III (i) THE VISHNUKUNDINS

The Vishnukundins rose to power on the downfall of the Ikshvakus in the early decades of the fourth century and ruled unto the end of the sixth century of the Christian era over the lower Deccan and the coastal Andhra. The history of the Vishnukundins is reconstructed on the basis of information furnished by the inscriptions, mostly copper-plate charters registering the gifts made by the rulers of the dynasty to the gods, brahmins, and other religious foundations. These records mention generally the donor and three or more generations of his ancestors, and allude incidentally to their achievements in peace and war, thereby bringing to light events of historical importance.

The following nine copper-plate charters and a stone inscription of the dynasty have come to light so far.

1. The Tummalagudem Copper-plate Grant I
2. The Tummalagudem Copper-plate Grant II
3. Chikkulla Copper-plate Grant
4. Tuddi Copper-plate Grant
5. Ramathirtham Copper-plate Grant
6. Ipur Copper-plate Grant I
7. Ipur Copper-plate Grant II
8. The Pulumburu plates
9. The Khanapur plates
10. The Velpuru stone inscription

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The available epigraphs furnish the following details:

1. *The Tummalagudem copper-plate grant I.*

   Place: Tummalagudem, Ramannapet taluk, Nalgonda dist.

   Indravarma, his son Madhavavarma, his son Govindavarma (donor) 37 years.

   It is stated that the third king Govindavarma, the donor of the grant, by the strength of his arms obtained his kingdom which consisted of the territories conquered from the other Sampantas; was the beloved of the *varnas* and *asrama* as well as of his relatives and followers; was the munificent bestower of gifts of villagers, fields, gold, elephants, horses, cows, bulls, conches, scats, vehicles, drinks, food, vessels, houses, dresses, ornaments, virgins and male and female slaves in thousands; was the builder of several temples, *viharas*, assembly halls, sheds for serving water and drinks to the thirsty wayfarers, irrigation tanks, wells and graves; was the possessor of wealth enjoyed by the *bhikshus*, the twice born, the poor, the beggars, the sick, the lowly and the miserable; was the acquirer of insight into the nature of this and the other world by means of the knowledge obtained from the study of the *Sastras*; was the possessor of a mind highly enlightened for the uplift of all beings. He made a gift of the village Penakapura for a monastery built by his chief queen Parama Mahadevi for the use of *Chaturdesarya-Bhikshu-Sangha* in the 37th year of his reign.

2. *Tummalagudem copper-plate II.*

   Govindavarma; his son Madhavavarma, asvamedhin; his
son Vikramendra Varma; his son Indrabhattarikavarm, his son Vikramendrabhattarakavaran (donor) 11th regnal year, Saka 488.

It begins with a sanskrit verse wishing success to the arms of uttama-sraya, son of Satyasraya and describes a genealogy of five generations.

It is said that Govindavarman, the progenitor of this line of kings, embraced Buddhism after studying the doctrines propounded by the Buddha and that he acquired brahmamunya, a religious merit resulting in final emancipation, the construction of several great viharas rivalling the celestial mansions of the Gods.

Madhavavarman, the second in the line performed all the sacrificial rites such as bahusuvama, poundarika, Vajapeya, Sarvamedha, rajasuya, and purushamedhakratu - sahasra, as enjoined by the scriptures; and he was the lord of the land encircled by the waters of Eastern and the Western seas and the river Reva (Narmada).

Vikramendravarman, the third in the line was the son of Madhavavarman by Vakataka Mahadevi; he was a great poet and a devoted Buddhist.

Indrabhattarakavaran, the fourth king made himself master of the entire domain and destroyed the whole body of his deyades.

Vikramendrabhattarakavaran, the last ruler and the donor of the present grant, was made king by the ministers while he was still a boy. He was devoted to the dharma. He led
an expedition against a Paliava king named Simha, and after scoring a victory over him in a battle, returned first to Sakrapura (Indrapura) and made in Saka 483 (A.D. 566 in the 11th year of his reign, a gift of the village of Irendaru to the chaturdasi-arvavara-bhikshusanga residing in the mahavima built by parama-bhattarika.

It is also stated that Paramabhattarika was born like Lakshmi in the ocean of the family of Prithvi Mularaja, which was honoured by its alliance with the Vishnukundins, the crest-Jewel of the samantas, that she married Govindaraja who built in all the provinces of the Dakshinapatha wonderful stupas and Viharas adorned with several kinds of sculptural work; who was brilliant like the Kaustubha pendant in the series of necklace viz., the kings on the east and west of the Sriparvatha, and who resembled Govinda (Vishnu) in virtue, beauty and wealth, that she had a son called Madhavavarman whose greatness is manifested by the conquest of the kings of other dynasties; who was adorned by the qualities of diplomacy and prowess and who was charming in personal appearance.

3. Chikkulla plates:

Place: Eluru taluk, West Godavari district.

Madhavavarman, asvamedhin, his son Vikramendravarman; his son Indrabhattarakavarman; his son Vikramendrabhattarakavarman (donor) 10th regnal year.

Of these kings, Madhavavarman is stated to have been the worshipper of the feet of the God of Sri Parvathaswami, who among the Vishnukundin kings washed off the evils of the world by his ceremonial bath after the performance of eleven
Asvamedha sacrifices. He was the performer of sahagra-
kratu, sarvamedha, behu suvarna, poundarika, purushamedha,
yudya, Rajaṣuya, Pradhiraṇya, Prajaṇeya, and a thousand other
sacrifices as a consequence of which he became supreme, and
all the kings of the earth bowed before his feet in
submission.

It is stated that Vikramendravarman was born to adorn
both the Vishnukundin and the Vakataka families. Indrabhataḥara-
avarman is said to have established his ascendancy over the
circle for the earth by the power of his sharp sword;
scattered his Ṛṣa dayadasas by knitting his brows; won
victories over elephants squadrons in several chaturdanta
battles; obtained religious merit by establishing ghatikas
as ordained by law; and lived a righteous life in virtue of
his gifts of lands, cows and virgins (Kanyas). He was a
paramamahesvara and maharaja.

Vikramendravarman was famous for the excellent
qualities from his boyhood; and he bore with efficiency all
the burdens of the kingdom. He was a paramamahesvara.

4. Tundi Copperplate grant:

Place: East Godavari district.

Madhavavarman, asvamedhin; his son Vikramendravarman;
his son Indrabhataḥaraṇavarman, his son Vikramendravarman
(donor) 14th regnal year.

The first king Madhavavarman is said to have been the
worshipper of the feet of the God Śrīparvathaswamy, who washed
off the evils of the world by means of the ceremonial bath
after the performance of eleven asvamedha; performed sahastra-kratu, eleven bahusuvarmas, eleven poundarikas besides several other sacrifices in virtue of which he acquired the occult power of achieving any thing he desired; and a purusha-medha and other sacrifices as a consequence of which he became a parameshti and Devadideva. The second king of the line Vikramendrabhattarakavarman is said to have adorned by his birth both the Vishnukundin and Vakataka families.

Indrabhattarakavarman, the third chief of the line is said to have vanquished his dayadars, some of whom were driven to the far off regions whereas others were destroyed completely; he is further said to have won victories in chaturdanta-battles, and made himself supreme lord of the empire with the help of his own right-hand. He was a parama-mahesvara, paramabhattacharya and a parama-brahmany and a dharma vijaya, who acquired vast religious merit by establishing ghatikas as ordained by law.

The last king Vikramendra bhattarakavarman is said to have been the crest-jewel of the Vishnukundin dynasty who was possessed of the great requisite qualities for the protection of the whole earth. He was a Mahimahendra the great Indra of the earth.

5. Ramathirtham copper plates:
Place: Vizianagaram district

Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin, his son Vikramendra; his son Indravarman (donor), 27th regnal year.

The first king Maharaja Madhavavarman is said to have been the devout worshipper of the god Sriparvathasvami, that
his feet were covered by the rays of the gems set in the diadems of the samantasa of the whole earth who bowed before him in submission. The second king Raja Vikramendravarman is said to have been the crest-jewel of the exalted line of Vishnukundin kings.

6. Ipur Copper-plate grant I:

Place: Tenali taluk, Guntur district.

Govindavarman; his son Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin (donor) 57th regnal year; his son prince Manchyanakhattarakka.

It is stated that Maharaja Sri Govindavarman was a devout worshipper of the god Sriparvathasvami. He is said to have made the gift of innumerable cows, large quantities of gold and much land evidently to gods and brahmins and all the samantasa or the subordinate chiefs are said to have bowed down to him in submission and that the orders of his son and successor Sri Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman were obeyed by the kings of all the countries; that he the possessor of the strength of bala, nava, and vinaya, of all the samantasa whom he conquered by means of force and diplomacy; that he was the delighter of the hearts of the youthful ladies in the palace of Trivaranagar; that he performed the Agnishtoma sacrifice; that he was born of hiranyagarbha, and that he washed off the sins of the world by the avabhuta-snavas after performing a series of eleven Agvamedha sacrifices. This king, it is further stated, granted in the 57th regnal year, while he lay encamped in the victorious skandhavara (army headquarters) at Kudavada the village of Vilembali in Guddavadi vishaya to
the brahmin Agnisarman of Vaisha gotra for the prosperity
of his family. The executor of the grant was Manchyana-
bbhattaraka, the dear son of the king.

7. *Ipur Copper-plate II:*

Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin; his son
Devavarman, his son Sri Madhavavarman.

Of these three kings, Devavarman, the second in the
line is mentioned without titles. The first king Sri
Madhavavarman, is said to have washed away the evil of the
world by means of his *avabhuta* after the performance of
eleven *asvamedha* sacrifices; besides he is also said to have
performed one thousand *Agnishtoma* sacrifices. His feet are
said to have been illumined by the rays of gems set in
diads of innumerable *samantas*. The official designation,
Maharaja of the third, Madhavavarman is lost due to damage
in the inscription. He is said to be a devout worshipper
of the God, Sri Parvathaswami. He is said to possess *naya,*
*vinaya* and *satya,* and is the lord of Malaya and Trikuta.

The inscription registers the gift of a village to two
brahmins Agnisarman and Indra sarman by the king. The gift
is said to have been made at Amarapura in the 47th year of
his reign.

8. *The Pulomburu plates:*

Place, East Godavari district

Sri Vikramendra varman; his son Govindavarman; his son
Maharaja Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin(donor), 48th regnal year.

It is stated that Vikramendravarman was the worshipper
of the god *Sriparvathaswami,* and that he subdued a multitude
of the Samanta chiefs; that Govindavarman won victories in many battles and had the title 'Vikramasraya', and that Madhavavarman, the donor of the present record was Dasasatasa-
sakala dharanitala parasati (ruler of the entire Dasasatadha-
ranitala or ten hundred country) was fond of sporting with young ladios in the mansions of Trivaranagara. (Avasita vividha
diiva Trivaranagara bhavana gata parasrayavati jana vibaranara ratar) was the offspring of the golden womb (hiranyagarbha prasuta)
that he washed off the evils of the world by ceremonial bath after performing eleven asvamedha sacrifices; that he was the protector of the learned, the twice born, the teachers, the aged and the ascetics; that he was the sun shining on the kings of the earth; that he was a para-brahmanya, that he meditated on the feet of his parents; and that he was known as Janasrava Maharaja. It is further stated that in his 43th regnal year he crossed the Godavari to conquer the eastern quarter (pragadigvijaya).

9. The Khanapur plates:

Place: Satara district, Maharashtra

The first plate of the inscription is lost. The second plate mentions Maharaja Madhavavarman who was a sarvabhousma
(emperor) and who performed the paundarika, bahuvarna, ekadase asvamedha sacrifices. He had the title of
chaturvarna, chaturasrama dharma-karmasetu.
10. Velpuru Inscription:

Place: Sathanapalli taluk, Guntur District.

A Sanskrit inscription in archaic characters belonging to a Vishnukundin king named Madhavavarman has been found on a marble pillar near the entrance of the Ramalingaswami temple at Velpuru in Sathanapalli taluk of the Guntur district. This is a fragmentary record which mentions the Vishnukundin and the Pallava families. The broken pieces refer to a skandhavarya (military encampment) where Madhavavarman and his son Vikramendra were camping. The inscription is dated in the 37th regnal year of the king Madhavavarman.

THE NAME OF THE DYNASTY

The name Vishnukundin is used variously in the inscriptions to denote their gotra as well as their family.

Tummalagudem Copper Plate Grant I:
Ist plate - II side - 3rd line
Vishnukundeenam

III plate - II side - 2nd and 3rd line
Vishnukundee
Kula vamsyai

IV plate - I side - 3rd line
Srhe Vishnukundeenam

Tummalagudem Copper Plate Grant II
I plate - II side - 3rd line
Vishnukundeenam

II plate - II side - 7th line
Vishnukundi kula
Chikkulla copper plates
I plate - 2nd line
Vishnukundi nam

Tundi copper plate grant
I plate - II side - 1st line
Vishnukundinam
II plate - II side - 1st and 2nd line
Vishnukundi Vakataka Vamsa
dvayalamkruta
III plate - 1 side 1st and 2nd line
Vishnukundi
Kulatilakasya
IV plate - 1 side - 1st line
Sree Vishnukundyanvaya

Ramathirtham copper plates:
I plate - II side - 3rd line
Sree Vishnukundiparthivo . . .

Ipur copper plate grant I:
II plate - I side - 3rd line
Vishnu (Kundinam)
III plate - I side - 1st line
Vishnuku(náyadhíraja . . .)

Ipur copper plate grant II:
I plate - II side - 1st line
Vishnukundinam

The Pulomhuru plates:
I plate - II side - 1st line
Vishmuku(ndinoh)
Thus the dynastic name occurs not less than sixteen times in the epigraphs of the family.

One recent writer, S.S. Sankaranarayanan observed that in almost all the known records of the family where the name of this royal house occurs outside the compounds, including the two sets of Tummalagudem copper plates, the name of the dynasty is spelt only as Vishnukundinam which denotes the i-ending of the name; and that the respective editors of those records have corrected the reading, into 'ondinam' with n-ending evidently to fall in line with the "very incorrect" text of the Chikkulla plates. He therefore suggests to spell the name only as Vishnukundi and not Vishnukundin, as has been usually done.\footnote{11}

The same scholar discussed at length in order to decide the correct spelling of the name of the dynasty and asserted that it would be logical to spell the name of the dynasty as Vishnukundi and not as Vishnukundin as has been hitherto done by scholars.\footnote{12}

It is further argued that 'Vishnukundinam' of our records means of the Vishnukundis' as in the case of Pallavanam, Vakatanam, etc., that the descendants of the kings Raghu, Gupta, Vakataka, Pallava etc., here respectively known as the Raghus, Guptas, Vakatakas, Pallavas etc., and that these names have a grammatical sanction.\footnote{13}
"Though the epigraphical texts are often full of irregular and wrong forms, and it would be improper to presume an irregularity in Vishnukundi, occurring sixteen times, merely because the available form is against the theory of some authors course", observes Dr. Sankaranarayanan.

The compound "Vishnukundin" belongs to "Druta" class. Druta is defined as letter "n" which fades away when not required.

Philology and phonetic laws clearly tell us that due to the speedy pronunciation of words the sounds that are not required are normally dropped. For example, when the compound word "man-like" is pronounced, the sound "ke" is omitted and changes into one word "manly". Similarly the two words "can not" become "can't". More stress falls on the first word and lesser on the second word. Such changes occur only in the colloquial language.

The usage of the words like "Vishnukundins" in the epigraphs cannot be decided grammatically but can only be explained by studying the words following comparative and historical methods.

The kings of the dynasty were the rulers of the 'Indhra country where Telugu language was predominantly spoken. It is an admitted fact that the Telugu comes from the Dravidian languages. It is but natural that the influence of their spoken language finds place wittingly or unwittingly in the inscriptions also. Thus it is quite possible that the dynastic name with druta 'n' in the end might have been
omitted and written as "Vishnukundinam, Vishnukuadee-Kula, Vishnukundikula, Vishnukundinam, Vishnukundi-Vakataka unnamed, Vishnukundyanayya, Vishnukundi Gotratprabhavasya etc.,

Further the word Vishnukundi appears to be used in singular form, and in its plural form it is necessary to add letter 'n' before suffixing the 'pratyaya "lu" to make it "Vishnukundi-nulu", on the other hand to call them as "Vishnukundilu" is untenable for the simple reason that the formation of the compound itself is not according to the principles and characteristics of phonology. It is difficult to pronounce the syllable "lu" which ends with vowel "U" immediately after the syllable "kundi" ending with vowel 'i'. Further with the influence of the vowel 'u' the sound 'i' also becomes 'u' and thus it should be pronounced as Vishnukundulu which is not literally correct. Therefore for the convenience of pronunciation, a gliding letter "nu" (druta) must necessarily be added before the "lu" pratyaya. And the English form of the word Vishnukundinulu becomes Vishnukundins.

In this connection, Dr. V.V. Mirashi observes that Vishnukundin would be the correct form of the name. His observation goes as follows: "Till now all scholars, including Sankaranarayanan, have taken the name of the Royal family as Vishnukundin, but now .... he has suggested that the correct name of the family is Vishnukundi. The name is spelt in both the ways in the records discovered till now. For instance, the Chikkulla plates read Vishnukundinam in line 2 (see E.I. IV p.195). Elsewhere, the form is Vishnukundinam
If the royal family name was derived from Vishnukunda as suggested by Kishor Vishnukundin would be the correct form of the name. As the same has been in vogue till now, it has been used in the present monograph.

Thus, the logical conclusion put forth by Sankaranarayanan to spell the name of the dynasty as "Vishnukundina" has no clarity, and justification. The previous scholars like W. Hultsch, Sewell, G.J.Dubreuil, K.V.Laxmana Rao, D.C.Sircar, K.Gopalachari, N.L. Venkataramanayya etc., did not err in calling the name of the dynasty as Vishnukundina or Vishnukundinulu.

Origin:

In the Velpuru epigraph of Madhavavarman II, his father Govindavarman I is stated to be an offspring of the Vishnukundin gotra.

"................. Vishnukundin-
(go) tratprabhavasya ...........

(face A - lines -2)\(^\text{19}\)

In the Tundi grant of Vikramandaravaran II, his grand-father Vikramendra I is spoken as an ornament of both Vishnukundi and the Yakataka families, his father Indrabhattarsaka and himself as the crescent jewel and the gem adorning the crown respectively of the Vishnukundin family.

"........... Vishnukundi - va

ketaka Vamsadvayalamkrita ........

(Second plate second side - 1st and 2nd line)
Prom these evidences scholars like Dr. N. Venkataramanayya opined that the name Vishnukundin is used as a common appellation of their gotra and family.

Opinion is also divided about the original habitat of Vishnukundins. Nine copper plate charters of the dynasty and the solitary stone inscription at Velpuru are silent on the subject.

