

Amaravati in Early Medieval and Medieval periods: A study

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Abstract :

Thus through the history of Coastal Andhradesa Dharanikota became a place of much attraction for Traders, Religious Acharyas, Political invaders and the Armies on the defense. Although it remained to be the seat of a feudatory family for several centuries it could retain Urban character till as late as the nineteenth centuries. When it was made the seat of the Zamindar of Chintapalli named Vasireddi Venkatadrinayudu, who founded the modern town of Amaravati.

Key words :

Dhanakata, Pallava, Dhanyakataka, Amareswara, Golakimatha.

Introduction :

Amaravati is one such place of Palnadu in Andhra Pradesh. With its own individuality in matters of civilization and culture. However, the fact that no part of the country is so much individual as to flourish absolutely independent of others, and no region could remain a loaf from others to the extent of without influencing, or getting influenced by others, is never to be ignored. Hence, the present study is not strictly limited to the region of Amaravati as a water-tight compartment and adequate importance has been accorded to the corresponding developments in the regions around, of the same time, and developments in other regions to have come over here and blossomed, without which the study remains not only incomplete but also unintelligible.

Dhanakaonda, the original name of Dhanyakataka is the name of the well known historical town Dharanikota near Amaravati. Interestingly, this place has changed its name at least four times. It was a fort town in the said names, a fact which is also supported by the ruined extensive mud rampart. In Vemareddi's Amaravati inscription of the fifteenth century it is mentioned as Dhanyavati, the place is named after dhanya, i.e. some grain, paddy, millet, etc. But according to the late M.S. Sarma, Dharanikota represents the place as a Centre for the studies of Dharaains, the Buddhist tantras. All these references are subsequent to 2nd century B.C. and not earlier. Its earlier name is not known. It cannot be said that the place was not a habitatioal site in that earlier period.

Objectives :

1. To identify the importance of the Amaravati region.
2. To identify the Amaravati as a Economical centre.
3. To identify the Amaravati as a Saiviate centre.
4. To identify the Amaravati as a Political centre .

Palanadu:

Some say that Pallinadu got that name because of the many Buddhist colonies called Pallis in the region. But palli need not be hamlet of the religious sects of the Buddhists or Jains. There are several pallis where no such vestiges are noticeable, e.g. Vangapalli, Edlapalli and many suburban attached to big villages pali means Buddha dharma and not a particular language. Palinadu might have been the original name, indicating the prevalence of Buddha dharma in the region and became Pallinadu.

The name Dhanakada suggests its being the place where large quantities of grain were stocked, sold and explored by boats on the river. The place with its natural riverine advantage acquired commercial importance even before the dawn of the Buddhist epoch.

Obviously grain varieties of the dry crops might have formed the bulk of the trade commodity. Caravans from the north found it is a comfortable place to cross the river and pitch their camps to cover a large business area to the South of the river. In the context of trade activity at the place it is worth recalling the discovery of the huge hoard of Silver Punch marked coins hoards in the country near the stupa site at Amaravati.

Thousands of Buddhists were participating in the religious congregations that were held here from third century B. C. to about fourth century A.D. In fact Dhanakada was the principal religious centre for the Buddhists in the south. It cannot be an exaggeration that by virtue of its commercial, religious and political importance this town was the biggest and most populous town in Andhra till at least about 600 A.D. Hyuan Tsang who visited the place at that time recorded there are a crowd of Buddhist monasteries but most of them were deserted, about 20 being in use.

It is noted to be a military centre in those early centuries, when the Pallavas had to defend themselves against the inroads of the Vishnukundi armies from beyond the river Krishna. During this period the Pallavas, according to tradition posted a feudatory family at this strategic point as frontier guards, which family. It was later known as the Kota chief of Dharanikota chiefs. The Western Chalukyas of Kalyana attacked many times to drive away the Chola armies. Subsequently the Kakatiyas against the Kota chiefs in A.D. 1180 and the Velama chiefs against the Reddi kings of Kondavidu in about A.D. 1380 invaded this town.

