

## CHAPTER- 2

# GEOMORPHOLOGICAL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF ORISSA

---

### **Geographical Location**

Orissa's geographical location is specified by its extension from 81 27' E to 87 29' E longitudes and 17 45' N to 22 30' N latitudes. Orissa is as big as Ireland in size and it covers an area of 60,135 sq miles, coastal tracts itself covers an area of about 500 Km. It is situated on the south-eastern coast of India and is a part of Peninsular India that shows rocks of the Pre-Cambrian age. Orissa is bounded by the states of West-Bengal on the north-east, Bihar on the north, Chattisgarh on the west, Andhra Pradesh in the south and the Bay of Bengal on the east. The description of geological and geographical features has given in brief to facilitate our understanding of the availability of raw material, associated landscape and impact on the socio-economic conditions.

The state is divided into four geographical regions:

1. Northern plateau.
2. Central river basin
3. Coastal plains
4. Eastern Ghats

**Northern Plateau:** Is an undulating upland intersected by rivers. It is a continuation of the Chhotanagpur plateau of Jharkhand. It consists of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Pallahara sub-division of Dhenkanal district.

**Central River Basin:** Comprises of the important rivers of the state i.e. The Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarini. It falls between the northern plateau and eastern hills.

**Coastal Plains:** It stretches from the Subarnarekha in the north to the Rushikulya in the south. The coastal region is formed by Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga, Baitarini, Brahmani, Mahanadi and Rushikulya rivers. It covers districts of Balasore, Ganjam, Puri which are sandy and on the other hand Cuttack district which is swampy and marshy.

**Eastern Ghats:** These are a series of hill ranges which stretches from the northern border of Orissa through the coastal region of Andhra Pradesh to Nilgiri in the western part of Tamil Nadu. This region comprises of Ganjam, Kalahandi, Khondamal and Koraput districts. (Nanda 1983: 5-8).

The physiographic evolution of the region has been controlled by diastrophism experienced by the region. Certain intervals in the rejuvenation resulting in chemical erosion (with little mechanical erosion) with the formation of laterite and bauxite, Orissa has the biggest bauxite deposit of India. Due to two more periods of rejuvenation, plateau level is stream dissected. These stages of upliftment have affected the entire state and beyond.

The Koraput plateau is disconnected from Ganjam plateau possibly by a couple of grabens (depression of earth's surface between faults) along which Nagavali and Vamsadhara rivers flow. Sabari and sileru rivers and many smaller ones are captured; same is the case with some of the tributaries of Mahanadi above Tel's

Grabens have been responsible for the deposition of Gondwana rocks along the east-west axis from Mahanadi up to Brahmani River. Monadnocks of Khondalites are seen between north of Chilika and Baitarini River and the eastern most exposure is at Assia hills where a regional closure of Eastern Ghats rock is found. Here important Buddhist monuments are located.

North of these rift regions are areas of older metamorphites. In the entire state, river piracy, antecedent drainage (in Gondwana areas), superimposed drainage, entrenchments along meanders and all such fluvial features including erosion surfaces are well developed.

A broad stratigraphy of the region may be summed up as follows:-

Laterite
Younger alluvium

Older alluvium
Baripada beds
Unconformity
Gondwana rocks
Eparchean unconformity
Vindhyan rocks
Unconformity
Kolhan group
Unconformity
Gangpur group and their equivalents
Basic intrusives and traps
Ultra basici intrusion
Granitic intrusions
Iron ore super group and its equivalents
Older Metamorphics and their equivalents (?) position not definite
Unconformity
Other intrusive (Nepheline syenite, Anorthosite, Carbonite, Granite, Pegmatite etc.)
Intrusions of granites (more than one at different times)
Unconformity
Eastern Ghats super group (khondalite-charnockite super group)
Older granite gneisses (basement, later granitised)

(The terms of super group, group, formation etc as per stratigraphic nomenclature is being used to suggest the trend along which the new concepts on stratigraphic classification is seen. These have strict stratigraphic meaning only) (Behuria 1988:62).

The older rocks of Pre-Cambrian time have occupied most of the areas where compact rocks are exposed. The oldest one are supposed to be the granite ones below the Eastern Ghats rock that occupy almost the entire southern part of Orissa up to Brahmani River. These rocks represented by khondalite, charnockite, granite gneisses and migmatite forms a part of the sedimentary- volcanic intrusive complex resting probably on older gneisses which should be regarded as part of the primordial crust of the earth. The khondalite-charnockite sequence is in all probability younger to this as no evidence of the former being younger is available. It is interesting to note that the term 'khondalite' was first used by Walker in the beginning of twentieth century after the hill tribe 'Khond' of Kalahandi where this rock was exposed.

The word charnockite was used by Holland in 1900 after Charnock, the founder of Calcutta whose tombstone was built of this rock, brought from Mt. Thomas hill of Madras city. Both these rocks are highly metamorphosed and have their own peculiar uncommon characters. Khondalite has mainly quartz, feldspar, sillimanite, garnet in variable proportions with or without graphite. Occurrence of khondalite stretches from the Brahmini River discontinuously up to Sri Lanka. It is usually a rusty brown rock due to decomposition of garnets and always wears a much decomposed appearance. Usually they occupy the hill tops and fringed by charnockite on both sides. Its nearest relative is leptynite which is known to be a migmatized khondalite or even migmatized basic granulite free of basics. Charnockite is much more massive and dark coloured. Although khondalite and charnockite were known to be sedimentary and igneous in origin respectively; a greater part of each of them may ultimately be considered to be metamorphosed igneo-sedimentary ones later migmatized.

Exposure of Gondwanas was discovered in Phulbani district in a narrow basin. The Gondwanas indicate glacial conditions which gave place to humid conditions with prolific vegetation and gradually changing over to an arid climate during Triassic period. The Permian-Triassic boundary is a climatologically one which shows evidences of a change from wet climate to dry. There has been a great hiatus in depositional history in Orissa up to the period of Mio-Pliocene in the tertiary time when Baripada Beds were deposited under marine conditions of deposition.

Sediments younger to these rocks are known to be the older and younger alluvium that stretches from north Balasore up to the northern part of Ganjam district where it thins out due to advent of khondalite rocks on the shore-line. While the older alluvium is cut by the river channels in which the younger one is sediment. Certain areas of khondalite outcrops i.e. Assia hill, occur as inliers in the alluvium.

In this tropical region laterite is one of the most important rocks. This rock can change any other rock into its own by the process of lateritisation and any rock i.e. clay, shale, sand-stone, khondalite or granite all will fall to this process and change their appearance to laterite with or without having any ghost structure reminiscent of its past parentage. Laterite is soft when freshly cut from quarry, faces hardness on exposure. On the hill tops of Eastern Ghats it has produced bauxite. It is a typical rock that helps in the identification of erosion surface and thus hill tops with laterite as the cover and with accordance of summit levels are a good combination to support the idea of past erosion surface at a lower level which has later been uplifted and dissected by the rivers and other eroding agencies. The mosaic of laterite usually indicated the rock that has been transformed. Around Bhubaneswar changeover of sand-stone, shale and khondalite to laterite is a very common sight. In all the early monuments of Orissa laterites and locally available stones has been used extensively.

## Political and Religious History of Orissa

### History of Buddhism from Buddha's times to the third Century BCE

Buddhism like Brahmanism and Jainism had a long and glorious career in Orissa and it played a vital role in the socio-religious life of the people of Orissa. Kalinga finds definite expression in the different early Buddhist texts like *Vinayana pitaka*, *Anguttara Nikaya*, *Majjhima Nikaya*, *Buddha Vamsa*, *Dathadhatavamsa*, *Mahagovinda sutanta* and the Buddhist *Jatakas*. But none of the contemporary literary reference states of Buddha's preaching in Orissa, in the later period, Hiuen-Tsang states in *Si-Yu-Ki* that, "There were more than ten Asoka topes at places where the Buddha had preached" (Watters 1905: 193-94).

The Early *Vinaya* texts, *Nikayas* and the *Jatakas* mentions about two merchant brothers of Utkala, named Tapussa (Tapassu) and Bhallika (Bhalliya), are said to be the first two disciples of Lord Buddha after attending the first sermon from the Lord at Gaya. The texts refers that the two brothers were on the way to Majhimadesa with 500 trading carts, where they met Buddha under the *rajayatana* tree on the last day of the seventh week after his enlightenment. They were asked to pay homage to the Buddha by a spirit of their departed relative and when they reached the place they found the Lord very weak due to long meditation without food and water. So, they offered him rice cake and honey and in return the Lord commenced them into his new religion (Bapat 1956: 23).

According to Buddhist literatures like the *Mahavagga* and *Anguttara-Nikaya* Buddha gave eight hands full of his hair to the merchant brothers. They took the hair relic to their city called Asitanjana and a magnificent *chaitya* was constructed for enshrining it (Kern 1896: 22). In the Bheragatha commentary it refers that these two merchant brothers met Buddha at Rajagriha also.

The Ceylonese chronicle *Pujavaliya* refers that these two merchant brothers after their conversion to Buddhism visited Ceylon and they constructed a *chaitya* on the eastern coast of the island. As there was frequent intercourse between the two countries, this incident finds mentioned in some other literature and inscriptions also .

According to a Burmese tradition Tappasu and Bhallika are represented as the inhabitants of the city of Okkalaba (Utkala), who after arriving at the port of Adzeitta (Tamralipta) went to Soowama (suhma), and then they proceeded towards Rajagriha and met the blessed one at Uruvela near Gaya. But there is controversy with the identification of Utkala, for in the traditions of the *Mahasamghika* School, as recorded in the *Lalitvistara* and the *Mahavastu*, Ukkala the home of Tappasu and Bhallika is situated in the Northwest of India. Even Hiuen-Tsang mentions this and mentions two cities north and west of Balkh (Watters 1905:111-12). But one cannot completely rely on the source of information obtained from the Chinese pilgrim as he had visited India in the seventh century CE. The *Lalitvistara* also suffer from obvious mistake in making Ukkala city

(*adhithana*) of the Uttarapatha just like the Burmese tradition, which locates the city of Utkala in the Irrawaddy delta. Therefore, the older accounts such as the *Vinaya* texts and the *Jatakas* are preferred, where in the two merchants are represented as hailing from the country (*Janapada*) of Ukkala, which should be identified with Utkal (Orissa) in the southeast of India.

### **After Buddha's Mahaparinirvana**

The famous Buddhist texts like *Buddhavamsa*, *Mahaparinirvanasutta* and the *Dathadhavamsa* refers to Kalinga, according to them a Buddhist monk named Khema carried Buddha's tooth relic to the far away Kalinga and handed it over to the king of Kalinga, Brahmadata.

The *Dathavamsa* further mentions, "the king made a temple for the tooth-relic, which was adorned with garland of pearls, bedecked with gold, surrounded by the *Kutagaras* (pinnacle house), which was vehicle to heaven and nirvana and which brought about pleasure, and he made a stool for the relic as bright as gems. Thus, Brahmadata placed the tooth-relic on the stool inside the newly built *chaitya* and started worshipping it day and night. Along with him, other kings of Kalinga also started worshipping as a result the place grew prosperously. This episode probably took place during the rule of Asoka after the conquest of Kalinga (Dash 1992:13-17). The monumental *chaitya*, which is believed to have been worshipped by Brahmadata and his successors namely Kasiraja, Sunanda & Guhasiva (Fifth century BCE to third Century CE), has to be archaeologically proven.

