CHAPTER – SEVEN

RELIGION
The medieval period starting from eighth century A.D. marks a turning point in the religious history of Orissa. During that time a balanced synthesis of various religious cults and sects prevailed together by manifesting themselves in a cosmopolitan form. One of the important features of this period is that members of the same royal families were followers of different religious faith.

The period witnessed the growth of a large number of religious sects like Jainism, Buddhism, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaktism. The feudatory chiefs under their respective sovereigns patronized these sects and popularized 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 in their 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.

In Khiṇjali maṇḍala, many religions like Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaktism and Buddhism were in prevalence during the period under discussion. The Bhaṇjas who ruled over Khiṇjali maṇḍala, the hinterland that extended between the river Mahānadi,
the Tel and the Ṛṣikūlyā basin in the south, contemporaneously with the Bhauma-Karas, as the latter’s feudatory were also influenced by the trend prevailing in their sovereign dynasty. The Bhauma-Kara monarchs in the initial year of their ascendancy were Buddhists. In course of their rule, they also patronized the Hindu pantheon. It is known from their charters that some members of this family were great devotees of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti. For example Tribhūvana Mahādevī I, who succeeded Śubhākara III on the throne of Guheśvara Pāṭaka in around 845 A.D. has been described in her Dheṅkānāl plates as a Parama Vaiśṇavī or devout worshipper of Viṣṇu. Much before her accession we get evidence of Śaivism as a living force in the kingdom of the Bhauma-Karas. The Haṅseśvar Temple inscription of Mādhavi Devī, queen of Subhākara I records that the temple was erected by the queen who enshrined Mādhavesvara in it after her name. From the Baud plate of Prīthvī Mahādevī it is known that its donor was a devout worshipper of Lord Śiva. The Bhaṅjas were in some other way influenced by the prevailing trend. It is interesting to note that although they were ruling over a territory adjacent to the kingdom of the Bhauma-Karas where Buddhist faith predominated, Buddhism had very little

influence upon the religious system of the Bhañjas of Khiñjali. On the other hand some of their charters refer to Vedic Gods like Āditya, Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Sulapāni, Somo, Hutāsana and tribal deities like Bhairava and Stambheśvari. Hence the main pantheon that regulated the religious life of the people of Khiñjali maṇḍala were Śaivism, Śaktism and Vaiṣṇavism.

ŚAIVISM:

The origin of Śaivism can be traced back to 3rd millennium B.C. when the non-Aryans of Indus valley appeared in the Proto-historic period as the worshippers of Paśupati, the Proto-type of Rudradeva of the Vedic age. The availability of a large number of stone pieces resembling phallus has led Indologists to believe that Śiva was worshipped in the phallic form. In the Rig Veda, Rudra has been invoked as the lord of the forests. This indicates that the concept of Śaivism was particularly popular among the forest tribals and aboriginals in India in the pre-Vedic age. The Yajur Veda also refers to the idea of phallic rites in

connection with the horse sacrifice\(^9\). Sata Rudrāya pays homage to the non-Vedic Niṣādas\(^{10}\) as the worshippers of Rudra who is further worshipped as Sarva in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa\(^{11}\) and Bhava in the Atharva Veda\(^{12}\) respectively.

In the Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad Rudra is depicted as the Lord of Yonis\(^{13}\), which indicates his close association with the cult of Yoni. The Mahābhārata\(^{14}\) describes Śiva as sthānu because his Liṅgam incarnation stands erect and unmoved like a pole. In the Anuśāsana parvan he appears as a Mahāśpholingno\(^{15}\). In Harivamsa\(^{16}\) the Līṅga and Bhagaliṅga are considered to be the symbolic representation of Trayambaka (Śiva) and Umā(Śakti). The work further states that there is no third entity except these two in the world. Secular texts like Indika, the account of Megasthenes also refers to the worship of Śiva in the contemporary Hindu society\(^{17}\). Patanjali, in the second century B.C. has noted the Śiva-

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11. Ibid., p.91.
12. Ibid.
13. Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad, pp.4-11.
15. Ibid., Anuśāsana Parva, pp.14,15.
Bhāgabatas as ascetics roaming with iron tridents in their hands. The earliest numismatic evidence of the worship of Śiva is available to us from the Kuśāṇa coins. These coins, assignable to the first century A.D. depict Śiva with trident on the obverse. On the reverse we find the image of bull Nandi. It was during this period there arose in western India a great saint named Lakuliśa who propagated the faith of Śiva and founded a school of followers, which came to be known as the Pāśupata sect. The Pāśupatas flourished under the patronage of the Gupta. The Mathurā Pillar inscription of Chandragupta II, dated in G.E.61 records the installation of an image of Uditāchārya, the tenth Guru after Kuśika. Śaivism became one of the most popular religious faiths during the post-Gupta period giving rise to new sects like the Mattamayura and others.

From the study of numismatic and archaeological evidences it may be said that Śaivism flourished in Orissa shortly after the beginning of the Christian era, The discovery of large number of Kuśāṇa coins from Mayūrbañj, Keonjhar and other

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places of Orissa have led us to believe that Kuśāṇa authority constituted to remain in Orissa till the end of Hubiska (105-138 A.D.) and this has been ascertained from the fact that not a single coin after Hubiska has come to light so far in this land\(^{23}\). What is important to note is that Hubiska was a Śaiva as known from the figure of Phallicśiva\(^ {24}\) in his coins. Phallicśiva was a part of Śiva worship in the time of Hubiska\(^ {25}\). The above study of numismatic evidences of the Kuśāṇas is also corroborated from the discovery of an image on the Asanpat stone inscription\(^ {26}\) in the district of Keonjhar. The image of Naṭarāja found in the Asanpat stone inscription indicates the worship of Śiva in the region of Orissa. It is revealed from the inscription that Maharaja Śatrubhaṇja Deva, son of Maharaja Mānabhaṇja Deva of Nāga dynasty constructed a temple (Devāyatana) apparently of Lord Śiva. The image depicts Naṭarāja 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 other hands he holds a Trīṣula, a Ṛambaru and an Akṣhamālā. The image is in naked Urdhaliṅga form indicating Tāṇḍava dance. Nandi and Bhrukuṭi, the two attendants are seated on the both sides of the image.

