CHAPTER - XI

RELIGION
The period of this project witnessed the growth of a large number of religious sects, namely Jainism, Buddhism, Śaivism, Śaktism etc. The feudatory chiefs under their respective sovereigns patronised these sects and popularised them among the people. It is, sometimes, seen that rulers adopted certain sects in the early part of their life and owed allegiance to certain other sects at a later period. Illustrations of pursuing two religions simultaneously are also seen among them. Such a practice expedited the process of assimilation of various cults and paved the way for religious synthesis. It is evident from this that the rulers exhibited catholicism and tolerance towards other faiths.

Śaivism

During the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. Śaivism was a dominant cult throughout India and the influence was also extensively felt in Orissa of the time. The worship of Śiva in Orissa, however, is traced back to the 4th century A.D. The earliest evidence of Śiva worship is only known after the discovery of image on the Asanpat Stone inscription\(^1\) in the district of Keonjhar. The image of Natarāja found in the Asanpat

1. O.H.R.J., XIII, No. 2, pp. 1ff.
stone inscription indicates the worship of Śiva in this region of Orissa. It is revealed from the inscription that Mahārāja Śatrūrbhaṅjaṭadeva, son of Mahārāja Mānabhaṅjadeva, of Nāga dynasty, constructed a temple (Devāyatana) apparently of lord Śiva. The image depicts Nāṭarāja with eight hands. He holds a snake in the upper two hands and plays a lute with the lower two arms. In the three of the other hands he holds a Trisūla, a Dambaru and an Akshamālā. The image is in naked Urdhvalinga form indicating Tāṇḍava dance. Nandi and Bhṛukuti, the two attendants, are seated on both the sides of the image. Śaivism received royal patronage during the rule of the Bhauma-Karas whose charters reveal the popularity of this cult. It is known from the Hindol plates\(^1\) of Šubhakaradeva III that this king donated the village Nāḍīlo for the worship of the god Vaidyanātha Bhāṭṭāraka. The Bhauma queens, namely Dāndimahādevī and Vākulamahādevī assumed the title Paramamahēśvari\(^2\). The Hamsēsvara temple inscription indicates that Mādhavīdevī, wife of Bhauma-Kara king Šubhakaradeva I, constructed the Mādhavesvara temple\(^3\) dedicated to Mādhavesvara Śiva. Śaivism dominated the religious life of the Somavānīs for a considerable period. All the rulers from the time of Bālārjunā onwards styled themselves Paramamahēśvara. Their charact—ters open

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2. E.I., XXXVI, pp. 308ff.
3. ibid., XXVIII, pp. 184ff.

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with the invocatory verses, namely "Siddhan Namaḥ Śivāya"¹ and "Om Namaḥ Śivāya"². A large number of temples, enshrining the images of Śiva, were constructed under the patronage of Somavamsi rulers. Temples like the Parasurāmesvara, the Muktēsvara, the Brahmesvara and the great lingarāja have been ascribed to this period³. The Eastern Gaṅgas patronised Śaivism to their best. Lord Gokarnēsvara, the tutelary deity of the early Gaṅga rulers, was installed on the crest of the Mahendra mountain. The rulers, namely Hastivaman⁴, Indravaman⁵, Devendravaman⁶, Anantavaman⁷, Nandavaman⁸, Satyavaman⁹, Jayavaman¹⁰, Prthvivaman¹¹, Danar-navadeva¹² and Sāmantavaman¹³ were described as Paramāṃheśvara which gives a clear indication of their devout worship to lord Śiva. The preambles of the Eastern Gaṅga grants describe them as worshipping the lotus feet of Gokarnēsvara.

¹ E.I., XXXI, pp. 31-36.
² I.A., XVIII, pp. 179-81.
³ K.C. Panigrahi, Archaeological Remains at Bhubanesvar, p. 156.
⁵ ibid., III, pp. 127-33.
⁶ ibid., pp. 130-34.
⁷ J.A.H.R.S., II, pp. 271-76.
⁸ ibid., pp. 185-89.
¹⁰ I.A., XIV, pp. 10-12.
¹¹ E.I., XXIII, pp. 351-63.
¹² ibid., IV, pp. 128-201.
¹³ ibid., XXIII, pp. 263-65.

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Śaivism was a popular cult among all the feudatories of our discussion. The Śulki of Koḍālaka-Mandala practised Śaivism in their territorial jurisdiction. The Śulki charters begin with an invocation to Lord Śiva. Śulki rulers Ranastambha¹, Jayastambha² and Kulastambha³ were all worshippers of Mahēsvara. Devānandadeva II⁴, the Nanda ruler, was a Paramamāhēsvara which indicates his leaning towards Śaivism. Vinitatūṅga⁵ and Gayādatūṅga⁶ of the Tuṅga line were no less devotees of Lord Śiva.

Śaivism was a predominant cult among the Śaṅjas of Khijjinga-Kotta. Their charters begin with the invocatory verses to Lord Śiva "May Bhava, the consort of Bhavāni, the sole sovereign of all the worlds, dispeller of worldly fears, conversant with the numerous modes of meditation, the omniscient, be to our prosperity. Although religious epithets are few in number, the invocatory verses of their charters are a justification to Śaivite faith. The Khandadeul inscription⁷ of Ranabhanadeva reveals that the ruler expiated his sins through the worship of Lord Śiva. Mahān-madahavabhava donated a grant in the name of Bhagavat Śaṅkara

2. ibid,p.412.
4. R.C.Majumdar(ed.),Age of Imperial Kanauj,p.78.

