

**Short Studies In Indian History**

**The VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE**

by

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The great Vijayanagar empire existed in full vigour for the best part of three centuries from its foundation in 1336 A.D. It was the chief instrument for the preservation of the political independence from Muslim aggression and for the natural and unfettered development of South Indian culture in all its phases. The greatness of the kingdom can easily be gauged from the magnificence and wealth of its capital, the city of Vijayanagar, which is testified to by the travellers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the ruins of which even now excite our admiration by their grandeur and extensiveness. This empire and its wealth of output remained totally unknown till about half a century ago. Since then the researches of scholars have brought forth a wonderful harvest of history which is attempted to be reflected in a small compass in this booklet.

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## **THE VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE**

### **FOUNDATION AND BEGINNINGS**

#### **THE SANGAM DYNASTY**

The great empire of Vijayanagar comprehended all South India except bits of the Malabar coast and the extreme north-eastern part of the Madras sea-board. It lasted in vigour for the best part of three centuries from its foundation in 1336 A.D. and abundantly contributed to the enrichment of the arts, literature, religion and general culture of South India. The foundation of the empire was due, according to tradition, to the five sons of Sangam, a local chief, of whom the first three, Harihara, Kampa and Bukka may be remembered. These were assisted, rather inspired, by the celebrated scholar Madhava Vidyanaraya of the Sringeri Mutt, in the establishment of the city of Vijayanagar on the southern bank of the Tungabhadra river in the Hospet taluk of the Bellary district. The city was, according to tradition, first called Vidyanagar (city of learning) in honour of the sage; but it soon came to be known as Vijayanagar (city of victory), the Bijanagar of Muslim historians. It was also known as Anegundi (elephant-pit) which was a well-known place on the other side of the river. An early inscription describes the city thus: "Its rampart was Hemakuta, its moat the auspicious Tungabhadra, its guardian the world-protector, Virupaksha (god of Hampi), and its ruler the great king of kings, Harihara".

In the anarchy caused by the collapse of the Telingana kingdom of Warangal and the Karnatak power of the Hoysalas, under the pressure of Muslim invaders from Malik Kafur onwards, Harihara and Bukka contrived to found the new state. The first rulers of Vijayanagar were closely related by marriage to the Hoysala dynasty and the Sevuna Yadava monarchs of Devagiri. Tradition also says that Harihara and his brothers were first officers under the Kakatiyas of Warangal and had escaped, on the destruction of that city in 1323 A.D, to Anegundi, accompanied by Vidyanaraya. There are other variants of the tradition in which the details of the foundation of Vijayanagar and the events preceding it are slightly different.

When Dwarasamudra was sacked by the Muhammadans, the Hoysala king, Ballala III, transferred his capital to Hosdurga (or Virupakshapura) which has been identified with Hospet near Hampi; and his successor, Ballala IV, who was the last of the line, was known as Hampeya Wodeyar (Lord of Hampi). As Harihara and Bukka rose to power in

this area, Ballala IV quickly disappeared from the scene and was no more heard of after 1343.

Harihara's well-established power lasted 20 years (1336-1356). He was apparently crowned at Vijayanagar with all orthodox rites; and he assumed after 1340 full sovereign titles of Maharajadhiraj Rajapamesvara Vira Pratapa Maharaya, very likely after he had driven out the Muhammadans from several southern parts of the Deccans, by a combination with other Hindu princes. He built a fort at Badami to guard the north-western frontier against Muslim aggressions and celebrated a great festival of victory in 1346. Vijayanagar became the permanent capital; the Raya was greatly praised for his valour in war and succeeded in effectively throwing back the Muhammadans beyond the Krishna. The country to the south of that river and the coast of Kanara were brought effectively under Vijayanagar sway; and a proper system of administration through governors of provinces had been evolved when Bukka succeeded to the throne in 1356.

On the north, the aggressions of the Bahmani Sultans, Muhammad Shah I (1358-1375) and Mujahid Shah (1375-1378), which were naturally depicted with too favourable a colouring by the well-known historian Ferishta, were vigorously resisted. The partial success that Bukka and his ally, Vinayaka Deva of Warangal, secured against the Bahmanis in 1358 encouraged them to send an embassy to Sultan Firoz Tughluq of Delhi, soliciting his aid, for a combined action against Muhammad Shah I. But Firoz was indifferent to this application; and this emboldened the Bahmani ruler to make (1366) an attack on the Hindu power in the course of which he indulged in an indiscriminate massacre of men, women and children; Adoni was besieged, and Vijayanagar itself was threatened for over a month. It was now that the Raya's ambassadors proposed that in future wars the lives of unarmed inhabitants and prisoners should always be spared. We read that this merciful provision was agreed to and the good rule was observed for long afterwards. The next war was provoked in 1375 by the Muslim demand for the cession of Bankapur which lay on the direct route from the Hindu capital to the sea and by the counter-demand of the Hindus for the cession of the Raichur Doab as it had previously belonged to Anegundi. Mujahid Shah invested Vijayanagar and indeed penetrated to its outer walls where Bukka nearly lost his life leading a sortie against the invaders. But reinforced by his brother Marapa, the Raya contrived to beat back the besiegers who had also proceeded to a fruitless investment of Adoni. After this retreat of Mujahid Shah, the Hindu kingdom was not disturbed for over two decades.

Bukka Raya also successfully overcame the resistance of a powerful chieftain of the Tondaimandalam country, Sambuvaraya by name, and overran his districts of Padavidu and Conjeeveram. Kampa, the eldest son of the Raya who was the hero of the expedition against Samvaraya (1363), was able to drive out the Muhammadans who had remained in occupation of the Trichinopoly and Madura countries, where indeed the

Muslim governors first planted by Malik Kafur, now claimed independent rule as Sultans. Worship was restored in the ancient desecrated temples of Srirangam and Madura (circa 1370 A.D.) After these achievements, Bukka had the whole of the south brought effectively under his rule and styled himself the Suratrana, or the supreme ruler of the Hindu Rajas of the south.

According to the Vira Kampa Raya Charitam-the - poetic work of Gangadevi, the consort of Kampa-Kampa is held to have contributed largely to the driving out of the Muhammadans from the extreme south country, being divinely inspired to that task. Kampa was helped in his conquests by the illustrious Brahman general, Gopanarya, who was the governor of the Gingee province and who defeated the Muhammadans of Madura at Samayavaram near Srirangam. A contemporary inscription of Kampana at Tiruppullani near Ramnad indicates this conquest of the South. Still another general of Kampa was Saluva Mangu: who is styled Srirangasthanacharya - in the record and who was the ancestor of Saruva Narasimha the founder of the second dynasty. According to Ganga Devi, the rule of Bukka was so glorious that it seemed as if Manu himself had incarnated in his shape.

Bukka was followed on the throne by his second son Harihara II, as Kampa, his eldest son, had predeceased him. Harihara ruled for 29 years, but he was much troubled by external invasions and internal insurrections. There was a revolt in the Konkan besides risings in Tundira, and in the Chola and Pandya countries. Virupaksha, one of his sons, claims to have suppressed the Tamil regions once again and ruled as viceroy over them. Virupaksha seems to have overrun Ceylon also about this time (1385). An important event of this reign was the expulsion of the Muhammadans from Goa, sometime before 1391. There were waged two indecisive wars with the Bahmanis, resulting in the maintenance of the status quo so far as the boundaries of the two kingdoms were concerned. Harihara II was a strict Shaiva, but very tolerant towards other religions. He encouraged not only Sanskrit learning but also Kannada, and was styled in an epigraph, as "Karnataka Vidya Vilasa".

On the death of Harihara II, an attempt was made by all his three sons, Bukka II, Virupaksha I and Deva Raya I, to seize the throne. Each styled himself as the - Maharaya. The death of Virupaksha which occurred soon afterwards, rendered it easy for Deva Raya to succeed as against his half-brother Bukka, who eventually yielded to him, but continued to rule, with quasi-sovereign powers, over a part of the kingdom and more or less independently for over a decade. Thus there was no civil war, nor any palace revolution; nor was there any truth as to the extirpation of all the opponents of Virupaksha, as depicted in the highly exaggerated account as to a wholesale massacre given in the Prapannamrta of Anantarya .

Deva Raya I (1406- 1422), otherwise known as Pratapa-Deva Raya, thus came to the throne after a disputed succession. Soon after his accession he foolishly provoked a war with Sultan Firoz Bahmani (1397-1422) and had to conclude it by a humiliating treaty. In 1417 there was renewed war, in the course of which the Raya was assisted by the ruler of Warangal and secured a victory. Both the wars are but slightly referred to in the inscriptions of the Raya; and the story of his giving away his daughter in marriage to the Sultan at the close of the first war is not substantiated by the records and is probably unfounded.

