

Baddena's

SUMATI ŚATAKAMU

An English Rendering with notes and comments

Translator

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C P Brown Academy

The Alpha Foundation

Hyderabad

Sumati Śatakamu

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Preface

“For the English, after all, the best literature is the English,” said Walter Bagehot. And the reasons are obvious: the language is easy to understand, manners and mannerisms are familiar, the associations depicted are akin to one’s own, and above all one is quite at home with the scenes. The net result is: delight in reading. An extension of this analogy would mean: for the Telugu, after all, the best literature is the Telugu.

Anything new is, of course, equally enticing, if not delightful. For, it could display unknown riches. Looking at the vast canvas of a Steinbeck, a Hemingway, or a Miller we may pause and draw our breath. We may even get wonder-struck at the grandeur of this new world. Yet we can at the most dwell on its shore, for the associations therein are unknown, men and mannerisms are strange, and all this calls for a strong imagination to enjoy its strangeness. Yet, we fancy new things. However, be it literature, or in the real world, we being ‘ourselves’ often tend to fail in discerning the smell of native soil.

That’s where man falls back on his roots – starts looking for something that is his. This at once reminds you of what you are and who you are. Then you longingly look for your own Krishna and Godavari rivers, your lush green rice fields, familiar sugarcane and *kandi cēlu*, mango groves and *mādhavi latās*, the half-visible hutments behind them and the surrounding vast expanse of fertile lands dotted with towering temples. The very breeze of such thoughts soothes you with the soft murmur of homeland. This then is the real, for, it is the toil, beauty, and power left behind by your ancestors. That alone sounds your own. Wherever you are, when such thoughts overtake you, you long for the home that you have left behind.

It is at such fleeting moments that you turn to your literature more intently. And if you are not able to read it, you feel at a loss. It is to enable such individuals to get re-connected to their roots, to their native wisdom, to their literature, the C P Brown Academy of Alpha Foundation has come up with the idea of making Telugu classics available in Roman script. This present book is an outcome of this initiative. We earnestly hope that it will serve its intended purpose.

GRK Murty

Transliteration Scheme of Telugu Alphabet

Vowels (అచ్చులు: Acculu)

అ	ఆ	ఇ	ఈ	ఉ	ఊ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
ఋ	ౠ	ఌ	ౡ	ఎ	ఏ
ṛu	ṛū	.lu	.lū	e	ē
ఐ	ఒ	ఓ	ఔ	అం	అః
ai	o	ō	au	aṁ	aḥ

Consonants (హల్లులు: Hallulu)

క	ఖ	గ	ఘ	ఙ	
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ	
చ	ఛ	జ	ఝ	ఞ	
c	ch	j	jh	ñ	
ట	ఠ	డ	ఢ	ణ	
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ	
త	థ	ద	ధ	న	
t	th	d	dh	n	
ప	ఫ	బ	భ	మ	
p	ph	b	bh	m	
య	ర	ల	ళ	వ	
y	r	l	ḷ	v	
శ	ష	స	హ	క్ష	ౠ
ś	ṣ	s	h	ksh	ṛ

Introduction

Śatakam is a sequence of one hundred verses where each verse is a self-contained thematic unit. There is also a common refrain for all the verses. The refrain may be a single word as in Sumati Śatakamu or a whole line as in Vēmana Śatakamu. This genre of poetry originated in Sanskrit literature and then it spread to Prākṛit literature. It then travelled to regional literatures, notably to Kannada and Telugu. The Śatakamu in Telugu is about 800 years old. Mallikārjuna Panditārādhya's Śivatatva Sāram is believed to be the first Telugu Śatakamu.

The development of Śatakamu as a popular poetic form passed through various phases. In the beginning the recurring theme was devotion to Lord Śiva. Another theme was political and general morality, as exemplified in Baddena's Nītisāra Muktāvaḷi and Sumati Śatakamu. In the next phase, praise of Viṣṇu and philosophy, were frequent themes. Annamayya's Śatakamu on Venkatēswara and Sadānanda Yōgi's on philosophy are examples. In the third phase, Dhūrjati's Kālahastīswara Mahātyamu and Kancharla Gōpanna's (known as Rāmadās) Dāśarathi Śatakamu are memorable. The fourth phase, also known as the southern Andhra period, is considered the Golden Age of the Śataka literature in Telugu as in this phase more Śatakams were written and more Śataka poets were active than at any time earlier. Vēmana belongs to this period. Scores of Śatakams continue to be written in the modern period. The respectability of Śatakamu may be understood by the fact that the greatest Telugu poets including Tikkaṇa, Dhūrjati and Pōtana wrote Śatakams. In recent times, Viswanātha Satyanārāyana wrote a few Śatakams, like Mā Swāmy.

There is no restriction of themes to Hindu gods and goddesses only. There are Śatakams on Jesus Christ, Pōthulūri Vīrabrahman, Satya Sāi Bāba, Allah Malik, as also on political leaders like Lōk Mānya Tilak and Mahātmā Gāndhi. The themes are extended even to fiction and science. This flexibility of the Śatakamu in the choice of subject matter (religion, godliness, eroticism, philosophy, secularism) is matched by a similar flexibility in stretching the number of verses beyond one hundred.

The main features of a Telugu Śatakamu are:

- As the name indicates a Śatakamu will have one hundred verses,
- A refrain of one word or one whole line for each verse throughout the sequence,
- Use of the same metre for all the verses in a given Śatakamu,
- Restriction of a Śatakamu to a single emotion (godliness, pity, humour, eroticism, etc),
- The theme is based on the experience of the poet, and
- Each verse in the entire sequence is an independent unit in theme and can be read in isolation for its message.

On the basis of the content, Sumati Śatakamu belongs to the sub-category, which deals with morals. This kind of Śatakamu has its own features, which are:

- Morals which have eternal validity,

- Morals appropriate to changing conditions and personal values,
- Morals suitable for family life, and
- Morals necessary in politics.

Sumati Śatakamu is one of the most popular Śatakams in Telugu. It has endured for more than eight centuries. It has one hundred and ten verses. All the verses are composed in the metre known as Kandamu, which is considered a test of a poet's skill. All the verses are addressed to Sumati. We don't know who this Sumati is. But the name means a person with good sense. The running theme in this Śatakamu is good conduct and ensuring success in different walks of life. It reflects different dimensions of our culture.

It is generally believed by scholars that Baddena composed Sumati Śatakamu but the authorship is not clearly proved. Assuming that Baddena is the author will not help us much because there were several persons with the same name. Also, Baddena, the supposed author of this Śatakamu, has several names and titles. Very little is known about his place, time and life. What we know is based upon conjecture. He might have lived in the thirteenth century and he ruled over a small principality as a feudatory prince under Rudrama Dēvi, the Kākatiya queen during 1262-1295. Baddena or Bhadra Bhūpāla seems to be a brahmin of the niyōgi sect or he was associated with that community. He was a devotee of Śrī Rāma as the opening line of the first verse makes it amply clear. It is sometimes suggested that Baddena lived in Badvel, in the Cuddapah district, and the place was originally called "Baddenaprolu/Baddenavolu," which later changed to Badvel. He first wrote a Śatakamu entitled, Nīti Sūkti Muktvāḷi which deals with political morality. The second and more popular Sumati Śatakamu deals with morals for the general public. There is political morality also in the second book, but it is incidental.

In the absence of reliable information on Baddena's life and times, we can re-construct his personality only from the internal evidence available in his Śatakamu. He was a great scholar well versed in Sanskrit lore. Some of the verses in his Śatakamu are literal translations of existing Sanskrit verses. An example is a verse, which says that whereas the serpent has poison in its head and the scorpion in its tail, an evil person has poison all over his body. Baddena is impartial in teaching morals to the low level civil servants and to the kings; he does not mince words in criticizing any official; he is out-spoken in his description of the temperaments and motivations of people in various professions. His commitment to truth and fairness stands out in his verses.

In his time there was a monarchy. The monarch was helped by one or more ministers. In his work, Baddena detailed the desirable attributes of a king, where he advises the king not to encourage his minister to carry tales against others. He however makes it clear that a king needs a minister, as a kingdom without the benefit of the counsel of a wise minister is like an elephant without the trunk and also like a machine with a broken joint. He should notice the services of his subordinate and encourage him. There was an army headed by a general, and he should lead the army from front and never run away from the battlefield.

The village administration was carried on by the village accountant. Nobody could question him. He held a firm grip over the entire village. While presumably the poet himself belonged to the

nīyogi brāhmin caste, to which normally village accountants (karaṇams) belong, he was critical of the clever manipulations they resort to in running the village administration. In several of his verses he comes down heavily on their practices. In a verse, he declares the policy of karaṇam as saying “No,” but at the same time he is also aware of their occupational hazards, as, for example, he refers to the fear of one karaṇam of the other, as they do not hesitate to ditch each other. Also, for efficient administration a karaṇam has to be tough in his dealings; otherwise, he will be like a serpent that doesn’t bite and a scorpion that doesn’t sting.

The caste system was functioning efficiently because the brāhmin (the priest), the trader, the soldier, the potter, the goldsmith, the shepherd, the peasant, and the others had their roles clearly marked for them. In one verse, he states that for the town the trader is the breath of life. The poet mentioned the places suitable for one’s residence, where he talked about the availability of a doctor, a moneylender, a perennial stream and a priest. The continuing need for water, doctor and banks offering credit on easy terms in towns today is obvious. There were also plenty of paddy fields, which ensured ecological balance, in addition to supplying food for survival.

Baddena seems to have enjoyed the good things of life, like chewing the betel - quite common in those days - a refreshing head bath, and reunion with wife after a tiff. Weddings were celebrated with music and good food. Prostitution seems to have been rampant. In many verses he exposed the lust for money of a whore. In one of the verses, he declares that she will not accept a person, even if he is a scholar in the Science of Love, a handsome person or even a king himself, unless he offers her a lot of cash or covers her in money from head to toe. Her words/promises can never be trusted. He was fiercely against the prevalent social evil of his time and used his poetry to attack it and wean people away from it.

