AHOBILAM
SRI NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE

Prof. R. VASANTHA

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS
TIRUPATI
2001
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Published by
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
Tirupati
2001
Published by
Sri P. Krishnaiah, I A S,
Executive Officer,
T.T. Devasthanams Tirupati.

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T.T.D. Religious Publications Series No: 595

First Edition: January 2001
Copies: 1000

Printed at
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Press,
Tirupati.
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The unique manifestation of Sri Raman Narayana as Narasimha has been extolled by our great sages and acharyas. Born out of a pillar neither man nor beast, yet combining in Himself both aspects, this avatara of the Lord amply illustrates His supremacy and transcendence. To the devout, this God of ferocious form is the most alluring one whose compassion and love defy description. Sri Koorattalwan (Sri Vatsanka Misra) in one of his works expatiates on his graceful man-lion combination and emergence from a pillar and other extraordinary features which proclaim His paratva or all-transcending glory. There is no incarnation of the Lord in which the Lord's immanence and transcendence both shine forth simultaneously as in His Narasimha avatara.

Among the great shrines dedicated to Sri Narasimhaswami, Ahobilam occupies a pre-eminent place. This religious centre of great antiquity also known as Singavel Kunram in ancient Tamil classics is mentioned in many puranas like Kurma, Padma and Vishnu. According to the Brahmavishnu Purana, this place was once the haunt of Hiranyakasipu who was slain by Sri Raman Narayana in his Narasimha avatara aspect for the sake of his devotee Prahlada. Tallapaka Annamacharya in one of his sankirtanas exultantly praises the presiding deity of Ahobilam thus: Nava Narasimha namo namo/ Bhavanasintheera Ahobala Narasimha.

The present book on Ahobilam contains a detailed study of the history of Ahobilam, its growth and development from the pre-historic period to the present day, besides a brief survey of the sthalapuranas and other traditional accounts. A detailed study of the sculpture and iconography of the Ahobilam group of temples and an exhaustive analysis of the administrative and sacerdotal setup prevalent from time to time make the book an indispensable guide to the students of history. A glossary of the technical terms is also added to help those who are not familiar with them.

We have utmost pleasure in placing this monograph on the sacred temples of Ahobilam before the readers.

Lakṣmi katākṣa Sarasīruha rājahamsa
Pakṣendraśaila bhuvanam bhavanāsamīsam
Gokṣira hari ghanasara patira varnam
Vande kṛpānidhim ahobila narasimham

Tirupati, 14-11-2000.
P. Krishnahal, Executive Officer
FOREWORD

Among India's vast artistic heritage, the temples of South India stand out prominently. These temples are treasure houses of artistic creations. At the same time, these temples are closely intertwined with the lives of the people living around these temples. They are sources of great spiritual support and comfort.

Ahobilam is the home of Vishnu (Narasimha). In the avatars of Vishnu, the incarnation of Narasimha constitutes the transition from the stage of the beast to the human. The earliest reference to this Avatara is found in the Mahabharat according to which Lord Madhusudana took the form of Narasimha to protect the devatas and the people from the hands of asura. The complete myth of the Avatara is found in the Harivamsa. The Puranas such as the Kurma Purana, the Padma Purana, the Vishnu Purana, and the Bhagavata Purana narrate the myth differently.

The cave shrines of Narasimha at Ahobilam belong to the Srivaishnava tradition. It is one of the hundred and eight sacred centres (divya kshetras) of Srivaishnavism. This is a temple whose origins go back to almost 2000 years. Ahobilam is the only place, which exhibits nine distinct iconographical forms of Narasimha. In addition to this, this place is intimately associated with Van Satagopa Jiyar, the first Jiyar of the Ahobila math. It is being popularly believed that God Narasimha Himself came in the form of an old man and offered sanyasa to the Jiyar. Despite the spectacular setting of the cave shrines on the Nallamala hill ranges, pillared mandapas, mathas, and other structures at this hill, Ahobilam has not attracted sufficient attention of historians and archaeologists.

Dr. Vasantha's research on Ahobilam, for the first time, brings Ahobilam to the attention of both scholars and the general readers. The scholarly work of Vasantha is a comprehensive and composite treatise on one of the less known Vaishnava cave shrines of South India belonging to early centuries and developed through the ages. As an introduction she has provided the evolution of the Srivaishnava religion and the regional history. Her book is a good example of how to benefit from traditional, epigraphical, artistic, architectural and iconographical evidences as well as prevalent ritualistic practices in the matter of developing a proper perspective of the history and role of any living temple. The author has made an interesting sociological study of how the temple grew from the position of a holy place to a centre of pilgrimage, capable of attracting devotees from far and wide. It is essential that a magnificent temple like this, with rich sculptural and iconographical wealth, should be properly studied and appreciated.

Professor Vasantha should be congratulated for having contributed a study of Ahobilam in this beautifully illustrated volume. Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams has to be congratulated on this publication.

Hyderabad,
Dt. 9-8-1999.

Dr. Haripriya Rangarajan
PREFACE

The present work is an attempt to study the Narasimhaswami temples and caves at Ahobilam Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, comprehensively from both the historical and the art-historic angles. In fact this study is partially in fulfillment of a need to provide a comprehensive picture of the nature and development of temples in different parts of South India. Keeping in view that a temple is not only a work of art but also a religious and socio-economic institution, quite a few temples in Tamilnadu and Karnataka have been well studied, while such a study was a desideratum with regard to Andhra Pradesh. It is for this purpose we have taken up the present work. The choice for such a study fell on the Narasimhaswami temples at Ahobilam because of the uniqueness of the place and availability of both literary and archaeological material useful for the purpose.

Ahobilam is one of the traditionally famous hundred and eight Srivaishnava centres in India. Secondly, Ahobilam is the only place where nine iconographic forms of Narasimha are found. Thirdly, Ahobilam is intimately associated with Van-Satagopa-Jiyyar (the first Jiyyar) of the Ahobila math.

Detailed studies on many other Srivaishnava centres, spread over South India are available although such a study is lacking. This book intends to fill the gap and as far as Ahobilam shrines are concerned, it gives a picture of the development of this holy centre of the Srиваishnavas.

I am grateful to His Holiness Srivan Satagopa Sri Narayana Yatindra Mahadesikan for his holy blessings.

I express my profound sense of gratitude to Dr. Parabrahma Shastri for his scholarly guidance and permitting to study and make use of the unpublished epigraphs with him.

Several scholars have given advice, notably Sri Ramesh and other priests and Manager of the Ahobilam temple. Also I thank Sri N V Ramakrishnaiah Achari and Sri Allabaksh, Allagadda for nice drawings and photographs.

I gratefully acknowledge the interest taken by Sri P. Krishnaiah, I A S, Executive Officer, T T Devasthanams, and Sri N S Ramamurthy, Editor, T T D for accepting this work for publication under the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams Publication scheme.

R. Vasantha
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INTRODUCTION

Any historian interested in the study of ancient and medieval history of South India often meets with a peculiar situation while dealing with the source material. The inscriptions which provide a firm basis for the reconstruction of ancient history and which most of the times happen to be the only source material available are generally temple inscriptions. Similarly the majority of architectural monuments of the past now surviving are temples only. This situation may be due to the fact that the temples were bestowed more care in their execution, they being the houses of gods in contrast to the others associated with mortals. The temples were expected to be monuments to last perpetually and hence they would be constructed by utilizing better building materials and technology. They were also to be institutions to flourish for a longer time thus requiring perpetual endowments for their maintenance, the details of which would be recorded on imperishable stone for the guidance of future generations. This possibly accounts for the situation in which one finds the historical data available for ancient and medieval periods of South Indian history being more numerous relating to the temples than any other aspect of human activity. This abundance of data also provides a picture to the historian that the temple was a major social and economic institution in those times - a fact that has attracted many historians to take up studies relating to these aspects.

Studies on temples are being done in South India for a considerable period. Many of these are either concerned with the temples as surviving works of art, or as works of religious activity or as social institutions. We may mention here a few outstanding ones in this connection as those of K K Pillai,1 K V Raman,2 V N Hari Rao3 and K. Sundaram4 In these most of the above mentioned aspects have been taken together, considering the temple as integral organic institution in which all these are inseparably interrelated. There are also a few works which confine themselves to the study of architectural and sculptural aspects of individual temples or regional and dynastic groups.5 In recent years there are also some interesting studies relating to temple economy, etc.6 Even though a lot of labour has gone into the study of various aspects of the temples, comprehensive studies of individual temples are confined to those in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu only. Another region of South India which is equally rich in temples, i.e. Andhra Pradesh, has not so far gained any attention in this regard.7 Therefore we felt that a study of the above type relating to some temple in the Andhra Pradesh region would be of value to have a better picture of the temple institutions in South India in general.

In this connection we opted to choose the Narasimhaswami temples at Ahobilam on two counts. The first aspect that attracted our attention towards these temples is that they have considerable
architectural, epigraphical and literary data useful for a systematic study. Secondly, Ahobilam is well known as the nava-Narasimha Kshetra

Jwala Ahobila Maha Lola |
Kroda Karancheh Bhargava |
Yogananda Kshatravata |
Pavaneya Nava Moorthayyah ||

Out of the 79 Narasimha temples spread over Andhra Pradesh (Rayalaseema-32, Coastal Andhra-26, Telangana-13, centres not located region-wise for lack of proper historical material-8), Ahobilam is the only place, which exhibits nine distinct iconographical forms of Narasimha. In addition to this, Ahobilam is intimately associated with Van Satagopa Jiyyar (the first Jiyyar) of the Ahobila math, it is being believed that the God Narasimha himself came in the form of an old man and offered sanyasa to the Jiyyar [PL 122], on the banks of Bhavanasiini river. This fact has not only enhanced the importance of Ahobilam among the Srivashnava Centres but also has made this centre a spear-head of the Srivashanva movement in the region of Andhra. Further, this temple lends itself to an interesting sociological study in which the gradual growth of a centre of pilgrimage, from the earliest time of the establishment of a temple to a period when it gained a supreme position as a holy place capable of attracting devotees from far and wide, can be traced.

In this book, we aim at making a comprehensive study of the Narasimhasvami temple Complex at Ahobilam both as a religious structural complex and as a socio-religious institution as it developed through the centuries of its growth.

As far as the first aspect is concerned we have tried to provide a complete descriptive account of the architecture and sculpture of the temple, including the recognition of different chronological stages and their stylistic features. With regard to the latter aspect, it is our intention to provide a picture of the rituals and festivals, the administration, management and economy as well as the interaction between the temple institution and the contemporary society, as they obtained through centuries of history of this temple.

The sources available for the study of this temple, as usual for any other historical subject, include both literary and archaeological material.

Firstly, the Narasimhasvami temples in the Upper and the Lower Ahobilam are sufficiently major monuments as they have been in a good state of preservation. As it would be noticeable even to a casual visitor, these temples are complexes that have grown through additions and alterations made from time to time. Still, however, many of these stages of growth are identifiable on the basis of structural features and stylistic forms. Thus these temple complexes lend themselves to the study of their growth on the very basis of the architectural data. Similarly, there are a number of sacred, secular and decorative sculptures providing a rich array of material for stylistic and iconographic study.

Secondly, there are altogether 30 inscriptions available at Ahobilam. These inscriptions are in the Upper and the Lower Ahobilam engraved on the walls, pillars and stray stone slabs. All are stone inscriptions connected with different monuments of Ahobilam. It appears that there were hundreds of copper-plate records preserved in the small room at the Upper Ahobilam, adjacent to the Chenchulakshmi Shrine, but, later, were melt for the sake of copper. All the available inscriptions are in Telugu script and language except three inscriptions. Out of three, two are in Sanskrit script and language and the other is in Kannada script and language. The earliest of the inscriptions of Ahobilam belongs to the time of Chalukya Kirtivarman II (744-755 A.D.) and the latest to the time of Venkatapathraya II (1585-1614 A.D.). Most of the inscriptions are donatory records, and these inscriptions provide us.
rich data for the understanding of the various aspects of the temple. Many of these inscriptions are also highly valuable for fixing up the date of several monuments at Ahobilam.

Thirdly, there is a wealth of literary data available for the reconstruction of the history of the Srivaishnava establishment. These include Sthalapuranas, Srivaishnava hagiologies, literary compositions glorifying Ahobilam or dealing with the themes drawn from the legends connected with this place, stray references in other literary works and folk songs.

The Sthalapurana of this place is available in various puranas like the Nrisimha Purana, Brahmandapurana and Narasimha purana, each containing a few chapters concerning this temple. Besides these, another work Kasikhandam has a few chapters. The Sthalapurana of Ahobilam in Sanskrit gives a detailed description of the nine forms of Narasimha. Tamil poems, Nalayira divyaprabandham, has ten poems dedicated to the god of Ahobilam. These were composed by Tirumangai Alvar in the 7th-8th Century A.D. But the Sthalamahatmya is considered to be a later interpolation. We may also note, in addition, that the Sthalapurana of this place does not figure in any of the literary works of the medieval period, but several literary compositions based on the sthalapuranas appeared in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. V.G. Krishnamacharyulu observed on the nature and date of the Sthalapuranas from Andhradesa deserves quotation for comparison. He says, “Most of the Sthalapuranas were composed after the attempted establishment of Islam in Andhra during the 14th century. Islam posed a threat to the religious life of the Hindus and a number of efforts were made for rivetting the Brahminical religion into the minds of the people. The composition of the Sthalapuranas was one such effort”. These facts may hold good for the Sthalapuranas of Ahobilam too and they may have been composed somewhere between the 14th and 16th centuries.

Among the Sanskrit literary works, Ramabhyudayam of Saluva Narasimha (1486-91 A.D.), one of the illustrious kings of the Vijayanagara Empire, was a great devotee of god Narasimha. In the introduction to his work the King mentions clearly that he was born by the grace of god Narasimha of Ahobilam. Another important Sanskrit work Vasantika Parinayam by Van satagopa Yatindra Mahadesika, seventh Jiyar of the Ahobila math (1579 A.D.), is a drama depicting the marriage of Narasimha with Chenchita (a tribal girl).

The earliest Telugu work which makes a reference to Ahobilam is Errapragada’s Narasimha Purana (1324-1349 A.D.). The fifth chapter of this purana describes the importance of Ahobila Ksheera and of the presiding deity. The preface to Harivamsam (Uttarabhangam) by Errapragada has made a reference to the building of the steps to Upper Ahobilam by Vema Reddi.

The next important work is the corpus of Annamayya’s devotional songs. Annamacharyulu (1408-1507 A.D.) and Peda Tirumalacharyulu (1460-1547 A.D.) wrote a number of Sankirtanas’ (devotional songs) in favour of Ahobila Narasimha of Ahobilam. It is stated that the third Tallapaka poet, Tirumalacharyulu (1485-1550 A.D.) had made “pratistha” (Consecration) to the image of Narasimha in the Hanuman Shrine at Tirupati. It is stated that Annamayya visited the Ahobilam temple and sang the glory of god Narasimha. It is attested by two copper-plates of Annamayya’s Kirtanas, which are found at Ahobilam. He praised the Lord of the Upper Ahobilam as the boon-giver.

Garudachala mahatmyam of Obayyamantri (17th century A.D.) is a very popular Yakshagana describing the supposed marriage of god Narasimha with a girl belonging to the Chenchu tribe. Pratapacharitra of Ekamranatha, (1290-1323 A.D.) who received patronage from the Kakatiya Prataparudra II, has made a passing reference to Ahobilam.

Anantamayya who flourished in the 15th century A.D. dedicated his work Bhojarajyamu to god Ahobila Narasimha. Srinatha in his Kasikandam (1440 A.D) also has made a reference to
Ahobilam. The renowned Telugu poet, Pingali Surana, (1560 A.D) also makes reference to the god of Ahobilam, in his great classic Kalapurnodayam.

There are about six unpublished Telugu manuscripts, which provide information about the god Narasimha. Lakshmi Narasimha Vilasamu by Paidipati Venkata Nrisimha Kavi is preserved in Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras. This describes the love and marriage of god Narasimha with Chenchulakshmi.

Vasantika Parinayamu, a Yakshagana written by Kranja Venkatadri, is preserved in Saraswatimahal Library, Tanjore.

Kattamanchi Kamesvara Kavi is the author of Lakshmi Narasimha Charitramu, a prabhandha narrating the legend of the incarnation of Narasimha and Ahobilam. This is in Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras.

Ahobila Narasimha Satakamu is a palm leaf manuscript, preserved in Oriental Research Institute of Manuscripts Library, Tirupati.

The other two manuscripts Sikhi Narasimha Satakam and Narasimha Dandakamu are preserved in Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras.

Of great importance and utility is the paper manuscript of D. Ramaswamy Iyyengar of 1916, which is preserved in the State Archives, Madras. It provides details about various aspects of the temple administration, and also gives the temple plans. The temple plans of 1916 are markedly different from the existing ground plan of the temples.

Ahobilam Kaifiyat and Rudravaram Kaifiyat are the two important written documents of considerable interest for our study. These are of much later period mostly recorded by the village officials. They contain day-to-day accounts of the happenings of the areas to which they pertain. But, almost all these kaifiyats here become fascinating reading material since, so far as the past events are concerned, they refer to quite a good number of traditional legends and stories which often remain unsubstantiated. In narrating such legends, the writers of the Kaifiyats have lost sense of time, chronology and facts. But they put greater emphasis on stories full of romantic or heroic deeds without any relation to facts. We have examined some Kaifiyats which deal with Ahobilam in sufficient detail, regarding their acceptability, in reconstructing the history of the place.

Mackenzie has done a great service to historical research by collecting as many kaifiyats as he could and summarise them. In the manuscript No. 100 we have Kaifiyats of fifteen places and obviously the biggest one is the Kaifiyat of Ahobilam. The Kaifiyat of Ahobilam deals with the history of the place commencing from its foundation.

The God Narasimha of Ahobilam popularly called 'Ahobila' figures as the subject-matter of innumerable folk songs current among the populace of the region. Many of them not only praise this god as the greatest in fulfilling the wishes of the people, but also treat him often times as not dissimilar to a member of their own community who enjoys life as a colourful personality with all the human urges and feelings of love and hatred. In this context a number of stories are woven round him due to the fertile imagination of the common folk. Most of the folk songs are still in the oral tradition sung on occasions by the village folk around.

The book has been divided into two parts. Part One is devoted to provide a general geographical, historical and religious background pertinent to the study of the Narasimha temples. Part Two is completely devoted for the consideration of the various aspects of the Narasimha (both Upper and Lower) temples itself.
1. Location

Ahobilam is situated in the Nallamala hills, and is about 24 kms. from Allagadda taluq headquarters, 112 kms. from Cuddapah and 65 kms. from Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh. It can be reached by bus from Hyderabad and also by train via Kurnool and then by bus from there. The whole complex is composed of two parts - one called Yeguva Ahobilam which contains shrines devoted to (upper Ahobilam) Nava Narasimha (nine Narasimhas) and the other called DIGUVA Ahobilam (Lower Ahobilam) with a single shrine for Lakshm Narasimha. Both are connected by a road, covering a distance of about 12.8 kms. from the Lower Ahobilam to the Upper Ahobilam. From the Upper Ahobilam, the other shrines are to be reached only by trekking and negotiating the difficult terrain of flowing streams and slippery rocks. Nature is bounteous. It affords plenty of water by way of ponds, brooks and also some resting places in the form of shady trees. One can witness several cave like rocks on the way. Lions and other wild animals dwell in the forest. If one undertakes a strenuous traverse of 8 kms. from the Upper Ahobilam, one can see the Ugrastambham or Ukkukambham (an immaculate iron pillar) on the mountain side to be the one from which Lord Narasimha emerged in his ferocious form in response to Prahlada’s prayers.

2. Names of the place

The place is variously referred to in the inscriptions as Vobula, Ahobala, Ahobila, Ahobilagiri, Vedadi, DIGUVA Tirupati, Garudadi, Virakshetra, Achalachaya Meru, Singavel Kunram, Nidhi and Nagari. The popular name of the place in Ahobila and all the other names appear as terms connoting its mythology, sanctity and glory. Ahobala is the ancient form of the present name Ahobilam. The earliest inscription naming this place as Ahobala belongs to 1124 A.D. According to the sthala Purana, there are two popular legends, explaining the derivation of the word ‘Ahobilam’. It is stated that the Devas (Gods), while witnessing the ferocious aspect (Ugra Kala) the lord took on in order to tear Hiranyakasipu to pieces, exclaimed in wonder ‘Ahobala’ (literally, Lo! the stupendous strength!). Hence this place has come to be known as Ahobilam. In support of this derivation of the name, there is a popular Sanskrit verse about Ahobilam that reads:

Ahoviryam Ahsauyram Ahobahu Parakramah |
Narasimham Param Daivam Ahobilam Ahobalam ||
The other version of Ahobilam is ascribed to the great cave, where Garuda worshipped, did penance and realised the Lord.

According to the Ahobilam Kaifiyya there is another version, which states that "on one of the mountains in the range of Nallamala hills, eight amadas (an amada is equal to ten miles in measure) from Srisaila Kshetra, Garuda commenced silent penance to obtain a vision of Lord Narasimha who destroyed Hiranyakasipu. The Lord in His grace, after long years of the tapas of Garuda, manifested Himself in the cave of a mountain".

"Ten Paruvus' (a paruvu is equal to two and a half miles) to the north-east of the mountain, Garuda was doing penance. A vision of His manifestation was then granted to Garuda, who after obtaining a sign of the location of the mountain-cave, gladly travelled thither and had the vision of the Lord Jwalarasimha not easily accessible to common people. Garuda then worshipped the lord, and praised him that 'Ahobilam is Mahabalam' (Ahobilam endows us with great strength). The Lord's Divya Mangala Vigraha was worshipped by him with several stotras. Garuda then considered himself as blessed after a vision of the Lord. This divine place thereafter obtained the deserving name of Ahobilam".

Vobula is possibly the earliest name available about this place, occurring for the first time in an 8th century Chalukyan inscription. Vobula is most probably the corrupt or even the vernacular Telugu form of the Sanskrit word Ahobala.

Ahobalagiri means Ahobala hill. As the place is situated on a hill, the name appears to be appropriate. Several inscriptions found in the surroundings of Ahobilam refer to Ahobilam by this name. The earliest record which refers to Ahobilam by this name occurs in an inscription of 1378 A.D.

The name Garudadri is obviously explainable on the basis of Garuda's penance on this mountain. According to Sthalapurana as per his father's (Kasyapa's) instruction, Vainateya (Garuda) in his boyhood performed a very great penance in this place i.e., Ahobilam and obtained the grace of the Lord for being a Vahana (the eternal vehicle) of Sri Mahavishnu. Hence the mountain is called Garudadri to signify this legendary incident.

According to Sthalapurana, an asura (demon) called Somaka stole away the Vedas from Lord Brahma. Then they were restored by Lord Vishnu, after he killed the Asura. After this incident, the Vedas performed a severe penance in this place (Ahobilam) and Lord Narasimha who was pleased with their penance blessed them that thereafter they would not be stolen away by anybody else. To signify this occurrence the mountains are called "Vedadri". The earliest record which refers to Ahobilam by this name belongs to the year 1410 A.D.

Singavel-Kunram means 'seven hills', the abode of Narasimha. Saint Tirumangai Alvar who lived in the 8th century A.D. composed ten Tamil poems in praise of the God. In the first poem, Alvar sings about Sengan ali ittu erainjam singavel kunram. Singavel meaning the youthful lion is, doubtless, a reference to Lord Narasimha who resides in the hill Ahobilam. It is for that reason the hill is named Singavel Hill. The words Sengan Ali (Ali means lion) also signify a red-eyed lion. The name Nagari appears at the earliest in an inscription of 1558 A.D. This name is probably explainable as mulasthana (the main abode of Narasimha in the Upper Ahobilam).

Besides the names already mentioned appearing in the inscriptions, many puranas refer to Ahobilam by different names such as Achalachaya Meru, Virakshetra, Sheshadri, Narsimhatirtham, Garudadri, Garudagiri and Garudachalam.
3. Antiquities

Quite in tune with the importance of this place as a holy centre, a whole range of paraphernalia appropriate in such places has come up here from time to time due to the philanthropic contributions of the devotees. As such, we have here about nine shrines, six Koners (tanks), thirteen holy tirthas (ponds), besides twelve mandapas and other structures built for the benefit and comfort of the visiting pilgrims. In short, Ahobilam is a well-developed religious centre studded mainly with religious buildings, a study of which provides a good background for the understanding of the growth and development of this religious centre.

Among all the significant monuments at Ahobilam the Ahobala Narasimha temple at the Upper Ahobilam and Prahladavarada temple at the Lower Ahobilam stand out by the sheer grandeur of their size and appearance. An elaborate discussion of these two temples is taken up later. Now, we may pass on to the description of the other antiquities of the place.

A. Nava - Narasimha shrines

i. Ahobila Narasimha shrine

The temple, situated on the Upper Ahobilam, at a distance of eight kms. from the Lower Ahobilam, is the main temple and the earliest of all the nine shrines. The Lord in the sanctum sanctorum here appears in his fierce aspect. Hence he is called Ugra Narasimha. He is the presiding deity of the temple and is also known as Ahobila Narasimha. It is firmly believed that Narasimha was ‘Swayambhu’ (self-manifest) here. (A detailed description of this “Swayambhu” is taken up later in the succeeding chapters).

ii. Bhargava Narasimha shrine

The Bhargava Narasimha shrine is situated at a distance of two kms. from the Lower Ahobilam on a hill, near the sacred pond, known as Bhargava tirtham. It is the site where Bhargava Rama performed his penance. Hence the Lord of the temple is known as Bhargava Narasimha.

The entire distance is to be covered on foot. At some distance down a deep incline, we come to a very calm place where we find a beautiful pond of cool, fresh and crystal clear water surrounded by ever-green thick shrubs and tall trees. The pond is also called Akshaya Tirtha. At a few yards away from this pond, there is a flight of some steps, climbing up which, we reach the Bhargava shrine, which is renovated recently.

The deity installed in the Garbhagriha is about ‘3’ high and is placed on a low pedestal and is represented as four-handed, the upper two hands holding the Chakra and Sankha, the lower two hands are shown tearing the intestine of Hiranyakasipu. Hiranyakasipu is shown with a sword in his right hand. Prahlada is seen on the right in the Sthanaka posture with Anjali hasta.

The image is crude looking. But the presence of Dasavatara in the Prabhavali without Kirtimukha is interesting as it reminds us of the more graceful and artistic images of 10th-11th century.

An inscription belonging to 1564 A.D.24 was set up by Sri Parankusa Srivantasatagopa Jiyyangaru, the presiding acharya of the Ahobila math. This registers the grant of a piece of land in Lingamadine in Gandikotasima to the God Ahobalesvara for specified offerings and their distribution during the garden festival (Vana-mahotsava) near the tank constructed by him on the way to Bhargava shrine by Parankusa Van Satagopajiyyar who received this piece of land from Narasaya who in turn, is stated to have obtained the village Lingamadine from Nandela Timmaraju. The
inscription also mentions that the approach road and steps to Bhargava shrine were constructed by Parankusamiyar

iii. Yogananda Narasimha shrine

This shrine is at a distance of two kms to the south-east of Lower Ahobilam distance of two kms. The popular legend is that after killing Hiranyakasipu, Lord Narasimha taught Prahlada several yogic postures. Therefore, the lord in this posture is called Yogananda Narasimha. It is connected by a good road. This shrine is a plain stone structure with a square Garbhagriha and ardhamandapa. Seated on a Garuda pedestal of 1'2" high, the figure of the Lord is about 2'8" high in the yogic posture of the legs being crossed and tied with a Yogapatta. The deity is four handed and holds Chakra in the right upper hand and Sankha in the upper left hand. The other two hands rest on the knees. The form of Sankha and Chakra, the hand postures, the conical kirita and the style of the delineation show that this image is possibly of the 9th - 10th century A.D.

There is another Yogananda idol in a cave, near Prahladabanda in the Upper Ahobilam. This cave is in the upper reach of a lofty mountain. This figure is similar to the one mentioned already, except for such aspects like the slender body, style of holding Sankha and Chakra, the low pointed kirita, crude face and large ear. These peculiar aspects point out that this image may be earlier than the one referred to earlier and possibly might belong to the 7th - 8th century A.D. (PL 67)

iv. Chatravata Narasimha

The shrine of Chatravata is about four kms away from the lower Ahobilam, on the same motorable road leading to Yogananda. But we have to walk about a furlong on a rough track from the road to reach this shrine. The temple is small and is under the shade of an umbrella-like banyan tree. Hence the deity here is called Chatravata Narasimha. This shrine has a square Garbhagriha and a mukha mandapa. This mukha mandapa has six pillars, which consists of a simple rectangular lower part from which rises octagonal and square shaft and a plain capital. This is typical of the 12th century A.D. pillars in temples in all parts of South India. Bas-relief sculptures of Narasimha, Anjaneya etc. are found on these pillars.

The deity carved in black basaltic stone is seated in the padmasana pose on a low padmapitha. The two upper hands hold the Chakra and Sankha. The lower right hand is in the abhayam posture, while the lower left hand is a Kathastra, placed on the waist and the left thigh. The image is adorned with Kirita makuta, grainyaka, Keyura Yanjnopavita and a drapery. The ornamentation, workmanship, depiction of Sankha and Chakra, the way of showing the four hands, drapery and the style of delineation suggest that, stylistically the image belongs to the early Vijayanagara period. It is said that the two Gandharvas Haha and Huhu came from Merupavata and entertained this Narasimha with their melodious singing, whereupon, the Lord blessed them to become first rate singers in all the three worlds. Even now devotees who visit this shrine sing melodiously before the deity.

v. Kroda or Varaha Narasimha

The shrine of Varaha Narasimha is one km away from the main temple of Ahobilam. Walking along side the Bhavanasi river east-wards and Kalakshepa mandapa, we arrive at the cave shrine of Kroda (Varaha). Here we get entranced by the attractive natural scenery all around. The lofty mountains over-grown with tall trees are awe inspiring. In the narrow valley between Vedari and Guradadri, the silver stream of Bhavanasi glides on and forms the Varahagundam.

In this cave shrine, there are two images, one of Lakshmi-Narasimha and another Sthanaka figure of Varaha Narasimha with his consort, goddess Bhudevi. The goddess is shown as embracing
the ‘snout’ portion of the lord, just as she did while being raised by him up from the ocean waters after piercing Hiranyaksha with his tusks and then slaying him. Varaha stands in a tribhangi posture with only two hands, the head of the boar and the tail of the lion on a human torso. The image is bereft of any ornamentation. Stylistically the image may be placed in the period about 9th-10th centuries A.D.

vi. Karanja or Saranga Narasimha

This shrine is situated at a distance of one km. from the upper Ahobilam and one furlong away from the road leading to lower Ahobilam. The Bhavanasi river glides on at the left of the road. The shrine is under a Karanja tree which accounts for the name Karanja Narasimha. The shrine is a simple rectangular structure of granite slabs.

The image of the Lord appears to be seated in meditation, with a hooded cobra over the head. The upper right hand holds a Chakra and upper left hand has Saranga or bow. The lower hands are in Dhyana mudra. Stylistically the image may be placed in the period about 10th-11th centuries A.D.

vii. Malola Narasimha

Malola shrine is situated, nearly two kms. from the main temple of the Upper Ahobilam. The deity here appears in ‘Soumya’ (peaceful) form. As Narasimha is seen with his consort, Lakshmi, He is known as Malola Narasimha. The word ‘Malola’ means beloved of Lakshmi. (ma=lakshmi, lola=beloved)

The shrine is on a level surface of a peak of the Vedadri mountain. This place is also called Markonda Lakshmi Kshetra.

बेदवद्रे निकरे रमे तल्लोकेशुमुदाहितु।
तलसेवभगवादविशुन्तलबाहः सदृष्टिः॥

The God is seen seated here in sukhasana posture with his left leg folded while the right leg is shown dangling at an angle with a semi circular Prabhavali and a raised Kirtimukha. The goddess is shown seated on the left thigh of the Lord with kataka and parsiyatiyamamhasta. The feet of the goddess rest on padma which appears to have sprouted from the earth. The Lord’s two upper hands hold Chakra and Sankha, his lower right hand is in abhaya pose and the lower left hand is shown embracing his consort.

The semi-circular prabhavali with a raised Kirtimukha, over- ornamentation, crude bodily features of the goddess, the elongated kirita makuta, the style of holding sankha and chakra, suggest that the image may belong to the 12th-13th century A.D.

viii. Jwala Narasimha

The temple of Jwala Narasimha, lies higher up the Malola temple, on a hill called ‘Achalachaya Meru’. This is about four kms. from the upper Ahobilam temple. This place is said to be the actual spot where the ferocity or anger of the Lord reached its acme when he tore Hiranyakasipu. It is somewhat difficult to reach this place as we have to pass through a narrow passage made by cutting and chiselling the rocks of the peak on one side, while to the other side of this passage there is a very deep valley. One has to walk very carefully. It is told that the spot where Jwala Narasimha is sitting with Hiranyakasipu on his lap, is the threshold of the main entrance door of the spacious palace of Hiranyakasipu. Cleaving one of the pillars of the demon’s palace, Narasimha manifested himself. The part of this pillar standing erect has the shape of a lofty hill. This vertical hilly pillar is called Achalachayamuru. The cleaven side of the standing part is straight and at right angles to the foot part of it. On the precipice of this peak, there are three steel posts erected. On the surface of these steel posts, the names of the devotees erecting them are engraved.
It is generally believed that after slaying Hiranyakasipu, Narasimha looked very frightful. To pacify him, Indra and other gods poured suraganga water (celestial Ganges) on his head which flowed down as a stream into the nearby valley and the latter turned into a river called Bhavanasini. In front of this shrine, there is a small pond below a fully open cave. The water of this pond is reddish. The colour of the water is said to be due to Narasimha's washing his hands here after tearing the abdomen of Hiranyakasipu.

The shrine appears to be a natural cave. There are three idols in the shrine, a. Ashtabuja Narasimha b. Chaturbuja Narasimha and Narasimha chasing Hiranyakasipu.

a. Ashtabhuja Narasimha

The main deity seated at the centre is with eight arms. He is seated on a Garudapitha and a small image of Prahlada is placed to the left of Narasimha, standing with folded hands.

The sculpture suggests massive energy and vigorous action. The first pair of hands catches hold of Hiranyakasipu's crown and renders him motionless, while the other pair by tightly gripping the sword-carrying hand of Hiranyakasipu, completely disarms and overpowers him. The second pair of hands is engaged in tearing open the entrails of the demon lying on the folded right leg of the God. The third pair of hands hold Sankha and Chakra and fourth pair holds the intestine of the demon in the shape of a garland. A prabhavali with kirtimukha is carved in the same stone.

Stylistically this image goes back to the early Vijayanagara period.

b. Chaturbuja

This figure is depicted in the standing posture coming out of the pillar (Stambhodbhava-murti). This is said to represent the Kevala Narasimha form. This is a very rare form and appears to be earlier. It has four hands, the two upper hands holding chakra and sankha and the lower hands are depicted downwards as though he is tearing the demon. But peculiarly the demon is not depicted. Lakshmi is seated to the right and Prahlada stands to the left and the god is adorned with Karandamakuta. Stylistically this image appears to be earlier than the above and may belong to the 7th-8th century A.D.

The third figure depicts Narasimha as advancing towards Hiranyakasipu from the right, as the latter is approaching in a defiant attitude, with his sword lifted up to strike. Narasimha is made to take hold of the body of Hiranyakasipu so as to overpower him. Moreover the right hand of Narasimha is held up as if he is going to deal a blow to the enemy with the open palm of the hand.

The conventional lion's face, the conical kirta, the expressionless attitude and other details place the image to the 10th-11th centuries A.D.

lx. Pavana Narasimha

Pavana Narasimha shrine is situated on the bank of the river Pavani and it is about six kms. from the upper Ahobilam temple. One has to walk the entire distance from upper Ahobilam southwards, on a hilly forest track. This shrine is in the middle of a dense forest.

The shrine is a small rectangular building with a Garudastambha in front. The presence of Garudastambha suggests that the shrine might have been in great prosperity and annual functions were being regularly conducted. There is another shrine, opposite to this, dedicated to Siva.

At a distance of about a km. from this shrine, Chenchus, (tribal people) reside. They, even to this day, sing in their own language the momentous marriage of the Chenchu bride with Narasimha.
In the shrine, just by the side of the main image Pavanannarasimha, there are idols of Gopalakrishna, Navanithakrishna, Varadaraja, Anjaneya and another Pamuletinarasimha.

The main image is actually a Lakshmi Narasimha idol, with four hands. The upper two hands carry Sankha and Chakra. The lower right hand is in abhaya pose, while the lower left hand is shown as embracing Lakshmi seated on his left thigh. The lord is seated in sukhasana posture on Adisesha, with his left leg folded while the right leg is bent at the knee. Dangling down over the head of Narasimha is found a seven-hooded snake (Adisesha) spread like an umbrella. Lakshmi is shown seated on the thigh of the Lord with right hand embracing god. But the left hand is a little bit broken.

This form of image has sanction from the Vishnudharmottara and stylistically this image belongs to the period of the 6th-7th century A.D.

B. Ukku Stambham (Iron pillar) or Ugra Stambham

At a distance of eight kms. from the upper Ahobilam, we can see a cleft of the mountain dividing itself into two visible parts. It is a long-held view that from the cleft, the lord appeared in the form of Narasimha and this cleft is known as 'Ugra Stambham'. The pathway to this place is a very arduous one. There is a small pillar of iron here on the cleavage of a mountain to commemorate the event.

C. Prahlada Mettu

The small shrine situated on the hill is in between Ugra Stambham and the upper Ahobilam. It is dedicated to Prahlada. The images of Narasimha and Prahlada are installed in a small cave.

D. Mandapas and Pushkaranis (ponds)

Besides the above monuments, there are a number of mandapas dotting the hill and its lower part. The Ahobilam and Rudravaram Kaifiyats list 12 mandapas, 12 tirthams/Gundams and 8 Koners.

The twelve mandapas distributed in the Lower and the Upper Ahobilam are Vasanta mandapa, Unjal mandapa, Koluvu mandapa, Visvakesa mandapa, Mratasangrahana mandapa, Bigala Anjaneya mandapa, Durudu mandapa, Raghupati mandapa, Bhairava mandapa, Udyoga mandapa and one hundred and sixteen pillared mandapa and Varaha mandapa.

i. Vasanta mandapa

This mandapa which is square in shape measuring 12’7”x12’7” and located at a furlong distance from the Lower Ahobilam temple, consists of four pillars. The adhisthana is 2'4" high with a panel of dancing girls. An inscription belonging to 1548 A.D. states that Narasamma, wife of Mahamandalesvara Goburi Vobaya, constructed a Vasanta mandapam to the north of Digova Tirupati, endowed 120 gold Varahas to the temple as a principal amount and the recurring interest, is to be utilized for offerings (Naivedyams) to the god Ahobaleswara, when the Utsava Vigraha, the idol used in ceremonial processions visits the lower Ahobilam and waits at the Vasanta mandapam during occasions such as, Nityotsava, (daily function), Pakshotsava, (fortnightly function) Masotsava (monthly function) and Samvatsarotsavas (annual functions).

ii. Unjal mandapa

The pillars in the mandapa are artistic and bear the imprint of the Vijayanagara style of architecture.

This is situated opposite to the entrance gate of the lower Ahobilam temple in the sanndihi street. This mandapam is occasionaly used during unjalsevai functions. This is a simple square
mandapa measuring 9'x9' with four pillars. The Adhistana is 1'6" high from the earth. Pillars are very tall having square base, circular shaft and in the capital a neck-moulding (padmabandham) has been introduced. The Padmabandham joins on to the shaft, thus appropriating to itself a segment of the upper part of the shaft, and adding another item to the lower part of the capital in the form of a vessel or pot. As to the abacus, the palagai or plank is much expanded, in order to combine with the flower shape underneath and it is the most striking element. This pillar is an example of the Chola style. An inscription stone is placed near this mandapa.

iii. Koluvu mandapa

This is located, a few yards next to unjal mandapam towards the east. This is slightly bigger than unjal mandapam. This is situated by the side of the present bus stop on the Allagadda Road. Occasionally on festival days, God is brought in a procession and is placed in this mandapa for sometime. The mandapa is square in shape measuring 15'10"x15'10", and the height of the Adhistana is 3'8". These pillars belong to the Vijayanagara style.

iv. Visvakseṇa mandapa

This is also called mudra mandapa and situated on the other side of the main road (Allagadda road). The mandapa, which measures 12'7"x12'7", has four pillars of the Vijayanagara style and at present, is used as a shelter for the local people. The mandapa stands on high adhistana measuring 5' from the earth. The adhistana is very decorative consisting panels of dancing girls.

During the festival times, the idol of Visvakseṇa is brought here and offered puja, and taken in a procession to the temple again. We do not have any definitive knowledge about the reason behind the name mudra mandapam. We may presume that this mandapa might have acted as 'entry control' place.

v. Mṛtasangrahana mandapa

This is located a few yards, to the east of Visvakseṇa mandapa. During special festival times, earth is collected from this place. The mandapa is square in shape measuring 12'7"x12'7" with an adhisthana of 2'8" high. The pillars appear to belong to the early Vijayanagara period.

vi. Bigala Anjaneyasvami mandapa

This is two furlongs away from the Lower Ahobilam temple. There is a 6' Anjaneya idol in the centre and also a processional image. It is recently renovated. The mandapa measures 13'8"x13'8".

According to the local tradition, the main keys of the Ahobilam temple were deposited at the feet of Anjaneya, after the daily pujas were over and the Chief priest used to collect the keys in the morning from this place. ('Bigala' in Telugu means 'keys').

vii. Durudu mandapa

'Durudu' means in Telugu 'to pass through'. It is said that, before constructing the concrete road to the Upper Ahobilam, people used to pass through this mandapa to reach the Upper Ahobilam.

The ghat road from the lower Ahobilam slowly winds its way with an abundant sylvan pomp on both sides to the Upper Ahobilam. On the way to the Upper Ahobilam, is the Durudu mandapa on the Sopana marga. This is a plain mandapa which has in all sixteen pillars, eight on each side. There is an inscription on a slab near this mandapa. This inscription registers an endowment of twenty Varahas as Polivuttu for maintaining offerings during the sixteen days of festivals every year, when God was staying in this 16 pillared mandapa, while going down to the Lower Ahobilam on procession and back. The mandapa was built by Kurucheti Venkatadrideva - maharaju in 1553 A.D.
The pillars in the mandapa are plain without any special architectural features.

viii. Raghupati mandapa

This is also a sixteen pillared mandapa with a bigger dimension. The inscriptive 12th slab set up near this mandapa records the grant of a piece of land and some money by Van-Satagopa Jiyar for conducting certain festivals (16-day festival) when god Ahobaleswara was seated during procession in the 16 pillared mandapa from the temple to the Lower Ahobilam and back. This mandapam is said to have been constructed by Mahamandaleswara Kurucheti Timmaraju, in 1558 A.D. The pillars in the mandapam exhibit the Vijayanagara style of architecture. These pillars have ornamental brackets forming part of their capitals, as found in every stage of the Dravidian order. This is situated next to Durudu mandapa on the way to the Upper Ahobilam and measures 24'6"x24'6". There is a 3'5" Anjaneya idol in the centre.

ix. Balarava mandapa

Bairava mandapa is located to the west of the ghat road to the Upper Ahobilam. As we go up the hill, we notice a waterfall on the left of the mountains and there is a Gundam (water collected in the low lying area) by name Balarava Gundam. In it water collects from the stream flowing down the mountains. Opposite to the Balaravagundam is a long corridor mandapa with sixteen pillars. Deep inside this mandapa is a four pillared structure, where an image of Van Satagopa Jiyar in dhyana mudra is seated. These pillars have early Vijayanagara features.

x. Udyoga mandapa

Climbing up a stone-stepped staircase about four metres wide, we arrive at a level area surrounded by three mountains of the Ahobilam range of mountains. On the Western extreme is the Udyoga mandapam. This is a 16-pillared mandapam measuring 24'x24' in the typical Vijayanagara style. The adhistana is 4'9" high. This might belong to the late Vijayanagara period.

xi. Kalakshepa mandapa

This mandapa is situated near Varaha shrine. Walking further up from the Upper Ahobilam shrine, east-wards along the river for about 200 yards on a narrow rough track of stones and boulders, we find this one hundred and sixteen-pillared mandapa walled in only on the western side. The pillars are all plain and simple and may belong to the 11th-12th centuries A.D. or to the early Vijayanagara period.

xii. Varaha mandapa

Walking further upwards from Kalakshepa mandapa, this mandapam is situated adjacent to the Varaha shrine. This is in a dilapidated condition. The mandapam consists of sixteen pillars, beautifully carved and sculptured. Though the pillars exhibit the 16-17th century features, each pillar is distinct.

Another remarkable group of monuments, if they can be called so, seen here is that of Gundams/Tirthams and Pushkaranis or Koners (water ponds). Twelve of these are considered as sacred tirthas or gundams. They are the Bairava gundam, Narasimha tirtham, Varaha Gundam, Chuta tirtham, Sudarsana tirtham, Vinayaka tirtham, Dara tirtham, Sankhu tirtham, Gajendra Gundam, Rama-Lakshmana tirtham, Bhima tirtham and Rakta Gundam.

Besides those described above, there are eight pushkaranis or koners (ponds). They are Sannidhi koneru, Alvar koneru, Lanja koneru, Bhargava koneru in the Lower Ahobilam; Sannidhi koneru, Uttamadugu koneru, Akulapapaiah koneru, in the Upper Ahobilam and a small koneru near Malola shrine.
E. Konerus

i. Sannidhi Koneru (Lower Ahobilam)

This koneru is on the southern side of the Lower Ahobilam temple. The mandapas surrounding the pushkarinis are in a dilapidated condition and these housed vedic schools formerly. Recently this koneru is renovated by the present Jiyar of the Ahobila math. This tank is always dry and a deep well is dug within the tank. This pond measures 190' x 182'10" outside and 143'4" x 117'8" inside.

D. Ramaswamy Iyengar (1916) says that "Some years ago, one Jangalapalli Aswath Reddy, a devotee, constructed a feeder channel for the pushkarini to store the rain water". But it appears that now even the feeder channel had proved useless owing to the percolative nature of the sub soil. The mandapas around the tank are sinking into the ground due to the negligence and indifference of the temple authorities. The well in this tank retains water during a major part of the year. But they are muddy and infected with bacteria.