\(^{24}\) S.N.Chinnara, *op.cit.*, p.47.
During the seventh and eighth century A.D. Śaivism was a dominant cult throughout India and the influence was also extremely felt in Orissa at that time. The worship of Śiva was patronized and made popular by the Śailodbhavas of Koṅgoda. King Mādhavarāja II, the illustrious ruler of this dynasty was a devotee of Lord Śiva who invoked his grace in his charters. 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 of Subhākara Deva III that the king donated the village Naddilo for the worship of Lord Vaidyanātha Bhaṭṭāraka. The Bhauma queens namely Dāṇḍi Mahādevī and Vakula Mahādevī assumed the title Paramesvara29. The Haṇḍesvara temple inscription indicates that Mādhavi Devī, wife of Bhauma-Kara king Subhākara Deva I, constructed the Mādhavesvara temple dedicated to Mādhavesvara Śiva. The patronization of Śaivism by the Bhauma-Karas had a great impact upon their feudatories like the Bhanjas of Khiṃjali maṇḍala. Kings like Neṭṭabhaṅja I31, Śatrubhaṅja I32 and Raṇabhaṅja I33 of Dhṛtipura house of the Bhaṅjas have invoked the grace of Śiva in their charters. The most prolific ruler of this branch

Raṇabhañja was a Vaiṣṇavite in the initial period of his reign who later on became a Śaivite. His Orissa Museum plates and Sonepur (Siṅgharā) plates reveals that Raṇabhañja professed Śaivism in his 9th regnal year. His two Baud grants issued in 54th and 58th R.Y. respectively describe him as Parama Māheśvara. King Raṇabhañja's queen Vijayā Mahādevī was also a Parama Māheśvarī and it was under her influence that Śaivāchāryas got ample scope to spread their faith in Khiṅjali, which ultimately resulted in the construction of the Śiva temple at Gandharādi. She was a worshipper of Śiva and made endowment to Lord Vijayesvara. It is presumed that Raṇabhañja was inclined to Śaivism by the influence of Viajaya Mahādevī, his chief queen. It seems that Raṇaka Niyarnāmā same as Raṇaka Niyarnāva mentioned in the Simhapura grant of Dharma Khedi, during the time of Devendravarman, was a Śaiva and was the father of Viajaya Mahādevī. Matrimonial relationship of Raṇabhañja Deva seems to be a factor of his inclination towards Śaivism. Almost in all the charters issued from Dhṛtipura the donors have invoked the Bhairava incarnation of Śiva. Their prayer run as follows, 'Let the

39. Ibid.
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’. Bhairava is the presiding deity of the Kāpālika sect of Śaivas who consider him to be the author of creation, protection and destruction. He represents the fierce aspect of Śiva. However, no archaeological evidence of Bhairava is available to us in Khīñjali, in spite of frequent reference to him in the Bhañja copper plates issued from Dhṛtipura.

In the Soma-Bhañja war in the middle of ninth century A.D. the Bhañjas of Dhṛtipura branch were defeated by the Somavarmishis and driven out from the Baud area. Proceeding to further south they established their new Khīñjali maṇḍala making Vañjulvaka as the capital. The Bhañjas of Vañjulvaka zealously patronized Śaivism. During their rule a change of religious practice in the Śaivite centres of Khīñjali maṇḍala was marked. The table now turned in favour of a new school of the Śaivas that infiltrated

42. The Bhañjas of Dhṛtipura worshipped alongwith the ancient form of Śiva, i.e. the Membrum virile, the Chandra Chuda Bhairaba. It is attested by the fact that there is a temple in Baud town where Śiva is worshipped as Chandra Chuda. The ancient form of worshipping Śiva in this name has possibly been handed down to the present age. At Purunākatak, around 30 K.M. from Baud there is a Śakti shrine where the presiding deity is a Lingam encircled by the usual Yonipīṭha, but the deity is worshipped as Bhairabī. As Śiva and Śakti are inseparable elements of the principle of Creation, they are placed together and the worship of Śiva in the name of Bhairaba has probably undergone a metamorphosis giving upper hand to the worship of the female principle ultimately resulting in the change of nomenclature from Bhairaba to Bhairabī.
into the Bhañja territory. The Mattamayūra school of Śaivism, which had its origin in the central part of India began to flourish under the patronage of the Kalachuris, had established its new centre of activities at Rāṇipur Jhariāl\textsuperscript{43}. The Somavaṃśīs who ruled over the eastern part of South Kośala spear-headed the process of its propagation through their liberal patronage to Āchāryas of this school. It is evident that Gaṅgaśivāchārya, who had his headquarters at Rāṇipur Jhariāl, received the patronage of Mahābhāvagupta Janmejaya I\textsuperscript{44}. The Mattamayūra sect entered into Khiṅjali maṇḍala in the train of the Somavaṃśī invasion of the land and gradually overshadowed the influence of the Kāpālikas. Kings like Neṭṭabhañja Tribhūvana Kalaśa\textsuperscript{45} and Vidyādharabhañja\textsuperscript{46} of the Bhañja dynasty of Vañjulvaka house declared themselves as Parama Māheśvara which indicates their dedication to Maheśa or Lord Śiva. In their charters 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 world shine and which glitters like pure gold. Unlike the charters from Dhṛtipura, here Śiva is adorning

\textsuperscript{43} Rāṇipur Jhariāl is situated in the North-West corner at a distance of 13 K.M. from Titilāgarh in Bolāṅgar district.


\textsuperscript{45} \textit{EL}, Vol.XXVIII, Part-4, pp.272ff.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol.IX, pp.271ff.
with the delight of Moon and serpents, which are, but symbolic representation of Śiva worshipped by the Mattamayūras. The later Bhaña kings like Nettabhaña III, Silabhaña II, Vidyādharabhaña and Satrubhaña alias Maṅgalarāja who ruled from Vañjulvaka and Salvāda were devout worshippers of Śiva. The invocation of Lord Śiva found in the charters of Ghumusar Bhaña shows that they were patrons of Mattamayūra sect. Achieving the help and patron Śaivism was spread in different part of the kingdom of Khinjali maṇḍala. Now days also Śaivism has preserved its popularity in Sonepur, Baud, Nayāgarh and Gaṅjām districts which formed the kingdom of Khinjali maṇḍala and a large number of Śaiva shrines are found in these places.

ŚAKTISM: STAMBHEŚVARĪ WORSHIP :

The Śakti cult with its multi-dimensional manifestations has a long varied history traceable to 3rd millennium B.C. A good number of clay figurines and seals have been collected from the Indus valley excavations which attest to the worship of female principle of creation. These seals and figurines

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represent Śakti in anthropomorphic and anionic form. Apart from these findings the Vedic literary texts have also noticed the prevalence of Śakti worship in the contemporary society. The Rig Veda speaks of at least forty goddesses whose position was subordinate to their male counter parts. Among the Rig Vedic goddesses probably Uṣā held an important position who has been invoked by at least twenty hymns in the text. In the later Vedic literature Śakti is mentioned as Ambikā, the sister of God Rudra. The Taittiriya Āranyaka however describes Rudra as Ambikāpati and Umāpati. The Kenopaniṣad has described her as Umā-Haimavati. In course of time both the goddess are affiliated to Rudra as his consort, an inseparable part of the Brahman. The Śākta Upaniṣads accept her as the creative power of Brahman. J.N.Sinha, however, opines that she is Brahman by herself, and not a separate entity related to the Brahman only. This individuality is the essence of Śaktism. The Tripura Tapini Upaniṣad considers

55. *Ibid.*
60. *Tripura Tapini Upaniṣad*, 1.6, Vr.14.
Sakti to be the creative power of Śiva without whom the latter can not create the universe. She creates the Prakṛti, Puruṣa and the world. It represents Sakti as Durgā and deals exclusively with goddess. In some Śākta Upaniṣads like Tripura Tapini Upaniṣad, which are tantric in character, we find the symbolic representation of Sakti. Such symbolical terms are Bindu, Nāda, Bija, Sthāna, Śakti, Mantra, Yantra, Chakra and Taruka. The Devī Upaniṣad or Atharvasiraspaniṣad has mentioned different embodiment of Śakti or Durgā. Śakti here is depicted as Brahma Svarupini. During the epic age Śakti gained a prime position among the gods and goddess of Hindu pantheon. But in spite of her high and adorable position she did not have any independent cult of her own. She is depicted as a consort of Śiva in Rāmāyaṇa and has been considered as so much powerful that even gods were unable to undo things done by her.

