CHAPTER 4

The Rāmāyana Tradition

Vijayanagara city and its environs have been closely associated with the Rāmāyana; certain incidents related in the epic are said to have taken place in this locality. From the early fifteenth century A.D. onwards the cult of Rāma gained in popularity and enjoyed the patronage of both the court and the populace. The survey of this cult in the city also reveals that a homology was established between Rāma and the king. In this chapter an attempt is made to trace the antiquity of the association of this site with episodes of the Rāmāyana and to study the evolution, extent and patronage of the Rāma cult in the city and of the parallel drawn between the universal king, Rāma, and the earthly monarch.

Many places in Karnātaka are associated with the incidents and heroes of the Rāmāyana. Vālī and Sugrīva are said to have lived near Hāmpi; places like Sipinim in the Bijāpūr district, Chaya Bhagavati near Muddebihāla and Birakabbi in Bāgalkot talūka still retain the memory of Rāma and Hanumān who are said to have camped there.1 The Jatinga Ramēśvara hill in the Chitradurga district is believed to be the place where Jāyāputra fought with Rāvana and lost his life.2 Many place names in Karnātaka are based on the stories from the Rāmāyana. In some of these places, Rāma is stated to have lived with Sītā and Lakṣīmaṇa, while in others, he is said to have left the mark of his feet. At many riverside places where Sītā is believed to have dwelt and bathed, the water is said to be still yellow because of the turmeric she used.3 Of all the Rāmāyana sites in the state, none perhaps is as important as that of Hāmpe and its surroundings which is claimed to be the locale of many of the events narrated in the Kishkindhā Kāṇḍa, one of the seven Kāṇḍas of the epic.

It must be noted that there is considerable academic controversy over the Rāmāyana—about when and even whether Rāma existed, about the route that Rāma took in his southern wanderings, about the location of Dandakāranya, Kishkindhā, Lanka, etc. To cite just a few examples: Dandakāranya has been located both in Māhārāṣṭra and in Orissa;4 while the people of Karnātaka assert that Hanumān was born near Āṅgoṇdi, the tribals of Mādhyāb Pradesh believe that he was born in Anjan village in Gumla-Paramandāl in the Rājha district and countless legends related to his life are woven around the old temples scattered all over this region; still others hold that Hanumān was a descendant of the monkey clan that inhabited the central India.5 Regarding Kishkindhā, besides Āṅgoṇdi, Vādhyā Kishkindhā on the Vindhyas and Kekind near Jodhpur in Rajasthān are some of the places that claim to be the city of Vālī and Sugrīva.6 Besides the most common assumption of Śrī Lanka being the Lanka of Rāvana, places as far apart as the Amarakaṇṭaka peak in central India,7 the Maldieves8 and the northern part of the Andhra country on the shores of the Bay of Bengal9 have been identified as Lanka. Different views are held regarding the route that Rāma took in his southern journey. While the most commonly accepted view is that Paṇchavaṇi, the place of Sītā’s abduction, was near Nāsik on the Godāvari, in Māhārāṣṭra, and that from here Rāma followed a southerly route through Karnāṭaka in his search for Sītā, another theory locates Paṇchavati in Andhra and the route of Rāma’s southward progress along the east coast.

Such controversies are outside the scope of this study. From our point of view what is important is that for centuries countless numbers of people have venerated certain spots in and around Hāmpe as places hallowed by Rāma’s presence. The genesis of this tradition dates back to the pre-Vijayanagara times and gained in popularity during the empire period. To this day thousands of devout pilgrims visit these places with the greatest reverence.

The events of the Rāmāyana related to this site centre around the meeting of Rāma with Hanumān and Sugrīva and the alliance entered into with them. When Sītā was abducted by
Rāvana, Rāma and Lakshmana began their famous search for her. In their journey through the Dandaka forest they encountered the giant rākṣasa Kabandha, who advised them to ally themselves with Sugriva, the exiled prince of the vānara or monkeys, and directed them to go to lake Pānippa and Rishyamukha hill. Rāma and Lakshmana reached the west bank of the Pānippa and near it they visited the āśrama of the old female ascetic Śābāri, the disciple of rishi Matanga. Sugriva, the exiled prince, with Hanumān and his three other faithful companions, is said to have been dwelling at Rishyamukha, from here they saw Sītā being carried away southwards by Rāvana in his aerial chariot. Seeing them, the desperate Sītā dropped her ornaments and a garment, hoping that these would guide her husband in his quest for her.

When Rāma approached with Lakshmana, Sugriva rallied, suspecting them to be emissaries of his rival Vāli. Hanumān, who was sent by Sugriva, at first accosted the two strangers in the guise of a mendicant but soon realised his mistake, whereupon both sides offered friendly explanations. This meeting occurred at Rishyamukha hill. Hanumān now fetched Sugriva to meet the illustrious brothers. Rāma and Sugriva made a pact of friendship and the latter brought out Sītā’s garment and the jewels from the cave in which he had hidden them. Rāma and Sugriva went to Kishkindhā, where Rāma killed Vāli, the reigning king, and enthroned Sugriva in his place. Then, as the rainy season had begun and no operations could be undertaken, Rāma and Lakshmana took shelter for four months on Mālayavat hill, also called Prasravana. When the rains passed, Lakshmana asked for Sugriva’s help in finding Sītā and Sugriva repaired to Rāma at Mālayavat hill. Summoning his vassal vānara, Sugriva despatched them in four bands east, south, west and north, to discover within one month where Rāvana kept Sītā in captivity. Hanumān and his band who went south, found Sītā in Lankā city and returned with the good news to Kishkindhā. Before reaching Rāma with the happy tidings, the vānara band celebrated their triumph by alighting at Madhuvana, the protected park of the vānara king, where they indulged in unrestrained revelry. Regardless of the warnings of the guards, they drank the honey, ate the fruits, uprooted trees and ruined the beautiful park. Rāma and Lakshmana along with vānara army then proceeded south towards Lankā.

