CHAPTER XII

SOCIETY, RELIGION AND TEMPLE
1. Structure of the Society

The subject has been dealt with in the early chapter in connection with the people's role in the civil administration of the Kākatīyas.

As in other parts of the country, the society in Andhra during the Kākatīya period was basically divided into the four main castes, the brahmanas, kshatriyas, vaisyes and śūdras. But there are several sub-sects in each of these castes, based on regions. For example, the brahmanas were divided into Velanādus, Vēṅginādus, Teliṅgānas, Karmanēṭis, Kāsalnēṭis, Mulikinēṭis etc. which appear in other sects also. The Telugu chronicle Pratāpā charitra gives an elaborate list of the houses of the various sects of people residing in the capital Orugallu. Some of these sects are also mentioned in Kridābhiraṇa. Although we can not agree with the numerical figures of the houses given these we can take the several classes of people living in the capital which are as follows.

1. Brahmānas
2. ministers and other dignitaries
3. Warriors
4. ordinary merchants or vaisyās
5. Rich merchants
6. Padmaṇāyakas
7. Viśvakarmas
8. Gollas
9. Kā Ipsum
10. Edigas
11. Śiva-brāhmaṇas
12. Potters
13. Weavers (silk, weavers)
14. Padminasales (cotton-weavers)
15. Medaras
16. Painters
17. Upparis
18. Mēra
19. Besta (fishermen)
20. Tenugus
21. Bukkas
22. Saśgaras
23. Rajakas (washerman)
24. Vēsyas (prostitutes)
25. pūtakūti-vāru (Hoteliers)
26. Balījas
27. Miscellaneous houses

From the list we can understand the social set up of the country in those days.
1. Religion

1. Buddhism

Having enjoyed glory and grandeur for centuries Buddhism in Andhra slowly died out in tenth-eleventh centuries. Only stray references to that religion can be noticed in the epigraphs of our period. An inscription at Abbu dated A.D.1182 records the gifts of lamps to Buddhadeva by Kota Ketarāja and his courtesans of Dharanikota. A similar record of the same period refers to the installation of lamps to Buddhadeva at Amarāvati and other Aramas, viz. Dakshārāma, Kshīrārāma (Palakollu), Bhīmarāma (Bhīmarāma), Komārārāma (Bhīnavaram), by certain Sōmana-peṣaṇa. The Karimnagar inscription of Kākatiya Rudra's minister Gangādhara dated A.D.1171 refers to the installation of Buddha at Pāṭṭaśāla by that minister. The interesting point in this record is the statement that Lord Vishnu manifested himself in the form of the Buddha to deceive the āsuras or demons. Thus, even the faithful devotees believed Buddha as one of the avatāras of Vishnu. Certain Mallireddī, a subordinate chief of Kākati Rudradēva in his Bēkkallu inscription expressed the same belief. One of his attributes is samuddharita-samaya-CHATUSTAYA i.e. he was uplifted the four religious sects viz. Buddhism, Jainism, Śaivism and Vaishnavism. Besides these epigraphic references, we find an interesting anecdote in PANDITĀRĀDHVA-CHARITRA of Palkurki Sōmanātha, which
describes a religious conflict between a Baudhā preacher and Mallīkārjuna Panditārādhyā. It narrates the disputation between the preachers of the two religions in the court of the Velanāti chief Rājendra Chōla II of Chandavolu (A.D.1162-81). The conflict went to the climax that the disciples of Panditārādhyā murdered the Buddhist Āchāryas and destroyed their abode. The story further states, that the king being annoyed with this, made Panditārādhyā blind by pulling out his eye-balls. But the latter with mercy of the god Śiva got back his eyes and cursing the king, left for Śrīsaila. This seems to be the last historical incident which went adverse to Buddhism in Āndhradēśa.

2. Jainism:

As already said, the Kācatīyas started their political career in the Telugu country during the Rāstrakūta regime when Jainism enjoyed royal patronage. In Telingāna particularly, the Chālukyās of Vēmulavāda extended full support to that religion as evidenced by their numerous Jaina monuments and literary works like Yasastilaka of Sōmadeva and Adipurāṇa, of Pampa, which were produced in their court. The early Kācatīyas were not far removed from the period. Their association with the Garuda emblem and the myth of Madhavavarman stated in the Siddhēśvara charitra indicate their affiliation to Jainism in the early days. Bōta II is also stated in his Sanīgaram inscription to have made a gift to the Yuddhamalla Jinalaya. The Bānājipet inscription of Mēdarasa I records a gift to a Jaina
basadi by Kakatiya Beto II. The Padmakshi Temple inscription of Prōla II dated A.D. 1117 records the construction of Kadalalāya-basadi on that hill and endowments to the same by Prōla II and Madarāja II.

The Garuda symbol which adorned their banners till the time of Prataparudra, as stated in Pratāparudriya of Vidyānātha, does not indicate their religious attachment to Vishnuvism, as there is no evidence in that regard. It is quite possible that their association with the Garuda symbol indicates some Jaina like the Garuda of Śantinātha, the sixteenth Tīrthaṅkara.