Scholars are divided into two groups, some contending that they were outsiders who came to Telugu country along with some invaders and established themselves there as its rulers, and others upholding that they were the indigenous inhabitants of this region who rose to power and fame by their own efforts.

G. J. Dubreuil expounded the foreign origin theory. His theory is mainly based on the relationship between Vakatakas and Vishnukundins and also a story related in the 'sthalamahatmya' of the famous temple Sri Sailam or Sriparvatha, that the princess Chandravati daughter of the Gupta king Chandragupta conceived a passion for the God of the Srisaila hill began offering every day a garland of Jasmine flowers to him and that this Chandravati was none else than the Vakataka princess married to Madhavavarman I, the Vishnukundin king.

This theory was refuted by Dr. N. Venkataramanayya stating that this was a bold attempt to convert legend into history.
He opined that the Vishnukundins were probably a local family inhabiting the lower Krishna valley. His intention is merely to emphasize that they were the inhabitants of lower Krishna valley preferably Guntur district.

K.V. Krishnarao argued that the Vishnukundins were the natives of Vinukonda, gaining support from their title "Sriparvathaswami padanudhyata". It is argued that the Vishnukundin is a sanskritisation of Vinukonda which must have been their original home.

Prof. Kielhorn suggested that Vinukonda might have been the capital of the dynasty. The kings of the dynasty were described as Sri-parvatiyas. Prof. Kielhorn identified Sriparvata with the modern Srisailam in the Kumool district. 

Dr. S. Sankaranarayanan suggested that the Vishnukundins must have claimed a connection with some stock of the Ghutus and that their original home was Srisailam only basing on the following facts.

"At the outset it may be pointed out that Tummalagudem set II describes the kings of the dynasty as Sriparvatiyas meaning the "illustrious (kings) of the parvata (i.e. Sri-parvata). This parvata or Sriparvatha must be the same hill whose god the Vishnukundins worshipped. Prof. Kielhorn was perfectly right when he identified that hill with the modern Srisailam in the Kumool district famous for the Mallikarjuna temple. Secondly, a Vishnukundi king was referred to as Andhrapati by his Maukhari rival. These epithets viz.,
Sri-parvatiya and Andhrapati indicate a distinct possibility of the Vishnukundis claiming a connection with the Sriparvatiya Andhras who are included in the puranic list of successors of the Satavahanas i.e. the Andhras. There are reasons to believe that the above Sriparvatiya Andhras of the puranas were identical with the Chutu Satakarnis. Therefore it may be concluded that the Vishnukundis must have claimed a connection with some stock of the Chutus and that their original home was the Srisailam only. In this context it may be noted that the names of the Pithapuram chief, Mahendragiri and the Salankayana ruler Hastivarman, though ruling over the present Andhra area, were appended not with the title Andhra or Andhrapati but only with the adjective Paisthapuraka and Vaingeyaka in the inscription of Samudragupta. But at the same time the Vishnukundi is referred to as Andhradhipati by the Maukhari Iasanavarman. This may also go to show that, the Vishnukundis were connected ethnically with the Sriparvatiya Andhras of the puranic list”.

"Vishnukundi of our record, Vinhukada (i.e. Vishnukuda) of the Banavasi and Malavalli inscriptions and Vishnurudra of the Abhira record probably belonged to one ethnical group that perhaps included the clans like Chutukula, Sivakula".27

The above suggestion of the Chutu-Vishnukundi connection seems to get further support from the symbol of the seals and coins of the Vishnukundins. For example, the central figure on the seal of the Ipur set I, the earliest of the available
seals of the dynasty, is exactly what we find above the
figure of horse on some of the coins found in Anantapur
district. The same symbol is found on the Chutu coins also.
It may also be remembered that the same symbol is invariably
found along with the representation of the lion in all the
coins attributed to the Vishnukundis. Therefore, it is very
likely that the Vishnukundis inherited or copied this symbol
from their kinsmen, the Chutus. 28"

The origin of the dynasty is shrouded in mystery as
observed by Sr. S. Sankaranarayanan in the beginning of
Chapter II of his book. 29 But at the same time it is not
fair to make the problem more mysterious and obscure.

First let us see how far we are correct in deciding
the origin of the dynasty basing on the two epithets viz.,
Sriparvateya, and Andhrapati.

Scholars held divergent views on location of Sriparvatha.
Some believe that the Vishnukundins were the natives of
Vinukonda, the headquarters of the taluk of the same name in
Guntur district of the Andhra Pradesh. This is said to gain
support from their title Sri parvathaswami padanudhyata, which
is taken to connote their devotion to God Mallikarjuna of
Srisailam not far from Vinukonda. 30

Sr. N. Venkataramanayya 31 argued that it is doubtful
whether Sri-parvathaswami in the title 'Sri-parvathaswami-pad-
anudhyata refers to the God Mallikarjuna of Srisailam, for
in the first place, there is no evidence to show that there
existed at Srisailam a shrine dedicated to Mallikarjuna or
for to that matter any other deity at such an early date. 
Secondly, Sri-parvatha is mentioned in the Ikshvaku inscrip-
tions of the 3rd 4th centuries A.D., as the ancient name of 
Nagarjunakonda now in the Guntur district. This is also 
believed to be the Aparasaila of Huien Tsang, a famous Buddhist 
centure of international repute in the early centuries of the 
Christian era. Nagarjunakonda, that is the ancient 
Sriparvata, was also a great centre of Hindu worship at 
the time. The existence of several temples dedicated to 
Kartikeya, brought to light by the spade of Archaeologist at 
Nagarjunakonda, shows that the worship of the war-God 
Kumaraaswamy or simply swami was also popular in ancient 
Sriparvata and that it is not unlikely that Sriparvata swami to 
whose worship Vishnukundins were devoted was to God Siva or 
what is more probable Kartikeya of Vijayapuri (Nagarjunakonda).

This conclusion was evidently drawn from the fact that 
Sriparvatha was mentioned in many of the Ikshvaku inscriptions 
found at Nagarjunakonda and even Ikshvakus were known otherwise 
as Sriparvathiyas. He feels that because Govindavarman I was 
a Buddhist and his queen, paramabhattarika Mahadevi established 
a Mahavihara at Indrapura, the Sriparvathaswami must be none 
else than Lord Buddhā.

V. V. Krishnasastri, argues that the Sriparvathaswami 
cannot be Lord Buddha as we know that the Vishnukundin kings 
from Madhavavarman II onwards were staunch Saivites who called 
themselves as paramasahaswares. If it was Kartikeya as suggest-
ed by Dr. N. Venkataramanayya, he may be nearer to the truth. 
But it is very difficult to identify any stupa, Mahavihara, or
even a single sculptured slab either at Amaravathi or Nagarjunakonda belonging to Vishnukundin period.\textsuperscript{32}

Dr. K.R. Subrahmanian\textsuperscript{33} arrives at irresistible conclusion that po-lo-yu described by Fa-hian and Po-lo-mo-lo-kili mentioned by Hieun-Tsang, were parvata in Dhanyakataka in the vicinity of which was the ancient capital of Dhanyakataka. He opines that the presumption is strong that Hiuen Tsang confuses places and kingdoms, and his distances are not reliable.

Dr. Subrahmanian argues thus:-

"An inscription found on the site of Nagarjunakonda calls the place Sriparvata. The Buddhists must have called this sacred spot parvata in imitation of the Hindu parvata which is but 50 miles from here, as the Crow flies. The Buddhist parvata figures prominently in Buddhist scriptures. Thus the 'Manjusri Mula Tantra says, 'Sri parvate Mahesalla Daksinapatha samajnike Sri Dhanyakateke Chaitve jin@chatur dhare-bhuyi'.

According to Taranatha, Nagarjuna lived here in his old age. Hiuen Tsang, in describing 'po-lo-mo-lo-kili, 'refers' to a conversation between Nagarjuna and Deva. The former exhorts the latter to take over the torch of learning as 'he was now old and infirm'. Thus it is probable that Hiuen Tsang po-lo-mo-lo-kili is parvata.

Fa-hian describes from hearsay a great Buddhist centre in the Deccan which he calls po-lo-yu. The term literally means in Chinese spigeon (Parvata). The name parvata, Fa-hian must have noted down by mistake as parvata and
subsequently he must have translated paravata into Chinese as po-lo-yu. We should read his account of po-lo-yu very carefully. "There is a great rock out of which are excavated many buildings. The monastery has five storeys. There are 1500 cells all told. Water flows naturally round the establishment from perennial springs. The land all round is uncultivated and uninhabited. Foreign pilgrims go to this place". The last point seems to be confirmed by an inscription at the place Nagarjunakonda. The country all round is even today barren. There is a great rock and extensive ruins are found on the site. Hundreds of monks and nuns must have lived here once.

Huen Tsang's description of po-lo-yu-kili is exactly like Fa-hian's of po-le-yu. The peak towers above the rest. There are five storeys. There were 1000 priests. Streamlets of water flow down the hill and round the establishment.

Huen-Tsang's Travels and the life tells us that the capital of Dhanyakataka was full of hills, woods and streams. The description on page 221 of Beal's translation volume II reminds us of Nagarjunakonda. "To the east of the capital bordering on a monument is a convent called purvasaila. To the west of the city bearing against a mountain is a convent called Avarasaila. These were built by a former king to do honour to Budhha. He hollowed the valley, made a road, opened the mountain crags, constructed pavilions and long galleries wide chambers supported the heights and connected the caverns . . . 1,000 monks used to dwell here . . . .
Thus, the irresistible conclusion is that po-lo-yu and po-lo-mo-lo-kili were parvata in Dhanyakata in the vicinity which was the ancient capital of Dhanyakata.

From the foregoing arguments it can be very easily ruled out that Sriparvathaswamy is Lord Mallikarjunaswami of Srisailam. Sriparvatha literally means a 'sacred mountain', and any deity that is installed on a hill or a mountain may be called as Sri-parvathaswamy. One question may be asked now who is this Sriparvathaswamy that Vishnukundin kings worshipped as a family deity? Where is this Sriparvatha? We shall find logical answers in the next chapters.

Let us now examine the significance of the epithet, "Andhrapati" referred by the Maukhari Isanavarman.

Indrabhattaravarmachandra came into conflict with Isanavarman, the Maukhari king of the north, an ancient family who had been feudatories of the Guptas, ruling over the south Bihar and U.P. Isanavarman was the first Maukhari king to assume the imperial title Maharajadhiraja. The Haraha inscription of the time of that monarch dated Vikrama Samvat 611 (554 A.D.) credits him with a victory, in a war with Andhradhipati described as the master of thousands of rutting elephants.

Jitv=Andhradhipatim sahasra-genita
	tredha-ksharad-Varanam

Verse 13

Haraha (Barbanti district)

Here, "Andhra-adhipati" is a tatpurusha compound which means the Lord or ruler of Andhra country. This inscription is
evidently about two hundred years later to the inscription of Samudragupta. Indrabhattaraka gave his daughter Indrabhattarika mahadevi in marriage to Sarvavarman, son of Isanavarman, and concluded peace with him. Indrabhattaraka ruled over the kingdom for twenty-seven years. He was praised as a powerful warrior and a great monarch. He is said to be the victor in innumerable Chaturdanta battles; his feet are said to have been illuminated by the lustre in the diadems of the monarchs of the four oceans prostrating before him as a mark of their submission, and innumerable samantas are said to have carried out his behests in unquestioning obedience; He bore the title of "Satyasreyas". There is no wonder this king was referred as Andhradhipathi by his Maukhari rival in Harsha inscription.

As regards the Allahabad pillar inscription, Samudragupta was a samrat, who very easily defeated the Pithapuram chief, Mahendragiri, and the vengi ruler of Salankayana dynasty, (Hastivarman) in course of his south Indian expedition. Though Hastivarman bore the title of Maharaja, the extent of his kingdom was limited only to east coast, between Godavari and Krishna rivers, while Samudragupta is said to have "uprooted the kings of Aravarta", he is said to have followed a policy of "Capture and liberation". Further, he came into conflict with many kings during his south Indian expeditions, of whom Mahendragiri of Pithapuram and Salankayana Hastivarman were one among them. Thus, there is reason to refer these two kings as
Paisthapuraka and Vaingeyaka, in the inscription of Samudra-
this may also go to show that the Vishnukundas were cor-
gupta. As such, the argument that ethnically with the
Sriparvathiya Andhras has no weight.

Dr. Sankaranarayanan also argued that the symbols etc.
on the coins of Vishnukundas and Chutu-Satakarni's are alike
and that the Vishnukundas inherited or copied the symbol
from their kinsmen, the Chutus.

This argument is also not tenable as that of the other
two points for the simple reason that the origin or appella-
tions of a dynasty cannot be decided on the evidence of
coins and the symbols they bear.

A close and comparative study of the major dynasties such
as Vakatakas that ruled over Deccan after the fall of Satava-
hanas till the rise of Early Chalukyas throw some light on the
origin of the Vishnukan dynasty.

The following similarities show the kinship of
Vakatakas and Vishnukundins.

1. Vindhyasakti I, the founder of the VakaGaka dynasty was
   a brahman of Vishnuvridha gotra which closely resembles
   Vishnukundin gotra of the Vishnukundin rulers.

2. Vikramendrabhattaraka I, the father of the Indrabhattaraka
   was the son of Vakataka Mahadevi and an ornament both of
   the Vishnukundin and Vakataka royal families.

3. Some scholars believe that "Trivanajaraga bhavanaparama
   yuvati jana - Viharena - rata" associated with the name
   Madhavavarman IV (Janasraya) in the inscriptions shows that
   he was a native of Trivanagaraga, identified with modern
   Tewar on the banks of the Narmada which was in all probabi-
4. The title Maharaja figure in the records of Vakataka king pravarasena II seem to be purely formal and it does not seem that they enjoyed any considerable ruling power. The first two kings in the Vishnukundin dynasty i.e. Mahendravarman, the Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman I were having titles without any ruling power.

5. The Vakataka kingdom was fairly extensive but its rulers were content with the mere title of Maharaja, only one amongst them, Pravarasena I who was undoubtedly a great conqueror, took the title Samrat, probably because he had performed the vajapeya sacrifice. His successors reverted to the old and simple title maharaja.

6. The Vakataka rulers were all of Brahmanical faith but they liberally contributed to the development of the Buddhist establishments within their kingdom. Rudrasena I became a Saivite and all the subsequent Vakataka kings were devotees of Siva with the exception of Rudrasena II who became a Vaishnavite under the influence of his wife Prabhavatigupta and her father Chandragupta II.

All the Vishnukundins with the exception of Govindavarman I, his queen Paramabhattarika Mahadevi and Vikramendrabhattaraka I, were Saivas in faith. Govindavarman I who is said to be the founder of the Vishnukundin monarchy, his chief queen Paramabhattarika Mahadevi and Vikramendrabhattaraka I among the later members of the royal family adored the Buddha, built stupas and viharas. The subsequent rulers of the
family were all staunch followers of Vedic dharma. The Jriparvathaswami was the lord of their family deity. Indrabhattarakaraka and his son Vikromendra II were Paramamaheswaras.

7. A number of books were written in sanskrit on various subjects during the Vakataka period. The puranas were remodelled, the Yagnavalkya, Narada, and Katyayana smritis were written and the Vyasaabhashya sankhyakarika, and the Lankavakharasutra were composed. Bhasa, Sudraka, Visakhadatta, and Kalidasa flourished during the Vakataka period. King Pravarasena II wrote the prakrit poem Sethubandha and it was revised by the poet Kalidasa himself.

The Vishnukundins too loved learning and some of the kings were distinguished men of learning. Madhavaverman IV who had the title Janasraya, is believed to be the author of Janasraya chando-vichitti, a treatise on sanskrit prosody. Almost all the copper plate grants of the Vishnukundins were composed in sanskrit. Probably sanskrit might have been the court language of the Vakatakas and the Vishnukundins.

8. The majority of the Ajanta and Ellora caves were excavated in the Vakataka period. The cult of temples was gradually becoming more and more popular. The Vishnukundins seem to have inherited the artistic traditions of Vakatakas.

J.J. Dubreuil has shown that the cave temples at Undavalli and Nagalrajapuram on the banks of the Krishna are Vishnukundin excavations.

9. Ramagiriswamy, the deity at Ramtek about thirteen kilometres from Nagpur was the family deity of Vakatakas...
Most of the temples of the Vakataka period appear to have been dedicated to Ramalingeswara.

In all probability Ramalingeswaraswamy at Keesaragutta, about 49 kilometres from Hyderabad must be the family deity of Vishnukundins.\(^3\)

10. The Vakatakas were orthodox brahmins but followed the Kshatriya profession of kingship.

The Vishnukundins bore the glory of Brahmakshtras, a statement which clearly indicates that they were originally the brahmins who having adopted the profession of arms became kshatriyas.

11. Unlike Salankayanas, Brihatphalayanas, and Amandagotrinas Vishnukundins rose to power somewhere in lower Deccan north of Krishna distinctly in the present Telangana region and then extended their kingdom to eastern parts of Andhra country as well as penetrating towards north of Godavari. About 300 A.D. the Vakataka king Pravarasena I, who is credited with one title "Samrat" extended his kingdom into far south including the northern districts of the former Hyderabad State.\(^4\)

There are no evidences to show that the Vakatakas extended their territory beyond Krishna. We know that the Krishna valley was under the suzerainty of Ikshvakus till they were subjugated by the Pallavas. It is therefore quite probable that the Vishnukundins rose to power in the present Telangana region which was not under the sway of any royal family and this must have happened under the influence of the Vakatakas.
12. The fortunes of the Vishnukundins were bound up with the fortunes of the dynasties of the north and their sphere of action lay in the north, just as with the Vakatakas, the Maukharis and the kings of the Kalinga.

The foregoing facts show that the Vishnukundins were closely related to Vakatakas even much earlier than the matrimonial relations of Madhavavarman I with the Vakataka princes, and that they inherited the traditions of Vakatakas in all respects. It is also quite likely that the Vishnukundins originally belonged to a royal family of central India, gradually came down and settled in the Andhra country as ordinary feudatory chiefs and subsequently rose to power by their prowess by reducing to subjection their fellow feudatories and annexing their lands.

Extent of the kingdom:

The exact area that was under their sway at the zenith of the Vishnukundin dynasty is not known. However it is not a difficult task to find out the extent of the Vishnukundin kingdom from the available epigraphical, numismatic, and archaeological evidences.

Epigraphical sources:

The inscriptions of the Vishnukundin rulers were not issued from one place. There is no indication in the Govindaavarman's Tummalaagudem set of copper plate grant from where it was issued. Tummalaagudem plates II of Vikramendravarman II were issued from Indrapura, Ipur plates of Madhavavarman son of Dovavarman were issued from Amarapura. Madhavavarman II's Ipur plates from Puranisangama, Chikkulla plates of Vikramendravarman II were
issued from Lendulura. Tundi plates were granted from Tundi.
The find spot of Pulomburu plates is in the East Godavari district.
The Velpuru pillar inscription is in Sattenapalli taluk of Guntur district.

