

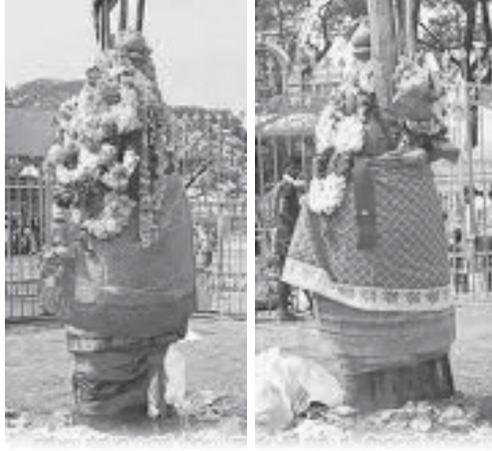


# The Casket of Vermilion

**KUMKUMA BHARINE**



**Dr. Lanka Siva Rama Prasad**



# ***THE CASKET OF VERMILION***

**[KUMKUMA BHARINE- A casket of vermilion]  
(The story of Sammakka- Sarakka)**

**Dr. Lanka Siva Rama Prasad**

# **THE CASKET OF VERMILION**

[KUMKUMA BHARINE]

(The story of Sammakka- Sarakka)

by

**Dr. Lanka Siva Rama Prasad**



June 2018

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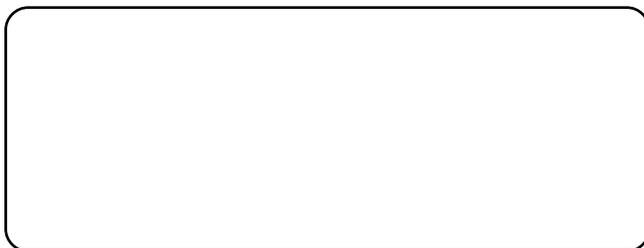
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*This book is presented to...*





## **Lily Swarn**

Poet , writer , columnist  
Winner of the Reuel  
International Literary Prize

## **Preface**

A chance virtual encounter with Dr Lanka Siva Rama Prasad was the beginning of a unique literary association with this unusually blessed man's work and personality . We would often engage in a sort of alliteration duel as a break from our own writings. A kind of mutual admiration society soon flowered.

Being a cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon is just one of his endless list of achievements. Telugu and English are his hand maidens as he has written poetry, fiction, numerology, scientific fiction, a book of cartoons, a travelogue, dream analysis to name a few. His forays into myriad realms ,spotlight his hunger for acquiring as well as spreading varied knowledge. Dr. Prasad's writings reflect his humane temperament and his spiritual leanings. His penmanship sways like a Lakshman jhoola (a bridge) between past and present. A knowledge of anthropology, occult sciences, psychology along with his training in multimedia technology, computer animations and television production reflects in the vast canvas of his poetry.

I am reminded of the legendary B NarsinghRao as Dr Prasad unveils the legend of Sammakka in his inimitable epic stance.

Sammakka Saralamma jatra or Medaram Jatara is a tribal Hindu festival, honouring the goddesses. It is celebrated in Telengana state and is known as one of the largest gatherings of the world.

Dr. Prasad's words illuminate the poem with evocative descriptions with the lucid vocabulary at his command. The poem takes on different avatars according to the progression of the narrative. The descriptive powers of the poet are brought into ample focus in Part 2

“ The whole forest was silent .....silver flakes .

I was mesmerised by part

21. “Most lovely moonlight illuminates the nights ; Mother Nature is worshipped with flowers .....in those sigel drawings of white flour”

A poem that stirs many emotions besides being a chronicle of a 13 th century ritual gathering . The roots of tradition and festivals are what make the present sturdy.

A must read book that has a lot to offer to readers of both literature and history.

**- Lily Swarn**

## **The story of Sammakka – Sarakka**

Somewhere in the 12th century, some tribal leaders found a new born girl (Sammakka) crying amidst tigers. The head of the tribe adopted her. She was married to Pagididda Raju a tribal chief. They were blessed with two daughters and one son Sarakka, Nagulamma and Jampanna respectively. After sometime, there was a severe drought that lasted for years and as a result the mighty Godavari River dried up. Because of the drought the tribal people didn't pay tribute to King. Rudra deva sent his army to subdue the tribals and collect the tribute under Peddapuli raju another tribal chief now a commander in the Kakatiya Army. Then a War was fought between tribal chief pagididda Raju and Kakatiya army on the banks of "Sampenga Vagu" (Jampanna Vagu).

Pagididda Raju, his daughters Sarakka, Nagulamma, son in law Govinda Raju (husband of Sarakka) lost their lives in the battle. Later Jampanna also dies in Sampenga Vagu (renamed as Jampanna Vagu in the memory of his heroic fight). Sammakka also enters war and fights and causes lot of damage to kakatiya army. Surprised by her Bravery and Valor the Kakatiya Prime Minister proposes peace offering Sammakka a place in the kingdom as the queen. Sammakka turned down the offer and continue the fighting to avenge the dead. The battle continued and Sammakka was seriously wounded. Sammakka told her people that as long as they remembered her, she would protect them. Then, she cursed the Kakatiya dynasty to perish and proceeded towards Chilakala gutta and disappeared in the forest. In the morning they found Kumkuma bharine –a red ochre box (a casket of vermilion), her bangles and the pug marks of a huge full grown tigress, exactly the same place where she was found as an infant by the koyas. Soon afterwards Kakatiya kingdom rises and falls.

A highly intriguing and fascinating story of the local deities that attracts more than ten million people to a remote area in Medaram forest, the largest bi-annual congregation of tribal communities, perhaps, in the world.

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# 1. THE RAGE OF SAMMAKKA

Rage- Goddess, sing the rage of heroic Sammakka  
the tribal warrior princess,  
Seeing her children in pools of blood, doomed for not  
paying the tribute cess,  
To the mighty throne of Kakatiya kingdom that was  
invincible at that time recess,  
Children of the forest were hurled down to the  
House of Death in the egoistic Process!

Less equipped and tactically poor, but sturdy souls  
wilting under severe drought,  
When their requests for annulment of taxes was  
rejected, war was declared on spot,  
By the reigning king who sent his cracked troops to  
crack the back of the tribals fought,  
Muse, sing me, when the two first broke and clashed,  
what god drove them to fight with such spat?

When the children of forest of Dandaka were  
witnessing the absence of Rain god,  
The Godavari River went thin leaving the tributaries  
into streaks of pebbles and mud bad,  
The verdant fields and ponds became dry parched  
tongues with iguanas and reptiles brood,  
No clouds seen above, the sun was virile throwing his  
hot arrows from his brow crude!

When the old men of the forest met the commander of  
their area in his regal venue,  
Tried to explain the plight of the tribals in the three  
year drought that yielded no revenue,  
The king was in need of money to wage wars on the  
fragile borders,- No excuses! Pay your due!  
Or else, we know how to collect our tribute from you  
barbarians that dwell in the woods and dew!'-

The swords of the commander's soldiers flashed at the  
neck of the old men in tension!  
The reckless commander growled-' now go, don't  
tempt our wrath- and you may depart alive!  
Terrified to the core the old men obeyed the order,  
like lone bees they returned to the beehive!  
It took them ten days to reach the forest, and they told the  
anxious people about the failure of their mission!

Men, women and children prayed for the safety of the  
dwellers of the forest,  
-'When war is imminent'-, the tribal prince said, -' we  
will fight, no more rest!  
Prepare bows and arrows, wood swords and spears,  
from bamboos best,  
Call all the able bodied men and women, train them  
in the fighting skills and test!

And Sammakka said to her king and mate, - ***O prince!  
War is a choice of lost wisdom.  
These children are like the tender buds of our  
flower and fruit trees in bloom,  
Can they fight the cruel empire that was known for  
its tactics and dark war doom?  
But dear, i am with you, we all the women -folk  
prepare us for certain martyrdom!'-***

And she heard the old man of the forest the ill-  
treatment they suffered in the court cage,  
He is the wise one who saw many moons in his life  
time, a medicine man, a priest,  
He is the one who gave asylum to Meda Raju  
her initial adopted father in Medaram Village  
He is her father who reared her, taught her the ways of  
forest and the prowling beast,  
When she saw her father in tears and the whole tribal  
children in agony, she flew into rage!



## 2. THE GLOW OF THE FOREST

Rage of that deafening silence was cleaved by the  
terrific roar of a tigress in forage,  
Somebody must have harmed her cubs;  
her seething anger was mounting in blaze!  
O Child! -Recollected the old man, -'We thought we  
heard an infant's cry in forest maze,  
That was a full moon night; the entire world seems to  
be bathing in bright silvery glaze!

The whole forest was silent except the occasional  
growls of tigers and infant cries in spikes,  
With us we carried a few torches lit, drums to scare  
away the beasts and clubs and pikes;  
in Magha masa- the full moon, O Child! He looks  
bigger and brighter, in sky and in lakes,  
Our Sampenga-Champak stream, and Godavari River  
glistened white with fine silver flakes;

The priests in big temples say it is in this month  
the goddess of 'vakku' Saraswathi was born,  
The Sun starts drifting towards North on his single  
wheel chariot, 'Ratha Saptami' it is known;  
The grandfather Bhishma chosen this month to leave  
this earth to heaven in divine emotion,  
The Prime God Lord Shiva is worshipped on Maha  
Sivaratri end of this month, with devotion;

With great caution we walked in slow steps with  
spears in hand, our hearts pounding  
Under the canopy of a great tree, near a large ant hill,  
a soft shaft of light was descending,  
There we saw a few tigers moving ferociously like  
sentries in Orugallu Fort, ready to pounce,

We saw them and started shouting in frenzy, beating  
drums, and waving torches at once;

Amazing! Like pet cats they looked at us and slowly  
disappeared in to the thick of the forest,  
There, O Child! We saw you under the hood of a great  
snake, it hissed at us at its best,  
When we prayed it with folded hands the white snake  
merged into the moonlight mist,  
And we found you wrapped in royal clothes, with  
gladdened hearts we brought you to our nest!

As a village head I had everything except children, we  
couple rejoiced at this god sent gift;  
Whole village celebrated your arrival and the divine  
way you lightened our spirits in drift,  
Meda Raju taught you skills and after  
his untimely death we took care of your uplift.  
With passage of every full moon you grew up in skills  
and beauty, you were a doe and swift,  
In the groves of Madhuka, sal, dhava, patala, tinduka,  
badari and mango trees in season shift,

You were a jhilika- cricket while leaping, Koel in  
singing, a spotted deer in run like lightning,  
Sarasa crane in flying, Chakravaka-shellduck in  
swimming, and a ferocious tigress in fighting,  
With a bow and quiverful of arrows when you moved,  
predators shivered in their burrows,  
The beasts, birds and man-folk learned from you the  
etiquette of forest and walked in rows!  
O Child! We named you Sammakka as you have  
brought us glow and happiness, and it grows!



### 3. THE MAIDEN AND A DREAM

It grows as she grew like the tree of mahua and  
blossomed with ancient beauty and charm,  
Every day is a festival and every festival is an occasion  
to sing and dance in mystic storm!  
In the month of Magha the tribe worshipped  
the rain god couple in clay image form,  
'Gajje bimdu pendul nend teruta'- today we celebrated  
Rain god's marriage in pomp farm!  
He will bless us with timely rains and water in our  
ponds and streams, protects us from harm!

In the seed festival we sow seeds and worship the  
earth goddess and seek her blessings,  
In the tamarind- ikka festival we collect basketfuls of  
fruit and sell it in the market for earnings,  
In the tadi- palm festival we start collecting Palm fruits  
and mahul flowers near water springs,  
In the Dassera festival we eat new rice, Raagi –millets  
in kani kurrum festival with joy tidings,  
In the sikudu festival we cherish beans, in marka  
festival we savor mangoes the summer brings!

Let us go into the interiors of forest and collect  
olagadda, besigadda, ita gadda tubers,  
Let us bring home leafy vegetables, bamboo shoots,  
tamarind and red-gram kandi flowers,  
Let us gather amla, jujub, jambol, fruits, tendu leaves,  
yams, jidi seeds, mulaka and palm fibers,  
Let us collect rice, horse-gram, millets, sweet potato,  
mangoes, jack fruits, tendu, for our stores,  
Let us sell them in the markets and purchase bangles,  
ear rings, and things for daily chores;

On that day men blew horns and beat drums and  
worshipped rain god, jhankara goddess,  
Songs and dances in praising earth goddess,  
forest god, and many family deities to bless,  
Everyone in the lotam-village including children had  
their quota of mahula or salapa drinks,  
With the dunga dunga beats of drums and the  
agile dhimisa dance steps in circles and rings,  
Everybody was tired by the midnight and the lovely  
Sammakka went home and slept in bliss!

In the early hours of morning she had a dream, in that  
dream, while she was walking,  
Near Champak stream some masked horse men  
with fox heads and hunting dogs barking,  
Attacked her from all sides, but she valiantly repulsed  
them and darted towards her village,  
But they regrouped and tried to abduct her,  
at that very moment tigers roared in rage,  
She saw a tribal warrior pouncing on the masked men  
and drove them away with courage!

The next moment she slipped on a stone and  
fell down hitting a big ochre rock,  
In to the heap of flowers of the flame of the forest –  
Kimsuka tree with a big knock,  
She saw the handsome warrior approaching her  
with a kind and compassionate look,  
In his hands he held a lotus leaf filled with water  
and he sprinkled the clear water on her,  
The water when touched her flowed red like warm  
blood and she woke up crying- **'Mother!'**-



(Madhul - Mahul - Madhulika - Vippra)  
Madhua - Mahua tree

## 4. THE RITES OF PASSAGE

Mother looked at her and announced in joy,-  
*'O womenfolk! Come here quick! Come here!  
Our mahua tree is in blossom; the crescent moon is  
becoming full in her magic sphere!  
The young serpent has released her first quilt; the  
young doe is in her 'erata' and red- fear!  
Let our wadde- priest and old woman know about the  
girl throwing her first red moon, o dear!' -  
Mother took the shivering doe into her arms and said!-  
- 'O precious! Now you, a virgin flower!' -*

The old-woman went in to the forest, in an isolated  
spot, two big banyan trees adjacent,  
With skill and dexterity she made temporary huts one  
on each one of the tree with new scent,  
With bamboo slivers and scented grass she made the  
huts comfortable for the girl innocent,  
Seven days they stayed in the huts away from any  
man's eyes, she will not touch earth, flower,  
Or any tree, the old woman said, if you touch them in  
this period they will become barren forever!

The old woman of the tribe told the young lady the  
secrets of womanhood and its rough rides,  
About the half moons on her bosom, the rise and fall  
of their turgor with emotional sea tides,  
The new hair lines, erotic dreams and ambrosial  
streams, the voice changes and mood slides,  
The passions and joys of a bloom, the perils and  
pathos of doom, she narrated in tales and fables!  
On the seventh day, she was bathed in turmeric water  
and in new dress she met all nobles!

In the serene evenings all the young girls as usual  
gathered in dhangadi Pikin-kudmas,

Boys of marriage age in dhangada basa practiced  
regular and ceremonial dances en mass,  
Dhola, tamak, dundunga, mahuri, pipes, bansuri,  
ektara, lutes and other accompaniments,  
The intoxicating drinks mahuli, landa, handia and  
salap flowed into their trance movements!  
Then one day the tribal chieftain visited the village on  
his way to Orugallu for tribute payments!

The village elders welcomed the handsome warrior  
with traditional honors,  
On that full moon night the villagers saw three full  
moons in their bright banners,  
One in the blue sky, another the bright warrior tribal  
prince in his pleasing manners,  
Then appeared the most beautiful moon ever known  
in her moonlight white attire,  
When she danced to the beats of drums the warrior  
prince's heart suffered a fire!

The Dhimisa dance was at its best, the young girls  
danced like does, peacocks, and swans,  
To the beats and tones of dappu, dolu, tudumu, mori,  
kiridi and jodu-kommulu- twin horns,  
They performed bhag, natikari, kunda-pot, sambor-  
nisani, bayya, mouli, goddi beta turns,  
Sammakka at centre stage, they enacted hunting  
postures in playful and romantic antic stream,  
And at the end of her enchanting dance the perfect  
moon saw the young warrior of her dream,  
Approaching her, the whole sky revolved around her,  
she was about to fall emitting a scream,  
She only knew that two arms are holding her with love,  
she felt secure and lost consciousness beam!



## 5. THE MARRIAGE OF EARTH AND RAIN

The consciousness beam she lost for a brief moment,  
like Mother Earth at the first shower of rains,  
The petrichor of love permeated the household like  
mahula flowers aroma in breezy trains,  
She did not know when she was shifted from his arms  
to her mother's lap in those late hours,  
By the time she opened her eyes her parents were  
looking at her anxiously like watch towers!

New Dawn rose up from her bed of white mist  
amidst the roosters' song swings,  
She painted the east gate pink with her dainty fingers  
and clouds of golden wings,  
Stars and moon her night guests are slowly departing  
towards the distant springs;  
Birds are singing welcome songs and flowers and  
webs are wearing mist pearl rings

-*Is she alright?*- She heard his voice outside and got  
up immediately from her mat grand,  
Her father went out, greeted the warrior, -'yes son!  
She is as fresh as the lotus in the pond!'-  
The warrior answered -'On my return I will be visiting  
you, o father! My greetings to you all'-  
The stag was searching; behind the bamboo window  
she, like a doe was waiting for his call!

Whole tribal villages rejoiced when their marriage  
was announced with the beat of drums,  
The daughter of Earth and forest goddess is given to  
the son of Rain god with no tantrums,  
Let sky be the pandal, clouds run on errands,  
hills as seats for guests, trees as fine sentries,  
Let bumble bees, humming birds, koels sing in joy,  
peacocks and partridges dance at entries,

Let thunder be the drum beat, pleasant breeze be  
the flute and horn duet'  
Let lightning draw floral images and sigils on blue  
dome as a bright poet!  
Let Champak stream sprinkle scented waters  
on our guests and delight,  
Let jaji, jasmines, chrysanthemums, marigolds  
and mango leaves shine bright!

The bridegroom is coming on his pride horse, his  
retinue on bullock carts decorated so nice!  
He is bringing rice, millets, cattle, tobacco, ornaments,  
clothes, liquor to pay the bride's price,  
Let us welcome him in to the guest hall with songs  
and dances of our great race,  
Let the palm toddy flow in streams and the  
revelry last whole day in joy's brace!

In palanquin, goes cynosure of our eyes,  
our princess in bridal dress like a tamed tigress,  
Look at the bridegroom, the full moon among stars  
and walking like a tiger, in white dress,  
Let us all pay our respects to our bijja-goddess,  
ilavelpu- family deities and other gods of ages,  
Let this marriage of Sammakka and Pagididda raju be  
written in bold letters in history pages!

In Joy the cool breeze caressed the trees;  
trees rained scented flowers on the procession,  
The entire entourage reached the village of  
bridegroom and everywhere there is jubilation!  
For three days they celebrated the marriage in feasts  
and dances with gay abandon fashion,  
The greatest tribal marriage of that time brought the  
Earth and rain into lovely passion!



## 6. THE KINGDOM BREATHING WAR

A lovely passionate granite boulder looks at you like  
an ancient giant petrified into hard rock,  
Surrounding it a kingdom breaths war on its fragile  
borders inside three walled block,  
Orugallu-one stone, Ekasila the capital city was called  
in the name of that stone black,  
From Beta, prola rajas first and second, RudraDeva,  
Maha Deva, and Ganapathi Deva king,  
The brave queen Rudrama Devi to her grandson  
Pratapa Rudra, war was always their sibling!

They worshipped their village goddess Kakati;  
Rudradeva developed orugallu city into future fame!  
Ganapati Deva built the Earth goddess temple and  
gigantic four arches- 'victory toranam!'  
His daughter Queen Rudrama Devi ruled her kingdom  
with kindness towards her people,  
Her grandson Pratapa Rudra inherited from her the  
kingdom and internal dissents ample!  
All borders surrounding his kingdom were boiling and  
a new pest from Delhi joined them!

Allauddin Khalji, A monster stirred with ambition,  
awful, raw and bereft of mercy,  
**'O gods, take such a pest away from earth'**- prayed  
his adversaries, such was his fancy,  
His sole pleasure was in conquering kingdoms and  
beautiful women, keeping them in pain,  
From the heights of Delhi throne he looked at the  
treasures of South rich in gold and grain!  
After Devagiri his plunder tongue and palate hurried to  
taste the fragrant Orugallu in strain!

Prataparudra was in no mood to tolerate rebel vassals  
in his empire's length and breadth,  
He never forgave the Ambadeva family that were the  
cause of his Grandmother's death,  
He hunted them in the territories of Mulikinadu and  
scorched them like forest fire in wrath,  
So he needed money and more money to maintain a  
great army and feudatory lords at posts,  
His ministers were tactical, his soldiers were brave but  
enemies were like swarms of locusts!

Faraway north the blood thirsty Mongol hordes  
attacked Delhi and its surrounding zones,  
In waves they came and ransacked the villages and  
towns, leaving smoke and charred bones,  
Allauddin repulsed their attacks and used their tactics  
of terror, displaying heads on spears,  
Hoisting victory flags over the pyramids of skulls, and  
killing children in front of their mothers,  
The charred clouds with burnt flesh stench have now  
crossed the skies of Vindhya Mountains!

They say this story has happened during the reign  
of Rudradeva in his expansion view.  
When the worst forest fire encircles the villages what  
can the children of forest do?  
They prostrated before the images of wood and clay  
and prayed at the sky ruddy blue!  
The magic sigils filled with turmeric and vermilion  
were wet with tears and fear dew,  
Fowls and beasts at sacrificial altars adorned with  
neem and marigold garlands stocked,  
Do they know when the sacrificial blade will hit their  
necks, but they walked and walked!



## 7. THE SONG OF MOON

And they walked and walked towards the parrot hill,  
under the spell of mahula breeze,  
Sammaka saw the full moon in the night sky  
and the wild forest in musical wheeze,  
O Moon! they sang,- ' In the month of Padman (Jyeshtha)  
we plough our fields and sow seeds,  
In burdabata(Aashadha) month we continue sowing in  
the burnt bushy wet lands and weeds;

In mundkhol (Sravana) month we collect roots,  
tubers and medicinal plants of jungle,  
In kani month(Bhadrapada) we observe kurumu  
festival or new suan eating as sample!  
In Dasara (Aswayuja) month we harvest early rice  
and celebrate new rice eating festival!  
In Devali(Kartika) we observe bean- sikudu ceremony  
and guard the crops from fowl and animal!

In Pand (Margasira) we dry and store paddy,  
maize, suan, pulses and oil seeds!  
In Push month (Pushya) we fill our stores with  
Cereals and pulses and fine sindi grass,  
In Magh(Magha) month we worship Rain god in  
Bimdu pandu praising his great deeds!  
In Phagur(Phalgun) we collect mahula flowers,  
Kendu leaves and dry them en mass!

In Chait month(Chaitra) we celebrate Ikka Pandu of  
new mahula- eating and go for hunting;  
in Semiti (Vaisakha) we collect seasonal fruits mango,  
jackfruit –of bijja festival celebrating!  
Whole summer we relish palm juice and pray  
mutyalamma goddess for our village well being,  
We hunt beasts and fish, keep cattle, goats, sheep,  
pigs, ducks and hen for farming and eating!

