

Champaka



The Forgotten Queen of Keladi Kingdom *Tragic Love Story*

K. Arun Prasad

Translated by
M.N. Sundar Raj



Champaka

The Forgotten Queen of Keladi

Kingdom

**A Tragic Love Story of Venkatappa Nayaka, the Popular King of
Keladi Dynasty and Queen Champaka**

First Edition

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Preface

I am grateful to Sri. P. Puttaiah who introduced me to Sri. Arunprasad of Anandapur in one of the occasions. Then I was presented a book written by him on Queen Champaka and read it with much interest. It is a tragic love story of Venkatappa Nayaka, the famous king of Keladi dynasty and queen Champaka.

As I went on reading, many interesting things about the life of Champaka captured me. Reading her tragic story, tears welled up in my eyes without my knowledge. An inherited caste ghost that claimed a beautiful mind had a profound effect on my mind. Though it is a small novel, very impressive. So, I decided to translate into English. It shows the magnanimity of Arunprasad that he happily agreed when I told him my wish.

I have read it several times before translating. I have translated it with devotion and to the best of my ability. There may be some mistakes here and there for which I request the readers not to give much importance to them.

We have heard so many stories of monuments to express their love in our history. Shahajahan built Taj Mahal for his Queen Mumtaz Mahal, Rani Roopmathi's Pavillion Mandu in M.P, Mastani Mahal in Pune and others. These monuments always stand as a reminder of historical significance. Crafted and built as epitaphs of undying commitment of love. Here is one such monument Champaka Sarassu, near Anandapuram in Shimoga district of Karnataka state in India.

There is an interesting story behind this beautiful Pond. Champaka is the name of a fisherman lass and Sarassu means pond. It is said that the lake was built in 16th century by Hiriya Venkatappa Nayaka a famous ruler in Keladi kingdom who ruled Keladi from A.D. 1583 to A.D.1630.

Venkatappa Nayaka saw her for the first time, and was astonished to see her beauty and fell in love with her. Her innocent beauty, made him completely surrender to her. He expressed his desire to marry and make her as his Queen. He convinced both the father and daughter and married secretly without informing of his Queen of the title Bhadrammaji.

Alas! Both crowned princess Bhadrappa and Siddappa expired. In the meanwhile, Queen Bhadramma got hurted severely when she came to know the secret marriage with Champa. She passed away in the same lamentation. Venkatappa Nayaka lost interest in administration and began to spend most of the time with Champaka. The people began to criticize in public by pointing her caste as she was a low caste lady. They thought that all mishaps happened because of this evil woman. She was considered as an elusive low caste lady. They also thought that she was not deserved to live in a palace with the King.

Champaka was deeply hurt and committed suicide. When the king came to know the sad demise of Champaka he was regretful and his grief had no bound.

He thought of building a magnificent memorial for her. He built a beautiful lake and in the middle, a small Shiva temple came up. He installed two stone elephants also. This historic lake of Mallandur known as Champaka Sarassu built after her death i.e. after 1624 A.D. It was in dilapidated condition till recently.

Some youths of Anandapur with the help of Yashomarg an NGO of film star Yash has now revived and transformed into a beautiful tourist spot. The surrounding of Champaka sarssu has been kept clean. There is a sluice on one side of the lake to pass the excess water out and in the opposite side it is believed that the water was pouring from the mouth of stone Nandi. But now it is not visible.

The place is less crowded and very close to nature. It's locally called as "Mahanthina Matha" and it is a very nice place to spend

some time with family and friends. It is one of the best places and considered as a hidden pearl of Malenadu. It is also the best place for Photo shoot.

There are many inscriptions which have spoken about the pool. An inscription here clearly mentions that the King Hiriya Venkatappa Nayaka donated a village to Mutt. If the central Archeological Survey of India minds, this historical place may be developed into a beautiful tourist spot.

The history of our state especially of Keladi Dynasty has become world famous and it is the duty of us to popularize it, and in this regard this little historical novel is a gift to the readers.

M. N. Sundar Raj

ಕೆಳದಿ ಸಾಮ್ರಾಜ್ಯ
ಇತಿಹಾಸ ಮರೆತಿರುವ

ಬೆಸ್ತರರಾಣಿ ಚಂಪಕಾ

ಕೆ. ಅರುಣ್‌ಪ್ರಸಾದ್

ಕೆಳದಿಯ ಖ್ಯಾತ
ರಾಜಾವೆಂಕಟಪ್ಪ ನಾಯಕ
ಮತ್ತು ಚಂಪಕಾರಾಣಿ
ದುರಂತ ಪ್ರೇಮ ಕಥೆ

Original Book in Regional Language Kannada

From the Author's Pen.....

Champaka Rani was a famous queen of Keladi kingdom whose history has been forgotten or hidden. This book contains a tragic love story of a king Hiriya Venkatappa Nayaka who reigned for 43 years and his Queen Champaka.

In memory of Champaka, a beautiful lake called Champaka Sarassu was built about 400 years ago in Malandur village of Anandapuram Hobli in Sagara Taluk of Shimoga district in Karnataka state of India.

It is a magnificent structure of love, built 28 years before the Taj Mahal. Champaka, who belonged to backward caste in Hinduism. King Venkatappa Nayaka falls in love with her Rangoli art and marries her. But Maharani Bhadramma sacrificed her life against this marriage and food habits of Champaka. This hurted Champaka and she committed suicide by drinking a mixture of a diamond powder with milk.

The inter-caste marriage is the main reason for the concealment of the king in the history.

In addition to this, an Italian traveller Petro Della velle in A.D.1624 recorded a visit to the king Venkatappa Nayaka at Ikkeri. It is considered as a tragic love story due to Indian caste system.

I am thankful to renowned writer Shri. M N Sundar Raj for translating this short Kannada novel of mine in to English and special thanks to Mr. Manoj Krishna, Sagar for final touch up and correction work.

K. Arun Prasad
Anandapuram



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