According to local Kaifiyat, this tank is said to have been constructed by Krishnadevaraya.

ii. Alvar koneru

This koneru is at a distance of two furlongs to the west of the Lower Ahobilam temple. It has flights of steps all round like the Sannidhi koneru. But now they are in a dilapidated condition. As D. Ramaswamy Iyengar (1916) says, "this tank was started during the time of Krishnadevaraya and the work was completed in Sadasivaraya's time. Round the bund of this tank there is a huge embankment provided with stone rivement. This embankment is a very fine one and is called Alvar-katta. It preserves rain water sitting up the tank. This tank is 156' x 138' in dimension and was used for the Brahmothsava festival. On the bund, there are a number of monolithic stone reservoirs formerly used for storing water for the cattle." This tank retains water throughout the year. There is a well dug within this tank as in the sannidhi koneru.

iii. Lanja koneru

This koneru is at a distance of a few yards away from the Lower Ahobilam temple towards north-eastern side. This tank retains no water even during the rainy season. It is believed that this was constructed by a prostitute (Lanja) and so is called Lanja-koneru.

iv. Bhargava koneru

This is the smallest of the tanks at the Lower Ahobilam. It retains water throughout the year as it is fed by a perennial spring. This is situated 3 kms. from the lower Ahobilam temple, closely surrounded by forest adjacent to Bhargava shrine. An inscription dated 1564 A.D., registers that this tank was constructed by Parankusa Van Satakopa Jiyar.

v. Akulapapaiah koneru

This is on the way to the Upper Ahobilam on the sopana margam. At present, this is totally covered with thick green trees.

vi. Uttamadugu koneru

This is five kms. from the Lower Ahobilam and is situated on the road side to Upper Ahobilam.

vii. Sannidhi koneru (Upper Ahobilam)

The ghat road to Ahobilam leads to the west. As we go up the hill, we notice a waterfall on the left in the mountains and there is a tank called Sannidhi koneru where the water collects from the
streams flowing down the mountains. The size of the tank is 61'x82'6" with 22 steps on three sides. Opposite to the tank, there is a long corridor mandapa with sixteen pillars.

This tank and mandapa are magnificent and are partly hewn out of the mountains.

viii. Small koneru (near Malola shrine)

This is two kms. away from the Upper Ahobilam situated adjacent to Malola shrine. The size of the tank is 24'10"x13'.

Apart from antiquities described already, there are ten chattrams and they are, Papalamma Chatram, Konda Reddy Chatram, Gandhi Guruvayya Chatram, Kotapudu Chatram, Vobalampalli Chatram, Suddapalli Lakshmamma Chatram, Pedda Pasupala Chatram, Chenchia Chatram, Kammara Chatram and Gundupapala Chatram.

These chattrams are located in Sannidhi street at the Lower Ahobilam and are in a dilapidated condition. Some chattrams are used as shelter and some as shops and some of them are in a ruined state. At present, these are used as free-feeding places for non-brahmin community during the special festival times.

Through such benefactions as described already, the religious devotion of generations of people has made Ahobilam a centre of ardent pilgrimage.
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# THE SHRINES, MANDAPAS AND KONERS

(Chronologically arranged)

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SITE PLAN OF
NAVA NARASIMHA SWAMY
TEMPLES-AHOBILAM

REFERENCE

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2. AHOBILA NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE.
3. MALOLA NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE.
4. CRODA NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE.
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6. BHARGAVA NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE.
7. YOGA NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE.
8. CHATRAVATA NARASIMHA TEMPLE.
9. PANAMA NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE.
SITE PLAN OF MANDAPAS, KONERUS, AND TIRTHAMS/GUNDAMS IN LOWER AND UPPER AHOBILAM.
SKETCHES SHOWING THE DETAILS OF THE DELINEATION OF THE NARASIMHA ICONS
(Please see the colour plates also for the icons)

1. Narasimha tearing Hiranyakasipu

Bhu-Varaha-Narasimha

Pavana-Narasimha
Yoga-Narasimha (near Prahalada mettu)

Karanja-Narasimha

Jwala-Narasimha (Chaturbhuj)
Narasimha chasing Hiranyakasipu

Yoga-Narasimha (Lower Ahobilam)

Bhargava-Narasimha
Malola-Narasimha

Jwala-Narasimha (Ashtabhuja)

Chatravata-Narasimha
CHAPTER - 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to understand the significance and the historical situation that promoted the rise of Ahobilam as a prominent Narasimha centre, a brief account of the history of the region is very helpful. This region situated in the south of the Deccan plateau witnessed the play of successive historical forces that had been operating here from very early times.

1. Pre-history

The district of Kurnool abounds in several pre-historic sites. Several paleolithic implements and weapons are found in the beds of the Kunderu and the Sagileru, the high ground lying between the river Gundlakamma and the depression of Markapur taluk region.

Traces of microlithic culture were revealed by the discovery of some scattered fragments of light and dark coloured chert along the banks of the Madhyapur and the Ullamoor streams, a number of agates near Iskagundam, a microlithic site near Dhone below the railway bridge on the road to Kurnool and cores and flakes at Peapally (Pyapali). Microliths were also noticed on the high ground lying between the Gundlakamma and the depression of Markapur taluk, Suddepalle, Gajulapalle (Gazulapalle) and Gundla Brahmeswaram.

The remains of the neolithic age were brought to light at Kodumur (Kodumuru), Veludurthy (Veldurthi), Pattikonda and Ternekallu (Teranikallu) where the finds comprised mostly flakes and cores. The existence of megalithic culture was revealed by the discovery of burials termed variously as circles, stone circles, cists, carins, dolmen and menhirs at Cumbum, Janpalacheruvi, Gajalakonda (Gajelakonda) railway station, Yerragondapalem, the Arella-Marella Gutta in the west of Nandikotkur and in Giddalur and Markapur taluks. When some of these burial sites were unearthed, bones and potsherds were found, while some comprised terracotta sarcophagi containing bones and earth mixed with decayed grain.

Besides these, two groups of caves, the Billasargam and the Yerrazangabbī caves, of great archaeological interest exist in Kurnool district. On examination, the Billasargam group was found to be ossiferous. One of the caves in this group yielded bones of rhinoceros, horse, bison and some extinct fauna long ago. Pottery was also found below the surface and evidences of human habitation abounded in the shape of cut-bones, of which 200 were implements like awls, arrow-heads, barbed and unbarbed knives and scrapers. The Yerrazangabbī group did not yield fossil bones, though considerable excavation was carried on there.
In order to gain a good understanding and appreciation of the ambitions and activities of the major dynasties which created an impact on this district in the arts of both peace and war, it may be helpful to attempt a geographical placement of Kurnool district in the wider historical region, the vicissitudes underwent through the centuries. Kurnool district in the ancient times, appears to have formed part of Andhra and Karnataka. In modern times, the portion included in Karnataka became gradually merged with the portion in Andhra which was again an influential political division of ancient India

2. Early-history

In view of these facts, it would be necessary here to deal with the political history of Rayalasima in brief, for the political history forms the skeleton of the area which in course of time gets fleshed out by its culture. The dynasty-wise political history of the kings in each dynasty with their contributions for the growth of culture is presented in the following sections

3. The Mauryas (C 324 -187 B C)

The region, in all probability, was included in the Mauryan empire. The existence of Asokan inscriptions at Yerragudi and Rajula-mandagiri in the Pattikonda taluk of Kurnool district in the neighbourhood and the references in an Asokan stupa at Kanchi by Hu-en Tsaing, who visited the city in the first half of the 7th century AD seem to indicate that the territory lying between the two places formed part of Asoka’s dominions. According to the XIII rock-edict of Asoka, the Andhras were within the Mauryan imperial domain. Megasthenean, the Greek ambassador in the Mauryan court also noted that the Andhras supplied a large army to the Mauryans. It may be said that the Rayalasima had been a part of Asokan dominion, as Jonnagiri which is twelve miles away from Rajula-Mandagiri is identified as Suvarmagiri, a seat of Mauryan viceroyalty. The major and minor rock edicts of Asoka discovered in Rayalasima were meant to carry the ‘Dharma’ of Asoka to the people of this area

4. The Satavahanas (C 235 B C - 225 A D)

After the decline of the Mauryas, the Andhra region came under the sway of the Satavahanas, the feudal chief of the Mauryans. They declared independence in this region and their rule lasted for four centuries which included Rayalasima. The mention of Sattahani-ratha in the Myakadoni (Makadone in Adoni Taluk, Kurnool district) inscriptions of Pulamavi IV, the existence of Satavahanakota (Satankota in Nandikotkur taluk of Kurnool district) clearly indicate that the neighbouring districts of Kurnool were under the rule of Andhra Satavahana kings. Their authority seemed to have extended south-eastwards into the Cuddapah district

The earliest mention of the Srisailam hill, a historical place in Kurnool district is recorded in Nasik inscription of Gautami Balasiri. It also makes a mention of the Satavahana ruler, Gautamputra Satakarni, who was the ruler of several countries and mountains including the Western and the Eastern ghats. It also mentions that Satakarni was the ruler of Mulaika, identified with Mulkinadu, a part of Rayalasima in Cuddapah district. "The term ‘Mulki’ in Mulki-nadu is reminiscent of the Mulks, an Andhra tribe who lived in the neighbourhood of Paithan on the banks of Godavari, in the time of Buddha. It is not unlikely that the Mulks had to move southwards beyond the Srisaila range in search of new homes, unable to bear the pressure of the barbarians who swept over the Deccan after the disappearance of the Satavahanas."

The inscriptions and literature of this period describe that the Satavahana kings practised religious tolerance. The Vedic Brahminism, the Buddhism and the Jainism flourished in their kingdom. Though these kings, patronised Vedic religion and performed Vedic sacrifices, they tended to show greater respect and favour towards Buddhism. So, the popularity of Buddhism can be witnessed through the worship of Buddhist images prevalent during this period. The inscriptions of Satakarni,
Krishna⁴, Gautamiputra Satakarni⁵, and Vasishthiputra Pulumavi⁶ found at Nasik caves and the inscriptions of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi⁷ and Gautamiputra Yagnasri⁸ on the caves of Karla, Amaravati⁹ and Kanheri record the royal grants to the Buddhist Sanghas. The chief patrons of Buddhism were ladies, many of them were from the royal harem, the classes of merchants and artisans and also the people at large.

The kings of this dynasty performed vedic sacrifices and patronised Brahmhinical religion. The Naneghat inscription¹² of Naganika and the Nasik inscription of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi describe the vedic sacrifices and the rule of Gautamiputra Satakarni, strictly based on Dharma Sastras. The Satavahans metronymics are derived from the vedic gotras. Gautamiputra means the son of Gautami or a lady belonging to the Gautama gotra¹³. The emphasis shown on the Vedic religion by the Satavahana kings was responsible for the Vedic culture to be initiated in Rayalasima also.

The idol worship in Buddhism initiated by the Satavahana kings inspired the people of the Vedic religion to worship the Vedic gods in the form of idols. Idol worship was encouraged among the Hindus also. Influenced by the Buddhistic constructions, the Hindus also constructed shrines for the Vedic gods on a large scale. The famous Siva linga at Gudimallam, belonging to the first century BC suggests that the idol worship of Lord Siva was propagated during this period. The recent discovery of Virapuram (Kurnool district) brought to light a large number of Saiva shrines which were built by the Satavahana kings. As in other places of the Andhra country, in Rayalasima region also temple building activity was undertaken. The Prakrit literature of this period propagated idol worship of the Vedic gods. Gathasaptasati compiled by Hala mentions a number of episodes related to Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu. Personal names especially in the royal family appeared with Saiva prefixes. Names of frequent occurences were Siva, Sivaskanda, Sivadatta etc. The appearance of bulb¹⁴ on Satavahana coins also indicates the Saiva leanings of the kings. In her Nasik cave inscription Gautamiputra Basasri compared her son Satakarni with Rama, Bhagiratha and Ambarisha. The wife of Satakarni I worshipped Vasudeva, Krsna and Samkarsana¹⁵. The first Satavahana king probably Simuka is said to have built Jaina temples and Chaityas. These points show as to how different religious beliefs co-existed in the Satavahana dominion. The Rayalasima formed one ahara, as some scholars opine according to the Myakadoni inscription of Pulumavi. The religious sentiments prevalent in other parts of the Satavahana kingdom also echoed in Rayalasima.

5. The Early Pallavas (290 - 510 A.D.)

At the end of the 2nd century A.D. and in the beginning of the 3rd century A.D., the Satavahana empire began to decline and the feudatory chiefs became independent. A number of independent principalities arose in their respective localities. The Rayalasima area, including Cuddapah, Kurnool and Chittoor except Anantapur fell into the hands of the Pallavas¹⁶. Though, no record of the early Pallavas are found here, Munda-rastra and Hiranya-rastra are mentioned in the inscriptions of Vishnugopa and his son Sinhavarman II, who ruled over the coastal region comprising the present Nellore and Guntur districts in the 5th century A.D. Allahabad pillar inscription mentions that Samudragupta, the emperor of Magadha, invaded Kanchi and disturbed Vishnugopa. Samudragupta’s army while advancing to Kanchi, must have passed through Cuddapah district and created some stir.

6. The Nalas

A family of local chiefs known as the Nalas was ruling over the territory of Nalavadi around the early 6th century A.D., which lay in the direction of Bellary and Kurnool. But very little is known about the events connected with their rule in this district¹⁷.
7. The Chalukyas of Badami (C.5th - 8th Cent. A.D.)

The association of the Chilikas with the Hiranyakas is of special interest. There can be no doubt that Chilika is identical with Chalukya inscriptions as the family name of the rulers of that dynasty. Now, according to the tradition preserved in the charters of the Eastern Chalukya kings of Vengi, Vishnupardhana, the progenitor of the Chalukya race, was born at Mudivenu, the present Peddamudiyyam in the Jammalamadugu taluk, a place within the boundaries of the Hiranya-rastra. The reference in the Ikshvakus inscription to the Chaliki in close association with Hirinya-rastra concerns with the truth of the legend mentioned above. Peddamudiyyam six kms. away from Ahobilam may be regarded as the cradle of the Chalukyan family, which played an important part in the history of the Deccan of the later ages. Ikshvakus had matrimonial alliances with the Hiranyakas. Thus, this area comprising the eastern taluks of Cuddapah district was closely associated with the Ikshvakus kingdom.

The Western Chalukya ruler of Badami, Kirtivarman I (566/7 - 597/8 A.D.), defeated the Nalas and occupied their territory. Pulakesin II (609/10 - 642 A.D.) who came into conflict with the Pallavas suffered a series of reverses and lost this territory to the Pallava king Narasimhavarma I. Pulakesin’s death in one of the battles in A.D. 642 gave rise to a war of succession among his sons, Chandraditya, Adityavarman, Vikramaditya I and Jayasimhavarma, who like the other feudatories, sought their safety by converting the territories under them into independent kingdoms. A copperplate grant in Kurnool refers to the self-assumed Adityavarman’s titles and states that he had conquered a vast empire. This district appears to have been in the hands of the Pallavas till A.D. 654 when the war of succession ended with the accession of Vikramaditya I. Kurnool district again came under the Chalukyas and remained with them till they were overthrown by the Rashtrakutas.

8. The Greater Pallavas (575 - 893 A.D.)

The Rayalasima region passed into the hands of the greater Pallavas between 630 A.D. and 800 A.D., which can be attested to, from a number of inscriptions found in Chittoor district. The greater Pallavas obtained the Rayalasima region from the early Chalukyas after the defeat of Pulakesin II in 642 A.D., by the Pallava king Narasimhavarma I (630 A.D. - 680 A.D.)²⁰. The political battles fought between these two kings took place on the battle-fields of Manimangalam, Pariyala and Surmara in Cuddapah and Kurnool districts. Pulakesin II was killed in these battles and the Pallavas occupied more Chalukyan dominated areas in Rayalasima.

The Pallavas took up several temple-building activities and donated lands and villages for their development. The Parasurameswara temple at Gudivallam (Chittoor district) was constructed by the Pallavas. According to an epigraph dated 801 A.D., this temple was built in the middle of the 8th century A.D.²¹ There are inscriptions to attest to the fact that the Pallavas and the Banas donated liberally to this temple.

9. The Cholas (C.9th - 13th Cent. A.D.)

The Chola king Karikala, the predecessor of Cholas in Tamil and Telugu regions had frequent wars with Trilochana Pallavas in the fifth century A.D., which resulted in the overthrow of the Pallavas not only from their home territory Tondamandalam but also from the Telugu region including Paka-nadu, a part of Cuddapah and Nellore regions. A part of Cuddapah district was under the rule of a local dynasty of Chola chiefs during the period of the Pallava-Chalukya wars. The Cholas of Tamil country, deported from their home land during the period of their weakness, were in quest of fortune. The Cholas of Renadu was one such branch²².
10. The Renati Cholas (C. 6th - 10th Cent. A.D.)

Renadu is the name of the part of the Andhra country comprising broadly the present taluks of Pulivendala, Kamalapuram and Jammalamadugu of the Cuddapah district and some stretches in the Kurnool district. It is stated in the inscriptions of Renadu-eduvelu (Renadu-7000) implying that this territory consisted of 7000 villages or revenue units in the ancient days. It is also called Maharajavadi or marjavadi. A branch of Chola chiefs ruled over this region from the sixth to the tenth Century A.D., and hence, they are called the Renati Cholas by the historians. Four copper plates grant and nearly fifty stone inscriptions are available of this dynasty.

The Renati Chola king Pormukharna Punyakumara conquered the Hiranya-rastra, a subdivision of the Pallava kingdom of Kanchi in the 7th century A.D. He styled himself as the lord of Hiranya-rasra in his Domara Nandyala copper plate inscription. During his reign the famous Buddhist traveller Hieun-Tsang of China passed through Renadu and his reference to the kingdom of culiya is identified with this dynasty. These Cholas had lost their control over Renadu somewhere about the 10th century A.D. An undated inscription at Veligallu (Chittoor district) refers to a Vaidumba chief, Ganda Trinetra as ruling over Renadu-7000 country. The dated inscriptions of Vaidumbas appear at places like Upparapalli in Proddatur taluk and Animela in Kamalapuram taluk since the last quarter of the 10th century A.D.

Another branch of Telugu Cholas of Bodinenipalli is named after the village in Giddalur taluk of Kurnool district. They became feudatories of the early Chalukyas of Badami in the 7th century A.D. Another branch of Telugu Cholas of Nellore also ruled the south-eastern part of Cuddapah district in 1160 A.D., and later they were brought under the control of the Kayastha chiefs in the beginning of the 14th century A.D. Another branch called Nidugal Cholas, Orayur Cholas established their rule over the territories Nidugal and Hemavati (Anantapur district) in the middle of the 11th century A.D.

The Renati Cholas were very busy warring with the Vaidumbas and Rastrakutas and did not carry on any temple-building activities. Their inscriptions record their donations largely to the Vedic Brahmins and temples which existed already by that time.

11. The Vaidumbas (C. 8th - 11th Cent. A.D.)

Consequent on the fall of the Cholas of Renadu, the region was seized by the Vaidumbas, another line of Telugu-speaking chiefs. Their original home was in Chittoor district, where their ancient capital Vaidumbavroolu is situated. After the conquest of Renadu from the early Cholas, they changed their capital to Chippili in Madanapalli taluk and subsequently to Pottapui in the Rajampet taluk. Although they claim to have been ruling Renadu-7000, that is in the present Pulivendala, Kamalapuram, Jammalamadugu taluks and parts of Kurnool district, their authority extended in the taluks of Madanapalli, Vayalpadu, Rayachoty, Rajampet and parts of Kolar district. Only some kings of the later generations of the family seem to have ruled over the taluks of Kamalapuram, Jammalamadugu and Cuddapah also, besides the taluks mentioned above.

The rule of Vaidumbas was extended into the Telangana region also during the 11th and the 12th centuries A.D. They waged regular battles with the Rastrakutas and the Nolambas. Though they were continuously ruling the same parts of Rayalasima off and on, they had to depend upon give-and-take policy with the Rastrakutas and Nolambas. They seemed to be subordinates of the western Chalukyas of Kalyani. As the western Chalukyas were on the verge of their extinction, the Vaidumbas could consolidate their power in Cuddapah district. The Vaidumba chief Mahamandaleswara Malla Maharaja is mentioned in two inscriptions at Alampur in Mahaboobnagar district dated A.D. 1078 and 1080 as the ruler of Aize-300 under the control of Vikramaditya VI. The chief is also said to be the
lord of Kalukada. *Rayadevamaharaja*, also known as *Rakkasa Ganga*, was a powerful king of Vidumbas. He conquered some territory belonging to the Telugu Cholas of Nellore in or about 247 A.D., and occupied a part of it extending as far at least as Jyoti in Siddavatam taluk.

Another Vaidumba chief, Somideva ruled for nearly thirty five years. In one of the inscriptions at *Chintalapattur* near Pushpagiri in Cuddapah taluk dated 1268 A.D., he figures as a joint ruler with another chief called Murarikesavadeva Maharaja and both are styled as the lords of Kalukada. According to *Yallaredipalli* inscription (Kamalapuram taluk), Somideva was ruling in 1267 A.D., over Muliki-300, Honnavati-90 and Pendekallu-800 from Vallurupattana, his capital in Cuddapah taluk. Another inscription found at Gundluru in Rajampet taluk dated 1284 A.D., shows that Somideva brought subsequently under his control Pottapinadu also. He was defeated by Kayastha prince Ambadeva. Ambadeva refers to his victory over the Vaidumba chiefs in his Tripurantakam inscription dated 1290 A.D. According to an inscription of 1287 A.D., found at Attirala in Rajampet taluk, Ambadeva was ruling from his capital *Valluru* pattana over Gandikota, Muliki-nadu, Renadu, Pendakallu, Eruva, Sakali and Pottapi. This shows that the Kayasthas gained over the Vaidumbas and the Vaidumbas lost their control over Rayalasima.

12. The Kalyani Chalukyas (973 - 1198 A.D.)

The Chalukyas of Kalyani started their rule in the Rayalasima area in 973 A.D., which reached its zenith under Vikramaditya VI. There are many epigraphs to confirm their rule in this region. According to an inscription dated 1124 A.D., Vikramaditya is referred to have been associated with *Peddamudiyam*. This inscription also mentions his subordinates Ayatanachola Maharaja and Chidona Chola Maharaja, who both belonged to the Cholas of Renadu. This clearly shows that the Cholas of Renadu lost their power.

After Vikramaditya VI, his son Someswara III (1126 A.D.) became the king. His subordinate Mallideva issued two epigraphs dated 1139 A.D., found at Pushpagiri, which mention that Someswara III ruled Valluru (Cuddapah district). Some inscriptions from Valluru and Kurmoor region mention the rule of Someswara III. An inscription found at *Kolimigundla* (Kurmoor district) dated 1134 A.D., refers to their subordinate chief Vankanachola Maharaja, ruling Renadu, Pendekallu and Kannadenadu. All the above inscriptions clearly show that the north-eastern parts of Kurmoor district, including Cuddapah were under the rule of Someswara III. According to an inscription found at *Devagudi* (Jammalamadugu taluk), Someswara's son Jagadekamalla II (1138- 1155 A.D.) ruled some parts of Cuddapah. The inscription of Tailapa II dated 992 A.D., found at Kogilli (Bellary taluk) records his rule of *Redda* identified as Roddam in Penukonda taluk (Anantapur district). Some more inscriptions of this king found at Bellary record that Tailapa II seized a portion of Nolambavadi, which remained under his control till 997 A.D.

The inscriptions found in the Anantapur region refer to the reign of Vikramaditya II (1076-1126 A.D.,) and his subordinates. His son Someswara III recaptured Gangavadi, Nolambavadi and *Banavasi* and established his rule over these parts. An inscription found at Astasivaram (Madakasira taluk) refers to Someswara III who destroyed the Kalachurya race. It is also mentioned that during his reign, Hoyasala Ballala II invaded his empire and defeated the last king named Someswara IV (1184-1200 A.D.) and captured his capital Kalyani.

13. The Rastrakutas (753 A.D. - 974 A.D.)

The Rastrakuta king, Dantidurga overpowered the early Chalukya king, Kirtivarman II and became master of Karnataka and conquered the rulers of Kanchi, Telugu Cholas of Srissailam. Thus
Srisailam region came under the control of the Rastrakutas in the 8th century A.D., and continued to be a part of their kingdom till the 10th century A.D. The expansion of Rastrakuta empire into the Cuddapah district and further south is attested to by a number of inscriptions. Indra III was probably the first Rastrakuta monarch to rule directly over the Cuddapah region. The Chittoor and Cuddapah districts were ruled by the Rastrakuta king, Krishna III, who defeated the Chola king Parantaka I (907 - 955 A.D.). Krishna III visited some temples in his kingdom and made some liberal grants. An inscription found at Pushpagiri records his gift of land to all temples at Pushpagiri, while returning from a pilgrimage to Jyoti (Siddavatam taluk). Another inscription of the time of Krishna III found at Rameswaram (Cuddapah) temple. It describes the genealogy of Rastrakuta kings i.e., Dantidurga, Krishna, Prabhutavarsha, Dhruva, Jagattunga and Krishna.

The Rastrakuta power was eclipsed after Krishna III. The Kalyani Chalukyas became more powerful and king Tailapa II put pressure on Rastrakutas in 973 A.D., and overthrew them. Though the Rastrakutas were replaced by the Chalukyas of Kalyani, the region of Rayalasima continued to be under the rule of the Cholas for some years.

14. The Kakatiyas (1000 - 1323 A.D.)

As the successors of the Cholas, the Velanadu Cholas established their authority in this region. During their reign, the Kakatiya king Rudradeva (1158 A.D.- 1198 A.D.) invaded the territories belonging to the Velanadu Cholas and conquered Srisailam region in the South. By 1162 A.D, Srisailam became the southern boundary of the Kakatiya kingdom. Then onwards, Srisailam formed a part of the Kakatiya empire upto 1323 A.D. A number of inscriptions are found at Tripurantakam in the reign period of Rudradeva (1199-1261 A.D.). Ganapatideva, the son of Rudradeva was the first ruler of the Kakatiya dynasty, who conquered the Cuddapah region and ruled over it. He conquered the region with the help of the Telugu Cholas of Nellore. He defeated the Vaidumba ruler who occupied Pottapinadu for the benefit of Manumasiddi. This was the first time that Ganapatideva had a contact with Cuddapah district. The earliest epigraph of the Kakatiyas dated 1275 A.D., found at Gangavaram (Kamalapuram taluk) refers to Ganapatideva. He appointed the Kayastha chief Gangayashahini as the Governor of this region. From this incident onwards, Cuddapah region became a part of the Kakatiya empire upto 1323 A.D. The Gangavaram inscription of Ganapatideva also registers the gift made by the Chief Gangayashahini and his wife Kamalabai to the Pushpagiri temple. There are some more inscriptions found at various places in this district belonging to the period of his grandson Prataparudra. An inscription of Kayastha Chief Tripurari II (1304 A.D.) records that the chief ruled from Valluru in Mulikinadu, a sub-division of Cuddapah region. Another inscription dated 1308 A.D. found at Kurnool records that Tripurari II controlled almost all the portions of Cuddapah region.

The Kakatiya Kings and their subordinates ruled over Rayalasima. They undertook temple - building and other welfare activities on a large scale and also made religious charities towards temple development in this region. An inscription dated 1185 A.D., belonging to the king Rudra, found at Tripurantakam informs us that he donated a village Revuru for Tripurantakeswara of Sripavata (identified as Tripurantakam). The king also paid a visit to Srisailam and was later on blessed with a son. By the grace of Mallikarjuna of Srisailam (as claimed by Rudra) the prince blessed by Mallikarjuna became an illustrious king called Ganapatideva. Ganapatideva was a powerful king. He was equally spiritual -minded and was responsible for many religious establishments in his kingdom. The subordinate chiefs of Kakatiyas also equally participated in contributing for the development of temples in this period.

During the periods of Rudramadevi (1262-1289 A.D.) and Prataparudra (1289-1323 A.D.), the religious activities were carried on with enthusiasm. The ministers, royal officers and religious pre-
ceptors equally patronised the Saiva religion. The ladies of the royal family also contributed to the development of temples. Potamba, wife of Somabhumala caused the erection of a Dhvaja of the Tripurantakam temple. A record from Srikalahasti, engraved on a stone in front of Manikantheswara temple, registers the creation of an endowment for the sake of offerings to Srikalahastiswara by Samantabhoga. This man was described to be a minister of Ganaapatideva, according to one inscription found at Kanchipuram.

15. The Kayasthas (1239 - 1304 A.D.)

The Kayasthas seem to have been associated with the rule of Rayalasimha from the 13th century A.D., according to their inscriptions. They described themselves as Kshatriyas. Though they were feudatories under the Kakatiyas, they proclaimed independence now and then under favourable conditions. Their inscriptions are available in Cuddapah and Kurnool districts. The inscriptions attest the fact that they ruled the region between Panagallu and Marjava.

16. The Yadavas (C 12th - 13th Cent. A.D.)

The Western portion of Kurnool region came under the control of the Yadavas in the last quarter of the 12th century A.D., and the eastern portion fell into the hands of the Kakatiyas. The Yadava kings occupied some portions in Cuddapah and Anantapur districts as attested to by some inscriptions. The reign of Singana, a Yadava ruler (1210-1246 A.D.), is attested to by two inscriptions found at Pedakottalike and Devarabata in Adoni taluk. Two inscriptions of Hoyasala Ballala III, dated 1178 A.D., and 1205 A.D., found at Parigi (Hindupur taluk) and Hemavati (Madakasira taluk) record a conflict between the Yadavas and Hoyasalas. The position of Yadavas in the Cuddapah district was disturbed by the Kayasthas.

17. The Vijayanagara Kings (1336 - 1674 A.D.)

After the Kakatiyas, the Srisailam region in Kurnool district was occupied by Prolayaverna Reddy, the founder of the Reddi kingdom. It is included in Puginadu, which formed the nucleus of his kingdom. But in 1339 A.D., the Vijayanagara king Harihara I conquered and occupied Srisailam. After the death of Harihara I, the Velama Chief Lingamanayaka occupied this area and held it for some time. Between 1363 A.D. and 1364 A.D., Bukka I, the successor of Harihara I, re-conquered this area and entrusted it to his chief who belonged to the Recherla family. After the downfall of the Reddi kingdom in 1422 A.D., Srisailam region became a permanent part of the Vijayanagara empire. The Chittoor region was administered by Kampana II, a Viceroy under his uncle Harihara I and his father Bukka I. During the reign of Kampana II, his General Mangideva Maharaja had the central shrine of the Koyil-Alvar gilded and got the golden pinnacle placed on Tirumala temple. This is recorded in an inscription found at Tirumala dated 1359 A.D. When Kampana II ruled over Chittoor district, Sayanna Odayar, brother of Harihara I was appointed as the Viceroy of the Udayagiri region. Harihara I also appointed his brother Bukka I and put him in charge of the Gooty fortress. Bukka I then conquered the Penukonda fortress from the subordinates of Viraballala III of Hoyasala dynasty and changed his headquarters from Gooty to Penukonda. From all these evidences, it is known that the kings of Vijayanagara dynasty ruled portions of Rayalasima from 1339 A.D.

There are a number of inscriptions found in Rayalasima region to attest their rule. Some inscriptions of those rulers dated between 1408 A.D. and 1417 A.D. are found at Gaurivaripalli (Hindupur taluk), Gulapalayam, (Gooty taluk), Dharmavaram, Kadiri, Lepakshi and other places in Anantapur district. During the reign of Devaraya I, the western part of Udayagiri in Cuddapah region was ruled by Ahobala of Apartimalla family. This Chief ruled the Udayagiri rajya in the vicinity of Pushpagiri.
This is confirmed by an inscription dated 1420 A.D., found at Goturas near Pushpagiri35. This inscription registers the gift of land to the temple of Bhairaveswara at this place for the spiritual benefit of his parents. During the period of Saluva Narasimha, an inscription issued by an officer, Annamarusayya dated 1477 A.D., found at Attirala, records the restoration of the temple lands at Poli for the temples of Parasurameswara and Bhairava by that officer, who was on a pilgrimage to Siddhavatam and Attirala.

A large number of inscriptions, issued by Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara are found in Anantapur and Kurnool districts. Achyutaraya, the next successor of Krishnadevaraya also issued many inscriptions which are found in this district. The next ruler, Sadasivaraya also issued inscriptions in this district. Numerous inscriptions of Achyuta and Sadasiva found in Cuddapah bear ample testimony to the fact that the authority of Vijayanagar over this area continued unabated during their reigns.

During the reign of Sadasiva, the de facto ruler of the empire was his brother-in-law Ramaraja of the Aravidu family. He was assisted by his brother Tirumala. On the fateful field of Rakshasa-Tangadi in January 1565 A.D., a fierce battle took place between the combined forces of the Muslims and the Vijayanagara forces. In this battle Ramaraja was killed and the Hindu army was disturbed very badly. These fateful events brought about the end of Vijayanagara empire.

Even after this tragedy of Rakshas-Tangadi, the Vijayanagara power, however, lingered on for nearly a century more. Tirumala, the brother of Ramaraja, succeeded in preserving his dynasty, the bulk of his empire, no doubt, included the whole of Cuddapah. The capital was shifted from Vijayanagara to Penugonda in the Anantapur district, though the empire still retained its old name.

Tirumala was succeeded by his son Sriranga I. According to an inscription at Ponnatotala (Jammalamadugu taluk) dated 1574 A.D., Sriranga was ruling Penugonda. This is the first known inscription of this king. Sriranga I was succeeded by his brother Venkatapatideva Maharaya. According to 'Vijayanagara Samrajyam' (described in Mackenzie manuscripts), Venkatapatideva's coronation was celebrated in the year 1585 A.D. One of his inscriptions dated 1589 A.D. is found at Kokatam (Kamalapuram taluk)44.

From the account given by a historian, we learn that during the time of Venkatapatideva Maharaya, the forces of Golkonda led by Amir-ul-mulk, the Minister of Quly Qutb Shah, succeeded in occupying the whole of Kurnool, portions of Cuddapah and Anantapur districts55. This was only a temporary success for the Muslims. For, in a short time, Venkatapati mustered all his available forces, made an all-out attack on the enemy and succeeded in liberating all the territories mentioned above from the Muslims. It is said that the Muslim garrisons were chased across the Krishna and Sultan Quly was forced to recognise that river as the boundary between his kingdom and the dominions of the emperor of Vijayanagara56.

Close on the heels of this external menace, Venkata II seems to have been confronted with a serious internal revolt of the nobles in the Rayalasima area. Nandyala Krishnamaraju of Gandikutasima joined by Kondaraju Tipparaju of Pottapi and Siddhavatam simas, raised the banner of revolt against Venkata II. But the help of some of his faithful nobles like Yallamaraja, Devappanayaka and Pemmasani Timmana promptly put down the rebellion. Gandikota was now handed over to the house of Pemmasani Timmana and Siddhavatam sima to Yellamaraja on behalf of Venkata II in the battle of Utukuru as described in an inscription dated 1527 A.D.57

After the death of Venkata II in 1614 A.D. his nephew, Sriranga II succeeded him. The weak and incompetent rule of this king resulted in several palace intrigues which ended up in his death and also of many members of his family. The next ruler was Ramadeva, son of Sriranga II. Ramadeva
was fortunate in having the help and able guidance of Yachamanayaka, son of Velugoti Kasturiranga. An inscription at Papayapalli (Jammalamadugu taluk) dated 1623 A.D. mentions Ramadeva as the overlord of that area.

It was only in the time of Sriyang III, who ruled from 1642 to 1681 A.D., that the whole of Cuddapah region passed under the Muslim rule. Mirjumla, the Minister of Sultan of Golkonda, laid siege to the fort of Udayagiri about 1645 A.D., and captured it without much trouble due to the traitorous behaviour of Chinnana who was sent against him by Sriyang. Later, the victorious Mirjumla attacked the principality of Chittivelu, Porumamilla and Kamalapuram Matlikumara, Ananta, the ruler of the above territories as feudatory of Srirangar could not prevent the loss of territory as he could not repel these aggressions. He had to purchase peace by offering the aggressor a large sum of money. Thus came about the end of Vijayanagara rule in this region.

During the period of the Vijayanagara kings, they undertook building of new temples and patronised the temples which already existed in their empire. Krishnadevaraya’s donations in cash and kind to many temples in Rayalasima are attested to in his inscriptions. There are many inscriptions recording his donations to Tirumala temple and Srikalahastiswara temple. He visited the Pushpagiri temple and came to know that the priests of the temple were tambula by caste and not Brahmins. He later on replaced the tambulas with Brahmins and granted them two Aghaturas, Goturu and Pushpagiri. An inscription of Krishnadevaraya, dated 1510 A.D., registers the gift of eight hundred panam (money) for the purchase of land to create an endowment for making offerings of food, flower-garlands and for keeping lamps for the God, one during day and another during night in the temple of Srikalahastiswara. Not only Krishnadevaraya, but also other Vijayanagara kings, their royal officers and royal ladies contributed much for the development of temples.

18. Other Chiefs

In the Kurnool region many local families such as Velugodu, Nandyal, Owk, Kundurpi and Kandavolu chiefs ruled over different portions. They, as their overlords did, contributed to the development of their respective areas and donated liberally to temples.

A. The Velugodu Chiefs:

During the hegemony of the Vijayanagar rulers, a few local families such as the chiefs of Velugodu, Nandyal, Owk and Kandavolu ruled over portions of Kurnool district.

The first member of the Velugodu family called after Velugodu, a village in Atmakur, an independent sub-taluk, was Rayappa (also called Peda Raya.). He was a subordinate of the Gajapati of Orissa and Kapilesvara Gajapati conferred on him the title of ‘King of Velugodu’. He is said to have lost his life in a battle fought with an enemy, whose name is not ascertainable, in the neighbourhood of Mahanandi in this district. Another member of the family Gani Timma, called after his capital Gani (Nandyal), was a subordinate of the Vijayanagar rulers, Krishnadevaraya and Achyutadevaraya. He marched against Santa Linga, the head of the Bhikshavritti Math at Srisailam. He is a religious fanatic, who believed in the persecution of the Svetambara Jains. At the instance of Krishnadevaraya, Gani Timma fought and defeated him. He helped Achyutadevaraya in repulsing the Qutb Shahi and the Gajapati attacks against the Vijayanagar empire. He received the title of ‘the lord of the Manne chiefs’ from Achyuta devaraya in appreciation of his services. In A.D. 1544, Timma, who came into conflict with Havadi Ayubalaraja, the head of a section of the Nandyala branch of the Aravidu family, was killed in a battle. The other important members of the family were (1) Yara Timma, son of Gani Timma, (2) Kasturi Ranga, (3) Chenna, (4) Yacha or Yachama, son of Kasturi Ranga, (5) Kumara Yachama, son of Yacha, and (6) Singa. They supported their sovereigns loyally and took an
active part in putting down the internal rebellions and repulsing the attacks of the Qutb Shahi Sultans. Their estates were, however, subsequently conquered by the Qutb Shahi forces and they were compelled to become the subordinates of the Qutb Shahis.\textsuperscript{39}

B. The Nandyala Chiefs

The Nandela or Nandyala family, a branch of the Aravidu dynasty, the fourth in the line of rule over the Vijayanagar empire, was named after Nandyala, its hereditary estate. Several members of this family figure in as governors of a number of estates. During the reign of Sadasiva, the Nandyala chief Mahamandaleswara Aubhalesvara was governing the Koilkunta-sima, while Mahamandaleswara Nandyala Timmayadeva Maharaja was holding the Gandikota-sima. This was probably due to the favours conferred on them by the ruling Aravidu chiefs Aliya Ramaraja and Tirumala to whom they were related. The epigraphs of these chiefs are found scattered over a number of places in Kurnool district.

These chiefs, who were loyal to the rulers of the main line till the reign of Sriranga I, turned hostile to Venkata II and instigated the local nobles to rise in revolt. In A.D. 1597-98, Nandela Krishnamaraja refused to pay the usual tribute to Venkata II and asserted his independence. He was joined by Kondaraju Tirupatiraju, the ruler of Pottapi and Siddhavatam or Sidhout (both in Cuddapah) and Gopalaraju, the chief of Kandavolu. He was defeated by Venkata II, and his estates were confiscated and divided between Hande Devappa Nayaka and Pemmani Timma Nayaka. Krishnamaraja was confined at Chandragiri (Chittoor) till his death and little is known about the subsequent history of the family.\textsuperscript{60}

C. The Kandavolu Chiefs

The chiefs of Avukusima known after Owk in Koilkunta taluk and the chiefs of Kandavolu called after Kurnool were the next in importance. Tirumala or Timma was the progenitor of the Owk family. He rose to prominence under Vira Narasimha and Krishnadevaraya. His third son Mahamandaleswara Chinna Timmadeva appears to be the first chief to hold the Avukusima as ‘nayankara’. Little is known about the subsequent history of the family.

The chiefs of Kandavolu and Gani simas are mentioned in two epigraphs dated S.1469 (A.D. 1547) in Kurnool taluk. These epigraphs refer to Mahamandaleswara Ramaraja Venkatadri Ayyadeva Maharaja as governing the simas of Kandavolu and Gani. He was followed by Rangaparajayyadeva Maharaja and Gopalaraja in succession. They held sway over Kandavolu and Gani but remitted a number of taxes to several agraharas in them. Gopalaraja joined the rebellion of Nandyala Krishnamaraja against Venkata II. He was defeated and kept in prison at Chandragiri. He was, however, set free after some time and sent back to rule over his fief. His estates were twice attacked by the Bijapur Sultan in A.D.1619-20 and A.D.1624. He offered stubborn resistance but failed to protect his estates and fled from the dominion. His estates were occupied by the Bijapur Sultan who appointed Abdul Wahab, a general, as the governor of Kurnool.\textsuperscript{61}

D. Matlis

Historical knowledge of this region will not be complete unless we study the contribution of Matlis to the socio-cultural growth of the place.

In the decades following the battle of Rakshasa-Tangadi, the family which endeavoured to continue the traditions of the Vijayanagar empire in varied spheres of activity is that of the Matlis. The association of this family with this district covered almost three centuries. These Matli or Matla chiefs, hailing from the village of Matli on the Mandavi river in Rayachoti taluk, are also known by the
numerous tanks they constructed, and the temples they built and the number of villages named after them.

Of all the Matli chiefs, Varadaraja’s association with this district is significant in view of the influence he wielded during the reign of Sadasiva. The chief who had enhanced the prestige of the Matli family was Ananta. Ananta was a great scholar and was deeply devoted to the Visishtadvaita School of Ramanuja. He was also an able warrior and a good sportsman. He was a shining example in respect of practising religious tolerance. He succeeded in suppressing the rebellions which confronted him during the initial stages of his rule. His own brother who was involved in them was imprisoned in the Sidhout fort but was later pardoned.

Two epigraphs of S.1550 (A.D.1628) at Alipiri at the foot of the Tirupati hills recount both his deeds of valour and acts of charity. He built a large tank near Chennuru (Cuddapah) and established the villages of Chennamambapura and Chennamambasamudra. He established a dozen free feeding houses and constructed gopuras and mandapas at various places in the district. He also fought fierce battles at Palagiri, Animala, Chappalle, Vempalle and Gundluru against the palegars. This lord of Anantarajapurā seems to have exercised authority over the country lying between the hills of Tirupati (Chittoor) and Ahobila (Kurnool). His gifts to temples at Udayagiri (Nellore), Tiruvalur (Chingleput) and Kalahasti (Chittoor) and his numerous acts of charity including a Tula-dana* have lent an aura of greatness to him. It may be said that the Matli principality reached its zenith during his reign.62

On Ananta’s death, his adopted son, Kumara Ananta II, succeeded him. He carried on the administration of the kingdom with the help of his paternal uncle Ellama. During his time, the Matlis lost a sizeable portion of their territory including Kalitur, Duvvur, Chennuru, Badvel, Porumamilla and Mamalapuram to the Sultan of Golconda. In spite of this setback, Ananta’s sway extended fairly over a vast area comprising Pulugulanadu, Pottapinadu and Siddhavattamsimas. When his principality was attacked for a second time by the army of Golconda under Mir Jumla, Ananta succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat on them. He had, however, to abandon his principality for fear of reprisal by Mir Jumla and retreated to Ikkeri-Basavapuram in Mysore. Mir Jumla then marched with his army to Sidhout, occupied the town and posted a garrison to keep the conquered territory under control.
CHAPTER - 3

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

1. History of Srivaishnavism

As Ahobilam and the Narasimhasvami shrines are intimately associated with the history and affairs of Srivaishnavism, it would be beneficial to have a short background of Srivaishnavism itself.

A. Pre-Ramanuja Vaishnavism

Though Srivaishnavism took a definitive shape in the hands of Ramanuja (C 1017-1137 A D), it has a hoary background. The whole system is based upon complete surrender to god Vishnu, a concept which was already current in some sections of the pre-Ramanuja Vaishnava faith. In fact, this religious movement can be traced ideologically to the rise of the Bhagavata system and the Bhakta cult. The seeds of the religious and philosophical ideas could be traced to the Bhagavadgita itself.

B. The Alvars

But it was in Tamilnadu that this form of staunch Vishnu-bhakti became a powerful movement due to the efforts of a continuous line of teachers who are celebrated in the tradition as Alvars. 'Alvar', a Tamil term, literally means, 'one who rules', and in this context it is one who rules the world of the faithful. They were the spearhead of the Vaishnava movement in the South India and through their philosophy of complete surrender to God, gave a distinctive shape to a form of Vaishnavism which later became famous as Srivaishnavism. The Alvars adopted the local Tamil language for expression of their religious fervour in their intensely devotional songs and appealed to the hearts of the people.

The date of the Alvars is much disputed. Traditional accounts put their date at the beginning of the Kaliyuga. Prof S Vayapuri Pillai opines that the Alvar period falls between the 7th and 9th century A D while according to some others they seem to have flourished between the 2nd and 8th century A D. According to the tradition there are 12 Alvars and they are placed in the following line of order:

1. Poygaï Alvar
2. Pudattalivar
3. Pey Alvar
4. Tirumalaisãi Alvar

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5. Kulasekhara Alvar
6. Tondaradippodi Alvar
7. Tiruppan Alvar
8. Tirumangai Alvar
9. Periya Alvar
10. Andal
11. Nammalvar
12. Madurakavi Alvar

The First three, Poygai, Pudattar and Pey Alvars, born in Kanchipuram, Mamallapuram and Mylapore respectively, form the earliest group. They are placed in a period not later than the 5th or 6th century A.D. Their teachings are very gentle and so simple to understand.

