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MAHIMA DHARMA AND SAINT BHIMA BHOI

Bishnu Pada Sethy

The Mahima Dharma is a unique religious cult of Odisha. It emerged as a revolutionary movement to bring about a drastic change in the evil and irrational practices prevalent in the society in nineteenth century Odisha. The originator of this movement emphasised the worship of ‘Brahma’, who is said to be *Alekha* (without description), *Anadi*(without beginning), *Anakar*(without shape) and *Ananta* (without end) by anyone irrespective of caste and creed.

The founder of Mahima Dharma was Mahima Swami who is believed by his disciples to be God-incarnate. According to Baba Biswanath, an eminent exponent of the *Mahima Dharma*, Mahima Swami spent many years in *Atmayog* (self meditation) in the Himalayas and travelled as a recluse before his first appearance in Puri, the nerve centre of Orissan religion and culture, in 1826. Mahima Swami delivered a discourse on the nature of ‘Brahma’ in the Mukti Mandap Sabha of Jagannatha temple at Puri.

After making his first appearance at Puri, he moved to Khandagiri, Udayagiri and Dhauligiri hills near Bhubaneswar where he stayed for twelve years. He spent these years, drinking only water and was known as Jalahari, Nirahari. At Khandagiri he spent many years in Atmayoga. Then in 1838, he went to the Kapilas hill in Dhenkanal district where he betook to austere mediation for about twenty-four long years and at last attained enlightenment. Legend has it that here he started *Atmayogasamadhi* sitting on a round stone for 21 days during which the great seven-hooded snake

Ananta covered his head. At the time the darkness of the forest was illuminated by the luster of Mahima Prabhu's body which was of the complexion of gold and copper mixed with the fiery brightness of the *Ananta Saptaphani*. Besides being a famous seat of Saivism, the Kapilas hill is an important place of pilgrimage for the followers of Mahima Dharma.

Like all great teachers of religion, Mahima Swami preached his principles by oral instructions and his teachings were transmitted by word of mouth till at last they were codified. He preached his religion in the then districts of Cuttack, Puri, Ganjam, Sambalpur and Angul and in the feudatory states of Dhenkanal, Athagarh, Hindol, Baud and Sonepur. Both Mahima Swami and his chief disciple Baba Govinda Das, preached the new faith in different villages where the people received them with great enthusiasm. During his tours he established a number of centres of Mahima Dharma known as Mahima Ashrams or AlekhaTungis and in each centre he installed a *dhuni* (unextinguishable fire) which is the only altar for worshipping Mahima.

The king of Dhenkanal Bhagirathi Bhramarbar Bahadur was a strong patron of Mahima Dharma. Under his care massive construction work commenced and several institutions were built: Gadi Mandir, Dhauni Mandir, Niti Mandir, Ghantaghara four sided well, BhikshyaSthana, Manohi Mandap, Sabha Mandap, Mahima Dharma GranthaKosa Bhawan, Dharmasala for household devotees, PrabhugharaRosei Sala Mahima VidyapithaPrabhugharGosala, VikshyaBhandarSadarChaupadhi Sabha Mandap, Solandhighar, Bangala house Lion's Gate and BhikshyaGrahanSthana. These institutions enhanced the importance of the area as a spiritual site.

Sadananda was the first member from tribal community to receive the blessings of Mahima Gosain. Siddha Govinda Das, who is identified by Mahima sanyasis as Jagannath, was the first to have the darsana of Mahima

Prabhu. It was he who helped build Mahima religion into a popular movement. The disciples who attained *siddhi* or perfection were given the title of *Abadhutaby* Mahima Swami.

However, the history of Mahima movement would be incomplete without mentioning SanthaKabi Bhima Bhoi who is considered as the first and foremost missionary propagator of Mahima Dharma. The well-known historian K. C. Panigrahi has quoted Bhima Bhoi to argue that the poet could not possibly have been blind, contrary to the popular belief that Bhima Bhoi was a blind poet. His blindness was spiritual, Panigrahi says, which was removed by the blessings of Guru Mahima Swami.

Bhima Bhoi was an illiterate tribal boy who was initiated into Mahima sect after receiving the ‘spiritual touch’ of Mahima Swami who was in Kankanpada, a village in Rairakhol, along with Baba Govinda Das. Mahima Swami’s spiritual touch, it is said, transformed Bhima Bhoi who went on to compose devotional songs.

Thus sings Bhima Bhoi:

The glory of Brahman alone Brahma knows,
No rival in all the three worlds,
None there to estimate him in this endless universe,
He is invisible in all celestial worlds.

Bhima Bhoi upholds the Advaitic conception of Brahman who represents the Supreme Lord.

Bhima Bhoi’s vigorous ethics, revolutionary messages and monotheistic Bhajanas have brought the essence of Mahima religion to hearts of million all over India. He has glorified Mahima Dharma through his devotional writings like StutiChitamani, StutiNisedha Gita, AstakaBihari Gita, Adianta Gita, BhahmaNirupan Gita, Nirveda Sadhahna, Chautisa Granthamala and Bhajanamala etc. All the compositions ‘Stuti Chitamani’

emerges as a masterpiece depicting the Philosophy of Mahima Dharma in a systematic and impressive manner. The prayers in the Bhajanamala are remarkable for their lucidity and powerful exposition of the poet's ideas and sentiments. The poet faced oppression by the feudal lords because of which he migrated to Khaliapali where he established an Ashram in 1877 A.D.

Mahima is omnipotent and all-pervasive. Seers and saints describe the Supreme Lord as creator, the protector, the destroyer, benevolent and with other noble adjectives like omnipotent omniscient and omnipresent. For Bhima Bhoi, Parambrahma is not the object of worship, and his idolization brings the majesty of his power into positive predication. Bhima Bhoi accepted this strategy to reach the Eka Alekha Mahima Parambrahma by bringing his majesty (Mahima) into focus.

It is said that Mahima Swami had received a prophecy that the main centre of the religion would be at Joranda where Mahimagadi would be established. After completing his missionary activities Mahima Swami arrived in Joranda and continued to preach until he gave up his mortal frame on the fourth day of the bright fortnight of Falguna in 1876.

All the devotees of Mahima Dharma are required to observe certain simple rituals and say prayers known as *Saranam* and *Darshanam* at dawn and just after the sunset.

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3. Mr. Sankarsan Jena, Cultural Heritage of Orissa, Dhenkanal, pp.146-158.
4. Ibid, Dr. Satrugan Behera, pp.139-145
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RAVANACHHAYA: THE SACRED SHADOW

Gouranga Ch. Dash

I



The man who lovingly endeared and presented the age-old shadow play of *Ravanachhaya* is no more, but the memory he left behind speaks of his great personality. True, he passed away in the year 1986 and after his demise there were legends-galore, many of them incredible. He is Kathinanda Das, a bard and puppeteer, popularly known as Kathibaba in the Pallahara and Talcher regions of the Angul district in Orissa.

It was a hot summer evening of 1981. I met him in his village Odasha, where he lived. At very first sight I fell in love with him. I did not believe his age simply looking at his shining physique. He was stockily built, broad-shouldered, with a sharp nose, long white curled locks and beard. He had beaming dark eyes as if speaking of love and compassion. An extraordinary

simple man clad in a *dhoti* of *geru* (orange-brown) colour and a *gamuchha* (a large towel) on his shoulder.

He lived in a straw thatched house having two rooms with a narrow verandah in front of the *Bhagabatagadi* in the middle of the village. Asking me to sit on the verandah, he went into the room and came out with a copper plate. It was the citation he received from the President of India for his contribution to the Indian culture as a puppeteer and he wanted me to have a close look at it. We talked quite a lot about our personal lives. Then I requested him to recite a few *chhandas* from the *Vichitra ramayana* (the source of Ravana chhaya). Looking at me with his piercing eyes he lit a pipe of *ganja* (crude hashish) and started smoking with habitual ease.

Uttering the name of Sri Rama he started striking a small tambourine with his feeble fingers in low pitch and began a sort of *ããlãpa* with the tune of ã ã. But when the music of the tambourine picked up its natural momentum, it was sheer ecstasy. The sublime mixture of the sound of the small tambourine and the old master's voice that came straight from his heart produced a grand *nãda*. I was emotionally charged hearing such music that was almost divine in nature. I spent about four hours with the artiste talking about his personal life and his art *Ravanachhaya*. I left his place late in the night. We had a strange companion all throughout. She was an old woman who was his dear wife, patiently listening to her husband reciting the *chhandas* and his talk with me. I can never forget this meeting, especially with such unforgettable characters.

Thereafter my long association with Kathinanda began. After that, I did have the opportunity to know much more about puppet plays in general and *Ravanachhaya* in particular. As it was very common in the case of most artistes of the world, Kathinanda had also a cursed life. He had married early in youth, was blessed with a son, but lost him at the age of fourteen. The only daughter he had also passed away after giving birth to a child.

Kathinanda and his wife took care of the baby and lavished their love and affection on the child. But their love could not win the baby to them. He became wayward and finally left his old grandparents for good. In their old age they were lonely again. In retrospect, Kathinanda's misery knew no bounds.

In this context, one cannot forget the name of Jivan Pani who brought Kathinanda and *Ravanachhaya* into limelight. It was because of him that Kathinanda was honoured in 1978 with the citation for his contribution to folk art by the Sangeet Natak Academy of India, New Delhi,. He became a hero when the news of the commendation spread in his locality and everybody showered praise on him. But this unexpected recognition also created enemies for him and made his life miserable. Those who were in no way connected with *Ravanachhaya* became friendly with him and their vested interests started exploiting him. One fine morning, an organization called *Ravanachhaya Natya Sangha* came into existence. Kathinanda Das was made the president of this Sangha in his village Odasha. The poor artiste could not understand such an intrigue.

The result of the intrigue was manifold. *Ravana chhaya* got its first shock. Many of the puppets simply vanished. Kathinanda, the steward of the theatre, was mercilessly neglected. Many who were not related to *Ravana chhaya* sported themselves as artistes. He was stripped of his land, house and his so called well-wishers turned hostile. Some pseudo admirers of the village never thought a bit about the contributions made by this great artiste.

No doubt, he was a lovable personality, but at the same time very simple, innocent and honest. He was an artiste and not a scholar. On many occasions, I had asked him a question time and again, relating to the history and nomenclature of *Ravanachhaya*. To my utter surprise, every time, he would give new answers, sometimes contradicting his earlier ones. I thought, this could be due to his old age, but later I found that the old man

was hiding many things from me as he was constantly under threat from his scheming pseudo well-wishers. In reality, these so called well-wishers wanted to take the credit of reviving *Ravanachhaya* and rewrite the history, suited to their desires and intentions. In fact, Baishnaba Charan Das, brother-in-law of Kathinanda was another expert artiste of the group. There were other artistes of the bard community who also associated with the master in this art. These artistes with the master were slighted. The conspirators ultimately could not succeed in their scheming. As Baishnava was related to the master and was considered the artiste's-heir, they could not deprive him of his position in the organisation. And, eventually, Baishnaba was recognized as one of the gurus of *Ravanachhaya*. This was also acknowledged by Kathinanda who candidly confessed that Baishnaba was a greater artiste than him and he too revered him as his guru. But Baishnaba was denied the official position held by Kathinanda after his death. After this the history of *Ravanachhaya* may be reconstructed as enumerated below.

II

Jiwan Pani, an exponent of dance and theatre, had made certain findings of Ravana chhaya. In his book *Ravana chhaya*, he claimed that this form existed in Orissa sometime in the third century B.C. He has also quoted many historians who opined that during this time, shadow theatre had traveled from Kalinga to Southeast Asian countries. Orissa, which is a modern state now, had such names as Udra, Kalinga and Utkal in the past. Emperor Kharavala of the *Chedi* dynasty ruled in Kalinga during 2nd century B.C. Kalinga's vast territory extended from Magadha in the North to the whole of South India and the West¹ Emperor Kapilendradeva of *Surya* dynasty ruled in the 15th century A.D. and had expanded his kingdom from Ganga in the North to Karnataka in the South. The people of Kalinga, during the reign of Asoka (3rd Century B.C.) until the rule of

Kapilendradeva were culturally very enlightened. They freely deliberated on matters relating to society, religion and philosophy of the period. They even indulged in discussion on Jainism, Buddhism or Brahmanism and their related scriptures. And, this social consciousness continued to prevail even during the reign of *Shungas*, *Voumakaras*, *Somas* and *Gangas*. The main centre of study of the Buddhist religion, its philosophy, art, music and dance were the *Viharas* situated in Khandagiri, Udayagiri, Lalitagiri and Ratnagiri. In Western Orissa one would find Subarnapur, Boudh, Sambal and in the Northeast, Keojhar and Mayurbhanj were the places for the Buddhist *Sahajajana* group. Dr. Nabin Kumar Sahu has very rightly ascertained that these were regions where the *Siddhacharyas* of *Sahajajana* sect started practicing their philosophy and in later days have undertaken the task of propagating the religion in the whole of India and in countries like Nepal, China, Japan, Cambodia, Malaya, Burma, Java, Sumatra, Bali and Cylone.²

Further, historical evidence proves that the warriors and merchants of the maritime Kalinga had established commercial settlements or colonies in the above mentioned countries of South-East Asia. They journeyed by land and sea-routes to these lands in the 2nd century A.D. This was the time when *Aryanisation* in India had already been established, whereas it was beginning to gather momentum in these countries in the sixth or seventh centuries A.D.³ We do not know for sure who first set foot in those lands, but it is certain that greed for gold made the Hindu traders rush to establish their colonies there, despite the hazards of sea voyage. They settled down in the lands of Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo, etc. which were then known as *Subarna-dweepa*, the island of gold. The people who first nourished these foreign lands were the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Buddhist preachers. They were patronized by the rulers of different dynasties, such as the *Guptas*, the *Pallavs*, the *Cholas*, *Pandyas* and *Sailendras* of South India between the fourth and tenth centuries A.D. In the beginning, like other colonialists they might have befriended the natives by engaging them in

good humour and later, they must have taken advantage of their credulous nature and imposed their authority, styling themselves as the superior race, and emasculating those people to their own benefit. For above one thousand years from third century till fourteenth century A.D., history has witnessed various conflicts arising out of abhorrence, disbelief and discontentment among the divergent groups of colonists and natives. Eventually, this kind of disturbance ended in an amicable reconciliation. But, strangely, in the midst of confusion, Indonesian culture flourished accommodating powerful strains of Indian-ness. One notices these traits in the field of art, literature, music, dance, drama and architecture of Indonesia. It is widely accepted by the historians of the world that the people of *Kalinga* have been to a very great extent instrumental in the process of Hindunisation of the culture of these lands.⁴

Depending on the facts found in Buddhist scriptures and archeological remains in South East Asian countries, historians Krom, R.C.Mazumdar, R.D.Benarjee, H.S. Sarkar, Prof. K.D. Bajpai and K.A. Nilakantha Shastri have recognized the contribution of the people of Kalinga, then known as *K'un-Lun*, *Ku Long* and *Ho-ling*. They state as such:

- (i) Ho Ling has been generally admitted to be a Chinese transcription of Kalinga. It would thus appear that the leading kingdom in Java was named after the well-known province of India and it may easily lead to the inference that colonists from Kalinga dominated in that quarter. It is generally held that the name of Java was changed to Kalinga in time due to a fresh stream of migration from Kalinga or the eastern part of India.
- (ii) (a) A Buddha image of Borobudur in Java strikingly resembles a Buddha image of Ratnagiri of Orissa. (b) The Kalamata ornament probably migrated to Java from Kalinga as maker-heads of the springing of the arch and *kirtimukha* at the crown are fairly common

motifs in Orissa. (c) This island was dominated by the people of Kalinga in ancient times. She was the ancestral country of the Sailendra of Java.

- (iii) Kalinga had built up a great overseas empire and spread its colonies as far as Philippines islands in the East and far South into the islands of the Indian Archipelago (p.62) and the people of Kalinga who have been proved to be the pioneer colonists of India, Indonesia and Oceania are probably the very same people whom the modern barbarians of the Pacific and Indian oceans regard with awe and wonder as people from the sky who civilized them and taught them the rudiments of culture.
- (iv) The early settlers hailed from Kalinga, Bengal and Southern Central regions. (p.6) It has to be remembered that during the early centuries of Christian era, the entire Bharat was culturally one integrated whole with a composite culture pervading the entire sub-continent. All the same, it may be pointed out that the name of Kalinga has been most conspicuous in Southeast Asian lands even to these days.⁵

The fact is also corroborated by Chinese scholars. *Kalinga* had built up a great overseas empire and spread its colonies as far as Philippines islands in the East and to islands of Indian archipelago in far South. The people of Kalinga were regarded as the pioneer colonists of India by the historians. They are the same colonists who were honoured as the people who descended from the sky and civilized the people of Indonesia and Oceania where the modern barbarians of the Pacific and Indian Ocean have lived. Talking about the origin and growth of the Kings of Sailendra dynasty that ruled over Java from eighth to eleventh century A.D., R. C. Majumdar clearly mentioned that “the Sailendras, originally came from Kalinga and spread their power in the far East through lower Burma and Malay peninsula” and “that the dynasty could have originated or were connected

with the eastern Gangas, the Sailodvavas or the Sailas of Vindhya. The Ganga, the Sailodvava and the Sailas dynasty may all be the source of the name like a Sailendra.⁶ And, these Sailendras were migrants from Kalinga or, say, South Indian.⁷ Further, in order to substantiate the findings as more authentic, Mazumdar, citing the archeological remnants found in the island of Java, stated that the Buddha image of Borubudur in Java strikingly reassembled the Buddha image of Ratnagiri in Orissa. More proof is the *Kala Makara* ornament found in Java might have migrated from Kalinga. The *Makar* head on the arch in temple architecture and *Kirtimukha* on the crown of the kings were fairly common motifs in Orissa.⁸ Depending on the legends prevalent in Java, Sir Thomas Stanford Raffles also believed that “twenty thousand families were sent to Java by the prince of Kalinga.” These people prospered and multiplied, although in their uncivilized state until the year 289 (of Javanese Era, i.e. Saka Era) when the Almighty blessed them with a prince, named Kango.⁹

But H.B.Sarkar has never accepted the findings made by his predecessors R.C. Mazumdar, R.D. Banerjee and Krom. To him:

At least from ninth to eleventh century A.D., the Javanese people thought that *Kling* (=Kalinga) and *Haryya/Aryga* (=Arya having been mute in the language) were contiguous tracts in India. I should like to place the locality in the lower reaches of Krishna valley, which lay immediately to the South of Kalinga. It is, however, well to remember that the lower Krishna valley was not the only region of the Southern India which participated in the first few centuries in migration to South-East Asia. The contiguous regions of Kalinga and Vidarbha also equally played an important part in the establishment of principalities or Kampongs in South-east Asia. There are indications that sometimes the people from Vidarbha and Kalinga tracts took the initiative; sometimes the people from Krishna valley did so, but in

other cases their overseas activities overlapped or got mixed up. Broadly speaking, the whole of Godavari Krishna valley participated in the process of migration, of which clear indications are available from Chinese texts as well as South and South-east Asian data from the pre-Sailendra period”.¹⁰

Further, citing the names of different places, rivers, hills, cities of Southeast Asia like Kanchi, Niranjana, Baranasi, Chandrabhaga, Gomati, Madura, Ayodhya, Dvaravati, Srikshetra, Kalinga, he has opined that “these names do not, of course, give any indication regarding the original homeland of the colonists. Gonda has truly observed that the names merely reveal the popularity of the Indian epic and puranic literature and it would perhaps be improper to study the significance of the names from a different context.”¹¹

It is not understood how H.B.Sarkar arrived at such a conclusion that the people of Kalinga were not the pioneer colonists in Java, Sumatra, Borneo when place names like Srikshetra, Puri, Chandrabhaga do bear striking resemblance with the names of so many places in Orissa. It is natural that when a particular race colonizes an alien land, the culture of the newly found lands is affected by the culture of the colonist. Sarkar has accepted that the epics and puranic literature have influenced the culture of these countries. Strangely, he denies that the culture of the puranas of the people of Kalinga has ever influenced the culture of the newly found lands. The following reference of Sarkar invites deliberation. He has accepted the fact that:

Many enterprising people from Kalinga and its hinter land started for this destination possibly at a later date. Kalinga lay, broadly speaking, between the Mahanadi and the Godavari and it had an excellent sea port at Paloura near Gopalpur in Orissa. Scholars are generally inclined to believe that the name Kalinga has been reflected in the term *Kling*, *Keling* and even the name Ho-Ling (*Kalinga*), which according to the Chinese evidence, appear to be state of central Java.¹²

Of course, Gonda, an eminent linguist and historian, had already made a similar observation before Sarkar in 1952 in his book *Sanskrit in Indonesia*. If we accept Sarkar's proposition, which seems quite reasonable in the background of the Indo-Javanese cultural relationships during this period, it would appear that the culture of Kalinga played an important part in the colonies when the merchants prospered through commercial activities with these lands in the 7th Century A.D. To authenticate this proposition, he further argues that since in history, the word *lyawones* is identified with the Ancient Greeks and accepted as *Yavana* in Sanskrit literature, similarly Kalinga can be identified as India of those days.¹³ It is possible that the people of Kalinga might have carried their art with them and have attracted the natives by popularizing the visual and musical form of entertainment to establish a good social rapport. The primary objective may have been to promote their trade, but indirectly and without anyone's efforts for it, the culture of music and drama had established a foothold in the alien land. And in the process, the shadow theatre must have made its journey from Kalinga to these countries as part of folk entertainment and consequently flourished there. Gradually, it emerged as a form of art with certain regional variations. As a result, the shadow theatre has become multinational in character, spreading ideas relating to politics, religion and culture. This proposition is based on historical facts and therefore, it conclusively proves that shadow theatre of Southeast Asian countries is a by-product of the original Kalinga's folk drama.

III

Scholars engaged in finding out the origin of *Ravanachhaya* and its historical growth go back to the period of second century A.D., where they trace different sources of reference available in countries like Siam, Cambodia, Turkey, Indonesia and Malaya. When they study the political and cultural history of the islands of Java, Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, they find the

importance of the popular shadow theatre tradition *Wayang Kulit*. But controversy arises among scholars regarding the origin and growth of *Wayang*. Jivan Pani, an expert of performing art happens to be the latest scholar who has tried his best to prove *Wayang*, one of the excellent forms of shadow theatre, as the improvisation of *Ravanachhaya*. He argued that the sea-faring navigators of Kalinga not only carried *Ravanachhaya* to Java but in the process some technical terms used in the art form also entered into the language of the natives. These words have certainly undergone some inevitable change, but are still in use in the *Wayang* shadow theatre. The close relationship between *Kalinga* and *Wayang* shadow theatre is further emphasized by the fact that one of the ancient icons, the short dramatic sketches on the life of Rama, are still popular among the people there. *Delang* has also resembles the name *Bambang*, which means Kalinga. So it is very likely that *Ravanachhaya* and *Wayang* were closely related for more than one thousand years.¹⁴ Examining some of the technical terms used in *Wayang Kulit*, like *Carma Rupa* (Charma Rupa-leather puppet), *Wandha Nrutya* (emotion or mood of the characters), *Suluk* (*Sloka*-verse composition recited rhythmically), *Dalang* (Dalai-Guru or trainer of the artistes), *Gopurana* (Gopura-gate), *Alus* (Alasa-graceful posture), *Kelir* (Kelipura-Theatre Hall), *Gammelan* (*Melan*-an assemblage of artists and the people of all walks of life on any festive occasion), *Talu* (scalp) and *Lamphana* (jump). Pani discovers such striking resemblance is justified by his hypothesis which appears more scientific.

But H.S.Sarkar believes that *Wayang* has migrated from Southern India. To strengthen his views he mentions “there is no conclusive proof regarding the indigenous origin of shadow plays in Java, as many modern terms coming from the West are being rendered into native parlance with astonishing rapidity in both South and Southeast Asia. It seems, therefore, not unlikely that the Sanskrit *chhaya Nataka* is the analogue of the Javanese

Wayang Purva.¹⁵ But he has not exactly mentioned the names of the places wherefrom the artistes of *Wayang* have come.

Shadow theatre, in whatever name it might have been known, *Karagoz* in Turkey, *Nang Yai* in Siam, *Wayang Kulit* in Malaya are the forms closely associated with the socio-cultural lives of people in all countries. Scholars like Hageman, Peonson, Veth, Krom, RC.Majumdar held the view that it migrated from India while Brandes, Coedes, Hazeu and D.G.H.Hall were in favour of accepting its indigenous origins in Java. These scholars are not certain about the time when this form was popular among a particular group of people in any place. Taking all these statements of the researchers, a conclusion can be drawn that shadow theatre did exist in India and might have haunted the new lands sometimes between 8th and 11th century A.D. Depending on one of the inscriptions discovered from Bali, the scholars accepted the fact that the *Wayang* was one of the popular genres of performing art during the reign of the King Balitung (A.D.898 to 910). Before the discovery of this inscription, it was held that as early as first half of the 11th century A.D., shadow plays were shown at Kediri where the shadow figure cut-outs of leather were projected on a screen. They were so popular a form that they were referred to by poets in their works in the 20th century A.D. Those shows were accompanied by an orchestra consisting of flutes, small cymbals etc.¹⁶

Sometimes a pertinent question arises in the mind of the researchers relating to the life and occupations of the artistes responsible for the popularization of this colourful art. H.S.Sarkar has opined that “wherever the Indian went, whether for trading or for any other purpose, they usually look up to the sky, wait for favourable weather, before they return to their homeland. At times they were stranded before they set sail for their return voyage. During such period of forced inactivity, they possibly regaled themselves, in the international settings of Southeast Asia by presenting

Indian dramas or shadow plays based on the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Since the Indian dramas required elaborate stage management and the question of language might have created serious difficulties, it may be believed that the usual way of escaping the monotony in a colonial haunt, was to organize their own recreational shadow plays which required only brief introductions and very little, if at all, dialoguing. As the stories of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were well-known, the theme hardly needed any introduction. When Indian dramas or shadow theatres were staged, it was natural for the natives of the locality to witness the show.¹⁷ But I feel this might not be the only reason, as the colonists very much wanted to spread their culture among the natives. The elements of song, music and *abhinaya* along with the fantasization of the most subtle feelings, imagination and belief of the people displayed on the screen might have allured them to fall in love with the art. In the beginning, the people who endeared this form of theatre must have been the Javanese and subsequently these natives carried it to the lands of Bali, Sumatra, Malaya, Siam and Turkey. And, in the course of time, there might have been local artistes who wished to portray stories of their own on the screen based on love, adventure and religion. In 14th century, Java and many other Southeast Asian countries came under Muslim rule and these rulers wanted to influence the shadow theatre with their own culture. The story *Majapahthon* had a hero named *Panji*, the prince of *Jangle*. This form of *Wayang* is known as *Wayang godol*.¹⁸ But they failed in their effort as the Hindu culture had a strong hold in the shadow theatre.

Indian historians have failed to identify the people who had expertise in presenting shadow plays. They might be either the *Brahmins* who were known as the champions of classical literature and the performing arts or the *Buddhist Shramanas*, the so-called preachers of the life and ideals of Buddha, or the people who belonged to the itinerary *bard* community of the lower class of society, known as the branded entertainers and real

ambassadors of Indian culture. We know from history that neither *Kshyatriyas* or *Vaishyas* have ever cared for the propagation of any art form. Some scholars who argued in favour of Java as the seed-bed of shadow theatre are of the opinion that the natives of these islands observed a kind of festival named *Wayang* during first and second century A.D. The main objective of this festival was to pay tribute to their ancestors and offer prayers to seek favour of the gods.¹⁹ They had the belief that their daily life was directed by the souls of their departed ancestors, who lived even after death in mountains, air and water.²⁰ During these festivals, they would stage shadow plays to appease the characters of the unseen world. The old name of this play was *Wayang-purva*. Later on, this form of shadow theatre was intended to propitiate any unseen power and became a source of popular entertainment. When one analyses the ritualistic importance of the play as demonstrated in the prelude by the *delang* (the guru): making some offerings in a cup for the spirits, appearance of two puppets in grotesque form as the symbol of the dead from the unseen world, he will certainly accept its traditional association with certain customs. But there are always the stories of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. One will notice thematic variations as there is native imagery mixed into them. They, too, have regional variations in respect to costumes, music and songs. Rama is a Javanese prince and Hanuman a wonderful Balinese monkey.²¹ In Madura and Bali the illustration of Rama's adventures on painted clothes have been found even in North Celebes, where the characters of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have been Javanised. Witnessing the *Ramayana* of *Wayang* on the screen, Door T. Kats had the feeling-that "at *panataran* with a *wayang* head dress and body resembling the Javanese and especially, the Balinese type of *Wayang - Koelit* in which this *spiritual being* is expressed rather than the material reality. It is very likely that in these shows, the bad spirits of the 'air' threaten the hero on all sides. The flames very likely represent the *sekti* (shakti), which is the great power of *ksastra* or the

'pundits'." However, he has admitted the fact that the in the cases of the *Hakayat Serirama* of Sumatra and the Javanese *Wayang Lakon* (especially those found in Jogia), the story agrees mostly with the popular version in Netherlands and in India. This version is also found in *Ramakeling* met with in Java and Madura. The old Javanese *Ramayana* (that is still followed in the performances of *wayang wong* in Bali) and the new Javanese *Serat Rama* agree more closely with the *Ramayana* of Balimiki.²² As in story, similarly, the most of striking features of *Wayang* are the figures of the puppet characters. Their shadow pictures are so lively and fascinating that the audience never wants to leave the auditorium during the shows. The puppets are big in size, profile in shape, intricately designed, clear-cut and variegated in different colours. Looking at them, H.S. Sarkar has rightly observed that "when *Wayang* shows are staged on festive occasions to ensure happiness to the people and to ward off disease, we are surprised to find heroes and heroines of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in fantastic shapes and dresses. The temples and candies, dedicated to various members of the *Hindu* and *Buddhist* pantheon, still remind the passersby of the legacy of ancient times.²³ In regards to the costumes of the puppet characters, one also finds their resemblance with the relief of the *panatarn* group of temples.

