CHAPTER – IV

BHĀGAVATA THEMES
BHĀGAVATA THEMES

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part covers Bhāgavata themes upto the story of Parasurāma and the second part deals with Krishnalīla themes.

BHĀGAVATA THEMES: The first part deals with the following themes. They are

1. Vishnu protecting the elephant or Gajēndramōksha.
2. Garuḍa Garvabhangha and Nārada, Tumburu Garvabhangha.
3. Matsyāvatāra.
4. Kūrmāvatāra or Sāgara Madhana (churning of the milky ocean).
5. Varāhāvatāra.
7. Vāmana and Trivikrama.

There are about hundred panels dealing with the above themes in this region.

The following table shows the number of panels selected for study from the temples of Rāyalaseema. Panels having some special features only are selected.

BHĀGAVATA THEMES
TABLE - III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Temple</th>
<th>Place &amp; District</th>
<th>No. of panels selected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mādhavarāya temple</td>
<td>Gōranṭla, Anantapur</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Chennakēśava temple</td>
<td>Pushpagiri, Cuddapah</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mallikārjuna temple</td>
<td>Śrīsailam, Kurnool</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Māṇikyavaradarāja temple</td>
<td>Punganur, Chittoor</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.No.</td>
<td>Temple</td>
<td>Place &amp; District</td>
<td>No. of panels selected</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agastēśvara temple</td>
<td>Chilamakūru, Cuddapah</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rudrapādāla temple</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ruined temple</td>
<td>Vallūr, Cuddapah</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mallikārjunā temple</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Chennakeśava temple</td>
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II. GARUDA GARVABHANGA & NĀRADA, TUMBURU GARVABHANGA:

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Tāḍipatri, Anantapur</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kōḍandarāma temple</td>
<td>Ontimitta, Cuddapah</td>
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III. MATSYĀVATĀRA:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Temple</th>
<th>Place &amp; District</th>
<th>No. of panels selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chennakeśava temple Complex</td>
<td>Pushpagiri, Cuddapah</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mallikārjunā temple</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kōḍandarāma temple</td>
<td>Ontimitta, Cuddapah</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Narasimha temple</td>
<td>Lower Ahōbilam, Kurnool</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Gōvindarāja temple</td>
<td>Tirupati, Chittoor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chennakeśava temple</td>
<td>Chukkaluru, Anantapur</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chennakēśava temple Complex</td>
<td>Pushpagiri, Cuddapah</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rāma temple</td>
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## VI. NARASIMHA:

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<td>2.</td>
<td>Navanarasimha temples</td>
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<td>Rāma temple</td>
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<td>Pādamandapa, Alipiri</td>
<td>Tirupati, Chittoor</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Chennakēśava temple</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ruined mandapa inside the fort</td>
<td>Siddhavatam, Cuddapah</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Vēdanārāyana temple</td>
<td>Nāgalāpuram, Chittoor</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Kalyānavenkaṭēsva temple</td>
<td>Nārāyanavanam, Chittoor</td>
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## VII. VĀMANA OR TRIVIKRAMA:

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<td>Pushpagiri, Cuddapah</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chintala Venkaṭaramaṇa temple</td>
<td>Tādipatri, Anantapur</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Chennakēśava temple</td>
<td>Chukkaluru, Anantapur</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. **GAJENDRAMOKSHA:**

This is a popular theme in literature and sculpture. Pūtana described it very well in his *Āndhramahābhāgavatam*. Vishnu rescuing an elephant from the clutches of a crocodile is the theme of the story. Indradyumna, a king of Dravida dēsa insulted Sage Agasthya and as a result was cursed to become an elephant. When the elephant entered a lake a crocodile caught its leg. The elephant tried many years to break free but in vain. Finally it prayed Vishnu who at once appeared, killed the crocodile and protected it. The állwars frequently quoted this episode in their songs. Their influence was much felt on Rāyalaseema. As a result this theme was narrated in sculpture at many places in this region. It is often depicted in a single panel showing Vishnu patting the elephant. Twelve panels are selected for description here.

### 1. THE MĀDHAVARĀYA TEMPLE, GŌRANŢLA:

This popular theme is found depicted in two stages on a pillar in the *mukhamandapa* of the Mādhavarāya temple, Gōranţla. In the first stage Vishnu is standing in *samabhanga* holding *chakra* and *Sankha* in upper arms. His lower hands are in *abhaya* and *varada*. He wears *graivēyakas, yagnōpavīta, kirītamakula* and is dressed in *pūrnōrūka*. Infront of him the elephant pleads for help with raised trunk. The crocodile catches its back left leg. In the second stage the elephant, released from the
clutches of its enemy, stands on four legs. Vishnu is standing in *dvibhanga* facing the animal. He affectionately pats it with lower hands.

2. THE CHENNAKEŚAVA TEMPLE, PUSHPAGIRI:

This is shown in a single panel in the Chennakesava temple, Pushpagiri. It shows Vishnu descending to Earth on his mount, Garuḍa. He holds *chakra* and *sankha* in upper hands. His lower right hand is in *abhaya*. To his bottom right is the elephant whose back right leg is caught by the crocodile.

3. THE MALLIKĀRJUNA TEMPLE, ŚRĪŚAILAM:

This theme is depicted in two parts in a single panel on the *prākāra* of this temple. To the left of the panel a huge crocodile is pulling the front right leg of the elephant. The elephant is desperately trying to break free. Its raised trunk reveals its agony. The fight between the two animals must have created commotion in the water. So some fish and crabs are moving away in a hurry. In the second part Vishnu holding *chakra*, *sankha* and *gada* is standing in *samabhanga* with *abhayahasta*. To his left Garuḍa is kneeling with folded hands. But for the long beak Garuḍa is almost in human form.

4. THE MĀNIKYA VARADARĀJA TEMPLE, PUNGANUR:

This theme is found in three stages, each on a different side of the same pillar in the *mukhamandapa* of the Manikya Varadarāja temple, Punganur. The first stage shows the elephant with its raised trunk holding a *padma*, praying Vishnu for help. Its hind left leg is caught by the crocodile. Its wide-open eyes and raised tail reveal its agony. In the second stage Vishnu, seated on the back of Garuḍa, keeping his feet on the latter’s palms descends. He holds *chakra* and *sankha* in upper hands, *gada* in the lower right and
points his left fore finger down suggesting his descent to Earth. In the final stage he stands close to the elephant patting its back with lower right hand. The crouching elephant appears to be falling at his feet. The *makara* is not shown here.

5. THE VARĀHASFĀMI TEMPLE, TIRUMALA:

A rare representation of the theme is found on a pillar of *mahamandapa* in the Varāhasvāmi temple at Tirumala. It is found in two panels. In the first panel the prolonged fight of the elephant and crocodile and the appeal of the elephant for help are beautifully shown. Both the animals are interlocked in a firm grip. The crocodile holds the left leg of the elephant with its trunk. The crocodile is shown head down by the side of the elephant. It looks more like a lion. Its protruding snout resembles the trunk of an elephant. The elephant is beautifully decorated with a cover on its back, a cap like ornament over its head and anklets. With its raised trunk it holds many flowers besides the tail of the crocodile. The space available is excellently utilized. The animals in opposite directions look very attractive. Nowhere else this theme is depicted in a similar style. (Plate-31A)

In the second panel found on the top portion of the same pillar Vishnu is protecting the elephant. Here the god stands in *dvibhanga* holding *chakra* and *sankha* in upper hands. His lower right hand is in *abhaya*. He pats the elephant on its head with his lower left hand. The elephant is crouching. Many more examples of this theme are found in many temples and *mandapas* in and around Tirupati.

6. THE VENKAṬARAMANA TEMPLE, TĀDIPATRI:

It is found on the south exterior wall of the *antarāla* of the Venkaṭaramana temple in one panel. Here six-armed Vishnu descending on Garuḍa to protect the
elephant is shown. Garuḍa is in human form with outstretched legs and arms. He appears as running. Vishnu keeps his feet on the palms of Garuḍa. He holds chakra in prayōga fashion in upper right hand, gada in the middle and khadga in lower right. His upper left hand holds sankha, the next is placed on the head of the elephant assuring it protection and the lower left is kept on the left thigh. He is in an attractive tribhanga pose, with long multi-tiered crown and other ornaments. To his left is the elephant. The crocodile is pulling it down by clutching its left hind leg. A celestial with folded hands shown above the elephant watches the feat of the lord in amazement.

On one of the pillars of mahāmandapa of the Venkaṭaramana temple, Tādipatri this theme is again shown in one panel. It is similar to the Alipiri example in many ways. But here, the elephant holds a padma in its trunk. It is decorated with chains and a cover on its back. The crocodile is not shown here.

7. ALIPIRI:

The theme is found on the south exterior wall of the first gōpura, Alipiri, at the foot of the hill of Tirumala. It is in two stages. At the top Vishnu stands in samabhanga, four armed, holding chakra, sankha and gada. His lower right hand is in abhaya. At the bottom panel he stands before the elephant affectionately patting it with lower hands. The makara is shown behind. Carved in bold relief the panel exhibits artistic ability.

II. HANUMĀN SUBDUING GARUḌA, SUDARSANA, NĀRADA & TUMBURU:

Hanumān is said to be immortal. After the completion of Rāmāvatāra he continues to be in importance even in Dwāparayuga. He is said to have helped Bhīma, subdued the pride of Garuḍa and Sudarsana, defeated Nārada and Tumburu in the music contest and helped Krishna in subduing the pride of Satyabhimāma and Arjuna. References
about his role in Dwāparayuga are found in the Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Purāṇas, Parāsarasamhitā and Samīrakumāravijayam, a medieval Telugu work written by Pushpagiri Timmana a poet of Rāyalaseema. According to the last mentioned work Krishna wanted to subdue the pride of Garuḍa, Sudarsana, Nārada, Tumburu and Satyabhāma. Garuḍa was very proud of his physical power. Sudarsana, the wheel of lord Vishnu, thought that it was invincible. Nārada and Tumburu, the divine musicians, were proud of their excellency in music. Each of them thought that he was the best in the world. To decide the issue they came to Krishna who wanted to teach all of them a lesson in humility.

He sent Garuḍa to fetch Hanumān from Gandhamādhana Mountain. The latter found Hanumān sleeping under a tree with his tail coiled around him like a wall. Underestimating his (Hanumān) power Garuḍa tried to pull him out. Hanumān caught him with his tail and threw him back in Dwāraka. Garuḍa was humbled. Next time he went in all humility to request Hanumān to come to Dwāraka.3

Krishna asked Hanumān to solve the divine musician’s problem. Hanumān took the cymbals of Nārada and Tumburu in one hand and took a rock in another. He started singing a tune known as gunda Kriya rāga by which the rocks melt. When the rock in his hand was melting he kept the cymbals in it and solidified it with his music. Then he challenged Nārada and Tumburu to melt the rock by their music and take out their tālas. Nārada tried first, later Tumburu attempted but both of them failed. Hanumān sang the tune again to bring out the tālas. The pride of the contestants was subdued.4

The story has a different version in Parāśara samhitā. Trisūla Rōma, an asura, defeated by Hanumān concealed himself in a rock to save his life. Hanumān noticed it and brought him out by melting the rock singing the gunda Kriya rāga. Meanwhile
Nārada and Tumburu came to him to know who was the better musician. Hanumān inserted their vīnas in the melting rock and asked them to take them out by melting it again with their music. When they failed to do it he did it and subdued their pride. Sudarsana, the disc of lord Vishnu attempted to stop Hanumān while the latter came to Dwāraka. Hanumān caught him in his mouth like a toy and went inside. That subdued the pride of Sudarsana.

The theme is rarely found in literary works that too only in variant versions. But no version tallies exactly with the description found in sculpture in Rāyalaseema. The sculptors perhaps, mixed all the incidents of the above stories and briefly narrated them in sculpture with modifications to suit their needs. It is not uncommon to find a theme in literature and sculpture differing in many ways.

The theme as found in sculpture should be in the following way. Hanumān, to subdue the pride of Nārada and Tumburu, kept their cymbals in a rock by melting it with his music and challenged all to melt it again to take the cymbals out again. After the divine musician failed, Garuḍa, proud of his physical prowess, tried to break the rock into two to take the cymbals out. But he failed. Sudarsana who was proud of his power to cut anything also attempted to break the rock into two but failed. Hanumān by singing Rāma's glory in a rock-melting tune got the cymbals out and proved his physical and intellectual power.

The theme is found for the first time on the pillars of the mukhamandapa of the Siva temple at Chilamakūru. It is also found at Pushpagiri, Vallūr, Chukkalūru and Śrīśailam.
1. THE AGASTHĪŚVARA TEMPLE, CHILAMAKŪRU:

It is found depicted in two stages on the middle and the bottom parts on the western side of the southwest pillar in the Siva temple. In the first panel at the centre of the pillar, lord Vishnu, four armed, seated on a pedestal, cross-legged, is pointing his lower left forefinger downwards. He wears a long crown and holds chakra vertically in his upper right hand, sankha in upper left, khadga held upwards in his lower right hand and wears a thick necklace, thick yagnopavita, udarabandha, kēyūras, kundalas and kankaṇas. His face is turned to his right a little. He keeps his folded left leg on the pedestal and the right leg slightly bent on the ground below.

In the second panel Hanumān to the right and Garuḍa to left stand slightly bending their knees to indicate the weight of an oval rock they hold in both hands. A vertical cut at the centre of the rock suggest that it is melted and welded again by the musical power of Hanumān. A squatting lion below appears to support the rock. (Plate – 31B)

The flexibility in limbs, the graceful movements and the harmonious alignment of the figures stand testimony to the artistic excellence of the Rēnati Chōla artist.