Some scholars identify this Dantapura or Dantapuri of ancient times with present Puri. Tradition proclaims that the holy relic of Buddha was preserved in the *Navipadma* of Jagannath (Law 1930:327). From other literary sources it is known that at least three relics of the Lord were brought to Orissa in different periods i.e. hair (*kesasti*), nail (*Nakhasti*) and tooth (*Dantasti*). The finds from Lalitgiri of the relics probably of the Lord as believed by the excavator (Chauley 2004:25-30) strengthens the historicity of the *Datthavamsa* and confirms the claims of historians that Buddhism in Orissa was known during the life time of the Buddha.

### **During the time of Asoka (third century BCE)**

After the demise of the Lord Buddha, Buddhism passed through many phases, during which different sects and sub-sects cropped up. In spite of the differences in the sects, Buddhism during pre-Asokan period managed to develop large missionary activities without any imperial patronage. Since Asoka patronized Buddhism, its popularity spread in India as well as in the neighboring countries.

The unclear history of Buddhism in Kalinga becomes clear during the reign of Asoka. Asoka in his eighth regnal year undertook an expedition to Kalinga. The war, though a victory in some sense, turned to be a turning point in his career. He gave up wars and conquests and became a follower of Buddhism. He confessed that after the Kalinga war there commenced in his mind an ardent desire for the practice of *Dhamma* and for the purpose he mobilized the state machinery. His reign saw an all-round development of Buddhism, and he started propagating *Dhammavijaya*.

Kalinga became the fifth province of the Asokan Empire, with its capital at Tosali. Asoka during his sovereignty had constructed many stupas, *chaityas*, monasteries and excavated caves for the monks to reside. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang is said to have visited the Asokan stupa that he located to the south of the capital of Kalinga, which justifies the above hypothesis. Asoka also got rock edicts engraved at Dhauri as instructions for his officials, for smooth administration and propagation of *Dhamma*, which is amply attested by *Madhaeipeta* inscription of third century CE (Vogel 1929-30: 7&22).

Asoka got another set of these rock-edicts engraved at Jaugada in Ganjam district (Bhandarkar 1925:122). He also inscribed in this rock edict, two special edicts known as special Kalinga edicts to proclaim this principle of *rajadharma* (Barua 1946:98). It is said that Asoka erected a pillar at Bhubaneswar also, which has been converted into a huge *Sivalinga* enshrined in the Bhaskaresvara temple at Bhubaneswar (Fabri 1974:6). Another spectacular example of Asokan Buddhist art is the forepart of a miniature elephant hewn on top of the hillock containing the Asokan edicts at Dhauri. The elephant is believed to be representing Buddha, as the latter is believed to have entered his mother's womb in this form.

Asoka took keen interest for the propagation of Buddhism in Orissa. But at the same time, it is very likely that Asoka did not impose excessive pressure while propagating Buddhism in Kalinga. He had sent Buddhist scholars to Kalinga and he constructed a monastery called Bhojakagirivihara for his brother Tissa later known as Ekavihariya (Mitra 1978:5), who chose Kalinga to be his place of retirement. Dharmarakshita, a great scholar who had spent most of his time preaching in western India spent his last days with Tissa in the Bhojakagiri Monastery (Malasekhara 1960:585).

The discovery of the stupa ruins in the shape of railing pieces (*vedhikas*), lenticular sockets, crossbars (*suchis*) and the coping stones (*usnisas*) from different sites like Tarapur Duburi hill, Janakinagar, Radhanagar, Kaima hill, Dharmasala (in Jajpur, District), Dumduma, Bhaskareswara temple area (Bhubaneswar), Aragarh (in Puri, District); along with the main stupa, containing three sets of the relic caskets from Lalitgiri (District, Cuttack) and the stupa remains from Langudi hill (District, Jajpur) proves the fact that Buddhist establishments started in Orissa in the Pre-Christian era.

The Ceylonese chronicles, states that Emperor Asoka sent a sapling of the *Bodhi* tree in the hands of his daughter Sanghamitra along with eight families from Kalinga to Sinhala. These

families are said to have settled there and played an important role in the spread of *Theravada* doctrine in Ceylon (Das 1977:127). From the above discussion, it is observed that during the Asokan period Hinayana form of Buddhism was very popular in Kalinga, which continued in the post Asokan period also. The period saw erection of large number of stupa, *chaityas* and *viharas* constructed in different part of India due to the growing popularity of Buddhism and Kalinga was not an exception to this. Evidences of constructional activities can be seen at Dantapura, Tosali, Kuruma and Pushpagiri, which were chief centers of Hinayana Buddhism (Sahu 1958:47). Orissa remained a strong hold of Hinayana Buddhism till the rise of Mahayana form of Buddhism and the difference between them became apparent. Even till the advent of the Bhaumakaras (736 CE), Hinayana form of Buddhism was more popular among the people of Orissa (Mishra 1999:131).

### **During Kharavela's Reign**

In the first century CE Kharavela of the Chedi dynasty was ruling Orissa. He was a devout Jaina. He had hewed the caves at Khandagiri and Udaygiri (near Bhubaneswar) for the *Ajivikas*. Being a Jaina he was lenient towards Brahmanism. The Hatigumpha inscription (Banerjee 1997:486-507), datable to first century CE states about this all-embracing attitude of the great Jaina King Kharavela. In the inscription, *Maharaja* Kharavela is described as “the worshipper of all gods and goddesses” (*savapasandpujaka*) as well as “the builder of temples for all gods and goddesses” (Satapathy 2000: 70). (*Savadevajatana samkara karaka*) but probably Buddhism could not gain royal patronage for the time being during his reign.

The history of Orissa from the end of Kharavela's rule till the middle of fourth century CE is not very clear and lack substantive facts at present. The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta (De 1952: 254) mentions that Kalinga was divided into several small principalities in or about 350 CE. But within a few years of Samudragupta's expedition, Matharas established their rule over this area, which roughly falls in between River Mahanadi in the north to river Godavari in the south. The Early Mathara rulers described themselves as '*Paramadaivata*, '*Paramabhatarakapadabhakta*' and '*Pitrapadabhakta*' in their royal charter. But Chandravarman and Nandaprabhanjanavarman used the title '*Paramabhagavata*' in their records. While in the Ningondi grant (Satapathy 2000:71) Prabhanjanavarman of this family styled himself as '*Bhagavatsvami Narayanapadanudhyata*'. Anantavarman calls himself '*Paramamahesvara*' in his Siripuram plates. Thus, Matharas patronized both Vaishnavism and Saivism. From the Ceylonese records it is known that they also patronised Buddhism (Mishra 1984:4)

### **During the time of Sunga's**

The Sungas were followers of Brahmanical Hinduism, which led to Buddhism losing royal patronage during this period. Though, the Buddhist and contemporary literary works records that Pushyamitra Sunga was a religious fanatic and ill-treated the Buddhists. In spite of lack of royal patronage people came forward for the cause of Buddhism. Buddhism had become the religion of the masses. This is known from the large number of donations made by individuals that are recorded on the several monuments constructed or excavated during this phase, i.e. Sanchi, Bharut, Bhaja, Karla, Pitalkhora etc. By this time Buddha first time was depicted in iconic form.

In Orissa, as such no evidence is found of any activity that can be dated to this period as yet. But we find a passing reference in the Buddhist texts that there was some alliance or influence of *Mahasanghikas* in Kalinga region. As it refers that the main center of the *Mahasanghikas* in the eastern region was Vaishali and from there it spread to Magadha, Andhra and went through Kalinga. So, it is inferred that while passing through they might have made a few settlements in Kalinga also. The findings of finger looped/marked terracotta tiles with perforations (for roofs), architectural fragments of pillars with lenticular sockets, *suchis*, half lotus medallion motif in front of the apsidal *chaityagriha*; at Lalitgiri are evidence of Sunga's influence in Orissa. As very few sites are excavated in Orissa, a clear picture of this period is lacking.

### **During the Kushana Period**

In or around first century CE, the Mahayana form of Buddhism began to gain popularity and predominance in the country. Kaniska the Kushan emperor acted as a period of revivalism of royal patronage to Buddhism. It was under his sway Mahayana Buddhism rapidly spread to the north-eastern region of India and also to central and eastern India. The Satavahana were over-powered by the Kushanas, who were Mahayanists. The Kushanas looked upon the Buddha as the living universal Lord savior and started the practice of worshipping him in pantheistic forms. This idea gave birth to various iconographic shapes to Buddha and other Buddhist pantheons. Buddhism experienced an all round development during this phase. The northwest region (Gandhara) witnessed a very high stage of development in a new art form i.e. the Indo-Greek art. It is believed that here for the first time Lord Buddha was represented in iconic form. Contemporary to Gandhara, in Mathura region another school of art came up i.e. the Mathura school of art. The fourth Buddhist council also took place during this period and the result was the coming of a new form of Buddhism that became popular as Mahayana Buddhism (followers of the great vehicle). More people were attracted towards Mahayana form of Buddhism; it gained popularity not only in India but also in central Asia, China, Ceylon, etc.

It is not clear whether the Kushanas had direct supremacy in Orissa. But in the first and second century CE, Orissa also inclined towards the growing popularity of Mahayana Buddhism and Orissa made remarkable contribution in the development of Mahayana Buddhism (Mishra

1999:131). This is evident from the Puri- Kushan coins reported in good numbers from different parts of Orissa (Chauley 2000:445). They are datable to the first-second century CE, and it won't be fair to assume that it was due to the direct rule of the Kushans here. By this time Orissa was well known as a Buddhist center and was frequently visited by pilgrims from far and wide (As it is evident from the chronology found at Lalitgiri and Langudi). Further ancient Orissa was well connected with trade routes with South, Central and Western India (Patnaik 1993:48). So, it can be assumed that the presence of Puri- Kushan coins was the result of both trade and pilgrims (Tripathi 1986:33).

Archaeologically, two evidences have been found that refer to the Kushan influence. The excavations at Lalitgiri (Dist. Jajpur) (Chauley 1999:445) yielded an inscription from the pedestal in front of the *Chaityagriha*. The nature and content of it is not known yet but paleographically it can be dated to first- second century CE. The Shell script is *Brahmi* of Kushan period. Another, evidence is a medallion of the Bodhgaya type found here and the *chaitya* window, designed in the form of a five hooded snake with beautiful coils having twenty-one perforations (Plate-I) establishes the continuation of the monastery during the Kushana period.

Moreover, during excavations at Langudi, a few inscriptions along with railing pillars and lenticular sockets have been found, which together with the finds of Lalitgiri can be dated as contemporary to Bodhgaya and Sanchi. Mention may be made of the ruins of a stupa with railings, *suchi*, coping stone and the exposed stupa at Langudi (Plate- X & XI), Aragarah hill and apsidal *chaityagriha* at Lalitgiri amply attest to their origin to around first-second century CE. Discovery of a few *Yaksha* images, now on display in the State Museum Bhubaneswar is also believed to be the workmanship of Kushana era.

After first century CE the epigraphical document which reveals the Buddhist influence in Orissa is the Bhadrak stone inscription of Maharaja Gana. The inscription refers to some charities granted by a king to a Buddhist *Sramana* of certain *Arya samgha*. This evidently proves the establishment of a Buddhist society, which was under the said *Mahakulapati* and was also aided by the local ruler. The inscription on paleographic grounds can be dated to second-third century CE (Rajguru 1976:2). Whereas the Nagarjunakonda inscription issued in the 14<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Ikshvaku King Virapurushadutta, who ruled in the second half of the third century refers to Sri Lankan monks preaching in Tosali and it is believed they were teaching Hinayana Buddhism (Mitra 1978:6).

### **From the Middle of the fourth Century to the Middle of the fifth Century CE**

During the early part of fourth century CE Mathara kings were ruling Kalinga, they patronized Hinduism. Towards the close of the fifth century CE to the beginning of the sixth century CE, the Gangas ruled Kalinga, who were Saivites (De 1947:136).

