CHAPTER - II

RELIGIOUS CONDITION
In the early medieval times major faiths in Hinduism like Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śāktism along with the heterodox religions like Buddhism and Jainism flourished in Orissa. The religious history of Orissa is cosmopolitan in nature where each and every cult claims its superiority and greatness. However, it is fascinating to note that this has been a land of peaceful co-existence and tolerance. Different ruling families extended royal patronage to the various sects for their growth and spread.

Orissa emerged as an abode of Pāñcdevatās namely Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, Gaṇapati and Śakti, worshipped in their traditional pithas in Puri, Bhubaneswar, Konark, Mahavināyak and Jajpur. In the early medieval times due to the process of sanskritisation many tribal elements were incorporated into Hinduism and certain features of Hinduism were also integrated into the tribal cults. Thus the local tribal cults were assimilated with the main stream of Brāhmanical Hinduism. Hence, the process of Aryanisation or Brāhmanisation made a great impact on the Orissan society during this period.

**Jainism**:

Jainism was a predominant faith among the people of Kalinga in ancient times. The earliest reference to a Jaina king named Karakandu ruling in Kalinga is mentioned in the
He was a disciple of Pārśvanāth. The numerous sculptural representations depicting the life of Pārśvanāth in Khandagiri and Udayagiri hills suggest that probably the great preacher visited Kalinga and was adored by its people. The Jaina literatures like Āvasyaka Sūtra and Haribhadriya Vritti state that Vardhamāna Mahāvīra visited Kalinga in the 6th century B.C. Further, some important towns like Toṣali and Pithunda flourished as great stronghold of Jainism in ancient Orissa. The Nanda ruler Mahāpadma Nanda attacked Kalinga and had taken back the Kalinga Jina to Pataliputra which was recovered back by Khāravela. Thus Jainism was in a flourishing state in Kalinga till Asoka invaded her in 3rd century B.C. The Buddhist as well as the epic literature depict Kalinga as an 'impure' country or 'Mlechha' or non-Aryan country.

Jainism grew in popularity under the royal patronage of the Chedi emperor Khāravela. His successful campaigns resulted in recovering back the Kalinga Jina from Pātaliputra. A number of caves were dug out on the hills of Khandagiri and Udayagiri by the Chedi rulers. Though, they were patrons of Jainism, yet honoured other religious sects. After the Chedi dynasty Jainism suffered a set back due to the subsequent rise of Brahmanism.

In 3rd century A.D. Jainism was still a religious force to reckon with under the patronage of the Murunda king Dharmadāmadhara. Another king Guhasiva was also Jaina by faith and worshipped the Nirgranthas. The Matharas, being great
patrons of Brahmanical faith named their headquarter Vardhamānapur, which suggests the popularity of Jainism in Orissa in 4th-5th century A.D. Thus in the early Christian era Jainism continued to co-exist as a minor religion in Orissa.

The accounts of Huien Tsang refer to the prevalence of Jainism in Orissa in 7th century A.D. He mentions about 10,000 Tirthikas living in Kongoda and in Kalinga majority being Nirgranthas. The Banpur plates of Dharmarāja reveals that the queen Kalyāṇa Devī granted two tīmpiras of land in Madhuvāṭaka and three tīmpiras of land in the village of Suvarṇa Ralondi in Thoraṇa viṣaya to Nāśichandra and his disciple Ekasata Pravṛddhachandra. The word Ekasata referred to in the inscription conveys that the people honoured and adored Śvetāmbara sect of Jainism. Besides, the archeological findings in Banpur establishes the fact that it was a stronghold of Jainism in early medieval times. Ten Jaina images and a number of chlorite images have been found within the enclosure of Dakṣa Prajāpati temple which belonged to 8th-11th century A.D.

Jaina images of Rishabhanāth, Pārśvanāth, Mahāvira etc. have been found out from Poḍāsingidi, a place in Keonjhar district, which belong to 8th century A.D. Such images were also discovered in and around Baripada in Mayurbhanj district which was ruled by the Bhaṅjas of Khijjiṅgakoṭṭa.

Jainism lost its ascendancy under the Bhauma-Karas. However, it was not totally extincted. Due to the secular nature
of the Bhauma-Kara rulers Jainism was restricted to some areas. Several images of Jain tirthankaras are discovered at Prachi valley and Jajpur area. Thus, in the period under discussion Jainism had lost its popularity due to the lack of royal patronage, yet, it existed as a minor religion in some parts of Orissa.

Buddhism:

Buddhism, based on the cardinal principles of kindness, humanity and equality greatly influenced the life of the people of Orissa in ancient and medieval period. The earliest reference regarding the prevalence of Buddhism in Orissa is made in the Jātaka stories. Tapassau and Bhālli ka the merchants of Utkala embraced Buddhism and enshrined the sacred hair of Buddha in a Chaitya. The Ceylonese as well as the Burmese tradition also corroborate the same story. Buddhavaṃśa and Dāthavaṃśa speak of the existence of Buddhism in Orissa. In the Dighāṇikāya, it is mentioned that after the death of Buddha the tooth relic was carried by one Khema to the court of Brahmadatta in Kalinga, who constructed a Chaitya in Dantapura.

The antiquarian remains suggest that Buddhism became more popular and flourished well only after the invasion of Asoka, the great Maurya ruler. A passage of the Rock edict XIII reveals that there were śramanas along with other sects in Kalinga before his invasion. Asoka in order to seek solace from the mental
agony caused by the miserable plight of the millions suffered during the war, turned to Buddhism. He engraved two rock edicts one at Dhauli near Bhubaneswar and the other at Jaugada in Ganjam. Through these edicts Asoka wanted to spread Buddhism in Orissa in order to establish peace and good-will among the people. However, he did not exert undue pressure while propagating the faith.

