CHAPTER - IX

SOCIAL CONDITION

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Caste System

During the period under review caste system had been firmly rooted in the social life of this region. The castes were distinguished by their four water-tight compartments, namely, the Brāhmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaiśya, and the Sudra. Yuan Chwang\(^1\) is of the opinion that castes were gradually assuming hereditary character in the society. In the medieval period the Varna system, based on profession, was losing its impact and was giving rise to caste system based on birth and heredity. This generated iron curtains and retarded the process of assimilation of the society.

Brāhmaṇas

The Brāhmaṇas were at the top of Varnāśrama-dharma and were respected by the people at all levels of the society. Smṛiti writers\(^2\) attributed high social status to the Brāhmaṇas. Itsing\(^3\) describes the position of the Brāhmaṇas as dignified and honourable all over India and that they were regarded as Devas (Gods). They enjoyed such positions due to their

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2. Parāsara, VIII, 33.
3. Takākushu, pp.24 and 182.

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holiness and dutifulness. Rulers patronised them with lavish grants of land and money. These grants were also made for the spiritual upliftment of the donor and of his ancestors. The land grants were made both by the Princes and the people almost in equal manner. The ब्राह्मणas enjoyed tax-free land and various services rendered by other classes of people in the society. The donated villages or अजराहारas were completely free from administrative oppressions.

The ब्राह्मणas were identified with different classes in respect of their original home provinces. The North India ब्राह्मणas were grouped into five classes, namely, सारस्वत, मधुला, गाँड़ा, उत्कल and कृष्ण कुंजा. All of them together were called पञ्चगाँड़ा. In South India, the ब्राह्मणas were known as द्रविड़, ताला, कर्नाट्का, मध्येश or गुरजरा.

The ब्राह्मणas were conventionally known by their surnames as उपाध्याय, श्रवण, समाज, दिक्षित, कारा, स्वरोधय, भट्टा and आचार्या. These name-suffixes distinguish them from other castes of the society. Study and

5. ibid.
10. ibid.

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teaching were the chief professions of the Āchāryas, the Upādhyāyas and the Bhāttas. They were sincere and rigid in safeguarding the Vedic literature and culture. Some of them accepted priest-craft as their profession. The royal priests exerted considerable influence in the administrative and social spheres. In the Bhaṅja royal family of Vaṅjulvaka the royal priests were Bhāṭṭa Sūmangala¹, Bhāṭṭa Durgada², Bhāṭṭa Rājada³, Bhāṭṭa Arkaḍeva⁴ etc whose advices were sought at the time of land grants.

Brāhmaṇas, who migrated to Orissa during this time, settled there permanently and assumed the names of their original places of migration. The Simhipura grant⁵ reveals that two Brāhmaṇa brothers, namely, Būdra Valaka and Chānda Valaka, had migrated to Kāliṅga from Sālivana Dadapura and village Dharma-pura in the Mahendrabhoga viśaya was established for them. Several other Brāhmaṇas were also brought from outside states and were made to settle in various parts of Orissa. The examples of some such settlements were Vikhati⁶, Tilapadraka⁷, Odra Viṣaya⁸.

1. E.I., XXIV., pp. 172-175.
4. E.I., XXVIII., pp. 272-278.
7. ibid., Vol. XXV., pp. 147-157.
8. ibid., pp. 157-61.
Madhyadeśa¹, Atapagrāma², Buddhakutī³, Tala Bhṛtakī⁴, Palāṣi⁵,
Bhatta Nīrāla⁶, Buralla⁷, Muleri⁸, Takāri⁹, Tribhuvanapura¹⁰,
Maṁdana¹¹, Khaḍuvavalli¹², Śīkhedāha¹³, Vaṭalavīḍīma¹⁴, Vapa-
bhumi¹⁵, Gaṅgavādi¹⁶, Kolāṇcha¹⁷, Dastipada¹⁸, Traśiḍya¹⁹,
Raḍha²⁰, and Vardhana²¹.

6. ibid, Vol.XX, pp.100-104.
13. ibid, Vol.IV, pp.67-68.
15. ibid, Vol.XVIII, pp.298-299.
18. ibid.
21. ibid, Vol.XXVI, pp.74-82.
Distinction among the Brahmanas is noticed in respect of their gotras, Pravaras and Anupravaras. Gotra is generally referred to family relationship. The seven eponymous sages were Kāsyapa, Vāśīṣṭha, Bhṛigu, Gautama, Bhāradvāja, Atri, and Visvāmitra, after whom the gotras are named. Later on the eighth gotra in the name of sage Agastī was added to the list. These gotras were subsequently subdivided into a number of other gotras, namely, Vatsa, Krishṇatreyā, Maudgalya, Rohita, Kanva, Kaunāḍīya, Kauśika, Parāsara, Kapiṅjala, Kausta, Haritaka, Kumara Harita, Gargya, Pingala, Visvāmitra, Jatukarma and Kātyāyana. Pravaras and Anupravaras were used to glorify the names of those illustrious persons who contributed to the enhancement of the family prestige. Pravara is generally constituted of three or five Rishis and accordingly, the Brahmanas were recognised as Trayarsha or Pañchārsha. Some Brahmanas had also Akarshi Pravaras. The Brahmanas were also divided into a number of social groups on the basis of gotras and Pravaras. Matrimonial relation was prohibited among Brahmanas of similar gotras and Pravaras. Thus casteism was deep rooted in the society.

The duties assigned to Brahmanas were six-fold in character, namely, Yajña (offering sacrifice), Yajana (officiating at sacrifices), Adhyayana (study), Adhyāpana (teaching), Dāna (gift).

The Smritis\(^1\) ascribe the study of the Vedas, performances of sacrifice and offering of gifts to the Brähmanas. They were recognised in the society according to their specialisation in any of the three Vedas - Rig, Yaju and Sāma. The Atharva Veda was not popular in the society at that time. Brähmanas belonging to Rig Veda were few in number and they were included in Asvalāyana branch. Brähmanas of white Yajurveda were included in Aditya community and were known as Vājasaneya branch. They had two branches, namely, Kanva and Madhyāndina. Brähmanas of Black Yajurveda were divided into three parts which are mentioned in the copper plate grants of Orissa as Taitiriya, Maitreyani and Katha. Kautheniya branch was popular among the Sāmaveda Brähmanas.