Next comes Tirumalisai. He takes his name from the village of his birth in Chingleput district. He is said to have been a senior contemporary of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I.3 Before he accepted Vaishnavism, he practised Jainism, Buddhism and Saivism. It was only later that he ultimately embraced Vaishnavism and became an Alvar.

Next in order is Tirumangai, one of the most celebrated among the Alvars. He, a chieftain of Alinadu in Tanjore district, took to robbery in order to pay for the renovation of the Ranganatha temple in Srirangam, the most celebrated Srivaishnava temple in the South India. In his hymns, he mentions the siege of Kanchipuram by Vairamegha (Rashtrakuta Dantidurga, 735-756 A.D.) and hence he may be placed in the middle of the 8th century A.D.4 He has composed a large number of poems, forming the bulk of the collections of the hymns of the Alvars. The religious trend of the day is well manifest in his compositions. He attacks Buddhism and Jainism, but shows a friendly attitude to Saivism.5

A little later than Tirumangai, about the close of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century, came Periya Alvar, a Brahmin from Srivillipputur in the Tirunelveli district. He was originally known as Vishnuchitta. He is said to have established the supremacy of Narayana in a religious disputation held in the court of the Pandyan king Srimara Srivallabha (815-862 A.D.). He is the foster father of Goda, another Alvar.

Goda or Andal, the only woman to attain the status of Alvar, is a magnetic personality among the Srivaishnava devotees, especially known for her intense unsullied love to god Ranganatha of Srirangam. The story goes that she was found as a baby by Peri Alvar and he brought her up in his house in which Andal was exposed to the ecstasy of religious devotion displayed by her father. It is said that when Andal was young she used to decorate herself with the garlands prepared by her father to offer to the deity and replace the same before sending them to the temple. When once her father came to know about it, he felt that the flowers worn by a mortal were unfit for offering to the god and did not take the flowers to the temple on that day. That night the god appeared to him in his dream and chided him for not offering the garlands which were doubly dear to him due to the fact that they had been used by Andal. Thenceforth Peri Alvar began to take the same garlands to offer to the God. On this account, it is said, Andal came to be known as Sudikudutta Nachchiyar (the lady who gave what she had herself decorated with).6 Andal was intensely devoted to Vishnu and dreamt of her marriage with the God. She describes this experience in a beautiful song which is sung even to this day as part of the marriage ceremony in Sri Vaishnava households. Andal is said to have achieved her desire of the mystical union with the God: She entered the garbhagriha in the temple of Srirangam and disappeared there. It is said that by this Peri Alvar also gained the honour of being considered the father-in-law of god Ranganatha of Srirangam. Andal’s songs are appealing to the masses and the elite alike.
due to their intensely human but spiritually elevated touch. Her hymns are replete with allusions to the stories of Sri Krishna.

Tiruppan Alvar belongs to the same period. He is a minstrel of the low caste. As he had not been allowed to enter the temple according to the then existing social practices, he used to go on singing songs in praise of the God from outside the precincts of the temple at Sri Rangam. His devotion was so great that the Vaishnava belief about the supremacy of devotion over caste or creed is proved in his case. He is said to have been totally absorbed in God.

Tondaradipodi (the dust of the feet of the devotees) was a Brahmin whose real name was Vipranarayana. A story is told about him that he fell in love with a dancing girl and god Ranganatha himself paved the way to consummate their union. Tondaradipodi was as much intolerant to Jainism and Buddhism as he was devoted to Vaishnavism.

In contrast to the various Alvars who came from the different sections of the lower and middle classes of the then society, comes Kulasekhara Alvar, a King of Kerala. He was proficient in Sanskrit and Tamil. He was not averse to singing songs in praise of Nataraja at Chidambaram. He abdicated the throne and spent his last days at Sri Rangam.

Nammalvar, the last of the Alvars, was born in a family of Vellalas (a caste of agriculturists) at Kururugur near Tirunelveli. Because of his association with kurugu, the village became famous later as Alvar-Tirunagari. Nammalvar was originally known as Maran. He was initiated into spirituality in his 35th year at which time he gained the title Satagopa (the destroyer of ignorance). Nammalvar’s songs are regarded as “embodying the deepest religious experiences and philosophical thought of one of the greatest seers of the world”. His songs are the second largest in number among the compositions included in the compilation of the hymns of the Alvars.

The philosophy of the Alvars is deeply indebted to the Vedic and Puranic scriptures. The study of these Alvars not only makes one understand the spiritual atmosphere of the Bhakti school, but also gives a background to the Visistadvaita philosophy.

The Alvars are primarily staunch devotees of God and they rarely sought royal patronage. They are leaders of the people, and strove to spread their beliefs among the larger populace rather than conveying them to the kings and elite only.

2. The Acharyas

A. Pre-Ramanuja Acharyas

The Srivaishnava Canon received its definite shape at the hands of a succession of acharyas from the 9th century onwards.

Nathamuni (9th century A.D.) is reputed to be the first among these. He collected the Tamil devotional hymns of the Alvars numbering about 4000 and divided them into four sections of thousand stanzas each. This is famous as Nalayira-prabandam and is respectfully described by the Srivaishnavas as the Dravida Veda. Nathamuni arranged for their regualar recitation at Srirangam. Thus he popularized the Srivaishnava religion.

Alavandar was next in the succession of Srivaishnava acharyas of the period. He is said to have lived during the time of king Raja Raja (985-1012 A.D.). The Koyil-olugu, an ancient temple manual of Srirangam, says that he was entrusted with the management of the Srirangam temple which he ably conducted for a long time. Alavandar has written four books in Sanskrit viz. Stotraratna, Siddhitraya, Agamapramanya and Gitartha samgraha elucidating the doctrine of Visishtadvaita.
Also, during his time Srivaishnavism began to receive attention and patronage from the Chola kings and generals.

**B. Ramanuja**

Ramanuja is the next great acharya. He was born at Sriperambudur near Madras in the first quarter of the 11th century. He first studied under Yadavaprapaka of Kanchipuram, who belonged to the school of Samkara. But disagreeing with his teachings, he studied under Tirumala Nambi a disciple of Yamunacharya. In due course of time Ramanuja succeeded Yamunacharya as the pontiff of his math at Srirangam. He engaged himself in systematising the new philosophical ideas, and wrote several works of which the three, viz. Vedarthasamgraha, Gitabhashya and Sribhashya, are considered to be the most important.

Ramanuja’s genius and contribution lie in his systematic presentation of the philosophy of Visishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) which emphasises that the absolute is endowed with all the auspicious qualities (Saguna) in contrast with the simple Advaitic concept of the abstract non-dualistic Absolute (nirguna). This Absolute of the Visishtadvaita is no other than Vishnu and the achievement of proximity to Him is the goal of human life i.e. moksha and the way to achieve this is through complete surrender (prapatti) to Him.

Ramanuja further emphasized that the achievement of moksha through surrender is not the prerogative of any particular creed, community or sex but all human souls can achieve this. This concept opened up a new avenue of far reaching social reforms. Ramanuja himself engaged in many acts boldly in going against the then social framework of caste system by throwing open the gates of entry to Srivaishnavaism to all, irrespective of the caste in which they were born.

Ramanuja introduced a number of reforms in the temple rituals also to suit the needs of Srivaishnava theological ideas, adding colour and pomp and pageantry making them attractive to the devotees. In short, at a time when the ancient Bhagavata doctrine had, through the course of centuries acquired several incoherencies and had lost its lustre, Ramanuja brought a fresh look and appeal to that by his carefully planned religious reformation. In order to propagate his philosophy, he travelled throughout India.

**3. The Post-Ramanuja Period**

**A. Successors of Ramanuja**

It is said that Ramanuja prepared 74 set of sankham and chakram and 4 copies of Sri Bhashya, placed them first at the feet of god Varadaraja of Kanchi and distributed them among a number of disciples. Those who received a set of sankham and chakram came to be known as Simhasanadhipatis (‘Throned Monarchs’ of the kingdom of the Good law). This was a way to spread the message of Srivaishnavism far and wide. The main personalities among those who received the Sri Bhashya were his close disciples Varada Vishnu Acharya, Pranatartihara, Andan and Pillan.

These disciples and their successors took active interest in further elucidating and disseminating the Srivaishnava ideas. In course of time, the varied degrees of emphasis laid by the Srivaishnava teachers on the relative importance of Sri Bhashya and Divyaprabandham led to a schism in Srivaishnavism. Thus in the history of Srivaishnavism two schools rose: the Sri Bhashya school with its emphasis on the importance and authority of Sri Bhashya for the understanding of the Srivaishnava tenets, and the Prabandhic school laying emphasis on the Divya Prabandhas for the same purpose. Among the teachers of Sri Bhashya school Kurukesa and Engal Alvan of the 12th century and Nadadur Ammal and Atreya Ramanuja of the 13th century are famous. Similarly the
Prabhantic school was promoted by Bhattar and Nanjiyar of the 12th century and Perivachchan Pillai and Vadakkuri Tiruvithi Pillai of the 13th century. By the end of the 13th century the ideological differences between the two schools became pronounced with the exertions of two towering personalities of the day, Vedanta Desika (1268-1369 A.D.) propounding the Sri Bhashya school and Pillai Lokacharya (1264-1327 A.D.) propounding the Prabhantic School.

Vedanta Desika wrote several works renowned for his analytical acumen, persuasive logic and beauty of diction in his writings which earned for him several titles such as kavitarkikasimha and Sarvatantrasvatantra. He wrote more than hundred works out of which Satadushini, Sankalpa Suryodaya, Yadavabhuyudaya and Yatrayarasaptati are famous. It is during this period that the Srivaishnava leaders were compelled to leave that place. Vedanta Desika moved to Satyamangalam near Coimbatore and visited Melkote.8

Pillai Lokacharya is equally famous for his scholarship in logic and prolific writings. Some of his famous works are Tattvatraya, Mumukshupadi and Sri Vachana Bhusuna. He often adopted a style in his writings suited to his teachings, in which Sanskrit passages interspersed with Tamil ones appear (the Manapravala style).

4. The Rise of the Mathas

From the middle of the 15th century A.D. the history of Srivashnavism gains a new turn. From this time onwards a number of distinguished Acharyapurushas and Vaishnava leaders begin to figure in as influential personalities on the Socio-political scene. Another important development, was the rise of various religious mathas like the Van-Sathagopa-Jiyar matha, Parakala matha, Alagiya Manavala-Jiyar matha, Vanamamalai matha, Yatrayar matha, etc. A distinctive feature of these mathas is that they began to propagate either the Sri Bhashya school or the Prabhantic school individually, thus bringing in a definite division in the srivaishnava faith. Those who adhere to the Sri Bhashya school came to be known as Vadagalai and those who owed allegiance to the Prabhantic school were known as Tengalai.

The primary function of these mathas is to serve as repositories of sectarian ideology and the propagation of the same among a wide range of its adherents. Mathas also acted as centres of learning. The monks of the mathas taught not only the scriptures of their respective creeds but also secular literature. The duty of educating the society rested with the mathas.

The constitution of the mathas was based upon the monarchic principle. The head of the matha was the supreme authority of the institution. He had the power to nominate his own successor from among his disciples. The monks of the matha were under his control and they acted as the final authority concerning all matters relating to the religious activities of their adherents. They had the authority to initiate people into monkhood and accept new disciples.

Though these mathas played a major role in the socio-religious life of the country from about the 15th century onwards, the history of these mathas is yet to be properly studied by the historians. However, every matha maintains its own historical account and a few facts drawn about Ahobilamatha be mentioned here.

A. Van-Sathagopa Jiyar matha (Ahobhila matha)

This matha is popularly known is Ahobila matha and this association is because of its headquarters being placed at Ahobilam in the 15th to 18th centuries.

This matha was one of the influential mathas of the Vadagalai sect. The Jiyars of this math appear to have played an important part in popularising Srivaishnavism.
Van-Satagopa Jiyar (1436-1516), the founder of the matha, is said to have been born at Melkote and did his studies at Kanchi and is believed to have received initiation into sanyasa asrama at the hands of god Narasimha of Ahobilam.

According to the Matha Gurupararpai, this happened way back on the fifth lunar day of bright fortnight in the Saka year 1320 (1398 A.D.) - Bahudanya, purattasi - exactly when he was 20 years old. According to tradition, it appears that, an idol of Lakshminarasimha was found to have landed into his hands. This is the processional deity that Ahobila Jiyaars have been worshipping since then and found carrying wherever they go for religious propagation.9

Ramanuja is said to have classified the Jiyaars into three categories, namely aradhana Jiyaars, like the Ahobila Jiyaars, Adyapaka Jiyaars like the Vanamamalai Jiyaars and Tirupati and Srirangam Jiyaars, and Paricharaka Jiyaars. Sri Satakopa Yati has been chosen as the Chief Archaka.

Sri Satakopa Yati, as he was called hence forward, settled at Ahobilam in the inhospitable regions and finding that the Chenchus (the tribals) were already the votaries of the Lord, he decided to work amongst them and uplift them. He also appointed a class of missionaries known as ‘Ahobila Dasars’ to work among them and bring about a transformation in their life.

He organised regular worship at Ahobilam. The nucleus of the Ahobila matha may be said to have been laid with Sri Satakopa yati becoming the custodian of worship and ritual in the Ahobilam temple.

Ahobilam, unlike with their din and bustle of the celebrated places like Kanchi or Srirangam or Tirupati was a holy place distinguished for its serene atmosphere. He stayed there and arranged for the regular worship and other rituals.

A shrine for the founder of the Ahobila matha was built to the West of the Nammalwar shrine, and he then set out on a tour which took him to Melkote (his birth place), Tirupati, Kanchi, Tuppul, Sholingur and Srirangam. In Srirangam, he established a matha and a shrine for Desika within the Sri Ranganath Temple. He returned to Tirunarayanapuram(Melkote) where he shed the coils of the mortal existence on Saturday, the eleventh day (Ekadasi) of the dark fortnight in the month of Chaitra in the year Bahudanva corresponding to Kali Yuga 4560 (April 1458 A.D.). He was entombed at Tirunarayanapuram.

The following are some of the literary sources, which reveal that,

1. Allasani Peddana known as the Andhra Kavita Pitamaha and the author of Manu Charita - was his disciple. He described the first Jiyar as a refuge of learning and a dispeller of the thick darkness of ignorance through the moonlight of his kindness.
2. Krishnadevaraya himself is said to have praised the efforts of reading the Jiyaar in spreading Vaishnavism in the Empire.
3. The famous divine music composer Tallapaka Annamacharyulu was his contemporary and his disciple.
4. The Jiyaar was a disciple of Nainacharya, the apostolic head from 1371-1410 A.D.
5. Manavala Mahamuni(1370-1444 A.D), Kandadai Ramanuja Iyengar, the first, second and third Brahma Tantra Swatantra Jiyaars of the Parakala Matha were his other distinguished and eminent contemporaries.

The inscriptions of Saluva Narasimha, who usurped the Vijayanagar throne, throw light on the activities of the first Jiyaar.
Dr. S.K. Ayyangar observes that the first Pontiff’s activities in Tirupati are borne out by these inscriptions beyond a shadow of doubt and also that he had established his reputation as an Acharya and attracted a number of devoted followers in the temple town.

His connections with Kanchi are revealed by an inscription 411 of 1919 in Kanchi Varadaraja Temple.

A copper plate found at Tonner in Karnataka State mentions Srinivasa Yati as the Guru of Krishnadeveraya.\textsuperscript{11}

Two inscriptions at Srirangam Temple\textsuperscript{12} throw light on the commendable activities of the Jiyar.

All these established the activity of the Jiyar in the temple town and the commemoration by Krishnadevaraya himself by providing for taking out the Deity (Nam Perumal) on the Jyeshta Asterism Day and the distribution of a share of the offerings to the disciples at the Jiyar matha at Srirangam.

Sri Ahobilam matha has the proud privilege to offer spiritual service and humanitarian relief to one and all right from its establishment by the Jiyar Srimat Adivan Satakopa Yateendra Mahadesikan. The rulers, the laity, the Pandits and the pious people were equally enfranchised by the personality and the musical powers of the Jiyar.

Not only the Orissa Kings, but also the Pandian and Vijayanagar Kings, apart from many feudatories and chieftains of several regions were disciples and admirers of this Jiyar as well as subsequent Jiyars of Ahobilam matha. The dawn of Vijayanagaram Kingdom heralded a new era in the annals of the history of Andra Pradesh, says Dr.M.Narasimacharya in his book on the Narasimha cult. “They were not only popular as patrons of art and letters but they were also staunch devotees and upholders of the Hindu ‘Dharma’. They adopted stern measures to defend and protect lands and temples from the onslaught of the Muslim invaders. Srimad Adivan Satakopa who appeared on the scene at this right moment on the specific command of Lord Lakshminarasimha. He donned the robes of Sanyasi gifted by God and made Ahobilam (part of Vijayanagaram Kingdom) his centre of activities. He rallied a large number of Srivaishnavite disciples and set up a number of mathas at different places to popularise the works of Ramanuja and Vedanta Desika.”

The divinity in him helped to restore the kingdom to Orissa King. He was able to help Pandian king realise the spiritual aspects and converted him into Srivaishnavism. Krishnadevaraya was so overwhelmed with this Jiyar that when he poured out his devotion for Andal in his famous grand literary piece Amukamalyada, he makes a special mention of Sri Ramanuja, Vedanta Desika and, of course Sri Adivan Satakopa Jiyar. He heaps a shower of praise on Satakopa Jiyar and sings his glory. Allasani Peddana, one of the eight scholars (Ashtadiggajas) had dedicated his kavya Hariyathasara to the first Jiyar of Ahobilam matha. He also showers his reverential praise on the Azhagiyoosigar in his another kavya Manucharitra. The grant he received from Krishnadeveraya was a village called ‘Gogatam’ which he renamed as Satagopapuram in honour of Adivan Satakopa. Allasani Peddanna who adorned the royal court of Krishnadeveraya had his Samasrayana and Mantra-upadesam at the feet of this first Jiyar and henceforth called himself as “Peddanna Iyengar”.

Likewise, another staunch devotee of Adivan Satagopan was the famous Annamacharya, whose songs on Lord Venkateswara are marked by devotional fervour and philosophical profundity. He also had his samasrayanam under this Jiyar. A gist of the song of Tallapakkam Annamacharya on Adivan Satakopa Yateendra Mahadesikan is given below:

“Behold! This is our revered Satakopa Muni, who is easily accessible to all and to whom Lord Hari Himself is the guide and refuge! He is our golden path for the final abode of beatitude, the last word in scriptures, the soul pure and free from sin, and the boat with which to cross the river Viraja in
Vakuntha He is the divine lamp of wisdom illuminating all the worlds, the redeemer from sins and the raft which enables us to cross this ocean called samsara He is an ardent devotee of the presiding deities of Srirangam, Kancheepuram, Venkatagiri and Ahobilam and a prince among ascetics"

Having established Sri Ahobila matha and having displayed dynamic leadership in managing it, the first Jiyar Sri Adivan Satagopa Yateendra Mahadesikan made the task easier for his successor to carry on the challenging job of spiritual ennoblement. The fact that the second Jiyar-Srman Narayana Yateendra Mahadesikan was the one chosen to lead is evident from the title given to him as Shashti Prabhandha Nirmatha - (author of sixty books) a title given by the first Jiyar in recognition of his versatility. It is remarkable that like the first Jiyar, this 2nd Jiyar’s birth star was also Jyeshtha. He built a prosperous village called Maduramangalam and by duly installing the image of his master in the temple of Selvapillai (at the command of that God) and another in the Brindavan (a lodgement of the astral body of a saint) of his master at Melkote (again at the command of Sri Lakshminarasimha), the Jiyar had amply carried out the noble tradition of the first Jiyar, his Guru. His sanchara took him to places like Kancheepuram, Sholingapuram, Tirupati and Ahobilam, Srirangam and Melkote where, after a reigning period of 15 years, he attained paramapada. His Brindavanam is also at Melkote.

Sri Parankusa Yateendra Mahadesika was the third Jiyar in the line of succession. He spent his days in teaching Sribhavsha and Srimad Rahasyatrayasara to numerous disciples at Kancheepuram. His contribution was the creation of villages like Neeralur, Uragadam, Nemmily, Kadankanai, Pilaaputhur and Kalathur. By a divine command, he went to Srmushnam where he was instantly attracted to the Lord there as also Sri Ramanuja whose grace he abundantly derived and breathed his last there in tranquility.

The fourth Jiyar Sri Srivasa Yateendra Mahadesika needs special mention because he undertook padayatra to as far-off places as Ayodhya, Gokul and Brindavan, all in the North India before he settled down at Singar Kovil, spreading the message of Ramanuja and Vedanta Desika. He realised that his days were drawing to a close in this world and was in search of a worthy successor. The Lord appeared in his dream saying, ‘Sarvatranta Svatantra is coming to take the Peetam and hence do not be concerned’ whereupon the fourth Jiyar was jubilantly awaiting him. Lakshminarasimha similarly appeared in the dream of one Kandalur Svami asking him to proceed immediately to the fourth Jiyar’s camp. They exchanged the substance of their respective dream messages. However, since Kandalur Svami happened to belong to Tenkalai sect, the fourth Jiyar asked him to have his Barasamarpanam done then and there at his (4th Jiyar’s) feet and having done this the Sanyasa asrama was given to him. It is a gesture of magnanimity on the part of both the Jiyars in that while the fifth Jiyar respected the Vadakalai tradition by having Barasamarpana at the 4th Jiyar’s feet, the fourth Jiyar directed that during the time of the 5th Jiyar’s reign, both the sampradayams would be respected. Kanadalur Svami was then duly installed as the fifth Jiyar bearing the asrama name Sarvatranta Svatantra Satagopa Yateendra Mahadesikan.

The fifth Jiyar made tours mostly in the north of India and when his period ended, he was laid to rest on the banks of the river Krishna. It is again the magnanimity of this fifth Jiyar that he, in turn, initiated the famous Shashta Parankusa Svami of the Vadakalai into Sanyasa asrama.

B. Shashta Parankusa Yateendra Mahadesika, The Sixth Jiyar

After the first Jiyar, the sixth Jiyar Srimad Shashta Parankusa Yateendra Mahadesikan became equally famous for his spiritual and miraculous powers. S N Venkatesa Aiyar writes in his ‘History of the Ahobila Math’ “This Jiyar,” he says,” is deservedly considered as one of the most powerful personages that adorned the pontifical seat. Even at the outset, in connection with this Jiyar we meet with another well known personage Panchamathabhanjanam Tatachariar (sister’s son of this Jiyar.

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in his pre-sanyasin life). This Tatachariar was also noteworthy as being the father of the great Lakshmikumara (Kotikanyakadanam Tatachariar) - the famous person who gilded the Varadarajaswami Temple, Kanchipuram. He was a person of great importance and influence - being the Guru of Venkatapathiraya (Venkata I) 1575 to 1614 A.D. and also of Venkata II 1630 to 1642 A.D. - both Kings of Vijayanagara in its later days of decline. Any student of the Araveedu dynasty of Vijayanagara cannot afford to miss this Tatachariar family in the study of the outstanding spiritual teachers of the time. This Lakshmikumara Tatachariar has claimed himself as having crowned both Venkata the First and Venkata the Second and used the valuable presents given to him by the Emperors - for gilding the Tirupati and Kanchipuram temples. The sixth Jiyar with whom we are now particularly concerned was the guru and teacher of the Tatachariar - the original founder of the family. Inscriptions both at Tirupati and Kanchipuram state that the sixth Jiyar founded a settlement at Bhashyapuram in Cuddapah district, on the banks of the north Pennar. He was a very learned man and taught Vedanta and other philosophies to numerous disciples. The Ahobila matha became quite wealthy during his tenure, possessing a large number of villages granted in Sarvamanyam, besides numerous herds of cattle, number of elephants, camels and other paraphernalia of a rich matha. The sixth Jiyar travelled upto Badarinath in the Himalayas and visited all the famous Vishnu shrines in India. The modern Vaishnavite agraharams of Injumedu and Thaiyar trace their origin to this Jiyar.

A reference is made to this Jiyar in the History of the Cult of Narasimha in Andhra Pradesh wherein it is said that “both during the period of the fifth Jiyar and the sixth Jiyar, Ahobila matha was the nerve-centre of Srivaishnavism in Andhra Pradesh and brought many influential families as well as the masses into its fold. It is stated that the fifth Jiyar was the spiritual preceptor of the Nandyala Chiefs who were Vijayanagara feudatories...” The sixth of the apostolic line of the Ahobila Math, Shashta Parankusa, says Dr.M.Narasimhacharya, was respected by King Mukundadeva of Kalinga and he instituted the worship of Alvars at Purushottam (Puri) which is also known as Jagannatha shrine. An epigraph of 1555 A.D., during the reign of Sadasiva, mentions that Shashta Parankusa was the trustee of the Ahobila Temple and the agent of Aliya-Ramappadeva Maharaja. This Jiyar is stated by the Satsampradaya Muktaivali to be the contemporary of Sadasivaraya and he received from Sadasiva the village of Bhashyapura on the banks of the river Pennar. He was the author of a number of works including Narasimha-stava. Tradition has it that this sixth Jiyar while fervently worshipping at Ahobilam was commanded by the god, Lakshminarasimha to be ever present there to do pooja (ceremonial worship) to Him. In order to do that, he had disappeared into the cave of Ahobilam which now remains closed (This place is shown to pilgrims at the Upper Ahobilam Temple where it seems that even now early in the morning the pealing of bells and chanting can be heard by the devout.) He was, however, never again seen afterwards though we are told, very pathetically that his Sishyas - particularly Tatachariar - stayed outside the cave for several days without meals and water, wept and cried out for him requesting him to come out - but it was all in vain.

C. 7th Jiyar - Sri Satagopa Yateendra Mahadesikan

Like the first Jiyar, this seventh Jiyar also became a sanyasi at the young age of twenty five. His scholarship was very high and he earned many titles. “An inscription of S.1501 (A.D. 1578-79) from the Lower Ahobilam, records certain stirring political events that happened at the time, at the initiative of Van Satagopa Jiyangaru, the seventh head of the matha of Ahobilam, the recapture of Ahobilam from the Muslims. The Jiyangaru approached the King Ranga I of Vijayanagara and appealed to him to recover the temple from the Muslims. As the King had regard for the Jiyar, he issued orders to his chief, who, proceeding with the Jiyar to Ahobilam, defeated the Muslims, repaired the temple and established the Jiyar at Ahobilam.” Dr. M.Narasimhacharya records further in his ‘History of the Cult of Narasimha in Andhra Pradesh’ that this is no mean achievement for the
Jiyar, who took the lead to drive away the Muslims from the temple. This Jiyar was not only famous for this act of resurrection of the Ahobilam temple, but also popular as the author of a Sanskrit Drama *Vasantika Parinayam*. The theme of the drama is the marriage of Lord Narasimha with a Chenchu woman. The importance of his work is that it is the first of its kind in Sanskrit literature, which mentions the association of God Narasimha with Chenchita, a tribal woman. The story of Narasimha and Chenchita became popular not only among the Chenchus but also among the rural folk. It made the Chenchus feel even now that Chenchita is their woman and God Narasimha is their tutelary deity. Prior to the beginning of the Brahmothsavam, even today it is the custom for the Utsava Narasimha to tour several villages around Ahobilam and accept their hospitality. After touring from Ahobilam to Srirangam, this seventh Jiyar found his resting place at Srirangam itself where his Brindavanam lies.

The Jiyars of Ahobila matha from 8th to 45th occupy an important place in the history of Ahobilam and Srivaishnavism. Various development programmes and religious activities were carried out by 44th and 45th Jiyars of Ahobila matha.

The most important work is the construction of the Gopuram in 1985 to Srirangam temple, with thirteen tiers. Built at a cost of 15 million rupees, the Rajagopuram is the tallest tower in Asia, measuring 165 feet in length and 150 feet in breadth, the tower rises upwards by 226 feet in height.

5. Ahobila Math

The presiding deity of the Matha of course, is Sri Lakshmi Narasimha better known as Malola-Narasimha. The glory of this ancient idol has been sanctified by touch and by daily *aradhana* three times a day performed right from the first Jiyar Sri Adivan Satakopa Yateendra Mahadesikan upto the present Holiness. Sriyan Satagopa Sri Narayana Yateendra Mahadesikan.

1. Malola Narasimha is the centre piece of attraction in the mobile silver Mandapam seated on the jewelled Dolai with His consort on His lap, holding Sankha and Chakra and with His right foot adorned with sandal (Paduka). The other equally famous idols that are enshrined therein are:
2. Swarna Narasimha said to have been given to the first Jiyar by King Prataparudra. There is a legend behind it. It seems that the King’s daily routine included moulding a Linga in gold and presenting it to a Brahmin before he partook food. One day when he ordered the smith to mould a Linga as usual, the goldsmith found, to his surprise, that the mould turned out a golden Lakshminarasimha instead of the Linga. He melted the idol and cast it again which also turned out to be that of Lakshminarasimha. This was brought to the attention of the king in whose presence it happened once more. It was then that some pious men brought to his notice that a great saint by name Sri Adivan Satakopa Yateendra Mahadesikan was camping in the vicinity worshipping the Lakshminarasimha of Ahobilam. The king taking the idol went thither and prostrated before the Jiyar and narrated the miracle, and then and there became a convert to Srivaishnavism on seeing the lustre of divinity on the Jiyar’s face. He duly presented the idol of Swarna Narasimha to the Jiyar and also grants for daily worship.
3. Mangalagiri Panaka Narasimha: This was donated by a devotee to the 42nd Jiyar.
4. Kannan (Krishna) to whom dolotsavam is usually done. *Beejakasharams* are found on this idol and as per tradition, Ramanuja was performing the puja of this icon. It is believed that the barren women beget children on performing dolotsavam to this image.
5. Sri Ranganathan reclining on Adisesha with Lakshmi. 6. Atthigiri Varadan which was with the great scholar Nadathur Ammal and later given to Sri Adivan Satakopa Svami by the former’s grandson Gavitkasatam Ammal. 7. Srinivasa with Alamelu Mangathayaru seated in His chest.
8. Sampath Kumaran with Yadugiri Nachiyar.

The 45th Jiyar the present peetadhipathi of Ahobila matha, is ‘Sriyan Satagopa Sri Narayana Yateendra Mahadesikan’. The ceremonial appointment took place on Oct. 21, 1991. He has been carrying on his duty, guidance, training and propagation of the ideals and thus bearing on the torch of the glorious traditions of the Ahobila matha.

In the history of Ahobila matha, Gadwal occupies an important place. Because of its proximity to Ahobilam and because of the abundance of scholars around these parts, Gadwal became a beehive of Vaishnavite religious activities. The Samasthanadhipathis of this place generously patronised the spiritual and cultural activities and Raja Somabhupal became a disciple of the 24th Jiyar - Sriyan Satakopa Sri Parankusa Yateendra Mahadesika (1764- 1776). This is the first reference in the Guru Parampara and this Raja is said to have presented the Matha many villages, silver palanquins and the usual paraphernalia. The 25th Jiyar had won the hearts of Raja Sarabhoji of Tanjore, the Mysore Maharaja and naturally the Gadwal Maharaja too.

The Raja of Gadwal went personally to Ahobilam where the 25th Jiyar was camping, and after prostrating before him, invited the Jiyar to visit Gadwal and escorted him to Gadwal with full honours and retinue. Guruparampara records an incident which bears out Jiyar’s vast powers of learning and disputation. As this Jiyar escorted by the Gadwal Raja was on his way to Gadwal, near Surapuram, a village in Cuddapah district, he was accosted by one Kireeti Venkatacharia, a reputed scholar and a famous disputant who defiantly challenged the Jiyar on Visishtadwaita principles. It seems the debate lasted for fifteen days. When the Swami felt himself flagging, by a divine command Satadushini and Srutapracasika the records of authority were brought into play leading to the irrefutable triumph of the Jiyar. Venkatacharia fell at the feet of the Jiyar. Removing the bell of victory from his palanquin, Venkatacharia tied it to the palanquin of the Jiyar. He became an ardent disciple of the Jiyar who in a gesture of magnanimity variously honoured Venkatacharia. Having witnessed this, the reverence of the Gadwal Raja towards the Jiyar increased multi-fold.

The shrines of Narasimha at Ahobilam and other places in Andhra Pradesh received royal patronage as the Narasimha Cult gained momentum under the Jiyars of Ahobila matha.

The present day Gadwal has now completely lost the glory. The last Raja of Gadwal left for Hyderabad where the royal family settled down permanently. The fort though the palace-building, now houses the Rani Adilakshmi College though parts of the building are dilapidated. The Kesava Temple is in ruins. In its vestigial form only, the worship goes on. Many idols are kept in a row (as if in display) uncleaned and undusted in the main temple precincts. The priest, though employed by the royal family perhaps is ill-paid. As a result, regular worship cannot be carried on. The Ahobila matha is in a much worse condition having been ravaged by the passage of time. The Pedda Agraharam, which once abounded with Brahmin scholars still exists but without the old tradition. Not more than six to ten brahmin families live there. The land adjoining the matha has now been retrieved by the Math Agent and a Committee has been formed with Sri Rajagopalachari, as the President and Sri Ramakant as Secretary. Sri Ramulu Gowd, a leading Advocate of Gadwal has shown a lot of interest and as the member and Legal Advisor of the committee is quite keen on renovating not only the Matha but also the Brindavan of the 27th Jiyar situated on the banks of the Krishna river which is also totally devastated.
Letters of Nawabs, Rajas and Residents connected with the Ahobila Matha is appended

Mysore Residency
21.10.1812

Sri Ahobila Swamy, a Brahmin High Priest proceeds from Mysore to Kumbakonam via Salem, Srirangam etc. with three elephants, one camel, four horses, three palanquins, sixty bullocks, two hundred Brahmins and about one hundred servants and attendants.

All officers in authority under the British Government are requested to allow him to pass without molestation.

(Sd) COLE,
British Resident
21.10.1812

From
The Honourable Mr.COLE,
The British Resident,
MYSORE.

To
The commanders of Forts, commandants of Garrisons, Thasildars, persons guarding mountain passes and out houses and such like persons in Authority in the British territories (2) Sri Ahobila Swami Etc., Etc., (3) You should get them all the things that they require for Proper prices. Sri Swamy is a very respectable man.

He should be received with all Honours.

P.S: The Swami and his party are to be allowed to pass freely through your respective divisions.

(Sd) Cole.
21.10.1812.

To
Ayyalur Ramachandra Naidu,
Police Superintendent, Etc., Etc.,

You are hereby informed that as (1) Sri Ahobilasvami is coming on a tour and as he is a very great and respectable person coming with all and every equipments you are to issue strict order to the peons and servants within your jurisdiction to go and wait upon him and render him all th assistance he may want, to be very careful that there is no disturbance from others during the time the gentleman stays there and you are to arrange that the Honours customarily shown him in the places within your jurisdiction are properly shown him. As this is a necessary matter, you are to issue strict order to your peons and servants not to conduct themselves with indifference towards him in the least degree.

(Sd) Dt.Collector
Chingleput, 4th May 1808.
N B Even in 1944 when His Holiness the 42nd Jiyar stayed in my native village Singanallur, near Coimbatore City he had with him (1 Sri Karyam, Secretary 2 Manager and his assistants 3 One Elephant and a very big tusker it is! Oh! What a lot of trouble and anxiety it gave us 4 One Camel, which unfortunately died during the Chaturmasya 5 two horses 6 23 double Bullock carts and 46 stout-bulls to drag them 7 a dozen and more of Brahmins to chant the Itanies-morning-day and night Viswa Rupam (morning song) Abigamana (Noon day puja) Ijya (mid-afternoon), Night Puja) 8 Brahmin Pandits to discourse on the Sastras to the ladies 9 several advanced students to learn the Rahasyatrayasara of V Desika 10 Cooks, peons, cart drivers etc (in all) about seventy (11) 4 police constables with guns etc to guard the Gadi Jewels etc (These police are paid by the Nizam state as per mamool and are part of the Nizam’s police force )

Mysore Rajah’s letter to Pontiff XXVI

Extract from a letter addressed to Sri Ranganath Yatandra Maha Desikan to the then Head Priest of Ahobilam Mutt by His Highness Krishna Rajah Odayar, the Maha Rajah of Mysore on 28 12 1813

(We) Krishna Raja Odayar of Mysore (known as) the greatest of all kings, the king of kings, very powerful, Peerless, styled the king of Angles and Men (Deva Narapathi), the greatest Warrior in all the world, who shines like the moon sprung from the ocean of Yadukula (dynasty) and honoured with the following emblems, viz, sankha, (conch), chakram (circle) Ankusam (the instrument used by the elephant driver), the axe, the Makara (fish), Sarabha (bird), Ganda Bhairunda (bird), Bhuvara (pug), Hunuman (monkey), Garuda (kite) and kathwah (the lion) and such like, (supplicate as follows after making Sastanga Namaskarums (complete limbs prostration at your feet)

By the Grace of Swamy, I and all others are doing well up to Tuesday, the 6th day of Pushya Suddha of Srimukha year (28th December 1813), you must be pleased to direct the sending of Snumkham (letters) always, about the honours and blessings gained by virtue of your penance The Prasadams (fruits), Mantrakshata (blessed Rice) and cloth which you were graciously pleased to remit through Bhashyakara (Religious quarters) having reached us with the Sreemukham, we have been saved and raised to salvation We have placed the same over our heads We are filled with joy, having been blessed with full particulars of the splendid manner with the chaturmasya festival after the receipt of yearly payments, Shawls, Kashaya Vastram (red-coloured cloth) sent through Mukum SrinvasaSamnar most learned in the Vedas As we shall annually send before the commencement of the said festival money, Shawls and Kashaya Vastrams according to custom, you must be pleased to accept them and use them for the worship of God and direct the sending of Sreemukhams (letters) always showing in detail the manner in which your penance is being performed daily In this manner (We) supplicate making complete prostration

Signature of Maharaja of Mysore
28 12 1813

N B - The Poluars of Vanaparti and Gadwal vide further letters) are Hindu polgars in the Hyderabad State, but they are antenor to the (Asaf Jah) Present Nizam’s dynasty They along with Mysore, Madura, Trchinopoly, Tanjore, were part of the Vijanangar Political System Even today, the Palanquin-bearers to the Ahobilu Muth are supplied by the Raja of Gadwal
**Letter No.5**

Seal of Mahomed Akbar Shah,  
Police Superintendent of Nizam’s Police Force

Notice is hereby given to all Gumustahs in the service of jaghirdars, Faujidars, Choukedars, watchmen, toll-gates men etc. That one Narasimha Swamy, a Hindu Priest, accompanied by 150 adherents with palanquin and 16 holy bearers, bandies, elephants, camels, horses, cows, etc. Will shortly proceed through and in the direction of Bijapur and you are therefore, hereby warned not to interrupt for the toll-tax during his passage and to afford every facility to pass him safely.

Written and dated the 18th Jamadhee - Oossanee 1250 Hijri (10th November 1833)

Signature in Persian Characters

N B - The above Narasimhaswami can only refer to His Holiness - the 28th Jiyar (1833-1836)

**Letter No. 6**

Letter addressed to Sri Satakopa Sri Ranganatha Satagopa Yatindra Maha Desikan, The Head Priest (28) of Aohibla Muttam by Raja Chandu Lal the Prime-Minister of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad on 16th September 1833 (Translated from Persian)

Raja Chandu Lal, the servant of your servant’s offers his complete prostrations at all times in the day and night. By the unbounded favour of your divine grace, your servants etc. are doing well till Friday the first Adhika Bhadrapadu month. You must be pleased to favour me with sacred letter from time to time letting me know, how, the daily feeding of Brahmins and the inculcation of the Religious Vedas and Sanskrit Theology and Philosophy are progressing at your sacred quarters. The sacred letter which your divine grace has been pleased to favour me with, was duly put into my hands and its contents were understood and I was elated with joy.

When your divine grace advances towards the northern countries you must be pleased to pass by this road and thereby remove the sins of myself and others by casting upon us a mere sidelong of your Muttam at these quarters, ardently waiting for your divine arrival for a complete expiation of their sins. I am elated with joy and consider that it is the fruitful result of the performance of several virtuous acts in my former births that made me an object to be favourably treated by your divine pleasure.

What can I write more to a person, able, who is omniscient and master of all learning?

Friday the 1st Adhika Bhadrapada suddha of Vijaya (16th September 1833)

The Persian seal of Raja Chandu Lal, Dewan of His (Exalted) Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad

**Letter No.7**

Raja of Vanaparti’s letter

Letters, addressed to Sriman Satakopa Sri Veeraraghava Yatindra Maha Desikan, the then Head-priest of the Aohobilam Muttum (32) by His Highness the Raja of Vanaparti on 19 7 1852

I, who being the seat of a thousand faults, am drowned in the middle of the dreadful sea of family life without any means of escape, come to your protection. And Oh! God! keep me under your control by thy simple mercy. This is true and no falsehood. Listen to a single humble prayer of mine. If you
do not show me pity you cannot find any other object worthy of your Grace. Rameswara Raja, the king of Vanaparte Desam (country) the humble servant of Ramanuja, who classing himself with one of your favoured disciples, is ever expecting your instructions, makes to you prostrations in conjunction with his wife and all his people in accordance with the saying - My prostrations to him who is beyond description or imagination who shines like an ocean both for words and fancy, who is possessed of great and endless salvation and who is the great ocean of boundless mercy.

By the Grace of your feet, I have been living happily with my wife and child and followers at Kanthamal village up to the 3rd Sukla of Sravana of the current Paridhavi (19th July 1852). A letter was sent by the chief agent of your sannadhi. In that letter, it was written that your noble personage felt a little sick and that a physician should be sent. I am sorry for it. Two persons Ramanuja and Lakshmana have been sent to give medicine to you. Please take medicine from them, keep good diet and you will be all right in seven days. I pray that you will give me joy, who am your chief disciple by directing a letter to be written to me immediately regarding the present state of your health. Why write more. The servant of the worshipper of Lakshmi Narasimha.

The seal and signature of Rameswara Ramanuja Dasa.

Letter No.8

Maha Raja of Gadwal's letter - December 1814

Letter addressed to Srivan Satakopa Sri Ranganatha Yatindra Maha Desikan, the then head priest of Ahobilam Muttam (Head Priest XXVI) by His Highness the Maharaja of Gadwal, December 1814.

Raja Rama Bhoopla Rayadu your most obedient and humble servant offers his adorations. Myself and all my retinue are doing well here up to 4th Margasira Sudha of this year. You must be pleased to favour me from time to time with sacred letter letting me know to good progress in the daily feeding of Brahmans and advance made in the cultivation and inculcation of sacred Vedas and Hindu Theology and philosophy at your sacred quarters. The sacred letter which your divine pleasure has been pleased to send in the month of Sravana Sudha through A. Raghavacharlu and Venkata Dikshithulu was received with all honours and due dignity on the auspicious day of 10th Karthika Bahula.

I placed it on my head and thereby I was absolved from all sins. I was directed to send camels, peons, and palanquin bearers to enable your divine grace to travel to the Northern countries to dispel all gloomy darkness of ignorance and spread lustre by the glorious rays of your divine learning and thus achieve universal triumph. A little delay was caused in procuring a pass-port from the town of riches (Hyderabad) and it is herewith sent as per your directions. Be pleased to place your sacred feet in this part of the country and absorb all your servants from sin. All the remaining circumstances would have been brought to your divine knowledge by the letters addressed to your divine grace by Ramanujacharlu, the Muttum agent at this place. Thus I tender my endless adorations to your sacred feet.

Royal seal of the Raja of Gadwal.

(Courtesy: History of the Ahobilam Mutt - An Outline by S.N.Venkatesa Iyer)
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<td>Bhaudanya Moth: Vaikashi&lt;br&gt;Sukhla Paksham&lt;br&gt;Ashtami&lt;br&gt;June 1698 A.D.</td>
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<td>Srivan Satakopa Sri Veeraraghava Yateendra Mahadesikan</td>
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<td>Margazhi</td>
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<td>Year: Subhakritu Month: Purattasi Date: 13, Krishna Paksham Chaturthi, Tuesday, 27.9.1842</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Srivan Satakopa Sri Veeraraghava Yateendra Mahadesikan</td>
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<td>34.</td>
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<td>Star: Uttiradai</td>
<td>Date: 27, Krishna Paksham Dasami</td>
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<td>Wednesday 10.9.1879</td>
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<td>Month: Purattasi</td>
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<td>Date: 28, Friday Sukha Chaturthi Poorna Palguni Nakshatram</td>
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<td>Month: Adi</td>
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<td>Date: 14, Tuesday Margazhi Nakshatram</td>
<td>27.12.1896</td>
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<td>Vilambi</td>
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<td>Star: Pushyam</td>
<td>Date: 2, Saturday Poomimai Asvani Nakshatram</td>
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<td>38.</td>
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<td>Year: Siddharthi Month: Thai Tiruvadhira Suka Dwadashi Friday January 1860</td>
<td>Year: Vishvavasu Month: Adi Date: 2, Poornimai Monday, Uttirada Nakshatram 17.7.1905</td>
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<td>39.</td>
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<td>40.</td>
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<td>Year: Virodhikrit Month: Margazhi December 1851</td>
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<td>41.</td>
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<td>Year: Ananda Month: Margazhi Star: Poorattadi December 1854</td>
<td>Year: Dundubhi Month: Thai Date: 17.1.1923</td>
<td>Details are not clearly known October 1941</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>Tiruvalloor</td>
<td>Year: Bahudanya Month: Thai Star L. Uttiradam 21.1.1879 A) Sweekaram Year: Sukha Month: Chittirai (1929) B) Pattabhishekam Year: Visha Month: Ayppasi Date: 8, Sukha Panchami, Friday 24.10.1941</td>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Details</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<td>43.</td>
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<td>Year : Hevilambi Month : Karthigai Date : 9, Sunday 24.11.1957</td>
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(Courtesy: This compilation done by Sri D. Gopala Krishna appeared in Nrsimha Priya, 1992).
1. Mythological Accounts from the Sthal Purana

Like many other famous temples, Ahobilam also has a Sthalapurana which gives a detailed account of the mythological origin of the temple. Its Sthalapurana forms a part of the Bramhanda Purana, with ten chapters consisting of 1046 stanzas. The sthalapurana of Simhachalam temple discusses the four important shrines dedicated to Narasimha. These four are Ahobilam, Kritisancham, Harapapam and Simhachalam. This recounts how Narasimha, the God at Ahobilam, manifested Himself born from a pillar to kill the demon, Hiranyakasipu. The Kurma Purana gives an account of Vishnu tearing Hiranyakasipu to pieces. "The circumstances in which Vishnu had to assume the furious form of the man-lion" are not mentioned in this Purana.