Indrapura, Amarapura are identified as modern Amaravathi on the southern banks of Krishna. Guddavadi vishaya is modern Godavari district. Puranisamgama may be identified with the modern Sangam in the Palakonda taluk of the Srikakulam district. Lendulura is modern Dendulura near Kuru in West Godavari district. Tundi grama is modern Tuni in East Godavari district. The find spot of Tummalagudem copper plates is in Ramannapet taluk of Nalgonda district. Ipur is a village in Tenali taluk of Guntur district.

Now let us study some more details available in the inscriptions.

The statements in the Tummalagudem plates I and II that Govindavarman I acquired his kingdom by the might of his arms and that he made himself master of the territories of the other feudatories by his heroism, bravery and prowess show that he established his kingdom by reducing to subjection his fellow feudatories and annexing their lands. He is said to have built in all provinces of Dakshinapatha viharas adorned with sculptures. He claims to have conquered his fellow samantas and became as a consequence the Kaustubha pendant in the necklace (hara) of the kings ruling both on the eastern and the western sides of the Sriparvata.

Though the extent of the country under his rule cannot be definitely estimated, it must have been large, as it is stated to have comprised of several vishayas.
It is stated in the Tummalagudem plates II that by his prowess Madhavavarman II seized the royalty of the kings of other dynasties and that his authority extended over the region surrounded by the eastern, southern, and western seas and the river Reva (Narmada) in the north. It is also stated that his kingdom was bounded by the western sea and the river Reva in the north. From Velpuru inscription we learn that he led his army southward across the river Krishna with a view to conquer the Guntur region. It speaks of his presence in military camp at Velpuru probably during the course of a war with the Pallavas. Ipur plates I show that the king was camping at Skandhavara (army headquarters) at Kudevada in Guddadi vishaya. It is quite probable that he waged war against the kings ruling over the Pishapura region and penetrated as far as Srikakulam area.

Madhavavarman II extended his kingdom up to Narmada, exterminated the Salankayana dynasty at Vengi, subjugated the rulers of Pishapura and Srikakulam and thus extended his kingdom to the eastern sea. He vanquished the Pallavas and annexed northern parts of Guntur district to his kingdom.

Ipur plates II of Madhavavarman III grand son of Madhavavarman II tells us that he bore the title of Trikuta-Malayadhipathi and that his capital was Amarapura. Regarding the identity of Trikuta and Malaya there is considerable difference of opinion among scholars. Some believe that Trikuta is identical with Kotappakonda in the Guntur district whereas others identify it with a peak of the Sahyadri near Nasik in Maharashtra.\(^{42}\) The latter appears to be more reasonable. Malaya is the ancient
name of the Eastern Ghats, this region is spoken of in the early inscriptions as Malayamandalam in Vengi. We have to understand by the title Tribhuta-Malayadhipathi that Madhavavarman III was the ruler of the territory extending from the Tribhuta in the west to Malaya in the east.

In Pulomburu plates Madhavavarman IV is described as "Dasasata-Sakalo-Dhanantalamanamathi" and this land has been correctly identified with Vengi. (Vengi-grama-sahasram)

It is evident that he made himself master of the whole of Vengi that is, the country between the deltas of the rivers Krishna and Godavari.

**Numismatic and Archaeological evidences:**

Vishnukundin coins were found in Tanguturu in the Ahongir taluk of Malgonda district, Telkunta in the Sultanabad taluk of the Karimnagar district, Dharanikota near Amaravati in Guntur district.

A Vishnukundin coin was found in Prakash excavations on the banks of the river Tapati. This coin within a circle with a pellets round, lion with tail downward to right on the obverse and within a broad circle of radiating lines, vase on a stand between the tripod lamp stands or standards is identified by V.V. Krishnasastry as Vishnukundin coin.

Coins of the Vishnukundins first came to light in Maharashtra, in the course of archaeological excavations at Brahmapuri, on the western outskirts of the city of Kolhapur on the right bank of the Panchaganga river. A couple of coins were recovered in the excavations at Novasa in the Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra. One Vishnukundin coin of the usual
type was reported from the surface of a low mound at Nagar in the Gondia taluk of the Bhandara district. Thereafter three Vishnukundin coins were unearthed in Paunar in the Wardha district while digging foundations for a house, and two coins in the course of archaeological excavations. Another Vishnukundin coin was found near Nagpur. Thus we may come to an assumption that a large part of Maharashtra including the Satara-Kolhapur, Ahmadnagar, Nasik and Vidarbha regions was once held by the Vishnukundins, though this distribution of coins find spots need not be taken as conclusive evidence of the extent of the kingdom.

Vishnukundin coins were also found in the course of archaeological excavations conducted at Yeleswaram in Nalgonda district, Melkondapalli in Khammam district, and Keesaragutta in Rangareddy district.

The find spots of these coins are of great significance. The coins found in the Nalgonda, the Karimnagar, the Khammam and the Hyderabad district in Prakash on the banks of Tapti, and in four to five districts in Maharashtra indicate the extension of Vishnukundin territory into western Deccan as well as northern parts of Godavary valley, to the south of the river Krishna in the present Nandyal taluk, Kurnool District.

We come across several structures popularly known as Nahanandisvara temples. The Mahanandisvara temple at Mahanandi, and Sivanandisvara temple at Kadamalakalva and a ruined temple at Panyam, all in the Nandyala taluk of Kurnool district are curvilinear structures exhibiting more or less the same architectural features. In Kadamalakalva, the temple is dedicated
to the god Sivanandisvara. Besides the main shrine, there are about five minor shrines in stepped pyramid type and about forty monolithic votive shrines of nearly one metre high. On one of these monolithic shrines there is a label incised in two lines which reads as:

1. Satyasraya bhattarara
2. Konranachakrasumanantu

The first half of the record clearly mentions the name of Satyasraya Bhattarara, that is Pulakesin of the Chalukyan family. This enables us to fix the upper limit of the date of this temple to the time of Pulakesin I (A.D. 540) who is contemporary to Vishnukundin king Indrabhattarakavarma who bore the title Satyasraya.

Indrabhattaraka came into conflict with the Chalukyas, Pulakesin I who was a contemporary of Indrabhattaraka appears to have risen against the Vishnukundin and asserted his independence. The title Satyasraya, bore by Pulakesin I belonged originally to the Vishnukundin Indrabhattaraka. It was customary in ancient South India for the victorious warriors to appropriate to themselves the titles and the insignia of their vanquished enemies. In pursuance of this practice it is not unreasonable to suppose that Pulakesin I defeated Indrabhattaraka in the neighbourhood of Kadamalakalva and assumed as a mark of his victory and Vishnukundin monarch's title Satyasraya.

It is also interesting to notice in the Satyavolu temple twin horned Saiva figures as dwarapalas before the main garbhagriha, which feature reminds us the Mogalrajapuram cave images
of the same type ascribed to the Vishnukundin period. Satyavolu group of shrines contain an apsidal or gajaprishtha structure, a feature datable to pre-Chalukya period, quite probably to Vishnukundin kings.

TRIVARANAGARA

Epithets:

We come across with an epithet Trivaranagara bhavana gata-yuvati-jena-bridaya-nandana, which is attributed to Madhavavarman IV in set I of the Ipur copper plates.

In Pulomburu plates also he is described as Trivaranagara chavanagata - parama -yuvatijena - Viharanaratih.

Some scholars identified "Trivaranagara" appearing in the above epithets, with Tewar in Madhya Pradesh, and some with the city of Trivara of South Kosala. One recent scholar tried to identify this with "Tiruvur" town in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh.

Professor K.A.K. Sastry, rightly interpreted the expression Trivaranagara as "three good cities and concluded that there were three flourishing cities in the kingdom of Vishnukundins. The set of Ipur copper plate inscriptions registers the gift made at Amarapura by Maharaja Madhavavarman. Tummalagudem plates II refers that Vikramendрабhattrakavarnam led an expedition against a Pallava king named Simha, and after scoring a victory over him in a battle, returned first to Sakrapura (Indrapura) and made a gift of the village of Irenderu to the Chaturdas-arya-vara-Bhikhu sangha residing in the mahavibhara built by paramabhattachari. It is believed that
Madhavavarman II must have overthrown the last Salankayana ruler and annexed the latter's territory of Yengi; thus extending the eastern boundary of the Vishnukundin kingdom to the Bay of Bengal. When Madhavavarman IV succeeded Vikramendra II, the territory under his rule was limited to a small area around the capital. He was obliged to fight hard to bring under his rule even Yengi which must have formed the core of the Vishnukundin dominions. In Ipur plates II it is stated that in his 37th regnal year he was camping, during the course of an expedition, at Kudavada. It is likely that the enemy was the Durjaya chief Prithvi Maharaja. Madhavavarman seems to have been successful ultimately in establishing his authority over the whole of Yengi, for he proudly asserts in the Pulomburu grant, dated in his 48th regnal year that he was the lord of the whole of Dasa satasakala dharanitale.

It is evident that Madhavavarman made himself master of the whole of Yengi. Earlier we have seen that modern Hewar on the banks of the Narmada was in all probability the headquarters of the appanage granted to the family of Madhavavarman IV. It may be accepted beyond doubt that there existed three flourishing cities during the rule of Madhavavarman-IV, that he was the delighter of the hearts of youthful ladies in the places of those three cities and that he was fond of sporting with young ladies in the mansions of the three good cities. In all probability Yengi and Hewar are the two among the three cities. The third flourishing city must be the original capital of the Vishnukundins in the Telangana region and it is none other than Keesaragutta in the present Rangareddi district.
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The genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundin dynasty have become a subject of controversy among the scholars. The viewpoints of scholars like D.C. Sircar1, K.A. N. Lakanta Sastry2, K.V. Laxmana Rao3, H. Krishnasastri4 are well known. The discovery of the Tummalagudem copper-plates has led to the re-examination of the subject by many scholars viz., Dr. M. Rama Rao5, Ajay Mitra Shastri,6 V.V. Mirashi7, S. Sankaranarayanan8 and N. Venkataramanayya9.

After an exhaustive and comparative study of the various theories on the subject Dr. S. Sankaranarayanan has propounded his theory, setting aside all other theories regarding the genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundins. On the basis of the reasons given by him and on the known regnal years of the kings of the family, the genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundins has been tabulated as follows.10
The above scheme is stated to be based on the facts supplied by the old and new source materials, is free from unnecessary assumptions and minimises the gap between the dates of the two sets of the Pulomburu plates and that the total period allotted to the eight ruling monarchs is only 225 years in average about 28 years for each monarch and it is not unreasonable. It is further argued that the reign period (564-612 A.D.) allotted to Madhavavarman-Janasraya finds support from the work Janasraya Chandovichiti of the period, for it quotes from the poet Bharavi, who has been generally assigned to about 550 A.D.

Even after the discovery of the two sets of Tummalagudem plates some new theories have been advanced by the scholars. Dr. V.V. Mirashi felt that the view of Dr. S. Sankaranarayanan in placing the grant of Govindavarman before that of Vikramendrabhattaraka lands him in some difficulties as shown below.

Before proceeding to discuss this problem, it is necessary to state the genealogies in the two charters and give some other details mentioned in them. They are as follows:

I - The Grant of Vikramendrabhattaraka - The genealogy in this grant is as follows:

Govindavarman

Madhavavarman (married a Vakataka princess and performed eleven Asvamedhas and several other sacrifices)

Indrabhattaraka

Vikramendrabhattaraka (II) (11th regnal year and Saka 438)
The purpose of the charter was to register the donation by Vikramendrabhattaraka, of the village Irundera to the Paramabhattacharika-Mahavihara constructed by the Paramabhattacharika-Mahadevi, the queen of Govindaraja, who is evidently identical with Govindavarman mentioned as the progenitor of the family. She is highly glorified in the charter and described as the mother of Madhavaraja (evidently identical with Madhavavarman mentioned above) as born in the illustrious family of King Prithvimula.

II - The grant of Govindavarman - The genealogy in this grant is given as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Indravarma} \\
&\text{Madhavavarman} \\
&\text{Govindavarman (37th regnal year)}
\end{align*}
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The purpose of this charter was to register the donation, by Govindavarman, of two villages, Bramadala and Penakapura, to the vihara of the Parama-mahadevi for the alleviation of the miseries of his parents and other beings and the acquisition of religious merit by his chief Queen (Agra-mahishi) resulting from the supply of the materials of worship (of the Buddha), food, shelter and medicines (to the Bhikshus) and the repairs of the monastery.

Both the grants were evidently made to the same vihara, viz., that known as Paramabhattacharika-mahavihara, which was constructed by the queen of Govindavarman and mother of Madhavavarman, who being held in great veneration, is
referred to as Paramabhattarika-mahadevi in the first grant and as Parama-mahadevi in the second.

If we scrutinise the two genealogies carefully, we shall find that Madhavavarman of the second grant was the brother and successor of Vikramendrabhattaraka who made the first grant, since Indrabhattarakavarman of the first grant is plainly identical with Indravarman of the second. The combined genealogy of the two grants would, therefore, be as follows:

Govindavarman (I)

    (son)
Madhavavarman (I) (married a Vakataka princess and performed eleven Asvamadhas and several other sacrifices)

    (son)
Vikramendrabharvarman (I)

    (son)
Indrabhattarakavarman

    (son)
Vikramendrabhattarakavarman (II) (11th regnal year in Saka 438)

        (brother)
Madhavavarman (II)

        (son)
Govindavarman (II (37th regnal year)

This genealogy in no way conflicts with that known so far from Vishnukundin grants. The names of Devavarman and his son Madhavavarman have not been included in it, because they were ruling in Western Maharashtra (as the latter king is described in his grant as Trikuta-Malay-adhipati. We have only to add Vikramendra (called Vikramendra in the Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman) in the beginning of this
genealogy, as the father of Govindavarman (I). Till now, Vikramendra II was the last known king of this branch. The newly discovered Tummalagudem plates have carried the genealogy two reigns further.

Sankaranarayanan does not agree with this order of succession. He places the grant of Govindavarman before that of Vikramendrabhattarakaraka chronologically and states the succession of the Vishnukundins as follows:

Indravarman
   Madhavavarman I
   Govindavarman
      Madhavavarman II (performer of 11 Asvamedhas)
         Vikramendrabhattarakaraka I
            Indrabhattarakaraka I
               Vikramendrabhattarakaraka II

This genealogy is in conflict with the following known from the Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman (the performer of all Asvamedhas).

Vikramahendra (i.e. Vikramendra)
   Govindavarman
      Madhavavarman (performer of 11 Asvamedhas)

It will be noticed that the grandfather of Madhavavarman (who performed eleven Asvamedhas) was Vikramendra according to the aforementioned Pulomburu plates, while that of the homonymous king (who also performed the same number of Asvamedhas) was Madhavavarman according to the genealogy suggested by Sankaranarayanan. This clearly shows that the
genealogy is incorrect. In defence of this genealogy, however, he says that the two Madhavavarmans, though described in identical terms as performers of eleven Asvamedhas, are different from each other. Such a view is hard to accept. The Asvamedha was no ordinary sacrifice. In the ancient history of India there is only one king who is credited with the performance of as many as eleven Asvamedhas. He is also known to have married a Vakataka princess. He is the son of Govindavarman and grandson of Vikramendravarman. If any other king had laid claim to this distinction, he would have been immediately found out and publicly ridiculed. It is strange that Sankaranarayanan believes in the performance of as many as eleven Asvamedhas by more than one king of the same name and in the same period. In defence of his strange view, he quotes the Vedantic saying - na hi drishte anupapannam nama (No question of impossibility can arise when we actually observe a truth on the testimony of evidence). But what is the evidence? Is it not self contradictory? Cannot the available evidence be interpreted satisfactorily in any other way? We have shown above that it can be interpreted quite satisfactorily if we take Govindavarman's grant as later in date than that of Vikramendrabhattaraksavarman.

But, one may ask "Apart from the identical description of the two Madhavavarmans, is there any evidence that the chronological relation of the two grants assumed by Sankaranarayanan is incorrect?" We proceed to state it below.
The Tummalagudem plates of Govindavarman record the grant of the two villages made by the king.

The passage (in the grant) is rather loosely worded, but as it stands, it tells us that the villages were granted by the king for the alleviation of the sufferings from poverty of his own parents(1) and all beings, and for the undiminished religious merit of his chief queen (Agramahishi) by the supply of lamps, incense, sandal paste, flowers (for the worship of the Buddha), food, drink, beds (and) medicines (to the Bhikshus) and the repairs of dilapidated and damaged portions of the vihara of the Parama-mahadevi. The Agramahishi mentioned in the grant is clearly different from the Parama-mahadevi, whose vihara received the gift.

This vihara is identical with the Paramabhattacharika-maha-vihara mentioned in the other grant of Vikramendrabhattaraka-varman. It was constructed by the queen of Govindavarman, the founder of the Vishnukundin kingdom. She was greatly venerated. She is called Parama-Bhattarika-mahadevi in that grant and is described as the mother of the illustrious Madhavavarman (I) who married a Vakataka princess and performed eleven Asvamedhas and several other sacrifices. It is sure that she is referred to as Parama-mahadevi in the other grant. She is not identical with the Agra-mahishi of Govindavarman. The later is not likely to refer to his own queen as Parama-mahadevi. He is evidently referring to the venerable queen of his ancestor Govindavarman, the founder of the Vishnukundin kingdom.
Govindavarman, who issued the Tummalagudem plates is different from his namesake, who was the father of the great king Madhavavarman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and other numerous sacrifices. He flourished later than Vikramendrabhattaraka who issued the other set of Tummalagudem plates. He was the latter's nephew, his grand-father Indravarman being identical with the latter's father Indrabhattarakaivarman mentioned in his plates. His plates are, therefore later than those of Vikramendrabhattarakaivarman.

This conclusion is also supported by the palaeographical evidence of the two sets of plates. Sankaranarayanan also is conscious of this, but he has tried to explain it away as follows: "Set I (i.e., the grant of Govindavarman) was probably prepared during the time of Vikramendrarvarman II on the basis of an original charter that had probably fallen in disuse." This is a gratuitous assumption, for which there is no basis. The real cause of the developed characters is that the grant was made and incised in a later age.

The same can be said of his explanation of the words 'Sthitir-esha sthapita' which occur at the end of the charter. Stiti here means the same as Vyavastha which occurs in some grants in the sense of settlements. It does not mean 'the restoration of previous grant' as Sankaranarayanan supposes.

This problem can be examined from another point of view also. The Vismukundin king Madhavavarman I is known to have married a Vakataka princess, for his son Vikramendravarman is described as 'one whose birth is adorned by the two royal
families of the Vishnukundins and the Vakatakas or as the son of a Vakataka Mahadevi. She is generally taken to have been a daughter or some near relative of the Vakataka king Harisena. The latter ruled from circa A.D.475 to A.D.500. It is now generally agreed that Harisena, who is credited with a victory in Andhra, probably defeated the contemporary Salankayana king and gave his kingdom to the Vishnukundin Govindavarman. He also formed a matrimonial alliance with him by giving a Vakataka princes in marriage to his son Madhavavarman. This conjecture is based on what we know of the history of the contemporary ruling families.

