

RANI
RUDRAMA DEVI



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PREFACE

Merely a couple of days ago, while going through the nomination process for Presidency, Hillary Clinton made a telling comment that she really didn't know whether America was ready for a woman President.

It is a matter of great pride that India has shown itself to be a path-breaker on this count. In mythology as well as since historical times we have worshipped goddesses and attributed the most important portfolios to them. Historically it was Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi who sowed the first seeds of rebellion towards almost a century long battle for the freedom of India. Our history is replete with stories of many such brave women who have walked the untrodden path. Lives of Nagamma the leader of Palanati Seema, Brahma Naidu's mother Seelamma, Tribal king Yerukalaraju's mother

Kuntala Devi, Erramma Kanasamma, the lady who contributed to resurrection of the Kakatiya clan, the valorous Gond Queen Rani Durgavati 1524-1564 AD, the Muslim woman warrior Chand Bibi 1550-1599 AD, great ruler and Queen of the Malwa kingdom Devi Ahilyabai Holker 1725-1795 AD and the first and only woman ruler to sit on the throne of Delhi Sultanate Razia Sultan 1236 AD, are women who have excelled in every aspect of their lives and inspired us.

Rani Rudrama Devi, destiny's queen, was a 13th century Kakatiya warrior ruler. An able administrator, the boldest of warriors, a compassionate ruler, an indomitable conqueror, an adorable daughter and a loving mother, she can be given any title and it would perfectly fit Rudrama as if it was coined for her. She was Queen mother to her people, compassionate to their problems, and responded accordingly. Furthermore, she was an understanding leader, and her taxation as well as revenue to run her kingdom depended upon the circumstances therein. Rani Rudrama made herself answerable to her subjects. She was a commander who rode a horse as well as wielded a sword as no other person in her kingdom could. In addition, she was valiant and led from the front in all battles. Rudrama Devi had immense self confidence to

allow chieftains to continue ruling the smaller kingdoms conquered by her. She was shrewd enough to make the right moves both as a ruler as well as during battle.

The Kakatiya Dynasty has to be credited with the opportunity it surfaced for Rani Rudrama Devi. This book provides the readers an insight into the Golden Era of the Telugu people which rose under the Kakatiya rule, comprising mainly of Ganapatideva, Rudrama Devi and Prataparudra. The Author has aimed to provide a comprehensive picture, taking you back in history, from the inception of the Kakatiya Rule to the Encompassing of a Region; the Growth of a Kingdom: Socially, Economically and Culturally; the Rule of the First Queen; and the progression of a small clan into super powers of South of India.

This book is dedicated to this great woman ruler and all other women who have etched their names permanently in the history of India. Women like Rani Rudrama Devi, Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, and others have shown great strength and conviction in their own self as well as immense love for their motherland. Furthermore, they have reaffirmed that an Indian woman is no less, but an equal to her male counterpart in every aspect.

DR ALEKHYA PUNJALA



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1

HISTORY OF THE KAKATIYAS

Introduction

The history of the Kakatiyas begins from the closing years of the 10th Century. The Kakatiyas who were mainly chieftains in the 10th and 11th Centuries rose to become a major power in the Southern Peninsular of India in the 12th and 13th Centuries. It was before 1163 AD that they emerged as a sovereign power. Until then, they were only subordinates of the Rastrakutas and later of the Eastern and Western Chalukyas of Kalyana. During this period the sphere of their activity was limited to Madhira and Manukota around Warangal District in present day Telangana, which is about 150 km from the city of Hyderabad. Their activities and dealings were primarily with other subordinate families, namely the Chalukyas of Mudigonda in the East (present day

Khammam district), Polavasa Chiefs in the North West (present day Karimnagar district) and Telugu Choda Chiefs of Kanduru in the South. However, the relations of the Kakatiyas with the above mentioned Chiefs were not very friendly.

As subordinates the Kakatiya Chiefs showed their valour and strength in battles they won over enemies for their overlords time and again. In lieu they were granted land to govern under the Kingdom, recognising them as able Chiefs. For instance, a Rashtrakuta commander Gunda III won battle against a Vengi Chalukya King. As a result of this triumph, Erra Rashtrakuta the son of Gunda III was made Governor of Kuravi in Warangal district, thus starting Kakatiya control over Kuravi. Erra was then succeeded by his grandson Kakatiya Gunda IV.

In 973 AD, the Rashtrakutas succumbed to the Chalukyas. Kakatiya Gunda IV was a Rashtrakuta loyal, who refused to submit himself to the new Chalukya Emperor taking over the Rashtrakutas. Since the Chalukyas were still setting foot into the kingdom and consolidating it, Kakatiya Gunda IV grabbed the opportunity and established control over an independent principality with Kuravi as its capital. Around 1000 AD, Kakatiya Gunda IV met his demise, and his son Beta I

was too young to control the threats faced by Kuravi. Hence, his paternal aunt Kamayani, Erra's Wife, took him to the then Chalukyan King to enrol Beta I as a Chalukyan subordinate. This started the journey of the Kakatiyas as Chalukyan subordinates.

Beta I continued to rule a part of Telengana, under the dominion of the Kalyana Chalukyas. He however, rose to fame when he defeated the Cholas and helped the Chalukyas with a conquest over Hanumakonda. The Bayyaram Tank inscription attributes the conquest of Hanumakonda to Beta I. It is said that Hanumakonda was made his Capital. However, since all this was still under the Chalukyas, it is presumed that Hanumakonda was given to Beta I as a fief, a gift for his performance and also as a loyal replacement to previous existing chiefs Anoma and Konda of the Cholas. The Kazipet Dargah inscription refers to the victory of Beta I over the Chola army. Here it is gathered that Beta I could not have independently attacked the Cholas as a subordinate to the Chalukyas, but must have accompanied the Chalukyan expedition led by Ahavamalla Someswara I. Furthermore, the Chalukyan invasion over the entire Chola kingdom and the capture of Kanchi is attributed to Beta I and his able commanders, as mentioned in the Palampet inscription and as a statement in the

Ekamranatha Temple inscription. Thus, it can be concluded that as a Chalukyan loyal, Beta I spent his rule, assisting and enabling expansion of the kingdom and overthrowing the Cholas.

Beta I, had his capital named Kakatipuram. Since they worshiped goddess Kakati as their Tutelary deity, the dynasty came to be called Kakatiyas. There is a temple with goddess Kakati as the presiding deity in the city of Warangal which was their capital and was called Orugallu at that time. There are several stories as to how they got the name of Kakatiyas. The Kazipet inscription has the line *Sriman Kakati Puraadhinaadho*, which means rulers of the place called Kakati, on account of which they came to be called Kakatiyas, thus seems more plausible. It is said that they were followers of Jainism and later converted to Shaivism which was being very strongly advocated at that point of time and was making a strong impact.

Prola I succeeded his father Beta I around 1055 AD. Prola I was a King highly revered by his subjects. The Bayyaram epigraph mentions that he was attributed with the title *Arigajakesari*, meaning 'Lion to the Elephants', that is, enemies. He was famous for political successes as well as social reforms. Prola I constructed a big tank and named it Kesaritataka, stemming from his

title *Arigajakesari*. As a mark of gratitude, his successors adopted the symbol of a boar to signify the act of digging up the earth for creating the tank. He was one of the first Kakatiya rulers to have effectively initiated irrigation and water supply in town planning.

Prola I played an active role in expeditions against the Chakrakuta, Chola and Konkana territories. His success in all ventures and conquest of Konkana, as mentioned in the Kazipet Dargah inscription, brought him fame which spread afar. He was feared by enemies and never returned without triumph. The neighbouring chiefs also seemed nervous around him. Prola I conquered the Kadaparti and Purakuta regions and annexed Hanumakonda as well. Impressed and gratified by his performance, Chalukyan king Someswara I granted the extended Hanumakonda region to him as a permanent fief. This was given to him with a right to mint his own coins with the boar or Varaha symbol. It was a big step for a Kakatiya ruler and a sign of progress leading to eventual independence. Growth and prosperity of the Kakatiya reign was felt most during this era, which was just short of a formal declaration of independence from the Chalukyan Empire. Prola I was succeeded by his son Beta II.

Beta II, generally known as Tribhuvana Malla, according to the Hanumakonda inscription, acquired

Sabbinadu 1000 with the help of his minister. Like his father, Beta II participated in Chalukyan expeditions against the Cholas and Malavas. Beta II got Sabbinadu 1000 as a reward for his success, which was immensely significant for the Kakatiyas. This changed the geography as Sabbinadu was annexed to the Hanumakonda region and resulted in promotion of Beta II's position within the Chalukyan Empire. Beta II was succeeded by his first son Durgaraja who was further succeeded by his younger brother Prola II. Prola II came into power when the Kakatiya rule was flourishing with the deeds of their forefathers. He sensed expansion, and from 1117 AD onwards started expanding the Kingdom to the south. With perceptible success and increasing prominence, in strength and region, Prola II declared the Kakatiyas independent of the Chalukyan Empire.

Independent Rule of The Kakatiyas

In a nutshell, the first king of the Kakatiyas was Gundaya Raj, 956-996 AD. Beta Raju I succeeded Gundaya and had his capital at Kakatipuram. As we see, from 1000-1158 AD, they conquered all the small princelets and subordinate kingdoms which were under the Chalukyan Empire. Over this long period of 150 years, four of the Kakatiya

kings brought the whole of the Telangana region under one Sovereignty. Out of these above-mentioned four kings, Prola I was very well known. Prola II who ruled from 1110-1158 AD, extended the boundaries of the Kingdom towards the south and declared the Kakatiyan independence.

Rudra, 1158-1195 AD

Rudra, his successor who ruled from 1158-1195 AD, pushed the boundaries to the north, right up to the Godavari Delta. He built a fort at Warangal, to serve as a second capital and withstood invasions from Devagiri. His rule which falls in the second phase, namely the period between 1159-1281 AD, saw Telangana as their base and conquest of the whole of Andhra region. They solidified their position here. As Rudra had no children his younger brother Mahadeva succeeded him. According to the Khandavalli copper plate grant of Prataparudra, Rudra entrusted the kingdom to Mahadeva, his younger brother, perhaps as regent of the young prince Ganapati. The sundella in the Peddapalli Taluk in the Karimnagar district, dated 1197 AD and a broken undated record in the Warangal fort, are the only two inscriptions of this king. Invasion of the Seuna kingdom was the sole significant political event of his reign.

Mahadeva, 1196–1199 AD

As Rudra had no heirs his younger brother Mahadeva succeeded him in 1195–1199 AD. Like his brother, Mahadeva waged a war of aggression against their enemies in 1199 AD and died at the hands of Jaitugi. The Bayyaram Tank inscription indicates plunder of Kalyana in the course of his march against their enemies. Jaitugi imprisoned Mahadeva's son Ganapatideva, later released due to efforts of the Kakatiya minister Recherla Rudra who made him ascend the Kakatiya throne in 1199 AD. Rudrama Devi's copper-plate inscription states that the Yadava king offered his daughter Somala Devi's hand in marriage to Ganapatideva.

Mahadeva had two daughters Mylaamba and Kundaamba apart from his son Ganapatideva.

Ganapatideva, 1199–1262 AD

Ganapatideva succeeded Mahadeva. He was one of the three major kings, who ruled for a long span of 60 years. He was the greatest of the Kakatiya rulers and also the first ruler, after the Satavahanas to bring the entire Telugu region under one rule.

The Mantena inscription is the earliest record of Ganapatideva, probably issued in the first year of his reign. It is not known as to how and why he was set

free by the Yadava ruler Jaitugi and reinstated on the throne.

The commander Recharla Rudra's Palampeta inscription, dated 1213 AD, tells us that neither the nobles of the royal family nor the enemy kings, took kindly to the succession of Mahadeva after the demise of Rudra Deva. One of the enemies was Nagati Raja, brother of Kusumaditya of the Mudigonda Chalukya family who ruled Visurunadu. It is said that Kakati Rudra drove out these Chalukya Chiefs from their land and they had to seek refuge under other kings. Probabaly due to this reason they tried to assert their independence, after Rudra's death. But later, according to the Nattarameshwaram inscription, he was given a crushing defeat by general Recharla Rudra around 1218 AD. This must have been at the time of Mahadeva's short reign or after his death. Other enemies were probably the Mandalikas of coastal Andhra, who had suffered defeat at the hands of Rudra, during his eastern campaign in 1185 AD.

In addition to this Ganapatideva had other enemies. They were probably his paternal uncles who had joined hands with the Yadava king Jaitugi and were responsible for his captivity, while he was still a prince. The Mantena inscription dated 26th December, 1199 AD

attributes the title of *Sakala-Desa-Pratishtapanacharya* to him, which meant the 'Establisher of all Kingdoms.' This indicates that Ganapatideva had been released by then and become the master of all the kingdoms acquired by Rudra.

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 Ganapatideva. He significantly expanded the Kakatiya kingdom and launched a series of attacks outside the dynasty's traditional Telangana region around the year 1230 AD, thus bringing the Telugu-speaking lowland delta areas around the Godavari and Krishna rivers under Kakatiya control.

While Ganapati expanded his territory, the Kakatiya capital at Orugallu, established in 1195, was not forgotten. 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.

Though a portion was lost to enemies during Mahadeva's time, it was due to the efforts and planning of Recherla Rudra that the kingdom was saved from further disintegration. This is evident from his Palampeta inscription. It was because of his effort that Ganapati was reinstated on the throne, as is evident from the Ramakrishnapuram inscription. According to Bayyaram tank inscription, it is said that the marriages of Ganapatideva and his sister Mylaamba were conducted by Mahadeva. This must have taken place before his Devagiri campaign which led to his death.

After strengthening his position in the capital, Ganapatideva channelized his energies and focused his attention on the coastal Andhra region. He consolidated his position and in some of the areas, he was helped by Jaya Senapathi, which is evident from his Ganapeshwaram inscription, dated 1231 AD. The Kondaparthi inscription of Malayala Chaumda dated 1203 AD, describes the conquest and capture of the island fortress with all its occupants. It is said that, Jayappa plundered the whole island and enriched the treasury of Ganapatideva. Ganapatideva was impressed by the qualities of young Jayappa, son of Pinna Choda. Ganapathi enrolled him in his service, made him train

in state craft and the commanding of elephant forces. Aiming at strengthening this alliance and loyalty, he married Jayappa's two sisters who were called Naramba and Peramba.

