

Sana Patta of Vedma Ramu Thoti

Resident minstrel bard Thotti of Yedulapad Village,
Lakhshittipet Taluk, Kumram Bheem District, Telangana, India.

Recorded in 1977

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This is the text that Vedma Ramu dictated/spoken to me of his epic mythological song, the Sana Patta, that was sung to me, accompanied by his Kinjiri fiddle and his children and grandchildren in the courtyard of my house in Ginnedhari village, Asifabad Taluk, Andhra Pradesh, in 1987. It took him five days to perform it.

Sana Patta means 'song of the ancestor'. The sanalir is the overall body of Raj Gond ancestors.

Anyone reading this should understand that Vedma Ramu sings each sentence, which is then repeated by his *chelas*, his students. In his case these were his three or so sons and cousins and also his grandson. In this way, and through the endless repetitions in the lyrics, his students memorise and learn this great epic poem so that they can repeat his performance after his death. In this way this oral tradition is preserved. Also do not forget that reciting this epic myth at the Raj Gond's many coming of age ceremonies like birth, marriage and death ceremonies, the Thotis and the Pardhans, the traditional minstrels and bards of the Raj Gonds, are following their profession, from which they earn a living. They are paid for every performance and also an annual percentage of the harvest by their patrons. They also only perform and are paid by the particular pari (clan) to which they belong. In this way it can take up to five days to completely perform this full recital. However, for many of the ceremonies only one or two sections of the total score are performed. Though usually at the death ceremony of a wealthy and important community elder the entire epic myth is sung. This will attract a particularly large audience. While this mythical song is being sung, the ritual death ceremony will be being performed at the same time.

My footnotes and the phrases in brackets are inserted to help understand the text. They are often translations of Gondi words that have obscure meanings. It should also be noted that repetitive lists of words like "Am Bijam, Em Bijam, Ram Bijam, Wam Bijam, Lam Bijam" are largely meaningless, but are rhythmically powerful and add an esoteric quality to the performance.

However, the frequently repeated lists of "Deeps" (or continents, zones or islands) do have important meanings and references, which I occasionally analyse and explain.

All Gondi words and names and titles are italicized.

Vedma Ramu Thoti considers himself to a storyteller and philosopher; in effect a tribal (adivasi) version of a Hindu Brahmin priest. However, unlike the Hindu Brahmin, he does not have any priestly ritual function or a high status of purity in a caste-like (varna) system. He is considered to have a lower status than his Raj Gond patrons. He is not allowed to

enter a Raj Gond house, even his patron's. Nor will he ever share food or interdine with a Raj Gond. He is not seen as having any polluting influence on his patrons. But he is considered as ritually and economically inferior. Marriage between a Gond and a Thoti or Pardhan is strictly prohibited. However, the Thotis and Pardhans are considered to be intellectually more advanced and are often used as honoured counsellors and advisors, while also being agriculturally and, in terms of hunting and subsistence economy, inferior to their Raj Gond (Koitur) patrons.

The Thoti's mother tongue is a dialect of Dravidian Telugu, while the Pardhan's mother tongue is a dialect of Indid Marathi. In Marathi they refer to themselves as Pardhan, while in Gondi they refer to themselves as Patardi. Though both Pardhan and Thoti service sub-tribes are fluent in the Gondi dialect of their patrons.



Vedma Ramu Thoti performing the Sana Patta for me in 1987. He is watched by the villagers of Ginnedhari and accompanied by three sons, a cousin and his grandson.

Vedma Ramu's own Introduction.

My community is *Thothial* and my *pari* (clan) is Vedma. My father is Mengu and my mother is Jangu Bai. I am the tenth child of my mother's bosom. I am the youngest of the sons. My father and my mother were very poor. What I am going to tell you is the five words of the Pen (the God). I give my salutes to all. I am giving my salutes to you *sahib* (me). I announce victory (*jai*) to all the mothers and fathers seated here. Here, now, what I am going to tell you I have learnt from my elders, my ancestors. I will begin this great story that is the story of how the world was created.



Vedma Ramu, the traditional minstrel bard performing – an experienced entertainer.

Vedma Ramu's mnemonic system.

When I asked Vedma Ramu, after he had finished reciting this epic saga, how he remembered such a complicated thing, he simply replied that he thought of a picture of twenty-five seeds (*bija*) laid out five by five on the ground with one seed (*bija*) coming out of the centre top and three out the centre bottom. He went off and got some pebbles and laid them out like this on the ground. Then he named each seed.

“This is how I think of it”, he said. “But this has to be repeated three times. Each one of the three is for the underworld of the spirits and ancestors, the ordinary world of daily life and the upper world of the gods”.

Vedma Ramu's mnemonic system



NIRANJAN or NIRANKAR

The Almighty. Nothingness. Primordial void.
Prabhu Niranjan Guru, unified master, without sorrow or thought.



SIKATI

darkness



MAHATU

a spring



MADANKAR

wonder, splendor.



Pancha Tan Matra

five human senses



Pancha Tan Bhutamulu

five
elements/substances



SARDAR SHIVA

Shembu. Shesh.
Nag. Shankar



AMBIJAM

sperm



PARASHAKTI

direction



SHABDA

sound



SUNILA or AKASH

sky or ether



ISHWARA

minor deities



YAMBIJAM

blood



ADISHAKTI

devotion/from the
beginning



SWARESHA

touch



WARI

air or wind



RUDRA

hunter, the roarer



RAMBIJAM

feet



GNANA SHAKTI

knowledge



RUPA or ASITAMU

form or shape



TARMI or AGNI

fire



VISHNU

preserver



WAMBIJAM

marrow



ICHCHAR SHAKTI

self



RASA or SUBAMU

taste or liquid



JAL

water



PARA BRAHMA

Great creator



LAMBIJAM

brain or mind



KRIYA SHAKTI

action



GANDA or RAKTAMU

smell



DHATRI or BHUMI

earth



JAGAAT

world



VIRAAT

globe or problem



ATMA

sun, male, right hand, *rotalir*, golden creeper



ANATMA

moon, female, left hand, *soiralir*, silver creeper

Vedma Ramu's Epic Mythological Story that recounts how the world, the universe, came into being.