O full moon! Who can compete with your graceful  
charm that made you ever green?  
Your scintillating rays pierced the edges of clouds veil  
and clearly the silver lining is seen!  
Moon! Bless us with love, romance and fecundity, let  
our progeny grew under your wing!  
In your silvery moonlight, under a great mahul tree,  
may we enjoy the romantic life spring!

Many moons passed and the glorious couple of the  
forest had three blessed children,  
Saralakka, Nagulamma and Jampanna, they brought  
joy and happiness to the tribal region,  
They learnt the skills of song and dance, hunting,  
fighting from their parents and village folk,  
Saralakka was given in marriage to Govindarajulu,  
a young sturdy warrior with pleasant look!



## 8. THE DEATH AND A VISION

Pleasant look! No! That year there was a spate of  
natural disasters, fevers put people off-work,  
Mosquitoes became rampant; nights were disturbed  
by the cries of owls and wolves in pack,  
Black crows jumped on houses erratically;  
Bamboo trees flowered in un-season and dark,  
Palm trees yielded less juice and wadde the tribal  
magician -medicine man yelled a remark!

He prostrated before tribal deities, drew peculiar sigils  
and images, filled them with bones,  
On them he sprinkled turmeric and vermillion,  
put bison headgear on his head, threw stones  
On invisible demons, mumbled incoherent  
sentences in yells and spells, lit fire on altar zones  
Sprinkled frankincense, amber and myrrh, stirred flames  
and smoke with animal fat and horns,

Villagers brought neem branches, dry twigs of sal,  
jujuba, holy basil, calotropis and nuts,  
Put them on sacrificial fires, the dark aromatic smoke  
spread all over the streets and huts,  
The medicine man in his trance threw a few seeds,  
bones, colored stones and gavva dice,  
Then he yelled out a loud cry-' three years of famine  
and drought, no meat, fish or rice!'-

For a while he danced and danced amidst of the  
sounds of drums and horns in trance,  
And collapsed at the altar of the Earth goddess as  
though hit by a thunderbolt by chance!

The whole gathering shivered in fear and they heard that  
the village elder woman is unwell,  
Messengers rushed to Poonugondlu village to bring  
Sammaka and Pagidda Raju couple!

The old woman looked at her daughter and  
Son-in law and her grand children in tear mist,  
Her penimiti- husband was on her bed side;  
She Blessed one and all, and breathed her last!  
A new cloth was put on her body and a hole was made  
in the roof of the thatched hut,  
The body was brought out, anointed with oil and  
turmeric, bathed with water from pot,

Covered with a new cloth, the body was carried to the  
cremation ground, they hurled a black hen  
And the tail of a buffalo and placed some coins  
in her fist and mouth for journey on;  
Carried the body on a bamboo padi to the cremation ground  
amidst of drum beats and horn,  
And pretar-dances, singing the songs that hail the services  
and character of the old woman!

On the ninth day they made a deity with rice flour  
and offered food to it,  
Wadde- priest magician completed the rituals  
and they had a big feast ,  
Then he called upon the tribal chieftain  
Pagidda Raju and Sammakka aside,  
And guided them towards parrot hill to tell them a  
secret and a vision of pride!

***(Parrot hill- Chilukala gutta)***



## 9. THE DEADMAN'S GROVE

Pride! The symbol of human fall! All the feathers  
and follies stop here lie stark naked,  
You come naked into this world and go naked out of it,  
into an unknown naked world,  
Either buried in cold graves or burnt in pyre drapes,  
what remains is ash or bones hurled,  
Dust into dust; memories hid in tears and scars,  
some menhirs and slabs speak words cold!

The trio Pagididda Raju, Sammakka and the  
old magic man reached a spooky dark place,  
The cries of crickets, hisses of snakes, bats wing  
flutters and owls' hoots shake you in your shoes!  
A gigantic flank of a crag, dug into a cave seems to be  
covered by thick vines and waterfalls,  
All that is weird and flanking it were the ancient graves  
abundant with menhirs and stone balls;

That area is infested with lots of parrots, flocks of  
tailed monkeys, cauldrons of screechy bats,  
Sleuths of bears, gangs of buffaloes, a glare of wild  
cats, a murder of crows, packs of wild rats,  
Colonies of rabbits, troops of bandicoots, wolves,  
jackals, foxes, boars, porcupines, owls, kites  
Mongoose, peacocks, fowls, partridges, variety of  
snakes - vipers, cobras, pythons and kraits

The constant chirping noises made by the parrots in  
countless numbers conferred its name,  
It is a mysterious hill for the tribal people, who revered  
it with respect and believed the same,  
That the shades of their fore fathers stay there and in  
troubled times people seek their advice!  
The magic man told them- ' This is where I have to  
stop! You go on your own in search of wise!

He made them drink toddy juice and mahula  
tampere with mystic roots, seeds and tubers,  
They found their eyes reeling but suddenly the  
surroundings became bright with light fibers,  
Hand in hand the brave couple entered the maze  
glittered by fire-flies and moonstone sparks,  
In the dank narrow lanes they made their way into the  
cave on slippery grass and sharp rocks.

Scorpions and snakes were crisscrossing their paths,  
with stray bats hitting on face blinding,  
Every step was a test for endurance; every slip was  
death sentence, with hearts pounding,  
They walked cautiously and found a circle of stones  
smeared with fresh turmeric and vermilion  
An oil lamp was blinking in its smoke, half broken  
coconuts, and a bleeding head of a black hen,

The weird smell of blood, the pungent scent of amber,  
the fragrance of hibiscus and oleander,  
With dampness and darkness that chilling scene was  
ghastly and scary like storm and thunder,  
On a totem pole was fluttering the tribal flag and near it  
on a wooden stool was a great bow,  
And a quiver with two arrows, when they stepped  
towards it, a voice boomed like flash blow!

Slicing the screen of smoke emerged an old woman,  
dark yellow with anointed turmeric paste,  
On her face glowing was big vermilion circle, her hair  
is disarrayed, her breasts heaved in haste,  
Her supporting stick was shaking with her bent back;  
her voice was more than human and chaste.  
**-Are you tardy to offer vows and prayers, you children  
of the forest! In this dead man's grove,  
Why you put your mortal feet? This is no time to gape  
at spectacles but your skills to prove!'-**



## 10. THE ORACLE AND A MIRACLE

*-‘To prove your skills, o children!*

*Now search for the door in these dolmens,  
It is a door with no lock, but locked with a key,  
no key but a key kept in arrows,  
Arrows with no words but carved on dumb bells,  
no bells but hung in secret rows  
By these rows, on no man’s land you fit the key!  
Rush, o stag and doe, no omens!*

And the old hag disappeared behind smoke column  
and the cave looked vacant,  
They touched the walls of the cave, pushed them  
with force, no clue even scant,  
Sammaka said to her husband, -‘dear the key  
must be hanging above in the air,  
That’s no man’s land; Let me stand on your  
shoulders to see what’s in the up-stair!

They prayed the gods with solemn hymns and  
Sammakka saw the great boulders,  
She took the great bow and quiver with arrows,  
and stood upon his shoulders,  
Supporting her with his strong arms, he was looking  
for a clue in that opaque rocky ceiling,  
Then Sammakka saw a trellis high above her head  
where ferocious snakes were crawling,

For a moment a blitzkrieg of fear descended on her  
spine, but she controlled herself well,  
Above that trellis of the serpents was a stone-arch;  
carved in that arch was a big stony bell,  
Amidst of the bell the gong was hanging by two lines of  
rope, below it, a spoon with diadem,  
Sammaka informed her mate, aimed and shot at the  
two lines of rope with arrows tandem!

Pagididda Raju stood like a rock supporting her, and  
the arrows cut the rope,  
The big gong did slide down on to the spoon, the  
spoon moved on a hinge slope,  
There was a big thud, Earth underneath his feet  
moved; the dust flew non-stop,  
Snakes and serpents slithered down; timely he  
prevented her fall on to the soil top!

Then they saw an ancient mahua tree, its leaves and  
plaint stem are pure golden,  
With copper-gold leaves, bright yellow flowers and  
silver shining stems; as a token,  
To take home he plucked a branch, surprise!  
Immediately a second one grew again;  
It is the mother of all mahua –madhulika trees of that  
region, a legend well known!

Under the shade of that tree they found the key carved  
on stone slabs of moonstone wall,  
When they touched the key, a trap door opened and  
they saw the priestess near a deep well!  
She mumbled- 'It is the well of the past that one is the  
hill of the future, in between is present!  
The golden bough and the giant bow are the passes to  
this puzzling land of descent and ascent!

***-Now o children, you chose! One with golden bough  
can descend into the well of the past,  
The one with giant bow can climb the hill of future;  
you both can walk in the present fast,  
You should not reveal the mysteries to anyone that  
includes you too, it brings misfortune!'-***

Then there was a big explosion, thick smoke spread all  
over, they heard a melancholic tune!



## 11. THE SCENTS OF ASCENT AND DESCENT

The melancholic tune was coming from the depths of  
that step wall, enveloped in fog black,  
Somebody was telling them, - ***'your time starts now,  
before sunrise you must come back!'***-  
At present they walked a few steps hand in hand  
before starting their quests in light and dark,  
Down he went in the light of shades, holding golden  
bough and up she climbed with her bow,  
In the shades of light, in search of mysteries of time in  
the vivid psychedelic experiences glow!

The warrior prince step by step started descending in  
the spiral steps of the deep well of past,  
He moved along in darkness, through the shadows,  
beneath the lonely adjusted light ballast,  
In that phantom kingdom first he invoked the spirits of  
his parents who died in a battle worst,  
Never entered his childhood memories, as he was  
raised by his grandparents with no love lost!  
He saw the freezing blue- black waters; multitude of  
shades was rushing like sparks in a blast!

Pagididda Raju called on his parents and put the  
golden bough in the niche of the wall,  
A door opened into the past and underneath a sal tree  
he saw a couple of shades in a squall,  
They recognized him and cried aloud- ***'O my son!  
Come! Help us to cross the infernal river!'***-  
Eyes filled with tears he tried to hug them, -swish!  
His hands cut through the cold air ever!  
Amidst loud lamentations echo they said-'we were not  
cremated properly with coins of silver!

When you go home find our bones trapped in the  
bamboo grove near the Champak stream,  
O son! The treacherous one who stabbed us from back  
is now a big official in royal team,  
Bad days are ahead! All those shades you see are your  
ancestors resting in their last dream,  
Now you may meet the elder woman, the mother of  
your wife and unfold a secret scream!-  
With heavy heart he bid good-bye to them and walked  
forward towards a dusky light beam.

Sammakka's mother blessed him and she was going  
on her final journey, fast gone!  
Then he saw a beautiful woman a replica of Sammaka,  
A sense of fear shook him on!  
She said in a soft voice,- ***I am Sammakka's real mother,  
deceived by the same man!***  
***The child of forest but power hungry; with the help  
of rival tribe he subjugated your clan,  
I am not permitted to tell you the whole story, but  
you will learn,*** - and she melt in the dawn!

Sammakka went up the steep hill looking into the  
future; She saw a big army marching dread,  
She saw the flames enveloping the tribal villages; she  
saw Champak stream turning blood red,  
She saw her own shade and totem pole; she saw  
a Vermillion Casket -kumkum bharine ahead,  
She saw the largest gathering of people on that blood  
wet land paying respects all around;  
She saw the morning light, so she came down and met  
her husband on the present ground!



## 12. THE RETURN JOURNEY

On the present ground, there he sees no well;  
No hill is seen to Sammakka either!  
The rapid slide of a trap door made them hurry away  
from the Golden Bough tree further!  
The priestess was nowhere and a few stones moved,  
dust and smoke projected farther!  
Only one hole they saw and they jumped through it,  
landed on grass and damp weather!

Outside they saw the medicine man waiting  
for them,- *'you witnessed good and bad,*  
***Keep everything to yourselves; now the day lamp is***  
***pink and becoming yellow red!***  
***Remember the warning! Don't reveal anything! You***  
***walked on the impossible timeline!***  
***You are blessed human beings; but we cannot***  
***waste time here on fears and tears lane!'***-

Blessing them the magic man disappeared into the  
thicket of forest rich with bamboo groves!  
It was a difficult situation, they never had any secrets  
kept for themselves; verily heart grieves!  
For a brief period of time, silence ruled their walk;  
then Pagididda Raju said in a deep low tone,  
- 'What a peculiar situation! But dear one! We will  
keep the secrets for the benefit of everyone!

Then they took the holy bath in the pleasant waters of  
Champak stream and reached home!  
The warrior was restless by the words spoken by his  
parents' shades, ringing in mind's dome!  
The murderer is now a noble in the rank and file  
of the most powerful and large kingdom!  
Who will believe in the words of shades, against a  
chief known for his strength and wisdom?

Then they went in search of the thick bamboo grove  
and found it near the confluence  
Where another small tributary joined Godavari River,  
amidst of thick bamboo fence,  
The remains of two bodies they unearthed and the  
warrior gave them proper cremation in glow,  
The old men of his village narrated the incident;  
-'that shook us many many full moons ago!

He was the strongest bull of that time, belongs to the  
rival tribe of the other side of the river!  
He wished to be the chieftain of all tribe but your father  
was the chief and able contender!  
So he started sallies over our cattle and our people  
repulsed them many times with valor!  
Then on that fateful day we were celebrating the  
hunting festival, on that day under cover,

He ambushed your father and wounded him severe,  
bleeding heavily your father reached home,  
And they traced him to the village and threw burning  
torches on our thatched huts fragile,  
In that night your parents escaped but they intercepted  
them and with arrows, shot them,  
It seems they fell into the stream in spate; our search  
for them after the aftermath was futile!

Whom to complain? Whom to blame? One year old  
kid you were reared by your grandparents,  
Our enemy became the tribal chieftain and defied  
every tribal custom, defiled innocents,  
When the uproar reached the sky he sensed the  
danger and shifted his loyalty to the kings,  
A cunning commander now grazing on royal fields  
with occasional escapades in native springs!'-



### 13. THE GATES OF SLEEP

Springs to my mind, a saying,- 'There are  
two gates of sleep; one made up of ivory,  
Perfect, gleaming, and brings prophetic dreams  
in the blissful mid-night's revelry!  
The other one is said to be of dark horn,  
it is an exit to the nightmares of rivalry'-  
Sammakka got up shuddering from her disturbed sleep  
of dark images gallery!

From the day of oracle, many doubts started haunting  
her like the fearful shades,  
Why royal army should march on its own people  
with deadly spears and blades?  
Why the sweet and fragrant Champak stream has to  
turn blood red in its glades?  
What is that casket with vermilion powder?  
Why a city invades and forest fades?

She observed the gradual increase in the  
periods of silence between them,  
Each in his or her own thoughts analyzed the  
incidents in timeline rostrum!  
She wished to know who her real parents were  
and why they abandoned her.  
How many more mysteries are on line before  
she confronts the wounds and scar!

The wheel of Time is now passing on bumpy  
and thorn roads of stone and dust,  
Three years continuously the Rain God did not  
visit the famed Dandaka forest,  
The ever flowing Champak stream gone dry,  
many birds and beasts died of thirst,  
The mighty Godavari looked like an afflicted  
one with consumption on its worst!

The raging groans of cattle, they roar at midnight  
with incremental fear,  
The growls of bristling boars, horny goats and  
pent-up bears in their lair,  
The annoying mosquitoes, the return of scorpions  
and their severe sting fire,  
Even the mahula and palm trees yielded less  
causing concern in the daily affair!

From those days of subjugation, the tribal people  
were paying annual tribute,  
In produce- to the rulers of Orugallu –in terms of  
Bamboo rice, tamarind fruit,  
Animal skins, mahula dry flowers, red-gram,  
peacock feathers, tuber and root,  
Sickles, spears, arrows, birds, animals, wood,  
tendu leaves and warriors to fight!

With internal and external dissents gnawing  
the borders of his vast kingdom,  
The king was impatient on his throne expecting  
the boom of war drum anytime,  
Tributes must be collected from the defaulters  
with brute force or words soft,  
The minister in charge of tribal area found that no  
tribute was paid citing drought!

So he gave powers to collect taxes to his trusted  
commandant of tribal army division,  
He Peddapuli Raju once the tribal chief,  
highly skilled archer with ambitious vision,  
Called for an emergency meeting with the elders  
and leaders of the Godavari forest,  
-‘Two years I excused you but this year you have  
to pay all the dues, no more tax rest!’-



## 14. THE POISON AND THE FIRE

Rest! How can we even think of it?

Our water pots are empty. Birds and beasts die!

See! The Sun's arrows in thousands are scorching  
even the tears of mothers to dry!

His fiery shafts are hitting fowl, cattle and humans  
alike, big spot mother is on prey!

Fever and vesicles lay off people; non-stop corpse-fires  
burned amid moans and cry!

The poison is everywhere; we burnt our own huts  
for purification; it is time for divination!

The elders of all villages, chiefs and medicine men  
gathered at Medaram for reconciliation!

From the other banks of Godavari a famous priest,  
and many elders came on invitation!

The news spread all over; people in innumerable  
numbers thronged the venue of invocation!

As the chief of this side of Godavari River,

Pagididda Raju took his place among the elders,

The High priest praised the gods, scanned the flight of  
birds, threw dice and rice on boulders,

Invoked spirits, sacrifices a few fowl and beasts,

studied the blood flow and entrails and bones,

Cursed the malevolent demons, sprinkled handfuls of  
saffron, vermilion, growled in loud tones!

The fire before the Earth goddess image was in flames,  
into that he threw myrrh and amber,

The fragrant smoke and the smell of sacrificed  
animals' blood was thick like wet oak timber,

-O Elders of this forest! You order me to explain the  
Sun god's anger! The distant deadly archer!-

Like a man possessed by Sun god the high priest raised  
his voice on and on! 'It is real torture'!

For there is a man I will enrage- I see it now-  
A powerful man who lords it over all us people,  
Even if he swallows down his wrath today, he will  
nurse the burning in his chest wood-apple!'-  
Then they heard a deafening noise, Earth shook under  
the hooves of cavalry, dust rose sky high!  
Birds flew in all directions; they heard the hunting dogs  
barking, saw the swords flash nearby!

The soldiers surrounded the gathering, like a hungry  
tiger their commander entered the venue,  
He paid obeisance to the gods; greeted the priests  
and elders; they all stood up in respect due!  
**-Pedda puli Raju! Pedda puli Raju! Hail Pedda puli Raju!  
Roared a soldier! Hail the prince warrior!-**  
The king's warrior sat on the bamboo chair covered  
with tiger skin, looked with class barrier!

He thundered-'After many moons I entered these  
premises now wilting under God's wrath!  
A curse is on you! You have faltered in paying tribute to  
the king! Our king is our god on earth!  
Now o priest! Continue your prediction, what is in store  
for us? What is in their great minds?-'  
The High priest looked at him with blood shot eyes!  
- **'O Son of this soil! A calamity grinds!**

***It crushes the children under the might of a  
colossal stone! Blood will stain this land red!  
That giant stone shall be crushed by the thunderbolts  
from north! I see treachery ahead!  
A merciless warrior's army shoots its arrows on a doe,  
his own daughter, god! Take away my life!-***  
Uttering incoherently the High-Priest in trance  
stabbed himself with the ceremonial knife!



## 15. THE FIRST CONFRONTATION

The ceremonial knife grazed the High Priest's chest  
and second time he slashed his neck,  
Pagididda Raju ran towards the priest, snatched the  
knife; dressed the wound with cloth!  
There was a big commotion and the soldiers of  
Peddapuli Raju brought it under check!  
The priest and Pagididda Raju both knew a secret but  
both lost voices to injury and oath!

-***'Who is this rooster?'***- The commander asked a  
magic man standing nearby,- looks familiar!  
-***'He is Pagididda Raju, son of NagaRaju of  
Poonugondlu village, o great warrior commander!'***-  
-***'Oh! I remember! He was killed by his enemies long  
long ago, those were the wild days!'***-  
Said he in a formal tone- 'Now under His Majesty's rule  
we do not allow disrupting ways!'

Pagididda Raju with much difficulty controlled his  
anger and looked at him with scorn!  
He placed the wounded man under the care of  
medicine man and gave a look of warn!  
The rival old hunter studied his rival's body movements  
carefully and smiled like poison!  
-***'My blessings! o bull! Come, join the rank and file of  
the king, the right place for you, son!  
You are the chief here! See that the tribute due is paid  
otherwise ready to face the prison!'***-

Pagididda Raju was red with wrath!-***'Shameless-  
armed in shamelessness- lost your sheen!  
We never steal anybody's cattle or scorched huts!  
Now you colossal, help people if you can!***

Don't let us bring back the buried skeletons on to the  
surface and shoot arrows in dark!  
The children of the forest are under the flames of  
Sun and you demand tribute and talk!'-

First time he saw his rival's cub! First time a tribal  
warrior dared to raise his club and voice,  
His handgrip tightened on the hilt of his powerful  
sword but a cunning fox makes no noise!  
His dark heart filled to the brim, blazing with anger,  
his eyes burnt like searing forest fire,  
With a sudden, killing look he wheeled on the priests  
and gathering roared he,- '**Beware!**'-

***Your anger is fire but it scorches you only! Move  
with changing times lest you go extinct!  
Weapons of wood and clay will have to bow  
before the flash and flames of steel instinct!  
Earth worms are worms, but serpents are not,  
they will hunt with fire and vengeance hot!  
By His Majesty's order I came here to remind your  
responsibility and the final arrow is shot!'***

In his regal attire Peddapuli Raju walked like a tiger  
ready for kill and mounted his horse,  
His soldiers moved around him like a shield in case of  
any offence; the strong cavalry force  
Displayed the flash of swords and spears instilling fear  
and awe in the wild-eyed innocence;  
The eyes of the opponents clashed in defiance;  
Pagididda Raju, like a fort with great defense,  
Stood firm on his ground and the children of the forest  
saw in him a symbol of their resistance!



## 16. THE PATHOLOGY OF WAR

A symbol of their resistance how much adamantite it  
may be, it tries to shun war,  
For war is not a mere sport, it is the butchery of people,  
blood, flesh, ash and tar;  
Shift to the right, shift to the left, to march in the  
wounded marshes burnt and char;  
With fogged eyes and mind it is a fight to the finish,  
twirl and hurl in the Death's car!

Vultures had their own informers, foxes and  
hyenas have their noses wait at fences,  
Demons and vampires took their positions down the  
passageways of battle lances,  
They arrive at the battle with drums of groans and  
horns of moans while death dances,  
Black ravens look for the dead eyes, Flies for the  
rancid flesh, foxes bite for bite chances!

After the march of war, the escaped tears become  
rivers, flow rapid in the mortuaries,  
Slabs and urns bear the names of the dead,  
splints and bandages speak war worries,  
Zombies walk for sometime in the burnt houses and  
forts, owls hoot in the grim ruins,  
Orphans and widows cry behind their hunger pains,  
bodies goes for sale in market groins;

All the verdant fields and water lakes labor with  
human filth, gardens suffer human stench,  
Children wake up in sudden nightmares; widows ride  
on harsh ritual mares of custom trench!  
Pet animals and cattle cry in hunger crunch, wild rats  
and stray dogs fight for the rotten lunch,  
Plague and fevers prowl in the blood stained streets of  
vanquished cities and villages in bunch!

