

***Contextualizing Brahmanical Iconography in Early
Medieval Odisha, c. 7th – 13th centuries CE***

Thesis submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University

for the award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SUJATA RAKSHIT



Centre for Historical Studies

School of Social Sciences

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi- 110067

July 2019

Date: 15/7/19

Declaration

I, Sujata Rakshit, hereby declare that the Thesis titled "*Contextualizing Brahmanical Iconography in Early Medieval Odisha, c. 7th – 13th centuries CE*", submitted by me in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of the Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University is my original work. This thesis has not been previously submitted in part or full for the award of any other degree to this university or any other university.


Sujata Rakshit

CERTIFICATE

It is hereby recommended that this thesis may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.




Prof. R. Mahalakshmi

Supervisor



Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067


for 12/7/19

Prof. Sucheta Mahajan

Chairperson



Chairperson
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

This thesis is dedicated to Maa and Baba

&

to my village.

Contents

Acknowledgments	i
Transliteration	vi
List of Plates: Chapter II	vii
Chapter III	vii
Chapter IV	ix
Chapter V	xii
Introduction	1
A. Historiography	
A.1 Political and Religious Structure	
A.2 Art and Architecture	
A.3 Gender and Sculptural Representations	
B. Sources and Methodology	
C. Chapterization	
Chapter I: Patronage to <i>Brāhmaṇas</i> and Brahmanical Institutions	45
I.1 Introduction	
I.2 Nature of the <i>Dāna</i>	
I.3 Donations to the <i>Brāhmaṇas</i>	
I.4 Brahmanical hegemony over other Occupational Groups	
I.5 Emergence of Brahmanical Culture	
I.6 Ritual Polity and Patronage	
I.7 Conclusion	

**Chapter II: Sacred Geography: Cults, Temples and
Landscapes in Odisha**

93

- II.1 Introduction
- II.2 Concept of *Tīrtha*
- II.3 The Idea of Sacred Geography
- II.4 *Purāṇas, Upapurāṇas* and Other Texts
- II.5 Brahmanical *Kṣetras*
- II.6 Inscriptions as Sources
- II.7 *Śākta Kṣetras*
- II.8 Conclusion

Chapter III: The Divine Images: Forms and Symbols

127

- III.1 Introduction
- III.2 Visualizing the Divine
- III.3 Representing Goddesses
- III.4 Conjugal Images
- III.5 Other Śākta Goddesses
- III.6 Conclusion

**Chapter IV: Semi-Divine and Erotic Imagery: Representations
and Meanings**

187

- IV.1 Introduction
- IV.2 *Gndharva, Kinnara, Yakṣa, Dikpāla* and *Dvārapāla*
- IV.3 *Alasā Kanyās*
- IV.4 Everyday Life

- IV.5 Ritual Scenes
- IV.6 Erotic Couples
- IV.7 Physical Appearances
- IV.8 Importance and Evolution of the Sculptures

Chapter V: Animals and Ornamentations:

Depictions of Flora and Fauna

228

- V.1 Introduction
- V.2 Types and Patterns of Ornamentation
- V.3 Portrayal of Mythical and Other Animals
- V.4 Significance of Non-Animatic Motifs
- V.5 Representation of *Bandhas*
- V.6 Cosmic *Vāhanas*
- V.7 Conclusion

Chapter VI: Representations of Hierarchy, Hegemony and World Views

291

- VI.1 Introduction
- VI.2 Temple and Polity
- VI.3 Hierarchy and Hegemony: Theory and Practice
- VI.4 Society, Religion and Culture
- VI.5 Economy
- VI.6 Theorizing the World View
- VI.7 Conclusion

Conclusion	319
Appendix	325
Bibliography	366

Acknowledgments

I wish I could write this part without following strict grammatical rules, and with melodic yet academic expressions and zero conventionality. While submitting my M. Phil dissertation in 2015, my Guruma, Prof. Mahalakshmi asked that what I have learnt from this varsity after completing two years. I couldn't answer at that point, because JNU was perhaps thinking of sprinkling some more love on me before I could speak! After a journey of almost six-years, I can only say that I learnt the taste of freedom, love, life, food, sky, tree-leaf, soil and about that circle, which is actually an infinite spiral. At this stage of life, I am not only grateful to my supervisor; I actually am overjoyed by the fact that I could work under her. Throughout the entire journey since the beginning to the sea mouth, she taught me about work, life, freedom of research and about the vast world of academia. My confusion and insecurities about research, publications and other stories were always being sorted by her. The relationship was never limited to borrowing a book or weekly meetings. It is indeed a great lifetime experience to work with her. Whenever I needed any solution, she always was there, no matter whether it was a cloudy day or a stormy night. I am blessed to have a teacher like Prof. Mahalakshmi in my life. She has nurtured and given the shape of my research through rich ideas, comments and discussion. Each and every line of this thesis couldn't be written without her erudite command...Ma'am 'thank you' wouldn't be enough for the person, who actually taught me the 'other language', English.

I sincerely thank Prof. Ranabir Chakravarti of Centre for Historical Studies for facilitating me with his valuable inputs in various ways. A day in the Centre was incomplete without his anecdotes, many lessons, laughter and care. Outside the sea

trade; decaying Bengali culture, George da's Rabindra-sangeet, and sometimes Rabindranath himself were the topics of fight over lemon tea. I am honoured to learn things from Prof. Chakravarti in my academic career. Sir, you are missed. I would like to pay my regards to Prof. Ganapathy Subbiah (Visva Bharati, Santiniketan) for guiding me since circa 2010. His critical analysis gave me strong perspectives and motivation to read, write and think. His encouragement gave me the spontaneity of speaking regarding anything under the sky. I am glad that I had chances to learn from Prof. Subbiah. I would like to specially thank Prof. Kunal Chakrabarti, Prof. Rakesh Batabyal, and Prof. Sucheta Mahajan. I also thank all my teachers from Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, especially Prof. Arun Nag, Dr. Sarita Khettry, Dr. Ananda Chandra Sahoo, Dr. Anil Kumar, Dr. Sina Panja, Dr. K. Mavali Rajan, Dr. Bina Gandhi Deori, and my uncle Dr. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh for giving me continuous encouragement to fulfill my research work. I am grateful to all of my teachers since primary school till 12th standard for giving me the elementary education and the way ahead in the very beginning of my life. Especially to my drawing teacher Nilotpal Bhattacharya, who gave me the first lesson of everything- pastel, water colour, shades, renaissance, Ajanta and every beautiful esoteric object I will cherish and breathe all my life.

I am immensely thankful to Dr. Lalatendu Das Mohapatra, Assistant Director of National Archives of India (Bhubaneswar Circle); without whom my fieldwork in Odisha would not be done accordingly. The archivist Rama Chandra Karan at NIA-Bhubaneswar has also helped me throughout the period. I am also grateful to all the officers/ members of Odisha State Archive (Research and Reference); especially to Mrs. Suchismita Mantry, superintendent of OSA, Bhubaneswar. I am extremely thankful to Mr. Ranjit Mohanty (Director), Mr. M.K. Samal (Librarian) and Mrs.

Jyotshna Sahoo (Assistant Librarian) of Odisha State Museum and Library, Bhubaneswar for giving me permission to access the gems on Odishan art, culture and heritage. I am tremendously thankful to the Kedarnatha Gabeshana Pratisthana at Bhubaneswar for their help on providing me important documents, articles and books. Dr. Umakanta Mishra, faculty at Department of History, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, has tremendously helped me find my primary sources in Odisha and agreed to spare his valuable time on the discussion of my thesis. I was honoured to meet Dr. Sanjay Acharya of Dept. of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Utkal University, who gave me important inputs and allowed me to have a discussion on my thesis.

Dr. Nikhil Mohan Pattnaik and Mrs. Puspashree Pattnaik of 'Srujanika', Bhubaneswar, have enormously helped me with their rare and valuable collection of digitised copies of classical books on Odisha and Odia culture.

I am thankful to Prof. Chandi Prasad Nanda (Dept. of History, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack), Dr. Ramesh Chandra Mallik (Utkal University) Mr. Ramesh Chandra Patra, Mr. Sunil Patnayak, Renu Patra, Dr. Bhuvan Vikrama, Mr. Prasanna Kumar Dikshit (Konark), for their unconditional advice, suggestion and help throughout my field work in Odisha.

I am not thankful, but actually am proud of my parents for keeping their hopes. Their faith and love helped me remain true to my goals to be balanced though my academic and personal spheres.

I would like to thank to the Central Library and DSA, JNU for the source materials and books. I am grateful to Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, for facilitating me with the Study-cum-Travel grant (field work) during the time of my

PhD field study in Odisha (September-October 2017). I would also like to thank Dr. Vinod Kumar (Assistant Director, Research) of ICHR, who helped me throughout the process. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, has been one of the great resort for primary materials, photographs and secondary books for the visual as well as the material sources for my research work.

My JNU family- Abhimanyu, Anand, Ananya, Anwasha, Deepna, Dev Kumar, Ema, Jean Paul, Ikram, Jay bhaiya, Jitendra bhaiya, Jyoti, Lekshmi, Madhulagna, Mausumi di, Megha, Nirupama, Nupur, Pankaj, Pratichi, Prerana, Reeti, Sana, Sneha, Srabani, Suvajit, Thursday Reading Group, Virendra bhaiya, Viru, and Zia Bhai - it is not only a dry “thanks”, but thank you all for staying together while everyone was getting wrenched in the same time (sometimes even on the same day!) We had our ‘nectars’ (please read tea and coffee), aloo-mutton, shayari, crazy-stupid stories, marches, jungle hunting on a moonlit night, photo sessions, dumb charades, biryanis together. Comrades- we fought, we wept, we cheered, and we shouted, we rolled, we drenched and we walked together. And we shall. Goonja (a ‘ferocious’ researcher and an avid reader), we are missing our gossips and late afternoon discussions. Be there where you are happy, where you can read more, and you can devour your weirdly beautiful interests. I miss you my strange-wizard girl.

Friends who could convince my parents at different levels of life- Antora di, Chhoton, Kajol, Kathakali, Namami di, Pradip da, and Sayantan; again, a small thank you is not enough for you Genies.

I wish I could remember each and every name of the lifelines to pay my homage. Here are few of them I am mentioning; without them my scholarship would get a shape like doom! Here to Amrita, Blake, Chandler, Chandril, Corbett, da Vinci, Emily

Dickinson, European Renaissance, Frost, Gibran, GNT, Humayun Ahmed, Iqbal, Jaun Elia, Jibanananda, Joy Goswami, Kahlo, Madhusudan, Matisse, Mirza Ghalib, Monet, Nazrul, Rabindranath, Rajshekhar, Ravi Varma, Rodin, Shakespeare, Srijato, Sukumar, Sylvia, Taslima, Van Gogh, Wilde, Woolf and to the eternity.

I also thank Ashis Da and his group for helping and providing me all kinds of photocopies and materials during my research years in CHS, JNU. I would like to thank Latif bhैया, SSS I canteen, Shambhu Da, Shipra hostel, Narendra bhैया as well for providing me scrumptious meals throughout the time in the centre and library in these six years.

Thank you all Comrades!

Table of Transliteration: Sanskrit

Vowels

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	e	ai	o	au

Consonants

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅ	ca	cha	ja	jha	ña
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	त	थ	द	ध	न
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	ta	tha	da	dha	na
प	फ	ब	भ	म	य	र	ल	व	श
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma	ya	ra	la	va	śa
ष	स	ह	.	ऋ					
ṣa	sa	ha	m̐	ṛ					

List of Plates

Chapter II: Sacred Geography: Cults, Temples and Landscapes in Odisha

Plate	Page Nos.
Plate 1: State map of Odisha, India Courtesy: https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=8986&lang=en	94

Chapter III: The Divine and Semi-Divine Images: Sculptural Representations of Men and Women

List of Plates	Page Nos.
Plate 1: Śiva <i>liṅga</i> , Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	129
Plate 2: Aja Ekapāda, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNCA	133
Plate 3: Ekapāda, Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA	134
Plate 2: Naṭarāja- Gajasamhāramūrti, Śatrughneśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	137
Plate 4A: Naṭarāja, Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	137
Plate 4B: Naṭarāja- Gajasamhāramūrti, Mukteśvara temple, Bhubaneswar	139

Plate 5: Hari-Hara, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar,	140
Courtesy: IGNCA	
Plate 6: Lakulīśa with a <i>lakuṭa</i> , Bharateśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	141
Plate 6A: Lakulīśa, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	142
Plate 3: Viṣṇu, Nīlamādhava Temple, Nayagarh, Courtesy: IGNCA	144
Plate 4: Kārttikeya, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	146
Plate 5: Gaṇeśa, Liṅgarājā Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA	148
Plate 6: <i>Kāpālīka</i> with a <i>Kamaṇḍalu</i> , Rājārānī Temple,	152
Bhubaneswar	
Plate 7: Pārvatī, Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar,	155
Courtesy: IGNCA	
Plate 8: Pārvatī, Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA	156
Plate 13: Maḥiṣamardinī, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar,	160
Courtesy: IGNCA	
Plate 14: Maḥiṣamardinī, Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar,	161
Courtesy: IGNCA	
Plate 15: Maḥiṣamardinī, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	162
Plate 16: Maḥiṣamardinī, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	163
Plate 17: Gaṇjalakṣmī, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	164
Plate 18: Hara-Pārvatī, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	168
Plate 19: Hara-Pārvatī, Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	169
Plate 20: Pārvatī on Hara's thigh, Khiching	170

Plate 21: <i>Kalyāṇa Sundara</i> , Khiching	171
Plate 22: <i>Ardhanārīśvara</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	174
Plate 23: Varāhi, Hirapur, IGNC	176
Plate 24: Varāhi, Odisha State Museum	176
Plate 25: Cāmuṇḍā, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	178
Plate 26: Cāmuṇḍā, Hirapur	179
Plate 27: Cāmuṇḍā, Odisha State Museum	179
Plate 27-A: Cāmuṇḍā, Daśāśvamedha Ghat, Jajpur	180
Plate 28: Yoginī, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	182
Plate 29: Yamunā, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	183
Plate 30: Gaṅgā, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	183
Plate 31: <i>Navagraha</i> Panel, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar,	184
Courtesy: IGNC	

Chapter IV: Semi-Divine and Erotic Imagery: Representations and Meanings

List of Plates	Page Nos.
Plate 1: <i>Gandharvas</i> , Lakṣmaṇeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	189
Plate 2: <i>Kinnara</i> , Śatrughneśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	189
Plate 3: <i>Gandharva</i> , Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	190
Plate 4: <i>Gandharvas</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	190

Plate 5: Ten armed Bhairava, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNCA	191
Plate 5A: Indra, Sārī <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA	191
Plate 6: <i>Gandharvas</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	192
Plate 7: <i>Dvārapāla</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple Compound, Khiching	193
Plate 8: <i>Dvārapāla</i> , Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	194
Plate 9: <i>Alasā Kanyā</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	197
Plate 10: <i>Ḍālamālikā</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	197
Plate 11: <i>Darpanā</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	197
Plate 12: <i>Nartakī</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	198
Plate 13: <i>Māṭr Mūrti</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	198
Plate 14: <i>Mardalā</i> , Konark Sun Temple	199
Plate 15: <i>Nūpurapādikā</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	199
Plate 16: <i>Guṇṭhanā</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	199
Plate 17: <i>Padmagandhā</i> , Konark Sun Temple	200
Plate 18: <i>Maninī</i> , Konark Sun Temple	200
Plate 19: <i>Toraṇā</i> , Śatrughneśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	201
Plate 20: <i>Vinyāsā</i> , Konark Sun Temple	202
Plate 21: <i>Ketakībharanā</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	202
Plate 22: <i>Cāmarā</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	202
Plate 23: <i>Śukasārikā</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	203
Plate 24: The Charioteer, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar	204
Plate 25: Family Scene, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar,	205
Courtesy: IGNCA	

Plate 26: <i>Śikṣādāna</i> , Liṅgarāja Temple, Courtesy: IGNCA	206
Plate 27: <i>Śikṣādāna</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	206
Plate 28: <i>Śikṣādāna</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	207
Plate 29: <i>Yonīabhiṣeka</i> , Sārī <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA	208
Plate 30: <i>Śrīyantra Meru</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA	209
Plate 31: <i>Liṅgapūjā</i> , Megheśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	209
Plate 32: <i>Liṅgapūjā</i> , Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	210
Plate 33: <i>Yonīabhiṣeka</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	213
Plate 34: <i>Rajapāna</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	214
Plate 35: <i>Mithuna</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	215
Plate 36: <i>Maithuna</i> depictions inside the <i>Ratha Cakra</i> , Konark Sun Temple	216
Plate 37: <i>Maithuna</i> , Rāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	216
Plate 38: <i>Mithuna</i> , Lakṣmaṇeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	217
Plate 39: <i>Maithuna</i> , Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar	218
Plate 40: Coiffure and jewellery, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	219
Plate 41: Moustache, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	220
Plate 42: Lower garments of Woman and Men, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar	220
Plate 43: Scarf, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar	221

Chapter V: Animals and Ornamentations: Depictions of Flora and Fauna

List of Plates	Page Nos.
Plate 1: <i>Simhvirāla</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	232
Plate 2: <i>Simhamakarikākṛti</i> , Konark Sun Temple	233
Plate 3: <i>Gajavirāla</i> , Konark Sun Temple	233
Plate 4: <i>Gajakrānta</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	233
Plate 5: <i>Nāga Stambhas</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	235
Plate 6: <i>Nāginī</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	235
Plate 7: <i>Nāginī</i> , Konark Sun Temple	237
Plate 8: <i>Nāga Stambha</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	237
Plate 9: <i>Hamsas</i> , Liṅgarāja Temple	238
Plate 10: <i>Hamsalatā</i> , Svarṇajāleśvara Temple	238
Plate 11: <i>Hamsalatā</i> , Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	239
Plate 12: <i>Hamsalatā</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	239
Plate 13: <i>Makara Kīrti</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	240
Plate 14: <i>Makara</i> with <i>Ālamba latā</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	241
Plate 15: <i>Makara Praṇālā</i> , Chāyādevī Temple,	241

Konark Sun Temple Complex, Courtesy: Virtual Museum of Images and Sounds

(https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http%3A%2F%2Fvmis.in%2Fupload%2FAssets%2FArchive%2F198%2F5152.jpg&imgrefurl=http%3A%2F%2Fvmis.in%2FArchiveCategories%2Fcollection_gallery_zoom%3Fid%3D198%26siteid%3D0%26minrange%3D0%26maxrange%3D0%26assetid%3D2219%26self_archive_id%3D7728%26index%3D6&docid=4DYuJgmLNCjysM&tbnid=0iYN6WfHHoKniM%3A&vet)

=12ahUKEwiN_umZ0_LiAhXVPXAKHbfuBCw4ZBAzKAIwAnoECAEQBA..i&w
 =614&h=825&itg=1&bih=669&biw=1213&q=chayadevi%20temple%20konark&ved
 =2ahUKEwiN_umZ0_LiAhXVPXAKHbfuBCw4ZBAzKAIwAnoECAEQBA&iact=
 mrc&uact=8)

Plate 16: <i>Makara Praṇālā</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	242
Plate 17: <i>Makara Praṇālā</i> on the <i>Toraṇa</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	242
Plate 18: <i>Eka Bhārarakṣaka</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	243
Plate 19: <i>Eka Bhārarakṣaka</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	243
Plate 20: <i>Yugala Bhārarakṣakas</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	244
Plate 21: <i>Kīrtimukha</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	246
Plate 22: <i>Kanyā Latā</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	248
Plate 23: <i>Ālamba Latā</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	249
Plate 24: Gajalakṣmī, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar,	250
Courtesy: IGNC A	
Plate 25: <i>Gavākṣa</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	252
Plate 26: <i>Kumbha Pīṭha</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	254
Plate 27: <i>Padma Pīṭha</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	254
Plate 28: <i>Ghaṭa</i> with <i>campaka</i> leaves, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	255
Plate 29: <i>Kumbha</i> with <i>latā</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	255
Plate 30: <i>Mithuna Kumbha</i> , Varāhī Temple, Chaurasi,	256
Courtesy: Monuments of Odisha (https://medium.com/monuments-of-odisha/varahi-temple-chaurasi-c9b93f5490f9)	
Plate 31: <i>Anurāha Pāga</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	258

Plate 32: <i>Koṇaka Pāga</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	258
Plate 33: <i>Koṇaka Pāga</i> , Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	258
Plate 34: <i>Padmagarbha</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	260
Plate 35: <i>Kāmagarbha</i> , Konark Sun Temple	261
Plate 36: <i>Kāmagarbha</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	262
Plate 37: <i>Vajra</i> with <i>Ālamba latā</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	263
Plate 38: <i>Kirīṭa</i> type <i>Vajramastaka</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	264
Plate 39: <i>Āgamā</i> , Anata Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar	265
Plate 40: <i>Gumphanā</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	266
Plate 41: <i>Makara latā</i> , Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	267
Plate 42: <i>Vartulā</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	267
Plate 43: <i>Gumphanā</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	268
Plate 44: <i>Ratikera</i> , Vaitāla <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar	268
Plate 45: <i>Āgamā</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching	268
Plate 46: <i>Nara latā</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	269
Plate 47: <i>Pāṭa jāli</i> , Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	270
Plate 48: <i>Banka jāli</i> , Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	270
Plate 49: <i>Khākāra</i> motif, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar	271
Plate 50: <i>Rekhā</i> motif, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar	271
Plate 51: <i>Lakṣmī Bandha</i> , Gouri Sankara Temple,	274
No 83, inside Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar, IGNCA	
Plate 52: <i>Lakṣmī Bandha</i> , Sārī <i>deul</i> , Bhubaneswar, IGNCA	274
Plate 53: <i>Kāma Bandha</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	276

Plate 54: <i>Sakhī Bandha</i> , Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	277
Plates 55 and 56: <i>Garuḍa</i> , Birañci Nārāyaṇa Temple, Bhadrak,	280
Courtesy: IGNCa	
Plate 57: <i>Vāhana Stambha</i> , Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar	281
Plate 58: <i>Śava vāhana</i> of Cāmuṇḍā, Sārī deul, Bhubaneswar	283
Plate 59: Cāmuṇḍā with Boar, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNCa	283
Plate 60: Cāmuṇḍā with an Owl, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar	283
Plate 61: <i>Śava vāhana</i> of Cāmuṇḍā, Vaitāla deul, Bhubaneswar	284
Plate 62: <i>Śava vāhana</i> of Cāmuṇḍā, British Museum	285
Plate 63: Varāhī with boar, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNCa	286
Plate 64: <i>Karkaṭa vāhana</i> of Karkarī, Hirapur, Courtesies: IGNCa	287
Plate 65: Padmāvātī with <i>Sarpa</i> , Hirapur, Courtesies: IGNCa	287
Plate 66: Mahālakṣmī standing on <i>Padma</i> , Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNCa	287
Plate 67: Peacock <i>vāhana</i> of Kaumārī, Courtesy: IGNCa	287
Plates 68 and 69: Mahiṣamardinī with <i>Simha</i> , Kīcakeśvarī Temple,	288
Khiching	

Contextualizing Brahmanical Iconography in Early

Medieval Odisha, c. 7th – 13th centuries CE

Introduction

Odisha had seen many political changes in the early medieval period. One of the means through which dynasties sought legitimacy was land grant to the *brāhmaṇas* and temples as the custodians of the grants. The development of brahmanical culture through endowments, art and architecture as seen through the numerous epigraphs and temples that were donated at this time can be attributed to this process. This research focuses primarily on temple iconography to understand representations of the nature of brahmanical cults, the issue of acculturation, and the forms of gender identity and status. The history of Odisha and its sacred towns reveals the emergence of brahmanical cults much earlier than 7th century CE when the zeal of temple building is believed to have started in different parts of the sub-continent. There is evidence of flourishing of brahmanical culture since the 4th century CE in Odisha. Granting of lands, building of temples, and other expenditure associated with temples are mentioned in records, which attest to the establishment of this strong mainstream culture.

From the beginning of the history of *dāna*, *brāhmaṇas* were facilitated with land, money and other gifts. In the first half of the 1st millennium CE, they were gifted lands to promote the royal supremacy, in regions that were transitioning from pre-state to state society. Subsequently, several dynasties endowed *brāhmaṇas* to avail political recognition. The meaning of *dāna* changed and was intended to acquire legitimacy through the *brāhmaṇas* as the custodians of the grants. This political transformation from the early medieval period in Odisha occurred, when several institutions and structures were concomitantly being developed. The religious process as it evolved in Odisha in the early medieval period left a mark on the state formation and political integration. From the beginning of the state

formation in Odisha, religion played an important role. The political process of an emerging state is always attached to its patronage of religious traditions. The early medieval period saw the development of many regional cultures, particularly centred on the growth of temples and other religious institutions. The temple emerged as a result of the spread of the Puranic brahmanical traditions, with a focus on the sectarian worship of Viṣṇu and Śiva, and at a later point of time *Devī* as well.

But the temple was not merely a religious space; it also provided a visual canvas for the artistic and architectural traditions of particular regions to develop. While the broad architectural structure and themes for visual presentation were drawn from the epic-Puranic mythology, local elements in the form of ornamentation and style developed. In the context of Odisha, the emergence of Brahmanism produced three different sectarian cults like Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Sūrya worship. Later, the Śākta cult also emerged within the Brahmanical traditions. Various *Śilpa Śāstras* written within this sectarian trend carry Śākta and other doctrines. Prescriptive texts like *Bhuvanapradīpa*, *Śilpa Prakāśa*, *Śilparatnakośa*, etc. depict the principles and style of portrayal of the architecture and images in Odisha. The *ācāryas* from the different sects had idealised the style of installation as per their religious affiliations. In this context, numerous iconographic expressions of the male and female forms in temples may be considered as reflections of certain dominant notions about divinity, symbolism and gender.

As a part of this research, the issue of patronage and the nature of gifts and offerings made to the temples will also be studied. As R. Champakalakshmi has argued, temples may be seen as institutions that served as instruments of integration of various sub-regions and resources within a state society.¹ Various scholars have tried to understand the

¹ R. Champakalakshmi, *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India, 300 BC to 1300 AD*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996.

development of temple art and architecture from the perspective of the legitimacy sought by the ruling classes. Some have pointed out the development of particular kinds of iconographic motifs that reinforced the political ideology or the social norms. In the first case, abundance of icons representing power and authority, and their placement has been emphasised.² In other cases, the choice of icons and the development of an iconographic canvas as reflecting the integration of various local and sub-regional cults have been emphasised.³ In other words, patronage is not simply a question of the religious beliefs and devotion of the patron.

The period of research that has been chosen is c. 5th to 13th century CE in Odisha, to locate the massive changes in the nature of land donations, changes in sculptural and iconographic forms, styles and themes, which were linked to the development of the temple space as well. Inscriptions are one of the important primary sources of this period. *Purāṇas* and other texts (local scriptures/ doctrines) that were mostly written in the early medieval period will be studied. From the 4th century CE onwards, large amount of inscriptions had been issued. The available inscriptions on endowments, temple building, and temple expenditures unravelled the process of religious changes in early medieval Odisha. The majority of the inscriptions studied for this thesis are royal charters. As we have seen, political growth has been integrated with the religious process in several studies.

The visual treatments or iconographic representations in various regions are considered important to mark this religious and political process. After the Guptas, several dynasties emerged in Odisha and created enormous beautiful temples and sculptures. The religious

² Ibid.

³ R. Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess: Korāvai–Durga in the Tamil Traditions*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2011.

affiliations of the patrons, the political economic growth in the region, and the evolution of a regional artistic and aesthetic style provide the context in which brahmanical iconography can be studied in the region. The major temple building process had started in the beginning of 7th century CE, and throughout the early medieval period this tradition reached its supreme stage.

In south India, rulers of several dynasties used to donate large amount of lands, money and claimed to have liberated themselves through the intervention of the supreme religious authority of *brāhmaṇas*. Temple institutions emerged rapidly in the early medieval period. These practices led to a different economy and created a feudal psyche, which controlled the rest of the society. Brahmanical religion had authorised the building of the different religious institutions in early medieval Odisha. Temples and *maṭhas* were not only identified by the donations, but became a place of cultural and sectarian assimilation of brahmanical culture. Śiva and Jagannātha, being the prevalent deities of early medieval Odisha, the cult of *Devī* (Śākta sect) also emerged within the mainstream. The absorption of tribal and other non-brahmanical religious sects into the mainstream through endowments and religious institutions was crucial for the process of formation and expansion of the state. Prosperous towns became sacred due to different affiliations of gods and goddesses. Bhubaneswar, Puri and Jajpur turned into *Tīrtha kṣetras*. To capture the supreme power over the polity, the kings and queens tried to create a strong impression through the religious grants of lands, art and architecture to the brahmanical cults.

A. Historiography

Though much work has been done on inscriptions, temple art, sculpture and iconography in general, we do not find a detailed description on rise of brahmanical cults and its impact on literature, art, architecture, iconography and society. All the pioneering scholars have discussed in their studies on Odishan temples, general aspects related to origins and features. Eminent scholars like Andrew Stirling, R.L. Mitra, N.K. Bose, M.M. Ganguly, K.C.Panigrahi, R.P.Chanda, R.D.Banerji, T.E. Donaldson and many others have made important contributions for the study of various cults, temples and iconography that emerged in early medieval Odisha. But none of them has taken up the comprehensive study of social dimensions of brahmanical iconography. Little effort has been made so far to deal with the complex nature of a particular cult. Yet such studies are utterly needed to show the trend of endowing lands, temple building, sculpting of images, etc.

A.1 Political and Religious Structure

In the context of eastern India, Kunal Chakrabarti in his book *Religious Process: The Purāṇas And The Making of A Regional Tradition*, analyses the impact of the religious processes triggered by the brahmanical presence in the region, through a detailed study on the *Purāṇas* believed to have been composed in the context of early and early medieval Bengal.⁴ However, the regional religious traditions of Odisha have been unnoticed except in the case of the *Jagannātha* cult. In the early medieval period, various brahmanical religious cults

⁴ Kunal Chakrabarti, *Religious Process: The Puranas and the Making of a Regional Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2001.

flourished. Scholars like Hermann Kulke have discussed the cult of *Jagannātha* to denote the social integration polity as a marker of state formation.⁵

The religious history of Kalinga underwent great changes from the 5th century CE. The political situation of this period was marked by the rise of new ruling dynasties.⁶ After the invasion of Samudragupta, the rise of the Mātharas was a notable event in the political history of Odisha. Umakanta Subuddhi, the author of the book *The Bhauma-Karas of Orissa* states that in the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta, several minor dynasties had been mentioned.⁷ Some of them had survived for a hundred and fifty years whereas some others just appeared and then vanished in a short while. In ancient times, the Mātharas enjoyed high political and social status and had matrimonial relations with several powerful ruling families of Kośala and south India. During the early part of 5th century CE, Māthara kings ruled over Kalinga and patronized Brahmanism. Towards the beginning of the 6th century CE, the Gaṅgas came to rule Kalinga, who were Śaivites in their religious affiliations.⁸ The author mentions that *Mātharas* were able to unite the region and created hegemony over the region after a period of disunity.⁹ Long before the Bhauma-Karas, Mātharas introduced a well-organised land and administration system. Expansion of agriculture led to a flourishing economic life in that period.¹⁰

Towards the middle of the 6th century CE and more obviously at the advent of the 7th century CE, the obscure political scene of Odisha became clear to some extent. In the political

⁵ Hermann Kulke, *Kings and Cults: State Formation & Legitimation in India & South-East Asia*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2001.

⁶ N. K. Sahu, P. K. Mishra and J. K. Sahu, *History of Orissa*, Nalanda Publishers and Book Sellers, Cuttack, 1991, pp. 63-7.

⁷ Umakanta Subuddhi, *The Bhauma-Karas of Orissa*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1978, pp. 4-5.

⁸ S.C. De, 'Feudatory States of Orissa', *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, 1954, p. 136.

⁹ Subuddhi, *The Bhauma-Karas of Orissa*, p. 5.

¹⁰ Ibid.

scenario of Odisha, the Śailodbhavas extended their kingdom from the Mahanadi in the north to Mahendragiri in the south. They ruled over *Koṅgodamaṇḍala*, roughly comprising the undivided Ganjam and Puri districts. The centre of their political activities was *Koṅgodavāsaka* which was, perhaps, on the bank of river Salia in the Ganjam district.

Sarat Chandra Behera in his book *Rise and Fall of The Śailodbhavas* argued that during their period, mainstream Brahmanical religion, in the form of Śaivism, arose as a great religion over *Koṅgoda* region in 7th century CE.¹¹ The *Ekāmra Purāṇam* and Hiuen Tsang's *Si-yu-ki* help to reconstruct the history of the Śailodbhavas.¹² The Śailodbhavas ruled over *Koṅgoda* for nearly about 200 years. Lokanātha and Mādhavarāja brought political prestige over this region and established their power firmly in the state.¹³ They were feudatories under Śaśāṅka of Gauḍa, ruling over a small territory and asserted their independence.¹⁴ Their historical significance lies in the fact that from their rule onwards, we get a regular dynastic history of Odisha. The author mentions that the Śailodbhava state was economically prosperous and “launched a policy of vigorous maritime activities over the high seas.”¹⁵ That economic prosperity and political integrity of *Koṅgoda* region resulted in marvellous and grand architecture of this period.¹⁶ A number of Śaiva temples like *Parśurāmeśvara*, *Bharateśvara*, *Lakṣmaṇeśvara*, *Śatrughneśvara*, *Svarṇajaleśvara* had been erected during this period. Numerous Śiva sculptures and iconography emerged, e.g. Śiva seated in *lalitāsana* with *jaṭā*

¹¹ Sarat Chandra Behera, *Rise and Fall of the Sailodbhavas: History and Culture of Ancient Orissa from c. 550 A.D. to 736 A.D.*, Punthi Pustak, Orissa, 1982, pp. 98-9.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 83-4.

¹⁴ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa: Circa Fifth-Eighth centuries A.D.*, Vol. I, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, pp. 61-2.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. vii.

¹⁶ Ibid.

mukūṭa can be seen.¹⁷ The author of the book suggests that in that phase the *mūrti* of Śiva was carved as ‘Śānta’, instead of ‘Rudra’.¹⁸ No reasons are given for such a depiction.

The Bhauma Kara dynasty had established its rule over the coastal belt of Odisha in the first half of the 8th century CE. The capital of this dynasty was in Guhadevapāṭaka or Guheśvarapāṭaka, situated near modern Jajpur town of the Jajpur district. The scholars have not been able to settle conclusively the origin and chronology of the Bhauma Karas. K.C. Panigrahi has traced the origin of this dynasty on the basis of the Paśupati temple inscription of Nepal.¹⁹ Contrarily, Umakanta Subuddhi argued in his book that after the Māṭharas, Bhauma Karas united the coastal Odisha along with the other lands and gave it a political shape of the modern day state.²⁰ The rise of the Bhauma Karas in the 8th century CE and their two hundred years rule provided the scope to the successors of this dynasty to complete the unification of the state through land grants.

A number of temples, *viḥāras* and monasteries were built during this period under the patronage of the Bhauma rulers.²¹ It justifies the well-developed economic system, which promoted the material progress of the kingdom.²² Prabhat Mukherjee states that the early Bhauma Kara kings were Buddhist by their religious affiliations.²³ But the later rulers of this dynasty decidedly leaned towards Saivism. But the author mentions that while editing one of the grants of the queen Daṇḍimahādevī, a devotee of Śiva, H. Panday had found a mark of a

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 204-05.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 200.

¹⁹ Krishna Chandra Panigrahi, *Chronology of the Bhauma-Karas and The Somavamsis of Orissa*, Modern Book Depot, Bihar, 1961.

²⁰ Subuddhi, *The Bhauma-Karas of Orissa*, p. 145.

²¹ Ibid, pp.129-38.

²² Ibid. p. 146.

²³ Prabhat Mukherjee, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism In Orissa*, Prabasi Press, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 9-10.

conch-shell, which is the emblem of the Vaiṣṇava pantheon.²⁴ Several temples were built in Bhubaneswar, Solampur, Khadipada, Baud and the Brahmani valley.²⁵ Bhauma Kara period is marked as one of the important epochs in Odishan history as it witnessed a great change within the domain of art, religion, society and culture.²⁶

The work by Pandit Binayak Misra in his *Orissa under the Bhauma Kings* provides the chronological history of this dynasty of Odisha. This book contains the lists of copper plate inscriptions and grants made to the *brāhmaṇas*.

To identify the capital and region ruled by this dynasty, the author mentioned Sarala Dasa's *Mahābhārata* from the 15th century CE. *Virajā*, the other name of Jajpur, is also mentioned in this context. On the basis of the *Virajā-māhātmya*, he mentions *Kusumeśvara*, *Laliteśvara* and *Daṇḍiśvara* shrines, which probably became extinct.²⁷ He argued these shrines are etymologically responsible for the naming of the queens of this dynasty; which are Kusumahāra, Lalitahāra and Daṇḍimahādevī.²⁸ Hiuen Tsang's account has been referred as the writer tries to mention "there were 50 *deva* temples in Orissa in the 7th century AD."²⁹ It provides some instances of donations and the patronage under the rulers of Bhauma Kara dynasty. The author tries to portray the economic condition during the Bhauma supremacy.³⁰ From the inscriptional data, he tries to find out the price of oil and rice, which directly indicates the state economy as well as the donations related to religious institutions.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 10.

²⁵ Subuddhi, *The Bhauma-Karas of Orissa*, (1978), pp. 136-40.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 147.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 87.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 91.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 92.

The reign of the Somavaṁśīs in 9th century CE extended over two hundred years. For the first time *Kaliṅga*, *Utkala*, *Koṅgoda* and *Kośala* were unified and brought under one political authority. The uniform pattern of administration removed anarchy and confusion throughout the state and paved the way for a cultural synthesis leading to the emergence of a unique culture. The Odishan temple architecture took a concrete shape during the time of the Somavaṁśīs. The Somavaṁśīs, otherwise known as Pāṇḍuvaṁśīs, ruled over Odisha from the middle of the 9th century CE to the early part of the 11th century CE.³¹

In *History of Somavaṁśī Rule in Orissa*, Bina Kumari Sarma refers to this dynasty as one of the important periods in the political and cultural history of Odisha.³² She mentions the origin, genealogy and chronology of the Somavaṁśī dynasty. Known from the available inscriptional sources, thirteen rulers ruled the kingdom (consists Bolangir, Sambalpur, Balasore, Cuttack, Puri, parts of Ganjam, Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi of the modern state of Odisha and Midnapore district of modern West Bengal).³³ For nearly two hundred years from 919 CE to 1118 CE Somavaṁśī dynasty ruled.³⁴ In this period Śaivism flourished and elaborate sacred and secular sculptures were carved out. In her work she cites “under the tolerant rule of the Somavaṁśī kings, Vaiṣṇavism also became a great force in the religious life of Orissa, though it was not popular as was Śaivism.”³⁵ Before their successors, the Gaṅgas, Somavaṁśī rulers had sustained and maintained their autonomy. The author tries to put this argument that through the patronage the kings provided, there was a many sided development of the cultural and social life.³⁶

³¹ Gopinath Mohanty, Jeeban Kumar Patnaik and Santosha Kumar Ratha, *Cultural Heritage of Jajpur*, State Level Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Smruti Samsad, Orissa, 2004, p. 51.

³² Bina Kumari Sarma, *History of Somavamsi Rule in Orissa*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1983, p. 94.

³³ Ibid, pp. 1-8, and pp. 9-16.

³⁴ Ibid, pp. 14-5.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 72.

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 94-5.

A brief account of the Gaṅga dynasty available from the inscriptions is known from a compilation by the early epigraphist B. Lewis Rice that the previous rulers of this dynasty came from Ayodhyāpur under the leadership of Viṣṇugupta. Later on they proceeded to southern India and established their kingdom at Kaliṅga in 11th century CE. N. K. Sahu opined that both the western and eastern Gaṅga dynasties belonged to the same family originally, and they came from north India in 5th century CE and established new kingdoms in Kaliṅga and Karnataka respectively. B. Lewis Rice cited an inscription “The origin of the Gaṅgas is derived from Ikṣvāku and trace back to Ayodhyāpura. Under Viṣṇugupta, the seat of government was moved to Ahichhatra, which, it is hinted, as Vijayapura. With the arrival of Dadiga and Madhava in the South, at Gaṅga-perur, and the establishment of the Gaṅgavāḍi kingdom in Mysore aided by Simhanandi, we seem to come to historical events.”³⁷ The kings of the Gaṅga dynasty got their pedigree inscribed by their *brāhmaṇa* eulogists as well as the courtiers. In this regard, S.N. Rajaguru has given the following opinion: “Different royal dynasties, while narrating their genealogy, were eager to identify themselves with the famous solar or lunar dynasties of the *Purāṇas*”.³⁸ The Gaṅga kings it appears were no different.

Kaliṅga under the Eastern Gaṅgas (Ca. 900 A.D. - 1200 A.D.) by N. Mukunda Rao describes the political condition of the Kaliṅga state and the emergence of the imperial Gaṅgas in 10th to 11th centuries CE. Based on epigraphical sources, the author tries to incorporate the origin of the Gaṅgas and the administrative machinery of the state. In the political history of eastern Gaṅgas, he mentions the annexation of the first Gaṅga king Vajrahasta I, which happened in 1038 CE.³⁹ Between Vajrahasta I and Madhukāmārṇava, there is a time gap, but in the further explanation of the given genealogy, the author again conforms the date according to the

³⁷ S.N. Rajaguru, *History of the Gangas*, Pt. I, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, 1968, p. 192.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 3.

³⁹ N. Mukunda Rao, *Kaliṅga Under The Eastern Gangas (Ca. 900 A.D. - 1200 A.D.)*, B.R. Publishing House, Delhi, 1991, pp. 9-10.

inscription issued by Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, where the king confirms the grant of his ancestors.⁴⁰ In this book, he tries to divide the administration based on the inscriptions into few segments. Taxation, currency, land tenures and gift giving ritual have been studied in detail by classifying them. *Karaśāsana*, *Bhoga-bhāga*, *Ekabhoga*, *Bahubhoga* were the different kinds of grants issued in this period.⁴¹ Here he mentions that the temple economy was based on a large number of gifts of cash or gold, animals or incomes by the donees towards the daily rites of the temple institution.⁴²

Brahmanical hegemonic culture spread with its dominant paradigm transforming the religious landscape of Odisha between 5th to 13th centuries CE. The spatial expansion of Śaivism can be seen, where it emerged as an important cult in Odisha with huge temples. The incorporation of the tribal deities into the fold of religious pantheons was one of the most important features. Brahmanism integrated the forms of *Śiva* and *Śakti* by incorporating them into the figure of *Ardhanārīśvara*. Many tribal gods and goddesses like *Stambheśvarī*, *Maṇināgeśvarī* and *Gokarṇeśvara* were included into Brahmanism.⁴³ Despite being opposed by Buddhism, or because of it, Brahmanism incorporated Buddhist deities by giving them status in the pantheons. Buddha became one of the *avatāras* of *Viṣṇu*, and *Tārā*, *Mahākāla* simultaneously joined the hierarchy of the Tantric Śaiva pantheon.

Hunter refers to the spontaneous transference of the supreme religion, i.e., Śaivism, to the status of the religion of the people. In his words, “The religion of royalty everywhere becomes sooner or later, a religion of luxury. The sixty-three kings of the lion-line not only

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 10, p. 13.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 198-99.

⁴² Ibid, p. 202.

⁴³ Here *stambha* signifies ‘pillar’. *Stambheśvarī* was originally a tribal goddess worshipped in the hinterlands of Odisha. In course of time, she was like many other tribal deities given a place in the brahmanical pantheon. Subsequently, she transformed from a nomadic cult to Śakti cult. See, ‘Stambhesvari Cult in Orissa’ by Ashok K. Rath, *Orissa Review*, September 2009, pp. 84-5.

built temples, but endowed them with noble estates and covered the country with settlement of priests. Śiva-worship, although the creed of the dynasty almost from the first, very slowly became the accepted faith of the people.”⁴⁴ In *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa*, author Prabhat Mukherjee states that the prime god *Jagannātha* subordinated and assimilated other cults under Brahmanism.⁴⁵ *Jagannātha* cult had established the wave of ‘neo-Vaiṣṇavism’ in 13th century Odisha.⁴⁶ The pinnacle of worship of the Vaiṣṇavite deity had materially affected the result of other cults in 13th century CE. M.M. Ganguly in his work *Orissa and Her Remains* gives us a clearer idea of the salient features of a temple and its rituals. In his study, he elaborates that some of the ritual procedures were recommended during the establishment of the temple, and they are still being noticed in the premises.⁴⁷

A.1.I The issue of patronage

The nature of patronage to the temples of Indian sub-continent has been discussed by the scholars on the basis of location of the temple, extent of the kingdom, sectarian affiliation of kings, location of the capital, inscriptional references to the temple building and donation to lands and deities. In the earliest periods of Indian history, patronage was expressed in terms of a few major institutions - Vedic sacrifice (*yajña*) and Buddhist and Jain charitable donation (*dāna*). The purpose of the elaborate Vedic ritual sacrifice was to ensure the fertility and well being of the patron, termed *yajamāna*, his family, and ultimately the whole community.⁴⁸ Romila Thapar in her study on patronage in Vedic and early Indian context, deals with the critical examination of literature and inscriptional data

⁴⁴ W.W. Hunter, *Orissa*, Vol. I, Smith, Elder and Co., London, 1873, p. 237

⁴⁵ Mukherjee, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism*, (1940), p. 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Mono Mohon Ganguly, *Orissa and Her Remains: Ancient and Medieval*, Gian Publishing House, Delhi, 1986, pp. 171-75.

⁴⁸ Romila Thapar, ‘Dana and Dakshina as Forms of Exchange’, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 94-108.

related to patronage.⁴⁹ The act of patronage is partially a form of exchange. With time, this exchange took a form of various acts like religious and social prestige and legitimization of kingship. Gift exchange would therefore tend to become less embedded in those primarily agricultural societies which experienced the gradual changing of attitudes to land and the ownership of the land where land slowly emerges as the major economic unit. And the accepted token of wealth is significant since wealth is a demonstration of status; it is a means of controlling others by winning followers and by placing those who accept the gift under obligation.⁵⁰

Marcel Mauss, the social anthropologist, points out that the royal donations were gift-exchanges in which there were elements of reciprocity, and the gift is not neutral as it is linked to an individual or a group.⁵¹ Though in theory all gifts are voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous, yet in practice they are obligatory and interested.⁵²

Vidya Dehejia states that in the period beginning about a century after Aśoka, women participated in the sponsorship of the construction of the earliest surviving monuments of Buddhism, the great *caityas* at Bharhut and Sanchi.⁵³ The earliest large-scale stone monuments of India were not erected and adorned by a single donor, but rather through collective sponsorship of men and women from various walks of life; royals, merchants,

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 1987, p. 107.

⁵¹ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Society*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1967, p. 45.

⁵² Ibid, p. 45.

⁵³ Vidya Dehejia, 'The Collective and Popular Basis of Early Buddhist Patronage: Sacred Monuments, 100 BC-AD 250' in Barbara Stoler Miller, ed., *The Powers of Arts*, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 35-45.

artisans, and their wives and relatives, according to Peter Skilling.⁵⁴ Inscriptions from Sanchi, Bharhut, Kanheri, Karle, Nasik, Amaravati, and Mathura show that nuns were major sponsors of the early monuments. Gregory Schopen is cited as having calculated that at Sanchi there were 129 monk donors, and 125 nuns. He notes that “at Pauni there were three monk donors and five nuns; at Bharhut 16 nuns and 25 monks; at Amaravati there were 12 monk donors and 12 nun donors”.⁵⁵ The inscriptions, which date from roughly the 2nd century BCE to the 3rd century CE, show not only that nuns played an active role in the erection of *caityas* and *vihāras*, but also that they had the social and economic status that enabled them to do so. Queens, or other female members of the court, played a role. The author describes in the same work that Mahādevī Gautamī Bālasrī, mother of Gautamiputra Siri Sātakarṇi, donated a cave at Nasik. Also at Nasik, an *upāsikā* Mamma gave an endowment of a cave. At Nagarjunikonda in Andhra Pradesh, female members of the royal elites were prominent donors. At Mathura a seated Bodhisattva was set up by *upāsikā* Nāgapriyā, housewife of the goldsmith Dharmaka.⁵⁶ At Sanchi, in the Kuṣāṇa period, an image of the *jambuchhāyā* episode was installed by Madhurikā, and an image of *Sākyamuni* by Vidyāmati.⁵⁷

In the early period, both nuns and laywomen were prominent sponsors of *caityas*, caves and images. In Gupta and post-Gupta period the nature of Buddhist monument building changed.⁵⁸ Whatever the case, the body of available evidence shrinks from the Gupta period onwards, and the role of female donors becomes difficult to determine.

⁵⁴ Peter Skilling, ‘Nuns, Laywomen, Donors, Goddesses: Female Roles in Early Indian Buddhism’, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 24, Number 2, 2001, p. 257.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 259.

⁵⁸ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, ‘State and Economy in North India: Fourth Century to Twelfth Century’, (ed.) Romila Thapar, *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1995, pp. 309-46.

According to Cynthia Talbot, herders, merchants, traders, and women in early medieval Andhra, all gave to major temples at significantly higher rates than the norm; something about this type of institution was particularly appealing to them.⁵⁹ Data shows that some 13th century Andhra women had property rights over land, despite the fact that brahmanical legal literature indicated strong disapproval of female landownership.⁶⁰ She cites that in Andhra region the third group of donors who patronized major temples in large numbers were women. Quite a few female donors were wealthy and influential; the wives of powerful kings and princes who, acted as rulers after the death of their husbands. For enhancing prestige, royal women of medieval south India often played a more prominent role as donors of temples than did the men in their families. As an example, the queens and princesses of the imperial Cōla dynasty donated far more direct gifts to temples than did the kings and princes.⁶¹ From her account on temple patronage in Andhra region, it is clear that main and big temples were naturally constructed at the economically privileged regions; that is the river banks (fertile zone, surplus production and strong economy) or in along strategic points on trade routes.⁶²

Ramendra Nath Nandi in his work *Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan* mentioned that the *bhakti* cult largely expanded in the Deccan in 8th-9th centuries CE. It helped to popularize the temples as the authority, and patronage was based on the distribution of political and cult centres and increasing elaboration of architecture. As discussed earlier, not only the royal families but also other classes in society endowed temples. But above all, we can see the ultimate popularity of patronizing the magnificent

⁵⁹ Cynthia Talbot, 'Temples, Donors, and Gifts: Patterns of Patronage in Thirteenth-Century South India', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2, p. 322.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 325.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 328.

⁶² *Ibid*.

temples. In the situation of decentralization of administration, the feudal and local lords helped to build the temples in 9th-12th century CE in India.

Scholars have begun to explore issues of gender arising from women's patronage of monuments, indicating their control over resources. In an essay, Padma Kaimal discusses the patronage of some hundred temples built in the Kaveri delta of central Tamil Nadu during the 9th and 10th centuries CE.⁶³ She shows that in the case of Cōḷa temple patronage, women considerably outnumbered men. The wife of Gaṇḍarāditya Cōḷa, Sembiyan Mahādevī's patronage practices and architectural preferences are conspicuous in the period. Another Cōḷa queen, Kokkilān, the mother of Rājāditya Cōḷa, who was to become king in 947, built before 935 the *Tiruttōṇḍiśvara* temple at Tirunamanallur. Within an extended Cōḷa family, patronage of temple architecture was primarily female oriented. When a woman married into the royal family, they brought this practice with them from their natal families. Cōḷa men had little impact on temple construction during the 10th century CE, even when the sponsors were their wives. The author shows through Tamil donatives documents that south Indian men and women of privilege frequently made public displays of pious generosity. Those actions are still perceived as high virtue in Tamil society. Wealth enabled queens to sponsor an entire temple; her gender may have been irrelevant. The reason for the visibility of women as donors may be seen in the south Indian preference for endogamous cross-cousin marriages, which may have enhanced women's significance within their husband's families.⁶⁴

⁶³ Padma Kaimal, 'A Man's World? Gender, Family, and Architectural Patronage, in Medieval India', *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 53, 2002/2003, pp. 26-53.

⁶⁴ This might have given these women access to material resources through their natal families. Thomas Trautmann has noted that through such marriage patterns the Cōḷas and their neighbours created persistent relationships between families through repeated intermarriages. Since the Cōḷas turned repeatedly to certain families for marriage partners, the wife's family as well as the husband's might "persist" within the Cōḷa

It is worth noting that Cōla queens played a pivotal role in the evolution of the temples. Royal women in south India had for some centuries perpetuated a tradition of religious giving. This culminated just before the beginning of Rājarāja I's reign in the ambitious building program of Cōla queen Sembiyān Mahādevī.⁶⁵ The possibility that women played such a pivotal role in political and ritual development urges us to distinguish in the current essay between male and female donations made by the Cōla family.

Leslie Orr's survey of Cōla inscriptions reveals that while women made frequent and lavish donations to a number of temples, female generosity to temples was not new to south India during the Cōla period.⁶⁶

It is unfortunate that there are no works of this nature on patronage in the context of early medieval Odisha. Drawing upon the analyses in the various works cited above, this aspect will be taken up for detailed study in this dissertation with a bid to fill this glaring gap.

A.2 Art and Architecture

One of the earliest pioneering works on the brahmanical art of Odisha was done by Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda.⁶⁷ He divided the region into four broad cultural zones centering on Jajpur, Cuttack, Southern Odisha (including Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark), and Mayurbhanj.⁶⁸ He points out that although the 17th century palm-leaf chronicle of the *Jagannātha* temple at Puri suggests that a kingdom flourished in the Jajpur region in the

household. A new bride might find aunts or sisters already integrated into her husband's extended family, and these natal relatives may have been a source of social and psychological support.

⁶⁵ Padma Kaimal, 'Early Cōla Kings and Early Cōla Temples: Art and the Evolution of Kingship', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 56, No. ½, 1996, pp. 33-66.

⁶⁶ Leslie C. Orr, 'Cholas, Pandyas and 'Imperial Temple Culture' in Medieval Tamilnadu', *The Temple In South Asia*, in Adam Hardy ed., *The Temple In South Asia*, London: British Academy, 2007, pp. 109-30.

⁶⁷ R.P. Chanda, 'Art In Orissa', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 82, No. 4265, 1934, pp. 309-28.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 310-19.

4th century CE, there is no material evidence in the form of a standing monument before the 17th century here.⁶⁹ The legend of this region being *Virajākṣetra* is borne out by the finding of numerous images of goddesses from the site. Chanda provides a vivid description of the figures of “the mothers” found here; “The most remarkable feature about these Jajpur images of the mothers is that they disclose a keen sense of solid masses, a grasp of three-dimensional relations... Of the two surviving figures of the set of colossal mothers, only one, *Varāhī*, with a pig’s head, is in a tolerable state of preservation. Even the animal head is not without expression. It is looking on the child with interest. The human body of the animal is enlivened throughout motherly feeling, and the garlands of beads that encircle the neck, the breasts and the forearms in rhythmic lines add grace to the figure.”⁷⁰ Chanda draws our attention to other goddess images from the Puri area and surmises on stylistic grounds that these reveal the Jajpur influence. However, he does point out that in terms of the expressions of the goddesses, the Jajpur ones reveal a natural look, while the Puri ones seem to be in a meditating aspect. He also points to the early Bhauma Kara Mahāyāna Buddhist remains in the Cuttack area, visible in the form of low-relief sculptures of the Bodhisattva and Kubera.⁷¹ In the context of the temples in Khiching in the Mayurbhanj area, the author points out the female attendant figures of Śiva.⁷² Further, images of dancing Śiva, *Durgā* and *Nāgas* are described in detail. Although the tone is mostly descriptive, Chanda’s work is important because it draws our attention to similarities and differences in sculptural representation, the latter which he attributes to sub-regional variations.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 322.

⁷¹ Ibid, pp. 323-4.

⁷² Ibid.

Early medieval temples in different parts of the sub-continent and specifically in Odisha are richly decorated with pilasters, geometrical designs and scroll works animated by figures of animals and human and divine beings. K.C. Panigrahi draws our attention to these sculptures, which are subordinated to the scheme of decoration, and, in most cases, carved on the building stones after the erection of the structure of the building.⁷³ The *Liṅgarāja*, dating from about 1000 CE, is the largest of the Odishan temples, and bas-reliefs in its panels are of considerable size. It is pointed out by the scholar that some of the sculptures found in Bhubaneswar carved in chlorite are defective, as well as the life-size images of the same material fixed in the main niches of the temple of *Jagannātha* at Puri. The author puts emphasis on the southern school of Indian art which survived till about the middle of the 13th century CE⁷⁴. The other decorative sculptures of Konark Sun temple including male and female figures and animals are different, and show dramatic vigour. The images intended for the niches are carved of chlorite schist. The most remarkable images amongst these both in size and quality are the images of the Sun god. Though a few of these images seem to lack flexibility and the quality of suppleness, most of the sculptures show soft modelling and pulsation of life, according to him.⁷⁵

Thomas E. Donaldson, in his masterly work on the *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*, explains all types of Odishan temple architecture and sculptures.⁷⁶ This is a comprehensive study of the technical development of architectural and sculptural elements in the brahmanical temples of Odisha. Numerous temples are picked up for detailing of the different figural and ornamental motifs. On the question of sexual imagery and *mithuna* figures on the

⁷³ K. C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, Orient Longmans, University of Michigan, Delhi, 1961.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Thomas E. Donaldson, *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*, Vol. I, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1985.

Konark Sun temple and other temples of Odisha, he states on the lines of Desai that evolving Tāntrism probably influenced the depictions of erotic figures.⁷⁷ Another section of this book contains a specific discussion on female imagery and erotic motifs in which the author argues that the ornate images of females – mortal and divine – were depicted for the beautification and protection of the temple.⁷⁸ Does he want to signify the protective aspect and fruitfulness of those *mithuna* motifs? Donaldson states that in Tāntrism it is believed that every naked and half naked woman is an incarnation of *prakṛti*.⁷⁹ Sexual union and women play always a fundamental role in Tāntrism. He sees the idea of sexual and other decorative motifs as performing an auspicious function on the temple walls. The images of *Rati* and *Prīti*, consorts of the god of love *Kāmadeva*, are often seen in early-medieval Indian temples, according to him. On *Śisireśvara* temple wall in Odisha, he draws our attention to an amorous sculpture showing *Kāmadeva* flanked by *Rati* and *Prīti*.

Another motif in later sculptures that has been discussed by Donaldson relates to the theme of a female straddling a *liṅga* or a fire altar.⁸⁰ The female is shown squatting, so that her *yonī* touches the *liṅga*, in a manner most likely representing the offering of *rajas* in his opinion. Here, *rajas* can also mean genital secretion of woman (*Śakti*), rather than strictly menstrual fluid. The majority of such scenes in later temples probably depict *rajapāna* and the *urdhvaliṅga* state of the male which indicates he is sexually excited but he is not emotional.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 1152-69.

⁷⁹ Thomas E. Donaldson, 'Erotic Rituals on Orissan Temples', *East and West*, Vol. 36, No. 1/3, September 1986, p. 145.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 138.

Donaldson is amongst the very few scholars who have tried to examine and analyse the vast array of brahmanical sculpture in Odisha. His work has proved extremely useful in understanding style and placement of sculptures. However, other than general assessments of the art traditions and their historical contexts, this is again more of a descriptive study.

An interesting work by Joanna Williams highlights the *Rāmāyaṇa* illustrations in early medieval Odisha.⁸² The earliest descriptions of the epic occur in the 6th century CE *Śatrughneśvara* temple at Bhubaneswar. These were small scenic descriptions that appear just below the niches marking the *Vālin-Sugrīva* episode in the narrative. Williams argues that because of the carving of scenes in separate cuts, these may well have been seen as individual images rather than as part of a visual narrative.⁸³ A century later, the *Svarnajaleśvara* temple, also at Bhubaneswar, expands on the narrative for the same theme. Not merely is the conflict between the monkey rulers depicted, but also the abduction of *Sītā*, and the deceit of *Mārīca* in the form of a golden deer. Williams suggests that the sculptors were using certain artistic devices such as flashback and conspicuous action to give meaning and continuity to the narrative. The 9th century *Simhanātha* temple is seen as elaborating on the literary narrative, where in addition to the popular events the battle scene in *Laṅkā* is also shown. The author sees a shift in representation of the epic motifs, where the narrative appears to be replaced by large icons drawn from the stories, such as *Rāma*, *Sītā*, *Lakṣmaṇa* and *Hanumān*.

Williams in this work is concerned more with the continuity of particular *Rāmāyaṇa* motifs, but she fails to discuss issues related to the epic's cultural circulation and why only

⁸² Joanna Gottfried Williams, *The Two-headed Deer: Illustrations of the Rāmāyaṇa in Orissa*, University Of California Press, Berkeley, 1996, pp. 70-7.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 71.

some scenes find prominence. Nevertheless, as a study of sculptural forms, this work is important because it does reveal cultural motifs that have a value beyond sectarian claims.

A.3 Gender and Sculptural Representations

Some scholars have worked exclusively on the depiction of women and the female form in early Indian art. Many of the works are descriptive, providing us with a range of depictions beginning from the prehistoric period. These works largely stem from an assumption that women personified beauty and fertility. Other works have tried to critically understand how certain aesthetic sensibilities developed. While some of these scholars continue to anchor such analyses to the importance or centrality of women, others have critiqued the objectification of women that this implies.

M.L. Varadpande sees continuity in depictions, primarily because of what he attributes to the male fascination with the female form. While according to him, scholars have tended to look at depictions of women amongst other motifs, Varadpande focuses exclusively on this theme in his study of ancient and early medieval Indian art. For him, the Indus female figurines are “a starting point... of the great Indian tradition of sculpting the female figures in a number of mediums including stone, clay, wood and metal... Mother is a major theme of most of these figurines....”⁸⁴ The author assumes that all such figures represent mother goddesses. In an apparent contradiction, he goes on to discuss how the refinement of the art traditions in the Buddhist monuments resulted in the sensuous depictions of the female form, belying his own argument about the preponderance of the ‘mother’ figure. Here, Rita Wright’s discussion of gender in the Indus context, as well as the work of other scholars like Jonathan Kenoyer has moved the debate from the ‘mother goddess’ centric

⁸⁴ M. L. Varadpande, *Woman in Indian Sculpture*, Abhinav Publication, New Delhi, 2006, p. 15.

explanations to a more nuanced understanding of the possible nature of gender relations and roles in the society of those times.⁸⁵ Scholars like Sharri Clark have raised other important issues related to the contexts in which different figurines have been found, the material from which they are made, and the possible interpretations that go beyond the established analysis of the female figurines.⁸⁶ Although this is not germane to our analysis of works on early medieval brahmanical art traditions, we raise these issues because of Varadpande's and other scholars' emphasis on the Indus art as the inspiration for the depiction of the female form during later periods.

As far as the art of the early historic period is concerned, the depiction of the *yakṣī* figure is focused on by Varadpande in the Mathura style of art. Using various sources such as the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* and Kālidāsa's compositions, he reiterates Ananda Coomaraswamy's argument that these were spirits of fertility rooted in anthropomorphism, and not spiritualized.⁸⁷ He also seems to agree with Coomaraswamy that the *yakṣī* figure formed the basis for the myriad depictions of women in the Gupta and post-Gupta art of the early medieval period. In the Mathura art itself, specific figures such as the woman playing with the ball (*kandukenakrīḍā*) and of squeezing water from her hair after a bath (*keśanistoyākārinī*) were seen to continue in the art of the later period, with more such themes being developed.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Jonathan M. Kenoyer, *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1998.

⁸⁶ Sharri R. Clark, 'Representing the Indus Body: Sex, Gender, Sexuality, and the Anthropomorphic Terracotta Figurines from Harappa', *Asian Perspectives*, 42:2, 2003, pp. 304-28; see also 'Material Matters: Representation and Materiality of the Harappan Body', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 16: 3, 2009, pp. 231-61.

⁸⁷ Varadpande, *Woman in Indian Sculpture*, (2006), p. 31.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 52.

The *Nāyikās*, *Surāsundarīs*, *Alasā Kanyās*, goddesses and erotic couples are captured in stone throughout the early medieval period, though they are depicted in ancient texts also. Here, Varadpande states that the beauty that is generally captured only in ancient texts was presented visually by the sculptors.⁸⁹ The myriad faces, forms and styles of women that appeared repeatedly in Indian sculptures illustrate the multiple activities and personhood of a woman in ancient Indian society. He deals with the sculptures of women which were mainly associated with nature. To compare the fabulous sculptures with nature, he takes some literary references like *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam*, *Mālavikāgnimitram*, *Buddhacarita* etc. In all major literary masterpieces, there are innumerable examples about association of women with trees. Varadpande draws our attention to the affectionate female figures that are in love, a woman deceived by her lover, a woman denied by her lover and breaking down in grief, woman applying make-up with the help of a mirror and many other types of *nāyikās* depicted in the Konark Sun temple and other temples in Bhubaneswar and Khajuraho.⁹⁰ The author's concern with women's sensuousness, dress, jewellery, intellect and beauty is rooted in a conservative notion of Indian 'womanhood' with no attempt to look at variations in depictions, and the manner in which these ideas conform to patriarchal notions of femininity. Also, issues of the form and composition, placement of specific icons in earmarked spaces, etc. are not of concern to him.

K.C. Panigrahi also points out that many of these female figures in early medieval art represent conventional poetical ideas to be found in Sanskrit literature.⁹¹ The females holding babies, plucking flowers or fruits, writing love letters, putting on ornaments, or engaged in similar feminine pastimes, that we find in the Bhubaneswar temples, are not

⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 21-2, 24-5, 28-32, 34, 36-9.

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 85-92.

⁹¹ K. C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Kitab Mahal, Cuttack, 1981.

always free of the human sentiments, although such sentiments are of universal and ideal nature.

The linking of women to nature, particularly trees, flowers and animals, has been discussed by various scholars in other contexts. A famous sculptural form, known as *Aśoka Dohadā* is depicted over in ancient Sanskrit literature.⁹² *Śālabhañjikā*, the most significant figure amongst Indian female sculptures, is also linked with a *Śāla* tree.⁹³ However, even with the many overarching themes of depiction, there were differences in styles. It has been argued that the art of Mathura and Andhra centres of the early historic period reflects luxuriousness and sensualised figures in the consciously posed *yakṣīs* and female figures in contrast to the simplicity and naivete of the Bharhut *yakṣīs* and *devatās*.⁹⁴ The subjects, represented in both art and text, include *yakṣīs* and *yakṣas*, beautiful women and young girls.

An important work on *Śālabhañjikā* by Udai Narain Roy discusses the iconography of the semi divine female figures from Bharhut and Sanchi, and goes on to their representation in the post-Gupta period.⁹⁵ Sculptures from the Śuṅga period, he terms as *Surāsundarī*, are

⁹² *Aśoka Dohadā*: “That an *aśoka* tree blossoms at the touch of the feet of a beautiful woman, is a conventional poetical idea which is to be found in several Sanskrit works like the *Meghadūta*, *Mālavikāgnimitra* etc., and this conventional poetical idea has been executed in stone by the ancient artists of Orissa. In fact, for inspiration and for achieving grace and elegance in their creations-both the poet and the artist had to borrow ideas from the same common source; viz. the Sanskrit literature. That is to not however, go to the length of suggesting that certain motifs or forms have been inspired by a particular poet or poets like Kālidāsa or Bhavabhūti. All that is intended to be said is that certain well known poetical ideas were widely current in the periods when the temples were built, and that the sculptors have depicted them in stone to lend charm and elegance to their creations. It is also to be noted that the sculptors in reproducing these ideas have been inspired by their beauty and appropriateness rather than by a desire to depict the real life of the society in which they lived.” Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, pp. 434-35.

⁹³ Varadpande, *Woman in Indian Sculpture*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ U.N. Roy, *Salabhanjika in Art Philosophy and Literature*, Lokharti Publications, Allahabad, 1979.

described as the ‘outstanding’ female figures of Kuṣāṇa age.⁹⁶ The author uses examples from epics to identify the sculptures distinctively.⁹⁷ To locate the sensuousness of these feminine beauties, the author uses a set of female figures with very pertinent iconography from the early period of Indian art.⁹⁸ He has also mentioned like Banerjea, that “...the Gupta art witnessed a stage when the *Śālabhañjikā* motif... paved the way for the anthropomorphic forms of the rivers, *Gaṅgā* and *Yamunā*, when the dynasty established the imperial sway on the basins of the two rivers.”⁹⁹ According to the author, the motif of the divine lady, *Śālabhañjikā*, changes from time to time. In the later part of this work, the author discusses the gradual changes of *Śālabhañjikā* from the Gupta to the early medieval period of India. Initially accorded a high status as a divine damsel, the *Śālabhañjikā* was later portrayed as *Nāyikā*, although she continued to be carved in relation to trees (*Udyāna Krīḍā*).¹⁰⁰ The iconographic representations of the semi divine figures changed over time, and Roy highlights this in some detail.

V. S. Agrawala, primarily a scholar on sacred art in the early Indian context, brought Sanskrit literary sources to throw light on *yakṣīs*, *śālabhañjikās* and *vrkṣikās* and it appears that Varadpande was inspired by this analysis.¹⁰¹ Agrawala took references of *nāyikās* from Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit sources, particularly works composed by Kālidāsa, Bāṇa, Aśvaghoṣa and Rājaśekhara. A myriad range of female sculptures have been identified by him. *Śukasārikā*, *veṅṅprasādhanā*, *aśoka dohadā*, *kandukakrīḍāratā* and many more sculptures were referred by him in textual context. A goddess in *abhayadāna mudrā*, though more conventional in form as suits a divinity, is interpreted by him as not very

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 26.

⁹⁷ The context of *Mālavikāgnimitram* used by the author to depict the physique of Mālavikā; ibid, pp. 27-8.

⁹⁸ Ibid, pp. 62-8.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 68.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 69.

¹⁰¹ V.S. Agrawala, ‘Mathura Museum Catalogue’, *JUPHS*, Vol. XXIII, pt. I, 1950, pp. 2-106.

different from the other figures. Again, like in the discussion of Varadpande, there is primarily a discussion of the sculptures and their correspondence with literary descriptions, with no attempt to analyse these.

Feminist approaches to Indian art have provided a new dimension to the study of iconography. Social construction, world-views, religious and ideological phenomena are seen as affecting the sculptural motifs, especially in relation to female sculptures in Indian art. Vidya Dehejia and Gauri Parimoo Krishnan are eminent art historians following this stream. However, the interpretations of these two scholars differ.

