Several legendary accounts are afloat in Andhra country that grew on the personality of a great king Madhavavarman, but none discloses him to be Visṇukundin. Some of them are found in local records and others reported by inscriptions. But both the sources are totally unreliable for historical study on scientific basis, for they belong to a far later time and highly exaggerated, often involving supernatural element. However, some scholars consider the king to be the same with the celebrated Visṇukundin king of the same name and tried to deduce some historical facts out of them. Their view that the king was the famous Visṇukundin king is quite acceptable, for there was no king of the name in any other dynasty that ruled over Āndhradesa, at any time, except in the Visṇukundin dynasty. Further, some of the stories speaking the king as the victor of Kālingā, has some relevance only in the case of the Visṇukundin king, Madhavavarman.

Two different versions are found in the traditions connected with Anumakonda region. The first of them was recorded in a medieval Telugu work, called Somadevarājiyā, gives him as a native of the region. It speaks that Mādhavavarmaṇ was the posthumous son of one Somadeva, the king of Kandara (purāṇa), who had his enemy in the lord
of Kaṭakā (whose name was given sometimes as Vallabha). He determined to uproot the former, together with his family. Somadeva had no son by the time and performed an Aśvamedha, in order to obtain a son. When Vallabha invaded his country and killed him in the battle, his queen Siriyāladevi was pregnant, as a result of the Aśvamedha. She escaped to a Brāhman agrahāra, in the vicinity of Anmakonda, whose chief was Mādhavavarman. He took the queen into his protection, concealed her identity from the spies of Vallabha, underwent himself all the tests by the latter, to prove that the queen was his own daughter. She gave birth to a son, who was named Mādhavavarman, after the name of the protector of his mother and his own preceptor. The boy, when he came up of age, having known the account of his father's death at the hands of Vallabha, rallied the scattered followers of his father, raised a great army and took vengeance on the enemy.

B.V. Krishnarao attempted to bring out some historical facts out the story and suggested that Kandarapura the capital of Ānandagotras was identical with the capital of Somadeva in the story and Vallabha was perhaps, some Pallava king. Thus, he saw the Ānandagotra-Pallava rivalry and the latter annihilating
the former, as the background of the Viṣṇukundin rise.
But the story was clearly a later day fabrication, perhaps, about the same time, when the Cālukyas invented an exactly similar account of the origin of the dynasty. Neither Kandarapurē had anything to do with the Ānandagotra capital, nor Somadeva, a king of the dynasty. His fugitive queen going so far as the region, of Anmakonda, for asylum and the Pallavas going so far haunting her, are not borne by any historical evidence.

Another local tradition speaks that Mādhavavarman conquered the Anmakonda region and settled there four Kṣatriya families, of Vāsiṣṭha, Dhaṁakhaya, Kaundinya and Kāvyapa. Thus, he was an outsider to the region, according to this tradition. A feudatory chief in the time of Kākati pralāha, by name Māgaraśa, claimed descent from Mādhavavarman, who had a vast army consisting of 8000 elephants, eight crores of horses and countless foot soldiers.

The most important of the traditions current in coastal Īndra, about the king Mādhavavarman was that, reported by an inscription found in the temple of Māleśvara at Vijayawada. It reports that king Mādhavavarman ruled the Bezawāda (the earlier name of the present day town of Vijayawada) as his capital about Saka 514 in Kali age and he sentenced his own son, when
he was guilty of causing death to the son of a poor woman, who lived by sailing tamarind. Malleśvara, the presiding deity of the tīrtha was greatly pleased with king's administration of law and showered gold. The account was described in some Telugu poetical works of fourteenth century also, when the poets traced the descent of their respective patrons. The king was spoken of as Vāsiṣṭha gotra and that he conquered Kaliṅga, by means of his vast army, consisted of four varieties (catur-āṅga).

The Teliki thousand, a guild of oil mongers in medieval Andhradeśa claimed patronage of Mādhavavarman, who was said to have granted them a number of trade privileges.¹⁰

The importance of these legends lie in the fact that they speak the king almost as superhuman, born as a gift of gods. His armed strength was so much and his rule was in such a way, fulfilled dharma, that he had to be compared only with the great kings and emperors of purānic accounts. Origin of these legends must be the exaggerated descriptions of his ritualism and deification¹¹ in the inscriptions of his great-grandson. These legends can be found reflecting in such epithets as avasīta vividha divyāḥ in the pōlamūrū and other copper plate grants,¹² supposed to have been issued
by Mādhavavarman. Nevertheless, these accounts, if they were stripped of the exaggeration and supernatural attributes, point out that he Mādhavavarman was so great a king that his fame lived through centuries and gathered all the mythology around it.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

4. M.S. Sarma, *Vijñāna Sarvasvamā*, p. 120
7. The inscriptions read:

   1. 4. Mallesvaram iti khyāta sannidhatte Mahaesvaram śrimad-viṣaya
   5. yavat-ākhyya pure Kṛṣṇā vibhūṣaṇe Kalau śrimac-cajac-ābd-adhi
   6. āsasi sāyake sammite Rājā Mādhavavarmaabhid-vikhyāte dharaṇitale
   7. tata svaputreṇa hata tintriṇī jīvīni suta dharma sa-
   8. mrukṣaṇ-ārthāya svaputraṃ-avadhīt sa....

The date is Śaka 514, corresponding to A.D. 589 but it is not trustworthy as the inscription itself.
8. Dubaguṇṭa Nārāyaṇa Kavi, a contemporary of Śrīnāḍa in the introductory of his Telugu version of Pañcatantra, describes his pattern Basavarāja as a descendant of the famous king Madhavavarman. The latter king was described as to have led expedition on Kālīṅgā at the head of a great army, obtained by the mercy of the goddess Durgā. Another of the same period, Dagguballi Duggana, who dedicated his Nāśikonākhyānaṁ to Candalūri Gaṅgana, an officer of the above mentioned Basavarāja, also gives the same account.

9. The Chief Basavarāja belonged to Vāsiśṭhagotra.

10. Supra, pt. IV, Ch. 3.

11. Supra, pt. I, Ch. 2, notes nos. pt. III, Ch. 2 and pt. IV, Ch. 1. For an analysis of the meaning of the epithets.

12. The prominent reference to his eastern expedition, the epithet avasita viśvīdha viśvāḥ are clearly suggestive of these later day accounts reflected in the inscription.

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