Taking all these speculations and hypotheses of so many researchers, it becomes rather difficult to arrive at any acceptable conclusion that the *Wayang* tradition of Southeast Asian countries is the influence of the cultural tradition of India in general and Kalinga or South India in particular. It would be, rather, more proper to accept the fact that *Wayang* happens to be the outcome of the marriage of the two cultures. However, one cannot say which of the two happened to be the mother-culture, as it is improper to dismiss the fact that the islands did not have anything of their own. Of course, we cannot rule out the truth that the natives were not influenced by the language, culture and literature of the colonists.

Witnessing the shadow theatre of India and Indonesia, in whatever name they are called, one will, unhesitatingly, acknowledge that *wayang* cannot be a slavish imitation of the master's work, but an expression of their own artistic taste. Thus, the assumptions Jiwan Pani made in connection with the influence of *Ravanachhaya* on *Wayang Kulit* seems also hypothetical.

IV

It is not yet certain, even today, what name this shadow theatre was popularly known in those days in the state of *Udra*. The mention of shadow theatre is mentioned in the writings of many Sanskrit scholars of Orissa. But these scholars have never mentioned *Ravanachhaya* anywhere in their writings on philosophy and epic poetry. Surprisingly, we do not find the word *Ravanachhaya* in the *Mahanataka* of Damodar Mishra ,who was accepted to be an Oriya by many. There is no mention of shadow play or *Ravanachhaya* in the mystic songs written by the *Bouddha Siddhacharyas* between the tenth and twelveth centuries, even though they have been accepted as living evidence about the origin and development of Oriya language and literature. Further, one does not find the use of the term *Ravanachhaya* in the writings of Narayanananda Abadhuta Swamy (Special Reference to his Prose Epic *Rudra Sudhanidhi*) and Mahakavi Sarala Das's classic creation the *Mahabharata* in 15th Century A.D. But the poet has profusely used the term "Pata Chitra" (Appliqué art) in the context of shadow pictures in his *Mahabharata*. In the *Udyoga Parva*, when Yudhisthira, the son of Pandu ascends to the throne of *Pancha Kataka* as the king, Dhruatarashtra, the elder brother of Pandu remarks,

Oh unkind Fate!
What a cruel trick you played unto me?
(You) Show the pictures
And, display in the twinkling of an eye.

Elsewhere Hanuman says to Bhima in the *Udyoga Parva*:-

Make an image in the likeness of me

And install it. In the chariot *Nandighosha*

(Mahabharata, Udyoga Parva Ll.64, Pp34+)

Again in another place in the same epic it is stated :-

The world appears to me a variegated picture

Where the reflection of man is as inconsistent as in water.

(Mahabharata, Ll 221, p. 33)²⁴

In the ‘Adi Parva’ he describes the world as a temporal oneandfull of illusion as in the case of *Chitrapata*. Of course, it has been exceptionally very common among the Indian paintings to draw pictures on clothes, rocks, palm leaves and walls. Sarala Das also uses these two words ‘Chitrapata’ and ‘Patachitra’ in the same way as the writings. But in the excerpts of verses, one gets the impression of the pictures as reflections in water expressing certain emotions.

Considering the fact that this world is subject to constant change and temporary in character, the poet has rightly expressed the phenomenon through ‘Shadow Pictures’ instead of *Pata Chitra*. Pictures drawn on cloth, rock or wall, happen to be unchangeable whereas this change can only be effected through shadow pictures.

There have been ample use of the words like *chitrapata* (appliqué) and *chitra-pratima*, *chitra pitula* (image) in the Oriya epics of the Middle Ages.(16th-19th C. A.D.) and to draw exact pictures of replicas of certain heroes or heroines on cotton clothes has been an age-old tradition in Orissa. This is well known as *patachitra* (appliqué art). Besides this, it has been a traditional practice to draw erotic pictures on the walls of the bedrooms of kings and feudal lords and pictures of gods and goddesses in noble forms on the walls of temples. Therefore, it is believed that these words have been

very commonly and naturally used in the poetry of the Middle Ages. But Dinakrushna Das (17th Century A.D.) in his epic poetry *Rasa Kallola* uses the word *chhaya* (shadow) for the first time alongside ‘Nriya’ (dance). Observing the foot movement of the child Sri Krushna, the poet composes the following lines :

How will I express what picture of dance
Where the poet stays speechless thinking
As if in trance. (*Rasakallola*, Canto 5, line 20)²⁵

Again, elsewhere, in the same epic, the poet writes:-

The beautiful maiden in her youthful glamour
Walking in veiled face in her full lustre
Enamoured of her beauty, said the divine lover
How could you appreciate your own finest charming face
As the puppeteer behind the screen
Never could enjoy the sight of the shadow figure.

Further, the poet compares the maidens of Gopapura, whose graceful bodies were hidden under colourful garments, to the puppeteers who hide themselves behind the screen while manipulating their puppets. And, to describe the romantic pursuits of Sri Krishna in Brindaban, the poet describes his impression as :

At times they dance in fine arrays
At times they sing together
At times the shadows please the eyes
At times they look like dancing pictures
How can I tell the romance and amour ?
(*Rasakallola*, Cantos 18, Lines 27-29)²⁶

The phrases ‘dance in fine arrays’, ‘shadow pleases the eyes’ and ‘dancing pictures’—all suggest different aspects of ‘shadow play’.

There are certain hints or suggestions about shadow play in the epic '*Bidagdha Chintamani* of Abhimanyu Samantasimhara of 18th century A.D. Just like the poet Dinakrushna of Vaishnavite, Samantasimhara uses the word *bimba* (reflection) in three different categories—*Chhaya Bimba* (Shadow Reflection), *Prati Bimba* (Image Reflection), *Swabimba* (Self-reflection). The reflection which is cast in water is said to be inconstant and temporary. While describing the state of mind of Radha, the poet writes:

She walks and halts on the way
 The boarder of her blue garments flutter
 The maiden resembles a flash of lightening
 Just as the lightening on the clouds, shivers
 Her body trembles under the clothes.
 As Cupid pulls the thread
 The golden puppets play the parts
 As they spread.
 Our eyes are struck to the beauty of pictures
 Just as birds are caught by the sticks of
 The bird catchers
 The maiden returned from the scene in a rage
 And her friends discerned her anguish
 The curtains have fallen and closed the stage
 Tell me, if I can do as I wish.

(*Bidagdha Chintamani*, ll.20-23/Pp88)²⁷

The use of the word 'reflection' or *pratibimba* has been abundantly made by *Kabi Samrat* Upendra Bhanja in his great epics *Baideheesha Vilasha* and *Labanyabati*. One could accept the word 'reflection' as a synonym of the word "Shadow Picture". Further, the poet tries to evoke love in the mind of Labanyabati, creating an illusory play. The plot of the play indicates that Prince Chandrabhanu of Karnataka commands Vinod, an

emissary (*nata*) who was an expert magician (*aindrajalika*) belonging to the *Bhata* (?) community, to go with his sixteen year old beloved Premarupa (*nati*) to the land of Cylone. Vinod with Premarupa enter the royal palace and on the request of the king, enacts the dance–drama in front of the lords and the courtiers. Thus the *nata* couple, enacting different stories of the *Ramayana* on the stage in front of the royal audience, captivates them. While witnessing the play and being charmed with the magical performance of the couple, Labanyabati felt herself transformed into Sita and thought Chandrabhanu as Rama.

This illusory or deceptive play of the *nata* couple can be accepted as a form of shadow play, because the stories of the *Ramayana* can be better enacted in abridged forms of shadow theatre and the way it is presented on the stage, creates a kind of illusion (*maya*) in the minds of the audience. In staging such shows, the great artists could create a world of dreams and illusion that enchanted the spectators. As the scholars have accepted the existence of such shadow play, which in the past was the best medium to exhibit any story in drama form, the shadow play or the illusory drama of Vinod in Cylone can be considered more proper.²⁸ So, based upon these available facts of ancient times and the Middle Ages, we may accept without doubt, that the birthplace of Shadow Theatre was the state of the Udras, although it existed in many other places of India.

I have already mentioned that at present, *Ravanachhaya* still exists as a living form in village Odasa and Bhaluki (Pallahara Sub-division) and Kishornagar (Athmallick Sub-Division) in the Angul District. As it is known, the age of this theatre in the village of Odasa spans three generations. The history of puppet theatre in this village centers round the famous man, the late Kathinanda Das (1906?-1988), who was known as a great artiste and guru. Kathinanada's father Basudev Das had come to this village from his own village, Seepurand settled down in Odasa permanently.

Kathinanda was born here. Further, Basudev gave his son in marriage to the daughter of Chintamani, another stalwart of *Ravanachhaya*. The marital ties between the two families further helped in the growth of the theatre as both the families acknowledged this art as their life and their source of livelihood. *Ravanachhaya* gradually disintegrated in the village Seepur, but remained alive in the village Odasa. While *Ravanachhaya* is three generations old in the Odasa village, (corresponding to the mid-twentieth century), its association with the village Seepur was about five generations or approximately one hundred and twenty-five years old. From the statements made by Baishnava Das, brother-in-law of Kathinanda and few other members of the bard community of Seepur, we may accept that their ancestors were inhabitants of Jaipur in Orissa. They were experts in the art form, skilled in wit and rhetoric, fond of art and, loved to sing the praises of the kings who patronized them. Getting help and kindness from the king of Dhenkanal they permanently settled down in Domal. It is known that they have entertained kings, lords and courtiers and of course, the common man by their shows.

The neighbouring king of Talcher was also attracted by this shadow theatre and brought them to his own state to stage similar shows. He settled them in the village Seepur, giving land and other things. Therefore, it is believed that towards the second half of 19th Century A.D., the bard community of Talcher and Pallahara were entertaining people of different villages by performing *Ravanachhaya* in that region. With the passage of time, certain feuds cropped up the bard community. There were family problems too. As a result, some of these bards left Talcher and settled down in Pallahara and in some places of Athamallick and the Rajkishore Nagar area. They settled down permanently and earned their livelihood by performing shows. However, this art form existed in its original form in Seepur until the mid-20th century.

Of course there are certain reasons why it is difficult to accept the historical facts advanced by the *Bhata* community about the history of *Ravanachhaya*. Social scientists, however, have claimed that the *Bhata* community has been living in Rajasthan. But the bards believed that they were the descendants of *Adinata* who was born through the mouth of Brahma, the creator of this universe. *Adinata* was otherwise known as *Suta*. Commanded by Brahma, *Suta* performed shows to entertain the common man by offering prayers to the Almighty. He also sings the praise of the Lord. So he is said to be the father of the creator of this bard community.²⁹ Afterwards, to accomplish the job of *Suta*, many people of the *Brahmin* and *Kshyatriya* castes adhered to the life of the bard community. Inter-marriages started between the two castes. And because of some customs and tradition, the scions of this mixed caste were not accepted as either *Brahmins* or *Kshyatriyas*. They were considered lower castes. In the social system of India, these people took up the role of expert artistes, court jesters and sometimes became political spies. These bards used to sing the praises of the kings every morning and, because of that, had access to palaces and harems.³⁰ These artistes of the bard community moved from place to place and entertained people. While the shadow puppeteers of Orissa are of bard community, their counterparts in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh were said to have belonged to the *syllakatha* community. In Maharashtra, the bards are experts in the fields of painting, dance and music. They organise stage shows before the gods and goddesses in the temples of the state. But in society they are considered untouchables and of lower castes. The bards of Tamilnadu are almost of the same status as the *Mandikar* sect of Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The artists of Andhra Pradesh are like their Maharastrian counterparts, but inclined to aboriginal habits. Of course the bards who stage shows of shadow plays are now the people in charge of the security of the cullases and temples of the locality and are known as the *Aranayakas*. They happen to be *kshyatriyas*. But the

‘Jangamas’ (tribals of Amaravati region) are said to be their masters or gurus. The puppeteers of Karnataka who belonged to the castes *Killekyathas* or *Killy kyathas* (or *Sillekyathas*) are said to be related to the Dayatkar-Jangam sect of Maharastra. They either belonged to some scheduled caste or some tribal community.³¹ The *Bhatas* of Orissa may be of lower caste, but are not untouchables. The government has declared them as scheduled caste. One does not find any similarity between the language and the surname of the performing artistes of Orissa and the artistes of Western and Southern India. Further, the artists of *Tholpavakuthu* of Kerala are known to be agriculturists and belong to the cheltry caste. Though they have accepted the Kamparamayana as the text of their play, one never finds any resemblance with regard to language and social customs with their Tamil counterpart.

It is often seen that there is a close relationship between shadow theatre and the religious societal practices of a community, where songs, music and dance are associated. It is not history alone with which religion is associated, but the future of any art also very much depends on the religious conscience of the people. Based on this, the critics of theatre have successfully found out the history of the different forms of the shadow theatre still existing in different parts of India.

There is evidence that *Chamdyacha Bahulya* shows are traditionally performed in certain temples in Maharastra. The artists used to worship the puppets on Rama Navami Day in certain Rama Mandiras. The artists stage their plays in the temple complex and get their wages from the temple authorities. They also offer prayers to the rain-god, Indra, for good rainfall. Besides this, people also wish for certain desires to be fulfilled, like a son to be born in the family or the impregnation of a barren wife. Further, one finds resemblance between the drawings of certain puppets and that of the images on stone on the temple of *Leepakshi* constructed in the 15th century

A.D. in Andhra Pradesh. Again, one notices the striking relationship that exists between the *Tol Pavakoothu*, a shadow play of Kerala and the ritualistic festivities in the temples of Bhadrakali in the Trichur and Palghat districts in Kerala. In the temple of *Bhadrakali*, a new flag is hoisted in the month of *Aswina* and from that day till the seventh or fourteenth or twenty-first day, a play is performed in the *Mandir* complex.

The common people of Karnataka accept the shadow puppet as the symbol of divine powers. They organize shows in the temple complex wishing for good rain, bumper crop and protection from different diseases. The artists of Belgaon district up to today enjoy the property of Hanuman temple only to perform puppet shows.

While almost in all parts of India shadow puppets plays have positive relationship with their temples and religious festivities, Orissa seems to be an exception. We know from history during the rule of *Somabansis* that Jajpur or Jaganagra was considered a Shakti Kshetra during 9th and 10th century A.D. Again we find that from the reign of the kings of *Ganga* dynasty in 11th century A.D., until today, Srikshetra Puri of Lord Jagannath has been accepted as the center of spiritual consciousness of India. If we accept the opinion of the *Bhata* community, those who perform *Ravanachhaya*, it is surprising to note that they were not associated with either the Shakti cult of Jajpur or Baishnava cult of Srimandir (Lord Jagannath) of Puri. But the tradition of Rama worship among the people of Orissa is age-old and very strong. Of course the people of Orissa have appreciated these puppet shows during any country-fair and on occasions associated with certain religious rituals. This might have been the cause for which *Ravanachhaya* has faced many problems in regards to its growth and development. It is strange that in spite of such difficulties *Ravanachhaya* has survived in Orissa as a form of entertainment for many centuries.

There were references to shadow theatre in Orissa in different *kavyas* and *puranas*, but we do not know for certain when it acquired the name *Ravanachhaya*. There is a fresco painting on the rock-face in Sita-binjhi, a place 20 kilometres from Keonjhar, that provides certain clues to establish a probable relationship with the pictures used in puppet plays. The fresco depicts a royal procession. The king is found sitting under a decorated canopy on an elephant. In front of the elephant there are four infantry soldiers and a cavalry on horseback. Behind the elephant, there is a lady attendant with a danseuse. Under the fresco, the name of the Maharaja, Disa Bhanja belonging to the *Bhanja* dynasty in the 4th century A.D. is painted.³² The local people call this fresco *Ravanachhaya*. However, scholars are silent about the authenticity of this painting. The *Bhatas*, who performed shadow plays in the Keonjhar region, might have come across the name of *Ravanachhaya* and got enamoured by it and, later on, accepted this name for their own theatre. But researchers and artists put emphasis on the following points about the nomenclature of this form of shadow play as *Ravanachhaya*.

- a. The *Bhatas* accept that Lord Sri Ramacandra is the *Purusottama*, the Almighty Himself. And that *Brahma*, who is known as shapeless and without a body, is therefore shadow-less. The "shadows" are associated with demoniac power. Therefore, it would be improper to associate the noble soul of Sri Rama with any shadow, even symbolically. As Ravana is a demon king and "shadow" is symbolic of devilish power, we therefore have the name *Ravanachhaya*.
- b. In the *Ramayana* Sita was abducted by Ravana and was kept in confinement for two years. When Rama killed Ravana and Sita was brought back to Ayodhya, a washer-woman questioned the Sita's chastity. Sita Mata defended herself by saying that she was a *Sati* and never even saw Ravana, but while she was abducted by Ravana in

Pushpaka Vimana (Chariot), in the sky passing over the seas, she had seen his shadow in water and this sight of Ravana's shadow in water foretold the tragic future of Maa Sita Devi. So the "shadow" of Ravana might be the source of the name *Ravanachhaya*.

- c. Jaya, was Ravana himself in his previous birth, working as a gate keeper of Lord Vishnu. There, he disobeyed the commands of Maha Laxmi, the consort of the Almighty Lord and was cursed to be born as Ravana in this world. Although cursed, he was a great devotee of the Lord and belonged to the high caste of Brahmins. But in character and mentally, he was a demon. To get absolved from the curse, he displayed his demoniac activity. But in his mind, he treasured the images of Lord Rama and Sita (the representative names for Lord Vishnu and Maa Laxmi) and waited all his life for them. Therefore, the villain Ravana is known as a great devotee. He is also considered the real hero of the epic. It is probable that the bard community wanted to depict the demoniac character of Ravana as the hero of their play and named it as *Ravanachhaya*. Their intention was to teach people how a demon could change into a noble soul. It is, therefore, acceptable that the artists intimately knew their audience and wanted to affect a transformation of their nature, in the same way they portrayed the change of the inner character of Ravana.

Jivan Pani, in his in-depth study on *Ravanachhaya*, has convincingly expressed that there was a positive effect of Jainism and Buddhism on this sort of play. So far as its name is concerned, he has advanced the view that from the third century B.C. to 9th century A.D. Brahmanism was alternately fighting Buddhism and Jainism for their interference in Hinduism. Jaina Rama stories do not paint Ravana as a demon king, but as *Prati-vasudeva*. *Pauma Chariyu*. This is stated by Vimal Suri in his Jaina Ramayana, believed to be the earliest version. According to the Jaina tradition, it was

written in 72 A.D., but considering it from a linguistic perspective, Jacobi and other scholars date it to be from the 4th century A.D. In this epic work Ravana was not killed by Rama, but by Laxmana, who had to go to hell as a result of his sin. On the other hand, Ravana, after some births, attains the state of an *Arhata*, i.e. a super-saint. This respectful treatment of Ravana is also found in some Buddhist literature like Lankavatarasutra. Dharmakirti (6th century A.D.) and paints Ravana as an ideal Buddhist king. Therefore, it is possible that *Ravanachhaya*, during its formative period came under the influence of Jainism and Buddhism.³³ Of course, it is accepted that the Jainas and the Buddhists who had been enamoured by art tradition of the *Bhata*, were also responsible for the spread of the puppet play. The depiction of Ravana as a defiant hero who was loved by thousands of downtrodden and destitute people and proved himself as a messiah was the brainchild of Jainas and Buddhist Shramanas. But to accept the fact that the name *Ravanachhaya* has been the outcome of the fine artistic sensibility of the Jainas and Buddhists is rather a weak conclusion. The bards who have been depending on this art, as it was the source of their livelihood, considered words like "Ravana" and "shadow" more lively than the words 'Rama' and 'leather' (skin). They might not have been disturbed by any philosophic considerations, but they have only considered that the devotee is greater than the god. Their main intention was to enchant and teach the audience through their artistic shows and to portray the character of Ravana, a great devotee of the Lord who fought for the redemption of his sin. And therefore, with much fondness for the name Ravana, they have given the name of their shadow play *Ravanachhaya*.

V

The puppets of *Ravanachhaya* are made of the hides of deer, mountain goats and sambar. The skins used for making them are untanned leather. The dry hides are soaked in water and then cleaned of the hairs with the help

of some sharp instruments. Then the damp hides are straightened by stretching them with the help of four strings attached to its four -corners which are fastened to stumps. On top of the stretched skin is a heavy load. The characters of the play are made from these skins.

While making these puppets, artistes give due thought to the shape, size, age and mental state of different characters. First, they draw linear sketches of different characters either on paper or on some other medium. Then these linear cut pictures are superimposed on the hides and then exact images are cut out with the help of hand chisels of various sizes. Especially, when the puppets of kings, princes, princesses and different gods and goddesses are made, the makers take due care and caution to cut them with their special costumes and ornamental decorations. This involves skill and artistic handiwork on the part of the people making the puppets. They have to take the utmost care while drawing and cutting the borders of particular robes the puppets wear, the decorative veils, other garments, garlands, crowns, rings and different parts of the chariots used in the play.

When somebody keenly observes the designs of the puppets of *Ravanachhaya* he will be moved by the artistic insight of the village-folk. He will witness that the figures are intricately cut into both finer and ornamental shapes, capable of producing faint and dark shadows. The puppets of *Ravanachhaya* are different from puppets of other shadow plays in India as they are opaque and perforated. Because of this feature, they cast lively shadows. But sometimes shadows of various colours emanate from the opaque puppet figures, creating a kind of illusion in the mind of the audience. I myself, have also experimented with puppets and observed that different kinds of shadows are determined by the quality and thickness of leather used for the purpose. This understanding might have helped the artistes of Orissa to create puppets of their choice and not to go for decorating them with different colours like the artistes of the other regions in India.

Usually, the puppeteers use deer hide for god-like and peace-loving characters, such as, holy-men, *sadhus* and *sanyasis*. The hides of mountain goats is mostly used for all lady characters. For characters like valiant warriors, wicked, cruel and mischievous demons, the hide of *sambar* is best suited. As the hide of *sambar* happens to be thicker, it does not suit the purpose for making puppets of finely and intricately shaped characters. Further, this kind of skin casts deep and dark shadows on the screen. On the other hand the silhouettes of certain sober and serene characters with marked outlines exercise a nobler influence on the audience. As the skin of mountain goats are considerably thin, it becomes easier to cut intricate patterns on them. These shadows help in arousing a sort of divine feeling among the audience. Sometimes the puppets, plainly-cut without any intricate designs, cast shadows of such powerful characters that they attract and appeal to the conscience of the thinking-man. This way the puppets made of skins of different animals in different shapes and sizes take the role of different characters and evoke positive responses from the audience through shadows on the screen.

The puppets which are used in *Ravanachhaya* are made of single pieces of hides and are without joint. Small and slender pieces of bamboo sticks are attached to the lower parts of the puppets. The puppeteers hold the puppets with the help of these sticks using their palms or the tips of their fingers. Thus they manipulate these puppets so as to make different parts of the puppets move with the help of a single stick. For that reason, to display the different parts of the body of a particular character, there is the need of more than one puppet with different shapes and poise for the same character. Further, as the puppets are made to move with the help of fingertips and are jointless, the size of the puppets are made as small as possible. So the puppets used in *Ravanachhaya* are mostly limited to a range of one inch to three feet. Of course, the puppets representing immobile

objects like trees and mountains are rather bigger in size, but the number of such puppets are very few.

The puppets used in *Ravanachhaya* are seemingly primitive when compared to the puppets of other shadow plays in the world. The traditional puppeteers of the Bhat community have never tried to modernize this form. In this context, we can quote Jiwan Pani, who has, earnestly, tried to prove *Ravanachhaya* as the most ancient in the history of shadow theatre. He, candidly confessed that *Ravanachhaya*, the traditional shadow theatre of Kalinga has inspired Wayang in Java, not vice-versa, since the puppet figures of *Ravanachhaya* are less sophisticated and have a more primitive quality in conception and delineation.³⁴ But as I have observed, the puppets of Indonesia are most elegant among all the puppets of the world. Their puppets are the most artistic, well-delineated, coloured and full of intricate and ornamental designs. But the real beauty of the puppets of *Ravanachhaya* lie in their crudeness. Of course, the puppets are the products of the artistic sensibility of the village-folk who are considered as uncivilized and rustic in taste and manner as their puppet characters. However, these age-old puppet figures of *Ravanachhaya* have enormous power in spite of their crudeness, to enamor millions of lovers everywhere. The characters happen to be the symbols of the inner mind who suffer from inherent fear, anguish, joy, loneliness, valour and pity.

VI

The stage used in *Ravanachhaya* is almost similar to any other stage made for shadow theatre throughout the world, with certain exceptions. In the past, the puppeteers would fasten four pieces of long bamboo or round wooden poles on the four corners of a rectangular ground of four by six feet. Three sides of it would be covered by some coloured clothes fastened to the poles to a height of about six feet. The front side of the stage facing the audience was covered by a white cloth above while the bottom part up to a

height of three feet from the ground was covered by a thick mat. The top of the whole stage on the rectangular ground remains open. It appears like an enclosed room with four walls and without a roof. In the centre of the ground, an earthen lamp quite big in size used to be kept as the source of light and kept burning with the help of a thick wick and castor oil. The manipulators of the puppets used to take their position inside the quadrangular enclosure. The puppets were arranged inside conveniently for the puppeteers to manipulate them. The puppets, which are less needed are kept fixed up, were on the inside of the front mat-mesh. This is the practice that is followed even today. Therefore, the mattress below the white screen in front can be said to be the stand on which the puppets are kept hanging in an orderly fashion. The puppeteers sit below the white screen and manipulate the puppets and the audience enjoys the shows.

At present some changes have been affected so far as the stage is concerned. The stage has become bigger than before and is square. The ground for the stage is usually eight feet on each side. For preparation of the stage, strong wooden poles or iron pipes one inch in diameter are used as the supporting bars to hold the coverings of thick blue or black cloth on three sides up to eight feet in height. The bottom part of the front side up to nearly four feet is also covered by thick coloured cloth. The upper part in the front is covered by a white cloth, which is the screen, on which the shadows of the puppets fall. This almost resembles a square shape of a stretched mosquito curtain with its top open and three sides covered with coloured cloth and the front taking care of the screen. Instead of a lamp of earlier times, an electric bulb is used as the light source. As the stage has been made in folding pattern and, is less heavy than in earlier days, it is easier to dismantle and carry from one place to another. It is rather a readymade stage which can be assembled and dismantled within a little time. This improvisation of the stage is a sort of modernization of the stagecraft of *Ravanachhaya* and has made the shows more attractive and popular.

It is noticed that the artistes who manipulate shadow puppets throughout the world adopt mainly two techniques. In some regions the puppeteers stand behind the screen on which the shadow of the puppets fall and, in some others, they sit below the screen on the ground and manipulate their puppets. In *Ravanachhaya* the puppeteers follow the second method. While making the puppets dance or act, the puppeteers take care not to show any part of the stick or their own bodies above the bottom screen so as to be seen by the audience. Thus, the audience fails to understand as to how the shadows are capable of moving in different ways on the screen. At any particular time, a puppeteer can only manipulate two puppets, but when the plot or story demands the presence of many characters, more than one puppeteer are required to handle the puppets. If at any time, some puppets are not required to act anymore, they are kept on the mat, but their bodies are just behind the white screen. When the puppeteer needs them at any time for specific action he lifts them from the mat. Sometimes the puppeteer shakes the mat a little and the fixed puppets, which are lying inactive, becomes lively and the audience see the movement of the puppets. Further, sometimes, the puppets are to move forward and backward in between the source of light and the white screen, thus effecting a change in the size of the puppet shadows. But this sort of moving of the puppets is very tricky. If the puppeteer is not careful, the shadow of his own body and the sticks may fall on the screen, spoiling the artistic effect of the play.

VII

In the plays of *Ravanachhaya*, usually, the themes are taken from the *Ramayana*. It is very difficult to say when the stories of *Ramayana* were used in shadow theatre and gained popularity in this region. There were no written scripts. It only existed in oral tradition. But depending on the episode, as narrated in the epic poem *Lavanyabati* written by Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja of seventeenth century A.D. referred to earlier we can

presume that this kind of play might have been popular much before the time of the poet. There, in the palace of the king of Cylone, the conjurer-couple staged the stories of the *Ramayana* in a nutshell. But the style of the presentation was so fascinating that it made the whole audience spell-bound. This amazing theatrical form could be the earliest form of shadow theatre, *Ravanachhaya*.

