CHAPTER ONE
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INTRODUCTION

The cult of the Mother Goddess is associated with the most ancient faith of man all over the world. The Divine Mother is considered to be the source of energy or the Sakti itself. In the ancient world from the dawn of civilization Mother Goddess was worshipped in different names. In ancient Egypt she was worshipped as Isis. In Babylonia she was regarded as Istar. In India at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro she was worshipped as the goddess of fertility. The Mother Goddess was invoked, in the Rg Vedic Age as Uṣā, Aditi, Pṛthvī etc. In the Upanisad, she came to be known as Haimavatī Uma and Māyā, the consort of Maheśvara. In the Purānic lore there was ramification of Sāktism and the Mother Goddess was known as Ādisakti, Mahāsakti, Parāsakti, Durgā, Chaṇḍikā, Chaṇḍumā etc. She was also adored as Mahālakṣmi, Mahā-sarasvatī Ichhā-Sakti,

Sakti and Jñāna Sakti. In the early mediaeval period centering round Sakti work, there emerged the system of Tantra in the Agamic literature. The Agamas were generally compiled between the 5th and 8th centuries of the Christian era and the Agamic literature profoundly influenced the tantric world. In the Ananda Lahari of Śaṅkarāchāryya composed in c. 9th century A.D., it was propounded that Śiva became dynamic only in association with Sakti. In the mediaeval period, there emerged several cults centering round the Sakti worship in India. Such cults as the cult of the seven Mothers and the Yogini cult gained popularity among the people at large. Matsyendranātha and his followers popularised the cult of Sixty-Four Yoginis in India.

In eastern India among the leading Śaktapīthas, Virajāpītha on the bank of the river Vaitarani, Puruṣottama Ksetra with Vimala as its presiding goddess at Puri, Jalesvara

5. Ananda Lahari, Vr. I.
7. MBH, Vana Parva XXCV, 6; CHRJ, Vol. IV, Nos. 3 and 4, p. 43; Sircar, D. C.—The Śaktapīthas, p. 19; JRASB, Letters, Vol. XIV, No. 2948.
8. Brhan Nila Tantra, Patala 5, Quoted by Sircar, D. C.—The Śaktapīthas, p. 31 n.
in the Balasore district, and Ekāmra at Bhubanesvara have been mentioned in the Sākta literature as great centers of Śakti worship. Oḍḍrapitha in general corresponding to modern Orissa has been also glorified in the tantric literature as the land of the Mother Goddess. Utkala is also associated with goddess Viraja (Virajaḥau Utkale Khyāta) in the text called Pitā Nirṇaya or Mahāpitha Nirupānām. Although Oḍḍra associated with Kātyāyani and Utkala associated with Viraja, find places in the Sākta literature, almost every nook and corner of Orissa is associated with the Mother Goddess who came to be known in popular tradition as grāmādevata. The Mother Goddess enshrined almost in every village of Orissa was either a pillar or a post or an anthropomorphic representation. Śaktism in Orissa as we have discussed in this dissertation began with the worship of Mother Goddess through the medium of a pillar or post and it was famous as the cult of Stambhesvari. In course of the evolution of Śaktism in Orissa, there emerged several cults like the cult of Mahiṣamardini, Umā-Mahesvara Cult, cult of Ardhanārīśvara.

10. Ibid, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23n, 27, 38, 67.
Sapta-Mātrkā cult, cult of Sixty-four Yoginis and the cult of Ekāhamsā which have embodied in our present study of the Sakti worship in Orissa.

**SOURCES**

Our study of the "History of Sakti worship in Orissa" is based mainly on epigraphical records, temples and sculptures, Sakti literature comprising the Purāṇas and the tántric texts and some traditional anecdotes. The two special Kalinga Edicts<sup>14</sup> of Asoka and the Rock Edict XIII<sup>15</sup> give us a faint idea of the prevalence of Brahmānical Hinduism in Kalinga and the invincible charter of the Aṭavikas<sup>16</sup> who from time immemorial are the worshippers of the Mother Goddess. Hātigumpha inscription<sup>17</sup> of Kharavela throws dim light on the co-existence of the Brahmānical faith along with the faith of the Jainas in Kalinga under the patronage of Kharavela in the 1st century B.C. Bhadrak inscription of Mahārāja Surasarma<sup>18</sup> or Gaṇa<sup>19</sup> is a votive

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15. Ibid.
16. See line 6 of the Rock Edict No.XIII, Ibid.
Prakrit epigraph which gives the definite information about the cult of the Mother Goddess which was popular among the tribal people in the 3rd century A.D.