Victors hoist the flags of their kingdom, vandalize the  
places of worship and desecrate,  
Cruelty surfaces on the faces, rival warriors are  
sacrificed at the altar, fear they create,  
Royalty will be beheaded or subjugated to be the  
vassals; able bodied men are enslaved,  
Womenfolk take the brunt, defiled, destroyed, debased  
they dot on the terms enforced;

Plunderer goes to his nest for rest with a plan  
ready for the next conquest,  
The nobles redesign their tactics and change the  
flag colors on time's quest,  
The rebellions surface and the kingdoms die  
in pieces; morals of peace high flies;  
But the hurt remains, History is carved on rock slabs  
and palm leaves with true lies.

Decades and centuries become dust in the sand,  
heroes and leaders as totems and images,  
At some places local braves becomes deities; cultures  
clash to own them as their own sages;  
Elsewhere the murderers are honored as the  
incarnations of gods with brightened visages,  
Here we see the only example in the world; the  
vanquished are revered by the people from ages!



## 17. THE EMBASSY TO ORUGALLU

From ages known to elders the famine was  
not this severe and harsh,  
Where can they gather tribute when daily  
survival itself is on crash?  
The children of the forest live for the day,  
not used to amass cash,  
The meager resources they had they spent already,  
now this royal rash!

All the tribal chiefs from both sides of Godavari River  
assembled there to refute,  
For the first time, they all voiced against the  
pressure of kingdom in paying tribute,  
Poverty is such a base virtue; it unites diverse people  
on tears and sweat port!  
Chief Nela Raju of Peddapuli Raju's village suggested a  
representation to the king's court!

Five chiefs, five elder men and five medicine men  
were selected to represent the forest,  
One chief said –'though we have our cubs working in  
the royal army, they talk in jest!  
We are uncivilized barbarians in their view; we may  
not be given welcome in this unrest!  
We will go there, pray His Majesty to spare us,  
till the gods relieve us from famine and pest!'-

So they collected gifts whatever they could,  
including the ancestral gifts to please the king,  
Pagididda Raju to lead the group and the chief  
Nela Raju as spokesperson of the gathering,  
The medicine men prayed the gods and they  
travelled to the Fort City- Orugallu-with hope!  
At the Stone gate they were stopped by the guards;  
they were let in but –Not much scope,

To meet the king now is next to impossible; His  
Majesty is busy in punishing enemy clan,  
If they have grievances they can represent them to  
Peddapuli Raju the in charge, their own!  
Nela Raju said happily,- Our problems are over! He is  
our cub and a tiger, he will oblige us!'-  
Days passed, no call from the commander, the  
provisions they brought were over, not plus!

Then they all went to the house of Peddapuli Raju  
waited hours outside, for his arrival,  
In that heavily guarded premises their requests nobody  
cared, there was no approval!  
In the late evening they saw a glimpse of him; he  
signaled the guards to allow them in!  
Nela Raju spoke first-'O son of a tiger! ***O great warrior!  
Have mercy on us! Pardon our sin!***

***Our beloved forest and lands are dry, Famine and  
pests are rampant; you are our only hope!  
Kindly annul our burden till Rain and Earth gods  
blesses us! To pay tribute we have no scope!'-***  
Peddapuli Raju growled-'maybe it is difficult times for you!  
Our kingdom is also in war hue!  
If you cannot pay taxes you sell your property, people and  
produce here, this city absorbs you!

The Empire is not ready to hear your excuses, either  
you send all able bodied persons,  
To work for the army with arms and provisions or face  
dire consequences for your sins!'-  
Pagididda Raju intervened -'***With your permission, sir,  
we are the children of the forest,  
We prefer freedom; born like kings we die like kings,  
we abhor slavery under any pretext!'-***



## 18. THE IMPRISONMENT OF A TIGER

-‘Any pretext! Aha! How dare to speak to me  
in this manner! You arrogant one!  
I spared you last time; this time no! Arrest him!  
Here you obey, not raise tone!’-  
The commander roared and by the time  
Pagididda Raju reacted, swords flashed,  
Spears pointed at his chest; scores of soldiers  
surrounded him and he was lashed!

***-‘This is no forest, son! Here we extinguish fire  
before it starts! Don’t be troublesome!  
Now elders! Go home and come with tribute as  
stipulated and consider him as ransom!’-***  
The representatives from the forest understood the  
one way trap, into which you can only go in!  
But you cannot come out; the trap door is closed;  
this is a battle of tigers, one has to win!

Pagididda Raju resisted his arrest with all his might  
but the royal tiger planned it well!  
They bound him with ropes and dragged him to the  
prison and shut him in a dark cell!  
The elders were shocked and pleaded with  
Peddapuli Raju to show mercy and compassion!  
He said-‘Your lives are spared, Go home quick before  
I change my mind! No more discussion!’-

The father in law of Pagididda Raju wept in tears,  
tried his best, but was kicked out of the mansion.  
They were escorted out of the city ramparts in  
un-ceremonial manner and tension!  
What can one do if the cub of their own,  
blood of their blood subject dishonor!  
With lowered heads and spirits they reached the  
forest, what to be done further?

To send ten thousand young ones to serve the  
army as slaves or resist the empire spar?

What about the fate of our beloved Pagididda Raju?  
How to bring him out of prison?

Whole Tribe was in tears! His family was deeply  
perturbed! It is life's worst season!

The elders of the villages convened a meeting and  
decided to gather weapons and men!

Sammakka thought for a while, Yes, on the auspicious  
day of Lord Siva's Night, it is to be done!

Sammakka called on Saralamma and Nagulamma,  
and Jampanna to this mission,

Saralamma's husband Govinda Raju participated in  
discussion and later in expedition!

They took the blessings of Elders and proceeded  
towards the great city with ramparts.

With them the only weapons were traditional bow  
and arrows and dried mahula flowers and pots!

They pitched their camp near the prison; befriended a  
guard originally belongs to their clan!

Pagididda Raju now knew that his family is outside  
waiting for him, it is only luck to sanction!

Meanwhile the victorious army reached city; the  
jubilant king ordered festivities and function!

And he pardoned all prisoners and at the time of  
release the royal tiger met the tiger in prison!

***-'Keep health, son! Have a look at the grandeur of the  
kingdom; your defiance lost its reason!***

***Pagididda Raju replied- 'Yes sir! Blood for blood and  
love for love! Let us honor gods' decision!***



## 19. THE RAMPARTS OF A FORT

Gods' decisions lie beyond the periphery of human  
vision, hence man trusts magic men!  
These sorcerers create awe in the places of worship,  
wandering in the places of omen,  
Speak peculiar languages, chant mixed vocabulary,  
and perform magic tricks uncommon!  
Most of their rituals are loaded with inflicting pain,  
spilling blood and gore deeds damn!

In fragrant smoke citadels, in the flaming altars,  
sprinkling frankincense, myrrh and amber,  
Sitting amidst weird sigils, amidst heaps of white flour,  
turmeric and vermilion in chamber!  
Some psychedelic roots, some opium, hashish puffs,  
mahua or toddy sips to remember,  
At festivals, processions and obsequies in trance to  
reveal the ways of gods in slumber!

Fear and uncertainty fogs the reason, Darkness further  
increases the illusion,  
Credulity and innocence enhances the chances of  
oracles and create confusion,  
Legends and local myths becomes life histories and  
epics for future generations,  
Gigantic structures and arches, temples and forts  
provide false security to nations!

South to Vindhya, Satpura Ranges lies Deccan Plateau  
once ruled by Chalukyas and Cholas;  
in the later years Marathi speaking region with capital  
at Devagiri was ruled by Seuna Yadavas;  
Hoyasalas over Karnataka with capital at Dwarasamudra;  
Pandyas of Tamil land with Madurai,  
Kakatiyas over Telugu Nadu with their capital at  
Orugallu, busy with annual skirmishes,  
Unaware of Foreign legions with new religion hoisting  
the flag and rule in north premises!

Once feudatories to eastern chalukyas, Kakatiya rulers  
declared independence,  
Telugu language replaced Kannada at the time of First  
Rudra Deva's eminence!  
A marvelous thousand pillar temple was built at  
Anamakonda, the capital city!  
Ganapathi Deva king shifted the capital to Orugallu;  
built around a Great rock in amity,  
It came to life in Rudra Deva's vision,  
This story they say happened during his reign!

Orugallu became capital at the time of Ganapati Deva  
a great King cool and benign.  
His daughter Queen Rudrama Devi- a lioness that  
subdued a great elephant stock,  
In their regimen the fort was built; with ramparts, moat  
and a temple of beauty in rock.  
A massive mud wall encircled by a deep moat, inside a  
gigantic granite stone fort,  
With forty five huge bastions, turrets sky high, stone  
arches four of masonry art;

Queen Rudrama had three daughters-  
Mummadamma, Ruyyamma and Rudrama,  
Mummadamma's son Pratapa Rudra became king  
after the death of his grand maa!  
Unable to digest the fact a woman on the throne,  
Amba Deva declared independence;  
Once Pratapa Rudra became king he sallied till he  
finished Amba Deva and his resistance!  
All that grandeur bites dust when the more powerful  
army seizes the fort in hunger,  
The might of the Maha Rajas goes on bent knees to  
drown in the waters of Narmada river!



## 20. THE CITY OF ROCK WITH DIAMONDS

River's vast space for the diamonds collected in  
Kolluru mines to fill many rooms in treasury,  
With the stock of gold enough to gild all the  
mountains of Hind, gold coins attracts usury,  
Diamonds and pearls to exceed fish and pebbles  
in the moat; thousands of war horses,  
Hundreds of Malabar elephants well trained,  
nine types of precious stones to fill bourses;

The city started by Rudra Deva - Orugallu- One Stone  
city attracted travelers and businessmen,  
From all over the civilized world buyers and sellers  
buzzed in the streets with acumen,  
Where the swift horses of bahri and kohi, cat's eyes,  
pearls, diamonds, emeralds, coral stone,  
Were sold in rows and heaps, the Third Eye of the  
Lord Siva was the largest diamond known;

The four great victory arches made up of single stone,  
the big red granite temple in centre, by Ganapati Deva  
With aesthetically sculpted dancing hall summoned by  
the Queen Rudrama Devi, his daughter,  
The last king Prataparudra Deva gave his public  
appearance and blessed his subjects all,  
On Maha Siva ratri, the wedding night of Lord Siva  
with Parvati, celebrated in that lovely hall!

\*\*\*\*

United with his wife and family Pagididda Raju  
witnessed the grandeur of the great fort,  
Understood why people once enter cities do not wish  
to come back to their huts in forest,  
But are they not losing freedom? He asked himself-  
'may be they want work and some rest,

In the safe custody of a king and power to hold others  
lives at ransom without any test?

Then how to survive in the changing times? How can  
children of the forest, themselves kings,  
Be subservient to urban over-lords? Can they accept  
the strictures and encroachment stings?  
Three years of famine taught them hunger and thirst,  
how long can they survive on dry springs?  
In the return journey these thoughts ringed in his mind,  
if we resist what misfortune it brings?

They entered the forest amidst of a few sprinklers of  
rain a propitious sign they were told,  
The villagers thanked the gods for the safe return of  
their able chieftain to his lovely fold,  
Another three months summer was too hot and dry  
like the temper of their in charge lord!  
This time Dassara festival will be the line of tolerance,  
to pay tribute or to be on the guard!

The rainy season has come in squalls and stones, Dark  
clouds thundered, blue dome cracked,  
With the flash vines of lightning, the petrichor brought  
joy to the people in hopes crashed,  
Peacocks and dragonflies danced, dry ponds and  
streams smiled, laughed with water clothed,  
Frogs conducted symphonies at night, Cranes, egrets,  
and cormorants in day meditated and bathed;

Trees of the forest washed their dust, roads became  
slippery, scorpions and snakes crawled,  
Overall life has returned to normal, flora and fauna  
heaved sighs, Champak stream well flowed!  
A time for celebration, A hope on the horizon, a to be  
paid tribute to the gods on command,  
A big hurrah to the Rain god and Earth goddess, a song  
and dance of life in the revitalized land!



## 21. THE FESTIVALS OF FLOWERS AND WEAPONS

The revitalized land yielded them just sufficient  
produce to pay a part of that year's tribute,  
A messenger came with royal order- Ten able bodied  
men each village should contribute;  
Preferably young, without any delay! The king needs  
reinforcements; no excuses allowed!  
Peddapuli Raju is official nayak of tribal territory; to  
him any grievances can be addressed!-

On the occasion of Dassara festival all the urban  
villages and city are in festive spray!  
From the holy day of Bhadrapada- mahalaya- pitru  
Amavasya of that no moon day,  
Nine days and nights- navaratri- to Saddula  
Batukamma or Durga ashtami- in floral joy!  
A lovely flower festival that marks the end of monsoon  
and the beginning of Fall, ahoy!

Most lovely moon light illuminates the nights;  
Mother Nature is worshipped with flowers,  
A gopuram- pyramid in seven concentric layers of  
iris color flowers amazes nature lovers!  
A festival of women this festival of colors begins  
with beautiful rangoli –muggu on floor!  
Five lumps of cow-dung in cone shapes are placed in  
those sigil drawings of white flour!

Men and boys collect Marigold, Chrysanthemum,  
colored celosia- gunugu, hibiscus  
Katla, Teku, cucurbita, cucumis, tridax, memecylon,  
senna, water lilies, tangedu, lotus;

Women with their artistic skills arrange them on a  
Thambalam- a wide plate as base;  
In the serene evening dawns they sing and dance in  
circles with synchronizing steps;

O Bathukamma! O Mother Nature! O Life Giver!  
O Gauri goddess! O Prime power!  
Like a swing- vuyyala- life moves to and fro in realms  
happiness and sorrow cover!  
Like the phases of moon, like the ebb and flow of  
tides, life glows and fades ever!  
O Gauramma, O Mother! You are the energy, you are  
the color, and eternal lover!

Like vuyyala-swing, like chandamama-moon our  
female life has phases every month and year!  
Like seas, like day and nights, like seasons,  
like zodiac houses, like planets, like stars far!  
We living beings -flora, fauna and humans go on birth,  
growth and death cycle wheel,  
O Mother! You open your eyes it is our birth,  
if you close it is death. You are merciful!  
That's why you keep your eyes always open and  
protect us from the dark creatures awful!

O Life Giver! You are Bathukamma with cornucopia!  
We name you with Naivedyam of same!  
On first day O Engili pula Bathukamma! we offer you  
rice flour, cut rice annam, seeds sesame!  
On second day O Atukula Bathukamma!  
with Bland lentils, jaggery, atukulu- flattened rice!  
On third day O Muddapappu Bathukamma!  
we offer you soft lentils, milk and jaggery nice!  
On fourth day Nana biyyam- wet rice; on fifth day  
Atlu- pan cakes, accept them o Mother!

On sixth day O Aligina Bathukamma you refused food;  
on seventh day –neem fruits so sour!  
Or oil baked rice flour of neem fruit size to you O  
Vepakaya! Bathukamma! Please come!  
On eighth day O Vennamuddala Bathukamma!  
Have butter, ghee and jaggery wholesome!  
On ninth day O Saddula Bathukamma! We offer you  
curd rice, tamarind rice, lemon rice,  
Coconut rice, sesame rice- varieties five as  
naivedyam- food offering and in praise!

On the ninth day night we carry you O Gauramma to  
immerse you in water of clear lakes,  
And renew our lives under you protection O  
Bathukamma- Life Giver, a symbol of our lives!  
We offer you corn, rice, sorghum, bajra, wheat,  
ground nuts, cashew nuts, sesame seeds,  
Milk, jaggery, black gram, Bengal gram, red gram,  
green gram and to protect us in deeds!  
O Mother! Our young girls, From your form and energy  
learn life's dark and white shades!

\*\*\*\*\*

At the temple of Bhadrakali the Goddess is worshipped  
each day in one form,  
First day as **Shaelaputri** adorned with crescent moon,  
trident, lotus and Nandi bull,  
Second day as **Brahmacharini** walks on bare feet,  
with rosary and water pitcher,  
Third day as **Chandraghanta** with half-moon, with  
weapons of war, rides on a tigress;  
Fourth day as **Kushmanda** lives in Sun, rides on a  
lioness, a goddess of war and peace;  
Fifth day as **Skandamata** the mother of Skanda,  
rides on a lion, Sits on a flower lotus,

Sixth day as **Katyayini** to kill Buffalo demon rides  
on a ferocious lion to protect deities;  
Seventh day as **Kalaratri**, to kill Sumbha,  
Nisumbha demon twins, rides on a donkey!  
Eighth day as **Maha Gauri**, most fair enchanting form  
with damaru to beat heart beats!  
Ninth day as **Siddhidhatri**, Adi Sakthi- Primordial  
Energy, the other half of Siva, formless!  
O Mother of all worlds! Be merciful to us and remove  
this veil of illusions; kindly bless!

Orugallu was reverberating with the festive rituals  
and reverberations of pre war!  
There is usual procession of Nayaks with their army  
units and weaponry of spar!  
On Vijaya Dasami day there is worship of weapons  
new and old, from the royal chest,  
Foot-soldiers, cavalry, mahouts with their war  
elephants, Artisans their instruments best!

The army took a procession with their arms  
and armor, a special group of soldiers,  
With various weapons in hands, performed-  
Perini-tandavam-'Dance of Warriors'-  
Swords and blades- long and short, daggers,  
saber blades, battle axes, Morning stars,  
Maces, bludgeons, lances, pike, clubs, spears,  
tridents, slings, scythes, hammers,  
Long bows, arrows, chakrams, sickles, goads,  
battering rams, scribe's lekhini or stylus,  
Tala patrams, musical instruments, every artisan  
his instruments of daily work factory!  
All were placed before the War goddess Durga on  
Aswayuja Maha navami for victory!  
In the confluence of cultures, forest, villages and  
city one feels the unity in diversity!

Under the banner of Tribal division Peddapuli Raju  
participated as a commander,  
He displayed his recruits old and new; their urbanized  
skills to the nobles and ruler!  
When greed and ambition blinds a skilled one he  
forgets his roots and demeans his own!  
In the glittering of royal city lights, the child of the forest  
forgot the stars, moon and sun!  
His induction into the city nobles made him ride on the  
dark horse with hooves of iron!



## 22. THE MARCH OF THE CITY INTO A FOREST

Horses with hooves of iron in gallops came with the  
bad news of Northern green pest dread!  
Hundred thousand archers and soldiers, thousands of  
horses, elephants, bullock carts to ride,  
A massive mud wall with a deep moat, a gigantic  
granite wall with ramparts strong and wide,  
Countless Nayaks as commanders and tons of gold  
and diamonds of a great dynasty's pride,

More, more I want says fear; more and more I need  
says greed; more where to store?  
A great country with many divisions where nobles ill  
treat commoners, men their women,  
Thousand rituals and hundred morals etched on  
palm leaves and carved on slab stone,  
Can they bring unity in a country with thousand  
kingdoms where kings feast and snore?

In the skirmishes with enemies in borders,  
the skilled Kakatiya army won many a battle;  
In a fight to finish the army lost a few thousand  
front line soldiers in death's rattle!  
Peddapuli Raju division suffered a major loss  
but the victory brought him lands and title;  
He is now looking for new recruits from his territory  
and started negotiations prattle!

But the loss in the tribal villages was immense;  
every village lost four or five children,  
It is not the death, but the manner of untimely death  
that brought grief and concern!  
When the royal commander demanded more  
recruits and resources they rebelled,

This time all of them refused to walk on his tow-line,  
tensions mounted and cats belled!

The trusted royal commander spoke to the  
minister and explained the situation,  
Unless the problem is ripped at this bud stage  
it will be a big tree defies correction,  
He requested permission from his majesty,  
citing the tax dues, for a final negotiation,  
His sweet tongue and recent glory made the king  
and minister accept his proposition!

The commander along with the minister attended  
the big tribal conglomeration!  
The elders pleaded that they did not pay the dues  
due to severe drought situation;  
They requested not to pressurize them for new  
recruits as they lost many children,  
The minister left the decision in the hands of  
their own clan; left on urgent mission!

Peddapuli Raju took this opportunity to prove  
him leader supreme, passed a resolution!  
-By the next moon if they won't submit,  
army shall march into forest to find solution!-  
Pagididda Raju observed it in silence but kept  
distance to avoid repeat confrontation;  
The royal tiger roared; then they heard the deafening  
roar of tigers of the forest station!  
All the assembled people roared in defiance; every  
villager looked like a tiger in motion!  
But some elder men saw the whole city coming and  
occupying the forest sans hesitation!



## 23. THE WAR OF ELEPHANTS AND ANTS

### I

-Hesitation! No! Let the ants learn a lesson!  
Can earthworm hiss and bite like a serpent?  
When elephants go on parade ants look with awe;  
die under their feet, life force spent!  
Anthills and leaf huts can they be compared with  
Forts and palaces of urban wisdom?  
A simple lesson we teach you at much cost;  
you say this excersize is a price for freedom!'-

Peddapuli Raju laughed at them and left the  
gathering with stern warning!  
His contingent of soldiers as usual flashed their  
metal and mettle while going!  
Then the elders heaved a sad sigh; elected  
Pagididda Raju to lead the fighting!  
He said, - ***O Children of the forest! We are not  
invading their fort, this forest is our living!  
Let us prepare ourselves to face this war famine;  
it also scorches, dry our resources;  
But our mother forest protects us; Let us like  
tiger red ants, sting if they ride our sources!  
Let every tree be a fort, every man, woman and  
child be a red ant and fight for our land!'***-  
They started preparations by building tree nests,  
to shoot enemies from top and surround!

Plenty of new bows and iron tipped arrows from  
fresh bamboo groves, teak wood shields,  
Swords, spears, long pikes and lances, slings and  
pebbles, small trenches in open fields,

All the tricks they knew from childhood to earn  
    livelihood now used in big scale and yield;  
They put messengers, scouts to communicate fast  
    and effective, all provisions they wheeled!  
Now it is time to appease gods with prayers;  
    on holy altars animals and fowl were culled!

A strong army of twenty thousand supported by  
    cavalry and a few elephants of war,  
Under the observation of the minister, led by  
    Peddapuli Raju the veteran commander,  
Waited for the due date and began their march  
    towards forest, to quell a dissent,  
The minister had his own mind, the commander  
    his own ambition, to give the king a present;  
Their well trained army is at ease, Can a bamboo  
    grove resist sharp sickles or trident?

It is always the same with army; they pitch their  
    camps in open, send spies in advance,  
By the time they move, that open space smell with  
    human filth and leftover stench;  
The frontal army cleared the way under cavalry back  
    up to avoid ambush or trench,  
Their leader knows his forest well; a past hunter  
    covers his tracks and takes a chance!