Surprisingly, the artistes of the *Bard* community have never adopted this canto of *Lavanyabati* as the prime story of their theatre. Another great epic, *Baideheesha Bilasa* of Upendra Bhanja on *Rama-katha*, which had tremendous influence on the contemporary poet-artistes for its lyrical verbosity and intellectual pursuit also was not taken to be a source for the episodes of *Ravanachhaya*. In Oriya literature, we yet find many versions of the *Ramayana* out of which more than half a dozen are in lyrical form. However, *Vichitra Ramayana*, a great epic, written by Viswanath Khuntia, remains the most favorite among the people of Orissa compared to other epics and *puranas*. Therefore, the *bhatas* were inspired to use different episodes of the *Vichitra Ramayana* as the text of their play.

Viswanath Khuntia, popularly known as Bisi Khuntia, was one of the major poets of the middle age (16th to 19th Century A.D) in Oriya literature. Depending on certain clues reflected in *Vichitra Ramayana*, the scholars have opined that it might have been composed during the reign of Divya Singha Deva (1692 to 1720), the then King of Orissa.³⁵

There are many editions of *Vichitra Ramayan*, but they differ from one another in language, subject matter and metre. In one of the books, the number of *Chhanda* (Canto) are two hundred and eighty-nine, whereas in another text has two hundred and thirty-six. The scholars are of the opinion that Viswanath had composed only two hundred and thirty-seven cantos and the rest are interpolation.³⁶ This statistic is based on the *vanita* (versifier's self acknowledgement) mentioned in the last lines of all the cantos. To me,

Biswanath Khuntia was simply a genius, an exception among his contemporaries. And, one can take his *Ramayana* as a composition of his brilliant poetic sensibility. Thematically, this epic is an Oriya version of the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. As the versification technique of Khuntia was very appealing, it gained popularity very soon among the Oriyas. Its simple lyrical composition and the attractive episodes rendered in colloquial language could win the hearts of the rural folk. There is a large variety of metrical forms which is not found in any other works written by his contemporaries. The element of song, music, dance and above all *abhinaya* had attracted the artistes of *Ramaleela* who endeared it in their performances. Even today, its popularity has not waned.

These are the reasons that inspired the *Bhatas* to endear this epic as the text of their play. In the first canto of the epic *Vichitra Ramayana* the poet identifies Sri Rama with Lord Jagannatha. This kind of perception was new. Yet it could not change the attitude of the artistes of *Ravanachhaya*. Though Lord Jagannath, the State-deity of Orissa is worshipped by all as the manifestation of *Parambrahma* Himself, it is strange that the artistes never made any invocatory prayer to Lord Jagannatha in the prologue of their shows. Plausibly, they conceived Rama, not as the incarnation of Bramha, but the Bramha Himself.

Few important events of Rama's life such as the birth of Rama and his childhood, the murder of demoness Tadaka, salvation of Ahalya, the boatman episode, Rama's marriage to Sita and confrontation with Parsuram (*Adya Kanda*), Rama's banishment and exile, the death of Dasharath (*Ayodhya Kanda*), the killing of Biradha, the encounter with Soorpanakha, the abduction of Sita, the liberation of Savari, a tribal woman (*Aranyaka Kanda*), the killing of Bali, the coronation of Sugriba, the quest for Sita, (*Kiskindhya Kanda*) locating Sita in confinement, setting Lanka in fire (*Sundara Kanda*), preparation for war, Rama's confrontation of with the

demons of Lanka, the killing of Indrajita, Mahiravana, Kumbhakarna, the death of Ravana and the coronation of Rama in Ayodhya (*Lanka Kanda*) were generally chosen for stage-shows. These episodes are considered the most popular plots selected from the main epic *Vichitra Ramayana*. The most important point to note here is that no episode from *Uttara Kanda* was ever selected for presentation in *Ravanachhaya*. The artiste used to say that they were presenting the whole of *Ramayana* in a period of twenty-one days. The purpose of the performers was to entertain the common man, yet they also led emphasis on the spiritual aspects which would arouse in them a sense of liberation and purification of self. This is one of the basic elements of the *Bhakti* movement.

But the intelligent *Bhats* do not only engage their audience with the story of *Ramayana*. They also narrate, in a most interesting way, certain problems of the society while staging plays in order to make the common man conscious of his own problems. Sometimes in form of parables with tragic undertones they engage the minds of the audience with notes of sadness and a didactic message. While at other times, the audience giggled with laughter, seeing funny and queer characters ridiculed for their silly actions on the stage. So, a few feet of white screen become the liveliest medium to project the emotions of little human beings and demonstrate the problems of a larger world. The audience sees characters like a barber and his wife, the washer man and the washer woman, the *harijan* couple of lower caste, the aborigines, the *brahmins* and the *kshatriyas* of the higher caste constitute the theatrical personalities. The observer becomes aware how pitiable the lower class people were before the pride and shameful rudeness of the upper class.

In all the shows of *Ravanachhaya* at the outset we find a barber and his wife appearing on the stage carrying on preliminary sanctification of the stage singing;

A barber I am, hear my story, oh hear
 I go out in the morning, let no one fear.
 I keep my knife, my mirror in one hamper
 I keep one pocket empty and keep my scissors in other.
 Whenever I shave somebody I wash his right foot
 Whenever I get some coins, in the bag, the same I put

xxx xxx xxx xxx

And later in the scene, the barber is seen humiliated with harsh and dirty remarks by *Brahmin* and other characters. Sometimes, the artistes do not hesitate even to criticize the gods, goddesses, great warriors and *Sadhus* through their songs and narratives. They could attract and involve the audience in their own way of looking at things.

VIII

The element of song and music is the real soul of *Vichitra Ramayana*. The verse pattern of this whole epic is both classical and of the folk tradition. This can be, rather, accepted as the storehouse of *rāgas*, *rāginis* and *bolis*. The *rāgas* used in this epic are more than forty in number among which the *rāgas* like *Kedara*, *Kamodi*, *Kafi*, *Deshakshya*, *Chokhi*, *Gujjari*, *Rasakulya*, *Sindhuda*, *Bangalashree* and *Malashree* are the most favourite of the poet. He has also carefully, made some sub-divisions of certain *rāgas*. For example, *Kedara* has three subdivisions, namely, *Kalahamsa Kedara*, *Pahadia Kedara* and *Kedara Gouda*. *Kamodi* has five subdivisions: *Kedara Kamodi*, *Dakshina Kamodi*, *Kumbha Kamodi*, *Sindhu Kamodi* and *Vichitra Kamodi*; *Dashakshya* has two variations, *Chinta Deshakshya* and *Vichitra Deshakshya*. Therefore, these ragas, namely *Kedara Kamodi* and *Mangala Dhanashree*, *Mangala Gujjari*, *Vasanta Bhairavi*, *Kalyana Ahari* and a few more are mixed in character and also are found in the books of Indian Classical music. But the *rāgas* like *Pahadia Kedara*, *Kalahamsa Kedara*, *Chinta Deshakshya*, *Ashadha Sukla*, *Vichitra kamodi*, *Kumbha Kamodi*,

Chinta Bhairava, Chalughantaand Ghantarava as mentioned in *Vichitra Ramayana* are peculiar to the Orissa state only. These *misra-ragas* (mixed *ragas*) of *Ravanachhaya* are not found in other literature elsewhere in India. Further, the use of different *bolis*, *bānis* and *bruttas*, namely, *Munibara bāni*, *Adya Magusira bāni*, *Gadamālia bāni*, *Nanda bāni*, *Choutisha bāni*, *Gopa Jibana bāni*, *Braja Singha bāni*, *Dadhi manthana boli* number more than thirty in *Vichitra Ramayana*. They happen to be the most important phenomena in regards to musicology. *Bāni*, *brutta*, *boli* were the element of song that were dear to the village folk in Orissa. Of course, notes of the music of each *bāni* has a grammar system of its own. But the most noticeable feature is the queer blending of *bhava* with that of *swara* and the style of singing of most of the *bolis*. All this is the result of a perfect blending of the folk and the classical.

Viswanath, surprisingly, has never left any clues in the *Vichitra Ramayana* in regards to his expertise in musicology. But looking into the *ragas* used in his epic, undoubtedly, he can be acknowledged as one of the ramifiers of the musical tradition of Orissa. He owed his achievements to three different sources; namely, the devotional songs; propitiating deities and various rituals; recreational revelries, the kind of songs and music that springs from the heart of the rural and tribal folk and, finally, the classical music—the product of the superb brains of the higher strata of the society meant for entertainment of the elite and royal class. This is the foundation which has sustained Orissa's musicology for more than a thousand years, i.e. from 7th to 17th century A.D. And the people who have enriched this tradition happen to be the poets and preachers of different sects. Here, the *Boudhha Sahajayana*, the Saivaites, the Shaktas, the Vaishnavas few notable religious groups, the court poets and scholars are the composers of innumerable *bhajans*, *jananas*, *choupadis*, *champus*, *chautishas*, *ashtapadis*, *koilis*; they are the champions of classical strain.

B.C. Deva, one of the experts of Indian music has rightly observed that “this region, Orissa also had its own characteristic music.” Of these, the best known are *champu*, *chhanda* and *chautisha*. The songs of Orissa have in general a pattern made of the burden (*Ghosapada*) and the succeeding section (*Antara*). They are also distinguished by certain typical poetic rhythms and prosodic constructions. The first thing that strikes the ear is that these songs are most often slow and medium tempos, though faster passages are interlaced within a song. Sometimes, even a *tala* changes in one song. The flavour of *raga* is also characteristic. There is a curious leaning towards *gamakas*. The *rāgas* also have their *Odissi* names, for instance *Kananashree* roughly similar to the *Karnataka Kharaharapriya*. The names of *rāgas* have identity in both *Karnataka* and *Hindustani* music, so it is with the *tāla* system. Treatises on this music goes back at least to the 13th century—when the *Keshava Koili* was composed by Markanda Das and *Geeta Prakash* of Krishna Das. Above all this area of India has a quaint influence of the music of north, east and south.³⁷ Like a profound musician, Vishwanath judiciously, has incorporated all these three elements of music in his epic to endear both the groups of the people, namely, the masses and the aristocrats known as *Chhanda*, very much unique to Orissa in the context of Indian musicology.³⁸ The popularity of *Vichitra Ramayana* as a *Chhanda Kavya* had certainly inspired the artistes of the bard community to adopt this as the text of their puppet play. But the way they rendered the dialogues and lyrics accompanied by music can be compared to the form of a verse-drama. Usually, the singers adopt their own style of rendering these songs. One would be disappointed if he looked for classical strains in these songs. At times, even the songs are rendered in such a way that they resemble dialogues in prose in between songs that does not create any kind of hindrances so far as the aesthetics of the play is concerned. Rather, this kind of prose dialogue used in between the songs, keep the audience charmed and enchanted. The artistes sometimes use these songs in a style almost prosaic

in nature, which synchronizes the dance of the puppets with lyrics in particular scenes. This is a very special, tricky and artistic style adapted by the singers and puppeteers themselves. Sometimes the rendering of the *rāgas* in a composite form (*Mishra raga*) using *Pahādiā Kedāra*, *Nalini Goudā*, *Chintā Deshākshya* and *Sindhu Kāmodi* makes the artistes of classical strain frustrated. But one does not find any kind of deviation in it with regard to *tālas*. Therefore, we may accept *Ravanachhaya* as an exceptional art form of shadow theatre, where the plays (plot) drawn from classical epics with particular rhythmic form, are dramatized in a folk-based tradition.³⁹

The role of musical instruments are no less important in a puppet play, where a particular story is rendered through the medium of songs. Since the puppet plays are mostly song-oriented, the rendering of songs by the artistes are matched with the accompaniment of the special musical instrument, *Khanjani*, commonly used in *Rāvana Chhāya*. This *Khanjani* is a small shallow wooden drum with a pair of loose metallic disks on the rim, played by striking one's hand, mostly fingers and thumb. Although this was used in earlier times, other instruments like cymbals (a pair of round brass plates) *dāskāthi* (a pair of wooden sticks) and *mridangam* have been introduced in the course of time.

In any form of play, the role of artistes, musicians, players of different musical instruments, people delivering dialogues, singers and others engaged in stage management do have specific significance. But so far as the theory of drama is concerned, the shadow theatre is considered as an exception. This is the type of play, where the characters are lifeless or non-living representations, therefore, still, dumb and mute. Their finer sensibilities are expressed through the songs, dialogues and the style in which they are manipulated, casting corresponding shadows. Therefore, it is expected of all the artistes associated with the play in different actions in all departments to

be perfectly skilled. Generally, during the show of *Ravanachhaya* the musicians play different instruments and the singers sing in front of the stage. But every artiste is a combination of a musician, a singer and a dialogue renderer. On the other hand, puppeteers who remain inside the stage, manipulate and handle the puppets, also render dialogues and sing songs = when the need arises. Further, the puppeteers must be well-versed in the songs and dialogues used in a particular play, so that they could make the puppet dance in particular fashions representing particular shades of emotion. Therefore, the success of the play depends very much on the skill of the artistes who manipulate the puppets from behind, keeping their eyes fixed on the screen where the shadows of the puppets fall to the accompaniment of songs, music and the delivery of dialogues, thus, creating a world of fantasy with the shadow of the puppets and enthralling the audience. And thus, *Ravanachhaya* becomes a perfect synchronization of the actions of the musicians outside and the puppeteers inside the stage.

Of late, *Sriram Institute of Puppet Theatre* (1995) has been founded in village Odasa in the district of Angul, Orissa. The main objective of this organization is to preserve the age old identity of this ancient art form, *Ravanachhaya*. It provides scope for further research and the modernization of this art form. This organization could not have seen the light of the day without inspiration from the puppeteer guru Khageswar Pradhan, a disciple of the great master, the late Kathinanda Das. The revival of this art form has already begun and a great part of the praise goes to the famous painter and artist Sri Prahallad Behera of Angul. He was instrumental in puppet making with his masterly drawings and sketches. There are also other enthusiastic young artists who have joined this organization with their individual experiences and determined effort for its steady growth.

It would be unfair if the name of Ms. Kapila Vatsayana, the great researcher, art-lover and, a famous artiste, is not mentioned here. She and

the research scholar, Ms. Sobhana Radhakrishnan, have provided their timely advice and encouragement to the artistes to go ahead to fulfill their dream project.

The institute has already choreographed and staged many puppet plays depicting the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru; on topics relating to the social, cultural and political history of India, folk-tales and varied contemporary events of the country. Many art-lovers of India and the outside have showered praise on the merited performances of the plays staged by the Institute. The artistes of this Institute have succeeded in claiming a prestigious place for *Ravanachhaya* in the world of shadow theatre.

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POST-MAURYAN YAKSA AND NAGA SCULPTURES FROM BHUBANESWAR

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The Maurya rule in India came to an end in c.185 B.C.E. when Pushyamitra Sunga, the commander-in-chief of the royal army usurped the royal throne after killing the last Maurya ruler Brihadratha.¹ During the reign of Sungas Indian history and culture took a new shape which in turn greatly shaped the sculptures of the said period which in some way reflects the people's taste. "Sunga art" rightly remarks N.R. Ray, "is thus the first organised and integrated art activity of the Indian people as a whole and stands directly counter posed to the court-art of the Mauryas. It reflects for the first time results of the ethnic, social and religious fusion and integration that had been evolved through centuries on the Indian soil, more particularly in the Madhyadesha."² The sculptures of this period viz, 2nd century B.C.E. shows railing pillars representing the then country life, demi-gods like Yaksas, Nagas and other folk scenes like flora and fauna. Among these, the Yaksa and Naga figures constitute a major share of sculptural wealth of this period. Several large-sized Yaksa and Yaksi figures were reported from Patna, Parkham near Mathura, Vidisa in Madhya Pradesh, Bhubaneswar and other places. V.S. Agrawala ascribes these Yaksa images to the early tradition of folk art which prevailed at that time. "The tradition" observes Agrawala, "of folk art may be recognized in a group of free standing statues which have been found at many places in north India, in Bihar and in Odisha. They are mostly figures of Yakshas and Yakshis and they carry with them a distinct plastic tradition which it is not possible to connect with the finished products of the court-art. These can be classed as representing the earliest Indian statuary consisting of a group of free standing

huge images (more than life size) installed under any protective shed or the open sky, carved out in the round, but still conceived frontally. They are symbol of power, impressive in their sheer volume, powerfully built, colossal in size proclaim unmistakably their divine character.”³

The post-Asokan period in Odisha is also marked by the folk traditional environment as indicated by the discovery of Yaksha and Naga sculptures. Several Yaksha images were discovered from Bhubaneswar by K.C. Panigrahi during the early fifties of the last century. A total of four images found by him out of which three were reported from the village Dumuduma near Jagamara on the outskirts of Khandagiri and Udayagiri hills at Bhubaneswar (Fig. 1) and the other one from the close neighbourhood of the Brahmesvara temple. Out of three Yaksha images from Dumuduma, two are intact and measures 5 feet 7 inches in height, a socket can be found on their head which was necessitated for the insertion of some other architectural part.⁴ Interestingly they have been represented having bent knee under the weight of something which they raise by their uplifted arms (Fig.2). Commenting on these Yaksha images K.C. Panigrahi remarks that, “Their frontal pose, the bulged-out-bellies, bent knees, broad torques, heavy ear ornaments, bracelets numbering more than one in each hand and the folds of their *dhotis* hanging down between their legs are strikingly similar to those of the Yaksas forming the capitals of the pillars that support the architraves in the west gateway of the Sanchi Stupa.”⁵ The third one recovered from Dumuduma is broken in the middle thus dividing the sculpture into two parts such as the front and back. Its remaining back portion (Fig.3) depicts elaborately a knot of the *dhoti* like that of the aforesaid Yaksas, but here in this case it further shows a scarf having beads as border decorations placed like a cross having a rosette at the intersecting point. It is noteworthy that, this type of scarf can also be noticed in their prototypes found at Sanchi. The fourth Yaksha image was discovered from



Fig. 1, Yaksa,
Odisha State Museum.



Fig. 2, Yaksa,
Odisha State Museum.



Fig. 3, Yaksa,
Odisha State Museum.



Fig. 4, Yaksa,
Panchagaon, Bhubaneswar.

the Brahmesvara temple area. Different in dimension this sculpture measures 4 x 5 feet and possesses holes beneath the arms unlike other specimens.⁶ These sculptures are all now preserved in the Odisha State Museum. Similarly, another Yaksa, like the Dumuduma specimen is now worshipped as a local deity in a small shrine located near the tank of Badagada area at Bhubaneswar. In the village Panchagaon near Bhubaneswar there is also a Yaksa image (Fig. 4) worshipped as a local deity. This sculpture is carved out of a large piece of sandstone in standing position. Here both the hands are carved uplifted. He wears a loincloth, two square-sized ear-studs and a rich necklace. Over his head a sunken portion can be seen which is very likely the pot believed to be full of wealth. The face portion is slightly mutilated. This Yaksa figure is almost identical to its Dumuduma prototype mentioned earlier. Commenting on the period of these ancient sculptures C.L. Fabri says that, "It will be seen consequently that in the period 2nd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. to which these village deities can be ascribed on stylistical grounds, Orissans not only worshipped the same type of *dii minores* or *gramadevatas* that the rest of India did, from Gandhara and Mathura in the North to the Dravida people in the South but that they also embarked, for the first-time in Indian art history, on carving these much loved local godlings in stone. As no stone statues of these tutelary deities, known from Buddhist literature from the earliest times, have ever been found belonging to the period before the 2nd century B.C., it is reasonable to conclude that the sculpturing in stone of these was the result of the imperial introduction of stone carving during Asoka".⁷

It is interesting to note that, the local people called these images as Gopaluni (milkmaid) of legendary fame without knowing their exact identification. But in reality these heavy and life-size figures represent the Yaksas who were generally worshipped for the well-being of the village. Most of these Yaksa images appear primitive in nature due to the decayed condition, less ornamentation and appears like heavy stumps. According to

K.C. Panigrahi, "The sockets on the heads on the above show that they were architectural parts and were most probably utilized in the *stupa* structures as capitals of pillars. The Yaksas of Sanchi, standing back to back and numbering four in each capital, have been carved in relief, but the specimens found here are free standing statues carved, like all other early images, on both sides. The pillars of the gateways of the *stupas* to which they originally belonged, therefore had capitals different from those at Sanchi. These capitals seem to have been formed of a single Yaksa, but not of four as in Sanchi. As we have already said, these Yaksa images and their miniature prototype in the Khandagiri and Udayagiri caves indicate close cultural contacts between Bhubaneswar and Sanchi which was probably in the occupation of the Andhra Satavahanas during the reign of Satakarni II."⁸ But it is evident from the sculptural depiction of these Yaksa images and iconographical features the socket as observed by Panigrahi may be pots held by these demi-gods on their heads. The aforesaid theory propounded by K.C. Panigrahi is also not accepted by C.L. Fabri. "I find" opined Fabri, "this conjecture rather unlikely. No statues of this size have ever been found anywhere in India as structural components of any building. The *yakshas* and *ganas* that are frequently found as supporters of *torana* crossbars, or as portions of a capital of a pillar, are ever so much smaller, and are almost invariably found in groups, not single. The Dumuduma *yaksa* and the Kapilaprasad *naga* and *nagini* are large, free standing statues of considerable weight, and could not, possibly have formed part of a pillar or railing; one has been measured and is reported to be 5 feet 7 inches in height; the others that I have seen are all life-size, enormous blocks of stone, quite unsuitable for being used as an element in a Buddhist railing."⁹

Like Yaksas, the Nagas are also demi-gods and venerated as the protector of the village folk. Because of this we find Naga images on the outskirts of villages and ancient habitations. They are believed to be the inhabitants of nether world having supernatural powers. Generally Naga images of ancient period are two types such as - (i) Theriomorphic and



Fig. 5, Naga,
Panchagaon, Bhubaneswar.



Fig. 6, Nagaraja,
Odisha State Museum.

(ii) Therio-Anthropomorphic. In North India, Mathura was a great center of Naga worship which is proved by the discovery of several Naga images. Like Mathura ancient Bhubaneswar was also a famous center of Naga worship. An early theriomorphic Naga figure is noticed in the village Panchagaon near Bhubaneswar.¹⁰ This figure is now worshipped as the village deity (Fig. 5). It is carved in relief on a big piece of sandstone. Here the Naga possesses a canopy of seven hoods. The worship of this early sculpture indicates about the continuation of Naga worship in Bhubaneswar from pre-Christian period to present times. K.C. Panigrahi discovered two Nagaraja statues from Bhubaneswar which are now housed in the Odisha State Museum. The first one was discovered from the Sundarapada and the second one was found from the Brahmesvara temple area of Bhubaneswar.¹¹ Unfortunately the Sundarapada statue is in broken condition (Fig. 6). Its

upper portion is missing from the belly. The image is carved against the coils of a snake of which the tail can be noticed underneath its leg. Here the Nagaraja wears a *dhoti* of which the end and folds are depicted in between the legs and on left side. From the waist-band of the figure a long sword can be noticed which hangs down. This sculpture is mostly weather beaten due to the poor quality of sandstone. The other Nagaraja figure mentioned above is also badly weathered and is also covered by a thin coat of lichen. Unlike the previous one this sculpture represents the full figure of a Nagaraja carved against the coils of the snake which has a canopy consisting five hoods on its head. Unfortunately the hoods are broken, but from the remaining demarcating lines it is proved that, there were a total of five hoods. The Nagaraja wears a conical turban on the head, big *kundalas* on the ears, a broad torque and prominent bracelets. On the left side of the waist of the figure, traces of a broken hanging sword can be noticed. Among the two hands of this figure the left is seen hanging down, and the right one is in the *abhaya-mudra*. K.C. Panigrahi assigned these images to the 1st century B.C.E.¹²

It is to note that, these Nagaraja figures are weather-beaten, crudely carved and due to this it appears that, they were anterior to the developed sculptures of the Khandagiri and Udayagiri caves of Kharavela's period. These figures are close prototypes of the Yaksha and Naga images reported from Parkham, Patna and Pawaya which is proved by their manner of execution and costumes. From the above description it would be safe to assign these images to 2nd century B.C.E. and it becomes quite clear that, like ancient Mathura the city of Bhubaneswar (ancient Tosali) was also a great centre of Naga worship during post-Maurya period. "Naga worship" rightly comments K.C. Panigrahi, "seems to have been widely spread in India, and one of the most flourishing centers of this worship in the north-east was Rajgir where an image of Naga of about the first century B.C. has been discovered. It appears that the Naga worship, which represents a

popular folk cult, asserted itself on the decline of Buddhism and Jainism which flourished respectively under Asoka and Kharavela.”¹³

The post-Asokan period during 2nd and early part of the 1st century B.C.E. though not clear from political point of view, but the cultural condition of the region was quite developed which is clearly evident from the available archaic Yaksa and Naga images discovered from various localities of the ancient city of Bhubaneswar. Considered as folk divinities these archaic figures were worshipped for the well being of the village and people during ancient period. Among these, the Yaksas are of two types such as- I. Benevolent and II. Malevolent. Gradually the Yaksas began to be associated with Brahmanical God Kubera who is regarded as the Lord of Wealth. A comparison between these crude and simple Yaksa images with that of the robust guard figures of the Udayagiri and Khandagiri hills prove that, the former are much earlier than the latter. Because the guards noticed on either side of the caves are depicted with advanced features like smartness, good costume, large turban and *dhoti* on the body as well as weapons in the hands. Similarly, the Nagas were also regarded as demi-gods and worshipped for the safety of progeny and yielding of good crops.

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THE JAINA IMAGES NOTICED IN THE JAGANNĀTHA TEMPLE, BARIPADA – A STUDY

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Odisha is known all over the world for its art and culture. In this land, there was the spread of Jainism, Buddhism and Brahmanical faith. Here, there was also the development of Jaina, Buddhist and Brahmanical art and architecture. Jaina antiquities have been discovered from various places of Odisha. Along with the study of the Jaina philosophy, research on the iconography of the Jaina images was undertaken by the scholars. Art historians have thrown light on the Jaina Tīrthānkara and Śāsanadevī images found from different places. In the Indian context, a number of research works have been produced in the field of Jaina art and iconography. In the work of B.C. Bhattacharya, a critical analysis of the images of the Tīrthānkaras, Yakṣas, Yakṣinis, Dikpālas and other Jaina divinities have been made¹. U.P. Shah has referred to the symbols of Jaina worship² and pointed out the origin of Jaina images and iconography of the Tīrthānkara images³. Proper attention has been given on the study of Jaina art. In Odisha, at an early stage of research, importance was given on the spread of Jainism. The facts like Jainism in Kaliṅga, examination of the Hāthīgumphā inscription and impact of Jainism on the Odishan culture are vividly described by L.N. Sahu. While describing the Jaina art, his basic focus was on the caves of Khaṇḍagiri and Udayagiri although he had referred to the images of other parts of Odisha⁴. Every angle of Jainism in Odisha has been elaborately examined by R.P. Mohapatra⁵. Discussions have been made on the history of Jainism and Jaina art in Odisha by A.C. Sahoo⁶. In a recent work, the iconographic characteristics of the Jaina images, the earliest phase of Jaina art in Odisha and importance of the Jaina art have been analysed⁷.

Along with these major works, the features of the Jaina images found from certain places have been examined⁸. In Odisha, it has been marked that some Jaina images have been found in the Brahmanical temples⁹. In the Jagannātha temple of Baripada, four Jaina images have been found. The aim of this paper is to make a micro study of these images and compare the images with other Jaina images found from different places of Odisha. It is also necessary to examine the reasons behind the finding of these Jaina images in this temple.

Jaina monuments are seen in different parts of Odisha. It can be pointed out that three main centers concerned with Jaina activities were Udayagiri and Khandagiri in Bhubaneswar, Podasingidi near Anandapur in Keonjhar district and B.Singpur in Koraput district¹⁰. It is too difficult to find out the exact date when there was the spread of Jainism in Mayurbhanj. There are some indirect references which can throw light on the prevalence of Jainism in this region¹¹. The *Uttarādhyayana Sutra* states that Karakandu, the king of Kalinga was a follower of Jainism. He left the throne and followed the faith of the Jinas¹². It is said that after leaving Tamralipta, Pārśvanātha reached at a place called Kopataka or Kopakataka where he stayed in the house of Dhanya, Kopakataka has been identified with Kupari in Balasore district which was located in the border area of Mayurbhanj¹³. Mahāvīra reached Toshali after passing through the places namely “Valuyagama, Subhoma, Sucheta, Malaya, Hathasisa” and others. These places have been identified with certain areas situated in the western Odisha. It was from Toshali, Mahāvīra proceeded towards Ganjam area¹⁴. It shows that Mahāvīra’s visit had no connection with the northern region of Odisha. N.N. Vasu says that when there was the advent of Pārśvanātha on the border of Mayurbhanj and Nilgiri, some of his followers called Jaina *Crāvakas* came to this region¹⁵. He has referred to an image of Pārśvanātha found from Kosali near Badasahi in Mayurbhanj district where Pārśvanātha is seen with two standing and two sitting figures and these four figures can

be taken as the disciples of Pārśvanātha¹⁶. In course of time Jaina images have been found from various places of Mayurbhanj like Baripada, Khiching, Badasahi, and Barudi. The discovery of a number of Jaina images from Mayurbhanj, no doubt, indicates that there were some followers of Jainism here and this religion established its sway over this region.