At the outset nothing was created. There was no water, no mountains and no trees. There was nothing at all (a void). Then what was created? *Brahma* was born. There was Darkness (*Sikati*). Then *Mahatu* (wonder) was born. Then *Madankar* (lustre and splendour) were born. The five elements of the body *Pancha Tan Matra* were born. Later the five spirits (*Pancha Bhutamulu*) were created. Later the Globe (problem/*viraat*) was created. Originally there was *Brahma*. First came darkness (*Sikati*). Second was Wonder (*Mahata*). Third was lustre and Splendour (*Madankar*). Fourth was *Pancha Tan Matra* (the five elements/senses of man). Then fifth *Pancha Tan Bhutmulu* (the five elements) was born. They are *Akash* (sky), *Wari* (air or wind), *Tarmi* (Fire), *Jal Rani* (Water Queen), *Dhatri* (Earth). These make up all the *Viraat* (Globe/universe). After the birth of all these *Khasi Khand Nau Khand Patar Deep* was born (the underworld/sacred continent/nine continents/underground island [*Deep* = Continent]). After this *Khand Deep* was born. Later *Artawa Deep* was born. Then *Kurtawa Deep* was born. After that *Maha Munulk Deep* was born. Then *Moropa Deep* was born. Then *Jambo Deep* was born. Then *Jawara Deep* was born. Then *Son Khas Deep* was born. Then *Bibla Deep* was born. Then *Gangana Deep* was born. Then *Yeovda Deep* was born. Then *Hom Deep* was born. Then *Girja Deep*. Then *Parda Deep*. Then *Bandha Deep*. Then *Dur Mandal Deep* was born. Then *Char Kon Chaur Rastra* (four sides and four ways) were born. Then *Swarga Deep* was born (Heaven). Then inside *Nau Khand Deep* father *Beech Khand*, mother *Sonjara Moti*, this couple were born. From them their daughter *Jal Rani* (Water Queen) was born. After being born *Jal Rani* was as thin as a hair. After being born, while drinking from the mother's breast, she was tossing/rocking like the waves of the sea. She is like *Ahi Jal*, *Mahi Jal*, *Aki Jal*, *Paki Jal*, *Panana Japun Jal* (wonderful water, great water, that water, this water, on all sides water, the water parted on all sides). *Jal Rani's* beauty was very great; just like the sunbeams. Like the *Agni* (Fire) beams (flames). Now then the daughter *Jal Rani* was finally born. Now (she has matured) she has come to the age of wearing the *Yeni Mula Dhikla* and *Kuri Mula Kanchuri* (the sari drawn up between the legs like an elephant's backside and sparkling coloured bodice). Later she reached the age of being able to greet her parents in the morning and look after them in the evening.

One day *Jal Rani* placed the palms of her hands and the fingers of her hands together touching each other and greeted her parents with deep respect, "Oh my parents, so much has happened since I was born. Now I will go around the seven and seven, fourteen islands (continents) and the sixteen steps of the world. I will see them". She

asked their permission to do this. Then her parents said to her, “Go do this. But you will have to be under our command. You must uphold our name.” Then *Jal Rani* greeted her parents and set off.

Then she went to *Nau Khand Patar Deep*, then *Artawa Deep*, then *Kurtawa Deep*, then *Yapar Deep*, then *Dwapar Deep*, *Maha Munulk Deep* (the land of the great wise sages), *Moropa Deep* (the land of the Navel ¹), *Jambo Deep*, *Jawara Deep*, *Sona Khas Deep*, *Bibla Deep*, *Gangana Deep*, *Yeoda Hom Deep*, *Girja Deep*, *Parda Deep*, *Bandar Deep*, *Dur Mandal Deep*, *Ek Mandal Deep*. After that she stood at the place where the four sides and the four ways meet (*Char Kon Chaur Rashtra*). Then she passed seven and seven, fourteen islands and sixteen steps. Then she became twelve years old and a well-equipped girl to stand on her own. She was jumping. She was tossing. She was tossing like the pearls and emeralds. Her hair was like the *sindi mara* with bunches of fruits. Her forehead was shining like *paris kala* (a kind of jewel that turns all to gold). Her eyes were black like *Jamun* fruit. Her nose was like the *Korma Gor* (it was finely pointed). Her lips were like the Flame of the Forest tree flower. Her teeth were like the *Tendu* seeds (pure white). Her body was glowing yellow like turmeric flesh. Her waist was as thin as the waist of a moth. Her feet were like pearl shells. Her heels were like chicken’s eggs. Her beauty was like the light of the full moon. Like this was the body of *Jal Rani*.

Then she looked at herself and felt very happy. Then she said, “The islands were born first, then I was born. In the island of *Nau Khand Deep* and on the mother waters the algae was born that is green and as thin as hair. Its name was *Son Japi*. That filled the *Patar Deep*. Then it filled the *Khand Deep*. In this way it filled the seven plus seven, the fourteen islands (*deeps*). Then she stood where the four sides and the four ways meet. Then *Jal Rani* cast her eyes on it all, “Oh God, what is this stuff? I was so clean that there was no dirt on my body. But now what is this blame on me? (What have I done wrong to deserve this algae (green slime) on me.

Then she remembered that she had brothers. Who were they? *Wayu Devta* (Wind/air God) was told of this and rushed to her with a great roar “*Jara-rara*”. After coming it removed the green slime from her body. Again she went to her *Nau Khand Deep*. Then *Jal Rani*, the Water Queen, made five islands in the water. In the whirlpool a golden plant germinated. It was shining “*jug-jug*”. It grew up “*jai jai*”. In *Nau Khand Deep* golden male (right handed twining) creepers thronged. The silver female (left-handed twining) creepers gave out shoots. All the place was filled with greenery. Then she crossed over the *Nau Khand Deep*. From there she went to *Artawa Deep*. The golden creeper grew longer and longer roaming all over the Water Queen. Then she covered *Kurtawa*

¹ The navel is the focal point, the centre of balance of the body. It is the entry point for the journey of discovery that can give the traveler, the searcher, a deeper understanding of its inner nature.

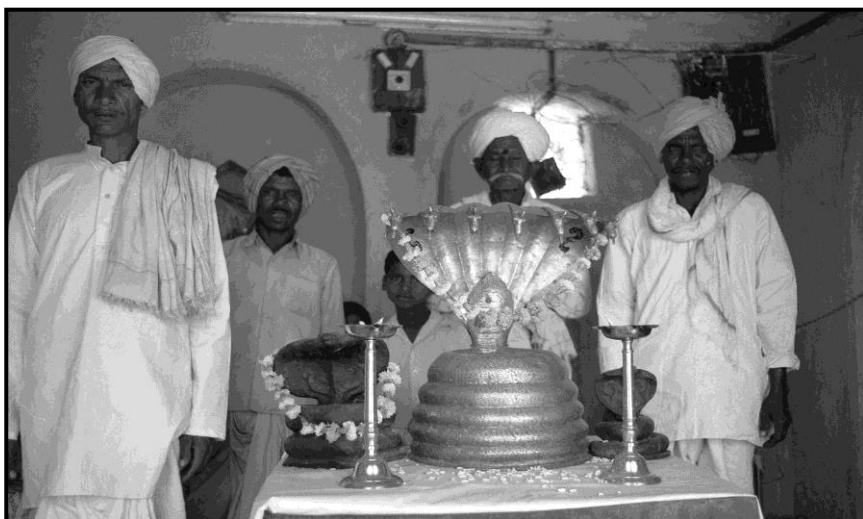
Deep, Yapar Deep, Dapar Deep, Maha Munulk Deep, Moropa Deep, Caureta Jambo Deep, Gautam Jawara Deep, Sona Khas Deep, Bibli Deep, Gangana Deep, Yeovda Deep, Hom Deep, Girja Deep, Parda Deep, Bandar Deep, Dhur Mandal Deep, Ek Mandal Deep, Jara Deep, Chaur Kon Chaur Rashtra Deep (4 sides 4 ways). At last she reached *Swarga Deep* (Heaven). On the four sides four golden creepers were stretched out. On the northern side, on the eastern side, on the western side and on the southern side, on these four corners the green leaved creepers grew long. In this way twelve years passed by and she became a mature girl of twelve years old. On this the *Jal Rani*, Mother of the waters, *Shri Deva Nath Punditers*, was created and became fully mature. Then she was fully grown. Then she flowered. On the four sides four blossoms bloomed. The blossom's seeds were ripened and burst open. Their beauty was like the sun and the moon. The blossom's seeds were created. Fruits developed and became larger and larger and then they became ripe. The four fruits have four names, *Shri Rama Nath Pundi, Shri Soma Nath Pundi, Shri Poni Pundi* (pundi = fruit). The southern side had Ram Nath fruit that was ripe. It took nine months to ripen. What was born inside this fruit? That means there are seven charms, one *Brahma*, two Darkness (*Sikati*), third Wonder (*Mahat*), fourth Lustre and Splendour (*Madankar*), fifth *Pancha Tan Matra* (the five senses of man), sixth the Five Spiritual Elements (*Pancha Tan Bhutamulu*). After that seven *Jagaat* (worlds) seven *Viraat* (globes). In this way there were eight names. From the Darkness (*Sikati*) five *wens* (gods) were born. One was *Sardar Ishwar*, two was *Ishwar Shembu*, three was *Rudra* (shape/form), four was *Vishnu* (the preserver), five was *Brahma* (the creator). In the *Mahatu* (wonder) five seeds were created, one *Ambi Jam* (*Jam* = seed), two *Yambi Jam*, three *Rambi Jam*, fourth *Wambi Jam*, fifth *Lambi Jam*. In *Madankar* (lustre and splendour) five spirits were created, first *Para Shakti* (the beyond mother/devotion), second *Adi Shakti* (original mother/devotion), third *Gnana Shakti* (devotion to knowledge), fourth *Ichchar Shakti* (character devotion), fifth *Kriya Shakti* (devotion to action/practice).