Baddena was a keen observer of life around him. He knew the psychology and aspirations of people. He was unhappy with some bosses, who ill-treated their subordinates. In a verse, he talks about the arrogant (miḍimēlapu) employer, who does not pay reasonable (living) wages and declares that instead of serving such an employer, it is better to live in the world ploughing paddy fields with a pair of sturdy bullocks. He is also critical of the bosses, who always look for defects in the employees and have no word of appreciation for their good work. Being aware of the ways of the world, the poet offers sound, practical advice on a variety of matters. In another verse, he mentions the inevitability of the rise and fall of fortunes and advises people against behaving arrogantly in times of affluence. Even a strong, powerful person may fall and experience defeat and humiliation, very like the strong serpent which will meet its end, when attacked by a number of tiny ants. In another verse, he talks about the futility of attempts to raise an unworthy person to an exalted place, just like placing a dog on a golden throne, as he will not get over his previous mean habits. Like Shakespeare, he also advises people against lending money. He believes that if people leave their original native locations, they lose their strength and advantage, like the lotus flowers, which wither when they leave their lakes. Even in a family, a person is respected as long as he earns money; once the earning ends, he will be treated like a walking corpse. A man with high moral values is stronger (better) than a physically strong man, just as a mahout is more powerful than an elephant.

Baddena emphasized the need for good personal and family relationships, which ensure happiness for all. He gave high place to women in the family structure. He announces that for one's prosperity it is the lady of the house that is the true source. He also cautions male folk against making women weep, as Lakshmi will not dwell in the house where women are unhappy. But unfortunately, perhaps influenced by the mindset of the male-dominated society of his time, he has expressed unpalatable views about women. Repeatedly, he makes caustic remarks about the love professed by women and their faithfulness. He tags the faithfulness of women with the promise made by the rulers. He cautions one against believing that women would love. And he also advises against falling in love with a woman.

Taking a highly elevated ethical position in human relations, he asserts that it is not unusual for a person to help one who has helped him; but it is indeed the height of nobility to extend help to the one who has harmed him without finding fault with him. He considered good education lies in giving - and giving liberally. And good family relations lie in addressing brothers with love and affection. In another verse too, he stresses the nobility of giving without reservation and hesitation.

The morals he included in his Śatakam are derived from his own experience of the world. That Baddena's teachings in Sumati Śatakamu are still valid after eight centuries show that human nature hasn't changed much in this long period.

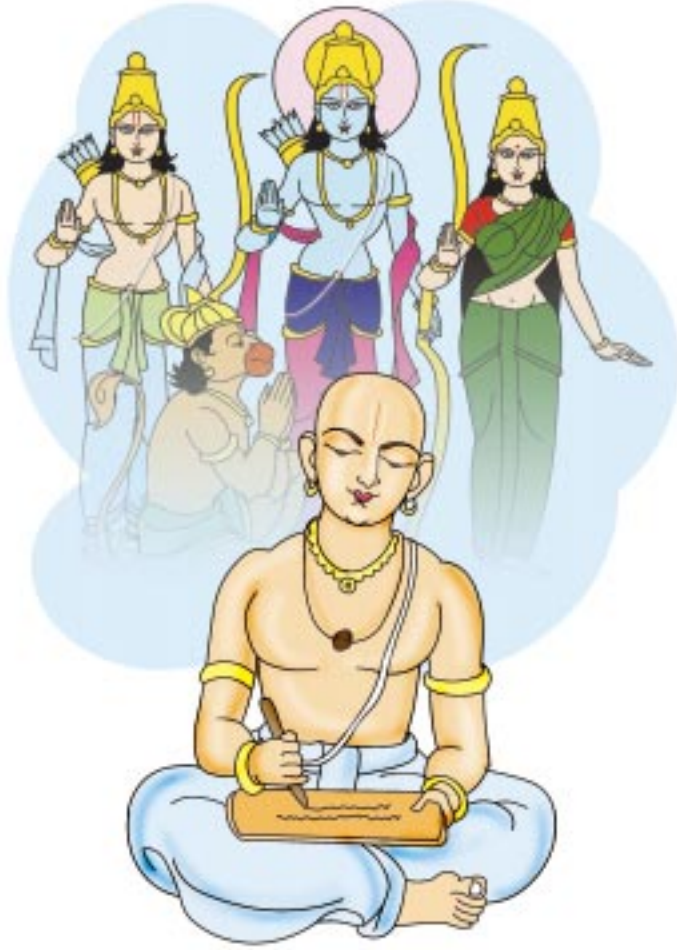
The methods adopted by the poet for teaching morals are simple:

- Listing of don'ts.
- Listing of dos.
- Using similes for conveying morals.
- Conveying one moral in a single line of a verse.
- Using simple language, well-known idioms and rhyming words make the verses easy for memorization. That is an important aim of moral teaching.

In this book, a transliteration of each verse is given. The meanings of a few difficult words are provided. Then the verse is paraphrased. A brief comment on the substance of each verse is included, pointing out the contemporary relevance of the verse.

The paucity of information on the author of Sumati Śatakamu does not in any way diminish the pre-eminent place this Śatakamu has attained and maintained for over eight hundred years. It is a jewel in Telugu literature.





Srīrāmuni daya cētanu
nārūdhiga sakala janulu naurā yanagā
dhārāḷa maina nītulu
nōrūruga javulu puṭṭa nuḍiveda Sumatī!

ārūdhiga=definitely; cavulu=saliva; dhārāḷam=plenty; nuḍiveda=shall tell.

Sumati, with the grace of Srī Rāma, I shall tell plenty of morals. All the people will certainly be fascinated and will ask for more.

The poet states his theme of morals, which will be of interest to everybody. In this noble task he seeks the blessings of Srī Rāma.

Akkaraku rāni cuṭṭamu
mrokkina vara mīni vēḷpu mōharamuna dā
nekkina bārani guṛṛamu
grakkuna viḍuvanga valayu gadarā Sumatī!

akkara=need; vēḷpu=god; mōharamu=a military formation; grakkuna=at once.

Sumati, one must at once discard: a relative who doesn't help in times of need, a god who doesn't grant boons, and a horse (one mounts) which refuses to run in a battle.

People should help their relatives in times of distress. Otherwise they are useless.



Aḍigina jītam biyyani
miḍimēlapu doranu golci miḍukuṭa kanṭen
vaḍigala eddula gaṭṭuka
maḍi dunnuka bratuka vaccu mahilō Sumatī!

miḍimēlapu=arrogant; miḍukuṭa=feel sorry.

Sumati, it is better to live in the world ploughing a paddy field with sturdy, fast moving bullocks than serve an arrogant master who doesn't pay the wages asked and then feel sorry for it.

There are bosses who are arrogant and extract work from their workers. They don't pay fair wages and pay in time. Self-employment like cultivation is better than low-paid jobs.



Aḍiyāsa koluvu goluvaku
guḍimāṇiyamu sēyabōku kujanula tōḍan
viḍuvaka kūrими sēyaku
maḍavini tōḍarayaka narugaku Sumatī!

aḍiyāsa=abnormal hope which cannot be realized; guḍimāṇiyamu=service in a temple; kūrими=friendship; kujanulu=wicked persons

Sumati, don't ever serve anyone with abnormal hope, don't cultivate temple lands for selfish ends, don't make fast friendship with wicked persons; don't go to a forest without a companion.

It is foolish to work under someone who cannot understand your aspirations. It may be necessary sometimes to deal with wicked people, but we should keep them at a distance. A friend is useful when a person goes into a forest because such a journey is fraught with many unknown dangers.

Adharamu kadaliyu gadalaka
madhuramulagu bāṣaluḍigi maunavratuḍau
nadhikāra rōgapūrita
badhirāndhaka savamu jūḍa bāpamu Sumatī!

adharam=lower lip; mounavrat=row of silence; badhira=deaf; savamu=corpse

Sumati, an official will barely speak; he won't speak sweet words, but becomes silent. Power corrupts him and he appears like a blind and deaf corpse. It is a sin to see such a person.

Officials might become insensitive and unsympathetic to visitors. It is better to avoid such unhelpful officials.



Appiccuvāḍu, vaidyuḍu
neppuḍu neḍategaka pāru nērunu, dwijuḍun
joppaḍina yūra nundumu
coppaḍakunnatṭi yūru corakumu Sumatī!

dwijuḍu=brāhmin; ēru=stream.

Sumati, reside in a place where a creditor, a doctor, a perennial stream, and a brāhmin (priest) are available. Don't go to a place where they are not available.

Our life would be difficult if we don't have credit facilities, medical help, uninterrupted water supply, and a priest to perform rituals on various occasions. So, a place with these facilities should be chosen for residence.



Alluni manci tanambunu
gollani sāhitya vidya kōmali nijamun
bolluna dancina biyyamu
dellani kākulunu lēvu teliyara Sumatī!

polluna=chaff.

Sumati, know that these things do not exist: good behavior of a son-in-law, literary scholarship of a shepherd, truth uttered by a woman, rice from pounding chaff, and white crows.

It is difficult to obtain rice from chaff, there are certainly no white crows. But the three other things mentioned in this verse are not completely true. Son-in-law may be good; some shepherds may acquire literary knowledge, and women are truthful. Son-in-law might be too demanding, shepherds might not be educated, and women may have reasons to resort to falsehood. But these things are changing fast with the spread of education and interaction among different people.

Ākonna kūḍe yamrutamu
tākondaka niccuvāḍe dāta dharitrin
sōkōrcuvāḍe manujuḍu
tēkuva galāvaḍe vamsa tilakuḍu Sumatī!

ākonna=to be hungry; tāku=annoyance; sōku=difficulty; tēkuva=courage.

Sumati, in this world the food eaten when hungry is nectar, the man who gives without annoyance is a real donor, the person who can put up with difficulties is a man, and the one with courage alone brings fame to the family.

A hungry man will not care much for the taste of food. Donating without irritation is noble charity. Adversity tests a person's character. A courageous man will bring glory to a family.



Ākali yuḍugani kaḍupunu
vēkaṭi yagu lanja paḍupu viḍuvani bratukun
brākonna nūti yudakamu
mēkala pāḍiyunu rōta mēḍini Sumatī!

vṛēkatiyagu=pregnant; prākonna=stale; rōta=disgust; mēḍi=earth.