In the Indian context, the tradition of image worship in Jainism can go back to the Maurya and Suṅga period and here, the nude figure found at Lohanipur near Patna may be taken into consideration¹⁷. This image is noted for its fine polish and some scholars have the opinion that this sculpture shows the presence of Jaina images during the time of Mauryas¹⁸. Another similar type of this image from the same site having no polish shows that during the Suṅga period, there was the prevalence of Jina worship¹⁹. The popularity of Jainism during the Gupta period can be revealed from the epigraphic sources like the Udayigiri cave inscription of the reign of Kumāragupta-I and Kahaum stone pillar inscription of the time of Skandagupta and also from the installation of five Tīrthānkara images on the niches of a stone pillar²⁰. In Odisha, only limited numbers of inscriptions refer to Jainism. In the Asanapata inscription, there is reference that *Mahārāja* Satṛbhaṅja gave gifts to different religious groups which included the *Nigranthas*²¹. The Lalatendu cave inscription of Uddyotakesari, year 5 clearly reveals the installation of Jaina images. It states, “In the fifth year of the victorious reign of the illustrious Uddyotakesarin, at the sacred place (*sthāna*) on the illustrious Kumāraparvata, the decayed stepped well (*vāpi*) and decayed temples were caused to shine (i.e. to be repaired) and the twenty-four Tīrthānkaras (i.e. their images) were installed”²². As there was the development of Jainism in Odisha, there was the popularity of worship of the Tīrthānkara images and most of the Jaina images found from Odisha can be placed in the period between the 8th and 11th centuries²³. There was the revival of Jainism in Odisha during the 11th century and a number of

Jaina images were made it may be pointed out that the noted Jaina images can be assigned to the 10th and 11th centuries²⁴.

At present four Jaina images are seen in the Jagannātha temple, Baripada. L.N. Sahu referred to the images of Ṛṣabhanātha, Neminātha, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra at the inner entrance of the temple²⁵. But some of these images are not found now. While crossing the main entrance of this temple, images of Pārśvanātha, one on each side are marked. In general, standing or seated Tīrthānkara images are seen in Odisha. The standing images are notice in the *kāyotsarga* pose and seated figures are in *yogāsana* poses. In the images, three-tiered umbrella, cymbal played by hands, flying figures etc. are found²⁶. In case of the images of Pārśvanātha, snake is the cognizance. Snake is not only found in the usual position of symbol, but also canopy of snakes with three or seven or eleven hoods are seen²⁷. In the earliest images of Pārśvanātha, a canopy of seven hooded snake is marked²⁸. Here, in the Jagannātha temple of Baripada, the two images after the entrance have been clearly identified with Pārśvanātha because of its canopy of serpent hoods. These images are placed in bigger cells and appear almost identical. But in the real sense, the snake in the image on the right side (Fig.1) contains nine hoods where as the snake in the image on the left side (Fig.2) consists of thirteen hoods. Both the images are seated in yogic posture. On the chest of the images, bulging diamond like structure is marked. They possess big ears. Hairs appear to be in curled locks²⁹. People worship these images as Ananta. Similar Pārśvanātha images are found from Podasingidi and Sainkul in Keonjhar district. One Pārśvanātha image seen in Podasingidi is found in yogic posture. The canopy of snake above the head consists of seven hoods. But here, the hoods are bigger in size. In one Pārśvanātha image found from Sainkul, it is marked that the figure is in a meditative pose. It contains a canopy of snake over the head having seven hoods. Here, the hoods are big in size in comparison to that of the Baripada images. A remarkable feature in this image is the presence of two

attendants, one on each side. Another Pārśvanātha image from Sainkul is also seen in yogic posture and it contains a canopy of snake over the head with seven hoods. Here, the hoods are also bigger in size. So it can be said that two Pārśvanātha images of Baripada are noted for their specific identity.

Among other images noticed on the inner part of the *Jagamohana* wall of the Jagannātha temple of Baripada two Jaina images are seen. One is the standing image of Pārśvanātha (Fig.3). The typical iconographic features of Pārśvanātha are clearly visible here. The image is standing in *kāyotsarga* pose on a double petalled lotus pedestal. On the upper part, a small trilinear umbrella is seen. Curled lock in hairs is marked. The snake over the head consists of seven hoods. The coils of the snake are noticed on both the sides of the image and also seen around the double petalled lotus structure on the bottom. Cymbal in invisible hand is seen on the upper right part of the image. *Chauri* bearers are marked one on each side. Small sitting figures are noticed on the right side³⁰. This can be taken as one of the noted images of Pārśvanātha. This image can be compared with another Pārśvanātha image found from Kosali near Badasahi in Mayurbhanj district. The image is standing on a lotus pedestal and his hands are stretching downward. A canopy of seven hooded snake is seen over the head. Long coils of snake are clearly visible on both the sides of the image. Two attendants are marked one on each side of the lower part. The feature of this Kosali image is similar with the Baripada image to a great extent. The Kosali image has been dated to 11th century³¹.

Another Jaina image in a niche on the side of the Pārśvanātha figure is also noticed (Fig.4). The image is in *kāyotsarga* pose. The *lāñchhana* bull is clearly seen on the pedestal by which the image can definitely be identified with Ṛṣabhanātha. Above the head, a trilinear umbrella is found. A crown like structure is noticed on the head. Hair locks are marked on the head. Double petalled pedestal is seen. The smaller images of twenty three

Tīrthaṅkaras are found around the Ṛṣabhanātha image. Nine standing images on the left and nine standing images on the right are noticed. In each group, three images are placed by which three groups are seen on each side. On the upper part, five standing Tīrthaṅkara images are marked. Flying figure is seen on both sides of the upper part of the image. The chest portion is slightly broken³². This image has some similarities with the Ṛṣabhanātha image found in the Śvapneśvara temple at Adasapur in Cuttack district. The same *kāyotsarga* pose, lānchhana bull, double petalled lotus pedestal, hair locks and trilinear umbrella have also been marked in the Adasapur image. But a major difference is that the Ṛṣabhanātha image at Adasapur is surrounded by twenty four Tīrthaṅkaras, ten on each side and two on each side of the legs. Here, the surrounding Tīrthaṅkaras are seen in pairs³³. This Adasapur images can be dated to late 11th century or early 12th century³⁴.

As all these Jaina images are noticed in the Jagannātha temple, Baripada, the date of the temple may be taken into consideration. An inscription on the top portion of the right boundary wall of temple mentions.

*“Śakābde Muniraṅdhraḅdhisubhrāṅsupramite śubhe /
Bhaṅjena Baidyanāthena prasādastu kruto mudā //”*³⁵

These two lines show that the temple was built by Vaidyanātha Bhaṅja in the Śaka year 1497³⁶, which corresponds to 1575 A.D. Most of the Jaina images found from Odisha are placed between 8th and 11th centuries. Kosali Pārśvanātha image having similarity with that of Pārśvanātha image of *Jagamohana* wall of the temple has been dated in the 11th century and Adasapur Ṛṣabhanātha image having similarity with the Ṛṣabhanātha of this Jagannātha temple is dated in the late 11th century or early 12th century. So it can be said that the date of the Jaina images found in this Jagannātha temple can be ascribed much earlier to the date of the temple. The reason as to the finding of the Jaina images in this temple can be analysed. It can be pointed out that, this temple also contains Buddhist

images. The Bhañja rulers of Mayurbhanja followed a tolerant policy. When Jaina, Buddhist and Brahmanical images are noticed in this temple, it can show the due honour provided to all the religious sects by the kings of Mayurbhanj. Another aspect indicates that Jainism might have occupied a prominent place in the religious life of the people of Mayurbhanj.

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Mohapatra, *op.cit.*, (1984), p.113; *Archaeology in Orissa*, Vol.II, Delhi, 1986, p.142; P.K. Mohanty, *op.cit.*, p.36; “A Study of the Structure and Iconography of the images of the Jagannatha temple of Baripada,” *Kosala*, No.3, (2010a), p.224.

30. P.K. Mohanty, *op.cit.*, (2010); *op.cit.*, (2010a)
31. K.S. Behera and T. Donaldson, *op.cit.*, p.105.
32. P.K. Mohanty, *op.cit.*, (2010), pp. 36-37; *op.cit.*, (2010a)
33. P.K. Mohanty, “Iconography of the Jaina image found in the Svapnesvara Temple, Adaspur”, *Souvenir*, Golden Jubilee Year Session, Odisha History Congress, Adaspur, 01-02 February, 2020, pp.. 40-41.
34. K.S. Behera and T. Donaldson, *op.cit.*, pp.105-106.
35. N.N. Vasu, *op.cit.*, p.3
36. *Ibid.*

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1

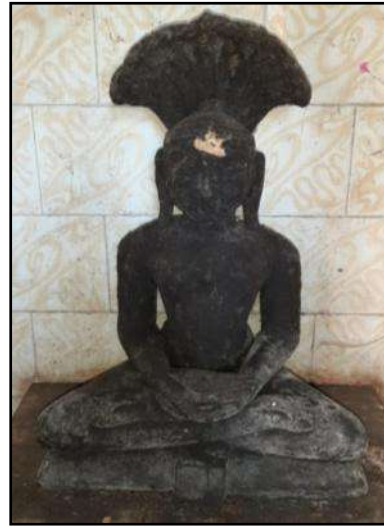


Fig. 2



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

NARASIMHAPATANA TRILINGUAL INSCRIPTION

S.K. Acharya,G.S. Khwajaand M.V. R. Verma

On 7 October 2017 it was first reported in *The Samaja*, an Oriya daily, that there existed a trilingual inscription (Persain, Oriya and Telugu) in the village of Narasimhapatana in Puri distirct.¹ A photograph of the inscription was also published along with the report. On 7 November 2017, the first author visited the site and after cleaning the surface of the inscribed stone slabs took fresh photographs of the inscriptions. The Oriya inscription has been read by him while the Persian and the Telugu versions of the inscriptions have been deciphered by the second and the third author respectively.

Narasimhapatana is situated on the left bank of the river Dhanua (locally known as Sunamukhi) on the way to Bali-Harichandi in AmbapadaPanchayat,BrahmagiriBlock of Puri district of Odisha. The distance from Puri to Narasimhapatana is 22 kilometers. There is an old *maṭha* or *dharmasālā* (locally known as Paṇḍitamāṭha) with several rooms and dormitories all around with an open courtyard in the middle. The ceiling of the rooms is arch shaped and according to the locals there are fifty-two rooms in total. The entire *maṭha* is square in plan and it is built in burnt bricks. The walls are 36 inches thick. But at present the *maṭha* is much dilapidated and is in ruins. Large vegetation growth all around the *maṭha* has made several cracks in the walls and roofs. There is a platform in the back wall of the *maṭha* where the deities like Jagannātha, Balabhadra and Subhadrā were installed and worshipped. Subsequently a small shrine was constructed in the courtyard itself for the worship of the deities. The main entrance of the *maṭha* faces to the east and on its two sides two inscribed

stone slabs are fixed. The stone slab on the proper right of the entrance measures 29.4 x 18.8 inches and contains two inscriptions written in Persian (three lines) and Oriya (six lines) languages. (**Photograph I**). The slab fixed to the proper left of the wall measures 33.8 x 12.2 inches and bears a Telugu inscription. (**Photograph II**)



Photograph I: Persian and Oriya Inscriptions

Persian Version

The inscription contains three lines. The letters are neatly engraved and writings are in a good state of preservation. It is written in Persian language and Arabic script. The date of the inscription is expressed in Fasliyear 1197 that corresponds to 1788-89 CE.

Text

1. Dar sal 1197 Fasli, jahat-i aramiyat-i hangam-i tabish o barish o larzish-i mardumkebarayedarsan-i ShriJagannath

2. Swami amad-raft midarand, AnandkishanBalkishanwalad-i RamkishanPila, DiwanMistarMarkinOlimas
3. BahadurNawabtaraf-i anke in mihmansaraiNarsingPatan, bagh o talabarasta, niyaz-i Swami namudand.

Translation

1. In the year 1197 Fasli (1788-89 A.D.) to relieve people of heat, rain and other botherations, who come for the pilgrimage of ShriJagannath
2. Swami, AnandkishanBalkishan son(s) of RamkishanPila, Diwan of MistarMarkinOlimas
3. Nawab, constructed this inn on his behest at Narasingpatan (and also) garden and tank, as an offering to the Swami (i.e. Jagannath)

Oriya Version

The inscription contains six lines. The writings are in a good state of preservation. It is written in Oriya language and script. There are a few Perso-Arabic loan words in the inscription modified after Oriya pronunciation, e.g. *nabāba* for *nawab*, *bahādara* for *bahadur*, and *dibāna* for *diwan*. The word *pilā/pillā* (l. 30) is a Telugu word used in this inscription. The words *āśiṣvaruṁ* (l. 3) and *tharem* (l. 5) are peculiar to the Oriya of the 18th century. The last letter of the inscription is unintelligible. The letter *bā* after *darśana ta* in line 2 is written below the line. The date of the inscription is ŚālivāhanaŚaka era 1710 which may correspond to 1788 CE. The word *udayābdare* after the date could be interpreted as at the beginning of the Śaka era 1710.

Text

1. śrīśālivāhanaśakābda 1710udayābdareśrīpuruṣottamakṣatra
2. śrījaganāthamahāprabhuṅkadarśana
ta(he)bānnimittagatāgatahebājanamānaṅka

3. bāta-bars-
ātapaupaśamanārthareśrībābrahmacārigosāin̄kaāśiṣvaruṁgañjāma
4. nabābaulvamabahādarasāhebaṅkadibānaānandakrishnapilābālakrishna
pillā e dha-
5. rmaśāl-ārama-
puṣkaraṇīmadhvanṛisimhapāṭaṇāṭhāremnirmāṇakarāibhagabatsa-
6. marpaṇa kale ||dharmātmahebāloke e kīrttiabhibṛiddhikarithibe_

Translation

(The inscription was written) at the commencement of the ŚālivāhanaŚaka year 1710. Ānandakrishna and Bālakrishna, the sons of the Dewan of UlvamaBahādur, the Nawāb of Gañjām, constructed a *dharmasālā* or a transit house, a garden and a tank in the village of Nṛisimhapāṭaṇā for relieving the pain of the people (travelling the distance) in winter, rainy and summer (seasons) for a *darśan* of the Lord Jagannāth in Puruṣottama-kṣetra (and) dedicated them to the Lord.. This act of charity was made with the blessings of ŚrīBālaBrahmacāriGosāin (the Almighty). The pious people would increase the prosperity of this act of charity.



Photograph II: Telugu Inscription

Telugu Version

The inscription contains six lines. The writings are in a good state of preservation. It is written in Telugu language and script. There are a few Perso-Arabic loan words in the inscription which are modified after Telugu pronunciation. They are *tarapu* in line 3 (*tarf* or *taraf* meaning towards/ from), *navābu* in line 3 (*nawab* meaning a Governor or Lord), *bahadaru* in line 4 (*bahadur* meaning valiant), and *divānu* in line 4 (*diwan* meaning Prime Minister). It is dated in ŚālivāhanaŚaka era 1710 and in *Kilakasamvatsara*. The Christian equivalent of the inscription is 1788 CE.

Text

1. śrīśālivāhanaśakābdaḥ 1710 kīlakasamvatsaramuna
2. śripuruṣottama-kṣetrāṅkuśrījagamnāthasvāmidariśanarthamgatāgataja-
3. nulakupāta-varush-ātapa-śramanivāraṇārthamāśikātarapunavābu
4. mārgemvulleṁsubahadaruvāridivānuperamgaḷattūrurāmakṛiṣṇa-
5. piḷlakumālluānandakṛiṣṇuḍubālakṛiṣṇuḍuyinarasiṁgapatṇam
6. dharmasāla-ārāma-puṣkariṇīnirmimcibhagavat-samarpaṇacesiri

Translation

(The inscription was written) in ŚālivāhanaŚakaera 1710 (which also corresponds) to Kilakasamvastara. Ānandakṛiṣṇa and Bālakṛiṣṇa, the sons of PeramgaḷatturuRāmakṛiṣṇa, the Dewān of MārgemVulleṁsuBāhādur, constructed a *dharmasāla* or a transit house, a garden and a tank in the village of Narasiṁhapāṭaṇam for relieving the pain of the people (travelling the distance) from Āśikā in winter, rainy and summer (seasons) for a *darśan* of the Lord Jagannāth in Puruṣottama-kṣetra(and) dedicated them to the Lord.

Discussion

The three inscriptions reveal that the same content was recorded in three different languages. However, there are a few omission and commission here and there in each of the versions which can be taken

together to formulate the actual happening. All the versions are inscribed in ŚālivāhanaŚakaera 1710 which corresponds to 1788 CE. From the Telugu version it is known that the Śaka era corresponded to *KilakaSamvatsara*. *Kilakasamvatsara* mentioned in the record is in fact the corresponding name of the year as per the Sixty Years of Jupiter's Cycle and it has been calculated as the serial number 42.² The practice of dating the inscriptions according to this system along with the Śaka era was prevalent in many medieval inscriptions in this part of India.

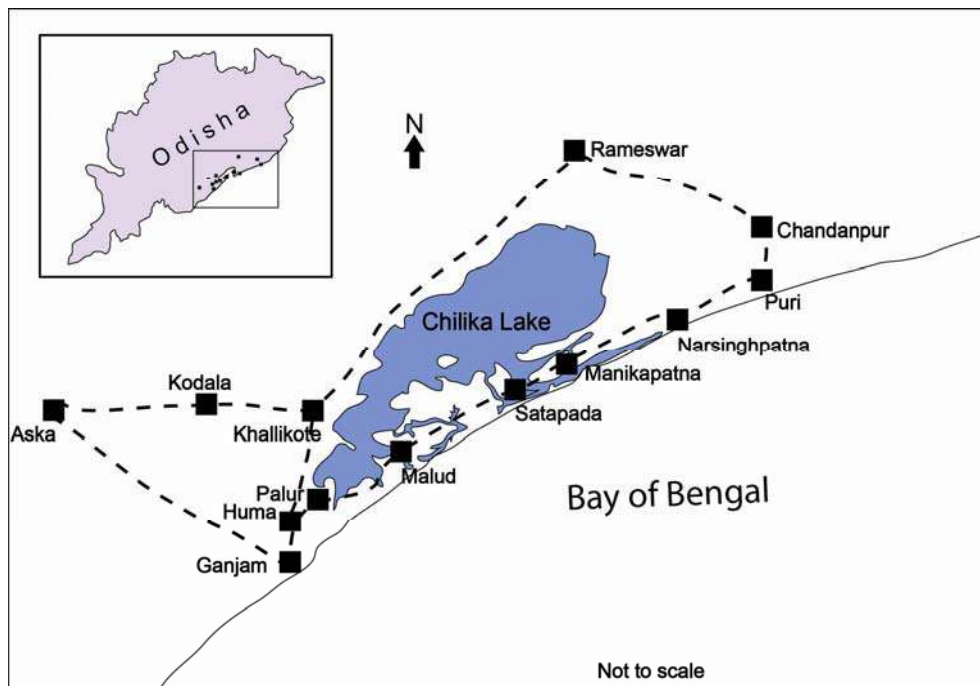
The reference to MistarMarkinOlimas, GañjāmaNabābaUlvama BahādaraSāheba and MārgemVullemsuBahadaru respectively in the Persian, Oriya and Telugu versions of the inscription suggests that MarkinOlimas/Ulvama/MārgemVullemsu was the personal name of the ruler who ruled over the region. From the Persian and Oriya version it is evident that he was the Nawab or ruler of Ganjam. It may be noted here that the English East India Company took possession of the whole of the Northern Sircar of the Madras Presidency in 1766 and appointed a Resident in Ganjam which formed the northern most district of the Presidency.³ Ganjam was strategically located because at this place the river Risikulya merges with the Bay of Bengal and close to this place there is a place called Potagarh (literally, 'the buried fort').⁴ During the 16th -18th century it was an important trading centre and very interestingly the place name Ganjam is derived from the Persian word *ganj-e-aam*, meaning 'a common market place'. Mr. Edward Cortsford, an engineer by profession, assumed the charge of the first Resident of Ganjam in July 1768. Between 6 June 1785 and 19 May 1790 Mr. Morgan Williams was the Resident of Ganjam.⁵ The Telugu version records his name as MārgemVullemsu which was apparently intended for Mr. Morgan Williams. The inscriptions under study actually refer to him as the Nawab of Ganjam. From the Telugu version it is known that one PeraṅgalatturuRāmakriṣṇawas serving as a Dewan of Mr. Morgan Williams who is designated in the inscriptions the Nawab of the locality.

The act of charity inscribed in the inscriptions actually belonged to the two sons of this Dewan and they have been named as Ānandakrishna and Bālakrishna.

In all the three versions it has been mentioned that Ānandakrishna and Bālakrishna, the two sons of Rāmakrishṇa constructed a rest house (*dharmaśālā*), a garden (*arama*) and a tank (*puskarini*) at Narasimhapatana for the pilgrims paying a visit to Lord Jagannāth in the sacred place of Puruṣottama-kṣetra, i.e. Puri. It was intended for the pilgrims to relieve the pain of travelling the distance in all the seasons like winter, rain and summer. This arrangement was meant for the pilgrims coming from Ganjam and the south. In the Oriya version it has been mentioned that the two brothers constructed this with the blessings of Śrībā(1a) BrahmācāriGosāin. It is unintelligible to whom it was meant. Very likely it was referring to the Almighty or the Lord Jagannāth.

The Telugu version of the inscription is especially instructive in this respect because in this version it has been stated that this arrangement was made for pilgrims coming from Āśikā. Āśikā is the same as Aska in the Ganjam district of Odisha. In fact pilgrims coming from south were taking the coastal route from Ganjam to Puri via Maluda, Manikpatna and Narasimhapatana to reach Purinear Lokanātha temple.⁶ VāsudevaSomayāji, the author of *Gaṅgavamśānucaritam*, has described that he came to Puri from Baruwa, a port in Ganjamdistrict by a boat and returned on the land route to Khallikote after crossing the Chilka Lake in a boat in the year 1762.⁷ Those who were coming from Aska were either taking the land route along the river Risikulya or the riverine route to reach Ganjam and then travelling to Puri via Huma, Palura and Maluda. From Maluda they were passing through the narrow strip of land between the Sea and the Chilka Lake, and then reaching atManikpatna and Narasimhapatana.⁸ (**vide Map 1**). In the map it is also shown that there is yet another land route for the people coming from southOdisha to Puri. This route passed through the

western fringe of the Chilka Lake via Khallikote and Rameswar. From Rameswar they were taking the old Jagannath road to reach at Chandanpur. During the British occupation of Odisha in 1803, Colonel Harcourt mobilized the English troops in the same coastal route through Manikpatna in Chilka Lake to reach Puri. Harcourt dispersed a contingent of Maratha troops at Manikpatna with ease and through their *Fauzdar* named Fateh Muhammad won them over to his side. The English troops proceeded from Ganjam on 8 September 1803 and Puri was captured on 18 September 1803.⁹



Map 1: Land and coastal routes from south Odisha to Puri

Thus, the route from Ganjam to Puri was well known to the people of the locality and it was not only used by the pilgrims coming to the Puruṣottama-kṣetra or Puri and the invaders for troop mobilization but also

by the traders to carry the merchandise. The *dharmasālās* constructed on the way further providing temporary transit houses or resting places for all of them. The *dharmasālā* constructed at Narasimhapatana was one such example which was originally meant for the pilgrims but might have subsequently used by the traders and troops. The tank which was dug at the time of the construction of the *dharmasālā* is still found about one hundred meters to the east of the *dharmasālā*. The dense forest cover of the *sal* trees at the back of the *dharmasālā* could be the *ārāma* or garden mentioned in the inscriptions. It is also evident that the resting place together with the tank and garden were constructed in the year 1788 and hence they are a mute witness to the flow of pilgrim to Puri from the south for nearly two hundred and thirty years.

Notes and References:

1. *The Samaja*, Bhubaneswar edition, 7 October 2017, p. 12.
2. Sircar, D.C., 1965. *Indian Epigraphy*, MotilalBanarsidass, Delhi, pp. 267-69.
3. MaltbyThomas James, 1882. *The Ganjam District Manual*, Lawrence Asylum Press, Madras, pp. 146-48.
4. A ruined fort with a moat is now found in Potagarh. This star shaped fort overlooking the sea was designed by Edward Cortsford in 1768 and it was completed in 1769. There is a cemetery near this historical fort which is lying in a dilapidated condition. It contains the graveyard of mainly the British captains and majors who died fighting in different resistance movements lunched by the locals. Thus, in the 18th century Ganjam emerged as an important port on the Gingelly coast and it had brisk costal shipping between Ganjam and Madras. For details see Das Mohapatra, L., 2010. *Commerce in Orissa, 1600-1800*, Prafulla, Jagatsinghpur, pp. 146-49.
5. Maltby, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-48.

6. Pradhan, D., P. Mohanty and J. Mishra, 2000. "Manikpatna: An Ancient and Medieval Port on the Coast of Orissa", in K.K. Basa and P. Mohanty (eds.), *Archaeology of Orissa*, vol. II, PratibhaPrakashan, Delhi, pp. 473-94. Limited archaeological excavations at Manikpatna, about 45 kms south of Puri, were conducted in 1989-90 and 1992-93. The antiquities revealed that it was a famous port town in early and medieval Odisha. Even under the colonial rule it remained as a trading centre and was ruled by a *Jagirdar* up to the 19th century.
7. Patnaik, S.K., June 2014. "Puri: A Study of Early Trade and Pilgrim Routes", *Odisha Review*, pp. 103-109. "The existing temple of Lord Jagannath was known to international sailing community as an important landmark while moving in the Bay of Bengal. Sailing directions and ship logs mention about exact location of the temple from distant sea (20 kms from sea. Kempthorn (1679 AD) has given the exact course of coastal navigation in folios 136-68 which mention that 'from Maneclaptam to Jauggernaut course is East-North East and distance is 20 miles.'" (p. 107). "The traffic from south to Cuttack passed along the eastern shore of the Chilikalake, between it and the sea, to Puri and thence followed exactly the line of the present great Jagannath road." (p. 107).
8. Mohapatra, G.N., 1983. *Jagannatha in History and Religious Traditions of Orissa*, PunthiPustak, Calcutta, pp. 228-30.
9. B.C. Ray, *Foundations of British Orissa*, New Students Store, Cuttack, 1960, pp. 19-26.

CAPITAL AND PROVINCIAL CITIES OF ANCIENT ODISHA - A HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

Ms. Sarita Nayak

Introduction

In the long journey of historical interlude of India at least from sixth century BCE, we see emergence of states, regional kingdoms and local chiefdoms having their principal city centers and capital cities and provincial headquarters. Though, the Early Historic is said to have begun as early as 1000 BCE in North India and the Ganga valley in particular¹ (Allchin 1995), the South Indian Early Historic is often defined much later – during the 3rd century BCE². Historical sources suggest that North India witnessed a period of gradual political consolidation, culminating in sixteen *janapadas* or states by 600 BCE³. These *janapadas*, initially emerged as small chiefdoms in the late 1st millennium BCE and over the succeeding centuries developed into several forms such as monarchical states and tribal republics or oligarchies known as *gana-sanghas*. This political development was accompanied by what is often termed "the second urbanization", a time when large urban centers emerged for the first time since the decline of the preceding Indus Valley Civilization (c. 3200-1200 BCE)⁴.

The beginning of second urbanization and emergence of large number of cities and towns are marked in sixth century BCE, which was the turning point in the history of India. During this phase many sources have been found on the dynastic history of kings or on the history of religious movements and their leaders. The religious movements of Buddhism and Jainism emerged in the Gangetic Valley during this period and from writings of the devotees of these two religions, we get principal information on the settlements and brief descriptions of small and capital towns. During

the time of Gautama Buddha, Champa, Rajgraha (Rajgir), Sravasti, Kausambhi, Vaisali and Varanasi were capital cities which were centers of urban settlement. This phase as the historians termed it second urbanization first being the Mahenjodaro-Harappa. Some of the literary sources like *Rigveda*, and *Dharmasastra*, refer some capital cities. The *Arthasastra* of Kautilya, *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali, *Manusmriti* and the epics and *Puranas* as well as Buddhist canonical texts and *Jatakas* refers to the capital cities and towns⁵. The principal source for the study of towns in south India came from Tamil *Sangam* literature composed in between 500 BCE to 200 CE⁶. The historical transition from the sixth to fourth century BCE saw the expansion of agriculture, the evolution of towns and the beginning of commerce on a wider scale than before as remarks Romila Thapar (2002: 173). At the same time towns and cities emerged in Odishan region too as known from stratigraphy of recent excavated sites at Sisupalgarh, Talapada, Radhanagar and earlier at Jaugarh of our historical period, we see capital cities were very famous with their kings and rulers as Nandas built canals in Kalinga around fourth century BCE. Some the earliest city centers known from both archaeology and literature.

A capital or capital city is the municipality exercising primary status of a state. Capital cities that also serve as the prime economic, population, cultural or intellectual centers of a nation or an empire are sometimes referred to as primate cities. Historically, the major economic centre of a state or region often becomes the focal point of political power⁷. Toynbee says that a city should have a genuine community, defensive city wall, temple and a public hall.⁸ Mumford and Soberj have emphasized the role of political authority in emergence of towns⁹. Braidwood and Adams have given stress on cultural growth and cultural process respectively¹⁰.