Then in the *Pancha Bhutamula* five natural elements were created, *Sunila* (Sky), second *Wari* (wind/air), third *Tarmi* (Fire), fourth *Jal* (Water), fifth *Dhatri* (Earth). In the *Pancha Tan Matralu* five elements (human sentiments) were born, *Sunila* (Sky), *Dhumramu*, *Asitamu*, fourth *Subama*, fifth *Rakhtamu*. With five times five, twenty-five elements were mixed together and three sounds 'Aum', 'Saum', 'Ahim', were created. This is the great *Guru* (master/teacher). His name is *Prabhu Niranjan Ek Shankar Guru* (*Prabhu* means without thought and with all powers unified master/teacher). *Ranj* means Sorrow, *Niranjan* means without sorrow or sorrowless/joyful). His dhoti (trouser cloth) was brown. His shirt was brown. His hair was tied into a pointed knot like a conical cap. On his left shoulder was a beggar's brown leather bag. In his hands were nine lakhs of *Taras* (one stringed plucking fiddles). In his begging bag were nine *Vibuthi* (balls of lime powder and ash). His hair had rope-like knots (dreadlocks). On his neck were *Rudrakash* beads. That necklace had twelve chains/strings. The holy thread across his torso had sixteen strands. There were five in the garlands on his neck. There were seven small beads, like stars. In each hand were twenty and twenty stars. In one hand was a conch shell. Taking all these things he was created. His eyebrows were so thick that he could not look upwards. He knows four *Vedk* (songs

or hymns) and fourteen *puranks* (myths or sagas) eighteen languages and he understood eighteen kinds of knowledge. He sat cross-legged. In this way *Niranjan* (sorrowless/joyful) Guru was created.

In the first fruit of *Shri Som Nath*, after nine months and nine days, the *Wayu Deval* (God of wind) with twelve wings was created. He has many, many colours. Then *Hom Guru* was created and afterwards *Kam Dam Kasturi Yayal* mother was created (the *Kasturi* is the musk ox, *yayal* means mother). Her legs were pure white. Her right horn was golden (masculine) and her left horn was silver (feminine). And there was a central turmeric coloured horn. On its forehead there was a white star shaped patch.

Then again it gave birth to *Shri Shekal* (the cobra snake god Nagoba). He has seven tails and fourteen hoods and sixteen shoulders. The hoods were as wide as *tattis* (bamboo plaited mats). Its mouth was very wide and its eyes as small as flies. Its tongue flickered and its body was the colour of wheat flour.



The Shri Shek Nagoba deity at Keslapur

In its fangs there was poison. It has the footprint of a musk ox (*Kasturi*) on the back of its head. Its neck was black. There were four white marks on its waist. There were nine white marks on its tail and its name was *Shri Skekal* (the cobra snake deity).

Again months past and who was created next? *Reva Guru* was created. He had a brown coloured *dhoti* and a brown coloured shirt. Again carrying months *Girja Guru* was born. She had a Head full of hair and a brown dhoti and shirt. Then *Devna Pundi* (the fruit of God) was born. It was also created after nine months and nine days. Again it was carried months. And *Yeodhan* was born. His head was full of ropes of hair (dreadlocks). His *dhoti* and shirt were both brown. And again carrying months *Gangana* was born. Again carrying months *Jambu Guru* was born. Again carrying months *Jaura Guru* was born. And again carrying months *Gope Devu* was born.

The fourth fruit was *Poni Pundi*. In its stomach after nine months and days *Aap Devu* and *Shri Gope Devu*, *Shri Nauru Devu Guru* were born. Then *Shri Guru Devu* was born. Again *Ansuria* was born. Altogether five brothers were born. Again carrying months *Mehur Rani* the spirit was born. It had eyes all over its head. Its throat was full of tongues. Her *sari* was the size of an elephant's backside. Her jacket (bodice) was of silver cloth. She wore clothes worth nine lakhs. When she as born she had wings. As soon as she was born she flapped them and flew away, flying over its fort. In the same way all these gurus were born and lived.

After the birth of all these gurus the greatest of all the gurus, *Prabhu Nirankar*, was in deep meditation. He thought, "I have given birth to so many gurus, now what duties should I give to each of them?" To whom did he call for advice? He called for *Shri Shekal* (the snake god, Shiva). *Shri Shekal* attended the court and with all reverence and high respect he greeted him with his palms and elbows touching each other. The *Shri Shekal* was blessed by *Shri Nirankar Guru* (he is also *Bhagavan* or *Shembu* or *Niranjan Guru*). Then *Nirankar Guru* said, "Go and take your own *watan* (region or parish). Your *watan* is *Nau Khand Patar Deep*. *Shri Shekal* bowed to the feet of *Nirankar Guru* and left for *Patar Deep* (the underworld). Afterwards *Khan Dan Kasturi Yayal* (mother) the cow asked if she could attend the court. She attended the court of *Nirankar* and was given the *watandari* of *Moropa Deep*. "You should feed at *Kalpar Deep*. You should drink water at *Kausan Deep*." Then *Jambu Guru* was called and he attended the court of *Nirankar*. He was told to go to the *watan* of *Jambu Deep*. Afterwards *Jaura Guru* was given the *watan* of *Jaura Deep*. Then *Son Khas Guru* was asked to take *Son Khas Deep*. Then *Gangana Guru* came and greeted *Nirankar Guru* and was given *Gangana Deep watan*. Then *Yaudan Guru* was given *Yaudan Deep*. The *Hom Guru* was given *Hom Deep*. Then *Girja Guru* was given *Girja Deep* and *Gope Devu* came and was given *Gope Deep*. Then *Parda Guru* was given *Parda Deep*. Then he called the five brother gurus and they, *Shri Aap Devu*, *Shri Gope Devu*, *Shri Nauru Devu*, *Shri Gauru Devu*, *Shri Aksha Surial* (sun in the sky) greeted *Nirankar* and they were given *Bhandar Deep*. Then *Dur Mandal Guru* was called and given *Dur Mandal Deep*. Then *Wayu Deval* was given *Adar Deep*.

