Chapter-I

Historical Background of Sambalpur
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SAMBALPUR

Sambalpur, the western most district of Orissa, lies between 20°44' and 20°4' north latitude and between 82°39' and 84°23' east longitude. It has unique cultural heritage and great historical importance in the field of social, religious, educational and political consciousness.

The district of Sambalpur has its own cultural heritage. The people have evolved their own romantic dialect known as Sambalpuri which is prevalent in all the districts of western Orissa. The district is noted for “tie and dye” weaving in cotton and tassar silk bringing out excellent artistic designs from the loom almost like magic with the help of formulae which have passed down from father to son for generations.

Sambalpur saw the dawn of civilization long before the introduction of any regular script in India. Ancient man has left at Vikramkhol (about 16 miles to the west of Jharsuguda
railway station) on the wall of a cave pictograph writing still undeciphered.²

According to K.P. Jayaswal, “The characters in Vikramkhol inscription belong to a period intermediary between the script of Mohenzodaro and Brahmi. Some letters still retain their original or secondary Mohenzodaro forms and some have assumed the Brahmi or Proto Brahmi forms. This proves the origin of Brahmi to be Indian and throws a flood of light on the history of writing as from Brahmi the Phoenician and European scripts are derived”.³ This Vikramkhol pictograph scripts clearly indicate that a cultured and developed people lived in this region about five thousand years ago.⁴

In the ancient times Sambalpur was a part of South Kosala, comprising roughly the modern districts of Raipur and Raigarh in Chhatisgarh and the undivided districts of Sambalpur, Bolangir and Sundargarh in Orissa.⁵ South Kosala has been one of the most ancient places of human civilization. That a developed civilization existed in Sambalpur region is clearly evident from rock engraving and painting. South Kosala played an important role in the history of India. Its vast territory
once formed the Mahakosala (greater Kosala) empire, which was one of the foremost Mahajanapadas of India and produced some great personalities like Iksvaku, Mandhata, Sagar, Harichandra, Raghu, Rama and Prasannajit. Its history is traditionally known from the Puranas, the great epics and the early Buddhist literature. The territorial limit of ancient Kosala was very large. Then it known as North Kosala and South Kosala. Sambalpur was in South Kosala. The term 'Kosala' has got its derivation from the Sanskrit word 'Kusalam' (betterment). According to the source from Budhaghosa, Kosala means one who is clever in the art of plucking, 'Kusa' grass, which is very useful in the performances of Yagnas and religious sacrifices. So it appears that, this area once used to supply 'Kusa' grass to other part of India for use at the time of religious rituals.

We have a little information about South Kosala in the Rigveda which only makes mention of its two emperors, namely Iksvaku and Mandhata.

The two great epics i.e. Ramayan and Mahabharata, however, provide certain references to it. The Ramayana mentioned that the state of Kosala, after the death of Rama, was
divided between his two sons Lava and Kusa. While Lava received the northern part of Kosala, Kusa got its southern part with its capital, Kusavati or Kusastalipura near the Vindhyas, which was probably named after him and married a Naga Princess.\textsuperscript{7}

According to F.E. Pargiter, Rama's long stay in Dandakaranya during his banishment along with wife Sita and brother Lakshmana gave rise to the name Kosala. He identifies \textit{Dandakaranya} with modern Chhatisgarh.\textsuperscript{8}

The \textit{Mahabharata} also gives some references about Kosala. In the context of its description of Kuru-Pandavas war, it refers to many great Kings of Kosala.\textsuperscript{9} The Aranyaka Parva of the Mahabharata describes a few places of pilgrimage of Kosala. \textit{Risabha Tirtha}, one of the holy places of Kosala, can be identified with the modern Shakti in Chhatisgarh State. Shakti was a feudatory state of the kingdom of Sambalpur.\textsuperscript{10}

The Sabha Parva of the \textit{Mahabharata} states that a large section of the people of Kosala migrated to the South due to fear caused by Jarasandha. This might have led to the
development of South Kosala according to F.E.Pargitar. According to the epic, this territory was situated to the north of Dakshina Patha and adjacent to Vidharbha which is no doubt of South Kosala.

According to the Vayu and Matsya Puranas, Dakshina Kosala was located it in the Vindhya region. Again, the Puranas declare the people of Kosala as the inhabitants of the Vindhya region along with Mekhalas and the Utkalas. Hiralal, the eminent historian opined that Dakshina Kosala was also known as Mahakosala. But Dr.N.K.Sahu and Dr.S.C.Behera disagreed with him. According to Dr.Sahu there is no mention of Mahakosala or Dakshina Kosala mention in the ancient Brahmin inscription of India.