2. THE RUDRAPĀDĀLA TEMPLE, PUSHPAGIRI:

On the pillars of the Rudrapādāla temple at Pushpagiri the theme is briefly narrated in one panel. It is found many times on the pillars of this temple. One such is described here. It is a miniature panel measuring 6" x 6" in size with a simple decorative border on all sides. It shows Hanumān and Garuḍa holding an oval rock with a vertical cut in the centre. Both the figures kneel on one leg. While Hanumān simply holds the rock in both hands and looks up at Garuḍa the latter is pulling the rock, head bent, with
all his force. His wings are shown in flying fashion behind him. Inspite of its low relief the panel reveals vigorous action and a tense movement.

3. THE RUINED TEMPLE, VALLŪR:

The theme is depicted in a single panel on one of the pillars of the mukhamandapa of this temple. It is again a miniature panel just like the previous example measuring 6 square inches and has a simple decorative border. It shows Garuḍa to left and Hanumān to right standing with their legs apart holding a round rock with a vertical cut in the centre. They keep one hand below and the other above the rock. Both wear crowns, necklaces, and simple ardhorukas. The emphasis is only on the rock here. It does not reveal Garuḍa’s futile attempt to break it. Hence it lacks the vigorous action noticed in the previous panel. Though the carving is better here the emotion is missing. One common feature of the two panels is that they are found next to Purushāmrīga panels discussed earlier in this work. (Plate – 32A).

4. THE MALLIKĀRJUNA TEMPLE, ŚRĪŚAILAM:

On the exterior side of the eastern prākāra in the fourth register this theme is found depicted in a long panel. Here Hanumān is shown singing, keeping tāla or time with his hands. Facing him are Nārada and Tumburu listening to his song with rapt attention. They hold their vīnas. Behind them is a round rock with a design resembling the cymbals carved on it. Behind it is another rock, which is melting. The first part shows Hanumān singing guṇda Kriya rāga to melt the rock. The second part shows the rock melting by his musical power. The narration here very closely tallies with the description found in Samīrakumāravijayam.
5. THE CHENNAKÊŚAVA TEMPLE, CHUKKALûRU:

This theme is carved in three different ways here. The first panel is found on the eastern side of the southwest pillar in the mukhamanûpa. It is different from all other such panels in the sense that it includes Sudarsana also in the theme. There is a long vertical shaft with floral decoration at its top with Sudarsana in the centre. Hanumân and Garûda hold it with their left and right hands respectively. They stand keeping their legs apart and raising their other hands up as if they are about to beat each other. Their heads are tilted backwards. They are identically bejeweled, each with a long multi-stringed chain reaching the knees with a prominent pendent, necklaces, channavîras, armlets, anklets and other jewels. Garûda has a cylindrical crown but Hanumân does not have a crown. His tail is coiled upwards. (Plate – 32B)

The central vertical pillar like object may be the vîna of the divine musicians fixed in a rock. While Garûda with all his force fails to take it out, Sudarsana shown as a disc tries to cut it from the top. It is needless to mention that both of them failed in their attempts. The carving is in low relief but jewellery details are prominent. The outer wall panels of the temple do not reveal such details. The other two panels of the same theme are found on the north exterior wall of the mukhamanûpa.

In the second panel the theme is found very crudely sculptured. In what looks like an outline carving one can notice Garûda in a fighting attitude trying to pull the oval object from Hanumân’s hands. Their legs are crossed, faces are tense and serious and their looks are menacing. Here too only Garûda sports a crown.

In the next panel shown at the bottom register Garûda and Hanumân are shown in some what compromising attitude with a clear smile on their faces. They are more jammed into each other. They seem to hold each other’s hands. It may be the next stage
in the theme i.e., Hanumān forgiving the subdued Garuḍa. It may be the continuation of the previous panel. While Hanumān is scarcely dressed Garuḍa is neatly dressed and bejeweled.

III. THE MATSYĀVATĀRA:

The story of Vishnu assuming the form of a fish to bring back the Vēdas snatched by a demon who hides under the ocean is described in many purānas. Āndhramahābhāgavatam gives a vivid description of the episode. Though Vishnu is shown in the form of a fish at many places, the entire episode is narrated beautifully in a single panel in the temples of Onṭimiṭṭa and Tāḍipatri.

1. THE KŌDANḌARĀMA TEMPLE, ONṬIMIṬṬA:

At the top section of the east phase of a pillar in the mukhamandapa of the Kōdanḍarāma temple, Onṭimiṭṭa the story is narrated. The panel is 15" x 15" in size. Vishnu shown as half fish and half human form is four armed. He keeps chakra in prayōga style in upper right hand, sankha in upper left, holds the vēdas in lower right and tears up the abdomen of the asura with his lower left hand. The vēdas are shown as palm leaf manuscripts attached to each other with a thread. The asura squatting on the ground with his head bent backwards holds a sword in right hand and his left hand is slightly held up. His face reveals his agony.

2. THE VENKAṬARAMANA TEMPLE, TĀDICIPATRI:

At the centre of the south face of a pillar in the mukhamandapa of this temple the same scene is narrated. It is much better in execution. It is almost similar to the previous panel but for the difference in the posture of the asura. Here he is supporting himself with his hands held down on the ground. He has no weapons. The god holds
two vēdas in his lower right hand and two more vēdas are shown beneath attached to a thread. (Plate – 33A)

IV. SĀGARAMADHANA OR CHURNING OF THE OCEAN:

Kśhirasāgaramadhana or Churning of the ocean of milk to produce amrita or nectar is the theme found in the purānas and Bhāgavata. Amrita was first produced by Prudhu, an emperor. By the curse of sage Durvāsa it fell in the milky ocean. The gods and the demons tried to bring it up by churning the ocean. They brought Mandhara Mountain as churning rod and used Vāsuki, the great serpent, as churning rope. When the mountain was sinking they prayed god Vishnu who appeared as a tortoise (Kūrma) to lift it and hold it in its place. Finally nectar appeared. Dēvas and Danavas fought for it. Vishnu, in the guise of Mōhini, deceived the demons and distributed the nectar to the gods.

This is not a popular theme in sculpture, as we do not find its detailed narration anywhere. Whenever it is represented in sculpture it is narrated in a single panel briefly. Even then Vishnu as Kūrma is not often shown. The theme is found at six places in Rāyalaseema namely Śrīśailam, Pushpagiri, Tirupati, Onṭimiṭṭa, Ahōbilam and Chukkalūru. Except the Pushpagiri example the other five have a common feature i.e. vānaras or the monkeys instead of dānavas churning the ocean along with the gods. This is peculiar because no literary work in Telugu or in Sanskrit mentions the presence of vānaras in place of demons in the episode. Even among the five above-mentioned panels there is one common feature in Tirupati, Onṭimiṭṭa and Chukkalūru examples. The vānaras hold the front half of the serpent. But in Śrīśailam and Ahōbilam panels they hold the hind part of Vāsuki, which is again against the story mentioned
everywhere. In all literary works *devas* are said to have held the hind part of the serpent to avoid the fumes of its poison.

In no panel Vishnu is shown as Kûrma uplifting the mountain. Only in Pushpagiri and Chukkalûru examples he is shown as four-armed Vishnu sitting on top of the mountain. The other four panels do not show him at all. The above details reveal that this theme is not very popular among the people and the artists. They only have a vague idea about it and depicted the theme in a defective manner.

1. THE CHENNAKÉŚAVA TEMPLE, PUSHPAGIRI:

This is the only panel, which more or less corresponds to the description in books. Even here Vishnu is shown sitting at the top of the mountain but not as Kûrma supporting it. The mountain is shown as a round pillar with a square top over which Vishnu, four armed sits in *padmâsana*. To his left stand three male figures holding the first half of the serpent. Towards his right are seen three more figures holding the tail. The right side figures are *devas* as their prominent *yagnopavitas*, tall crowns, better jewellery indicates. The left figures are *dânava*. They wear shorter crowns, fewer ornaments and are smaller in size. They are jammed into each other while the *devas* freely stand. The serpent looks like a thick rope. The panel is in very high relief. As common to Pushpagiri sculptures here too attention is paid to intricate designs on dress and jewellery. The fingers and toes are a bit bigger than the required size, which is again a common feature in Pushpagiri. (Plate – 33B)

2. THE MALLIKÂRJUNA TEMPLE, ŠRĪŚAILAM:

It is the thirteenth panel in the top register from the eastern end on the south *prâkâra* wall. Measuring roughly 8' x 1 ½' in size the panel shows the mountain in the
centre which looks like a round pillar with a square top. It is entwined with the serpent with seven heads. Three male figures pull it with both hands. They are shown in different poses and hairstyles, which is a common feature in Śrīśailam sculptures. Two vānaras wearing crowns pull the tail of the serpent. Three fish, one to the left of the mountain and two to its right are shown to suggest that the place of churning is an ocean.

3. THE KŌDANDĀRĀMA TEMPLE, OṬTIMIṬṬA:

The panel is found on the inner walls of the east gōpura. It is partly covered by heavy iron pillar supporting the roof and so photography is not possible. This is nearly 9" x 5" in size. It shows four vānaras on one side and four dēvas on the other pulling the serpent. Vishnu is not seen in the panel. The carving is in bold relief and demands our praise for the uniform arrangement of figures.

4. THE NARASIMHA TEMPLE, LOWER ĀHÔBILAM:

On the south wall of the mukhamandapā of the Narasimha temple this panel is seen. It is 1' x 5" in size. It shows four dānavas and four vānaras churning the milky ocean. The dānavas hold the first half of the serpent. A dwarf, squatting, is holding the head of Vāsuki, the serpent. The first dānava points at Lakshmi sitting on the top of the mountain. All the four of them are in different positions. They seem to be exhausted by the fumes of the serpent. They have disheveled hair and are scantily dressed. The vānaras are pulling the hind part of the serpent. All of them look at Lakshmi. They are all in the same pose with crowns. Lakshmi is shown as seated in padmāsana. While the dānavas are big in size, the vānaras are comparatively smaller. (Plate - 34A)
5. THE GŌVINDARĀJA TEMPLE, TIRUPATI:

This panel is found on the inner walls of the second gōpura of the Gōvindarāja temple, Tirupati. Vānaras holding the first half of the serpent and the dēvas holding the second half or tail of the serpent churn the milky ocean. There are six figures on either side. The panel resembles the Ontimimā panel.

6. THE CHENNAKĒŚAVA TEMPLE, CHUKKALŪRU:

In the centre of the western outer wall of the sanctum in the dilapidated temple the theme is sculptured in 2' x 6' in size. It has six figures. The central one is Vishnu, two armed, holding sankha and chakra. He is shown partly on top of the mountain. To his right is the head of the serpent. It is held by two vānaras wearing crowns. To the left three dēvas are pulling the tail. The head of the serpent resembles that of a bird. As it is a famous serpent a crown is shown on its head. Though the carving is crude here, the position of the limbs of the figures is natural.

V. THE VARĀHĀVATĀRA:

Vishnu assuming the form of a boar to rescue Priyāvati (Earth) who is captured by Hiranyāksha is the theme of Varāhavatāra. Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa and Taittirīya-Aranyaka contain some of the earliest references about the boar which rescued the earth from the depths of the lower regions. In Rāyalaseema this theme, somehow, did not catch enough attention as detailed narration of the theme appears only at Penukonda.

1. THE CHENNAKĒŚAVA TEMPLE, PUSHPAGIRI:

On the outer wall of Chennakēśava temple complex, Pushpagiri, it is narrated in one panel in brief. Varāha, four armed, with knees bent a little suggesting that he is
coming out of *pātāla* is holding a round object on his snout on which goddess Pridhvi is shown.

2. **THE RĀMA TEMPLE, PENUKONDA:**

   The theme is delineated in sculpture in three panels on the outer wall of the Rāma temple, Penukonda. In the first panel a huge boar is charging at the demon who tries to kill it with a heavy sword held in his left hand. In the second Varāhamūrti, four armed and with a boar head, holds the right hand of the demon with his left hand and wields the mace with his right. His upper hands hold *chakra* and *sankha*. Hiranyāksha bends to his right as his opponent pulls him. His left hand still carries his sword. A shield is in his right hand. Both the figures wear long garland like chains reaching up to their knees. (Plate - 34B)

   In the third the god is seated cross-legged holding a round object with a long handle, which looks like a hand mirror. His face is partially reflected in it as the design in the object resembles his snout. Facing him is Pridhvi in the form of a woman. She holds a garland in her hands. She is obviously ready to garland her saviour and accept him as her husband.

VI. **NARASIMHA:**

   The story of Vishnu assuming Narasimha or Man-lion form to protect Prahlāda is very popular in this region. Narasimha is mentioned in a list of *avatāras* in the *Mahābhārata*. The Konāḍamotu panel from the Guntur district points to the early worship of a theriomorphic Narasimha in a Vaishnava context.11 The plaque from Peddamudiyaṃ, Cuddapah district, which may be assigned to the period of Vishnu-kundins and that of the early rule of Pallavas contains the earliest sculptural
representation of Narasimha. Sontheimer traces at the root of the cult of Narasimha "a tribal theriomorphic divinity mostly originating in a forest, on a hill, in a cave or a ravine. The deity was, if at all, visualized not in an anthropomorphic mūrti, but by oral legends as an animal of the feline order, mostly a lion." This deity was worshipped by tribals, came to be called Narasimha and was eventually identified with the avatāra of Vishnu. There are many shrines for Narasimha in Rāyalaseema, the most famous being the temples at Ahūbilam.

The ālvars visited the Narasimha temples at Ahūbilam. Tirumangai ālwar composed many songs on the Lord Narasimha at Ahūbilam. He called him Singaperumāl. The influence of the ālvars was very much felt on Rāyalaseema. It was one of the reasons for the popularity of Narasimha cult in this region. Pōtana, in his Āndhramahābhāgavatam, gives a vivid description of this episode. According to this work, Hiranyakasipu becomes furious when his son Prahlāda always chants the name of Hari. So he asks him to show where Hari is present. The boy replies, "There is no need to doubt the presence of Hari. He is omnipresent. Wherever you search for him there he is present."