Later, he killed Prithvishwara with the help of the Choda king of Nellore and another named Mahamandaleshwara Ballaya of Kammanadu and took on the title of *Prithvishwara - Siraha - Kanduka - Kreedha - Vinoda*.

Later, Ganapatideva undertook the southern expedition according to the Chebrolu inscription of Jayappa. According to this inscription Jayappa was conferred, lordship of the region on Ganapatideva's return. Thereafter, he led an expedition to the east which included the invasion of Kalinga. After Prithvishwara's death, it became necessary for Ganapatideva to capture his entire kingdom, especially Kalinga. He led several other expeditions like the attack and conquest of Kolanu, the second southern expedition etc., fought many battles, subjugated a whole lot of rulers, and brought several parts of the Telugu region under one umbrella.

Though Ganapatideva ascended the throne, under not so favourable circumstances, his reign was the most significant and brilliant in the history of the Telugu region. He took up the reins when the Telugu country

was in a state of strife and complete political disorder. The Chalukya Cholas and the Chalukyas of Kalyana had lost their power, giving rise to several small feudal states which were always at war, fighting for supremacy. He took upon himself the difficult task of uniting the Telugu country either by using force or by diplomacy. It can be said without doubt, that he succeeded in his efforts to a large extent.

Ganapatideva was credited with the charge of capital from Anumakonda to Orugallu. Ganapatideva continued the work started by his uncle Rudra Deva in his last years. He constructed two forts, one within the other, using stone and mud respectively. The fort had seventy-five bastions and each one was entrusted to a Nayaka who was in service of the king.

Furthermore, Ganapatideva put an end to the rule of Vellanati Chodas in 1201 AD. He later extended the kingdom to the delta of the rivers Krishna and Godavari. Furthermore, he extended his way up to Kanchi in the south and Ganjam in the north east. But Ganapathideva did not occupy the region of Nellore, as the ruler requested him for protection. He established order in his vast dominion and encouraged trade.

Ganapatideva had two daughters named, Rudrama and Ganapamba from his queen Somaladevi. He

had Hariharadeva and Murarideva from his other wives but there is no strong evidence. His daughter Ganapamba was married to Beta Raju of the Kota clan. It is said that later Ganapamba became the de-facto ruler there.



2

REIGN OF RUDRAMA DEVI

Rudrama Devi, 1262-1289 AD

The succession of Rudrama Devi to the throne in 1259 AD became a historical event. It unfolded a new chapter in the history of our country, the reason being that history had barely and rarely witnessed a woman ascending a throne. She was not only well-versed in the art of warfare but could also withstand the attacks of enemies, instilling a deep sense of awe and fear in the hearts of enemies. Since Rudramadevi was the first woman ruler to have ascended the throne in South India, she became a country wide inspiration for centuries to come.

Her father Ganapatideva had himself been a successful ruler for a long time, loved and worshipped by his people. He had made a conscious decision to enthrone his daughter as his successor, creating history

in the process. Such a decision was unheard of in those times, but reflected his unstinting faith in Rudrama's strength and capabilities as a ruler. Rudrama was an embodiment of the power of women, which was in sharp contrast to the general belief that women were the weaker sex. Ganapatideva's decision, which was entirely opposed to the then prevailing royal situations, traditions and beliefs, to place Rudrama on the throne proved his strong conviction and sense of judgment which is praiseworthy. There were probably a few reasons as to why Ganapatideva entrusted the throne to his daughter; his wife, the Queen, had borne no sons, which in turn caused other male members in the immediate family to lust after the throne. These members conspired and connived to join hands with neighbouring foes. Amidst such unrest within the family, Ganapatideva felt a deeper confidence in Rudrama, sensing her ability, prudence and solidity to control and withstand internal and external opposition. Ganapatideva's vision of Rudrama Devi's success was opposed at the most basic level, where polity and society viewed women as subordinates and not the other way round. This negativity was put to rest when Rudrama Devi proved her essence and made a mark as one of the greatest rulers of the Kakatiya kingdom.

Early Life

Sensing her innate strength and focus, Ganapatideva made Rudrama go through the rigours of training in horse riding, sword fight, and other arts of warfare, under the guidance and tutelage of her early Guru Sivadevayya. She had a fine sense of politics, administration, statesmanship and public governance. Even before she ascended the throne Rudrama made herself familiar with people and places, visiting several parts of her kingdom, pilgrimage centres and gaining enough knowledge about them. The Pottugallu inscription of Karimnagar dated 1235 AD and the Yeleshwar inscription of 1246 AD, bear testimony to this fact.

Under her Guru's keen supervision and training Rudrama mastered the art of leading the army, planning and execution of facing as well as overpowering opponents on the battleground, and penetrating into the enemies' planned war moves. He made her understand the science of politics, administration and the rules of battle. Jayappa, her maternal uncle, taught her fine nuances of the art of dance and moulded her into a fine artist. Konkanabhattu, her other teacher, acquainted Rudrama with literature and music. By the time Rudrama reached the age of 15, she had bloomed and blossomed into a beautiful young lady, well-versed

in various subjects, necessary for a ruler. She grew up to be strong, capable and grounded, ready for future challenges. Her father Ganapatideva shared his vast knowledge and experience of politics and public governance with her. Making her a part of his daily administration, he made Rudrama at ease with the battle field at every given opportunity. He started giving her responsibilities to make her familiar with the various aspects of ruling by which she became quite adept and soon exhibited a keen sense and mastery in ruling with concern and welfare of the people in her heart.

Even Rudrama's attire was more like a male and she conducted herself like a man and a ruler. Gradually, she transformed into an epitome of strength and valour, ready and capable of taking over the reins of the kingdom from Ganapatideva.

Marriage

By this time, as Rudrama had attained marriageable age, Ganapatideva was looking for a right suitor for her, one who would match up to his daughter in all aspects of looks and valour. He found Prince Virabhadra, son of King Indushekhara of Nidadavolu, to be the most suitable. By then, Virabhadra was well known for his innumerable deeds of valour and strength along with

qualities of a great soldier and fighter. Probably another conscious reason for Ganapatideva might have been to win over the enemy with this alliance and put an end to a probable enemy attack from that quarter. It is said that Rudrama had put forth this condition, that whoever she would marry must win over her in battle. Virabhadra readily agreed to this condition. The two prepared for a fierce battle in the presence of excited and anxious onlookers comprising ministers, subordinate kings, commander in chiefs and an unprecedented crowd of people who came to witness this extraordinary event. Both of them were in top form. They fought ferociously with different weapons, exhibiting the skills of fight that they had honed over the years. Rudrama and Virabhadra were completely focussed with only victory over the other as their goal. It is believed that they continuously fought for three days and nights at a stretch with no result in sight. Finally, Ganapatideva stepped in and declared them equally proficient, a true match and suitable for each other. Rudrama agreed for marriage as she had found an equal in Virabhadra.

Ganapatideva performed their wedding with great pomp and grandeur, befitting the royal couple. Their marriage has been told and re-told many times, over the years by writers, story tellers and bards. Both of

them had a harmonious marriage but this did not shift Rudrama's focus from responsibility towards her kingdom or its people. She gave full support and strength to Ganapatideva who was at the fag end of his life, by taking on more responsibilities in the kingly duties.

In the Juttiga inscription of 1259 AD, there is mention that Rudrama Devi rose to the throne in 1259 AD. In this inscription one also finds the first mention of Rudrama's marriage. Her marriage can be traced back to approximately 1235 AD, as the Malkapur inscription of 1261 AD and the Palakeedu inscription of 1269 AD help us in assessing these timelines. In these inscriptions one finds mention of her grandson Prataparudra as a child. He was the son of Mummadamba, Rudrama Devi's daughter.

Unfortunately Rudrama Devi lost Virabhadra very young. She was facing extremely tough times at that juncture, taking care of her ailing father and moaning the death of her dead husband. However, she did not succumb to sorrow and despair nor did she neglect her duties. Instead, Rudrama channelized all her strength and energies in discharging her duties as a ruler.

Family

Some scholars say, Rudrama Devi had two children, both daughters, named Mummadamba and Ruyamma.

According to the Prataparudra Yasobhushan written by Vidyanatha, Mummadamba was married to Mahadeva, who in all probability belonged to Kakatiya lineage. To the couple was born a son, Prataparudra. On the advice of Ganapatideva, Prataparudra was adopted and named heir to the throne by Rudrama Devi. According to scholar and historian Dr Mudigonda Sivaprasad, Rudrama's second daughter, Ruyamma was adopted. It is mentioned that Ruyamma was married to Annaya, the son of Mantri Gannaya of the Induluri family. Annaya had been in the service of the queen as the Mahapradhana and Senadhipati for years together. He was loyal and extremely efficient in administration of the kingdom. According to Dr. P. V. Parabrahmasastry, scholar and writer, Rudrama Devi had a third daughter Rudrama, who was married to Yellenadeva, a Yadava Prince. This is mentioned in the Alapadu Grant inscription.

The Coronation

Ganaptideva's decision to make Rudrama Devi his successor was supported by his minister Sivadevayya, Rudrama's Guru, as there was no male heir apparent or anyone more deserving.

Ganapatideva called for Rudrama and expressed his desire. He made her aware of the responsibility and

duty of upholding the honour of the Telugu people, protecting the Kakatiya kingdom from the onslaught of enemy attacks and taking care of her subjects as her father would, and last but not the least bringing name and fame to the Kakatiya dynasty with her exemplary rule. Rudrama was moved by her father's love and patriotism for his land, love for his people and the confidence he reposed in her. She decided and vowed never to betray this trust, to never let an enemy succeed with attacks on the kingdom and to rule with happiness of the people at heart.

Rudrama was coronated in the August presence of all the dignitaries of the kingdom. The whole kingdom wore a festive look and subjects cheered with cries almost reaching the skies. People came in hordes from all over to catch a glimpse of this extraordinary happening with their own eyes. As part of the coronation celebrations, there was singing, dancing, rituals were offered at temples and food was served to all those visiting at various places.

The place where the ceremony was to be held was beautifully decorated, and holy water was brought from the sacred rivers. Regally dressed Rudrama arrived in the hall filled with people. Amongst Vedic chants, her father Ganapatideva placed the crown on her head and

handed over the sacred family sword to his daughter. He blessed Rudrama to carry forward the rich legacy and to always keep the honour of the kingdom and its people as top priority.

Rudrama adorned the royal court after the coronation ceremony. She was flanked by her father Ganapatideva on one side and her guru Sivadevayya on the other. All the Samantha rulers of the kingdom like Gangaya Sahini, Malyala Gundayya, Nagadeva Maharaja, Viriyala Ganapathi, Oppili Siddhi, Cheraku Bolayya Reddy, Saarangapani Deva Maharaja, Vishwanadha Devudu, Allada Pemayya Devudu and Malli Deva Siddhayya Chodudu were present at that time. Chief Minister Sivadevayya, Prime Ministers Govindanayakudu, Khayyanna Nayakudu and other ministers like Bhaskara, Pothana Matyudu, Induluri Soma along with poet Thikkanna, Yaadavakula Annamayya Maarana, Kethana Saakalyamalla, Bhattu, the scholars, made the gathering all the more resplendent. Those people present showered Rudrama with money and gifts as a mark of their love and respect. Soon after, she was taken in a procession throughout the capital on a decorated elephant as was the custom in those days.

Though she ascended the throne in 1259 AD, Ganapatideva continued to hold the reins of his kingdom

for ten more years according to some inscriptions, namely:

Tripurantaka Inscription dated 1261 AD

Malkhapuram Inscription, 1261 AD

Alapadu Inscription, 1264 AD

Pammi Inscription, 1265 AD

Panugallu Inscription, 1267 AD

Palakeedu Inscription, 1269 AD

Boodpuram Inscription 1271 AD

Irwin Inscription, 1271 AD

The Durgi Inscription of 1269 AD addresses Rudrama Devi as a King Designate till 1269 AD, but some inscriptions proclaimed her as the ruler, ruling independently even when her father was alive. These include:

Bandaramehswar Palli Inscription of 1264 AD

Alugadapa Inscription, 1265 AD

Peddamunagala Inscription, 1267 AD

Bollepalli Inscription, 1267 AD

Burugadda Inscription, 1268 AD

Atluru Inscription, 1268 AD

Manukota Inscription, 1268 AD

In the first two to three years of conjoint rule with her father, the kingdom was thrown into confusion

and disorder due to the invasion by Jatavarma Sundara Pandya I and the disastrous defeat of the Kakatiyas along with their allies on the battlefield of Muttukur near Nellore. Though Ganapati was ultimately successful in turning back the tide of invasion, yet, he not only suffered loss of territory and prestige but his hold over feudatories and nobles was shaken. Under these circumstances, he retired from active politics.

Though Rudrama Devi assumed full sovereignty in 1262-63 AD, she was not the crowned queen till the year 1269 AD. Kayastha chief Jannigadeva's Duggi (Palnad Taluk) record speaks of Rudrama as Pattodhriti (queen-designate) of Ganapatideva Maharaja. It was only after the death of her father, around the year 1269 AD, that she celebrated her coronation.

Internal Revolts

Rudrama Devi's nomination and succession to the throne was not generally approved. Some of the nobles, who were unwilling to submit to a woman's authority took up arms against her. Ekambranatha's 'Pratapacharitra', refers to her step-brothers, Hariharadeva and Murarideva ousting Rudrama, and capturing Warangal. It is said that Rudrama effectively tackled them with the help of citizens and some of her powerful supporters.

These two brothers from the royal family plotted to oust Rudrama from the throne, by joining hands with enemies. When Rudrama was on a visit to a temple at a place called Mogalicharla, along with her daughter, they attacked the fort and tried to occupy it by force. This was thwarted by her trusted lieutenants and people who rose to give them a crushing defeat. Among them were Recherla Prasaditya, Kannardevudu, Kayastha Jannigadeva, Viriyala Suranna, Rudra Nayaka and Nissankamalikarjun. They helped Rudrama in crushing the revolt and unanimously strengthened Rudrama's reign, thus earning her the title of *Kakati Rajya Sampratishtanacharyulu*, which means 'Establishers of the Great Kingdom of Kakatiya.'