The Thera School of Deccan is known to have undertaken missionary activities in Tosali and Palura in Kalinga, along with several other places of India before the third century CE. Palura has been identified by S. Levy with Dantapura, the city of the tooth, on the ground that 'Pallur' which constitutes the first part of the name "Pall" means, "a tooth" and "ur" the other part of it means "a city". Palura has been described as the ancient trading centre of Kalinga, located at the mouth of the river Rishikulya, very close to the port of Gangam by Ptolemy. Ptolemy selected it as one of the bases for the preparation of his map (Sahu 1955:182) This period saw development of large number of magnificent monasteries of the Mahayana sect at places like Tosali, Tamralipti, Jayarampur, *Che-li-ta-lo*, *Pu-si-po-ki-li*, Ratnagiri, Ganiapali and others. These monasteries contributed a lot to the growth and development of Mahayana Buddhism in Orissa (Mishra 1999:132).

### **During the Gupta period**

The Guptas were mainly Vaishnavites. Their reign brought back Brahmanical Hinduism in limelight that was fading due to the popularity of other religious sects. It is evident that Buddhist establishments existed, during the Gupta period which shows that the Gupta's had supremacy over the southern part of Orissa up to the second half of the sixth century CE. After Samudragupta invaded Kosala in the middle of the fourth century CE which resulted to a cultural turmoil, giving rise to Vaishnavism in the conquered territories. Under the patronage of the Guptas and the Vakatakas, Vaishnavism gained a strong hold over South Kosala in the fifth century CE. It is remarkable to note that along with Saivism in the region, Buddhism and Jainism were popular in Pre-Sarabhapuriya period in Kalinga and Kosala (Tiwari 1985:126-29).

The Guptas were tolerant towards other religions. This period marked a new height in Buddhism. But till date, their direct over lordship in this region is not evident, except for the Sumandala copper plate grant (Sircar 1952:79-85) (in Dist. Ganjam) dated to the Gupta year 250 (569 CE). The grant mentions that, the Gupta's had appointed one *Prithivivigraha* as the viceroy of southern part of Orissa and he remained in that position till the second half of the sixth century CE (Patnaik 2000:27).

The Gupta influence at the Buddhist sites is evident, especially on the basis of art and architecture reflecting on the monument and the sculptures. The excavated remains unearthed from

Lalitgiri, Langudi, Udaygiri and Ratnagiri located in Cuttack and Jajpur districts, have provided ample evidences to prove Gupta influence, especially in the execution of the sculptures. Besides, the monastic establishments in these areas were in a flourishing state during this period. Gupta gold coin of the archer type was found from Lalitgiri belonging to Chandragupta II and Gupta *Brahmi* inscription (creed) was found engraved below the bases of three of the votive *stupas* discovered at Lalitgiri and highly stylized well carved pillars with creeper, *kirtimukha* design found in the excavations at Lalitgiri (Chauley 1999:445) attest to this period in Orissa. Further excavations carried out by Sambalpur University under the directorship of N.K.Sahu at Ganiapalli (Bargarh Dist) yielded two Buddha images and a monastic establishment of fifth century CE. One of the images in *dhyana-mudra* bears typical Gupta features. (Patnaik 2000:27).

According to Taranath during the reign of a king named Buddhapaksa, a *vihara* named Ratnagiri was built on a hill near the sea in Orissa. A famous library was maintained there with three sets of Mahayana and Hinayana *Sastras* etc., and there were eight great groups of *dharma* (Religious Schools) with five hundred monks. But the name Buddhapaksa is not mentioned in any other historical record. According to Taranath he was the king of Varanasi who flourished before Harsha (606-46 CE) long before the Pala king Gopala (750-70 CE).

Nalinatksha Dutt (Sahu 1958: vii) opines that Buddhapaksha was the nick-name of the Gupta king Narasimhagupta Baladitya (early sixth century CE), a name given to him by the Buddhists as a patron of Buddhism and an enemy of the Hunas who were anti-Buddhists. And the earliest inscription found at the site recording the *Pratityasamutpadasutra* occasionally combined with the Buddhist creed found from within a stupa can be paleographically dated to the later part of the Gupta period (Donaldson 2001:3).

The stupa standing on the highest prominence of the Ratnagiri hill was built on the ruins of an earlier structure belonging to the Gupta period. This is proved by the discovery of a stone slab from the debris near the stupa. This slab contains the Buddhist creed *Pratitya samutpada sutta*, which is inscribed in the characters of the Gupta period. This slab is now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The fragment probably dates to the sixth century CE (Mukherjee 1984:1-2).

A number of copper plate grants have come to light, that were issued by the local rulers from different parts of ancient Kalinga during the Gupta period; which mention about construction of *viharas*, donations for construction and repair works of monasteries and donations to Buddhist institutions for fulfilling the day-to-day needs (Sahu 1958).

Jayrampur copper plate of *Maharajadhiraja* Gopchandra datable to the fifth-sixth century CE, states that Achyuta who was a subordinate king, granted a village named Svetabalika within the ancient district of Dandabhukti to the Mahayanist *Bhikshu-sangha* for construction of a *vihara* at Bodhipadraka (Jayrampur) in favour of Arya-Avalokitesvara, for performing the ceremonial

worship by providing the required materials like *bali, charu, gandha, puspa, pradipa etc.*, and for meeting the necessities of the Arya-Sangha like food, bed, seat, sick-diet, medicine and cleaning arrangements (Sahu, Mishra & Sahu 1991). This statement proves that Buddhist establishment existed at Jayarampur prior to the issue of the grant. It further reveals about the life of the students residing in the Buddhist monasteries, who, other than Buddhist philosophy, also studied *Vedas* and *Smiriti-sastras* (Bandyopadhyay 2004:5). This thoroughly speaks about the religious sects existing during that period.

### **History of Buddhism from sixth Century CE to the tenth Century CE**

Very little information is available about Buddhism between the later part of the sixth and the early part of the seventh century CE. This could be due to the unstable political situation of the country on the fall of the Gupta Empire. According to the Kanas (Puri district) copper plate grant, dated to Gupta 280 i.e. 569-600 CE (Sircar 1949-50: 328), the post-Gupta period saw the growth and development of Mahayana Buddhism in Orissa; during this period southern part of Tosali was ruled by Lokavigraha who is believed to be the successor of Pritivivigraha of *Sumandala* charter. At the same time contemporary to Lokavigraha were the Manas who were ruling over Northern Tosali.

These territories were conquered by King Sasanka of Karnasuvarna in 610 CE who appointed a governor named Somadatta to rule Utkala and Dandabhukti. The religious harmony that existed among the various religious sects was disrupted by Sasanka.

*Ekamra Purana*, speaks of a prolonged conflict between Saivism and Buddhism. By the middle of sixth century CE, Saivism appeared to have acquired greater hold than Buddhism (Pradhan 1984:167). The Lakulisha cult became so popular in Ekamrakshetra that the so called Asokan pillar was chiseled to give the look of a *Sivalinga* by adding a *Yonipitha* around the pillar, installed within the Bhaskaresvara temple in Bhubaneswar. In course of time by seventh century CE, the Mahayanic faith became the religion of a limited minority and remained confined within the monasteries (Sahu 1958:53-54).

### **During the time of Harshavardhan**

Conflict and vandalism between sects within Buddhism (Hinayana and Mahayana sects) and of Buddhism with other religious sects continued up till 643 CE, when Harshavardhan conquered Orissa, which included Utkala and Kangoda and for its administration appointed a governor. During the visit of Harsha, Hinayanism was more popular in Orissa. Hiuen-Tsang conforms that, "The Hinayanists of Orissa were very strict and could not stand the Mahayanists, they compared them with *Kapalikas*, and for forgetting the dictum of the teacher. They used to attack violently the neo-Buddhists".

After his invasion of Kangoda in 643 CE, when Harsha returned to Orissa, the Hinayana priest was not very happy to hear that the king built a *vihara* of brass close to the Nalanda convent. The priest presented a treatise composed by Prajna Gupta in seven hundred *slokas* and openly challenged for a debate between both the sects. It is believed that *Acharya* Silabhadra the Chancellor of Nalanda convent deputed four great scholars i.e Sagaramati, Prajnarasmi, Simharasmi and Hiuen-Tsang to go to Orissa in order to contest the Hinayanists of that country, at which all of them except the Chinese pilgrim expressed an unusual fear and nervousness about the outcome of the contest (Beal 1911:159). It is stated that although Hiuen-Tsang consoled and encouraged his three friends, he himself found the treatise of *Prajanaparamita* a hard nut to crack. This certainly reveals the inefficiency and fear of the Nalanda philosophers to face the Hinayana monks of Kangoda (Das 1978: 144). This fear of the Nalanda Philosophers to face the Hinayanists of Orissa reveals the sign of canker that had started within Mahayana by the seventh century CE (Sahu 1955:31). It is not known whether this religious conference was held or not, but it is obvious that there was a clash at that time between ideas and ideals of these two schools of Buddhism (Donaldson 2000:5).

### **Accounts of Hiuen-Tsang on Buddhism in Orissa**

Hiuen-Tsang is said to have visited Orissa in about 639 CE. He has given a detailed description on the condition of Buddhism in the middle of the seventh century CE in Orissa. He visited almost all the important sites in Orissa but for some reason, he is mum about the establishments or art and iconography of these Buddhist monasteries (Beal 1911:205). From his accounts it is proven that even in the middle of the seventh century CE; stupas were worshipped with all associated religious ceremonies.

In his itinerary *Si-Yu-Ki*, ancient Orissa comprised of three regions i.e. Odra (*Wu(U)-t'u*), Kangoda (*Kung-yu-t'o*) and Kalinga (*Ka-leng-ka*). Odra was the northern most of the three, which includes the modern districts of Midnapore, Balasore, Cuttack and Puri; north of the marshes along the northern edge of Chilka Lake. Kangoda started from the south of these marshes. And Kalinga probably extended from the southern boundary of Kangoda comprising of the modern districts of Ganjam and Vishakapatnam up to River Godavari (Banerji 1931:141) Amongst these three principalities, Buddhism was popular in the country of *Wu-t'u* i.e. Odra.

There were above one hundred Buddhist monasteries of Mahayanist sect. There was more than ten Asoka topes at places where the Buddha had preached. In the south-west of the country was the *Pu-sie-p'o-k'i-li* monastery in a mountain; the stone tope of the monastery exhibited supernatural lights and other miracles, sunshades placed by worshippers on it between the dome and the *amalaka* remained there like needles held by a magnet. To the northeast of this tope in a hill-monastery was another tope like the preceding in marvels.

*Pu-sie-p'o-k'i-li* or Puspagiri-vihara was an important Buddhist establishment in Odra. It is likely that this *vihara* is one and the same Puphagiri (Puspagiri) mentioned in the Nagarjunakonda inscription of Ikshvaku King *Sri Vira Purusha Dutta* datable to the third century CE (Vogel 1929-30: 21). From this inscription it is known that religious donations were made by *Upasika* Bodhisiri at various places including erection of a stone *mandapa* at Puphagiri (Mitra 1978:11). Puspagiri-*vihara* has not as yet been identified though various scholars have suggested Udayagiri or Lalitagiri or all the three i.e.; Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udaygiri combined formed a university complex where Buddhism was preached (Panigrahi 1961:33, Chanda 1933:6) or somewhere in the modern Phulbani-Ghumsur region (Sahu 1958:50). Pushpagiri was also regarded as a great centre of learning like Nalanda and Vikramasila. The reference of a monk named Prajana, who had come to study yoga philosophy after eighteen years of rigorous study at the famous Nalanda University to Pushpagiri monastery indicates that it was an important centre of learning (Chandra 1954:76).

