CHAPTER II
ORIGIN OF KULINISM

(1)
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Though the kulapañjikās generally regard Balālasena as responsible for introducing Kulinism among the descendants of the five immigrant Kalāṇca Brāhmaṇas, Kāyasthas and the Vaidyas of Bengal, they record different traditions about the motive behind its introduction by the Sena king.

Thus, according to the evidence of the Kārikā of Eḍumīśra, Ballālasena is said to have pleased the Goddess Candī so much with his prayers and worship that he was bestowed with the power of creating new Brāhmaṇas within a limited space of time, and that he created seven hundred new Brāhmaṇas who later became known as Sepṭaśatīs or Sāṭatīs. This enraged the existing Vedic Brāhmaṇas so much that they were about to pronounce a curse upon him. To propitiate them he promised to introduce an order of merit or Kulinism among them.

The Kulatattvārṇava\(^1\), edited by Sarvānanda Miśra, records a different tradition. According to it, the Sena king intending to be remembered by the descendants of the five immigrant Brāhmaṇas like Ādiśūra promised to introduce Kulinism among the Brāhmaṇas.

On the basis of a tradition current during his time, L.M. Bhattacharyya\(^2\) states that once the Sena king invited the Brāhmaṇas to his court. Those who came at 1 P.M. and 1-30 P.M. became Śrotiyas and Gauṇas respectively, and who came late became kulīnas because it was supposed that good Brāhmaṇas could not come in time for heavy course of daily rites.

On the basis of Vācaspatimiśra's Kularāma, M.C. Majumdar\(^3\) states that at a certain date in his reign the Sena king made a gift of a golden-cow. Some Brāhmaṇas of the Rādhīya class, after causing that cow to be cut into pieces, accepted the gift of gold. Observing this evil practice of the Brāhmaṇas, he selected a few Brāhmaṇas from among those who abstained from accepting the gift and invited them to his court. He, then, declared them to be spotless and honoured them with the appellation of kulīna.

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N.N. Vasu refers to an incident mentioned in the Radhīyakulamanjari, according to which once while the Sena king was narrating to an assembly of the Brāhmaṇas the principles of Kulinism which he would like to introduce, a section of the assembled Brāhmaṇas protested against it, and so they were classed as Śrotriyas, and the more pliant ones became kulīnas.

Various suggestions have also been offered by scholars in explaining the reasons for the introduction of Kulinism. Thus, according to W. Ward, Kulinism was introduced with a view to distinguishing the most learned men in the country.

K.M. Banerjea says that the descendants of five immigrant Brāhmaṇas were proud of their superior extraction and behaved themselves with great haughtiness to the Saptasatīg.

W.W. Hunter opines that Ballālasena found it necessary to settle questions of precedence by a comprehensive classification of his Aryan subjects. According to E. Vesey Westmacott, the Sena king introduced Kulinism for a

5. The Pālas of Bengal, p. 33.
further development of the same policy as the revival of Brāhmaṇism which Ādiśūra followed by introducing families of Brāhmaṇas into Bengal. In the opinion of R.L. Mitra, Kulinism was introduced for giving preeminence to the descendants of five Brāhmaṇas.

Supporting the view that Ballālasena introduced Kulinism, S.C. Mitra explains the reasons for the absence of reference to Kulinism in inscriptions and contemporary works by observing that the introduction of Kulinism did not appear to be such a revolutionary or a very important measure to the contemporaries as would merit reference to in the inscriptions in which generally political and military achievements of the kings are given prominence, and that nor is it to be believed that it was universally accepted by the Hindu society all at once, and that it would find a place in the Smṛti books of the Sena age. D.C. Sen is also of the same opinion.

According to P.L. Paul, some social re-organisation seems to have become necessary for the Sena king whose ancestors came from Karnāṭa and were Brahma-Ksatriyas.