Quoting from the traditions of Kalikā Purāṇa, Rmanusia Swami, the commentator of Rāmāyaṇa holds that Rāmachandra of Ayodhya was the first to celebrate autumnal worship of Śakti in form of Durgā. This tradition has also been

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61. Devī Upaniṣad, Vṛ.2.
63. Devī Upaniṣad, Vṛ.2.
65. Kalikā Purāṇa, ch.60.
66. Rāmāyaṇa, VI, 110, last verse.
attested by the Mahābhāgabata Purāṇa\textsuperscript{67}, Devi Bhāgabata Purāṇa\textsuperscript{68} and Kalikā Purāṇa\textsuperscript{69}. There is further evidence of the worship of female principle in the contemporary society. The Kurma Purāṇa\textsuperscript{70} bears testimony to the worship of Durgā by king Janaka of Mithilā. Kauśalyā, the mother of Rāma is said to have worshipped Durgā for protection from all evils\textsuperscript{71}. The Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa mentions the worship of Durgā by Puruṣottama Rāma\textsuperscript{72} and Sītā\textsuperscript{73}. Besides Rāmāyaṇa also provides evidence of Śakti worship by the non-Aryans. The Mahābhāgabata Purāṇa informs us that, Rāvaṇa, the king of Lāṅkā was a devout worshipper of Devī and his kingdom was abounded with the temple dedicated to the goddess\textsuperscript{74}. The cult of Mother Goddess gained much importance in the age of Mahābhārata\textsuperscript{75}. The great epic devotes two stories addressed to Goddess Durgā which throws light on the position of Śakti cult and indicates that Śakti during this period represents the fusion of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva goddess. Durgā in the Mahābhārata has been described as the rescuer of her devotees from all difficulties\textsuperscript{76}.

\textsuperscript{67} Mahābhāgabata Purāṇa, chs.36-38. 
\textsuperscript{68} Devī Bhāgabata Purāṇa, 111,30,40,46. 
\textsuperscript{69} Kalikā Purāṇa, chs.62,36-38. 
\textsuperscript{70} Kurma Purāṇa, 19-20. 
\textsuperscript{71} Adhyātma Rāmāyana,11,2-42. 
\textsuperscript{72} Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa, 111,30-17. 
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., IV,27. 
\textsuperscript{74} Mahābhāgabata Purāṇa, 1.36.5.9, p.39. 
\textsuperscript{75} Mahābhārata, IV and VI,23. 
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., IV, p.6, Vr.20.
The Mother Goddess from the time immemorial was the beloved deity of the primitive people of Orissa. She was worshipped with great veneration by the non-Aryan tribes like the Śavaras and the Pulindas who dwelt in the Vindhyas as far as south-eastern part of Orissa. That the Śavaras and the Pulindas were the inhabitants of Mahendragiri is indicated by the inscriptions of Orissa\textsuperscript{77} of early medieval period. The Cuttack Museum charter or the Orissa Museum plates\textsuperscript{78} of Mādhavavarman of the Śailodbhava family reveals that in the middle of sixth century A.D. there flourished in Mahendragiri a great tribal chief of immeasurable power and prowess. It is known from Mahābhārata\textsuperscript{79} that Sahadeva defeated the Pulindas and marched to south. In Kathāsārita Sāgara the Pulindas and Śavaras were associated with the Vindhyas and the eastern mountain Mahendra. Āryāstaba of Khila Harivamśa\textsuperscript{80} describes the Mother Goddess both as an Aryan and non-Aryan deity. She is addressed there as Āryā, Nārāyaṇī, Tribhūvaneśvarī, Śrī Rātrī and Kātyāyaṇī. She is also adorned in the said work in association with hills, particularly the Vindhyas, caves, forests and the tribal people like the Śavaras and the Pulindas. The non-aryan aspect of the Mother Goddess is also indicated by such names as

\textsuperscript{79} K.Aiyanager, \textit{Beginning of South Indian History}, (Calcutta, 1918), p.60.
Aparṇā, Nagna-Śavari etc. attributed to her in the same text81. The primitive people of forests and hills of Mahendragiri thus appear to have worshipped the Mother Goddess from very early times.

The worship of Śakti in the form of a post or pillar seems to have emanated from the primitive tree worship, which like the serpent worship was an ancient religious cult of India. The primitive people like Śavaras and Pulindas who belong to the proto-Austrōliodiptthic group appears to have worshipped the Mother Goddess in the form of a tree or the trunk of a tree. In some early inscription of Orissa82 Śiva is referred to as Sthānu i.e. branchless trunk83. In a later literary source, the Mukhaliṅgam Kṣetra Mahātmya84, which is a part of Skanda Purāṇa, there is an anecdote which supports the hypothesis that some of the major religious cults were associated with the primitive tree worship. According to the anecdote a Śarava chief of Mukhaliṅgam had two wives who lived on the product of a Madhuka tree. One of the wives of the Śavara was devoted to Śiva and she was blessed with golden flowers from the tree, while the other was deprived of this miraculous gift. Consequently there was a quarrel in the family and the tribal chief in

81. Ibid., p.120.
annoyance cut off the tree at its very root. Strangely to the astonishment of all there emerged from the root of the tree a Śiva Līṅga, which was later on idolized as Madhukeśvara. It is no wonder that God like Paśupati Śiva was also worshipped in the form of a log of wood or a post or a pillar (stambha). In fact the tradition of the worship of Mother Goddess has come down through ages to present time. In Orissa in many obscure nooks and corners and places inhabited by the tribal people the Mother Goddess in worshipped in the form of a log of wood or a pillar made of stone and she is popularly designated as Khambeśvari or Kandhuṇidevi\textsuperscript{85} i.e. the deity of the aboriginal Kondhs. A close observation of many of the images of the Mother Goddess in Orissa, a critical analysis of Āryāstava and a study of the epigraphic records of Orissa of the Gupta and post-Gupta period leads us to conclude that in the history of Śaktism in Orissa, the genesis of the cult is indicated by a fusion of the primitive tree worship, proto-historic Yoni worship and the worship of the Upaniṣadic concept of Umā. The Pulindas and the Śavaras who dwelt in the hills and forests of Orissa in course of a process of aryanisation under the influence of a Brahmanical school

\textsuperscript{85} Most of the Goddess enshrined in villages and forests bear the names indicating tribal origin. They are Maṅgalā, Pitābalī, Bāuti, Khambeśvari etc. At Surudā in Gaṅjām district Kandhuṇidevi is worshipped in the form of a log of wood. Eschmann and Others(ed.), The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa, (Delhi, 1978), p.86.
identified the worship of the Mother Goddess Umā with their sacred tree. In this process in Orissa the tree worship of the Śavaras got itself mingled and merged with the worship of the Aryan Mother Goddess, which ultimately gave rise to the establishment of Stambheśvarī cult in Orissa.