Hiuen-Tsang also mentions about *Che-li-ta-lo*, a city on the south-east frontier of *Wu-tu* (Odra) on the border of the ocean, it was also an important sea port. The city's geographical location was strong and it contained many rare commodities. Outside it were five monasteries close together, of lofty structure and with very artistic images. From Odra Hiuen-Tsang visited *Kong-U-T'o* (Kangoda) in the South-west of Odra, which was twelve *li* away and the route was through deep forests. Kangoda was thousand *li* in circuit and its capital was twenty *li* round. The people here respected the teachings of the Hindus and Jainas and did not believe in the law of Buddha. There were some hundred *Deva* temples, which makes it clear that in this area Buddhism was not that popular.

The Kangoda region as mentioned above has been identified as the area lying between Puri and Ganjam. From Kangoda, the pilgrim proceeded further to south-west and after travelling for one thousand to fifteen hundred *li* through vast deserts, jungles and forests he reached the country of *Kie-Ling-Kia* (Kalinga). After discussing in short of the people there he mentions that there are ten *Sangharamas*, with five hundred students studying the great vehicle according to the teachings of *Sthavira* School. Thus, from the descriptions of Hiuen-Tsang it is clear that in seventh century CE, Mahayana form of Buddhism was more or less in a flourishing state. From the *Gandhavyuha*, it is evident that Mahayana was preached in Tosali from as early as the fourth century CE. According to Hiuen-Tsang's accounts, Jainism was in a better position than Buddhism in Kangoda and Kalinga.

### **During the Sailodbhavas**

After the death of Harshavardhan, many independent rulers came up, one such was the Sailodbhavas, who rose to power ruled in Kangoda from 550 CE to 736 CE and they had their

sway up to the river Mahanadi. The rulers of this dynasty were mainly followers of Brahmanical Hinduism and devout worshippers of Lord Siva.

An inscription was found from Padampur (Koraput Distt. Orissa), which reads as: “*Sri Chandrabkhabhadrakhan Dharmmakirtti*” (Sircar 1951-52: 258). The inscription can be ascribed to the seventh century CE. Dharmakirti is a Buddhist philosopher and during this period Udyotakara a great Brahmanical philosopher flourished in India. Dharmakirtti has criticized Udyotakara in his *Nayayavinda* and Udyotakara has criticized Dharmakirti in his *Vadanyaya*. It is really astonishing that while Dharmakirti of the Mahayana school was most worshipped by the Lamas of Tibet; but his influence was strictly checked by the Sailodbhavas in Kangoda. This indicates that the Sailodbhavas were staunch followers of Brahmanism and succeeded in keeping the country free of Buddhist influence (Behera 1982:76-77). This view is based upon the information given by Hiuen-Tsang; he did not find even a single Buddhist monastery in Kongoda region during his visit. During Hiuen-Tsang's visit Madhavaraja II (610-655 CE) was the ruler of Kongodamandala (Behera 1982:80) and he had accepted the over lordship of Sasanka, the king of Karnasuvarna. According to *Aryamanjusiri Mulakalpa* (De 1953:38-39) Sasanka was an arch enemy of Buddhism and a great patron of Saivism and so during his reign it is said that he not only subjugated Kongoda but also kept it free from Buddhism by using his influence over Sailodbhava Kings (Satapathy 2000:73). Madhavraja II of Sailodbhava dynasty faithfully adhered to the same religious policy of Sasanka.

It is believed that the Sailenderas of Suvarnavipa were the Sailodbhavas who being hard pressed between the Bhaumas of Utkala and Gangas of Kalinga migrated to Malayasia. The Mahayana Buddhist art of the Sailenderas of Java has strong affinities with the Early Medieval Orissan Art. It is also believed that during this period the mature art form of Orissa travelled to Java. P. Mukherjee has remarked in his book:

“The Buddhist images of Ratnagiri are the products of a mature art, which spread to Java during the rule of the Sailendera king who belonged to the Sailodbhava Dynasty of Kangoda. There are striking similarities between the images found in Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udaygiri and those of Buddha and Bodhisattva of Borobudur in Java. Both are distinguished by the same clarity and severity of concept, and the same spiritual zeal”.

### **During the Bhaumakara's reign**

The Bhaumakara's ruled over an extensive part of Orissa, stretching from the modern districts of Balasore, Cuttack, Puri, Dhenkanal, to parts of Ganjam, Phulbani and Keonjhar. This period (736 to 910 CE) saw tremendous all round growth of Buddhism in Orissa. During this period magnificent monastery adorned with superb images of Buddha, Bodhisattva's and their

emancipations developed throughout the empire and Orissa became a great centre of Mahayana Buddhism. Apart from the Mahayana Buddhism, another important form of Buddhism came up called Tantric Buddhism, which is popularly known as Vajrayana cult, also received due patronage from the Buddhist Bhaumakara Kings and reached the zenith of its development during this period in Orissa (Panigrahi 1961:133). They gave royal patronage and made Buddhism as a part of state religion. The Bhauma kings like Asoka appointed top ranking religious officers who were designated as *Mahamandalacharya* and *Paramaguru* to take care of the religious matters in the country (Levi 1919-20: 363-64).

The Bhaumakara rulers were devout Buddhists, the family chief named Kshemankara who was also known as Lakshminikara used the epithet *Parmaupasaka* (a Buddhist) (Sircar 1947:103). From the Neulpur copper-plate of Subhakaradeva I, it is known that the first three rulers of the Bhaumakara dynasty used titles like *Paramopasaka* Kshemarikaradeva, *Parmatathagatha* Sivakaradeva I and *Parmasaugata* Subhakaradeva I (Banerji 1919-20: 1-8).

From the Tervandia copper-plate of Subhakaradeva II it is known that Subhakaradeva I was a Buddhist (Sircar 1949-50: 212). In spite of being a Buddhist we find in the seal of Subhakaradeva I, a figure of Bull and the mount of Lord Siva (Joshi 1979:202). It is also known that the fourth Bhauma ruler Sivakaradeva II is a *Saugatasraya*, who was a *Parmasaugata*. The Bhaumakaras also set unusual examples of religious tolerance and co-existence, for in their family some were devout Buddhists on the other hand some were patrons of Vaishnavism and Saivism. There are even instances when the husband followed one religion and wife patronized another.

The Bhauma rulers, who were not Buddhist also made land grants for maintenance of Buddhist establishments. In two Talcher charters of Sivakaradeva III dated to the year 149 of the Bhauma era (885 CE) records that though Sivakaradeva III professed the epithet of *Paramamahesvara*, he granted two villages for meeting the expenses of the maintenance of the Buddhist temple dedicated to god Buddhahattraka in Jayasrama *vihara* (Donaldson 2001:7). The Baudh copper-plate (DE 1951-52:216) of Tribhuvana Mahadevi-II, issued in 158 year of Bhaumakara era, records the erection of huge stone *viharas* by Subhakaradeva-I.

The Bhauma period is memorable for it was the period that saw the fusion of different cults and sects. Buddhism, Saivism, Vaishnavism and Saktism seem to have lost their separate entities and were bind together into a mixed form of religion. As a result this period brought into prominent relief the reciprocal influence of different religions upon one another (Das 1978:156). Although most of the Bhauma rulers were Buddhist, yet almost all of them believed, encouraged and practised *Varnasrama* system and made donations to Brahmins (Subudhi 1978:121).

The Dhenkanal copper-plate of Tribhuvana Mahadevi I states that, “The Bhauma Kings whole heartedly spend the treasures of their vast kingdom on religious works in order to enlighten their country and others, who decorated the earth by construction in unbroken continuity of various temples, *mathas*, monasteries and sanctuaries, which were like staircase to ascend the city of Purandara” (Donaldson 2001:7, Satapathy 2000:33). During this period beautiful sculptures of the Mahayana pantheons were carved, which is evident from the large number of sculptures found in the ruins of Ratnagiri, Udaygiri and Lalitgiri.

Sivakara I is said to have sent a mission to Te-tsang (in 795 CE), the Emperor of China to present him the autographed manuscript *Gandhavyuha*, the last section of the Buddhist treatise *Avatamsaka* dealing with the practice of *yoga*, of *Buddhisahava Samantabhadra*. For this work Prajana, a scholar on Mahayana was instructed (Das 1978:147). Prajana had studied and acquired knowledge in north India and in Madhyades, he resided in Nalanda and visited many sacred places. After eighteen years of learning, he settled in a monastery in Orissa to study *yoga*. He next moved to China, where in 788 CE he made a translation of the (*Mahayanabodhi*) *Sat-paramita-sutra*. In the Chinese annals also we get reference to this incident. It states that, “in 795 CE the Chinese emperor Te-tsang received as a token of homage an autograph manuscript addressed to him by the king of *Wu-Cha* (Odra or Orissa) in southern India who were the followers of Mahayana Buddhism and whose name, translated into Chinese was “the fortunate monarch who does what is pure, the lion” (Sircar 1947:104).

According to Chinese sources a former king of Odra named Subhakarasingha, is credited for introducing Tantrayana Buddhism in China at the beginning of the eighth century. He arrived at the Chinese capital in 716 CE at the invitation of T'ang-Hsuan-tsung, where he was welcomed as a renowned monk and was given the title of “Teacher of the Country”. He had taken with him numerous texts which included the *Mahavairocanaabhisambodhi*, which he translated into Chinese in 725 CE, and an iconographic copybook by his own hand, of the deities for the *mandalas* of the *Sarvatathagata-tattvasamgraha*, the latter is now surviving in Japan and is known as the *Gobushinkan*.

Mahayana Buddhism could not maintain its popularity for a long time in Orissa. When various elements of faith, manifold ceremonies, rights and rituals as well as mystic practices like *mudras*, *mandalas*, *abhiseka*, *samadhi*, *mantras* etc were incorporated into Mahayana Buddhism it lost its established ideals and moral values and consequently lost its paramount position in the society (Majumdar 1966:406). In due course of time Mahayana Buddhism got divided into two distinct schools known as *Mantrayana* and *Paramitayana*. The *Mantrayana* later on developed as the Tantric Buddhism or Vajrayana cult (Panigrahi 1981:133). Later on the Vajrayana cult which originated in Uddiyana spread to other countries like Tibet, Nepal and China (Das 1981:6). As in

most of the centres in Orissa, by about ninth century CE the Mahayana doctrine gradually transformed itself into Vajrayana. With the rise of Mahayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism under the patronage of the Bhaumakara kings, a large number of religious institutions developed in different parts of Orissa i.e. Jajpur, Ratnagiri, Khadipada, Ayodhya, Kaupari, Chauduar, Banasvarnasi, Banpur, Boudh, Lalitgiri, Udaygiri, Talcher, etc. The overwhelming number of such images found from different parts of the state proves that Vajrayana found the most favoured environment and conditions for growth, in the land of Orissa; which also played a significant part in the development of the new code of belief later.

From the above discussion it is proved that Buddhism both in Mahayana and Vajrayana form accomplished great progress and prosperity under the patronage of the Bhaumakara kings. The Bhauma rule can therefore be rightly called as the most remarkable period in the history of Buddhism in Orissa. The Bhauma rule came to an end by the middle of the tenth century CE and with the decline of the Bhaumakaras, Buddhism in Orissa also suffered.

#### **During the Somavamsis's**

The Somavamsi rulers came to power in the third quarter of tenth century CE (Sahu, Mishra & Sahu 1991:129). They ruled almost all over the area ruled by the Bhaumakara. The Somavamsi were mostly followers of Saivism and Vaishnavism and this period saw the consistency of the Kalinga temple architecture. Though they were followers of Brahmanical Hinduism but at the same time they showed religious tolerance towards other sects. Among the Somavamsi rulers, Balurjana Mahasivagupta, the last great ruler of the early branch of this dynasty was a great patron of Buddhism (Basak 1935-36:120-21, Dikshit 1955-56: 197-98) though a Saivite in religion he showed great respect to Buddhism and made very liberal land grants to Buddhist monks and monasteries. The Sirpur stone inscription praises the "lotus" feet of the *Saugata* (Buddha) and records the construction of a monastery by a *Bhikshu* named Ananda Prabha during the reign of Balarjuna as well as the establishment of a *attara* (feeding house) for the monks residing in the monastery and for the upkeep of that a white rice field was given together with the supplementary crops grown in it. He had also donated a *vihara* to Buddhist nuns. He is said to have constructed many Buddhist monasteries at Sripur and revival of Mahayana Buddhism was the most outstanding feature of his reign.