Sovereign rulers as well as the feudatories under them made lavish grants of money and lands for the repair of temples, worship of deities and maintenance of the temple priests. Priests became the custodians of such grants and led a comfortable life out of the income of the temples. Numerous illustrations of various such donations are available from the epigraphic records of the period under review. The twin temples of Niłamādhava Vishnu and Siddhesvara Siva\(^2\) standing on one platform, was constructed during the rule of Dhrātipura Bhañjas and the Brähmana dones of Gandharadi were, beyond doubt, the

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1. Manu, I, 80-90, Yaj, I, 116-19  

2. E.I., Vol. XX, pp. 100-104f.
priests of this temple. The Sanakhimedi charter of Śvetaka Gaṅga king Indravarman, was donated to Lokāmadhava Vishnu and Svayambhukesvara Śiva. A part of this grant was earmarked for sacrifice, Āhava and Nāivedya. The priests were instructed to lead an austere and devoted life. Brāhmaṇas, habituated to gambling and prostitution, were deprived of all privileges. Some Brāhmaṇa priests did not only confine themselves to traditional duties like study, teaching and religious rites but showed their worth in state-craft. The Datta Brāhmaṇas specially were distinguished for playing significant roles in the administration. The original home of these Datta Brāhmaṇas was Ayodhyāpura, probably Ayodhyapura of modern Balasore district in Orissa. This Ayodhyā was famous for Buddhist monastery devoted to Mahāyāna Buddhism in the 9th and 10th centuries AD. One Datta family was ruling over this territory at first as the feudatory of Saśāṅkaadeva in the first half of the 7th century AD. and later on as the feudatory of Harshavardhana. These Datta Brāhmaṇas lost their original profession due to prolonged stay in administration. They even identified themselves as a separate caste. D.C. Sircar is of the opinion that the modern Datta families of West Bengal were a branch of the ancient Brāhmaṇas of Varnāsrama-dharma. Brāhmaṇas of other gotra also played similar roles in the administration of the contemporary period. Almost all high offices like Mantrin, Sandhivigrahika

and Mahākšapātalika were reserved for them. They were endowed with the titles like Mahattara, Mahāmahattara or Mahāmahattama. During the rule of Vañjulvaka Bhañja kings Bhaṭṭa Bapuka, Bhaṭṭa Stambhađevas, Bhaṭṭa Bapudeva were appointed as ministers and Bhaṭṭa Keśavađevas was the chief minister of Vidyādhara-bhañja.

It is known from the epigraphic records that many people of tribal origin came in contact with the Aryan culture and accepted Varnāśramadhamma. Some of them became well versed in the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas and identified them as Brāhmaṇas. Some of their Non-Aryan names, namely, Lumbādeva, Apudeva, Chhedimāsvami, Chhedisvami, Chharampāsvami, Heragāsvami continued even after the Aryanisation. Many Brāhmaṇas also switched over to other professions for better earning. The Simhipura copper plate grant of Dhamakheḍi reveals that donees Nayaka Duḍurāvalaka and Nayaka Chēmanḍaka adopted Kshatriya profession and achieved praise-worthy success in the field of defence. They adopted trade and commerce and identified themselves as Vaisyas. In the Orissa Museum plates of Nettaḥbanja the donee was Ibadatta of Kaśyapa gotra, devoted to Vaiśya profession.

3. ibid., XXXVII, p. 257f.
4. ibid., XVIII, pp. 282-300ff.
Kshatriyas

The Kshatriyas were placed in the second position in our Varṇāśramadharma and they had played a significant role in the history and culture of medieval Orissa. It appears that the Kshatriyas of medieval Orissa originally belonged to some tribal families who were Aryanised through process of acculturation and entered into Kshatriyahood of Varṇāśrama system. The epigraphic records of the feudatory rulers corroborate this fact. It is said that the Bhājjas were born of egg (Andaja Vaṁśa Prabhava)\(^1\). The eponymous prince was born of a pea-hen's egg and was brought up by sage Vasiṣṭha. Satrubhaṅja of Asanpat Stone Inscription was of Nāga origin\(^2\). The tutelary deity of the Śulkis of Kōdālaka-Maṅḍala was Stambheśvari or Khambeśvari\(^3\).

Some scholars hold the view that the tribal chieftains of the above were the heads of the various tribal communities and later on included in the Kshatriyavarnas by the Brāhmaṇas\(^4\). Such efforts considerably helped to popularise and consolidate Brāhmaṇism. Many non-Aryan gods and goddesses were recognised as Brāhmaṇa deities. Brāhmaṇism also accepted

the Tantric cult of the tribes. Some Brāhmaṇas even identified themselves as princes by practising Kshatriya profession. People of the tribal community took to military profession and were regarded as lesser Kshatriyas.

Statecraft and military training were the most important subjects of study for the Kshatriyas. They became capable of defending their people and state from all sorts of dangers both internal and external. The Smṛiti writers\(^1\) assigned bravery and capability to the Kshatriyas in protecting the innocent and punishing the wicked. The Kshatriyas were usually appointed in important positions of civil and military services. Sometimes, of course, men of other castes, namely the Brāhmaṇas and the Vaishyas, were appointed in the Kshatriya profession. But the Kshatriyas were far more in number in comparison to others.

The Kshatriyas had a free hand in establishing matrimonial relation with other castes in the society. This is evident from the fact that Nettabhaṅja of the Banatumba copper plate grant\(^2\) married a lady of Kshatriya caste (Kshatridevī) as well as a lady of Kaivarta caste (Kaivartadevi).

Vaiśya

The Varnaśrama-dharma provided the third position to the Vaiśyas in the society. Smṛiti writers\(^3\) prescribe

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1. Parāśara I, 64 and Śukra, 1.41.
3. Atri, 5-6, Vaiśāṣtha, 2-23.

