

God as Divine Mother

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God, the Supreme Being, is as much worshipped as the Divine Mother as He is worshipped as the Divine Father. The Divine Mother is synonymous with Shakti, the Divine Power that manifests, sustains and transforms the universe as the unifying force of existence. The Divine Mother exists in all beings as intelligence, mercy and beauty. She is the embodiment of the all-existential power. All these powers are the glorious attributes of the Supreme Being who is the main source of this creation. So Devi worship is the worship of God's glory; His greatness and supremacy over the universe.

Devi worship does not belong to any particular cult. Devi Mata is worshipped by one and all irrespective of any distinction. Truly speaking, all beings of the universe are Shakti worshippers, for there is none in this world who does not love power in some form or other. Scientists have proved that everything on the earth is the manifestation of a pure imperishable energy. This energy is nothing



other than the manifestation of the Divine Shakti, which exists in every form of our existence. Since this Shakti can not be worshipped in its essential nature, it is worshipped through various manifestations as the symbols of creation, preservation and destruction. Shakti in relation to these manifestations is worshipped as Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali. Although they are represented as three distinct images, they are virtually one and worship of one form is adored as the worship of the other forms.

The concept of Devi worship is not of recent origin. It was in vogue in the ancient past. Reference to Devi worship as Goddess Durga is made in the Rig Veda, and the great epic, the Mahabharat. The hymns devoted to Devi worship in the Rig Veda, extol the Devi Mother as Devi Durga, the embodiment of the supreme Divine Power. In the Mahabharat, She is adored as the sister of Lord Krishna. In the Kanopanishad, She appears as Goddess Uma, the Divine consort

of Lord Siva. Yudhisthir worshipped Devi Mata for relief from sufferings during their exile. Lord Krishna advised Arjun to pray to Devi Mata before the commencement of the Mahabharat war. The glory and the aura of the Divine Mother is devotedly sung in the Devi Mahatmya - the Sapta Sati- which in spiritual values is equal to the Bhagvatgita. The Goddess as the Divine Mother is every year worshipped in a nine-day festival, popularly known as Navaratri Puja during the first nine days of the bright fortnight in the month of Aswin. This period falls in September-October in the English calendar. The adoration of the Devi during this period is glorified as the mystical worship of the Shakti. This is also known as Shakti Puja, which is the worship of the inherent power of the Supreme Divine. This virtually transcends the inherent ritualism of the Veda-Samhitas and Purans.

In the Devi Mahatmya, the Devi is described in different forms with revelations in Her primordial qualities, called Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva. These three forms are equated with the manifestations of the Universal Powers of Action (Kriya), Desire (Iccha) and Knowledge (Jnana). In Her first form, it is said, She woke-up Lord Vishnu from His cosmic sleep to encounter the Asuras (demons), Madhu and Kaithava who had risen in the cosmic ocean. In Her second form, she met the forces of the demon, Mahisasura and slew him with Her superb divine forces. In Her third form, she killed the Asuras, Sumbha and Nisumbha with their forces and brought peace to gods in heaven and solace to mankind on the earth.

Thus as described in the Devi Mahatmya, the Devi in Her monotheistic divine form was blended with the divine glee of all the 'Devas' and She combated the evil forces

and fought them off one after another with Her resplendent divine prowess. She played all the parts in Her distinct role as a warrior queen. The goddess, though described as young, beautiful and caring was savage-like in Her intent and purpose, while t h r o w i n g herself in to various battles.



Dasabhuja Durga from Konark
(now in British Museum, London)

The term, 'Devi' in Hinduism is an elastic esoteric ideology. Although it refers to a female goddess, as described in the Devi Mahatmya, She is adored as the Divine Mother of the entire universe. The forms like Durga, Chandi, Mahalaxmi, Maha Saraswati and so on are but Her various divine forms. Each form of the Devi has a distinctive role meant for a definite purpose. Each form in this sense is also identified as the Ultimate Reality of the universe. In the Devi Mahatmya, "Durga" for instance is described and adored as one aspect of the Divine Mother. She is the consort of Lord Shiva. She is generally represented with ten arms, seated on a lion and some times on a tiger. She is worshipped as the protector of the universe destroying the demons of ignorance and giving blessings of divine love and knowledge. Kali is another aspect of the Divine Mother. She is another form of the



Mahisamardini Durga (now in Philadelphia Museum of Art)

consort of Lord Shiva. She is always shown as standing on the chest of Lord Shiva. Around Her waist, She wears a garland of human hands. Similarly around Her neck, she wears a garland of human heads. She has four arms; the lower left hand holds a human head. She holds a saber in Her upper right hand. She offers boons to Her divine children with the other upper hand. She makes a sign that dispels fear. She deals out death as She creates and preserves with Her primordial prowess. Kali's role has a definite purpose. She deals out death as She creates and preserves our life. She also destroys ignorance and gives blessings and liberation to those who earnestly seek it. While Lord Shiva represents the Absolute, Kali represents the dynamic or the relative aspect of the Supreme Reality.

Each form of the Divine Mother is thus an embodiment of the Supreme Divinity. One form may appear different from the other. But in spirit, each such form is a mystery of reproduction of life springing from nothing, verily the Supreme Primordial Prakriti. Every mystic who has experienced godhead, personally, intensely and unmistakably would assure us that the experience of every such form is as real as any other form of the Supreme Reality.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa called the Divine Mother by more than a dozen names as if to demonstrate to the world that the particulars of any dogma and tradition are all but meaningless expositions compared with the vision of Mahamaya who may be Kali at one time and Durga at another. But the Mother in any form is indeed that monotheistic deity who creates the universe and holds it within Her being and yet resides within the living beings and objects. Be that as it may, behind the veils of the myriad deities in human forms and personalities, there is formless God who is one for the entire universe and known as Brahman, the Satchidananda in the linking of Existence (Sat), Knowledge (Chit) and Anand (Bliss).

Descriptions of the Shakti and the Brahman are exactly the same except on one particular point. While the Brahman is infinite, the Shakti is ever changing as a vibrant force of the Brahman. This vibrant force is the cause of the creation of the universe. In this sense the Brahman and the Shakti are inexplicably interrelated. The two are thus one like fire and its power to burn.