Banpur has yielded large number of Buddhist bronze images, and a copper plate of the Somavamsi ruler Indraratha's has also been discovered. Indraratha had made a land grant to a female Buddhist deity called Khadiravani Bhattaraka of Kangodamandala, Mitra has identified this goddess with a Buddhist Tara image (1978:4). Moreover, their patronage to Buddhism is also known from the gift of the village by Karnadeva to Karourasri hailing from Solampur *mahavihara* of Utkaladesa, which has been identified with a village of the same name near Jajpur on the bank of

the river Baitarani. It was an important Buddhist centre since the time of the Bhaumakaras and therefore it is presumed that the lady, to whom the village was granted, was a Buddhist. Thus, it is apparent that the Somavamsis followed a policy of reconciliation towards Buddhism. During this period it was the Vajrayana form of Buddhism that gained popularity and flourished throughout the kingdom.

It is known from the Achutrajpur (Banpur) copper-plate charter of Indraratha (first quarter of the eleventh century CE) that the king granted a village to bear the cost towards the rituals and offerings to goddess Khadiravani Bhattarika (Tara), this proves that by the first half of the tenth century CE the worship of female goddess came to prominence (Mitra 1980:214). Towards the end of the tenth century CE Kalachakrayana an offshoot of Vajrayana, was introduced in Orissa. From Tibetan Buddhist sources it appears that in Orissa, particularly the institution of Ratnagiri, played a significant role in the propagation of the Kalachakra-tantra.

The Ratnagiri copper plate Grant dated to the end of eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century CE records the grant of a village in favour of *Rani* Karpurasri who hailed from Solampura *Mahavihara*. She was a lay devotee and spent her last years at Ratnagiri *Mahavihara*. So, it is presumed that the grant was for her to meet her day-to-day requirements or on her insistence to the monastery for its upkeep.

### **Buddhism under the Ganga's**

After the Somavamsis's Buddhism was in a declining phase. The successors of the Somavamsis were the Gangas in the second decade of the twelfth century CE and they ruled till the fifteenth century CE. The Korni plates of Chodagangadeva dated to Saka year 1034 (1112 CE) reveal that he re-established the Lord of Utkala who is identified with Karnadeva. This speaks about the occupation of Utkala by the Gangas by 1112 CE (Sahu, Mishra & Sahu 1991:186). Not much is known about the state of Buddhism in Orissa during this phase. In one reference about Chodaganga's rein, it is stated that he was a Saivite before his conquest of Utkala but later in about 1112 CE he changed his religion and embraced Vaishnavism. He is also credited for bringing in accord between the Buddhists and Brahmans of Orissa. He was not only a popular king among the Hindus but was equally famous in the Buddhist world. This is attested to by dint of his entering in to a matrimonial alliance with the Buddhist King of Sri Lanka (Mishra 1971:40-41).

But on the basis of evidences and data available it is proved that Buddhism was not in a very good state of affairs. In one instance, a tradition recorded in the *Mandalapanji* states that Madana Mahadeva (Rajarajesvaradeva), the successor of Kamadeva is said to have drove away the Buddhists residing in the caves of Sara, Pamra, Bindhyesvari, Banivakrisvara, Yamunajhadapada, Aragada and Dhauli hills (Dey 1958:44). But from the excavated remains at Ratnagiri and the

scattered Buddhist remains at different Buddhist sites, it is seen that the religion was not much affected during the rule of the Gangas. Though no royal patronage may have been extended to the Buddhist but it kept getting local patronage from the traders and local devotees. For in the excavations at Ratnagiri, from within a stupa a Ganga *fanam* was found (Mitra 1978:19).

During the Muslim invasion in Northern and Eastern India, Orissa had become a refuge for the Buddhist, in the Jayashram *Vihara* of Jagati Village and Jagadal *Vihar* of North Orissa, which were important Mahayana centers from the ninth to the twelfth century CE. Many Buddhist mendicants moved in to Orissa when Bakhtiyar Khilji attacked Nalanda, Vikramshila and Dantapuri; like Mahakar Gupta, teacher of *Nikayas*, Bibhuti Chandra, teacher in Philosophy and Subhakar Gupta, teacher of Tantricism (Patra 1991:31-34). From the excavated remains at Ratnagiri, Udaygiri, Lalitgiri and Langudi and surface finds from other sites of the state it is seen that Buddhism was not in an well off condition after the thirteenth century CE (Mitra 1978:19).

### **Buddhism under the Gajapati's**

The Gangs were succeeded by the Gajapatis and during this period Buddhism didn't get any royal patronage and very little information is available about the condition of Buddhism in the state. According to a tradition recorded by A. Sterling (1904:80-81), Prataprudrdeva (1497-1540 CE) of this dynasty, who was inclined towards the Buddhist earlier, turned hostile later under the influence of his queen, who was a ardent supporter of the Brahmins and became a persecutor of the Buddhist. According to the tradition, "a robbery took place in the Kings palace and that Prataprudra Deva being anxious to discover the perpetrators, called together the wise men, both of the Buddhist and the Brahmins, to identify the culprit. The Brahmins failed to tell anything, but the Buddhist's, were able to point out both the offender and the place where the stolen property was concealed.

The king was impressed with the skills of the Buddhists and he became a warm supporter of the Buddhists for a short period as later on under the influence of his queen who was a devout Hindu, convinced him for another formal trial of their relative skills as men of science or rather magicians. Accordingly, a snake was secretly put into an earthen jar, the mouth of which being covered up, the vessel was produced in a great assembly at the palace. Both the parties were then asked what the jar contained. The Buddhist monks correctly diagnosed that it was a snake. But the *Brahmins*, through their magical power, burnt the snake into ashes and said that there were ashes inside the pot and sure enough when opened it was found to contain nothing but ash. This instance entirely changed the kings opinion, and he now became as violent against the Buddhists as he had been before prejudiced in their favour. He not only withdrew his protection but violently expelled the whole sect from his dominion and destroyed all their books except the *pothis* called the Amarsingh and Birsingh".

The Gajapatis during the reign of Prataprudradeva saw the rise of Vaishnavism under Sri Chaitanya, who is said to have left an indefinable mark on the king in general and the country (Orissa) in particular (Mitra 1978:19). It is said that some of these Buddhists were killed and others ran away to the forests and hilly terrains belonging to the vassal chiefs<sup>1</sup>. This tradition also speaks that the followers of Buddha continued to form a sect of importance in this part of India until the beginning of the sixteenth century.

### **Buddhism under Bhoi Dynasty**

Buddhism suffered a lot during the reign of Prataprudra Deva of Gajapati dynasty, but under his successor Mukunda Harichandana of Bhoi dynasty (1559-1568) (Sahu, Mishra & Sahu 1991:253), Buddhist's got some support. According to *Sambhala-lam-yig*, initially Mukundadeva was a follower of Brahmanical Hinduism but later under the influence of his queen became a believer of Buddha. It is also mentioned that poet Balarama Dasa who had left the court of Gajapatis under the displeasure of Prataprudra, returned during the reign of Mukunda Deva (Mitra 1959:99). To show his respect to Buddha and his religion he got erected many Buddhist structures in the country of Odisha. The above is corroborated by the statement of Taranath, who states that Mukandadeva is credited with erecting Buddhist temples and a few monasteries in Odisha. This is further attested to by Sampo-Khampa a Tibetan writer, who wrote in the *Pag-Sam-Jon-Zan* that Buddhists were found in large number residing in Mukandadeva's territories (Vasu 1911:23).

Orissa was untouched by Muslim invasion till 1568 that made this region a new home for Buddhist refugees from the north. Taranath also records the dispersal of the Buddhist scholars to Orissa among other places, after the destruction of the monasteries of Vikramshila and Odantapuri. Taranath also states that his *guru* Buddha Gupta also visited many sacred places like Jagannath and Jharikhanda and the renowned stupa at Hari Bhanja or Mayurbhanj (Mitra 1911:99).

After the death of Mukandadeva in the battle with the Sultan of Bengal, Buddhism declined (1568 CE) and here after there is no evidence of any donation or constructional activity. It is believed that the Buddhists of Orissa like the Buddhists from other parts of India during the Muslim inroads in Orissa fled to Tibet and Himalayan region (Dutta 1962:31-32). Besides the rich heritage left throughout the state in the form of monasteries, stupas, and large number of votive stupas, sculptures and other art remains; it contributed to the development of Orissan architecture and iconography. The Buddhist doctrine of *Sunyata* (void) was subsequently accepted by the Orissan school of Vaishnavism (Pradhan 1984: 165).

---

<sup>1</sup> They had to live secretly among the lower caste people and cultivators. In the process, they had to adopt other ways of life and they lost touch with one another. Some of them lost their identity completely. For a long time they did not care to know the whereabouts of their brethren. Only much later, when there was a feeling of safety, they mobilized themselves to re-establish their identity.

The followers of Buddhism were made to believe that in the *Kali-yuga*, the Buddhists must disguise themselves and worship Hari who had been incarnated as Buddha and must wait patiently till Buddha reappears again (Mitra 1959:102). In *Dharmapujavidhana*, Jagannath is called the Buddha incarnation of Hari. In the sixteenth century Buddhism though in a fallen condition, it was a prevalent and highly influential creed in Orissa, influencing the thoughts and lives, purifying the hearts and minds of many thousands of her neglected children outwardly professing other creeds.

## Tantric Buddhism in Orissa

*Tantra* the word means the worship of *Sakti* or female energy. The female energy is worshipped in conjunction with male energy. The union of male and female energy is the essence of *Tantra* (Vasu 1911:10).

Orissa played an important role in the growth and development of Tantrayana form of Buddhism. Tantrayana was the last phase in Buddhism which came after Mahayana. Tantrayana form of Buddhism was the combined form of Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakrayana. Though, it represented the fine philosophy of Mahayana in principle, it evolved into a deep esoteric practice.

The ordinary followers of Buddhism could not follow the original dictum of Buddhism and it was for them that the *sutras* were abbreviated into *Dharanis*, which is an element of *mantra* and whose literary meaning is that by which something is sustained or kept up (*dharayate anaya iti*) i.e. the mystic syllable capable of keeping up man's religious life which is the synonym of the term *raksa* in Sanskrit.

These *Dharanis* were to be memorized and recited regularly by the lay followers, it was believed they possessed immense power to produce infinite merit in the one recited and confer desired benefits on them. It is seen that many Mahayanic works were added too, with *Dharanis* in the later phase to suit the later trend. Few examples in support of this are: -

*Saddharma-Pundarika* a Mahayanic work of the first century CE contains *Dharanis* which according to De-La-Vallee-Poussin was added later on. Then the *Manjusrimulakalpa* a Mahayanic *Sutra* text was remodeled in to *tantras*. *Suvarna Prabhasa sutra* which was translated by Dharmasena into Chinese in the first half of the fifth century CE is quite *tantric* in its contents, formulae and rites (Maharana 1995:150).