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duties like trade and commerce, agriculture and domestication of animals to the Vaiśyas. They were recognised as Vanikaputra due to their professional ability. Rulers of various states patronised and encouraged them by land grants. 'Vaiśyāgrahāra', a combination of three villages, was assigned to Śrī Erapā Nāyaka, a Vaiśya, by the Kaliṅga ruler Madhusūrya 1.

The medieval traders were divided into three categories, namely the local traders, the travelling traders (traders going abroad) and professional traders. The traders of Kaliṅga, during this time, travelled in the sea to distant islands for trade and commerce. Kalidasa has depicted the Kaliṅga ruler as the lord of the sea in his epic Raghuvamśa 2. Island like Java, Sumatra, Vai, Borneo were colonised by the Kaliṅga traders. Trade relations were also established with China, Ceylon, Africa and Rome. In fact, the foreign trade of Orissa made its social life more prosperous and conspicuous.

On the basis of their profession the Vaiśyas were divided into several sub-castes. Laxmīdhar is of the opinion that the Vaiśyas were free to adopt any profession that suited to them. The title Nāyak shows that the Vaiśyas served as the commanders in the armed forces. Some of them were also important scribes who inscribed large number of land grants.

2. Raghuvamśa, 6. 54.
It is revealed from the Baud grant\(^1\) and the Singhara grant\(^2\) of Ranabhañjadeva of Khiñjali-Mañgala that Śivanāga and Padmanāva, the scribes of the above grants, were Vaiśyas.

The caste system was not rigid in the early medieval period of our history. The Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatryyas and the Sudras had no bar to adopt the professions of the Vaiśyas. The Vaiśyas also could easily take up professions of other varnas in the society. Hemadri\(^3\) has included the goldsmiths in the class of Wāsherman and cōbblers. Alberuni\(^4\) was of the opinion that there was no difference between the Vaiśyas and the Sudras.

**Kāyasthas**

Kāyastha as a caste emerged only in the medieval period of Orissan history. The Varna system, therefore, does not mention Kāyastha as a caste because of its late origin. The earliest reference to this group was made in the Yajñavalkya Śrīti\(^5\). The Vedaśya Śrīti\(^6\) describes them as Sudras. In the ruling of Calcutta High Court\(^7\) also they have been described as Sudras. The Patna High Court, of course, holds

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1. E.I., XII, p. 328, 1.58.
2. J.B.O.R.S., VI, pp. 480-86.
5. H.D., II, I, 75-76.

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them as Dvijas\(^1\). In the writings of Panini, Patanjali and Kauttiya and the inscriptions of monarchs like Ashoka and Kharavela, the word Kāyastha does not find any place. The word Kāyastha has been used only once in the Yajñavalkya Smṛti\(^2\).

The Damodarpur copper plate charter\(^3\) of the Gupta period is the first epigraphical record where Kāyastha has been mentioned. Kāyasthas ultimately crystallized into a distinct caste and occupied an important position in the society. The Mrichhakatikā-Prakāsa\(^4\) mentions the Kāyasthas as writers in the Judicial Courts. Kane\(^5\) is of the opinion that they were the writers in the revenue department of the kings. The Kāyasthas are described as writers and accountants in the Mitakshara of Viṣṇuśarma\(^6\). R. N. Banerjee has accepted them as scribes\(^7\). The Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtra\(^8\) establishes them as writers of documents. They were also placed in exalted positions in the departments of civil, military and judiciary. The Kāyasthas maintained a low profile and became unpopular among the masses due to their strictness in the performance of royal duty.

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2. I - 3346.
3. E.I., XV, p. 128f.
5. H.D.S., 3, 979.
8. Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtra, VIII, 3.

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Contemporary literature visualises mass reaction against them. They are even described as greedy and merciless men. The Yajñavalkya Smriti maintains that it is the sacred duty of the rulers to save the people from the oppression of the Kāyasthas.

The contemporary epigraphic records do not provide much information on the Kāyastha as a caste. Yasodatta, the donee of the Dasapālla grant of Devānandadeva of Airavattamandala, was a Kāyastha. He was a Sattva-Gehi (Virtuous householder) and a teacher of military science (Sastrapoḍhya). In the Parālakhimedi copper plate grant of Vajrahastadēva of Gaṅga dynasty, Vachhapajya has been described as a minister who belonged to the Kāyastha Caste. The scribe of the Galavalli charter of Manujendravarman of this dynasty was Kāyastha Chidhapa. The non-Aryan names like Vachhapajya and Chidhapa indicate that they were of tribal origin. Towards the last part of the period under review the Kāyasthas have already been converted into a caste.

Kāraṇas

Kāraṇas as a caste figure frequently in our epigraphic records of the contemporary period. In the Manu Smriti Kāraṇas have been described as the scions of Vṛtṛya

3. ibid., III, p. 220.
   E.I., XXXI, pp. 188-91.
5. 1. 44.
(Kshatriyas of ancient time). They are depicted as the off-springs of Vaisya males and Sudra females in the Yajñavedavya Smriti. Lexicographers of medieval time identify the Karanas with the Kayasthas. Kshiraswamin, while writing the commentary on the Amarakosa, mentions the Karanas as officers like the Kayasthas. Mirashi finds no difference between the Karanas and the Kayasthas. D.C. Sircar is of the opinion that the Kayasthas are a professional class of scribes intermixed with the tribal Karanas and crystallized into a caste in the medieval period. The names of Karanas are mentioned in the Petrasara grant of Netabhanja and the Orissa Museum plates of Silabhanja alias Tribhuvanakalasa. The Karanas also appear as a caste in the Mahabharata. In the Orissa of the modern time Karanas are found more in number and they are very much similar to the Kayasthas living in Bihar and Bengal.