An account given in the Padmapurana is in agreement with what is found in the Vishnu Purana and some other puranas also. It tells us that "Hiranyakasipu had in his earlier life adored Brahma and obtained from Him boons to the effect that he should be so invulnerable as not to be killed by man or beast, that he should not die either in the day or at night, and that no weapon of any kind should injure him. After he obtained these boons, he naturally became haughty and irrepressible in his worrying behaviour towards the Gods, and it became imperative that he should be killed. But at the same time the boon conferred by Brahma on him had to be respected. Consequently, Vishnu assumed the form of a man-lion, and tore Hiranyakasipu with the claws at the time of lingering twilight forming the junction between day and night, himself being seated upon the doorsill of the mansion of Hiranyakasipu. It is obvious that, in so causing the death of the demon, not one of the boons bestowed on him by Brahma was counteracted and shown to be futile". The mythological account of the place Ahobilam and its importance as narrated in the Sthalapurana runs as follows. This sacred place was the kingdom of Hiranyakasipu in the Krtayuga and Lord Narasimha came out of a pillar from the palace of the demon. This place is variously known as Vedachalam, Garudachalam and Virakshetram. It is also known as Singvelkunram. Tirumangai Alvar, a famous Vaishnavite saint, praised this Lord as "except the Lord nobody can enter this Narasimhakshetra. This place, which is Ahobilam has two popular legends, for the derivation of the word "Ahobilam". It is stated that the devas (Gods), while witnessing the terrible aspect (Ugra Kala) he took on in order to tear to pieces Hiranyakaspu, sang in His praise as "Ahobala" (Lo! the stupendous strength). Hence this place has come to be known as Ahobalam". The Gods praised Lord Narasimha exclaiming at his strength.

The other version is that because of the great cave, it is named Ahobila. There Garuda worshipped the Lord of Ahobila. Besides Brahma; Lord Sri Rama and Lord Srinivasa, the most popular
deity of Tirumala-Tirupathi, also worshipped Lord Narasimha. The Lord of Ahobilam Narasimha is referred to as “Peria Perumal” (God of gods) in Srivaishnava tradition. It is stated that when Sri Rama was in the forest, we know from Seshadharma that he prayed to the Lord of Sri Ahobilam with Panchamrta stotra. In Archavatara, Lord Srinivasa had married Padmavathi, only after offering worship to Sri Narasimha of this mountain. It is held that the Shrine of Lord Srinivasa, to the south of Narasimha’s temple within the enclosure, lends credence to the view.

The Sthalapurana of Ahobilam also gives an account of the nine forms of Narasimha worshipped here. In short, the Sthalapurana of the temple, which is said to be Bramhanda Puranatargata (part of Brahmanda Purana) with ten chapters, described the greatness of the Kshetra in the first chapter. The second chapter of the Purana narrates the performance of the penance of Garuda for the darshana of the Lord. The third chapter gives an account of the sacred ponds of the place. The fourth chapter furnishes an account of the Nine temples of Narasimha in his nine forms and performance of the penances by Bramha, Bharadvaja, Gobhila and Bhargava Rama. The fifth chapter relates the traditional story of Jaya and Vijaya and their birth as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu respectively and the assurance given by the Lord to the gods for their protection. The sixth chapter describes, at length, the childhood of Prahlada and the atrocities perpetrated against him by his father. The seventh chapter narrates the devotion of Prahlada to the Lord, birth of God Narasimha and the destruction of the demon, Hiranyakasipu. The eighth chapter mentions the Sarabahavatara of Siva and his destruction by Lord Narasimha. The ninth chapter states explicitly the untiring efforts of Bairava for the river Bhavanasini and his becoming Kshetrapala of the place. The last chapter clearly states that worship to the idol of the Lord is the only means for attaining salvation to the common people.

2. Traditional accounts depicted in Ahobilam Kaifiat

The Ahobilam Kaifiat (28th July, 1810) forming part of Mackenzie collections gives very valuable information regarding the Ahobilam temples. The Ahobilam Kaifiat gives the legendary account substantiating the name of Ahobilam. “In the cosmic expanse and in the fourteen worlds is the earth; on this and in the ‘abhinava jambu dweepa’ and to the south of the area of the mount Meru and near Sri Sailam, the Southern Varanasi, a part of Karnataka country is to be found the Nallamala mountain range. On one of these mountains, eight amadas from Srisaila Kshetra, Garuda commenced silent penance to obtain a vision of Lord Narasimha who destroyed Hiranyakasipu. The Lord, in His grace, after long years of the penance of Garuda, manifested Himself in the cave of a mountain”.

“Ten Paruvus to the north-east of the mountain where Garuda was doing penance, a vision of His manifestation was then granted to Garuda, who after obtaining a sign of the location of the mountain cave, gladly travelled thither and saw the embodiment of the Satswaroopa.

Mahapurusha, Lord Jwalanarasimha is not easily accessible to common people. Garuda then worshipped the Lord and praised Him that ‘Ahobilam is mahabalam’ (Ahobilam is a great sustainer with great strength). The Lord’s Divya mangala vigraha was worshipped by Garuda with several stotras. Garuda then considered himself as blessed after a vision of the Lord. This divine place thereafter obtained the deserving name of Ahobilam”.

“The mountain on which Garuda performed tapas became famous as Garudachala. In the days of yore when truth and dharma prevailed, great heat was observable near the mountain-cave of Ahobilam. According to legend when green grass was put in the cave, it caught fire and smoke emitted. Several great rishis lived there for a time. After sometime, with the knowledge that great places would become common janapadas in the Kali age, they left for the northern lands, covering up the
Narasimha cave with boulders. Traditionally therefore this place is being called the Narasimha Kshetra. There are thus nine forms of Narasimha installed and worshipped.

Jwala Ahobila Maha Lola |
Kroda Karancha Bhargava |
Yogananda Kshatravata |
Pavaneya Nava Moorthayah ||


The Jwala Narasimha is ten paruvus “to the north-east of Garudachalam hill. To the south-west of this place is Ahobila Narasimha in Garudadri hill-cave. To the north of this place at a distance of one mile is to be found Malola Narasimha. To the south of this place at a distance of one mile is Kroda Narasimha. To the north-west of this place at a distance of three paruvus is Karkanja Narasimha. In the direction of Kubera, at a distance of two paruvus is Bhargava Narasimha. To the west of this place at distance of three paruvus is Yogananda Narasimha. To the south-west of this place, at a distance of six paruvus, is Kshatravata Narasimha. To the eastern side of this place at a distance of one amada is Pavana Narasimha. To the north-east of this Ahobila temple at a distance of five paruvus is to be found the Utkukambam (steel pillar) on a mountain, the place where Lord manifested Himself out of a pillar on Prahlada’s prayer. This is by tradition the place of Hiranyakasipu where Hiranyakasipu Vadha took place”.

This is the account given in the Ahobila Kaifiyat regarding the Narasimha Kshetra of Ahobilam.

3. Temple and early traditional legends

There is a tradition that a few kings and preachers visited this shrine. But there is no authentic evidence in support of their visit to the temple. However, the tradition furnishes some information about this temple, which may be taken into account with utmost care and caution.

1. It is stated in the Guruparampara that the great preacher and philosopher of Srivaishnavism, Ramanuja visited this temple. (11th Cent. A.D.) 2. Besides this the great king, Vikramaditya (1076-1106 A.D.) of the Western Chalukyas, is said to have worshipped the “main deity” of the temple.3. According to the Srivaishnava tradition, Vendanta Desika (1268-1379 A.D.), while on his religious tour, visited Ahobilam. 4. The Ahobilam Kaifiyat clearly states that Prataparudra (1296-1322 A.D.) probably the last king of the Kakatiyas, gave a gift of the idols and renovated the mandapas of the temple and made arrangements for conducting the processions of the temple of Ahobilam.9 There is another interesting and popular tradition about Prataparudra’s veneration to god Ahobaleswara. The tradition says that on his return from Srisailam, Prataparudra halted at a place called Rudravaram, which is 20kms away from Ahobilam. The king wanted to cast a gold Siva-linga, for conducting his daily pujas. But, whatever the cast was, the final figure that emerged was the figure of Narasimha. The king was perturbed and during his meditation, the Lord appeared before him and asked him to worship the Lord of Upper Ahobilam. Another tradition says that “the king worshipped that deity and gave that small golden vigraha (idol) in charity to the saint of Ahobila math and became his disciple. In accordance with the instructions given by his guru, Adivan-Satagopa Jiyar, Prataparudra renovated the Garbhalayam, endowed several lands for the maintenance of the temple and gave a gift of a number of ornaments to the Lord.” It is mentioned that another king of the 14th Cent., Prolaya Vema Reddy (1324-1353 A.D.), the founder of the Reddy Kingdom of Kondavidu, is said to have built
a Kalyana mandapa with twenty eight pillars, rich in architecture. According to the tradition, Chaitanya (Gauranga) visited Narasimha at Ahobilam in 1513 A.D.

4. Chenchu Parinaya in folklore

There are a number of popular legends about Narasimha, which are widely current among the Chenchus, who are closely associated with Ahobilam. The popular legend is that "when Lord Vishnu took on the incarnation of Narasimha, the Golden Lakshmi was born in the Chenchu tribe and both were living very happily. On account of this, the Lord is said to have refused to go back to Vaikuntam." The love-making of Lord Narasimha with Chenchita, a tribal woman is famous in many folk songs of the place. The sculptures of Narasimha and Chenchita on the pillars of the temples of Upper and Lower Ahobilam and Vasantika Parinayam, a Sanskrit drama, written by Jiyar, the seventh pontiff of Ahobila math, describing the marriage of the Lord Narasimha with Chenchita, lend support to the popular legend.

There are several folk songs on the lips of many people of this region. These folk songs are more imaginative than historical and add various episodes to the story of Chenchita. These depict the love episode between Narasimha and Chenchita. A few popular songs are appended at the end of the chapter.

The mythology and legends are more the creations of fertile minds for the satisfaction of the curious interested in the common human desire to know about the antecedents of anything. They also served as the means of enhancing the popularity and glory of the institution concerned. They hardly stand the test of historical scrutiny, though sometimes some legends may have been woven round a grain of fact.

5. Historical Account

A. Nature of sources and the scope of the present account

In the context of the reconstruction of the history of Ahobilam and its temples, the authentic historical sources like epigraphs are very few. First of all there is no foundation inscription relating to these temples. So it becomes necessary to take recourse to various other sources also, like the legends, but they must be subjected to the scrutiny of the historical eye. Fortunately, connected with the legends of this temple and amenable to verification are a few historical personalities about whom a lot of material is available in other sources.

Thus, in the present section, we aim mainly to have a glimpse of the origin and growth of this temple, by way of assessing the historicity of traditional accounts and reviewing the epigraphical data.

i. The beginning

It is a matter of utter disappointment that the temple and its surroundings at Ahobilam are absolutely devoid of any inscription of the early period. The earliest epigraphical record now we find here is of the mid-14th Century A.D. in the period of the Reddy monarchs. Obviously one has to believe that some intentional destruction of the old epigraphs and for that matter even of the structures, took place probably in the course of frequent renovation works, as we notice usually in the case of similar religious centres. The greater the religious importance of the place, the more extensive would be the loss of its antiquarian evidence of the structural and epigraphical nature. Only some icons may survive, if the renovator does not venture to strike them out of reverential fear in breaking the idols. As a clear indicator of the loss of all previous records, the copper plate grant of Anavema Reddy datable to 1378
A D issued from Pedda Palakalur, which is 10 kms from Guntur, states that he has constructed flights of steps both to Srisailam and Ahobilam for the benefit of the pilgrims. This clearly indicates, at that time, Ahobilam was a prominent pilgrim centre visited by several pilgrims.

Assessing the extent of influence of Ahobilam on the other parts of the state, helps us to fix the upper limit to the place. An inscription of Chalukya Kirthivarman II, found at Peddapeta, a hamlet of Yadiki, refers to the name of a person as Uobula. The word Uobula is a colloquial form of Ahobila.

Also, the Tamil saint, Tirumangai Alvar, who lived in the 8th century A D has composed ten Tamil poems in praise of the God of Ahobilam (See Chapter-1 for details).

Another very interesting fact which attests the existence of Narasimha sculpture in this region as early as the 6th century A D, is Peddamudiam, a place which is situated nineteen kms, north of Ahobilam.

The chief interest attaching to the place lies in the fact that it seems to have been the place of birth of Vishnu-Vardhana, who founded the Chalukyan Empire. It was variously known as Trilochanapuram, Brahmana Mudiam and Mudiam. There are two temples dedicated to Narasimha on the outskirts of the village. One temple of Ugra (Vidarana) Narasimha Swami is on the bank of the river Kunderu and the other is devoted to Yogananda Narasimha Swami at a distance of two furlongs to the east of the above temple. It is said that the former is earlier than the latter.

There are four inscriptions which give some information about the temple of Narasimha. It appears that the temple, on the bank of the river, was surrounded by the houses, which are now in ruins. The history of the antiquity of the cult of Narasimha of this place, can be gleaned from a stone plaque, which is found at this place. In it, there is a representation of nine deities, including Narasimha, which is third in order from the left and it belongs to the fifth or sixth centuries A D, at the latest. Sivaramamurti states that this sculpture belongs to the 6th century A D.

"On the slopes of a hill two miles from Pudurallah in the Palnadu taluk of Guntur district, the State department of Archaeology excavated and brought to light a lime-stone plaque bearing representations of the early icons. This plaque was originally installed inside a rectangular bench which was unfortunately lifted for building materials by the neighbouring villagers. No plan of the temple was made by the explorers but a graphic description was made available by the former Director of Archaeology, Sri Abdul Waheed Khan" and the plaque having Narasimha figure is dated to 3rd-4th Century A D.

Further, at Ahobilam, we find cave shrines which are either cut in or cut out of boulders or hillocks. [See Jwala,avana, Ahobila and Baraza mandapas. We have many evidences to show that the Brahmical cave temples sprang up under the patronage of Vishnukundins, Eastern Chalukyas, Pallavas of Kanchi and Telugu Cholas, in the eastern regions of the Deccan plateau. Historians also opine that the cave temples in this region might have been built as early as in the 2nd or 3rd Century A D. Thus possibly the Ahobilam caves may be placed between the 3rd and 4th Centuries A D. The exact date within this short span is not easy to establish.

We may also note here that the icon at the Upper Ahobilam appears to be earlier than the Peddamudiam sculptures. (For details see Chapter 6). Also, there are a number of Narasimha icons at Ahobilam, the delineation of the figures, drapery and ornamentation, are typical of the Chalukyan school of art.
6. Further development of Ahobilam under different rulers

Traditional accounts also connect the history of the temple with Pratapa Rudra Mahadeva of the Kakatiyas. While there is no epigraphical basis to this traditional account, the presence of the early Kakatiya influence on the pillars of the Mahamandapa of the Upper Ahobilam temple gives support to the traditional account of the connection of the temple with Kakatiyas. The Ahobilam Kaityyat also mentions that one Nandana Chakravarti - in the lineage of Parikshit, Janamejeya, Sataniya, Aswamedat, Mahakshemendra, Rajanarendra, Somendra and Uttangabhuja. Uttangabhuja, being the father of Nandana Chakravarti was the king in whose reign, worship of Ahobila Narasimha Svami was being performed regularly. Similarly such worship is mentioned during the time of the Chalukya kings Jagadeka Malla, Bhuvaneka Malla and Tribhuvana Malla rajas. The Kaityyat also mentions that worship was also going on during Ganapati's reign; and thereafter in the reign of Pratapa Rudra Deva Maharaja of Warangal. The reference is obviously to Kakatiya kings of Warangal. The Ahobilam Kaityyat mentions that the Utsava Vigrahas of Ahobilasvami were got moulded and made by Pratapa Rudra Mahadeva. It also mentions that local people say that he did some work for the temples and mandapas of Ahobilam.

Ahobilam played an important role in shaping the course and destiny of the Vijayanagara Empire. The Lord of Ahobilam is believed to have saved the Empire on two crucial occasions. Sri Adi Van Satagopa Yatheendra Mahadesikan, the first Jiya of Ahobila Math, made Ahobilam the centre of his activities. He rallied a large number of Mathis to popularise the works of Ramanuja and Vedanta Desika. According to the Ahobilam inscriptions of 1584-85, the God of Ahobilam Himself bestowed the robes of a Sanyasin on Van Satagopa Jiya. He declared himself to be the servant of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha of Ahobilam and carried the idol of Malola Narasimha throughout the country for propagating Vaishnavism. He was essentially good and extended lots of privileges to all sections of society in the temples and instituted a class of missionaries for the benefit of the hill tribes. His Holiness had a lot of influence on Devaraya II who ruled the Empire from 1422 to 1446.

The sixth Jiya of the Ahobila Math, Sri Parankusa Yatheendra Mahadesikan, was highly respected by Mukunda Harichandam, an independent sovereign of Orissa. The king was an ally of Rama Ray of Vijayanagara. The Jiya Svami instituted worship of the Alvars at Purushotham (Puri) where the presiding deity is called Jagannath.

Sometime during the 14th century, the Vijayanagara Empire was declining in importance but by the grace of the Lord of Ahobilam, the kingdom was resurrected through Saluva Narasimha. Saluva Mangu, who restored the idol of the temple of SriRangam, had a son called Gautha who was then ruling Chandragiri. Gautha's son Gunda had a wife called Mallambika. They did not have any children for a long time. To get their desire fulfilled, they had observed to a number of vows and finally retired to Ahobilam for performing penance. Pleased with their penance, Lord Narasimha appeared to the king in a dream and blessed him with a son possessing of all virtues and ordained that he should rule the Empire. The king, later, narrated this to his wife. The king was blessed with a son whom they named Narasimha after the God of Ahobilam. In due course, Saluva Narasimha proved to be a very great king of the Vijayanagara Empire and protected the Hindu culture and dharma from the onslaughts of the neighbouring Muslim kingdoms. He infused rare vigour into the body politic in rescuing the state from destruction. The birth of Saluva Narasimha is considered to be an expression of Divine Will. It is interesting to note that the Divine Will expressed itself at a very crucial time in the history of Vijayanagara.

From the time of Saluva Narasimha onwards, the rulers of Vijayanagara were very much devoted to Lord Narasimha of Ahobilam. One of the rulers of Vijayanagara called himself Ahobila Raja. He built a Gopuram and a Mandapam for the Vittalasvami temple at Hampi. In 1338 A.D. foot steps
to the Upper Ahobilam were built by a king of Vijayanagara. In 1515, Sri Krishnadevaraya, visited
Ahobilam. By about this period, the Bahamini Sultans could not tolerate the only Hindu Kingdom
flourishing in the South and they joined together in 1565 at Tallikota and defeated the forces of
Sadasivaraya of Vijayanagara. The defeat of the forces of the Vijayanagara Empire threatened to put
the future generations of the Hindus of the South in dismay. Tirimula, who succeeded Sadasivaraya,
re-organised the shattered kingdom and shifted the capital from Vijayanagara to Penukonda. Time
and again, the Muslim forces were attacking the territories of the Vijayanagara Empire and harassing
the people. Ranga Raya I, who succeeded Tirimula, also was not able to stop this. In the year 1579
A.D., the forces of Ibrahim Ali Kutub Shah, the Sultan of Golkonda, attacked Ahobilam, completely
demolished the temple structures and plundered the jewel-studded idols of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha
and carried it to Golkonda. This was a sequel to the Tallikota war in which Rama Raya had been killed.
The Sultan's son Kuli Kutub Shah too had a hand in the further destruction of the Ahobilam temples.
The idols were brought into the presence of the Sultan by one Murahari Rao. When the idol of Narasimha
which was made of gold and silver and studded with precious rubies was shown to him along with the
other treasures looted at Ahobilam, the Sultan was perplexed and stunned. He could not speak from
that moment onwards and that night, he vomitted blood and died. According to some, the exact cir-
cumstances in which Ibrahim Kutub Shah, second in succession to Kuli Kutub Shah died, remained
mysterious. Farista, a contemporary historian, states that it was rumoured in the Golkonda Fort by the
Muslims that the Hindu demons of the Ahobilam temple had killed the Sultan while the Hindus said that
the death of the Sultan was brought about by the wrath of Lord Narasimha of Ahobilam. One indis-
putable fact is that the Sultan died suddenly and as Sherwani has put it, as per the available historical
evidence, Ibrahim Kutub Shah had spent seven years of his life in the Vijayanagara Empire, before he
became the Sultan and he was very well aware how the Vijayanagar kings were devoted and attached
to the God of Ahobilam. He must have seen the magnificent stone idol of Lakshminarasimha at Hampi
and must have been bewitched by its captivating beauty and power. Although the Sultan had partici-
pated in the Tallikota war, he was not directly responsible for the sacking of Ahobilam. The sacking
must have taken place without his sanction. With this background of the Sultan, it is not, therefore,
surprising to believe that the sight of the looted holy idol of Lord Narasimha shocked the Sultan and
caused haemorrhage in him. This appraisal is perhaps relevant and significant after with this event, the
attitude of the subsequent rulers of Golkonda underwent a remarkable change towards the Hindus, the
Hindu Temples and the Hindu culture.

The Sultan died on the 5th June, 1580 and the reign of Golkonda was taken over by his son Kuli
Kutub Shah. As stated earlier, Kuli Kutub Shah had led the attack on Ahobilam. He had also wit-
tnessed the tragic death of his father and must have pondered over the mysterious circumstances of his
death. It is no wonder, therefore, that he had to adopt a softer policy towards Hindusim. He gave some
of the important posts to the Hindus and this policy was continued by the subsequent rulers of the
dynasty. In fact, the last Sultan of Golkonda, namely, Abul Hassan Tanisha, extended royal patronate
to the temple of Lord Rama at Bhadrachalam. This policy, however, provoked the wrath of the Moghul
Emperor Aurangzeb.

It may be further interesting to note that even after Kuli Kutub Shah took over the reign for a
period of five years, poojas were not performed in the temples of Ahobilam. Vijayanagara, which
was a mighty Empire earlier, was then declining. As history would reveal it, we find a strange pattern
emerging at that juncture. Once again it was Ahobilam which gave strength to the fallen Empire. His
Holiness Sri Van Satagopa Sri Satagopa Yatheendra Mahadesikan, the seventh Jiyar of Ahobila Mutt,
visited the court of Ranga Raya of Vijayanagara and requested him to restore the original glory of
Ahobilam. Ranga Raya pleaded his helplessness in view of the powerful position held by the Sultan of
Golkonda. But the Jiyar's words were quite purposive and persuasive. He reminded the king of the

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age-old connections of the Vijayanagara dynasty with the Ahobilam temple. The temple’s financial position was in a bad shape as it had lost its lands to the enemies. The Jiyar, therefore, pointed out that it was the duty of the king to restore these lands to the temple. The Jiyar wanted him to give up the policy of appeasement and drive out the aggressors just as his illustrious predecessors like Saluva Narasimha had done. As a result of this, Ranga Raya was very much inspired and he offered himself to lead an army into the then Ahobilam district and drive out the enemy. The High Priest said that there was no necessity for his direct intervention. It was enough if he entrusted it to his subordinates Kondaraju Venkataraju and Kondaraju Tirumala Raju. The God of Ahobilam appeared to the Jiyar in a dream and mentioned that these two warriors were the fittest persons for the purpose. The king acquiesced in Divine will and he presented the two chiefs with jewels and titles and asked them to march against the enemy.

Sri Van Satagopa Jiyar led these military leaders of the Vijayanagara Empire along with their troops and directed them how to attack the enemies and also gave instructions regarding the field placements. The Golkonda forces were routed by the forces of Vijayanagara Empire at Ahobilam and the temple area was cleared of the enemies. It was said at that time that the army of Kuli Kutub Shah was captured. An inscription at the Ahobilam temple dated 1584 A.D.\cite{22} bears testimony to this event.

An account of the war described already would reveal the great historic role played by Ahobilam in resurrecting Hinduism and in the maintenance of the glory of the Vijayanagara Empire.

7. Munro and Ahobilam

There is also a mention that the English Collector (actually a Scotsman) Col. Munro arranged for an annual payment of 100 varahas from Rudravaram village in the East India Company Taluq to be paid to Ahobilam temple.

Alafa Khan, son of Munawar Khan, it is said was appropriating the Hundi collections and the kanukas offered to the Lord both at the Upper Ahobilam and the Lower Ahobilam. The Kaiyiyat also mentions that there was no one (in 1810 A.D.) to support the temples, and that only the Garbhagudi and Prakaram of the temple were in good condition whereas the mandapas and gopuras were in ruins. The Kaiyyiat also mentions that Sri Parankusa Sriman Satagopa Jiyangar of Ahobila Math who was the then Guru of the Pitham was staying at Kumbakonam and that Pancharatra pujas were being performed in Ahobilam then. The absence of the Jiyangar in Ahobilam is also mentioned. In 1810, the Upper Ahobilam temple had one pujari and two sudras, and these were staying there on festival days only. There were pujari brahmans houses and ten huts of sudras in the Lower Ahobilam. Worship was being offered to Sri Narasimhaswami in the Upper Ahobilam and also for the Chinna Ahobila Narasimhaswami. The festivals for the Svmi at both the places were being performed from the 15th day of Suddha Phalguna month upto the 12th day of Bahula fortnight.

The Ahobilam temple continues to be under the Jiyars of the Ahobila Math even to-date. The Endowments' Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh has not yet taken over the temple. In the year 1963, a Renovation Committee of several members was formed with Dr.N. Sanjeeva Reddy as its Chairman. Renovation work was then started. The Tirumala-Tirupathi Devasthanams also released funds for constructing a choultry at Ahobilam. Several works were then taken up for the renovation of the temple. The Upper Ahobilam Rajagopura Vimanam had Maha Samprokshanam, after the renovation on Friday, the 20th June, 1978. However, there is need for more renovation work, better transport, lodging and boarding facilities to be provided by the Endowments Department and the Temple authorities.

The works taken up and completed by the Renovation committee so far are:
A. Lower Ahobilam

(i) Debris removal around the temple.
(ii) Renovation of three Prakaram walls in the main temple.
(iii) Cut stone flooring inside the main temple.
(iv) Black topping of the Main Street (sannidhi Street) from Allagadda Road to Mondi Gopuram.
(v) Cut stone flooring around Dhvajasthambam area in front of Rajagopuram.
(vi) Renovation of the Vimana of Sri Venkateswara Swami.
(vii) Renovation of Sri Adivan Satakopa Swami Sannidhi.
(viii) Renovation of "Putta Bangam" - Mandapas.
(ix) Renovation of the Ranga Mandapas flooring (with 5 line dressing)

B. Upper Ahobilam

(i) Renovation of the Koluvu Mandapa along with the provision of Vimana.
(ii) Renovation of the flight of steps with the parapet wall.
(iii) Concrete road from the Koluvu Mandapa to the Rajagopura.
(iv) Renovation of flooring inside the temple with cut stones.
(v) Renovation of the Western and the Eastern Rajagopurams.
(vi) Renovation of Sri Svami Vadi Vimana.
(vii) Construction of Sri Annavari Shrine with a new Vimana.
(viii) Renovation of the Kalyana Mandapa.
(ix) Renovation of Garuthman.
(x) Providing all the main mandapas with ornamental grills.
(xi) Renovation of the Gadwal Mandapas.
(xii) Retaining wall from the Western Rajagopuram to the Koluvu Mandapa in the West on the Northern side of the concrete Road.
(xiii) Renovation of the Upper Ahobilam Sannidhi Pushkarani near Bhairava gundam and its surrounding mandapas are under execution.

C. Other works executed

(xiv) At a cost of Rs. Fifty-six thousands the Bhargava Temple and the steps leading to the temple were renovated by Sri N.D. Bangur, Calcutta.
(xv) Sri Raghava Reddy, Proddatur provided two grill doors to Sri Chathravata Svami.
(xvi) Renovation of the temple kitchen at the Upper Ahobilam. (xvii) Renovation of temple kitchen at the Lower Ahobilam.
(xviii) Weather proof course at the Upper Ahobilam.
(xix) Water supply scheme at the Lower Ahobilam by providing Jet pump and over-head tank. This is wholly donated by Sri Sanga Venugopal of U.S.A. S/0 Sri Sanga Subba Rayudu, P.A. to Collector, Cuddapah (retd.).
FOLK SONGS

1. గంగాబావు స్మరణం చేసుకుందానే
   క్షీణంతో సరిహద్దు చేసి
   మీదుగా నా తండ్రి

   మానవులు స్మరణం చేసుకుందానే
   నాణయాలను కూలించి
   నేపియేని దేశం

   సమాధి లేని దుస్తతో
   సాధించి చేసి
   మీదుగా నా తండ్రి

   కప్ప కప్పి ప్రసాదం
   చాలా సాధనం
   మీదుగా నా తండ్రి

   ఉత్తర మామిడి జరిగి
   అమ్మ చేసి
   మీదుగా నా తండ్రి

   దాని సాధనం జరిగి
   పంచా చేసి
   మీదుగా నా తండ్రి

   రామారుమం మామిడి
   రూపచేసి
   మీదుగా నా తండ్రి

   రాంయలం మామిడి
   రామచేయను
   మీదుగా నా తండ్రి

2. మాక్కడ సోంథ బులింగ మామిడి స్మరణం
   కుటుంబాన్ని నిలిప దీని సాధనం

   అంతిమ ఐదు మీతో

   అంతిమ ఐదు మీతో

   అంతిమ ఐదు మీతో

   అంతిమ ఐదు మీతో

   అంతిమ ఐదు మీతో

3. హొమినేసి 
   మామిడి 
   మామిడి

   హొమినేసి 
   హొమినేసి 
   హొమినేసి 

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భాషలు సాంప్రదాయాలవంతం
అనుభూతి సంవత్సరాల ప్రమాణం

భాషల భారతదేశంలో యూనియన్ సంస్థ
భాషల విద్య ప్రధాని
భాషల ప్రధాని

చారిత్రక నాటికి
విభాగాల విభాగాలం
భాషానుభవం

భాషా నిర్వహణ
ప్రధాని సంస్థానం
ప్రధాని నియమాలు

భాషా నియమాలు
ప్రధాని సంస్థానం

భాషా నియమాలు
ప్రధాని సంస్థానం

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1. A Description Of The Temple Complex

The Ugra-Narasimha temple at the Upper Ahobilam and the Prahladavarada Narasimha temple at the Lower Ahobilam are the most important and magnificent structures in the whole of Ahobilam.1

A. Ugra-Narasimha temple at Upper Ahobilam

The Upper Ahobilam temple is situated at a distance of 8 kms from the Lower Ahobilam temple. The road leading to Upper Ahobilam winds its way through the reserve forests and the Forest Department has laid an excellent roadupto the temple. The mountains on both the sides tower up straight high into the sky and between them stretches the narrow valley with luxuriant verdure of trees. Along one edge of this valley, like a glossy serpent carelessly creeping on, glides the sacred Bhavanasini with its holy crystal water hissing against the boulders. As we pass along this valley, a modest gateway welcomes us. Entering it, we find ourselves in an enclosure with mandapas all around. Probably, this might have housed the Ahobilam math once. Further proceeding on keeping to the mountain side, we meet the Sannidhikoneru. From the Koneru as we proceed still further, we find a group of scattered Mandapas and Bairavagundam. Entering the main gate (Rajagopuram), we come to the main complex of the Ugra Narasimha temple.

B. General Layout of the temple

The temple proper is rectangular in plan (measuring 201' x 101'.9'') and faces east, but whereas the Garbhagriha faces north, because of the orientation and situation of the natural cave. In general, it consists of a main control unit with a garbhagriha (in this case a natural cave), on its either side studded with small shrines, and preceded by a mahamandapa and a pillared mukhamandapa, all axially aligned east-west, except garbhagriha. In the same axial line, abutting the mukhamandapa is a dhvajastambha (21'10'') with a balipitha (6'7'') in its front. This unit is located in a large open area, with cloistered mandapas on all the sides, and the eastern gateway leads to the Malola and Jwala shrines.

C. The Main Unit

1. Garbhagriha

This forms the original cave of the temple. This is a natural cave, with no definite shape, the Western Wall of the cave is the continuation of the mountain Garudadri, measuring 9'7" x 16' x 5'9"
and with north-south orientation. The main deity is placed, on a raised platform, approximately 4' high and the idol (2' high) faces east.

The door frame of the Garbhagriha is very crude and short. There appear no decorative details, except the Vastu shastra Dvarapalakas at the base of the door jambs. On either side of the door jamb is a life-size dvarapalaka figure measuring 8'6", now kept standing against the front wall of the Garbhagriha, but these were not part of the original cave. They might have been added during the later periods.

In its external elevation, the Garbhagriha is a plain cave on the eastern and the western sides. The southern side is not at all visible and in the northern side, the only visible wall has an adhistana supporting a plain bhatti. The concrete roof over the cave is a recent construction. The Garbhagriha is crowned by a tower.

The Adhistana consists of a series of functional mouldings. Upana, the lowermost moulding, projects beyond the vertical norm and is surmounted by the Jagati. Over this is the Kumbha, which is three-faceted (tripatta-kumuda). Next is the Kantha, a recessed moulding, oblong in elevation, and connecting the other mouldings above. The Pattika, which is above the Kantha is thick. The topmost members of the plinth is Vedi (also called Prati).

The Pranala meant to drain out water from the Garbhagriha is visible on the western side at the vedi level. This projects out of the wall for about 1'8" and has a lion's face at the end.

Above the roof, the tritala sikhara part of the vimana superstructure is visible. This sikhara, however, is of brick and cement and is obviously of recent times.

ii. Side-Shrines

To the left of the Ahobila-Narasimha cave (to the east) is a smaller cave (4'8" high), in which a few idols are kept. They are the idols of Shiva linga, Ganesh, Sri Devi and Bhu Devi. The most significant of all the assemblage of the idols is the idol of Lakshmi Narasimha tearing the demon Hiranyakasipu.

There is a small rectangular shrine measuring 6'x6'10", for the goddess, Chenchulakshmi. The shrine is to the right of the main shrine, situated at the Western corner of the main unit.

It is worth noting that there is another small shrine beside the cave of Ahobila Narasimha. Actually one has to climb up a height of 6' to the west of the main cave to enter this small shrine, where the Sudarshana Yantra is installed. The shrine of Chenchulakshmi is further to the west of the Sudarshana yantra.

According to the earlier plan, (old plan of 1916) we find another room (now not to be seen), by the side of the goddess's shrine. It appears that a huge number of copperplate records were placed in this room along with the temple jewels and ornaments.

iii. Mahamandapa

Axially in front of the Garbhagriha is a sixteen-pillared Mahamandapa. The Mahamandapa is to the north of the main shrine and has sixteen pillars. On the floor space, in the centre of the Mahamandapa, is a circular piece of black granite, called Brahmagundam. There are three entrances to the mahamandapa. The eastern entry is regularly used and the other two are permanently closed. In external elevation, the Mahamandapa has an adhistana supporting a bhatti. The kapota, prastara and hara portions are now embedded in a concrete roof recently constructed.

The Adhistana consists of a series of functional mouldings, upana, jagati, patta, urdhva padma, kantha, kampa, tripattikumuda and another broad patta with rectangular blocks having different
sculptural motifs. The wall is decorated with niches and pilasters. There is a bhadra-koshta in the centre with Karnastambha at each end and two kudya-stambhas on either side of the bhadra-koshta. The kudya-stambhas and karnastambhas are of the bhadra-koshta type. They rise straight from the vedā without having any distinct base. The shaft is plain and rectangular in cross-section but their upper half is well carved. The first member above the shaft is a rectangular panel (malasthāna) mostly decorated with pearl strands hanging down. Above this member are the lasuna tadi Kumba, Phalaka and Potkas. The lasuna portion is plain. The cushion-shaped capitals (Kumba) are roughly square. The Padma and Phalaka are also rectangular. The brackets are three-pronged with grooved frontal sides (taranga-potaka).

The bhadra koshtas are rectangular niches flanked by a pilaster on either side. These pilasters are also of the same type as the kudya-stambhas but are shorter and carry a lintel, above which on the wall is a beautiful ek-tala-Vimana, with a stūpa carved in Dravidian style. In the Central apex a grasa head (Kirtimukha) is carved.

The northern and eastern entrances of the Mahamandapa are flanked by Vaishnava dvarapalakas, one each on either side. The dvarapalakas on the eastern side are 7' 10" high and the pedestal measures 3'5" x 2' x 11". The dvarapalaka on the northern side is a little taller measuring 8'6" and the base measures 3' x 2'6" x 2'5".

At the entrance of the Mahamandapa in the eastern side, is a high platform, where an agent sits and collects tolls from the pilgrims. Hence, the platform is named Undil platform.

On all the three sides of the Mahamandapa, there is an open pillared corridor having 36 pillars. But recently this is covered on all the three sides by iron grills.

iv. Dhvajastambha and Balipitha

In front of the grilled entrance are a Dhvajastambha and a balipitha. The dhvajastambha is made up of wood installed on a small adhisthāna made of solid stone. The dhvajastambha (21'10" high, 5'3"x5'4" base) is a tall pillar with a star-shaped base and circular shaft and the bottom portion is now covered with gold plated brass plates and is decorated with a metal flag at the top. The balipitha (5'4"x5'4"x6'7") has three divisions viz. a pitha, a padma and a karnika, the lowest being square in shape, the central, octagonal and the topmost, circular. In front of the Dhvajastambha, is a small Garuda Shrine, measuring 5' x 4'10" x 10'9".

v. Vahana - Mandapa

(New plan) is the site plan of the Vahana mandapam of the temple. Though it is called Vahana mandapam, now this place is used as a place of rest for officials and important people. At present, the vahanas are placed in the grilled pillared corridor of the temple. This mandapa is square in shape (33' x 27'7") having sixteen pillars.

vi Kalyana Mandapa

The open space in front of the Vahana mandapa has a flight of steps at one corner and that leads to the Kalyanamandapa. The Mandapa measures 42'x31' and has a small platform at one end measuring 42'x31' and the mandapa has 28 pillars in four rows. Special festivals like Kalyanotsava etc. are conducted here.

vii Uyyala mandapa

In the site plan is the Uyyalamandapa in the upper storey of the temple. It appears that this mandapa was used for Uyyala festival of the Lord, in olden days. The mandapa is square in shape measuring 25' x 25' and has sixteen pillars in four rows.
For example, the cost of rice is stated to be one gajana and 1 1/4 rukhas for 7 tumus and 3/4 kunchas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ga</td>
<td>Ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackgram</td>
<td>2 1/2</td>
<td>5 1/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another inscription of 1563 A.D.\(^{11}\) which adds land and cash to the temple treasury is looked after by the juyar of Ahobila matha. The specifications registered in the inscription are that 600 varahas are given by an officer to the temple treasury to purchase some wet land measuring 6 marthurs and the location of the land also is specified. In turn, the said chief Vobularaju is stated to have made a gift of the said 6 marthurs of land to the temple and agreed to submit the produce at the rate of 5 putris for each marthur totalling to 30 marthurs of paddy to the temple as gift and this produce will be utilised for the daily offerings to Nammalvar at the rate of 1/4 tumu rice and kotha rukha per day. It is quite possible that the area of land was reckoned in terms of the quantity of potential produce raised in that extent of land. The total amounts to 4 1/4 tumus for Amruthapadi for the year and other expenditure 360 rukha’s per year. The cook charges 120 kotha rukhas and the amount totals upto 480 kotha rukhas per year. Another condition is that the offerings are to be made in the name of the said chiefs and prasadam is to be utilised for feeding 12 Vaishnavas daily.

Another inscription dated 26th August, 1563 A.D.\(^{12}\) describes some more assets of the temple. This registers the gift of income from the village Kalutapalli situated in Korakolasima amounting to 230 varahas. Out of this amount, the polivutu offerings would cost 162 Gajianas (varahas) and other offerings amount to 68 varahas, the total would be 230 varahas. Again Vobula Raju made a gift of 1 putti of land in Padakandla village which was equivalent to 40 varahas and another 2 putris of land in Dornipadu village the income of which would be 40 varahas and another 2 putris of land in the village Injedu, the income of which would be 40 varahas, and another wet land 4 marthurs in the village Bavyapagudur the income of which was 20 varahas. The total yield of these four items of land amount to 370 varahas. And this amount is to be spent for the offerings to the god during the period of stay of god in the mandapa constructed by the donor in Kamasamudram Narasayya’s house. So far, the income and expenditure of the gift and lands and the offerings to the god are broadly stated. There follows a detailed description of certain items which are missing.

Some items extant may be given as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Varaha</th>
<th>Rukha</th>
<th>Kanis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 plate rice</td>
<td>1 varaha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pepper (1/16 of one measure cost being)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 kanis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Curd (3 measures cost)</td>
<td>1/4 rukha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 visas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>400 Betels</td>
<td>1 rukha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>400 leaves</td>
<td>1 rukha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sandal paste</td>
<td>½ rukha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fire wood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 visas of Rukha</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>¼ rukha</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The streets already mentioned lead to the car-street at its eastern end. The car-street also has a row of mandapas on either side and in the centre near this street, there is Bigala Anjaneya Temple and the Lanja Konenu. In this street, there is the car-platform which enables us to form an idea of the enormous size of the car used in olden days. This street with the central row of mandapas has been included in the preserves. Perhaps the car was dragged within this one street. Even now we can find that in many a town in the ceded districts the car is dragged only through a single broad street set apart for this purpose. But the car at Upper Ahobilam should have been stationary.

At right angles to the Sannidhi Street described already, runs the long front outer wall of the Lower Ahobilam temple. The four outer walls are as massive as those of a bastion in a hill-fort and the stones used in the construction are massive but not solid enough. Round these four outer walls are the ruins of the Sannidhi Street. In one of these streets, we can find some gigantic blocks of stone which were intended as beams for the unfinished Mandapa. How those ancients with no machinery to help them lifted those huge beams over the massive pillars is a subject of great curiosity. Perhaps, they must have made use of the principle of inclination and its engineering technique in order to lift heavy pillars on to the top of the Unfinished Mandapa. We also find the Gollamitta Anjaneya temple.

Entering the main gate of the temple the first thing that strikes our eye is the "Tower of Victory". This is a magnificent tall column of monolithic sand stone and is full of architectural carvings on its sides. It stands on a platform on the southern side of the entrance and the sides of the platform contain inscription commemorating the event of Victory of Rangaraya's army over the Mahammadans.

Proceeding a little further, we see the Sannidhi Pushkarini on the Southern side. The dilapidated mandapas round it, were said to have been formerly used as Vedic Schools.

Just opposite to the Sannidhi-Konenu is the Bhashyakara Sannidhi. It is a very spacious compound with massive stone-built walls now in ruins. The Sannidhi itself is a very fine piece of Dravidian architecture in all its sumptuous details. It was in a completely dilapidated state. In 1914, there was a proposal to rebuild it and it was one of the items mentioned in the printed notice circulated by the math during that year. The work of reconstruction was taken up in right earnest. The work of demolition preparatory to the rebuilding work has been ordered and the Ramanuja image was bodily removed to the Ramulavari - Mandapa and seated there with strict orders to remain there. So, probably, the above Sannidhi had been reconstructed. However, at present, the Bhashyakara Sannidhi is in a ruined condition.

From the outer prakaram, we enter the next one by a gate without a gopura and the gateway is full of architectural beauty. The prakara was covered with thick bushes and debris as it obtained in 1914. However, this prakara is kept tidy in recent days. There are some mandapas in this prakara also. One was used as a Bheri mandapa and another as a Taligal mandapa during the Navaratri festivals. The latter mandapa does not now exist at all. From this prakara, we enter the next one by a gate called the Kanchu Gumma Toranam so called from the bronze plates and knobs covering the doors.

B. The Main Unit

i. Garbagriha and Artha mandapa

These two form the original cave of the temple. The garbagriha is rectangular in plan and measures 10'2" x 10'4". The outer walls of the arathamandapa are slightly inset from the line of the outer walls of the garbagriha which measures 28' x10'2" with no circumambulatory path. Inside the garbagriha, the main deity is placed a little behind the exact centre and directly opposite the
front doorway. In the interior, both the garbhagriha and the ardhamandapa are 10' in height and have flat ceilings. The ceiling of the garbhagriha has a central square panel with a concentric circular padma motif. The ardhamandapa ceiling does not have any decoration. The door frame of the garbhagriha has Kumba type pilaster on the jambs and some figures at the base and a Lalatabimba on the lintel. The figures at the base of the jambs are the Vaishnava dvarapalakas and Lalatabimba is that of Gajalakshmi. On either side of this doorframe is a life-size dvarapalaka figure now kept leaning against the front wall of the ardhamandapa, but these, however, were not part of the original planning.

In external elevation the garbhagriha and ardhamandapa have an adhistana supporing a bhitii. The prastara and hara portions are now embedded in a concrete roof recently constructed. The garbhagriha is crowned by a tower.

The Adhistana consists of a series of functional mouldings. Upama, the lowermost moulding, projects beyond the vertical norm and is surmounted by the Jagati. This is oblong in shape. Over this is the kumba, which is three faceted (tripatta kumuda). Next is the kantha a recessed moulding, oblong in elevation, and connecting the other mouldings above. The pattika which is above the kantha is thick. The topmost member of the plinth is the vedii (also called prati).

Immediately above the adhistana is the bhitii decorated with karnastambhas (Corner pilasters), kudayastambhas (wall pilasters) and devakostas (niches).

The outerwalls of the garbhagriha and ardhamandapa contain some superb small reliefs. Incidents from the Nrisimha Purana are illustrated on neat little panels. These are set against a background, as it were, of restrained decoration on the wall surface. On the western wall, the surface is divided into three parts by pilasters. There are also devakosthas and kumbha panjaras. Between them are three horizontal rows of reliefs.