It may not be out of place in this connection to correlate two identical statements occurring in the Govindapuram epigraph and the Telugu chronicle Siddhesvara charitra. According to the former, certain Mādhava-chakravartin who is stated to be the founder of the Polavāsa chiefs (described in chapter III above) acquired his military strength consisting of eight thousand elephants, ten crores of horses and numberless foot soldiers by the grace of Yakshesvari at the command of Jina. The same myth in Siddhesvara charitra, is stated that Mādhavaverman the founder of the Kakatiya family acquired an army comprising thousands of elephants and lakhs of horses and foot soldiers by the grace of the goddess Padmakshi. The Dāksharam inscription of Durga son of Prōla II mentions Mādhavaverman as the founder of the Kakatiya family. The goddess Padmakshi on the hill near Anumakonda is beyond all doubts a Jaina deity although
it is at present worshipped as a Śaiva goddess. The image of this goddess situated amidst the images of Jaina Tīrthankarās cannot be believed to be a Śaiva goddess. The original Jaina deity was gradually transformed into a Śaiva goddess to suit the Śaiva leanings of the later Kākatiyās. The said Jaina myth itself is recast into a Śaiva one. The goddess might have been originally Padmāvati, the Yakṣeśvari or Śasanadevi of Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third Tīrthankara. While editing the inscription of Prōla II set up before this temple, H. Krishna Sastry expressed the view that the Kadalalāya basadi mentioned in it must have been dedicated to Kadalalāya, the Kannada name for the goddess Ambikā or Padmāvati. All this leads to the conclusion that the early members of the Kākatiyās were the followers of Jainism. It is not unreasonable to believe that the Jaina goddess on the Anumakonda hill was set up by Garuḍa Bēta or Beta II and called as Kākati as stated in the Gudur epigraph that Kāmavasāṇi by reinstating Garuḍa Bēta established Kākati.

That Jainism enjoyed the patronage of even the later members is evidenced by the renovation work conducted by Rudra’s minister Gāṇādhara to the Jaina vasati on the Pādmākshi hill as stated in his recently discovered epigraph at Anumakonda. A Jain poet named Appayārya states in his Jīṃendra-Kalyāṇābhvyudaya that he completed his work during the reign of Kākatiyā Kumārarudrādeva, that is Pratāpārūḍa. This is also an indication that Jainism flourished in Andhra till the end of the Kākatiyā period.
To illustrate the general tendency of the society towards Jainism during this period we have an inscription at Bekkallu, Jangaon taluk, datable to Rudra's reign. Certain Mallireddi therein is stated to have constructed twenty-one temples after the names of so many members of his family, although his family was devoted to Jainism. It is very interesting to note in the record a specific statement in Telugu prose as well as verse that the four samayṣas namely Śeiva, Vaishnava, his own Jaina and Baudhā are mere causes for disbelief (samāyṣa-hētu) but the god in all the schools or samayṣas is only one and that with this strong belief he constructed all those temples to the god Śiva. It is thus evident that the people at large in those days were following the four religions without prejudice to each other.

3. Śaivism:

Among the several schools of Śaivism like the Kalāmukha, Kāpālika, Arādhya-Śaiva, Vīraśaiva, Pāṣupata, etc., the last mentioned gained predominance during the Kakatiya period. After serving their close association with the Jaina cult, the early members patronized the Kalāmukha school of Śaivism. Bēṭa III is said in the fragmentary Anumakonda epigraph to have been the best pupil of Rāmēśvara Pāṇḍita and granted him the village Vaijanapalli as fief after renaming it Śivapura. Rāmēśvara Pāṇḍita was proficient in Lakulēśvara Ācāma-Mahā-Siddhānta. Bēṭa III according to the Kazipet Dargah inscription made a gift of the village Śivapura to the same Rāmēśvara Pāṇḍita of
the Kālamukha school who is stated to be the head pontiff of Śilāmātha of Śrīśaila Mallikārjuna. It is thus evident that Beta III and his sons Durgarāja and Prola II were initiated into the Kālamukha school of Śaivīsu by Rāmeshvara Pandita, who was an authority on Lakulīśvara-Āgama. When Śrīśaila, the main Śaiva centre in Andhra was presided by the Kālamukha-guru, one can easily understand the predominance of that religion in the Telugu country in those days. According to one of the Ablur inscription\(^{18}\) of A.D.1112 Kālasmukhas have obtained the fame in the Śaktiparsha of the Parvat-amnāya or Parvat-āvalī.

Mallikārjuna Śilāmātha referred to above is one of the famous five Śaiva Maṭhas situated on the Śrīparvata. The names of the Kālamukha Śaiva ascetics end in Śaktī, Rāśī, Pandita and Rāśi-pandita. Lakulīśvara or Nakulēśvara was the founder of this Kālamukha doctrine. The ascetics of the Kālamukha school were well versed in Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Sāṅkhya dārśanās.\(^{19}\) It is quite likely that the same Rāmeshvara Pandita who was the Rājaguru of Beta III and Prola II and chief of the Śilāmātha of Śrīśaila might have been the athānāpati of Dākṣārya temple also. Thus we can understand how Kālamukha Śaivism gained prominence throughout the Andhra country during the twelfth century.

From the Sanigaram inscriptions it is noticed that Prola I, Beta III and Prola II were Parama-mahēśvaras.\(^{20}\) King Rudradeva was a Paramamahēśvara. We have no knowledge about his spiritual guru. But his Anumakonda inscription mentions Advayāmṛita-yatī
and Rāmēsvara-dīkṣita as teacher and father respectively of Achintēndra, the composer of that record. It is not unlikely that any of these ascetics might have been the spiritual guru of Rudradēva. Mahādeva's rāja guru was Dhruvēsvara pandita.

