CHAPTER III

THE RISE

The rise of the Vishnukundı power is a mystery. It is, of course, as mysterious as the rise of many other powers of ancient India. But it can be comprehended to some extent by understanding what geographical unit served as the nucleus of the early activities of the Vishnukundıs and what historical process might have helped their rise in that area.

(i) The Nucleus

The Vengi country was the centre of the Vishnukundı power at its height. But it does not appear to be the earliest stage of their political activities. In the last chapter we saw that the Vishnukundı kings originally belonged to the Śrīśailam hills. Therefore one should naturally look for such a stage only round about that area. The southern and western sides of the hills viz. the modern Kurnool-Bellari-Raichur region formed parts of the Pallava and Kadamba dominions in the 4th and 5th centuries. The eastern side of it i.e. Guntur District was under the sway of the Ānandas and then passed on into the hands of the Pallavas, from whom it was taken to the Vishnukundı dominions subsequently by Mādhavavarman II as we shall see in the next chapter. Consequently the centre of the activities of the early rulers of the dynasty are to be located round about the Śrīśailam, particularly the territory on the northern side of it viz., the modern Mahbubnagar district. Again the Tummalagudem set I
of an early king of the dynasty comes from the Nalgonda
district and it speaks of a vihara built there by his queen.
Therefore the nucleus of the political activities of the
early members of the family may be located in an area that
comprised roughly the Mahbubnagar-Nalgonda region, i.e. the
middle valley of the river Krishna, where Prof. H.C. Ray-
chaudhuri, and Dr. Sircar etc. locate the Rishika country.

According to some other scholars the Rishika was identi-
cal with the modern Khāndesh. But in the Nasik inscription
of Pul̃umāvi, Rishika (=Prakrit Asīka) is mentioned along with
Āśmaka (=Prakrit Asāka), and in the Mārkandeya Purāṇa, this
country is clubbed with the countries of Kuntala and Andhra
in the list of the southern ādās. Further, it is also
mentioned immediately before Kuntala by Varāhamihira in his
Bṛihatsamhitā. All these may suggest that the Rishika was
contiguous to the Kuntala, Andhra and Āśmaka countries. The
Kuntala and Andhra respectively comprised the upper and lower
valleys of the Kṛishṇa, while the Āśmaka proper was the
northern part of the old Hyderabad State. Therefore Rishika
is to be identified as many scholars have done, with the
southern part of the Telengana in the middle valley of the
Kṛishṇa i.e. the Mahbubnagar-Nalgonda region, which is
contiguous to the said three countries.

Again a country called Ākara is mentioned by Varāhamihira
in the list of southern janapadas, which includes also Rishika
and Kuntala as we saw earlier. Similarly in the Nasik list
of territories of Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni, both Rishika
as well as Akara find mention. While translating the
Brihatasamhita, Prof. Kern has identified Akara with Khāndesh. Other scholars too hold the same view. If this
identification is accepted, then the lists given by
Varahamihira and by the Nasik inscription, in which both the
countries viz. Khāndesh (i.e. Akara) as well as Rishika,
figure may indicate that they are different and not identical.

No doubt the above suggestion goes counter to the
theory that identifies Akara with the Eastern Malwa, having
its capital at Vidisa. But Kalidasa refers to that country
i.e. Eastern Malwa by the name Dasarpa. To say that
Dasarpa and Akara were the two names of the Eastern Malwa
would be to ignore altogether the testimony of the ancient
writers like Varahamihira, Parasara etc. For they include
Dasarpa in the list of south-eastern countries and Akara
along with the Vepa and Avanti in the list of the southern
countries.

Furthermore, the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman I,
gives a list of countries included in the empire of that
Mahākshatrāpa. There the list begins with the expression
Purv-Āgar-Āgar-Āvanti which is a Karmadhārya compound of
which the first and second units viz. Purvānara and Āgar-
Āvantī are Ávandvas. Now if the names Ākara and Avanti
could themselves denote respectively the East and West Malwas
as believed by Rapson and others, why then the unnecessary
adjective Purv-āpara? On the other hand if Ākara means
"Khāndesh", as we have stated, then the said adjective serves a good purpose. As in the case of Malwa so in the case of the adjacent Khāndesh too, the territory seems to have been divided into the eastern and western halves.

In fact the evidences of Vātsyāyana, Kālidāsa, Varahamihira Bāṇabhaṭṭa, Vātsyāyana's commentator Yaśōdhara, etc. clearly indicate that in ancient times the eastern part of the modern Malwa was known by the name Daśārṇa or Malva while the western part by the name Avanti; and that in some later period only the whole territory came to be viewed as a single unit under the name Malava. Therefore to hold Pārvanarākara-vaṇṭi of Rudradāman's inscription as indicative of the eastern and western parts of a single geographical unit viz. modern Malwa is to set aside all these points. At any rate, on the basis of the above evidences one may be right in concluding that Akara was different from Daśārṇa or Eastern Malwa and it is also very probably identical with Khāndesh which was therefore different from Rishika. Thus it is certain that the last mentioned country included the Mahbubnagar-Nalgonda region and formed the nucleus of the early activities of the Vishpukundī rulers.

(ii) Early History of Rishika

The edicts of Aśoka at Maski, Gavimāth and Pālkikundu all in the Raichur district as well as at Erpagudi in the Kurnool district suggest that Rishika was well within the empire
of the Mauryan emperor. Probably it was annexed to the empire earlier by his grandfather Chandragupta Maurya himself. After the fall of the Mauryas, the country passed on to the Sātavāhanas. There was in this country a city, perhaps an important one, on the bank of the Krishna river. The Chedi ruler Kāravela of Kaliṅga (about the 2nd or the 1st century B.C.), in his Hathi-gumpha inscription, calls this city by the name Rishika-nagara and claims to have threatened it by despatching a huge army disregarding Sātakarni, i.e., a Sātavāhana ruler of the west in his second regnal year. The language of his inscription does not indicate that he conquered or occupied the country. So, even after his raid, Rishika seems to have continued to be under the Sātavāhanas. It is found included in the list of countries of which Gautamiputra Śrī Sātakarni (the 1st or 2nd century A.D.) claims to be the lord. Between Gautamiputra’s time and the time of the rise of the Chāluḵya Pulakeśi in the seventh century a big gap has been felt in the history of this country. This gap is, however, narrowed to some extent thanks to the recent numismatic discoveries.