Stambheśvarī was an aboriginal Goddess worshipped by the non-Aryan tribes of hinterland Orissa. In course of time she was like many other tribal deities given a place in the Hindu pantheon. She was adopted and worshipped by the Aryan invaders who settled amidst the non-Aryan tribes\(^\text{86}\). Subsequently she was transformed from a nomadic cult to Śakti cult. Gradually when the Aryan chiefs established small kingdoms of their own, they had to depend upon the sturdy tribal for consolidation and defence of their newly established kingdoms. The Aryan kings who also needed the lands of different tribes and their services for the promotion and extension of peasant agriculture which would yield enough surplus crops to meet the requirements of the increased civil and military personal. Thus the kings were dependent upon the support and loyalty of the tribes. Therefore they kept them in good humour through the gradual process of inclusion of tribal groups into the Hindu caste system and the absorption and adoption of some aspects

of the tribal religion and culture into the Aryan fold. Pargiter\(^87\) has observed 'the Aryans met the religious practices and beliefs among whom (the tribes) they ruled over and came in lasting contact with, and has assimilated some of them gradually thus modifying their own religion to a certain extent'. In this process the dominant tribal deities like Stambheśvarī were aryenised and patronized by the kings as tutelary deities. Patronage of dominant autochthonous deities enabled the kings to consolidate their power and its legitimacy in the Hindu tribal zone of hilly hinterland of western Orissa\(^88\).

In this process of aryenisation the Brāhmaṇas who were granted rent free lands in the tribal area played an important role. They settled in the forest tracts through land grants and came into contact with the forest tribes, which were to lead a recluse living in the forest, and serve their king in various ways\(^89\). Prof.R.S.Sharma has rightly stated that the significance of land grants to Brahmins is not difficult to appreciate. The grantees brought new knowledge with the improved cultivation and inculcated in the aborigines a sense of loyalty to the established order uphold by the rulers\(^90\). The

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87. Eschman and Others(ed.), *op.cit.*, pp.128-29.
co-existence of Brahmanical and tribal culture led to the interaction between these two. So much so the deities like Stambheśvarī worshipped by the non-Aryan tribes entered into Brahmanical pantheon. It may be mentioned that the hill tribes who believed in matriarchy were worshippers of Śakti. Stambheśvarī is also worshipped as a manifestation of Śakti in the hill tracts or Orissa at least in tribal surroundings. She is the best example of aboriginal Goddess of Orissa, which underwent the process of aryанизation in earlier times.

The first royal patron of Stambheśvarī was Mahārāja Truṣṭikara. He ruled over Kalāhāṇḍi, Suvaranapur, Baud and Ghumusar region in the fifth century A.D. This region covers the hill tracts of western and southern Orissa. The earliest reference to Stambheśvarī is found in the Terāsiṅgā Copper plates of Mahārāja Truṣṭikara. In this inscription the king has styled himself as ‘Stambheśvarī Pādabhakta’. This inscription reveals that Mahārāja Truṣṭikara in order to cure his ailing mother Śrī Śobhini worshipped at the feet of Goddess Stambheśvarī, the Iṣṭadevi of his family. It is interesting to note that the name of the places occurring in the

93. Ibid., p.58.
95. Lines 1-4 of Terāsiṅgā plates.
Teräsìṅgā plates have been located by S.N. Rajguru\textsuperscript{96} in the Āskā region of Gañjām district. At Āskā there is a temple of Stambheśvarī, locally called as Khambeśvarī, on the bank of river Rṣikūlyā. In view of this it may be suggested that Goddess Stambheśvarī at Āskā was enshrined previously by Truṣṭikara in the fifth century A.D.

In March 1973, the Asurgarh fort in Kalāhāṇḍi district was excavated by N.K. Sahu, the then Head of the Department of History of Sambalpur University. This excavation brought to light a structure which was completely buried underground. The structure was probably a temple of the Mother Goddess as known from the terracotta figurines of different animals\textsuperscript{97}. This circular brick temple had probably wooden roof as indicated by the grooves of wooden pillars. The structural ruins and antiquities unearthed from the site have been assigned to cir. fifth century A.D. In course of the growth of Śakti worship in Orissa, the Mother Goddess was worshipped both in form of a pillar as well as in anthropomorphic form. In the post-Gupta period the Śaravapurīyas of South Kośala and the Śailodbhavas of Koṅgoda emerged as two great royal houses, which evolved from aboriginal rocks. The Śaravapurīyas embraced

\textsuperscript{96} I.O., Vol.I, Part-II, p.84.
\textsuperscript{97} N.K. Sahu, Archaeological Finds in Asurgarh, Third Purva Bharat Sanskrutik Sammelan, (Bhubaneswar, 1976), p.133.
Vaiṣṇavism and the Śailodbhavas embraced Śaivism in the seventh century A.D. They were influenced by the Brahmanical form of Hinduism. It is no wonder therefore that the cult of Stambheśvarī which was basically a tribal one was relegated to the back ground for about two centuries for want of royal patronage. The cult however continued to be popular among the hill tribes and rural population in Orissa.

After the fall of the Śailodbhavas, the Bhauma-Karas occupied Toṣali in 736 A.D. They worshipped the anthropomorphic form of the Mother Goddess. There is no evidence to reveal their association with the cult of Stambheśvarī. But the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area. All the Śulkis who were the feudatories of the Bhauma-Karas popularized this cult in Kodālaka maṇḍala, which comprised Dheṅkānāl, Tālcher and neighbouring area.

Thus in the Dhenkanal plates\textsuperscript{100} of Kulastambha we come across the phrase ‘Stambhesvari’ Labdha Vara Prasādaḥ’. Similarly in the Puri plates\textsuperscript{101} of Raṇastambha we find mention of ‘Stambhesvarī Datta Vara Prasadat’. Raṇastambha in another of his copper plates\textsuperscript{102} is said to have received boons from Stambheśvarī (Stambheśvarī Prāpta Vara Prasādat). She is declared as the witness (Sākṣini) of the Dhenkanal grant\textsuperscript{103}.

It is striking to note that the Śulki rulers used the epithet Stambha\textsuperscript{104} as the surname. By adopting this nomenclature they obviously wanted to associate themselves with the divine Mother whom they worshipped in the form of a Stambha (Pillar) or a post. It is also interesting to note that the father of the donee of Dhenkanal grant\textsuperscript{105} of Jayastambha was a Brahmin whose name was Khamba\textsuperscript{106}. Thus it is obvious that in course of the fusion of the Aryan and non-Aryan elements even the Brahmins of Vedic lineage showed their reverence to Khambeśvarī under the Śulkis. It is interesting to note that the worship of Stambheśvarī is widely popular at present in Dhenkanal, Angul and Tālcher region once ruled by the Śulkis.