On the Raya's death in 1422 he was succeeded by his son, Vira Vijaya Raya, otherwise known as Vira Bukka, who ruled for a couple of years, and "did nothing worth relating" according to the chronicler Fernao Nuniz; but he is credited in epigraphs with considerable military prowess and a zeal for religion and learning. His son, Deva Raya II, was co-regent with him. As usual a war was waged against the Bahmani Sultan who closely besieged Vijayanagar, attacked Warangal and destroyed it (1424).

The next king was Deva Raya II (1424-1446). Under him the Vijayanagar Empire attained its height of prosperity and fame. After a war with the Muhammadans in 1435, Deva Raya took steps to improve his army and induced a settlement of Muhammadan soldiers in his capital, commanding that "no one should molest them in the exercise of their religion" and making his Hindu warriors learn the discipline of the bow, so that he had "2,000 Mussalmans and 60,000 Hindus well skilled in archery, besides 80,000 horse and 200,000 foot armed in the usual manner with pikes and lances". Towards the close of his reign there was an attempt at the Raya's assassination, closely followed by a Bahmani war in which he lost his eldest son. Lakkanna Dandanayaka, the Raya's minister, led an expedition to Ceylon, apparently for the re-occupation of Jaffna, the earlier conquest of which is attributed to Virupaksha in about 1385. The Singhalese poems of the time speak of these invaders of Jaffna as Kanarese, and Valentijn, a Dutch writer of the early 17th century, makes a reference to the Kanarese voyage to the Ceylon coast. The rulers of Quilon and Ceylon, Pulicat, Peguana Tenasserim are said to have paid tribute to the Raya. Foreign travellers were attracted to the city of Vijayanagar which had then attained to a great height of wealth and magnificence.

Thus Nicolo Dei Conti, an Italian, who was one of the earliest Europeans to visit India, was at Vijayanagar in about 1420. He has left an account of the city which he calls Bizenegalia, and which had a circumference of 60 miles and contained 90,000 men fit to bear arms. The ruler, he believed, was more powerful than all the other kings of India. Abdur Razaak, the Persian ambassador, spent the greater part of the year 1443 at Vijayanagar which, in his words, was "a city exceedingly large and populous" with "a king of great power and dominion, whose kingdom extended from the borders of Sarandip to those of Kulbarga and from Bengal to Malibar, a space of more than 1,000

parasangs". The kingdom had 300 ports. The capital city had seven fortified walls; cultivated fields, gardens and houses covered the spaces between the three outer walls; and shops and bazaars were closely crowded from the third to the seventh walls. There were four bazaars in the innermost fortress, each being provided with a loft arcade and a magnificent gallery and with accommodation for the tradesmen of each separate guild. "The jewellers sell their rubies and pearls and diamonds openly in the bazaar". The traveller also describes the brilliant scenes and military reviews held at the palace on the Mahanavami day.

The royal court, we learn from other sources, was crowded by poets and writers. Srinatha, the famous Telugu poet, visited Vijayanagar and was honoured with the kanakabhisheka ceremony and with the title of Kavi Sarvabhauma. The Raya was inclined towards Vira Saivism; and the noted Vira Saiva writer, Chamarasa, wrote the well-known Prabhulinga Lila, noted alike for the elevation of its diction and the epic character of its contents. There was a stiffening of Hindu orthodoxy visible at the time.

The Rayas were praised as the protectors and upholders of varnashrama dharma; festivals and temple-worship were elaborated; and the practice of sati continued unabated, according to the evidence of epigraphs and the writings of the travellers. The practice of bargaining for marriage (Vara sulkam) was discountenanced; and kanyadana, i.e. free gift of the bride was enforced, according to a record among the Brahmans in the Padaividu province, of Karnataka, Tamil, Telugu and Lata communities living therein.

From Srinatha's Harivilasamu we learn that his patron, a great Vaisya merchant, imported valuable commodities by land and sea for the Rayas of Vijayanagar, the Gajapatis of Orissa and the Reddi chiefs of Kondavidu, among others. He thus supplied to these personages camphor plants from the Punjab, elephants from Ceylon, horses from Ormuz, musk from Goa, silk from China, & etc.

The Raya was a generous patron of other Hindu creeds like Jainism and Vira Saivism, and earned the good-will of the Muhammadan soldiers recruited to his army. He erected a mosque for their use in the capital and constructed a Jain temple near the royal palace in 1426 A.D.

Mallikarjuna, a son of Devaraya ascended the throne on the latter's death, He was known as Immadi Praudha Deva Raya and has been styled Deva Raya III. Apparently he was superseded, in the actual enjoyment of sovereignty by Virupaksha III in 1466, though he survived and continued to be regarded as rival sovereign for nineteen years more; till both the rival rayas were swept away owing to the usurpation of the throne by Saluva Narasimha Raya (1485) ,

Fairly early in his reign, Mallikarjuna was faced with a combination of the forces of the Bahmani Sultan, Alauddin II (1435-1458), and the Gajapati ruler of Orissa, Kapilaesvara. An alliance between these two had been in existence for some time, because the occupation of Vinukonda by Vijayanagar which thus extended its dominions from Kondavidu had to be counteracted. There took place two combined Bahmani-Gajapati invasions of Vijayanagar territory on the first occasion in 1446 soon after the death of Deva Raya and the next about 1462. On the former occasion the invaders seem to have been repulsed since a record of 1450 speaks of Mallikarjuna as Tulukkadala Vibhadhan (destroyer of Muhammadan forces). The second invasion took place in 1462 when the Bahmani forces were driven back from Devarakonda.

The confusion at the Bahmani capital which followed the death of Allauddin led Kapilesvara Gajapati to take his own separate measures for the conquest of the outlying portions of Vijayanagar in Tundira (Tondaimandalam). Kapilesvara first attempted to conquer the country round Kanchi in 1462. A record of 1473 belonging to the reign of Virupaksha III refers to the commotion caused by the Oddiyan (Orissan) menace and the consequent cessation of festivals in the temple of Jambai in the South Arcot district for ten years. From yet another record we learn that the Vishnu temple of Tirukoilur got out of repair in consequence of the Orissan inroad. To add to the confusion, the *raiyats* were cruelly harassed by the exactions of the officials and many had to abandon their homes. Mallikarjuna ordered the immediate ending of these exactions. But the situation did not improve. A turbulent feudatory actually occupied Kanchi in the years of anarchy following the Orissan invasion.

On the west coast the Raya ordered a revengeful massacre of the Muhammadans at Bhatkal on the ground that they had stopped their supply of horses to the Vijayanagar state. The survivors fled to Goa which was promptly seized by Mahmud Gawan, the great minister of the Bahmani Sultans, as the result of an attack which he launched both by land and sea (1469 A.D.); and an attempt of the Raya to retake the place was promptly foiled by the Muhammadan capture of Belgam (1472-73). As if to crown these misfortunes, a terrible famine broke out in 1475 and ravaged the land for two years. Whether the famine extended to the southern districts is not known; but certainly the Telugu districts greatly suffered from it. When the Kondapalli people rose against their Muhammadan governor and called in the aid of the king of Orissa. The Bahmani general, forced the Orissa army to retire, occupied the district and seized Rajahmundry. The temple of Kondapalli was razed to the ground and a mosque raised on its site. The Sultan, having secured Telingana, now advanced against Vijayanagar where, meanwhile, a political revolution, viz. the usurpation of Saluva Narasimha was in operation.



This Bahmani menace was met, rather forestalled, by Saluva Narasimha, the most powerful chief of the country between Telingana and the Karnatic, who boldly advanced to Rajahmundry to meet the enemy. Saluva Narasinga's first great service was the beating back of the Gajapati ruler who had contrived to occupy the whole region between Nellore and Rajahmundry and to station his army safely behind an entrenched wall on this side of the Godavari. Narasimha had been thus far successful against the Gajapati ruler and had also, in the meanwhile brought under his influence several of the provinces of the middle and the west. Thus he began with his ancestral governorship of Chandragiri and took successive possession of the territories of Udayagiri, and of the Orissan conquests upto the Godavari. He had also mastered Penukonda Kongu, Dhara-puram and Gingee. His inscriptions have been found in all the districts from Chandragiri to Seringapatam; and his usurpation of the imperial throne "merely completed this gradual acquisition of power and position". In all his campaigns, Saluva Narasimha was ably assisted by Araviti Bukka and his son Rama, by Ishvara Nayaka, the Tuluva, and his son Narasa Nayaka. Of these Narasa Nayaka was the most distinguished; but all the four earned honour in the campaigns against the last great Bahmani Sultan Muhammad III of Bidar (1463-1482).