The Pranala meant to drain out water from the garbhagriha is visible on the northern side at the Jagati level. This projects out of the wall for about 1'6" and has a lion's face at the end.

Above the roof, the sikhara part of the Vimana super-structure is visible. Though vimana is of recent times, it reflects features of the earlier components. The Vimana is in two talas. The hara on the first consists of a karnakuta, a panjara with an image in it, a sala, another panjara and another karnakuta. On the second tala, the scheme is a sala flanked by karnakutas. There are a number of self-imaginative images. The stupa rises from a four-petalled lotus.

ii. Small rooms

The ardhamandapa (28'x10'.2" with six pillars) is continued by an oblong construction. On the northern side of this mandapa are placed bronze images of the temple, on the southern side, there are store rooms.

iii. Mahamandapa

Axially in front of the above mandapa, is an eight-pillared square shaped mahamandapa (22'8" x 22'8"). On the northern, southern sides of this mandapa, at its junction with the preceding unit, there are entrance porches. But, now the southern entrance is permanently closed and northern entrance leads to the mahamandapa of the Goddess shrine. The main entrance i.e. the eastern entrance opens out to the rangamandapa.

iv. Ammavaru shrine

This is somewhat small and consists of a garbhagriha and an ardhamandapa, (44'10"x33'6"). Besides, there are also rooms used for different purposes and also for keeping different bronze im-
ages. This is continued by a mahamandapa, which is uneven in size. At the north-western corner, Andal Shrine is located. According to the temple plan, (old) Andal Shrine was located in the southern side of the outer prakara. No one gives any reliable information about the shifting of the Andal shrine. The mahamandapa has 22 pillars which is also unevenly distributed. The northern entrance has a flight of steps, which leads to the first prakara of the temple. The eastern side is totally open leading to rangamandapa.

v. Rangamandapa

This mandapa is the most ornate part in the whole temple. There are 82 pillars distributed in ten rows. Each pillar is a work of extraordinary artistic merit, each ingeniously designed, most intricately carved and richly sculptured with mythological stories, most pleasing to the eye and instructive to the mind. As to their general pattern, most of these can be described as square shafts but some have cubical blocks divided by polygonal fillets, but each part of it is minutely carved. Some are incut to display a central core with a number of subsidiary shafts to form its outer body. Some of them show the technique of undercutting. Each one of them is a type by itself and is marked by ingenuity of craftsmanship. They are better enjoyed visually than through any verbal description.

vi. The Mahadvara - Gopura

Though the upper part of the tower is modern, the lower part is considerably old. The whole tower is veritably a gorgeous creation. To a great extent, the upper part retains its original components. The outer face and inner face of the lower part have been sculptured exquisitely. The sculptures at the base are not mere architectural forms. They show a harmonious blending of figure along with architectural and decorative elements. Nothing is more remarkable than the manner in which vertical and horizontal lines have been combined on the inner surface of the Gopura in order to produce a rich effect. There are nearly seven horizontal rows of reliefs. The bottom contains sikharas which look as if they were the vimanas submerged. Then, a row of seated ganas apparently playing music, with a bold adhistana member, in which very small vimanas are inset. Then a number of elephants march by, one divided from the other by pilasters.

On the base of the Gopura outside, there are three niches each on the right and left sides. The pillars meant to serve as jambs are nearly 22' high and cut in single granitic blocks. These door jambs and the side structures, are adorned with beautiful sculptures, all elegantly carved with a singular precision and a unique proportion. The female figures standing on makaras and shown as hanging to the creepers flowing down from above are exquisite sculptures.

vii. Dhvajastambha and Balipitha

In front of the Gopura a platform extends further. On the extended portion stands a dhvajastambha and a balipitha. The dhvajastambha is a tall pillar with a square base and a circular shaft and is now covered with brass plates, and is decorated with a metal flag at the top. The balipitha has three divisions, viz. a pitha, a padma and a karnika, the lowest division being square in shape, the central one being octagonal and the topmost being circular.

viii. Other mandapas and shrines

Beyond the open yard around the central unit are a few subsidiary structures. In all the four corners, we find different shrines.

ix. Kitchen

Kitchen is situated in the south eastern corner. This is square in shape measuring 37' x 37'. This is a plain structure.
x. Kalyana Mandapa

This is situated in the south eastern corner, on a raised platform, measuring 100’ x 31’7". It has fifty pillars, each being distinct and elegant. They form four rows of pillars with two rows bearing erect lions standing in the Yali posture. The other two rows of pillars are embedded into the stone walls.

xi. Satagopayathi shrine

In the north-western corner is the shrine of Satagopayathi. This is a small structure having a Garbhagriha and an eight-pillared mandapa in front. This measures 32’2" x 21’8".

xii. Ramalayam

In the north-eastern corner is the Ramalayam. This is quite a big structure measuring 36’8" x 90' and has 50 pillars distributed in 10 rows. A number of stone icons, which were placed earlier in this shrine, are now shifted and placed in the Kalyana mandapa.

xiii. Mandapas in the second prakara

Beyond the open yard around the second unit is a broad pillared cloister running along the prakara wall on the western and the southern sides. This cloister is on a high base and consists of rows of pillars, the last row touching the prakara wall, thus providing two long bays running parallel all along the outer-wall on its inner side. These bayed corridors, however, are used as residential places by temple priests, manager and others connected with the temple.

xiv. Mondil-Gopura

This is the second entrance to the temple. This is an Unfinished Gopura and has only a lower part. The upper portion remains incomplete. The lower portion is almost similar to that of the first gopura in its delineation.

xv. Jayastambha and other structures

Right in front of the third entrance is a Jayastambha, a Bhashyakarar sannidhi, and a weavers’ chattam. It is clear that the Jayastambha was erected to commemorate the victory of Sri Rangaraya over Ibrahim Qutbshahi. There is an inscription displayed on the stone encircling the middle of the base of the Stamba. Risking repetition, it is worth noting that the inscription registers the gift of a piece of land in the village Alamur purchased from Van Satagopa Jiyaar and other officials connected with the management of the temple, for raising a garden with coconut and other trees in favour of God Ahobaleswara by Avubhalraju son of Timmayyadeva - maharaju of Gargyagotra, Apyastamba - Sutra and Yajus - Sakha. On the northern side is a dilapidated mandapa, in which Ramanuja idol was installed and called Bhashyakarar sannidhi in the early days. On the top of this shrine, abutting the prakara wall, is a newly built weavers’ chattam.

3. Chronology And Development

A. Chronological Data From Tradition and Epigraphy

i. Upper Ahobilam

The Narasimhaswami temples at Ahobilam as they stand now are the result of a continuous architectural activity through centuries from the time of their inception as can be made out from several pieces of evidence.
Traditionally it is believed that Tirumangai Alvar (7th-8th cent. A.D.) has composed songs in praise of the god of Ahobilam (Upper). Also the Ahobilam Kaifiyat records that the Chalukyan kings (8th century A D.) worshipped the deity of Ahobilam.

However, it is clear from the epigraphical evidence that the Upper Ahobilam temple was in existence and also popular, earlier to Chalukya Kirthi Varman II (C.8th cent. A.D.).

The next record (Inscription of Andhra Desa, No. 472) of any utility is of one Prolaya Vema's record, (1325-53 A.D.) which registers the construction of flight of steps to the Upper Ahobilam temple. Another inscription (though not found now) refers to the construction of Mahamandapa in the Upper Ahobilam by Harahara II (1377-1404 A.D.).

Stylistically the pillars used in the Mahamandapa, however, is of a significant type and these pillars exhibit a style, which was in vogue in the Kakatiya temples.

From these evidences, we can presume that the cave temple at Upper Ahobilam might have come into existence earlier than 7th-8th cent. A.D. and the other components of the main unit of the temple may have been constructed between 11th-14th cent. A.D.

II. Lower Ahobilam Temple

An inscription of 1515 A.D. states that Krishnadavaraya visited the temple and offered varieties of jewels to the god at the Lower Ahobilam.

Saluva Narasimha (1486-1491 A.D.) in his work Ramabhyyuydayam clearly mentions that he was born by the grace of god, Narasimha of Ahobilam. In another place, he calls himself as the disciple of Van-Satagopa Jiyr and as one blessed as Vira-Narasimha.

Very interestingly enough, an inscription of 1546 A.D. names the main image of the Lower Ahobilam as Vira-Narasimha.

The garbhagriha and the ardhamandapa form a compact unified structure, both by way of the mode of construction and style. The adhistana and prastara of both these are continuous. The decoration of the bhitti is also identical on the two. Stylistically the adhistana is of the type regularly seen in the early Vijayanagara temples, the order and form of the Upana to prati here being almost identical with that seen in the Madhavaraya Svami temple at Gorantla, Ramalingeswara temple and Chintalaraya temple at Tadpatri. So, it appears that this unit of the Narasimhaswami temple, i.e., its garbhagriha and the ardhamandapa may belong to the early Vijayanagara tradition.

Stylistically, the pillar types found in the Mahamandapa of the temple are similar to the pillars found in the Ramalayam, Kalyana mandapa and Jiyr temple, and these pillars are identical with the pillars found in the Madhavaraya Svami temple at Gorantla, built by Saluva Narasimha (1485-1506 A.D.)

Also, we know clearly that, the early Vijayanagara architectural tradition has expanded in the Rayalaseema area during the Vijayanagara empire from its beginning to the downfall.

We may infer from the above evidences that the main unit of the temple along with the mahamandapa, may have been constructed during the time of Saluva Narasimha.
4. TABLE OF CHRONOLOGY

A. Upper Akobilam Temple

1. The Garbhagriha (main cave) and the adjacent cave
   C 2nd-3rd Cent.A.D.

2. Chenchulakshmi shrine, Sudarshana Shrine and mahamandapa
   C 11th-12th Cent.A.D.

B. Lower Akobilam Temple

1. Garbhagriha, ardhamandapa, Mahamandapa, Ramalayam, Jiyar’s Shrine and main unit of the Kalyana mandapam
   Saluva Narasimha’s time (1485 - 1506 A.D.)

2. Rangamandapa and the mandapa in front of the Tayar Shrine
   C. 16th Cent.A.D.
1. PLAN OF NARASIMHA SVAMI TEMPLE AT
UPPER AHOBILAM (OLD) PREPARED IN 1916
front doorway. In the interior, both the garbhagriha and the ardhamandapa are 10' in height and have flat ceilings. The ceiling of the garbhagriha has a central square panel with a concentric circular padma motif. The ardhamandapa ceiling does not have any decoration. The doorframe of the garbhagriha has Kumba type pilaster on the jambs and some figures at the base and a Lalatabimba on the lintel. The figures at the base of the jambs are the Vaishnavas dvarapalakas and Lalatabimba is that of Gajalakshmi. On either side of this doorframe is a life-size dvarapalaka figure now kept leaning against the front wall of the ardhamandapa, but these, however, were not part of the original planning.

In external elevation the garbhagriha and ardhamandapa have an adhistana supporing a bhitii. The prastara and hara portions are now embedded in a concrete roof recently constructed. The garbhagriha is crowned by a tower.

The Adhistana consists of a series of functional mouldings. Upana, the lowermost moulding, projects beyond the vertical norm and is surmounted by the Jagati. This is oblong in shape. Over this is the kumba, which is three faceted (tripatta kumuda). Next is the kantha a recessed moulding, oblong in elevation, and connecting the other mouldings above. The pattika which is above the kantha is thick. The topmost member of the plinth is the vedii (also called pratti).

Immediately above the adhistana is the bhitii decorated with karnastambhas (Corner pilasters), kudvastambhas (wall pilasters) and devakostas (niches).

The outerwalls of the garbhagriha and ardhamandapa contain some superb small reliefs. Incidents from the Nrisimha Purana are illustrated on neat little panels. These are set against a background, as it were, of restrained decoration on the wall surface. On the western wall, the surface is divided into three parts by pilasters. There are also devakostas and kumbha panjaras. Between them are three horizontal rows of reliefs.

The Pranala meant to drain out water from the garbhagriha is visible on the northern side at the Jagati level. This projects out of the wall for about 1'6" and has a lion's face at the end.

Above the roof, the sikharas part of the Vimana super-structure is visible. Though vimana is of recent times, it reflects features of the earlier components. The Vimana is in two talas. The hara on the first consists of a karnakuta, a panjara with an image in it, a sala, another panjara and another karnakuta. On the second tala, the scheme is a sala flanked by karnakutas. There are a number of self-imaginative images. The stupi rises from a four-petalled lotus.

II. Small rooms

The ardhamandapa (28'x10'.2" with six pillars) is continued by an oblong construction. On the northern side of this mandapa are placed bronze images of the temple, on the southern side, there are store rooms.

III. Mahamandapa

Axially in front of the above mandapa, is an eight-pillared square shaped mahamandapa (22'8" x 22'8"). On the northern, southern sides of this mandapa, at its junction with the preceding unit, there are entrance porches. But, now the southern entrance is permanently closed and northern entrance leads to the mahamandapa of the Goddess shrine. The main entrance i.e. the eastern entrance opens out to the rangamandapa.

IV. Amavarau shrine

This is somewhat small and consists of a garbhagriha and an ardhamandapa, (44'10"x33'6"). Besides, there are also rooms used for different purposes and also for keeping different bronze im-
TYPES OF PILLARS USED IN THE NARASIMHA SVAMI TEMPLES
UPPER AHOBILAM

1 A PILLAR IN THE MAHA MANDAPA
2. A PILLAR IN THE MAHA MANDAPA
3. A PILLAR IN THE MAHA MANDAPA
4. A PILLAR IN THE MAHA MANDAPA
5. A PILLAR IN THE MAHA MANDAPA, PILLARED CORRIDOR (EASTERN SIDE)
6. A PILLAR IN THE MAHA MANDAPA, PILLARED CORRIDOR (EASTERN SIDE)
TYPES OF PILLARS USED IN THE NARASIMHA SVAMI TEMPLE
LOWER AHOBILAM

1. A PILLAR IN THE RAMALAYAM
2. A PILLAR IN THE ARDHAMANDAPA (INCOMPLETE)
3. A PILLAR IN THE ARDHAMANDAPA (INCOMPLETE)
4 A PILLAR IN THE ARDHAMANDAPA (TAYAR SHRINE)

5 A PILLAR IN THE MAHAMANDAPA (NARASIMHA SHRINE)

6 A PILLAR IN THE MAHAMANDAPA (TAYAR SHRINE)
7 A PILLAR IN THE RANGAMANDAPA

LOWER AHOBILAM
TYPES OF ADHISTANAS USED IN THE UPPER AHOBILAM

GARBHAGRIHA (NORTHERN SIDE)

ALWAR SHRINE (WESTERN SIDE)

MAHAMANDAPA (NORTHERN SIDE)
TYPES OF ADHISTANAS USED IN THE LOWER AHOBILAM

GARBHAGRIHA (WESTERN SIDE)

MAHAMANDAPA (SOUTHERN SIDE)

RANGAMANDAPA
CHAPTER - 6

SCULPTURE AND ICONOGRAPHY

The temple possesses a number of stone and metal images representative of various stylistic traditions and pancharatra iconographic forms. This being a Srivaishnava temple, there is preponderance of the Vaishnava images. Among them the images of Vishnu and his various avatars form a major percentage. Strictly speaking, according to the Srivaishnava theology, the Lord is the only one. Yet, because of his inner dynamic vitality and creative activity of cosmic proportions, He can be comprehended by men in his different modes, diverse appearances, various forms and unlimited energies. Out of His infinite mercy, He chooses to take forms and shapes, to assume appearances, and to undertake universal welfare activities etc. They include the vyuha, avatara, murti and Sakti modes of revelation as well as the other shapes and forms. Thus there are ten avatars attributed to Vishnu in the Hindu pantheon of deities.

Vishnu is unique as the only one among the Hindu deities to be credited with avatars. He is said to have assumed several forms in his role as protector. This is said to have been explained by the recurrent puranic motif of the daivarupam in order to resolve the recurring conflict between the gods and the demons. Huntington would consider the avatara theory to have conformed to an evolutionary pattern. He tries to show that as the first three avatars are concerned with rescuing something from the waters, the resultant forms have approximately been fish-man, tortoise-vedas or knowledge, and boar-earth. Thereafter, the emergence of Narasimha, the hybrid form, half-man and half-beast, is said to be symbolic of nascent humanity while vamana is physically undeveloped, a dwarf, yet he is said to possess within himself the consciousness of divine power as he takes possession of the world. Parasurama represents the full potential of human physical strength directed for a single purpose by the power of will. The Ramavatara symbolises moral strength and represents the human ideal. Judged by every human canon of ethical conduct, the superiority of moral strength over physical powers is exemplified by the episode of Rama meeting Parasurama resulting in the retirement of the latter. The advent of Krishna (along with Balarama) does not make Rama’s position less important, for morality is always presupposed in the teachings of Krishna. As Kalki is yet to appear, it is said to be difficult to fix him in this scheme, but as his colour is white, it may represent a symbol of purity and also the fullness or plentitude.
The above pattern of evolution is purely interpretational and is neither historical nor chronological in its association with Vishnu. For, the originators of the **avatara** theory clearly did not resort to an evolutionary pattern for the incarnation. The series of **avatars** did not assume the same importance in all the regions and there is a clear preference for some over the others in specific geographical areas. The **avatara** concept provided an easy means of bringing into the ever-expanding pantheon all new entrants into **Vaishnava** worship, as for example, the **Alvars** and **Acharyas** and even the personified and deified weapons.

The **Srivaishnava agamas** consider that the temples of Lord Vishnu should have the images of His consort and attendant deities. Many a devotee often finds as much solace in worshipping these deities as he would find in worshipping the main god; the choice of a god for religious devotion is out of individual volition conditioned by the attitude and purpose of the devotee. All these points appear to have been taken into consideration by the **agamas** in formulating their prescriptions in which enough provision has been made to install various types of deities, both major and minor. Equally so, the **Alvars** and **Acharyas** are respected and worshipped in iconic form. They, in a way, are the “embodiments of humility, devotion and absolute surrender in body and soul” the three important features emphasized in **Srivaishnava** devotionalism. They are at once the guides and models to the aspirants of **moksha**. All these naturally find representation in the **Srivaishnava** temples.

1. **Consecrated Images**

   A. **Stone images (Upper Ahobilam)**

   i. **The main deity**

   The chief deity installed in the main cave of this temple is **Ugra-Narasimha**. The inscriptions refer to this as **Ahobala Narasimha**.

   This is a beautiful image made of **Salagrama** stone. It is 2' high and is depicted in sitting posture in the **samabhanga** pose. The right leg is folded and the left leg is dangling down. It is two-handed and is depicted tearing out Hiranyakasipu's entrails. The demon is lying on the lap of the god, the demon's head is to the right and his legs to the left. The figure of **Lakshmi** in the form of **Srivatsa** on the right chest is very interesting. Iconographically this image of Narasimha is very unique. This figure very much resembles the figure of Narasimha on a plaque from Manimangalam in the Chengalput district belonging to the Pallava period.

   The image is somewhat peculiar stylistically, without conforming completely to any of the prevailing styles such as Pallava or early Chalukyan, in this region. However the form of the image is close to those seen in the Ikshvakus or Vishnukundin tradition. A stone image of Prahlada in Anjalihasta is installed in a niche opposite to the idol of the main deity. This image is 1' high.

   ii. **Chenchu-Lakshmi**

   This is the consort image of Ahobala Narasimha installed in the shrine at the north-western corner inside the temple. The image is about 3'11" high. The goddess is shown as seated in **padmasana** and as having four arms; the lower two being in the **abhaya** and **varada mudras** and the rear ones carrying the lotus-bud in each of them. She is richly decked with the **Karanda-makuta** and other jewels. The **prabhavali** is carved in the same stone and it has a creeper design.

   The creeper design in the **prabhavali**, the **karanda makuta** and the style of the delineation show that this image is possibly of the 10th - 11th centuries A.D.
iii. Images in the second cave

There are four images now kept in the cave, adjacent to the main cave. The images are of Siva Lingam, Ganesha, Ugra Narasimha and two unidentified images. According to the local tradition and structure No.6 in the New Plan, there existed an Eswaralayam.

iv. Siva Linga

Sivalinga is about 1'1" high. The bottom portion is totally embedded in the floor. The soma-sutra and the portion above are visible.

v. Ganapathi

There is a figure of Ganapathi by the side of Sivalinga. It is nearly 1'5" high. The Deity is shown as seated on a pedestal, with a mouse depicted on the pitha and a halo behind the head, hands depicted in the naturalistic posture, holding parasu and padma in the upper hands and ekadanta and sweet preparation in the lower hands. He wears ardhoruka with a naga udarabandha. The ears are characteristically big. The delineation of a broad chest and broad shoulders and lack of ornamentation displayed in this image are some of the characteristic features of the early sculptures (i.e. Pallava or Chalukya). The disposition of the trunk i.e. the entire trunk turned to the left with a curve at the tip which rests on the bowl of sweets in the left hand suggests that the image is that of the Karnakata tradition and the presence of karanda makuta reminds us of similar decoration in the early Chalukyan sculptures. Thus the image represents the early-later Chalukya transitional period i.e. to about 8th - 9th century A.D.

vi. Ugra-Narasimha

There is another image, Ugra Narasimha with four hands. The upper hands carry Sankha and Chakra and the lower hands tearing open the abdomen of the demon. It is in a sitting posture in the samabhanga pose. The right leg is folded and the left leg is dangling down. The demon is lying on the lap of the god, the demon's head is to the right and his legs to the left and is shown as holding a sword and a shield in his hands.

The lion face, the form of the Sankha and Chakra, the size of the srivatsa, the natural hand postures, and the style of delineation show that the image is possibly of the early Chalukyan style.

vii. Two unidentified images

1. Goddess Lakshmi in padmasana is seated on a padma motif. It is two handed holding nilotpala flower in the right hand in the katakahasta posture whereas the left hand is in the varada hasta pose. She is also shown with well-moulded breasts, and several necklaces. The kiritamakuta is on her head and the eyes are in samadrishhti pose. Makarakundalas are found in her ears. The usual ornaments such as manjiras, keyuras, bangles, necklaces, the mangala sutra are found on the image of the Goddess. The style of delineation shows that this image is possibly of the Pallava-early Chalukyan style.

The other is a form of Vishnu in Bhogasana posture. Vishnu is represented seated on a pedestal. The left leg is folded and the right leg is hanging down. On the left thigh of the image rests the left hand and the right hand is held in abhayamudra. In the rear right and left hands the Chakra and sankha are respectively held. Garuda is depicted on the pedestal. The style of the image takes it to the Pallava-early Chalukyan period.
viii. Dvarapalakas

There are three sets of Dvarakapalaka figures flanking the main cave and Mahamandapa (northern and eastern) doorways. They are of varying heights ranging from 4'9" to 8'6". They are shown as standing at ease with one leg firmly held on the ground and the other foot across, as though they are resting the weight of their body partly on the mace which rests on the floor. They have four hands. Both of them hold chakra and sa...kha in the upper right and left hands respectively. But the right one has the gada in the left hand and its right hand is in abhaya pose. These are reversed in the left figure. Both the images are shown with a number of ornaments. Their headgear is like karandamakuta.

The figures are thin and elegant. The workmanship is very fine and looks more like Kakatiya or early Vijayanagara period.

ix. Garuda

Garuda who is affectionately called by the Srivaishnavas as Garudalvar or periya-Tiruvadi has his place directly opposite the presiding deity inside the temples. But here the Garuda shrine is outside the main unit of the temple near Dhvajastambha. The figure is about 3'6" high. Garuda here is depicted as standing with two hands in the anjali pose. Being the lord’s mount, he is standing with outspread wings, always ready to carry him. He is shown with a roughly trefoiled halo behind and a low crown and is heavily decorated with ornaments. Stylistically this image appears to be of the 11-12 centuries A.D.

x. Ramanuja

This stone image is identified as Ramanuja. The image is shown as seated in padmasana and is about 3' high. Ramanuja is shown here as Sanyasin with shaven head and holding his hands in the anjali pose. The earlobes are long and show a large split. He wears a tulasi garland, yajnopavita and a single large bangle, a little below the elbow on each of the foreheads. Stylistically this belongs to the Vijayanagara period.

B. Images in Lower Ahobilam

i. Prahlada Varada-Narasimha

The image is in sukhasana pose with left leg folded while the right leg is dangling free. Lakshmi is seated on his left thigh. It has four hands, the lower hands are in abhaya and varada mudras and the upper hands are holding chakra and sankha. The image is about 4' high.

ii. Amrutavalli - Tayar

This image depicts the consort of Prahlada Varada. The image is about 3'1" high. The goddess is shown as seated in padmasana and as having four arms. The lower two being in the abhaya and varada mudras and the rear ones carrying the lotusbud in each of them. There is a halo behind the head. She is richly decked with the karanda-makuta and other jewels. This is a beautiful image.

iii. Andal

The image of Andal is 3'5" high and is standing in samabhanga on a high pedestal. The right hand is holding a kalharana flower and the left hand is in tola mudra. The hair is tied to a side.
iv. Images in the Kalyana mandapa

a. Balakrishna

Balakrishna is depicted as crawling with a ball of butter in his hand. The image is decked with varieties of ornaments. Stylistically this image appears to be of the late Vijayanagara period.

b. Venkataramana

The image is about 4' high. It is a standing image of Srinivasa on a pedestal and holds Sankha and Chakra in the upper hands, the lower right hand is in Varada mudra and the left in kaiimudra. The image appears to be of the late Vijayanagara period.

c. Panduranga

The image is about 3'8" high. It is in samabhanga and standing posture. It is two handed and both the hands are placed on kati. Stylistically the image belongs to the late Vijayanagara period.

d. Madhava

The image is about 3' high. The image stands in samabhanga on a pedestal. The god holds Chakra and Sankha in the upper right and left hands and the lower right holds gada and the left padma. This conforms to the agamic description of Madhava of the twenty four forms of Vishnu. Stylistically the image is of the early Vijayanagara period.

v. Rama and Sita

These stone images are in the Ramayam in the north-eastern corner of the temple. Inside the temple are the seated images of Rama and Sita, Lakshmana alone is standing. All the three figures are carved out of one stone. Hanuman is in anjalihasta pose near the feet of Rama. Lakshmana is to the right of Rama and Sita is to Rama's left. Lakshmana is standing in samabhanga holding a bow and a quiver. Rama is keeping his right hand in abhaya posture and the left hand rests on his thigh. Sita holds a nilotpala flower in the left hand and the right hand kept in the abhaya posture. The images are fine and elegant. The presence of parabolic prabhavali without kirtimuka is interesting reminding us of the 10th-11th century images as seen in some Nolamba sculpture.

vi. Vishvakasena

The image is placed in a small room. It is about 2'5" in height and is depicted as seated. It has four hands with Chakra and Sankha in the upper right and left hands respectively and the lower right and left hands shown in abhaya and jnana mudra. The parabolic prabhavali reminds us of the 10th-11th century workmanship.

According to Srivaishnava tradition, Vishvakasena is the commander of the armies of Vishnu and, as such, occupies a place very near the main deity in the temple. Also in the acharya hierarchy of the Srivaishnavas, he is next only to Sri or Lakshmi. He is invoked by them at the beginning of all the auspicious ceremonies. He is also the custodian of the personal effects of the Lord, and so, in all important festivals, special worship is offered first to Him.

C. Metal Images

All the metal images in the temple are of bronze except the snapana-bera which is made of silver.

l. Karma-beras

In agamic ritualism associated with temples, a number of services and rituals are to be performed. All these are expected to be offered to the presiding deity of the temple. But the elaboration
of rituals probably made it necessary to provide some substitutes for the main deity. While in some temples all the rituals are performed to the main deity installed in the garbhagriha, some of the temples have smaller images in bronze for use in connection with specific rituals. These bronze images are called karma-beras. They may be one, three, five or six in a temple. There is only one karma bera in the Narasimha Svami temple, and it is the snapana-bera.

The karma-beras used for various purposes should correspond to a certain degree in posture and attitude to the main icon- if the main icon stands, the karmabimba stands; if the main icon sits, the karmabimba should also sit. However, if the main icon reclines, the karmabimba cannot be shown likewise but may be shown only standing or sitting. Further correspondences are to be noted in regard to the number of arms, and the specific weapons borne etc.

ii. Snapana-bera

This is a small silver icon, about 9" high. This is always kept just at the foot of the dhruva-bera in the sanctum-sanctorum. This is used for purposes of offering daily bath to the god.

The image, as a karma-bera is to be, is iconographically a replica of the mula-bera, but this is totally different. Stylistically, the icon is in samabhanga, and in standing posture holding Chakra and Sankha in upper hands, the lower right hand is in abhaya mudra and the left is holding gada. This may be of about the early-Vijayanagara period.

iii. Ahabila-Narasimha

The processional deity of the Upper Ahabila temple is placed in the Lower temple. Iconographically, this is not a replica of the mula- bera. This image is about 1'3" high including the pedestal which is about 8" in height. Iconographically this is an image of Narasimha with Lakshmi.

Narasimha is sitting with Lakshmi on his lap. It is four-handed having Chakra and Sankha in upper two hands and the lower right is in abhaya and the left is holding Lakshmi. Stylistically, this image appears to be of the early Vijayanagara type.

iv. Lakshmi-Narasimha

Iconographically this is almost similar to the above icon. This icon is used as a processional image of Pavana-Narasimha. Stylistically the forms of Sankha and Chakra, the kirita, the mode of depiction of the hands and the face, the bulging chest, roundish face possibly indicate that this image may be slightly later than the above image.

v. Jvala-narasimha

This icon is also placed along with the above bronzes. This is the processional image of Jvala-Narasimha. The processional image is a replica of the mula- bera, Jvala Narasimha, iconographically. The image is seated on a Garuda pedestal measuring 1'6" high. This image forms the central figure of a set, the other two being the images of Sri and Bhu which flank this, but are separate pieces. Sridevi is on his right and Bhudevi, on his left. They are in rhythmic tribhanga pose. The depiction of these is tender and charming. These are about 1'3" in height. The forms of band postures and ayudhas, the tall kiritamakuta of the god, the conical karandamakuta of the goddesses, fine workmanship etc. possibly suggest that this is similar stylistically to that of the Ahabila Narasimha (explained already). Hence, this may also belong to the 11th - 12th centuries A.D. bronze tradition.

vi. Prahlada Varada Narasimha

This is not identical with the dhruvabera of Prahlada-varada- Narasimha. Iconographically, this is totally different. This image is about 2'5" high and the pedestal is about 9" high. This processional
image is in samabhanga, standing posture and forms the central figure of a set, the other two being the images of Sri and Bhu which flank this but are separate pieces. Sridevi is to his right and Bhudevi, to his left. The flanking images of Sri and Bhu are in rhythmic tribhanga pose. The icons are very charming and elegant. These are about 2'5" in height. As the images are now in worship access to them is not permitted and hence it is difficult to carry on a detailed study. However, the visible portion and its style possibly suggest that the set of images belong to the Vijayanagara tradition, of about 14th to 15th centuries A.D.

vii. Vishvaksena

This is a beautiful bronze image of seated Vishvaksena, about 1'9" high. The iconographical features are identical with those seen in the stone image of Vishvaksena already described. Stylistically the forms of Sankha and Chakra, the Kirita, the mode of depiction of the hands and the face, the bulging chest, roundish face, and somewhat pointed nose possibly indicate that this image may be of the Vijayanagara period.

viii. Navaneetha Krishna

This image is also placed along with the other bronze icons. This is an image of Balakrishna standing and holding butter in the right hand. It is in dancing posture and the right leg is lifted. Stylistically this may be of the Vijayanagara period. This image is about 1'10" high.

ix. Chakrattalavar

This image is about 1'8" in height. This deity, also called Sudarsana, is the personification of the discus, one of the weapons of Vishnu. This is the replica of the stone image installed in Upper Ahobilam. The representation of this in this temple is awe-inspiring and also bewitching. In outline, it is a chakra or circular frame with jvala or flames depicted. Within the large circle, there is the shatkona design made up of two interlacing equilateral triangles. In the centre of this is another smaller circle in which stands Sudarsana in his terrible aspect, his hair standing out in jatas or plaits which are like the flames emanating from the god of fire. He has prominent tusks. He is depicted here with six hands, holding chakra, ankhusa and gada in the right hands and sankha, pasa and padma in the left hands. On the reverse side there is no figure.

This is a beautiful image and in various respects its delineation looks almost like the processional image of Ahobala Narasimha image placed along with the bronze icons.

x. Alvars

The images of the Alvars are placed in a cell located, in between the arathamandapa and Mahamandapa of the Lower Ahobilam temple. The bronze images of Ramanuja and Adivansatagopa yati (the first Jiyar of Ahobila math) are placed along with the Alvars.

The image of Ramanuja is 1'4" in height, and iconographically this is a replica of the stone image.

The image of Adivansatagopa yati is in standing posture, measuring 1'6" and holds the bronze icon of Lakshmi Narasimha in his hands (for details see chapter 3, P. 72).

Nammalavar (1'3" high) is shown as seated, displaying Chinmudra whereas Tirumangai (2'2" high), is standing holding a sword and a shield. All the other Alvars are about 1'8" high. All are shown as standing except the above two Poygai, Pey, Bhudattalavar and Tirumalisai are with anjali hasta. Kulasekharalvar a crowned monarch, has a makuta on his head and is with anjali hasta and is standing. Certain Brahmmin saints have a small tuft of hair on the crown as in the case of Tondaradippodi,
Periyaḻvar and Madurkavi. Others are shown with a bun of hair. Tiruppanaḻvar could easily be recognized by the cymbals he has in his hands.

The Alvar images here successfully display the spirit of complete surrender (prapatti) to God in their countenance and stance. These images may be of the Vijayanagara bronze tradition.

2. Non-Consecrated Sculptures

The temples often served as places of offering religious instruction as much as they served as places of worship. Many of the temples ran educational institutions themselves offering higher instruction in various aspects of religious love and devotion to the students. These students belonged mostly to the higher castes. But there was still a large section of the society like women folk and people belonging to various professional and other castes whose curiosity for knowing about their religion was also to be satisfied. This purpose was amply served by a number of depictions of gods and goddesses and themes from the puranas in various places in the temple. They served as illustrated religious books in stone. In order to serve this purpose well, there have been a number of sculptured pieces, some purely comic, some evoking curiosity, and some simply decorative adding attraction and beauty.

In the Narasimha svami temple such a rich wealth of religious sculpture is to be seen carved in relief on a number of pillars set up in the mahamandapa and the different pillared corridors running round inside the prakara wall.

3. Sculpture on pillars and walls

A. Upper Ahobilam

1. The Mahamandapa and pillared corridor

A rich fare of sculptured representations of divine figures individuated and functioning in the different contexts of the epic literature is intermixed with or highlighted by secular motifs of dancing girls, flute-playing shepherds, squatting monkeys in Ajalihasta pose, fabulous figures of swan and a woman seated on fish. It is interesting enough to notice paralellisms in respects of attitude, aim and posture between the divine figures and secular persons. Scenes from the Ramayana representing and dramatising major events in the story of the hero are engraved with meticulous details. They include Lord Rama offering a ring as insignia to Hanuman commissioned with the task of searching out Lord Rama’s abducted wife; Lord Hanuman meeting Sita under Asoka tree in the Asoka garden of Ravana, Lord Hanuman in the ambassadorial role seated on a higher level than that of the enemy, Ravana and such like incidents; Lord Krishna’s figure taking handful of butter from a pot and Lord Krishna playing in flute, the individual figures drawn from the story of Bhagavatha; Lord Narasimha represented as pursuing his enemy Hiranyakasipu and tearing the abdomen of the enemy. They bring to the minds of the onlookers certain major hallowed and picturesque events in the lives of the protagonists of the two epics concerned.

Lord Hayagriva, Lord Dakshina Murthy, Lord Venkatesvara, Brahma the creator, Lord Bhairava and Lord Buddha have been individuated and represented to inspire a sense of piety in the minds of the worshippers belonging to different shades of Hindu religious philosophy. They bring together figures of Vaishnava mysticism and forms of manifestations of Shiva. As usual, floral designs, animal figures and fabled creatures are rendered with artistic grace in their miniature forms. Another striking feature of the artistic figures on the pillars is the sculptured representation of lions squatting and standing in different sizes. These figures recur in more or less similar forms in the other mandapas of the Upper Ahobilam. Yali type of pillars preponderate.
ii. North-West outer walls of the Mahamandapa

The outer wall of the northern side presents a series of sculptured engravings which are of considerable interest. As one walks along gazing at the figures, one is struck with the grace and tale-telling picturesqueness of scenes from Narsimhavatara Krishna Pratara and tribal life. If we concentrate on the first row of sculptured representations, we find Lord Narasimha being enthroned and fanned by women with fly-whisks, Narasimha tearing Hiranyakasipu's abdomen, Kirtimukha engraving, Lord Narasimha holding the terrified Chenchu Lakshmi and scene of particular interest is a pair of tribals in the pose of wooing. The picture lends itself to tribal motif on the surface level and the wooing of Chenchu Lakshmi by Narahari, at the cult level.

Of greater detail and number are a series of sculptured pieces representing Lord Krishna's childhood as described in Bhagavatham. Like a mortal child, Lord Krishna takes out a lump of butter from the churning pot as his mother churns milk.

The next scene is that of crawling Krishna, followed by Krishna in the act of stealing butter in a house of Gopika. On a complaint by the neighbours, the mother is shown to be punishing her son. Another scene represents Krishna in his naughty act of stealing the sarees of bathing gopikas. The bare gopikas are shown to be raising their hands praying to Krishna for their clothes. On the philosophical level, the Hindus view it as an act of absolute surrender to Krishna without any sense of ego.

The last row shows first the figure of Lord Krishna playing a flute, the second figure is that of a tribal hunter carrying a hunted deer. The third figure is obviously that of Lord Vishnu in the shanaka posture holding sankha and chakra in his two upper hands, while holding a mace in the lower left hand and the lower right hand held in abhayamudra. However, this is followed by the figure of a bow-woman with her face turned back plucking out a thorn from her right foot. Soon we have the figure of Lord Vishnu reclining on Adisesha with his son sprung out of his the navel and seated on the lotus and two consorts at his feet. It is followed by another representation of the figure of Lord Vishnu. A pair of women obviously Yakshnis are carved out in their fabled version. The other scenes that follow in succession are those of women in an attitude of conversation and a nude woman. It climaxes with the figure of Lord Krishna taming the ferocious Kalinga serpent. The last carving is that of a human figure encircled by a floral design.

On the surface of the outer wall of the western side, figures delineating the tribal folks in various attitudes and contexts monopolise the sculptured scenes, with the singular exception of the figure of Lord Suryanarayana, the manifestation of Vishnu. The upper row of figures shows a tribal woman holding her child with her left hand and sweeping the floor with a broom. Another figure is that of a woman seated in a semi-yogic posture on the fish. It is succeeded by an obviously shy woman with her body bare. The lower row starts with the figure of a tribal woman shooting her arrow backwards. This is followed by a chenchu huntress with her bow in the left hand and her right hand holding an arrow pointing at the spot where she suffers from the thorn in the flesh. It seems a chenchu surgeon is removing the thorn with the pointed end of his arrow. The figure of Lord Suryanarayana crowns the succession of figures depicting the tribal folk. One notices the punctuation of these figures with the columns depicting various artistic designs. Some more details about the sculpture cannot be furnished as they have been so thickly white washed as not be caught by the photo camera clearly enough.

B. Lower Ahobilam

i. The Rangamandapa and other mandapas

The Ranga Mandapam consists of 82 pillars rich with artistic sculptures with the thematic motifs of the epics Mahabharata and the Ramayana. They illustrate very popular and key events in the two
epics which have formed part and parcel of the complex Hindu religious, mythic, legendary and folk psyche. They, at once, are a feast to the eye and inspired devotion required of a pilgrim to the holy shrine. They display the fabled figures, legendary motifs, tribal culture transfigured into divine mythology. The puranic motifs engraved on the stone pillars include the Dasavatara, a cycle of ten avatars, engraved on the pillars in the northern mandapa.

The whole range of principal events connected with the avatar of Narasimha has found a series of finely chiselled and exquisitely carved figures graphically representing Lord Narasimha wooing Chenchu Lakshmi, Lord Narasimha with his consort on his lap, Lord Narasimha engaged in a duel with Hiranyakasipu, Lord Jwala Narasimha emerging out of the split pillar where upon he tears the abdomen of Hiranyakasipu. Other prominent forms of Lakshmi Narasimha are those of Varaha Narasimha, Yoga Narasimha with and without His consort Lakshmi. Yoga is usually thought of as a union of the individual soul with the Cosmic Spirit. Such a union is envisioned as the culmination of worldly renunciation and spiritual enlightenment. But here Lord Yoga Narasimha is seated with his consort Lakshmi and this puzzles and engages our minds in the direction of spiritual quest. Lord Narasimha is also represented as a guru to a disciple. These figures highlight and intensify the Narasimha cult which is practised by the Srivaishnavas. They are inspired with the proper frame of mind to be attuned to achieve the darshan of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha’s consecrated idol in the garbha griha.

In the southern part of the Ranga Mandapa, pillars bear representations of gods, peculiar to Srivaishnavism. Lord Rama and Anjaneya are shown in anjalihasta pose and kneeling posture respectively. Lord Rama is said to have worshipped Lord Narasimha in the Lower Ahobilam. Another main deity of Srivaishnavas is Lord Venkateswara whose figure is carved in standing posture in the abhaya and varadha poses. Annamacharya, a prodigious composer of several kirtans describing the glory of Vishnu as Venkateswara, Narasimha and Rama is shown right under the right hand of Lord Venkateswara.

However, in both the mandapas quite a good number of pillars bear figures representing Yakshas, Gandharvas and also fabled figures in the forms of erect and squatting lions and celestial swans. Another category of figures of utmost artistic interest includes men and women figures variously as dancers, musicians and servants carved with telling detail and graphic attitude expressive of their artistic activities. Perhaps the artist’s yearning for the graceful and attractive designs have been realised in the depiction of floral designs with geometrical precision and aesthetic charm. Another representation of unique charm and bewitching beauty is of a lady obviously Minakshi in the Sukasana pose. In her right hand, she has a flower and near her left hand holding a fruit we can see a parrot pecking at the fruit. The pillars by themselves have a unique structural design. They are neither square nor rectangular but are many-sided structures. Pillars with corbels bearing full-fledged pusphabodhigas show the impress of the Vijayanagara style of sculpture. The adhistanas have bas-reliefs of elephants carved with a life-like grace. Almost similar figures are found in general over the surfaces of the pillars of Kalyanamandapa and other mandapas with some minor variations in detail and shape.

