

WARANGAL

The Lost Empire



Kakatiya sculpture

Warangal is one of the major archaeological sites of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. It is also an important centre of Telugu culture and a seat of learning as well. As a tourist destination, there is so much to see in this historic city; it was the ancient capital of the *Kakatiyas* – a dynasty of great warriors and the legendary young Princess Rudramma Devi, who is still remembered in this land even some eight centuries after the dynasty faded into the history. There are countless songs sung in the glory of the Kakatiyas; these are intricately woven into the folklore here.

The Kakatiyas ruled the medieval Andhra from 10th to the 12th century AD. The dynasty left a legacy more lasting than the mere forts and temples. Its influence is felt even on the contemporary Telugu language and literature, apart from architecture and arts. Not just the monuments, they also left behind several scenic lakes as well, which are considered engineering marvels even to this day.

Warangal has also been a traditional centre for handicrafts. The most noted among them are the brass work, carpet weaving and *Tussar* industry. The *Batukamma* festival and *Medaram Jatara* are unique to this place. The village *Pembarthi* is Andhra's traditional centre for brassware. In keeping with the times, the traditional craftsmen here make a variety of beautiful, decorative and utility objects of brass famous the world over. The *Pembarthi* brass potted planters decorate many homes, hotels and corporate officers across the globe.

As we leave *Pembarthi* and travel east, we will be entering Hanamkonda, the twin town of Warangal, where a magnificent temple – known as the 1000-pillared temple – is located, skirting the shoreline of the historic Bhadrakali lake. It is named after the deity *Bhadrakali* whose ancient shrine stands on the edge of the same lake. The Kakatiyas in fact derived their name from *Kakati*, the local name for the deity Bhadrakali, their family deity.

The 1000-pillared temple was built during the reign of Kakatiya king Pratapa Rudra Deva in 1162 AD. Inspired by the early Chalukyan style and built as a triple shrine dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and Surya (the sun-god), it is an elegant structure quite impressive for its carved pillars, perforated screens and profusion of sculpture. The central hall of the temple has richly carved doorways and lintels with a circular stone platform in the middle, a common feature found in all the Kakatiyan temples which was meant for dance performances related to temple rituals. In the front open yard of the temple sits superbly carved *Nandi*, mount of lord Shiva, who looks awesomely huge and truly majestic. This temple is an architect's delight.

Some distance away from this temple, to the west of the lake, stands on a hill the temple of Padmakshi devi, reached by a steep flight of steps. This temple is said to be much older than the others abutting the lake. Interestingly, we also find on this hill some beautiful icons of Jain Teerthankars cut into to huge rock boulders. The Padmakshi hills, as they are locally known, form a picturesque backdrop for the idyllic lake below. The lakeside presents haunting silhouettes of the hills and the jagged volcanic rocks against the setting sun. This is the traditional venue for the annual *Batukamma* festival, the largest congregation of women who celebrate amidst songs and dance the festival of thanksgiving to Mother Nature whom they worship with a profusion of flowers for bringing in good rains and greening their environs.

Fort Orugal, the old capital of the Kakatiya kingdom, now known as Warangal, lies five miles further east of Hanamkonda. In Orugal, both ancient and modern exist side by side. The fort built in concentric circles in a radius of about seven miles was the seat of Kakatiya power. Impregnable as it may seem even today, and standing as testimony (even in its ruins!) to the military skills of Kakatiya builders, the fort thwarted several attempts by enemies to overrun it. This is the converging point for tourists visiting Warangal.

Contd.

Cultural Calendar for May

- May 4** Hindustani vocal music recital by Miss. Apoorva Shridhar from India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- May 8** Programme to Mark the 145th Birth Anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore jointly organized by the Indian Cultural Centre and the Tagore Society.
Venue & Time: ICC 4.00 p.m.
- May 11** Film: Karuthamma (with English subtitles)
Language: Tamil
Directed by: Bharathiraja
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs
- May 16** Film: Saathiya (with English subtitles)
Language: Hindi
Directed by: Shaad Ali
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs
- May 19** "Maitri Sandhya" an evening of music & dance presented by the Indian Cultural Centre & the Sri Lanka India Society
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- May 25** "The end is the journey" – Lecture & exhibition of paintings By Ms. Nalini Jayasuriya
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
Exhibition dates: 26th & 27th from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00p.m.