And so their spirits soared, as they took positions  
    down the passages of battle,  
The cleared open is pitched with tents; blazing  
    watch fires like eyes of cattle,  
Glistened in hundreds in their glory like the stars  
    in the clear sky without rattle,  
When the air falls to a sudden, windless calm,  
    the sentries heard a low prattle;

A few desperados slipped in to dark in search of  
clues and blues, raided a village,  
They tried to enter the huts; attacked the village  
guards firing a few arrows in craze!  
Though wounded, guards repulsed them,  
and the forest now woke up in wild rage!  
That vast windless calm was pierced by the lit arrows  
of a sea of people in torch blaze!

## 2.

But the wooden ramparts built around the army camp  
scuttled the sudden onslaught,  
To certain extent, A few tents were on fire, a brief  
commotion merged into new thought!  
The commander rallied his army, tit for tat!-he roared, -  
'they burnt your tents this night,  
Tomorrow at dawn we burn their forest, let smoke and  
fire bring the ants and rats out!

He drew the map of the forest with rivers and villages;  
closed the paths and water holes in-field;  
-'Surround all villages and put them to torch;  
surrenders can be kept as human shield;  
Army of five thousand to guard the camp; in groups of  
hundred with a leader you go ahead!  
Reinforcements come to strengthen you; this job  
should be finished within a week period!'-

Till morning the children of the forest made sallies  
against the fortified camp;  
When they saw their villages on fire they attacked the  
army on the battle ramp,  
A few casualties brought rage in both camps,  
by mid afternoon it is death's stamp!

Rivals faced one another nearby Champak stream  
and arrows boomed on target lamp!

The streams of blood, the death rattle,  
the detached limbs, the screams of wounded,  
The shining buffalo horns, the spear's sharpened  
thorns, the severed heads, the dead,  
The hot blood gush, the mad rush, the agony blush,  
the pain's push, the wrath's brush,  
In a mêlée of idiotic flesh and rhetoric nerves  
Death and Life both have nascent crush!

Sarakka and her husband Govinda Rajulu  
fought like seasoned warriors;  
For Sarakka her mother Sammaka is  
an inspiration, caring no army barriers,  
She with her husband decimated the defense  
at one corner of enemy camp,  
They pounced on the body guards of the minister;  
trounced them in damp;  
Peddapuli Raju saved the day; He lunged at the  
warriors he stabbed one well,  
Speared another square in the back; the point  
went in and came out the navel!  
Govinda Rajulu let fly an iron tipped arrow,  
hitting the commander's shoulder,  
Lucky was the royal tiger, it grazed his left arm  
and hit a wooden boulder;  
More soldiers were pouring, the minister was safe  
and the old tiger was in rage;

Govinda Rajulu tactically started retreating,  
signaled Sarakka, to back-stage  
Peddapuli Raju now attacked the tribal warriors  
shielding their leaders,

With his heavy sword he sliced a rival,  
    slashed another and cut the intruders,  
His body guards chased the escaping duo,  
    and the fighting escalated,  
Sarakka shot arrows like a machine,  
    killing and wounding their stalkers,  
Govinda Rajulu twirled his long spear like a wheel  
    and stabbed one in the stomach,  
That unfortunate victim, screaming shrill as the  
    world went black before him,  
Clutched his protruding bowels to his body,  
    bent doubled and sank;  
Sarakka hit another persistent one with a  
    crescent tipped arrow,  
Hitting his full bladder and he fell on the  
    ground gasping out his brittle life!  
Peddapuli Raju saw the fate of his doomed soldiers,  
    alerted a group of archers,  
The arrows hit the retreating duo and made sieves  
    on their back  
With blood gushing from the wounds,  
    they disappeared into the forest  
Holding one another's arms out of the range of  
    human arrows!

### **3.**

In another corner young Nagulamma moved  
    like a great serpent,  
Scores of soldiers surrounded her like mongooses,  
    she hissed death scent,  
Her arrows maimed and killed enemies in dozen,  
    but outnumbered by them,  
She was arrowed, speared and stabbed by the  
    marauders in their helm!

The Minister was assessing the situation;  
it is no small battle,  
It is not mere rebellion; it is a war for freedom  
and independence;  
Women and children along with men are  
dying for a cause;  
They are not paid soldiers; any way whose  
land is this?

From a distance Pagididda Raju saw the  
fall of his children;  
The battle field is no place for tears and  
sentiments to churn,  
He knew the might of the Empire;  
this war may not last longer!  
But the murderer of his parents is behind the  
protective cover;  
Now it is the time to pay it back;  
blood for blood! One for one!  
He massacred the soldiers that are  
fighting his tribal troops,  
And with a leap forward accompanied by a  
swarm of his companions  
He attacked the forces of Peddapuli Raju  
and his paid minions!

Jampanna saw his father jumping  
into the jaws of death,  
He tried to reach him but rival leaders  
were in stiff breath,  
The enemy soldiers were erratic in their  
fight against this warrior!  
They thought they cornered him on the  
banks of Champak River!  
Then the young Jampanna lunged  
on a nearby soldier,

He forced his sharp ballem-spear through  
the neck of him,  
Pulled it out with lightning speed,  
hit another between his grinning teeth;  
So hard, he hooked him by that spearhead  
over his awe struck colleagues,  
Hoisted, dragged and dashed him to the  
trunk of a teak tree;  
Assisted by the cavalry and archers the  
enemy soldiers ran weapons on him,  
Wounded all over blood pouring from his body,  
On the bank of Champak stream he threw his arms;  
sunk in the clear waters;  
The soldiers recovered from awe; saw the whole  
stream becoming blood red;

#### 4.

By the time Pagididda Raju entered the enemy camp  
The royal tiger doubled the protective circles  
around the tents;  
To keep the respected minister and him self safe  
and sound!  
First ring of archers and spearmen supported  
by the cavalry  
And a few war elephants are ready to trample  
the intruders!  
With the roar of tigers the Forest warriors penetrated  
the enemy's defenses  
And disbursed the rats they brought with them,  
a few snakes, and red ants  
The rats ran in front of the elephants;  
the black clouds of earth neighed  
Fear gripped them and they ran helter-skelter  
destroying the defenses,  
Snakes crawled over the legs of the war horses  
and the cavalry is on quandary!

The red ants ran all over and their bites disturbed  
the archers aim!  
Scratching all over they threw the bows and  
spears down looking for relief!

At this moment Pagididda Raju came  
face to face with Peddapuli Raju!  
The royal tiger hid his surprise and with a  
sneer he drew his sword,  
Pagididda Raju took the blow on his shield  
and sparred his enemy,  
Now the chase began, chasing one another;  
two fierce tigers, nonstop,  
Who is hound? Who is fawn? Who is the  
player and who is pawn?  
-'No love between us except the love to kill!  
No truce! No prison to me!  
You killed my parents; you put me in prison  
and enjoyed your position!  
You are trying to kill our freedom; you wish to  
confiscate forest;  
That will not happen as long as I live;  
I won't allow you, harm our nest!'-  
Gathering all his force he swooped  
like a soaring eagle,  
Swinging his whetted sword bursting with rage,  
Guarding his chest with the strong wooden shield;

At that moment the minister witnessed the scene  
He signaled the spearmen;  
Peddapuli Raju defended well himself  
The heavy sword of Pagididda Raju made a  
wide gash on his chest,  
Asunder the armor, cleaved the chained shirt;  
the royal tiger will survive!

But the long spears of enemy soldiers pierced  
the bare throat of the forest tiger;  
One archer found his arrow hitting the target  
the great warrior's heart!  
While slumping to the ground the warrior smiled  
at the commander!  
No Morals! Always win with treachery!  
Is it what your civilization teaches?  
Slowly the light dimmed in his eyes;  
He saw his parents in the descent of that well!  
Inviting him with open arms!  
He remembered his children, wife and others;  
His lips moved, Sammakka! My dear!  
Death cut him short,  
The end closed in around him;  
His soul went to the house of Death;  
Unable to see the lithe warrior dying,  
The sun went down behind the west hills;  
Darkness loomed all over!



(Royal Tiger - Peddapuli Raju)  
(Forest Tiger - Pagididda Raju)

## 24. The Casket of Vermilion {KUMKUMA BHARINE}

All over! No! Not at all! Where you think it is end,  
there begins the beginning!  
Both warring factions needed introspection;  
scattered bodies convey something;  
May be about the impermanence of life or the  
burning timber becoming ash bland!  
For some time tears rule the nation, after that revenge  
and rage takes upper hand!

Consoling others and herself, she prayed the gods to  
permit her to go ahead;  
The important thing is giving proper burial or  
cremation to the warriors lie dead;  
Sammakka called on the elders and chieftains who  
survived the massacre of that day,  
She took the helm of affairs on her shoulders;  
it will be a fight to finish, no delay!

They saw the old woman of parrot hill and the  
magic man approaching them,  
They blessed Sammakka and volunteered to  
go to the Army tent to negotiate,  
In the twilight guards took them to Peddapuli Raju;  
minister was with him  
The wound was stitched and he was recouping  
but he was in pain very severe,  
When he saw the old woman he got up and cried in  
tears!- 'O Mother! Why here? Now!  
'Yes son, I am here now! Always late!  
What you have done is not right! O Majesty!'-  
She addressed the minister, -***please allow us  
take the bodies of our children,***

***After the last rites performed, the battle may go as  
usual; A reprieve till mid day!  
Thank you for your acceptance! Dear son! I can predict;  
but I cannot change the course;  
When you meet Sammakka then you will  
understand why I have come to you now!'-***

When the messengers left, there was silence;  
the permission was given;  
On bullock carts they carried the bodies of slain,  
performed the last rites, then,  
The fire and smoke from the pyres enveloped  
the verdant forest scene,  
With the blood of thousands of warriors the  
land looked crimson,  
The cries of wounded disturbed the birds  
and they flew away in terror very often!

Then the battle began with thousands of  
young warriors attacking the camp,  
Young and old, men and women, medicine men  
and magic men all  
From the villages far and wide, crossing Godavari,  
crossing hills they came like waterfall!  
Yesterday it was in groups, today it is in swarms,  
with every wave they came,  
They went on inflicting minor injuries;  
and pushed back all enemy soldiers,  
Into the camp and surrounded it; Sending rats,  
venomous snakes and red ants;  
They created panic among the soldiers,  
disturbing their sleep

They understood that Sammakka is in charge  
and she is a blessed child,

For seven days she made repeated sallies  
And decimated the army divisions that burnt the villages;  
Messengers reached Orugallu; a new batalion started  
from fort to the forest;  
Sammakka's warriors intercepted them  
on the way, in vain!  
Mean while she came with her army like the  
war goddess riding a tigress,  
Took her giant bow, releasing arrow after arrow,  
no intermission,  
She broke the gates of the camp  
And in thousands they swarmed and the  
fiercest battle ensued!  
One to one, but she saw that they have  
superior arms and armor!  
They saw her with swords in both hands  
how she cleaved the defense,  
They saw her with her long spear how fast  
she cut the throats of the guards,  
They saw her proficiency in shooting arrows  
in all directions in a wink of time,  
They saw her taming the elephants and war horses,  
They felt terror, fear, apprehension and no soldier  
dared to stand on her way!

She rushed like a thunder-bolt into the tent of the minister  
He was looking grave amidst heavily armed body guards;  
He looked at her and said- 'I saw your skills,  
beauty and temperament!  
This forest is not a place for you;  
please accept my terms;  
I am offering you a place in the royal palace;  
Not a place but throne, the throne of a queen!  
I am the mentor of our king and adviser!  
Please understand that you are in trouble,

The reinforcements are already here,  
They have decimated your forces;  
We will give you one day time  
My offer is truthful and valid!  
Let's stop this bloodshed;  
By tomorrow mid -day!

She looked at him  
With scorn!  
Did we attack you at anytime?  
Are we any sort of invaders?  
You killed our freedom  
You killed our people  
You killed my children  
You killed my husband  
Now  
You offer me a husband  
You offer me a harem  
You offer me queen-ship  
O elder! Very good offer!

She left!  
Sammakka with a sneer!  
She left!

Outside there was a big commotion;  
The arrival of the new division,  
Soldiers are happy!  
Peddapuli Raju entered the camp of the minister,  
With a commander of the army  
Then he saw Sammakka, leaving  
While leaving she saw him  
She saw him with hate  
She saw him  
She left in rage,  
Then he saw her,

He saw her,  
Then he saw Sammakka!  
His head was reeling,  
He sat in his chair motionless  
He was looking into the forest  
He was looking into the past  
Forty years reeled in flashes...  
He lost consciousness

A soldier  
Young and reckless  
The child of the forest  
Ambitious  
She  
The most beautiful girl  
Peda Ramappa's grand daughter  
The great sculptor,  
They say he found a new born baby at temple steps,  
They say she has royal blood,  
And they say she died at her child's birth,  
She  
The most beautiful girl  
Peda Ramappa's grand daughter  
The replica of madanica- A beautiful nymph  
Love blossomed between a soldier and the nymph  
A soldier  
Young and reckless  
The child of the forest  
When she became pregnant  
He eloped with that beautiful girl,  
In the forest his mother was a priestess,  
On the other side of Godavari;  
He kept the girl under her protection  
After a few months of love life  
He had to leave his pregnant wife  
And went south on army expedition;

By the time he returned,  
Ten months a long time;  
They said they left  
Mother-in law and Daughter- in law  
Where?

A soldier  
Young and reckless  
The child of the forest  
Trained in warfare  
Wished to become the chieftain  
Of the Forest,  
On his road of ambition  
He found one thorn on another side of the river  
A warrior of repute  
He had to eliminate him and his wife,  
So it was done.  
Forty years  
A very very long time,  
Now,  
In this battle  
He saw the enemy cub, a real forest tiger  
And the power of his sword,  
Made a big gash cutting through the chain mail,  
It hurts  
Hurts.....

When he woke up  
His body was on fire!  
A wave of chills traversed through his entire body!  
Outside a big commotion,  
Mad rush!  
Soldiers were shouting  
Sammakka is coming  
Coming on a tiger

The return of tigress  
His daughter is coming  
Daughter?  
Yes, that's what his mother said-  
'- When you meet Sammakka  
then you will understand why I have come to you now!'-  
O Daughter! Forgive me!  
Tears filled his eyes like turbulent seas!  
He wished to get up  
He wished to say-  
O Daughter! I am responsible for this chaos!  
With my own hands I committed these crimes!  
He got up trembling all over,  
Attendants helped him,  
Now  
I will save my daughter!

Outside the camp like lightning  
Sammakka was coming  
Sammakka was coming, riding on a tiger  
A giant bow, a quiverful of arrows, a great sword,  
a long spear,  
Sammakka was coming  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was coming  
Sammakka was riding on a tiger,

Flanked by a few more tigers,  
Followed by elderly men and women,  
Followed by medicine men and magic men,  
Followed by the warriors of all ages,  
Followed by the people of all the villages,  
Preceded by drummers, horn blowers, and dancers,  
Preceded by women dancing in trance with disheveled hair,  
Flanked by dancers wearing buffalo horns head gear

Flanked by flame throwers throwing flames,  
Flanked by swordsmen, sling throwers,  
Flanked by warriors with battle-axes and saber,

Amidst the fragrant smoke of myrrh and amber  
Amidst the circles of archers and spearmen  
Sammakka was coming  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was coming  
Sammakka was riding on a tiger!

The birds and beast saw her  
The trees and flowers saw her  
The Blood Red Champak River saw her  
The sky, air, earth, fire and water saw her  
Sammakka was coming  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was coming  
Sammakka was riding on a tiger,

The wise minister saw her  
The commanders saw her  
The archers and cavalry saw her  
The swordsmen and spears men saw her  
The mahouts of war elephants saw her  
Sammakka was coming  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was coming  
Sammakka was riding on a tiger,  
She wore a whit saree,  
She wore a red kimsuka flower garland  
She wore red bangles, She wore anklets and bracelets  
Sammakka was coming  
Sammakka was coming, riding on a tiger  
A giant bow, a quiverful of arrows, a great sword, a long spear,

Sammakka was coming  
On her forehead a circle of vermilion  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was coming  
Sammakka was riding on a tiger,  
Flanked by a few more tigers

The archers and cavalry saw her  
The swordsmen and spears men saw her  
The mahouts of war elephants saw her  
The unfortunate father saw her  
The commanders saw her  
The wise minister saw her

Is it her bridal dress?  
Is it their custom?  
Is she willing for a truce?

Then the procession stopped,  
The wise minister sensed danger,  
He signaled, the army formed a phalanx of tortoise  
Shields covering them like a wall  
Long spears pointing at the enemy,  
She got down the tiger,  
She took her giant bow  
She shot a Fire arrow  
She shot one after another  
Arrows with red chilli powder  
Her archers shot many more,  
The wind bellowed towards enemy camp,  
The soldiers started coughing,  
With burning eyes they dropped the shields,

Attack!  
She shouted!  
Attack!  
They shouted!

The fierce battle began;  
The minister was astounded!  
All his years of experience, knowledge of war tantra  
Gone with the spicy wind!  
Then he saw the swords flashing in her both hands,  
She played balls with the severed heads,  
Her warriors on rampage,  
She with her woman warriors cleaved the defense  
She did not touch the minister  
She did not harm the new commander  
She did not injure the trembling soldiers  
She attacked them who attacked her  
She found her target  
She found her enemy  
She found her father  
The royal tiger was in his febrile fits  
He saw her approaching  
He saw death smiling

She saw his mother weeping  
She saw the old priestess weeping  
She saw her mother's guardian weeping  
She saw her enemy weeping  
She saw her father weeping  
She saw herself weeping,  
She bound her father with ropes  
She bound her enemy with clothes  
She bound the prodigal son of the forest with vines

She took her way to the forest,  
She took her father on the way to the forest  
She took the prodigal son in a bullock cart to the forest!

They saw her abducting their commander  
They saw her abducting their nayak-leader  
They saw her abducting the royal honor  
They saw her leaving to the forest like a queen

They saw her leaving to the forest like a mother  
They saw her leaving to the forest like a goddess  
But civilization taught them that ends are more important  
Wars taught them treachery as the most powerful taunt  
Epics taught them one can kill woman in exceptional time slant!

It is that time said the minister,  
It is that time agreed commander,  
It is that time nodded the soldiers,  
So they attacked her rearguard,  
So they attacked her vanguard  
So they attacked her flanks  
She was wounded on her back  
She was wounded on her neck  
She was wounded on her flank  
The blood drenched her hands red  
The blood drenched her feet red  
The blood drenched her saree red  
The earth drenched to blood red  
The trees flowers became blood red  
The Champak stream waters became blood red

They saw her disappearing into the forest  
They saw the children of forest merging into the forest  
They saw the sunset and night enveloping the rest  
They heard the roars of tigers,  
They heard the hisses of snakes  
They heard their elephants trumpet calls  
They heard their horses' neighs and snickers

The wise minister said-Let's close this chapter here  
The commander said- Let's forget this incident here  
The soldiers said- Let's go home from here!  
The wounded soldiers cried-'when?'

Sammakka reached her village with the survivors  
Sammakka told them that it is the time, for her to go

Sammakka asked them to find Jampanna body  
at the bamboo grove  
At the confluence and to cremate it!  
History repeats, she said  
In my life it is true, she said  
Sammakka told them that it is the time, for her to go  
The old woman with her son disappeared  
into the parrot hill  
Sammakka told them that it is the time for her to go  
She cursed the king and his empire to perish soon  
She cursed the ministers to perish soon  
She cursed the commanders to perish soon  
She cursed the soldiers to perish soon

Sammakka told them that it is the time, for her to go  
The blood drenched her hands red  
The blood drenched her feet red  
The blood drenched her saree red  
The earth drenched to blood red  
The trees flowers became blood red  
The Champak stream waters became blood red  
Sammakka told them that it is the time, for her to go  
They blessed them all!  
Sammakka told them that it is the time, for her to go!

On her call, tigers came roaring  
They saw her going blessing them  
They saw her blessing the children of the forest,  
Sammakka was going, riding on a tiger  
A giant bow, a quiverful of arrows,  
a great sword, a long spear,  
Sammakka was going  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was going  
Sammakka was riding on a tiger,  
Flanked by a few more tigers,  
Followed by deer and doe,

Followed by tigers and cheetah,  
Followed by fauna and flora,  
Followed by moon and stars,  
Preceded by breeze and fire-flies,  
Preceded by showers and night birds,  
Amidst the petrichor  
Amidst the circles of mystic fog  
Sammakka was going  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was going  
Sammakka was going, riding on a tiger!  
Sammakka was going towards parrot hill- chilakala gutta!  
Sammakka was going  
On a tiger, like a goddess,  
Sammakka was going  
Sammakka was going and gone, riding on a tiger!

In the early morning they found the body of  
Jampanna in the bamboo grove,  
In the early morning they found the Champak river  
waters blood red  
In the early morning they cremated Jampanna's body  
and renamed the river- Jampanna Vagu!  
In the early morning they found the drops of  
blood leading to parrot hill  
In the early morning they found a casket of vermilion  
near the anthill !  
In that early morning they found  
pug marks of tigers and Sammakka's bangles.  
In that early morning the old man wept incessantly  
looking at the Casket of Vermilion,  
In that early morning the old man saw the casket  
filled with vermilion powder!  
In that early morning they saw tigers and serpents  
protecting the KUMKUMA BHARINE without any rage!

**THE END**

## THE FESTIVAL

And the king decreed let there be a  
great festival bi-annually  
Where the blood of the children of the  
forest made the earth crimson,  
Where the priests and elder men of the  
village found the Red Ochre Box,  
Let it be celebrated in the traditions of  
local customs and rituals;

Let royal treasury allot money for the  
bandaram- in heaps  
Let plenty of gold- jaggery and silver-  
coconuts available!  
Let there be inscription of King's decree  
on border stoneplaques;  
on Magha masa, on full moon day,  
At Medaram village, near Jampanna vagu,  
-"Sammakka devatala utsava...  
Kaakateeya raajya... kaanukalu...  
bangaaramu bandaaramulu maa prajala nunchi  
cherchamani vinathi ...  
Pagididha raju jnaa... pournami kaanukalu...  
kaakateeya sainyaadhipati aagna meraku'-

And the nearby rulers and people attended the festival,  
They prayed the goddesses with reverence  
and paid tribute,  
Heaps of gold –jaggery and silver-coconuts of  
their own weight,  
And prayed the goddesses to protect them  
in afflictions and tribulations;

On the first day they bring Sarakka image from Kannepalli  
village and install it on Gadde-pedestal;  
Unmarried women and men, childless couple greets  
her with frenzy and reverence;  
On the second day Sammakka is welcomed with  
'Edurukolla Ghattam' as bamboo sticks;  
Then they bring the revered Kumkuma Bharine from  
the legendary Chilakala Gutta- Parrot Hill;

Devotees throng in millions take their holy bath in  
Jampanna vagu- stream,  
Women offer "odi biyyam"- sacred rice and people  
offer bangaram and vendi;  
Bangaram(Bellam, jiggery, gold) along with the  
coconuts they fondly call silver;  
People stand for hours in line to have a glimpse  
of the revered goddesses;

On fourth day the images are taken back  
into the forest – 'vana pravesham'  
All four days the forest appears like a city and  
all the roads lead to Medaram;  
Many villages and towns go empty as  
whole families go to the forest,  
The world's largest tribal festival comes alive  
in rituals of ancient culture!

