In Śaṅkta literature of India Orissa is well known as Odrapitha. For centuries it was recognised as one of the four great Śaṅkta-pithas\(^1\) of India. Viraja on the bank of the river Vaitaranī at Jajpur, Vimala at Purusottama Puri are the most well-known representations of the cult of Mother Goddess in Orissa. Jajpur, Bhubaneswar and Puri emerged as the centres of Śaṅktism, Saivism and Vaiṣṇavism respectively in course of time. But the whole of Orissa abounds with Śaṅkta shrines and icons ranging from the Gupta period to the modern times. The earliest image of the two-armed Mahiṣamardini Durgā at Jajpur, beautiful sculptural representation of Uma-Mahesvara of Krsna-giri, Bankada and Bhubaneswar, the early Sapta-Mātrkā sculptures of Parāṣurāmesvara and Gaha Ghodar near Titilagarh, are some of the important landmarks in our study of ŚAKTI WORSHIP IN ORISSA. The cult of Stambhesvari represented by the worship of a log of wood or a pillar or a post is yet another significant aspect of the most ancient form of Sakti Worship in Orissa. Epigraphic, iconographic and ethnological evidences indicate

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1. Kālikā Purāṇa Ch.64. 43-45.
the hoary antiquity of this cult which continued to exert overwhelming influence in the socio-religious life of the people of Orissa through ages. Tantricism which became popular in early mediaeval Orissa also deeply influenced Sakti Worship which found vibrant manifestation in Yogini cult with its two great centres at Hirapur and Ranipur.

The present dissertation is primarily a historical study of Sakti Worship in Orissa. It is the first systematic account of the various cults pertaining to Saktism in Orissa. Scholars like J.D. Beglar and Rama Prasad Chand had made pioneering attempts in studying the Yogini images of Ranipur and the Durga image of Kalasapur (now enshrined at Jabipur) respectively. P. Acharya, a student of Rama Prasad Chand also surveyed many interesting Sapta-Mātrkā sculptures of Orissa. The late K.N. Mahapatra discovered the Yogini temple of Hirapur and surveyed a number of Sākta shrines and sculptures of Orissa. In recent times K.C. Panigrahi, K.S. Behera, M.P. Dash, R.K. Sharma and H.C. Das render valuable contributions to the study of Saktism in Orissa, but the studies of these scholars have been more or less fragmentary. Our thesis is the first comprehensive account of the various cults relating to the worship of the Mother Goddess in Orissa from Circa 4th century A.D. to Circa 13th century A.D. In our dissertation we have made fresh interpretations and proposed new
identifications, particularly in our studies in the cult of Stambhesvari and the Yogini cult. In the light of archaeological and literary evidences we have presented the historical survey of Sakti worship in Orissa which in the long run was assimilated in the Jagannatha triad.

In the Chapter One of the thesis we have introduced the subject in the Indian context and also dealt with the epigraphic, sculptural and literary sources for a systematic study of Sakti Worship in Orissa. In Chapter Two of the work we have presented an account of the Saktapithas or the Centres of Sakti worship in Orissa in the light of literary and archaeological evidences. Bhadrak Inscription of the 3rd century A.D. has given us the clue to locate Bhadrakālipītha at Bhadrak where the Mother Goddess was worshipped as Parnadevati at least from the 3rd century A.D. We have for the first time shown in this Chapter in the light of the Banpur copper plate grant of Dharmarāja Srimanabhita that Bhagavatīpītha of Banpur which was the heart of Kohgoda under Sailodbhavas was recognised as a significant Saktapītha of Orissa at least by the 7th century A.D. In Chapter Three of the dissertation we have discussed the tribal origin of the Sakti Worship which began with the worship of a log of wood or a pillar among the tribes like the Pulindas and the Savaras. In the
light of Aryāstava of Khila Harivamsa we have shown how the Mother Goddess was invoked with such appellation as Aпарна and Nagna Savari indicating the non-Aryan element of the cult. In the light of Mukhalingam Ksetra Mahatmya we have further shown that the Savaras who worshipped Madhuka tree from ancient time gradually accepted the same as the representation of Śivalinga as well as the Mother Goddess. The aboriginal Khonds of Ganjam use to worship the Mother Goddess in the form of a wooden pillar, popularly known as Kandhunidevi at Suruda illustrated by us in Fig.No.7. We have also indicated how tree worship of the Jaina pantheon, illustrated by us in Fig.Nos.1 & 2 influence the cult of Stambhesvari of the Gupta period which was popular in the dense forest region of Kalahandi in the 5th century A.D. We have also pointed out that Brahmans, donees and Officers under the Sulkis and Tungas were named as either Khamba or Stambhadeva thereby indicating the cult in which a pillar was worshipped as a deity. We have also for the first time illustrated the Stambhesvari images of Aida (Fig.4) and Deulajhari (Fig.5) near Athmallik where Ranabhaṇja, the devout worshipper of Stambhesvari, ruled in the 10th century A.D.