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Bhattaraka\(^1\). The medallions of the grants provide the legends "Prthvibhañjadevasya" and "Śrī Śatrubhañjadevasya" along with the symbols of a crescent, a bull and a trident. Paramāhesvara\(^2\) is a title used by some of the kings of this dynasty. Śrī Prthvibhañjadeva, a prominent ruler of Khijjinga-Kottā, was described to have been free from sins on account of his devotion to Hara enshrined at Khijjinga-Kottā (Prasaktah Khijjinga-Kottāvāśī Haracharanarādhana kahayitapāpah)\(^3\). The Khijjinga Bhāñjas also constructed a large number of temples in dedication to lord Śiva. The temple of Hara rebuilt and renamed as the temple of Khijjingesvarī, is the most significant among them. K. C. Panigrahi is of the opinion that the image of Ardhanārisvara Śiva (Fig. 35), now preserved in the Khiching museum, was the enshrining deity in the original temple\(^4\). Temples like Khandiadeul and the Chandrasekhara (Fig. 5) inside the Thakurani compound are also dedicated to Śaivite deities. The ruined temple of Nilakanthesvara (Fig. 7), known today as Kutāitunḍi is dedicated to Nilakanthesvara Śiva. In the preamble of the Bananghati plate\(^5\), the following lines, invoking the grace of Śiva and Pārvatī, have been found out.

2. I.H.Q.,XII,pp. 429ff.
3. Ibid.,pp. 418-31, Text lines 12,13,14 ; I.O.,VI,p.40.
An endowment, in favour of Bhagavāna Mahādeva Bhaṭṭāraka, has been made by Raṇabhaṇjadeva in his Khandadeuli plate and the charter has been donated to Bhaṭṭaputra Rāchho for the worship of lord Śiva and for the management of the temple.

We also come to know that Raṇabhaṇjadeva freed himself from all sins by a constant worship at the feet of lord Hara (Haracharaṇārādhanaśayītāpāpaḥ). Narendraḥaṇja continued the policy of Maharāja Raṇabhaṇjadeva by extending his patronage to Śaivism. His Adipur plate describes him as a 'bee' in the lake of Śiva’s feet (Śivaḥcaraṇasamaratpadaḥ). Raṇabhaṇjadeva’s son Śatrubhaṇjadeva issued his Kesari copper plate grant in favour of lord Saikara (Bhagavād Bhaṭṭāraka Saṅkara Saṅudisya).

Śaivism had an impact on the territory of Khīnjali-Maṇḍala ruled by the Bhaṇjas of Dhṛtipura branch. These Bhaṇja rulers, in their copper plate charters, offered prayers for lord Śiva which run as follows, "Let the great lord Śiva protect you, the lord who appears terrible like fire of the deluge; who is served by Yama, the lord of death and who had destroyed the demon Andhaka". Though the first two Bhaṇja rulers, namely Śilabhaṇja-

2. Line 14 of the plate, I.O.,VI,p.11.
deva and Satrubhaṇḍajadeva I were believers of Vishnu; the third and the most prolific ruler Rāṇaka Raṇabhaṇḍajadeva was a Śāivite. in the later part of his rule. The Orissa Museum plates\(^1\) and the Sonepur(Singhara) plates\(^2\) of Raṇabhaṇḍajadeva reveal that he professed Śaivism in his 9th regnal year. He has been described as paramamahēsesvara in the two Baud grants issued on the 54th\(^3\) and the 58th\(^4\) regnal years respectively. His queen Vidya(Vijaya) Mahādevī was also a worshipper of Śiva and made endowment to God Vijayesvara\(^5\). It is presumed that Raṇabhaṇḍajadeva was inclined to Śaivism by the influence of Vijayamahādevī who was his Chief queen. It seems that Rāṇaka Niyānmāna same as Rāṇaka Niyānmāva mentioned in the Simhipura grant of Dharmakheḍi\(^6\), during the time of Devasndravamana, was a Śaiva and was the father of Vijayamahādevī. Matrimonial relationship of Raṇabhaṇḍajadeva is perhaps a factor for his conversion to Śaivism.

The Bhanjas of Vaiñjulvaka zealously patronised Śaivism. They have paid their homage to the third eye of lord Śiva which had destroyed the cupid(Kandarpa, the god of love); the lustre of which has made the moon on the head of Śiva fade; which has made the planets of three worlds shine and which glitters like pure gold. Nettabhāṇja Tribhuvanakalasa\(^7\) and Vidya-

\(^1\) O.H.R.J.,XI, No.3, pp.155-159.
\(^2\) J.B.G.A.S.,VI, pp. 481-86.
\(^3\) E.I., XII, pp.321-25.
\(^4\) I.R., XIII, pp.473-77.
\(^5\) Patna Museum plates, E.I., XX, pp.100-104; I.C., VI, p.80, lines 28-29.
\(^7\) E.I., XXVIII, Part-IV, pp. 272ff.

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dharabhaṭāja¹ of the Bhānja dynasty declared themselves as Parsamamāheśvarā which signifies their dedication to Maheśa or lord Śiva.