However, no other evidence is available to prove the existence of her step-brothers. Even if it is believed that some intransigent nobles and near relations rebelled against Rudrama's authority, the Kayastha chief Jannigadeva and his younger brothers, Tripurari and Ambadeva, Recherla Prasaditya and Reddi chiefs such as Gona Ganna Reddy and a host of others remained firmly loyal to the queen, espoused her cause and helped her defeat the rebels.

With regard to external dangers, Kalinga King Narasimha I who had previously suffered a defeat at

the hands of Ganapatideva, took advantage of chaotic conditions in the Kakatiya kingdom and marched with his forces into the Godavari delta to recover his lost possessions. His short and incomplete inscription at Draksharama, dated 1262 AD, testifies the same. The minor Chalukyan families and Haihaya chiefs who were ruling the erstwhile Vengi territories during this period, did not recognise any overlord. Whether they were actually independent or nominally autonomous princes (because of Virabhadra's relationship), is not certain. But it is a fact that we do not find any trace of Kakatiya rule either in the Godavari valley or in Vengi until 1278-79 AD. In the later part of the reign of Rudrama Devi, the above provinces came back under her rule. Her able commanders Poti Nayaka and Proli Nayaka fought fiercely against Kalinga Vira Bhanudeva I, son and successor of Narasimha I, and his accomplices Arjuna Deva, the Matsya chief of Oddadi and others, inflicting a crushing defeat on them. They even assumed the title of *Thangasimha*, which means 'A Lion to the Strutting Elephant,' and *Oddiyarayamanamardana*, meaning the 'Destroyer of the Pride of Oddiyaraya.' Kakatiya power was thus re-established in the coastal Andhra country.

In the south, after the victory of Muttukur, a large part of the Kakatiya territory, was under the sway of the

Pandyas. As a subordinate of the Pandyan monarch, the last Chalukya-Chola ruler Rajendra III, ruled Nellore and its dependencies. Even the eastern part of the Cuddapah district and Chittore district were under the Pandyan rule. Kalukada chiefs Kesavadeva and his brother Somideva, encouraged by the Pandyas, proclaimed their independence and even made successful inroads (1267-69 AD) into the Kayastha territory which remained under the formers at least for some time.

Battle with King Mahadeva

Rudrama Devi faced the most serious danger from the west. It threatened to overthrow the Kakatiya monarch. The Seuna ruler Mahadeva, who succeeded to the throne of Devagin in 1260 AD., invaded the Kakatiya kingdom in the early years of his rule.

When Rudrama ascended the throne, the northern parts of Telangana were under control of the Yadava kings. At a time when she had just consolidated her position, the capital of Warangal was threatened by the invasion of Mahadeva. His inscriptions state that he had captured the Telinga ruler and also his elephants. The work *Vrata-Khanda* by Hemadri, credited Mahadeva with the title of *Telingarayasirah-Kamala-Mulothpathana* which meant 'One who had cut off the Head of the Telinga

Ruler.’ In fact this title was actually held by Jaitugi, who had slain Rudra in 1196 AD and was probably taken on by Mahadeva as hereditary. But it is a reality that the Kakatiya kingdom was invaded by Mahadeva.

According to ‘Pratapacharitra’ of the seventeenth century, written by Ekambranatha, Mahadeva invaded the kingdom of the Kakatiyas and took control of Warangal, its capital. It is said that Rani Rudrama put up a very stiff resistance and fought with him for fifteen long days, during which, she destroyed three lakhs of the Seuna cavalry and chased him up to the walls of the fort of Devagiri. The Bidar fort inscription bears testimony of Rudrama’s victory over Mahadeva. It gives a lengthy description of the Kakatiya kings, starting from Rudra and includes Mahadeva, Ganapatideva and Rudrama. Bhairava, the queen’s subordinate from the Sinda family, who accompanied her in all the expeditions as commander of the army, also finds mention in the end. It is said that she handed over the above kingdom to be ruled by Bhairava. This fragmentary inscription found in the southern part of the Yadava kingdom, where no other Kakatiya inscription or record has been found so far, is ample proof of Rudrama’s successful attack on the Yadava kingdom, culminating in the annexation of Bidar fort along with its surrounding areas to the Kakatiya

kingdom. Rani Rudrama remains the only ruler from the Kakatiya dynasty, to have taken control of parts of the Yadava kingdom, establishing her supremacy in the southern region. On the other hand, it is said that Mahadeva begged for clemency and offered to pay a large amount of money as well as horses as a sign of truce.

The epigraphic evidence from Panugal (Nalgonda district) and Hire-Kogilun bears testimony to this. A hoard of Seuna coins discovered at Rachapatnam (Kaikalur Taluk of the Krishna District) probably 'represent a part of the money which Rudrama, according to Pratapacharitam, received from Mahadeva as war indemnity and distributed among the officers of her army.' Unwilling to put Mahadeva's defeat on record, court poet Hemadri disguised it by saying that his king Mahadeva left Rudrama free because he was reluctant to kill a woman.

Some chiefs like Sarangapani and others who differed with Mahadeva, sought refuge in the Andhra country and enjoyed privileges by the grace of queen Rudrama. It is evident from the Alapadu grant of Yellanadeva, a Yadava prince, that some members of the royal family migrated from their own country, took protection of the ruler of Telugu country and settled

here. Yellanadeva, states in his grant that he belonged to the lineage of Bhillana and Jaitugi and was married to a daughter of Rani Rudrama, the Kakatiya queen.

Rudrama's *Raya-Gaja-Kesari* Title

After having proven herself to be a worthy daughter of a worthy father, Rudrama took on the title of *Raya-Gaja-Kesari* (Lion to the Elephant-like (enemy) Kings) which had earlier adorned her father. As a mark of her victory, a beautiful *Rangamantapa* was built in the Swayambhu Deva temple, which can still be seen from the ruins in the fort today.

After the victory, she also issued coins and measures, bearing the same title. This was again immortalised in sculpture, at various places by presenting her as a warrior riding a lion and standing on an elephant. The carved sculpture depicts the queen as a warrior mounted on a lion, holding a dagger and a shield in two hands. The elephant is represented by a trunk holding a lotus facing upwards below the lion. This can be seen on the brackets of the broken pillars of the *Rangamantapa* of Swayambhu Deva Temple. Very significantly one observes that this motif is absent in the temples at Anumakonda, Paalampeta, Naagula Paadu, Pillala Marri and several other constructions pertaining to the

reign of earlier Kakatiya rulers. Thus, scholars are of the definite opinion that this represents Rudrama Devi with the title *Raya Gaja Kesari*, which we find in the Bidar inscription.

Situation in the south became still worse for the Kakatiyas. As already seen, after the Muttukur conflict, the Nellore kingdom came under sway of the Pandyas and was placed under their vassals. As the Pandyan inscriptions at Nandalur and Tirupati indicate, even the Vallum Kayastha kingdom came into possession of the Pandyas, where their subordinates, the Kalukada Vaidumba chiefs were in charge. Though the Kakatiya vassal Mahamandalesvara Nagadeva Maharaja conquered Nellore and the surrounding territory, it was a temporary phenomenon which lasted just for five years (1271-75 AD). The area was reoccupied by the Telugu Cholas who paid allegiance to the Pandyas.

Last Battle with the Kayastha ruler Ambadeva

The Kayastha clan had always been loyal subordinates of the Kakatiya rulers. During the early part of the reign of Rudrama, Janniga Deva who was the Kayastha chief, put an end to the rule of Pandyas. This is evident from the Nandaluru inscription of 1264 AD. His brother Tripurantaka or Tripurari succeeded him and ruled for

three years from 1270 to 1272 AD. Like Janniga Deva, he continued to be a subordinate of the Kakatiya queen. Ambadeva, his brother who succeeded him, was a rebel right from the outset. He visualised an independent principality for himself. Besides, his extremely defiant attitude is evident from his being always at war with his neighbours and also in his reluctance and failure to mention the queen as his overlord in all records.

Ambadeva's Tripurantakam inscription of 1290 AD, stands as an account of all his victories over many of the Mandalikas who were subordinates of the Kakatiya queen Rani Rudrama. The same record tells us about the rulers of Pandyas and Yadavas with whom he had not only fostered and established a friendly alliance but also received rewards in the way of jewels, and titles along with horses and elephants. Some of the titles he received deserve special mention. *Pandya Rajanya Priyapeshitha Chanda Vethaanda Thuranga Sartha Veerajamana Samposhitha Souhardha*, which means, 'He whose Friendship is Nourished by the Elephants and Horses Sent by Pandya Kings,' was one of them. The other title was *Devagiriraja Prasthapitha Prabhritha Mani Kanakabhushana*, which means 'He who is Adorned with Ornaments of Gold and Precious Stones which were Sent as Gifts by the Devagiri King.'

To establish his might and supremacy, Ambadeva vanquished several subordinate kings. Among the rulers who were defeated by him are Chief Sripathi Ganapathi who bore the title *Raja Sahasra Malla* according to the Tripurantakam inscription. Ambadeva's 'Neela Gangavaram' inscription identifies him as Gurindala Ganapati who was defeated by Ambadeva. At that time Ganapathi was ruling Gurindala of Gurijala in the Guntur District as a subordinate of Rudradeva Maharaja or Queen Rudrama. Ambadeva defeated him in 1273 AD and seized all his possessions including his title. In the course of this conflict, Ambadeva is set to have been at war and fought with seventy- five subordinate Nayakas whose heads he is supposed to have cut off in battle.

He next vanquished chiefs Kesavadeva and Somideva of Kalukada with their ally, Allu Ganga, the Telugu Chola ruler of Gutti. He got back the whole of Kayastha country along with its capital Valluru-pattana. This had been in possession of the Pandyas since 1263 AD. Next he killed Manumalli Deva of Eruva region. He not only annexed his territory but also the neighbouring region on account of the marriage between his daughter and Pendekallu's chief Bollaiah's son Rajanna. Ambadeva put down all the kings whom the queen might have sent

to check his advance. The Attirala inscription dated 1287 AD states that he ruled from his capital Valluru-pattana over all the regions which extended as far as Jagatapi Gutti in Anantapur district.

Ambadeva extended his sway up to Nellore with the death of Ganda Gopala around 1279 AD. Ambadeva continued to put down many others like Kopperunjinga, an ally of the Kakatiya queen, who was guarding the kingdom of Nellore and reinstated Manumaganda Gopala on the throne of Nellore before 1282 AD, according to the Kodavalur inscription, 1284 AD. Thus we see that Rudrama Devi had lost authority in the south, beyond the Krishna river, except for some parts temporarily. Later the Pandyas who made a fresh effort to regain their lost glory in the southern Andhra region in about 1282 or 1283 AD, marched into Pottapinadu under the leadership of Jata Verma Sundara Pandya, Mara Verma Sundara Pandya and Mara Verma Kulasekhara Pandya accompanied by Somideva and Keshavadeva. Ambadeva gathered all his forces and gave them a crushing defeat.

It is beyond doubt that Ambadeva became all powerful and an independent sovereign by 1290 AD.

One has to note at this point and take cognizance of the hitherto unknown fact brought out by the Chandupatla

inscription. We find information about the demise of Rani Rudrama Devi in the Chandupatla inscription found in Nalgonda District of Telangana State, dating back to 27th November, 1289 AD. Scholars have two opinions about the information given in this inscription. One, that she probably died on the same day. Second, she probably must have died twelve days earlier since it is a donation inscription. As according to Hindu customs donations are usually given on the 12th day of the person's demise. Here the donor, Puvvula Mummadi who gave the donation, must have been an officer of high rank and also a favourite, though he addressed himself as "bantu or servant" of Mallikarjuna, the commander-in-chief of Rani Rudrama. He probably addressed Mallikarjuna as father out of love and respect. This donation was an indefinite gift in the form of land grant to Chandupatla Somanatha Temple for the establishment of "Annadana Satram", a place where devotees were served food on all days throughout the year.

Mallikarjuna Nayaka was Rudrama Devi's military general is evident from the Panagallu inscription set up by his son Immadi Mallikarjuna Nayaka in 1290 AD, for the merit of Kumara Rudradeva Maharaja.

The record states that both the queen and her general died at the same time which may mean that they

might have been killed at the same time by an enemy in their military camp, though not on the battlefield. Rudrama Devi, must have been around eighty years of age during that time. It does not seem possible that she took part in a battle. But being a valiant lady she might have led the forces to inspire the soldiers, guarded by her army general Mallikarjuna. More details of this event are unknown and also no invasions from outside seem to have taken place during that period of time. Ambadeva's attack seems to be the only political disturbance in the kingdom. Despite old age, Rudrama must have led the armies against Ambadeva and met her final end along with her general Mallikarjuna Nayaka.

The Tripurantakam inscription indicates the probable course of events. The boastful praise of Ambadeva in the lines *Sarvan Andhra - Mahatpatna rana - mukhe jetha yasho labdhavan*, indicates that he had conquered all the kings in the Andhra region, including the queen. He is also said to have deprived general Mallikarjuna of his seven limbs which could even mean seven parts of the kingdom that is king, minister, friend, treasury, territory, force and forces. Ambadeva could not boast of killing the queen as it would bring discredit to a warrior like Ambadeva for killing an old woman. Thus we see

the great reign of Rudrama Devi ending with a rebellion in her own kingdom.

Policy and Rule of Governance

On observing records of the Kakatiya dynasty, we find an insight to the nature of relations maintained with subordinate kings over the years. It is evident that a decentralised type of administration was preferred, with limited interference and enforcements from the centre.

The Rulers were content being passive Maha Mandaleshwaras and refrained from exercising their imperial power. During the Kakatiya period, administrative officers like the *mandalikas* and their officers, village assemblies and subjects, all constituents of the kingdom, seem to have no clash with each other. Kakatiyas proved that this kind of rule, a novel method, was a success and it is implemented as the Federal system today. General administration was taken care of by officers at different levels who had their independence and powers to take decisions. At the same time they did not overstep the line of authority and remained answerable to those above them.

One of the most important points to be observed is that all activities that were taken up for welfare of

the people, not only by members of the royal family but also subordinate rulers, officers and people from different rungs of society, reflected the ideas, interests, perceptions and thrust of the Ruler. We observe this aspect in various charities, construction of temples, tanks, lakes, choultries and hospitals for health care taken up during those times. Moreover, we can say that they definitely revealed the agenda of the reigning ruler.