Asoka is believed to have constructed a monastery at Bhojakagiri for his brother Tissa. It became a centre of Theravada Buddhism. During the Asokan and post-Asokan period Hinayana Buddhism with Pali as its language spread all over Kalinga. Scholars like Dhitika and Mahādeva visited Kalinga. A large number of stupas, chaityas and vihāras sprang up as a result of the growing popularity of this faith. Orissa served as a gateway for the transmission of Buddhist thought and principle in the neighbouring countries like Burma and Ceylon.

Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim visited Orissa in the 7th century A.D. In his accounts he states that the people of Kongoda had no faith in the law of Buddha. This was due to the fact that the Sailodbhavas who were the rulers of Kongoda, were Śaivite by faith, hence Buddhism relegated to the background. But this was not the case with other parts of Orissa. The pilgrim says Buddhism was the religion of many in the Wu Ta country (Odra). There were 100 Buddhist monasteries and myriad Brethren all Mahayanist. In Odra both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism flourished. About Kalinga the pilgrim writes that "there were
above ten Buddhist monasteries and 500 Brethren students of Mahayanic Sthavira school systems.\textsuperscript{25} In South Kosala "there were above 100 Buddhist monasteries and 10,000 Brethren all Mahayanists."\textsuperscript{26}

The Śailodbhavas were Pro-Brahmanic and performed Vedic rituals like Asvamedha and Vājapeya sacrifices. The period witnessed a growing contest between Buddhism and Śaivism. Ultimately it resulted in the triumph of Śaivism as Buddhism suffered a great set back due to the lack of royal patronage.

The colossal Śiva lingam worshipped in the Bhāskareswar temple of Bhubaneswar is a part of Asokan pillar.\textsuperscript{27} Scholars believe that before 7th century A.D. Buddhism prevailed in the area around Bhubaneswar.\textsuperscript{28} This view is supported by the Nagarjunakonda inscription\textsuperscript{29} of the Ikṣvāku king Virupākṣadatta which records the preaching of the Ceylonese monks in Tosali, identified with the area around present Dhauli. With the active support received from the different royal dynasties like the Śailodbhavas, the Bhauma-Karas and later, the Somavamsis, Bhubaneswar became an important centre of Śaivism. But the imprint of the images of Buddha on the defied figures of Lakulīṣa in the temples of early medieval period is unmistakable.\textsuperscript{30}

From the study of the archeological remains in various places of Orissa, it is believed that Buddhism was popular among the people in 6th century A.D. Jayarampur in Balasore district was a centre of Mahayanic Buddhism. A Copper plate of Gopachandra
records the grant of a village Svetabālika to the Mahayanist bhikṣu-saṅgha for the construction of a Vihāra at Bodhapadraka identified with Jayarampur. Besides the Sumandala Copper plates dated 569 A.D. describes Prithvivigraha as a Bhāttāraka.

Important centres of Buddhism which flourished in the 6th and 7th century A.D. were Bhubaneswar, Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, Udayagiri, Jayrampur, Che-li-ta-lo (Puri) Peu-so-po-ki-li (Puspagiri) and Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li (Parimalagiri).  

Hinayana had established itself as a strong and popular force in 7th century A.D. At the request of Harsa, Śīlabhadra the head of Nalanda deputed four scholars namely Sāgaramati, Prajñārasmi, Siṃharasmi and Hiuen Tsang to contest the Hinayanists of Orissa. The philosophers were diffident to face the Hinayana monks. Further Harsa requested Jayasena, a Buddhist monk to stay in Orissa and assigned him the revenue of eighty villages to which the latter declined. Thus, it is quite clear that Orissa was an important centre of Hinayana Buddhism in 7th century A.D.

With the rise of the Bhauma-Karas to power in 736 A.D. Buddhism got further impetus. The early rulers of this dynasty were staunch followers of Mahayana Buddhism. Kṣemaṅkara, Sivakara I, Śubhākara I and Śubhākara II were patrons of this faith and bore the epithets like Paramopāsaka, Parama Tathāgata, Parama Saugata and Saugatāsraya in their charters.
Although the records of the Bhauma-Karas do not throw much light on their activities to spread the religion in their kingdom, yet they championed the faith. Tribhuvana Mahādevī in her Dhenkanal plates describes the Bhauma kings "exhausted the treasure of their kingdom on religious works, in order to enlighten their country and others, who decorated the earth by constructing in un-broken continuity various mathas, monasteries and sanctuaries."

In 795 A.D. Sivakara I sent an autographed manuscript of Gāṇḍavyuha to the Chinese emperor Te-tsong. This manuscript was carried by a renowned Buddhist monk named Prajñā, who was instructed to translate it. The visit was a significant one as it nurtured Sino-Indian relationship in the realm of culture.

Epigraphic study and the archeological remains assignable to Bhauma-Kara period reveal the popularity of Mahayana faith in Orissa. In the Talcher plate Sivakara III mentions about a sanctuary near Jayāśrama Vihār identified with Jagati, a small village near Talcher. The Dhauli inscription of Śāntikara I refers to one monastery named Ārghyakavātikā constructed in 829 A.D. by Bhimaṭa and Bhaṭṭa Loyāmaka.

Ratnagiri and the adjacent hills of Udayagiri and Lalitagiri flourished as the greatest centre of Mahayana Buddhism in 8th century A.D. The Archaeological survey of India has unearthed an imposing stupa, a massive monastery along with a number of votive stupas, a colossal Buddha image seated in bhūmisparśa mudrā, two colossal Buddha heads on the top of the
Besides a number of Mahayana and Vajrayana deities have been discovered assignable to the Bhauma period on epigraphical and iconographical grounds. Like Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitagiri also contain large number of Buddhist statues and ruins of Buddhist temples. All these suggest the flourishing condition of Ratnagiri Mahavihāra in Orissa in the Bhauma period.

