



E-ISSN: 2706-9117  
 P-ISSN: 2706-9109  
 IJH 2019; 1(1): 01-03  
 Received: 01-05-2019  
 Accepted: 05-06-2019

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## Religious conditions during the kakatiya feudators

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### Abstract

The Kakatiyas ruled over a vast area, comprising of a major part of the present Andhra Pradesh except the three extreme northern circular districts and also some places in the present Karnataka and Tamil Nadu districts. It embraces the area from Draksharamam to Pitapuram in the north and Kanchi in the south. It also included Bidar and Raichur districts and some places in the present Kolar district in Karnataka. The subordinates rulers under the Kakatiyas the Recherla, Malyala, Viriyala, Natavadi, Cheruku and Velamas were the subordinates of the Kakatiyas in the central zone. The second peripheral zone was shared by Induluri chiefs and the Chalukyas of Nidadavole, while the entire third peripheral zone and some part of twilight zone were under the sway of Gona chiefs and the Kota chiefs. During the period Saivism was a dominant religion which greatly influenced the life of the people. Vaisnavism was next to it. To a limited extent Jainism and Buddhism also flourished. Saivism with its different schools was at its zenith during the Kakatiya period. Kakatiya rulers built many temples to lord Siva and the Kakatiya feudatories followed the footsteps of their over lords.

**Keywords:** Kakatiyas, feudatories, Siva, Jainism, Buddhism, Vaisnavism

### Introduction

The Recherla Reddis described themselves as paramamaheswaras. They built several temples of lord Siva, matas and donated lands for their maintenance. Erakasani, wife of BetiReddi built Erakesvaralaya after her name and donated lands. She also constructed Komaresvara and Erakesvara temples after the names of her parents. NamiReddi built Trikutesvara temple after the names of his parents. In his own name he built Namesvara temple at Pillalamarri, granted villages and opened a choultry for feeding the needy. RecherlaRudraSenani built the famous Ramappa temple besides other temples at Elkurti and Orugallu. His son Katreddi donated lands to a great Siva scholar Mahadevamanchi. Kataya, son of Rajanayaka, minister of RecherlaRudra built Trikutesvaralaya at Godisala. Natavadi chiefs were also Saivaites. PakkidiRudra's wife Mailamba installed Mailambikesvara at Tripurantakam and donated lands for the lord's naivedya. Kundamba, wife of NatavadiRudra consecrated god Rudresa after her husband's name Mahadeva, after her father's name (KakatiMahadeva), Surya and Ganapati after her brother Ganapatideva and endowed them with a part of the village Kundavaram. This shows that Kundamba's patron deity was Siva and as she was specially devoted to Siva she constructed temples to the god Siva at Kalesvaram, Jeedikallu, Srisailam and Mantrakuta. The Cheruku chiefs, though Saivaites, were tolerant towards other sects. They built and endowed lands to Siva and Vaisnava temples. The temple Ketesvara, Maresvara and Surya built by Cheruku Bollaya Reddi were living symbols of the memory of his family members. Similarly the temples of Bollesvara, Mallesvara and Ganapesvara came into existence to cherish the memory of Immadi Viswanatha's parents and brothera. Care was also taken to provide for their maintenance with lands situated at Rempadi village. The Prasasti of Kota rulers of Dhanyavati claims that they were devotees of Amaresvara of Amaravathi. Kota Ganapamba, a devotee of Siva is credited with the construction of many siva temples and the installation of golden kalasa on the sikhara of the Amaresvara temple at Amaravati. She constructed at Enamadala Betesvara temple after her husband's name. She built Ganapesvara temple at Amaravati in her name as well as in her father's name. The Kayasta chiefs were also Saivaites. They built several temples and endowed them with agraharas. Ghoderaya Gangayadeva, a great Saiva, teacher and Ambadeva's minister, established Ghoderaya, gurupitha or a Matha. His son was Siddesvara. The Saivaacharyas Nanda siva, Trayambaka Siva, Kumara Siva, Rudra Siva, Santapura Siva, received gifts of villages from the kayasta chiefs for the maintenance of mathas and Vidvapithas. Ttigullapadu epigraph of

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Jannigadeva refers to a gift made to Santasivadesika of Abhinava Golaki-matha at Srisailam for the maintenance of Sivaligamatha, Vidyamandapa and a feeding house. Another record of Jannigadeva from Pondaluru record the grant of Purundaluru (Pondaluru) in Pottapinadu to his spiritual guru, Santa Siva Desika of Abhinava Golaki Matha of Sripurvata for the maintenance of Vidyamandapa and feeding house attached to Sivalingamatha at Srisailam. As these mathas were considered to be of the Pasupata Saivism. The Induluri chiefs were also Saivaites, though much is not known about their patronage of Saivaites for want of epigraphical evidence. Recharla Velama chiefs were Saivites initially, in tune with their Kakatiya overlords, but later adopted Vaishnavism. The Chalukya Chiefs of Nidadavole were Saivaites who consecrated temples to Siva and provided for worship and festivals in them.