Thus one can postulate a double revolution in Vijayanagar; one in 1466 when Virupaksha III, probably a nephew of Deva Raya II, secured his coronation as king, driving Mallikarjuna into exile and putting to death a number of his adherents. The date of this first revolution was Saka 1388 (1466 A.D.), which, the date of the Srisailam Plates which record a grant of Virupaksha III on the occasion of his coronation. This revolution was, perhaps effected without much bloodshed. Mallikarjuna, the dispossessed ruler, continued to live up to 1487; and certainly he, his sons, and one of his grandsons were also alive for a number of years after the accession of Virupaksha III. There is epigraphic evidence that these continued to rule, probably as local chiefs, in the old Tundira, Chola and Mysore countries. The testimony of Nuniz was that Padea Rao (Praudha Deva Maharaya), the grandson of Mallikarjuna, lost the kingdom to Saluva Narasimha; and this was probably true in the sense that "he was possibly the last direct lineal descendant of the Sangama dynasty who was legally entitled to the throne which Saluva Narasimha usurped from Virupabha III in or about 1485 A.D., the supplanting being virtually completed in that year."

The second usurpation of Saluva Narasimha, completed in 1485 A.D. when the Sangama dynasty had been totally eclipsed, was a gradual process. Saluva Narasimha was governor of Mulbagal and Penukonda in the first stage of his rise: even as early as 1459 his assertion of independent authority was visible and the Emperor Mallikarjuna and his minister had to visit Penukonda to settle matters with him. After 1466, he took advantage of the rivalry of Mallikarjuna and Virupabha to improve his own position

rapidly. And as an epigraph has it, in 1485, "when Virupaksha III was ruling the kingdom of the world, the administration was that of Narasimha Raja Wodeyar", and the actual power was in his hands. Even in his earlier years, Narasimha adopted in his grants the royal style of Rajaraya Maharasu. A record of his of 1486 discards all disguise and describes Narasimha thus: "When Rajaparamesvara Praudha Pratapa Narasimha Raya, seated on the diamond throne in Vidyanagara, was ruling the earth....." Thus the process of usurpation was now complete though yet, some provincial chiefs, in issuing grants still applied only the humbler title of Mahamandalesvara to him. Even this limitation disappeared in 1493 when he was openly styled Maharaya and described as ruling the kingdom of the earth. We do not hear of Virupaksha III at all after 1486; and perhaps his exit was inglorious.

It was now that we find Srivaishnavism increasing in influence in the land. One of its notable patrons was Timmanna Dandanayaka who did many acts of piety and charity at Melukote. The religion of the earlier rulers of the Sangama dynasty was Saivism of a tolerant kind. Harihara I and Bukka I were disciples of Kriyasakti who was possibly a Pasupata. The well-known minister, Madhava, Mantri was deeply devoted to this teacher who is mentioned as the kula guru, or the family priest, of Kampa II in the Vira Kampa Raya Charitam. Bukka I was very tolerant and his reconciliation of the Jains and Vaishnavas reveals a sincerity of faith "beyond the mere forms of faith."

The succeeding Rayagurus were also known as Kriyasakti. The Rayas also kept in close touch with the Advaita Sringeri Matha which was greatly encouraged by their generous grants up to the time of Mallikarjuna. Vidyasankara, Vidyaranya Madhava, and his brother Sayana were all held in great honour; and Vidyaranya and his brother were able to get the great commentaries on the Vedas written up under royal patronage. As a result of the mutual esteem and support of the Sringeri Matha and the rulers of the Sangama dynasty, Vedic scholarship and Sanskrit learning received great encouragement; and the revival of Brahmanism became very vigorous in the decades on either side of 1400. At the same time religious tolerance was looked upon as a virtue: it was indeed, a social and political necessity at that time. Jaina, Smartha, Sri Vaishnava, Madhava, Virashaiva, all these sects lived in amity side by side and Deva Raya II paved the way for generous tolerance to, and encouragement of, the Muslim settlers at the capital. The prevailing spirit of tolerance was best exemplified in the invocation of God Kesava at Belur, identifying him with the chief object of worship of every sect, both orthodox and heterodox. Thus we read: "He whom Saivas worship as Siva, the Vedantins as Brahma, the Baudhas as Buddha, the Naiyayikas skilled in proof as Kartta, the followers of the Jaina sasanas as Arhat, the Mimamsakas as Karma-that God Kesava ever grant your desires, ....."

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## THE EMPIRE INVIGORATED

### THE SALUVA DYNASTY

The second dynasty of Vijayanagar monarchs was a short-lived one. Saluva Narasimha was in supreme power down to 1497 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Immadi Narasimha entitled Dharmaraya. In a few years, however, the latter lost the throne to the Tuluva general, Nararasa Nayaka. Saluva is said to mean literally a hawk; and Saluva Mangu, the great grandfather of Narasimha was the first notable member of the family. According to the Jaimini Bharatamu, his fame spread far and wide and earned him the title of Parapakshi Saluva (a hawk to foreign birds i.e., death to foreign rulers.) The Saluvas were an ancient family of local chiefs of Western Karnata. The Saluvabhyudayan, written by Narasimha I's court poet, Rajanatha Dindima, and the Ramabhyudayam attributed to Narasimha himself, give a good account of the birth and pedigree of the usurper. Not only did Narasimha I drive out the Muhammadans from the empire but he also made attempts to extend his power beyond the traditional north-eastern limit of Udayagiri, along the east coast, up to the Krishna, as already noted.

He is said to have been anointed at Benares, evidently with a view to obtain religious sanction for his illegal, though justifiable, usurpation. He was a great benefactor of temples and a generous patron of poets. He assumed the titles of Sarvabhauma, Dharani-Varaha (the boar of the earth which he uplifted from the ocean of wicked kings) and Bhujabala Deva Maharaya. His inscriptions range in date from 1456 to 1496-97 A.D.; but his actual rule over the empire as its Maharaya lasted only about eleven or twelve years from the date of his usurpation. His position as Maharaya was so strong that Kasim Barid of Bidar sought his help against Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur. (The Bahmani Sultanate had begun to split into its five branches about this time.) The Hindus seized the country as far as Mudkal and Raichur; and Heemraje (who is, perhaps, identifiable with Narasa Nayaka) was the chief commander of this aggressive expedition (1489). But within a few years, the Adil Shah advanced against Raichur and recovered the two fortresses defeating Heemraje and according to one account, mortally wounding in battle the young son of the Maharaya. Firishta's reference to the confusion at the Hindu capital and his suggestion that Heemraje seized the throne is due obviously to his mixing up the events of a later date with this war.

Saluva Narasimha might on the whole, be justified in his usurpation. He restored order and good government in the empire and secured it against external attacks; and it has been aptly remarked that "He did not evade the Revolution but forestalled it in the larger interests of the country." "Talikota was in one word put off for another eighty years." His policy can be gleaned from a study of Pina Virabhadra's political maxims embodied in his works, Navaratnamulu and Saptangapaddhati, some of the verses of which are

specifically addressed to the Raya himself. The poems embody the ideal basic concepts of medieval kingship in South India-"a benevolent sovereignty limited by practical wisdom and immemorial custom". One historian compares Pina Virabhadra with the almost contemporary Italian writer, Machiavelli, and remarks that the latter had never a trick that the former did not apparently know.

Saluva Narasimha died some time after March 1497 and was succeeded by his son Immadi Narasimha (Narasimha II), otherwise known as Vira Dharmaraya. He was overshadowed by Narasa Nayaka, the Tuluva general who was described as the Regent (Karyakarta) in inscriptions from 1497 onwards. Immadi Narasimha was only the titular sovereign, and Narasa Nayaka conducted the administration in his name. Nuniz, writing about 40 years after Narasa Nayaka's usurpation, gives an obviously circumstantial account of how Narasa had the puppet Raya removed to Penukonda and had him subsequently killed there. But the inscriptions give a different version and show Immadi Narasimha as the king and Narasa Nayaka as the administrator. We have no contemporary record relating to Narasa Nayaka's actual accession to sovereignty; and we have definite evidence, on the other hand, of Immadi Narasimha surviving the Regent's death. Perhaps an unsuccessful attempt was made to get rid of the nominal Raya. Firishta's version of the events is very confusing and seems to be a jumble of the traditions current in his time (circa 1607 A.D.)

Narasa Nayaka's administration may be said to have lasted from 1497 to 1503. He was an able and vigorous ruler. His inscriptions have been found in the Mysore State and in the districts of Anantapur, Cuddapah, Trichinopoly and Madura. One of his officials was in charge of the Madura country and his power perhaps extended to Jaffna across the Palk Strait. Others were in charge of Pottappi Nadu, Southern Mysore, Haiva and Konkan. The magnificence of the capital city is testified to by Ludovico de Varthema, the Italian traveller, who says, that it was seven miles in circumference and had a triple, circlet of walls and its king kept 40,000 cavalry and 400 elephants.