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\textsuperscript{100} Line 3 of the plates, \textit{J.B.O.R.S.}, Vol.II, pp.404-05.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol.II, pp.395-400.
\textsuperscript{104} B. Mishra(1), \textit{Dynasties of Medieval Orissa}, (New Delhi, 1933), p.29.
\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{106} Khamba means pillar in Oriya language.
family. Her shrines are found at Barimul near Baḍambā in Cuttack district, Bāmur and Tarās in Angul district, which are not far from the capital Kodālaka maṇḍala. Stambheśvari is represented by a single stone or wooden post, which is worshipped in the cultivating season in different villages of Angul region by the Dehurīs belonging to Kondh tribe of Śūdra caste having tribal affiliation. This worship is named as Kaduāli Pūjā (worship of the cultivating season)\textsuperscript{107}.

The northern part of Kodālaka maṇḍala constituted a separate maṇḍala under the rule of the Tuṅga family and was named as Yamagartta maṇḍala\textsuperscript{108}. We learn from the Tālcher plate of Gayāda Tuṅga that the Tuṅgas were the devout worshippers of Goddess Stambheśvari\textsuperscript{109}. It is further interesting to note that during the reign of Vinita Tuṅga there flourished a district or viṣaya called Khambā\textsuperscript{110}, which seems to be reminiscent of the Stambheśvari cult.

The Bhaṅjas of Khiṅjali maṇḍala who issued charters from Dhṛtipura were the worshippers of Stambheśvari although they accepted Śaivism and Vaiśnavism in different periods. An

\textsuperscript{107} S.Pattanaik, Kodalaka mandala O Stambhesvari, \textit{Utkala Sahitya} (Oriya), Vol.XXVI, pp.7-15.
\textsuperscript{108} N.Senapati and P.Tripathy(ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, p.53.
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{J.A.S.B.}, Vol.XII, pp.291-95.
\textsuperscript{110} B.Mishra(1), \textit{op.cit.}, p.27.
illustrious ruler of this branch Ranabhaṅja was the only monarch who is known to have received the cult of Stambheśvari. This cult was popular in the Gaṅjām and Kalāhāṇḍi districts of Orissa in the Gupta period. In the post-Gupta period it did not receive any royal patronage under the Śailodbhavas and the Śaravapurīyas. But it seems that among the innumerable aboriginal tribes of Sonepur, Baud, Phulbāṇi, Āṭhmallik and Ghumusar region this cult was popular. When Raṇabhaṅja, the son of Śatrubhaṅja occupied the Āṭhmallikk region he was obviously influenced by the cult of Stambheśvari which was popular among the natives of that locality111. In the Orissa Museum plates112 of the 9th regnal year Raṇabhaṅja calls himself ‘Stambheśvari Labdha Vara Prasāda’. In fact all through his life except the fag end of his career he continued to be the devout worshipper of Stambheśvari and extended benevolent patronage for the growth and development of the cult in Baud Sonepur region. Out of his 13 charters so far available, in the first 8 charters he continued to refer to the boon of the Devine Mother Stambheśvari113. It was only by his 54th regnal year he

111. Our field study to the locality has revealed that within a radius of about 10 miles from Āṭhmallik in the village like Aida, Oluthu, Odasingā etc. Stambheśvari is being worshipped by a community called Dumāls who seem to be tribal origin. Eschmann seems to be correct in taking the Dumāls as tribal people who even now observe a lot of aboriginal traditions. Eschmann and Others(ed), op.cit., p.271.
discontinued the reference to the grace of this Goddess and since then he professed to have unsullied devotion to Lord Śiva only. The successors of Raṇabhaṇja who ruled from Vaṅjuḷvaka were deeply influenced by Vaiśnavism. Yet they continued to remain devoted to Goddess Stambheśvarī. It is important to note that during the age of the Bhaṇjas pillars and posts were worshipped not only as Iśvarī (Goddess) but also as Deva(God). Obviously therefore we find the nomenclature of Stambha Deva in the epigraphs of the Bhaṇjas. For example one responsible officer designated as Dutaka under Silābhaṇja II alias Tribhūvana Kalaśa was called Bhaṭṭāraka Stamba Deva. A learned Brahmin of the Vajasaneyi charaṇa with distinct lineage and the donee of Komañḍa copper plate of Neṭtabhaṇja alias Kalyāṇa Kalaśa was Stamba Deva. These indicate that the Aryans of Khiṇjali maṇḍala had accepted the medium of a post or a pillar as the representation of God. It is interesting to note that in the two sets of copper plate grants of Vidyādharabhaṇja alias Amogha Kalaśa (Samvat 174 i.e. 910 A.D.) a minister of war and peace was known as Stambha.

At present Åskā in the Gañjām district, which was an integral part of Khiñjali mañḍala is one of the early centres of Goddess Stambheśvarī. Here the Goddess is worshipped in the form of wooden post and a particular street of the township as known as Khambeśvarī Pātaṇā. Not far from Åskā, there are villages named Pathorā, Debhūmi and Taṇḍrā, which seem to be reminiscent of Parbatadvārka, Devagoka and Tarabhramaraka respectively of the Terasiṅgā grant of Truṣṭikara. At Khambeśvarī Pātaṇā there is a Khambeśvarī temple, which was renovated by Dhanañjaya Bhañja117 (C.1636-1702 A.D.) of Ghumusar. Here Goddess Khambeśvarī is worshipped both as an image in the Garbhagriha and as a wooden pole presiding over the sacrificial pit in front of the main image opposite the main door on the sanctum. The main image consists of a stone pole, which has been anthropomorphized by the addition of a disc as head. She has a slightly carved nose and mouth, while her three eyes and the protruding tongue are made of gold. There is a thick layer of pasty vermillion on her face painted from time to time. She has been adorned with gorgeous silken dress and heavy golden ornaments.

Gandharādi in Baud district is an important centre of Stambheśvarī cult. It is important to note that this area was included

in Khinjali maṇḍala and is situated nearer to Baud, which served the capital of Khinjali maṇḍala and was known as Dhṛtipura.

The historic site of Subarṇapura i.e. modern Sonepur was also a very important stronghold of this cult. The temple of Stambheśvarī at Sonepur town represents the most vibrant manifestation of the cult from the age of the Bhaṅjas who ruled over Baud-Sonepur region.

Bīrmāhārājpur a sub division of Subarṇapur district and its neighbourhood is another prominent centre of Stambheśvarī cult\textsuperscript{118}. It is important to mention here that during the reign of the Bhaṅjas of Khinjali maṇḍala this area was known as Uttarapalli Viṣaya.

Āṭhmallik, a sub division of Angul district is also another important centre of Stambheśvarī cult. When Rāṇabhāṅja I, the son of Satrubhaṅja I, the Bhaṅja ruler of Khinjali maṇḍala occupied this region he was obviously influenced by the cult of Stambheśvarī which was popular among the people of that locality. Odisiṅgā, a village situated near the Āṭhmallik town is said to be the

\textsuperscript{118} Our field study to Bīrmahārājpur area has revealed that in as many as 42 villages like Kardāpāl, Deulmundā, Bhālāpadar, Saṇḍha, Bāgbar, Dumuri, Hiliing, Kamirā, Ektāl, Kādodar, Goudgād, Meṇḍāmāl, Kamalpur, Kotsamlāi etc. Stambheśvarī is worshipped in the form of pillar and post.
early inhabitants of the Dumāl community who seem to be trial origin and worship Stambheśvarī as their īstadevi.