We find the reference of Kosala kingdom in the Buddhist literature. That Kosala was a well known state in the 6th century B.C. is attested by the “Anguttara Nikaya”. In the Milindapanho also, we find reference to Kosala. The Kosala King Prasenjit happens to be a contemporary of Lord Budha. During his time the capital of Kosala was Sravasti.11
Bharatmuni, the author of 'Natyasastra' has also mentioned the name of South Kosala in his work. Vatsayana has referred to Kosala as the country bordering Strirajya, Dr.Hiralal has identified the Strirajya with the western part of modern Chandanpur of Chhatisgarh. Pulakesin II in course of his north-ward military campaign is known to have defeated Kalinga along with Kosala (Sambalpur tract).12

During the Post-Maurya period South Kosala appears to be under the rule of the Chedi Kings and it was sometimes known as the Chedi Rashtra. It was from this territory that the ancestors of Kharavela came to Kalinga and founded a new kingdom which under Kharavela became the most powerful in the then India. South Kosala very likely formed a part of Kharavela’s empire.13 Later, period nine kings of the dynasty ruled over South Kosala.

The district of Sambalpur has been named after the headquarter town Sambalpur. According to L.S.S.O’Malley, the town itself derives its name from the Presiding deity Samalai, whose image was founded by Balaram Dev, the first Chauhan King of Sambalpur, beneath a Simul (Silk cotton) tree. Ptolemy,
the Greek Geographer (Middle of the 2nd century A.D.) in his work "Geographike" refers to a town named Sambalaka situated on the bank of the Mananda. Sambalaka and Mananda may perhaps be identified with modern Sambalpur and the river Mahanadi respectively.¹⁴

From time immemorial Sambalpur was famous for the finest type of diamonds available on the river bed of the Mahanadi. Chandeswara, the author of 'Ratna Pariksha' and Varahamihira, the author of 'Brihat Samhita' refer to Kosala as the land of lustrous diamonds. Ptolemy also wrote that diamond was obtained there and was exported to other parts of the country for which this part was known as 'Hirakhand' all over the world. Tribals of the area, were engaged in collection of diamonds from the river Mahanadi. Huen Tsang, the Chinese Pilgrim, mentions that a tribe called the 'Jharas' used to collect diamonds and sell those at Kalinga.¹⁵ Mainly diamonds were obtained from the river IB, a tributary of the Mahanadi, near Kosa of Sambalpur. The French traveler Tavernier, writing about the middle of the 17th century A.D., referred to Sumelpur as a region rich in diamonds obtained from the most ancient
mines. This region was reputed as containing one of the largest diamond mines in the world. The historian Edward Gibbon (1734-1794) in his work "Decline and Fall of Roman Empire" states that Rome was being supplied with diamonds from the mines of Sumelpur in Bengal. Sumelpur in Bengal is no other than the present Sambalpur of Orissa. Meanwhile, the King of Sambalpur used to be addressed as the "Hirakhanda Chhatrapati" i.e. the emperor of the land of diamonds.

The Allahabad Pillar Inscription informs us that about the 4th century A.D. Samudragupta, the King of Magadha, defeated Mahendra, the King of Kosala. The Kingdom of Kosala then consisted of modern Raipur, Bilaspur and undivided Sambalpur district. This inscription also refers to the political and cultural history of the land.

The eye witness accounts of Hiuen Tsaing, the Chinese Pilgrim, who visited Kosala in 639 A.D. about the topography of South Kosala appears to be clean and authentic. The Chinese pilgrim himself came to Kosala from the capital of Kalinga and he had to cover the distance through a wild country of hills and forests. The pilgrim reached Kosala after marching
about 1,800 li (360 miles) in the north-west direction of Kalinga.\textsuperscript{18}

According to the Chinese Pilgrim, there were mountains on the northern part of Kalinga, and following the north-west course of forest and mountains one can reach Kosala. It seems that pilgrim did not reach the Kosalan territory of Chhatisgarh area directly. He first passed through the Kandhmal and the distance of his route points to the district of Sambalpur.\textsuperscript{19}

The traditional evidences showing that the South Kosala region was the abode of the aboriginals from very ancient period. Ptolemy associates the place with \textit{Mundas} and \textit{Savaras}. Because of the later tribes dominance, this region is also called as Savarai. Hiuen Tsaing also refers, in his accounts, to some tribes who dominated the region and who were tall and black complexioned with a hard and violent disposition.\textsuperscript{20}

In the first half of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Padmasambhava, son of Indrabhuti, King of \textit{Sambhal} in \textit{Uddiyana}, founded Lamaism in Tibet. According to
Dr. N.K. Sahu, *Uddiyana* was known as modern Orissa and Sambhal was Sambalpur of today. He has given details for this, in his work "Buddhism in Orissa, (Bhubaneswar, 1958, pp. 143-153 & 166-168)." He is the first to initiate a controversy over the identification of *Uddiyana* and Sambhal. Historian have yet to debate and decide the issue. If Sambalpur in early 8th century was a seat of Buddhism evidence has to be looked for, which may be found at Melchamunda (Ganiapali) where there appears to be what might be the ruins of an ancient stupa and the Gandhamardana hill has to be searched for ancient Buddhist relics. However, sufficient indication shows that Sambalpur region was a seat of Tantrism which led to the establishment of a Tantric site at the present Patnagarh (now in Bolangir district) which till a few years ago was also called Kauri Patna or Kumari Patna which means the seat of maidens.  

