CHAPTER 5

CULTURE

Culture has varied definitions. The culture of any society is always dynamic. The culture, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, includes the use of writing, the presence of cities and of wise political organisation and development of occupational specialization. But the culture will have its significance if we can concentrate on dealing with religion, philosophy and art. The Vijayanagara period was of great significance in the sense that it stood on the threshold of change in terms of philosophy, religion and art.

The greatest contribution of Vijayanagara to the history of South India is the binding force which it brought in its wake to preserve the unity of the country and its maintaining independence from alien rule. It is said:

A study of the factors that contributed to the creation of Vijayanagara reveals that its founders were inspired by patriotic ideals and spirit of freedom and sacrifice. These ideals comprised the protection, preservation and promo-
tion of the peoples’ rule, their social organisation, indigenous culture in all its aspects such as religion and religious institutions, traditional learning, lores, literature and arts. The history of this empire seen through the constructive works of its rulers, stands eloquent testimony to the fact that these ideals and aspirations were translated into action to the best of their ability.¹

These are the aspects with which this chapter is concerned. The above extract is an apt description of a welfare society.

A welfare society is one that strives for the welfare of its people. We have brushed aside the notion that Vijayanagara was a purely military state. The kingdom had no doubt an efficient military force; but thwarted as it was surrounded by enemies on all sides, it was the necessity of the day to have a strong army. Allāuddīn Khiljī’s attacks in South India forbode danger to the very existence of a Hindu State. The kingdoms of the South, barring that of the Hoysaḷas, fell like nine pins, unable to restrain Malik Kafūr’s marauding army. Their own internecine quarrels weakened the Hindu kingdoms of the Yadavas of Dēvagiri, Kākaṭīyaś of Warangal and the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai in Tamil Nadu. It was at this juncture that the last Hoysaḷa king, Ballāḷa III felt the need of a new power that would act as a bulwark against the Mohammadan onslaughts. His own son Ballāḷa IV, could not rise to the occasion. Hence, the responsibility of saving the kingdom and protecting the Hindu dharma fell on the mantle of Harihara brothers. He succeeded in establishing the vast Hindu kingdom spread over the whole of South India.

However, within a decade a Mohammadan power the Bahamani
kingdom took its birth. This was a challenge to the newly founded Hindu kingdom. Availing themselves of the confused conditions, some Hindu chiefs within the kingdom rose in revolt. There was, thus danger to the kingdom from within and also without. To prevent all these, huge sums were needed. Coffers had to be filled. Towards this, the kings worked hard. As seen in Chapter Three, they improved the fertility of the soil by excavating wells and tanks, drew irrigational channels, brought fresh land under cultivation, and through such activities worked for the general welfare of the society and they also greatly augmented the financial conditions. Inland and overseas trade was encouraged. This gave the new kingdom much economic opulence.

But, to keep the society united and breathe dharma, through which alone there could be social adhesion, the kings concentrated also upon dissemination of culture. Hence, the temple now gained greater prominence. Efforts were made to bring together all people, without distinction of caste or creed in building a Hindu society. But, even here, there was such a broad outlook that even the Mohammedans were brought under its hold. We know that Dēvarāya II appointed Muslims soldiers into the army and it is said, not to hurt their sentiments, he kept a copy of the Quoran by the side of his throne for the Muslims to feel satisfied that they offered obeisance to the Quoran and not to the Hindu king.

What we discuss in the present chapter is the impetus given by the rulers to culture. It may be noted here that the temple, as usual played a prime part in the dissemination of culture. But, unlike in the previous centuries, not many new temples were constructed by the kings. They took to the renovation of the old temples and added several halls, like the dance-hall (nātya-śāla (nritya))
swing-hall (*uyyāla- manṭapa*), marriage halls (*kalyāṇamaṇṭapa*) and covered the interiors of the enclosures for the benefit of the people, to perform festival and such other religious functions when groups gathered. Kameswar Rao has, in his work,\(^2\) given an account of the important temples of the period, like the ones at Kadiri, Gōraṇṭla, Penukoṇḍa, Mārkāpuram, Tādapatri, Lēpākshi, etc., in all about 15 places. But we now consider some of those temples which are known to us only through epigraphs, and of those temples in villages looked after by the local populace who made all the necessary arrangements for worship and performance of various ceremonies and festivals.

At Gutti Iruguappa, a general of Harihara I is said to have built a *chaityālaya*. The record, in Sanskrit, is found engraved on a slab built into the wall of the mosque. Hence, the details are lost. The *basadi* was for Pārsva Jine. The Bukkarāyasamudram inscription states that Anantarasa-Oḍeya, a minister of Bukka I built a temple on the bund of the tank excavated by him. This was in 1364-65 A.D.\(^4\) The Chōlasamudram inscription\(^5\) speaks of a temple built for Chaudēśvari-amma and a tax on each loom by Timmarasa and others, probably as a gift to the Goddess, Chaudēśvari, which name is obviously a shortened form of Chāmundēśvari, *i.e.*, Mahisāsuramardini. The record is probably dated 1470-71 A.D. The *reḍḍis and karanams* of Kurubalapalle (Kurulapalle) made a grant of land for worship and offerings in the temple of God Mailāra for the merit of Dharani Nāgappayya, agent of *mahāmaṇḍaleśvara* Salakarāju Pedda Tirumalayyađēva.\(^6\) Mailāra is a folk God and goravas worship the deity. This deity is quite popular in North Karnataka and Maharashtra. In Maharashtra he is worshipped also as Khaṇḍōba.\(^7\) Infact, although Chaudēśvari is the corrupt form
of Chamundēśvari, this too is, for all practical purposes, a folk deity. Another epigraph from Chōlasamudram⁸ registers a gift to this Goddess by rāyasam Koṇḍamarasayya, son of Śripatyāchārāya. He was a famous general of Kṛishnādēvarāya. Obviously he was giving encouragement to such temples also. Another record from Koṭṭṇūru,⁹ dated 1550 A.D., registers exemption from several taxes to the temple servants of the temple of Chaudēśvari, of that place by Gunḍāmarasayya, agent of Siriypapa-nāyaka.