Sudras

Sudras occupied the fourth position in the Varna system of our society. In the medieval period some

1. 1, 92.
3. CII, p.CIX.
6. ibid, Vol.XXVIII,pp.272-278.
developments were noticed in the social position of the Sudras. Medhatithi\(^1\) was of the opinion that the affluent Sudras were not obliged to serve the Brāhmaṇas. Yajñavalkya had supported the view of Medhatithi and stated that the duty of the Sudras was to carry on agriculture and trade for the benefit of the Brāhmaṇas. Hieun-Tsang\(^2\) also said that the Sudras were cultivators. Yajñavalkya Smṛiti describes the Sudras as people adopting various professions like rearing of cattle, trade, painting, dancing, music etc. They had also the right to sell oil, ghee, milk as mentioned in the Parāsara Smṛiti\(^3\). According to Brhaspati Smṛiti\(^4\) the Sudras are free to adopt any profession suited to them. It is observed that some professions were common to both the Vaiśyas and the Sudras. It further seems that the line of demarcation between them was first dwindling down. They were known more by their castes than by the Varnas of Vaiśya or Sudra. The study of epigraphic records reveals that there were many castes in the society, namely Suvarnakāra (Gold smith), Kamsākara (Bellmetal worker), Mālākāra (Florist), Sutrardhara (Weavers), Napita (Barbar), Kaivarta (boatman), Tailika (Oilman) etc. It is to note that these castes were assuming hereditary character.

\(^1\) Medhatithi, 3-153, 8-415.
\(^2\) Watters I, p.168.
\(^3\) Parāsara Smṛiti, 1-68.
\(^4\) Brhaspati Smṛiti, 5-53, p.304.
The goldsmiths, the bellmetal workers and the Vindhanis were engaged as scribes and they continued to do so through generations. A family of bellmetal workers was influential in the territory of Svetaka Ganga ruler Indravarman. Kulaputra Śrī Sāmanta Swayambhu of this caste was appointed as the scribe of the copper plate grant and was promoted to the position of śreṣṭhi in subsequent times.

The work of making flower garlands was a profitable profession in which a caste named Mali was engaged. Garlands were meant for deities of the temples and for the luxury of the people.

The fishermen were engaged in fishing and transporting people and goods, across the rivers. The Banatumba copper plate grant of Bhañja king Nettabhañjadeva reveals that this ruler had a queen named Kaivartadevi, who was without doubt a fisherman's daughter.

The Kumbhakāras (Potters) and the Kamakāras (Carpenters) were identified as special castes in the society. The Kāmanalinākshapur grant of Jayavarmā mentions the name of village Kamakārarachheda where the Kamakāras and the Lauhakāras (blacksmith) inhabited. The Saundhikas, otherwise known as Madhukaras or Madhuvalı̄yas were engaged in the distillation of liquor.

1. The Sanakhimedi copper plate grant of Indravarman, E.I., XXIII, p. 78f.
Through the process of acculturation many tribals were converted into the four varnas of our Varnaśrama-dharma. But there were many tribals who remained firm in their religion and culture. The tribals were commonly known as Savaras. It is known from the accounts of Pliny, and Ptolemy as well as from classical literature that the Savaras were widely inhabiting the South-East India and the major part of Orissa was included in it. It is revealed from the Sarvanija Jātaka that this territory extended up to the river Telavaha identified with the modern Sal river of Orissa. Many believe that the surrounding area of river Savari in Koraput was the original homeland of the Savaras. The Nātyaśāstra of Bharata describes that they had a special language of their own. The Kādambari of Banabhaṭṭa gives a clear picture of the Savaras of the forest. A Savara has been depicted as an ignorant one who is hated by others. This work further gives the description of a tribal youth.

The epigraphic records of Chadagaṅgadeva of Gaṅga dynasty describe that Kāmārṇarvadeva with his four brothers came from Kolāhalapura of Western Gaṅga state to Mahendragiri area. After worshipping God Gokarnesvara they defeated Vālāditya, the Savara chief and founded the new dynasty in Kaliṅga. The Dhenkanal grant of Suṅki ruler Jayastambha-deva reveals that Kalāhastambha, a ruler of this dynasty, defeated a tribal chief named Dhekata. According to B. Mishra this Dhekata was the Savara chief Dhenka after whom the modern Dhenkanal has been named. From the above examples it is evident that Aryan culture flourished on the ruins of tribal culture. Savara king Bālāditya was very much influenced by the Aryan culture whereas Dhekata or Dhehka maintained the identity of his own cultural and religious heritage.

In the medieval Orissa there was no significant difference as to the means of livelihood among various groups of tribal communities. They were totemistic and used birds and animals as totems. Their religion was full of superstitions. Hunting was their main pleasure. Both male and female were habituated to liquor. Forcible marriage was popular among them.

1. I.A., XII, p.9f; XVIII, p.161f.
3. B. Mishra, Dynasties of Medieval Orissa, p.32.
They were very much hospitable to guests and for that reason Aryans had cordially invited them and they were gradually influenced by the Aryan culture.

Āśramas

Life in Brahmanism has been divided into four stages or Āśramas, namely Brāhmacharya, Gārhyastha, Vānaprastha and Sanyāsa. During Brāhmacharya a young student was to study the Vedas and the other religious scriptures in a Brāhmana Agrahāra under a preceptor. This young man was called Brahmachari and such a system was compulsory for all the Brāhmanas. Rulers donated money and land for the maintenance of individual Brahmacharis and the institutions dedicated for the training of the Brahmacharis. The Yuvarājas or the royal princes were also imparted training in these institutions. It was popular among the higher sections of the society for professional efficiency. The Bhaṭṭa Brāhmanas were engaged to teach Asṭādhyaṭī of Panini and the Alankāra Sūtra. It is to be noted here that traditional Gurukula Āśramas were in the process of decline during this time.

People in the Gārhyastha Āśrama entered into married life and established themselves as ideal house holders. They adopted family professions and at the instance of making

1. I.ā.ī., XVI, p.382f.
grants to the donees these householders acted as witnesses (Grāme Sarve Samavetan Kutumbinah Samajāpayati). Smṛitis enjoin that this Āśrama was for the upliftment of a pious householder. He was to perform Homa and Tarpana. In the performance of Homa and other sacrifices the Agnihotri Brāhmaṇas were engaged. The Tarpana is meant for the religious merit of the donor and his parents.