Sumati, on this earth certain things are disgusting: food that does not satisfy hunger, a pregnant whore who doesn't give up her profession, the stale water in a well, and goat's milk.

Tasteless or insufficient food is bad. The necessity for money felt by a pregnant whore to continue her work, accumulated water in a well which is unhygienic, goat's milk, which has a different smell compared with cow's milk, are nauseating. But it must be pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi used to drink goat's milk as it was nourishing.



Immuga jaduvani nōrunu
'ammā' yani pilici yannamaḍugani nōrun
dammula biluvani nōrunu
gummari manu dravvinaṭṭi gunṭara Sumatī!

immuga=comfortably; kummari=potter.

Sumati, a mouth which doesn't read well, a mouth which doesn't ask a mother for food, a mouth which doesn't invite younger brothers is (useless) like a hole dug by a potter in the earth.

In ancient times education was through oral transmission and practice. Great importance was attached to correct pronunciation, which is of importance for successful living/career. If the mouth is not used for asking the mother for food and for affectionately calling the brothers, then it is useless. The mouth has nobler functions than a potter's ditch.



Appugoni cēyu vibhavamu
 muppuna brāyampuṭālu mūrkhuni tapamun
 dapparayani nṛpu rājyamu
 depparamai mīda gīḍu deccura Sumatī!

vibhavamu=wealth; prāyāmpuṭalu=young wife; nṛpu=king; tepparamu=harm.

Sumati, wealth obtained through borrowing, a young wife in old age, a fool's penance, and a regime which doesn't recognize the crime of an accused, will cause harm later.

Living with pomp on borrowed money, which many people do, will lead to grief. It is just as bad as taking a young wife in old age, praying without conviction, and an unpunished crime. All these should be avoided if you wish to lead a peaceful life.

Uḍumunḍade nūrēnḍlunu
baḍiyunḍade pēmi bāmu padinurēnḍlun
maduvuna gokkera yunḍade
okaḍu nila buruṣārtha paruḍu kāvale Sumatī!

uḍumu=iguana; pēmi=great; maduvu=lake; kokkera=crane.

Sumati, in this world, man should achieve four things known as purushārthas (morality, money, love, and salvation). Otherwise his life is worthless. Doesn't the iguana live for a hundred years, a serpent for a thousand years, or a crane for a long time in a lake without achieving anything worthwhile?

The poet urges us to pursue significant aims and not simply exist like animals and birds.



Uttama guṇamulu nīcuna
ketteraguna galuganērcu? neyyaḍalan dā
netticci karaga bōsina
nittaḍi bangāramagune ilalō Sumatī!

yetteraguna=in what way; eyyaḍala=in any place, nīcuḍu=wicked person; ittaḍi=brass.

Sumati, in this world, how can a wicked person acquire noble qualities? Can brass become gold anywhere by melting it and giving it value?

Noble qualities come with birth. Mean persons like base metals can never obtain value.



Upakāriki nupakāramu
viparītamū kādu sēya vivarimpangā
nepakāriki nupakāramu
nepamennaka sēyuvāḍu nēpari Sumatī!

nepamu=complaint; vivarimpanga=to explain; viparītam=unusual event; nēpari=expert.

Sumati, it is not unusual to help a person who helps you. But one who helps a person who has harmed him without any complaint is an expert (a skilled person).

A person can show his nobility by showing charity to a person who harmed him. That is a greater virtue than taking revenge. Revenge might satisfy, but noble treatment might lead to a change of heart on the part of the offender. Jesus Christ and Mahatma Gandhi were able to win over their opponents through their nobility.

Upamimpa modaṭa tiyyana
kapaṭam beḍaneḍanu jēraḱu kaivaḍine pō
nepamulu vedakunu gaḍapaṭa
gapaṭapu durjāti ponḍu gadarā Sumatī!

upamimpa=comparing; kapaṭam=deceit; kaivaḍi=similar; durjāti=(friendship with) wicked persons.

Sumati, friendship with wicked persons is like sugarcane: it is sweet in the beginning and turns tasteless in the end. Initially it entices and then becomes deceitful finding faults.

This is a worthwhile caution against trusting deceitful persons who befriend you talking sweetly, but finally quarrel with you.



Eppaṭi keyyadi prastuta
mappaṭikā māṭalāḍi yanyula manamul
noppimpaka tā novvaka
tappincuka tiruguvāḍu dhanyuḍu Sumatī!

prastutam=appropriate; dhanyuḍu=fortunate person; manamul=minds

Sumati, a person, who speaks whatever is appropriate at the given time and so doesn't hurt others' feelings, or get his own feelings hurt, is fortunate.

Whenever we interact with a person we have to consider the occasion, the time and that person's frame of mind. We should not hurt him, nor should we get hurt ourselves.



Ērakumī kasugāyalu
dūrakumī bandhu janula dōṣamu summi
pārakumī raṇamanduna
mīrakumī guruvu nājña mēdini Sumatī!

kasugāyalu=unripe fruits; dūraḱu=don't blame; mīrakumī=don't cross (limits), disobey; mēdini=in the world.

Sumati, in this world, don't pick unripe fruits, don't abuse relatives, don't run away from the battle, don't disobey the teacher's order.

The poet impresses on us that no purpose will be served by picking unripe fruits, abusing relatives, escaping from a battle, and disregarding the teacher's order. Such negative deeds may actually recoil on us.

Ollani sati nollani pati
nollani celikāni viḍuva nollani vāḍe
gollanḍu kāka dharalō
gollanḍunu gollaḍaune guṇamuna Sumatī!

Ollani=(not accepting) to love; gollanḍu=fool; dhara=earth; golla=shepherd.

Sumati, on this earth, one has to leave a woman who doesn't love one, a master who doesn't respect one, and a companion who doesn't like one. If one doesn't leave them, one is a fool. The word shepherd may mean a fool, but every shepherd is not a fool simply because of his caste.

We have to keep away from people (women, masters, friends) who don't like us. In modern society we should not associate certain qualities with certain castes. Given education and opportunities, people of any caste may come up.



Ōḍala bandḷunu vaccunu
ōḍalu nābandḷa mīda noppuga vaccun
ōḍalu bandḷunu valenē
vāḍambaḍu kalimi lēmi vasudhanu Sumatī!

ōḍalu=ships (boats); kalimi lēmi=wealth and poverty.

Sumati, in this world, carts are carried on boats (in water), and carts carry boats gracefully on the earth. Like the boats and the carts, the rich and the poor may exchange places.

Inter-dependence is an essential feature of life. The wealthy and the poor should realize this and try to co-operate with one another. The wealthy should not be proud and the poor dejected.



Āsinci nappuḍiccina
vīsamu padivēlābōlu, vēvēlainan
vīsamani tōcu nedalō
nā samayamu gaḍaci canuṭa narthiki Sumatī!

vīsamu=coin of small value, pie; gaḍachi=pass off

To a man in need, if even a pie is given, when he seeks it, it will be like ten thousand; but if even ten thousand is given after the hour of need has passed off, it will appear like a mere pie.

Help to the needy should be rendered at the proper time without any delay. Timely help will go a long way in solving the problems of the less fortunate.



İccunade vidya, raṇamuna
joccunade magatanambu, sukaviśwarulun
meccunade nēṛpu, vāduku
vaccunade kiḍu summu vasudhanu Sumatī!

raṇamu=battle; vādu=quarrel; kiḍu=harm; vasudha=earth.

Sumati, in this world, giving is knowledge, joining a battle is manliness, what good poets praise is talent, quarrel is harmful.

The test of knowledge is being generous; manliness is on test in a battle; talent is appreciated by great poets. Quarrel leads to harm. These are matters of common experience and continuing relevance in our strife-ridden world.

Kappaku noragālainanu
sarpamunaku rōgamaina, sati tuluvainan
muppuna daridruḍainanu
tappadu maṛi dukkhamaguṭa tathyamu Sumatī!

oragālu=lame; tuluva=wicked person; muppuna=in old age; tathyamu=certain.

Sumati, sorrow is certain for a lame frog, a sick serpent, a wicked wife and an old man who is poor.

There are certain disabilities and disadvantages for both animals and human beings, which cause distress and misery. If an old man who has no more physical strength to earn his livelihood and if he thus faces poverty, it is sorrowful for him.



Cīmalu peṭṭina puṭṭalu
pāmulakiravainayaṭḷu pāmaruḍu tagan
hēmambu kūḍabeṭṭina
bhūmiśula pālajēru bhuvilō Sumatī!

hēmambu=gold; bhuvi=earth.

Sumati, in this earth, the ants build anthills, but serpents dwell in them. Similarly, a foolish man may amass wealth, which will ultimately go to the rulers of the land.

It is foolish to be greedy and deny yourself comforts. Your money should be put to good use including charity. Otherwise, the government will confiscate it.



Karaṇamu garaṇamu nammina
maraṇāntaka maunugāni manalēḍu sumī
karaṇamu dana sarikaraṇamu
maṛi nammaka marmamīka manavale Sumatī!

manalēḍu=cannot live; marmamu=secret; sarikaraṇamu=village accountant of same rank.

Sumati, if a village accountant trusts another village accountant, it will be fatal; he cannot survive. One village accountant should not trust another village accountant too much and reveal his secret.

In each profession and institution there may be some confidential information. Such information should not be divulged even to colleagues. The co-workers may betray you.

Kōmali viswāsambunu
Bāmulatō jelimi yanya bhāmala valapun
vēmula tiyyadanambunu
bhūmīśula nammikalunu bonkura Sumatī!

nammikalu=assurances (of confidence); bonku=untruth

Sumati, the faithfulness of a woman, friendship with serpents, other women's love, sweetness of neem seeds and the assurances of rulers are all false.

It is true that neem seeds can never be sweet and befriending serpents is dangerous. But it is, not correct to say that women and their love are untrue. It is our experience that many promises made at the time of election are forgotten soon after the election. The rulers quite often look for expediency than for keeping their word.



Karaṇamu sādai yunnanu
gari madamuḍiginanu bāmu garavaka yunnan
dhara dēlu miṭakunnanu
gara maruduga lekka gonaru gadarā Sumatī!

sādai=mild; kari=elephant; kara=very; arudu=rare; lekka konaru=don't care.