According to the Eastern Indian Cosmology, the Devi's creative force brings out and develops this universe. The said creative force also draws back in to itself the whole of the universe on to the blissful unchanging being of the Brahman, only to spew out again after an age (Yuga) in the cosmic game of evolution and dissolution. This is what is known as the process of expansion and contraction of our creation. The expansion is akin to evolution of the universe and the contraction is equal to dissolution of the universe. All this happens due to the personification of the primal energy of the Devi. This is known as the Maya Shakti of the Brahman. We worship the same Maya Shakti

during the Navaratri Puja in the month of Aswin. "Devi Mata" is also known as Mahamaya, the mother of the universe. According to scriptures She is the supreme divine will. She veils our vision of the Brahman, the Absolute Reality of the universe. Again She is also throb of His grace which rends this veil, leading us to realize the identity of Jivatma with Paramatma.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa had envisioned this sacred prowess by using his own descriptions. He has spoken in his various conversations on the close and the unchangeable link between the Shakti and the Brahman. In Ramakrishna's phrase, the "Brahman is without change. The Shakti is the creative energy. She is ever changing. But both are one like the two sides of the same coin". Ramakrishna knew from his own experience that all the different forms of God are different perspectives of one unchanging Godhead. But Ramakrishna spoke most frequently of the Mother because this was the prospective that he most cherished in his life. Ramakrishna's experience and the experiences of the other mystics assure us that many of the perspectives of the Godhead open up to a Mother Goddess, who functions in the lives of Her devotees, as their protector, companion and mentor.

The conception of the cosmic spirit as the Divine Mother is very easy to understand. The Motherhood of the Supreme Being is a spontaneous urge of every human being who comes to this world in the natural order of the evolutionary process. Love of the Mother is most logical in every human being. It is an easy step to god realization. That which is beyond our knowledge is the transiently Para Brahman. That which one can know well in the spiritual order through our mind is the Mother in the manifestation of Her various forms. She is the

Maha Shakti at the back of Her every manifestation. She is the Brahma Shakti manifested to us through the form of Saraswati. She is Bishnu Shakti manifested to us through the form of Lakshmi. She is also Shiva Shakti manifested to us through the form of Parvati.

The Devi Mata is the combination of both Vidya and Avidya in Her supreme form. As the symbol of Avidya, She is omnipresent in the form of Cosmic delusion. And, at the same time as the symbol of Vidya, She is adored as the supreme force of cosmic deliverance, leading the Jiva from the mysterious spiritual deliverance to spiritual wisdom. What is the significance of the sharp knife and the noose, She holds in Her divine manifestation? The noose represents the concept of Her binding force. The noose is the symbol of Maya, which binds us to our material surroundings. This casts a veil on our conscience for which although we know our goal, we are ultimately away from it, because of the binding force of Maya.

The knife She holds represents the weapon, which can snap the noose and lead the Jiva on the path of God realization. So the Devi Mother is the embodiment of both the concordant forces of Vidya and Avidya. The devotees who



Goddess Kichakeswari, Khiching, Dist. Mayurbhanj

worship Her in the spiritual order achieve Her grace and attain Mokshya and remain free from

the bondage of birth and death in the wheel of human procreation. The Supreme Mother leads them safe and sound on the path of spiritual knowledge. But those who are mesmerized and struck by Her binding force of Maya, lead an awful life full of sarcasm and are born again and again on this earth with endless trails of material agonies. This is the Para and the Aparā forms of the Divine Mother a la the two sides of the same coin. We should understand the Devi in this way and worship Her divine prowess as Para Shakti full of all-loving and compassionate Spirit.

A question may generally come up: if the Divine Mother is all-compassionate, why then She should appear dreadful in Her metaphysical form?

The answer to this query is very simple. Kali, as the semblance of Devi Mata, may appear to be a dreaded deity. But in spirit She is not like the one we see Her in outward appearance. She is worshipped in Para Bhakti as a divine force ensuring victory of the good over the evil. Kali Mata stands for destruction of the evil. Durga also stands for the same mystical purpose. She is the destroyer of darkness to emit light. She is the destroyer of ignorance to bestow knowledge. She destroys all pains, all miseries and all tribulations to bestow bliss and to free the Jiva from this mundane world. All that we see in Her outward appearance are the symbols of Her extricating prowess ever vibrant and alert to annihilate all the evil forces of the life like ego and other such emotions of the senses. So we pray to the Mother in Her symbolically terrible form for Her gracious benediction for victory over the mind. This is the spirit behind Durga Puja. This indeed is the moral content of the Durga Saptasati which is read in great devotion during

the nine days of Navaratri worship. The Durga Saptasati is a wonderful allegory. We may cite here the case of Swami Vivekananda who worshipped Kali Mata in Her terrible form. But when he perceived Her presence, he perceived it in the most gracious dispensation. The story goes like this.

Swami Vivekananda was known in the name of Naren in his childhood days. When his father died, he was succumbed to myriad wants and miseries in life. Naren had elders who advised him to meet Rama Krushna Paramahansa known for his occult powers for alleviation of his distressed conditions. He met the revered monk in Dakhineswar Temple. The Paramahansa received him with cordiality and affection. Naren expressed his helpless plight and the extremities of his pecuniary wants to Ramakrishna. The great monk advised him to meet Kali Mata in the temple and represent his predicament. Naren prayed to the Divine Mother as advised. The Mother at last appeared in Her gracious form, ever radiant to help Her ardent devotee. When he saw the Divine Mother, he was immensely lost in the surges of divine ecstasy. Naren forgot all his material necessities for which he had gone to Dakhineswar Temple. When the Mother called on him to ask for a boon, Naren said that he needed Her divine mercy to reach the goal of Light, which is the ultimate goal of life. The Devi Mata granted him the boon and disappeared.

We learn from the divine experience of Naren a noble lesson of life. As one knows well, Naren had gone to Dakhineswar Temple to request Ramakrishna Paramahansa to bestow on him material prosperity of life. But when he had the visionary experience of the Divine Mother, he forgot the actual purpose and he

became deeply concerned about the spiritual needs of his life and asked the Divine Mother for grant of knowledge and devotion. Ramakrishna, when he came to know of this said, "Naren, with the glint of this boon, bestowed on you by the Divine Mother, you have all the wants of your life entirely fulfilled. So go back home; you will have no more worries in life".

