

## The Kakatiyas - Emergence of a Regional Kingdom

You may have listened to many ballads and stories about the bravery and martial skill of Brahma Naidu and Balachandrudu and the 66 heroes. You may have also participated in *Jataras* dedicated to Sammakka and Sarakka. They had fought against armies of kings to protect the rights of the tribal people. You might have enjoyed the popular story of Katama Raju who fought with the Kings of Nellore in defence of the right of animal herders.

- ◆ Find out from your parents and elders the stories of the Palnati Virulu, Sammakka-Sarakka and Katama Raju. Relate these stories in the class.

All these stories relate to the period from 1000 to 1350 AD. This was a very important period in our history. In the previous chapter we read about the new ruling families that emerged all over India. These rulers sought to establish small kingdoms over agricultural villages and to enable their herder-followers to settle down as agriculturalists. These ambitious warriors and kings fought against each other constantly. Amidst this situation arose the Kakatiya kingdom in Warangal.

This was also the time when the first books in Telugu were written. According to tradition, *Srimad-Andhra Mahabharatam* is the first poetic work in Telugu which was composed by *Kavitrayamu*, the Trinity of Poets - Nannaya, Tikkana and Erra Pragada between 1000 and 1200 AD.

We have a large number of inscriptions which tell us about the activities of the kings, queens, chiefs, farmers, herders and traders. We also have a number books written about them in Sanskrit and Telugu. Vidyantha wrote *Prathaparudra Yashobhushanam* during the Kakatiya rule. Some works were also written after the end of their rule (Vinukonda Vallabharaya's *Kridabhiramamu*, Ekamranatha's *Prataparudra Charitramu*).



Fig 14.1 Kirti Torana entrance of Svayambhu Siva Temple - built by Kakatiya kings in Warangal.

- ◆ Having read the above passage can you tell which are the two important sources of information about the Kakatiya kings?

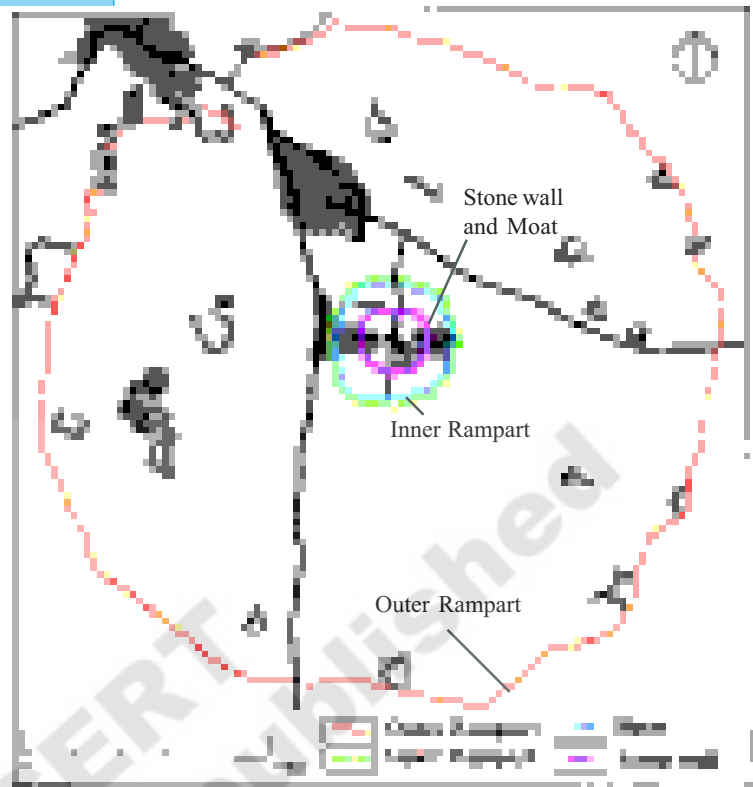
According to inscriptions and literature the Kakatiyas traced their lineage to certain Durjaya. They also adopted Telugu as the favoured language of the court. Most of their inscriptions are in Telugu and they also called themselves as ‘Andhra Rajas’. They also sought to bring together the three regions in which Telugu was being spoken - the coastal regions, Telangana region and Rayalaseema region. In this manner the Kakatiya kings tried to build a Telugu regional consciousness. To some extent they were also successful as even to this day they are remembered fondly in this region.