King Indrabhuti's sister Laxmikara, married to Jalendra, King of Lanka (modern Sonepur district), was the propagator of *Suhajyanism*, another form of Buddhism. The period of Indrabhati and Laxminkara has been fixed in the early phase of the 8th century A.D.
We find description of the territory of *Sambhal* identified with Sambalpur. The Suffix ‘Pur’ was later added to the original name ‘Sambhal’, when the territory came under the rule of the Chauhans. The naming of the town could have been made after the word ‘Sambhal’ which means ‘Resource’. The area is resourceful owing to large source of diamonds in Sambalpur.

The history of Sambalpur can be traced as back as 4th century A.D. In the historic period, it saw the rise and fall of many dynasties ruling over Sambalpur one after another and earned fame for their administration, art, monuments and religion.

**The Sarabhapuriyas**

After the Guptas and Nalas, the Sarabhapuriya having their capital at Sarabhapura came into prominence in Kosala in the 6th century A.D. The founder of the dynasty was King Sarabha who is identified with Sarabharaja in the Eeran Pillar Inscription dated 510-11 A.D. The son of Sarabha was Maharaj Narendra who extended the territory to a considerable
extent. An important ruler of this family was Prasannamatra who issued the gold coins and founded a town called Prasannapura. His son Jayaraja, also called Mahajayaraja ruled for four years. He was probably succeeded by his brother Manamatra also called Mahadurgaraja. King Jayaraja had two sons who ruled one after the other. They were named Pravararaja and Vyaghraraja. After the rule of these two Kings, two sons of Manamatra named Sudevaraja and Pravararaja II are said to have ruled one after the other. A large number of Copper Plate grants issued by King Sudevaraja have come to light and from those it is known that the Nuapara district as well as part of Sambalpur district was included in the Sarabhapura empire. Pravararaja II was the last ruler of this line and during his rule the capital was located at Sripura or modern Sirpur. After his death the empire was passed on to the hands of the Panduvamsi King Tivaradeva sometime in the 7th century A.D.

Tivaradeva extended his territory towards east and took possession of Utkala. He could properly maintain the Kosala portion of his empire and kept it intact. The present
undivided district of Sambalpur was very likely a part of that empire.\textsuperscript{26}

**The Somavamsis**

The Somavamsis, originally known as the Panduvamsis were a powerful ruling dynasty of Medieval Orissa. Towards the last decades of the 9\textsuperscript{th} century, King Janamajaya-I Mahabhavagupta (C.A.D.882-922)\textsuperscript{27} consolidated the eastern part of Kosala comprising the modern undivided Sambalpur and Balangir districts and established matrimonial relationship with the Bhauma-Kara dynasty ruling over the coastal tract of modern Orissa.

King Janamejaya was succeeded by his son Mahasivagupta Jayati-I (922-955 A.D.) He founded the capital Yayatinagar on the bank of the river Mahanadi, which is identified with modern Jagati, seven miles to the west of Boudh. One of his Copper Plate grants mentions that he donated a village in the mandala of Gandhatapati in his thirteenth regnal year.\textsuperscript{28} It is identified as the village Gandhardi situated at a distance of about 12 miles from Baud. Jayati-I built another
capital in Utkala known as Abhinava Yayatinagara and according to tradition he performed the 'horse sacrifice' at Yayatinagara (modern Jajpur) to which ten thousand Brahmins were invited from Kanauj.29

Mahasivagupta Yayati-II (1025-1040 A.D.) annexed the Utkala defeating Bhauma-Kara king in the middle of the 10th century A.D. He was a powerful ruler as well as a man of great valour. Yayati-II was succeeded by his son Uddyotakesari (C.1040-1065 A.D.)

The disintegration of the Somavamsi kingdom began from the time of Uddyotakesari's son Janamejaya-II (1065-1085 A.D.). From the Ratnagiri Plates of Karnadeva (c.1100-1110 A.D.), probably the last ruler of the Somavamsi dynasty, it is known that Janamejaya-II fought against a Naga King.30 The Naga King Someswar-I of Bastar was a contemporary of King Janamejaya-II and the latter had to wage war against the former which ultimately ended in the victory of the Naga King. In occupying Kosala, the Naga King was helped by Telugu-Choda family and finally the Telugu-Chodas ruled Kosala (the Sambalpur-Sonepur region) with their capital at Sonepur.31
The Telugu-Chodas

The Telugu-Choda ruler Somesvara-II who issued Mahada Copper Plate grant in circa 11090 A.D., declares himself in this grant as the King of Western Lanka having capital at Suvarnapura. This grant was issued in the 2nd year of his reign. Towards the close of the 11th century, the Telugu-Choda ruler of the Sambalpur-Sonepur region was Somesvara-III about whom we know from his Kumarsingha and Patna Museum Copper Plate grants, issued during the 11th and 17th regnal years respectively. Besides these two prominent rulers, there was one Dharalladeva who appears to have ruled for a period. No inscription of his reign has been discovered. Somesvara-III was the last Telugu-Choda King of Suvarnapura.