Krishnan begins with an explanation for the use of the term ‘Devāṅganā’ in the title of her work, where she argues that other terms for women in architectural and poetic works suggest their beauty and amorous nature as the central element. In her view, the depiction of women has to be understood in terms of a society’s acknowledgement of the power of the female, “which is not necessarily religious, erotic or anything trivial”.¹⁰² For her, the *devāṅganā* (literally meaning divine beauty) was a catch phrase for all the semi-divine figures of *apsarā*, *yakṣī*, and *surāsundarī*, found generously depicted on temple walls. While the tendency has been to study these figures as unimportant or subordinate to the primary goddess figures, she argues that they may be considered “dynamically pulsating forms of female principles, ever auspicious, balancing effects of good and evil that manifested collectively, but were never accorded definite recognition thus far.”¹⁰³ The regional context in which Parimoo situates her work is modern-day Gujarat, Rajasthan and parts of Madhya Pradesh. Using architectural treatises belonging to a later period primarily to discuss the artistic representations of the temples of the 8th to 12th centuries CE, the author attempts to identify different figures depending on their postures and attributes.

¹⁰² Gauri Parimoo Krishnan, *The Power of The Female*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 27.

Interestingly, the author raises the possibility that there was a specialization amongst various artists to work on particular motifs, and also whether the *sthapatis*, religious teachers, sculptors and patrons, whether male or female, could have employed a philosophical perspective on the question of female sculptures.¹⁰⁴

Despite her assertions that it would not be correct to reduce the female figures to fertility symbols, Krishnan arrives at similar conclusions in her discussion of their placement in the 11th century Rānī Vāv at Patan and other similar structures.¹⁰⁵ She also seems to distort the significance of specific motifs by bracketing them all as *devāṅganās*. For instance, in the Abu temple the *vitāna* figures of the *Vidyādevīs* which have great importance in the early medieval Jaina traditions are subsumed under the category of *devāṅganās*.¹⁰⁶ Further, she clubs all the images of dancing female figures also under the *devāṅganā* concept, which needs serious reconsideration.¹⁰⁷

While this work is valuable for the detailed discussion of the *śilpa* texts and their allusion to female figures, there is a tendency to club too many ideas and motifs within one conceptual frame of the ‘devāṅganā’. If the use of separate categories such as *apsarā*, etc. is seen as arbitrary, so is the use of the term *devāṅganā* here.

Vidya Dehejia in the introduction to an edited work has emphasized on the historical context as far as representations of the body are concerned and brings in a psycho-analytical lens to study these.¹⁰⁸ In another edited work, Dehejia discusses the concept of *Devī* in the Indian context.¹⁰⁹ She argues, “The importance of visual images of the great

¹⁰⁴ Krishnan, *The Power of The Female*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp. 391-92.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 400-01.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 344.

¹⁰⁸ Vidya Dehejia, *Representing the Body: Gender Issues in Indian Art*, Kali for Women, Delhi, 1997.

¹⁰⁹ Vidya Dehejia, *Devi: The Great Goddess*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, 1999.

goddess is emphasised by the context of worship across the sub-continent, whereby devotees visit a temple for *darśan*, or “seeing” the image of enshrined deity. Such seeing does not merely mean using one’s eyes, but is a dynamic act of awareness....”¹¹⁰ Visually, the goddess prototype appears in the terracotta female figurines of the 3rd to 2nd centuries BCE, with the elaborate ornamentation, girdles and fan shaped headdresses. Terracotta plaques of the late first millennium BCE, and coins from the early centuries of the Common Era, suggest that goddesses as bestowers of wealth and prosperity were known and venerated. This is also the period when they begin to appear on stone, as seen from various sites, particularly Mathura.¹¹¹

The increasing visibility of female forms in temple art is attributed to the growth of the Tantric traditions, and is particularly related to the elaboration of *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, where the male *puruṣa* is depicted as inactive, requiring the active agency of *prakṛti*.¹¹² Other key concepts she draws upon are the feminine principle *māyā* that was conceptualized as the creative potential of Brahman or ultimate reality, and power personified as *śakti* which gradually became identified with consorts and female deities in the *Vaiṣṇava* and *Śaiva* traditions initially and with the great goddess or *Devī* in the *Śākta* tradition.¹¹³ The full development of the iconography of *Devī*, bringing together these three concepts, is identified in the images of the goddess *Durgā* fighting the buffalo demon.

Although Dehejia’s book emerged out of an exhibition at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art, the range of themes she and other contributors highlight in the first part of the work, as well as the sheer range of visual material that is discussed makes

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 14.

¹¹¹ Ibid, pp. 19-20.

¹¹² Ibid, p. 21.

¹¹³ Ibid.

it an important study on early Indian art. What is important also is the manner in which she links the visualization of the goddess to sectarian and philosophical ideas. Dehejia discusses the manner in which textual expressions blended with the visual material.¹¹⁴ Here, she shows the way in which the divine and human bodies are conceptualized and get combined to represent elements of the natural world.

Ellen Goldberg in a rich study of the concept of *Ardhanārīśvara*, draws our attention to the iconography of this figure.¹¹⁵ Focusing on seventeen specimens, Goldberg analyses the historical contexts in which the icon emerges as well as the play of meanings around this figure. She argues that the theological message behind the *murtī* is both cosmogonic and cosmological. The “bipolar representation” of ‘the god who is half-woman’ is precisely to emphasise the cosmogonic character.¹¹⁶ The icon typically has the right as the male aspect and the left as the female one, with all the dress, ornaments and other details conforming to this division. In the north Indian context, Goldberg points out that a slight ithyphallic element is noticeable on the right side. Interestingly, she points out the shared features of the icon – the navel, chest ornaments, hand ornaments and a *prabhāmaṇḍala*. Sometimes, the third eye of *Śiva* may also be shared. There are specific prescriptions with regard to number of hands and the attributes to be shown, but what is common to all icons is that the female side depicts the breast prominently. She also discusses texts such as the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* to examine the differences between the prescriptions and the available sculptures. Although the focus in this icon is on the Puranic *Śiva*, the mythology

¹¹⁴ Vidya Dehejia, *The Body Adorned: Dissolving Boundaries Between Sacred and Profane in India's Art*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009.

¹¹⁵ Ellen Goldberg, *The Lord Who is Half Woman: Ardhanārīśvara in Indian and Feminist Perspective*, State University of New York, USA, 2002, pp. 8-56.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 10.

around the goddess, and the specific descriptions of the ‘feminine’ aspect of the icon are relevant for our discussion.

In early medieval India *Śakti* cult shows its own antiquity in Indian culture rather than any other living tradition. Apart from the other religions in India, *Śakti* cult and the worship of goddesses differentiate its nature by opening the door to all castes, class and varieties of the society. The benevolent and malevolent, creation and destruction, male and female and transcendences and rootedness are embedded in the construction of the sacred structures.¹¹⁷ R. Mahalakshmi contextualizes the emergence of *Śakti* cult, which was produced by the amalgamation of the mainstream brahmanical and non brahmanical forms of religion.¹¹⁸ In the Tamil region, the depiction of the female form of divinity as spouse goddess resulted in many composite iconographic representations emerging, such as the Umāśahita mūrti, Laksmī-Anantaśayana Viṣṇu mūrti, Ardhanārīśvara etc. Other female divinities who appear to have emerged from an indigenous context but were assimilated into brahmanical traditions are also discussed by her. So, while the *āyudhas*, *mudras* and *vāhanas*, etc. might find a place in the prescriptive works, and seem to be similar to that associated with spouse goddesses or male deities, the manner of depiction, certain specific motifs being used and the placement of the icons are shown to reveal the purpose behind such representation.¹¹⁹ In an analysis of the icon of the dancing Kālī, found in stone and bronze from different parts of the region, Mahalakshmi highlights the invoking of specific traits of the regional *tiṇai* deity Korravai in this depiction, while the linking of this image with Śiva is obvious, visually and mythologically.¹²⁰ The myth itself can be traced to the *Purāṇas* and the *nāyaṇār* bhakti saints in the region alluded to it, and added their own

¹¹⁷ R. Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, p. 15.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, chapter 5.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, chapter 6.

versions of it. The context of the dancing Kālī was the competition between Śiva and the goddess. The dance was a ruse to tame the bloodthirsty goddess. Mahalakshmi interprets this icon as being deliberately chosen to assert social ideas regarding the triumph of the male and the subjugation of the aggressive female, for Śiva is able to win only because of his phallic thrust, symbolized by the *ūrdhvatāṇḍava*. Such kind of detailed discussion, corroboration of diverse sources, and analysis is largely missing in the Odisha context.

In all of these studies, there is an emphasis on contextualizing the study of iconography by studying the mythology, forms of representation and meanings conveyed by the sculptures. In this thesis, we propose to borrow from the methodologies indicated in these studies, to analyse the social significance of brahmanical iconography in Odisha.

B. Sources and Methodology

There are three broad sources for the study – epigraphical, archaeological and literary. A large number of inscriptional records, engraved on copper-plates and stone, provide the bulk of information for this study. Prescriptive texts and Puranic and other narratives will be used as the basic literary sources of this research.

B.1 Epigraphical Sources

The first group of written sources in my thesis are the inscriptions. The extensive collection of inscriptions is found in the volumes of *Epigraphia Indica* and *Inscriptions of Orissa*. In addition to these, there are a number of other journals for epigraphical sources which have been found from Odisha and the upper part of Andhra Pradesh. The approximate dates of those inscriptions are from 5th to 14th century CE. Sanskrit was mostly used as the prime language of the inscriptions. Māṭhara, Śailodbhava, Bhauma Kara, Somavaṁśī and Gaṅga inscriptions are taken as the sources for the chapters as discussed in the following section. These inscriptions help to analyse the formation of

individual religious institutions, temples and sacred places. The copperplate inscriptions, stone inscriptions, image inscriptions, temple door inscriptions, etc. have been used to focus on the issue of patronage in early to early medieval Odisha.

B.2 Archaeological Sources from Temples and Museums

Various artefacts belonging to early medieval dynasties and temples of Odisha have been analyzed. For instance, a broken sculpture of a female drummer from the upper Potala of the Sun temple of Konark, detached *apsarās*, couples, decorative motifs, door jambs, *mithuna* scenes are included and regarded as the archaeological materials. These are found mostly *in situ*, i.e. on the walls of the temples, or in museums.

B.3 Literary Sources

Śilpa Prakāśa, *Śilparatnakośa*, *Bhuvanapradīpa* (*Canons of Orissan Architecture* by Nirmal Kumar Bose), *Mādalā Pañjī* (temple chronicle of *Jagannātha*), *Skanda Purāṇa*, and *Ekāmra Purāṇam* are the main sources to interpret the nature of *dāna*, sacred geography, morphology, iconography and sculptures in the temples of early medieval Odisha. These are discussed in detail below.

Śilpa Prakāśa

Śilpa Prakāśa, written by Rāmacandra Mahāpātra Kaula Bhaṭṭāraka in approximately 10th century CE is an important *Śilpa* text. *Śilpa* means art and *Prakāśa* means to throw light upon. This 10th century text was edited and translated into English by Alice Boner, and it throws light on architecture and sculpture in Odisha. This text basically depicts the Tāntric style of temple architecture along with other styles in Odisha. *Śilpa Prakāśa* upholds the

details of various parts of the temple, and the underlying meaning of iconography and symbolism, by drawing on Tāntric and other ideas.

The author Rāmacandra Mahāpātra Kaula Bhaṭṭāraka was not only a Sanskrit Paṇḍit, he himself was an architect. He describes the temple building process in great detail. He is believed to have belonged to the *Kaula Sampradāya*. He used *Bhaṭṭāraka* as his last name, which signifies the form of a Tāntric goddess *Bhaṭṭārikā*.

To date this text accurately, scholars gave their opinions after examining the epigraphic records. Here, Rajendra Prasad Das in this edition mentioned that the patron of this architect and writer Rāmacandra was Vīravarmā, a minor ruler, who flourished probably around the 10th century CE.¹²¹

Śilpa Prakāśa is typically based on the Tāntric doctrines followed by that sect in early medieval Odisha. The text recommends the practice of depositing and concealing *yantras* in the foundation and other parts of the temple as well as under the images of the carved deities. The author describes the Tāntric forms in this *Śāstra* and it appears that these were followed in the *Vaitāla* temple and later adopted by *Paraśurāmeśvara* and *Gaurī* temples of Bhubaneswar.¹²² The author adds that the symbolic *yantras* has to be placed with great concern below every part of the temple. Similarly, every sculpture that decorates the temple walls should be carved with divinities and perfection. This composition projects the merit of practical instruction in the art of temple building on religious, ritualistic, architectural and technical plane. This text is very important for this research in understanding not only the temple architecture, but the whole symbolism beneath these exquisite temples of Odisha.

¹²¹ *Śilpa Prakāśa* by Rāmacandra Mahāpātra Kaula Bhaṭṭāraka, Alice Boner and Sadasiva Ratha Sarma (trans. and eds.), IGNC and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2005, p. vii.

¹²² Ibid.

Śilparatnakōśa

Sthāpaka Nirañjana Mahāpātra wrote *Śilparatnakōśa* approximately in 16th century CE. Like *Śilpa Prakāśa*, this medieval text of temple architecture also contains the art and style of Odisha temples and sculptures. *Prāsādamūrti* and *Pratimālakṣaṇa* are two important parts of this text in which the author describes the way of making sculptures. This Sanskrit text is critically edited and translated by Bettina Bäumer and Rajendra Prasad Das.

The basic symbolical part of the body of Rekha temple is compared with the divine figure, *Puruṣa*. The *Śilparatnakōśa* accepts this primary symbolic identification of the temple. On the other hand, the geometrical motif or *Mañjuśrī* type of temple projects the idea of femininity or feminine principles. In the second section of this book, the author gives effort to describe the *Prāsādamūrtis* (temple sculptures) with broad classification and deals with the technique of making images.

The classification between cult-images and decorative images has been differentiated clearly in the *Pratimālakṣaṇa* section of this text. The text prescribes that the cosmological diagrams should be drawn before carving and determining the images.¹²³

Śilparatnakōśa, found and translated from three palm leaf manuscripts, attributes the style of temple making and sculptures of *Śākta* sects along with other contemporary sectarian traditions of late medieval Odisha, although it has some bearing for the earlier period as well. The typical *Kaliṅga* style of art and architecture is understood with distinctiveness through this text.

Bhuvanapradīpa

Nirmal Kumar Bose edited the original Sanskrit text *Bhuvanapradīpa* as *Canons of Orissan Architecture* depending on the rendering of a craftsman in Odia language.¹²⁴

¹²³ *Śilparatnakōśa* by Sthāpaka Nirañjana Mahāpātra, Bettina Bäumer and Rajendra Prasad Das (trans. and eds.), IGNCA and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994, pp. 12-13.

Though the main text is lost, it enlarged the understanding of forms, morphology and construction of the medieval Kalinga temples, and as its consequence, enhanced the scope on the studies of the most powerfully impressive styles of north Indian temple architecture. *Bhuvanapradīpa* classifies soil, stone and temples, and contains details of designs and placement of icons, decorative motifs, *Pārśvadevatās*, *Dikpatīs*, *Aṣṭasakhīs*, *Nāga* and *Nāginī*, *Śārdūla*, *Ulṭa-Gaja-Virāja Siṃgha*, *Navagraha*, *Vetāl*, *Kīrtīmukha*, types of scroll like *phulalatā*, *naṭīlatā*, *patralatā*, *vanalatā*, elephant, horse, bull, *makara* and other animals.

Skanda Purāṇa

The nature and characteristics of the *Skanda Purāṇa* is very doubtful. Different geographical sections of this *Purāṇa* appeared in approximately 11th century CE in the form of *Khaṇḍas* and *Māhātmyas*. As the entire *Skanda Purāṇa* could not be found many scholars have suggested that the fragments of *Khaṇḍas*, *Māhātmyas* and *Samhitās* constitute the parts of this *Purāṇa*. The individual *Khaṇḍas* have detailed descriptions of sacred places. Similarly the *Utkala Khaṇḍa* highlights the sacredness of Odisha; especially the *Puruṣottama Kṣetra* of *Jagannātha* and Bhubaneswar. The other *Khaṇḍas* like *Revā Khaṇḍa* and *Brahmottara Khaṇḍa* emphasized the holiness of local groups of temples and shrines. In Vaiṣṇava *Khaṇḍa*, the holy places around the *Puruṣottama Kṣetra*, eulogy of *Nīlamādhava*, Indradyūma's journey towards *Ekāmra Kṣetra*, etc. have been described.

¹²⁴ *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, Nirmal Kumar Bose (ed. and trans.), Prabasi Press, Calcutta, 1932.

Ekāmra Purāṇam

Ekāmra Purāṇam has been accepted as one of the oldest literary works on Odisha. It deals with the sacred glory and greatness of the *Ekāmra Kṣetra*, Bhubaneswar.¹²⁵ Due to the presence of a mango tree in this area, it has been called as *Ekāmra*. This Sanskrit text is professed as one of the *Upapurāṇas* in comparison to the other *Mahāpurāṇas* like *Skanda*, *Vāmana*, *Matsya* etc.¹²⁶ *Upapurāṇas* are mostly sectarian in characters and try to glorify the divinity of a particular space. Like *Nīlamata Purāṇa* in Kashmir region and *Kālikā Purāṇa* in Kāmarūpa, the *Ekāmra Purāṇam* has described the city of Bhubaneswar and its adjacent areas. The *Śaiva Kṣetra* or the seat of *Śiva* had been contextualized through historical and religious aspects. Composed approximately between 12th to 15th centuries CE, this Saivite text is divided into five *aṁśas* or parts defining the prior position of *Śiva* over the other brahmanical gods. The origins and historicity of the temples in that region, rituals, festivals and the merit of the deities are mentioned in this text.¹²⁷ Along with the mention of important *Śaiva* temples in Bhubaneswar the text states that some of the temples existed at the time of composition of this text.¹²⁸ The extant *Ekāmra Purāṇam* is based on the combination of palm leaf manuscripts found from the region. Sometimes it confirms the names of the different authors.

***Kapila Saṁhitā*¹²⁹**

Kapila Saṁhitā encompassed the sacred geography of four *kṣetras* of Odisha viz. *Puruṣottama kṣetra* at Puri, *Arka kṣetra* at Konark, *Pārvatī kṣetra* at the abode of Śākta worship - Jajpur, and *Hara kṣetra* at Bhubaneswar. *Kapila Saṁhitā* is a *Sthala Māhātmya*,

¹²⁵ *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, Upendra Nath Dhal (ed.), Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1986, p. 1.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 3.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

¹²⁹ *Kapila Saṁhitā*, Pramila Mishra (trans.), New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 2005.

which depicts the glory of the four above mentioned sacred places of Odisha. *Kapila Samhitā* also deals with the place named Kapilāsa, the place of pilgrimage dedicated to lord Śiva in the Dhenkanal district of Odisha. There is a huge dispute regarding the authorship of this Sanskrit text. This religious text compiled by Kapila, the sage, or Kapila the serpent king, or Kapila, the son of Viśvāmitra or the Kapila, a Pāśupata teacher.¹³⁰ The popularity of Pāśupata sect in Odisha suggests the authorship.¹³¹ After excluding the other possibilities of the time of the composition of *Kapila Samhitā*, the author writes that the text must have been composed after 13th century CE and not later than 16th century CE.¹³²

Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya

Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya is a rarely known text, which was previously written and divided in two different manuscripts. U.N. Dhal compiled them together, translated it, and wrote a detailed critical introduction. The simultaneous rise of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śakti cults and their synthesis with each other, the sacred geography of the *Kṣetras* are some important aspects of this text.¹³³

Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam

Puruṣottama Kṣetra Māhātmyam or *Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam* contains in detail the narration on the Utkala region in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, which was ascribed to the legendary Vyāsa Maharṣi. *Jagannātha Kṣetra Mahimā* explains in a very lucid manner that why lord Vaiṣṇava decided to descend in the form of Dāru, and the reason he had

¹³⁰ *Kapilendra Praṇita samhitā*, p. 295, 302-03.

¹³¹ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, p. 316.

¹³² *Kapila Samhitā*, pp. 304-07.

¹³³ *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya*, U.N. Dhal (trans.), Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1984.

chosen to reside on the bank of Mahanadi in Utkala Deśa. The *Utkala Khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* provides a detailed description of *Puruṣottama Kṣetra*. *Puruṣottama* made this place as his perpetual abode or ‘*Vaikuṅṭha Bhuvana*’. *Maharṣi Jāiminī*, the great legendary author of the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras*, took the responsibility of narrating the greatness of this *Kṣetra*. In the assembly, the gathered *Mahārṣis* wanted to know the growth and propagation of *Vaiṣṇavism*. *Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam* was translated by M.V. Satya Narayana.¹³⁴

Mādalā Pañji¹³⁵

Mādalā Pañji is a chronicle of *Śrī Jagannātha Mandira*, edited by A.B. Mohanty, dating from the 12th century CE. It is the source of the daily rituals, divinity and religious importance of *Puruṣottama Jagannātha* as a deity in the temple of Puri. The chronicle of *Śrī Kṣetra* or *Puruṣottama Kṣetra* gives an entire scenario of the sacred space of the temple as well as the place. *Mādalā Pañji* records the events, which are mentioned by the kings through gifts of lands and money, daily rituals and temple records.

C. Chapterization

The thesis is divided into six chapters, along with an introduction and a conclusion.

¹³⁴ *Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam* by *Jāiminī Rṣi*, M.V. Satya Narayana (trans.), Andhra University Press Visakhapatnam, 1988.

¹³⁵ *Mādalā Pāñji*, Arun Kumar Mohanty, Krishnachandra Bhuyan (trans.), Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2010.

Chapter I: Patronage to *Brāhmaṇas* and Brahmanical Institutions

In the first chapter, the significance of patronage to the *brāhmaṇas* and brahmanical institutions in early to early medieval period of Odisha will be discussed. Most of the inscriptions reveal that royalty were responsible for the building and maintenance of temples. Here, royal women stand out as prominent patrons. Issues related to sectarian influences and dominance can be gleaned from these sources, which would have a bearing on the iconographic choice in temples. Nature of the gifts in the case of land grants, the issue of who were the custodians of the grant, spread of Brahmanism, the brahmanical hegemony and the gifts as indicating circulation of resources will be taken up here.

Chapter II: Sacred Geography: Cults, Temples and Landscapes in Odisha

In this chapter, the antiquity of historical sites including Bhubaneswar, Puri, Virajā etc. will be discussed in terms of the political contexts and their geographical location. The geography, religious developments under various dynasties, and the narratives from various literary sources would help us to reconstruct the history of these places. How the expansion of monarchy reached the tribal areas and forests facilitated by the worship of Śiva and Puruṣottama Jagannātha and the institutionalization of their cults, how the lands gifted to *brāhmaṇas* helped the rulers of various dynasties to establish their rule in the peripheral regions of the state, will be analysed. The brahmanical claim to hegemony in this region was partly fulfilled by creating a sacred area (*kṣetra*) in Puri and Bhubaneswar region. *Tīrthas* dedicated to *Puruṣottama* and *Ekāmreśvara* (Bhubaneswar) became the epicentres of newly established political-religious activities. The cults of the predominant gods Śiva and Viṣṇu spread all over the region. The emergence of Virajā as a Śākta goddess, and her *kṣetra* as one of the main Śakti seats amongst these mainstream deities will also be discussed. In one of the

Māṭhara inscriptions by Pṛthivī Mahārāja, the victorious city Virajā is mentioned.¹³⁶ Inscriptions, *Purāṇas*, *Upapurāṇas* and temple chronicles will be used as primary sources in this chapter.

Chapter III: The Divine Images: Forms and Symbols

The mirroring of notions of femininity and masculinity prevalent in society can be seen in the sculptures in the temples of the period under study. This chapter endeavours to study the normative understanding of masculinity and femininity as depicted in sculptures on the temple walls, with respect to gods and goddesses. This chapter is primarily based on the field study of the temples of Bhubaneswar and those in Puri, Cuttack, Jajpur and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha. The time period for this study is the early medieval period, which is marked by the rise of various dynasties like Bhauma Karas, Somavaṃśīs and the Gaṅgas. The great pilgrimage centres of Bhubaneswar, Puri and Virajā were a product of the socio-economic transformations. The images found from Odishan temples are important iconographical sources that need to be analysed in terms of their choice and placement, which would reveal the significance attached to them. Discussions on the brahmanical sculptures, Tāntric goddesses and figures of sacred feminine will follow the textual descriptions.

Chapter IV: Semi-Divine and Erotic Imagery: Representations and Meanings

In continuation to the previous chapter, the representation of semi-divine beings or mortal human beings forms the main focus of this chapter. Along with independent female

¹³⁶ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, (1997), p. 29.

divinities, *Nāyikā*, *Surasundarī* and *Alasākanyās* are mentioned in prescriptive texts such as the *Bhuvanapradīpa* and *Śilparatnakośa* (approximately 16th century CE). The use of eroticism as a representational mode is quite significant, and needs deep analysis. How and why did notions of sexuality and aesthetics find their way into the precincts of the temple? What were the meanings behind the different kinds of representations? Why is it that the female form in particular was used for such depiction? These will be some of the questions we seek to address.

Chapter V: Animals and Ornamentation: Depictions of Flora and Fauna

In this chapter, the various floral and faunal motifs found on the body of the temple will be studied. The ornamentation of a temple always prioritises its religious affiliation. The group of brahmanical temples studied indicate enormous attention that has been paid to detail. This chapter can be divided into two broad themes: architectural ornamentations and sculptural ornamentations. In the first part, some of the examples of pillars in front of temples are shown. These pillars are mostly bearing the non-anthropomorphic icons related to the deities established inside the shrine. In sculptural ornamentations we can notice that the *nāga*, *makara*, griffins, *vyāla*, *gaja-simhas*, *kīrtīmukhas* (which are closely related to the *Śiva* temples), various kinds of *praṇālās* with animal heads have been carved. The vegetation motifs are used in the sculptural art to add aesthetic beauty as well as provide symbolic significance. For brahmanical religion, some leaves, flowers, fruits are regarded as auspicious. *Śākta*, *Vaiṣṇava* and *Śaiva* temples maintained some differentiations in carving the motifs, which leads to the question that how these brahmanical temples created their own forms of ornamentation and designs over the early medieval period. *Bhuvanapradīpa*, *Śilpa*

Prakāśa and *Śilparatnakośa* are the primary sources to analyse the sculptural motifs, identified during fieldwork.

Chapter VI: Representation of Hierarchy, Hegemony and World Views

The above mentioned Brahmanical as well as Tāntric gods and goddesses carry some distinct features, iconography, symbolism and meanings. Symbolic erotic motifs have been discussed by various scholars in the context of early medieval temples of Odisha. This chapter will focus on the politics of gender and identity as revealed by temple iconography. Issues of social hierarchy of class and culture, gender, the politics of identity and the socio-religious pressure on the oppressed will be examined. This chapter will be trying to unfold the questions on how the marginalized people, women and others have been hegemonized by certain religious classes, and how the state politics upholds and maintains the oppression for its own benefit. This chapter will require a re-examining of inscriptional evidence to understand the evolution of social structures based on the *varṇāśramadharmā*, with its attendant strictures on women. This will be evaluated against the iconographical canvas and the sacred texts, which project certain normative views on gender.

Conclusion

Chapter I

Patronage to *Brāhmaṇas* and Brahmanical Institutions

I.1 Introduction

In Vedic and Puranic literature, *dānas* are described in various forms. The literature on *dāna* is enormously extended, from their early articulation, to their later, more rigid, exposition. Various forms of Vedic sacrifice, which were offerings to sustain the gods in their work of maintaining the world, are documented in ancient Sanskrit hymns and ritual literature, as well as in the Sanskrit epics. Beside this, the *Agni Purāṇa* (chapters 208-15 and 217), *Matsya Purāṇa* (chapters 82-91 and 274-89) and *Varāha Purāṇa* (chapters 99-111) carry elaborate descriptions of *dāna*.¹ In *Śāstras* there are critical differentiations of *yajña*, *homa* and *dāna*; the first two categories are related with “abandoning something that belong to one” and intended for the deity, but *dāna* constitutes the idea of ownership on a thing which could be mental, vocal or physical.² Apart from the Vedic literature, the *Anuśāsana Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* is fully devoted to the numerous aspects of *dāna*.³ In the *Mahābhārata*, the idea of patronage is shown in various rituals, particularly in the context of the great ceremonies of Yudhiṣṭhira’s royal consecration (*rājasūya*) and horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha*), and also in the description of the building of the city of *Indraprastha* by the divine

¹ P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Pt. II, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1941, p. 841.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, pp. 840-41.

architect Maya.⁴ These episodes present a grandiose idea that the king needed the rituals and buildings not only to provide legitimation for his rule in the eyes of his subjects, but in his own psyche and that of the other participants. *Dāna* was a social, economic and religious phenomenon that occurred in the ancient times. It became prominent in the Vedic period, but received a formalised regulatory structure in early medieval times. The very notion of a ‘gift’ in the sacrificial context, according to J.C. Heesterman, involves a kind of moral ambiguity in the relation between the donor and recipient, since they are reciprocally dependent on one another in asymmetrical ways.⁵ In addition to the study of the ritual and sacrificial context of the gift, there have been significant analyses of economic and socio-political relations of patronage in agrarian contexts in the Indian sub-continent, in terms of *jajmāni* and other systems.

With regard to the question of patronage to the brahmanical institutions, the support to temples, *maṭhas*, and later the construction of temples in early medieval India, reveals the status and incentives for the patrons to engage in such activities. Not only the enduring monuments, but numerous epigraphic sources have shown the endowment for the constructions of such institutions in the early part of 1st millennium CE, which led this activity towards the process of making a politico-religious identity in the early medieval times. That epigraphic information leads us to the subject of patronage, where the background of the patron, the nature of the donation, the recipient of the patronage, the process of state formation, and in particular the rise of the brahmanical cults, specifically of Viṣṇu, Śiva and *Devī* worship, as major phenomena are clearly visible. This chapter studies the

⁴ J.C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, Mouton and Co., Berlin, 1957.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 35.

donations to the *brāhmaṇas*, various kinds and nature of gifts, the issue of patronage and its role in the construction and maintenance of religious organizations and the role of the *brāhmaṇas* in making the state from earliest times to the early medieval period in Odisha. Hermann Kulke has pointed out that for legitimizing their authority, kings tried to extend patronage to *tīrthas*, donated a large amount of money, and built imperial temples.⁶ The question of the affiliation of the patrons to particular sectarian traditions as seen by the religious institutions supported by them also needs scrutiny. In the case of Odisha, the royally endowed temples were dedicated to specific sects. Until the 12th century CE, Śiva temples were built in a great number within different parts of Odisha. Subsequently, Vaiṣṇavism, particularly the worship of the deity Puruṣottama Jagannātha has risen up as the imperial cult as seen from the construction of temples in Bhubaneswar and its adjacent areas.⁷ Much earlier the instrumental tools like the grants of land to *brāhmaṇas* and their institutions, led to the expansion of brahmanical culture and paved the path for the rise of various religious sects into that region. Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, *Śākta* cult are the results of the singular brahmanical culture which started flourishing in the beginning of 5th century CE as a result of the donation of lands to the *brāhmaṇas*.

⁶ Hermann Kulke, 'Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms', Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and Gaya Charan Tripathi (eds.) *The Cult of Jagannatha and The Regional Tradition of Orissa*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 125-38.

⁷ I am thankful to my supervisor Prof. R. Mahalakshmi for providing me with the article of Dr. Umakanta Mishra on this shift in a forthcoming volume: Umakanta Mishra, 'From Viraja Tīrtha to 'Allegorical' Nābhi Gayā: Exploring the Changing Religious Landscape of Jajpur (Sixth — Fourteenth Centuries CE)', in R. Mahalakshmi (ed.), *Art and History: Texts, Contexts and Visual Representations in Ancient and Early Medieval India*, Bloomsbury, India, 2019 (forthcoming).

Due to ample information in inscriptions with regard to land grants and endowments to temples and other expenditures, we can reconstruct the history of patronage in early medieval Odisha. On the basis of the epigraphic sources, the chapter has been divided into various themes, namely, the nature of patronage, the politics of gift giving, types of donors, types of donations to the *brāhmaṇas* and the consequence of the patronage in early medieval Odisha.

I.2 Nature of the *Dāna*

The contributions of the *brāhmaṇas* in legitimating of the royal authority for building temples and their role played in the development of various temple structures in early medieval India is significant. The temples of the 8th-12th centuries CE in Odisha centred on brahmanical deities of *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śākta*, and *Śaiva* faiths. Ramendra Nath Nandi in his book *Religious Institutions and Cults in The Deccan* mentioned that the *bhakti* cult largely expanded in south India and the Deccan in 8th-9th centuries CE, and helped to popularize the temples, as authority and patronage was based on the distribution of political and cult centres, and the increasing elaboration of architecture. Above all, ultimate popularity was gained by patronizing the magnificent temples. Expansion of agriculture, rural trade and decline of the coinage did not favour economically the spread of temple building according to R.N. Nandi, but in this position the surplus production and favourable circumstances financially helped the local lords to patronize the temples in the peripheral regions of the kingdom. All these indicate how the local authorities and

their localities were engaged in the growing temple system.⁸ Nandi also emphasized on the merchant patronage in south India. He gave us the example of merchant *Bāsava Śeṭṭi*, who in 1021 built a new temple after clearing a ruined one and arranged the performance of *rudrahoma*.⁹ There are many insights as well as problems in Nandi's work. He rightly draws attention to the different forms of patronage, the attraction of making gifts to the monumental 'royal' temples, and the background of the patrons. However, his broader framework of a feudal structure, ruralisation of the economy, etc. appear to be problematic in the light of arguments proffered by Hermann Kulke and B.D. Chattopadhyaya.

A history of gift giving between 500 and 1300 CE has been studied in various regional contexts in some detail. The religious gifts to ritual functionaries of the earlier period took the form of temple donations and patronage after 6th century CE.¹⁰ As patronage depended on the economic condition of the territory and the patron's control over economic resources, the priorities in gift giving were the highly developed economic zones. From Cynthia Talbot's account on temple patronage in the Andhra region, it is clear that the main and big temples were naturally constructed in the economically productive sub-regions, be it the river

⁸ R.N. Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1973, pp. 15-6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁰ Michael D. Willis, 'Religious and Royal Patronage in North India', in Vishakha N. Deasi and Darielle Mason (eds.), *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, A.D. 700-1200*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd, Ahmedabad, 1993, p. 89.

bank (fertile zone, surplus production and strong economy), or in the political centre of the kingdom.¹¹

Sociologically, the royal donations were gift exchanges in which there were elements of reciprocity and it is not neutral, as it is linked to an individual or a group.¹² Gift exchange would therefore tend to become less embedded in those primarily agricultural societies, which experienced the gradual changing of attitudes to land and the ownership of the land, where land slowly emerged as the major economic unit. And the accepted token of wealth is significant in Talbot's analysis, since "wealth is a demonstration of status; it is a means of controlling others by winning followers and by playing those who accept the gift under obligation."¹³ Though in theory all gifts are voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous according to Marcel Mauss, yet in practice they are obligatory and interested.¹⁴ If we study the epigraphic sources, we will find that majority of land grants portray the king's act as an altruistic measure primarily given by religious consideration. Talbot raises important issues that are relevant for other regions as well – the sub-regional patterns of gift-giving, structures of patronage and the question of legitimisation, be it in the name of devotion, or merit-making, or salvation, or commemorating events.

¹¹ Cynthia Talbot, 'Temples, Donors, and Gifts: Patterns of Patronage in Thirteenth-Century South India', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 308-15.

¹² Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Society*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1967, p. 45.

¹³ Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 1987, p. 107.

¹⁴ Mauss, *The Gift*, (1967), p. 45.

Vidya Dehejia and Romila Thapar are among the prominent scholars who have worked on patronage in the early Indian context. Both critically examine the inscriptional data related to patronage.¹⁵ In one way, patronage has always been understood as donation of land or money by the royal authority for the construction and maintenance of religious institutions and for legitimizing their own rule. On the other hand, patronage was not only the prerogative of the royal authority, but other social groups and individuals were also involved in it. The act of patronage is partially a form of exchange. With time, this exchange took the form of various acts contributing to religious and social prestige and legitimization of kingship. Patronage is understood as having numerous dimensions, like in early forms of kingship, patrons and recipients both built into the system and benefited from it; secondly, community patronage and patronage including public activity were other forms in which we see the act of giving. In the Vedic context, Thapar has pointed out from the *dāna-stuti* hymns that the gifts given to the *brāhmaṇas* by the *rājās* or the chiefs, in return for the eulogies composed by those *brāhmaṇas*, which acted as a form of historical memory.¹⁶ This type of patronage is linked with the lineage-based or tribal societies in early India. To perform the ritual functions, the *brāhmaṇas* were gifted by the *yajamāna* or landowner. But the scenario changed in the mid-first millennium CE, when the object of *dāna* created an institution of political legitimization, namely the brahmanical temple.

¹⁵ Vidya Dehejia, 'The Collective and Popular Basis of Early Buddhist Patronage: Sacred Monuments, 100 BC-AD 250' in Barbara Stoler Miller (ed.), *The Powers of Arts*, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 35-45; Romila Thapar, 'Dana and Dakshina as Forms of Exchange', *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, (1978) 2004, 94-108.

¹⁶ Thapar, 'Dana and Dakshina', pp. 97-103.

A survey of donative records suggests that most of the grants, especially that of land, came from the kings, members of the royal families and officials of the state. These emerging patterns of the grants warrant some explanations. In the context of huge temple building activities, the massive patronage extended to the brahmanical and other institutions by royalty in early medieval India is striking. It can be said that the socio-political compulsions of the ruling dynasties were involved in such instances. Similarly it can be argued that grants to the *brāhmaṇas* and temples in the post-Gupta period immensely helped in the extension and consolidation of the political and material foundations of the state.¹⁷ The desire on the part of the ruling dynasties to be perceived as being non-partisan as seen in their patronage of different religions brings out the inherent socio-political motives behind grants to religious institutions.¹⁸ In the context of the early medieval grants to *brāhmaṇas*, temples and monasteries, it has been stated that the grants to such institutions drive home the nexus between political power and the sacred domain or its agents, involving patronage for one and legitimisation for the other.¹⁹

Various Puranic texts confirm the importance of the *dāna* or patronage in the making of a culture. Epigraphic records in Odisha provide information on every aspect of endowments to the most complicated processes of building a superstructure of an institution. Patronage was not only the privilege of the royal

¹⁷ Hermann Kulke, 'Fragmentation and Segmentation versus Integration? Reflections on the Concept of Indian Feudalism and The Segmentary State in Indian History', *Studies in History*, Vol. IV, 1982, pp. 237-63.

¹⁸ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Historiography, History and Religious Centres: Early Medieval North India circa. CE 700-1200' in Vishakha N. Deasi and Darielle Mason (eds.), *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, A.D. 700-1200*, Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd, Ahmedabad, 1993, pp. 12-4.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 16

authority, but other social groups and individuals were also involved in it. Early medieval patronage is a very complex issue and to understand the mechanism of patronage, one has to understand the role of the local community and their role in the gift giving and maintenance of the gift. The types of patronage of the endowed lands are mentioned here respectively: the noble or royal patronage, and patronage of officers and subjects. In early medieval Odisha, the type of patronage revealed through records suggests the singular domination by the ruling classes. The succeeding discussion on patronage is to reconstruct the historical conditions and to understand the pattern of patronage from a historical perspective. This chapter will try to detect the authority and patronage based on the distribution of inscriptions and royal charters to continue the process of brahmanical expansion. To explore the relations between political and cult centres, the epigraphic sources would be utilised. The contributions of the *brāhmaṇa* in legitimizing the royal authority and the role they played in the development of various religious institutions in Odisha will also be studied. The institutions of 13th century CE are mostly scattered around brahmanical deities of Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Śākta traditions. The temple art and sculptures were largely influenced by the religious iconography of above mentioned sects. Seeking the position of religious upliftment, the devotional activities led the kings towards the temple construction.

The *Dharmaśāstra* texts that were composed possibly between 200 BCE and 600 CE, developed the concepts of *iṣṭa* and *pūrta dharma*, literally meaning that which is desired and that which is fulfilled.²⁰ To differentiate the category of these two, one has to understand the spiritual merit, which can be acquired only by donation.

²⁰ Ludo Rocher, *Studies in Hindu Law and Dharmaśāstra*, edited with an Introduction by Donald R. Davis, Jr., Anthem Press, London, 2014, p. 45.

P.V. Kane has suggested the 'high antiquarian value' of these two words.²¹ Meaning of the *iṣṭa* is what has been sacrificed, while the *pūrta* signifies the meaning of 'what is filled' which is particularly in relation to the *brāhmaṇa*.²² In the *Mahābhārata*, *iṣṭa* has been defined by whatever is offered in a single fire or inside a *vedi*, and *pūrta* is the donation of lands, deep wells, tanks, temples, distribution of foods, maintaining public gardens etc.²³ In the compendious study *History of Dharmasāstra*, Kane states that the *sūdras* and women have been given authority to perform *pūrtadharmas*.²⁴ In the case of Odisha, the instances of endowments made by the women rulers mostly fall into the *pūrta* section. However, it may be noted that it has not been mentioned in the inscriptions that they were particularly performing *pūrtadharmas*. The Bhauma Kara queens, Somavaṃśī queens, Gaṅga princess and other individuals appear to have been associated with the *pūrta* functionalities.

I.3 Donations to the *Brāhmaṇas*

There are about 74 inscriptions that refer to the royal donations, in the form of kings constructing temples and endowing them with gifts. The earliest inscriptions from the region belong to the reign of Māṭhara kings from the 5th to 6th centuries CE. The rulers of the Śailodbhava dynasty (7th to 9th centuries CE), and the Bhauma Kara dynasty belonged to 9th to 10th centuries, recorded the land donations. It is from the time of the Somavaṃśī (10th to 11th centuries CE) and the

²¹ Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, p. 843.

²² Ibid, pp. 843-44.

²³ Ibid, p. 844.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 845.

Gaṅga (11th to 13th centuries CE) dynasty that we have evidence of land grants being made to temples.

In Odisha, the idea of gift giving started from the period of the Guptas and it has been demonstrated in the inscriptions. These inscriptions are the bearers of the *praśastis*, but the ritual of gift giving was one of the main aims of these epigraphs. From the post Gupta period onwards, it got prominence and merit. Various types of gifts had been included in the inscriptions. Not only lands, but wells, temples, market places, and wealth to the constructed temples added to the complexity of the epigraphs in the early medieval period of Odisha. To acquire ritual sanction and political legitimacy by the *brāhmaṇas* was the primary objective of the rulers. Here, Vijay Nath conveys that the aspect of feudalism was obvious when ‘*mahā*’ had been added in the context of ‘*dāna*’.²⁵ The kings of Gaṅga dynasty issued grants to *brāhmaṇas* for acquiring spiritual merit, as did the kings of other dynasties. Besides this, *kṣatriyas* were also enjoying the endowments made by the kings. Those grants were given either to a single person or to a group. The donees were principally *brāhmaṇas* (Kāśyapa *gotra*, Bhaṭṭas etc.) and few of them were *kṣatriyas* (military chiefs, royal family members, officers etc.).²⁶

The context of gift giving in early to early medieval Odisha had changed through subsequent periods. The concept of *agrahāra* or donated village has been applied in the land grants from the beginning of the gift giving.²⁷ Earlier, this term had

²⁵ Vijay Nath, ‘Mahādāna: The Dynamics of Gift-Economy and the Feudal Milieu’, in D.N. Jha (ed.), *Feudal Order, State, Society and Ideology in Early Medieval India*, Manohar Publishers. Delhi, 2000, pp. 420-21.

²⁶ D.C. Sircar, ‘Nagari Plates of Anangabhima III’, in B. C. Chhabra (ed.), *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, Govt. of India, Calcutta, p. 245.

²⁷ Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, p. 869.

occurred in the *Vana Parva* and *Āśramavāsi Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*.²⁸ The gift giving ritual was called *mahādāna*. Here, adding the prefix ‘*mahā*’ indicates the feudal phenomena in the ritual. It was considered as *dāna*, as long as it continued. In relation to kingship, the importance of the *brāhmaṇas* in early medieval Odisha is evident. They provided the royal legitimacy to the kings, and as ritual advisors they were closely associated with the royal courts of the kings. *Brāhmaṇa* beneficiaries of the royal endowments and temple establishments have also been noticed in the same region. The land grants facilitated the construction of religious institutions in early medieval Odisha. It paved the way to control the whole rural economy by the ruling elites as well as by the *brāhmaṇas*, because these lands were donated to *brāhmaṇas* by the kings to maintain the temple and its adjacent area. When it was granted in a donee’s name, the donee became the lord of that land and controlled the whole land through the religious institutions. As agriculture was the most important economic productive base in early medieval Odisha, most of the grants were awarded for the perpetual enjoyment or required a small amount of money to be paid as rent to the state.²⁹ The donees, especially the *brāhmaṇas* became landlords of these places and created their own religious establishments.

I.3.1 Donations by the Kings

In 5th century CE to 6th century CE the nature of the grants in Māthara period was not entirely donative; it was partly donated or endowed with the limitations. Seventeen inscriptions are studied belonging to this dynasty, one of the early ones,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ R.K. Ghoshal, ‘Dhavalapeta Plates of Maharaja Umavarman’ in N.P. Chakravarti (Ed.), (*EI*, vol. XXVI, 1941-42, Govt. of India, Calcutta, p. 133.

of Odisha. They started their political activities in the Mahendragiri region and their capital was Simhapura.³⁰ From the 8th century CE onwards, in the realm of the Bhauma Karas, the lands were donated with the *uparikaras*, or with extra taxes and continued for the other generations also.

There are no particular dates prescribed for this dynasty. From the palaeographical evidences, Bhauma Kara dynasty is estimated to be in 5th to 6th centuries CE. Snigdha Tripathy in *Inscriptions of Orissa* mentions that the maximum corroborative dates had been erased from those copper-plates found of this dynasty.³¹ In the 5th century CE Ragolu Plates of Nandaprabhañjanavarman of Māṭhara dynasty from Andhra Pradesh, it is stated clearly that the donee had to pay annually a sum of fifty *paṇas*, and twenty *daṇḍapaṇas* as the token of fine or penalty.³² In Niṅgoṇḍi Grant of the same ruler, Hoṅarāma *grāma* had been donated to some *brāhmaṇas* of different *gotras* and *carāṇas*,³³ and it became a permanent *agrahāra*.³⁴

The Madras Museum Plates of Anantaśaktivarman, Siripuram Plates of Anantavarman, Baraṅga and Bṛhatproṣṭha Grant of Umāvarman also provide reference to the *agrahāra* system in 5th century Odisha. In these grants, inhabitants of the *agrahāras* have been asked to offer the kings *meya* and *hiraṇya* regularly.³⁵

³⁰ S.C. Bhatt and Gopal K. Bhargava (eds.), *Land and People of Indian States and Union Territories: Orissa*, Vol. 21, Kalpaz Publication, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 20-1.

³¹ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, ICHR, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 4-8.

³² Ibid, pp. 118-19.

³³ Ibid, mentions as “*nānāvidhagoṭraścarāṇyebhya*” in verse 8, p. 92.

³⁴ Ibid, verses 5-8.

³⁵ Ibid, pp. 98-105. D.C. Sircar refers to *meya* as “the share of grains to be paid to the king or landlord; revenue from agricultural land paid in kind; same as *bhāga*.” D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1966, p. 203. *Hiraṇya* is “cash, or revenue income in cash”, Sircar, *ibid*, p. 129.

In Madras Museum Plates, two brothers named Nāgaśarman and Durgaśarman have been endowed by the king in Sakuṇaka *grāma* of Varāhavartani *viṣaya*.³⁶ In Siripuram Plates of Anantavarman, eighteen *brāhmaṇas* has been endowed by the king in village Tōṅṭāpara, and this *agrahāra* village has been privileged as it was applicable in Kharapuri *madamba*.³⁷ The Baranga Grant of Umāvarman states that Hemaṇḍaka *grāma* in Bhiliṅga *bhoga viṣaya* has been donated in the name of Viṣṇuśarman *brāhmaṇa*, and inhabitants of this *agrahāra* have been asked to offer him *meya* and *hiranya* regularly.³⁸ The endowment had been made in the favour of Khallasvāmin in Kuttura *grāma* in Mahendra *bhoga*.³⁹

In 5th century CE, the first stage of formation of the state was witnessed in the region. In the second half of first millennium CE, the land grants offered to the *brāhmaṇas* to strengthen the process of state formation. In 5th to 6th centuries CE, rulers wanted to ensure the further expansion of the lands and the agrarian economy by grants to the *brāhmaṇa*. It may be argued that through this, the *brāhmaṇa* donees could extend their hegemony over the masses of those interior areas and could establish a link between the monarchy and the periphery. It is striking that some of the grants have been made to the *brāhmaṇas* in perpetuity, i.e. comparing the grant to the existence of the sun and moon, whereas the other donees had to pay and could not enjoy the land perpetually. In those lands distant from the main central establishment, Brahmanism was a tool to spread the

³⁶ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, vol.I, no.4, verses 6-7, and verses 3-4, p. 98.

³⁷ Ibid, verse 8 and verse 1, p. 100.

³⁸ Those addressed group of people are not clearly mentioned, who they were, etc.; verse 7, verses 2-3, verses 9-12, pp. 104-05.

³⁹ Ibid, verses 5-6 and verses 2-3, pp. 108-09.

monarch's power and valour, and the process happened throughout the following centuries in early medieval Odisha.

Approximately in 620 CE, at the time of the Śailodbhava rule, the land grants were made invariably as perpetual endowments. Mostly to protect their religious merits, the rulers of this dynasty granted the lands in the names of the *brāhmaṇas*. In a number of grants, it has clearly been mentioned that the donor wanted to ensure his/ her division of religious merit. In the 7th century CE Khurda Plates of Śrī Mādhavarāja, the donor has mentioned that to maintain the religious merit of his parents and himself, he had endowed this land in the name of the *brāhmaṇa* Prajāpatisvāmin in a locality called Kumbhāraccheda inside the village Arahaṇṇa in Thoraṇa *viṣaya*.⁴⁰ And it was said to have the lawful enjoyment by the donee.⁴¹ In the Ganjam Plates of Mādhavarāja in 620 CE, the enhancement of the religious merit has been told repeatedly.⁴² The Buguda and Purushottampur Plates of Mādhavarman reveal that *brāhmaṇas* were endowed with the land under the title of *bhaṭṭa*. In the 7th century CE Buguda plates, the donee was mentioned as *Bhaṭṭa* Vāmana, he was the son of Ādityadeva and the grandson of Vāmana, had been endowed with Puipiṇa *grāma* within Khadira *pāṭaka* under Guḍḍa *viṣaya*.⁴³

In Purushottampur Plates around 633 CE, *Bhaṭṭa* Nārāyaṇa in Āmba *grāma*, attached to the Devagrāma *viṣaya*, had been mentioned.⁴⁴ These plates have mentioned that without any disruption, the donee can enjoy the lands. This

⁴⁰ Ibid, verse 20, p. 213.

⁴¹ Ibid, verse 20, verses 15, 19 and 20, verses 22-4, p. 213.

⁴² The land was granted in the name of a *brāhmaṇa* called Charampasvāmin, in Cchavalakkhaya in Kṛṣṇagiri *viṣaya*. To enhance the religious merit of the king himself and his parents and for the libation of the water, verses 21-2, p. 210, and again mentioned in page 211.

⁴³ Ibid, verses 37-40 and verses 31, 36-7, in page 216-7.

⁴⁴ Ibid, verses 34-7, p. 221.

donation was provided to sustain the religious merit of the donor and his parents. In the Puri Plates of the same king, a *brāhmaṇa* named *Bhaṭṭa Vittadeva*, facilitated with the grant of the village *Sāla*, situated in *Toraṇa viṣaya*, was directed to enjoy the lawfully gifted village without any interference.⁴⁵ Here it suggests military activity inside the regime. In an epigraph of the Mahārāja Śaktivarman of Māṭhara dynasty in 5th century CE, the king firmly states that the soldiers were ‘exempted’ to enter in that gifted village.⁴⁶ The basic intention to ensuring the security around the peripheral region of the kingdom has been suggested through the epigraphs. But it is not clearly mentioned that whether the army were appointed under the king to protect a newly cultivated land. Hypothetically the king could have created the base of the soldiers to ensure protection. The evidence of centralising power of the kings from both of the dynasties indicates a highly bureaucratic administrative influence, which is one of the crucial backgrounds of state formation in early to early medieval Odisha.

In the time of the Bhauma Karas, a total of twenty three inscriptions issued by the kings, queens and others have been studied for this research. Many of the inscriptions bear the terms *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya* and *akṣaya nīvi*, which denote that towards 9th century CE the granted lands were already being perpetuated at the time of donation.⁴⁷ These perpetual lands granted by the several rulers of this dynasty have always favoured the *brāhmaṇas*. The first Kara era dated grant of Bhauma Kara king Śivakara was found in Chaurasi near Puri.

⁴⁵ Ibid, verses 30-5, pp. 224-5.

⁴⁶ Ibid, “*Abhatapraveśya*”, that term used to denote the prohibition on the entry of the soldiers; verse 9, p. 89.

⁴⁷ The term *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya* means “in accordance with the principle of cultivating the land for the first time and enjoying it free of taxes as a result”, and *akṣaya nīvi* refers to a permanent endowment. See, Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, p. 393.

Snigdha Tripathy dated this epigraph to about 9th to 10th centuries CE according to the style of the palaeography.⁴⁸ However, she has argued that when Bhauma Karas were occupying the northern part of Odisha, they had started their own era, which could be counted from 736-37 CE.⁴⁹ Similarly Ajay Mitra Shastri claimed that Bhauma Kara era commenced ‘in all probability in 736 CE.’⁵⁰ In 748 CE Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara, a village named *Vuvraḍā* in *Dakṣiṇa Tosali* has been granted in the name of *Jāllubhaṭṭa*, and established according to the rule of *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya* and granted as tax free land.⁵¹ Under the name of the same king in the 766 CE Neulpur Plate, it has been advised to the donees that this gift should be reserved “out of respect for the religion”.⁵² It granted two hundred *brāhmaṇas* in *Parvatadroṇī-Komparāka* and *Daṇḍāṅkiyoka* villages in *Pāñcāla* and *Vubhyudaya viṣaya*.⁵³ Sometimes the kings used to endow villages only for maintenance. Around 836 CE in Terundia Plate of Śubhākara II, it has evidently been mentioned that the donees who were the *brāhmaṇas* of Bhāradvāja *gotra*, had been endowed with the village under the terms of maintenance of the village named *Lavāgaṇḍā*.⁵⁴ This example suggests that the sanctity of a place could be maintained by the

⁴⁸ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, No.7, p. 105.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 82.

⁵⁰ Ajay Mitra Shastri, *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāñḍuvamśins, and Somavamśins*, Part I, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1995, (It could be calculated as the main Bhauma Kara era added to the regnal years of the rulers. Shastri refers, “the Kumurang charter of Daṇḍimahādevī, dated (Bhauma-Kara) year of 187 corresponding to 923 AD”, cited in *JBORS*, verses 564-77), p. 196.

⁵¹ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, pp. 107 and 109, verses 22-3, pp. 107-09. The author mentions in the footnote of the book that, “the expression intends to mean the prevalent rule that the grant would never in future be the subject of entry into another document, reclaiming it as a fallow land. The expression finds mention in almost all the copper-plate records of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty so far known.”

⁵² Ibid, p. 115.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid, verse 21, p. 122.

brāhmaṇas. The current epigraph does not mention any names of the other occupational groups. But to sustain peace and to protect the ultimate sovereignty over the coastal area of Odisha, the rulers of the Bhauma Kara family played the tool of Brahmanism. Taking the point from the previous inscription from 739 CE of king Śubhākaradeva, in the Dharakote Plate it is again mentioned that the lands had been endowed to Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇadevakaṇṭha and Bhaṭṭa Lumbādevamitra in the *Gujjaṭā* village in *Koṅgodamaṇḍala* of *Dakṣiṇa Tosali* along with *uparikara*, and the principle of *akṣaya nīvi* was established in terms of donating the land.⁵⁵ It got permanency due to the rule of *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya*.⁵⁶

After 10th century CE in Odisha, the idea of granting lands and endowments proceeded differently and the applications of these grants continued to sustain the temple properties. Hermann Kulke suggested that the state formation in Odisha reached to its zenith by the annexation of Puri by Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga in the 11th century CE.⁵⁷ The centralised power became stronger and they had a resourceful reach towards the periphery. The newly established Vaiṣṇava cult helped to grasp the rest of the geographically peripheral regions to the monarchy.⁵⁸

In the Nāgari Plates of Anaṅgabhīma III in 12th century CE, it can be seen that the king offered twenty *vāṭis* of land at Pūraṇa *grāma* to a *brāhmaṇa* named Saṅkarṣaṇānandaśarman, and made it a tax free land where different types of

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 131-33.

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 130-32.

⁵⁷ Hermann Kulke, 'Early Royal Patronage of The Jagannātha Cult', in Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and Gaya Charan Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 144-45.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

castes were living together in that settlement.⁵⁹ To display their devotion to *Puruṣottama*, the kings donated villages to the *brāhmaṇas* and made them revenue free gifts in perpetuity. In another inscription by this ruler again it mentions the donation of lands to a *brāhmaṇa*.⁶⁰ In Puri Copper Plates, Narasimha IV of Gaṅga dynasty donated lands to a *brāhmaṇa* named Devārathācārya.⁶¹ This land grant to the *brāhmaṇa* made the deal as *dēulī bhūmi* or lands to the god. Neither taxes nor any kind of punishments would be applied to this donated land. Besides this handful of grants of lands, other gifts were inscribed for donations, which would be discussed in the other sections of this chapter.

I.3.2 Queens, Elites and Others

An interesting element in Odisha is that while some of the donors are royal women, in the sense that they are wives, daughters, mothers of the king, we have a striking number of sovereigns who were women. Concomitant with the development of temple architecture, communal patronage to religious institutions declined and royal or individual patronage increased as the result of the decline of Buddhism and Jainism. During the time of the Kuṣāṇa kings, patronage gradually became conspicuously associated with royalty and aristocracy. But communal patronage continued in this period in south India. Vidya Dehejia has discussed the causes of patronage, a pan Indian phenomenon, across regional and chronological contexts. Political stability was the most important reason for the creation of art

⁵⁹ D. C. Sircar, 'Nagari Plates of Anagabhima III' in B. CH. Chhabra (Ed.), *E.I.*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, p. 244.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 243.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, pp. 303-04.

and architecture. The considerable economic prosperity and surplus production is seen as essential for art production. Other than kings, members of the royal household, state functionaries and a few others appear as donors in inscriptions.

As has been mentioned earlier, women patrons were abundant in the early medieval period in different parts of India, and particularly in the case of Odisha. The inscriptions that belonged to the Māṭhara dynasty of 5th century CE were mostly related to donations made by the kings. But from the 8th century CE onwards, the inscriptions from Śailodbhava and Bhauma Kara dynasties provide some instances of powerful women of the royal household. In the context of land donations in Odisha, some of the queens of Bhauma Kara dynasty had ruled as independent rulers and donated in large number to the temples.⁶² There were at least six queens who appeared to have ascended the throne and ruled over lower Odisha between the 9th and 11th centuries CE. These queens were Tribhuvanamahādevī I (846 CE), Tribhuvanamahādevī II (894 CE), Gaurīmahādevī, Daṇḍimahādevī (916 CE), Vakulamahādevī (940 CE) and Dharmamahādevī (949 CE).⁶³ Some confusion prevailed on the question of the succession of these queens earlier. That uncertainty was solved by the discovery of the Taltali plate. According to it, Daṇḍimahādevī was succeeded by her step-mother Vakulamahādevī of the Bhaṅja family.⁶⁴

These six queens of the ruling Bhauma Kara dynasty of early medieval Odisha (9th to 10th centuries CE) are prominent in Odishan history. After the reign of

⁶² Anjali Verma, 'Women Administrators in Epigraphic Sources: AD 600-1200', *Indian Historical Review*, ICHR, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 11-5.

⁶³ Dated according to T.E. Donaldson, *Iconography of the Buddhist Sculpture of Orissa*, Vol. I, IGNCA, New Delhi, 2001, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, No.23, verse 20, p. 218.

Daṇḍimahādevī, she was succeeded by Dharmamahādevī, who has granted and made the donation according to the plate mentioned here.⁶⁵ That record helps to weave a linkage between the successions to the throne of the Bhauma Kara queens. The female rulers of this dynasty had ruled over early medieval Odisha for six generations.

Tribhuvanamahādevī of this dynasty donated lands to the *brāhmaṇa* named *Bhaṭṭa Jagaddhāra* mentioned in the Dhenkanal Grant in 896 CE.⁶⁶ The grant states that this land has been donated for the ceremony of bringing the rain.⁶⁷ It also says that she has granted this for the “enhancement of the religious merits” of her parents.⁶⁸ The land had been endowed according to the rule of *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya*, and including *akṣaya-nīvi*.⁶⁹ In the next grant by Daṇḍimahādevī in 916 CE (the Santigrama Grant, found at Angul, Dhenkanal dist. of Odisha), it has been stated that *Sāntigrāma* and *Komyosaṅga* situated in *Paścima Khaṇḍa* within the *viṣaya* of *Tamura* in *Dakṣiṇa Tosala* has been donated to the *brāhmaṇa* named *Bhaṭṭa Mākyadeva*, son of *Jālladeva* and grandson of *Puruṣottama deva*.⁷⁰ Another inscription issued by the same queen from the Bhauma Kara dynasty states that *Villagrāma* village, situated in *Varaḍākhaṇḍa viṣaya* of *Koṅgodamaṇḍala* has been donated by the queen to the *brāhmaṇa* named *Dhavalā Pratihāra*, son of *Vāsudeva* and grandson of *Apratiḍāghoṣa*.⁷¹ But this inscription states that *Dhavalā* had to give

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid, this grant has been discovered from Bhimanagarigarh in old Dhenkanal state, Dhenkanal dist., verse 31, pp. 167-69.

⁶⁷ Ibid, mentioned in the verse 32 of this present inscription as “*Vṛṣṭikāmanimittāya*”.

⁶⁸ Ibid, verse 30, p. 169 and p. 172.

⁶⁹ Ibid, verses 29-30, p. 169.

⁷⁰ Ibid, verse 35, p. 176, and verses 28 and 31, pp. 175-76.

⁷¹ Ibid, verses 24 and 29, pp. 180-81; in the foot note of the present volume the author has stated that “The locality has been identified with the present village of Belagam in the Athgarh taluk of the

the share of one fourth of the grant to the other *brāhmaṇas*.⁷² Hence, we can assume that firstly the grant was not tax free, and secondly, the name of one *brāhmaṇa* donee has been mentioned in the grant. But the other beneficiaries are as silent as the rest. Inside the same inscription (Ganjam Grant, Plate B), the queen is issuing another charter to the *brāhmaṇa* named *Bhaṭṭaputra Puruṣottama*.⁷³ The land of *Garasāmbhā*, situated in *Varttaṇiviṣaya* of *Koṅgodamaṇḍala* has been granted together with *uparikara* and *uddeśa*.⁷⁴ In the Arabala Grant and Kumurang Plate, queen Daṇḍimahādevī is donating the lands out of respect to the religion, and mentioned that the grant should be preserved. In 919 CE, she issued the Arabala Grant, donating lands to *Bhaṭṭa Puruṣottamavṛddha*, son of *Dīkṣita Jivāśvavṛddha*, in *Aravāla* village in *Teṇḍahāra viṣaya* of *Uttara Tosala*. It also mentions the libation of water to acquire the religious merit for the queen, her parents and all other creatures according to the rule of *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya* and *akṣaya-nīvi*.⁷⁵ The second grant in 923 CE was about lands donated to *Kakā*, *Dugaḍa*, *Vāṅkulla*, *Vauvavā*, *Īśvara*, *Sarvvadeva* and *Vāṅgeśvara* by the queen, and she had given *Kaṅsarānagarī* village and *Vāsimlicheda* locality of *Khidiṅgahāraviṣaya*, in *Dakṣiṇa Tosala*.⁷⁶

An epigraph issued by the queen Vakulamahādevī of the Bhaṅja dynasty in 940 CE, records a land grant to the *brāhmaṇas*.⁷⁷ The donee's name was Mīhadhīca, son of *Bhaṭṭaputra Nīlakaṅṭha*, who had migrated from Śāvastha and was a resident of

Ganjam district and which is situated on the eastern side of the river Badānai or the ancient Mahanadi. This area is known as Puravakhanda from earlier times, since at least the time of the Sailodbhavas." Ibid, p. 183. Also see the verses 33-4, on p. 181.

⁷² Ibid, verse 41, p. 182.

⁷³ Ibid, verses 31-2, p. 188.

⁷⁴ Ibid, mentioned in the verses no. 19, 22 and 25, pp. 187-88.

⁷⁵ Ibid, see verses 31-3, verses 27-9, in pp. 193-4.

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 196-200.

⁷⁷ Ibid, verse 19, p. 204.

village Kānteḍa.⁷⁸ The land had been granted free of taxes to bring religious merit to the queen and her parents.⁷⁹ The grant states that the gift should be enjoyed by the donee till his death.⁸⁰ The land should be taken along with the *uparikara* and *uddeśa*. *Bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya* and *akṣaya-nīvi* were applied.⁸¹ Two copper plates by Dharmamahādevī the queen of Lavaṇabhāra mention the land donations to the *brāhmaṇas* around 940 CE.⁸² In the first plate, 10 *mālas* of land in Deśala *grāma* had been donated.⁸³ The tax of the land had to be paid by the donee with the measurement of *rūka* or *rūpaka* of three *palas* of silver.⁸⁴ In the second plate Padmanābha, son of *Paṇḍita* Gadādihara, grandson of *bhaṭṭa* Puruṣottama got Tarataloi *grāma* in Talamura *viṣaya*.⁸⁵ The donated land was donated with *uparikara*, and as per the rule of *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāya* and *akṣaya nīvi*.⁸⁶

In the context of the Śailodbhava rulers, Śrīrājñī Kalyāṇadevī, the mother of the reigning king Dharmarāja, issued the Banpur Grant of Dharmarāja *alias* Mānabhīta around 8th century CE.⁸⁷ She donated land to *Ekaśāṭa* Prabuddhacandra, disciple of *arhadācārya* Nāsicandra, which was endorsed by her son.⁸⁸ The grant states that the

⁷⁸ Ibid, verses 37-8, p. 204.

⁷⁹ Ibid, verse 38, p. 205-06.

⁸⁰ Ibid, verse 37.

⁸¹ Ibid, verse 34.

⁸² Ibid, verse 20, p. 218.

⁸³ The inscription mentions that it was granted to Śrīdhara *bhaṭṭa*, son of Vite *bhaṭṭa* and grandson of *bhaṭṭa*, ibid, verses 22-3-4, p. 212, and verses 25-6, pp. 212-13.

⁸⁴ Ibid, verse 26, p. 212.

⁸⁵ Ibid, verse 31, p. 219 and verse 34-6 in pp. 219-20 (it has been mentioned that the grant had been given for the religious merit of the queen and her parents).

⁸⁶ Ibid, verse 32, 33 and 37, pp. 219-20.

⁸⁷ Ibid, verse 44 (a) and (b), p. 255.

⁸⁸ Ibid, verse 44 (a), p. 255.

donee could enjoy the gifted land till his death.⁸⁹ The land of three *ṭimpiras* in the locality called *Suvarṇaraloṇḍi toraṇa viṣaya*, and two and one fourth *ṭimpiras* of land at the village Madhuvāṭaka, near Rāṇḍa Sīma, had been donated to the *brāhmaṇa*. The record also mentioned that no such obstruction be made against this donated land.⁹⁰ In the time of the Śailodbhavas, no such other grants by the royal ladies or queens have been mentioned.

I.3.3 Other Donations

This has already been discussed that the lands were donated to the *brāhmaṇas* by the royals and commoners as the token of religious and social prestige. Not only lands, but temples, installed images, wells, ponds, forests and thickets etc. had also been recorded as the donations. Kings, queens, other nobles from or outside the royal families and normal citizens used to donate to the *brāhmaṇas* for their social, political legitimacy and to gain the highest religious merit.

I.3.3.1 Donations to Religious Institutions and Sculptures

In early medieval Odisha, temples were the most remarkable donations the royals used to make. But in Odisha the instances of temple inscriptions are very few in number. P.V. Kane in the second part of the *History of Dharmasāstra*, has discussed how the construction of temples, wells and other religious and institutional foundations had been included under the *pūrtadharmā*, and how even the *śūdras* were able to perform these activities.⁹¹ P.V. Kane states that the women and widows of

⁸⁹ Ibid, verse 44 (a) mentions the term *Yāvatjīvati*.

⁹⁰ Ibid, verses 45-7, (mentioned in the verses no. 44 (b) and (c), p. 255).

⁹¹ Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, p. 889.

society were able to perform *pūrta* but not the *iṣṭa dharmā*.⁹² Making temples, gift of lands, water reservoirs were the sources of ‘endless happiness’.⁹³ Donating lands, gold, clarified butter and water were considered as *atidāna* (excessive munificence) in the *Dharmaśāstras*.⁹⁴ The same author states, “on the other hand *Anuśāsanaparva* (62. 2) and the *Viṣṇudharmottara* (quoted by Aparārka p. 369) say that the gift of land surpasses all other gifts.”⁹⁵ One of the inscriptions found from northern part of Odisha, which was contemporary to the Māṭhara dynasty, mentions at the end of the inscription that Mahārāja Śatrubhaṅja of the Nāga family has built a temple of Śiva around 6th century CE.⁹⁶ The other part of the inscription is saying that the grants at various *maṭhas*, monasteries have been made in favour of the *brahmacārins*.⁹⁷ Kane describes in the *maṭha-pratiṣṭhā* section of his work that the foundation of *maṭhas* has not been too ancient in India. The author again mentions that “here *maṭha* does not appear to have any technical sense. In the lexicon of *Amara* a *maṭha* is defined as ‘a place where pupils (and their teacher) reside’. A temple and a *maṭha* were both established from the same religious motive or sentiment, but they served different purposes. A temple was built principally for the purpose of prayer and worship... in the case of the *maṭhas* they were primarily intended for the instruction of pupils or the laity by some great teacher.”⁹⁸ The author states that throughout the centuries temples and *maṭhas* have been supplementary to each other. Both of the institutions are

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid, pp. 847-48.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 848.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.1, No.30, verse 13, pp. 171-72.

⁹⁷ Lakhs of cows endowed to the places of Pāṭalīputra, Gayā, Kṛmīla, Dalāvārdhana, Puṇḍravārdhana, Gokkhaṭi, Khadrāṅga and Tāmralipti, and both of the Tosalis to both the Brahmanical and Buddhist religion; *ibid*, verses 8-11, pp. 171-72.