Liquor of all types flow in like Jampanna stream,  
fowls and beast are sacrificed,  
But, that's usual in any ancient ritual,  
so you go and pray the goddesses there,  
Walking on the blood wet dusty paths and  
liquor smelling alleys in new facilities,  
It is a mixed feeling where the ancient forest is  
taken over by modern city rulers,

But the reverberating echoes of past and  
    resounding prayers of hope of the people,  
Tells us a thing that a lot to be done, to better the  
    livings of people still searching  
For Heroes, Gods and Goddesses to teach them about  
    resistence, to live in peace and freedom!  
Legends tell us that people remember rulers and gods  
    only when they are in troubles and in tears!



## THE INSCRIPTIONS OLD AND THE DESCRIPTIONS NEW!

Is there any authenticity? The linguists and  
archeologists looked at the inscriptions;  
They found some evidence of a war between Rudra  
deva first and some descriptions;  
Dommaraju of Nagunuru of present day Karimnagar,  
Mailagi of Jagityal of Yadava scion;  
Medaraju of Medaram of Warangal forest region fought  
with Kakatiya king; lost the sheen!

Sammakka, the daughter of Medaraju, may be reared  
by him, in the forest;  
Rejected the proposal of marriage of giving  
Sammakka to Rudradeva first,  
The proposal brought up by the clever minister and  
trusted mentor Gangadhara  
The king was much younger to him, for Kakatiya  
Rudradeva and Polavasa Medaraju  
Both were feudatories under Rashtrakutas, now have  
ideas of independence;

Rudradeva father was the second Prolaraju was his  
contemporary and friendly;  
But the young Rudra was arrogant and adamant, how  
can he be his feudatory?  
Polavasa Medaraju took shelter with the children of  
forest and became one of them  
The king wanted peace by the way of marriage and  
sought his daughter Sammakka;

Sammakka was married to local tribal chief Pagididda  
Raju and they had three children;  
But the hurt remained, after two decades the war  
happened near Medaram;  
Rudra Deva's trusted commander Peddapuli Raju was  
made incharge of the forest area;  
Minister Gangadhara was the principal adviser of war  
and peace, and negotiator;

Peddapuli Raju had a past that haunted him; He loved  
a girl of royal descent,  
Reared by a sculptor's family that was famous for  
carving great sculptures;  
His mother was a priestess and known for her  
predictions in annual festivals;  
Peddapuli Raju joined the king's army as an archer and  
grew up in his stature;

He eloped with his girl, who was pregnant and kept  
her under his mother's care,  
As he had to leave with the army going on an  
expedition; after his return  
He found no traces of his mother or wife and after a  
futile search, he relented,  
Gradually he grew to a position of the  
commander and a trusted one to the king.

In the last stages of war he recognised  
Sammakka as his daughter  
But by that time everything went out of hands  
and a new myth is sowed,  
He disappears into the forest along with his  
priestess mother;  
Then his daughter also joins them,  
now a legend and the goddess;

The minister understands the sentiments  
of the children of the forest,  
The king announces them as the goddesses  
of the forest to quell the unrest.  
And a biannual festival is designed to  
worship them under royal decree,  
Rest is the history what nowadays we celebrate  
it as Sammakka-Sarakka Festival of divine degree!



## THE LEGEND

You may say that it is your magnificent  
figment of imagination,  
You can declare that most of the story is  
pigment and coloration,  
You may criticize the sentiments of forest  
and rest as provocation,  
You can conclude all this story is a mixture of  
history and confabulation!

Who said you are wrong? You are absolutely right!  
In fact you are a genius!  
One day you will go in search of evidences  
in parrot hill-chilakala gutta!  
You may send the waters of Jampanna  
vagu- stream for scientific analysis!  
And you shall be looking for the link between  
Rudrama devi and Ramappa!

You may say that it is your clever way of using  
Iliad and Aeneid!  
You can declare that most of the story is history  
a little bit twisted!  
You may criticize the sentiments of mother  
and son as farfetched!  
You can conclude all this story is a hotchpotch of  
incidents bewitched!

Who said you are wrong? You are absolutely right!  
You are a super genius!  
One day you will go to Medaram and carrying  
gold-jaggery and silver-coconuts!  
You may bath in the waters of Jampanna vagu-  
like all other millions of devotees!  
And you shall be wishing a few diamonds in  
Kolluru mines and Orugallu fort ruins!

You may say that it is your way of weaving the  
threads from epics loom!  
You can declare that the weaponry you  
described is not found in fossil room!  
You may criticize the well of descent,  
and hill of ascent are Dante's bloom!  
You can conclude all this story is a fictional  
account threaded to time line groom!

Who said you are wrong? You are absolutely right!  
You are a critic supreme!  
One day you will write a treatise on this story  
how it has got its fame!  
You may send waters of communion to absolve me  
from the plagiarism game!  
And you shall be looking for the links between  
incidents and the real time frame!

You may say that as the time passes by famous  
people are incorporated in the legend;  
You can declare that the names of historical places  
and people were wrongly fastened!  
You may criticize you brought the story many  
years up or down and retold in style grand,  
You can conclude all this story was happened at the  
life and times of Rudradeva son of Prola Second!

Who said you are wrong? You are absolutely right!  
You are a master of providence!  
One day you will correct the inaccuracies of this  
story by finding fresh evidence!  
You may bring back the exact days and change names  
and situations in proper order!  
And i shall be looking for that day to thank god and you  
for bringing out the truth so far!



## The Characters:-

1. **Sammakka-** The tribal Goddess. (She was found near an anthill protected by a great snake and tigers. She was reared by the old man of Medaram village the village chief and his wife. She was given in marriage to Pagididda Raju the tribal chieftain. They had three children –Sarakka, Nagulamma and Jampanna. Later in the battle with Kakatiya army her husband and children meet death, herself wounded disappears into the hill of parrots (Chilakala Gutta). In this long poem she was depicted as the daughter of the antagonist Peddapuli Raju. (She might be the daughter/adopted daughter of Medaraju on whose name Medaram village and forest are named)
2. **Sarakka (Sarakka)-** Daughter of Sammakka-Pagididda Raju; married to Govinda Rajulu, both die in the first day of the war.
3. **Govinda Rajulu-** The husband of Saralakka, killed in the battle field.
4. **Jampanna-** the valiant son of Sammakka- Pagididda Raju; in the fierce battle he was wounded severly and falls in Champak stream. The river becomes red and after the battle people find his body in a bamboo grove, and final rites were performed as per the instructions of Sammakka. Since then the stream was called as-‘Jampanna Vagu’-
5. **Nagulamma-** the brave daughter of Sammakka-Pagididda Raju-dies in the battle field.
6. **Pagididda Raju-** The protagonist of this story. The tribal Chieftain marries Sammakka. His parents were killed by Peddapuli Raju and he was reared by his grand parents. Imprisoned by his arch-rival for some time, released, returns home, And in the battle he injures Peddapuli Raju and was killed by the guards that surrounds him. Devotees believe that after his death he became a great serpent and protects the tribal people.

7. **Peddapuli Raju-** He was the chief of the tribal people of the north banks of Godavari. Ambitious and wayward. Prefers city and joins army. Marries a girl reared by a sculptor's (Peda Ramappa) family. When she is pregnant he elopes with her to his village and keeps her in his mother's –(a priestess) protection. Later he leaves them to go on an army expedition. On return he fails to find them. To gain supremacy over tribal people he kills the parents of Pagididda Raju. Winning many battles he gains the trust of the king and chief minister. Later he becomes a noble and commander in royal army and in charge of the whole forest area. When Pagididda Raju confronts him he understands the threat from him and imprisons him. Later in the war he was wounded by Pagididda Raju, but his body guards kill his rival Pagididda Raju and save him, under the eyes of the Minister. Later his mother gives a hint and he realizes that Sammakka is his own daughter and repents. His mother and Sammakka surround him in a brave act and take him back to the forest. His mother takes him in a bullock cart and disappears into parrot hill (chilakala Gutta). Some people think Sammakka joins them later.
8. **Nela Raju-** Father of Pagididda Raju. Killed by Peddapuli Raju.
9. **Old man-** The elder-pedda of Medaram village. finds and rears Sammakka.
10. **Old woman-** wife of old man
11. **Priestess-** mother of Pagididda Raju- stayed in parrot-hill (chilakala gutta).
12. **Minister-** negotiator and principal adviser. (Gangadhara?)
13. **King -** Rudradeva / (Prataparudra?)
14. **Meda Raju -** Sammakka is said to be the daughter or adopted daughter of Meda Raju who was living under the shelter of Medaram elder couple. After his Untimely death Samakka was brought up by the elderly couple.
15. Sammakka's mother etc.

## NOTES (WIKI)

- 1. THE RAGE OF SAMMAKKA-** Some where in the 12th century, some tribal leaders found a new born girl (Sammakka) amidst tigers. The head of the tribe adopted her. She was married to Pagididda Raju a tribal chief. They were blessed with two daughters and one son namely Sarakka, Nagulamma and Jampanna respectively. After sometime, there was a severe drought that lasted for years and as a result the mighty Godavari River dried up. Pagididda Raju didn't pay tribute to King. Rudra Deva. In turn king sent his army to subdue the tribals and collect the tribute. Then a War was fought between tribal chief pagidde Raju and Kakatiya army on the banks of "Sampenga Vagu" (Jampanna Vagu). The Koya army fought valiantly but could not with stand the well equipped Kakatiya army. Pagididda Raju, his daughters Sarakka, Nagulamma, son in law Govinda Raju lost (husband of Sarakka) lives in the battle. Later Jampanna also dies in Sampenga Vagu (after renamed as Jampanna Vagu in the memory of his heroic fight against well trained Kakatiya army). Upon hearing this news Sammakka also enters war and fights and causes lot of damage to kakatiya army. Surprised by her Bravery and Valor the Kakatiya Prime Minister comes with proposal of peace and offered Sammakka a place in the emperor's harem as the chief queen. Sammakka turned down the offer and resolved to continue the fight to avenge the dead. The battle continued and Sammakka was seriously wounded. Samakka told her people that as long as they remembered her, she would protect them. Then, she cursed the Kaktiya dynasty to perish and with that wounded body proceeded towards Chilakala gutta and disappeared in the forest. The grieving Koyas searched for their queen all they found were a red ochre box (a container of vermilion), her bangles and the pug marks of a huge full grown tigress, exactly the same place where she was found as a infant by the koyas. The Kakatiya dynasty came to an end very soon. Since then the Koyas and other Indian tribes and castes have been holding festivals in memory of Sammakka and Sarakka regularly.

The subtitle-THE RAGE OF SAMMAKKA- is in the tradition of Iliad the greatest Greek epic ever told by the bard Homer. Even some of the sentences have the fragrance of that marvelous poem.

- 2. THE GLOW OF THE FOREST-** This poem describes the childhood of Sammakka in Medaram forest , a part of the famous Dandakaranya,

rich with fauna and flora. Sampenga vagu- Champak Stream is a tributary to Godavari River, where the battle between tribals and Kakatiya army resulted in the death of Sammakka and her family.

3. **THE MAIDEN AND A DREAM-** The life of Koya- a division of tribal people and their festivals, food and drink, culture is described. **Koya** a scheduled tribal community habituated southern part of India. Koyas are commonly referred to as Koi, Koyalu, Koyollu, KoyaDoralu, Dorala Sattam, etc. Koya tribes can be further divided into Koya, Doli Koya, Gutta Koya or Gotti Koya, Kammara Koya, Musara Koya, Oddi Koya, Pattidi Koya, Rasha Koya, Lingadhari Koya (ordinary), Kottu Koya, Bhine Koya, Raja Koya, etc. Koyas call themselves “Koitur” in their dialect. Koyas speaks Koya language, also known as koya basha, and is a member of the Dravidian language family. The Koya are mainly settled cultivators and artisans, expertise in making bamboo furniture including mats for fencing, dust pans, and baskets. They grow Jowar, Ragi, Bajra and other millets. Tubers and roots such as Tella Chenna Gadda, Kirismatilu and edible green leaves such as Chencheli, Doggali, Gumuru, bacchalakura, gongura, pacchakura, pullakusiru, Thota kura, Boddukura are dietary staples as are curries made from some of these ingredients.
4. **THE RITES OF PASSAGE-** Sammakka attains maturity and the ritual is done befitting her status. Here first time she meets Pagididda Raju her future husband.
5. **THE MARRIAGE OF EARTH AND RAIN-** Some of the details of tribal marriage
6. **THE KINGDOM BREATHING WAR-** The Kakatiya rulers traced their ancestry to legendary chief or ruler called *Durjaya*. Many other ruling dynasties of Andhra also claimed descent from *Durjaya*. Nothing further is known about this chief. The early rulers were feudatories of Western Chalukyas. Prataparudra I established a sovereign dynasty in 1163 CE. The regional dates of the early rulers are unknown. In order, they were-Venna, Gunda I, Gunda II, Gunda III and Erra. The next ruler, Gunda IV, is mentioned in the Mangallu grant of the Eastern Chalukya king Dānārnava in 956 CE. Gunda IV (c. 956–995) was followed by Beta I (c. 996–1051), Prola I (c. 1052–1076), Beta II (c. 1076–1108), Durgaraja (c. 1108–1116) and then Prola II (c. 1116–1157). Next come the sovereign rulers Prataparudra I (1158–1195 or 1163–1195), Ganapati (1199–1262 or 1199–1260), Rudrama Devi (1262–1289 or 1261–1295 CE), and Prataparudra II (1289 or 1295–

1323).The dynasty ended in 1323 after an invasion by the Delhi sultanate. The early Kakatiya rulers used the title “Reddi” (derived from “Redu,” meaning king in Telugu). However, after they became sovereigns they were addressed as “deva” (Lord or deity) and “devi” (Lady or deity). There appears to be a significant element of “sanskritisation” in this transition.

Prataparudra I. According to Sastry, Prataparudra I reigned between around 1158 – 1195, while Sircar gives the dates 1163–1195. He was also known as Rudra Deva, Kakatiya Rudradeva, Venkata, and Venkataraya. He was the son of Prola II, who had made efforts to assert greater Kakatiya influence on territories in the western parts of the declining Western Chalukyan empire and who died in a battle fought against the Velanati Choda ruler Gonka II around 1157/1158 while doing so. It was during Prataparudra’s reign, in 1163, that the Kakatiyas declared an end to their status as feudatory chiefs of the Chalukyas. It is notable that inscriptions were henceforth written using the Kakatiya chiefs’ vernacular Telugu rather than the Kannada language that had prevailed until that point. Maha Deva succeeded Prataparudra I as king, reigning probably from 1195 to 1199.

**Ganapati-** Just as the Seuna and Hoysala dynasties took control of linguistically related areas during the 13th century, so too did the Kakatiyas under the rule of Ganapati. He is also known as Ganapathi Deva and, according to Sastry, reigned between 1199–1262; Sircar gives regnal dates of 1199–1260. He significantly expanded Kakatiya lands during the 1230s when he launched a series of attacks outside the dynasty’s traditional Telangana region and thus brought under Kakatiya control the Telugu-speaking lowland delta areas around the Godavari and Krishna rivers. The outcome in the case of all three dynasties, says historian Richard Eaton, was that they “catalysed processes of supralocal identity formation and community building”.The Kakatiya capital at Orugallu, established in 1195, was not forgotten while Ganapati expanded his territory. He organised the building of a massive granite wall around the city, complete with ramps designed for ease of access to its ramparts from within. A moat and numerous bastions were also constructed.Ganapati was keen to bolster the dynasty’s economy. He encouraged merchants to trade abroad, abolishing all taxes except for a fixed duty and supporting those who risked their lives to travel afar. He created the man-made Pakhal Lake.

**Rudrama Devi-** also known as Rudramadevi, reigned around 1262–1289 CE (alternative dates: 1261–1295 CE) and is one of the few

queens in Indian history. Sources disagree regarding whether she was the widow of Ganapati or his daughter. Marco Polo, who visited India probably some time around 1289–1293, made note of Rudrama Devi's rule and nature in flattering terms. She continued the planned fortification of the capital, raising the height of Ganapati's wall as well as adding a second earthen curtain wall 1.5 miles (2.4 km) in diameter and with an additional 150 feet (46 m)-wide moat. Rudrama was married to Virabhadra, an Eastern Chalukyan prince of Nidadavolu who had been selected for that purpose by her father. Having no son as an heir, Rudrama abdicated in favour of her grandson when it became apparent that the expansionist sultan Alauddin Khalji was encroaching on the Deccan and might in due course attack the Kakatiyas. Prataparudra II

The earliest biography of Rudrama Devi's successor, **Prataparudra II**, is the *Prataparudra Caritramu*, dating from the 16th century.<sup>1</sup> His reign began in 1289 (alternative date: 1295) and ended with the demise of the dynasty in 1323. It is described by Eaton as the “first chapter in a larger story” that saw the style of polity in the Deccan change from being regional kingdoms to trans-regional sultanates that survived until the arrival of the British East India Company in the 18th century.

**Demise of the dynasty**—The conquest of the Deccan by the Delhi Sultanate began in 1296 when Alauddin raided and plundered Devagiri. Later in that year, he murdered his uncle, the reigning sultan Jalaluddin, and took the role of sultan for himself. The Kakatiya kingdom attracted the attention of Alauddin because of the possibility for plunder. The first foray into the Telugu kingdom was made in 1303 and was a disaster due to the resistance of the Kakatiya army in the battle at Upparapalli. In 1309 Alauddin sent a general, Malik Kafur, in an attempt to force Prataparudra into acceptance of a position subordinate to the sultanate at Delhi. Kafur organised a month-long siege of Orugallu that ended with success in February 1310. Prataparudra was forced to make various symbolic acts of obeisance designed to demonstrate his new position as a subordinate but, as was Alauddin's plan, he was not removed as ruler of the area but rather forced thereafter to pay annual tribute to Delhi.<sup>1</sup> It was probably at this time that the Koh-i-Noor diamond passed from Kakatiya ownership to that of Alauddin, along with 20,000 horses and 100 elephants. In 1311, Prataparudra formed a part of the sultanate forces that attacked the Pandyan empire in the south, and he took advantage of that situation to quell some of his vassals in Nellore who had seen his reduced status as an opportunity for independence. Later, though, in 1318, he failed to provide the

annual tribute to Delhi, claiming that the potential for being attacked on the journey made it impossible. Alauddin responded by sending another of his generals, Khusrau Khan, to Orugallu with a force that bristled with technology previously unknown in the area, including trebuchet-like machines. Prataparudra had to submit once more, with his obeisance on this occasion being arranged by the sultanate to include a very public display whereby he bowed towards Delhi from the ramparts of Orugallu. The amount of his annual tribute was changed, becoming 100 elephants and 12,000 horses. The new arrangements did not last long.

Taking advantage of a revolution in Delhi that saw the Khalji dynasty removed and Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq installed as sultan, Prataparudra again asserted his independence in 1320. Tughlaq sent his son, Ulugh Khan, to defeat the defiant Kakatiya king in 1321. Khan's army was driven with internal dissension due to its containing factions from the Khalji and Tughluq camps. This caused the siege on this occasion to last much longer — six months, rather than the few weeks that had previously been the case. The attackers were initially repulsed and Khan's forces retreated to regroup in Devagiri. Prataparudra celebrated the apparent victory by opening up his grain stores for public feasting. Khan returned in 1323 with his revitalised and reinforced army and, with few supplies left, Prataparudra was forced into submission after a five-month siege. The unprepared and battle-weary army of Orugallu was finally defeated, and Orugallu was renamed as Sultanpur. It seems probable, from combining various contemporary and near-contemporary accounts, that Prataparudra committed suicide near to the Narmada River while being taken as a prisoner to Delhi. Aftermath- Tughlaq control of the area lasted only for around a decade. The fall of the Kakatiya dynasty resulted in both political and cultural disarray because of both disparate resistance to the sultanate and dissension within it. The structure of the Kakatiya polity disintegrated and their lands soon fell under the control of numerous families from communities such as the Reddies and Velamas.

As early as 1330, Musunuri Nayaks who served as army chiefs for Kakatiya kingdom united the various Telugu clans and recovered Warangal from the Delhi Sultanate and ruled for half a century. Surrounded by more significant states, by the 15th century these new entities had ceded to the Bahamani Sultanate and the Sangama dynasty, the latter of which evolved to become the Vijayanagara empire. A brother of Prataparudra II, Annamaraja, has been associated with ruling

what eventually became the princely state of Bastar during the British Raj period. This appears likely to be historical revisionism, dating from a genealogy published by the ruling family in 1703, because it records only eight generations spanning almost four centuries of rule. Such revisionism and tenuous claims of connection to the Kakatiyas was not uncommon because it was perceived as legitimising the right to rule and a warrior status. Talbot notes that there is a record of a brother called Annamadeva and that: He is said to have left [Orugallu] for the northeast after anointing Prataparudra's son as king. Thus, the founder of the family fortunes in Bastar may very well have been a Telugu warrior from Telangana who was familiar with the prevalent legends about the Kakatiyas.

7. **THE SONG OF MOON** – The various traditional festivals of tribals were described.
8. **THE DEATH AND A VISION**- Here the rituals of death ceremony are described.
9. **THE DEADMAN'S GROVE**- The poem follows the tradition of Virgil's Famous epic poem Aeneid and beyond.
10. **THE ORACLE AND A MIRACLE**- Encounter with shades as in Aeneid
11. **THE SCENTS OF ASCENT AND DESCENT**- Some idea taken from Dante's Divine Comedy
12. **THE RETUEN JOURNEY**- The dilemma created by the knowledge of future.
13. **THE GATES OF SLEEP**- The earliest appearance of the image is in the Odyssey, book 19, lines 560–569. There Penelope, who has had a dream that seems to signify that her husband Odysseus is about to return, expresses by a play on words her conviction that the dream is false. She says- 'Stranger, dreams verily are baffling and unclear of meaning, and in no wise do they find fulfilment in all things for men. For two are the gates of shadowy dreams, and one is fashioned of *horn* and one of *ivory*. Those dreams that pass through the gate of *sawn ivory deceive* men, bringing words that find no *fulfilment*. But those that come forth through the gate of polished *horn bring* true issues *to pass*, when any mortal sees them. But in my case it was not from thence, me thinks, that my strange dream came. Virgil borrowed the image of the two gates in lines 893–898 of Book 6 of his *Aeneid*, describing that of horn as the passageway for true

shadows<sup>[7]</sup> and that of ivory as that through which the Manes in the underworld send false dreams up to the living.<sup>[8]</sup> Through the latter gate Virgil makes his hero Aeneas, accompanied by the Cumaean Sibyl, return from his visit to the underworld, where he has met, among others, his dead father Anchises: ‘Two gates the silent house of Sleep adorn’-

14. **THE POISON AND THE FIRE-** A new fictional character is introduced- Peddapuli Raju as an Antagonist and the prodigal son of the forest. He elopes with the granddaughter of Pedda Ramappa the famous sculptor. She delivers Sammakka and die during her birth. Peddapuli Raju mother abandons the child near Parrot hill- Chilakala Gutta, with an intention she will be saved by the villagers.
15. **THE FIRST CONFRONTATION-** Peddapuli Raju attends the gathering of tribals and addresses them. It is the first confrontation of him with Pagididda Raju. He knew that this villain is the murderer of his parents. The powerful commander in position and power gives his rival a veiled warning.
16. **THE PATHOLOGY OF WAR-** A philosophical insight into the cause and effect of war.
17. **THE EMBASSY TO ORUGALLU-** The fifteen member team goes to Orugallu, there they wait, wait and wait.
18. **THE IMPRISONMENT OF A TIGER-** A disaster embassy finally ends in the imprisonment of Pagididda Raju the tribal chieftain.
19. **THE RAMPARTS OF A FORT-** The description of Orugallu fort
20. **THE CITY OF ROCK WITH DIAMONDS-** The description of Ekasila nagaram or Orugallu in victory march and in joyful spirit.
21. **THE FESTIVALS OF FLOWERS AND WEAPONS-** a detailed description of Bathukamma and Dassara festivals and celebrations
22. **THE MARCH OF THE CITY INTO A FOREST-** The talks failed, the indication of war
23. **THE WAR OF ELEPHANTS AND ANTS-** The detailed description is penned in libre verse
24. **THE RED OCHRE BOX {KUMKUM BHARINE}-** The death of Sammakka and her appearance as a casket of vermilion or the red ochre box- Kumkuma Bharine. Peddapuli Raju realizes that Sammakka is his own daughter and leaves to the forest with his mother and disappears in the forest. Some people may say all these three people

left the parrot hill into unknown lands. The tribal people whenever they hear the roar of a tiger they believe that Sammakka was on the look out to destroy the intruders of the forest.