It is natural that the royal power under the Sena kings should be used for the welfare and promotion of the Brāhmanical religion and society. Besides, some Pseudo-Smṛti books were composed in the Sena period probably with a view to suit the changed social and religious condition of Bengal and the growing needs of the Hindu society. This fact, therefore, appears to show that some steps were taken to organise the Hindu society in the Sena period\(^1\). It is also suggested by Paul\(^2\) that, when people from other religions were entering into the Hindu fold, Ballālasena selected some pure and religious minded Brāhmaṇas for the rank of nobility, who would serve as models to others by their conduct and conviction. Paul\(^3\) also observes that causes behind the social reorganisation by the Sena king were various and it is not unlikely that contemporary political events influenced this to a certain extent. Paul\(^4\) further suggests that Kulinism was probably not accepted by all the Brāhmaṇas, and that it must have taken a long time even for recognition, not to speak of acceptance.

1. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
2. Ibid., p. 54.
3. Ibid., p. 57.
4. Ibid., p. 54.
In support of his suggestion, Paul points out that when the government of British India with the advantages of modern communication and propaganda and with all its elaborate administrative machinery could not enforce all the provisions of the Sarada Act (1929) for the prevention of child marriage, it is hardly to be expected that Kulinism introduced by the Sena king was accepted by all the Brāhmaṇas in the 12th century A.D. Hence, Kulinism did not appear in inscriptions and literatures.

According to N.K. Bhattasali, since the Sena dynasty hailed from the Deccan, Ballālasena introduced Kulinism among the Brāhmaṇas in order to make his own position secured.

There are, however, several scholars including G.N. Dutt, R.D. Banerji, G.M. Sarkar, R.C. Majumder and D.C. Sircar who do not attribute the authorship of Kulinism to Ballālasena. Thus, G.N. Dutt has made the following observations:

(i) It is very difficult to believe that the Brāhmaṇas had made over their power to the Sena king to interfere among their own caste.

1. Ibid., pp. 53-54.
(ii) The Sena king conquered and held Mithilā under him. But it is pertinent to note that he did not introduce the order of nobility among the Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas of that country.

(iii) It is possible to think that in order to invest the institution of Kulinism with an antiquated sacerdotal and regal sanction the Brāhmaṇa Ghaṭakas of much later age have woven queer stories about him.¹

(iv) In order to prevent the Hindus from being Mohomedanised in their conduct, hard and fast rules regulating their matrimonial relation and conduct of life were necessary and, as such, the rules, later on, collectively called Kulinism, were introduced by the Bengal Brāhmaṇa scholars on their returning home from Mithilā during the 14th - 15th centuries A.D. in imitation of those prevailing in that country².

According to R.D. Banerji³, the legend about the origin of Kulinism should be accepted with great caution, for neither the Sena king's own inscriptions, nor those

¹. Ibid., p. 47.
². Ibid., pp.47-48.
of his son Lakṣmaṇasena contain any reference to Kulinism, even when referring to Brāhmaṇas to whom land was granted. Banerji\(^1\), therefore, suggests that the whole system may be of much later origin, and it was created by some Brāhmaṇas several centuries after the Sena kings.

On the authority of the Kārikā of Harimīṣra, Y.M. Ray\(^2\) observes that Ballālasena does not appear to have been responsible for introducing Kulinism.

Supporting the view of Banerji, G.M. Sarkar\(^3\) remarks that there is neither epigraphic nor literary evidence about the origin of Kulinism and adds that even among the Kulapaṅjikāras themselves there are differences of opinion. Sarkar\(^4\) refers to the Sadvaidvakulapaṅjikā of Kavikanṭahāra (1653 A.D.), which says that there are two views regarding the institution of Kulinism. The older view is that it was based on nine personal qualifications such as ācāra, vinaya, vidyā, etc. But the more recent view is that it was for the first time created by Ballālasena. Sarkar\(^5\) therefore, opines that

1. Loc.cit.
4. Loc.cit.
5. Loc.cit.
the view that Ballālasena was its originator only gained ground in comparatively recent times and, as such, cannot be credited with much authenticity.