Our sources for a study of Saktism in Orissa from the Gupta period onwards are relatively numerous. The inscriptions reveal that while the Matharas ruled over Kalinga as great champions of Vaishnavism and Saivism, the Nalas who ruled over South Kosala with similar attitudes and patronage for Vaishnavism and Saivism. However, a very significant epigraphic record which throws light in the beginning of the cult of Stambhesvari in Orissa is the Terasinga copper plate grants of Maharaja Tustikara of the 6th century A.D. The inscription was found in the valley of the river Tel near Belkhandi in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. This record provides the basic information with regard to the primitive tree worship and its identification with the worship of the Mother Goddess through the medium of a log of wood or a wooden pillar or a post made of stone. Other inscriptions which throw light on the Stambhesvari cult in Orissa are the Dhenkanal plate of Jayastambha21, a

number of charters issued by Ranabhanja\textsuperscript{22}, Bonai copper plate grant of Vinita Tunga\textsuperscript{23}, Talcher copper plate grant of Gayāda Tunga\textsuperscript{24}, and the recently discovered copper plate grant of Jammejaya\textsuperscript{25} preserved in Sambalpur University Museum.

For a study of the different phases in the development of Sāktism in Orissa, our principal sources are monumental and sculptural. However, some important inscriptions of the Sailodbhavas, the Bhauma-Karas and the Somavamsis help us as milestones in the proper reconstruction of the growth of Sāktism in Orissa. The Sailodbhavas were devout worshippers of Śiva, but they worshipped Śiva along

\begin{enumerate}
\item[a]{Line 15 of Orissa Museum plate (Regnal year 9)}
\textit{OHRJ, Vol. XI, pp. 118-119.}
\item[b]{Line 19 of the Phulbani plate (Regnal year 9),}
\textit{I.O., Vol. VI, p. 270.}
\item[c]{Line 16 (Singhara) Sonepur Plate, \textit{JBORS, Vol. VI, pp. 481-486.}}
\item[d]{Line 20 of the Patna Museum plates (Regnal year 22),}
\textit{E.I., Vol. XX, pp. 100-104.}
\item[e]{Line 5 of the second plate first side of the Taspaikera Charter, \textit{JBORS, Vol. II (1916), pp. 167-177.}}
\item[f]{Line 18 of the Dasapalla plate, \textit{JBORS, Vol. VI, pp. 266-273.}}
\item[g]{Lines 16-17 of the Baud grant (Regnal year 26),}
\textit{E.I., Vol. XII, pp. 325-328.}
\item[h]{Line 19 of the undated Baud grant, \textit{JBORS, Vol. XX, p. 147.}}
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{OHRJ, Vol. XI, pp. 118-119.}
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{I.O., Vol. VI, p. 270.}
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{JBORS, Vol. VI, pp. 481-486.}
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{E.I., Vol. XX, pp. 100-104.}
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{JBORS, Vol. II (1916), pp. 167-177.}
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{JBORS, Vol. VI, pp. 266-273.}
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{E.I., Vol. XII, pp. 325-328.}
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{JBORS, Vol. XX, p. 147.}