The most popular of the deities in the villages were Kēśava (Prasanna Kēśava), Aubhala (Narasimha), Tiruveṅgaḷanātha and Hanumanta. Harihara II (?) described as Pratāpa Hariharāya is stated to have laid the foundation of the temple Ādikēśavanātha at Chinna Hōtūru, on which occasion, the Śrīvaishṇavas of 18 nādus and others made a gift of 5 kōlagas of land for oblations.¹⁰ The copper-plate grant of Sadasīva dated 1548 A.D.,¹¹ registers a grant of the village Kanuma in Mundimaṇḍūgu-sīme, divided equally between several learned brahmanas of various gōtras and sakhas and God Chennakēśava of Mundimaṇḍūgu. According to this, one half is left as the village property while, even in the other half, containing 30 vrītis, 2 vrītis are made over to the God for daily worship. The donee Brahmāṇas were required to perform sixteen kinds of service (shōḍāsopachāra) to the deity. Perhaps the same record appears to have been noticed elsewhere, at Guntakal. A record, found engraved on a slab, in the mosque at Chitrachēdu,¹³ dated 1554 A.D., registers a gift of income from dommari pannu collected from the kāpus of that village to God Chennakēśava, Rāmāyaliṅga and Gaṇādhipati for worship during the dhanur-māsa by the dommaris. Here is also found a Śiva temple, called Rāmāyaliṅga which is obviously
the same as probably Rāmēśvara. The Molagavalli epigraph of 1557 A.D.,\textsuperscript{14} records a grant of land to some artisans attached to the Chennakēśava temple therein. The vipra vinōdis, Gōvindayya, Vallabhayya and Pōlaya made a grant of income from tyāgavarttana to the deities Bhōgēśvara, Kēśava-perumāl and Vīreśvara of Guntakallu in 1558 A.D.\textsuperscript{15} The Chippagiri epigraph\textsuperscript{16} records the construction of a tank and grant of lands below for offerings and performance of festivals in Prasannakēśava-perumāl temple and for maintaining the Brahmanas serving in the temple by mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Tirumayyadēva, grandson of Āraviti Bukkadēva-mahārāja. Twenty years later, in 1528 A.D.,\textsuperscript{17} a grant of land was made for offerings to the temple of Prasanna Veṅkatādri of the same place. This record is found in the enclosure of Timmappa temple. An undated record of Sadāśiva at Halagēri registers a royal grant of the village Aligere to God Chennakēśava at Hālahari.\textsuperscript{18} The gift was made also for a feeding house (satra) for Brahmanas, aradēsis and paradēsis who were using the military road (daq-dudōva). These are some selected epigraphs from Anantapur district.

Surprisingly, in the Bellary district, which was a part of Rāyalaseema in the period of our study, there are practically no records that refer to Kēśava (Adi or Prasanna) temple, or also Aubhala (Ahōbalēśvara) temple. There are as many as 154 Vijayanagara epigraphs in this district as on a decade back.\textsuperscript{19} And about 10 more inscriptions may be added to this. It is true that the district is yet to be completely surveyed. Still, this is an interesting aspect. Krishṇadēvarāya’s period saw the construction of Vitṭhala and Krishṇaswāmi temples. Perhaps, since Bellary district had God Virūpāksha as the presiding deity, no other temples could be built there. But, this still, remains as surmise.
On the other hand, about half a dozen records refer to God Tiruvengalanatha, the Tamil form of which is Tiruvengaḍam-uḍaiyān, Lord of Tiruvengaḍa hill, referring to God Śrīnivāsa (Veṅkatāḍri-Veṅkatēśa) of Tirupati. The Nakkarahālu record\textsuperscript{20} refers to the contribution (kāṇike) made to God Tirumala which was probably used for excavating the temple. The Hampi epigraph of Kṛishṇadēvarāya dated 1517 A.D.,\textsuperscript{21} registers a grant of land by the king for offering to God Tiruvengaladēva at Vijayanagara. The inscribed slab is found in a field near the darga and the temple does not appear to exist now. The record of Achyutarāya, dated 1534 A.D.,\textsuperscript{22} refers to the consecration of the deity Tiruvengalanātha, on the bank of the Tuṅgabhadrā when several gifts were made. They also included gifts to temple servants. A Telugu inscription dated 1543 A.D., in the reign of Sadāśiva registers lands in Krishnapura-agrahāra to God Tiruvengalanātha by a lady - Tippamma Būmakkamgāru of the Sudra caste (chaturtha - gōtra).\textsuperscript{23} Abbarāja Timmappa, agent (kāryakarta) of pradhāna Tirumalaraṇa made a gift of income from cess (mūlavīsa) to God Tiruvēṅgalā in Tirumaladēviyara-patṭana.\textsuperscript{24} The Agasanūru epigraph registers a gift of that village to God Tiruvengaḍa of Tirupati, described as Saptādrivāsa and Lakshmīnivāsa by Koṇḍayyadēva-mahā-arasu. The gift village was situated on the bank of a river (name not clear), near Ādavāni.

