

## Invocation

"Sithi Petradiyen Sirappudan Vaazhga,  
Vaazhga Vaazhga, Mayilon Vaazha,  
Vaazhga Vaazhga, Vadivel Vaazhga,  
Vaazhga Vaazhga, Malai Guru Vaazhga,  
Vaazhga Vaazhga, Malai Kura Mahaludan"

(Bless me with your grace, let me live graciously.  
Long live, long live, the Rider of the Peacock,  
Long live, long live, the Holder of the Spear,  
Long live, long live, the God of Mountains,  
Long live, long live, He with the mountain Goddess  
Valli!)

**My humble obeisance to the great Lord Seyyan!**

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## **Acknowledgements**

A huge debt of gratitude to everyone who critically evaluated the early versions of the manuscript and for the many suggestions for improvement they patiently provided.

A special thanks to the legend of Kumari Kandam, which has inspired many seekers of ancient Indian history.

While I gratefully acknowledge the efforts and inputs from everyone, I take sole responsibility for any errors that remain in the book.

## **About the Author**

Suresh Nayar is an online marketing professional and a hobby farmer from Bangalore.

His passion for ancient history and mythology has led him to read voraciously on these subjects.

He has travelled across India, seeking to be enlightened on the various mysterious legends of India's glorious past.

His interactions with various scholars of history and mysticism, especially on the origins of the many ancient Indian civilisations, was the primary inspiration for him to put pen to paper.

## **Authors note**

This book is a fictional account of an Immortal Dravidian's journey.

The story is placed against the backdrop of the legend of Kumari Kandam, the land of the ancient Dravidians. This legendary land is believed to have extended further south of Kanyakumari, several millennia ago.

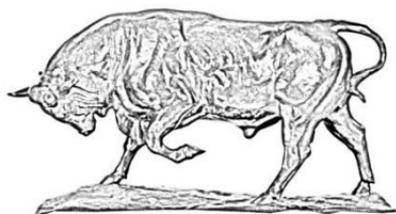
This legend along with various other legends like Lemuria, Atlantis, Sundaland and Zealandia have stirred the imagination of many seekers around the globe.

Several brilliant treatises have been written about the period when Kumari Kandam existed. This glorious period is widely believed to be the Sangam Age – The Golden Age of Tamil Literature.

This being a work of fiction, standard disclaimers that apply to any such work hold good for "The Dravidian from Kumari Nadu" as well.

# Estimated extent of Kumari Nadu in 9000 BCE





The Dravidian  
from  
Kumari Nadu

A fictional account of the incredible journey of an  
immortal Dravidian!

## Glossary

### Significant characters in this book

**Amara Bhujangam** - The commander of an elite commando squad in the Imperial Chozha navy

**Ankayarkanni Devi** - The Empress of Kumari Nadu

**Arumoli** - A captain in the elite commando squad, reporting to Amara Bhujangam.

**Dr. Somasundaram Semburan** - A practising surgeon and a childhood friend of Professor Kasturirangan

**Izhaiyini** - Masuthivan's love interest

**Masuthivan** - A young resident of the ancient city of Mutthur in Kumari Nadu

**Nataraj** - Venkat's assistant and caretaker of his property at Ashokavanam

**Prof. Semboor Kasturirangan** - Shruthika's mentor, guide, and philosopher. Professor of historical studies at Jnaana Bharati.