On the outer surface of the walls of the Garbhagriha and Ardhamandapa a panel of Kshirasagaramardhana by gods and demons and other panel depicting Lord Krishna on the hoods of Kaliya are carved in such nice detail as to arrest our eyes and captivate our minds.
<table>
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<th>Description of relief Sculptures</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>One sub-pillar with ornamental design</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Seated lions in a row at the Base in a pose of supporting the pillars.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Squatting lion</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seated lions in a row at the Base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Pillar No. 2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Damaged and unfinished</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Seated lion</td>
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<td>Damaged and unfinished</td>
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<td>Yaksha with a lion on his either side.</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Damaged and unfinished</td>
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<td>sub-pillar</td>
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<td>Sub-pillar</td>
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<td>Damaged</td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pillar No. 3</td>
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<td>Seated lion</td>
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<td>pillar with a single pattern decoration</td>
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<td>Floral design and partially damaged</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>One round supporting pillar</td>
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<td>pillar with a single pattern decoration</td>
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<td>Floral design and partially damaged</td>
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<td>pillar with a single pattern decoration</td>
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<td>Floral design and partially damaged</td>
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<td>Damaged</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No 4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Squatting lion</td>
<td>Plain pillar</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Plain pillar</td>
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<td>Pillar No 5</td>
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<td>Pillar No 6</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Creeper-like patterns</td>
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<td>Single sub-pillar</td>
<td>Standing Hamuman in Anjali Posture in niche</td>
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<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No 8</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
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<td>II ROW</td>
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<td>A lion figure in sitting posture</td>
<td>Lion figure in the sitting pose</td>
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<td>pillar No 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Single round sub-pillar</td>
<td>Single sub-pillar</td>
<td>Single sub-pillar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Yaksha in a dancing posture</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A figure of Yaksha</td>
<td>Damaged</td>
<td>Damaged</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Single sub-pillar with decorated design</td>
<td>Damaged pillar</td>
<td>Damaged pillar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Damaged pillar</td>
<td>Damaged pillar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 3</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Damaged pillar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A lion in the upright posture supporting the pillar</td>
<td>Two Gandharvas and two lions in a sitting position</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A lion in the upright posture supporting the pillar</td>
<td>Three sub-pillars</td>
<td>Three sub-pillars</td>
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<td>Pillar No 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Single sub-pillar</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Single sub-pillar</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>A creeper like design</td>
<td>Single sub-pillar</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Garuda sculpture</td>
<td>Noble with his wife, two sub-pillars</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Yaksha in an erect posture</td>
<td>Yaksha in an erect posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
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<td>Three squatting lions</td>
<td>Two seated yakshas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 6</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>Three squatting lions</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Three sub-pillars</td>
<td>Three sub-pillars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>Three sub-pillars</td>
<td>three sub-pillars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A squatting lion</td>
<td>Round sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A squatting lion</td>
<td>Sub-pillar</td>
<td>Sub-pillar</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Squatting lions</td>
<td>Three squatting lions</td>
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<td>Base</td>
<td>Three squatting lions</td>
<td>Three lions squatting</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Seated lion with Yakshas on either side</td>
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<td>Squatting lions in a row</td>
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<td>Pillar No.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>monkey in a jumping posture</td>
<td>Two lions and two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two lions above two sub-pillars</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hanuman in three different postures</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Plain base</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A Man holding a snake in the right hand</td>
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<td>Dvarapalaka</td>
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<td>Some designs</td>
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<td>Pillar No. 7</td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars and Yali Lion</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars and three Yakshas in mirthful mood</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 8</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Squatting lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yoga Narasimha Svami with the Yoga patta wound around his knees with Lakshmi seated on his thigh This is a unique figure of Yoga Lakshmi Narasimha Svami, as Yoga figures are normally sculptured without consort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillow No. 9</td>
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<td>Seated Yakshas</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Base</td>
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<td>A row of lions</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lord Narasimha wooing Chenchu Lakshmi</td>
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<td>4 sub-pillars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
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<td>Yakshas in a mirthful mood</td>
<td>Yakshas in a mirthful mood</td>
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<tr>
<th>Pillow No. 10</th>
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<th>4 squatting lions</th>
<th>Squatting lions in a row</th>
<th>Two seated Yakshas</th>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>4 sub-pillars</td>
<td>4 sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars and yali lion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars and two Yakshas</td>
<td>Yakshas in a happy mood</td>
<td>Yakshas in a mirthful mood</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars and above a pregnant lady giving birth to a child</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV ROW Pillow No.1</th>
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<th>Base</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>A sculptured piece of Anjaneya in kneeling posture with an expression of calm devotion on the face. The figure is slightly mutilated</td>
<td>A lion in the upright posture supporting the pillar</td>
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<td>T</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV ROW Pillow No.2</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Yali Lion</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Dvarapalaka</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>Dvarapalaka</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>A figure of Dvarapalaka</td>
<td>A figure of Vishnu partially damaged</td>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>Letter</td>
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<td>Garuda figure in upright posture with Anjali hasta</td>
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<td>Plain pillar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lord Venkatesvara with Annamacharya on his right side</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
<td>Plain pillar</td>
<td>Plain pillar</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Common figures</td>
<td>Single sub-pillar</td>
<td>Dancing figure</td>
<td>Dancer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A figure of Mastya Kanya</td>
<td>Plain</td>
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<td>Seated Lakshmi Devi</td>
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<td>Figure of Lord Satyanarayana</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Dvarapalaka</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A figure of swan</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
<td>A figure of Balakrishna</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 7</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Seated Yaksha with lions on either side</td>
<td>Seated Yaksha with lions on either side</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Yai lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Figure of Lakshmi Varaha Narasimha Swami with the Chakra in his right hand and Conch in the upper left hand with Lakshmi seated on his thigh. She is holding a flower in her right hand</td>
<td>Top. squatting Yaksha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 8</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>Three lined Nama</td>
<td>Plain Base</td>
<td>Three lined Nama</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A hunter and a swan</td>
<td>Dvarapalaka</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>A figure of Lord Venkateswara</td>
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<tr>
<td>S-N</td>
<td>V ROW</td>
<td>Pillar No.1</td>
<td>Pillar No.2</td>
<td>Pillar No.3</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Lotus</td>
<td>Man holding two Kamalams in two hands</td>
<td>Man seated on a fish</td>
<td>A figure of Tandava Krishna</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Three lined Name</td>
<td>Three lined Name</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Man blowing bugle</td>
<td>A figure of Prahlada in Anjali hasta pose</td>
<td>A figure of Garuda in Anjali hasta pose</td>
<td>Seated man and Bal Krishna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Hanuman in standing posture</td>
<td>A dancing lady</td>
<td>A figure of Yoga Narasimha and Rajahamsa</td>
<td>Hanuman in running posture</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seated Yaksha with lions on either side</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>A common figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Pillar No.1**
  - B: Squatting Yakshas with lions on either side
  - M: Two sub-pillars
  - T: Two small sub-pillars

- **Pillar No.2**
  - B: Three ornamental blocks of stones as base
  - M: A figure of Lord Ventatesvara
  - T: A figure of Lord Yoga Narasimha

- **Pillar No.3**
  - B: Three ornamental blocks of stone as base
  - M: A figure of Dvarapalaka
  - T: Defaced figure
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar No.</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Squatting Yakshas with lions on either side</th>
<th>Figure of Yaksha with lions on either side</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Seated Minakshi: It is a unique sculpture of a Devil, perhaps the most beautiful sculpture in this temple in the Sukasana pose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Danseur</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>A figure holding a snake in the left hand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Design of a creeper pattern</td>
<td>Squatting monkey</td>
<td>Plain</td>
<td>Dhyana Buddha</td>
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<td>Plain base</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A figure of Anjaneya</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>A figure of Hanuman</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
<td>Flower bud design</td>
<td>Ornamental design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 7</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Figure of Yoga Narasimha Svami with the Yoga patta wound round his knees.</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>The figure has four arms. Top, floral design</td>
<td>Squatting Yakshas in a row</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 8</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Three ornamental blocks of stone as Base</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A figure of a Chenchu woman</td>
<td>women holding a parrot</td>
<td>A Chenchu woman holding a bow and arrows</td>
<td>A dancing artist with percussion instrument in his hands.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Three-Lined Nama</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
<td>Three-lined Nama and a figure of Krishnavataram</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>A figure of Dvarapalakas and Lakshmi Narayana</td>
<td>The figure of Vamana Avatara with the grace of celibacy aglow on his face.</td>
<td>A figure of Ganesa</td>
<td>God holding two padmas and another figure holding Sanicha, Chakra (Uma Vishnu).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>A figure of Kurmvataram</td>
<td>A women holding a whisk</td>
<td>A figure of Vara-vasa</td>
<td>T. The figure of Matsya Avatara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 10</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>A women holding a whisk</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>A figure of Lord Narasimha pursuing Hiranyakashipu after emerging out of pillar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>A women holding a whisk</td>
<td>Yakshas in standing pose</td>
<td>Yakshas in standing position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROW VI</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Squatting lions</td>
<td>A group of dancing Rishis</td>
<td>A figure in Arjail hasta posture</td>
<td>Plain base</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Seated figure</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
<td>Yakshas</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas holding a snake in left hand and lions on either side</td>
<td>Yakshas in a row with lions on either side.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 sub-pillars</td>
<td>A mutilated image of a devotee</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas holding a snake in left hand with lions on either side, pilasters</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
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<td>Two Yakshas in a happy mood</td>
<td>Unfinished figure</td>
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<td>Yakshas with lion on either side</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>A bracket figure of nobles carrying the whisk and the chamara for the Lord</td>
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<td>Yakshas</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>A dancing woman</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
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<td>A man holding bugle</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas holding a snake in the left hand and with lions on either side</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
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<td>Two round sub-pillars</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
<td>Yakshas in a happy mood</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars and one Yaksha holding a drum</td>
<td>Yaksha in standing pose</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Base</td>
<td>Lion with Yakshas on either side</td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>Base</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Jvala Narasimha</td>
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<td>Pilasters</td>
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<td>Pillar No. 10</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Four seated Yakshas with one lion</td>
<td>4 Seated Yakshas</td>
<td>4 seated Yakshas with one lion</td>
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<td>Pillar No. 10</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars and Yakshas</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars and two seated Yakshas</td>
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<td>ROW VII</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A figure of Anjenaya with Anjalihasta pose</td>
<td>A man in sitting position holding a snake in right hand with lions on either side.</td>
<td>A man in meditation</td>
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<td>Design</td>
<td>A man in standing pose</td>
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<td>Squatting lion</td>
<td>A squatting lion</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Single round sub-pillar</td>
<td>Single round pillar</td>
<td>Single round pillar</td>
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<td>Pillar No. 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Yali lion and Three sub-pillars</td>
<td>Yali Lion and Three sub-pillars</td>
<td>Figure of Sri Ranga Raya I of Perukonda</td>
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<td>Yakshas in a Joyous mood</td>
<td>Yakshas in a Joyous mood</td>
<td>Narasimha figure</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Hanuman in running posture</td>
<td>lions in standing position</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Ornamental design</td>
<td>A seated man holding flowers in two hands</td>
<td>A man holding an arrow</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Two seated Yakshas with three lions</td>
<td>Two seated Yakshas with three lions</td>
<td>Three seated Yakshas with a lion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yali Lion and</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Six small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Noble man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
<td>Divisions</td>
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<td>Pillar No. 7</td>
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<td>Seated Yakshas</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>One sub-pillar</td>
<td>One sub-pillar</td>
<td>One sub-pillar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Squatting lions</td>
<td>Squatting lions</td>
<td>Squatting lions</td>
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</tr>
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<td>One sub-pillar</td>
<td>One sub-pillar</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROWS VIII</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3 seated Yakshas with lions</td>
<td>Seated Yaksha holding a snake</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Three sub-pillars</td>
<td>A figure of Anjaneya in Anjali hasta pose</td>
<td>One sub-pillar</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
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<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Dvarapalaka and seated Lakshmi Devi</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Dvarapalaka and Rama blessing Anjaneya</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Plain Base</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>A figure of Danseur with Pavadai (Skirt). This figure has several gajjalu (tassels) on her ankles which are worth noticing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>A seated man holding a flower in right hand and Rajahamsa</td>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>A figure of Anjaneya carrying the Sanjeevini Parvatam in the left hand</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Floral design</td>
<td>Vargas</td>
<td>A seated woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>Rajahamsa</td>
<td>Squatting lions and Tandava Krishna (Dancing Lord Krishna on the hoods of Kallige)</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ornamental design</td>
<td>A man in a standing pose</td>
<td>A seated man</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillar No. 6</td>
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<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas with lions on either side</td>
<td>Base</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
<td>A Danseur of 3 feet high. She must have been a court dancer.</td>
<td>One sub-pillar</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pilasters</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
<td>Seated Yakshas</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Seated Yaksha with lions on either side</td>
<td>3 squatting lions</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>3 small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
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<td><strong>ROW IX, Pillar No. 1</strong></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Lion with Yakshas on either side</td>
<td>3 squatting lions</td>
<td>A Yaksha</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>Onesub-pillar</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>3 Yakshas in a Joyous mood</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars (Rama giving ring to Hanuman as his insignia to Sita)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4 sub-pillars</td>
<td>One sub-pillar</td>
<td>Man with cymbals in his hand in the pose of participating in a Bhajan</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Two sub-pillars and a Yali lion</td>
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<td>Seated Yaksha</td>
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<td>Yali Lion</td>
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<td>Squatting lions</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
<td>Floral design</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yali lion</td>
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<td>Padmam (Lotus)</td>
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<td>A figure of Seshasayana Murthy</td>
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<td>Three lions with three Yakshas</td>
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<td>Yakshas in a joyous mood</td>
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<td>Three sub-pillars</td>
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<td>3 sub-pillars</td>
<td>A man playing on the Mridanga.</td>
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<td>Seated Yaksha</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars</td>
<td>One Yaksha</td>
<td>Seated Yaksha</td>
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<td>Three Yakshas in a joyous mood</td>
<td>Yakshas in a Joyous mood</td>
<td>Seated Yaksha</td>
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<td>Four sub-pillars</td>
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<td>Yakshas in a joyous mood</td>
<td>2 small sub-pillars</td>
<td>Two Yakshas and lions in a happy mood.</td>
<td>Two small sub-pillars.</td>
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<td>A figure of a woman in Anjalihasta pose</td>
<td>Yakshas in a joyous mood</td>
<td>Yakshas in a joyous mood</td>
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<td>sub-pillars and Yali Lion</td>
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<td>A common minstrel</td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
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<td>Yakshas</td>
<td>Pilasters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yali Lion</td>
<td>A common Minstrel</td>
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<td>Two sub-pillars</td>
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<td>A squatting lion</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>Base</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 sub-pillars</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
<td>4 sub-pillars</td>
<td>Yali lion</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yakshas in a Joyous mood</td>
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Note: B - denotes Bottom, M - denotes Middle, T - denotes Top.
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<td>M</td>
<td>A flower design</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Pillar No. 4</td>
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<td>A flower in a circle</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A comedy figure of a beautiful woman releasing arrow with her face turned back</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Lord Venkatesvara on a raised platform</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A graceful figure of Dancing Krishna</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>Base</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>A seated monkey</td>
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|---------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------|--------------------|---------------
<p>| Pillar No. 7 | Lord Arjaneya with one raised Arm           | B       | Bodhiga       | Bodhiga           | Bodhiga       |
|         | Lotus                                                 | M       | A flower      | A floral design   | Plain         |
|         | Bodhiga                                              | T       | Bodhiga       | Bodhiga           | Bodhiga       |
| Pillar No. 8 | Base                                               | B       | Base          | Base              | Base          |
|         | Plain                                                 | M       | Plain         | Plain             | Plain         |
|         | Bodhiga                                               | T       | Bodhiga       | Bodhiga           | Bodhiga       |
| Pillar No. 9 | Base                                               | B       | Base          | Base              | Base          |
|         | Flowers                                               | M       | Flowers       | Plain             | Plain         |
|         | Bodhiga                                               | T       | Bodhiga       | Bodhiga           | Bodhiga       |
| Pier No. 10 | Base                                               | B       | Base          | Base              | Base          |
|         | Plain                                                 | M       | A flower      | A flower           | A flower      |
|         | Bodhiga                                               | T       | Bodhiga       | Bodhiga           | Bodhiga       |
| ROW III Pillar No. 1 | Base                           | B       | A troop of Dancers on a platform | Base | Base |
|         | A flower                                              | M       | A flower      | A flower           | Floral design |
|         | Bodhiga                                               | T       | Bodhiga       | Bodhiga           | Bodhiga       |
| Pillar No. 2 | Base                                               | B       | Base          | Base              | Base          |</p>
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<td>Lord Garuda on a Platform</td>
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<td>Inside the wall</td>
<td>Rama taking aim with his bow and arrow and Lakshmana by his side</td>
<td>Inside the wall</td>
<td>Vall in his last moments, while Rama and Lakshmana and Vall's wife look on.</td>
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<td>Rama and Lakshmana</td>
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<td>A group of monkeys in Anjali hasta pose</td>
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<td>Hanuman touching the feet of Rama on a platform</td>
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<td>A Man in a meditation posture</td>
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<td>Seated Sita and Hanuman standing before her under Ashoka tree.</td>
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<td>Hanuman in Anjali hasta pose</td>
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<td>Dancing women on a platform</td>
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<td>A group of dancing monkeys</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Lord Narasimha tearing the abdomen of Hiranyakasipu</td>
<td>Seated Lord Venkatesvaralu</td>
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<td>Brahma seated on a platform</td>
<td>A figure of Dhakshina Murthy</td>
<td>Bodhiga</td>
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<td>Lord Narasimha and Hiranyakasipu engaged in duel</td>
<td>Lord Krishna eating butter off a pot</td>
<td>Lord Hanuman and Lord Garuda engaged in a fight</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>A figure of seated vigneswara on a platform</td>
<td>A figure of women seated on a fish supposed to hold the clue to a hidden treasure</td>
<td>Bodhiga</td>
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<td>Seated Lord Venkateswara</td>
<td>A dancing lady</td>
<td>A Chenchu couple Budth in Yogic posture</td>
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The Pujas conducted in the Ahobilam temple do not differ much from those in the other Srivaishnava temples in South India.¹

The temples were the centres of sanctity and devotion. They provide spiritual solace to the pilgrims who visit them. Normally the people will develop love, and veneration towards a particular temple depending upon the rituals, festivals and the mode of worship offered in it. It is observed that the more complex and sacred the ritual Worship, the greater the attraction towards a particular temple complex. It is on account of this reason that every temple has developed a certain established system of ritual worship and even special festivals. The devotees and the pious people naturally take into consideration the special religious and ritualistic activities referred to while visiting a particular temple and offering their donations and gifts in various forms.

In the Ahobilam temple were instituted certain special festivals, rituals and other religious ceremonies in order to propitiate the deity. A critical study of the epigraphs found in the Ahobilam temple gives us a detailed information about the daily proceedings of worship (puja) and ceremonial occasions (festivals) since centuries.

The rituals of the Ahobilam temple do not differ essentially from those of the other Vishnu temples of South India like those at Tirupati, Kanchi and Srirangam. Credit for the systematisation of the temple rituals in shrines dedicated to Vishnu is traditionally given to Ramanuja².

K.V. Raman states, “in a Hindu temple, the daily offerings to the various deities at different times in the day is of fundamental importance. The day-to-day ceremonies connected with worship are called the nityapuja, while occasional ceremonies in connection with some special festivals, are called the naimittika. The daily offerings are obligatory and are essential to preserve the sanctity of the shrine. They represent the basic ceremonial rituals to be performed in the temple which are governed by the Agamas”. The worship conducted in a temple from dawn to dusk and the various special festivals are elaborately described in the Agamas.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the rituals in the Vishnu shrines of South India are based on one of the two main systems of worship - either the Vaikhanasa system or the Pancharatra system. The Vaikhanasa Agama recommends puja six times a day. The timings and the details of the Puja are as follows³.
1. Pratyusha (arunodaya)
2. Prabhata (pratahkala)
3. Madhyahna (noon)
4. Aparahna (afternoon)
5. Sayankala (evening)
6. Nisi (ardhajama)

The Pancharatra Agama liberalises this and allows discretion to the temple authorities to perform two, three, four, five, six or even twelve pujas in a day according to the financial position and organising ability of the temple authorities.

We can infer from the epigraphical evidences, that the pancharatra form of worship has been in vogue from ancient times in the Ahobilam temple.

In every temple there are three to six different times of worship beginning from the early morning and ending at midnight during which pujas are performed and offerings, made. It is interesting that the inscriptions of Ahobilam refer to special pujas instituted by kings, queens and nobles which are called 'avasaramu'. The elaboration of the worship and the variety of food offerings made on such occasions (avasaramu) varied depending upon the status of the donor. The worship ordinarily consists of sixteen services (shodasopachara). They are dhyana (contemplation), avahana (localisation), asana (offering of a seat), padya (washing the feet), arghya (washing the hands), acamaniya (sipping a quantity of water), snana (bath), vastra (clothing), yajnopavita (the sacred thread), gandha (smearing sandalwood paste), malya (decoration with garlands and flowers), dhupa (waving incense), dipa (showing a lamp), naivedya (offering food), nirajana (circumambulation of a lamp) and mantrapushpa (offering a tribute). As evidenced by the inscriptions the worship offered in the Ahobilam temple is of two kinds. Of the two the more important and elaborately done is the early morning service. It consists of shodasa-upcharas. The other items of worship are more or less repetitions on a minor scale with some constituent items omitted. An inscription of 1550 A.D. mentions the offer of Tulasi, flowers and fruits; which forms part of the important rituals of the shodasa-upcharas to the lord. These have been supplied to the temple from the sacred groves and flower gardens from the temple lands. According to inscriptions the daily rituals performed in the temple are as follows.

1. Daily Worship

Daily pujas are conducted only in the Upper and the Lower Ahobilam temples. In all the other shrines, pujas are conducted only on festival days.

The earliest inscription which mentions the ritual of daily offerings to God Ahobaleswara is of the year 1410 A.D. The daily worship of the deity starts early in the morning with the chanting of Lakshminarasimha Suprabhatam.

Tirumanjanam or Abhishekam is another important ritual in the nityapuja, which is performed elaborately in the morning. The ritual starts with the bathing of the lord in the sacred water and milk. During the abhisheka, the Purushasukta and the other sacred names of the deity are chanted. After the completion of the abhishekha, the applications of sandal and sugandha dravyas are offered to the god. The abhisheka ceremony comes to a close by offering food and tambula to the god. The bath and decoration are followed by archana dhupa dipa naivedya.

It is very interesting to note here that the Lord was worshipped with the chanting of his thousand names known as 'sahasranamapuja' which was attested to by an epigraph of 1545 A.D. at the
Upper Ahobilam. There are inscriptions which refer to the preparation of Tulsimala, Pushpamala and sandal paste.

Offering the naivedya to the deity during the specified hours of the day and on different occasions is an important item in the daily puja. The offerings are made usually at the end of each of the series of functions in the course of the worship of the deity. The food, after it is offered to the god is distributed among the temple employees and also to the devotees who gather at the time of performing various services.

There is a very interesting inscription dated 1564 A.D., which describes how the prasadams like Vada or Dosa or Appam are distributed in different proportions to the donor, for sale and for the public distribution. There are a number of inscriptions which detail the extensive provision made for the naivedya. We find that there are a number of grants made to the temples for the offering of the Lord when He is seated in certain mandapas, which were constructed at Lower Ahobilam. Besides the routine offerings, special offerings like Sringara taligai (six plates of sumptuous food of different varieties) were provided to the Lord of Upper Ahobilam in 1548 A.D.

This inscription also records an endowment of the village for providing sringara taligai daily to God Prahlada of Lower Ahobilam a taligai (a plate of food) each for Sri Bhasyakara and Alwars and oil for burning the lamps in the temple.

Most of the inscriptions give a long list of details about the different preparations of the various provisions and groceries required for varied food offerings.

The most important and interesting feature of the celebration of different rituals is that of the offering of various types of food. Their culinary expertise and gastronomic excellence in preparing certain delicacies for the Lord's naivedya are of sociological interest.

After the naivedya to the god, Vidyam (Tambulam - betel leaf and arecanuts) - is offered. There are four inscriptions which mention the quantity of betel leaves and nuts to be offered to the Lord.

After the pujas, the devotees who used to visit the temple, took satagopam, tirtham and prasadam (sacred water and consecrated food) from the priest, which were known as temple honours to the devotees. An inscription of 1584 A.D. records the prevalence of this type of service in the temple. Further, the Ahobilam kaifiyat also says that the temple honours, such as Parivattam, tirtham, prasadam, satagopam, Talihe prasada, panniru, and gandham were in practice at the temple of Ahobilam. It is clear from these evidences that the devotees visiting the temples were given the tirtham and prasadam in addition to the satagopam. This practice of offering honours to the devotees is continued even to this day in the Ahobilam temple.

The ritual performance of the Lord reveals that the Lord's daily activities are similar to those performed by a grown-up dignified personage whose needs are to be attended to in the most befitting manner. As a result, the various ritual services rendered are symbolic of those received by an adult from his near and dear. Accordingly the Lord is awakened from sleep by singing certain hymns addressed to Him, then bathed, adorned and served with food and again put to repose at certain hours. These are parallel to the routine activities of a human (or) royal personage. They are personal and intimate in terms of human life. They reflect virtually the social impact of the age on the domain of the ritual world.

The long process of rendering services to the Lord is symbolic of its counterpart, adopted in Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Vishnu. In Vaikuntha it starts with the awakening of the Lord with the help of the recitation of specific hymns to produce harmonious and sonorous music. The next process
of rendering the services to the Lord is symbolic of how water is offered to the Lord to complete his ablutions and how light refreshments in the form of milk and its preparations are offered to the Lord in the mornings. The noon and the afternoon offerings consist of a large variety of sumptuous dishes made out of rich and delicious food.

It is evident that all the daily rituals performed in service of the Lord in Vaikuntha and the pomp and splendour attendant on it were observed by the kings and their admirers during the period under our study. The samantas (the feudatories) used to show their veneration and respect towards their overlord by offering the same ritual that was offered to Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha. This has a political significance in that it is similar to the ritual worship offered to the mortal kings of the period under review. It is interesting to note in this connection that the deification of the king and the construction of shrines for the images of the deceased kings were started by the Cholas. The same custom was followed by the Chola emperors in the medieval period of South India.  

2. Festivals

The conduct of the daily proceedings differs naturally from the special festivals of the Lord. The celebration of the festivals has been an important and attractive functioning of the temple. Most of the donations made to the Ahobilam temple relate to this aspect and indicate its importance. Consequently the temple attracted a large number of devotees even from far-off places and thus became an important centre of pilgrimage. Probably there had been no day without the celebration of some festival or the other and special offerings being made in the temple. In fact except one or two like Kartikapunnami, almost all the festivals are celebrated with pomp and grandeur even today.

The festivals conducted in the temple are generally known by the name utsava or tirunal. The utsavas conducted by the temple are many. They are divided into two categories viz., the basic festivals connected with the ritual of the temple-worship which are enjoined by the sastras and agamas and some auxiliary festivals according to the nature of the establishment or the endowment by devotees etc. The Kalyanoisava, Chandanayatra and certain others have the sanction of ancient texts, while the dhanurmasotsavas and Kamadahana utsava etc., are the auxiliary festivals. Apart from the annual festivals, there are a number of minor festivals conducted in the temple described as varotsavas (Weekly festivals), pakshotsavas (fortnightly festivals) and masotsavas (monthly festivals). These are generally performed in the afternoon.

In general, the god on festival days is adorned with precious and attractive jewellery and offered worship. The utsavamurti (the processional idol) bedecked with valuable jewels and mounted on various kinds of vehicles on different days, is taken out in procession around the temple. On such occasions one can see a blending of deep devotion and joy in the pilgrims.

A brief account of the festivals celebrated in the temple over the centuries is given below.

A. Pulikapu sevai

This ritual of the temple is known from the inscription of 1544 A.D., which speaks about the ceremony of the main idol. On every Friday, special offerings were provided to the god on those days. This is said to be instituted during Sadasiva’s reign.

B. Kartika Pourmina

This festival occurs on Kartika pournima (full moon) every year. On this day, the temple is illuminated with lamps and the Akhanda dipa is replaced by new ones. There is a Sanskrit saying that “on this day all should give a gift of lamp to the donor.” This festival is also known as Krithika Dipotsavam. An inscription of 1547 A.D. records the gift of money for providing eight offerings
to the god Ahobaleswara of Lower Ahobilam during the festival that falls on the 15th day of the bright half of Kartika. Even to this day, this festival is celebrated by illuminating the temples.

C. Ekadasi Utsavas

As is well known, the eleventh day of both the former and latter fortnights, is very auspicious especially for the Vaishnavas. These are called pakshotsavas. They take place when an auspicious asterism appears on that particular day.

Of the Ekadasis, the Jalasayana Ekadasi is considered to be very auspicious. It is considered that Lord Vishnu retires to sleep during the rainy season which lasts for four months. This sleep commences on the 11th day of the former fortnight of the lunar month Ashadha and ends on the 12th day of the former fortnight of the lunar month Karthika. Hence these two days, which are called the Sayana Ekadasi and the Uttana dvadasi respectively are considered to be very auspicious. Generally liberal endowments were made on these days to attain religious merit. Probably Jala Sayana Ekadasi is Toli Ekadasi or Prathama Ekadasi, which is observed even now in all the Vaishnava temples. We have instances of the charities, being made to the god on this day, which is considered holy. An inscription of 1515 A.D. mentions that Krishnadevaraya and his queens donated many jewels and lands for providing anga-ranga-bhogas (daily rituals and utsavas) and dhupa-dipanaivedyas (burning the lamp and offering food) to god Ahobala Narasimha on this auspicious day.

D. Kshirabdi

This festival occurs in the month of karthika, on the Suddha Dwadasi. An epigraph of 1547 A.D. states that an endowment was made in cash offering to god Vira Narasimha during the kshirabdh and other festivals like Vijayadasami.

A particular reference is made to Vijayadasami festival in an inscription of 1561 A.D. which states that an arrangement was made for the offering.

E. Garden festival

The Garden festival, probably the Vasantha Utsava was celebrated in the month of Chaitra. (March-April) An inscription of 1564 A.D. mentions the celebration of this utsava, near a tank, constructed by Van Satagopa Jiyar on the way to Bhargava shrine. The Jiyar gave a gift of land to the god of Lower Ahobilam in 1564 A.D. for special offerings and their distribution during this festival. It was also called as Tirunal, which was attended by huge congregations.

F. Tirunakshatras

It is a tradition that the tirunakshatras (natal constellations obtaining at the time of birth) of twelve Alvars are being celebrated in the temple, dedicated to god Vishnu. An inscription of 1561 A.D. clearly mentions that thirteen 'tirunakshatras' were celebrated every month and the total number of days of tirunakshatras in a year had come up to 150 days. Further the inscription states that Timmarajaguru, during the reign of Sadasiva of Vijayanagara, made a provision for the celebration of all these tirunakshatras throughout the year. It is probable that the twelve tirunakshatras of Alvars and Ramanuja had been celebrated in the temple of Ahobilam making a total of thirteen every month. The list of the tirunakshatras is given at the end of this chapter.

G. Kartika Somavaram

The festival of Kartika Somavaram conducted in Ahobilam is referred to in the inscriptions of 1547 A.D. and 1548 A.D.
The general notion is that, the Kartika somavaram is connected with Siva and, however, it is also connected with the festivals in the Vishnu temples. But we would like to emphasize here that, the Kartika masam fully recognized as an auspicious month for god Vishnu, is otherwise called Kartika Damodara. So the Mondays are particularly observed as fasting days and in the evenings, brahmans are fed in the name of Karthika Damodara as well as god Siva. It additionally coincides with Kshirabdhī Dvadasi and the merit is multiplied, if the gifts are made in a Vishnu temple.

Besides the festivals, Utsavas were celebrated in the temple or outside, for the enjoyment of the Lord. From the inscriptions of 1548 A.D.32, 1553 A.D.33, 1558 A.D.34 and 1560 A.D.35, it is known that the processions were conducted to the god of Ahobilam and the Lord was made to sit in various mandapas, such as Vasanthamandapa, 16 pillared mandapa and four pillared mandapa and special food was offered to god, when he was placed in different mandapas. An inscription of 1560 A.D. records the gift of land for providing an offering of cakes during the festivals, when Ahobaleswara was brought in procession and seated in the four pillared mandapa in the south-east corner of the street (tiruvithi). Similarly Vansatagopajiyar gave a gift of land in 1563 A.D.37, for providing offerings of rice-cakes on specified festivals, when the lord seated in the mandapa, in front of the matha, which he had constructed on the nagari i.e. upper Ahobilam. There is another interesting inscription of 1609 A.D.38 which registers the gift of two Vinjamaras (fly-whisks) and a white-silk umbrella with a kalasa over it to Vira-Narasimha of lower Ahobilam. These umbrellas are used when god is taken out in procession.

H. 220-Festival days

It is interesting and significant to note that 220 festival days were celebrated to the god of Lower Ahobilam in a year. An undated inscription from the Lower Ahobilam states that the Mahamandasaleswara Surapa Obulayadeva-Maharaja set up the ‘Garuda Stambha’ in the street, opposite to the temple and made an endowment in cash for providing offerings to the god on 220 festival days in the year, on which the god was brought in a procession and seated on the platform of this pillar39.

It is stated that the days selected for festivals in Trumalai were 222 in number, made up of 96 days of eight Brahmostavas, summer festivals, kodia Tirunal 20 days, Adhyayanotsavam 24 days, unjal Tirunal 5 days, Tiruppavitra Tirunal 5 days, Ekadasi Tirunal 25 days, Sahasra Kalasabhishekam 5 days, Masa sankramanas 12 days, Amavasya 13 days, Yugadi and Deepavali 2 Days, Padiya Vettai 1, Tirukkattigai 1, Krishna’s Rohini 13; total offerings 222 appapadi.40 It is not an exaggeration to say that 220 or 222 festivals are celebrated either at Ahobilam or at Tirumalai, where there is a shrine of Narasimha, within the temple of Venkateswara and offerings made to Sri Venkateswara are also made to Yoga Narasimha on par with the former.

I. Paruvettai Utsava

The very name of the procession denotes, symbolically, that the Lord goes out for Vetai (hunting). An inscription of 1542 A.D.42 registers the grant of villages to conduct paru vetta Utsavam and offerings to the god, when he visit those mandapas by one Bhutanatha Brahma Jyoyise belonging to Riksaka and Ashwalayan sutra.

However, the significant feature is that, this festival is conducted only in Ahobilam, not in any of the Narasimha temples like Simhachalam, Mangalagiri, Kadiri etc.

Even today this procession is conducted on a grand scale, for nearly 38 to 40 days. This procession starts on the very next day of the makarasankranti festival (i.e. on Jan. 15 or 16). The god is taken out in procession to nearly 32 villages, which are situated at a radius of 10 kms from Ahobilam.
3. Significance of the Rituals and Festivals

The daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly and annual performances and festivals are conducted in honour of Lord Narasimha. They may be understood in terms of their functional references to universal welfare, devotion to divine worship, religious symbolism, reverential spectacle, social integration, educational importance and regulation of correspondence between the major and the minor traditions of the Hindu culture.

Firstly, the performance of the rituals and festivals conducted in honour of the Lord are meant for the material and spiritual well-being of the devotees in particular and the welfare (yogakshemam) of all human beings in general. This reveals the functional significance of the performances.

Secondly, the festivals and rituals conducted in the temple under our study, have a special impact on the pilgrims who celebrate and participate in them actively. In the first instance, it enlightens them as to the metaphysical and the mystical significance of these rituals and ceremonies. In the second instance it will help to remodel the life of an individual according to the Hindu concept of dharma-artha-kama-moksha. It also enhances piety of the devotees. The devotee is the principal player in the drama of rituals and ceremonies. Total dedication, concentration and surrender to the god with the utmost devotion and reverence are required of the devotee without expecting any material reward. This ultimately paves the way for the development of worship on the lines of bhakti-marga.

Thirdly, the rituals and festivals conducted in the Ahobilam temple complex will give opportunity to the devout pilgrims to know about the meaning, the character and the significance of the rituals and festivals. Besides, the rituals and festivals normally influence the devotees spiritually and the resultant effect of which would be that they will develop spiritual attachment to the deity. They develop a sense of sacrifice and dedication not only towards the god but also towards the fellow-human beings. That these festivals and rituals have had humanitarian importance and value is without doubt. Besides, they also reveal the symbolic and spiritual significance of their performances.

Fourthly, most of the rituals and festivals were celebrated with pomp and splendour through various types of offerings, the use of ornaments and finally, the utilisation of the temple paraphernalia. Such grand celebrations are found to occupy a position of paramount importance. The nature or the way of celebrating rituals and festivals has become a centre of attraction to the people at large and the devotees in particular. Thus, people belonging to different castes, customs and traditions used to flock around the temple complex at Ahobilam. This fact has a sociological significance in that it paves the way and facilitates a special impetus for the development of social mobility. It is likely that these rituals and festivals might have promoted social equality, in the first instance, in the presence of the god and later in the society. This might be the most potential reason for the absence of socio-economic tensions during the period under our consideration. This is very well attested to by the epigraphs and literary works of that time.

In conclusion we may state that the temples in general and the rituals performed in the Ahobilam temple complex in particular, reflect or reveal a combination and an accommodation, at once, of some great and small traditional elements. This is very characteristic of the Hindu culture in India. The main temple and the main god housed in the sanctum sanctorum represent the great tradition. The main temple is surrounded by many subsidiary temples for the accommodation of the parivaradevatas or subsidiary deities. This aspect clearly reveals a harmonious combination and a judicious compromise of the traditions, referred to above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>NAME OF THE ALVAR</th>
<th>TIRUNAKS ATRAM</th>
<th>TAMIL MONTH</th>
<th>TELUGU MONTH</th>
<th>ENGLISH MONTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poygai Aiwar</td>
<td>Sravanam</td>
<td>Tula Sankramana</td>
<td>Kartikam</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pudattar Aiwar</td>
<td>Dhanista</td>
<td>Tula Sankaramana</td>
<td>Kartikam</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pey Aiwar</td>
<td>Satabhisam</td>
<td>Tula Sankramana</td>
<td>Kartikam</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tirumala Sai Aiwar</td>
<td>Megha</td>
<td>Makaramasam</td>
<td>Pusyam</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nammalwar</td>
<td>Visakha</td>
<td>Vrsabhamasam</td>
<td>Vaisakham</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Madhura Kavi Aiwar</td>
<td>Chitta</td>
<td>Mesamasaam</td>
<td>Vaisakham</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kulasakhara Aiwar</td>
<td>Punarvasu</td>
<td>Kumbha Sankramana</td>
<td>Phalgunaam</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Periwar</td>
<td>Swati</td>
<td>Mituna Sankramana</td>
<td>Jyestham</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Anjal (Goda)</td>
<td>Pubba</td>
<td>Karkataka Sankramana</td>
<td>Sravanam</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tondaradippadi Aiwar</td>
<td>Jyestha</td>
<td>Dhanus Sankramana</td>
<td>Margasiram</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tiruppan Aiwar</td>
<td>Rohini</td>
<td>Vruschika Sankramana</td>
<td>Kartikam</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tirumangai Aiwar</td>
<td>Krtti</td>
<td>Vruschika Sankramana</td>
<td>Kartikam</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ramanuja Charya</td>
<td>Ardra</td>
<td>Masamasaam</td>
<td>Vaisakham</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ROUTE PLAN OF SRI LAKSHMI NARASIMHA SVĀMI PĀRVĒTTAI UTŚAVAM

1. Bache Palli
2. Kondampalli
3. Krishnapuram
4. Kota kendukur
5. Marri palli
6. Yadawada
7. Alamur
8. Thimmana palli
9. Narasapuram
10. Muttaluru
11. Nallavagu Palli
12. Bachapuram
13. Nagi Reddy Palli
14. Padakandla
15. Allagadda
16. S. Lingam Dinne
17. Saravaraya Palli
18. M.V. Nagar (Allagadda)
19. Chinthakunta
20. Devarayapuram
21. Gubagundam
22. Jambula Dinne
23. Mandalur
24. Nakkala Dinne
25. Chandalur
26. Chilakalur
27. Thippa Reddypalli
28. T. Lingam Dinne
29. Nagulavaram
30. Tuwvpalli
31. Rudravaram
32. Lower . Ahōbilam
1. General Remarks

An institution like the Narasimhaswami temple at Ahobilam, which enjoyed a lot of resources due to donations of land, money etc., made from time to time and in which elaborate rituals and festivals are to be conducted, required a good system of management and a number of persons meant for conducting different services in the temple. This aspect of study would provide useful information about one of the important social institutions that played a significant role in ancient society.

It is not very easy to build up a consistent history of this aspect relating to the Narasimhaswami temple due to the non-availability of data pertaining to the situation as it obtained from time to time. We have, of course, a few inscriptions which throw some light on this aspect. But most of these belong to a short span of about two hundred years in the Vijayanagara period. There are very few inscriptions for the period preceding and the inscriptions of the later period are just short donatary records. However, there are a few temple records useful for the purpose of the study.

2. The Functionaries of the Temple

With regard to the temple functionaries the epigraphs do provide some information, though not comprehensive. But the temple record preserved with the Manager throws much light on this aspect in particular. This temple record prepared by the Government officials and the temple authorities, the most recent document of 1980, gives a comprehensive list of the functionaries engaged in the service of the temple. Before proceeding further, two points, as known from customs here, deserve to be noted:

1. The post of some of the functionaries are held on a hereditary basis. Eventhough, this is not a matter of right in recent years, preference is given, by convention, to the members of the family to which the functionary concerned belongs.

2. Another feature pertains to the conditions of the tenure and the remuneration paid to the functionaries. Till recently, the employees were paid in the form of Prasada (Portion of cooked food and other items offered to the God) and endowment of lands. But he was only a mortgagee and not the owner of the land. The functionary was allowed to cultivate the land and enjoy its proceeds as long as he was engaged as the employee of the temple. In modern times, the functionaries are paid in the form of cash\(^1\).
The personnel associated with the temple may be classified as Religious and Miscellaneous functionaries.

A. Religious functionaries

I. Archakas

The priests (archakas) of this temple belong to a minor sect of the Srиваishnavas called Bhattars, a community that is to be seen performing similar functions in all the Srиваishnava temples that follow the Pancharatra-agama system of worship. At present, there are two archakas, one looking after the Upper Ahobilam and the other placed in charge of the Lower Ahobilam.

D.Ramaswami Iyyengar’s manuscript of 1916 mentions the poor state of the archakas who were paid only Rs.2/- per month. Further it states, that “during the month of March, 1914, these priests complained that they were not paid for many months”. This book also writes that, this place was totally inaccessible and hence, practically difficult to reach.

The records of 1982 preserved with the Manager mentions the names of four archakas, K.P. Venugopal, R. Raghavachari, N. Kesava Iyyengar and A. Seshachari and they were paid Rs.150/- as salary per month.

The inscriptions of Ahobilam do not mention anything about the archakas. The history of the Ahobila matha informs however that the Jiyars of the matha were the trustees of the temple and they had full powers to appoint priests and other functionaries.

II. Paricharakas and Sthanikas

Usually in all the Srиваishnava temples, these paricharakas are assistants to the priests and are also Srиваishnava brahmins. At present, each shrine has one assistant. The main duty of the Paricharakas is to assist the priest in the pujas. They have to bring the water needed for the rituals in the temple and clean the vessels, collect all the objects needed for the daily rituals in the temple, distribute the prasada among the devotees after the naivedyam etc. But, much to our surprise, the paricharakas are mentioned as sudras both in the temple records and the Ramaswamy Iyyengar’s manuscript.

The temple record mentions the names of three paricharakas, Sanjanna, Subbanna and Veeranna and they were paid Rs.90/- each towards their monthly salary. But, at present, the temple has two Srиваishnava paricharakas, who assist the priests, appointed by the Ahobila matha.

III. Miscellaneous Functionaries

In order to carry on the various other functions, there is a band of people appointed for the purpose. They include the cooks who prepare rice and other dishes for the daily and special offerings to the God, people who supply flowers from the temple gardens, people who play the wind and percussion instruments etc., the palanquin bearers, people who carry oil torches during the procession of the gods, servants maintained for decorating and cleaning the temple, the watch guards including those who announce time by blowing trumpets and by beating drums.

The inscriptions of the Vijayanagara period mention a variety of functionaries who assist in the proper conduct of daily pujas and festivals. These functionaries are listed down below and also the amount of money that was paid to them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.</th>
<th>Dates of the Inscription</th>
<th>Functionaries</th>
<th>Amount paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1560(^{A.D.})</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>1/2 Varaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Person who prepares flour</td>
<td>3 Rukhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Person who prepares blackgram floor</td>
<td>3 Rukhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Person who brings groceries and other things</td>
<td>1/2 Varah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1563(^{A.D.})</td>
<td>Person who prepares sandal paste</td>
<td>1/2 Rukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1564(^{A.D.})</td>
<td>Who fetches water</td>
<td>1 Rukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Carpenter (Kammarā)</td>
<td>3 Rukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Who blows pipe</td>
<td>3 Rukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Kshethravasi</td>
<td>1 Rukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Cobbler</td>
<td>1 1/4 Varaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Wicker-basket maker (Medaravadiki)</td>
<td>1 1/2 Rukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>1586(^{A.D.})</td>
<td>Vaishnavas (Probably who participate in the temple rituals)</td>
<td>6 Varahas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Person who gives sacramental bath to the God (Probably the priest)</td>
<td>6 Varahas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>7 Varahas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Garland maker</td>
<td>5 varahas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Administration and Management & Administrative Personnel

**A. The present situation**

There are also a few officials who are associated with the administration of the daily activities of the temple.

The temple's administrative record\(^{4}\), states a provision for the appointment of non-hereditary trustees and appointment of an executive officer. Also, it records that, compromise proposals were made on behalf of the hereditary trustees on 31-3-1947 stating that

1. The manager or agent to be appointed by the board should be paid a sum of Rs.100/- per month towards his salary. Out of Rs.50/- is to be met from the temple funds and Rs.50/- is to be met from the Ahobila matha funds. The Manager so appointed should be a disciple of the matha, and

2. That all orders to the manager or agent will have to be issued through the hereditary trustee and the manager discharge his duties without affecting the rights and privileges of the hereditary trustee. The board has decided to accept the terms proposed by the hereditary trustee with modifications providing, *inter alia* that the salary of Rs.120/- per month may be paid to the manager by equal shares by the Jiyar or the matha and the temple,
3. That the proposal to appoint a disciple of the matha selected and accepted as a manager capable of supervising the religious tradition of the temple and obeying all lawful orders of the hereditary trustee, and

4. The board shall frame rules for the proper administration of the temple.

B. Administration

The trustee board⁹ had framed rules for the proper administration of the temple.

According to the rules, the manager will draw half of his salary and D.A. from the funds of the temple and that the other half be remitted to the manager from the funds of Sri Ahobila matha within the first seven days of a month.

According to the records, Sri Adivan Satagopa Yatindra Mahadesika was the first hereditary trustee, 600 years ago and the 44th Jiyar of the math is the present hereditary trustee from 1957, who resides at Srirangam.

Sri Lakshminarayana is the manager appointed by the hereditary trustee with effect from 21-5-1961.

The record, further states that the Manager appointed should look after the properties of the temple, and also gives a list of lands and jewelleries.

C. Properties

As per an old approved property register¹⁰ the following lands are possessed by the temple.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Lands taken over by Government Under Estate Abolition Act 1948 situated at Gundala and Obulapuram Villages</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>5593.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>Forest land given to temple</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>101.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td>Lands in possession and enjoyment of the Servicedars of the temple.</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>80.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td>Lands kept vacant</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>132.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td>Lands covered by lease approved order</td>
<td>9.26</td>
<td>72.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Donation of Wooden Chariot by the Hereditary Trustee

The Hereditary Trustee of the Temple has donated a Wooden Chariot worth about Rs.70,000/- from Sri Ahobila Math, Triplicane, to the temple. The said Chariot has been kept in the premises of Ahobila Matha in the Sannidhi Street at Ahobilam. The Manager is requested to enter this chariot in the property register of the temple.
II. Gold, Silver articles and Metallic Idols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Description of Property</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Insured value of the articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grams</td>
<td>M.Grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Gold articles</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Silver articles</td>
<td>76,513</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Metallic idols</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Measurement in C.M&amp;M.M)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At present, the group of managerial functionaries consist of a Manager, a clerk-typist, four attenders placed at different choultries and a sweeper.

4. The Epigraphical Data

A few inscriptions\(^{14}\) mention the treasury of the Lord (Sri Bhandara) in which all revenues in kind and cash accruing to the temple were deposited.

One senabova\(^{12}\) has been mentioned as the man in charge of the accounts of the Sribhandara of the temple.

There are many Vijayanagara inscriptions,\(^{13}\) which mention about Mudrakarta, a representative of Van Satagopa Jiyaar, Karyakarta, a representative of the ruling king and Sthanamvaru (local representative) form a corporate body to look after the temple administration.

A. Temple Management at different periods

The over-all management of the temple was possibly looked after by several persons as a committee or sometimes by some individuals. The inscriptions of different periods give us an impression that the structure of the temple management was changing from time to time. For some periods, however, we have no definite information. Still with the extant data, an account may be attempted. To be exact, reliable epigraphical evidence is restricted to the Vijayanagara period. So it would not be out of place to make a general survey of the temple management making use of the inscriptions outside Ahobilam also.

B. From 11th to 13th century

During the rule of the Telugu Cholas and the Kakatiyas in the South Andhra, each temple had a separate administrative committee formulated and controlled by the village assembly concerned. These committees looked after almost all aspects of the temple administration including the conduct of the religious services and the management of revenue and expenditure of the temples. This feature is noticeable mostly in the agrahara villages. Some of the temples, however, appear to have been managed by some individuals called Sthanamvaru who were in charge of one or more temples. In this context, we may also note that Sthanapati was the highest officer of many temples in Andhra country as evidenced by a number of inscriptions.\(^{14}\) Many inscriptions invoke the protection of the Srivaishnavas for the donations made to the temples. Probably there were small religious groups which were in charge of the temples. Sthanapathis, who exercised more influence and power can be gleaned from the later inscriptions also. In the absence of proper records throwing light on the administration of the temple at Ahobilam we would not be far wrong in considering a similar method of management described as the above was there for the Narasimha Svarmi temple also.