Let us examine some select inscriptions from Cuddapah district. At Katteragāṇḍla in Sakali-sīma there is a Chennakesava temple for which Annajayya, son of Paḍavāṭi Virūpāksha dīkshita a sarvakratu-vājapāya- sōmayāji made a gift of land on the occasion of a lunar eclipse, for the merit of the king (Kṛishṇadēvarāya) and Dāmarasayya, the nāyaṅkara holder of Ghanḍikōṭa-
This was in 1525 A.D. on the same day, this grant was confirmed and the merchant also made a gift of income from taxes like *nallēddu, achchu-virālaḷu* etc. to the same deity, for the merit of Annajayya. The Chinnamāchulapalle record registers a royal gift of that village (Chikkamamchupalli) of Mulki-nādu for worship and offerings to God Chennakēśava of Pushpagiri. Chemullapalle epigraph dated 1539 A.D. states that Pāpi-nāyadu, ruling over Chernūru-sīma formed a village - Yallamāṇilaṇḍapuraṇam named after his wife Yallamāṁba in the fields of the village Mulupāḷa, to the east of Pushpagiri, got a temple of Kēśava built there in, dug a well, planted a grove and made several other gifts in the name of his wife. The donor was the son of God uğumati Būmi-nāyadu and Timmamāṁbā, Būmi- nāyudu being the agent for the affairs of Salakarāju Peda Tirumalayayadēva- mahārāja. At Gurṛampāḍu mahāmanḍa-leśvaram Jagatāpi Sōmalarāju’s son Tirumalayya made a gift of that village to God Kēśava (perumāl), for conducting the *daśami* festivals. The gift village was a part of Chernūru-agrahāra. Muppīnēni Parvata-nāyudu made a gift of Madureḍḍipalle, in 1548 A.D., to God Channakēśava of Saṅkhavaram, for daily worship.

Sājuva Maṅgu, son of mahāmanḍalēśvaram Saṅkideva established a village - Dēvarapalle - after God Ahōbalēśvara of Bajināmpalle at Voyinūṭāla and gifted it to the *nambi*, Nāranadāśi for daily worship to God. The Pōrumāmilḷa record exempts *mārga-surkam* and *magame* on all food stuffs besides incense etc, *(rasadravya* and *parimaladravya*) carried by the temple bulls from Udayagiri and Pāka-nādu *simas* to Sakali-sīma for offerings to God Ahōbalēśvara of Vedadri and Garudādri, by Nandela Timmarāja. The same donor made a sarvāṁyā gift of *durga-danayāni-vartṭana* etc., realised in the village Koṅuku-
Padu, an agrahāra of Pōrumāmillada to Narasimha-pegade Gōvindayya, the sthānapati of the temple of Ahōbila Narasimha on the bank of the Pinākini.³³

At Dēvuni Cuddapah³⁴ there was a Tiruvenīgalanātha temple. A fragmentary inscription registers a gift of some income from a village in Mulka-nādu attached to Udayagiri-rājya, to that temple by mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Timmamayyadēva, probably when Sājuva Narasimha was in power in 1474 A.D. Some more wet lands were added to the original grant in 1517 A.D.³⁵ At Pālakoṇḍa there was a Tiruvenīgalanātha temple, for the daily worship of and offerings to which deity mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Timmamayyadēva made a grant of the village Kadapanipalli in Vūtukūrū-śīma, in 1524 A.D.³⁶ Eight vārahas payable to the dommaris by the kāpus was made over by the former headed by Gōparāju, etc., to the temples of Tiruvenīgalāja, Chennakēśāva and Mahālīṅga in the hill of Beḍadūru alias Narasimhapura, an agrahāra, by Nandyāla Timmarāja.³⁷

The Palugurāllapalle epigraph³⁸ dated 1396 A.D., in the period of Dēvarāya I states that Gōli Aubhajanātha got the temple of Bhairava renovated and a circumambulatory passage - tirigirānu rāṭikōta - built. Bhairava is not a vedic deity, but associated with Śiva. Aṅkāla paramēśvari, however, is a folk deity. Since the inscribed slab is set up in front of the Durga temple, it might be that Goddess Durga is described as Aṅkālaparamēśvari. This is in Pedda Kōdurē where the income from Mahārāja prayōjanam and Dēvata-prayōjanam i.e., the tributes paid for the king and the Goddess were made over to Jaṅgama Sarvayya, son of Vāraṇāla Basavayya for performing tūrtam, parapu and siddhāyogam. The gift, made in 1552 A.D. was for the merit of mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Aubhalēśvararadēva of Nandyāla.³⁹ An incomplete record of Achyutarāya from
Pataprabhalavədu⁴⁰ dated 1537 A.D., refers to the mahājanas of Prabhulavīdu, the kānpus and people of 56 countries who assembled in the mukhamanḍapa of the temple of Yakkalidēvamma of Kaulakurṭa and seems to record a gift probably in favour of a washerman, Tippana. The Dēvigudi epigraph⁴¹ engraved on a pillar in the courtyard of Talakanṭamma temple states the Dēvāraya I, on the eve of his coronation, at the request of the tammāḍis of Taḷaṭaṇḍidēvi temple made a grant of a half of the lands of Dānavulapādu for worship and offerings. Nāgapadaṇṭayaka was ordered to execute it. Another record⁴² therein states that a gift of daśavanda land to the west of the boundary of Sukamanēripalli was made by the temple officials (sthānamvāru) to certain reḍḍis for their having constructed the enclosure to the temple. Śiṅgarāju Basavayya, the sthala karaṇam, wrote the record.

Kurnool has two important religious centres - one Śrivaishṇava at ahōbalam and the other Śaiva (Vīraśaiva) at Śrīśailam. Yet, there are other temples, both Śaiva and Śrivaishṇava. But the Śrivaishṇava temples predominate in this period. Bhōgaya was entrusted with the work of constructing the enclosure and the maṇḍapa raising of a garden and excavation of tanks - all for the temple of Chennakēśava at Guṇḍāla in Dhōṇi-sīma.⁴³ For this purpose Veṅkaṭa-nāyanigāru, with the consent of the reḍḍis, karṇams and talāri of the place, made a gift of land to Bhōgaya in 1569 A.D. Earlier, Rāmarāja Tirumaladēva-mahārāja granted two villages - Pedavāpadinne and Jonnagiri - to the same deity, for worship and celebration of festivals.⁴⁴ Anantayya and Parvatayya, the vipnavinōdis, made a grant of the vipravinōdi varttanas to the temple of Chennakēśvara at Malamindi Uppalūru alias Sōmasamudram in Ghāṇ-
The gift was made for the construction of a mantapa in front of the temple. The Kotakonda epigraph of 1524-25 A.D., records the creation of a settlement (pēṇḍa) called Diguva Tirupati situated to the west of Kotakonda endowed for offerings to God Mallikarjuna and a grant of half the income from the village for worship and offerings to God Chennakesava of Kavulūṭa. Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Hanumayadēva-mahārāja remitted the levies of the mānīya lands of Mahālīṅga, Chennakēsava and Vīrayya temples at Pērusūmula, unjustly collected by earlier rulers. The proceeds of this remission were now made over to the respective temples. Pandaraṅgi Viṭṭhalēśvara is yet another deity of Kōvelakunḍa. Four epigraphs, one in the Anjaneya temple and three more in the Raṅgasvāmi temple, refer to this deity. A remission of taxes and grant of villages was made to this temple. Yet another record from the same place registers incomes for the cherapu and pāruvenṭa festivals of Goddess Ahaṅkālamamma (Aṅkālamma) by mahāmaṇḍalēśvara Aubhalēśvaradēvmahārāju of Nandyāla.