**Shruthika Jayaram** - A young PhD student and

Venkat's love interest

**Siruvani Adigal** - A powerful Oracle at the Royal abode of Kumari Nadu

**Somradeva** - A young Siddha physician employed by Emperor Ravana's army

**Thalaivan Senguttuvan** - The chieftain of the ancient Mutthur city

**Venkat Srinivasan** - A young novelist, martial artist, and Siddha physician

**Venugopal** - The liaison executive at Ashokavanam Orchards

Other terms used in this book

**Aaru** - Tamil for a large river

**Alaka Nagaram** - Capital city of Lord Viśravaṇa

**Alakku** - A unit of measurement in ancient times

**Aṇḍu** - Ancient Tamil calendar year

**Arasar** - Tamil for Emperor

**Arasi** - Tamil for Empress

**Aiyya** – An honorific title given to respectable or learned individuals.

**Bhrigukachcha** - An ancient port city in modern-day Bharuch

**Chakram** - Spoked wheel

**Champa Kingdom** - Present-day Vietnam

**Dalapathi** - Commander of a fleet or brigade  
**Dandaka forest** - An Ancient forest that lay between the Narmada and the Tungabhadra rivers  
**Deva** - Divine celestial beings.  
**Devalokam** - Land of the Devas  
**Dravida** - Southern part of ancient India  
**Dravidadesham** - Kingdom of the Dravida  
**Eetitimaar** - Rank of Captain in the Imperial Chozha Navy  
**Emperor Eela Vendhar** – The name given to Emperor Ravanam by the ancient Dravidians  
**Giraavaru** - The earliest settlers of Maldives  
**Eelanku Arasar** - Honorific title for the Emperor Ravanam  
**Eelan Nagaram** - Capital City of Emperor Ravanam  
**Eelanku Teevu** - Ancient name for Sri Lanka  
**Isila Ashva** - A fierce ancient tribe of Karnataka  
**Jalathalathipathi** - Rank of Admiral of the Imperial Chozha Navy  
**Kadagam** - Cantonment of the Imperial Chozha army  
**Kalapathi** - Rank of Commander in the Imperial Chozha Navy  
**Kampu Sutra** - Ancient palm leaf texts on advanced fighting techniques using the wooden staff  
**Kanni Kulu** - Elite commando troops of the Imperial Chozha navy  
**Karaipirivu** - Coast Guard fleet of the Imperial Chozha navy

**Kapatam** - The Ancient city where the second Sangam took place

**Kingdom of Poni** - Present day Brunei

**Kishkinda** - The ancient region around the Tungabhadra river

**Kudil** - Traditional cottage

**Lord Seyyan** - Lord Murugan

**Lord Sivan** - Lord Shiva

**Lord Viśravaṇa** - Another name of Lord Kubera, Emperor Ravana's half-brother

**Lord Viswakarma** - The heavenly architect

**Maharishi** - A very powerful Hindu sage of ancient times

**Mahodayapuram** - An ancient port city on the southern Konkan coast

**Malayadvipam** - Modern day Malaysia and Indonesia

**Malaya Mountains** - A mountain range that ran through the middle of ancient Kumari Nadu, believed to have been connected to the western ghats of India