(Admission to all programmes is free on first come first served basis)

The Archeological Survey of India dug out some buried remnants of a magnificent structure – apparently belonging to an annihilated temple dedicated to another Kakatiyan deity – *Swayam Bhudevi* (temple to the Mother earth). It is led by four impressive gateways known as *Keerti Toranalu*, or the victory arches, standing majestically in four cardinal directions. They are said to have been built by King Ganapati Deva to mark the victory of Princess Rudramma Devi over the Yadav kings of Bidar. Each of these arches is a masterpiece of classic Kakatiyan art; they are known for their remarkable symmetry and intricate carvings.



Nandi bull guarding the 1000-pillared Temple

Another Kakatiyan monument located outside the city limits is the famous Ramappa Temple, 45 miles off Warangal, which is yet another fine specimen of the Kakatiyan temple architecture.

This 12th century monument – a Shaivite temple – is an archeological wonder in black granite. It is known for its superb sculpture, especially the figurines of voluptuous court dancers carved in black basalt with brilliant mirror-like finish.

However, the trip would be incomplete without a visit to some of Warangal's scenic lakes and dense forests that surround them. In those days, it used to be the tradition of the Kakatiya builders to create a lake and a temple side by side. The great lakes like *Pakhal* and *Ramappa* constructed during their times are still alive and kicking; they are the lifeline of the district – irrigating thousands of acres of lands. The forests abutting these lakes are rich in wildlife, including tigers.

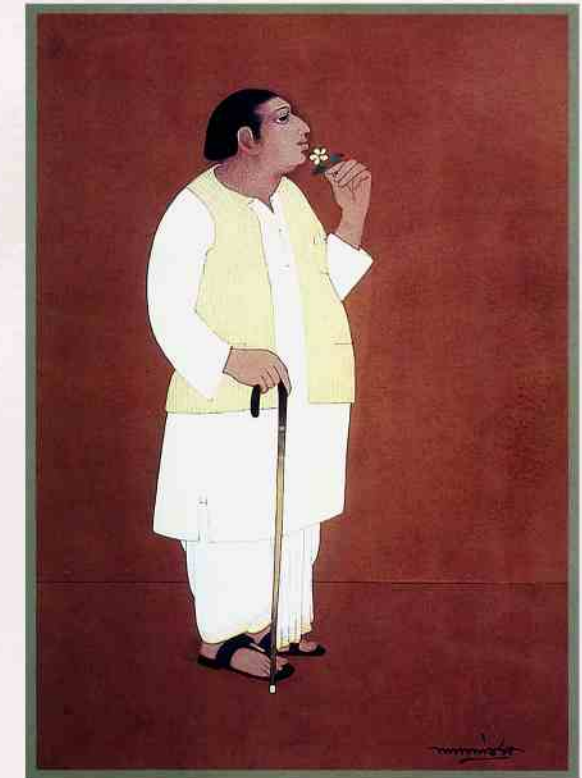
The innumerable tribes inhabiting these forests gather once in every two years at the forest village of Medaram to celebrate what has come to be known as *Sammakka Jatara*, which also attracts thousands of tribals from as far as Chattisgarh and Orissa states.

Ramchander Pentuker, *India Perspectives*



ICCR

May 2006



Lulu Prasad Shaw, *Babu*, tempera, 61 x 46 cms., 2001

Indian Cultural Centre

133, Bauddhaloka Mawatha,
Colombo 4, Sri Lanka
Telephone: 2500014, Fax: 2598674
E-mail: icc@sltnet.lk
ICCR Website: www.iccrindia.org

In Retrospect

10th March

Mirudangam & Carnatic vocal music recital by Master. Abilash Thevaraj & Mr. A.K.Karunakaran



Master. Abilash Thevaraj & Sangeetha Vidwan A.K.Karunakaran, eminent Carnatic vocalist presented an evening of captivating music. Abilash disciple of Kalabhooshanam Mr. A. Vickraman did his mirudanga arangetrans in April 2005. Mr. A.K. Karunakaran, sang several keerthanai's and raagas for which Abilash accompanied on mirudangam. The evening was very well enjoyed by the audience gathered at the centre.

13th March

"Holi Milan" – Programme to mark the Holi festival

The Indian Cultural Centre organized a programme entitled "Holi Milan" to mark the Holi festival on 13th March. The programme included vocal music recital by Mr. Heshan Gamage and his group members and dance recital by the students of Ms. Anjali Mishra.