The Salankayanas were ruling over the country between the Godavari and the Krishna with their capital at Vengi. The capital of the Vishnukundins is not mentioned in their grants, but it too was probably at Vengi, for the decisive battle in which they suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Early Chalukya king Pulakesin II was fought near the Kunala lake, which lies only a few miles from Vengi. Thereafter, the Eastern Chalukyas also made the same city their own capital. So the Salankayanas, the Vishnukundins and the Eastern Chalukyas ruled in succession at Vengi.

Let us next see when the Vishnukundins established themselves at Vengi. We know that Madhavavarman I, the son of Govinda- varman, was a junior contemporary of the Vakataka king Harishena, who flourished in A.D.475-500. So he can be referred to the period circa A.D.490-535 as he had a reign of more than forty years. We have a valuable reference in his
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Pulomburu plates that there was a lunar eclipse in Phalguna in the fourteenth year of his reign. So that eclipse must have occurred round about A.D. 530. The same approximate date is arrived at, from another date. We know that the Tummalagudem plates issued in the eleventh regnal year of Vikramendravarman's reign are dated in Saka 488 or A.D. 566. Now, the known regnal years of his father Indrabhattarakavarman and grandfather Madhavavarman I are 27 and 40 respectively. The total of these three regnal years comes to (40 plus 27 plus 11 = 78). Deducting this from A.D. 566 (when the Tummalagudem plates of Vikramendravarman II were issued), we get A.D. 488 as the lower limit for the accession of Madhavavarman I. The exact year of it can be ascertained from the mention of the lunar eclipse in the month of Phalguna in his fourteenth regnal year. We find from Swami Kannij Pillai's Indian Ephemeris that there were lunar eclipse in Phalguna of the three successive years A.D. 527, 528 and 529, but there was none in the previous period of A.D. 501 to 526, and in the succeeding period of A.D. 530 to 545. So the lunar eclipse of the fourteenth year of Madhavavarman I's reign must be one of those in A.D. 527, 528, 529. We have fixed A.D. 488 as the lower limit of Madhavavarman I's accession. So the lower limit for the lunar eclipse of his fourteenth regnal year would be 488 plus 40 = A.D. 528. As there was a lunar eclipse in Phalguna of A.D. 527 it must be the one mentioned in Madhavavarman's Pulomburu plates of the 40th regnal year.
Madhavavarman I thus came to the throne probably in A.D.487. He was preceded by Govindavarman I. The latter was a contemporary of the Vakataka king Harisena (A.D.475-500), who may have given the kingdom to him after overthrowing the last Salankayana king after his invasion of Andhra in circa A.D.480.

How far does this conclusion agree with the known dates of the Salankayana kings? D.C.Sircar has suggested A.D.430-450 for the reign of the last known Salankayana king Skandavarman. This is only approximate as the reign-periods of the different Salankayana kings are not definitely known. The last king may well have continued to reign till A.D.480, when he may have been defeated and deposed by Vakataka Harisena.

According to the genealogy of the Vishnukundins suggested by Sankaranarayanan, Madhavavarman I was preceded by three kings viz., Indravarman, Madhavavarman and Govindavarman. It is impossible to squeeze these three reigns in the period between 475 (the accession of Harisena) and A.D.487 (the date of the accession of Madhavavarman I fixed above). This also proves the incorrectness of the proposed genealogy.

Let us next see what bearing this date (A.D.489) fixed for the accession of Madhavavarman I has on the history of the Deccan. Madhavavarman I performed as many as eleven Asvamedhas, and extended his rule over a large part of the Deccan including Viderbha and Southern Maharashtra. One of his inscriptions has been found in the Satara district. Northern Maharashtra was under the rule of the Trikutakas. Madhavavarman gave southern Maharashtra to his grandson Madhavavarman (II), son of Devavarman. It seems that soon
after the death of Madhavavarman I in circa A.D.530, there was a political revolution in the Deccan. The Kalachuri king Krishnaraja's father, who was ruling from Mahishmati, seems to have extended his rule to Vīrābha, Konkan and Maharashtra. The date of this revolution can be fixed as A.D.533-34 on the evidence of the Hatwan plates of the Abhira year 284 as shown by us elsewhere.23

If we place the three kings mentioned in the Tummalagudem plates of Govindavarman in the beginning of the Vishnukundin age, the history of Andhra after Saka 488 (A.D.566) would be completely dark. On the other hand, if we suppose that they flourished at the end of that age, it would throw important light on the political history of that country during fifty years (A.D.566 to A.D.616) before the invasion of Pulakesin II in A.D.616. Vikramendravarman ruled for at least three years after issuing the Tummalagudem plates; for his Tundigrama grant is dated in the fourteenth regnal year.24 His grandson Govindavarman II ruled for at least 37 years. The remaining ten years (50 minus 40) must be the reign period of Madhavavarman II, the father of Govindavarman II. Pulakesin II seems to have conquered Andhra in A.D.616 and thereafter issued his Muruturu grant in the eighth year of his reign, corresponding to A.D.617-18.25 All the known dates are thus satisfactorily explained if the two sets of Tummalagudem plates are chronologically related as shown here.

The queen of Govindavarman I was born in the feudatory family of Prithvimula.26 This king was probably ruling over
Pishtapura. I have shown elsewhere that he was an ancestor of the homonymous king who was a contemporary of the Vishnu-kundin king Indrabhattarakavarman as stated in the Godavari plates. A prince of this family named Hularaja is mentioned at the end of the Tummalagudem plates of Vikramendravarman as the restorer of the royal fortune of the Vishnu-kundin family by his diplomacy and valour. These two families thus connected politically and matrilineally continued to rule at Vengi and Pishtapura till the conquest of the country by Pulakesin II. A later king of this family named Pritaviraja is known from two grants.

Finally, the Pallava king Simhavarman, after defeating whom the Vishnu-kundin king Vikramendravarman II made the grant dated Saka 488, has been identified by Ram Rao with the second king of that name who was ruling in circa A.D. 550-575.

In an Appendix to Chapter II on the History of the Vishnu-kundins in Vol. III of the History and Culture of the Indian People, (pp. 223 f.) K.A. Nilakanta Sastry has proposed a different chronology and genealogy of the Vishnu-kundins, which also must be examined in this connection. We have taken king Madhavavarman who granted the Ipur and Pulomburu plates are identical with the homonymous ruler mentioned as the grandfather of Indravarman in the Ramatirtham plates and as the great-grandfather of Vikramendravarman in the Chikkulla plates on the ground that in all these four charters he is described in identical terms viz., that he performed eleven Asvamedhas and a thousand other Vedic
sacrifices. Sastri, however, differentiates between them on the ground that in the former two charters he is also described as Hiranya-garbha-prasuta and as Trivarana-gara bhavana-gata-yuvati-hridava-nandana, but these epithets do not occur in the later two grants. This is a strange argument. Does Sastri expect that all epithets of a king should be repeated in all his charters and in those of his descendants? We must utilise all positive evidence. Negative evidence is not always reliable. Sastri’s reliance on this negative evidence has vitiated the chronology and genealogy of the Vishnukundins proposed by him.

Sastri’s second objection to the chronology and genealogy of the Vishnukundins given in that chapter, which, for the most part, is identical with that fixed in the present article, is as follows.35 “The Pulomburu grant should be placed much nearer the date of the foundation of the Western Chalukya dynasty, as the second ruler is separated from Madhavavarman of the Pulomburu grant by hardly one generation — as is seen from another Pulomburu grant of the fifth year of Chalukya Jayasimha I (ss M.XXII, pp.20-1, esp. n.3 on p.21). This objection must be examined at some length, especially because we have now fixed a definite date for the accession of Madhavavarman I in the present study.

The Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman I record that when he crossed the Godavari to conquer the eastern region, he donated the village Pulomburu in the Guddavadi vishaya to Sivasarman, the son of Bmasarman and grandson of Audrasarman of the Gautama gotra and Saivta saka, on the occasion of
a lunar eclipse which occurred on the full-moon day of
Phalguna. Again, the Pulomburu plates of the Eastern Chalukya
king Jayasimha I, which were discovered along with the above
plates of Madhavavarman, record the grant of the same village
to Rudrasarman, the son of Sivasarman and grandson of Dacasarman
of the Gautama gotra and Taittiriya sakha. It seems that
Rudrasarman, who is called purva-agraharika (former owner of
the donated village) lost possession of the village in
troubled times due to the invasion of Pulakesin II. He seems,
therefore, to have made representations to Jayasimha I some­
time after peace and order had been established in the kingdom
and received the aagraha village again by a new charter.

On the evidence of these two charters, Sastri infers that
Madhavavarman who granted the Ipur and Pulomburu plates was
separated from Jayasimha 'by hardly one generation'. So in
his genealogy he places him in circa A.D.556-616, and distingui­
shes him from king Madhavavarman, the grandfather of indravarman
and great-grandfather of Vikramendravarman, notwithstanding
the afore mentioned identical description of both. Let us
examine this argument at some length.

The grant of Madhavavarman I recorded in his Pulomburu
plates was made to Sivasarman in A.D.527 as determined above.
That if the Eastern Chalukya king Jayasimha I was made to his
son Rudrasarman in the first regnal year. As Pulakesin II
conquered Andhra in circa A.D.616, and his brother Vishnuvardhana
had a reign of 18 years, this second Pulomburu grant must have
been made in (616+46+5) = A.D.639. There is thus an interval
of 112 years between the two grants. Such long interval between a grant made to a Brahmana and that made to his son is, no doubt, unusual, but not impossible. If we suppose the Sivasarman, who received the grant of Madhavavarman I in A.D. 527 was a young man of twenty-five, and Rudrasarman was born to him at the age of fifty (in A.D. 552), the latter would be an old man of eighty seven when he received his Pulumburu grant from Jayasimha in A.D. 638. This is not impossible. We may quote here the same Vedantic saying in support of it. Na hi Dristhe samaparanam-nama. Here both the dates have been fixed on the reliable evidence of contemporary copper-plate grants. They are not conjectural. So the supposition regarding the age of Sivasarman and that of his son Rudrasarman at the time of receiving their respective grants is quite plausible.

To sum up, if we interpret the two sets of Tummalagudem plates as shown above, all problems raised by them can be solved satisfactorily.

The theory of Dr. N. Venkataramanayya and the detailed reasons put forth by him in support of formulating the genealogy and chronology of the dynasty are as follows:

The Chikkulla and Tundi grants belong to one and the same king; for Vikramendrabhattarakavarman, the donor of these two records, was the son of Indrabhattarakavarman the grandson of Vikramendrabhattarakavarman, the ornament of the two dynasties of the Vishnukundins and the Vakataka, and the great grandson of Madhavavarman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and innumerable other sacrifices. The Tummalagudem plates II also belong to the same monarch; for Vikramendra-
Mhattraka, the donor of this grant like his namesake donors of the other two, was the son of IndrabhattarakaVanman, the grandson of VikramendrabhattarakaVanman who was the son of Yakataka Mahadevi and a great grandson of MadhavaVanman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas besides innumerable other sacrifices. In addition to the names of these four generations of kings, the Tunmalagudem plates II introduces a fifth king viz., GovindaVanman, the father of MadhavaVanman, so that we have here five generations of kings instead of the usual four. The Ramatirtham grant also belongs to a king of the family; for Indravaman (the abridged form of IndrabhattarakaVanman), was the son of Vikramendravaman, the ornament of both (Vishnukundins and Yakataka families) and the grandson of MadhavaVanman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and Kra\textit{ma} sahasra (thousand sacrifices). It is evident the Vikramendra the donor of the Ramatirtham plates was the father of VikramendrabhattarakaVanman, the donor of the three inscriptions mentioned above. Taken together they describe a genealogy of five generations of Vishnukundin kings.

Maharaja Sri GovindaVanman

Maharaja Sri MadhavaVanman

Maharaja Sri VikramendrabhattarakaVanman I

Sri IndrabhattarakaVanman

Sri VikramendrabhattarakaVanman II

This genealogy is unquestionable, and has to be accepted by all. We have now to see whether and how the genealogies described in the remaining records are connected with this.
We take up first the two Ipur sets into consideration. Of the two, the second set is considered on the palaeographical evidence to be more ancient than the first. The second set refers only to three generations of kings.

Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman I
Sri Devavarman
Sri Madhavavarman II

Madhavavarman I, the first king of this line, performed like his namesake of the other four inscriptions mentioned above, eleven Asvamedhas besides Agnishtoma - Sahara (thousand Agnishtomas). They may therefore be considered identical. If this identification is acceptable, taking this on to the combined genealogy of the foregoing four inscriptions, we# get the following.

Maharaja Sri Govindavarman
Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman I.

Devavarman Vikramendravarman
Sri Madhavavarman II Indrabhattarakavarman

The Ipur I set mentions as stated already, two generations of kings, and together with the yuvaraja who is also the executor. Three generations.

Maharaja Sri Govindavarman
Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman
Yuvaraja Manchayana bhattaraka

Maharaja Govindavarman and Maharaja Madhavavarman of inscription may appear at first sight to be identical with the
kings of the same names in the genealogy formulated above. Their mutual relationship as father and son and the attribution of the titles - Prenata - Sakala - Samanta and go-hiranyabhū - pradāta of the former and agnishtoma-sahasra-yaįi, okadas - avamedhāvabhṛt - avadhuta - jagat - kalmashah of the later - lend colour to it; but the title Trivaranaaara bhavana-cata-yuvatiḥṛi dayaranjana of Madhavavarman of this record is not associated with Madhavavarman of this record i-e- not associated with Madhavavarman of the Ramathirtham, Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates seems to indicate that Madhavavarman of Ipur I plates is not identical with Madhavavarman of the four records mentioned above but a different monarch. The genealogy of this inscription appears to be the same as that described in the Pulomburu plates. The latter refer to three generations of Vishnukundin kings.

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\begin{align*}
\text{Sri Vikramahendravarman} \\
\text{Govindaavarman} \\
\text{Madhavavarman}
\end{align*}
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Vikramahendravarman, the name of the first king of this line, has been taken by scholars to be a scribal error for Vikramendravarman. This may have been so. He is said to have been a devout worshipper of the feet of Sriparvata-svami; to whom the circle of the samanta kings bowed in submission. The second king, Govindaivarman was a victor in several battles; his feet, it is stated, were illuminated by the light of the gems set in the crowns of the enemy kings; and he bore the title of Vikramasraya. Vikramahendra's son, Maharaja Madhavavarman was like Madhavavarman of the Ramatirtham, Chikkulla
Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates as well as Madhavavarman of
the Ipur I plates, was the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and
other sacrifices; but unlike the former and like the latter,
he was Trivaranagara bhavana gata yuvati jana vihara rata (or
brideya - randana) and hiranyagarbha - prasuta - that is, he
took delight in sporting with (or in the alternative caused
delight to the hearts of) the young damsels of Trivarnagara
and took his birth from the womb of the golden (cow),. It is
reasonable to suppose that Madhavavarmans of the Ipur I and
Pulomburu plates are one and the same person and that the
genealogical lists given therein are identical. Combining
the pedigrees of these two records, we get the following:-

Maharaja Vikram(ah)endravarman
  Maharaja Govindavarman
  Maharaja Madhavavarman
  Manohyana bhattaraka

We shall next proceed to find whether this line of
rulers has any connection with the Vishnukundin monarchs of
the four inscriptions mentioned above; and if so where in the
genealogy described therein they have to be accommodated. Now,
Vikramendravarman, the first name in the Ipur I -cum-Pulomburu
list offers a clue. It may be remembered that this name
occurs twice in the list furnished by the four (Chikkulla,
Tundi, Ramatirtham, and Tummalagudem II) inscriptions
mentioned above. Of the two Vikramendravarmans of this list,
the first was the son of Madhavavarman, the performer of
eleven Asvamedhas and other sacrifices. He is referred to in
the inscriptions as the son of Vakatakamahadevi, ubhayavamsalam
karabhuta, and Vishnukundin - Vakataka - ubhayavamsadvayad-
-lamkara-janma (born as an adornment both of the Vishnukundi and
Vakataka families); and the other was the grandson of the
above, son of his son Indrabhattarakavarman. The Vikramendra
(Vikramahendra)varman of the Ipur-I-cum-Pulomburu list must be
identical with one of these two. Some have identified him
with the latter; but this cannot be accepted, as it militates
against the known historical facts. If Vikramendra (Vikrama-
hendra) of Pulomburu plates is identified with his namesake,
the donor of the Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates,
his son Govindavarman, and grandson Madhavavarman must have
ruled the kingdom one after the other. We know from the
Tummalagudem II and Tundi plates that he ruled atleast upto
A.D.570. Allotting a period of 25 years of rule to
Govindavarman, and adding to it the 48 years rule of his son
Madhavavarman, we get A.D.643 as the latest known year of the
latter. This is impossible; for in the first place, the
Chalukyan conquest took place, as revealed by the recently
discovered Maraturu grant of Pulakesin II, in A.D.616-17.37
After the Chalukyan conquest, the Vishnukundins could not
have been ruling in Vengi or anywhere in the coastal Andhra
country. Therefore, it is not possible to accept that the
Pulomburu line of kings succeeded Vikramendra bhattaraka, the
donor of the Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates.
There is reason to believe that they were contemporaneous with
this Vikramendrabhattaraka and his predecessors. In the
first place the characters of the Pulomburu plates resemble
those of Tummalagudem plates. Secondly, Madhavavarman and his father Govindavarman of the former, bear titles ending with suffix asraya like Vikramendrabhattarakavarmc and his father Indrabhattaraka. It seems, therefore, reasonable to think that Vikramendravarman of the Palomburu plates is identical with Vikramendra, the son of Madhavavarman and Vakataka Mahadevi and that he was the common ancestor of Vikramendrabhattarakavarmc (the donor of Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem records), and Madhavavarman of the Palomburu grant. Assuming the correctness of this line of thought, the Vishnuukundin genealogy may be drawn up as follows:

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Maharaja Sri Govindavarman I
Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman

Devavarma  Vikramendraravarman I
Madhavavarman II

Indrabhattachakavarmc  Govindavarman II
Vikramendrabhattachakavarmc II  Madhavavarman III

Manchayanabhattachakara
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There is yet one more record Tummalagudem plates to consider before we complete the Vishnuukundin genealogy.

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Maharajendravarman
Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman
Maharaja Sri Govindavarman.

Though the similarity of the characters of this record to those of the Tummalagudem II plates seem to indicate that
they belong to the same period, there are strong grounds to believe that the former is much anterior to the latter. Govindavarman, the donor of Tummalagudem I, got granted the village of Penkaparu to the monastery of the Chaturdas-aryabandha-bhikshu-samgha built by his chief queen Parama Mahadevi at Indranagara.