Sumati, if a village accountant is mild, if an elephant loses its arrogance, if a serpent doesn't bite, or if a scorpion doesn't sting, then no one cares for them.

Sometimes, it is necessary to be harsh in dealing with others. Otherwise people don't care for us and we cannot get anything done.



Iccina dinamula danakā
Laccini neḍabāya rādalamghyata narutō
Niccina dinamulu thīrina
Niccina naru bāsi lacci yēgura Sumatī!

Lacchi=Lakshmi, goddess of wealth; alamghyatha=impassability, ēgu=go (away)

In the days when a man is generous and gives liberally to others, goddess will stay with the man, without passing by. But when the days of giving have passed, the goddess of wealth will desert the man and go away.

The source of one's wealth is in the willingness to give, and it is the greatest human attribute and asset in our world. All people should cultivate the charitable disposition.

Kavikāni vāni vrātayu
navarasa bhāvamulu lēni nāṭula valapun
davili canu pandi nēyani
vividhāyudha kauśalamubu vṛtharā Sumatī!

tavilicanu=non-stop run; Kousalam=skill.

Sumati, the writings of one who is not a poet, the love of a woman who is not well-versed in the nine emotions, the skill of a hunter with various weapons who fails to kill a fast-running boar, are all futile.

This verse urges expertise and professionalism in whatever we do. A casual approach to work is not adequate, when we seek results.



Kādanna vāḍe karaṇamu
vādaḍacina vāḍe peddi vasudheśu kaḍan
lēdannavāḍe canavari
gādhalu pekkāḍu vāḍe kāvyuḍu Sumatī!

vāḍu=scandal; peddi=village head; canavari=well wisher; kāvyuḍu=statesman.

Sumati, a village accountant contradicts others. A peddi alone can settle the litigations. An attendant in the royal court who can say 'no' to those who seek favors of the king is his well-wisher. One who can narrate several interesting stories is a statesman.

It is necessary to be tactful in dealing with people. We may have to say 'no' to people on many occasions, but there are polite ways of saying 'no' without hurting their ego. A tactful man may narrate many parables and become a statesman.



Kāḍu sumī dussangati
pōḍu sumī kīrtikānta pondina pidapan
vāḍu sumī appiccuṭa
lēḍu sumi satula valapu lēśamu Sumatī!

dussangati=friendship with bad people; lēśamu=very little.

Sumati, you shouldn't make friends with wicked persons. When once you attain fame, it won't leave you. Lending money to others will lead to disputes. There is not even a bit of love among women, at any time.

In this verse, the poet advises the reader that one should not befriend evil persons, should not lend money and should not expect mutual love among women, but should perform good deeds, since after the physical body perishes after death fame remains.



Udakamu drāveḍu hayamunu
madamuna nuppongu cunḍu mattēbhambun
modavukaḍa nunna vṛṣabhamu
jaduvani yā nīcujērajanakura Sumatī!

udakam=water; hayamu=horse; modavu=cow in heat; vṛṣabham=bull.

Sumati, don't go near a horse which is quenching its thirst, an elephant which is swelling with pride, a bull with a cow in heat, and a mean person who isn't educated.

Animals under certain circumstances lose control, behave wildly and attack people. But a person without education is worse than an animal and so we should keep away from him. Education enables a person to rise above beasts, which cannot reason.

Urisedu inṭa vasimpaku
Murisiyu pagagonaku karaṇamulatō, ninṭam
Garicedi kukkanu bencaku
Cericedu yagasāli pondu sēyaku Sumatī!

Urisedu=Leaking (rain water); murisi=taking a liking for; agasāli=gold smith

Don't live in a leaking house; don't take a liking for wreaking vengeance against the village accountant; don't keep a biting dog at home; and don't make friends with a harmful gold smith.

The poet advises us to avoid certain people and places, which will ultimately prove harmful to our well-being. It is better to avoid them, in the first place; instead of regretting, at leisure.



Kāraṇamu lēni nagavunu
bēraṇamu lēni lēma pṛudhivi sthalilō
būraṇamu lēni būreyu
viraṇamu lēni penḍli vrudhārā Sumatī!

nagavu=laughter; pēraṇamu=blouse; lēma=woman; būraṇamu=sweet stuffing; viraṇamu=double drum.

Sumati, on this earth, laughing without reason, a woman without a blouse, a sweet dish without the stuffing inside, a wedding without a double drum, are all wasteful.

The value of certain things can be enhanced if they are properly presented. Just as a dish without the sweet stuffing will be insipid, many other things will fail to impress without proper embellishments.



Kulakānta tōḍa neppuḍu
galahimpaku vaṭṭi tappu ghaṭiyimpakumī
kalakanṭhi kaṇṭa kannī
rolikina siri inṭa nunḍa nolladu Sumatī!

ghaṭiyimpaku=don't attribute; siri=wealth, prosperity.

Sumati, don't quarrel violently with your wife at anytime. Don't attribute any baseless defects to her. Prosperity doesn't stay in a house where the woman weeps.

A happy home is the basis of prosperity and peace. A happy home is possible if the husband and wife don't quarrel and don't find fault with each other. It is a man's duty to make his wife happy so that his own life can be happy.

Kūrimi gala dinamulalō
nēramu lennaḍunu galuga nēravu mari yā
kūrimi virasambainanu
nēramulē tōcu cunḍu nikkamu Sumatī!

Kūrimi=friendship; virasam=absence of friendship, dislike.

Sumati, as long as you remain friends with someone, you don't find any defects. But if the friendship sours you will find only defects in him/her.

When you have love and friendship for others, you don't notice their faults. It is important to maintain friendship with others. It is necessary to overlook any disagreeable qualities they may have in order to maintain a happy and peaceful life.



Konceptu nāru sangati cē
nancitamuga kiḍu vaccu nadi yeṭṭannan
kincittu nalli kuṭṭina
mancamunaku peṭṭu vaccu mahilō Sumatī!

kincittu=tiny; ancitamu=crooked way; peṭṭu=beatings.

Sumati, friendship with an evil person will lead to danger in a crooked way. This is like a cot receiving beatings when a tiny bed bug bites a man.

A man who makes friends with a mean person will have to bear the consequences himself. More than the evil person, the other man will be blamed for any mishap.



Kokkōkamella jadivina
jakkani vāḍaina rājacandrundāinan
mikkili rokkamu liyyaka
dakkadurā vārakānta siddhamu Sumatī!

kokkōkamu=a treatise on erotic love; rokkam=cash.

Sumati, a man may have read the treatise on erotic love, he may be handsome, he may be a great king. But he cannot possess a whore unless he pays her a lot of cash.

One's knowledge, physical attraction and other accomplishments may impress the cultured people. But for others, the only criterion is ready cash. We should not be led astray by those who care only for money.

Kora gāni koḍuku puṭṭina
goragāmiye kādu taṇḍri guṇamula jeracun
jeraku tuda vennu puṭṭina
jerakuna tīpellajeracu siddhamu Sumatī!

koragāni=useless; vennu=the ear of corn.

Sumati, a useless son is not only useless, but he will spoil the reputation of his father. If at the end of a sugar cane, a thorny bush grows, it will spoil the sweetness of the entire sugarcane.

A useless son, like the ear of corn of a sugarcane, will destroy the good name of the family. Similarly, in any organization one corrupt or immoral person will spoil its good name.



Ennaḍu kuḍavaka kaṭṭaka
Tannē mari kūrchu dhanamu dharaḷō nepuḍum
Mannīlaku jūdaralaku
Kannamulaku bōvucunḍu gadarā Sumatī!

Ēmari=frugally (carefully); mannīdu=ruler, king.

The money saved by an individual without eating properly and even putting on proper dress, will go to the rulers, the gamblers or to the thieves.

There is no wisdom in leading a very frugal life, sacrificing the barest minimum requirements of an individual. One should take care of his needs before planning to save the money.



Karaṇamu grāmābharaṇamu
Karaṇamu dannēlu patiki kaṇṭhābharaṇa
Sphūraṇa mātaḍu vikaṭincina
Marimari kāpulaku migula maraṇamu Sumatī!

kantābharaṇamu=an ornament around the neck, necklace; vikaṭinchina=develops enmity; migula=excessively.

For the village the village accountant is an ornament. He is very like the ornament around the neck for his king. But if one develops enmity with him, he will turn out to be real death for the farmers in the village.

One should be extremely careful in choosing one's enemies even more than in choosing one's friends, since enmity with the clever and the powerful will cause great damage to one's interests.



Eppuḍu sampada galigina
nappuḍu bandhuvulu vatturadi yeṭṭannan
deppaluga jeṟuvu ninḍina
gappalu padivēlu cēru gadarā Sumatī!

teppaluga=abundantly; ceruvu=lake.

Sumati, when you are wealthy, relatives flock to you. This is like frogs in large numbers moving to a lake, which overflows.

A wealthy person should be sympathetic and charitable towards the less fortunate, but at the same time careful about those who seek his help when he is well off, as they are sure to leave him, when he falls on bad days.

Daggara koṇḍemu ceppeḍu
preggaḍa palukulaku rāju priyuḍai mari tā
neggu praja kācarinçuṭa
boggulakai kalpataruvu boducuṭa Sumatī!.

koṇḍemu=(slandering) complaint; preggāḍa=minister; kalpataruvu=wish granting tree; poducuṭa=felling, axing.

Sumati, a king who listens to his minister's complaints against his people and harms them is like axing a wish-granting tree for the sake of charcoal.

A ruler is usually surrounded by clever tale - bearers. A wise ruler will not encourage them. He will come to his own judgment and will not be swayed by the tales borne by selfish persons.



Cuṭṭamulu gāni vāralu
cuṭṭamulamu nīkaṭancu sompu dalirpan
neṭṭukoni yāśrayinturu
gaṭṭiga dravyambu galuga gadarāSumatī!

sompu=grace, sweetness; talirpan=sprouting.

Sumati, when you have a lot of wealth, people who are not related to you push forward and approach you talking sweetly and claiming relationship to you.

This is a common experience. When a person has wealth, people whom he hasn't heard of or seen before, come forward, claim relationship, and seek favors, especially monetary gifts. These are selfish and shameless people. You may help them to the extent possible, but must take care not to be cheated or exploited.