Chittoor district has a famous Śaiva centre at Kālahasti. Yet all importance, practically in the entire district, is given to God Vēṅkatēsa. M.D. Sampath gives a statistical analysis of the inscriptions at Kālahasti and Tirupati. 218 inscriptions are copied from Kālahasti of which 142 belong to the Chōḷas (as also Yādavarāyas) while those of Vijayanagara 65 belong to the four dynasties, viz., Saṅgama, Sāluva, Tuluva and Āraviṇḍu. On the other hand, at Tirupati, of 1070 epigraphs copied, 742 belong to Vijayanagara. Of these 742 inscriptions, the Tuluvas are represented by 592 epigraphs. Even among these, the records of Kṛishṇadēvarāya and Achyutarāya have a preponderance over the others. To
One important aspect of the temples, be they small or big, is the fact that as institutions they played a great role in offering appointment to hundreds of people. It now became a great economic and social force to reckon with. The liberal grants made to the temples were specially for conducting worship and offerings therein. We have seen that the social upheaval of the 12th century Karnataka, which had spread to Andhra also had weakened the position of the temples, worship where in came to be neglected. On the other hand, as discussed above, most of the temples were converted into maṭhas (monasteries) where the Śivaliṅga was worshipped. But greater emphasis was now given to the feeding of the jaṅgamas and lay devotees and for the spread of education. In course of time maṭhas came to be converted into educational institutions. The temples, as such, have now lost the original importance. Earlier, the temples were centres of cultural activities, like the architectural embellishments, and imparting dance and music. And they were also institutions that gave impetus to agricultural operations and banking. Although they continued to be general feeding centres, for the moving populace that sought shelter on the way, and also for those poor and destitute in the villages who, no doubt, offered what little service they could, to the temple. Slowly, however, the grandeur of worship was lost. It lost its original attraction of the people at large, since fine arts like music and dancing also came to be given lesser importance. Mere worship bereft of its finer aspects, did not attract the people at large, more so when Vīraśaiva philosophy itself decried temple worship.

However, with the founding of the new kingdom, the sole purpose of
which was rejuvenation of culture and drawing the people back into the socio-economic activities. This, once again, changed the attitude of the people towards the temple. The new religion, Vīraśaivism, logically and philosophically, was acceptable. But, it meant seriousness of one’s attitude towards life. Its emphasis on social change was acceptable; but its philosophy was not palatable. Under the circumstances, the desire of the people to join the mainstream of life for protecting one’s own dharma was understandable. The strength of the Vijayanagara kingdom lay in the participation of the people in its politics and its socio-economic movements.

Earlier also the temples played a dominant part in the society. But it was not to this extent. Even in villages it was the official that could afford building temples and maintain the worshipping activities. But now the economic affluence of the people made them afford, if not building, at least renovating the temple by also adding a few more mantapas. According to Mahalingam:

The true nature and spirit of Vijayanagara art are reflected in the numerous new temples constructed and additions that were made to old ones during the period. The practice of constructing unitary temples each with a dominating vimāṇa gave place to the coming into existence of a temple complex with a number of shrines and mantapas, necessitated by the multiplication and elaboration of religious rituals and ceremonial observance in the temples. The temple began to have from about this period within its enclosure a number of individual shrines for subsidiary deities, pavillons and pillared halls and annexes, each having a definite purpose. The most significant among the accessory buildings are the Amman shrine and the kalyānamanṭapa......Extension of an earlier period with resemblances of these important features may be found in a few places, still it is not too much to say that the Vijayanagara artists heralded a new era by perfecting,
beautifying and enlarging the earlier innovation and assigning to them a prominent place, so much so, that the main part of the temple dwindles in relation to the temple complex as a whole.

No doubt big temples were constructed in Rayalaseema. But epigraphs show that most of them were constructed in a period much earlier than that of the Vijayanagara rulers. Kameswara Rao has discussed the Vijayanagara temples in Rayalaseema. But even here he has himself shown that not all the temples listed therein were founded in Vijayanagara period. But there were additions made to the original in the form of mantapas, sub-shrines etc. This is true of quite a good number of other temples not noted by him, but examined recently. There were, as already noted, two reasons for this. Engaged as they were in incessant wars, the kings were not in a position to build new temples at huge costs, except in places where there was great attraction and which were by then religious centres. Only a few like Nandi Lakki-setti and was family members could afford to build temples at Lepâkshi and add mantapas renovate them, get tanks within the temple complex excavated and so on.