The Kalachuris

We have both epigraphic and numismatic evidence to show that Sonepur-Sambalpur region was in occupation of the Kalachuris of Ratnapura since the reign of Jajalladeva in the beginning of the 12th century A.D. In the Kharod Inscription of Ratnadeva II it is clearly stated that Jajalladeva I "by the night of
his arms deprived Bhujadeva, the Lord of Suvarnapura, of his power in a hostile encounter.34

Bhujavala of the Kalachuri inscriptions was no other than Somesvara III of the last Telugu-Choda chief of Kosala. He was defeated and perhaps killed by the Kalachuri King Jajalladeva-I in about 1119 A.D.35

Soon after taking possession of the Sambalpur-Balangir region, the Kalachuris entered into a protracted struggle with the Gangas who had then occupied Utkala under Chodaganga Dev. The Ganga attempted to drive out the Kalachuris and to occupy Sambalpur-Balangir area. The Kharod and Pendrabandha inscriptions clearly testify to the defeat of Chodaganga Dev and his son Kamarnava at the hands of the Kalachuris Kings Ratnadeva-II and Prithvideva-II respectively.

The Ganga-Kalachuris conflict continued for about a century and it was finally decided in favour of the Gangas. It is described in the Chatesvara Inscriptions (1220 A.D.) that Vishnu, the Commander-in-Chief of Anangabhima Deva-III (1211-1238 A.D.), went in an expedition towards Tummana.36
The battle took place about 1211 A.D. which resulted in the defeat of the Kalachuris.

The Gangas

The Sambalpur region remained under the rule of the Gangas and was placed under a Ganga Governor. The Khambesvari Temple inscription of Sonepur discloses the fact that a Ganga Governor was stationed in that region probably with headquarters at Sonepur during the rule of Bhanudev-I (1264-1278), the grandson of Anangabhim Deva-III.37

The middle of the 14th century was a critical period for the Ganga rule in Orissa. In the north, Shamsuddin Illyas Shah, Governor of Bengal, rose in power and declared himself independent of the Sultan of Delhi. In the South, two powerful and independent Kingdoms Vijayanagar and Bahmani, raised their heads. All of them were longing to acquire the extensive Ganga Empire of Orissa. The Ganga King, Bhanudeva III, who came to the throne in 1352 A.D. had to face the aggression and expedition of those neighbouring rulers. Besides, the Sultan of Delhi, Firuz Tughluq, also invaded Orissa. Bhanudeva-III sued
for peace by giving twenty elephants to the Sultan and he returned to Kara via Sambalpur.38

All those expeditions and invasions had a great effect on the political condition of western Orissa. It weakened the Ganga hold on that region and paved the way for the establishment and growth of a new dynasty. Amidst chaos and confusion which prevailed in that region, one Ramai Deva, a Chauhan Rajput, laid the foundation of the Chauhan rule in western Orissa.

The Chauhans

The Chauhans played an important role in the political history of North India during the 12th century A.D. A branch of this clan migrated to western Orissa and established a small principality at Patnagarh of modern Bolangir district in the middle of the 14th century A.D.39

From about 14th century A.D. Sambalpur came under the Chauhan ruler of Patna who was the head of a cluster of eighteen states known as the Athargarhajat and dominated a large tract to the east of Ratnapur kingdom. Their ancestor is
said to have been one Hammir Deo who lived near Mainpuri in North India and was killed by the Sultan of Delhi. One of his wives named Asavati, who was pregnant, fled away to save her life and honour and ultimately got shelter at the residence of one Chakradhar Panigrahi of Patna. There she gave birth to a son known as Ramaideva. At that time Patnagarh was under the suzerainty of the Gangas of Orissa. After the death of the last Ganga Viceroy, Kurtivasadeva, without any issue, the territory was governed by Eight Mullicks (Eight Chieftains). Ramaideva overthrew the oligarchy of the Mullicks and established the rule of his dynasty at Patnagarh. All these traditions, however, agree that the founder of the Chauhan rule at Patnagarh was Ramaideva who belonged to the family of Prthviraj Chauhan of Delhi.

According to a tradition current in Maraguda valley of Kalahandi district there was a battle between Alla and Udala around the first half of the 14th century A.D. It is said that a Chauhan Prince was pursued by a Muslim general from North and they fought a fierce battle around the river Jank. The Muslim general was defeated by the Chauhan Prince who
established his sway over the Maraguda Valley. Such an episode even though reassure further historical investigation is also born by the existence of Rajput class of Chauhans origin in Chattisgarh region. They narrate the story as to how they came to Chattisgarh plain from Mainpuri and extended their sway in the regions of western Orissa in course of time.

The early history Chauhan rulers of Patna is known from a Sanskrit work 'Kosalananda' written by Pandit Gangadhar Mishra and a Hindi work called 'Jayachandrika' written by Prahallad Dubey in 1664 A.D. and 1781 A.D. respectively. These two literary work throw much light on the administration of the Chauhan rulers.