Unfortunately it was Ambadeva's revolt during the last days of Rudrama's reign that went against this policy. Though the Kakatiyas could sustain these revolts, it was also the continued, uncontrolled attacks of other rulers that weakened and brought down the great empire.

The main source of income was revenue earned through taxes levied. While inheriting this system from the Chalukyas, Kakatiya rulers refined the same by bringing in changes as needed and suited to their kingdom. Taxation was systematised into five categories; land taxes, industrial and property tax, professional tax, commercial tax and miscellaneous tax. Inscriptions like the Durgi inscription, 1269 AD, from the reign of Rudrama Devi and the Kocherla Kota record, 1310 AD of Devari Nayaka, the general of Prataparudra, discovered later, give indications to these revenue systems.

Military System and Nayamkara Arrangement

The art of warfare was inherent to the rule and success of the Kakatiya Dynasty. History associates and characterises Kakatiya rulers as skilful warriors on the battlefield. Their successful journey from mere subordinate chieftains, first of the Rashtrakutas and then the Chalukyas, to super powers of the Telangana region can be credited to these qualities. The dynasty attracted more enemies and opponents with growing success and power, which made it pertinent to build a strong, organised and efficient army. Gifted as warriors, the strength of cavalry and organisation made the Kakatiya army a formidable force.

The reign of Ganapatideva witnessed geographical expansion of the kingdom, which was done with the help of a very well organised army. Furthermore, the expansion meant placing army personnel to guard expanded boundaries of the kingdom. Thus, the army evolved into an organisation with aggressive as well as passive roles as attackers and defenders, growing and protecting the Kingdom. Rudrama Devi who had not yet, become the ruler, participated and significantly contributed in the organisation of the army. The father and daughter duo did their best to increase the number of cavalry soldiers, horses and elephants as well as foot

soldiers. Classified and headed by able commanders, the troops were trained and guided by the King himself. Able commander Jayappa who specialised in leading the elephant cavalry and had rightfully earned the title of *Gaja-Sahini* is one such shining example.

Once Rudrama Devi took over the reins of control, she introduced the Nayamkara system of military administration. The fort was provided with 75 bastions which were properly organised, with the security of each bastion being delegated to a Nayaka in the service of the Ruler. The system enforced that the King assign villages in lieu of salary to the Nayakas and also for maintenance of the army, which the King ordered for, as and when needed. A similar responsibility was assigned to subordinate chieftains known as Samanthas. The cavalry of the ones who were given this responsibility depended upon their financial status as well as levels of prosperity. In addition to supplying an army to the king, they had to pay regular tributes. In this way the King could keep a check on the strength and stability of these forces, thereby assessing his own army's collective strength.

Besides the army maintained by Nayakas, the Ruler, independent of the Nayakas, maintained large units of different troops, which consisted of chariots, elephants,

cavalry and foot soldiers with the help of carefully selected commanders. This army existed since before the Nayamkara system came into existence and hence continued, independent of this system of military administration. Started from Ganapatideva's reign, record has it that the Kakatiyan Central Army consisted of 100 elephants, 20,000 horses and 9 lakh foot soldiers by the time it was Pratapa Rudra's rule. Commanders of these units were called Gaja Sahani, Ashwa Sahani and Senadipathi respectively. Wherever necessary, the king recruited skilled commanders from as far as the northern parts of India, to maintain excellence of the army.

Officers under Rudrama's Rule

There were several important officers who immensely contributed to the greatness of Rudrama's rule and helped her in smooth governance of the kingdom in addition to providing the right support and strength during battles. Among them, there were some who were valiant and stood like rocks by her side, well-versed in politics, valour, law and justice, and some who were scholars, poets and confidantes.

1. Mahamantri Shivadevayya: Shivadevayya was instrumental in Rudrama ascending the throne. He was the key person who convinced and encouraged

Rudrama's father Ganapatideva to take the decision of choosing her as his successor to the throne. Furthermore, he was Rudrama's teacher and guide and moulded her into an accomplished warrior and an able administrator. He guarded her like a hawk at every step, protecting her from troubles coming from unexpected quarters. Shivadevayya remained a minister for three decades, serving the Kakatiya rulers, who in return gave him the respect due to a Guru and guide.

2. Janniga Deva Sahini: He belonged to the Kayastha family which had for years served and supported the Kakatiya rulers. He was the commander-in-chief of Rudrama Devi's army and was one among the inner circle of Rudrama's officers. Janniga Deva Sahini was the nephew of Gangaya Sahini, the founder of the kayastha clan. He was the officer in-charge of Gandikota. For enemies and for traitors he was like Lord Yama - the god of death himself. Janniga Deva fought for the welfare of the kingdom till his last breath. He was a disciple of Shiva Devayya and embraced the Veera Shaiva cult. Besides, he served Rudrama Devi till 1270 AD.
3. Tripurantaka Devudu: He was the brother of Janniga Deva and was the chief of commanders in Rudrama's army. In addition, he had control

over several places with Duvvuru and later Valluru as his capital. He put down the revolt of Siddaiah Deva Chodudu and Kulothunga Chodudu who turned traitors in the early days after Rudrama's coronation. Besides, he was a Veera Shaiva who made several land grants.

4. Amba Devudu: He was also a brother of Janniga Deva Saahini. A great warrior and able administrator who was adorned with the title of *raya-sahasra-malla*.¹ His capital was Gandikota Manoratha Puram. He was a disciple of Aghora Sivacharya. For some time he remained a loyal subordinate and helped in defeating the enemy. But with growing confidence in his own might and strength, Amba Devudu declared himself independent. He became the first kayastha ruler to reject the supremacy of the Kakatiya ruler while attacking and defeating many of the subordinate kings in the southern part of the kingdom. Above all, he became the cause of Rudrama's death in 1289 AD.
5. Prasaditya Naidu: He was the right hand man of the Kakatiyas, from the very beginning and belonged to the Recherla clan. A trusted servant of Rudrama, he

1 Raya-sahasra-malla: Champion over a thousand kings

exhibited strength, valour and love for his motherland in the early days of her reign itself. He saved the fort from attacks and stood by Rudrama in times of crisis and very rightly received the title *Kakatiya-Rajya-Prathistapan-Acharya*. His son Rudra Senani followed in his foot steps.

6. Induluri Annaya: He belonged to the Induluri clan. They acted as ministers and officers in-charge of law and justice during the reign of the Kakatiyas. As their subordinate he ruled over the region between Orugallu and Simhachalam. Besides, he was married to Rudrama Devi's daughter Ruyyamma.
7. Kumara Ganapathi Devudu: He was one of the chief men amongst Rudrama Devi's subordinate rulers. He was one of the prominent warriors along with Induluri Gangaiah and Janniga Deva as they went to fight with the Pandyas. In addition, he was adorned with the title "Raya-Sahasra-Mala". Later he was defeated by Ambadeva.
8. Malyala Gundaiah: Son of Baacha Senapatii, he was one of Rudrama Devi's trusted officers; well-versed in elephant warfare and also an expert in the use of various other weapons. Moreover, he was adorned with several titles.

9. Saagi Nagadeva Maharaja: Son of Sagimalla Sainya Vibhudu of the Durjaya clan, he took over Vikrama Simha Puram and made it his capital from 1271 AD to 1275 AD, after forcing its ruler Veera Rajendra Chola to flee. Moreover, he was married to Mechanayaka's daughter Mallamaamba.
10. Gona Ganna Reddy – Vittala Senadhipathi: Both of them were responsible for victory over the Raichur fort in the later phase of Rudrama Devi's reign. This happened to be Rudrama's last triumph.
11. Padikam Bhashpa Devudu: He was a confidante and trusted commander in chief of Rudrama Devi. In addition, he belonged to the eastern Chalukyan Family and was closely related to the Kakatiyas.

Apart from all these subordinate kings, commanders in chief and other officers, there were others like Yekki Naidu, Pina Rudri Naidu, Pothi Naidu, Vallaiiah Naidu and Parvata Naidu who served as Rudrama's body guards. They served the ruler and were ready to give up their life for the protection of Rudrama. Thus we see that Rudrama Devi was assisted by several such brave and loyal officers who helped her rule the kingdom efficiently and successfully.

Rudrama Devi's Successor:

Pratapa Rudra, 1289–1323 AD

The last ruler of the Kakatiya dynasty was Prataparudra who succeeded his grandmother. He was the son of Mummadamma, Rani Rudrama's daughter. Adopted by his grandmother Rudrama Devi, he was moulded and shaped into a ruler that she wanted him to be. Prataparudra was known as Kumara Rudradeva even after ascending the throne, which leads to the belief that Rudrama was alive until 1295 AD. During his growing up days, Prataparudra was closely associated with all military endeavours and in the running of the government. Hence, the subordinate officers and enemies of the Kingdom did not question or rebel against the succession of Prataparudra to the throne. It is said that he was married to Visalakshi and had a son by the name Veerabhadra. There is also mention of a second queen by the name Lakshmadevi in an inscription found in Yelgedu, Karimnagar District.

As a King, Prataparudra treaded the same path as his grandmother Rudrama Devi, of keeping the kingdom united as well as extending and consolidating its boundaries. His immediate attention was to defeat and subjugate Ambadeva, for which he concentrated on strengthening and re-energising his army. The Nayakas

of the empire were given orders to proceed against Ambadeva. Sensing this threat, Ambadeva tried to step up his defences by joining hands with Yadavas in the North and Pandayas in the South. In spite of this, Prataparudra gave a crushing defeat to the kayastha king Ambadeva who was the main cause of the death of Rani Rudrama. Thereafter, Ambadeva was forced to retire from the Tripurantakam region. However, his son and successor Tripurari II continued in the same vein, exercising independent authority over Mulkinadu. This is evident from the absence of inscriptions and also omission of the Kakatiya name as overlords in that area. Once again, Prataparudra sent an army under the leadership of his general Maharaya-patta Sahini, Somaya Nayaka and Induluri Annaya, who thoroughly defeated the kayasthas and reclaimed Mulkinadu, annexing it to the Kakatiya Kingdom and entrusting it to Nayaka Somaya.

Prataparudra's reign faced aggression from invaders time and again. The Khiljis from Delhi were one such example. Many a time, Prataparudra had to make peace treaties, paying large sums of money, jewels, horses and elephants in the process. This, weakened the kingdom as a result of which outline provinces began to declare their independence. The declaration of independence by Pagidigiddaraju and his wife Sammakka, the tribal

subordinate rulers, took away a large portion of the empire, further weakening it. In those days India was under attack by several invaders in different parts of the country. Events in Delhi moved quickly, fuelled by greed and treason amongst invading parties. Once Ghiyas-ud- din Tughlaq, ascended the throne in Delhi, he declared himself the Sultan. Within three years of rule, he sent his eldest son Ulugh Khan on an expedition to conquer and annex Telangana. A probable cause for such an expedition was Prataparudra's infrequent payment of tribute to the Sultan in Delhi. Stiff resistance by Prataparudra's army resulted in a six month long siege at the Warangal Fort. However, due to rumours of the Sultan's death in Delhi, the enemy army retracted. Prataparudra celebrated this victory by hosting a feast, giving away stored grain and advising his subjects to concentrate on agriculture instead of military activities. He presumed that Ulugh Khan would never return. However within four months, Ulugh Khan returned with a stronger and more adamant army, when the fort was without garrison and other provisions to withstand the attack. Prataparudra put up a brave fight but was taken captive, ultimately having to surrender. The threat of keeping Prataparudra in the kingdom was real, hence Ulugh Khan decided to take him prisoner

in Delhi. According to the Vilasa grant of Musunuri Prolaya Nayaka dated 1330 AD, Prataparudra died on the banks of river Narmada en route Delhi. Besides, according to Kaluvacheru Grant of the Reddi Queen Anitalli, dated 1423 AD, it is stated that Prataparudra died of his own desire. This probably meant that he was a proud monarch who preferred death to the dishonour of captivity. With the defeat and death of Prataparudra the Kakatiya rule came to an end.



3

RANI RUDRAMA DEVI'S PERSONA

Rani Rudrama Devi was undoubtedly one of the greatest rulers of southern India. She took an active part in all aspects of governance and administration of the kingdom. Her male attire in which she attended the royal court and adorned the throne, inspired awe and respect in all those who were present there. Furthermore, she gave interviews to visitors and foreigners, and diligently heard reports of the secret service to take corrective measures. Rudrama Devi constantly held consultations with her ministers, generals and other officers of state to update them and advice them as to how they should act to promote the best interests of the state. Besides, she never stepped back or hesitated in leading her troops and going to the battlefield. No doubt, Rudrama was eulogised in the writings of many a poet and writer

as a valiant and courageous fighter endowed with the incomparable abilities of a general leading her men into battle.

She has been immortalised in a prayer song of the Telugu region, 'Mā telugu talliki mallepūdandā'² composed by Sri Sankarambodhi Sundarachari for the Telugu film 'Deena Bandhu' in 1942. This song is sung at the beginning of every important occasion and function to pay obeisance and homage to all those who have contributed to the greatness of Telugu land. Moreover, one takes great pride in saying that Rudrama, finds a prominent place amongst such greats. During her reign, one finds emergence of the Reddy chief of Gona Family and the Velama chiefs. In addition, one notices the appearance of Velama chief Prasaditya for the first time during Rudrama's reign.

Amongst her feudatories, the most powerful were the kayastha rulers, holding sway over the south western region of the Kakatiya kingdom. They were extremely loyal, helped the ruler in suppressing the enemy and greatly contributed in consolidating the position of Rudrama on the throne. Ambadeva, who was adorned

2 Ma Telugu Talliki: 'To my mother of Telugu,' the official song of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

with the title “Raya-Sthapanacharya”, as mentioned in some of the inscriptions, probably refers to his loyalty and allegiance to the crown till the time he asserted his independence. The reasons behind this change of heart remains unknown. One observes that Kshatriya families of the Vengi region did not accept supremacy of the Kakatiya queen, which is substantiated by the absence of any records pertaining to Kakatiya rule between 1262 and 1278 AD in the Vengi region. It strengthens the belief of Rudrama's loss of control over this region during that period. Among the vassals of Rudrama Devi, Sarangapani Deva, son of king Singhana of Devagiri, was the most important, along with Raanaka, Gopadeva Raja as mentioned in the Gundlapadu inscription of Palnad Taluk in the Guntur district, dated 1273 AD.