Indugalaḍanu leḍani sandēhamu valadu
chakri sarvōpagatunḍu
endendu vetaki chūsina andandē galaḍu....

Then his father questions him whether Hari is present in a pillar nearby. Prahlāda says yes. Immediately the demon king breaks the pillar with his mace. Hari comes out of it as Narasimha and kills the asura. Almost in every temple in this region at least a single panel is allotted to depict the story. The following panels are selected for description here.
1. THE MANIKYA VARADARĀJA TEMPLE, PUNGANUR:

The theme is described in four panels each on one side of a pillar in mukhamandapa. The first shows Narasimha standing in samabhanga holding chakra and sankha in upper hands. His lower right hand holds a gada and the lower left is on kati. In the second panel he is killing the demon king, Hiranyakasipu. He is eight armed here. His lower hands tear open the abdomen of the demon held in his lap, the second pair of hands holds the entrails like a garland, the third pair of hands holds the knees and the head of the demon while the upper most hands hold chakra and sankha. The third panel depicts Nārasimha blessing Prahlāda. He keeps his left hand on the head of Prahlāda who sits facing him with folded hands and points at him with right hand. His legs are bent a little. In the last panel the god stands in tribhanga. His lower right hand is in abhaya and the left arm rests on gada. Except in the second panel he is shown with four arms in all other panels.

2. THE NAVANARASIMHA TEMPLES, AHŌBILAM:

The outer walls of the mukhamandapa of the Ugranarasimha temple, upper Ahōbilam contain many narrative panels in bas-relief. The thick lime coating covering the wall makes it difficult to clearly identify all of them. The story of Narasimha is shown in bottom register and top register.

The story starts with Chandāmarka and his disciple Prahlāda coming to meet Hiranyakasipu. The former is lean with bent knees, a long beard and holds an umbrella over his head. Prahlāda in the centre is talking to him. In the other panel Narasimha is emerging out of a huge pillar. Prahlāda to his left and the asura to his right watch him in amazement. In the next panel, the god is wrestling with the asura. He has a big, furious lion head. His upper hands hold chakra and sankha. His lower hands pull the demon
king who tries to break free. The next panel shows the god keeping the demon in his lap. He is eight armed. His lower hands take out the entrails of the demon. The second pair of hands holds his legs and head. The other four arms carry sword, shield, chakra and sankha.

**THE CHENCHULAKSHMI STORY:**

The next part of the story depicts a local version, which is popular in Rāyalaseema. After killing the demon, Narasimha roams around with uncontrollable fury until he finds a chenchu girl who is incarnation of Lakshmi and falls in love with her. He lives with her in the forest leading a hunter’s life. There is another version to it. “It is said that one day Cencū-Laksmī saw a lion and shot him; from the dying lion the beautiful Narasimha arose. They fell in love with each other and Narasimha wanted to marry her. Cencū-Laksmī wanted to see whether he was a suitable husband and put him to tests, e.g., climbing trees, jumping over the river, collecting wild honey and finding a golden, life bringing insect in a termite mound.”

The next panel shows a Chenchu woman looking back in absolute shyness. In the next Narasimha and the woman i.e. Chenchulakshmi are shown side by side each holding a bow. They are dressed in shorts resembling leaves. Behind them a few trees are shown. In the next panel Narasimha is climbing a tree while the woman standing below points at something on the tree, perhaps, at a fruit. In another panel Narasimha is hunting with bow and arrows.

On many pillars in the Nava Narasimha temples at Ahōbilam. Narasimha and Chenchulakshmi are shown standing with bows. In some of the panels Narasimha is picking out a thorn from the foot of Chenchulakshmi. Some more panels in the various
mandapas at this place show Narasimha fighting with the asura and killing him by pulling out his entrails.

On one of the pillars of the rangamandapa of the Narasimha temple at Lower Ahobilam there is a beautiful image of Narasimha overpowering the demon, Hiranya Kasipu. The god is four armed. He holds chakra and sankha in upper hands, places his lower left hand on the crown of the demon and keeps his lower right on his (demon) waist ready to tear out his abdomen. The god wears a long cylindrical crown, many chains, armlets, wristlets and anklets. He is dressed in a beautifully designed ardhõruka with pearl hangings. His protruding eyes and the wide-open mouth reveal his ferociousness. The asura, also dressed in an ardhõruka, wears a makuta, yagnõpavita, channavîra and a long hâra. His raised right hand holding the sword is blocked by the lower left hand of the god. He carries a shield with a lion symbol in his left hand. His face shows his surprise.

NARASIMHA WOOING CHENCHULAKSHMI:

On another pillar at the same place there is a rare sculpture of Narasimha trying to please and pacify Chenchulakshmi who has a grim and serious face. The god dressed in a lower garment made of leaves sports a crown, which is also made of leaves. He holds chakra in upper right hand. He is profusely ornamented. He keeps his lower right hand near the chin of Chenchulakshmi and is trying to turn her to his side. His lower left hand goes around the waist of the lady and placed on her left breast. His bulging eyes and protruding tongue show his anxiety to please the lady.

Chenchulakshmi, holding a bow in the left hand, turns away from the lord with a serious face. Her expression reveals her anger. She also wears a crown and a garment
made of leaves. Her hāras, kuchabandha, kaṭibandha, kankaṇas and maṇjīras are attractive. (Plate – 35A)

3. THE VARĀHASWĀMI TEMPLE, TIRUMALA:

On a pillar in the mandapa of the Varāhaswami temple, Tirumala, the theme has some variation. It is depicted in two panels. In the first panel showing the fight, Narasimha pulls the demon. The demon’s right leg is locked between the lord’s legs. The demon is trying to escape. In the second panel, the two pairs of upper hands of Narasimha are raised up as if they hold the entrails of the demon like a garland. The demon is turned to face the onlooker. The god keeps his right leg between the legs of the demon.

4. THE RĀMA TEMPLE, PENUKONDA:

The best narration of the theme is found in three panels on the outer wall of the Rama temple, Penukonda. In the first panel Chandāmārka, the teacher, stands facing Hiranyakasipu. He bends a little in respect and with folded hands. In the centre, Prahlāda is seated on the ground with a book in his hands. The asura is seated cross-legged holding a mace in the left hand. His right hand is in tarjani pose. In the second panel he points out at a pillar with outstretched right hand. Prahlāda, still holding the book in left hand, also points out at the pillar with his right hand. Narasimha is emerging from the pillar. He is shown up to his waist. (Plate – 35B) In the third panel Narasimha is seated in the centre in yōgāsana with a paṭṭa or cloth around his knees. Prahlāda and Lakshmi are standing on either side in anjali.
5. PĀDAMANḌAPA, ALIPIRI, TIRUPATI:

A forceful representation of the theme in four panels is seen on two pillars in the mandapa at Alipiri. In the first panel the lord is emerging out of a pillar breaking it into two halves with his lower hands. In the next he holds the asura in his lap and tears open his abdomen. He is eight armed and has a furious face. (Plate – 36A) In the third he is walking away in the same furious mood. He has four hands now. In the fourth he blesses Prahlāda who worships him with folded hands.

6. THE CHENNAKEŚAVA TEMPLE, CHUKKALŪRU:

On the south outer wall of the sanctum the story is narrated in four panels. In the first Chandāmārka, with a long beard, pleads his helplessness to train Prahlāda as per the wishes of his king. Prahlāda stands next to him with a book in his left hand. Next to a pilaster with a squatting lion at its base the demon king, seated, points to a pillar near by and kicks it with his right leg. Narasimha is emerging out of it. Only his face is shown inside the pillar. (Plate – 36B) According to Padmapurāṇa Hiranyakāśipu angrily kicked the pillar and Vishnu at once came out as Narasimha and killed him.17

In the next panel the lord is overpowering the demon. In the next he is killing him. Prahlāda and his teacher watch the scene. At the top Brahma and Siva stand with folded hands. To their left the lord is seated with Lakṣmī on his left thigh. Next to him another man with crown, may be Indra stands in anjali. The presence of Brahma and Siva with their consorts is noticed in a sculpture of Narasimha from Cave No. III in Badami.18 Similarly the presence of Indra in anjali pose is according to Vaikhānasāgama.19

A pillar in the ruined fort of Siddhavātām, another in the mukhamandapa of Vēdanārāyana temple, Nāgalāpuram and a pillar in the mukhamandapa of Dēvi shrine.
Nārāyanavanam depict the story in two stages. In the first Narasimha is overpowering the demon and in the second he is tearing out the entrails of the latter. All these panels appear to follow the description in the Vaiśhānasūgama. Pillars in the temples at Onṭimitta, Tirupati, Sōmapālem and other places have panels showing a man plucking out a thorn from the foot of Chenchulakshmi.

VII. VĀMANA OR TRIVIKRAMA:

This incarnation is different from the others. In this form Vishnu does not kill Bali but just pushes him down to Pātāla and even stays at the entrance of his house in the nether world as guardian. It is because Bali is known for his charity. He donates three feet of land to Vishnu knowing that he will be crushed. Still he does not want to miss the chance to keep his hands at a higher level than those of Vishnu who receives the dāna. It is vividly described in Andhramahābhāgavatam.20

1. SIVA TEMPLE, CHILAMAKŪRU:

The story is found on southeast pillar in the mukhamantapa in three panels. It is the earliest narration of the theme in this region. The first panel has four figures. The first is that of Sukrāchārya, the family priest of Bali. He turns to his right and keeps his hands on his chest expressing fear at the sight of Vāmana. Next to him Bali is seated on a pedestal in yagnadiksha. His right leg is placed on the ground and left is bent and placed on the pedestal. He signals Vāmana with his right hand to come near. His wife, Vindhyāvati21 stands by his side with a padma in her right hand. Facing him is the vatu or brāmachārī with umbrella in his left hand and right hand in abhaya. He wears ardhiroka, yagnopavīta, kundalas and has short hair. The panel measures 6" x 14" in size.
In the second panel Bali offers dāna to Vāmana. Vindhyāvatī brings water in a kamandala. Bali who sits with knees bent on a pedestal washes the feet of Vāmana who stands before him with umbrella. Bali’s wife wears an ardhoruka in this panel where as in the previous panel she is dressed in pūrnoruka. The panel measures 10" x 14" in size.

In the third panel Vāmana assumes the multiform or visvarūpa as Trivikrama. Bali seated in the same position is stunned at the sudden transformation of Vāmana. His hand held behind him on the ground for support indicates his wonder. Facing him Trivikrama (shown from the base to the top) raises with his left leg on ground and right leg raised up with toes stretching out. He is in tribhanga. He has four arms and keeps chakra, sankha and gada in his hands. The lower left hand points at the sky. A servant holding a vessel stands at the bottom. The panel measures 11" x 14" in size. (Plate – 37A)

The panels grow bigger and bigger in size just as Vāmana grows bigger as Trivikrama. They successfully bring out the emotions of the figures. Sukrācharya’s fear, and astonishment of Bali are clearly expressed. The positions of all figures are natural and demand appreciation.

2. CHENNAKÉŚAVA TEMPLE, PUSHPAGIRI:

The best narration is found on the south outer wall of the Chennakēśava temple, Pushpagiri in two panels. In the first Bali in centre pours water with a vessel into the right hand of Vāmana. Sukrācharya tries to stop him by pulling his right hand. Vāmana stands facing them with an umbrella held high in left hand. He wears yagnopavīta and is dressed in a clout. The king and his purōhit wear crowns, prominent ear studs and chains. They are dressed in ardhōrukas. (Plate – 37B) In the second Trivikrama, four armed, raises his left leg high and points his left hand at it. The leg is washed by Brahma. The water thus used comes down in the form of Ganga. Garuda is squatting at
the bottom with folded hands. A male-figure, perhaps Sukrācharya, stands at bottom right. The ornaments and garments of the all the figures, especially those of Trivikrama, are exquisitely carved.

3. THE VENKAṬARAMANA TEMPLE, TĀDĪPATRI:

On the north outer wall of the antarāla in the Chintala Venkaṭaramana temple, the theme appears in two panels. In the first Vāmana, dressed as a brahmin bramhachāri with an umbrella, is receiving dāna with his right hand. In the centre Bali, standing erect, offers dāna with both hands. Behind him stands his wife holding a vessel in her left hand. In the second panel the four armed Trivikrama, with one leg on the ground, with the second held high, places the third leg on the head of Bali who is crushed down the Earth up to his waist. The second leg is washed by Brahma. The water is shown coming down as a stream in which snakes and fishes are vaguely seen. The lord holds chakra in prayōga fashion in the upper left hand and holds his raised leg with his lower left. (Plate - 38A) “The carving here depicts three distinct stages of strides taken by Trivikrama…. For fulfilling the placement of third step the artist has depicted a third leg with which he (Vishnu) is shown pushing down Bali into Pātālalōka. ….Trivikrama cannot become an analogous one to three footed character and further more there is no āgamic mandate to such a formulation.”

At both the places the panels are in bold relief. Ornaments and dress are skillfully depicted. In the same temple the theme is again depicted in three panels. In the first panel Bali is inviting Vāmana who is shown with a beard. In the second he is offering dāna by pouring water. In the third Trivikrama is shown occupying the universe. The umbrella of Vāmana is peculiar in shape. According to Vaikhānasāgama
the image of Vāmana should be sculptured as a small lad. Showing Vāmana with a beard is against the rules of āgamas.