## **PLACES, PEOPLE AND FESTIVALS :-**

- 1. Medaram** is a village in Warangal district, Telangana, India. A popular religious congregation or Jatara called “Sammakka sarakka” jatara takes place for four days biennially in this village. Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara held by forest dwelling Koya tribe of Telangana and surrounding States, is the biggest Tribal festival in Asia which is attended by one crore people on an average. **Sammakka Saralamma Jatara** or **Medaram Jatara** is a tribal Hindu festival of honouring the goddesses celebrated in the state of Telangana, India. This Jatara is known for witnessing one of the largest people gatherings in the world. The Jatara begins at **Medaram** in Tadvai mandal in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. Medaram is a remote place in the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in the Deccan.

Jatara is celebrated during the time the goddesses of the tribals are believed to visit them. It is believed that after Kumbha Mela, the Medaram jatara attracts the largest number of devotees in the country. It commemorates the fight of a mother and daughter, Sammakka and Sarakka, with the reigning rulers against an unjust law. There are many legends about the miraculous powers of Sammakka. According to a tribal story, about 6-7 centuries ago, that is in the 12th century, some tribal leaders who went for a hunting found a new born girl (Sammakka) emitting enormous light playing amidst tigers. She was taken to their habitation, and the head of the tribe adopted her and brought up as a chief. She later became the saviour of the tribals of the region. She was married to Pagididda Raju, a feudatory tribal chief of Kakatiyas (who ruled the country of Telugus from Warangal City between 1000 AD and 1380 AD). She was blessed with 2 daughters and one son namely Sarakka, Nagulamma and Jampanna respectively. Jampanna died in this attack and fell bleeding into a vaagu (stream) and later the whole sampangi vaagu has turned red due to which it was later on called JAMPANNA VAAGU near the place where the present mela is taking place. Sammakka Sarakka Jatara is a tribal Hindu festival, held at about 100 km from Warangal city. It is the time for the largest tribal congregation in the world, held every two years (biennial), with approximately ten million people converging on the place, over a period of four days. Many tribal devotees from

different states of India (Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Karnataka and parts of Jharkhand) reach to the festive place to celebrate the Jatara.

People offer bellam (jaggery) to their weight to the goddesses and take holy bath in Jampanna Vagu (stream). It is a festival with no vedic or brahmanic influence.

In 2008, nearly 8 million people were estimated to have attended the festival. And in 2012, the gatherings in the jatara are roughly estimated to be 10 million. This fair is said to be the largest repeating congregation of tribal communities in the world. Festival held in 2016 is the first one after the formation of Telangana state, and it took a greater significance with special attention by the government.

Jampanna vagu is a tributary to river Godavari. According to the history, Jampanna is the tribal warrior and the son of tribal Goddess Sammakka. The Jampanna vagu took his name as he died in a battle fighting against Kakatiyan Army in that stream. The Jampanna vagu is still red in colour marked with the blood of Jampanna (Scientifically the red colour of the water is attributed to the soil composition). Tribal's believe that taking a holy dip in the red water of Jampanna Vagu reminds them the sacrifice of their gods who save them and also induces courage into their souls. There is a bridge constructed on top of Jampanna Vagu, known as Jampanna Vagu bridge

The jatara venue is situated at about 100 km from Warangal, 170 km from Karimnagar, 220 km from Suryapet and 250 km from Hyderabad. Until 1978, the only way to reach Medaram was by a bullock cart. In 1978 the then Andhra Pradesh State Government declared the 1000-yr old festival as official and laid down a motorable road.

### **MEDARAM FESTIVAL-**

Medaram jatara begins on the fullmoon day also known as suddha poornima day of the Magha masam. It is January-February months that coincide with Magha month of Hindu lunar calendar. There is no permanent idol of the deity. It is said that a Koya boy who gets a vision before the festival, searches in the forest for a week without food and sleep and finally brings the goddesses in the form of two vermilion caskets tied to a piece of bamboo, one representing the main deity Sammakka and the other her daughter Sarakka (or Saaralamma). The actual festival begins in the month of Magha, on Suddha Pournami (full moon day) evening when Saaralamma would be traditionally brought from Kanneboyinapalle, a village in the forest,

and installed on a gaddi (the throne or platform), an earthen platform raised under a tree. Animals are sacrificed and intoxicants such as liquor are widely used. By next sunset, the main goddess Sammakka (in the form of a vermilion) will be brought from Chilukalagutta. There are two gaddes (platforms) separately one for goddess “Sammakka” and other for goddess “Sarakka”. They are represented by bamboo sticks smeared with turmeric and vermilion (Pasupu and Kunkuma). Since time immemorial, there is a huge tree standing on Sammakka gadde. They believe Pagididda Raju stays on the tree in the form of a snake and watches over the festival! When the priests bring out the vermilion box and other relics from a hidden forest location, there is great tumult with frenzied beating of drums, blowing of trumpets and full throated yells. It is said that during the festival a huge tiger prowls around peacefully. Offerings are coconuts and jaggery. They are piled at the foot of the trees.

**Day -1** (31-01-2018) 1st day of “Medaram Jathara” is celebrated as the arrival of Saralamma on to the ‘Medaram Gaddhe’ (Platform). Sarakka (Saralamma) was the daughter of Sammakka. Saralamma is installed in a temple at Kannepalli, a small village near Medaram On 31-01-2018, in the morning pujaris perform pujas secretly. The unmarried women and men, those who want to have children and those who are suffering from diseases perform special pujas to Saralamma on this day The villages of **Kannepalli** perform ‘Aarti’ and organize grand farewell to Saralamma. From there, the idol of Saralamma is brought to Medaram Gaddhe through ‘Jampanna Vaagu’ (a small canal named after Jampanna) After arriving on to the ‘Gaddhe’ Saralamma is worshipped with special pujas and other rituals. More than 3 million devotees visit Saralamma and offer special pujas as a part of Medaram Jathara.

**Day – 2** (01-02-2018) 2nd day of Medaram Jatara is celebrated as the arrival of Sammakka on to the ‘Medaram Gaddhe’ (Platform). Sammakka is welcomed amidst the official homage from police and government. ‘Edurukolla Ghattam’ is one of the popular events during the arrival of Sarakka. On 01-02-2018, pujaris bring bamboo sticks and place them on the ‘Gaddhe’. Amidst the protection and official homages of police, Pujaris bring Sammakka to Gaddhe (Sammakka is usually installed at Chilakala Gutta in the form of a ‘Kumkuma Bharine’). Sammakka is the presiding deity of Medaram Sammakka Saralamma Jathara At Chilakala Gutta, as the indication of the arrival of Sammakka, the district SP (Superintendent of Police) fires his gun

thrice in the air and inaugurates the 'bali' to please Sammakka. Amidst the slogans praising Sammakka, pujaris bring the deity on to Gaddhe.

**Day – 3** (02-02-2018) On 3rd day of Medaram Jathara, Sammakka Saralamma darshanam is available to devotees. After performing Punya Snamams in 'Jampanna Vaagu', devotees visit the Goddesses. Devotees offer various offerings to Sammakka Saralamma. In 2018, sammakka sarakka darshanam date is 02-02-2018. Women offer 'Odi Biyyam' (sacred rice) and 'saare' (combination of necessary items in daily items) to the Goddesses. Third day is the busiest one among the four festival days. The important offering in Sammakka Sarakka Jathara is 'Bangaram' (bellam, the Gold). Jaggery is offered as gold to the Goddesses.

**Day – 4** (03-02-2018) Last the 4th day of Medaram Jathara is celebrated as Vana Pravesham of Sammakka and Sarakka. After getting worshipped by millions of devotees, devatas return back to forest. It marks the conclusion of 4-day Sammakka Saralamma Jathara. The same security and the official homage they have got while arriving on to the platform are paid to the Goddesses while returning into the forest (Vana Pravesham).

- 2. The Thousand Pillar Temple or Rudreshwara Swamy Temple** is a historic Hindu temple located in the town of Hanamakonda, Telangana State, India. It is dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and Surya. Many Hindu temples were developed under the patronage of Ganapati Deva, Rudrama Devi and Prataparudra who were of Kakatiya dynasty. The Thousand Pillar Temple was believed to be constructed during the period of Rudra Deva. It stands out to be a masterpiece and achieved major heights in terms of architectural skills by the ancient Kakatiya vishwakarma sthapatthis. The Thousand Pillar Temple with its ruins lies near the Hanamkonda-Warangal Highway in Telangana State, about 150 kilometres (93 mi) from the city of Hyderabad. Rudreswara Temple locally known as Veyisthambala Gudi (Thousand pillars temple) is one of the fine and earliest available examples of Kakatiya art, architecture and sculpture. It was built by Rudra Deva, and named after him as 'Sri Rudreswara swamy temple with the presiding deity as Rudreswara, in 1163 AD in the style of later Chalukyan and early Kakatiyan Architecture, star shaped and triple shrined (Triktulaya). The temple is a fine specimen of architecture and sculpture with One thousand pillars implying that the temple has many pillars. There are richly carved pillars, perforated screens,

exquisite icons; rock cut elephants and the monolithic dolerite Nandi as components of the temple. Strengthening of foundations like sand box technique, the skill of Kakatiya sculptors is manifest in adroit craftsmanship and flawless ivory carving technique in their art. The ingenuity of Kakatiya sculptors is visible in likes of lathe turned, and shiny polish in dolerite and granite stone sculpture and craft work of Nava rangamandapa.

3. **Ramappa Temple** also known as the **Ramalingeswara** temple, is located 77 km from Warangal, the ancient capital of the Kakatiya dynasty, 157 km from Hyderabad in the state of Telangana in southern India. It lies in a valley at Palampet village of Venkatapur Mandal, in erstwhile Mulug Taluq of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, a tiny village long past its days of glory in the 13th and 14th centuries. An inscription in the temple dates it to the year 1213 AD and says it was built by a General Recherla Rudra, during the period of the Kakatiya ruler Ganapati Deva.

The temple is a Shivalaya, where Lord Ramalingeswara is worshipped. It stands majestically on a 6 ft high star shaped platform. The hall in front of the sanctum has numerous carved pillars that have been positioned to create an effect that combines light and space wonderfully. The temple is named after the sculptor Ramappa, who built it, and is perhaps the only temple in India to be named after a craftsman who built it. History says that it took 40 years to build this temple.

The main structure is in a reddish sandstone, but the columns round the outside have large brackets of black basalt. These are carved as mythical animals or female dancers or musicians, and are “the masterpieces of Kakatiya art, notable for their delicate carving, sensuous postures and elongated bodies and heads, **Perini Shivatandavam (Perini Sivatandavam)** or **Perini Thandavam** is an ancient dance form from Telangana which has been revived in recent times. It originated and prospered in Telangana during the Kakatiya dynasty. Perini is performed by males and it is believed that in ancient times this was performed before the soldiers set to war. Nataraja Ramakrishna was the person who revived this art form recently. Perini Dance form was developed at the time of Ganapathi deva, the king of Kakatiya Empire.

The Perini Thandavam is a dance form usually performed by males. It is called ‘Dance of Warriors’. Warriors before leaving to the battlefield

enact this dance before the idol of Lord Siva (Shiva). The dance form, Perini, reached its pinnacle during the rule of the ‘Kakatiyas’ who established their dynasty at Warangal and ruled for almost two centuries.

The Perini Thandavam, Telangana It is believed that this dance form invokes ‘Prerana’ (inspiration) and is dedicated to supreme dancer, Lord Siva. One can find evidence of this dance in the sculptures near Garbha Gudi (Sanctum Sanctorum) of the Ramappa Temple at Warangal. Perini is a vigorous dance done to the resounding beats of drums. Dancers drive themselves to a state of mental abstraction where they feel the power of Siva in their body. While dancing they invoke Siva to come into him and dance through him. The Perini Thandavam is indeed believed to be the most invigorating and intoxicating male dance form. Perini dance form almost disappeared after the decline of the Kakatiya dynasty but Padmasri Dr. Nataraja Ramakrishna brought renaissance in Perini dance, which was on verge of extinction.

4. **Warangal Fort**, in Warangal district, Telangana in India. Appears to have existed since at least the 12th century when it was the capital of the Kakatiya dynasty. The fort has four ornamental gates, known as Kakatiya Kala Thoranam, that originally formed the entrances to a now ruined great Shiva temple. The Kakatiyan arch has been adopted and officially incorporated into the Emblem of Telangana after the state bifurcation. The Fort is included in the “tentative list” of UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Warangal Fort is laid out in three concentric circular walls with defensive fortifications. The first structure, built during the reign of Rudrama Devi, was in the form an earthen embankment 1.5 miles (2.4 km) in diameter. A moat of about 150 feet (46 m) width was dug around this wall, forming the outer limits of the fort during the reign of the Kakatiya rulers. Another wall built to protect the fort after the earthen wall and the moat was a fortified inner stone wall of about 0.75 miles (1.21 km) in diameter. It was the central part of the Kakatiya capital, called the fort. This wall was built with dressed huge granite stone blocks of very large dimensions. These stones were not in any regular shape, but were closely fitted without using any type of mortar. During the reign of Rudrama Devi the height of the wall was increased to 29 feet (8.8 m) from the structure which had been built earlier by Ganapati Dev. The wall has been fortified with 45 very large rectangular bastions! (also known as towers), which measure 40–60

feet (12–18 m) on a side; they extend beyond the face of the wall up to the waters of the moat. There are also 18 stone steps laid over a gradual slope built on the inner slopes of the earthen wall as an access to the ramparts. As these steps covered the entire central area of the fort they permitted the soldiers easy and quick access in times of war from any location in the fort, including the top of the ramparts. The king, Pratapa Rudra, had used these steps to go to the rampart in 1318, attired with qaba to bow towards Delhi, in honour of the Sultan. There is also a third ring of fortification in the form of a mud wall of 12.5 kilometres (7.8 mi) diameter that encloses the present city of Warangal. The area within the fort has an axial road laid in an east-west direction where there is now some human habitation. The central part of the fort has been identified as the archaeological zone where the ruins of a great Shiva temple are now seen with only the freestanding “entrance portals” or gates on the four sides. Each gate has twin pillars with angled brackets over which lies the huge lintel; the height of this gate is 10 metres (33 ft). The gates have extensive intricate carvings of “lotus buds, looped garlands, mythical animals, and birds with foliated tails”. The carvings do not include any religious symbols, which is said to be the reason for its preserved condition and not getting destroyed by the Muslim invaders. Of the four gateways (local name *charkamou*), the northern and southern ends are 480 feet (150 m) apart. The eastern and western gates are a distance of 433 feet (132 m) from each other. While the Shiva temple has been completely destroyed, there are many ruins of “wall slabs, brackets and ceiling panels”, some of which are exhibited now in an outdoor museum. There are still some standing pillars (“temple spoilia”) that the Bahmanis earlier used to build a mosque, which remained incomplete. Also seen among the ruins are remnants of a mihrab. The original deity of the temple was a linga with the four faces of Shiva, which is now deified in a separate shrine to the south of the fort complex, where regular worship is offered. Archaeological excavations in the area have also unearthed many small shrines, built in a series, deified with a votive linga.

Seen within 150 metres (490 ft) of the archaeological zone is the Kush Mahal, which is a public hall built in the 14th century by the Delhi Sultans, who had captured the fort. The mahal, which is rectangular in shape, is built with huge sloping walls, sliced by six arched openings on each of its sides. There was once a timber roof over this mahal, supported by five transverse arches built of stones. There are approach steps on the northeast corner that provide access to the top of the

structure, which has scenic views of the entire fort complex. Within the southern quarter of the archaeological zone is a big water tank. Inside this tank is a distinctive natural rock formation that protrudes above the water surface. This is called locally as **Orugallu** (**meaning: single rock**) in Telugu, giving the name “Warangal” to the fort. A small temple is built over this rock. There are many other temples and water ponds in the entire fort complex. There are also three large granaries close to the south gate of the fort. Just outside the central fort, the mud wall, which is the second circle of the fort complex in the northwestern part, has within it the Lanja gudi (‘gudi’ means “shrine”), which consists of three small temples; but the linga deities have been removed and are seen scattered nearby. There are many inscriptions on the ruins of the wall of the main temple recording the gift of a Kakatiya king, on pillars, on a stone outside the fort, and at many more places, all in the Telugu language.

5. **Telangana** is one of the 29 states of India. Formed on 2 June 2014 from the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana is the newest State of India. It has an area of 112,077 square kilometres (43,273 sq mi) and a population of 35,193,978 (2011 census). It is the twelfth-largest state in India, and the twelfth-most populated state in India. Its major cities include Hyderabad, Warangal, Nizamabad, Khammam and Karimnagar. Telangana is bordered by the states of Maharashtra to the north and northwest, Chhattisgarh, Odisha to the northeast, Karnataka to the west and Andhra Pradesh to the east and south.

Telangana had a history as the Telugu-speaking region of the princely state of Hyderabad, ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad.<sup>[5]</sup> It joined the Union of India in 1948. In 1956, the Hyderabad State was dissolved as part of the linguistic reorganisation of states and Telangana was merged with former Andhra State to form Andhra Pradesh. Following a movement for separation, Telangana was awarded separate statehood on 2 June 2014. Hyderabad will continue to serve as the joint capital city for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for no more than ten years.

6. **Bathukamma** is floral festival celebrated predominantly by the Hindu women of Telangana. Every year this festival is celebrated as per Shalivahana calendar for nine days starting Bhadrapada Amavasya (also known as Mahalaya Amavasya or Pitru Amavasya) till Durgashtami, usually in September–October of Gregorian calendar. Bathukamma is celebrated for nine days during Durga Navratri. It starts on the day of Mahalaya Amavasya and the 9-day festivities will

culminate on “Saddula Bathukamma” or “Pedda Bathukamma” festival on Ashwayuja Ashtami, popularly known as Durgashtami which is two days before Dussehra. Bathukamma is followed by *Boddemma*, which is a 7-day festival. Boddemma festival that marks the ending of Varsha Ruthu whereas Bathukamma festival indicates the beginning of Sarad or Sharath Ruthu. Bathukamma represents cultural spirit of Telangana. Bathukamma is a beautiful flower stack, arranged with different unique seasonal flowers most of them with medicinal values, in seven concentric layers in the shape of temple gopuram. In Telugu, ‘Bathukamma’ means ‘Mother Goddess come Alive’ and Goddess Maha Gauri- ‘Life Giver’ is worshipped in the form of **Bathukamma** – the patron goddess of womanhood, Maha Gauri Devi. It is the festival for feminine felicitation. On this special occasion women dress up in the traditional sari combining it with jewels and other accessories. Teenage Girls wear Langa-Oni/Half-Sarees/Lehenga Choli combining it with jewels in order to bring out the traditional grace of the attire. Day1- Engili pula Bhathukamma Day2-Atukula Bhathukamma Day3-Muddappappu Bhathukamma Day4-Nanbiyyam Bhathukamma Day5-Atla Bhathukamma Day6-Aligina Bhathukamma (alaka Bhathukamma) Day7-Vepakayala Bhathukamma Day8-Venna muddala Bhathukamma Day9-Saddula Bhathukamma.

**Vemulavaada** Chalukya were sub-feudatories of Raastrakoota kings. In the wars between Chola kings and Raastrakootas these Chalukyias sided the Raastrakootas.

In 973 AD Rastrakoota sub-feudal chalukya lord Tailapudu-2 defeated the last king Karkudu-2 of raashtrakoota kings and established independent Kalyani Chalukya kingdom. The present Telangana region was under his authority. After the death of Tailapudu-2 in 997 AD his son Satyaasrayudu became the king. In the erstwhile kingdom of Vemulavaada (present Karimnagar District), Rajarajeswara temple is popular. Rajarajeswara received worship from Telangana people as their beloved deity. Chola king, Paraantaka Sundara Chola was in troubles while defending the attack from Raastrakoota kings. Learning that Rajarajeswara will help those in troubles Paraantaka chola turned as his devotee. Also, he named his son as Raja Raja. This is evident from Arikesari epigraph. Raja Raja Chola ruled between 985-1014 AD. His son Rajendra Chola attacked as a Chief of Army and stood victorious on Satyaasraya. As a sign of his victory he destroyed Rajeswara’s temple and took the Bruhat (huge) Siva linga to his father as a gift. In 1006 AD Raja Raja Chola had started building a temple to

this huge Sivalinga (Brihadeswara). In 1010 AD he installed this Linga. Chola kings also announced in Tamil epigraphs that this Brihadeswara temple is built from the wealth looted in the attack on Vemulavaada Chalukya kingdom. Even now the similarities between the Sivalinga of Vemulavaada Bheemeswaralayam and Sivalinga of Brihadeswaralayam of Tanjavuru can be seen. Taking away the Sivalinga from Vemulavaada to Tanjavuru downhearted people of Telangana.

After leaving Telangana in the form of Linga, along with an attempt to console Paarvathi (Bruhadamma) in the temple here and to inform sorrowfulness to Cholas, Batukamma is arranged with flowers like Meru mountain. On its top Gouramma made with turmeric is placed and is recounted with sing and play for nine days. Dispatching her in water and calling her back took a shape of a festival. Batukamma name is derived from Bruhadamma. Batukamma festival is a social denouncing movement practiced from 1000 years. Only songs are sung with mother Goddess Parvathi's name with comforting, who is without shiva.