Vikramendrabharavarman, the donor of the Tummala-gudem II got granted the village of Iranderu to the same monastery built at Indrapura by Parambhattaraka Mahadevi, the queen of Govindavarman, the grandfather of his grandfather and the mother of Madhavavarman, the father of his grandfather for the Chatur-das-aryavara-bhikshu-samgha.


It is evident from these that Govindavarman and his Parama (bhattarika) Mahadevi of these two inscriptions are identical and not two different individuals. The fact that Parama (bhattarika) Mahadevi was the builder of the
vihara at Indranagara (pura) for the monks of the Chatur desarya - vara - bhikshu - samgha strengthens this identification. Therefore, it may be declared with confidence that the Tummalagudem I set is anterior to the II set. The similarity of the alphabet must have been due to the fact that the former is a later copy in course of time, or to the varied scribal skill as it can often happen for dating decisively on mere palaeographic differences may not always be acceptable. Accepting this to be the correct reading of the facts, it may be asserted that the genealogies in the two records are interconnected, and the kings mentioned in the first set are the ancestors of those in the second. The genealogy of the Vishnukundin kings may be finally set forth as follows:

Maharajendravarman
Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman
Maharaja Sri Govindavarman
Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman

Devarman (TG.II, Tu and Chik) Maharaja Sri Vikramendravarman
(Tiravukundin - Vakatakasamsa - dvayalamarajamman)
Sri Madhavavarman
(Trikuta-Malayadhipati)

Maharaja Sri Indrabhattaraka Govindavarman (Vikramasraya)

Vikramendrabbhattaraka (Uttamaraya) Madhavavarman (Janasraya)

Manchayanabbhattaraka.
CHRONOLOGY:

The Vishnukundin chronology had been resting hitherto on the basis of two copper-plate grants (1) of the Vishnukundin Madhavarman II Janasrayan and (2) of the E. Chalukya Jayasimha Vallabha I, both from the village of Pulomburu (the present Polamur) in the E. Godavari district A.P. These are referred to, for the sake of convenience, as Pulomburu plates I and II respectively in the course of the following discussion. The former registers the gift of the village of Pulomburu as a sarva-kara-paribhara agrahara of Siva Sarman, son of Dama Sarman and grandson of Rudrasarman of Gautama-gotra by Madhavavarman Janasraya, son of Govindavarman and Vikramahendravarman of the Vishnukundin family on the occasion of a lunar eclipse on Phalgima-paurnamasya in the 48th year of his rule after crossing the Godavari for the conquest of the eastern region. The latter records the renewal of the grant of the same agrahara to its former owner Rudra Sarman, son of Siva Sarman, grandson of Dama Sarman of Gautama-gotra by Jayasimha Vallabha, son of Kubja Vishnuvardhana, younger brother of Satyasraya Pulakesi Vallabha II and grandson of the Chalukya king Kirtivarman II. It is evident from these (1) that Siva Sarman who obtained Pulomburu as an agrahara from the Vishnukundin Madhavavarman IV Janasraya was the father of Rudra Sarman, who obtained the renewal of the grant of a former agrahara from the E. Chalukya Jayasimha Vallabha I; and (2) that Siva
Sarman and his/Rudra Sarman were the contemporaries of Vishnukundin Madhavavarman IV Janasraya and the J.Chalukya Jayasimhavallabha I respectively. It may be inferred from this that the last two belonged to two successive generations and that the latter might even have been the younger contemporary of the former.

The data furnished by these two records had formed until recently the basis of the Vishnukundin chronology. Sri K.V. Lakshmana Rao the first writer to formulate the chronology of the Vishnukundin rulers, sets forth the problem as follows: "As the donee of Madhavavarman's inscription was the father of the donee of Jayasimhavallabha's inscription. Madhavavarman must have been a contemporary of Jayasimhavallabha's father Kubja-Vishnuvardhana, the founder of the J.Chalukya kingdom of Vengi and of the former's paternal uncle Pulakesin II, the famous South Indian opponent of Sri Harsha. It is evident from this that Madhavavarman must have flourished about the close of the 6th and commencement of the 7th centuries. A.D. We must now see whether it is possible to ascertain the period of his rule more precisely. We learn from Polomburu plates I that Madhavavarman made the gift described therein at the time of a lunar eclipse on Phalguna Paurnami (11-25-27). Now during the period under consideration, the Moon suffered eclipse on Phalguna Paurnami in A.D.575, 593, 594, 612 and 621. The first of these dates (A.D.575) must be rejected as too early to be the 48th regnal year of a king (viz. Madhavavarman) who should have suffered.
defeat at the hands either of Kubja Vishnuvardhana or of his elder brother Pulakesin II. Similarly, the last date (A.D.621) must also be rejected as too late, as he (Madhavavarman) was vanquished by Pulakesin II at the beginning of the 7th century, very probably about 610 A.D. We know that Kubja-Vishnuvardhana established his independence about 616 A.D. Of the remaining three dates 593 and 612 must also be rejected, as the lunar eclipse, which occurred when the Sun was above (below) the horizon were not visible in India. Therefore, the only date that satisfied the conditions is A.D.594 (to be more exact 10th February A.D.594), when Madhavavarman issued the charter (i.e. Pulomburu plates I). As the inscription is dated in the 48th regnal year of the king, his reign must have commenced in A.D.564. As Madhavavarman, perhaps the last Vishnukundin king of Vengi, ruled that country before its conquest by Pulakesin II or his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana, he must have ruled for 65 years from 546 to 610 A.D.  

Lakshmana Rao next proceeds to reconstruct, on the basis of the known period of Madhavavarman's rule which he had fixed, the chronology of the Vishnukundin kings as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reigning King</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indrabhattarakavarman</td>
<td>A.D.469-496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vikramendravarman I</td>
<td>A.D.444-469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indrabhattarakavarman</td>
<td>A.D.469-496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vikramendravarman II</td>
<td>A.D.496-521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhavavarman I</td>
<td>A.D.357-382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhavavarman II</td>
<td>A.D.407-444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devavarman</td>
<td>A.D.382-407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Ramatnirtham plates, Ep.Ind. XII p.133

Chikkulla Plates, Ep. Ind. IV p.193

Ramatnirtham plates, Ep.Ind. XII p.133

Chikkulla Plates, Ep. Ind. IV p.193
Scholars, who discussed the problems of the Vishnukundin genealogy and chronology subsequently, accepted the dates suggested by Sri Lakshmana Rao as the basis of their chronological schemes, though they differed from him about the actual succession of the kings and put forward variant versions of their pedigree. Like him they made the two sets of Pulombur plates the bed-rock of their chronology, and proposed on their basis chronologies which, however, differ from one another. As these like the one put forward by Lakshmana Rao are opposed to facts that have come to light recently, they are not taken into consideration here.

The dates A.D. 546 and 594 suggested by Sri Lakshmana Rao for the first and the 48th regnal years respectively of Madhavavarman may be accepted as correct as they are based on the astronomical and chronological data furnished by the Pulomburu Plates I. There is, however, no justification for prolonging the reign of that king until A.D. 510. It is not also possible to accept the genealogy and the chronology propounded by him as they are opposed to facts that have come to light in recent years. The Pulomburu plates I and II, no doubt, show that their donees Sivasarman and Rudrasarman were contemporaries of their respective donors Madhavavarman and Jayasimhavallabha; but it does not
necessarily follow from this that like the former the latter also belong to two successive generations and that Kubja-Vishnuvardhana and Pulakesin II, the father and paternal uncle respectively of Jayasimhavallabha were contemporaries of Madhavavarman; and that it was from him that they conquered Vengi in A.D.610. There is reason to believe that the Vishnukundins ceased to exist some time before the Chalukyan conquest which as a matter of fact, took place in A.D.616-17 and not in A.D.610 as assumed by Sri Lakshmana Rao. The recently discovered Maraturu grant of Pulakesin II shows that he invaded Vengi for the first time in his 7th regnal year (A.D.616-17), and that he was accompanied not by his younger brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana as it is generally believed but by the Alupa king of Mangalapura (Mangalore on the West Coast)\(^{41}\). Kubja Vishnuvardhana was in fact, governing the three Maharashtrakas from Achalapura as the deputy of his brother, at the time.\(^{42}\) It is utterly baseless that he should have declared his independence as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao in A.D.617. His association with Vengi began some seven years later in A.D.624 from which, as shown by Sri M.N.Sarma, he reckoned his regnal years.\(^{43}\) His rule over Vengi lasted for 18 years not from A.D.617 to 633 as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao but from A.D.624 when he was succeeded by Jayasimhavallabha. He revived the old grant of Pulomburu to Rudrasarman in his 5th regnal year, that is in A.D.647. There should have elapsed therefore 53 years between the grant of Pulomburu to Sivasarman by Madhavavarman in his 48th regnal year (A.D.594),
and the regnant of the same village to the former's son Rudrasarman by Jayasimhavallabha in his fifth regnal year (A.D. 647). Reckoning 25 years for a generation, two generations have passed in the interval. It is therefore doubtful whether Rudrasarman was actually a son of Sivasarman, as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao, and not a later descendant.

The belief that the Vishnukundin rule lasted up to the time of the Chalukyan conquest of Vengi, and Madhavavarma (IV) the donor of the Pulomburu plates I, was the Vishnukundin monarch who suffered defeat at the hands of either Pulakesin II or Kubja Vishnuvardhana and forfeited as a consequence his throne and kingdom is not supported by evidence. The Chalukyan inscriptions, it may be noted, do not even remotely allude to the Vishnukundins. They declare on the contrary, that Kubja Vishnuvardhana, the founder of the Chalukya dynasty conquered Vengi from the Durjayas who were then ruling that country. The earliest record to mention this fact is the Katlaparru grant of Guna Vijayaditya, wherein it is stated that Kubja Vishnuvardhana brother of Satyasraya (Pulakesin II) defeated the Durjayas and seized Vengi. This is also referred in the inscriptions of some of his successors. The Pandipaka grant of Chalukya Bhima I for instance states that Kubja Vishnuvardhana, the unrivalled in prowess, dislodged the Durjayas from the Andhra-vishaya which was in their possession and conquered and occupied Vengi. The Kakamana grant of the same king also declares that Kubja-Vishnuvardhana having driven out at first the Durjayas from Vengi ruled over that
country for eighteen years. Similarly, the Kandayam plates of Danamava assert that Kubja Vishnuvardhana took Vengi by force from the Durjayas and ruled over it for eighteen years. The evidence of these inscriptions make it clear (1) that the Vishnukundin rule did not last, as supposed by Lakshmana Rao and others, until the Chalukyan conquest; (2) that the Chalukyas conquered Vengi not from the Vishnukundins but the Durjayas, and (3) that the Durjayas had been in possession of Vengi for some time before the advent of the Chalukyas having conquered it earlier from the Vishnukundins.

Sri B.N. Sastri had placed the scholarly world engaged in historical research under a deep debt of gratitude by his discovery and publication of the two sets of Tummalagudem (Indrapalangaram) Copper-plates, which have greatly enriched our knowledge of ancient Andhra history. Of these, the second set which is by far the most important Vishnukundin record both from the chronological and historical points of view, that has come to light so far may be regarded as the sheet anchor of the Vishnukundin chronology. It has given it, by coupling Saka 488 (A.D.556) with the 11th regnal year year of Vikramendrabhattarakaavarman II, certainly which it had never known before. If, as stated in this inscription the 11th regnal year of Vikramendrabhattaraka II coincided with Saka 488 (A.D.556), he ruled, as shown by his Tundi grant, for fourteen years, and his rule consequently lasted from A.D.553 to 570. On the basis of these dates and with the regnal years furnished for each king by his
inscriptions, it is possible to formulate a tolerably correct chronology of the Vishnukundin dynasty; but before proceeding to do so a fact which seems to militate against it demands consideration. We have deduced from the Tumalagedem II and the Tundi grants that Vikramendrabhattarakavarman II ruled from A.D. 555-6 to 570-71. His father Indrabhattarakavarman who preceded him on the throne ruled according to the Ramatirtham plates for 27 years. (1) Deducting 27 years from A.D. 556 when he was succeeded by his son, we get A.D. 529 for the beginning of his reign. We have accepted above the dates A.D. 546-596 calculated by Sri Lakshmana Rao on the basis of the astronomical and chronological data provided by Pulomburu plates I for the reign of Madhavavarman (IV) as correct. This would mean that during the whole of the reign of Vikramendrabhattaraka and part of that of his predecessor Madhavavarman (IV) was also ruling simultaneously as the sovereign of the Vishnukundin dominions. This, however, is not as incompatible as it may appear at first sight. Madhavavarman IV was a member of a collateral branch of the Vishnukundin royal family ruling over a tract of territory granted to it as an appanage by the sovereign. It may be noted that the peace of the Vishnukundin dominion was considerably disturbed during the time of Indrabhattaraka. The Maukharis from the north and the Pallavas from the south invaded the kingdom. The dayadas or the cognates belonging to the collateral branches of the royal family taking advantage of the foreign invasions rose up in rebellion
against him. Particular emphasis is laid on Indrabhattaraka's conflict with his dayadas in all the inscriptions of his son Vikramendrabhattaraka II. In the Chikkulla plates, it is stated that he (Indrabhattaraka) scattered the whole body of his dayadas by knitting his eye brows; in the Tummalagudem plates it is said that he destroyed completely the multitude of his dayadas; and in the Tundi grant it is asserted that he put to flight and ruined all his dayadas by his attacks. Madhavavarman IV was obviously one of the dayadas referred to in these inscriptions. He may have suffered defeat at the hands of Indrabhattaraka but was not destroyed by him. His estimate lay far way from the capital on the northern side of the kingdom in the vicinity of Maukhari territories, his submission could not have been permanent. He must have repudiated his allegiance and considered himself independent as he had reckoned his regnal years, from A.D.546, when he succeeded to the family estate; and his reign naturally ran parallel to those of Indrabhattaraka and his son Vikramendrabhattaraka for the duration of their rule.

Having thus fixed the time and the chronological limits of the reigns of Indrabhattaraka and Vikramendrabhattaraka II and Madhavavarman IV, and also explained how the last mentioned came to rule simultaneously with the other two, we may now proceed with the reconstruction of the chronology of the earlier kings of the dynasty. Vikramendra I, the father of Indrabhattaraka did not, as stated already, ascend the throne, although he was the son of Vakataka Mahadevi, and an ornament
both of the Vishnukundin and Vakataka royal families. It was
Madhavavarman II, son of Devavarman, the senior half-brother
of Indrabhattarakas who preceded him on the Vishnukundin throne.
As this Madhavavarman ruled, according to the Ipuru plates II
for 47 years, his reign must have lasted from A.D. 482 to 529.
Madhavavarman II, the grandfather of Madhavavarman III, was
his immediate predecessor. As the former ruled, according to
Ipuru plates I for 37 years, his reign must have lasted
from 445 to 482 A.D. As Madhavavarman’s father, Govinda-
varman I was the immediate predecessor who ruled, according
to his Tummalagudem plates I for 37 years; he must have held
away over the kingdom from A.D. 408 to 445. It is not known
how long Madhavavarman I and Indravarman, the father and
grandfather of Govindavarman I ruled. Assigning the
conventional 25 years for each of them, they may both be
considered to have ruled for a period of 50 years, Madhava-
varman I from A.D. 383 to 408; and his father Indravarman from
A.D. 358 to 383. If the chronology formulated here is correct,
the beginning of the Vishnukundin rule may be placed in
the middle of the 4th century A.D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indravarman (A.D. 358-383)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madhavavarman I (A.D. 383-408)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govindavarman I (A.D. 408-445)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhavavarman II (A.D. 445-482)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Devavarman (A.D. 482-529) -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vikramendrabhattacharakas (A.D. 529-556)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indrabhattarakas (A.D. 556-570)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vikramendrabhattacharakas II (A.D. 570-594)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Madhavavarman III (A.D. 546-594)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The above theory of Venkataramanayya appears to be reasonable and hence acceptable.


3. Lexmana Rao, K.V.;
   i) "The Telugu Academy plates of Vishnukundin Madhavavarman III; in Journal of Department of Letters XI, Calcutta University, pp.31 ff.
   ii) Bharathi Telugu, September, 1930 and February, 1931.

4. Krishna Sastry, H; 1914; ARB; p.102.


6. Ajay Mitra Shastry; 1966; Fresh Light on the History of the Vishnukundins; XLIV, p.683'-691.


8. Sankaranarayanan, S.; 1977; The Vishnukundins and their times; Delhi, pp.2-14.

9. Venkataramanayya, N.; 1975; The Vishnukundins, Madras University, pp.1 ff.


11. Mirashi, V.V.; "Fresh Light on the Two sets of Tummalagudem plates of the Vishnukundins"; (unpublished article).


20. Mirashi, V.V.(ed); CII. IV; pp.xi.
23. Epigraphia Indica xxxvi, 1965; Delhi, p.7 f.
27. Mirashi, V.V.; Epigraphia Andhrica II, p.117.
28. Epigraphia Indica XXIII; 1936-1941, Delhi, pp.58 f.
32. Subba Rao, R.; 1931; Pulomburu plates; JAHRS, VI, pp.17 ff.
33. Hultszch, E.; 1914; Ramathirtham plates; El., XII, p.133 ff.
34. JAHRS. IV; 1930; Chikkulla plates, pp.193.
36. BI. XIX 1927-28; Pulomburu plates of the Eastern Chalukya
   King Jayasimha I, Delhi, p.256 and JAHRS IV, 1930 pp.74 ff.
37. Ramesan, N; 1962; Naruturu grant of Pulakesin II, APGAS No.6,
   Hyderabad pp.36 ff.
38. - -; The Pulomburu plates; Bharathi VII, No.8; pp.302, 315.
42. Venkataramanayya, N.; 1975; The Vishnukundins, Madras, p.20.
43. Venkataramanayya, N.; 1950; The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi,
   Madras, p.55 note 1 and 2.
44. Venkataramanayya, N.; 1975; The Vishnukundins, Madras, p.21.
46. Venkataramanayya, N.; 1970; Vishnukundinulu, Telugu, APGAS No.40
   Hyderabad.
47. Venkataramanayya, N.; 1975; op.cit, p.21.
49. Hultzsch, E.; 1925-24; Ipur Plates II; Epigraphia Indica XVII;
   pp.337-339.
50. Hultzsch, E.; 1923-24; Ipur Plates I, Epigraphia Indica XVII,
   pp. 314-17.

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The mighty Satavahana empire too went the way of all empires, 'though valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy and decay'. But while it lasted, it imparted more stability and security to the life of the people, the inhabitants of the vast regions of the Deccan, than any other earlier Indian power had ever done. The Satavahanas ruled on strong in will and stronger in action.