VAIŚNAVISM:

Vaiśnavism, an ancient religion of India is traceable to Vedic age. Lord Viṣṇu has been worshipped in several forms and names, most important of them being Bhāgabata and Pañcharātra sects. But it is commonly accepted that the devotees who adore Lord Viṣṇu in any name or form are called Vaiṣnavas, their religion being Vaiśnavism. Nārāyaṇa has been identified with Viṣṇu. Probably the earliest reference to this is met in the Baudhayana Dharma Sutra (about fifth century B.C.) and the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka (XII) contains the passage ‘Nārāyaṇa vidmahe Vasudevāya dhimahi, tanno Viṣṇuh prachodayāt’, in which Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu are regarded as one and the same deity. Here Nārāyaṇa is also called Hari and the eternal deity, the Supreme and the Lord. Probably the earliest reference to Bhāgavata cult is met in Madhya Pradesh. The Besnagar inscription (in Madhya Pradesh assignable to the second century B.C.) refers to the setting up a garuḍavāja (column surmounted by

120. Ibid.
the figure of Garuḍa bird, the vehicle of Viṣṇu) at Vidiśā by Heliodorus, the Greek devotee of Takṣaśilā, in honour of Vāsudeva, the greatest God (Devadiva). Here Heliodorus calls himself a Bhāgavata i.e. worshipper of Bhagavata Vāsudeva Viṣṇu. Another inscription from Besnagar refers to the erection of a Garuḍa column for a temple of the Bhāgavatas. The inscribed image of Viṣṇu at Burhikar near Malhār is one of the earliest iconic representation to the Lord Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva. K.D. Bajpei and S.K. Pandey ascribe this image to second century B.C. where as Jayaswal ascribe this to first century B.C. But some say this Vaiṣṇava image is an attendant of Viṣṇu (having his appearance and attributes) and not that God Viṣṇu himself. Now this Vaiṣṇava image (either of Viṣṇu Vāsudeva or his attendant) is worshipped as Chaturbhūji Bhagavān at Burhikar near Malhār. This image is four handed, the upper left and right hand hold the chakra (discus) and gadā (mace) respectively, and the lower left and right palms are joined in the aṅjali pose. It bears an inscription in the Brahmi scripts of about first century B.C. Again South Kośala, covering the western part of Orissa and Chhattisgarh also remained for some time under the political influence of the Guptas and the Vākāṭakas who were great

122. H. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.117.
125. H. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.118f.
champions of Vaishnavism of both the sects i.e. Pañcharātra and Bhāgabata. Vaishnavism had established itself in the Raipur area of Chhattisgarh during the Gupta period. Towards its end, Rajim and subsequently Sirpur became centres of Vaishnava religion. Its further advance from there into the bordering regions of Orissa was closely linked with the political development in this area.\textsuperscript{126}

During the rule of the Nala dynasty Vaishnavism received a paternal care. The Poḍāgarh Stone inscription\textsuperscript{127} of Nala king Skandavarman refers to the construction of a shrine of Viṣṇu at Puskari. The temple was built by the king after he had recovered the lost fortune of the Nala family and repealed the deserted city of Puskari. It is said that he installed a footprint of Lord Viṣṇu for its worship and the footprint symbolizes Lord Viṣṇu’s Vāmana (dwarf) incarnation. The first verse of the Poḍāgarh inscription praises ‘Hari’, who is described as one who was victorious, is victorious and will be victorious. Again the Divine Hari is himself the conquest, the object of the conquered and conqueror.\textsuperscript{128} This shrine of Viṣṇu is the first Vaishnava shrine in western Orissa.\textsuperscript{129}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{126} A.Eschmann and Others(ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, p.10.
\item \textsuperscript{127} \textit{E.I.}, Vol.XXI, pp.153-57.
\item \textsuperscript{128} \textit{I.O.}, Vol.I, Part-II, p.94, V-I.
\end{itemize}

\begin{verbatim}
Hariṇā jitam-Jayati jesyataersa gunastu
Bhagavāneva jayo jetavyam chadijetacha.
\end{verbatim}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{129} A.Eschmann and Others(ed.), \textit{op.cit.}, p.11.
\end{itemize}
With the coming of the Šarbhapurīyas, Vaiṣṇavism became more vibrant. Their royal seals bear the figure of Gajalakṣmī (consort of Viṣṇu). The kings of the dynasty called themselves 'Parama Bhāgavatas' in their grants and in their gold coins the image of Garuḍa flanked by a discus on its right and a conch on its left is found depicted. During the Gupta period two sects of Vaiṣṇavas were prevalent, namely Pañcarātra and Bhāgavata. The epigraphic sources acquaint us with the temporary suzerainty of the Guptas and Vākāṭakas over South Kośala. The Vākāṭaka queen and daughter of Chandragupta II Prabhābatīgupta was invited by a teacher of Pañcarātra school. During the overlordship of Vākāṭakas over South Kośala the Pañcarātra Ācharyas might have penetrated deep into the heart of Kośala country for the propagation of the Pañcarātra sect. The worship of Viṣṇu can purify the Kirāṭuas, Huṇas, Yavanas, Pulindas etc. and the Šarbhapurīyas who had a tribal origin got the spiritual sanction as Aryans from the teachers of the Pañcarātra School. The Šarbhapurīyas patronized learned scholars like Viṣnusvāmī of Kausīka gotra, Dikṣita Ananta Svāmī and Dāmodara Svāmī of Bharadvāja gotra who belonged to the Pañcarātra school

131. Bhāgavata Purāṇa, ii, pp.4-18.
of Vaiṣṇavism\textsuperscript{132}. In the gold coins circulated by the Śarabhapurīya kings the emblems of Garuḍa, Saṅkha and Chakra find place. All these are Vaiṣṇavite symbols.

Vaiṣṇavism was not a popular faith in Orissa during the early part of Bhauma-Kara rule as not a single Viṣṇu temple is known to have been built during their rule. However, it received royal patronage and became a dominant religious force towards the later part of the Bhauma rule. Bhauma queens like Tribhūvana Mahādevī I, Tribhūvana Mahādevī II and Tribhūvana Mahādevī III were devotees of Viṣṇu. This is known from the fact that the epithets like Parama Vaiṣṇavī (one who is devoted to Lord Viṣṇu) are being used by Tribhūvana Mahādevī I\textsuperscript{133} and Prithvī Mahādevī\textsuperscript{134}. The Tālcher plate of Śubhākara Deva IV describes his mother Tribhūvana Mahādevī as the worshipper of Hari\textsuperscript{135}. Besides we find occasional references to Lord Viṣṇu and his consort Śrī or Lakṣmi in the records of the dynasty.