On first five days women will clean their vakili (courtyard), cow dung mixed with water is spread in the courtyard as a ground-base, decorate the ground-base with managala aakara or muggu patterns or rangoli made of rice flour. For the first five days Batukamma is prepared with cow dung. Five small lumps in cone shape are arranged in the vakili. Men in the house gather flowers Bathukamma Flowers from the wild plains like Celosia, Senna, Marigold, Chrysanthemum, Indian Lotus, Cucurbita leaves & flowers, Cucumis Sativus leaves & flowers, Memecylon edule, Tridax procumbens, Trachyspermum ammi, Katla, Teku Flowers, etc., which bloom in this season in various vibrant colors all across the uncultivated and barren plains of the region. Preparing a Bathukamma is a folk art. Women start preparing Bathukamma from the afternoon. They cut the flowers leaving the little length base, some dip Gunugu (Celosia) flowers in various vibrant colours, some scented and arrange them on a wide plate called *Thambalam*

For the nine days, in the evening, women, especially young girls, gather in large numbers with their Bathukammas in open areas of their locality. All women will form a circle around the Bathukamma and start singing folk songs by clapping their hands and revolving around the Bathukamma, synchronizing steps and claps in unison provide a splendidous look to the festivities. Women seek good health, prosperity

and happiness for their families. The songs are to invoke the blessings of various goddesses. By principle, the rendition end with any one of the following three tributes Uyyaala -swing, Chandamama - moon or Gouramma.

Each day has a name mainly signifying the type of “naivedyam” (food offering) offered. Most of the naivedyam offered are very simple to prepare, and usually young children or young girls are mainly involved in the preparation of the offerings for the first eight days of the festival. The last day, called saddula Bathukamma is when all the women take part in the preparation. Following is the list of names for each day and the naivedyam offered on that day.

1. **Engili pula Bathukamma-** The first day of the festival falls on Mahalaya Amavasya, also known as Pethara Amavasya in Telangana region. Food offering/Naivedyam: Nuvvulu (Sesame seeds) with biyyampindi (rice flour) or nookalu (coarsely ground wet rice).
2. **Atkula Bathukamma:** The second day is called Atkula bathukamma, falls on the Padyami (first day) of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: Sappidi pappu (Bland boiled lentils), bellam (jaggery), and atkulu (flattened parboiled rice)
3. **Muddapappu Bathukamma:** The third day of Bathukamma falls on Vidiya/second day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: muddapappu (softened boiled lentils), milk and bellam (jaggery)
4. **Nanabiyam Bathukamma:** The fourth day falls on thidiya/third day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: nananesina biyyam (wet rice), milk, and bellam (jaggery)
5. **Atla Bathukamma:** The fifth day falls on the chaturdi/fourth day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: uppidi pindi atlu (pan cakes made from wheatlets), or Dosa
6. **Aligina Bathukamma:** The sixth day falls on the panchami/fifth day of Ashwayuja masam. No food offering is made.
7. **Vepakayala Bathukamma:** The seventh day falls on the sashti/sixth day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: rice flour shaped into the fruits of neem tree is deepfried.
8. **Vennamuddala Bathukamma:** The eight day falls on saphthami/seventh day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: nuvvulu (sesame), Venna (Butter) or ghee (clarified butter), and bellam (jaggery)

9. **Saddula Bathukamma:** The ninth day of bathukamma is celebrated on ashtami/eight day of Ashwayuja masam, and coincides with Durgashtami. Food offering/Naivedyam: Five types of cooked rice dishes: perugannam saddi (curd rice), chinthapandu pulihora saddi (tamarind rice), nimmakaya saddi (lemon rice), kobbara saddi (coconut rice) and nuvvula saddi (sesame rice)

### **Saddula Bathukamma**

This festival is celebrated for nine days and concludes on *Durgastami*. The last day of the festival is called *Saddula Bathukamma*. On this final day immersion of Bathukamma (Bathukamma Visarjan) in water bodies is celebrated with utmost devotion and enthusiasm with rhythmic drum beats throughout Telangana. The evening offers a beautiful, calming and a peaceful visual treat. Guramma (a symbolic idol of Gowri made of turmeric) is taken back from Bathukamma before immersion and every married woman applies a paste of this, on her Mangala sutra that marks the solemnization of her marriage and also her husband is protected from all evils and ill fate. For 9 days of festival each day a *Nivedyam* or a special dish is prepared and offered to the goddess. Generally ingredients of the dishes are Corn , Sorghum , Bajra , Black Gram, Bengal Gram, Green Gram , Ground Nuts, Sesame, Wheat , Rice , Cashew Nut (Kaju), Jaggery , Milk etc. Maleeda - a combination of Roti and Jaggery, is prepared on this day and distributed at the end of the event.

Legends- Once upon a time, King Dharmangada of Chola Dynasty used to rule South India.<sup>[7]</sup> After many prayers and rituals, his wife gave birth to Goddess Lakshmi. Baby Lakshmi survived many accidents. So, the parents named her Bathukamma (Bathuku = Life, Amma = Mother). Since then Bathukamma festival is celebrated by young girls in Telangana. The purpose of this festival is to pray to the Goddess in the belief that the young girls would get husbands as per their wish, to teach the young girls how to take care of their in-laws, their husbands, be great women who respect elders, love people around them, be guides to their younger ones. Further, married women celebrate the festival to pray to the Goddess for good health and prosperity of their families.

**Bathukamma means ‘come back to life mother’** and it is an asking for Goddess Sati to return. Legend has it that Sati returned as Goddess Parvati and therefore the festival is also dedicated to Goddess Parvati. There are many myths behind this festival. According to one myth

Goddess Gauri killed 'Mahishasura' the demon after a fierce fight. After this act, she went to sleep on the 'Aswayuja Padyami', due to fatigue. The devotees prayed to her to wake up, and she woke up on the Dasami.

The other being Bathukamma, as the daughter of the 'Chola' King 'Dharmangada' and 'Satyavati'. The king and queen lost their 100 sons in the battlefield and prayed to Goddess Lakshmi to be born in their house, as their child. Goddess Lakshmi heard their sincere prayers and chose to oblige them. When Lakshmi was born in the royal palace, all the sages came to bless her and they blessed her with immortality "Bathukamma or Live Forever".

Bathukamma or 'Shakthi', according to one legend, is a lover of flowers. Flowers are arranged on a square wooden plank or a square bamboo frame with the size of frames tapering off to form a pinnacle on top. They resemble the shape of a temple 'Gopura'. Gauramma (a symbolic idol of Gowri made of turmeric) is placed on top of the flowers. This little floral mountain is worshipped as Goddess Bathukamma.

This festival is celebrated with joy and gaiety. During these celebrations, there are dance performances, music, dramas and a variety of entertainments as thousands of tourists and locals too, flock to witness the happenings. 'Jataras' are also held during this month long celebrations

7. **Vijayadashami**- known as *Dasara*, *Dusshera* or *Dussehra* is a major Hindu festival celebrated at the end of Navratri every year. It is observed on the tenth day in the Hindu calendar month of *Ashvin*, the seventh month of the Hindu Luni-Solar Calendar, which typically falls in the Gregorian months of September and October. Vijayadasami is observed for different reasons and celebrated differently in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. In the eastern and northeastern states of India, Vijayadashami marks the end of Durga Puja, remembering goddess Durga's victory over the buffalo demon Mahishasura to help restore Dharma. In the northern, southern and western states, the festival is synonymously called Dussehra (also spelled Dasara, Dashahara). In these regions, it marks the end of "Ramlila" and remembers God Rama's victory over the demon Ravana, or alternatively it marks a reverence for one of the aspects of goddess Devi such as Durga or Saraswati.

Vijayadashami celebrations include processions to a river or ocean front that carry clay statues of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha and Kartikeya, accompanied by music and chants, after which the images are immersed into the water for dissolution and a goodbye. Elsewhere, on Dasara, the towering effigies of Ravana symbolizing the evil are burnt with fireworks marking evil's destruction. The festival also starts the preparation for one of the most important and widely celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, which is celebrated twenty days after the Vijayadashami

Vijayadashami is a composite of two words "Vijaya" and "Dashami" which respectively mean "victory" and "tenth", connoting the festival on the tenth day celebrating the victory of good over evil. According to James Lochtefeld, the word *Dussehra* is a variant of *Dashahara* which is a compound Sanskrit word composed of "dasham" and "ahar" respectively meaning "10" and "day". According to Monier Williams, *Dus* (means "bad, evil, sinful", and *Hara* means "removing, destroying", connoting "removing the bad, destroying the evil, sinful. Vijayadasami is celebrated in a variety of ways in South India. Celebrations range from worshipping Durga, lighting up temples and major forts such as at Mysore, to displaying colorful figurines, known as a *golu*. The festival played a historical role in the 14th-century Vijayanagara Empire, where it was called *Mahanavami*. The Italian traveller Niccolò de' Conti described the festival's intensity and importance as a grandeur religious and martial event with royal support. The event revered Durga as the warrior goddess (some texts refer to her as Chamundeshwari). The celebrations hosted athletic competitions, singing and dancing, fireworks, a pageantry military parade and charitable giving to the public. The city of Mysore has traditionally been a major center of Dasara-Vijayadashami celebrations. Another significant and notable tradition of several South Indian regions has been the dedication of this festival to Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, learning, music and arts. She is worshipped, along with instruments of one's trade during this festival. In South India, people maintain, clean and worship their instruments, tools of work and implements of their livelihood during this festival, remembering Goddess Saraswati and Durga

**Ayudha Pujai** is an integral part of the Navratri festival (festival of triumph), a Hindu festival which is traditionally celebrated in India. It is also called "Astra Puja", the synonym for Ayudha Puja. In simple terms, it means "Worship of Instruments ,The festival falls on the

ninth day or Navami of the bright half of Moon's cycle of 15 days (as per Almanac) in the month of September/October, and is popularly a part of the Dasara or Navaratri or Durga Puja or Golu festival. On the ninth day of the Dasara festival, weapons and tools are worshipped. In Karnataka, the celebration is for killing of the demon king Mahishasura by goddess Chamundeshwari. After slaying of the demon king, the weapons were kept out for worship. While Navaratri festival is observed all over the country but in South Indian states, where it is widely celebrated as Ayudha Puja, there are slight variations of worship procedure.

The principal Shakti goddesses worshiped during the Ayudha puja are Saraswati (the Goddess of wisdom, arts and literature), Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth) and Parvati (the divine mother), apart from various types of equipment; it is on this occasion when weapons are worshipped by soldiers and tools are revered by artisans. The Puja is considered a meaningful custom, which focuses specific attention to one's profession and its related tools and connotes that a divine force is working behind it to perform well and for getting the proper reward. In the cross cultural development that has revolutionized the society, with modern science making a lasting impact on the scientific knowledge and industrial base in India, the ethos of the old religious order is retained by worship of computers and typewriters also during the Ayudha Puja, in the same manner as practiced in the past for weapons of warfare. In Orissa, tools traditionally used for cultivation like plough, war like sword and dagger, and inscription writing like "karani" or "lekhani" (metal stylus) are worshiped. The tools and all implements of vocation are first cleaned. All the tools, machines, vehicles and other devices are then painted or well polished after which they are smeared with turmeric paste, sandalwood paste (in the form of a tilak (insignia or mark)) and Kumkum (vermillion). Then, in the evening, previous to the puja day, they are placed on an earmarked platform and decorated with flowers. In the case of weapons of war, they are also cleaned, bedecked with flowers and tilak and placed in a line, adjacent to a wall. On the morning of the puja that is on the navami day, they are all worshipped along with the images of Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati. Books and musical instruments are also placed on the pedestal for worship. On the day of the puja, these are not to be disturbed. The day is spent in worship and contemplation.

**Durga** is an ancient deity of Hinduism, according to archeological and textual evidence available. However, the origins of Durga Puja

are unclear and undocumented. Surviving manuscripts from the 14th century provide guidelines for Durga Puja, while historical records suggest royalty and wealthy families were sponsoring major Durga Puja public festivities since at least the 16th century. The 11th or 12th century Jainism text *Yasatilaka* by Somadeva mentions a festival and annual dates dedicated to a warrior goddess, celebrated by the king and his armed forces, and the description mirrors attributes of a Durga Puja. The word *Durga*, and related terms appear in the Vedic literature, such as in the *Rigveda* hymns 4.28, 5.34, 8.27, 8.47, 8.93 and 10.127, and in sections 10.1 and 12.4 of the *Atharvaveda*. A deity named *Durgi* appears in section 10.1.7 of the Taittiriya Aranyaka. While the Vedic literature uses the word *Durga*, the description therein lacks the legendary details about her or about Durga puja that is found in later Hindu literature. The Dadhimati Mata Temple of Rajasthan preserves a Durga-related inscription from chapter 10 of *Devi Mahatmya*. The temple inscription has been dated by modern methods to 608 CE. A key text associated with Durga Puja observations is *Devi Mahatmya*, which is recited during the festival. Durga was likely well established before the time this Hindu text was composed, which scholars variously estimate to between 400 and 600 CE. The *Devi Mahatmya* mythology describes the nature of demonic forces symbolized by Mahishasura as shape-shifting, deceptive and adapting in nature, in form and in strategy to create difficulties and achieve their evil ends. Durga calmly understands and counters the evil in order to achieve her solemn goals.

Durga, in her various forms, appears as an independent deity in the Epics period of ancient India, that is the centuries around the start of the common era. Both Yudhisthira and Arjuna characters of the *Mahabharata* invoke hymns to *Durga*. She appears in *Harivamsa* in the form of Vishnu's eulogy, and in Pradyumna prayer. The prominent mention of Durga in this popular epics may have led to her worship.

The following being most common:

- a. **Preliminaries:** the preparations before the actual Durga puja begins.
- b. **Bodhana:** the rites to awaken and welcome the goddess to be a guest, typically done on the sixth day of the festival.
- c. **Adhivasa:** anointing ritual wherein many symbolic offerings are made to Durga, where each item represents a remembrance of subtle forms of her. Typically completed on the sixth day as well.

- d. **Saptami:** bathing of the goddess, selection of the priest, elaborate prayers (*arati*), recitation of texts describing Durga heading to war against evil, the *ululu* ritual (group meditation and scream-like crying at high points by women), done on the seventh day of the festival.
- e. **Mahastami:** similar to Saptami, more prayers, recitation and enactment of Durga legends and scriptures on the eighth day. The day is significant because the moment when it ends and ninth day begins is considered the moment Durga kills the buffalo demon, the good once again emerges victorious over evil.
- f. **Sandhi Puja:** one of the most important rituals during Durga Puja, it is a forty eight minute high point that celebrates the climax of war which goddess Durga was engaged in. It is done at the exact time Mahashtami ends and Mahanavami begins, with rituals being performed for the last 24 minutes of Mahashtami and for the first 24 minutes of Mahanavami. The legend behind Sandhi Puja comes from when Durga was engaged in a fierce battle with Mahishasura and was attacked by the demons Chanda and Munda. Goddess Chamunda emerged from the third eye of Durga and killed Chanda and Munda at the cusp of Ashtami and Navami. In some regions, devotees sacrifice an animal such as a buffalo or goat, but in many regions there isn't an actual animal sacrifice and a symbolic remembrance substitutes it. The surrogate effigy is smeared in red vermilion to symbolize the blood spilled. The goddess is then offered food (*bhog*) by women, and afterwards everyone eats. Major sites celebrating Durga Puja engage in a sixteen part devotional service. The community begins merry making, music, dancing and women playfully smear the faces of their companions with *sindoor* (vermilion), all as a mark of the victory of good over evil.
- g. **Mahanavami:** the ninth day of festival observes rites similar to *Saptami*, with the difference that the celebration is after Durga's victory and Vedic style homa (fire oblation) rituals are now included. The other deities on the stage, such as Ganesha, Kartikeya, Lakshmi and Saraswati are remembered and prayers offered to them.
- h. **Vijaya Dasami:** the tenth and last day, begins with Sindoor Khela, where married women smear sindoor or vermilion on the Goddess' idol, on her forehead and feet, before smearing it on each other. Since sindoor is like an ornament for married women, this ritual signifies them wishing each other a happy married life. They also offer *bhog* to the goddess. It ends with a great procession where the clay statues are

ceremoniously walked to a river or ocean coast for a solemn goodbye to Durga. It is an emotional day for some devotees, and the congregation sings emotional goodbye songs. When the procession reaches the water, Durga is immersed, the clay dissolves, and she is believed to return to Mount Kailasha with Shiva and cosmos in general. People distribute sweets and gifts, visit their friends and family members. Some communities such as those near Varanasi mark the eleventh day, called *ekadashi*, by visiting a Durga temple. **Dhunuchi Naach**, a dance performed with dhunachi (incense burner) is an integral part of the rituals. Drummers called *dhakis*, carrying large leather-strung *dhak* create music, people dance and complete the final day of worship called *aarati*.

**Navadurga** - *Nine forms of Durga*), are nine manifestations of the Goddess Durga in Hinduism, especially worshipped during the festival of Navratri where each of the nine manifested forms are consecutively venerated throughout all the nine nights. The nine manifested forms of Goddess Durga are: **Shailaputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Katyayini, Kaalratri, Mahagauri and Siddhidhatri.**

8. **Pratâparudra** (r. c. 1289-1323), also known as **Rudradeva II**, was the last ruler of the Kakatiya dynasty of India. He ruled the eastern part of Deccan, with his capital at Warangal.

Prataparudra succeeded his grandmother Rudramadevi as the Kakatiya monarch. In the first half of his reign, he subjugated the insubordinate chiefs who had asserted their independence during his predecessor's reign. He also achieved successes against the neighbouring Hindu kingdoms of the Yadavas (Seunas), the Pandyas and Kampili. Prataparudra succeeded his grandmother Rudramadevi on the Kakatiya throne. His mother Mummamma was the eldest daughter of Rudramadevi and a Chalukya prince Virabhadra. His father Mahadeva was a Kakatiya prince. Prataparudra had been associated in his grandmother's military campaigns and administration, which helped him gain acceptance of the nobles after ascending the throne. **Subjugation of Ambadeva and his allies-** During the reign of Prataparudra's predecessor Rudramadevi, the Kakatiyas' Kayastha feudatory Ambadeva had set up an independent kingdom with help from the neighbouring Yadava (Seuna) and Pandya dynasties. Soon after ascending the throne, Prataparudra reorganized the Kakatiya military, and launched expeditions against Ambadeva and his allies.

Prataparudra first sent his army to Vikramasimhapura (modern Nellore), which was ruled by Ambadeva's appointee Manuma Gandagopala. The attack was led by Adidamu Mallu, an officer (*dakshinabhujadanda*) of the Kakatiya chief commander (*sakalasesadhipati*) Somayadula Rudradeva. Manuma was defeated and killed in a battle. He was succeeded by Madhurantaka Pottapi Choda Ranganatha (alias Raja-Gandagopala), whose rule is attested by inscriptions dated to 1290 (Shaka 1212). Prataparudra formed an alliance with Raja-Gandagopala.

In 1291-92 (Shaka 1213), Prataparudra sent an army to Tripurantakam. The army was led by Manuma Gannaya (son of Kolani Soma-mantri), and Annayadeva (Prataparudra's cousin and son of Induluri Peda Gannaya-mantri). Epigraphic evidence suggests that as a result of this attack, Ambadeva had to retreat southwards to the Mulikinadu region: his last inscription at Tripurantakam is dated Shaka 1213, and an inscription of Induluri Annayadeva is dated two months later in the same year. The Kayasthas seem to have ruled Mulikanadu independently for next few years, as the inscriptions of Ambadeva's son Tripurari II do not mention Prataparudra as his overlord. In 1309, Prataparudra sent an expedition to Mulikinadu, which resulted in the end of the Kayastha rule. The region was annexed to the Kakatiya kingdom, and Somaya Nayaka was made its governor. Prataparudra also sent an expedition against the Yadavas (Seunas), who had supported Ambadeva. The Telugu Chola Manuma Gandagopala (not to be confused with Manuma Gandagopala of Nellore) participated in this expedition. His Narasaraopet inscription calls him "the wild fire to the bamboo-like army of the Seunas". The 1294 Raichur Fort inscription of the Kakatiya feudatory Gona Vithala states that Vithala captured the Adavani and Tumbala forts in the present-day Bellary district, and Manuva and Haluva in the Raichur Doab. Finally, he took control of the city of Raichur, where he erected strong fortifications to protect the city. Meanwhile, Raja-Gandagopala betrayed Prataparudra, and formed an alliance with the Pandyas. To punish him, Prataparudra sent a second expedition to Nellore, led by the Telugu Chola chief Manuma Gandagopala. The Kakatiya army won the ensuing battle: a 1297-98 (Shaka 1219) inscription of Manuma states that he drank "the ocean of the Dravida (Pandya) army" like a massive fire.

**Alauddin Khalji's invasion-** In the early 13th century, the Deccan region was an immensely wealthy area, having been shielded from the foreign armies that had ransacked northern India. In 1296, Alauddin

Khalji, a general of the Delhi Sultanate, had successfully raided Devagiri, the capital of the Yadavas, who were the western neighbours of the Kakatiyas. Alauddin forced the Yadava king Ramachandra to become his tributary, and shortly after, used to loot from Devagiri to usurp the throne of Delhi. The huge plunder obtained from Devagiri prompted Alauddin to plan an invasion of the Kakatiya capital Warangal in 1301, but the untimely death of his general Ulugh Khan put an end to this plan.

In late 1302 or in early 1303, Alauddin sent his generals Malik Juna and Malik Chajju on an expedition to Warangal. This expedition ended in a disaster, and by the time the Khalji army returned to Delhi, it had suffered severe losses in terms of men and baggage. The Delhi Sultanate chronicles do not mention how and where the army suffered these losses. According to the 14th century chronicler Ziauddin Barani, the army had managed to reach Warangal, but decided to return because the rainy season had started. The 16th century chronicler Firishta states that this army was ordered to reach Warangal via Bengal. Historian Kishori Saran Lal theorizes that the Delhi met with a humiliating defeat in Bengal, which was ruled by Shamsuddin Firoz; an embarrassed Alauddin decided to keep this failure a secret, which explains Barani's narrative. On the other hand, P. V. P. Sastry believes that a Kakatiya army repulsed the invaders at Upparapalli. His theory is based on *Velugomivâri-Vamcavâli*, which states that two Kakatiya commanders — the Velama chief Vena and Potugamti Maili — destroyed the pride of the Turushkas (Turkic people, that is, the Khaljis). Around 1308, Alauddin sent his general Malik Kafur to Devagiri, after Ramachandra discontinued the tribute payments promised in 1296. Malik Kafur returned to Delhi after defeating the Yadavas, and forcing Ramachandra to become Alauddin's vassal. Prataparudra determined that the Delhi forces were likely to invade Deccan again, and therefore, he reorganized his defence set-up. He is said to have raised an army of 900,000 archers, 20,000 horses and 100 elephants. Despite these preparations, when Malik Kafur invaded Warangal in 1310, Prataparudra was forced to negotiate a truce. He surrenders a substantial amount of wealth to the invaders, and agreed to become a tributary to Alauddin. Subsequently, he maintained friendly relations with Alauddin.