## **THE APOGEE OF THE EMPIRE**

### **THE TULUVA DYNASTY**

Narasa Nayaka died in 1503, followed soon after by Immadi Narasimha; and Vira Narasimha, the eldest son of the late Regent, occupied the throne, disregarding the claims of the two young sons of Immadi Narasimha. There was great discontent displayed at Vira Narasimha's' usurpation; and, according to Nuniz, during the six years

of his rule he was always at war against the captains and feudatories of the kingdom. He had to put down risings in the Tuhi country, in Ummattur and other parts of Mysore, and spent 80 lakhs of pagodas in restoring peace which, however, was re-established stably only after his successor, Krishna Deva Raya, had undertaken a military tour soon after his coronation. Full imperial titles were assumed by Vira Narasimha only in 1508 and when he died in the following year he left to his successor an empty treasury and a country seething with discontent.

Vira Narasimha was succeeded by his half-brother, Krishna Deva Raya. The former had made an unsuccessful attempt to have his brother blinded in order to secure the succession of his own eight-year old son; but the plot miscarried owing to the cleverness of Saluva Timma, a just and far-seeing minister who served loyally Narasa NAYaka, Vira Narasimha and Krishnadeva Raya.

There are several hundreds of inscriptions belonging to Krishna Deva Raya's reign, scattered all over South India; and several literary works like Allasani Peddanna's *Manucharitamu* and Nandi Timmanna's *Parijatapaharanamu* were dedicated to the Raya himself. These and the contemporary Rayavachakamu and the latter work *Krishna Raya Vijayamu* of Kumari Durjati, give detailed information about the Raya whose own literary compositions, *Amukta Malyada* in Telugu and *Jambavati Kalyanam* in Sanskrit are also useful additional sources of information. All these sources furnish plenty of information as to the Raya's campaigns and wars and they are supplemented by the useful Portuguese chronicles of Dominigo Paes (dated about 1520) and that of Fernao Nuniz (composed in 1536) which have a peculiar and unique value.

The first resolve of the new Raya was to acquire the fortress of Udaygiri, RAichur and Mudkal and to push back the conquests of the Gajapathis and the Muhamadden. Albuquerque the Portuguese governor of Goa, proposed to the Raya that he would attack Calicut by land while he himself would attack it by sea and in return offered to help him against the Muhamadden enemies and to supply horses only to him and not to the Decanni rulers. Albuquerque repeated this offer to help to the Raya, after he took possession of Goa early in 1510 and requested permission to build a fort at Bhatkal for the protection of Portuguese trade. The Raya did not grant this request as, apparently, he was not yet in a position to break with the Adil Shah of Bijapur. The Muhamadden force attempted to retake Goa; and only when their second attempt failed in 1512, the Raya permitted Albuquerque to erect the fort at Bhatkal. Perhaps he had himself entertained a plan to seize Goa before it should be fortified, since, Timoja (Timma Raja) had promised the Raya that he could recapture the place while as yet it was in Muslim hands if he were helped by an army. This was before the Portuguese recaptured the place in December 1510. The Raya also contrived to secure for himself the monopoly of

horses imported through Portuguese agency and the service of Portuguese engineers and artillerymen.

The Raya's first campaign was directed to the reduction of Sivasamudram and Seringapatam. He next led an army against Udayagiri and recaptured it (1512-13). A second expedition to the east coast secured the forts of Addanki, Vinukonda, Bellamkonda, Nagarjunikona and other strongholds (1514). In 1515 the great fortress of Kondavidu was captured after a long siege and its defenders, Kesavapatra and Prince Virabhadra, son of Pratapa Rudra Gajapati, were taken prisoners. The Raya led yet another expedition to the East in 1516-17. After a halt at Bezwada he besieged and reduced Kondapalli, and prepared to advance into the kingdom of Orissa. He then advanced into the Kutb Shahi kingdom and captured several forts in the present Raichur, Nalgonda and Warangal districts, viz.. Kanakgiri, Khammamet (Kambamettu), Nalgonda, Jallipalli and others. He then advanced across the Godavari to Simhachalam and Potnuru (in the Vizagapatam district), drove Pratapa Rudra into flight and even ravaged Katakapuri (Kattak). Peace was concluded with the Gajapati; the conquered territories, north of the Krishna, were returned to him; and his daughter, Jagan Mohini, was married to the Raya.

After three years of peace the Raya declared war on Bijapur. Starting with a huge expedition, he besieged and took Raichur after a decisive victory, captured Kulburga and annexed the hotly contested Raichur Doab to Vijayanagar (1520). He is said in the epigraphs to have reinstated on the throne the dethroned Bahmani prince after the victory. He frustrated an attempt made by the Adil Shah in 1525 to retake Raichur. When he was preparing to secure Portuguese help for his projected expedition to Belgaum, the Raya suddenly died (1530).

The chief minister of the great Raya was Saluva Timmayya, a Brahman of the Kaundinya gotra, who had saved the life of his master from the evil design of Vira Narasimha. He was minister, provincial governor and general, and was appointed to the charge of Kondavidu after its capture. He left the duties of the governorship to his nephews, Nadinla, Appa and Gopa who were notable personages; and his son Timmanna Dannayaka and his brother Govinda also occupied high offices. Saluva Timma was the Mahapradhana and was commonly known to the people as Appaji. A record of 1510 praises him a 'Tantra Nayaka'. After his sudden fall and imprisonment owing to the Raya suspecting him of having a share in the poisoning of his young son, Tirumalayya Deva, he was succeeded by Ayyapparasa, son of Rayasam Kandamarasayya, who was the governor of Udaygiri and Kondavidu. Saluva Dannavaka was in charge of Tiruvadi Rajva (South Travancore) and of a large territory bordering on Ceylon.

Sevappa Nayakka, the progenitor of the Nayak rulers of Tanjore, was another high officer of the Raya. There were governors of the various provinces and districts whose names, though not occurring in the epigraphs, are mentioned in the Rayavachakamu and the Krishnaraya Vijayamu. One inscription at least claims for the Raya the conquest of Ceylon which was probably related to the disturbance of 1521; apparently Northern Ceylon was included in the governorship of Madura and this justified the Raya's assumption of lordship over the Dakshina Samudra.

The accounts of Vijayanagar and its glory, given by Duarte Barbosa, a cousin of the famous sailor, Ferdinand Magellan who probably visited the capital city before 1514 and by Domingo Paes, are well worth reading. Paes's narrative reveals a settled and orderly administration; he also describes the wonderful structures of the capital. Nuniz's Chronicle is more historical than descriptive; but furnishes a graphic picture of the Raya's camp in the Raichur campaign of 1520.

All this wealth and extravagance involved a heavy tax burden on the people whose suffering led to frequent royal emission of vexatious impositions like the tax on marriages and minor duties which were payable to the royal palace. One Bhattar Apatsahayar who greatly pleased the Raya by his warlike deeds at the battle of Raichur is, according to an epigraph, said to have waited on the Raya at Vijayanagar and got the order of tax remission ratified by him.

The great Raya enriched his capital with several beautiful temples, like the Hazara Ramaswami temple close to the royal palace and the Vittalaswami temple which is deemed to be "the extreme limit in florid magnificence", the great monolithic statue of Lakshmi Narasimha and the Home of Victory erected on the Raya's victorious return from the Orissa campaign. The Raya erected numerous additions to the great temples at Kalahasti, Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, Srisailam and Tirupati. He also made a triumphant march through the southern parts of his empire, worshipping at Rameswaram and other sacred shrines. Nor were irrigation works forgotten. The Raya excavated a tank at Nagalpur (near Hospet), a city of his own foundation and Kondanarasayya effected a similar work in the distant province of Madura.

Over 200 governors are said to have governed the various divisions of the empire on a quasi-feudalistic basis. The more important among them had charge of two or more provinces. All of them personally paid homage and tribute to the Raya at the Dussehra season when their tributes were fixed and the quota of their troops defined. One half of the total land revenue was paid to the Raya towards the expenses of his household and the maintenance of his army. The chief officers of government were the minister (pradhani), the treasurer, the guardian of the crown lands, the commandant of the palace guard, the chief master of the horse, the keeper of the jewels and the secretaries

who kept a diary of all that the king ordered. Each chief or governor had a representative at the capital who regularly informed his master of all that took place at the court. Though the primary strength of the army organisation lay in infantry, Krishna Deva Raya took great care to improve his cavalry by a steady and continuous purchase of good Arab and Persian horses through the Portuguese; he maintained the elephantry on its old basis, and trained the foot soldiers in the use of arrows, swords, spears and daggers and muskets, which had come into vogue.