The places mentioned in the above account from the Rāmāyana are all located in and around Hanipī. Kishkindhā is said to be in the hills that surround Anegoṇḍi. Anjanadri hill, to the north-west of Anegoṇḍi, is reputed to be the birthplace of Hanumān or Anjaneya. Pānippa Sarovar (also called Pānippa Saras) is near the foot of this hill. Close to this lake is a small cavern in the rock that is identified as Sābāri’s hermitage. The Rishyamukha hill is on a large island in the Tungabhadra, to the north of Matanga. A small cave amidst boulders on the south bank of the river (NG o/1), known as Sugriva’s Cave, is identified as the place where Sugriva hid Sītā’s jewellery. Certain streaks on the sheer rock near the cave are pointed out as the marks made by Sītā’s garment. At Chintāmaṇi, in Anegoṇḍi, Rāma is said to have given the garland to Sugriva to wear, in order to distinguish him from his brother Vāli in their deadly combat, which took place on a nearby rocky island in the river. A huge mound of scorched ash in the village of Nittībāpura on the south bank of the river is claimed to be the cremated remains of Vāli. Lakshmana is said to have crowned Sugriva king at the site of the Kodaṇḍarāma temple (NG w/1), also located on the south bank. During the rainy season Rāma and Lakshmana waited on Mālavanta hill, Madhuvana, where Hanumān and his cohorts descended to celebrate their success in discovering Sītā; is said to be located on the Hospet-Kāmalapuram-Kanipalli road, about one-and-a-half kilometres beyond the circuit wall of the “urban core”. A small lake near Sugriva’s Cave is locally known as Sītā Sarovar or Sītākundā. The Rāmāyaṇa makes no mention of such a spot. Perhaps, it came to be so called because Sītā’s jewels are believed to have fallen nearby. The Pampānāhatmya gives an interesting account of this lake. According to it, Sītā, after her abandonment by Rāma, was advised by Vālmiki to bathe in that lake, pray to the goddess Gaurī and do penance. Sītā did so and the goddess Pānīpa appeared to her and reassured her; thereupon Sītā returned to the hermitage of Vālmiki. The Hemakutakhandha and the Pampānāhatmya, the local sīha-
purānas corroborate the oral tradition by mentioning Kishkindhā, lake Pānīpāta, Rishyamūka, Madhvavana, Aṅjanadri hill etc., as being at the site.24

A careful survey of the monuments and remains at these spots reveals no traces of any pre-Vijayanagara structures. If there is no archaeological proof that the Rāmāyana association with this site pre-dates the empire, there are a few epigraphical and literary sources that indicate this link at the eleventh century A.D. onwards. A Kannada inscription dated A.D. 1069 from Devighat about 10 kilometres away from Anegondi refers to Kishkindhā.25 A later Chālukyan record, dated A.D. 1088, in a Śiva temple of Somanāthā at Munirābad, a village about 6.5 kilometres north-west of Hospet, mentions Kishkindhā as being to the north and Rishyamūka to the east of this temple.26 The Jainas version of the Rāma story, Rāmāchandra-Charita-Purāṇa of the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. by Nagachandra or Abhinava Pānīpāta, claims that the residents of this area were not monkeys but a tribe who had the monkey insignia on their flag.27

From the Vijayanagara period, we have many proofs of the firm belief that Kishkindhā was located in this area. In Anegondi, across the village from south to north, there are about seven or eight stone temples of Hanumān now in ruins. The pillars of these and other temples are scattered about the village. On these pillars there are numerous representations of Hanumān and his heroic exploits. What is noteworthy is the exclusive representation of Hanumān in these and not of the main events of the entire epic. Obviously this is due to the attempt to commemorate the tradition that this is the place of Kishkindhā.28

In the Viṣṇupūrka Vasantotsva Cāmpū of Abhodā, Kishkindhā and Vālī Bhāṇḍāra (the treasury of Vālī) are mentioned as being on the northern side of the Tuṅgabhadrā,29 the Rishyamūka hill is also referred to.30 This is a work of the Vijayanagara period, but the exact dating of it remains a problem.31

By the early fifteenth century, when the Rāmāchandra temple (NR w/1) was built in the heart of the “royal centre”, the Rāmāyana association with the site seems to have been widely accepted. The Rāmāchandra temple is axially and visually aligned with hills to the north and north-east that are connected with this epic. The “route of Rāma” and the sculptural panels on the temple walls circumambulate the temple.32 The north-south axis of this temple, if extended northward, passes through the Mataṅga hill, the Kāṇḍarāma temple, close by the Rishyamūka hill and through the Aṅjanadri hill; while a north-east axis converges on the Mālyavanta hill. The “route of Rāma” at the site is a complete half circle of clockwise movement around this temple—from the Rishyamūka hill to the north, the Mālyavanta to the north-east and finally the departure for Lankā southward. The Rāmāyana panels on the exterior wall of the rānga-mandapam of the Rāmāchandra temple also encircle the temple in a clockwise direction three times.33

In the Rāmāchandra temple there are two series of Rāmāyana panels, the first, as mentioned above, around the rānga-mandapam and the second on the inner face of the pārśvala walls between the northern and eastern gateways. In both, the Kishkindhā episodes are well depicted. A third complete Rāmāyana series is found on the walls of the sixteenth century gopura of the south-facing temple (NCw/3), north-east of the Viṭhala temple, locally known as the ‘Old Śiva Temple’. Here 32 panels, out of a total of 131, are related to the Kishkindhā Kāṇḍa.34 Thus, it is clear that by the sixteenth century it was widely accepted that the city and its surroundings was the locale of these incidents. Even the foreign visitors to the city seemed to be well aware of this, for Nuniz reports, “they say that in the former times this land belonged all to the monkeys and that in those days they could speak”.35