Amaravati:

Dhanyakata or Dharanikota was the ancient name of Amaravati, the celebrated centre of Buddhism in Andhradesa. A beautiful sculptures and a complex of monasteries known as Purvasaila and Aparasaila, Sanghramas, Situated in the hills lying on the Eastern and Western directions of the city of Dhanyakataka, were the most magnificent and outstanding Buddhist monuments in Andhradesa.

In the course of his pilgrimage to Buddhist Centers in India, Hiuen Tsang had passed through forested hills to reach the passed through forested hills to reach the country of An-to-lo, above 900 li (240 Km) South of Dakshina Kosala. The An-to-lo country was 3000 li (800 km) in circuit and its capital was ping-ki-lo which has been identified with Vengi. He also refers to the town of a Buddhist establishment at To-na-nie-tse-kia which stand for Dhanyakataka. Hiuen Tsang's visit to these places indicate that they were renowned Buddhist Centers, although, as he records, they were on the verge of decline at that time.

Longhurst (1938:3) observes that in all probability, the Krishan was a much larger river affording easy navigation down to the sea at all seasons of the year, thus making the city of Vijayapure readily accessible and in communication with other Buddhist centers at Goli, Chezerla, Amaravati, Jaggayyapeta, Ghantasala, Gummadiurru, Bezwada and Bhattiprolu, all of which are situated in the

lower Krishna valley. All these Buddhist Centers might have been established in the vicinity of town complexes as was the general practice of the Buddhist.

Bezawada or Vijayawada, known in the inscriptions as Vijayavatika, is a city of antiquity, founded by the Eastern Chalukya king Mangi Yuvaraja, after his second name Vijayaditya and his epithet Vijayasiddhi. He shifted his capital from Vengi to this new city for strategic purposes. His successors till the end of Vijayaditya's reign continued to use this city as their capital for about two centuries, even though Vengi was still the official capital. Though Amma I shifted the capital to Rajahmundry, Yuddhamall II of the same family shifted it again to Vijayawada.

The port at Maisolia was connected with a number of other ports and towns either by river-routes or by land-routes. One of the land-routes went upto Vengi, the capital city and political nucleus of the Salankayanas and their successors, to which converged political-cum-commercial routes from Pithapuram, Kalingapatnam, Mukhalingam, Dakshina-Kosala; from Maharashtra via Ter ; from Karnataka along the Krishna and Tungabhadra; and finally from the Dravida country (Tamilnadu) via Nellore, Ongole and Guntur.

The land-routes within Andhradesa, comprising Religious, Commercial and Political routes, plied for several centuries. From Vengi, the capital, one route went to Rajamahendrapura and from there to Pithapuram and Daksharama, other routes from Vengi plied to Guntupalli via Tadikalapudi, to Vijayavatika (Vijayawada) and to Machilipatnam. A political highway during the Chalukya, Chola period was at function linking Vengi with the Chola capital at Kanchipuram via Vijayavatika, Gunturu, Brahmapalli, Ongolu, Nelluru and Tirukkalatti (Kalahasti). From Vijayavatika another political reach Vinukonda. Since, the temple complexes developed at Tripurantakam, Srisailam, Sangamesvaram and Alampur a religious or pilgrim route was necessary and thus the already existing Vengi-Vijayavatika-Vinukonda route was extended to Tripurantakam and further up to the other temples situated on the Krishna and Tungabhadra. In the Kalinga region Political and Religious routes plied from Kalinganagara (Mukhalingam) to Kalingapattana, Srikakolanu, Arasvalli, Vijayanagaram, Srugavrapukota, Visakhapattana, Elamanchili and reached upto Pithapuram where the route from Vengi had also converged.

