



# “Ramappa Temple” Exquisite Craftsmanship of the great Kakatiya dynasty a UNESCO World Heritage Site of Telangana

**Dr. Kottireddy MallaReddy,**  
Associate Professor of Telugu

SRR Government Arts & Science College (Autonomous), Karimnagar, Telangana, 9154690580,

*Abstract: Popularly known Ramappa Temple of Telangana State (India) recognized as the world's historical and cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2021. The Temple is so unique that even centuries later having seen various earthquakes, invasions and wars over centuries still stands majestically. The foundation of the temple is built with “sandbox technique” and porous bricks made of lightweight, so-called ‘floating bricks’, which reduced the weight of the roof structures. The paper reveals the uniqueness of the Ramappa Temple.*

**Keywords:** UNESCO, World Heritage Sites, Kakatiya Temples, Ramappa Temple

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) strives to establish peace through international cooperation to promote the recognition, preservation, and propagation of cultural and natural heritage worldwide. By recognizing the world's historical and cultural sites as World Heritage Sites, UNESCO contributes to preserving them and passing them on to future generations. In the words of UNESCO, heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live today and what we pass on to future generations. Both our cultural and natural heritage are irreplaceable and inspiring sources of life. The mission of UNESCO in relation to World Heritage is to promote the commitment of countries and local populations to the conservation of World Heritage in various ways. Providing urgent assistance for the protection of endangered treasures, technical assistance for their conservation, and providing professional training.

UNESCO strengthens the bonds between nations by promoting cultural heritage and the equal respect of all cultures. It facilitates and promotes the development and cooperation of scientific programs. As freedom of expression is a fundamental right and a key factor in the development of democracy, UNESCO organizes programs to promote the flow of intellectual ideas and knowledge sharing by helping various countries adopt international standards. UNESCO's founding vision was born in response to world wars of racism and anti-Semitic violence. UNESCO has a special role to play in strengthening the foundations of lasting peace and sustainable development

of societies. Increasing cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, and information will pave the way for international social equality in the face of increasing pressures in the face of global social change.

The UNESCO prepares World Heritage Sites list to ensure the international recognition and legal protection of the listed sites by taking appropriate steps to obtain funding from the World Heritage Fund. World Heritage Site designation involves making of a provisional list of all member Countries of their important cultural and natural sites. Selected places from that list notify into the nomination file. These are listed as World Heritage Sites by the International Council on Monuments and Sites and the World Conservation Union. A cultural area of world-renowned outstanding universal value, architecture, technology, monumental arts, urban planning, landscape, exceptional evidence of living or extinct civilizations are the grounds for recognition as World Heritage sites.

The World Heritage Committee currently includes Australia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Thailand and Uganda.

Ramappa Temple of "The Glorious Kakatiya Temples and Gateways" nominated for World Heritage Site in 2014. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) included the Ramappa Temple in the "Provisional List" of the proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019. Russia introduced Rule 22.7 at the session of the WHC on 25 June 2021, with Norway the only country to oppose the move, citing the resolution of ICOMOS. As part of India's diplomatic success, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, with the support of 17 countries, took the decision to add Ramappa to the list of World Heritage Sites after a consensus at an online meeting of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) being held in Fuzhou, China. Congratulating the people of Telangana on the occasion, Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi said that this iconic Ramappa temple showcases the finest craftsmanship of the great Kakatiya dynasty. I urge you all to visit this majestic temple complex and enjoy its magnificence," he said on Twitter.

*Somewhere between 1212 and 1234, a temple architect named Ramappa toyed with the idea of creating a unique temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. A place so unique that even centuries later, the temple is known by its creator's name. Ramappa Temple is the only temple in India that is named after the architect; not that attempts were not made to name the temple after the chief deity, in this case, Lord Shiva. The temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and you can find it under the name Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, a mix of both Shiva and Ramappa. (The Times of India)*

Ramappa Temple also known as Ramalingeshwara Temple which is located in a valley in Venkatapur village of Palampet mandal, 220 km from Hyderabad, 77 km from Warangal and 15 km from Mulugu (Mulugu district) in Telangana state, South India. Dedicated to Lord Ramalingeshwara, this temple is the only temple in the world to be named after a sculptor. Now under the Archaeological Survey of India. Based on an inscription in this temple, it is said to have been built in 1213 AD by Recharla Rudra Senani of Kakatiya ruler Ganapati Deva. This temple is a Shiva temple where Lord Ramalingeshwara is worshipped. Marco Polo, while visiting the Kakatiya Empire, called this temple as "the brightest star in the galaxy of temples". It is built on a 6 feet high platform. It

consists of sanctum sanctorum with Antara and Maha Mandapam. The temple is Known for exquisite craftsmanship and relief work. It is a testament to the technology of its time and an understanding of raw materials. The foundation of the temple is built with “sandbox technique”, the flooring is made of granite and the pillars are made of basalt. The lower part of the temple is built with red sandstone. Porosity and uniform firing of the bricks in the roof (sanctuary) of the temple is a testament to their skill. These lightweight bricks float on water.