Aṅjanadri hill, the supposed birthplace of Aṅjaneya, is crowned by a temple dedicated to this deity, where worship still continues. The large relief of Aṅjaneya, in heroic pose, in the garbhā-sāhīha is most probably a Vijayanagara period carving. An inscription on a rock in a field close to the hill records a land grant to Hanumantādeva of the hill by Nāgannādeva of Anegondi,36 who appears to be a minister of a Vijayanagara king.37 Unfortunately this record cannot be dated since the Śaka year is not given in it, but only the cyclic year Śvabhām. There seems to be some confusion regarding the location of Pānīpāta Saras during the
Vijayanagara period. An inscription of A.D. 1409 identifies what is now called Śīkṣuṅka (NG 0/2) as the Pañḍā Saras. However, in another inscription of A.D. 1594 this lake is clearly named as Śīkṣuṅka, it being mentioned as the northern boundary of Achyutārāyapēte. Evidently a change in identification occurred during the 134 years between these two epigraphs. Perhaps, with the growing popularity of the Rāma cult in the city and due to the proximity of this lake to the small cavern, that is called Sugriva’s Cave, this lake came to be associated with Śīkṣuṅka, while the lake to the north of the river became known as Pañḍā Saras. That the latter was considered a sacred spot at least by the late Vijayanagara period is indicated by the presence of a devi temple and a Śīva shrine, of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century A.D. on its banks. Besides its association with the Rāmaśānya, this lake is more famous as the site of Pañḍā-devi’s austerities, hence the devi and Śiva shrines near it are appropriate.

The site of Sugriva’s coronation is marked by the temple of Kodandarāma (NG w/1). In its sanctum is a large relief, carved on a rock, of Rāma–Śīkṣuṅka–Lakṣmīmana, with a small figure of Sugriva on one side. The temple, with its composite pillars, appears to be a sixteenth century construction. At Madhuvana is a modern temple, enshrining a very large relief of Anjaneya in the striding, heroic pose. That this place was known as Kalasipura in the Vijayanagara times is revealed in an undated inscription. An inscription of A.D. 1434, near this temple, records the gift of Devarāya II to god Hanumantadeva. Thus, evidently, there was a temple here in the fifteenth century and this spot must have been of special significance. It is likely that the modern temple is built on the site of the Vijayanagara temple and that the miśra is the original one.

Māyavāna, where Rāma is said to have stayed for four months and from where he started on his campaign against Lankā, is graced by a large Raghunātha temple. However, the Māyavāna hill appears to have also been a Śaiva sacred spot. According to the Pañcamāhātmya, sage Māyavāna, a great devotee of Śiva, did severe penances on this hill. Around A.D. 1410 Lakshmanānanda, a minister of Devarāya I, consecrated Gaṇekṣa in a cave temple on the southern slope of this hill; no mention is made of Raghunātha in this record. On this hill there is also a group of twenty hingas and Nandis carved on the bedrock (NT d/7), flanking a crevice filled with water. Surprisingly, this crevice is locally known as Lakshmī-śāna, for it is believed that Lakshmīna shot his arrow into the ground here to get water. Perhaps, this may indicate a conflation of the earlier Śaivaite cult with the cult of Rāma at this spot. Much of the Raghunātha temple complex dates from the sixteenth century. It is possible that the nucleus of this temple is of an earlier date, since in the Narasimhapurāṇam of Harihaṛa it is written that one Prīḷunati Tippa, a contemporary of Devarāya II, gifted a valuable crown to god Raghunātha of Māyavāna hill. However, since this work was composed only about the year A.D. 1580 its reliability as a source of information may be questioned. While there are sixteenth century epigraphical references to this temple, there does not seem to be any inscriptive evidence of its existence in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries.

Thus, although the association of Pañḍā trīṭya and its immediate environs with the Kishkindha section of the Rāmaśānya cannot be dated exactly, it definitely pre-dates the Vijayanagara empire. It is likely that, besides the association of the site with Pañḍā and Virupaksha, the Rāmaśānya tradition at the site was a reason for its choice as the capital city. Yet the first Sangama rulers made no reference to Rāma or to the Rāmaśānya at this site in their inscriptions and there are no pre-fifteenth century temples dedicated to Rāma in the city. It was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the various pilgrimage spots linked with Rāma’s exploits here were clearly identified and reliefs, shrines or temples were set up to highlight their importance.

It is not surprising that, despite the Rāmaśānya association at this site, the worship of Rāma in the city is not very ancient. For although the belief in Rāma as an avatāra of Vishnu existed from the early centuries of the Christian era, the cult of Rāma came into existence only about the eleventh century A.D. So far no shrine dedicated to Rāma and no cult image of this deity has come to light before the medieval period. In Kamṭaka, although there are representations of the Rāmaśānya themes and of Rāma on temple walls from the early
Chalukya and Rashtrakuta periods, there are no temples dedicated to him till the Hoysala period.\(^{59}\) In the state, Rama gained importance from the latter half of the Hoysala period and became a popular deity during the Vijayanagara times.\(^{61}\) Thus, the strong presence of the Rama cult is a relatively later phenomenon, for the incarnation of Rama definitely remained a minor one till the late medieval period.\(^{55}\) Undoubtedly, in south India the Rama cult became widely popular only during the Vijayanagara period.\(^{55}\)

Within the empire, the royal patronage of the cult of Rama dates from the early fifteenth century. In A.D. 1406, on the occasion of his coronation, Devaraya I gifted a village as an agrahara to several brahmans after granting one share of it to the gods Ramachandra and Sambhu (Nva).\(^{54}\) An inscription of A.D. 1433 of Devaraya II records a gift of a village to a temple of Ramachandra.\(^{55}\) Both Devaraya II\(^{56}\) and Mallikarjuna\(^{57}\) patronised the Raghuvanta matha at Gokarna and the temple of Rama in it. Among the later rulers, Krishnadevaraya was the most generous in the lavish endowment of temples of various deities, including the temples of Rama,\(^{58}\) in different parts of his empire.