According to the Bidar inscription subordinate king Bhairava who was the son of Maila of Sinca lineage, is said to have assisted the queen by securing victories in all her military enterprises over Vengi, Dravida and other places. Several others continued to be hereditary loyal samantas³ and rendered invaluable service by taking on the posts of commanders or Senadhipatis in Rudrama's army.

3 Samantas: big landlords or warrior chiefs

We can say that Rudrama Devi was undoubtedly one of the greatest rulers of Andhradesa. Being a woman, did not come in the way of her discharging the duties of an exalted ruler. She was a committed ruler who took an active part in governing the country and strove very hard to promote the best interests of the state. In spite of the wars which frequently disturbed the country, people in her kingdom remained content and happy under her rule. Rudrama strengthened the fort of Warangal still further, making it highly deterring for the enemy. She had a deep moat dug around the fort to fortify it to a greater extent. It is said that Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller who paid a visit to the kingdom probably a little later, wrote very highly of her as a ruler and administrator.

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4

PATRONAGE OF LITERATURE ART ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURE

Kakatiya rule has been very rightly called the Golden Age of the Telugu People. There was an abundance of charitable activity, religious practice, music, dance, art, architecture, sculpture, literature and so on. Kakatiya Kings were very popular on account of their humane approach towards subjects, harmonious administration and benevolence. The rich ambience reflected during their rule, can be discerned and understood from the following inscriptions found in the famous Thousand Pillar Temple or the *Veyi Sthambhala Gudi* at Warangal, as it is called:

*'Tasy aste Numakonda naama nagari Sri rajadhan iva
yaatr odyat-sat
Akhamda-khamdapasu-vyajirimbhan-ojjirimbhita |*

*Kamdarppayasa pru iva sa ratimati sringara-bhava-
anvita Mahendriva cha
Jishnu Vishnu sahita Rambha vilasa-or-jitta | | '*

This means that the city of Anumakonda which was like the capital of the Goddess of Wealth, was raised to a great state by the rising of the excellent and bountiful divine grace of Lord Shiva who lived there. It was enchantingly delightful like the city of Kamadeva, the God of Love and looked as if Mahendri was possessed of temples of Jishnu and Vishnu, beautifully decorated with plantain trees, along with the amorous play of the celestial dancer Rambha.

There was a lot of overlapping and addition in terms of building and constructions of forts, temples and so on and so forth. To understand these aspects taken up during the Kakatiya period one has to collectively look at everything that had been done during the reign of every Kakatiya ruler, comprehensively. One must understand that work taken up during the rule of one King continued, enhanced and sometimes finished during the reign of another ruler, like the case of Ganapatideva and Rani Rudrama Devi.

Prataparudra himself who was moulded and trained by Rudrama to be a great ruler, took all aspects of art,

architecture and military administration to greater heights of excellence.

Literature

Sanskrit occupied a very important place during the Kakatiya period and rulers greatly contributed to the advancement of Sanskrit literature in the Telugu country. This is testified by numerous records maintained by the Kings as well as their subordinates, which refer to institutions imparting education and also men of letters. Once again, the Malkapuram inscription dated 1261 AD, gives us information of, 'Vidya Mandapa,' an educational institution of that period.

Vishweshwara Sivacharya, the Rajguru of Ganapatideva and Rudrama Devi, received Mandara Village where he established a new colony under the name of 'Vishweshwara Golaki'. He founded a Sanskrit college and a Saiva Matha in this village where other than prescribed courses, the Vedas were also taught. Similar Vidya Mandapas are stated to have existed at Srisailam and Pushpagiri. From this, we understand that there were regular colleges and institutions imparting Sanskrit education, which were patronised by the Kings and their dependents.

We find several inscriptions composed in ornate Sanskrit verse, for example, Rudradeva's Thousand Pillar Temple inscription, which is compared to a mini *kaavya* in Sanskrit. This was composed by Achintendra, a disciple of Advayttmrita-yati. The Velpuru and Amaravathi inscriptions also display very complicated and difficult compositions of the Sanskrit language.

Poet Vidyanatha who wrote the well known work on Alankara, called 'Prataparudriya' or 'Prataparudra-Yashobhushana', deserves first mention amongst the authors of books in Sanskrit language. He was the court poet of King Prataparudra. Another poet and scholar of the Kakatiya court was Sakalyamalla, who was credited with two works, namely Udhatta-Raghava-Kavya and the Niroshthya Ramayana. Vidyanatha's Prataparudriya is the most popular of the above-mentioned works and is referred to as a standard work on Alankara even today. Gandayya Bhatta was another important poet of Prataparudra's court, who was also an officer looking after the Brahmanas. He authored a commentary on 'Khandana-khanda-khadya,' an important treatise on the Vedanta, composed by Sri Harsha. Among other poets mentioned in the Kakatiya inscriptions, Devanabhatta, Nandimitra, Balabharati and Kavi Chakravarthy are worth mentioning.

Amongst other sciences, the grammatical work of Kolani Rudradeva, the famous general of Rudrama Devi and Prataparudra, is worth mentioning.

Along with Sanskrit we notice that several inscriptions were written in Telugu. Chebrolu inscription of the Guntur District, mentions Bheemayya Panda as a poet capable of writing both in the *marga* (Sanskrit tradition) as well as *desi* (Indigenous Telugu literary) styles. The Upparapalli inscription by Kata Nayaka, the general of Kakatiya Ganapati and son of Raja Nayaka, is in ornate *kavya* style, comprising Telugu prose and poetry.

Among all works of Telugu literature during the Kakatiya period, Tikkanna's 'Andhra Mahabharatham' deserves a special and first mention. This particular poet is adorned with the title of Kavi-Brahma, the Poet Creator. Moreover, the work is generally believed to be a translation of Vyasa's Mahabharata. However, several critics opine that it is a poem far superior, both in beauty and artistic quality, than being a mere translation of the Sanskrit epic. The work reflects usage of simple and homely Telugu words, which is its distinctive feature, avoiding frequent use of long and difficult Sanskrit compounds.

More than one Ramayana was composed in Telugu, during the Kakatiya period. *Nirvachanothara Ramayana*

and the *Uttara-kanda* of Ramayana by Tikkana Somayaji, rank high on the list. Though succeeding centuries have seen many a version of Ramayana being written, it is Bhaskara Ramayana, initially written by Mantri Bhaskara, which later received contributions from multiple non-contemporary authors like Hujakki Bhaskara, Mallikarjuna Bhatta, Kumara Rudradeva and Ayyalarya, which is believed to be the best amongst all, for its artistic excellence and literary perfection.

Amongst other classics written and composed in Telugu during this period are '*Ranganatha-Ramayana*' by Ranganatha or a certain Buddaraja, and *Markandeya Purana* by Marana who was a disciple of Tikkana Somayaji. Amongst the Kavyas we have *Kumarasambhava* by Nannechoda, written in the early Kakatiya period, *Andhra Dasakumara Charitra* by Ketana, *Keyurabahu Charitra* written by Manchana, which is a translation of Rajashekara's drama into Telugu, and the *Vithasalabhanjika* which had additions of several other stories from *Panchathantra* and other works.

There were several books on Rajneethi or policy which were authored in Telugu during the Kakatiya period. *Neeti sara* is said to have been written by Kakati Rudra while others opine it was written by Prataparudra. *Purusarthisara* was written by Shiva Devaiah, the

Rajaguru of Prataparudra. *Neethi Shastra Muktavali* and *Sumati Satakam* were written by Baddena, a Telugu Choda chief.

Telugu literature based on *Shaivism* can be found in abundance during the Kakatiya period. Palkurki Somanatha's *Panditaradhya Charitra* and *Basava Purana* were two important works of Shaiva literature, which dominated this period. The basic tenets of Veera Shaivism preached by Basava are found in these two books. These compositions also throw a flood of light on the religious practices, as well as social conditions of the Kakatiya reign.

Nritta Ratnavali

Nritta Ratnavalli was a text on dance authored by Jayappa, the commander-in-chief of the elephant army. The tenets laid down in the book found expression in performing artists and *devadasis* associated with the temples. Author Jayappa was the brother of Naramma and Peramma who married Ganapatideva after he defeated their father Pinna Choda. Ganapatideva was a father figure and mentor to Jayappa who was trained and tutored under Ganapatideva's able guidance and supervision. Ganapatideva was smitten by the multifaceted talents of young Jayappa and he made him learn all the intricacies

of various art forms from one Gundannamatya of the Royal Court. Soon young Jayappa grew up into a young man, well versed not only in the art of war fare but also music and dance. In the year 1253-1254 AD, on the word of the King, Jayappa began to work on his *magnum opus*, *Nritta Ratnavalli*. It became a *lakshana grantha*, a treatise for further researchers in the field of dance during later times. He also authored books called *Geeta Ratnavali* and *Vadya Ratnavali* which are unavailable today. Unfortunately this reflects the lack of seriousness in protecting and preserving our heritage and culture.

Nritta Ratnavalli, runs into eight chapters and explains in detail, the science of body movements, hand gestures and expressions. Furthermore, Jayappa describes at length, the features and requirements of a dancer, singer, the orchestra, the chief guest and also the audience. The text is of immense value to all those interested in the art of dance, as it throws light not only on the *marga* form (pan-Indian classical dance) but also the *desi* or folk dance forms, prevalent and popular during that period. Perini, Penkhana, Rasakam, Dandalaasakam, Charchari, Chindu, Kanduka Nritham, Bhandika Nritham, Ghatti Saani Nritham, Charana Nritham, Bhahuroopa Nritham and Kolaata Nritham are a few of the *desi* forms. These dance forms included dancing with

sticks, hand knives, musical balls, acrobatic feats, with the performer balancing on a rope etc. One need not be surprised to see many of them prevalent and alive even today, though probably in a different presentational format.

Perini, was the most popular amongst the *desi* art forms put forth in the *Nritta Ratnavali*; this vibrant masculine art form was witnessed both in temples and battle fields. With their vibrant performances, Perini performers inspired and energised the soldiers before going to battle, both physically and mentally, into giving their best. Perini which had slowly disappeared after the Kakatiyas was once again brought to life by the renowned dance Guru, late Padmasree Dr Nataraja Ramakrishna, who was deeply inspired by the enchanting sculptures found in the famous Ramappa Temple in Warangal. The reading of the text of *Nritta Ratnavali*, reveals how cultured and trained people were in those days. In addition, it helps us understand the value and position enjoyed by these art forms.

The Chebrolu inscription of Jayappa, very clearly mentions the gift of *devadasis* for temple services, building of living quarters for their accommodation and also the grant of land for the maintenance and upkeep of the temple.

Architecture

Warangal Fort

It is said that Rudra who succeeded Prola II found it necessary to have a strong fort built to defend Kakatiya kingdom from enemy attacks. He started the process of fortification around the Swayambhu Temple which was later taken up and completed by Ganapatideva.

When Rudrama took over as the ruler, she undertook several measures for the welfare of the people. Most importantly, she further fortified the fort, by raising the fort wall to deter the enemies from attacking it. The defence of the walled city was very well augmented during Rani Rudrama's reign.

The fort was an architectural marvel with three circular rampart walls. The first was an outer mud wall about ten feet in height surrounding the villages. The second was another huge mud wall, around twenty feet in height, built outside Orugallu. This was surrounded by a deep moat filled with water, which made it impossible for the enemy to gain access to the fort. The third built of stone was called the Kanchu Kota that is the bronze fort. This had a similar moat, probably deeper than the outer one, running around it. Unfortunately, only ruins remain as a proof of this marvellous architectural structure today. It is believed that as soon as Rudrama Devi ascended

the throne she took the decision of further fortifying and strengthening the fort and issued orders to her officers to the same effect.

Infrastructure was said to be highly evolved in those days. The roads were very wide and neat, with trees adorning both the sides. At every intersection one found small gardens with water fountains, adding to the aesthetic beauty of the town plan.

Swayambhu Shiva Temple

Rani Rudrama encouraged the construction of temples and arches and built a Ranga Mandapam at the Swayambhu Temple.

Like many other influences, the Kakatiyas inherited the Chalukya style of architecture as well. However, the Kakatiya style of architecture displays more of indigenous art than keeping in line with tenets laid down in the texts of Vastu and Shilpa. Granite and sandstone, which were locally available, were largely used for the construction of temples upto the Vimana. Its super structure was built in brick and lime. The Kondaparthi inscription of Ganapati's reign describes the architectural skill of the Kakatiya sculptor, '*prakaro jayati trikutam abhitas-tat tena nirma pitaaha ... samtakshya eva mahaytasim iva seelam yatnat samutta ritah.*' This

meant that the *prakara* (bounding wall) around the *trikuta* is all glorious, constructed by Kata, with black stones, closely joined and levelled uniformly so that the lines of the joints are not at all visible. It appears as if it has been sculpted out of a single stone and raised by stone masons with great effort.

Anumakonda or present day Hanumakonda remained the capital of the Kakatiyas till the rule of Mahadeva Maharaja. It was shifted to Orugallu, present day Warangal, during the reign of King Ganapatideva. An interesting legend is associated with laying of the foundation stone in the process of developing Orugallu or Eka Sila Nagara into a new city. Orugallu was also known as Omti Konda on account of a huge boulder like hill in the vicinity. On one of his cart journeys, Prola II chanced upon a miracle stone or Parsavedi, which had amazing properties of turning everything it came into contact with into gold. He got the place excavated and a Shivalinga with the same properties was discovered to the wonder and amazement of all those who were present there. In consultation with renowned priests, Prola II built a temple at the site and installed the excavated Shivalinga which came to be known as Swayambhu Shiva Temple and Swayambhu Deva respectively. It is said that he planned to develop the surrounding areas

into a city, with the temple in its centre. This became the family deity of the Kakatiyas.

The excavations at Orugallu in the Fort area have brought to light some structures of the Swayambhu Deva Temple, supposed to have been built by Ganapatideva. Large blocks of neatly chiselled masonry were used for building the Temple. The four gateways or *toranas* as they are called, which face four different directions, are the most striking features of this temple. When one carefully examines the entire construction, it gives rise to the probability that the temple was built in several stages. The eastern structure was the earliest, built by Ganapatideva. Whereas the Western Mandapa and gates seem to have been built later on, most likely by Rudrama Devi during her reign. The representation of the *Gaja-kesari* motif on pillar brackets is the main reason for such an assumption. The motif represents a Queen with the headdress of a lady warrior, holding a dagger and a shield in each hand. She is shown fighting, seated on a lion which is standing on the trunk of an elephant.