Mehemai Shakti Rani had grown up to the age of thirteen and fourteen and was fully mature. Then she roamed and was totally exhausted. She had flown over the skies and said to herself that she could not go any further. She crossed the waters and was tossed about. She was unhappy that she had nowhere to rest. She had looked everywhere and she saw the pinnacles of *Nirankar's* palace sticking out of the water. She rested on a pinnacle. At once *Nirankar Guru* knew about it. "Oh you, *Mehemai Rani*, why have you perched on my pinnacle? I am the greatest of all the gurus whoever you are or I am. You are the woman and I am the man. This is not the way you should behave. Get down from that place and come here. I am going to give you your *watan* (region)." Then she laughed like the flowers blossoming. "Oh my grandfather (*ako*) I won't get down." Then the guru said, "Why won't you not get down." "*Prabhu*, my grandfather, watch me and love me and I will see and love you." He replied, "Haa, if I see you at all, you will burn to ashes. You will burn like the oil in the lantern. You will be finished. You only have four days to live in this world in your life. Again *Meha Rani* laughed and said, "Oh my grandfather, if at all my life comes before you, it will be equal to the pilgrimage to *Kashi* (Varanasi). It is just like bathing in the water of the Ganges and it is the charity of giving lakhs of cows and it is just like eating a plate full of rice and curd." Then the guru said three times, "You are not pleasing me with your words." But she did not listen to him. The truth is that "*Raj Hath*, *Bala Hath* and *Striya Hath*." That the child's wish, the Raja's wish and the woman's wish must always be obeyed.

When the guru saw *Meha Rani's* obstinacy, he called her to him. And they opened their eyes fully they saw each other and recognised each other fully for the first time. *Meha Rani* began

greeting him with arms and elbows touching properly. She was like a flickering flame and their two hearts became one. A great joy rose up. Then she asked him, "Give me a *watan* (parish)." Then *Niranjan Guru* asked her, "Go and live in *Khand Deep*, which is beyond the *Nau Khand Patar Deep*". Then *Meha Rani* is told, "Up to now I have given *watans* to so many gurus. Now my office is so big, if anyone is created to take over this office (*kutcherry*) I will come and visit you there." The *Meha Rani* bowed in front of him and he blessed her putting his hand on her head. When she abruptly stood up her waist jerked and her face was like wheat flour. Her body was like turmeric. As she went away she swayed like the waves of the sea. Then nine months and nine days passed and her stomach grew very large. She said, "Oh God, now who will look after me?" She sat down and laid an egg a quarter of a forearm's length in size. She went and rested at *Khand Deep*. Nine months and nine days passed again and the egg was shining like the sun and the moon. The egg abruptly split open and *Brahm Devu* came out of it. Again another part of the same egg opened and *Shri Satvi* was born. And again the egg hatched and *Shri Mahadu* was born. His head was covered in plaited hair. His dhoti was brown. These three Pens (Gods) are brothers.

Again she gave birth to *Gandari* who had an elephant shaped *sari*. Her jacket (bodice) was made of silver cloth. In the next birth *Kotma* was born. In this way, with the sound of *Aum*, they were all born. They were all known to *Prabhu Niranjan Guru*. Then what did the guru do? He rubbed some dirty skin off his lap, the size of a *jamun* fruit. He took out the ashes from his begging bag, which are used for making *botthu*, and he mixed the two together. He poured some nectar on it. What had he prepared? It was turned into a fruit. Then it ripened. It had become the *Vida Dode Bakar* (a split betel nut some cloves and bitter spice wrapped in a *Nag* creeper leaf). Lime had been applied to it and it was a *pan* bound up in five leaves. It was put down in front of his office (*kutcherry*). Then the *betel* leaves were burnt and some light came out of it. Then he cried out, "Oh *Brahm Dev*, come out." *Brahm Dev* came out. He made the fullest prostrations and deepest greetings. *Niranjan Guru* blessed him. "Yes my son, now hear my words. Now you must lift the *pan* and you must do whatever I order." Then *Brahma Devu* said that he would listen and obey. The Guru replied, "Now you must go to *Jal Mandal Deep*, *Dur Mandal Deep*, *Kalpar Deep*, *Kausan Deep* and *Marsa Deep*. There you will find the *Kham Dam Kasturi Yayal* (cow mother). Go and greet her. Go and drink five mouthfuls of milk and stand before her and greet her. Then she will guide your future way of life. Behind her is the *Maha Munulk Deep* (The Great Rishi/sages land). What is there? There you will find five celestial *lingams* (Shiva's phallic emblem). Go and do *darshan* (catch a divine glimpse) before them. After passing these you will find fistfuls of banyan roots hanging. And there is the head of a man there. On that head you will find a golden basket (a metaphor for a mouth) and a silver winnowing fan (a metaphor for a tongue). There are 32 nails (teeth) on it. After passing it there are two stands for earthen clay lamps (a metaphor for the eyes). After that there are two temples and two stars. These are the objects of the *Maha Munulk Deep*. (The meaning of this is that on this island of the great wise men or sages you will find a head or a consciousness of great intelligence and wisdom.)

From there you will go to *Dwapar Deep*. There you will find four ages or aeons: *Kritar Yog*, *Tretar* or *Dwapar Yog*, (*Trutar* or *Dvapara Yog*) and *Kali* or *Dark Yog*. There you will find a large golden cradle and five sisters. You must attend to them. When you leave there are sixteen *satik* (cremated widows). There are eighteen *Kamk* (memorial posts). You must do *darshan* (catch a divine glimpse) to every *Kam* (wooden post). After you pass the *Kamk* (the wooden memorial posts) you will find *Moropa Deep* (the land of the Navel ²). You must honour it by doing *darshan* to it. You must then go to the *Krutar Deep* (the land of the Hip ³). There you will find a *chowki* (a square wooden seat, [the hips]). Do *darshan* to it. You must sit there for five hours. After you leave it behind, you will find *Patar Paukang* (steps into the underworld). Do your *darshan* there. After that you will find nine doors. Embrace the doors one after the other. After passing that, there are doors that lead to the outside. (The nine doors are metaphors for the mouth, the two nostrils, the two eyes, two ears, the anus and the penis or vagina.)

EXPLANATORY NOTE by Michael Yorke and Abdul Majid:-

At this point in translating Vedma Ramu's dictation of the Sana Patta we stopped to discuss the implications of this rather confusing myth that we were working on. We got together with Vedma Ramu to try to interpret and make sense of the story so far. What follows is the result of that discussion.