In support of the view of Banerji, K.P. Bhattacharya¹ argues that the Pitṛdavitā of Aniruddhabhaṭṭa and the Brāhmaṇa Sarvasvam of Halayūdha do not, however, refer to Kulinism and that the Sena king does not appear to have determined Kulinism on the basis of virtues; for, the descendants of Bhavadevabhaṭṭa, Śūlapāṇi, Jimūtavāhana and others, though well-versed in Vedas, were not considered to be fit for the rank of Kulinism, while those who do not even find mention in contemporary works were rewarded with the rank. While accepting the view that some Brāhmaṇas were responsible for the introduction of Kulinism after the Sena period, Bhattacharya² further observes that a large number of Brāhmaṇas were, however, favoured with the award of distinction viz., Rājā, Khān, Vaṅgabhūṣaṇa etc., by Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah and Sultan Firoz Shah of Delhi by the middle of the 14th century A.D. and that the descendants of those honoured Brāhmaṇas seem to have introduced Kulinism. According to Bhattacharya³, the hereditary character of Kulinism was probably made in the time of king Ganesā (1415-3 A.D.).

¹. Radhiva Brahmana Kulatattva, pp. 12; 79-80.
². Ibid., pp. 12- II.
³. Ibid., p. intro., II
Following R.D. Banerji, R.C. Majumdar points out that the genealogy, as given in the *Mahāvamsa* (1485 A.D.) of Dhruvānandamiśra, makes the author of the work to be descending seventh in the family from Maheśvara who was ranked as kulīna by the Sena king and that in between the said author and the Sena king there is a gap of three hundred years in which seven generations are not possible for accommodation. Majumdar also draws our attention to the fact that the Sena king did not consider the learned Brāhmaṇas such as Aniruddhabhaṭṭa Halāyūḍha, Īśaṇa, Pasupati, Dhanañjaya, Sarvānanda and other to be fit for the rank of kulīna; while the rank was bestowed on them whose names are known only to the genealogists.

He, however, suggests that Kulinism was not the only mark of individual or social status and it like the titles bestowed by the British government was probably the individual title bearing the mark of general dignity; afterwards it turned to be hereditary in character and was standardised to be the mark of high class in society.

Even the introduction of Kulinism among the Kayasthas by Ballālasena has been doubted by N.K. Dutt\(^1\) who opines that "the origin of Kulinism among the Kayasthas is shrouded in mystery." In support of his contention, Dutt\(^2\) points out that high born Kayasthas are mentioned in the inscriptions but few of them have the modern kulīna cognomens and also mentions that one Pāṇḍudāsa (of Bhūrisṛesṭī in the Hooghly District) of the Nyāyakandali\(^3\) (10th century A.D.) of Śrīdhara was "the headmark of the Kāyastha community," while the surname Dāsa is of an inferior order among the modern Kayasthas. Dutt\(^3\), further, adduces some reasons which led Ballālasena, if he at all introduced it, to declare order of Kulinism. Thus, Dutt\(^4\) suggests that the Sena kings who were foreigners finding it difficult to destroy the influence of the Pālas so long as the Kayastha hereditary administrators of districts and collectors of revenue remained loyal to their old Pāla-masters succeeded in winning over a small section of them by conferring Kulinism upon them as a reward for their desertion of their Pāla-masters and Buddhist religion. According to him\(^5\), they must have been a very
limited number, but after the downfall of the Sena kingdom there was little restriction upon all those who bore the surnames of the original kulīna families claiming Kulinism for themselves. This, according to Dutt¹, happened in a practically wholesale fashion in West Bengal where there was little Sena influence left after the Muslim conquest of Nadia. But in East Bengal the process was very much checked by the presence of Sena and other Hindu rulers for a long time, and hence it is found that the number of kulīnas even among those bearing the surnames of Ghoṣa, Vasu, Guha and Mitra are very limited there.