4. THE CHENNAKEŚAVA TEMPLE, CHUKKALŪRU:

In the ruined Chennakeśava temple at Chukkalūru where imitations of Tādipatri panels are seen, this theme is depicted in two panels with a pilaster separating them. In the first Bali (without a crown) pours water into the hands of Vāmana with a vessel held in right hand. His left hand is held down straight. Vāmana looks tall and lean with an umbrella over his head. Sukrāchārya is shown behind him. He is lean, old and has a beard. In the second panel Trivikrama is crushing down Bali. The panel is a poor imitation of its kind in Tādipatri. Here Trivikrama holds chakra in right hand. Even the stream of water coming down is shown as in Tādipatri panel.

In Pushpagiri panels the fingers of the figures are disproportionately long. In Tādipatri Vāmana is shown with a beard, which is against any literary description. The Chukkalūru panels reveal clumsy workmanship and are in very low relief.

VIII. PARASURĀMA:

Parasurāma is the sixth incarnation of Vishnu. The story is referred to in Mārkandeya Purāṇa, Uttara Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata. It is described in detail in Andhramahābhāgavatam. Jamadagni has a divine cow, ‘Kāmadhēnu’ in his hermitage, which gives all that is requested. Once Kārtavīryājuna, a king with thousand arms, visits the hermitage with his army after a hunting expedition. Jamadagni provides a grand feast to the king and his men by the grace of the divine cow. The king desires the cow for himself but the sage refuses. The king sends his men to fetch it by force. But the army created by the cow defeats them. Parusurāma wants to teach the king a
lesson. He defeats the king, cuts off his thousand arms and subdues his pride.\textsuperscript{25} 
\textit{Agnipurana} states that Jamadagni was slain by the son of Kārtavīrya and so Parasurāma wiped out all the kshatriyas.\textsuperscript{26}

1. **THE KĀSI VISVēŚVARA TEMPLE, PENUKONDA:**

   This theme is depicted on the other wall of the sanctum of the Kāsviśvēśvara temple, Penukonda in nine panels. The first panel shows Jamadagni sitting under a tree in his hermitage receiving Kārtavīryārjuna. The latter is shown with multiple hands and heads. An attendant holds an umbrella behind him. In the second panel the king and his men are enjoying the feast provided by the sage with the grace of Kāmadhēnu. The king on one side and the ministers on the other sit facing each other while the divine cow is shown in the centre with three heads to indicate that it is moving either side to provide food to the guests sitting in two rows. The king is seen taking the food from a vessel placed before him. The third panel shows the sage sitting under a tree with the cow facing him. He may be thanking the cow for its help in providing the feast. In the fourth panel five soldiers are seen in a row while the first one is forcefully pulling the cow.

   In the fifth panel the cow attempts to break free. It is crushing two soldiers under its feet and killing another with its horns. Three more soldiers are about to attack the cow. (Plate – 38B) In the next panel two chariots are shown in a row. On the first, one a warrior with a club proceeds to fight. On the other there is another man with bow and arrows. An attendant holds an umbrella over his head. Two more soldiers are running with swords and shields.

   The next panel shows two more soldiers armed with heavy swords and shields. In the next are three more armed soldiers. The one in the front holds the cow with a rope. In the eighth panel a servant standing with folded hands informs the unsuccessful
attempts of the army to the Haihaya king, Kārtavīrya. The king is shown with multiple heads and hands. On top of the same panel the fight between Parasurāma and Kārtavīrya is depicted in another panel. Both the fighters shoot arrows at each other. The last panel shows Parasurāma cutting off the head of Kārtavīrya with an axe.

The panels are in very low relief and some times appear as outline sketches. The carving is also crude. Facial features, ornaments, dress and other details cannot be easily identified in these panels. But they reveal forceful movements, vigorous action and clarity of conception. Obviously these carvings may not be the work of the master craftsman who worked in Rāma’s temple at the same place.

2. THE RĀMA TEMPLE, PENUKONDA:

On the west outer wall of the sanctum of the Rāma temple the story of Parasurāma is repeated in four panels. The entire story is narrated in brief selecting only main events. But the carving is in bold relief and reveals much better workmanship and finer execution.

As per the story Jamadagni gets angry with his wife Rēnuka as she delays bringing water for his daily rituals by looking at a gandharva couple sporting in the river. The sage, furious with her negligence, orders his sons to kill her. While the last three sons refuse to do so, the first one, Parasurāma does it. He brings his mother back to life by requesting his father. This story is found in the Mahābhārata and Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa. The first panel here shows Jamadagni sitting cross-legged on a pedestal. He orders his son Parasurāma to kill Rēnuka. The latter stands facing the sage in anjali. He holds his bow on the left shoulder. (Plate – 39A) In the second panel Parasurāma is cutting off the head of his mother with his axe. He wields the axe with his right hand and holds the bow in the left. Facing him his mother sits on a pedestal
keeping her right hand on her left knee. Her left hand in *tarjani* pose may be warning her son about the sin of committing matricide.

The third panel shows the pitched battle between Parasurāma and Kārtavīryārjuna. Parasurāma wears a crown, *yagnopavīta*, along with many ornaments. He wields his axe with his right hand. He keeps his right leg forward. Near his feet the mutilated limbs of his opponent are piled up. Kārtavīrya stands with his legs stretched apart. He is shown with fourteen arms. Many others are seen falling on the ground. He holds a big sword in his lower right hand, a club, bow, mace, shield and other weapons, which are not clear to identify. He is in a defensive attitude, which shows that he is not a match to his opponent. (Plate – 39B) The fourth panel shows Parasurāma standing in *anjali* facing his father.
SECTION - II

KRISHNA LĪLA

This is a popular theme in Rāyalaseema. Almost all the important temples, both Saiva and Vaishnava, contain at least a few panels describing Krishnalīla. Certain episodes like Kāliyamardana (Krishna subduing Kāliya, the serpent) Gōvardhana Giridhāri (Krishna lifting Mount Gōvardana) Yamalārjuna (Krishna redeeming two gandharvas from curse), Navanītachōra (Krishna steeling butter), Krishna as Vēnugopāla and other forms are represented in sculpture in large number in every temple. Such episodes are mostly found on pillars. Leaving aside such panels, some important panels, both theme wise and style wise, are discussed in brief in the following pages. The table given under provides a list of such panels found in important temples.

KRISHNALĪLA PANELS – TABLE-IV

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Besides the above-mentioned places many panels depicting Krishnalīla are seen in the temples of Nāgalāpuram, Nārāyanavanam, Yādamari, Srīnivāsa Mangāpuram, Tiruchānur, Sōmapālem, Lēpākshi, Chidipirāla and other places. Mostly Kāliyamardana, Vēnugōpala, Gövardhanagirdhāri and other popular incidents are depicted in these panels. The following panels are selected for study. They are:

I. THE PARASURĀMĒŚVARA TEMPLE, ATTIRĀLA:

The Parusurāmēśvara temple, Attirāla is one of the very old temples in this region. There is a beautiful Vēnugōpala sculpture here. It shows four-armed Krishna playing on his flute while four cows, two on either side with raised heads, listen in rapt attention. Krishna holds chakra and sankha in upper hands. The lower arms hold the flute. He stands in attractive tribhanga pose keeping his right leg bent behind the left in traditional vyatyaastapāda pose. His hair-do appears as if he wears karandāmakuta. His lower cloth reaching his knees is beautifully designed. The tree to his left with its branches in floral design is attractive. The carving is in very bold relief. (Plate – 40A)

II. THE SOUMYANĀDHA TEMPLE, NANDALUR:

The mukhamandapa in this temple contains the following Krishnalīla panels on the pillars. Most of them measure 16" x 16" in size.
1. **YAŚÖDA AND KRISHNA**:  

   This represents a domestic scene in Brindāvan. It is found only in a few temples in this region. It shows Yaśōda churning buttermilk holding the churning rope in both hands. She is dressed in a saree. She is adequately ornamented. Her hair is fixed in a knot to the right of her head. At the bottom right Krishna is taking some butter from the pot. His tuft is attractive.

2. **NAVANĪTA KRISHNA DANCING**:  

   This is repeated on another pillar also. The panel shows Krishna in an attractive *tribhanga* pose dancing. His right leg is slightly bent. His left leg is raised a little. He keeps a ball of butter in right hand and his left hand is in *lōlahasta* pose.

3. **VĒNUGOPĀLA**:  

   Krishna, four armed, plays on a flute held in lower hands. His upper hands carry *chakra* and *sankha*. His legs are bent a little. He wears a *vanamāla*, *yagnāpavīta* and many more ornaments and is dressed in *pūrṇoruka*. He is flanked by two cows on either side.

4. **KĀLIYAMARDANA**:  

   Kāliya, a great serpent, resides in a lake in Brindāvan. It kills anyone who enters the lake. Krishna jumps into the lake, subdues the serpent, dances on its hood and finally pardons him when his (the serpent’s) wives request him.28 Here Krishna stands with his right leg on the serpent, which has a single head. His right hand is in *abhaya* and the left holds the tail of kāliya. He wears a long, elongated crown with vertical lines on it, *ratnakundalas*, *udarabandha*, anklets, *yagnāpavīta* and is dressed in *pūrṇoruka*.
5. KUVALAYAŚĪDA VADHA:

When Kamsa, the king of Mathura, comes to know the heroic deeds of Krishna and Balarama he becomes terribly afraid. He wants to kill them before they kill him. So he sends a huge elephant, trained to kill, to crush them to death. But Krishna kills Kuvalayāśīda, the elephant, along with its rider. This episode is described in a lengthy vachana or prose in Āndhra-mahābhāgavatam. This incident is depicted rarely in this region. In this temple, at the top section of the west face of a pillar in the mukhamandapa, this incident is depicted. Here Krishna is killing the elephant by tearing its wide-open mouth into two. The elephant with bent hind legs and raised front legs is trying to avoid him.

6. KRISHNA KILLING VARIOUS DEMONS:

The other sides of the pillar have sculptures describing Krishna’s encounter with various demons. He is killing Bakāsura (demon in the form of a crane), Dhēnukāsura (demon in the form of an ass), and Vatsāsura (demon in the form of a calf). In another panel he is dragging a mortar to which he is tied. It depicts Yamalarjuna incident or Krishna redeeming two gandharvas from curse who are in the form of two trees.

III. THE VARADARĀJA TEMPLE, ŚRĪKĀLĀHAŚTI:

On the basement of a pillar in the mukhamandapa of the temple Krishna lifting mount Gōvardhana is depicted. It has three things worth noting. (1) Krishna stands here with both his legs firmly placed on the ground. (2) He keeps his right hand in abhaya, which is rare. (3) The mountain is circular in shape and looks more like a big bun. Three cows, all-looking at him are depicted at his feet. The absence of any human figure around him is also noteworthy. (Plate – 40B) It measures 1’ x 2’ in size.
IV. THE UGRA NARASIMHA TEMPLE, UPPER AHÔBILAM:

The exterior walls of the mukhamandapa in the Narasimha temple, upper Ahôbilam have three registers of narrative sculptures of mythological character. The middle register contains scenes from Krishna’s life. But the walls are thickly coated with lime many times. Photography or even identification has become difficult. Among these panels the following are the vaguely visible sculptures.

1. BĀLAKRISHNA SITTING IN THE LAP OF YAŚÖDA:

Krishna sports the traditional tuft on his head and wears a chain of bells besides many other ornaments. He is sitting in the lap of his mother who is neatly dressed.

2. YAŚÖDA THREATENING KRISHNA:

Yaśōda irritated by the mischief of his son wants to teach him a lesson. Here she is shown catching him with left hand and wielding a cane with her upraised right. She is adorned with many jewels. Krishna with an innocent face is crouching on the ground and tries to avoid the punishment.

3. KRISHNA STEALING BUTTER:

In this panel Krishna, standing on a stool with right leg and keeping his left on one of the pots for support, is stealing butter placed in the pot at the top. The pots are kept one above the other. He has some butter in the right hand. With his left hand he takes some more from the pot. His fondness for butter is well portrayed here.
4. YAMALĀRJUNA EPISODE:

Krishna is seen crawling on all fours. Above him two heads in a circle are vaguely seen. They may indicate two gandharvas released from their curse when Krishna fells the trees by dragging the mortar.

5. YAŚODA CHURNING:

This panel resembles the Tādipatri panel. While Yaśoda is churning Krishna facing her leans on the churning pole and eats the butter from the pot.

6. KĀLIYAMARDANA:

Krishna dances on the single hood of Kāliya, which looks lean and long. He is dressed in shorts and wears many hāras. The traditional tuft and his tribhanga pose are attractive to look at.

7. GŌPIKA VASTRUĀPAHARANA:

In this partly visible panel a nude woman is covering her genitals with left hand and turns to a side. She may be one of the victims of Krishna's mischief.

8. KRISHNA AND GŌPIKAS:

This is indeed a rare scene. In all the other panels depicting Krishna in the company of gōpikas Krishna teasing the women is shown. Here he is seen troubled by two women on either side. The women pull him in opposite directions. The woman to his left pulls his left hand and the one on the right pulls his upper cloth. His parted legs and the raised right hand suggest that he is not quite at ease with both of them. It is a funny panel indeed. The pillars all over the place contain popular Krishnalīla themes. But nothing special can be mentioned about them.
V. THE CHENNAKEŚAVA TEMPLE, PUSPHAGIRI:

A Veṇugopala sculpture found here is a masterpiece in this region. It shows Krishna, bending towards his right, playing on his long flute, which has a floral attachment at one end. He wears a crown but his hair fly beautifully on both sides behind his head. His ardhrūka, with its two circular central knots and tussles, is intricately designed. An ox decorated with chains looks up at him. A sage standing to his right at a higher level appreciates the music. All the figures seem to be immersed in the rhapsody. (Plate - 41A) It is 19" x 15" in size. In another panel Krishna is shown with four arms standing on three-hooded Kāliya.

VI. THE GŌVINDARĀJA TEMPLE, TIRUPATI:

The pillars and the inner walls of second gōpura are full of panels describing Krishnālīla themes, of which the following are selected for study.