Within the capital, probably the earliest and certainly the most important Rama temple is the one popularly known as Hazara-Rama (NR w/1), the real name of which, inscriptions reveal, was Ramachandra temple.\(^{59}\) It is located in the heart of the “royal centre”, in the middle of the royal enclosures. As already seen, a north-south axis and a north-east axis link it with prominent natural features in the city. To the west of the Ramachandra temple and aligned with it on an east-west axis, is the temple of Prasanna Virupaksha, the royal chapel dedicated to the tutelary deity of the empire and the earliest temple within the “royal centre.”

The Ramachandra temple (Plate 16) was the first major construction in the capital in the imported Tamil style; it was worked on by the most skilled artisans and sculptors of the day, for the quality of its architecture and sculpture is truly outstanding. The temple complex is a fairly small one (see Fig. 15). It consists of a rectangular courtyard, with gateways in the east (A) and north (B) walls and a small doorway in the south wall (C), which was probably a private entrance for the ruler. The principal, east-facing shrine (D) has a square sanctum, a rectangular antechamber, a transitional rectangular bay and a square hall (raiga-mandalapada) with porch on the east, north and south sides. In the sanctuary is a rectangular pitha (pedestal) with three socket holes, probably for statues of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. The open pillared mandapa (E) to the east of the raiga-mandalapa is a later addition. The subsidiary shrine (F) has two sanctuaries, an antechamber and a pillared hall. The enclosed utsava-mandalapa (G) in the north-east corner of the courtyard is probably a sixteenth-century structure. This temple complex is fairly small. The limited space suggests a restricted use—possibly only for the king and his family, his priests and high officials. In all likelihood it was a state chapel.

The high enclosure wall of this temple complex is unique, for this is the only example in the city where there are continuous reliefs along the outer face of the wall. These reliefs, arranged in five sculptured friezes, run in a clockwise direction around three sides of the temple. The friezes display a procession of elephants, horses, soldiers, dancing girls and mythological scenes; occasionally seated royal figures are also present, leaning on cushions inside pavilions, sometimes with attendants. More than eighty metres east of the Ramachandra temple and aligned with its east gateway are the remains of a lofty stone pillar and a shrine, which was probably intended to house Garuda or Hanuman.

The strategic location of the temple, the remarkable quality of its architecture and sculpture and the royal imagery on its enclosure walls—all indicate that it was a royal construction. But, there is no foundational inscription to reveal clearly who the royal founder was. The earlier writers\(^{60}\) on Vijayanagara have erroneously attributed the temple construction to Krishnadevaraya. This temple is definitely of the early fifteenth century. A Sanskrit inscription mentions king Devaraya and the goddess Pampa.\(^{61}\) According to N. Venkataramanaya, the temple was built by the last Sangama ruler, Virupaksha II, who following his conversion to Sri-Vaishnavism transformed an earlier Pampa temple into a temple of Rama.\(^{62}\) However, as seen in Chapter 1, the story of the conversion of Virupaksha is based only on the
Prapannamāvatam, a late piece of Śrī-Vaishnavī hagiography and is not supported by any other evidence. Besides, throughout the period under survey, Pāṇḍava-Viṣṇu-pāksha remained the tutelary deity of the empire and it is highly unlikely that any ruler, whatever be his personal affiliation, would have replaced an extant temple dedicated to Pāṇḍava-devi by a temple to another deity.

This inscription carved on the east porch of the rāja-mandapa (Fig. 15: 1) has puzzled historians, for no mention is made in it of god Ramachandra. It reads “Just as Vāni was gracious to Bhūja Rāja, Triparāmba to Vatsa Rāja and Kāli to Viṣṇu-Makara, just so is Pāṇḍava now gracious to king Devarāya.” Michell has proposed an interesting explanation for this invocation by the king of the blessing of the goddess. Pāṇḍavā, as seen in Chapter 2, was the local goddess of the site selected by the early Saṅgamams for their capital, the sākta of Viṣṇu-pāksha the tutelary deity of the kings. Therefore, some need must have been felt to integrate the older Saṅga cult with the rising importance of Rāma, a god who came to be worshipped in a splendidly appointed new temple in the heart of the king’s own capital. Through this Sanskrit sūkta, Devarāya asserts that despite his patronage of Rama, and his incorporation of the cult of this god into his “royal centre”, he is still concerned about benefiting from the blessing of the goddess. “Devarāya has no intention of relinquishing his links with Pāṇḍava despite the dedication of his new royal shrine to Rama. This, we believe, is the basic intention of the epigraph and it provides us with an insight into the conflicts that must have arisen as the Viṣṇu-pākṣa kings broadened the scope of their religious beliefs.”

The above inscription indicates that one of the Devarayas built the temple. This inscription, when read together with a second one (2), also on the basement of the east porch, reveals that the king was probably Devarāya I. It is likely that these two epigraphs, engraved one above the other and prominently displayed just north of the main entrance of the principal shrine, date from the consecration of the temple. In the second inscription it is stated that Ambara-devi presented gold vessels to Śrī Rāmāchandra, on the first day of the bright fortnight of Chaītra in the year Durmukhi. It is very probable that Durmukhi here represents A.D. 1416 and that Ambara-devi may have been a queen of Devarāya I. The type of royal figures depicted on the outer faces of the enclosure walls also indicates that this is an early temple.

An inscription (3) dated 12 March A.D. 1513, on the south wall of the utsava-mandapa, records the gift made by Krishnah-deva of six villages to this temple.