This is the rich outcome of Para Bhakti in the Sadhana of devotion and knowledge. The terror-form of the Mother ultimately came out as the most benign and magnanimous Mother, when Naren had Her "darshan" in Dakhineswar Temple.

Swami Chhidananda Saraswati Maharaj has explained this allegorical connotation from a different angle. He says that in the modern age we have many antibiotics as medicines. These are called lifesavers and millions of people look upon them with feelings of gratitude as they are the curative medicines of many critical diseases. But they are nonetheless terrible and destructive in nature. So on the cover of every such medicine, a word of caution is written that they should be taken with care under the prescriptions of qualified physicians. The antibiotics are said to be destructive because when they go inside the stomach, they kill the germs and thereby the disease is removed and one is cured of the ailment. Swamiji Maharaj says, would it then be correct to call these antibiotics destructive in nature? Yes, we may call them destructive because they destroy the germs. But their ultimate purpose is something noble, the purpose being to cure the disease and restore good health. In the same analogy, Mother Kali may appear terrible and destructive in Her outward appearance for annihilating the evil

from the universe. But for that reason, we cannot call the Devi Mata a destructive force. In Her destruction, one can see the light of a resplendent regeneration. She destroys but destroys ignorance in order to bestow knowledge. She destroys darkness, so that we can see light in the ultimate run. Thus we see in the Divine Mother a glorified spiritual being, ever intent upon giving deliverance from delusion. This is the sacred theme of the Navaratri Puja.

The Devi Mata in Her divine form as Laxmi is worshipped in the second three days of Navaratri Puja as the goddess of wealth and prosperity. She is adored as the preservative power of God as Vishnu. She is also reverentially venerated as Sita, the consort of Rama, Rukmuni, the consort of Krishna and Radha, the Chinmayi Shakti of the Vaishnav cult. The Devi Mata is worshipped in the last three days of the nine-day worship as Saraswati, the creative power of God as Brahma. She is hailed to represent Vak (Speech) in the Rig Veda Samhita and as the presiding deity over arts, music and literature.

Let us pray to the Devi Mata to illuminate our hearts as Budhi. Let us all pray to Her to keep alive the great truth in our hearts and remove the veil of delusion thrown over our consciousness. Let us pray to the Divine Mother to manifest to us as Vidya-Maya as She manifested to Swami Vivekananda. If She has Her radiant eyes on us, then all our delusion, all our sorrows and all our darkness would come to an end and we shall see Her as Sachidananda Para Brahman.

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Origin of Tantricism and Sixty-Four Yogini Cult in Orissa

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Tantricism in some form or other evolved in almost all the countries of the world. But in India it has a speciality forming a significant part of the country's religious system in points of time and space. The ancient and modern scholars have stated different derivative meanings of the word '*Tantra*'. According to M.M. Haraprasad Sastri it means shortening of abbreviation like algebraic forms of formula. The word is traced from the term '*tan*' (to spread) and '*tatri*' (to explain). Thus the original connotation of the term is scientific.

Tantra is a science of religion and philosophy of science. Tantra is *Sadhana*. In order to understand Tantra, its antiquity, significance etc in the religious system of India, we have to touch upon the ancient civilisations, when the early men derived the magical power from the natural phenomena.

Tantra is generally categorised into *Agama*, *Nigama* and *Yamala*. The term *Agama*

is explained as that class of *tantra* which is addressed to Parvati by Lord Siva, whereas *Nigama* refers to *tantra* spoken by Parvati to Lord Siva. *Yamalas tantra* were designed to mean the worship of united deities. *Varahi tantra* says *Agamas* deal with seven topics -

Cosmology, Destruction, Worship of God, *Sadhana*, Purascharana, the six block rites and four-fold meditation. *Yamala tantra*, on the other hand, deals with cosmology, astronomy, division of castes, yogadharma etc.



Chausathi Yogini Pitha, Ranipur Jharial

Agamas are of various types. *Shaktisangama tantra* records Saiva, Sakha, Ganapatya, Saura, Vaisnava, Mahavira, Pasupata etc. (of eleven types) and Savara of (eleven types). *Agamas* are Vedic or non-Vedic. It is divided into *Tantra*, *Yamala* and *Damara*. *Damaras* are of six types - Yoga Damara, Siva Damara, Durga Damara, Saraswata Damara, Brahma Damara and Gandharva Damara. In accordance with

the sects the Tantras are classified. Geographical conditions are also responsible in classification of Tantra, viz. Visnukranta, Rathakranta and Asvakranta.

There are three trends of tantras : Dakshina, Vama and Madhyama. Like this tantra has a vast mass of literature covering wide range of heterogenous systems. In the Vamadeva Tantra Parvati said to Lord Siva 'you have explained to me crores of tantras each of which has a special features of its own.' Really it is difficult to state the nons of tantras. Each tantra has its philosophy, own system of ritual practice and deity etc. As a matter of fact, the tantras deal with the worship of not only female deities but with various male deities as well. And we have really works known as tantras belonging to various sects like the Saivas, the Vaisnavas, the Ganapatyas, the Sauras etc. It is true that this literature is generally known among the followers of various sects as 'Agama' as well. The Tantrikas consider *tantra* as the fifth Veda. Bhaskar Ray in his book 'Setubandha' describes the 'Chausathi Mahamayavi Tantras' or '64 Yogini' as Veda.

The culture of sixty-four Yoginis was the exuberant expression of extreme form of tantricism in about 8th century A.D. when the occult and esoteric *Sadhana* reached the highest peak. Origin of sixty-four yoginis is shrouded in mystery. The vedic and post-vedic literature mention the names of some individual yoginis, but never sixty-four manifestations together. Through the process of transformation the cult came into existence and exerted an important niche in the Sakta-tantric pantheon. The puranas and Upa-purans which are the source of different cults are referred to find out the origin of sixty-four yoginis, who are basically the

mother-goddesses. The markendeya Purana relates that the gods created goddesses from their own Shaktis to assist Durga in killing the demon Raktavirya, the ally of Sumbha, who had the power to multiply himself into demons of the same stature and prowess from the drops of blood oozing out of his wounds and touching the ground. They were yoginis, who drank blood of the demon before felling on the grounds. The same story is recorded in the Mahabhagavata Purana to kill Andhaka demon, who had the power of creating numerous demons from his oozed blood touching the ground. Siva's pasupata weapon proved futile. Having no alternative Siva propitiated Nrusimha to come to his rescue. Lord Nrusimha created hundred and eight terrible goddess to help Ambika to kill Andhaka demon. After Andhaka was killed the new goddesses moved in a campaign of destruction in the Universe. To subdue them Nrusimha created thirty-two mothers more powerful than the earlier one. The earlier mothers out of fear took refuge in Nrusimha who asked all the created mothers to look after the living beings of the Universe as mothers. An eminent modern scholar opined that yoginis were originally women or priestesses, who being possessed by the spirit of goddesses became yoginis.

