Chapter XXI
SAIVISM IN ANDHRADESA

Early Saivism

Saivism is not only the oldest but also the most predominant religion in Andhradesa. Traditions connected with its early history have been mentioned already.

Satavahana

About the condition of Saivism during the Satavahana period information is extremely limited. However, the linga of Sudishmallas and the tradition recorded in the inscription of Athanakundas reveal that Saivism was prevalent during the Satavahana period. Scholars believe that Hala was inclined towards Saivism. Gautamiputra Satakarni was compared with Mount Kailasa and some of the later Satavahanas had Saivite names.

Iksvakus

The Iksvakus who succeeded Satavahanas, were essentially Saivite and their period is a landmark in the history of Saivism in Andhra. The Iksvaku kings and their general built and dedicated temples to Siva with names like Puspadhara and Modagirisamy.

1. Vide Supra, Ch. III.
2. Vide Supra, P. 64.
3. Vide Supra, P. 312.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
One interesting feature, associated with the worship of Siva was the installation of Bana Lingas in honour of the deceased. This conclusion is supported by the discovery of Bana Lingas especially in the Burning ghat near Vijaya-ur. This shows that Siva came to be definitely associated with death. At the same time, he was called Mahadeva, the Supreme God. Eliot remarks, "Saivism possesses truth and force. It gives the best picture which humanity has drawn of the Lord of this world, not indeed of the ideal to which the saint aspires, nor of the fancies, with which hope and emotion people the spheres behind the veil, but of the force which rules the universe as it is which reproduces and destroys and in performing one of these acts necessarily performs the other, seeing that both are aspects of change." The creator is also the destroyer, not in anger but by the very nature of his activity.

The practice of installing Lingas in honour of the deceased continued for a long time. This was probably the cause which should have induced Vijayaditya II of the Eastern Calukyan dynasty to build a temple of Siva at every place where he fought.

1. Ind. Arch., 1952-53, Pl. VI, A, B, C. There was a temple of Siva near the Ghat and the God was known by the name of Bhogesvara. M. Ramasao, The Ikavas, P. 64.
4. Ibid.
with his enemy. According to the Kalidindi copper plates, Hayarajanrendra built temples in honour of three Cole generals who died fighting on his behalf. We come across in the Kakatiya inscriptions, people building temples of Siva in the name of their deceased parents.

Worship of Skanda

Another important feature of Saivism during this period is the worship of Skanda or Mahasena, the son of Siva and Parvati. It is believed, as noted above, that the worship of Skanda in association with his divine parents, is a very ancient practice. From Patanjali, we learn that Skanda enjoyed independent worship. Patanjali records that the images of Siva, Skanda and Visakha were made up and sold and the statement implies that Skanda enjoyed independent worship. In the Satavahana dynasty, we find Skandasambha, Skandasvati and Silvakanda, the fifth, the eleventh and the twentieth respectively of the Patyac list.

The Ikshvakus looked upon Mahasena as the guardian angel and built his temples on all the four cardinal sides of their citadel.

---

1. N. Venkataramanayya, Eastern Chalukyas, p. 130.
4. Some scholars think that the worship of the Triad, God, Goddess and Their son, was coming down from the Harappan times. They identify Muradeva of theaveda with the prototype of later Skanda. The Skandasvata sculpture became popular from the time of the Pallevas. There is a beautiful bronze "Somakanda" in the temple of Srisailam. Intra, pl. XIV, Fig 2.
5. A.P. Narayana, Religions of India, p. 21.
8. This information is obtained from the notes prepared by Dr. R. Subrahmanyan who excavated the city of Vijayapur.
As already noted, the founder of the Iksvakus dynasty, was an ardent devotee of Mahasena. From the fragments of sculptures, we learn that Skanda was worshipped in association with Sakti and he was associated with Kukkuta and Kayura.

**Bhatpalayanases & Salankayanaes**

The Bhatpalayanases who succeeded the Iksvakus in the Iksvakus Delta were Saivites. The only king of the dynasty known to us from the Koniamudi plates was a votary of Maheswara.

The Salankayanaes were essentially a Saivite dynasty. The word Salankayana means, Nandi, the vehicle and symbol of Shiva. The crest of the dynasty also is the bull. As an interesting contrast to the Vamvakundas, all the members of the Salankayana dynasty bear Saivite names and Vijayadevavarmman, who is regarded the founder of the dynasty took the title Parameshwara.

**Sun-worship**

From the inscriptions of the Salankayanaes, we learn that their family deity was Citrarathaswamy, which means the Sun God. The Sun is indeed a Vedic god and his worship is prescribed by

---
2. Ibid. 1955-57.
7. K. Ramaswami, *"Successors of Satavahanas", op. cit.*
10. *E.A.*, VIII, 60, 1; 62, 2.
the Brahmanas and Sutra literatures. Sandhyavandana as described by the Avatayana Orivasutras is nothing but the invocation of Surya.