1. PŪTANA VADHA:

On the inner walls of the entrance gateway tower in the temple Krishna sucking the life out of Pūtana is shown in very low relief. The demoness looks ugly with sagging breasts, sunken eyes and visible ribcage. The episode is shown many times on pillars in the temple.

2. NAVANĪTA CHŌRA:

It shows Krishna being caught while attempting to steal butter. Here he climbs a ladder and takes out some butter from one of the many hanging pots. Two women pull him down catching him in the act. The one to his left may be Yasōda as the attention paid to her dress and make-up suggests. Krishna looks down at them with his head bent to his left and seems to be pleading innocence.
3. **SAKAṬĀSURAVADHA:**

Almost all *asuravadha* panels here are carved in a similar style. Krishna invariably kicks the demon and latter falls head down in his original form at the other end of the panel. In one panel Krishna standing with out-stretched hands, almost naked but for his ornaments, is kicking a big cart holding it with his left hand. Sakaṭāsura is falling head down from the cart at the other end. (Plate – 41B) Bakāsuravadha, Vatsāsuravadha etc., are also shown in similar style. Yaśāda and gōpikas catching Krishna red-handed while stealing butter, Krishna as Madanagōpāla, Gōpikāmānalūla, Kāliyamardana etc., are the other important panels here.

4. **HŌLI FESTIVAL IN BRINDĀVAN:**

In a rare and interesting panel Krishna spraying coloured water on gōpikas with a syringe is shown. It indicates the Hōli festival. Here Krishna is chasing the gōpikas with a syringe. The one infront of him is requesting him with folded hands to stop spraying while the other three gōpikas shown in the panel also carry a big syringe each. This panel is also only one of its kind in Rāyalaseema. (Plate – 42A)

5. **A RURAL SCENE IN BRINDĀVAN:**

Though carved in low relief it brings out the simple rural life at Brindāvan. To the left of the panel a man milking a cow is shown. Another stands behind it watching a woman churning. Behind the churn Krishna is seen holding the pole and taking out some butter. The man and the woman churning may be Nanda and Yaśāda. Kāliyamardana, Gōpikāmānalūla, Vēnugōpāla and Bakāsuravadha are repeated many times on the pillars here.
6. **BAKĀSURAVADHA:**

In one of the Bākāsuravadha panels, Krishna shown taller than the crane is tearing out its beak into two parts. He presses the bird with his left leg to keep it unmoved. The crane (Bakāsura in disguise) does not make any attempt to escape and meekly surrenders to Krishna. Krishna is almost nude. He sports the traditional tuft. (Plate – 42B)

**VII. THE KŌDNAṆṆARĀṆA TEMPLE, TIRUPATI:**

Among the few panels here mention must be made of the one showing Krishna in cradle. Here Krishna leans on to one end of the cradle. He is cross-legged and keeps his right hand on right knee. Two women on both sides swing the cradle. The one facing him may be Yaśōda as she is taller than the one at the other end. The cradle with its heavy legs and strong ropes resemble the one shown in the Tāḍāpatri panel of the same theme. (Plate – 43A) Yaśōda churning the butter, Kāliyamardana, Navaṇītachōra and Vaṭapatrasāyi are some other panels here.

**VIII. THE KŌDNAṆṆARĀṆA TEMPLE, ONṬIMIṬṬA:**

There are many Krishnalīla themes, some of which are very rare. Krishna steeling butter appears to be the favourite theme here as it is repeated nine times. Kāliyamardana is depicted six times. Vēṅgōpāla is repeated five times. Some of the interesting panels are described here.

1. **KRISHNA RIDING A LION:**

Krishna is seated on a lion holding its uplifted tail with left hand and an object resembling a sankha in the upraised right hand. The lion has a wide-open mouth and keeps its front right leg raised. Whether he is riding the lion or trying to kill it is difficult
to judge. But no literary work mentions Krishna's encounter with a lion. He is said to have killed many *asuras* who assumed different forms of animals. The sculptor perhaps tried to introduce a demon in the form of a lion out of ignorance. It reveals the social and cultural backwardness of this area.

It may even be interpreted as Krishna killing the lion, which killed Prasēna, the brother of Satrājīt. As per *Bhāgavata* a lion kills Prasēna who wears a special jewel known as *samantakamaṇi*. Jāmbavanta kills the lion and takes away the *mani* which gives a lot of gold to the bearer everyday. Krishna tries to trace the jewel, finds it in the cave of Jāmbavanta, defeats him in wrestling and marries his daughter Jambavati. The episode may be the source of inspiration for the sculptor of this panel. The object in his right hand may be *samantakamaṇi*. Even then Krishna cannot be shown as killing a lion. A similar scene is noticed in one of the Hoysala temple at Basral.

2. **KRISHNA AND SATYABHĀMA**

In another panel Krishna is seen riding on Garuḍa. To his right a woman is seated while two more women wave their hands at the pair. It may be Krishna and Satyabhāma bringing Pārijāta from Heaven or their victorious entry into Dwāraka after killing Narakāsura. A similar scene is again seen in the Hoysalēśvara temple at Halebid.

3. **KRISHNA RIDING AN ELEPHANT**

Krishna is seated on an elephant holding its up raised trunk with his right hand. The animal looks more like a lion. It has a wide-open mouth. It may be Krishna killing Kuvalayāpīda, the elephant sent by Kamsa.
4. **Yamalārjuna Episode**:

Yasoda, who could not bear Krishna's mischief ties him to a mortar. The lad draws the mortar along with him. He pulls it in between two trees, which fall and take the form of gandharvas. They thank Krishna for redeeming them from curse. In all such panels Krishna is shown pulling a mortar. But here is a rare representation. Krishna bent to his right is pulling a tree with both hands and pushing another tree with his back. The trees are shown on both sides of Krishna. A creeper at the top connects the two trees. This panel is much defaced. Yet it represents a very rare style of depicting the above incident. It measures 18" x 16" in size.

5. **Bakāsura Vadha**:

This is also peculiar in the sense that Krishna is seated on the crane (Bakāsura) where as in all other panels of the theme he just holds it. He is tearing out its beak into two. He appears too big to sit on it.

6. **Chānūra Vadha**:

The panel shows two wrestlers locked up in wrestling with their legs entwined around each other. The taller one holds the hair of the other with his left hand and the folds of his clothing at the back with his right. The other man holds the waist of the opponent. The taller one may be identified as Krishna and the other one as Chānūra, the wrestler in the court of Kamsa. (Plate – 43B).

7. **Vēnugopāla**:

A four-armed Vēnugopāla sculpture depicting Krishna with chakra and sankha in upper hands and flute in lower hands is excellently carved here. He wears a vanamāla reaching up to his knees, a beautifully designed crown and many ornaments. The ends of
his upper cloth and pūrnōruka are shown flying at both sides. He is flanked by a cow on either side.

8. NAVANĪTA KRISHNA DANCING:

This is repeated nine times here. In most of such panels Krishna stands in an attractive tribhanga pose dancing. He holds a ball of butter in right hand and the left is in lōlahasta pose. His legs are bent in an attractive dance pose. He is depicted mostly nude. (Plate - 44A)

9. ŚAKAṬĀSURA VADHA:

Infant Krishna killing a demon who comes in the form of a cart (Śakaṭa) is one of the popular episodes in Krishnalīla. Here Krishna is kicking the cart with his left leg. He is squatting on the floor with his right leg bent. Śakaṭāsura is shown as two wheels one above the other and with a head emerging out of it at the top. His hair is firmly held by Krishna's left hand.

10. PŪTANA VADHA:

Krishna, leaning on the lap of well-dressed Pūtana, holds her right breast with both hands and sucks out her life. The demoness squatting on the floor, cross-legged, is about to fall back dead. She keeps her left hand behind her on the ground for support. Her head bent backwards reveals her agony and pain.

11. KRISHNĀ LIFTING GŌVARDHANA:

Krishna stands with his right leg on the ground and left leg bent. His right forefinger is raised suggesting that he holds the mountain aloft though no mountain is shown. His vaishnava nāma, sacred thread and chains give him a pretty look. (Plate - 44B)
REMARKS: In all the panels describing Krishna’s encounter with the asuras the power and the ease with which the lord performs the miracles are clearly shown. The asuras do not stand a match to him at all. Mostly he is shown with a tuft at the top of his head.

Rare episodes are depicted here. At the same time popular episodes are shown in a rare style. Pūtarna is shown as a woman from an aristocrat family. At other places she is shown as an ugly woman reduced to skin and bones. Yamaḷārjuna episode is represented in a peculiar manner. In one of the Vēnugopala sculptures a snake is also shown entwined to a tree nearby and listening to Krishna’s music with rapt attention. But most of the panels are thickly coated with lime many times and many others are defaced due to the poor quality of the stone used.

IX. THE VENKĀṬEŚVARA TEMPLE, TIRUMALA:

Numerically it is Krishna’s story that dominates the sculptured theme in all the temples in Tirupati and Tirumala. The artists here seem to have taken great delight and pleasure in presenting Krishna in his many faceted and versatile moods.

On one of the pillars of the Tirumāmani mandapa in front of the sanctum complex, Tirumala, Krishna is depicted as sitting in a cradle while Yaśoda and another woman are swinging it. Similar scene is also seen in the Rāma temple, Tirupati. On the pillars of the Snapanā mandapa there are sculptures of Bālakrishna eating butter and Krishna as Kāliyamardana. On the central portion of a pillar in Annamāchārya shrine there is a cute sculpture of infant Krishna crawling on all fours. But for his ornaments he is naked. The curly hair, the clear smile on his lips, the vaishnavanāma, on his forehead and the big eyes are captivating. He is plump and instantly reminds us the Bālakrishna sculpture at Chukkaluru.
On a pillar of the entrance mandapa there is a sculpture of Vastrāpaharana mūrti. Here Krishna dances on the top of a tree, which resembles a creeper. Two nude gōpikas pray him to return their clothes. One of them tries to climb the tree to fetch her clothes. At the bottom of another pillar at the same place a sculpture of Pūtana vadha is depicted in low relief. It is said that Krishna sucked out the life of Pūtana. Here it seems that he sucked out her flesh also as the demoness is almost reduced to a skeleton. Her agony is clearly visible in her face.

The astabhuja and chaturbhujia Vēnugōpāla sculptures in the Tirumalarāya mandapa, the numerous Kāliyamardana, Navanītachōra and Vēnugōpāla sculptures found on the pillars speak about the popularity of Krishnalīla themes in the temple. The astabhuja Vēnugōpāla here holds chakra, sankha, gada, padma, bāna and dhanus in the upper hands and in the lower hands he holds the flute. This is a very rare representation of Vēnugōpāla.

X. THE CHINTALA VENKAṬARAMANA TEMPLE, TĀDIPATRI:

This temple contains many panels on the exterior walls of sanctum and antarāla. They describe the life and sports of Krishna from his birth to his marriage with Rukmini. Thirty-three panels are found here. The pillars in the mukhamandapa also contain many panels depicting Krishna's encounter with various asuras in Brindāvan. While the panels on the walls deal mainly with Krishna's juvenile sports, the panels on the pillars deal with his heroic deeds. Except Kuvalayāpīḍa vadha and Kamsa vadha no other asura vadha is depicted on the walls. As in the Rāmāyana panels one can notice the hand of different sculptors even in Krishnalīla panels as they basically differ in style and relief. When compared to Rāmāyana panels better workmanship is noticed in Krishnalīla.
panels. The artist here attempts to carve themes like Trināvarta vadha, which are very difficult to carve. The wall panels are first described in the following pages.

1. NANDA AND YАŚŐDA:

These panels start in the west half of south exterior wall of antarāla in the top register and run all along the south wall of antarāla, sanctum, on the west wall of sanctum and end on the north wall of antarāla in the top register. The story starts with Nanda, the foster father of Krishna, admiring his son Krishna sitting in the lap of Yaśōda. He stands cross-legged keeping both hands on top of a long stick. There is joy in his face. To his right, beyond the pilaster, Yaśōda sits on a pedestal with infant Krishna in her lap. She wears many jewels. Her hair is combed backwards and fixed in a knot to her left. Her tilaka is prominent. Her facial features are attractive.

2. KRISHNA AND YAŚŐDA:

The second panel shows Krishna, grown up in size, sitting in her lap. He is cutely dressed. His right hand is in varada. A gōpika similarly dressed looks at the proud and joyous mother. In the next panel Krishna sits in a cradle while his mother swings it. In the fourth Yaśōda is nursing her son.

3. KRISHNA PULLING THE CHUNNI OF A GŌPIKA:

In the fifth panel Krishna, further grownup in size, pulls the chunni (upper cloth) of a gōpika. His hair is arranged in a knot at the top of his head and some of it also falls on both sides covering his ears. He wears a chain of bells around his waist and many other jewels. The gōpika stands in samabhanga. She holds a pot on her head. Her saree shows criss-cross design. She wears a chunni, which looks like a garland. To her right Yaśōda with her raised right fore finger threatens the boy to behave himself.
4. **PŪTANA VADHA:**

The sixth panel depicts Pūtana vadha. It is crudely carved. It seems to be the work of a different sculptor. Pūtana, after being sucked out of her life by Krishna, falls back in agony. Her loosely hanging breasts, disheveled hair and wide-open mouth make her look horrible. Krishna climbs down from her lap keeping his hands on her right thigh.