The yoginis have been classified in different texts according to their functions, names and rituals attached to them. The Yoginis are sixty-four in number and are classified as Sahaja, Kulaja and Antyeja. Another text divides yoginis into Ksetraja, Pithaja, Yogaja and Mantraja based on different principles. The first two groups of the second classification have association with the sacred pithas; the yogojas are propitiated with yogic practices and the mantrajas with Mantras. The mother goddesses such as Brahmani, Maheswari,

Vaisnavi, Indrani etc. are classified as yoginis. The yogini kaula of Matsyendranath also refers to the worship of mystic circles made up of 4, 8, 12, 64 and more angles of the centre of which there is Siva, Omnipresent, immovable and undualified. The sixty-four yoginis are most probably so many angles representing the equal number of manifestations of the Shakti embracing Siva. The circle thus forms a 'Lotus' reminding us of the famous Tantric Sricakra. This theory of Matsyendra holds good when we analyse the extant yogini temples. The number of yogini is really perplexing. Various sources have furnished different numbers of yoginis, but ultimately the number sixty-four appears to have been accepted by all the authorities. Of these sixty-four yoginies, the principal seven or eight are known as mother goddesses such as Brahmani, Maheswari, Vaisnavi, Kaumari, Varabi, Indrani and Chamunda, who according to the Puranic stories were created to drink blood of the demons. It is probable that these eight principal mother goddesses who are evidently the yoginis were multiplied into sixty-four. That the cult of sixty-four yoginis was widely prevalent is evident from several lists of sixty-four yoginis recorded in different texts. The Kalika purana, Skanda purana, Brihadnandikeswara Purana, cansatha yogini namavali, chandi purana of Sarala Das, Durgapuja, Brihdla Tantra, Bata Avakasa of Balaram Das and other texts contain list of sixty-four yoginis. Besides, the inscribed images in the sixty-four yogini temple of Bheraghal of M.P. furnish seventy-five images. Another list enumerates as many as sixty-nine yoginis in eight categories. Another text states sixty-nine yoginis in eight categories, such as Gupta Yoginis, Guptatara Yogini, Sampradaya Yogini, Kulatirna Yogini, Nigarva Yogini, Rahasya Yogini, Atirahasya Yogini.

sixty-four yoginis are associated with sixty-four kalas, sixty-four Ratibandhas, sixty-four Bhairava, sixty-four Nayika and sixty-four emotion of human-being. Name of these sixty-four yoginis - 1. Chhaya, 2. Maya, 3. Narayani, 4. Brahmayani, 5. Bhairavi, 6. Maheswari, 7. Rudrayani, 8. Baseli, 9. Tripura, 10. Ugratara, 11. Charchika, 12. Tarini, 13. Ambika Kumari, 14. Bhagabati, 15. Nila, 16. Kamala, 17. Santi, 18. Kanti, 19. Ghatabari, 20. Chamunda, 21. Chandrakanti, 22. Madhavi, 23. Kachikeswari, 24. Anala, 25. Rupa, 26. Barahi, 27. Nagari, 28. Khechari, 29. Bhuchari, 30. Betali, 31. Kalinjari, 32. Sankha, 33. Rudrakali, 34. Kalavati, 35. Kankali, 36. Bukuchai, 37. Bali, 38. Dohini, 39. Dwarini, 40. Sohini, 41. Sankata Tarini, 42. Kotalai, 43. Anuchhaya, 44. Kechamukhi Samuha, 45. Ullaka, 46. Samasila, 47. Mudha, 48. Dakhinai, 49. Gopali, 50. Mohini, 51. Kamasena, 52. Kapali, 53. Uttarayani, 54. Trailokya Byapini, 55. Trilochana, 56. Nimai, 57. Dakeswari, 58. Kamala, 59. Ramayani, 60. Anadi Shakti, 61. Balakshatrayani, 62. Brahmani, 63. Dharani and sixty-four. Matangi. All these names of sixty-four yoginis are described in Chandi Purana of Sarala Das.

Twelve lists of sixty-four yoginis collected so far do not confirm to each other. The extant yogini temples do not show uniformity in iconography. In Hirapur Yogini temple the images are all standing associated their Vahana, whereas at Ranipur Jharial they are in dancing poses. The images of Bheraghat temple of Madhya Pradesh are seated in Lalitasana.

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Samalei to Sambaleswari - Ashapuri to Samalei

(The Hindu Mode of Absorption of a Tribal Deity During Medieval Period in Sambalpur)

Dr. Chitrasen Pasayat

Sambalpur, besides being the seat of Buddhism and Hinduism, is also home to other religions and communities such as Muslims, Christians and innumerable indigenous tribal communities. With this multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-lingual composition, Sambalpur has always chosen the path of social accommodation and social integration. Thus, people of diverse religious faiths have been residing together in harmony in Sambalpur. Therefore, it may be rightly called the most pluralistic society. The present paper is an attempt to understand how the indigenous communities and their religious traditions have played a significant role in the process of state formation in the erstwhile Sambalpur Rajya during medieval period.

In Sambalpur, the ruling classes were aware of the fact that communalism would weaken the state and would cause disharmony in social life and divert the attention of people from formation of a separate Sambalpur Rajya. So, attempts were made to integrate the indigenous communities into one fold under the umbrella of "Hindusim". Their deities were

accepted and exalted by the ruling classes of Sambalpur in order to appease the local subjects to consolidate their power over the natives and to exercise their authority over this area. Understandably, in the process of the building of an unified Sambalpur Rajya indigenous communities with their religious traditions were successfully absorbed in the mainstream of the Great Hindu Tradition through its branches like Saivism, Vaishnavism and Saktism. The area of our study i.e. Sambalpur is the headquarters town of modern Sambalpur district. It is situated on the left bank of the river Mahanadi.