Khaḍipāḍā also was another centre of Buddhism where images of Buddha in different mūrās and Bodhisattva have been discovered. Solanapura and Komārakāgrāna mentioned in the Neulpur charter may be identified with Solanapura and Kupāri in Balasore district. A large number of Buddhist images and extensive ruins of monastery and Buddhist temple give ample evidence of Solanapura and Kupāri being important sites of Mahayana Buddhism during the period under discussion.

Other famous centres of Buddhism in 8th-9th century A.D. were Chaurasi, Choudwar, Dharmasala, the Praci Valley, Baud and Banapur. These places have yielded innumerable images of Buddhist deities.

The study of extensive Buddhist remains of Orissa, assignable to the Bhauma period reveals that Mahayana doctrine gradually transformed into Vajrayāna in about the middle of 9th century A.D. This Tantric form of Buddhism originated from Yogachāra school leading gradually to the development of mantras, dhāranis, yantras and plexuses. King Indrabhuti and his sister Lakṣmikarā of Uddiyāna (Orissa) were great exponents of Vajrayana.
The introduction of Tantric form of worship in the Mahayana Buddhism ushered in a new stage of development in the history of Buddhism in Orissa. Tantric Buddhist art is reflected in the stupas, monasteries, chaityas and in sculptures of this period. Images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas in different mudrās, the Vajrayana deities like Tara, Heruka, Hayagriva, Marici, Manjusri, Avalokitesvara etc. are found in the different sites with the Buddhist formula "Ye dharma hetu Prabhavā ....".

Important centres of Vajrayana form of Buddhism were Khiching, Kupari, Solampur, Khadipada, Chaurasi, Salepur and Kendrapara. Besides Achyutarājpur near Banpur has provided us with large hoards of bronze icons like Trailokyā Vijayā, Tārā, Herukā, Kurkullā, Bhṛikuti etc assignable mostly to the Bhāumakara period.

During this period renowned scholars and philosophers either flourished or visited Orissa popularising Mahayana Buddhism. Eminent among them were Dharmapāla, Chandragomin, Chandrakīrtti, Dharmakīrtti, Prājñā etc. Tantric siddhas namely Rāhulabhadra, Indrabhuti, Lakṣmikarā, and Krisnāchārya flourished in Orissa. Indrabhuti composed Sādhanāmālā, Kurula-sādhanā and Jñānasidhi.

Thus, under the Bhāuma kings, who were pro-Buddhist, Buddhism reached the highest watermark. The period made valuable contributions in the field of art and architecture with abundance of sculptures, monuments, monasteries etc. Undoubtedly this was a golden period in the history of Buddhism in Orissa.
Vaisnavism:

Vaiśnavism, the cult of Viṣṇu is one of the oldest religions of India dating back to the Vedic times. This religion with Viṣṇu as the predominant deity is very popular in Orissa from the ancient times. But the epigraphic evidences suggest its existence from the time of the Māṭharas, the contemporary of the Guptas. It is believed that this cult advanced towards Orissa from the south and the West of India.  

The Māṭharas were pro-Vaiśnavite. Anantasaktivarman of this dynasty used the epithet 'Nārāyanasvaminah Pādabhaktah'. Other members of the family such as Prabhajñānavarman, Nandaprabhajñānavarman and Chandavarman were great exponents of Vaiśnavism and used the Vaiśnavite epithets like Paramabhaṅgavata, Bhāgavat Svāmī, Nārāyan-pādānudhyāta etc. The age of the Māṭharas witnessed the rise of Pancharātra system of Vaiśnavism in Orissa.

Besides the Māṭharas, other ruling families like the Sarabhapuriyas of South Kośala and then the Panḍuvaṃsis also popularised the Bhāgavata cult. The Anang plates of Mahārājā Sudevaraja refers to him as Paraṇa Bhāgavata. The seals of this dynasty bear the symbol of Gajalakṣmi. The coins of Prasanamatra contain the figure of Garuda and the symbol of conch and discuss. The Panḍuvaṃsis of South Kośala also used the epithets 'Parama-Vaiśnava'. The Podagarh stone inscription describes a king of the Nala family Mahārājā Skandavarman as a Vaiśnava king who constructed a shrine of Viṣṇu.
With the fall of the Māṭharas Vaiṣṇavism suffered a set back in South Orissa. The Śailodbhava rulers of Kongoda were deeply influenced by Brāhmanical form of Śaivism. However, Vaiṣṇavism did not make an eclipse in their territory. In order to establish their imperial status they espoused the cause of Vedic worship. Though Vaiṣṇavism sank to a second rate creed it greatly influenced the religious life of the people. Some of the donees in the Śailodbhava charters bore Vaiṣṇavite names like Narayana Svāmi, Bhaṭṭa Narayana, Mādhava Svāmi, Pradyumna Svāmi, Śri Svāmi, Govardhana Svāmi, etc. The contemporary records of the period under discussion also show the Brāhmaṇa donees bearing Vaiṣṇavite names. These testify the prevalence and popularity of Vaiṣṇavism among the common mass in Orissa.

It seems Mādhava cult was popular in Kongoda under the Śailodbhava rulers. The Khurdha plates of Mādhavarāja II reveal that Lord Mādhava was being worshipped by the people of Kongoda. The Kondedde plates of Dharmarāja II, there is the reference of Hari. It is interesting to note that three princes of this family bore the name of Mādhava. Besides in some of the copper plate charters we find the donees and officers bearing the name Mādhava. Mādhava is a synonym of Viṣṇu. The repeated nomenclature of the name Mādhava shows the popularity of this cult in Kongoda. Immigration of Brāhmaṇas of Vājasaneya Charaṇa of Śukla Yajurveda, Chhāndogya Charaṇa and Mudgala gotra from north India was responsible for the popularity of Mādhava cult in South east India.
Vaisnavite sculptures belonging to this period have been discovered from different sites of Ganjam and Bhubaneswar. On the summit of Mahendragiri a sthanakamurti of four armed Madhava stands with the iconographic features of 7th century A.D. At the foot of the Kṛṣṇagiri near Koalo in Ganjam district we find the consecrated icons of Umā-Maheśvara and Madhava side by side. The image of Madhava in black chlorite in the Muktesvar temple is an example of the eclectic faith of the Sailodbhavas.

