

Transcending social and geographical barriers-

Vision of Tribal women for a new social order.

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The historical heritage

The daughter of Chandragupta Vikramaditya of Ujjain (M.P) Prabhavathi Devi was married to Nandapur king of Orissa, in Eastern Ghats. (The capital from Nandapur was shifted to Jaypore in Koraput district of Orissa). The stone throne of Vikramaditya with 32 steps is still intact and worshiped in Nandapur

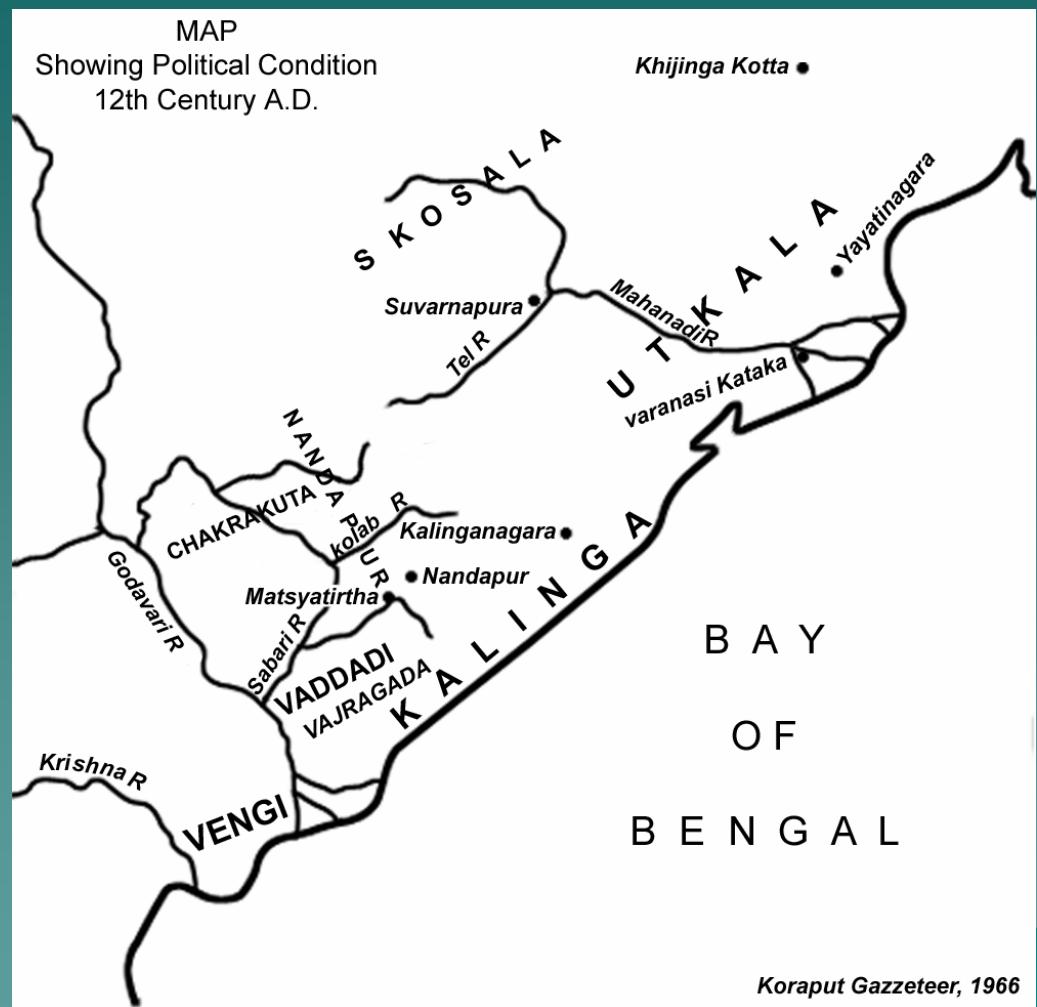


The High and Low lands

The Nandapur kings have relationship with Madugula, Vaddadi, Vajragada kingdoms in the low lands abutting Eastern Ghats. Vajragada kingdom near Narsipatnam was demolished by Madugula kings for eloping with their girl.