A large variety of the Sātavāhana coins lately unearthed in this area testify that the country remained under the effective control of the Sātavāhanas down to the time of Yajña Śrī Sātakarni. We have earlier referred to the coins of the Chūṭu and Śivala chiefs that have come to light from his area. We have also alluded to the relationship between those families and to the fact that the area passed on to them round about
200 A.D. when the Satavahana empire was fast declining, after Yajña Śrī Satakarni. It is however difficult to be certain whether the Chuṭus and the Śivalas ruled over the area one after another or both simultaneously held sway over parts of the country. It may also be remarked that some chiefs of the Chuṭukula enjoyed the designation Maharathī while some others of the family had that of Mahāsenaṉaṭi. Therefore it is not unlikely that the issuer of at least some of the Kopḍāpur (near Hyderabad) coins bearing the legend Maharathī were issued by the Chuṭukula chiefs.

The complete legend, preserved only in a few of the said Chuṭukula coins of the area, runs Mahāsenaṉaṭi Saṅgamāna-Chuṭukulaśa. Earlier there has been occasion to refer to the controversy regarding the interpretation of this legend. Without entering into any dispute, one may safely follow the method by which we understood the expressions like Vishnuḍura-Śivalāṇaṇa and Viṅhkada-Chuṭukulaṇaṇa. There we saw that their respective first parts, viz. Vishnuḍura and Viṅhkada were personal names while Śivala and Chuṭukula were clanish names. So one may not at all be in the wrong in concluding that the above disputed legend is of a king named Saṅgaṇa who belonged to the Chuṭu family and who was the son of a woman of the Bhāradvāja gotra and had the designation Mahāsenaṉaṭi. Saṅgama (=Skt. Svargamaṇa or Saṅgamana) may well make a personal name like Vardhamana, Koṇḍamana, Patamana etc. Thus these coins indicate that the Chuṭukula king by name Saṅgama was
ruling over Rishika in a semi-independent capacity, owing some nominal allegiance evidently to a Satavahana overlord.

How long the members of the Śrīparvatiya Andhra tribe viz. Sagamana and his descendants ruled in this area in that capacity we do not know. It is possible that they declared total independence before long as the imperial power was becoming rapidly weaker and weaker. Even the last vestige of the once great Satavahana empire had already disappeared sometime in the first half of the third century. Coins of other families like the Śīvala have also come from this area. Whether they signify a struggle for suzerainty among the members of those families is more than what can be affirmed now with the material available. However it may be recalled that according to the Purāṇas there were seven Śrīparvatiya Andhra kings who ruled on the whole 52 or 112 years (i.e. on the average less than 8 or exactly 16 years each). We are not aware of seven Chuṭa kings. It is also not known whether the Purānic number "seven" of the Śrīparvatiyas probably includes, besides the Chuṭukulas, their kinsmen also, i.e., the chiefs of the Śīvala family. At any rate it may not be wrong to say that there was a constant strife among them for predominance, resulting in the short reign period for each ruler. On the whole it may be provisionally surmised that the independent rule of the Śrīparvatiya Andhras that began perhaps round about the beginning of the third century A.D. might have ended more or less about the beginning of the next century.
Sometime during the period under question the Śriparvatiya Andhras seem to have been branched off into two distinctive groups - one ruling over the country of Vanavāsa and the other sticking on to the homeland, viz. the Śriparvata and Rishika. To the former group belonged the kings Viṭṭhukāda Čhtukulananda of the Banavasi and Malavalli records. Perhaps the Vanavāsaka Mahārāja, to whom was married the Īkṣvāku princess Koṭabalisiri, a sister of Chantamula II, was a member of this branch. To the other group perhaps belonged the Śriparvataśhipati Bapusāmi of the newly discovered Nagarjunakonda record of the 24th year of Virapurisadatta referred to earlier. This inscription seems to indicate a close relationship between Virapurisadatta and Bapusāmi. As the name suggests, it is not unlikely that the latter was a close relative perhaps the father(?) of Bapisiri one of the queens of that Īkṣvāku. If this is accepted then it would seem that Bapisiri’s mother Hammasiri, a uterine sister of Chantamula I, had been given in a marriage to the above Bapusāmi.

Now, about 300 A.D. the Vākāṭaka king Pravaraśeṇa I (c. 275-335 A.D.) was seriously engaged in his warlike career and was annexing, one after another, to his dominions the petty kingdoms that had sprung out of the defunct Sātavāhana empire. He is credited with the title saṃrāṭ and is stated to have conducted extensive conquests and to have performed several sacrifices including four Āśvamedhas. His
kingdom is known to have extended as far south as to include the northern districts of the former Hyderabad State. It would not have been difficult at all for an ambitious mighty conqueror of the calibre of Pravarasena I to march a little further southward and to annex to his dominions the Bishika country also, by putting down its rulers who, at that time, because of their long bitter strife among themselves, might have been too much exhausted to organise an effective resistance to the invader.

In this connection some facts may be borne in mind. On the grounds of some common phraseology that is met with only in the early charters of the Vakaṭakas and the Pallavas, Prof. Mirashi has conjectured that there must have been some connection of the Vakaṭakas with the Pallavas. That striking common phraseology perhaps shows that the territories of both the powers were contiguous with one another. Besides the early Pallava ruler Skandaśishya, is praised to have captured a ghatika of the Brāhmaṇas from a king called Satyasena. That Satyasena remains yet to be identified satisfactorily. There was another Satyasena who is considered to be the author of the verses 233 and 298 of the famous Gathasaptasati. Prof. Mirashi has conjectured that that Satyasena might have been a Vakaṭaka. If that is accepted, one may also identify the Pallava's opponent Satyasena too with the same Vakaṭaka. This, again would lead one to suppose that the territories of both were contiguous with one another; that both the kings had a hostile relationship; and that the
Pallava captured the *ghatika* of the other during a raid into the land of the latter. But there is no evidence to show that the Pallava dominion during the period in question had ever extended beyond the *Krishna* in the north. On the other hand the Amaravati inscription, referred to some time back, suggests that the Vākaṭaka family was not completely new to Andhra country. Moreover the *Śrīgālamāhātmya* which we will examine later in detail goes to indicate that the Vākaṭaka might have well penetrated across the Rishika country southward as far as the *Krishna*, a policy that culminated in the Vākaṭaka-Viśnukaṇḍi matrimonial relationship later.