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{OHRJ, Vol. XI, pp. 118-119.}
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{I.O., Vol. VI, p. 270.}
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{JBORS, Vol. VI, pp. 481-486.}
\textsuperscript{25} \textit{E.I., Vol. XX, pp. 100-104.}
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{JBORS, Vol. II (1916), pp. 167-177.}
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{JBORS, Vol. VI, pp. 266-273.}
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{E.I., Vol. XII, pp. 325-328.}
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{JBORS, Vol. XX, p. 147.}
with Pārvatī. For the first time in the History of Orissan inscriptions we find an invocatory verse pertaining to the Divine Couple of Sambhu and Pārvatī in the preamble of the undated Buguda Charter of Mādhavarāja II of the Sailodbhava dynasty. The invocatory verse indicates that in the opinion of the Āchāryas of the Mattamayūra School who influenced the Sailodbhavas and the Early Gaṅgas, Siva and Sakti are inseparable and as such the Divine Mother, Pārvatī is to be worshipped along with Paramesvara. A very important epigraphical record of the Sailodbhavas which throws light on the Sāktapīṭhas of Orissa, is the Banpur copper plate grant of Dharmarāja Srimanābhiṇa made endowments for the deity Bhagavati. Bhagavati is well known to be the presiding deity of Banpur and the present epigraphical record provides beyond doubt that atleast by the 7th century A.D. Bhagavati-pīṭha of Banpur which was the heart of Kongoda was recognised as a significant Sāktapīṭha.

The Bhauma-Karas who ousted the Sailodbhavas from political power were Buddhists in the beginning of the dynastic power and subsequently they embraced Śaivism. Not a single Bhauma ruler embraced Saktism as an independent faith, but the Dhenkanal copper grant of Tribhuvana Mahādevi

worshipper of Chandi although he was a Saivite. Lodhia copper plate grant\textsuperscript{34} and Senakpat inscription\textsuperscript{35} of Mahāśīvagupta Bālārjuna are two important epigraphical records of the Somavamśīs which reveal that the two great Tantric teachers namely Pramathāchārya and Sadāśīvāchārya played roles in popularising the cause of Tantra in South Kosāla which comprised the considerable portion of western Orissa. Somesvara temple inscription\textsuperscript{36} lay on the side of the Yoginī temple at Ranipur–Jharial is a lithic record which reveals that the famous tantric teacher Gaganāśīvāchārya influenced Saktism in South Kosala during his times.

The Imperial Gaṅgas who conquered Utkala in the beginning of the 12th century A.D. were the worshippers of Gokarnesvara Siva from the inception of their rise to political power. But they also worshipped Viṣṇu and Durgā simultaneously. Cholagāndadēva built the great temple of Puruṣottama at Puri and one of his sons is known to have worshipped Chandikā according to a stone inscription\textsuperscript{37} noticed at Ragollu in Andhra Pradesh. Drāksārām temple inscription\textsuperscript{38} describes Anaṅgabhīma III as Puruṣottamaputra.

\textsuperscript{36} Vide Somesvara temple Inscription of Gaganāśīvāchārya E.I., Vol.XXIV, pp.239-43.
\textsuperscript{38} South Indian Inscriptions, Vol.IV, No.1329.
Rudraputra and Durgāputra. These are some of the epigraphic references which enable us to discuss the "History of Sakti worship in Orissa" up to the time when Saktism was assimilated and integrated in the cult of Jagannātha.

Epigraphic sources almost speak to us the prevalence of different cults of Saktism in Orissa, but such references are relatively few when compared with the mass of monumental and sculptural evidences. The image of two-armed Mahiṣamardini Durgā which was discovered from Kalasapur and subsequently installed at Jajpur is the earliest icon of Durgā in Orissa and one of the early images of the cult in India. Iconographic features go a long way in assigning this piece of art to the Gupta period. Four-armed images of Mahiṣamardini Durgā found at Motia in Prachi valley, Mārkandesvara temple at Bhubanesvara; six-armed Durgā noticed at the temple of Parasurāmesvara at Bhubanesvara and at Belkhandi; eight-arm Mahiṣamardini Durgā images in the temple of Bhagavati at Banpur, in the temple of Khijjiṅgesvarī at Khiching, Lingaraja temple compound and at Vaitāla and ten-armed Mahiṣamardini Durgā at Mukhaliṅgam, Pitapura, Lataharana, Nivarana, Niali are some of the important icons which have enable us to fix the chronology of the images in the context of the development of Saktism in Orissa through ages. The image of twenty-armed Mahiṣamardini Durgā from Salebhata now preserved in Sambalpur University Museum is a latest example of the cult of Mahiṣamardini Durgā in Orissa.
Images of Uma-Mahesvara noticed at Krsnagiri near Khallikote in Ganjam district, in the temple of Batesvara near Pallur (Ganjam District), in the temple of Dandisvara at Kodala, in the ruins of Belkhandi are some of the representative sculptures of different periods of the history of Orissa. The images of Ardhanārīśvara at Parasurāmesvara and Simhanātha illustrate the ideology of the identity of Śiva and Śakti which was popular in Orissa in the 7th and the 8th centuries A.D.