5. **KRISHNA TEASING A GŌPIKA:**

The next panel shows Krishna teasing a young gōpika. It is one of the best here. Krishna still wearing only a chain of bells around his waist, but grown up as tall as the gōpika, is pulling her hair with right hand and catches hold of her left breast with his left hand. He presses her left leg with his right toe and makes her unable to escape. His mischievous act looks so sudden that the helpless woman does not find time to avoid it, as she is busy in churning. Her hands hold the churning rope. The woman looks very beautiful, tall, well proportioned, neatly dressed and bejeweled. Her thin and long eyebrows, big eyes, thin lips and slender fingers add more beauty to her. Such scenes bring amusement and attract the devotee to the temple often. (Plate – 45A)

6. **NAVANĪTA KRISHNA:**

Krishna eating butter, depicted in the next panel, also attracts our attention. It reveals the contentment, and joy of the mother and satisfaction of the child. Yaśōda stands in attractive tribhanga pose churning the contents in the pot while Krishna holding on the churn eats the butter from it. He is said to be very fond of butter. He does not have patience to wait until his mother separates the butter from the pot. He stops the churning rod with his left hand and takes out some butter. Yaśōda is holding
the churning rope loosely in her right hand and has stopped churning, lest her son gets
his hand wounded. The sculptor pays a great deal of attention to decorate her figure.
This panel has a natural rural touch and reveals the wide knowledge of the artist about
rural life. (Plate – 45B)

7. KRISHNA STEELING BUTTER:

The next scene instantly reminds us Pōtana’s Bhāgavata in which he describes
vividly the mischievous acts of Bālakrishna.35

When Yaśōda catches Krishna red-handed while stealing butter the lad requests
her to pardon him and swears that he will never repeat it. He starts weeping and rubbing
his eyes. The collyrium in his eyes melts with his tears and gives him a pathetic look.
Yaśōda anger melts away but still she wants to teach him a lesson and ties him to a
mortar.

Eetappu sairimpuminka dongili bōva
Nēnani munumūṭta nēdchu vâni
Kāṭuka nerayanga kannulu nulumuchu
Veḍalu kanniṭito vegachu vâni
.... Koṭṭa chēṭulāḍaka... bāla kaṭṭa dalache 36

It is, depicted here in two stages. In the first Yaśōda catches Krishna red-handed
while stealing butter. She pulls his left hand with her left and raises a cane to threaten
him. She looks grim and serious. Krishna looks up at her with innocent face and throws
the contents of his right hand on the ground. His bent legs suggest that he tries to break
free. In the second stage Yaśōda, still holding him, produces the evidence i.e. a small pot
(usually the one from which he steals the butter) containing butter. Instantly the
young lad tries to fall at her feet either to avoid punishment or to plead innocence. He
squats on the ground with his right hand touching his mother’s feet. The expression in
Yaśoda’s face suggests that her anger is slipping away and that she feels helpless to control the boy. (Plate – 46A)

8. **YAŚŌDA TRYING TO TIE KRISHNA TO A MORTAR**

The next panel is a beauty to watch. Here Yaśoda ties the lad to a mortar so that he stays at home and will behave himself. Pūtana, while describing this episode in Bhāgavata, writes that she brings a rope to tie Krishna but finds it falling short by a few inches. She adds another rope to it but again it falls short by the same length. She adds another but in vain. Pūtana describes that it is impossible to tie one who has all the worlds in his stomach.37

\[
\text{Tajjanani logitamgala} \\
\text{rajju paramparala krammaran sutugaṭṭan} \\
\text{bojja tirigi rādayye} \\
\text{jagajjālamulunna bojja kaṭṭan vasame}
\]

The panel here describes the same puzzled state of Yaśoda. She finds the rope too short to tie the naughty lad who makes it more difficult for her by crawling away. (Plate – 46B)

9. **THE YAMALĀRJUNA EPISODE**

The next panel depicts Yamalārjuna episode. Krishna crawls on the floor pulling the mortar behind him. To his left stand two men (gandharvas) sporting vaishnavanama or ‘U’ shaped tilak on their foreheads. The next few panels show a different style as we see shorter but plumpy figures with prominent thighs. They lack the intricate dress design and beautiful ornamentation noticed in the previous panels. But they exhibit a rare variety in depicting the popular themes. They may be the work of another sculptor.
10. PRALAMBĀSURA VADHA:

The next is a rare episode found in sculpture in south India. It shows Balarāma killing Pralambāsura, which is described, in the first part of tenth canto in Pōtana’s *Bhāgavata.* The story is as follows. One day when Balarāma and Krishna are playing with other boys an *asura* by name Pralamba, sent by Kamsa, comes there in the guise of an young *gōpa.* He keeps Balarāma on his back and flies high. Balarāma noticing it pulls him down by his hair and with a punch crushes him to death. It is depicted in two stages. In the first, Balarāma flies in the air. He is shown on a higher level than in the next panel. He is beckoning some one to come to him. In the next panel at the lower level he pulls a man upside down holding his hair. The man with hands hanging down, legs folded, seem to fall from the top of two trees, which look more like two pillars. Balarāma’s legs in the first panels are close to each other and in the next they are bent and kept apart on the ground to show that he landed on the ground. He looks alike in both panels but for two differences. He sports a single anklet on his right ankle in the previous panel, which is missing in the second stage. His shorts shown clearly in the second are not found in the first. (Plate – 47A)

11. GŌVARDHANA GIRIDHĀRI:

It is the next theme that deserves description. When Krishna advises worship to mount Gōvardhana instead of the annual Indrayāga all the *gōpas* agree to do so. Indra, furious with their behaviour, unleashes a heavy rain on Brindāvan. Krishna protects the people by lifting the mount Gōvardhana. That subdues the pride of Indra. Pōtana describe the lifting of the mount as “Kari Sarasijamuḷa mettu gatin” i.e. Krishna lifts the mount as easily as an elephant lifts a lotus from a pond. Here Krishna stands in *tribhanga*, keeping his legs slightly bent and away from each other. He is lifting
Gōvardhana with his right fore finger. The mountain is shown as a heap of rocks. Krishna wears an ornament, which resembles a loincloth. His anklets, armlets and wristlets appear prominently. He is flanked by a gōpa and a cow on either side. (Plate – 47B)

12. VENUGOPÄLA:

Krishna as Venugopala is one of the most popular themes found all over south. Here Krishna stands in his traditional cross-legged position in front of a tree while a cow behind him and two in front listen to his melody with raised heads in rapt attention.

13. KÄLIYAMARDANA:

Krishna dances on the serpent, Kāliya, which looks lean and long with a single head. He holds its tail up with his raised right hand. One woman, obviously Kāliya’s wife, stands near his right leg in anjali praying him to forgive her husband.

14. GÖPIKÄMÄNALÖLA:

Krishna as Gōpiramānalōla also deserves special mention here. Krishna stands on the branches of a tree holding the clothes of gōpikas in both hands while four women in total nudity stand in different poses around the tree requesting him to give back their clothes. The sculptor seems to be more interested to reveal his knowledge of female physiology. The women, young and well built, stand in different positions. None of them makes a sincere attempt to cover their modesty. The one in extreme right stands keeping her legs a bit apart and raises her hands high above her head praying for her clothes. The next one stands with her right leg slightly bent and keeps her left hand above her left knee. The one to the left side of the tree climbs the tree to fetch her clothes. She keeps her right leg on the tree trunk and holds the branches with her hand
but she looks at the on looker. The last one behind her stands with her left leg bent a little and keeping her left hand on her left thigh. The tree has two branches in opposite directions with a few leaves. Nowhere else in the region the tree appears in a peculiar ‘V’ shaped style. Krishna is still nude sporting only a chain around the waist. (Plate – 48A)

15. KRISHNA GOING TO MATHURA:

Krishna going to Mathura along with Balarāma and Akrūra is the next important episode found here. Kamsa starts a bow sacrifice or dhanurājoga. He sends Akrūra to Brindavan to invite Krishna and Balarāma. He plans to kill them at once when they are in Mathura. But Krishna comes to know of his evil plan through Akrūra.40 This theme is very rarely delineated. Akrūra, the envoy of Kamsa sent to bring Balarāma and Krishna to Mathura stands in front of the chariot. It may be presumed that he is revealing the evil plans of Kamsa to the brothers. Next to him stands Krishna followed by Balarāma. The chariot is peculiarly designed. A central shaft to which a long board is attached by three big bolts connects the four wheels. The horses are galloping at full speed. (Plate – 48B)

16. KUBJA VIMOCHANA:

Krishna converts a dwarf woman into a beautiful lady. Krishna meets the woman in Mathura who takes perfumes to Kamsa. He stops her, forcibly takes the perfumes and converts her figure into a beautiful lady.41 Here he holds the chin of the woman and lifts her face. This is also a rare representation in sculpture.
17. **KUVALAYĀPIDA VADHA**:

Here Krishna keeps his raised right leg on the elephant. He holds its trunk with right hand and pulls down the tusks with his left hand. The elephant, unable to break free, tries to go back.

18. **CHĀṆŪRA VADHA**:

The next two panels show a pair of wrestlers each. They are Krishna and Balărāma encountering Chāṇūra and Musṭika, the court wrestlers of Kamsa. Both panels look similar.

19. **KAMSA VADHA**:

It is the next episode. Krishna is shown as beckoning some one to come to him. In the next he is holding the hair of Kamsa with his right hand and gives him a blow with the left.

20. **RUKMINI KALYĀNAM**:

After Kamsa *vadha* there is a beautiful sculpture of Durga on the north exterior wall of *antarāla*. It does not seem out of place here as the next incident shows Rukmini offering prayers to the goddess. The following few panels describe Rukmini *Kalyānam.* In the first panel we find a temple in which Gouri is seated in *padmāsana*. Rukmini stands to the left of the temple facing the goddess with folded hands. (Plate 49A) In the next panel she is walking back to her place.

The next one shows Balărāma and Krishna going to Vidharbha to bring Rukmini. Balărāma holds his *halāyudha* in his right hand. His left hand and legs suggest his movement. Krishna is shown riding a chariot. He keeps the bow in the out-stretched left hand and stands on the chariot. In the last panel we find Krishna abducting Rukmini in a
chariot. He stands in ēḷīḍha pose keeping his legs wide apart, a bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right. Behind him Rukmini sits in padmāsana keeping her arms on her knees. Her pose suggests that she is willing to go away with Krishna. The driver squatting on his knees in front and with raised right hand seems to be driving the chariot at great speed. (Plate – 49B) The above panels instantly remind the visitor Potana’s description of Rukmini Kalyāṇam in his famous Bhāgavatam.

XI. KRISHNALĪLĀ THEMES ON THE PILLARS OF MUKHAMANḌAPA

Besides the detailed narration of the life of Krishna in sculptured panels on the outer walls of the temple, the following scenes are found depicted on the pillars in the first, third and fourth rows of the mukhamanḍapa. The size of the panels vary between 13” x 14” and 13” x 17” in size.

1. KRISHNA IN CRADLE:

This is a rare episode found in sculpture. Krishna is shown seated cross-legged in a cradle while Yaśōda swings it with both hands. Her hands and closely kept legs, suggest that she is swinging the cradle slowly and carefully. The cradle with its four heavy legs and thick chains appears strong. Krishna sporting a tuft on his head points to his mother with his right hand. The mandapa in which they are seen have pillars with inverted lotus corbels in Vijayanagara style. The panel presents the picture of a contented mother and a happy child. (Plate – 50A)

2. ŚAKAṬĀSURA VADHA:

Though this is an often-repeated scene, here, it is depicted in a different style. Usually Krishna is seen lying on his bed in this scene, as it happens when he is still an
infant. But, here, he seems to be a grown up boy standing on a platform and lifting his right leg high to kick the demon in the shape of a cart. The cart shown is of particular interest. Its two heavy wheels with hinges and chassis, broken into two pieces, are flying in different directions to suggest the power of Krishna. (Plate – 50B)

3. **TRINĀVARTA VADHA**:

A very rarely depicted incident from Krishna’s life is Krishna slaying Trināvarta, a demon who comes in the form of whirlwind to abduct him. As it is nearly impossible to depict a whirlwind in sculpture it is not found anywhere in the country except in Lakshmana temple, Khajuraho and in an 18th century painting reported by P. Banerjee in his book “The life of Krishna in Indian Art.” But the Tādipatri sculptor overcomes the difficulty with his imaginative skill.

Here the whirlwind is shown as coils of rope. About ten coils in decreasing size connected to each other are shown one above the other. At the end of the last coil Trināsura appears in his original form flying in the sky. Krishna catches the demon’s right arm with his left and gives him a punch in the chest with his right hand. Krishna, as usual, is shown with a tuft on his head and a loincloth. His attire and jewellery are similar to those found in Krishna panels on outer walls of this temple. (Plate – 51A)

4. **KRISHNA SHOWING THE UNIVERSE IN HIS MOUTH**:

This is another interesting incident depicted nowhere else in this region nor reported from outside Rāyalaseema. As per the Bhāgavatam Balarāma reports to his mother that Krishna is eating soil. Yaśōda becomes angry. When questioned Krishna pleads innocence. She forces him to show his mouth but to her amazement she watches the entire universe rotating in it. She gets confused and closes her eyes.
The poems describing this episode in *Andhramahābhāgavatam* are popular all over Andhra. When Yaśōda questions Krishna about the complaint he says whether he is an infant, or he is hungry or he is mad to eat soil and requests her not to believe these complaints.

Ammā mannu tinanga nē śiśuvunō,
yākontinō, verrinō Namman jūdaku virīmāṭalu

When Yaśōda looks at the universe rotating in Krishna’s mouth she is stunned. She cannot make out whether what she sees is a dream (kala), an illusion of Vishnu (vaishnavamāya), something else or is it true (satyamu).