Some scholars think that the word "Satavahana" was the corrupt form of Saptavahana which means the sun and they conclude that the Satavahanas were worshippers of the Sun God. Many scholars believe that the Sun-worship in India has gained momentum with the advent of the Magas of Persian origin into the north. Some even try to establish some connection between the Salankayanas of Vengi and some tribe in the north.

It appears strange that the Saivite Salankayanas used the Sun God for their family deity. It may be recalled that the Vedic Sun was essentially Vaisnavite. It appears that Surya and Siva were gradually reconciled till they were held identical by the Brahma and Saura puranas. To this rapprochement may be attributed the installation of Surya images in important Saivite temples as those of Chejerla.

Even after the fall of the Salankayanas, the Sun God was worshipped independently at many places in Andhra. The Codes of Renadu appear to be the votaries of Sun. An inscription from

2. Ibid.
3. H. Romer, Satavahane Sanchi, P. 52.
6. Dilip Kumar Biswas, "Surya and Siva", I.H.C., XXIV, pp.142-147. He quotes the following sloka from the Saurapuras:
   Suryo tisthati yo davo na Surya vetti senkaram
   Yasya Suryahavadram tamal Suryatmane ha mah.
7. Vide infra, pl. VIII, fig. 2.
8. S.K.C., X, no. 293.
Kambadur in Anantapur district dated A.D. 883 registers a gift to a temple of Surya. At Malayanur in the Kurnool district, Vemulawada in Karimnagar district and at Alampur which was a great centre of Saiva and Saktiya worship in the Nabadwipadav district there were built temples of the Sun God.

**Vakatkes, Vismukundins, Anandes**

Almost simultaneously with the Pallavas in the south, the Vakatkes rose to power in the western Deccan and occupied parts of Andhra. With the exception of one or two, the Vakatkes were devotees of Siva. Among the Anandagotra kings, there were two Mandaras (Skanda) and one Hastivarmas. Kandara II was the patron of the Kapoteswara temple of Chejerla.

Among the Vismukundins, Indrabhattaraka and his son Vira-mandrasvarman were Parameshwars. The latter gifted a village on the bank of the Krishna, to the temple of Somagirisvaranatha of Tryambaka Siva.

The kings of the Anandagotra and Vismukundin dynasties claimed to have built many temples to their favourite deities. The caves of Undavalli and Mogalrajapuram are attributed to the

---

Vismukundins, i.e. to the period A.D. 500 to 600. A few sculptures in these caves and others that have been salvaged from different places show how the Saivite mythology has considerable growth by that time. The most important of such sculptures is the Pedamudiya plaque from Cuddapah district, which is placed by critics in the 5th century A.D. From that sculpture, we learn that the worship of Ganapatli was popular and first place was given to him; the worship of Linga was common; the legend of Mahisasuramardini also was in currency. In the Mogalrajapuram caves are found the sculptures of Ganapatli, Natraja and Ardhanariswara. One of the caves is popular as Natraja or Siva-Tandava cave because its facade is decorated by a beautiful, though damaged, image of Natraja.

The Undavalli caves contain in two sculptures, the episode of Lingodbhava. It appears that nobody has satisfactorily identified the sculptures. In one of the sculptures, there is a long shaft from bottom to top representing the Linga. On either side of it there stands a deity with four hands. Each holds two of his hands in Anjali. As the sculptures have been much tempered with, the symbols and weapons they hold in their other two hands are not clear. The symbols in the hands of the deity to the right of the Linga look like Sankha and Cakra. One of the hands of the other deity seems to hold aksamala. It is therefore

2. C. Sivaramamurti, S.E.C.S., P. 12, Plate l, a.
5. R. Subrahmanyan, Tuni Copper Plate Grant, P. 43, and Infra, Pl. VII, Fig. 2.
6. Dr. Ramasarma who has given a description of the caves and the sculptures does not seek to describe these two. Op. cit., PP. 24-32. Infra, Pl. VII B, 1, a and b.
clear that the deities are Visnu and Brahma respectively, probably confessing their inability to find out the two extremeties of Linga. The second sculpture contains the Linga in the middle. It represents one god scaling the skies and the other diving into the earth. The peculiarity with this representation of Lingodbhava is that Brahma and Visnu are represented in human form. The Agamas suggest that human forms of Visnu and Brahma are to be avoided and they must be symbolised as bear and swar respectively. The sculptures of Undavalli must have been very early belonging to the period when the Agamas had not yet become popular.

**Calukyas**

From the time of Pulakesin II (A.D. 610-642), the Calukyas showed preference to Saivism. Pulakesin II's son and successor, Vikramaditya I took Sitamandaladiksa from Sudarsanacarya. This event is recorded by the Amidlapadu (Mahabootnagar) inscription according to which the former gifted a village to the scurrya. Amalapur seems to have developed into a great centre of Saivism under the patronage of these Early Calukyas. In the time of Vijayaditya (A.D. 696-733), Pattadakal became a great centre of Saivism.