Such a sculpture is normally attributed to Goddess Durga in Hindu Mythology. Here, this motif definitely represents Rani Rudrama Devi who took on the title of *Raya-Gaja-Kesari* as noticed in her Bidar inscription and also found on coins pertaining to her reign. This

suggests that the Mandapa was constructed by the queen to commemorate her victory over the Seunas in the early part of her rule. The pillars in this Mandapa represent her by the *Raya-Gaja-Kesari* motif. Lending support to this view is the absence of such a motif in earlier temples. Similarly, we find another frieze with the same motif, where lions are shown mounted on elephants. On alternate figures of the frieze we find a boy lying on the back of a lion holding its uplifted tail while one of his legs is placed in the mouth of the animal. It probably represents the title *Daya-Gaja-Kesari* borne by Pratapa Rudra, carved when he was a young prince. From this it can be inferred that the Mandapa portion of the temple was built by Rudrama Devi in the latter half of the thirteenth century. Apart from these two *Gaja-Kesari* motifs the Kirthi-Mukha, Alasa-Kanya, Nandi and Hamsa were other popular ones. The motifs of a dancer in a scene of *Kolatam*, among other decorative sculptures, are worthy of mention. They represent the indigenous styles of dance as described by Jayappa in his *Nritta Ratnavali*, a book on dance. It is said that the workshop of eminent sculptors employed by the Kings, flourished in Orugallu in those days. Furthermore, it is mentioned that builders from various places of the kingdom came to this workshop to buy art pieces carved by them.

The Thousand Pillar Temple

The earliest monument of the Kakatiya structures of importance is the Trikuta at Anumakonda, which is popularly called *Veyyi Stambhala-Gudi* or The Thousand Pillar Temple. The monument was built in 1162 AD by Rudra to commemorate the proclamation of Sovereign power. The temple had two main parts: the Trikuta with the shrines of Rudreshwara, Vasudeva and Suryadeva deities, which form the main structure; and the Mandapa on its opposite side. We do not know whether the temple was left unfinished or was targeted by the vandalism of later invaders. It was probably destroyed by the Khilji or Tughlaq rulers during their invasion of south India. If the first reason is true, there is every possibility that the temple was originally built by Rudra Deva in 1163 AD and underwent some changes and modifications during the reign of Ganapatideva. The old rough structure was replaced by the present polished one during this time. An elaborate decoration of the pillars and doorways, near the main shrines, suggest that they were added on at a later date. Though there are thousand pillars in the complex of the temple, yet no pillar obstructs the vision of a person standing at any point of the temple from viewing the deity in the other temple. Unlike pillars that we see in temples constructed in other parts of India, the pillars of

the main temple are very tightly knit and form a wall, giving an impression of space and uniformity. The base of the temple is star shaped with shrines dedicated to Rudra (Shiva), Vasudeva (Vishnu) and Surya (Sun God). It is interesting to note that Brahma who is a member of the trinity of Gods is not the third deity. We find Nandi bull, the vehicle of Lord Shiva on the fourth side. Unlike many of the temples in India that face the East this temple faces the South, probably because the Kakatiyas were worshippers of Lord Shiva and wanted the early morning sunrays to fall directly on the idol.

Unlike the Ramappa Temple which we get to see in Warangal, adorned with a Vimana over the sanctum sanctorum, the roof of this temple is semi-flat. Behind Nandi, there existed a splendid structure, a hall of columns numbering three hundred, which was called the Kalyana Mandapam.

Legend has it that Rudra Deva born to Prola Raju II, was predicted to kill his very own father to rise as the next most powerful king. This prediction led to the abandonment of baby Rudra who was taken care of by the chief priest of the Swayambhu Temple. He was trained to be a warrior and was well taught. In one of his visits to the temple, Prola II was overcome with paternal love and approached Rudra with a hug. However,

mistaking him to be an enemy, Rudra stabbed him, causing severe injury. Prola called for his ministers and asked for Rudra to be crowned as his successor. Grieved by the sin of killing his own father, it is said that Rudra constructed this Thousand Pillar Temple in 1163 AD. It is believed that there is a tunnel between the fort and Rudreshwara Temple, which exists even today but is closed for the public.

Found on the slope of a hillock, this temple showcases not only the rich architectural legacy of the Kakatiyas but also the skill of stone sculpting in that period.

The Ramappa Temple at Palampet

The Ramappa Temple at Palampet, in the Mulug Taluk of Warangal district is situated 65 kilometers from Hanumakonda, by the side of the sprawling lake known as Ramappa Cheruvu. It was constructed by Recharla Durga, the famous General of Ganapatideva, in about 1213 AD. This information is provided in the inscription on the four faces of a polished column, within the *mandapa* in the north-eastern corner of the temple. The Ramappa Temple is considered to be the most beautiful amongst the multitude of medieval temples. Lord Shiva is the presiding deity in this temple. The Temple is not a Trikuta shrine but is known for its sculpture and

bracket figures that seem to spring from the outer pillars and appear to be supporting the roof projections. These twelve figures represent *Alasa-Kanyas*, the indolent damsels, including a *Nagini* and some lions standing on the head of an elephant. The temple is a pyramid type super structure consisting of four stories. It is said to have been built by a special kind of light weight bricks, specially manufactured for this purpose. The sculptures at all places in the temple are so richly carved that they appear almost alive. These stand as testimony to the masterly skills and agility of Kakatiyan sculptors. The ceiling of the Mandapa has panels with figures which depict Natya-Siva, Gajantaka and Tripurantaka, examples of great lapidary skill. The temple pillars depict folk tales, dances and musical instruments. Scenes from the Bhagavata, like *Gopika Vastrapaharanam* and *Rasa Kreedha* can be seen on pillars of the Ranga Mandapa where musicians and singers used to perform.

Apart from showcasing the skill and know-how by creating such an intricate masterpiece, sculptors and architects of the temple display immense love as well as patronage of art, music and dance by the Kakatiya rulers.

The Nandi at the Ramappa temple, deserves special mention. Installed on a high platform, the bull faces

Lord Siva with his majestic poise, so realistically carved that even the veins under his skin are visible. This is an impressive architectural gesture respecting Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva.

Bhongir Fort

This fort was built by the Western Chalukya ruler Tribhuvana Malla Vikramaditya VI on an isolated monolithic rock, named after him and called Tribhuvanagiri. With the passage of time, it began to be called Bhuvanagiri and is subsequently called Bhongir. The town is about 39 kilometres from Hyderabad. Besides, the hill on which the fort is built is about 500 feet high and 40 acres wide. This fort is associated with the rule of queen Rudrama Devi and her grandson Prataparudra. One finds a moat encircling the fort, a vast underground chamber, wells, ponds, stables, armoury, trapdoors and other similar features. The fort provides an impressive view of the surrounding country side from the top. Bala Hisar, the citadel on top of the hill, gives a bird's view of the entire neighbouring area.

Golkonda Fort

The 400 year old majestic and imposing Golkonda Fort, situated on the western outskirts of the city of

Hyderabad, dates back to the reign of the Kakatiya rulers of Warangal. Some historians attribute the initial construction of the Golkonda mud fort to Rani Rudrama Devi. Rumour has it that there was once an underground corridor connecting Bhongir Fort to Golkonda Fort. This seems quite probable as in those days the ruler saw to it that there were escape routes in place to enable the royal women and children to flee during times of battle and also to provide a way out for the ruler in times of defeat. The Golkonda Fort was ceded to the Bahamani Sultante and later became the capital of the Qutub Shahi rulers during the period of 1518 AD to 1687 AD.

Legend has it that Golkonda got its name from the words Golla Konda or Shepherd's Hill, as it was popularly known in Telugu. The story goes that a shepherd boy discovered an idol on the rocky hill, which was called Mangalavaram. The news was conveyed to Rani Rudrama, ruling at that time. She got a mud fort constructed around the site where the idol was found. Her descendants continued to follow in her footsteps and progressively built the Golkonda Fort as we know it today. Subsequent generations witnessed further fortification of the fort and a beautiful city within. By the 17th century Golkonda was a famous diamond market which gave Kohinoor, once the largest known diamond, to the world.

After the fall of the Kakatiyas, the kingdom was subjected to uncontrolled plunder in which many buildings and temples were raised to the ground. The fort was renamed Sultanpur and changes were made, where fortification of the fort was done to suit requirements of the Bahamani rulers. Islamic architecture came into place and the bastions were reshaped. A huge water body source was created. The earth excavated for this exercise was used to bury ruined structures of the Kakatiyas. Probably, the four *toranas* remained as they were, as they did not have any symbols pertaining to the religion. Later Sitapati Raju, a Bahamani Hindu Sardar titled Shitab Khan, became the Kiladaar, commandent of the fort, in 1504 AD. He tried to revive the glory of the temple within the fort by repairing and installing the deities. A stone structure, Kush Mehal was built from demolished stones of the temples of Warangal fort. Later, Sultan Quli Qutub Shah, the Governor of Golkonda, invaded and defeated Shitab Khan, on account of which Warangal permanently came under the Qutub Shahis and Qutub Shah declared himself the ruler of Golkonda.

Sculpture

Kakatiya rulers had the unique distinction of being great patrons and practitioners of temple construction. This

was very much a common practice witnessed among the royals. Thus, we see several temples dedicated to various gods and goddesses standing as silent proofs of excellence in sculpture and architecture.

Sculpture reached great heights of craftsmanship during the reign of the Kakatiya dynasty. Furthermore, the art of sculpture was not only a singular art form laid in stone, but stood as evidence of the glorious art of dance in those days. Every temple architecture depicts the dancing style of those times in its sculptures. Besides, we can see intricate postures of contemporary dance displayed in these sculpted forms.

The technique of sculpture depicted in Kakatiya architecture is a fine example of a well developed and rich art form. Each temple in the Telugu region showcases the same degree of artistic excellence. Sometimes, on viewing these sculptures, one wonders whether it is the work of a single sculptor or the labour of a group of artists. Though they resemble each other in many ways, one does not perceive them as mere copies of a single idea. Paying attention to the finest of nuances, the sculptures catch the eye of the spectator with ease. Like discussed in architecture, these sculptures were carved out from black stone, which is predominantly seen in the Telangana region. The stone is known for its soft

look and toughness in strength. Temple architecture of the Kakatiyas is not merely looked upon as an art form but has been elevated to the realm of spirituality. Above all, the sculptors themselves considered this gift of sculpting as divine and connected it to the soul. It was not a mere craft as the sculptor had to be well equipped with the knowledge of inter-related subjects like anatomy, psychology and also the art of dance to bring the stones to life.

The temples are not merely a testimony to the past glory of the Kakatiya dynasty but also a silent historical record of its cultural heritage from generation to generation. Apart from being fine examples of the art of sculpture, the sculptures in these temples stand as evidence of the prevalence of the art of music and dance. Each sculpture depicts a female dancer in a distinct pose and we find musicians along with their instruments taking positions below. These figures display the physical beauty of a female form and also the highly intricate stylisation of a particular posture. Amongst the innumerable temples which adorn this region, a few of them are very fine examples. The famous Thousand Pillar Temple of Warangal, built during the rule of Kakatiya Rudra Deva in the year 1162 AD, is a shining example of the art forms which prevailed during those times. Another temple

worth mentioning is the Ramappa Temple of Mulugu village near Warangal, which became more popular by the name of the sculptor Ramappa. The entire temple is breathtakingly beautiful with rich sculptures engraved on its pillars.

Another fine example is the temple on the banks of Palampet Ramappa Tank, showcasing exquisite sculptures of female dancers, along with female musicians, holding musical instruments in their hands. One finds sculpted female musicians along with their musical instruments even on the entrance to the fort of queen Rudrama Devi.

This gives ample proof of the popularity enjoyed and patronage received by artists and their troupes, who served the artistic needs of people in those times.

Inscriptions

One finds several kinds of inscriptions during the Kakatiya period. Every inscription gives details and information regarding different subjects. There are inscriptions related to temple constructions, land grants, donations, celebrations, offerings of different kinds and so on and so forth. Many inscriptions of the Kakatiya period found in temples proclaim that the rulers were great patrons of art forms such as music and dance. During

their reign, one observes that it was not only the rulers, but also the commander in chief, the Samantas (vassals) and their immediate family members who built temples to commemorate special and auspicious occasions.

On the day of installation of the presiding deity, rock inscriptions with details of temple properties, staff and art forms to be showcased during temple rituals and festivities, were laid. Few of the inscriptions which mention such details are given below:

Jalalpuram Inscription

This inscription was laid by Cheraku Bollaiah Reddy during the installation of the deities of Sri Ketheshwara, Katheshwara and Mareshwarasurya Devara in the Jalalpuram village, Thungathurthi, of Nalgonda District. Consisting of four sides, the inscription mentions all the traditional actors, especially the Sutradhara.

Dharmasagara Inscription

This inscription mentions the donations made, in the form of land to the *devadasis* and musicians engaged in service of the temple.

Namireddy Pillalamarri Inscription

This inscription was laid by Recherla chief Namireddy. Information regarding donations made to the temple

staff, musicians and dancers is mentioned in detail in this inscription.

Gangaiah Sahini Tripurantaka Inscription

Some warriors belonging to the kayastha caste served as subordinates under Kakatiya Ganapatideva. They built many temples in and around their area of control. Large areas of land and gold, were gifted to the staff and artists of the village. Among these, was the famous kayastha king Gangaiah Sahini. In one of his rock inscriptions of 1250 AD there is mention of the temple of Moolasthaneshwara which was gifted with the villages of Boyapalli and Reddipalli.

Namadeva Durgi Inscription

Namadeva was a minister in the court of the kayastha king Gangaiah Sahini. He laid an inscription in the Venkateshwara temple of Durgi village, Palnadu, Guntur District in the year 1251 AD. Once again, this inscription mentions donations made to the percussionists, actors and the orchestra.

Vaddemaanu Rock Inscription

Vaddemaanu, a village by the same name, is located four miles from Nagarkurnool, Mahbubnagar District. One finds the temple of Nageshwara in a dilapidated condition

even today. This temple was built by Malyala Gundaraju, who was a subordinate ruler of Vardhamanapuram, during the time of King Ganapatideva. The Vaddemaanu Rock inscription stands in front of the temple like a silent and mute witness of those times. The inscription describes the donation given by Gundaraju in the form of land to the Pinnalatti Palli Temple. We also find mention of dancers, singers, actors and musical instruments in the service of the temple.