⁹⁸ Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, pp. 906-07.

serving the religious and spiritual activities. In an inscription of Mahārāja Bhānudatta in 6th century CE, addressed as *mahāsāmanta* and *mahāpratihāra* of Andhaśṛṅga, it is mentioned that the donor is endowing to the temple, *maṭha* and to the *brāhmaṇa* students of Maitrāyaṇīya *maṭha* at Kumvukirikṣilāka in Uttamāloka *viṣaya*.⁹⁹ It was endowed to build the Maṇināgeśvara *Bhaṭṭāraka* of Ekāmbaka, where students of the Maitrāyaṇīya school of the *Yajurveda* resided in the *maṭha* of the deity.¹⁰⁰

In the realm of the Bhauma Karas, construction of a temple site is often mentioned, but it did not reveal the name of the existing temple. In Hamseśvara Temple Inscription of Śubhākara and his queen Mādhavadevī, dated around 790 CE, the mention of the *Mādhaveśvara* temple construction has been cited.¹⁰¹ In the *History of Dharmaśāstra* the author acknowledges from the *Kādambarī* of Bāṇabhaṭṭa that one who donates for the foundation halls, embankments, wells, *prapās*, temples and gardens, that person actually serves this *pūrta* works to heaven, and he or she would be able to release his or her burdens from the *samsāra*.¹⁰² An interesting inscription around 829 CE in the realm of Śāntikaradeva, mentions the endowment by a physician named *Bhīmaṭa*, the son of *Ijyā* and *Nannaṭa*, who made a vow to donate some amount of paddy (*yācate dhānyaprasatham*) every year for the worship of *Gaṇeśa*.¹⁰³

King Śubhākaradeva in his Hindol Plate (839 CE) mentioned that he has donated *Noḍḍilo* village along with *uparikara* in *Pulindeśvara* temple, erected by

⁹⁹ Tripathy *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.1, No. 37, verses 3 and 7-8, p. 190, and verses 10-1, p. 191.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ This temple has been compared to the residence of *Śiva*, Mount *Kailāsa*; see, Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, Part II, No. 1, p. 102.

¹⁰² Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, p. 890.

¹⁰³ Tripathy *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. 2, No.6, verses 4-5, pp. 118-19.

Pulindarāja.¹⁰⁴ The inscription also states that *dīpa*, *dhūpa*, *nivedya*, *gandha*, *puṣpa*, *bali*, *caru* should be provided, and the expenditures will be allowed for repairing of the temple.¹⁰⁵ Maintenance of the family of the *dānapati* was assured and *kaupīna* (loin cloth), foods and medicines would be facilitated for the *Śaivācāryas*.¹⁰⁶

Another reference of *maṭha* has been found in the Baud inscription of the Bhauma Kara queen Tribhuvanamahādevī in 894 CE. The second and third section of this epigraph states that *sattra* (house?), garments and medicines was to be provided to the monks and the temple would be repaired by the donor. The food and clothing should go to the *brāhmaṇas*.¹⁰⁷ The inscription reads that Nānneśvara Talapāṭaka and Koṭṭapurā villages were donated in *Tamālakhaṇḍa viṣaya* in *Daṇḍabhukti Maṇḍala* in favour of Śaśilekhā to donate the image of the deity *Umā* and *Maheśvara*.¹⁰⁸ Inscriptions relating to royal women donating images are common during the latter part of the early medieval period under these dynasties. The instance of the Bhauma Kara queen Vatsadevī in 10th century CE corroborates this statement, for an inscription records that she had installed an image of goddess *Cāmuṇḍā* in Jajpur.¹⁰⁹

In the inscriptions of the Somāvāṁśīs, royal consorts and daughters of the ruling monarchs had been mentioned as making grants. In the *Brahmeśvara* temple inscription, Kolāvatī devī, the queen of the Somavāṁśī king Yayāti II (around

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, verse 18, p. 119.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, verses 21-2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, verse 23.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, mentioned in verses 30-1, and verses 25 and 27, in page no. 156; verses 33-4, p. 157.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, verses 32, 33, and 37, p. 222.

1058 CE) and mother of Uddyotakeśarī, constructed a temple of *Brahmeśvara* along with four other miniature shrines of *Siddhārtha* at *Ekāmra*.¹¹⁰

The Bhubaneswar Inscription housed in the Royal Asiatic Society cites the daughter of Anaṅgabhīma III (c. 1278 CE), princess Candrikā (devī), as one who constructed a temple at *Ekāmra*.¹¹¹ The possibility that the place known as *Ekāmra* in the previous inscription is the same as this temple may be considered. In this grant, she is credited with building the *Ananta Vāsudeva* temple on the eastern bank of the *Bindusarovara* at Bhubaneswar.¹¹² According to the *Dharmaśāstras*, this would be regarded as a more meritorious grant than sacrifices which benefited the *brāhmaṇas*.¹¹³ According to the inscription, we are told that the temple was built for *Śrīkṛṣṇa* and *Valavāsa* (*Balarāma*).¹¹⁴

The Bhadrak inscription of the reign of king Suraśarmā is peculiar, in that we hear of the donor Mūlajapā, a *Mahārāja gaṇa*, installing three images in the *devāyatana*. There is little clarity about who this Mūlajapā is, or of the images he is installing. But a later inscription refers to the *vastra* donated to the deity who was believed to have been a layman. In *History of Dharmaśāstra*, the author notes the different categories

¹¹⁰ P. Acharya, 'Brahmesvara temple Inscription of the time of Udyotakesri (Regnal Year 18)', *JARSB*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, Letters, 63-64, 1947, Calcutta, pp. 63-74.

¹¹¹ According to *Ekāmra Purānam* the place *Ekāmra* was basically a Śaiva place. From the legend or the mythological story of the Purāṇa we can give a satisfactory conclusion that, the place was occupied by Lord Śiva and his wife Pārvatī who killed two demons named *Kīrtti* and *Vāsa*, and a temple shrine has been erected for Pārvatī beside the *Liṅgarāja* temple. K.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Kitab Mahal, Cuttack, 1981.

¹¹² F. Kielhorn, 'Two Bhubanesvar Inscriptions', in E. Hultzsch (Ed.) *EI*, Vol. VI, 1900-01, ASI, Calcutta, pp. 198-200.

¹¹³ Kane, *History of Dharmaśātra*, p. 890.

¹¹⁴ Kielhorn, 'Two Bhubanesvar Inscriptions' in E. Hultzsch (Ed.), *EI*, Vol. VI, pp. 198-200.

of gifts to be donated to a *brāhmaṇa*. One who gifts lamp, wood, garment etc. would be honoured in heavens.¹¹⁵

An inscription from the 11th century CE at the *Kedāreśvara* temple mentions the younger brother Pramādideva of the ruling king Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga as making a land grant to the temple.¹¹⁶ Three grants refer to functionaries: two of them held important positions as military commanders, and a third is mentioned as a *padātaka* or footman. The first, of the reign of Anaṅgabhīma I records the building of the *Megheśvara* temple dedicated to Śīva in Bhubaneswar. In the 12th century CE a *senāpati* of the Gaṅga king Anaṅgabhīma III, Śrīkaraṇa Suru is credited with making provisions of various kinds to the temple of *Puruṣottama*.¹¹⁷ These donations included milk, clarified butter, rice and curd. The third inscription records that Khaṇḍa, who was a footman in the reign of Anaṅgabhīma III, granted *vāṭis* (a type of measure) of lands to the same temple as the previous grant.¹¹⁸

In the Puri Copper Plate Inscription, the donee Dēvarathācārya, who had been employed as the priest in the temple of *Ugreśvaradeva* is said to have enjoyed the land as *deulī bhūmi*.¹¹⁹ This confirms the idea that the land granted was transformed into a religious institution.

In the Nāgari Plates of Anaṅgabhīma III (Śaka 1151 and 1152),¹²⁰ it is mentioned in verse 27 that Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga built a temple of *Puruṣottama Jagannātha* at

¹¹⁵ Kane, *History of Dharmasātra*, pp. 847-48.

¹¹⁶ D. C Sircar, 'Bhubanesvar Inscription of Pramadi', in N. L. Rao, D. C. Sircar (eds.), *EI*, Vol. XXX, 1953-54, ASI, Delhi, pp. 90-4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 197-203.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 303-04.

¹²⁰ *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 235-58.

the shore of the Bay of Bengal, and that he undertook the great task on behalf of his ancestors to build such a marvellous temple at Puri.¹²¹ An interesting thing is that from another inscription of this king (Plates of Anaṅgabhīma III) it has been said that the kings are the deputies and feudatories under lord *Puruṣottama* and the lord is the king of the “*Puruṣottama Sāmrājya*”.¹²²

Temple construction and the rehabilitating of dilapidated temples are discussed under the *Jirṇoddhāra* section of *History of Dharmaśāstra*.¹²³ It says that if the image is burnt or injured or ‘reduced to particles’ that should be reinstalled after ritualistic purifications prescribed in the various texts and *Purāṇas*.¹²⁴ In the 12th century CE, Anaṅgabhīma III in the First Bhubaneswar Inscription had claimed to have repaired the *maṇḍapa* of the *Kīrttivāsa* or *Liṅgarāja* temple in Bhubaneswar. For this purpose, he donated lands to Govinda Senāpati, his military commander, to maintain the temple.

Royal participation in the temple building activities clearly shows the lack of separation of the political domain and religious practices. Early medieval patronage is a very complex issue and to understand the mechanism of patronage, one has to understand the role of the local community in temple building activities and their maintenance.

A curious inscription of Narasiṃha IV in the 13th century CE mentions the grant of lands to the Śankarānanda *maṭha* in Puri.¹²⁵ We can surmise from this and other

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid, cited in the footnote, p. 243.

¹²³ Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, p. 905.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 304.

inscriptions that the temples were perhaps controlled by the *maṭhas*, which also connected different shrines together.

I.3.3.2 Donations for other expenditure

The endowed materials were not only meant to be lands; other forms of donations were also donated. For example, the donation of lamps to the temples has been mentioned in three inscriptions. Kane mentions “Śabara on Jāmini I.3.2 refers to the *smṛti* rules about charitable objects which are based on such *śruti* passages as “O *Agni*, who art ancient and a king, thou art to the man who desires to offer a sacrifice like *prapā* (shed where water is distributed to travellers) in a desert.” In Ṛg X. 107.10 a *puṣkarīṇī* (a tank) is mentioned. The Viṣṇu Dh. S. (chap. 91. 1-2) states “one who digs a well (for the public) has (the consequences of) half his sins destroyed when the water has begun to flow forth; one who dedicates a pond is forever happy (free from thirst) and attains the world of *Varuṇa*”.”¹²⁶ The author also states that from the very beginning of grants to the *brāhmaṇas*, donating wells, ponds and tanks were taken to be auspicious.¹²⁷

In 790 CE, Haṁseśvara Temple Inscription of the Bhauma Kara period cites that the *ācārya* should be appointed to conduct the worship of the deity, and also mentions excavation of a *vāpi* in the vicinity of the temple and establishment of a *kiraṇojvala haṭṭa* in front of the temple.¹²⁸ It has been said in the *Dharmaśāstras* that if a person is

¹²⁶ Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, pp. 889-90.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 890.

¹²⁸ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Part. II, No.1, p. 102.

donating *caru* (boiled food) of barley in milk on an auspicious *tithi* or in the bright fortnight, and feeds the *brāhmaṇas*, he would get religious merits.¹²⁹

In the Hindol Plate of Śubhākaradeva in 839 CE, in which the donation was made on the 5th day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Śrāvaṇa*, it is mentioned that *dīpa*, *dhūpa*, *naivedya*, *gandha*, *puṣpa*, *bali*, *caru* should be provided to the temple regularly.¹³⁰ Similarly the Baud Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī, which was issued on the 7th day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Kārttika*, recorded provision of *vali*, *caru*, *gandha*, *puṣpa*, *dhūpa*, *naivedya*, *candana* to the deities *Umā* and *Maheśvara*, which had been installed in the *Nānneśvara Śiva* temple at *Nānneśvara Talapāṭaka* and *Koṭṭapurā* villages in *Tamālakhaṇḍa viṣaya* in *Daṇḍabhukti Maṇḍala*.¹³¹ The donor Śivakaradeva states in the Talcher Plate around 885 CE that this plate was issued to provide *dīpa*, *dhūpa*, *bali*, *caru*, *puṣpa*, *gandha* etc.¹³²

In the 11th century CE, Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga of the Gaṅga dynasty, mentioned in the Puri Inscription his own endowment of a *chāyādīpa* in the *Mārkaṇḍeśvara* temple.¹³³ In the Bhubaneswar Inscription of the same king the grant of perpetual lamps, containing 100 wicks and fed by 24 *karāṅkas* of oil in favour of the God *Kīrttivāsa* at the *Liṅgarāja* temple has been stated.¹³⁴ Another Gaṅga ruler in 12th century CE, Anaṅabhīma III in his Bhubaneswar Inscription (2nd Inscription) states that he made a grant for perpetual lamps in the *Kīrttivāsa* temple.¹³⁵ King Pramāḍideva, mentioned himself as the younger brother of king Anantavarman

¹²⁹ Kane, *History of Dharmasātra*, pp. 890-91.

¹³⁰ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, No.8, verses 21-2, pp. 125-30.

¹³¹ Ibid, p 154; verses 30-1, 25 and 27, p. 156; and verses 33-4, p. 157.

¹³² Ibid, verses 26-8, p. 152.

¹³³ *El*. Vol. XXVIII, pp. 181-84.

¹³⁴ *El*, Vol. XXX, pp. 17-23.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

Coḍagaṅga of Gaṅga dynasty, and records the grant of villages for maintaining the perpetual lamps for the deity *Kēdāreśvara*.¹³⁶

Śrīkaraṇa Suru Senāpati (officer of the record department of the Gaṅga king) in the Puri Inscription of Anaṅgabhīma III (1st Inscription) states that he issued that inscription in favour of *Puruṣottama* for providing milk, clarified butter, rice and curds to the deity.¹³⁷ Khaṇḍa Padātaka in Puri Inscription of Anaṅgabhīma III (2nd Inscription) recorded the grants of *vāṭīs* of land donated to the temple.¹³⁸

I.3.3.3 Forests and Thickets

“Trees have been highly prized in India at all times. They were useful in sacrifices for making the *yūpa* (the post to which the sacrificial animal was tied), for *idhma* (samidhs which were thrown into fire), for several ladles like *sruva*, *juhū* etc.¹³⁹ The lands, donated by the Somavaṁśīs and Gaṅgas also included forests and thickets. These donated forest areas were meant to be cleared by the rulers of these dynasties for the purpose of agrarian expansion. The grants of Jayastambha of Śulkī dynasty at Kodālaka *maṇḍala* states that, the donee should enjoy various rights including the designated rights to fishing and hunting.¹⁴⁰ It suggests the proximity of the gift area of the donee to water resources and forest. Similarly in

¹³⁶ Ibid, pp. 90-112.

¹³⁷ Ibid, pp. 197-203.

¹³⁸ *EI*, Vol. XXX, pp. 198-207.

¹³⁹ Kane, *History of Dharmasātra*, pp. 893-94.

¹⁴⁰ *JBROS*, vol. II, 1916, pp. 409 and 416, *Epigraphia Indica* mentions from the ‘Puri Plates of Kulastambha’ (ed.) by D.C. Sircar that, the date of the Śulkī dynasty was contemporary to the Bhauma Karas, and the date counted 103 Bhauma Era or 839 AD; *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XXIX, part I, 1951-52, pp. 165-66.

Hindol Plate of the Bhauma Kara ruler Śubhakaradeva in 839 CE, it has been referred that the donor is transferring the hunting rights and thickets to the donee.¹⁴¹ In this inscription, some interesting references are available. The instances of deer and other wild animals in the neighbourhood have been mentioned.¹⁴² The land grants endowed by the Somavaṃśī rulers also bear some instances of forests (*araṇya*) and forest products.¹⁴³ Undoubtedly, the donee being assigned land in a forest tract was meant to expand the territorial and resource control of the monarch.

After the Somavaṃśī rule, in 11th to 12th centuries CE, the Gaṅgas endowed some of the lands in the dense and hostile forested areas. In the Alamanda Plates of Anantavarman, it has been referred that the donor Devendravarman (son of the reigning king Anantavarman) had donated a land in a dense forest to a *brāhmaṇa* named Śrīdhara Bhaṭṭa, son of Viṣṇudeva.¹⁴⁴ The Asankhali Plates issued by the Gaṅga king Narasimhadeva II records the donation of two plots of land which were to be cleared of the forest cover by the donee, to transform it into agricultural land.¹⁴⁵ B.P. Sahu explains the meaning of *kṛttāraṇya-bhū-bhāga*, which possibly refers to the massive deforestation and starting of cultivation in the thickly forested

¹⁴¹ *JBROS*, vol. XVI, 1930, line 19, p. 78.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, line 35, p. 79.

¹⁴³ S.N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. IV, OSM, Bhubaneswar, 1965, line 11, p. 238.

¹⁴⁴ E. Hultzsch, 'Alamanda Plates of Avantivarman' in E. Hultzsch (Ed.), *EI*, Vol. III, 1894-95, ASI, Calcutta, verses 15 and 18-21, pp. 18-9.

¹⁴⁵ D.C. Sircar, 'Asankhali Plate of Narasimha II', in D.C. Sarkar (Ed.), *EIVol.* XXXI, 1955-56, pp. 115-16; also cited in S.K. Panda, 'The Pattern of Land and Agriculture in Medieval Orissa: CAD 1000-1600', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Bombay, 1980, p. 271.

lands, which were of no use for the donees who received these land grants without the introduction of agriculture.¹⁴⁶

I.4 Brahmanical hegemony over other occupational groups

B. P. Sahu has mentioned that the second part of the 1st millennium CE has been characterised by the agrarian expansion and economic integration in Odisha.¹⁴⁷ Since 400 CE the process of the emergence of state has begun. In different sub regional pockets, the formation and the expansion were reflected. These regional polities were mainly rooted to the agrarian expansion of the region.¹⁴⁸ The reason of this entire socio-economic transformation was based on agricultural expansion and land cultivation. The Bhauma Karas, Somavamśīs and the Gaṅgas had extended the boundaries of their kingdoms not merely by conquest but by expanding their agrarian frontiers. To understand this process of agrarian expansion, it is necessary to gather some idea on the geo political nature of this region. The hill division includes the northern uplands spread over Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergarh and the Pallahara sub-division of Dhenkanal district, and the middle mountainous region stretching over the hilly tracts of the districts of Koraput, Kalahandi, Phulbani and Ganjam. Rivers like the Brahmani and Baitarani originate in and travel across parts of the northern uplands, which are an extension of the Chotanagpur Plateau. The middle mountainous zone is a part of the Eastern Ghats. The Tel, Vamsadhara, Indravati and Kolab are the major rivers that flow through this region. The soil in both these geographical sub-divisions is not very

¹⁴⁶ B.P Sahu, 'Aspect of Rural Economy in Early Medieval Orissa', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 21, No ½, Jan-Feb 1993, p. 52.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 48.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

conducive for agriculture. These plains include the coastal plains, major river valleys and the erosional plains of the Mahanadi and Tel in Western Odisha. The coastal plains comprise the districts of Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and parts of Ganjam. However, the middle coastal plains covering the districts of Puri and Cuttack are the widest and not unnaturally. All the major sub-regional states in early medieval Odisha gravitated towards this area. The prime attraction was the geography and the materials gathered from this region. The coastal plains are thus, centred largely on the Mahanadi delta. There is evidence for land grants in tribal areas, forests or hilly tracts and also the grant of uncultivated land, implying that such grants were made to open up virgin soil for agriculture and to extend cultivation. The names of many villages, *Khaṇḍas*, *Pāṭakas* and *Viṣayas* appear to be non-Sanskritic which may suggest that they were located in backward areas.¹⁴⁹ It may also imply the slow and gradual spread of brahmanical culture to these areas.

The lands donated to the *brāhmaṇas* of this region were mostly intended for cultivation. In some of the inscriptions of the Māṭharas, it has been clearly stated that the thickets and the forest lands had to be cleared and to be settled by the donees. These donees were predominately *brāhmaṇas* of different *gotras* and *caraṇas*. Some of them were migrated from other lands while the others enjoyed the donation from the neighbouring places. As previously stated, the rural economy was typically based on agriculture. To support and sustain the economic system, other occupational categories emerged as subordinate ancillaries to the agriculturalists. After studying the inscriptions from 5th century CE to 12th century CE, it has been specified that the whole state formation and expansion of the state

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

idea was instrumentalized by the tool of brahmanical cultural expansion. Hermann Kulke points out that in case of Odisha, where the monarch could not reach out to the periphery, the tool of brahmanical institutions to exert hegemony over the region had been utilized.

The *kuṭumbina* or *kuṭumbika* term, used for the cultivators or the peasants was common in early medieval Odishan inscriptions. Hetukar Jha has argued that, “the peasant is subjected to the demands and sanctions of some power-holder who does not belong to his stratum and this happens when the “state” appears in society. Society then becomes “more complex” and social relations become asymmetrical.”¹⁵⁰ In an article by Ranabir Chakravarti, the term *kuṭumbika* has been understood to define the peasant category in ancient India.¹⁵¹ According to him, the word *kuṭumbika* can be literally translated as “one having a household or one owning a household”.¹⁵² Here, Chakravarti has argued that the term throws light on the fact that the peasant hardly can work outside his or her family circle. Hence, the cultivator’s household could have played a crucial role to the ‘human resources’ from all perspectives.¹⁵³ But in the context of early medieval Odisha, was it really possible that cultivator was given such importance within the realm of Brahmanism? The *brāhmaṇas* acted as the land lords in this region. Kings, queens or other nobles used to pay homage to the *brāhmaṇas* for their own legitimisation in the society. And after the gift giving ritual, the donee acted as a feudal lord.

¹⁵⁰ Hetukar Jha, ‘Understanding Peasants and its Low-classness’, in Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aounshuman (eds.), *Peasants in Indian History I: Theoretical Issues and Structural Enquiries*, Janaki Prakashan, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 8-9.

¹⁵¹ Ranabir Chakravarti, ‘*Kutumbikas* of Early India’, in Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aounshuman (eds.), *Peasants in Indian History I*, pp. 179-92.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 181.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

In many Bhauma Kara copper plate inscriptions, it has been stated clearly that the donated land has been issued as per *akṣaya-nīvi* system, which leads a *brāhmaṇa* to enjoy the land perpetually and after his death the land would be enjoyed by his succeeding generations. Here, the author points out another important issue which is the cost of the labour. This study on inscriptions has revealed land grants which were made according to the maxim of bringing virgin lands under cultivation, or the custom of reclaiming fallow lands. The operative expression is *bhūmi-cchidra-pidhāna-nyāyaa*, a term which is also found in the inscriptions of other regions. This term occurs mostly in the grants of the Bhauma Karas in Odisha. It is also found in the Narasapatam plates of Vajrahasta III.¹⁵⁴ These instances lead us to envisage a steady extension of the area under cultivation.

When a *grāma* was gifted to a *brāhmaṇa*, people from other castes were also included in the new social framework that was emerging through brahmanical influence. It has been told in a grant issued by Anaṅgabhīma III in the 12th century CE that the donated land contained large palaces like that of royals, and was also enclosed by other houses of merchants, goldsmiths, conch-cells dealers, potters, betel leaf dealers, oilmen, fishermen, and washer men.¹⁵⁵ This interesting data of people from different communities throws significant light on a pattern of early medieval township, which too indicates the socio-cultural panorama of the gifted lands and further, the heterogeneous society in early medieval Odisha. Another noticeable issue from this inscription is that there is no mention about the cultivators. If we consider the donated land as a barren one, then the concept of

¹⁵⁴ S. Konow, 'Narasapatam Plates of Vajrahasta III', in E. Hultzsch (Ed.), *EI* Vol. XI, ASI, Calcutta, 1911-12, verses 55-6, p. 151.

¹⁵⁵ *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 243-44.

having other castes in the same region is appropriate. Thus, we can trace that all of the donated lands were not agricultural lands.

During the 5th century CE, the settled population beside the *brāhmaṇas* in a village is mainly *kuṭumbina* or the *kuṭumbikas*. They were the cultivators of the lands, where the villages were endowed. Other occupational categories were mostly silent in that period. But from the inscriptions of the Bhauma Karas, the shift of the occupational level can be seen. The major issue would be cultivating new lands.

In the *Paraśurāmeśvara* Temple Inscription, the mention of *bhoga* is indicated, which may have referred to some ritual offerings.¹⁵⁶ It has been said that the *kṣetrapāla* or “the keeper of the field” who will not feed the Lord will be punished.¹⁵⁷ Now, the question is who the *kṣetrapāla* of this inscription is, was he meant to be the patron of the temple or the donee who had to supply money and grain to manage the temple economy? Actually temples were economic tools of integration, and it is in this capacity that they functioned as institutions. This inscription found from Bhubaneswar belonged to the first half of 8th century CE.¹⁵⁸ The alluvial soil of Bhubaneswar region and rainfall patterns made this a fertile region, and a good amount of taxes were collected by the state from the landholders. Though those gifted lands were generally tax free, the donee enjoyed the revenue collected from the land, and enjoyed it through generations. The king who donated the land remitted taxes in the name of his *iṣṭa-devatā* or beloved God. The accumulated revenue went to the temple to supply its food and cover the expenditure.

¹⁵⁶ *El.*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 126-27.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹⁵⁸ State: Odisha, *Agriculture Contingency Plan*, Agriculture Department, Government of Odisha, 2011.

In the incipient period of state formation around the 5th century CE, the rulers only wanted to expand the kingdom, as we have discussed earlier. The demand of deforestation and cultivating the lands was only fulfilled by the cultivators. *Brāhmaṇa* donees acted like landlords in converting the forested areas into agricultural lands. But with time, the need also expanded and beside cultivation, other occupational categories emerged. *Tantuvāya* (weavers), *śauṇḍika* (distiller), *mālākāra* (garland maker), *tailika* (oilmen), *gokuṭa* (herder/ milkman) and other professional groups emerged in the society. The shift in occupational level is traceable in the time of the Bhauma Karas. Eventually in the time of the Somavamśīs onwards, brahmanical hegemony had been established in the society.

I.5 Emergence of Brahmanical Culture

Regarding the *brāhmaṇas* of ancient Odisha, A.C. Mittal has referred to the *Purāṇas* where Pṛthu, son of Vena gave Magadha to the *Māgadhas* and *Sūtas*, and Kalinga to the *Caraṇas*.¹⁵⁹ As it has already been noticed, to provide the religious merit and to enhance their glory, the rulers of several dynasties used to donate to the *brāhmaṇas*. In some of the inscriptions it is also mentioned that certain communities and branches of *brāhmaṇas* were invited to this land as donees. The early stage of state formation took place in central Odisha. In the realm of the Bhauma Karas, Somavamśīs and Gaṅgas, the main intention was to expand the kingdom to the forest covered coastal areas. To reach out to the peasant and tribe society, the rulers donated lands to the *brāhmaṇas* in those areas. It is necessary to

¹⁵⁹ Amar Chand Mittal, *An Early History of Orissa*, Jain Cultural Research Society, BHU, 1962, p. 89.

categorise the *gotras* and identities of the *brāhmaṇas* to trace the spread of Brahmanism in early medieval Odisha.

In the Māṭhara period, early 5th century CE Odisha, various *gotras* and *caraṇas* have emerged amongst the *brāhmaṇas*. *Savarṇa*, *Kātyāyana*, *Ātreya*, *Kāśyapa*, *Vatsa*, *Aupamānyava*, *Devarāt* and *Kauṇḍinya* *gotras* were flourishing inside the state. And *Chāndoga*, *Bāhvṛca*, *Devarāt* *caraṇas* were main roots to this brahmanical acculturation. Likewise in the 7th to 10th centuries CE, *Bhāradvāja*, *Maṅgalya*, *Viśvāmitra*, *Kauśika*, *Jātukarṇa* and *Śāṅḍilya* *gotras* were mushrooming within the region. The *Bhāradvājas* were predominant throughout the region in early medieval times. The *Taittirīya*, *Chāndogya* and *Vājasenaya* *caraṇas* were parallel to them. The state sponsored Brahmanism found its presence all over the Kalinga region. Various *gotras* from different origins emerged in this period.

In the 5th century CE Bobbili Plates of Candravarman and Niṅgoṇḍi Plate of Prabhañjanavarman, separate donations to the *brāhmaṇas* of the different *gotras* and *caraṇas* are mentioned.¹⁶⁰ Bobbili Plates states *brahmacārins* belonging to different *gotras* have been granted Tirithhāṇa *grāma*.¹⁶¹ The Niṅgoṇḍi Plate says, some of the *brāhmaṇas* belonging to different *gotras* and *caraṇas* have been endowed with Hōṇarāma *grāma* of Kalinga area, named Niṅgoṇḍi.¹⁶² In the Māṭhara period, Chicacole Plates of Nandaprabhañjanavarman states that the land has been given to the *brāhmaṇa* named Hariścandrasvāmin of the Akṣat *agrahāra*,

¹⁶⁰ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, No.13, verses 5, 7-8, p. 122; No. 2, verse 8, p. 92.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 122.

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 92.

belonged to the Deverāta *gotra* and *caraṇa*.¹⁶³ Here, it suggests that the *brāhmaṇas* from the distant lands had been brought to the newly formed agrarian settlements, and the local populations were continuously inheriting the brahmanical practices, culture and rituals in the region. In the 5th century CE Andhavaram Plates of Anantaśaktivarman, again the king donates to the *brāhmaṇas* of various *gotras* and *caraṇas*.¹⁶⁴ Again in the Baranga Plates of Nandaprabhañjanavarman in 5th century CE it is repeatedly mentioned that *brāhmaṇas* of different *gotras* and *caraṇas* are the beneficiaries of this grant.¹⁶⁵

The Neulpur plate of the Bhauma Kara king Śubhākaradeva (766 CE) states that he granted lands to two hundred *brāhmaṇas* of different *gotras* and *caraṇas*.¹⁶⁶ In Terundia Plate (836 CE), Śubhākara II is donating to the *brāhmaṇas* of *Bhāradvāja gotra*.¹⁶⁷ After studying these royal land grants to the *brāhmaṇas*, we can clearly see that in the initial period (Māthara dynasty) the rulers are granting the land charters to groups of *brāhmaṇas*, but much later, rulers of the other dynasties were particular to choose the individual donees. If we consider *bhaṭṭa* or the learned *brāhmaṇas* as one of the prestigious groups of the *brāhmaṇas*, then in Bhauma Kara period, the *bhaṭṭas* were endowed lands in central Odisha. The ambiguity of the *gotras* and *caraṇas* in early Odisha remained stable to the early medieval phase. The rise of the brahmanical cults inside the region may be attributed to the state's association with them. To maintain their authority the kings did not approve the practices of disparate indigenous groups. Here, B.P. Sahu has

¹⁶³ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, No. 12, verses 4-7, (they were donated to Dejavāṭa village), p 114.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, verses 7-8, pp. 95-6.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, verses 6-7, p. 116.

¹⁶⁶ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, No.12, p. 115.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 120.

argued that Sanskrit entered into the sub-regions of Odisha; first it emerged in Kalinga, followed by *Dakṣiṇa Kosala* and Khijjingakota.¹⁶⁸ Thus the ruling elite of the region preferred Sanskrit to be the medium of ‘political discourse’.¹⁶⁹ The dichotomy of *brāhmaṇa* and non *brāhmaṇa* category in the early to early medieval period in Odisha resulted in a two-tiered social structure. The *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas* restrained themselves out of this social order.¹⁷⁰ B.P. Sahu states that the region incorporated a large number of ‘immigrant’ *brāhmaṇas* during this time as the beneficiaries of land grants.¹⁷¹ In the second millennium CE, the division of *gotras* and *carāṇas* shaped into a new pattern and facilitated the emergence of high caste surnames of the *brāhmaṇas* who performed different roles in the socio-political life of the times.

L6 Ritual Polity and Patronage

Land donations to the *brāhmaṇas* in early medieval Odisha played a crucial role in the legitimization of polity as discussed above, and the paradigm of ‘ritual polity’ suggests the formation of the early state by legitimating its authority and the spatial configurations of its political units, by taking recourse to religion. Several formulations of the ritual polity indicate that administration and control over territory alone were not the basis of early political structures in early medieval India. Instead, “kings at a central core who manifested the qualities of a universal overlord linked together small political and economic units. The position of the

¹⁶⁸ Sahu, ‘Aspect of Rural Economy’, p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 12.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

kings devolved from the operation of cosmic forces or from the will of the gods, who supported royal protectors of righteousness or dharma in the material world.”¹⁷² Proponents of ritual polity described the king as the “turner of the wheel of dharma” or *cakravartin*, which further developed in some cases into the idea of the “god-king” (*devarāja*). James Heitzman used the term ‘ritual polity’ in his study of early medieval south India to indicate not only the administrative control over the territory but the king’s appearance as the “overlord” of the kingdom, a sovereign located in the central core.¹⁷³ He wanted to show the emergence of the idea of the “god king”, on which the idea of the ritual polity was premised, which acted as the key to political integration and renewed the king’s legitimacy over the lands through construction of temples and making donations.¹⁷⁴ Heitzman asserts that the use of ritual/ religious ideology is in addition to other political tools and ideology used by the ruler, which was meant to bolster his rule. Using these insights in the case of early Odisha, the Māṭhara kings donated lands to the *brāhmaṇas* for gaining religious merit, which would help them to legitimise their rule in the new regions out of their kingdom. Around the 5th century CE Nandaprabhañjanavarman donated Ḍeyavāṭa village to a *brāhmaṇa* named Hariścandrasvāmin of the Akṣat *agrahāra* and made it tax free for his religious merit.¹⁷⁵ Likewise in Śailodbhava period in the Ganjam Plates of Mādhavarāja in 620 CE, the donor states that to enhance the religious merit of the king and his

¹⁷² James Heitzman, ‘Ritual Polity and Economy: The Transactional Network of an Imperial Temple in Medieval South India’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 34, No. 1-2, pp. 24-43.

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 23.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 24-5.

¹⁷⁵ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, No.12, verses 4-7 and verses 8-12, p. 114-15.

parents, the land had been granted to the *brāhmaṇa* Charampasvāmin.¹⁷⁶ Cchavalakkhya *grāma* in Kṛṣṇagiri *viṣaya* had been donated to this *brāhmaṇa* who belonged to Bhāradvāja *gotra*.¹⁷⁷ In Khurda Plates of Śrī Mādhavarāja in 7th century CE, maintenance of religious merit of the donor king and his parents was mentioned.¹⁷⁸ In 633 CE, the Buguda Plates of Mādhavarman states that Puipina *grāma* within Khadira *pāṭaka* under Guḍḍa *viṣaya* had been donated to *Bhaṭṭa* Vāmana, the son of Ādityadeva and the grandson of Vāmana of Hārīta *gotra* and Taittirīya *carāṇa*, to sustain the religious merit of the donor and his parents.¹⁷⁹ In Purushottampur Plates of the same ruler of Śailodbhava dynasty it's mentioned that *Bhaṭṭa* Nārāyaṇa of Maudgalya *gotra* has been given Āmba *grāma*, attached to the Devagrāma *viṣaya* by the king to increase the religious merit of the donor and his parents.¹⁸⁰ In 8th century CE another ruler named Dharmarāja Mānabhīta mentions in the Ranpur Plates that a locality called Usvāṭaka in Tanekaṇḍrā *viṣaya* had been endowed in the name of *Bhaṭṭa* Trilocanasvāmin, belonging to the Ātreya *gotra* for the increasing of religious merit of the donor.¹⁸¹ Again in the Nivina Copper Plate Grant, this ruler donated two *ṭimpiras* of the land within the village to the donee *Bhaṭṭa* Savaridevadīkṣita for the enhancement of religious merit.¹⁸² Another inscription of the Śailodbhava ruler Dharmarāja has been found from a *maṭha*, which mentions the increment of 'religious merit' by donating two *ṭimpiras* of land in the area Kiṇiyā *cheda* in Doṅgi *grāma*, situated in Varttani *viṣaya* to

¹⁷⁶ The editor of this inscription dated it on the basis of the Gupta year: 300 Gupta year is mentioned as the regnal year of the ruling king. See Ibid, p. 209; verses 21-2, p. 210, p. 211.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, verse 22-4, p. 213.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, verse 31 and 36-7, verses 37-40, pp. 216-7.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, verses 34-7, pp. 221-22.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, verses 47-9, and verses 49-51, p. 244.

¹⁸² Ibid, verses 39-41, p. 249.

brāhmaṇa Āsika Golokasvāmin.¹⁸³ Two other inscriptions - Chandeśvar Plates and Konedda Grant) of Dharmarāja, state the enhancement of the religious merit of the donor through the granting of the lands to the *brāhmaṇas* named *Bhaṭṭa* Śubhadeva and *Bhaṭṭa* Goṇadevasvāmin of Śivāvivāsa and Koṇḍeḍḍe *grāma*.¹⁸⁴

That practice continued till the inscriptions of the Bhauma Karas; which suggests that after getting the political and social legitimacy, the rulers of the succeeding dynasties were only concerned to protect their valour and power within the state. The Dhenkanal Grant of Tribhuvanamahādevī, issued in 890 CE, mentions that she has granted this for the enhancement of the merit of her parents.¹⁸⁵ The grant reads “...*mātāpitraurātmanah sarvvasatvānāñca puṇyabhivṛddhaye*”.¹⁸⁶

Hermann Kulke discusses in the context of Odisha that royal patronage at pilgrimage sites had great significance for legitimizing royal power.¹⁸⁷ The pilgrimages became centres of a multi centred royal network which merged the different nuclear areas religiously and economically. He cites, even though Bhubaneswar was not a political capital, that the Somavaṃśī’s declaration of affiliation with Śiva at this important pilgrimage site and religious centre was crucial to their establishment of divine legitimacy. Kulke has shown the links between the sacred domain of the temple and temporal power.¹⁸⁸ The subtle way in

¹⁸³ Ibid, verse 48-53, p. 261.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, verse 21, verses 27-8, p. 265, and verses 52-3, p. 270.

¹⁸⁵ Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, No. 30, verse 30, p. 169 and p. 172.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 169.

¹⁸⁷ Hermann Kulke, ‘Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms’, in Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke, and Gaya Charan Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannatha and The Regional Tradition Of Orissa*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 125-37.

¹⁸⁸ Hermann Kulke, ‘Early State Formation and Royal Legitimation in Tribal Areas of Eastern India, in R. Moser and M. K. Gautam (eds.), *Aspects of Tribal Life in South Asia I: Strategy and Survival*, University of Berne, Berne, 1978, pp. 29-38.

which patronage, authority and status are related to one another and operate their mutual interrelationship in society is established by such studies.

In the Odishan context, most of the granted lands under study are situated in Bhubaneswar region along with Puri, Balasore, Cuttack, and South Rāḍha districts. The lands divided amongst the various donees, were almost scattered over the entire south-east, middle and north part of modern Odisha state, in the fertile and semi fertile region. The most important thing is that the sub-regional nuclear areas in Odisha were situated in the upper delta regions of the rivers, especially the Mahanadi River, which were connected to the Bhubaneswar region through pilgrimage, and later, these nuclear areas were integrated to create the regional Odishan culture. The most significant economic feature is these fertile riverine areas, the nucleus of agricultural production and particularly rice cultivation. This is seen in the numerous instances of *bhoga* being offered to the gods in temples. If we judge the economy of the temples in Odisha, we can see that lands were donated to the *brāhmaṇa* donees, and they tried to cultivate those lands using the labour of others, while the revenue collected from these lands contributed to the state's resources.

I.7 Conclusion

In early medieval Odisha the process of growth of Brahmanism started approximately in the post-Gupta period, c. fifth century CE. The enormous amount of land donations accelerated this course, where it became prominent in the following centuries. With the endowments, the power of religious institutions and the practice of temple building had taken root. To validate their political realm and

power, royal donations to the *brāhmaṇas* nurtured and gave rise to a ritual polity in the early medieval context of Odisha. Development of brahmanical hegemony started with the donations to different *gotras* and *caraṇas* of the *brāhmaṇa* community. The monumental presence of brahmanical culture and cults spread over the region, which contributed to the creation of a sacred geography in terms of *tīrtha kṣetras*, or the established territory of an assigned deity. Through the establishment of different brahmanical cults like Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaktism subsequently, the concept of various *tīrthas* or sacred places acquired prominence in the early medieval period of Odisha. Important *tīrthas* like Liṅgarāja (Bhubaneswar), Jagannātha (Puri) and Virajā (Jajpur) emerged in this period and these brahmanical cults marked their territories of power and extended the religious culture for the duration of seven to eight hundred years in this region.

Chapter II

Sacred Geography: Cults, Temples and Landscapes in

Odisha

II.1 Introduction

The region of the modern state of Odisha (erstwhile Orissa), with varying geographical limits, was known as Kaliṅga, Oḍra or Utkala during ancient and early medieval period. The earliest reference of Kaliṅga is found in Aśoka's edicts – the Kandahar edict of Shar-i-Kuna and Shahbazgarhi edict.¹ Both the edicts mention the war of Kaliṅga and its subsequent inclusion into the Mauryan Empire. This was placed in the latter half of the third century BCE. Conquest of Kaliṅga is one of the most important episodes in Aśoka's life. Kaliṅga as a region had been mentioned in one of the well-known inscriptions from within the region by Khāravēla as well. In that inscription, Khāravēla is referred as *Kaliṅgādhipati* or the overlord of Kaliṅga.² This inscription was dated in the first century BCE. Xuanzang, the famous Chinese pilgrim of seventh century CE, visited the capital of the kingdom of Kie-ling-Kia identified with Kaliṅga.³ Bhubaneswar possessed highly rich and continuous heritage of religious change and artistic upliftment for more than thousand years. These

¹ E. Hultzsch, 'The Shahabazgarhi Rock' in E. Hultzsch (ed.) 'Inscriptions of Asoka', *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, (ed.) Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1925, pp. 55-71.

² K.P. Jayawal, 'The Hatigumpha Inscription of Kharavela' in Hirananda Sastri (ed.), *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XX, ASI, Delhi, 1929-30, pp. 71-89.

³ Kaliṅga was spread over 1400-1500 *li* in the west of Ganjam; see in 'The Ancient Geography of India', in his *Ancient Geography of India*, Alexander Cunningham, Trubner and Co., London, 1871, pp. 515-16.

changes carry us back to the dawn of the dated Indian history, and at the same time it also puts forward the argument of state formation and the supremacy of brahmanical culture and hegemony. Archaeologically the earliest known history of the place can be traced to Sisupalgrah, the antiquity of which is established back to the period of third to fourth centuries BCE.⁴



Plate 1: Modern State of Odisha, India

II.2 Concept of *Tīrtha*

“There exists the holy *Ekāmra* forest equal to Varanasi in purity and sanctity; in all the three worlds there is no land as holy as the land Puruṣottama. The

⁴ K. C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1961, p. 179.

land of Śrī Puruṣottama is the holiest of all the sacred places; and the deity Śrī Puruṣottama is the Lord of all the divinities. □ It is true and very true that there is no place like Puruṣottama. Then what is the necessity of repeating and saying it again and again.”⁵

The Śaiva, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava monuments and the sites are spread over a vast area in the various localities and places of modern Bhubaneswar city, Puri, Konark and other districts of northern, central and southern Odisha. *Bhuvaneśvara* is one of the epithets of the *liṅga*, which is now called Liṅgarāja, enshrined in one of the biggest temples of Bhubaneswar city.⁶ The name ‘Bhubaneswar’ is also referred in the old revenue records of the locality.⁷ Thus the place derived its name from the presiding deity of the sacred space. As revenue settlement, Bhubaneswar covers almost the entire area around the Liṅgarāja temple, which is known as the ‘Old Town’.⁸ But according to Panigrahi, the breadth of the ancient city Bhubaneswar extended in a much wider area as witnessed by the location of Brahmeśvara temple.⁹

⁵ “*Vārāṇasyāḥ samaṁ tvasti kṣetrmekāmraḥkaṁ vanam
Puruṣākhyaṁ samaṁ kṣetraṁ nāsti trailokyamaṇḍale.
Sarveṣāṁ caiva kṣetrānām rājāśrīpuruṣottamah
Sarveṣāṁ caiva devānām rājāśrīpuruṣottamah.
Kiṁ cātra bahunoktena bhāṣitena punah punah
Satyaṁ satyaṁ punah satyaṁ kṣetraṁ na puruṣottamāt.*”

Kapila Samhitā, Pramila Mishra (trans.), New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 2005, ‘*Pañcamo Adhyāyah*’, verses 38-40, pp. 61-2.

⁶ G.N. Srivastava, *Ancient Settlement Pattern in Orissa: With Special Reference to Bhubaneswar*, Agam Kala Prakashan, New Delhi, 2006, p. 2. See also S.N. Rajguru, *Inscription of Orissa*, Vol. IV, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, 1966, pp. 244-52.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ N. Senapati (ed.), *Puri District Gazetteer*, Cuttak, 1977, pp. 708-12.

⁹ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1981, pp. 1-5.

An inscription originally attached to this temple speaks about the locality of the temple, which is *Ekāmra*, the other name of Bhubaneswar.¹⁰ The area of Bhubaneswar covers almost all the ancient sites and settlements, which will be discussed in this chapter. In the Purāṇic Sanskrit literature and in the descriptions of inscriptions, the sacred geographies of Ekāmra, Virajā and Jagannātha have been mentioned simultaneously. The circumferences of these sacred spaces have specifically been indicated inside the *Upa Purāṇas*. Sanskrit texts like *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, *Kapila Saṁhitā*, *Ekāmra Candrikā*, *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya* and *Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam* have mentioned these places in detail. Various descriptions found in *Skanda Purāṇa* regarding the Jagannātha *tīrtha kṣetra*, and *Nīlācala* as described in *Mādalā Pāñji* are some of the sources that focus light regarding these phenomena. An important text of late medieval period, *Svarṇādri Mahodaya* speaks about the boundary of Bhubaneswar as three *yojana* in each cardinal direction from the temple of Liṅgarāja.¹¹ The text further repeats the area of

¹⁰ S. N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. IV, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, 1966, pp. 244-52; also see P. Acharya, 'Brahmesvara temple Inscription of the time of Udyotakesri (Regnal Year 18)', *JARSB*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, Letters, 63-64, 1947, Calcutta, p. 70, this inscription states that the construction of Brahmesvara temple by Kolāvati Devī, the queen-mother of Uddyotakesari in the latter's regnal year 18 (1010-1065 CE). The verse twelve refers to the name of this temple as Brahmesvara and the site of its location has been called 'Siddhartīrtha Ekāmra'.

¹¹ *Svarṇādri Mahodaya*, Ratnakar Gargabatu (ed.), Calcutta, 1938, Chapter 1, Verses 28-9, and also see Snigdha Tripathy, 'Ekāmra-Bhubanesvara', *Odisha Historical Research Journal*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1 & 2, p. 152.

Legends from various texts trace the sanctity of this place, when there was a single mango tree with Śiva *liṅga* below it. This is the religious centre of Śaivism and although many changes occurred over the centuries, Bhubaneswar continues as a living centre of pilgrimage in Odisha. The Ekāmra *Kṣetra* or Ekāmra *Kānana* (forest) was much more extensive in dimension than the present temple town or 'old town'. It is believed to have extended from Khaṇḍācala (Khandagiri) on the west to Kuṇḍaleśvara on the east, from Valāhādevī on the north to Bahīrāṅgeśvara at the top of the Dhauligiri on the south. The

sacred and pious land and as the landmark or boundary, which is determining the limits on each direction.¹² *Ekāmra Caṇḍrikā* also confirms that the sacred area lying between Khaṇḍācala (Udayagiri- Khandagiri hill) on the west and Kuṇḍaleśvara temple (at village Tankāpāni, mentions in the inscription) on the east; and goddess *Varhīm* on the north and Vahiraṅgeśvara temple (at Dhauli hill) on the south.¹³

II.3 The Idea of Sacred Geography

The important sacred geography, development of religious institutions under various dynasties and the narratives from Purāṇic sources would reconstruct the history of these places. In previous chapter it has been discussed that how the expansion of monarchy reached to the tribal areas and forests facilitated by the worship of two mainstream brahmanical deities like Śiva and Puruṣottama Jagannātha and the institutionalization of their cults. The lands endowed to *brāhmaṇas* that helped the rulers of this period to establish their rule in the peripheral regions of the state will be analysed. The brahmanical claim to create hegemony in this region was partially fulfilled by creating sacred spaces or *kṣetras* or *tīrthas* in Puri and Bhubaneswar region. *Tīrthas* dedicated to Puruṣottama and Ekāmreśvara (Bhubaneswar) and these became the epicentres of the newly established political-religious power. The cults of the predominant brahmanical gods like Śiva and Viṣṇu got spread all over the region. The emergence of Virajā as one of the important Śākta goddesses also occurred during this time, and her *kṣetra* was established as one of the main *Śakti* seats

area is believed to be *maṇḍalākāra* (circular) in shape. See also P. Acharya, 'Studies in Orissan History', *Archaeology and Archives*, Cuttack, 1969, pp. 1-3.

¹² Ibid, p. 3.

¹³ Manamohan Mahapatra, *Traditional Structure and Changes in an Orissan Temple*, Punthi Pustak, Bhubaneswar, 1981, p. 8.

amongst these mainstream deities in early medieval Odisha.

The concept of *tīrtha* in the Indian context originates from the time when *Purāṇas*, *Upa Purāṇas*, *Sthala Māhātmyas* began to have composed during fourth century CE. The *Matsya Purāṇa* and *Vāyu Purāṇa* gave an estimate of 35 million *tīrthas* in the sky and on the earth.¹⁴ *Vāmana Purāṇa* also provides the same statistics regarding *tīrthas*. An approximate statistical estimate prepared by P.V. Kane tells the number of Purāṇic verses devoted entirely to the subject of *tīrthas* in the case of Odisha of that period, as found in *Agni Purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and in *Brahma Purāṇa*.¹⁵ In the *History of Dharmasastras* Kane mentioned *Puruṣottama kṣetra* discussed by Raghunanda.¹⁶ In the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the glorification of *Puruṣottama kṣetra* has been described.¹⁷ S.G. Moghe further narrates that in the Govindapura inscription there is a mention of *Puruṣottama tīrtha*.¹⁸ He states that the mention of *Guṇḍica* temple near Puri has been referred as the ‘summer house’ of *Puruṣottama*, which is again written in the *Brahma Purāṇa* and in *Kapila Samhitā*.¹⁹ It states,

“*Snānam jyeṣṭhāyām prakurvīthāh guṇḍicākhyam mahotsavam*”.²⁰

Other specialized studies on the subject based on specific *Purāṇas*, especially *Skanda*

¹⁴ S. G. Moghe, *Bhārataratna Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. P. V. Kane’s History of Dharma-Śāstra: In Essence*, MM Dr. P. V. Kane Memorial Trust, Mumbai, 2000, p. 502.

¹⁵ P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmashastras*, Vol. II, Pt. II, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1941, p. 106.

¹⁶ Moghe, *Kane’s History of Dharma-Śāstra*, p. 515.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 516.

¹⁹ Ibid; ‘Gundi’ means wood in Bengali language. Lord *Puruṣottama* has the wooden body; in that context the story of *Indradyumna*, who found a log of wood floating on the sea, is relevant.

²⁰ “Make arrangement for a ceremonial bath in the month of *jyeṣṭhā* and a great festival called *Guṇḍica*”, *Kapila Samhitā*, ‘*Caturtha Adhyāyah*’, p. 51.

Purāṇa, would further bear the testimony of the expansion and growth of these sacred places. According to *Skanda Purāṇa* a place in this world will be called *tīrtha*, when that would be restored by ‘good men’ and their merits.²¹

According to Diana L. Eck a *tīrtha* is considered to be a “crossing place”, in which many people cross over to achieve a heavenly relief.²² In her article though she has put stress on the ‘Hindu’ form of piety and salvation, but the author finally engaged her remark on the traditional form of ritual and pilgrimage. She has called the *tīrtha* “the locative form of religiousness”.²³ She argues that in this particular form the primary locus of the place or the *tīrtha* gains a much older status than the mythology or any deity attached to the place.²⁴ The meaning of a *tīrtha* is a sacred place enriched with the power of gods and goddesses and filled with purity. The process of bringing all of these cult centres together of a particular religious tradition through myth, icons, structures and symbols creates the panorama of sacred geography. Brahmanical cults created their own religious topography through the resonant links with other regional centres by putting in myths and legends evolving around this powerful cult. The cult of Jagannātha acquired a supreme status after the Gaṅgas made Jagannātha their state presiding deity, and after them the trend was followed by the Gajapatis in 14th century CE. The pilgrim networks expanded in the Gaṅga and post-Gaṅga periods when significant institutionalization of brahmanical cults, elaboration of state policy and changes in the temple ritual and festivals, incorporating manifold later Vedic and Āgamic practices, took place.

²¹ Moghe, *Kane’s History of Dharma-Śāstra*, p. 501.

²² Diana L. Eck, ‘India’s Tīrthas: “Crossings” in Sacred Geography’, *History of Religions*, 1981, pp. 323-24.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 323.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

II.4 *Purāṇas, Upa Purāṇas and Other Texts*

In the text *Kapila Samhitā*, Bharadvāja replied to the sages regarding the sanctity of “*Oḍradeśa*” that,

“The land of *Oḍra* the remover of all sins is extolled even by the gods. Listen to the glory of this land as related by me in detail. In that *Oḍra*-land, gods and the goddesses like Śrīkṛṣṇa, Sun (Arka), Pārvaṭī and Lord Śīva (Hara) reside for all time to come. A single sacred spot presided over by any of these gods and goddesses enables one to destroy all sins.”²⁵

The *Skanda Purāṇa* itself is brimming with such sections as *Simheśvara Māhātmya*, *Ekānāmeśa Māhātmya*, *Avanti Kṣetra Māhātmya* and *Puruṣottama Kṣetra Māhātmya*.²⁶ *Matsya Purāṇa* is considered to be one of the oldest *Purāṇas* composed. It mentions the seat of the deity Vimalā in *Puruṣottama Kṣetra*.²⁷ Amongst the later *Purāṇas*, namely *Viṣṇu*, *Agni*, *Padma*, *Nārada*, *Brahmā* and *Skanda*, we get

²⁵ “*Sarvapāpaharam deśamoḍremdevaistuvanditam*

Śṛṇudhvamkathymānam hivistareṇāsyabhodvijāh.

Tasminnoḍre sadā santi kṛṣṇānarkapārvaṭīharāh

Ekasyaikasya kṣetraṁ tu sarvapāpaprāṇāśanam.”

Kapila Samhitā, ‘*Dvītīya Adhyāyah*’, verses 2-3, p. 20.

²⁶ *Skanda Purāṇa* devotes the entire sixth chapter on ‘*Puruṣottama Māhātmya*’ with the graphic descriptions of the Utkala country. *Oḍra* or *Puruṣottama Ksetra* was a sacred and exalted province; see A. B. L. Awasthi, *Studies in Skanda Purāṇa*, Pt. I, Kailash Prakashan, Lucknow, 1965, pp. 79-80.

²⁷ V. S. Agrawala, *Matsya Purāṇa: A Study*, All-India Kashiraj Trust, Varanasi, 1953, pp. 105-07; in the ‘*Devī Tīrtha*’ section the author has made a list of all the predominant goddesses. There are 108 *Devī Pīṭhas* found all over the Indian sub-continent, as mentioned in the book. Author writes that this is the illustrative idea of the sacred spaces in which goddess Satī has become omnipresent. With the help of *Matsya* and *Padma Purāṇa*, the author was able to make the list of the goddesses, including Vimalā.

references to Vimalā and Jagannātha, the deity and place of his installation.²⁸ In an inscription by the Bhauma king Śubhākaradeva, the place Guhadevapāṭaka, which is described as a victorious camp, had been identified.²⁹ The cult of Śrī Puruṣottama Jagannātha has its deep root as non-Aryan or tribal features.³⁰ At the earliest phase of

²⁸ Asoke Chatterjee, *Padma Purāna: A Study*, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 97-8; see also H. H. Wilson, *The Vishnu Parana: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*, Vol. I, Trubner & Co., London, pp. XX-XXI, XXVIII, LXXIII.

²⁹ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 118-19; the place is five kilometer away from Virajā *kṣetra*, and an important seat for the Bhauma Kara as well as the Somavamśī rulers.

³⁰ *Savara* tradition in the cult of Lord Jagannātha has its connection with the legend of *Rājā* Indradyumna. It is mentioned in the *Uttara Khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāna* that *Rohini Kuṇḍa* is situated near *Kalpapaṭa* tree on the *Nīlakāṇḍār* of the country of *Oḍra*. The *Devatās* used to come at night to worship Lord Nīlamādhava every day. This news tempted the king Indradyumna to see Nīlamādhava. The king deputed his Brahmin priest Vidyāpati to *Oḍra Deśa* to collect information of Lord Viṣṇu. Coming to *Oḍra Deśa*, Vidyāpati took shelter in *Savara* village and made friendship with the family of chief concealing his identity and motive for coming to that place. On his repeated request the *Savara* chief got motivated and took him covering his eyes through a narrow track to a cave where Nīlamādhava was worshipped. On seeing Nīlamādhava, his eyes glittered. Vidyāpati secretly dropped mustard seeds on the ground on his way to see Nīlamādhava. After some days, plants from germinated seeds paved the way to the cave where Nīlamādhava was worshipped. Nobody except Vidyāpati could know this. Locating the route, he then returned to Avanti and informed the king Indradyumna about Nīlamādhava. The king with his forces, accompanied by Nārada, set out his journey to *Oḍra Deśa*. No sooner the king reached the boundary of *Oḍra* country, then he received the news about the disappearance of Nīlamādhava. Nārada assured him that the lord would appear in the form of *Dāru* (sacred wood). Lord Nīlamādhava made his appearance in a dream to the king and instructed him that Lord would appear in the form of *Dāru* (sacred wood) on the seashore. On the next day, the king got the information about the floating of *Dāru* on the seashore with four branches. Then the king brought it and placed it on a *Mahāvedī* with supreme care. At the time of discussion with Nārada about the construction of temples for deities, a voice from above announced and instructed him that the Lord himself will construct His own image and will appear on *Mahāvedī* after a fixed number of days, during which the door of the said room with *Dāru* should be shut up. An old carpenter with his instrument came and agreed to take up the work with the condition that he would be allowed to remain isolated and un-perturbed for a period of twenty-one days inside the temple. After fifteen days when no sound of construction of images came from the room, the king and queen, being impatient and doubtful, opened the door of the room and found that the images remained unfinished and the carpenter

the deity being worshipped, the God was represented, as a simple form of tree or *Dāru* and it may be that aboriginal *Savaras* of Eastern India worshipped him in the form of a wooden deity. Up to the early medieval period, Odisha continued to be a tribal dominated area. We have references of tribal chiefdoms in Odisha in the Edicts of Aśoka in 3rd century BCE.³¹ It is believed that there must be somewhere in early Odisha, wood or tree worship (*dāru*) was a common tradition, which continued till 3rd century CE. Scholars like J. Padhi, S.N Rajaguru have focused on Jagannātha's origin, again, in relation to the *Savara* tribes of south Odisha. K. C. Mishra and A. Eschman came forward with the discovery of several non-brahmanical religious relations between Jagannātha cult and religious practice of the *Konds* in Dhenkanal-Talcher region of Odisha.³² Puri emerges as a *tīrtha* having a supremely important epicenter since early part of 11th century CE, with the increasing process of ritual legitimization of the deity Lord Jagannātha as the *rāṣṭra devatā*.³³ Amongst the predominant brahmanical gods extensively portrayed in the mythologies as being instrumental in *tīrtha* formation were Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti. It can be pointed out that Viṣṇu with his placid and more popular aspects was portrayed through numerous incarnations. Some of them particularly carry those tribal or pastoral affiliations, such

had disappeared. The king worshipped the Lord Jagannātha, Balabhadra, Subhadrā. The tradition was associated with the worship of deities at Puruṣottama *kṣetra* with the name of Indradyumna. This popular story was narrated to me by a *Pāṇḍā* named Ajaya Misra inside the Jagannātha temple complex during my fieldwork in September-October, 2017, in Puri, Odisha. See also A. Eschmann, *The Cult of Jagannātha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 79-99; M. V. Satyanarayana, *Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam*, Andhra University Press, Visakhapatam, 1988, pp. 22-3, 32, 45, 48-9; A. B. L. Awasthi, *Studies in Skanda Purāṇa*, Pt. IV, Kailash Prakashan, Lucknow, 1976, pp. 35-6, 43.

³¹ Romila Thapar, *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, University of California, California, 2002, pp. 22-3,

³² Eschmann, *The Cult of Jagannātha*.

³³ D. C. Sircar 'Nagari Plates of Anaṅgabhīma III', in B. CH. Chhabra (ed.), *EI* Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, pp. 235-58.

as Nṛsiṃha, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Dattātreyā, Puruṣottama etc. These forms naturally carried a close affinity to those aboriginal groups that subscribed to those cults. For instance, we find that Kṛṣṇa had special affiliations with the pastoral tribes like the *Yādavas*. Similarly a special relationship could have existed between Jagannātha and the *Savaras*.³⁴

During 12th century CE, the temple city of Puri might have assumed the greatest prominence under the rule of the Imperial Gaṅgas, which started from 1078 and extended up to the first half of fifteenth century CE. The present magnificent temple of Puruṣottama Jagannātha was erected during this period by Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga. But Jagannātha temple got its stature and became more organized during the rule of Anaṅgabhīma III (1211-1238 centuries CE).³⁵ As a king, Anaṅgabhīma III regarded Puruṣottama as a real sovereign of his kingdom.³⁶ The king in return became his *rauṭṭa* or the representative of the state.³⁷ He bestowed himself a few royal titles like *Paramabhaṭṭāraka*, *Puruṣottama putra* and *Durgāputra* during his reign.³⁸ *Mādalā Pāñji* also states that other Gaṅga kings like Bhānudeva I, Narasiṃhadeva II, Bhānudeva II had made all efforts to make Puri as chief religious centre in the following ruling years.³⁹ During the rule of Sūryavaṃśī and Gajapatis from 1435 to 1540 CE, powerful kings like Kapilendradeva, Puroṣottamadeva and

³⁴ *Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam* by Jāminī Ṛṣi, M.V. Satya Narayana (trans.), Andhra University Press, Visakhapatnam, 1988.

³⁵ Sircar, 'Nāgari Plates', *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 235-58.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Mādalā Pāñji*, Arun Kumar Mohanty (ed.), Krishnachandra Bhuyan (trans.), Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2010.

Pratāparudradeva ruled from Puri, affording protection from invasions.⁴⁰ Devotees like Saralā Dāsa and Caitanya Mahāprabhu during 15th century CE got much patronage for propagating the Jagannātha cult in eastern India.⁴¹ The mention of anecdotes concerning the images being made of *Dāru* or wood found floating on the Bay of Bengal were composed by poet Saralā Dāsa (1435-66 CE) in his *Odia Mahābhārata*.⁴² *Skanda Purāṇa* also showed the awareness of the authors of the texts to establish connection of the worship of Lord Jagannātha with the region.⁴³

II.5 Brahmanical *Kṣetras*

In early medieval period, Bhubaneswar emerged as the major centre for Śaivism and was known through various names, such as Ekāmra, Ekāmra *Kānana*, Ekāmra *Kṣetra* etc. Many Sanskrit texts provide evidence about the sanctity of the Ekāmra *Kṣetra*. The *Maṣṭya Purāṇa* refers to Ekāmra and its chief goddess Kīrtimati.⁴⁴ She could be goddess Pārvatī, who is described in the *Ekāmra Purāṇam* as Kīrttirūpā.⁴⁵ The *Brahma Purāṇa*, however, provides an interesting detail about its territorial extent,

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ravi M. Gupta, *The Chaitanya Vaishnava Vedanta of Jiva Gosvami: When Knowledge Meets Devotion*, Routledge, USA, 2007, p. 121.

⁴² Sachidananda Behera, 'Daru Bramha Purusottam as Depicted in 'Sarala Mahabharata'', *Orissa Review*, July 2005, pp. 97-8; see also, *Saralā Mahābhārata*, A. B. Mohanty (ed.), *Vana Parva*, Pt. II, Utkal University, 1946.

⁴³ Awasthi, *Studies in Skanda Purāṇa*, Kailash Prakashan, New Delhi, 1965, pp. 25, 44.

⁴⁴ Agrawala, *Matsya Purāṇa: A Study*, pp. 105-07.

⁴⁵ *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, U.N. Dhal (ed.), Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1986, Chapter-36, 46, pp. 57-84, pp. 92-119.

temples, garden, houses, streets and beautiful women.⁴⁶ The area of Ekāmra *Kṣetra* comprises of two-and-half *yojanas*. The *Kṣetra* is said to have evolved from a single mango tree. Its presiding deity is mentioned as Kīrttivāsa.⁴⁷ The *Purāṇa* mentions the sacred tank *Bindusāgar*, *Kapila tīrtha*, and the *Śivaliṅga* called Bhāskareśvara. To explain the religious merit of the *Bindusāgar*, *Kapila Samhitā* writes that

“Since then the person engaged in religious observance, O sages, should everyday take a bath in the best of the lakes i.e., *Bindusarovara* and daily have a view of Lord Śiva (*Kṛtivāsas*, the god covered with a skin).”⁴⁸

This excellent *Kṣetra*, containing one crore *Śivaliṅga*, is considered as sacred as Varanasi. The devotee, who sees the presiding *Śivaliṅga* of *Kṣetra*, Devī Pārvatī, Kārtikeya, Gaṇeśa, Vṛṣabha and *Kalpadruma*, attains *Śivaloka*.⁴⁹

The Śiva *Purāṇa* refers to numerous *Śivaliṅgas* in Indian subcontinent. It mentions Kīrttivāseśvara, Kedāreśvara and Bhubaneśvara etc.⁵⁰ Kīrttivāseśvara either belongs to Varanasi or Bhubaneswar. But the mention of Bhubaneśvara is no other than the presiding *Śivaliṅga* of Ekāmra *Kṣetra*.⁵¹ This mentions Bhubaneswar in the land of

⁴⁶ K.S. Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple of Bhubaneswar: Art and Cultural Legacy*, IGNC & Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2008, pp. 3-10.

⁴⁷ Ibid. See also K. C. Panigrahi ‘Three Temple Inscriptions from Bhubaneswar’, (ed.), *OHRJ*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 97-105.

⁴⁸ “*Tatah pratidinam viprah snanam kuryat hradottame*

Darśanam pratyaham kuryad vratī śrīkṛtivāsasam.”, *Kapila Samhitā*, ‘*Aṣṭādaśa Adhyāyah*’, pp. 249-50.

⁴⁹ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, IGNC & Aryan Books International, 2008.

⁵⁰ *Śiva Purāṇa*, J. L. Shastri (ed. & trans.), Pt. IV, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2002, p. 1632.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Puruṣottama as the bestowers of *Siddhi*.⁵² The *Śiva Purāṇa* describes the greatness of Ekāmra *Kṣetra* and Liṅgarāja *Tribhubaneśvara*.⁵³ In course of time the Ekāmra *Kṣetra* became a major centre of Śaivism and attracted many pilgrims. Several *Sthala Māhātmyas* were written to describe its sanctity.⁵⁴ Amongst such works *Ekāmra Purāṇa*, *Ekāmra Candrikā* and *Svarṇādri Mahodaya* deserve special mention.⁵⁵ These texts describe in detail the temples, the legends around them, sacred tanks and the notable festivals taking place in Bhubaneswar.⁵⁶ These orthodox texts mention several shrines inside the Liṅgarāja and many temple compounds. These texts cannot be precisely dated, but they contain traditional accounts of much earlier period than their actual date of composition.⁵⁷ These texts were composed around fourteenth century CE. The textual analysis of these above mentioned three texts suggests that the *Ekāmra Purāṇam* is possibly the earlier one and it was followed by *Svarṇādri Mahodaya* and *Ekāmra Candrikā* respectively. R. C. Hazra believed that the *Ekāmra Purāṇam* was composed between 950 and 1150 CE.⁵⁸ But K.C. Panigrahi⁵⁹ on the basis of reference to Ananta Vāsudeva temple, which was built in 1278 CE, places the text in the 13th century CE.⁶⁰

II.5.1 Ekāmra Kṣetra:

In Purāṇic literature Bhubaneswar, the new capital of Odisha is known as Ekāmra

⁵² *Śiva Purāṇa*, J. L. Shastri (ed. & trans.), Pt. III, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2002, p. 1264.

⁵³ *Śiva Purāṇa*, Pt. IV, ibid. See also, Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 6-9.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, pp. 69-85.

⁵⁶ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ R. C. Hazra, 'A work of Orissa', *Poona Orientalist*, Vol. XVI, No. 14, p. 70.

⁵⁹ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 22-3.

⁶⁰ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 9-11.

Kṣetra or the place that has a single mango tree (*Ekāmra vṛkṣa*).⁶¹ This is one of the important regions in the sacred geography of early medieval India. Bhubaneswar got the name *Ekāmra* due to the presence of a *Śiva liṅga* at the root of a mango grove with multitude of branches. And Bhubaneswar inherited its name from the presiding deity of the region Tribhuvaneśvara. The idea behind calling the deity Liṅgarāja is related to the gigantic structure of the *liṅga* representation inside the *garbhagrha* of the respective temple. On the basis of the monumental establishments, it became one of the important centres of Śaivism. From the authoritative Sanskrit literary works, the place was known by different names, such as *Svarṇādri*, *Ekāmra Kṣetra Gupta Kāśī*, and *Cakra Kṣetra* etc.⁶² However, the account of its geographical location is given in the *Ekāmra Purāṇam* where Śiva explains to Brahmā:

“There is a dense forest on the bank of the south sea, uninhabited by human beings, devoid of any other hermitage. It is invincible and terrifying. In that sylvan area lies my favorite abode in a mountain called Hemakuta.”⁶³

This is also corroborated by another reference contained in *Svarṇādri Mahodaya* where Śiva says,

“in the forest of *Ekāmra*, there lies a mountain called *Svarṇakūṭādri*, on the peak of which is the manifestation of the absolute *Brahmaṇ*.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, p. 1.

⁶² *Ibid*.