**Malayadhwajam Dynasty** - The predecessor of the ancient Pandyan Dynasty

**Malendura** - The second largest city in Eelanku Teevu after Eelan Nagaram

**Maalumi** - Seafaring boat people from the south-east Asian lands

**Mandalathipathi** - Rank of Vice- Admiral of the Imperial Chozha Navy

**Maruthuvar** - A doctor or physician of herbal and natural medicine

**Matthurai** - The capital city of Kumari Nadu, later known as Thenn Madurai (southern Madurai)

**Mohiniyattam** - A traditional south Indian classical dance form originating in Kerala

**Mount Meru** - The legendary mountain peak of Kumari Nadu

**Murangakai Sambar** - A spicy traditional south Indian dish made of pulses and drumstick

**Muthal Sangam** - The first confluence of the Devas and Maharishis held in Kumari Nadu

**Nittaewo** - A now extinct tribe of small bigfoot or Yeti-like hominid cryptid native to Sri Lanka.

**Paal Payasam** - A traditional south Indian dessert made from milk

**Pampa Saras** - An Ancient name of Tungabhadra river

**Payoshni River** - An Ancient river of India, north of the Dandaka forests

**Rakshasan** - A barbaric mythological being

**Rikshas** - A ancient tribe of bear-like humans

**Saptharishis** - Seven illustrious sages of ancient India

**Siddha Medicine** - A system of traditional medicine originating in ancient Tamil Nadu

**Silambam** - An ancient weapon-based martial art originating in Tamil Nadu

**Siriyaazh** - A ancient seven stringed musical instrument.

**Srivijaya Empire** - Ancient kingdom encompassing Indonesia and Malaysia

**Tamizhagam** - The geographical region inhabited by the ancient Tamil people

**Thalaivan** - Chieftain of a province

**Timingalam** - Tamil word for whale

**Tolainōkki** - Monocular or telescope

**Tumasik** - Present day Singapore

**Varma Kalai**- A Tamil term for the Indian knowledge of vital points of the human body

**Vattaiyezhuthu** - An ancient alphabet system developed by Tamil people to write the Proto-Tamil language,

**Vattam Varaital** - A diagram, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically

**Veddha** - An indigenous group of people believed to be the earliest inhabitants of Sri Lanka

**Villaali** - An accomplished archer

**Vimaanam** - An ancient flying machine

**Yakka tribes** - A tribe of mythical creatures in ancient Sri Lanka



## Prologue

### *Kumari Nadu, 9000 BCE*

The Immortal Dravidian was aghast!

A dreadful fear parched his throat as he stared at the menacing waves lashing against the gates of Mutthur, threatening to devour this ancient city where the love of his life waited for him.

His mind went numb, and as he gradually turned towards the distant Malaya mountains, his gaze fell upon the swirling canopy of dense, turbulent clouds in the distance.

Just below the swirling clouds, a shroud of thick smoke hung around the greatest icon of the ancient world - the legendary holy peak of Kumari Nadu! The smoke was rapidly enveloping the revered abode of the great Lords!

It was fuming and spitting fire, but the exploding peak could not draw the Immortal Dravidian away from the macabre devastation that was raging below the slopes of the rocky hillock that he stood on.

The fearsome Oracle's prophecy was coming true!

The *Wrath of Sivan* was swallowing the holy peak!

\*\*\*\*\*

All through its glorious past, this mist crowned peak has adorned the steamy, tropical jungles of this ancient Dravidian kingdom.

It is the tallest and undeniably the most dominant geographical feature of this thickly forested kingdom of the divine Malayadhwajam dynasty.

Revered and worshipped by the people of this vast land, this venerated peak of the mighty Malaya mountain range is known as the Holy Mount Meru.

Stretching from north to south in a great wavy line, like the spine of this legendary land, the rugged Malaya mountain range is the lifeblood of the ancient Dravidians.

The countless natural springs within the many remote caves and rocky crevices that are scattered across these lofty mountains give birth to the several large rivers that nourish this fertile land. The abundant natural resources gifted by these towering peaks preserve the thriving economy of this fabled kingdom.

Bounded on three sides by the great oceans, this legendary nation of the Dravidians is known to the ancient world as the Kingdom of Kumari Nadu.

The Holy Mount Meru has always been rumbling, even before the dense tropical jungles of this ancient land were created by the supreme Lords. Large swirling gusts of vapour perpetually rise from the mountaintop, and lazily disappear into the skies like the wispy fumes of an extinguished bonfire.

The people of Kumari Nadu believe that the abode of the Red God of War - Lord Seyyan, lies somewhere deep within the mysterious recesses of Mount Meru.

His father, the great Lord Sivan often visits this divine mountain abode to meditate and to calm his repressed rage, which is dreaded even by the Paralōkam Devathas.

It is believed that the powerful energy emerging from Lord Sivan's deep meditation, is the cause of the rumbling sounds and the vapour rising from the holy peak.

Over the last few days, the great Lord Sivan seemed to be unusually enraged. The rumbling had grown louder and has continued for several days, with the steam now angrily shooting high up into the skies in thick jets.

The earth began to tremble as though in mortal fear of the great Lord's wrath, forcing the creatures of the vast forests to flee in terror.

An ominous roar emerged gradually from deep inside the womb of mother earth.

The roar now grew to sound like an extended thunder, only worse, because the fearsome vibrations were rising up from deep under the earth.

Soon, the ground began to behave as though it was a wave at sea. Heaving and falling, the moist floor of the dense jungles cracked open to reveal deep jagged fissures. The greenish yellow slime that bubbled out from these fissures, produced jets of scalding steam that scorched the vegetation around it.

The gigantic trees that had stood for centuries along the thickly forested slopes of the Malaya Mountains, groaned like it was their last breath. They began to creak, sway, and lean, before they slid across each others trunks and came crashing down towards the quaking ground below. Their massive roots ripped open the damp forest floor, tossing huge amounts of soil high into the air.