In the middle of the 16th century, Narasingh Dev, the Chauhan ruler of Patna, ceded to his brother Balaram Dev the territory of Sambalpur. According to popular tradition, Balaram got the territory as a reward from Raja Narasingh Dev for his service at the time of the delivery of the Rani. It is said that in a stormy night he swarm across the flooded river Mayavati to bring a nurse from the other bank. This tradition is not found in earlier works and appears to be a later publication.
The 'Jayachandrika' of Prahalad Dubey narrates a quarrel between Narasingh Dev and Balaram Dev for partition of the kingdom and the dramatic settlement made by their mother who declared that the river Ang should be the dividing line of their shares. Balaram Dev built the kingdom of Sambalpur in the territory he got. This story does not find place in the earlier work, the 'Kosalananda Kavya' of Gangadhar Mishra which, on the other hand, describes Balaram Dev as an obedient brother rendering faithful service to Narasingh Dev.43

It appears that the kingdom of Sambalpur was established out of a military necessity. According to 'Jayachandrika', the territory of Balaram Dev was first known as the kingdom of Huma and that his capital was at Bargarh on the bank of river Jira. From Bargarh, Balaram Dev is said to have shifted his capital to Chaurpur and finally to Sambalpur on the left bank of Mahanadi. He fortified the place and installed there 'Samalai', the most important deity of the tribal people of the locality.44 He recognized 'Samalai' as the tutelary deity of his family probably to get the support of the people. It was with the help of the tribal people that Balaram Dev was able to
consolidate his position at Sambalpur and launched a career of conquest.

The kingdom of Balaram Dev originally extended from the river Mahanadi in the north to the river Ang in the South and from the river Surangi in Phulghar in the west to the village Huma on the Mahanadi in the east. He extended his kingdom on all sides by war and conquests. According to Kosalananda, Balaram Dev helped Ramachandra Deva-I, the Raja of Khurda, against the invasion of Muslims (Yavanas). Thus he was a contemporary of Rama Chandra Dev who was reigning in the second half of the 16th century A.D.

The most important military expedition of Balaram Dev was directed against the Kalachuris kingdom of Ratanpur. Kalyan Sahai, King of the Kalachuris died about in 1580 A.D. and the Kalachuris power, after him, suddenly declined. Laxman Sahi, the weak successor of Kalyan, bore the brunt of the Chauhan invasion. He was defeated by Balaram Dev and was forced to cede him Sarangarh, Raigarh, Bargarh and Sakti. Balaram Dev also defeated the rulers of Bamanda, Gangpur and Surguja and forced them to acknowledge the suzerainty of
Sambalpur. He married a Princess of Surguja and brought from that state the Anantasayya image for whom a temple was built later.

In the meanwhile Narasingh Dev, the Raja of Patna, had breathed his last and his son Hammira Dev also died after a short rule of three years leaving behind him a minor son. Balaram Dev appointed his son Hrudayanarayan Dev to govern Patna on behalf of the minor Prince. The rule of Hrudayanarayan in Patna was disliked by the old ministers and the widow queen of Hammir Dev. Later on, Balaram Dev dismissed the ministers; and the widow queen, suspecting conspiracy against the life of her minor son Pratap Dev, fled with the boy to Nandapur. After the death of Balaram Dev, Hrudayanarayan Dev who succeeded to the throne of Sambalpur, brought back Pratap Dev from Nandapur and restored to him the kingdom of Patna as a vassal state of Sambalpur.47

Hrudayanarayan Dev ruled Sambalpur for a brief period of five years (1600-1605 A.D.). He improved the internal administration of his kingdom. The temple of Patneswari in
Sambalpur was built by him. His son Balabhadra Dev was a powerful King who ruled for a long period of about 25 years (1605-1630 A.D.) The most important event of his administration was the war against Baudh, a neighbouring state, lying to the east of the Chauhan kingdom. It is said that the fort of Baudh was besieged by Balabhadra Dev for a long period of 12 years and ultimately the King Sidha Bhanja of Baudh was defeated and imprisoned. His kingdom was restored to him when he promised to pay tribute to Sambalpur.48

Balabhadra Dev was succeeded by his son Madhukar Dev (1630-1650) who was a popular King. He had five sons, Balar Dedv, Madan Gopal, Bansi Gopal, Anirudha and Ananta. The eldest Prince, Balar Dev, was made the heir apparent and he assisted his father in the administration of the Kingdom. Madan Gopal was assigned to administer Sonepur where he established a new line of Chauhan dynasty. Bansi Gopal became a Vaishnavite ascetic and built some temples in different parts of Chauhan territory. He also established some 'Mathas' like the Gopalji Matha at Sambalpur and Sonepur. Anirudha Sai, the fourth son, became the Chief of Rajpur-Khinda.49 The
great freedom fighter Surendra Sai was a scion of the Rajpur-Khinda family.

Madhukar Deva was succeeded by his eldest son Baliar Dev (cir.1650-1688). He is regarded as the most outstanding ruler under whom the Kingdom of Sambalpur reached the zenith of its power. Baliar Dev declared himself as the lord of eighteen states and assumed the proud title of ‘Atharagada-Maudamani’ (the crest Jewel on Eighteen Garhs). These states were :- (1) Sambalpur (2) Patna (3) Sonepur (4) Baudh (5) Athmallik (6) Khariar (7) Rairakhol (8) Bamanda (9) Gangpur (10) Bonai (11) Raigarh (12) Bargarh (13) Sarangarh (14) Sakti (15) Phuljhar (16) Chandarpur (17) Bindra-Nuagarh (18) Surguja.