The river-routes of the Krishna and its tributaries touched the hinterland towns, temple towns and river ports at Alampur (on the Tungabhadra), Sangamesvaram, Srisailam, Nagarjunakonda-Vijayapuri, Macherla, Chezerla, Amaravati, Jaggayyapeta, Gole, Gummadidurru, Vijayawada, Bhattiprolu and Ghantasala. Some of these towns as noted elsewhere, were Buddhist Centres. In the Godavari the river-route plied from Rajamahendranagara (Rajahmundry) to Draksharam. Even the small river Vagaruvagu had a port called Vangeru port (SII, 6:652) and similar river-ports must have been at function on other small rivers.

Amaravati and Saivism:

The mighty kings and warriors must have worshipped the aggressive forms of gods and goddesses to attain success in their ambitious political designs; whereas the business community and peasantry probably preferred the pacific forms of the divinity to gain material prosperity. Besides, the popular tales and mythological stories, such as Kiratarjuniya, churning of the ocean, Gaja-Moksha, Ravana shaking kailasa, and other episodes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which are very often found depicted in early medieval art, must have been a source of enjoyment and inspiration to the devotees of Hinduism during the early medieval era of Indian history.

Saiva sub-sects:

Saivism, the most predominant sect in Andhradesa, was divided into several branches or sub-sects. All these minor sects, although centered around lord Siva, differed from each other in ritualistic rites and mode of worship.

Pasupata sect:

The followers of the Pasupata sect consider Pasupati as the supreme cause of all creations. The Pasu (soul) is released from the Pasa (Bondage) of the Samsara only by the grace of Pati (Siva). According to the Pasupata philosophy the soul and God are two different phenomena and thus, they oppose Advaitism. The Pasupatas advocated the philosophy of incarnation of lord Siva who incarnates on the earth again and again to uphold the righteousness and purity of the faith. The four incarnations, viz., Isana, Mahabala, Vrddhadeva and Lakulisa are assigned to the krtayuga, Drapara, Treta and Kali yugas respectively. Hence, Lakulisa is the last incarnation of Siva who taught Pasupata siddhanta and finally merged into Brahmesvaralinga with a staff and citron in his two hands (JAHS, Vol. XIII, p. 174). The period assigned to Lakulisa is the first quarter of the second century A.D. (Ep. Ind., Vol. XXI, P. 5). The four disciples of Lakulisa are named as Kusika, Gargg, Kaurusa and Maitreya who established the Pasupata-charya or conduct with varying differences.

The famous work "Sarva-Darsana-Sangraha" presents an interesting account of the Pasupata sect. The sect is said to have flourished in Devakipuram, where the Golakimatha existed. It proceeded from Devakipuram, to Kerala and thereafter to Andhradesa. Out of the three noted Acharyas, viz., Vimalasiva, Dharmasiva, and Visvesvara Siva, the latter was the religious preceptor of the Kakatiya king Ganapati (Vide Basava Purana, intro; P. 75). He is credited to have established a large monastery at Mandara on the banks of the river Krishna. (A corpus of Ins. In the Telengana districts of H.E.H. the Nizam's dominion, pt. I, 1942, P. 20). Besides, he established numerous other Mathas at Kalesvaram, Ponnagramamu, Mandarkutam, Manepalli, Utudpalli, Chandra-valli, Kambhani-palli, Anandapuram, Kommuru, Srisailam, Vellad, Uttara-soma-sila and other places (J.A.H.R.S. Vol. XIII, P. 174)

The Kalamukhas:

The Kalamukhas seem to have large following in Andhradesa during the rule of the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. The Tandikonda copper plate grant of Ammaraja II mentions the name of Rajaguru Vidyesvara who belonged to the Simha Parishad of Kalamuka school. The Kalamukhas were divided into Parsas, Parishads or Parishads. The celebrated Saiva Acharya, Somesvara Pandita, who was a contemporary of the Western Chalukyan king Trailokyamalla (Somesvara I), belonged to Sakti Parishad (SII. Vol. IX, part I, No. 101). Even the early Kakatiya rulers preceding Beta II, were the disciples of Ramesvara Pandita. The Kalamukhas established Mathas, as centers of their philosophy and art. The famous "Mallikarjunna Sila Matha" of the Kalamukhas was on the Sriparvata or Srisaila in Kurnool district. The head of this matha, as known from inscriptions, was Aliya Rameswara Pandita.