⁶³ “*Dakṣiṇāsyo dadhūtīre nīrjane gahanevane
Duhsamacāre mahāmahime prabrteanāsrame
Hemakūṭaitikhyāto matpriyah parvatottamah.*”, *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, ‘*Ekādaśa Adhyāya*’, pp. 85-6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

Attributed to Sūrya, the *Ekāmra Purāṇam* mentions the *Māhātmya* of Kapilendradeva (1435-67 CE).⁶⁵ The *Svarṇādri Mahodaya* quotes identical verses from the *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, which also matches with *Svarṇādri Mahodaya* and *Ekāmra Candrikā*. These *Sthala Māhātmyas* collectively focus light on the religious and cultural milieu of the Ekāmra *Kṣetra* or Bhubaneswar and its numerous temples.⁶⁶ *Kapila Samhitā* is another important work on the sacred geography of Bhubaneswar, which describes the four important religious centres of Odisha dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, Arka, Pārvatī and Hara.⁶⁷ These centres are in Puri, for the worship of Kṛṣṇa Jagannātha cult; Konark for the worship of Sun god or Sūrya; Virajā at Jajpur for the worship of *Devī* and Ekāmra, in Bhubaneswar for the worship of Śiva.⁶⁸ The section devoted to Ekāmra *Kṣetra* throw light on the iconic temples, rituals and festivals of Bhubaneswar region.

The text provides evidence that in the 15th -16th centuries CE Bhubaneswar happened to be one of the vibrant centres of pilgrimage. The *Tīrtha Cintāmani* of Vācaspati Miśra (composed around 15th century CE) includes Ekāmra *Kṣetra* as an important centre of pilgrimage.⁶⁹ It quotes few verses from the *Brahma Purāṇa* to prove its legitimacy.⁷⁰ In the *Odia Mahābhārata* of Saralā Dāsa (around 15th century CE) one can notice that the legends about *Kīrtti* and *Vāsa* have been mentioned.⁷¹ Several names of the temples such as Ekāmbaranātha, Kedāreśvara, Mukteśvara,

⁶⁵ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*.

⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁷ *Kapila Samhitā*, ‘Dvītīya Adhyāya’, pp. 20-1.

⁶⁸ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 8-12.

⁶⁹ *Tīrtha Cintāmani* of Vācaspati Miśra, Kamalakrishna Smrititirtha (ed.), Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1912.

⁷⁰ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 8-12.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Sukhmeśvara, Yameśvara have been stated as well.⁷² Saralā Dāsa mentions that *Ekāmra vana* had fifty-two crores of *Śivaliṅgas* situated and the Liṅgarāja was the most excellent of them.⁷³

Other Sanskrit texts on the Ekāmra *Kṣetra* are *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, *Ekāmra Candrikā* and *Kapila Samhitā*. These texts mirror the idea regarding the contemporary religiosity and traditions of Bhubaneswar.⁷⁴ The sacred geography of this *Kṣetra* along with temples is very clearly described on the basis of these texts. Ekāmra *Kṣetra* is considered to be in circular or *Maṇḍalākāra* shape, according to the *Ekāmra Purāṇam*.⁷⁵ The other concept associated with the Ekāmra *Kṣetra* is about the eight divisions or *āyatanas*.⁷⁶ It suggests that the text was following the *aṣṭamūrti* or the eight forms of Śiva Tribhuvaneśvara.⁷⁷ The term *āyatana* referred in this context, means a place, abode, or a sanctuary.⁷⁸ The concept of *āyatanas* is found in all the above-mentioned three texts. In some temples, as in the *Svarṇādrī Mahodaya*, there is apparent confusion and overlapping of the names of *liṅgas*.⁷⁹ In the narration of the eight *āyatanas*, the *Ekāmra Candrikā* has elaborated on it, and in the later part *Kapila Samhitā* followed it too.⁸⁰ According to the above mentioned texts, first *āyatana* of

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, chapter 24.

⁷⁶ Ibid; also see R. L. Mitra, *The Antiquities of Odisha*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 99-166.

⁷⁷ *Ekāmra Purāṇam*, chapter 5, 6.

⁷⁸ Jan Gonda, *The Meaning of Sanskrit Term Āyatana*, The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Madras, 1969, pp.1-79.

⁷⁹ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 11-4.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Ekāmra *Kṣetra* contains *Bindusāgara*, Ananta Vasūdeva temple, *Devī pādahāra*, Trithēśvara and Tribhuvaneśvara.⁸¹

The second *āyatana* of this text writes about the temple of Mitreśvara, Varuṇeśvara, Īśāneśvara, Yameśvara and Ugreśvara.⁸²

“There exists the pool known as Kāpila-kuṇḍa which endows one with the merit of taking a dip in all the Tīrthas. Having paid a visit to this Kāpila-kuṇḍa and taken a dip there, one attains imperishable religious merit. In the northern direction there is present Ugreśvara-liṅga who is the lord of eleven lakhs of liṅgas. By paying a visit to him (Ugreśvara-liṅga) with regards, one attains eleven lakhs of desired objects.”⁸³

Tīrtha is mentioned as well; e.g. Pāpanāśinī *kuṇḍa*.⁸⁴ The third *āyatana* includes the *tīrthas* of Gaṅgā and Yamunā and a Śiva *liṅga* called Gaṅgeśvara.⁸⁵ According to *Kapila Saṁhitā*:

“Lord Yameśvara is also present there in the North-west direction. A person who is fortunate to get a view of Yameśvara, O sages, is not affected by the tortures inflicted by Yama (upon sinners after death). In front of Yameśvara there exists a very sacred tīrtha called Pāapanāśana

⁸¹ *Ekāmra Candrikā*, Nilamni Misra (ed.), Kederanatha Gabeshana Pratisthana, Bhubaneswar, 1995, Chapter 5, pp. 24-6.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ “*Tatra śrī kāpilam kuṇḍam sarvatīrthe phalapradam
Tasmīn snātvā ca tam dr̥ṣṭvādyakṣyam phalamālabhet
Tatra ugreśvaram liṅgam kouverīḍisamāsthitam
Daśalakṣaikalakṣāṇām liṅgānām prabhureva sah
Tam dr̥ṣṭvā prītiyuktena lakṣaikādaśamāpnuyāt.*”, *Kapila Saṁhitā*, ‘*Trayodaśa Adhyāya*’, p. 177.

⁸⁴ *Ekāmra Candrikā*, *ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

(the destroyer of sins). Just by taking a dip in the waters of the tīrtha (Pāapanāśana) all the sins are destroyed.”⁸⁶

The fourth *āyatana* has mentioned several *Śivaliṅgas* in *Ekāmra*, such as Koṭīśvara, Svarṇajāleśvara, Suparṇajāleśvara, Siddheśvara, Mukteśvara, Kedāreśvara, Rudraliṅga, Māruteśvara, Daityeśvara and Indreśvara.⁸⁷ The *Kapila Saṁhitā* states;

“*Vistareṇa samākhyāhi kṣetramāhātmyamuttamam*

Vāsudevasya māhātmyam koṭilingeśvarasya tu”.⁸⁸

The *tīrthas*, which are closely associated with the *Śivaliṅgas* are *koṭi tīrtha*, *siddha kuṇḍa* and *gaurī kuṇḍa*.⁸⁹ In the text, the fifth *āyatana* speaks about the shrines of Brahmeśvara, Madhyameśvara⁹⁰ and Jaṭileśvara, situated beside the *Brahmā kuṇḍa*.

“Further, on the bank of that river Gandhavatī there is the symbol of Lord Śiva which was previously adored by Lord Brahmā; known as Brahmeśvara, this divinity confers the world of Brahman on the devotees”.⁹¹

⁸⁶ “*Yameśvarastu tatrāste mārutim diśamāsthitaḥ*

Tam paśyantam naram viprā yamadaṇḍo na vādhatē

Tasyāgre paramam tīrtham pāpanāśanasamjñakam

Pāpāni vilayaṁ yānti tajjale snānamātrataḥ.”, *Kapila Saṁhitā*, ‘*Caturdaśa Adhyāya*’, p. 178.

⁸⁷ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 14-5.

⁸⁸ *Kapila Saṁhitā*, ‘*Trayodaśa Adhyāya*’, p. 147.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, and also see *Ekāmra Candirkā*.

⁹⁰ “*Tatrai vāmrātakeśastu madhyameśvara eva ca*”, *Kapila Saṁhitā*, ‘*Caturdaśa Adhyāya*’, p. 175.

⁹¹ “*Tasyāstīre punarliṅgam brahmaṇārādhitam purā*

Brahmeśvaramiti khyātam brahmalokapradāyakam.”, *Kapila Saṁhitā*, ‘*Saptadaśa Adhyāya*’, p. 226.

According to the texts, the next *āyatana* contains *liṅgas* and *tīrthas* together; like Megheśvara along with *Megha kuṇḍa*, Bhāskareśvara and its associated *Kuṇḍas* and *kapālamocana Śiva*. “There are different images of Śiva *liṅga* known as Bhāskareśa, Megheśa, Gokarṇeśvara, Svarṇajāleśvara and Svarṇakūṭeśvara.”⁹²

The seventh *āyatana* mentions the Śiva *liṅgas*, such as Ālābukeśvara with Ālābu *tīrtha*, Uttareśvara and Bhīmeśvara on the bank of Gangua.⁹³ The eighth *āyatana* on Ekāmra *Kṣetra* writes about the temple of Rāmeśvara along with Rāma *kuṇḍa*, Śīteśvara, Bharateśvara, Lakṣmaṇeśvara and Śatrughneśvara respectively.⁹⁴

Eight *tīrthas* are respectively mentioned in Ekāmra *Kṣetra*, which are *Bindu tīrtha*, Pāpanāśinī *kuṇḍa*, Gaṅgā-Yamunā *tīrtha*, *Koṭi tīrtha*, Brahma *kuṇḍa*, *Megha tīrtha* and Rāma *kuṇḍa*.⁹⁵ Amongst these *tīrthas*, *Bindusarovara* is the excellent one.⁹⁶ Behera has mentioned in his work that after taking bath in the *Bindu tīrtha*, a devotee should visit Puruṣottama at Ananta Vāsudeva temple, *Devī pādaharā*, and Tribhubaneśvara or Liṅgarāja. *Kapila Saṁhitā* describes:

“A man who after taking a dip in the lake Bindusarovara pays a visit to Lord Śiva (the bull-embled god), released from all sins is merged in the body of Lord Śiva.

And there on its bank exists, O eminent sages, a *tīrtha* Devī-Pādaharā.

⁹² *Bhāskareśam ca megheśam gokarṇeśvarasamjñakam Svarṇajāleśvaram liṅgam svarṇakūṭeśvaram*”, *Kapila Saṁhitā*, ‘*Caturdaśa Adhyāya*’, p. 175.

⁹³ “*Punastasyāṣṭe viprā liṅgam bhīmeśvara smṛtam*”, *ibid*, p. 227.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, chapters Six, Thirteen, Fifteen, Eighteen, Nineteen, Twenty-one.

⁹⁵ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 13-5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*.

By visiting that shrine and offering worship there a man attains happiness.

The *tīrtha* is known as Devī-Pādaharā as Lord Śiva exists on the feet of the goddess (Pārvatī). After taking a dip in that *tīrtha* one should pay a visit to Devī-Pādaharā. And then one should pay a visit to Lord Śiva (the great lord).

Goddess Pādaharā bestows happiness on the people. O sages, this goddess is evidently the second embodiment of Liṅgarāja.

A man who takes a dip in the sacred lake Bindusarovara and visits the propitious goddess Pādaharā by offering adoration in that *tīrtha* is freed of all sins.

After taking a dip in the Bindusarovara, if one visits Lord Puruṣottama and later on goddess Pādaharā, one secures imperishable rewards.

The god of gods, the lord of the universe and the master of the three worlds, i.e., Lord Śiva existing in the form of a *liṅga* and known as Tribhuvaneśvara grants liberation to the person who pays him a visit.

A man who pays a visit to Lord Viṣṇu (the spouse of Sri i.e., goddess Lakṣmī) and Lord Śiva (the god who confers happiness) after taking a dip in the, most famous *tīrtha* (Bindusarovara) goes to the abode of Viṣṇu seated on a chariot moving as per his will.”⁹⁷

⁹⁷ “*Bindūdbhave narah snātvā yah paśyed vṛṣabhadhvajam*

Sarvapāpavinirmuktah śivadehe pralīyate.

Taṭe tasya dvijaśreṣṭha devī pādaharā śrutā

In the texts it is also mentioned that after taking bath in Pāpanāsinī *kuṇḍa*, the devotees must visit Mitreśvara and Varuṇeśvara temples respectively.⁹⁸ The twin *tīrthas* of Gaṅgā and Yamunā are associated with these temples. The *Koṭi tīrtha* is associated with the *kuṇḍas* like Brahmā *kuṇḍa* with Brahmeśvara; Megha *tīrtha* with Megheśvara; and Rāmeśvara.⁹⁹ The Rāma *kuṇḍa* is called *Aśoka-jhara*. The *Kapila Samhitā* narrates that “In the western direction of this *liṅga* there is the sacred pool, dispeller of all sins, known as Aśoka-jhara originating from the great sacrifice. In the entire earth there is no other sacred pool which is more auspicious than the Aśoka-jhara. By taking a dip there, one attains the world of Śiva. One who meditating on Lord Śiva in one’s heart takes a dip in that famous pool (Aśoka-jhara) specially on the eighth day of the bright fortnight is never tainted in sins.”¹⁰⁰

Tām dṛṣṭvā pūjayitvā ca narastu sukhmedhate.
Pāde devyā haro yasmāt pādaharā śrutā
Tatra snātvā ca tām dṛṣṭvā paścātpaśyenmeśvaram.
Yāosou pādahrā devī narāṇām sukhadāyini
Dvitiya viṅrahaśceyaṁ liṅgarājasya bho dvijāḥ.
Snātvā vindūdbhave tīrthe dṛṣṭvā pādaharām śubhām
Tasmātīrthe ca saṁpūjya naro mucyate pātakāt.
Bindūtīrthe narah snātvā dṛṣṭvā śrīpuruṣottamam
Devīm pādahrām dṛṣṭvā dyakṣayaṁ phalamālabhet.
Yastu paśyati talliṅgam nāmnā tribhuvaneśvaram
Devadevo jagat svāmī tasya muktīm prayacchati.
Tasmin tīrthavare snātvā dṛṣṭvā śrīdharaśaṅkarou
Kāmagenā vimānena vaiṣṇavaṁ padamāpnuyāt.”
Kapila Samhitā, ‘Dvādaśa Adhyāya’, pp. 143-45.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ “*Tatrādhvavarodbhūtvām tasya liṅgasya paścime*
Aśokajharavikhyātām tīrthe pāpaprāṇāśanam.
Nāśokādadhikam tīrthamastyatra pṛthivītale
Yatra snātvā naro viprā śivalokam ca gacchati.
Yah snāti tatra surabhou dhyātvā hr̥di maheśvaram

These Sanskrit texts also located the seats of eight *Caṇḍīs* in the same *Kṣetra*. *Svarṇādri Mahodaya* and *Ekāmra Candrikā* have referred to these eight *Caṇḍīs*; they are Rāmāyaṇī, Kapālinī, Mohinī, Vindhyāgā or Vindhyavāsinī, Ambikā, Dvāravāsinī, Uttareśvarī and Gaurī.¹⁰¹ *Caṇḍikās* are placed on the four sides of the *Bindusāgara*.¹⁰² These sides are referred as: in the east *Dvāravāsinī*, in the western part Ambikā, on the northern bank Uttareśvarī and Gaurī, and on the southern side are Mohinī and Vindhyāga.¹⁰³

II.6 Inscriptions as Sources

The Purāṇic literary sources have focused their views on the sacred geographical spaces. Furthermore, the earliest epigraphic sources as well talked about *Ekāmra*.¹⁰⁴ It is first mentioned and to be found in the Gupta year 280, which is 600 Common Era.¹⁰⁵ The inscription belonged to the Vighraha dynasty and mentioned a *maṭha* of *Maṇināgeśvara bhaṭṭāraka* of *Ekāmbaka*.¹⁰⁶ This datum evidently represents Ekāmra or Ekāmra derived from the word *Ekāmbaka*. This suggests that Ekāmra, as the ancient name of modern day Bhubaneswar, was already known by that name during 6th and 7th centuries CE.¹⁰⁷ There is another inscriptional evidence that a ruler

Śuklāṣṭmyām viśeṣeṇa sa pāpeṣu na līyate”, *Kapila Samhitā*, ‘*Pañcadaśo Adhyāya*’, pp. 182-82

¹⁰¹ See *Svarṇādri Mahodaya*, Ratankara Garabatu (ed.), Calcutta, 1912.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Behera, *The Lingarāja Temple*, pp. 10-5.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 3; and see also D.C. Sircar (ed.), *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, pp. 330-31.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ D. C. Sircar, ‘Two Plates from Kanas’, in B. CH. Chhabra (ed.), *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, pp. 329-

34. □

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

named Śāntikaradeva who was presumably a feudatory chief of the Bhauma Karas, came to Ekāmra for the purpose of pilgrimage and at the bank of Bindusarovara donated a piece of land to a *brāhmaṇa* in his own territory of *Yamagārtta Maṇḍala*.¹⁰⁸ This fact proves that Bhubaneswar acted as the sacred space dedicated to lord Śiva and came to prominence as a centre of pilgrimage or *tīrtha*.

The Brahmeśvara temple donated by the Somavamśī queen Kolāvātī Devī, bears an inscription of 11th century CE, that mentions the building of Brahmeśvara temple at *Ekāmra Siddhārtha*.¹⁰⁹ During the 13th century CE Ekāmra became one of the well-known *kṣetras* amongst the other *tīrthas* of Indian sub-continent. A commemorative inscription of Ananta Vāsudeva temple in again Bhubaneswar, records that the temple was built by Candrikā Devī, who was a sister of the king Narasiṃha I of Eastern Gaṅga dynasty in the Śaka year 1200 (1278 CE).¹¹⁰ According to the inscription, the temple was erected on the bank of Bindusāgara or *sarovara* at Ekāmra. The inscription furthermore writes that the presiding deity of the *kṣetra* is called Kṛttivāsa and the temple is said to have been located near the *Gandhasindhu*, which represents, a variant form of river *Gandhāvātī*, identical with the small river called Gangua.¹¹¹ In *Kapila Saṃhitā*, *Gandhavātī* or Gangua is mentioned as:

¹⁰⁸ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 3-8; see also *OHRJ*, Vol. XIII, pp. 1-14.

¹⁰⁹ P. Acharya, 'Brahmesvara Temple Inscription of King Uddyotakesari', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Letters Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1947, p. 72, and also see *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VII, pp. 557-62.

¹¹⁰ Lionel D. Barnett, 'Bhubaneswar Inscription in the Royal Asiatic Society', in Sten Konow and F.W. Thomas (eds.), *EI*, Vol. XIII, 1915-16, pp. 150-55.

¹¹¹ P. Acharya, 'The Commemorative Inscription of the Ananta-Vāsudeva Temple of Bhuvaneshwar (Rectification of a century-old mistake)', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 3, 1939, pp. 287-318; also read that the Gandhavati or Gangua is a local stream in Bhubaneswar, which has two main sources. These two sources are known as major Gangua and shorter Gangua, which is cumulatively now called as Gangua 'drain'. This small channel flows nearby the town Bhubaneswar.

“*Tato gandhavatīnāmnī gaṅgā tatra viṣṛjya ca*”^{112 113}

In most of the early medieval inscriptions of Odisha, the presiding deity of the Ekāmra *Kṣetra* is called Kṛttivāsa or Kīrttivāsa.¹¹⁴ Thus the sacred place was called Kīrttivāsa *Kaṭaka*, which is also mentioned in the inscription of the Gajapati king Puruṣottamadeva.¹¹⁵ But it was not possible to trace from when the *tīrtha* of Ekāmra was given the name Bhubaneswar. An inscription found in the Liṅgarāja temple complex issued by Virocoḍa in 12th century CE mentions the presiding deity as Tribhuvanadhīśvara or the Lord of the three worlds.¹¹⁶ Subsequently the name of the deity Bhubaneśvara became more popular than Kīrttivāsa. In an Odia inscription by Puruṣottamadeva, the presiding deity of the temple is mentioned as

This channel originates from Gadakan and major Gangua has its source in the hilly tract to the west of Mancheswar, some 9.6 km. north of Sisupalgarh. From Sisupalgarh it flows further 11.2 km. in south-south-west-south direction and joins the river Daya. The shorter Gangua stream which initially flows in east-South orientation near Kedāra-Gaurī becomes fully south oriented after covering a distance of one kilometre or more, turn almost in right angle towards west and runs the same distance in that direction. Here, it encircles the localities of Bhubasuni and Kapileswar, then again turns southwards where it meets the major Gangua, here both the courses run almost parallel. It is a noteworthy point that whereas the shorter Gangua inspired the rise of Ekāmra-Bhubaneswar, the major Gangua was exploited by the occupants of the fortified settlement of Sisupalgarh, in Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, (1961) pp. 21, 135, 216; see also Piyush Das, *Memory of a Stream: Gandhabati*, Copal Publishing Group, New Delhi, 2016; also see G.N. Srivastava, *Ancient Settlement Pattern in Orissa*, (2006), p. 65, and see also the map, in source: <http://wikimapia.org/17829951/Gangua-drain>

¹¹² *Kapila Samhitā*, ‘*Ṣoḍaśa Adhyāya*’, p. 208.

¹¹³ For the origin of river *Gandhavatī*, *Kapila Samhitā* explains that;

“*Kānanodbhavapuspāṇām ketakīnām latāntare*

Keśarāṇām ca padmānām campakānām viśeṣate.

Phalānām vāyusamsargād gandhalābhād mahītale

Nāmnā ganghavatī gaṅge bhavaikāmravane śubhe.”, *ibid*, p. 215.

¹¹⁴ Srivastava, *Ancient Settlement Pattern in Orissa*, pp. 11-3.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, and see also *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. LXII, 1893.

¹¹⁶ S.N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. III, Pt. I, OSM, Bhubaneswar, p. 67.

Bhubaneśvaradeva or Bhubaneśvara or Bhubaneśvara *līṅga*.¹¹⁷ In 15th century CE Saralā Dāsa, the composer of the *Odia Mahābhārata*, mentions Bhubaneswar *tīrtha* in the *Vana Parva* in the context of killing of two demons Kīrtti and Vāsa at the *vana* (Ekāmra *vana*).¹¹⁸ Within the internal course of centuries, the city named after deity Bhubaneśvara, came to be known as Bhubaneswar. Bhubaneswar as a name of the sacred city had already been popular by the end of 17th century CE.¹¹⁹ This is suggested by a 17th century Sanskrit text, called *Ṣaṭpañcasaddeśavibhāga*, which forms a part of the *Śaktisaṅgama Tantra*.¹²⁰ Bhubaneswar became popular, although Ekāmra *Kṣetra* as the name of the temple town was not altogether replaced from the sacred memory.¹²¹ Bhubaneswar one of the supreme *tīrthas* evokes the glory of the Ekāmra *Kṣetra*. That was not entirely to be rediscovered, but remains as a living heritage and gets displayed through the temples and other antiquarian objects, places and fame.¹²²

Bhubaneswar came under the rule of the Imperial or Eastern Gaṅgas of *Kaliṅga* around 12th century CE. The Liṅgarāja temple bears an inscription of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅgadeva (1078-1147 CE).¹²³ The inscriptions of the Gaṅga rulers are to be found at Bhubaneswar in several temples, such as the *jagamohana* of the Liṅgarāja, Kedāreśvara, Megheśvara and Ananta Vāsudeva. The Gaṅga rule was followed by the

¹¹⁷ S. Tripathy, 'Ekāmra-Bhubaneswar', *OHRJ*, Vol. XXXIII, 1987, p. 149.

¹¹⁸ K. C. Panigrahi, *Sarala Dasa*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1975, see also *Saralā Mahābhārta*, A.B. Mohanty (ed.), 'Vanaparva', Part-II, Utkal University, 1946.

¹¹⁹ D.C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971, pp. 75.

¹²⁰ Ibid, *Śaktisaṅgama Tantra* is a 17th century text; *Śaktisaṅgama Tantra*, Benoytosh Bhattacharyya (ed.), Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1932, 1947.

¹²¹ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 3-8.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ S.N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. III, Pt. II, OSM, Bhubaneswar, 1961-62, p. 302.

rule of the Somavaṁśī kings. According to traditions of the *Mādalā Pāñji*, Kapilendradeva (around 15th century CE) had his coronation at Kṛttivāsa-*Kaṭaka*, i.e., Bhubaneswar.¹²⁴ Inscriptions of Kapilendradeva¹²⁵ and his successor Puruṣottamadeva¹²⁶ (around 1467-97 CE) are found on the *jagamohana* of the Liṅgarāja temple. According to the local tradition, a mound on the southwest of the Liṅgarāja temple represents the remains of a royal palace. Bhubaneswar happened to have continued as an important religious and cultural centre during the Somavaṁśī period. While Pratāparudradeva was ruling at the region, Śrī Caitanya came to Puri during that period.¹²⁷ He spent nearly eighteen years of his life and also died at Puri. On his way to Puri he is said to have worshipped Liṅgarāja after taking bath in the Bindusāgara as he believed in the Hari-Hara cult.¹²⁸ The major biographies of Śrī Caitanya, such as *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* refer to his visit to Liṅgarāja temple, but later works tell us that he had visited the Ananta Vāsudeva temple as well.¹²⁹

II.7 Śākta Kṣetras

“I will tell you about the very sacred spot called Virajā which is very pure, clean and highly meritorious. In ancient times this spot was created by Lord Brahmā for protection of his creation.

¹²⁴ *Mādalā Pāñji*, pp. 34-6.

¹²⁵ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 4-5; see also M.M. Chakravarti, JASB, Vol. LXII, 1893.

¹²⁶ *Mādalā Pāñji*, pp. 37-9.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 40-2.

¹²⁸ Bimanbihari Majumdar, *Shri Caitanya Cariter Upadan*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1938, pp. 350-54.

¹²⁹ Locandāsa, *Śrī Caitanya Maṅgala: A Sixteenth Century Biography of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, Mahanidhi Swami, 1994, p. 204.

In that sacred spot, O excellent ascetics, there is installed the goddess Virajā, remover of passion and gloom (the bestower of want of passion and gloom). Having viewed the face of goddess Virajā one is cleansed of all sins. Goddess Virajā, giver of enjoyment and liberation is installed in the country Utkala for the good of the yogīns.”¹³⁰

One of the earlier mentions of the Virajā *Kṣetra* was in the Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara of Bhauma Kara dynasty.¹³¹ The writer of the charter Harivardhana, a brazier and resident of Śrī Virajā were mentioned.¹³² Next in the Gaṇeśa Gumphā Inscription of the time of Śāntikara, who hailed from the same dynasty, this sacred place finds mention again. The first verse of this inscription by Śrī Śāntikaradeva states the existence of Virajā *Kṣetra*.¹³³ Also states that the grace of lord Gaṇeśa should prevail on the people of Virajā. The second verse mentions that the physician named Bhīmaṭa, the son of Ijyā and Nannaṭa made a vow to donate some amount of paddy (*yacatedhānyaprastham*) every year for the worship of Gaṇeśa.¹³⁴

Another copper plate charter confirms that it was the political headquarters of the region. Paralakimedi Copper plate of Śrī Pṛthivī Mahārāja of 6th century CE reads:

¹³⁰ “*Kathayāmi mahāpuṇyam virajākhyam sunirmalam
Yatkṣetram sṛṣṭirakṣārtham brahmaṇā ca kṛtam pura.
Tasmin kṣetre dvijaśreṣṭhā virajāvirajah pradā
Virajāmukhamālokya rajah prakṣālanam bhavet.
Tatra Śrīvirajādevī bhuktimuktipradāyinī
Sādhakānām hitārthāya virajā utkalam sthitā.*”
Kapila Samhitā, ‘*Saptam Adhyāyah*’, pp. 81-2.

¹³¹ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, p. 101.

¹³² Mentioned in the verse 29 of this inscription, *ibid*, p. 108.

¹³³ *Ibid*, verse 3, p. 118.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, verses 4-5, p. 119.

“*Svastiśrīvijayaskandavaratvirañjānagarādhivāsakat*”.¹³⁵

A 7th century inscription also confirms the fact of Virajā being the capital of an extensive territory.¹³⁶

Situated on the bank of the Vaitarani river, it was an important urban centre of early medieval Odisha. Being an important political, religious and administrative centre of the Bhauma Karas, Guhadevapāṭaka/ Guheśvarapāṭaka started expanding as one of the main Śākta *kṣetras* in the region. According to R. P. Chanda, the installed image of the goddess Virajā in present Jajpur, is a specimen from 4th to 5th centuries CE.¹³⁷ Though *Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna* Buddhism was predominant in that period in Odisha, the goddess cult traced its origin from the brahmanical cult during the Bhauma Kara period around 8th to 9th centuries CE.¹³⁸ The origin of the Virajā *kṣetra* and the goddess dragged to the *Tāntric*-Buddhism (*Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna*); but the deity was subsequently absorbed and affiliated into the mainstream brahmanical religion by the inclusion of ritualistic performances for the deity.¹³⁹ There are various instances of deities being assimilated into the brahmanical religion, when they were linked to the

¹³⁵ S. N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. 1, Pt. II, Berhampur, 1958, it is on the second side of the first plate.

¹³⁶ N. G. Majumdar, ‘The Soro Copper Plate of Maharaja Bhanudatta’, in N.P. Chakravarti (ed.) *EI*, Vol. XXIII (Grant D), p. 203; it reveals “*Om svasti śrī virajāvāsakan mahāpratihāra mahārāja Bhānudattakuśālī*”.

¹³⁷ R.C. Mishra, ‘Jajpur, A Centre of Religious Activities’, in B.C. Ray, Bhubaneswar (ed.), *Cultural Heritage of Orissa*, Vol. II, 2000, p. 75; see also B. C. Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, Société Asiatique De Paris, Paris, 1954, p. 155.

¹³⁸ A. C. Pradhan, ‘Situating Viraja Kshetra and Its Environs in the Odishan Historiography’, *Odisha Review*, November 2014, pp. 107-08.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 108; see also Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, (1954), p. 155

non-brahmanical cults.¹⁴⁰

From 9th century CE onwards, the Somavaṁśīs replaced Tāntric practices of earlier period with Vedic rituals.¹⁴¹ Jajpur sometimes gets compared to *Yayātinagara*. But from the epigraphical evidences, *Yayātinagara* was situated on the bank of Mahanadi, while Jajpur was on the bank of Vaitarani.¹⁴²

Stella Kramrisch argued that the gods are mainly installed beside the rivers-banks, lakes, sea shores etc.¹⁴³ The places without tanks barely carry the image of a *tīrtha*, because the presence of water is essential.¹⁴⁴ It has been said that the holy water removes sin. *Kapila Samhitā* writes,

“Then after a gap of many days they reached the region of the goddess Virajā. Having taken a dip in the waters of the river *Vaitaraṇī*, they had the vision in the form of a boar. Afterwards they could have the sight of goddess Virajā, Lord *Mukteśvara*, god *Ākhaṇḍaleśvara* and three-eyed Lord Śiva.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. During the 9th century CE, in the reign of the Bhauma Karas, the region witnessed the growth of *Tāntric* Buddhism. The carving of Saptamātrkā images along with other mother goddesses enhanced the idea of assimilation of *Tāntric* Buddhism into the fold of Brahmanism. The Saptamātrkā shrine in Jajpur is situated beside the Vaitarani. Ibid, p. 110.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 111.

¹⁴² Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, p. 202.

¹⁴³ Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. I, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2002, p. 5.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ “*Tato bahudine te ca prāpurvirajayamaṇḍalam
Snātvā vaitaraṇītoye dadṛśuh kroḍarūpiṇam.
Tataste virajāṁ devīm devaṁ mukteśvaraṁ haram
Ākhaṇḍaleśvaraṁ caiva trilocanamahēśvaram.*”
Kapila Samhitā, ‘*Unavimsa Adhyāyah*’, p. 264-65.

From the time of the *Mahābhārata* this place has been maintaining its sacredness.¹⁴⁶

In this context *Kapila Samhitā* states that,

“O best of kings, the sacred place Virajā is very sanctifying, undoubtedly like the heaven it is a beautiful place which destroys all sins. The place (Virajā-kṣetra) is crowded all over by *Brahmins*, *Kṣatriyas* and *Vaiśyas*; resounding with the sound of the divine drums the place is full of various gods”.¹⁴⁷

Most of the earliest temples of Virajā *Kṣetra* do not exist now. The two-armed Mahiṣamardinī, which belongs from the 4th or 5th centuries CE, is the presiding deity of the present temple.¹⁴⁸ In the *Kapila Samhitā*, Virajā as a sacred space has been mentioned repeatedly.

Apart from being an important Śaiva centre, Bhubaneswar was also a notable Śākta *Pīṭha*.¹⁴⁹ Several tantric texts, such as *Jñānārṇava Tantra*, *Bṛhannīlā Tantra*, etc. mentioned that Ekāmra was a leading Śākta *Pīṭha*.¹⁵⁰ The chief goddess of Ekāmra is called Kīrtimati according to the *Prānātoṣanī Tantra*¹⁵¹, *Mastya Purāṇa* and *Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa* while *Tantrasāra* mentions Bhāgavāha as the chief goddess of

¹⁴⁶ *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya*, U.N. Dhal (trans.), Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1984, p. 4.

¹⁴⁷ “*Yadā tvaṃ ca vaśiṣṭhena virajākhyam gamiṣyasi
Tasminalpāmbutīrthe ca snātvā muktimavāpsyasi
Virajākhyam nṛpaśreṣṭha! Kṣetram parampāvanam
Ramyam pāpāpanodam ca svargatulyam na samśaya.*” ‘*Saptam Adhyāyah*’, *Kapila Samhitā*, verses 41-2, p. 90.

¹⁴⁸ Mishra, ‘Jajpur, A Centre of Religious Activities’, p. 75. □

¹⁴⁹ K. S. Behera, ‘The Evolution of Śakti Cult at Jajpur, Bhubaneswar and Puri’, in D.C. Sircar (ed.), *The Śakti Cult and Tara*, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 74-86.

¹⁵⁰ T. E. Donaldson, ‘Bhubaneswar (Ekāmra *Kṣetra*): Temple Town and Cultural Centre’, *Marg*, Vol. 52, No. 3, Mumbai, 2001, pp. 12-27.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 14; see also *Kapila Samhitā*, pp. 102, 264.

Ekāmra *Kṣetra*.¹⁵² Several *Purāṇas* mentioned four *Pīthas* in the *Kṣetra*, such as *Bhava Pītha*, dedicated to Kedāra and Gaurī; *Mahāśmaśāna Pītha* with Uttareśvara and Uttareśvarī; Śiva *Pītha* inside the Liṅgarāja temple, before Gopālinī and under the *Kalpavṛkṣa*; and *Bṛhat Pītha* where Vaidyanātha is present.¹⁵³

The editor of *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya* describes that the *tīrtha yātrā* of the Pāṇḍavas specifically mentions the *Vaitaraṇī* on the northern bank of which *Virajā tīrtha* was situated. In *Mahābhārata* it was described as *pitṛ tīrtha*.¹⁵⁴ Amongst the eighteen *Purāṇas* few of them briefly described the sacred place. In the Gaṅga period, most the *Purāṇas* began to incorporate after 11th century CE, sites such as Ekāmra, Virajā, *Arka* and *Puruṣottama* etc.¹⁵⁵

The Somavaṁśī rulers raised Śiva temples at Bhubaneswar as well as at *Virajā Kṣetra*, which, according to K.C. Panigrahi, were built by the artisans of the same school.¹⁵⁶ *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya* gives a list of Śiva temples constructed at *Virajā Kṣetra* during Bhauma, Somavaṁśī and Gaṅga periods.

Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya depicts that,

“*Yatra śouvāni liṅgāni naiikakoṭisthitāni vai*

Tāvato mūrtimāsthāya devī yatra virājate”.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Behera, *The Liṅgarāja Temple*, pp. 12-5.

¹⁵⁴ *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 10-1.

¹⁵⁶ Pradhan, ‘Situating Viraja Kshetra’.

¹⁵⁷ *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya*, chapter 1, p. 79.

This has been placed as Annakoṭi Śivaliṅga shrine complex. The most interesting forms of *liṅgas* - Śaiva *sahasra liṅgas* and the *liṅgas* of miniature shrines, are found in the temple premises of goddess Virajā.¹⁵⁸

II.8 Conclusion

In the context of sacredness of the city of Bhubaneswar, Stirling writes,

“A path leads through the woods towards the object of curiosity, and conducts, at the end of about six miles, to a gently swelling rocky elevation or Tangi formed of beds of the iron clay, on reaching which you will find yourself, with astonishment, in the centre of a ruined city, consisting entirely of deserted and dismantled towers and temples sacred to the worship of Mahadeo, under the innumerable titles, which absurd legends or the fancy of his votaries have assigned to that deity.”¹⁵⁹

The brahmanical cult deviates in three major forms of Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaktism in early medieval Odisha. Textual analysis and inscriptional evidences suggest that the rise of brahmanical hegemony in that region began from fifth century onwards. Various authors of those texts, which primarily corroborated the idea of a unified regional sacred geography, had written and stressed the nature of sacredness associated with a particular deity in an unquestionable manner in Odisha. Starting from *Ekāmra Purāṇam* to *Kapila Saṁhitā*, *Mādalā Pāñji*, *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya* and *Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam*, these texts originally had been composed to

¹⁵⁸ These *liṅgas* have been assigned to the 7th and 8th Century CE, in the time of the Bhauma Karas and Somavaṁśīs.

¹⁵⁹ Andrew Stirling, *An Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical of Orissa Proper, or Cuttack*, John Snow, London, 1846, pp. 165-67.

glorify particular *tīrtha kṣetras* in early medieval Odisha. Most importantly some of these Sanskrit texts were written much later than the temple building activity; mostly in fifteenth and sixteenth centuries CE in this region. That signifies the continuous process of development and acculturation process of Brahmanism in the preceding centuries in Odisha. After the emergence of sacred places, the actual manifestation of brahmanical cult got its appropriation through temple building and sculptural arts, which started from approximately seventh century CE and went well into the thirteenth century CE in Odisha. Started from the endowments by the royals, brahmanical hegemony was significantly established in this period. The idea of declaration of the brahmanical hegemony and cult through architecture and images had substantiated the idea of the significance and even superiority of the tradition. Later on the grandeur and complexity of Kalinga architecture carried the manifold manifestation of Brahmanism, which flourished in early medieval period. Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta temples adorned the sacred places all over. These were welded into a unified form through the evocation of the *kṣetra* and *tīrtha* concepts, and the creation of *Māhātmyas* and *Purāṇas* from the second half of the early medieval period in Odisha.

Chapter III

The Divine Images: Forms and Symbols

III.1 Introduction

The aspects of benevolence and malevolence, creation and destruction, male and female, and transcendence and rootedness are embedded in the construction of the sacred.¹ With the brahmanical influences spreading into hitherto forested and tribal areas, these traditions became intermingled. From the *Purāṇas* and *Upa Purāṇas*, it is clear that the goddess tradition or the cult of Śakti influenced other religious sects.² Even the concept of *bhakti* in Vaiṣṇavism became a part of Śakti *sādhana*.³ R. Mahalakshmi contextualizes the emergence of Śakti cult, which was produced by the amalgamation of the mainstream brahmanical and non-brahmanical forms of religion.⁴ Through mythology and sculptural depiction of the goddesses, Śakti became a popular and known cult in early medieval India, as well as in Odisha. The roots of brahmanical cult may be seen in the development of the goddess cult from primitive society to an advanced state society which was predominantly agrarian in character, marked by the building of temples and appearance of iconographic and sculptural forms.

¹ R. Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess: Koṛṇavai–Durga in the Tamil Traditions*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2011, p. 15.

² Kunal Chakrabarti, *Religious Process: The Puranas and the Making of a Regional Tradition*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001.

³ Francesco Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, (Thesis), Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, 1997, pp. 14-5.

⁴ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, pp. 6-7.

The early medieval Odishan sculptures are a class apart. These are known as ‘*Kaliṅga* type’, and considered part of the *Nāgara* architecture of North India. The temple of Paraśurāmeśvara, Vaitāḷa, Liṅgarāja, Rājārānī and Mukteśvara are remarkable for their indigenous characters and those exquisite sculptures are the products of the *Kaliṅga* School of art. Most of the Odishan temples from 7th to 13th centuries CE are decorated from the top to the bottom. Some of the most significant decorative motifs are the female figures known as *Nāyikās*. According to Śākta philosophy, femininity is considered as the highest active principle of the universe.⁵ Although some authors define such depictions as realism, the role of the erotic symbols at Konark cannot simply be explained away by concluding that the temple is secular in character to allow us to think that the statuary was intended to be purely and simply edifying.⁶ The earliest Śākta icons like *Nāga-Nāgī*, *Yakṣa-Yakṣī* developed after the Maurya period. The progress in the sculptural forms, particularly in the depiction of goddess figures, can be noticed in the early medieval temples in different regions of India, including Odisha.

III.2 Visualizing the Divine

The Somavaṃśī rulers brought about a major geo-political change by situating their capital in Jajpur.⁷ They eliminated the *vāmācāra* Tāntric element from the iconography of the brahmanical temples, and mainly constructed shrines to the Puranic deity Śiva. In the Paraśurāmeśvara in Bhubaneswar, it is noticed that earlier

⁵ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, p. 15.

⁶ Max-Pol Fouchet and Brian Rhys, *The Erotic Sculpture of India*, Lausanne Print, London, 1959, p. 145.

⁷ Jajpur is famous for the seat of Devī Virajā in Odisha. See, Chapter II for the textual description of this sacred centre.

Śiva used to be represented as a *līṅga* or to some extent, the ornamented *līṅga*. Here, we have a typical representation of the thousand miniature *līṅgas* on the body of the main *līṅga* – the *sahasra līṅga*.



Plate 1: Śiva *līṅga*, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

During 9th and 10th centuries CE the anthropomorphic form of Śiva came into existence and was portrayed mostly on the walls of Śaiva temples. Likewise, in the 12th century CE, after the accession in Puri of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, the Vaiṣṇava temples started erecting the life size exquisite images of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa etc. Konark Sun temple, built by Narasiṃhadeva in 13th century CE, was dedicated to the Sun god or Sūrya. Full-length sculptures of the Sun god are some of the remarkable images from the early medieval period of Odisha. Apart from the conjugal sculptures like Umā-Maheśvara, those of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa are conspicuous on the temple walls. Kārttikeya, Gaṇeśa and *dāru* (wooden) Jagannātha inside the temples are the other male divine forms in this region.

III.2.1 Representation of Gods

The images of gods found a place on the walls of the temple, with a view to presenting the different forms of the presiding deity as revealed by mythology, as well as to display sectarian superiority. As such, images are not arbitrarily placed at the whim of the artisan but reveal a deliberate choice on the part of the patron and ideologues of the tradition.⁸

III.2.1.1 Śiva

Śiva occurs in the Vedic literature as Rudra, who is portrayed as a malevolent deity responsible for death and disease, and is prayed to in order to seek protection for one's family, cattle and belongings.⁹ He is represented as carrying bow and arrow or a thunderbolt in these early descriptions. In the *Mahābhārata*, Rudra is associated with Agni and is portrayed as the father of Skanda.¹⁰ Śiva emerged as a supreme deity in the Puranic period but his image as a destroyer remained his abiding feature.

One of the main sectarian deities around whom specific Puranic compositions, such as the *Agni*, *Liṅga* and *Śiva Purāṇa*, were composed in the first millennium, Śiva was a prominent deity in the early medieval temples across the Indian sub-continent, as many rulers patronised this sect. The images of Śiva in his various manifestations are prolific in the temples. In all the examples, he is depicted with *ūrdhvaliṅga* or erect phallus. Individual Śiva images with usual attributes are found depicted on the temple wall throughout the period and these images are not indicator for the chronology of

⁸ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, p. 242.

⁹ T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu iconography*, Volume II- Part-I, Second Edition, Motilal Bannarsidass, Delhi, 1914, p. 39.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 42.

the temples. He is represented as carrying a trident, a discus, a club, an axe, a sword and the serpents commonly in sculptural representation.

III.2.1.2 Ekapāda Śiva

Originally, the idea of the one-footed figure appears in the *R̥g Veda*, invariably referring to the Sun.¹¹ The *Atharva Veda* also refers to the unborn eternally one-footed one, again believed to be an allusion to Sūrya.¹² The association with Śiva appears to have been a later development, with the earliest reference coming from the *Mahābhārata* to the Rudras as Ekapāda.¹³ Among the Līlāmūrtis of Śiva, at least three are known as one-footed. The *Śilpaśāstras* expand the number of Ekapāda Līlāmūrtis, some giving 11, and others 25 as their number. The southern texts like *Uttara Karaṇa Āgama* refer to Ekapāda Trimūrti as one of the name of Śiva.¹⁴ Some of the earliest forms of Ekapāda are believed to have appeared in Andhra Pradesh, at the Sangameśvara and Someśvara temples.¹⁵

Thomas Donaldson describes the figure of Ekapāda in Odishan temples by looking at their placement and artistic treatment.¹⁶ He quotes V.S. Agrawala that the figure with

¹¹ See, Prachi Virag Sontakke, 'Single Footed Deities: Glimpses From Art and Literature', *Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology*, 3, 2015, p. 609.

¹² *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Ralph T.H. Griffith (trans.), E.J. Lazarus and Co. Benares, 1917, XIII.1.6, p. 134.

¹³ Sontakke, 'Single Footed Deities', p. 610.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 611.

¹⁶ Thomas Donaldson, 'Ekapāda Śiva Images in Orissan Art', *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 13, 1982, pp. 153-67.

one leg originally symbolized Agni.¹⁷ The image was supposed to flank the central niche of the Mahiṣamardinī image on the north side, according to prescription, in the form of a Bhairava.¹⁸ J.N. Banerjea is of the opinion that Ekapāda Śiva represents the image of the lightning flash, which is coming down to earth.¹⁹ Mostly the depictions of Aja Ekapāda (goat [*aja*] with one foot [*ekapāda*]) and Ekapāda images are mentioned as two of the *ekādaśa Rudras*, described in *Liṅga Purāṇa*.²⁰ Here Donaldson states, in most of the Odishan temples Ekapādas are depicted with four arms and a ‘terrific’ face, short beard, open mouth, fangs, moustache, and protruding eyes.²¹ Ekapāda images can be seen in Śaiva as well as in Śākta temples in the early medieval period of Odisha. Aja Ekapāda or Ekapāda Bhairavas are mostly depicted in Mārkaṇḍeśvara, Śiṣireśvara temples of Bhubaneswar and the Yoginī temple at Hirapur.²² However, the Trimūrti variety appears to have been absent in Odisha; further, with the rise of the cult of Jagannātha its disappearance is conspicuous. This may be because the *dāru* image does not have clearly demarcated legs, and resembles more of a single stump. So, it is believed that the Ekapāda image inspired the iconography of Jagannātha.²³

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 153.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The hypaethral temple complex is dedicated to sixty-four Yoginīs at Hirapur near Bhubaneswar city. K. N. Mohapatra who discovered this temple in 1953, has argued that this temple sculptures feature Bhauma characteristics and thus dated it as a 9th century CE construction. According to the patronage work of the Somavamśis, he later on dated Ranipur-Jharial in 11th century; Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, (1997), pp. 336-37; see also K. N. Mohapatra, ‘A Note on the Hypaethral Temple of Sixty-four Yoginīs at Hirapur’, *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1953, pp. 23-44.

²³ Sontakke, ‘Single-footed Deities’, p. 611.



Plate 2: Aja Ekapāda, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNC A

At the Megheśvara Temple, which dates to the last quarter of the 12th century CE, a two-armed Ekapāda has been carved on the *pratiratha* on the south side of the temple.²⁴ Apart from that, Mārkaṇḍeśvara has the carving of Ekapāda on the *jaṅgha* as well.

²⁴ Thomas Donaldson, 'Ekapāda Śiva Images in Orissan Art'.



Plate 3: Ekapāda, Mārkaṇḍeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA

He writes that the sculpture is considerably eroded; but it is still possible to identify the trident and a skull-cup held in the right and left hands, respectively.²⁵

III.2.1.3 Naṭarāja/ Nṛttamūrti

Naṭarāja, the common usage for the icon of the dancing Śiva, is referred to in a number of texts as the ‘lord of dancers’. The dance of Śiva is known as the dance of cosmos, at the rhythm of the “movement of the sun and the moon, of the earth and the wind.”²⁶ R. Mahalakshmi points out that out of all the deities associated with the dance, it is Śiva’s dance that occurs in almost all Brahmanical texts.²⁷ In the *Nāṭya Śāstra*, the dance is also portrayed in linguistic terms. Just like the letters are conjoined to make words, which are then conjoined to make sentences, the *karaṇas*

²⁵ Ibid, p. 157.

²⁶ Stella Kramisch, *Manifestations of Śiva*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981, p. 43.

²⁷ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, p. 314.

are also weaved together to form *aṅgahāras*, which further weave together to form *recakas*. This results in the combined basic movement of leg, hand and body,²⁸ which is also portrayed in the visual representations. The *tāṇḍava* dance of Śiva is not performed on a specific theme or an occasion, but as stated, its purpose is to give the spectators an aesthetic, joyous and peaceful experience.²⁹ However, according to Mahalakshmi, the aesthetic experience takes a secondary place when the dance is seen in the context of the local traditions.³⁰ As Korṟavai came to be identifies with Durgā-Kālī in Tamil traditions, this resulted in ‘credibility’ to the myth of Śiva and Kālī’s dance competition, with Śiva annihilating the arrogance of Kālī. The myth is seen as the contestation of the two cults where the victory of one over the other also symbolizes the superiority of the brahmanical over the regional tradition.³¹ Among the dances of Śiva, we also find the theme of destruction or *saṃhāra*. The philosophical idea of destruction leading to regeneration is combined with the mythology that refers to Śiva’s vanquishing of demons. A popular representation, which is also considered a dancing figure, is that of Gajāntaka or Gajasamhāra.

The texts *Kūrma Purāṇa*, *Varāha Purāṇa* and *Suprabhēdāgama* mention the myth of the killing of the elephant by Śiva and his recasting of the elephant’s skin as his garment. However, all the texts give different versions of the complete myths relating to the Gajasamhāramūrti. *Kūrma Purāṇa* narrates that while all the *brāhmaṇas* were gathered around the *liṅga*, named Kṛttivāsēśvara in Kāśī, an *asura* in the form of an

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 316-17.

³⁰ Ibid, pp. 319-20.

³¹ Ibid.

elephant came to disturb them. The Śiva came out of the *liṅga*, killed the elephant and wore its skin as his upper garment.³²

T.A. Gopinatha Rao refers to the descriptions of the Gajasamhāramūrti Śiva in various prescriptive texts.³³ He may have four or eight arms, and was to hold the *pāśa*, elephant skin, and the hide with the head and tail stretched on either side in an arc over the head. He could also be shown with a *triśūla* and *ḍamaru*.³⁴

The image of Naṭarāja, specifically as Śiva vanquishing the elephant demon through his dance of destruction, is a commonly occurring motif in the temple art of Bhubaneswar.³⁵ It is found from the earliest phase of temple-building activity to later phases. These and other dancing Śiva images served as a grill in the facade of the *jagamohana* of the temple *rāhapāgas*.³⁶ Numerous images of Naṭarāja that appear on the temples of Bhubaneswar have an elephant skin as one of the attributes of the deity and in the majority of them a thin sliver of the elephant hide is held in the uppermost two hands in these images. Besides this, the trident and the *vīṇā* (lute) are found in three specimens, almost identical in form as this image. The Naṭarāja image is depicted in the temples like Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara, Paraśurāmeśvara, Śatrughneśvara, Bharateśvara, Liṅgarāja, Rājārānī and Megheśvara in Bhubaneswar.

³² T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu iconography*, Volume II- Part-I, second Edition, Motilal Bannarsidass, Delhi, 1914, p. 150.

³³ T.A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Icoography*, Vol. 2, Part 1, The Law Printing House, Madras, 1916, pp. 150-51.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 151.

³⁵ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, p. 137.

³⁶ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, p. 17.



Plate 2: Naṭarāja- Gajasamhāramūrti, Śatrughneśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Naṭarājas found inside the Jagannātha temple complex are all adorned with ten arms.



Plate 4A: Naṭarāja, Vaitāla *deul*, Bhubaneswar

The image of Naṭarāja in a *makara toraṇa* capped with a *kīrtimukha* on the outer walls of the Vaitāla *deul* in Bhubaneswar, shows the dancing ten-armed god with his various typical āyudhas, with one right front hand raised in *abhaya mudrā* and the corresponding left hand crossing the chest to rest loosely below the upraised palm – the *gajahasta*. Interestingly, the small female figure to the left bottom is presumably of the goddess, and one of Śiva's left palms is cupping her chin. Many of the traits match the textual prescriptions.³⁷ What is also striking in the image is the pronounced *ūrdhvaliṅgam*.

The Mukteśvara Naṭarāja image is considered one of the best specimens in Bhubaneswar. Although the typical *abhaya mudrā* and the *gajahasta* are shown, they are in the reverse order, i.e. the left hand is in *abhaya* and right is *gajahasta*. Again, this seems to be also a Gajasamhāramūrti as seen from the arch caused by his grip on either side of the elephant hide.

³⁷ See, Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, p. 225.



Plate 4B: Naṭarāja- Gajasamhāramūrti, Mukteśvara temple, Bhubaneswar

III.2.1.4 Other Forms

Hari-Hara depiction in Liṅgarāja temple is one of the other manifestations of Śiva, the images of which can be frequently found in the other early medieval Odishan temples.³⁸

³⁸ Ibid.



Plate 5: Hari-Hara, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA

Lakulīśa

It is believed that the *Pāśupata* sect of Śaivism found its way into Odisha during the 6th-7th century CE.³⁹ The organizer of the *Pāśupata* sect was Lakulīśa who was considered to be the last incarnation of Śiva.⁴⁰ With the growing popularity of the *Pāśupata* cult, the image of Lakulīśa began to be carved on the Śiva temples, and we find this in Odisha as well.⁴¹ He has been frequently depicted in the earlier temples, but in later ones he has been given less importance. The Lakulīśa image is depicted in the known temples like Paraśurāmeśvara and Bharateśvara of Bhubaneswar, which were built in the 7th century CE. Lakulīśa images with *lakuṭa* (club) in hand, seated in

³⁹ J.K. Sahu, 'Saivism in Orissa', *Sidelights*, 1949, p. 329.

⁴⁰ A.N. Parida, *Early temples of Orissa: From The Sixth Century A.D. to the End of Somavamsi Rule*, Commonwealth, New Delhi, 1999, p. 52.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

yogāsana posture and *dharma-cakra-pravartana-mudrā*, are found in the Mukteśvara, Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara, Svarṇajāleśvara, Kośaleśvara etc as well.⁴²



Plate 6: Lakulīśa with a *lakūṭa*, Bharateśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Lakulīśa images are fairly prolific in their appearance on the Bhubaneswar temples and may be classified under two broad groups by the modes of their seated positions. In one group Lakulīśa is shown as seated cross-legged in what is known as *vaddhāsana*. The other variety shows the crossed legs against the chest-crossed legs are tied with *Yogapāda* or *Yogapāṭṭa*. These two modes constitute distinctive traits for a typological division.⁴³ Lakulīśa is usually shown in *dharma-cakra-pravartana-mudrā* with a *lakūṭa* held in his arms.⁴⁴ Usually he is shown single, but there are quite a few instances where he is found in the company of disciples, two, four, six or eighteen.⁴⁵ Lakulīśa also appears occasionally on the lintels in the company of the

⁴² Thomas E. Donaldson, *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*, Vol. III, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1987.

⁴³ K.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Kitab Mahal, Cuttack, 2008, p. 134.

⁴⁴ K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1961, p. 75.

⁴⁵ L. K. Panda, *Saivism in Orissa*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 1985.

teachers of the *Pāśupata* sect.⁴⁶ The Lakulīśa images are remarkable for their close similarity with the images of *Dhyāni* Buddha.⁴⁷



Plate 6A: Lakulīśa, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

III.2.2 Viṣṇu

The first reference to the Viṣṇu dates back to the *Ṛg Veda*, where he is depicted as a minor deity, in the form of a protector. In the Vedic literature, he is related with the Sun who covers the entire universe in just three steps.⁴⁸ The *Mahābhārata* describes Viṣṇu as one of the twelve Ādityas, the sons of Aditi, and considers him to be superior to all other Ādityas in greatness and attributes.⁴⁹ In the *Purāṇas*, Viṣṇu retained his position as a protector and attained a supreme place in the brahmanical trinity.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 47.

⁴⁷ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, p. 75.

⁴⁸ T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu iconography*, Volume I- Part-II, second edition, Motilal Bannarsidass, Delhi, 1914, p. 73.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 75.

The Viṣṇu images are found mostly in standing position. The earliest Viṣṇu image has been traced at the bank of Bindusarovara at Bhubaneswar, the image is known as Saṃkarṣaṇa. Except for several small seated images, there are few Vaiṣṇava motifs on Śaiva temples, the majority of these being depictions of *avatāras* such as *Varāha*, *Nṛsimha* (Puruṣottama Jagannātha is often compared and depicted with the Nṛsimha), *Vāmana* and *Daśāvatāra* in the temples of Jagannātha at Puri, Sun at Konark etc. At the beginning these images of Viṣṇu and his incarnations were occasionally inserted into niches as *āvaraṇa-devatā* (protective deities), generally on the *janṅha* of the *jagamohana* of the temple.⁵⁰ At the Nīlamādhava temple complex in Nayagarh, dated 10th century CE, a standing Viṣṇu figure has been found, who is exhibited as the presiding deity. The left upper hand holds a *śaṅkha*, and the lower hand rests on a *gadā*; the two right hands are broken but one may have held the *cakra*. What is distinctive is the large *prabhāvali* around the head and the two flying figures at the top right and left, symmetrically cutting into the halo. The faded *padmapīṭha* and diminutive attendants on the side are also visible.

⁵⁰ Ibid, and see also Parida, *Early temples of Orissa*, p. 55.



Plate 7: Viṣṇu, Nīlamādhava Temple, Nayagarh, Courtesy: IGNC A

III.2.3 Kārttikeya

It was when Rudra was in liaison with his consort, Umā, that he was approached by the *Devas*, who prayed to Śiva, requesting him to produce a son who would vanquish the *asuras*.⁵¹ The condition was that this could not be through the womb of the goddess. Śiva transformed his passionate desire for Pārvati into a fiery *tejas*, which emerged from the third eye of his six heads, and this *tejas* was then transformed into a burning seed. Then, Agni was asked to receive the seed and develop it, but due to its insufferable heat, he instead dropped it in Gaṅgā, and as a result Skanda was born on the sixth day of the ‘waxing moon’ in the *mārgaśīrṣa* month. The myths further elaborate his upbringing by the six stars - Kṛttikās, from whom he received his name.

⁵¹ Preetha Rajan Kannan, *Legend of Kartikeya: Champion of the Gods*, Jaico Publishing House, Mumbai, 2017.

His other name *Ṣaṇmukha* is also related to these mothers, for he is believed to have grown six heads to suckle at each of their breasts at the same time.⁵²

The images of *Kārttikeya* are frequent in *Śiva* temples of this period, as he is considered a *pārsva devatā*/ subsidiary deity in the *Śaiva* pantheon. *Kārttikeya* may be depicted in several ways because of the presence/ absence of the peacock or cock, the characteristic *vāhana* of the god. The carving of *Kārttikeya* is either seated or standing and is shown with two hands, one holding a *bīja-pūraka* (citron) and the other a *śakti* (spear).⁵³ At *Uttareśvara* temple, *Kārttikeya* is shown without peacock.⁵⁴

At *Parśurāmeśvara* temple *bāḍa* of *Bhubaneswar* we find a two-armed *Kārttikeya* sitting on an *āsana*, with his peacock *vāhana* apparently pecking at a dead snake at its feet.

⁵² See, Fred W. Clothey, *The Many Faces of Murukan: The History and Meaning of a South Indian God*, Mouton Publishers, The Hague, 1978, p. 174.

⁵³ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 80-1, 128.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*



Plate 8: Kārttikeya, Parśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

In the standing examples the peacock, the mount of the god, is shown on the pedestal.⁵⁵ In the second type of the image category he is usually shown four armed and in a standing pose, though two armed seated representations, resembling the first type except for the figure of the peacock are also found. Kārttikeya is shown with only peacock in the early phase temples (Parsurāmeśvara) but in later temples he is shown with peacock and cock or hen (Brahmeśvara and Liṅgarāja).⁵⁶ Iconographically, the general speculation is that in the evolution of the iconography of Kārttikeya there was a period when the peacock was not regarded as an essential feature. In Mukteśvara temple the Kārttikeya figure is regarded as one of the earliest of the god with peacock, sitting on a *Padmāsana* while his peacock stands on his right

⁵⁵ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, pp. 127-31. Also see, R.S. Gupte, *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainas*, D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1972, p. 46.

⁵⁶ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 51.

side and a cock on his left looking up at him.⁵⁷ The deity carries a spear in his left hand and the right hand is in *varadā* pose. The peacock as an essential element in the iconography of Kārttikeya appears from the seventh century CE onwards.⁵⁸

III.2.4 Gaṇeśa

As one of the important *Pārśva devatās* (subsidiary deities) of Śiva, Gaṇeśa is repeatedly represented in Bhubaneswar temples in the following varieties, i.e., absence/ presence of mouse as depiction of *vāhana*.⁵⁹ The planet slabs also fall into two groups by the presence or otherwise of *Ketu*, the ninth planet.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, p. 129.

⁵⁸ D. R. Das, 'Kosalesvara Temple at Baidyanath (Balangir District, Orissa)', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1976, pp. 297-307. According to Das, the Kośalesvara temple at Baidyanath, revealing the iconographic features of *Mahāsenā* Skanda of sixth century CE, leaves no doubt that the site was a famous *tīrtha* under the patronage of the Nala King Bhavadattavarman. The image of *Mahāsenā* Skanda was enshrined but the original temple where the image was installed could not survive. The image was, therefore, later placed inside the present temple of Kośalesvara of the tenth century CE, when the Somavamśis were predominant in this part of Odisha.

⁵⁹ K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 124-25, and see also Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 50.



Plate 9: Gaṇeśa, Līngarājā Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNC A

Gaṇeśa in the earlier temples does not have mouse as his mount but in later temples mouse is found with him.⁶¹ Seated, rarely standing, and holding in the four hands a *mūlaka*/ radish, a *japa mālā*, an upraised *kuṭhāra* (axe) and a bowl of sweets. Snakes are used as the belt and the sacred thread. The head usually does not show any *jaṭā mukuṭa*. The second variety or sub-type is distinguished further by a *jaṭā mukuṭa* on the head, and the pedestal shows one or two jackfruits.⁶² Standing and holding in the upper right hand a broken tusk, in the lower right a *japa mālā*, in the upper left a bowl of sweets in which the trunk is placed and in the lower left a *kuṭhāra* placed upside down.⁶³ The mouse appears on one side of the deity or on the pedestal below the feet

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 124-27. See also, Gupte, *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainas*, pp. 47-8. Also see K.S. Behera and T. E. Donaldson, *Sculpture Masterpieces from Orissa Style and Iconography*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 65-7.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 48.

of the god.⁶⁴ The Gaṇeśa images are carved in three types i.e., *Sthānaka mūrti* (standing), *āsana mūrti* (seating) and *nṛtyamūrti* (dancing).⁶⁵ The Gaṇeśa images are depicted in Svarṇajāleśvara temple in Bhubaneswar. The eighth century images of Gaṇeśa are found in the Mukteśvara, Śisīreśvara, Vaitāla, Kedāreśvara and Liṅgarājā temples in Bhubaneswar, Kīcakeśvarī temple at Khiching in the Mayurbhanj district; Jagannātha temple at Puri. The *āsīna* Gaṇeśa is found in Orissa from seventh to 8th century CE. During this period the image of *āsīna* Gaṇeśa image is seen seated in *Bhadrāsana*, and in some cases in *Padmāsana* like Pārvatī. The number of *sthānaka* Gaṇeśa is fewer in Odisha. This type of images, which were carved in the 9th century CE, were mostly installed by the Somavaṃśī rulers of Odisha. This form of Gaṇeśa became popular after the 11th century CE.

III.3 Representing Goddesses

From the beginning of the early medieval period, the Śakti cult flourished all over Odisha.⁶⁶ Śākta religion and philosophy is based on the idea of creation. It is a very common belief that the concept of Śakti originated from the ancient mother goddess cult found in pre historic times. The tribal communities upheld this mother goddess worship over different historical periods, which underwent some changes through assimilations over time. In mainstream religious culture, the philosophy and acceptability of Śakti cult came through the representation of goddesses in anthropomorphic forms and worship. In early medieval India, the influence of the Śakti cult in the form of sculptural representations in temples is well attested. The

⁶⁴ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, p. 126.

⁶⁵ Karuna Sagar Behera & Thomas E. Donaldson, *Sculpture Masterpieces from Orissa: Style and Iconography*, Aryan Books International, Orissa, 1998, pp. 65-7.

⁶⁶ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult in Orissa*, p. 1.

goddess was conceived of as both benevolent and malevolent, as having the powers of creation and destruction, and as being transcendent as well as rooted in terms of her accessibility to her worshippers.⁶⁷ With the brahmanical influences spreading into hitherto forested and tribal areas, the local traditions began to intermingle with the brahmanical ones, and a number of practices, rituals and myths reveal this process of assimilation and absorption. From the *Purāṇas* and *Upapurāṇas* it is clear that the goddess tradition or the cult of Śakti influenced other religious sects, and it is particularly in the case of Śaivism that this can be seen, as the goddess began to be given an extremely important position in the mythology and rituals.⁶⁸ Even Vaiṣṇavism gradually came under the Śākta influence, as *bhakti* was conceptualized in terms of *Śakti sādhanā*.⁶⁹ Ultimate reality was conceived of as Devī in many of the texts, such as in the *Kālikā*, *Devī Bhāgavata* and *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa*. It is particularly through iconographic depictions of the goddesses, that Śakti became a popular and known cult in early medieval India, including Odisha.

The roots of Odishan Śaktism may be seen in the development of the simple, tribal society to an advanced state society, which was predominantly agrarian in character, marked by the temple buildings. The goddesses of the tribal society were absorbed into Brahmanism, given a new name and form, and finally they made an appearance in standard iconographic forms, although their diversity was never subsumed completely.⁷⁰ B.D. Chattopadhyaya discusses this process, and connects it to the

⁶⁷ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, p. 15.

⁶⁸ Chakrabarti, *Religious Process*.

⁶⁹ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult in Orissa*, p. 4.

⁷⁰ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, pp. 11-2.

nature of state formation that was occurring concomitantly, in his essay, 'Reappearance of the Goddess'.⁷¹

Anncharlott Eschmann gives the example of the goddess Stambheśvarī, locally known as Khambheśvarī, the tutelary deity of the Śulkī and Bhañja dynasties.⁷² She discusses the transformation of an essentially aniconic cult, symbolized by perhaps a wooden post (*kambha*), into an icon with *mūrti pūjā* in the form of *pañca-upacāras*, namely *gandha* (sandal), *puspa* (flowers), *dhūpa* (incense), *dīpa* (lamp) and *naivedya* (food offerings).⁷³ She further argues that the iconic representation for these diverse local goddesses was often one and the same – Durgā or Cāmuṇḍa, or even Kālī.⁷⁴

There are several iconographic forms of the goddess available in Odisha in our period of study. The two-armed Mahiṣamardinī sculptures in early temples in Odisha have been recognized as an early Gupta period phenomenon. The image of Virajā is one of the first significant Śākta goddesses, which found a conspicuous space in the mainstream brahmanical temple architecture of early medieval Odisha.⁷⁵ But from the Bhauma Kara period, Tantric elements were incorporated into the fold of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. A myriad range of iconographic forms developed due to the intermixing of the Śaiva-Śākta sects. Inside the Śākta temples, Śaiva influenced Kāpālikas and Kaulas were associated with the performance of rituals. This view is supported by the

⁷¹ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, 'Re-appearance of the Goddess or the Brāhmaṇical Mode of Appropriation: Some Early Epigraphic Evidence Bearing on Goddess Cults', in *Studying Early India: Archaeology, Texts, and Historical Issues*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2005 (2003), pp. 172-90.

⁷² Anncharlott Eschmann, 'Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa: The Śākta and Śaiva Typology', in Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and G.C. Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, Manohar, Delhi, 1986, p. 86.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 89.

⁷⁵ Virajā is the earliest known Śākta deity of Odisha.

sculptures, where the images of gods and goddesses are worshiped by priests, sometimes long-bearded, with a *kamaṇḍalu*, who are supposed to be as the *Kāpālikas*.

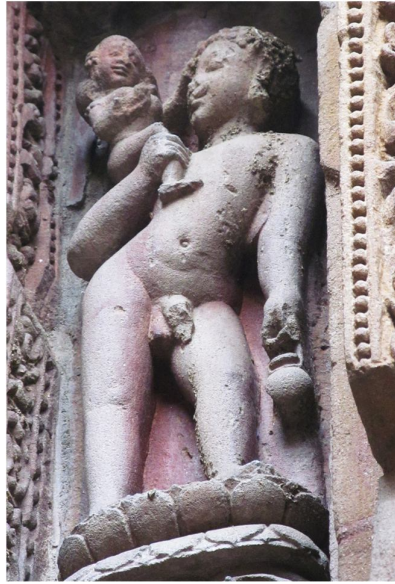


Plate 10: *Kāpālika* with a *Kamaṇḍalu*, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar

The most striking examples of Śākta influence are the temples dedicated to groups of goddesses known as Yoginīs. However, it is difficult to associate the construction of Odisha's Yoginī temples with any particular ruler or dynasty.⁷⁶ The early Bhauma Kara kings had ceased to reign by the year 840 CE, while the Somavaṁśīs took over the area by the end of the 9th century CE.⁷⁷ During the intervening period, the Bhañja rulers temporarily extended their kingdom to the coastline of Odisha. They are known to have worshipped goddesses, as in their inscriptions they frequently styled themselves as “favoured by the goddesses”.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult in Orissa*, (1997).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 90. Kīcakeśvarī was the supreme deity of this dynasty, seated in Mayurbhanj, Northern Odisha. Kīcakeśvarī, the 10th century CE Bhañja temple at Khiching, Mayurbhanj, holds some of the exquisite images of Mahiṣamardinī. An eight-armed black chlorite, supple and powerful image of Mahiṣamardinī is sculpted on the *bāḍa* of the temple, and is one of the best-carved icons found in 10th

The Somavaṃśī rulers brought about a major geo-political change by situating their capital in Jajpur.⁷⁹ They superseded the *vāmācāra* Tāntric element from the iconography of the brahmanical temples, and mainly constructed shrines to the Puranic deity Śiva. They developed the Śakti cult by carving out some masterpieces like Mahiṣamardinī, Saptamātrikās, Pārvatī and various other sculptures of goddesses with their exquisite craftsmanship. Some magnificent temples like Mukteśvara, Brahmeśvara, Rājārānī and Liṅgarāja were constructed at this point, and countless exquisite images of *nāyikās*, erotic couples in various seductive poses, and *devadāsīs* were installed and introduced as the part of temple rituals.