Alampur on the bank of Tungabhadra was another important Kālāmukha centre in Andhradēśa. The mahāsthānādīhpatis of the Brahmēsvara temples at that place were renowned for their scholarship and piety and were greatly honoured by the Western Chōlukyas of Kālaṇa. Similarly Agastyēśvaram near Alampur was also another important centre for these ascetics.

Thus we notice that upto the end of twelfth century Kālāmukha Śaivism spread throughout Andhradēśa not only in temples and mathas but also in the royal court.

The reign of Gaṇapatidēva is a memorable mile stone in the history of the Śaiva religion in Andhra. The advent of the Śaiva teachers of the Pāsūpata school into the Andhra country brought about a change in the fortunes of the Kālāmukha sect. In fact the Kālāmukha and Pāsūpata schools are not widely apart from each other in their philosophy. Nevertheless as systems of faith and custom their paths gradually took different ways, basing chiefly in matters of religious practices and rituals. During the reign of Kākati Gaṇapatidēva the Pāsūpata Śaivas belonging to the Golēkī-māṭha the Śāhala country on the bank of Narmada, gained popularity among the masses as well as the rulers. As the names of Kālāmukha ascetics end with rāsi, pandita and sakti, the names of the Pāsūpatas end with śiva,
Śambhu, Pandita and rishi. Viśeśvara-Siva, according to the Malkapuram and other records was the rāja-guru of Gaṅapatideva and his daughter Rudramadēvi. In the colophon of the incomplete inscriptive poem on the Urusugutta it is clearly stated that its author was the son of rāja-guru Viśeśvara-pandita, whose name was Narasiṁha-rishi. The Malkapuram inscription of Rudramadēvi referred to above furnishes an interesting and detailed account of the Śaiva teachers of the Golaki-matha. Accordingly, in the country known as Dāhala-mandala situated between the rivers Gaṅgā and Narmadā, there flourished a line of Śaiva teachers whose founder was the sage Dūrvāsa. In this line appeared Saṁbhāva-Śambhu. He received from the Kālachuri monarch Yuvarājadēva the Mulakh province as bhikṣa. This Śaiva ascetic founded the Śaiva monastery called Golaki-matha and gave away that province as vṛtti for the maintenance of the teachers of that mathe. In this Golaki-matha appeared gurus and their disciples in thousands, who had the power to bless or curse the kings of the earth. Sakti-Śambhu, Kirti-Śambhu, Vimala-Śiva and Viśeśvara-Śambhu were some of the renowned teachers of that school. The last named Viśeśvara-Śambhu or Śiva was the dikṣā-guru to king Gaṅapatidēva. Gaṅapatidēva styled himself the son (spiritual son) of Viśeśvara-Śambhu after the initiation ceremony had taken place.

These Śivāchāryas of the Golaki-matha are also said in the inscriptions to have belonged to the Golaki-vamsa and are
called Bhikshā-mathā-santāna. These Śaiva teachers commanded great influence on the Kalachuri kings, the Kākṣiya kings and the kings of Mālva and Chōla countries. It is interesting to note that the list of Śaiva teachers mentioned in the Malkapuram inscription referred to above, is to some extent identical with that of the Jabbalpore stone record.

The Malkapuram inscription states that Rudramadēvi granted to Visveśvara-sambhu in Śaka 1183, Durmati (A.D.1261) the village of Mandaram or Mandadan on the bank of the river Kṛishna in the Velanāndu-vishaye in accordance with the desire of her father. After receiving this gift from the queen, Visveśvara-sambhu constructed at the village a temple to the god Śiva and also a monastery called Īśuddha-Śaiva-mathā and a feeding house. In that village he settled many brāhmaṇas and renamed it Visveśvara-Golaki or Visvanātha-Gōlagiri. Provision was also made in this matha for health and maternity homes (prasūty-ārogya-sāla).

The record also mentions other charitable gifts and benefactions which Visveśvara-Śambhu made at other places. He founded a stone monastery, upala-mathā and Śiva temple at Kāleśvaram which fact is proved by an epigraph found at Kāleśvaram on the bank of Godāvari, in Karimnagar district. This matha at Kāleśvaram was headed by Dharma-Śiva, son (spiritual son?) of Visveśvara-Śiva. At Elesvara, on the bank of Kṛishna he built a matha of sixteen āvarakas. Besides these,
the ascetic Viśvēśvara-Śambhu is said to have set up Śiva-
liṅgas at Mantrakūṭa, Chandravalli, Kommu-grāma, Nivṛtti
and Uttara-Sōmasila.

There were many branches of this Gōlaki-maṭha at
different places in the Andhra country, e.g. Bhattiprolu,
Pushpāgiri, Śrīparvata, Tripurāntakam, Alampur and Dāksharānam.
At all these places the āthāna-patīs were the Śaiva-charyāyas of
this Gōlakimāṭha and they commanded considerable influence on
the masses. These institutions of the Pāṣupata Śaivism
flourished in the Andhra country almost up to the end of the
reign of Prataparudra, the last Kākatīya monarch, after which
we do not find any reference to this Śaivism in the inscriptions.