The invocation to lord Śiva found in the charters of the Chumsar Bhānjas shows that they were the patrons of Mattamayura sect². Śrī Mahāmādahavabhāṭaṇja, in the Bhānja grant from Khiching, has been known as a great devotee of Bhagavan Śaṅkara Bhattacharja³.

The Gaṅgas of Śvetaka were Śaivaśātras and they paid homage to Gokarṇēśvara Śiva. Their invocatory verses describe Him as one who is worshipped by all the worlds; who has on his head the crescent moon; who is the cause of birth, life and death; who resides on the summit of the mount Mahendra and who goes by the name of Śrī Gokarṇēśvara. All the Śvetaka Gaṅga rulers worshipped Gokarṇēśvara, a Śaiva deity, installed on the top of Mahendra mountain. Indravaman of this branch in his Indian museum grant⁴ donated land in favour of Svayambhu-Kesvara Śiva.

The Kādambas of Kaliṅga who were the feudatories of the Eastern Gaṅgas also worshipped Gokarṇēśvara as their tutelary deity. Dhamakheḍi of the Kādamba family has been described as Śrī Mahendraśāhipati⁵ in his Simhipura charter. The epithet Mahendra-

1. E.I.,IX,pp.271ff.
2. Śaivism in Orissa, Side lights on History and Culture of Orissa,p.333.
4. ibid,XXVI,pp.165-71.
śhipati has been a derivation from the Mahendra mountain, the seat of Gokarnaśvara Śiva and a centre of Śaivism.

Pāśupata School

The Lakulisa School known also as Lakulisa-Pāśupata School was founded in the second century A.D. by Lakulisa who is regarded as the last incarnation of Maheśa Śiva. Lakulisa who was a historical figure, took his birth at Kāyarohana, identified with Karvan, a land of the Siddhāchāryas in the first quarter of the second century A.D.¹. The figure of Lakulisa may be broadly classified under two groups. One group represents Lakulisa, seated cross-legged with the legs firmly planted on the seat. The other group is also crosslegged but is tied round with Yogapattā. Lakulisa, also known as Nakulisa had four disciples, namely Kausika, Gargya, Kaurusa and Maitreya. These disciples popularised the Pāśupata School in various parts of India. During time of the Sāyodbhavas of Kongoda-Mandala the Lakulisa-Pāśupata cult found its way to Orissa and it seems to have gained ascendency during the time of the Bhauma-Karas². Lakulisa is seen either alone or surrounded by teachers of Pāśupata School. It appears that the Pāśupata School had entered into Kośala and

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¹ The date of Lakulisa is subject to controversy. R.G. Bhandarkar places the beginning of this cult about the 2nd C.B.C. Bhandarkar, R.G.; Vaishnavism, Saivism and mirror religious systems, 1965 Paper back edition, p.117. Dr. J. N. Banerji thinks that Lakulisa-Pāśupata flourished in the 2nd C.A.D.-Religion in the Art and Archaeology, p.51.

² Śaivism in Orissa, Side lights on History and culture of Orissa, p.329.
Kalinga in the 4th century A.D. The followers of Pasupata-Lakulisa School of Saivism do not believe in the personal attributes of Śiva\(^1\) and they worship Him in the Phallic form. This School was followed by the Śaiva Siddhanta system which popularised the worship of Śiva with all the personal attributes. This Lakulisa-Pasupata School became widely popular in the 6th and the 7th centuries A.D. as a large number of such images are found in various temples of this time.

The earliest known teacher of the Pasupata School was Kadambaguhāvāsin\(^2\) and the twelfth descendant was Prabhodhasiva\(^3\) who became prominent in A.D. 972. This indicates that Kadambaguhāvāsin, most probably, flourished in the later part of the 3rd century A.D. Saṃkhanathikādhīpati, the successor of Kadambaguhāvāsin may be assigned to have been known in the beginning of the 4th century A.D. The followers of Saṃkhanathikādhīpati are known to have spread the Śaiva Siddhanta system of Śaivism in different parts of India through centuries.

The spread of the system of Śaiva Siddhanta School in the 4th century A.D. is known from the Asanpat stone inscription\(^4\). Śatrubhanja of the Nāga Origin claims to have made rich endowments to Saṃkharakamatha as well as Manibhadra-matha for the

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4. ibid,II,pp.1ff.
worship of lord Lokesvara. This Sambhakaramathä has been
identified with Sambhãmatha of Ranod Inscription. The stone
tablet of the Asanpat stone inscription reveals that Śiva is
represented with all personal attributes as per the injunctions
of the Siva Siddhanta School.

Mattamayura School

The Mattamayura School of Śaivism seems to have
originated from the city of Mattamayura in Madhya Pradesh. This
School was founded and ably guided by Āchārya Purandara Swami,
also known as Mattamayuranātha, the fifth Āchārya of the School. The four illustrious disciples of Āchārya Purandara were
successively Kadambaguhaśāvin (inhabitant of Kadambagus),
Sāmkhamatikāñhipati (the head of Sāmkhamatha), Terāmpipāla
(Protector of Terāmbi) and Amardakatirthanātha alias Rudra-Śiva
(lord of the holy place called Amardaka). Scholars have
expressed different opinions as to the identifications of their
disciples mentioned above. According to S.N. Rajguru Kadamba-
ghā is Kadambagiri of Orissa. Keilhorn identifies it with
Kadwāhā in Madhya Pradesh. This scholar again identifies
Terāmbi with Terehi located in Madhya Pradesh whereas Dr. J. K. Sahu

5. ibid.
identifies it with a place called Temra situated in the north of Ranipur-Jharial in the district of Bolangir. Amardaka has been identified with a village called Amsada, located in the district of Balasore of Orissa\(^1\). It seems that Mattamayura School originated in Madhya Pradesh and subsequently entered into the territory of Orissa.