At any rate, leaving to the future discoveries and researches a more satisfactory answer to the question of the southern boundary of the Vākaṭaka dominions, one may, on the reasons shown above, believe that Rishika was at least within the sphere of the Vākaṭaka influence even if it was not under their direct control, and that the rulers of the country were perhaps the vassals of the Vākaṭaka monarchs. This suggestion perhaps seems to find support from the *Āchārya* Danḍin who, in his well-known romance *Daśakumāracharita* includes the king of Rishika also in the list of the feudatories of a Vīdarbha king, presumably a Vākaṭaka.

After Pravarasena I, the Vākaṭaka empire was divided. Vindhyāśakti II of the Vatsagulma line was a ruler of an
extensive kingdom and his Basim record bears a close resemblance to the Prakrit charters of the Pallavas, as pointed out earlier. So it is likely that the rulers of Rishika became the vassals of the Vakataka rulers of the Vatsagulma branch.

In spite of their vassalage, the rulers of the Śrīparvata and its adjacent northern territory viz. Rishika seem to have played an important political role. It was during this period that the Kadamba Mayūraśarman established his power in Banavasi. By way of elucidating the circumstances that led to his rise, the Talagunda inscription of his great-grandson informs us how that Brāhmaṇa, being exasperated with the Kshatra i.e. Pallava, at Kaņchī, vanquished the latter's frontier-guard, and occupied the impregnable forest area in the pass leading to the Śrīparvata, managed to extract levies from some feudatories of the Pallava including Brihad Bāṇa; and how the Pallava having realised that it was impossible, even with his own huge army, to vanquish him in the battles, chose him for a friend and made him the ruler of the west viz. the kingdom of Banavasi.

The fact that Mayūraśarman, though an upstart, proved to be quite a formidable foe even to the very powerful Pallava at the Śrīparvata region betrays that he had the backing of the Śrīparvatiya chiefs, probably the Čhupukulas or their kinsmen and successors like the early Vishṇukundis. The fact that by a treaty with the Pallava, Mayūraśarman managed to get the rulership of the Banavasi kingdom which the Čhupus
were ruling till very recently, seems to add some strength to this suggestion. Dr. Dubreuil had already remarked that the common lion crest of the Kadambas and the Vishnukundis proves some kind of family relationship between them. Maybe, during the period of Mayurasarman's occupation of the Sriparvata-dvara area, a family relationship was effected perhaps by means of a marriage.

(iii) Early Vishnukundī Rulers

The epigraphs do not help us in understanding how the Vishnukundīs came to prominence. The only information they supply is that the Vishnukundīs rose to power by their own effort, and that they were helped in this respect by the grace of God Sriparvatsvāmin. This is too vague a statement to be made use of in drawing out a clear picture. Therefore one has to depend entirely on the circumstantial evidences supplied by the history of the region, traced in the last section.

It has been seen that the early rulers of Rishika might have been a sort of feudatories under the Vākāṭaka rulers of the Vatsagulma branch. It is likely that during the period of their vassalage i.e. sometime after 300 A.D., or perhaps even earlier i.e. sometime in 200-300 A.D., there arose a powerful chief who crushed the other petty chieftains of the area by his own valour, consolidated his conquest and founded his own dynasty. It has been concluded earlier that Vishnu-
kundi was probably a name of an individual whose descent the Vishnukundis rulers claimed. Therefore one may provisionally take that individual, named Vishnukundi, as a historical personage and identify him with the founder of the dynasty (gotra). This Vishnukundi is characterised as a devotee of the god of Srīparvata. There is clue to determine the exact date of this chief. Nor can one say anything definitely about his activities.

From the Tummalagudem set I we learn that in the family of the Vishnukundis were born Mahārāja Indravarman and his son Mahārāja Madhavavarman. The said record, the only source of our information regarding these two kings, does not mention anything beyond their names and titles. Consequently no definite information is available about their exact political status, and the area they were ruling. It is, however, likely that they were powerful enough to assume the title Mahārāja.

But at the same time it is to be borne in mind that the Tummalagudem set I was, as we shall see later, drafted about 150 years after these rulers and that during this period even the great kings in South India like Pravarasena I and Vindhyasakti II, etc., were endowed only with the title Mahārāja unlike the Guptas of the North who had the high sounding titles like Mahārājādhirāja, etc. Moreover, even among the Vishnukundis, powerful kings like Madhavavarman II and Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman, sometimes did not style themselves as Mahārāja or even as Rājan whereas these titles have been
indiscriminately used for Indrabhaṭṭārakaravaran and his father, Vikramendravarman I in the later records of the family.

In the said Tummalagudem sets I and II there figures a city called Indrapura. The queen of Gōvindavaran I, the grand-son of Indravaran I, is said to have built up a Buddhist monastery there. This city was possibly founded by, and named after, this Maharaja Indravaran I. Maybe, it was the capital of the dynasty during the early period. It has been identified with the area of the modern Indrapalagutta near Tummalagudem in the Ramannapeta taluk in the Nalgonda district.

The reigns of Maharaja Indravaran I and his son Maharaja Madhavaran may roughly be assigned to a period comprising the last quarter of the fourth century A.D. and the first quarter of the fifth century A.D. As the Šālanakāyanas are known to have been ruling over the eastern part of the Andhra Pradesh during this period, the political activities of these two Vishṇukūṇḍi kings must have been confined to the western part of it consisting of Nalgonda district and possibly also the territory further west viz., Mahbubnagar district.

The same period saw a notable turning point in the Vākāṭaka-Vishṇukūṇḍi relationship. The mighty ruler Vindhyāśakti II of the Vatsagulma branch of the Vākāṭakas died about 400 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Pravarasena II, who, after a very short rule, died and was succeeded by his
infant son who was hardly eight years of age. These developments indicate a probability of weakness in the central authority of the Vākaṭakas of this branch. But at the same time, in the main branch of the Vākaṭakas, though Rudrasena died young about 405 A.D., leaving minor children behind, his able queen Prabhavatigupta took the reins of administration into her hands and ruled efficiently till about 420 A.D. Probably she was backed during her regency by her powerful father, the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II. Thus while the Vatsagulma branch was perhaps losing in strength, the main branch was maintaining or even gaining in its strength. Some scholars have already suggested that the members of the latter branch might have helped the rulers of the other branch in the administration and that the two governments may have been amalgamated for a while during the time of Pravarasena II.