Before long, thunderous roars tore through the vast land. Gigantic columns of steam began to shoot up into the skies from the summit of Mount Meru. The terrifying hiss from the humongous columns of steam could be heard for miles around.

The steam that rose from the peak, rapidly forged a massive white canopy of swirling, multi-layered clouds high in the skies. This fearsome display of divine fury was now visible from every corner of Kumari Nadu.

The unearthly spectacle drew anxious residents out of their homes, who gazed in uncertainty at the foreboding skies above. As the steam clouds rose to the upper strata of the atmosphere, they condensed, forming dark clouds that stretched as far as the eye could see.

Blinding lightning bolts cracked through the clouds and zig-zagged across the skies. Even as they watched, curtains of water cascaded down from these dark clouds. The abrupt cloud burst that followed, triggered many landslides along the mountain slopes. The people of this ancient land could not comprehend the reason for the great Lord's sudden rage.

Trembling with fear, they now huddled together in little groups all over their beloved country. Many began to fervently pray to the ever-benevolent Mother Nature, to liberate them from the *Wrath of Sivan*.

Meanwhile, the molten lava which had been bubbling deep below the holy Mount Meru, began to creep horizontally along the aquifers.

The lava hissed furiously as it vaporised everything within the subterranean crevices. It charred and consumed the deepest strata of the earth's crust, as it crept along the aquifers.

Simultaneously, hundreds of feet above, the imposing Malaya mountains shook violently and began to gradually sink. The ground around it began to heave, fall, and slide in all directions.

Beasts of the forests bounded away in terror and thousands of birds soared into the sky in panic.

As the molten lava consumed the rocky layers deep below the surface, large swathes of the river plains began to cave in. Vast belts of the dense forests on the lower slopes of the Malaya mountains began to slide down towards the river plains.

Meanwhile, there was utter chaos in the ancient city of Mutthur, with terrified residents of the city and nearby villages fleeing aimlessly towards open lands. Their homes had begun to slide and collide against each other, as if giant invisible hands were pushing the ground below them in all directions.

At several places, scalding water and steam sprang unpredictably from the many jagged cracks that began to appear across the vast landscape.

The terrified Mutthurians abandoned their homes in utter fear, horrified by the dreadful calamity that had abruptly fallen upon them.

The helpless menfolk ran aimlessly all around, trying to find a refuge for their families.

With their beloved world coming apart around them, the women hopelessly shrieked in panic.

Some of them huddled together in small groups, shielding their wailing infants and terrified children.

With no place to hide, some others made a dash towards the open land. As they fled, the land before them abruptly heaved and cracked open. Many of the petrified women and children plummeted into its deep, steam spewing abyss.

Heart-wrenching screams escaped from the unfortunate souls who disappeared into the deep chasm. Those who survived, ran in all directions, desperately seeking a safe shelter that could save them from the *Wrath of Sivan*.

Far down south, the coastal provinces of Peruvalla Nadu and Oli Nadu had disappeared under the ocean. Giant tidal waves had swept all across the southern regions of Kumari Nadu, devouring everything in its path.

The tides were now threatening to overwhelm Mutthur, the thriving ancient city on the banks of the mighty Pahruli Aaru river.

Not very far away from this mayhem, the Immortal Dravidian goaded his panic-stricken horse to gallop at a blistering pace towards his beloved city. He expertly negotiated the constricted paths through the dense river forests, oblivious to the great calamity looming over his country.

The Immortal's city lay where the forest ended, on the banks of the mighty Pahruli Aaru river.

He was determined to reach his ancient city and rescue the hapless citizens from the *Wrath of Sivan*. He knew very well that they would be powerless in the face of this fearful curse of divine fury.

As he barrelled down the steep slopes of a long, wide, shallow valley filled with slippery clay, he wondered where he was. Looking around, he tried to chart a path through this now unfamiliar landscape.

A chill went up his spine as he gradually began to recognise the shallow valley he stood in. It was the dry river bed of the mighty Peru Aaru. Till a few hours ago, the river was brimming with shimmering cold water flowing down from the perennial springs of the Malaya Mountains.