The Satavahana empire broke up into small kingdoms at war with one another. Many parts of the Satavahana empire were under feudatory families during its last days. The Ikshvakus were one such family. The Brihatphalayanas were also feudatories under the Satavahanas. The Salankayanas identified with the Salankenoi of Ptolemy, must have been another feudatory family under the Satavahanas.

After the Satavahanas, the Ikshvakus maintained and added to the Satavahana traditions. After the Ikshvakus the Salankayanas, Pallavas and Vishnukundins continued to sow the seeds of their own culture far and wide.

Of all the dynasties that ruled over Andhra Desa after the fall of the mighty Satavahana empire, the Vishnukundins proved to be the true successors of the Satavahanas in respect of culture, religion, language, art and architecture, etc., though there is a gap of about hundred years between the fall and rise of the two dynasties.
I. Religion:

Some of the Satavahana kings performed yagnas; they patronised Brahmanism as well as Buddhism. One of them even called himself "the unique Brahmin". A wealthy king in those days could acquire superiority of higher caste over fellow-tribesmen through a rebirth ceremony called the 'hiranyagarbha'. The golden 'womb' from which the rebirth took place went to the officiating Brahmins as their fee. This ceremony was described in the puranas and mentioned in royal inscriptions. Though the Satavahana inscriptions do not mention this ceremony, the most powerful among their kings claimed to have performed Vedic sacrifices like Aswamedha and Rajasuya, involving huge gifts to the Brahmins. New gods and goddesses developed, better suited to the rustic mentality of the people, like Siva, Parvati, Ganesa, Krishna etc. The Gatha Saptasati refers to Siva (1, l: V, 48; V, 55; VII, 100) Gauri (1, i, II, 51; VII, 100), Ganesa, (IV, 72) and Krishna (I, 89; II, 12; II, 14; V, 47) besides Indra, Vishnu, etc., worship of the Sun, the Buddha's feet and innumerable village deities developed side by side. Thus, the two radically different systems could co-exist side by side with rivalry or conflicts.

The Vishnu-kundina were patrons of Buddhism as well as Brahminism. Names like Vikramendra, Govinda, Madhava, and Indrabhattaraka prove their attachment to Brahmanism. Many of them bore titles of Parama Maheswara and Parama Bhagavata. On the other hand, they bestowed liberal grants to Buddhist Viharas. Govindavarman's Tummalagudem charter, the earliest record of this family describes him as a believer in
Varnasrama dharma, builder of "temples, viharas, assembly halls, wells, tanks and gardens", and giver of wealth to "beggars, ascetics (bhikshus) brahmins, destitutes, sick people and the poor". His wealth was the teaching of Bodhisatva. He gave the village Penakapara to one, who was "Versed in the eighteen schools of Buddhist dharma, endowed with the qualities of the thirty two great men, and who performed yajnas according to the stipulated injunctions for saving humanity from the three fold pain of life, death and sorrow". The grant was for the "Uninterrupted provision of lamps, incense, perfumes, flowers, flags, drinks and foods, beds, seats, grass, medicine and repair work", to the vihara bestowed by his Chief Queen Paramamahadevi. The finances for the construction of this vihara were provided from the royal exchequer. This record "opens with a long invocation to the Buddha". Another Tummalagudem charter issued by Vikramendrabhattaraka-varma of the same family, records the gift of another village Irunneru to the same vihara. The donor is described as a "great respecter of Buddhist philosophy", and as one who "acquired great merit through the benevolence of brahmins on account of the great monasteries he had constructed". These two inscriptions show how slender the distinction was between Buddhism and Brahminism in the fifth and sixth centuries. Though the stupas and viharas were still built for the Buddha by the ladies of the royal family, several of the kings and their officials followed
the Brahmanic Hindu dharma. It is said that Maharaja Madhavavarma, a great conqueror belonging to the Vishnukundin dynasty, performed eleven asvamedhas, thousands of kratus, servamedha kratu, a hundred thousand bahusuvarna, paundarika, purusha medha, vajapeya, yudha, rajasuya, pradhira, and prajapatiya.

Under the Vishnukundins, Buddhism continued to lose ground steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the Vishnukundin period.

While the Vishnukundin kings were staunch followers of the vedic religion, some of their records are in fact Buddhistic in nature and stand witness to the liberal policy of religious tolerance of the kings. Before the advent of the Vishnukundins, the Andhra country had several Buddhist establishments in places like Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Yeleswaram, Jaggayyapeta, Guntupalli etc., Hiuen Tsang who visited the country soon after the disappearance of the Vishnukundins informs us the existence of some twenty Buddhist monasteries with more than 3000 brethren in the area. The objects of worship at Amaravati are the stupas, small and big, the footprint (Paduka) of the great teacher, the "trisula" emblem etc. Regarding the trisula emblem and the pillar supporting it, Burgess says "the sides of the pillar supporting the trisula are always represented as in flames," and as Ferguson has remarked, this seems to be the counterpart of the Agni Linga of Siva.
The Naga cult in Buddhism during Satavahana period is also noteworthy. Serpents are represented as entwining the stupas. Both at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, the Buddha is represented as seated on Nagas with their hoods just above his head. The snake cult was so widely prevalent in these parts of Andhra Desa.

Very interesting specimen of a dull redware globular pot with a lid profusely decorated with snakes and human female figurines has been recovered outside the Garbhagriha of the temple structure at the north-west corner of the antarala during the recent archaeological excavations at Keesaragutta, which is believed to be the capital of the Vishnukundins. This is very unique since this type of pot has not been found in any other excavations so far carried out by this department. It is a globular vase with flat out-curved rim and narrow neck. There are five terracotta human female figurines encircled by serpents on the belly of the pot at equal distances in a sitting posture resting their hands on the knees. The lid is also decorated with a female figurine surrounded by a snake; the head of the snake is broken. The belly of the pot is decorated with seven serpents in their full length beautifully moulded exhibiting artistic skill. This clearly shows that the Vishnukundins followed the religious faiths of the Satavahanas.

II. Language:

Pali, a form of prakrit, became the language of Buddhism, while Sanskrit continued to be that of Brahminism. All the
early Buddhist writings were in Pali. The story of Gunadhya proves beyond doubt that prakrit was more popular than sanskrit during the rule of the Satavahanas, that some of the kings did not even understand the meaning of Sanskrit words, that the Satavahana ruler in question turned towards Sanskrit because of the taunting remarks of his Sanskrit knowing queen, and the Gunadhya wrote his 'Ocean of Stories' in Paisachi, a form of Prakrit which was understood by all, "including Chandalas". Out of innumerable inscriptions of the Satavahanas, there is one solitary inscription in Sanskrit, a Nasik inscription, which contains a mixture of Sanskrit, and Pali, was composed by one "who wished to write Sanskrit, but did not know the language quite in the form which was finally given to it by the great grammarians and other authors.7

The Andhras, as devoted followers of Buddhism, naturally adopted the language of their master, side by side with their own native tongue, Telugu. The Myakadoni inscription (Kurnool district) reveals a linguistic form, for the first time, which can be proved to be Telugu beyond doubt.8 A village by name Vepuraka, (Vemu + Uru) is mentioned in this inscription.

A slab among the Amaravati sculptures contains a word nagabu, serpent. Thus, the discovery of two words Vepuraka, and nagabu, belonging to the Satavahana period establishes a body of information which is highly valuable for the history of Telugu language.
Prakrit was very popular among the masses during the Satavahana rule; besides prakrit there were a number of 'desa bhashas'. Eighteen desabhashas were mentioned by Kautilya, Vatsyayana, and Bharata, of which the Andhra is one. As the political power in the Andhra region was wielded by a Prakrit-speaking dynasty, the language of the country was naturally subjected to the influence of Prakrit, the language of the rulers. A remarkable feature of this period is the progressive replacement of Prakrit by Sanskrit in royal charters. As already said, the inscriptions of the Satavahanas were all in Prakrit. Their successors continued tradition for some decades. But their characters disclose a gradual change from Prakrit to Sanskrit.

All the inscriptions of the Vishnukundins are in Sanskrit. Chikkulla plates contain highly incorrect Sanskrit mixed with Prakrit words. "That the writer's vernacular was Telugu is proved by the ending of the word" Samvassarambul" for samvatsarah" in line 26.9

The Vishnukundins loved learning like the Satavahanas, Govindavarman II was a learned monarch, well versed in the Buddhist scriptures and all the sastras. Some of the kings were distinguished men of letters. Vikramendra I is stated to have been a maha-kavi (great poet), Madhavavarman IV, Janasraya, wrote a sanskrit work 'Janasraya Chandovichiti'. It is a commentary on a work on poetics written under the patronage of Janasraya. The work mentions about dvipada and tripada also. Therefore, we can infer that verses were being
written in Telugu as far back as the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.\(^{10}\)

At Keesaragutta, very near to the western gateway there is a small label inscribed in archaic Telugu, datable to Vishnukundin period, the characters exactly resembling those found in the copper plate inscriptions of the period of Madhava Varman II. The label reads as 'Tulachuvaanru' - a purely Telugu term which means carvers or engravers. Through these Telugu words and many others found in Vishnukundin charters such as Ravirevu, Ienduluru, Penakaparru, it is evident that Telugu language had reached the final stage of evolution and Vishnukundins were the first rulers to have patronised the Telugu language.\(^{11}\) Telugu verses must have been in vogue during the reign of Vishnukundin kings, but they did not get a place in literature.

III. Coinage:

The standard coinage of the Satavahanas was of great economic significance. In the absence of silver in the south, lead was the only alternative, with which the Satavahanas maintained the monetary balance between the two currency systems (i.e. of copper in the north and of silver in the west). More or less the same is the significance of their coins billon.\(^{12}\)

Some copper and potin coins issued by the early Satavahana kings have been recently collected from Kotilingala.\(^{13}\) Hoards of Satavahana coins have also been collected from the excavations conducted at Yeleswaram, Peddabankur; The Satavahana coins were of lead, potin, copper, and silver with
no pretensions to artistic merit. The symbols on them are the chaitya, bow, elephant, lion, horse, and the so called Ujjain symbol. Nahapana struck coins of both copper and silver. Gauthamiputra Satakarni restruck most of the silver coins which had been issued in the name of Nahapana. There is a large collection of Satavahana coins from the Kareemnagar region which include the coins of the Satavahanas, Satakarni I, Gauthamiputra Satakarni, Vasistiputra Pulamavi, Siva Siri Pulamavi, Yajna Satakarni and Rudra Satakarni.

Smith noticed that the coins of the dynasty are northern rather than southern in type and in fact have nothing in common with the peculiar coinage of the south. But it may be pointed out that the peculiar coinage of the south is evidently of a later date than the times of Satavahanas. The chief characteristic of the Satavahana coinage is the use of metals like potin and lead, the former being more predominant.

Hoard of Vishnukundin coins were found at several places in Andhra desa including Yeleswaram, Bhongir taluk of Nalgonda District, Sultanabad taluk of Kareemnagar district, Keesaragutta in Rangareddy district.

The coins found at Yeleswaram are of an alloy of copper and zinc, bearing a vase-lion symbol. The coins recovered from Nalgonda district and Kareemnagar district are of copper and round in shape. These coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse and a vase or kalasa flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse.
In the course of excavations at the temple complex on the top of Kesara-gutta many Vishnukundin coins bearing a squatting lion with a spiral-type tail and raised fore-paw on the obverse, a poornaghata flanked by two lamp stands all enclosed in a rayed circle on the reverse were found.\(^{18}\)

On some of the coins found at Yeleswaram the letters "vi-ka-ra-ma" are traced. Vikramendravarma II of the Vishnukundin dynasty must be the only king to whom these coins can be assigned.\(^{19}\)

An exceptionally large number of Vishnukundin coins has been reported from several sites in Maharashtra. At first glance they give an appearance of being copper coins and look rather heavy in proportion to their size. But a recent metallurgical analysis has revealed a peculiarity of their composition in as much as they comprise an iron core with the coating of a thin sheet of copper on the surface.\(^{20}\) So far as Maharashtra is concerned, the coins of Vishnukundins first came to light in the course of archaeological excavations at Brahmapur, an elevated mound on the western outskirts of the city of Kolhapur on the right bank of the Panchaganga river. Only a solitary coin was recovered in layer 4 of square II. Although the coin is left undescribed in the excavation report, according to P.L. Gupta, it bears a lion to the right on one side and a jar flanked by a trident on either side within the rayed circle on the other.\(^{21}\) The discovery of this coin is very important in as much as it provides a missing link between the close of the Satavahana
period and the Silahara period and affords necessary evidence for dating the layer in question in the fifth-sixth century A.D.

P.L. Gupta's statement that the discovery of this coin "makes it clear that the Brahmapuri site was occupied by the Satavahanas only for a short time before they were eclipsed by the Vishnukundins", is wide of the mark, for there was a long chronological gap between the eclipse of the Satavahana power and the rise of the Vishnukundins. Nevertheless, it is certain that the Vishnukundins were definitely influenced by the Satavahanas in minting coins also.

IV. Art and Architecture:

Art received a tremendous fillip under the patronage of the Satavahanas. Its main source of inspiration was Buddhism. "In welcoming the non-Aryan elements of society into its fold, Buddhism had to give recognition to the popular cults of the soil and of nature, and to their beliefs, practices and modes of worship. It soon led to the development of a Buddhist pantheon which was peopled by the fertility spirits and godlings of the earliest Dravidian region. . . . Amongst the most prominent decorations are the carvings of the Yakshas and Yakshis and the nagas, originally associated with the forests, trees and still-waters as spirits and genii in non-Aryan India. The symbolic representations of the Buddha were rooted in the beliefs and customs prevailing in the society of the day. His birth was illustrated by the lotus. His enlightenment was represented by the Bodhi tree.
His preaching of the sermon was suggested by a wheel. His nirvana was symbolised by stupa or funeral mound.

Although the subject matter of Andhra sculpture during Satavahana period was religious, it is significant that religion was used as an instrument for adding strength and beauty to the raptures of worldly life.24 Amaravati Art is described as the most voluptuous and the most delicate flower of Indian sculpture. It is also characterised as the culmination of Indian art.

There are three exquisite dance scenes among the Amaravati carvings, all collectively performed. Some of the paintings in Ajanta caves depict the artistic life of our ancestors. The Ajanta caves represent the golden age of Indian painting. Literary evidence confirms the developed state of our arts in the Satavahana period. The 'Gathasaptha Sathi' contains innumerable references to the artistic tastes of our people.

The architecture of a monastery would generally be influenced by the doctrine of some particular sect. A study of the monastic architecture in the Nagarjunakonda valley reveals the evolution of Buddhist thought and modes of worship. The temple concept gained greater currency. The emphasis was transferred from the stupa to the shrine.25 The image worship and the concomitant apsidal, and later on, square or oblong shrines were steps towards further popularization of Buddhism.26 A number of Brahmanic cults - Saiva, Vaishnava, Skanda, etc., prevailed in the post-Satavahana period.
The Vishnukundins were patrons of Buddhism as well as Brahminism as already stated in the preceding paras. Temples, Viharas, assembly halls, wells, tanks and gardens were built. If we examine the temple architecture of some of the Brahmini-cal shrines in Andhra Desa, we can see that they are a continuation of Buddhist monasteries. Recent excavations at Rajahmundry revealed that a Saivite shrine was built on a Buddhist chaitya with bricks. At Gollathagudi in Mahboobnagar district ruins of a Saivite shrine built with bricks is found in the temple complex which definitely goes back to Vishnukundin period.

The rock-cut cave temples at Vijayawada, Mogulrajapuram, and Undavalli disclose a striking similarity of Brahmin and Buddhist architecture. The big temple at Undavalli displays the style of a vihara. If we examine the seals of the Vishnukundins copper-plate grants, the coins they struck and some of the carvings on the cave walls, all of which bear the lion symbol, we cannot but conclude that they were scooped out of the Buddhist structures during the suzerainty of the Vishnukundins.

The cave temples in and around Vijayawada, Mogulrajapuram and Undavalli have been rightly attributed to the Vishnukundins. The dvarapalas and pillars with lotus, vase and lion decorations remind us of the Buddhist sculptures of Amaravati. Right above the pillars are chaitya windows with heads introduced in them, besides floral designs flanking the windows and shovel - heads on top. There are
five rock-cut temples at Vijayawada, five at Mogulrajapuram and four at Undavalli. Those at Vijayawada and Mogulrajapuram were dedicated to the Trinity, while those at Undavalli to Vishnu. In one of the Mogulrajapuram caves we notice a row of lions and elephants beneath the figure of Nataraja with his eight arms crowning the front of the cave. This is exceedingly realistic. The eight armed Siva figure, even in its mutilated condition, is a great masterpiece of sculpture. This Nataraja is in the Urdhva jana pose and is tampering Aparamarapurusha. It is rather unique and nowhere else is found. Considering all these facts the unique cave temple must be ascribed to the Vishnukundin period.27

The temple in each of these caves consists of a rectangular pillared hall with a small shrine-chamber excavated in one of the side walls. It has no ornamentation within, but usually dvarapalas are carved in bold relief.

The Satavahanas and their immediate successors like Ikshvakus and Vishnukundins adopted the brick medium for the Buddhist stupas, chaityas and viharas from their very inception, as at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Goli, Chantasala, Rajahmundry, Vijayawada (Mogulrajapuram hill top), etc., almost side by side with the end of the rock-cut architectural phase, when apparently a greater expansion in the erection of stupas in the riparian tracts and plain country was sought, and rocky scarps suitable for cave excavations were not available at every desired place, particularly in all the habitable river valleys in the Deccan. The continued use of brick medium
in the lower Deccan by early Hindu architectural pioneers, even with the admitted availability of stone - raw material of the requisite quality would have to be ascribed to the influence of age - long and customary use of brick by their Buddhistic fore-runners in the same region. The very earliest examples of Brahmanical structural architecture are mostly of brick medium and the possibility, for every single large sized temple of this kind which had survived in howsoever descript a form, there would have been at least a hundred small to medium sized shrines which had totally perished without leaving a trace.28

The excavations conducted at Keesaragutta by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, A.P., revealed a square brick shrine with a pedestal in the middle. The flooring inside the temple was paved with brick and a covered drain was provided at the north-east corner to conduct the waters of ablution to the outside. The square pedestal in the middle of the shrine has a square socket for introduction of square based Linga, now missing, post-holes were noticed over the corners of the square pedestal, possibly to support wooden pillars. A running verandah had possibly existed on all sides of the shrine, supported by wooden pillars based on granite slabs. On the northern bank of the tank at the lower gradient of the Keesaragutta hill, a huge brick structure with five rooms prefaced by a rectangular hall, a square porch and flight of steps was unearthed. Facing this building on the north was found another elaborate flight
of steps with a moon stone, leading to another building consisting of six rooms in two rows with a central hall. The entire complex was protected by a brick used in the construction measured 46 x 25 x 7 cms.