From ancient times, Sambalpur has been known as the land of *Tantrik Buddhism*.

It is an ancient town, which has the reputation of a *Tantra Pitha*. Significantly, when Buddhism as a religio-cultural force began to decline in many parts of India, Sambalpur played the most important role for the continuation of Buddhism in its new form i.e. *Tantrik Buddhism*. The existence of Sambalpur may be dated back at least to the early Christian era. The Greek geographer Ptolemy (middle of the second century A.D.) in his book

Geographike refers to a town named *Sambalaka* situated on the bank of the river *Manada*. Ancient *Sambalaka* and *Manada* are identified with modern Sambalpur and the river Mahanadi respectively (Panda, 1996:34). The suffix 'pur' has been later added by Sanskritising the original name *Sambal* when the territory has come under the Chauhan rule (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971 : 2-3). Similarly, the *Samlei Pitha* may be said to be much older and the deity may have been worshipped by the aborigines since time immemorial.

Sambalpur is intimately associated with the spread of Tantrik Buddhism in India and abroad. It is considered to be the land where the *Sambara Tantra* was propounded by a famous *Siddha* called Pitopada who is also regarded to have attained the *Siddhi* of invisibility at Sambala (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:446). Sometimes in the eighth century A.D., Indrabhuti was the king of Sambalaka / Sambalpur and was believed to have patronised *Tantrik Buddhism*. He was the author of the text *Jnyanasiddhi*. His sister Laksminkara is also reported to be a Tantrik Buddhist perfectionist. She is regarded as one of the 84 *Siddhagurus* in Tantrik Buddhism and as the propounder of a religious faith called *Sahajayana*, thus making a great reputation for herself. It suggests that by the time of medieval period, the land of Sambala/Sambalaka/Sambalpur was one of the important seats of Tantrik Buddhism.

There is no denying the fact that the *Vajrayana* of Indrabhuti and *Sahajayana* of Laksminkara flourished in Sambalpur area during the eighth century A.D. At that time, Sambalpur might have developed a high standard of Tantrik culture. Most probably, *Samalei Pitha* was an integral part of that great cultural tradition. In the *Garbhagriha* (inner sanctum) of this temple, the fierce and typical

shapeless rock made to appear like the face of *Samalei Devi* with two gold leaves in the forms of eyes and in the middle a projection resembling the mouth of a cow suggests some influence of *Tantra*. In this context, learned scholar Sasanka Sekhar Panda (1996:37) identifies some significant points that in front of the *Garbhagriha* of *Samalei gudi* (temple), there is a pillared hall wherein a pair of human foot-prints with two eight-petalled lotus-rosette motifs on both sides are carved on a stone-panel. This pair of foot-prints is worshipped as Sitalamata. Such foot-prints are found to be carved on stone-slabs at Ghudar and Ranipur Jharial in the district of Balangir and Narsinghanath in the district of Bargarh. It is widely believed that worship of foot-prints of Siddhacharyas was very common to the Tantrik school. In other words, Sambalpur had made Tantrik Buddhism a potent spiritual and cultural force in the Indian sub-continent. In view of this, Sambalpur might be considered to be one of the important urban centres with international reputation in between the second and eighth century A.D. Apparently Tantrik Buddhism continued to prevail in Sambalpur till about 13th century A.D. long after Buddhism had vanished from most parts of India.

Reportedly, Laksminkara had married Sevola, the son of the king Jalendra of Lanka/Lankapuri. But, Laksminkara preferred the career of a Tantrik Buddhist perfectionist and practised Tantrik *Sadhana* in Lankapuri which was regarded as *Mahayogapitha* or a great centre of Tantrik Buddhist *Yoga*. Continuous meditation and Tantrik *Sadhana* for seven years in the cemetery of Lankapuri *Mahayogapitha* made her properly enlightened and she distinguished herself among the people of India and abroad as *Bhagavati* Laksminkara or goddess Laksminkara because of her *Uttama siddhi* or excellent perfection. Lanka / Lankapuri is identified with modern Sonapur/

Suvarnapur (Mishra, 2003 : 87-88). Lankeswari, therefore, may be identified with Laksminkara, as the former nomenclature seems to be a corruption of latter. Legend also ascribes Goddess Samalei as Lankeswari. In view of this, Goddess Laksminkara may reasonably be identified with Laksminkara i.e. Samalei / Samaleswari who has been worshipped by the local people in Sambalpur.

Balaram Dev became the first Chauhan *Raja* of Sambalpur Rajya some time in the middle of the 16th century A.D. According to the prevailing tradition, he discovered the image of Samalei beneath a *Semel* (silk-cotton) tree. The botanical name of this tree is *Bomax Malabaricum*. Because of phonetic similarity between *Semel* and *Samalei* some scholars give credence to this tale that the deity worshipped beneath a *Semel* tree has come to be known as Samalei. Oral tradition relates that *Raja* Balaram Dev was given a grant of this area by his elder brother *Raja* Narasimha Dev of Patnagarh. Balaram Dev established himself first at Bargarh on the bank of the river Jira. Therefrom, he is said to have shifted his capital to Chaunrpur, on the right bank of the river Mahanadi. Most probably, during this period when Balaram Dev carved out a new Rajya out of the territory of his elder brother he named it *Huma Desh*. The learned scholar Dr. N.K. Sahu has ascribed the period of foundation of Sambalpur Rajya to the year 1570 A.D. (Panda, 1996:35).