In effect this previous passage is a parable for a journey of discovery through the human body, which itself is a metaphor for the underworld, the ordinary daily world on which mankind lives, and the heavenly ethereal world, indeed the entirety of existence, the existential universe. When you take the underworld of the spirit world, the ordinary daily world on the surface of the earth, and the divine ethereal world of the heavens all together, you have the total universe. So here the act of human discovery and understanding is an act of creation itself. In Gondi philosophy something only exists (is created) once you understand it. So understanding something is an act of creating it. As Vedma Ramu once said to me, "God only exists in your mind".

Abdul Majid then explained to me, after talking to Vedma Ramu, that, "All of this is a description of the body. It is a 'Death Song'. It is also a 'Creation Song' and also a 'destruction of the body and the universe song'. The body and the world are here the same thing. There are three units here that are all made up of the same basic elements. These elements are five-fold, as mentioned in the song, and also evident in Vedma mnemonic system. They are the forces or elements that make up the world, the Gods and mankind. Everything is made up of these five elements called the *Pancha Bhumatulu* in Telegu and Gondi.

² The Navel is the entry point into the body the door that lets you in so that you can understand the body's power and essence.

³ After the navel you come to rest on the hips of the person, the body, the world as represented by the human body.

The translation of Veda Ramu's epic Sana Patta myth follows...

Each door has its own room behind it. You must attend them and perform *darshan* at each of them. Then there is *Artawa Deep*. What are the things of that Deep? There you will find the book of *Mahadeva* (the Great God) that costs nine lakh rupees. Do *darshan* to the book. You must pick it up and come to me. Then you must go to *Khand Deep* where you will find *Meha Rani*. She will tell you how to live in the future. Again comes *Nau Khand Patar Deep* (the nine underground continents/islands). Who lives there? You will find *Shri Shekal* (great cobra) there. (*Shri Shek* could well be a metaphor for the intestines). There you will find the water pool of the *Patar Deep* (the underworld). In it there is a spring. And there are the veins. One is *Suriya Nadi* (the sun or male vein or channel). The other is *Chandra Nadi* (the moon or female vein or channel)⁴. These two veins or channels have eight letters (aksha). The first is *Brahma*. The second is *Sikati* (darkness). The third is *Mahatu* (a spring). Fourth is *Madankar* (valour and splendour). Fifth is *Pancha Tan Matralu* (the five basic elements). The sixth is *Pancha Maha Bhutamulu*. Seventh is *Jagaat* (the world). Eighth is *Viraat* (the void/problem). With all these are five *Penk* (deities). These are multiplied five times five or twenty five *Penk* (deities). You must leave *Brahma*, *Jagaat* and *Viraat* behind and this leaves five *Penk* for you. The five will give out branches. These are *Khandan* (lineages).

First is *Sikati* (darkness). Its elements are five-fold.

Firstly *Sada Siwa* (the great deity Shiva)

Second is *Ishwa*. (also Shiva)

Third is *Rudra*. (wind, storm, terror and the hunter)

Fourth is *Vishnu*. (the preserver)

Fifth is *Brahma*. (the primeval creator)

Secondly there is *Mahatu* (the spring). It too has five elements.

First is *Ambi Jam*.

Second is *Yambi Jam*.

Third is *Rambi Jam*.

Fourth is *Wambi Jam*.

Fifth is *Lambi Jam*.

Third is *Madankar* (see text above).

Fourth is *Pancha Tan Matralu*. (the five human senses)

Fifth is *Pancha Maha Bhutamalu*. (the five basis elements or essences)

Then he came in front of *Brahma* and greeted him. *Brahma* (or *Niranjan*) Deva said to him, "I have given you a *watan* (region/parish) that suits you". Then he made him sit on the left side. After that he called *Shri Satvi*. *Satvi* came close and stood in front of him. *Satvi* stood and greeted

⁴ The Gonds say that there are four channels, the two nostrils and the two arteries in the wrists. Of these the two nostrils, if the right hand one flows freely the person will be an active person. Those whose left nostril runs freely will be sluggish. The two will never be equal.

Brahma. He asked *Brahma*, "For what duty have I been called?" *Brahma* asked him to lift the *viraat* (this is a miraculous thing that is a test, a problem. It can be anything but we cannot say exactly what). *Satvi* replied, "I cannot lift it". *Brahma* said, "Don't be unhappy. Go to the office of the *Maha Deval* (possibly *Shiva* or *Shri Shek*). Then *Satvi*, greeting *Brahma*, flew to *Jal Mandal Deep*. From there he went to *Dur Mandal Deep*, *Kalpar Deep*, *Kausan Deep*, and *Moropa Deep*. There he found *Kam Dam Kasturi Yayal* (the cow mother). He greeted her and she told him the way to go in the future. He thought, "Why should I go to the cow mother when my brother *Bahma* has not given me a *watan*? (parish)". So he returned to *Brahma* and stood in front of him and greeted him.

Then *Prabhu Niranjan* said, sit on my right side and then you will be given a *watan* that befits you." Then *Niranjan* called his younger brother *Shri Mahadu*. He came to him and greeted him. Then *Niranjan Guru* became very happy. *Mahadu* asked *Niranjan*, "For what work have I been called?" *Niranjan* asked him to lift the *viraat* (the great problem). With all respect he tried to lift it. *Mahadu* lifted it with ease and gave it to the guru (this means he was very intelligent and understanding). The guru was very happy to see this and asked him to patiently listen to what he had to say. "Go to *Jal Mandal Deep* and then to *Dur Mandal Deep*, to *Kalpar Deep*, to *Kausan Deep* and *Moropa Deep*. There you will find *Kam Dam Kasturi Yayal* (the cow mother). Her four legs are white and she has a white patch on her forehead and a tuft of hair on her tail and a golden right horn and a silver left one. The central horn is of turmeric. When you find her. Greet her and drink five mouthfuls of her milk that is like nectar. Then she will give you the direction you need to take. When you pass the *Moropa Deep* (the entry point, the navel) you will reach the *Maha Munulk Deep* (the land of the great wise gurus). There you will find five *lingams*. Greet them and they will be proud of your devotion. They will make you have *lingams* in your hands and on your throat (They will give you a charm bracelet and a necklace). When you leave that zone/land you will have a small bunch of tiny *pipal* (banyan) roots in your hand. They will be made of steel. They will give off sparks. Greet them and carry on. You will reach the head of a man. It will be made of steel and will give off sparks. You must greet it. Carry on to the golden basket and the silver winnowing fan (the winnowing fan is the tongue; the golden basket is the mouth). In it there are 32 nails (teeth). They will shine like gold. Greet them. When you pass you will find two lampstands (the eyes).