We come across accounts of this sect from the inscriptions like Ranod\(^2\) and Bilhari\(^3\). The Senakapat grant\(^4\) of the SomavamŚ king Bālārjuna records that Sadāśivāchārya hailed from Amardaka penance-grove which was an important centre of Mattamayura sect. It is known from the Loḍhia charter of the same ruler that at the request of his Śaivaguru Śūlapāṇi, the king donated grant for the worship of Isanesvara Bhattāraka\(^5\). Guru Śūlapāṇi and his preceptor Pramathāchārya apparently belonged to Mattamayura school.

The prominence of Mattamayura sect came to light in western Orissa with the rise of Āchārya Gaganasiva in the last part of the 9th century A.D\(^6\). Gaganasiva is identified with several other names like Gaganasva, Vyomasiva, Gagana Śaśimauli etc. According to B.C. Chhabra Gaganasiva’s original

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4. E.I.,XXXI,pp.31-36.  
5. ibid.,XXVII,pp.319-25.  
home was at Terāmbi, one of the centres of Mattamayura sect. 
Āchārya Gaganāśiva ultimately became the chief Āchārya of the 
Mattamayura sect and settled in the Madhya Pradesh. He contribu­
ted so much for the growth of Śāivism in India and particularly 
in Orissa that he was deified by a large number of his disciples. 
Āchārya Pataṅga Sambhu who succeeded Gaganāśiva was the preceptor 
of Gaṅga king Devendravarman I as revealed from Dhamalīṅgeśvar 
copper plate grant of Gaṅga year 184 (A.D. 682)¹.

The Mattamayura Siddhāchāryas were expert in the 
Vedas and practised charity and benevolence to others. They 
constructed temples and maintained monasteries. The ascetics of 
this sect are sometimes kept on equal status with Tantric Śaiva 
sects like Kāpālika and Kālāmukha².

Umā-Maheśvara Cult

Śubhakaradēva IV, the Bhauma ruler was the first 
to declare himself as Paramamāheśvara, the devout worshipper of 
lord Śiva. The worship of Umā-Maheśvara, a Śaiva sect, was first 
seen during the reign of Prthvimahādevī (A.D. 894). Her two Baud³ 
charters record the grant of villages for the worship of Umā-
Maheśvara enshrined in the temple of Nanneśvara Śiva built by 
Śamīekha, in memory of her deceased father Nanna. The village 
was granted for perpetual offering of oblation, sandal-paste etc 
to the deity.

2. R.G. Bhandarkar, Vaishnavism, Śaivism and minor Religious 
systems, p. 198.

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The image of Uma-Maheśvara, seated side by side on a lotus seat, is found on the wall of the Tantric temple of Vaitāla. In the early Gaṅga period Śiva was worshipped in his various manifestations which contributed to the growth of Uma-Maheśvara sect, the legacy of which can be traced back to the Sailodbhas of Kongoda-Mandala.

The Bhaṇjas of Khijjinga-Kotta worshipped Uma-Maheśvara in pursuance of their Śaivite faith. At least three figures of Uma-Maheśvara (Figs.11,12,13) dating to the 10th century A.D. in Aliṅgana pose and seated in Sukhāsana, are preserved in the site museum at Khiching\(^1\). N.N.Vasu has referred to the worship of Śiva at Kaisarīgarh (Mayurbhanj district) where he noticed an ancient sculpture of Uma-Maheśvara\(^2\). Maheśvara in this sculpture is sitting on a petalled lotus. The two-armed Maheśvara embraces Umā with one arm and shows Abhayamudrā with the other. He wears a Jāṭāmukuta on the head. Umā is seated on the left thigh of Śiva and a trident is represented behind the figure of Umā. It is indicated from the iconographic features of the sculpture that it was contributed by the Bhaṇjas in or about 8th century A.D. In the 9th century A.D. the popularity of Śaivism was enhanced and different forms of Śaiva images were found out on the walls of the temples constructed during the period under review.

1. A. Joshi, History and Culture of Khijjinga-Kotta, p.11.

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Harihara Cult

The synthesis of Vaishnavism and Śāivism began in the 6th and the 7th centuries A.D. which gave birth to the Harihara cult in Orissa. This is evident from the fact that the Eastern Ganga king Hastivarman, in his Narasimhapalli charter¹, donated the village Rohanakain the Varahavartini viṣaya to Nārāyaṇa though he has been described there as Paramamāheśvara. The twin temples of Gandharādi constructed on a common platform and dedicated to Nilamādhava Vishnu and Śiddhesvara Śiva situated at a distance of 8 kilometres from Baud town is a mute witness to the synthesis of Vaishnavism and Śāivism in the Bhaṅja kingdom. It will not be out of place to mention here a verse of the Ekāṃra Purāṇa² which says "There is no distinction between Śiva and Vishnu". Harihara image is depicted in one of the side niches in the Simhanatha temple of Baramba.