In Chapter Four while dealing with the anthropomorphic representation of the Mother Goddess we have dealt with the iconographic significance of the earliest
Durgā image of Orissa at Jajpur. The image has not been illustrated as the temple authorities do not accord the necessary permission of the same. However, we have for the first time illustrated another two-armed Durgā image of Jajpur (Fig. No. 8) which belonged to the Gupta period. The traditional Dhyana-sloka of Virajadevi cited by us also justifies the iconographic significance of the deity.

We have also for the first time dealt with the figure of a two-armed Mahiṣa-mardini Durgā depicted in a stone plaque from Prachi Valley (Fig. No. 9) now preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum. The image of eight-armed Mahiṣa-mardini Durgā in the Bhagavati temple at Banpur with mutilated inscription palaeographically assigned to c. 8th century A.D. (Fig. No. 16) has also been illustrated by us for the first time on the present work. This iconographic evidence combined with the epigraphic reference to Bhagavatī in the Banpur plate of Dharmarāja unmistakably indicates that modern Banpur had been recognised as a center of Sakti Worship in Orissa in the epoch of the Sailodbhavas.

In Chapter Five we have dealt with the popularity of the goddess Umā indicated by the nomenclature of Umāvarma, a ruler of Kaliṅga of c. 5th century A.D. In the same Chapter we have pointed out the worship of Umā along with Mahēsvara leading to the cult of Umā-Mahēsvara which was for the first time popularised by the Sailodbhavas in Orissa
We have illustrated the cult by the figures of Uma-Mahesvara from Batesvara (Fig. No. 21) near Pallur, Ganja (Fig. No. 22) near Chhatrapur and Dandisvara (Fig. No. 123) at Kodala in the Ganjam district of Orissa.

In our study of the cult of Sapta-Matrka in Orissa in Chapter Six of the thesis we have for the first time illustrated the sculptural representation of Sapta-Matrka of Ghodar (Fig. No. 34) near Titilagarh in the district of Bolangir. It was K.N. Mahapatra who was the first to notice the sculpture. M.P. Dash considered it to be earliest representation of Sapta-Matrka in Orissa. But we have pointed out in the thesis that Sapta-Matrka panel headed by Ganesa without mouse at the temple of Parasuramesvara is certainly earlier than that of the Ghodar and as such it is the earliest Sapta-Matrka sculpture in Orissan art. The two sets of Sapta-Matrka images noticed at Jajpur were assigned by K.C. Panigrahi as the epoch of the Somavamsis. K.S. Behera too could not decide the chronology of the two sets. But we have proved on the basis of iconographic development that the set of Sapta-Matrka images at Dasasvamedhaghast, Jajpur with tripholiate haloes as its distinctive feature belonged to the epoch of the Somavamsis while the other set of Sapta-Matrka images of the S.D.O. compounds, Jajpur without

2. Sircar, D.C. (ed.)—The Sakti Cult and Tara, Calcutta University, 1967, p. 73
tripholiate haloes belonged to the epoch of the Bhauma-Karas when the cult became very popular in Utkala. We have also differed from M. P. C. Srivastava who in his work Mother Goddess in Indian Art, Archaeology and Literature, assigned the Saptamātrkā images of Markandesvara at Puri to the epoch of the Imperial Gangas. The Saptamātrkā images of Puri are stylistically the same as those of Dasasvamedhaghat of Jajpur.