As per the legend, the village Chaunrpur is said to be the seat of Balaram Dev before his coming to Sambalpur. One day while hunting, Balaram Dev crossed the river Mahanadi. When he reached the left bank a beautiful hare appeared before him. Balaram Dev set his hounds at the innocent creature. But, the result was contrary to his expectation. After some time the *Raja* found his hounds

repulsed by the hare. Struck by this extraordinary exhibition of courage by the most timid of animals, the *Raja* thought that there might be some supernatural virtue in the land. That night Goddess Samalei appeared in his dream and said, "Why do you appear so sad ? Don't think that there appears to have been a mistake. I am Lankeswari here. Worship me. Your expectations and hopes will be fulfilled." Next day, Balaram Dev discovered the deity in the form of a stone. Thence the *Raja* decided to build his *gad/garh* (fort) there. Having built a *gad* he installed in it the deity Samalei. The place where her image was set up was a *kud* (island) on which stood a *Semel* tree and hence was called *Semel kud* while the deity was named Samalei. Samalei has been Sanskritised to Samaleswari i.e. "Iswari of Sambala" in the reigns of Chauhans. Thus, Sambalpur is known as the land of Samalei. In other words, she is the reigning deity of Sambalpur (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971 : 2-3).

Be that as it may, identical stories prevail about the origins of other places of Orissa like Cuttack, Talcher and Baripada. Identical story is also associated with the discovery of deities like Banibakreswari of Kuapada village under Delanga block in Puri district and Barala *devi* of Balasakumpa village in Phulbani district. This is why it is difficult to locate the exact time and place of the origin of this myth (Pasayat, 2003 : 10-12). But, this story attests the fact that the aboriginal religious shrines like Samalei has received royal patronage. *Raja* Balaram Dev enshrined the deity inside his *gad*. During his reign, *Puja* services were provided from the royal treasury. In other words, state funding of the *Puja* services has been introduced since then. Subsequently, the present temple was built in the reign of *Raja* Chhatra Sai (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971 : 548). Thus, it may be suggested here that *Samalei pitha* was already existing when

Balaram Dev arrived there. Perhaps, the temple was in a dilapidated condition. Balaram Dev extended royal patronage and rebuilt or renovated the temple. Subsequently, *Raja Chhatra Sai* had also most probably rebuilt or renovated the temple.

There is no denying the fact that *Raja Balaram Dev* adopted this *Shakti Pitha* and extended royal patronage. But, the most significant development in the period of *Raja Chhatra Sai* was donation of forty villages for the regular worship of *Samalei devi*. Names of some villages are collected from the local people. These are Jayaghanta, Kalamati, Ambasada Katapali, Nunia Jampali, Karpula Senapati, Chaunrpur etc. Thus, *Chhatra Sai* made a permanent arrangement for the maintenance of the *Samalei gudi* (temple). It means that recognised steps have been taken by the Chauhan rulers for the state-funding of the *Puja* services in *Samalei gudi* and she has been raised to the status of *Rastra Devi* and called *Samaleswari* i.e. '*Iswari*' or reigning deity of Sambala or Sambalpur. However, the landed property assigned for the performance of the daily and special *Pujas* of *Samalei Devi* have been converted into personal property by the priests. This has been possible most probably during the British rule, either by hiding or destroying the copper plate grants. What these priests have done was contrary to the age-old prevailing tradition of this *Shakti Pitha*. Any how, the priests are now managing the *Puja* services of *Samalei gudi*. Reportedly, the *Samalei gudi* has no property at present (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971 : 548).

It may be said with precision that, in the 15th and 16th century A.D. after the disintegration of Ganga empire of Orissa, a strong pull towards political fragmentation as well as decentralisation of power was taken place partly due to the partition of ruling

families and partly due to land grants of villages by the rulers to indigenous tribal chiefs who ended up as independent potentates. In the frontier zone of uncertain control like Daksina Kosala (roughly modern west Orissa) the indigenous tribal chiefs and chiefs of obscure origins took advantage of weak central authority, assumed power and formed several small *Rajyas* (Deo, 2003 : 96). Formation of a separate Bargarh and subsequently *Huma Desh* and finally Sambalpur *Rajya* by Balaram Dev in the 16th century A.D. was the result of the partition of the ruling family of Patnagarh. In all probability this was a forested area and inhabited by aboriginal people when Balaram Dev first arrived here. He was a reputed warrior. Owing to military necessity, the administration of this tribal dominated, hilly and forested part was entrusted to him by his elder brother Narasimha Dev, the then Chauhan *Raja* of Patnagarh. Balaram Dev successfully consolidated the Chauhan rule in this part of the *Rajya* and carved out a new *Rajya* out of the territory of his elder brother. Subsequently, his successors extended and strengthened the Chauhan rule in Sambalpur *Rajya*.

In order to sustain a separate and independent Sambalpur *Rajya*, most probably Balaram Dev and his successors had to depend upon the *Bhogas* and *Bhagas*. They had to persuade the local tribal people to become settled agriculturists so that production would increase, because a tribal economy based on shifting cultivation cannot sustain a *Rajya* as analysed elsewhere by the learned scholar Dr. F. Deo (2003:96). To legitimise their status as *Rajas* and to their share of the produce (*Bhaga*), the Chauhan rulers granted lands to Brahmins and temples which contributed to changing the agrarian situation, formation of hierarchical social order and Brahminisation or Hinduisation of the society. Therefore, it may be suggested here that *Samalei Pitha* was

already existing when Balaram Dev arrived here. Perhaps, the temple was in a dilapidated condition. He extended royal patronage and rebuilt or renovated the temple. Later on *Raja* Chhatra Sai also most probably rebuilt or renovated it. Thus, the temple of Samalei/Sambaleswari became an important agent of Hinduisation in Sambalpur.

There is a tale which reveals that during the demolition of Hindu gods and goddesses by Kalapahada, the priests of Sri Jagannath Temple of Puri fled with the images of the deities. They buried the images on the bank of Mahanadi in Sonepur/Suvarnapur which is situated to the south of Sambalpur. Kalapahada and his army followed the priests and arrived at Sambalpur where Samalei *Devi* prevented them from proceeding further. She assumed the form of a milk-maid and appeared before them. She sold milk and curd to the soldiers who were very thirsty. Immediately, the soldiers consumed the milk and curd which spread desolation among them. At this hour, the army of *Raja* Balabhadra Dev of Sambalpur drove back Kalapahada successfully. It would not be out of place to mention here that identical stories prevail in other religious shrines of Orissa namely Chalhakhai Devi at Kulada and Dahikhai-Chamunda Devi at Rambha, both in Ganjam district. Also, this tale is associated with Danteswari Devi at Bastar in the neighbouring state of Chhattisgarh (Pasayat, 2003:20). It may be suggested here that the origin of this story is imagination. That is why it is difficult to identify the place where from and the time when this tale has first been conceived and later adopted in other religious shrines. However, we cannot ignore the fact that this tale has identified the supernatural power and deeds of Samalei Devi. It has established socio-cultural relationships between the aborigines and the caste-Hindus. By assimilating such stories into Samalei cult,

the aboriginal people identify themselves as part of the larger Hindu religious culture, thus contributing to Hindu cultural unity at a larger level which has helped in the state formation in Sambalpur.