Baliar Dedv was a worshipper of Lord Siva. He built the temple of Bimaleswar Siva at Huma on the left bank of river Mahanadi. During his time Pandit Gangadhar Mishra had written his work Kosalanandakavya in 1664 A.D. He is regarded as greatest Chauhan ruler of Sambalpur.
Baliar Dev was succeeded by his son Ratan Singh who died after four months only. By that time his eldest son Chhatra Sai was not at Sambalpur and availing of this opportunity, the Dewan seized all powers and refused to recognize the authority of Chhatra Sai. With adequate military help from Sarangarh and Raigarh, Chhatra Sai easily defeated his enemies and recovered his own capital.\textsuperscript{52}

Chhatra Sai (1690-1725) was an efficient administrator. He fortified the town of Sambalpur by improving upon the constructions of the time of Balaram Dev, excavated the moat of the fort and made it deeper and wider, a part of which is popularly known as Chhatra Sagar. Chhatra Sai also renovated the temple of Samalai and repaired many other temples. His Chief Queen was the Princess of Ratanpur who was the mother of Princess of Bamanda whose son was Prince Ajita. Chhatra Sai was told by some of his trusted officers that the Rani was intriguing to place his son Budharani on the throne of Sambalpur. This led to the execution of both mother and the son. Later on, he repented for it. The \textit{Saiva} shrine, known as the temple of Budharaja built by Chhatra Sai on the summit of a
hill at Sambalpur town bears the memory of the unfortunate Prince Budharai. His court physician Gopinath Sarangi wrote ‘Chikitsa Manjari’ in bilingual verses, Sanskrit and Oriya. It is known from his work that the Raja of Sambalpur was by that time the Lord of eighteen garhs and thirteen Dandapats while the extent of territory was one hundred miles in length. Sambalpur, the capital of the kingdom, had a population of twenty thousand.53

Chhatra Sai was succeeded by his son Ajit Singh (1725-1766 A.D.). He was an indolent and week ruler and had eight queens and three sons, namely; Abhaya Singh, Jayanta Singh and Padman Singh.54 The administration of the kingdom was completely under the influence of the ministers; and especially the Dewan, Dakshin Ray, rose to power and prominence. When the Raja was warned by his Queen Muktamani Devi to get rid of this powerful minister, Ajit Singh hatched a plot and murdered Dakshin Ray on 17th June, 1763 A.D.55 The plan to assassinate Dakshin Ray was executed by one Piloo Ray who hoped to succeed as Diwan but Kascrie, who was an Officer of Sambalpur was jealous. Pillo Ray, however
could know of his evil purpose and employed a villain to murder him. But the internal feud did not end here.

Akbar Ray, a relative of Kascree, wanted to take revenge. On 27th August, 1764, on a festive occasion, Akbar attacked Pilloo Ray and murdered him. In this critical situation Ajita Singh died in 1766 A.D. At the time of his death he advised Yuvaraj Abhay Singh to occupy the throne.56

Abhaya Singh (1766-1778) became the King of Sambalpur when he was a young boy of only 16 years. Reciprocal suspicion and resentment between him and Akbar developed into open hostility. Abhaya Singh appointed Krishna Badmallick as his Dewan and tried to suppress Akbar by military force. Akbar was prepared to meet such situation as he himself also commanded some armed force. After that a Civil War broke out at the midnight of 17th June 1766 A.D. In that night Akbar and his forces marched to the Palace and murdered every one who stood on his way and imprisoned Abhaya Singh and Krishna Balmallick. After that he became the de-facto ruler of Sambalpur.57
Akbar Ray established his personal rule at Sambalpur and put to death a number of important persons including the mother of Abhaya Singh. The King was shocked at this and died disappointed in prison in 1778. After that, Akbar Ray placed on the throne one young boy named Balabhadra Sai who belonged to the Chauhan family of Padampur.

In the meantime Jayant Sing, the younger brother of Abhay Singh, was collecting strength from the faithful feudatory states of Sambalpur. The ruler of Sarangarh, Dewan Viswanath Sai gave him possible help including a number of chiefs of Chhatisgarh. Thus, acquiring great strength Jayant Singh proceeded towards Sambalpur to recover his paternal throne in 1781 A.D. It was on this occasion that Prahallad Dubey of Sarangarh composed the Hindi work 'Jayachandrika' which narrates the history of the Chauhans ending with the victory of Jayant Singh.58

The Marathas

In the middle of 18th century, the Marathas of Nagpur conquered Chhatisgarh and Cuttack Province of Orissa. After
that their eyes fell upon the kingdom of Sambalpur lying between Ratanpur and Cuttack. They, however, found it difficult to occupy it because of the powerful army of the Chauhan King. In the last quarter of the 18th century, Sambalpur became weak because of the Civil War and the subsequent removal and death of Akbar Ray who was a terror to the Marathas.59