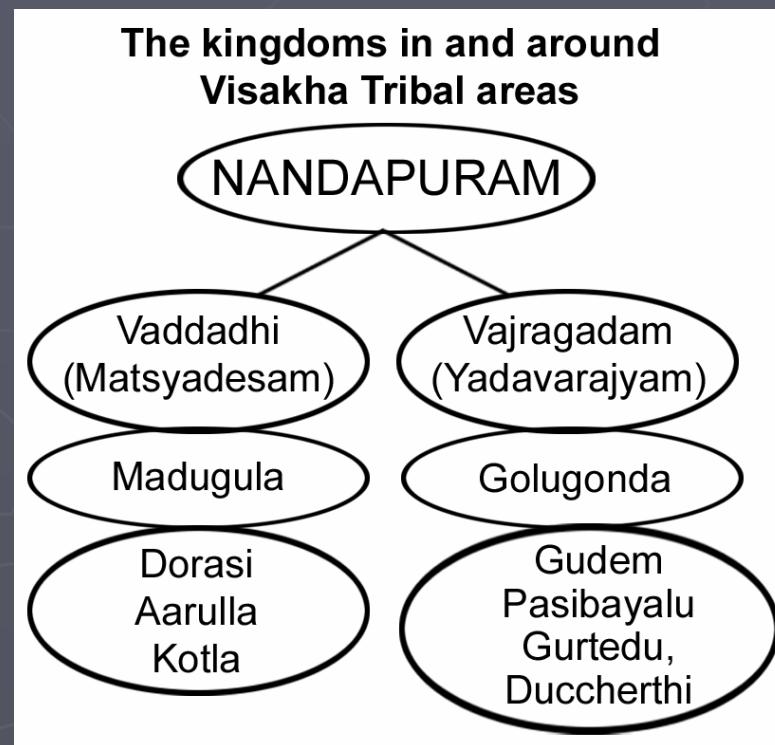
Sanskritisation

The sanskritisation process divided the tribal society in to beef eaters, non beef eaters; rulers and ruled.



Modakondamma song

It will be interesting to note how these historical developments are reflected in the oral tradition, in the ballad of Modakondamma, sung by tribal women of Visakha district, and their vision and urge for a new social order, transcending social and geographical barriers. Modamma is a popular deity worshiped in the uplands and in the lowlands.