In Bānkāḍa standing Madhava image, at Deogaon Kośalesvara temple, Madhava with Chakra in one hand and other in Varadā Mudrā - are examples of the growing popularity of this faith. The Madhava image made of blue sapphire stone in Markandesvar temple belong to this period.

Besides the Madhava cult we find the prevalence of Pancharātra school of Vaiṣṇavism in Kongoda. In three of the Sailodbhava charters Tekkali, Banpur and Puri there is the reference to Lakṣmī. Lakṣmī in association with Nārāyaṇa or Madhusudana indicates the existence of Pancharātra system.

Though overshadowed by Śaivism, the cult of Viṣṇu was very popular and the Sailodbhava rulers also paid attention for the development of this cult. The early temples of 7th century A.D. e.g. Svarnajaleswar at Bhubaneswar had an image of Viṣṇu holding Saṅkha, chakra, qadā and padma. The scenes from Rāmāyaṇa are depicted on the walls of Svarnajaleswar, Bharateswar and Parasurameswar temples belonging to this period. In the
series of Saptamātrikās found in Parasurāmeśwar, Vaital, Mukteśwar and in Jajpur, Puri, Khiching etc. Vaiśnavi, the counterpart of Viṣṇu makes her appearance. Madhava cult was precursore of the cult of Purushottama in the subsequent period of which Puri emerged as a stronghold.

In the Bhauma-Kara period Vaiṣṇavism suffered a temporary set back. The early Bhauma kings were devout Buddhists and adopted Buddhist titles like Paramopāsaka, Paramatathāgata and Paramasaugata. During the early part of Bhauma rule, the rising Buddhist movement in Utkala clashed with the Brāhmaṇical form of Hinduism which had already gained a stronghold in Kongoda. So it is quite apparent that when Kongoda was conquered in the middle of 8th century A.D; Buddhism, the predominant faith in Utkala was challenged by the Brāhmaṇical school in south. In order to consolidate themselves in the newly conquered southern territories the Bhauma-Karas were compelled to patronise Brahmanism. So 8th-9th century A.D. witnessed the synthesis of the two schools which resulted in the cult of Purushottama Jagannath.

The Bhauma-Karas claimed themselves as descendants of Viṣṇu in their charters. In the Kalika Purana it is described that "Viṣṇu in his incarnation of the boar (Varāḥ) while lifting the earth from the deluge with His tusks, took her as His consort and had by her a son who was known as Naraka or Bhauma (born of Bhūmi)." With this origin the Bhauma-Karas in Orissa established their capital at Viraja or Guheśvarapāta in otherwise known as...
Varāhatir̥tha. Though the rulers of this family were Buddhists, yet they could not forsake the Brāhmanical school.

In the Bhauma-Kara charters we come across Vaishnavite names of the donees such as Purushottama, Āmanasvāmi, Narayana, Śrīchara, Padmanābha etc. Lakṣmikarā was a progenitor of the Bhauma-Kara family. Literally the name means one who holds the hands of Lakṣmi. Sivakara I, though a devout Buddhist described himself as Śri-Bhārasaha or one who is capable of carrying the weight of Lakṣmi.

Tribhuvana Mahādevī is described as Paramavaishnavi, in her Dhenkanal plates. The Talcher plates of Subhākara IV describes her as a devotee of Hari. Prithvi Mahādevī of this family was also a follower of Vaishnavism. In the Baud plate she is described as a Parama Vaishnavi. Sāntikaradeva II has been stated in the Talcher plate as glorious as Vaikuṇṭha. The last ruler of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty was Dharma Mahādevī. She had been compared with Lakṣmi in the Taltali plate which states "she is the Lakṣmi in the Nandan garden, full of flowers for the suppliants."

Epigraphic evidences show that the Purushottama cult was very popular in the Bhauma-Kara kingdom. Tribhuvana Mahādevī compares her husband Lalitahāraadeva with Purushottama Viṣṇu. We come across names like Bhaṭṭa Purushottama, Purushottamasvāmi etc in the Bhauma charters.
Among the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas, the Nandodbhavas were followers of Vaiṣṇavism. In Sarang and Bhimkund two huge rock cut statues of Anantasāyi Viṣṇu are found. In his Narsimhapalli charter Hastivarman prays for the grace of Narayana.

Vaiṣṇavite sculptures are found in the Vaital and Markandesvara temple in Bhubaneswar. The twin temples one of which is that of Nilamādhava in Gandhāra are assigned to the Bhañja, who were feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas. This is similar to the Parasuramesvar temple in Bhubaneswar. The Simhanāth temple in Badamba probably named after Simhadvaja Subhākara III provides some Vaiṣṇava sculptures like Nṛsiṃha, Varāha Trivikrama along with the scene of Kāliya Dalana.

In the 8th century A.D. the Tantric lore influenced the socio-religious life of Orissa. Tantra seems to have provided the main stay for the development of the three creeds of Hinduism. Though scholars alleged Buddhist origin of Jagannath at Puri, it can be said that Vaiṣṇavism absorbed elements which were essentially Śaivite and Buddhistic in spirit during the early medieval period.

