CHAPTER - V

EPIC THEMES
RĀMĀYANA PANELS IN RĀYALASEEMAA

Rāmāyana has profound influence on the culture and narrative art of this region. This epic is narrated in sculpture in great detail. Almost every Vaishnava temple and many Siva temples also contain at least a few panels describing some of the important episodes of Rāmāyana.

Vāli and Sugrīva fighting, Rāma killing Vāli, Hanumān receiving ring from Rāma, Hanumān in Asōkavana, Hanumān prostrating before Rāma after his return from Lanka, Rāma and Lakshmana standing with their bows etc., are some of the most popular sculptures found in every temple. It is also narrated in detail at a few places. The Venkataramana Temple, Tādipatri, The Rāma temple, Penukonda, Temples at Pushpagiri, Onṭimiṭṭa, Tirupati and its surrounding places and in a ruined gōpura at Timmapuram near Tirupati, contain detailed narration of this epic. Not less than 500 panels are seen in this region. As the detailed description of all the panels is impossible and beyond the limitations of this study, incidents depicted at every place are first listed out before description of important and rare episodes is taken up.

Though I have specially photographed and collected nearly 200 Rāmāyana panels from the four districts of Rāyalaseema, forty photographs are selected for inclusion as plates picking a few from every district. The following table shows a list of important Rāmāyana panels in this region.
TABLE SHOWING RĀMĀYANA PANELS
IN THE TEMPLES OF RAYALASEEMA

Table No.5

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Besides the above places the mandapas and temples in and around Tirupati, temples at Nāgalāpuram, Nārāyanavanam, Sōmapālem, Dharmavaram, Lēpākshi and other places contain about 100 panels.

I. THE PARASURĀMĒŚVARA TEMPLE, ATTIRĀLA:

Some of the earliest panels narrating Rāmāyana episodes in this region are found among the sculptures on the west side of the tower of the Parasurāmēśvara temple, Attirāla.
1. **HANUMĀN RECEIVING RING FROM RĀMA**:

Rāma and Lakshmana are seated cross-legged on a pedestal. They wear beautiful crowns and many chains. They look at Hanumān bowing before them. The panel indicates that Hanumān is ready to start his search for Sīta after receiving the ring from Rāma.

2. **HANUMĀN'S ENCOUNTER WITH SIMHIKA**:

When Hanumān was crossing the ocean a monster known as Simhika wanted to devour him. She could capture any one by pulling his shadow. When it pulled Hanumān’s shadow the latter could not move anymore. He looked around and noticed Simhika. As he heard about the monster’s power, he wanted to avoid a fight with it as it would delay his work. So he increased his size many times to confuse Simhika. But the monster also increased the size of its mouth. Hanumān, realizing that it would not leave him unless he killed it, suddenly reduced his size and entered its mouth. He destroyed its vital parts and came out of its mouth thus killing it.¹

This incident is very effectively narrated in this temple. Simhika, shown as a nude woman, giant in size, with open mouth, is falling dead on the ground. Her entrails are coming out of her mouth. Hanumān, in a minute size, comes out of her mouth holding her intestines. Simhika’s bulging eyes, big eyebrows, potbelly and heavy limbs give her a terrible appearance. Her bent legs and arms held on the ground suggest that she is dying fast.
3. HANUMĀN IN ASŌKA VANA:

Sīta, seemingly relieved of her sorrow because of her meeting with Hanumān, is seated with her left leg folded. Hanumān is standing to her left with the ring in his right hand. Two female guards are seated to the right of Sīta.

REMARKS: These panels are some of the oldest Rāmāyana panels of this region. They are carved almost in the round. Excellent workmanship is noticed in the carving. The pose and the size of the figures are natural. The ornaments are intricately carved. Minute details are taken care of. Even the hair of Sīta is shown as clearly as in a photograph. In the second panel the size and pose of Śimhika and Hanumān perfectly tally with the description found in literary works such as Vālmīki Rāmāyana and Ranganādha Rāmāyana.

II. THE CHENNAKESAVA TEMPLE, PĀLAGIRI:

One of the pillars of the mukhamandapa of this temple contains three panels on three different sides. The ring of Rāma from Kishkinda reaching Sīta in Asōkavana is the theme depicted here. In the first panel Rāma seated cross-legged on a pedestal gives his ring to Hanumān. He wears a tapering crown, kundālas, kēyuras and other ornaments. His uttarīya is on his left shoulder. The ring is seen above his right palm. In the second Hanumān, bending forward, receives it, which seems to be falling in his hands. His long hair is tied into a knot with what looks like a flower fixed in it. The ends of his dress fly in the air. He wears two chains, a sacred thread and many ornaments. In the third he is shown thrice, first as a small monkey climbing a tree, then as ready to jump down and finally as standing before Sīta with his hands assuring safety and informing the welfare of Rāma. The ring is again shown as falling into the right hand
of Sīta who is seated on a pedestal under the Simsupa tree. (Plate - 61A) Though carved in low relief the panels show all the details and maintain continuity and action.

III. THE CHENNAKĒŚAVA TEMPLE COMPLEX, PUSHPAGIRI:

The following are the episodes represented in sculpture. They are:

1. SRAVANAKUMĀRA EPISODE:

The narrow gala at the top edge of adhīśtāna in the Umanahēswara temple contains the Sravanakumāra episode. It explains the reason for the separation of Dasaradha and his son Rāma. Dasaradha during one of his hunting trips shot an arrow in the direction of the sound he heard in the forest using 'Sabdabhēdī' technique (shooting an object by listening to the sound made by it). But the sound was not made by an animal as he thought, but by Sravanakumāra, a boy who was drawing water from the river Sarayu for his aged and blind parents. When the boy died Dasaradha regretted his mistake and informed the news to the old couple who cursed him that he would also die longing for his son and died soon unable to bear the bad news.2

The episode is depicted in three stages. To the right side of the panel Sravanakumāra is shown carrying his parents in a bangy or yoke to which baskets are hanged on either side. He wears a loincloth and rosary beads but no sacred thread is seen as he is not a brahmin.3 In the second stage he carries two pots in both hands and is buckling down in pain as the arrow hits him in his abdomen. To the left of the panel Dasaradha, with his bent left foot forward, aims an arrow positioning him behind a tree. The panel measures 7" x 16" in size. (Plate - 61B)

The panel gives all necessary details. The boy's pain is revealed by his bent head and knees. The postures of the figures are natural. The narration is as per Vālmiki
version. Hence *yagnopavita* is not shown. Dasaradha does not look at the direction of the arrow but turns his ear as he uses the *sabdabhedi* technique. Though small in size the panel reveals the sculptor’s ability. The same theme is also narrated on the south outer wall of Śrīśailam temple.

2. **YĀGA SAMRAKSHANA**:

   This is seen on the north outer wall of the Chennakesava temple. It is 15" x 18" in size. It shows Rāma and Lakshmana standing guard while Visvāmitra performs the sacrifice.

3. **MARRIAGE OF RĀMA**:

   This is also found on the same wall in the same size. It shows Janaka at the left corner holding a water vessel in both hands and offering *kanyā dāna*. The water is collected in a bowl kept on the head of a servant standing in between the king and Rāma. The latter keeps his right palm open receiving the water or *dāna* and holds the little finger of Sītā which symbolizes the acceptance of the bride as per Hindu custom. He stands with befitting attire while Sītā stands next to him in beautiful bridal make up. All the three figures have different designs of crowns and dress.

   The next three couples, each shown between a pair of pilasters, are obviously the brothers of Rāma with their brides. As per Rāmāyana, after the marriage of Rāma, Lakshmana marries Ùrmila, Bharata marries Māndavi and Satrughna marries Sritakīrti.

4. **ABDUCTION OF SĪTA**:

   It is the next scene, which also shows Jāṭāyu attacking Rāvana. Jāṭāyu, a huge, powerful bird is the friend of Dasaradha. When it notices Rāvana abducting Sītā it tries to save the lady. So it fights with Rāvana and is mortally wounded by him.
5. **VĀLI VADHA:**

It is shown in three panels on the south outer wall of the Chennakēśava temple. They are 9" x 13", 9" x 20" and 9" x 22" in size. In the first Tāra warns Vāli to be cautious. In the next Vāli and Sugrīva are fighting and in the third Vāli is killed by an arrow shown as passing through the seven tāla trees. Tāra with dishevelled hair and devoid of her crown mourns behind Vāli while Sugrīva in the front expresses his gratitude to Rāma. The seven tāla trees are out of place here.

The west outer wall of the Santānamallēśvara temple has two more panels measuring 16" x 17" and 16" x 23". The first one at the bottom shows Rāma and his brother standing with their bows. Above this, in the second panel, Rāma gives his ring to Hanumān before the latter sets out for the search of Sīta.

6. **VĪBHIŚHANA ŚARANĀGATI:**

The next panel found on the same wall measuring 17" x 21" in size describes a rare episode i.e., Rāma offering asylum to Vībhīṣhana or Vībhīśhana śaranāgati which is described from 16th to 19th sarga in *Yudhakānda*. In the centre of the panel Rāma is seated in *sukhāsana* on what looks like a stool made of bamboo sticks and keeps his right hand in *abhaya*. To his left stands Sugrīva facing Vībhīṣhana who stands in *anjali*. He stops but beckones the visitor after noticing Rāma’s intention. The upraised tail shows his surprise. Lakshmana stands at ease keeping his right hand on his waist behind his brother. (Plate - 62A)

This panel instantly reminds us the Kākatīya panel in the Hyderabad museum depicting the same theme. In the latter Sugrīva advises Rāma not to allow Vībhīṣhana while Hanumān opposes. More action and excitement are shown in it but the Pushpagiri
panel is more effective. It brings out the karuna or compassion of Rāma, the helplessness of Vibhīșhana and the surprise of Sugrīva clearly.

7. SĀGARA ŚARANĀGATI:

The other panel on the same wall depicting Rāma’s anger on the ocean spells out roudra rasa. It is not found anywhere else in Rāyalaseema. It measures 17” x 21½” in size. Rāma prays Sāgara to give way to reach the other end but fails to get any response. He becomes furious and aims his Brahmiśtra at the ocean to dry it up. Sāgara appears and gives way.⁷ Rāma is depicted in a magnificent size, standing in ālīdha pose and holding his bow in outstretched left arm. His facial features reveal his roudra or anger. Terrified by it Sāgara, accompanied by his wife and a servant holding a box of gems to please Rāma, appears instantly on a makara. He and his wife are seen with their hands held in anjali. (Plate - 62B)

Sāgara is shown with his wife because he is afraid to face Rāma alone. If his wife also prays he will be saved as Rāma, the embodiment of dharma and karuna will not cause sorrow to a woman by killing her husband. Sāgara, also known as ‘ratna garbha’ i.e., holder of gems, brings a big plate full of gems to appease Rāma. A vānara is already bringing a rock for constructing the bridge. It is described in the 21 & 22 sargas of Yudhakanda in Vālmiki Rāmāyana. But it does not refer to the presence of Sāgara’s wife and offer of gems. As per Ranganādha Rāmāyana, Sāgara appeared before Rāma along with Ganga and other rivers. These rivers prayed Rāma not to harm their husband, Sāgara and to protect their māngalya.⁸ The sculpture at Pushpagiri introduces the lady and the servant to emphasize Rāma’s anger and Sāgara’s fear. A similar scene is noticed on the walls of the Hazāra Rāma temple, Hampi.⁹ In another
panel the battle between Rāma and Rāvana is shown. Rāma, carried by Hanumān, is discharging an arrow. Facing him Rāvana is shown dead lying on the ground.

REMARKS: The panels on the outer walls are carved in bold relief and those on the gāla at the top of the base are in low relief. The minute details delineated suggest perfect visualization of the theme by the craftsmen before carving. Diversity is shown through different designs of dress and jewellery. Lot of care is taken in the carving, which is intricate and pleasing. Many panels are naturally depicted. Sravanakumāra without yagnopavita, Tāra with crown and beautiful dress before the death of Vāli and with dishevelled hair and without crown after the death of her husband, Rāma holding the little finger of Sīta at the time of marriage and the horses of Rāvana’s chariot abruptly stopping at the sudden appearance of Jaṭāyu are some examples.

Certain rare themes like Vibhīshana saranāgati, Sāgara saranāgati and Sravanakumāra episode are depicted here. But a few defects are also seen. The arrows of Rāma, Lakshmana and Dasaradha appear too big and look like shafts. Rāma’s arrow passing through the seven-tāla trees before it hits Vāli is out of place and against the description of the theme in all versions. The sculptor, perhaps, wanted to combine Sapta tāla bhanjana and Vāli vadha episodes in one panel.

IV. THE RUINED TEMPLE, VALLŪR:

The pillars in the mukhamandapa of the ruined temple Vallūr have an octagonal band on which a few miniature panels are depicted. Two of them describe Rāmāyana but they are partly mutilated. In the first scene Rāma is giving his ring to Hanumān. He is seated on a pedestal and gives the ring to Hanumān squatting on the ground facing him. Hanumān looks more like a cat. Lakshmana stands with an arrow, which looks like a
shaft in his right hand and bow in the left. In the second panel Hanumān meets Sīta in
Asōkavana. He is first shown as a monkey on a tree top and again as standing in human
form with his right hand raised. Sīta is seated cross-legged.

V. THE NAVANARASIMHA TEMPLES, AHOBILAM:

The sixteen-pillared mandapa on the way to upper Ahobilam has a few bas-reliefs purely in Vijayanagar style. Some of them narrate a few scenes of Sundara Kānda.

They are:

1. Hanumān getting ready to cross the ocean
2. Hanumān searching for Sīta in Lanka
3. Hanumān and Rāma

The udyogamanḍapa in the same place has a few more panels describing Kishkinda and Sundarakāndas. They instantly remind the visitor the Tādipatri panels.

They are as follows:

1. Rāma killing Vāli
2. Hanumān and Sugrīva facing Rāma after Vāli vadha
3. Hanumān in Asōkavana handing over the ring to Sīta
4. Hanumān fighting the asuras
5. Return of Hanumān from Lanka

The inner walls of the Rājagōpuram, a tower on the way to the Ugranarasimha temple, have long bas-relief panels around one and half feet width. These panels are not divided into compartments. One scene follows closely another just like the panels on the inner walls of second tower of the Govinda Rāja temple in Tirupati. Kishkinda, Sundara and Yuddha Kānda are described briefly. The story coincides with Ranganādha Rāmāyana. The narration here starts with Rāma meeting the vānaras in Kishkinda.
SAPTA TĀLA BHANJANA:

To prove his valour to Sugrīva Rāma shoots an arrow through seven sāla trees. But in Ranganādha Rāmāyana Rāma is said to have pierced seven tāla trees. It is known as Sapta tāla bhanjana. According to Ranganādha Rāmāyana the seven-tāla trees are so big that even gods cannot shake at least one of them. But Vāli used to shake them so hard that all the leaves would fall. Once Marutu, a sage, informed Sugrīva that Vāli would be killed by one who would cut all the seven-tāla trees with one arrow. When Rāma performed the feat the trees took the shape of a divine nymph named Karunāvati who told that she took the form of the trees by the curse of sage Dūrvāsa.10 The trees are usually shown as growing on the back of a serpent. According to another tradition a serpent, troubled by Vāli, cursed the latter that one who could cut all the trees with an arrow would kill him.