\textsuperscript{133} J.B.O.R.S., Vol.II, pp.419ff.
\textsuperscript{134} E.I., Vol.XXIX, pp.210ff.
\textsuperscript{135} B.Mishra(1), Orissa Under the Bhauma Kings, (Calcutta, 1934), p.37.
The huge images of Viṣṇu in Sayana (recumbent) posture found at Sarāṅg and Bhimkhaṇḍ in Angul district have been assigned to the Bhauma-Kaṇa period\textsuperscript{136}.

The acceptance and patronization of the Bhauma-Karas had a great impact upon their feudatories like the Bhaṇjas of Khīṇjali maṇḍala. The early Bhaṇja chiefs of Dhṛtipura were Vaiṣṇavites. Rulers like Satrubhaṇja Deva and Raṇabhaṇja Deva were described as Parama Vaiṣṇavas. Satrubhaṇja has been described as Parama Vaiṣṇava in his Sonepur grant\textsuperscript{137}. The Kumurakelā charter\textsuperscript{138} of this king was issued on Kārtika Śuklapakṣa Mahādvādaśī, which is an auspicious day of Viṣṇu. In all the charters\textsuperscript{139} issued before 54 regnal year of Raṇabhaṇja Deva the epithet Parama Vaiṣṇava has been used by him. The temple of Nilamādhava Viṣṇu at Gandharādi was constructed by king Raṇabhaṇja Deva\textsuperscript{140}. It is important to note here that the Bhaṇja rulers of Dhṛtipura branch were no doubt the devout worshippers of

\textsuperscript{139} Kārtika Śuklapakṣa Mahādvādaśī falls on the 12\textsuperscript{th} day of 2\textsuperscript{nd} fortnight in the month of Kārtika (November).
 g) Baud grant (R.Y.9), \textit{J.B.O.R.S.}, Vol.XX, pp.147-52.  
\textsuperscript{140} For detail see chapter 8.
Viṣṇu, but we also find in their grants customary verses in honour of Śiva and Śaiva symbols in their seals.\textsuperscript{141}

After being defeated by the Somavamśī king Janmejaya I the Bhaṇjas of Dhṛtipura fled to Ghumusar of Gaṅjām district where they built their new Khiṃjali maṇḍala with Vañjulvaka as their capital.

Among the Bhaṇja rulers of Vañjulvaka Neṭṭabhaṇja, the donor of Daśapallā\textsuperscript{142} and Orissa Museum\textsuperscript{143} grants, Śatrubhaṇja Tribhūvana Kalaśa of Daśapallā Copper plate\textsuperscript{144} and Gaṅjām plates\textsuperscript{145}. Neṭṭabhaṇja of Jurāḍā grant\textsuperscript{146} and Bhaṇjanagar plates\textsuperscript{147} were devout Vaiṣṇavas. The Bhaṇja rulers donated charters on the occasion of Viṣṇu Saṅkrānti\textsuperscript{148}, Devotsava Dvādaśī\textsuperscript{149}, Viṣnurunchayana Ekādaśī\textsuperscript{150} which are auspicious days for the worship of Viṣṇu.

\textsuperscript{141} The existence of twin temples of Siddheśvara and Nilaṃadhava at Gandharāḍī is an unique example of Harīhara cult which prevailed during the reign of the Bhaṇjas of Dhṛtipura branch of Khiṃjali maṇḍala.
\textsuperscript{142} \textit{J.B.O.R.S.}, Vol.VI, Part-II, pp.274-79.
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol.XI, No.1, pp.9-17.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol.IV, pp.67-76ff.
\textsuperscript{146} \textit{E.I.}, Vol.XXIV, pp.15-20ff.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{I.O.}, Vol.VI, pp.220-25.
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{O.H.R.J.}, Vol.V, No.3-4, p.67f.
\textsuperscript{150} \textit{E.I.}, Vol.XVIII, pp.298ff.
BUDDHISM:

The origin of Buddhism in Orissa can be traced back to the time of meeting of Buddha with two Orissan traders Tapassu and Bhālliika during their trade sojourn in northern India\(^{151}\). They are even said to have received the Dharma Chakra Pravartana Sutta (the sermons of Buddha) straight from the great master himself at Bodh Gayā. According to the Buddhist traditions recorded in Buddhavamsa\(^{152}\) and Dāṭhavamsa\(^{153}\). Kaliṅga was among the few states to receive a tooth relic of Buddha after the latter’s Mahāparinirvāṇa at Kusinārā. The said relic is said to have been preserved in a stupa erected at a flourishing port town called Dantapura, so named after the sacred tooth which is also called as Pālur in Telugu, meaning town of the tooth, in the Gaṇjām district of Orissa\(^{154}\). The stupa containing the tooth was universally worshipped by the people as a most sacred shrine till 261 B.C. when the land was occupied by Aśoka. As a result of the bloodiest war he fought with Kaliṅga in which one hundred thousand were slain, one hundred fifty thousand were taken as captives and about that number died of injuries and pestilence as he confessed in his Rock Edict

\(^{152}\) *Buddhavamsa* (P.T.S.), XXVIII, p.6.
\(^{153}\) Edited by B.C.Law (the Punjab Sanskrit Series), No.VII, (Lahore, 1925).
XIII. The amount of blood shed, sufferings, agonies and miseries caused by the war to the people of Kaliṅga left a deep impression on the mind and heart of Aśoka who in an effort to seek explanation turned completely towards Ahimśā (non injury to living beings) and became a Buddhist. His heart was filled with the feelings of deep sorrow, remorse and repentance at the terrible loss of lives tragedies the war caused. He felt disgusted with the war and finally decided to give up warfare forever when he was in full tide of victory. In consequence he abandoned the sword and stuck to the wheel of law for Buddhism.\(^{155}\)

The Kaliṅga war thus proved to be a turning point in Aśoka's career and in the history of India. It closed the era of Magadhan imperial aggrandizement and opened a new era of Dharma Vijaya of peace, social progress and religious propaganda. In fact with the end of the Kaliṅga war the era of military conquest or Digvijaya was over and an era of spiritual conquest or Dharma Vijaya began\(^{156}\).

As a result of the war, Kaliṅga was made a province of the Magadhan empire and was governed by the emperor through a Kumāra or prince viceroy and Mahāmātras or high officers posted at

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Toṣali (the headquarters of the Northern division, identified with present Dhauli in Khurdā district) and Somāpā (the headquarters of the Southern division, identified with the village Samā near Jaugadā in Gaṅjām district). Aśoka adopted a compassionate and solicitious attitude to the people of Kaliṅga and paid proper attention to their all round development. All this has been well reflected in his special Kaliṅga Edicts, which are addressed to the Mahāsāmantas stationed at Toṣali and Somāpā. It is not known whether Aśoka’s successors continued to rule over Kaliṅga in the same manner as he did. But the fact remains that soon after Aśoka’s death Kaliṅga regained her independence taking advantage of the weakness of his successors. According to some scholars Aśoka got some stupas erected in Kaliṅga, which needs to be testified by archaeological evidences.