Śaivism:

Śaivism or the cult of Siva attained a predominant position in Orissa in 7th century A.D. The age of the Guptas was responsible for the revival of Brāhmaṇical faith in many
parts of India. In the post-Gupta period rulers of different families patronised the cult of either Siva or Viṣṇu. The Māṭharas in the 5th-6th century A.D. patronised Vaiṣṇavism. But with the rise of the Śailodbhavas in Koṅgoda, Śaivism gained a stronghold and exerted overwhelming influence over the people of Orissa.

During the Gupta period Lakulīśa Pasūpata cult, in which Siva is worshipped symbolically through Sivalingaḥ was very popular. But soon the personal attributions like the cobras, the garland of skulls, the digit of moon, Parvati, matted hair etc associated with Siva attracted the people. This branch is famous as Mattamayur branch of Śaiva Siddhānta school. The Śailodbhavas were followers of Mattamayur sect. It is known from the preamble of the Śailodbhava charters that they worshipped "the matted hair of Siva, which is embraced by the moon with its tender beams, resembling the clean fibres of lotus stalk, whose radiance is besmeared with the fawny rays of the bright gem of the great serpent, whose tie becomes loose when Parvati seized by hair and from which the particles of ashes are washed away by the leaps of the leaps of the Ganges water."

Pulindasena, the progenitor of the Śailodbhava family worshipped Lord Svayamābhu Siva with all his personal attributes, on the crest of Mahendra which is regarded as Kulagiri in the Puranas, reputed as a stronghold of Śaivism. The early Ganga rulers of Kalinga also worshipped Lord Gokarnesvara, their tutelary deity on the summit of Mahendragiri.
In the early medieval period the tribal culture of Orissa was aryanised under the influence of Brahmanical school. Rudrasiva was worshipped by the tribal people like the Nishādas, Savaras, Pulindas and Kirāṭas from the Vedic times. Tree worship gave rise to linga worship. Siva who was worshipped as sthanu according to the Śailodbhava inscription, subsequently worshipped with all his divine glory and personal attributes.98

Another feature of Mattamayura form of Śaivism was that Siva was not terrific in form but Śāsvatam Śāntarupam.99 The two technical terms Chitta and guṇa used by Śaiva Acharyas of this sect found mention in the line 12 of Buguda plates of Madhavarāja II.100

The Śailodbhava rulers in their charters have described Siva with all his personal attributes. Though Madhavarāja assumed the title Parama Brāhmanyan he was devoted to "the feet of the blissful master of the three worlds (Śiva) who is the cause of creation, existence and destruction whose arms are placed on the hump of the great bull resembling the pillow of a couch and whose matted hair is illuminated by the crescent of the moon."101 In fact Madhavarāja II was a feudatory of Sasanka, who was a great patron of Śaivism.102 The Ekamra Purana states that Sasanka constructed a massive temple at Bhubaneswar for Lord Siva.103 This tradition is corroborated by Kapila Saṁhitā and Svarṇādṛīmahodaya.104 The temple built by Sasanka was replaced by the Lingaraja temple. Thus Śaivism received a great impetus from Sasanka and Madhavarāja II.
Madhyamarāja I, the son of Mādhavarāja was a Paramamahēśvara. In his Banpur plates Śiva is eulogised as greater than the sky, superior to Indra, establisher of Dharma in the Yajña of Dakṣa, victor of rākṣasas, deeper than the fathomless ocean, brighter and more luminous than the sun, more pleasant in looking than the moon and the ruler of the three worlds.¹⁰⁶

Besides the Śailodbhavas several other rulers like Lokāvigraha,¹⁰⁷ Śambhuyasa,¹⁰⁸ Bhanuvardhana¹⁰⁹ etc patronised Saivism.

During the rule of the Śailodbhavas a number of Śaivite temples were constructed in different parts of their kingdom. The early temples such as Satrughnesvara, Bharatesvara, Lakṣmaṇeswar and Svarnajalesvara are assigned to the Śailodbhava period.¹¹⁰ In Baṅkāḍa the capital of the Śailodbhavas, a four armed Śiva in tribhanga pose is found in a ruined temple assigned to 7th century A.D.¹¹¹ The Gokarnesvara Śiva temple situated on the summit of Mahendragiri was probably constructed during the time of the Śailodbhavas. Besides, Kṛṣṇagiri was another religious centre where we find sculptures assigned to the Śailodbhava period.

The concept of Umā-Maheśvara cult is well depicted in the Śailodbhava inscriptions and the sculptures of that period. In fact the Śailodbhavas were the first rulers to popularise this cult in Orissa. Innumerable images of Umā-Maheśvara were produced
in different temples like Kṛṣṇagiri, Baṅkāḍa, Muktesvara, Baṭesvara, Khiching and the Prachi Valley.

In the copper plate grant of the Śailodbhavas the emblem of bull is represented. Among the donees we come across several Śaivite names like Rudrasvāmin, Sarvasvāmin (Orissa Museum plates), Sivasvāmin (Parikud plates) and Trilochana-svāmin (Ranpur plates) which indicate the popularity of Śaivism in Orissa in 7th century A.D.

Śaivite Acharyas like Saṅkhramaṭha, Rudraśiva, Śrikanṭhachārya etc propagated the faith and thought throughout Orissa and were immensely responsible for the popularity of Śaivism in Orissa in 7th century A.D.

With the ascendancy of the Bhauma-Karas Śaivism suffered a temporary setback. On the other hand Buddhism recovered back its status and popularity by gaining royal patronage. Earlier in the 5th century A.D. Śaivism overshadowed Buddhism which is indicated by the inscribed lingas of Keonjhar and the Asanpat stone inscription found near Sitābiṇji, a Śaivite centre. The colossal linga of Bhaskaresvara temple at Bhubaneswar which was initially an Asokan pillar clearly shows the triumph of Śaivism over Buddhism.