The lengthy panel here shows Rāma standing with outstretched legs releasing an arrow. The seven tāla trees are shown as growing on the back of a huge serpent. A sharp cut is shown in the middle of each tree and at the neck of the serpent to indicate that Rāma’s arrow went through them. Behind Rāma Lakshmana, Sugrīva and Hanumān are shown hailing the feat. (Plate – 63A) Rāma killing Vāli, Hanumān crossing the ocean, his encounter with Rāvana where he is shown as sitting on his coiled tail, Rāma and his army getting ready to besiege Lanka are the other scenes found here.

The exterior walls of the mukhamandapa in the Ugranarasimha temple have three registers of bas-reliefs. The top register has fewer panels than the centre and bottom registers. The figures are also shorter than those in the other two. The walls are coated many times with lime. Only the outlines are visible. Hence photography is not possible. Some of the panels that can be identified in spite of their thick lime coating are:
1. Rāma standing with a bow.

2. Hanumān standing in front of Rāma with hands clasped in *anjali*.

3. Vāli *vadha*.

Similar panels, mostly depicting *Kishkinda* and *Sundara Kāṇḍa* are found on the pillars of many *mandapas* in Ahobilam. *Sundara Kāṇḍa* received top priority while narrating Rāmāyaṇa in sculpture.

VI. THE MALLIKĀRJUNA TEMPLE, ŚRĪŚAILAM:

**SRAVANA KUMĀRA EPISODE:** It is delineated in three stages on the exterior of south *prākāra* of the Śrīśailam temple. But they are not in thematic order. The first stage to the left shows Dasaradhā shooting an arrow at Sravana Kumāra. At the other end Dasaradhā is handing over a water vessel to the parents of the boy. They are shown as sitting in the baskets attached to a bangy, which is suspended from a tree. The third stage shown at the centre shows the old parents lamenting at the death of their son. The dead body is kept in the lap of the old man. The raised right hands of the couple indicate that they are cursing Dasaradhā who stands before them with hands held in *anjali*. (Plate – 63B)

VII. GŌVINDARĀJA TEMPLE, TIRUPATI:

The inner walls of the second *gōpura* in this temple contain many sculptural panels depicting krishnalīla and Rāmāyaṇa. The story is not narrated in full. Certain episodes from *Aranyakāṇḍa*, *Kishkinda* and *Sundarakāṇḍa* find place in these panels. They are listed below:

1. Sītā requesting Rāma to fetch the golden deer.

2. Rāma setting out to catch the deer.
3. Rāma chasing and killing the deer.

4. Sapta tāla bhanjana

5. Hanumān facing Indrajit in Asokavana

6. Indrajit capturing Hanumān

7. Indrajit taking Hanumān to Rāvana

8. Hanumān and Indrajit in the court of Rāvana

9. Hanumān sitting on his coiled tail facing Rāvana


11. Rāma’s coronation.

The panels are not in order. They are mixed up with the Bhāgavata themes. Most of them are in low relief. A few are carved in very low relief. The panels are not separated by any design or outline. Yet the action and the continuous movement depicted demand appreciation. In the golden deer episode such movement can be seen. In the Sapta tāla bhanjana scene, not only the seven tāla trees but even Rāma, Lakshmana and Sugrīva are standing on the back of a lengthy serpent. In the coronation scene, Rāma and Sīta are seated on a throne while Hanumān is sitting at their feet. Lakshmana and his brothers stand facing them with bows. In the next scene Rāma is shown as four armed Vishnu with his consort sitting in his lap. Lakshmana and the vānaras stand in anjali. Many more panels describing Rāmāyana are seen on the pillars in this temple. Rāma breaking the bow of Siva, vānaras meeting Rāma, Rāma’s coronation, Dasaradha flanked by Rāma and Lakshmana, Rāma killing Vāli and other scenes are repeatedly carved on the pillars all over the temple complex.
VIII. KÖDANDARĀMA TEMPLE, TIRUPATI:

A few episodes from Rāmāyana appear on the pillars inside the temple. But the entire story in brief is narrated in a long panel in the middle of the north, east and south walls of the mandapa outside the temple. The following are the episodes narrated here.

1. Rishyasringa and Dasaradha discussing the preparations for the putrakāmēshi sacrifice.
2. Yāgapurusha coming out of the altar with a bowl of pāyasa.
3. Rishyasringa giving the pāyasa to Dasaradha.
4. Dasaradha giving the bowl to Kousalya.
5. Sumitra and Kaikēyi receiving pāyasa.
7. Visvāmitra asking Dasaradha to send Rāma to protect his sacrifice.
8. Rāma, Lakshmana and Visvamitra going to the forest.
9. Redeeming Ahalya from her curse.
10. Marriage of Rāma and Sīta, Lakshmana and Urmila and others.
12. Abduction of Sīta.
13. Rāma and Lakshmana searching for Sīta.
14. Rāma felling seven tāla trees.
15. Vāli and Sugrīva fighting.
17. Rāma giving ring to Hanumān.
18. Hanumān meeting Sīta in Asokavana.
19. Hanumān destroying Asokavana
20. Death of Akshayakumāra.
22. Indrajit taking Hanumān to the court of Rāvana.
23. Hanumān talking to Rāvana.
24. Hanumān meeting Rāma in Kishkinda.
26. Building the bridge.
27. Rāma fighting Rāvana.
28. Rāma’s coronation.

DESCRIPTION:

The panels are not in order. The mandapa must have been renovated some time ago. Then the masons, out of ignorance might have misplaced all the panels. The scenes are not separated by any design or border. But sufficient space is given between the panels. Minimum details are given to identify the panel. The relief is bold in some of the panels but generally it is shallow.

BĀLAKĀNDĀ: In the above panels, Bālakāndā is given more importance as it is narrated in eleven panels. The putrakāmēśhti sacrifice and the birth of Rāma and his brothers are shown in six panels. Here Rishyasringa gives the bowl of pāyasa to Dasaradha where as at all other places the yāgapurusha gives it to Dasaradha. Even the distribution of pāyasa among the three queens is shown in a different way. Dasaradha gives it to Kousalya and at the other places, Dasaradha distributes the pāyasa to all his queens. Tātaki vadha, yāgasamrakshana and Siva dhanurbhanga are not shown here. In the marriage scene all the four brothers are shown with their brides. Ayōdhyakāndā is totally ignored here.
ARANYAKÂNDÂ: The most important event of Aranyakânda is abduction of Sîta. So the sculptor depicted this episode along with the death of Jâta. Râma and Lakshmana meeting each other in the forest after abduction of Sîta is the only other scene narrated from this chapter. Surprisingly the popular golden deer episode is ignored.

KISHKINDAKÂNDÂ: Râma killing Vâli and Hanumân going in search of Sîta are narrated from this chapter, as these two are the most important episodes.

SUNDARAKÂNDÂ: It received better attention as it is described in six panels. The depiction is according to the Ranganâdha Râmâyana.

YUDDHAKÂNDÂ: Vibhishana Saranâgati, which is not usually represented in sculpture, finds place here. The panels depicting the construction of the bridge and battle scenes are lengthy and contain vigorous action, but as the panels are divided horizontally into two compartments the scenes look clumpy and over crowded. The emphasis is on narrating the story. Therefore certain amount of mechanical and schematic depiction is found here. The sculptor did not make any sincere attempt to impress the viewer with his artistic ability.

IX. THE KÔDANDÂRÂMA TEMPLE, ONTÎMIŢŢA:

The Kôdandârâma temple, Ontîmitta, is one of the largest temples in Cuddapah district. It contains some rare themes of Râmâyana carved on the pillars of the mahamandapa. They are as follows:
1. HANUMĀN BRINGING SANJĪVINI:

It is depicted in three panels on the eastern side of the third pillar in the mahamandapa. The panels measure 15"x15", 15"x15" and 15"x20" in size. The first panel at the top of the pillar shows Sugrīva and Hanumān in conversation. They discuss about Lakshmana who falls unconscious in the battle. Hanumān, standing towards right, seems to tell that there is no cause of worry and that he will bring the medicine 'mrita sanjīvini' from the Himalayas. In the second at the centre of the pillar he hands over the medicinal herbs to Rāma in whose lap Lakshmana lies unconscious. In the third Rāma embraces Hanumān for his help while the recovered Lakshmana stands in gratitude with folded hands.

KĀLANĒMI EPISODE:

This incident is not found in Vālmiki Rāmāyana. In the Ranganāḍha Rāmāyana and Bhāskara Rāmāyana in Telugu it is created to add more interest to Yuddhakānda. According to these works Hanumān was sent to the Himalayas to bring Drōṇāḍri, a mountain containing life saving herbs, to protect Lakshmana wounded in the battle. On the way he found Kālanēmi, an asura sent by Rāvana in the guise of a sage, doing penance near a hermitage. As he did not notice the hermitage when he went to bring mount Sanjīnīivi, he wondered whether he lost his way and came to enquire the sage and also to quench his thirst. Kālanēmi asked him to go to a pond nearby. When Hanumān entered it a crocodile caught his leg but he killed it. It turned into a divine nymph named Dhānyamāli and told him that she became a crocodile by a curse and revealed the evil plan of the asura. Hanumān killed Kālanēmi, went to the Himalayas and brought Mount Drōṇāḍri to save Lakshmana and others.
The north and west side of a pillar in the *mahāmandapā* has six panels depicting the theme. The size of the panels vary from 15"x15" to 15"x20" in size. The last two panels are worn out due to ravages of time and lime coating.

In the first panel Hanumān stands in *anjali* by the side of Kālanēmi who is in the guise of a sage. The latter is seated in *yōgāsana* with long hair and rosary beads. A few trees and creepers are shown to suggest that the scene takes place in a *parnasēla* (cottage). (Plate – 64A) In the next Dhānyamāli, the divine nymph is coming out of the mouth of the dead *makara*, which looks more like half elephant and half lion. In the third she fully comes out of the *makara* and explains her story to Hanumān. In the next panel Hanumān is seen pouncing on the cunning sage with raised hands and open mouth. Kālanēmi, perturbed by the unexpected failure of his plan to kill Hanumān, is planning to avoid the attack. As per the *Ranganādha Rāmāyana* he takes the form of a bird, then the form of a tiger and tries to attack Hanumān. But Hanumān foils his plans.\(^{13}\) In the fifth panel a bird is shown at the centre. Kālanēmi in human form is falling down. A tiger at the bottom is shown pouncing to indicate that the fallen asura took the form of the animal. Hanumān with his raised right hand looks at the changing forms of the *asura* in wonder. The slightly defaced pillar needs some close observation to identify the figures. (Plate – 64B) In the last panel the tiger is shown in a small size from which Kālanēmi emerges in true form with raised fists. Hanumān attacks him with his raised right fist. The *asura*, perhaps, has not yet completely transformed to his original form. So his face still resembles that of an animal. He is shown with a crown. There is not much difference in the pose of Hanumān in this panel and the previous one. He still stands with raised right fist and keeps his left hand on his left thigh. (Plate – 65A)
The sculptor had full knowledge of the *Ranganādha Rāmāyana* and gave an impressive portrayal of the theme in sculpture. The story, though not so vividly described, is also seen depicted on the pillars of the Tādipatri temple. In another panel, Hanumān is shown carrying many rocks for construction of the bridge. He keeps one rock in each hand, one on the head and another tied to his tail. It is as per the description of the theme in the *Samīrakumāra vijayam*.

X. **THE VENKATESVARA TEMPLE, TIRUMALA:**

On the lintel of *Kalyānamanaṇḍapa* of the Venkatēśvara temple, Tirumala, Rāmāyana is narrated in sculpture in two registers. Many panels in the lower register contain dancing figures and musicians playing on different instruments. There are about twenty panels but some of them, especially in the dark corners of the *manḍapa*, are not clearly visible. The following are some of the important episodes found here.

2. Rishyasringa coming to Ayōdhya.
3. *Putrakāmēshti* sacrifice.
4. Dasaradha handing over the bowl of *pāyasa* to his queens.
5. Birth of Rāma and his brothers.
6. Tātaki *vadha*.
7. *Yāgasamrakshana*
8. Marriage of Rāma and Sīta.
9. The newly wedded couple going to Ayōdhya.
11. Vāli and Sugrīva fighting.
12. Vāli *vadha*.
13. Rāma and Rāvana in battle.
15. Rāma’s coronation.

As per the Ranganādhya Rāmāyana Dasaradha was advised to send his courtesans to forest to lure Rishyasringa to Ayōdhya as Rishyasringa’s presence will bring rains and that the sage is capable of performing putrakāmēśti sacrifice. As the sage never saw a woman in his life time, he was attracted by the beauty of the courtesans and came with them to Ayōdhya.15

THE PUTRAKĀMĒŚHTI SACRIFICE:

The story starts with the courtesans of Dasaradha luring Rishyasringa to come with them. Rishyasringa is seated near a tree. Three women stand before him. One woman plays on a musical instrument resembling a vīna. One more invites him with raised hands and the third stands waving a chāmara. In the second scene two women are carrying the sage in a palanquin. There is a woman sitting with him on either side. In the third stage the sage is performing the sacrifice. The Yāgapurusha emerges out of the sacrificial fire and hands over the bowl of pāyasa to Dasaradha. The first two scenes are also narrated in the Chennakēśava temple, Chukkalūru.

TĀṬAKI VADHA:

Rāma shoots an arrow at Tāṭaki who falls back dying. She holds a mace in right hand and a shield in left hand. Nowhere else in this region she is shown as carrying weapons.
RAMA'S MARRIAGE:

It is one of the best panels here. The panel is divided into four compartments showing four couples in different poses. The first couple i.e. Rāma and Sīta is standing hand in hand close to each other. The next couple stands in similar position but they are a bit away from each other. The third and fourth couples are exchanging *talambrālu*.

The sculptor very cleverly indicates the time after the marriage of each couple. The first pair i.e. Rāma and Sīta is the first to be married and there should be some time gap between their marriage and the marriage of the other couples. More intimacy can be developed during this time between the couple. So Rāma and Sīta stand close to each other. Lakshmana and Ürmiḷa are the next to get married. They also stand hand in hand but not as closely to each other as Rāma and Sīta. The last two pairs i.e. Bharata and Satrughna and their brides are still performing various rituals of the marriage. So they are shown as still exchanging *talambrālu*.

RĀMA AND RĀVANA IN BATTLE:

The last stage in the war between Rāma and Rāvana is given importance here. The panel shows all-important warriors participating in the final stage of the war. At the extreme right Hanumān is shown ready for fight with uplifted tail and closed fists. Next to him Vibhīṣhana stands with his mace held ready on his left shoulder. Lakshmana stands nearby picking an arrow. Rāma in the centre stands on a chariot shooting an arrow at Rāvana facing him on another chariot. The horses of the two vehicles push each other with their raised front legs. Above the horses two pairs of arrows are shown in criss-cross position suggesting a prolonged battle between Rāma and Rāvana. Behind Rāvana’s chariot his heads are shown one above the other falling on the ground. Behind him at extreme left is a man with sword and shield. He may be Kumbhakarna. The
position of the horses resembles that of the horses in the panel depicting the battle between Arjuna and Karna in the Chennakesava temple, Pushpagiri.