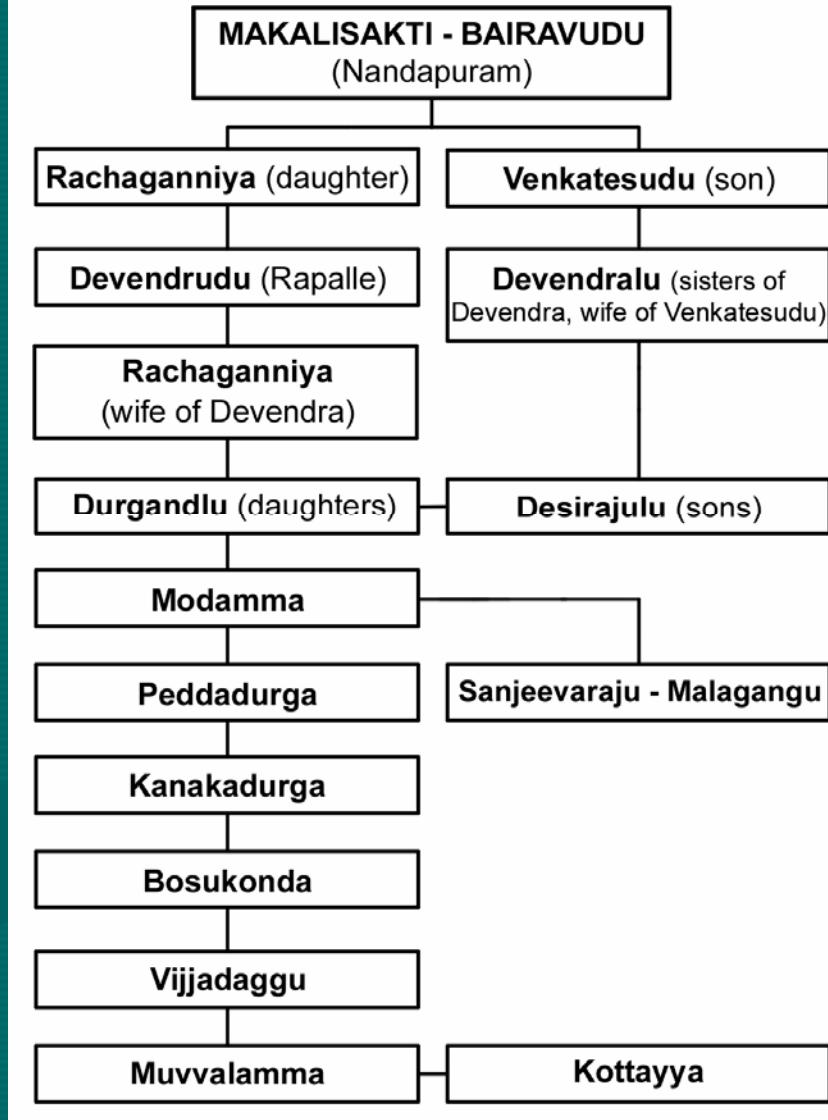
The marriage relationships

Modamma is eldest among the seven daughters of Devendra, the king in the low lands. Venkatesa is the king of Nandapur. Both the rulers exchanged their sisters in marriage.

The Venkatesa, the upland king, has seven sons. The sons while proceeding on hunting crossed the borders of uplands and entered in to low lands. They found the seven princess of lowlands immersed singing merrymaking.

Both of them traced their family relationship and came to know that they are nephews and nieces. They got married in a hideout 'Kalyanapulova'

Relationship of Hilandkings & Lowlandkings in Modamma song



Crime and Punishment

The Devendra treated the marriage as theft. He summoned the bridegrooms, handcuffed and imprisoned them.

The tribal bridegrooms felt such punishment as an insult and disgrace, committed suicide

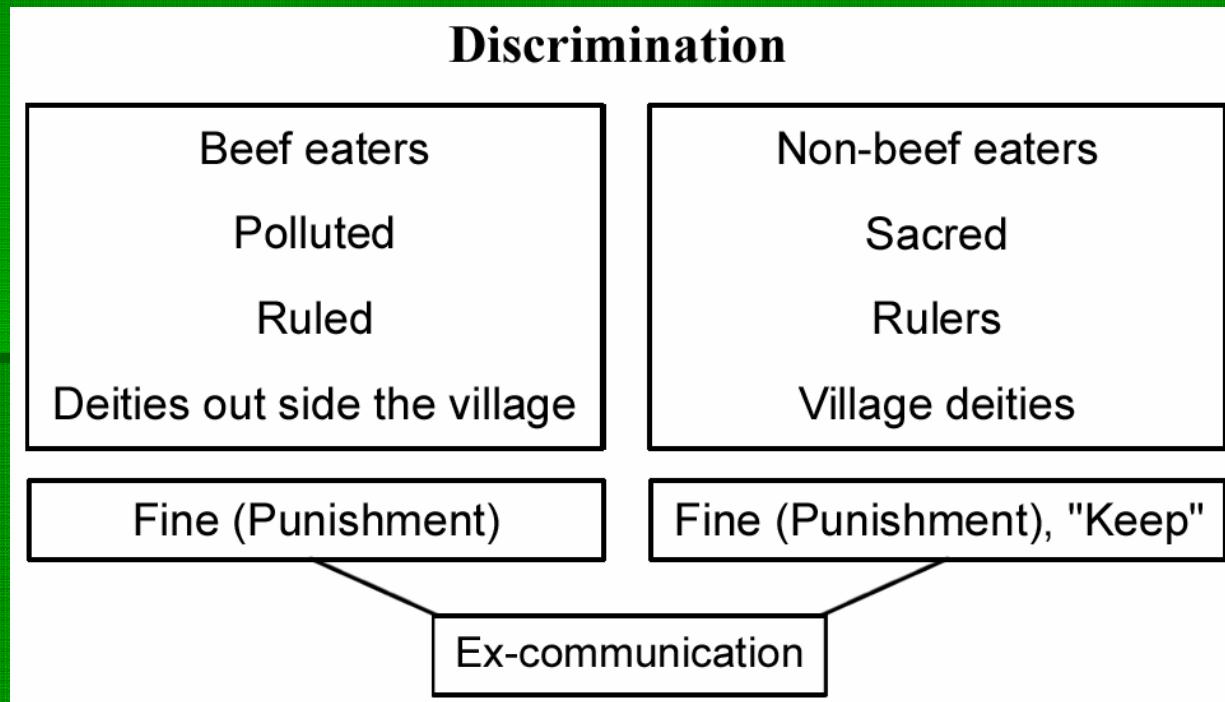
Crime and Punishment among Highland - Lowland communities



Beef eaters, non beef eaters

By that time Modammama was pregnant. She delivered a male child Sanjeevaraju, who is the only heir to both the kingdoms.