The massive style of architecture of the multi-storied secular buildings at Keesaragutta may indicate that it may be the palace complex of the Vishnukundin period. The Bana Lingas over brick pedestals, the two handed Vishnu sculpture carved on green limestone, the miniature temples with wagon-shaped vimanas, all found at Yeleswaram excavations are further examples of Vishnukundin art. A beautiful sculpture of Vishnu, head and feet mutilated, was found in Vishnukundin level associated with layer 4 at Yeleswaram. The modelling of torso and body was chaste and beautiful. This appears to be an early form of Vishnu holding a sakti or staff in his right hand and a conch in the left. The sculpture closely resembled late Amaravati carvings.

V. Military Organisation:

The military organisation of the Satavahanas reached a high water-mark. An Amaravati rail pillar depicts the art of war and military organisation. Cities were defended by high walls and ramparts. The walls and gateways were built of brick and mortar.

The flooring inside the halls was paved with brick, measuring 56 x 27 x 7 cms. While the idea or concept of a fort as a military structure appears to have undergone several changes from time to time in its size, methods of
construction, disposition of various structures, additional
defensive equipment, etc., depending on contemporary trends
of warfares methods of attack and defence and weapons and
implements of warfare. Forts in ancient Andhra were mainly
built of perishable materials like mud and brick, as against
stone, which became the chief material of later times.

The architecture of forts depends to a large extent
upon the building materials and methods of construction in
vogue in particular period. The earliest phase of fort
architecture built with mud, morrum and brick represented by
the forts of Satavahana and post-Satavahana periods like
Dharanikota, Nagarjunakonda, Mulikatta, and Keesaragutta,
Nagarjunakonda had four phases of fortifications, the first
built of rubble, the second of heaped up mud and morrum,
and brick and the third of rubble and the fourth of stones. 32

Keesaragutta is an example of brick construction over
rubble foundation. Keesaragutta was enclosed by a fort wall
now defunct. There are presently traces of 3 metres broad
dressed rubble stone foundation. The brick measuring
46 cm. x 25 x 7 cms used for raising superstructure is still
visible all along the fortification wall in fragments and at
some places intact. The fort was provided with three main
gates on the east, west and the north, preaced by strategic
secondary walls in the shape of crescent bulge; some water
gates were also provided at the water ponds for fetching
water into the fort. Traces of guard-rooms were found near the main gates and entire fort is studded with brick structures. There are no evidences of existence of any other fort belonging to Vishnukundin kings. According to one B.N. Sastry\textsuperscript{35}, the ancient hill-fort at Indrapalagutta in Ramanmapet taluk of Nalgonda district on the banks of river Musi, belongs to Vishnukundins. This is doubtful and has got to be confirmed by conducting further explorations.

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The evolution of Hindu royal titles and honorifics affords us a useful clue to the growth of the ideas of sovereignty in Ancient India. It is interesting to study the growth of Ancient Indian Kingship through the changing royal titles and epithets. These royal titles and honorifics went through a long process of evolution mirroring the change in the power and position of the king. Beginning with the simple rajan, royal titles, with the passage of time, became highly complex and rhetorical. In the medieval Hindu inscriptions we come across increasingly pompous and an ever-lengthening set of titles. The size of royal titles may indeed be adopted as a rough dating-standard of inscriptions the bulkier the title the later the period of the record.

The most frequently used term in the Vedas for the king is raja. His office was created out of military necessity to lead people in battles and save them from defeats. A member of the raja class, his duty was to give protection to people. Rashtra, the earliest state developed by the Indo-Aryans belonged to raja. He was the 'upholder of state'. The rajanyas were not only the protectors of realm, but were also the upholders of the cosmic law (rata-sya-gopah). In fact the function of king is considered to be so important that his office is given some kind of divinity. The king is twice greeted as Indrasakha and ardha-deva. Even in the Samhitás, apart from the normal raja, we find certain regal
terms like samraj, edhiraj, ekraj, svaraj, etc., denoting greater power than rajan. These indicate a nascent beginning of the ideas of king's supremacy and imperialism. Samraj expresses a greater degree of power than rajan.  

"The office of the rajan is lower and that of samraj is higher". Samrat, explains Amanakosa, is one who has performed the rajasuya sacrifice and is the overlord of a mandala, with subordinate feudatories and princes. According to Aitareya-Brahmana ekraj is a ruler whose domains extend all over the earth from sea to sea. Adhiraj is interpreted by Macdonell and Keith as overlord. But taking into consideration the political condition of the time, when the great states were still in formation, they (Macdonell and Keith) could not bring themselves to believe that a real overlord existed in the Vedic society. N.M. Law has suggested that these different terms might signify different degrees of power or ranks among the kings brought about by the innumerable battles which were so common in the age.

Most of these terms appear in the Brahmanas too. We, however, know it definitely that the power of king increased considerably during this period. The period was marked by an excessive religiosity and the development of a sacrificial cult. Sacrifices came to be given a sort of divine potency. Naturally the king's importance increased due to his participation in the sacrifices like rajasuya, vajapeya, and asvamedha which were so common in the age. He is now more pronouncedly called 'the guarding of law' and the 'sustainer of state'.
Dharmapati and dharmasya gota and rastrabhrt are the appellations used for a king in the Brahmanas. There also occur the following terms: maharaja, rajadhirajya, samrajya, bhaujya, svarajya, and vairajya, 'self rule'. Jayaswal interprets samrajya as a combination of monarchies or a federal imperialism around one dominant member. Maharaja obviously meant ruler of a large kingdom.

In the Satapatha Brahmana we find the following significant sentence: "Before the slaying of Vrtra he was Indra, it is true. But after slaying Vrtra, he became Mahendra even as raja or king becomes maharaja after obtaining the victory". This much, however, is sufficiently clear from these terms that the idea of absolutist kingship made considerable headway during the Brahmana period. The king came to be considered as both the head of the state as well as the guardian of moral law.

In the sixth century B.C. began the Magadhan imperialism which was to find its consummation during the Maurya rule. Practically the whole country was brought under one rule. It is natural to find in the literature of the period royal titles conveying the idea of supreme sovereignty and universal rulership. Chakkavatti (world ruler) is an often repeated royal title in the Buddhist literature. According to the Buddhist literature, Chakkavatti governs and abides by dharma and righteousness. While the ethical side of his function is emphasised by the Buddhist works, Kautilya lays stress on the Chakravarti's military power and conquests. The chakravarti of the Arthasastra is an aggressor (vijigesthu) set upon a
policy of digvijaya, whose sphere of influence extends from the Himalayas to the southern sea. Kautilya, however, does not overlook king's duties towards his subjects and the maintenance of moral law. He is to make people happy as well as moral (prajanam vinaye ratah). The development from rajan to chakravarti, is straight and natural. Chakravarti, actually is an amplified version of rajan. It contains the same two basic elements in the composition of its sovereignty, the administration of kingdom and the maintenance of dharma or rta.

Strangely, however, in the Maurya inscriptions we do not find the use of any imperialistic title. Asoka was content with the simple raja. The Sungas too preferred the same appellation. Kharavela of Orissa is given similar simple titles. He is called khemaraja (lord of security), vadheraja (lord of boundary), and dharmaraja (lord of justice). The Andhra Satavahanas in most of their inscriptions are found assuming only the modest title of rajan. Slightly more imposing titles like maharaja and rajaraja are applied for Gautamiputra Satakarni. The term svamin, which, according to Kautilya, was one of the seven elements of sovereignty, was used by the Satavahanas to stand for the sovereign himself. From these inscriptions it appears that in actual practice kings had not yet started assuming the imperialistic titles met in the literature of the age and which were to become a common feature of later inscriptions.
But the explanation of king’s power can be traced from frequent use in inscriptions and coins of royal titles suggesting divinity. Devanampriya given to Asoka is the earliest of such titles found in inscriptions. Dasaratha, the grandson of Asoka, also assumed the same title.

Apart from those suggesting divinity, the normal titles of foreign rulers of the post-Mauryan period were maharaja and rajadhiraja (usually coupled together), with their Greek equivalents basileos basileos. These titles were evidently borrowed from the Iranian ksavathi-yavanam ksavathiya. This usual pair of titles were sometimes supplemented by some other epithets like mahata or trataras (Greek megas, saviour) by more ostentatious kings. Gondophernes assumed slightly loftier titles of great kings, supreme king of kings. Some kings also assumed titles like dharmaasthita and sachadharmasthita showing the adoption of the Buddhist ideal of righteousness and also probably the Brahmanic conception that the king is the guardian of law. It was also in this period that another Iranian term satrap or ksatrapa found a place in Indian politics. The word satrap originally meant a provincial governor. It was sanskritized into ksatrapa and soon a more dignified term mahaksatrapa was coined. Originally local governors, many of the Ksatrapas and mahaksatrapas set up independent powerful monarchies. They retained their old title just as Pushyamitra continued to be known as senapati even after he became the king.
The Guptas were the first Indian monarchs who really began the custom of assuming high-sounding and rhetorical titles. The Lichchhavis (of Nepal), the Maghas, the Bharasivas, the Vakatakas and the first two Guptas continued old practice of using the simple maharaja. But from the third Gupta, Chandra-gupta I, the rulers of the dynasty bore the imposing Maharajadhiraja. The titles continued to multiply in course of time. In the Udayagiri Cave Inscription\textsuperscript{31} Chandragupta II is styled as paramabhattacharya. In the Gadhwa inscription the same monarch is called paramabhagawata\textsuperscript{32}. In a series of Gupta kings are given the following triple appellations; paramadaivataparana bhattarakmaharajadhira.\textsuperscript{33} The kings of later Gupta line made a minor change in the triplet. They substituted paramadaivata by paramesvara\textsuperscript{34}. Similarly we find that the Vardhanas are given such imperialistic titles as paramabhattacharya and maharajadhira in their inscriptions.\textsuperscript{35} The 'birudas' and the honorifics of the Gupta kings on their coins are extremely rhetorical.\textsuperscript{36} The practice of assuming high flown titles, no doubt, indicates an increase in royal power and prestige. It is interesting to note here that the weaker kings of this period (Gupta-Vardhana period), the founders of a rising dynasty, are usually found using only maharaja. It is only when the dynasty gets established we find the kings beginning to appropriate titles like maharajadhira.\textsuperscript{37} The first three Gupta kings used only maharaja. Similar was the case of the later Guptas and the Maukhariyas etc.
The tendency to attach divinity to the king noticed in the previous periods continued. Somudragupta is described as equal to Kubera, Indra, Varuna and Yama. His son Chandra-gupta II, we are told, shone upon the earth like the Sun radiant. Inspite of the ridicule poured by Bana on the false claim to divinity by kings, the custom was taking a growing hold of the country. Harsa's contemporary Pulakesin II had the biruda, parmesvara which became the common appellation of the later kings of the Western Chalukyas. In the next period it became a common feature for kings to assume divinity. The growing influence of the Dharmasastras and the increasing popularity of the idea of incarnation were powerful factors working in this direction. At first sight one gets the impression from these titles that king's absolutism reached a glorious height.

The Vakataka kingdom was fairly extensive but its rulers were content with the mere title of maharaja only one amongst them, pravarasena I who was undoubtedly a great conqueror, took the title 'Samrat', probably he had performed the Vajapeya sacrifice. His successors reverted to the old and simple title maharaja. Vishnukundin rulers were also content with the title maharaja. Madhavarman II is said to have performed the aegishtoma, krathusa hasra, asvamedha sarvamedha, purushamedha, bahusuvarna, vajapeya.
paundarika, rajasuya, but he was content with the title maharaja.

The following titles figure in the records of Vishnukundin kings:

I. The Tummalagudem plates I:

Sri maharajendravarmanah . . . maharajasri Madhava-
varmanah (first plate 2nd side fourth line) Maharajasri
Govindavarmanah (second plate second side lines-12-13).

The Tummalagudem Plates II:

Maharajasri Govindavarmanah (first plate second side
6th line).

Maharajasri Madhavavarmanah, Maharajasri vikramandrasya
(second plate - first side - lines 9-10).

The Ipur Plates I:

Maharajasya Sri Madhavavarmanaha (first plate -
second side - lines 3-4).

The Ipur plates II:

Maharajasya Sri Govindavarmanah (first plate - second
side - lines 2 & 3)

Maharaja Sri Madhavarma (second plate first side
8th line)

The Ramathirtham plates:

Srimanmaharaja Madhavavarma (first plate second side -
2nd line)

Srimanindravarmakhya Raja

Sriman indravarmakya Raja

(second plate - first side - 5th and 6th line)
The Chikkulla plates:

Maharajasya . . . . .
(second plate - first side - line 7)

Maharajasya Sri Indrabhattacharakavarma
(third plate - first side 16th line)

Maharaja Sriman Vikramendravarman
(third plate - second side - 19th line)

The Tundi grant:

Maharaja Sri Madhavavarmanah
(second plate - first side and third plate second side line 8-9)

Maharaja Sri Vikramendrabhattacharakavarma
(second plate second side line 13 - third plate first side line 13)

Maharajendrabhattacharakavarma
(third plate second side line-20)

The Pulumburu plates:

Maharajah Sri Madhavavarma
(second plate first side 14th line)

Thus it can be seen that almost all the Vishnukundin kings including Madhavavarman II who performed eleven asvamedhas and rajasuya bore the title of Maharaja. Performance of 'asvamedha' and 'rajasuya' indicate that the king attained the position of a sarvabhauma or paramount sovereign, who was the overlord of many subordinate kings. The statement that Madhavavarman II performed eleven asvamedhas implies that he embarked on digvijaya expeditions and subjugated the monarchs of the neighbouring countries who held out
against his authority as many times. He seems to have built up his empire after a series of conquests spread over several years of warfare and he appears to have been powerful war-lord. Nevertheless he was content with the title 'maharaja'.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the rulers of the contemporary dynasties of the times also bear the title of 'maharaja'. Chamtamula, the first king of the Ikshvaku dynasty possessed sovereign powers as indicated by his title "Maharaja" attached to his name. He is referred to as Rajan in the memorial pillar inscription. In the Ikshvaku records the titles Rajan and maharaja are indifferently used. Siri Virupurushadatta bears the title of Rajan in most of the inscriptions and Maharaja in inscriptions G. and H. Shuvula Siri Chamtamula is styled Maharaja in G. and Rajan in G2 and G3.43

The Brihatphalayana gotra king Jayavarman bears the title of Maharaja as mentioned in the Kondamudi copper plate grant.44 Whilst Damodaravarman the Ananda king and the Pallava kings of the period bear the title of 'maharaja', Attivarman, another Ananda king is styled "Rajan".45 The Salankayana kings Devavarman, Hastivarman, Chandavarman, Saktivarman etc., also bear the title "Maharaja", as can be seen from the Elloro grant, Peddavegi and Kollair plates.46

Dr. K. Gopalachari49 observes that the Satavahana polity confirmed to the rule laid down in the sastras; its keynote
was the sovereign. Monarchy was hereditary. Hereditary kingship is suggested by the expression Desapurushamrajya, a kingdom of ten generations - occurring in the Satapatha Brahmana.  

The Vishnukundin monarchy did not claim any divine origin. The epithet appearing in line 8 of Tundi copper plate grants, viz., "devatidevasya Maharaja" which is attributed to Madhavavarman does not indicate any claim of divine origin, Vishnukundin evidently followed the ancient Indian tradition in this regard. In fact, observed by one recent writer, the Vishnukundin kings did not attach much importance to the titles like Maharaja etc., and even though they were supreme kings they did not always consider themselves supreme.
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32. Ibid, p. 38.
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34. C.f. the titles of Adityasena, Devagupta, etc.,
36. JAHRS Vol. XX, 1964-65; (Parts I-IV) p. 124.
37. Ibid; p. 124.
39. Ibid; Inscription No. 35.
44. Epigraphia Indica Vol. VI; 1900-1901, Calcutta, p. 316.
47. JAHRS. Vol. I; 1926; p. 92.
48. Indian Antiquary, Vol. V; 1876; p. 78
50. Satapata Brahmana 1882-1900; Kasi, XII, 9.3.1 - 3 cf.
51. Subrahmanya, R.; 1962; Tundi copper plate grants APGAS No. 3, Hyderabad.
52. Sankaramarayanan, S.; 1977; The Vishnukundins and their times; Delhi pp. 130.
The emblem of the Vishnukundins and its significance:

As was the Bull or Nandi in the Pallavas\(^1\) and \(\text{\textit{T}}\)\(^2\)\text{\textit{Salankayanas}}, the elephant to the Ikshvakus; the Boar to the Chalukyas\(^3\), Monkey to the Ananda Gotrans\(^4\), so was the lion to the Vishnukundins, an emblem, symbolising the assiduity necessary for the achievement of greatness. The lion emblem of Vishnukundins was represented on the seals of their charters from Tummalagudem, Ramathirtham, Chikkulla, etc. The circular seal of the Tummalagudem plates of Govindavarman I bears the figure of a lion.\(^5\) The oval seal of the Ramathirtham plates of Indravarman shows the faint figure of an advancing lion with its left fore-paw raised, neck erect, mouth wide open, and the tail raised above the back so as to end in a loop.\(^6\) Chikkulla plates of Vikramendravarman-II consists of a circular seal bearing in relief, on a slightly countersunk surface, a well executed lion, which stands to the proper right, raises the right fore-paw, opens the mouth, and apparently has a double tail.\(^7\) Vishnukundin coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse and a vase or \text{\textit{kalasa}} flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse.\(^8\)

The lion signifies fierce energy and undaunted courage which are the very qualities necessary for success in war. The Indian Earth Goddess is also called a lioness in a passage occurring in the \text{\textit{V}a\textit{j}urveda} and the \text{\textit{S}atapatha Brahmana}\(^9\), and later on the lion is a favourite animal of Parvathi just as the bull is of Siva.
Symbols survive for ages, and so also traditions relating to their meaning, "Power over the images or inprints gives over the person" is a conception. Earth goddess or Mother goddess was essentially connected with good luck and prosperity. For this reason symbols sacred to her may be stamped on coins etc.,\textsuperscript{12}

Another suggestion that is offered is - the lion was the Andhra emblem and their successors, the Vishnukundins, might have retained it.\textsuperscript{13} K. Gopalachari\textsuperscript{14} opined that the lion device was perhaps Buddhist in origin and that the lion motif at Amaravati is sufficient evidence.
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13. ibid, p.42.
The following names of places figure in the Vishnukundin records.

I. Ipur C.P. I
   Veilembali

II. Ipur II
   Kudavada

III. Ramathirtham
   Amarapura

IV. Chikkulla C.P.
   Peruvadaka
   Puranisangama

V. Pulomburu C.P.
   Regora
   Ravi Reva
   Dendulura

VI. Tummalagudem I
   Pulomburu
   Maindvatica
   Trivaranagara
   Kunruru

VII. Tummalagudem II
     Penkapara
     Sprundero
     Sakrapura
     Indrapura

VIII. Tundi C.P.
      Tundi

IX. Khanapur
    Retturuka
    Belivati
    Kolivatika
    Vattanika

X. Velpuru
   Velpuru

None of the records furnish us with any definite information regarding the capital of these rulers. Different
Scholars identified different places as the capital city of the Vishnukundins, propounding their own theories.