Though the Bhauma-Karas extended royal patronage to Buddhism they were not intolerant of Śaivism either. From the Hansesvar temple inscription of Jajpur, it is known that Madhavi-devi, the queen of Subhākaradeva I constructed the Madhaveswar
temple named after her, and enshrined the idol of lord Siva in it, with utter devotion. Probably the queen was very much influenced by the Saivachāryas of Saiva Siddhānta school.

Towards the beginning of the 9th century A.D. Saivism again revived back its past glory. The son and successor of Subhakaradeva was given the name Sivakaradeva by her mother who was a devout Śaiva. In the Chourasi plate dated 809 A.D. he declared himself as Paramabhāttaraka Mahārajādhiraja Paramesvara. This change of faith from Buddhism to Saivism indicates the rivalry between the two for supremacy. Sankaracharya’s visit to Puri in the 9th century A.D. might have prompted the later Bhauma-Karas to incline towards Saivism.

Besides Sivakaradeva II the later rulers e.g. Sāntikaradeva I and Subhākaradeva II described themselves as Paramabhāttaraka Mahārajādhiraja Paramamaheśvara. Subhākaradeva III was a devout Śaiva. In his Hindol plates, it is stated that he acquired profound knowledge in the agamas. It also describes that Pulindaraja constructed the Pulindesvara temple in the Bhauma territories. Subhākara III granted the village Nāḍdīllo of Kankavira Viṣaya of Uttara Tosali at the request of Pulindaraja for the establishment of Vaidyanātha Bhaṭṭāraka. His queen Prthvi Mahādevi donated village Koṭṭapura for the perpetual offering of ablution and sandal paste etc to Lord Nannesvara.
Subhakara IV and Sivakara III also bore the Śaivite epithet Paramamahēśvarā in their charters. The Bhauma queens Tribhuvana Mahādevī, Daṇḍi Mahādevī, Prthvi Mahādevī and Vakula Mahādevī also worshipped Śiva and bore the epithet Paramesvāri. The Kumurang plates of Daṇḍi Mahādevī registers the gift of a village to some brāhmaṇas with different names like Sarvadeva, Īśvara, Vaṅgeśvara etc. Virajā Māhātmya mentions three temples Kusumesvara, Lalitesvara and Daṇdisvara constructed after the names of the Bhauma rulers Kusumahāra, Lalitahāra and Daṇḍi Mahādevī at Jajpur. Thus the epigraphic study shows though Śaivism suffered a temporary set back in the early part, regained its status of a state religion under the patronage of the later Bhauma-Kara rulers.

The Bhauma-Kara period was a glorious period in the history of early temple architecture. Numerous Śiva temples were constructed in Jajpur and at Bhubaneswar. The temples of Sisireśvara, Markandesvar, Taleśvara and Uttareśvara have been ascribed to the Bhauma period. Vaital temple and Vahirangesvar and Batesvara temple in Ganjam were also constructed during this period.

In the above temples we find a large number of Śaivite sculptures and images of Ganesa, Kartikeya, Parvati, Ardhanārīśvara and Nāṭarāj along with scenes depicting the life of Śiva. The depiction of Lakulīsa figure also suggest that the Lakulīsa Pasupata sect had considerable influence over the
members of the royal family as well as the common people of Orissa during 8th-9th century A.D.

An interesting feature of the socio-religious life of the period under discussion was the growing popularity of Tantra. Jajpur, the capital of the Bhauma-Karas, was one of the Tantric pitha in Medieval Orissa. Under the influence of the Tantric form of Vajrayana or Sahajayana the Śaivāchāryas incorporated into their system, the diversified systems of the various sub-sect of the Śaiva pantheon. Siva was not worshipped in his 'Gāsvata Sānta rūpa' as in the earlier times but in a terrific Bhairava form wearing garland of skulls, with a sunken belly, hollow eyes, open mouth, holding trident and dagger in both hands as found in Sisireśvara and Vaital temple.

There was a synthesis of Śaivism and Tantric form of Vajrayāna which was accepted by the people with much religious zeal. The Tantric dharanis were accepted in the Śaivite shrines. The Siva linga at Soro in Balasore contains the dharani, ("Om ye dharma hetu prabhavā hetum tesām Tathāgata hyavedāt tososcha yo nirodha evām vādi Mahā śramaṇah"). This suggests that Buddhism which had lost its popularity, subsequently lost its identity and merged into the fold of Śaivism, which later gained the status of a state religion.

The above discussion shows Śaivism, neglected during the early part, received a great impetus from the later Bhauma rulers in 9th-10th century A.D. Even some of the feudatories
of the Bhaumas were also Śaivite in faith. The Śulkis of Kodalaka Maṇḍala,\textsuperscript{133} the Nandas and some of the Tūṅga rulers\textsuperscript{134} and the Bhāṇjas\textsuperscript{135} of Khijjiṅga as well as Khīṅjali Maṇḍala\textsuperscript{136} were ardent devotee of Śiva and patronised Śaivism. In fact the Bhairava cult evolved during the Bhāṇja rule.\textsuperscript{137}

**Śaktism**:  
Śaktism is one of the ancient cult dating back to the pre-Vedic times. Śakti worship gained popularity in Orissa during the Pre-Gupta period.\textsuperscript{138} The earliest representation of Śakti in the form of two armed Mahiṣamardini Durgā is found in Jajpur as the presiding deity Viraja.\textsuperscript{139} R.P. Chanda has ascribed this image to the pre-Gupta period.\textsuperscript{140}

We do not get any epigraphic evidences of Śakti worship in Kongoda during the reign of the Śailodbhava rulers. With the ascendancy of the Bhauma-Karas in 736 A.D., Śaktism exerted enormous influence over the religious life of the people in Orissa. Guhesvarapataka identified with Viraja or Jajpur, capital of the Bhauma-Karas was the famous centre of Śaktism.