Chebrolu Inscription

The inscription mentions that Ganapatideva himself donated houses to Jayapa Senani, the author of Nritta Ratnavali, and sixteen other dancers.

Malkapur Inscription

Situated in the Guntur District, dated 1261 AD, this inscription speaks of donations made by Kakatiya Rudrama Devi to ten dancers, eight percussionists, a Kashmiri singer, fourteen female singers and six other members of the orchestra. In addition, these inscriptions certainly give us, a fairly good idea of the performing arts and its patronage.

Durgi Inscription

This inscription found on a slab in the Gopalaswamy Temple, Durgi of Palnad Taluk in Guntur District

dated 1269 AD, states that Rudrama Mahadevi, the Queen Designate of Ganapatideva, was reigning over Orugallu. Her servant Gandapendara Jannigadevaraja was ruling the country from Panugallu to Marjawada. Karanam Namayya consecrated the deity of Gopinatha at Dugya in Pallinadu and made grants of land and assigned certain taxes for its worship.

Another inscription was found in the same Guntur district, on a mutilated stone, lying in front of the Virabhadraswami Temple at Rayapudi, dated 1269 AD. This inscription refers to a land grant made to the temple by Parvata-Nayaka, the *angarakhshak* or bodyguard of Kakitya Rudradeva Maharaja. In the same village, another inscription dated 1269 AD found on the Nandi Pillar in front of the Somesvara Temple, mentions another grant made by Parvata-Nayaka to God Somesvara.

Mulpuru Inscription

This inscription dated 1270 AD, was found on a stone built into the north wall of Chennakesava Temple, at Mulpuru in Tenali Taluk of Guntur District. The inscription refers to a land grant made to the temple of Nilakesava by Vallaya-Nayaka, the palace guardian of Kakatiya Rudradeva.

Tripurantakam Inscription

The inscription dated 1270 AD, was found on the base of a north wall, in the dark room of the Tripurantakeshwara Temple, Tripurantakam in Kurnool District. The inscription states, a certain servant (lenka) of Kakatiya Rudrayyadeva Maharaja, gave money for the upkeep of a perpetual lamp in the temple of Tripurantaka-Mahadeva.

Ravipadu Inscription

This inscription was found on a broken Nandi pillar set up in front of the temple of Ramalingasvami in the Ravipadu village, Narasaraopeta Taluk of the same district, dated 1277 AD. It states that Samanta Poti Nayaka, who was very well known as a loyalist of Rudrama Devi, consecrated the image of Suresvara in Ravuru in the name of his father and for the merit of Kakatiya Rudradeva Maharaja. This donation was made by Poti Nayaka's sons Potaya and Maraya in the memory of their father. They built a three peaked temple and a *mandapa* for it, endowing it with land and gardens along with a perpetual lamp to the temple.

Ambadeva Tripurantaka Inscription

Ambadeva Raju was a subordinate kayastha king who later rebelled against Rani Rudrama Devi. He laid this

inscription in the pilgrimage centre of Tripurantaka Kshetram in the year 1290 AD. This inscription has three sides, similar to the trend of other temple inscriptions. The second side has mention of the donations made to artists like dancers, singers, musicians and actors.

All the above mentioned inscriptions are just some of the many inscriptions found. These inscriptions talk of donations given to temples not only for its maintenance but also for the staff and people engaged in its service. Furthermore, these inscriptions mention in great detail the donations made to artists of the temple, thereby throwing ample light on the prevalence, popularity and patronage of art forms during the Kakatiyan period. A point that needs to be observed, is that, all charitable activities taken up by subordinate officers of the kingdom, during the lives and times of Kakatiya Rulers, reflect the Rulers' intentions, focus and drive for the welfare of their people.

Many of the inscriptions have been found in ruins, as they were plundered and destroyed by invading rulers who brought down the structures, causing loss of invaluable properties and information. Appreciation must be given to all archaeologists, historians and scholars who have conscientiously managed to assemble the information we share today.

Temples

The temple has always played a significant role as an institution of myriad activities. Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastry defines the role of the temple in medieval India in the following words:

“As land holder, employer, and consumer of goods and services, as bank, school and museum, as hospital and theatre, in short as a nucleus which gathered round itself all that was best in the arts of civilized existence and regulated them with the humaneness and born of the spirit of *Dharma*, the medieval Indian temple has few parallels in the annals of mankind.”

Several inscriptions found in the various temples of Draksharamam, Tripurantakam, Alampur, Bapatla, Simhachalam and many more reveal the truth of the above given statement. We observe that temples became a symbolic representation of various social activities in medieval Indian history.

As we see from the Malkapur Inscription of 1261 AD, it is very clear that activity was not restricted to religion alone. This inscription throws light on the multifaceted activity that took place during the reign of Ganapatideva, which was promoted and continued during Rudrama Devi's rule. It tells us about the establishment of a Sanskrit college to provide education, a shaiva mutt

for the propagation of religion and a choultry for free feeding without any distinction of caste and creed. There is also mention of construction of a general hospital and a maternity hospital at the same time. This gives us a fairly good idea about the importance of health care and concern for expecting mothers, during Rudrama Devi's reign. Keeping in view the period, it is definitely a point which is highly commendable. This inscription elaborates on donation of land for upkeep of the temple and other institutions. It also draws the lineage of the family of the Kakatiyas from the solar race.

Several inscriptions laid by officers working in various ranks during Rani Rudrama's reign, speak of grants given in the form of money, land and cattle etc. They also mention several measures taken up for the welfare of *devadasis* who were dedicated to these temples. This stands as ample proof of the patronage received by fine arts and the honour and respect that these *devadasis* enjoyed in the then prevailing society.

We can hardly find any village without a temple. The temple became the nucleus around which villages and towns grew and where trade and commerce flourished. Architects always made the provision for a temple when new villages were constructed. The Manthena inscription of 1299 AD records Manchi Bhattopadhyaya,

the priest of King Ganapati, who founded a village, excavated a tank and built two temples. One temple was for Lord Mahadeva and the other for Lord Keshava Deva. In those days construction of temples was regarded as one of the seven pious deeds known as *Saptha Sanaatanas*.

As mentioned, the capital of Orugallu had many exquisite temples like the Thousand Pillar Temple, Swayambhu Deva Temple, Panchalaraya Temple, temples for goddesses Kakati and Ekaveera. The Padmakshi Temple and the Prasanna Keshava Temple were among other important shrines in Anumakonda. The temples at Palampet, Pillalamarri, Ghanpur, Naagunuru and Nagulapadu were some of the well known temples built during this period. The Kakatiya period witnessed construction of several temples in the Telugu region with each one dedicated to different gods and goddesses. A point worth noting is that, all these temples were self sufficient, endowed with lands and villages for their maintenance.

Temples provided employment for various ranks of people. Apart from the priests and Maanyas or the respectable people who looked after the stores, the treasury, the accounts and so on, we have a third variety of employee called Saanis who were women donated to

the temples by devotees for the purpose of giving dance performances during temple rituals. This was called *rangabhoga*, performed in the *ranga-mandapa*. One can find several inscriptions which tell us very clearly about the donation of such women to several temples during that period. From this we understand that they were respectable married women but attached to the temples for a specific purpose on behalf of the donor. This becomes clear when we understand *Shodashopacharaas*, the sixteen kinds of service offered to gods in the temples.

A temple in those days was second only to the Royal Palace with the right to employ a large number of people for various activities on regular salaries and other kinds of payment. In those days temples also acted as banks, as institutions for the purpose of maintaining teachers and pupils and as museums showcasing art. This is indeed true as we see temples showcasing scriptures, art, architecture, sculpture and paintings. We also know that a *rangamandapa* is an integral part of temple construction. For example, we have already heard of Rudrama herself building a *rangamandapa* in the Swayambhu Deva Temple. Hence, the temples became platforms for a variety of performances on a regular basis and even more on festive occasions when special

programs were presented. The temple became a sought after venue for various performances like music, dance, drama, Harikatha and Burrakatha.

Furthermore, the temple became a meeting ground for all people. It was a meeting place for all village committees, marriages and also for kings and officers to meet the common man and record minutes on the walls. It has been recorded that important events like coronations and celebrations of victories took place at the temple. Common people executed deeds of noble importance in the temple premises under divine presence.

Thus, we observe that the temple was not only a place of worship in medieval times but also a hub of various activities reflecting the social life of people. Even today we see that this holds good when we look at the administrative set up of temples and pilgrimage centres in the South of India.

The construction of temples, forts, archways, water tanks and architectural marvels during the rule of the Kakatiyas stand as proof enough for their interest, knowledge and patronage of art and culture. Not only during her own reign but also during the active rule of Ganapatideva, Rudrama Devi must have played an active role in decision making towards encouragement

of such activities. This must have continued during her rule and also the successive rule of Prataparudra who succeeded her.

Kakatiya Coins

Regarding coinage during the Kakatiya period, conclusive evidence was not available for a long time. However, scholars such as P.V. Parabrahma Sastry have contributed in great detail by throwing light on Kakatiya history and coinage, thus rendering that the existence of coins was a reality during the Kakatiya period. It is evident today that there were gold coins and perhaps even copper coins of smaller denominations at that time. There is however no evidence of silver coins. It is primarily with the help of inscriptions that historians have solved the ambiguity about coins issued during the period of Kakatiyas. This ambiguity is caused by the sheer number of coins found, common in style, symbols and weight to ones issued by neighbouring regions and even transcending into different phases of time. For instance, Kakatiya coins closely resemble the Yadava coins. Apart from letters of the legend, the symbols found on the Kakatiya coins are the sun, moon and the Varaha or boar. In addition, there are coins with lion symbols that are ascribed to the Kakatiyas.

The first recorded instance of coins under the Kakatiyas was during the time of Prola I, 1052-1076 AD. Though, still under the Chalukyas, Prola I greatly helped with the Chalukya expeditions. At a specific instance, when Prola I conquered the regions of Kadaparti and Purakuta and annexed them to Hanumakonda, Chalukya King Someswara I was immensely impressed by his performance and granted him the extended Hanumakonda region as a permanent fief. Thus began Kakatiya control over the Hanumakonda region. In addition, the region was given to him with a right to mint his own coins. These coins featured the boar or Varaaha symbol.

The story learnt is, that Prola I, an excellent warrior, was given the title *Arigajakesari*, as mentioned in the Bayyaram Tank Inscription. *Arigajakesari*, literally means lion to the elephants, which meant that Prola I was as formidable to his enemies as a lion is to elephants. A compassionate ruler, Prola I was known for his welfare and social reforms. Indeed, he was one of the first to construct a huge tank for serving as a water source for his people. The tank came to be known as *Kesaritataka*, inspired by his title *Arigajakesari*. Besides, the act of digging up the earth to build a tank was received with such great reverence

that it was symbolised by Varaah the boar. This symbol then featured on coins minted during Prola I's reign and even his successors as a mark of respect and gratitude, thus starting a trend. Origin of the boar symbol, however belonged to the senior Chalukya reign, which was borrowed by Prola I.

Scholars have helped establish that the Kakatiyas possessed titles suffixed with gaja-kesari or similar suffixes. One such example is seen in the Bekkallu Inscription, dated 1176 AD by Vrekkamti Malli Reddi, which mentions that the title *Daya-Gaja-Kesari* was ascribed to Rudradeva. Another example the Pakala Inscription, refers to a similar title Raja-Gaja-Kesari with reference to Ganipatideva. We witness in the Bidar Inscription laid by Bhairava, the mention of Raya-Gaja-Kesari, a title credited to Rudrama Devi. Further, an inscription dated 1292 AD at the Siddheshwar Temple, Terala, Guntur District, by Rudrayya Peddi who was the brother in law of the then commander in chief Somayajula Rudradeva during Prataprudra's reign, ascribes the *Daya-Gaja-Kesari* title to Prataparudra.

Even the Gaja Kesari sculptures and motifs found in excavations of the Warangal Fort are proof enough, attributing the gaja-kesari title to the Kaktiya Rulers. Thus, it is concluded that coins bearing titles credited to

each ruler along with the symbols described earlier can be ascribed to the Kakatiyas.

Inscriptions further help us in ascertaining denominations of the coins. Out of the many denominations traced some include, *varaah, mada, gadyana, niska, ruka, adduga, padika, paraka, visa* and *chinnam*. It is observed that similar currency, denominations and names have been found in neighbouring regions, probably to enable the purpose of trade.

Kakatiya coins, when mentioned in the inscriptions, featured the prefix of *kesari*, example *kesari gadya, kesari mada and so on*. Each coin is said to weigh a common 56.25 grains. It is opined by scholar N. Ramesan that light weight, which is, smaller currency may not have been popular or necessary because the barter system was very much prevalent in those days. Currency was just one of the means of exchange. Weights and measures were introduced by the Kakatiyas for the first time. These were also suffixed with *kesari* on the inscriptions.

Irrigation and Agriculture

Agriculture was given top priority by the Kakatiyas. It is an accepted fact that the Kakatiyas adopted innumerable measures for improving irrigation and

agriculture in this region. It was during their rule that this area received proper attention. They took up the initiative to create more irrigational facilities like streams, and built dams, tanks and also canals. Some of the reservoirs which were built during their time are still in use and functional.

Almost all reservoirs are silt free despite their life span that has spread over hundreds of years. Pakhal, Ramappa, Lakshnavaram and Ghanpur lakes, classified as major reservoirs, were constructed during the 13th century. They look fresh and clean even today, serving water to thousands of villages, both for drinking and agricultural purposes. Kakatiya rulers ensured a very democratic and equitable distribution of the stored water resources. One observes, that the villagers and users were responsible not only for the normal operations but also maintenance of the tanks for their local use.

Building of the public water resources like tanks, ponds and community wells, called the *Thataka*, *Koopa* and *Vaapi* respectively fall into the first three of *sapta-sanaatanas*, the seven noble deeds. It can be said here that the concept of *sapta-sanaatana*, expected of the kings and nobility, was sincerely incorporated in the basic humanistic philosophy of the Kakatiya Rulers. Hundreds of tanks and lakes built during their rule are sufficient

proof and bear testimony to this belief. Driven by this, not only members of the royal families, but even the noble men and other officers competed with each other in building tanks and ponds in their respective areas.