There are certain cities are discovered with archaeological spade and the town planning is also ascertained. The town planning could be seen in

the town of Sircap in Taxila built by Greeks and the Indians with grid system. Later, the Parthians expanded it. Similar township was emerged in Odisha with Sisupalgarh which had the elements of town planning in grid system¹¹. Many major ancient towns were discovered and documented; some of them are Kausambi, Rajghat, Sravasti, Mathura (UP), Eran, Ujjain, Vidisha (MP), Rajgriha or Rajgir (having 40 kms in circumference), Vaisali, Pataliputra (Patna), and some others. In the south, ancient cities like Kanchipuram, Madurai were also referred¹². With coming of Mauryan empire and the successive dynastic rule in India under Sungas, Kushanas, Chedis, Satavahanas, Vakataks gave rise a number of capital and provincial cities that are documented. In the early medieval period again under Harshavardhan, Sasanka, and emergence of regional dynasties all over India gave birth to number historical cities. In *Indian Archaeology 1982-83: A Review*, the terms 'early historic', 'early medieval', 'medieval' and 'late medieval' have been used and the periodization brings archaeology closer to history¹³. However, the perception of cities is changed with socio-economic process. In fact, the cities are not static, but rather they keep on changing their meanings over time. The ancient cities significantly are different than the cities early medieval and modern period. It is well accepted in academic circle that man makes imprints on geography in the material process of existence by repeated modifications in the landscape and that by a historical study of landscape one can decipher the context of human activity and can trace the human thought behind it. Historical geographers and historians now make a distinction between private and public spaces, sacred and profane spaces, commercial and ceremonial spaces, shared and divided spaces, male and female spaces, and individual and institutional spaces, and they realize that spaces are contested resources which individuals and groups seek to control as demonstrations of their own power¹⁴. Capital cities were fed by a trade and luxury goods or hard commodities and by intangible services provided by a large number of professionals. In this context, we

may see cities as indicators of economic growth and social change; mean different things in different historical periods and regional context. When, we look into capital cities of the early historical period, our perception is to find out the archaeological remains in form of fortifications, layout of the settlement pattern, building materials, drainages, and the usable objects such as pots, terracotta objects, coins, mould, weapons, scripts etc. as has happened in the discovery of all ancient cities in India and elsewhere¹⁵. When we look into the early medieval capital and provincial cities for their location, we mostly depend upon the sources of geographical locations, material remains, inscriptions and copper plates charters that are visible. Similarly, medieval capital cities are also looked upon on the references in the literature, inscriptions and the monumental remains on the sacred or profane spaces. We may infer B.D.Chattopadhyaya's insightful analysis of process of urbanization in early medieval urban processes, finding the early medieval urban centers 'far more rooted in their regional context than their early historical predecessors'¹⁶. In this context, an exploratory study is being undertaken to locate and redefine with historical geography and recent archaeological discoveries of some of the important capital cities of ancient Odisha.

The geographical boundaries of ancient and early medieval Odisha often changes, so also changes the nomenclature of the regions. We are getting at the earliest strata, a province well within Odishan region was Kalinga of which number capital and provincial cities are referred to in Asokan Edicts and Hatigumpha inscriptions of Kharavela. Subsequently, Kalinga was divided or added with territories of Utkala, Odra, Toshali, Toshala, Trikalinga, Odra, Kangoda, South Koshala under different ruling dynasties but almost all are located well within modern region of Odisha. Many erudite scholars have shed light in this area of research but still, we are in a dilemma to draw conclusion on Dantapura, Toshali, Kalinganagari and Kalinganagara, the ancient most capital and provincial cities of ancient

Odisha (Kalinga). Similarly, some of the capital cities of ruling dynasties of Matharas, Sailodbhabas, Bhaumakaras, Somavamsis and Gangas have been identified by various erudite scholars¹⁷ but some are known from further explorations and excavations in the region and shed new light on their location which has been discussed in some cases.

The use of suffix like *pura*, *nagari* and *pattana* with administrative centers like Dantapura, Kalinganagari, Kalingapattana, Simhapura etc. proves that these were the capitals or urban centers at the beginning of historical period in Odisha orbit¹⁸. The early medieval capital cities like Sunagara, Kongoda, Vardhamanapura, Siripura, Suvarnapura, Vinitapura (Binika), Gandharadi (Jagati), Guhadevpataka (Guasverapataka), Yayatinagara, Varanasi-Kataka, Abhinava Varanasi Kataka, Puri, Khorda (Gada-Khurda) all are developed from early medieval period and continued till today.

A parameter of thriving of these cities centers with ups and downs related to the spread of trade routes which was reflective of recurrent movements of circular migrations involving traders, pastoralists and pilgrims, who moved on these routes for their own purposes. The assertions of authority were as apparent on these routes as they were in the settlements. These routes were well recognized by itinerants as well as the states through which they passed, and were referred to as *marag* in the records. This route in Eastern shore was connecting Kalinga with Pataliputra in North and Paithan in South and was dotted with a number of Buddhist settlements starting from Tamralipti, Moughalmari, Jayarampur, Radhanagar, Lalitgiri, Dhauli, Aragarh, Jaugarh, Salihundam, Kalingapattana, Ghnatasila, Bhattiprolu, Thatlkonda, Bhavikonda, Guntupalli connecting Krishna-Godavari valley up to Amaravati. The Ancient Odisha was in trade circuit and connected with royal routes of North and South India. This route is further connected to Suvarnabhumi or Southeast Asian countries with its maritime link which may be termed as *Purbiyapatha*. The *marag* had a life

of its own, dotted with check posts as well as the resting places, monasteries, *sarais*, temples, shrines, water posts and often just a bit of shade for the odd traveler¹⁹. An exploratory and analytical study is thus undertaken to view the cities in the light of newly discovered source materials of historical research of ancient and early medieval Odisha.

Dantapura (Dantavakatrunkota)

Dantapura is the earliest known capital of Kalinga or ancient Odisha referred in Pali canonical texts. The capital Dantapura is mentioned in the Buddhist texts of *DighaNikaya*, *Mahavastu* and in the various Jatakas such as Kalingabodhi, Chulla Kalinga, Kumbhakara, Kurudharam Jatakas. The Kurudhamma Jataka states that Dantapura the capital of Kalinga was once badly affected by drought. The Pali text *Dathavamsa* (Tooth chronicle) states that a disciple of Buddha named Thera Khema, acquired the tooth remains from the funeral pyre of the Gautama Buddha and handed over to Brahmadata, the king of Kalinga. Brahmadata enshrined it in his capital city, which was known as Dantapura²⁰. In the Mahabharata, the city is known as Dantakura. Pliny described Dantapura as Dandagula or Dandagola (fortified town). The *Mahagovinda Sutta* of the *Dighanikaya* mentions Dantapura in Kalinga as one of the six famous cities of contemporary India. The Jaina works *Sutrakritanga* speaks of this capital city and its king Dantavakra, “the best of the Ksatriyas”. This *nagara* was the *rajdhani* (capital) of Kalinga country. Kings called Sattabhu, Kalinga, Nalikira and Karandu reigned from Dantapura.²¹ The reference to Dantapura appear to be Mauryan and post Mauryan period. Perhaps earliest references whatever we are getting, the city was the strong hold of Kalinga from earliest time to 3rd-4th century CE and lost its importance during Asokan period when Toshali emerges as one of the major provincial headquarter of Mauryas. But in the later period, we again get a large number of references to the city in the copper-plate charters of the Eastern Ganga kings in about 7th century CE which seems that the old citadel was served for defense purpose.

The word *pura* is defined as ‘a town, fortress,city in the Pali-English Dictionary²². It seems fortified town is most appropriate, in the sense that such settlement had some sort of ditch,wall, etc. for defensive purposes built around it. Fortification was associated with political settlements which were residences of kings and their entourages.The fortification enclosed the urban settlement and separated it from the surrounding areas,thus demarcating the urban and rural. Early fortifications may have been in the nature of mud ramparts,with more elaborate structures belonging to the post –Buddha days. Pura was mainly meant for defense-cum administrative functions where *asnagarawas* constituted of *pura* plus the area outside the defense wall²³.

There is a site under the name Dantavakatrunikota or Dantapura, well within the ancient geographical region of Kalinga and now in the district of Srikakulam of Andhra Pradesh bordering Odisha boundary. The place is under the name of Dantavakatrunikota on the right bank of the river Vamsadhara near Rottavalsa. The archaeological mound still some part is intact spread over an area of about 5 kms between two villages Rottavalsa and Ravivalsa in Surbujilimandal of Srikakulam district. We have explored the site with a team of archaeologists in the year 2016,2017 and in March 2020²⁴. The site is square in size 1000 x 1000 mtrs with openings on four sides. The circumference is almost 2 kms and surrounded by moat. The mud fort covers an area of 500 acres of land and the existing habitation deposit is of about 4 to 5 meter. The fortification wall raises about 35 ft high with thickness of about 60 ft. all around. Inside the fortification several high mounds is marked. It appears that the site had four entrances on the four cardinal directions of which only western gate could be traced. We have collected precious potsherd that ranges from Black and Red Ware, shreds of NBP, shreds of RoulettedWare, Knobbed Ware along with Black and Red Slipped Ware and Grey ware. Some semi-precious beads and terracotta figurines were also collected.

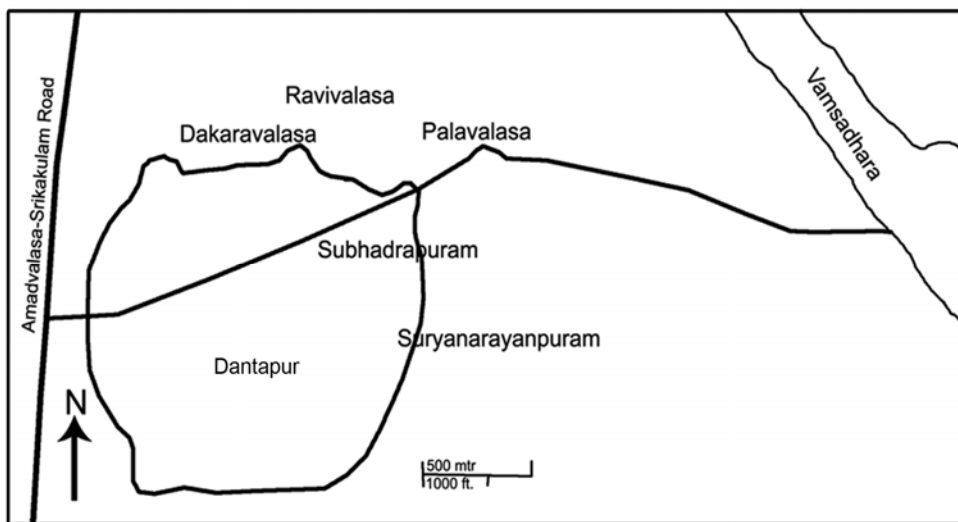
However, a small-scale excavation was conducted by the Department of Archaeology, Andhra Pradesh in the year 1998-2000. The excavation revealed a row of Buddhist stupas and ruins of brick structures as well as an earthen rampart surrounding the site. To know the foundation details of the stupa, the stupa was dug up to a depth of 5.60 mtrs and exposed 39 courses of bricks. At the foundation level, a circle of granite blocks were planted with a view to avoid dislocation of circular brick structure. Associated materials with brick structures of various kinds and pottery of that includes plain, decorated, single incised and stamped type, usually of wheel turned and well fired. The pottery include northern black polished ware, rouletted ware, grey ware, dull red ware, red slipped ware and knobbed ware and the shapes are storage jars, vases, vessels, lamps on stand, dishes, lids deep bowls etc²⁵. The site and excavated materials are very much akin to the early historical site Radhanagar of Dharmasala area of Jajpurdistrict, Odisha. The cultural sequence is equally matching. The series of fortified ancient sites excavated in the last decade ranging from Radhanagar, Sisupalgarh, Talapada, Lathi and Dantapura and in between Jaugarh (Samapa) are in a single line and mostly located in the coastal area of Odisha or in the same the geographical orbit ancient Kalinga²⁶. The city planning with such a mud fortification on the bank of the navigable river Vamsadhara supported by near port site Kalingapatnam and Salihundam presents a unique culture complex. The Archaeological exploration and excavation prove that it is fortified capital city Dantapura of ancient Kalinga which had life of about 600 years as that of early historical cities of India as discussed by R.S.Sharma²⁷.

The Korni Plates of Anantavarma Chodaganga (1070-1150 CE) refers to Dantavarapukota as the capital of Kalinga situated on the banks of the river Vamsadhara²⁸ (Sitapati 1926; 1926-27). But the Early Gangas had their capital at Mukhalingam during 5th-6th century onwards till it was shifted Abhinava-Varansai Cuttack in 12th century. The Jirjingi Copper Plate

Charter of Indravarmana was issued from the city of Dantapura. The king Indravarmana styled as the 'lord of Trikalinga' and *Maharaja* of Ganga family. The object of the charter is to record the grant made by him of the village Jijka (modern Jirjing) situated in the *visaya* of Vonkhara given away as an *agraharain* equal shares, in favour of Agnisvamin. The charter was written by the king's *Sandhivigrahin* named Devasimhaddeva. Several suggestions have been advanced in regard to the identification of this ancient city²⁹ but R. Suba Rao's identification of the 'ruined fort of Dantapura situated on the southern bank of the river Vamsadhara seems more probable³⁰. After the early period when Dantapura was the earliest capital of Kalinga even in pre-Asokan period but continued up to 3rd-4th century CE as that of Radhanagar chronology. After coming of Matharas in this region of Mahendragiri-Vansadhara region, they made their capital at Sunagara or Simhapura. When the Early Gangas occupied again these region they made Dantapura, a secondary capital, perhaps a military base for which we some time confuse regarding its identification. In simple, the earliest capital as per the excavated materials, the chronology or the stratigraphy of the site is from earliest time to 3rd -4th century CE and again from 4th-5th century to 10th century CE as that all other early historical sites mentioned earlier.

There are divergent views on the location of Dantapura in the past. We think, the scholars of the past tried their level best to identify the city but the archaeological excavations were not conducted at that time which made all plausible theories³¹. A. Cunningham (1871) located it around Rajahmundry. Subba Rao places it in the neighborhood of Sirkakulam. N.L. Dey suggested that Dantapura may be identical with Danton on the riser Kasai in Midnapore district. He also supported the traditional view of its identification with Puri in Odisha. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar identifies it with Kali \square ganagara. A.W. Oldham suggests looking for Dantapura somewhere near the embouchure of the Va \square sadhāra either at or near the

ancient Simhapura. Sylvan Levi has identified Paloura of Ptolemy with Dantapura on the basis of Tamil words *Pallu* (tooth) and *ur* (city). But this view has been strongly refuted by B.V. Krishnarao. S.N.Rajguru(1968) also supported Rao's arguments. Most of the scholars have attempted to identify Palura with modern Palur village of Ganjamdistrict.Hunter (1872) opines that Puri was the Dantapuri and even some foreign authors refer Puri as Dantapuri. Recently, some scholars have analyzed the historical background and suggested Radhanagar as the ancient city of Dantapura³². But it seems too early to accept because of the geographical location. The present site of Dantavakatrunkota represented by the ruins of the fort of Dantapura situated on the southern bank of the river Vamsadhara in Srikakulam District is more acceptable. This identification is favored by the similarities of name and geographical location. Dantapura was the ancient most capital site and its chronology must have pre-Mauryan and it was well described in the literature which confirms with the present location.



Plan of Dantapura Fortified Settlement.

Toshali

The next important city comes to picture is Toshali which was an ancient city in the present day Odisha state in eastern India. It was the capital of the eastern province of the Mauryan empire. The first epigraphic record of this term in the sense of a city is found in the first and second separate edicts of Ashoka at Dhauli. In the first of these edicts, the context is *Tosaliam ma(ha)mata (naga) la (v)I (yo)halaka(a)* –‘the Mahamataras at Toshali who are judicial officers of the city’.The second of these edicts writes *Tosaliamkumalemahamata cha* –‘the prince (governor) and the *mahamatras* of Toshali’³³. The earliest textual reference to Tosali is that of Ptolemy in the 2nd century CE:Tosalei, a metropolis³⁴. After Ashokan edicts, the next important inscription is Ikshvaku inscription from Nagarjunakonda of 3rd century CE which lists the areas where Buddhism was preached by the monks of Tamrapani of Sri Lanka, China,Chilisa (Kirita), Tosalai, Avaranta (Aparanta), Vanga, Vanavasi, Yavana, Damila, Palura and isle of Tamrapani³⁵. However, the great city of Toshali like that of other contemporary cities of Ujjain, Pataliputra, Taxila, Suvarnagiri in other parts of India was sustained a life of about 600 years but strangely enough, we are not getting any reference of the city in the Hatigumpha inscription of emperor Kharavela but in third century CE, we get reference again from Nagarjunakonda inscription as discussed which ruled out identification of Toshali with Sisupalgarh.

After examination of the later inscriptions like Soro, Patiakela, Midnapur and Kanasa Copper Plates which give idea regarding the extent of both the Tosali was divided into parts as Uttara and Dakhina towards early medieval period.This indicates the horizon of the city perhaps transformed into a wider geographical region of State. The Soro copper-plates mentions Uttara Tosalin. Plate A and Plate B mentions *Odra-Vishaye Uttara – Tosalyamsarephahara-Vishye* denotes a village called ‘Adyara in the *Saeph-*

ahara-vishaya in North Toshali' so also the Neulapur Plate grant refer '*Uttara –Tosalyam*'.³⁶

Dakhina (South) Toshali figures in Patikela grant of Maharaja Sivaraja of 7th century CE which included Kongoda-mandala. Again, Kanasa Copper Plate of Lokavighraha (6th century CE) was ruling comprising 18 forest states (*Tosalyamsashtadasattavirajyam*) and Satrubhanja was ruling in both the Toshalis. S.Tripathy (ibid. p.172, note 7) refers that '*UbhayaTosali*' is evidently Uttara and DakshinaTosali of the later Odishan epigraphs, comprising the region from Balesore district up to northern part of Ganjam district. The boundary extended up to Chilika lake, with Mahanadi dividing two Tosali. However, she clarified all but more or less the extent of the Toshalis is as previous one in her second volume.³⁷

As per the *Gandavyuha*, the city of AmitaToshala has been divided into Uttara Toshali and DaksinaTosali. In fact, Uttara Tosali comprised of modern Midnapur, Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts, the northern part of Cuttack district, while DaksinaTosali composed of the districts of modern Puri, parts of Cuttack and Ganjam districts upto Rusikulya river. The river Mahanadi appears to be the dividing line between the two territories³⁸.

Toshali is the capital city of Kalinga during the period of the Maurya emperor Ashoka and continued upto the Chedi rule in the latter half of the 1st century BCE. The Separate Kalinga Edict mentions the city was the headquarters of the north-eastern part of Kalinga. Ashoka divided the conquered empire of Kalinga into two separate states Tosali and Kalinga. S. Levi observes, the transformation of Tosali into Dhauli is not a phonetic impossibility. P.C. Bagchi points out that the boundaries of that town were probably the river on the west, the Kausulla-gang (Kausalya Ganga) on the east and the Dhauli hill on the north or north-east. Most of the scholars are identifying the place with modern Dhauli near Bhubanewar³⁹. Some scholars are also identifying the place with Sisupalgarh. But the

archaeological excavation report of Sisupalgarh, earlier by B.B. Lal (1948-49) and later by R.K. Mohanty and M.L. Smith (2004-07), the date is pushed back to 700 BCE. In his Sisupalgarh excavation report B.B.Lal (1949.p.66) mentions that “The possibility of Sisupalgarh being identical with either Toshali of the Ashokan edicts or Kalinganagara of Kharavelas’s inscription or both may; however,be considered.But it must be stated at once that no inscription or other authentic evidence has so far been obtained to settle the preposition either way⁴⁰.D.K.Chakrabartihas studied a stratigraphy of Sisupalgarhand opine as follows:

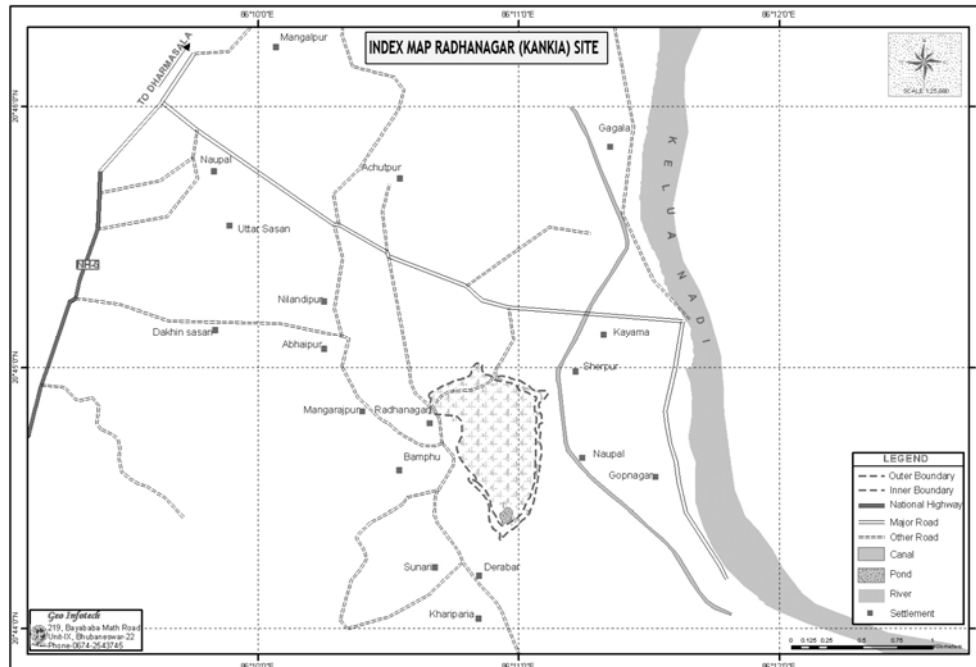
“The Sisupalgarh mud rampart (phase -1, 25 feet high and 110 feet wide at the base was built in the earliest stage of black and red ware at the site .This stage was put by him at c.200 BCE on the ground that between presence of the roulette ware in Sisupalgarh sequence around 50 CE, according to his calculation ,and the earliest stage of black-and-red ware, there was a cultural deposit of about 10 feet,for which he assigned only 2 to 3 centuries.The rouletted ware,which is common enough pottery at many excavated sites between the Ganga and Kaveri-Vaigai deltas,may be placed at least around 100 BCE and for 10 feet of cultural debris to be deposited at a non-deltaic site like Sisupalgarh, it should take at least 4-5 centuries.Thus, on whole, the date of the first phase of Sisupalgarh fortifications is unlikely to be later than c.500 BCE.Interestingly, between the lowest black and red ware deposit and natural soil,there was a 4 feet thick cultural deposit and thus taking the general antiquity of the site to c. 700 BCE⁴¹ or thereabout” which was proved with the excavation by R.K. Mohanty and M.L.Smith in the year 2007-8⁴².

The excavations at Radhanagar in this decade brought to lime light a major Early Historical Settlement akin to Sisupalgarh.Radhanagar-Kankia, locally known as Radhanagar or Rajanagar in Dharmasala area of Jajpur District, is located on the right bank of river Kelua (Kimiria), a tributary of

the Brahmani River. The site was excavated during the year 1997-2007 and 2010-13 by the OIMSEAS⁴³. The site is enclosed by a mud fortification. The cultural sequence is dated from 4th-3rd century BCE to 4th - 5th century CE. A number of inscriptions, terracotta beads, iron implements, coins, potsherds like NBP, rouletted ware, knobbed ware, Roman clay bullae have been recovered from this level. Seven numbers of silver punch marked coins were retrieved. A conch pendent inscribed with three letters in Pre-Mauryan Brahmi read as 'B (V) ijaya' and another pendent inscribed in Brahmi script reading as '*SadabhuTissa*' with swastika marks have been recovered. One more inscribed clay pendant *Devaya Nagara* of 2nd century CE, conclusively makes us a city center. One gold coin of Huviska of Kushana period has been acquired recently in August 5th2020 which signifies the city's contact with North West India. The coin belongs to Nana series of Kushan king Huviskawith depiction of goddess Nanaa on reverse and on obverse the legend is 'the king of king Huvishka, the Kushan' (*..eshkikosh...that, stands for shaonoshao..oeshkikoshano*) as studied by one of the eminent archaeologist Laura Giuliano⁴⁴. The antiquities and structural remains clarified Radhanagar was an urban center and the people were Buddhist. Most important antiquities were recovered from the site like *triratna* symbols, sprinklers, pendants of Buddhist nature⁴⁵. The stratigraphy of the site is from 4th-3rd century BCE to 4th century CE.

Further, the scattered relics around Radhanagarexcavated Early Buddhist settlement site are Kayma and Langudi bordering the river Brahamani. The remains of early historic Langudi, Tarapurand Kayama stupas are in 'the close vicinity' of Radhanagar. At Langudi, there are 34 rock-cut miniature stupas in the Amaravati style along with a large central rock-cut stupa. Langudi has also yielded Sunga period terracotta, lotus medallion in rock and rock cut panels. A major early stupa with two/three phases has been excavated and date back to 2nd century BCE with discovery of Sunga style two human figures. Some scholars opine the images are of

emperor Asoka. Forty early rock-cut caves are explored in the surrounding hill ranges. A fragment of an inscription in Brahmi of the 1st century CE identifies the Langudi site as *Pushpa-sabharagiriya* (a hill loaded with flowers) or *Pushpagiri* monastery mentioned by Huen-Tsang. Radhanagar – Kayama-Langudi-Tarapur all Buddhist sites within radius of 5 to 10 kms forms an unique Buddhist landscape and is termed as culture Complex⁴⁶.



Radhanagar index map.

It is useful to remember that most of the early major Buddhist monastic sites of Odisha are in the Jajpur area or the Baitarani valley. For instance, the antiquity of Lalitagiri has been pushed back to the 2nd-1st century BCE on the basis of the finds of the base of a railing pillar with half lotus medallions on the model of Bodhgaya⁴⁷. A hoard of silver punch marked coins ranging in the date from the imperial Nandas to Mauryas has

also been found in the Radhanagar area. In fact, considering the major Buddhist monastic relics from the same area, we would venture the conclusion that Radhanagar was likely to have been more important in early historic Odisha than Sisupalgarh. Viewed from this angle, Radhanagar has a better claim to be considered Toshali than Sisupalgarh. The fact that the term Toshali is found in the two edicts outside Sisupalgarh does not necessarily make it ancient Toshali. It may be noted that Toshali was also the abode of a Mauryan prince and only Taxila, Ujjain and Suvarnagiri were the Mauryan cities where a prince was stationed. Here, at Radhanagar we have inscriptions referring *SadbhuTissa* and *DevayaNagara* points to abode of an eminent monk in a city. Sisupalgarh does not look as significant as Taxila or Ujjain with available such inscriptions. Suvarnagiri, is still unidentified. It is therefore Radhanagar was more likely to represent ancient Toshali than Sisupalgarh⁴⁸. Sisupalgarh is more akin to Kalinganagar of emperor Kharavela.

Samapa

Samapa is referred to in the Separate Kalinga Edicts of Ashoka, was the capital of the south-western part of Kalinga during the rule of the Mauryas. It has been located by scholars near modern Jaugada which is about 18 miles north-west of the town of Ganjam on the northern bank of the river Rushikulya. Samapa may be identified with a nearby village Samma around present Jaugarah. The present site Jaugada situates near Purusottampur, about 35 kms north-west of Berhampur city in Ganjam district on the left bank of the river Risukulya near the village Pandia.

J.D. Beglar has given the description during the later part of 19th century who visited the site in 1874 along with the City Magistrate of Ganjam, Mr. Maltby. They have reported the extent of fortification towers and moat and further describes that 'The walls had towers, also of earth, at each of the four corners, and also on each flank of each of the eight

entrances". Again, he has mentioned that some Indo-Scythian copper coins were collected but heard that a European official had collected some gold, silver and copper coins. The prevailing tradition of Lac Fort was active at that time⁴⁹.

In 1956 Debala Mitra of the ASI undertook a complete survey of the site and also excavated although in small scale but that is the only source to know the cultural sequence of the site as well as Early Historical Sites of Odisha⁵⁰. P. Yule (2002-03) made an extensive survey of the Fort and published it in the year 2006⁵¹. Subsequently, the author and a team of Archaeologists surveyed the site during the year 2016-17 and documented the ruined early historic quadrangular rampart and the nearby villages to understand the site⁵².

The visible remains of the site are the fortification around the town consisting of an earthen rampart reaching to an average height of 7.70 m and breadth of 21.50 m. It was roughly quadrangle in plan, each side tiered by two gateways, approximately half a mile in length. Although, in 1956, D. Mitra reported that the glacis measure 23 x 4.75 mtrs, extent maximal height. P Yule measured it with interior dimensions of the fortification as 700 x 850 mtrs., and is a quadrangular earthen fort, surrounded by a deep and wide moat. Similar fortifications are perpetually present at the Early Historic settlements discovered at Radhanagar (950x 950mtrs), Sisupalgarh (1125 x 1115 mtrs) and Dantavakatrunkota or Dantapura (1000 x 1000) mtrs⁵³. The fortification is clearly understandable and the plan is also drawn. The excavation report says that the fortification wall on the southern side was examined with excavation in cross sections. The result is that the first layer of the rampart on the natural soil was a sandy layer of flimsy occupational debris with shreds of fine Black and Red ware, over which the first defensive wall was built. Its material was derived from a ditch cut into the sandy layer. In the core of the wall stray shreds of the same nature as in

the sandy layer were found. In the next phase, a thick deposit of clay was laid on the existing top of the wall and later on erected on the inner side a 60 cm. high wall of rubble and stone clips with large boulders on the top. The defensive wall continued to be heightened but its top was largely eroded. This is a mud fortification with kankar and some rubbles on the top. The excavator opines that the free occurrence of Puri-Kushana coins in the levels of Period II not only suggests an era of prosperity when these coins were in use as currency but also sets the upper limit of the period⁵⁴. (IAR, 1956-57). However, further work may reveal the position of earlier buildings inside the fortification.