Samalei at Sambalpur is a shapeless rock made to appear like a face. It may be said to be a big piece of head-like stone structure. According to the oral tradition, Daksha arranged a *Yajnya*. He invited all the deities and relatives to attend the function. But, he did not invite his own daughter Sati and son-in-law Lord Siva, because Sati married Siva against the wish of Daksha. Yet, Sati went to attend the ritual ceremony where she was received with disgrace. As a consequence, Sati protested and accused her father for his neglect and disregard shown to her husband. Daksha broke into anger and cursed Lord Siva by calling him a beggar, ashman, *Yogi*, king of goblins etc. Sati could not tolerate such insult and jumped into the *Yajnya kunda*. Lord Siva became furious and started his *Tandava Nritya* bearing the corpse of Sati on his back. It was terrible and the destruction of the entire universe was imminent. Lord Vishnu came out to save the mankind. He instructed his *Sudarsana Chakra* to cut the dead body of Sati into pieces. After the weight was gone and Lord Siva became conscious he was consoled by Lord Vishnu. Thereafter, Lord Siva retired alone to his abode Kailash. The body of Sati was hewn into a number of pieces and wherever a fragment touched the earth a *Sakti Pitha* (shrine of Mother Goddess) sprang up. It is believed to be the head of Sati which is enshrined and worshipped in the *Samalei gudi*.

Though mythologically, the origin of the *Sakti Pitha* at Sambalpur is connected with the most famous Daksha *Yajnya* story, originally it is not reported or recorded in any of the epic tradition of the Hindu religion. There is no

denying the fact that the image of Samalei Devi is a large block of stone. There is also a projection with a narrow groove in the middle of the stone image of the deity. This projection is believed to be the mouth of the deity. On both sides of the projection are depressions covered with beaten gold leaves which represent the eyes of the deity. Moreover, the image of Samalei Devi does not resemble any other *Sakta* goddess found in Orissa. There is a *Parsva Devata* of Samalei called Pitabali who is believed to be the deity of tribal people namely Kandhas (Senapati and Mahanti, 1971:547). The above descriptions of Samalei Devi suggest us to believe that she is a non-Brahmin deity originally worshipped by the aborigines of Sambalpur. Addition of Daksha Yajnya story is very likely a later development to add to Samalei some more dose of Sanskritic elements. This may be suggested to be a fine example of localisation or parochialisation of famous Daksha Yajnya story to validate the faith of the aborigines with the Hindu epic traditions (Great Tradition) of India. By identifying Sambalpur with the incarnation of Shakti as Samaleswari and her mythical and miraculous events, the local people identify themselves as part of the larger Hindu culture (Great Tradition), thus contributing to cultural unity and consolidation of Chauhan rule in Sambalpur.

There is another story which indicates the horrifying nature of Samalei Devi. Once the priest had fruits and flowers on a plate and was offering prayers to the deity while his small daughter was standing by his side. The priest discovered suddenly that the deity had disappeared. Looking up, the priest found the deity devouring his girl child. Immediately the priest threw the plate at the face of the deity. As a result, the face of the deity turned to back side. So, the deity is believed to be facing away from the main entrance and that is why there is

no face on the front side. Interestingly, this tale with little variation is found in some other religious shrines namely Kanakadurga at Piteipur village in Jagatsinghpur district, Jaanlei Devi at Hinjilikatu in Ganjam district and Kumari Devi at Bonai in Sundargarh district. Also the tale is associated with Chandrahasini Devi at Chandrapur in Bilaspur district of the neighbouring state of Chhattisgarh (Pasayat, 2003 :19). All the same, the meaning of this tale is more important for our study. This tale is meant not only to frighten children away, but also suggests practice of severe form of blood sacrifice and influence of *Tantra* on this *Pitha*.

As per the oral tradition, once upon a time human beings were sacrificed before Samalei Devi. It is said that once a *Siddha* Brahmin arrived at Sambalpur. Priests of Samalei Devi caught him for sacrifice before the deity. The *Siddha* Brahmin told the priests to leave him alone before the deity inside the *Garbhagriha* so that Samalei Devi could eat him if she wanted. Accordingly, the *Siddha* Brahmin was not beheaded; rather left alone and alive before the deity. Then the priests closed the doors of the *Garbhagriha*. The event went contrary to the interests of the priests. Next morning, the *Siddha* Brahmin came out from *Samalei gudi* alive and unhurt. The story spread quickly through out the *Rajya* that the *Siddha* Brahmin had been pleased by Samalei Devi and the deity had blessed him. *Maharaja* Baliar Singh heard this miraculous incident and ordered to stop the practice of human sacrifice before Samalei Devi. Since then buffaloes were sacrificed before the deity. Now-a-days, *Bukas* (he-goat) and cocks are common sacrificial objects during Durga Puja, Chaitra Purnima and other occasions in this *Shakti Pitha*. This may be understood to be the process of legitimisation of Brahmin priests in the non-

Brahminic *Samalei gudi* and minimisation of severe practice of blood sacrifice in this *Pitha*.

According to the tradition, Samalei was worshipped originally by the natives belonging to Sahara and Jhara communities living on the bank of the river Mahanadi. The main occupation of these people was to collect diamonds from the river bed of Mahanadi. Once they found a big stone under the deep water. They brought it out with the hope to extract diamonds from it and placed it under a *Semel* tree on the bank of the river. Later on they realised it as a deity in the form of a stone. Thence, they started worshipping her (Dash, 1962 : 227). Although, Balaram Dev adopted the local deity, he did not exclude the traditional servants of the deity from the temple cult which was emerging as a testimony to Sanskritisation or Hinduisation of Samalei Devi. He appointed the Saharas, the traditional worshippers of the deity as the priests and Jharas as the servants and holders of canopy of Samalei Devi (Sae Deo, 1985:7-8).