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C. From the 14th to 16th century - Van Satagopa Jiya of the Ahobila Matha

In the inscription of the time of 1535 A.D.15 there is reference to van Satagopa Jiya. This inscription is of great historical interest as this introduces us for the first time possibly the Ahobila matha Jiya’s, who figure later as the important trustees of the Ahobilam temple.

An inscription of 1550 A.D.16 registers a record set up by the trustees, consisting of Srivan Satagopa Jiya, Ahobila Sthanamavaru (Local representatives) and Karyakarta (representative), Uggarasangaru on behalf of Kondaraju Chinna Timmrayadeva Maharaju and other dignitaries to record certain arrangement regarding the offerings to be made to the god.

An inscription of 1554 A.D.17 registers the dasavanda grant of land in the village of Pedakallu for the maintenance of the temple situated in the village Alamuru which also belonged to the temple. This was set up by the authorities of the temple including Parankusa Van-Satagopa Jiya, Ahobila Sthanamavaru (Local Chiefs) and certain Peddayya, the agent of Mahamandaleswara Aliya Ramappayya.

From 1558 A.D.18 onwards, there appears to be little change in the management. Instead of Jiya’s direct involvement, a mudrakarta, Jiya’s representative appears to figure in the inscriptions. The powers, of the Jiya enjoyed were equally entitled to the mudrakarta also. At the end of each inscription, they (committee consisting of three representatives) assure that they would maintain these perpetually and set their hand. In this section there are three signatures Sri, Sri, Sri. All the signatures are in Telugu characters, and it is made clear that these persons have set their hand as a corporate body.

D. From 18th century onwards

The paper manuscript of D. Ramaswamy Iyengar preserved in the Madras Archives, states that, “When the Jiyaangar left Ahobilam and settled at Tiruvallur, he left the management in the hands of an agent of his called Mudrakarta”.

“The system of appointing Mudrakaras was brought into vogue by the head of the Pushpagiri Math. The Mathadhipati remained at Pushpagiri and as his jurisdiction extended over a considerable area, he appointed deputies to look after the disciples in various parts of India and report from time to time any irregularity on their part in the observance of caste rules or performance of religious rites. These agents, who were called Mudrakaras had no fixed salary but rented the privileges for a certain number of years. The offences, generally taken cognizance of by them were;

1. Disregard of the priest’s orders
2. Disregard of the local Sabha
3. Sexual connection with Sudra Women
4. Drunkenness
5. Non-observance of ceremonies
6. Brahmin widows of more than 20 years not shaving their heads
7. Flesh eating
8. Illicit intercourse with a woman
9. Other minor offences

Of course, the above restrictions were enjoined on the brahmins also.

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The Ahobilam and the Vanamamalai Jiyangars too later on followed this system of appointing Mudrakartas in different areas of their spiritual jurisdiction. It is clear that the Ahobilam Mudrakartas had no power over brahmin disciples. Their privileges were as follows.

1. To collect fees from dasaris and basavis or unmarried women who go about the country holding a garudakambam and begging their food. The latter have to pay a registration fee ranging from Rs.1 to Rs.5, in accordance with their individual means. After they were conferred the privilege of the mudradanam they were licenced to tonsure the heads, and smear the faces of the pilgrims with sandal paste at Ahobilam. Every year they have to pay a recurring fee of Rs.4/- as long as they continue the profession.

2. To collect certain fees during marriage and death ceremonies. To collect these fees, mudrakarta has appointed sattani deputies who go about and dun out the amount from the dasaris.

3. To conduct samayachara i.e., to arbitrate in complicated cases of religion and arbitrate disputes among dasaris and with due judicial temperament make decisions for those people.

4. So then, the mudrakarta has originally spiritual power alone. When the Jiyanagar went south, he invested the Ahobilam mudrakarta with the duty of managing the Ahobilam temples and their properties. That custom has developed into a rule of investing the Ahobilam mudrakarta with the dual functions relating to their properties and the priest of the dasaris.

A mudrakarta purchases the privileges for a certain number of years. The annual contribution paid by him to the matha is Rs.250 and he gets in return a lucrative situation with none to question him in the midst of a forest. No mudrakarta earns a positive valedictory opinion. Justly or unjustly, he becomes the target of all kinds of accusations. Occasionally we hear men of probity and ability to have held that post. But popular opinion asserts that some who had been in that post were not worthy of the position. The people in the country round, exaggerate the irregularities of these mudrakartas. When one leaves one's native home, the cost of one's maintenance naturally increases. As such, a mudrakarta who has to live many miles away from Ahobilam and maintain a cart and some other luxuries too to keep up his status, is generally looked upon with an envious eye by the people. But it is inexcusable, if puja is not regularly conducted within the temples and lights are not kept in the shrines and servants are not paid regularly. It is equally inexcusable if large amounts made available by the matha for repairs were to be misappropriated in parts and the portions intended to be repaired left as they were. In fact, such a kind of cheating is also going on in the shrines occasionally. In general, the ability of the local people to manage the shrines in the interest of the large body of disciples and pilgrims is not of the right order. Further, it will be improper to allow the management of the temples originally managed by a proper Jiyanagar, to drift into the hands of non-brahmins. It is equally uncharitable to make the Mudrakarta a subordinate of the local people.19
CHAPTER - 9

ECONOMY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

1. Economy

A. Sources of income

An institution like the Narasimhasvami temple at Ahobilam which was conducting elaborate rituals and celebrating a number of festivals spread throughout the year, and which was also employing a large number of people for the purpose, needed resources enough to maintain all these. Like any other temple, the Narasimhasvami temple also depends on two types of income: Voluntary contributions from devotees visiting the temple and the revenue derived from its landed assets.

B. Casual donations

The casual and small contributions made by the devotees to the temple can hardly find a mention in the permanent records like the inscriptions. However, the practice of contributing such donations appears to have been old. There is a reference to this practice in an inscription\(^1\) of 1560 A.D. It says that all contributions of money, grains, cloth and ornaments coming to the temple should be properly accounted for and deposited in the temple treasury.

C. Landed property

Landed property and other permanent endowments being perpetual assets naturally find references in a number of stone inscriptions. The services performed and festivals celebrated are regular. They require a huge and recurring expenditure. The funds have to be met from permanent sources of revenue more than the casual and sporadic contributions from the people. Thus we see, in a number of inscriptions, donations of villages, lands and taxes to be collected from various sources etc. having been transferred to the custody of the temple concerned. As such, the income from them may be substantial and permanent for carrying on the activities of the temple without hindrance. The inscription of Krishnadevaraya of 1515 A.D.\(^2\) reveals that the temple enjoyed several such assets.

Such assets may have been gained possibly from the time of the first construction of the temple itself. But no inscription of that time is available here. The earliest inscription recording such a grant to the temple belongs to the time of Sri Krishnadevaraya\(^3\). This inscription was set up by the king Krishnadevaraya himself in the year Saka 1438, Yuva cyclic year Pushya Suddha-15 corresponding to 1515 A.D December 21. It records the gift of one necklace with emerald and diamonds, one locket with diamonds, a pair of armlets studded with rubies, one gold plate, besides 1000 varahas. It also registers the gift of one pendant by his queen.

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Also it registers the grant of village Maradur or Muddur situated in Chagalamarrisima for conducting angaranga vaibhoga to God. Probably this must have been a substantial grant which added considerable resources to the temple.

It is during the Vijayanagara time that this temple began to grow wealthy enough to increase the number and variety of pujas and festivals, adding colour, dignity and splendour to this temple.

In 1532 A.D.6 a few lands were added during the reign of Achyutaraya, and hence the temple gained more assets. A person from Porumamilla made some offerings to God in the form of lands. For this purpose, he purchased two pieces of land from the temple estate, after paying the required amount to the temple treasury. The land consists of one wet land, and the other, a piece of dry land. The location of these lands is given with particular marks i.e., one is under the Pathrani Cheruvu and the other by the side of Lotus tank. In the first piece of land the donor prescribed to grow a garden for the benefit of the temple i.e., the produce is to be used for growing flower plants and small fruit plants which are to be daily offered to the God. In the second phase also it is prescribed that the grain produced should be utilised for the offering of the God.

During the reign of Sadasivaraya more assets and cash were added to the temple. It is due to the philanthropy of the Vijayanagara officer that the temple gained another grant of 50 varahas as principal amount in the treasury of the temple. It is stated that the interest accruing from the said principal amount should be spent for conducting a special festival. The temple gained another village Jambuladinne in Koilkuntalasima. Interestingly enough, this gift was given all the rights like Ashtabogatejasvamyas, i.e., the right of sale, exchange and gift. In 1548 A.D.,7 the temple received another 120 gold varahas as a principal amount and the recurring annual interest is to be utilised for offering 15 plates of dosas.

In the period between 1550 A.D. and 1610 A.D this temple gained extensive donations from the Vijayanagara officers stationed in this region. This is also a period in which we find elaboration of daily rituals and addition of a number of new festivals.

An inscription dated 1550 A.D.8 registers the gift of a piece of land in the village Alamuru purchased from the corporate body of the temple and this land was utilised for the purpose of growing a garden, and also a land yielding one putti, three tumus purchased from a person of Alamuru and also another piece of land purchased from the temple land to grow coconut trees, betel leaves, mango trees, plantains and other fruit yielding trees. It further records that out of the produce 1/3 should be given to the god and the remaining 2/3 to the four gardeners and in the wet land one half of the produce was to go to the god and the remaining half to the cultivator. It is clear from this record that this grant provided new employment to the people of the region.

In 1552,9 Gurijepalli in Dupatisima was gifted to the temple and 500 varahas as income from the village was given to maintain a free-feeding home in Lower Ahobilam. In the same year, another 20 varahas was added to the temple treasury.

An inscription dated 1554 A.D.10 mentions the construction of the tank Konasamadram alias Srimanaranjana samudram to the north-east of Alamuru. The person who irrigated the temple lands was given the yield measuring two putris out of dry land and two marthurs out of wet land as remuneration. Besides he was also granted another remuneration in the shape of dasavandha11. In this grant, we find that he was given a separate grant of land as remuneration for excavating the tank and dasavandha (1/10 of the produce) grant for the maintenance of the tank. From 1560 A.D.12 there are a number of inscriptions giving details about food offerings and the expenditure incurred in their preparation.
The inscription mentioned above records a grant of 200 varahas in the temple treasury towards the cost of some land in two pieces, yield measuring two separate Maruthurs of wet land. The yield from the two pieces of land is stated to be 10 Puttis of paddy and its cost is estimated to be 20 varahas. This amount is to be spent towards the preparation of the sweets called manoharalu, one plate on each day of the god's procession. It is quite interesting to note that, for the preparation of this variety of sweet, they have specified the weight and measures of the ingredients. For the preparation of the said sweet, ingredients are specified as follows. Rice 1/2 Manika, Black gram pulses 1/2 Manika, Ghee 3 Chittus and Jaggery 71/2 palas, pepper 1/4 chitti, ilachi (one gajjanam weight), betel nuts 3, betel leaves 6.

At this rate of the offering, that is one plate every day, there would be 250 prescribed times (putalu) expenditure of 20 varahas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Varahas</th>
<th>Rukhas</th>
<th>Visa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1¼</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green gram pulse</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td>8¼</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4¼</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5¼</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilachi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaggery</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td>4¼</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betels</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firewood</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4½</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversion Table

1 Rukha = Four Quarters
4 Visas = One Quarter Rukha
16 Visas = One Rukha
10 Rukhas = One Varaha / Gajjana

Having specified the cost of each item required for the manoharalu, the total amount of the gift money of 20 varahas is approximately adjusted. If any marginal deviation or difference in the expenditure is to be incurred, it is to be adjusted out of the miscellaneous expenditure which is here specified to be one gajjana and 4 1/2 rukhas. This record gives us an idea of the cost of Manohara offerings for the specified 250 times.
For example, the cost of rice is stated to be one gajjana and 1 1/4 rukhas for 7 tumus and 3/4 kunchas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ga</td>
<td>Ru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackgram</td>
<td>2 1/2</td>
<td>5 1/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another inscription of 1563 A.D.\textsuperscript{11} which adds land and cash to the temple treasury is looked after by the juyar of Ahobila matha. The specifications registered in the inscription are that 600 varahas are given by an officer to the temple treasury to purchase some wet land measuring 6 marthurs and the location of the land also is specified. In turn, the said chief Vobularaju is stated to have made a gift of the said 6 marthurs of land to the temple and agreed to submit the produce at the rate of 5 putis for each marthur totalling to 30 marthurs of paddy to the temple as gift and this produce will be utilised for the daily offerings to Nammalvar at the rate of 1/4 tumu rice and kotha rukha per day. It is quite possible that the area of land was reckoned in terms of the quantity of potential produce raised in that extent of land. The total amounts to 4 1/2 tumus for Amruthapadi for the year and other expenditure 360 rukha's per year. The cook charges 120 kotha rukhas and the amount totals upto 480 kotha rukhas per year. Another condition is that the offerings are to be made in the name of the said chiefs and prasadam is to be utilised for feeding 12 Vaishnavas daily.

Another inscription dated 26th August, 1563 A.D.\textsuperscript{12} describes some more assets of the temple. This registers the gift of income from the village Kalutapalli situated in Korakolasima amounting to 230 varahas. Out of this amount, the polivudu offerings would cost 162 Gajjanas (varahas) and other offerings amount to 68 varahas, the total would be 230 varahas. Again Vobula Raju made a gift of 1 puttu of land in Padakandla village which was equivalent to 40 varahas and another 2 puttis of land in Dornipadu village the income of which would be 40 varahas and another 2 puttis of land in the village Injedu, the income of which would be 40 varahas, and another wet land 4 marthurs in the village Bayyapagudur the income of which was 20 varahas. The total yield of these four items of land amount to 370 varahas. And this amount is to be spent for the offerings to the god during the period of stay of god in the mandapa constructed by the donor in Kamasamudram Narasayya's house. So far, the income and expenditure of the gift and lands and the offerings to the god are broadly stated. There follows a detailed description of certain items which are missing.

Some items extant may be given as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Varaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 plate rice</td>
<td>1 varaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pepper (1/16 of one measure cost being)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Curd (3 measures cost)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>400 Betels</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>400 leaves</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sandal paste</td>
<td>1/2 rukha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fire wood</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversion Table

4 Kanis 1 Ana/ Visa
8 Kanis 2 Anas
64 Kanis 1 Rukha
16 Anas 1 Rukha
10 Rukhas 1 Varaha

In this way some of the items are specified while other items are indistinctive. At the end of the distribution of the offerings, the procedure for the distribution of the prasadam is also furnished. (One measure is to be given to the matha, and another measure for two Vaishnavas. 62 vadas and 15 betel leaves were also to be given to Math.)

In 1563 A.D. an inscription was set up by the presiding Acharyas of the Ahobila matha, Sri Parankusa Vansatakopa Jiyar. This inscription clearly throws light on the rates and costs of the different groceries at that time.

The register indicates a gift of offering 40 dosas to the god. For this purpose, the table of items cost-wise is furnished below according to the statement given in the inscription.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Rukhas</th>
<th>Anas</th>
<th>Kanis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green gram pulse</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firewood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour maker</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this way there would be 114 prescribed times and for each prescribed time the offering cost 1 rukha. so, 114 rukhas were expended which amounted to 11 varahas and 4 rukhas. The additional amount 3 varahas and 7 rukhas might have been intended for the miscellaneous expenditure in the year. So too, there are a quite good number of such inscriptions. We come across a marginal amount perhaps to meet the additional expenditure.

Similarly another inscription of 1564 A.D. registers a grant by the Jiyyamgaru of the land (dry land) measuring 12 tumus in the village Lingamadinne in Gandikotasima which was donated to him by a certain Narasayya who got it from Nandyal Thimma Raju. The income of the 12 tumus of the gift land is calculated at 8 varahas per year. Another piece of land measuring 5 tumus, the income of which is specified as 5 varahas. These amounts for Tirunal offerings are allotted for the expenditure on items specified as detailed in the following table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Gajanam (or) Varaha</th>
<th>Rukha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice ½ kha</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curd rice (½ tumu)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiruvisas (½ tumu)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greengram</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curd (1 tumu, 1 kuncha)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk (½ tumu)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantains (50)</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantains (20)</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried ginger</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickles</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caster oil (½ measure)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appa palli (½ tumu)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaggery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 Nuts</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 Betel leaves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandal paste</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green gram pulses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaggery for syrup</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire wood</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basket maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksetravasuniki</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanika</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobbler</td>
<td>1¼</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>½,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaga</td>
<td>½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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One-fourth of the *prasadams* is distributed to the donors, \(\frac{1}{4}\) is allocated for sale, 2 parts for free distribution. Accordingly out of the 71 *appas*, 18 *appas* go to the donor, 18 are offered for sale and 35 are distributed freely. Similarly out of the 71 *vadas*, 18 are distributed to the donor, 19 are sold, 34 *vadas* are allotted for free distribution. This is how the distribution of the *prasadam* registered.

1586 A.D.\(^{15}\) inscription of Venkatapatiraya II gives a list of various taxes collected from different villages and how this amount was spent on different items. It was set up on the 9th of February in the year 1586 A.D. The purpose of the record is to register the monetary gift of 80 *varahas* which a certain chief called Venkatarajadeva Choda Maharaja was entitled to receive from different villages.

His income of varied amounts from various sources had been donated to god Ahobileswara as shown below. (Source of income called *Kavali sunkam* from different villages.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Varahas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bommi Reddy Tank (5+5)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamuru (12+5)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinna Bodhanam</td>
<td>12 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narasapuram</td>
<td>1 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutthalur</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammula dinne</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vengalam palli</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padakandla</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagulavaram</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingamdinne</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80 varahas</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expenditure of the 80 *varahas***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Varahas (per annum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice for Amrutha padi (<em>2 putris, 5 tumus</em>)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure on Vaishnavas</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tirumanjanam</em> (Sacramental bathing)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship of the Lord</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandal paste - maker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland maker</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80 varahas</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chief was the same as the donor referred to in the inscription dated 1584 A.D.\textsuperscript{16} In the present inscription, he is the donor of some offerings etc. specified already and the ruling king was Venkatapati Raya.

The last grant recorded is by a merchant guild. This inscription dated 1609 A.D.\textsuperscript{17} was set up by the members of a merchant guild of Penukondapura. It registers the gift by the members of seven gold guilded kalasas for the temple gopura (Pinnacle) and one such gold kalasa along with umbrella used in the procession of the god. The names of the donors of these kalasas are given below.

1. Krishnma Setty son of Araveeti
   Chennama Setty and Rangayya
   son of Seshadri both donated one
   Kalasa and 2 fly whisks and
   white silk umbrella with kalasa

2. Thimmappa son of Viluri Venkata Setty
3. Lakshmaiah, son of Pola Mallaiiah
4. Potam Setty, son of Devi setty Mallisetty
5. Saravaiah, Son of Rachamadugu Lingaiah
6. Papaiah, Son of Madisetty Tippaiah
7. Lingi setty, son of Madisetty Jenniah

It is quite likely that this is the only merchant guild inscription.

\textbf{D. General information regarding the above inscriptions}

Most of the inscriptions refer to the offerings mentioned in detail. However, the inscription set up by the merchants of Penuonda, gives a list of the gifts of guild Kalasas, fly whisks and one umbrella.

Some of the inscriptions specify particulars regarding the items to be prepared and the expenditure to be incurred for the preparation of these items. In some records, the distribution of the prasadams are also specified. Over-all management of the temple seems to rest in the hands of the presiding acharya of the matha. Although we find the mention of the trustees of the temple, their interference in the affairs of the management seems to be very little. Officially the documents are executed firstly by the Jiyrar through the secretary, secondly, by the trustees of the temple, thirdly, by king's representatives, fourthly, in some cases local chiefs, fifthly, in some cases local officials (adhiyamvaru). These are stated to be the authentic executors.

Out of the temple proceeds, money is lent at interest though the exact rate of interest is not known from the inscriptions. However, certain more offerings are to be made out of the amount realised as interest.

Consequently the reference to any social aspects such as the employment and payment to the service personnel including women is not found in these inscriptions. In this respect, the inscription of Ahobilam differs very much from those found at many other temples like Sri Sailam, Bapatla in Andhra Pradesh or those of Karnataka which offer the details of a social nature. Even from the inscriptions belonging to a Vaishnava temple, very little is known about the theology of Vaishnavism. The geographical information is also very scanty.
By about the end of the 16th Century A.D., this temple had 18 Sarvamanya villages; 80 Acres wet lands in other places and the right of collecting some taxes in villages.

Though the exact income accruing annually to the temple treasury cannot be made out as all the inscriptions are not well preserved, we may say from the extant onse that it exceeded 3165 gold varahas by about the end of the 16th century A.D.

2. Items of Expenditure

All the income derived from the assets were to be utilised variously by the temple, as enjoined by the various donors. As already indicated, the major items of expenditure in the temple prior to the Vijayanagara period are not known through the records.

During the Vijayanagara period several new services were included. Thus there were offering of perpetual lamps and several varieties of lamp circumambulations (diparadhana), provision for the supply of flowers, costly scents and perfumes like Punugu, pachchakarpura and panniru. There were food offerings totally four times a day in which varieties of dishes were to be offered to the god. The varieties of dishes included rice preparation, puddings, sweets etc. all of the best types in the culinary art of Andhra. Similarly elaborate details for the distribution of prasadams from the various dishes offered to the god give us an impression that the various food offerings were not only of excellent quality but also of substantial quantity.

Likewise, such arrangements for offering somewhat elaborate services, though not as of the same scale of the Lower and Upper Ahobilam temples, were organised in the various other adjoining shrines, inside and outside the temple. It is during this period that many other shrines and temples grew in number at Ahobilam.

Again during this period an impressive list of new festivals and elaboration of old festivals begin to figure in the inscriptions for which provision has been made to meet the expenditure from the temple treasury out of the revenue accruing from various donations mentioned above. We hear from these inscriptions a ten - day festival (Brahmotsava), a month-long festival commencing from sankranthi festival (Paruvettai-utsava), a three-day festival (Rathotsava), occasionally -conducted long festival (tirunal Mahotsava), seven - day festival in the months of February-March (Vasantha-purnima) etc. Many of these festivals included the procession of gods and offerings of worship to them in different pavilions outside the temple and offering special naivedyam and distribution of prasadam on these occasions.

Besides, various donors donated villages or set apart a portion of the income to be gained from their donations, either for the conduct of any festival in the Upper or Lower Ahobilam temple or for the free feeding in the Ramanujakuta.

3. Addition of Jewellery, Utensils etc.

From about 19th century there was altogether a new trend. Probably by this time the temple had enough resources to run the varieties of pujas and festivals and thus we see not the addition of land grants but offering of costly gold and silver utensil for services, jewellery for decorating the gods and varieties of vehicles for use in processions.

4. The temple in the economic life of the region

The economy of the Ahobilam temple provides a glimpse of the role of such institutions in the general economic life of the land. The temple acted not only as a religious institution but also as an important economic institution. It required a lot of assets, created employment for a large number of people and maintained facilities for the devotees coming from far and near. The assets of the temple
consisted of lands it owned. It had a great capacity to generate employment and promote commerce directly and indirectly. Directly, it maintained a huge staff for running the ritual and other activities connected with it. Apart from the persons directly employed to till the lands, a good number of others received lands in the region for the maintenance of specific endowments to the temple like rendering the special services. Its festival gatherings created opportunities for commerce and business on the precincts of the temple. One of the greatest services rendered by the temple was possibly in the field of extension of agriculture, by way of repairing or constructing the tanks and bringing new lands under cultivation. For private individuals, it would be a formidable task but a wealthy institution like this temple, with its good officers, men and money could easily afford to do this.

From an inscription at least, we have such an instance being recorded. An inscription of 1554 A.D.\(^{19}\) refers to the excavation and maintenance of the irrigation tank and the same inscription has a reference to the new lands that could be brought under cultivation.

The temple was the biggest consumer of the locality. It required a variety of commodities and services for its day-to-day conduct as well as for its special festive occasions. In the early stages, the requirements of the temple were probably few. But the steady increase in the offerings, festivals and rituals from about the 15th century A.D. resulted in the increase of the articles required by the temple. They include rice, gram, pulses, turmeric, pepper, mustard, jaggery, salt, arecanut, betel, camphor, *kumkum*, coconut, fruits, milk, ghee, butter, curd, oil, honey etc.

The temple was the biggest consumer in the locality not only of the food articles and the perfumery, but also of other articles like cloth, wooden objects, jewels, gold, silver and brass metal lamps, decorative articles and the like. In this way, the temple stimulated and encouraged crafts, industry and trade.

5. Social Interaction

A. General Remarks

The temple, though founded by some zealous individuals, has exerted influence on the larger section of the society, promoting a religious attitude among the people and serving them by furthering the cause of communal peace and harmony and the general happiness of the community. The extent of beneficent influence exerted by a religious institution such as the Ahobilam temple can be gauged by its impact on the society in general by way of interaction.

The Indian social structure was predominantly based upon the system of stratification. The successful operation of any social institution in a given age depended upon the magnitude of its positive interaction with the numerous classes and caste groups, identifying its own function with the meeting of the peculiar needs, promotion of interests and fulfilment of the ambitions of the populace at large.

The inscriptions available in the Ahobilam temples have some information relating to the various individuals that participated directly or indirectly in the affairs of the temple. So it would be an interesting exercise to find out to which class and caste these individuals belonged, thus identifying the impact of this temple on various social groups. However, we must confess that the information available in these inscriptions is very much limited and hence for this study are forced to adopt a slightly different method. We have tried here to assess the role of the temple by pooling up whatever information is available from historical sources and interpreting them against the background of the present day situation, wherever it becomes necessary.

B. Participation of different professional groups

Most of the inscriptions present in the Narasimhaswami temples are donative, which would normally contain details of donations of a substantial kind only. So naturally the various donors that figure
here come from such of the social classes which had adequate resources to direct a portion of their means towards socio-religious causes. Such classes, in the historical context, can be identified as the royalty, the class of state officials, the rich traders and trading organizations and sometimes rich agriculturists.

Peculiarly enough, the names of the major donors for this temple, as recorded in inscriptions come from the section that was clearly associated with royalty. Between the beginning of the 14th century and the end of the 16th century A.D. when major donations accrued to this temple we have an array of such persons belonging to various social strata.

There are thirty inscriptions recording the details of the donations. Out of these, there is only one inscription directly from the King Krishnadevaraya in 1515 A.D. All the other inscriptions are of private individuals namely Brahma Jyoyushu, Abbiraju, Ugaarayayangaru and the other name not clear. In the early 16th century, the inscriptions were those of Chinna Aubulayyadeva Maharaju, the Nandyala chief in 1548 A.D. and in 1508 A.D. Mahamandaleswara Narasamgaru in 1552 A.D. Mahamandalesvara Kondayyadeva Maharaju, in 1553 A.D. Mahamandaleswara Venkatadrideva Maharaju, in 1555 A.D. Mahamandaleswara Ganapathi Deva Maharaya, in 1558 A.D. Mahamandaleswara Timmarajguru, in 1560 A.D. Mahamandaleswara Gopinatharajguru, in 1563 A.D., Mahamandaleswara Aubalaraju, in 1586 A.D. Mahamandaleswara Venkatarajudeva choda Maharaju. The four other inscriptions are from the corporate body (trustees) of the temple, two from Parankusa Jiyar, one from a Nayankara (name not known) and one from the merchant guild.

Thus these inscriptions provide a picture of the peculiar situation relating to this temple. Why alone this temple was mainly patronised by the rulers of the day and why there is practically nothing coming forth from the other wealthy classes like the merchants and the rich land owning class, cannot be easily understood. Possibly this may indicate a situation in which it was only the royalty and their close associates that have come under the influence of Sri Vaishnavism at the time. Or was it a case in which compared to the rich donations from the royalty, the donations made by the other sections of the society were of so meagre consequence and value as to go unrecorded in the epigraphical documents?

C. Participation of different castes

At present, the Narasimha temple at Ahobilam employs people belonging to various castes for carrying out different functions and it also attracts people of various caste groups from this region. The inscriptions also throw some light on the involvement of and participation by people of different sections of society.

This, being a Srimaithana Brahmanical institution, it goes without saying that the Srimaithana Brahmins were intimately connected with the affairs of the temple. We have indicated elsewhere that the priests, paricharaka and the adhyapaka who formed a substantial section among the temple employees were all Srimaithana Brahmins. The management was also directly under the control of a Srimaithana matha. Besides these, there appears to have been a number of Srimaithanas, who though not employed by the temple directly, were enjoying certain privileges like free - feeding and rendering service through the agency of the temple.

Brahmins were respected for their learning and pious life. Numerous were the endowments made in their honour and for their maintenance. For example, an inscription of the time of the Vijayanagara king Venkatapathiraya II mentions the grant of money to Srimaithanas. The total amount 80 varaahas granted was divided into 9 parts, and 6 varaahas were granted to Srimaithanas, whose gotras and names are not mentioned. Another inscription of the time of Sadasivaraya of 1563 A.D.31 mentions different grants, one of which grant is made to Srimaithana sangha.
As Ahobilam is situated in the dense forest area, probably the functionaries connected with the temple might have stayed in Peddamudiyam or nearby places. We find many epigraphical references to Srivaishnavas agraham at Peddamudiam.

In the life of the Srivaishnavas of this region the temple occupies an important place. Owing to the impact and influence of the teachings of Vansatagopa Jiyan and his disciples, the importance of the temple and service to the deity housed therein assumed a new dimension. Especially because of the emphasis Srivaishnavism laid on the archa form or idol manifestation and the value of service to God in the temple, every Srivaishnava deems it his duty and honour to do one kind of service or the other to the temple.

There were a few other Srivaishnavas who were not brahmins by caste but yet were associated with the Srivaishnava temples. Though they hailed from different caste groups, they had accepted the Srivaishnava tenets. Many of these were staunch devotees of Ramanuja and had taken to a way of life which did not differ much from that of the Srivaishnava Brahmans. For example, we have in many other Srivaishnava centres like Kanchi references to a class calledDasas and Nambis. It is said that they formed a class called Sathada Srivaishnavas and they looked after the temple gardens and served the god by supplying flowers for worship and they were known for their dedicated service.

There is only one reference in the Ahobilam inscription. A record of the time of Sadasivaraya mentions the grant of a few varahas to Sathada Srivaishnava who was in charge of gardening and supply of flowers to the god Narasimha.

The Ahobilam inscriptions refer to a few other individuals probably belonging to different castes. An inscription of 1609 A.D. mentions a merchant guild which records that a grant of seven gold guilded kalasas for the temple gopura by Chennama setty, Viluvarivenkata setty, Potama setty, Saravaiah, Papaiah and Lingama setty. The surname Setty indicates that they were probably of some merchant community.

Another inscription of 1558 A.D. mentions vocational groups of workers such as basket-makers, carpenters, cobblers, barbers, palanquin carriers etc. Probably, there are a group of employees other than Srivaishnava Brahmins for various manual services in the temple. It is not unlikely that the same situation is prevailing at present also.

Ramanuja’s revolutionary reforms in the contemporary social structure and a continuation of the same trend by the successive teachers of the faith appear to have made an impact on the people of this region in bringing them closer to the Narasimhasvami temple at this place.

In the Narasimhasvami temple there is an age-old custom in which people belonging to the so-called tribals - (Chenchus) being given the privilege of the first service during the Brahmotsava ceremony. The practice is that on the last day of the Ratotsava ceremony, the Chenchus belonging to the tribal community, should hit the mobile chariot with their bows. We have already mentioned earlier the relationship of the Chenchus with the temple. The prevailing customs, unimaginable in a tradition - bound society, must have enhanced the interaction of the people belonging to tribal groups with this temple. It is a common sight in the region to see people of various castes including the tribals decorating themselves with the urdhvapundra (namam), calling themselves as the followers of Srivaishnavism and considering the god Narasimha of Ahobilam as their family deity. The impact of this trend is well seen in the various customs they adopt in their religious life including the naming of their children. It is a very common thing to come across in this region people of various castes bearing names like Ahobala, Aubalayya, Obulanna, Aubaladeva, Obuleshu, Obulu and so on - all after the
name of this deity. A casual survey of the prevalence of these names reveals that the influence of Ahobilam is to be seen spread over not only in all the regions of Andhra but also in the neighbouring state of Karnataka.

When this sort of close affiliation of the people with the temple started is difficult to ascertain from the epigraphical data. The earliest inscription which refers to a brahmin named ‘Vobula’ belongs to the 8th century A.D. which is found in the village Peddapeta, which is a hamlet of Yadiki. Vobula is a simplified form of Ahobata. The appearance of such names as Obalayya, Obulesu etc. among the non-brahmin communities of the region is to be seen in a number of inscriptions dating from the 17th century A.D. and the inscription of this region is galore with such names.

D. Promotion of Social Good

This temple was also a centre of learning and education. With it were associated Srivaishnava mathas which served as seminaries and schools. The establishment of Ahobila matha by Vansatagopa Jiya is indicated by a few inscriptions of Ahobilam. Even to this day this matha continues to be a centre of religious and philosophical studies. That this place promoted higher learning is indicated by a string of epithets associated with a number of persons mentioned in various inscriptions. The Jiya are often called as establishers of the path of the Vedas (Vedamarga Pratishtapanacharyas) and as the promoters of the faith of Ramanuja.

The need for facilities for the travellers and visitors in a pilgrim centre like Ahobilam, situated in a hilly and far off place, is quite obvious. Even now free feeding for the pilgrims is arranged in private homes or elsewhere through the agency of public institutions such as mathas on festival days like paruvettai. But an important institution that admirably served this need in ancient times was the Ramanujakuta, in which free food is offered to the poor and the pilgrims. An inscription of 1552 A.D. mentions the grant for the maintenance of the Ramanujakuta at lower Ahobilam. There is also mention of Ramanujakuta in the inscriptions of the surrounding areas of Ahobilam, where, the idol of god Narasimha visits the villages, during the paruvettai utsava. This institution must have served as a welcome facility encouraging pilgrims from various parts of the country to visit this place, and providing greater scope for social interaction among people of different communities and regions. It also served as an instituion for the poor feeding.

Similarly the various festivals celebrated with pomp and colour attracted a large number of people of different social groups facilitating social interaction and the consequential integration. Such large gatherings helped the local craftsmen and traders to improve their business and a number of artists of various kinds display their talents. Thus the temples at Ahobilam were serving varied needs of the society effectively.
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INTRODUCTION

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14. Rajanikanta Rao, Balantrapu, Andhra Vaggeyakara Charitramu, P 105 It is said that Chaganti Seshayya fixed up these dates

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16. Rajanikanta Rao, B, Andhra Vaggeyakara Charitramu, PP 133-134
17. Ibid., P.114.
18. Tirumala Narayana Charya, Puttagar; Abobilam Telugu Sahityam, Maha Samproksanam Commemoration Souvenir, June 1978
19. Ibid.
24. Lakshmiranianam, K., Andhra Sahitya Charitra Sangrahamu, PP.118-119; Viresalingam Pantulu says that the poet lived about 1560 A.D.
25. MSS Preserved in the Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, Sanskrit MSS, D.No. 10096
26. MSS Preserved in the Tanjore Maharaja Serforji's Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjore, Telugu MSS, D.No. 494
27. MSS Preserved in the Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, Telugu MSS, R.No. 527
33. See chapter IV, pp. 124-126.

Chapter - 1

1. E.I., XXXVIII, No. 56, p.340
2. S.I.I., IX. p.209
5. S.I.I., X, No. 577, p. 319
6. S.I.I., XVI, No. 96, p. 111
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., ch.II
10. Nalayira Divya prabandham
11. S.I.I., XVI, No. 271, p.278
12. Ibid., No. 235, p. 241
13. S.I.I., IX, No. 207
14. Bramhandapurana: Kshetradhanda, Abhola Mahatym, ch.VII.
15. Mack. Vol. (S.A.), No. 100, Abobilam Kaifiyat
18. Bramhandapurana: Kshetradhanda, Abhola Mahatym, Ch.I
19. Ibid., ch.II
20. Ibid.

22. These poems form a part of 4000 Tamil songs known as Nalayira Divya Prabandham, which are sung in all the Vishnu temples even today. One hundred and eight places are revered as Divyadesas or places of divine residence by Sri

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Vaishnavas. Among them, Ahobilam, known as Singa-vel-kunram, occupies an important place. The *Nalayira Divya Prabhandham* contains more than 75 verses on Lord Narasimha by various Alvars and out of them ten by Tirumangai Alvar are specifically on Sri Ahobilam Narasimha. The poems of Tirumangai Alvar are given below.

1. When Hiranyakasipu, feared by all in this beautiful wide world, challenged his son Prahlada to show Lord Vishnu in a particular pillar in his Audience hall, God, who is ever pure, appeared out of it and tore into two his chest with His sharp nails. That Narasimha now resides in Singa-Vel-Kunram where lions with angry eyes pay obeisance to Him by offering Him the ivory tusks of elephants killed by them.

2. Hiranyakasipu, who was known for his inhuman cruelty, was torn to pieces by Narasimha of incomparable mettle, exhibiting his wrath through His twisting tongue and shining fangs. The Narasimha now resides in Singa-Vel-Kunram which resounds to the noise of trumpets and the twang of bows of the local hunters way laying the pilgrims to the shrine (The dangers faced by pilgrims in the days of the Alvars are truly portrayed by him).

3. Narasimha of unparalleled heroism, with a fitting wide mouth and sword-like sharp teeth reduced to smithereens the body of Hiranya which had grown amply. That Lord now resides in Singa-Vel-Kunram which is characterised by nothing but animals getting tired by roaming on the hard surface, broken small hills and bamboos destroyed by forest fires. (The weird environment is as fascinating to the Alvar as the charming groves with buzzing bees and dancing peacocks elsewhere).

4. Lord Narasimha made a prey to his adamantine nails the body of Hiranya who with his lethal lance was an enemy of His devotees. He now resides in Singa-Vel-Kunram, which, because of devouring dogs, preying eagles, the fierce heat of the mid-day sun and whirlwinds is accessible to none but gods. (The Alvar is happy that it is inaccessible to hostile elements with malevolent intents).

5. The peerless Lord Narasimha with his fearful jutting jaw and sword-sharp teeth had a relatively light task of disposing of Hiranya who was practically dead out of dread. He now resides in Singa-Vel-Kunram where the blazing reddish forest fire spreads to the skies assisted by the whirlwind.
6. "What kind of strange form is this Man-Lion with gleaming greenish eyes and glowing jaw containing flashing fangs?" thus exclaiming, the gods ran helter-skelter unsteadily in fright. That Lord of all now resides in Singa-Vel-Kunram where tigers look for the pug marks of their prey, the elephants, among the large tracts of dense bamboo bushes.

7. The denizens of the three worlds were filled with dire apprehension that the universe would come to an end because the increasing ire of Lord Narasimha began burning the skies. He now resides in Singa-Vel-dKunram which is full of the noise of bursting stones burnt by forest fires and the more fierce hunters roaming with their bows.

8. Brahma and Siva continuously and by turns extol the unrivalled Lord Narasimha in an appropriate manner till their tongues become thick with fatigue. That Lord now resides in Singa-Vel-Kunram where the dried up fruits of Yahai trees make a rattling noise in the wind, while the tall pipe like bamboos, emerging amidst stones, rub against each other, brightening the sky with the resultant fire.

9. O! my benign mind! let us worship Narasimha, who is our own Lord, who is enfolding Mahalakshmi, on His side, who is endowed with a thousand arms, and who is now residing in Singa-Vel-Kunram where the growing trees break through rocks with their spreading roofs, where the palm leaves restle and crickets screech unceasingly.

10. Those mastering these verses by the generous Alvar, a master of Tamil poetry and Ruler of Tirumangai, ever blessed by Vaishnava-Sri, wearing a garland attended by buzzing bees, will, by the grace of that Lord Narasimha, face no evil and derive auspicious benefits.

23. S.I.I., XVI, No. 235
24. Ibid., No. 263
25. Ibid., No. 169
26. Ibid., No. 235
27. This type of reservoirs is found in Hampi, which are of bigger size.
28. S.I.I., XVI, No. 263

Chapter - 2
7. Ibid., P.72
8. Ibid., P.67
23. *Inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh Cuddapah District, Vol. I No. 10*
   ii. *Domnara Nandyala Plates of Punnyakumara* E.I., XXVII. PP.268. ff
   iii. Madras museum plates of Sri kantachola C.P., No.5 of 1935-36, JIH, XV, PP. 30 ff
   iv. Pedachapalli plates of Srikantha Srimanokara, E.P. Andhrica VI. PP.13FF.
The King of this dynasty used Telugu language for the first time in the history of Andhra for issuing inscriptions. The first Telugu inscriptions found at *Kalamalla in Kamalapuram tahuk*, assignable to the 6th century A.D., is in Telugu, which was issued by Dhananjayavarma, the first king of this line. All the stone inscriptions of this dynasty appear in Telugu and the copperplate one in Sanskrit. The following is the genealogy of the *Renuki Cholas* as given by M. Venkataramanaiah on the basis of their inscriptions.

_Dhananjaya 575 A.D._

Mahendra Vikrama 600 A.D.

Navarama

_Muditasilakshara_

Lord of Chera, Chola and Pandya countries Gunamadita Punnyakumara

M. vasantapori cholamahater 625 A.D.

_Vikramaditya I C. 650 A.D._

_Saktikomara C. 700 A.D._

_Vikramaditya II_

Cholamaharaj C.700. A.D.

_Uttamaditya C.725 A.D._

_Satyaditya C. 725. A.D._

_Prithivivallabha_

Vijayaraditya Chola C.750.A.D.

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29. Telangana Inscriptions, Vol. 11. PP. 34-37
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32. Ibid., No. 448
34. Ibid., P.53
35. Ibid., P.55
37. Inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh, Cuddapah District Vol.I No. 88
39. Srinivasulu, K., Gandikotacharitra-samskriti (Telugu), Proddatur, 1988, P.51
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41. Srinivasulu, K., Gandikotacharitra - Samskriti (Telugu), proddatur, 1988, P.52
42. S.I.I. Vol. X. No. 10
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44. S.I.I. Vol. X, No. 550
45. Sampath., M.D., Chittoor through the Ages, Delhi, 1980, P.98
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49. Sampath, M.D., Chittoor through the Ages, P. 104.
50. Ibid., P.105.
52. Ibid. PP. 61-62
53. Ibid., PP. 83-84
55. Ibid
57. A.R., No. 564 of 1916
58. I.A.P.C., I., No. 87
59. Kurnool District Gazetteer, (rev) 1974, Hyderabad, P.43
60. Ibid., P.44
61. Ibid., PP. 44-55

Chapter - 3
1. Quoted by K.C. Varadachari, Alvars of South India, Introduction, Bombay 1970
2. It may be noted in this connection that, of the Twelve Alvars, one was a woman saint, Andal, who cannot be considered, strictly speaking, as an Alvar. But she has been given that status since she occupies such a pre-eminent position among the devotees of Vishnu.
4. This discredits incidentally the famous story of Tirumangai meeting the great Saiva saint Jnana sambandhar
5. However, there are many resemblances, in literary form and religious sentiments, between Jnana sambandhar and Tirumangai.
6. A famous Telugu Kavya, *Amuktamalyada* or *Vishnuchittiya* written by Krishnadevaraya, the Vijayanagara Emperor, is based on this theme.


8. In his work *sakalpa suryodaya*, Vendanta Desika makes a passing reference to Melkote by appreciating the place for its good climate and pleasant look.


11. *Inscriptions of Mysore*, P. 315

12. A.R., 256/50-51 and No. 370 and No. 393 of *Srirangam Temple Inscriptions*


Chapter - 4


2. *Sri Simhachala Ksetra Mahatmyam* (Sanskrit), Published by the Devasthanam of Simhachalam, Slokas. 11-17.

3. Of these four places Kritasanchanam and Harapapam cannot be identified. Simhachalam is located in the north of Vishakapatnam.

4. *Sri Simhachala Ksetra Mahatmyam* (Sanskrit), Published by the Devasthanam of Simhachalam slokas 11-17.

5. The *Kaifiyats* are digests prepared from *Kaviles* or village registers containing information on the political, religious, social and other conditions of villages in the Deccan and were prepared by Pandits and musaddis working under Col. Macknezie. *The Ahobilam Kaifiyat* is in Telugu and was written by one Kasuba karnam Ramanna in the year (1810, 28th July 1810). The *Kaifiyat* is available in the state of Archives at Hyderabad.

6. *Guruparamparai* is available in many versions. The vedagalai version provides a detailed account and hence this has been made use of in this present work.


14. Folk Songs in Telugu.


19. “The plaque is important for many reasons. Next to the Aastabujasvami Temple, the image of which is lost, this is the earliest form of Vishnu (Nrisimha) known to us from any part of Andhra. The tradition of dedication of such plaques became popular in the later ages and Sivaramamurthy has referred to one from Peddamudiyyam in his note on early sculptures and also illustrated by late Prof. Banerjea”.

174
The plaque from Kondamotu is made of limestone and contains six figures, a central Narasimha in theomorphic form seated on its fours with an uplifted penis. The additional human hands with Kankanas (bracelets) are added to this and carry a gada and chakra. Two standing figures of Kartikeya and Vishnu flank this image. The two-handed Kartikeya holds his weapon Sakti in his right hand the Kabbata in his left. A two-handed Vishnu stands in Samabhanga and holds a Sankha and the right hand is held in abhaya-mudra. He wears a crown similar to the one worn by the figures in the Amaravati and Nagaramonkonda sculptures. On the right of these figures, Rama holding a bow and arrow stands cross-legged in titrabanaga. Balarama, wearing kundalas and a typical Amaravati, head gear holds his wine cup. Lastly, perhaps kalki is shown holding a sword and a shield in his hands.

The delineation of the figures in the drapery, ornamentation etc., is typical of Amaravathi school of art and therefore cannot be far removed in date from the third and fourth centuries A.D.