Besides mathas, the Kalamukhas also established satras where free food was supplied to the followers of the sect. The charitable institutions, like the hospitals were also started for the welfare of the people. The Kalamukhas built temples and provided encouragement to architects and sculptors.

The Kaulas, or Kalamukhas believed in the controlled enjoyment of the objects of senses for it was realized that in ultimate analysis Yoga and Bhoga are the same. The ritual practice of the cult, therefore, enjoined the partaking of "Panchamakaras" i.e. flowers, perfumes, flesh, fish and sweat meats were commonly used in all ceremonies. Even the Participation of the Vesya-kumarikas was also enjoined.

The ultimate aim of the Kaulas is defined as “the state in which the mind and the sight are united, the sense organs loose their individuality. Sakti becomes identical with Jiva and sight merges in the object to be Visualized. In other words the union of Akula (Siva) and Kula (Sakti) is called kaula and the process by which this relationship is established is kaulamrga.

The kapalikas:

The Kapalikas had many practices similar to those of the kalamukhas except that they believed in human sacrifices and laid more emphasis on erotic rituals. Yamunacharya in his *Agamapramanya* (c A.D. 1050) says that the Kapalikas were the sacred, thread crest jewel, ornaments for ear and neck. They also carried a human skull, a club and their bodies used to be smeared with ashes (Vide *Basavapurana* Intro. P. 75)

The drama, ‘*Malati Madhava*’ of Bhavabhuti gives an interesting account of the Kapalikas. The two characters, Aghoraghanta and Kapalakundala, play an important role in the drama. The Kapalikas lived in cremation ground, resorted to human sacrifices and believed in the efficacy of the mantras for the attainment of the Siddhis, Superhuman powers. In their rituals and customs, the Kapalikas seem to have been greatly influenced by the Sakta-tantra.

Basava, although not the founder of faith, is said to be the most potential force for popularizing the Virasavism in the Deccan. There are different versions of the story as how Basava furthered the cause of Vira-Saivism.

Thus, it is evident that the religion followed by the common folk during medieval era was not something away from life but it was a way of life which required collective involvement of the people in all type of religious activity. Religion, on the other hand, acted as a vehicle to the growth art and architecture, which was again a collective upsurge of the people at large in Andhra region. The different sects were flourishing side by side without interfering into each other’s field and this type of social and religious harmony created a very congenial atmosphere for an all round development of art and architecture of the Deccan.

Political Importance of the Region:

According to reconstruction of the event based on a different chronology for the small dynasties which succeeded the Ikahvakus, about the middle of the fourth century, Kandara and his feudatories expelled the Pallavas from Dharanikota.

Nothing is heard of Amaravati or Dharanikota until Pulakesin II, the Vatapi Chalukya, captured the Andhra districts and a little later handed them over to his brother, Kubja Vishnuvardhana. A Dharanikota inscription dated in the thirtieth year of Vishnuvardhana’s reign registers a gift of land by Bhimaraja and two other Mandalikas in Kondanavadi. Three events concerning Dharanikota and Amaravati are recorded in the Eastern Chalukyan age.

The first was a visit to Amaravati by Huen-tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, about the middle of the seventh century. He left China for India in 629 and returned in 645. He came to Dhanakata, called “*To-na-kie-tse-kia*” in his Chinese, after journeying “1,000 li or so” southwards ‘through a desert forest from Andhra, strictly so called, or the Vengi kingdom. He found the Dhanyakataka country rich and fertile (Buddhist records of the western countries, p. 220 et. Seq.). It was regularly cultivated, affording abundant harvests. There is much desert country and the towns are thinly populated. They (the people) greatly esteem learning.