Cētulaku toḍavu dānamu
bhūtala nāthulaku doḍavu bonkami, dharalō
nītiya toḍavevvāriki
nātiki mānambu toḍavu, nayamuga Sumati!

toḍavu=ornament; mānambu=honor.

Sumati, in this world, giving away liberally is an ornament for the hands. Not uttering falsehoods is an adornment for the kings. Morality is an adornment to all. For women, honor is the adornment.

A person may wear gold rings or other ornaments on his hands, but it is his willingness to give that is his real adornment. A king may wear gold and diamond ornaments from head to foot, but his real distinguishing mark is his truthfulness. More than anything else, honor is the most important embellishment for a woman. Qualities of head and heart are more important than monetary or material acquisitions.

Taḍavōrvaka yoḍalōrvaka
kaḍu vēgam badici paḍina gāryam bagunē
tadavōrcina nodalōrcina
cedipōyina kāryamella jēkuru Sumatī!

taḍavu=delay; oḍalu=body.

Sumati, can you achieve your goal if you cannot tolerate delay and cannot exert yourself? If you put up with delays and work hard you may set right things which have gone wrong.

Patience is both physical and mental. Unless we have both these kinds of patience, we cannot accomplish our goals. In modern times when there are delays, postponements and cancellations of programs, it is much important to keep cool. If we work patiently, we can solve knotty problems.



Tana kōpame tanaśatruvu
tana śāntame tanaku rakṣha daya cuṭṭambou
tana santōṣame swargamu
tana duhkhamē naraka maṇḍru tathyamu Sumatī!

śatruvu=enemy; raksha=calmness; swargamu=heaven.

Sumati, your anger is your enemy; your calmness is your defence; your compassion is your relative; your happiness is your heaven; your sorrow is your hell; this is true.

Happiness and unhappiness are two attitudes in our mind. It is only our thinking which makes the difference. Peace and happiness are possible with self - control.



Tana yūri tāpasi tapamunu
tana putruni vidya pempu dana sati rūpun
tana peratī ceṭṭu mandunu
manasuna varṇimpa reṭṭi manujulu Sumatī!

peratī=in the backyard;

Sumati, no one praises in his heart the penance performed by one's own villager or the educational progress of one's own son, the beauty of one's own wife, or the medicine from the tree in one's own backyard.

We don't appreciate our own advantages. We even try to deride or ignore them for sentimental or other reasons. But it is sometimes necessary to say a word of praise where it is due. Otherwise, people may feel discouraged.

Tana kalimi yindra bhōgamu
tana lēmiye sarvalōka dāridryambun
tana cāvu jagat praḷayamu
tanu valacinadiye rambha tathyamu Sumatī!

praḷayamu=catastrophe; rambha=a celestial damsel.

Sumati, some people think their wealth is equal to Indra's, that their poverty is the world's poverty, that their death is the world's catastrophe. They believe that the woman they love is indeed a celestial damsel.

People tend to exaggerate their fortunes and misfortunes. It is necessary to be more realistic in one's evaluation.



Tana vāru lēni cōṭānu
januvincuka lēnicōṭa jagadamu cōtan
anumānamaina cōṭānu
manujunakunu niluva dagadu mahilō Sumatī!

canavu=feeling comfortable; jagadamu=quarrel.

Sumati, in this world, it is not proper to live in a place where there are no relatives, where one doesn't feel comfortable, where there are (chances for) quarrels, or a place over which there are suspicions.

It is better to choose a place where there are relatives and where people care for you, for your own residence. Otherwise, you may face difficulties in times of need.



Tamalamu sēyani nōrunu
ramaṇula canu monala mīda rāyani mēnun
kamalamulu lēni kolanunu
himadhāmuḍu lēni rātri hīnamu Sumatī!

kolanu=lake; himadhāmuḍu=moon; hīnamu=inferior.

Sumati, a mouth which hasn't chewed the betel, a body which hasn't rubbed on the nipples of a beautiful woman, a lake without lotuses, a night without the moon's cool light are worthless.

Full enjoyment of life includes savoring the betel, intimate contact with a beautiful woman, watching a lake filled with lotuses, and the full moon shedding cool light.



Kanakapu simhāsanamuna
śunakamu gūrcunḍa beṭṭi śubha lagnamunan
donaraga baṭṭamu gaṭṭina
venukaṭi guṇamēla mānu vinarā Sumatī!

simhāsanamu=throne; śunakamu=dog; onaraga=properly; paṭṭamu kaṭṭina=crowned.

Sumati, if at an auspicious moment, a dog is placed on a golden throne and properly crowned, will he give up his old habits?

Nobody can give up his inherent qualities. Even when there are happy occasions old habits die hard and people fail to live up to the occasion. A mean person cannot give up his meanness and a liar cannot stop lying even when they are in favorable positions.

Talanunḍu viṣamu phaṇikini
velayamgā dōkanunḍu Vṛschikamunakun
talatōka yanaka nunḍunu
khalunaku niluvella viṣamu gadarā Sumatī!

phaṇi=serpent; vṛschikamu=scorpion; khaluḍu=wicked person.

Sumati, the serpent has poison in its head, the scorpion has it in its tail, the wicked person has poison not only in head and tail, but all over his body.

A wicked person is worse than poisonous animals because his thoughts, his words, and his deeds may cause harm to many people at the same time.



Kādani yevvāri thōḍan
Vādincaka cūḍa verri vānimbalenē
Bhēdābhēdamu delipeḍu
Vēdānta rahasyamella vedukara Sumatī!

verri vāḍu=dull-witted person; Ella=totally.

One should not argue with any body, disagreeing with him. It is wisdom to appear like a dull-witted person and seek the hidden secrets of Vēdānta (a branch of Hindu philosophy), which advises one on the differences and non-differences among human beings.

In the world, those, who show off as highly intelligent, pick up arguments with all and sundry. That is the sure way to lose friends. But if we appear like less brilliant people and patiently study the others and discover the differences among them, we are likely to be successful.



Tala māsina nolu māsina
valuvalu māsīnanu prāṇa vallabhu dainan
gulakāntalaina rōturu
tilakimpaga bhūmilōna diramuga Sumatī!

valuvalu=clothes; tilakimpaga=to observe.

Sumati, in this world, even if a man is dearer to a woman than her life, she will loathe him if his hair is untidy, if his body is dirty, or his clothes soiled.

It is necessary to maintain personal cleanliness for our own health and for social and even domestic acceptability.

Tā nanubhavimpa narthamu
mānavapati jēru gonta mari bhūgatamau
gānala nīgalu gūrcina
tēniya yoru jērunaṭlu tiramuga Sumatī!

mānavapati=king; kāna=forest.

Sumati, it is certain that money which is not spent will partly go to the king and partly to the earth if it is hidden there. This is like the honey-bees gathering honey in a forest and storing it in a hive. But the bees don't drink it; others will enjoy it.

Money must be spent for your comforts; it may be given away to others. But wealth accumulated may end up in the government or under the earth.



Cīntimpaku gaḍacina pani
kintulu valaturani nammakentayu madilō
nantaḥpura kāntalatō
mantanamulu mānu midiyē matamura Sumatī!

intulu=women; antaḥpuram=women's quarters in a royal palace; mantanamulu=secret negotiations.

Sumati, don't worry about the past; don't believe in your heart that women will love; stop secret negotiations with women in the royal palace. This is the acceptable way.

Brooding over the past events, especially when they were unfavourable, will only lead to depression. One should be extremely cautious in talking to women particularly professional colleagues, because such talk may be misunderstood or misrepresented as sexual harassment.



Dhanapati sakhuḍai yunḍiyu
nenayamgā śivuḍu bhikshamettaḡa valasen
tanavāri kenta galigina
tanabhāgyame tanakugāka tathyamu Sumatī!

dhanapati=kubera, god of wealth; sakhuḍu=friend; enayamgā=befitting way.

Sumati, the god of wealth is a friend of Siva. But Siva had to seek alms. Whatever wealth one's relatives and friends might have, one would get only what is one's fortune. This is certain.

The wealth of your relatives and friends doesn't help you. Your prosperity depends on your own good fortune.

Tala poḍavu dhanamu bōsina
velayāliki nijamu lēdu vivarimpangā
dala daḍivi bāsa jēsina
velayālini nammarādu vinarā Sumatī!

basa=oath; velayālu=prostitute.

Sumati, a prostitute will not tell the truth even if you cover her with money all over. You should not trust a prostitute even when she swears by putting her hand on your head.

There are many things and people money can buy. But money cannot make a whore tell the truth. Falsehood is an inherent quality of her profession.



Naḍuvaku mī teru vokkaṭa
guḍuvakumī śatruniṅṅa gūrими tōdan
muḍvakumī para dhanamulu
nuḍvaku mī yorulamanasu novvaga Sumatī!

teruvu=way; kuḍuvaku=don't eat; muḍvaku=don't pack.

Sumati, don't go alone on the road. Don't eat in an enemy's house out of courtesy. Don't steal others' money. Don't speak in a way, which hurts others.

Since journeys are fraught with dangers and accidents, it is advisable to go with a companion. Don't accept the hospitality of an enemy because he may harm you. Don't grab others' money. Never speak an offensive word. If you do any of these you will court trouble.



Nammaku sunkari jūdari
nammaku magasālivāni naṭu velayālin
nammaku mangaḍi vāḍini
nammaku mī vāmahastu navanini Sumatī!

Sunkari=tax collector; magasāli=goldsmith; vāmahastu=left-hander.

Sumati, in this world, don't trust the tax collector, the gambler, the goldsmith, the actor, the whore, the shopkeeper and the left-hander.

The professionals named above are untrustworthy as they are habitual liars. Left-handers are included presumably because they are unusual.



Oka yūriki noka karaṇamu
noka tīrpari aina gāka nogi darucainan
gakavikalu gāka yuṇḍune?
sakalambuna goṭṭuvaḍaka sahajamu Sumatī!

karaṇamu=village accountant; tīrpari=a law officer who delivers judgments in disputes; kakavikalu=confusion; kottuvadaka=getting spoiled.

Sumati, the affairs of a village will go on smoothly if there is only one accountant, and one law officer. If they are more, there will be confusion and everything will get spoiled. This is natural.