In any case, during the period under question, the influence of the rulers of the main line of the Vākaṭakas seems to have started penetrating into the Vishṇukūḍi territory which, as we already saw, had been within the sphere of influence of the rulers of the Vatsagulma line. This fact seems to be indicated by the tradition recorded in the Śrīśailasthala-mahātmya, which informs us that one Chandravatī, a daughter of the king Chandragupta offered garlands of jasmine flowers daily to god Mallikārjuna at Śrīśailam.

Scholars are generally inclined to identify the said
Chandravati with Prabhavatigupta, who was the queen of the Vakataka Rudrasena II of the main line and was a daughter of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II. Just like a princess of Rudrasena's family was known by the name Rudrabhattarlka and Bapusami's daughter was Bapisi, it is likely that Prabhavati, being a daughter of Chandragupta, was probably known also by the name Chandravati.

The above identification has been questioned and the historical value of the tradition has been denied by some on the grounds that as the Vakataka capital was far off from the Sriramasham the queen could not have supplied the garland everyday; and that Prabhavati who claims to be a staunch Vaishnava could not have worshipped the god Shiva-Mallikarjuna. Of course, the traditions, though born from hard facts, often, by the passage of time, accumulate a lot of fiction around themselves. But on that account to discard their evidence altogether may not be justifiable. In any way, they wished to tell the truth at least to begin with.

The fact indicated by the said tradition seems to be that the Vakataka queen made arrangements, evidently by means of some gifts, for supplying jasmine flower garlands to the deity daily. Prabhavati's brother Kumāragupta, though a staunch Vaishnava (Paramabhāgavata) gave much prominence to the Śaiva god Kumāra-Kārttikeya. Prabhavati's son Pravarasena II and the poet Kalidasa were Śaivas, yet they wrote respectively the Sātubandha and the Raghuvamsa, the themes of which are mainly Vaishnava.
tradition may well be taken on the whole as an indication to
the fact that the Śrīśailam temple had been favoured by
Prabhavatī. It also appears to indicate the queen's policy
to replace the declining influence of the Vatsagulma house
by extending the political influence of her own house in the
Vishṇukūḍi area. Evidently her's was a friendly policy
that culminated, as we shall see in the subsequent chapter,
in a marriage tie between her house and the house of the
Vishṇukūḍis.

This suggestion seems to receive some strength from the
fact that her house followed the same friendly policy towards
the Kuntala kings also. The Vākāṭaka king Vindhyāśakti II
of the Vatsagulma line claims to have defeated the lord of
Kuntala. This suggests that the Kuntala kings must have
acknowledged the supremacy of the conqueror. At the same
time we find a Kuntala princess was married to the Vākāṭaka
prince Narēndrasēna of the main line in the subsequent
period. It is not difficult to surmise that the above marriage
alliance superceded the influence of the Vatsagulma house
over Kuntala. That is why in the succeeding period Harishēpa
of the last mentioned line embarked upon expedition, evidently
a punitive one, against the kings of both Kuntala and Andhra
as well as those of Kōsala and Mēlava all of whom favoured
the rulers of the main line.

The above policy of the Vākāṭakas of the main branch
seems to have been the main course of strength for the
Vishṇukundī, viz. Madhavavarman I and Indravarman and their successors in heightening their political status. That is why a special significance was attached to the Vākaṭaka-Vishṇukundī marriage in almost all the official records of the Vishṇukundī family of the subsequent age.

(iv) Govindavarman I

As we saw in the last section, the reign of Madhavavarman I probably came to an end about 425 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Govindavarman I. The Tummalagudem set I is the only record of the latter we have. Before studying the contents of this charter, it is worthwhile to note the following interesting features of it.

1) In the early charters of the family, viz., those of Madhavavarman II, Madhavavarman III and Indrabhāṣāraka-varman, the texts are invariably precise and are short enough not to run more than 14 or 16 lines distributed over four sides (viz. the inner sides of the two outer plates and both the sides of the middle plate) of a set of three copper-plates. Longer text running over more than 30 or 40 lines, distributed over more number of plates, seems to have become fashion of the day from the time of Vikramendravarman II. To this latter category belongs the Tummalagudem record I.

2) A comparative study of the characters of the grants of the family would reveal that the charter under question may have to be placed after the Ipur and Ramatirtham
plates and that it cannot be far removed from the Chikkulla and Tummalagudem (II) plates from the point of time.

iii) Again the texts of the early charters of the family viz. Ipur (I and II) and Velpuru records, though written in Sanskrit, exhibit influence of Prakrit which is totally absent in the present charter as in the case of the grants of succeeding kings of the dynasty. But at the same time it was issued by the king earlier than those of the Ipur records.

iv) Similarly the texts of all the charters of the family are in the form of orders of the respective kings addressed to the residents, etc., of the respective grant villages informing them of the royal gifts. But the text of the present grant consists of a simple statement that the villages were gifted by the king in favour of the Āryasāṅgha.

v) Besides, the chain of privileges attached to the gift villages in the charter under discussion is conspicuously long and in no other met with in the Vishṇukūḍi charters.

vi) Unlike the other early charters of the family, the present grant does not refer to the officer āṁṭa or āṁṭakānti, and this peculiarity is also found in the Chikkulla plates of Vikramāndravarman II, and not in any other grants.

vii) Moreover, the benedictory verse at the end of the present charter praying for the permanence of the Vishṇukūḍi rule is rather unusual and a similar instance
is not met with anywhere else in the Vishnukundī records. This verse reminds us of a similar one found at the end of the Godāvari plates set II of Prithivīmūla, who, as we shall see later, was contemporary of Indrabhaṭṭārakavarmā and his son.

These unusual features are likely to suggest that the charter under question may not be a genuine one. However, taking into consideration the palaeography as well as the contents of the record, that are corroborated to great extent by the Tummalagudem charter II, we may conclude that the charter under question viz., Tummalagudem set I had been probably prepared during the time of Vikramendravarman II, the issuer of the second set from Tummalagudem, as the original charter had fallen in disuse; and that the present text had been composed by the Buddhist monks of the Paramamahādevi-vihāra of Indrapura, most probably basing on an earlier text.

