

Namaste

This is P. Ravi Sarma of the class of 1966 coming to you with the third broadcast in a series of occasional essays on the “story and history” of AMC/ KGH and the city of Visakhapatnam as we continue the centennial celebrations of AMC.

The broadcast on Jan 23rd was a Prologue, with a commentary on the past one hundred years and now our hopes for a brighter future in the second century and beyond for our AMC,

On January 30th we listened to the early history of AMC, an essay written by Dr KVGK Tilak in 1995.

Today is Monday, February 6, 2023 and I briefly go over the history of Visakhapatnam. The events of the last 500 years have a lot to do with the character and composition of the city, now called a city of destiny and one which is soon to become the seat of government of the new state of Andhra Pradesh.

For this broadcast I again chose an artist of our own, Dr A Kanyakumari of Vizianagaram, a renowned Vidushimani on Violin, selected from her Tyagaraja Pancharatna keertanas, the first one is Jagadananda Karaka and the next one is Duduku gala. Hope some of you will enjoy the music also.

Today, I will also post an article written by Dr Bhavaraju Subba Rao garu, of the class of 1960, MS; MCh, HOD and Professor of Neurosurgery, now retired. He wrote this article at the time of the Global Meet in 2008. His essay updates the information from Dr Tilak in 1995 and also adds more details in many years. Hope you will like this review also.

Until we meet again for another broadcast on the “story and history” of AMC, I wish you and your loved ones, blessings of the Divine. This is P. Ravi Sarma of the class of 1966.

February 6, 2023

Washington DC

USA

A BRIEF HISTORY OF VISAKHAPATNAM: From Visakha Puri to Vizag

The city we call Vizag has a long and celebrated history going back thousands of years. It was variously called

Visakha Puri

Visakha Pattanam

Visakhapatnam

Kulottunga Puram

Isakhapattanam

Vizagapatam

Waltair and

Vizag.

For most of its history it was and has been Visakha Pattanam or Patnam.

It is surrounded by the Eastern Ghats ("Turupu Kanumalu) and on the east by ocean, the Bay of Bengal. Its climate is very hospitable, and its land and forests are very fertile. Its people were farmers, manual workers, sea farers, fishermen, scholars and artisans. Its local rulers never were conquerors and they did not create any kingdoms. Therefore, various kingdoms at various times ruled over Visakhapattanam.

The earliest recorded history goes back to the 6th century BCE (before the common era) when this province was part of the Kalinga empire. Later, Emperor Ashoka defeated the Kalinga empire and it became part of the Maurya empire. The first Andhra kings were the Satavahanas and their rule lasted for about 400-500 years, beginning shortly after the Mauryan rule in the 3rd century BCE and ending sometime in the 3rd century CE.

This province was a thriving Buddhist center, with all the three branches of Buddhism, The Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana sects flourished here. There are many Buddhist sites that are still present in and around Vizag and they are popular destinations for both locals and out of town visitors .

After the Satavahanas, rulers from the Southern states, Cholas, Pallavas, Chalukyas, Vengi Andhra kings, and from the Northern part, the Odissi rulers, the Gajapati dynasty from Jeyapore, all had this area under their control. In the 14th and 15th centuries when the Vijaya nagara empire was in its prime its control extended to this area also. In fact, the Simhachala devasthanam was renovated and supported by emperor Sri Krishna Deva Raya.

Later both Gol

Europeans arrived in the early 17th century, as traders but quickly became rulers. The Dutch, The French and the British reigned over this area. Bhimunipatnam has many sites that point to the rule of the Dutch in the 17th-19th centuries. The East India Company came here in 1682 and In the 18th century, both the French and the British controlled at various times. Finally, the British defeated the French in 1804, during the Napoleonic wars in Europe, and administrated the province until independence in 1947.

There are local narratives on the reason the city is called Visakha Pattanam. The most often mentioned story is that an Andhra king was passing through the area on a pilgrimage to Varanasi and stopped to rest. He became so enchanted with the place, he decided to build a temple near the present-day Lawson's Bay. It was in honor of his family deity, Visakheswara (Subrahmanya) and the town became Visakheswara Puram, then Visakhapatnam. The exact period when it happened is not known, some say it was in the 4th century CE and others say, 10th century CE.

Another narrative is that is named after a Pallava king Visakha Varma.

There is a third narrative, that the city is named after Visakha, the most well known female disciples of Gautama

Buddha.

During the British rule, the area was included in the Madras presidency. The civil administration of Visakhapatnam started officially in 1803 and its municipality was incorporated in 1858, following an 1850 law. It became a municipal corporation in 1979 and in 2005 was reorganized as Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and is administered by a Mayor. The city has been growing rapidly and its growth will likely accelerate with it becoming the executive capital of AP. Its official population in the 2011 census was 1.728 million (17 lakhs) and the estimated population at the end of 2022 was 2.36 million, 23.6 lakhs. Slum dwellers constitute 44.6% of the population.

It is obvious that I left out many details on this ancient and modern city, whose best days are still ahead of it, that is why it is called the City of Destiny. We are very proud that our AMC is a very important part of this city's history and growth.

Until we meet again this is P Ravi Sarma, wishing you all well.