As Khusrau puts it in his inimitable style:

“He sent to the Malik an image of himself in gold with a rope round its neck in token of surrender and a humble request that his life be

spared. ‘ If the king ‘. he said, ‘ desires treasures and presents, I have of gold enough to gild all the mountains of Hind, and it is at his service. But if the world-decorating judgment of the king, in its generosity, allows this yellow-faced servant to keep a few of those gold coins, he will be able to preserve his dignity among his compeers. If the object of the king be diamonds and pearls, I have collected so many of them that neither the eyes of the rocks have beheld nor the ears of the fish heard of a similar treasure. Of horses, too, I possess twenty thousands, both bahri and kohi, the former of which would fly like the wind on the sea without wetting their feet, and the latter would make the mountain ridges tremble like the Indian sword with their tread. The reins of all these horses will be tied to the royal stable. Elephants also have I, hundreds of them, which I would gladly send to the sublime threshold. They are the elephants of Ma’bar, not the grass-eating ones, and all young and new-born who are now just growing their tusks not like those whose tusks have become raised up with age or who have become toothless. These elephants have heard the elephant-prostrating noise of the royal forces, and with their ears wide open they draw lines on the ground with their trunks, in humility and repentance, saying that hence-forward they would not turn their faces towards the Ka’ba of Islam except in slavish deference In short this slave, Luddar Deo (which is how the Muslim historians pronounced Rudra Dev), places in one scale of the balance all the wealth, elephants and horses he possesses, and in the other his own life, and the king can choose either of them,” This message was delivered to Kafur by the rajah’s ‘ basiths’ or messengers in eloquent Hindi ‘ more cutting than the sword ‘, and next day the rich presents consisting of elephants, precious stones like emeralds, rubies, ‘nimmanis’, cat’s-eyes and cock’s-eyes, diamonds, pearls and horses were brought to the royal camp. The Malik, satisfied that the rajah could pay no more, accepted the presents, and returned to Delhi.”

**Southern campaigns-** Taking advantage of the Khalji invasion, the Kakatiya vassals at the frontier provinces asserted independence. When Mallideva, the Vaidumba chief of Gandikota, attempted to overthrow his suzerainty, Prataparudra sent his general Juttaya lemka Gomkya Reddi to Gandikota. Gomkya Reddi defeated Mallideva, and was appointed as the governor of Gandikota and its surrounding areas. Another insubordinate chief was Ranganatha, the Telugu Chola ruler of Nellore. In 1311, Prataparudra’s overlord Alauddin asked him to contribute forces to Malik Kafur’s invasion of the Pandya kingdom. On his way to the Pandya territory, Prataparudra visited Ranganatha’s

territory, and suppressed the rebellion. By the mid-1301s, the Pandya kingdom had been weakened by a war of succession between the brothers Sundara and Vira, and the Muslim raids. After Alauddin's death in 1316, the Hoysala king Ballala launched a fresh invasion of the Pandya territory. According to a Daksharama inscription, the Kakatiya commander Peda Rudra defeated Ballala and his allies — Shambhuvaraya of Padaividu and Yadavaraya of Chandragiri. After this victory, he occupied Kanchi in the Pandya territory.

When the Pandya forces tried to evict the Kakatiyas from Kanchi, Prataparudra himself led an army against them, supported by his generals Muppidinayaka, Recherla Era Dacha, Manavira, and Devarinayaka. The Pandyas were forced to retreat after a battle near Kanchi. The Kakatiya general Devarinayaka penetrated further into the Pandya territory, and defeated Vira Pandya and his ally Malayala Tiruvadi Ravivarman Kulashekhara. The Kakatiyas then reinstated Sundara Pandya at Viradhavala. To commemorate his victory, Devarinayaka granted the Salakalavidu village to Sriranganatha in 1317.

**Mubarak Shah's invasion- siege of warangal-1318-** After Alauddin's death, Malik Kafur installed Alauddin's minor son Shihab-ud-din Omar as a puppet monarch on the throne of Delhi. However, Alauddin's elder son Qutubuddin Mubarak Shah soon killed Kafur, and became the Sultan. By this time, Ramachandra's son-in-law Harapaladeva had rebelled at Devagiri, and Prataparudra had stopped sending tribute payments to Delhi. Mubarak Shah suppressed the rebellion at Devagiri, and then sent his general Khusrau Khan to Warangal in 1318. Prataparudra did not offer much resistance, and made a tribute payment in form of 100 elephants, 12,000 horses, gold, and precious stones. In addition, he agreed to cede five districts of his kingdom to Mubarak Shah.

**War against Kampili-** Meanwhile, the Hoysala king Ballala invaded the Kampili kingdom located at the juncture of the Kakatiya, Hoysala and the Delhi Sultanate (formerly Yadava) territories. According to the Kannada language text *Kumara-Ramanasangatya*, the Kampili prince Kumara Rama sought Prataparudra's assistance against Ballala. Prataparudra refused to help him and his father Kampiliraya, leading to a rivalry between the two kingdoms. Sometime later, Kumara Rama forcibly occupied the western part of the Kakatiya kingdom, and Prataparudra responded by waging a war against Kampili. According to Srinatha's Telugu language text *Bhimeshvara-Puranamu*,

Prataparudra's commander Prolaya Annaya destroyed the Kampili capital Kummata. Kotikanti Raghava, a son of the Aravidu chief Tata Pinnama (who was probably a Kakatiya feudatory), is credited with having defeated Kampiliraya. These accounts suggest that Prataparudra won battles against Kampili, but he does not appear to have gained any tangible benefit from these victories.

**Tughluq invasion- - siege of warangal-1323-** Meanwhile, in Delhi, Khusrau Khan murdered Mubarak Shah, and usurped the throne of Delhi in 1320. He was dethroned by a group of rival nobles, and Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq became the new Sultan. According to the 16th century chronicler Firishta, Prataparudra had stopped sending tributes to Delhi by this time. Therefore, Ghiyath al-Din sent his son Ulugh Khan (later Muhammad bin Tughluq) to Warangal in 1323. Prataparudra put up a strong resistance this time, but ultimately retreated to his capital Warangal. Ulugh Khan besieged Warangal, while another part of the Delhi army led by Abu-Riza besieged Kotagiri.

During the siege, a false rumour about Ghiyath al-Din's death in Delhi caused a rebellion in Ulugh Khan's army, and he had to retreat from Warangal. The Kakatiya army plundered his camp, and pursued him till Kotagiri, where Abu Riza came to his rescue. Ulugh Khan ultimately retreated to Devagiri. Prataparudra believed that he had achieved a decisive victory, and let his guard down. However, Ghiyath al-Din sent reinforcements to Devagiri, and instructed Ulugh Khan to launch a fresh attack on Warangal. Within four months, Ulugh Khan besieged the fort again, and this time, Prataparudra had to surrender.

**Death-** Ulugh Khan sent Prataparudra and his family members to Delhi, escorted by a contingent led by the Tughluq lieutenants Qadir Khan and Khawaja Haji. The Tughluq court historian Shams-i-Siraj Arif simply states that Prataparudra died en route to Delhi. The 1330 Vilasa inscription of Musunari Prolaya Nayaka states that Prataparudra died on the banks of the Somodbhava (Narmada) river, while being taken to Delhi as a captive. The 1423 Kaluvacheru inscription of the Reddi queen Anitalli mentions that he "departed to the world of Gods by his own desire." When taken together, these accounts suggest that Prataparudra committed suicide on the banks of the Narmada River while being taken to Delhi as a prisoner.

9. **Allud-Din Khalji** (Khilji) ( 1296–1316) was the second ruler of the Khalji dynasty that ruled the Delhi Sultanate in the Indian subcontinent.

He was a nephew and a son-in-law of his predecessor Jalaluddin. When Jalaluddin became the Sultan of Delhi after deposing the Mamluks, Alauddin was given the position of *Amir-i-Tuzuk* (equivalent to master of ceremonies). Alauddin obtained the governorship of Kara in 1291 after suppressing a revolt against Jalaluddin, and the governorship of Awadh in 1296 after a profitable raid on Bhilsa. In 1296, Alauddin raided Devagiri, and acquired loot to stage a successful revolt against Jalaluddin. After killing Jalaluddin, he consolidated his power in Delhi, and subjugated Jalaluddin's sons in Multan. Alauddin wished to become the second Alexander (*Sikander Sani*), and this title of his was mentioned on coins and public prayers.

Over the next few years, Alauddin successfully fended off the Mongol invasions of India, at Jaran-Manjur (1297-1298), Sivistan (1298), Kili (1299), Delhi (1303), and Amroha (1305). In 1306, his forces achieved a decisive victory against the Mongols near the Ravi riverbank, and in the subsequent years, his forces ransacked the Mongol territories in present-day Afghanistan. The military commanders that successfully led his army against the Mongols include Zafar Khan, Ulugh Khan, and his slave-general Malik Kafur.

Alauddin invaded, conquered and plundered the Hindu kingdoms of Gujarat (raided in 1299 and annexed in 1304), Ranthambore (1301), Chittor (1303), Malwa (1305), Siwana (1308), and Jalore (1311). These victories ended several Hindu dynasties, including the Paramaras, the Vaghelas, the Chahamanas of Ranastambhapura and Jalore, the Rawal branch of the Guhilas, and possibly the Yajvapalas. His slave-general Malik Kafur led multiple campaigns to the south of the Vindhyas, obtaining a considerable amount of wealth from Devagiri (1308), Warangal (1310) and Dwarasamudra (1311). These victories forced the Yadava king Ramachandra, the Kakatiya king Prataparudra, and the Hoysala king Ballala III to become Alauddin's tributaries. Kafur also raided the Pandya kingdom (1311), obtaining a large number of treasures, elephants and horses. During the last years of his life, Alauddin suffered from an illness, and relied on Malik Kafur to handle the administration. After his death in 1316, Malik Kafur appointed Shihabuddin, son of Alauddin and his Hindu wife Jhatyapali, as a puppet monarch. However, his elder son Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah seized the power shortly after.

- 10. Malik Kafur** (died 1316), also known as Taj al-Din Izz al-Dawla, was a prominent eunuch slave-general of the Delhi Sultanate ruler Alauddin Khalji. He was captured by Alauddin's general Nusrat Khan

during the 1299 invasion of Gujarat, and rose to prominence in the 1300s. As a commander of Alauddin's forces, Kafur defeated the Mongol invaders in 1306. Subsequently, he led a series of expeditions in the southern part of India, against the Yadavas (1308), the Kakatiyas (1310), the Hoysalas (1311), and the Pandyas (1311). During these campaigns, he obtained a large number of treasures, elephants and horses for the Delhi Sultanate. During 1313-1315, Kafur served as Alauddin's governor of Devagiri. When Alauddin fell seriously ill in 1315, he was recalled to Delhi, and held the actual power as the *Na'ib* (viceroy). After Alauddin's death, he tried to usurp the power by appointing Alauddin's son Shihabuddin Omar as a child puppet monarch. His regency lasted for about a month, and he was assassinated by Alauddin's former bodyguards. Alauddin's elder son, Mubarak Shah, succeeded him as the regent, and usurped the power shortly after.

#### 11. Time Line - CE (Reigning Period)

Prola-II (1116-1157)



Rudra Deva - (1158-1195)



Maha Deva - (1195-1199)



Ganapati Deva (1199-1260)



Rani Rudrama Devi (1261-1295)



Pratapa Rudra (1289-1323)

Thousand Pillar Temple - Rudreswara Temple - (1163 AD)

Fist Medaram War - 1159-1163 AD

Polavasa Medaraju-II (1116-1159)

12. **Prataparudra I- RUDRA DEVA-1-** reigned between around 1158 – 1195, He was also known as Rudra Deva, Kakatiya Rudradeva, Venkata, and Venkataraya. He was the son of Prola II, who had made efforts to assert greater Kakatiya influence on territories in the western parts of the declining Western Chalukyan empire and who died in a

battle fought against the Velanati Choda ruler Gonka II around 1157/1158 while doing so. It was during Prataparudra's reign, in 1163, that the Kakatiyas declared an end to their status as feudatory chiefs of the Chalukyas. It is notable that inscriptions were henceforth written using the Kakatiya chiefs' vernacular Telugu rather than the Kannada language that had prevailed until that point. In his reign the Ekasila nagaram was built. His famous minister was Vellaki Gangadhara. He defeated Dommaraju- Nagunuru- Karim nagar; Medaraju- Medaram- Warangal; Mailagi- Jagityal). He died in the war with Yadava king Jaitugi- Jaitrapala.(1195) Maha Deva succeeded Prataparudra I as king, reigning probably from 1195 to 1199.

The general acceptance by the historians is that there was a war in Medaram area during the reign of Kakatiya Rudra (1158-1195 AD). He was also popular by the name, Prathapa Rudra I. It is said that Kakatiya Rudra sent his armies under the command of his senadhipathi, Gangadhara to Medaram Pargana as the subordinate ruler, failed to pay the kappam (taxes) for years.

Kakatiya and Polavasa rulers were the army commanders- senanies under Rastrakutas. Both rulers agreed to support the Kalyani Chalukyas after Rastrakutas defeat in 973 AD. Kakatiya Prola II (1116-1157 AD) and Polavasa Medaraju (1116 -1159AD) were Mandaleswaras under Kalyani Chalukyas. In the geographical area, Polavasa kingdom was almost double to the Kakatiya kingdom.

Billama of Kalachuri vamsha who became the political heir of Kalyani Chalukya kingdom, during the reign of Tailapa III sent his army under the control of his son Mailagi to take control of Kakatiya Rudra. Dommaraju of Nagunuru and Polavasa Medaraju II who were having enmity with Rudra wanted to avail this opportunity to support Mailagi to avenge.

According to Govindapuram inscription of 1122 AD the founder was Madhava Chakravarthi or Madhavavarma and next ruler was Duggaraju. (Buchi Reddy Avala and Guduru Yugander)

This war had taken place in between 1159-1163 AD. In the Anumakonda inscription, it was said that Rudra foiled the attack of enemy front formed by Mailagi, Medaraju II and Dommaraju. In this war Dommaraju was killed, Polavasa Medaraju II was forced to flee into the forests and Mailagi too was made to run away to his capital, Kalyani.

Probably at this point during the war Rudra might have put his proposal to Medaraju to accept his defeat and give his daughter, Sammakka to him. His refusal to offer his daughter to Rudra by accepting the defeat had become a burning issue to Rudra which led to a revengeful attack on Medaram in the later year when he came to know that his subordinate Pagididharaju married Sammakka.

To expand his kingdom, Rudra attacked the Kingdom of Bheema Choda of Vardhamanapuram (Vaddemanu) and defeated him and married Padma, daughter of Udaya Choda II. In lieu, Bhima Choda was made his feudatory to rule Vardhamanapuram again. Rudra tried the same matrimonial experiment with Medaraju II and failed.

This led him to track Medaraju II and his daughter Sammakka in between 1159 AD afterwards till the Medaram war took place. The Anumakonda inscription of 1163 AD was installed in Chitrabhanu, Magha Sudha thrayodasi day. And the Medaram Jatra is also held on Magha Sudha trayodasi day, bi-annually. Now it is clear that the first Medaram war would have taken place at least one year prior to the Anumakonda inscription of 1163 AD.

In Medaram war, Pagididha Raju, the husband of Sammakka and the daughter and son of Sammakka, Saralamma and Jampanna died along with Sammakka. That means Saralamma and Jampanna were majors, capable of participating in the said war. If we assume that the marriage of Sammakka took place in about 1160 AD, by 1189 AD and 1195 AD, the age of Saralamma and Jampanna should be more than 29 and 27 years. So, it is possible that the said war took place in between 1189 AD and 1195 AD death year of Rudra.

An undated inscription, found at Pakala, Warangal district mentions some information related to Medaram. It is a Telugu inscription in Kannada script. “Sammakka devatala utsava... Kaakateeya raajya... kaanukalu... bangaaramu bandaaramulu maa prajala nunchi cherchamani vinathi ... Pagididha raju jnaa... pournami kaanukalu... kaakateeya sainyaadhipati aagna meraku”. May be that was to appease the people of the forest erected by the king first Pratapa Rudra Deva.



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### **I. Poetry (Telugu)**

1. Alchemy
2. Vaana Mabbula Kanthi Khadgam
3. Tea Kappulo Toofan
4. Tangeti Junnu
5. Karakatakam (Cancer)
6. Oka Sarassu – Aneka Hamsalu (Psychiatry)
7. Marana Saasanam
8. Sri Lalitha Sahasranama Stotram
9. Kuyyo – Morro Satakam
10. Bhairava Satakam

### **II. Poetry (English)**

11. Shades
12. The Twilight Zone
13. My Poem is My Birth Certificate
14. The Pendulum Clock, The Gramophone,  
The Typewriter and The Pen
15. The Vigilance Whistle!
16. How to Cook a Delicious Poem
17. Windows and Apples
18. The Guerdon of Poesy
19. The Haste Land
20. Bees Need No Invitation When Flowers Bloom...
21. The Poet that launched a thousand poems
22. Walking with My Moon
23. Reflections

### **III. Stories, Novels, Essays... (Telugu)**

24. Katti Anchupai (Noir Stories)
25. Chupke – Chupke (Woman diseases)
26. Akshararchana
27. Deepa Nirvana Gandham (Death)
28. Swapna Sastram (Dreams-1)
29. Kalalu-Peeda Kalalu (Dreams-2)
30. Satyanveshanalo (Novel)
31. Sankya Sastram (Numerology)
32. Dr. Jayadev Cartoons (Cartoons)
33. Kathalu – kavitalu
34. Genome (Biotechnology Novel)

### **IV Stories, Novels, Essays (English)**

35. In Search of Truth (Novel)
36. How to be happy (Philosophy)
37. Bouquet of Telugu Songs and Poems

### **V Translations (English to Telugu)**

38. Iliad (Homer)
39. Odyssey (Homer)
40. Epic Cycle (Homer)
41. Three Greek Tragedies
42. The Poems of Sappho
43. Aeneid (Virgil)
44. Pilgrim's Progress (John Bunyan)
45. Paradise Lost (John Milton)
46. Paradise Regained (John Milton)
47. Divine Comedy (Dante)
48. Faust (Goethe)
49. World Famous Stories
50. Namdeo Dhasal Poetry
51. William Blake Poetry
52. Emily Dickinson Poetry – Part I
53. Emily Dickinson Poetry – Part II
54. Emily Dickinson Poetry – Part III
55. Emily Dickinson Poetry – Part IV
56. Emily Dickinson Poetry – Part V
57. Russian Poetry
58. Jalapatam (Eighteen English Poets)

59. Dabbu Manishi (Money Poetry)
60. Santi Yuddham (War-Peace)
61. Christu Adbhuta Geethalu
62. The Path of Christ
63. Silappadikaram
64. Manimekhala
65. Sangam Poetry
66. Conference of Birds (Attar)
67. Masnavi - Part 1
68. Masnavi - Part 2
69. Masnavi - Part 3
70. Masnavi - Part 4
71. Masnavi - Part 5
72. Masnavi - Part 6
73. Madhusala (Edward Fitzgerald)
74. Sougandhika (Master Poems in English-1)
75. Toorpu Padamara (Master Poems in English-2)
76. Prema Kurisina Velalo... (Master Poems in English-3)
77. Vallu Mugguru (Master Poems in English-4)
78. Alanati Kothagali (Master Poems in English-5)
79. Manchu Toofan (Master Poems in English-6)
80. Endaa – Vaana (Master Poems in English-7)
81. Pillanagrove Pipupu (Master Poems in English-8)
82. Naalugu Dikkulu (Master Poems in English-9)
83. Allanta Doorana Aa Paata Vinavacche (Master Poems in English-10)
84. Divya Vastrala Kosam (Master Poems in English-11)
85. Oka Madhusala (Master Poems in English-12)
86. The Axion Esti (Odysseus Elytis)
87. Love & Death (Frederico Garcio Lorca)
88. Ten Thousand Lines (Edwin Cordevilla)
89. Century of Love (Roula Pollard)
90. Pablo Neruda Poetry
91. Mexican Poetry
92. Inanna (Queen of Heaven and Earth)
93. Sataroopa (A.K. Khanna)
94. Aamani (Master Poems in English-13)
95. Kotha Deepalu (Master Poems in English-14)

## **VI Translations (From Telugu, Hindi to English)**

96. Bhagavatam (Potana)
97. Soundarya Lahari (Sankaracharya)

98. Modern Bhagavadgita
99. Samparayam (Suprasanna)
100. The Tree of Fire (Anumandla Bhoomaiah)
101. The Poems of Kuppam (Seeta Ram)
102. We Need a Language (T.W. Sudhakar)
103. The Broken Grammer (T.W. Sudhakar)
104. The Voice of Telangana (Madiraju Ranga Rao)
105. Fire and Ice (Rama Chandramouli)
106. The Tears of Bliss
107. This is no Streaking (Stories – K.K. Menon)
108. The Pool of Blood (Novel – Ampasayya Naveen)
109. Madhusala (Harivamsa Roy Bacchan)

### **New ones- to be released**

110. Journey to Manasa Sarovar (English poetry)
111. Inanna (The queen of Earth and Heavens)
112. Smooth Hands- Sosonjan A. Khan- (Bilingual)
113. Dancing Winds- Maria Miraglia (Bilingual)
114. Moments- Alicja Kubreska (Bilingual)
115. Tayouan Pai Pai- Yaw-Chin Fang(Bilingual)
116. The World of Extinct Lamps- Izabela Zubko (Tri lingual)
117. Pearls of Wisdom- Pramila Khadun- (Bilingual)
118. The Wind my lover- Ade C. Manila-(Bilingual)
119. The Mystic Mariner- Madan Gandhi (Bilingual)
120. The Casket of Vermilion (English Poetry)
121. The Collected poems of Dr. LSR Prasad and many more...



# The Casket of Vermilion

**KUMKUMA BHARINE**

by Dr. Lanka Siva Rama Prasad

Somewhere in the 12th century, some tribal leaders found a new born girl (Sammakka) crying amidst tigers. The head of the tribe adopted her. She was married to Pagididda Raju a tribal chief. They were blessed with two daughters and one son Sarakka, Nagulamma and Jampanna respectively. After sometime, there was a severe drought that lasted for years and as a result the mighty Godavari River dried up. Because of the drought the tribal people didn't pay tribute to King. Rudra deva sent his army to subdue the tribals and collect the tribute under Peddapuli raju another tribal chief now a commander in the Kakatiya Army. Then a War was fought between tribal chief pagididda Raju and Kakatiya army on the banks of "Sampenga Vagu" (Jampanna Vagu).

Pagididda Raju, his daughters Sarakka, Nagulamma, son in law Govinda Raju (husband of Sarakka) lost their lives in the battle. Later Jampanna also dies in Sampenga Vagu (renamed as Jampanna Vagu in the memory of his heroic fight). Sammakka also enters war and fights and causes lot of damage to kakatiya army. Surprised by her Bravery and Valor the Kakatiya Prime Minister proposes peace offering Sammakka a place in the kingdom as the queen. Sammakka turned down the offer and continue the fighting to avenge the dead. The battle continued and Sammakka was seriously wounded. Sammakka told her people that as long as they remembered her, she would protect them. Then, she cursed the Kakatiya dynasty to perish and proceeded towards Chilakala gutta and disappeared in the forest. In the morning they found Kumkuma bharine –a red ochre box (a casket of vermilion), her bangles and the pug marks of a huge full grown tigress, exactly the same place where she was found as an infant by the koyas. Soon afterwards Kakatiya kingdom rises and falls.

A highly intriguing and fascinating story of the local deities that attracts more than ten million people to a remote area in Medaram forest, the largest bi-annual congregation of tribal communities, perhaps, in the world.

**THE STORY OF SAMMAKKA - SARAKKA**