The water had completely disappeared, exposing the moss filled, slushy bed of the river. Many large wooden boats of the *Maalumi* people stood motionless on the river bed, abandoned by their crew. These boats were seen leisurely sailing down this river on their way to the western oceans, just a few hours ago.

As he gaped at the unreal sight before him, a jet of steam abruptly shot up from a deep fissure in the ground nearby. His startled horse instantly reared and threw him off its back, neighing loudly in sheer terror.

Before he could recover from the fall, the fear-stricken horse galloped away aimlessly, leaving the Immortal without a mode of transport. He picked himself up and began running, almost delirious after the fall, but his immortal body refused to wear out or slow down.

He continued to sprint for a couple of hours, before a deafening explosion knocked him off his feet. The ensuing shock waves flung him off the ground and violently hurled him several feet through the air. He went crashing through the thick undergrowth of the river forests and slammed into a massive tree trunk.

Bouncing off the tree trunk and a few boulders nearby, he tumbled over the soft damp earth and came to rest against a mud embankment.

But just before smashing into the ground, he had instinctively turned around to look towards the source of the explosion.

The terrifying sight that he saw, momentarily numbed his senses!

The summit of the magnificent holy Mount Meru had disappeared.

A monumental column of fiery red material was gushing out from the blown-off peak.

This was followed by the shocking sight of the mighty Malaya mountain range gradually sinking behind the tree line.

Within a few minutes, the legendary icon of Kumari Nadu had disappeared from the face of the earth.

All that was left behind was a vast cloud of grey ash, which began to descend over the scorched forests below.

‘The *Wrath of Sivan* will swallow Kumari Nadu!’.

He recollected this apocalyptic prophecy of the divine Oracle and her Sky-Disk, as he lay on the damp forest floor, hopelessly staring at the dreadful prophecy unfolding right before his eyes.

The Immortal Dravidian was numb from the shock of this horrifying turn of events.

The subsequent aftershocks snatched him back to reality. Oblivious to the severe injuries on his body, he quickly got to his feet again. He resumed sprinting with all his might, leaping over the many wide jagged fissures that had begun to rapidly appear all over the ground. He would not stop till he reached his destination to the south, determined to be with his beloved, without whom, life would be meaningless.

Hoping that she would be waiting for him, he eagerly looked forward to the magical moment when she would melt into his arms.

But, little did he know, that every relationship he ever had, would tragically end this day.

He would soon realise that his immortal destiny would begin later today, but only after the Adigal's prophecy was fulfilled, at his beloved city of Mutthur!



## **Amara Bhujangam**

### ***Tumasik, 1025 CE***

It was close to midnight, and pitch dark aboard the light assault ship, anchored off the coast of the Malayadvipam peninsula.

The cloudy skies blocked even the faintest light from the stars and other celestial objects. The sea was tranquil, and a soft, cool breeze from the south, gently ruffled the sails of their ship. But the excitement of an impending adventure, produced a few beads of sweat on Kalapathi Amara Bhujangam's forehead.

The highly decorated Kalapathi was in a huddle with twelve of his elite commandos from the Kanni Kulu of the Imperial Chozha Navy. Their light assault ship lurked a kilometre away from the port of Tumasik, one of the very strategic military ports of the Srivijaya Empire. Well concealed by the darkness, the commandos on board the ship briskly went about their stealthy business.

At twenty-nine years of age, he was the youngest Kalapathi in the Imperial Navy of Emperor Rajendra 'Gangaikonda' Chozha. His elite commando unit was a vital cog in the covert operations against the naval forces of Srivijaya.

The unit was proficient in the art of covert sabotage and demolition. They had executed several daring operations during their triumphant maritime expedition, which began from the Chozhan port city of Poompattinam a few months ago.

Amara Bhujangam had joined the Chozha Navy a decade ago and had quickly risen through the ranks of various regiments in the force.

With no family or relatives and only a few friends with whom he spent his little spare time, he dedicated most of his time and energy in the service of the Imperial Chozha Army. With an insatiable passion for the armed forces, he spent most of his time at the Kadagam's training garrison, perfecting every battle skill, and fighting procedures within a very short time.