Right in the beginning of the third century B.C. when Aśoka embraced Buddhism as his religion, it began to play a significant role in the relationship of Kaliṅga with other countries of south-east Asia. From Dantapur (modern Pālur) Buddha’s tooth was carried to Ceylon. The fact forms the basis of a lasting relationship between Kaliṅga and Ceylon over the centuries\(^{157}\).

During the reign of Aśoka three types of scholars of Buddhism such as Therāvādin, Sarvastivādin and Mahāsaṅghamika

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flourished in Kaliṅga. Aśoka himself was a Therāvādin and several Therāvādin monks like Dharmarāksit visited and stayed in Kaliṅga during this time. Aśoka is said to have built a monastery at Bhajakagiri in Kaliṅga in honour of monk Tissa¹⁵⁸.

In the post-Aśokan period, Sarvastavādin school of Buddhism was popular in Kaliṅga. The famous monk Āchārya Kala was its foremost proponent in Kaliṅga. Later on this school developed into Mahāyāna Buddhism¹⁵⁹.

Buddhism was in flourishing condition during the reign of the Śailodbhavas. Hiuen-Tsang in his ‘Si-Yu-Ki’ mentions about the existence of a number of Buddhist monasteries and shrines of both Hinayānism and Mahāyānism in different parts of Orissa¹⁶⁰. According to him majority of the people of Orissa were Buddhists. He visited several centres of Buddhist learning in Orissa like Puṣpagiri, Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri etc. Among the prominent Buddhist monks of Orissa of that time were Dharmapāda, Chandragomin, Chandrakirti, Dharmakirti, Śāntideva and Jayasena.

According to the Chinese pilgrim, after having occupied Orissa Harṣa hold a Mahāyāna Buddhist conference in

Kongoda some where near Buddhakola in Gañjām district to which several monks and scholars were invited from all over the country including Šilābhadra, the chancellor of Nālandā University. After the end of the conference Harṣa donated the revenue of eighty large towns of Orissa to the local Buddhist monk and scholar Jayasena, the organiser of the Mahāsaṅgha.

Buddhism was in flourishing condition under the Bhauma-Kara rulers many of whom were Buddhist. It is proved from the fact that they used such titles as Paramopasaka, Paramatathāgata, Paramasaṅgatga and Saugatasrava. A prominent king of this dynasty, Śivakara Deva presented an autographed Buddhist manuscript titled ‘Ganḍavyuha’ the last section of the ‘Buddha Vatanisaka’ to Chinese emperor Te-Tsang. Such a Buddhist presentation by a king of Orissa to an emperor of China signifies cultural contact between Orissa and China in the eighth century A.D. The carrier of the manuscript was a Buddhist monk named Pranjnā. He was asked to translate it into Chinese. Pranjnā migrated from the valley of river Kapiṣā in Afghanisthan to Orissa where he studied Yoga. He is said to have studied it at Jayasena Vihāra, a famous Buddhist centre of learning.

161. Ibid.
163. Ibid., p.119.
I-Tsing, another Buddhist pilgrim who visited India in 673-87 A.D., also refers to this vihāra as a seat of Buddhist learning and culture.

During the period of our study Mahāyānism was a popular branch of Buddhism, which according to Taranath originated in the land of Odivasa (Orissa)\textsuperscript{164}. The above statement has also been corroborated by Pāg-Sām Jon-Zāng who ascribes the origin of Mahayanism to Orissa\textsuperscript{165}. Hiuen Tsang\textsuperscript{166}, the Chinese pilgrim, could witness about hundred monasteries where 10,000 Mahāyāna monks pursued their monastic training and study. The Bhauma-Kara kingdom Tosali as described in Gaṇḍavyuha\textsuperscript{167}, became a great centre of Buddhism. The Ratnagiri mahāvihāra of the Bhauma period was also a prominent place of Mahāyāna Buddhism\textsuperscript{168}. Hinayāna, the other branch of Buddhism was also no less significant in the seventh century A.D. Hiuen-Tsang could see Puṣpagiri, a great centre of Hinayāna Buddhism, flourishing in Orissa.

Although the Bhañjas were ruling over a territory adjacent to the kingdom of the Bhauma-Karas where Buddhist faith

\textsuperscript{165} S.C.Das(ed.), \textit{Sumba Makhan Po's Pāg-Sām-Jon-Zāng}, (Calcutta, 1908), p.82.
predominated, Buddhism had very little influence on the religious system of the Bhañjas of Khinjali. No inscription of the Bhañjas refers to them as Buddhist. However the discovery of a Buddhist monastery and some Buddhist images in and around Baud corroborates the fact that Buddhism was not neglected and widely accepted by the people. Hence due to the lack of royal patronage it was not so much popular. The Buddhist images of Baud town located near the palace, of Syāmsundarpur and Pargalpur and that of Rameśvar temple are ascribed to ninth century A.D. It is important to note that during that time Baud was an integral part of Khinjali maṇḍala and was ruled by the Bhañjas. Śilābhañja Deva I, who was the earliest ruler of Khinjali maṇḍala ruled from 765 to 775 A.D. He was succeeded by Śatrubhañja Deva who ruled from 775-798 A.D. Śatrubhañja was succeeded by his Raṇabhañja Deva who ruled from 798 to 858 A.D. In 858 A.D. the Bhañjas were driven out from Baud area to Ghumusar area and Baud was occupied by the Somavamśīs. If we will accept the fact that the above said images were constructed in ninth century A.D. we have to admit that those were not constructed by the Somavarnaṁśīs as they were not Buddhist. On the other hand if we look into the political situation of that time we will see the ruling of the Bhauma-Karas as the sovereign of the Bhañjas. The Bhañja king Raṇabhañja of Baud branch was a
contemporary of Śubhākara Deva I (C.780 to 800 A.D.), Śivakara Deva II (C.800 to 820 A.D.), Śāntikara Deva I (C.820-835 A.D.), Śubhākara Deva II (C.835-838 A.D.), Śubhākara Deva III (C.838 to 845 A.D.), Tribhūvana Mahādevī I (C.845-850 A.D.) and Śāntikara Deva II (C.850 to 865 A.D.)\(^{169}\). Among them the first four rulers i.e. from Śubhākara Deva I to Śubhākara Deva II who ruled from c.780 to 838 A.D. were ardent Buddhist\(^{170}\). During that time Raṇabhaṇja had cordial relation with his sovereign rulers. Therefore it can be presumed that the above said four images were constructed by the Bhauma-Kara kings during the reign of Raṇabhaṇja between c.798 to 858 A.D. This has also been corroborated by K.S.Behera who ascribes the monuments of Šhyamsundarpur and Pargalpur to ninth century\(^{171}\). The image of Buddha found near the palace of the Rājā of Baud has been assigned to Bhauma period by R.D.Banerji\(^{172}\).

In the second half of ninth century A.D. the Bhaṇjas of Khiṇjali maṇḍala of Dhṛtipura branch were defeated and driven away by the Somavamśī ruler Janamejaya I who brought this territory under his suzerainty. The Somavamśīs who were ardent Śaivite did not patronage Buddhism for which it passed in to oblivion in their newly occupied area.

\(^{170}\) Ibid.
\(^{171}\) *Indian Express* (Vizianagaram), 15 January 1992.