Another inscription (4) on the south basement of the rāja-mandapa of the principal shrine, of A.D. 1521, and a damaged, unpublished one on the south basement of the sanctum (5) record the devotion of Timmarāja, son of Mahāmāyā-balīśvara Hikka Timmarāyadeva, the ruling king of Yerava, to this temple deity. He built an utsava-mandapa and made an endowment for the celebration of a number of festivals and services in the temple.

On the west wall of the north gateway (6) is the record of the installation of altars in the temple by Aruvi Tengalāru. The Aruvi chiefs, Rāmāyana, his brothers and cousins, rose to prominence during the reign of Sadasiva. Hence, it is likely that this undated epigraph is of the last phase of the city’s history. We do not know of an Aruvi prince named Tengalāru. But, a younger brother of Aliya Ramāyana is named Venkatādri. Since Venkatādri and Venkata are both names of the deity of Tirumalai-Tiruvati it is possible that this prince was the author of the inscription.

These inscriptions reveal the importance of this temple. It enjoyed patronage from the early fifteenth century up to the mid-sixteenth century. The authors of the inscriptions are all distinguished persons, namely, two kings, a queen, the son of a subordinate prince and a highly connected chief. The significance of the Rāmāchandra temple is also indicated by its position in the centre of the royal enclosures, at the heart of the “royal centre” and its alignment with salient landmarks and structures. This temple was the key organizing feature of the plan of the “royal centre” and the city, for all the radial roads from outside into the city converged on the plaza adjacent to the temple, while the ring roads of the city pivoted around the royal enclosures at the centre of which is the Rāmāchandra temple.

The Rāmāchandra temple is the only temple
in the city dedicated to this cult deity that can be
definitely assigned to the fifteenth century on
the basis of epigraphical evidence. However, as
already seen, it is probable that the core of the
Mālavaṇī Rāhuṇāṭhā temple (Fig. 16) was also
constructed during the Saṅgama period.
This temple is built around a large boulder,
which is completely incorporated into the
vimāna, only protruding above the roof. In
the sanctum (A) is a relief carved on this rock of the
Rāma-Sītā-Lakṣmanā-Hanumān group. Rāma
and Sītā are seated, the former has his right
hand in the jñāna-mudrā, while the left rests
against the knee and the goddess holds a lotus
flower in one hand; Lakṣmanā is standing and
Hanumān kneeling in adoration. All the figures
wear magnificent head-dresses and ornaments.
Stylistically these figures appear to have been
drawn during the period of the Saṅgama
rulers.74

Many additions were made to the Mālavaṇī Rāhuṇāṭhā temple in the sixteenth century
A.D., such as the mahā-maṇḍapa (B) which has
composite pillars and the detached columned
hall (C) in the south-west corner of the court-
yard. The latter is a typical feature of the six
teenth century temple complexes in Vijayāṇagara. This temple is one of the largest
temples dedicated to Rāma in the city. The
frequent occurrence of the nāmaṇam and of reliefs
of the alvars and Rāmānuja on pillars indicate
that this was a Śrī-Vaṁśhaya temple. For
many years it was deserted, but in fairly recent
times worship has been revived in it and an
annual car festival is organized by bairagis
from Bihar who have occupied it.75

On the south bank of the Tungabhadra, near
the sacred Chakra-tirtha, is the small, north-
 facing sixteenth century temple of
Kōndandarāṇa (NG w/1), the name indicating
that Rāma holds the Kōndanda or bow. As at
Mālavaṇī the images here are carved on a
single boulder. Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmanā are
standing, while Sugriva bows low at Rāma's feet.
These figures are not refined. Stylistically they
probably belong to the reign of the last kings of
Vijayāṇagara.76 The temple belonged, most proba-
ably, to the Vadagalai Śrī-Vaṁśhaya sect, for the
nāmaṇam of the northern school appears on the
temple pillars. It is a living temple; even today
the archakas conducting the rituals are Vadagalai
Śrī-Vaṁśhayas.

That the cult of Rāma was popular in the city
in the sixteenth century A.D. is revealed by the
number of temples built in honour of this deity.
To the north of the Hiriya Kāluve (Turna
canal) is a dilapidated Rāhuṇāṭhā temple (NL
q/1) built in A.D. 1524 by Gopinātha Dikshita,
who also donated some land to the temple. At
the same time Krīṣṇadevarāya laid down a
system of offering daily a quantity of supplies
from the Krīṣṇa temple for the food offerings
to this god; while from the Pāṭiya-Virupākṣha
temple, too, a stipulated amount of rice and oil
was to be supplied daily.77

The largest temple in the site dedicated to
this deity is the so-called Paṭṭabhirāma temple,
east of Kāmalāpuram (Plate 18). Although there
is no foundation inscription in this temple, its
construction can be assigned to the period of
Achyutarāya since it is located in the new suburb
built during his reign in honour of the queen.
Besides, the inscriptions within the temple also
belong to the reign of this king. An epigraph
of A.D. 153978 reveals that this temple in
Vārada-devi-ammaṇa-paṭṭana was of god
Rāhuṇāṭhā and it records a gift to the deity of
the toll revenue on garden produce, amounting
to vāras 1050 by one Achyutarāya-Malkapāṇa.
This was also one of the temples in the capital
on which king Aσhyutarāya enshrined his gift of
Anandaṇidhi to the brahmanas A.D. 1539.79
On the east gopura there are two Sanskrit records
of this, one in the Telugu script and the other
in Nāgarī.80 This temple, too, was undoubtedly a
Śrī-Vaṁśhaya one.

During the same reign, in A.D. 1540,
Timmarāju, son of Hiriya-Abharāja, installed
the god Rāhuṇāṭhā in a temple built by him to
the east of Vārada-devi-ammaṇa-paṭṭana near
the Penugonda gate and made a grant of lands
for the services in the temple.81 This inscription
is engraved on a large slab in front of this
temple.