In the time of the imperial Gaṅga dynasty, with the economic prosperity, developed art forms and architecture emerged as a consequence. The rise of *bhakti* movement influenced the cult of Jagannātha at Puri, which became the religious centre par excellence under the two dynasties - Gaṅgas and Sūryavaṃśīs, which flourished over the next five hundred years in Odisha.⁸⁰ The magnificent Jagannātha and Konark Sun temple are considered the highest watermark of Odishan architecture, created in this period. Life-sized sculptures were carved out on temple walls. In this period, the amalgamation of Śaktism with Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism occurred, with lord Jagannātha as the pivot deity. The existence of Mahālakṣmī and Vimalā shrines inside the Jagannātha temple complex and the temple of Chāyādevī inside the Konark Sun temple periphery prove that fact. Inside the Liṅgarāja temple complex, the Pārvatī shrine may also be attributed to this influence. Influence of Śaktism can be seen in the form of the goddess sculptures in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples. The Śiva *liṅgas*,

century Odisha. Along with this, another ten-armed (much eroded and weathered now) Mahiṣamardinī is also present on the other wall of this temple. The previous black chlorite *mūrti* of Devī provides a vibe of the darkness of the *asura* being killed by Śakti.

⁷⁹ Jajpur is the famous of the Devī Virajā in Odisha.

⁸⁰ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*.

Mahiṣamardinī Dūrgā were carved thoroughly on the Jagannātha and Liṅgarāja temple *bāḍas*. *Pañcādevatā upāsanā*, or worship of the five deities Rudra, Ambikā, Nārāyaṇa, Bhāskara and Gaṇeśa, in the Konark Sun temple shows the unification of sectarian religious traditions in early medieval Odisha.⁸¹

The horrific and terrifying nature of the Devī in Sanskrit literature and art is quite evident. The goddess in some cases is depicted either dancing or sitting or standing on a *śava*. Invariably, the Devī in this horrific form is either Cāmuṇḍā or Kālī, and she is closely associated with Bhairava or Mahākāla, Śiva in his terrific form. Both these goddesses have also independent mythological backgrounds and they are related with a group of other images where the presiding goddess is considered as the powerful or most important one. As an example, Cāmuṇḍā can be seen with the other mother goddess figures known as *māṭrkās*, and *Mahāvidyās* or ten different aspects of *śakti*. Originally, each and every aspect is created from the mind and the body of Śiva, or from the Devī herself. They separately have myriad forms and different names. In spite of these characteristics, the different forms of the goddess have their own iconographical forms and distinctive natures. Various scholars have considered them to be one and the same form of energy. This is because of the other aspect of Pārvatī, the horrific form of Kālī, which is defined by the colour black.

Each sculpture in Odisha shows the specific cultural traits of the early medieval period. A distinctive and vivid change in imagery occurs in the standardizing of sculptural forms.⁸² It is very likely that these developments were directly linked to the political changes under the Bhauma Karas, Somavaṃśīs and the Gaṅgas.⁸³

⁸¹ Balaram Mishra, *The Sun Temple: Konark*, Mo Press, Bhubaneswar, 1986, p. 4.

⁸² K.V. Soundara Rajana, *Early Kalinga Art and Architecture*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 164-65.

⁸³ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, p. 434.

III.3.1 Pārvaṭī

Pārvaṭī may be considered as a deity who receives her core identity in relation to Śiva. She is born especially for the purpose of marrying Śiva drawing him away from his asceticism into the world of the householder.⁸⁴ Etymologically, the name Pārvaṭī provides her association with the mountains, and she is also known as Girijā and Giriputrī.⁸⁵ However, despite the gods wanting Śiva to beget a son, they do not want him to be born of the union with Pārvaṭī. This is because they feared the nature of the child born of the combined power of the divine couple.⁸⁶



Plate 11: Pārvaṭī, Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA

Pārvaṭī is regarded as a ‘warrior goddess’ in the *Purāṇas*.⁸⁷ This could be because of her violent, powerful persona as revealed in the legends. Sometimes she is iconographically represented with a lion-drawn chariot, and identified with Kauśikī.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*, pp. 35-6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 41.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 43-4.

⁸⁷ Yuko Yokochi, ‘The Warrior Goddess in the Devimahatmya’, *Senri Ethnological Studies*, 50, 1999, p. 88.

⁸⁸ Kauśikī is another manifestation of the goddess Pārvaṭī. Pārvaṭī was born with dark skin, Mocked by Śiva, she meditated and gained her golden coloured fair skin due to Brahma’s grace. She abandoned her darker image and became Kauśikī, the sheathed goddess. *Ibid*, pp. 82-6.

The flower *ketaka*, shown in one of the hands of Pārvatī in the early temples of Odisha, changes to lotus in the later temples.⁸⁹ The image of Pārvatī is considered as the main *pārśva devatā* of Śiva temples, normally placed in the niche of the northern *bāḍa*. In the Bhubaneswar group of Śiva temples, the images of Pārvatī are recognized with three different types of names: Yogeśvarī, Maheśvarī or Gaurī, and Rājeśvarī.⁹⁰



Plate 12: Pārvatī, Vaitāla deul, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA

The distinction between the various sculptural images of Pārvatī depends on whether she is holding the *ketaka* or *padma* flower in one of her four hands.⁹¹ We find the figure of the goddess holding a *japa mālā* (rosary) in her upper right hand, with the lower right in *varadā* or boon giving posture, sometimes with a lotus on the palm, in the images of the early phase.⁹² Pārvatī may also hold a *ketaka* flower in her upper left

⁸⁹ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 51.

⁹⁰ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, pp. 131-32. For further information, see also Behera & Donaldson, *Sculpture Master Pieces*.

⁹¹ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 125, 131.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 142.

hand and a vase in her lower left hand. The other type, which is also carved on the temple niches of the *bāḍa*, depicts the goddess with the *padma* or lotus, particularly in the later period. These sculptures clearly show the iconographic evolution, from the early phase to the later one in early medieval Odishan temple art. A specimen of the second type is found in the early medieval Paraśurāmeśvara, temple and Vaitāla *deul*. In the latter, the goddess is shown with an elaborate hair arrangement, full-breasted, heavily ornamented, and with her lower garment reaching her ankles, holding a trident in her right hand.

A second kind of image of this goddess depicts her with Śiva, in the form of Hara-Pārvatī, which was an important sculptural depiction of the divine couple to be found in the early medieval Odishan temples. We will be discussing these in a separate section.

III.3.2 Durgā Mahiṣamardinī

As mentioned earlier, the goddess Mahiṣamardinī was being worshipped from the later Gupta period in Odisha. This goddess was the most popular amongst the various forms of the goddesses. According to Tracy Pintchman, there is an interesting mythological story that tells the tale of Mahiṣamardinī, available in several *Purāṇas*.⁹³ Born from Viṣṇu's ear, two demons, named Madhu and Kaiṭabha disturbed Brahmā, and in panic he tried to wake up Viṣṇu. But the latter did not reply to them, as he was inhabited by *yoganidrā*.⁹⁴ Only when the devotees beseeched the Devī in this form did she leave Viṣṇu and thereafter he was able to arise and save them. Subsequently

⁹³ Tracy Pintchman, *Rise of the Goddess in the Hindu tradition*, State University of New York, USA, 1994, pp. 119-20.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 120.

Brahmā helped the goddess to manifest in her full-grown form. She collected the energies from the other gods, and then fought a battle against Mahiṣāsura (the buffalo demon) and killed him.⁹⁵

According to T.A. Gopinatha Rao, the goddess with six or more arms must be malevolent in nature.⁹⁶ The author has noticed that when the goddess is depicted as Durgā, she becomes benevolent.⁹⁷ There are many works focusing on iconographic depiction of this form of the goddess. R. Mahalakshmi discusses the iconography of Mahiṣamardinī in her work on goddesses based in the Tamil region. The early phase of the sculptural decoration, based on the Pallava and Pāṇḍya monumental remains (7th and 9th centuries CE), depicts the goddess with eight arms, and she is seen fighting against the *asuras*, sitting on a roaring lion, which appeared to be ‘leaping forward’.⁹⁸ The goddess holds a bow, a sword (*khadga*), a dagger, a bell (*ghanṭā*), a noose (*pāśa*), and a *cakra*. The *Śākta* goddess in several sculptural panels sportingly portrays vigorous movement while killing the buffalo demon.⁹⁹ Such panels show that she had directly engaged in the battle with the demon, as depicted in *Devī Māhātmya*.¹⁰⁰ Other studies reveal similar depictions in central India, Deccan and other parts of the sub-continent in early medieval period.

The goddess Durgā was created by the combined energy of the gods to fulfil their goal against the *asuras*, and certainly the episode relating to Mahiṣāsura or the buffalo

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ T.A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 1, Pt. II, The Law Printing House, Madras, 1914, pp. 380-84.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 342.

⁹⁸ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, p. 256.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 257. See also, T.B. Coburn, *Devī Māhātmya: The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1988, pp. 212-48.

demon is very prominent in visual narration.¹⁰¹ The author has given us another picture of Mahiṣamardinī, where she is presented as an eight armed deity and standing in a *tribhaṅga* pose.¹⁰² She is holding a *kāpāla* (bowl) in her right hand in front and the left arm is in '*kaṭihasta*'.¹⁰³ The reason she may be identified with Mahiṣa is because of the buffalo head pedestal on which she stands. A feature that becomes distinctive about such representations is the upper hands of the goddess holding the *śaṅkha* and *cakra*, which are Viṣṇu's *āyudhas*.

In Odisha, from 6th to 7th centuries CE century onwards, we find representation of Mahiṣamardinī Durgā in most Śaiva and Śākta temples. During the 8th to 9th centuries, possibly due to the influence of the Bhauma Kara rulers, the image of Mahiṣamardinī replaces that of Pārvatī as the *pārśva devatā* in the north *rāha* niche of many Śiva temples at Bhubaneswar.¹⁰⁴ Her image virtually disappears from the niches, except for an image on the temple wall of Liṅgarāja. There are a few surviving detached images from independent shrines, outside of Bhubaneswar.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p. 260.

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 258.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, p. 133-34.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp. 154-55.



Plate 13: Mahiṣamardinī, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNC

The six-armed Mahiṣamardinī Durgā image found in the Parśurāmeśvara temple of Bhubaneswar dated to 6th to 7th centuries CE, is a beautiful figure of early Odishan art and iconographic tradition.¹⁰⁶ From chest upward the deity is profusely decorated with beautiful headdress, *karṇa kuṇḍala*, *mālā* and *kaṅkaṇa*. The deity is seen holding a sword in upper left hand, while with the upper right hand she is pressing down the face of the buffalo demon. With her middle left hand, she is piercing the *trisūla* on the neck of the demon, while in the lower left hand she holds a pointed *āyudha*.¹⁰⁷ In the right middle hand, she is holding a *ketaka*, while in the lower right hand she holds a bow. In the Vaitāla *deul* of Bhubaneswar there is a magnificent figure of a rare eight-armed Mahiṣamardinī Durgā killing Mahiṣa. Again, the anthropomorphic form with the prominent head of a buffalo is being pressed by the goddess. Her lion mount on the left bottom of the panel seems to be attacking Mahiṣa's hand, while the snake in her left lower hand appears to be hissing and readying to strike his head. The weapons

¹⁰⁶ C. B. Patel, 'Mahisamardini Durga: Antiquity and Iconography', *Orissa Review*, Sep-Oct., 2008, pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁷ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 133-34.

in her other arms are sword and shield, the bow and arrow, trident, the thunderbolt and snake. This sculpture is placed at about 7th to 8th centuries CE.¹⁰⁸



Plate 14: Mahiṣamardinī, Vaitāla *deul*, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNC A

The other ten-armed figure of Mahiṣamardinī Durgā is found in Liṅgarāja temple of Bhubaneswar datable to 11th century CE. Here, we find the buffalo head of the demon being pressed by the deity forcefully, while the *trishūla* is piercing the neck of the demon into complete subjugation. The *āyudhas* in her hand match the textual prescriptions, including the bow and arrow, sword and shield, human head and skull cup, etc. On Kīcakeśvarī temple wall, a ten-armed image of Mahiṣamardinī has been exquisitely carved, depicting the killing of demon Mahiṣa.

¹⁰⁸ Patel, 'Mahisamardini Durga, pp. 20-2.



Plate 15: Mahiṣamardinī, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

Durgā is considered as the most powerful Śākta Tāntric goddess, revered by all sections of people. Basically three Mahiṣamardinī images of Odisha can be identified, based on the shape and form of the buffalo demon. In the first mode, the demon is represented completely in animal form.¹⁰⁹ The next type represents the demon in human body with a buffalo head. In the third type, the demon is depicted in human form issuing from the decapitated carcass of the buffalo.¹¹⁰

This goddess was made extremely popular during the rule of Bhauma Karas, who patronized Tāntric Buddhism and Tāntric Śaktism. Most of the Śākta temples and shrines are assignable to this era. Two remarkable images of eight-armed variety are noticed in Vaitāla and Śiṣireśvara temples.¹¹¹ On Kīcakeśvarī temple *janḡha*, the ten-armed goddess is carved with the anthropomorphic demon Mahiṣa who is emerging from the remains of the animal body. The power of the goddess is accentuated by her

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 74, 81.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 125.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 133.

enormous size, the diminutive figures of the buffalo and the anthropomorphic demon, and even her lion mount is incredibly small in size.



Plate 16: Mahiṣamardinī, Kīcakaśvaraī Temple, Khiching

III.3.3 Lakṣmī

According to R. Mahalakshmi, the goddess Lakṣmī represents the ideal femininity of the brahmanical tradition.¹¹² She is the amalgamation of wealth and fertility. The benevolent and generous image of Mahālakṣmī is created by the blended forms of Sarasvatī, Kālī and Lakṣmī.¹¹³ Seated over the full-grown lotus flower, the consort of Viṣṇu is not always portrayed as the symbol of Śakti. The goddess is sometimes considered as the ‘passive Śakti’ who is a proper wife of her husband.¹¹⁴

¹¹² R. Mahalakshmi, *The Book of Lakshmi*, Penguin Viking, Delhi, 2009.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

With the emergence of Vaiṣṇavism as a dominant tradition in Odisha, this particular form of Śakti started getting carved in the form of Gajalakṣmī when depicted alone, and as Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa in the divine couple format in the early medieval brahmanical temples of Mukteśvara, Liṅgarāja (*bhogamaṇḍapa*) etc.¹¹⁵

Gajalakṣmī is a *pārśva devatā* image, who is carved in many of the Viṣṇu and Śiva temples on the lintel of the doorways in early medieval Odisha. She is always shown seated graciously over a *padmāsana* (lotus bed). Two elephants are generally seen pouring water over her head from upturned jars on either side of the goddess.¹¹⁶



Plate 17: Gajalakṣmī, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

J.N. Banerjea has argued that, the presence of Gajalakṣmī in mainstream tradition is a tribal influence.¹¹⁷ From the numismatic evidences, the image of Gajalakṣmī has been

¹¹⁵ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, p. 258.

¹¹⁶ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 55.

¹¹⁷ J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941, pp. 122-23.

found which strengthens this argument.¹¹⁸ This type of sculpture is frequently seen in the early medieval temples like Brahmeśvara, Mukteśvara, Jagannātha and Liṅgarāja.

III.3.4 Virajā and Ambikā

After the Gupta period, it is believed that the Sanskritization process occurred through the assimilation of tribal cults into the fold of Brahmanism. The cult of Virajā is known from a place called Virañjā *Nagara* or modern Jajpur, the seat of the Bhauma Karas. From the 7th century onwards Virajā cult was appropriated into the mainstream brahmanical cult of Durgā, and became one of the prime *Śākta* goddesses in early medieval Odisha. By the time of the Coḍagaṅga rulers Anāṅgabhīma and Narasiṃha I, the cult of Durgā-Virajā became one of the triad of the regional religious tradition of Odisha, which included the Jagannātha and Liṅgarāja cults, so much so that these kings called themselves the sons of these three cult deities.¹¹⁹

The *Śilpa Prakāśa* states that the panel of Virajā should be made below the inside border of the pilaster of the door, and should be decorated with the *kañika*.¹²⁰

A number of new goddesses appear to have been emerged during the later Vedic period, taking precedence over the non-Vedic ones, while the Puranic goddesses seem to be a throwback to these non-Vedic deities.¹²¹ In the context of *pārśva devatā*, in every Śaiva temple there must be a figure of Ambikā or Durgā on the left (northern) side of the temple. It embodies the energy of the Śākta deity.¹²² The deity should be

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 122-23,146.

¹¹⁹ A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi, 'The Formation of the Jagannāth Triad', in Eschmann et al, *The Cult of Jagannāth*, p. 192.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 138.

¹²¹ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, p. 7.

¹²² *Śilpa Prakāśa*, p. 278.

standing on a pedestal in *tribhaṅga* pose, with various decorations and ornamentations.¹²³ According to the text:

“In the two upper hands, the skull-bowl in the left and the sword in the right, in the lower hands the *mudrās* of: “Fear not!” and of “bestowing boons. Her vehicle is a divine lion, she is surrounded by female attendants, holding *cāmara* and other attributes adorning the sides and the upper parts.”¹²⁴

The *mithuna mūrtis* of the Śākta doctrine inspired the decoration on these temples.

The *Śilpa Prakāśa* summarizes this doctrine in a few sentences:

“Love is the root of the universe. From love all beings are born. Primordial elements and all beings are reabsorbed again in love. Without Śiva and Śakti creation would be nothing but mere imagination. Without the action of *Kāma* there would be no birth or death.”¹²⁵

¹²³ Ibid, p. 278.

¹²⁴ “*Ūrdhvahastādvaye vāme kharparaṁ khaḍgaṁ dakṣiṇe*

Adhodeśe tathā nimne abhayavaradhāriṇī.

Keśarīvāhanaṁ divyaṁ veṣṭitāḥ paricārikā

Cāmarādisamāyuktā pārśve ūrdhve vimaṇḍayet”.

Ibid, p. 278.

¹²⁵ “*Jagatastu mūlaṁ kāmah kāmād bhūtādi jāyante*

Mūlabhūte tathā bhūtaṁ kāmena pravilīyate.

Śivaśaktim vinā sṛṣṭih kalpanāmātraṁ kevalam

Na hi janmādi vā mrtyustathā kāmkrīyām vinā.”

Ibid, pp. 305-07.

The textual description of Śakti images has revealed that depending on the iconographic features, the image has to be understood by the disciple. About the installation of the Śakti images on the temple walls, the text has kept secrets.¹²⁶

III.4 Conjugal Images

Iconography reveals not merely religious conceptualization and mythology of the gods and goddesses but also certain social ideas. For instance, normative ideas related to power, gender and status are conveyed through visual descriptions. The purpose is cognition of the images by the viewer, and in fact essential.¹²⁷ In this regard, both the content and the format/ technique of representation becomes important.

With regard to the conjugal couple, the depictions may provide an immediate reference to myths, while also visually conveying social ideas. Hence, in full-fledged sculptures in niches, the male deity is always to be towering, while the consort may be diminutive. The prescription is generally for four arms of the male god and two arms for his wife. Certain prominent sexual attributes signify the erotic aspect, while also conveying control over the sexuality of the female.¹²⁸

III.4.1 Hara-Pārvatī

There are several varieties of this image, which have appeared on the *bāḍa* of the temples of Bhubaneswar and other regions. Images of Hara-Pārvatī are portrayed in

¹²⁶ Ibid, “I am explaining the image of the Śakti for the understanding of disciples only. The image of the Devī is mainly made in *vasutāla* (*aṣṭatāla*=height of eight *tāla* = length of a palm). Durgā, Kātyāyanī, Kālī, Pārvatī and Sarasvatī, Mahākālī and Raudrī, Varāhī, Muṇḍamālīnī, all these are made according to *vasutāla* proportions. The measurements of the *vasutāla* are given in *aṅgulas*”, p. 373.

¹²⁷ Mahalakshmi, *The Making of the Goddess*, p. 296.

¹²⁸ Ibid, pp. 297-8.

the early group of temples of Bhubaneswar.¹²⁹ Here, they are not carved inside any niches of the *bāḍa*, but appear on the *śikhara* of the temple, both in *padmāsana*, over the bull mount of Śiva.¹³⁰



Plate 18: Hara-Pārvaṭī, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

In the images, Hara and Pārvaṭī may be seated side by side on an *āsana* below which their respective mounts are shown.¹³¹ The goddess is seated next to the god instead of on his lap, a feature that may be dated to 7th to 8th centuries CE. This type of image is also found at the Nārāyaṇī temple. The *vyāghra carma* of Śiva conforming to textual descriptions is pronounced in the Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar. The ornamentation of the pilasters enclosing the niche, the large earrings and prominent ornamentation of the deities and their *vāhanas* are striking. What is also interesting is the image of Gaṇeśa between the two mounts, under the seat. This is a typical *Āliṅgamūrti* with the goddess placing the elbow of her right hand casually on the shoulder of her husband, and gazing up at him.

¹²⁹ Ibid, pp. 142, 147.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 147.

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 65.



Plate 19: Hara-Pārvatī, Vaitāla *deul*, Bhubaneswar

Hara and Pārvatī images are depicted side by side in the Vaitāla *deul*, with the goddess gazing at and touching him with her right palm on his shoulder, and his upper arm holding a flower brushing her breast. Again, the enclosing of the niche with floral ornamentation adds to the visual spectacle of the divine couple who fill the niche completely. What is striking about the four-armed and three-eyed Hara is the prominent ithyphallic representation.

In earlier temples, one can identify the goddess seated near her counterpart, but not on his lap. This feature might be dated to 7th to 8th centuries CE on the basis of the iconographic and stylistic presentation. In the early medieval temples, like Vaitāla, Śiśireśvara, Kīcakeśvarī temple compound there are some images where she appears to be seated on Hara's thigh.¹³² In such images, the size of the goddess is generally smaller than that of the god. What is striking in the representation is Śiva's left lower hand coming from behind the goddess and cupping her left breast. This may be seen

¹³² Ibid, pp. 150-51.

as an assertion of control over the wife's body by the husband, even while it conveys an erotic imagery.



Plate 20: Pārvaṭī on Hara's thigh, Khiching

Another such icon also from Khiching shows a more elaborately and expressively carved couple, with the signature owning of the goddess revealed through the cupping of her breast by Śiva. What differentiates this image from the previous one is the pronounced ithyphallic form of Śiva.

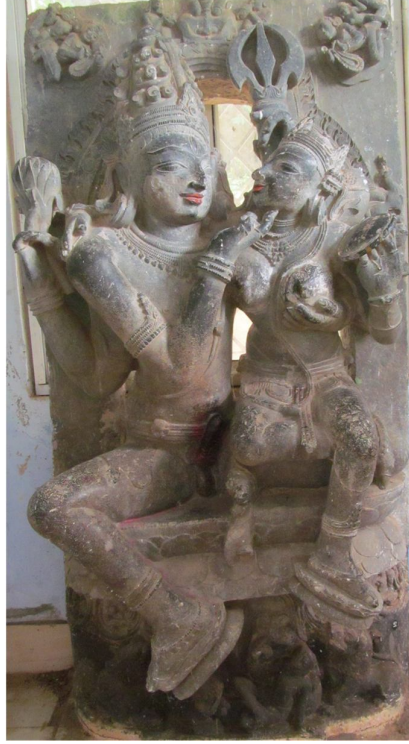


Plate 21: *Kalyāṇa Sundara*, Khiching

III.4.2 Ardhanārīśvara

The image of Ardhanārīśvara combines the forms of Śiva and Pārvatī; the principles of Śaivism and Śaktism have been depicted in the image itself. It is the projection of ‘two primeval parents of the universe’.¹³³ T.A. Gopinatha Rao states that according to *Śiva Purāṇa*, Brahmā had created many *Prajāpatīs*, and asked them to proceed among the other created things. But seeing their slow progress he went to lord Śiva and prayed to him to solve the situation. Later, Śiva appeared in front of Brahmā in a male-female form. He took that form because the female part of his body performed the undone tasks of creation. Another story recounted by T.A. Gopinatha Rao is that

¹³³ T.A. G. Rao, *Elements Of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 2, Pt. I, The Law Printing House, Madras, 1916, pp. 321-33.

on the *Kailāśa* mountain, which was the abode of Śīva, once the *devatās* and *ṛṣis* came to circumambulate Śīva and Pārvatī. But one of the most important devotees of Śīva, Bhṛṅgī, did not agree to walk around Pārvatī. She got angry with him and converted him into a *preta*. Thereafter, Bhṛṅgī was not able to walk and stand up properly. Śīva, out of pity for his devotee, gave him a third leg so that he could walk. But he failed to convince his consort, Pārvatī, about the reason for the consideration shown. He then took an androgynous form, a mixture of the male and female elements, by uniting his body with hers.¹³⁴

In early medieval Indian iconography, Ardhanārīśvara is mentioned in numerous ways. Ellen Goldberg has argued that, “It is from this dynamic and varied *Śilpa* tradition that our information on the perspective dimension of Ardhanārīśvara iconography derives, at least in parts.”¹³⁵

Three different varieties of this deity are to be found at Bhubaneswar. First variety is shown where deity stands leaning on the bull shown behind, and has in the male hands a *japa mālā* and a *bīja-pūraka*. It is also fourhanded, but only three of its hands have survived.¹³⁶ The lower right (male) hand holds a skull (*kharpāra*) and the upper two (male and female) are raised in an attempt to affect a union over the head. In the female part jewelled ornaments, garments and a prominent breast have been shown, while the male part shows a garland of skulls, reaching to the thigh, and the *ūrdhvaliṅga*.¹³⁷ The third variety is with two hands, holding in the right hand a trident

¹³⁴ Ibid, pp. 321-22.

¹³⁵ Ellen Goldberg, *The Lord Who Is Half Woman: Ardhanarisvara in Indian and Feminist Perspective*, SUNY Press, New York, 2002, p. 18.

¹³⁶ Ibid, see also Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, p. 142.

¹³⁷ Goldberg, *The Lord Who Is Half Woman*, see also Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, p. 142.

and in the left an indistinct object. The bull and the lion occur on the pedestal on the respective male and female sides of the deity, a characteristic also noticed in the second variety.¹³⁸

The icon of Ardhanārīśvara evokes the idea of the intermingling of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. In other words, the universal cultural dialectic of nature and culture is projected in Indian iconography by collapsing the female and male aspects in the deity Ardhanārīśvara.¹³⁹ Invariably, culture is privileged, and this possibly explains the predominance of the male half in so many of the diagnostic features found in the iconography of Ardhanārīśvara.¹⁴⁰ Specifically the image's female indicators identify the image of Ardhanārīśvara. The god, that is to say Śiva, is normatively perceived as male and the aspects that bring out his androgynous nature needs to be identified as female, thus assuming that the male is the norm and the female is the exception.¹⁴¹

A good number of sculptures of Odisha depict the Ardhanārīśvara form in which the right half comprises all the iconographic features of Śiva, and the left half those of Umā.¹⁴² Significant Ardhanārīśvara figures are seen in Megheśvara, Brahmeśvara, Vaitāla *deul* respectively.

¹³⁸ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 82-3.

¹³⁹ Ellen Goldberg, 'Ardhanārīśvara in Indian Iconography: A New Interpretation', *East and West*, Vol. 49, No. ¼, 1999, pp. 181-82.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 183.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp.184-85.

¹⁴² D. Panda, 'Cult of Gopinatha', *OHRJ*, Vol. XXIII, pp.93-8.

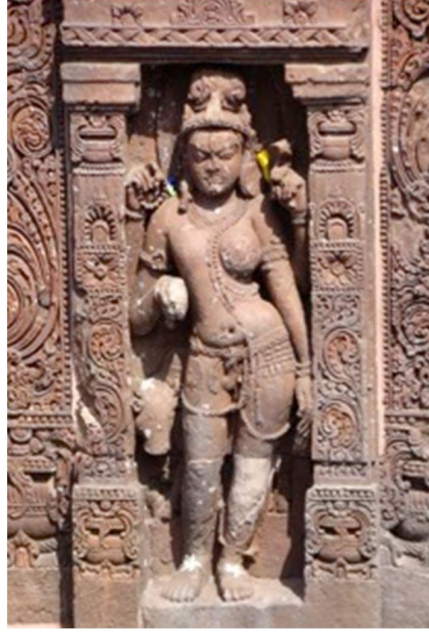


Plate 3: *Ardhanārīśvara*, *Vaitāla deul*, Bhubaneswar

III.4.3 Divine Couple in Vaiṣṇava Imagery

Though the cult of Jagannātha prevailed over the entire early medieval state under the imperial Gaṅgas, the influence of Śakti was abundant in temple sculptures.¹⁴³ This Śakti cult was depicted through the representation in association with Vaiṣṇava male deities in the composite form of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī-Varāha, Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃha; and independent Śākta temples were also erected.

III.5 Other Śākta Goddesses

Varāhī

Amongst the Śākta goddesses Varāhī holds a high spiritual position. Varāhī, according to the iconography has a boar face and is identified with the colour gray.

¹⁴³ *Jagannātha* was widely known in Odisha as the *Rāṣṭra Devatā*.

She has a *karaṇḍa mukuṭa* over her head, which is bejewelled with precious stones. She holds the *hala* or the plough as the emblem of power, and is seated underneath a tree with the elephant *vāhana*.¹⁴⁴ Several *Purāṇas* describe her with a huge belly. She is six armed, in which she carries *khadga*, *daṇḍa*, *pāśa* and *kheṭaka* while the other remaining hands held in *abhaya* and *varadā* poses. The goddess Varāhī is seen in seating or dancing pose when she is represented with the other *mātrkā* in a single sculptural panel.

There are some textual references in which the weapons of the goddess have been described. She has been described as one of the scattered parts of the *mātrkā*. In the *Vāmana Purāṇa* where the *mātrkās* are created from various parts of the goddess Caṇḍikā, we hear that Varāhī has been born from her back.¹⁴⁵ This Puranic text describes her holding *gadā* and the *cakra* and seated on *Śeṣanāga*.¹⁴⁶ That could be a rare instance, where *Śeṣanāga* serves as the *āsana* of the goddess. According to the Puranic accounts, she is dark skinned, which is associated with the destructive aspect. Wearing a blackish garment and holding a heavily ornamented crown over her head, her vastness is compared to the world. In the *Devī Māhātmya*, she is described as having a hog like form, as having uplifted the earth with her tusks, and as wielding a formidable *cakra*.¹⁴⁷ In the battle against the demon *Raktabīja*, she strikes him with a sword; a weapon not normally associated with Varāhī in later Tāntric texts.¹⁴⁸ At the

¹⁴⁴ T. E. Donaldson, 'Orissan Images of Vārāhī, Oḍḍiyāna Mārīcī, and Related Sow-Faced Goddesses', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 55, No. ½, 1995, pp. 155-82.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 158.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁷ David Kinsley, 'The Portrait of The Goddess in Devi Māhātmya', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 1978, 489-506.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 496.

Hirapur Yoginī temple, Varāhī image is carved as one of the sixty-four Yoginīs in a graceful manner.



Plate 23: Varāhī, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNC



Plate 24: Varāhī, Odisha State Museum

Cāmuṇḍā

In the context of Cāmuṇḍā, Panigrahi states that it could be the representation of the female aspect of Śiva.¹⁴⁹ The known form of the goddess, also known as *Śivadyūti*, invokes the idea of the association of *mātrkāś* and Śiva, according to the *Mārkaṇḍeya Caṇḍī*.¹⁵⁰

In contrast to the earlier form of Cāmuṇḍā, the later sculptural form has been characterized by an emaciated body and bearing gruesome features. This later iconographic form appears to invoke Kālī as *Mahāvīdyā*, which is quite different. The

¹⁴⁹ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 80.

earlier form is essentially aesthetically appealing, depicting large and prominent breasts. The striking feature of this image is the lolling tongue.¹⁵¹

Cāmuṇḍā usually dances on a *śava* (corpse), which is being chewed on by jackals or pecked by the vultures. Cāmuṇḍā is personified and depicted through sculptures as the wrath of the goddess. She is seen as embodying death, because she fights on behalf of the great goddess. She is never worshipped in households because of her destructive nature. She uses *śava* (corpse) as her mount or vehicle, under her feet. The corpse is sometimes identified with the *puruṣa* or Śiva, who lies under her feet to stop her destructive nature. But in many cases, the dead body has been regarded as the anonymous figure, which only symbolizes death and destruction. This could be connected with the cemetery setting of the goddess. But in the two Cāmuṇḍā images found from Odisha, the corpse is identified as Hari and Puruṣa respectively.¹⁵² The Paraśurāmeśvara temple of Bhubaneswar bears the earliest known image of the goddess, where the corpse is not presented. Instead of the *śava vāhana*, she is sitting on an owl. According to Donaldson from ninth century onwards the corpse replaced the owl as the *vāhana* the goddess.¹⁵³ Taking point from this argument the phenomenon particularly can be sighted in the eighth century Vaitāla *deul*, where the owl is placed at the lower left corner of the niche while the *śava* is serving as the main *vāhana* of Devī.

¹⁵¹ T.E. Donaldson, 'The Śava-Vāhana as Puruṣa in Orissan Images: Cāmuṇḍā to Kālī/Tārā', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 51, No. ½, 1991, pp. 107-41.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 108.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 122.



Plate 25: Cāmuṇḍā, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

In this temple, the goddess can be seen seated on a *vajrapariyāṅka*.¹⁵⁴ The image of Cāmuṇḍā at the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, sitting on an owl and with a tripod shaped vessel, in which the offerings for the goddess were possibly placed, shown below the pedestal.

The presiding deity enshrined in the *Vaitāla deul* is a terrible figure of Cāmuṇḍā. In the inner wall of the *jagamohana*, we find a group of *Saptamātrkāś*, all of them sitting in *yogāsana* pose on a fully blown lotus with their different attributes. Donaldson states that, the placement of the *śava* in the context Odishan images of Cāmuṇḍā can be grouped into two modes: directly under her body where it serves as her seat; and second, on the pedestal, beneath a *viśvapadma* which serves as her seat.¹⁵⁵ The *śava* or the body of the dead person lying in a flat position, resting his head over his arm and giving the impression that he is sleeping, is the most popular posture amongst the early images in Odishan temple sculptures. His one leg is carved out under his body and the other leg's knee is bent.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 121-23.



Plate 26: Cāmuṇḍā, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNCA



Plate 27: Cāmuṇḍā, Odisha State Museum

In the early temple sculptures of Cāmuṇḍā, the corpse's body is seen with a dagger and the hair-do is frequently untied, which suggests that the *śava* must be an *asura* who fought with the goddess until his death. According to the iconography, the image is similar to the *asura* (Mahiṣa) in Mahiṣamardinī images.¹⁵⁶ Cāmuṇḍā is generally regarded as the wrathful goddess and as such is invariably associated with this aspect of Śiva or Bhairava. She may be considered as an equal counterpart of Bhairava but never as superior to him.¹⁵⁷ It is not until this Śākta concept is fully developed that the corpse beneath the Devī can be identified as Śiva himself.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 139.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

An unusual image has been found from Jajpur, which is believed to be the form of Dantura Kṣemāṅkarī described in the *Agni Purāṇa*.¹⁵⁹ A sketch found in the Mackenzie Collection, now in the British Museum collection, shows her as an old woman seated on her haunches, with the typical emaciated, ribs and bones prominently displayed.¹⁶⁰ This may have been a local cultic deity absorbed into the brahmanical pantheon through the figure of Cāmuṇḍā.



Plate 27-A: Cāmuṇḍā, Daśāśvamedha Ghat, Jajpur

Yoginī

Yoginīs are generally regarded as the *Mātrkā*s. The sixty-four Yoginī temples at Hirapur near Balkati, and at Ranipur Jharial in Balangir district are famous for their images of gruesome and benevolent *Mātrkā*s. The Yoginīs, placed along the inner

¹⁵⁹ Sanjaya Kumar Mahapatra, *Chamunda in Mythology, Art and Icoography*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 2015

¹⁶⁰

walls of the hypaethral temples, are usually depicted as beautiful-bodied women with rounded breasts, slender waist and broad hips. Generally, they are adorned with a skirt like drapery, surrounded by a jewel girdle placed low on the hips.¹⁶¹ They are ornamented with necklace and garlands, with armlets, bangles, anklets, earrings and elaborate head dresses.¹⁶² Several have exquisitely delighted faces to correspond with their curvaceous bodies. However, the Yoginī presents us with a number of widely varying counter names, some clearly deriving from non-human associations.¹⁶³ According to Dehejia, the erotic context of sixty-four Yoginīs suggests that they were depicted to embrace the sixty-four Bhairavas in left-handed Tāntric worship, and gradually came to be worshipped as goddesses.¹⁶⁴ Yoginīs and Ḍākinīs are also included as motifs on Śaiva temples at this time, generally housed in exterior niches or in the recesses separating the *pāga* projections. Invariably, they are depicted in a cemetery setting accompanied by a jackal. They hold a *kāpāla*, trident, and severed head, or are distributing flesh as alms. They do not, however, have a *śava vāhana*. There are in addition numerous examples of Ḍākinīs who trample a corpse, or several prostrate figures beneath one foot, while the other leg is raised high as if taking a giant stride. A *kāpāla* is raised to the mouth with one hand in the act of drinking, while the other hand holds a sword.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Vidya Dehejia, *Yogini: Cult and Temples, A Tantric Tradition*, National Museum, Janpath, New Delhi, 1986.

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶³ Ibid, these Yoginīs sometimes are adorned with animal faces; for instances horse, boar, buffalo etc., p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 62-4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 125.



Plate 28: Yoginī, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Other Deities

Gaṅgā and Yamunā, the two river goddesses, became visible on the doorjambs with their individual vehicles, *makara* (crocodile) and *kūrma* (tortoise) in the early medieval period. The illustration of river goddesses on the doorframe is a stylistic feature of the Gupta period. In the later architecture of early medieval Odisha, these are conspicuous by their absence, with one exception. In the Jagannātha temple at Puri, over the doorjamb of the *bhogamaṇḍapa*, the images of these two deities are found. In Kīcakaśvarī temple at Mayurbhanj, these river goddesses are found to be protecting the presiding deity.



Plate 29: Yamunā, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching



Plate 30: Gaṅgā, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

Navagraha

A very common sight in the early medieval temples is a row of eight or nine *graha* or planets, depicted on the mouldings above the door lintel of the temples. In Odisha, there are several such specimens. These were the Sun (Sūrya/ Ravi), Moon (Soma/ Candra), Mars (Maṅgala), Mercury (Budha), Jupiter (Bṛhaspati), Venus (Śukra), Saturn (Śani), and the Moon's shadow planets Rāhu and Ketu.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ See, Virendra Singh Bithoo, Science and Society in Varāhamihira's *Jyotiṣa Śāstra*, PhD Thesis, Submitted to Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, New Delhi, 2018, p. 20.



Plate 31: *Navagraha* Panel, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA

The *graha* slabs are present in almost all the temples except the Vaitāla and the Śiśireśvara of Bhubaneswar. According to the *Śilpa Prakāśa*, the propitiation of *navagrahas* leads to total destruction of evil.¹⁶⁷ It is perhaps because of this reason that the *grahas* have been astronomically attached with the temples. Each *graha* slab bears a chronological significance.¹⁶⁸ In the earlier temples of our period only eight *grahas* are found carved on the panel. These *grahas* are respectively Ravi or the Sun has two hands holding lotus stalk and has a *ratha* drawn by seven horses; Soma or Moon holding a mace and *varada mudrā* and with a *ratha* drawn by ten horses; Aṅgīrasa or Maṅgala has four hands holding a *khadga*, *śakti*, *gadā* and *varada mudrā* and with a ram as his vehicle. The next is Budha or Mercury who has four hands holding sword, shield, *gadā* and *varadā mudrā* with lion as the vehicle. Bṛhaspati has four hands holding *daṇḍa*, *akṣasūtra*, *kamaṇḍalu* and *varadamurdā* with a swan as a vehicle. Śukra has the same attributes like Bṛhaspati only with a frog as a vehicle. Śani with four hands, holding *śūla*, bow, arrow with a vulture and Rāhu holding sword, *śūla* and *varadamudrā* with a *makara* vehicle. In the later temples, starting

¹⁶⁷ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, pp. 36-7.

¹⁶⁸ P. Acharya, 'Note on the Navagraha Slab in the temple of Orissa', *Studies in Orissa History, Archaeology and Archives*, Cuttack, 1969, pp. 316-19.

with the Mukteśvara, the number of the eight *grahas* had increased to nine with the new addition of the *graha* Ketu who is holding *gadā* and *varada mudrā* in two hands, in the presence of a vulture.¹⁶⁹

Starting from the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, *Aṣṭa/ Navagraha* panels have developed through time and acquired a definite space on the top of the doorjamb. The remarkable varieties of their distribution may also be found to supply rough chronological data regarding the occurrence of a particular form in a particular period.

III.6 Conclusion

In the context of early medieval temple art of Odisha, we can trace the existence of gods, goddesses, male and female figures at the sacred sites. The act of representation of male and female deities was seen as the propagation of brahmanical cults of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śakti respectively. The different images of gods, goddesses, men and the feminine have been discussed in detail in this chapter with the help of the prescriptive texts like *Śilpa Prakāśa* and *Śilparatnakośa*. The representation of cult images throughout the sacred places in early medieval Odisha appears to largely conform to textual prescriptions. This kind of sculptural representations led to the culmination towards the brahmanical hegemony through art and iconography. Most of these representations largely reflect the religious and cult appropriations. The emergence of Śaivism with the Bhauma Karas and later on Somavaṃśī rulers occurred at a time when Bhubaneswar became one of the powerful seats of political rule. The accession of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga in Puri, around eleventh century CE proclaimed a sacred territory of Vaiṣṇavism.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 316-19, 326. See also the description on Ketu in *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1962.

In the tenth century CE the amalgamation of the Śākta cult into the fold of mainstream Brahmanism, contributed to the portrayal of goddess figures in Odishan temples. The images of goddesses similarly reinforce the notions of being '*saumya*' or benevolence, through the portrayal of an attractive and pleasing form. The independent fierce goddesses are often shown with unkempt hair, hanging tongue and emaciated forms, presenting them as the antithesis of the benevolent goddess. It is in this context that sculptural representations may be seen as mirroring social values and ideas. This representation validates the emergence and synthesis of tribal religious cults into Brahmanism in early medieval Odisha. In Odisha, the additional factor, due to the influence of Tantrism, was the erotic imageries. The composite texture of Brahmanism propagated the idea of ritual polity through architecture and sculptural representations. Subsequently the other form of decorations in each temple became important for their own affiliations attached to the presiding deities of the temples. Symbols and icons enhanced the concept of sectarian development of Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta cults. Deities with their respective *vāhanas*, ornamental motifs and different styles in the individual temples of that period in Odisha indicate the growth of the brahmanical cults and their hegemony in early medieval Odisha.

Chapter IV

Semi-Divine and Erotic Imagery: Representations and Meanings

IV.1 Introduction

There are a class of semi-divine beings that find a space in brahmanical temple art. The motif of ritually sanctified sex can be traced to the Vedic hymns, where the sexual act was considered one of the numerous sacrificial ingredients necessary for ritual success. With the ascendance of Puranic religion, the *mithuna*, or sexual act, was depicted in stone to adorn different ramparts of the temple. The emergence and growth of the *Śākta* cult also added meaning and context to the depictions. Tantric influences cannot be denied; although it is clear that Tantric practices never allowed open depiction of femininity. The early medieval Odishan sculptures which depict the semi-divine and erotic sexual figures are a class by themselves. These are known as ‘Kaliṅga type’, though it is considered as a part of the *Nāgara* architecture of North India. The temple of Paraśurāmeśvara, Vaitāla, Liṅgarāja, Rājārānī and Mukteśvara are remarkable for their indigenous character and the exquisite sculptures are the products of the Kaliṅga School of art. All the Odishan temples from 7th century CE to 12th century CE are decorated from the top to the bottom. And the most significant decorative motifs are the female figures known as *Nāyikās*.

The prominent sculptural ornamentation on the temple walls of Odisha is the carving of beautiful *Nāyikā* figures. According to *Śākta* philosophy, femininity is considered as the highest active principle of the universe.¹ Some would suggest that depictions of semi divines are modest, or the artist was a free agent, to explain away these images. But neither the so-called realism, nor the

¹ K.S. Behera, *The Lingaraja Temple of Bhubaneswar: Art and Cultural Legacy*, IGNCA, New Delhi, 2008, pp. 27-8.

role of sexual motifs, particularly at Konark, can lead us to conclude that the temple is secular in character, or allow us to think that the statuary was intended to be purely and simply edifying.²

IV.2 Gandharva, Kinnara, Yakṣa, Dikpāla and Dvārapāla

The flanking figures from the two sides of *Vajramastaka* are often *gandharvas* or bird like *kinnara* figures. These early medieval ornamented figures are the descendants of the archaic *yakṣas* of in the art of the Maurya and later on Gupta period. The terms *Gandharva* and *Kinnara* are etymologically indiffereniable. The *Gandharva* are believed to guard the heavens, and as such their“ habitation is the sky, or the region of the air and the heavenly waters”.³ The *Kinnaras* are understood to be mythical entities with bird/ animal features, great musical exponents, attached to the service of Kubera.⁴ The *Yakṣas* appear to have been originally the opponents of the gods, who later were incorporated into the brahmanical traditions as lesser divine beings, attending upon Kubera and at a later date Viṣṇu.⁵ The sculptures on the temple walls of this category of figures indicate the fertility and prosperity association of these semi-divine beings.

² Max-Pol Fouchet, Brian Rhys, *The Erotic Sculpture of India*, Lausanne Print, London, 1959, p. 145.

³ Monier Williams, *A Dictionary English and Sanskrit*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, (1851), 1976, p. 346.

⁴ Alain Danielou, *The Myths and Gods of India: The Classic Work on Hindu Polytheism*, Inner Traditions International, Vermont, (1964) 1991, p. 307.

⁵ Ibid, p. 137; Monier Williams, *A Dictionary English and Sanskrit*, p. 838.



Plate 1: *Gandharvas*, Lakṣmaṇeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 2: *Kinnara*, Śatrugheśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

The *Śilpa Prakāśa* indicates where these mythical half human figures were to be carved on the *bāḍa*. It says:

" On the side of Nirṛti there is a Kinnara, and by the side of Śaṅkara (Īśāna), a Gandharva, both Yakṣa and Siddha are depending on Vāyu Devatā."⁶

⁶ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.23, p. 54:



Plate 3: *Gandharva*, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 4: *Gandharvas*, Vaitāla *deul*, Bhubaneswar

Dikpālas work as the protecting ring of the main divinities in a shrine. Their form and nature within each pantheon depends on the main deities; in fact, the sectarian affiliation can be understood by the *Dikpālas*. In a *Śaiva* temple, Rudras play the role as the supreme doorkeepers.⁷ Similarly, in a *Śākta/Devī* temple their places are taken by the *mithuna bandha* or erotic panels.

“*Kinnarām nairṛtadhīśam gandharvaṃ saṅkarasya ca
Yakṣasiddhadvayam vāyudevatāyāh pralambakam*”.

⁷ Ibid, p. 29.

The *dikpālas* are placed inside the *anarthas* (in a *Śaiva* temple) or on the *mukhaśālā* (*Śākta* temple).⁸ According to the *Prakāśa*:

“These are the different categories of the bandha (series of external images).
Listen to the high secret. This is called the Dikpāla or Mahāvidyābandha.”⁹

It has been very clearly stated that in Viṣṇu or Śiva temple, Indra must be appointed as a *Dikpāla*. In Śiva and Devī temples, Bhairavas and Bhairavīs are to serve as *Dikpālas*.



Plate 5: Ten armed Bhairava, Hirapur,

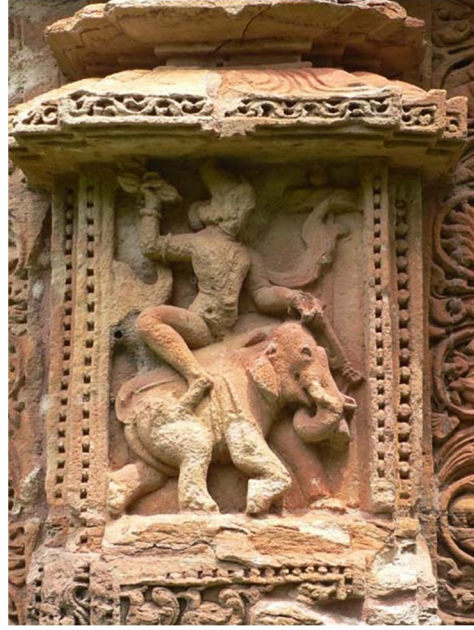


Plate 5A: Indra, Sārī *deul*, Bhubaneswar

Courtesy: IGNC A

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, I.256, p. 114:

“*Ete tu bandhabhedāh (syuh) śṛṇu rahasyamuttamaṁ*
Dikpālo vā mahāvidyābandhastatra sa kathyate.
Viṣṇorbhavanayuktena indrādi dikpālādayah
Rudre bhairavamūrttiḥ syāt devī gṛhe ca bhairavī.”

Among the semi-divine figures, flying *Vidyādharas*, *Yakṣas*, *Yakṣinis* and *Kinnaras* (birds with human head) are profusely carved. They have been irregularly depicted on the walls of the temples and bear no specific significance. In the later temples the *Yakṣas* are represented with their hands uplifted as if raising heavy structures. The knees are bent with the weight of the raised structures, and they are called *bhāravāhaka*.¹⁰



Plate 6: *Gandharvas*, Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

In the lower portion of the doorjambs, we generally find *dvārapālas* and *dvārapālikās* of respective deities in the temples, sometimes above double *vyālas*.¹¹ Dual complementary

¹⁰ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 56.

¹¹ Thomas Donaldson, 'Doorframes on the Earliest Orissan Temples', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 38, No. 2/3, 1976, pp. 189-218.

They carry a trident spear as their weapon similar to their counter parts in the early Cālukya temples. In the *Śaiva* temples in South India, the doorkeepers generally are depicted leaning on a heavy mace with legs crossed; the Pallava *Śaiva* guardians carry a mace and their free hand is usually resting on the hip. The spike-halo carries the

symbolism is also evident in the Śaiva *dvārapālas* at the base of the jambs on the temples of the Śailodbhava period. The guardian on the proper left is a Bhairava (Nandi), or frightening aspect of Śiva, while the guardian on the right (Mahākāla) represents the benevolent aspect of Śiva.



Plate 7: *Dvārapāla*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple Compound, Khiching

The Odisha *dvārapālas* are represented in a slightly flexed, frontal position with an oval halo behind the head. In the Bharateśvara, and in one example of the Paraśurāmeśvara, the legs of the *dvārapālas* are crossed. Only on one occasion does a *dvārapāla* lean on his weapon. The *dvārapālas* are generally small, occupying the lower fourth of the jambs, and usually have four arms, an exception being the Bharateśvara where they have only two. Except on the Bharateśvara

insignia of the Pallava kingdom. See, Aschwin Lippe, 'Some Sculptural Motifs on Early Cālukya Temples', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1967, pp. 6-11.

and Paraśurāmeśvara, they are flanked by a pair of dwarfish attendants, one in each of the lower corners.



Plate 8: *Dvārapāla*, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

None of the attendants hold umbrellas, as on numerous neither Gupta temples, nor are there any river goddesses present.¹² In the temples of the earlier phase the figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, two river deities, with their respective mounts are shown beyond the *dvārapālas*.¹³ But in later temples the figures of these river goddesses do not appear in the same places. River goddesses are only sporadically associated with doorways on Odisha temples, except for a brief period during the early Somavaṃśī dynasty when the influence was filtering into Odisha from central India through the region of Upper Mahanadi Valley. Rare early examples appear on the west

¹² Donaldson, 'Doorframes on the Earliest Orissan Temples', pp. 212-14.

¹³ The carving of geometric lintel over the doorway or niche on these earliest temples 'is dominated by a rectangular panel invariably carved with a narrative scene rather than a hieratic *dvāra-latā-bimba*'; see Donaldson, 'Doorframes on the Earliest Orissan Temples', p. 208. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

portal of the Paraśurāmeśvara. However, the river goddesses merely flank the portal and are not part of the doorframe itself.¹⁴

IV.3 *Alasā Kanyās*

According to *Śilpa Prakāśa*, the graceful female figures, which we find distributed on the temple walls of Odisha are the *Alasā Kanyās* (indolent or playful maidens, female figures in various poses decorating the exterior part of the temple). Sculptures in early medieval Indian temples introduced a visual spectacle. It has been argued that the female sculptures were carved to portray the liberation from earthly materials. To pay homage to femininity, the temple walls were carved with voluptuous sculptures within an architectural element evocatively titled the *nārībandha*. The *Śilpa Prakāśa* says,

“By the people it is called *nārībandha* (row of female figures) arising from art.

As a house without a wife, as playful enjoyment without a woman,

so without (the figure of) women art will be deficient and bear no fruit.”¹⁵

The temple through the depiction of *Nāyikās* is believed to have attracted the soul of the creator of the universe.¹⁶ The *Kaula* architects of early medieval Odishan temples followed the core

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 190.

¹⁵ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I, 392-393, p. 149:

“*Laukike kathito nārībandhah śilpasamudbhavah*

Vinā nārīm yathā vāsah vinā nārīm yathā krīḍā”. (v. 392)

“*Vinā lalanām hīnaṃ ca jāyate śilpaṃ niṣphalaṃ....*” (v. 393)

¹⁶ Ibid.

directions and instructions of the *Śilpa Prakāśa* to decorate the temple walls with the *Nāyikās*.¹⁷ The *Alasā Kanyā* motif was possibly the most favoured as the text prescribed its portrayal on numerous places on the *vimāna* and *mukhaśālā*.¹⁸ According to their myriad poses, features and facial expressions, the author of the *Śilpa Prakāśa* specified and categorized them in sixteen types. These types are: *Alasā Kanyā* (indolent woman), *Ḍālamālikā* (holding a branch of a tree), *Darpaṇā* (holding a mirror), *Guṇṭhanā* (bashful lady showing her back), *Mardalā* (drummer), *Māṭṛmūrti* (lady with a child), *Nartakī* (dancer), *Nūpurapādikā* (lady wearing anklets), *Padmagandhā* (smelling a lotus), *Toraṇā* (leaning on a doorway), *Mugdhā* (innocent, simple girl), *Māninī* (offended girl), *Vinyāsā* (thoughtful), *Ketakībharāṇā* (one who adorns her hair and body with *Ketakī* flower), *Cāmarā* (holding a fly-whisk) and *Śukasārikā* (playing with a parrot or a *maina*).¹⁹ Generally, there are overlaps in actual visual representations of these types, where for instance the *Ḍālamālikā* and *Alasā Kanyā* may be shown in one and the same figure. All of these figures are generally shown expressing happiness and allure, seen in the smile and tilt of the eyes, as well as the languid two-/ three-fold bend of the body.

¹⁷ Vidya Dehejia, *Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 69.

¹⁸ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, p. xiii.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 149-69.



Plate 9: *Alasā Kanyā*, Brahmeśvara Temple,
Bhubaneswar



Plate 10: *Dālamālikā*, Mukteśvara Temple



Plate 11: *Darpaṇā*, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 12: *Nartakī*, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Plate 13: *Mātr Mūrti*, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar





Plate 14: *Mardalā*, Konark Sun Temple



Plate 15: *Nūpurapādikā*, Rājārānī Temple,



Plate 16: *Gunṭhanā*, Rājārānī Temple

Bhubaneswar



Plate 17: *Padmagandhā*, Konark Sun Temple



Plate 18: *Māninī*, Konark Sun Temple



Plate 19: *Toraṇā*, Śatrughneśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 20: *Vinyāsā*, Konark Sun Temple

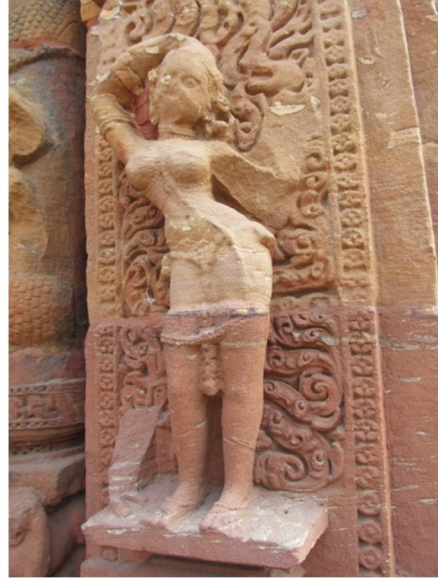


Plate 21: *Ketakībharaṇā*, Mukteśvara Temple,

Bhubaneswar



Plate 22: *Cāmarā*, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 23: *Śukasārikā*, Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

In other medieval *Śilpa* texts in the Indian subcontinent, the lists are much larger than in the aforementioned text. In the *Saurāṣṭra* tradition, thirty-two types of *Nāṭaka-strī* descriptions are given (female figures).²⁰ The present editors of *Śilpa Prakāśa* have suggested some names of *kanyās*, who can be only differentiated by their names; but the features remain same in both of the regions.²¹ *Alasā* of *Śilpa Prakāśa* is called *Līlāvatī* in *Saurāṣṭra* tradition.²² Likewise *Darpaṇā* becomes *Vidhicitā*, *Māṭṛmūrti* becomes *Putravallabhī* and *Guṇṭhanā* is called *Prekṣaṇikā* in *Saurāṣṭra* region.²³ Paraśurāmeśvara, Rāmeśvara, Vaitāla, Svarṇajāleśvara, Rājārānī, Ananta Vāsudeva, Jagannātha, *Sārī deul*, Mukteśvara, Liṅgarāja, Megheśvara, Brahmeśvara, Konark Sun temple and other temples of early medieval Odisha are full of these semi divine figures.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid, p. xiii.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

IV.4 Everyday Life

The temple sculptures not only consist of the images of gods and goddesses but also the representation of social themes. These are human beings in domestic scene, battles, exercising, *ācārya* and *śiṣya* depictions, pilgrimages and processions, household features like a lady seemingly waiting for her husband's return with the door kept partly open, *Alasā Kanyās* fondling a child or sporting with pet birds, an *abhisārikā*, removing her anklets, wearing a drape, playing on musical instruments, attending to hairstyle and make-up or relaxing amidst flower plants and birds, animal scenes especially the method of capture of wild elephants through trained elephants (a frequent theme), riding a horse, with attendants, carrying flowers, lady removing thorn from foot, lady looking at the mirror, marching of elephants, cavalry and infantry and even a camel brigade are all painstakingly portrayed.



Plate 24: The Charioteer, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 25: Family Scene, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNC A

Portrayal of *Śikṣādāna* is commonly found on the walls of early medieval temples. Most of the images show the teacher to be seated on an *āsana* and towering over the students. There are also instances of women being taught.

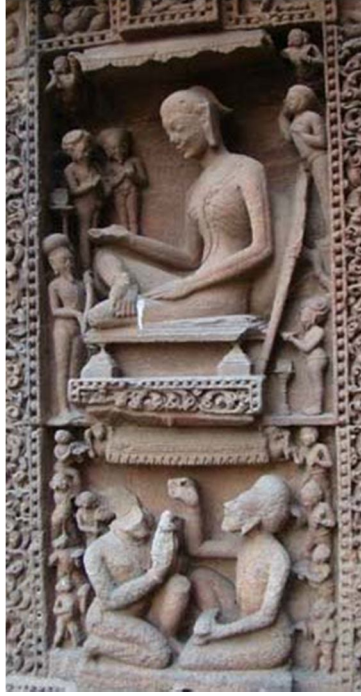


Plate 26: *Śikṣādāna*, Lingarāja Temple, Courtesy: IGNCIA



Plate 27: *Śikṣādāna*, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 28: *Śikṣādāna*, Kīcakaśvarī Temple, Khiching

IV.5 Ritual Scenes

Amongst the ritualistic figures in Odishan temples, it is likely that the male figure symbolizes virile potency, be it the ascetic or royal figure. In several cases, including one at Konark Sun temple, the male holds his *liṅga* while straddling a fire altar, suggesting the sacrificial offering in the form of semen.



Plate 29: *Yonīabhiṣeka*, Sārī *deul*, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNC

There are numerous other themes suggesting Tāntric influence, including the motif of a priest engaged in sexual congress with several females. *Yonīabhiṣeka* is one of the important motifs where the *yonī* can symbolize fire, and woman herself is the altar. The motif can be understood as the female allowing the *liṅga* to penetrate, suggesting communion as well as sacrifice. The earliest illustrations of erotic rituals generally appear in the *bandhana* and recesses of the temples, and are primarily restrained in nature and generalized in activity. These images are usually associated with *liṅgapūjā*, drinking or eating from a *kāpāla*, and illustrate the doctrine of the combined aspects of *Pāśupata* and *Kāpālika sādhanā* through the temple sculptures of early medieval Odisha.

Śiva *liṅga* worshiped by the ascetics, worship of *Śrīyantra Meru* are few important motifs that can be found in *pīṭha-grhas* in Rājārānī temple.



Plate 30: *Śrīyantra Meru*, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA



Plate 31: *Liṅgapūjā*, Megheśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 32: *Liṅgapūjā*, Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

IV.6 Erotic Couples

Erotic sculptures in sacred architecture were not a new phenomenon, but in the evolved phase of temple architecture in the early medieval period across the Indian sub-continent their appearance was more profuse and complex than in the earlier stage. Such profusion and intricacy can be seen in the erotic forms and postures of sculptures in the Konark Sun temple. The erotic figures were influenced by the ideas and philosophy of Tantrism.²⁴ Erotic imagery serves the same auspicious function as other decorative motifs and may likewise be symbolic of what was either propitious or catastrophic or both.²⁵ Erotic imagery on the later temples must be viewed in the same manner as other imagery, as auspicious motifs, which beautify and protect the temple. It is generally the magical power of sex that dominates in these images or in the underlying secret *yantras*, both of which are stressed in the *Śilpa* text.²⁶ In Tantrism it is believed that passion

²⁴ Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, p. 483.

²⁵ T. E. Donaldson, 'Erotic Rituals on Orissan Temples', *East and West*, Vol. 36, No. 1/3, September 1986, pp. 75-100.

²⁶ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, p. 307.

cannot be suppressed; but one can get *mokṣa* by the satisfaction of earthly pleasures, sex being one of them. The *Śilpa Prakāśa* clearly explains the significance of erotic sculpture in the following verses:

“Śiva himself is visibly manifested as the *mahāliṅgam*, and Śakti in the form of the *Bhaga* (womb).

By their union the whole universe comes into being. This is called the action of love (*kāma kriyā*).”²⁷

The decorative and symbolic motifs of earlier traditions of art were being included in the early medieval temple art, but with some new dimensions.²⁸ The ancient tree and woman motif, known earlier as *śālabhañjikā*, is introduced in the *Śilpa Prakāśa* as *gelabanārī* (semi divine female figures intertwined with creepers and trees) and more importantly, the erotic couples can be understood in early medieval times as constituting *mithuna* and *maithuna* motifs.²⁹ The intense pleasures from sexual union of all creatures of the universe cause happiness and salvation, according to the text.

In our analysis, sex and religion appear to have been considered as a part of life, and life was seen as neither separated nor possible without the pleasure. It was intended for people to see the sexual imagery, and associate it with the laws of nature, thus lending legitimacy to its worship. These images were carved under the influence of Tāntric philosophy. The actual meaning of love

²⁷ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, II. 501, pp. 306-07:

Śivah sāksād mahāliṅgam śaktirbhagasvarūpiṇī
Tadyogena jagat sarvaṃ kāmakriyā sā uccate”

²⁸ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, ‘Preface to the First Edition’, p. xii.

²⁹ *Ibid.* For a detailed discussion on different kind of erotic sculpture, see Devangana Desai, *Erotic Sculptures of India*, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 1975.

is hidden underneath the *Kāmakalā Yantra*, which is not revealed to those who are not initiated into the Tāntric tradition.³⁰

To describe the eroticism in images, *Śilpa Prakāśa* introduces another description, which is called *mithuna-bandha*.³¹

So, while the text firmly recommends erotic sculpture to be displayed, it also specifies the kind of erotic images. It firmly disallows depiction of sexual intercourse or coital sex, and suggests that the amorous couple instead be depicted.

For the most part in early medieval Odishan temples, these images seem unrelated to any specific religious sect even though the temples are Śaivite. In the beginning of the 8th century CE, erotic imagery was placed in the *bārāṇḍā* and was explicitly associated with Śiva, possibly relating to specific religious rituals. The main methodological problem with the Odishan temples is that it is difficult to determine, due to the absence of inscriptional evidences, the nature of the influence of the *Pāśupata* and *Kāpālika* sects. Despite some major differences in their doctrines and rituals, these two sects have been grouped together and described collectively by medieval Sanskrit writers, probably because of their unorthodox ascetic practices, which include sexual exhibition and ritual sex.³² According to Donaldson, “in some rituals, the idea of propitiation is absent, or minimized, and the worshipper is united with divinity through food, drink, sex, or mental ecstasy, communion rituals similar to Dionysian revels in ancient Greece and the belief in enthusiasm, the belief that a man through physical intoxication at first, later through spiritual ecstasy, could pass from the human to the divine”.³³ We can reconstruct their rituals from

³⁰ Donaldson, ‘Erotic Rituals on Orissan Temples’, p. 307.

³¹ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.548-53, p. 186.

³² Donaldson, ‘Erotic Rituals on Orissan Temples’, p. 137-38.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 144.

Sanskrit texts, all of which state that they worship Bhairava and his consort Cāmuṇḍā, and that the central ritual of Tāntric communion is sexual intercourse. Woman and sexual union thus played a central role in Tāntric *sāadhanā*. Basically there are three scenes, which deviate from conventional love making which, along with added figures, suggest the ritual nature of the activity - *yonīabhiṣeka*, *puruṣācāraṇa* and *rajaṣpāna*.³⁴ Semen and menstrual discharges are both offered as sacrifices in Tāntric rituals so that the specific act here is relevant only in respect to identifying the particular text being illustrated.



Plate 33: *Yonīabhiṣeka*, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar

³⁴ Ibid, p. 169.

The ritual ceremony of *Yonīabhiṣeka* is another important motif in this context. A female figure is seen splaying her legs, with the vagina prominently shown, and a dwarf attendant is applying some substance to her vagina with a stick to prepare her for the ceremony. This is considered as a Tāntric motif.



Plate 34: *Rajapāna*, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar

The rite of *Rajapāna* is considered the sixth stage among the eight involved in the *Kāmakalā* ritual.³⁵ It appears in more than twenty early medieval sculptures from Odisha, and the standard depiction is of a kneeling male drinking the female discharge. It has been argued that this rite may be seen at the core of the *Kāmakalā* ritual.³⁶ Śiva himself is depicted in the *Śilpa Prakāśa* as drinking the *raja* of the goddess *Kāmakaleśvarī*.³⁷

³⁵ David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yoginī: “Tantric Sex” in its South Asian Contexts*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003, p. 99.

³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 100-01.

³⁷ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, II.533-5, p. 106.

There are also instances of the woman taking the male organ in her mouth – fellatio. In all of the early scenes of fellatio, the kneeling female is depicted with rough features suggesting she is a girl of low caste, possibly a *Dombi*, the favourite of Tāntric authors, and a fact, which reinforces the ritual and casteist nature of the activity.³⁸ The role played by girls of low caste and courtesans in Tāntric rituals is well-known, and the more depraved and debauched the woman according to the brahmanical thinking, the more fit she is for the rite. Part of this exaltation is a reaction against the orthodox systems and the ideology of castes while on a symbolic level it is related to the Tāntric doctrine of the identity of opposites.



Plate 35: *Mithuna*, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

³⁸ Donaldson, 'Erotic Rituals on Orissan Temples', p. 157.



Plate 36: *Maithuna* depictions inside the *Ratha Cakra*, Konark Sun Temple



Plate 37: *Maithuna*, Rāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 38: *Mithuna*, Lakṣmaṇeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

In the 10th century CE, with the Somavaṃśī rulers from the upper Mahanadi valley firmly entrenched in eastern Odisha, the *Pāśupata* and *Kāpālīka* sects were gradually replaced in popularity by Śaktism, and newly introduced religious sects such as the *Kaulācāras* were popular in Central India. The popularity of erotic motifs can be seen in political articulations as well - Somavaṃśī Keśarī rulers glorify the pursuit of love and their domain is visualized as the pleasure garden of *Kāma*.³⁹ Whereas the earlier erotic friezes depicting Tāntric rituals appear to be an indigenous development, the pursuit of love extolled by the new rulers reflects the changing social and religious attitudes spreading throughout India at this time.⁴⁰ In Ananta Vāsudeva temple, the *mithuna* motif is generally found in an *anurāha* niche of the upper *janṅha*, the other images in these recesses being *Alasā Kanyās* and scenes from daily lives.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 186-87.



Plate 39: *Maithuna*, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar

IV.7 Physical Appearances

The different arrangement of coiffures and ornaments can be noticed in the temples from 9th century to 13th centuries CE vividly. In the temples of 7th to 9th centuries of Bhubaneswar, tasselled hair-do and tied hair rolled up into a bun on the head are generally seen. The common or ordinary women from the household scenes used to split their hair into two parts and make a bun at the back of their head. No heavy ornamentation was used, which allowed for the visible marking of this category, since the other figures were just the opposite.

While the figures of males are ornamented moderately, like the women sculptures they are also seen with long hair and topknots, with curled locks. But unlike the women, their coiffures did not become more elaborate. The sculptures of the later period show the male figures sporting moustaches.



Plate 40: Coiffure and jewellery, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar

Women applying *sindūra* (vermillion), women colouring their feet with *alaktaka*, women applying *yavaka* as lipstick, putting *kuṃkuma* (circular mark over forehead) are seen in the sculptures of early medieval temples in Odisha.⁴¹ The *Darpanā* images are the best examples of women engaged in beautification and dressing. Applying vermillion with the help of the stick and holding a mirror in another hand is one of the most common portrayals of this type.

⁴¹ *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1953, pp. 23-4.



Plate 41: Moustache, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Various types and styles of garments are also seen in both male and female sculptures. Lower garment of a man was called *antarīya* and the upper one is *uttarīya*.⁴² B. Das refers to the *Śārī* for women in his article but this is a misnomer.⁴³



Plate 42: Lower garments of Woman and Men, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar

⁴² R.L. Mitra, *Antiquities of Orissa*, Vol. I, Today and Tomorrow's, New Delhi, 1963, pp. 86-7.

⁴³ Biswarup Das, *The Bhaumakaras and Their Times*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1978.

Close fitting sarong style garments are generally shown on the dancers. They also used thin and transparent garments. The usage of scarf flanking over the shoulder and thigh is also noticed in numerous female sculptures in Ananta Vāsudeva temple.