This suggestion may get some support from (1) the unusually long chain of epithets of Govindavarman running over nearly 10 lines; (2) the total absence of any reference to the Śrīparvatasvāmin, the god of the king's family, but at the same time too much of stress on the king's leaning towards the Buddhist religion; (3) the glorification of the Buddha and the Buddhist clergy (lines 14-20); and the excessive use of the Buddhist technical terms in the context.

Above all the declaration sthitiśeṣā sthāṇītā towards
the end of the formal portion of the record is significant
as it seems to mean "the original decree (i.e., of the gift) has been restored".

Basing on these dissimilarities between the present record on one hand and all the early records of the family on the other and on the cumulative evidence just mentioned, it may be justifiably concluded that the Tummalaugudem charter I was composed most probably adapting an earlier version of a record issued by Gōvindavarman I in his own (atmanah) 37th regnal year. Therefore it seems that no information regarding Gōvindavarman I comes to us from the records of his own time. At the same time it may also be borne in mind that being nearer to Gōvindavarman's time, the official text of the Velpuru and Iparu records may carry more weight than the Buddhist ecclesiastical version of Gōvindavarman's own charter viz., Tummalaugudem set I when the evidence of the latter seems to go counter to that of the former.

The Tummalaugudem Plates, Set I: (Contents): This record is Buddhist in nature. It introduces the Mahārāja Gōvindavarman of the family of the Vishnukundis who were noted for their ability in protecting their subjects. Gōvindavarman is endowed with a long chain of epithets, many of them stressing the Buddhist leaning of the king. The charter records the royal gift of two villages called Ėrmbula and Preñakapara in favour of the Buddhist sangha of the vihāra that had been built at Indrapura by his chief queen Paramahādevī.
charter is dated on the full-moon-day of the month Vaisākha in Govindavarman's own 37th regnal year. Because both the festivals of Jayanti (birth) as well as parinirvāna (death) of the Buddha are to be celebrated on the Vaisākha-Pūrṇimā day, the king must have chosen that auspicious day for a grant to the Buddhist vihāra.

As has been done already, the place Indrapura where the Buddha vihāra had been built is to be identified with Indrapalagutta near Tummalagudem, the findspot of the charter about five miles from Ramanapeṭa (17° 15' Lat., 79° 15' Long.). Therefore the above mentioned gift villages, too, may respectively be identified probably with the modern Yerjabaliguda (17° 35' Lat., 79° 40' Long.) and with Pāṅkabapda (17° 25' Lat., 79° 10' Long.) or with Pāṅkera (17° 45' Lat., 79° 45' Long.).

Apart from the above charter, the Velpuru and Ipuru (I) records of Mādhavavarman II and the Tummalagudem plates II of Vikramāndravarman II also tell us something about Govindavarman I.

Govindavarman I started his reign sometime in the twenties of the fifth century A.D., i.e., a period when the Vākāṭaka Pravarasena II of the main line began ruling independently. We have already referred to the favourable policy of the main line of the Vākāṭaka kings. Govindavarman I might have taken full advantage of the backing of Pravarasena II and of the weakness of the Vatsagulma line.
He used his skill, might and energy and carved out a sizeable kingdom of his own and ruled it either independently or semi-independently. He seems to have also started a policy of expansion by conducting aggressive wars into the territories of neighbouring chiefs. In the Coastal Andhra the power of the Sālaṅkāyana family was fast declining. This must have considerably helped Gōvindavarman in extending the boundaries of his kingdom. It is likely that by his warlike activities he managed to bring under him some neighbouring feudal families. To the group of such families belonged the family of a chief named Pṛthivīmūla, who was, as we shall see later, perhaps the grandfather of his namesake who issued the Godavari plates, sets I and II. This family probably had its seat somewhere in the western part of the East Godavari district. Therefore Gōvindavarman must have extended his kingdom considerably eastwards. Yet there is nothing to support the view that Gōvindavarman was the ruler of the Trikūṭa and Malaya.

Gōvindavarman's chief queen was Paramamahādevī, also referred to as Paramabhaṭṭārikāmahādevī. She was said to be the daughter of Pṛthivīmūla I mentioned above. It is likely that this matrimonial connection strengthened the position of the Vishpakuṇḍi overlord. The fact that the above Paramamahādevī is referred to as the agra-mahishī or the chief queen, seems to suggest that Gōvindavarman I must have had more than one queen.
Govindavarman was not only a conqueror but also a righteous ruler and was a great builder. He is characterised as "paramadhamīra" or highly righteous. He claims to have had a good mastery over the scriptures. He respected the varnāśramadhistha, donated liberally to the Buddhist monks and the Brāhmaṇas, the helpless etc., and often gifted away villages, cultivable lands, gold etc. He is credited with the construction of the new beautiful temples, monasteries, halls, water-houses etc. and with the repairing of the old ones.

These claims are not of political nature. Yet, we may legitimately conclude that it was Govindavarman I under whom the family became powerful and began to rise to eminence, and that it was he, who, for all practical purposes, was the real founder of the dynasty. This is perhaps the reason why the official genealogical accounts of the family in the subsequent ages, start from this monarch only. His achievements must have been considerable enough to tempt the Vākāṭaka to enter with the Vishṇukundī into a matrimonial relationship. His success were so great as to be remembered as late as the time of his great-great-grandson in whose record the fame of this king is described to outshine all his predecessors and successors of the family (pryāpara-kshitipati) and his virtues and wealth are compared with those of Govinda himself (i.e. Kṛiṣṇa-Viṣṇu).
The above details would suffice to show that there is hardly any basis for the conjecture that a Vākaṭaka ruler conquered the Salankāyana territory and handed over the same to the Vishṇukūṇḍi. Besides, no Vākaṭaka claims to himself such an action. Again to characterise Harishēṇa (c. 475-510 A.D.) and a bestower of the Andhra kingdom on Gōvindavarman may not also fit in well in the Vishṇukūṇḍi chronology we are following here.