Contemporary epigraphic records do not throw adequate light to enable us to form a correct idea on the Āśrama called Vānaprastha. Ranabhaṅgadeva of Khiṃjali-Maṇḍala ruled for 58 years and crossed the age of 50 which is accepted as the year of Vānaprastha. The Sanyāsa which is the fourth and the last stage of our Āśrama refers to Jatis and Tapasvis. The Raghuvamsa of Kalidasa mentions three Āśramas and depicts the third one as Muni Vṛtti.

The Sanyāsīs were attached to the Mathas with permanent establishment and perpetual endowment. The head of the Matha was generally a preceptor. A Sanyāsī was expected to perform meditation and austerities. He wears a loin-cloth (Koupina maṭra Vastra), besmeared the body with ashes and remained satisfied with alms (mita bhikṣa bhogi). Smṛiti

1. Vyāsa Smṛiti, 4.2.
writers do not find any difference between a Sanyāsī and a Brahmacārī as both live on begging\textsuperscript{1}. The growth of Mathas and Viharas in the later period provided the ascetics to lead comparatively an easy life and there was hardly any need for begging. These monasteries (Mathas and Viharas) were main centres of education and learning during the period of Brahmacharya Āśrama.

**Marriage.**

In the early medieval period of our study the Anuloma and Pratiloma marriages were in vogue among the various social groups. The princely houses of this period established matrimonial relations irrespective of caste. Princesses of Bhañja family, namely Vakulamahādevi and Dharmamahādevi\textsuperscript{2} were wedded to Bhauma rulers. Trikaliṅgamahādevī, the queen of Bhañja king Vidyādharabhañja\textsuperscript{3} was a princess of the Somavānasī who were the lords of Trikalinga. The Banatumba grant\textsuperscript{4} of Bhañja king Netṛabhañja indicates that he had at least two wives, one is Kshatriñdēvi of Kshatriya caste and the other is Kaivartañdēvi of fisherman's caste.

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1. Briddhaharita, 8, 54.
2. B. Mishra, *Orissa under the Bhauma Kings*, pp. 53, 1.7.
Marriage ceremony was performed on auspicious occasions and Brāhmaṇa priests were endowed with lavish grants for the performance of such work. The Trilingi plates\(^1\) of Devendravaman reveal that on the occasion of marriage a village was donated to Brahmachārī Pillasarmā and his sister Pillika Swāmini. Anantavarman, the Gaṅga king, donated the Dharamalingesvara copper plate grant\(^2\), in favour of Vishnu Somāchārya on the occasion of the marriage of a daughter. The Parlakhimedi charter\(^3\) of Vajrahastadeva describes that a village named Hośanḍi was given to Kāmadī as dowry which reveals that dowry system was in promulgation then. This was probably followed in all parts of Orissa in this period.

Role of women in the Society

Women played a distinct role in the society. Much before the period under discussion, study of Veda and chanting of Vedic hymns were denied to them. Early marriages had also debarred them from pursuing higher learning. Women of aristocratic birth, however, were highly educated. Pillika Swāmini and her brother Pillasarmā of Trilingi copper plate grant received donations for their achievements in higher study\(^4\).

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Queen Karpuraśī, the donor of the Ratnagiri charter of Soma-
vaññi ruler Kamađeva, received education in the Solanapura
Vihāra of Utkala.

Women were also considered as the chief of the
household. They took part in the fasting, worshipping and the
other ceremonies with their husbands. The internal administra-
tion of the family mainly depended on them. They had rendered
significant services in the administration. The genealogy of the
Bhauma-Karas furnishes a list of nine queens who ascended the
throne and assumed sovereign titles like Mahārājādhīraja, Para-
bhaṭṭārikā and Māhesvarī. Mahādevī Vāsaṭā², the dowager queen of
the Somavahāsīs, took up the reins of administration as the regent
of her minor son Bālārjuna and showed accomplishments and
administrative abilities. In the Bhaṇja and Svetakaśaṅga records
we come across some chief queens who were endowed with the right
to register land grants with their seals. Queen Vijaya(Vidyā)
Mahādevī³, the consort of Rāṇabhāṇjadeva, donated a grant.
Jivalokanahādevī⁴, the queen of Nettabhaṇḍa Tribhuvanakalasa, was
given the responsibility of such a work. Widow marriage was not
in vogue in the royal and noble families. Queens spent their

1. E.I., Vol.XXIII, pp. 263-274...
2. Ibid. II, p. 191, V.18.
3. Patna Museum Plates of Rāṇabhāṇja year 22,
E.I., XX, pp. 100-104...
4. Orissa Museum plates of Nettabhaṇḍa Tribhuvanakalasa,
E.I., XXVIII, pp. 272-73...

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lives in religious and administrative works. Mahādevī Vāsatā and Kolāvatidevi of the Somavāsa; Prthvīmahādevī, Gospaṁinīdevī, Tribhuvanamahādevī III, Gaurīmahādevī, Vakulamahādevī and Dharmamahādevī of the Bhauma-Kara rule and Gospaṁinīdevī and Elādevī of the Śvetakāṅga dynasty were famous in their own ways. The Śastras prescribe an austere and restrained life for the widows. They were also prohibited from using precious jewels and perfumes.

Among the Vaiśyas and the Sudras, however, widow marriage was promulgated and such women were known as Punarbhūs.

**Dress and Cosmetics**

Both men and women gave much emphasis on the physical beauty and took maximum care to maintain a sound physique. They decorated their bodies with different types of clothes, flowers and scents. From the sculptures of Orissa and from the contemporary Indian literature some idea can be formed about the dress and cosmetics of this period. Males in general wore lower garments but people of higher society wore two garments of unstitched cloth, namely the upper and the lower garments. The upper garment was put across the breast and the left shoulder as depicted in the Nilamādhava image of Gandharādī (Fig. 16). The kings and nobles wore garments made of silk and wool of various colours in auspicious occasions. The Harsa Charita of Bāṇabhatta gives

a description of valuable cloths like Dukula, Netra and
Jattipāttā. The images of Brahmā (Fig. 51) at Baud and Nilamā-
dhava (Fig. 16) at Gandharādi give an idea of the style of
wearing of garments.