Kalayō vaishnava mayayō etara samkalpārdhamō satyamō

This episode is delineated in two panels here. In the first Yaśōda, holding the chin of her son, asks him to open his mouth. Krishna stands looking at her with closed mouth. The big bun shaped hairstyle of Yaśōda and long arms of the figures add beauty to the carving. In the next, the confused Yaśōda closes her eyes with her right hand. She still holds Krishna’s right hand. He looks at her with wide-open mouth in, which a round object, indicating the Universe, is shown. The ornamentation and attire remain similar but the figures change their positions from left to right in this panel. (Plate – 51B)

5. **VATSĀSURA VADHA**:

The incident describing Krishna slaying a demon in the guise of a calf, which is sent by Kamsa, is described in *Andhramahābhāgavatam* in detail. This is also often repeated in sculpture in many temples. But in this panel Krishna is shown as tearing out the neck of the calf with the nails of his right hand, while breaking its neck by pushing it backwards with his left. His left leg is stretched in between the front legs of the calf.

(Plate – 52A)
6. **BAKĀSURA VADHA:**

This and the Vatsāsura *vadha* are described together in Andhra Mahābhagavatam. In the same way these two incidents are carved here on the same pillar one below the other. In this panel the crane, turned turtle, is shown in the lap of Krishna who tears out its abdomen with both hands just as Narasimha tears out the abdomen of Hiranyakasipu. Krishna's feet are turned in opposite directions, which is unnatural. But his tuft and boyish face with *vaishnavanāma* gives him a cute look.

Dhēnukāsura *vadha*, Kāliyamardana, Yaśōda threatening Krishna, Krishna pulling the chunni of a woman, Krishna catching hold of the breast of another are the other scenes which are also portrayed on the walls. But Kāliyamardana is of special importance here. Here Kaliya, the serpent is lean, long and is shown in zigzag coils. Its mouth resembles the wide-open beak of a bird. Krishna dances with his bent legs placed inside the open jaws of the serpent, but not on its hood, which is the common style in this episode. (Plate – 52B)

7. **KĖSI VADHA:**

Krishna killing Kēsi, another demon in the guise of a horse, is not represented in sculpture frequently. Here a caparisoned horse is attacking Krishna with its raised front right leg. Krishna pushes his left hand inside the horse's mouth to destroy its vital parts. The feat does not require much of his power so he keeps his right hand freely hanging. (Plate – 53A)

8. **VYŌMĀSURA VADHA:**

The above incident is described along with Kēsi *vadha* in *Andhramahābhagavatam*. Similarly the two incidents are carved one below the other
on the same pillar. This is not found depicted in any other place in Rayalaseema. Here Krishna slightly bent towards the *asura*, looks at his head. His limbs are kept close to his body. Vyōmāsura, with bulging eyes, wide mouth and hair shown as growing vertically on his head, is squatting. He is keeping his hands on his legs. (Plate – 53B)

9. **KUBJA VIMĪCHANA**:

Krishna restoring *Kubja* (dwarf woman with a humped back) to normal form is known as *Kubja Vimōchana*. He receives perfumes from the woman in Mathura, which are meant for Kamsa and in return sets right her body. This is depicted in two stages. In the first *Kubja* with her bent back stands in front of Krishna offering him a vessel of perfumes with her right hand. The latter, pleased with her, keeps his right leg on her left and raises her chin up with his left hand. His right hand pulls her head backwards.

At the centre of the same pillar the second stage in which the woman getting a normal and erect physique, with her hump disappeared, is shown. She stands straight and hails the feat of her saviour. Krishna pointing her with his right palm held down seem to suggest that such thing are normal to him. The continuity in their ornaments and attire is maintained in both panels.

**REMARKS**: The narration of Krishna’s life is vivid and faithful to the *Āndhramahābhāgavatam*. The sculptors are either well versed in mythology or scholars who mastered the work should have guided them excellently. The narration in sculpture follows the same order in which it is found in literature especially in Pōtana’s work.

The craftsmen here show excellent conception and brilliant execution. Their imaginative skill is seen in rendering almost impossible themes such as Trināvarta vadha, Pralambāsura vadha and Vyōmāsura vadha very easily in sculpture.
The carvings successfully bring out the necessary emotions and expressions. In the panel, describing Yaśodā threatening the child, the nature of a naughty child is projected very naturally.

The craftsmen are not mere imitators of the styles or themes found elsewhere. Even in depicting popular themes they adopt a novel method and add something special to every panel.

Continuity is maintained throughout the narration. Krishna appears with a tuft at the top of his head, anklets, a chain of bells around his waist, chains and a vaishnavanāma on his forehead in almost all the panels depicting his childhood pranks.

The relief is bold, contours are pleasing, dress and ornaments are attractive and the panels on the whole appear captivating. If the intention is to draw the laymen to the temple and to educate them in Hindu mythology then the artists are totally successful in their attempt.

THE RĀMA TEMPLE, PENUKONḍA:

The Rāma temple at Penukonda has sculptural embellishments on its outer walls having mythological themes. As at Tādipatri the panels here exhibit Rāmāyana themes in the bottom register and Krishnalīla in the upper register. Both the registers start at the west half of the south outer wall of the antarāla and end on the north outer wall of the mukhamandapa. The life of Krishna is described in 33 panels here. They are listed below:

1. Vishnu appearing in the dream of Dēvaki.
2. Birth of Krishna.
3. Vasudēva exchanging the babies.
4. Kamsa snatching the child from Devaki.
5. Kamsa trying to kill the child.
6. Pūtana vadha.
7. Sakataāsura vadha.
8. Navanītakrishna.
10. Yaśoda churning butter.
11. Navanītachōra.
12. Yaśoda threatening Krishna.
13. Krishna showing Universe in his mouth.
15. Balarāma killing a demon.
17. Pralambāsura vadha.
18. Gōpikāmānalāla.
22. Gōpikas serving food to Krishna.
23. Madanagōpāla.
24. Rāsalīla.
25. Dhēnukāsura vadha.
27. Krishna going to Mathura.
The story starts with Dévaki and Vasudēva’s imprisonment and ends with the coronation of Ugrasēna in Mathura. The size of the panels differ from 1' x 1' to 2' x 1' in size. The first part of the life of Krishna i.e., his birth in the jail of Kamsa and Vasudēva taking him to Brindāvan and other incidents are narrated only in this temple in the entire region. Incidentally the earliest sculptured representation of Krishna in a panel now in Mathura Museum dated 2nd century BC also shows vāsudeva carrying the new born Krishna crossing the river Yamuna to reach Brindavan. The Hoysalēśvara temple, Halebid contains panels narrating the birth of Krishna and his journey to Gōkula. Many of the episodes found here are also narrated at Tādipatri. The following are selected for description here.

DESCRIPTION:

BIRTH OF KRISHNA:

The birth of Krishna in the jail of Kamsa in Mathura, the birth of Yōgamāya in Gōkula and Vasudēva exchanging the babies are the first few episodes in Krishna’s life. While Vishnu takes birth as Krishna in the jail of Kamsa in Mathura, Yōgamāya is born in Gōkulā. Vasudēva takes his newborn child, Krishna, to Gōkula crossing the river Yamuna. The river gives way to him, Ādisēsha keeps his hood as umbrella for
Krishna and by the grace of god, Vasudēva exchanges the babies without the notice of anyone. Kamsa comes to know about the birth of the eighth child to Dēvaki. He hurriedly comes to jail, snatches the child and tries to kill ignoring Dēvaki's requests. The child, when thrown down on a rock, escapes, flies high and warns Kamsa that his days are near and that one who will destroy him is born somewhere else. These incidents are narrated in the first few panels.

1. VISHNU AND DĒVAKI:

The first panel here shows Dēvaki sleeping on a cot, keeping her left hand under her head for support. She is dressed in a saree. The cot with its heavy legs is strong. Vishnu is standing on the ground near her feet. He holds *chakra*, *sankha* and *gada*. His lower right hand is in *abhaya*. The panel may indicate Vishnu taking birth as the son of Dēvaki. (Plate – 54A)

2. BIRTH OF KRISHNA:

The second panel is in two parts. In the first part, Vasudēva and Dēvaki stand in *anjali* pose facing the four-armed Vishnu. The royal couple comes to know that their newborn child is Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu. The garments and the jewellery of the couple indicate that they belong to royal family. Though they are in jail as prisoners of Kamsa such attire is needed for easy identification by the common people. In the second part, Vasudēva carries the newborn child to Brindavan as Ādisēsha, the serpent, protects and follows them with its hood as umbrella. The child does not appear as a newborn as Vasudēva carries him as one carries a grownup child. (Plate – 54B)
3. EXCHANGE OF THE BABIES:

It is also depicted in two parts. In the first part Vasudēva keeps Krishna in the lap of Yaśoda and carries her child, Yōgamāya. Here, too, the infants do not appear as newborn. In the second part Vasudēva hands over Yōgamāya, to Dēvaki. (Plate – 55A)

4. KAMSA SNATCHING THE CHILD FROM DĒVAKI:

Kamsa holding a sword in his right hand is about to snatch the child from Yaśoda. The lady, sitting cross-legged on a pedestal is trying to stop him from killing the child. As per Bhāgavatam, Yaśoda requests her brother, Kamsa, not to kill the child, as it is a female child. A divine voice tells Kamsa that he will be killed by the eighth son of Dēvaki. But Kamsa does not want to take any chances and tries to kill even the female child.

5. KAMSA TRYING TO KILL THE CHILD:

In the next stage Kamsa holds the feet of the child and raises her to crush her to death on a rock shown at his feet. But the child flies high and escapes. The garments and jewellery of Kamsa and Vasudēva look similar. Continuity is maintained in the attire of Dēvaki in all the panels.

6. PŪTANA VADHA:

This is one of the best panels found here. It is in two stages. In the first stage, Pūtana is falling dead under a tree. Her protruding grass like hair, big eyes and huge size reveal that she comes back to her original form at the time of her death. Yaśoda is pulling out Krishna who sucked out her life. Krishna appears too big and grownup to be fed by Pūtana. In the second stage Yaśoda carrying her child looks much relieved to notice that the demoness does not harm the child. Krishna is shown here as an infant.
Devaki’s saree with its central folds is attractive. Her necklace, bangles and hair-do are also beautifully carved. By repeating the figures of Devaki and Krishna twice the sculpture achieved continuous action and movement. The tree with its floral design is beautiful and looks much better than the trees shown elsewhere. (Plate – 55B)

7. SAKAṬĀSURA VADHA:

In this panel, Krishna lies in the cradle in Vaṭapatrasāyi pose. A toy hangs from the pole above. Below the cradle a four-wheeled cart is shown out of which Sakatāsura falls out head down.

8. VATSĀSURA VADHA:

Krishna stands with right hand holding the head of the calf and kills it. The calf is shown four times one above the other to suggest that it tries to break free. Behind it, the head of the demon emerges upside down.

9. BALĀRĀMA KILLING A DEMON:

This is a rare incident among Krishnalīla panels. Balarama is shown killing a bull, which is a demon in disguise. He holds the hind legs of the enemy with the right hand and keeps his Halāyudha, the plough, on right shoulder.

10. PRALAMBĀSURA VADHA:

It is again a rarely found episode in sculpture. When Krishna and Balarama are playing with other boys a demon by name Pralambāsura joins them in the disguise of a boy and tries to abduct Balarama by flying high. But the later finds out the evil plan and drags the demon by catching his feet and kills him. Here four boys, two on each side, play carrying one another on their neck. In the next part the asura is shown turned turtle
and lying dead on the ground. But the Tadipatri panel of the same theme appears more effective.

11. WORSHIP OF MOUNT GÖVARDHANA:

It is not found narrated in sculpture anywhere else in Rayalaseema. In the *Andhramahābhāgavatam* it precedes the lifting of the mount, Gōvardhana by Krishna. As per the story Krishna stops the annual worship of Indra in Brindāvan and asks his people to worship mount Gōvardhana instead. When his worship is stopped Indra becomes furious and lashes the area with heavy rain for several days. Krishna holds aloft the mount to protect his people from the heavy storm. Here a mountain is shown at one end facing which two women are walking carrying baskets full of offerings to the mount. Krishna and Balarāma, standing at the other end, are watching it. In the next panel Krishna lifts Mount Gōvardhana, shown here as a heap of rectangular blocks, in raised right hand while a few cows and two men take shelter on each side.

12. GÖPIKAS SERVING FOOD TO KRISHNA:

The women of Brindavan bring food and serve it to Krishna and Balarāma without their husband’s knowledge. This also does not find place anywhere else in Rayalaseema. Here two women are walking towards Krishna with vessels in their hands.

13. RĀSALĪLA:

Krishna dancing in multiple forms with many gōpikas at the sametime in Brindavan is known as Rāsalīla. Here Krishna is repeated thrice. He dances with one gōpika in each form.
14. **DHÉNUKĀSURĀ VADHA**:

Krishna once kills Dhēnukāsura or a demon in the form of a donkey sent by Kamsa. The panel shows Krishna kicking Dhēnukāsura with his left leg and holds its jaws tightly with his left hand. His raised right hand is ready to deliver a blow. The asura shown as a donkey tries to charge at Krishna. It stands on its hind legs. It appears more like a horse. Behind it the demon comes out in his original form holding a sword in right hand. Balarāma holds his hala in right hand and points out the fight with his left hand. He and Krishna are similarly dressed.

15. **KUBJA VIMŪCHANA**:

Krishna receives perfumes from a dwarfnwoman named Trivakra in Mathura. She has a hunchback. Krishna sets her body straight by pulling up her chin. Krishna and Balarāma are shown here as receiving perfumes from the woman.

16. **KUVALAYĀPĪDA VADHA**:

This is the best panel of this theme in the entire region. The action is more vigorous and the details are more in this panel. It shows Krishna overpowering Kuvalayāpīda, the elephant, which is sent to kill him. Krishna is kicking down the elephant with his right leg. At the same time he pulls its tusks with his left hand and gives a blow on its head with the right.