Bhairava Cult

The prevalence of Bhairava cult is evident from the worship of Bhairava image by the Bhaṅjas of Khijjinga-Kotta. The Rigveda enumerates the reverence to Bhairava as one of the seven Rudras. An excellent image of Ajaikapaḍa Bhairava (Fig. 34) found at Kaisari gives an idea of Bhairava worship by the Khijjinga Bhaṅjas. The image is four-armed and it is flanked

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². Ekāṃra Purāṇa, Ch. IV.
by the attendants having trisula in their hands. The head of the Bhairava is decorated with conical-tiara and trifoliate halo with kirtimukha and heavenly bodies at the top. The impact of Buddhism on the Bhairava cult is clearly discernible from the representation of a Dhyani Buddha on the Kirti of the figure which flourished in the Bhañja territory about the 10th century A.D. The Bhañjas of Dharotipura are known to have invoked the blessings of Bhairava in almost all their epigraphic records. The Sonepur grant of Rana-bhañjadeva refers to the invocation of the grace of Bhairava in the following lines.

"Samhärakāla hṛutabhuṅg Vikarālaghora Sambhranta Kinkara Krutánta Nitánta bhīma bhinnāmāhavataḥ propatu".

This verse reveals that he was the worshipper of Bhairava. The Bhañjas of Vāñjulvaka branch in the later stage also worshipped Bhairava. Nettabhañjadeva, a ruler of Vāñjulvaka, invoked the grace of Sadasiva decorated with matter hair, crescent moon, garland of skulls and the great serpent.

**Vaisnavism**

Vaisnavism received royal patronage and became a dominant religious force towards the later part of the Bhauma rule. Bhauma queens, namely Tribhuvanamahādevi I, Tribhuvanamahādevi II and Tribhuvanamahādevi III were devotees of Vishnu. This

is indicative of the fact that the epithets like Paramavaishnava ī is being used by Tribhuvanamahadevi I and Prthvirajahadevi. The Talcher grant of Subhakaradeva IV describes his mother Tribhuvanamahadevi as the worshipper of Hari. The early Somavamśi rulers were worshippers of Vishnu. The Vaishnavite symbols like Garuḍa, Chakra and Śāmkha used in their seals are a supplement to their faith. The use of Gaja-Laxmi as the emblem of royal seal and expression of homage to Aditya, Varuṇa, Soma, Hutasana and Vishnu in the Soma epigraphic records point to their adherence to Vaishnavism. Queen Vasātā, the mother of Bālarjuna was a great patron of Vaishnavism and constructed a temple dedicating to Vishnu.

The Avatāra (incarnation of Vishnu) cult gained popularity in the land of Kosala during our period of study. In the Nilamādhava temple at Gandharādi, a monumental symbol of the Bhājjas of Dhṛtipura, images of Vāmana, Matsya, Kurma and Varāha were seen by R. D. Banerji in 1929. The wide prevalence of Vishnu cult appears to have given rise to the cult of Nilamādhava (Vishnu) whose image is worshipped in the temple of Gandharādi. Gandharādi, known earlier as Gandhatapati, was the

3. E. Mishra, Oriṣsa under the Bhauma kings, p. 37.
5. ibid., XI, p. 192, V. 20.
6. Antiquities of Baud State, J. B. O. R. S., XV, pp. 64-86.
capital of the Bhanjas of Dhārtipura. After the victory of the Somavamśī ruler Jananejaya I over the Bhanja territory, worship of Nilaṃadhava became more popular in Kośala as well as in the feudatory states. Prthvīmahādevī, the Somavamśī princess, was a Paramavaishnavī. Her love for Vaishnavism found expression in her object of adoration, the exquisite black chlorite stone image of Nilaṃadhava enshrined in the temple of Gandharāḍḍi. She continued to remain a devout worshipper of Nilaṃadhava Vishnu and constructed the Purusottama (probably Nilaṃadhava) with the help of her brother Yayāti I.

Though the early Eastern Gangā rulers were devotees of Śiva, still they showed eclecticism by patronising Vaishnavism. Hastivarman of this dynasty donated land for the worship of lord Nārāyaṇa. The Narasimhapalli charter issued by him describes Nārāyaṇa as "One who lies in the seven seas, who is eulogized in the seven hymns, who is the sole lord of seven worlds and who is given the name of Ranabhitodaya".

Among the feudatories, the Nandas or the Nandodbhavas of Airavatta-Mandala were Vaishnavas. The relics of this dynasty, as a mark of devotion to Vishnu, are at present seen in the huge rock-cut statues of Vishnu Anantaśayana of Bhimkand and Sarang in the Talcher sub-division of Dhenkanal district. In Bhimkand, at a distance of about 18 miles from the Talcher town, an image of Vishnu in the sleeping posture (Fig. 21) has been carved out on a rock. This image measures 41 feet 6 inches from


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head to feet. The sculptural representation of this image is natural and execution is smooth. It is assigned to the 8th or the 9th centuries A.D. The other Vishnu image (Fig. 19) measuring 49 feet has been located at Sarang on the bed of the river Brahmani. The village Sarang is situated at a distance of two miles from the Talchergharh. P. Acharya has compared the Jaina image of Gomateswara on the Doddabetta hill in the erstwhile princely State of Mysore with the statue of Sarang. Padmasree Acharya is of the opinion that the statue of Gomateswara measures 57' in height and is the biggest standing image of India whereas the image of Vishnu at Sarang is the largest sleeping image.