Hevajra Tantra compiled in 7th century A.D. mentions the four main centres or pithas namely - Uḍḍiyāṇa, Purnagiri, Kamarupa and Jalandhara.\textsuperscript{141} In Kalika Purāṇa also states Uḍra as the first Brahmanical Tantric Pitha.\textsuperscript{142} Uḍḍiyāṇa identified with Orissa, particularly the coastal belt is abounding with
archaeological evidences, historical accounts and records which prove that Śākta-Tantricism upsurged here since 4th century A.D. till the late medieval period.\textsuperscript{143} The Śākta temples are found mainly at Jajpur, Bhubaneshwar, Puri and the Prachi valley.

Śākti is worshipped in the forms of Mahiṣamardinī Durga, Parvati, Candi, Sapta Maṭrkās, Camunḍā, Varāhi, Kali, Maṅgalā, Cārcikā, and Bhagavatī. Besides we come across village goddesses with different names and Iṣṭadevīs in different households.\textsuperscript{144} All these suggest that Orissa during the early medieval period flourished as one of the most important centre of Śaktism in India.

During the rule of the Bhauma-Karas Śaktism, no doubt was a great religious force in Orissa. Besides Jajpur, the two armed Mahiṣamardinī Durga is found at Kakatpur of the Prachi Valley.\textsuperscript{145} In the next phase of evolution four armed Durga images are found in Motia, in the Mādhava temple at Niali and at Banki.\textsuperscript{146} Six-armed Durga has been found at Astarang and in Dvāravāsinī temple on the bank of Vindusarovar.\textsuperscript{147}

In the 8th century A.D. eight-armed Mahiṣamardinī Durga was popular. The demon Mahiṣāsura is depicted with a human body and a buffalo head. Such images are fond in the Vaital temple, Kundesvara in Cuttack and in the Prachi Valley.

Another form of Śakti worship is the Sapta Maṭrkās. These are the divine mothers representing the Śaktis of important deities. The earliest Sapta Maṭrkā group is found on the northern
wall of the porch of Parasuramesvara temple. They are Camunda, Varahi, Indrani, Vaisnavi, Kumari, Mahesvari and Brahmi flanked by Virabhadra and Ganesa. Next group in chronological order, is found inside the Vaital temple, where Camunda acts as the presiding deity. In Jajpur, we find two sects of Sapta Matrikas with Viraja as the presiding deity.

Camunda is the next important deity of this cult. Like the Durga images, Camunda images also vary in their forms as regard to hands. Camunda figure usually is depicted in dreadful posture with a corpse beneath her feet and the hood of a snake above her head. Camunda in the Mohini temple is in dreadful form, with sunken belly, lean and pendulous breasts, having a ghastly smile and garland of skulls hanging round her body. The Camunda figure at Bhuasuni temple is also ascribed to the Bhauma age. The worship of Camunda probably was associated with human sacrifice.

Varahi is another independent goddess in the Saktta temples. The Varahi temple at Chaurasi has been assigned to the Bhauma epoch in Orissa.

Among the various Saktta temples that flourished in Orissa during the Bhauma period, Vaital temple at Bhubaneswar is the best specimen containing Saktta, Saiva and Buddhist images. Vaital, derived from the word Vetal, originally was a Kapali shrine. Here Bhairava is the deity of the Kapaliyas. Camunda the presiding deity is known as Kapalinī. In the medieval
period Kapālika sect was very popular in India and it was associated with all the Śākta Tantric temples. The Kapālikas were associated with awful esotericism and mysticism. They resorted to Pañchamakārsādhanā to gain control over mind and body. Bhairava, according to them, is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. The dark inner sanctum, sacrificial pillar, the Bhairava images in terrific forms denote the association of Kapālika sect with Vaital temple.

The Sexo-yogic practices of the Kapālikas centred round the Cāmundā and the sixty-four Yoginis. In the 9th-10th century A.D. due to the rise of Brāhmanical tāntric tantricism many tāntric temples came into existence in different parts of India. The sixty-four Yogini temple at Hirapur and Ranipur-Jharial - two such temples of which the former is described to the Bhauma period. This temple was built by the Bhauma queen Hirā Mahādevī and the village was named after her.

The sixty-four Yogini temple at Hirapur is the earliest one representing the complicated Śākta-Tantric pantheon. This temple is circular in shape with the images of the Yoginis, ten armed Mahāmāyā, the presiding deity and nine Kātyāynīs, four-armed Ajaika Pāda Bhairava and ten armed Bhairava. This esoteric cult of Yogini was introduced in the coastal Orissa through central and western India.

The Kālikā Purāṇa declared Jagannath as Bhairava and Vimalā as Kātyāyini, the presiding deity of Odra Pitha.
The popularity of Katyāyini is revealed from the epigraphic evidence belonging to the Bhauma period. In her Dhenkanal charter Tribhuvana Mahādevī I compares herself with Katyāyini. Scholars have identified Katyāyini with Viraja. Bhauma-Kara rulers e.g. Sivakara I, Tribhuvana Mahādevī and Gouri Mahādevī were followers of Śaktism. Some of the feudatory rulers namely the Śulkis and Bhañjas also popularised Śakti worship in Orissa in the medieval times.

During the period under discussion we find a strange amalgamation of Śaivism, Śaktism and Vajrayānism. The sculptures of this period exposed the skill of master craftsmen in Orissa. The images of Ardhanārisvara, Parvati, Bhairava, Camunḍā, Yogiṇīs along with the Buddhist deities Avalokitesvara, Mañjuśrī, Tārā etc on the facades and niches of the temples show the popularity of Śākta tantricism. Besides divine, semi divine and mithuna sculptures on the outer facades of the temples express sensuous beauty along with divinity symbolising the mystery of Puruṣa and Prakriti, Śiva and Śakti.