D.C. Sircar² also appears to support N.K. Dutt when he suggests that Kulinism among the Kāyaṣṭhas seems to have been influenced by such system as was found among the Brāhmaṇas of Bengal.

While supporting R.D. Banerji, D.C. Sircar³ suggests that Ballālasena could not have been entirely responsible for introducing Kulinism, at least, among the Vaidyas, for Bharatamallika, the author of the Candraprabhā⁴ (1675 A.D.), does not ascribe to the

1. Ibid., p. 528.
fathership of Kulinism among the Vaidyas. According to Bharatamallika, Kulinism originates from good conduct, but does not deny that wealth, not wholly unconnected with Sadācāra, may also bring it. Further, Sircar, thoroughly utilizing the evidence of the Sadvaidyakulapanjikā, referred to, for the first time by G.M. Sarkar, as noted above, suggests that Kulinism has originated from such qualities as education, wealth, good conduct, good deeds etc. and has been gradually standardised through the efforts of the Samājpatīs, Kulapanjikāras and Ghatakas among the Vaidyas of Bengal.

He also adds that Kulinism among the Vaidyas seems to have been influenced by such system as was found among the Brāhmaṇas of Bengal. In the opinion of Sircar, the story of Ballālasena's association with Kulinism was concocted not much earlier than the middle of the 17th century A.D. as known from the above works.

Besides, several scholars have traced Kulinism before the Sena age. Thus, according to D.C. Sircar, Kulinism among the Brāhmaṇa society of Eastern India was known at the time of the Bangaon inscription.

1. Loc.cit.,
3. Vang, Sāh, Par, Pat., No. IV, 1370 B.S., p. 45.
6. Ibid., pp. 48ff.
of Vigrahapāla III (1043–70 A.D.). On the evidence of the said inscription, Sircar\(^1\) suggests that the importance attached by the East Indian Brāhmaṇas to matrimonial relation with the Brāhmaṇas of Kolāṇca or Kroḍāṇca in U.P., who often came or were brought to settle in East India, was an important factor in the growth of Kulinism among the Brāhmaṇas. Thus, Ghaṇṭiśa, a Brāhmaṇa of Tīrabhukti (North Bihar), is, as evidenced by the above-mentioned inscription, found to trace his ancestry to a Kolāṇca Brāhmaṇa named Kāccha through the granddaughter of the latter\(^2\).

Sircar\(^3\) further draws our attention to the fact that a large number of Brāhmaṇas of Śrāvasti, especially of Tarkārī in U.P. were, as known from the inscriptions\(^4\) of 10th–11th centuries A.D., settled in the Hili-Balurghat area in North Bengal and those Brāhmaṇas named their new settlements after their old habitations in U.P. According to Sircar\(^5\), it is possible to imagine that the very eagerness on the part of the Bengal Brāhmaṇas to enhance their social prestige by establishing their matrimonial connections with the immigrant

2. Loc. cit.
Brahmanas of U.P. was an important factor in the development of Kulinism in Bengal.

That Kulinism existed in the eleventh century A.D. is also traced by Y.M. Ray who points out that the Cikitsasamgraha of Cakrapanidatta says that the author's father Narayanaadatta was the patra and Rasavatadhikarin (Superintendent of the culinary department) of the Gauda king (identified by a 16th century commentator with Nayapala (c. 1035 - 50 A.D.); he was a kulina of the Lodhraval family (i.e. the Lodhraval branch of the Dattas among the Vaidyas).

That Kulinism existed in the eighth century A.D. has also been shown by D.C. Sircar who mentions a Brahmana named Vandya - Devabhadra from an eighth century inscription of Orissa. According to Sircar, the word Vandya in the name of the Brahmana (possibly of Bengal) seems to be connected with the growth of the cognomen Vandy - Opadhyaya in a section of the Raqhiya Brahmanas of the kulina class.