### Important Kakatiya Rulers

Prola II	(1116 - 1157AD)
Rudradeva	(1158 - 1195AD)
Ganapati Deva	(1199 - 1262AD)
Rudramadevi	(1262 - 1289AD)
Prataparudra	(1289 - 1323AD)

The early members of the dynasty began their career as warriors and *samanthas* of Rashtrakuta and Chalukya kings who were ruling in Karnataka. They were holding the posts of village heads called *Rattadi* and through their military skills became army chiefs, *samanthas* etc. and gained control

Map 1: Warangal Fort



over Anmakonda in Telangana. The Kakatiyas emerged as independent rulers after the fall of Western Chalukyas.

During Rudradeva’s rule (1158-1195 AD) the capital was shifted from Anmakonda to Orugallu (Warangal). The new city was laid out with a plan to accommodate increase in city population and to address the needs of an imperial capital. Rudradeva built a big fort, a tank and a temple called Thousand Pillared Temple in Anmakonda.

Look at the map of Warangal Fort. You can see an outer fort wall with four gates. This protected agricultural lands and several water tanks within it. In this area were huts of many artisans like basket weavers. After crossing these we come to the centre where there was another moat and a fort wall made of mud.

If you walked further towards the centre you would find another moat and fort wall made of stone. The city buildings and palaces were within this stone wall. It had four gates opening out into East, West, North and South. From each gate a main road went to the centre of the city where there was a temple of Svayambhu Siva. This temple too had four gates in the four directions.

The city itself was divided into several quarters or *vadas*. People of a profession lived in their own distinct *vadas*.

- ◆ Can you draw a rough sketch map of your village or town and compare it with the map of Orugallu?
- ◆ What are the main differences you find between modern towns and cities of the past like Orugallu?
- ◆ Use the scale shown on the map to find out the breadth of the outer wall from East to West.
- ◆ Also find out the breadth of the city within the inner stone wall from North to South.
- ◆ If you have ever been to Warangal city, describe the city today to your classmates.
- ◆ Svayambhu Siva was the family god of the Kakatiyas. Why do you think they built the temple and not the palace or a market place in the middle of the city?

As Kakatiya kings became powerful they were able to persuade many chiefs to accept them as their Kings. The Kakatiyas

protected their *samantha* subordinates from other warriors and chiefs and also took the *samanthas* with them when they went to conquer other kingdoms. Many of the *samantha* chiefs made attempts to become independent and the Kakatiya kings sent armies to subdue them.