The records do not agree with one another in describing Gōvindavarman's religion. His Tummalagudem plates I would give us an impression that he was a staunch Buddhist, while his son Madhava-varman's Ipur set I calls him a Śripārvatasyāmi-pādānudhyāta. It is probable that to begin with he was a Buddhist and was subsequently converted to Śaivism just as the Pallava king Mahēndravarman I of the subsequent age, who, originally a Jaina, was converted to Śaivism. If this is true, then it may be construed that this change of religion of Gōvindavarman might have been due to his close contacts with the Vākaṭaka king Pravara-śena II, a Parama- mahēśvara, whose mother, as we have already seen, favoured the temple of the god of Śrīśailam.

However it may be remembered that, as has been already pointed out, at times the evidence of the Velpuru and Ipur records may supersede that of the Tummalagudem charter. Therefore one may doubt whether the Buddhist authors of the texts of both the sets of Tummalagudem plates, in their
enthusiasm to admire their patron Govindavarman, tried to portray him as a Buddhist. This doubt seems to draw some strength from the fact that unlike all the other records of the family, the Buddhist record Tummalagudem set II alone calls Vikramendravarman I a Paramasangata or a devout follower of the religion of the Buddha. So it would appear that only with a grain of salt, one may have to take the description of Govindavarman's religion in the two sets of the Tummalagudem plates. In that case, the statement by the Tummalagudem sets may have to be interpreted simply as indicative of nothing more than that the king was very well disposed towards Buddhism and that he liberally donated to the Buddhist establishments though himself was a Śaiva.

His example must have been followed by his grandson, the Paramamahēśvara Vikramendravarman I also, just as the latter's grandson did by issuing the Tummalagudem set II, and as Prithivimūla II, a Paramamahēśvara, did by issuing the Godavari set II.

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NOTES

(1) The Nucleus

1 See CA, p. 276, 271.

2 Ibid., pp. 202, ff; BHAC, pp. 189 ff.

3 See below Ch. IV, Sect. iv.

4 BHD, pp. 26-27.
Dr. Sircar has already dealt with this question in detail (SG, pp. 158 ff) and has established the above identification. Therefore only a few new points in support of the theory are added here.

I.e. *Asaka-Asaka + + + Ākar-Āvanti-rājasa* (EI, VIII, p. 60, text line 2).

I.e. *Nāṭa(ṛi)shikāp Kuntalā Andhraḥ* | See SG., p. 31.

*Samantri(bāṭrīy-ṛi)shikāp Kuntalā-Īṛāla, etc.*

Ch. 14, verse 11. See also Prof. H. Kern's note on the passage (*Verspreide Geschriften, eerste deel*, p. 241). No doubt, for the purpose of the metre Varāhamihira often clubs together geographical names in such a way that it is too difficult to determine their relative positions. However it can not be denied that at least in this case he follows the said Purānic list that indicates the relative positions of the countries.

See *Mirashi, EI, XXXVII*, p. 18; H.C. Rayachaudhuri *(*op.cit.*) p. 27.

SG, p. 154. For the other view see *EI, XXXVII*, p. 18.

See for example *EHD.*, pp. 26-27; SG. p. 158.
Dr. Sircar has kindly endorsed this view of mine by his private letter to me dated 7.11.1967.

Of course, at times Rishika is found coupled with Vidarbha also (CII, V, p. 123) which also seems to indicate that both were contiguous. But there the names Vidarbha seems to have been used in its wider sense "empire of the Vidarbha kings". Asmaka formed part of the empire of the Vakaṭakas who ruled from Vatsagulma, located by Rajasekhara in Vidarbha (EI, XXXVI, p. 19 and f.n. 7; SG, p. 152). A parallel example may be found in the name of Kuntala often used in its widest sense "the empire of the kings of Kalyāṇi". See EHDI., p. 43.

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16 See above note 8.


18 See SED., S.v. PSED (1957), S.v.

19 RC, p. xxxiii

20 Megha. I, verse 23.

21 See e.g., S. Ins. p. 88, f.n. 2, p. 178, f.n. 4.

22 See Brihā., Ch. 14, verse 10 and Ūtapalabhaṭṭa’s commentary thereunder for quotations from Paraśara.

23 Ibid. verse 12. Ākara-Veṇ-Avantika is the reading of in Prof. Kern’s copy (op. cit., p. 235). The text published in Benares (1895, p. 288) however reads
Äkara-Vēṇā-Avartaka. But as Paraśara enumerates these geographical units viz. Äkāra, Vēṇā and Avanti (and not Avartaka) among the southern janapadas, Kern’s reading seems to preferable. Otherwise in the lists of countries Varāhamihira could nowhere else include Avanti, while on the other hand Paraśara locates it in the south at least on two occasions. (See Bhappōtsala’s commentary on the Brih., Ch. 14, verses 2–4 and 11–16). Moreover we do not know any country in the south bearing the name Avartaka.

24 See EI, VIII, p. 44, text line 11.

25 The expression is usually translated as “eastern and western Äkarāvanti” (IA, VII, p. 262; EI, VIII, p. 47). But it seems to go against the rule of Purvapar-adhar-ottaram=śakāsēm=āikādikarapō (PA. II, i, 1). It is not totally improbable that Purv-Apar-Äkara is a Karmadharaya and it is added to Avanti by a Dvandya. The fact that the Brihatsamhitā, as stated above mentions Vēṇā in between Äkara and Avanti does not seem to favour those who would take Äkarāvanti as a single unit (Cf. also S. Ins. p. 178, f.n. 4).

26 RC, p. cxix.

27 S. Ins. p. 178 f.n. 4.

28 See Kāma. Adhi. II, Ch. 5, sū. 22 and 25, and the Jayamangala commentary thereunder; Mēgha. I, verses 23, 24, 27, 30; Kāda. pp. 11–12, 116. See also
The ancient name Ākara of Khāndesh might have had a connection with modern Akrāni, a division of Khāndesh. (See BG, XII, pp. 421 ff.). Abul Fazal says that the district was named Khāndesh by the Muslim rulers after the title of the Faruki kings sometimes after 1417 A.D. (See BG, I, ii, p. 231; XII, p. 1, f.n. 2; CII, V, p. 124 f.n. 1). However on the authority of Ferishṭa, it has been concluded that the area had had a name resembling Khāndesh even before it was first conquered by the Muslims in 1294 A.D.; that the earlier name was changed to suit the title of the Faruki kings (BG., XII, p. 1, f.n. 2); and that the new name came soon into general use on account of its close resemblance to the old one (BG., I, ii, p. 231). As the name Sūṇḍadēśa may not satisfy these conditions, as believed by some (ibid.) can one suggest that the earlier name intended was Khanidēśa? For khāni and ākara are synonyms.