The preferential treatment shown to the Pāṣupatas is
noticed in the Durgī inscription of Gaṇapatiḍēva's reign which
while recording some grant to a feeding house attached to the
temple of Vaṃkēṣavaradēva, states that five Pāṣupatas are to
be fed well daily during the four months of Chāturmāṣya. An
installation of a maṭha for Viśuddha-śiva at Tripurāntakam
is recorded in one of the inscriptions there, where several
āvṛttīs for the various items of its maintenance are stated.
The employees of the maṭha include Karanām, servants, cooks
and watermen, gardeners, and watchmen. A detailed account of the
Śuddhaśaiva-maṭha constructed by Viśvēśvara-Śambhu, the
Rāja-guru is furnished in the Malkapuram inscription dated
A.D. 1261.
The Kakatiya period, in the history of religions in Andhra, is noted for another school of Saivism called Aradhya-Saivism. Although the Kakatiya kings did not extend patronage to this creed it happened so that it gained momentum during this period. The three Acharyas popularly known as Pandita-traya namely Sripati-Pandita, Mallikarjuna-pandita and Mañchana-pandita flourished in this period and preached Saivism throughout the Andhra. Those who followed the Saiva school of these Acharyas are called Aradhyas or Lingadhāris, because they bear the lingas on their body. These Śaivas are extant among the brāhmaṇas of Andhra country and they strictly observe caste distinction. Mallikarjuna-Pandita was a contemporary of the Velnāti Chōda king Rajendra-Chōda probably II (A.D. 1162-1181). In the Telugu Dvipada work Panditarādhya-charitra composed by Pālkuriki Somanatha, a contemporary of Prataparudra, the biography and teachings of Panditarādhya were narrated at length. Accordingly Pandita admired and respected Basava, the minister of Kalachuri Bījjala and the protagonist of Vīra Saivism in Karnātaka.

Although the Vīra-Saiva school in Karnātaka was at its zenith during this period, its impact on the masses of the Telugu country was practically nil. But its entire representation in Andhra was found in Pālkuriki Sōmanātha who advocated the teachings of Basava in his famous Basavapurāṇa and other works.

The Śaiva mathas of the Kakatiya period served as great
educational institutions imparting not only religious teachings
to their disciples but also other systems of education like
the Vedas, Sastres, Agamas and Darshanas. The Malkapuram
inscription cited above gives an account of the provision made
by Visvesvara-Sambhu for the teaching of the various subjects
of learning in the Vidyamandapa attached to his matha at that
place. The three Vedas namely Rik, Yajus and Sama, Padavakya
Pramana i.e. Vyakarana and Terka, Sahitya, Agama (Saivagama),
five commentators, (perhaps teachers of Darshanas) and Vaidya
or Physician are the branches of learning and their teachers
were provided with vrittis. A similar Vidyamandapa is mentioned
in the Irigullapadu epigraph of the Kayastha chief Jannigadeva
where the gift was made to Santa Siva desika of the Abhinava
Golaki-matha of Sri Isaila for the maintenance of the Sivalinga-
matha, Vidyamandapa and a feeding house. Another record of the
same nature is found at Pondaluru in Rajanpet taluk, Cuddapah
district dated in the 62nd regnal year of Ganapatideva, which
states that the king's general Jannigadeva, the Kayastha chief,
granted the village Purundaluru (Pondaluru) in Pottapindu to
his spiritual guru Santa Siva desika of Abhinava-Golakimatha of
Sriparyata for maintaining the Vidyamandapa and the feeding
house attached to the Siva linga matha, situated probably at
Sri Isaila. It seems that the Abhinava Golaki-Matha at Sri Isaila
maintained in those days an educational institute or Vidyamandapa.
4. **Vaishnavism:**

In spite of their preference to Shaivism, the Kakatiyas were in no way averse to the spread of Vaishnavism. The popular sect known as Sri Vaishnava which was predominant in the post-Kakatiya period in Andhra was not noticed during this period. The boar symbol on their emblems, seals and coins and the installation of Hari as a component deity in all their Trikūta-temples bear testimony to the fact that the Kakatiyas did also worship the god Vāsudeva or Vishnu. King Rudradēva installed Vāsudeva in the Rudrēśvara temple at Anumakonda (Thousand Pillared Temple). His famous minister Vellaki Gangadhara installed the God Prasannakēśava and constructed a big temple for that god at Anumakonda, as described in his Anumakonda inscription. The remains of this important structure have been recently unearthed on the tank bund near the new bus Depot. The Inugurī inscription states that queen Mailāmbā, sister of Gaṇapatidēva constructed a temple to the god Gōpālakrishna at that place and endowed it with lands. King Prataparudradeva's General Deviri nāyaka granted at the command of the king, the village Salakalēsvīdu in Eruvēndu to the god ŠrīTranga of Kāveri. The same king is noticed in another record found at Kolanupalli in Mahbubnagar district making some grants to the god Chennakesava of that place in A.D. 1321. There is another epigraph at Palivela where the king is noticed to have made gifts to a Narasimha temple. King Prataparudradēva's queen Lakmādevi is noticed in an epigraph
found at Yelgedu in Karimnagar district, granting some gifts to the god Ramanathadēva of that place. Instances of this kind can be easily multiplied. Therefore, it is quite evident that all the Kākatīya kings were the worshippers of the god Vishnu also.