His power must have shocked the elephant. So it is trying to retreat. Its folded hind legs, the backward movement of the front legs, the folded tail and trunk suggest that it has fallen on the ground by the impact of Krishna’s kick and is desperately trying to get up and escape. The two riders with their ankusa and gada are goading the animal to charge at the opponent but in vain.
Killing an elephant seems to be a child’s play to Krishna as he is quite at ease and confidant. Balarāma, standing behind him with his right hand in tarjani pose, appears to warn the riders.

The hair-do of Krishna and Balarāma is peculiar. They sport long matted hair instead of a tuft as found in Krishnalīla panels elsewhere in this region. A part of the hair appears as a knot at the top of the left ear. A fillet like ornament keeps the hair intact. (Plate - 56A)

17. WRESTLING WITH CHĀNŪRA AND MUSTIKA:

It is also the best representation of the episode in the entire region. The panel shows Krishna and Balarāma wrestling with chānūra and Mustika respectively. One more court wrestler of Kamsa in vīsmaya pose watches the fight in utter disbelief.

Krishna and Balarāma look much alike. It is difficult to differentiate between them. The central figure may be Krishna as the ease with which he handles his opponent indicates. The other figure may be Balarāma as he looks taller than the central figure.

Krishna, pushing down the opponent, is trying to break his neck. Chānūra is desperately trying to break free. At the end of the panel another pair i.e., Balarāma and Mustika are engaged in wrestling. Balarāma, holding Mustika in a firm grip, is jumping high with his raised left fist to give a deadly blow to his opponent. All the three court wrestlers of Kamsa sport clean shaven heads. The dress and the jewellery of Krishna and his brother are pleasing. (Plate - 56B)

18. KAMSA VADHA:

The next panel here depicts Krishna killing Kamsa. It is in two parts. In the first part, a two storeyed mandapa is shown. In the first storey a woman is seated on the
throne with her left hand in *tarjani* pose. In the second storey a throne is shown. A royal figure is jumping down. His right hand points at the empty throne in the second storey and his left hand points at the next scene. He may be Kamsa suggesting that he is dragged down from his throne by Krishna. The woman may be his queen warning Krishna (shown in the next scene) not to kill his maternal uncle, Kamsa.

In the next part Kamsa is held down on the ground by Krishna. The latter holds his (Kamsa) hair with left hand and is about to cut his head with a sword. He presses Kamsa with his right leg. Balarāma, standing behind, is appreciating the action of his brother. (Plate – 57A)

19. A ROYAL PERSON AND A WOMEN TALKING:

They may be Vasudēva and Dēvaki in jail talking about their son’s arrival to Mathura or it may be Vasudēva and Dēvaki, after their release from the jail, talking about their son’s heroic deeds. The next panel shows four men around a royal person with a crown. It may be coronation of Ugrasēna.

REMARKS: The Penukonda craftsmen made a sincere attempt to excel their counterparts at Tādipatri. They narrated certain incidents, which missed the attention of the sculptors at Tādipatri. Episodes such as Balarāma killing a demon in the guise of a bull, worship of mount Gōvardhana, *gōpikas* serving food to Krishna and his brother, *Rāsalīla* and the coronation of Ugrasēna are narrated here. These episodes are absent at Tādipatri.

The craftsmen here may be more religious minded. They try to restrict their narration only to important incidents in Krishna’s life. They are not bothered to depict
scenes showing Krishna taking liberties with the gopikas, thus avoiding any trace of vulgarity.

When narrating popular episodes of Krishnalīla they followed totally a different style. In most of the panels describing Krishna's encounter with the asuras, the asuras always fall dead upside down in their original form. Similar style is noticed in the Krishnalīla panels exhibited in the T.T.D. museum, Tirupati and to some extent in the panels of Gōvindarāja temple, Tirupati.

They narrated a few rare episodes, which are also narrated at Tādipatri. Krishna eating butter while Yaśoda churning, Krishna showing universe in his mouth, Pralambāsura vadha, Kēsi vadha and Krishna's visit to Mathura along with Akrūra are carved in a different style.

The panels are not separated by pilasters as at Tādipatri. They are close to each other and are in bold relief. The mode of carving is same in all the panels. A set pattern is followed in the depiction. All the figures are a bit plumpy. The ornamentation is just adequate. The garments appear attractive. The swords look heavier than those at Tādiaptri.

Krishna and Balarāma are shown with long matted hair running down their back. The traditional tuft of Krishna is absent here. Different types of foot ornaments are shown here. On the whole these panels present another attractive and detailed narration of Krishnalīla. But they cannot excel the Tādipatri panels, which are more expressive in nature.

SIDDHAVAṬAM:

On the pillars of one of the mandapas inside the fort of Siddhavatam four beautiful panels depict Krishnalīla. They measure 15" x 15" in size.
1. NAVANĪTA CHÔRA:

The panel shows Krishna stealing butter. It resembles the Onṭimiṭṭa panel but for one difference. Here Krishna keeps his right hand in the mouth while covering the pot of butter with his left. His posture, hair-do and ornaments look similar in both the panels. A tree is shown behind him.

2. VENUGOPĀLA:

This panel, one of the highly attractive of such panels, instantly reminds us the Attirāla panel. Here too, Krishna is four armed holding chakra and sankha in upper hands and the flute in lower hands. He sports a conical cap here where as in Attirāla panel a smaller mukuta is shown. He keeps his bent right leg in front of his left leg in this panel. In the other example it is kept behind the left. He wears a vanamāla. A cow licks his right heal though no tree as in the other panel is shown. The floral design of the pillar provides a lovely background. (Plate – 57B)

3. MADANAGOPĀLA:

This is a rarely depicted scene. Here Krishna stands sandwiched in the midst of two women. He pulls the one to his right with his right hand while the one to his left turns him to her side. The right side women is turning away her head with shyness but the one on the left leans on him turning to his side. Krishna seems to be more interested in the woman to his right side. The sculptor exhibits two different types of women here. All the three wear vanamāla but that of Krishna is very long. The dress, ornaments and hair-do of the women are also different from each other. A garland seen near their ankles hold the three of them together. (Plate – 58A)
4. **KUBJA VIMŌCHANA**

Krishna holds the upraised right hand of kubja, who is holding a basket of perfumes, with his right hand and her chin with his left and presses her left thigh with his left leg to straighten up her figure. The sculptor adds one more right hand to her, which is kept down to suggest that the lady is now cured of her hunchback. (Plate - 58B)

**T.T.D. MUSEUM, TIRUPATI**

Inside the museum there is a big stone slab on which narrative panels in four registers are seen. The first, third and fourth registers deal with Krishnālīla while the one in the second depicts Rāma's coronation. The first panel measures 1' x 9" in size while the others measures 1' x 10". The figures are 6" in height. The slab belongs to sixteenth century and is in pure Vijayanagara style. The story starts in the bottom or fourth register in left to right direction, continues in first or top and ends in the third register in the same direction. The figures are not in thematic order.

The story starts with Sakaṭāsura vadha and ends with the coronation of Ugrasēna. The episodes narrated are as follows:

1. Sakaṭāsura vadha
2. Yamalārjuna Episode
3. Bakāsura vadha
4. Dhēnukāsura vadha
5. Gōvardhana Giridhāri
6. Gōpika Vastrāpaharana
7. Kāliyamardana
8. Krishna and Yaśōda
9. Yaśoda beating Krishna
10. Vēnugōpāla
11. Krishna & Balarāma going to Mathura
12. Krishna & Balarāma arriving in Mathura
13. Krishna taking away clothes from the washer man
14. Krishna receiving perfumes from Kubja
15. Krishna breaking the bow in Yāgasāla
16. Kuvalayāpīḍa vadha
17. Chānūra vadha
18. Kamsa vadha
19. Coronation of Ugrasēna

Certain panels here need special mention. In the Yamalārjuna episode Krishna is shown standing with out-stretched limbs holding the branches of two trees. He is neither crawling nor tied to a mortar.

In the Bakāsura vadha panel the crane is shown with raised wings struggling to free itself. In the ninth panel Krishna appears very much afraid of his mother who threatens him with a cane. He is squatting on the ground with both hands on his cheeks to avoid the lashes of the cane.

The Vēnugōpāla panel is very effective here. It displays the power of his enchanting music. Krishna stands in the centre playing on his flute while the women on both sides rush to him unmindful of their sarees slipping down. They enjoy the ecstasy of the music forgetting the world. Two men, perhaps, their husband's are watching in anger standing far off at both ends of the panel.
Krishna's visit to Mathura is given more importance here. It is described in nine panels. In the first, Akrūra arrives in a chariot and invites Krishna and his brother to Mathura. In the second the three persons are going on the chariot. In the third they are shown standing near the chariot suggesting their arrival in Mathura.

Krishna forcefully taking the royal clothes from the washerman is an episode, which is not found anywhere else in the region. Here Krishna is pulling out a few clothes from the bundle on the back of the washer man who helplessly obliges. Balarāma stands with his hala to his left. This incident is described in the Āndhramahābhāgavatam.55

The next scene is depicted in a different style. Kubja, the female perfume maker, is seen grinding the perfumes. Krishna takes some perfume from her and applies it to his hands. The next panel is again the only one of its kind in the entire region. It is doubtful to say it exists anywhere else even outside the region. When in Mathura Krishna does many things that irritated king Kamsa. In a sacrificial hall a divine bow is kept and worshipped everyday. Krishna enters the palace and breaks the bow while attempting to aim it. It causes uproar in the city and Kamsa sends his people to kill him.56 Here Krishna keeps the bow in out-stretched left hand and draws its string with all force. He stands in ālīṭha pose. But the bow is not shown as broken.

In the Kamsa vadha panel Kamsa is shown twice, first as sitting on a throne cross-legged while Krishna kicks him and then as falling dead on the ground. The last panel describing Ugrasēna’s coronation is also found in Penukonda. Here Krishna offers a garland to Ugrasēna sitting on a throne.
Krishna's encounters with various *asuras* have something in common. In all such panels he kills the opponent by kicking them with his out-stretched right leg. Such style is also found in the Penukonḍa panels.

He is shown as using all his force in his fight. At other places such as Tādipatri and Onţimitţa Krishna is shown killing the demons very easily.

Though the figures are not in order, they are neatly carved, comfortably placed with sufficient gaps between them and have minimum details to identify every episode. Emotions are naturally portrayed. There is no over crowding of figures.

**THE CHENNAKESAVA TEMPLE, CHUKKALŪRÚ :**

On the north and south exterior walls of the *mukhamandapa* the following Krishnalīla panels are depicted.

1. Yamalārjuna Episode
2. Krishna in Cradle
3. Krishna pulling the Chunni of a Gōpika
4. *Vastrāpaharana*
5. Rukmini worshipping Gouri before her marriage

All the panels are of 10" x 15" in size. They are divided by pilasters having floral design. The panels are in low relief. The panels describing abduction of Rukmini are imitations of Tādipatri panels of the same theme. A few panels are described here.

1. **YAMALĀRJUNA EPISODE :**

This incident is not completely narrated as the trees are missing here. Krishna crawling on all fours is dragging a mortar to which he is tied with a rope. The mortar is
placed vertically. In most of the other such panels it is shown horizontally. Krishna appears as a well-fed, plumpy infant. His long and curly hair, though tied in a tuft at the top of his head, falls on both sides covering his ears. His round face, chubby cheeks and big eyes are attractive. He wears many armlets, wristlets, keyuras and chains. There is a thick rope like jewel around his waist. His crawling posture is also pleasing. It is one of the beautifully carved panels in this temple. (Plate – 59A)

2. VASTRĀPAHARANA:

Though in low relief this panel exhibits the skill of the sculptor in successful display of feminine nudity. Krishna stands at the top of a tree holding the clothes of the gopikas. Seven women below are requesting him in different poses to return their clothes. Three of them are on a higher platform while the rest are shown on a lower one. Out of the first three women, one turns to him with folded hands, while the others two are trying to cover their nudity. Out of the next four, the first stands erect with upraised hands, the second crouching on the ground requests him with her right hand to return the clothes, the third stands with her palms held together and the last one raises her hands high above her head and prays him.

3. RUKMINI WORSHIPPING GOURI:

It is divided into two parts by a pilaster. At the extreme left a temple is shown inside which Gouri, four armed, is seated on a pedestal. To her left Rukmini dressed in pūrnórūka is standing in anjali facing the goddess. She wears a fillet, kāṭibandha, bangles and chains. In the second part Rukmini stands in the same pose but looks towards her left as the maid behind her signals some thing with her right hand. Obviously she is drawing the attention of Rukmini to Krishna who comes to take her
away. (Plate - 59B) In the next panel Krishna is carrying away Rukmini in a chariot. It resembles the Tādipatri panel. (Plate - 60A)

FORT MUSEUM, CHANDRAGIRI:

In one of the panels exhibited in the fort museum, Chandragiri Rāsalīla of Krishna is beautifully depicted. The lengthy panel shows Krishna six times. Each Krishna dances with a gōpika. All the figures wear garlands and are neatly dressed and bejeweled for the occasion. The background shows creepers and flowers. The seen indicates Krishna taking many forms to dance with a gōpika in each form during the moonlit nights in Brindavan on the banks of Yamuna. The panel reveals the ecstasy and rhapsody in the Rāsalīla. (Plate - 60B)

BHĀGAVATA – FOOT NOTES

4. Ibid., pp.216-218.
5. Ibid., p.218.


37. Ibid., Verse 386, pp. 786-787.
38. Ibid., pp. 822-825.
39. Ibid., pp. 838-844.
40. Ibid., pp. 873-875.
41. Ibid., pp. 882-883.
42. Ibid., pp. 926-941.
45. Ibid., Verse 339.
46. Ibid., Verse 343.
47. Ibid., p. 791.
48. Ibid., p. 792.
49. Ibid., p. 871.
50. Ibid., pp. 870-872.
54. Ibid., Verse 154, pp. 766-767.
55. Ibid., p. 881.
56. Ibid., p. 883.