Then you will find two temples. At the two temples you will find *Suriya Nadi* (the passage of the sun) and *Chandra Nadi* (the moon's passage). (This is the right and left nostril). Greet them and then you will find two wheels (the eye sockets). They will be shining like fire. Greet them. Leave them and come to *Dwapar Deep*. What are the things of *Dwapar Deep*? There you will find a golden cradle with twelve continents/islands in it. (the cradle is the chest that has twelve ribs). There are five sisters sitting in that cradle, the *popas* (lungs), the *tanaki* (liver), the *borka* (heart), the *niranja* (spleen) and the pancreas. The cradle will be shining. Stand there touching your five fingers together and greet it. Sit in the cradle and then carry on. After you pass this you will reach

the eighteen *Kamk* (memorial posts). After greeting them (the ribs) you will leave *Dwapar Deep* and enter *Yapar Deep*. What are the things of this *Deep*. The first is *Desta Moropa*. Greet it. Then you will reach *Chaur Katul* (the square chair). This is also made of steel. It gives off sparks. Greet it and sit there for five minutes. Then leave it and go to *Krutar Deep*. What are the things there? There are nine doors of sparkling steel. Greet them. Leaving them you will find many rooms. Greet them. Leaving them go on to the *Patar Paukang* (legs). Greet them. After leaving *Krutar Deep* go to *Artawa Deep*. There is the office of *Mahadeo*. Here you will find the nine *lakhs* book. There are four *vedas* and fourteen *puranas*. And eighteen *Shed Shastras*. Its name is the office of *Mahadeo*. That will also shine like steel. Greet it and then take it up your hands. Lift it up. After leaving *Artawa Deep* there is *Khand Deep*. What are the things there? There is *Mehur Rani Shakti*. Stand before her and greet her and call her your mother. Ask her to lead you on your way. Then she will say to you, "Why are you worried? I will look after you. Do not worry". When you leave it go to *Patar Deep*. What is there? There is *Nau Khand Patar Deep*. The gatekeeper is *Shri Shekal*. Go and stand before him. Greet him and he will show you the way forward. Passing them what is inside *Patar Deep*? There are eight things. One is *Brahma*, two is *Sikati*, three is *Mahatu*, four is *Shankar*, five is *Pancha Tan Matralu*, six in *Pancha Tan Bhutamulu*, seven is *Jagaat* and eight is *Viraat*. These are the eight things that you must greet.

What is born from *Sikati*? Five Gods were born from there. What are they? One is *Sardarshiv*, two is *Ishwara*, third is *Rudra*, fourth is *Vishnu*, fifth is *Brahma*. Greet them. After passing them five *bijam* (seeds) are born in the *vamsa* (dynasty) of *Mahatu*. What are they? One is *Am Bijam*, two is *Em Bijam*, three is *Ram Bijam*, four is *Wam Bijam*, five is *Lam Bijam*. Five seeds were born.

What was born in *Madankar*? One was *Para Shakti*, second is *Adi Shakti*, third is *Gnana Shakti*, fourth is *Ichchar Shakti*, fifth is *Kriya Shakti*. (*para* = above or beyond others, *adi* = original or of the beginning, *gnana* = of knowledge, understanding and learning, *ichchar* = of will and pleasure, *kriya* = resulting from action and doing). What was born in *Pancha tan Matralu*? One was *Shabdham* (voice or sound), second was *Sparsa* (touch), third was *Rupam* (shape or form), fourth was *Rasam* (juice or liquid essence), fifth was *Gandam* (smell). (These are the five bodily elements). Then what was born/created in *Pancha Tan Bhutamulu*? (the five basic great elements or essences). First was *Akash* (sky or ether), second was *Wari* (air or wind), third was *Tarmi* (fire), fourth was *Jal* (water), fifth was *Bhumi* (earth).

Five times five, that is twenty five, the *Pancha Maha Bhutamulau* were created. How are they? First they are bubbling around in the spring of water. Its name is *Jal Bugga* (water spring). Stand in front of it with ten fingers touching and it will be pleased. Take it in your hands. Then you will be lit up. You will think that light (knowledge/understanding) has come and that all the time you have been devoting yourself and searching only for this light (knowledge or understanding). This is the *Buddha* (teaching) and you will gain an understanding of it. Now, oh son, go away. There is

nothing else to think about. That is all". *Mahadu* then said, "*Prabhu* I am leaving you. But, oh grandfather, tell me how many years I have to travel (and discover) like this?"

"My son," said *Prabhu*, "you will have to travel for three years and again return. It will take you six years in all. (in fact this song has to be repeated three times. Each time representing the underworld (*Patar Deep*), the ordinary world of mankind, and the heavenly upper world of the gods).

The *Mahadu* said to the guru, "Six years will not be enough. Give me six years to come and six years to go, in all twelve years to go and come back". (Here he is stressing that learning to understand all this will be a great work.) Hearing this the guru was very happy. (A human is said to take 12 years before becoming a mature grown up). What did he do? He rubbed his lap and took a *Nele Kaya* the size of a portion of dirt (*nele kaya* is a very bitter gooseberry) and put it into his hand and rolled it into a ball. From his bag he took out *Vibuthi* (ashes) and mixed them with it. Then he poured *amrut* (nectar) on it. What was created then? A golden *Garuda* was created (a large vulture-like bird). *Prabhu* said to *Mahadu*, "You do not need to walk. Sit cross legged on the back of the *Garuda*"⁵. Then he gave the *Garuda* to *Mahadu*. He said, "Go away and return. Having done this work you will reach *Maha Munulk Deep*. There is the head of a man. Take your hands and do devotion to it for me. Then you will understand. Go way dear son, and then come back. Do whatever I have told you." Then *Mahadu* replied, "Grandfather, I am going and will come back to you." He greeted the head with five fingers and his elbows touching each other. He sat and left on the *Garuda*. And then it went and rested on the *Jal Mandal Deep*. Then it went to *Dur Mandal Deep* and then to *Kalpa Deep* and on to *Kawasi Deep* and onto *Moropa Deep* and *Kam Dam Kasturi Deep*. He greeted her and then the cow mother. She spread her legs and he drank five mouthfuls of her milk. Drinking this *Mahadu* greeted her and said to her, "Oh, dear Mother, I was sent by *Prabhu Niranjan Guru*. May I be given the power to rule the *Kali* (the dark world) or not? Tell me." Then what did the cow mother say? She said, "You will be given the power to rule." She said with her mouth. From her tail the sound came, "No, no." Then *Mahadu* said to the cow mother, "What is this? You are disagreeing with this, by saying yes from your mouth and no from your backside?" Then *Mahadu* was angry and punched her in the mouth with his fist. Then he punched her in the teeth and her upper jaw fell out. (The cow is said to have no upper teeth). Then *Mahadu* said, "This is the age of *Deva Gan* (time of the gods). Now comes the age of mankind (*Nara Lokamu*) or (*Singar Kali*). You have lied to me. From now onwards, as a sign of your lie, your upper jaw will be toothless." Then the cow mother shivered and said, "My son you will surely get the power of ruling the world (*The Kali Yug*). Go now it is finished."