A slab erected in front of a small ruined
temple (NS x/1) on a hill to the south-east of
the Sōma-cātri Rāhuṇāṭhā (Monday Gate) records a
donation to god Gavikēri Rāhuṇāṭhā during
the reign of Sadāśivaṛāya.82 Since this is a dona-
tive grant, it is not possible to date this temple of
Gavikēri Rāhuṇāṭhā. East of this temple is a
deserted double-shrine temple (NT z/5). In the
lower shrine is a relief of Virabhadra, while the upper one is built against a boulder on which is a carving of the pāṭābhisheka (coronation) scene of the seated Rāma and Sītā flanked by the standing Lakshmana, Bharata and Satruṣgha. This shrine of Pāṭābhārāma, too, cannot be dated. An inscription on a double-storeyed māndapa (NR 1/3) east of the Rāmachandra temple records the construction of the māndapa by the mercantile guild as a service to god Rādhunātha. Thus, inscriptions or relief carvings indicate the presence of eight Rāma temples at the site. It is likely that there were other temples or shrines dedicated to Rāma of which we have no evidence. The epigraphs reveal that the patronage of the Rāma cult came not only from kings (Devaraya I and Krishnapādevaraya), high dignitaries (Aravīṭi Vengalarāja) and subordinate chiefs (Timmarāja, son of the ruling king of Yeruva), but also from wealthy citizens (Gopinātha Dikshita, Achyutarāya-Mallapāna and Timmarāja, son of Hiriya-Abbarāja) and from mercantile groups.

Besides the temples, sculptures also highlight the wide popularity enjoyed by this cult. Throughout the site, reliefs of Rāma are common on the pillars of temples, both Vaishnava and Śaiva. He is usually depicted, according to the iconographic rules, in the standing pose with the bāṇa or arrow in the right hand and the dhanus or bow in the left. Lakshmana is also seen occasionally on pillar reliefs. To distinguish him from Rāma, Lakshmana's bow is slung over one shoulder and his hands are joined in the anjali-mudrā. Carvings of the Rāma theme on rocks and isolated boulders are also extant. In the Yantārādhara Anjaneya shrine (NG w/3), besides the principal Hanumān relief, there is in the side shrine a fine carving of Rāma seated in lañcāsana with Sītā on his knee and Lakshmania standing to one side. In a rock shelter (NG n/5) near Kōti-ṭirtha, alongside the Narasimha relief, there is the representation of the Rāma-Sītā-Lakshmana group. In another rock shelter (NS a/1), along with other Vaishnavā themes, there is the relief of the seated Rāma and Sītā and standing Lakshmana, flanked by Garuḍa and Hanumān. On the Bēmakūta hill, near temple NL b/14, is a rock-carving of Vīra-Aṇjaneya and to his left that of the standing Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmana. This relief is unique since it is the only definitely non-Śaiva monument of the pre-Vijayanagara or Vijayanagara times extant on this hill. On a rock within the "royal centre" is a relief (NG u/4) of Rāma and Sītā in a seated posture and Lakshmana standing guard. Below the panel are carved Hanumān, Garuḍa and Śeṣha. A large relief of Rāma and Lakshmana appears on a boulder near temple NM d/3.

The Rāmāyaṇa association with the city and its surroundings is commemorated by Rāmāyaṇa panels. Besides the three complete series of the Rāmāyaṇa mentioned earlier (i.e., two from the Rāmachandra temple and one on the gopura of temple NC w/3), which portray the complete story of Rāma from the Bāla Kāṇḍa to the Yudhā Kāṇḍa of the epic, there are also two series of the Uttara Kāṇḍa, the seventh and additional kāṇḍa. The first of these is on the exterior walls of the vimāna of the subsidiary shrine within the Rāmachandra temple complex. The main episodes of Uttara Kāṇḍa are to be found here, arranged in two tiers. The second occurs in the uyyāle-māndapa of the principal shrine in the Viṭṭhala complex (NH a/1). This māndapa is divided into three parts: the central portion of the north aisle there are vertical slabs forming an architrave above the pillars. Along these are panels of some of the episodes of the Uttara Kāṇḍa—askamedhā sacrifice organized by Rāma, the capture of the horse by the twins, Lava and Kusha, etc. A number of Rāmāyaṇa reliefs are also seen on the two pillars of the north porch of the principal shrine of the Viṭṭhala complex and on the east gopura of the Tiūv ngànalātha temple (NM h/1). Stray reliefs of incidents from the epic are to be found on pillars of many temples such as in the Śiva temple NG 1/3, in the ranga-māndapa of the principal shrine of the Viṭṭhala temple and in the southeast corner pavilion in the same complex.

Rāmāyaṇa themes may also have been popular in temple paintings. Unfortunately, very few paintings have survived at the site. The best preserved paintings are on the ceiling of the mahā-ranga-māndapa of the Viṭṭhala temple (NF w/1). Here the depiction of the Śīta-sthanyavara and the marriage of Rāma and Sītā are prominent.

In the Indian tradition, Rāma is considered to be the ideal king. One reason for the wide
prevalence of the Rāma cult and the royal patronage it enjoyed in Vijayanagara was, perhaps, the homology drawn between Rāma, the ideal, universal monarch and the earthly king reigning from his capital. The city was compared to Ayodhyā, Rāma's capital. For example an inscription of A.D. 1379 states, “in the same city (Vijaya) did Harihara dwell, as in former times Rāma dwelt in the midst of the city of Ayodhyā.”