However, as noted already there were a good number of smaller temples in several villages in the district which played the role of cultural centres. The temples provided employment to quite a good number of people like the drummers and pipers (dōlu-nāgasvarādavaru), florists (mālagaras), attendants to worshippers like the sattāda (uninitiated - not wearing sacred threads), Śrivaishnavaş, helpers (parichārakas), priests (Parichārakanambi), temple accountants (kōyil kaṇakku) in big temples where there was huge income and correspondingly huge expenditure. Several new festivals and rituals came to be introduced, more so in Vaishnava temples. For example, we hear of the recital of Tiruppāvai,
work of the female āḻvar - Gōdadēvi - performance of birthdays (tirunāḷ) and pavitrōtsavas, The naṭṭuvars and dēvadāsis recited works like kaṇṇinun- śiruttāṁ-bi (kaṇṇinun-śirappu) and used them as subject matters for dancing. Reading of Tiruvēṅkaṭamāhātmya and performing adhyayanōtsava etc.54 were other such activities.

These were occasions when the devotees irrespective of caste, creed, profession, sect etc. assembled in the temples. In bigger temples the so-called out-caste people will not be noticed at all and they had no problem of temple entry. But in smaller villages, there is nothing on record to show that they were barred from temple entry. It was the tradition-bound society in the village which, at best, took objection to such entries; but there was a great social change which in such a society, could in no way be a hindrance. In the Tamil region, in Chittoor district, these low class society had undergone a change. The distinction between the eḍaṅgai (left hand) and the valaṅgai (right hand) group did occur. The former formed a military wing, Iḷaṅgai-mahā-sēṉaiyār and are found in their cantonment at Chandragiri. A record from Valakaṅampūṇḍi, of the reign of Harihara II registers a grant of income from certain taxes to God Vijayālis-varam-uḍaiyar of that place.55

The smaller temples did not have, and could not afford to have, such huge establishments; but they too had in a smaller way, their own establishments to be maintained by them. The people, as a whole, came forward, willingly, to meet such expenses through contribution. The festivals provided opportunities to foster cultural activities also. There were, of course, the vipravinōdins who collected vipravinōdi pannu from the people in the villages but made a gift of
much of that income for offerings etc. in the temples. The Kopparti epigraph, for example, registers a gift of annual *varttana* obtained in the village, to God Siddhēśvara of Kōppolu by some *vipravinōdis* of Kāsyapa-gōtra.56 In 1552 A.D., some members of that community made a gift of similar *varttana* for the benefit of God Vishṇu (*Perumāl*) of Peddakomarla.57 Puchchalapāti Rāmayya, the officer of seal (*mudra*), under Amarināyani Veṅgaḍa-nāyaniṅgāru had the central shrine and the *sukanasi* of God Vīreśvara (Vīrabhadra) at Rāchavīdu renovated.58 Pāparāju Kondayya, the tax officer (*suṅka maṇihaṅgaṇḍu*) made a gift of income from taxes realised at Muddūru to Gods Ishtakāmēśvara and Bhairavēśvara of Siddhavatām.59 *Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Kannayyadēva made a gift of lands to the temples of Perumāl (Vishṇu), Vināyaka and Aṅkaladēvi, as also to several Brāhmaṇas and the artisans who constructed certain temples.60 The *purāntakas* headed by Komaraliṅgaya, Rāchayya and others, made a grant of *vīramuṣṭi-pannu* at the instance of Siddhabhikshāvirtti-ayya to the temples of Vīreśvara and Gavi Siddhēśvara of Bedadūru alias Narasimhapuram.61 Appagāri Yellappa was the *uḷiyam* (servant) of Aubhalēśvaradēva-mahārāja and he made a gift of land to the temple of Tiruvēṅgalanātha for worship and offerings therein, in the event of the construction of a stone *maṇḍapa* in the south-east corner of the temple and the flooring of the western yard.62 *Agrahāras* were also established wherein learned Brāhmaṇas were settled. A learned Brāhmaṇa, Rāmarāya, received an *agrahara*, Pērakarinūtula and this donee further apportioned it to other Brahmaṇas.63

The Tulumaladinne record is undated but states that the village was the *ākabhōga-agrahāra* of Nāchana Sōma granted by Prauḍhadēvarāya. This
means that this was for the sole enjoyment of the donee. Another record from the same place dated 1529 A.D.,\textsuperscript{65} states that Pushpāla Pāpanā, obviously a florist, got a lamp-post erected in front of the Chennakēśava temple of that place which is described as the \textit{agrahāra} of Nāchana Sōma. However, the earliest reference to this poet, author of \textit{Uttara Harivarpaṁsaṁ}, is found in a copper-plate, grant of Bukka I dated 1344 A.D.,\textsuperscript{66} wherein he is stated to have been granted the village Peṁchukaladinne\textsuperscript{67}. Sastry opines that Prauḍhādēvarāya noted above is identical with Dēvarāya I. "Nāchana Sōma therefore, might have live long after he received the above-mentioned copper-plate" in 1344 A.D.,\textsuperscript{68} The copper-plate grant has a verse about this poet eulogising him as a person capable of composing in eight languages.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Yājushānām} & \text{ varēṇyāya sakalāgama-vēdishē} \\
\text{ashtādaśa} & \text{ puraṇānām abhijñatārtha vēdinē} \\
\text{ashtabhāshākavitva} & \text{ śrī vēṇī vijata-saṁpadē} \\
\text{Sōmāya} & \text{ Nāchanāṁbōdhēḥ Sōmayāmitatējase}\textsuperscript{69}
\end{align*}
\]

Nāchana Sōma is a big name in the history of Telugu literature. But, there were other writers, who lived and died, unwept and unsung.

We have at Śrisāilam, an epigraph of 1458 A.D., which refers to Ōduva Hanumavva of the palace.\textsuperscript{70} She is otherwise, unheard of. The epithet Ōduva may be interpreted also to mean one who reads, to be taken in the sense of \textit{gamaki}-declamator. If so, perhaps she was reading epic or puranic or literary works in the palace, obviously in the royal court for the academic pleasure of the king. In that case she should have been well-versed in such a literature.