Among the Eastern Calukyas, Vijayaditya I (A.D. 723-770) was the first to take the title Paramaswara. Most of his

---

2. The nephew of Pulakesin, Nagesvaradhana gifted a village in the Nasik District for the worship of Kapalesvara and the maintenance of Mahavratins residing in it. R.C. Randerkar, op. cit., P. 168.
successors were Saivite and took the above title. Vijayaditya (A.D. 808-847) built 108 temples of Siva whereas the temples of Pancha Aramas are attributed to Calukya Bhima. Besides the above places, Biscaval, Bezawa or Vijayawada, Cebrolu, Girdi, and Agastyesvaran (Mahabookunagur) became seats of Saivism in Andhra.

Radical Saivite sects like the Pasupatas and Kalasmukhas entered Andhra and received patronage from the Eastern Calukyas. The aggressive missionary zeal of these sects was largely responsible for the tragic fate that befell Buddhism during this period.

Worship of Skanda & Vinayaka:

The worship of Skanda or Mahasena continued. At Cebrolu, there was a big temple of Mahasena. The Eastern Calukyan king Yuddhananda built a temple for the same god at Bezawa. One interesting practice connected with these temples was the annual festival — Jatara or Tirumala in which the image of Skanda was taken in procession from Cebrolu to Bezawa and back. The following are important among them:

1. The following are important among them:
   - Ananta: Bezawa grant, Ibid. 1915, C.A. No. 11.
   - Saktivarsha: Ponneru grant, Eastern Calukyas, App. XI.
   - Raja Ramaendra: Nandamundi grant, E.I., IV, p. 500.
2. Guntur Plates of Vijayaditya III, A.S.I., E., 1011-1012, C.P. No. 3
4. Tel. Ins., II, pp. 77-84.
6. Vide supra, Ch. on Decline of Buddhism.
7. S.I., VI, Nos. 101, 102, 103 and 104.
9. Ibid.
temple at Chebrolu was in a flourishing condition even in the Kakatiya period and Jayapa, the Gajasabini of Ganapati made rich gifts to it. However, the importance of Kumara appears to have decreased as that of Vinayaka gradually increased. The worship of Vinayaka is very old in Andhra. It may be recalled that Ananda Coomaraswamy found a Yaka iv with elephant head in the early sculptures of Amaravati. At first he was a maleficent god, the leader of Ganas or evil forces. Gradually he was changed into a benignant god as the remover of obstacles. The Saptasati contains an invocation to Ganapati and a reference to the image of Ganapati.

The worship of Ganapati became popular in Andhra from about the 5th century A.D. In a beautiful sculpture from Naugula in the Palnad Taluk (Guntur District) Vinayaka finds place with his divine parents Siva and Parvati in the shape of a small child. Since that time, the images of Vinayaka occur in the caves of Mogalrajapuram and in the Eastern Chalukyan temples of aicevati and other places. He is represented as sitting, standing, dancing

2. Vide Supra, P. 30.
3. R.G. Dhandikar, op. cit., P.
5. V, 6.
6. iv. 72.
11. Ibid. P. 41.
12. Ibid. P. 44.
1. and at times with his Sakti. Gradually, the importance of Vinayaka grew so much that he became the centre of a cult known as Ganapatya. By the time of Kumarila, Ganapatya should have become an influential cult so that Ganapeti could be included into the Pancaratanas.

**Kakatiyas**

The Kakatiyas who succeeded the Calukyas were devotees of Siva, at least from the time of Prolaraja II. According to the Pratapa Rudra Yasoobhusanam of Vidyamatha, the dynasty received the name Kakatiya because they worshipped Goddess Durga in the name of Kakati. At Warangal, there was a temple dedicated to Goddess Kakati.

Many Saivite sects flourished under the patronage of the Kakatiyas. Prolaraja II honoured Rameswara pandita, a great Pasupata teacher. In the time of Ganapatideva, the Golakiratha established its branches at many places in Andhra and its pontiff, Visweswara Sivadeva became the Maksaguru of Ganapati. Such an atmosphere proved congenial to the Virasaiva movement which made rapid progress in the land, suppressing its rivals especially Jainism.

From literature and inscriptions, we learn that the worship of Siva in his terrible forms - Bhairava and Mallara - was popular in the Kakatiya period. This form of worship and the Virasaiva movement seem to have inspired not only fervid devotion but also heroism in the people.

---

1. Ibid. P. 46.
2. R.G. Bhandarkar, op. cit.
3. The early Kakatiyas are believed to be Jains. Vide Supra, P.
5. Kridabharam, V. 129.
6. Cor. Tel. Ins., No. 12.
7. Vide infra, P. 396 ff.