Fritz and Michell have highlighted the centrality of the Rāmachandra temple in the urban planning of the city. It is the key to the understanding of the partnership envisaged between the deity and the king. This temple is at the nucleus of the “royal centre”, from where the king’s authority emanated outwards to the city and the empire; around it are arranged all the enclosures and architectural elements of this zone. The temple is the focus of the radial road system of the city and it also acts as a pivot for the concentric circumambulatory routes. The temple helps to define the “royal centre” into two parts. The north-south axis of the temple, besides axial aligning the temple with important landmarks, also separates the “royal centre” into the zones of royal performance and royal residence. The zone to the east of this axis is connected with the public roles of the king (administrative, military and ritualistic), while in the enclosures to the west of this axis were enacted the private roles of the royal household. Thus, the god is at the centre of the king’s public and private life. Such an emphasis on Rāma as the nucleus of the city plan suggests the profound significance of this deity for the Vijayanagara rulers. The king and the god were the focus of the “royal centre” and the city; the monarch was the most powerful terrestrial partner of the god.

It has been suggested that “Ramachandra was conceived as ‘within’ the king, ‘empowering’ or ‘generating’ his activities.” This aspect of the relationship between the god and the king is hinted at in the arrangement of the reliefs on the enclosure walls of the Rāmachandra temple complex. On the inner faces of the walls, between the north and east getaways, are Rāmacaṇḍa reliefs distributed in panels on six horizontal courses (Plate 17). On the outer faces of the walls are the five courses of reliefs displaying royal pageantry—the celebration of the royal rituals of the Mahānavami and Vasantotsava festivals. While in the interior Rāma is the focus of the friezes, on the exterior the attention is directed to the king and his power and wealth.

If the king in Vijayanagara is identified with Rāma, in turn Rāma is also portrayed as a king. This is to be found in certain reliefs in the temples, which are at variance with the traditionally accepted iconographic representations of this god. In these unusual reliefs, Rāma is shown sitting on a throne-like seat, leaning against a cushion or bolster, with one leg crossed over the other, often with one hand raised in the tarjānutrā (one finger pointing upwards) and usually with a shawl draped around one arm (Plate 19). He is depicted exactly as the kings are on the enclosure walls of the Rāmachandra temple complex (Plate 20), on the Mahānavami Platform and elsewhere. The only difference is in the headgear: while the god wears the kirīsāṅkula, the typical crown worn by Vishnu in his diverse manifestations, the kings are bareheaded or wear the kūlāyi. Occasionally in such reliefs, Rāma is accompanied by Lakṣmī or Hanumān, either in the same panel or in the adjacent one.

Thus, Vijayanagara and its surroundings are considered to be intimately connected with the earthly adventures of god Rāmachandra. The cult of Rāma from the fifteenth century onwards enjoyed an extensive following in the city and it had a special significance for the kings.

Notes
2. Ibid.
8. V.H. Vade, “Situation of Rāvana’s Lanka on the
Religious Traditions at Vijayanagara