Sculptural representation of Sapta-Matrkas in the temple of Parasurāmesvara at Bhubanesvara, at Ghodar near Titilagarh (Bolangir District), in the temple of Vaitāla in Bhubanesvara, at Jajpur (Cuttack district), at Mārkandesvara (Puri) are beautiful examples of the growth and development of the cult of the Divine Mother in Orissa. The Yogini temples of Ranipur-Jharial and Hirapur discovered by J.D. Beglar and K.N. Mohapatra respectively are very important monuments which illustrate the prevalence of Tantricism in Orissa in the 9th and the 10th centuries A.D. A comparative study of the two monuments along with those of the Yogini

temples at Bheraghat, Khajuraho, Coimbatore, Dudhai, Lokhari, has revealed that the cult was popular in different parts of India for the attainment of psychic powers. The Saktta temples of Chaurasi (Cuttack district), Vaitala, Mohini and Gouri at Bhubanesvara, Khichingesvari at Khiching are some of the significant Saktta shrines which give us a beautiful picture of the Saktta architecture in Orissa under the patronage of the Bhauma-Karas and the Somavamsis.

The epigraphic and monumental sources are well supported by a good number of literary texts and traditions for our study of Saktism in Orissa. The Mahabharata is one of the early literary sources throwing light on the Saktaiptiha of Viraja. Vana Parva of Mahabharata gives us a vivid account of the religious importance of Viraja on the bank of the Vaitarani. Among the Puranic texts Brahma Purana gives us an exhaustive account of the story of Viraja.

46. MBH, Vana Parva, XXCV. 6.
47. Brahma Purana, Ch. XIII, Vr. I.
It is, however, a late mediaeval text and as such it refers to most of the shrines of Jajpur. The said Purana also throws light in identifying Ekāhamsā with Subhadra of the Jagannātha triad and refers to the central figure of the shrine of Jagannātha as Subhadra identical with Kātyāyanī. The Skanda Purana (Visnu Khanda) is another important Puranānic text which throws light in identifying Subhadra with the Sakti of Visnu-Krsna as well as with the sister of Kṛṣna. We have utilised the Skanda Purana as a source in identifying the Yoginis mentioned in the Puranānic text with the icons of the Yoginis enshrined at Ranipur-Jharial. Matsya Purana and Vamana Purana also refer to Purusottama Puri as an important Ksetra of ancient India. Kālikā Purana refers to Ṇidra, the seat of the goddess Kātyāyanī and god Jagannātha as one of the four important Saktapithas of India.

48. Ibid.

49. Vide Skanda Purana, Ch. XIX, Vr. 7.


51. "Gayāyam Maṅgalā Nāma Vimalā Purusottama", Vide Matsya Purana, Chapter XXII.

52. OHMJ, Vol. III, p. 16.

53. Vide Kālikā Purana, edited by Panchanana Tarkartha, Ch. 64, p. 410; also vide Sircar, D. C. The Saktapithas, p. 12n.
Ekāmra Purāṇa and Kapila Samhita of the late mediaeval period also give us a vivid account relating to the Śāktapīthas, Viraja and Ekāmra.

Tantric texts of the early mediaeval period also provide us a lot of informations with regard to the significance of the Śāktapīthas of Orissa. Kubjika tantra refers to Viraja as one of the 42 Siddha Pithas and Jñānārṇava Tantra refers to it as one of the fifty Pithas. Brhan Mîla Tantra, Prāṇa Tośni Tantra, Tantrasāra, Piṭha Mînaya are some of the important Tantric texts which throw light on various Śāktapīthas of Orissa. Rudra Yāmala which finds mention in Brahma Yāmala is another important tantric text of the 10th century A.D. which glorifies...