Despite being decades old and having seen various earthquakes, invasions and wars over centuries, Ramappa Temple still stands majestically. Some of the idols in the temple were damaged during Malik Kafur's attack in 1310. The hunters destroyed the rest. Although the flooring was shaken by the largest earthquake of magnitude 7.7 - 8.2 on June 16, 1819, the columns and vertical structure remained intact due to the sandbox technique used in its construction.

The hall in front of the sanctum sanctorum has several carved pillars. The main structure is built with red sandstone. The outer pillars large brackets contain black basalt rich in iron, magnesium and silica. These are carved with sculptures of mythological animals, female dancers and musicians. Its specialty is the sandbox technique used in its construction. Ramappa is the masterpieces of Kakatiya kings, their exquisite sculpture and various dance poses. Based on the sculptures in this temple, Nataraja Ramakrishna is believed to have revived Shivatandavam. Poses written by Jayaprasanna in his Book Nrittaratnavali are also found in these sculptures. The walls of the temple display intricate carvings. The pillars and ceilings are also beautifully carved. The circular path around the sanctum sanctorum is filled with shikhara. In front of the temple many pillars built with exquisite carvings. Unlike other Shiva temples in the country, here Nandini is shown in an attentive posture ready to execute the Lord's command. The complete story of Ksheera Sagara Mathanam is engraved on the beam. Myths like Dakshayagna Samharam, Tripurasura Samharam, Gajasura Samharam, Narakasura Samharam and Gopika Vastrapaharanam are wonderfully carved.

*The culture-induced landscapes of Kakatiya show the nature-culture relationship from the anthropological perspective. It is understood that human beings and their culture exist with nature. Human needs will intervene with nature and the Kakatiyas portrayed boundless limits without exploiting it. It is important to merge with nature and help it prosper. Creating awareness and educating ourselves about Kakatiya's cultural and technological advancement will help in connecting future generations to its heritage. It can be concluded that the Kakatiya rule was the Golden Age of Telangana (Prof. G.S.V. Suryanarayana Murthy).*

Inside the temple, the Shiva Lingam is placed in the sanctum at a height of 9 feet. Sculptures can be seen on the walls, displaying various dance forms as well as various musical instruments, depicting scenes from the Hindu epics Ramayana, Shiva Purana and many other ancient texts. The temple has two sub-shrines named Kameswara and Koteswara on either side. The Ramappa temple exhibits a traditional style of architecture whereby the main building of the temple is built on a raised platform in a detached manner. Another strange thing is to be noted in this temple is the musical sounds of SA-RI-GA-MA(Basic sounds of Indian Classical Music) will recite when the pillar or stone is struck. Along with Ramappa Temple, Ramappa Lake and Laknavaram Lake are tourist

attractions. The Ramappa lake built during the time of Ganapati Deva proves the critical irrigation system of the Kakatiya Dynasty. It is a matter of pride to be recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site for this unspoiled historical and cultural artefact with fine technical knowledge and intricate craftsmanship.

Rudreshwara, popularly known as Ramappa Temple, is located in the village of Palampet approximately 200 km North-east of Hyderabad, in the State of Telangana. It is the main Shiva temple in a walled complex built during the Kakatiyan period (1123–1323 CE) under rulers Rudradeva and Recharla Rudra. Construction of the sandstone temple began in 1213 CE and is believed to have continued over some 40 years. The building features decorated beams and pillars of carved granite and dolerite with a distinctive and pyramidal Vimana (horizontally stepped tower) made of lightweight porous bricks, so-called ‘floating bricks’, which reduced the weight of the roof structures. The temple’s sculptures of high artistic quality illustrate regional dance customs and Kakatiyan culture. Located at the foothills of a forested area and amidst agricultural fields, close to the shores of the Ramappa Cheruvu, a Kakatiya-built water reservoir, the choice of setting for the edifice followed the ideology and practice sanctioned in dharmic texts that temples are to be constructed to form an integral part of a natural setting, including hills, forests, springs, streams, lakes, catchment areas, and agricultural lands. (UNESCO Date of Inscription, 2021)

#### References:

1. Prof. G.S.V. Suryanarayana Murthy, KAKATIYA TOWNS, TEMPLES AND TANKS AS LANDSCAPES A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE, JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, SEPTEMBER 2021.
2. The architectural marvel that is Ramappa Temple, TIMESOFINDIA.COM/TRAVEL TRENDS, WARANGAL/ Created : Jun 27, 2022, 11:07 IST.
3. Ramappa temple in Telangana, and its UNESCO tag, THE INDIAN EXPRESS (Jurnalism of Courage) New Delhi | Updated: July 28, 2021 07:41 IST
4. Dr. N.R. Giridhar, An Overview of Architecture and Temple Development under Kakatiyas, Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR), November 2021, Volume 8, Issue 11(P. 484-486).
5. Ramappa temple: A marvel in black basalt, The Hindu August 12, 2021 04:12 pm | Updated August 13, 2021 04:19 pm IST
6. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1570/> , UNESCO World Heritage Site.
7. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India, From Prehistoric times to fall of Vijayanagar, 1955, OUP, New Delhi, 2002.
8. Dr. K. Mallareddy, Advantages and limitations of Virtual Classroom in Telugu Language Teaching, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 15, Issue 6 (Sep. - Oct. 2013), PP 54-56.