3Arya Kanda lxxiv, 57-66, Ibid., p. 251.
4Arya Kanda lxxiv, 25, Ibid., p. 252.
5Arya Kanda lxxv, 63, Ibid., p. 254.
6Arya Kanda lxxv, 5-12, Ibid., p. 255.
7Kishkindha Kanda i and ii, Ibid.
8Kishkindha Kanda i, 1, Ibid.
9Kishkindha Kanda i, v and iii, Ibid.
10Kishkindha Kanda xxvi, i, Ibid., p. 296.
11Kishkindha Kanda xxv, 1-4, Ibid.
12Kishkindha Kanda xxviii, 11, 36, Ibid.
13Sundara Kanda lxxvi, 1, Ibid.
14These spots connected with the Râmâyana that are listed above are as pointed out by the local pilgrim guides and as given in the pilgrim maps. Many of these were also mentioned by H. Daniel Smith in his talk "Râmâ Padyâtra." delivered on 29 March 1988, at the University Club House, Bombay, under the aegis of the Anantacharya Indological Research Institute and the Museum Society.
15Pampamahatthya, first part, chapter 73.
16Hemakuta-khandha, chapters 32-34 and Pampamahatthya, first part, chapter 67.
20A. Sundara, op.cit., pp. 16-11.
22Ibid., p. 32.
23According to V. Raghavan, this work must have been produced during the time of Harîhara I (Ibid., p. 17). According to R.S. Panchamukhi (Introduction to the Virupâksha Vasanottosasa ChhatpÂ, p. xvi), it belongs to the second half of the 14th century A.D. However, the internal evidence indicates that it is highly unlikely that this was a 14th century work. In the ChhatpÂ the city is referred to as Vijayanagara, but this name became current only in the 16th century. Mention is made in it of the great eastern gopura of the temple, but it is unlikely that this could have existed in the 14th century. The reference to the pulling of the temple chariot up to the Nandi statue at the foothill of Massanghika indicates the existence of the rathavâdhi, which appears to be part of the late 15th or 16th century expansion of the temple. The main reason for attributing it to the 14th century is that Vishnu Temple is stated to be present and to play an honoured role in the festival, as did the king. The two learned authors were probably unaware that Vishnu Temple became the title of the rulling pontiff of the Aditya maha as Vijayanagara (now as the Nârâyan Temple is the crowning act assumed by the heads of the pithas that trace their origin to the great advaitya sage), which was originally a branch of the Śrîtâgeri maha. This is indicated in an inscription of Krishnadâvarânyâ of A.D. 1515 (B.R. Gopal, *Vijayanagara Inscriptions*, vol. II, no. 580). Even today, the present head of the Hâmpi maha, Narasinha Bharati, is called Vidyârânya svâmi. In modern times, too, the spiritual descendant of the original Vidyârânya svâmi and the descendant of the Vijayanagara rulers, the erstwhile ruler of Anegundi, played an important role in the annual car-festival of Vîrâpâksha. Thus, it is possible that this chârapû was a 16th century literary work.
27FE, p. 390.
29Ibid., p. 285.
30VPR, 83-84, no. 12, p. 29.
31SII IX, pt. II, no. 364.
33VPR, 84-87, no. 161.
34SII IX, pt. II, no. 446.
35Pampamahatthya, first part, chapter 61.
36SII IV, no. 967.
38QI, XXXI, p. 148.
39EC XI, Hr. 75 and 76; SII IX, pt. II, no. 670.
43Ibid., p. 336.
44K. Desai, op.cit., p. 120.
46EC V, Hr. 133.
47ARSE of 1928-30, B.K. no. 119.
48MAR of 1935, nos. 26 and 27.
49EC VII, Hr. 68 and 69.
51SII IV, nos. 250, 251, 253; VPR, 83-84, no. 67.
53SII IV, no. 252.
54N. Venkatarananayya, "The Date of the Construction of the Temples of Hazarâ Râmakâvántu and Vijñâna at Vijayanagara," *JOR*, XVI, pp. 84-87.
55G. Michell, "Kings and Cults," in *The Ramachandra
65 *SIT IV*, no. 251.
66 The cyclic year Durmukhi during the Vijayanagara period coincided with A.D. 1556-57, 1416-17, 1476-77 and 1536-37.
67 MAR of 1929, p. 36.
68 These figures are very similar to the regal figures depicted on the 14th century first phase of the Mahānāvami Plataform. In both cases, the men wear only a short dhoti. They have long hair, tied up in a large knot at the back of the head. In the later period there is a definite change in the attire—-the kings and other noble personages always wear a high cap, the kūlīyā, and besides the dhoti they often also wear a short jacket and often have a shawl thrown over one arm. This can be seen on the 16th century A.D. third phase of the Mahānāvami Plataform, in the statue of Krishnaśāyana at Tirumalai, on the pillar reliefs in the subsidiary shrine of the Tiruvengalantathu temple (NM h/1), etc. The earliest example of this type of costume is to be seen in the so-called Aṇājaṇyā temple (NV n/1) of Malīkārjuna’s reign where, in the portrait sculptures of the king and his attendant Śrīlaṅkā, both sport the kūlīyā (see *VPR* 79-83, plate LI); and N. Lakshminarayan Rao, "Portrait Sculpture of the Vijayanagara King Malīkārjuna," in *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, ed. S. Rāi and B.R. Gopal, pp. 181-84. Thus, in the 14th and early 15th centuries A.D., the kings were bareheaded and had hair tied in a big knot, while from the mid-15th century onwards the kūlīyā, which covered the hair, became de rigueur.
69 *SIT IV*, no. 253.
70 At the same time the king made similar grants to three other temples. These grants were all made on the auspicious occasion of a solar eclipse that occurred on the 7th March A.D. 1513 (SITIX, pt. II, no. 493). The other temples were the great Virūpākṣha (SIT IX, pt. II, no. 493), the Prasanna Virūpākṣha (SIT IX, pt. II, no. 493) and the Vījala (SIT XIV, nos. 273 and 278) temples. The choice of these four temples for rich endowments on the same occasion is significant. They are the temple of the tutelary deity, the royal chapel dedicated to the same deity within the "royal centre", the state chapel of Ramachandra and the temple which in the 16th century became the most important Vaṣṇu temple in the city.
71 *SIT IV*, no. 250.
72 VPR ’83-84, no. 67, p. 49.
73 16th century A.D. inscriptions reveal many variations in the names of Aravinda chiefs. For example, Tirumala, the younger brother of Alāja Ramaraya, who became the first king of fourth dynasty, is also referred to as Veṣa-Timmaparāja (SITIV, no. 265 and 266). Thus, Tirumala and Timma are used interchangeably. Similarly, Rāmaraya’s paternal uncle Peda Kondriya is mentioned as Kondriya Deva (SITIV, no. 275) and his son Kondriya Deva (ibid.) and Kondriya Timmaparāja (SITIX, pt. II, no. 616). Suffixes such as rāja or rāja, deva and aya are often added to the names and are also used interchangeably. 74 J.M. Fritz, "The Roads of Vijayanagara: A Preliminary Study," in *VPR* 79-83, pp. 55-56.
77 V. Filliozat, *loc.cit.*
78 VPR ’83-84, no. 16, pp. 31-32.
79 SITIX, pt. II, no. 595.
80 The other temples are the Vījala (NM h/1), Tiruvengalantāthu (NM h/1), Krishnā (NM m/4) temples and the Chitthalinga temple near Kānulāpura.
81 SIT XVI, no. 120 and ARSIE of 1904, no. 29.
82 SIT IV, no. 245.
83 VPR ’83-84, no. 65, p. 48.
84 According to R. Champakalakshmi, *Vaisnava Iconography in the Tamil Country*, p. 125, it is only in the coronation scene that Bhairava and Satrihāri are shown along with the seated Rāma and Sītā and the standing Lakṣmana.
85 VPR ’83-84, no. 68, p. 49.
87 Cited by B.A. Saletore, *Sec. & Pol. Life*, vol. 1, p. 121.
90 According to R. Champakalakshmi, op.cit., pp. 124-125, Rāma is usually depicted in a standing pose, holding the bow and arrow in his two hands; occasionally he is shown with four hands, in which case in the upper hands he holds the sākha and chakra. At times, Rāma is shown along with Sītā, Lakṣmana and Hanumān, all four may be standing or Rāma and Sītā may be seated while Lakṣmana and Hanumān are standing. It is only in the pāṭālabhīṭeṇkā scene that the other two brothers are also represented. In this scene the god and goddess are usually represented as seated (in lāttisana). Thus, an icon of Rāma seated by himself does not occur in the iconographic canon.
91 In my field trips to Hairpet, such images of Rāma were wrongly identified by me as that of Vijayanagara kings. It was only the occasional presence of Hanumān or Lakṣmana near Rāma or in an adjacent panel and kirti-mukuta worn by the deity that helped in identifying this unusual type of image as that of Rāma. In a discussion about the nature of such images with Dr. A.L. Dallapiccola, it was suggested that the Vijayanagara sculptors had resorted to "intentional ambiguity" in these reliefs, in order perhaps to draw a parallel between the divine and earthly kings.