Feudatory States, under sovereign monarchs, are not a new feature in the history of India. They existed in this country from very early times and their role has been recognised by the ancient sūrti writers as well as in the Purāṇas and the Epics. They, however, gained greater prominence in the early medieval period. From about 750 A.D. to about 950 A.D., the History of India witnessed the rise of the Pālas in the east, the Pratihāras in the west and the Rāstrakutās in the south. These three sovereign powers were served by a large number of feudatory chiefs and were engaged in a tripartite struggle for supremacy. Exactly the same political development was witnessed in the History of Orissa during that period. Here also there was struggle for supremacy among three sovereign powers, namely the Gaṅgas of Kaliṅga in the south, the Bhauma-Karas of Tosālī in the east and the Somavānśis of Kośala in the west. They were served by a

1. Vide Manu Sūrti, VII, 22.
   Mahābhārata, Śānti Parva, 33, 43-46.
   Vishnudharmā Sāstra III, 47-49.
   Agni Purāṇa, 235, 22.
number of feudatory chiefs who also took active part in that struggle. The feudatory chiefs enjoyed perfect autonomy in their internal affairs, had their own cabinet, own administrative organisation and their own army. Some of them were very powerful and at times, they even challenged the supremacy of their overlords. In fact, the power, prestige and prosperity of the sovereign states depended, to a great extent, upon the faith, loyalty and support of their feudatory chiefs. The kingdoms of Orissa during this period were not in a state of equilibrium and this was because of the role of the Feudatory States. Besides, the Feudatory States preserved local autonomy, protected local interest and patronised local culture. It is, therefore, needless to say that any attempt to write the History of Medieval Orissa will be incomplete, imperfect and futile unless due importance is given on the political and cultural development in the Feudatory States. Our scholars are dazzled by the abundant sources, available about the sovereign states and they give almost all their attention in describing the power and pelf of the overlords pushing the feudatories to the background. So far three theses on the Somavamsis of Kośala, at least two theses on the Bhauma-Kara

2. Bijaya Kumar Rath, Cultural History of Orissa, Delhi, 1983.
of Tosali and two theses on the Early Gangas of Kalinga have been produced for Ph.D. degree in different universities. But we have no works on the Feudatory States of Medieval Orissa excepting perhaps the solitary thesis of Dr. A. Joshi on the Bhanjas of Khijjingga-Kotta and at best a chapter in general books of Orissa History. So here for the first time, I have made an humble attempt to assess the role of Feudatory States in the political and cultural spheres of Medieval Orissa for about two hundred years from c.750 A.D. to 950 A.D. in one compact volume.

Among the three sovereign dynasties of the period, the Bhauma-Karas were apparently the most important power so far the role of the feudatory chiefs is concerned. Their kingdom Tosali was surrounded by a number of Feudatory States which served as bulwarks against the aggression of the Somavamsins of Kosal on one side and the Gangas of Kalinga on the other. The Bhauma-Karas established their rule in Tosali about the year 736 A.D. which is the initial year of the Bhauma Era. Within a few years i.e. by about 750 A.D.,

5. Arjun Joshi, History and Culture of Khijjingga-Kotta, New Delhi, 1983.
they rose to be an imperial power and were served by a number of big Feudatory States. After 200 years by 950 A.D., the Bhauma-Karas fell a victim to the imperialism of the Somavânsins who did not favour the continuation of big autonomous Feudatory States in their empire. After 950 A.D. for nearly a hundred years, the Gangas of Kalinga also suffered a temporary set-back. Thus the period from 750 A.D. to 950 A.D. was the Heyday of the Feudatory States of Medieval Orissa. For this reason, I have taken this period for my study.

A large number of copper-plate charters, issued by the Feudatory chiefs of Orissa during the period under study, are available to us and they constitute the main source of my work. I have also profusely utilised the inscriptions of the sovereign rulers of that time. Thus the project is mainly an Epigraphical Study.

In the first chapter of the thesis, I have described the political history of the three sovereign powers, namely the Bhauma-Karas of Toșâli, the Somavânsins of Kośala and the Gangas of Kalinga as Historical Background. I feel that in order to assess and appreciate the role of the Feudatories, we should have before us a political picture of the kingdoms of their overlords. But for this, the History of the Feudatory States would be broken arcs.