Divided and multiple leadership in any setup will lead to confusion and collapse. Hence it is important to have someone in overall charge of the affairs of a village or an organization.

Nayamuna bālun drāvaru
bhayamunanu viṣammu naina bhakshinturuḡā
nayamenta dōṣakāriyo
bhayamē cūpanga valayu bāguga Sumatī!

nayamu=politeness (with sweet words); bhakshinturu=gulp, devour.

Sumati, people don't drink milk if you ask them politely, but they will devour poison when threatened. How harmful is politeness! So threats are necessary to get things done.

In feudal and patriarchal society fear motivates people to work. But fear as motivating factor in a democratic set-up has lost its force. Persuasion and reasonable discussion should drive out fear as motivation.



Narapatulu mēra dappina
diramoppaga vidhava inṭa dīrpari ainan
garaṇamu vaidikuḡainanu
maraṇāntaka maunu ḡāni mānadu Sumatī!

mēra=limit; vidhava=widow; vaidikuḡu=vedic scholar; dīrpari=boss.

Sumati, if the rulers cross the limits of authority; if a widow becomes the boss in the house, or if a village accountant becomes a vedic scholar (priest), it certainly amounts to death.

We have certain stereotypes in mind: a king should act within the limits of his authority; a widow should be docile; a village accountant is not fit to be a vedic scholar (priest), and so on. But these stereotypes are not valid any more.



Navarasa bhāvālamkṛta
kavitā ḡōṣṭiyunu madhura ḡānambunu dā
navivēki kentajippina
jeviṭiki śankūdi naṭlu siddhamu Sumatī!

alamkṛta=adorned; avivēki=ignorant man; śanku=conch shell.

Sumati, an ignorant person cannot appreciate poetry embellished with the nine emotions just as a deaf man cannot hear the blowing of a conch-shell.

Knowledge, culture and curiosity are necessary for enjoying and appreciating fine arts like poetry and music. People without this basic equipment will react to music and poetry as a deaf man reacts to the sound of a conch.

Navvakumī sabha lōpala
navvakumī talli dandri nāthula tōḍan
navvakumī parasatulatō
navvakumī vipravarula nayamidi Sumatī!

nātha=husband, boss; vipravarulu=brahmins.

Sumati, don't laugh in a meeting, don't laugh in the presence of parents, boss (or husband) or wives of others. Don't ridicule eminent brahmins. This is only proper.

Laughter is a natural emotion but there are situations when we should restrain our laughter. Otherwise, there is scope for misunderstanding and worse.



Nirē prāṇādhāramu
nōrē rasabharitamaina nuḍuvula kellan
nārē narulaku ratnamu
cīre śṛmgāra mandru siddhamu Sumatī!

nuḍuvulu=words; śṛmgāram=adornment.

Sumati, water is the source of life; mouth is the aid (vehicle) for beautiful speeches; woman is a jewel for men; it is said that a saree is an adornment (for women). This is certain.

Water is the source of life in all forms, so we should save it. We should use our mouth for pleasant speech to win over others and not offend them. Woman has a respectable place in human society. She is a mother and in that role she is revered even by those who renounce the world. The saree has a special grace among clothes for women. Only in the Indian subcontinent is saree used by women.



Paga vala devvāri tōḍanu
vagavangā valadu lēmi vaccina pidapan
deganāḍa valadu sabhalanu
maguvaku manasiya valadu mahilō Sumatī!

paga=enmity; vagavanga=weep, worry; teganaḍu=denounce; maguva=woman.

Sumati, in this world, don't have enmity with anyone, don't worry when you face poverty, don't denounce anyone in a conference, and don't give your heart to a woman

To get along smoothly in life we should avoid quarrels with anyone. We should face adversity with equanimity. It is improper to decry others in a meeting. It may also be advisable to resist getting infatuated with any woman.

Panicēyu neḍala dāsiyu
nanubhavamuna rambha, mantri yālocanalan,
dana bhukti yeḍala dalliyu
yanadagu kulakānta yunḍanagurā Sumatī!

mantri=minister; bhukti=food; kulakānta=house wife.

Sumati, a good wife is one who is a servant while working, a heavenly damsel in bed, a counselor in discussions, and a mother in serving food.

A woman has multiple roles which she plays skillfully. She switches from one role to another without fanfare and fuss. This verse draws from the well-known Samskrit slōka: Kāryēṣu dāsi, karaṇēṣu mantri/ sayanēṣu rambha, bhōjeṣu māta/kshamayā dharitri , which extols the multiple duties efficiently discharged by an Indian woman.



Para nāri sōdaruḍai
para dhanamula kāśapaḍaka parulaku hituḍai
parulu danu bogada negaḍaka
baru laligina naluganataḍu paramuḍu Sumati!

aligina=got angry; paramuḍu=noble man.

Sumati, a man should look upon other women as his sisters; he shouldn't covet others' properties; he should be a well-wisher of all. He should behave in a way that would bring him praise. He shouldn't be angry with others even if they are angry with him. Such a person is a noble man.

A man can attain greatness if he treats other women as his sisters, if he has no eye on others' money, if he engages himself in good deeds and if he doesn't ever lose his temper.



Para sati kūṭami gōraku
para dhanamula kāśapaḍaku, paru nencakumī
sarigāni gōṣṭi sēyaku
siricedi cuṭṭambu kaḍaku jēraku Sumatī!

parasati=other's wife; dhanamu=money; siri=wealth.

Sumati, don't desire another man's wife, don't covet others' property, don't find fault with others, don't approach relatives when you lose your wealth.

This verse continues the list of negative imperatives of the previous verse; don't go to a relative in times of adversity; don't debate on unequal terms.



Gaḍavagala magani jūcina
naḍugulakunu maḍugu liḍudu rativalu dharalō
gaḍa nuḍugu magani jūcina
naḍa pīnugu vaccenanucu naguduru Sumatī!

maḍugulu=presseed clothes; naḍa pīnugu=a walking corpse.

Sumati, women respect a man and welcome him with a red carpet as long as he earns money. But when he stops earning money they look upon him as a walking corpse and laugh among themselves and mock at him.

It is true that earning members of a family receive respect and special treatment. When the earning capacity wanes, particularly with the onset of old age, there is a decline in the respect shown to them. It is unfortunate that a person's earning and the respect given to him are linked. But that is the way of the world.

Para satula gōṣṭi nundina
puruṣuḍu gāṅgēyuḍaina bhuvi ninda paḍun
barasati suśīla yainanu
baru sangati nunna ninda pālagu Sumatī!

gōṣṭi=conversation; gāṅgēyuḍu=Bhīṣma (the son of Ganga).

Sumati, in this world, even if Bhīṣma (who had taken a vow of celibacy) talks to other women, there will be a scandal. Even a woman of good character will be blamed if she is friendly with another man.

Even persons of sterling virtue may have to face scandal if they are found talking to other men and other women. This applies to both men and women.



Parunātma dalacu sati viḍu
maru māṭalu paluku sutula mannimpakumī
veraperugani bhaṭu nēlaku
taracuga sati gavayabōku, tagadura Sumatī!

mārumāṭalu=talking back; verapu=fear; bhaṭu=servant; kāvaya=unite.

Sumati, discard a woman who thinks of another man. Don't excuse your sons who talk back. Don't hire a servant who doesn't fear you (has no respect for you). Don't unite with your wife too often. These things are not proper.

The negative imperatives are continued in this verse also. Within a family, if the wife thinks of another man, if the sons are impudent, and if a servant is disobedient, they should be given up.



Parula kaniṣṭamu seppaku
poruginḍlaku banulu lēka pōvaku mepuḍun
oru galisina sati gavayaku
merigiyu birusaina hayamu nekkaku Sumatī!

birusaina=rough, arrogant; hayamu=horse.

Sumati, don't talk of unpleasant things before others, don't go to others' houses if you have no business with them, don't unite with a woman who had an affair with another man; don't ride a horse known for its arrogance.

This is another catalogue of prohibitions. Talking of unpleasant things, disturbing others on purpose, riding a disobedient horse, and seeking a woman who loves another are dangerous.

Parvamula satula gavayaku
murviśwaru karuṇa nammi yubbaku madilō
garvimpa nāli bempaku
nirvahaṇamu lēni cōṭa niluvaku Sumatī!

parvamulu=holy days; ubbu=feel flattered; nirvahaṇamu=livelihood.

Sumati, don't unite with women during holy days, don't feel flattered by trusting the sympathy of the rulers, don't allow the wife to become arrogant, don't reside in a place where there is no means of livelihood.

Yet another list of prohibitions. These negative commands are based on daily experience. If these are followed, one may lead a happy, trouble-free life.



Paludōmi sēyu viḍiyamu
talagaḍigina nāṭi nidra taruṇula tōḍan
bola yaluka nāṭi kūṭami
velayintani ceppa rādu vinarā Sumatī!

viḍiyamu=betel; taruṇulu=young women; pola yaluka=love tiff; vela=price, value.

Sumati, we cannot state the value of chewing betel after brushing teeth, of sleeping after head bath, of uniting with young women after tiffs.

Certain things like chewing betel after cleaning the teeth, sleeping after a head bath and uniting with a woman after minor quarrels give immense pleasure.



Guptamu cēyumu mantramu
Vyāptōpāyamulanaina vairla gelumī
Sapthavyasanamula viḍu
Māptula rakshimpu cālu nantiye Sumatī!

vyāpṭha upāyamulu=several strategies; vairi=enemy Saptha vyanamulu=Seven evil practices. They are similar to the Seven Deadly Sins, mentioned by Pope.

A person should keep the mantra a secret. Adopting a variety of strategies, one should defeat the enemy. One must give up the seven deadly sins (evil practices). One should also protect one's kith and kin. And that is all that is there to it.

A mantra given by the guru is sacred and is meant for use by the disciple only. Its potency will be lost, if it is widely circulated. When there is the inevitable war, one should adopt all means to vanquish the enemy. And a great virtue is to protect and help the near and the dear.

Pālanu galasina jalamunu
pālavidhambunane yunḍu barikimpagā
bāla cavi jeracu gāvuna
bālasuḍagu vāni pondu valadura Sumatī!

parikimpaga=on observing; palasuḍu=wicked person.