Orissa undoubtedly was an important centre of Śaktism in 8th-9th century A.D. Though this cult is of distant origin, still it continues as an important independent religion.
Minor Cults:

Apart from the above faiths, we come across other minor cults which were popular during the period under review. The sculptures in the temples represent the images of Gaṇesa, Nāga, Kāṛtātikeya, Sūrya, Agni, Yama, Varuṇa, Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

Sun Worship:

The beginning of the Sun worship in India may be traced back to the pre-Vedic times. The Gupta records refer to the worship of the Sun god. In Orissa, the prevalence of solar symbol on the early punch marked coins, traces the popularity of this cult in ancient times.

Hīuen Tsang in 7th century A.D. (641 A.D.) witnessed the car festival of Sun god at Multan. Bana describes Prabhākara Vardhana, the father of Harsa as an ardent devotee of Sun. Sun-worship in Kalinga was popular. Though the Māṭharas traced their origin from Māṭhara or Sun, they worshipped Narayana Viṣṇu. From Vedic times Viṣṇu and Sūrya belonged to one celestial group and both are known as Trivikrama. The Early Ganga rulers also considered the seventh day of Māgha auspicious and performed the car festival of Surya. There are some epigraphic instances of donating land to the brāhmaṇas on this day.

In the Sumandala plate of Dharmarāja I calls himself 'Sahasraraśmi Paśābhukta' which reveals that the king was a
devotee of Sun god. The Śailodbhava ruler Madhavarāja II donated land to Chharampāsvāmi on solar eclipse day. The Buguda plate also refers to the donations of land on solar eclipse day.

Sun worship was introduced by the Saura Brāhmaṇas of Sakadvipa known as Māgas. The Āṅgiras Bharadvāja Brāhmaṇas claimed their descent from the Māgas. The Āṅgirasa brāhmaṇas were donated land in our period by the rulers. The Maitrāyaniya brāhmaṇas who were worshipper of Mītra (Sun) were accorded royal patronage in South Tosali in 6th century A.D. by the Vigrahas, Mudgalas and Datta families. With them the sun worship became popular in Orissa in early medieval times.

The image of Surya is found in Parasuramesvar temple, in the front facade of Vaital temple and at Khijjing. Thus, we may conclude that though this cult was popular from the ancient down through the medieval period it could not attain supremacy due to the spread of Vaishnavism and Śaivism. Yet Sun god was worshipped for removal of sins, bestowal of riches food, fame, health and prosperity by the people of Orissa in medieval times.

Naga Cult:

Naga worship was prevalent in Orissa in 3rd-4th century A.D. The statues of Nagarāja discovered in the suburbs of Bhubaneswar confirm the popularity of Naga cult in Orissa. Epigraphic reference to Śrī Maṇināgesvara Bhaṭṭāraka is made in
the Kanas plate of Loka-Vigraha and Olasing plate of Bhānuvardhana. In both the charters Maitrāyaniya Brāhmaṇas are mentioned in association with the worship of the God.

Orissa is full of Nāga antiquities associated with the divinities of Brāhmaṇical fold of Hinduism as well as Buddhism and Jainism. Nāga sculptures belonging to the period under discussion are found at Bhubaneswar, Ratnagiri, Mayurbhanj (Khijjiṅgakoṭa) Maraguḍā and Daya valley.

Cult of Gānapatya:

Ganesa or Siddhidata is the deity worshipped at the beginning of all religious and auspicious occasions. He is venerated by the Hindus, Buddhists and the Jainas. The temples of our period have Ganesa figure with his mount musika (mouse). In the Parasuramesvar, Vaital, Sisirēśvara, Svarṇajalesvar, Bharatesvar temples, the seated figure of Ganesa is found.

Another popular deity worshipped in the tribal areas is 'Stambhesvarī' (lady of the post). In the 6th century A.D. Raja Tustikara declared himself as a patron of this deity (Stambhesvarī Padābhakta) in his Terasinga plate. Between 6th and 7th century A.D. the Sulki rulers of Kodalaka manḍala declared Stambhesvarī as their tutelary deity. Originally Stambhesvarī was worshipped as a wooden post but later it was carved in stone. The Bhanjas of Khiṅjali Manḍala also patronised
this cult and worshipped the goddess as their tutelary deity in Sonepur and Baud region. Stambhesvari temple is found in Sonepur and the goddess is still worshipped in different parts of Orissa. Wooden pillar or stone in every village is worshipped as 'gramadevata' which implies the popularity of this cult.

Orissa was a congenial ground for the prevalence of all religious faiths since time immemorial. In the Pre-Christian centuries Buddhism and Jainism had full sway and in the early Christian centuries Brahmanical religions gained popular acceptance. For over five centuries after the Gupta period the people of Orissa supported all religious views without giving any indication of social turmoil. In course of time when Buddhism and Jainism became extinct the essential features found representation in the Jagannath cult. Orissa from the Ganga period (1108 to 1435) became the centre of Panchopasana (worship of Ganesa, Bhaskar, Visnu, Siva and Durga). Never in the history of Orissa was there any incident of religious conflict. There are instances where kings equivocally styled themselves as patron of Saivism, Vaishnavism and Saktism. There is an example in the Ganga period where king Anangabhima III assuming the title 'Purusottamaputra, Durgaputra and Sivaputra'. The Bhanja king Ranabhana assumed the title 'Paramamaheśvara and Stambhesvarivarapradasadat'. This shows the nature of royal support and state policy. It served as a congenial ground for the growth of religious syncretism and evaluation of the Jagannath cult in the 12-13th century.
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