During the rule of the Chauhan ruler Jayanta Singh witnessed frequent inroads and plundering of the Marathas. In 1793, the Raja signed a peace treaty where he agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs.32,000/- Sambalpur Cutcha coins equivalent to 16,000 gold coins to the Marathas.60

In 1799, Vincoji Bhonsle, a younger brother of Raja Raguji II was passing through Sambalpur on pilgrimage to Puri. At Sambalpur, he was not greeted by the Dewan at which he felt offended. On reaching Cuttack, he sent an army under Bhup Singh against Sambalpur. Bhup Singh succeeded in making captive Raja Jayanta Singh and his son Maharaja Sai. They were sent to Chanda to be detained there. After that, Sambalpur was brought under Nagpur and Bhup Singh was appointed as Governor.61
In Sambalpur, Bhup Singh joined hands with Rani Ratan Kumari, the Chief Queen of Raja Jayanta Singh and disregarded the order and warnings from Nagpur. On being called back, he refused to move. He repulsed an army of Nagpur sent against him but was ultimately defeated and fled to the British camp with Rani Ratan Kumari. The Bhonsla of Nagpur appointed Tantia Parnavis as the new Governor of Sambalpur.

During the Second Anglo-Maratha War the army of the British East India Company occupied Cuttack, the seat of the central authority of Marathas in Orissa. John Melville and George Harcourt, the Civil Commissioners for the affairs of Cuttack then started negotiation with the Garjat Chiefs inducing them to recognize their suzerainty. In January 2, 1804, Sambalpur was occupied by Major Broughton on political ground and for trade interest. In the opinion of Broughton, Sambalpur was strategically situated between Bihar and Birbhum. The Mahanadi and its tributaries which flow through it were navigable and could be used to carry out the cotton goods of Chhatisgarh region to Cuttack. But after the departure of Lord Wellesley, Sir George Barlow, the Governor General-in-
Council, restored it together with the Patna state to the Marathas in 1805, which they could actually take possession of only in 1808 because of the strong opposition of the people and the ruler Rani Ratan Kumari. They, however, were unable to retain it and during the Third Anglo-Maratha War the territory of Sambalpur was surrendered to the British in 1817.64

**Sambalpur Under the British**

As a result of this Victory, the British got possession of Sambalpur territory. Raja Jayant Singh and his son Maharaj Sai were released from Chanda and were brought to Sambalpur. Rani Ratan Kumari, however, did not live to see the restoration of her husband. She died in 1816 at Kasi where she had been on pilgrimage. She is remembered in the history of Sambalpur for her country against the Marathas. Out of the three Queens of Jayanta Singh breathed his last.65 The widow Queen Mukta Devi submitted a petition of Prayer to the British Government regarding the succession of her step-son Maharaj Sai. Her petition was accepted and Maharaj Sai was recognized as the Raja of Sambalpur in 1820.66 His feudal authority over the
subordinate chiefs was withdrawn and the chiefs were given separate Sanads by the British Government in 1821.

Maharaja Sai was allowed Zamindari tenure of Khalsa villages at the annual rent of Rs.16,821 in Sicca currency for a term of five years from 1st January 1821. The Sanad of Maharaj Sai was renewed for another five years from 1st January 1826, but the Raja could complete hardly one year after that and died in 1827 leaving behind him two daughters and no son. The British authorities installed the widow Rani Mohan Kumari on the Gadee ignoring the rights of other claimants and thus took an arbitrary decision in violation of the customs and laws of the land. As a reaction to such decision a feeling of annoyance and discontentment spread throughout the kingdom. The notable claimants of the Gadee were Surendra Sai of Khinda, a descendant from Raja Madhukar Sai and Govind Singh of Jharsuguda, a descendant from Raja Chhatra Sai. Both of them revolted separately against the British authorities and each of them was supported by large number of discontented people.

Lt.Higgins commanding a troop of Ramgarh Battalion stationed at Sambalpur could not cope with the situation and so
Captain Wilkinson with a force from Hazaribagh rushed to Sambalpur to put down the rebellion. As the British, in spite of their best attempt, failed to suppress the revolt, they were forced to depose Rani Mohan Kumari and sent her off to Cuttack with a Pension. It is said that on the eve of her deposition Mohan Kumari suggested the name of Narayan Singh as her successor. There were two persons named Narayan Singh in the Chauhan family, one being the uncle of the rebel leader Govind Singh of Jharsuguda and the other the uncle of the Chauhan Zamindar Bhabani Singh of Barpali. Narayan Singh of Jharsuguda being a man of strong will and independent disposition was not considered suitable. His nephew Govind Singh had been branded as a rebel against the British authorities. So, the choice naturally fell on the old and feeble Narayan Singh of Barpali family who was then residing at Bonai. He was brought to Sambalpur and installed on the Gadee on 11th October 1833.