Females generally wore both the upper and the
lower garments. Sometimes, of course, they put on only the lower
garment keeping the entire upper part of the body exposed as
revealed in the amorous couples of Vaital temple. The folds in
the lower garment of the females are gathered and passed between
the legs and tucked on the back. The breast of a woman is
covered by a chauli or bodice. They also use a short-sleeved
blouse to cover the upper part of the body. A close fitting
tunic or pyjāmā is specially used by a dancing girl. Women of
poor and backward classes wore a small inner garment called
Ghāghara. The tribal people living in the forest, either
remained naked or wore a Kaupina.

Ornaments

Ornaments of different varieties were being
used by both males and females during this time. Mānasollāsa\(^1\)
prescribes finger-rings, armlets and ear-rings for kings. These
were made of gold studded with pearls and precious stones. The
queens wore ornaments of gold, pearl and precious stones and
garlands of fragrant flowers. According to Kapura manjari\(^2\)

\(^1\) Mānasollāsa, 8, 1049-1129.
\(^2\) Kapura manjari, pp. 20-96.
necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings, armlets were commonly used by people. We also get the information about the ornaments called Jirgijamupura¹ (anklet) and the tinkling Kaśchi² (girdles) worn by the ladies.

Elaborate crowns were worn by kings, queens and dancing girls on their heads. Gold chains, bands, and pearl string decorated the forehead of the ladies. The use of crest-jewel (Chudāmāni) by kings on their forehead was a unique style. Bala(Kharu) is an ornament of forearm often used by ladies in Orissa. Kinkina³ was the most favourable ornament for the leg and feet worn by both the sexes.

Hair Style

From the study of the images of the contemporary time it is known that hair style was very popular among men and women. Males arranged their hairs in the Jatamukuta fashion or allowed to fall freely on the back of the shoulder. The hairs of the females were comparatively longer which were thrown backwards and which, sometimes, touched the back of the waist. Maidens generally favoured wig hair style. A common feature noticed in the hair style of this period, was the tying of

1. I.H.U., XX9, 241, 1.2.
hairs into big knots falling into a side at the back of the head. Coiffure is another hair style noticed in the images of Sri and Pusti in the Nilamādhava temple of Gandharādi. These coiffures are in the form of big slanting buns topped by small chignons over the heads. The chignons are found decorated with flowers and pearl strings. Sanyāsīs and Sādhus have matted locks covering sometimes the head like turbans and hanging on the back as big stripes.

Food and Drink

The food habits of the people during this period, include both vegetarian and non-vegetarian items. The Buddhists and the Jains lived on vegetarian food whereas meat was the favourite food of the non-Aryan communities. Rice, Vegetables, Pulses, Oil, Spices, fish, meat, milk products, fruits and nuts, spiritous liquor and toddy, white rice (śita-taṇḍu) and condiments (Vyañjana) constituted the chief food and drink of this time. According to Mānasollāsa¹ quality rice was abundantly produced in Orissa during the period under reference. In the ancient and medieval literature use of rice has been mentioned. The Lāhkāvatārasūtra² describes rice, wheat, barley, three types of pulses, milk products and molasses as chief

1. Mānasollāsa, III, 1347.
2. Lāhkāvatārasūtra, p.250.

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diets of the people. It is of the opinion that wheat was not produced in Eastern India and Magadha. The epigraphic records of this period also do not throw much light on the production of wheat. We come across śāstras (free feeding houses), during the period under review, where rice gruel was distributed among the needy and poor people at the time of natural calamities.

Among the chief vegetable products were brinjels, Pumpkins, beans etc. The Aṣṭangaṛudaya of Bāgbhāṭa describes watermelon as Kalinga and from this it is known that this was cultivated abundantly in medieval Orissa. The most common of the vegetables relished by the people were the leaves of plants. This habit of taking leaves is still found among the people of Orissa. People used to keep a plot of land adjacent to their houses for green leaf cultivation. It is interesting to note that one of the leaves bears the name Kośala which most probably has been derived from the kingdom of Kosala.

Spices were specially used to make different items of food tasteful. The Yoginītāntra mentions the production of Haridrā (turmeric), Adraka (ginger), Tinaka (Cumin), Maricha (Pepper), Pippaliyaka (Long pepper) and Sarisha (Mustard). Spices have been referred to as Vyañjana (Condiments) in our inscriptions.

1. II, 7 V. 186.
Among the edible oils, mustard and sesame (tila) were commonly used. Oil is also extracted from the fruits of Madhuka tree\(^1\).

The mention of Sarkara Pādraka\(^2\) and Guḍapādraka\(^3\) in the Orissan epigraphy gives an idea that sugarcane cultivation and use of sugar and molasses were widely prevalent. Honey and different types of milk products were available in large quantity. This was possible because of the presence of long stretch of forest areas and cattle grazing fields in various parts of Orissa. Milk as well as milk products were included in the daily diet of people. In the epigraphic records of the Bhauma-Karas mention has been made of a community named Gokuta. The sale of milk and various milk products like curd, butter and ghee was their profession.

Fruit as an item of food was also popular in Orissa. Mention of place names like Vilvapādraka\(^4\), Jambugrama\(^5\) in the epigraphic records of the time is an indicative of that. Fruit-bearing trees were donated along with the lands to various donees. Important fruits of this period, relished by the people, were mango, Vilva, Jambu, Tala and Tentuli. Hiuen Tsang has referred to abundant growth of fruit-bearing trees in different parts of Orissa\(^6\).

1. E.I., XXVIII, p. 325, 1.27.
2. ibid., XXXV, p. 63, 1.6.
3. ibid., XXXI, p. 36, V. 15.
5. I.H.Q., II, p. 242, 1.3.
The use of spirituous liquor was seen mostly among the tribal communities. People of aristocratic class used it as an item of luxury. In the epigraphic records of the Bhauma-Karaś, the Saundhikas (distillers of wine) have been given an important place. From this it can be conjectured that drinking of wine was widely prevalent. Drinking of spirituous liquor was also popular among the women. The Mālavikagnimitram of Kalidāsa reveals that the beauty of woman is enhanced by the drinking of spirituous liquor. Use of such liquor was, however, forbidden to the Brahmins. The Brahmin donees were warned in the various copper plate grants not to take liquor of any kind.