He also adopted the use of big artillery and siege-guns in the battles of Kondavidu and Raichur. The royal hunt was a well-organised institution as was the case in the time of Chandragupta Maurya; and there were large game preserves and organised troops of foresters. Paes speaks very warmly of the fighting qualities of the troops and in the grand annual reviews. The Raya had more than 35,000 cavalry clad in armour; and each war elephant carried 4 warriors in its howdah and had sharp swords tied to its tusks.

The Raya's patronage of letters has been the most prominent feature of his reign. The traditional Ashtadik Gajas (eight great poets) that are said to have flourished in his court included Allasani Peddana, undoubtedly the greatest among them, who was honoured as the Andhra Kavita Pitamaha (Brahma to Telugu poetry) and whose Manucharitamu has become "the touchstone of all poetry since his time". In his Harikathasaramu known to us only in a fragmentary form, he refers to the Raya's reinstatement of the Bahmani prince to the throne of Bidar;-the title Yavanasthapanacharya; is actually applied to the Raya in a record of 1521. In another place the poet calls the Raya as the saviour of Kulburga and Cuttack. The Raya was deeply attached to the poet to whom a nayankara (fief) was given, besides the highest academic honours and rewards.

Nandi Timmayya dedicated his Parijatapaharanam to the Raya, and in it he has given us glimpses of the history of the period. Saluva Timma, the minister, and his nephews Nadindla Appa and Gopa were men of some literary fame. Lolla Lakshmidhara was the author of the Kaza and Kondavidu inscriptions and also of Saraswati Vilasa, the legal work which has been usually regarded as being the work of Pratapa Rudra Gajapati. The Kannada poet, Timmanna Kavi, was patronised by the Raya who greatly honoured the great

Dwaita scholar and Vendantic, Vyasa Raya Sabhapati of the famous Dindima family of Mullandram, near Arni, was the compiler of the florid phraseology of many of the epigraphs of the reign and probably the court poet in Sanskrit. Another member of the Dindima family was Rajanatha Kavi, the author of Saluvabhyudayam and Achyutarayabhyudayam.



The Raya himself was an accomplished Sanskrit and Telugu scholar. Besides several Sanskrit works, he wrote in Telugu, the *Amuktamalyada* (or *Vishnu Chittiyamu*) which narrates the story of the Sri Vaishnava saint Periyalwar and Andal, his daughter, who was married to God Ranganatha himself. In the fourth canto of the work, wherein, anachronistically Yamunacharya, a Vaishnava teacher who lived long after the saint is depicted as having become the ruler of a part of the Pandya kingdom and was therefore a Brahma-Kshatriya; and the words of political wisdom that he imparted to his younger son at the time of his abdication, are embodied in nearly eighty verses at the end of the canto.

This Rajaniti portion of *Amuktamalyada* is valuable because it embodies the Raya's political ideals and treats of every aspect of royal duties and depicts the prevailing practices and notions of the time. In this can be seen the Raya's practical knowledge of administration, civil and military; and it looks as if the Raya himself wished his young son whom he anointed as co-ruler to learn from his practical experience and knowledge. A learned writer has analysed these ideas under certain well-recognised heads: like the king's primary duty of protecting the subjects and redressing their grievances; the mutual dependence of sovereign and subjects; obedience of the subjects; the appointment of governors of forts and of the prime minister; separation of the administration of religious and public charities from revenue work; friendly relations to be maintained with frontier, aboriginal and forest tribes; relations with buffer states; benefiting the poor cultivators; utilisation of the revenues; qualities of the ideal king; the mode of conducting warfare; and stress on dharma as the motive power in the king's actions. The proverb- 'At the end of his rule there is Hell'-is quoted so that "the king should not forget his dependence on God for his own protection.'

Of Krishna Deva Raya's two sons, the elder had been poisoned soon after he was appointed as Maharaya and co-ruler even when he was only six years of age as the Raya wanted to make sure of his succession. The other son of the Raya was an infant only 18 months old when he died on the eve of his expedition against Belgaum. Achyuta Raya, Krishna Deva Raya's half-brother was crowned soon after, having been probably co-ruler for some time. According to the *Achyutarayabhyudaya* of Rajanatha the new Raya was anointed at Timpati and formally crowned at the capital. But his accession was disputed by two other claimants; and from out of this triangular struggle Achyuta emerged successful, with his brothers-in-law Salakam Pedda Tirumala and Salakam Chinna Tirumala as his chief ministers. Aliya Rama Raja and his brother, Tirumala Raja, both of whom had married daughters of Krishna Deva Raya also shared in the administration.

The administration of the Salakam brothers, whom Nuniz condemns as 'grasping Jews,' was very high-handed and resulted in the loss of Mudkal and Raichur to Bijapur and in

several internal commotions. Among these latter was the revolt of Sellappa Saluva Vira Simha Nayaka who took refuge with the Chera King (ruler of Tiruvadi rajya). Achyuta himself advanced to Srirangam and his minister, Salakam Tirumala pushed on to Madura and Tinnevely, and secured the submission of the ruler of Tiruvadi and the surrender of the rebel and of his ally. Visvanatha Navak, son of Nagama Nayak, who was the founder of the Madura Nayak dynasty, played a prominent part in this campaign and secured a footing in the Pandya country. Another general, Vittala Deva, participated in this campaign and was in sole charge of the war against Tiruvadi that was renewed in the next reign.

Firishta says that immediately after the death of Krishna Deva Raya, Ismail Adil Shah laid siege to Raichur and Mudkal and took them in three months. The Gajapati ruler similarly invaded the region south of the Krishna, probably in conjunction with Sultan Kuli Kutb Shah of Golconda who had reduced Kondapalli, according to a record of 1531. As Achyuta himself was at Bezwada in 1534, it is likely that the Kutb Shah withdrew after coming to a reasonable settlement. Raichur seems to have been recovered by the Raya from the Adil Shah who is held to have surrendered some territory and also failed in an attempt to retake the fortress, Achyuta's numerous gifts earned for him the title of Navakoti Narayana (Lord of fabulous riches) though Nuniz regarded him as rapacious. His court poet was Rajanatha Dindima who dedicated his Bhagavata Champu to his master. A lady, Tirumalamba, wrote the work Varadambika Parinayam (celebrating the marriage of the Raya with Varadambika) early in the reign. The Madhava saint, Vyasa Raya Tirta, continued to be influential at court, and also at the installation of his son Venkatadri as yuvaraja.

The Prince Venkatadri who was, perhaps placed on the throne, on the death of Achyuta towards the end of 1541, was a youth of some promise, but he was soon assassinated in the revolution that raised Sadaiva, a nephew of Achyuta to the throne (middle of J 542). In this revolution Aliya Rama Raja and his brothers Tirumala and Venkatadri espoused the cause of Sadasiva, while Prince Venkatadri's party was headed by the Salakam brothers, and assisted by Queen Varadambika. Rama Raja's part is described in the Telugu works-Vasucharita and Narasabhupaliyamu of the poet-laureate Bhattumurthi, the Narapati Vijayamu of Venkayya, Ramamatya's Svaramela Kalanidhi and the Annals of Hande Anantapuram. From these we infer that the Salakam Tirumala brothers' planned to usurp dominion for themselves after the assassination of their protege, Prince Venkatadri. That Rama Raja restored the Karnataka Rajya after killing Salaka Timma (the elder of the two brothers) is also confirmed in epigraphic records, one of which gives him the title of "Establisher of the Great Empire of Karnata" (Prajya Karnatarajya Sthapancharya).

Sadasiva was placed upon the throne as the eldest surviving male representative of the Karnata (Saluva) dynasty and was formally crowned (1542). Since he was only 16 years of age, Aliya Rama Raja assumed the office of Regent and Protector. From the available epigraphs we can note the successive stages by which Rama Raja completed his usurpation of the throne. Upto 1550, he was only Regent, styling himself the agent for the affairs of the kingdom. Then he put the Raja in confinement, but always treating him with dignity and honour. Now Rama Raja claimed equality with Sadasiva and issued grants in their joint names for the merit of both. This stage lasted till about 1563. Rama Raja's brothers did not, perhaps, relish the summary suppression of the monarch and made an unsuccessful stand against him for a time. After 1563 Rama Raja openly assumed full imperial titles and Sadasiva's name was omitted completely. This is confirmed by the observation of Cesare Federici, an Italian contemporary traveller in India, that Rama "sat on the royal throne and was called the king," though there is however no mention of his coronation.

Aliya Rama Raja was a descendant of Aravite Bukka who was a general of Saluva Narasimha; his father was a noted warrior and a prominent governor under Krishna Deva Raya who chose Rama Raja for his son-in-law; hence he came to be known as Aliya Rama Raja. Rama Raja was the governor of Udayagiri at the beginning of the reign of Sadasiva and spent the greater portion of his career in wars.