In fact, members of the Hindu society during this period were chiefly divided into two important sectarian groups viz. the Śaivas and the Vaishnavas. Teachers of these two samśāras had their respective mathas headed by learned pontiffs of the sect. The temples at Simhāchalams, Sarpavaram, Śrīkākolānu, Bhāvapatru or Bapatla, Macharla, Ahobilam, Nellore, Dharmapuri, and Tirupati became some of the important Vaishnava centres in Andhradēśa during the Kākatīya period. That the Velama chiefs in Telīṅga region patronized Vaishnavism during Prataparudra's time is borne out by their later inscriptions at Kandikonda which state that Mādhava son of Siṅga I and his son Venna were the devotees of Vishnu. Some scholars hold the view that Vedanta Dēsīka composed his Tatvasandesōpāsādāra at the request of Venna-bhūpāla.

According to the tradition preserved in the Telugu ballād Palnaṭivīra-charitra, the party led by Brahmanāyūdu belonged to Viṭra-Vaishnava sect as against the rival party led by Salaṣāma-rāja and Nāgawa-nāyakurālu who were Śaivites. In fact it is also attributed that the differences in their religious pursuits was one of the causes for that fratricidal war. The Chennakesava-
śvami temple at Mācherla was in those days a great Vaishnava centre where Brahmānāyudu advocated universal Vaishnavism irrespective of caste and creed.

Religious Harmony:

As far as Andhra is concerned the sectarian conflict between the Vīra-Śaivas and the followers of other faiths did not develop into religious animosity as in Karnataka during this period. It was all due to the tolerant attitude of the Kākatīya rulers that the society at large could rather assimilate than vehemently oppose the doctrines of other sects. Minister Gangadhara, treating the Buddha to be an incarnation of God Vishnu installed the image of the Buddha at Paṭṭaśāla.38 Mallireddī in his Bekkallu record states that the four samayas namely Śaivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism are mere superficial differences which give rise to undue suspicion but believing the god in reality to be one, in spite of his family religion Jainism he constructed several śiva temples.39 These statements bear testimony to the sectarian harmony during the period under study.
iii. The Temple

In the medieval history of the Deccan the temple became a symbolic representation of the various social activities. For a modern researcher it is the largest repository where not only the religious, but also the political, social and cultural aspects of history are preserved on stones, often found mutilated. There was hardly any village without a temple. It was the nucleus around which villages developed, towns grew and commerce centered. When new villages were constructed, the architects invariably made provision for a temple by leaving proper site for it. An inscription at Manthena dated in the first regnal year of Gaṇapatideva, that is A.D. 1299, records the gift of land to the king's priest Manchibhatṭopādhyāya to construct a village. Accordingly the donee founded a village excavated a tank and constructed two temples one for Mahadeva and another for Keśavadeva. Installation of temples in those days was treated as one of the seven pious deeds popularly known as sapta-santanaś namely one's own son, adopted son, a literary work, an agrahāra, a garden, a tank, and a temple. Although we notice variations in this list, temple is invariably included. These were the items on which the rich people in those days used to spend their hoards of money and other resources. Most of the villages contains at least two temples, one for Śiva and one for Vishnu besides the temple for the village goddess, because the religion of the period is chiefly divided into Śaivism and Vaishnavism. There existed in
the capital town Orugallu a magnificent temple to the god Svayambhudeva the tutelary deity of the Kākatiyās as we known from epigraphical and literary sources. The temples for Panchālarāya, goddess Kākati, and Ekāvīra are also stated to have existed. The famous Thousand pillared temple of Rudrēśvara, the Padmākshi temple on the hill and the Prasannakēśava temple built by Gangēdhara are some of the important shrines in Anumakonda. The temples at Palampet, Pillalamarri, Ghanpur, Nagunur, Nagulapadu are the other famous temples that have been built during this period. Vidyānātha, the celebrated author of Pratāparudrīya attributes the name Trilīṅgadēśa to Andhra on account of the three Śiva līṅgas situated in the famous shrines at Śrīśaila in the Kurnool district, Kālēśvaram in the Karimnagar district and Dakshārāmam in the East Godavari district. The temples at Tripurantakam, Siddhavatam, Alampur and Umanahēśvaram are represented to be the four gateways to Śrīśaila. The shrines at Amarāvati, Dakshārāmam, Bhēmēśvaram, Palakollu and Kumārārāma near Bhīmavaram are represented as Paṅchārānas. The Narasimha temple at Simhāchalam, Bhāvanārāyaṇasvami temple at Sarpavaram, The Vishnu temple at Śrīkākulantu the Narasimha temples at Vedādri and Dhermapuri, the temples at Mopuru, Nandaluru, Nellore, Pushpagiri, Mahānandi, and Kalahasti are some more important temples of the Kākatiyā period. All these temples are endowed with lands and villages and maintain their own system of administration run by the respective governing bodies.
Now let us turn to the significant role of the temple as an institution of multifarious activities. Professor K.A. Nilakantha Sastry rightly assessed the role of the temple of the medieval period in the following words.