Wheat-eating was very popular among the non-Aryan tribes. Fish and meat were indispensable to the kings and nobles. While donating land grants, the kings and the feudatories delegated hunting and fishing rights also to the donees. Sacrifice of cock, goat and ram was promulgated to propitiate the gods.

Education and Learning

During the period under review, the Brāhmin villages Agrahāras were the main centres of learning and education. They played the role of the Gurukula Ashramas of ancient

1. Mālavikagnimitram - Act.III.
time. The rulers, both sovereign and feudatory, patronised the learned Brāhmins and made them settle in certain villages with the purpose that the culture of the land would be protected and education would be spread among the people. The organisation of the tribal people also might have been an object of this step. In villages and towns some Hindu temples served the purpose of school-rooms for imparting elementary and preliminary education. Besides, there were some Vihāras which were the centres of advance studies mainly in Buddhist learnings and Hindu Śāstras. The Jayāśrama Vihāra situated in the feudatory State of Yamagartta-maṇḍala under the Tuṅga rulers may be taken as an example of centre of advance study. The rulers were making arrangements probably in the palaces for imparting military education to the royal members as well as to the people of the Kshatriya caste. Kayastha Yaśodatta, the donee of the Dasapalla grant of Devānandadeva of Airavatta-maṇḍala, has been designated as a teacher of military science (Śāstropadhyāya). The Vaiśyas were getting training in their respective professions in the houses of some chief artisans.

Entertainments

In the medieval period of our history many parts of Orissa was full of dense forests and provided ample opportunity to the hunters for hunting. Kings, nobles as well as common people were busy in hunting varieties of animals. It

1. Talcher Copper Plate of Sivakaradēva III, B. Misra, Orissa under the Bhauma Kings, p. 44.
2. E.I., XXIX, pp. 188 ff.

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appears that hunting was an entertainment of the people of
high birth and this was a tradition maintained from the ancient
time. In the Abhīgīyatnām Śākuntalam Kalidasa has depicted
Dusmanta as addicted to wine and hunting.

Gambling

Gambling, during this time, was very popular
and entertaining. This game attracted kings, their subjects
and even the Brāhmaṇas. Gambling was so widespread that many
writers of this time raised their voice against its devastating
effect. In the Sirpur Stone inscription, the donor Mahārāṇī
Vāsaṭā has warned the Brāhmin donces not to be addicted to
women and gambling. The Kathāsārītasāgara of Somadeva has
given an interesting description of a gambler.

Music and Drama

Music and drama have created a lasting impres­
sion in the minds of man as a source of enjoyment. The 64
arts of Kāmasūtra of Vatsyāyana have given the foremost place
to music, instrumental sound and dance. It is known from
Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela that Mahārāja Khāravela
was a great lover of music and he used to entertain his subjects
by music and dance. In the first and second century A.D.
Bharatamuni had divided the Indian music into four geographical

1. E.I., XL, pp. 181-201ff, Vr. 31.
2. Kāmasūtra, 121, 71, 125.
boundaries, namely Avanti, Dakshinatya, Pañchāli and Oḍramagadhi. The music of the eastern part of India was known as Oḍramagadhi and Oṛissa had also a significant contribution to music. A study of the temple sculpture (image) of Tosali reveals that there was a great development of music during the period under review. The image of Natarāja, revealing the symbol of dance, was a favourite one of the people. The Nāṭarāja idol, found in the Asanpat stone inscription⁴, was the first of its kind. Subsequently this kind of images became popular and a large number of Nattarāja images were being made in various parts of Oṛissa. All the Nattarāja images indicate that people of medieval Oṛissa had a special taste for Śivatandava dance. The ancient Oḍra-māgadhi music in the modern time developed into Odiṣi music and Odiṣi dance.

It is revealed from the writers of this period that music and dance were patronised by the kings and rich persons. Among the musical instruments Veena, Bheri, Turi, Conch, Mrudanga, Karatala were famous.

The Sirpur stone inscription of Mahārāṇi Vāsaṭā gives an indirect indication of the popularity of drama. This inscription reveals that the success of a drama depends on the decoration of the stage, plot, sequence and dialogue. There is sufficient ground to believe that a number of plays were written and staged in the medieval Oṛissa but all those have been

1. O.H.R.J., XIII, No. 2, p. 3.
lost in course of time. The Anargha Rāghava of Murari Mishra, written during the period, was the only play which was staged in Orissa. This play was staged on the auspicious occasion of the car festival of Lord Jagannath on the sea-shore.

Toys

Wooden and mechanical toys were made for the enjoyment of the children. The Kathāsāritasāgara of Somadeva describes varieties of toys being gifted for the entertainment of the Kaliṅga army. The art of making of toys (Vālakridānakāṇi) was one of the sixtyfour arts of Vatsāyana. The children of Western Orissa play with the earthen and the wooden toys of cow, elephant, and horse in the Bhādrava Amavāsyā day. Some of the ancient villages have earned a name for the manufacture of wooden images. This tradition of medieval Orissa has been kept alive even today.

Social Gatherings

The kings and the people of higher section of society enjoyed their lives through various methods of entertainments. Capital cities of the sovereign houses and their feudatories and numerous other cities were full of bounties and beauty. People of these urban areas occasionally gathered together in social gatherings called Gōsthīs for exchange of

1. Kathāsāritasāgara 21, 1.2.
ideas and enjoyment. According to Vatsyayana\(^1\) such Gosthis consist of men of common culture, intellect, social status and professions. Gosthis are also mentioned in the Ramayana\(^2\) and the Mahabharata\(^3\). These Gosthis were arranged either in a rich man's house or in a temple. Actors and singers entertain the gathering by their artistic performance and sweet music. In another Gosthi, specially arranged for the poetic discussion, renowned poets were taking part. The Kavyamimansa\(^4\) of Rajashekhara depicts the personal life of a poet who participated in such Gosthi. In all these social gatherings people took part in the deliberations concerning arts and craft, music and poetics and observed literary contests\(^5\). Sonepur copper plate grant\(^6\) of Mahabhavagupta Janamejaya I refers to the learned poetic discussion in Aramakataka, the capital of South Kosala (Vividha Vidyalankrta Vidvajjana Janita Kavyalapa). Kings patronised these Gosthis and personally participated in it on certain occasions. The medieval Orissa records grant of certain charters to the Brahmans for their scholarly achievement and this scholarship seemed to be testified in the poetic Gosthis.