**VICTORY CELEBRATION:**

The lower register mostly reveals group dances and musicians playing on different instruments. These may indicate the joyous scenes after Rāma's return to Ayōdhya. In some of the panels Rāma and Sīta are seated on a throne watching the dance while Lakshmana stand guard behind them.

**RĀMA’S CORONATION:**

This is again a rare scene in Rāyalaseema. The panel shows Rāma and Sīta seated on a throne, while Lakshmana holds chhatra, Bharata and Satrughana holds chāmaras. Hanumān is seated near Rāma’s feet. Behind him a sage may be Vasishṭa, is giving advice to Rāma, perhaps, about ideal administration. Behind the sage three vānaras stand one behind the other with folded hands.

**XI. THE VENKATARAMANA TEMPLE, TĀDIPATRI:**

The Chintala Venkaṭaramana temple in Anantapur district is a veritable treasure house of narrative sculptures. Rāmāyana panels deserve special praise here, as it is in this temple the most detailed narration of the great epic is found in the entire Rāyalaseema. The narration starts on the west half of south exterior wall of mukhamandapa. There are three registers of narrative panels in this temple. Rāmāyana starts at the bottom register of south exterior wall and occupies all the three registers on north side exterior walls of antarāla and north and east walls of mukhamandapa. It ends in the top register on the wall where it started.
The story starts with preparations for the *putrakāmēṣṭi yāga* and ends with *Agni pariksha* or Sita undergoing ordeal by fire. Thus it covers all the six *kāṇḍas* or chapters viz., *Bāla-kāṇḍa*, *Ayodhya*, *Aranya*, *Kishkinda*, *Sundara* and *Yudhakāṇḍa*. The entire story is divided into more than 150 panels, which are separated by the pilasters on the walls. The pilasters are also used to depict some minor scenes or to provide space to some of the figures in the adjoining panels. The episodes selected for narration are listed here chapter-wise. Important episodes are described in detail.

**BALAKANĐA :**

1. Preparations for *Putrakāmēṣṭi yāga*
2. Rushyavrunga performing the *yāga*.
3. *Yāgapurusha* coming out of the altar with *Pāyasa*.
4. Three sages blessing Dasaradha and his queens.
5. Dasaradha giving *pāyasa* to his queens.
6. The queens sharing the *pāyasa*.
7. The queens sitting with their children.
8. Sages blessing Rāma and Lakshmana.
9. Visvāmitra asking Dasaradha to send Rāma to protect his sacrifice.
10. Visvāmitra and Dasaradha conversing.
11. Visvāmitra taking Rāma and Lakshmana to forest.
12. Rāma standing with bow while Visvāmitra warning about the arrival of Tātaki.
13. Tātaki attacking while Rāma still stands hesitating.
14. Forest scene – a tree, a tiger and a tribal woman.
15. Rāma killing Tātaki.
16. Visvāmitra giving weapons to Rāma and Lakshmana.
17. Ahalya sāpavimōchana.

18. A royal person standing and pointing to his right side (perhaps he is pointing to Sivadhanus).

19. Siva dhanurbhanga.

20. Queen of Janaka with a maid holding chāmara.


22. Fixing the auspicious time for the marriage.

23. Rāma pouring talambrālu (sacred rice or pearls) over Sīta while Sīta’s mother is watching.

24. Same scene repeated.

25. Sīta’s mother bringing talambrālu.


27. Rāma handling the Vaishnava dhanus.

28. Dasaradha and his queens in conversation (perhaps about Rama’s coronation).

29. Rāma and Sīta accompanied by relatives.

AYÓDHYA KĀNDĀ:

The incidents selected for narration more or less tally with Vālmiki Rāmāyana.

They are listed below:

1. Dasaradha informing Rāma and Lakshmana about the coronation.

2. The sages fixing the auspicious time for the coronation.

3. Dasaradha asking Sumanta to make preparations.

4. Rāma and Sīta in their chambers while a few maids serve them.

5. Mandhara (shown on a pilaster) watching Rāma.

6. Mandhara instigating Kaikēyi to stop the coronation.

8. Kaikēyi lying on the ground, pressing for her demands.
9. Dasaradha’s futile attempts to convince her.
10. Dasaradha yielding to her demands.
11. Dasaradha informing Rāma about vanavāsa.
12. Rāma accepting.
13. Rāma informing the same to Lakshmana and Sīta.
14. Rāma, Lakshmana and Sīta meeting Dasaradha.
15. Rāma, Lakshmana and Sīta taking leave from their mothers.
16. They seek blessings from Kousalya.
17. Sīta requesting Rāma to permit her to come to forest.
18. Kousalya advising Sīta.
20. The brothers taking leave from the citizens.
22. The trio leaving for vanavāsa on chariot.
23. Dasaradha with his queens bidding farewell.
25. Bharata arguing with Kaikēyi.
26. Bharata meeting his brothers in forest at Chitrakūta.
27. He goes back to Ayōdhya on elephant with chouri bearer behind.
28. He is meeting the ministers in Ayōdhya.
29. He is keeping the pādukas on a pedestal.
ARANYAKĀNDA:

1. Kākāsura garvabhanga.
2. A demon, perhaps Virādha, killed by Rāma’s arrow.
3. Rāma and Sīta receiving gifts from sage Atri.
4. They take leave of the sage.
5. Rāma receiving weapons from sage Agasthya.
6. Rāma and Sīta in parnasāla (cottage in forest) in Panchavaṭi.
7. Sūrpanakha (on a pilaster) watching Rāma and appreciating his beauty.
8. Mutilation of Sūrpanakha.
9. Sūrpanakha complaining to her brothers Khara and Dhūshana.
11. Sages blessing Rāma while celestials shower flowers on him.
12. Rāma giving back his bow to Lakshmana.
13. Sūrpanakha complaining to Rāvana.
15. Rāvana coming to Panchavaṭi.
16. Rāma and Sīta watching the golden deer.
17. Rāma’s attempts to capture the deer and the death of Māricha.
18. Sīta ordering Lakshmana to go out to help Rāma.
19. Rāvana in disguise before Sīta.
20. Sīta’s abduction.
22. Sīta throwing her ornaments from the chariot, which the monkeys collect.
23. Rāvana warned by his wives about the consequences of Sīta’s abduction.
24. Rāma and Lakshmana meeting in the forest.

25. They notice the empty parnasāla.

26. They meet Jaṭāyu.

27. A tribal woman informs them about Sīta’s abduction.

The above incidents are depicted in 32 panels.

KISHKINDA KĀṇḍa:

This part of the epic is narrated on the south half of the east outer wall and partly on the south outer wall. The important incidents narrated are given below:

1. Rāma and Lakshmana in Kishkinda.

2. Sugrīva, Hanumān and other vānaras noticing them.

3. Rāma and Lakshmana meeting the vānaras.

4. Sugrīva showing Sīta’s ornaments to Rāma.

5. Rāma kicking the carcass of Dundhubhi to prove his valour.

6. Sapta tāla bhanjana.

7. Sugrīva inviting Vāli to fight.

8. Tāra warning Vāli about Sugrīva’s audacity.

9. Sugrīva receiving Gajapushpi garland from Lakshmana.

10. Vāli and Sugrīva fighting.

11. Vāli slain by Rāma’s arrow.

12. Vāli in Tāra’s lap while Lakshmana and Hanumān hailing Rama’s victory.

13. Sugrīva and Angada cremating Vāli.

14. Sugrīva with Tāra and Angada after his coronation.

15. Rāma giving his ring to Hanumān.

The above incidents are depicted in 24 panels.
SUNDARAKĀNḍA:

This part of the story starts from the top registers on south east corner of the south outer wall of mukhamandapa continues on the south outer wall of antarāla and sanctum, continues in the reverse direction and ends on the west outer wall of mukhamandapa. 29 panels describe the whole of Sundarakānda. The main incidents depicted are as follows.

1. Hanumān and other vānaras meeting Sampāti.
2. The vānaras meeting Swayamprabha.
3. Hanumān jumping over the ocean.
5. Hanumān in Asokavana.
6. Rāvana talking to Sīta in Asokavana.
7. Hanumān giving Rāma’s ring to Sīta.
8. Sīta giving chudāmani to Hanumān.
9. Hanumān destroying Asokavana and killing the asuras.
10. Indrajit facing Hanumān.
11. Hanumān tied down by Brahmāstra.
12. Hanumān meeting Rāvana in his court.
13. Vibhīshana’s advice.
15. Hanumān setting fire to Lanka.
16. Hanumān crossing the ocean.
17. Hanumān and vānaras ransacking Madhuvana, the garden of Sugrīva.
18. Dadhimukhi, the gardener complaining to Sugrīva.
19. Hanumān meeting Rāma, Sugrīva and others

20. Vibhīshana saranāgati.

21. Constructing the bridge over the ocean.

YUDDHAKĀṇḍA:

The last part of the story is depicted at the top register on the south outer wall of the mukhamandapa where the story started at the bottom register. The important incidents selected are as follows:

1. Rāma praying Ganēsa for success.
2. Lakshmana killing Indrajit.
3. Rāma killing Rāvana.
4. Sugrīva and Lakshmana showing the amruta bhanda to Rāma.
5. Sīta undergoing agnipariksha or ordeal by fire.

These incidents are found in eight successive panels and the last incident is carved on the lintel above the south entrance of the mukhamandapa.

Besides the above-mentioned panels a few more episodes from the same epic are found carved on the pillars of the mahāmandapa. They are as follows:

1. Lakshmana lying in the lap of Rāma after he was wounded in the war.
2. Hanumān meeting Kālanēni on his way to bring Sanjīvini.
3. Hanumān killing a makara (an apsara under curse).
4. The apsara named Dhānyamāli regains her original form and informs Hanumān the evil plan of Kālanēmi.
5. Hanumān kills Kālanēmi.
6. Rāma protecting the sacrifice of Visvāmitra.
7. Rāma breaking Siva’s bow.
8. Sīta and Rāma pouring *talambrālu*.

9. Sīta and Rāma giving a pearl chain to Hanumān.

The panels depicting Bālakāṇḍa are of 16"x16" size. Most of the panels of *Ayōdhya-kāṇḍa* are of 14"x16" size and a few measure 24"x16" in size. The panels describing Aranyakāṇḍa have 14"x16" size, Sundarakāṇḍa 16"x16" size and the last few panels depicting the war are bigger in size having more length and less width as they are carved in between the closely built pilasters. The narration of the story is very elaborate. The sculptors perhaps want the visitor to the temple to know fully about the epic. The incidents are labelled. But the labels do not fully tally with the incidents in the panels. So they may belong to a much later date.

The sculptors bestowed equal attention to the first five kāṇḍas of the story. More care was taken and greater skill was shown while the popular and important episodes were carved. At the same time, they wanted the visitors to know fully about all episodes. They tried to draw the attention of the visitors to *Ayōdhya-kāṇḍa*. Much emphasis was laid on Rāma’s coronation and Kaikēyi’s sudden decision to stop it and to send Rāma to forest. Mandhara’s jealousy, Kaikēyi’s rigid demand, Rāma taking leave from all elders and Sīta’s strong desire to follow him to forest and the other incidents are elaborately carved. It may be due to the fact that the laymen do not know much about this part of the story except the fact that Rāma was suddenly forced to forgo the throne and to go to forest. Bālakāṇḍa and Sundarakāṇḍa received better attention as we find the best panels here describe the above two chapters. Aranyakāṇḍa is the next part where the sculptors used all their imaginative skill and technique. Yuddhakāṇḍa is the last part of the story, which deals with the war. As the layman is not interested in the course and cumbersome details of the war, but only in its result, the sculptor completed this part in eight panels.
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPORTANT PANELS – BĀLĀKĀΝḌA :

1) BIRTH OF RĀMA AND HIS BROTHERS :

The story starts with Putrakāmeshṭi sacrifice described here in four panels. In the next panel the queens with their now born sons are depicted. Kousalya and Sumitra are shown seated on a pedestal whereas Kaikēyi is carved on a pilaster. Kousalya occupies more place in the panel. The hair of both the queens is arranged in knots in opposite directions, which add beauty to the scene. Kaikēyi sits on a narrow pedestal with Bharata in her lap. The size of the figures is proportionate to their age and importance.

2) VISVĀMITRA GIVING WEAPONS :

Visvāmitra giving weapons to Rāma is one of the masterpieces found here. Visvāmitra, standing with closed eyes with an arrow in the right hand, gives the divine weapon to Rāma, who stands in attractive tribhanga, and receives the bāna with great caution and respect. Lakshmana stands in anjali behind him. The hair-do, beard, rosary beads and vibhūti on the forehead of the sage present a perfect picture of the pious sage. His closed eyes and facial expression speak out volumes of his concentration in ‘astrhrōpādēsa’. Rāma stands as the personification of masculine beauty with devotion and respect towards his teacher. Different designs are used for the crowns, dress and ornaments of each figure. Rāma as a crown prince is given better treatment in dress and jewellery. (Plate – 65B)

3) TĀṬAKI VADHA :

It is portrayed in four panels. In the first Rāma is shown standing with his bow while Visvāmitra waves his hand indicating the arrival of the demoness. In the next Tāṭaki is attacking Rāma with a rock in her raised right hand and another in the left hand.
Rāma strings his bow to get ready to kill her. In the next panel a tree with a monkey on it and a tiger roaring near are shown to indicate that the scene is a forest. In the next panel, Rāma kills Tātaki with an arrow. Facing him the demoness is shown twice, first as standing with two rocks in her hands and the arrow piercing her chest and again as falling face down. The two figures have one lower half. The wide-open mouth and eyes of the demoness reveal her pain.

4) AHALYA SĀPAVIMÔCHANA:

This is another masterpiece here. Rāma in the centre stands wondering at the sudden appearance of Ahalya. His right hand is in vismaya mudra and the left holds the uttarīya. At his feet a small rock is shown. Next to it stands Ahalya with her hands in anjali. Lakshmana stands with his bow in his left hand. Rāma wears a crown from which a garland flows down on either side. He sports big chakrakundālas, hāras, kēyūras, kankaṇas and manīras. The design of the upper cloth held in his left hand matches with that of his pūrnoruka. Lakshmana does not have a garland. The design of his dress is also different. Ahalya wears chakrakundālas, hāras and other ornaments. Her saree with central folds looks attractive. The reverence and gratitude of Ahalya and the pleasant surprise of Rāma are clearly displayed in this panel. This episode is depicted as per the Ranganādha Rāmāyana.17 (Plate – 66A) In the next important panel a marriage ritual popular in Āndhra i.e., talambrālu or the newly weds pouring sacred rice or pearls over each other is shown. The next important panel shows Rāma meeting Parasurāma.

5) RĀMA MEETING PARASURĀMA:

Parasurāma challenging Rāma is a unique episode where two incornations of Vishnu meet each other. In the first panel, Parasurāma holding the bow stands facing
Rāma in an angry mood. He is bigger in size, wears a *makuta, hāras, channavīra*, *kēyūras, kankaṇas* and other ornaments. His eyes and folded right hand reveal his anger. His *ardhōruka* and *hāras* add beauty to his figure. He is giving the bow to Rāma with his left hand. Rāma is shown as a young man with youthful features. His face reveals his mild anger. He stands with an arrow in left hand and receives the bow with the right. His legs are kept close. He appears ready to accept the challenge. He does not make any great effort to hold the heavy bow as if he knows he is fit to handle it easily. (Plate – 66B)

**AYŌDHYA KĀNḍA :**

In the first panel Dasaradha informing Rāma about the coronation is depicted. In another panel, Mandhara is shown on a pilaster looking jealously at Rāma’s *vaibhava* or grandeur. She is shown on the next pilaster again. This time she is looking in the opposite direction perhaps, towards the chambers of Kaikēyi. In the next panel, the two women are looking at the previous panel i.e., at Rāma’s chambers. The pilasters here are used so skilfully to depict minor characters and to form a link between successive panels.

6) **KAIKĒYI DEMANDING HER BOON :**

In the next important panel an interesting episode is carved. A lady is shown here claiming a tower. She is Kaikēyi entering her *kōpagriha*\(^{18}\) or a place where the royal woman stay when they get angry with their husbands. (Plate – 67A) In the next panel, Dasaradha tries to pacify her but she lies down on the floor with her right hand under the head and legs folded. Her uncontrollable anger and adament nature are so cleverly portrayed here. The sculptor succeeds in creating a cheap opinion on the lady.
Dasaradha standing near her, with his head leaning towards left and right arm slightly raised, looks loosing his argument. His posture brings out his helplessness in cojoling his queen. (Plate – 67B)

7) SĪTA REQUESTING RĀMA TO TAKE HER TO THE FOREST:

In the next important panel Sīta seeking Rāma’s permission to come to forest is depicted. Clutching Rāma’s right arm Sīta passionately requests him to take her along with him to the forest. She stands leaning towards her husband, but at the same time she keeps a decent distance from him. Rāma immersed in deep thought appears hesitating to yield to her request. Sīta’s long hair beautifully folded, her big kundalas and saree are attractively carved. (Plate - 68A) The Ranganātha Rāmāyana describes her request to come to forest in the following manner. She says that she can withstand any difficulty in the forest if she is allowed to stay with Rāma.

Karunamai nīvichhu kandamūlamulu
Narudāra namrutambulaviyunu nāku

Even if you provide me roots for food (kandamūlamu) I treat them as nectar (amrutam)

Enne dukhamulainā nennikakādu
Anneyu soukhyambulagunu nīdayānu

All troubles (dukhamulu) can be ignored, as they will become comforts (soukhyambulu) in your company.

8) SATRUGHNA PUNISHING MANDHARA:

The next panel that needs mention here is the one, which shows Satrugna holding Mandhara upside down. As per the Vālmiki Rāmāyana, Bharata and Satrugna come to know about Mandhara’s role in Rāma’s vanavāsa and become furious. Then Mandhara
happens to pass that way. Satrugna abruptly catches her, throws her on the ground and
drags her all along the way. Here his feet suggest movement and his face reveals his
fury. Mandhara held upside down is being dragged like a dead animal. This is very
rarely depicted in Rāmāyana panels. It is not found anywhere else in this region. (Plate –
68B)

ARANYA KĀNDĀ :

8) KĀKĀSURA EPISODE :

The first incident, rather crudely carved, may be about punishing Kākāsura who
tries to harm Sīta. Here, Rāma stands with a drawn bow and stretched right leg. Sīta
and Lakshmana are shown next to him. A demon with wings and an arrow near him is
shown on a tree. In the next panel Kākāsura, shown in his original form, squats on the
ground with hands held high in anjali. On the adjoining pilaster a demon is killed by
Rāma’s arrow. Perhaps it is Virādha who tries to abduct Sīta and gets killed. It is
another example where the pilaster is used to describe a minor incident, thus saving
space.

9) SŪRPANAKHA’S MUTILATION :

Sūrpanakha meeting Rāma and his brother in the forest and her mutilation is very
effectively depicted here. In the first panel the demoness is admiring the beauty of
Rāma. The adjoining pilaster shows a tree on which two birds and a few fruits are
shown. A lizard climbs it while a monkey sitting close to it eats a fruit. It indicates the
Panchavaṭī forest. In between the pilasters Rāma and Sīta are seated on a pedestal inside
a mandapa. On the next pilaster Sūrpanakha is shown neatly dressed and wondering at
the beauty of Rāma. Rāma’s left hand suggests that he is married to the lady sitting to
his left and the raised right hand fingers seem to tell the demoness to go after Lakshmana who stands behind her with a long sword held ready in his hands. Sita, sensing the outcome of the game, is warning her husband with her right hand not to fool the poor demoness.

The next panel depicts Sūrpanakha’s mutilation. Here, Lakshmana, standing erect, holds the woman’s hands in his left hand and with his right holds a huge sword and cuts her nose. The woman leans backward. The position of her legs suggests that she is trying to break free from the impending danger. (Plate – 69A) In the previous panels her hair is shown arranged in a big bun shaped knot. But now it is loosely held behind her head, which suggests her futile attempts to keep her head away from the sharp sword. Her wide-open eyes give her a horrified look. On the adjoining pilaster Sūrpanakha is again shown in a very small size running away from the scene holding her nose with left hand and looking back to see whether her villain is still chasing her. The sculptor, to give the scene a comic touch, even plants an upright tail to her body to suggest that she, with her nose gone, is as ugly as a monkey. Her small size suggests that she ran far away from Panchavaṭi.

10) KHARA, DŪSHANA VADHA:

Sūrpanakha complaining to khara, Dūshana and others about her insult and the demons fighting with Rāma are the next episodes. The story continues in the upper register, which shows Khara dropping dead by Rāma’s arrow. Above him one more demon is swept away by the force of an arrow. In the next panel, Trisira’s three heads fly high in the air. Carving a donkey’s face to Khara, three heads to Trisira and a big mouth to Dūshana (Dūshana means abuse) is befitting. The demons dropping dead with
legs buckling under their own weight indicate the speed with which Rāma sends them to Hell. This is again a rarely represented episode.

11) SHOWER OF FLOWERS:

The next is the most interesting of all panels. Here Rāma is shown under a shower of flowers. The celestials, are so amazed by the valour of Rāma and his service to the world by destroying the powerful demons that they shower flowers on him.22

Manula deevinchiri mogi pushpavrishti
yanimishal guriyinchirā Rāmu meeda.

The sages blessed Rāma, celestials (Animishulu) showered flowers (Pushpavrishti) on Rāma.

The Valmiki Rāmāyanam also states that the gods showed flowers on Rāma. (Pushpavarsham Samantatah, Ramasyāpari....)23 A sage with a kamanQla in left hand blesses him. Rama holding the bow in his left hand seems to tell him that he just performed his duty as a kshatriya. Between the two figures as many as sixteen flowers are carved. Nowhere else this incident finds place. (Plate – 69B)

12) ABDUCTION OF SĪTA:

This is narrated in detail in fifteen panels. The first shows Rama taking his bow from Lakshmana. Later he is chasing the deer. The fourth panel shows Sīta and Lakshmana in parnasāla. Sīta, fearing a threat to her husband cajoles Lakshmana to go out to help him. Her raised left hand indicates her argument. When Lakshmana does not respond, she attributes sinister motives to his inactivity. Lakshmana unable to withstand the humiliation asks her to stay indoors until he returns. He stands in samabhangha with bow. His raised right hand in tarjani pose indicates his warning to Sīta. The sixth panel
shows Râvana abducting the lady. In the next panel Jaṭāyu attacks Râvana. Sîta with her raised left hand calls for help. Above the ten heads of Râvana a row of five buildings are shown to suggest that the chariot has traveled for and is nearing Lanka. The sculptor’s ability is revealed here.

The eighth panel shows a few monkeys looking at the ornaments thrown by Sîta. A monkey points at the sky. The tenth panel shows Râvana with Manḍodari in Lanka. In the next, he is seen in the company of his wives. Manḍodari stands facing him and requests him with folded hands to return Sîta. The fourteenth panel shows Râma standing in front of the empty *parnasâla* wondering about the whereabouts of his wife.

13) RĀMA MEETING A TRIBAL WOMAN:

The last one is interesting. Here the sculptor introduces a tribal woman who informs Râma about Sîta’s abduction. Râvana’s chariot, and Sîta yelling for help might have definitely produced commotion and attracted the attention of the tribal people in the forest. So when Râma starts searching for his wife in the forest definitely some one might have informed him about the abduction. Here we find a tribal woman, whose hair style and dress made of leaves are befitting to her culture, holds a bow in the right hand and with her left hand shows the way in which Sîta was taken forcibly on the chariot. Râma and Lakshmana seem to be grateful to her for her voluntary help. So they take leave of her with folded hands. This panel shows the imaginative skill of the sculptor, which excels the description in literature. (Plate – 70A)

14) LAST RITES TO VĀLI:

Sugrīva performing the last rites to his deceased brother vāli,²⁴ is the next important scene found here. It is again a rarely represented scene. Nowhere else in
Rayalaseema this is found narrated. Here, Sugrīva and Angada stand near a funeral mound on which two birds are seen eating. This may be ‘pinda pradāna’ or offering food to the departed soul, which the Hindus believe, would come in the form of a crow to eat. When birds eat the offerings people believe that the soul is satisfied with the last rites. In satisfaction Sugrīva and Angada raise their hands. Sugrīva holds a bowl in his hands.

15) VĀNARAS MEETING SWAYAMPRABHA:

The next few panels describe Sugrīva’s coronation and the search for Sīta. When Hanumān and others worry about their failure to locate Sīta they meet Swayamprabha in a cave, who informs them about the whereabouts of Rāma’s wife and takes them to the sea shore.²⁵ It is a very rare scene in Rāmāyana panels. Here a lady is seated cross-legged on a pedestal in a cave. She keeps her right leg placed on the head of a gana who squats near her. She looks like a woman in penance. Hanumān stands facing her with folded hands. Her hair-do appears like a cap. This episode is also described in the Bhāskara Rāmāyana (Plate – 70B)

16) VĀNARAS MEETING SAMPĀTI:

The vānaras meeting Sampati, the brother of Jātāyu, is another rare episode represented here. When the vānaras are afraid that the time given to them has expired and that they have failed in their mission, they decide to commit suicide. When they talk about Rama, Sampāti who lives in a nearby cave, listens and encourages them that they would find Sīta.²⁶ Here Hanumān is shown standing in front of a huge bird, which listens to him intently. A similar scene is found in the Rāmachandra Temple (Hazara Rāma) at Hampi.²⁷
Hanumān crossing the ocean is the last scene in *Kishkindakāṇḍa*. The ocean is shown as a big pond with fish, tortoise, crabs and other marine life. Hanumān standing before it points his right hand to the ocean.

**SUNDARAKĀΝḌA :**

The sculptor devoted special attention to *Sundarakāṇḍa*. The heroic deeds of Hanumān in Lanka are skillfully narrated. He is shown as standing on a hill in front of which a palace is shown. It is obviously the capital of Rāvana. In the next panel Hanumān is seated on the *sinsupa tree* in Asökavana. Sīta is seated in *padmāsana* under the tree keeping a piece of grass in her right hand.28 Facing her is the ten-headed Rāvana majestically dressed and powerfully armed in all his twenty arms. He tries to win over Sita’s heart but in vain.

Sīta being an ideal wife does not talk to another man who desires her. As she is a prisoner in Rāvana’s garden now, she wants to keep at least a piece of grass as a barrier between her and Rāvana. So she picks up a piece of grass and warns the latter about the consequences of his actions.

Another panel shows Hanumān meeting Sīta. Sīta looks different from the previous panel and also from the next. The absence of continuity may be assigned to two or three different artists working on this project. Hanumān destroying Lanka is a beauty to watch. Here he destroys a huge building by crushing it down. He keeps a mace in his right hand and with the left he beckons an *asura* to a fight.

Hanumān tied down by *Brahmāstra* of Indrajit is another masterpiece. Indrajit shown a shade taller than the vānara holds *Nāgapāsa* in his hands. Hanumān meeting Rāvana is another beautiful piece of sculpture found here. This incident is depicted as
per *Ranganādhā Rāmāyana*. When Hanumān is brought before Rāvana, he is not offered a seat. So he raises his tail and makes it a tower on which he sits facing Dasakanta.

17) DESTROYING MADHUVANA:

It is another rare incident represented only at Tadipatri in the entire region. After returning from Lanka Hanumān informs the other vānaras that he met Sita. As a proof, he shows her chūdāmanī. The vānaras during their return journey to Kishkinda pass through Madhuvana, which is full of fruits and honey. They want to celebrate their success in their mission. With Angada’s permission they enter the garden, which belongs to Sugrīva and ransack it by consuming all the fruits and honey. Dadhimukha, the gardener unable to stop them rushes to Sugrīva to complain.

One of the panels shows Hanumān sitting on a tree plucking the fruits and Angada catching them. In the next the gardener is informing his master the destruction of the garden. He stands before Sugrīva keeping his hands on his head. A coat like cloth covers his head and shoulders. It resembles the raincoat used by farmers in Rāyalaseema even now. Sugrīva seated on a pedestal cross-legged orders his gardener to send the vānaras to him soon. (Plate – 71A) The following panels show Hanumān meeting his king.

Vibhīshaṇa *Saranāgati* is the next important episode. Rāma is seated cross-legged. To his right Hanumān advises him to allow Vibhīshaṇa while another vānara, perhaps Sugrīva, shows his surprise at Rāma’s decision. Vibhīshaṇa and his minister stand facing him.

In the entire chapter Hanumān is shown without a crown and with a lion cloth. The continuity is carefully maintained. The dress of the various vānaras differs from each other. In the Madhuvana episode the faces of the vānaras are a bit elongated.
relief is low. These panels may be the work of a different craftsman. Carving Sīta in
tree different styles in three successive panels is the only error noticed here. Otherwise,
the narration of Sundarakāṇḍa in Tadipatri stands comparison to any other narrative art
in India.

YUDDHAKĀΝḌA:

The last part of the story is narrated in eight panels. The first one shows
constructing the bridge. The next one shows the ocean with full of marine life. In
another panel, inside a niche, Rāma worships Gaṇapati. The God is in āsina pose, four
armed, keeps pāsa and ankusa in upper hands and his lower right arm in abhaya and his
lower left holds a mūdaka. Rāma stands to his right and offers flowers. (Plate – 71B)
The next panel shows Lakshmana killing Indrajit. His arrow, in the shape of half moon,
beheads the demon. Rāma killing Rāvana is the next scene. Rāma stands in dvibhanga,
holds the bow in outstretched left hand and with the right releases the arrow. In between
the next two pilasters Rāvana is shown falling on the ground with folded legs and left
hand supporting the ground. An arrow is shown in his abdomen. His ten heads lay
scattered in the air.

As per the Ranganāḍha Rāmāyana, Vibhīshaṇa informs Rāma about the
amritabhānda in the abdomen of Rāvana, which makes him invinsible. So Rāma
aims his arrow at Rāvana’s abdomen. In the next panel Lakshmana is holding a jar,
perhaps the amritabhānda in his hands and shows it to Rāma while Sugrīva stands
behind. This is also narrated only here. (Plate – 72A)
18) ORDEAL BY FIRE:

The last scene i.e., *agniparīksha* or ordeal by fire is carved above the lintel of South side entry to the temple. In the centre *Agni*, the fire god, emerging from the fire declares that Sītā is pure. To his left Rāma stands holding Sītā’s left hand. Next to him Lakshmana, Viṃśiṣṭa and others stand with their raised right hands hailing Sītā. At the top Vishnu is shown standing in *samabhanga*, four armed, keeping his lower hands in *abhaya* and *kātyavalambita* poses. It symbolizes the end of Rāmāvatāra.

REMARKS: All the panels are not the work of a single sculptor. There may be more than three craftsmen. The master sculptor’s hand is clearly seen in *Bālakāṇḍa*. All the panels in this chapter are carved in bold relief. Continuity is maintained in shape and size of every figure. Dress, crowns and ornaments are excellently carved. The size of the figure is based on its age and importance of the character depicted. So Rāma is always shown taller than Lakshmana. Kousalya is shown in a bigger size and with better dress and jewellery when compared to her co-wives.

While main characters occupy the prime position in the panels supplementary characters are pushed either to corners or to the pilasters. They are carved in low relief. The public does not appreciate Kaikēyi, who is the root cause of all the troubles of Rāma. So she is always pushed on to a pilaster and is carved in very low relief. The hairstyles are different and exhibit a pleasing variety. Almost all the female characters have their hair tied in a bun behind their heads. The dishevelled hair of Sūrpanakha is also naturally portrayed. The designs of the crowns show a very good variety. *Uttariya*, the male upper cloth is shown as being held in the arm double folded. One peculiar thing noticed here is the absence of footwear. Except in the panel showing Bharata carrying Rama’s sandals footwear is not shown in any panel.
Human emotions are effectively portrayed. Compassion, affection, love, anger, adament nature, pain, astonishment, happiness and excitement are but a few feelings clearly depicted in the panels. Invariably the raised right hands indicate some feeling or emotion like excitement, warning and others. The panels depicting Ahalya sāpavimōchana and Hanumān meeting Rāma after his return from Lanka clearly project respect and reverence of the characters towards their lord. Anger and hatred are clearly depicted in the incident describing Rāma’s fight with Khara, Dhūshana and Trisira.

**Vīra and roudra rasas** are portrayed in the face of Rāma when he kills various demons. The same is manifest in Vāli, Sugrīva fight and in Hanumān’s fight with the asuras in Lanka. Pain and agony are clearly revealed in the faces of the demons killed by Rāma. Excitement is well portrayed in the raised tails of vānaras. Kaikēyi’s adament nature when she lies down on the ground for grant of boons and Dasaradha’s helplessness are also clearly represented.

Animals such as the sacrificial horse, tiger and the marine life are naturally depicted. The movement of hands is utilized skillfully to indicate conversation, direction, request, reverence and anger.

Pilasters are skillfully used to represent all minor characters and to narrate minor incidents. Thus sculpture and architecture are skillfully blended.

In the entire narration a few things reveal the imaginative ability of the craftsmen. Introducing a forest scene in Tātaki vadha panel with a tree and a monkey on it, a tiger roaring under it and a tribal woman leaning over her bow adds beauty to the entire episode. Decorating Sīta’s parnasāla with rangōli in the foreground and pearl hangings in the top is praiseworthy. Introducing a tribal woman to inform Rāma and his brother about the abduction of Sīta is very imaginative. In the episode depicting Sīta’s abduction
the buildings in Lanka are shown in top indicating that the chariot has traveled far and is approaching its destination. It should receive special praise.

The Hindu religious and social rites and rituals are excellently depicted. Fixing the *muhūrta* or auspicious time for marriage, exchanging *talambrālu*, offering *pindapradāna* as part of last rites and worshiping Gaṇapati before Rāma started his war with Rāvana are some of the Hindu customs narrated in these panels.

The artists mixed all versions of Rāmāyana. But they are more faithful to Vālmiki’s version. Certain incidents like Kaikēyi entering *kōpagriha*, Satrugna punishing Mandhara and other incidence are as per the *Vālmiki Rāmāyana*. Whenever local variations demanded portrayal the artists followed them. Sīta keeping a piece of grass in her hand when she talks to Rāvana in Asōkavana, Hanumān sitting on his tail in Ravana’s court, Ahalya appearance when Rāma touches a rock the Kālanemi episode and a few others are as per the *Ranganādha Rāmāyana*.

But it is strange to note that in such elaborate narration a few important incidents from *aranyakāṇḍa* such as Kabandha *vadha* and Sabari offering fruits to Rāma are missing.

**XII. RAMA TEMPLE – PENUKONḌA:**

In one of the lengthy registers running all along the outer walls of Rāma’s temple, Penukonda, Rāmāyana is narrated in sculpture in forty-eight panels. The panels are rectangular in shape measuring 2'x 1' in size. The story starts with the *Putrakāmēṣhti* sacrifice and covers many events some of which are not depicted anywhere in this region nor reported from other regions of Āndhra. The incidents depicted are listed here. They are shown on the west half of south wall.
1. *Putrakāmēṣhti* Sacrifice: Rishyasrunga performs the *Putrakāmēṣhti* sacrifice while the *Yāga Purusha* comes out with a bowl of *pāyasa*. Dasaradha receives it and distributes to his three queens.

2. Dasaradha with his wives and children.

3. Rāma and his brothers standing with bows and arrows.

4. The four brothers grown up as youngmen.

5. Visvāmitra asking Dasaradha to send Rāma and Lakshmana with him to protect his sacrifice.

6. Rāma and Lakshmana going with Visvāmitra to the forest.

7. Tātaki *vadhā*.

8. Yāgasamrakshana

9. Ahalya *Śāpavimōchana*.

10. Janaka explaining to Visvāmitra and his disciplines the rules of *Swayamvara*.

11. Siva *dhanurbhanga*.

12. Rāma’s marriage.

13. The newly wedded couple returning to Ayōdhya.

**PANELS ON THE WEST OUTER WALL:**

14. Rāma handling the Vaishnava *dhanus* given by Parasurāma.

15. Dasaradha announcing coronation.

16. Mandhara instigating Kaikēyi to stop the coronation while Dasaradha fails to convince his wife.

17. Kaikēyi ordering Rāma to go to forest while Dasaradha watches helplessly.

18. Rāma, Sīta and Lakshmana taking leave of Kousalya to go to forest.

19. The three going to forest.
PANELS ON THE NORTH OUTER WALL OF SANCTUM AND ANTARĀLA

20. Rāma, Sīta and Lakshmana going on a chariot driven by Sumanta.
21. Bharata meeting his brothers in the forest to request them to come back to Ayōdhya.
22. Bharata carrying the sandals of Rāma on his head.
23. Rāma killing an asura while Sīta watches. The asura may be Virādha.
24. Rāma sleeping in the lap of Sīta under a tree while Lakshmana is guarding them.
25. Rāma, Sīta and Lakshmana in the hermitage of Agastya from whom Rāma receives a weapon.
27. Rāma killing Khara, Dūshana and Trisira.
28. Sīta pointing at the golden deer.
29. Lakshmana going out in search of Rāma and warning Sīta to stay in the parnasāla.
30. Sīta coming out to offer food to Rāvana who is in the guise of a mendicant.
31. Abduction of Sīta.
32. Jatāyu attacking Rāvana.
33. A rare scene depicting Kabandha capturing Rāma and Lakshmana.
34. Sabari offering fruits to Rāma.
35. Rāma and Lakshmana in Sabari's hermitage.
36. Rāma and Lakshmana continue their journey in the forest.

PANELS ON THE NORTH OUTER WALL OF MUKHAMANDAPĀ

37. Hanumān meeting Rāma and his brother on Rushyamūka Mountain in Kishkinda.
38. Sugrīva and Hanumān meeting Rāma and Lakshmana.
39. Sugrīva showing ornaments thrown by Sīta from the sky to Rāma.
40. *Sapta tāla bhanjana.*

41. Sugrīva standing in *anjali* while Rāma gets ready to kill Vāli.

42. Vāli and Sugrīva fighting.

43. Vāli *vadha.*

44. Vāli in the lap of Tāra while the other *vānaras* watch his death.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Most of the episodes narrated here are found narrated at many other places. But certain episodes are given more importance here while some others are narrated only here in entire Rāyalaseema. Such incidents are discussed below.

1) **TĀṬAKI VADHA:**

In the panel describing the killing of Tāṭaki, the demoness is shown struck with two arrows, one in the head and another in the chest. In all other panels found elsewhere Tāṭaki is killed with only one arrow. Her outstretched hands suggest that she is throwing a rock on Rāma. While Visvāmitra encourages Rāma, Lakshmana standing behind the sage does not look interested in the fight. (Plate – 72B)

2) **YĀGASAMRAKSHANA:**

In another panel depicting *Yāgasamrakshana* three demons are shown attempting disruption of the sacrifice. At other places only two demons, Māricha and Subāhu, are shown. The three *asuras* are shown flying in the air, head down with swords and shields in their hands. This shows their ability to move in any direction in the air. At other places they are shown either running on the ground or flying in normal position.
3) AHALYA SĀPAVIMŌCHANA:

In the Ahalya Sāpavimōchana panel Ahalya is shown as emerging right out of the rock. She is shown only up to her waist where as at other places she is shown fully. But in the Rāmachandra Temple at Hampi, Ahalya is shown as emerging out of a rock and is shown up to her waist.31

4) JANAKA EXPLAINING THE RULES OF SWAYAMVARA:

The tenth panel is rarely depicted. It shows Janaka and Visvāmitra conversing with each other seated on pedestals while Rāma also participates in the conversation. It can be identified as Janaka explaining the rules of Swayamvara of his daughter.

5) SIVA DHANURBHANGA:

Here Rāma leans on the bow bending it with his hands and pressing it with his left knee and tries to fix the bowstring. Facing him Janaka is seated on a throne appreciating his successful efforts with his raised left fore finger. Lakshmana stands behind Rāma watching the feat while Visvāmitra seated cross-legged on a pedestal behind him also hails Rāma’s victory. (Plate – 73A)

6) RĀMA’S MARRIAGE:

In the twelth panel depicting Rāma’s marriage kanyādāna is given importance, Janaka keeps a water vessel in his hands for kanyādāna while Sīta’s hand is held by Rāma. talambrāalu is ignored in this panel.

7) BHARATA MEETING RĀMA IN THE FOREST:

In Aranyakāṇḍa Bharata meeting Rāma is an important episode.32 It is rarely depicted in sculpture. Here it finds place in two panels. In the first, Bharata is seen
approaching the place where Rāma lives in the forest. He is shown behind a tree to indicate that he has entered the forest. His hands are clasped together in **anjali** pose. On the other side of the tree Rāma and Sīta stand facing him. Rāma invites him with his right hand. Lakshmana’s posture suggests that he is apprehensive about Bharata’s visit.

In the second panel Bharata holds the sandals of his brother cautiously with both hands on his head. Facing him Rāma and Sīta are shown seated cross-legged on a common pedestal. A sage probably Vasishṭa, the family priest of the Raghuvamsa, is seated behind Bharata advising caution. (Plate – 73B)

8) **RĀMA KILLING VIRĀDH Ā**:

Rāma killing Virādha, an *asura*, who tries to abduct Sīta, is a theme, which is rarely represented. It is in two parts. In the first, Sīta is shown complaining about the evil designs of the villain to Rāma who is just returning to his place. Rāma’s feet suggest quick walk. He holds the bow in his right hand. In the second part he is shown in the opposite direction at the other end of the panel shooting an arrow at the *asura*. It pierces the head of the *asura* and sweeps him away. The limbs of Virādha suggest the speed with which he is swept away like a dry leaf by Rāma’s arrow.

9) **SŪRPA NAKHA’S MUTILATION**:

In another panel describing Sūrpanakha’s *garvabhanga* the demoness stands without any attempt to breakfree from Lakshmana’s sword. Her hands are held down on both sides, which indicate that she is too scared to move and avoid the punishment.

10) **RĀMA KILLING KHARA & DŪSHANA**:

In the next panel, Rāma is involved in a fierce battle with Khara, Trisira and Dhūshana while Lakshmana standing behind him assures Sīta that there is nothing to be
afraid of. Khara with a donkey head, Trisira with three heads and Dūshana with a big mouth is naturally depicted. An arrow hits the first of them. (Plate – 74A) The three demons are similarly depicted in Tādipatri panels also.

11) RĀMA KILLING KABANDHA:

Another panel describes a very rare scene i.e. Rāma killing Kabandha, a monster having only a head and two arms. When Rāma and Lakshmana are wandering in forest in search of Sīta the monster catches them. They cut his arms. He turns into a gandharva, thanks them for redeeming him from curse and directs them to go to Rushyamakā Mountain. Here Rāma faces the demon with bow and arrow but as per Rāmāyana he should be shown with a sword. Over the head of Kabandha a man emerges, turns to Rāma and salutes him with gratitude. (Plate – 74B) This episode is found on the south wall of the principle shrine in the Rāmachandra Temple, Hampi.

12) SABARI OFFERING FRUITS TO RĀMA:

Very close to the previous panel is the next scene perhaps represented in sculpture only here. It shows Sabari offering fruits to Rāma in her hermitage. Here Rāma and Lakshmana stand facing two women. The first one may be Sabari and the next is perhaps her maid. Both the women stand with folded hands. Rāma appears to be receiving something from the first woman. The scene is repeated again as the narration moves on to the northwest wall of the mukhamandapa to maintain continuity. The other scenes do not have anything special.

REMARKS: The modeling appears to be nice at first look. But when watched closely the panels do not reveal considerable artistic talent. The facial features are not clear. The relief is at times bold but mostly shallow. As the panels are not as frequently
interrupted by the presence of pilasters as at Chukkalûru or as at Tädipatri they look attractive. But they do not contain any diversity in the designs and shapes of dress or crowns.

Though the narration is not as elaborate as at Tädipatri, Chukkalûru and Timmäpuram the artists achieved fame by introducing episodes, which are, not attempted elsewhere. Kabandha vadha and Sabari offering food to Râma are such episodes. Virâdha vadha and Bharata meeting Râma in the forest are very rare scenes. The craftsmen incorporated such incidents. Tädipatri panels might have inspired them because here, too Krishnalîla and Râmâyana are depicted in two rows and we find remarkable influence of Tädipatri panels on these panels.

An attempt to excel the narrative sculpture at Tädipatri can be seen here. Some more care in carving the facial features must have been taken to succeed in that attempt. Still the panels present another detailed narration of the great epic in a different way.

XIII. RÂMÂYANA PANELS – TIMMÂPURAM

Timmâpuram, the area between Tondavâda village and Chandragiri town, is around ten kilometers from Tirupati. Once there might be a village on the banks of Kalyâni River with the name of Timmâpuram. But now only paddy fields and a few houses exist there. Here, by the side of Tirupati-Chittoor road, hidden among the bushes is a ruined gôpura, which might be the entrance of a beautiful Vishnava temple. Now except the gôpura in ruins, all other parts of the temple vanished without a trace. The inner walls of this gôpura contain not less than seventy sculptured panels describing Râmâyana in detail. Nowhere else in Chittoor district such detailed narration of the epic is found. These panels are numbered by the Archaeological Department but no attempt,
so far, is made to identify and describe them. Some of the panels at the bottom are hidden in the ground.

From the visible panels one can notice the narration of the epic from Bālakāṇḍa to yuddhakāṇḍa. Bālakāṇḍa starts from Visvāmitra asking Dasaradha to send Rāma and Lakshmana with him to protect his Yāga. The following are the incidents depicted here as seen from the visible panels.

**BĀLAKĀΝḌA :**

1. Visvāmitra asking Dasaradha to send Rāma and Lakshmana with him.
2. Tātaki vadha
3. Yāgasamrakshana
4. Visvāmitra showing a deer to Rāma and his brother.
5. Ahalya Sāpavimōchana.
6. Attendants carrying Siva Dhanus.
7. Siva Dhanurbhanga.
8. The marriage party returning to Ayōdhya.
9. Parasurāma challenging Rāma to handle the bow of Vishnu.
10. Parasurāma accepting defeat.

**AYODHYAKĀNDĀ :**

11. Rāma and Lakshmana standing.

**ARANYAKĀNDĀ :**

13. Lakshmana standing under a tree.
14. Rāma and Sīta sitting in parṇasāla.
15. Mārīcha taking the form of the golden deer under Rāvana’s orders.
16. Rāma chasing the deer.
17. Rāma killing the deer.
18. Rāma carrying a deer.
19. Rāma and Lakshmana meeting in the forest.
20. Rāma and Lakshmana watching the empty parnasāla.
21. Rāma and Lakshmana standing.
22. Abduction of Sīta and Jaṭāyu attacking Rāvana.

KISHKINDAKĀNDĀ :
23. The brothers in search of Sīta.
24. The vānaras meeting the brothers.
25. Sapta tāla bhanjana.
26. Rāma kicking the carcass of Dundhubhi.
27. Rāma promising help to Sugrīva.
28. Vāli vadha.
29. Sugrīva’s coronation.
30. Sugrīva sending his vānaras in search of Sīta.
31. The vānaras in conference.
32. Rāma giving his ring to Hanumān.
33. Hanumān ready to cross the ocean.

SUNDARAKĀNDĀ :
34. Hanumān handling Simhika in the ocean.
35. Hanumān entering Lanka.
36. Hanumān in Rāvana’s Harem.
37. Hanumān fighting with the *asuras* after destroying Asōkavana.
38. His fight with Akshaya Kumāra.
39. His encounter with Indrajit.
40. Indrajit capturing Hanumān with *Brahmāstra*.
41. Hanumān meeting Rāvana.
42. Lankā *dahana*.
43. His return and handing over *Chūdāmani* to Rāma.

**YUDDHAKĀΝDA**:

44. Hanumān killing the *asuras*.
45. Lakshmana killing Indrajit.
46. Sage Agastya teaching *Ādityahridaya* to Rāma.
47. Rāma killing Rāvana.
48. Rāma’s coronation.

**SIZE** : The panels are of many sizes. The smallest panel depicting Hanumān getting ready to cross the ocean measures 10" x 16". The largest depicting Indrajit capturing Hanumān and the latter meeting Rāvana measures 53" x 22". Many panels have a height of 20" inches and their length vary from 20" to 40".

**DIRECTION** : As elsewhere the narration starts at south west corner of the inner wall at the bottom. It revolves round the north and south inner walls including the piols in circles until it ends on the ceiling where Rāma’s coronation is shown.
DATE: No inscription is available on the gopura. Basing on the architectural features and style of narration it can be safely ascribed to first half of 16th century. The kumbhapanjaras and the salabhanjika pillars suggest a pure Vijayanagara style to the monument.

THEME: The theme of the story does not fully tally with the original work as it interpolates the variant versions found in the Padmapurana and Ranganadha Ramayana.

DESCRIPTION: In the first visible panel sage Visvamitra, seated cross-legged on a pedestal is asking Dasaradha, seated by his side on another pedestal to send Rama and Lakshmana with him to protect his sacrifice.

1) TATAKI VADHA:

In the next panel Tataka is shown dropping dead on the ground by Rama's arrow. The demoness is huge in size with disheveled hair and sagging breasts. Facing her Rama stands with his left foot stretched out releasing the arrow. Lakshmana stands behind while the sage hails Rama's victory with his raised left hand.

2) YAGA SAMRAKSHANA:

In the third panel yaga samrakshana is depicted in two parts. In the first Maricha is pouring blood and meat on the altar with a big pot. Visvamitra points out this act to Rama who aims an arrow at the demon. In the next part at the right side the sage embraces Rama congratulating his victory. While the latter stands with folded hands Lakshmana carries two bows i.e., his and that of his brother.
Maricha shown as flying with his folded legs above the ground and Lakshmana carrying the bow of Rama as the sage embraces the latter and other panels reveal the artists ability. In the next, redeeming Ahalya from her curse is depicted.

3) AHALYA BIDDING FAREWELL TO RAMA AND OTHERS:

The next panel is unusual. Here the sage and his disciples behind him are moving on while a lady, standing behind them under a tree with a clear smile on her face, waves her right hand. It may be Ahalya bidding farewell to her saviour with gratitude at the hermitage of her husband, sage Goutama. (Plate – 75A)

4) VISVAMITRA POINTING AT A DEER:

The next scene is also unusual and reveals the artists imaginative power. Here Visvamitra points out to his disciples a deer jumping away in the forest. Behind him Rama and Lakshmana are walking with bows slung to their right shoulders. It seems the sage, who can foresee the future, is warning Rama to be careful with the deer. Incidentally it is the golden deer, which separates Rama and Sita. (Plate – 75B)

5) BRINGING THE SIVA’S BOW TO THE MARRIAGE HALL:

The next scene is also rare. It shows three attendants of Janaka carrying the bow of Siva to the hall of ‘swayamvara’ where the invitees are asked to aim it. It is said to be very heavy. No one except Rama can handle it. So to show its heaviness the sculptor shows three well-built men carrying it on their heads. (Plate – 76A) The panel instantly remains the Hazara Rama temple panel in Humpi. At both the places the bow, with its string towards the sky, is carried in a similar style. One would wonder whether the same sculptor who worked on the Hampi temple also worked on the panels here in which four men carry the bow on their heads where as three men carry it here.
6) **SIVA DHANURBHANGA:**

The next scene depicts 'Siva Dhanurbhanga'. To the left of the panel two sages, probably Visvāmitra and Satānanda, *kula guru* of Janaka,\(^{37}\) are hailing Rāma's valour. In the centre Rāma holds the bow with his left and with the right he pulls the bowstring fully. Facing them are three royal persons seated on a common pedestal. They may be ministers of Janaka or other kings invited to the *swayamvara*.

7) **RĀMA MEETING PARASURĀMA:**

The next scene marks the end of *Bālakāṇḍa*. It shows Rāma's meeting with Parasurāma. Here the figure of Rāma is shown four times to mark the continuity in action and movement.

In the next panel Rāma and Sītā are in conversation. It may indicate Sītā's request to come to forest with Rāma.

8) **KHARA, DŪSHANA VADHA:**

The next scene is from *Aranyakāṇḍa*. It shows Khara and Dushana attacking Rāma. They have terrible faces with tusks and big eyes. Facing them Rāma aims an arrow at the demons while Lakshmana is ready with an arrow held high in his right hand.

9) **THE GOLDEN DEER EPISODE:**

The next scene shows Rāvana ordering Māricha to take the form of golden deer to enchant Sītā. Rāvana is shown standing in between two trees and Māricha is sitting in *padmāsana* dressed like a sage. Next he is shown moving on to his left and then the deer is shown jumping in the forest looking back at Rāvana. The next four panels describe the golden deer episode. These scenes also resemble the Hazara Rāma panels.\(^{38}\) In both the places, the carving is similar; Rāma's repeated attempts to catch the deer are shown...
in similar style. In one panel which is again not seen anywhere, Rāma carries home a
dead deer, perhaps with the idea that he would show the dead deer and hide the death of
Maricha as he does not want his wife to be afraid. The sculptor reveals the anxiety of
Rāma to keep his wife undisturbed through this imaginative panel.

10) ABDUCTION OF SĪTA:

The next important panel describes abduction of Sīta. To the left of the panel
Jaṭāyu attacking Rāvana is depicted. Rāvana is shown with five visible heads and twenty
arms with his lower hands carrying two swords. Jaṭāyu is first shown at the top attacking
Rāvana and latter as following on the ground. The chariot first shown as moving on the
ground is shown next with its wheels high above the ground.

11) RĀMA MEETING THE VĀNARAS IN KISHKINDA:

With the next scene Kishkindakānda starts. In the first important scene Rāma
lying in the lap of Lakshmana looks above at a monkey on the tree. As per the
Padmapurāṇa Rāma thinks he has seen a monkey in the dream, which is a bad omen.
He again notices it at the treetop and orders his brother to shoot it. Mean while the
monkey, which is none other than Hanumān, comes down in its original form. He
introduces himself as minister of Sugrīva.39

Here Lakshmana is ready to kill the monkey with an arrow. Rāma lying in his
lap shows it with his left hand. The monkey is about to jump down. In the centre
Hanumān and Sugrīva introduce themselves to the brothers. To the right of the panel,
Rāma is shooting an arrow through seven tāla trees which are shown as growing on the
back of a serpent. (Plate – 76B) Rāma sleeping with his crown is one error noticed here.
12) SEARCH FOR SīTA:

In the next, Rāma is kicking the carcass of Dundhubhi. The next interesting scene depicts Lakshmana’s anger at the inordinate delay by Sugrīva to send his vānaras in search of Sīta. It shows Lakshmana being pacified by Hanumān and the latter warning Sugrīva. Both the vānara leaders stand face-to-face discussing the preparations for the search. At the right end Sugrīva leaves the place hurriedly to command his army. It is a rare scene in Rāmāyana panels.

13) HANUMĀN’S ENCOUNTER WITH SIMHIKA:

The next scene shows Hanumān subduing Simhika while he crosses the ocean. He is shown four times in this panel, first as bidding farewell to his people, second on a hill top ready to jump, third as flying in the sky and entering Simhika’s mouth in a minute form and as the end as flying again victorious in his feat.

Simhika the monster has the power to drag anything flying in the sky by pulling its shadow. When it pulls the shadow of Hanumān he goes down its abdomen, destroys its vital parts, kills her and comes out before it closes its mouth. The monster is shown with a lions face. The panel displays vigorous action and quick movement. (Plate – 77A)

14) HANUMĀN IN LANKA:

In the next panel, Hanumān is climbing the compound wall to enter Rāvana’s fort. In another, which is again not shown anywhere else in Rayalaseema, Hanumān entering Rāvana’s chambers is depicted. He watches Rāvana sleeping with a woman, mistakes her as Sīta and feels happy that he has found her. But the next moment he realizes that the woman cannot be Rāma’s wife. Rāvana is shown with crowns and weapons in his ten right hands. The woman has placed her right arm over his chest.
Near their heads Hanumān stands in an excited mood with raised right hand. The thick rectangular border around them may be the cot. (Plate – 77B)

The next few panels describe the destruction he caused in Asokāvāna. In one of the panels he is seen fighting with Akshaya kumāra, the son of Rāvana. (Plate – 78A) His encounter with Indrajit is depicted in two panels. He sits on the top of a building facing Indrajit and in the next, he is chained by the Brahmāstra. In the second panel Indrajit holds him with a rope. In the next part he is seated on his coiled tail facing Rāvana. (Plate – 78B) The asura king is shown with five heads and twenty arms carrying different weapons. Both of them sit cross-legged. While Rāvana looks majestic Hanumān posture reveals his bravery.

15) THE BATTLE :

The top panels describe Yuddhakāṇḍa. Hanumān attacking various asuras is shown in them. One panel describes the battle between Indrajit and Lakshmana. The former on a chariot and the latter on the ground are locked up in a fierce battle. Behind Lakshmana Vibhīṣana stands with a club and encourages him to kill the opponent.

16) AGASTYA TEACHING ĀDITYA HRIDAYA TO RĀMA :

The one above this depicts Rāma and Rāvana engaged in battle. In another panel a sage is teaching something to Rāma who stands in anjali. It may be sage Agastya teaching the divine mantra Ādityahridaya to Rāma by reciting which Rāma can kill his enemy easily.41 On the ceiling the coronation of Rāma is depicted.

XIV. RĀMĀYANA PANELS – CHUKKALŪRU :

The Chukkalūru village houses a ruined temple having a sanctum, antarāla and mukhamandapa, the exterior walls of which are divided by pilasters and filled with
narrative panels of mythological and secular themes. Another detailed narration of Rāmāyana, imitating the same in the Venkaṭaramana temple, Tādipatri, is found here. The story as usual starts on western half of the south exterior wall at top register and goes round the other walls i.e., west, north and on both sides of the entrance in the east wall. There are roughly forty panels here. These panels are not yet studied and photographed.

The following are the important incidents seen among the panels.

1. Rishyasringa playing with a deer in the forest.
2. The sage being carried in a palanquin by two women.
3. His arrival at Ayōdhya.
4. His conversation with Vasistha about the Putrakāmēshi sacrifice.
5. The three queens of Dasaradha with their newborn children.
6. Rāma and his brothers standing.
7. Yāgasamrakshana.
8. Tājaki vadha
10. Siva dhanurbhanga.
11. Rāma's marriage.
12. Sūrpanakha garvabhanga.
15. Sapta tāla bhanjana.
17. Sugrīva's coronation.
Lakshmana's anger at the delay for Sīta's search.

Vanara's getting ready for the search.

Rāma giving ring to Hanumān.

Hanumān crossing the ocean.

Hanumān in Asokavana meeting Sīta.

His destruction of Asokavana.

Indrajit capturing Hanumān.

Rāvana and Hanumān in the court.

Return of Hanumān.

His meeting with Rāma and a few battle scenes.

DATE: The attempt to imitate the Tādipatri Ramayana panels clearly indicate a date later than the Tādipatri temple. Hence it may be assigned to second half of sixteenth century.

DESCRIPTION:

1. ARRIVAL OF RUSHYASRINGA:

   The first panel shows sage Rushyasringa standing by the side of a deer. He has a horn at the top of his head. He wears a pūrṇoruka. In the second panel he is being carried in a palanquin. Two women carry it while two more sit in it along with him. The sage sits in their lap keeping his hands on their breasts. All the women appear to be nude. As the sage has not seen any women in his life, Dasaradha sends these women who are well versed in Kāmasastra to lure the sage to Ayodhya. (Plate - 79A) In the third panel, he is shown standing, which indicates his arrival at Ayodhya. In the next scene he is speaking to Vasista.
The *Putrakāmēṣṭi* sacrifice and the birth of the children are shown in the next panels. The three wives of Dasaradha are seen seated with their children in their laps. The size and ornamentation of all the figures are according to their age and importance in the theme.

2. SIVA DHANURBHANGA:

The next panel that attracts our attention depicts Siva Dhanurbhanga. To the left, Rāma is seen lifting the bow and pulling its string. He wears a crown, a beautifully designed lower garment up to his ankles and sports a vaishnavanāma. To his left Visvāmitra sitting on a pedestal hails his success. His moustach, beard, the rosary beads and the sacred thread are neatly carved though his posture does not demand admiration. Next to him, on the same platform king Janaka, seated cross-legged, also hails the feat. Sītā is seated on his right thigh with her head bent a little suggesting her shyness. The king’s ornaments are intricately carved. Sītā’s hair-do and attire also deserve appreciation. It is in bold relief and one of the carefully carved panels here. Sītā is not shown as seated in the lap of her father anywhere else in Rāyalaseema. (Plate – 79B)

3. MARRIAGE OF RĀMA:

In the next Rāma stands facing his bride and pours *talambrālu* over her head. The bends in his body, the clear smile on his lips and his attire are praiseworthy. Sītā, shown smaller in size, has the natural and perfect look of a bride with her face showing a mixture of joy and shyness. She keeps in her palms the sacred rice ready and bends a little to make things easy for her husband while he pours *talambrālu*. (Plate – 80A) The last two panels, mentioned above should be the work of an exert craftsman. These two panels reveal his skill and imagination.
The next panel is repetition of the previous one but for the change of position of the couple and the presence of Lakshmana. But the carving is poor and the posture of the couple is not attractive. There is a vast difference in its quality, which reveals the hand of a different craftsman.

4. ABDUCTION OF SĪTA:

The next that deserves description shows abduction of Sīta. Carved in between the pilasters this panel reveals poor quality and workmanship. Rāvana is shown standing with his legs apart and with a sword in the right hand. He does not have a crown nor he looks majestic and firocious. Sīta seated on the chariot cross-legged looks like admiring the journey. She keeps her right hand on her right thigh and the left rests on the bent left leg. There is no trace of worry in her posture and facial expression. The chariot shown with two wheels does not have a horse or a charioteer.

5. SAPTA TĀLA BHANJANA:

In the Sapta tāla Bhajana scene the sculptor displayed lack of planning, imagination and skill. Here Rāma is shown holding the bow in right hand and with left touching the bowstring. The seven-tāla trees appear like a heap of grass and are shown on the tail of a serpent. Its top half raises up straight and looks at Rāma. It appears more like an earthworm. (Plate – 80B).

6. HANUMĀN MEETING SĪTA:

The panel showing Hanumān in Asokavana is better depicted than many others. He is first shown as a small monkey sitting on top of the Sīnsupa tree. Then he is receiving the Chūdāmani from Sīta. But for the clout he is almost naked. His face
reveals reverence. Sītā, seated cross-legged on a pedestal, wears many ornaments and her hair-do is attractive.

The succeeding panels describing destruction of Asokavana are but imitations of the panels depicting the same theme at Tādipatri. They are in bold relief and show better workmanship.

In another scene, Hanumān is seated on his coiled tail at a higher level than the ten-headed Rāvana. He is cross-legged and his right hand indicates his conversation. Rāvana's ten heads are clumsily carved between the two pilasters. The other scenes are also imitations of Tādipatri panels. But they are abridged and poor imitations of their counterparts of Tādipatri.

**OBSERVATION :**

There is a keen and clear attempt to imitate the Rāmāyaṇa panels at Tādipatri. At Tādipatri and Thimmāpuram the story starts with *putrakāmēshṭī yāga*. At Chukkalūru it starts with Rishyasringa's life in the forest. An attempt to show the sacrifice with more details can be seen here. Nowhere else in Rāyalaseema, Rishyasringa's life and the women luring him to come to Ayōdhya is shown.

But the desire to narrate the story in greater detail does not match with the ability in carving. Poor workmanship is displayed in most of the panels except in two or three which may be the work of the master craftsman.

The panels are too many to fit into the place available. So adequate width is not provided resulting in jamming of the figures. There are too many pilasters on the walls but they are not utilized to depict minor characters as at Tādipatri or Animela. The creeper designs on some of them look pleasing but the carving of the story disappoints. The panels depicting *sapta tāla bhanjana* and abduction of Sītā are the worst in terms of
workmanship. The relief is mostly shallow except in a few panels. Even the architectural numbers are not properly finished. Most of the sculptures appear half finished.
MAHĀBHĀRATA

A close look at the Hindu narrative art in the country reveals that the Rāmāyana and the Krishnallīla themes dominate and outnumber the Mahābhārata scenes in numerical strength. The same pattern is observed even in Rāyalaseema. The following are the temples where such themes are portrayed in sculpture.

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I. THE PARASURĀMĒŚVARA TEMPLE, ATTIRĀLA – BHĪMA & BHAGADATTA:

The Parasurāmēśvara temple, at Attirāla is embellished with sculptural panels of rare and varied themes of mythology. On the outer walls of garbhagriha, antarāla and mukhamandapa such panels are seen. The first one on the south wall of the mukhamandapa shows Dharmarāja facing Bhīma and Purushāmrīga, which is described under saivite themes. One more panel deals with an interesting episode from the battle of Kurukshētra i.e., Bhīma attacking Bhagadatta who is mounted on his famous elephant, supratika.

Bhagadatta, the king of Ujjayani with his capital of Mahishmati is one of the seasoned and old generals of Kaurava army. His elephant Supratika is trained in warfare. Together these awesome two create panic in the army of the Pāṇḍavas by sending thousands of soldiers to Heaven every day. Bhīma unable to tolerate it attacks them one day with his club. When a fierce battle takes place between them Arjuna notices it, comes to Bhīma’s help and kills Bhagadatta.

Here Bhīma with a heavy club in his right hand is about to strike the elephant, which holds his left arm with its trunk. In spite of its strength it is unable to pull him. Bhagadatta with an ankusa in the right hand provokes it to charge at the opponent. The backward movement of the elephant shows that it fails to show any impact on Bhīma. Its front legs lean backwards and the hind legs are bent. Its tail is raised. The rider is
comparatively small in size. His sacred thread and the long hair held as a bun behind his head are vaguely visible. The shape and pose of the animal is natural. Bhīma wearing *kirītāmakuṭa*, *ratnakundālas* and other jewels is dressed in shorts having criss-cross design. (Plate – 81A)

II. THE SOUMYANĀDHA TEMPLE, NANDALUR – KRISHNA SHOWING VISVARŪPA:

On one of the pillars in the *mukhamandapa*, in this temple, which is thickly coated with lime many times a scene very rarely represented in sculpture is seen. It is Krishna showing *visvarūpa*. The Kauravas attempt to arrest him when he went to Hastināpura as the envoy of the Pāṇḍavas. Then he shows them his multiform or *visvarūpa*. He assumes a giant form, which reaches the sky. The Kouravas are stunned and fall unconscious. This is a very interesting incident in Krishna’s life, which is described in the *Mahābhārata*.44

Here Krishna reveals his multiform which occupies the entire universe. He rises up to the skies demolishing the buildings in which the Kauravas try to arrest him. He has ten arms. The upper most arms hold *sankha* and *chakra* and the other hold various weapons. His lower hands are in *abhaya* and *varada*. He places his bent left leg on a falling building from the compartments of which various heads (those of Kauravas) are seen. He wears a crown, big *ratnakundālas* and *pūrṇöruka*. It is 1' x 2' in size. (Plate – 81B)

III. THE TRIKŪTĒŚVARA TEMPLE, PUSHPAGIRI – BHĪMA AND BHAGADATTA:

The fight between Bhīma and Bhagadatta in the battle of Kurukshētra is repeatedly depicted in the miniature panels around the pillars in this temple. The panels measure 6" x 6" in size. In one of them Bhīma stands erect with legs outstretched
and the club held straight in right hand. The animal holding his left hand struggles to pull him. (Plate – 82A)

IV. THE RUINED TEMPLE, VALLÚR:

The same theme is found in one of the miniature panels of an octagonal band, which decorate the pillars in the mukhamandapa. It measures 6" x 6" in size. Bhīma and the elephant are closer to each other in this panel. Bhīma keeps his left hand around the head of the elephant holding its left tusk and is ready to strike it with his club. He wears a peculiar crown, heavy yagnopavita and shorts. He is pressing the elephant’s front right leg with his left toes. The animal tries to retreat while the rider leaning backward appear as if he tries to avoid the club. (Plate – 82B)

V. THE CHENNAKESAVA TEMPLE COMPLEX, PUSHPAGIRI – GĪTÓPADĒSA:

The south wall of the Santāna Mallēśvara temple contains between two beautifully designed pilasters a unique scene depicting Gītōpadēsa or Krishna teaching Gīta to Arjuna. Dr.V.K. Rao first identified the panel. It measures 14" x 16" in size. It interrupts the Kirātārjunīyam panels and hence appears out of place here.

Krishna is seated on a platform at a higher level than the one on which Arjuna is standing. His right hand points to Arjuna while the left in lōlahasta pose is supported by the raised left knee. His sukhasana posture is ideal to sit for a long time. He is four armed. In upper hands he holds chakra and sankha. He wears a kirita, ratnakundalas, kēyūras, hāras, kankaṇas, kaṭibandha and yagnopavita. His shorts are covered by another cloth with attractive knot at the centre. His face reveals his concentration. But his fingers are too long and disproportionate to his physique. Arjuna stands by his side turning his head to right. His hands are in anjali. His bow is in the left arm. The quiver
on his right shoulder is full of arrows. He is attentive and receives the message with rapt attention. The designs of his crown and dress are different from those of Krishna. They show pleasing diversity. The soldiers shown in the arch at the top and the elephants moving in opposite directions below give the panel a touch of busy battle field. (Plate – 83A)

VI. BHĪMA & KUBĒRA:

Bhīma’s confrontation with Kubēra during his attempt to fetch Sougandhika flowers for Draupadi is another unique representation in sculpture found here.

On the north wall of the Santāna Mallēśvara temple the panel is found at the top of the base in a recess. It is partly mutilated. As per the Mahābhārata a Sougandhika flower, famous for its great fragrance, falls near Draupadi when she and Bhīma were taking a walk in the forest during their vanavāsa. At the request of the former Bhīma sets out towards north to fetch the flowers, which are in the garden of Kubēra. On the way he meets Hanumān and receives his blessings. Later he enters the lake of Kubēra, which is full of such flowers. When the guardians try to stop him he defeats them. Kubēra comes to fight but after realizing the identity of the intruder he befriends him and gives him many flowers.45 This episode is not found anywhere else in this region nor is reported by any scholar from other regions.

The panel, here, is in two stages. In the first Bhīma with the club and Kubēra with his sword and shield are about to attack each other. They are shown on both extreme sides of the panel. Near the left hand of Bhīma a creeper with a leaf and a flower at its top is depicted on a slab. Both the male figures are profusely ornamented. Their garments and jewellery reveal different designs.
Kubéra requests Bhíma to forgive him with folded hands. The latter holds his hands suggesting him to forget the entire incident. Their weapons are shown behind them. But their anklets, which are shown in the first stage, are missing and the designs of their garments differ from those in the first stage. The shield of Kubéra has vertical bands here while in the previous stage it has a floral design. (Plate – 83B)

VII. BHÍMA FACING BHAGADATTA WHILE ARJUNA COMES TO HIS RESCUE:

It is found on the eastern outer wall of the Chennakéśava temple, Pushpagiri in two stages. The first stage shows Bhíma attacking Bhagadatta during Kurukshétra war and the second to its left shows Arjuna coming to his rescue.

When Bhagadatta is causing havoc in the army of Pándavas Bhíma attacks him. Arjuna watches the long drawn battle and decides to help his brother. He requests Krishna to turn the chariot towards Bhagadatta, joins the fight and finally kills him along with his elephant supratíka. The first stage is found depicted at many places but the two stages are found together only at Pushpagiri in this region. The two panels are carved side by side on the same wall. The first measures 18" x 16" while the second is 16" x 16" in size.

In the first panel Bhíma holding the raised trunk of the elephant with his left hand is about to strike it with his gada. Bhagadatta is goading his mount to charge and is ready to strike the opponent with his club. Another soldier with a club is seated behind him. The elephant, decorated with chains and bells, tries to break free. Its open mouth, raised tail and bent legs reveal its struggle. The rider with his long beard appears as old as he is described in the epic. The flaw in the panel is the size of the weapons. Bhíma's club looks like a lotus. That of his opponent is like a flywhisk and that of his assistant is
still smaller in size. But for it the vigorous action shown here is praise worthy. (Plate – 84A)

The next panel is a beauty. The figures of Krishna as charioteer and Arjuna as the warrior on the chariot are full of life. Krishna is four armed, holding *chakra* and *sankha* in upper hand and the whip in lower right. He pulls the reins to stop the galloping horses. The peacock feather in his crown is attractive. He is not shown with a peacock feather in the crown in other panels. The chariot is naturally depicted. The position of the horses suggests an abrupt stop and a changed course.

Arjuna turned to left looks yonder intently, perhaps, at the scene in the previous panel. Hanumān is shown at the top of his flag post, as Arjuna’s flag is known as *Kapidhvaja*. Both the panels are in very bold relief. (Plate – 84B)

**VIII. ARJUNA & KARNA IN BATTLE:**

This is a crucial stage in the battle of Kurukshetra. When Karna is anointed as General of the Army, Salya is requested to be his charioteer as he is the only one among Kouravas who knows *Asvahridaya* or psychology of the horses and can match the skill of Krishna as charioteer. Salya accepts the offer reluctantly as he feels it is below his dignity to drive the chariot of the son of a charioteer or *siitaputra* i.e., Karna. So he keeps on discouraging Karna during his fight with Arjuna.\(^6\) The episode narrated here describes the above incident. It measures 15" x 22" in size and it is found in the north outer wall of the Chennakesava temple, Pushpagiri.