59. Ibid, p. 27.
60. Ibid, pp. 22, 23.
61. Ibid, p. 45.
the tantric importance of Lord Jagannātha. Devī Bhāgavata\(^6\) refers to Virāja as a Sāktapithas and Mahābhāgavata\(^6\) refers to 64 maid servants of Kālī who simply be identified with .

64-Yoginis. Kaula Jhāna Nirṇaya\(^6\) and Akaula Vīra Tantra\(^6\) are two tantric texts attributed to Matsyendranātha which are authoritative texts for a study of the Yogini cult in Orissa. Aṣṭādasapīṭha\(^6\) said to have been written down from the dictation of a Brāhmaṇa of Utkaladesa who was an inhabitant of Jāhajapura on Vaitarani\(^\) refers to Virajā devī as the celebrated Sākta deity of Utkala. Another tantric text entitled Kulārnava Tantra\(^6\) speaks of Kalinga as one of the eighteen Sāktapīṭhas. In addition to these Sanskrit works in Tantra, Oriya Mahābhārata\(^6\) of Sāralā Dasa of the 15th century Bata Avakāśā\(^7\) of Balarāma Dēsa of the 16th century A.D.,

Bengali works like Chaṇḍi Maṅgala\(^7\), and Chaitanya Maṅgala\(^7\) also enable us to find out the importance of the Sāktapīṭhas of Orissa.

64. Kumar, Puspendra., Sakti Cult in Ancient India, p. 144.
65. IHQ, XXXI (1955), No. 4, pp. 362-374.
66. Ibid.
69. Sāralā Mahābhārata -Drona Parva.
Traditions sometimes recorded in literature also help us to corroborate the archaeological evidences in a general way. For example, a tradition as recorded in Skanda Purāṇa that Madhukesaśvāra Śiva linga emerged from the root of a Madhuka tree obviously gives us the clue of the popularity of tree worship among the hill tribes of Kalinga. The primitive tree worship has not only influenced Śaivism, but also Sāktism in India in general and in Orissa in particular. Even now Margosa (Neem) tree is considered to be dwelling place of Thākurāni or Mother Goddess almost in every part of Orissa. This tradition substantially corroborates the rise of Stambhesvāri cult in which Stambha or a wooden pillar or a post is worshipped as the Pratima of the Mother Goddess. Similarly, there is another tradition in Orissa with regard to the manifestations of the Divine Mothers as Sātabhaunī which literally means seven sisters. Madalāpāñji, the temple chronicle of Puri informs us that a king of the Kesārī dynasty called Bhīma Kesārī installed the images of Sātabhaunī near the tank of Markandesvara at Puri. The Sātabhaunīs as recorded in Madalāpāñji are undoubtedly the Sapta-Mātrkās of the Sanskrit literature and the tradition is substantially corroborated by the archaeological evidence of the Sapta-Mātrkā images, iconographically.

73. Madalāpāñji (Oriya), Prāchī Edition, p. 98.
attributed to the Somavāṁsi. In the fitness of thing we are inclined to believe that Bhima Kesāri who enshrined the images of seven sisters as recorded in the Madalapāńji is no other than Bhimaratha of the Somavāṁsi line. Traditions associated with the cult of Jagannātha also indicate that Puruṣottama Kṣetra at one stage was a Śaktapīṭha where the presiding deity was Vimalā. It is no wonder, therefore, that even to-day the Naivedya offered to Jagannātha is considered to be Mahāprasāda only when it is again offered to goddess Vimalā. In accordance with another time honoured custom on the eve of the Navakālevara (the fresh construction of the wooden images of Jagannātha, Balabhadra and Subhadra once in every twelve years) certain devotees in quest of the sacred log of wood for the construction of the images are required to offer their prolonged prayer with prostration in the temple of the Mother Goddess called Maṅgalā whose Injunction determined the issue. Such traditions substantially corroborate in the archaeological and literary evidences in our study in the "History of Sakti worship in Orissa".

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