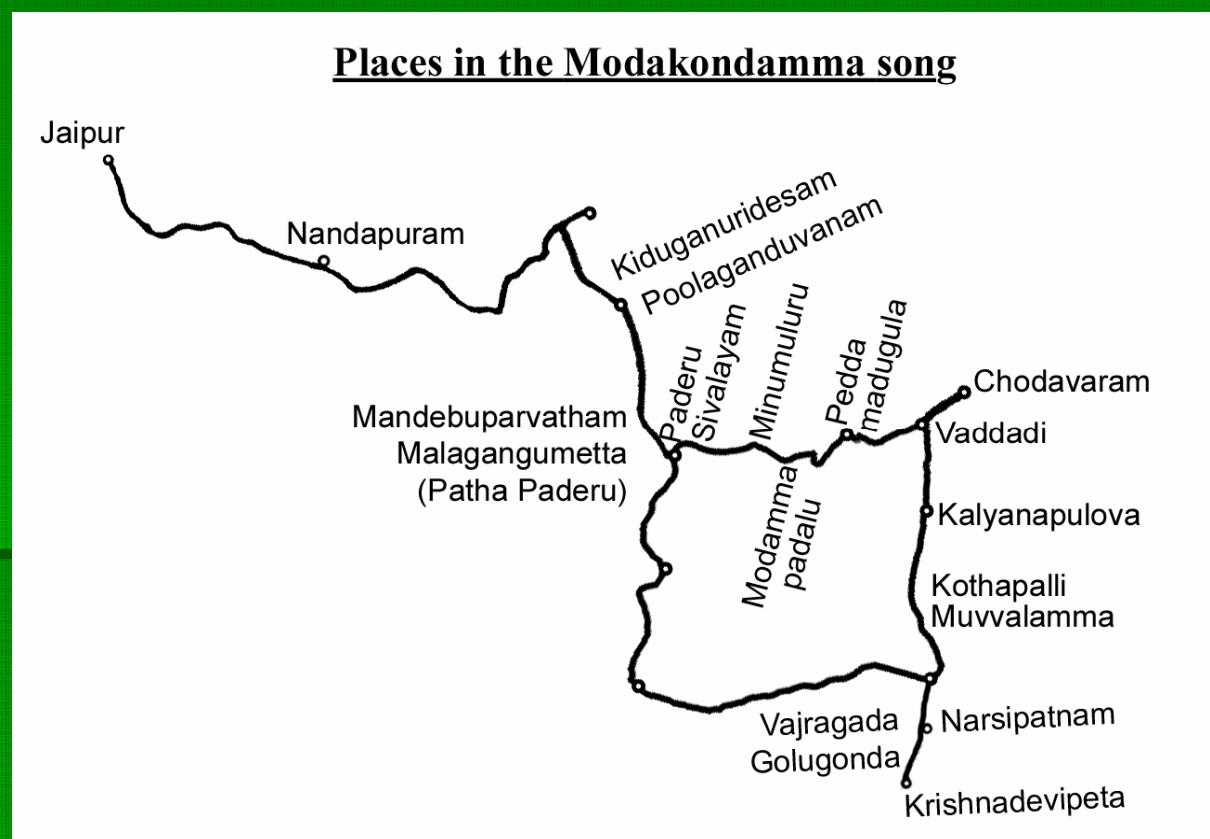
Sanjeeva raju during his hunting trip met Ganga, a girl hailing from an untouchable caste. Both fell in love with each other. The girl teased him offering a meal with beef.



Celebrating marriage

Modamma and her sisters were unable to come to a decision on excommunicating their only son. They felt any hasty decision may result in another disaster.

They communicated the matter to the queen in Nandapuram. The Queen rushed to the house of Ganga, appreciated her politeness and mannerisms. She celebrated the marriage of the lovers. The places described in the ballad are very sacred to the hill folk.