(ii) Early History of Rishika

30 See AIU, p. 61.

31 See ibid., p. 216; EHAC, p. 37; Com. H.I., p. 112 f; EBD, p. 90.

32 Cf. Dutiya cha vase achitavita Satakāmpī pachhima-
33      See EHD, p. 93 f; AIU, p. 203.
34      See note 8 above.
35      See APGMS, No. 2.
36      EI, XXXV, pp. 77 ff.
37      Ibid. pp. 75 ff. The probability of one and the same 
       Chutukula enjoying both the designations has also been 
       suggested by scholars. Ibid. p. 77.
38      APGMS, No. 2, pp. 30-31, Nos. 6-8. These Kocajpur coins 
       bear on their obverse, a figure of lion and above a 
       clear legend Maharathisa, and on the reverse, the Ujjain 
       symbol. It s been affirmed that the partly damaged 
       legend of another Kocajpur coin of exactly the same 
       type reads as p a h a (JNSI, XI, pp. 1 ff; EI, 
       XXXVII, p. 47). But a comparison of this coin with 
       the above mentioned feature s would show that in all the 
       cases the intended reading of the legend may be perhaps 
       Maharathisa.
39      Cf. APGMS, No. 2, pp. 13-16.
40      In a few cases the reading is Ciarutasa Sagamana and 
       Chutukasa. See EI, XXXV, pp. 75-76. Cf. also EI, 
       XXXVII, p. 42.
41. See above Ch. II, Sect. ii.

42. If the root sag (to cover) (the Siddhantakoumudi, root No. 789 šagā) is found in the atmanāpada also, then Sagamana itself may be a Sanskrit name, like Vardhamana and Patamamana from the roots vrīḍaḥ and pat.

43. Name of the Brāhmaṇa donee in the Malavalli inscription (LL, No. 1195).

44. Name of an individual in a Besnagar inscription (ibid. No. 671).

45. AIU, pp. 206-07.

46. JNSI, XV, p. 120; EI, XXV, p. 77, type VI.

47. See DKA, p. 46 and f.n. 32; p. 72 and f.n. 11.

48. Op. cit. On palaeographical grounds the Banavasi record has been assigned to the first-half of the 3rd century A.D. (AIU, p. 208 f.n.).

49. See EI, XX, p. 24, Inscr. H; SS, p. 20, 23-24. The Vanavāsa king of the inscription is generally taken to be a Chuṭu Sātakarni. Recently it has been suggested with some reservation, that he might have been identical with Vīṣhṇurudra-Sīvalānanda Sātakarni of the Ābhīra Vasuśēpa's Nagarjunakonda inscription referred to earlier. See APCMS, No. 5, p. 11.

50. SS, pp. 18, 24.
Here and hereafter the respective dates of the Vākaṭaka kings are based on the chronological scheme of the family as worked out by Prof. Altekar (EHD, pp. 153 ff.) and by Prof. Mirashi (CII, V, p. vi). Even the scheme suggested by Prof. R.C. Majumdar (JRASB(L), XII, p. 1 ff.) may not seriously affect the study undertaken here.

CII, V, pp. xviii ff.

EHD, p. 159.

CII, V, p. xv.


The suggestion that he may be identical with the Mahākṣatrana avāmin Satyasena (9th decade of the 4th century A.D.) is not favoured by many on ground that such a hostile contact between the Śaka ruler of the north and the Pallava of the farther south was not at all likely. See R. Gopalan, Hist. of the Pallavas of Kāñchi (Madras, 1928), p. 53. Moreover the text of the Velurpalayam plates provides no basis for the conjecture that both the said Satyasena and his ghatikā were in Kāñchi itself. Cf. TPCP, Introd. Tamil, page, v.
The Pallava Jinalaya of the Pudur (Gadwal taluk, Mahbubnagar district) inscription of the Chalukya Vikramaditya VI (No. B 28 of AES, 1965-66) probably indicates a later Holamba Pallava influence over the region.

See also CII, p. xiv ff.

Cf. EBD, p. 159.

Uchchhyasa VIII, (Kale's Ed. 1926, p. 201). Daśakumāra-charita is after all a clean fiction. Even if one accepts that some of its microscopic particulars might have been legendary or historical (ibid. Introd. p. xxxviii), to give the narration much weight and to deduce some weighty conclusions on that basis alone may not be fully justifiable (cf. CII, V, pp. xxxii ff.). See Appendix III.


The reading in the inscription is not Triparyata at all. Cf. JIH, XII, p. 357; CA, p. 271.


AHD, p. 92.

(iii) Early Vishnukundī Rulers

Inscr. I, lines 1-2.
67 Inscr. VIII, line 2.

68 See also section ii.

69 Ibid.

70 Cf. Inscr. II, line 1.

71 See CII, V, p. xxxvi.

72 See Insers. I and VIII.

73 Cf. e.g. the case of the Vakāṭaka capital Pravarapura founded by, and named after, Pravarasena II. EHD, p. 80; CII, V, p. xxiv.

74 CA, p. 206; EI, XXXVI, p. 4.

75 EHD, p. 136.

76 See the Ajanta Inscription, CII, V, p. 108, y. 10.

77 EHD, p. 175.

78 Ibid., pp. 179, 186.

79 ARE, 1915, p. 94. This tradition of the Sthalamahātmya is said to have been recorded in the Telugu poem Pandītāraṇḍya-charita assigned to c. 1200 A.D. and to have been translated into Sanskrit in the 15th century. (JDL, XI, p. 52 and f.n.).

80 See e.g., AHD, p. 90; EHD, p. 159.

81 For other instances of similar nature see below Ch.
VI, n. 171. Cf. AIOC, XIII, Pt. ii, p. 425. Some scholars have gone further to suggest that "Chandravati" may have been the premarriage name of Prabhañvatī (EHD, p. 159). According to an earlier view, this Chandravati was the daughter of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya dynasty (ARE, 1915, n. 91). Some have tried also to identify this Chandragupta with the king of Mahā Kosala and Chandravati, with his daughter, whom according to these scholars, Madhava-varman Janāgrava married (BD, pp. 522-23). See below Ch. IV, Sect. iii.