The cultural sequence of the site, according to the excavation report the Period I represented a full-fledged iron-using culture with pottery specimens like three distinct wares like ordinary Dull Red Ware with or without slip, fine and well burnt Black and Red Ware in the shapes of the dish and bowl, polished Red Ware and Knobbed Ware were reported. Another significant finding was a large number of beads, made of shell, bone, carnelian, agate, crystal, quartz etc., along with some unfinished ones which indicate the local manufacturing of them. Post-holes and patches of floorings (made of burnt earth or rammed gravel) were encountered in this period, but no brick structure was found⁵⁵. (IAR, 1956-57).

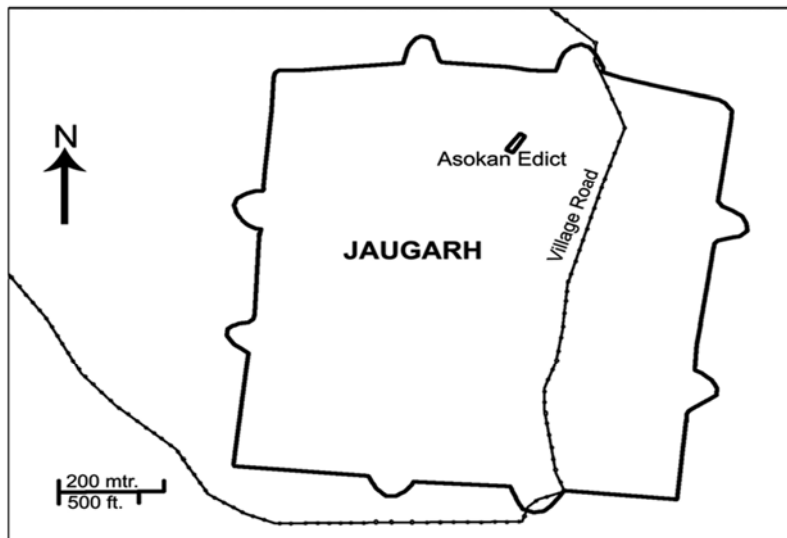
In period II, brick and stone structures were scantily encountered. The principal ceramic industry of this period was Red Ware, made of medium grained clay and mostly under fired, decorated with incised and applied patterns. Knobbed vessels, also found in period I with degenerated fabric. Knobbed Ware indicates the possible early presence of Buddhist monks who used and traded such vessels. Knobbed ware is one of the significant characteristics of Early Historic sites, particularly Buddhist sites of Eastern India. Other findings were some beads, mostly of semi-precious stones, shell and terracotta and copper and iron objects and one punch marked coin and

Puri-Kushan coins. It is reported that 334 number of punch marked coins have been found from Pandia near Jaugada which establishes the greatness and trade content of the site. A good number of animal bones were also reported which were examined by Zoological Survey of India and published in recent years⁵⁶. The site was served as city centre on the East Coast.

The most important visible remain is the famous Rock Edict of Ashok which lies close to the northern glacis. The Ashokan Edicts found on the rocks at Dhauli and Jaugada addressed to the Mahamatyas of Toshali and Samapa, the two provincial headquarters of the Mauryas. Samapa was one of the provincial fortified headquarters of Kalinga during 3rd century BCE and is famed by its version of the monumental Rock Edict of Mauryan Emperor Ashok. Preservation is best on the western side and worst on the southern and eastern sides. The low lying hill to which the Jaugada rock belongs was known in ancient times as the *Khapingala-Parvata*. But similar to Dhauli, the regular series of fourteen rock edict is partly replaced by two Separate Kalinga Edicts (which are only for the people of Kalinga). The two special edicts occupy the place of 11th, 12th and 13th edicts of the normal series of 14th edicts of Ashoka found throughout the country. Jaugada inscription is specifically addressed to the *Mahamatras*, the royal officers stationed at Samapa city for administration⁵⁷.

From the above material remains it is curtained that the city 'Samapa' during Asoka was an important provincial headquarter. The Viceroys or Mahamatras are instructed to visit the people and make them understand about the Dhamma. The echo of Kalinga was found in Mansera and Sahabazgarhi inscriptions of Ashoka in the far North-West of India, presently located in Pakistan. There were good communication links between the Asokan provincial head quarters like Taxila, Ujjain, (North) Tosali, Samapa (East) and Subarnagiri (South). It was great and important city centre in Ancient Kalinga. F.R. Allchin, who graded ancient Indian cities

(Mauryan period) according to size in six categories and placed Jaugada in the 4th category. According to him the enclosed area estimated to be c. 61-120 hectares, it could be categorized as the fourth grade city. Ujjain, Pratisthana and Anuradhapura (Ceylon) as per these criteria could belong to this grade⁵⁸(Allchin, 1995). Thapar (2002) emphasized the importance of Jaugada of being selected for the inscriptions was that the town was fairly large and the fort might have been a military centre. Its proximity to the sea might have given it the added advantage of trade and maritime activities⁵⁹. It is one of the cities of 3rd century BCE and again continued up to 3rd century CE on the bank of the river Risikulya.



Jaugarh Fortified Settlement.

Now, the site is well documented with available archaeological remains like many other ancient cities of India such as Rajgir, Vidisha, Champa, Prathisthana, etc. Further, Jaugarh was an important urban centre and port of Early Historic time and the inhabitants took part in maritime trade. The port town of Palura mentioned by the geographer Ptolemy of first

century around this site is very important. In our study it is observed that Paluraundeniably was a port around the Chilika and the Risukulya, might not be a particular place but a port that was existed in between. The journey from Ashokan Samapa to Ptolmy'sPalura is the history and heritage of the region for about four hundred years that might have contributed for the growth of Buddhist trade network in the East Coast.

Kalinganagari

Another important city referred in Hatigumpha Inscription of 1st century BCE/CE is Kalinganagar which was the capital city of Chedi dynasty. The earliest epigraphic evidence of this city inscribed in the Hatigumpha inscription of emperor Kharavela of *KalingaNagara* is the commonest word used in Pali literature to denote a city. It appears from some references that fortification was an important part of *nagara*. Therefore, a *nagara* meant an urban settlement that included both fortified as well as unfortified portions in it⁶⁰. A *nagara* was surrounded by villages mainly occupied by craftsmen whose products were in demand in the *nagara* but whose vocation would require large space. Here, we may cite a very good example of Khandgairi–Udayagiri which was the product of craft persons within the orbit of *nagara*.

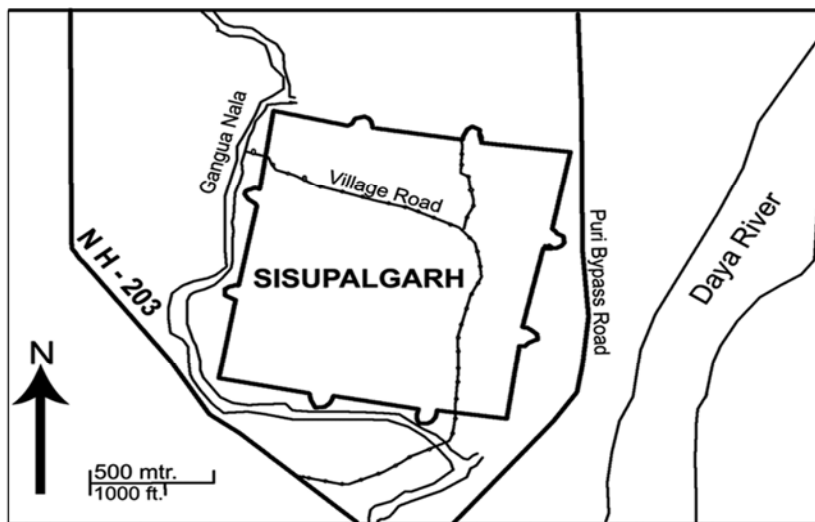
Kharavela arranged the repairs of the gates and buildings of his capital Kalinganagara, which had been destroyed by a storm, in his 1st regnal year. Another reference found from the inscription of Khandagiri datable to late 1st century BCE, mention's Kharavela's improvement of a water channel (panadi, i.e. pranah) which had been constructed by the 'Nanda king' three hundred years earlier and which is now extended into the city⁶¹. This suggests that there was an incursion into his region by a Nanda king from Magadha (where the Nandas ruled prior to the accession of Chandragupta Maurya in c.322 BCE). This seems to be more appropriate for Kalinganagar or city of Kalinga. Sisupalgarh is perhaps more appropriate for

Kalinganagar as the references are more befitting and many scholars like N.K.Sahu and Mittal, in the past also shed this opinion. The site is identified with present Sisupalgarh.

The site was subjected for excavation earlier by B.B. Lal (1948-49)⁶² and later by R.K. Mohanty and M.L. Smith (2004-07) was discussed earlier⁶³. The structural remains such as Gates, Moats, and Pillars standing *in-situ* witness a fully urbanized culture. The findings of knife, blades, daggers, arrow and spear heads, nails, sickles, ferrules of iron, knobbed ware, NBP ware etc. which makes us understood about the demographic profile and their culture. Most interesting findings of caltrop were found from the site, which occurs in Roman sites too. Caltraps were spread on roads to hinder the progress of cavalry. B.B.Lal remarks that “the possibility of Sisupalgarh being identical with either Tosali of the Ashokan edicts or Kalinganagara of Kharavela’s inscription or both may, however, be considered. But it must be stated at once that no inscription or other authentic evidence has so far been obtain to settle the proposition either way”. Thus, only circumstantial evidence may be used, which, however, cannot be conclusively by it⁶⁴.

Further, we may very well observe the 16 pillars that stand on the Sisupalgarh site unanimously suggest that there must be a big hall or remnants of a palace. The design of the pillars very well matches with the Khandagiri-Udayagiri rock-cut pillars. It may be accepted that there was no use of pillars by Mauryans for building of palaces or domestic purposes except for royal message. Here such use of pillars and datable to post Mauryan period points to the capital of Kharavela. It may be mentioned that there are three more inscriptions found in the Udayagiri Caves. Inscription 1346 is from Swargapuri Cave which records the “establishment of a cave for the Kaliga (Kalinga) monks (*samana*) in honour of the *arahantas* (arahat) by the chief queen (agamahishi) of (siri-kharavela), emperor (chakavati?) of Kalinga and daughter of rajanLalka, great grandson of Hatisimha”⁶⁵.

The Manchapuri inscription shows that “the cave of the noble (*aira*) maharaja, the lord of the Kalinga Mahameghvahana Vakadepa-siri (sri-Vakradeva). The Baghagumpha inscription refers “the cave of town –judge Bhuti”. Thus D.K. Chakrabarti says clearly belongs to the chief queen of Kharavela and the second one seems to belong to a member of the same dynasty as Kharavela. Kalinga is mentioned in both the cases. The impression one gets is that the Mahameghavahanadynasty, to which the king Kharavela and Sri Vakradeva belonged, had the area, where the cave – complex is located, under their control⁶⁶. From these inscriptions, we may safely conclude that the location of these cave are nearer to their headquarter and Sisupalgarh remains and fortified are could have belonged to Kharavela and continued with the capital city of Kalinganagari. The situation might have changed after wards and the fortified city might have lost its importance due to shifting of political headquarters which had happened to many such cities in Ancient India.



Sisupalgarh (Kalinganagri) Fortified Settlement

Simhapura

Simhapura or Vijayasimhapura has been referred to as a capital city of Kalinga in ancient literature under the Matharas who ruled over the area in the modern district of Ganjam in Odisha and Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh. *Mahavamsa* stated that Simhapura, capital of northern Kalinga, was founded by Simhavahu⁶⁷. In the Tamil work *Manimekhalai*, Simhapura and Kapilapura are described as two capitals of Kalinga. *Mahavastu* relates the story of the Kasyapa brothers who ruled in the city of Simhapura. According to *Culavamsa*, Vajravahu the king of Ceylon (1054-1109 CE), who married Triloka-Sundari of Kalinga came to Ceylon from Simhapura. From the epigraphical sources, Simhapura was the capital of Kalinga during the rule of the Matharas. The city was under Satrudamanadeva, a feudatory of the Eastern Ganga king issued his Pedda-dugam plates from the city of Simhapura⁶⁸. A lithic record dated Saka 1100 (1178 CE) describes a gift for perpetual lamp to god Madhukesvara by the donor Erakammanayakuralu, wife of VanapatiPeggada of Simhapura. Hultzsich identified Simhapura as Singupuram, situated between Srikakulam and Narasamapeta. Till today it is the latest identification. However, during early historical period from 6th -7th century, it was a capital city of Kalinga.

Kalinganagara

Kalinganagara was the capital city of Eastern Ganga dynasty, which is the modern Mukhalingamon the river bank of the Vamsadhara, in present Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh bordering Odisha which was earlier part of Ganjam district of Odisha. The region speaks the earliest historical paradigm of Odisha⁶⁹.

Hastivarmana (577 CE), the third known Ganga ruler of TriKalinga, wrested away north Kalinga from Vighrahas and conquered south Kalinga from Prithivi-Maharaja of Pistapura and thus founded the Ganga kingdom of Kalinga. He built the new capital of Kalinganagara on the bank of the

Vamsadhara and assumed the title of *Sakala-Kalingadhipati*. Hastivarmana, in fact was considered to be the real founder of Ganga-kingdom of Kalinga⁷⁰. The Early Gangas or Eastern Gangas established their capital at Kalinganagara identified with modern Mukhalingamin Srikakulam district only 30 Kms from Paralakhemundi and around 60 kms from Mahendragiri. Scholars also opine that the Gangas had a secondary capital at Dantapura identified with Dantapurakota near Kotavalsa (The same site of ancient capital of Kalinga), again on the bank of Vamsadhara. The region of Gangas was around the present Srikakulam-Paralakhemundidistrict, otherwise known as the Eastern Gangas or Early Gangas and ruled from 496 CE to the middle of 11th century CE. The Chicacole plates of Indravarmana (Ganaga Era 146), states that “hail from the victorious city of Kalinganagara” which is the ornament of all the land of Kalinga that is embraced by the fingers of the waves of the water of the ocean, the Maharaj Sri Indravarmana, who has had the stains of the kali age removed by unceasing obeisance to Gokarnasvami, the sole architect for the formation of the universe, who has full-moon for (his) crest-jewel, (and) who is clothed with the coils of great serpents, (and) who dwells on the summit of the mountain Mahendra” and goes on narrating kings personal eulogy⁷¹. It seems that Mahendragiri had already got its due importance in the cultural life of Kalinga people from the days of Eastern Gangas. After the accession of AnatavarmanaVajrahastadeva in 1038 CE, theGangas of Kalinga rose up to follow a policy of aggressive imperialism followed by Chodagangadeva (1077 to 1147 CE), the grandson of Vajrahastadeva V. The Ganga empire extended from the mouth of theGodavari to the Ganges. They also shifted their capital from Kalinganagara (Mukhalingam) to Avinava Varanasi /Cuttack or Choudwar Cuttack to check the Kalachuri king Jajlladeva I’s further eastward advance. The expansion of Kalachuri kingdom towards east might have prompted Chodaganagdeva for shifting the capital from Kalinganagar to Yayatinagara or VarnasiKataka to check the advance of the

Kalachuris. The transfer of the capital might have been effected in or before 1114 CE because by that time the western portion of the country was already occupied by Jajlla. K.A.M.Sastri also opines that Chodagangadeva had transferred his capital from Kalinganagara to Utkala territory by 1114 CE⁷².

The history and heritage of Odisha is revolving all with these cities which shed the romantic life of Odisha State. The cities as discussed not only our witness to the socio-economic -politico and religious upheavals but say about of our journey from great cities of 6th century BCE (Dantapura) to Abhinav Varansi Cuttack in 20th century. Once one visits the city centers and just have a look to the archaeological remains and epigraphical evidences, would understand the whole of Odisha from Kalinga to Utkala, from Kongoda to Kosala, from Odra to Odisha. The journey of our history is the march of civilization, people may not live to speak, technology may not be there to make us understand, only history and historians of our past and modern time can able to tell the truth and this is the relevance of history in modern times.

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Fig.1. Exploration at the site Dantapura (Dantavaratanikota),



Fig.2. At the site Dantapura



Fig.3. Pottery specimens from Dantapura Exploration :
Rouletted Ware, NBP and Knobbed Ware.

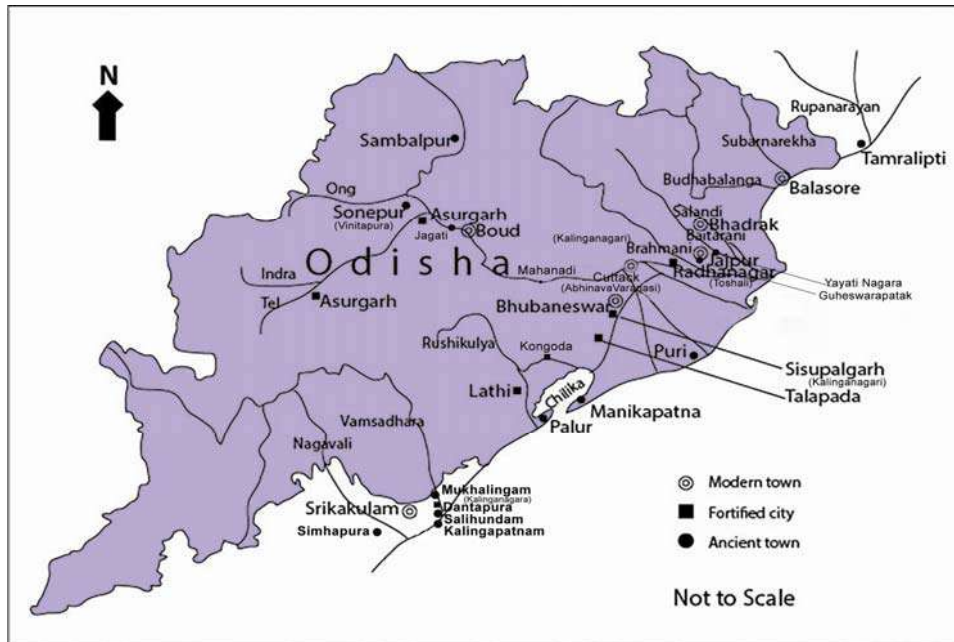


Fig.4. Capital Cites of Odisha.

A REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN CHITROTPALA RIVER BASIN

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The present research article reports firsthand archaeological explorations conducted in the district of Kendrapara spanning for two field seasons. The data incorporated in this research paper is based on the findings of pottery, antiquities and overall observations made on the sites. The district remained unexplored and very little archaeological resources were available to understand the cultural milieu of the area. The exploration work revealed a number of early historic sites for the first time in the district. The site's categorization along with the description of cultural material found from the sites have been incorporated in this paper to focus on the historical importance of the area.

Kendrapara District¹ (Latitude 20° 20' N To 20° 37' N and Longitude 86° 14' E To 87° 01' E) is situated in the eastern coast of Odisha and stretches from *Dhamara Muhana* in the north to *Bati Ghara* (falls point) in the south. The district is presently bounded² by the district of Bhadrak in the north, Jagatasinghpur in the south and Cuttack in the west. Seven important rivers i.e., the Mahanadi, the Baitarani, the Brahmani, the Chitrotapala, the Karandia, the Luna and the Kharasrota and their tributaries and distributaries flow in this area. The river valleys are dotted with archaeological remains and monuments i.e., stone tools, iron implements, potteries, terracotta ring wells and sculptural antiquities.

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The river Chitrotpala³ as the distributary of Mahanadi starts from Guali near Salipur, 20 kilometres downstream towards Kendrapara. Within 6 to 8 kilometres, again it subdivides into Chitroptala and Luna (distributary). Luna being the deeper one carries almost 60 percent of water of the main river in dry season. In rainy season the equation changes when there is large amount of rain water to be evacuated. Chitroptala flows eastward approximately 60 kilometres and joins its tributary river Luna near Paradeep.

The river itself is quite famous for its sandy bed, *Jhaun* forest, the local myths and its prospects as a site of pilgrimage. Nemala is quite famous as Nemala-Bata in coastal Odisha for *Malika-bachana* (a book of predictions) which was written by the famous saint Achyutananda five hundred years ago. Another place named Kuda-Nagari at its bank, is famous for Magha-Mela, where during the Hindu month of Magha, thousands of pilgrims from Cuttack and Kendrapara district take the holy-dip in the river and offer *tarpan* to their *pitrapurusha* (ancestors).

The present work is based on the archaeological explorations conducted in and around Chitrotpala river in Kendrapada district. During the course of exploration of the area several archaeological sites yielding antiquities like potteries, terracotta animal figurines and ring wells, etc have been noticed. The potteries include black slipware, fine gray ware, red slip ware and coarse varieties of pottery. A brief account of the explored sites are described below.

KUDANAGARI (27°19'00.2"N 82°25'00.1"E)

Kendrapara district is quite rich in maritime activities as several perennial rivers flow into the Bay of Bengal⁶. It is also evident from the archaeological remains that the shore line of Kendrapara, during the ancient times, was busy in seafaring activities and hence the sites like Kudanagari might have been formed. Kudanagari is famous for Magha mela. In the

Hindu month of Magha, thousands of pilgrims in and around Kendrapara district take the holy-dip in the Chitrotpala River and offer *tarpan* to their ancestors (*Pitrapurusa*). As the name suggests Kudanagari is a large mound (about 5 x 300m) having numerous potsherds and bone fragments found scattered on it. The site Kudanagari is also known as '*Boitakuda*' which literary means the sheltering place of sea-going vessels. As Kendrapara is located along the east coast, there must have been some maritime activities in the remote past. It is also certain that the coast of Kendrapara district played a major role in the diffusion of maritime activities. As has been mentioned in literature that Odisha had had several sea ports busy in brisk maritime trade network with South East Asian island like, Java, Sumatra, Bali, Bornio, Malacca and even the Roman world. But the archaeological investigations on port sites have yielded a handful of port sites. As the Kendrapara coast was not properly surveyed earlier, the port sites like that of Boitakuda⁴ have not been brought to limelight. However, the present survey has resulted in the discovery of a port and resting place of ancient time which is also corroborated by the present boat construction activities in this part of Kendrapara district. This island might have played an important role in pursuance of maritime activities, boat building and boat repair. There are also local communities who are engaged in the construction of boat planks in the sea. Such type of port sites were for the first time traced in Kendrapara district by the present scholar.

The site is quite extensive and some archaeological material like pottery and bone fragments have been found. From the dugout section the habitation deposit is up to 3.5 metre from the present surface level. The entire mound is covered with trees. There is extensive soil quarry by the local people as the site is located on a sand dune. From the surface a large number of potsherds of red ware, black ware, and grey ware have been collected for sampling. Typotechnologically they may belong to the Early Historic and Early Medieval period. The river Chitrotpala, which is an all

season navigable river, was the main channel of communication and transportation during the early periods. The archaeological findings of the sites like pottery, etc suggest that, this port was briskly active and was a primary medium of communication and transportation. At present also boats ply in the river carry both human beings and materials. In this context it is quite clear that Kudanagari was an important port in Kendrapara District like that of *Manikapatna, Gaurangapatna, Palur, Baruah, Tamralipti, Dinamardinga, Olondazsahi, Farasidinga* found in coastal Odisha⁵. As the site is covered with large trees and vegetation nothing more could be ascertained. However, there is no doubt that the site has archaeological importance as evident from the scattered remains. Now- a-days too one notices several boats anchoring on the bank of the river.

BANALA-SANABETARA (ARJUNPUR)

(20°24'36°45''N. 86°18'17°97''E.)

This is an extensive habitation mound located on the right bank of river Chitrotpala, at Sanabetara village. The site is measuring about 200 square metres and having a habitation deposit of around three metre, which is marked by the exposed section on the rain gully. From the surface a large amount of Early Historic pottery like red-slipped ware, black-slipped ware, red ware, dull red ware, coarse grey ware have been found. The shapes of slipped potteries include that of bowls, saucers, platters, dishes, globular pots with carination etc. The most important finding is a terracotta figurine (lion/bull) of which only head portion is found. The figure is made of very fine clay and has a lustrous shining surface. From these findings it is quite clear that the site was an important Early Historic settlement of the region. The site is intact and awaits archaeological spade work which will no doubt reveal new information about the Early Historic efflorescence of Kendrapara region. Kendrapara has not yet revealed any significant Early Historic archaeological remains; this site would give a new direction on the pursuance of Early Historic research in this coastal area. However, as most

of surface areas are covered with shrubs and small plants, it was not possible to determine the exact extension, cultural deposit and habitation levels of the site. It is planned to revisit the site once again to have a thorough search to determine the exact cultural sequence and nature of habitation deposit. The finding of such important antiquities along with Early Historic pottery clearly signifies its importance as a major Early Historic settlement of Kendrapara region. In Kendrapara region, as there was no substantial archaeological work, the finding of such important sites gives positive indication on the flourishing cultural attributes of the region.

CHASAKULA (20°24'18.64"N., 86°17'30.30"E)

The village Chasakula is located on the left bank of river Chitrotpala. The river, right from its origin, up to its confluence, meanders at several points. This phenomenon possibly gave opportunity for the early settlers to settle down along its banks. The site of Chasakula is located on the right bank of the river. The sites spread of over an area of 35metre. The surface of the site is littered with ancient potsherds of black-slipped ware, fine gray ware, red-slipped ware, coarse varieties of pottery and terracotta objects used for domestic proposes. The site has a visible habitation deposit of around 3metres and practically exposed on its left side and the cultural material are visible on the section of the side. The habitation soil is light greenish in colour and is soft. However, on the top portion of the site little disturbance is marked due to human activities. Besides, thorny shrubs have been grown up which covers the habitation deposit to a great extent. There are strong suggestions of this site as Early Historic given the material remains and other aspects as found on the surface.

SANA ARHANGA (20°24'35.81"N., 86°19'36.62"E)

This site is located on the left bank of the river Chitrotpala and is found at a little distance from bank of the river, especially in the meandering area. A number of villages surround this habitation. The site with a

considerable habitation deposit of about 2.5meters is spread over an area of 15mx 20m north-south and east-west respectively. The cultural material found on the top surface include potsherds of various typical early historic ceramics like, black-slipped ware, black-and-red ware, fine gray ware, red ware with a gray core and the coarse variety of ceramics, specially used as cooking vessels. The basic shapes of the pottery include globular pots carinated bowls, dishes, and cups and also storage jars. The pottery is made of well levigated clay and turned on a fast wheel. The pottery is applied with a slip on the exterior surface & is glossy in nature. Besides, some antiquities like beads of terracotta in various shapes like, conical, circular, flat and square. As the village is located quite nearby, the maximum portion of the habitation deposit has been disturbed. The cultural materials are noticed on the surface due to disturbance made by human agencies. Besides, a large portion of the site is disturbed by agricultural activities.

KANCHILO (20°24'32.59"N., 86°20'19.24"E)

Kanchilo is located on the left bank of the river Chitrotpala. The site is located on an elevated portion which is marked with a heap-like soil deposit. The site measures about 27 metre North-West and 15 metre South-East. The cultural material is found scattered along its left edges, basically exposed by the fluvial action of the river. The soil pattern of the site is alluvial. The site as noticed from its surface is represented with early historic potsherds like black-slipped ware, fine gray ware, coarse varieties of pottery in gray, red and ashy colour. As noticed from the exposed section of the site, it is observed that it was a very tiny settlement, possibly a farmstead. Besides, the site also yielded a few specimens of antiquities such as beads, spindle-whorls, sling shots, catapult pallets, terracotta objects like dishes, hopscotches and other minor antiquities like shallow dishes of both terracotta and stone. The site is also characterised by the presence of some structures made of stone and burnt bricks, remnants of which are noticed on the surface as also the exposed portion of the site.

KALABUDA (20°24'12.84"N., 86°21'17.74"E)

The Early Historic site of Kalabuda is located around 30 metres away from the right bank of river Chitrotpala, in the meandering portion of the river. This is a scattered village and is surrounded by agricultural fields. The Early Historic settlement is noticed in and around the meandering area, as indicated by the finding of potsherds, brickbats and other archaeological remains. As an exposed portion signifies on its left side, the habitation deposit is about 3 metres and the site covers an area of 30m x 25m and is slightly elevated from the surrounding ground level. From the surface a large number of ancient potteries and structural remains have been noticed. The pottery types are of typical Early Historic period covering the wares like black-slipped ware, fine gray ware, dull red ware, grit tempered pottery. The basic shapes include bowls, dishes, globular pots, storage jars, cups, etc. The slip treatment is basically found on the exterior surface of the pottery which was made of very well levigated clay, devoid of impurities. The pottery also looks shiny and glossy.