When Tantrism in the form of *Dharanis*, *Mantras*, *Mudras* and *Mandalas* etc made their way into Buddhism, other traditional believes which exists in every society, within every human being in the subconscious i.e. magic, charms and sorceries with their accessories also entered into Buddhism. This resulted in a complete change in the later Mahayana system, thus evolving a new *Yana*, which came to be popularly known as Tantrayana. So it won't be wrong to say that *Tantric* Buddhism evolved and grew within the province of Mahayana. It was in the later phase of

Mahayana that *Tantric* Buddhism had its full-fledged development. Later on the *sexo-yogic* practices, the six kinds of esoteric rituals was known as *abhichara* i.e. intended for the good or evil of anybody, for the purpose of fulfillment of the *Sadhakas* desires. The *abhicharas* are *marana* (killing), *Mohana* (enchanting), *Sthambhana* (paralyzing), *Vidvesana* (envying or rendering harm through animosity), *Ucchatana* (exciting) and *Vasikarana* (subduing) and for its fulfillment the path/help of *Panch-ma-kara* was taken, which are *Madya* (wine), *Mamsa* (meat), *Matsya* (fish), *Mudra* (parched cereal/women) and *Maithuna* (sexual intercourse) (Mahanirvana Tantra: 11).

It was in Orissa that some of the forms of deities of the Vajrayana pantheons took place, which is evident from the hundreds of Vajrayana images found throughout the length and breadth of the state (Sahu 1958:142).

Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakrayana evolved from the full-fledged *Tantric* Buddhism. But scholars are not unanimous about the chronology of these three offshoots of *Tantric* Buddhism. Uddiyana is referred to as the place where these forms evolved, which has been identified by scholars with present Orissa but some scholars associate Uddiyana with the Swat valley in North-west India. The claim that Uddayana was the place of their beginning is further strengthened for all the three persons associated with its propagation i.e. Indrabhuti, Laksmikara and Pitopada respectively are said to have belonged to Uddiyana. They are all historical figures and they chronologically also follow the same sequence. Thus this proves two things, firstly, all three offshoots of Buddhism belonged to Orissa, so Orissa was the birthplace of *Tantric* Buddhism and secondly, Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakrayana evolved in this chronology.

### **Vajrayana form of Buddhism**

Literally the term Vajrayana means “an adamant path or vehicle, but technically it means “*Sunya* vehicle” where *Sunya* is used in a special sense to represent *Vajra*. *Sunya* is the synonym used for *Vajra* for it is firm, sound, unaltered, impenetrable, incombustible and indestructible (Shastri 1927:37). The *sunya* used by the Vajrayanists is not the same *sunya* in essence and to them neither the mind nor the external world bear any reality (Shastri 1927:19). This acuity was not acceptable to the Vajrayanist, for they looked for positive aspect in the *sunyata*. According to the *Sadhanamala*, Vajrayana is described as the ‘path that leads to perfect enlightenment’ which is termed in Sanskrit as *Anuttara Samyaka Sambodhi* (Bhattacharaya: XXIV).

In Vajrayana, instead of the *Dharmayakaya* Buddha, Vajrasattva is generally considered as the Supreme Being and most of the *tantras* start with salutations to the Lord supreme. Along with Vajrasattva, the theory of the five Dhyani Buddhas also evolved. The Dhyani Buddhas belonged to five different families (*kulas*) with their associated *Saktis*. Therefore for the first time, worship of female Goddess in Buddhism was introduced by the Vajrayanists. The Vajrayanists also introduced

into Buddhism a host of other elements including large number of Gods and Goddesses, their *Sadhanas* etc (Bhattacharya 1958: II).

*Siddha* Indrabhuti, the king of Uddiyana is regarded as the profounder of Vajrayana and to his authorship several *Tantric* works of Vajrayanic importance are attributed; of these 23 are believed to have been preserved in the translated pages of Tibetan *Tangyur*. The *Tantric* text *Janasiddhi* composed by him in Sanskrit contains 22 chapters. This work starts with an invocation to Lord Jagannath, where Jagannath is being prayed as Buddha and he is referred to as such in four other verses (Maharana 1995:152).

### **Sahajayana**

The literal meaning of the word *Sahaja* is that which is inborn or originates with the birth. This is substantiated by the *Hevajra Tantra*. S.B.Dasgupta gives both the primary and secondary meaning of the word *Sahaja* when he says, “what is natural is the easiest (Early, straight or plain) and thus *Sahaja*” (Maharana 1995:152). Whereas Sahu (1958:137) defines it “the word *Sahaja* literally means that, which accompanies with the birth and manifests itself as the primitive and natural propensities in man. The path that leads man to realize the truth through satisfying these inborn and fundamental propensities is therefore, the most natural and easiest of all paths and hence, it is called the *Sahaja* path or *Sahajayana*”.

Lakshminkara or Bhagavati Laksmi is regarded as the profounder of Sahajayana. She was the sister of *Siddha* Indrabhuti, who promulgated Vajrayana. She was married to the son of Jalendra, the king of Lankapuri. She is the author of *Advayasiddhi* through which she taught her peculiar and novel doctrines and was very bold in preaching them.

She was against the idol worship of the Vajrayana pantheon along with their innumerable emanations. She insisted that “no suffering, no fasting, no bathing, no purification, no other rules of society are necessary, nor does one have to bow down before the images of gods, which are prepared of wood, stone or mud; one should with concentration offer worship to your own body, where all gods reside (Bhattacharya 1958:77). So the Sahajias believed in the principle of satisfying all the needs of the physical body, which was the abode of all the *tattvas*, *pithas* and deities and without which no *siddha* can be attained. The whole *yogic* process of the *Sahaja* school is found to be based on a highly sublime aspect of sex, where the *Sadhak* is to embrace and indulge with the female (*Sakti*), who are variously addressed as Chandali, Dambi, Savari, Yogini, Nairatma, Sahajagungari, etc. This new concept, had a large following, the followers were called Sahajiyas. It is evident that the *Jananasiddhi* composed by her brother to a great extent influenced her and it is said she was his favourite disciple (Maharana 1958:153).

### **Kalachakrayana**

The word *Kalachakra* literally means the wheel of time. But in Kalachakrayana it has a different meaning. It is made of two words “*Kala*” denoting time, death and destruction and “*Chakra*” meaning wheel, so “*Kalachakra*” is the wheel of destruction and Kalachakrayana means the vehicle for protection against the wheel of destruction. Some scholar describes this as demonology or devil-worship. Though this term is mentioned in the *Tantric* texts many a times but the scholars are unable to explain its nature, as the materials available regarding Kalachakrayana are very few. As a result, it has become difficult to form a complete and definite definition describing the characteristics of this school.

Towards the end of tenth century CE Kalachakrayana, an offshoot of Vajrayana, was introduced into Orissa, it is known from the Tibetan accounts that Orissa, particularly the institution of Ratnagiri played a significant role in the dissemination of *Kalachakra-tantra* (Mitra 1978:18). According to the *Pag-Sam-Zang* on Vajrapani’s instruction *Acharya* Pitopa went to Sambhala by magic and brought the *Kalachakra-tantra* to Ratnagiri Vihara and there he explained the doctrine to *Bhiksu* Abadhutipa, Badhisri and Naropa (Dutta 1944:49). The Blue Annals corroborates the fact that the *Kalachakra-Tantra* was in prevalence in Ratnagiri *Vihara* and it was read there by one *Acharya* Tsi-Lu-Pa (Cheluka). It states that *Acharya* Cheluka was born in Orissa and he studied important Buddhist scriptures at Ratnagiri, Vikramshila and Nalanda (Mitra 1978:78).

The textual evidences are supported by the excavations conducted at Ratnagiri from where a large number of sculptures and votive stupas have been found with the reliefs of the Vajrayana pantheons, inscribed stone slabs, molded terracotta plaques with *dharanis* amply justifies the above statement (Mitra 1978:19).

Thus from the above discussion, it is evident that Ratnagiri *vihara* played an important role in the emergence, development and decimation of the *Kalachakra-tantra*.

With due course of time people were gradually becoming disillusioned, uncomfortable and fed up with the new concepts and tenants creeping up in to Buddhism. Vaishnavism on the other hand, under the guise of Jagannath cult was catching up with the people. Many a tenants of the then prevailing Buddhism was also incorporated within the Jagannath cult and Buddha was made an *avatara* of Vishnu. This is evident in the contemporary literary and religious texts that equated Buddha with Jagannath. This gave rise to a movement locally known as Nathism in the twelfth-fourteenth century CE. It was within the fold of Buddhism and was mainly against the esoteric practices of Buddhism. It was a powerful *yogic* cult. Gorakhanatha was the person who was responsible for propagating Nathism in Orissa. This movement was greatly influenced by the religion, philosophy and yoga system of the Jagannath cult and developed as a Buddhist *Vaisnava* cult in the fifteenth-sixteenth century CE (Patnaik 2000:39).

### **Uddiyana Pitha**

In the early tantras like *Hevajra tantra* and *Sadhanamala*, four *pithas* have been identified. But in the later period there is variation on the number of *pithas* mentioned in different texts (Donaldson 2000:9). However, Uddiyana/Oddiyana/Odra *pitha* finds mentions in all the texts. It is described as not only an important but also as one of the oldest *pithas* in the *Kalika Purana* (Snellgrove 1958:70). Uddaiyana being the prime centre of *Tantrayana* a large number of *Siddhas* emerged here. Lama Taranath corroborates this by giving a long list of *Siddhas* who flourished in Uddiyana. According to scholars, the *Siddha* scholars mentioned in Taranath's book are said to have flourished in between 950 and 1200 CE. They also believe that it would be exaggerating to say that all the eighty four *Siddhas* originated in Orissa, but at the same time it won't be an amplification to say that fact that most of them must have been composed in Uddiyana *pitha* (Das 1977:323). There is no accordance among the scholars about their location.

Certain annals of the T'ang dynasty of China, Hiuen-Tsang and Fa-hien locate Uddiyana in the Swat valley. Along with them certain scholars like Sircar, Bagchi, L.Waddell and many others identify and locate it at Udyana in the Swat Valley; M.Sylvain Levi places it somewhere in Kashgarh; N.N. Dasgupta identifies it with the Chittagong region of Bengal; R.M. Nath correlates it with Hojai in Nawgong district in Assam; B. Bhattacharya and M. Winternitz locate it in Bengal or Assam; whereas H.P. Sastri, N.K. Sahu, K.C. Panigrahi and N.K. Douglas identify Uddiyana with Orissa. L. Chandra identifies it with Kanchi in south India, which is a very different identification from the rest (Bhattacharya 1980:43-44). Sahu (1958) believes that the words Oda, Odra, Uddra, Odivisa and Oddiyana are used as synonym of Uddiyana. In the *Sadhanamala*, Uddiyana is also spelt as Odrayana. While in the *Kalika Purana* it is spelt either as Uddiyana or Odra.

Tribhuvana Mahadevi while accessing to the throne of the Bhaumakaras at Viraja compares herself to goddess Katyayani. Viraja has been identified with present Jajpur. Sahu further quotes *Kubjika Tantra*, where Viraja is mentioned as the goddess of Uddaiyana. While in the Brahansila the consort of Jagannath is the Goddess of Uddiyana. He further informs that Padmasambhava the son of Indrabhuti is associated with Viraja. In an inscription of twenty five lines, in Nail-headed character of the eight-ninth century CE, on the backside of an image of *Jatamukuta* Lokesvara (Maha Kurana) at Udaygiri in Jajpur district, Oadmasambhave and Tara along with other deities are invoked. It also states that a stupa with relic inside was set-up on that very spot where the Tathagata had dwelt. The stupa is believed to have contained the relics of Padmaprabha.

In the *Saddharmapundarika* there is a forecast saying that Lord Buddha assures Sariputta that in the distant future he would be reborn as a Buddha under the name of Padmaprabha and that he shall attain enlightenment at a place called Viraja.