21. Ibid.

**Chapter - 5**

1. These two structures are popularly known as Eguva (Upper) Ahobilam and Diguva (Lower) Ahobilam Temples.
2. In 1916, the approach road existed only upto the 5th mile.
3. Local people believe that there is a hoard of valuables underneath the stone. Many have tried to remove the stone, but in vain. Another belief is that the priests used to get water from the periodical springs underneath, to the temple.
4. S.I.I., XVI, No. 296
5. Ibid., No. 174
8. M. Vol. 100 (S.A.), Ahobilam Kaifiyat
10. Ibid., No. 155

**Chapter - 6**

2. Buddha's function according to the Puranas is purely negative.
5. The presence of symbolic figure of Lakshmi is significant. Narasimha is visualised for the first time in the combined aspects of Lakshmi-Narasimha, representations of which occur in the later sculpture of the Cholas and subsequent periods in large numbers. The plaque, therefore, may be said to represent the earliest form of the concept.
6. Krishna, also among the avatars of Vishnu, is worshipped as a child, a young man etc. forms fit for exhibiting the various kinds of bhakti, or love, as for instance, that of a mother for her child, that of a wife for her husband and that of a friend for a friend. Due to this feature, Krishna, is specially likable to the Srivaishnavas psyche and hence varieties of Krishna, including Balakrishna find depiction in the Srivaishnava temples.
7. Gopinatha Rao does not give details of the six-handed sudarsana- chakra. However, there is a passage in the Purushottama Samhita (VII. 40b-42a) which mentions slightly different attributes for the six-handed Sudarsana (H.D. Smith 1969 P. 582).
8. Interestingly enough many of the sculptures of gods and goddesses depicted here are more general in type showing only their essential features. Very few of them are completely in accordance with the agamic prescriptions.
Chapter 7

1. The credit for systematization of the pujas conducted in Sri-Vaishnava Temple is attributed to Ramanuja.

2. Sadhu Subramanya Sastri, in his Tirupati Devasthanam Epigraphy Report summarises the formulation and systematization of the temple worship by Ramanuja and his followers, p.87 ff.


4. Ramesan, The Tirumala Temple, Tirupati, New Delhi, 1975, p.35


11. Ibid., Nos.159, 165, 169 and 188.

12. Ibid., No.174.

13. Ibid., No.165.

14. The satthagopam is a round vessel, made of silver or brass, with small figures of foot-prints of god Vishnu, drawn together on the outer apex of the vessel. It is always kept in a plate before the 'utsava idols' of the god, in such a way that the foot-prints are visible to the devotees, wherever the god goes out of the sanctum, the Satthagopam follows him. The devotees visiting the temple are blessed by the touch of satthagopam upon their heads, which is considered as keeping the feet of the god on their heads in humility to gain blessings from Him for spiritual merit and material prosperity and longevity. This service of the temple is done by the priests without any distinction of caste or creed.


17. Parivattam means a cloth of the god is tied to the head of a devotee as a mark of honour for the recognition of his services to the Lord of the Temple.


20. Interview with Chikkudugaya Ranga Charya, a scholar in sanskrit, Hyderabad.

21. Ibid., ("Kartika dipam danam tubhya samprape namah").

22. Purushottama samhita, Adh.27.

"Kartikyam vahini naksatram, (Kartika naksatram)

Rohiynam vapare ham

Pournamasyam vrsre lagne,
Diparohana macharet").


24. Ibid., No.53.

25. Ibid., No.159.


29. Ibid., PP.111-168.


31. Ibid., No.169.

32. Ibid.
Chapter - 8

1. Ahobilam Temple Records checked by Government Auditors of the Endowments Department
4. S.I.I., XVI, No. 248
5. Ibid., No. 260
6. Ibid., No. 263
7. Ibid., No. 299
10. Ibid
11. S.I.I. XVI, Nos. 248, 257
12. Ibid
13. Ibid., Nos. 199, 200, 235 & 257
14. For details see A. Surya Kumari, The Temples in Andhra Desa unpublished
15. S.S.I. XVI, No. 109
16. S.I.I. XIV, No. 174
17. Ibid., No. 199
18. Ibid., No. 235

Chapter - 9

1. S.I.I. XVI, No. 248
2. Ibid., No. 53
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. No. 96
5. Ibid., No. 169
6. Ibid., No. 174
7. Ibid., No. 181
8. Ibid., No. 199
9. Inscription recording the repairing work of tanks and canals refer to dasavanda or dasabandha which means one tenth. Imposing 1/10 of tax on the land irrigated under a particular tank and giving that amount to the person or persons who repaired the tank is dasavanda according to lawaradatu. D.C. Sircar explains dasavanda in two ways (a) Dasavanda is 1/10 of the total produce of the lands under tanks, wells and canals and should go to the people who attended to the
APPENDIX - I

LIST OF INSCRIPTIONS FROM UPPER AND LOWER AHOBILAM TEMPLES (TEXTS)

No. 1

1 Svasi [ṛ] Śrīmat-
2 Kṛṣṭivun[ṛ]mAs-Aci-
3 vāritull-eśan
4 Pṛtiṭhiv-Vāya-1-
5 julum-Parasāvarājum
6 okaṣa uṇa paras-
7 vagaṇa Rājaviṣa-
8 yuga Kuḍalūra iruvadi-
9 ēna maruuchuṭu pauna(ṇa)
10 Vēgi-pāra Duggaya-
11 k-ichhinayadi nāyaṇu-
12 k karaṇahun [ṛ] Uṇḍya-
13 pāru Dull+pāru Nigama [ū]
14 uj-lēvura Koṭi-gi-lēvura Vē-
15 buja-Peda-Koṇa-pāru-Dāsa-
16 ti Kṣakulu Kānduṇa ṭindra
17 gorapa(ṇa)bugānu ā boli-giri [ṛ] di(di)ni
18 jachhinārāru Vārappai vēvura pā-
19 ru vā kaviṣa vā gujju vē su-gu-
20 ṣu jachhināru(va)ru [ṛ] kāṭṭu-lun
21 ārapa(e)lbu
22 Pēgina-nā-
23 tu Pērja-
24 niyaṇiki
25 iṣch[ṛ]pahṇa(ṇa) pā(ṇa)-
26 āvvisa [ṛ]
No. 2

1. 
2. 
3. 
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37. 
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39.
No. 3

Part of the inscription

1. [వేదాలం] వెండులు
2. కెవలుగు వారాని వారాని
3. ఏండ్యం అమలు
4. నిష్పత్తి నిష్పత్తి
5. కోసం సాధనము
6. వర్గం తో దృశి[ం] సాధనము
7. సాధనము సాధనము
8. రామాయణం సాధనము
9. సాధనము సాధనము
10. భూపాలు, భూపాలు
11. సరస్వతి సాధనము
12. సరస్వతి సాధనము
13. సరస్వతి సాధనము
14. సరస్వతి సాధనము
15. సరస్వతి సాధనము
16. సరస్వతి సాధనము
17. సరస్వతి సాధనము
18. సరస్వతి సాధనము
19. సరస్వతి సాధనము
20. సరస్వతి సాధనము
21. సరస్వతి సాధనము
22. సరస్వతి సాధనము
23. సరస్వతి సాధనము
24. సరస్వతి సాధనము
SRI AHOBILA NARASIMHA SWAMY TEMPLE

25 ప్రస్తుతిభాగం [ర]
26 ప్రస్తుతి భాగం
27 కార్యాలయం కార్యాలయం
28 ప్రత్యేక సంచారం
29 అత్యడం చేపట్టం [ట]

1 ఆధారంపై వస్తువు
2 మానవ సంప్రదాయ సంప్రదాయ
3 క్రమం కూడా [ట]
4 ప్రత్యేక కార్యాలయం కార్యాలయం [ట]
5 ప్రత్యేక సంచారం ప్రత్యేక సంచారం
6 క్రమం [ట]
7 మానవ [ట] సంప్రదాయ సంప్రదాయ
8 క్రమం ప్రత్యేక సంచారం [ట]
9 సంచారం వస్తువు
10 మానవ సంప్రదాయ సంప్రదాయ
11 ప్రత్యేక సంచారం ప్రత్యేక సంచారం
12 క్రమం ప్రత్యేక సంచారం
13 ప్రత్యేక సంచారం ప్రత్యేక సంచారం
14 వస్తువు [ట]
15 ప్రత్యేక సంచారం [ట] సంచారం
16 వస్తువు [ట]
17 ప్రత్యేక సంచారం [ట]

No. 4

65. పురాణ విన్యాసం -
పురాణ పుస్తకం
ప్రత్యేక పుస్తకం
ప్రత్యేక చిత్రం
ప్రత్యేక ప్రాంతం -
ప్రత్యేక వాహనం 113011 బిందు
No. 6

1. एकाग्रतेन नरः सर्वोपरि प्रकृतिमयमः हिमकमः। तुष्यम्।  
2. अभिनवगच्छति विश्वम् रजस्वः सुचिस्वः। च ति।  
3. तत् सत्यं सर्वसंयत्तमं कथं वै सर्वस्य कथस्वत्वस्य च।  
4. यद्यात्मविद्य गुरुविद्य तद्यथा पुरविद्य। द्राक्षां तत्।  
5. द्वितीयसिद्धं वै स्वविद्यं तलाक्षं तर्वन।  
6. प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च दयामयम्। दश्यतु।  
7. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
8. ज्ञानाश्रयं वेदाश्रयं रजनीगंधर्वपुरश्च। श्रुतिः।  
9. महानुभूति वेदः गुरुव्यसनात्ममः पुरम्। तुष्यम्।  
10. अभिनवरं वेदविद्यं दृष्टमिति पुरम्। तुष्यम्।  
11. विद्यं वेदाविद्यं दृष्टिनां दृष्टिविद्यं दृष्टिः।  
12. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
13. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
14. सर्वस्य वेदाश्रयं गुरुविद्यं दृष्टिमयं दृष्टिः।  
15. सर्वस्य वेदाश्रयं गुरुविद्यं दृष्टिमयं दृष्टिः।  
16. सर्वस्य वेदाश्रयं गुरुविद्यं दृष्टिमयं दृष्टिः।  
17. सर्वस्य वेदाश्रयं गुरुविद्यं दृष्टिमयं दृष्टिः।  
18. सर्वस्य वेदाश्रयं गुरुविद्यं दृष्टिमयं दृष्टिः।  
19. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
20. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
21. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
22. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
23. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
24. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
25. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
26. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
27. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
28. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
29. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।  
30. श्रद्धायनि च वै प्रभृतिर्विदोऽवलोकनं च। दश्यतु।
३१ वैद्यकीय मर्दाने अनुसरण करावासो। नामक ने काहीदिवस वाचूया।
३२ या वैद्यकश्याम हीत २१४ दिवसे हिमालयामें नृकेलावलांच्या दृष्टीमयी.
३३ निम्नवेदना राजसिंहावर ऐंठिक असावला थंड नुसकाचा 
. . . . [४]हेरा।
३४ अभिलांक हेरे, उन्हांना अनेक आले देतानेही अभिलांक [५]हेरा।
३५ [६]हेरे, तीन दिवसात तीव्रता वाढतात, ती तेव्हा चिंता [७]हेरा।
३६ सत्तुराव राजसिंहपूर्वी तीत तेव्हा नृकेलाने वाचूया वाचूया। तीन दिवसात ती तेव्हा चिंता [८]हेरा।
३७ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [७]हेरा।
३८ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता अनेक [९]हेरा।
३९ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [१]हेरा।
४० नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [२]हेरा।
४१ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [३]हेरा।
४२ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [४]हेरा।
४३ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [५]हेरा।
४४ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [६]हेरा।
४५ तीत नृकेलावर अर्थात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [७]हेरा।
४६ [८]हेरा, या काळात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [९]हेरा।
४७ या काळात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [१]हेरा।
४८ या काळात तीत तेव्हा चिंता [२]हेरा।

१८ आणि २९. हेरा हे, अनुसूचित भाषेत हेरा आहे।
२०. हेरा हे, अनुसूचित भाषेत हेरा आहे।
२१. हेरा हे, अनुसूचित भाषेत हेरा आहे।
२२. हेरा हे, अनुसूचित भाषेत हेरा आहे।
२३. हेरा हे, अनुसूचित भाषेत हेरा आहे।

No. 7
No. 8

Text

1. [ఎ] ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు ప్రత్యేకంగా ఇతరమందమైనంతా చాలు

2. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు. ఇప్పుడు మనం దృశ్యం విషయంగా తేలికి ఉండవచ్చు.
No. 9

TEXT

1. సంభోతి మతం 

2. సంప్రదాయ పదలాలు ప్రతి మార్పిడి వాడడం ప్రతి సంభవిస్తుంది 

3. అనుమతితో ప్రతి కార్యకారి తారాబాహులు 

4. Damaged.

No. 10

1. సంభోతి మతం 

2. సంప్రదాయ పదలాలు ప్రతి మార్పిడి వాడడం ప్రతి 

3. అనుమతితో ప్రతి కార్యకారి తారాబాహులు 

4. సంప్రదాయ పదలాలు ప్రతి 

5. అనుమతితో ప్రతి 

6. సంభోతి మతం
No. 11

1 இலக்கியாக் விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.
2 இந்த புத்தகம் உயிர் விளக்கம் மற்றும் மேற்குப்புக்கோப்பை: எண்ணை 5
3 இந்த புத்தகம் உயிர் விளக்கம் மற்றும் மேற்குப்புக்கோப்பை: எண்ணை 6
4 பதிப்பு விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.
5 இது முன் விளக்கம் மற்றும் மேற்குப்புக்கோப்பை: எண்ணை 7
6 முனிவர் விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.
7 ["] முனிவர் விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.
8 முனிவர் விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.
9 இது முன் விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.
10 இது முன் விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.
11 இது முன் விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]விட்டு முதல் எண்ணப்படுத்தப்பட்டது.

Incomplete

No. 12

1 ["] விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
2 ["] விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
3 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
4 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
5 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
6 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
7 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
8 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
9 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
10 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
11 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
12 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
13 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
14 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
15 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]
16 இது விளக்கம் அறிமுகப்படுத்தப்பட்டது ["]

Incomplete
No. 13

The remaining three lines are completely damaged.

Text:

1 [ ]

2 [ ]

3 [ ]

4 [ ]

5 [ ]

6 [ ]

7 [ ]

8 [ ]
1. பாமை மற்றும் தோட்டமிடப்பட்டுவல்ல[10] உயர்வுக் பொருள் வழிபடுத்தும் தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதி அல்லது செயல்பாட்டு தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் இந்த முதல் தளத்தில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பாமைகள் மற்றும் தோட்டமிடப்பட்டுவல்ல[10] உயர்வுக் பொருள் வழிபடுத்தும் தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் மற்றும் செயல்பாட்டு தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் இரண்டு தளங்களில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பாமைகள் மற்றும் தோட்டமிடப்பட்டுவல்ல[10] உயர்வுக் பொருள் வழிபடுத்தும் தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் மற்றும் செயல்பாட்டு தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் இரண்டு தளங்களில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பாமைகள் மற்றும் தோட்டமிடப்பட்டுவல்ல[10] உயர்வுக் பொருள் வழிபடுத்தும் தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் மற்றும் செயல்பாட்டு தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் இரண்டு தளங்களில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள பாமைகள் மற்றும் தோட்டமிடப்பட்டுவல்ல[10] உயர்வுக் பொருள் வழிபடுத்தும் தொலைக்காட்சியில் வருமதிகள் 

2. ... வாணித பூதாலைகள் வருவதைக் காண்பதை முடியாது [10]முதல் சுமார் ஒரு பாண்டியில் ஆயிரம் என்று கூறி வந்து காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... அங்கு செல்லும் [10]முதல் சுமார் ஒரு பாண்டியில் ஆயிரம் என்று கூறி வந்து காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... மாலைக்கு காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... மாலைக்கு காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... மாலைக்கு காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... மாலைக்கு காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... மாலைக்கு காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... மாலைக்கு காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் தொடங்கின. ... மாலைக்கு காண்பதற்கு இருந்து செல்லத் 

3. ... முறையில் போக்கிறது பொருள் மற்றும் விளக்கத்தை செய்யவுடன் ஏற்றயிய கோழிக்காட்சியை காட்டுக்கோழிக்காட்சியை காட்டுக்கோழிக்காட்சியை காட்டுக்கோழிக்காட்சியை காட்டுக்கோழிக்காட்சியை 

No. 14

No. 15
4. 1 मध्ये कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्यात तिचे तनाव, कस्तूरीच्या यांनी तिच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं. कस्तूरी पडताली, तिचे तनाव उघडत नाही. ह्यातील तनावाची आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरीच्या यांनी तिच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

5. [२२] वर हिंदूदेशी अथवा भारतीय वास्तवमध्ये नातील तर ही माहिती निर्धारित करते. त्यांनी नाहीत होणार नातील ती तनावात अंधाच फांसूं.

6. [२३] २० मध्ये कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं. कस्तूरी पडताली, तिचे तनाव उघडत नाही. ह्यातील तनावाची आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरीच्या यांनी तिच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

7. [२४] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरीच्या यांनी तिच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं. कस्तूरी पडताली, तिचे तनाव उघडत नाही. ह्यातील तनावाची आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरीच्या यांनी तिच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

No. 16

1. 0 महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

2. महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

3. [२५] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

4. [२६] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

5. [२७] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

6. [२८] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

7. [२९] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

8. [३०] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

9. [३१] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

10. [३२] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

11. [३३] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

12. [३४] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

13. [३५] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

14. [३६] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

15. [३७] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

16. [३८] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.

17. [३९] महाराष्ट्रातील तेंतीतील आत्मदासत्व कस्तूरी पडताient आहे. त्याच्या यांनी ह्याच्या तनावाच्या बाबतीतच अंधाच फांसूं.
18. [t]தென்றறிவு குழு தமது வாசகரை [ச]கவர்வல் -
19. என்ன பெரும் முன்னோடியின் துறவு சீரமைப்பல்
20. எனை வறுக்கு விளையாடின் மதி க வாழு விளையாடின் [ச] -
21. உட்கு மறு வாழ்வு கூறும் சூட்டு க எனு என்று இரு -
22. இவை இல்லாத என்று விளையாடினும் விளையாடினும் -
23. ஊஞ்சல் என்று கற்கு குறித்து விளையாடின் விளையாடின் -
24. குளுகுக்குளுகு வாழ்வு வாழ்வு வாழ்வு வாழ்வு வாழ்வு [ச]தென்று வாழ்வு வாழ்வு வாழ்வு வாழ்வு -
25. ஊஞ்சல் -
26. என்ன என்று கற்கு விளையாடின் விளையாடின் -
27. ஔஷ்டவ என்று விளையாடினும் விளையாடினும் விளையாடினும்.
No. 18

1. போறு கிண்விக்குனர்கள் என என்றுக்கும் எனக்கு நேரடை கூறும் சொல்லுக்கு
2. வள்ளியர்களுக்கு கூறும் சொல்லுக்கு நேரடை கூறும் சொல்லுக்கு
3. கூற்று சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வையும்
4. ஒரு வரி அனைத்தையும் பரிமாற்றுக
5. என் என்ற நிகழ்வுகளுக்கு எப்படி என்று
6. என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை, என்று
7. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை, என்று
8. ஒரு வரி அனைத்தையும் பரிமாற்றுக
9. மாற்றும் வகையில் சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
10. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
11. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
12. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
13. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
14. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
15. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
16. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
17. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
18. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
19. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
20. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
21. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
22. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
23. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
24. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
25. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
26. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
27. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
28. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
29. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
30. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
31. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
32. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
33. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,
34. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்னுடைய பார்வை,

No. 19

1. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்று என்று
2. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்று என்று
3. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்று என்று
4. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்று
5. என்று என்ற சொல்லில் என்று
6. აღსანილიამა გამოსახულები, რომლებიც ჩამოთვლილი არ აქვთ.
7. ქართული ამომუშავები შელდება მოწონდება.
8. მათ აღჭურვილი მონაწილეობები შესაძლოა მომთავრდეს.
9. მონაწილეობა თანამედროვე და მხატვათა შესახებ.
10. შესაძლო, რომ მომთავრები გამოაჩენიათ.

No. 20

1. [კლასი] ძირითადი მაგალითი გამოთქვამა.
2. [კლასი] ძირითადი საზოგადოები.
3. [სია] წარმოდგენა.
4. [სია] წარმოდგენა.
5. [კლასი] ძირითადი მაგალითი.
7. [კლასი] ძირითადი მაგალითი.
8. [სია] წარმოდგენა.
10. წარმოდგენა.
No. 23

Text

1 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
2 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
3 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
4 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
5 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
6 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
7 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
8 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
9 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
10 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
11 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
12 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
13 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
14 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
15 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
16 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
17 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
18 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
19 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
20 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
21 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
22 கொல்லு. சாமை வேத்ய யாரு பாது மட்டும்
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No. 25

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No. 28

Text

1. கொச்சியில் சொன்னு அவருக்குச் சொல்லும் தொன்மை. குறி: இது சுண்டும்.
2. இந்த சுண்டு வெளியேசு கூறவில்லை இல்லையேசு காரணம்.
3. மோசா ஒண்டுறைசு இன்னேல் வெளியேசு சொல்லும்.
4. அப்படியாக வேலைகளின் மூலம் இருக்கும்.
5. அந்த வேலை வெவ்வேறு விளம்பு காட்டுகிறது. இது சுண்டும்.
6. வேலை வெளியேசு சொல்லும் வெளியேசு வெளியேசு.
7. வேலைப்பணிகளுக்காக வேலை வெளியேசு.
8. தீவினுடைய புராணப் பகுதியில் இன்றைய நாளேசு.
9. இவ்விதமான தொன்மை வேலைகளில் இளங்கட்டும்.
10. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
11. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
12. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
13. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
14. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
15. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
16. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
17. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
18. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
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25. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
26. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
27. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
28. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
29. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
30. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
31. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
32. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
33. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
34. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
35. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
36. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
37. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
38. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
39. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
40. வேலையேசு சொல்லும் வேலை வெளியேசு
No. 29

1. அட்டையான இலையும் தீட்டியான அழகு கொண்ட வாலில்
2. என்ற திறனை போற்றே வாலில் மீண்டும் சொல்லுங்கிருந்து
3. இரவம் வரவு, தேர்வான வரவு
4. குழலளவு கல்பம் இருந்த 
5. அதில் நன்கு வந்ததாக வெள்கின்றது
6. இலங்கை வரவு வெளியே மீண்டும்
7. இதை என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
8. ஒவ்வொரு முறையும் என்று குறித்த வணு
9. இப்பொருள் குறித்து என்று குறித்த வணு
10. என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
11. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
12. குழலளவு கல்பம் இருந்த 
13. அதில் நன்கு வந்ததாக வெள்கின்றது
14. இலங்கை வரவு வெளியே மீண்டும்
15. இதை என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
16. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
17. என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
18. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
19. என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
20. என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
21. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
22. என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
23. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
24. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
25. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
26. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
27. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
28. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
29. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
30. என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
31. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
32. என்று குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
33. பொருள் குறித்து இருக்கும் [வணு]
34. என்று குறித்து
No. 30

Text

1. हेरूपूर्व काळातील दिवसांत दर्शित केलेल्या गाण्यांना असेल.
2. ताप्या संरक्षणाने वाचू ते कौनले विकल्पहील्या होतात?
3. तुम्हाला तिसर्स्काळातील वर्णनांकडून सुद्धा तीन रूपांतर.
4. मात त्याच्या दोस्ताने सुरुस्वत वाचू त्यंत ते शांत वाचू?
5. मी तुम्हाला आधिकारिक म्हणून इथे येतल्या काळ्यांच्या प्रतिकूलांची दाखवणे.
6. ती अपघाताने ती ती वाचू. ती वाचू त्याच्यावर नाही ती वाचू.
7. तुम्हाला हा विषयाप्रमाणे डर वाढत आहे. ती ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
8. तरुण आज ते करू तरुण आज ते वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
9. मुलुकाच्या विचारात दुसरे वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
10. वाचू ते करू तन-सर्जनाच्या विचारात दुसरे वाचू. ती वाचू.
11. बालकाच्या प्रभावाची ती वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
12. मात येतल्या काळाच्या प्रतिकूलांची वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
13. मुलुकाच्या विचारात दुसरे वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
14. मुलुकाच्या विचारात दुसरे वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
15. मात येतल्या काळाच्या प्रतिकूलांची वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
16. मात येतल्या काळाच्या प्रतिकूलांची वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
17. मात येतल्या काळाच्या प्रतिकूलांची वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
18. मात येतल्या काळाच्या प्रतिकूलांची वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
19. मात येतल्या काळाच्या प्रतिकूलांची वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
20. मात येतल्या काळाच्या प्रतिकूलांची वाचू. ती वाचू. ती वाचू.
1. நேரடியாக சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடுார்களே என்று -
2. கருணாயும் சேதுசராட்டு சைமை என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
3. ஐயங்கு என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
4. சோய என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
5. பூர்த்தியில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
6. பெருந்தாய்த்து என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
7. பண்டைய விதம் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
8. சோயான்கள் அல்லது சேதுசராட்டு சைமை என்று -
9. ஐயங்கு என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
10. சோய என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
11. பூர்த்தியில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
12. பெருந்தாய்த்து என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
13. பெருந்தாய்த்து என்று விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
14. பையோமின் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
15. அர்த்தம் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
16. நேரடியாக விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
17. பையோமின் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
18. பையோமின் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
19. மாநாடுகள் [1] சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
20. குறுகிய சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
21. பையோமின் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
22. பையோமின் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
23. பையோமின் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
24. பையோமின் [2]சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
25. பையோமின் [3]சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
26. பையோமின் [4]சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
27. பையோமின் [5]சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
28. பையோமின் [6]சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
29. பையோமின் [7]சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
30. பையோமின் [8]சாத்யாங்கையில் விளையாடும் செய்திகள் என்று -
# APPENDIX - II

## SUMMARY OF INSCRIPTIONS FROM UPPER AND LOWER AHOBILAM (Chronologically arranged)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1124 A.D.</td>
<td>Tribhuvana malladeva (Western Chalukya)</td>
<td>(On the slab set up to the west of the Siva Temple) Peddamudiyam Jammalamadugu (Tq.) Cuddapah (Dt.)</td>
<td>Sanskrit and Kanarese</td>
<td>It refers itself to the reign of the Chalukya King Tribhuvanamalladeva ruling from Jayantipura and mentions his feudatory, the Mahamandalesvara Atiyanchola, Maharaja, son of Sovanachola Maharaja and Gosanamahadevi Atyana's feudatory, the Mahamandalesvara Chiddana- Chola Maharaja is stated to have made a grant of the village Mudivemu to the Mahajanás of that place. The grant was made in the presence of God Narasimha deva of Ahobala.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. IX No.207. PP 208-209 (A.R.No.350 of 1905)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1378 A.D.</td>
<td>Reddy King Anavema (1364-86)</td>
<td>Upper Ahobilam</td>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>Building of steps to Ahobilam, Probably this is an addition to the repairs to the former steps.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>1395 A.D.</td>
<td>Hairhara Maharaya II (1377-1404)</td>
<td>Upper Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The Mackenzie manuscript of Ahobilam kaifyat also mentions an inscription (not discovered and read so far by epigraphists) referring to the construction of a Mukhamandapam in Upper Ahobilam.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>1410 A.D.</td>
<td>Katama Reddy Vema Reddi (1402 - ?)</td>
<td>On the way to the Panulei Narasimha Temple Upper Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>States that Katama-Reddy Vema - Reddi made a gift of several villages to temples and Brahmins renaming those villages Komaragitipuram in honour of King Komaragiri Reddi and also ten villages with the name of Vennavaram. It also states that Katama Reddi’s wife Mallamma made a gift of Mallavaram to God Markandisvara of Rajamahindravaram.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Copperplate inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh, Government Museum, Hyderabad. P. 182</td>
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<td>Mackenzie Manuscript Vol.No. 100.</td>
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<td>S.I.I. Vol. X No.577 PP. 319-320 (A.R.No. 84 of 1915)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1515 A D</td>
<td>Sr. Kshnadevaraya (1509 - 1529 A.D.)</td>
<td>On a slab set up at the entrance into the Narasimha Svaran Temple in Lower Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>An inscription issued by him indicates that he visited the temple on his way towards Kalinga and offered the God, a necklace, a pendant of diamonds, rubies inset with emerald, a pair of bangles covered with rubies, a golden plate and thousand varahas while his two queens Chinna Devi and Tirumala Devi presented a pendant. Maddur Village in Chagalamam was also gifted to the Lord for the Angaranga Bhogas of the Diety. The inscription also makes a mention of the exploits of Kshnadevaraya and gives his title as Purva Dakshina - Paschima Samudradhisvsara, Yvanarayasthapananacharya and Gaajapatideva Vibhu etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1532 A D</td>
<td>Achyutadevaraya (1529-1542 A.D.)</td>
<td>Round the base of the central Shnnes of the Narasimha Svaran temple Lower Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>It registers gift of lands after purchase to God Ahobalesvara by Abbiraju, son of Gubbaraju Tipparaju of Vasishtha gotra, Asvalayana-sutra, Rik-Sakha and a resident of Pourmamilla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1535 A D</td>
<td>Achyutadevaraya (1529-1542 A.D.)</td>
<td>Round the base of the central</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The epigraph is damaged. It seems to register some grant to Vithalam Anantappa by</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1546 A.D</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya (1542-1570 A.D.)</td>
<td>On the west wall of the main shrine in the Narasimha temple Lower Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The details of the date are lost. The inscription is damaged and fragmentary. It seems it records a provision made for certain offerings to the deity on some specified occasions out of the proceeds of a village obtained by him from king Achyutaraya and endowed for the purpose of the offerings by the son (name lost) of Bhutanatha Brahma - Jyotyasa of Asvalayana-Sutra and Rik-Sakha.</td>
<td>S I I Vol XVI, No 155, pp 163-164 (A.R No 60 of 1915)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1547 A.D</td>
<td>Sadasvraja</td>
<td>On the North wall of the goddess in the Narasimha Svami temple Lower Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>It records an endowment of 120 varahas into the temple treasury by Ugarasayya, Son of Ramarasayya and Grandson of Ugarasayya of Gudiya Chelluru and belonging to the Kasyapagotra, Apastamba-sutra and Yajus-sakha, stipulating that the interest accruing from the amount was to be spent for offerings to God Vira Narasimha of Ahobilam during the Kshirabdi and other festivals.</td>
<td>S I I Vol XVI, No 159, p 167 (A.R No 58 of 1915)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>1548 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya</td>
<td>On the westwall of the Narasimhasvami temple Lower Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription states that Narasamma, wife of Mahamandaeswara Goburi Vobaya of Kasyapa-gotra and Yajus-sakha having constructed a Vasantha mandapam to the north of Diguva-Tirupati, endowed 120 varahas to the temple for conducting out of its interest the festivals for the God Ahobalesvara. The four sons of the Donor Narasamma namely, Narasing Raju, Narasaruju, Timmaraju and other (name missing) were to supervise the proper conduct of the festivals enjoined in the gift.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol.XVI No. 169.P. 177.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>1550 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya</td>
<td>Round the platform of the</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>It registers the gift of a piece of land in the Village Alamuru purchased from Van saltagopa</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI No. 174, P.181.</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>1552 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasiva Raya</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription records the endowment of the village Gurijepalli in Dupati-sima as a poliyutugrama to the temple treasury of Ahobalesvara by Mahamandalesvara Kondayadeva maharaja, Son of Ramaraju Koneti raju who sold the village for 500 varahas for the Ramanuja Kutam Vaishnavas at Diguva Tirupati. The donor belonged to Atreya-gotra, Apastamba Sutra and Yaju-sakhi and claimed his descent from the lunar race. He held Dupati-Sima as nayankara conferred on him by the king.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>1553 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasiva Raya</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription records an endowment of twenty varahas as poliyutu for maintaining offerings during the 16 days of festivals every year when</td>
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<td>1554 A.D</td>
<td>Sadasiva Raya</td>
<td>(Slab set up in the courtyard of the Narasimha Swami Temple) Lower Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription registers the dasavanda-manya grant of land in the village of Pedakallu to Mahamandalesvara Avubhalaraju, Son of Konerirajyya and grandson of Rama Raju Pedakondayyadeva maharaju of the lunar race by Parankusa van Sathagopa Jyyar, the trustee of the temple Hanharanathunu Peddayya, the agent of Mahamandalesvara Aliya Ramappayya and the adikamvaru, for his having constructed the tank of Konasamudram alias Snnarayana Samudram near Alamuru.</td>
<td>S11 XVI, No 199 Pp 205-206 (A R No 65 of 1915)</td>
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<td>1554 A.D</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya</td>
<td>(Slab set up in the courtyard of the Narasimhaswam temple) Lower Ahobilam</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription records the sale of a grove and a flower garden for 50 varahas in the village Alamuru belonging to the god Ahobilesvara by Parankusa Van Sathagopajyyar, the trustees of the temple Hanharanathunu Peddiraju and</td>
<td>S11 Vol XVI No 200 p 207 (A R No 66 of 1915)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>1555 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya</td>
<td>(West wall of the Narasimha swami Temple) Lower Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>others to Mahamandalesvara Avubhalaraju, Son of Koneiraju and grandson of Ramaraju Peda Kondayadeva Maharaju of the Lunar race, stipulating that a third share of the produce was to be enjoyed by the God and the rest by donor.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI No. 205 p.212 (A.R. No. 59 of 1915).</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>1558 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya</td>
<td>(Slab set up near the sixteen pillared mandapam) Upper Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>This partly damaged inscription records the grant of a piece of land and some money by Emberumanar Jiyamgaru, the mudra-karta of Van sathagopa Jiyyangaru and others for conducting certain festivals when God Ahobilesvara was seated in the 16-pillared mandapa constructed by Mahamandalesvara kuruceti Thimmaraaju Son of Vobularaju and grand son of Baicana deva coda maharaju, Son of Vobularaju and grandson of Baicana deva-coda maharaju of the solar race, when the God was taken in procession to the Lower Tirupati</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI No. 235 P.241 (A.R. No. 79 of 1915).</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>1560 A.D.</td>
<td>Sdasivaraya</td>
<td>(Slab set up on the way to Upper Ahobilam to the south-east of the Narasimhasvami temple) Upper Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription registers the purchase of a piece of land for 200 varahas from the temple treasury and gift of income derived from it for conducting the festivals in the mandapa in front of the Prahladavardha temple at Diguva Tirupati to the God Ahobaleswara by Mahamandaleswara Gopinath raju, Son of Goparaju and grandson of Jutuni Bhatraju of the lunar race, Atreya-gotra and Apastamba Sutra. The items of offerings are specified.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI. No. 248 pp. 253-254 (A.R. 78 of 1915)</td>
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<td>1563 A.D.</td>
<td>sadasivaraya</td>
<td>Slab set up to the right of the entrance of kanchugumbha gopura in the Narasimhasvami temple. Lower Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription records the sale of 6 manuttis of land by Ramanuja Jiyyar, the Karya-karta of mahamandaleswara Ramaraju Tirumalara-jayyadeva - maharaju and other temple officials to mahamandaleswara vobularaju, Son of Vobularaju and grand son of pociraju Ramaraju for a sum of 600 varahas remitted by him into the temple treasury and registers the grant of this land by vobularju for worship and offerings in the temple of Nammalvar and for feeding twelve Srivaishnavas out of the yield from these lands.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol.XVI. No. 257 p. 262-264 (A.R. No. 69 of 19.15)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>1563 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya</td>
<td>(Slab set up near the Kanchugopura of the Narasimhaswami Temple) Lower Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription registers a grant of lands in the villages kalutapalle in Korokota-sima, and Pedakallu, Domipadu, Injedu and Bayyapugudu, yielding a total income of 308 varahas to be utilised for offerings to the God Ahobalesvara by mahamandalesvara Koneti Obularajyyadeva-maharaju, son of Koneti Ayyadeva maharaju and grandson of Ramaraju Pedda Kondarajyya deva mahanju of Atreyagotra, Apastambasutra and yajus sakha.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI No. 260 pp.265-266 (A.R. No.72 of 1915)</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>1583 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya</td>
<td>(Slab in the courtyard of the Narasimha Swami Temple) Upper Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription records the construction of a four-pillared mandapa and a matha and registers a grant of a piece of a land in the village Cinna komerta in Ghandi Kota-sima by parankusa van sathagopa-Jiyyamgaru stipulating that the income derived from the gift-land was to be utilised for the offerings on the occasions when the god Ahobilesvara was seated in the mandapa during the panchaparvas and two tirunalu when the deity was taken out in procession from the hill down and back again.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI No. 261. Pp.267-268 (A.R. No.82 of 1915)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>1564 A.D.</td>
<td>Sadasivaraya (Slab set up near the entrance of Kanchugumba gopura of the Narasimhasvami Temple, Lower Ahobilam)</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription registers the grant of a piece of land in Lingamadinne in Ghandikota-sima to the God Ahobulesvara for specified offerings and their distribution during the festivals in the month of Caitra, near the tank constructed by him on the way to Bhargavam by Parankusa Van Sathagopa Jiyyar who received this piece of land from Narasayya who is stated to have obtained the village Lingamadinne from Nandela Timmaraju.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI No. 263. Pp.269-270 (A.R. No. 73 of 1915)</td>
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<td>Sadasivaraya (On the west wall of the Narasimhasvami Temple, Lower Ahobilam)</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>This fragmentary inscription registers the grant of 300 chakra gadyas to the temple treasury of the God Ahobalesvara for the Village Cituru in Podili-sima, as a perpetual endowment (Polivutu) for offerings and services to the God when he halted in the 16-pillared mandapa built in the temple garden on specified occasions. The name of the donor who held Podili-sima as his nayankara and the details of the date are lost.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. XVI No. 271. P. 278 (A.R. No. 62 of 1915)</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>1584 A.D.</td>
<td>Srirangaraya I (1572-1585 A.D) Slab set up near the entrance of the kanchu-</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription states that on a former occasion in the year Bahudhanya (1579 A.D.) Ibrahim with the Hande chiefs captured Ahobalam and held it</td>
<td>S.I.I., Vol. XVI No. 296, pp. 302-303</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>1586 A.D.</td>
<td>Venkatapatiyra II (1585-1614 A.D.)</td>
<td>Slab set up near the entrance of the kanchugumba gopuram of the Narasimhasvami Temple. Lower Ahobilam.</td>
<td>for 5 or 6 years. On the representation of Van Sathamoga Jiyyar, Venkataraju who took an active part in recapturing the place and restoring it to its past glory was granted temple honours such as pariyavattam, tirtham, sathamogam, etc., by vakulabharana Jiyyar, the karya-karta of Vansathamoga Jiyyar Racappa, the Karya-karta of the king and the sthanikas of the temple.</td>
<td>(A.R. No. 70 of 1915)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>1590 A.D.</td>
<td>Venkatapati II</td>
<td>Slab set up in the Kanchugumba gopuram of the Narasimhasvami temple. Lower Ahobilam.</td>
<td>The inscription registers a gift of land for offerings during the procession of god Prahladavarada at Diguva Tirupati by Savaram Rangapparaju, son of Yellapparaju and grandson of Suraparaju of Mallapa chintakunta.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol. No. XVI. No. 301, pp 308-09 (A.R. No. 68 of 1915)</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>1609 A.D.</td>
<td>Venkatapati II</td>
<td>Slab set up near the entrance of kanchugumba-gopuram of the Narasimha svamin temple, Lower Ahobilam.</td>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>The inscription registers the gift of seven gold gilded pinnacles, two fly whisks and white silk umbrella to the god Ahobala at Diguva Tirupati by Madisetii Rudrayya and others for the merit of 150 nagarasvamis who bear among others the title penugonda puravardhisvara.</td>
<td>S.I.I. Vol,XVI No. 310. P.317 (A.R. 87 of 1815)</td>
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Reddy Sanchita (Telugu)

Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India


**GLOSSARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abhaya</td>
<td>A posture of Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abhishekam</td>
<td>Religious rite of pouring or sprinkling sacred water on the image of a deity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acharyas</td>
<td>Religious preachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agamas</td>
<td>sacred texts related to the conduct of worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agraharam</td>
<td>Village gifted away to Brahmans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akasavani</td>
<td>A heavenly voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akanda dipam</td>
<td>Perpetual lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alagia Singer</td>
<td>God Narasimha (Alagia=beautiful)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alankara</td>
<td>Decoration, ornamentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvar</td>
<td>A Vaishnavite Saint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angaranga bhogas</td>
<td>Procession and rituals with pomp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antarala</td>
<td>Ante-Chamber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aradhana</td>
<td>Special Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argya</td>
<td>Washing the hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asana</td>
<td>Offering of a seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avahana</td>
<td>Localisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avatar</td>
<td>Manifestation, incarnation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhogam</td>
<td>Food offering to the deity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmostavam</td>
<td>Annual festival, Grand festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakra</td>
<td>The weapon of Lord Vishnu, Disc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamara</td>
<td>Fan made of silk fibres for fanning the celestial beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandanam</td>
<td>Sandal Paste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasavatara</td>
<td>Ten incarnations of God Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhanurmasotsavam</td>
<td>Month during which worship of God is celebrated early in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharma</td>
<td>The approved way of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhupam</td>
<td>The wave of incense smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhvaja Stambham</td>
<td>Pillar in front of the temple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dikpalakas</td>
<td>Guardian deities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dipotsavam</td>
<td>Festival of burning of oil lamps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dvra Palakas</td>
<td>Sentinels on either side at the entrance of a temple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ekadasi</td>
<td>Eleventh day, after the full moon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gadyana</td>
<td>Gold coin, money.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garidham</td>
<td>Sandal-wood paaste</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garbhagriha</td>
<td>Sanctum Sanctorum, inner sanctum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garuda</td>
<td>The Vehicle of Lord Vishnu, a divine eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giri</td>
<td>Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gopuram</td>
<td>Tower before a temple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grama Seva</td>
<td>A procession of the deity round the village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaifiyat</td>
<td>A written document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalyana mandapam</td>
<td>Wedding hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirtam</td>
<td>Crown</td>
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<td>Kirti mukha</td>
<td>Lion's face</td>
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Koneru
Kshetram
Kurtcha
Mada
Mahatmayam
Mahotsavam
Makuta
Makara Toranam
Malya
Mandapam
Maridalesvara
Manika
Matha
Masotsavas
Mula Vighram
Mukha Mandapam
Nambi
Naivedyam
Narasimha
Nirajana
Padma
Pakshotsavas
Panakam
Pavalimpu Utsavam or Parrupu seva
Paruvettai
Prakara
Pradakshina
Prasadam
Parivara Devatas
Puja
Pujari
Puranas
Pushpa
Pushkarani
Pushpamalalu
Putti
Rathotsavam
Sahasranama Puja
Samprokshana
Sankha
Sannidhi
Sarvamanya

Pond
A holy place
A measure used for liquid
A coin in the medieval times
Power or greatness
Great festival
A crown, cap
A type of festoon in a temple, makara canopy
Decoration with garlands and flowers
A hall with art side-walls, but with pillars and roof of stones
Head of a small group
Liquid measure
Monastery, place of residence of religious mendicants
Monthly festivals
Presiding deity
Entrance hall, front hall
A Non-brahmin Vaishnava priest
Offering in kind made to the deity
Man-lion (Human body with lion's face)
Circumambulation of a lamp
Lotus
Fortnightly festivals
Jaggery solution tastefully spiced
Sending the Lord to bed with soft music etc.

'Paru' means run and 'Veta' means hunt
Enclosure
Going round the deity or the temple, circumambulation
Eatable distributed after offering to the deity
Subsidiary deities
Worship
Priest
Hindu religious books
A flower
Sacred pond
Garlands of flowers
Grain measure (basket)
Temple car festival
Worship chanting the thousand names of the deity
Hallowing by cleansing
Conch
A shrine
Exclusive gift of land

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Satakam</td>
<td>A book of 100 poems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senabova</td>
<td>Village writer/accountant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sloka</td>
<td>Couplet or quatrain in Sanskrit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soumyarupa</td>
<td>Graceful form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sthala Puranam</td>
<td>History of the place</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sthanapati</td>
<td>An official-in-charge of the temple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stambham</td>
<td>Pillar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svayambhu</td>
<td>Self-manifest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirtham</td>
<td>Sacred or sanctified water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirumanjanam</td>
<td>Holy bathing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tirunakshatram</td>
<td>Natal Constellations obtaining at the time of birth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tirunal</td>
<td>Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tirividhi</td>
<td>Taking procession around the temple street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tulasimala</td>
<td>Garland of bunches of basil-leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tum</td>
<td>Measure of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumu</td>
<td>Grain measure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ugrarupa</td>
<td>Awe-inspiring posture</td>
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<td>Utsavam</td>
<td>Ceremony</td>
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<td>Utsava Vigrahitas</td>
<td>Procession images</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vahanam</td>
<td>Vehicle</td>
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<td>Varaha</td>
<td>Gold coin</td>
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<td>Weekly festivals</td>
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<td>Vasantotsavam</td>
<td>Celebration of a festival connected with sprinkling of coloured water in the spring season</td>
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<td>Vastra</td>
<td>Clothing</td>
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<td>Vemjamara</td>
<td>A white fly-whisk</td>
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<td>Yajnopavita</td>
<td>Sacred thread across the shoulder</td>
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<td>Yuga</td>
<td>Period of time according to Hindu tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>L.A.</td>
<td>Lower Ahobilam</td>
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<td>Local Records</td>
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<td>Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams Inscriptions</td>
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<td>U.A.</td>
<td>Upper Ahobilam</td>
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Sri Narasimhaswami Temple of Ahobilam is one of the most celebrated pilgrimage centres in the country. Located on the Nallamadu hills in Andhra Pradesh, this sacred temple dedicated to Lord Sriman Narayana, who manifested Himself as Man-Lion to save His supreme devotee Prahlada, is invested with great antiquity. Many puranas and ancient works exultantly praise the magnificent grandeur of the shrine and the radiant charm of the Deity.

In this book, the author makes an inclusive Study of Ahobilam group of temples. An exhaustive account of its history and administration is also given besides exploring the architectural as well as sculptural wealth of the temple. Profusely illustrated,

'Ahobilam Sri Narasimhaswami Temple': An indispensable book for the devotees and students of history.

The author, Dr. Vasantha, is Professor of History at Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur.