CHAPTER II

SRIPATI PANDITA AND SIVALENKA MANCHANA

Introduction

From the writings of Palakuriki Somanatha, Sripati Pandita, Sivalenka Manohana and Mallikarjuna Pandita described as panditatrayam (Pandita trinity) were known as the propagators of devotional Saivism. This form of Saivism is commonly known as Virasaivism in Andhra. The present chapter deals with the first two of the three Pandita, Sripati and Manohana. Of the two, the source material on the latter is very very scanty and hence this chapter is mostly concerned with Sripati Pandita.

Sripati is believed to be the earliest of the three Pandits. Many of the later writers who trace their descent to him have described him as a Virasaiva. Since the time of Srikarabhashyamu, a Sanskrit work, being a commentary on the Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana from the Virasaiva standpoint, brought to light as the work of Sripati, he became all the more important as the earliest Virasaiva. Some
scholars like B S L Hanumantha Rao comparing Sripati with Ekantada Ramayya who was given credit by K A W Sastri as the originator of the faith, says that the Virasaiva traditions were prevalent in Karnataka and Andhra much earlier than Basava.

But others have expressed doubts regarding Sripati's authorship of the Bhashya and if this is the truth there is little scope to claim him as a Virasaiva. So to decide whether he was a Virasaiva or not his authorship of the Bhashya has to be settled. And this in its turn needs an examination of the various theories put forward by the scholars on the date of Sripati and the work. First let us examine the historicity of Sripati.

**The historicity of Sripati Pandita**

As in the case of the other religious leaders his life also is overlaid with legends making him appear semi-legendary and semi-historical. However, the inscription of the Pallava king Pallaketa and many literary accounts of Sripati help us to establish his historicity.

**Sripati in the early works**

To begin with, Mallikarjuna Pandita was the first
poet to mention the name of Sripati. We learn from his writings that Sripati was an ardent Saivite who believed in the superiority of Siva. To establish it, it has been said that once he held fire in his upper cloth and transferred it to a nearby sa introduce tree at Vijayawada.

After Mallikarjuna, Somanatha, the greatest Virasaiva poet of Andhra, made several references in his works to Sripati and described his fire miracle in different contexts and with slight modifications.

Sripati in Basavapuranamu

Somanatha would have us believe in this work that Sripati performed the miracle in the court of Anantapala to prove that one devotee of Siva was greater than one crore of Brahmins. It is to be noted here that Anantapala cited by Somanatha has been identified with Anantapala dandanayaka under the Western Chalukyas who ruled over the Andhra region during the first quarter of 12th century.

Sripati in Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya Charitra

A passing reference to the same miracle was made by Somanatha in his M.P Charitra. In the Mahimapakaranam of this work, the author described Mallikarjuna as having
included the name of Sripati in the list of Trayodasaganas and thus paid him a very high tribute. Then while describing the ascent of Mount Srisaila by the devotees, Somanatha says that the devotees tried to forget the difficulties of climbing by singing songs in praise of Sripati and other devotees.

Epigraphical evidence to the fire miracle

The inscription of Pallaketa, referred to earlier, found in the court-yard of the Mallesvara temple at Vijayawada, mentions the fire miracle of one Panditaradhya who is identified with Sripati Pandita. It is a mutilated lithic record containing many legends. It mentions one Mahamandalesvara Pallaketa bhupala of the Kaduvetti dynasty and a subordinate of the Chalukya king (name is not given) of Vengi.

Among the other legends, the inscription records that one pious devotee of Siva by name Panditaradhya proclaimed to the world that the devotees of Siva were superior to the divine sages and illustrated the truth of it by binding live coal in a piece of China muslin with a tender twig of a Sami tree. God Mallesvara was pleased and manifested himself before his devotee.
The date of the inscription is not known and no more details of the king Pallaketa of this inscription are known. However, H Krishna Sastrī, the Government Epigraphist suggested that it might be referred to the period of the Kakatiya rulers, king Ganapatī and his daughter Rudramba. V Yasodadevi mentions one Pallaketa in association with one Siddhayadeva Maharaja. She says that both these rulers have come to light from three records, two found at Bezawada and one at Motupalli. They claim their descent from Mukkanti of Kaduvetti and were of Bharadvaja gotra and entitled Pallava Kulatilaka. Two of their records register grants for the merit of Ganapatideva and Rudrama of the Kakatiyas. The third record at Motupalli of 1231 mentions a gift of a village Aduru to god Prasannakesava of that place for the merit of his father Mallideva and Kakatiya Ganapatī. One of the two above mentioned Bezawada records is dated S 1150 corresponding to 1228. Since Pallaketa bhupala was mentioned along with Siddhayadeva Maharaja it can be taken for granted that the former also lived about 1228. This Pallaketa, was known to be of Bharadvaja gotra and of Kaduvetti dynasty and he could be identified with Pallaketa of the inscription mentioning the fire miracle of Panditaradnya as the name, gotra and dynasty are identical.
Among the later writers, Gubbiya Mallanarya who lived in the 16th century (1513) was the first poet to mention the name of Sripati. In his Bhavachintaratnam, he pays rich tributes to Sripati and the other two Pandits. It is to be noted that all the three poets so far seen did not give other details about Sripati except paying him compliments either for his miracle or his devotion.

But still later writers belonging roughly to the later half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries, described Sripati as a Virasaiva and tried to trace their descent to his line.

Of the later writers, Pochiraju Viranamatya whose known date is 1826 is the most important one. He was the author of many works and he made a reference to Sripati in almost all his works. In Manuvamsapuram, he stated that Sripati was the Guru of the Tellikas (oil-mongers) at Vijayawada and also of Chalukya Vismurdhana Maharajdevabhallana Vira Perumala Pratapa-chola and both the king and Sripati were said to have been living in S 1109 (1187).
In his another work Bhallanacharithram also, he made a reference to Sripati. The author dedicated the work to one Moggana, the native of Bandaru (Machilipatnam). The latter was stated to be the disciple of Sambhulinga, the son of Mahadevadesika who was born in the family of Sripati of the prosperous town of Vijayawatika. In Vibhuti Rudraksha Mahatmyam of the same author, the name of Sripati is mentioned. While dealing with the dedicatory part of his work, the poet described in such a way that it would refer to either Sripati or Mahadeva. So it has been interpreted in both the ways. Ramakrishna Sastri states that the author dedicated the work to Sripati, while Adilakshmi says that it was dedicated to Mahadeva the author of Basavapuranamu.

Mahadeva Kavi

He is the above mentioned poet. He makes a reference to Sripati. He appears to have lived during the time of Pochiraju Virana mentioned above. In Basavapuranamu, he traced his descent to Sripati. He described that he was the son of Sambhulinga and grandson of Mahadeva of Kausika gotra. Thus it appears that he was the son of Sambhulinga, the guru of Moggana, as the other details tally with each other. Mahadeva Kavi gives an interesting
account of Sripati in the Avatarika of his work 28 According to it, Sripati was a famous Virasaiva guru living in the Mallesvara temple at Vijayawada. He had many followers including Anantapala - the ruling chief of the day. One day an outcaste Virasaiva devotee came to Sripati and informed him about his vrata according to which he had to feed six Mahesvaras or devotees of Siva a day and falling short of one also he had to cut his head according to the vow he took. So Sripati responded to the request of that devotee without any hesitation, went to his house and had his food with him. The Brahmins came to know of it and excommunicated him from their caste and threatened him that they would not supply him with the sacred fire. On hearing this, Sripati wanted to show them the greatness of Sivabhakti and thus performed the miracle of tying up the fire in his cloth. Thus the Brahmins had to go without fire and they had to request Sripati to release it.

Kasinadhuni Viranaradhyā was another poet who traced his descent to Sripati. The poet appears to have lived during the 19th century 29 In his work called Dharmaguptabhyudayamu, 30 he gives the same story 31 given above as to how Sripati performed the miracle but with slight modifications here and there. According to his
account when the Brahmins asked Sripati for explanation for accepting the food from an outcaste, the latter argued at length that one should not question the caste of the devotees of Siva since they believed in Sivadvaita i.e. the union of Jiva and Siva and quoted many Sastras in support of his view. The Brahmins could not appreciate his arguments and prohibited him from using the sacred fire which led Sripati to perform the miracle. Another poet called Nagalinga, the author of Pattabhiramavilasamu, traces his lineage to Sripati. The date of this poet is not known. According to the details given in his work, the author was known as the son of Viranaradhya or Viresalingam and the grandson of Sambhulinga—a descendant of Sripati.

Hayavadana Rao suggests that Sambhulinga cited above could be identified with the Guru of Moggana whose name also was the same. If Sambhulinga, the grandfather of Nagalinga and the Guru of Moggana were one and the same, it is quite likely that Sambhulinga was the father of Mahadeva also and Nagalinga's father must be the brother of Mahadeva Kavi. But according to the description of the latter in Basavapuramam, it is known that Sambhulinga had four sons—Mahadeva, the eldest the third one was said to be Virabhadra.
Since the other details given by Nagalinga tally with Mahadeva's account, Virabhadra mentioned by Mahadeva must have been Viranaradhya the father of Nagalinga. Virana appears to be an abbreviation of Virabhadra.

Halakatti, the Virasaiva Vachana Pitamaha of the present century, says that Sripati Pandita visited Basava at Kalyana. P B Desai also says the same thing. But both these authors do not quote the sources for their statements. Thus the different accounts of Sripati well attest to his historicity.

The date of Sripati

None of the literary works except Manuvamsapurana, discussed so far, mentions the date of Sripati. But since that work is of much later period and the ruler mentioned therein also cannot be identified with certainty, much weight should not be attached to the details unless they are well supported by other evidence. So now let us turn to the earlier works to fix a probable date to Sripati.

The earliest reference to Sripati was made by Mallikarjuna who lived in the 12th century. So it can be said that Sripati lived either in the same century or earlier than that but definitely not later than the 12th century.
some scholars however have argued that Sripati lived earlier than the 12th century and according to others he lived later than that. So let us first examine here the divergent dates assigned to Sripati by different scholars and their arguments in favour of the same.

1. Narayana Rao\(^{37}\) says that Sripati lived earlier than the 12th century.

2. Venkata Rao\(^{38}\) supported Narayana Rao's views and fixed the date of Sripati as 930, the date of the inscription of Yuddhamalla of which he considers Sripati to be the composer.

3. Hayavadana Rao\(^{39}\) assigned 1400 to Sripati taking various factors like i) the internal evidence of Srikarabhashya, ii) the inscriptions of Yuddhamalla, and iii) the literary evidence, into consideration. Mahadevan\(^{40}\) agreed with Hayavadana Rao's date.

4. Scholars like Prabhakara Sastri, Bandaru Tammayya, N Venkataramanayya, and Chaganti Seshayya accepting Somanatha's description of Sripati's association with Anantapala, expressed their view that the former lived in the 12th century. Now let us examine the
validity of these views

Narayana Rao

He did not give any weight to Somanatha's account regarding the contemporaneity of Sripati with Anantapala saying that the name of the former is not found in any of the inscriptions of Anantapala. Narayana Rao doubted the historical knowledge of Somanatha and to point out Somanatha's ignorance of certain historical information, the former said that Somanatha described Kumarapala Gurjara as a great Virasaiva in M P Charittra. But according to Narayana Rao, Kumarapala was a famous ruler of Gujarat in the 12th century and he was a Jain. Thus disbelieving Somanatha's information about Anantapala as a contemporary of Sripati, Narayana Rao put forward the following points in support of his argument that Sripati lived earlier than the twelfth century.

1. The name of Sripati Pandita was mentioned in Basava-
puranamu and M P Charittra along with the names of some devotees like Pushpadanta, Aripuri, Kannappa, Pillanayanaru and other devotees who were known as Puratanas and they were known to have lived earlier than Basava. So Sripati also must be taken to have lived earlier than Basava i.e. earlier than the 12th century A.D.
2. Basava was described by Somanatha to have quoted the example of Sripati accepting food from an untouchable and about his fire miracle, when Basava was accused by Bijjala for accepting food from Sivanagumayya - an outcaste devotee. Since Basava quoted Sripati the latter should have lived earlier than the former.

3. Sripati has been described as the earliest of the three Pandita. So he must have lived earlier than Mallikarjuna who was known to have lived in the 12th century.

4. In M P Charitra, Kumarapala was described to have mentioned the name of Sripati. Since the former lived in the 12th century, Sripati must have lived earlier.

5. While describing the fire miracle of Sripati, Mallikarjuna suggests in Sivatatvasaramu that it was quite famous by his time by saying Ala Jammi (i.e., that famous Sam). So it must have been performed earlier than the 12th century.

Venkata Rao

Agreeing with the view of Narayana Rao, Venkata Rao pointed out what according to him was another mistake of
Somanatha saying that the latter wrongly stated Bijjala who was a Kalachuri king as a Chalukya. In support of the view, that Sripati lived earlier than the twelfth century, he says that

1 Though the date of Pallakata's inscription which mentions the fire miracle is not given there, Venkata Rao stated that it was assigned to the 11th century by the epigraphists and so the miracle mentioned therein might have taken place earlier i.e. somewhere in the 10th century.

2 As has been stated already, he attributed the composition of the inscription of Yuddhamalla II to Sripati and assigned the date of the inscription to the latter viz., 927-930.

Before going to know the details of this inscription and the views of Venkata Rao, let us examine the various arguments in favour of the view that Sripati lived earlier than the 12th century. To find fault with the historical knowledge of Somanatha, his reference to Kumarapala was cited saying that he was a famous ruler of Gujarat and a Jain. But no evidence is quoted in support of this statement. Moreover, Mallikarjuna described Kumarapala as a
great devotee of Siva. According to his information, the latter went to Kailasa with his horse and wives. If one has to apply the argument of Narayana Rao here it can be stated that since Mallikarjuna of the 12th century quoted Kumarapala, the latter should have lived earlier than the 12th century but not in the same century. Whether Kumarapala was a historical person or not, a Jain or Saiva, he was mentioned as a Saiva by Mallikarjuna and it is obvious that Somanatha borrowed the matter about Kumarapala from the work of Mallikarjuna and developed it into a story in M P Charitra as he did with many other parts of Sivatatvavasaramu. So just because of Kumarapala's account one need not find fault with Somanatha's historical knowledge.

Regarding Bijjala being called a Chalukya, Venkataramanayya stated that Somanatha was not a contemporary of Bijjala or of any one his successors. The art of writing history was not known those days as it was not the practice to record all the minor details of history. Bijjala might have been considered as a Chalukya king in Somanatha's days. Probably for this reason, the Araviti rulers who were said to belong to the Chalukya dynasty wrongly claimed Bijjala as one of their ancestors. So according
to Venkataramanayya, it was not a mistake, when Somanatha called Bijjala a Chalukya king because the latter was so called by many others also. Then what might be the reason for this mistake? It must be probably due to the following reason. The Kalachuri rulers from the time of Jogama, the grandfather of Bijjala, were said to have enjoyed a privileged position in the court of the Chalukyas by having matrimonial alliance with the imperial family. Jogama's daughter, the aunt of Bijjala, was given in marriage to Vikramaditya VI. Fermadi, Bijjala's father, married the daughter of Vikramaditya by his senior queen and thus Bijjala was the son of the Chalukya princess. Taking advantage of his privileged position, Bijjala was said to have exercised great influence in the Chalukya court. This must be the main reason for Bijjala to be mistaken for a Chalukya prince by Somanatha and others.

Leaving aside some minor details here and there, it can be said that much of the historical information furnished by Somanatha is proved to be correct. He was the first poet to describe the life and activities of Basava and Mallikarjuna. Basava was described as dandanayaka in the court of Bijjala. Madivalu Machayya, Chennabasava, Allamaprabhu and some other devotees who were mentioned by
Somanatha were famous figures during the time of Basava Choda II, the ruler of Velanadu, mentioned by Somanatha, as a contemporary of Mallikarjuna, was a historical person who lived in the later half of the 12th century. Moreover, it is interesting to note that while doubting the historical knowledge of Somanatha on the one hand both these scholars gave so much importance to the other details given by Somanatha and quoted them in support of their views. It was Somanatha who wrote that Basava quoted the name of Sripati and that Kumarapala mentioned the account of Sripati. It was Somanatha who included the name of Sripati in the list of the Puratana Saiva devotees of earlier times. But there it can be seen that Somanatha cited the names of the other devotees like Madivalu Machayya and others who lived in the 12th century in association with Sripati and in Parvata Prakaranamu his name was mentioned along with Pandita and Basava. Thus it is not justifiable to argue, that since Sripati was named in the list of the Puratanas, he must have lived earlier than the 12th century.

In the same way, it can be said that just because Mallikarjuna described Sripati, the latter should have lived earlier than him. Mallikarjuna mentioned the names
of many of his contemporaries like Madivalu Machayya, Bijjala and Basava.

As has been seen already, Pallaketa's inscription was assigned to the time of Ganapatideva and Rudramba but not to the 11th century as was wrongly stated by Venkata Rao. So it is untenable to argue that Sripati lived in the 10th century.

Sripati Pandita and the Inscription of Yuddamalla

The above mentioned inscription was found at Bezawada and is composed in Madhvakara metre and is assigned to 990. On account of the following reasons, Venkata Rao argued that it was composed by Sripati and hence the date of the inscription could be taken according to him as the date of Sripati also.

1. The inscription is found at Vijayawada and Sripati was known to have performed the miracle at that place.

2. The inscription is found in the Mallesvara temple where the miracle was said to have been performed.

3. It mentions the word goraga which is connected with Virasaivism and Sripati was known to be a Virasaiva.
It was composed in the Madhyakkara metre which was said to be the native metre and used very much by the Saiva poets to spread their religion.

Sripati was described as a poet by Somanatha.

But these arguments do not appear to be quite sound. The inscription does not mention either the name of Sripati or his miracle. Just because he was said to have performed the miracle at Vijayawada the inscription cannot be attributed to him. In the same way, neither Mallikarjuna nor Somanatha described that Sripati performed the miracle in the Mallesvara temple at Bezawada. The word goraga mentioned in the inscription is in no way connected with Virasaivism. Venkataramanayya observes that the word was used in the inscriptions long before the origin of Virasaivism. It was derived from the Sanskrit word and cannot be taken as a word signifying Virasaivism. It is too early to spot out Virasaivism by the time of the inscription i.e., 930 either in Karnataka or in Andhra. Yuddhamalla who is mentioned in the inscription was not a Virasaiva. It is known from the inscription that he built a temple for god Kartikeya and a Matha attached to that temple. The entrance of non-Saivas to that Matha was strictly...
prohibited. It was meant only for the goragas, i.e., to the Saiva mendicants. If others who were not goragas tried to stay in the Matha, it was warned that they would derive as much sin as that of committing murder in Varanasi. It is also stated that those who take care of the Matha without allowing non-Saiva to enter it would be blessed with as much punya as they would derive by celebrating one Asvamedha sacrifice. Thus it is obvious from this description that the inscription is in no way connected with Virasaivism as it does not approve the worship of Kartikeya or any other god and it is against the performing of any Vedic sacrifice.

The word goraga was used at different places by early Telugu writers, but it was never used to mean Virasaivism. In Kridabhiramamu, while describing the celebrations of god Mailara by Mailarabhatas (the devotees of Mailara) goraga women were dancing. The Telugu dictionaries explain the word as a Saiva mendicant who worships god Mailara. Sometimes, it has been used to mean a fourth caste servant who is employed in cleaning the temples.

Donappa says that goragas are to be found even today in Western Andhra and they belong to the Kuruba or
shepherd caste and known at present as goravayyalu and they are not Virasaivas. Thus it can be stated that the inscription of Yuddhamalla is not a Virasaiva inscription and its composition cannot be attributed to Sripati and so the date of the inscription cannot be accepted as the date of Sripati.

From the above discussion it can be said that the arguments of both Narayana Rao and Venkata Rao in favour of their opinions that Sripati lived earlier than the 12th century (and according to the latter he lived in the 10th century) are not acceptable.

Hayavadana Rao

According to Hayavadana Rao, Sripati must be posterior to Madhva. He says that Sripati refers to the doctrines of Sankara, Ramanuja and also Madhva and the latter was being mentioned both by name and implication. So Hayavadana Rao argues that the author of the Bhasha must be posterior to Madhva and because of this reason, Hayavadana Rao did not accept R Narasimhacharya's view saying that Sripati was the contemporary of Mallikarjuna and Basava. Taking into consideration the following point, he fixes the date of Sripati as C 1400.
1. Madhva lived about 1230. So Sripati should have lived after that date.

2. He should have lived before 1513 since it was the date of Bhavachintaratnam where Sripati was paid tributes by the author of the work. So Sripati should have lived in between Madhva and Gubbiya Mallanarya, the author of the above mentioned work.

3. Hayavadana Rao tried to identify certain Panditaradhya mentioned in an epigraph found in the ruined Mandapa of Kondavidu of S 1327 with Sripati Pandita. The record says one Damalapati Chennamanemgaru made a gift for the merit of his spiritual teacher Sirigiriyyamgaru who was said to be the grandson of Panditaradhya. Accepting it as a strong evidence, Hayavadana Rao stated that Sirigiriyya must have been at least forty years of age when the record was issued since he was mentioned as the spiritual guru, and at the rate of a gap of twenty years for each generation, Sripati should have been definitely living 40 years earlier to the date of the record i.e., in S 1287 corresponding to 1365 and taking that he lived little later also, the date can be set down to C 1400.

4. Accepting the suggestion of Krishna Sastri, that...
Pallaketa's inscription, which mentions the fire miracle of Panditaradhya, could be referred to the time of Ganapati and Rudramba, Hayavadana Rao says that the date of Rudramba i.e. 1295-1323^68 is a little bit early to Sripati, so it can be suggested that Sripati must have been an younger contemporary of queen Rudramba and lived long after the close of her reign. So he should have lived about 1400.

But the inscriptions evidence taken by Hayavadana Rao cannot be accepted for two reasons.

1. The identification of 'Panditaradhya of Kondavidu inscription' with Sripati is wrong. 'Panditaradhya' mentioned therein is described as one who obtained *Niluvugannulu* (extra pair of eyes on the forehead) and this refers to Mallikarjuna Pandita of Panditatrayam as he was famous for the miracle of pulling out and getting back the eyes along with a pair of extra eyes. So Sirigiriyya cited in that record must be the grandson of Mallikarjuna and not of Sripati. Coming to the second argument the dates shown for Rudramba are totally wrong. She ruled between 1261 and 1289 and the dates given to her by either Krishna Sastrī or Hayavadana Rao i.e. 1295 to 1323 are the
It appears that Hayavadana Rao was not aware of Mallikarjuna's reference to Sripati in Sivatryasaramu of the 12th century. Thus it is clear from the above discussion that the different dates assigned by Narayana Rao, Venkata Rao, and Hayavadana Rao to Sripati are not acceptable.

**Sripati lived in the 12th century**

As we have disposed of the theories that he lived earlier than the 12th century and about 1400, let us now see the probability of the other view viz., that he lived during the 12th century. It appears probable for two reasons:

1. Mallikarjuna of the 12th century made a reference to Sripati along with the other devotees of the same century like Basava and others.

2. According to Somanatha, Sripati performed the miracle in the court of Anantapala. Of the information till now brought to light on Sripati, this is the only direct evidence to fix his date. Venkataramanayya opines...
that until more satisfactory evidence on this issue is available, Somanatha's statement that Sripati was a contemporary of Anantapala can be accepted. And now it is necessary to examine the inscriptions about the latter's rule in Andhra.

The rule of Anantapala in Andhra

A Kannada inscription of CVE 40 (1116) from Kesavaswami temple at Chebrolu mentions both Chalukya Vikramaditya and Anantapala and the latter is said to have repaired the temple and built a tank called Anantasarovara. This record appears to be the earliest of the inscriptions of Anantapala in Andhra and in the light of this inscription the earlier opinion of the historians like Venkataramanayya, that Anantapala ruled over the Andhra region between 1120 and 1130 needs a slight modification. As CVE 51 appears to be the last known date of Anantapala it can be stated that he ruled over Andhra between 1116 and 1127.

An inscription of 1115 of the region of Vikramaditya VI found at Guntur and the records of the Pallavas of Guntur lend support to the above view that Anantapala's rule commenced in Andhra from 1116. The Guntur record of Vikramaditya states that he was reigning at Guntur in 1115 and another record of the same year found at Chebrolu.
shows that the country was locally ruled by the Velanadu chief Choda, alias Rajaendra Choda Fulottunga Chola's protege and adopted son. Thus when Vikramaditya conquered the Guntur region, Chebrolu must have been under the rulers of Velanadu and the record of Anantapala in the following year at the same place shows that soon after the conquest of Guntur, Chebrolu also might have been conquered and occupied by the Western Chalukyas.

Writing about the Pallavas of Guntur - a minor dynasty - Yasodadevi states that they ruled Satasahasra between the years 1100 and 1300 with their capital at Gunturu (modern Guntur). Ketaraja who ruled between 1060 and 1115 was the earliest ruler and Bezawada was the nucleus of his kingdom. His successor Mahamandalika Boddana ruled from 1115 to 1127 and his kingdom included the villages near Bezawada and these were said to have been secured by him from the king of Karnataka i.e. Vikramaditya. This information clearly proves that the latter defeated the Pallavas of Guntur and occupied their territory including Bezawada and appointed Anantapala to rule over it as his subordinate. The Tripurantakam inscription of Anantapala testifies to his rule over the Guntur region by mentioning Yenamadala six thousand Bezawada, the nucleus.
of the Pallava kingdom, must have become the seat of Anantapala in 1115 and this conclusion confirms the two literary accounts of Sripati’s miracle performed according to Mallikarjuna at Vijayawada and according to Somanatha in the court of Anantapala. And if Somanatha’s account is correct, the fire miracle would have taken place between the years 1116 and 1127 when alone Anantapala’s inscriptions are found round about coastal Andhra.

**Anantapala’s religious leanings**

Discussing the causes of the decline of Jainism in Andhra, Hanumantha Rao writes that it was exposed to the attacks of Saivites like Sripati Pandita. He opines that Sripati performed the miracle in the court of Anantapala probably to wean him away from his favourable disposition to Jainism. It is known from the inscriptions of Anantapala found at Chebrolu and Kolluru that the latter made gifts to the temples of both Siva and Vishnu. The Narendresvara temple at Kolluru is said to have been converted by Anantapala into Ananta Bhogisvara temple and the Ananta Jinalsya was supposed to have been built by Anantapala. Thus as Anantapala was inclined towards a ‘false’ religion, Jainism, it is said by Hanumantha Rao that Sripati proved the superiority of Saivism by performing a
miracle and weaned him away to the side of his own religion.

Two more points can be added here in support of the above expressed view on the probability of Anantapala's favourable disposition to Jainism.

1. Being a native of Gujarat and a domicile of Western Deccan, the strong-holds of Jainism, Anantapala's inclination to that faith is easy to understand.

2. His nephew, Govinda dandanayaka, also appears to have been a supporter of Jainism. His daughters were known to have built a Jain temple.

Thus Anantapala must have encouraged Jainism also. However it does not appear to have been the main cause for Sripati to perform his miracle. But he appears to have performed it only to declare according to Mallikarjuna that Siva is the only god and according to Somanatha, to prove the superiority of Sivabhaktas over the Brahmins. Thus Sripati appears to have lived in the first half of the 12th century.

According to the writings of Viranamatya, as has been stated already, Sripati lived in 1187. But the king mentioned therein as the disciple of Sripati can not be
identified as there was no king of that name about the
given date among the ruling dynasties. Venkataramanayya
feels for this very reason that the king might not be a
historical person. But Hayavadana Rao tried to
identify the king Vishnuvardhana Devabhallana with Bhallan-
arendra who is mentioned in a few inscriptions at
Pedakallepalli in the Krishna district. It is said that
two such records found at Nagesvara temple at that place
S 1076 (1154) recording gifts of gold for lamps by
Somadevi queen of Bhallanarendra. In the opinion of
Hayavadana Rao, since the difference of the date mentioned
by Viranamatya and the inscription was only 33 years, it
could be taken that Virana mentioned the name of the king
correctly. If the identification of the king by Hayavadana
Rao is accepted it can be said that Sripati was living in
S 1076 (1154). If Viranamatya's date to Sripati is to be
accepted it can be said that Sripati must have been a very
old man by that date. By the time he performed the
miracle in the court of Anantapala, the former must be
at least between 20 and 30 years of age between the dates
1116 and 1127 and thus he must have been between 80 and 90
years of age when he was said to be the guru of Vishnu-
vardhanaballana. In that case it might have been also
possible for Sripati to visit Basava at Kalyana. But there is no evidence to say definitely whether he visited Basava or not. Thus from this long discussion it can be said that Sripati lived in the 12th century and more or less as a contemporary of Mallikarjuna and Basava.

Now let us examine his authorship of Srikarabhashyam.

Sripati and Srikarabhashyam

In the opening verses of the Bhashya the author is known as 'Srimachchripati Panditendrayati'. The author appears to have named the Bhashya after Siva as Srikara Sivānugrahadbhāshyam arīkara nāmakam bhavaharam durvādīgar-rvāpaham. In the beginning of the work itself, the author mentions the names of

'Dvaitādvaita visista Bouddhamata mattabhendra
kanthiravam, Sivādvaita vivaskāra Vilasatsiddhānta-pakṣa pradam'

Dvaitādvaita is like the lion to the great elephant of the above mentioned philosophies. The author invokes Revanasiddha calling him 'Sri Revanasiddhagurum', 'Revanakalpvriksham' and 'Srimad Revanadesikendra'

Marula Prabhu and Gkora, the latter as 'Ekoramakhya'
and 'Ekoramatindra'. He describes Virasalvism as the synthesis of all the Vedas *Virasaiva Siddhānta sarvasruti samanvayāh*.

In the course of the Bhashya, the author quotes from *Siddhānta Sikhamani* by mentioning its name.

*Ityādi parāsaramruti Siddhānta Sikhamanyadou?*

These details from the Bhashya are enough for us to fix its date. From the Bhashya no other details are available about the author. But when the Bhashya was first published, in 1893, at Secunderabad, some details were given about the author by its editor in the preface. It is a long panegyric of Śripati where he was described as:

1. one proficient in all the Vedas, Agamas and *Udbhava-Vedanta* (Dvaitadvaita),

2. as one capable of teaching and convincing his disciples of *Isatilinga, Bhavalinga* and *Pranalinga* aspects of *Sivatatva*,

3. and as one who suspended at the end of a *sāmś* branch, the fire-collected and tied in a piece of cloth.
Thus Sripati Pandita, the author of Srikarabhashyamu was identified with Sripati of Pandita trinity of the 12th century. But from the internal evidence of the Bhashya, it does not appear to be the work of 12th century. So divergent opinions on Sripati's authorship of the Bhashya are expressed. Scholars like Prabhabara Sastrī and Venkararamayya doubted the authorship of Sripati of the 12th century without much discussion on it. Tammayya first argued that Sripati of Panditatraya was the author of the Bhashya, but later on he revised his views saying that it was a much later work and its authorship was still to be settled. Narayana Rao and Venkata Rao argued that Sripati of Panditatraya was the author of that work. Narayana Rao criticised the views of Hayavadana Rao for stating that Srikarabhashyamu was a post-Madhva work. He contended that the word Madhva was not there in the manuscript and in the absence of that word the Bhashya could not be claimed as a post-Madhva work since Madhva was not the originator but only a reviver of the Dvaita concept.

From the point of view of Dvaita Siddhanta, in the absence of the word 'Madhva', Narayana Rao's argument is justifiable. It appears that the Dvaita concept was known well by the time of Basava. We find its mention in
the Vacanas of Basava

What do you Sir - Reading of Dvaita or Advaita

Unless you melt for the Saranas like wax in fire 101

Though Mallikarjuna did not use the word Dvaita in his work, he was a great exponent of that concept 102 and he was anterior to Madhva. Thus just because of the reference to the Dvaita concept, Srikaрабhashyamu need not be assigned to the post-Madhva period. But when the other aspects of the Bhashya are taken into consideration, it appears to have been composed not earlier than the 13th century. As has been stated earlier, the author of the Bhashya mentions the names of three of the Panchacharyas who were claimed according to the tradition as the originators of Virasaivism, though he does not say that they were the originators. As we have been earlier, he quoted from Siddhanta Sikhamani and mentions the work by name. Thus it is evident that Srikaрабhashyamu was composed after Siddhanta Sikhamani and by the time of its composition three Acharyas, Revana, Marula and Ekorama, were known. Here it is to be noted that Siddhanta Sikhamani mentions only one Acharya, 'Remuka of Kulyapaka' 103 (who is mentioned as Revana of Kolanupaka in some other works).
as the originator of Virasaivism. Thus the date of Srikarabhashyamu is linked with the date of Siddhanta Sikhamani.

Now let us examine the probable period of the composition of Siddhanta Sikhamani. Conflicting views are expressed on this subject. According to one group of scholars, like Prabhakara Sastrī, it was a post-Basava work and according to another group like Tammayya, who believed that Virasaivism was a very ancient religion, it was a pre-Basava work. Tammayya assigned to Siddhanta Sikhamani as a probable date 960. But he did not mention any direct and acceptable evidence in support of his date.

Nandimath, who says that Basava revived Virasaivism, does not seem to have accepted Siddhanta Sikhamani as a work of the pre-Basava period. According to him, Virasaiva literature especially Sanskrit literature of the pre-Basava times, is very meagre and much of the Sanskrit literature on the sect available in the present century, must have been produced after Basava. If Nandimath had accepted Siddhanta Sikhamani as an earlier work, he would have cited it in support of his argument that Basava was not the originator of Virasaivism.
Somanatha who lived during C 1250 – C 1325 was a well-versed scholar proficient in all the Vedas, Agamas, Upanishads and Puranas and quoted the various scriptures in support of the different tenets of Virasaiivism. But he never made a mention of Siddhanta Sikhamani in any of his works. If it had been composed by his time it would have been definitely mentioned by him.

It also appears that the theory of Renukacharya of Kulyanaka or the five Acharyas as the originators of Virasaivism, had not gained ground either by the time of Basava or Somanatha. The latter described Basava as the originator of Virasaivism. We do not find even a passing reference to any of these Acharyas in the works of Somanatha who paid so many tributes to many Sivabhaktas, whether they were Virasaivas or not. P B Desai stated that both the Kannada Basavapuranamu written in 1369 and Sivatatvachintamani written in 1450 did not mention the name of the Acharyas. So he expressed the view that the theory of the Panchacharyas as the originators of the faith might have gained currency during the later Vijayanagara period, i.e., the 16th century.

In the light of the above discussion, it can be said that Siddhanta Sikhamani which mentions Renukacharya or
Revanacharya as the originator of Virasaivism is probably a work of the post-Basava period. Sakhare identified Renukacharya of Siddhanta Sikhamani with Revanasiddha, an older or senior contemporary of Basava.

Sivayogi Sivacharya, the author of Siddhanta Sikhamani, was known to have belonged to the order of the Acharyas of the school of Siddharama who was born by the favour of Revanasiddha. Sakhare identifies this Siddharama mentioned by Sivayogi with Siddharama, the disciple of Allamaprabhu and says that Sivayogi was post-Basava. He also says that Sivayogi refers to Basavesvara in the prefatory note (IX 36) where it is said that Virabhadra-ohara Basavachara Suchayanu, bhaktachara pratipadayati. According to Sakhare, Sivayogi was fourth in the line of Acharyas founded or named after Siddharama and so he must have lived about the middle of the 13th century. And so it can be said that Siddhanta Sikhamani was composed in the middle of the 13th century. Hayavadana Rao and S N Dasgupta expressed similar views on the date of this work. Hence depending on the date of Siddhanta Sikhamani, the date of Srikarabhashyamu can be pushed still further, i.e., towards the end of the 13th or during the succeeding centuries — but before the 16th century as by then the
Five Acharyas were known as the originators of the faith. Thus it can be said that *Srikarabhashyamu* by citing three as against one Acharya of *Siddhanta Sikhamani* and of the five according to the later accounts, has been witnessing the process of the evolution of the theory of Panchacharyas. It is obvious that Sripati of the 12th century could not be the author of *Srikarabhashyamu* Moreover the author of the *Bhashya* was described as a *Mirabhāra* *Virasaivayati* a term which is not used even by Somanatha. The *Virasaiva* concepts like *Istalinga* and *Bhavalinga* are not mentioned in association with them. It is too early to find such well developed concepts by the 12th century in Andhra. Even Mallikarjuna who was described as a great *Virasaiva* leader and contemporary of Basava did not describe any of these concepts in his work. Thus it can be concluded that Sripati of *Panditatravya* was not the author of the work. Sripati Pandita who was said to be the author of *Srikarabhashyamu* might be another Sripati Pandita or the work must have been wrongly attributed to Sripati Pandita.

The religion of Sripati Pandita

Now it has to be examined whether Sripati was a *Virasaiva* even without being the author of *Srikarabhashyamu*.
The primary sources on Sripati i.e. Sivatatvasaramu or the works of Somanatha do not describe him as a Virasaiva. No Virasaiva concept like Diksha, or Lingadharana is associated with him. He has described as the originator of devotiona-lism and as one who proved the superiority of Siva over Brahma. He claims that Siva was the Creator Utpattikartha na Brahmavâdi Brahmam anu Brahmavãdula drunchi Harabhakti yutpatti kadhipathi nâga barage da dolly Sripati Panditayya (He defeated the Brahmavadins who argued that Brahma was the creator and thus Sripati was the originator of Sivabhakti.) He was said to have proved the superiority of the Sivabhaktas over Brahmins. Thus he could be said to have been a great Saiva leader who established the superiority of Siva and thus prepared the ground for his junior contemporaries like Mallikarjuna to carry it further until it had been systematised in the form of Virasaivism with all its accepted tenets.

However, the later writers, as has been stated already, described him as a Virasaiva subscribing to all the approved concepts of the religion, but without evidence. It is possible that they might have been carried away by the tradition that the three Pandits were the propagators of Virasaivism in Andhra. Moreover Mallikarjuna of the
three Pandits was described by Somanatha as a great Virasaiva leader and since Sripati's name was associated with that of Mallikarjuna, the former too might have been considered as a Virasaiva. And also probably because of the heroic spirit that Sripati exhibited by performing the miracle to prove and establish the superiority of Siva over Brahma, he might have been described as a Virasaiva. The same reason might have led Ramunath Rao \(^{119}\) to compare Sripati with Ekantada Ramayya and state that the Virasaiva traditions were much earlier in Karnataka and Andhra than Basava. Here it is to be noted that even Ekantada Ramayya has not been accepted as a Virasaiva. In the words of Desai \(^{120}\) Ekantada Ramayya belonged to the traditional orthodox school of Saivism, not subscribing to the doctrine of Virasaivism propounded by Basava. Sometimes, Somanatha himself used the word Virasaiva so broadly without looking much for the tenets of the religion. In Chaturvedasaramu, \(^{121}\) he describes Hari as a Virasaiva for his heroic devotion (Virabhakti) to Siva. In that sense, one may call Sripati Pandita a Virasaiva but not in the accepted sense of the term. In conclusion, it may be said that Sripati lived in the 12th century and he was not the author of Srikarabhashyamu which was a composition of a later period and that he was not a Virasaiva. But he can be claimed...
as the originator of devotional Saivism which became the nucleus of Virasamaj.

**Sivalenka Manchana Pandita**

If Sripati announced to the world that Siva was the creator of the universe and thus superior to Brahma, Manchana tried to prove that Siva was the caretaker of the world and superior to Vishnu. He is described as having brought Vishnu to the feet of Siva and thus destroyed the pride of the devotees of Vishnu.

Excepting this heroic deed of Manchana to propagate the supremacy of Siva, nothing more is known either about his religion or his religious activities. Somanatha did not mention the place also where Manchana performed the miracle of bringing Vishnu to Siva. Narayana Rao says according to some Kannada works, the miracle was said to have been performed at Banaras, and gives the following additional details from the same source about Manchana.

He was the grandson of Somasambhudeśaka and Manchana’s father was said to have been a great Agamic scholar Prabhakara Sastri tried to identify Somasambhu, the said grand-father of Manchana with Somasambhu of the Golakimatha. Manchana was known to have visited Basava...
Some Kannada Vacanas known as Manchanagala Vacana are said to be the Vacanas of Manchana. But Narayana Rao doubted Manchana's authorship of these Vacanas and stated that somebody might have composed them and attributed them to Manchana. Different views are expressed on the date of Manchana and because of the paucity of sources on the topic no lengthy discussion is possible. According to Prabhakara Sastri, Manchana might have been a contemporary of Basava and the other two Pandits. According to Narayana Rao, since Mallikarjuna did not make any reference to Manchana, he might have been posterior to Mallikarjuna and anterior to Somanatha. According to Venkata Rao, Manchana lived in about 1030. But however this date cannot be accepted. It appears that Venkata Rao assigned 1030 to Manchana following the date of Sripati as 930, which is however not accepted.

Some of the Aradhya families having 'Sivalenka' as their surname trace their descent to Manchana Pandita. Thus Manchana was not known to have contributed anything to the cause of Virasavism excepting his efforts to propagate the supremacy of Siva.
Chapter II

ACTORS AND PHILOSOPHES

1. Brahmanvāda drenchi Harabhakti utpetti kadhurvinere barega te dolli Sripati Panditeyya, athisikarta

2. Harinumāpātikī mrokinchi keshiti Vishnuvaḍa la
gītadāgīnchi cheneci bāhātikriya sthikarteyararu
Janiyeng Lenka Ṣanehepana panditeyya, ṣeḍarā sarhē-
rekarteyararu ādharasamayuga nēveru balku bhāti
dūrēnya someyesamēhurudei Cheniye ērundu hallikūrujave
Panditeyya, Kēśyitabhakti gēraṇavurusulai
Pāṇḍitatreyambana bhūvi Janeyē

Fra P 7

2. See the above lines about Sripati

3. 1. Lahadekavi, Avatarike to BP Adilakshmi
Parisodhena June-July 1955 pp 11-12 ff

2. Vēru (the three pandits) bhūvi vīraēiva

4. Op cit P 287

5. Prabhakara Sastri and Venkatarasānyya discussed their views in a number of places, mentioned in the relevant places
See for details "Anantaala's rule in the same ch

Puratanara P 407

Mahima Pra P 86

Parneta Parve P 375

SII X 22

Ed Heyavadana Rao The Ezkarabhashyamu Vol I

Bangalore 1936 P 13

The HC, JAHRS Vol XLII 1957-58 P 16

SII IV 747

(1) Heyavadana Rao P 17 (2) Perneta Rao Lives of Telugu poets Madras, 1956 "Srip timendita" P 72

He was also known as Kolesalurvu Virana

Adilakshmi 'Mahadevakap Basavpuranamu'

Parivashama June-July 1955 P 8

Madras Oriental NS Library Telugu C 1 No 160

quoted by Heyavadana Rao P 10

(1) I NS S Library, D C 11 lo 600

Heyavadana Rao P 19

(2) Sista Ramakrishna Sastri Vircagaye Literature in Telugu, Tirupati, 1952 P 246

Srilalita Jayavatike nagara sarathi Sripati

Panditarudhya vamrassomudhavya Mahadevakhyadeśikôte
Sambhav Sambhulinga nāmāvīra Ketajanorundu
Nayavedana Rao P 19

22 śrīgurunātha Kevinagotra cankalitu
Nāgalingarādhyanēku Putrudeina 'Mahādevuni
Pautru sambhulinga Ceputru bhesitanistrandru
Sripati Panditendru naparaprabhāvū, Mahādevudel-achi quoted by R K Sastrī 216

23 Ibid

24 Adilakshmi "Lahadevakavi Bāsyaṃpuranaṃ" Op cit P 11

25 It was he who gave a detailed account of Sripati Pandita's fire-miracle

26 Adilakshmi Ibid P 10

27 Ibid P 15 VV 45-56

28 Ibid VV 4-38

29 The famous patriot and journalist of our time is said to be the sixth on the line of Viraṅgaṇādhyya Intro to BP First edn of Indhra grandhanala 1906

30 S R K Sastrī says that this work is not extant from the 2nd canto itself and the beginning of the work also is lost P 267

31 extracts given by Prabhalara Sastrī Intro to BP pp 64-65

32 Nayavedana Rao P 21

33 foggана's guru Sambhulinga mahadevakavi's father Sambhulinga, Nāgalingu's grandfather Sambhulinga appears to be the same person
1 In the line of Sripati
   
   Mahadeva
   
   Son
   
   Sambhulinga
   (Moggana's guru)

2 The genealogical table of Lahadevavakavi according to the Avatara of Baraveurm

In the line of Sripratipadita

   Lahalinga

   Lahadeva

   Sambhulinga
   
   Mahadeva Virabhadra Umapati trutyunjayudu
   (the author of B P)

3 Sambhulinga's Son

   Viranaradhya's Son
   
   Viranaradhyas might be a contraction of Virabhadra

   Nagalinga

34 Arevaitamuvuru Siva Serenare Cheritragalu 1947

Part II P 334.

35 P 191

36 See "The date of 1 Pandita" Ch III

37 Intro to JRG P 31

38 Lives of Telugu poets P 78

39 P 17.
59  Ibid P 69
60  'Sripeti Panditdu' P 16
61  Paragange Berwade gomurasabiki bhaktudei sudiva nirupama mati nruvadhSudettinhe nepiderchi metharu goraplarksokurindu vidici brundambu goniye du varu sarigaka yavvaregai vrecchine pappambe gondru
F I Vol XV P 153
62  Valluthamatya Madras 1960 V 143
63  1 Sabderatnaram, 2 Sabdeiahacandrike
3 Suryandrenghuntuvu
64  Prof in Hel Andhra University, Ialtair
65  Bhagavate Pancharatna madhvadi Vaishnavam
Adhyaya 11 Pada 11 Shruti 41 P 237 Line 27
Heyavadana Rao Ibid P 95
66  Ibid P 31
67  Ibid P 32
68  Ibid P 13 and 16
69  I'd H Venkateramayya A P Govt Report on

Lippography for 1965 P 103
70  'Sripatipanditdu' Op cit
71  V R Vol II C T 93 (1054 of 1897)
72  Sripatipanditdu Ibid P 4 Hemarantha Rao P 138
73  SII No 212 and 213
74  V R Ibid 89 150 of 1897
75  Ibid
76  JAHR Vol XXI (50-52) pp 82-85
The moon of the Lake of Nabakusha lived at 1103.

EC Vol 7 Fall 1953, No 90

Sripatipanditadu" Ibid

Sri varabhaeshyam Preparatory P 2

Id Sri Chideram Ath Virabhadra Sarma Hanvar 1650

Ibid nayadana Rao Ibid P 5 and Sri varabhaeshyam 1 2

Sri varabhaeshyam P 1

Intro to BR P 66

Op cit Pf 5-6

Vyasavali II P 153

ndhrabhesa Sarvesa a Parishat P trika

Vol 52 1951 P 9

Intro 1 0 P 31
95 Intro ST x 63 Bhakti July 1974
'Siva yothi' book review

100 Intro IS pp 29 to 31

101 Venkatesh of Vamapana to 191

102 Pandita did not accept the concept of the Unity of
Soul and Supreme Soul for details see Ch IV
"Pandita's religion in his own words" also
K Laksmana Rao Intro to 'IS

103 A B Dimirno Vishnu Kulyapabhi sthalom eterna
Nakalinaa trirudrute sarenjukha karicheda II 91 2

104 P 76

105 Vyajvali Vol II P 177 and it

106 A hand book of Virestivm P 2

107 "The date of Somanatha" Ch V

108 BE 1 cento 6

109 3 330

110 Intro to Indian Pana Chandrika By Nand Kosovo
Belgium, 1942 pp 389-395

111 According to him, Revanacharya, himself was the one of
Siddhante Silkerai and he assigned 1250 to
Revanacharya I 54 Sakha says that 'havayo
Revanacharya was the author of the book but wrote in
the name of Revanacharya

112 A History of Indian hiology embridge 1953
Vol V pp 40 and 46

8 The era of Srikara Dvayha Annals of M Chandaor 64
v Vol x 18 p 158
113  D Desai Op cit
114  Fryvadana Rao P 7
115  Preface to the Secunderabad edition 1873 quoted by Fryvadana Rao P 9
116  Venkataramanayya suggests that Sri Vachchyan or
late Vijayanagar period might be the author of the
Bhashya c 1 IV P 97 AR 10 37 of 191
116a  'Sripati Panamvadam' Vishvesa vyasamantrir PP 5 C
117  Sripati was expressed by Srinandn Sastri P 153
118  Lahdevanavi AP avaterika Ibid V 8 art 12
119  Srijan was described as Vraava desika 1 23
120  Religion in Andhra Op cit P 237
121  Ibid P 124
122  Sthitikarta Nri numadati mrokinchi khe i
Vishnu Purana fi aipinchi chernai bh kili taya
sthiti karta yanasa Janoyenu lenka Landhana P 111
123  Intro to TPC P 72
124  Intro to H5
125  Ibid
126  Intro SI P 63
127  Ibid P 64