The early Bhanja chiefs of Dhritipura were Vaishnavas. Rulers like Satrubhanjadeva and Ranabhanjadeva were all described as Paramavaishnavas. Satrubhanja has been described as Paramavaishnava in his Sonapur grant. The Kumarakela charter of Satrubhanjadeva was issued in Kartika Suklaksha Mahāvdāsi which is an auspicious day of Vishnu. In all the charters issued before 54th regnal year of Ranabhanjadeva, the epithet Paramavaishnava has been used by him. The temple of Nilamādhava (Vishnu) (Fig. 1) at Gandharādi is a sign of his devotion to Vaishnavism. It is to be noted that the Bhanja rulers

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were no doubt devout followers of Vishnu but we also find in their grants customary verses in honour of Siva and Saiva symbols in their seals.

Among the rulers of Vañjulvaka Nettabhañja, the donor of Dasapalla\(^1\) and Orissa Museum\(^2\) grants, Šatrubhañja Tribhuvana Kalasa\(^3\) and Nettabhañja of Jurda grant\(^4\) were devout Vaishnavas. Bhañja Chiefs donated various charters on the occasion of Vishnu Saûkranti\(^5\), Devotsavadvádasi\(^6\), Vishno ruñcha-yanaskádasi\(^7\) which are auspicious days for the worship of Vishnu.

The existence of a shrine of Vishnu in KhijjINGA and the figures of Vaishnavite origin\(^8\) testify to the prevalence of Vishnu worship among the Bhañjas of Khijjinga-Mandala. The Vishnu Chakra and the Navagrahas with sculpted deities, preserved in the site museum, are witnesses to the existence of Vishnu temple in Khijjinga-Kotta. The Khiong museum also preserves a four-armed Vishnu image (fig. 17) which might have been enshrined in some temple of Khijjinga in the past.

Instances of Vishnu worship are available in the Svëtaka Ganga rule. The Indian Museum (Sanakhimedi) plates\(^9\) of

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2. ibid, XI, No. I, pp. 9-17.
3. O. H. R. J., IV, pp. 67-76.
5. ibid, XXIX, pp. 188ff and O. H. R. J., I, No. 3, pp. 208ff.
7. E. I., XVIII, pp. 298ff.
Indravarman reveal that lands were donated for the worship of Lokamādhava Vishnu as well as Bhattāraka Swayambhukēśvara Śiva though the king used only Saivite epithets like Paramaḥēśvara and Paramēśvara in the grant, prefix to his name. It indicates catholicity in his religious outlook.

The Avatāra cult (incarnation of Vishnu) of Vaishnavism gained prominence everywhere among the feudatories. R. D. Banerjee in 1929 found out images of Vāmana, Matsya, Kūma and Varāha in the Nilamādhava temple of Gandharāḍi located within the Bhaṇja territory of Dhṛtipura. This temple further reveals the cult of Nilamādhava (Vishnu) (Fig.16) as a form of Vishnu worship. It seems that the Somavāṃśi rulers of Kosala were attracted to this cult after the occupation of Dhṛtipura by Jaimejaya I. The origin of Madhava cult can be traced back to the rule of the Sailodbhavas which ultimately took the form of Nilamādhava at Gandharāḍi. The Khijjinga Bhaṇjas offered their devotion to Vishnu in the form of Narasimha (Fig. 31) and Varāha (Fig.32). The images of Narasimha and Varāha now decorate the floor of Baripada Museum.

Sāktism

The Śakti cult made its appearance about two or three centuries before Christ and flourished in different parts of Orissa under the benevolent patronage of the royal dynasties.

1. Antiquities of Baud State, J.B.O. R.S., XV, pp.64-86.

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Sakti is worshipped in the forms of Mahisasamardini Durga, Parvatī, Chaṇḍā, Kālī, Saptamatrikas, Chāmunḍā etc. The Vaishnavas worshipped Sakti as Adyāsakti (primal energy) in the form of Mahālakṣmi and Mahāsarasvatī. Sakti is accepted as the universal mother and the spouse of lord Śiva. In the Tantric Buddhism she is worshipped as Prajñā along with her consort Upaya. With the progress of Tantrism, Devī is worshipped as the deity of Daśamahāvidyā, Matrikā and Yoginī groups.

Among various manifestations of Sakti, Mahisasamardini Durga is widely worshipped in various parts of Orissa. This deity is represented as two-armed, six-armed, eight-armed, ten-armed and twelve-armed and even fourteen-armed. The eight-armed (Aṣṭabhuja) Mahisasamardini become very popular during the reign of the Bhauma-Karas.

The images (Fig. 38, 40) of Mahisasamardini Durga, now preserved in the site museum at Khiching, were symbols of this form of Sakti worship by the Bhaujes of Khijinga-Kotta. At Kualo near the Talcher town the image of twelve-armed Mahisasamardini has been recently brought to light. This goddess, known as Kanakesvari and the consort of Kanakesvara Śiva, is worshipped in a small shrine in front of the damaged temple of Kanakesvara Śiva. In the Parsvadevata niches images of Mahisasamardini are seen on the walls of the Kualo and the Kichakesvari temples.