During the years of his regency and usurpation several notable wars were fought of which the expedition against Tiruvadi Rajya comes first. The expedition was in charge of Vittala Deva Maharaja, who was probably a cousin of Rama Raja and who was assisted by Vishwanatha Nayak, the governor of Madura and by his eldest son Krishnappa. The king of Travancore at the time was Unni Kerala Varma, who is said to have brought about a sudden stop at the miraculous intervention of St. Francis Xavier who had befriended the Travancore king to the advance of Vittala who had marched through the Aravoyamoli Pass as far as Kottar, near Nagercoil. Finally peace was signed in 1547; Tinnevelly was ceded to Vijayanagar, Tiruvadi Rajya agreed to pay an annual tribute, the birthday of Vittala Maharaja was celebrated in the Suchindram temple and Vishwanatha Nayak was appointed amaranayak of the ceded portions. There was a third invasion of Tiruvadi Rajya by Vittala in 1558; but this time the invading army was forced back after much bloodshed.

The Portuguese of Goa had cooled in their attitude towards Vijayanagar, even in the reign of Achyuta. They despatched a fleet in 1544 to plunder the temples of the south; but nothing came out of this. Rama Raja concluded treaties with the Portuguese in 1546-1547, by which Vijayanagar was given the monopoly of the purchase of all Arab and Persian horses landed in Goa, and the merchants of the Hindu empire were to send their goods through Honavar and Barcelore (Basrur) where Portuguese factors were to

purchase them. Iron and saltpetre were not to be exported to Bijapur; and all the cloth of the Hindu kingdom was to be purchased at Honavar by the Portuguese in exchange for copper, coral, vermilion, mercury, China silk and other commodities.

Rama Raja's attitude towards the Sultans of the Deccan was to keep them disunited always. But though he was successful for a time, he failed in the end. At first we find an alliance between Rama Raja and the Nizam Shah against the Adil Shah by which the latter was to try to capture Raichur and Mudkal and the former was to take Sholapur and Kulbarga. Within four years Rama Raja became an ally of Ibrahim Adil Shah (1535-1557) who aided him with a large army for the defence of Kulbarga against Ahmadnagar. The youthful Ali Adil Shah was helped to take possession of his kingdom in 1557; again he sought the Raya's aid against a combination of Ahmadnagar and Golconda to take Kalyan (1558). Rama Raja sent his brother Venkatadri to attack the southern districts of Golconda, and he took Kondapalli, Masulipatam and other fortresses.

Firishta complains bitterly of the havoc created by Rama Raja's troops in the enemy territories, especially at Ahmadnagar, which wounded the religious feelings of the Muslims. He wrote: "The infidels of Beejenuggur, who for many years had been wishing for such an event, left cruelty unpractised." It was these excesses that invited the reprisals of the Muslims on Vijayanagar after the Hindu defeat at Talikota. The military prestige of the Hindu power was very great. Not only did Rama Raja effectively help the Adil Shah in putting down the rivalry of his uncle, Prince Abdulla, who had sought asylum and help, from the Portuguese, but also two expeditions were fitted out against Ceylon. In the first of these, the king of Kandy, though helped by the Portuguese, was defeated by the combined forces of the Vijayanagar viceroy of the south, Vittala, and of Vishwanatha Nayak of Madura. The second expedition was fitted out about 1563 under Krishnappa Nayak, son of Vishwanatha and inflicted another defeat on the Kandyan army. Rama Raja was thus the greatest warrior of his generation and the most powerful ruler south of the Vindhya. But with the growth of his power, he threw all caution to the winds and displayed great hauteur in his personal bearing. He was, however, very careful in strengthening the defences of the capital and fortifying the hills along his northern frontier.

The hatred and jealousy of the Deccani Sultans at the Raya's great power ultimately led to the formation of a Muslim confederacy against him. There were other factors at work like the spirit of reprisals for the outrages committed by his troops and their insolent behaviour in the last expedition against Ahmadnagar. Ali Adil Shah who professed an almost filial affection for Rama Raja was really the first to move in the formation of a confederacy against him. Ibrahim Kutub Shah (1550-1581) and Hussain Nizam Shah (1554-1565) who bore the most violent hatred towards the Raya readily supported the

idea of a combination against him. The Nizam Shah agreed to give his daughter Chand Bibi in marriage to the Adil Shah, with the much coveted fort of Sholapur as dowry. The Barid Shah of Bidar also joined, but the adherence of the Imad Shah of Berar, though claimed by Couto, cannot be regarded as absolutely certain.

The confederate Sultans assembled at Bijapur with their armies and marched south in the last week of December 1564, and then encamped in the neighbourhood of Talikota, 25 miles north of the Krishna. Kishwar Khan was in command of the Bijapur army, Mustafa Khan was at the head of the Golconda contingents and Inayatullah was in charge of the Nizam Bhahi forces. According to Firishta, the Muhammadan army was composed of 50,000 horse and 3,000 infantry. On the other side, the Hindus mustered 70,000 horse and 90,000 infantry, besides a large number of camp followers-an extremely sprawling and unmanageable camp. Venkatadri and Tirumala, the Raya's brothers, had advanced to the south bank of the Krishna and fortified their encampment with cannon and rockets mounted on earthworks, so that they could effectively bar the passage of the enemy across the river. By a feint, the Muhammadans drew the Hindus some miles down the river bank, and then suddenly returned and crossed it at the original ford at the bend of the river near Ingalige which was undefended.

According to Sewell, the decisive battle was fought near the little village of Bayapur: but Kannada and Maratha accounts definitely describe the battle site as being situated between the villages of Rakshasji and Tagdiji. It was fought in the plain to the south of the Krishna, about 10 miles from its southern bank. Firishta says that Rama Raja rejected the overtures of the allies made on the eve of the battle, as he evidently did not believe in their genuineness. He commanded the centre of the Hindu vanguard, entrusting the left to Tirumala and the right to Venkatadri. The enemy camp was protected with a row of cannon in front strung together with chains and ropes, behind which were stationed elephants in serried ranks with their tusks armed with sharp sword-blades. An experienced Turkish gunner, Chalabi Rumi Khan, was in charge of their artillery.

Rama Raja was very confident of securing an easy victory. Tirumala, who commanded the right wing, beat back the Golconda troops, but lost an eye and also his son Raghunatha. Rama Raja, who was thoroughly infuriated, charged violently on the allied centre and thrust back the Ahmadnagar troops. Ali Adil Shah who had been thrust back by Venkatadri, then returned to check Rama Raja's advance at the centre. Rumi Khan's artillery kept up a heavy fire. Yet the Hindus seemed to gain ground as the two flanks of the enemy were compelled to fall back. But the Nizam Shah held firm in the centre which was still unbroken, while the artillery worked with deadly effect. Two Muhammadan captains-one of whom, Ainul Mulk, was wounded and the other who Rama Raja used to call as his own the brother who was on the Raya's side went over to the enemy at the critical moment when the Hindu centre had begun to give way.

Rama Raja himself was wounded. He was caught by the enemy and immediately beheaded by the Ahmadnagar Sultan who exclaimed: "Now I am avenged on thee! Let God do what he will do to me!" Adil Shah hastened to the scene to beg for his benefactor's life, but he was too late. The Raya's death was the signal for the disruption of the Hindu forces and their retreat towards Vijayanagar. According to Firishta, as many as 100,000 persons perished during the battle and in the course of the retreat.

Neither Venkatadri nor Tirumala made any attempt to rally the troops or defend the capital against the approaching Muhammadans. Venkatadri fled to a distant fortress, presumably Chandragiri or Tirupati, and lived there for some time. The victorious Sultans did not continue their pursuit of the retreating troops to the capital. They returned to the camp and allowed their soldiers to plunder freely, so that "every private man in the allied army, became rich in gold, jewels, tents, arms, horses and slaves."

The brothers who survived the disaster, Tirumala and Venkatadri probably planned, to judge from their subsequent action, to abandon Vijayanagar temporarily, remove the royal family and the treasury to Tirupati, and to reoccupy and rehabilitate the capital after some time. While Venkatadri had hurried away to Chandragiri and Tirupati, Tirumala set out with Sadasiva Raya, the nominal emperor, the court and its vast treasures, held to be worth more than a hundred millions sterling-for the hill shrine of Tirupati which had become a special object of veneration for the Rayas since the times of Saluva Narasimha.

The retirement of Tirumala and the royal court left Vijayanagar ill defended. It was rifled and plundered by the wild Bedars who looted the shops and houses. When the victorious Sultans reached the place after a short time and made their triumphal entry, they began a systematic course of plunder and iconoclastic excesses. In the opinion of Father Heras the city was burnt, and almost all the idols in the temples were destroyed.