The village is inhabited by several ethnic communities, practising traditional⁷ and age-old traditions, customs, rituals, religious, performances, social festivals etc. One such festival is the *Baruni Melawhich* is celebrated in the month of April and continues for a week. On the occasion people from various places and nearby villages gather to witness the fair. The festival fair also sees an attractive display of traditional craft items made of bamboo, wood, stone, terracotta, palm leaf and shell objects. The festival also signifies the ancient trade markets for ethnic produces manufactured and prepared by the traditional inhabitants of the locality. It is also presumed that these types of ceremonies are continuing right from the Early Historic period. This is a very good example of the living tradition which is a part of processual archaeology where, archaeological material is compared and interpreted with the help of present day practices of the living ethnic communities.

PAHANA (20°24'39.55"N., 86°22'52.33"E)

The early historic site Pahana is located in the perfectly 'U' shaped meandering of the Chitrotpala River. This site is comparatively a larger one in terms of its extent and habitation deposit. The sites spread over an area of 75m. X 35m. North-South and East-West respectively with a habitation deposit of around 3.5 metres as exposed on its eastern fringe near the river cliff. The habitation deposit of the site is of about 2.5 metres as indicated by the exposed section. The surface of the site is littered with early historic potsherds and remnants of some structural activities as indicated by the presence of brickbats, post-holes, dressed stone slabs etc. The ceramic assemblages of the site comprise black-slipped ware, red-slipped ware, coarse tempered gray ware, matt impressed gray ware. The pottery is wheel turned and comprises shapes such as globular pots with externally projecting flaring rims, inverted rims, featureless rims etc. The slip treatment is generally observed on the external surface. A few graffiti marks containing the geometric and non-geometric patterns like circles, squares, parallel lines etc. have been noticed.

A few slingshots of stone particularly made of veins like agate and jasper have also been noticed on the surface of the site. Besides, some post holes have also been noticed which indicate some structural activity at the site. Archaeological spade work will throw much light on the nature of the site.

KODANGAPATANA (20°24'09.35"N., 86°23'16.87"E)

The site of Kodangapatana is inside the meandering portion of the Chitrotpala at a distance of around 20 metres from the right bank of the river⁸. The site is located around 15 metres from the river bank and covers an area of about 30 m. x 18m., and is located on an elevated portion formed by accumulation of habitational debris. The surface of the site is littered with the presence of a variety of Early Historic pottery comprising black-slipped ware, red-slipped ware, fine and dull gray ware, red ware with gray core. The basic

shapes of pottery include that of goblets, storage jars, channel spouted bowls, dishes, saucers, cups etc. Carination is also noticed on the neck portion of some of the potsherds which signifies the advance technology in pottery making. The minor antiquities of the sites include objects of terracotta like hopscotches, sling balls, catapult pallets, net sinkers and stone objects like mullers, pounders, dabbers, hammer stones with battering marks. From these antiquities it can generally be interpreted that this site was an important place for pottery making. Besides these evidences, the surface of the site also indicates the existence of a floor level which indicates that some structural activities were executed, whose remnants are still found.

The village is also inhabited by traditional people practising traditional occupation like pottery making, basketry, mat making, agriculture and other traditional professions. The site and the village are the benchmarks for understanding the settlement pattern of the Early Historic period. As determined from habitation deposit, it is estimated the site has been active from the Early Historic period. The finding of the antiquities in varied nature indicates that the site was inhabited by the people belonging to the different professions to meet the requirement of the village as well as the peripheral settlements of the site. As indicated from the deposit, it is promising to conduct a small-scale excavation at potential spots of the site which would yield the hidden material culture of the site for the reconstruction of the Early Historic phase of the area.

AKHUADAKHINA (20°24'27.67"N., 86°24'50.48"E)

This Early Historic settlement site is relatively small in comparison to the adjoining sites of this area and is located on the left bank of the river Chitrotpala. The habitation area of the site extends for a stretch of 35m x 15m, East-West and North-South respectively. The village is inhabited by the traditional craft men community practicing as old profession to meet the requirements of the local people which are sold in the weekly market of the

place. The Early Historic settlement site revealed the presence of Early Historic Cultural material like pottery of red-slipped ware, black-slipped ware, fine red ware, fine gray ware, etc. along with some minor antiquities like terracotta beads, ear studs, bangles and other domestic object like saddle quern, pestles, mullers, hammer stones. Besides, other objects made of terracotta and stone have also been noticed from the surface of the site. The habitation is little disturbed due to a rain gully which cuts some portion of the habitation deposit. The site in the central portion has remained intact barring the topmost soil accumulation.

MANDIA (20°22'56.24"N., 86°24'36.24"E)

Mandia is located within the meandering of the river Chitrotpala. The Early Historic site is located around 30 metre away from the river bank and covers an area of 45metre North-South and 15metre East-West with habitation deposit of around 2 metres. The habitation deposit is marked in an exposed section, embedded with some potsherds and brickbats. The pottery of the site comprises of typical Early Historic ceramics like black-and- red ware, black-slipped ware, dull red ware, red-slipped ware, gray ware, etc. The village is inhabited with a number of craft specialised people like potters, blacksmith, carpenter and people professing various occupation including agriculture are traced surrounding the village which indicates the dependency of people on agriculture. Locally the site is known as *kudaw* which means a heap of soil, which is a general phenomenon for all Early Historic sites of Odisha. The site also yielded some structural remnants as indicated by the scattered structural material like brick, stone, foundation portion of houses and floor-levels. All these aspects indicate that the site was a flourishing one and people from all categories were living in the village whose remnants are found to some extent on the surface of the site. The remains of stone blocks, brickbats and post holes indicate the existence of structures at the site. The material culture of the site is well-attested with the materials found at the nearby sites in a very close proximity to each other.

HARIDASPUR (20°23'55.26"N., 86°25'47.06"E)

The Early Historic settlement site Haridaspur is located on the meandering portion of the river Chitrotpala. The site is almost square in plan and covers an area of 30m x 25m. North-West and South-East respectively. The site is a little disturbed due to its close proximity to the river and is affected by the fluvial action of the river. The site has yielded typical early historic cultural material like potsherds of black and red ware, black-slipped ware, red-slipped ware, gray ware, dull red ware, matt impressed red ware and cord impressed pottery. The basic shapes of these wares include globular pots, carinated bowls, dishes, jugs, storage bins, etc. The pottery are characterised by wide mouth with inverted, flaring straight and featureless rims. The site also yielded remnant of charcoal, brunt bricks, dressed stone slabs probably for structural activities like houses and pathway construction. The houses were most probably ranged in linear fashion and comprise 10 to 15 houses. The houses are noticed to have had well-rammed floors with provision of hearths and storage facility. The site also yielded meagre amount of antiquities in stone and terracotta like saddle querns, mullers, hammer stones, points, daggers and other objects to operate heavy work including construction work. All these objects clearly demonstrate the structural activities of the early historic people. The major portions of the site is disturbed due to human activities. This site is a part of the complex along with other sites located nearby which must have been in close interaction with each other in terms of material procurement and agricultural operations. The vicinity of the site is also mark with similar type of activities practised by the present day inhabitants.

PODANA (20°24'47.20"N., 86°25'50.43"E)

The Early Historic settlement site of Podana is located on the left bank of river Chitrotpala at a distance about 30 metres from the bank. The site is relatively small, most possibly a hamlet of the major sites described above. The site has a thick habitual deposit of about 3.5 metres which suggests its

prolonged occupation during the Early Historic period. A small portion of the site on its eastern fringe is disturbed due to river-action, but it exposes the section with clearly demarked occupational levels. The site as indicated by the surface has yielded the basic component of the Early Historic culture like typical ceramics containing black-and-red ware, black-slipped ware, red-slipped ware, fine gray ware etc. The site also yielded a few specimens of minor antiquities such as sling balls, spindle-whorls, hopscotches, throwing dishes both in terracotta and stone and marbles. The site also witnesses a floor level which is exposed and marked with domestic activities. The minor antiquities along with the structural remains clearly indicate that the site was in constant occupation without break. It must have been that the inhabitants of the site exploited the natural environment for subsistence. The site is primary in nature and retains the habitation deposit intact. The site as composed of loam and alluvium is susceptible to rapid decay as is noticed from the nature of the site marked with several disturbances all around.

BHADAKAMAL (20°24'38.45"N., 86°21'12.13"E)

The Early Historic site of Bhadakamal is located on the left bank of river Chitrotpala. The area around the site is sparsely populated and comprises a tiny village. The Early Historic site is located at a distance of 10metre from the river bank. The site has a maximum habitation deposit of 2.5 metre and measures about 15m x 7m North-South and East-West respectively. The site is partially cut off by the river action and hence the actual habitation deposit couldn't be determined. However, from the extant remains it is ascertained that the site has a maximum habitation deposit of around 3 metres and is partially disturbed because of the nearby river. The surface explorations revealed pottery types such as black-slipped ware, red-slipped ware, gray ware, dull red ware, fine gray ware etc. which speaks about the efflorescence of the site during the Early Historic period. However, the finding of antiquities is scanty and comprises the remains of

beads of terracotta and stone, bone tools, antiquities made of pottery like hopscotches and sling balls which are common to almost all Early Historic sites of Odisha and are found aplenty. The site is intact barring the eastern fringe where the river action is maximum and a considerable portion of the mound has been washed away by fluvial activity.

JIRAL (20°24'39.38"N., 86°23'35.25"E)

The Early Historic site of Jiral is located on the left bank of river Chitrotpala and is found right on its bank and hence a considerable portion of the mound has been washed away by the river action. The site measures about 10 m. x 12 m. North-South and East-West directions. A major portion of the site is disturbed and the cultural material is found right on the surface. The antiquarian remains of the site include pottery and minor antiquities. The pottery types are black-slipped ware, red-slipped ware and gray ware of both fine and coarse variety, red ware of coarse variety and other ceramic types in gray and black wares. The antiquities from the site comprising of terracotta beads of various shapes like globular, tubular, bi-cone faceted, arecanut shaped and of different geometric shapes like triangular, square, and hexagonal. The site is disturbed on its upper level of habitation but remains intact in the lower levels. From the surface a number of architectural members in stone and bricks have been noticed which suggest the structural activities at the site by the inhabitants during the Early Historic period. It is pertinent to mention here that such different sites are located in a series along both the bank of river Chitrotpala which speaks about the ancient colonisation by the Early Historic people dating back to 4th-5thc. CE to 3rdc. CE.

On the basis of the archaeological investigations conducted in the Chitrotpala River area, it is argued the site was active in the Early Historic period and, possibly, prior to that. Sites such as Kudanagari may have played an important role in trade and commerce. The other sites might have been

centres of manufacturing and supply of different types of commodities such as terracotta, stone, semiprecious stones etc. to other parts of Odisha and even to the South-East Asian countries. More intensive excavations in the Chitrotpala basin are required to establish the site as of archeological and historical importance.

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‘SEBA’ IN PURI TEMPLE AND THE BALANCE OF POWER : THE CASE OF GAJAPATIS AND GADAJAT KINGS

Thobir Kumar Lima

The formation of the state of Odisha has been the resultant outcome of a long history of complex coalescing and integration of local, divisional, subregional elements into a distinctive region. The regional dynamics is therefore constituted by economic, political, religious, and cultural forces operating at the local and subregional levels. In early medieval Odisha, there had been a number of smaller cultural-political-territorial zones named as Kalinga (south of Chilika upto northern Andhra, Utkala (coastal Odisha, broadly north of Chilika upto Midnapur area), Kosala (parts of present day Bolangir and Sambalpur). In central Odisha’s hill and jungle tract, in the upland plain and highlights of the mountainous regions of Odisha there existed local rajas who were ruling in various mandalas, such as Airavarta Mandala, Yamagartta Mandala (central Odisha), Bonai Mandala (Sundargarh), Khijjinga Mandala (Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar) and Khinjali Mandala (Phulbani and some part of undivided Ganjam’s eastern ghat area). The process of formation of the region of Odisha by integrating these territorial units into one Utkala or Odisha in the Somavamsi, Ganga and Gajapati period (from 10th century to 16th century C.E.) is marked by complex web of dynamic policies between the unified centre of the Gangas and Gajapatis on the one hand and the feudatory ‘peripheries’ on the other. Such negotiations and contestations between the centre and peripheries in 16th to 18th centuries is the subject of the present paper. The paper explores the dynamic relations between the Gajapatis of Puri on the one hand and

feudatories of the peripheries of Odisha on the other. Such negotiations and contestation were deeply political in nature but this political relation expressed itself not in political term but through cultural politics of privileges and access to the regional Cult centre of Jagannatha at Puri. This contestation and negotiations between the Gajapati kingship and feudal rajas resulted in the expansion of creations of many centres of Jagannatha temples in feudatory states between 17th and 19th centuries. These constructions of big Jagannatha temples in peripheral feudatory states of Odisha need to be located in the context of this dynamic relation between the Gajapati Centre and Feudatory states of Odisha, known as Gadajats. The paper also explores the ritual privileges and access rights to Jagannatha temple accorded by Khurda Gajapatis to feudatory states in 17th and 18th century. The Gajapatis were desperate to retrieve their endangered political status and the rising power of the feudatory states. In this paper, I do a reading of the royal letters of the Gajapatis to show that the ritual diplomacy of privileges and access to Jagannatha temple is used as a tool to recentre the pre-eminence of Khurda Gajapati, a pre-eminence which had already been lost and had given way to many centres in the realms of the Gadajatas of Odisha.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a marked expansion in the number of feudatory states in Odisha. In 1592, only a handful of states were recognised as independent principalities by Akbar. These included Khurda, Keonjhar, Hariharpur (Mayurbhanj), Aul and Sarangagarh.¹ However, we do know that there were a number of feudatory chiefs at the time of Kapilendradeva who had voiced their resentment against his authority, and were accordingly chastised.² These states, such as Ranpur, Kujang, Kanika, Dompura, Khallikot and others were linked to the

1 Kulke, Hermann 'Jagannatha as State Deity under the Gajapatis of Orissa' in Eschmannn. A Cult of Jagannatha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa. p. 208

2 Jaya vijaya dwara inscription, Jagannatha temple, Puri.

temple and the Gajapati both territorially and ideologically. The military account of Khan-i-Dauran (1660-1663) lists a number of ‘zamindars’ and ‘killadars’ of Ranapur, Kaluapada, Banki and others³ who fought the Mughal armies on behalf of the Khurda raja. This indicates that certain surrounding principalities were under the dominant influence of Khurda, both through the temple-Gajapati link as well as independently as military vassals. The intricate web of the links of obligation that connected the Gajapati with the Gadajata rajas were expressed through a combination of military, ritual and economic terms. Indeed, it is difficult to separate and define the diverse motivations that underlay this interaction.

A statement from the Ranapur Rajavamsavali recording the resolution of military conflict in ritual terms illustrates these linkages —‘The Maharaja of Puri had a battle with the Nawab and Jagannatha Patnaik of Ranapur helped the Maharaja of Tapanga Gada. So the Gajapati Maharaja ordered to honour the Raja Narendra Mahapatra of Ranapur with the presentation of white umbrella and bugle.⁴ The ritual gift of the umbrella and bugle, both symbols of royal sovereignty by the Gajapati, marked an acknowledgement of the Ranapur raja's support and of his status as independent ruler. The state of Ranapur was within the sphere of influence of the Khurda-Puri complex, both by virtue of territorial proximity as well as ideological and military linkages. The Ranapur rajas were offered a large number of special privileges in the temple during their annual pilgrimage; these were conferred by the Gajapati as a mark of favour. The increased status of the feudatory raja, in this case, his ritual status in the temple, reflected the greatness of his overlord, hence it was in the interest of the Gajapati, as well as that of the Ranapur raja, to mutually honour each other.

3 Sarkar, Jadunath ‘The History of Orissa in seventeenth century Reconstructed from Persian Sources’, p. 162.

4 ‘Genealogy of the Royal Family of Ranapur ’, ORP. Ms. 867 Sanad, p.28.

In another instance, the Rajavamsavali of Khallikota recounts the appointment of its founder, a Bhuiyan-Khandait (landowner) by origin, to being appointed feudatory chief by Gajapati Purusottamadeva during the Kanci-Kaberi campaign.⁵ The state of Keonjhar is described as having been a gift from the Gajapati to his son-in-law, a Rajput prince.⁶ The dynamism of the feudatory-Gajapati relationship was kept alive through ritualised economic relationships in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially through the redistributive system of the temple. The socio-economic and revenue networks of the feudatory states were mobilised within the temple sphere, and these links were sanctioned by, and channelised through the Khurda Raja.

The *Chhamu Chitau*, or the royal proclamations of the Gajapati, issued primarily in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is vibrantly illustrative of this ritual mobilisation of goods and services. The archival material of *Madala Panji* which the first Odishan Research Project procured from temple scribe (*deuli karana*) of the Jagannatha temple in 1971 contains about 160 chhamu-chitaus, most of them being addressed to altogether 32 rajas, princes and zamindars during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Ranapur, Athagarh, Khandapada, Dhenkanal, Tigiria, Nayagarh, Baramba, Banapur, Khallikote, Samblpur, Tekkali, Sukinda, Jeypore, Paralakhemundi, Vijayanagar, Khemundi, Banki, Boudh, Kujang, Madhupur, Mayurbhanj, Parikud and Sonapur.⁷

One of the early letters issued by raja Mukundadeva in 1662 CE illustrates the peculiar Chhamu Chitau Policy of Khurda rajas.

5 'Khallikota Zamindar', Local Records Vol. 59, ORP, GOMLM, Mss. 423, p.1

6 K. Misra, Kendujhar, translated by P. C. Mishra. 1932, ORP, Mss. 552, p.5.

7 Madala Panji

*“Raja Nilakantha Deva of Badakhimedi in south Orissa has gone to Puri for darsan of Jagannatha. We sent Paramananda Pattanaik along with him. He will stay with him and help him perform the darsan. The palanquin, the royal umbrella, a fan made of peacock feathers and the sword and dagger of the raja will be kept at a place near the Lion’s gate. You will be allowed to take his big fan and other necessary articles of prestige. After being carried over the seven steps of the batadvara of the jagamohana, all this will be kept at the Jayavijaya dvara inside the temple compound. He will worship at the Jayavijaya dvara. Entering the sanctum sanctorum, he will have darsan. Then he will perform the golden chamara seba. After this he will come through the inner southern gate and after having had darsan of the side deities, he will go out through the Lion’s gate”.*⁸

For instance, a letter issued by Virakesarideva in 1749 to the temple parichhas, pertaining to the privileges of the Ranapur rajas, runs as follows-

*“On the 22nd day of (the month of) Mesa in the 7th anka of this king a written order of the king was issued. You should give sadi and mahaprasad from the temple to the king (Narendra) of Ranapur in the traditional manner for supplying ropes (simuli)”.*⁹

Another letter issued by the same ruler in 1750 requests the Dhenkanal raja to supply iron for building the rathas and bestows the usual honour of *sadi* and *chandana* in return.¹⁰ Owing to a more tenuous political status of the Gajapati and greater independence of the feudatory states in the eighteenth century, what was previously simply requisitioned, even for temple functions, now had to be requested. These links of supply and

8 Chhamu Chitau

9 ibid

10 ibid

demand were restructured within a changed political milieu, wherein the Khurda raja was negotiating his status as Gajapati while attempting to achieve a balance with the pressures exerted by higher military authorities, the Mughals and the Nawabs. The Gajapati's ritual link with the temple, however, was a powerful one, and his ability to legitimise the feudatory rajas within the temple network accorded him a unique authority. As has been shown elsewhere in greater detail,¹¹ the Khurda raja had a wide range of different ritual privileges at his disposal, which they granted according to their position of their princely recipient, their loyalty and support the Khurda raja received or expected from them.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a curious interplay of political trends in the region, wherein cultural factors played as significant a role in state formation as military strategy. The Khurda raja achieved the status of Gajapati through shrewd foresight and military superiority as much as it was conferred upon him by the Mughal emperor. Thus, while he was militarily subordinate to Delhi, he was ideologically superior, even dominant in the region. On the other hand, his status of supremacy depended largely on his relationships with the feudatory rajas. While they upheld his ritual dominance, as the status of their own lineages was linked to the superior position of the Gajapati, the increased circumscription of his temporal power began to limit the exercise of his authority to the temple sphere. In the twelfth anka year of Sri Virakesari Maharaja and in the fourteenth day of Mithuna, a letter of privilege was written by the Maharaja as follows:

“Let this be known to the Pariksa and all the concerned officers of the Bada Deula from this letter that Shakira Sricandana of Banki will

11 Kulke, Hermann 'Ksetra and Ksatra' in Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia, Manohar Publications, New Delhi. 1993, p. 51-65.

accomplish darsana of the Gods. So, on our behalf, he should be given all due honours according to convention. In the former days the Srichandanas of Banki were appointed Pariksa. So he should be supplied with a silk fan for his fanning service.... The bhoga prasada should be supplied to him in a similar way as the Pariksa of the Temple enjoys the honours.....”¹²

This Chhamu Chitau issued by Virakesarideva in the mid-eighteenth century illustrates the manner in which feudatory chiefs were accorded a privileged status in the temple realm, through the performance of a *seba*, a ritual service. The fact that this event was announced and validated by the Gajapati, indicates his status of primacy in the temple sphere and the predominance of his right over temple functions. A closer analysis of these processes will clarify the situation. The reign of Virakesarideva, who succeeded his father Ramachandradeva after a struggle (which has been discussed earlier in the chapter), was characterised by a proliferation of Chhamu Chitau. Kulke views this as a consequence of Virakesari's efforts to mobilise material resources as well as re-establish his diminished authority over the Gadajata rajas, which he did through his link with the temple.¹³ Temple *seba* was a privileged share in the process of worship: they were honours that constituted authority in the temple realm. In a broad sense, the status inherent in the notion of *seba* lay in the degree of access to the deity that it afforded. Moreover, temple honours publicly affirmed the individual's involvement in the temple's redistributive system, access to which was synonymous with a kind of ritual authority in society.

¹² Chhamu Chitau, in Jagannatha Sthala vrttantam, ORP Ms. 441 p. 94

¹³ Kulke, Hermann 'Ksetra and Ksatra' in Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia, Manohar Publications, New Delhi. 1993, p. 51-65.

The raja had been intimately connected to the temple since Ganga Anangabhima declared himself to be the rauta (deputy) of Jagannatha in the thirteenth century.¹⁴ The raja's links with the temple had been further strengthened by the Gajapatis, particularly by Purusottamadeva, who established the tradition of *chhera pahara* (ritual sweeping), the raja's exclusive seba, as an essential part of temple ritual. In the eighteenth century, the Bhoi rajas of Khurda were struggling to retain their position of primacy among the Gadajata rajas of the region. In this context, the raja's ritual status as Gajapati, the Adyasebaka, recipient of the first bhoga in any ceremony, symbolising his predominance in the temple's material and status networks, was central to the maintenance of his position. By conferring temple privileges upon the Gadajata chiefs, the raja mobilised material resources via the temple's ritual networks. For instance, the raja of Daspalla was given the privilege of providing wood for the rathas during the annual car festival, while iron and ropes came from Dhenkanal, Talcher and Ranapur. What had possibly been requisitioned earlier was now concretised into a ritual exchange, sealed with the sadi and sandalwood, symbols of privileged status in the temple. The raja of Banki was allowed *darsana* at night, an exclusive privilege of the Gajapati. He was also appointed pariksa (*pariccha*, a high-ranking temple official), being accorded honours due to the highest temple official. He was allowed to perform *chamara seba* or fanning service and was provided with a silk fan with a golden handle as symbol of that honour. Service was considered to be a great privilege, as it implied a direct participation in the daily routine activity of the deity and thus a greater proximity to the deity. The Gajapati himself performed *chhera pahara* (sweeping of the chariots of the lords during the annual rathayatra by Gajapati at the time of Purushottamadeva Gajapati in early 16th century) at each ratha jatra, a privilege that reaffirmed his direct link with the deity before thousands

14 'Puri Inscription of the year 1237 A.D.' in Epigraphia Indica 30, 1954, p. 202.

of devotees. By formally honouring their service, the Gajapati was allowing the feudatories a share in his own niche in the redistributive system. It also reinforced his position of primacy in that system. This point is beautifully illustrated in a manuscript of the former *rajguru* of Keonjhar: It describes the manner in which the raja of Keonjhar mobilised the tribal hinterlands of his own capital in exactly the same way as the Khurda raja engaged the feudatory chiefs in the service of Jagannatha. Keonjhar had its own Jagannatha temple along with the annual ratha jatra celebration. The raja placed on the Bhuiyans and Juangs, semi-tribal landed groups belonging to that area, the responsibility of preparing the ropes for pulling the chariots. On the day itself they came with their ropes shouting 'Hari Bola' before tying them to the chariot wheels. For this service, they were awarded a *sadi* and an honourarium from the temple. They were also asked to pay a tax in kind called *paluka* on lands that were previously rent-free. The imposition of a material obligation affirmed their involvement in the dominant redistributive network. The ritual nature of their mobilisation subsumed the material obligation that they were placed under. The Gajapati had held this position of honour for the region since early medieval times, but each raja had this privilege within his own domain. Ganga ruler Anangabhimha's declaration that his kingdom was the 'empire of Jagannatha' (Jagannatha samrajya) confirmed the raja's absolute control over his land. As the *rauta* (deputy) of the predominant deity of the region, the raja had assumed a level of authority that had the sanction of divine power, its ritual nature being more effective in the case of a rebellion than mere military supremacy.

In conclusion, the notion of temple seba indicated privileged access to the deity. Yet, underlying the ritualised distribution of these services by the Khurda raja in the eighteenth century showed a desperate attempt on the part of Khurda Gajapati to retrieve his irretrievable status which had been diminished in the eyes of feudatory states on account of defeat in the hands of Moghuls and the marriage of Gajapati to a muslim girl. The imposition of

ritual obligations on feudatory states was an attempt to limit their resistance to the Gajapati King. In the end, the feudatory states created their own centres of power by replicating the architectonic of Puri Temple city in their respective capital cities. This resulted in the construction of magnificent temples in feudatory states of Keonjhar, Mayurbhan, Nilagiri, Khallikote, and in almost all other feudatory states of Odisha.

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VIGNETTES OF *BHADRAMANDALI* LEISURE IN 19TH CENTURY KATAK

Urmishree Bedamatta

In early Chaitra of 1897, or so it seems, in Katak, the town's *bhadramandali* was feeling uncontrollably drawn to the bai from Banaras. A zamindar, some say a ukil, with 'no intention other than of public service' had invited Sukeshini bai from Kashi to treat the townsfolk to a new wondrous experience of evening leisure. What followed was narrated by one *baya kabi*(mad poet) and, evidently, a few others with varying details.

In this essay, I shall discuss the "Bai Nacha" of the *baya kabi* as a unique expression of 19th century Odia society gartered by an ambiguous moral code, which created a problematic category with confusing ideals — the *bhadrajana*. To a large extent the ideal universe of the *bhadrajana* was defined by positive ideas of good education (*sushikhya*) and the observance of rules (*niyama*) which included display of polite behaviour. However, the mad poet adds a negative attribute such as being ungrateful as a basis for exclusion from the *bhadrajana* brigade. The negative attribute of ungratefulness almost acquires the status of moral culpability when one who once had a good time owing to another's benevolence accuses the latter of being a corrupting influence.

Although there exists no systematic study of the evolution of the category of *bhadramandali* in Odisha, there exist quite a few studies on a similar category such as the *bhadralok* of 19th century Bengal. They were definitely not homogenous categories. Bhattacharya (p. 169), for example citing Bhabani Bandyopadhyay's *Kalikata Kamalalaya* (1823), comes to the conclusion that "the *bhadralok* [of Bengal], far from being a homogenous category, was a combination of the landed rentier class and the petty

bourgeoisie.” Bhattacharya’s study tries to unravel the social composition of the *bhadralok* category by explaining the conditions under which the Bengali population gained access to wealth, including landed property (*artha*), and education (*vidya*). Aryendra Chakravartty uses the ethnographic account by Bholanauth Chunder, “an anglicised Bengali *bhadralok*” to describe the *bhadralok* as the educated Indian middle class who participated in the nationalist project and were deeply aware of their subordinate status in relation to the British. Through Chunder’s characterisation, Chakravartty also foregrounds the “colonial trope of the effeminate Bengali”, as a marker of *bhadralok* identity. Mukherjee cites an interesting social phenomenon called “daladali” in the *bhadralok* community of 19th century Calcutta. The *bhadralok* were divided into dals, (groups) and the dalpatis had taken upon themselves several responsibilities such as keeping registers of pedigrees, of marriages, of social events and deciding the social status of the families (*kulas*). They also arbitrated in disputes of caste crossovers and guided social intercourse among the *bhadralok* community. Besides these, they organised entertainment parties for the *bhadralok*. Mukherjee (p. 68) cites N. N. Ghose the biographer of Nubkissen who praised the *bhadralok* for “introducing into Calcutta society nautch, *kabi* and *akhrai*.”