Sumati, when water is mixed with milk, it also looks like milk, but it will spoil the taste of milk. Friendship with a wicked person will spoil your goodness. Hence avoid that.

We should be wary of making friends with wicked people because they try to make us lose our virtues.



Pālasuna kaina yāpada
jālimbaḍi tīrca dagadu sarvajnunakun
dē lagni baḍaga baṭṭina
mēleruguna miṭṭu gāka mēdini Sumatī!

sarvajnuḍu=a wise man (one who knows all); agni=fire.

Sumati, a wise man should not take pity over the misfortunes of a wicked man and go to his rescue. If a scorpion is caught in fire and it is pulled out of fire, it will sting the rescuer and not thank him.

Ingratitude is a built-in trait of an evil-doer. So we shouldn't help him.



Putrōtsāhamu tanḍriki
butruḍu janmincinapuḍe puṭṭadu, janulā
putruni ganugoni pogadaḍa
butrōtsāhambu nāḍu pondura Sumatī!

putrudu=son; tandri=father; utsāhamu=curiosity.

Sumati, a father will not be happy immediately after the birth of a son. When people recognize and praise the son, a father will surely feel happy.

It is not so much the birth of a son, but his later accomplishments that will make a man happy. How a son shapes up is more important than the mere birth of a male child.



Pati kaḍaku dannu gūrcina
sati kaḍakunu vēḷpu kaḍaku sadguru kaḍakun
sutu kaḍakunu ritta cētula
matimantulu canaru, nīti mārgamu Sumatī!

vēḷpu=god; sadguru=good teacher; ritta=empty; canaru=won't go.

Sumati, wise persons don't go with empty hands to the king (the ruler), to the wife, to a god, to a good teacher and to a son. This indeed is the right way.

It is a cultural trait of humans to carry a gift (leaves, fruits, flowers, or even water) whenever they visit others, notably the persons listed here. It is necessary to show respect/love for them.

Purikini brāṇamu kōmati
varikini brāṇambu nīru vasumati lōnan
garikini brāṇamu tōṇdamu
sirikini brāṇambu maguva siddhamu Sumatī!

puri=town; vari=paddy; kari=elephant; tondamu=trunk.

Sumati, in the world, a trader gives life to a town; water sustains a paddy-crop; a trunk is necessary for an elephant; for prosperity a woman is essential.

There are some vital necessities without which life becomes difficult: a trader for a town, water for growing paddy, a trunk for an elephant, and a woman for prosperity.



Mānadhanu dātmadhṛiti ceḍi
hīnuṇḍaguvāni nāśrayincuṭa yellan
māneḍu jalamula lōpala
nēnugu mēyi dācinatṭu lerugumu Sumatī!

mānadhanuḍu=noble person; dhṛiti=courage; māneḍu=a small measure; mēyi=body.

Sumati, in this world, an honorable man may, because of misfortune, be forced to approach a mean person. This is like an elephant trying to hide its body in a small quantity of water.

An honorable man should never seek the help of a mean person. If he does, he will be humiliated.



Madi nokani valaci yuṇḍaga
madicēḍiyoka krūra viṭuḍu mānaka tirugun
adi ciluka billi paṭṭina
jaduvune yā paṇjaramuna jagatini Sumatī!

paṇjaramu=cage; jagati=world.

Sumati, when a cruel adulterer proposes consistently to a woman who is already in love with someone what she will do? When a cat catches a parrot, will the parrot repeat the words it had learnt in the cage?

We cannot compel some one to do something against his wishes. Things done under duress will lack grace and spontaneity.

Poruguna бага vāḍuṇḍina
niravondaga vrātakāḍe yēlika yainan
dhara gāpu kondē ainanu
garaṇālaku bratuku lēdu gadarā Sumatī!

iruvu=place; vrātakāḍu=a person who is proficient in writing.

Sumati, the life of a village accountant becomes difficult if an enemy lives next door, or if a person, who is proficient in writing, becomes the ruler, or if a peasant complains against him.

This verse is an indirect comment on the manipulative ability and secret deals of a village accountant which may be exposed by a foe, a knowledgeable ruler, or a victimized peasant.



Bangārukuduva beṭṭaku
sangaramuna bāripōku sarasuḍa vainan
angaḍi veccamu vāḍaku
vengali tō jelimi valadu vinarā Sumatī!

kuduva peṭṭaku=pledge; sangaramu=battle; angaḍi=shop; vengali=fool.

Sumati, if you are wise you shouldn't pledge gold, run away from the battle, buy things on credit in a shop, or make friends with fools.

Happiness comes to those who don't get involved in complicated affairs or trouble-some people. So, keep away from these.



Maṇḍalapati samukhambuna
meṇḍaina pradhāni lēka melaguṭa yellan
gonḍanta madapuṭēnugu
tonḍamu lēkunḍinaṭṭlu dōcura Sumatī!

samukhambuna=before; meṇḍaina=superior.

Sumati, if a ruler attempts to rule without a competent adviser before him, he is like a large elephant without a trunk.

There are some indispensable requirements in every job. Without fulfilling those requirements those jobs will be difficult to handle.

Mantrigala vāni rājyam
tantramu ceḍakunḍa nilucu daracuga dharalō
mantri vihīnuni rājyamu
jantrapu gīluḍinatlu jarugadu Sumatī!

tantramu=stratagem; jantramu=machine; kīlu=hinge, joint.

Sumati, in this world, quite often, a country ruled with the help of a minister will conduct its affairs smoothly, whereas a kingdom without a minister will not function very like a machine with a broken joint.

A knowledgeable person can give proper advice to an administrator so that the government functions smoothly.



Parahitamulēni sampada
Dhara nevvaḍu gūrcenēni dakkaka pōvun
Muripembuna juntigalu
Mari kuḍavaka gūrchu tēne mārgamu Sumatī!

parahitamu=the welfare of others; juntīga=honey bee; muripemu=(Here) affection, devotion; kuḍavaka: without eating

If a person accumulates wealth without considering the welfare or well-being of others, it will never be his own. It is like the honey- bees, which save the honey without feasting it on it themselves; finally they are taken over by honey-collectors.

Wealth is to be acquired and utilized for the welfare of people around and not to be merely accumulated and stacked away. The proper use of wealth is to serve the society or the nation as a whole.



Māṭaku brāṇamu satyamu
kōṭaku brāṇambu subhaṭakōṭi dharitrin
bōṭiki brāṇamu mānamu
cīṭiki brāṇambu vrālu siddhamu Sumatī!

subhata=soldiers; bōṭi=woman; cīṭi=letter; vrālu=signature.

Sumati, in this world, truth is the breath of speech; good soldiers are vital for a fort; for a woman honor is important; and for a letter (document) signature is essential.

Everything has a special requirement. A woman must have honor. A document without signature is useless.



Piluvani panulaku bōvuṭa
galayani sati ratiyu, rāju gānani koluvun
biluvani pēraṅṅambunu
valavani celimiyu cēyavaladura Sumatī!

pēraṅṅam=a social function for women on auspicious occasions.

Sumati, don't work for others without invitation, don't unite with a woman who doesn't like the union, don't work for a king who doesn't notice you, don't go to functions uninvited, don't make friends with persons who have no affection for you.

It is unwise to work without a proper invitation, to work for a king who doesn't bestow attention on you, to attend functions without invitation. The consequence will be that you will be ill-treated.

Puli pālu decci yiccina
nalavaḍaga guṇḍe kōsi yaracē niḍinan
dalapoḍugu dhanamu pōsina
velayāliki gūrmi lēdu vinarā Sumatī!

puli=tiger; alavaḍaga=making one suitable (bringing one under control).

Sumati, a prostitute will not love a man even if he offers her tiger's milk, or places his heart on her palm, or offers her a heap of cash equal to her height.

A whore will not love anybody even if she is given things which are extremely difficult to obtain. She acts without emotion.



Maruvagavale noru nēramu
Maruvagavale dānamicci madilō nepuḍun
Maruvagavale iṣṭadaivamu
Maruvagavale dorula mēlu madilō Sumatī!

maruvagavale: must forget; oruni:of the other; nēramu: crime; (here) fault, lapse; iṣṭadaivamu: favorite god.; mēlu:help

One should forget the lapses or faults of others. After donating to some one, some cause, one should forget it. But one should never ever forget his favorite God and the help received from others.

In human conduct, forgetting and remembering have their distinct places. The evil of others should be forgotten, but their good acts should be ever gratefully cherished. We may give donations for good causes, but should not seek publicity for it. Charity should be an end in itself, but should not be used as a means for self glorification.



Rā pommani piluvani yā
bhūpāluni golva bhukti muktulu galavē
dīpambu lēni yinṭanu
ce puṇikillāḍi naṭlu siddhamu Sumatī!

bhukti=food; mukti=salvation; puṇikillu=grope (seek with fingers).

Sumati, will service under a king who doesn't enquire about your welfare provide food and salvation? Such service is like groping (with fingers) in a house without a lamp.

Don't work under a master who is unsympathetic and insensitive to the needs and hopes of his subordinates.

Rūpinci paliki bonkaku
prāpagu cuṭṭambu keḡgu palukaku, madilō
gōpincu rāju golvaku
pāpapu dēsambu coraku, padilamu Sumatī!

rūpinci=after knowing fully; prāpu=support; eggu=harm; padilam=care.

Sumati, don't deny what you said knowing its implications fully, don't harm your supporting relatives; don't serve an angry king; and don't run to a sinful country.

Lying, fault-finding among relatives, serving an irritable ruler and migrating to a bad place will bring misery.



Vari paṇṭa lēni yūrunu,
dora yunḍani yūru, tōḍu dorakani teruvun
dharanu bati lēni ḡṛhamunu,
narayamgā rudrabhūmi yanadagu Sumatī!

rudrabhūmi=cremation ground.

Sumati, in this world, a village without a paddy field, a place where the ruler doesn't reside, a journey without a companion, a house without a husband, may be called cremation ground.

Without certain pre-requisites many things are like graveyards. A village without a paddy field, a journey without a friend are depressing and should be avoided.