After a few months' stay at the capital the Sultans accepted the peace proposals made by Venkatadri, ceding back all the territories taken by Rama Raja. They returned to Raichur where they separated. Tirumala returned to Vijayanagar (July-August 1565), tried to rehabilitate the city, induced the Portuguese to recommence their trade in horses and even interfered in the politics of the Musli states. But within two years he found it impossible to continue any longer at Vijayanagar; and, according to the evidence of Cesare Federici he transferred his capital to Penukonda in July 1567. The city was finally abandoned, and the epigraphs of 1568 definitely state that the city had fallen into complete ruin. The earliest record of Penukonda, mentioning Sadasiva as emperor is dated Saka 1489 (A.D. 1567-1568); and Federici describes Vijayanagar as it was at that time thus: "The cities of Bezeneger is not altogether destroyed, yet the houses stand still, but empty, there is dwelling in them nothing; and as is reported, but

Tygres and other wild beasts". Vijayanagar, the great city of the Hindus thus ceased to exist. "What the hand of man had still left standing Time did not spare. Rank ruin followed: A ruin, yet what ruin! from its mass Walls, palaces, half-cities have been reared." But as long as the grand ruins stand men shall continue to cherish memories of its ancient grandeur and of its great men and traditions.

Rama Raja's rule had been neither that of an unpopular usurper, nor that of a hard-hearted jailor, but was a continuation of the military powers and cultural activity that marked the reign of Krishna Deva Raya. Besides the Telugu poet Bhattu Murthi (held to be the same as Rama Raja Bhushana.), the great Kannada hymnographer, Purandra Dasa too flourished during his reign. Vadiraja Tirtha who helped in the building of the temple of Sri Krishna at Udipi and who was, like Purandara Dasa, a pupil of Saint Vyasa Raya, wrote many works in Sanskrit and Kannada. Likewise Vijayendra Tirtha who controverted the critiques on Madhwa philosophy made by Appayya Dikshita, the great Advaita scholar, and Emmebasavendra, a Virasaiva teacher, also adorned the age. Tatacharya (Tatarya), a noted Sri Vaishnava scholar, was mentioned in several grants of the Aravidu Dynasty; while his son, the better known Lakshmikumara Tatacharya, was the Raya Guru of Venkata I (1586-1614). There also flourished Doddayya-charya of Cholasimhapuram who wrote his work, Chandamarutam, in refutation of Appayya Dikshita's Advaita Siddhi. The creed of Sri Ramanuja was popularised among the chiefs of the Telugu country and Vaishnavism became the most dominant faith in the Hindu empire before the close of the 16th Century.

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## THE ARAVIDU DYNASTY

Sadasiva was recognised as the nominal emperor till his end in 1570. He was of course under the guardianship of Tirumala. His Krishnapuram Plates (A.D. 1567) show that he was till respected by the southern feudatories. How he disappeared is not known. We learn from several sources that he is said to have been murdered by Tirumala's son. With his death the Tuluva dynasty came to an end, giving place to the fourth (Aravidu) line, begun by Tirumala I, who had himself crowned as the de jure ruler, on the death of Sadasiva (middle of 1570), though perhaps there were some disputes about his right to the succession.

He had already met fairly successfully the steady pressure of Bijapur which had secured Dharwar and Bankapur. The Bijapuri general Mustafa, now advanced on Penukonda itself, but was beaten off by Chennapa, one of the generals of the Raya; and Penukonda was now greatly strengthened. The Raya's sons were, as usual, appointed

to the great governorships. Of the eldest we do not hear much. The next Sriranga was in charge of the Penukonda country; Rama ruled over the Seringapatam country; and the last, Venkata, was the governor of the Tamil districts. Sriranga soon became the yuvaraja. Besides the royal governors there were the great hereditary chiefs, the Nayaks of Madura, Tanjore, Gingee and Vellore, the Wodeyars of Mysore and the rulers of Keladi who took great part in the administration of the country.

Tirumala appears to have reigned down to 1578. Penukonda had become the royal residence, and Chandragiri a subsidiary capital. The Raya had Bhattu Murthi for his court poet; and his patronage of literature earned for him the fame of being as learned as Bhoja;" he is also credited with the authorship of a commentary on the Gita Govinda of Jayadeva. He enjoyed a reputation for energetic rule, and earned the title of Dharani Varaha, "having delivered the earth from the ocean of his enemies" -perhaps containing a gentle allusion to the supersession of Sadasiva. He is said to have struck a new type of coin called the "Three Svami Pagoda" containing on the obverse three figures. Sri Ranga succeeded to the throne and ruled till 1586.

He had been yuvaraja since 1571 and his epigraphs range from that year to 1585. He was also an ardent Vaishnava and a generous donor to temples and learned men. Among the temples patronised by him may be mentioned those of Srimushnam (in South Arcot district), Melkote (in Mysore) and Ahobalam from which he expelled the forces of the Kutb Shah and his ally Malakappa Naidu. The deification of the great Sri Vaishnava teacher, Sri Ramanuja, was apparently completed about this time; and the shrine of the Saint at Sriperumbudur (in Chingleput district) was enlarged and enriched greatly by the Raya.

The Muslim aggressions decreased in intensity after the death of Ibrahim Kutb Shah in 1580. It was, however, only the territory round Ahobalam that the Hindus were able to recover. The territory north of Penukonda which the Muslims had attacked more than twice, passed firmly into the possession of Bijapur, while Golconda had taken hold of a good portion of the province of Udayagiri.

The Annals of Hande Anantapuram informs us that the Raya was even taken prisoner on one occasion by the Muslims but this is not confirmed from Muhammaddan sources. The Raya's policy is praised in the Kuniyur grant of Venkata that "he was renowned in the eight regions" and had crossed the milk ocean of "crossed the milk ocean of policy".

The court-poet Rayasam Venkatapathi praised the Raya's warlike qualities in his work "Lakshmi Vilasamu.". It is doubtful whether Sri Ranga left any issue or not. He was followed by his younger brother, Venkata I (1586-1614) who was perhaps .the best



known and the most powerful ruler of the Aravidu dynasty. The empire of Venkata comprehended the greater part of South India, south of the Krishna. According to Du Jarric, it also included the western kingdoms of Malabar and others like Honovar and Bhatkal to the north and on the east it stretched for two hundred leagues of coast along the Bay of Bengal from Cape Comorin to the limits of the Orissa kingdom. Penukonda continued to be the capital, though the Raya spent a great deal of his life at Chandragiri. It has been suggested by the Rev. H. Heras that after the Bijapur invasion of 1592. Venkata established himself and his court permanently at Chandragiri. But several records of a later date definitely mention Penukonda as the capital. It is a remarkable fact that Penukonda which continued to be mentioned as the capital in many later records was usually referred to as Penukonda alias Vijayanagar or Hampe Hastinavati. "The capital was always Vijayanagar wherever it was situated, because the State of Vijayanagar had the headquarters located there. A map of 1652 republished by the Rev. H. Heras in his book (The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara) marks Chandragiri as 'Bisnagar or Chandragary' because it was the residence of the Vijayanagara rulers .

In the first years of his reign, Venkata carried on aggressive warfare against the Muhammadans. He staved off a threatened advance on Penukonda by the Golconda forces and forced them to retreat, being helped by Prince Raghunatha, son of the Nayak of Tanjore. The retreating Golconda army was pursued and defeated on the bank of the Pennar river, which ran red with blood. The Vilapaka Grant and the Dalavay Agraharam Plates (1586) give details of this victory. Venkata also helped the chief of Udaya giri against the Kutb Shah and enabled him to plunder all the territory up to Kondavidu and the Krishna river. The Raya also strove to recover Gandikota and help even distant chiefs like the Raja of Kasimkotta (in Vizagapatam district) who solicited his support. He is believed to have taken Kondavidu and the Ramarajiyamu tells that the Kutb Shah sought peace and agreed that Krishna should be the boundary between the two kingdoms. While even in the first years of his rule, the Raya was recognised as the overlord of Udayagiri, we learn from an inscription of Kanduka of 1613-1614 that the Muslims continued to retain their hold over the northern part of the Nellore district.

On the western part, the Muslim aggression was even more formidable. Venkata sought the alliance of Burh Nizam Shah II of Ahmadnagar, against Ibrahim Adil Shah II. When the latter laid siege to Penukonda the Raya retired to Chandragiri and the besieged fortress was bravely defended by Matla Ananta, his minister, who, according to epigraphic evidence, destroyed the pride of the Sultan. After this war the Hindus were free for some years, from Muslim attacks. A Mughal envoy from Akbar arrived at the Raya's court in 1600, probably with a view to secure first-hand information about the strength of the Hindu kingdom. A second Mughal embassy was sent in 1604 when Ibrahim Adil Shah also solicited the Raya's aid against the rushing tide of Mughal aggression. Venkata is

said to have declared "My kingdom is in the hands God; and if He wishes to deprive me of my Empire, who will be able to stop Him? So much is certain, however that I shall never kiss the feet of a Muhammadan; should he (Akbar) ever come here war is sure to follow."