Then *Mahadu* reached *Moropa Deep* and *Maha Munulk Deep*. There he found the five *lingams* and had to greet them. These *lingams* (Shiva's phallic emblem) had to be attached to the correct place. He passed them and there was a handful of fine banyan roots. They were pleased

⁵ The Garuda is the vehicle of Vishnu, the Preserver. It is an eagle like bird with human features.

to see him and he greeted them. Then he went on to the head of the man. He greeted it and it was pleased to see it. He passed on to the golden basket (the mouth). He greeted it and it was pleased. He passed to the 34 nails (the teeth). He greeted them and they were pleased. Then he came to the two light stands (the eyes). He greeted them and they were pleased. Then on to the temples, which he greeted and they too were pleased, then to the two big wheels (the eye sockets). He greeted them and they too were happy. From there he went on to *Dwapar Deep*. There was the golden cradle with twelve continents (the ribs). Then he came to the five sisters sitting on the twelve continents. He greeted the cradle and sat in it for five or six minutes. He passed in front and came to the eighteen *Kamk* (ceremonial posts). He greeted them and embraced each of them. Then he came to *Yapar Deep*. There he found *Desha Moropa*. He greeted it and it was happy. Then further on what did he find? He found the four-sided seat. He greeted it and it was happy. Then he went on to *Krutawa Deep*. What was there? There were nine doors. He greeted them and they were happy. After passing them there were many rooms. He greeted them and they were happy. Then he reached *Patar Tan Paukang* (the legs). They were happy as he greeted them. Then he came to *Artawa Deep*. What did he find there? There was the office of *Mahadeo*. He greeted him and taking the book in his hand he was happy. Then he came to *Khand Deep*. There was *Mehur Rani* (the seagull). He greeted her and she was happy. He asked her, "Oh mother, grandfather *Prabhu Niranjan Guru* has sent me here. May I take the power to rule the world? Please give me the golden words." There is no doubt that he will become the master of the office.

Then he greeted her and went on to *Patar Deep*. There he found *Shri Shek*. He went before him and greeted him. He asked *Shri Shek*, "May I get the power to rule the *Kali*?" "Yes it will come to you." He said giving full assurance. From there he went to *Nau Khand Patar Deep*. There it was boiling. He stood at the water spring and greeted it with ten fingers touching. The water spring was happy to see him. Then he held it in his hand and was very happy. The seven plus seven, fourteen zones gave light. Then he left *Patar Deep* and reached *Khand Deep*. From there he reached *Artawa Deep*. Then on to *Krutawa Deep*. Then *Yapar Deep* and *Dapar Deep*. And then *Maha Munulk Deep*. There he found the man's head. He took it up in his hands and he thought about *Niranjan Guru*. He said to himself, "You have told me that in *Maha Munulk Deep* I will understand. Then by the grace of *Prabhu* what was created? A boy was created in the shape of a king. Then *Mahadu* saw that for such an event *Prabhu* had sent him there. Seeing that child *Mahadu* became very happy. "Now this is *Siwa Daramam* (the limit of knowledge). Such a thing has been put into my hands. I must not destroy it." That child's name was *Jabaula* (*Jamba Wantudu* = a god-like bear). "You go and live in and rule the *Jambo Deep*." Then *Mahadu* went on from *Maha Munulk Deep* to *Moropa Deep*. There he found *Kam Dam Kasturi Yayal*. He was taking in his hands the office of *Mahadeo* and the water spring. Taking these he took six years to reach *Moropa Deep*. Then he thought, "I will not now go to the guru. I have six more years. There are seven plus seven, fourteen *Deeps*, I will go and roam through them all. He went from *Moropa* to *Jambo Deep* and to *Jawara Deep* and to *Son Khas Deep* and on to *Bibla Deep* and to *Gangana*

Deep and from there to *Yeodan Deep* and there he found *Yeodan Guru*. He greeted him with five and five, ten fingers touching. Then *Yeodan Guru* asked *Mahadu*, "My dear son, where have you come from?" *Mahadu* replied, "I have been ordered to take charge of the office of *Mahadeo* and the water spring. Taking these I am coming. When I take all these things from *Maha Deva*, he will give me a very great *watan* and I will become master of his golden seats. All the crores of living beings will in my hands." The *Yeodan Guru* said, "Oh my son, the rule will not be given to you." *Mahadu* said, "Surely I will get it because I have lifted the *Viraat*. Why should I not get the power to rule?" Then *Yeodan Guru* said, "Oh my son *Shri Mahadu*, listen to a word from me. After you pass this *Yeodan Deep* there is *Om Deep*. After that here is *Girja Deep*. There you will find *Girja Guru*. She has seven daughters who are sisters to each other. They are called *Raja Khania*, *Deva Khania*, *Deva Ghari Dev Khania*, *Draupati*, *Sita*, *Rukhmuni*, *Girja Deva* (*Khania* means a young woman).

The youngest girl was playing with the golden basket and the silver winnowing fan and also with pearls and diamonds. The six elder ones were around her. *Girja Devi* was in the middle. There were seven brothers called *Dalais*, which held seven big iron sticks and stood around them. "Oh my son *Mahadu*, you will have to capture the youngest girl avoiding the sight of the six sisters and seven brothers. After you get her you will be married with her. Then you will have your wife and you can both go and sit in the office. Then the office will give a beauty. Then *Mahadu* said, "Grandfather, I will go." A golden *Garuda* was created and he sat on it and from *Yeodan Deep* he went to *Om Deep*. Then *Om Deep* to *Girja Deep*. There were seven sisters whom he saw from far away. Then he thought about *Guru Niranjan* and sprang a long jump of twelve forearms length into the middle of the seven sisters. He grabbed the youngest sister, *Girja*, in his arms and leapt up and disappeared. Then he headed towards *Yeodan Deep* and reached *Yeodan Guru* and said, "Oh my grandfather, greetings." *Girja* got down from his arms and quickly greeted the guru. "Oh my dear son, that is first class, excellent. Now you are really the master of the world. You are the father and mother of the world."

Shri Mahadu took *Girja* and left to go the *Prabhu Niranjan Guru*. Arriving there he stood and greeted with palms pressed together.

Girja caught sight of *Niranjan Guru*. Then *Niranjan Guru* asked *Mahadu*, "How is she related to you?" He said, "She is my queen." Then *Prabhu* said, "All right. It is wonderful that I told you to do one thing, but you have come doing two things. Have you done what I told you to do?" *Mahadu* replied, "I have performed all your orders". *Niranjan Guru* said, "Now you have no trouble. We will perform your marriage." Then *Niranjan Guru* called *Wari Deval* before him. *Wari Deval* came and greeted him holding his palms together. Then the *Niranjan Guru* ordered him to go to seven plus seven, fourteen *Deeps*, where there are many *gurus*. "Call them all to come. We have to perform *Shri Mahadu's* marriage." Then *Wari Deval* went to fetch the *Gurus*. He fetched these *gurus* from *Patar Deep Shri Shekal*, from *Khand Deep Mehmaya Shakti*, from *Moropa Deep Kasturi Yayal*, from *Jambo Deep Jambo Guru*, from *Jawara Deep Jawara Guru*, from *Son Khas*

Deep Reva Guru, from *Gangana Deep* *Gangana Guru*, from *Yaura Deep* *Yaura Guru*, from *Hom Deep* came *Hom Guru*, from *Girja Deep* came *Girja Guru*. He brought with him his six remaining daughters. *Girja Parbatal* was the youngest, who was to be married to *Mahadu* or *Shembu*. From *Parda Deep* came *Gope Guru*. From *Bandar Deep* came *Shri Yap Devu*, *Shri Gope Devu*, *Shri Navur Devu*, and *Shri Gauru Devu* and *Shri Akash Surial Devu*. From *Dur Mandal Deep* came *Dhur Mandal Devu*, from *Adar Deep* came *Wari Devu*.