Long before Sircar, F.E. Pargiter traced the existence of Kulinism even in the sixth century A.D. He pointed out that a Brahmana named Vrtec-Cattta appears in the Faridpur

3. Loc.cit.
inscription of king Dharmaditya (6th century A.D.)\textsuperscript{1}.

According to him\textsuperscript{2}, Cāṭṭa is apparently the same as the Cāṭopādhyāya, a cognomen of the kulīna Brāhmaṇa of the Rādhīya section of the Brāhmaṇas.

In tracing the existence of Kulinism further back, Y.M. Ray\textsuperscript{3} also argues that Manu\textsuperscript{4} regarded a good family as the most important from the eugenic point of view. He says one who desires to raise his family to excellence and eminence should always enter into marriage alliances with the best and avoid alliances with the low. The Āśvalāyana Gṛhyāṭra\textsuperscript{5} places kula (a good family) in the forefront in the case of both the bride and bridegroom. Yama\textsuperscript{6} also refers to good family (kula). According to the Āpastamba Gṛhyāṭra\textsuperscript{7}, the accomplishment of a bridegroom must be made with good family.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{1.} Loc.cit.
\item \textbf{2.} Loc.cit.
\item \textbf{4.} Chap. 4, verses 244-45.
\item \textbf{5.} 1.5.1.
\item \textbf{6.} Op.cit., cited in Sm.C. Chap 1, p.78.
\item \textbf{7.} 3. 20.
\end{itemize}
Anandabhaṭṭa\textsuperscript{1} suggests that Kulinism originated out of the tantric cult. R.K. Chakravarti\textsuperscript{2} observes that Ballālaśena introduced the rank of nobility among the Brāhmaṇas who believed in his tantric cult for establishing a close relation between them and the royal Sena family. He made it a rule that the rank was to be awarded on the basis of nine virtus mentioned in the Buddhist tantric cult. Chakravarti, however, has not cited any evidence in support of his argument and, according to H.P. Sastri\textsuperscript{3}, many Buddhists in the Sena period were converted to the Hindu religion, and for these new converts and adherents some castes and sub castes were organised or reorganised and even new ones were formed. R.C. Majumdar\textsuperscript{4} also believes that there is a close connection between tantricism and Kulinism, although the nature and extent of the relation cannot be determined.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Vallāla-Carita, pp. 8-10.
\item Gauder Itihasa, Pt.I, p. 169.
\item Bharatavarsha, Pt.II, 1346 B.S., p. 372; cf. also Vangiya Kulasastra, R.C. Majumdar, p. 103.
\end{enumerate}
Majumdar¹, however, says that a community named Kaula came to be originated at the influence of the Buddhist tantricism (10th - 12th centuries A.D.), and the people belonging to that class were known as Kaula, or kulīna, and the name of their religion was Kulāgama or Kulāśāstra. Majumdar² refers to the Cāṇḍī tradition³ mentioned above, and also refers to another tradition⁴, according to which Devīvara Vandyopādhyāya obtained the right of offering the order of merit known as Kulinism by worshipping the Kāmākhyā goddess. According to Majumdar⁵, all these traditions seem to indicate the possible relation of tantric cult with Kulinism.

Referring to the Theravāda Buddhist Text in which there is mention of Setthis (Bankers) and Kulaputtas, S.C.Chakravarty⁶ suggests that some connection of these Setthis and Kulaputtas with Kulinism may be traced out.

G.E.Lambourn⁷ suggests that the introduction of Kulinism was an attempt to solve the problem of the social and religious confusion which had arisen in the dominant

¹. Loc.cit.
². Loc.cit.
⁵. Loc.cit.
Aryan ruling classes from their contact with local beliefs, the pressure of Brāhminism reinforced by fresh immigration from the west, and the legacy of the long period of Buddhism.