An Adil Shahi expedition was directed against western Kanarese country and Mysore in 1593; but Bijapur hold over the Mysore country did not last long. Seringapatam was taken from Tirumala, the last of royal viceroys, by Raja Wodeyar of Mysore, apparently with the Raya's consent; and in 1612 Raja Wodeyar was firm in the possession of Seringapatam.

The Raya's relations with the great Southern Nayaks were generally cordial. Achyutappa Nayak of Tanjore was uniformly loyal to him; and his successor Raghunatha was equally so down to 1610. Krishnappa Nayak of Gingee, who is spoken of highly in the Jesuit letters, revolted and had to be brought back to obedience more than once. Virappa Nayak of Madura showed some opposition about 1592, but submitted to pressure. His successors continued to be loyal, though occasionally they had to be coerced into paying tribute regularly. Lingama Nayak of Vellore rebelled in 1603 both against his immediate master, the Nayak of Gingee, as well as against the Raya. Assisted vigorously by Chenna, the Raya forced Lingama's submission and imprisoned him. Vellore itself became a second royal residence from about 1606 and came to be known as Raya Veluru. It was during the reign of Venkata that the Dutch and the English first appeared on the east coast. The Dutch attempt to obtain a footing at Pulicat was attempted to be counteracted by the Portuguese influence at the court of Venkata; and when they settled at Pulicat, they proved a thorn on the side of the Portuguese of San Thome who razed to the ground the Dutch fort in 1612. Before the end of the reign the Dutch had regained their hold at Pulicat and also foiled the English attempt to do some trade at the place.

Venkata was a great friend of the Portuguese missionaries and frequently had discussions with them about their religion. But they could not make any headway in their main work of conversion and had to confess that "the gate is shut" and "great grace of God is required to open it." From the Rev. H. Heras's publication of the Jesuit letters of the time, we get a very good view of Venkat's spirit of tolerance on religious topics.

Venkata's famous minister, Matla Ananta, was a warrior and poet. He fortified Siddhout, and his son, Tiruvengalanatha, built the gopura of the temple of Lower Tirupati. Yachama Nayak, the Velugoti chief, was another notable figure of the time and a devout Sri Vaishnava. Gobburi Oba Raya was a noted general and also the father-in-law of the Raya. The Gobburi chiefs became the chief partisans of the pretender prince in the coming civil war. Lakshmi Kumara Tirumala Tatacharya was the Raya's guru and

enjoyed considerable influence with the Raya. His power was evidently felt even by the Jesuits at the court. Venkata's reign was re-markable for its group of great literary and religious personages-including Appaya Dikshita, the well known minister of the Tanjore Nayaks; Virupaksha Pandita, author of Chenna Basava Purana; and the great Jaina grammarian and poet, Bhattalanka Deva.

At the Raya's court Telugu received special attention; and among the Telugu writers of note, we have, besides Matla Ananta, Pingali Suranna and Tenali Rama Krishna Kavi. Tenali Ramakrishna was known as the Vikatakavi (Jesting Poet). His wit has been conveyed to the people of South India, through numerous jests and practical jokes he is said to have practised on his brother poets and even on the Raya himself. He was an impromptu versifier; and the stories of his many hits at Tatacharya strengthen the view that they were both contemporaries. For his *bon mots* his name has earned a reputation equal to that of Bir-Bal; but his literary greatness rests on the merits of his serious works like the Panduranga Mahatmyam.

The death of Venkata led to a tragic civil war between the adherents of Sri Ranga II, the legal claimant to the throne, headed by Yachama Nayaka, and the supporters of the putative son of the late Raya, headed by Jaga Raya, a brother of the queen who claimed to be the prince's mother. Sri Ranga was very weak and failed to justify his choice. Jaga Raya contrived to get his nephew, the putative prince, crowned as the emperor. Yachama Nayaka stood firmly by the side of the deposed Raya; and he contrived to save Sri Ranga's second son, Rama, just on the eve of the massacre of the entire royal family in cold blood by Jaga Raya. It was this massacre that precipitated the civil war which resulted in two years of confusion and anarchy in the land (1614-1616). After a number of skirmishes the war was ultimately decided at the fateful battle of Toppur (Tohur) quite close to the Grand Anicut on the Kaveri in 1617. Among the great feudatories, the Nayak of Tanjore alone remained loyal to Yachama and the other great Nayaks had gone over to the side of Jaga Raya. In the battle Jaga Raya fell and the young prince Rama was installed as emperor by Raghunatha Nayak of Tanjore and by Yachama. Jaga Raya's brother, Yati Raja and the turbulent Nayak of Gingee were brought to submission only with difficulty and the wily Madura Nayak had to be conciliated by Raghunatha.

Yachama was the real hero of this civil war and well deserved the title of the "Saviour of the Empire." But the integrity of the empire had gone down too much. Muttu Virappa of Madura and his successors, Tirumalai Nayak (1627-1659) definitely denied the suzerain claims of the Raya. Equally weak was the rule of Sri Ranga II's successor, Venkata (1630-1642). Sri Ranga III (acc. 1642) strove hard, as between Muslim pressure from the north and the disloyalty of his feudatories, to make the best of a bad and steadily deteriorating situation.

In the half a century of confusion that intervened the battle of Toppur and the death of Shahji in 1664, Mysore did some service to the Hindu empire by resisting the aggressions of Bijapur, though ultimately the latter power was able to occupy the districts of Chitaldrug, Tumkur and Kolar and also one half of Bangalore. Through all the vicissitudes of the empire in this epoch, Madura discharged no such duty either to herself or to the empire. When Sri Ranga III ascended the throne of Chandragiri about 1642, the empire was in a very precarious condition and could barely maintain an unequal struggle for existence, chiefly through the want of loyalty of the feudatories of the south, particularly of the powerful Tirumala Nayak of Madura. The Raya made even at this moment an organised, though unsuccessful, effort to bring these Nayaks under effective allegiance to him. The empire had thus to bear alone and unaided the brunt of the aggression of Golconda under Mir Jumla and his lieutenants. Madura which was the only strong feudatory power, did not perceive this root danger to the Hindu cause, and its non-cooperation and frequent display of treachery might be regarded as the primary factor responsible for the extinction of the empire.

Shahji, the Maratha General of Bijapur in the south from 1637 who had a large share in the conquest of the country from Bednur to Vellore, should be remembered as the preserver, to an appreciable extent, of the Hindu heritage of the Vijayanagar empire and its feudatory kingdoms and as having injected into it a Maratha strain which was perhaps the only available and effective remedy for its preservation. His son Ekoji secured Tanjore from its last Nayak in 1675 and established a dynasty there which lasted for over a century and a half.

The Nayaks of Tanjore, Gingee, Madura and Ikkeri were in a special sense the continuators of Vijayanagara tradition in culture, art and architecture. The Rayas had evolved a distinct school of architecture which used with success the most difficult material and produced a brilliant hereditary group of sculptors and painters.

Enough has been said about the renaissance of Hindu religion and literature under the patronage of the Rayas. It is not possible here to describe the administrative system at length. The big empire was divided into provinces, not unlike the subhas of Mughal days. V. A. Smith estimates the number of such districts to be two hundred, but in reality the number was much less. These provinces were in charge of governors who were *de facto* sovereigns in their respective areas. They paid fixed revenue to the state and besides undertook to furnish troops when called upon to do so. Justice was administered according to local custom and it seems that no hardship was felt by the inhabitants. The village panchayats continued to function as in days of yore. Land was the chief source of royal revenue. The statement of Nuniz that the peasantry paid nine-tenths of their gross produce is incorrect. Rent was collected in money and payment in kind was expressly forbidden at any rate in the days of Harihara I. The criminal code

was not severe, but the method of punishment in some cases was cruel and almost barbarous. The practice of duelling was very common but a special license had to be obtained from the ministers for conducting it. The Vijayanagar kings maintained an army on the Mauryan scale, necessitated no doubt by the presence of ambitious Sultans on the northern frontier.

It is thus clear that the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar and its great cosmopolitan capital, which flourished for nearly three centuries, can compare favourably with any empire, eastern or western, regarding richness in cultural and architectural output. It is a pity that the empire has remained forgotten so long and its glorious capital has become ruined out of shape. Vijayanagar is, and is bound to remain, the richest embodiment of the South Indian genius.

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