The protagonist of “Bai nacha” must have been a *bhadrajana* such as Nubkissen. The *baya kabi* gives us a vivid description of the fun-filled evening, while being extremely cautious about issuing offensive remarks for that is not what *bhadrajana* do. In 1827 in Katak, the guests who had the good fortune to be invited to an evening with Sukeshini Bai included Bengali and Odia zamindars, a few British officers, and a few pathans (muslims). The generous zamindar, who had taken the trouble to extend the invitation, actually had wanted a Banarasi bai to perform on the evening of Dola Purnima. But as luck would have it, Sukeshini Bai arrived from Kashi a few days later. The *baya kabi*, though, was not among the list of invitees. However, he happened to see an invitation card, which seemingly, stirred

his curiosity and he landed up at the zamindar's house that evening although he knew it was not a mark of *bhadrata* to visit without an invitation card. We see him entering the host's dwelling as he describes for us the deodar trees lining the space in front of the house, the lanterns arranged for an attractive display of light, the host's handshakes with the guests and the dutiful son-in-law leading the guests to their seat. An evening with Sukeshini Bai and the luxurious accompaniments of the casual thrills of flesh, foreign liquor and gourmet meal were the good things of life that a man outside of the *bhadramandali* would never be able to partake of and *baya kabi* was cursing his lot. Still, displaying the trait of *bhadrajana*, the *baya kabi* enjoins upon all, who had started accusing the zamindar Nagendra babu, to display real *bhadrata* which was to not criticise the man who had taken so much trouble to give them such happiness. With no means to bring such happiness to one's own doorstep, the *baya kabi* says, poor men like him are dependent on the *bhadrajana* and, therefore, ought to display gratitude and politely acknowledge the latter's spirit of generosity and not subject them to censure. For gratitude and polite behaviour is a mark of *bhadrata*, the *baya kabi* says.

Sukeshini bai's visit, it appears, fuelled a series of debates on *bhadramandali* and *bhadrata*, as can be seen from another anonymous tract titled "Katakare Banarasi Bai" which uses the event to reflect on the changing practices of social intercourse. For example, the invitation card, which the *baya kabi* had not received and felt humiliated for what he perceived as a deliberate exclusion from *bhadramandali*, acquires a different meaning for some people who saw it as offhandedness on the part of the host who instead of visiting them personally had sent off just a card. The anonymous narrator chides these people for unnecessarily suspecting the host of rudeness. Clearly, *bhadrata* in Odisha was beginning to evolve as a conceptual problem in the context of colonial modernity.

It is clear from the *baya kabi*'s account and his suggestions that the bai's visit surely rattled those who remained on the fringes of the elite circle of the *bhadramandali*, not so much on account of their capacity for discernment or for matters of taste as much for the accident of their life circumstances. Any improvement on this observation calls for a detailed systematic study of the special category of *bhadramandali* of modern Odisha, a category of eminent Odias of whose life and social practices we have only anecdotal references.

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A HISTRO-CULTURAL ASSEVERATION OF SAKTAISM AND YOGINI ASCETICISM

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Part - I

Ancient Trikalimya-Odravisaya oportunes to be the harmonious seat of many religious faiths, practices, cults and spiritual sects. Bedantic accomplishment, Jainism Buddhism, Saivaism, Shaktivism, tantric vanitic atheism and adoration over ancient udra mandal for many centuries. Though ascertainment and worship as shakti as synthetical branch of hinduism still got its radiant and illuminutiny popularity as a tantric practice aspecially in oddian territory and Ekamra Khetra.

Shaktivism is one of the oldest and early common popular forms of religious tantric based cultural of odrakhya and its origin can be traced back to the periods of the Gupta and Post-Gupta. In response to the Kalika Purana, Kubujika tantra, Jnananarava tantra the odra mandal oddiyan was wellknown as a prime-place of pilgrimage of mother goddess. The historical and archaeological prominent evidence of oddiyan Kosala, Mahanadi Belt and Tosalkhanda able to demonstrated that the shanta-tantric tradition of Odravisaya was established as a commix practice. Accepting and purifying the rituals, rules, cause, means, religious rites and penance and all types of attractive cohesions of Boudha-Saiva-Baishnava faiths the shaktivism established itself as a separate and most impressive doctrine of esoteric appliances in ancient oddrasaya (The old odisha). For centuries (from 4th century to sixteenth century) the Adi-Shakta-pitha odrakhyam was accepted as highest bliss centre in shaktee tantric trends and movements of India. In the latter stage of Odian history (before the great Gupta-period) the Shakta-

shrine of Viraju (the adi-epithet of Goddess mother) seems to have been eliminated by Bouddha - Tantraism. During the Muthara and Bhouma period the same shakta shrine viraja was again influenced by saiva-tantrik faith of Maheswari Nanayani within sixth-eighth century it was observed that the Bouddhaism, Shaivaism, tantraism, Karmakandiya Brahminism and Shaktaism had became strangely amalgamated at West-northern and North-eastern part of Odrabisaya. This mixed form and practice based religion must have ascended the Shakta shrine of Viraja, Durga, Mahamaya, Yogamaya, Chamunda, Matraka, Baraki, Chandi, Marichi, Taratarini and ten types knowledge of goddes Sanaments. According to the gradual evolutional march of pious time the total - odrasaya (from purushottam, Ranipur, Jhanial, Sreepur, Ekrama, Tel Valley, Baitarani Valley, Khinjine-Mandala, Atabika Mandala, Oddian, Kosala, etc.) became famous for Shakti-worship According to great saroja Chandi Das near about Eighty four types of Shakti-tradition developed in Odrarustna mandala of Gajapati Kapilendra Deva.

Part - II

There are many holistic places in Odisha having important Shaktapithas and deities. Among them Viraja, Taratarini, Ugratara,, Pataneswari, Samaleswari, Sureswari, Lankeswari, Sarala, Bimala, Bhagabati, Hingula, Mangala, Khichengeswari, Charchika, Vattarika, Harachandi and Ramachandi are very popular and historically legendful and archaeologically inquisitive also. The most ramarkable and stretching matter is that every village of Odisha (from Sailodbhava period to Gajapati era) had has own presidency dieties ritually designate as Gramadevati, Kuladevi, Thakurani, Khanduali, Maa-Gosain, Istadevi and Pithadebati. Within 9th - 11th century the Stambheswari or Khambeswari cult was developed as a tribal faith in South-Western and North-Western part of Trikalinga-Odradesha. During 12th - 13th A.D. this Khambeswari cult threw its tribal

and primeval identity into distant background and it was known and refashionised as Aryan-goddess Stambeswari (ubham Stambi Subhadra) and was found as immaterial spirit inside the Jagannath cult.

Amng other forms of Shakti- Goddess, the worship of Mahisamardini Durga (Chamunda, Chandi, two/ four/ six/ eight/ ten/ twelve/ sixteen armed Durga) possessed and controlled a prominent spirit in odian religious usage and ritual concept. The Iconography of Durga image became commixed with the distressed, wretched, misfortune, anxiety calamity, arduous conditions of odian faith. Durga, the empowering embodiment of Narayani and a symbol of redeemer occupied a highest blessed possision among the odian cultural phychics. She is able to save form pain of recurring birth and mundane existence. An epithet of Supreme Shakti She is accepted as deliverer - Goddess by the Bhairabi worshippers, eulogisers and esoteric practitimers. Shortly as an infinity and gigantic faith the Durga-tradition (Saradi Durga, Bana Durga / Basanti Durga / Jaya Durga) Durgadevi Durga / Durgatinashini Durga / Chandi Durga / Yogamaya Durga) has greatly influenced the social cultural minds of Odisha from seventh century to till date. The reformative and consecratory exoteric principles also based on three manifestations of goodess Durga i.e. Kali, Taara and tripura (The redeemer of Vices, agonie turmoils and ingratitude).

Another ritualistic and interesting glance of Shakti-worship of odishan history is the image concept and perpetual perception of matrukas (Sapta > Asta > Sodasha > Astadasha Matrukas). The images of seven/ eight mothers (Brahmani > Maheswari > Kaumari > Vaishnavi > Bhairavi - Vabani > Varahi > Indrani > Chamunda / or Sivaduti Sivani) contain the images of Bighnayasaka Ganesh and Vinabhadna (revered idol for destroying arrogance). Saptamatruka cult was able to attributing the child-Centred religious race in the tradition and trends fo Shakti in Odisha. This concept became commonize during the epoch of Bhaumakaras and in the time of the

Somavamsis. The aboriginal goddess Khambeswari was perfectly aryanized and identified as Ambika-Mahanaya or Bhadramata (Source mother or source goddess).

The ancient panel of Matrukas are found on Ekamra - Koshala - Sriskhetra and in the adjacent of Mahanadi and Baitarani valley. Within 8th-10th century the concept of seven mothers became attributed as shrine of the seven sister in the south Koshala-region. Shrine of the seven sisters cult related with fulfillment of the prime desired object and primitive erotomania and sensational passion of eulogiser or sensual worshipper. The seven sister cult had built a school of black magic by the receptacle of 'Mystorious tantrik-practice' or practice of illusive nystagogy. Due to the development of black magic-practice (as an intending worship) of Super-sister images the Shaktatism took a different and vibrant turn in the ancient Odisha. Thus the Sapta-matruka and seven sister faith were very popular during 7th to 11th Century and both forms were main cause to product of tantricism and which combination led to the birth of the mysterious 'Yogini Cult' in Odradesha.

Part - III

In response to the rise of tantric-Sahaja Jani and Bajra Jani Buddhism and Saiva-Bhairava-tantric practice during the Bhaumakara and Somavamsi era the great Sixtyfour Yogini practice and worship became upstrated and generally admired in rivage of Mahanadi, Baitarani, Brahmani, Russikulya and Prachi of Trikalinga Mandala (Utkala + Kosala + Kalinga region). The fundamental concept of yogini practice was propounded by the historical perfectionist Matsyendranath of Kamarupa in the 1st part of 8th century. This magic concept was brought from Kamarupa to oddian religious periphery by the patronage of Bhaumakars. The evolutionary development of this corporal religious ethics and witchcrafting esoteric appliances in

odrarashtra was exalted the yogic doctrine of the void atheism and false hood-practice with knowledge best completion of worship.

Banking of Amardaka School / the mattamayura school of Saiva tantric doctrine and the Kaula Kapilaka school this religious tenet was expanded between 8th-9th Century. The Ascertainments of Eight Bhairabi Matrukas Gradually multiplied into sixty-four Yoginis. The Bairava of Saivism became one footed, two-footed, three-footed and top-footed Vairaba and wellknown as Kalavairaba, Superior or Mahavairaba, Parswa Vairaba in Yogini System. Likewise the Bhairaba cult of tantric Saivism and the granting virago of Yogini Cultural faith of Shaktivism seen to be connected trustly with each other.

The great exponent Rudrsiva of Amardaka School of Saivism have contributed to the collaborating methodical extention of the tandric form of saivism in thethen Oddasaya (old-Odisha). The Sadasivacharya of some branch of saivism have a positive and constructive role in the collaborating development of tantric Shaktivism and yogic Saivism in South-Koshala. The Kapalika faith and the tantric Bhairavacentred Saivaisim gradually came to a blessing mixture in Shakta Mandal of old-udradesha through the Saiva-inspiredseer Gaganasivacharya. In this way a female-dominant tantric tradition had developed and established in Oddian religious cencle, in which the Mahabhairava occupied in important and powerful posture in tantric system of neditation. But the granting success power of meditation was yogini. Yogini was an uterinic counter part of Bhairavic contemplation. According to Yayadratha Yamala and Kaulan-Jana Nirnaya (Two practical text on Yogini Cult) the Kalavairaba and Yogini Dakini Came to a commix corporal form and both were able to develop a sexual practice based meditation in Yogini trends. The Kaula-Kapalika stream of Matsyendra Natha helped to expound the tenants of the yogini customs and manners.

Akaulavira tantra of 8th century is a practical text of the yogini doctrine in which various Yogini-mantras and ritual norms were emerged.

Maarana, Vasikarana, Sammohana, Jaraapaharana, ChhayaRupayana, Yogini-mandal, Yogini-Bruta, Mukta Sidhipitha, Yogini Khola, Yogangakarama and Yogini-Sidhi Nelana are various rituals and ways for the success for sidhis. The text Akaulavira tantra ascertains that the sixty-four yoginis are inwanded as Sahaja, Kulaja, Antyaja, Kshetraja, Pithaja, Mantraja, Kamaja, Bhabaja and Bhayaja. An ascetic believes was settled that the sixty-four attendants of Mahamaya durga must be given highest bliss as Yogini-Goddesses to the perishable world. Offering and oblation are only path for highest bliss. Yoginis are very cruel for that asuppliant-ascetic who is fallen form the path of meditation. The falluer ascetic become a nourishes for adorable yogins. As the tolerant sage a perfect practitioner must able for unmixed and imaculated bliss of success or sidhi through offering self-denials. The accomplishment, fulfillment, perfection, completion, success, attainant, emancipation, supper humanitarianity, satishtaction, pageantry, auspiciousness, commencement of shedding are twelve numbers of sidhi sutras for practice of yogini-Meditation. Like a Kapalika Sunyabodhi a yogini devotee always chosses a great void of outer space as yogini sidhapitha for attaing union with supreme spirit of yogini.

Part - IV

There are two impontant yogini temple in odisha - one is Hirapur muktakasha temple near Bhubaneswar and another is Ranipur-Jharial temple near titilagarh in Bolangir district. According to architectural view-point both the temples are free-circular in shape and have no roof. The great Bhauma queen Hiramahadevi was built Hirapur-yoginkemple for the devotees of vaitali kapalani. At Hirapur open-space-temple the images of sixty four yoginis, nine katyayanis and Ekapada, Duipada and Urdhwapada Bhairavas have been enshrined in their respective places and thanas. The

aesthetical images fo hirapur-yoginis are symbols of aesthetic qualities of odia-women. Exclusively their amusement style, hair style, folded clothic style, crest style, chignon style, embellishment style is a heritagical odian-identity. The metaphoric images of Yoginis of the Hirapur are very attractive, artistic and blessing full with all type of femimine accomplishments. They are not evil to see, they are very deer to devotee for worthy devotion. They are thought provoking and appreciating. They are not frail, but very powerful. They are also associated with their various vehicles and Ayudhas. The ten-armed adisakti, Mahamaya is the presiding deity of this temple The Yogini pratima of Hirapur are representations of human beings with charming figures and in an assimilation style. But most of the Yoginis of Rahipur are charactensed by the heads and faces of animals They are created a deranged and modified feeling. Shortly in eariy medieval period the tantnic Yogini cult gradually assimilated with Brahmahan saktism. During 12th-14th century A.D. like other religion the Yogini saktism alsctxwas mixed in the cult of Jagannatha. (Ref. Dakshina Kalika Norms).

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NILADRIPUR COPPER PLATE GRANT OF VIDYADHARABHANJA ANOPAMAKALASA

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The copper plate was found from Niladripur village of Nayagarh district of Odisha. The copper plate is now preserved in Odisha State Museum.

The set consists of three plates, each measuring 16.5cm x 9.5cm. They are strung together on a copper ring, attached with a royal seal. The seal bears the figure of a couchant lion and below it the legend in two lines read as (1) *Śri Vidyādhara* (2) *bhañjadevasya*. There are altogether 38 lines of writing on the plates. The language of the epigraph is Sanskrit and the script is Eastern variety of Northern class of alphabet of 10th century A.D. Though the charter is in good state of preservation but some alphabets are corroded. The charter of the inscription akin to the characters of Odisha plates¹ of Vidyadharabhanja, Nayagarh plates² of Vidyadharabhanja and Ganjam plates³ of Vidyadharabhanja Anopamakalasa.

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Text¹1st Plate

1. Om² II Jayati Kusumava(bā*)ṇa –prāṇa – vikshobha – daksham sva – ki-
2. raṇa –parivesh-aurjitya –jirṇṇ- endu –lekham tribhuvana –bhavana – antar-
3. dyota-bhasvat – pradipam kanaka –nika³ gauram vibhru netram Harasya-
4. Śesh- āher = iva ye phaṇāḥ –pravilasanty= udbhāsvar = endu tvi-
5. shah parley-āchala – śriṅga – kottayah(koṭāya*)= iva – tvaṅga –
6. nti ye = tyunnatāḥ nrītt-attopa (āṭopa*)vighatṭitā iva bhujā – ra-
7. janati ye śambhavās = te sarvv-āgha = vighātinaḥ sura - sa-
8. rit-toy= ormmayah pāntu vaḥ I Svasti vijaya Vañjulvakād-
9. Asti sri vijaya –

2nd Plate 1st Side

10. nilayah prakāṣa – guṇa – gaṇa – grasta – samasta- ripu vargaḥ –
11. Śri Anopamakalaśa nāmā raja nirddhuta(nirdhuta*) kali – kalusha ka-
12. Imasha Bhanj=āmala kula- tilaka Mahārājā Śri Raṇa-
13. bhañjadevasya prapautra Śri Digbhañjadevasya naptā-
14. Śri Śilābhañjadevasya sutaḥ Paramamāheśvaro – mā-
15. tā –pitri pād= ānudhyata Mahārājā Śri Vidyādhara bhañja-
16. devaḥ kuśali – Uttarakhaṇḍa vishaye yathā –nivasi kuta-
17. vinaḥ samanta vishayapati bhāga – bhogy-ādi yatharham - mā-
18. nayati samjñāpayati ch= ānyat sarvataḥ Sivaṁ = asmā-
19. kam =ānyat-

2nd Plate 2nd Side

20. viditam = astu bhavatām etād vishaya samvadha⁴ - Kamasakā -
21. ra –grāma – chatuh simā parichchhinno mātā –pitror-
22. ātmanaś=cha puṇy-ābhivriddhaye ā- chandr-ārkkam⁵ –yāvat sali-
23. la dhārā purasarena⁶ vidinā Vāccha gotrā(ya*) Bhārgava –pra-
24. varāya Chāyavan Āpnuvana Jamadagni Audumvara pañcha-
25. rishiya pravaras Tikekasya naptā Mamikasya suta Bha-
26. ṭṭa Samvorasya Bhaṭṭaputra Maheśvarasya grāma sa –prada-
27. tta chrthā māṇa bhāga data (dattā*) || pratipādito smābhiḥ yasya-
28. yasya yadā bhūmi tasya tasya tadā phalaṁ Mā bhuya-
29. phala saṅkā vaḥ (Ma bhud-a-phala sankā vaḥ*) para – datt=eti
pārthivaḥ sva –dattā para –dattā ānupa

3rd Plate

30. la(nam*)hareta vasundharām sa vishṭhāyam kṛimir bhutvā pitri-
31. bhiḥ saha pachyate Iti kakala –dal –āmvu(ambu*) vindu – lolam śriya-
32. m = ānuchintya manushya –jivitañ = cha sakalam= idam udā-
33. hritañ = cha vudhva (buddhvā*) nahi purushaiḥ parakirttayo vilopyāḥ
sahi-
34. hitam lāñchhitam Śri Trikaliṅgamahādevya | anumanta –
35. śri Bhaṭṭa Stamhadevena vārgulika Tejadike-
36. na likhitam Sandhivigrahi Chandakhambhena pravesi-
37. tam pratihara Bhaṭṭa Kesava | utkirnnan (cha*) akshaśali-
38. Kumarachandraṇā iti ||

Abstract

The charter begins with the symbol *siddham* which is followed by the well known verse “*Jayati* or *Jayatu* Kusumava(bā)ṇa”, an adoration to god *Śiva* which is found in all the Bhañja records issued from the Vañjulvaka. The charter was issued from the city of Vañjulvaka by the reigning king Vidyādharaḥbhañja Anopamakalaśa, who was the son of Śīlabhañjadeva, grandson of Digbhañjadeva and great grandson of Raṇabhañjadeva of Bhañja family. The king assumed the title as *Paramamāheśvara* (devout worshipper of *Śiva*) and *Mahārājā*. The object of the charter is to record the grant of the village Kamasakara situated in the Uttarakhaṇḍa vishaya in favour of Bhaṭṭa Samvora, son of Mamika and grandson of Tikeka of the *Vātsa gotra* and the *Pañcharṣeya pravara*. The charter described that one forth of a *māṇa* (measure of land) was also given to a Brāhamaṇa named as Bhaṭṭaputra Maheśvara.

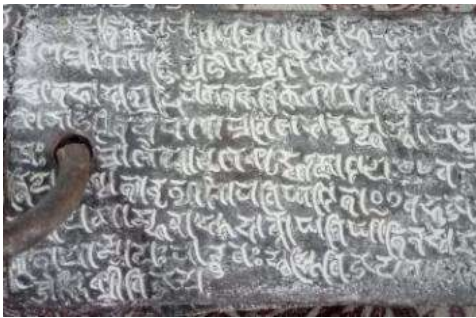
The charter was written by the *Sandhivigrahin* Chandakhambha, engraved by goldsmith Kumarachandra and enshrined by queen Trikaliṅgamahādevi.

1. From the original plate.
2. Expressed by a symbol.
3. Read kanaka nikasha,
4. Read sambaddha.
5. Read chandr-ārka.
6. Read puraḥ sareṇa.

Curator (Epigraphy)
Odisha State Museum,
Bhubaneswar-751014, Odisha.



Seal



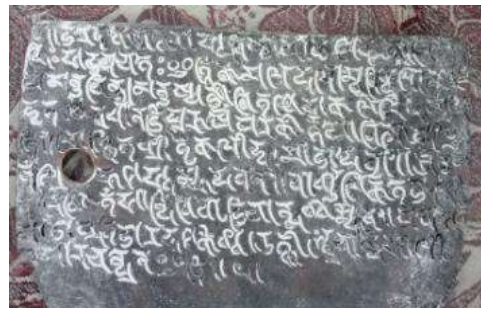
1st Plate



2nd Plate 1st Side



2nd plate 2nd side



3rd plate

THE WANDERING BARDS OF ODISHA

Bhagyalipi Malla

I

You often see them in pairs, wearing white dhoti with the tail cloth tucked in at the back, and carrying a circular palm leaf umbrella. There is a *gamchha* and a bowl slung over the shoulder, and they wear elaborate marks of sandalwood paste on the forehead. Sometimes they walk with naked feet while sometimes they wear wooden slippers. No sooner does one of them finish singing a line, the other picks up the tenor of his mate to add another. The women of the village stand ready with bamboo trays filled with grains, pulses and vegetables to be poured into the bowl hanging down from the men's shoulder. These men who roam the villages of Odisha in hot summer afternoons, bringing home the simple truths of life, are called *chakulia panda* or *chakaria panda*.

Their songs, comprising stories from puranas and upanishads, Ramayana and Mahabharata, are the common man's digest. They begin with stories about the power of giving and the good fortune which accrues to the giver, giving examples of King Bali from Bamana Purana, Ravana, Shibi, and Karna. Not only that, they also narrate events and happenings from around the world in the form of verses.

The *chakulia panda* are men of the mendicant Brahmin caste of the Kashyapa clan. They are known by different caste names in different regions of Odisha: Aranyaka or Jhaṅua in Garjat regions and Halua in the coastal areas. They are also said to belong to Balabhadra or Shiva clan. They are called *chakulia panda*, probably because of the circular umbrella they carry or because their poetic compositions remind people of the wheel

of time, the rising and falling fortunes of men over the ages. Sarala's *Mahabharata* mentions *chakra bhikhsu* which describes the pandavas roaming the jungles as mendicants during the days they spent in hiding. Evidently, the chakulia panda tradition of Odisha has its origin in a distant past.

Sometimes the pair performs the story of the meeting between Rama-Parashurama which is a great draw for villagers. The younger of the two is dressed up as Rama, the kshatriya prince; the other is dressed up as Parashurama, the old Brahmin warrior sage. While it is Rama's duty to protect his subjects, Parashurama has pledged to his father that he would wipe all kshatriyas from the face of earth. Rama and Parashurama indulge in mock combat, and Rama, inspired by the courage and valour of the old sage gradually overpowers Parashurama. In Odisha, the Janughantia brahmins are believed to be descendants of Parashurama. The Janughantias worship Rama and belong to well-to-do families. The villagers, therefore, take care to fill Parashurama's bowl with various kinds of offerings. They are concentrated in the regions of Nayagarh, Badamba, Khandapada, Athagarh and other Garjat regions. A king named Janughanta finds mention in Sarala's *Mahabharata*. The king is a siddha yogi and worshipper of sun god, who blesses him to live on throughout Dwapara yuga. It is certainly not possible to say with certainty if there is a link between the Janughantia brahmins and the king Janughanta. But it may be surmised that the Janughantia caste brahmins were the ancestors of the puranic king.

II

Elsewhere, in rural Odisha, when it is raining fire in Baisakha, in the shade of the village bamboo grove, a solitary dove sings to the baby dove who has fallen dead: 'Our grain baskets are all full, come my baby, wake up'. Just then the melancholic strain of the *kendera* pierces the air and a new

bride in one house and a widowed mother in another peep out through their small windows. The story of Mukuta Dei the queen mother and the nine young wives of prince Gobindachandra makes their hearts bleed.

Gobindachandra, it is said, renounced the world and it was none other than his mother who instigated him to do so. The jogis (yogis) of Odisha hold whole villages in thrall when they roam the countryside in quiet summer afternoons, singing the story of Gobindachandra. “Tika Gobindachandra” was composed by Daibajna Bipra in the eighteenth century. A similar song in a loftier kavya style called “Gita Gobindachandra” had been composed by Jasobanta Das in the eighteenth century. The story of the young prince who renounced the world circulates not only in Odisha but also in Bengal, Assam, Rajasthan, Punjab and in south India. The Bengali compositions are variously titled as “The Song of Mayanabati”, “Goraksha Vijaya”, “The Song of Gobindachandra” and “The Song of Gopichand”. The last one is perhaps the earliest composition and probably originated in east Bengal region (now in Bangladesh). One may say so because the birth place of the protagonist of the story is in modern-day Bangladesh. Different compositions of the same story by Durlabh Mallik, Mohammad Jayasi and Lakshman Singh are popular in northern and western India. There are palm leaf manuscripts in Odisha, carrying more compositions such as the ones by Chandrasekhar Das (Sekhar Das) and Uddhab Das.

The Odia story goes thus: Mukuta Dei is the first among many wives of King Ripuchandra. Even after years of marriage, the couple is childless. The king, disappointed and frustrated, sends away Mukuta Dei to a jungle where she finds herself alone and helpless. She sends news to her parents and her father who is a king builds a palace for her and sends an army of servants to take care of her. A few months later, Ripuchandra, who is hunting in the jungle discovers the palace and is shocked to find Mukuta Dei

living in full glory and splendour. Surely the queen must have taken to sinful ways, Ripuchandra thinks and questions her. Mukuta Dei takes several tests such as walking on iron nails and on the edge of the sword, entering and coming out of the fire unscathed, to prove that she is a *sati*. The king, filled with remorse for having treated Mukuta Dei unjustly, brings her back to the palace and she is honoured with the title of “*Paṇḍā mahadei*” [the primary queen]. A few months later the queen gives birth to Gobindachandra.

Gobindachandra enjoys wordly pleasures only up till the age of twenty-one. Soon after, he is forced by his mother to don ochre-coloured robe and smear his body with ash and carry a begging bowl to leave home and become a yogi. Mukuta Dei, through her great spiritual powers, had learnt that Gobindachandra would live only for twenty-one years. She decided she would make her son abandon the physical pleasures of worldly life at the age of twenty-one to go through a yogic journey of control and detachment to gain immortality and infinite peace. Gobindachandra is left under the tutelage of Hadipa, a man of weaver caste. Gobindachandra’s wives, silently, curse their mother-in-law for having brought them into helplessness but Mukuta Dei would not budge. A yogin herself and the disciple of none other than Gorekhnath, she would have nothing but her son defeat death and not become a victim of death.

Under Hadipa’s training, Gobindachandra learns to override the desires of the body and the mind. The yogi prince gains powers of omniscience and meets Hadipa’s guru Tantipa and the first guru Gorekhnath. The yogic journey continues for forty long years before Gobindachandra returns home to his mother and wives, after gaining victory over death. Is the story about the prince’s powers? Is it not about the prowess of a spiritually enlightened woman?

It is said, whoever takes birth on this earth is bound to die. Gobindachandra, however, proves this wrong. His journey preaches the transformation of self through self-control and detachment. The body becomes just a vehicle for the expression of consciousness which is by nature boundary-less and limitless. This is the central philosophy of a religious sect called the Nathas. The Nathas are known by several names in different regions of India: the Siddhas, the Kaulas, the Avadhutas, and the Kanphata yogis. Gorekhnath and Matsyendranath are believed to be the founders of this sect. While Gorekhnath is said to be the incarnation of Shiva, Matsyendranath is believed to be the incarnation of Vishnu. In Odisha, they are known by surnames such as Nath, Mishra, Nathsharma, Debsharma, Debnath, and Goswami. Some texts which propound Nath philosophy are *Shiva swarodaya*, *Gorekh samhita*, *Saptanga yoga*, *Shishu veda* (Gorekhnath), *Brahma kundali* (Siddha Saranga), *Parache gita* (Dwarika Das), *Amarkosha gita* and *Saptanga yoga saar*. In Odisha, there are several *mathas* bearing the name of Nath gurus. There are two famous seats of worship of Gorekhnath in Chhapada and Pandar villages of Jagatsinghpur district.

It is said the birthplace of Gorekhnath is a village called Chandrapur on the bank of river Godavari. Matsyendra was born in Nepal. These religious leaders brought about a confluence of religious philosophies of shunyavaad of Buddhism, nirguna sadhana and the Kaulas. Women are not relegated to the backwaters of spiritual and religious practices. As is represented by Mukuta Dei, the woman, unlike in the tradition of Manu, is not the originator of all desires but is ardently desirous of salvation. The world is not dismissed as an illusion, rather is presented as real in which it is the duty of every human being to distinguish between the real and the unreal and, in the process, know oneself, as Mukuta Dei and Gobindachandra do.

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