Rāyasam Koṇḍamarāsaya is described as \textit{chhappannadēsa chitrālipi}
lekha kōdida - expert in writing picturesque writing of 51 countries. We hear of local artists. Sanai papayya (who played on a shahanāi) was given a grant in 1589 A.D., for carrying a pandal every year to Tirumala.71 Obviously, he used the pandal there for giving a performance of his own art. Epigraphs refer to the drummers (dōlu) and pipers (nāgasvarālavāru).72 Lakkhayya was a great musician of the Tuluva period and had become so renowned that a hobli by name Haduva Lakhayyan hobli had come into existence by 1531 A.D.73 The Pandīḷapalli epigraph refers to pipers and vōhila Dāsari.74 We see pātrabhōgas attached to smaller temples like the one at Peddasettipalle.75 We also come across an actor (naṭṭuva) who also provided background music. He was Nāgayya, son of Chāgaya. This latter had become quite famous as an actor in Tāyikunda-nāṭaka which is otherwise unknown. According to Venkataramanayya this was one of the earliest representatives of yaksha-gāna, a folk form of drama.77

All the above details indicate how a temple, as a social institution had grown up in Rāyalaseema. This was, obviously true of other regions also. We have seen that in most of these cases it is the local people evinced keen interest in and came forward to patronise such activities. Through such efforts the different factions of the society came together. This shows that the concept of welfare state was not only theoretical but also had become practical. The king strove hard to protect Hindu dharma; his subjects helped him in achieving this by themselves staying together. This 'staying together' was essentially for the realisation of welfare state.

This brings us, next, to the religious conditions of the period and the
region under study. We have emphasised the fact that religious harmony was one factor which gave the kingdom its strength. Not that there was no conflicts at all. But they were solved within themselves amicably. In this the part played by the village institution and the village temple which were quite considerable. We have already referred to such little misunderstandings in the social structure, some little claims made by certain groups to gain a higher rung in social hierarchy. But, they were all set right. But conflicts of more serious nature were referred to the king for settlement. It is in this light that the Jaina-Śrivaishṇava accord has to be understood.

The Jainas of Sravanabelagola and other centres were harassed by the Srivaishnavas. Let the relevant inscription\textsuperscript{78} speak for itself:

\begin{quote}
...... during the time that mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, punisher of hostile kings, champion over kings who break the world, Śri Vira Bukkarāya was ruling the earth, a dispute having arisen between the Jainas and the bhaktas (Vaishṇavas), the blessed people (the Jainas) of all the māṇus including Āneyagondi, Hosaṇā, Penugunḍa and the city of Kal-leha having petitioned to Bukkarāya about the injustice done by the bhaktas, the king, taking the hand of the Jainas and placing it in the hands of the Śrivaishṇavas of the eighteen nādus, including all the āchāryas of the places, the chief of which are Kōvil Tirumala, Perumālkōvil and Tirunārāyanāpura; all the samayis, all the sātvikas; mōṣhikas; those of the holy service, of the holy fact and of the (holy) water, the fortyeight people; the sāvanta- bōvas; and the Tirukula and Jāṁbavakula - and declaring (at the same time) that there was no difference between the Vaishṇava darśana (or faith) and the Jaina darśana (decreed as follows):

This Jaina darśana is, as before, entitled to the five great musical instruments and the kaḷasa (vase). If loss or advancement should be
caused to the Jaina *darśana* through the *bhaktas*, the Vaishṇavas will kindly deem it as loss or advancement caused to their (own *darśana*).

The Śrivaishnavas will, to this effect, kindly set up a *śāsana* in all the *bastis* of the kingdom. For as long as the sun and moon endure, the Vaishṇava creed will continue to protect the Jaina *darśana* through the *bhaktas*. The Vaishṇavas and the Jainas are one (body); they must not be viewed as different. Tātayya of Tirumale, by consent of the blessed people (the Jainas) of the whole kingdom will, out of the money levied at the rate of one *hana* a year, for every house according to the door from the Jainas throughout the whole kingdom, for the bodyguard to be appointed by Vaishṇavas at the place of Beḷugula, appoint twenty servants as a bodyguard for the God and with the remainder of the money have the dilapidated Jinālayas (Jina temples) whitewashed .........

In fact another similar inscription is found at Kalleha. In this it is stated that the Jainas of all the *nāḍs* (three of them named as in the above and adding Kalyaha besides) made petition to him (Bukka I) that the Vaishnavas were killing them unjustly whereupon the king proclaiming that he would not countenance their unjust proceedings against the Jains or allow themselves to shelter under the plea of religion, ......passed a decree that the Jainas should use certain musical instruments, customary among them, only in five *bastis* (unnamed) and not in others. This would, reading between the lines, show that the Vaishṇavas did not take to cudgels unprovoked. quite understandable why the king took the issue so seriously as to issue a decree against the Śrivaishṇavas. Even here the diplomatic attitude can be seen. What was the punishment meted out? Every Jaina family living in a house all over the kingdom was to pay one *hana* per year and out of the money so collected the Śrivaishṇavas were to maintain a contingent, of bodyguards for the *basadi* at Śrāvanabelagola, and have all the dilapidated Jinālayas to be whitewashed. (They were not to be
This meant that the Śrīvaishnavaśas had nothing to lose by themselves.

But the inscriptions under study do not speak of any conflict as far as a Rayalaseema region is concerned. Thus they give a scope for us to understand that this region was relatively free from religious conflicts. Apart from this, the very decree is important since it laid down, in clear terms, the religious policy of the kings. That the king announced that both the religious (dārśanas - philosophies) were in fact the same is a confirmation of a much earlier stand taken during the Hoysaḷa period according to which all the doctrines - Śaiva, Bāuddha, Jainā, Naṭiyāyika etc. - after all, led to the same goal and hence they were all one.