Kielhorn looks upon Vinukonda as the survival of the dynastic name. K. Gopalachari supports the above theory and says that "this looks quite probable".

The argument of Kielhorn is as follows:

"The name Vishnukundin has not, so far as I know, been met with in other epigraphical records. Considering the locality where these plates come from, as well as the facts that the writer's Vernacular was Telugu and that, the donor worshipped the Lord of Sripurva, which I take to the sacred Srisaila in the Kurnool district, I believe that the word survives in Vinukonda, the name of a hill fort and town in the Krishna district, about 95 kms. east of Srisailam and 80 kms. south of the river Krishna, and that this Vinukonda, which is reported to be a place of great antiquity, was really the capital of the Vishnukundins".

The above view was supported by B. V. Krishna Rao but N. Venkataramanayya refused the argument of B. V. Krishna Rao.

From the Ipur plates II which Madhavarman III, the son of Devavarman and the grandson of Madhavarman II, issued in his 47th regnal year, we learn that he bore the title Trikuta-Malayadhipati and that his capital was Amarapura. N. Venkataramanayya identified this Amarapura as "Amaravathi" on the banks of the Krishna. One Scholar emphatically asserted that "Trivaranagara" which occurs in the Ipur
and Pulomburu\textsuperscript{8} plates was the capital of the Vishmukundins; he identified this Trivaranagara with the modern Tiruvuru in the Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh. Trivaranagara was identified with Tripuri the modern Tewar near Jhabalpur by Sri H. Krishna Sastri\textsuperscript{9}. D.C. Sircar believed that Trivaranagara is the city of (the king) Trivara\textsuperscript{10}.

Another writer\textsuperscript{11} has taken the stand that this Trivara or Trivaranagara is supposed to be the capital of the Panduvamsi kings, and to have been so named after Trivaradeva who ruled over south Kosala and the Chanda district and wrested the Chattisgarh district from the Yakatakas whose power at this time was waning.\textsuperscript{12}

"Madhavavarman" is known to have had a Vakataka princess for his queen and begotten by her, a son named Vikramendra. It may be reasonably inferred that the Vakataka successor of Harisena, in dire danger from Trivaradeva, appealed for Vishnukundin help. Madhavavarman defeated Trivaradeva or his successor and saved the drowning Vakataka, who out of gratitude gave the Vishnukundin a daughter of his in marriage. It must be in connection with the campaign against Trivaradeva that Madhavavarman conquered the eastern districts of Telangana.\textsuperscript{13}

There is another school of thought\textsuperscript{14} that the biruda Trivara-nagara bhavana-parama yuvati - jana - viharana rata associated with the name of Madhavavarman IV in the inscriptions shows that he was a native of Trivaranagara, identified with modern Tewar on the banks of Narmada, which was in all
probability the headquarters of the appanage granted to his family. The phrase 'Trivaranagara' that figures in the Ipur I and Pulomburu plates is to be considered in this connection. It is stated in Ipur plates I that Sri Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman was the deligher of the hearts of the youthful ladies in the palace of Trivaranagara. Pulomburu plates describes him as the ruler who was, among other things, fond of sporting with young ladies in the mansions of Trivaranagara. There was no city that flourished in Andhra Desa with the name Trivaranagara as such. It is not unreasonable to consider Trivaranagara as three sacred or great nagaras (cities) as the compound indicates. It is also quite probable that Vengi Tewar and Keesaragutta must be the three great Nagaras.\footnote{An allusion relating to Madhavavarman IV lead us to infer that Vijayawada might be the seat of administration of Vishnukundins. The story goes like this. "King Madhavavarman was ruling Andhra Desa Vijayawada as his capital. A boy came under the wheels of the chariot driven by the son of Madhavavarma, and died. The mother who lost her lone son in the tragic incident approached the king for justice. The king conducted enquiry and having found his son guilty, ordered for his (Yuvaraja) execution.}

Mallaeswaraswamy was pleased with the impartial judgement given by the king and the Yuvaraja was given life. The rock cut temples in and around Vijayawada attributed to Vishnukundin period may also support the above theory. But this is a bold attempt to convert legend into history.
Some argue that Indrapuri or Indrapalanagara on the banks of river 'Musi' was the capital of the founders of the Vishnukundin dynasty. Evidences of ruined ancient fort on the Indrapalagutta in Nizamnagar taluk of Nalgonda district, ruins of temples residential complexes constructed with brick in extensive area stretched over three miles, a deep tank just 200 yards away from the fort, and other structures like Saiva temple etc., strengthen the above view. It is presumed that the first capital of Vishnukundins - Indrapalanagar extended on either banks of the river Musi covering the modern villages Valigonda, Nageswaram and Tummalagudem. The name of Indrapura figures in the Tummalagudem copper plates I and II. The queen of Govindavarman I, the grandson of Indravarman I, is said to have built a Buddhist monastery there. The city was possibly founded by, and named after, this Maharaja Indravarman I as in the case of the Yakataka capital Pravarapura founded by, and named after Pravarasena II. May be, it was the capital of the dynasty during the early period.

There is another argument that 'Velpur' in Sattenapalli taluk of Guntur district, twelve kilometres south of Krishna river, where a stone inscription of the Madhavavarman II, was found, might be the capital of Vishnukundins in all probability. It is argued that Velpur is the sanskritised form 'Amarapura' (Velpu = Amara, Uru = Puramu) and that this village might have flourished as a capital of early Vishnukundin kings upto Govindavarman.
The place of issue of the charter (Chikkulla copper plate grant), 'Lendulura' has been identified with the modern Denduluru near Eluru in West Godavari district.\(^{20}\)

As this place is on the ruins of the city of Vengi, scholars have taken Lendulura as the capital of the Vishnukundin.\(^{21}\)

However this was refuted by another writer that the place was specially mentioned in the charter as a place of issue, not because it was the capital, but because it was not the normal residence (i.e. capital) of the Vishnukundin king.\(^{22}\)

Refuting the argument identifying Amaravati as Amarapura, the capital of Vishnukundins V.V.Krishna Sastry\(^{23}\) has stated that the name Amaravati came to vogue only after 11th century A.D. and the previous name was only Dhanakataka or Dhanyakataka or Dhannakada, and that the archaeological evidences either at Vinukonda or Amaravati or Nagarjunakonda would definitely go against these arguments. He asserted that it is certain that the capital of Vishnukundins must have been located somewhere in Telangana and most probably in the vicinity of Tummalagudem, which was known as Indrapura or Indupurala in a Telugu inscription of 12th-13th century A.D.\(^{24}\)

He also opined that the outer and inner defensive fortification walls, the numerous religious and secular structures inside the fort, the coins, the inscribed labels, the pottery and other concomitant finds, all datable to the Vishnukundin period are evidences enough to prove that
Keesaragutta was once the capital of Vishnukundins. This conclusion was evidently drawn from the fact that no inscription belonging to Ikshvakus, Salankayanas, Brihatphalayanas and Anandagotrins has been found in Telangana area till now. The following historical events give support to the above conclusion.

Madhavavarman II while extending his kingdom through his valour and prowess, must have put an end to the Salankayanas by defeating Nandivarman II or his successor, Skandavarma and occupied Vengi Desa around 462-64 A.D. It is evident that Vengi Desa was not under their suzerainty till then and he came from elsewhere and conquered it.

In this connection the observation of Fleet also furnishes the information that Keesaragutta was an important place in the early centuries of Christian era. Fleet observed "A study of the map has shown me the former existence of an early trading route, of which well marked traces still remain, from the east coast through Golconda or Haidarabad, Ter and Paithan, to Broach . . . . There were two starting points. One was Masulipatam, on the coast, in the northern part of the Kistna District; and the road from this place took, not only the local traffic from the coast districts, on the north of the Krishna but also the sea-borne traffic from the far east. The other starting point was probably Vinukonda, inland, in the southern part of the same district, which would serve admirably as a collecting centre for the
local products of the sea-side country on the south of Krishna. The roads from these two places joined each other at a point about twenty six miles towards the east-by south from Haidarabad, or perhaps at a point about twenty-three miles further in the same direction. And from that point the single road ran in the most natural manner, through east country via, Haidarabad, Kalyani, Ter, Paithan and Deulatabad to 'Chandore' and Markinda in the west of the Nasik district. And only there, in the Ghats . . . commenced the real difficulties of journey . . . 25

The point about twenty six miles towards the east-by-south from Haidarabad where the roads joined each other is more than Keesaragutta, in view of its importance of the place as a capital of the Vishmukundins.

Thus the theory of V.V.Krishna Sastry that Keesaragutta was the capital of early kings of Vishmukundins is acceptable, discarding all other theories.

The above theory is further strengthened by the following facts.

This part of the country attracted many ruling dynasties who built their capital cities and constructed forts both for defensive and administrative purposes.

Keesaragutta flourished as a capital city under the Vishmukundins.
Kolanupak which is 40 kilometres north east of Keesaragutta was the seat of administration under Kalyani Chalukyas. There are traces of mud fortification at Kolanupak besides Jaina temples etc.,

Bhongir is another hill fort town, 15 kilometres from Keesaragutta, which flourished under Kalyani Chalukyas, Kakatiyas etc., during 9th to 11th centuries, the fort still stands majestically even today as a reminiscence of the bygone days.

Warangal is a Sthala Durga built by the Kakatiyas who ruled over Telangana for about three centuries. Warangal is 100 kms. from Keesaragutta.

Golconda, 40 kms. east of Keesaragutta, is a well known fort which played very important role in the mediaeval history of Deccan.

Thus the region around Keesaragutta was the political nucleus right from the early years of the Christian era to the mediaeval period.
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10. Sircar, D.C.; 1939; Successors to Satavahanas in the Lower Deccan, Calcutta, p.238.
12. Mujamdar & Altekar; 1967; Vakataka Gupta Age, Delhi, p.124.
15. Vide Ch.III(i); Vishnukundins, Trivaranagara.
17. ibid p.221.
In the Sanskrit and Prakrit inscriptions of the Pre-Chalukyan period we find several Telugu words mostly the names of the villages and the names of the persons. Some Telugu words found place in the *Gathasaptha sati* of Satavahana king Hala belonging to 1st century A.D.

We find the following names of the villages in the inscriptions of Satavahana and Ikshvakus.

1. **Koṭḍavali inscription**
   - Khadavali (Kodavali)

2. **Macdonell Inscription**
   - Vepurake (Vepuru)

3. - Mandara
   - Hiralure
   - Kudura

4. - Halampura

The inscriptions of Anandagotrins, Brihatphalayanas, Salankayanas, and Kalingas also furnish us the following names of the villages.

**Anandagotrins**

1. Mattepadu C.P. of Damodaravarma - Kamgura

2. Gorantla C.P. of Attivarma - Tanrikonra

**Brihatphalayanas**

3. Kondamudi C.P. of Jayavarma - Kudura

Pantura

Kondamudi
Salankayanas

4. Eluru C.P. of Vijayadevavarma - Elura
5. Pedavegi Inscription of Nandivarma - Pralura
6. Holleru inscription of Vijaya - Kamburanchemvada
7. Kanteru inscription of Nandivarma - Kuruvada
8. Kanukollu C.P. of Skandavarma - Kompera
9. Kanteru C.P. of Vijayaskandavarma - Chintapuri
10. Srungavarapukota inscription of Anantavarma - Achanta
11. Siripura C.P. of Anantavarma - Tontapara
12. Tandivada inscription of Prithvi Maharaja - Kondamanchi
13. Chicacole C.P. of Prabhanjanavarma - Sarapalli
14. Sarabhavara inscription - Puloka (Pulaka)
15. Godavari C.Ps. of Prithivi Mula - Tandupaka

Kalingas

10. Srungavarapukota inscription of Anantavarma - Achanta
11. Siripura C.P. of Anantavarma - Tontapara
12. Tandivada inscription of Prithvi Maharaja - Kondamanchi
13. Chicacole C.P. of Prabhanjanavarma - Sarapalli
14. Sarabhavara inscription - Puloka (Pulaka)
15. Godavari C.Ps. of Prithivi Mula - Tandupaka

Kandali
Mugamuru
Irbuli
The following names appear in the Vishnukundin records.

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<td>Tummalagudem Set II</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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Proper names:

Besides the names of the kings we come across the following names of the donors etc., in the copper plate grants of the Vishnukundins.

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<td>I.</td>
<td>Ipur C.P. I</td>
<td>- i) Agni sarma</td>
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<td>II.</td>
<td>Ipur C.P. II</td>
<td>- i) Agni Sarma</td>
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<td>ii) Indra Sarma</td>
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<td>III.</td>
<td>Ramathirtham C.P.</td>
<td>i) Nagasarma</td>
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Such proper names are found in the inscriptions of the other contemporary dynasties that ruled Andhra Desa, a few of which are given below.

i) Ongode Inscription of Vijayaskandavarma — Golasarma

ii) Gorantla Inscription of Athivarman — Kotti Sarma

iii) Hedunga Raya copper plato grant of Vishnugopa — Doddi Swami

The first part of the above names viz., Gola, Kotti, Doddi are Telugu words. It may therefore be asserted with confidence that the Telugu language was in usage among the people in Andhra Desa prior to 1st century A.D. itself as we find from the Rala's Gathasaptasati and the names of the villages, persons, etc. in the Prakrit and Sanskrit inscriptions.

The inscriptions of the Vishnukundins tell us that there were Brahmins who were conversant with the Vedas and Vedangas during their times besides the scholars in Buddhist literature.

The Tummalagadem copper plate grant of Vikramendrabhattarakavarma, Vikramendravarma was described as "Mahakaveh..."
This king appears to be a great poet and patronised scholars and poets.

All the Vishnukundin kings patronised Sanskrit as well as Telugu languages. They donated Agraharas to the Brahmins who were scholars and poets.

Agnisarma and Eswara Sarma mentioned in their inscriptions were stated to be "Yama niyamasvadhyaya sampannabhayam".

From the description of Madhavavarman IV as "Vidvadvija-guru vipra viridha tapasya janaasrayah" it can be deduced that the Vishnukundins loved learning and they showed exclusive devotion of the brahmin religion and learning. During the rule of Vishnukundins Sanskrit and Telugu languages were encouraged. The language of the Vishnukundin records is simple, chaste and direct and are almost free from errors.

The early Sanskrit records of south-eastern Deccan are written in prose. They are not composed on special occasions like erection of temples or other edifices and are not to be classed with Gadya kavyas. But that the writers of these records were not unfamiliar with the artificial style of Sanskrit prose is proved by the gaj-guna of the records. Reference may be made to the description of Madhavavarman I in the family of the Vishnukundins. The Chikkulla grant describes him with seven epithets, the longest having no less than fifty five syllables. The longest epithet describing Madhavavarman in Ramathirtham plates contains as many as forty nine syllables.
Most of the Vakataka grants are written in elegant Sanskrit prose. So it is not unreasonable to think that the influence of the Vakatakas was there on the Vishnukundins in respect of poetic style in writing the inscriptions.

A treatise on Telugu prosody by name *Janasraya Chandovichiti* was brought out probably by the king Madhavavarma IV who bore the title of "Janasraya". It appears that this was written by a scholar named Ganasvami in the form of a commentary. The king Janasraya is praised in the introductory verse of this work, as having put down all his enemies to have performed many great sacrifices. The book is incomplete. It is a treatise on the poetry in Telugu language during the time of the king. This book written in the name of the king Janasraya, contains detailed study of Gana, Yati, and Prasa pertaining to Telugu poems. In the 5th Chapter of this book, prosody on different varieties of prose and poetry in Telugu language that was in vogue in those times was detailed by one Ganaswami. He praised the contemporary books on Telugu prosody. The slokas (stanzes) of Kalidasa, Vararuchi, Sundarapandya, Sudraka, were quoted by him in Janasraya Chandovichiti. All the poets that were mentioned in this book lived prior to sixth century A.D. The poems mentioned in the 5th chapter of this book belongs to different categories and Seershika is one of them. This seershika is of seven types. This resembles the present poet of 'Seesa' in Telugu, Seershika must be the old form of present. Seesa, (Seershika-Seesaka-seesa). The remaining types of poems in this book
are also in accordance with the prosody of Telugu literature. 'Dvipada' and Tripada also were dealt with in the treatise. Several books have been written in Telugu language in 'dvipada', in later periods.

One modern writer has aptly said that Janasraya Chandovishiti is one of the early works entirely devoted to the Sanskrit metrics and that such a work might not have been produced in the land and the age barren of literary activities, the presence of which alone could demand such a treatise.

The foregoing facts go to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Telugu flourished in 5th and 6th centuries A.D. under the patronage of Vishnukundins. The label 'Tolachuravuru' in archaic Telugu found at Keesaragutta strengthens the view that Telugu language flourished in Telangana region and then extended to the other parts of the Andhra country.

In Chikkulla plates Indrabhattarakavarma was described as "Yathavidhi vinirypita ghatikavapta-punya - sanchaya" the king obtained religious merit by establishing ghatikas as ordained by law. Opinion differs regarding the derivation of the word ghatika. Dr. Kielhornz considers that it is synonymous with goshti and understands it to mean an assembly of the learned brahman scholars.

Dr. C.Minakshi derives ghatika "from the sanskrit root ghat, which means to be busy with 'to strive after', 'exert oneself for', 'be intimately occupied with anything'.
and understands it to mean "the place or institution where scholars and students strove for knowledge. Dr. N. Venkata-
ramanayya asserted that the word Ghatika denotes an educational institution. Ghatikas are known to have existed during the time of the Vishnukundins and for several centuries after them in Andhra and other parts of South India. It is evident from the Ohikkulla plates that the establishment of a ghatika was regarded as a pious act which had to be performed according to certain regulations prescribed by tradition and law.

The establishment of the ghatika was regarded as a meritorious act which secured happiness to its founder in heaven. The Tundi copper plate grant of Vikramendrā II, declared that his father Indrabhāttaraka acquired brahma-punya, that punya which enabled him to attain the brahman status by the foundation of the ghatikas.

The Traidraja ghatika at Kanchipuram, the most ancient institution of its kind in the south was founded by the Pallavas, and it flourished under their protection during the six centuries of their rule. Narasimha II known as Rajasimha spent much of his wealth on Gods and Brahmans and revived the ghatika in his capital. The Vishnukundin monarchs also must have fostered the ghatika in their kingdom in the same manner. Ghatikasthana was an educational institution of the residential type in which provision was
made not only for the boarding but also for clothing of its members including teachers and pupils. The ghatika is an institution, the establishment of which is governed by certain rules said to have been laid down in the Vedas.32

It may also be concluded that ghatika denoted educational institution where the knowledge of the Vedas was imparted to the Brahmins.
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