"As land holder, employer, consumer of goods and services, as bank, school and museum, as hospital and theatre, in short as nucleus which gathered round itself all that was best in the arts of civilized existence and regulated them with the humanness born of the spirit of Dharma, the medieval Indian temple has few parallels in the annals of mankind." 43

After quoting these few lines from the pen of the great professor very little remains to add except to illustrate his statement with suitable examples. This opinion holds good even today, if we look to the administrative complex of the temple of Lord Venkaṭēśvara on the Tirumala-Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. The inscriptions in the medieval temples of Dākshāramam, Tripurantakam Alampur, Sarpavaram, Bhimēsvaram, Palakollu, Bapatla and Simhachalam in Andhra Pradesh reveal the truth of the statement in those days.

Sthāna: The governing body of a temple is called sthāna. The head of that body is called sthānādhipati or simply sthāna-pati. He need not be necessarily the chief pontiff of the matha, who exercises command over all the temples under the matha. The sthānādhipati is a paid officer appointed to look after the temple administration. In the Nadendla inscription dated 5.1055,
A.D.1133, the sthana-pati along with other employees, is also granted some land. The term Deva-sthāna is in vogue even to-day to denote the administrative office of a temple.

It was a full fledged institution with its elaborate service and office administrative machinery. It had affiliation to one or the other religious matha, the pontiff of which exercised autonomous power over these temples. In fact, temples were the branch institutes for their religious preachings. It is needless to say, that the worship and ritual in the temple were conducted according to the Agama of the particular matha. The wealth of the temple used to increase with the influence commanded by the pontiff.

Temple as Landlord: The kings and the subordinate chiefs used to donate villages to the temple. The Mallikārjuna temple at Śrīśaila, according to an inscription of the reign of Pratāparudra, dated A.D.1313 owned as many seventy villages in various nāḍus or regions, under the control of Arisimātha and Śīrāvāna alone. There were other mathas also at Śrīśailam in those days which also possessed some more villages. Similarly the temple at Tripurantakam, Alampur, Dākshāramam, Bapatla, Sarpavaram, Bezawada, Kaleswaram, Malkapurem, Amaravati and Velpuru owned several villages as devavrittis. Thus, these temples were much like māndalika estates possessing several villages in different regions and innumerable units of lands at several villages. Temples also possesses lands and villages in kingdoms other than where they are
situated. For example, the Śrīśailan record referred to above possessed village named Haralayapura in Dorasamudra region, obviously in the Hoysala kingdom. Similarly Prataparudra granted the village Salakalavīḍu in the present Prakasan district to the god Śrīrangaṇātha of the Kāverī island i.e. Śrīrangam, which was in the Pāṇḍya kingdom. So the temples do not have any political barriers in possessing properties. In this aspect temples were more privileged, than the subordinate chiefs. Not only this, the kings used to collect only nominal dues from the temples towards taxes. The same village, Salakalavīḍu for example, was donated to the god Śrīrangaṇātha with all the incomes due from that village to the king, which otherwise are to be paid by Devirināyaka, the concerned fief holder to the king. Therefore, all Deva-vaṭṭita lands and villages were practically gifted with all immunities, otherwise called sarvanāya tenures. This is the nature of landlordship of the temple in those days.

Temple as employer: The employees of a temple are generally of four kinds, namely Sthāna-patis, mānulu, sānis and nibandhakaras. The Satuluru epigraph of the Velanāṭi chief Gonka dated A.D. 1135 mentions these four kinds of employees. A similar statement of Sthēn-ādhipatis, Śrīkaraṇam, sāni-nummūrvaru, and nibandha-kāras occurs in a record in the temple at Juttiga dated A.D. 1221. Among sthāna-patis generally, include the priests of the temple also. But there are instances where sthāna-patis are seperately mentioned besides pūjāris or priests. For example a record at
Rajahmundry mentions *āsthān-ādhīpatīś* and *pujārīś* separately. Another record at Tripurantakau dated A.D. 1312 mentions *Pu jārīś* and *sthāna-patīś* differently. Therefore it is evident that the status of *pujārīś* in the temple administration was not equal to *sthāna-patī* who is a member of the governing body of the temple administration. Occasionally the *Pūjārī* may also become a *sthāna-patī* or one of the *sthāna-patīś* with the consent of the *sthāna* or the governing body of the temple. The *sthāna-patīś* are also generally provided with lands towards remuneration like other employees of the temple.

2. The second class of employees in a temple is called *mānulu*, probably a term derived from the Sanskrit word *mānya* or respectable person. An epigraph at Kaza dated A.D. 1269 mentions *sani-mānya, nibandhamulaku*. In some cases it is noticed that the officers like the *kottarum* or store keeper, *bhandārī* or treasurer, the *bōya* or shepherd and *srikaranamu* or accountant are generally termed as *mānulu*. Whether they have any place in the governing body of the temple *sthāna* is not clearly known. The *pujārīś* and the oilmonger also come under this class. An epigraph at Juttiga dated A.D. 1255 records a monetary gift to the god Vāsuki-ravi sōṁśvāra under the custody of *sthāna-patīś, srikaranamu* Komana peggāda, *sāni-300* and *nibandhana karas*. Here the *srikaranamu* is obviously one of the mānis of the temple. These employees are occasionally called *ayyanulu*, perhaps a derivative from ayya or ārya. An inscription at Chebrolu
mentioned 300 *sānis* and 300 *avanulu mānulu*. The matter is however to be further studied.