In Chapter Seven of our work we have made an exhaustive study of the Yoginī cult which was propounded, in our opinion, by Māsyendranātha, was brought from Kamarupa to Utkala by the Bhauma-Karas. The Bhauma queen Tribhuvana Mahādevī compares herself as Kātyāyanī which according to the Brhat Nanda Kishora Purāṇa is the name of one of the Yoginīs. The Yoginī Cult in Orissa which was mainly a contribution of Māsyendranātha and his followers was also influenced by Tāntric Saivism as propounded by the teachers of the line of Kadambaguhāvāsī, Sahajayāna School of Buddhism and the concept of Sāsanadevatas of Jainism. On the light of Praṇatosini Tantra, the tradition of Gouryādi-Sodasa Mātrkās and the authority of Agni Purāṇa (Ch. 146) regarding the emergence of sixty-four Yoginīs (Aṣṭāstaka = 8x8) we have come to the conclusion that the concept of Aṣṭa Mātrkās which
has been powerfully represented in the temple of Vaitāla. Ultimately gave rise to the concept of Sixty-four Yoginis and under the influence of the school of Matsyendranātha, mysterious tantric rituals were practised by its followers for the attainment of psychic power. We have pointed out that in Tantric Buddhism too Yoginis like Dombi and Savari were considered to be the manifestations of Sakti and that in the Jaina pantheon also there flourished such Sasanadevatās as Ajatādevī and Ambikā represented in the Sataghara caves at Khandagiri near Bhubaneswar. We have depicted, the Yoginis of the Yogini temple of Bheraghat and of Yogini Nāmaçvalī. In the light of a suggestion given by Prof. Joanna Williams we have for the first time attempted to group the Yogini images of Hirapur in eight categories of Maatrkaśas. For the first time we have succeeded in identifying a considerable number of Yogini images of Ranipur-Jharial with the Yoginis described in the Skanda Purāṇa. The contributions of the Saivite teachers of the line of Kadambaguhāvāsī particularly those of the Āmadaraka School and the Mattamayūra school has also been highlighted by us. Bhairava cult is a contribution of Tantric Saivism and the Āmadaraka school mainly popularised the cult in which ultimately there emerged Sixty-four Bhairavas. We have proved that corresponding to sixty-four Bhairavas there emerged sixty-four Yoginis who according to Mahābhāgavata were the maid-servants of Kāli at her residence
protected by the Bhairavas. That the Yoginis were closely linked with Bhairavas has been for the first time indicated by us in the reference to the expression "Bhairava-Dākinī" in Jayadratha Yāmala of Brahma Yāmala. We have further pointed out in the context that Kapālinī, the presiding deity of the temple of Vaitāla of the Kaula Kāpālika School is the feminine counterpart of Kapāli, one of the sixty-four Bhairavas. Similarly, the Yogini Bhiśanī No. 75 of the Bheraghat list, is obviously the feminine counterpart of the Bhairava called Bhiśana. These are some of our discoveries and new interpretations, discussed in Chapter Seven of the dissertation.

In the concluding Chapter we have held the view that the Somavamsīs who according to Bhakti Bhāgavata were inspired by the tāntric teacher Bhavadeva, carried the concept of Bhadrāmbika, identified with that of Stambhesvarī, to the Purusottama Kṣetra when they conquered Daksīna Tosali and enshrined the Sapta-Mātrkās at Puri. We have also discussed the iconographic significance of Vimalā, the Sakti of Purusottama Jagannatha according to the Tāntric lore and assigned the icon to the epoch of the Sailodbhavas. Thus in our opinion in the Saktapitha of Purusottama where Vimalā was already adored as Sakti, the Somavamsīs identified her with Bhadrāmbika and thus they presumably introduced the concept of Subhadra in the iconic form of Stambhesvarī. We have concluded with our view that Subhadra essentially a Sakti deity but under strong
Vaisnavite influence by the 13th century A.D. she came to be worshipped as the sister of Kṛṣṇa and Balabhadra. Skanda Purāṇa simply made a compromise by accepting Subhadra as the sister and consort of Kṛṣṇa-Purusottama.

Baran Charan Poddar

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