Therefore, by doing so, an attempt has been made to prove logically that Viraja was in Uddiyana and Uddiyana is Orissa and that King Indrabhuti was King of Orissa that is same as Uddiyana or Odra-pith of which the main deities were Jagannath and Viraja.

In the later period, dating to around the fifteenth century CE from south India we get an epigraphical evidence, engraved during the reign of the king Virupaksha (1473) stating that a confusion caused by Oddiyana, i.e. Orissa, in the Deccan and the resulted pause on festivals in the Siva temple at Jambai in the south Arcot district for ten years. This solves beyond doubt the confusion that Oddiyana was Orissa and this incident is also mentioned in another inscription dated to the reign of Saluva Narsimha (Sahu 1958:154).

Sahu, Panigrahi along with few other scholars, with the help of archaeological evidences proved that Uddiyana pitha was located in the northeast and not northwest part of India. Gradually they found that, few *Tantric* images of any importance of such early date have been found from the Swat valley, although numerous images of the Gandhara style have been reported from this area. Almost all the *tantric* images associated with worship like Marichi, Kurukulla, Lokesvara, Vidhvapada-Vajravahni etc are not found in the Swat valley (as identified with Uddiyana by some scholars). Whereas all these images have been reported from various parts of Orissa and they can be dated from the earliest times when *Tantrism* started. Most of the images are made according to the *Sadhanas* preserved in the *Sadhnamala*, *Nispannayogavali* and other Buddhist texts.

## **Buddhism from the seventeenth century CE to present day**

The history of Buddhism from seventeenth century onwards is not very much highlighted and is not free from controversy. However, Vasu (1911) has made an interesting account by arguing that the '*Mahima Dharmis*' of Orissa were the Buddhist in disguise during this period. The following contents are a summary of the views of Vasu for the benefit of the readers.

Various religious books of Utkala belonging to the sixteenth, seventeenth and the eighteenth century, states that many crypto-Buddhists were then residing in various parts of the country. In the hills and the forests of the Gadajats, they cherished the loving memory of their religion and made no secret of it amongst themselves in the society, they passed for devout Vaisnavas.

On the basis of the census report of nineteenth century "In the seventeenth century Buddha Guptanatha wandered in various parts of India and found Buddhism flourishing in various parts of

India. Then, it is lost altogether for two or three centuries; Buddhism was absolutely unknown in India” (Census report of Bengal 1901, Pt.I:203). But Vasu disproves this notion that Buddhism was lost in India for he on the basis of literary evidences has traced that Buddhism still lived in the memory of various poets in eighteenth century. The Buddhist in this phase never called themselves as Buddhists, nor did they ever designate their faith as Buddhism. In every page of history of their religion they are found to have called it simply ‘*Dharma*’ or at most ‘*Saddharma*’ and styled themselves as ‘*Dharmin*’ or ‘*Saddharmin*’. At the same time in Orissa the crypto-Buddhists called the creed they followed as ‘*Mahima-dharmin*’ and called themselves as ‘*Mahima-dharmin*’ (1911:151).

During the British rule they gained strength and tried to come out openly as Buddhists and tried to reassert themselves under the leadership of Bhima Bhoi. It was in 1875 during the twenty first year of the reign of Divya-Simha the king of Puri that the revival of Buddhism in the name of *Mahima-dharma* took place (Vasu 1911:160). It is said that Bhima Bhoi had heard a voice from heaven to the effect that with the revival of the *Mahimadharmas* the hidden state of Jagannatha as Buddha would again be brought to light. To have this statement realised and firmly believing in it, he called upon his followers to come and join him. People joined him in thousands, fired with the zeal of devotion and godliness, went in war against the king of Puri.

This incident finds mention in the “*Yocomati-Malika*” (Vasu: 165). The war occurred in the twenty ninth anka of the reign of Divya Simha Deva of Puri, and it states that the most important part was played by Bhima Bhoi himself. It is said that he collected people from thirty villages and marched upon Puri.

Later on when Bhima Bhoi realised that his ambition was not going to come true and so declared among his followers that the avoidance from doing any harm to others was the first principle of the religion. So they should not commit sin by injuring others. He further announced that Jaganntha had already left Puri in the guise of Buddha and he now understood that it was not Buddha’s intention that his image to be brought to light again. So there was no need for the war to continue. Listening to this order of their leader the *Mahimadharmins* took to flight. Some of them were captured and imprisoned and some were transferred for life on charges of murder by the British government. The *Mahimdharmins* after this out of fear of persecution by the government took shelter in the hills and forests of the Gadajats of Utkala (Vasu 1911: 167-70).

Bhima Bhoi passed away after ten years of the above incident and after him his sons are occupying the *gadi* at Jaranda. In the various parts of the Gardajats one could meet the members of this community even at the time of Vasus fieldwork (Vasu 1911). But the chief *gadi* was at Jaranda near the Kapilasa hill in the Dhenkanal state. The other important place was Badamatha in the village of Olacinga within the Boudh territory. It is the local belief that after he had left the Nilachala, Jagannatha lived here as Buddha. Besides this, Mayurbhanj was also inter-spread with

*mathas* of this sect. In the villages of Kulagi, Koipur, Jaypur, Purnapani, Kendari and Purnia in the subdivision of Bamanghati; at Merughati in Uparabhaga; in the village of Kesna in Panchpir, in upper-Dihi and in the village of Gandu in Joshipur; in Navapura; Purana Baripada, Jalapada and others in the Mayurbhanja proper, there were a large number of monasteries, big and small of this sect. These *mathas* are also to be found in a large number outside Mayurbhanj. In about twenty-twentyfive villages in Keonjhar; Gadajats such as Dhenkanal, Boudh, Dasapalla, Talcher, Conapur, Gangpur, Palalahara, Sarangagada, Rayagada, Kalahandi and in almost of the Killajatas monasteries of this sect were found (Vasu 1911: 170-71).

The followers of this creed are divided into two divisions viz., *Grhi* (house holders) and *Bhiksu* or *Sanneyasin*. Vasu, on the basis of his research in this area states that “almost wherever any large numbers of followers of this sect have settled, they have settled together, a small but neat and clean *matha* will attract the notice of the passer-by. Among the *Udasinas* (those who are indifferent to the ups and downs of life) only the most advanced are entitled to be *Mahanta* i.e. the head of the monastery. Common *Udasinas* or *Bhikshus* find shelter in these monasteries. Amongst the members of this community, numbering not less twenty-five thousand, there are to be found people both of the higher and lower ranks of society” (Vasu 1911: 171).

In the Barmba, Tigaria and in the adjoining parts of Cuttack and in the Puri district also there is a cast called the *Saraka*, who meet once a year at Khandagiri to worship Buddhadeva or Chaturbhaja. The *Sarakas* (a Prakrit form of *Sravakas*) are a religious community transformed eventually into a cast like the Vairagi or the Yogi of Bengal. In the census of 1911 it is seen that 1833 of them returned to Orissa as simply Buddhists (Mitra 1959:101). H.P.Sastri (1911 :28) in his introduction to “*The Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa*” states that in the state of Boudh according to the census report of 1933 (Census report of India, Vol. VII: 257-58) there were 1768 Buddhists who believed them-selves to be the offspring’s of Buddhist monks who renounced their vow of celibacy.

Thus, Vasu concludes that “the *Mahimadharmins* of the Gadajats of Orissa are simply Buddhists like other Buddhists of the Mahayana school; they are also passing their days in the firm belief and hope that Buddha will again be incarnated”

Buddhism gradually and slowly melted into Vaishnavism. Many scholars opine that Jagannath was a Buddhist deity. According to them the three deities are representations of the *Tri-ratha* of the Buddhists and that the uncouth forms of the deities represented the Buddhist Stupas. Buddhist influence on the cult of Jagannath cannot be deviated. Jagannath in the local mythologies is regarded as the Buddhist incarnation of Vishnu. It is written in the *Mandalapanji* that when Asoka was the king, Jagannath was worshipped according to Buddhist rites. Whatever may be the truth of the statement, we cannot deny the fact that Jagannath was associated with Buddhism in its

days of predominance. Even now Jagannath is decorated in Buddha *vesha* on a certain day in April as stated by R.L.Mitra (Mitra 1880).

Sarita Dash (2002: 13) while doing her research work on the Bauddhatantis of Maniabandha has also mentioned about the other Buddhists settlements still existing in Orissa. These people are popularly known as Bauddhatantis. These Bauddhatantis call themselves to be *Sarakas* (In historical context *Sarakas* refers to the identity of a Buddhist or Jaina householder). The earliest reference to this is found in the writing's of Sterling's Orissa, Published in 1904. This is further attested to in the historiographical cum religious literature of the Bauddhatantis of Maniabandha called '*Buddha Padma Kalpatika*' (Patra 1949). Then it was Haraprasad Shastri who in 1911 wrote the introduction for N.N. Vasu's book "*Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa*" he mentions about the *Sarakas* and their existence in Cuttack and Puri (Vasu 1911:22-23). Then Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee in 1940 mentioned that the *Sarakas* might have migrated to Orissa due to Mohammedans harassment in Bengal (Dash 2002:19).

According to the legend, the *Sarakas* arrived in the court of Prataprudra Deva (Sterling 1904:80-81) (1490-1538) in his twenty-eighth regnal year i.e. 1518 CE. They belonged to an ancient guild of weavers and came to Orissa from the Nandi village of Vardhaman. A debate was organized between them and the *Brahmins* in the royal court in which the Buddhists had to face defeat and as a result they were expelled from the area. Thereafter, they separated and sought refuge in remote and hilly parts of the country. Now a day's these Bauddhatantis reside in the following areas of Orissa, Athgarh, Nuapatna, Abhimanpur and Maniabandha in Cuttack district; Mohammadpur and Balibisi in Jagatatsinghpur district and at Ragadi and Banki in Khurda district. According to Sadasiva Patra the Bauddhatantis use the following surnames (Dash 2002:28-29): Patra, Chanda, Das, Paramanika, Mahapatra, Datta, Vardhana, Devta, Kara, Pala, Behera, Nandi besides it, two new surnames are being used i.e. Dalei and Naha. It was the recognition, help and development of Buddhism in other parts of the world in general and India in particular, which indirectly helped these *Sarakas* to come forth and proclaim themselves as Buddhists.

Today the image of Buddha can be seen installed in almost all the *Saraka* houses. On *Buddhapurnima* day all the *Sarakas* meet at a place and celebrate it with enthusiasm. They have even formed an 'All Orissa Buddhist Association' called 'Rastriya Bauddha Sangha' at Ragadi in Banki in Khurda district. They have their meetings annually (Dash 2002:55-56). Buddhist congregations are held in every *Saraka* settlement on every *ashtami*, the eight lunar days, which occurs four or five times in a month. In these congregations they discuss about Buddha and Buddhism. Nowadays, these Neo-Buddhists have also started making pilgrimages to ancient Buddhist sites like Dhauli, Lalitgiri, Udaygiri, Langudi, Ratnagiri etc.

### **Probable causes for the decline of Buddhism in Orissa**

From the above discussion it is evident that Buddhism in Orissa was a popular religion, since the time of Lord Buddha. It influenced the life, culture, art and architecture of the region in the past and its traces can still be seen in the daily life of the people of Orissa. What were the forces and factors that relegated Buddhism in to oblivion and made it disappear. It is for certain that no one cause was responsible for its disappearance; it was a combination and transmutation of number of factors.

If one thoroughly studies the religious history of India, it can be envisaged that Buddhism in all probability never attained a measure of success that it could act as a challenge to the very existence of Brahmanical Hinduism. Wassilieff has remarked that “Buddhism in India was propagated only temporarily and locally, this is a fact, which should not be lost sight of in tracing the decline of Buddhism, if we are not to consider its total disappearance from India as a absolute miracle” (Mitra 1959:14).