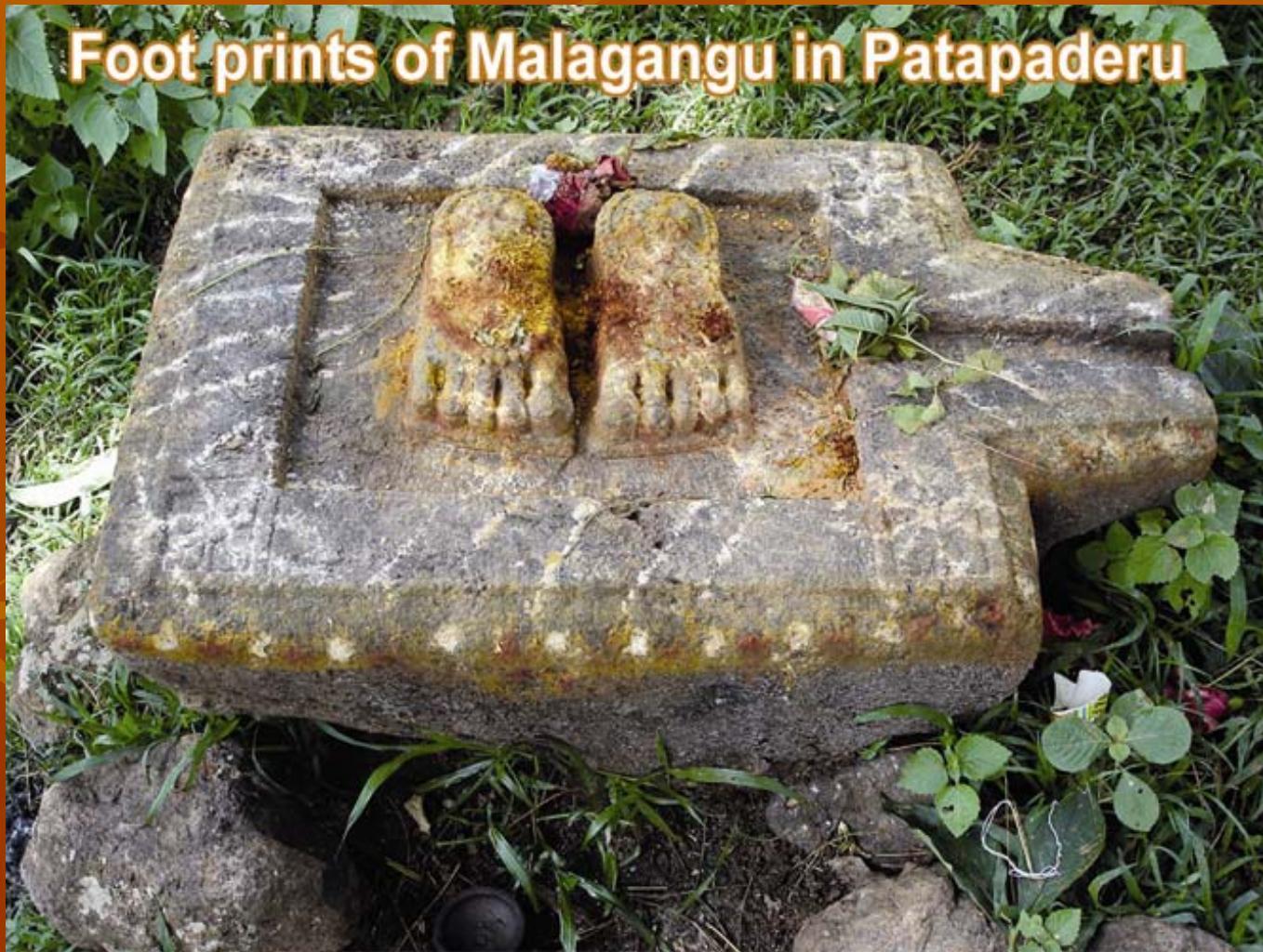


Festival sans message

But the development over few decades resulted in treating Modamma as a deity. A temple is constructed in Paderu.



A grand festival is celebrated. But the foot prints of Ganga are ignored.



The festival celebrated every year, with a procession from the old temple at Minumuluru in the ghat road to Paderu temple. The festival goes without any reference to the ballad and its message.



**Foot prints and the temple of
Modakondamma, Minumuluru**

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