At a time when the concept of a welfare state was unheard of, it is very heartening to find a medieval kingdom which set up a political philosophy of governance, aimed at reaching out to the needs and aspirations of its people.

Most of these irrigational works were looked after by ministers or subordinate chiefs. Right from the time of Prola I, innumerable tanks were built by the Kakatiya rulers. Prola I constructed a big tank and named it Kesari-tataka. As a mark of gratitude, his successors adopted the symbol of a boar to signify the act of digging up the earth for creating the tank. However, this symbol of a boar was not original to the Kakatiyas and was borrowed from their overlords, the Chalukyas of Kalyana. Garuda was the original symbol of the Kakatiyas and it lasted on their banner till the last King Prataparudra. According to *Pratap Charitra*, King Ganapatideva himself built several tanks, an activity which continued during the reign of his daughter Rudrama and later her grandson Prataparudra. Inscriptions found at several places provide ample proof to substantiate this fact.

Position of Women

A striking feature of many inscriptions found in the Kakatiya region is the relatively large number of women represented within it. It can be seen that women comprised eleven percent of individual donors. In practice, many women made land grants to temples during the rule of the Kakatiyas. Some of this property seems to have been given to them in dowry. This is suggested by two inscriptions found, pertaining to the period. In addition to land grants, female donors made gifts of objects commonly found in the Kakatiya region, such as cattle, temple buildings, metal items used in temple ritual worships and also irrigational facilities and money. Many of these women appearing in inscriptions of the Kakatiya realm were members of the ruling class like the queens and princesses whose male members bore titles of Maharaja or Raju. Such women added the term Devi to their names.

Above all, inscriptions reveal that the impact of marriage on a woman's social identity was less than what was given in law books of that time. In the orthodox system, a marriage severed a woman's ties with her maternal family and led to incorporation into her husband's family. This is seen in some inscriptions where women described themselves as the wife of

such and such person. But it is extremely interesting to note that one third of the women cited the names of their fathers or mothers on the inscriptions found. Here it cannot be assumed that all these women were unmarried. By this, one can understand that the social identity of women in those times did not just depend on her status as someone's wife but also as someone's daughter. This gives a clear indication that the ties of a woman with her maternal home remained very strong after marriage. It was the choice of a woman on whether she wanted to highlight her maternal family or the family of her husband.

We find that women in the Kakatiya society were not only confined to domestic affairs. They were taking active part in activities of the temples, holding honoured positions as officials in charge of treasuries, were engaged in service of the temples as temple dancers - called Saanis etc. Most of these women or Gudisaanis as they were called were daughters of respectable men. It is important to note the vast difference between these temple women of medieval times and *devadasis* of the 19th century who were commonly known as temple prostitutes.

There are some rare cases of women wielding political authority during this period. Kakatiya Rudrama

Devi who succeeded her father as a ruler, is one such exceptional example. In other instances we find that women who wielded political authority were the wives of dead kings or chiefs. It is interesting to note that they had this option and conformist norms followed in such situations could be overruled by sensible and practical considerations. What one learns from the inscriptions found, though limited, is that women did not confirm to orthodox constraints. Women during these times may have fitted into the roles of dutiful wives, as was ordinarily expected, but we see that not all of them did. This erases the common notion and thought of the traditional Indian women, that one finds projected in our inexhaustive epic literature, time and again.

A story related to the family of tribal King Pagadi Gidde Raju who was a subordinate at the time of King Pratapa Rudra, is worthy of mention at this juncture. The Kakatiya region witnessed extreme famine and drought at this time in history. Compelled by circumstances, tribal king Pagadi Gidde Raju had requested for a waiver of taxes but was blatantly refused. Soon after, he declared his independence. Therefore a battle ensued between the ruling officers and tribals, in which the chieftain, his daughter, Saralamma and son-in-law Govinda Raju died after a courageous fight.

Samakka, the wife of Pagadi Gidde Raju, rose to the occasion, took up arms and fought bravely. It is said, she sustained grievous injuries during the fight but somehow managed to stay alive by disappearing into the forest. The mother and daughter duo of tribal Queen Samakka and Saralamma, who fought valiantly have been immortalised as goddesses. Centuries later, they are remembered, worshipped and eulogised for their bravery and sacrifice even today. Legend has it that even as a child Samakka was worshipped as *Vanadurga* known for her extraordinary healing powers. Celebrated as *Medaram Jatara*, the tribal festival of honouring the goddesses, takes place every alternate year at Warangal. After Kumbha Mela, it is the second biggest congregation in our country that attracts millions of people.

Conclusion

Rudrama was the first woman to be coronated, because of which she became a matter of pride not only for the Kakatiya dynasty or India but for the entire woman race. She was not just a ruler but one who fought valiantly and defeated hardcore and more experienced enemies. Despite ascending the throne in difficult times, she rose above hurdles, internal objection and revolts, and enemy rebellion, to give a reign of love, peace and concern for

her people. Furthermore, her achievements have come to be forever etched in the history of women of India. She personified all that stood for confidence, bravery, commitment, and proved that every woman endowed with such qualities could rise to be another Rudrama. The well celebrated Queen Laxmi Bai, known as Jhansi Ki Rani drew her inspiration from Rani Rudrama Devi, who was compared to Goddess Kali in the battle field. Rani Laxmi Bai was addressed and commemorated by her ministers, chiefs, and subjects as the great Rudrama of the Kakatiya Dynasty. Indian history has thus, time and again witnessed the strength and power of women embodied in these fine examples of Historical Queens.

Renowned world historian and traveller, Marco Polo who landed at Motupalli near Chirala and visited Mutfili Fort, saw a state of flourishing sea trade, land trade, agriculture and economy of people in the Kakatiya Kingdom. The prosperity witnessed by him, was attributed to the highly competent rule of the then Queen Rani Rudrama reigning from her capital Warangal.

Not merely yesterday or today but for generations to come, Rudrama Devi will remain an inspiration to one and all, transgressing narrow gender equations. Rani Rudrama lived, fought and sacrificed her very life for her motherland, defining patriotism for India.



ANNEXURE I

Some Important Inscriptions from the Kakatiya Period

The Chebrolu Inscription of Jayapa Senani

Jayapa participated in the Kalinga conquest of Ganapatideva and was honoured with the title *Vairigodhuma Gharatta*. He built a temple (*Ganapeswara*) in honour of Ganapatideva and made a grant of many villages to the temple (1231 AD).

Jayapa built another temple (*Chodeswara*) in the name of his father Pinna Choda in Chebrolu (Guntur district) and made a grant of Modukuru village to meet the temple expenses. According to the Chebrolu inscription (1235 AD, April 21) he also built two-storied quarters in two rows for Devadasis (Temple dancers) in front of the temple. Jayapa must have been an accomplished master of dance because his Sanskrit treatise *Nritya Ratnavali* is an authoritative text on Indian dance.

1. Malkapuram Inscription

A. R. No. 94 of 1917

(On the huge Nandi pillar lying near the ruined temple in Malkapuram, Guntur Taluk, Gunture District. Published in the journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, Vol. IV. pp. 147-64, S.1183, Durmati, 1261 AD)

Gives a detailed account of the Kakatiya family and of the foundation and pontifical succession of the Golaki-matha of the Saivas and states that king Ganapatideva promised the village of Mandara in the Velandu-Kandravati country to his guru Visvesvara Sivacharya and that Ganapatideva's daughter Rudramadevi made a formal gift of that village along with the village of Velangapundi, that Visvesvara Siva established a new village with the name of Visavesvara-Golaki and brought people in it persons of different castes from various parts of the country, that he also established the temple of Visvesvara, a Sanskrit college, a *matha* for Saivas, a choultry for feeding people without distinction of caste and creed, a general land, a maternity hospital, besides some other things and that he made grants of land for the maintenance of all these institutions. Gives a detailed description of the administration

of the Trust and of the village affairs. Incidentally, it mentions a large number of other religious and charitable institutions established by Visvesvara Siva in several other places. Kakatiyas are described as belonging to the Solar race of Kshatriyas.

2. Juttiga Inscription

A. R. No. 740 of 1920

(On a pillar in the temple of Someswara, Juttiga, Tanuku Taluk, West Godavari District, S.1181, 1259 AD)

States that Vishnu the minister of Virabhadresvara of the Chalukya-vamsa who married Kakatiya Ganapatideva's daughter Rudrama-Mahadevi presented a perpetual lamp to the temple of Somesvara of Duttika. The inscription is incomplete.

A. R. No. 564 of 1925

(On a pillar in the outer mandapa of the temple of Ramalingesvara, Velpuru, Sattenepalli Taluk, Guntur District S.1176, 1254 AD)

States that Ganapatidevaraja, son of Kota Bayyaladevi, gave away Bhandaramu Akkama as a Sani (dancing girl) to the temple of Ramesvara at Velpunuru and also land, house-site and a garden.

3. Information on Officers Working Under Rudramadevi

(a) A. R. No. 660 of 1920

(On a stone built into the north wall of the temple of Chennakesava, at Mulpuru, Tenali Taluk, Guntur District, S.1192, 1270 AD)

Incomplete and damaged. Refers to the grant of land made to the temple of Nila-kesa[va] by Vallaya =Nayaka, the guardian of the palace of Kakatiya Rudradeva.

(b) A. R. No. 532 of 1913

(On a slab in the temple of Gopalasvami, in the same village, S.1200, Bahudhanya, 1278 AD)

States that the sons of Boluayudu, the body-guard of Kakatiya Rudradeva-Maharaja, made gifts of land. The name of the donor is not given.

(c) A. R. No. 318 of 1924

(On a pillar lying near a dilapidated mosque among the ruins of the fort at Gudimetta, Nandigama Taluk, Krishna District, S.1213, 1291 AD)

States that Dadi Somaya-Sahini and Peddaya-Sahini gave lands to the temple of Visvanatha-Mahadeva who were the officers of Rudraraja.

(d) A. R. No. 548 of 1909

(On a slab in the temple of Bhimalingesvara, Julakallu, Palnad Taluk, Guntur District, S.1213, Khara, 1291 AD)

States that Somayadula Rudradeva, general of all the forces of the king, gave 2 *puttis* of land to god Mulasthana – Bhimanatha of Juvulakallu, for the merit of Kumara Rudradeva-Maharaja.

(e) A. R. No. 711 of 1926.

(On a slab planted in front of the temple of Gopalasvami, Pinnali, Palnad Taluk, Guntur District, S.1214, Nandana, 1292 AD,)

States that Bollaya-Nayaka chief of Madapalli on the southern bank of the Godavari rebuilt the temple of Bhimanantha of Pingali and endowed it with land. This was done during the reign of Kakatiya Rudradeva-Maharaja.

Bidar Inscription

Rudrama Devi fought the armies of the enemy and chased them till they took refuge in their capital Devagiri. Thus deafeating the Seuna forces, she is said to have collected from king Mahadeva some crores of gold coins as war indemnity, which she distributed amongst her generals. This narration of the literary work is supported by the find of the hoard of several Yadava gold coins in Rachapatnam, Kaikaluru Taluk, Krishna District in the heart of the Andhra country.

The recent discovery of this Kakatiya inscription in the fort area of Bidar puts the final seal of authenticity on the said literary narration. According to this record, Ganapatideva was still alive.

Rudramadevi holding reins of the administration in her hands repelled the enemy and chased him till he entered the gates of Devagiri. She not only exacted from the enemy a large quantity of gold coins towards war indemnity but also annexed his territory under the fort of Bidar to the Kakatiya kingdom and posted there her general Bhairava of the Sinda family.

The inscription thus signifies this remarkable military adventure of Rudrama Devi. Having thus proved herself to be a worthy daughter of a worthy father, Rudramadevi appropriated for herself Ganapatideva's title *Raya - Gaja - Kesari*. (Source: *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* Vol. XXI, Numismatic Supplement)

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एकः सूते सकलम्

ANNEXURE II

Chronology of the Kakatiya Dynasty

Venna
Founder of the Kakatiya Family

Gunda I

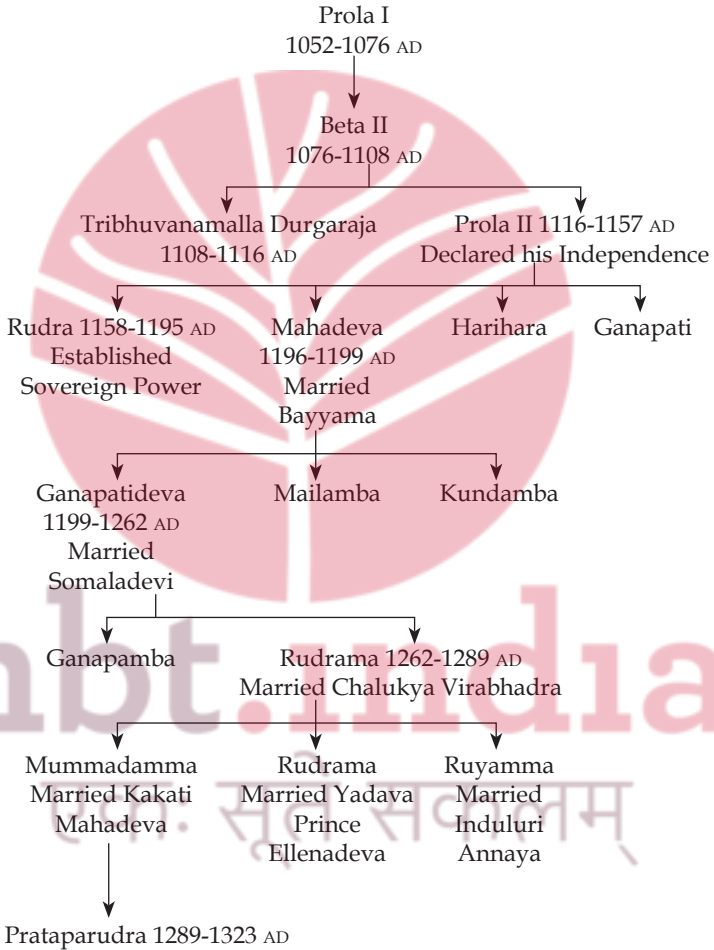
Gunda II

Gunda III
Died before 900 AD

Erra

Gunda IV
955-995 AD

Beta I
996-1051 AD





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