3. The third variety of employees in a temple are the *sānis* according to Dr. P. B. Desai this term is a derivative of the Sanskrit word *svāmīni*. Even respectable ladies like the wives of the chiefs, brahmans and the like do also have this word *sāni* as suffix to their personal names. The *sānis* of the temples in those days were a particular class of women who are donated to temples by the devotees for the purpose of conducting dance during the time of daily *raṅga-bhōga* performed in the *raṅga-mandapa*. They do not seem to have been paid fixed salaries in kind or coin as other employees. Their income depends on the grants of the donors. Some donors appoint some of these ladies to perform dance before the god daily in their (donor's) names for some time fixed by the authorities. An epigraph at Velpuru in Guntur district states that Mahāmāndalesvara Kota Gaṇapatideva donated Bhāṇḍāramu Akkama as *sāni* to the god Rāmeśvara of the place and granted some lands and house-site for her. A similar record at Ŭlesvaram, now submerged in the Nāgarjunasagar, dated A.D. 1271, states that certain Mankisetti made a gift of two dancing girls as *sānis* to the god *Elesvaradeva*. They were his grand daughters. Now we can generalize the custom to other temples and understand the nature of these *sānis*. They were not ordinary prostitutes as generally believed. They were respectable married women leading family life. But they were attached to the temples for a set purpose i.e. to perform dance and music before the god on behalf of the donor.
Because *grītya* (dance) and *gīta* (music) are the components of the sixteen kinds of worship (*ṣaṅgasātpāchāras*), the devotees generally used to make this arrangement in temples on their behalf. The temple authorities simply allot time for their performance, and see that the arrangement is being continued without any lapse on the part of the *āgni*. One *āgni* may have more than one appointmentslike this. She need not be paid from the temple treasury. In some cases it is seen that all the males employed in a temple irrespective of their posts are designated *mānulu* or *mānulu* whereas all the female employees are stated as *sānis*.

4. The fourth variety of temple employees is the servants. They are called *nibandha-kāndru* or *karana-karnikulu*. The menial servants, cooks, water fetchers, sweepers, watchmen, conch-blowers, the masons and other artisans are also included in this class. The Satuluru inscription A.D. 1135 while mentioning, *sthāna-patis*, *Sānis*, *mānulu* and *nibandhakaras* includes among the last group of employees the court artisans like *nattavumdu*, that is the male dancer etc. The Durgi inscription of the reign of Gaṇapatiśevas dated A.D. 1269 mentions not less than twenty employees of *raṅga-bhōra* alone. English equivalents of those terms cannot be precisely given. They are *maddraka-kāndru*, *āvaja-kādu*, *kāla-kādu*, *vāse-kādu*, [-] -tu-kādu, *BHĀṣatā-kāndru*, *pātraulu*, *pādripāru* (*sivānētalu*, ladies) *viṣṇupati-vāru*, *homcidivāru*, *Jēsantalavāru*, *divekōlavādu*, *grādaguvādu*, *sāgarakā sūvāsi*, *kēvadi-vādu*, *ūlīsapu-bēnasa*, *sāmpradēyavu∗
vennakūta. The plural forms of some of the items indicate more than one employee of that name.

A similar inscription at Nadendla of an earlier date, A.D. 1133, mentions as many as 48 employees including pujāris, sthāna-patīs, paurāṇika, adhyakṣa, the masons, singers, co-singers, players on flute, player on vīṇā, dancer, tantrapāla, umbrella, bearer, potter, kāse-vāru etc. Even the gold-smiths who prepare jewellery to the goddess and the sculptors are also included among the employees. This indicates that some temples used to maintain regular sculptors, masons, and smiths on their staff. On the whole, the various items of services in the temples are numbered as seventy-two (debbhai-rendu-nivorāla-varu) perhaps a term imitated from the similar services of the king’s palace and branches of general administration. The Kayastha chiefs Gangaya-sahini and his nephews, the Indulūrī chiefs and others are credited with the title bāhattare-nivrūgāḍhipati, the head of the seventy-two kinds of departments or sections of administration.

The temple in those days was a big concern second to only the royal palace which could employ a large number of people both on regular salaries in kind and cash and on vṛittis in the form of lands.

Some of these employees form themselves into corporate bodies. The sthāna-patīs, māyulu and sānis are bodies of 300 or munnuruvuru. The Chebrōlu inscription mentions, Sthāna-patīs—300 Sānis 300 and Ayyanas—300. These figures indicate, as said elsewhere, not the actual number of employees on rolls of a
particular temple which is not possible always, but the strength of the governing body of that profession incorporated in a big temple like Śrīśaila, Dakshārāma, Tripuranāka. All employees in the branch temples affiliated to the main temple become general members of the parent corporate body which has 300 governing members.

Temple as consumer of goods and services: Out of devotion the valuable products of the land first go to the temple in various forms like grains, fruits, jaggery, sheep, cows, oxen and even sānis. The Rājesvara temple at Vemulavāḍā in Karimnagar district is a good example where a number of oxen are donated annually to the god which forms the main source of income to the temple. A glance at the numerous epigraphs on the walls of the Daksharam temple reveals that some thousands of sheep, goats, and cows were donated to the god Bhirośvara. There are instances where maid servants and dancing girls were donated to the temples, as stated before. Therefore next to the royal palace, it is only the temple where enormous quantities of grains and other commodities were consumed. One can easily understand all the huge consumption ultimately goes to the villagers, because the daily offerings are distributed among the temple servants and the poor.