Sewell argued (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI) that Vijayawada was the capital of the “kingdom of Dhanakataka” which Huen-tsang mentioned, that the little hill to the north-east of the town is the site of

the Purvasila monastery” and that the Undavalli hills, opposite to Vijayawada across the Krishna river, were where Bhavaviveka had waited for the appearance of Maitreya. Fergusson too, “without a shadow of doubt”, identified Vijayawada as the city described by Huentasang. Burgess believed that the two monasteries mentioned by the pilgrim were the Stupa in Amaravati and the Kuchi-tippa, a mound not far away. To this Sewell replied that the two convents were not “situated in an open place and consequently cannot be located at Amaravati”.

Thus, the gains to the historian from the Chinese pilgrim’s account of his visit to Amaravati are inconsiderable. They only amount to the fact that Buddhism was declining in popularity even in Amaravati.

The next incident concerning Amaravati and Dharanikota in Eastern Chalukya days was a battle, (“The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi”, p.233. Note. 1), the second in the city’s history of which there is record. The Western Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Cholas were engaged in a titanic conflict for mastery in Southern India. Vengi was a bone of contention. The Eastern Chalukyan royal family was much beset by dissensions, and the other powers took full advantage of this fact. After a prolonged succession dispute, Rajaraja I Chola resorted to Saktivarman to the Vengi throne about 999-1000. But Satyasraya, the Western Chalukya invaded the kingdom. Chola ascendancy in Vengi was a threat to him, he sent an army under Bayal Nambi in 1006, this general entered Vengi from the South-west and after having destroyed the forts of Dannada and Yenmadala, camped at Chebrolu, then an important city. But the Western Chalukyan army had to be recalled as the Cholas under crown prince Rajendra created a diversion in Karnataka itself.

In the first Rajadiraja led an army to confront the Western Chalukyan forces which were massed in Dannada under the command of Vikramaditya, later the celebrated emperor the sixth of that name, Vijayaditya, a step-brother of the current Vengi king and his inveterate enemy, Gandappayya, Gangadhara, and Sangamayya. A fierce battle followed the Western Chalukyas were defeated with great slaughter. Gandappayya and Gangadhara lost their lives, and according to Chola claims, Vikramaditya, Vijayaditya and Sangamayya fled the field. The victors plundered the enemy camp and seized a great deal of booty. But instead of marching upon Vengi, they attacked Kollipaka and set the city on fire. The battle of Dannada, though sanguine was really infructuous.

A pilgrimage was undertaken in this same century, the eleventh to judge from the Palaeography of the Amaravati inscription which records it. Simhavaraman, who describes himself as a Pallava, visited Amaravati and worshipped the stupa. About 1090 Kulothunga I Chola sent an expedition against Kalinga. Several feudatories of him joined the invaders (Historical Inscriptions of Southern India, p. 90)

The temple of lord Amaresvara must have already been built in Amaravati by this time. Unlike the temples of lord Siva in draksharama, Chalukya Bhimavarama, Palakol and Chebrolu, the temple in Amaravati was rebuilt in later times. The other temples retain their original features to a greater extent.

The history of Dharanikota and Amaravati is hereafter episodic. The next event in this history occurred in the first quarter of the twelfth century, another battle took place in Dhanyakataka (History of The Reddi Kingdoms, p. 101). The city was now the capital of Kota chiefs, a minor dynasty which held rule from about the beginning of the twelfth century to about the middle of the next Pratapa Rudra I, the Kakatiya monarch of Warangal, invaded the coastal Andhra districts. His army met with strong resistance from the Kota chief, Bhima II or Dodda Bhima. But it was successful and captured the city. Bhima was killed in the battle, and some of the generals in the victorious army assumed the title “Dodda Bhimanai Siraschedaka”. Rudra awarded another title “Kotagelpeta” or “Conqueror of the Kota”, to Kota, one of these victorious generals.