All these gathered together for the marriage of *Mahadu*. When such a god's marriage was arranged and ready *Shri Mahadu*, *Shri Brahma*, *Shri Satvi* and her three sisters *shri Ganadari* and *shri Kotma* and *Girja Guru's* daughters who are six in all. These mothers said to *Niranjan Guru*, "Now we will have to perform the marriage. But first we need the ornaments for the women folk. Then the *Guru* said, "What are they? The sisters replied, "A moon is needed on the forehead and also a sun. And on the hands *Chumar* (they make patterns/tattoos with *Singar*). A bride is not allowed to sit on the *Lih* (chalked out patterns on the ground) until she has at least some tattoos. When these are completed she will have to sit on the marriage seat (*Marming Katul*)." Then *Prabhu* asked them, "Where are these things, children". The daughters said, "Those things are with *Hira Devi*, the daughter of *Hom Guru*, who lives in *Bibla Deep*. Call her here."

Then the elder brothers of *Mahadu*, *Brahma Deval*, *Satvi Deval* went to fetch her. When they went and stood there, *Hira Devi* came and met them. They told *Hira*, "Come with us to *Niranjan Guru*. All the *gurus* have gathered there for the marriage of *Mahadu*. Please bring *Biblakunk* that is *Singar Kopar* (cup and tattooing needle).

Hira Devi arrived at the marriage place. She greeted them all and sat down. All gave her blessings. Then *Niranjan Guru* said, "*Hira Bai*, get on with your work." The *Hira Bai* made *Girja* sit down in front of her and made the mark of the sun and the moon on her forehead and the two marks, one on each temple on the chin and between the eyebrows. One on the lobe of each nose and she made the tattoo on the back of the hand.

Then *Girja's* head was washed. She was dressed in the elephant shaped *sari* and the shining jacket/bodice coloured like a new young cock. After washing she left the clothes in which she bathed, the jacket and the *sari*, for *Hira* as a gift. Then all the *gurus* blessed *Hira Bai* and all the *gurus* said, "Now is the time of the Gods, and the coming future will be the period of *Singar*. That is your name, *Singar*. Unless the tattoo is done there can be no marriage." Then *Niranjan Guru* asked *Mahadu* and *Girja*, "Go and get *Ek Tiis Kakan Sers Barseng* from *Bandar Deep* (the triangular paper veil that is hung over the face at marriage). They both went together to *Bandar Deep* and found it there. Then greeted it and they took a handful of *Barsing*. Then *Girja*, greeting it, took out the one that suited her and she also picked out the *Kankan* (a black string that is tied to the wrist). Taking these she went to *Niranjan Guru*. All the *gurus* asked them, "How much have each of you brought?" Then *Mahadu* showed a handful of *Barseng*. But *Girjal* had shown only one. Then when all of them had seen the handful that *Mahadu* had brought, they all felt happy and

laughed (ironically). Then all the *Gurus* said, "Mankind may have ten marriages but women only one. This is the order of the *Gurus*." And they all laughed. Then they arranged all the formalities of the marriage. Then *Shri Mahadu* was made to sit down on the right lap of *Girja* and *Girja* was made to sit on the right lap of *Prabhu Niranjan Guru*. *Shri Mahadu* was dressed in a silk dhoti and a long shirt from his neck to his ankles. He put on a turban with twelve kilos of cloth wound round and round. Nearly twelve kilos of pearls were attached to the cloth over his shoulder with one end in front and the other wound around his neck. On the right hand was a bangle and on his forehead a nine lakhs priced *Barseng*. He had a *bhotu* on his forehead and on his two feet. In his ear lobes he had two rings and small rings on the upper ear. On the left ear was a ring in the middle. In the middle on his right ear was a ring with a pearl. There were two chains around his neck and another kind of chain with three chains on it. There was also a necklace with silver squares on it and also a wide golden chain necklace on his neck. He had stout bangles on his wrist called *baj band bahutey*. On the other wrist a cow faced bangle. On his right wrist was another golden belt called *Soneta poncha*. On his right foot were lines made of *kuku*. Betel leaf was given to the bridegroom. He was set up to eat. A dagger (knife) was put in his right hand. Now he looked like a goddess. He had a forehead like a shining stone. He had *jamun* coloured eyes. His lips were coloured like the flame of the forest tree (crimson) and his tongue was like *panjur* flowers. His teeth were like *tendu* fruits (white). His arms were sinuous and muscular. His wrists were as wide as the ramparts of a fort. His breast was as wide as a cart. His waist was like the waist of a wasp. His thighs were as hard as iron clubs. His feet were like pearl shells from the ocean. His heels were like chickens eggs. Looking like this the groom was sat on the lap of *Niranjan Guru*.

Now the bride has to be decorated. She had an elephant shaped sari and a silver threaded bodice. Her hair was curled like *sendi* seeds. A pearl was attached on every lock of her hair. She had earrings like stars. Her nose ring was like a giant star. She had many rings in her ears, *abangi wariki*, then *deobangi todor*, then *sita huli maha huli*, then *Brahma Shankar past padat*. All these were attached to her bosom and moved with her breasts. She also wore necklaces. She had a three stringed chain necklace. She had one nose ring on the right side and on the left side she had another ring. She had a bangle on her biceps. She had golden rings on her hands and golden bangles on her wrists. A dagger (knife) was put in her hand. Dressed like this she sat on the left lap of *Niranjan Guru*.

She was surrounded by her five sisters called *Girjal Tare*, *Girjal Mare*, *Girjal Jaini*, *Girjal Maini*, *Girjal Yesi* and *Girjal Keysu*. Then *Reva Guru* and *Hom Guru* said to themselves that they would become *Kanyalik Gorkang* (the spears behind the stools). *Gope Devu* said to himself that he would be the string around the sisters (apparently the flames in the *aarti danriya* are *Hom Guru*). Like this they all carried out their function. Taking the bride and groom they all stood on the *Goverdhan Gautan*. *Brahma* sprinkled *talwal* (rice mixed with turmeric). From that *talwal* some should also be sprinkled over the *Lih Mandal* (the drawing on the floor of the wedding bower).

The marriage went on for five plus five, ten days. Then *Niranjan Guru* said to *Mahadu*, “Up to now you have been called *Shri Mahadu*. From now on you will be called *Shri Shembu Mahadeva*. *Girja*’s name will be *Girja Parvatal*. Then asking from *Kam Dam Kasturi Yayal* (cow mother) a bull called *Nandi* was given to *Shembu Mahadeval*. The *Niranjan Guru* vacated his seat and put *Shembu Mahadeval* on it. Then he gave them nine lakhs of *Tara* (the elements that make up the whole world from sky to earth). Having given them all this *Niranjan Guru* said, “My dear son, *Waikot gernuk* (the whole world) is yours. You are the father of the world. *Parbati* is the mother of the world. *Nau Kot Dhauragiri* is yours to rule.”

THE END