1. Sakti Cult in Orissa, Side lights on History and Culture of Orissa, p.353.
Goddess Durga was a popular Sakti symbol in the period of our study. In the Baripada museum stone inscription\(^1\) of Satrubhanjadeva, probably a ruler of Khijjingga-Kotta, the image of Lillesabhadra Durga is seen. Most probably goddess Durga was worshipped as the family deity of the Bhanjas of Khijjingga-Kotta on whose honour donations of lands had been granted. The images of Sañhavāhinī Durga and other eight-armed and six-armed images are also discovered in the Khijjingga-Kotta area.

Stambhesvari, as the presiding deity, is mentioned in almost all the charters of the Šulkis and the Bhanjas. Stambhesvari was at first a tribal deity and was taken into Aryan fold later on. The earliest reference to Stambhesvari (Khambesvari) is known from the Kalahandi copper plate grant of Tuṣṭikaradeva\(^2\) who was probably ruling in the 5th or the 6th centuries A.D. The king was described there as Stambhesvari-Pada-bhakta. D.C. Sircaar, while editing the Hindol grant of Kulastambhadeva, is of the opinion that Stambhesvari was the family deity of the Šulkis where the goddess is described as Bhaṭṭārīka\(^3\). This charter further mentions that the grant was made in favour of Viṣvarūpa-svāmin with the king's family deity Stambhesvari Bhaṭṭārīka\(^4\).

The two Puri plates\(^5\) of Rapastambhadeva alias Kulastambhadeva I describe him to be born from the boon of Stambhesvari. The

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3. ibid., XXVIII, pp. 107-14.
4. ibid.
Stambha suffix to all the names of Śulki rulers confirms their devotion and faith on the goddess.

Bhanja chief Ranabhanijadeva of Dharipura was a great patron of Stambhesvari. He is described as Stambhesvari-lavdha-Varaiprasādah (blessed with the boon of Stambhesvari) in many of his charters. Ranabhanijadeva has described goddess Stambhesvari as the Bhairabā of Mahādeva. The goddess has been alluded to Bhatta Bṛhaspati who was known to be a devout worshipper of lord Vishṇu. The image of Stambhesvari, as depicted by D.C. Sircar, was of a phallic type in the beginning but it took the form of Śiva and Śakti at a later stage. Stambhesvari in the name of Khambevari (Khamārī) is being widely worshipped today in the Sonepur, Baud and Athmallik regions of Orissa.

Saptanatrikās are the prominent Śaktī deities represented in the form of seven Śaktis, namely Brāhmaṇī, Vaishnavī, Indraṇī, Māhesvari, Kaumārī, Varāhi and Čhāmunda whose worship was popular in the sovereign as well as in the feudatory States of Orissa of our consideration. Čhāmunda, the terrific expression among all other Matrikā images, is seen worshipped in various temples of Orissa. Matrikā images, assigned to Bhauma period, have been discovered at Jaipur. Bhuvanesvar became a significant seat (Pitha) of Śakti worship during Bhauma rule. The Vaital temple, constructed during the Bhauma period, is a Śaktī temple.

2. The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissan Culture, 1940, p.22.
where Chamunda is worshipped as the presiding deity. Tribhuvanamahadevi I, the Shrama queen in her Dhenkanal charter, compares herself with Katyayani, another form of Sakti deity. Khijjingesvari (Kichakeśvari) (Fig. 15) which is found enshrined in the temple of Khijjingesvari of Khiching is a ten-armed Chamunda with prominent veins, ribs and sunken belly, wearing a garland of heads and seated on a corpse. She was the presiding deity of the Bhanjas of Khijjinga-Kotta as well as the Bhanjas of Mayurbhanj at present. From the Parsva-devatas and the ground plan which is square in size, it is evident that the temple is dedicated to Siva. Chamunda worship is associated with human sacrifice which must have given rise to numerous esoteric practices. On one of the bands beyond the doorjams of the Simhanatha temple a squatting skeletal Chamunda, wearing a garland of skulls and seated on a recumbent male figure, is seen among the Saptamatrika images. Another Chamunda image (Fig. 39), hitherto unknown to scholars, has been located in an isolated grove, in the village of Singara, at a distance of three kilometres from Kualo, the ancient capital of the Sulki of Kodalaka-Mandala. This Chamunda with traditional attributes like garland of skulls, sunken belly and seated on a corpse, is provided with a Stambha (Pillar) on its right shoulder which is not found in any of the Chamunda images so far discovered. The Sulki rulers of Kodalaka-Mandala, as referred to earlier

were the devotees of Stambheśvarī, a Śākta deity. The Stambha attribute in the image of Sīngara indicates that the Sulkīs worshipped Chamundā as Stambheśvarī.

Saptamatrikā images, namely Maheśvarī, Brahmāṇī and Vaishnavaī are now preserved in the Khiching museum. These images are of the time of Khijjinga-KotṬa and were worshipped by the Bhaṅga kings and their subjects.