Varapaina cēnu dunnaku
karavainanu bandhu janula kaḍa kēgakumī
parulaku marmamu seppaku
pirikiki daḷavāyi tanamu beṭṭaku Sumati

varapu=drought; piriki=coward; dunnaku=don't plough; daḷavāyi=(army) general.

Sumati, don't plough the field during drought, don't go to relatives even if there is famine, don't reveal secrets to outsiders, don't appoint a coward as a (army) general.

If we do things which the poet enjoins us not to do, we will land ourselves in great trouble, loss, humiliation, or defeat. For example, a cowardly general will run away from the battle-field and bring defeat and ignominy to his country.

Veyyāru nadulu jalanidhi
Tiybaka naniśambu galaya tiyyana galadā
Kuyyidu vāniki jñānamu
Veyyi vidhambulanu delupa vṛudharā Sumatī!

jalanidhi=ocean; aniśammu=continuously; kuyyidu=evil person; vṛudhā=waste

Even though a thousand rivers join the ocean continuously, the ocean will not turn sweet. Even if we impart wisdom in a thousand ways to an evil person, he will not change. It will be a wasteful effort.

There are some people who refuse to learn and mend their ways. And it is no use making our efforts. It is better to leave them, hoping that one day, they will change on their own.



Vinadagu nevvaru ceppina
vininantane vēgapadaka vivarimpadagun
gani kalla nijamu telisina
manujuḍe pō nītiparuḍu mahilō Sumatī!

kalla=lies.

Sumati, in this world, we should listen to whatever anyone says. But we should not jump to conclusions at once. We have to judge what is false and what is true. A man who can distinguish between truth and falsehood is a virtuous person.

We should get inputs from whatever sources we can and then shift the true from the false. Then we can make our judgments.



Vīḍemu sēyani nōrunu
jēḍela yadhaṛāmrtambu jendani nōrun
pāḍanga rāni nōrunu
būḍida kiravaina pādu bondara Sumatī!

vīḍemu=betel; cēdelu=women; būḍida=ash; bonda=ditch, hole.

Sumati, a mouth which doesn't taste betel, a mouth which doesn't suck the sweetness of the lower lip of a woman, a mouth which cannot sing, is fit to be a ditch for ash.

There are several good things, which we should enjoy in life. Otherwise our lives are useless.



Balavantuḍa nākēmani
paluvuratō nigrāhinci palukuṭa melā
balavantamaina sarpamu
calicīmala cēta jikki cāvade Sumatī

nigrāhinci=pushing aside.

Sumati, a serpent is powerful, but it can be killed by many tiny ants. A similar fate awaits a strong man who does not care for other people and behaves with them rudely.

A strong man cannot always depend on his strength and behave in an arrogant fashion with others. A horde of weaker people may defeat and destroy him.

Sthiti lēka balimi celladu
Sthiti kaligiyu balimi lēka celladu sthiti, yā
Sthitiyunu balimiyu kaligina
Yatanikiḡa kājñā celladavanini Sumatī!

sthiti=position; balimi=strength, power.

If a person has no official position, his physical strength will be of little use. Even if he has a position, without strength, the position will be useless. But if he is blessed with both position and strength, his orders will be carried out by all.

In the world of ours, a combination of a suitable position and the ability to make use of that position help a person become successful.



Pāṭerugani pati koluvunu
gūṭambuna keruka paḍani kōmali ratiyun
jēṭetta jēyu celimiyu
nēṭiki nedurīdi naṭṭu lennaga Sumatī!

pāṭu=labor; cētu=harm; celimi=friendship

Sumati, serving a boss who doesn't appreciate hard work, uniting with a young woman who is ignorant of the sexual act, and friendship that soon harms are comparable to swimming against the current. That is, they are difficult.

There is no enjoyment in working under an unsympathetic boss, in having sex with an ignorant girl, and in patching up a friendship which harms one.



Vēsrapu jāti gānī
vīsamu dā jēyanatṭi vyaṛthuḍu gānī
dāsikoḍukaina gānī
kāṣulu galavāḍe rāju gadarā Sumatī!

dāsi=servant maid; koḍuku=son; kasulu=coins.

Sumati, one may belong to a mixed breed, one may be worth very little, one may be a slave's son, but he will become a ruler provided he has lots of money.

It is our experience that even in a democracy, the so-called leaders who are elected by the people are very rich. Money is important to come to power and retain it.

Śubhamula nondani caduvunu
nabhinayamunu rāgarasamu nandani pāṭal
abhilāṣa lēni kūṭami
sabhameccani māṭalella jappana Sumatī!

abhilāṣa=desire, wish; cappana=tasteless.

Sumati, education which doesn't bring happiness, a song which doesn't rouse an emotion, a union which lacks desire, and a speech not appreciated by an audience are insipid.

Certain things like education, music, sexual union and public speaking will lose their purpose if they don't lead to the expected goals.



Sarasamu virasamu korakē
pari pūrṇa sukhambu ladhika bādhalā korakē
peruguṭa viruguṭa korakē
dhara tagguṭa heccu korakē tathyamu Sumatī!

sarasam=pleasantry, cheerful talk; virasam=unpleasant relationship.

Sumati, pleasant talk may lead to enmity, perfect happiness may lead to great suffering, growth may lead to a fall. The fall in prices may lead to a rise. This is certain.

There is a contradictory tendency in pleasure and pain, growth and decay, and fall and rise. So, bear adversity with patience and treat happiness with caution.



Siri dā vaccina vaccunu
sarasambuga nārikēla salilamu bhangin
Siridā boyina bōvunu
kari mringina velagapandū karaṇini Sumatī!

salilamu=water; nārikēla=coconut; kari=insect; velagapandu=wood apple.

Sumati, wealth will come of itself like the water in a coconut. Wealth will leave like the pulp in a wood apple eaten by an insect, unseen.

We should not be swayed by the coming and going of wealth, but remain steadfast and stoic.

Strīla yeḍa vādu lāḍaku
bāloratō celimi cēsi bhāṣimpaku mī
mēlaina guṇamu viḍuvaku
yēlina pati ninda sēya kennādu Sumatī!

strīla=women; vādu=dispute; mēlaina=noble.

Sumati, don't dispute with women, don't befriend small kids and talk to them, don't give up noble qualities and don't ever abuse your employer.

This verse again gives a list of negative commands or don'ts. For success in life and a happy life we should not enter into unnecessary arguments with women or give up our virtues or abuse our bosses. These are matters of common sense too.



Eppuḍu tappulu vedakeḍu
nappuruṣuni golva gūḍadadi yeṭṭlanna
sappambu paḍaga niḍanu
gappa vasincina vidhambu gadarā Sumatī!

kolva=to serve; paḍaga=hood; sappambu=snake.

Sumati, you should never serve a person who is always looking for faults. Such service is like the life of a frog in the shadow of a serpent's hood.

A boss may appreciate a subordinate and pat him on the back. Another boss will only look for defects in the work of his subordinates, so he can punish them. The second type of boss should be avoided since he is dangerous.



Dhīrulaku jēyu mēladi
sārambagu nārikēḷa salilamu bhangin
gāravamunu miri mīdaṭa
bhūri sukhāvahamu nagunu bhuvilō Sumatī!

dhīrulu=wise men; sāram=nutritious; nārikēḷa=coconut; salilamu=water; bhangin=like; bhūri=excessive.

Sumati, in this world, we have to help the wise. Such help will be like the nourishing coconut water and it will fetch honor and a lot of happiness later.

If you nourish a coconut plant by watering it, it will give you nourishing water when it grows into a tree. So, if you assist wise people, you will receive wisdom from them.



Lāvu galavāni kaṇṭenu
bhāvimpaga nītiparuḍu balavantuḍau
grāvambanta gajambunu
māvaṭi vāḍekkiṇaṭlu mahilō Sumaṭi!

grāvam=hill; māvaṭivāḍu=mahout.

Sumaṭi, in this world, just as a mahout mounts an elephant as huge as a hill, an honest man is superior to another who is physically very strong.

Physical size and strength are of no avail compared with honesty. Great things can be conquered by small, but honest men.

Karaṇamula nanusarimpaka
virasambuna tinna tinḍi vikaṭincu jumī
irusuna gandena beṭṭaka
paramēśwaru baṇḍi aina bāradu Sumatī!

vikaṭincu=become unpleasant; irusu=axle; kandena=grease.

Sumati, we have to follow the wishes of the village accountants. If we eat against their wishes, it will cause illness. Unless the axle is greased, even god's chariot won't run.

It is important for a happy and smooth living not to offend those who matter. If they are dissatisfied, they will raise objections and make our life miserable. The way civil servants and policemen harass people is well-known. It is therefore necessary to keep them in good humor.



Peṭṭina dinamula lōpala
naṭṭaḍavula kaina vaccu nānārthamulun
beṭṭani dinamula ganakapu
gaṭṭekkina nēmilēdu gadarā Sumatī!

nānārthamulu=all provisions; gaṭṭu=hill.

Sumati, if you had given generously (in your previous life), all that you need will be available to you even in the midst of forests. But if you hadn't given, you won't get anything even on the top of a golden hill.

This is a variation of an adage, which says that just as you sow so you reap. If in this life you do good deeds, you will be happy in the next life. This is a kind of inducement for people to be charitable.



Tamakincina viṣamincum
Damakincina talliyaina danu ceḍa cūcum
Damakincina sutudencum
Damakincina prāṇahāni tappadu Sumatī!

tamakincu=to act in haste; prāṇahāni=danger to life.

If one acts in haste, the result of such action will turn sour; even a mother will ill-treat a person; the son also will find fault with the person and hasty actions will also endanger a person's life.

In life, haste always leads to disastrous consequences. It is advisable to perform one's tasks in a slow and steady manner, with added care and circumspection.



Kamalamulu niṭa bāsina
gamalāptuni raśmi sōki kamalina bhangin
dama tama nelavulu dappina
dama mitrulle śatrulaguṭa tathyamu Sumatī!

kamalamulu=lotuses; kamalāptuḍu=sun; kamalina=wither; nelavulu=places.

Sumati, if lotuses are removed from water, they wither under the sun's rays.. Similarly, if a person leaves his proper place, his own friends will become his foes. This is certain.

A position confers comfort and security on a person. If he moves out of that position, his friends may turn out to be his enemies.

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