It may also be pointed out that no student of Indian history is now prepared to set aside the evidence of Ceylonese chronicles and of the Prabandhachintamani in spite of the fact that their accounts are full of fiction and grotesque exaggeration.

See the king's Gadhwa Stone Inscription (CII, III, pp. 40-41).

Though a Vaishnava, the queen might have given some gifts to the temple at least at the instance of her son, who though a Saiva, built a temple of Rāma at
her instance. See ibid., p. xxv.

89 See the Ajanta Inscription of Varahadeva. Ibid., p. 108, verse 8.

90 See the Balaghat Plates of Narēndrasena's son Prithivī-śīhang. Ibid., p. 81, text lines 30-31.

91 Ibid., verse 13.

92 Ibid., p. 81, text lines 27-28.

(iv) Gōvindavarmen

93 This is not a special feature of the Vishṇukūṇḍi charters alone. Cf. the contemporary charters of the Vākṣṭakas in the north and the Pallavas in the south. For the injunction of the Smritis on this point, see Vīra. Vyavahāra. (p. 144) and Kṛtya. Vyavahāra. (pp. 157-58).

94 In the Vishṇukūṇḍi charters often the kings themselves act as executors.

95 See Ch. VI, Sect. iii; Ch. VIII, Sect. i.


97 Under such circumstances the creation of new charters are sanctioned by the Smṛti literature. Cf. Śāsanādan

A parallel instance may be found in the case of some Pallava charters. While all the charters of that family contain the orders of the respective monarchs addressed to the officers and residents of the gift villages informing them of the royal grants, the Ongodu plates of Śimhavarma (BI, XV, pp. 252 ff.) and the Udayendiram charters of Nandivarma I (ibid., III, pp. 142 ff.) and of Nandivarma Pallavamalla (SII, II, pp. 361 ff.) contain mere statements of facts that the respective kings had gifted away the respective villages. It is to be noted that the characters of these charters are to be assigned to the ages much later than that of their respective kings. Scholars are of the opinion that these may be the later copies of their respective earlier originals (See BI, XV, p. 252; SS, pp. 199, 209; TFC, pp. 108, 332, 350). It is likely that these too are not true, but adapted copies of the originals.

Cf. the expression sthiti-sthāpāna. See SED, s.v.

No doubt sthiti is recognised also in the sense of ordinance or decree and therefore sthitir-ēśā sthāvetā may also be rendered simply as "the decree has been
issued". But such or similar statement seems to be rather irrelevant in the records first issued, and it is not met with anywhere else in such records. On the other hand the word sthiti seems to have been used in the sense of "original decree" in the Podagadh (Koraput District, the former Jeypore Agency) inscription of the Nala king Skandavarman (EI, XXI, pp. 155 ff.) who was more or less a contemporary of the Vishnukundali king Vikramendravarman II. Cf. Sthitiḥ=ch-eyam purū baddhā dharmyā stambhā nivēśita of that record (verse 8), "this righteous decree (of grant) previously made is (now) committed to writing on the pillar". In that inscription, the Nala king claims to have restored the royal fortunes of his family and to have repopulated the forsaken city Pushkara. Likewise, by means of this record he might have restored in that area a grant originally made to god Purusha (i.e., Vishnu) by someone. This meaning for sthiti is further supported by the reference in the same record to the earlier gift as purushāva purā dattam (verse 5). The reading puram dattam does not appear to be correct.

The words ātmanah before the regnal year is quite unusual in the Vishnukundali charters and it occurs here immediately after the name of the donor Gōvindavarman. Probably it was purposely used to indicate that the regnal year 37 quoted was of Gōvindavarman I and not of the restorer viz., perhaps Vikramendravarman II. It may
be pointed out that in the later adapted copies of the Udayendiram (I) and Ongodu (II) records too we find respectively the expression tasya (line 37) and sva (line 31) before the regnal years while they are not at all met with in other records of the Pallavas.

101 Inscr. I, lines 4-5.
102 Ibid., lines 5-6.
103 Inscr. III, line 3.
104 Inscr. VIII, lines 22-23.
105 See below Ch. VIII, Sect. i.
106 Cf. JEMS, XXX, p. 310. See below Ch. IV, Sect. ii; Ch. VI, Sect. ii; App. IV
107 Paramamahadevi may be a name. But Paramabhattarakamahadevi sounds like a title that was borne by the queen of the later Guptas of Magadha (CA, p. 352).
108 See also below Ch. VI, Sect. iii; Ch. VIII, Sect. i.
109 Inscr. III, line 2.
110 Inscr. I, line 11.
111 Ibid., line 6.
112 Ibid. lines 6-11; Inscr. III, line 2.
113 Inscr. I, lines 8-9; Inscr. VIII, lines 24-26.
Inscr. VIII, lines 26-28. This sort of description we can expect only from an author who had the knowledge of Govindarāja's predecessors and successors of the family up to the time of Vikramendravarman II. Therefore Govindavarman-Govindarāja of the Inscr. must have ruled sometime earlier than Vikramendravarman II. The view that the above Govindavarman was the successor of Vikramendravarman II (JAHRS, XXXI, p. 41 ff) misses the above point. Besides we have already pointed out the chronological difficulties that are inherent in that view.

See AHD, p. 90.

CII, V, p. xxxi; EHD, p. 188. An equally untenable suggestion is that Govindavarman or his son Mādhavavarman, as the vassals of the Vākāṭaka Harishēna, conquered Andhra (QJMS, XXX, p. 312).

Inscr. I, line 12; Inscr. VIII, lines 3-4.

Inscr. III, line 1.

CA, p. 253.

CII, V, p. 12, line 16; etc.

An analogous instance may be found in the case of Harshavarman's religion. He is described unequivocally as a Śaiva in his own charters and in his biography written by Bana. But the statements of Yuan Chwang
would make us believe that the Pushyabhuti emperor was not only a devoted follower of Buddhism, but also showed disrespect to all the other religious sects including Śaivism. Naturally scholars are inclined to accept the account of that Buddhist Chinese pilgrim only "with more than usual reserve". (See CA, pp. 117 ff.).

122 See below Ch. VII, Sect. i.

123 See below, Ch. VIII, Sect. i.