Buddhism never had an independent entity; from the very beginning it had rudiments of Brahmanical Hinduism within it. In the later phase also, Mahayana with its mass appeal was but an extended bastion of Hinduism. The Hindu and the Buddhist *Tantras* have openly associated with one another (Mitra 1959:137). When Buddhism was in a flourishing state in the Northwest and in the middle kingdom in the fifth century CE, in the eastern region it was to a great extent a matter of surmise. Whereas, in the eastern region, when it was at the height of its glory under the Pala's, its decline had already been long accomplished in the Northwestern and its surrounding areas. In North India at the time of Hiuen-Tsang's visit, Buddhism had found new centers of strength at Kanauj and Ayodhya. While it was gaining influence in Banaras and Nalanda and was still in a prosperous condition at Pataliputra.

Political persecutions were carried out by Pushyamitra Sungha, Mihirakula, Sasanka of Karnasuvarna, Prataprudradeva, Kalapahar etc. These persons along with some other personalities in the course of history directly or indirectly persecuted the Buddhists in their sphere of influences. Buddhism suffered the most in the hands of the Brahmanical Hinduism, which not only at times waged holy wars on Buddhism (examples could be cited of Kumarila, Samkarachariya and others) but also ideologically, by trying to assimilate Buddhism in to the fold of Hinduism. In this regard, the conception of Buddha as a compassionate incarnation can be traced to a very early period.

After Buddha with the rise of many sub-sects within Buddhism lead to corruption and downfall. One of the main causes of downfall was the induction of the females. Besides this lack of discipline, proper education and sincerity on the part of the monks led to its collapse. This is testified in the accounts of the foreign travelers and in the contemporary literature i.e. Hiuen-Tsang refers to the neglect of study by the monks at Bharukaccha, the dirty habits of few monks in the Chola country, and the debauchery of the Sindh priests. I-sting regrets lack of faith on several occasions and complains of discipline not being strictly observed. The lavish and luxurious life of

the Buddhist monks is described in the *Matta-Vilasa*, a seventh century dramatic work by King Mahendra Varman.

Buddha had himself made prophesy about the beginning of the end of his religion after one thousand years, in reaction to the induction of women in to the holy order (Mitra 1959:11). Even Hiuen-Tsang, amidst the bustle and grandeur of Nalanda was hunted by a prophetic dream, in which he foresaw the evil days that would follow the death of Harshavardhana i.e. a fire would devastate the celebrated centre of Buddhism and the humming halls of Nalanda would be deserted. Thus, it is seen that the Buddhists themselves forecast their decline and were in fear of an approaching deluge.

The Hindu revivalism was one of the strongest factors in the eclipsing of Buddhism in the background and its gradual disappearance. New- Brahmanism appealed more powerfully, to the common man's senses and sentiments. It caught their eyes by means of its magnificent temples and beautiful images as much as it swayed their hearts by its glamorous festivals, devotional songs and mystery plays. Its splendid folklore and inexhaustible tales of myths and legends warmed up the imagination of the people to an unconscious enthusiasm. Its gods and goddesses, all too human in their imperfections, and embroidered with long and colourful legends, struck harmony in every heart and stirred people to passionate devotion (Mitra 1959:159). These developments put the Buddhist in a vicious circle where, if they were strictly Buddhists they were not popular, and if they sought to make their religion popular, they ceased to be really Buddhists. Even in countries where Buddhism still survives, as in China or Japan, only some of its fundamental ideas are generally accepted to make it acceptable and popular among the masses (Mitra 1959:161).

The Mahayana form of Buddhism, possibly under the influence of aboriginal popular cults in the lower strata of society came to assume a darker and debased form of *Tantrism*. This might have resulted from a misunderstanding of the symbolic language of the esoteric texts of the *tantric* school. Magic and sorcery and secret rites and rituals introduced into later Buddhism, particularly in respect of the female deities, no doubt, estranged the people. People were antagonized by some of the corrupt practices of the tantrics. This breaches made in the defenses of Buddhism, by *Tantrism* resulted in its capitulation to Hindu influences was facilitated (Bapat 1956:7).

Another formidable loophole of Buddhism was its incurable pessimism. Its basic teaching, "that all is sorrow, all is ephemeral, all is void" many fortify a philosopher in the storm and struggle of his life, but it was poor consolation for the weakness of the faltering heart. The common man preferred being deceived with shadowy harp than being raised to a bleak consciousness of such a devastating reality (Bapat 1956:162). Then the Buddhist denial of god implied an outrage on the spiritual carving of man, which no amount of righteousness could redeem and no amount of righteousness could condone. It should be remembered that from the days of the *Vishnu Purana* to the age of *Sri Chaitanya*, the perpetual refrain of all triads against Buddhism is not a moral laxity or factious feuds, but its negation of god (Mitra 1959:163). It has left behind in the form of

nothingness, universal compassion, etc. thus it can be said that the strain of pessimism and a certain lack of absorbing interest in life, that characterises the Indian mind, may be a legacy from the Buddhist. The Muslim invasions led to the ultimate disappearance of Buddhism from this land.

On the basis of the above review, it may be inferred that not a single reason was responsible for the decline of Buddhism but it was together a number of factors that combined over a prolonged period of time and led to the decay and disappearance of Buddhism.

In Orissa the process of extinction of Buddhism was the slowest and most prolonged. Buddhism in Orissa even in its better days in the seventh century was not the prevailing religion. Though it received active patronage from some of the rulers of Orissa but they were very occasional and short in duration. It was during the Bhaumakara period that it received the greatest impulsion.

The archaeological finds of the tenth-eleventh century clearly shows a two-fold process of evolution. On the one hand there was the gradual incorporation of Buddha in the Hindu pantheons and on the other, the usual development of later Mahayana and Vajrayana features with borrowings from Brahmanism. Decadence was evident in the artistic form as well, in the depiction of the soulless formalism of the Bodhisattvas of this period in contrast to the freshness and sincerity of earlier figures at Udaygiri and Lalitgiri.

The Muslim invasions led by Muhammed-bin-Bakhtiyar Khilji, tremendously affected Buddhism and the Buddhist edifices of North India including Orissa. The Muhammedian invaders sacked and burnt the monastic institutions of Nalanda, Vikramshila, Odantapuri in the thirteenth century CE (Mitra 1980:18). In Orissa Buddhist establishments like Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri, Udaygiri, Jagaddala (*vihara*), Vajragiri, Kolangiri, Langudi hill, together with other equally potential Buddhist centers also succumbed to unrestrained Muslim vandalism. Particularly noteworthy amidst these, is the existing tomb worshipped by both Hindus and Muslims called Durgadasa *satyapira* on the crest of so called Alamgiri dotted with important Buddhist ruins. According to an inscription engraved on the lintel, the said mosque was built by Muhammed Sujauddin a Deputy Subedar of Murshid-quli-khan, the Nawab of Bengal in 1711 CE (Banerjee 1870).

The immunity from Muslim attack, which Orissa enjoyed till 1568 CE, made this region a new home for the Buddhist refugees from the north; Taranath also narrates the story of Buddhist scholars taking refuge in Orissa among other places, after the destruction of the monasteries of Vikramshila and Odantapuri. Next to Muslim vandalism, the orthodox Brahmanical Hinduism (Saivism, Saktism and Vaishnavism) supplanted Buddhism in Orissa, a large number of Brahmanical shrines and temples sprang over the Buddhist establishments.

Mahayana Buddhism radically transformed to an detestable and enigmatic doctrine of Vajrayana, completely foreign to the teachings of Buddha with the influx of elaborate ritualistic practices, hideous tantric *sadhanas*, *dhyanas*, *mudras*, *andalas*, became directly competing with the Brahmanical *Tantrism* and thus lost popular appeal. Further the cult of violence, as is evident from

the worship of such ghastly and cannibalism in Buddhist tantric deity. Like Mahakala, who was invoked to devour the raw flesh and blood of the anti-Buddhist heretics, who did not offer obeisance to the *tri-ratnas* and its preceptors, was rather completely esoteric and antagonistic to the Buddha's doctrine of non-violence (*ahimsa*). The secret portals of *Sri Kalachakra tantra*, *Kalachakrayana* and *Sahajayana* together with the most violent and blood-thirsty cult of Mahakala were introduced into Orissa for the first time at Ratnagiri. The rational and highly ethical teachings of Buddha were repressed under an impending burden of superstitions, elaborate rituals, and the enigmatic worship of numerous deities, carnal eroticism and immoral life against which Buddha had crusaded ceaselessly. Consequent upon which Buddhism lost common mass appeal in Orissa and thus was abandoned (Prusty 1997:47).

In Orissa Buddhism suffered more due to absorption than destruction. Temples like Buddha linga, Buddhalingesvara, Tara-tarini, Bhattarika, Buddha-chandi, Trivaradia-Buddha, Narayana Bhattaraka Mahaprabhu, Dharmeswara-archaeologically speaks of doctrinal fusion, absorption and interaction between Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism or vice-versa (Prusty 1997:48).

The irresistible flood of Vaishnavism saturated by the lofty ideals of universal equality, secularism and untarnished devotion (*Bhakti*) swept over the popular mind and drew adherents in over whelming number. As a result Buddhism being an obsolete and invertebrate, morbid and decadent motive fare too weak to counteract against Vaishnavism, and could not survive.

At the same time Vaishnavism was exceedingly liberal to acknowledge the greatness of Buddha and incorporated him as one of the ten incarnations (*avatar*) of Lord Vishnu as is evident from the benedictory versions of Jayadeva in his grand liturgical versions of Vaishnavite text Geeta Govinda, composed in about thirteenth century CE. Jayadeva invokes Lord Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu.

But Buddhism was collapsing. The fading vestiges of the religion, which can be caught in the literature of the sixteenth-seventeenth century, are but a poor exhibition of Pseudo-Buddhism in a state of rapid dissolution amidst Vaishnavite belief and practices. It was made to believe that in the *Kaliyuga*, the Buddhists must disguise themselves and worship Hari, who had been incarnated as Buddha, and must wait patiently till Buddha reappears again. This was a consoling obituary notice on Buddhism and it symbolizes the whole lesson of the later Buddhism in India.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the reason for the decay and disappearance of Buddhism in Orissa in particular and India in general was basically the same. The only difference being that Orissa remained the strong hold of the Buddhist for a little prolonged period due to its immunity from the Muslim attacks till the sixteenth century. But at last, it also suffered due to the Muslim inroads. In Orissa most of the destruction caused whether to the Hindu, Buddhist or Jaina monuments, the legends ascribe it to Kalapahar, a convert Muslim. Who due to his personal vendetta is said to have desecrated all the monuments of the infidels during his attacks.

Thus, discarded by the enlightened, devoid of being backed by the innate devotional urge of the halfhearted laity, lack of royal patronage and decline in the active maritime trade with Southeast Asian countries owing to the speedy sedimentation of riverine ports, the centuries long golden reign of Buddhism, the glorious Buddhist heritage and the benign name of Buddha gradually flickered and subsequently faded from the popular mind. But Buddhism in Orissa is not yet a matter to be relegated to the pales of history, for it still survives in certain pockets in parts of Orissa.

After discussing ‘Geomorphological, Political and religious History of Orissa’, and the landscape, the soil-formation, the geographical location of Orissa, the political history from second-third century BCE to sixteenth century and religious history till present day, in the next chapter ‘Development of Stupa Architecture in India’ gradual development of stupa architecture from a earthen mound to a magnificent stupa through ages has been done.

This understanding of geo-political and religious situation of the region will form not only the basis of the continuity of Buddhism in Orissa, but also look into various kinds of influence in the form of ritual, economic conditions, religious rivalry or amalgamation of beliefs, ideas if any in monument building including the development of stupa architecture through the period.