Buddhism

In the early period of our study Mahāyānism was a popular branch of Buddhism which according to Taranath originated in the land of Odiśā (Orissa) ¹. The above statement has also been corroborated by Pag Sam Jon Zang which ascribes the origin of Mahāyānism to Orissa ². Hiuen Tsang ³, the Chinese pilgrim, could witness about hundred monasteries where 10,000 Mahāyāna monks pursued their monastic training and study. The Bhauma-Karas were ardent Buddhists and their capital Tōsali, as described in the Gandavyuha ⁴, became a great centre of Buddhism. The Ratnapurī Mahāvihāra of the Sisuma period was also a prominent place of Mahāyāna Buddhism ⁵. Hinayāna, the other branch of Buddhism was no less significant in the 7th century A.D. Hiuen Tsang could see Pushpapuri, a great centre of Hinayāna Buddhism, flourishing in Orissa.

2. Pag Sam Jon Zang, p.82.
Kings of Bhauma-Kara dynasty became ardent followers of this religion and zealously protected it from immediate liquidation. It is revealed from the Neulpur charter\(^1\) that Kshemamkara, Śivakara and Subhākara I were Champions of Buddhism. They bore the Buddhistic epithets like Paramopāsaka, Paramatathāgata and Paramasangata along with their names. These Bhauma monarchs were responsible for the evolution of Mahāyāna to Vajrayāna. The Talcher plate of Śivakara III mentions that the king, on the request of his Tštha feudatory Vinita-tuṅga, donated a village in favour of Buddhā hastaṭṭaraka\(^2\).

Buddhism was popular among various feudatory chiefs of our discussion. Buddhist monuments and images have been discovered in the territory of Khirijāga Bhamjas. Kamaksha Prasad Bose could find out images of Mārīci (Fig. 25), Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 24) and Buddha from Itāmūndī\(^3\). The site museum at Khiching contains images of Tara, a colossal image of Buddha in the Bhumiśparṣanā Mudrā (Fig. 22), Kaśyapa in Sukhāsana and Dhyāni Buddha in Dharmaśekhara-pravartanā-mudrā and a few figures of Vajrāsana Buddha which are collected from the neighbouring places. An inscription on the pedestal of the Buddhist Avalokiteśvara states that this image of the Lokārtha has been made by Dharani Varāha assisted by Kṛṣṇa or Rāja Śrīrāyabhaṣja which is an evidence of popularity of Buddhism in this area.

2. S. Mishra, Orissa Under the Bhauma Kings, p. 42.
3. Quoted A. Joshi, History and Culture of Khirijāga-Kotta, p. 115-16.
A Buddha image (Fig. 23) of chlorite stone seated in the Bhumiśparasamudrā has been kept in a shrine in front of the Baud royal palace. This image belongs to the period of Dhṛtipura Bhaṁjas. As the capital Dhṛtipura of the Khīnjali-Mandala was presumed to be located near the modern town of Baud, Buddhism was undoubtedly a popular cult during this period. Images of Ugra Tārā identified by R. D. Banerjee as Mahattarī Tārā, Maitreya (Fig. 49), Lokeśvara (Fig. 50) identified by N. K. Sahu as Sankhanātha Lokesvara have been discovered from the Ramesvara temple compound of Baud.

Dhruvānanandadeva of the Nandodhava dynasty of Airavattra-Mandala was a devout Buddhist as revealed from the Talmul grant donated by him. Large number of Buddhist images have been discovered at Talmul, the find spot of the charter. The Tūṅgas of Yamagarttra-Mandala were also patrons of Buddhism. On the request of Vīnītattunga, a Tūṅga ruler, Śivakaradeva III his Bhauma overlord, executed a copper plate grant in the year 149 (A.D. 885) donating the revenue of the village Kāṇī in Northern Tosali for the worship of God Buddhābhattāraka. The sanctuary of Buddhābhattāraka enshrining the image of god Buddhābhattāraka, was constructed by Ambubhāttāraka. This sanctuary was, most probably, within the precinct of the Jayāśrama.

1. The name Baud may be derived from Buddha.
3. Tālcher plate of Śivakaradeva, B. Mishra, Orissa under the Bhauma Kings, pp. 41-51.

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Vihara where Buddhist monks and nuns were residing together. A part of the expense of this Vihara was met from the revenue of the village Kallani. Another part of the revenue was utilised for perpetual offering of ablution sandal-paste, flowers, incense, lamp, vali, charu and oblation to the god Buddhabhattarakā.

The Bonai copper plate grant1 of Udaya Varaha mentions that the ruler used the title "Parama-Saugata" which is a Buddhistic epithet and confirms his devotion to sugata or Buddha.

**Jainism**

The excavations in the Prachi Valley reveal that Jainism was in a flourishing condition in Orissa from 7th century A.D. to 9th century A.D.2. A good number of Jaina images have been discovered in Khijjinga-Kotta which are preserved in the site museum. The important among them are the images of Rishabhanātha (Fig. 42), Sāntinātha and Parsvanātha (Fig. 41), the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara. The Adipur Copper plate grant3 of Durjayabhaṇja of Khijjinga-Kotta indicates the name of Thakura Gomāta which is undoubtedly a name of Jaina god. It seems that the name Gomāta might be a derivation from the name

Gomatesvara, the colossal Jain image at Mysore in the modern Karnataka state. We, however, do not come across any instance of the promulgation of Jainism among other feudatory States of Orissa of our project. It is to be further noted that this religion was in the process of decline.

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