About services also, the temple is such a concern where any unemployed person can also seek shelter, do some work or other and make livelihood. An individual, however wealthy he may be cannot maintain servants so lavishly as the temple. The main reason is, it is not a problem for the temple with its enormous
resources to feed the helpless poor. Several dozens of people like the hoyas, shepherds, oil-mongers and petty merchants who undertake the responsibility of supplying ghee or oil and other provisions regularly to the temple on behalf of the donors, also some under the class of temple servants although they are not regular employees.

As bank: Temples in those days used to give loans on interest. An inscription at Daksharāmaam datable to the twelfth century registers a grant of some nishkas, number not clear, and states that the interest on the gift amount is to be utilized for conducting the annual festival called Damanōtsava in the temple. The interest is calculated to be 25 naḥan-nishkas. The principal is stated as sannishkas and the interest as mahannishkas. Therefore the temples used to conduct banking business by lending money. We notice another interesting record in the Mallesvara-svami temple, Bezawāda, which records that certain Kunisetṭi, being unable to clear the loan which he took from certain Kumāra Telungurāya agreed to write a fresh promissory note for the principal and towards interest he transferred all his sukritas or good deeds in favour of the money lender. That means what donations he made to the god previously would be hereafter credited to the money lender towards interest. Really the temple is a peculiar bank where even sukritas or past gifts are also transferable to another's account by means of an inscription. A similar inscription dated A.D. 1244 records the gift of 1 cadya stating that the interest thereon alone should be used for one evening lamp. These examples indicate that monetary donations
are generally lent on interest and the interest alone is spent for the intended purpose. This is a clear instance of banking.

As school: There are numerous inscriptions where gifts are recorded for the purpose of maintaining teachers and pupils. The famous Nāgai temple in Karnātaka was also a great educational institution or ghatikāsthāna during the reina of Trailokyamalla Somēśvara I. The Malkapuram inscription in Guntur district gives an account of the educational institutions connected to the Matha of Visvēśvarasivāchārya. The Vidyāmandapa attached to the Mallikārjuna temple at Śrīsaila is referred to above. Almost all the big temples used to maintain Vidyāmandapas where efficient teachers were employed.

Temple as Museum: It is an undeniable fact that most of our modern museums in India and abroad contain galleries with the best art pieces collected from the old temples and stūpas of India. It is not an exaggeration that a model of the tōraṇa of the Kākatīya Śvayambhūdeva temple is raised in the premises of the Archaeological Survey of India at Delhi for the purpose of displaying its grandeur. The temples of Anumakonda, Palampet, Pillalamarri, Nāgulapādu, Ghanpur are all art museums which attract people in thousands. They are the galleries of Kākatīya art. The grand temple at Mukhalingam in the Srīkūtalam district serves as a museum of Eastern Gaṅga art. Pānugallu temple near Nalgonda represents the late Chalukya art. Similarly the temples at Macherla, Tadipatri and other places exhibit different schools of art and architecture.
Temple as a Theatre: Provision is invariably made in all temples for the construction of raṅga-mandapas where raṅga-bhōga is to be conducted before the god. On festive occasions special programmes are generally arranged. If any drama or music party or Hari-katha is to be conducted in the village, the venue would be naturally the temple serves as a theatre.

Temple as a community hall: All meetings of the village committees were generally held in the temples and at times their minutes were also recorded on the walls of the temple for safe preservation. Marriages are celebrated in temples. Even the kings and their officers in those days used to meet the citizens in the temples, and record their decisions on the walls. Even coronations and victory memorials of the kings are celebrated in the temples. It is very interesting that some subordinate chiefs recorded their oath of allegiance to Parāntaka the Chālukya-Chōla prince on the walls of the Bhūmēśvara temple at Dākshāramam. Whatever they wanted to keep sacred they used to make it in the presence of the god and record it on the stones near it.

In short, the medieval temple was not only a place of worship but also the venue where the very social life is reflected.

The temple has its own administrative set up supervised by a board of trustees, or a single man trustee like the Pontiff of the matha to which the temple is affiliated. It has the privilege of using special standards of measures and weights. The Śiva
temples generally have the nand-mānikas and nandi-kunchams whereas the Vishnu temples use the measures with Garuda symbol of standard. Similarly on the boundaries of the temple lands are planted the Nandi-pillars or Garuda-pillars. In some temples the sānis were entrusted with the duty of collecting ghee or oil according to the standard measure called sāniyam-bāṭi-mānika that is the standard measure entrusted to the sānis, which is to be used in taking ghee from chowherds or shepherds.

In one of the inscriptions at Tripurantakam it is noticed that the temple authorities accorded trade licence to a guild on terms of fixed payment of tolls. It is noticed in the Chittapur inscription of the reign of Pratāperudra that a merchant named Bairisetṭṭi bought his trade licence by digging a tank and donating one-third of the irrigated land to the god remaining two-thirds being left to the king. The religious zeal of the merchant is exploited by the king for providing irrigational facility to his agriculturist. Thus the temple indirectly helped for the promotion of agriculture.
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