The Bhanja rulers occupied a very prominent place among the Feudatory States of Orissa. Even in modern
times till the day of Merger (1st January 1948), they were the rulers of important States like Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Baud and Dasapalla. Bhānjā States during the period of our study are Khīnjali Mandala with capital at Dhrtipura, the New Khīnjali Mandala with capital at Vaṇjulvaka and Khijjīnga Mandala with capital at Khijjīnga-Kotta. The second, third and the fourth chapters of my thesis deal with the political history of these States respectively. In the second chapter, I have analysed, at the outset, the views of different scholars regarding the ancestry of the Bhānjās. In this connection, I have drawn the attention of scholars to the Asanpat Stone Inscription¹ which is the earliest known record of a king with Bhānja surname Satrubhaṇjadeva who claims himself as belonging to the Nāga dynasty. On the basis of this record, I have put forth a new view that a ruling family of the Nāgas in Keonjhar region might have been the ancestors of the Bhānjās. Asanpat is in Keonjhar district and the Bhānjās till today believe that the district was the original home of their dynasty. In this chapter I have for the first time established the fact that Satrubhaṇja of Sonepur copper-plate charter was different from Satrubhaṇja of Kumurkela grant and they cannot be identical as held by other scholars.

In the third and fourth chapters, I have presented a connected history of the Bhānjās of Vaṇjulvaka and Khijjīnga-Kotta respectively. Dr. Arjun Joshi has recently published his thesis.

on Khijjinga-Kotta. I have, however, differed to a great extent from this learned scholar and have reconstructed the genealogy and chronology of the Bhanjas of this branch with new findings and more scientific analysis.

The fifth chapter deals with Kodālaka-Mandala under the Śulkiś and the sixth with Yamagartta-Mandala and Airavatta-Mandala under the Tuṅgas and the Nandodbhavas respectively. I have shown that the later Śulki rulers who were feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas, assumed sovereign titles like Mahārājādhirāja and Paramabhāttāraka and behaved independently. Being annoyed at this, the Bhaumas destroyed the Śulkiś and divided the State, Kodālaka, into two parts, namely Yamagartta-Mandala and Airavatta-Mandala. They installed the Tuṅgas in the former and the Nandodbhavas in the latter.

In the seventh chapter, I have given brief accounts of some important feudatory dynasties such as the Mayūras of Bonāi-Mandala, the Gaṅgas of Śvetaka-Mandala, the Kādembas of Mahendrabboga-Viṣaya, Nalas of Khindārisīnga-Mandala and a Varman dynasty of Koleśa-Mandala. I have thrown sufficient new light on these families on the basis of the copper-plate charters issued by their rulers.

These seven chapters of my project are grouped under Section A i.e. the Section of Political Development.

Section B of the thesis deals with the cultural attainments in the Feudatory States during the period under review. It consists of five chapters (chapter VIII to
chapter XII) and deals with administrative organisation, social condition, economic life, religion and art and architecture of the time respectively. In writing this section, I have utilised the inscriptions of not only the Feudatory chiefs but also of their sovereign overlords. Even some records of the neighbouring states have been studied and utilised by me in this connection. Cultural life in Orissa during any period of history is considered as an integral part of Indian culture of that time and it is almost the same in Feudatory States or sovereign kingdoms. Of course, the local variations are there and I have tried to throw light on them. In the chapter on administrative organisation (chapter VIII), I have described in greater details the political relations between the sovereign monarchs and their feudatory chiefs. In describing the social conditions (chapter IX), due importance has been given on tribal life and culture. In the chapter on economic life (chapter X), land system, agriculture and local industries and trade have been described. In the chapter on religion (chapter XI) different cults like Śaivism, Vaishnavism, Śāktism, Buddhism and Jainism as flourished in the Feudatory States have been discussed and the patronage of the feudatory chiefs have been highlighted. The last chapter (chapter XII) is devoted to the art and architecture in the Feudatory States of Medieval Orissa. In it I have described the architectural characteristics of a number of temples of those regions the most important being the Rāmnāth temple complex of Baud and the twin temples of Gandharādi (Khiṇjali-Mandala), the Nilakanṭhaśvara (Kuṭāṅkunḍi) and
Kichakeśvarī temples of Khiching (Khijjiṅga-Kotṭa), Kanakesvara temple of Kualo (Kodālaka-Maṇḍala) and the Bhṛṅgeśvara temple of Bajrakot and Sīshanāth temple of Baramba (Yamagartta-Maṇḍala). The peculiarities of some icons like the Ananta-Sahayaśī Vīṣṇu images of Sarang and Bhimkand and the cult images in Khiching museum have also been brought to light in this chapter.

In this way, I have tried to present in this project a comprehensive account of the political development and cultural attainments in the Feudatory States of Medieval Orissa for two hundred years.

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