(3)

PLACE OF ORIGIN

The original home of Kulinism has been located by some scholars in Mithilā (North Bihar) where Harasiṁha or Harisiṁha (c. 1285-1324 A.D.), the last king of the country, is credited by local tradition with the reorganisation of the social system of the said territory\(^1\), just as Ballālasena is credited with a similar achievement in Bengal.

In placing the original home of Kulinism in Mithilā, G.N. Dutt\(^2\) draws our attention to the fact that the author of the Sambandhenirnay\(^3\) describes Ballālasena as having adopted the same time test of 2½ praharas,

The system of Kulinism has its real home in Mithilā and it was imported into Bengal by the Brāhmaṇa scholars who were formerly the students of Maithila scholars.

With regard to the observations of Dutt, further arguments, as made by J.K.Misra, may be mentioned.

(i) The Bengali kulapañjika texts are known after some avowedly Maithila Smṛti Nibabdha authorities on marriages, such as, Harimiśra and Vācaspati Misra.

(ii) The earliest kulaji texts do not date before the latter half of the 15th century and even the genuineness of some early texts is doubtful; while Maithila texts of Pāñjī are expressly dated in the early 14th century.

1. Loc.cit.
(iii) According to N.N. Vasu\textsuperscript{1}, the system of keeping genealogical records among the Kāyasthas in Assam was borrowed from Mithilā. Vasu\textsuperscript{2} thus states, "Kavīndra Patra (like his father who by introducing the custom of keeping genealogical registers had kept an authorised record of the status of the Kāyasthas of Mithilā) reconstructed, on lines similar to those of his ancestor, the Kāyastha community of Kāmarūpa. As in Mithilā, so in Kāmarūpa the Dāsas are regarded as kulīnas, then come the Devas and Dattas in point of honour in a social hierarchy. This order even now obtains among the Kāyasthas of Kāmarūpa."

(iv) According to certain scholars, though Harisimha reorganised society, the Pāṇjīs were known at the time of Nānyadeva (c. 1097 A.D.). Now this date is much earlier than the 'legendary' ascription of Bengal kula jīs to the reign of Ballālasena (12th century A.D.).

(v) The text on which Bengali tradition makes Ballālasena distinguish persons as kulīnas is that of Vācaspatimiśra who flourished in Bengal in about

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] \textit{The Social History of Kāmarūpa}, Vol.II, p. 168.
\item[2.] \textit{Loc.cit.}
\end{itemize}
15th century A.D. and thus further confuses the origin of Bengal Kulinism in 12th century A.D.¹

D.C. Sircar² suggests that the institution of Kulinism in Bengal was partly, if not originally, borrowed from Mithilā. In favour of his suggestion Sircar³ has made the following observations:

(i) There is possibility of identification of the Bengal Ādiśūra with that of the Maithil Vācaspatimīśra's Nyāyakanikā⁴ (9th century A.D.).

(ii) The Maithila Brāhmaṇa families of Gaṅgaulī⁵ mūla-grāma (the same as the gāni of the kulapañjikōs of Bengal) and the Rāḍhiya Kulīna family known as Gaṅg-Opādhyāya (Gaṅguli) seem to be the same.

(iii) How the order of Kulinism and the custom of preserving genealogical traditions or kulapañjīs grew up in Mithilā can, however, be known from the Bangaon inscription⁶ of Vigrahapāla III(eleventh century A.D.),

(iv) In upper class Hindus of Bengal including Sylhet a strong Maithil element is found. The origin only of the Maithil families that migrated in the late medieval period is, however, remembered; earlier migration were apparently completely absorbed in the social groups of Bengal.¹

(v) Pāṇḍudāsa, the patron of Śrīdhara, the author of Nyāyakandali² mentioned above, was the 'headmark of the Kāyastha community (kula)' and flourished in an area (possibly Mithilā) where the Śaka era was popular³.

1. Ibid., p. 54.
3. Ibid., p. 588, Note.