The Kakatiya, however, did not annex the conquered kingdom. He restored it to Bhima's son, Kota II, who became a loyal friend of his. According to an inscription in a temple at Velpuru (Inscriptions of Andhradesa", Vol. II Part I, p. 319) two of the titles of this king bore were "Amaresvara-divya-sripadapadma-radhaka" and "Dhanyakataka-puravara-dhisvara". The first cognomen indicates the high renown of the temple of lord Amaresvara in the twelfth century. This epigraph, dated 1182, says, "There is a city (named) Sri Dhanayakata, which is superior to the city of the gods, (and) where Sambha Amaresvara is worshipped by the lord of Gods, where God Buddha, worshipped by the creator is quite close by (and) where (there is) a very lofty chaitya, well decorated with various sculptures".

Little is known of the Kota kingdom after Kota II. His successor, the third of this name, is believed to have ruled from 1234. He was followed by Beta, who was a son-in-law of Kakatiya Ganapati. The last king of the dynasty was Beta IV, who has been given the date of 1265, though there is a record of Beta Rudra dated 1275-76.

Dharanikota is not heard of again in Kakatiya times. When that kingdom fell, Prola or Prolaya Vema Reddi declared his independence. The Reddis had been administering the South-eastern part of the Kakatiya dominions with Addanki as their capital. The capital was now changed to Kondavidu, long regarded as a formidable hill fortress. Vema Reddi is said to have seized the Dharanikota region from Kota officers.

The king built a fort in Dharanikota, one, according to tradition, of 1284 to the war of Muslim aggression (History of the Reddi kingdoms, p. 79). It was of strategic importance. In the region of Vema Reddi's son and successor, Anavota (c 1353-1364), the Bahmanis invaded the Reddi kingdom. An inscription in the Amaravati temple, set up in 1361, after sometime the event, says that Mallaya Vema, the minister of Anavota beat back the Muslim infantry from the west and saved the Reddi kingdom (Opcit. P. 100). During this invasion the Muslims desecrated the Amaresvara temple. The inscription records the re-consecration of the image of lord Amaresvara of Dhayavati by Vema, Anavota Reddi's minister, the temple had already become celebrated as one of the five "aramas" (Opcit. P. 101).

The Reddi kings had to reckon not only with the Muslims but also with the Recerla or Velama chiefs of Racakonda and Devarakonda. According to "Velugotivari Vamsavali", Singaya Mada, the Velama chieftain of Devarakonda, attacked Dharanikota and defeated Anavota (Opcit. P. 319). But he too, like the Bahmanis, with whom he was probably acting in collusion, failed to capture the fortress (The Suryavamsi Gajapatis of Orrissa", p. 19). This marked the beginning of a feud between the Reddis and the Velamas which lasted until the middle of the fifteenth century. The dynastic chronicle adds some interesting details regarding Singaya's victory over Anavota. It says that Singaya put him to fight in the same manner as Arjuna had driven away Duryodhana when trying to steal Virata's cattle. Anavota was probably captured by his enemies, but Naga Nayaka, Singaya's cousin or nephew, who was with the Velama army, released him after imprinting on his back his heraldic device, or lanchana as a sign of defeat. Following this victory the Recerla chiefs assumed the Reddi title.

A literary work, "Vishnu Puranam", by Vennelakanti Suranna, adds the interesting touch that Anavota met a cavalier, Kesabhupa, in combat near Amaravati. He defeated him utterly, but spared his life. Despite the reverses Anavota suffered, he does not seem to have lost possession of Dharanikota.

Following a division of the Reddi kingdom in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, a civil war broke out. The Vijayanagara emperors supported the Rajahmundry branch, while the Kondavidu branch received the help of the Telugu Chodas and the Bahmanis. In an incident in this was, perhaps a little after 1411, the Velama chiefs of Racakonda attacked Dharanikota and killed Maca, the commander of the fortress. But Muslim armies arrived in time to save the fort.