Plate 43: Scarf, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar

According to the view of A.S. Altekar, the discrimination and hierarchy inside the society can be encountered through the dresses.⁴⁴ It is quite evident to differentiate the sculptures depending on their attires. One can postulate that men-women, positioned well in the hierarchal order, normally used finer and silk fabrics, while the men-women from medium strata used coarse and simpler varieties of fabrics. Poor people used to wear cotton cloth over their body.

⁴⁴ A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1956, pp. 344-45.

IV.8 Importance and Evolution of the Sculptures

An analysis of the iconographic features of the sculptures depicted on the temple walls of Bhubaneswar, Konark and Puri provides insights into the development of architectural features and decorative motifs over time. The sculptural canvas in Bhubaneswar provides us with the best example of Kalinga or Odishan art. The exterior of the temple, including the platform, walls and tower, are the vistas where the sculptural tradition of Odisha can be identified. The devotees look at the temple first when he or she comes near the building, and then, particularly during the ritual of walking around or circumambulation, he or she comes in close proximity to the images, and also comprehends the meaning and symbolism of those sculptures. The temple now comes alive with the images.⁴⁵

According to Stella Kramrisch, “the coherence of its monumental shape is enriched by its carvings; nowhere else in India are the walls of the temple as intimately connected with their sculptures. The temple here is a work of monumental sculpture of which the single carvings form the intricate surface”.⁴⁶ The external surfaces of the Odishan temples have been in large quantities decorated and ornamented, in contrast to their interiors, which are mainly plain. The *Śilpa* texts do not mention anything about why the interiors are to be left plain. The interior of the *deul* or sanctum is conceived as the *garbha* or womb of the cosmic being.⁴⁷ Perhaps, due to the primary concept of womb or *garbha* as being a natural and unadorned space, the walls were

⁴⁵ Stella Kramrisch, ‘Wall and Image in Indian Art’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 102, No. 1, 1958, pp. 7-13.

⁴⁶ Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. I, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1946, pp. 216-17.

⁴⁷ Vidya Dahejia, *Early Stone Temple of Orissa*, Vikas Publishing, New Delhi, 1979, p. 31.

left plain.⁴⁸ The unadorned walls emphasize the quiet and solemn atmosphere, which is required for the performance of the rituals of the deity, which in turn would result in the (re) birth of the worshipper.⁴⁹ The interior portions of the early medieval temples in Odisha were decorated with sculptures and ornamented with various vegetation and floral motifs.⁵⁰ But this practice could not become popular and therefore did not continue. The interiors of both the *mukhasālā* and *vimāna* have been kept plain as far as possible.⁵¹ After the early period of experimentation, the crafts persons of Odisha succeeded in achieving an orderly arrangement of the sculptural motifs and cult icons on the body of the temple.⁵²

It has been already pointed out that the sculptural art of Odisha had travelled a long way by the time the Śatrughneśvara group of temples, the earliest extant temples, were erected. The temple sculptures followed the tradition established by the earlier sculptors.⁵³ The sculptures on the early group of existing temples appear to be the work of, in the observation of Fabri, ‘provincial artists’.⁵⁴

A few *Yakṣī* and *Nāga* images have been discovered in the temples of Bhubaneswar. These carved figures are decorated with heavy ornaments. “The workmanship is unfinished and

⁴⁸ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 41. The interior walls of the Vaitāḷa *deul* has been carved with the images of Saptamātrkās, Vīrabhadra, Gaṇeśa and Bhairava, unlike other early medieval temples of Odisha. These images are not intended to fulfil the visual purposes. In Odishan temple, there is no concept of interior wall decorations. These figures are carved to be worshipped along with Cāmuṇḍā, the presiding deity of the temple.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 41.

⁵⁰ Ibid. The ceilings of the Mukteśvara and Brahmeśvara temples are carved with the design of inverted and fully blossomed lotus. The existing *mukhasālā* of the Kośaleśvara temple has been carved exquisitely.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 41.

⁵² Ibid, pp. 43-5.

⁵³ C.L. Fabri, *History of the Art of Orissa*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1974, p. 31-2.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

primitive.”⁵⁵ The *Yakṣī* images bear similarities with those of Sanchi.⁵⁶ The image bears the uniqueness similar to those of the images on the walls of the early temples.⁵⁷

The brahmanical gods and goddesses represented on the temples are closely related to the visual representations of the gods of the Buddhist pantheon. The Lakulīśa image is the prolific example, which can be illustrated at this point. This sculpture is generally depicted sitting in *yogāsana* pose on the elongated lotus petals having half closed eyes. It is showing *dharmacakra-pravartana-mudrā* in definite iconographic style.

The prominent influence of Gupta style of art on the Odishan sculptures is visible in early medieval temples.⁵⁸ This can be clearly seen in the lintels of doorways. The image of the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā is seen with the wig like hair dresses and low cut decorative floral motifs.⁵⁹ Vidya Dehejia disagrees with the dominant view that the Gupta sculptural style motivated the Odishan art.⁶⁰ Instead she argues, “One feature the early Odisha did not take in from the Gupta workshops was sculptural style.”⁶¹

Another important development in the early medieval period was the textual authentication of the norms of the iconographies. The artists were forced to follow the strict doctrines to carve the god’s and goddesses’ images. It helped to focus light on the basic iconographical expression of

⁵⁵ Debala Mitra, *Bhubaneswar*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1958.

⁵⁶ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 207-08.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 42-3.

⁵⁸ Mitra, *Bhubaneswar*,

⁵⁹ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*,

⁶⁰ Dehejia, *Early Stone Temple of Orissa*, p. 62.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 65.

the sculptures.⁶² The early medieval architecture and sculptures not only follow the strict version of sculpture making but they apply the canons to authenticate the texts through the representations. The images of women, depicted on the temple walls thus were refashioned and appeared more mechanical than the earlier ones.⁶³

The sculptures on the temples of the Bhauma Kara and Somavaṃśī period in Odisha, are not so exquisitely treated. The development and evolution of the sculptures has been understood as the part of the religious organizations from that time. They were mostly sculpted on the lower portion of the temple. Here Vidya Dehejia states, “Proportions are poor, images stocky and figures generally in rigid postures. The human body has an uncomfortable appearance with arms and legs seeming to be separate entities, flat and flabby, and attached to the body in an inorganic fashion without any depiction of underlying bone or muscular structure”.⁶⁴ The fingers of toes look too crude compared to the sculptures of the later period. Likewise the figures in sitting posture are also lacking finesse.⁶⁵ It can be noticed that the appearance and condition of the sub-shrine deities are better than the rest of the figures. Dehejia states that these may have been done by the ‘more advanced craftsmen’ of the region.⁶⁶ But this seems like a strange proposition, as it seems more likely that the ‘experts’ would be employed in the main shrines.

After the early constructions, the temples of Vaitāla, Mukteśvara, Rājārānī, Liṅgarāja, dated from the 9th to 12th centuries CE, are noted for more prolific work in the context of carving the

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Dehejia, *Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, p. 62.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

sculptures. A. N. Parida suggests that the images have been scooped out in deeper reliefs.⁶⁷ For that reason the figures of the *kanyās* especially came along with more sensuous and delicate manners.⁶⁸ This group of temples reveal the more exquisite and intellectually developed figures than the early temples group. The facial expression and eyes are more prominent and gracious in nature. The figures are more slender and charming. Along with the semi divine and the divine figures, the images of the *kanyās* are perfect in nature. To discuss about the images of this period, Debala Mitra has said “The dignified self-composed figures of the deities with the expression of absorption are mellowed with warmth of spiritual grace and are elegant and refined”.⁶⁹ It also can be noticed that the treatment of the organs and parts of body has been portrayed precisely on the temple walls.⁷⁰

In the context of the *maithuna* and *mithuna* sculptures of the early medieval temples of Odisha also, the later phase saw an improvement in image making.⁷¹ According to Panigrahi, the sculptures of the later phase contain some similar features of the Buddhist style, particularly in Cuttack district (Ratnagiri).⁷² Some later phase temples like Mukteśvara, Rājārānī, Liṅgarāja, Ananta Vāsudeva, Sun temple of Konark are seen with huge ornamentation and decorations with exquisitely carved female figures. These figures are carved in a very profuse style, which can easily point out the skill and mastery of the sculptors.⁷³ Panigrahi noticed that the *kanyā* or *nāyikā* figures are the most exquisite and profuse other than the divine figures in the temples of

⁶⁷ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 45.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Mitra, *Bhubaneswar*, p. 24.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, pp. 45-8.

⁷² Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 33-6.

⁷³ Ibid.

early medieval Odisha.⁷⁴ The gradual improvement was directly associated with the techniques.⁷⁵ The knowledge of beauty and aesthetics are closely related and blended with the mechanism of the making of the sculptures in early medieval Odisha.⁷⁶ Hence one can state that the journey from the earliest form of the images reaches to the most expert, matured and refined stage.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Chapter V

Animals and Ornamentation: Depictions of Flora and Fauna

V.1 Introduction

The word ‘symbol’ has been derived from the Greek word ‘symbolon’, that signifies contract, token, insignia and identification.¹ Symbols and design, associated with Indian art and architecture have great significance for understanding religion. This symbolic stream of identification has been used for several centuries on sculptures, architectures, coins, paintings and pottery. In brahmanical religion, symbols and motifs carry different definitions from the point of view of art and iconography. For instance, the carvings of *pūrṇa kumbha* or *ghaṭa*, *kalpalatā*, *cakra* create different religious as well as cultural meanings.² Symbols facilitate communication by giving a common reference point for a variety of original disparate ideas. Rai Govind Chandra writes that “it is wrong to postulate that the ‘Indian plastic sense is averse to the symbol which is the substitute for a reality’ as the image of a deity in India is itself a symbol – a visual symbol of a particular aspect of God which the devotee wishes to worship”.³ Symbols are universal, in the sense they transcend history. Most writers agree in tracing the beginning of symbols thought to prehistoric times- to the latter

¹ K. M. A. Goldammer, ‘Nature of Religious symbols and symbolization’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1999, (Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/religious-symbolism>)

² Rai Govind Chandra, *Indian Symbolism: Symbols as Sources of our Customs and Beliefs*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996.

³ *Ibid*, p. 1.

part of the Palaeolithic Age.⁴ Ananda K. Coomarswamy says that “Symbolism is the art of thinking in images”. Paul Diel considers symbols to be ‘a precise and crystallized means of expression’,⁵ whereas thinker Saunier points out an important characteristic of symbols when he states that they are “the synthesizing expression of a marvellous science, now forgotten by men” but that “they show us all that has been and will be in one immutable form”.⁶

V.2 Types and Patterns of Ornamentation

Odishan temples from the early medieval period are famous for their grandeur. Exquisite sculptures of divine figures are carved on the upper *jaṅgha* of these temples as it has been discussed in the previous chapter. Semi-divine male and female sculptures in lower *jaṅgha* along with few yet rich domestic scenes on the plinth (*pīṭha*) are all adorned in a prolific manner. But in the same time birds, animals, mythical figures, flowers, vegetables, creepers and vines, geometric motifs, variety of jewellery (archetypal form of *ālamba* or hanging pearl strings) are some of the main features on the walls as well.⁷ Distinctive features of early medieval Odishan temples are these motifs.

⁴ J. E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1962, p. xvi.

⁵ Ibid, p. xxix.

⁶ Ibid, p. xxx.

⁷ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, by Rāmacandra Mahāpātra Kaula Bhaṭṭāraka, Alice Boner and Sadasiva Ratha Sarma (eds. and trans.), IGNCA and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2005, p. 32.

These motifs are prescribed by the text *Śilpa Prakāśa*. The canons of Odishan architecture classify stones, location of temples and placements of sculptures. Floral decorative motifs, *Nāga* and *Nāginī*, *śārdūla*, *gaja-vyāla/ virāla*, *simha- vyāla*, *vetāl*, *kīrtimukha*, elephant, horse, bull, *makara*, *kūrma*, fish and other animals are carved. In a temple finally, identification is on the basis of the insignia of the deity. In most of the Śaivite temples the presence of *trīśūla*, Nandi and Bhairavas are some of the insignias. And in case of a Viṣṇu temple a *cakra* motif or a Garuḍa sculpture are represented to signify the religiosity. Erotic and Tāntric motifs are chiefly and exquisitely carved on temples of different sectarian traditions.

This chapter will deal with the depiction of ornamentation, including flora and fauna, on the temple walls of early medieval Odisha. Animatic (*virāla/ vyāla*, *nāga stambha*, *gandharva-kinnara-dikpāla*, *haṁsa*, *bhārarakṣaka*, *makara*), non-animatic (*kīrtimukha*, *latā/ vakra-latā/ vartūla-latā/ nara-latā*, *ālamba*, doorframe, *gavākṣa*, *vajramastaka*, *pīṭha*, *kumbha*, *anurāha/ koṇaka pāga*, *padmagarbha*), *bandhas* (*Lakṣmī bandha*, *Kāma bandha*, *sakhī bandha*) and cosmic *vāhanas* will be discussed according to *Śilpa* texts especially assigned to this region.⁸

V.3 Portrayal of Mythical and Other Animals

During 10th century CE, with the building of Liṅgarāja temple in Bhubaneswar, the culmination of the evolution of Odishan temple architecture started evolving. In the 12th and 13th centuries CE the Kaliṅga architecture reached its zenith with the magnanimous structures of Jagannātha and Konark Sun temple.

⁸ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, pp. 29-35.

Animals and birds as the *vāhanas* of gods and goddesses found a place on the temple walls and became the prime elements of decoration. They are found on all the temples of early medieval period. The later temples of this phase, like Megheśvara, had less ornamentation than others. From the simpler motifs of Paraśurāmeśvara to the finest work of Ananta Vāsudeva temple, these decorative motifs changed and evolved through time. *Vyāla* and *gajas* are very common in their occurrence in those temples. These mythical sculptures on the temples have been carved realistically. Mukteśvara, Brahmeśvara temples in Bhubaneswar, and Kīcakeśvarī in Mayurbhanj are some of the finest examples where animal figures are found in plenty in the given period.⁹ These include, apart from lions and elephants, crocodiles, tortoises, bulls, deer and boars.¹⁰ Animals despite being portrayed as living or mythical bear the mark of a balance between stylization and realism.¹¹ They generally occupy the base of the temple or the *bārāṇḍā* and the base line course relief of the *caitya* window.¹²

V.3.1 *Vyāla/ Virāla/ Virāja*

The figures of *vyāla/ virāla* or *virāja* have frequently been used for the decoration of the temple *bāḍas* of early medieval Odisha. The word *vyāla* is a deformation of *virāla*, which means fantastic or grotesque. Therefore V.S. Agrawala in his study of *vyāla* terms it “Grotesque in Indian Art.”¹³ It is the admixture of mythical man and animal figures. M.A. Dhaky describes several kinds of *vyālas* in his scholarly

⁹ K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1961, pp. 109-10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² K.V. Soundara Rajana, *Early Kalinga Art and Architecture*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984, p. 180.

¹³ V.S. Agrawala, Foreword in M.A. Dhaky, *The Vyāla Figures of the Medieval Temple of India*, Prithivi Prakashan, Varanasi, 1965, p. 5.

monograph, *The Vyāla Figures on the Medieval Temples of India*.¹⁴ In the Vaitāla *deul* and Mukteśvara temple the *vyālas* are found flanking the *kīrtimūkha* on the pilasters and have riders on their back.¹⁵ There are strings of pearls coming out of the mouth of the *kīrtimūkha* and *vyāla*. There are two small flying figures at the corners below the upraised feet of the *vyāla*, which may be semi-divine beings. According to *Śilpa Prakāśa*,

“Four types of lions are best: *Virāja*, *Jāgrata*, *Udyata* and *Gajakrānta*. These are the foremost important lion-kings.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Dhaky, *The Vyāla Figures of the Medieval Temple of India*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, II.663, p. 346:

“*Siṃhāścaturvidhāḥ śreṣṭhāḥ virāyajāgratodyotāḥ*

Gajakrāntastathā mukhye harirājacatuṣṭayam.”



Plate 1: *Siṃhavirāla*, Vaitāla deul, Bhubaneswar

There are also descriptions of other types of *vyāla* in the *Śilpa Prakāśa*. The *Makarikā* has a lion face with a *makara* body. The *Gajavirāla* has an elephant face and lion body. Both have wings. The *Gajakrānta* has an elephant above, which the lion is depicted with its paws and nails unsheathed, as if attacking or quelling the elephant.



Konark Sun Temple

Plate 4: *Gajakrānta*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

The *vyāla* are conspicuous by their absence in the temples earlier to the Vaitāla. In the temples of the later phase the prolific occurrence of the *virāla* becomes a regular feature.¹⁷ They are placed in the recesses of the pilaster in the *talā-janḡha* portion of the *bāḡa*. They are found either on elephant mount or trampling an elephant and belong to different types described in the *Śilpa* texts.¹⁸ The *vyāla* figures are depicted on the temples such as Ananta Vāsudeva, Liṅgarāja, Jagannātha and other major and minor temples of Odisha. The larger than normal size *vyālas* are conspicuously carved on the walls and plinths of the Konark Sun temple in an exquisite manner.

¹⁷ A.N. Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa: From The Sixth Century A.D. to the End of Somavamsi Rule*, Commonwealth, New Delhi, 1999, p. 62.

¹⁸ Ibid.

V.3.2 *Nāga Stambha*

Nāga and *Nāginī* figures have a significant place in the temple sculptures. *Nāga* pilasters are found in the recesses formed by the *pāgas* on the *vimāna* and *mūkhaśālā* of the temples like Liṅgarāja, Rājārānī, Mukteśvara, Brahmeśvara, Rāmeśvara. Sometimes, the *nāgas* are anthropomorphic and some time purely in zoomorphic. The *nāgas* on the *bāḍa* of the Kīcakeśvarī temple are magnificently portrayed.



Plate 5: *Nāga Stambhas*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple,
Khiching



Plate 6: *Nāginī*, Mukteśvara Temple,
Bhubaneswar

According to *Śilpa Prakāśa*, *nāgas* are good spirits, who protect the temples against lightning and “propitiate the Nāga-folk in the subterranean regions”.¹⁹ *Nāga stambhas* secure the temple on its earth foundations. *Śilpa Prakāśa* says:

¹⁹ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, p. 34,

“The Nāga-nāyikā is the giver of wealth, corn and good fortune.

The pillar should be divided into four parts, following the wall.”²⁰

Most of the *Nāga stambhas* in Konark, Mukteśvara, Kīcakeśvarī are being entwined by the coils. Sometimes both *Nāga* and *Nāgī* figures together are seen. Around the *stambha* the *nāgas* form dynamic spirals. *Śilpa Prakāśa* remarks that the couple sometimes produces the best of the *nāgas*. Further, it is said:

“Sometimes the best *Nāgas* are made in pairs.

In the (remaining) three parts of the body is (coiled) around (the pillar) in a beautiful way.”²¹

Anurāhapāga in the Kalinga type temples are full of carvings of these extremely beautiful pillars.

Here, a point that may be reflected upon is the *stambhas* as representing the *axis mundi* – the universal pillar that connects the heavens with the earth, and whose base is fixed in the world below.²² The *Nāgas* as subterranean beings reinforce the idea of the brahmanical temple’s *axis mundi* through the *nāgastambha*.

²⁰ Ibid, I.225, p. 106:

“*Dhanadhānyam ca soubhāgya dāyikā nāganāyikā*
Bhittyanusāratah satmbham kuryāt bhāgacatuṣṭayam.”

²¹ Ibid, II.488, p. 302:

“*Kadācit yugmabhedena kāraennāgamuttamam*
Vedabhāge tathā deham vakrākāre manohare”..

²² Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, (trans.) William R. Trask, Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., New York, 1959, pp. 36-7.



Plate 7: *Nāginī*, Konark Sun Temple



Plate 8: *Nāga Stambha*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

V.3.3 *Haṃsa*

In most of the temples, the *haṃsa* frieze occupies the uppermost range.²³ *Śilpa Prakāśa* describes *haṃsa* as “an old and permanent symbol for the liberated spirit”.²⁴ The depictions of *haṃsa* in a frieze of any temples symbolize the subtlety. The representation of *haṃsa* sometimes as the *haṃsalatā* is also very frequent. The vivid

²³ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, ‘Introduction’. p. 23.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

description of *hamsalatā* in the *Śilpa Prakāśa* is as follows:

“Hear about the beautiful *hamsa* (geese) frieze, for which the *vasanta* is the best place.

On a hard stone, make the delicate form of a goose. The beautiful goose should always be carved with the tail in the form of a foliage.”²⁵



Plate 9: *Hamsas*, Liṅgarāja Temple



Plate 10: *Hamsalatā*, Svarnajāleśvara Temple

Bhubaneswar

The next verses describe the carving of a *hamsalatā*. The frieze of wings of *hamsa* should be carved upwards above the head, as well as neck of the geese. It says:

“In a quadrangular field half of the body of the goose should be in the upper area,

And leaf-ornaments should be made in the place of a tail. This is called *hamsa*.”²⁶

²⁵ Ibid, I.292, p. 122:

“*Śṛṇu hamsalatām divyām sreṣṭhām vasantacāriṇīm.*
Kaṭhinaprastare sukṣme hamsākṛtīm thācaret
Khodayet divyaṁ hamsaṁ ca pucchaṁ patrākṛtīm sadā.”

²⁶ Ibid, I.294, p. 122:

“*Caturasre samakṣetre hamsāṅgamūrdhvamaṇḍale*
Kārayet patrabhūṣācca hamsā iti sāvicyate.”



Plate 11: *Hamsalatā*, Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 12: *Hamsalatā*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

V.3.4 *Makara*

Aquatic yet mythological animal *makara* is the *vāhana* of the river goddess Gaṅgā and the ocean god Varuṇa.²⁷ Apart from being the cosmic vehicle, *makara* is an important faunal feature, which is carved over almost every temple as an integral form of semi-divine ornamentation. The ancient form of *makara* is exuberantly presented in many forms. Being a water element, the *makara* signifies the growth of

²⁷ Ibid, 'Introduction', p. 23,

life and nurture.²⁸ An open mouthed and full-faced *makara* is depicted throughout the early medieval period as a *kīrtimukha*. Prior to the Gupta period, the *caitya gavākṣas* were served by the *makara kīrtis*. The earliest appearance of the image is believed to be in the Lomaṣa Rishi cave, and in Buddhist monuments at the turn of the Common Era, it is generally associated with *yakṣa* figures.²⁹



Plate 13: *Makara Kīrti*, Vaitāla deul, Bhubaneswar

Later in the early medieval period, these *gavākṣas* turned into *kīrtimukhas* and took their place on the temple façade. In the context of the temples of Odisha in early medieval period, the *makara* throws out the *ālambas*, creepers and foliage.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid, p. 32.

²⁹ Betty Dashew Robins and Robert F. Bussbarger, 'The Makara: A Mythical Monster from India' *Archaeology*, 23:1, 1970, p. 38.

³⁰ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, 'Introduction', p. 32.



Plate 14: *Makara* with *Ālamba latā*, Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

In the *Makaramālinī* section, *Śilpa Prakāśa* writes that,

“In a square or a rectangle, along the middle-line

Two *makaras* facing opposite sides should be made.”³¹



Plate 15: *Makara Praṇālā*, Chāyādevī Temple, Konark Sun Temple Complex, Courtesy: VMIS

³¹ Ibid, I.546-7, p. 184:

“*Same vā viṣame kṣetre Madhya rekhā samanvaye.*
Vīparītamukhākāre kārayenmakaradvayaṃ.”

In most of the temples, the design of *praṇālā* or stouts, straight projected horizontally out from the back and side of the *garbhagr̥ha*. The designs of these *praṇālā* are in the shape of *makara*. Starting from Mukteśvara, Sun temple of Konark to other early medieval temples of Odisha has the exact feature. The Sun temple image shows a fish caught in the jaws of the *makara*. In Mukteśvara temple compound, Bhubaneswar, a gate or *toraṇa* carries the *makara* motifs.



Plate 16: *Makara Praṇālā*,



Plate 17: *Makara Praṇālā* on the *Toraṇa*,

Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

V.3.5 *Bhārarakṣaka*

Originally *bhārarakṣaka* means weight-bearer, or one who lifts the weight. Often on the top of the pilasters or pillars and on the corbels we can notice small, dwarf like figures. Sometimes they are together (*yugala*) or alone (*eka*). These figures portray themselves like they are lifting the lintel or architrave by the manner of holding their hands up.³²

³² Ibid, p. 35.



Plate 18: *Eka Bhārarakṣaka*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching



Plate 19: *Eka Bhārarakṣaka*, Vaitāla temple, Bhubaneswar

The editors of *Śilpa Prakāśa* write, “an abstract architectonic function is transmuted into the physical action of a living being.”³³ The *bhārarakṣakas* symbolizes earth and they are also related to the cult of *yakṣas*. Hence, they play as the protector of the sacred space as well. *Śilpa Prakāśa* gave a fitting definition regarding their position on the temple wall:

“The right arm touches the sole of the beautiful right foot.

The left arm is on the knee. The four arms are in the upper part.

This is the best disposition (composition) of the *eka* (type) whose head is curly like that of a Gandharva.”³⁴

Again the *Śilpa Prakāśa* confirms that on the two different sides of the pillars, two

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid, I.353, p. 138:

“*Dakṣiṇabāhudeśe ca pādadeśam suśobhanam*
Vāmbāhuh gulphadeśe daṇḍou ca ūrdhvamaṇḍale.
Nyaseduttamamekasya gandharvah kujjitaśīrah”.

bhārarkendrādhīpās should be carved.³⁵ The construction of a wall has been described like that, and a strong instruction is given of carving one or two *bhārarakṣakas* on each pillar towards its corbelling. *Bhārarakṣakas* can be seen frequently in the early medieval temples of Odisha.



Plate 20: *Yugala Bhārarakṣakas*, Vaitāla deul, Bhubaneswar

V.3.6 *Kīrtimukha*

Kīrtimukha or the ‘face of glory’ is an important decorative motif, which occurs on the temples from tenth century onwards.³⁶ According to Stella Kramrisch, these types of motif are often called “*Rāhurmukher mālā*” in the context of Odisha.³⁷ Originally it meant a hideous mask like feature. It has a fierce-looking lion’s *mastaka* with bulging eyes and an open mouth.³⁸ This carries the symbol of the thresholds.³⁹ On the religious shrines it has been used as an auspicious symbol to ward off evils.⁴⁰ *Śilpa Prakāśa* cites how a *kīrtimukha* should be carved:

“Those creepers near the circle are touching the base-line with string-ornaments.

On the place of the *vajra bindu* the face of a *Kīrtimukha* should be

³⁵ Ibid, I.497, p. 175.

³⁶ Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. II, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1976, p. 324.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 323.

³⁸ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 121-22.

³⁹ Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, p. 324.

⁴⁰ V. Ramasubramaniam, ‘Ganapati-Vinayaka Gajanana Worship-Analysis of an integrated-Cult’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Cultures*, January-June 1971, Madras, pp. 123-25.

carved.”⁴¹

An important question that has been raised by Stella Kramrisch is who’s face of glory is it? She has pointed: “One legend similarly recounted in the ‘*Padmapurāṇa*’ (*Uttarakhaṇḍa*, X. 10 f. 36-44) and the ‘*Skandapurāṇa*’ (*Viṣṇukhaṇḍa*, *Kārttikamāsa Māhātmya*, XVII) narrates how Rāhu as messenger of Jālandhara, the *asura*, demanded Pārvatī from Śiva whom he was about to wed. Śiva thereupon produced a terrible being from his third eye. Lion-faced, with lolling tongue, the eyes like lightning, hair on end, looking like another Narasimha it rushes at Rāhu; but Śiva stops it and bids it to devour itself. This it does leaving only his head, the *Kīrtimukha*”.⁴²

According to many Puranic legends, the *kīrtimukhas* should be carved at the entrance of a Śiva temple, and should be worshipped.⁴³ Hence, it is found on the front of the temple thresholds. The upper *caitya* motifs of the *vajramastakas* on the *rāha pāgas* of the earlier temples are formed by the strings of pearls coming out of the mouth of the *kīrtimukha*.⁴⁴ The detailed semi divine figures are encompassed by the *kīrtimukhas*, which are flanked by *yakṣas* holding garlands in their hands.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.142, p. 86:

“*Sā latā vṛttasannidhou bhūmisparśe guṇaih kṛta*
Vajrabindusthale kīrtimukhasya khodayet mukhaṁ.”

⁴² Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, pp. 329-30. For different versions of this myth, see, Anisha Saxena, ‘The *Gaṇa* Who Consumed Himself: *Kīrtimukha* in North Indian Literature and Art, 400 CE–900 CE, in R. Mahalakshmi (ed.), *Art and History, Texts, Contexts and Visual Representations in Early India*, Bloomsbury, India, 2019 (forthcoming).

⁴³ Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, p. 330.

⁴⁴ Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains*, pp. 121-2.

⁴⁵ In the Śatrughneśvara temple, for instance, this association is more implied than precise. Immediately above the *kanyā* figure, who reaches up to her legs and stretches out her *yonī*, is the representation of the male principle, which is symbolized by the head of Śiva. A nearly identical displayed female appears on the western facade of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, while these two images



Plate 21: *Kīrtimukha*, Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Sometimes, the *kīrtimukhas* are flanked by *virālas* with riders on their backs. Many strings of pearls are dripping from the mouth of both *kīrtimukha* and the hanging lions. In several later period temples, these *kīrtimukhas* are seen decorating the pilasters on the walls. *Kīrtimukhas* are projected out from the *rāhapāga* on some of the temples.

Here *Śilpa Prakāśa* says;

appear on the western facade of the later Gaurī temple. These are placed within the *vajramastaka* along with *Kīrtimukha* masks and a fearsome face of Kubera with projecting tongue.

“On the band below, for each segment, a *kīrtimukha* should be placed.⁴⁶

V.4 Significance of Non-Animatic Motifs

There are several images, which appear that are not modeled on fauna, but using several floral and other motifs that can be found, which will be discussed here.

V.4.1 *Latā* and *Ālamba*

Latā or the creeper again symbolizes fertility and prosperity. *Latā* and female forms are intertwined, possibly to compare their nature of dependency on a stronger body.⁴⁷

Or, they may be seen as reflecting fertility and hence the connection to women is easily made; it is possibly the reason why the profusion on goddess shrines is striking. Even beyond the gender perspective, *latās* are generally depicted to ornament a section, beside, above or beneath any sculptures. In Kalinga architecture there are different carvings of *latās*. To categorize them, some needed to be discussed.

In early medieval Indian art, the *latā* motif provides the expression of transformation of inanimate subjects and patterns into animate forms. For instance, the stem or *ḍāla* can sometimes be portrayed as *nāga*, which is closely connected to both the earth and the water.⁴⁸ *Kanyās* are often seen with the *latā* held in their hands. Starting from the 7th century CE to the 13th, the presence of the creepers is very nicely presented with each sculpture on the temple walls. *Ḍālamālikā* and *Padmagandhā nāyikās* are among the separate forms of the female semi divinities holding *latās*.

⁴⁶ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.229, p. 106: “*Paṭṭinimne pratichandah kīrtimukhasya sthāpanam*”.

⁴⁷ Ibid, ‘Introduction’, p. 32.

⁴⁸ A. K. G. Pearlroth, ‘Scrollwork in Medieval Orissan Art’, *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 25, 1971-72, pp. 78.



Plate 22: *Kanyā Latā*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

Ālambas or hanging pearl strings epitomize the attribute of a *kalpa vṛkṣa* or a wishing tree.⁴⁹ *Ālambas* can actually be seen spilling out from the *kīrtimukhas*. Pearls, coins, jewellery everything can be found from the single wish-fulfilling tree. In Śakti temples, this motif has been used profusely.

⁴⁹ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, p. 32.



Plate 23: *Ālamba Latā*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

V.4.2 Doorframes

The doorframes of the temples of Odisha are elaborately ornamented.⁵⁰ Even the doorframes of the earliest of the temples are not an exception to it.⁵¹ One can distinguish the influence of Gupta art traditions on the early medieval Odishan doorframes.⁵² The jambs consist of either three or four bands of decorative designs,

⁵⁰ Thomas Donaldson, 'Doorframes on the Earliest Orissan Temples', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 38, No. 2/3, 1976, pp. 189-218.

⁵¹ Ibid. In decorating the doorframe, its decoration should not only beautify the entrance into the *garbha-gr̥ha* but act as a frame for the enshrined deity as well. The doorframe functions as a mystical barrier on the temple doors, which is one of the most important parts of the temple. It is believed that doorframes exude the perils and ward off the contamination, impurities of the world.

⁵² Ibid, pp. 212-14. Most of the scholars on the early art of Odisha point out that the decoration on the doorframes amongst the other motifs are mostly of auspicious birds, *kalpa latās*, *pūr̥ṇa-ghaṭa*, *mithuna* (amorous couples), foliage and creepers, and dwarf figurines. In the Gupta temples, doorframe motifs found included the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā, *Ḍālamālikās* (*Kanyās* holding branches of trees), projected corbels are often decorated with lions, *virālas* with riders, and miniature *caitya* motifs. These doorframes are mostly divided into four to five mouldings, which are separated by interlacing *Nāgas*. The ornamentations are primarily dominated by the figurines of *dvārapālas*, superimposed panels of the *mithuna*-adorned figures, *gaṇas*, river or tree goddesses, flying figures etc.

which include various floral, and creeper motifs, scrollwork, *gelabī*, flying figures and occasionally *mithūna* figures. Aquatic animals like *makara* (crocodile) and *kūrma* (tortoise) are also seen, particularly with the river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamuna.⁵³ Iconographic exhibition of both the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava cults can be seen on the lintels and doorframe, in the form of deities and symbols attached to them. The Saptamātrkāś on the doorframe at the level of the *jagamohana* and the illustrations of some sexual rituals hint that a temple had a *Śākta* and *Tāntric* leaning.

In some later temples, male and female figures are depicted within niches at the top and bottom of the frame. The figure of Gajalakṣmī normally occupies the centre of the lintel above the doorway, but in some temples either Gaṇeśa or Lākūlīśa takes the place of Gajalakṣmī.⁵⁴ The Mukteśvara has a *navagraha* panel over the doorframe, which is regarded as the earliest extant example in Bhubaneswar.



Plate 24: Gajalakṣmī, Lingarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNC

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ A.N. Parida, *Early Temples of Orissa*, p. 49; mythological *Saivite* narratives are depicted on the lintels of the doorframes of the Śatruḅheśvara temple of Bhubaneswar. Sculpture of an *Anataśāyī* Viṣṇu carved out on the lintels of the Kośaleśvara and Kapileśvara temples. Parida opines that this particular feature is nearly unavailable in the other early medieval temples of Odisha.

V.4.3 *Gavākṣa*

Gavākṣa literally means the eye of a bull, and is used to denote a window in architectural treatises. In Gupta and even earlier periods, *gavākṣas* were used as the sun window on the facade of the *caityas*. The semi round, highly ornamented windows were not only adorned by the lion heads; but with *ālambas*, creepers and other motifs as well.⁵⁵ Later on the stylistics approach of *gavākṣa* changed once the purpose and nature of these features were transformed. In early medieval temples like Mukteśvara, Brahmeśvara and Rājārānī in Odisha, the design and formation of *gavākṣa* completely changed. The *gavākṣas* served as fully functioning windows in Kalinga temples, and were attached to both sides of the *jagamohana*. *Kanyās* or *nārībandhas* fill the design of early medieval *gavākṣas*. Besides this, the typical *jāla* motif can also be seen on them. *Śilpa Prakāśa* has a very clear definition of how a *gavākṣa* should be made:

“Hear the art of making the *gavākṣā* which is on both sides (of the *mukhaśāla*).

That place should be divided into five equal parts (vertically). Horizontally it should be divided by three lines into four equal parts.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, ‘Preface to the First Edition’, pp. xi-xii.

⁵⁶ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.365, p. 140:

“*Pārśvadvaye gavākṣasya nirmāṇakauśalam śṛṇu.*
Gavākṣārthaṁ yathā sthānaṁ pūrvayantre viniścitam.
Tat sthānaṁ samabhāgena pañcabhāgeṣu bhājitaṁ
Samabhāge tathā prasthe caturdhā triguṇānvite”.



Plate 25: *Gavākṣa*, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar

Śilpa Prakāśa says that each vertical element, which is divided into two parts, should create a proper space for the ‘*Alasā-bandha*’, alternating with the window.⁵⁷ With regard to sculpting the *Sakhī bandha*, *Śilpa Prakāśa* says:

“Divinding the space into equal parts, various images should be placed (in alteration).

In ine part divine female figures (*sakhīs*), and in the other fretwork (*gavākṣa*)”.⁵⁸

V.4.4 *Pīṭha*

Plinth or *pīṭha* is the base of the temple, on which the entire structure stands. It may

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid, II.567, p. 322:

“*Sama bhāge kṛte bhāge nānā vighrahaṁ sthāpayet
Ekabhāge sakhī divyā apare ca gavākṣikā*”.

be made of plain stone, but the Kaliṅga architecture is moulded in the form of tortoise back or *kūrma pṛṣṭha*, a downward hanging lotus petals or *padma pṛṣṭha* etc. Taken from the mythology of *Purāṇas* that a tortoise's back is a support to hold aloft the earth, the architects build the temples conceived of this. When gods and *asuras* began churning the ocean of milk in search of the nectar of immortality, the mountain *Mandāra* was placed on the back of the tortoise.⁵⁹ *Padma pṛṣṭha* symbolizes that the earth is getting supported by the spiritual reality.⁶⁰ According to *Śilpa Prakāśa*, before making the wall or *bāḍa*, one should make the plinth first. It says:

“Before making the wall-work, the form of the plinth should be decided upon”⁶¹

Five types of *pīṭhas* it is said formed the best bases.⁶² From verses 210 to 217 in *Śilpa Prakāśa*, it has been described clearly that how these five *pīṭhas* - *Kūrma*, *Simha*, *Kumbha*, *Vīthi* and *Kaṇi pīṭhas* are to be sculpted.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 31.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid, I.201, p. 100: “*Pīṭhanirūpaṇam kuryāt bhittikāryāgrasobhena*”.

⁶² Ibid, I.202, p. 101:

“*Simhapīṭham ca kūrmañca śilpasāstrānusāratah
Tanmadhye vihitah kūrmaḥ tridhā pādasamanvita.*”

⁶³ Ibid, I.210-17, p. 102.



Plate 26: *Kumbha Pīṭha*, Vaitāla deul, Bhubaneswar



Plate 27: *Padma Pīṭha*, Rājārānī Temple, Bhubaneswar

V.4.5 *Kumbha*

Rai Govind Chandra in his work explains the importance of *kumbha* motifs in the Buddhist as well as brahmanical architecture.⁶⁴ In the context of Kalinga architecture,

⁶⁴ Rai Govind Chandra, p. 4.

the *kumbhas* are often seen as the *pīṭha* or base of the temple.⁶⁵ In the *pābhāga* of the temples *kumbhas* are seen as well. *Kanyās* standing on the *kumbhas* or *kalasas*, pillars erected on the *kumbhas*, *mithuna kumbhas*, *matsya kumbhas* can be seen in the temples. *Śilpa Prakāśa* writes with regard to the *kumbha* pillar:

“The first division is shaped as the *kumbha*, and one should make a base of the *kumbha*”.⁶⁶

Campaka leaves hanging out from the *ghaṭa*, creeper ornamented *kumbhas* are frequently seen in the early medieval temples of Odisha.⁶⁷



Plate 28: *Ghaṭa* with *campaka* leaves



Plate 29: *Kumbha* with *latā*

Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

Three types of *kumbhas* are used for the *mithuna yantra*. This symbolizes the fertility and genesis of strength, and is seen in abundance in the goddess temples. The *mithuna*

⁶⁵ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.213, p. 102.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, I. 226, p. 106: “*Kumbhākṛtiḥ ādyacchede kumbhapādaṅca kārayet.*”

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 109.

figures are portrayed beside or above the *kumbha* just to indicate the *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* assimilation beside a full jar. The motifs of these *kumbhas* should be carved with proper shapes and in accordance with the place where they must appear. *Śilpa Prakāśa* says:

“Hear about the different types of *kumbhas* which, together with the *mithuna* are four:

The *pūrṇakumbha*, the *parṇakumbha* and the *kumbhamakara-mālinī*.”⁶⁸



Plate 30: *Mithuna Kumbha*, Varāhī Temple, Chaurasi, Courtesy: Monuments of Odisha

V.4.6 *Anurāha* and *Koṇaka Pāga*

Anurāha pāga and *Koṇaka pāga* are the subdivisions of *sikhara* or the superstructure

⁶⁸Ibid, p. 182:

“Śṛṇu *bhedānatra kumbha mithunādicatuṣṭayam*
Pūrṇakumbhah parṇakumbhah kumbho makaramālinī.”

of the Kalinga type temple, essentially denoting the narrow vertical wall from the top to the base or the outer corner buttress respectively. *Śilpa Prakāśa* says that *Koṇaka pāga* has six to eight parts:

“The *koṇaka pāga* can be of eight or five parts.

The *āmalakī* joined with other (sections) is its main (feature).

Inside one part, the *Koṇakais* divided into three sections.

Hear, in some varieties there are plinth-like *pheṇis* between the *āmalakīs*, altogether four sections with the incisions.”⁶⁹

According to the *Śilpa Prakāśa*, the *Anurāha pāga*, which is essentially a narrow pilaster separated by a slim column called *anartha* on either side of the *Koṇaka*, can be of three types: *guṇa*, *kumbha* and *gr̥ha*.⁷⁰

In the Gaurī temple, the *pābhāga* consists of five mouldings in the *rāha* and *anuratha pāga*, thus it becomes four in the *kaṇikas*. This transitional feature can also be seen in Mukteśvara. But the mouldings of *nāga* have changed over from the ascending to a descending posture in this temple.

⁶⁹ Ibid, II.107-09, p. 216:

“*Ko ake dak io ake dak u vā bādak ājitam.*
Āmalakyādiyuktena jāyate mukhyatasthātā.
Deśāntare tathā vede bhājayet koastha prati
Śṛṅśāntare tathā vede bhājayet koastha pr
Pheṇih pīhākr̥tou chedah sahaçchedah catuṣṭayam.”

⁷⁰ Ibid, II.118, p. 220.



Plate 31: *Anurāha Pāga*, Muktesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

These *anurāha pāgas* are designed as elongated *khākāra-muṇḍi*, adorned with few close niches crowned by *kumbhas*. The *koṇaka pāgas* are designed as multi-faceted pilasters. The recesses in between are occupied by *gaja-virālas*, *nara-virālas* and human amorous couples.



Plate 32: *Koṇaka Pāga*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple,
Khiching



Plate 33: *Koṇaka Pāga*, Rājārānī Temple,
Bhubaneswar

IV.4.7 Padmagarbha

Padmagarbha literally means 'lotus womb'. In Buddhism, the progenitive force is often represented by the symbol of lotus.⁷¹ This 'procreative sources of power' is related to the blooming of the lotus, and in Mahayana scriptures this bloomed shape of lotus is called *padmagarbha*.⁷² In the brahmanical traditions, the *padma* had been considered as the seat of the creator of the universe - Brahmā. Subsequently, the Śakti cult adapted the motif as a symbol of progeny.

In the context of early medieval Odishan temples Vidya Daheja in her work has classified the *rekhā deul* into two different categories; they are early *rathāyukt* and *padmagarbha*.⁷³ The wall of *rekhā*, *padmagarbha* should be *pañcartha* in plan. *Śilpa Prakāśa* writes that *padmagarbha* and *Kāmagarbha* temples are built for dedicating to Śiva and Śakti respectively.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Eric Stratton, *The Evolution of Indian Stupa Architecture in East Asia*, Vedams, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 15-6.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Vidya Deheja, *Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, 1979.

⁷⁴ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, II.253-5, p. 254.



Plate 34: *Padmagarbha*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

Śilpa Prakāśa describes the architectural features of *padmagarbha koṇaka*.⁷⁵ *Koṇaka* and *anurāhas* must be situated on broad and flat pilasters; they are adorned with scroll works and erotic figures. The *anurāhas* are either serpent pillars or decorative pilasters. The *śikhara* narrows up to the barrel-vaulted *khākāra* rooftop. N. K. Bose mentioned that in *Śilpa Śāstras* there are culminated numbers of fifty-five *rekhā deuls*, six *bhadra* or *pīḍhā deuls* and three *khākāra deuls*.⁷⁶ But any further information regarding the architectural characteristics of these temples was not provided by him.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Dehejia, *Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, p. 42.

⁷⁶ N. K. Bose, *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, Prabasi Press, Calcutta, 1932.

⁷⁷ Dehejia, *Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, p. 43.



Plate 35: *Kāmagarbha*, Konark Sun Temple

“Padmagarbha and Kāmagarbha are the two varieties distinguished by the wall part.”⁷⁸

In a *padmagarbha* temple, the situation or style of a *koṇaka pāga* should be decorated with the *ālamba mālās*.⁷⁹ Worshipping *kanyās*, *bhāravāhakas*, *kanyās* with *cāmara*, musical instruments, holding flowers should be situated on this *padmagarbha* section.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, II.255, p. 255: “*Padmagarbhah kāmagarbhah bhitti deśāṅgabhedayoh.*”

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, II.269-80, pp. 258, 260.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, II.252-3, pp. 252, 254.

In the Odishan temples, the *kāmagarbha* is also seen. As stated earlier, *Śilpa Prakāśa* confirms that *kāmagarbhas* are respectively seen in *Śakti* temples, where *padmagarbha* are carved mainly in the Śiva temples or elsewhere.⁸¹



Plate 36: *Kāmagarbha*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

V.4.8 *Vajramastaka*

Vajramastaka motifs are frequently carved as one of the ‘widespread architectonic elements’ on the temples as a means of protection.⁸² According to Parida, the *rāha pāgas* are decorated with *vajramastakas*, which are generally crowned by *kīrtimukhas*.⁸³ They are mostly treated as the guardians who keep the temple free from evil spirits. *Vajramastaka* is not only a motif but it has the power to protect the architecture from lightning. *Śilpa Prakāśa* says:

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 254.

⁸² Andrea Acri, ‘Tantrism “Seen from the East”’, in *Spirits and Ships*, (eds.) Andrea Acri, Roger Blench and Alexandra Landmann, ISEAS Publishing, Singapore, 2017.

⁸³ Parida, *Early temples of Orissa*, p. 96.

“Hear, first I am explaining the placement of the *vajramaṇḍala*.

These are various types of *yantras* for protection against lightning”.⁸⁴

There are different types of *vajramastakas*; *kirītavajra*, *vṛttavajra* and *latāvajra*.⁸⁵

Amongst them, *latāvajra* is richly adorned and ornamented, where an attractive design with a *Nandikā* (woman’s face with breasts) replaces the *kīrtimukha*.⁸⁶

Beautiful creeper ornaments are carved above the divine *candrikā* (referring to the eye of the peacock) or circle.⁸⁷ On most temples, *vajramastaka* is projected on the

rāha. Vaitāla, Mārkaṇḍyeśvara, Mukteśvara, Brahmeśvara, Kīcakeśvarī have some of the finest examples of *vajramastakas*, which remained as one of the important features in early medieval Kalinga architecture.



Plate 37: *Vajra* with *Ālamba latā*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

⁸⁴ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.120, p. 80:

“*Śṛṇu ādye pravakṣyāmi vajramaṇḍaladhāraṇam*
Nānābhedaṃ nānāyantraṃ vajrarakṣārthaṃ kārayet.”

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 82, 84, 86.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, I.147, p. 86.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, I.148, p. 86.



Plate 38: *Kirita* type *Vajramastaka*, Brahmesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

V.4.9 Other Decorative Designs

All temples of Bhubaneswar are full of depictions of scroll motifs. These are composed in enormous proportions, decorating such conventional surfaces as architectural members and affecting even figure sculptures.⁸⁸ All the ornamental designs borrowed from floral domain are combined together with other elements. Fringe motifs like *ḍāli* or *latā* is one of the exquisite motifs in Kalinga type of architecture. A common motif, depicted widely on the temples, is ‘*sādhā ḍāli*’, but when it combines flowers with mythical designs, it becomes noose-like *latā* motif. The main features of the fringe motifs are “the idea of a creeping plant with its tendrils, leaves and flowers.”⁸⁹ *Nāti-latā* is a motif with a winding end of creeper and

⁸⁸ Anita K. G. Pearlroth, ‘Scrollwork in Medieval Orissan Art’, *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 25, 1971-72, pp. 77-87.

⁸⁹ M. M. Ganguly, *Orissa and Her Remains: Ancient and Medieval*, Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1912, p. 191.

its slender curling. Another ornamental motif, *patra-latā*, is a similar flower fringe, which is again throwing off leaves over the seated and vertebrate band of sculptures.



Plate 39: *Āgamā*, Ananta Vāsudeva Temple, Bhubaneswar

Śilpa Prakāśa has suggested various types of important creeper like decorations with flowers. It states:

“And in what way those designs should be made pleasing.

The *kuñcitā* creeper, *haṃsā*, *vartulā* and *Āgamā*.”⁹⁰

The creeper scroll, with insets of birds, animal or even human beings, known as *haṃsa-latā*, *nara-latā* respectively, belong to this class. When a number of leaves spring around, with space for a number of small inset images, the motif is called *cakrī-latā*.

⁹⁰ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, I.285, p. 120:

“Kena rūpeṇa tad yantram karaṇīyam sukhapradam
Latā kuñcitā haṃsā ca vartulā āgamā tathā.
Ratikerā sagumphā ca kuṭilā samabhāgikā
Pallavā kaliyuktā sā meghā ekādaśa smṛtā.”



Plate 40: *Gumphanā*, Muktesvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Vartulā is carved on the prescribed lines, in which the motifs would be drawn in circles, mostly situated on the *jaṅgha*.⁹¹ According to the *Śilpa Prakāśa*, *āgamā* should have foliage looking like ‘freshly sprouted mustard seeds’.⁹² These are also important parts of *jaṅgha* decoration. *Ratikerā* is a kind of design where playful motifs or *rati* is carved with long leaves with tips curving inwards.⁹³ This motif is considered as one of the best decorations on the *jaṅgha* as well. *Śilpa Prakāśa* writes;

“The long leaves should be drawn touching the circles.

The tips of the leaves going down are curving inwards.”⁹⁴

In the same sphere like *Vartulā*, a *gumphanā* also can be made. The *gumphanā* was to be circular and decorated with animals, according to the *Śilpa Prakāśa*:

“In the same divisions as the *Vartulā* (make) a *Gumphaṇa* (creeper resembling a string garland) with leaves.

In each *gumpha* (unit of the garland) monkeys and boars,

Tigers, lions, elephants, birds, deer and other animals,

⁹¹ Ibid, I.296-8, pp. 122, 124.

⁹² Ibid, I.300, p. 124.

⁹³ Ibid, I.303, p. 124.

⁹⁴ Ibid:

“*Dīrghākāraṃ tathā patraṃ kalpitaṃ vṛttacumbitam*
Nimne kṣetragataṃ patraṃ kuṭīlam agrabhāgataṃ”

Should be carved by the expert *Śilpin*, and should look as if coming out of the ornament.”⁹⁵



Plate 41: *Makara latā*, Svarṇajāleśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar



Plate 42: *Vartulā*, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

⁹⁵ Ibid, I.305-06, p. 126:

“*Vartulā samabhāgena patrākāre ca gumphakam
Gumphamadhye tathā kṣetre vānarāh śūkarāstathā.
Vyāghrasimhagajāmścaiva paśupakṣimrgādikān
Khodayet nipuṇaṁ śilpī gumphodgamanaprekṣiṇī.*”



Plate 43: *Gumphanā*, Brahmesvara Temple



Plate 44: *Ratikerā*, Vaitāla deul,

Bhubaneswar



Plate 45: *Āgamā*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching



Plate 46: *Nara latā*, Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

The symbols and motifs of these early medieval temples can be found on doorframes as well. The windows with *jāli* decoration are depicted numerous on the temples, seen in two kinds of depictions in Bhubaneswar. *Pāṭa jāli* is a perforated window, shaped both in square or rectangular, whereas the *banka jāli* is shaped like a diamond, and carries geometric projections worked diagonally within the square.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ T. E. Donaldson, 'Decorative Scroll Motifs on Orissan Temples', *East and West*, Vol. 28, No. ¼, December 1978, p. 246; see also D. P. Ghosh, N.K. Bose, Y.D. Sharma, *Designs from Orissan Temples*, Thacker's Press, Calcutta and London, 1950.



Plate 47: *Pāṭa jāli*, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

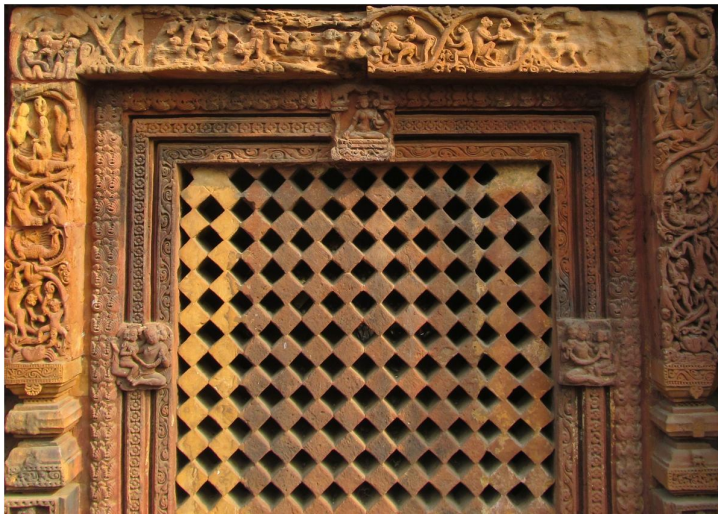


Plate 48: *Banka jāli*, Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

Starting since the Bhauma Kara period, the medallions shaped as *caitya* designs have also been used for the purpose of the decoration of the walls of the early medieval Odisha temples. These architectural designs include *khākāra-muṇḍi* (miniature representation of *khākāra deuls* on *śikhara*) and *pīḍhā muṇḍi* (miniature representation of *pīḍhā deuls*), which decorate the subsidiary *pāgas* (both *anurāha* and *koṇaka*) on the lower and upper *jaṅghas* respectively of both the *rekhā deul* and

*pīḍhā deul.*⁹⁷



Plate 49: *Khākāra* motif, Rājārānī Temple

Plate 50: *Rekhā* motif, Liṅgarāja Temple

Bhubaneswar

These are some of the standard decorations for the later temples as well. The niches of these *bāḍas* are full of carvings of the *pārśva devatās*, cult images and icons, *mithunas*, couples in conjugal position, and other figures.⁹⁸

The bottom and corbels of the pillars and pilasters of the temples are carved with *pūrṇa ghaṭa* designs. Pot-bellied *Yakṣas* as *bhāravāhakas* with uplifted hands and bent knees occur in the early temples. But these *bhāravāhakas* are not frequently seen in the early phase. The pillars and pilasters are decorated with fringes, but in later temples narrow bands of fringes are actually depicted over the *śikharas*. The *gelaba* motifs occur on the temples throughout this period. The decorative and symbolic

⁹⁷ Parida, *Early temples of Orissa*, p. 64.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

motifs of earlier traditions of Indian art were being included in the early medieval temple art, but with some new dimensions.⁹⁹ The ancient tree and woman motif, known earlier as *śālabhañjikā*, is introduced in the *Śilpa Prakāśa* as *gelaba nārī* (female figures intertwined with creepers and trees) and more importantly, the erotic couples can be understood in early medieval times as constituting *mithuna* and *maithuna* motifs.¹⁰⁰ C. L. Fabri describes these designs as “the most attractive and original specialty of Odisha decorative art.”¹⁰¹ The temples belonging to earlier phase also contain some other decorative designs such as, *jāli* and *jhāravalī*, which are rarely found in later temples.

V.5 Representation of *Bandhas*

The *bandha* signifies a bond, in the sense of tethering and tying, and refers to a frieze or band that serves to join architectural elements.¹⁰² The *Śilpa Prakāśa* refers to several types of *bandhas* that will be discussed below.

V.5.1 Lakṣmī *Bandha*

Lakṣmī is the goddess of wealth and prosperity in brahmanical cult. On many temples above the lintel a miniature niche keeps the image of prosperity and fertility. A large stone slab, which mostly covers the entire *navagraha* panel from above, is the niche

⁹⁹ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, “Preface to the First Edition”, p. xii.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, for a discussion on different kinds of erotic sculpture, see Devangana Desai, *Erotic Sculptures of India*, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 1975.

¹⁰¹ C.L. Fabri, *History of the Art of Orissa*, Orient Longman, Bombay, 1974, p. 39.

¹⁰² *Śilpa Prakāśa*, ‘Glossary of Technical Terms’, p. 398.

of Lakṣmī.¹⁰³ Over the lintel of the temple doors, a Lakṣmī figure can be seen very often.¹⁰⁴ With the gradual development of Śakti cult, the Lakṣmī image flourished with other goddess figures in early medieval Odisha. Lakṣmī is said to have emerged from the ocean, which is depicted in *Rāmāyaṇa* as well.¹⁰⁵ In pre-Vedic religious texts this sacred and cosmic water is regarded as the source of power, which are fertility, prosperity, sanctity, knowledge etc.¹⁰⁶ Brighenti has argued that Annapūrṇā aspect of Pārvatī is similar to the concept of Lakṣmī, who is also a goddess of food, nourishment and abundance.¹⁰⁷ This image of Lakṣmī overpoweringly emerged in Odisha since 11th to 12th centuries CE with the flourishing of the Vaiṣṇava cult. Many temple doorframes are embellished with the Gajalakṣmī or *Toraṇa* Lakṣmī motifs. *Śilpa Prakāśa* writes,

“Two kind of Toraṇa Lakṣmī are made on the entablature of the portal, Gaja-Lakṣmī (Lakṣmī with elephants) and Śubha Lakṣmī (Lakṣmī, the giver of all auspicious things).¹⁰⁸

Gajalakṣmī is always seen with two flanking elephants holding golden *kalāśas* with their trumpets, sprinkling the auspicious water on the seated *Devī*. This Lakṣmī *bandha* can be seen in almost every early medieval temple of Odisha. This fact

¹⁰³ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, ‘Introduction’, p. 36.

¹⁰⁴ *Śilpa Prakāśa* says that the lintel motifs vary mostly depending on the presiding deity of the temples. Gaṇeśa, seated Śiva or Viṣṇu images can also be noticed. But from the existing photographs collected from field study and IGNCA, these images don’t get depicted as per the presence of the main deity as they are mentioned in the text. For instance, in the main Śiva temples in Bhubaneswar, mostly Gajalakṣmī or Lakṣmī have been carved on the lintels of the main entrances.

¹⁰⁵ Francesco Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, (Thesis), Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, 1997, p. 53.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 165.

¹⁰⁸ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, p. 92:

“*Dvividhā toraṇalakṣmīh toraṇordhe niyojayet
Gajalakṣmīh śubhalakṣmīh lakṣmīh sarvaśubhapradā*”

symbolizes that Lakṣmī as one of the *Śākta* goddesses maintains her omnipresent nature in the temples, even those which were not *Śākta* in nature. In this respect, one can notice Lakṣmī or Gajalakṣmī carvings on the lintels of Śaiva temples as well. The presiding deity of Liṅgarāja temple is seen with Lakṣmī, who comes as one of his consorts during the *rathayātrā*, during the *Aśokāṣṭamī* festival.¹⁰⁹ The worship of Lakṣmī in both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples reflects the assimilation of the *Śākta* cult with these two in early medieval period in Odisha.



Plate 51: Lakṣmī *Bandha*, Gouri Sankara Temple, No 83, inside Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar, IGNC A



Plate 52: Lakṣmī *Bandha*, Sārī deul, Bhubaneswar, IGNC A

¹⁰⁹ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, (1997), p. 165.

V.5.2 *Kāma Bandha*

Tāntric rituals were often celebrated in the Yoginī temples of Odisha. Erotic scenes carved on the walls of Odishan temples started appearing from the 9th century CE, like Kīcakeśvarī at Khiching. By the end of 10th century CE, Tāntric erotic rituals began to be practiced in secluded *Śākta* temples.¹¹⁰ Brighenti rightly argues that being connected with the *Kaula* erotic spirituality, the *Śilpa Prakāśa* prescribes the rows of *kāma bandhas*:

“In the Kaulācāra tradition, it should be made on the lovely jāṅgha in the upper part of the wall.

The *kāmabandha* is placed there to give delight to people.”¹¹¹

This was the typical style during the *Śākta* period and carved on the upper *jāṅghas* of the Tāntric temples of Odisha. Brighenti writes that starting from Bhauma Kara period, the pattern of *kāmakalā yantra* (‘the mystic diagram of love images’) was drawing its inspiration from the ancient *Āgamic* speculations on *kāmakalā vidyā*.¹¹² K. V. Soundara Rajan writes that the erotic art of medieval Odisha was a formula for what the ‘*Kaula* matrix’ of the temple artists and patrons was responsible.¹¹³ The *kāmakalā yantra* always consists of *mithuna* and *maithuna* images, which are mentioned in this text as the important, sacred and most ostentatiously secret

¹¹⁰ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, p. 148.

¹¹¹ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, ‘Second *Prakāśa*’, p. 314:

“Kaulācāramate ramye jāṅghe bhittiyaparāmśake

Sthāpayet kāmabandhañca janasyānandakāraṇat.”

¹¹² Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*.

¹¹³ Devangana Desai, *Erotic Sculptures of India: A Socio-Cultural Study*, New Delhi, 1975, p. 203.

decoration of the outer parts of the temple.¹¹⁴ Again a vivid description of this *bandha/ yantra* has been presented in the *Śilpa Prakāśa*:

“This *yantra* is utterly secret, it should not be shown to everyone.

For this reason, a love-scene (*mithuna-mūrti*) has to be carved on the lines of the *yantra*.”¹¹⁵



Plate 53: *Kāma Bandha*, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

V.5.3 *Sakhī Bandha*

Situated over the *gavākṣa*, the *Sakhī bandha* is seldom known yet is a striking feature in early medieval temples of Odisha. With the gradual development of *gavākṣa* on the *bāḍas* of *jagamohana*, the relief sculptures also got portrayed over them. The fringes of semi divine female figures were advised to be sculpted on them.

Śilpa Prakāśa suggests:

¹¹⁴ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, 'Preface to the First Edition', pp. xi-xii.

¹¹⁵ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, II.538, p. 314:

“*Gopyam gopyatamam yantram sakalān naiva darśayet
Tadarthe yantracchedena mithunamūrtikhodanam*”.

“Dividing the space into equal parts, various images should be placed (in alternation).

In one part divine female figures (*sakhīs*), and in the other fretwork (*gavākṣikās*).¹¹⁶

Flute player, *Ḍālamālikā*, *Alasā*, *Nartakī*, *Toraṇā*, *Mugdhā*, *Māninī*, *Vinyasā* sculptures can be seen on the *gavākṣas* of Brahmeśvara, Mukteśvara temples in Bhubaneswar.



Plate 54: *Sakhī Bandha*, Brahmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 322:

“*Sama bhāge kṛte bhāge nānā vighrahaṁ sthāpayet
Ekabhāge sakhī divyā apare ca gavākṣikā*”.

V.6 Cosmic *Vāhanas*

A very interesting feature of the brahmanical pantheons is the according of mounts to specific deities. These were the *vāhanas*, and were often depicted in the iconography of the cultic deity, as a composite image, and as an independent one.

V.6.1 Garuḍa

Garuḍa promised Viṣṇu that he would act as his vehicle. Garuḍa image generally is shown having eight hands, which is holding the pot of ambrosia, *gadā*, snake in six hands. A descriptive picture of him has been discussed in the article by P. K. Mohanty that, “The *Viṣṇudharmottara* writes that Garuḍa has four hands, two wings; his legs resemble that of a vulture, the eyes are round; he has a pot-belly and a beak like nose. His two back hands hold umbrella and a cup of nectar and the front two hands are in *añjalī* posture.”¹¹⁷ In *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, Garuḍa has been mentioned as *khaga viśvakāyā* (bird whose body is the universe) and *mahā viśvarūpī* (great worldly form).¹¹⁸

The Garuḍa images are normally placed in a kneeling position on one knee, hands are folded with a budding lotus, both of the palms are seen above the chest, and it appears mostly in anthropomorphic forms. Wings and the shape of the face add distinctive features to the sculptures. Garuḍa as the *vāhana* of Viṣṇu, and the evolution of its image is closely related with the development of Vaiṣṇavism in the region in early medieval period.¹¹⁹ In the context of Odisha, there is a huge gap of epigraphic and archaeological evidences to trace the prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism before the Māṭhara

¹¹⁷ P. K. Mohanty, ‘Garuda Images Of Orissa: An Iconographic Study’, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 70, 2009-10, pp. 1018-19,

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 1019.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 1020.

rule which started during the middle of the 4th century CE.

These Garuḍa images in Odisha are noticed mostly in the Viṣṇu temples. The process of building temples in Odisha started with the rule of Śailodbhavas in approximately 6th century CE. As the dominant worshipper of Śiva, rulers from this dynasty erected various temples like Lakṣmaṇeśvara, Svarṇajāleśvara, Bharateśvara and Śatrughneśvara in Bhubaneswar.¹²⁰ After noticing a ‘squatted figure under a Varāhī image’ in Paraśūrāmeśvara temple, Vidya Dehejia suggests that it was a Garuḍa image.¹²¹

Garuḍa images are vividly noticed in Mayurbhanja region, which formed a part of Khijjingakotta in northern Odisha. A typical Garuḍa image is also found in Baripada museum, which has been collected from Agaria.¹²² An iconographical analysis has revealed that five modes of representation of Garuḍa images are available in Odisha, but the evolution of the image has not been discussed much.¹²³

¹²⁰ K.S. Behera and T. E. Donaldson, *Sculpture Masterpieces from Orissa Style and Iconography*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 14-21,

¹²¹ K.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Kitab Mahal, Cuttack, 1986, p. 72; see also Vidya Dehejia, *Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, p. 83; discussed in Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, ‘Garuḍa Images Of Orissa’, pp. 1018-27.

¹²² Mohanty, ‘Garuḍa Images Of Orissa’, pp. 1018-27.

¹²³ Ibid, p. 1018; see also T.E. Donaldson, *The Iconography of Vaiṣṇava Images in Orissa*, D. K. Printworld, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 255-58.



Plates 55 and 56: *Garuḍa*, Birañci Nārāyaṇa Temple, Bhadrak, Courtesy: IGNC

During the Somavaṃśī rule in Odisha, in Bhadrak there is a well-preserved *Garuḍa* image belonging to 10th to 11th centuries CE in Birañci Nārāyaṇa temple. Inside the Liṅgarāja temple complex of Bhubaneswar, there is pillar called *Vāhana stambha* in the courtyard of the *bhoga maṇḍapa*. On the finial part of the pillar there are two figures of Nandi and *Garuḍa*. According to P. K. Mohanty, this is the symbol of assimilation of the composite religious nature of Brahmanism, which depicts both Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Mohanty, 'Garuḍa Images Of Orissa', p. 1023.



Plate 57: *Vāhana Stambha*, Liṅgarāja Temple, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA

In Saralā Dāsa's *Mahābhārata*, Garuḍa is mentioned as *Vainateya* or the son of Vinatā.¹²⁵ In Nīlamādhava temple, one standing image of Viṣṇu and other images can be seen in the *jagamohana*, including the sculpture of a Garuḍa.¹²⁶

In the case of the Jagannātha temple, there is also a Garuḍa pillar depicting profoundly the Vaiṣṇavite nature of the shrine in the *nāṭa maṇḍapa* of the temple. Over the *āmalaka śilā* another comparatively small Garuḍa, sculpture can be seen with two other lion figures.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 1018.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 1021. See also R.P. Mohapatra, *Archaeology of Orissa*, Vol. I, B. R. Publishing Corp., Delhi, 1986, pp. 213-14; and K.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, (1986), p. 384; see also K.S. Behera, and T. E. Donaldson, *Sculpture Masterpieces from Orissa*,(1998), p. 25.

V.6.2 Śākta Vāhanas

With the increasing influence of Śaktism, many Śākta temples were erected in this period in Odisha. Corpses were the primary vehicles, which are situated with most of the Śākta goddesses like Durgā and Cāmuṇḍā according to the *Devī Māhātmya*. Such a representation of the vāhanas of these deities got legitimacy in the Bhauma Kara period.¹²⁷ Cāmuṇḍā usually dances on a śava (corpse), which is being chewed on by jackals or pecked by the vultures. Cāmuṇḍā is personified and depicted through sculptures as the wrath of the goddess. She is seen as embodying death, because she fights on behalf of the great goddess. She is never worshipped in households because of her destructive nature. She uses śava (corpse) as her mount or vehicle, under her feet. The corpse is sometimes identified with the *puruṣa* or Śiva, who lies under her feet to stop her destructive nature. But in many cases, the dead body has been regarded as the anonymous figure, which only symbolizes death and destruction. This could be connected with the cemetery setting of the goddess. But in the two Cāmuṇḍā images found from Odisha, the corpse is identified as Hari and Puruṣa respectively.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, p. 113.

¹²⁸ T.E. Donaldson, 'The Śava-Vāhana as Puruṣa in Orissan Images: Cāmuṇḍā to Kālī/ Tārā', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 51, No. 1/2, 1991, pp. 107-41.



Plate 58: *Śava vāhana* of Cāmuṇḍā
Sārī deul, Bhubaneswar



Plate 59: Cāmuṇḍā with Boar, Hirapur,
Courtesies: IGNC A

The image of Cāmuṇḍā at the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, sitting on an owl, with the goddess seated on a *vajra pariyaṅka* is a distinctive image.¹²⁹



Plate 60: Cāmuṇḍā with an Owl, Paraśurāmeśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar

The presiding deity enshrined in the Vaitāla *deul* is also a terrible figure of Cāmuṇḍā. In this early medieval temple sculpture, the owl *vāhana* of the goddess has been noticed at the lower left corner of the niche. The corpse is seen on the pedestal.

¹²⁹ Ibid.



Plate 61: *Śava* and Owl *vāhana* of Cāmuṇḍā, Vaitāla deul, Bhubaneswar, Courtesy: IGNCA

According to Donaldson, the placement of the corpse in Odishan images of Cāmuṇḍā can be grouped into two modes: directly under her body where it serves as her seat; and second, on the pedestal, beneath a *viśvapadma* which is her actual seat.¹³⁰ The *śava* or the body of the dead person lying in a flat position, resting his head over his arm and giving the impression that he is sleeping, is the most popular posture amongst the early images in Odishan temple sculptures.

¹³⁰ Ibid, pp. 121-23.