### Rudrama Devi

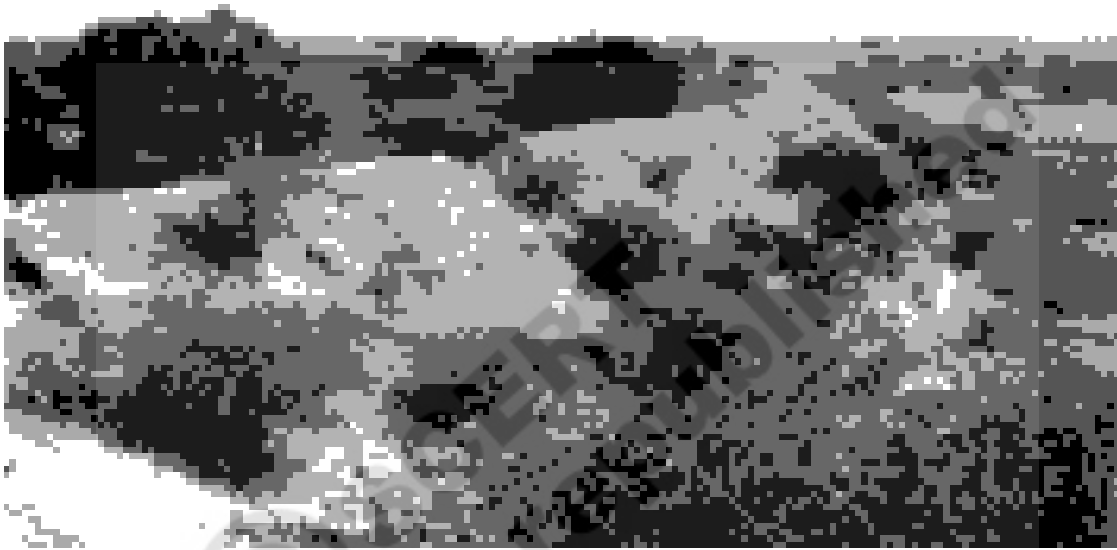
Have you heard of a brave woman ruler by the name of Rudramadevi? She was a powerful and successful ruler who impressed one and all with her abilities. Rudramadevi ruled from Orugallu (modern Warangal) and belonged to the famous Kakatiya family. She ruled from 1262 AD to 1289 AD for nearly 27 years. In our country there have been very few women rulers. In distant Delhi too there was a woman ruler by the name of Raziya Sultana some years before. But her nobles did not like to be ruled by a woman and had killed her. A famous traveller from Italy, called



Fig 14.2 Rudramadevi - Riding the Horse.  
(Modern representation in Hyderabad)

Marco Polo visited Rudramadevi's kingdom and he says that she was fearless, dressed herself like a man and rode horses with ease. In fact in her inscriptions Rudramadevi calls herself as Rudradeva Maharaja. Like Raziya Sultana she too faced

the opposition of many important chiefs who had been under her father, but Rudramadevi succeeded in subduing them. Rudrama and her grandson Prataparudra faced many revolts and took several steps to control these chiefs.



*Fig 14.3 A segment of the inner earthen wall with its (dry) moat at right.*



*Fig 14.4 Aerial view of the eastern gateway in the city's inner stone wall, showing the 'bent entrance' (Vankadari) and open courtyard (anganam). The doorway at right is the 'great city gate' leading to the royal avenue (raja margambu).*

## Nayankara System

Rudramadevi and Prataparudra encouraged several skilled warriors who were not from any powerful family but were very loyal to the queen and the king. They gave them high positions and the title of Nayaka. They were given several villages from where they could collect taxes. These villages were called their Nayankara. Each nayaka had to maintain a stipulated amount of army, from the income they derived from the nayankara, for the service of the king. But they did not keep these villages permanently as they could be transferred at the will of the king to a new place. These Nayakas depended upon the queen or the king and remained loyal to them. They were also probably used to subdue the rebellious chiefs. This arrangement was called Nayankara system.

Read here a portion of an inscription by a nayaka of Rudramadevi :

*“In the year (1270 AD) on the occasion of Sankranti, Bollinayaka the guardian of the gate for Kakatiya Rudradeva Maharaja, gave ten measures of land to the temple servants of God Kalyana Keshava of Kranja village in his own nayankaramu for the merit of his master Rudradeva Maharaja.”*

- ◆ Why do you think Bollinayaka was calling Rudramadevi as Rudradeva Maharaja?

## Encouragement to Agriculture and Temples

The Kakatiyas brought large tracts of land under cultivation by building tanks and digging wells. Apart from members of royal family and other feudal families the rich sections of the society like merchants and artisans participated in expanding



Fig 14.5 The remains of the great temple dedicated to Siva.

agriculture through construction of tanks. This enabled the extension of cultivation in the difficult terrains of Telangana and Rayalaseema.

The Kakatiyas also extensively patronised temples by making large donations to them. Women members of royal family like Muppamamba, and Mailamma made land grants. Women of other rich sections also made gifts of land, tanks, cash, cattle, jewellery, etc., to temples and brahmins. By promoting agriculture they derived income in the form of taxes and agriculture produce.