Capture of the fortress of Kondavidu, on June 23, 1515 was one of the great military achievements of Krishnadevaraya, the Vijayanagara emperor. After this triumph the emperor proceeded to Amaravati where he offered superb gifts to the temple. One, to Lord Amaresvara, was of the village of Pdamadduru for the merit of his father Narasa Nayaka, and of his mother, Nagadevi. Two villages were given to 108 learned Brahmins, and two other villages to the emperor's preceptors, Ranganatha Dikshita and Siva Dikshita.

The inscription (Inscriptions of Andhardesa, Vol. II, part I, p. 306) in the Amaravati temple, which mentions these facts, adds that the emperor visited Dharanikota-Amaresvaram after having captured Kondavidu and a number of other places, Nagarjuna konda included. He performed the ceremony of weighing himself against gold and other precious objects and distributing these in charity. Chinnadevi, one of his queens, performed the "great gift" of "Ratnadhenu". Two inscriptions, both on pillars refer to this famous event. One is reminded of the emperor's benefactions to the temple of Lord Venkatesvara in Tirumala.

Inscriptions in the Amaresvara temple show that the stupa continued to be venerated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Two, both dated in 1182 A.D., record the gift of villages and lamps to "God Buddha" by Kota II. The stupa is called the "high chaitya". Another epigraph, dated 1234 A.D., mentions the gift of a lamp to God Buddha by Bayyamba, a queen of Beta II. The last reference to the stupa is dated exactly a century later. The Gadaladeniya epigraph from Sri Lanka belongs to 1344 A.D.

The first of a number of donations in Kota's time occurs in 1157 with a donation for two lamps by Singanappegada, a noble. In 1178 comes the gift of a lamp by an official of Kota II. This king himself gives villages and lamps to the temple, along with the five queens of his, Kota II gives lamps in 1197 and three years later an official of the king one lamp.

Three inscriptions of the thirteenth century are recorded. One, dated 1226 registers the gift of a village, Damaluru, on the banks of the Krishna, to Lord Amaresvara by the Cagi king, Ganapaya. In 1273 was gifted the village of Magallu, this was in the reign of the Kakatiya queen, Rudamma. In 1298 was made the humbler donation by the priests and the "aruvalavaru" of the temple already noted.

In the fourteenth century, in 1345 the Reddi king, Prolaya Vema, set up five golden pinnacles on the temple. To the next century belong two epigraphs, one recording a gift of land by the "Chitti-Patineningaru" in 1427, and the other dated 1494 registering a gift by Mallaya Mahapatra of taxes collected by the "Pancanamvaru" of Dharanikota and Amaresvaram to the Kamathesvara temple in Dharanikota. The second donor was an Oriya. The Gajapathis of Orissa ruled parts of the Andhra region for a time.

Two epigraphs, in the sixteenth century, refer to the benefactions of Krishnadevaraya, the Vijayanagara emperor. Both dated in 1515, one records his magnificent donations and those of his two queens after his military victories, and the other describes his conquests in the east (N. Ramaswamy, 1975)

Conclusion:

The historical city of Amaravati and nearby regions played by a vital role Political, Economical and Religious aspects. This place located on the river bank of Krishna and parts of the middle of the coastal plains. The Vasi Reddi family became prominent in the district about 1710. The Raja of Vasi Reddi Venkatradri Naidu Zamindar of Chinthapalli built another place for himself and new town for his people near the Amaresvar temple in Amaravati. The Vasi Reddi came to Amaravati in 1794. The Zamindar certainly dispoiled the stupa, but he was a man of vigour and parts. In an article published in

“The Asiatic Journal” of 1823, Mackenzie bears witness to the fact that the new town he built in Amaravati was a handsome one. It is worth quoting extracts from this article.

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