The programme commenced with vocal music recital by Mr. Heshan Gamage in which he sang popular Holi songs. He was joined on vocal by Gayani Nadeesha, on tabla by Chandralal Amarakoon, on dhol by Gayan and on organ by Sisira.

The dance recital included two items, a Dandiya dance and a dance item for a Holi song. The dance items were presented by Nimasha Gayani Madurasinghe, Iyasha Sandamale Dissanayake, B.D.H.Nilmini, Niranga Sanjeevani Ariyapla, Chathurani Devika, Achini Dissanayake & Indu Anuradha Daluwatte.

The evening was very well enjoyed by the audience gathered at the Centre. The programme concluded with a small reception.

16th March

Sargam – An introduction to Hindustani classical music



A five part lecture series on understanding and appreciating Hindustani classical music was conducted by the Centre starting from 16th March 2006. Dr. Dayaratna Ranatunga, eminent vocalist and music therapist conducted the lecture series. He was joined by Prof. Amara Ranatunga on vocal demonstrations and several eminent musicians demonstrating on various instruments. The lecture series took place at the Centre on 16th, 23rd, 30th March & 4th & 5th April 2006. Various elements of Hindustani vocal music which was explained and demonstrated were very well appreciated by the members who participated in the lecture series.

21st March

"Nav Pratibha" – A display of new talents in Indian classical music & dance by the students of the Indian Cultural Centre

Nav Pratibha – A display of new talents in Indian classical music & dance - performances on sitar, violin, tabla & of Hindustani, Carnatic vocal music, Kathak & Bharatha Natyam dance recitals by the students of the Indian Cultural Centre held at the Bishop's college auditorium on 21st March. The event was presided by the High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka Smt. Nirupama Rao. Honourable Mr. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, Minister of Cultural Affairs & National Heritage graced the occasion as Chief Guest and Mr. Sanath Nandasiri, Dean, Faculty of Music, University of the Visual & Performing Arts as Guest of Honour.



The evening started off with a classical sitar recital in which the students trained by Dr. Nirmala Kumari Rodrigo presented an item, a composition based on raag Hansadhvani set to Madhyalaya Teental which was composed by their guru Dr. Nirmala Kumari Rodrigo.



The classical sitar recital was followed by the Carnatic vocal music recital by the students trained by their guru Kalasuri Ms. Arunthathy Sri Ranganathan. It started off with a "Keerthanai - Sri Ganesha Charanam" and continued with a "Saukakala Keerthanai - Nagumomu" and concluded with a Meera bhajan.



Carnatic vocal music recital was followed by a tabla duet by the students of the Centre trained by their guru Visharadh S.W.Randoowa. They presented an item entitled "Gurukul Ananyata" (tabla bols played according to the four different gharanas or styles of tabla playing – Banaras, Ajrada, Lucknow and Punjabi).



Hindustani vocal music students trained by Sangeethapathi Mr. Premadasa Mudunkotuwa presented a Bhajan.



This was followed by a violin duet in raag Jaya Jayawanthi set to Teental presented by students trained by their guru Visharadh Somasiri Illesinghe.



The instrumental and vocal music recitals were followed by dance recitals. The Bharatha Natyam dance students trained by Ms. Vasugy Jegatheeswaran commenced the dance recital with a dance item for the song "Theeradha vilayaadu pillai" a song written by famous Tamil poet Subramaniya Bharathiyar and continued with "Lingastakam" a dance item for the song in praise of Lord Shiva.



The Kathak dance students trained by Ms. Moksha Samarasooriya presented "Krishna Vandana" followed by classical Kathak dance.



Kathak dance recital was followed by Bharatha Natyam dance recital by the students trained by their guru Ms. Subashini Pathmanathan. They started with a classical item entitled "Sabtham" and continued with a "Keerthanam" in praise of Lord Krishna and concluded with a folk dance.

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Films in May

Karuthamma (with English subtitles)

Language: Tamil
Directed by: Bharathiraja
Starring : Raja, Rajashri,
Sharanya & Maheshwari



Saathiya (with English subtitles)

Language: Hindi
Directed by: Shaad Ali
Starring : Rani Mukherji
& Vivek Oberoi