Arjuna and Karna, standing on their chariots in *āliḍha* pose, are engaged in a fierce battle. While Arjuna has already released an arrow, the latter is still picking up one from his quiver. Moreover Arjuna is shooting his arrow with left hand as he is known as *savyasāchi* (one who can release arrows with both hands). It shows Arjuna’s
superiority in archery. He is shown in bigger size. The chariots are so close that the horses with their raised front legs try to push each other. Krishna, pulling the reins, is advising or warning the opponents. The kapidhvaja is prominently seen where as Karna’s flag post does not clearly show his symbol, the lion.47

Salya standing on the chariot, turns to the rider and seems to discourage him with the right fore finger in tarjani. The chariots are attractive, the poses of the figures are natural and the expressions are real. Though carved in low relief the panel reveals good conception and fine execution. (Plate – 85A)

IX. BHIMA & DUŚŚĀSANA FIGHTING WITH CLUBS:

This is another interesting episode from the great battle. Bhima vows to tear open the chest of Duśśāsana as the latter insulted Draupadi by trying to undress her in public.48 When he confronts Duśśāsana in the battle he avenges the insult.49 The panel shows two warriors with clubs attacking each other. The one with out the crown may be Bhima as he is not shown with a crown in the other panels dealing with the battle of Kurukshētra. He looks stronger and is stopping the opponent’s blow with his left hand, which indicates his superiority. The other one may be Duśśāsana. He points at the chest of Bhima or he may be threatening his rival to taste his next blow. He cannot be Duryōdana as the latter is depicted in two other panels as engaged in club fight with Bhima. Both the figures, squatting a bit, are immersed in a fierce battle. This panel appears on the east outer wall just above the Bhima-Bhagadatta panel. It measures 13" x 15" in size. (Plate – 85B)
X. BHIMA – DURYODHANA GADAYUDDHA:

This is another important episode from the epic. It is carved on a heavy pilaster on the same wall. It depicts the crucial stage in the fight between the two warriors who are experts in gadā yuddha i.e., fight with the clubs. According to the Mahābhārata during the prolonged club fight between Bhīma and Duryodhana Bhīma hits his opponent on the thighs as per the advice of Krishna. Hitting below the belt is not permitted in club fight. Still he does so as he vowed to break the thighs of Duryodhana when the latter insulted Draupadi.

This scene is depicted twice in this temple. In the present panel Duryodhana to left and Bhīma to right are engaged in a fierce club fight. Duryodhana keeps his left hand on his left thigh. His right knee touching the ground indicates that he is bucking down as the result of the blow. Bhīma holds his club at a higher level that that of his opponent. His legs are also bent but not as much as the other. His right hand points at the thigh of the other figure suggesting the target of his blow. Both appear equally built and similarly dressed but as Duryodhana is the crown prince he is shown with a crown, better design on his shorts, where as Bhīma does not have a crown. (Plate – 86A)

XI. KRISHNA SIGNALLING TO BHIMA:

This panel also describes the same scene but with more details. It is found in the narrow gala at the top of the base of the south outer wall of the Santāna Mallēśvara temple. It is in two stages. In the first Krishna is suggesting to Bhīma (not shown in the panel) to hit his rival on the thigh. He is crouching with right knee touching the ground and left leg bent. His right hand is placed on his right thigh and left fore finger and the little finger point at the next panel. He is four armed. He keeps chakra and sankha in upper hands. A club is shown upside down behind him. (Plate – 86B)
XII. BHĪMA BREAKING DURYŌDHANA’S THIGHS:

In the next panel Duryōdhana, hit below the belt, is surprised at the violation of the rules of the battle. His left leg is broken as its position suggests. He keeps his left hand on his left thigh. His eyes and parted lips suggest that he is questioning the validity of the blow he received. His right hand firmly holding the gada indicates that he still has the fighting spirit. Next to him Bhīma also crouching on the ground, points at the left leg of his rival with his left fore and little fingers. He holds a club in the right hand. (Plate – 87A)

These two panels are the work of an amateur. The carving is bold. But the fingers are too big. In the second panel Bhīma’s left little finger is much bigger than his fore finger. The limbs are crudely carved. A few vertical bands suggest the garments. Jewellery and crowns do not reveal any skill. Still the episode selected and the eagerness to reveal some expression and violent action can be appreciated in this panel.

XIII. THE MALLIKĀRJUNA TEMPLE, ŚRĪṢAILAM - ARJUNA PROCEEDING TO KURUKSHĒTRA:

On the south prākāra of the Śrīśailam temple is a peculiar panel depicting Arjuna and Krishna with a lady sitting on his right thigh travelling on a chariot. All the three figures are on a lengthy chariot. Arjuna is standing with bow and arrow. The flag shows a monkey. It is kapidhvaja of Arjuna. His pose suggests his readiness to fight. Krishna seated in padmāsana holds the reins of the horses with his lower right hand and a flute held as an arrow in lower left. His upper arms carry sankha and chakra. Seated on his right thigh is a woman with a crown holding a padma in her right hand. Two men dressed as servants play on drums and bugle behind the chariot.
It cannot be identified as Krishna abducting Rukmini because Arjuna cannot be shown in the scene. It cannot be abduction of Subhadra because Krishna cannot be shown on the chariot in this episode. So it must be identified as Arjuna proceeding to the battle of Kurukshetra as his kapidhvaja and Krishna’s presence as his charioteer indicate. The presence of Krishna’s consort in the panel only proves the lack of adequate knowledge of the sculptor and reflects the educational backwardness of the region. (Plate – 87B)

XIV. STORY OF SIBI:

Emperor Sibi is known for his charity and compassion. To test his qualities Indra and Agni take the forms of an eagle and a dove. The eagle chases the dove, which seeks shelter from Sibi. But the eagle demands its rightful and natural pray or in exchange an equal amount of flesh from the emperor’s own body. Sibi unhesitatingly offers flesh from his thigh to save the dove. Pleased with him the gods appear in their original form and bless him. This story is found in the aranyakapara of the Mahabharata.52

It is found narrated in a slight different version in a panel found on the south prakara of the Sriailam temple. It is in two parts. In the first, the emperor seated in padmasana is cutting his head with a knife. To his right the dove is seen. To his left a balance is shown. On one side is the dove and on another, which weighs less, is the flesh of the emperor. Above the balance the eagle is shown watching the act intently. In the second part Sibi stands in anjali facing Siva and Parvati who are blessing him. They are seated on their mount, Nandi. (Plate – 88A) The Mahabharata does not mention Siva in the episode. As the temple is dedicated to Siva all mythological characters are linked to him.
XV. THE KÄSIVISVÉŚVARA TEMPLE, PENUKONḌA — DHARMARĀJA AND DURYÖDHANA PLAYING DICE:

As per the Mahābhārata Duryōdhana wants to ruin the lives of the Pāndavas. On the advice of Sakuni, his maternal uncle, he invites Dharmarāja to a game of dice and defeats him by deceit. Dharmarāja bets his wife Draupadi in the game but looses her along with his brothers. To insult the Pāndavas further Duryōdhana orders his brother Duśśāsana to bring Draupadi to the court and undress her. The lady prays Krishna and saves her honour. This is described in the sabhāparva of the Mahābhārata.

This interesting scene from the Mahābhārata is found carved in low relief on the south outer wall of the Siva temple, Penukonda in two panels. The first panel shows Duryōdhana and Dharmarāja playing dice in Hastināpura. They are shown inside a mandapa seated cross-legged facing each other. In the centre the board of dice is shown. Behind Dharmarāja a pile of boxes and clothes are shown indicating his loss in the game. He is shown a shade taller then the other man.

XVI. HUMILIATION OF DRAUPADI:

In the next panel Duryōdhana is ordering his brother Duśśāsana to pull out the clothes of Draupadi. The lady is shown praying with hands held high in anjali for help while Duśśāsana standing in the centre pulls out her saree. This incident though in low relief effectively brings out the humiliation of Draupadi. (Plate – 88B)

XVII. THE VENKAṬARAMANA TEMPLE, TĀDIPATRI - ARJUNA SHOOTING THE FISH TARGET:

The episode describing Arjuna shooting the fish target and his marriage with Draupadi is depicted in detail in ten panels on the different sides of a pillar in the mahāmandapa of the Venkaṭaramana temple, Tādipatri. The panels at the bottom of the
pillar measures 13" x 17" in size where as those at the centre and top portions measure 13" x 14" in size.

The episode is narrated in the Adiparva in the Mahābhārata. According to the epic king Drupada announces svāpavara (selection of the bridegroom by the bride) of his daughter Draupadi. He arranges a rotating fish target at the ceiling. He, who hits it with an arrow by looking at its reflection in the water below, will be selected as the bridegroom. The Pāṇḍavas who are in disguise as brahmins during this period visit the place. Arjuna shoots the fish target and wins Draupadi.

Here the narration starts at the top portion of the pillar at its west side. The first panel shows Draupadi standing with a garland in her hands. Next to her Arjuna, is standing with his right hand on his chest suggesting that he would shoot the fish target. He is looking at Draupadi. He wears a crown, many jewels and is dressed in pūrnārūka. It should be remembered here that when all Kshatriyas failed Arjuna sitting among the brahmins rose to hit the target but he is not dressed here as a brahmin.

In the second panel he receives the blessings of a sage, as it is auspicious to get the blessings of the brahmins. The sage holding a water vessel in left hand points his right hand down wards. His long hair, rosary heads, thick yagnopavītā and dhōti give him a respectable appearance. Arjuna is again shown with the crown but wears on ardharūka. The sage may be Dhoumya, the priest of the Pāṇḍavas.

In the third panel carved at the bottom of the same pillar Sahadēva, Nakula and Bhīma are wishing him goodluck with raised right hands. Sahadēva in extreme left is shown in profile standing in a rigid position. Next to him Nakula, a shade taller, is in three-fourths profile with an upper cloth held in left hand. Next to him Bhīma facing the on looker is standing in tribhanga. He keeps his left hand in lōlahastha pose. He is
taller and stouter than the other two. All the three figures sport 'U' shaped vaishnavanama on their foreheads, wear crowns, many jewels and are dressed in purnorukas with pearl design. Their pose, size and height are in proportion to their age. (Plate – 89A)

In the fourth panel shown at the bottom of north phase a king is seated on a pedestal. He points at a bow placed to his right. He wears a crown, attractive ornaments and is dressed in a beautifully designed lower cloth reaching his ankles. He may be Dharmaraja asking Arjuna to try his luck with the bow. In the sixth panel at the centre of the same pillar Arjuna is aiming at the fish target. The fish is shown just above the bow. His bent head suggest that he is looking at the reflection of the target below. His dress worn tightly around his thighs looks like shorts. (Plate – 89B)

Just above this in another panel king Drupada and his wife are seated on a pedestal. Their right forefingers point at the top portion, perhaps, at the fish target. Their crowned heads bent in opposite directions add beauty to the panel. The king holds what looks like a rajadanda (a symbol of authority) in his left hand. Their garments and jewellery are befitting for a royal couple. (Plate – 90A)

At the top of the same side Arjuna shooting the target is shown. The fish with an arrow pierced in its body is falling down. Arjuna still holds the bow in raised left hand. At the top of the north side Arjuna’s marriage is depicted. He stands next to Draupadi, but does not look at her. He is pouring talaambraulu over Draupadi. The bride leans to her left but is not facing Arjuna. Both look straight at the onlooker, which is not natural.

On the south side of the pillar the same scene is continued. Here they more or less face each other. Draupadi keeps her right hand on her thigh and the left hand hangs freely. She looks up at her husband. Arjuna’s open palms suggest that he emptied the
talambālu on her head. The tenth panel shows Arjuna leading his bride. He holds Draupadi’s left wrist firmly with his right hand. It may indicate circumambulating the holy fire after marriage, which is known as pradakshina or it may indicate Arjuna leading his wife to his house. The continuity in garment and jewellery of the figures is maintained. (Plate – 90B)

**REMARKS**: Throughout the narration the relief is bold, details of dress and jewellery well depicted and the size of the figures are determined according to their age and importance in the panel. An attempt to show variety in dress and jewellery can be noticed. The crowns of each figure look different from the others.

The ability to narrate an interesting episode in the small place available on the pillars deserves appreciation. At the same time the originality is sacrificed. Pāṇḍavas should not be shown with royal attire and crowns as they are disguised as brahmins at this stage. But to make it easy for the layman to identify the story originality is sacrificed.

**XVIII. THE VĪRABHADRĀ TEMPLE, LĒPĀKSHI - DRAUPADI, ARJUNA & OTHERS:**

Some scenes from the Mahābhārata are shown in the paintings in the nātyamandapa of the Vīrabhadra temple, Lēpākshī. But due to their sad state of preservation they are difficult to be identified. The following are some scenes, which can be recognized. In the east end of the sealing of the nātyamandapa an eight-armed Bhairava is shown standing in tribhanga. There are two male devotees to his right. The taller of the two is identified as king Drupada worshipping Bhairava just before holding the swayamvara of his daughter, Draupadi. The next scene shows Drupada seated on a pedestal with Draupadi on his left thigh. Two women are standing behind. In the next
Arjuna stands firmly on his left leg and with slightly bent right leg drawing his bowstring fully. There is a small oval shaped bowl of water near his feet. The fish is shown falling down. The male figure behind Arjuna is identified as Krishna. This theme recalls identical sculptural representations in Hoysala art. The same theme in the Virupaksha temple at Hampi executed during Vijayanagara period shows greater skill.

XIX. PÄNDAVAS RECEIVING DRAUPADI:

In the next scene, which is faded beyond recognition a few figures are shown standing. They are identified as the Pändava brothers receiving Draupadi. Drupada and Draupadi are shown standing. Two men are in the act of pouring akshatas or auspicious grain on Draupadi. The five Pändava brothers led by Dharmaraja in front form a compact group. The actual marriage celebration is not shown.

FOOT NOTES

2. R.R., Ayodhyakānda, pp.107-111.
3. Ibid., p.108. (In this work the boy is known as Yagnadatta. He is born to a vaisya father and sudra mother. V.R refers him as Sravana Kumāra. It also does not mention him as a brahmin boy).
9. A.L. Dalla Piccola, The Rāmachandra Temple at Vijayanagara, p.90 and panel 51. (Here Sāgara is shown emerging from the waters as an elderly respectful man).
11. Ibid., Yuddhakanda, p.444.
17. Ibid., p.44 (As per V.R. Ahalya became a heap of ash but not a rock).
18. Ibid., Yuddhakanda, pp.79-81.
19. Ibid., p.91.
30. R.R., Yuddhakanda, p.466 (V.R. does not refer to the Amritabhanda).
32. R.R., Ayodhyakanda, pp.117-125.
34. Ibid., Sarga 69-73, pp.529-562.
35. Ibid., Sarga 74, pp.563-570.
41. Ibid., Yuddhakāṇḍa, p.460.
42. Pūrvagāḍhālahari, p.311.
43. Āndhramahābhāratam (A.M.), Yuddhapanchakam, Dronaparva, Āsvāsa-1, pp.147-151.
45. Ibid., Aranyaparvam, Āsvāsa-3, pp.268-286.
46. Ibid., Karnaparvam, Āsvāsa-3, pp.197-213.
47. Ibid., Āsvāsa-1, Verse-60.
50. Ibid., Salyaparvam, Āsvāsa-2, pp.395-403.
52. Ibid., Aranyaparvam, Āsvāsa-3, pp.246-248.
53. Ibid., Ādiparva, Āsvāsa-2, pp.197-208.
56. Ibid., p.40.
57. Ibid., p.75.
58. Ibid., p.40.