Plate 62: *Śava vāhana* of Cāmuṇḍā, Courtesy: British Museum

Amongst the *Śākta* goddesses, Varāhī holds a high spiritual position. Varāhī, according to the iconography has a boar face and is seated underneath a tree with the elephant *vāhana*.¹³¹ In Hirapur (9th century CE) a Varāhī image is found with the boar mount.

¹³¹ Ibid, pp. 155-82.



Plate 63: Varāhī with boar, Hirapur, Courtesy: IGNCA

Yoginīs and Ḍākinīs are also included as motifs on Śaiva temples at this time, generally housed in exterior niches or in the recesses separating the *pāga* projections. Invariably, they are depicted in a cemetery setting, accompanied by a jackal. They hold a *kāpāla*, trident, and severed head, or are distributing flesh as alms. They do not, however, have a *śava vāhana*. There are in addition numerous examples of *Ḍākinīs*, who trample a corpse, or several prostrate figures beneath one foot, while the other leg is raised high as if taking a giant stride.¹³²

The *vāhanas* or mounts of the *Yoginīs* and *Ḍākinīs* include animals such as the fish, parrot, turtle, frog, snake, scorpion, crab, peacock, lotus, while some appear with a decapitated male head, an archer, or other representation at their feet. Several of the *Ḍākinīs* have animal faces - of a horse, ass, hare, elephant and lion.

¹³² Vidya Dehejia, *Yogini: Cult and Temples, A Tantric Tradition*, National Museum, Janpath, New Delhi, 1986, p. 125.



Plate 64: *Karkata vāhana* of Karkarī,



Plate 65: *Padmāvati* with *Sarpa*,

Hirapur, Courtesies: IGCA



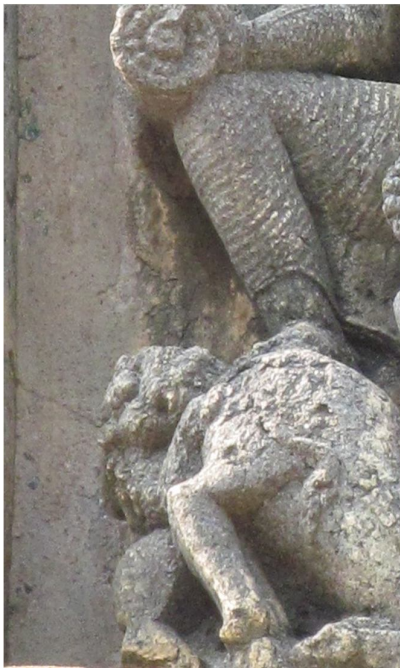
Plate 66: *Mahālakṣmī* standing on *Padma*



Plate 67: *Peacock vāhana* of *Kaumārī*,

Hirapur, Courtesies: IGCA

According to *Śilpa Prakāśa*, Ambikā has a divine lion as her vehicle.¹³³ Goddess Dūrgā is often seen as Mahiṣāsūramardīnī or the buffalo demon slayer and *Simhavāhinī* or ‘She-who-rides-the-lion’.¹³⁴ Previously Dūrgā had been showed with Mahiṣa. But according to Francesco Brighenti, Mahiṣa cannot be her “definable” vehicle.¹³⁵ Later on with the emergence of rich Purāṇic literature, the stylistic form of the goddess had changed. Lion had been associated to symbolize power and valour to this *Śākta* divinity.¹³⁶



Plates 68 and 69: Mahiṣamardīnī with *Simha vāhanas*, Kīcakeśvarī Temple, Khiching

U. N. Dhal writes regarding this spiritual attachment that, “after worshipping the Goddess, the devotee has to attend to the demon, whose body lies in the left side of the Goddess with severed head and then to the lion, the carrier of the Goddess in her

¹³³ *Śilpa Prakāśa*, p. 279.

¹³⁴ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, p. 262.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

right side.”¹³⁷ That comment definitely evokes the idea that the Mahiṣa was once considered more important than Durgā’s “official” *vāhana*, the *Simha*.¹³⁸ Brighenti points out that the buffalo possibly symbolizes the darker side of *Devī* and also signifies death at the same time.¹³⁹

Saptamātrkāś represent the evolution of *Śakti* worship in Odisha. These *mātrkā* motifs gained immense popularity in the 7th century CE. The representation of seven mothers in the door slabs of temples included the sculptures of Brahmāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Indrānī, Vaiṣṇavī, Varāhī and Cāmuṇḍā. Regarding the argument that what sort of *vāhanas* they should carry, Rao opines that “the female counterparts who are armed with the same weapons, wear the same ornaments and ride the same *vāhanas* as the corresponding male gods do.”¹⁴⁰

V.7 Conclusion

Cults and symbols had been portrayed on the temples through the icons, motifs, ornamentation and various sculptural and architectural patterns. The present study on the sculptural depiction from early medieval temples of Odisha indicates that hardly any panel exists where heavy decorations were not carved. This study reveals the significance attached to flora, fauna and non-living designs in the socio-religious

¹³⁷ U. N. Dhal, *Mahiṣāsura in Art and Thought*, Eastern Book Linkers, Delhi, 1991, p. 64, n. 13.

¹³⁸ Brighenti, *Śakti Cult In Orissa*, p. 262.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Biswarup Dass and Biswarup Das, ‘Yogini Cult In Orissa’, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 40, 1979, pp. 91-8; see also T.A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 1, Pt. II, The Law Printing House, Madras, 1914, pp. 380-81.

context. The notions of fertility in various *Śākta* temples were portrayed through *latā* or *kumbhas*. *Vyālas* and other animals, and motifs like the *kīrtimukha* were instrumental in enhancing the aesthetic and symbolic value of the temples. Associated to the presiding deities, their animal *vāhanas* symbolizes and differentiated each religious sect from the other. Nandi image attached to Śiva or Garuḍa to Viṣṇu create distinctions and carry the characteristics of separate sects respectively. In the *Śākta* temples, the gods and goddesses mostly are seen with the different sets of *vāhanas*. The embodiments of these individual portrayals of *vāhanas* impart the notion of the presence of different religious engagements into Brahmanism.

The religious-cultural hierarchy and hegemony as portrayed through the icons and symbols in the temples around early medieval period stated the political order, which was installed through the endowments to the *brāhmaṇas* in that region around fifth century CE. The aggregated power of politics and religion that influenced the brahmanical hegemony in that region, functioned as an important apparatus, and the hegemony was manifested through the iconography. The brahmanical iconography enhanced the expansion of religion and culture, which influenced the changes in politics and society. With the assistance of this tool of iconography, early medieval Odisha had witnessed the transformation in every aspect of social, political and religious order taking deep root.

Chapter V

Representation of Hierarchy, Hegemony and World Views

VI.1 Introduction

The early medieval temples of Odisha carry an enduring ideological importance, which leads us to the central focus of historical processes. Through the development of religion, society, economy and polity, a cultural metamorphosis marked the realm of architecture, art and iconography. Donations of lands and temples were means of legitimating and infiltrating the state process into the periphery of emerging kingdoms. These institutions of the ruling elites, the kings and queens, who acquired their legitimacy through patronage, were the tools of expansion. The patrons at this time tried to establish their authority through the temples and the embedded iconography. The idea of 'totality' became important in this milieu. So the assertion of art became a universal culture in the ideological realm. The association of art always signifies power, wealth and privilege. The state, in this regard, took the shield of iconography to spread their supremacy.

Temples in early medieval India worked as a high functioning institution. These temples acted as the integrating force for formation of state, society, economy and polity. Within these state structures, temple art and religious iconography symbolized the territory controlled by ruling dynasties. It is also important to understand that the temples being an integral part of this political process were also linked to the development of religion, sectarian traditions, society, economy and polity. Through texts, rituals and icons, art has been used as an important tool to proclaim political

power. Analysis of the politico-ritualistic uses and effects of art present different aspects: forms of art as a political tool have manifested in the development of icons and styles, a symbiotic relationship between art and power, and the interactions between political and artistic activities. In early medieval Odisha, the emergence of newly formed state authority and power over land and mass created an arena of hegemony. In the milieu of the state culture; the birth of 'intellectual class' is one of the principal indicators of class and hegemony. We can postulate the idea of caste and class based 'marginalized' categories from the donative inscriptions, which indicate the existing occupational groups, and signify the social and cultural hegemony of the *brāhmaṇas* and ruling elites over the region in the period under study.

VI.2 Temple and Polity

Many of the temples in the modern state of Odisha emerged from the beginning of 6th to 7th centuries CE. Their stylistic, iconographical and religious contents evolved gradually through the span of 600 years.

During early medieval period, these brahmanical temples attained the zenith of their influence on the social life of the country.¹ In the post Gupta period the small brick and mortar-structured temples provided a centre of simple worship attended by the people. But with the rise of complex religious institutions and political ideology, there also came up a varied routine in masonry, which was sustained by the accumulation of lands and gold by the affluent. The tendency of donating 'gifts' to attain religious

¹ K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, Madras, 1955, p. 652; (Sastri writes regarding the temples donated by the Coḷa kings in early medieval period).

merit infiltrated into the political culture, and became a tool for legitimation by the *brāhmaṇa* and ruling classes.

The temples erected by the early medieval dynasties of the region are to be understood as a statement of state power. Temple culture reflects a well-managed and institutionalized form of religion. They proved to be institutions with enduring importance and excellence, as symbols of authority and political hegemony of state. The plans and designs of these structures, like the royal palaces, were mapped in such a way as to symbolize power and authority, incorporating divine symbolism, somehow equating the rulers with the presiding deity and the temple as the cosmos of the kingdom. The image creation of the ruler as a protector and controller of the state and as the supreme upholder of religious merit reinforced the image of the god as the same.

As a monument a temple stands as one of the most powerful expressions of the political authority and of its royal patrons.² At the pinnacle of the state administrative and political control over the surplus productions and resources, the government always acted as the authoritative agency by the laws issued by the rulers, who were the creators of the temples.³ These temple-complexes manifested the mode of power in a broader sense.⁴ After the post Gupta period, a sudden artistic explosion in terms

² R. Champakalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition and ideology: Pre-colonial South India*, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 481-84.

³ Ibid. Also see, Upinder Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*, Pearson, Delhi, 2009, pp. 622-25, 626.

⁴ V. K. Thakur, 'The Essence of Feudal Economy and the Perspective of Third Urbanisation in India', *Indian Anthropologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, December 1986, p. 180.

of temple building activity was firmly rooted to the idea of the expansion of state.⁵ After analyzing the nature and functionalities of art in a feudal mode of society, Devangana Desai suggests that, “art in feudal society was to impress and dazzle the audience or the onlooker and to proclaim the glory, might and riches of opulent patrons. Though apparently in the service of religion it was actually the means of gratifying their aspirations of fame and glory”.⁶

In the context of Odisha, there are very few records, which register the data of construction of temples. But the endowed money or lands suggest that repairing and digging up the tanks, wells, planting orchards, market places, and building of resting places are some of the indicators of the method of hegemony inside the state was planted.⁷ The endowed lands to temples and temple expenditures being considered meritorious indirectly contributed to this, and to gain that religious merit, people started capturing the forested as well as coastal lands in order to gift it to the temples. Gifts included money and gold; raw materials related directly to the temple rituals are present in a huge quantity in this region. Numerous objects like the maintenance, daily services, annual functions or occasional festivals, feeding the *brāhmaṇas* and improvement of tanks are also included in the list of endowments.⁸

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. See also Devangana Desai, ‘Art Under Feudalism India in (c. A.D. 500-1300)’, *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 17.

⁷ ‘Haṁseśvara Temple Inscription’, Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 102,

⁸ ‘Bhubaneswar Inscription (1st Inscription)’, *EI*, Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 17-23.

VI.3 Hierarchy and Hegemony: Theory and Practice

We need to, at this point, after discussing the political infiltration and state administration in the society through religious institutions as an instrument, look closely at the use of the term 'hierarchy' and 'tradition' as the basic points for discussing the Odishan society. Rene Guenon argues, "we have just seen that in civilizations of a traditional character, intellectual intuition lies at the root of everything; in other words, it is the pure metaphysical doctrine that is essential, and all else is connected with it, either consequently or by way of application to the various orders of contingent reality. Not only is this true of social institutions but also of the sciences, that is to say of knowledge bearing on the domain of the relative, knowledge which, in such civilizations, cannot be regarded otherwise than as a mere dependency and as a sort of prolongation or reflection of absolute or principal knowledge. Thus a true hierarchy is always and everywhere preserved."⁹

VI.3.1 Gramsci's Model of Hegemony

The three main concepts of Gramsci will be discussed here that constitute important components in his idea of "philosophy of praxis".¹⁰ These concepts represent the earliest definition of the foundations of class and power. He has addressed the power from the point of view of superstructure and infrastructural formations of the state

⁹ Rene Guenon, *Introduction To The Study Of The Hindu Doctrines*, Marco Pallis (trans.), Luzac & Co., London, 1945; and *The Crisis of the Modern World*, Marco Pallis, Arthur Osborne and R. C. Nicholson (trans.), Sophia Perennis, New York, 1996; and see also A. L. Herman, 'Indian Art and Levels of Meaning', *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Jan. 1965, pp. 16-8.

¹⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, Quintin Hoare and G.N. Smith (eds. and trans.), International Publishers, New York, 1992, pp. 381-419.

society.¹¹ Gramsci has defined the rudimentary nature of class and power in a full-fledged Capitalist society. He used the idea of the ‘dialectical relationship’ between the base and superstructure, which addresses the complex nature of society, politics, power and hegemony.¹² Gramsci often emphasized that “the ideology and the superstructure of a civil society must be dealt with as objectively as economic considerations.”¹³ Gramsci linked the reality of the ruling class and their power with the combination of practices and ideal principles of behaviour, conformity, law, which has been synthesized and connects his concepts of ideology and hegemony.¹⁴ The concept of hegemony finds best expression in Gramsci’s *Notes on the Southern Question*, where it is said the ‘hegemonic class’ maintains the political authority over ‘subaltern classes’ by winning them over.¹⁵ According to Gramsci, ‘consensus’ belongs at the level of ‘civil society’ and hence must be won there.¹⁶ On the other hand, he explains that ‘coercion’ fundamentally belongs to the level of the state, more specifically, he called this the political society’.¹⁷ Accordingly, hegemonic rule, characterized by Gramsci as the consensus over coercion, represents in terms of balance, equilibrium between ‘political society’ and ‘civil society’.¹⁸ The ultimate state power rests in a ‘hegemonic equilibrium’, which alternated with moments of

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For theoretical explanation see, Nadia Urbinati, ‘From the Periphery of Modernity: Antonio Gramsci’s Theory of Subordination and Hegemony’, *Political Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Jun. 1998, pp. 370-91. Also see, Chantal Mouffe, ‘Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci’, in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, pp. 168-204.

¹⁴ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 269-72.

¹⁵ Antonio Gramsci, *The Southern Question*, Pasquale Verdicchio (trans.), Guernica, Chicago, 2005.

¹⁶ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 269-76.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 160, 171.

¹⁸ John M. Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism*, Stanford University Press, California, 1967, p. 204.

force.¹⁹ According to Gramsci, hegemony is a social condition wherein only the ruling class exercises political, intellectual and moral function of leadership within a hegemonic system.²⁰ The state of newly formed organic ideology is effective in a society through 'ideological struggle'.²¹ The potential hegemonic class tries to articulate the principles, which simplify the fact of absorption, re-articulation and assimilation of these elements in the discourse of other social classes. In this process of struggle, these principles try to create the sphere of emerging hegemonic class and hegemonic system.²²

VI.3.2 The Context of Hegemony in Early Medieval Odisha

As the Marxist theoretician Gramsci argues with regard to hegemony on the basis of his contemporary social model, in the context of early medieval Odisha, the emergence of certain ruling classes and dynasties had formed the circle of hegemony as well. From the upper-mentioned model, we can trace down three important aspects of the hegemonic theory:

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 353-64.

²¹ Ibid, p. 360. The author further writes: "class consciousness is, then, the product of an ideological struggle led by the intellectual "officers" of competing social classes. The phenomenon of 'false consciousness', which from the standpoint of economic determinism is simply incomprehensible, represents from Gramsci's standpoint simply a victory of the ruling-class intellectuals in this struggle. Conversely, the phenomenon of the passing of "traditional" intellectuals (those of a decadent ruling class) into the proletarian camp, which Marx recognized but never paused to explain, is explained by Gramsci as a victory for the proletarian intellectuals, who are aided by the fact that their class represents the "progressive" stage of human development". The author also mentions in the page footnote that Marx makes a fleeting reference to this phenomenon in the "*Communist Manifesto*", *Basic Writing on Politics and Philosophy*, p. 17. Ibid.

²² Ibid.

- 1) The way and the means of hegemony;
- 2) Emergence of intellectual classes;
- 3) Counter narratives of the hegemonic structure.

The first evidence of land grants to the *brāhmaṇas* in Odisha goes back to the 4th century CE, during the rule of the Māṭhara dynasty.²³ The inscriptions found in Odisha, since 5th century CE are some of the best specimens on land grants to attain the ultimate legitimacy by the *brāhmaṇas*, sought by the ruling class.²⁴ Starting from the Māṭhara dynasty, the issuing class is always donating to achieve religious merit. Anantaśaktivarman in his Andhavaram Plates mentions that *brāhmaṇas* of various *gotras* and *caraṇas* would be endowed with the *Āndōreppa* village, Kaliṅga as an *agrahāra*.²⁵ Another Māṭhara king Anantavarman announced through his Siripuram Plates that eighteen *brāhmaṇas*, who belonged to *Ātreya gotra*, would be endowed with *Tōṅṭāpara agrahāra* village.²⁶ This grant had been privileged, as it was applicable in *Kharapuri madamba* as well.²⁷ In the Chicacole Plates of Nandaprabhañjanavarman it has been stated that Hariścandrasvāmin of the *Akṣat agrahāra*, belonged to the *Deverāta gotra* and *caraṇa*, is being granted with the

²³ 'Koroshanda Copper Plates of Visakhavarman' is the earliest land grant found in Odisha, *EI*, (eds.) Hirananda Sastri, K.N. Dikshit, N.P. Chakravarti, Vol. XXI, ASI, Delhi, 1931-32, pp. 23-5.

²⁴ Dhauli (Bhubaneswar, Odisha) traced back its antiquity to 3rd century BCE, particularly to the time of Aśoka. Dhauli bears a great historical importance, as one of the famous Rock Edicts of Aśoka is located here. I have been using the inscriptions from the Māṭhara period, 4th century CE in Odisha; because of the need to trace the instances regarding formation of state in the region.

²⁵ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, ICHR, New Delhi, 1997, p. 96.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 100.

²⁷ *Ibid*.

Deyavāṭa village.²⁸ The king made the land tax free for gaining the religious merit.²⁹

Inscriptions from the Bhauma Karas, Śailodbhavas and Gaṅga dynasty had been issued in favour of the ‘intellectual class’ or the *brāhmaṇas*.³⁰ We have discussed in previous chapters that why the emergence of the brahmanical cult in the region was important. At the same time, the ruling class appointed them as their intellectual cohort. As a consequence we can witness the instances of rise of the brahmanical hegemony over Odishan society in the early medieval period. Exempted from taxes, this intellectual class use to dominate over the endowed lands, in village life and temple activities, and acted like the supreme leaders of the region. Sometimes the

²⁸ Ibid, p. 114.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 114-15.

³⁰ Gramsci opines that the ‘civil society’ holds different kind of power and practice, in which they form an ‘organic intellectual sphere’. According to Gramsci, ‘civil society’ is composed of all those ‘private organisms’, which are schools, churches, clubs, journals etc. See Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, and Thomas R. Bates, ‘Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Apr.- Jun. 1975, University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 353. In the context of ‘the formation of intellectuals’, it has been argued that “If not all entrepreneurs, at least an *elite* amongst them must have the capacity to be an organizer of society in general, including all its complex organising of services, right up to the state organism, because of the need to create the conditions most favorable to the expansion of their own class; or at the least they must possess the capacity to choose the deputies (specialized employees) to whom to entrust this activity of organizing the general system of relationships external to the business itself. It can be observed that the “organic” intellectuals, which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development, are for the most part “specializations” of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type, which the new class has brought into prominence...But the formation of intellectuals in the feudal world and in the preceding classical world is a question to be examined separately: this formation and elaboration follows ways and means, which must be studied concretely. Thus it is to be noted that the mass of the peasantry, although it performs an essential function in the world of production, does not elaborate its own “organic intellectuals”, nor does it “assimilate” any stratum of “traditional” intellectuals, although it is from the peasantry that other social groups draw many of their intellectuals and a high proportion of traditional intellectuals are of peasant origin.” Antonio Gramsci, *An Anthology of Western Marxism*, R.S. Gottlieb (ed.), OPU, Oxford, 1989, pp. 113-14.

other occupational groups, mentioned vividly in those epigraphs, had to pay taxes, which were entirely absorbed by this hegemonic class.

The Māṭhara dynasty issued some inscriptions, stating the completely opposite conditions for the commoners. Khallasvāmin of Vatsa *gotra* had been donated Kuttura *grāma* in Mahendra *bhoga* by the king *Mahārāja* Umavarman.³¹ In the epigraph this is clearly mentioned, though it was a permanent settlement, but the cultivators of the given *agrahāra* have to pay *meya* and *hiraṇya*.³² In the Ningondi Grant of Prabhañjanavarman, it was again enacted that *meya* and *hiraṇya* should be given by the common people of the region to the donees as taxes.³³

In the inscriptions of the Bhauma Karas, the mention of certain occupational groups is detectable. The lower strata of the state society, outside the realm of intellectualism had been addressed repeatedly by the lawmakers or the ‘political society’ in those epigraphs. The Hindol Plate of Śubhākaradeva in 9th century CE, stated that *tantuvāya* (weavers), *sa-kheṭa-ghaṭṭa* (police and military outposts) and the other artisans and distillers with a hamlet will be given to Pulindeśvara temple.³⁴ The mentions of other groups like *gokuṭa* (cowherd/ milkman), *śauṇḍika* (toll officer), *mālākāras* (garland makers/ florist) have been frequent in those plates.³⁵

In an ideal model proposed by Gramsci, the presence of ‘political’ as well as ‘civil’ societies are prevalent in any given circumstances. Starting from expansion of state to the peripheries (including forest lands and coastal areas) to the developed complex form of state society, the idea of brahmanical hegemony began to ascend. In the on-

³¹ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, pp. 108-09.

³² *Ibid*; *meya* means the share of the product, and *hiraṇya* is the tax in form of cash, p. 90.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 12.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 125.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 121-221.

going process, the desire to obtain the high spiritual mark (through mythological genealogies or to ascend to the *varṇa* ladder) by the sovereigns of the state and the other royals or bureaucrats, uplifted the merit of the *brāhmaṇa* class, and in the micro level, the state sponsored process of hegemony started.

VI.4 Society, Religion and Culture

In the early medieval period, the reason for the extensive development of brahmanical *varṇa* hierarchy was the decline of trade and urbanism, and emergence of an agrarian structure inside the state. It was dominated by the ruling as well as the intellectual strata of society, which could not get established in the early historical period. The change of course has been seen from the 5th century CE, which can be marked by the earliest land grants to *brāhmaṇas* and temples.³⁶ Brahmanical course of religion achieved this change in nature and culture of cults through a process of incorporation of local and folk elements in mainstream worship and rituals. By the end of the Bhauma Kara period (approximately 10th century CE) the assimilation of tribal ethnic groups into the religious and social order paved the path.

This societal change was visible since the 6th century CE, after the establishment of the *varṇa* hierarchy, through epic-Puranic traditions, in which the *kṣatriya* or warrior status was commissioned to the new and traditional ruling families, by creating fabricated and mythological genealogies through the *praśastis*.³⁷ These fabled

³⁶ Māṭhara inscription issued by *Mahārāja Śaktivarman*, 'Ragolu Plates', 13th regnal year; see Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, p. 89.

³⁷ Romila Thapar, *Ideology and the Interpretation of Early Indian History*, Review (Fernand Braudel Center), Vol. 5, No. 3, Winter, 1982, pp. 389-411.

genealogies were composed by the *brāhmaṇas* in return for royal grants of lands, where the *kṣatriyas* and the *brāhmaṇas* climbed the pinnacle of the power structure. The rest of the society was placed at the lower layer of the stratified *varṇa* order. In this period of assimilation, these temples acted as not only the major institutional base for absorption and redistribution economic surpluses, but they played an integrative force for social mobilization and took responsibility for arranging all the other occupational, tribal and marginalized groups of forests and hills.³⁸ A notable feature of the study region during the early medieval period was that the people belonged to different religious dominations. Buddhism, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and later on Śakti cult were predominant religious practices in this period. The religious institutions were powerful social and economic entities. As a source of religious practices, *brāhmaṇas* were the overlords and dominated the local masses. They even enjoyed a portion of the taxes given to the rulers. These kinds of activities led to the temple acting as not only the religious or artistic monument, but becoming a coercive power in the sphere of the lives of the masses of this region. Numerous common people donated in Odisha in this particular period.³⁹ With the endowments, names of the individuals often gave a kind of indication of their social status.⁴⁰ The state operated as the main instrument for adjusting the civil society to the political and economic structure. Here, Thomas Bates argues following the view of Gramsci that it was necessary for state to intervene into the structure; as the representatives of the change

³⁸ R. Champakalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition and ideology*, p. 446.

³⁹ In 'Ganesagumpha Inscription', a physician named Bhīmaṭa, the son of Ijyā and Nannaṭa, made a vow to donate some amount of paddy (*yācate dhānyapraṣṭham*) every year for the worship of Gaṇeśa. See Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, p. 119.

⁴⁰ Ibid, according to the inscription we came to know that, the donor Bhīmaṭa, might not belong from a ruling class, but socially he was established as a physician.

in the economic structure promoted by the state.⁴¹

The temple, as one of the major channels of socio-political culmination, projected the royal orders through inscriptions. It is indeed important to notice that these religious institutions became the means for the enactment of certain rules, which narrated the achievements of the king both in sacred and the political spheres. Redistribution or dispute over lands, irrigation, and cultivation, even deforestation amongst occupational groups created a meaning of social customs. Such corporate feelings were fairly well developed in the social and religious life of the medieval period.⁴²

Kesavan Veluthat opines in the context of early medieval South India on the existing social and the power structure that “the necessary sanction and validation from the temple-based religion of Āgamic and Purāṇic brahmanical, eminently spread by the bhakti movement. Once these ideas got accepted in societal order and validated the existing power structure, the symbols derived from them should be made use of in seeking legitimacy for the ruler himself is only natural.”⁴³

Veluthat argues in ‘Royalty And Divinity’ that, “as the kingdom presided over by the king was shown as a microcosm of the universe presided over by the God, the power of the king was sanctified. Moreover, since the king was equated with god, and

⁴¹ Thomas R. Bates, ‘Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Apr- Jun. 1975, University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 358.

⁴² R. Champakalakshmi, *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India 300 BC to AD 1300*, OPU, Delhi, 1996; see also Kesavan Veluthat, ‘The temple and the state in medieval South India’, *Studies in People’s History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2017, pp. 15–23.

⁴³ Kesavan Veluthat, ‘Religious Symbols in Political Legitimation: The Case of Early Medieval South India’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 21, No. ½, Jan.-Feb. 1993, p. 27.

treason with sacrilege, royal power in the weakly organised polity of early medieval south India was augmented and legitimised. In the absence of any legislative power, the king was only the executive head of the state, the legislation being made largely by the *brāhmaṇa* law-givers. Thus, again, the king became a tool in the hands of the priestly-landlord class, which represented the dominant section of the feudal nobility. An ideological standardisation, which society perforce accepted, was lent to the emerging feudal pattern by this divinisation of the king.”⁴⁴

VI.5 Economy

The temple was situated as a growing institution of influence of state wealth and political power. The early medieval copper plates and inscriptions were dealing with the land grants of religious nature to some extent. With the constructions of *deuls* and *mathas* in early medieval India, the land emerged as one of the important economic sources in the system of endowments to the temple.⁴⁵ Consequently the change from the early historical to the early medieval period was a single phenomenon, in which brahmanical religions occupied the significant position in the mainstream.⁴⁶ The revival of economy was more than a transformation of society and religious systems through these newly acquired institutional forces. Therefore, the temple changed into

⁴⁴ Kesavan Veluthat, ‘Royalty And Divinity: Legitimisation Of Monarchical Power In South India’, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 39, Vol. I, 1978, p. 247.

⁴⁵ R. Champakalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition and ideology Pre-colonial South India*, OPU, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 437-38; see also in the context of Odisha ‘Inscription of Narasimha IV’, during his rule around 13th century CE, Narasimha IV donated to the *Śaṅkarānanda Maṭha*, Puri, *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, p. 304.

⁴⁶ Champakalakshmi, *Religion, Tradition and ideology*.

the integral part of social organizations.

The temple was a determining key factor in the expansion of state by strategically creating a sacred geography and spiritual domains. These astounding royal projections of power, valour and artistic outcome mark the ‘apex of the Bhakti movement’.⁴⁷ The land ownership mapped a larger significance in an enquiry about the agrarian settlements in early medieval India.⁴⁸

It has been explored that a temple works as provider of employment in the context of Odisha. The epigraphs suggest that the means of livelihood for a number of people, who used to live in temple periphery, was provided through various occupations by these institutions.⁴⁹ These epigraphs inform us that many attendants had to perform different duties inside the temple premises and were getting paid by the holders of the grants. The list includes weavers, gardeners, potters, oil makers, washer men, milkmen, distillers, ferry attendants, etc.⁵⁰ Temple institutions were also engaged in employing labourers for temporary works, such as building and executing repairs in the shrine, and the wages paid took the form of gifts of land and a temple site.⁵¹ Trade was another important economic resource for the development of the political economy. R. Champakalakshmi writes that the ongoing growth of urban centres and

⁴⁷ R. Champakalakshmi, *Vaishnava Iconography in Tamil Country*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1981, pp. 238-44.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ ‘Hindol Plate’, ‘Talcher Plate’ of Śubhākaradeva, ‘Talcher Plate’ of Śivakaradeva, ‘Baud Grant’ of Tribhuvanamahādevī, ‘Santigrāma Grant’ of Daṇḍimahādevī are some of the instances where the existence of the other occupational groups have been mentioned, relating to the work of the temples or lands; see Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, pp. 125-72.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ ‘Bhubaneswar Inscription (1st Inscription)’ of Anaṅgabhīma III, where it is mentioned that king had endowed lands to repair the *maṇḍapa* of the temple of Lord *Kīrttivāsa*, the main deity worshipped in the Liṅgarāja temple; *EI*, Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 17-23.

the expansion of commerce were interlinked possesses, in which the comprehensive framework of the temple evolved unfolded into an integrative central institution.⁵²

VI.6 Theorizing the World View

In a society, most political analyses of art as a particular pattern of the expression of political hegemony, focuses the perspective on the instrumentalization.⁵³ This tool for exercising symbolic power needs to accomplish the control over behaviour through shaping of frameworks of different perspectives.⁵⁴ From the vantage point of beliefs, attitudes, and opinions this symbolic nature in return is understood as the one amongst several faces of hierarchy.⁵⁵ The author here writes that this hierarchy includes instrumental power and structural power.⁵⁶ From this, we see behavioural manipulation of given knowledge and based on the information, materials, symbols, and structures that are the apparatus of other forms of power.⁵⁷

In a state, art remains an important and integral mechanism by which symbolic power can be exercised. In this atmosphere, the political use of the definitive tool comes in a form of art, which can be discussed through the perspective of instrumentalism and its

⁵² R. Champakalakshmi, *Vaishnava Iconography*.

⁵³ Sandra Braman, 'Art and Power in the International Arena: Treaties as Cultural Instruments', University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, *Academia.edu*, pp. 1-19.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid*; instrumental power she described in the form of control over behavior through manipulations of the material environment and the exercise of physical force; where she formulates structural power as a control over behavior through the design of institutions and rules.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

own perspective. Here the author argues that art is a specialized form of product of informational activity that involves the production of new information.⁵⁸

In case of most social and political transformation, whether it is bourgeois or proletarian, it gets characterized by the period of the absolute monarchy.⁵⁹ Gramsci opines that the period of absolute monarchy is dependent on the general acceptance of the changes the economic structure.⁶⁰ Gramsci's recognition of the concept of hegemony worked as a difference between 19th-20th centuries theory of Marxism.⁶¹ Gramsci develops the idea on hegemony and on his theoretical approaches to the crisis of Marxism.⁶² He discussed the praxis of Marxism and about the consciousness and society in the 'Italian revolt against positivism'.⁶³ He argues that an 'upgrading' factor of cultural leadership in history needed a 'reappraisal of the Marxist concept of superstructure'.⁶⁴ Gramsci's theory was based highly on the socio-economic formation and development. Gramsci's study on the role of 'intellectuals' in the contemporary society motivated him to break down the Marxist approach on 'superstructure' into two large storeys. He has described them as "civil society" and "political society".⁶⁵ Civil society is always composed of all of those 'private

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ On hegemony Antonio Gramsci argues; see Liu Kang, 'Hegemony and Cultural Revolution', *New Literary History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter, 1997, pp. 69-86.

⁶⁰ *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, Cecilia M. Ady (trans.), New York, 1963; *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, Henry Furst (trans.), New York, 1963; see Thomas R. Bates, 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony', pp. 355-56.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 352-53,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 353

organisms’, such as schools, churches, clubs, journals, and parties.⁶⁶ This micro yet important equipment of the society contributes as a valuable substance towards the formation of social and political consciousness.⁶⁷ On the other hand, political society can only be composed by public institutions such as the government, rulers, courts, police and army. He argues that these two societies exercised ‘direct dominion’ over the social strata.⁶⁸ However, when the concept of society becomes synonymous with the state, then the ruling class exercises their power over society, on both of these levels, using different methods.⁶⁹ He writes that the feudal lords were the possessors of individual ‘technical capacity’ to hegemonize the society.⁷⁰ He argues, “it is precisely from the moment at which the aristocracy loses its monopoly of technico-military capacity that the crisis of feudalism begins”.⁷¹ But again the author postulates that the establishment of intellectuals in a feudal society and in the previous ‘classical’ world is a question needing separate treatment.⁷² It should also be noticed that the proletariat mass and the agricultural labourers performed as essential functionaries in a society of production, where the society does not process its own ‘organic intellectuals’.⁷³ It does not ‘assimilate’ any structure of ‘traditional

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ The term “civil society” has a long history. The English economists’ first used it in 18th century to denote the private realm of social and economic intercourse. For both Marx and Hegel, “civil society refers to social structure; more precisely, to what Marx termed the ‘relations of production’. According to Marx it is this sphere of social conflict that provides the ongoing power of history. Likewise for Gramsci, civil society is a sphere of potent historical action and it belongs to the superstructure of the society”; Thomas R. Bates, ‘Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony’, pp. 356-57.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 353.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Gramsci, *An Anthology of Western Marxism*, pp. 113-14.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

intellectuals’ as well.⁷⁴ It originates from the level of agriculture, and other social groups had been portrayed through this base.⁷⁵ In a society, he argues that the symmetry of the intellectuals and ‘traditional intellectuals’ who are of peasant origin is maintained.⁷⁶

V.6.1 Debates on Feudalism and Hegemony

The highly criticized notion of ‘Indian feudalism’ actually originated in Europe. The European feudalism was based upon the laws of Marxism. In a broad sense, the question of production or the relationship between land and labour were thoroughly discussed in the course of feudalism. The extensively discussed relationship between feudal lord and peasant economy had been brought into the focus of technology, trade, money etc.

Marxist scholars have developed the idea of feudalism, which needs to be interpreted on the basis of economic production, in which those landlords subordinated a class of dependent peasants.⁷⁷ In one of the classic studies of feudalism Marc Bloch saw that

⁷³ Ibid, p. 114.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ In his essay V. K. Thakur explains that the dynamics of feudal formation is based on two interrelated substratum components: “the decay of urban economy and the subjection and exploitation of the peasantry. The restatement of these two seminal elements in the context of the early medieval Indian urban complex is fundamental to all such attempts, which aim at conceptualising the elements of change in the contemporary society. Such a stance is also pertinent for underlining the futility of some recent analyses which seek to subordinate economic dimensions of feudalism to its lego-political dimensions, a trend which has unwittingly led to an inevitable neglect of the two imperatives which not only delineate but provide a meaningful pattern to any particular stage of historical development: (i) the relations of production at the operational level *sans* normative position and (ii) the forces of production”; V. K. Thakur, ‘The Essence of Feudal Economy and the Perspective of Third Urbanisation in India’, *Indian Anthropologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, December 1986, pp. 176-77. Also see, E.

feudalism is having certain basic characteristics, in which the labourers are subjected to the control of a landlord class.⁷⁸ The political and social supremacy of certain class, who are particularly the warrior class having land ownership, and military leadership, were responsible for the fragmentation of central power.⁷⁹ J.W. Thomson writes that “feudalism was primarily a system of government, the typical medieval system of government whose chief characteristic was the rights exercised by large landowners formerly exercised by the monarch, the inseparable association, in other words, of landownership with powers of government”.⁸⁰ According to Gramsci's theory, hegemony and dictatorship are mutually dependent phenomena.⁸¹ The lack of ‘spontaneous’ consciousness in civil society tends to oblige the state to resort to force.⁸² Where Gramsci described the societies characterized by predominance of force as ‘economic-corporative’.⁸³ By this he tried to explain how the societies, in which there was no general agreement about how a society should be, functioned and organized.⁸⁴ This view of Gramsci’s theory harmonizes with economic and social reality in comparison to the idea of feudalism and to an extent of Marxism.⁸⁵ He placed his argument that in such situations, politics can be the direct and unrefined

Balibar, ‘On the Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism’, (eds.) L. Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading Capital*, London, 1970, pp. 201-30.

⁷⁸ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, L. A. Manyon (trans.), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 443-47.

⁸⁰ J. W. Thomson and E.N. Johnson, *An Introduction to the Medieval Europe 300-1500*, W.W. Norton & Company Inc., New York, 1937, p. 290.

⁸¹ Thomas R. Bates, ‘Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony’, p. 354.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

expression of the dictatorship in the economic sphere.⁸⁶

In Indian context, the term “feudalism” denotes a socio-political process that is based upon the rural economy. The nature of feudalism can be characterized by splitting of power in a society of ‘semi-independent domains’.⁸⁷ According to D. C. Sircar the domains are being staged as fiefs held on condition of the performance of service.⁸⁸

One of the reputed Marxist historians in India is D. D. Kosambi. His work entitled *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, examines the course of Indian history from the earliest time.⁸⁹ He provided ‘feudalism’ a significant place in the context of socio-economic history of India. According to him the emergence and existence of feudal land system was the product of the exploitation of peasant class, caste, trade, commodity and natural resources.⁹⁰ In the stretch of the long period of Indian history, Kosambi noticed the increasing importance of intermediaries between the king and the subject.⁹¹ He referred to the *brāhmaṇa* intermediaries as the feudal lords, who controlled the land, which belonged to the religious institutions like temples and

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ D.C. Sircar, (ed.), *Land System and Feudalism in Ancient India*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1966, p. 42; also see D.C. Sircar, *Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as revealed by Epigraphical Records*, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, 1969.

⁸⁸ D.C. Sircar, *Land System and Feudalism*, p. 32.

⁸⁹ D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956.

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 210-32; see also R. S. Sharma, ‘How Feudal Was Indian Feudalism?’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Feb, 1984, p. 34, he states that “the caste system with the features of hierarchy and superiority, not to speak of untouchability, provided ritualistic sanction for the production and distribution system. It seems that the *jajmani* system developed in this period and was part of a more or less self-sufficient economy”.

⁹¹ Kosambi, *An Introduction*, pp. 152-53.

monasteries.⁹² In conceptualizing the growth of feudalism in Indian history as a two level process, which is from above and from below, is his landmark theory, enunciated in *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*.⁹³ He stated that in case of temples, taxes were collected through the small intermediaries, mostly by the *brāhmaṇas*. They paid a small quantity of this collected tax to the feudal hierarchy, in contrast to direct collection by royal officials. On the other hand, the meaning of feudalism from above is that the feudal structure was created by the state by endowing enormous amount of lands and official rights to *brāhmaṇas*.⁹⁴ Kosambi postulates the theory at the later point that “a class of landlords developed within the village between the state and the peasantry gradually to yield armed power on the local population”; a process he called “feudalism from below”.⁹⁵

Being one of the greatest writers on Indian feudalism, R.S. Sharma thought that the rise of the intermediary class of *brāhmaṇas* played a crucial role in construction of Indian feudalism.⁹⁶ The action performed by the state by endowing land grants to the intermediaries was the important element, which later on acted as the key of social

⁹² Ibid, pp. 262-7, and pp. 365-66.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid; see also R. S. Sharma, ‘How Feudal Was Indian Feudalism?’, p. 21, where he states, “not only of Brahmanas but also of the chief *Brahmana, mahattama, uttama, krsivala, karsaka, ksetrakara, kutumbin* and *karuka*, land endowed *Brahmanas* and *agraharas*. We also hear of *ksudra prakrti* or petty peasants, not to speak of *Meda, Andhra* and *candala*. It is obvious that certain people in the villages had a greater share in the sources of production and apparently possessed more than they could manage directly, It is also obvious that such people got their lands cultivated by petty peasants either through lease holding or through sharecropping or through the system of serfdom. We have therefore no means to establish that most peasants living in the villages were in ‘complete’ control of the means of production”.

⁹⁵ Kosambi, *An Introduction*, pp. 294-96.

⁹⁶ R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Macmillan India Ltd., Patna 1980.

hierarchy. The process of granting lands to the *brāhmaṇas* was the most striking development in this early medieval period.⁹⁷

Later on in his writings, Kosambi also suggests that upon this social structure, the growth of the classes and occupational groups emerged. The *kāyasthas* or scribes came into existence, because state sponsored grants needed to be recorded.⁹⁸ Kosambi calls this period as the period of ‘absence of feudalism’.⁹⁹ B.P. Sahu, amongst other historians argued that in this early medieval period, the ‘peasant proprietors’ of Kalinga emerged in the form of the *kuṭumbins*, along with the *grhapatikam*, *bhojaka* and *agrahārika*.¹⁰⁰ Around the 7th and 8th centuries CE, the lower strata of peasants and the other rural occupants came to be known as ‘*janapadan*’, while the still emerging, affluent category were referred to as ‘*mahattaras*’.¹⁰¹ In this contemporary period the rise of craftsmen and women such as *kumbhara* (potter), *kāmsakāra* (bronze-smith) and *karmakāra* (iron-smith), and the *kāyasthas* (scribes) can be witnessed as well.¹⁰² As it has been discussed earlier that the presence of *tantuvāya* (weavers), *saunḍika* (distillers or sometimes regarded as perfume-makers), *gokuṭa* (cowherds), *vaidya* (physicians), *sūtradhāra* (masons) and *tatthakāra* (braziers) were

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ D.D. Kosambi, ‘On The Development Of Feudalism In India’, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 36, No. ¾, July-October, 1955, p. 267.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ B.P. Sahu, ‘Community, Caste and Region: Perspectives from Early Orissa’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 40, No. 5/6, May-June, 2012, pp. 12-3.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid, pp. 13-4; see also, S.N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa (600-1100 AD)*, Research and Museum, Govt. of Orissa, Sri Sarada Press, Bhubaneswar, 1960, and Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I.

present in the early medieval land grants as well as in the society.¹⁰³

This significant process of changing patterns of land grants to the *brāhmaṇas* lasted till the 11th to 12th centuries CE, when the revival of state sponsored trade started functioning again in the process of urbanization.¹⁰⁴ B.N.S. Yadava believes that the landlords dominated the peasants by using the non-economic coercion in the society.¹⁰⁵

In addition to that, R.S. Sharma states, “those who wish to investigate the nature of feudalism in the Indian context are faced with the absence of any fixed theoretical model which can be applied to this country... In a broader sense I consider the existence of landed intermediaries to be the essence of feudal order which furnishes an agrarian economy buttressed by the decline of trade and shortage of money”.¹⁰⁶ D.N. Jha, another distinguished historian, strongly states that, “feudalism in India, unlike in Europe, began with the land grants made to *brāhmaṇas*, temples and monasteries for which the evidence begins from the first century BC”.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 13; see also ‘Baud Grant of Tribhuvanamahadevi’, in S. Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, p. 156; ‘Hindol Plate of Śubhākaradeva’, pp. 126-7; in the ‘Talcher Plate of Śivakaradeva’ the mention of ‘ferry’ is also there: “*Sashaunikadi prakritika naditarasthanadigulmaka sarvva*”, p. 137; in ‘Puri Copper Plate Grant of Dharmaraja’, the mention of bronze-smith is available: “*kāṅsakārabhiṭṭākavāstusametena*”, p. 261.

¹⁰⁴ Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*.

¹⁰⁵ B.N.S. Yadava, *Society And Culture In Northern India In The Twelfth Century*, Central Book Depot., Allahabad, 1973, pp. xxiii, 447.

¹⁰⁶ R.S. Sharma, ‘Methods And Problems Of The Study Of Feudalism In Early Medieval India’, *IHR*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1974, p. 81.

¹⁰⁷ D.N. Jha, ‘Indian Feudalism: The Early Phase’, *Changing Modes of Production in India: An Historical Analysis*, (ed.) D.N. Gupta, Delhi, 1995.

The type of history Kosambi sought to reconstruct is the social past in early medieval Indian context, is rarely present as R.S Sharma and D.N. Jha argued.¹⁰⁸ They added that pure philological and linguistic approach to the anthropological material showed that the tribal economy changed and moved towards the peasant economy.¹⁰⁹ In the context of Odisha, the land grants have played an important role in the early state formation as well as in the development of rural economy.¹¹⁰ Hermann Kulke has rightly pointed out that the land grants to the *brāhmaṇas* were a part of ‘systematic royal policy’.¹¹¹ This process has not hampered the central authority of the state; but on the other hand, strengthened the polity to the core by the ritual means.¹¹² B.P. Sahu in his article has shown that, on the basis of the land grants the dynamics of the early medieval rural economy altered in Odisha.¹¹³ Sahu states that when brahmanical tradition emerged and started evolving, at the same time, the practice of integration

¹⁰⁸ R. S. Sharma and D. N. Jha, ‘The Economic History of India up to AD 1200: Trends and Prospects’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Mar, 1974, pp. 48-80.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 65; in the context of societal transformation, see also B.P. Sahu, ‘The Brahmanical Model Viewed as an Instrument of Socio-Cultural Change- An Autopsy’, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 46, 1985, p. 180.

¹¹⁰ Hermann Kulke, ‘Fragmentation and Segmentation versus Integration? Reflections on the Concepts of Indian Feudalism and the Segmentary State in Indian History’, *Studies in History*, vol. IV, no. 2, 1982, pp. 237-63.

¹¹¹ Ibid, pp. 237-63.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ S.K. Panda, ‘Extension Of Agricultural Land In The Tribal Hinterland Of Early Medieval Orissa: A Study based on Land Grants’, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 60, 1999, pp. 214-15; see also B P. Sahu, ‘Aspects of Rural Economy in Early Medieval Orissa’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 21, No. ½, Jan- Feb, 1993, pp. 48-68; see also, S.K. Behera, ‘Economic Base for the Regional State Formation in Orissa During Early Medieval Period (6th century A.D. - 1250 A.D.)’, *Proceedings of the XIV session of the Orissa History Congress*, Bhubaneswar, 1988, pp. 25-6.

and hierarchization of people, geography and rituals were corroborating together.¹¹⁴ They had been positioned separately into the same stream with reference to the predominant state structure.¹¹⁵ According to him, the river land areas formed a boundary with conditions between brahmanical ideology and the tribal or peripheral realm.¹¹⁶ This process of integration of tribal culture to the mainstream was dependent on the means of ritual, proliferation of deities and development of temple building activity.¹¹⁷ Sahu added that the role of sacred geography as *tīrthas*, which were situated in the remote areas of Odisha, acted like the ‘meeting place and melting pot’ of varied influences.¹¹⁸ These sacred places like Jagannātha, Ekāmra and Virajā provided religious and cultural connectivity, and facilitated the process of acculturation in early medieval Odisha.¹¹⁹

The emergence of power through the sacred geography and *tīrthas* in the context of regional state formation is an important aspect. The complex nature of polity based on religion and power is structured purely on the relations between ‘involved state’ of the core and its proximity to the periphery.¹²⁰ The beginning of division of ‘class power’

¹¹⁴ B.P. Sahu, ‘Brahmanical Ideology, Regional Identities and the Construction of Early India’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 29, No. 7/8, Jul-Aug, 2001, p. 6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid; see also Kumkum Roy, ‘In which part of South Asia did the Early Brahmanical Tradition (1st millennium B.C.) Take its Form?’, *Studies in History*, Vol. 9, 1993, pp. 1-32.

¹¹⁶ Sahu, ‘Brahmanical Ideology, Regional Identities and the Construction of Early India’, (2001), p. 7.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid; see also Vijay Nath, ‘Tirthas and Acculturation: An Anthropological Study’, *Social Science Probings*, 10(1-4), 1993, pp. 28-54.

¹¹⁹ Sahu, ‘Brahmanical Ideology, Regional Identities and the Construction of Early India’, p. 7.

¹²⁰ Sandra Destradi, ‘Regional powers and their strategies: empire, hegemony, and leadership’, *Review of International Studies*, 36, 2010, p. 904-05.

forms economic relations.¹²¹ The political power, which is developed by the ruling class, creates ‘political hegemony’ from ‘civil hegemony’.¹²² The author argues that, for Gramsci, hegemony does not only refer to ideological or cultural leadership of the ruling groups and classes.¹²³ Hegemony is referred, as per Gramsci, as a dichotomy between ‘force and consent, the base and superstructure, and hegemony and domination’.¹²⁴

In the context of early medieval Odisha, the formation of state and its transition from feudalism towards a society with intellectual hegemonic forces is visible. The feudal model and the theory of Marx can be primarily situated with the state formation in the first half of the 1st millennium CE. According to Marx, these things are correlated with each other; production forces and production relations, base and superstructure and civil society and state, which are used as important elements to understand the historical processes.¹²⁵ Gramsci used different categories like ‘social hegemony’, ‘organic intellectual’ etc. to clarify the important conjunctures of history.¹²⁶ The society without economic prosperity is impossible to flourish. At the same time, the intellectual stratum works as one of the main backbones of an emerging state. Early medieval Odisha witnessed a long period of social consolidation of class interests of the elites through the process of state formation. Later on, the developed political society functioned as the proprietor of economy, while the civil society performed in spreading of intellectual hegemony through religion, culture and art.

¹²¹ Asok Sen, ‘Weber, Gramsci and Capitalism’, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Jan 1985, pp. 45-7.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Destradi, ‘Regional powers and their strategies’, pp. 55-7.

¹²⁵ Sen, ‘Weber, Gramsci and Capitalism’, p. 16.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

VI.7 Conclusion

Around 5th to 6th centuries CE, which is known as the period of state formation, Odisha went through various changes. These crucial aspects related to society, politics, religion and economy, contributing towards a more complex society. The *brāhmaṇas* were mostly responsible for creating segregation for political purposes and achieved consummate power. The temple economy that played a crucial role in the instrumentalization of religion was controlled by the *brāhmaṇas*. The roles of political and intellectual hegemony were implemented in the society by this priestly class. A social hierarchy through the creation of occupational groups is being observed through land grants to the *brāhmaṇas*. The concept of hierarchy and hegemony affected the absorption and assimilation of non-brahmanical cults into the same fold.

Conclusion

This thesis is an attempt to trace the religious and cultural background of state formation expressed through ideas of religious and political, institutions along with art and architecture. The regional state formation also facilitated the process of religious integration by assimilation of tribal communities and their cults and beliefs into the mainstream traditions, marked by brahmanical influence and hegemony.

The relationship between the ruler and the religious institution for legitimation has been studied by various scholars.¹ While several of them have studied the dynastic developments, it is only with the pioneering work of scholars like Hermann Kulke that a substantive shift in emphasis from dynastic history to political structure, modes of political integration and growth administrative apparatus as a process were taken up for study. Several works drawing upon B.D. Chattopadhyaya's seminal understanding of integrative strategies in political processes, and the making of early medieval regional formations, have studied Odisha in the early medieval period in terms of its emergence as a distinctive region. This thesis appreciates the early writings which had clarified so many of the vexing dynastic issues, and has drawn heavily upon the interpretations of Kulke, Chattopadhyaya and others in trying to locate religious integration as a simultaneous occurrence with the political formation. The building of numerous temples in the region may be linked to the expansion of the agricultural base of the newly emerging kingdoms, as these are being built only in the fertile core areas as seen from inscriptions. What is also clear from the records is that

¹ Hermann Kulke, *Kings and Cults: State Formation & Legitimation in India & South-East Asia*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2001.

not only donations were made for construction and renovation purposes, provisions were also made for conducting of rituals such as food offerings in the morning and evening services, to provide for *dīpa*, *dhūpa* and other elements for conducting the rituals, and most importantly land grants were being made to the religious and economic functionaries for the services they rendered. Chapter One focuses on the significance of patronage in promoting the brahmanical religious sects and institutions, and also tries to link the land grant based agrarian expansion and control over resources to this process. An attempt has been made to study the brahmanical religious institutions by focusing on patterns of patronage in the establishment of their religious traditions, as the propagation of the dominant Sanskrit cultural values and symbols was possible because of this development.

The patterns of patronage also highlight the making of a sacred geography in early medieval Odisha facilitated by the brahmanical expansion through the settling of the *brāhmaṇas* and building of temples dedicated to Viṣṇu and Śiva, and in terms of appropriation and assimilation of local cults through patronage in the period 7th to 12th centuries CE, and this is the subject of the second chapter. The brahmanical cultural and religious hegemony spread all over the region through cultivation of newer and unprotected forest lands. Settlements like Bhubaneswar became one of the main seats for Śaivism from at least the 7th century CE. Puri emerged as a sacred space because of the importance of Vaiṣṇavism in the latter half of the early medieval period. Jajpur was an important centre which gained importance with the spread of the *Śākta* cult. Konark emerged as an important site for the worship of Sūrya from around twelfth century CE.

The emergence of these sacred centres in early medieval period consolidated the gradual growth of Brahmanism in the region. Religious proliferation was doubtless

attached to the state formation process in that period. Many rulers, who could not penetrate through the thick forest areas of their kingdoms, gave those lands to the *brāhmaṇas* for the purpose of the expansion of the boundary of their territories. In fact, the story of appropriation of the ‘tribal deity’ Jagannātha into the manifold of Brahmanism is relevant in this circumstance as well. Sanskrit texts or the *Sihala Māhātmyas* provide important insights regarding the emerging *tīrthas*. Texts like *Kapila Samhitā*, *Ekāmra Purāṇam* are mostly focused on the Śaivite nature of the sacred region of Bhubaneswar. *Kapila Samhitā* also discusses the *Śakti pīthas*. Being a consort of Śiva, Virajā emerged as one of the main cults in early medieval Odisha. *Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya* and *Kapila Samhitā* have narrated the sacred nature of the place in Jajpur. The prevalent cult of *Śakti*, which was coming out of the *Śaiva* and *Kaula-Kāpālīka* cults, manifested fully around ninth and tenth centuries CE. Not only *Śaiva* temples but Viṣṇu shrines also incorporated the practice of having consorts. The mingling nature of *Śakti pīthas* with the *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava tīrthas* mostly arose in the early medieval period in Odisha. These associations also resulted in the creation of sacred spaces which altered the nature of politico-religious structures and the society.

Despite the sectarian differences between *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* temples, the styles of the sculptures depict the common pool of ideas, which have inspired these artistic traditions. The *Kaliṅga* type of architecture and sculptures from early medieval period are more or less the same in terms of features and characteristics, all over the region. In the third chapter the idea of divine and semi-divine, and images of daily lives portrays the distinction, if any, between ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ nature. The *Śilpa* texts clearly say that the disciples of the *ācāryas* have written the texts and they will imbibe the knowledge of sculpture making and only they can erect a temple. The writers of

both of the texts pertaining to Odishan art and architecture: *Śilpa Prakāśa* (10th century CE) and *Śilparatnakośa* (16th century CE), belonged to the *Kaula Sampradāya*, a prominent *Tāntric* sect in ninth to tenth centuries Odisha. The prescriptions related to building temples, therefore, the patrons and artists were influenced by these doctrines.

Here, the role of the sculptor and his expertise in religion and philosophy in addition to his craft is at issue. In the *Śilpa Prakāśa*, irrespective of the sectarian affiliations of *Śaiva* or *Vaiṣṇava* or *Saura* traditions, the general architectural and artistic features were conceptualized in such a way as to conform to the *Tāntric* injunctions on representation, symbolism and meaning. The depiction of gods, goddesses, *nāyikās* and other male figures together on the temple walls define the mindset of the patron as well as the artist. These images of god and goddesses have been portrayed in different sections of the temple, some of which are clearly earmarked for them, while the ‘secular’ images of men and women are carved out all over the temple, and the goddesses had a delineated space inside niches on the *bāḍa* of the temples. The representation of gods, goddesses and other human figures reflect the normative ideas about the contemporary society, economy and culture.

The fourth chapter takes up representations of semi-divine figures, *Nāyikās* and of erotic imagery for analysis. As discussed in this chapter, the *dvārpālas* in the *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava* and *Śākta* temples are portrayed differently. They are seen as protecting the temple and the presiding deity from the evil spirits of the universe. According to the *Śilpa* texts, the women figures carved on the temples are mentioned as ‘*nāyikās*’ In early medieval Odisha the donors encompassed a large section of the society, in which the kings, royal nobles, military personnel and most significantly women donors (both rulers and princesses) are more prominent. The semi divine figures

have an important visual and symbolic space in different parts of temples.

How certain architectural forms, sculptural motifs and patterns can be used to interpret the close-knit brahmanical tradition has been discussed in chapter five.

Mythological animal figures, *vāhanas* of different deities, plants, creepers, *kalaśas* are all the bearers of certain insignias of separate religious cults. The depictions of *vāhanas* carry immensely important characteristics in case of different temples. The presence of *Nandi* in front of almost every *Śaiva* temple carries the notion of the cultic nature. Similarly, the depiction of *Garuḍa* (sometimes above a *stambha*) the *vāhana* of *Viṣṇu*, immediately draws attention to the *Vaiṣṇavite* nature of the temple. *Śākta* divinities and their *vāhanas* are most ferocious in depictions. The transition phase, in which the *Śākta* and *Śaiva* cults get infused is considered as the watermark in *Kaliṅga* form of art.

The sixth chapter broadly discusses the conceptual basis and social elaboration of hegemony as a tool of the power elites. From the economic perspective, the early medieval period is characterized as one where economic transformations helped in the consolidation of the state's authority. The ruling elite sought ideological legitimacy which was provided by the brahmanical tradition, and in return for this they created a distinct realm for the priestly class inside the state. The hegemonic presence of the brahmanical culture across the region through the land grants to *brāhmaṇas* and construction of temples was established. We see that in every sphere of society whether it is 'sacred' or 'secular', brahmanical superiority and control was established, especially at the expense of other occupational or marginal groups in the society.

This thesis has attempted to offer a critical insight into the development of iconography in brahmanical temples through a detailed study of forms, technique and

placement. Various relevant texts that provide iconological and iconometric information have been combined with our own fieldwork towards this end. However, rather than a study in art appreciation, or as an art historical work, we have tried to locate the iconography in the historical context in which it was produced. For this, the nature of patronage, which established the brahmanical cults and institutions through land grants to the *brāhmaṇas*, has been analysed. Further, the rooting of the brahmanical sectarian traditions of *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava* and *Śākta* cults as well as the assimilation of local traditions is discussed in the process of patronage and the making of sacred geographies by the *brāhmaṇa* ideologues. Ultimately, the latter's presence as controllers of land and agricultural resources, as well as their role as ritual specialists and custodians of knowledge led to their hegemony in the early medieval Odishan society. Brahmanical iconography in terms of its evolution, and the use and innovation of forms and symbols, cannot be delinked from these processes.

Appendix

Table of Inscriptions of the Māṭhara Dynasty

No .	Name of the Inscription	Provenance	Donor	Regnal year	Deity	Donee	Donation	Settlement	Social/ political groups	Description of the donation
1.	Ragolu Plates of Saktivarman ¹	Ragolu, Chicacole dist., Andhra Pradesh.	<i>Mahārāj a Śaktivarman</i>	Year 13 th , full moon day of the month <i>Vaiśākh a</i> .		<i>Brāhma ṇa Kumāra śarman and his eight sons of Sāvarṇa gotra.</i>	Rākaluva <i>grāma</i> in the <i>viśaya</i> of <i>Kaliṅga</i> .	Mention of the victorious Piṣṭapura as the inhabitation of Māṭharas.		Firmly states that the soldiers were ‘exempted’ to enter in that gifted village. ² <i>Meya</i> and <i>hiraṇya</i> should be provided to the king. ³

¹ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, ICHR, New Delhi, 1997, p. 89.

² “*Abhatapraivesya*”, that term used to denote the prohibition on the entry of the soldiers; verse 9, *ibid*.

³ *Meya* means the share of the product, and *hiraṇya* is the tax in form of cash; verse 12, p. 90.

2.	Ningondi Grant ⁴	Parlakhimedi, Ganjam dist., Odisha.	Prabhañjanan	12 th day of the month Kārttika.		Some Brāhmaṇas belonged from different <i>gotras</i> and <i>caraṇas</i> .	Hōṇarām a <i>grāma</i> of <i>Kaliṅga</i> . Area named Niṅgondi.		Cultivators of the region.	<i>Meya</i> and <i>Hiraṇya</i> should be given by the common people of the region to the donees. It was a permanent <i>agrahāra</i> .
3.	Andhavarām Plates ⁵	Andhavarām, Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh.	Anantaśaktivan	Year 14,		<i>Brāhmaṇas</i> of various <i>gotras</i> and <i>caraṇas</i> .	Āndōrepapa village, <i>Kaliṅga</i> .			This charter said to have donated as an <i>agrahāra</i> to the <i>brāhmaṇas</i> , which was earlier granted by <i>Āryaka Śakti Bhaṭṭāraka</i> .
4.	Madras	Preserved	Anantaś	Year 28,		Two	Sakuṇaka	Mention of		This gifted

⁴ Ibid, p. 92.

⁵ Verses 7-8, ibid. p. 96.

	Museum Plates	in Govt. Museum of Madras.	aktivarm an			brothers named Nāgaśarman and Durgaśarman of Kātyāyana <i>gotra</i> ⁶	<i>grāma</i> of Varāhvarani <i>viṣaya</i> .	Sirīhapura as a victorious city.		village as an <i>Agrahāra</i> . ⁷
5.	Siripuram Plates of Anantavarm an	Siripuram, Srikakulam dist.	Anantav arman	Year not mentioned. ⁸		Eighteen Brāhmaṇas belonged to Ātreya <i>gotra</i> .	Village Tōṅṭāpara.	Reference of victorious Devapura.		This <i>Agrahāra</i> village has been privileged as it was applicable in Kharapuri <i>madamba</i> . ⁹

⁶ Ibid, p. 98.

⁷ Verse 12, p. 99.

⁸ Ibid, p. 100.

⁹ Verses 9-10, p. 100.

6.	Baranga Grant of Umavarman	Baranga, Ganjam dist., Odisha	Umāvar man	6 th regnal year. ¹⁰		Viṣṇuśar man of Kāśyapa <i>gotra</i> .	Hemanda ka grāma in Bhilinga boga <i>viṣaya</i> .	Victorious city of Sunagara. ¹¹		Inhabitants of this <i>Agrahāra</i> have been asked to offer him <i>meya</i> and <i>hiraṇya</i> regularly. ¹²
7.	Dhavalapeta Plates of Mahārāja Umavarman	Dhavalape ta, Andhra Pradesh	Umāvar man	Not dated ¹³		Khallasv āmin of Vatsa <i>gotra</i> and Chando ga <i>carana</i> .	Kuttura <i>grāma</i> in Mahendr a <i>bhoga</i> .	Sunagara.	Cultivator s are been mentioned . ¹⁴	<i>Meya</i> and <i>hiraṇya</i> have to be offered by the cultivators of the land. The donated land was exempted from all the taxes.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

¹¹ Verse 1, Ibid.,

¹² The addressed group of people are not clearly mentioned who they were; verses 9-12, pp. 104-5.

¹³ Ibid, p. 108.

¹⁴ Verse 10, p. 109.

8.	Brihatproshta Grant of Umavarman .	Palankoda , Andhra Pradesh.	Umāvarman	30 th regnal year. ¹⁵		Brāhmaṇa Haridatta of Aupama nyava gotra and Bahvṛca carana.	Bṛhatproṣṭhā grāma of Kalīṅga.	Victorious city Simhapura.	Cultivators are mentioned .	This charter has mentioned that the cultivators of the given <i>Agrahāra</i> have to pay <i>meya</i> and <i>hiranya</i> . It was a permanent settlement.
9.	Chicacole Plates of Nandaprabhanjanavarm an	Chicacole, Andhra Pradesh.	Nandaprabhanjanavarm an	Not dated. ¹⁶		Hariścandraśvām in of the Akṣata <i>Agrahāra</i> , belonged to the Deverāt	Ḍeyavāṭa village.	Sārapalli city.	Cultivators.	The land was granted for the libation of the water and it made tax free by the king for his religious merit. ¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 110.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 114.

¹⁸ Ibid, verses 8-12, pp. 114-15.

						a <i>gotra</i> and <i>caraṇa</i> . 17				
10.	Baranga Plates of Nandaprabh añjanavarm an	Baranga, Ganjam dist., Odisha.	Nandapr abhañja navarma n	15 th regnal year. ¹⁹		Brāhma ṇas of different <i>gotras</i> and <i>caraṇas</i> .	Siṅghala <i>grāma</i> .	Mention of the victorious city of Vardhamān apura.	Cultivator s and 'other inhabitant s'.	The inhabitants were asked to attain the done to pay <i>meya</i> and <i>hiraṇya</i> for the regular payment of the <i>Agrahāra</i> .
11.	Ragolu Plates of Nandaprabh añjanavarm an	Ragolu, Andhra Pradesh.	Nandapr abhañja navarma n	24 th regnal year. ²⁰		Brahma cārin Nandiśa rman of Kaunḍin ya	Rāgolaka <i>grāma</i> . ²¹	Victorious city of Siṅgupura.		The donee has to pay annually a sum of fifty <i>paṇas</i> , and twenty <i>daṇḍa</i> <i>paṇas</i> as the

¹⁷ Ibid, verses 4-7, p 114.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 116.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 118.

²¹ Ibid, verse 2, p. 118.

						<i>gotra.</i>				token of fine or penalty. Extensive discussion on the boundary of the village.
12.	Bobbili Plates of Caṇḍvarman	Bobbili, Andhra Pradesh	Caṇḍvar man	Year 4 th . ²²		Brahma cāriṇs belonged to different <i>gotras.</i>	Tiritthāṇa <i>grāma.</i>	<i>Vijaya-</i> Simhapura.	Addressed to the cultivators of the village.	It was a permanent <i>Agrahāra</i> in which cultivators were asked to pay their usual <i>meya</i> and <i>hiraṇya</i> . The done has to pay 200 <i>paṇas</i> annually to the king.
13.	Koroshanda Plates of	Koroshan da,	Viśākha varman	7 th regnal		Viṣṇuśar man,	Village Tampōya	Victorious Sripura.	Cultivator s.	Cultivators were asked to pay

²² Ibid, p. 122.

	Viśākhavar man	Ganjam dist., Odisha.		year. ²³		Śreṣṭhiś arman, Agniśar man, Nāgaśar man and Śivaśar man of the Ātreya <i>gotra</i> .	ka in Kōrōṣōḍa ka <i>pañcālī</i> .			their usual <i>meya</i> and <i>hiraṇya</i> .
--	-------------------	-----------------------------	--	---------------------	--	---	---	--	--	---

²³ Ibid, p. 126.

Miscellaneous Inscriptions of Northern Odisha

No .	Name of the Inscription	Provenance	Donor	Regnal year	Deity	Donee	Donation	Settlement	Social/ political groups	Description of the donation
14.	Asanpat Naṭarāja Image Inscription of Śatrubhaṅja	Asanpat, Keonjhar dist., Odisha	Śatrubhaṅja of the Nāga family.	Not date d. ²⁴	Both Brahmanical and Buddhist religion.		Lakhs of cows to the places of Pāṭalīputra, Gayā, Kṛmila, Dalāvardhana, Puṇḍravardhana, Gokkhaṭi, Khadraṅga and Tāmralipti, and both	Mention of <i>Ubhaya</i> Tosalis and Vindhya region.		Grants at various <i>maṭhas</i> , monasteries and to the <i>brahmacārins</i> and <i>bhikṣus</i> . It has been claimed at the end of the inscription that Mahārāja Śatrubhaṅja has built a temple of <i>Śiva</i> .

²⁴ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. I, ICHR, New Delhi, 1997, p. 171.

							of the Tosalis.			
15.	Olasing Plate of Bhānudatta	Olasing, Puri dist., Odisha	Mahārāj a Bhānuda tta, assigned as <i>mahāsā manta</i> and <i>mahāpr</i>	5 th regn al year.	Maṇināg eśvara <i>Bhaṭṭāra ka</i> of <i>Ēkāmbak a</i> .	To the temple and to the <i>Brāhmaṇ a</i> students of Maitrāya nīya <i>maṭha</i> . ²⁵	Kumvukir ikṣilāka in Uttamālok a <i>viṣaya</i> .			Students of the Maitrāyaṇīya school <i>Yajurveda</i> resided in the <i>maṭha</i> of the deity.

²⁵ Ibid, verses 10-1, p. 191.

			<i>atihāra</i> of Andhaśṛ ṅga.							
16.	Soro Plate of Mahārāja Bhānudatta	Badkhuri near Soro, Balasore dist., Odisha	Mahārāj a Bhānuda tta	5 th regn al year.		<i>Mahāma hattaras;</i> namely Priyamitr asvāmin, Vāṭamitr asvāmin, Dhruva- mitrasvā min and Āruṅgam itrasvāmi n, belonged to the	Village Vahirvāṭa ka in Sarephāhā ra <i>viṣaya</i> . ²⁶	Virañjā or Virajā has been mentioned as the residence of the king. ²⁷		To increase of religious merit and it was a tax free land.

²⁶ Ibid, verses 3-8, p. 195.

²⁷ Verse 1, Ibid.,

						Vatsa <i>gotra.</i>				
17.	Stone Inscriptions from the Temples of <i>Paraśurāme śvara</i> and <i>Śatrughneśv ara</i>	Bhubanes war, Puri dist., Odisha								Both of the inscriptions only mention the day of a week. ²⁸

²⁸ Ibid, p. 205.