Raja Narayan Singh breathed his last on 10th September 1849 without leaving behind him a male successor. The Governor General Lord Dalhousie then applied the “doctrine of lapse” and annexed the state of Sambalpur to the British
dominion in India in December 1849. The case of Sambalpur was different from the other native states as here there was no proposal for adoption and Narayan Singh, before his death, had expressed his wish that the British Government should take possession of his state and take proper care of his Queens. The Government appointed John Cadenhead as the Principal Political Assistant of Sambalpur and he was in over all charge of its administration. The widow Rani Mukhyapan Devi was sent off to Cuttack and was granted a Pension of Rs.100/- per month. After that Sambalpur lapsed to the British Empire on the basis of the “doctrine of lapse” and the kingdom was converted to a district. The Chauhan rule in Sambalpur was thus brought to an end.71

The early British administration in Sambalpur was neither judicious nor conciliatory. Though the annexation of the state brought political stability, there were strong feelings of resentment. Although Surendra Sai, who claimed the throne for himself, was in the British Jail, his supporters, including the Zamindars and the common people, wanted the restoration of native rule. Besides, there was also the grievance of the people
on economic grounds. There was no improvement in land revenue system. Revenue was increased by one fourth and the rent free religious and other jagir lands were resumed. All these created great dissatisfaction among the people. During the second short-term land settlement in 1854 revenues were further enhanced by one fourth. This was largely responsible to mould popular support in favour of Surendra Sai during the revolt of 1857.

The resistance movement led by Surendra Sai of Sambalpur against the British imperialism is a landmark in the history of Freedom Struggle in Orissa. Surendra Sai, the uncrowned hero of Sambalpur was born in the Chauhan family of Rajpur-Khinda. His father Dharani Singh was a descendant of Anirudha Sai, son of Madhukar Sai, the fourth Chauhan Raja of Sambalpur, thereby having a claim for succession to the throne of Sambalpur in the absence of a direct claimant to the throne as per the traditional rule of succession. By 1827, Maharaj Sai, the King of Sambalpur died without a son for which Surendra Sai, who then represented the next line of succession claimed for his succession to the Gadee of Sambalpur. But
this rightful claim of Surendra Sai was turned down by the British authority who had already resumed the reins of power in Sambalpur and decided in favour of the widow Queen Mohan Kumari as the successor. But she was deposed as soon as there was widespread dissatisfaction and rebellion against her and one imbecile man named Narayan Singh, an illegitimate scion of the Chauhan Zamindar family of Barpali was appointed as the King of Sambalpur, much against the will of the people of Sambalpur.

This act of total negligence to the claim of Rajpur Khinda family for succession infuriated Balaram Singh, the brother of Dharani Singh, who unfurled the flag of rebellion against the British authority. Surendra Sai along with his six brothers enlisted the support of the like minded Zamindars and Gauntias and organised the rebellion against the British.74

Surendra Sai first came to prominence in 1828 when he put forth his claim for the Gadee of Sambalpur against Rani Mohan Kumari. The claim was renewed in 1833 when Mohan Kumari was replaced by Narayan Singh. The disturbance continued till 1840 when Surendra Sai along with his close followers was kept in confinement. The British Government had
taken no interest in the administration of Sambalpur till it assumed direct responsibility in 1849 after its annexation. Even after 1849 its faulty agrarian policy made the situation explosive and cultivation was handicapped. The tribals, the feudal chiefs and the common people alike were badly affected by the British policy of land revenue and cash rvenue. The situation went beyond control when Surendra Sai claimed the Gadee again in 1857 and was put into the Hazaribag Jail.75

The great Indian revolt, the so called Sepoy Mutiny, broke out in May 1857. The troops of Hazaribag also revolted and broke open the Jail resulting in the liberation of Surendra Sai among others.

The close of 1857 and the following year witnessed a terrible period in the history of Sambalpur. During that time the British and the rebels were equally strong. The rebels, being poorly equipped, were no match for the British in open plain and therefore they resorted to guerrilla warfare. On both sides there were frindish cruelty, revenge and retaliation. Many villages were burnt, houses were looted and innumerable persons were killed in this process. Mere suspicion or taking side with either
party invited capital punishment. Those who incurred the displeasure of the rebels were crowed at Sambalpur under British protection.

The great Revolt of 1857 had been suppressed elsewhere in India by 1858. But in the district of Sambalpur it had continued till 1862. The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, rightly pointed out to the Government of India—that "the Sambalpur district was perhaps the very last district in India, in which the embers of the disturbances of 1857 were finally stamped out."\textsuperscript{76}

The year 1862 was a historical landmark so far as the history of Sambalpur is concerned. The great revolt of 1857 collapsed in the year 1862 in the district and Sambalpur was organised as a regular district in the division of Chhatisgarh in the Central Province.\textsuperscript{77}

The anti-British feelings were very deep in Sambalpur. But it was pacified after much efforts and after Surendra Sai was tried and kept in the Asirgarh Fort. The brave son of Sambalpur breathed his last on 28 February 1884. As a
result, the British Government took various reformative measures for the people of Sambalpur. The fresh land revenue settlements were introduced in Sambalpur. To maintain law and order, the powers and activities of the local Zamindars were restricted. The people gradually became reconciled to the settlements although the transfer of Sambalpur to the Central Province in 1862 created both popular resentment and administrative problems because of the ethnical and linguistic differences between Sambalpur and the other districts.


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