With this perfected skill in hand and his several heroic, superhuman acts on the battleground, he had impressed the Jala-Thalathipathis and Mandalathipathis across Ovarious regiments of the Chozha Navy. Highly appreciative of his dedication, patriotism and immense skills, they nominated him to serve in the elite Kanni commando corps. He quickly rose through the ranks to soon command one of its elite strike squads.

It was a very proud moment for him when he became the youngest Kalapathi of the formidable Kanni corps. As a Kalapathi, he now had the freedom to improvise on many battle tactics, and soon, many other corps Kalapathis gladly adopted his innovative battle tactics.

He was a widely recognised specialist in the martial arts of Varma Kalai and Silambam, and knew the Kampu Sutra by heart. The Kalapathis of the other Kanni Kuḷus often consulted with Amara Bhujangam for specialised training on these ancient martial arts techniques.

In a huddle now with his commandos, he instructed his second-in-command, Arumoli Mahadevi, to review the final plan of attack with the rest of the team.

He then went over the finer details of the forty-five-minute covert operation, aimed at demolishing a large fleet of the Srivijaya warships, anchored outside the Tumasik harbour.

Eight of his commandos that made up the Strike Team, were led by Arumoli. They quickly went through a final check of their equipment and positioned their breathing apparatus over their heads for the underwater stealth assault.

Out of these eight commandos, four were tasked to attach the explosives against the hulls, just above the waterline of at least twelve ships. Arumoli and the other three commandos would simultaneously climb up the hulls of four other ships.

They were tasked to place the explosives against the base of the swivelling catapults, mounted in the middle of the ship's vast decks.

These ship mounted catapults were designed to hurl large pitch-resin coated fireballs, over a distance of several hundred metres.

The flaming spheres were capable of causing massive damage to the stealthily approaching warships of the Imperial Chozha Navy, which were just a few kilometres away from their assault ship.

Once they attached the explosives to the enemy ships, the commandos would quickly retreat to their own ship before the explosions were triggered by the specialist flame arrow archers of the Assault Team.

But before they retreated, the Strike Team would pour a highly flammable, tree resin oil on the surface of the water.

This resin would float around the ships in the form of a thin film and cling to the hulls.

A few hundred meters away from the Tumasik port, Amara Bhujangam would wait with the four commandos of the Assault Team who were responsible for the detonation operation. They would also be ready to provide additional covering fire if required.

Each of these commandos belonged to the rank of Therintha Villaaḷi or specialist archer.

They were proficient in flame arrow archery.

Amara Bhujangam now watched as the Strike Team made the final preparations for the stealth assault. They secured the harnesses of their underwater breathing apparatus. This unique equipment was made from dried bottle gourds, equipped with built-in one-way valves to prevent water from entering it. Breathing tubes made of processed hollow reeds and bamboo were attached to one end of the bottle gourds.

The other end had a short, hollow bamboo pipe with a cowrie shell built into it. The shell mounted pipe served as the mouthpiece for the commandos to breathe.

This apparatus enabled the commandos to swim stealthily for considerable distances, a few feet below the surface of the water .

The bottle gourd also stored adequate amounts of reserve air, if the commandos had to dive deeper for short durations.

The commando wetsuit had a coating made from a special combination of beeswax and linseed oil. This coating helped in repelling water and keeping the commandos, their explosives and flame arrows dry.

Amara Bhujangam turned around to proudly look at the national flag leisurely fluttering on the bow of his ship. The bright red and white flag, with the imperial emblem of the leaping tiger emblazoned on it, was well recognised all over the Indian subcontinent.

His elite commando squad had always played a pivotal role in keeping the Chozha flag fluttering high over large parts of the Indian peninsula.

There were now at the threshold of another resounding victory, across the great eastern seas.

The Strike Team was led by his second in command, Arumoli Mahadevi, a senior Villaali of the rank of Eeitimaar. She was the daughter of a Kalapathi of the Navy's Karaipirivu coastal fleet.

Her father had inspired her to join the Imperial Chozha Navy around three years ago, much against the wishes of her mother.

Tall and dusky with an athletic build, she was blessed with a sharp intellect and had a penchant for martial arts.