Inscriptions of the Śailodbhava Dynasty

No.	Name of the Inscription	Provenance	Donor	RE year	Deity	Donee	Donation	Settlement	Social/political groups	Description of the donation
19.	Khurda Plates of Śrī Mādhavarāja	Uttar Mundamohana near Khurda, Odisha	Śrī Mādhavarāja	Not dated.		Prajāpatisvāmin of Vatsa <i>gotra</i> . ²⁹	Locality called Kumbhāra ccheda inside the village Arahaṇṇa in Thorāṇa <i>viṣaya</i> . ³⁰	Victorious residence of Koṅgoda. ³¹		To maintain the religious merit of the donor and his parents. Said to have the lawful enjoyment by the donee. ³²
20.	Buguda Plates of Mādhavarman	Buguda, Ganjam dist.	Mādhavarman	Not dated.		<i>Bhaṭṭa</i> Vāmana, the son of Ādityadeva and the grandson of Vāmana of Hārīta <i>gotra</i>	Puipina grāma within Khadira pataka under Gudda <i>viṣaya</i> . ³⁴	Mention of the city of Koṅgoda as Mādhavarman's residence		Without any disruption the donee can enjoy the land. This donation was provided to sustain the religious merit

²⁹ Verse 20, p. 213.

³⁰ Verses 15, 19 and 20, p. 213.

³¹ Verse 1, p. 212.

³² Verses 22-4, *Ibid.*,

						and Taittirīya <i>carāṇa</i> . ³³		³⁵		of the donor and his parents. ³⁶
21.	Purushottam pur Plates of Madhavavar man	Purushotta mpur, Ganjam dist., Odisha	Mādhava varman	13 th RE year. ³⁷		<i>Bhaṭṭa</i> Nārāyaṇa of Maudgalya <i>gotra</i> . And chandoga <i>carāṇa</i> . ³⁸	Āmba <i>grāma</i> , attached to the Devagrām a <i>viṣaya</i> . ³⁹			For the libation of water. And to increase the religious merit of the donor and his parents. ⁴⁰
22.	Puri Plates of Madhavavar man	Biroboi, Puri dist., Odisha	Mādhava varman- Sainyabh īta ⁴¹	13 th RE year. ⁴²		<i>Bhaṭṭa</i> Vittadeva of Kauśika <i>gotra</i> and Chandoga <i>carāṇa</i> . ⁴³	Sāla <i>grāma</i> , situated in Thorāṇa <i>viṣaya</i> . ⁴⁴			It was subjected to the donee to enjoy the lawfully gifted village without any

³⁴ Verses 31 and 36-7, p. 216.

³³ Verses 37-40, pp. 216-7.

³⁵ Verses 29-30, Ibid.,

³⁶ Verses 37-40, pp. 216-7.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 219.

³⁸ Verses 36-7, p. 221.

³⁹ Verses 34-5, Ibid.,

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 222.

⁴¹ Verse 17, p. 224.

⁴² Ibid., p. 223.

⁴³ Verses 30-2, pp. 224-5.

										interference. ⁴⁵
23.	Cuttack Museum Plates of Madhavavarman	Not known, now preserved in Odisha State Museum. ⁴⁶	Sainyabhiṭa II or Mādhava varman. ⁴⁷	50 th RE year. ⁴⁸		Skandāditya svāmin, Rudrasvāmin, Daḍḍasvāmin, Vedasvāmin, Mahendrasvāmin, Khadirādityasvāminn and other 17 other brāhmaṇas. ⁴⁹	Tamataḍā grāma in Vyāghrapura bhukti of Jayapura viṣaya. ⁵⁰	City of Mādhava pura has been mentioned. ⁵¹		The plot measuring twenty <i>ṭimpiras</i> was granted to the twenty three brāhmaṇas of the place. ⁵²

⁴⁴ Verse 30, p. 224.

⁴⁵ Verses 33-4-5, p. 225.

⁴⁶ Sited by the author, p. 227.

⁴⁷ Verse 21 and verse 27, p. 228.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 227.

⁴⁹ Verses 30-4, p. 229.

⁵⁰ Verse 27 and verses 29-30, pp. 228-9.

⁵¹ Verse 26, p. 228.

⁵² In verse 30 it has stated that *Viṅsatitimpīraparimāṇah*, p. 229

24.	Banpur Grant of Madhyamaraja	Banpur, Puri dist., Odisha	Madhya marāja Ayaśobhīta. ⁵³	Not dated.						It talks about the genealogy of the Śailodbhava dynasty. He performed <i>Aśvamedha yajña</i> in his reign. ⁵⁴ Refers the political achievements of the king Mādhavavarmān, his physical strength and skills etc. ⁵⁵
25.	Parikud Plates of Madhyamaraja	Parikud, Puri dist., Odisha	Madhya marāja-Yaśobhīta ⁵⁶	26 th RE year.		The brāhmaṇas from different <i>gotras</i> and <i>caraṇas</i> . ⁵⁷	Kaṭakabhukti <i>viśaya</i> . ⁵⁸			The donated land was free from all of the obstructions or taxes. Twelve <i>ṭimpiras</i> of land

⁵³ Verse 30, p. 233.

⁵⁴ Verse 27-8, p. 232.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 232-33.

⁵⁶ Verse 21, p. 236.

⁵⁷ Verses 46-9, p. 238.

⁵⁸ The author mentions here that, the name of the land of the donated village has been scraped out due to the damage; Ibid., p. 240.

										were donated in the name of the thirteen brāhmaṇas. ⁵⁹
26.	Ranpur Plates of Dharmaraja	Ranpur, Puri dist., Odisha	Dharmar āja, known also as Sri Mānabhīta. ⁶⁰	3 rd RE year.	Devoted to Siva.	<i>Bhaṭṭa</i> Trilocanasv āmin, belonged to the Ātreya <i>gotra</i> . ⁶¹	A locality called Usvāṭaka in Tanekaṇḍr ā <i>viṣaya</i> . ⁶²	Mention of the city of Māṭrcandra Pāṭaka. ⁶³		<i>Pañca kṣetra ṭimpiras</i> have been donated in the name of that brāhmaṇa. ⁶⁴ Libation of the water, no obstruction over the donated land and the religious merit of the donee has been mentioned in that charter. ⁶⁵
27.	Nivina Copper Plate Grant	Nimmina, Ganjam dist.,	Dharmar āja	9 th RE year. ⁶⁶		<i>Bhaṭṭa</i> Savaridevad īkṣita,	Nivinā <i>grāma</i> in the			Two <i>ṭimpiras</i> of the land within the village have

⁵⁹ Verses 43-4, p. 238.

⁶⁰ Verses 26 and 34, p. 243.

⁶¹ Verses 48-9, p. 244.

⁶² Verse 47-8, Ibid.,

⁶³ Verse

⁶⁴ Verse 48-9, ibid.,

⁶⁵ Verses 49-51, Ibid.,

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 246.

	of Dharmaraja	Odisha				belonged to the Vatsa <i>gotra</i> and Chandoga <i>carāṇa</i> . ⁶⁷	Khiṇḍiṅga hāra <i>viṣaya</i> of Koṅgoda <i>maṇḍala</i> . ⁶⁸			been given to the donee. Libation of the water, no obstruction over the donated land and the religious merit of the donee has been mentioned in that charter. ⁶⁹
28.	Banpur Grant of Dharmaraja <i>Alias</i> Manabhita	Banpur, Puri dist., Odisha	Śrīrājñī Kalyānad evī (mother of the reigning king) and endorsed by Dharmarāja. ⁷⁰	Samvat 1. ⁷¹		<i>Eka śāṭa</i> Prabuddhacandra, disciple of <i>arhadācārya</i> Nāsicandra. ⁷²	Three <i>ṭimpiras</i> land in the locality called Suvarnaral oṇḍi Thorāṇa <i>viṣaya</i> and two and one fourth <i>ṭimpiras</i> of land at			Mentioned a religious establishment where <i>vali</i> , <i>caru</i> and <i>satra</i> have to be provided in charge of Prabuddhacandra. ⁷⁴ The donee could enjoy the gifted land till his death. ⁷⁵ It mentioned that

⁶⁷ Verses 39-40, p. 249.

⁶⁸ Verses 36 and 39, Ibid.,

⁶⁹ Verse 41, Ibid.,

⁷⁰ Verses 44 (a) and (b), p. 255.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 252.

⁷² Verse 44 (a), p. 255.

							the village Madhuvāṭ aka, near Rāṇḍa Sīma. ⁷³			no such obstruction be made. ⁷⁶
29.	Puri Copper Plate Grant of Dharmaraja	Uttaraparsva <i>math</i> in Puri, Odisha	Dharmarāja.	12 th RE		Brāhmaṇa Āsika Golokasvām in, belonged to the Jātukarṇa <i>gotra</i> and Vājasenaya <i>carāṇa</i> . ⁷⁷	Two <i>ṭimpiras</i> of land in the area Kiṇiyā <i>cheda</i> in Doṅgi <i>grāma</i> , situated in Varttani <i>viṣaya</i> , ⁷⁸ and one <i>ṭimpira</i> of land in Duka <i>grāma</i> . ⁷⁹	Victorious city of Mātṛcandra Pāṭaka. ⁸⁰	The mention of bronze smith. ⁸¹	This grant increases the religious merit of the donor as well as his parents. ⁸²

⁷⁴ Verse 44 (a), p. 255.

⁷⁵ Verse 44 (a) mentions the term *Yāvatjīvati*, Ibid.,

⁷³ Verses 44 (b) and (c), Ibid.,

⁷⁶ Verses 45-7, Ibid.,

⁷⁷ Verses 51-53, p. 261.

⁷⁸ Verse 48-50, Ibid.,

⁷⁹ Verse 48-9, Ibid.,

⁸⁰ Verse 40 mentions that Vijayamātṛcandrapāṭaka as the source of the place of the inscription, p. 260.

30.	Chandeśwar Plates of Dharmaraja	Chandeswar, Puri dist., Odisha	Dharmar ājadeva Mānabhīta	18 RE		<i>Bhaṭṭa Śubhadeva, belonged to the Kauṇḍinya gotra and Vājasaneyā carāṇa.</i> ⁸³	Śivāvivāsa grāma, under Kirātatalaka viśaya. ⁸⁴	The city Kontalayi. ⁸⁵		The grant was rent free and meant to enhance the religious merit of the donee and his parents. ⁸⁶
31.	Konedda Grant of Dharmarāja	Not known	Dharmar ājadeva	30 RE		<i>Bhaṭṭa Goṇadevasv āmin of the Kauśika gotra and Vājasaneyā carāṇa.</i> ⁸⁷	Half of the village of Koṇḍeḍḍe, situated in Khidḍiṅga hāra viśaya. ⁸⁸	The city Saumyapura. ⁸⁹		It was a tax free endowment. This grant increases the religious merit of the donor as well as his parents.
32.	Tekkali Plates of Madhyamaraja	Tekkali, Andhra Pradesh	Madhyamāraja	Not mentioned					He was a powerful king of the mass	

⁸¹ *Kāṅsakārabhiṭṭākavāstusametena*, verse 51, p. 261.

⁸² Verse 53, *ibid.*,

⁸³ Verses 27-8, p. 265.

⁸⁴ Verse 26-7, *Ibid.*,

⁸⁵ Verse 21, *Ibid.*,

⁸⁶ Verse 29-31, *ibid.*,

⁸⁷ Verses 52-3, p. 270.

⁸⁸ Verses 50-1, *Ibid.*,

⁸⁹ Verse 42, *Ibid.*,

									called <i>raṇakṣobha</i> . ⁹⁰	
33.	Two Incomplete Palimpsests from Dharakote	Dharakote , Ganjam dist. Odisha	Not known. ⁹¹	Not known.						The verse was in praise of lord <i>Śiva</i> . ⁹² This charter contains genealogical material.

⁹⁰ Verse 15-6, p. 273.

⁹¹ The author mentioned that “theses verses are found in the other charters issued by the kings of the Śailodbhava family”, Ibid., p. 276.

⁹² Verses 3-5, p. 275.

Table of Inscriptions of the Bhauma Kara Dynasty

No .	Name of the Inscription	Provenance	Donor	Regnal year	Deity	Donee	Donation	Settlement	Social/ political groups	Description of the donation
34.	Haṁseśvara Temple Inscription. ⁹³	Jajpur, Cuttack district	Śubhākara and his queen Mādhavad evī	Not dated (script is of about 8 th century CE)	Śiva/ Bhavā		Mādhaveśvara temple	This temple has been compared to the residence of Śiva, Mount Kailāśa.		Appointed ācārya to conduct the worship of the deity, excavation of a vāpi in the vicinity of the temple and established a kiraṇojwalehaṭṭah in front of the temple.
35.	Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara. ⁹⁴	Chaurasi, Puri district	Śivakara	Year 12, the 12 th day of the bright		Jāllubhaṭṭa, belonged to	Vuvraḍā village in Dakṣiṇa Tosali		The uddēśa (space) had been	Established according to the rule of bhūmi-chidra-pidhāna-

⁹³ Snigdha Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. II, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 101-02.

⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 105-09.

				month of <i>Kārttika</i> .		<i>Kātyāyana</i> <i>gotra</i> .			gifted along with the artisans, weavers, herdsmen and the distillers.	<i>nyāya</i> ⁹⁵ and granted free from taxes by means of copper plate grant.
6.	Neulpur plate of Śubhākar adeva; Year 30. ⁹⁶		Śubhākara deva	Year 30, 13 th day of the dark fortnight of the month of <i>Mārgasīrṣa</i>		Granted to two hundred <i>Brāhmaṇa</i> <i>s</i>	<i>Parvatadro</i> <i>ṇī-</i> <i>Komparāka</i> and <i>Daṇḍāṅkiy</i> <i>oka</i> villages in <i>Pāñcāla</i> and <i>Vubhyuday</i> <i>aviṣaya</i> .			Advised that this gift should be reserved ‘out of respect for the religion’. Donated with <i>Uparikara</i> .
37.	Ganeśagu mphā	Ganeśagu mphā in	Physician named	9 th CE	<i>Gaṇe</i> <i>śa</i>		Made a vow to	States the existence		The grace of lord <i>Gaṇeśa</i>

⁹⁵ The present author mentions in the footnote of the book that, “the expression intends to mean the prevalent rule that the grant would never in future be the subject of entry into another document, reclaiming it as a fallow land. The expression finds mention in almost all the copper-plate records of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty so far known.” (ibid, pp. 107 and 109).

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 110-15.

	Inscription. ⁹⁷	Khandagiri hill, Bhubaneswar, Puri Dist.	<i>Bhīmaṭa</i> , the son of <i>Ijyā</i> and <i>Nannaṭa</i>				donate some amount of paddy (yācate dhānyaprasatham) every year for the worship of <i>Gaṇeśa</i> .	of <i>Virajākṣetra</i> .		should prevail on the people of <i>Virajā</i> .
38.	Terundia Plate of Śubhākarā; Year 100. ⁹⁸	Terundia, Puri District	Śubhākara deva	Year 100, the 5 th day of the bright fortnight of the month of <i>Vaiśākha</i> .		<i>Brāhmaṇas</i> of <i>Bhāradvāja</i> gotra.	Maintenance of the village named <i>Lavāgaṇḍā</i> .			
39.	Hindol Plate of Śubhākarādeva;	Chitalpur, Dhenkanal	Śubhākara deva	Year 103, 7 th day of the bright fortnight of	Lord <i>Vaidyanātha</i>		<i>Noḍḍilo</i> village along with <i>uparikara</i> .	This charter had been issued in	Weavers, herdsmen (<i>sakheṭaghaṭṭa</i>), and	<i>Pulindēśvara</i> temple, erected by Pulindarāja; <i>dīpa</i> , <i>dhūpa</i> ,

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 118-19.

⁹⁸ Ibid, pp. 120-24.

	Yerar 103.. ⁹⁹	district.		the month of <i>Śrāvaṇa</i> .				<i>Guhadev a-pāṭikā</i> , described as a victorious camp. Addressed various officers of <i>Uttara Tosali</i> and <i>Adhikaraṇas</i> living in <i>viṣaya</i> of <i>Koṅkavirā</i> .	the other artisans and distillers with a hamlet.	<i>nivedya, gandha, puṣpa, bali, caru</i> should be provided, repairing of the temple. <i>kaupinas</i> for <i>Śaivācāryas</i> , foods and medicines. Maintenance of the family of <i>Dānapati</i> .
40.	Dharakote Plate. ¹⁰⁰	Balichhai near Dharakote, Ganjam district	Śubhākara deva	Year 103, 4 th day of the bright fortnight of the month of <i>Bhādrapad</i>		<i>Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa devakaṇṭha</i> and <i>Bhaṭṭa Lumbādev amitra</i> ,	<i>Gujjāṭā</i> village in <i>Koṅgodamaṇḍala</i> of Dakṣiṇa Tosali. Along with			Tax free, as per the <i>akṣaya nīvi</i> principle. It got permanency due to the rule of <i>bhūmi-chidrapidhāna-nyāya</i> .

⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 125-30.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 131-34.

				<i>a.</i>		belonged to <i>Maṅgalya</i> gotra.	<i>uparikara.</i>			
41.	Talcher Plate of Śubhākar a; Year 141. ¹⁰¹	Jagati near Talcher, Dhenkanal dist.	Śubhākara deva	Year 141, 2 nd day of the dark fortnight of the month of <i>Bhādra</i> .		<i>Kulaputra ka Sūryapāla</i> , son of <i>Dāmodara pāla</i> and grandson of <i>Bāmanapāla</i> .	Donated to the village <i>Aḍḍhenako nā</i> in the <i>Maḍeraviṣaya</i> of <i>Dakṣiṇa Tosala</i> . The king requested to the donee to protect the land out of respect to the religion.	Mention of ‘chief city’ of <i>Guhadev aptāka</i> .	Donated along with the artisans, distillers and with the ferries. ¹⁰²	Mention of the name of Tribhuvanamahādevī as the in charge of administration.
42.	Talcher Plate of Śubhākar	Jagati near Talcher,	Śivakaradeva	Year 149, the 2 nd day of the dark	<i>Buddha</i>	<i>Amubhaṭṭaka</i>	Temple for <i>Buddhabhaṭṭāraka</i> ,		Weavers, artisans, herdsmen	Three shares of the donation. For providing

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 135-39.

¹⁰² Ibid, “*Sashaunikadi prakritika naditarasthanadigulmaka sarvva*”, verse 37, p. 137.

	adeva; Year 149, Plate A ¹⁰³	Dhenkan al dist.		fortnight of the month of <i>Pauṣa</i> .			<i>Kallyānigr āma</i> in <i>Pūrvarāṣṭr aviṣaya</i> of <i>Uttara Tosala</i> .		were establishe d with space, ferries and outposts.	<i>bali, caru, gandha, dīpa</i> etc. and maintenance for ten <i>bhikṣus</i> .
43.	Talcher Plate of Śubhākar adeva; Year 149, Plate B. ¹⁰⁴	Baud, Baud- Khandma l dist.	Śivakarad eva	Year 149, the 2 nd day of the dark fortnight of the month of <i>Pauṣa</i> .	<i>Budd ha</i>	<i>Amubhaṭṭ aka</i>	Village <i>Surabhipur a</i> in the division called <i>Koraṭṭi- khaṇḍa</i> in <i>Madhyama khaṇḍaviṣa ya</i> .		Weavers, artisans, herdsmen were establishe d with space, ferries and outposts.	Issued to provide <i>dīpa, dhūpa, bali, caru, puṣpa, gandha</i> etc. <i>Bhūmi-chidra- pidhāna-nyāya</i> 'which would not be subjected under any document'.
44.	Baud Grant of Tribhuva namahād evī; Year 158, Plate	Baud, Baud- Khandma l dist.	Tribhuvan amahādevī	Year 158, 7 th day of the bright fortnight of the month of <i>Kārttika</i> .	The image of the deity <i>Umā</i> and <i>Mahe</i>	<i>Śaśilekhā</i> .	<i>Nānneśvar aŚiva</i> temple. <i>Nānneśvar aTalapāṭak a</i> and <i>Koṭṭapurā</i>		<i>Tantuvāya , gokuṭa, śauṇḍika</i> .	Advised to provide <i>bali, caru, gandha, puṣpa, dhūpa, nivedya, candana</i> to the deities. Second

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 140-146.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 147-53.

	A. ¹⁰⁵				<i>śvara</i> has been installed.		villages were donated in <i>Tamālakha ṇḍaviṣaya</i> in <i>Daṇḍabhukti Maṇḍala</i> .			and third section of this inscription states by the issuer that <i>satra</i> , garments and medicines should be provided to the monks and the temple should be repaired. And the food and clothing should go to the <i>Brāhmaṇas</i> . Third share should go to the <i>pādamūlas</i> and others.
45.	Baud Grant of Tribhuva namahād evī; Year 158,	Baud, Baud-Khandma l dist.	Tribhuvan a mahādevī	Year 158, 7 th day of the bright fortnight of the month of <i>Kārttika</i> .	<i>Umā</i> and <i>Mahe śvara</i> .	<i>Śaśilekhā</i> .	<i>Utthukā-khaṇḍakṣetra</i> , situated in the <i>Dakṣiṇakh aṇḍaviṣaya</i>		Same mention.	

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, pp. 154-60.

	Plate B. ¹⁰⁶						of <i>Daṇḍabhukti-maṇḍala</i> of Uttara Tosala.			
46.	Dhenkanal Grant of Tribhuva namahādevī; Year 160. ¹⁰⁷	Bhimana garigarh in old Dhenkanal state, Dhenkanal dist.	Tribhuvanamahādevī	Year 160, 6 th day of the bright fortnight of the month of <i>Kārttika</i> .		<i>Bhaṭṭa Jagaddharā</i> , belonged to <i>Bhāradvāja</i> gotra, <i>Aṅgīrasa</i> , <i>Bhāradvāja</i> and <i>Bārhaspataya pravaras</i> .				For the ceremony of bringing the rain. ¹⁰⁸ Also says that she has granted this for the ‘enhancement of the merits’ of her parents. According to the rule of <i>bhūmi-chidrapidhāna-nyāya</i> and including <i>Akṣaya-nīvi</i> .
47.	Santigrāma Grant	Angul, Dhenkan	Daṇḍimahādevī	Year 180, a solar		<i>Bhaṭṭa Mākyadev</i>	<i>Sāntigrāma</i> and		Same occupatio	Granted during the occasion of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 161-66.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 167-72.

¹⁰⁸ Mentioned in the verse 32 of this present inscription as “*Vṛṣṭikāmanimittāya*”, ibid.

	of Daṇḍima hādevī; Year 180. ¹⁰⁹	al dist.		eclipse.		<i>a</i> , son of <i>Jālladeva</i> and grandson of <i>Puruṣotta madeva</i> , belonged to the <i>Bhāradvāj agotra</i> .	<i>Komyosaṅga</i> situated in <i>Paścima Khaṇḍa</i> within the <i>viṣaya</i> of <i>Tamura</i> in <i>Dakṣiṇa Tosala</i> .		nal castes.	the solar eclipse
48.	Ganjam Grant of Daṇḍima hādevī; Year 180, Plate A. ¹¹⁰	Ganjam Dist.	Daṇḍimah ādevī	Year 180, 5 th day of the dark fortnight of the month of <i>Mārgaśira</i> .		<i>Dhavala Pratihāra</i> , son of <i>Vāsudeva</i> and grandson of <i>Apratidāg hoṣa</i> , belonged to the <i>Viśvāmitr agotra</i> .	<i>Villagrāma</i> village, situated in <i>Varaḍākha ṇḍaviṣaya</i> of <i>Koṅgodam aṇḍala</i> .			Described the religion of the queen. <i>Dhavala</i> had to give the share of one fourth of the grant to the <i>Brāhmaṇas</i> . In the occasion of <i>Samkrānti</i> , the land has been donated by the queen.
49.	Ganjam	Ganjam	Daṇḍimah			<i>Bhaṭṭaputr</i>	<i>Garasāmbh</i>	Landing	Weavers,	Granted

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 173-77.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 178-84.

	Grant Daṇḍima hādevī Plate B. ¹¹¹	Dist.	ādevī			<i>a</i> <i>Puruṣotta</i> <i>ma</i> , belonged to the <i>Kāśyapa</i> <i>gotra</i> .	<i>ā</i> , situated in <i>Varttaniviṣ</i> <i>aya</i> of Kongoda- <i>Koṅgoda-</i> <i>maṇḍala</i> .	places, ferries and outposts.	herdsmen, the distillers.	together with the <i>uparikara</i> and <i>uddeśa</i> . Ordered to be made in the occasion of <i>Uttarāyaṇa</i> .
50.	Arabala Grant of Daṇḍima hādevī; Year 183. ¹¹²	Arabal, near Jajpur, Cuttack dist.	Daṇḍimah ādevī	Year 183, 15 th day of the dark fortnight of the month of <i>Jyeṣṭha</i> .		<i>Bhaṭṭa</i> <i>Puruṣotta</i> <i>mavṛddha</i> , son of <i>Dīkṣita</i> <i>Jivāśvavṛd</i> <i>dha</i> , belonged to <i>Bhāradvāj</i> <i>a gotra</i> , migrated from <i>Puṇḍravar</i> <i>dhana</i> and a resident of <i>Aravāla</i> .	<i>Aravāla</i> village in <i>Teṇḍahāra</i> <i>viṣaya</i> of <i>Uttara</i> <i>Tosala</i> .		Weavers, herdsmen, the distillers.	Donated for the libation of water. According to the rule of <i>bhūmi-chidra-</i> <i>pidhāna-nyāya</i> and including <i>Akṣaya-nīvi</i> .

¹¹¹ Ibid, pp. 185-90.

¹¹² Ibid, pp. 191-96.

51.	Kumuran g Plate of Daṇḍima hādevī; Year 187. ¹¹³	Ghantasil a near Kumuran g, Puri dist.	Daṇḍimah ādevī	Year 187, 13 th day of the bright fortnight of the month of <i>Jyeṣṭha</i> .		<i>Kakā, Dugaḍa, Vāṅkulla, Vauvavā, Īśvara, Sarvvadev a and Vāṅgeśvar a of Bhāradvāj a and other gotras.</i>	<i>Kaṅsarāna garī</i> village and <i>Vāsimli- cheda</i> locality of <i>Khiḍingahā ra viṣaya, in Dakṣiṇa Tosala.</i>		Weavers, herdsmen, the distillers and the artisans.	Out of respect to the religion, the grant should be preserved. To accurate the religious merit for the queen, her parents and all other creatures according to the rule of <i>bhūmi- chidra-pidhāna- nyāya</i> . Established principle of <i>Akṣaya-nīvi</i> .
52.	A Grant of Vakulam ahādevi; Year 204. ¹¹⁴	Not known	Vakulama hādevī, held from Bhañja family.	Year 204, 5 th day of the dark fortnight of the month of <i>Vaiśākha</i> .		<i>Brāhmaṇa Mīhadhīca , son of Bhaṭṭaputr a Nīlakaṅth a, migrated from Śāvastha and resident of</i>	Meramau (<i>Khaṇḍa kṣetra/ Land of plot</i>). Located in the village called Choḍātavut sā of Uregodḍā Khaṇḍa in	Hamlet, harbour and ferry places.	Weavers and milkmen.	Granted free taxes of the merit of queen and her parents. The gist should be enjoyed by the donee till his death. The land should be taken along with the <i>uparikara</i> and <i>uddeśa</i> . <i>Bhūmi-</i>

¹¹³ Ibid, pp. 197-202.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 203-09.

						village Kānteḍa.	Śravaṇakati kā viṣaya in Uttara Tosala.			<i>chidra-pidhāna-nyāya</i> and <i>akṣaya-nīvi</i> were applied.
53.	Angul Copper Plate Grant of Dharma mahādevī ¹¹⁵	Santri near Angul, Dhenkan al dist.	Dharmam ahādevī	Year not known, Samkrānti day.		Śrīdhara- <i>bhaṭṭa</i> , son of Vite- <i>bhaṭṭa</i> and grandson of <i>bhaṭṭa</i> <i>Atihara</i> , belonged to <i>Śāṇḍilya</i> <i>gotra</i> .	10 <i>mālas</i> of land in Deśala <i>grāma</i> .	Mention of Guheśvar apāṭaka. Kehuvā Khaṇḍa denotes the boundary		The tax of the land paid by the <i>rūka</i> or <i>rūpaka</i> (silver) of three <i>palas</i> . Donee had three <i>pravaras</i> ; Bārhaspatya, Jāmadagnya and Devala.
54.	Taltali Plate of Dharma mahādevī ¹¹⁶	Malisahi near Taltali, Dhenkan al dist.	Dharmam ahādevī, the queen of Lavaṇabh āra.	Date not known		Padmanāb ha, son of <i>Paṇḍita</i> Gadādhara , grandson of <i>bhaṭṭa</i> Puruṣotta ma of <i>Śāṇḍilya</i> <i>gotra</i> , resident of Komsallā.	Tarataloi village in Talamura <i>viṣaya</i> .	Mention of the main city of Guheśvar apāṭaka. Hamlets and ferries near the granted village.	Weavers, herdsmen, the distillers.	For the religious merit of the queen and her parents. Established with <i>uparikara</i> , rule of <i>bhūmi- chidra-pidhāna- nyāya</i> and <i>akṣaya nīvi</i> .
55.	Cāmuṇḍā	Jajpur,	Vatsadevī	Not known	Cāmu		Installation			Image of the

¹¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 210-15.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 216-21.

	Image Inscription of Vatsadev I. ¹¹⁷	Cuttack dist.			ṇḍā		of the image.			Cāmuṇḍā by the queen in Jajpur.
--	---	------------------	--	--	-----	--	------------------	--	--	------------------------------------

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 222.

Table of Inscriptions of the Eastern Gaṅga Dynasty

No .	Name of the Inscription	Provenance	Donor	RE year	Deity	Donee	Donation	Settlement	Social/ political groups	Description of the donation
56.	Puri Inscription ¹¹⁸	<i>Mārkaṇḍeśvara</i> temple wall	Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga	11 th century CE						Allotment of the <i>Chāyādīpa</i> by the king.
57.	Bhubaneswar Inscription of Anantavarman Chodagaṅga ¹¹⁹	Bhubaneswar	Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga			To the <i>Lingaraja</i> temple.				The grant of perpetual lamp, containing 100 wicks and fed by 24 <i>karāṅkas</i> of oil in favour of the God <i>Kīrttivāsa</i> at <i>Lingaraja</i> temple.
58.	Bhubaneswar Inscription of Rājarāja	Bhubaneswar	Rājarāja II	12 th century CE						It can be seen clearly that the king Rājarāja II was a Saivite in

¹¹⁸ E.I., Vol. XXVIII, 1987, pp. 181-84.

¹¹⁹ E.I., Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 17-23.

	II ¹²⁰									religious belief unlike his father Coḍagaṅga.
59.	Nāgari Plates ¹²¹	<i>Pūraṇagrāma</i> at Puri	Anaṅgabhīma III	Śaka 1151 (12 th century CE)		Saṅkarshaṇānandaśarman.				The king offered twenty <i>vāṭis</i> and made it a tax free land.
60.	Nāgari Plates (1 st Inscription) of Anaṅgabhīma III ¹²²	Bhubaneswar	Anaṅgabhīma III	Śaka 1151 and 1152 (12 th century CE)	<i>Puruṣottama Jagannātha</i>	<i>Jagannātha</i> temple at Puri.				It is mentioned in verse 27, Anantavarman Chodagaṅga built a temple of <i>Puruṣottama Jagannātha</i> at the shore of Bay of Bengal, and who took the great task of his ancestors to build such a marvellous temple at Puri.
61.	Nāgari	Bhubaneswar	Anaṅgab	Śaka		Saṅkarshaṇ				Donations of

¹²⁰ E.I., Vol. XXXV, 1963-64, pp. 117-20.

¹²¹ E.I., Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, p. 244.

¹²² E.I., Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, pp. 235-58

	Plates (2 nd Inscription) of Anaṅabhīma III ¹²³	war	hīma III	1151 and 1152 (12 th century CE)		ānandaśarman				lands.
62.	Plates of Anaṅabhīma III ¹²⁴	Puri	Anaṅabhīma III ¹²⁵	Śaka 1152 (12 th century CE)						It has been said that, the kings are the deputies and feudatories under lord <i>Puruṣottama</i> and the lord is the king of the <i>Puruṣottama Sāmrājya</i> .
63.	Bhubaneswar Inscription (1 st Inscription) ¹²⁶	Bhubaneswar	Anaṅabhīma III	Aṅka Year 34 (12 th century CE)		Govinda Senāpati				The king endowed lands to repair the <i>maṇḍapa</i> of the temple of Lord <i>Kīrttivāsa</i> , the main deity

¹²³ E.I., Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, p. 244

¹²⁴ E.I., Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, p. 243.

¹²⁵ Ibid., cited in the page foot note, p. 243.

¹²⁶ E.I., Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 17-23.

										worshipped in the <i>Liṅgarāja</i> temple.
64.	Bhubaneswar Inscription (2 nd Inscription) ¹²⁷	Bhubaneswar	Anaṅgabhīma III	12 th century CE	<i>Kīrttivāsa</i>	To the temple.				The king made a grant for the perpetual lamps in the <i>Kīrttivāsa</i> temple.
65.	Puri Copper Plates ¹²⁸	Puri.	Narasimha IV	13 th century CE		Devarathāc hārya.				This land grant to the <i>brāhmaṇa</i> made the <i>dēulī bhūmi</i> or temple land of the God <i>Ugreśvara</i> of <i>Koṣṭhadeśa</i> .
66.	Inscription of Narasimha IV ¹²⁹	Śaṅkarāṇanda Maṭha, Puri.	Narasimha IV	13 th century CE		To the <i>maṭha</i> .				This inscription evokes an idea of <i>maṭha</i> culture in early-medieval Odisha.
67.	Bhubaneswar	<i>Ananta Vāsudeva</i>	Princess Candrikā	1278 CE	<i>Visnu</i>	<i>Ananta Vāsudeva</i>				Built <i>Ananta Vāsudeva</i>

¹²⁷ E.I., Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 17-23.

¹²⁸ E.I., Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, pp. 303-04

¹²⁹ E.I., Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, p. 304.

	Inscription in the Royal Asiatic Society ¹³⁰	temple at Bhubaneswar	(devī)			temple.				temple for <i>Śrīkr̥ṣṇa</i> and <i>Valavāsa</i> (<i>Balarāma</i>).
68.	<i>Kēdāreśvara</i> temple inscription ¹³¹		King Pramāḍidēva, mentioned himself as the younger brother of king Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga of Gaṅga dynasty.	11 th century CE		To the temple.				Records the grant of villages for the perpetual lamps for the God <i>Kēdāreśvara</i> .
69.	Bhubaneswar Inscription ¹³²	Inside the <i>Ananta Vāsudeva</i> Temple,	Svapneśvara (was the general			To the temple.				It is recorded the building of temple <i>Megheśvara</i> .

¹³⁰ E.I., Vol. XIII, 1915-16, pp. 150-55.

¹³¹ E.I., Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 90-112.

¹³² E.I., Vol. VI, 1900-01, pp. 198-203.

		Bhubaneswar	under the Gaṅga king Anaṅgabhīma I).							
70.	Puri Inscription of Anaṅgabhīma III (1 st Inscription) ¹³³	<i>Pātāleśvara</i> temple walls inside the <i>Jagannātha</i> temple compound in Puri.	Śrīkaraṇa Suru Senāpati (officer of the record department of the Gaṅga king).	Śaka 1147 and 1158 (12 th century CE)		To the temple.				He issued that inscription in favour of God <i>Puruṣottama</i> for providing milk, clarified butter, rice and curds to the deity.
71.	Puri Inscription of Anaṅgabhīma III (2 nd Inscription) ¹³⁴	<i>Pātāleśvara</i> temple walls of inside the <i>Jagannātha</i> temple compound in Puri.	Khaṇḍa (Padātaka or a footman).	Regnal year of 29 of the king Anaṅgabhīma III.		To the temple.				It recorded the grants of <i>vāṭīs</i> of land donated to the temple.

¹³³ E.I., Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 197-203.

¹³⁴ E.I., Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 197-203.

72.	Bhadrak inscription of Mahārājā Gaṇa ¹³⁵	The inscription is found on the lintel of the ruined temple.	Mulajapā .	8 th regnal year of king Suraśar mā.		To the temple.				The donor installed three images in <i>Devāyatana</i> . It is added later that a lady named Ranghalī donated three pieces of garments to an indigenous deity, patronized by a layman.
-----	---	--	------------	---	--	----------------	--	--	--	---

¹³⁵ E.I., Vol. XXIX, 1951-52, pp. 210-20.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Epigraphical Sources:

Acharya, P., 'Brahmeśvara Temple Inscription', *JASB*, Vol. XIII, 1947, pp. 63-74.

Barnett, L. D., 'Bhubaneswar Inscription in the Royal Asiatic Society', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIII, 1915-16, pp. 150-55.

Ghosh, A., 'Parasuramesvara Temple Inscriptions', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVI, 1941-42, pp. 126-27.

Hultzsch, E., 'Inscriptions of Asoka', *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1925.

Jayaswal, K. P., R. D. Banerji, 'The Hatigumpha Inscription of Kharavela', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XX, 1929-30, pp. 71-89.

Kielhorn, F., 'Two Bhubaneswar Inscriptions', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VI, 1900-1901, pp. 198-207.

Konow, S., 'Narasapatnam Plate of Vajrahasta III. - Śaka Saṁvat 967', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XI, 1911-12, pp. 147-58.

_____ 'Mathura Brahmi Inscription of the Year 28', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXI, ASI, Delhi, 1931-32.

Majumdar, N. G., 'The Soro Copper Plate of Mahārāja Bhānudatta', (Grant D), *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIII, 1935-36, p. 203.

- Rajaguru, S. N., *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. III, Pt. I, OSM, Bhubaneswar, 1960.
- *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. III, Pt. II, OSM, Bhubaneswar, 1961-62.
- ‘Kudopali Plates of Mahabhavagupta’ *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. IV, Bhubaneswar, 1965, pp. 235-42.
- Ramdas, G., ‘Koroshanda Copper Plates of Visakhavarman’, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXI, 1931-32, pp. 23-5.
- Shastri, Ajay Mitra, *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāṇḍuvamśins, and Somavamśins*, Part I, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1995.
- Sircar, D.C., ‘Nagari Plates of Anangabhima III. - Saka 1151 and 1152’, *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, Part. VI, 1949-50, pp. 235-58.
- ‘Puri Plates (Set B) of Ganga Narasimha IV’, *EI*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, pp. 302-12.
- ‘Two Plates from Kanas’, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, 1949-50, pp. 332-36
- ‘Puri Plate of Kulastambha’, *EI*, Vol. XXIX, Part VI, 1951-52, pp. 164-9.
- ‘Bhubaneswar Inscriptions of Anangabhima III’, *EI*, Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 17-22.
- ‘Bhubaneswar Inscriptions of Anantavarman Chodaganga’, *EI*, Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 29-32.
- ‘Bhubaneswar Inscription of Pramadi. - Saka 1064’, *EI*, Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 90-4.
- ‘Puri Inscriptions of Anangabhima III. - Saka 1147 and 1158’, *EI*, Vol. XXX, 1953-54, pp. 197-203.

----- ‘Asankhali Plates of Narasimha II’, *EI*, Vol. XXXI, 1955-56, pp. 109-28.

Tripathy, Snigdha, *Inscriptions of Orissa: Circa Fifth-Eighth centuries A.D.*, Vol. I, ICHR and Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 1997.

- ‘Ragolu Plates of Saktivarman’, pp. 89-91.
- ‘Niṅgoṇḍi Grant of Prabhañjanavarman’, pp. 92-4.
- ‘Andhavaram Plates of Anantaśaktivarman’, pp. 95-7.
- ‘Madras Museum Plates of Anantaśaktivarman’, pp. 98-9.
- ‘Dhavalapeta Plates of MahārājaUmavarman’, pp. 108-09.
- ‘Chicacole Plates of Nandaprabhanjanavarman’, pp. 114-15.
- ‘Bobbili Plates of Caṇḍavarman’, pp. 122-23.
- ‘Asanpat Naṭarāja Image Inscription of Śatrubhañja’, pp. 171-72.
- ‘Soro Plate of Mahārāja Bhānudatta’, pp. 195-96.
- ‘Ganjam Plates of Mādhavarāja’, pp. 209-11.
- ‘Buguda Plates of Mādhavarman’, pp. 215-18.
- ‘Cuttack Museum Plates of Mādhavarman’, pp. 227-30.
- ‘Ranpur Plates of Dharmarāja’, pp. 241-45.
- ‘Banpur Grant of Dharmaraja *alias* Manabhita’, pp. 252-57.
- ‘Tekkali Plates of Madhyamaraja III’, pp. 272-74.

Tripathy, Snigdha, *Inscriptions of Orissa: Inscriptions of the Bhauma-Karas*, Vol. II, ICHR and Pratibha Prakashan, New Delhi, 1999.

- 'Haṁseśvara Temple Inscription', pp. 101-02.
- 'Chaurasi Grant of Śivakara', pp. 105-09.
- 'Neulpur Plate of Śubhākaradeva', pp. 110-15.
- 'Ganesagumpha Inscription', pp. 118-19.
- 'Hindol Plate of Śubhākaradeva', pp. 125-30.
- 'Talcher Plates of Śubhākaradeva', pp.135-46.
- 'Baud Grants of Tribhuvanamahādevī', pp.154-66.
- 'Santigrama Grant of Daṇḍimahādevī', pp. 173-77.
- 'Ganjam Grants (Plate A and B) of Daṇḍimahādevī, pp. 178-90.
- 'Kumurang Plate of Daṇḍimahādevī', pp. 197-202.
- 'A Grant of Vakulamahādevī', pp. 203-09.
- 'Taltali Plate of Dharmamahādevī', pp. 216-21.
- 'Cāmuṇḍā Image Inscription', p. 222.
- Haṁseśvara Temple Inscription',

Literary Sources:

Bhuvanapradīpa, Nirmal Kumar Bose (ed. and trans.), *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, Prabasi Press, Calcutta, 1932.

Kapila Samhitā, Pramila Mishra (trans.), New Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 2005.

Mādalā Pāñji, Arun Kumar Mohanty (ed.), Krishnachandra Bhuyan (trans.), Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 2010.

Śilparatnakośa by Sthāpaka Nirañjana Mahāpātra, Bettina Bäumer and Rajendra Prasad Das (eds. and trans.), IGNC and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1994.

Śilpa Prakāśa by Rāmacandra Mahāpātra Kaula Bhaṭṭāraka, Alice Boner and Sadasiva Ratha Sarma (eds. and trans.), IGNC and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2005.

Śiva Purāṇa, J. L. Shastri (ed. and trans.), Pts. III and IV, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 2002.

Śrī Jagannātha Kṣetra Māhātmyam by Jāminī Rṣi, M.V. Satya Narayana (trans.), Andhra University Press, Visakhapatnam, 1988.

Svarṇādri Mahodaya, Ratnakar Gargabatu (ed.), Calcutta, 1938.

Ekāmra Purāṇam, Upendra Nath Dhal (ed.), Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1986.

Virajā Kṣetra Māhātmya, U.N. Dhal (trans.), Nag Publishers, Delhi, 1984.

Report:

Odisha State, *Agriculture Contingency Plan*, Agriculture Department, Government of Odisha, 2011.

Secondary Sources

Acharya, P., *Studies in Orissa History, Archaeology and Archives*, Cuttack Students' Store, Cuttack, 1969.

_____, 'Note on the Navagraha Slab in the temple of Orissa', *Studies in Orissa History, Archaeology and Archives*, Cuttack, 1969.

Acri, Andrea, 'Tantrism "Seen from the East"' in Andrea Acri, Roger Blench and Alexandra Landmann (eds.), *Spirits and Ships: Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia*, ISEAS Publishing, Singapore, 2017, pp. 71-144.

Agrawal, V.S., 'Mathura Museum Catalogue', *JUPHS*, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 1950, pp. 2-106.

_____, *Matsya Purāṇa: A Study*, All-India Kashiraj Trust, Varanasi, 1953.

Altekar, A.S., *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1956.

Awasthi, A. B. L., *Studies in Skanda Purāṇa*, Pt. I, Kailash Prakashan, Lucknow, 1965.

Balibar, E., 'On the Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism' in L. Althusser and E. Balibar (eds.), *Reading Capital*, London, 1970, pp. 201-30.

Banerjea, J.N., *Development of Hindu Iconography*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1941.

Bates, Thomas R., 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Apr.- Jun. 1975, pp. 351-66.

Behera, Sarat Chandra, 'The Evolution of Śakti Cult at Jajpur, Bhubaneswar and Puri', in D.C. Sircar (ed.), *The Śakti Cult and Tārā*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 74-86.

_____, 'Palm-Leaf Manuscript on the Architecture of Koṅārḱ Temple', *ABORI*, Vol. 57, No. 1/4, 1976, pp. 175-80.

_____, *Rise and Fall of the Sailodbhavas: History and Culture of Ancient Orissa from c. 550 A.D. to 736 A.D.*, Punthi Pustak, Orissa, 1982.

Behera, K.S., 'The Evolution Of Śakti Cult at Jajpur, Bhubaneswar and Puri', in D.C. Sircar (ed), *The Śakti Cult and Tārā*, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 74 – 86.

_____, 'Economic Base for the Regional State Formation in Orissa During Early Medieval Period (6th century A.D. - 1250 A.D.)', *Proceedings of the XIVth Session of the Orissa History Congress*, Bhubaneswar, 1988.

_____, *The Lingaraja Temple of Bhubaneswar: Art and Cultural Legacy*, IGNCA, New Delhi, 2008.

Behera, K.S. and T.E. Donaldson, *Sculpture Masterpieces of Orissa: Style and Iconography*, IGNCA, New Delhi, 1998.

Behera, Sachidananda, 'Daru Bramha Purusottam as Depicted in 'Sarala Mahabharata'', *Orissa Review*, July 2005, pp. 97-8.

Bhatt, S.C., and Gopal K. Bhargava (eds.), *Land and People of Indian States and Union Territories: Orissa*, Vol. 21, Kalpaz Publication, New Delhi, 2006.

Bhattacharyya, N. N., *Ancient Indian Rituals and Their Social Contents*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1996.

Bloch, Marc, *Feudal Society*, (trans.) L. A. Manyon, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961.

Bose, N.K., *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, Cosmo Publication, New Delhi, 1982.

Braman, Sandra, 'Art and Power in the International Arena: Treaties as Cultural Instruments', University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, *Academia.edu*, pp. 1-19.

Brighenti, Francesco, *Sakti Cult in Orissa*, D.K. Printworld, Delhi, 2001.

Cammett, John M., *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism*, Stanford University Press, California, 1967.

Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Kutumbikas of Early India', in Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aounshuman (eds.), *Peasants in Indian History I: Theoretical Issues and Structural Enquiries*, Janaki Prakashan, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 179-92.

Champakalakshmi, R., *Vaishnava Iconography in Tamil Country*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1981.

_____, *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India: 300 BC to 1300 AD*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996.

_____, *Religion, Tradition and ideology: Pre-colonial South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011.

Chanda, R.P., 'Art In Orissa', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 82, No. 4265, 1934, pp. 309-28.

Chandra, Rai Govind, *Indian Symbolism: Symbols as Sources of our Customs and Beliefs*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996.

Chatterjee, Asoke, *Padma Purāṇa: A Study*, Sanskrit College, Calcutta, 1967.

Chattopadhyaya, B.D., 'Historiography, History and Religious Centres: Early Medieval North India circa. CE 700-1200', in Vishakha N. Deasi and Darielle Mason (eds.), *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, A.D. 700-1200*, Mapin, Ahmedabad, 1993, pp. 33-47.

_____, 'State and Economy in North India: Fourth Century to Twelfth Century', in Romila Thapar (ed.), *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1995, pp. 309-46.

_____, 'Re-appearance of the Goddess or the Brāhmaṇical Mode of Appropriation: Some Early Epigraphic Evidence Bearing on Goddess Cults', in *Studying Early India: Archaeology, Texts, and Historical Issues*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2005 (2003), pp. 172-90.

Cirlot, J. E., *A Dictionary of Symbols*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1962.

Clark, Sharri R., 'Representing the Indus Body: Sex, Gender, Sexuality, and the Anthropomorphic Terracotta Figurines from Harappa', *Asian Perspectives*, 42:2, 2003, pp. 304-28.

_____, 'Material Matters: Representation and Materiality of the Harappan Body', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 16: 3, 2009, pp. 231-61.

Coburn, T.B., *Devī Māhātmya: The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1988.

Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Yakṣas I*, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, 1928.

_____, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, Dover, New York, 1965.

Croce, Benedetto, *A History of Italy, 1871-1915*, (trans.) Cecilia M. Ady, New York, 1963.

_____, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, (trans.) Henry Furst, New York, 1963.

Cunningham, Alexander, *The Ancient Geography of India*, , Trubner and Co., London, 1871.

_____ *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of Asoka*, Vol. I, Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, 1877.

Dange, Sadashiv A, 'Sex in Stone and the Vedic Mithuna', *ABORS*, Vol. 58/59, Diamond Jubilee Volume (1977-1978), pp. 543-60.

Das, Biswarup, *The Bhaumakaras: Buddhist Kings of Orissa and their Times*, Oriental Publishers and Distributers, New Delhi, 1978.

_____, *The Bhaumakaras and Their Times*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1978.

Dass, Biswarup, 'Yogini Cult In Orissa', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 40, 1979, pp. 91-8

Das, D. R., 'Kosaleśvara Temple at Baidyanath (Balangir District, Orissa)', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1976, pp. 297-307.

De, S.C., 'Feudatory States of Orissa', *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. 3, 2 Quarterly, 1954, pp. 65-126.

Dehejia, Vidya, *The Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979.

_____, *Yogini: Cult and Temples, A Tantric Tradition*, National Museum, Janpath, New Delhi, 1986.

_____, 'The Collective and Popular Basis of Early Buddhist Patronage: Sacred Monuments, 100 BC-AD 250' in Barbara Stoler Miller (ed.), *The Powers of Arts*, Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 35-45.

_____, *Representing the Body: Gender Issues in Indian Art*, Kali for Women, Delhi, 1997.

_____, *Devi: The Great Goddess*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, 1999.

_____, *The Body Adorned: Dissolving Boundaries Between Sacred and Profane in India's Art*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009.

Desai, Devangana, *Erotic Sculptures of India*, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 1975.

_____, 'Social Dimensions of Art in Early India', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1990, pp. 3-32.

Destradi, Sandra, 'Regional powers and their strategies: empire, hegemony, and leadership', *Review of International Studies*, 36, 2010, pp. 903-30.

Dhaky, M. A., *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture, North India, Beginnings of Medieval Idiom c. AD 900-1000*, American Institute of Indian Studies, Delhi, 1998.

_____, *The Vyāla Figures of the Medieval Temple of India*, Prithivi Prakashan, Varanasi, 1965.

Donaldson, Thomas E., 'Bhubaneswar (Ekāmra Kṣetra): Temple Town and Cultural Centre', *Marg*, Vol. 52, No. 3, Mumbai, 2001, pp. 12-27.

_____, 'Doorframes on the Earliest Orissan Temples', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 38, No. 2/3, 1976, pp. 189-218.

_____, 'Ekapāda Śiva Images in Orissan Art', *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 13, Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan, 1982.

_____, 'Erotic Rituals on Orissan Temples', *East and West*, Vol. 36, No. 1/3, September 1986, 137-82.

_____, *Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*, Vol. I, E.J Brill, Leiden, 1985.

_____, *Iconography of the Buddhist Sculpture of Orissa*, Vol. I, IGNCA, New Delhi, 2001.

_____, 'Orissan Images of Vārāhī, Oḍḍiyāna Mārīcī, and Related Sow-Faced Goddesses', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 55, No. ½, 1995.

_____, *The Iconography of Vaiṣṇava Images in Orissa*, D. K. Printworld, New Delhi, 2001.

_____, 'The Śava-Vāhana as Puruṣa in Orissan Images: Cāmuṇḍā to Kālī/Tārā', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 51, No. ½, 1991, pp. 107-41.

Eck, Diana L., 'India's Tīrthas: "Crossings" in Sacred Geography', *History of Religions*, 20 (4), 1981, pp. 323-44.

Fabri, C.L., *History of the Art of Orissa*, Orient Longman, Bombay, 1974.

Fouchet, Max-Pol, and Brian Rhys, *The Erotic Sculpture of India*, Lausanne Print, London, 1959.

Ganguly, D.K., *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1975.

Ganguly, M.M., *Orissa and Her Remains: Ancient and Medieval*, Thacker Spink and Co., Calcutta, 1912.

Goldammer, K. M. A., 'Nature of Religious symbols and symbolization', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1999, (Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/religious-symbolism>).

Goldberg, Ellen, *The Lord Who is Half Woman: Ardhanārīśvara in Indian and Feminist Perspective*, State University of New York, USA, 2002.

Gonda, Jan, *The Meaning of Sanskrit Term Āyatana*, The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Madras, 1969.

Gramsci, Antonio, *An Anthology of Western Marxism*, (ed.) R.S. Gottlieb, OPU, Oxford, 1989.

_____, *Selection from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (eds. and trans.) Quintin Hoare and G.N. Smith, International Publishers, New York, 1992.

Guenon, Rene, *Introduction To The Study Of The Hindu Doctrines*, (trans.) Marco Pallis, Luzac & Co., London, 1945.

_____, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, (trans.) Marco Pallis, Arthur Osborne and R.C. Nicholson, Sophia Perennis, New York, 1996.

Gupte, R.S., *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainas*, D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1972.

Gupta, Ravi M., *The Chaitanya Vaishnava Vedanta of Jiva Gosvami: When Knowledge Meets Devotion*, Routledge, USA, 2007.

Hazra, R.C., 'A work of Orissa', *Poona Orientalist*, Vol. XVI, No. 14, p. 70.

Heesterman, J.C., *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, Mouton and Co., Berlin, 1957.

Heitzman, James, 'Ritual Polity and Economy: The Transactional Network of an Imperial Temple in Medieval South India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 34, No. ½, 1991, pp. 23-54.

_____, *Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997.

Herman, A. L., 'Indian Art and Levels of Meaning', *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Jan. 1965, pp. 13-29.

Hunter, W.W., *Orissa*, Vol. I, Smith, Elder and Co., London, 1873.

Jha, D.N., 'Indian Feudalism: The Early Phase' in D.N. Gupta (ed.) *Changing Modes of Production in India: An Historical Analysis*, Delhi, 1995.

Jha, Hetukar, 'Understanding Peasants and its Low-classness', in Vijay Kumar Thakur and Ashok Aounshuman (eds.), *Peasants in Indian History I: Theoretical Issues and Structural Enquiries*, Janaki Prakashan, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 79-87.

Kaimal, Padma, 'Early Cōḷa Kings and Early Cōḷa Temples: Art and the Evolution of Kingship', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 56, No. ½, 1996, pp. 33-66.

_____, 'A Man's World? Gender, Family, and Architectural Patronage, in Medieval India', *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 53, 2002-03, pp. 26-53.

Kane, P.V., *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol. II, Pt. II, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1941.

Kang, Liu, 'Hegemony and Cultural Revolution', *New Literary History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter, 1997, pp. 69-86.

Kenoyer, Jonathan M., *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1998.

Kinsley, David, 'The Portrait of the Goddess in the Devī-māhātmya', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 1978, pp. 489-506.

Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956.

_____, 'On The Development Of Feudalism In India', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 36, No. ¾, July-October, 1955, pp. 258-69.

Kramrisch, Stella, 'Kaliṅga Temples', *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. II, No. 1, 1934, pp. 43-60.

_____, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. II, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1976.

_____, 'Wall and Image in Indian Art', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 102, No. 1 (Feb. 17), 1958, pp. 7-13.

_____, *Indian Sculpture: Ancient, Classical and Medieval*, Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 2013.

Krishnan, Gauri Parimoo, *The Power of The Female: Devāṅganā Sculptures on Indian Temple Architecture*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2014.

Krishan, Y., 'The Erotic Sculptures of India', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1972, pp. 331-43.

Kulke, Hermann, 'Early State Formation and Royal Legitimation in Tribal Areas of Eastern India', in R. Moser and M. K. Gautam (eds.), *Aspects of Tribal Life in South Asia I: Strategy and Survival*, University of Berne, Berne, 1978, pp. 29-38.

_____, 'Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms', in Anncharlott Eschmann, Hermann Kulke and Gaya Charan Tripathi (eds.), *The Cult of Jagannatha and The Regional Tradition Of Orissa*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 125-38.

_____, 'King Anaṅgabhīma III, the Veritable Founder of the Gajapati Kingship and of the Jagannātha Trinity at Puri', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 1, 1981, pp. 26-39.

_____, 'Fragmentation and Segmentation versus Integration? Reflections on the Concept of Indian Feudalism and The Segmentary State in Indian History', *Studies in History*, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1982, pp. 237-63.

_____, 'Early Royal Patronage of The Jagannātha Cult', in *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, (eds.) Hermann Kulke and Gaya Charan Tripathi, Anncharlott Eschmann, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 139-55.

_____, *Kings and Cults: State Formation & Legitimation in India & South-East Asia*, Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2001.

Law, B. C., *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, Société Asiatique De Paris, Paris, 1954.

Linda, Mary, F., 'The Kalinga Temple Form', *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 20, 1990, pp. 87-111.

Locandāsa, *Śrī Caitanya Maṅgala: A Sixteenth Century Biography of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, Mahanidhi Swami, Calcutta, 1994.

Madhavananda, Swami and R.C. Majumdar, (eds.), *The Great Women of India*, Advaita Ashrama, Almora, 1953.

Mahajan, Malati, *Orissa: From Place Names in Inscription 260 BC to 1200 AD (Cultural and Historical Geography)*, Sharada Prakashan, Delhi, 2003.

Mahalakshmi, R., *The Making of the Goddess: Koṛṅgavai–Durga in The Tamil Traditions*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2011.

Mahapatra, M.M., *Traditional Structure and Changes in an Orissan Temple*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1981.

Majumdar, Bimanbihari, *Shri Caitanya Cariter Upadan*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1938.

Mauss, Marcel, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Society*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1967.

Miller, Barbara Stoler, (ed.) *The Powers of Arts*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992.

_____, (ed.) *Exploring India's Sacred Art: Selected Writings of Stella Kramrisch*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1994.

Mishra, Balaram, *The Sun Temple: Konark*, Mo Press, Bhubaneswar, 1986.

Mishra, R.C., 'Jajpur, a Centre of Religious Activities', in B.C. Ray (ed.), *Cultural Heritage of Orissa*, Vol. II, , Bhubaneswar, 2000,

- Misra, Pandit Binayak, *Dynasties of Medieval Orissa*, Raman and Vidya Bhawan, Delhi, 1933.
- Mitra, Debala, *Bhubaneswar*, ASI Publication, New Delhi, 1958.
- Mitra, R.L., *The Antiquities of Orissa*, Vol. I, Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1875, (Reprint) Indian Studies: Past and Present, Calcutta, 1961.
- Mittal, Amar Chand, *An Early History of Orissa*, Jain Cultural Research Society, BHU, 1962.
- Mode, Heinz, *The Woman in Indian Art*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1970.
- Mohanty, Gopinath, Jeeban Kumar Patnaik and Santosha Kumar Ratha, *Cultural Heritage of Jajpur*, State Level Vyasakabi Fakir Mohan Smruti Samsad, Orissa, 2004.
- Mohanty, P. K., 'Garuda Images Of Orissa: An Iconographic Study', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 70, 2009-10., pp. 1018-27.
- Mohapatra, K. N., 'A Note on the Hypaethral Temple of Sixty-four Yoginīs at Hirāpur', *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. II, No. 2, 1953, pp. 23-44.
- Mohapatra, R.P., *Archaeology in Orissa*, 2 Volumes, B.R. Pub. Corp., Delhi, 1986.
- Mouffe, Chantal, 'Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci', in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, pp. 168-204.
- Mukherjee, Prabhat, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism In Orissa*, Prabasi Press, Calcutta, 1940.
- Nandi, R.N., *Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1973.

Nath, Vijay, 'Mahādāna: The Dynamics of Gift-Economy and the Feudal Milieu', in D.N. Jha (ed.), *The Feudal Order: Stale, Society and Ideology in Early Medieval India*, , Manohar Publishers, Delhi, 2000, pp. 411-40.

Nāyaka, Pabitra Mohana, *Inscriptions of Orissa: With Special Reference to Subarnapur*, Readworthy Publication, New Delhi, 2011.

Orr, Leslie C., 'Cholas, Pandyas and 'Imperial Temple Culture' in Medieval Tamilnadu', in Adam Hardy (ed.) *The Temple In South Asia*, , British Academy, London, 2007, pp. 109-30.

Panda, D., 'Cult of Gopinatha', *OHRJ*, Vol. XXIII.

Panda, S.K., 'Extension Of Agricultural Land In The Tribal Hinterland Of Early Medieval Orissa: A Study based on Land Grants□', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 60, 1999, pp. 214-21.

_____, 'The Pattern of Land and Agriculture in Medieval Orissa', *PHIC*, Bombay Session, 1980, pp. 269-74.

_____, *Medieval Orissa: A Socio-Economic Study*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1991.

Panda, L. K., *Saivism in Orissa*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 1985.

Panigrahi, Krishna Chandra, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar*, Orient Longman, Delhi, (1961), 1981.

_____, *Chronology of the Bhauma-Karas and the Somavamsis of Orissa*, Modern Book Depot, Bihar, 1961.

_____, *History of Orissa*, Kitab Mahal, Cuttack, 1981.

_____, *Sarala Dasa*, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1975.

Parida, A.N., *Early Temples of Orissa: From the Sixth Century A.D. to the end of Somavamsi Rule*, Commonwealth Publisher, New Delhi, 1999.

Patel, C.B., 'Mahisamardini Durga- Antiquity and Iconography', *Orissa Review*, Sep-Oct., 2008, pp. 1-3.

Patel, Kartikeya C., 'Women, Earth, and the Goddess: A Shākta-Hindu Interpretation of Embodied Religion', *Hypatia*, Vol. 9, No. 4, Feminist Philosophy of Religion, 1994, pp. 69-87.

Patnaik, Nityananda, *Sacred Complex of Orissa*, Gyan Books Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 2000.

Patnaik, Satyendra, *Brahmanical Religion in Ancient Orissa: From the Earliest Period up to 14th Cen. AD*, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987.

Pearlroth, A. K. G., 'Scrollwork in Medieval Orissan Art', *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 25, 1971-72.

Pintchman, Tracy, *Rise of the Goddess in the Hindu tradition*, State University of New York, USA, 1994.

Pradhan, A. C., 'Situating Viraja Kshetra and Its Environs in the Odishan Historiography', *Odisha Review*, November 2014, pp. 107-12.

Rajaguru, S.N., *History of the Gangas*, Part I, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, 1968.

_____, *Inscriptions of Orissa (600-1100 AD)*, Research and Museum, Govt. of Orissa, Sri Sarada Press, Bhubaneswar, 1960.

Rajana, K.V. Soundara, *Early Kalinga Art and Architecture*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

Ramasubramaniam, V., 'Ganapati-Vinayaka Gajanana Worship-Analysis of an integrated-Cult', *Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Cultures*, January-June 1971, Madras.

Rao, N. Mukunda, *Kalinga Under The Eastern Gangas (Ca. 900 A.D. - 1200 A.D.)*, B.R. Publishing House, Delhi, 1991.

Rao, T.A.G., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 1, Pt. II, The Law Printing House, Madras, 1914.

Rath, Ashok K., 'Stambhesvari Cult in Orissa' *Orissa Review*, September, 2009, pp. 85-9.

Robins, Betty Dashew and Robert F. Bussbarger, 'The Makara: A Mythical Monster from India' *Archaeology*, 23:1, 1970.

Roy, Kumkum, 'In which part of South Asia did the Early Brahmanical Tradition (1st millennium B.C.) Take its Form?', *Studies in History*, Vol. 9, 1993, pp. 1-32..

_____, *The Power of Gender and The Gender of Power: Explorations in Early Indian History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2010.

Roy, U.N., *Śālabhañjikā in Art Philosophy and Literature*, Lokbharti, Allahabad, 1979.

Senapati, N., (ed.), *Puri District Gazetteer*, Cuttack, 1977.

Shah, Shalini, 'On Gender, Wives and "Pativrātās"', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 40, No. 5/6, 2012, pp. 77-90.

Sahu, B.P., 'Aspect of Rural Economy in Early Medieval Orissa', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 21, No ½, Jan-Feb 1993, pp. 48-68.

_____, 'Brahmanical Ideology, Regional Identities and the Construction of Early India', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 29, No. 7/8, Jul-Aug, 2001, pp. 3-18..

_____, 'Community, Caste and Region: Perspectives from Early Orissa', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 40, No. 5/6, May-June, 2012, pp. 3-17.

_____, 'The Brahmanical Model Viewed as an Instrument of Socio-Cultural Change- An Autopsy', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 46, 1985, pp. 180-89.

Sahu, J.K., 'Saivism in Orissa', in Manmath Nath Das (ed.), *Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa*, , Vidyapuri, Cuttack, 1977, pp. 326-35.

Sahu, N. K., P. K. Mishra and J. K. Sahu, *History of Orissa*, Nalanda Publishers and Book Sellers, Cuttack, 1991.

Sarma, Bina Kumari, *History of Somavamsi Rule in Orissa*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1983.

Sastri, K.A. Nilakanta, *The Colas*, The University of Madras, Madras, 1955.

Sen, Asok, 'Weber, Gramsci and Capitalism', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Jan 1985, pp. 45-7.

Sharma, R.S., *Early Medieval Indian Society*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2003.

_____, 'How Feudal Was Indian Feudalism?', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Feb, 1984, 16-41.

_____, *Indian Feudalism*, Macmillan India Ltd., Patna 1980.

_____, 'Methods And Problems Of The Study Of Feudalism In Early Medieval India', *IHR*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1974.

Sharma, R.S., and D. N. Jha 'The Economic History of India up to AD 1200: Trends and Prospects', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 17, No. 1, Mar, 1974, pp. 48-80.

Singh, Upinder, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*, Pearson, Delhi, 2009.

_____, *Kings, Brāhmaṇas and Temples in Orissa: An Epigraphic Study AD 300-1147*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1993.

Sircar, D. C., *Indian Epigraphy*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1996.

_____, *Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as revealed by Epigraphical Records*, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, 1969.

_____, (ed.), *Land System and Feudalism in Ancient India*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1966.

_____, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971.

Sivaramamurti, C., 'Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum', *Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum*, New Series, Vol. IV, Madras, 1942.

Skilling, Peter, 'Nuns, Laywomen, Donors, Goddesses: Female Roles in Early Indian Buddhism', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 24, Number 2, 2001, pp. 241-74.

Smith, Walter, 'Images of Divine Kings from the Mukteśvara Temple, Bhubaneswar', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 51, No. 1/2, 1991, pp. 90-106.

_____, *The Mukteśvara Temple in Bhubaneswar*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1994.

Srivastava, G. N., *Ancient Settlement Pattern in Orissa: With Special Reference to Bhubaneswar*, Agam Kala Prakashan, New Delhi, 2006.

Stratton, Eric, *The Evolution of Indian Stupa Architecture in East Asia*, Vedams, New Delhi, 2000.

Stutterheim, W.E., 'The Meaning of The Kalamakara Ornament', *Indian Art and Letters*, N.S. 3, 1929, pp. 25-52.

Subuddhi, Umakanta, *The Bhauma-Karas of Orissa*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1978.

Sundara Rajana, K.V., *Early Kalinga Art and Architecture*, Sundeep Prakashan, New Delhi, 1984.

Talbot, Cynthia, 'Temples, Donors, and Gifts: Patterns of Patronage in Thirteenth-Century South India', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2, May, 1991, pp. 308-40.

Thakur, V. K., 'The Essence of Feudal Economy and the Perspective of Third Urbanisation in India', *Indian Anthropologist*, Vol. 16, No. 2, December 1986, pp. 199-207.

Thapar, Romila, *Ideology and the Interpretation of Early Indian History*, Review (Fernand Braudel Center), Vol. 5, No. 3, Winter, 1982, pp. 389-411.

_____, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 1987.

_____, 'Patronage and community', in *The Powers of Arts: Patronage in Indian Culture*, (ed.) Barbara Stoler Miller, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, pp. 19-34.

_____, *Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, University of California, California, 2002.

_____, 'Dana and Dakshina as Forms of Exchange', in *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 94-108.

Thomson, J. W. and E.N. Johnson, *An Introduction to the Medieval Europe 300-1500*, W.W. Norton & Company Inc., New York, 1937.

Tripathy, Snigdha, 'Ekāmra-Bhubaneswar', *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. XXXIII, 1985, pp. 132-56.

_____, *Descriptive Topographical Catalogue of Orissan Inscriptions*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2010.

Urbinati, Nadia, 'From the Periphery of Modernity: Antonio Gramsci's Theory of Subordination and Hegemony', *Political Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Jun. 1998, pp. 370-91.

Varadpande, M. L., *Woman in Indian Sculpture*, Abhinav Publication, New Delhi, 2006.

Veluthat, Kesavan, 'Religious Symbols in Political Legitimation: The Case of Early Medieval South India', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 21, No. ½, Jan.-Feb. 1993, pp. 23-33.

_____, 'Royalty And Divinity: Legitimisation Of Monarchical Power In South India', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 39, Vol. I, 1978, pp. 241-49.

_____, 'The temple and the state in medieval South India', *Studies in People's History*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2017, pp. 15-23.

Verma, Anjali, 'Women Administrators in Epigraphic Sources: AD 600-1200', *Indian Historical Review*, 31 (1), ICHR, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 1-16.

Wadley, Susan S., and Doranne Jacobson, *Women in India: Two Perspectives*, Manohar Books, New Delhi, 1977.

Wakankar, V.S., 'Bhimbetka: The Stone Tools Industries and Rock Paintings', in V.N. Misra and Peter Bellwood (eds.), *Recent Advances in Indo-Pacific Prehistory*, , E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1985, pp. 175-76.

White, David Gordon, *Kiss of the Yoginī: "Tantric Sex" in its South Asian Contexts*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003

Williams, Joanna Gottfried, *The Two-headed Deer: Illustrations of the Rāmāyaṇa in Orissa*, University Of California Press, Berkeley, 1996.

Willis, Michael D., 'Religious and Royal Patronage in North India', in Vishakha N. Deasi and Darielle Mason (eds.), *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, A.D. 700-1200*, , Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 1993, pp. 49-65.

Wilson, H. H., *The Vishnu Purana: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*, Vol. I, Trubner & Co., London, 1864.

Wright, Rita P., *The Ancient Indus: Urbanism, Economy and Society*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2010.

Yadava, B.N.S., *Society And Culture In Northern India In The Twelfth Century*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1973.

Yokochi, Yuko, 'The Warrior Goddess in the Devimahatmya', *Senri Ethnological Studies*, 50, 1999.