Among the several schools of Saivism like the Kalamukha Kapalika, Pasupata, Aradhya Saiva, Virasaiva etc. Pasupata gained prominence during the Kakatiya period. It is well known that the followers of Kalamukha Saivism adopted the Pasupata philosophy as they do not have a specific philosophy of their own. The early rulers patronised the Kalamukha school of Saivism. Beta II is said to be the best pupil of Ramesvara Pandita, proficient in Lokulesvara agama mhasiddanta. The Sanigaram inscription records that Prola I, Beta II and Prola II were parama-mahesvaras. Rudradeva was a paramamahesvara. Thus upto the end of 12th century Kalamukha Saivism spread through out Andhradesa because of the patronage of the Kakatiya rulers. This is evident from the innumerable temples and mathas that came into existence and the patronage extended to the Saiva teachers of Pasupataschool. During the region of Kakati Ganapatideva, the Pasupata Saivas belonging to the golakimatha in the Dahala Country on the bank of Narmada, gained popularity among the masses as well as the rulers. While the names of Kalamukha ascetics end with rasi, pandita and sakti, the names of Pasupata end with Siva, Sambhu, Pandita and Rishi. According to Malkapuram was Visvesvarasiva of Golakimatha. The epigraph furnished interesting and detailed account of Saiva teachers of Golakimatha. It records the grant of Mandaram of Manadam village on the bank of river Krishna of Visvesvara Sambhu in A.D.1261 who built a temple to god Siva. A monastery and a feeding house. It also mentions other charitable gifts and benefactions which Visvesvara Sambhu made at other places. The Kakatiya period is also noted for another school of Saivism called Aradhya Saivism.

### **Vaishnavism**

Vaishnavism made steady progress during the Kakatiya period. In spite of the preference to Saivism, the Kakatiyas were in no way opposed to Vaishnavism and continued to have the sacred boar (Varaha) and the Divine Mount (Garuda) as the crest and banner of their family. In temples they installed both Siva and Vishnu deities and made provision for their daily worship. Some of the Kakatiya subordinates like Viriyala and Malyala families were devoted to Vishnu. The Gona chiefs were Vaishnavites. For instance the Ranganatha Ramayana composed by Gona Buddha is sufficient proof of the devotion of the Gona chiefs to lord Rama and the epic of Ramayana. The Cheruku chiefs also built temples for Vishnu. The Velama chiefs in later period adopted Vaishnavism. Vaishnavism, appears to have won the allegiance of large sections of people from all

classes, because of the appeal of the doctrine of Prapatthi, the liberal outlook of Vaishnavism and the bhoga concept of Vaishnavism.

### **Jainism**

The life of Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya was a saga fierce campaign against Buddhist and Jainas. An inscription from Pudur near Gadwal in Mahabubnagar district bear testimony to the destruction of jains by Saivaites in the time of Ganapatideva. The Kakatiyas started their political career as vassals of the Chalukyas who were followers of Jainism and so the early members of [the family were not opposed to, if not actually professed Jainism. From the time of Proaraja II, the Kakatiya took advantage of the growing weakness of their Chalukyan overlord and made a bid to build and empire. The realization of their ambition necessitated the rulers destruction of all religious beliefs and institutions that were sanctimonious to the Western Chalukyas. Simultaneously, the Virasaiva movement was making vigorous progress to the advantage of the Kakatiyas. Ganapatideva took advantage of the growing popularity of ViraSaivism vis-à-vis Jainism and to wipe out Jainism. In spite of such fearful campaign of persecution, Jainism did not completely die out in Andhra. It lingered on for a considerable time at places like Penugonda and Adoni, and was completely wiped out during the Muslim invasions. In such an atmosphere, there is no possibility for the feudatory chiefs to either protect or profess Jainism, which in course of time died its natural death lacking succor.

### **Buddhism**

Buddhism was in its declining phase during the Kakatiya period. Shorn of its glory and grandeur, the worship of Buddha continued in Andhra till about the close of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. An inscription from Abhur dated in the year A.D. 1182 records the gifts made by Kota Ketaraja of Dharanikota and his courtesans to the Buddha. But it may be added that Ketaraja and his courtesans worshipped Buddha as an Avatara or incarnation of Vishnu. The last blow at the remnants of Buddhism in Andhra was delivered by Virasaiva movement under the leadership of Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya. His biography in Telugu by Palkurti Somanatha records disputations between the Buddhists and Panditaradhya in the court of the Velanati chief Rajendra Chola at Chandol which resulted in the murder of the Buddhist Acharyas and destruction of their monestory. The antagonism and hostile attitude of the Saivas gave a death blow to Buddhism which gradually disappeared in Andhradesa.

However, it must be admitted that the sectarian conflict between the Virasaivas and followers of the other faiths did not assume serious proportions as in Karnataka during the period. Mallireddi in his Bekkallu inscription states that the four samayas namely Saivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism and Buddhism are superficial differences which give rise to undue suspicion. Believing god in reality to be one, although their family religion was Jainism, he constructed several Siva temples. Thus subordinate rulers played an important role in the consolidation of Kakatiya kingdom. They were great generals and good administrators. They patronised arts and letters like their overlords and left their imprints in the form of monuments, water tanks etc. It bears testimony to the religious harmony during the period.

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