The three major doctrines that then existed were Śaivism, Śrīvaishnavaśivism and Jainism. Though Buddhism is also named, it does not appear to have been popular in Rayalaseema - as also in South India, as a whole - except in some pockets. The Saṅgamas were essentially Śaivas and patronised that religion. But they did not look down upon other creeds. This becomes clear from Bukka's edict. As emphasised time and again in the above pages, they received unstinted blessings and cooperation from the matha at Śrīṅgeri and, obviously at the instance of the pontiffs of the matha, they gained popular support also both in money and kind. They, in turn, bestowed upon the matha very liberal donations of lands and villages. Thereby the monastery also came to be enriched. In fact, the rulers did not close their eyes to the fact that Islam had by then penetrated deep into the south. Naturally the Mohammadans who had settled could not kept away from others and were given all amenities, although for all practical purposes they were aliens. But, we do not have much of the
socio-religious conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims. Though they were outsiders, they were accepted by the Hindu society. We come across very few inscriptions dealing with the Muslims. This leads us to presume that in Rālayaseema there was little religious conflict during this period. Vaishṇavism of the Madhwa doctrine entered the body politic later on. Srīpādarāya, Vyāsarāya and Purandaradāsa lived around 1422-80 A.D., 1447-89 A.D. and 1480-1564 A.D. respectively. Of these, Vyāsarāya is said to have saved the life of Kṛishṇadēvarāya by sitting on the throne himself to avoid the evil effects of stars most unfavourable to the king. (kuhayōga).

The Saṅgama rulers extended patronage to Viśaśaivism also. We know that Dēvarāya II had viśaśaiva-sampannya as one of his titles. It is stated that he gave one of his daughters in marriage to Kerasthaḷadā Viṇḍaṇa. But, the Viśaśaiva philosophy did not encourage temple worship. Hence, as already noted above, the temples which were under the hold of the Pāśupatas or Kāḷāmukhas earlier, were mostly taken over by the Viśaśaivites who converted them into maṭhas. Even in Rāyalaseema we come across the maṭhas at Uravakoḷa and Bastherpalli of Anantapur district. However, slowly we find the influence of Viśaśaivism waning. This was probably more so because from the Sāluva period onwards Śrīvaishṇavism gained greater popularity since it received royal patronage also. Jainism, in Rāyalaseema was confined to one or two regions, Konakoḷla (Konḍa Kunda in Anantapur district) being one. In spite of the fact that Bukka I upheld the cause of Jainism, as seen above, slowly Jainism lost its hold over Rāyalaseema. This was more so because the followers of Jina, being merchants shifted their activities to the coastal region, where, in the coastal
towns of North and South kanara districts, we find them building basadis and make very liberal grants. The riches that they brought overseas were, partly shared by these basadis which have riches in kind also, of pearls, gems, diamonds and other precious stones.

Yet another sect, that for some time influenced the kingdom and the kings, was Vaishṇavism of which the greatest exponent was Madhwāchārīya. They, no doubt, upheld the greatness of Viṣṇu but their concept of Dvaita-duality- of Ātma and Paramātma being separate entities which could not come together - did not find much favour. As seen above, Vyasatirtha who came to be known as Vyāsārāya after he sat on the throne of krishnadevarāya for a very small period of the day with kuhūyōga which was inauspicious for the king himself, was a great pontiff. Then came the turn of Purandaradāsa. These devotees of Viṣṇu through their songs brought out a sense of social awakening among the people. Like the vachanas of the Vīraśaivas the kīrtanas of the dasas (servants of God) pictured the social evils that existed, condemned blind and illogical traditions and customs. This dāsasāhītya pictures the deteriorating conditions and emphasizes the oneness of the people. But their dogma itself was uncompromising.

Venkataramanayya says :81
Inspite of the effort of Vyāsatīrtha, Madhwaism did not evoke popular enthusiasm. The only contribution, which it made to popular religion, was to give an exaggerated importance to the worship of Hanumān. A few Brāhmaṇas and a fewer nobles accepted the teachings of Madhwa; and although the latter had long ago disappeared, the former still upheld the tenets of the faith with great zeal and en-
Thusiasm. The influence which Madhwaism wielded declined rapidly after Krishnaraya's death; and it does not appear to have played any prominent part in the religion of the subsequent period.

Thus, the two important vedic religions that had attracted the people as a whole were Śaivism (also called Smārta) and Śrivaishnavism, each being the upholder of Mānism (Advaita) and Qualified Mānism (Visishtādvaita). It was Śaiva dharma and the Śaiva māṭha at Śringeri that nurtured the newly born Vijayanagara kingdom. The early rulers greatly patronised the Śringeri māṭha and received the blessings and support of the pontiffs therein.

However, there was a change in the attitude when the Sājuvas got themselves converted into Śrivaishnavism Krishnadēvarāya was himself a very staunch Śrivaishnava. Amuktamālāya which he composed deals with the love story of Āndāl-Goddadēvi - a female ālivar. When Krishnadēvarāya returned from his several expeditions he distributed the wealth that he had amassed among the several Saiva and Vaishnava temples. Almost all his copper-plate grants repeat the verse in question which indicates that he bestowed his wealth on the temples at Chidambaram, Virūpāksha (Hampi), Kālahasti, Tirupati, Kaṇchi, Śriśailam, Tiruvannāmalai, Harihara, Ahōbala, Sangamēśvara, Kuṃbhakōnam, Mahānandi-ūrtha, Gōkarna and Rāmēśvaram which were all Śaiva and Śrivaishnava centres of pilgrimage. However, an analysis of the grants made to these temples would show that greater importance was given to the Śrivaishnava temples than the Śaiva ones. Even here Krishnadēvarāya being an earnest devotee of Lord Veṅkaṭēśvara of Tirupati, the greatest beneficiary of his grants was that temple. Further, it will be seen that even at Tirupati quite a good number of Śaiva shrines were converted to Śrivaishnava ones. For example, the
Kapilēśvara shrine and Kapila-tīrtham in front of it were later on converted into Śrīvaishnava Shirne. When after Śaka 1484 (A.D. 1562-63) the shirne collapsed owing to heavy rains, a donation made for the daily worship of and offerings to the image of Vighnēswara was utilised for the renovation of dilapidated kitchen. The donatrix, Śevvu-sāni found the original endowment made by her was not used for the purpose for which it was meant.