The long hours she spent in practising the ancient martial art of Silambam, had made her an exceptional warrior. She was proficient in a variety of close combat weapons and unarmed combat techniques.

Her long wavy black hair was neatly tied into a tight bun behind her neck, with a few poison-tipped darts always pinned into it.

She was widely recognized for her supreme skills in precision archery, high-speed dart throwing, and other close combat techniques.

She had perfected these techniques as a result of the rigorous training she underwent in the ancient martial art of Silambam.

She had volunteered to serve in the elite Kanni Kulu under Amara Bhujangam, a little over a year ago. She was inducted into the squad just before they set out on the ambitious overseas military expedition of the Imperial Chozha Navy.

Her sharp features, high cheekbones and large, fish-shaped eyes, gave her a very elegant yet bewitchingly seductive appearance. Every time Amara Bhujangam saw her, he was reminded of someone from his past, with whom he had an emotional relationship.

Over the past year out at sea, he had quickly developed a special fondness for Arumoli, though he never openly displayed it.

She however, did not attempt to conceal her emotions for him and preferred to spend most of her free time in his company. She knew very well that he would never object to that.

She also knew that he too secretly looked forward to the time they spent with each other every day.

He now watched her as she did a quick inspection of the team's specialised equipment, and made final preparations to slip into the dark waters below.

Each of the commandos was armed with various kinds of daggers, short assault spikes, knuckle dusters and poison-tipped darts, apart from a quiver full of flame ready arrows. A sleek wood-and-metal bow was clipped securely to their backs.

None of them carried swords, since they tended to be unwieldy in close combat situations.

Several waterproof pouches that slung from their waist belts carried the explosives, apart from medicinal powders and antiseptic pastes, as well as processed dry food.

With a reverent bow to the lazily fluttering Chozha flag, and a quick amorous glance at Amara Bhujangam, Arumoli slipped into the water without a single splash and barely a ripple.

The rest of the team followed her into the dark depths, in quick succession.

They immediately began their long swim below the waves towards the Srivijaya ships anchored just outside the Tumasik port.

Their camouflaged outfits helped them to remain undetected by the enemy. They were invisible to the sword-wielding sentries pacing along the bulwarks of the ships. The sentries on lookout platforms, high up on the main masts of the enemy ships were oblivious to the swiftly approaching commandos.

Meanwhile on the ship, the Assault Team along with Amara Bhujangam quickly cocked their weapons and took their designated positions. The assault ship began to stealthily slip over the waves towards the Tumasik port. They soon reached

within striking distance of the port and anchored again, fully prepared to launch themselves at the first sign from the Strike Team.

As the Strike Team slipped through the dark depths of the ocean, the Assault Team kept a watchful eye on the enemy. They anxiously watched the surface of the waters around the ships for tell tale signs of their compatriots.

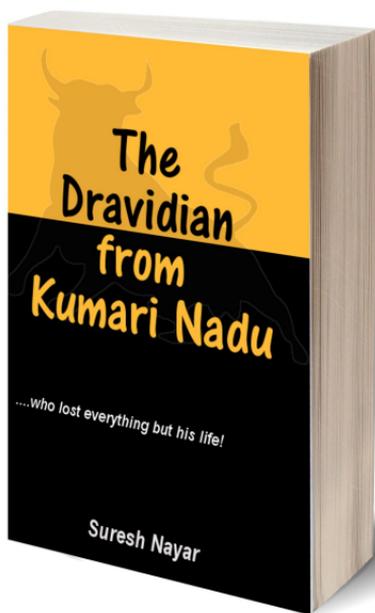
In less than fifteen minutes, they noticed ripples just below the enemy ships.

Eight black silhouetted heads broke through the surface of the water, away from the line of sight of the sentries above. They promptly re-grouped once more before the final assault.

The commandos sent up a silent prayer to Lord Murugan, before they split up again, gliding like invisible ghosts below the water.

Then they began their final approach towards the vantage points, from where they would soon execute their deadly assault on the unsuspecting enemy assets!





The  
Dravidian  
from  
Kumari Nadu

...who lost everything but his life!

Suresh Nayar

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