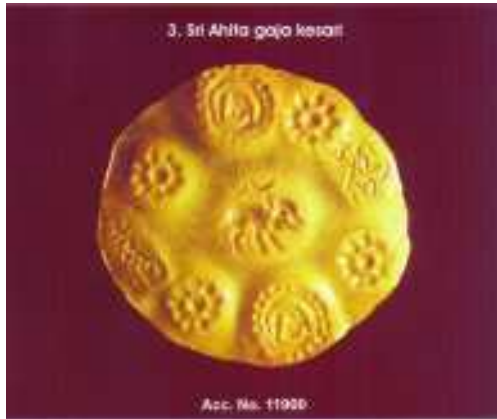


Fig 14.6 Gold coin issued by Kakatiyas.

## Trade

Warriors, chiefs and Kings derived much of their income by taxing traders, especially those who engaged in overseas trade from the ports. Read a portion of an inscription issued by Kakatiya king Ganapatideva in a place called Motupalli:



14.7 Motupalli Pillar Inscription

*“This Abhiaya Shasana has been granted by Ganapatideva to sea traders going back and forth to all continents, countries and towns. In the past, kings forcibly seized all the cargo such as gold, elephants, horses, jewels, etc. when sea going vessels were caught in storms, wrecked and cast on shore. But We for the sake of our reputation and punya and out of pity for those who have incurred the grave risk of a sea voyage, give up all but the customary tax.”*

The inscription goes on to mention the tax he would collect from the traders on different articles of trade.

- ◆ How did the kings treat the traders earlier?
- ◆ What was the guarantee Ganapatideva was giving them?
- ◆ Why do you think he was giving this protection to the traders?

Marco Polo who visited one of these ports says that the exports were diamonds, best and most delicate cloth which looked like tissue of spider’s web. He further says, “There is no king nor queen in the world but might be glad to wear them”.

## The End of the Kakatiyas

Sometime around 1190 AD a new kingdom was established in Delhi. The new kings were called Sultans and they originally came from Turkistan. They had a powerful army and were able to defeat most of the kings of north India and the Deccan before long. Sultan Mohammad bin Tugluq was able to defeat Kakatiya Prataparudra in 1323 AD. Thus ended the Kakatiya dynasty.

Some years later two new kingdoms were founded in Karnataka called Bahamani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms about which we will study in the next chapter.

### **Palnati Vira – Heroes who cut across Caste barriers**

*Palanati Virula Katha* written by Srinatha around 1350s helps us to understand how collectives of warriors must have been formed. The leading character, Balachandrudu, has a small war band of devoted companions from diverse backgrounds. One is a Brahmin while others – a blacksmith, a goldsmith, a washerman, a potter and a barber – are drawn from the service and artisan communities. Balachandrudu and his cohorts are so committed to each other that they are called *sodarulu* (brothers). Just before they set out for battle, Balachandrudu's mother prepares a meal for all the "brothers" with her own hands. But she serves this food to each one on a different kind of plate (earthen, bronze, leaf, etc.) and is rebuked for making such distinction by her son, who says that caste must be set aside when one goes to war. And so the "brothers" all eat from each others plates, in defiance of convention but in recognition of their joint fate.

### **Key words :**

1. Warriors
2. Nayankara System
3. *Samantha*
4. Artisans

### **Project work :**

1. Prepare a short presentation of any of the three stories in the form of a play.
2. Collect popular accounts of the origin of your village or town and prepare a chart and present the same.
3. Visit an old temple of your area and find out who built the temple, when etc. and look for any inscriptions in it.

## **Improve your learning**

1. Compare the warriors of those times with what you know about the armies of modern times. What differences do you see between them?
2. Kings and chiefs built irrigation tanks to improve agriculture in the Kakatiya times. What do they do now?
3. How do you think the Kakatiyas were able to gain control over the chiefs?
4. Why do you think the Kakatiyas did not appoint powerful chiefs as Nayakas?
5. Why was it difficult for women to rule in those days? Is it different today? How?
6. In those days powerful men had their own land and were also able to tax other farmers, traders and artisans. Can powerful people do this now? Give reasons.