A study of the inscriptions of this period shows us that after Kṛishṇadēvarāya period we come across few references to vire Śaiva cult. A glaring fact is that most of the inscriptions of Cuddapah on they speak Saivaite presiding deities.

A number of festivals were introduced in the periods of the rules of the Sāluvas and the Tujuvas most of them being Śrīvaishnava festivals connected with the birthdays of the Ālvārs, reciting of Prabhāndhams and institution of several sandhis (offerings) which were later on distributed in the Rāmānuja-kūtams started for the purposes of feeding. Nīlakanta Śastry says “the extent to which the Vaishnava influence pervaded the ritual and worship in the temples at Tirumala and Tirupati is indicated not only by the Vaishnava deities installed in these temples but also by the images of Vaishnava saints and preceptors installed in them from time to time and worshipped therin.82

This attitude was, undoubtedly, an exhibition of religious catholicity. However, the emphasis given to Srivaishnavism made the followers of other vedic religions look askance. The popularity of Kṛishṇadēvarāya was so high that the people dared not rise in any sort of revolt. It looked as though they were abiding
him for time. We know that although Sadasivaraya proclaimed himself to be the ruler after Achyutaraya, it was Aliya Ramaraya that was the de facto ruler and dictated terms. We know that he meddled in the politics of the Sultans and claimed himself to be a king-maker by his efforts to play politics diplomatically among the Sultans. He gave undue encouragement and support to the Mohammadans. Venkataramanayya gives an example of the high handedness of the Mohammadans who went to the extent of sacrificing cows in a mosque in the Turukawada of the capital. To quote:

"On one occasion, when the Mohammadans sacrificed cows in a mosque in the Turukawada of the city, the nobles and officers became so excited over the matter, that, led by Tirumala, a brother of Ramaraja, they made very strong representation to Ramaraja exhorting him to prohibit the Mohammadans from slaughtering the cows. Ramaraja, however, did not yield to them; but told them that he was the master of the bodies of his soldiers and not of their souls. Further he pointed out that it would not be wise to interfere with their practices. The firmness, which he exhibited on this occasion, was indeed remarkable, as the opposition was led by one of his own brothers. The nobles, who wanted to show Ramaraja the foolishness of his attitude towards the Mohammadans went away convinced that there was wisdom in it."

It was but natural that this was too much for the Sultans to swallow. They now sank their differences and got united in the final battle. We are told that soon after the Hindus lost the final battle at Talikota the Muslims hurried to Hampi and looted its wealth. But, we know for certain that the Mohammadans would not have made distinctions between the temples of different creeds. We also know that not all the temples at Hampi were attacked and ransacked by the Mohammadans. Could it be that, taking advantage of the situation, the non-
śrīvaiṣṭhṇavas themselves pulled out the Vaishṇava temples and looted as an act of revenge for the distinction shown by the rulers. It is, of course, a conjecture but based on the facts noted above. We only ask the question; could it be? Further studies alone can bring out the truth of the matter.

The Telugu literature underwent a change in the sense the style of the poetry became Prabandha. This is a distinguished style, certain figures of speech like simile, hyperbole and slesha occupy a pre-eminent place in it. This is lyrical, delicate and soft. Kṛṣṇadēvarāya among the Vijayanagara kings was not only the most powerful, but also most talented poet. Many a village was presented to the poets. They were bestowed with high honours. He even constitute an academy of poets, known as the 'Ashtadīgajas'. They were Peddana, Mallana, Timmana, Sūrana, Dhūrjaṭi, Rāmakṛiṣṇa, Bhāṭṭumurthy and Rudrakavi.

The Telugu scholars are of the opinion that Allasāni Pedanna and Bhāṭṭumurthy hailed from Rāyalaseema. Poetry of these two stalwarts in a way reflected the socio-economic conditions of Rāyalaseema. Even before that Srinatha, the noted poet during the time of the Dēvaraya II, visited the Rāyalaseema regions and Palanādu. He also depicted the chronic drought conditions of Rāyalaseema. Dhūrjati in his famous work Śrīkālahastiśwara māḥātmyam has narrated the life of the prostitutes and he was the most outspoken.

The inscriptions of Rāyalaseema of the period do not speak much about the activities of the poets, or for that matter any other literary activity. An
epigraph of 1527. A.D. of Krishnadevaraya speaks of an Agrahāra village being given to the eight court poets (Aṣṭadīggajas) at Tippalūru, Kamalāpuram Taluk of Cuddapah District.\textsuperscript{85}

Annamāchārya, hailing from Tāllapāka (Cuddapah District), was a famous composer. He composed about 3,000 devotional songs. The kīrti form, along with the pallavi, anupallavi and charanam, was first conceived and adopted by Annamāchārya. He chose Telugu as the medium of his composition because it was found to be the best language.

The Veerabhadreshwara temple at Lēpākshi (Anantapur district) represents one of the best specimens of Vijayanagara art. As many as four deities were worshipped here - Pāpānāśeswara, Śrī Rāmā, Virabhadra and Durga. The temple was constructed in 1538 A.D. by a treasurer, Virūpana. Nandi, the stone bull, is said to be the largest in India.

According to Sivaram Murthy:\textsuperscript{86}

"This nātyamanda is quite a charming piece of work with dancing figures, drummers and divine musicians carved on every pillar ........... a prominent figure of Śiva in the pleasant ānanda tāṇḍava attitude are among the noteworthy sculptures adorning the pillars that beautified the maṇḍapa".

The whole ceiling of the maṇḍapa was originally painted. It is very much decayed and damp, though much of it still remains. Speaking about the life size paintings of scenes of the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana and the Purāṇas, Francie says \textsuperscript{87}.

"..... one of the faces possesses the unusual characteristic of appearing to look full at the spectator from whatever point it is viewed."
Rāyalaseema during this period did reflect the philosophy, religion, and art. which were prevailing in the remaining areas of Vijayanagara empire. As a whole peculiar economic and political conditions did not give much scope for the emergence of any significant central form.
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