\(^{1}\) Kamasutra, 1.4.
\(^{2}\) 2, 69.5.
\(^{3}\) 3, 177.3.
\(^{4}\) Kavyamimansa - Ch. 10, p. 50.
\(^{5}\) ibid, X.
\(^{6}\) E.I., XXIII, pp. 243-55.
In the medieval literature, description has been made of Udyāna Jātṛā, Panajātrā and Jalevatrā, enjoyed by the aristocratic people. These peoples gathered in the part or in their friends' houses for drinks. Abhidhanaratnamālā refers to such gatherings as pana Gaśthi.

Besides the Gaśthīs mentioned above there were some public functions, namely Madana Mahotsava, Kaumudimahotsava and Dipapratipamahotsava. Madanamahotsava is similar to the Holy of modern time. An interesting description of Madana Mahotsava has been presented in the 1st Act of the play Ratnāvalī of Harsavadhān.

Kaumudimahotsava was a replica of modern Kumārapurnimā day. People dressed themselves in beautiful dresses and flower wreaths and visited the houses of friends and relatives. Pujas were performed in the houses by chanting the Vedic hymns.

Dipapratipamahotsava is similar to Deepāvalī of our time. This festival was also named as Dipamālikā or Dipālikā. People, on this occasion, visited temples, exchanged betels and donated money to the Brāhmaṇas and the poor. In the Skanda Purāṇa and in Alberuni's description this day has been described as Vālirajya. People decorated their houses by series of lights to welcome king Vāli. Kshatriyas spent this night in merry-making and enjoyment and prepared themselves for victory march (Dipalikayan Vividha Vilasadatra Mukhairatra nrupai Viśheya)².

1. Ratnāvalī, 10.16.

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On the full moon day of Jestha, women observed Vata-savitri day. They worshipped banyan tree and performed fasting for Savitri. The ninth day of the bright fortnight of Asvina was celebrated as Mahanavami, especially by the Kshatriyas. Rana Bhanjadeva of Dhurtipura donated a village to the Brahmanas in this Mahanavami day (Mahanavamitithau). It is apparent from the above discussion that Gośthi were the mainstay of ancient Indian social and cultural life.

The indigenous tribes during this time also enjoyed their lives through various social gatherings and club houses. These club houses were called Ghotuls round which the social life developed. The Gośthi of the Aryans had a distinct influence on the Ghotuls. S.C. Sircar, in one of his learned discourses, has opined that Ghotul might have been derived from Gośthi. According to Hiralal Sukla there was an intimate connection between the Ghotuls and the Gośthi or Gośthakulas. The male and the female members of the Ghotul were called Chelik and Motiyari respectively. Members of both the sexes were meeting in these Ghotuls and spending the whole night in dance and music. The Ghotuls provided opportunity to choose their life partners and the couples, in fact, passed a period of engagement in these houses. The marriage ceremony

3. IHU, 1948 March Book Review "Muśrīa and their Ghotul".
was performed by constant engagement of dance and song in front of their family deity. In some of the modern tribal villages, we notice the sign of Ghotul culture even today. In the charters of Somavamśi king Jayāti I and his son Bhimaratha, sensational accounts of sensuous love making in the capital city of Yayātinagara have been presented. This was undoubtedly a Ghotul gathering of tribal youths.

All kinds of enjoyment of life discussed above were confined chiefly to the aristocratic classes of the society. On the other hand, thousands of people were below the poverty line. They lived in small cottages away from the capital. People in the villages bore the entire burden of taxation and paid 1/6th of their production of grain as land revenue. They were subjected to forced labour without wages for the sovereign and the feudatories. Such a labour is called Viṣṭi (modern Vethi). Villagers had to bear the various expenses and the oppressions of the royal officials called Chāṭa, Bhāṭa, Kayastha etc. on their tours to the villages.

It has been mentioned in the Brāhat Nārādiya Purāṇa¹ that Brāhmaṇas will also be oppressed by the royal officials, for money, in the Kaliyuga. The Kaliyuga here has been referred to the medieval age of our time. Greedy traders extracted maximum profit from the innocent village folk. Rich people demanded higher percentage of interest against the loans advanced to the poor people. Thus common men in rural areas were oppressed and they groaned under acute poverty.

¹ Ch. 37, p. 50

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The epigraphic records of our period do not furnish adequate information regarding the poverty of the people. But the literatures of the period depict a sordid picture of such poverty. According to Subhāṣita Ratnakosā of Vidyākara majority of the people were living in a single room which was used for dining, sleeping, storage and delivery of human babies. Famine and infectious diseases were common among the people of medieval period. Agni Purāṇa refers to drought and excessive rainfall as the cause of famine and prescribes remedy for such calamity. Bhauma queen Tribhuvana Mahādevī donated a village in her Dhenkanal copper plate grant to Brāhmaṇa Jagadhara for the removal of drought. Just at this time the devastating effects of cholera have been referred to in the description of Arabian geographer Ibon-al-phaki. There was hardly any remedy for all the natural calamities referred to above. These were accepted as a curse of the god upon the people.

Thus in the society of medieval Orissa, like the modern society, we notice on one hand the luxurious life of the aristocrats, whereas people in general suffer from poverty and hardship. Still then the social life of the period was happier than that of the present time. This can be attributed to less population, human character and labour. Things of daily use were available cheaply and easily. Requirements and expenses were less. They had, therefore, a life of contentment and happiness.

1. Verse, 1310.
2. JEGOS, II, pp. 413-27.