Saharas are generally considered to be untouchables in the social hierarchy of this area. In villages, Samalei as village deity is worshipped by the *Jhankars*. Though the *Jhankars* do not belong to any specific caste or community, they are, in fact, non-Brahmin priests who also worship other village deities called Mauli, Budhima and Grampati. Earlier *Jhankars* were granted rent-free lands for their service in the villages. All these combinedly indicate that Samalei has the character of a non-Brahmin deity. Most probably, the rulers intended to honour the sentiments and feelings of the aborigines. In view of this, it may be suggested here that Shaktism has taken all care to adopt the features of the aboriginal or local religious cult i.e. Samalei. In other words, many local indigenous communities with Samalei tradition of erstwhile Sambalpur

Rajya have been deeply attracted towards and absorbed in the mainstream of the Indian cultural tradition through Shaktism. The great tradition of Shaktism coupled with Saivism has formed has become a great force for the integration of Indian civilization and has a great influence on the regional religious culture of Sambalpur i.e. Little Tradition.

A very important aspect of the development of religious system in Sambalpur region during the medieval period is the introduction of Tantrik elements in worship. As it has been discussed earlier, historical and archaeological remains attest to the fact that Sambalpur region has been a strong-hold of Saivism and Shaktism coupled with Tantrism. Furthermore, severe practice of blood sacrifice at this *Pitha*, absence of caste distinction, employment or engagement of tribal/non-Brahmin priests, installation of the guardian deity (Samalei) in the *Garbhagriha* i.e. centre of worship, belief in the replica (*Chalanti Pratima*) of the main deity, annual or periodical journey (*Jatra*) of the *Chalanti Pratima*, spirit possession or descending of Samalei Devi through human beings etc. suggest some connections with *Tantra*. As it is discussed elsewhere, Sambalpur as well as *Samalei pitha* has been identified with an important seat of Tantrism where a very high standard of Tantrik culture has been developed during the Buddhist and pre-Chauhan period. But, thereafter, particularly during Chauhan period the unique blend of Saktism, Saivism, Tantrism and Sanskritic/Brahminical culture has rose to a new height in Sambalpur region.

Most probably, the Chauhan rulers have brought their own faith with them. But, they have not enjoined on common people of this area to believe and follow their faith and worship their deity; rather they have reckoned their own faith with that of the locality. It was

not what they practised and worshipped but what they felt under what they believed that was important. The Chauhan rulers have taken all care to retain the primitive character of this *Pitha* like aniconical image of the deity, non-Brahmin priests of the deity, blood sacrifice etc. By constructing or renovating the temple they have introduced elaborate rituals in a systematic manner. By giving rent-free land grants to the temple they have ensured regular *Puja* services for the deity. Also they created myths wherever required to identify the deity as a Hindu Goddess. In all probability, they have carefully followed this principle under political expediency with a view to please the local subjects.

In this context, mention may be made of Ashapuri Devi who is the tutelary goddess of the Chauhan rulers all over the country. Ramai Dev, the first Chauhan ruler of Patna *Rajya* has identified her as Pataneswari in Patna/Patna *gad* meaning '*Iswari*' of Patna (Balangir-Patna). Since then Pataneswari has been the tutelary goddess of the Chauhan rulers of Patna *gad* or Patana house. Similarly, Balaram Dev has established Sambalpur *Rajya*. He has also exalted the local deity Samalei as Sambaleswari meaning '*Iswari*' of Sambala/Sambalpur and the king has accepted her as his own tutelary goddess. This way the local name of the deity i.e. Samalei has been Hinduised to Sambaleswari. According to this name, she is the deity of all who reside in Sambalpur. In other words, the deity represents a larger society wherein people of various ethnic backgrounds stay together. Thus, the deity has become the source and symbol of unity and integrity mainly between the aboriginal people and caste-Hindus in Sambalpur.

It may be understood that the Chauhan rulers have made it their principle to esteem and extol the deities of the aborigines or natives

wherever they have established their kingdoms and expanded their territory. Samalei, the deity of the autochthonous people has been hijacked by the ruling classes and used as tool to exercise their authority and control over the latter. Not only Samalei of Sambalpur but also *Asta-Sambhus* in different parts of erstwhile Sambalpur *Rajya* namely Bimaleswara at Huma, Kedarnath at Ambabhona, Biswanath at Deogaon, Balunkeswara at Gaiasama, Maneswara at Maneswar, Swapneswara at Sorna, Bisweswara at Saranda and Nilakantheswara at Niljee were adopted and given royal patronage in the reign of Chauhan rulers. Temples were constructed and elaborate rituals were introduced in these temples. Rent-free lands and villages were granted and regular *Puja* services of these deities were ensured. This fundamental principle has made them very popular among the local inhabitants and has helped them to expand, consolidate and strengthen the Chauhan rule in Sambalpur region.

It may be noted here that Pataneswari temples are found only at few places like Patanagad, Balangir and Sambalpur, whereas the number of *Samalei gudi* or Sambaleswari temples in Sambalpur is quite large. Besides the *Samalei gudi* situated in Sambalpur, Barpali and Suvarnapur, the deity occupies a pivotal position in the religious life of the common people of Sambalpur area. She is being commonly worshipped under a tree in the form of a stone in the vicinity of almost each and every village of erstwhile Sambalpur *Rajya*. This indicates the extent of reverence shown to Samalei in Sambalpur area. In villages, Samalei is worshipped by the *Jhankars* who enjoy rent-free lands for his *Puja* services. Moreover, many indigenous, aboriginal, native, local, folk or tribal communities with their religious traditions

(Little Tradition) of Sambalpur region have been successfully absorbed in the mainstream of the Hindu Great Tradition through Saivism, Shaktism, Vaishnavism and helped in the process of state formation during medieval period in erstwhile Sambalpur *Rajya*. Bose (1941:188) has rightly pointed out, "Hinduism has grown by the incorporation of many tribal cults, until it has become a kind of federation of religious beliefs and practices ... which goes by the name of Hinduism."

In sum, it may be concluded that as most of the rulers originated from one of the local groups it was easy for them to raise their deity to be the state deity. In the process it helped them to legitimise and consolidate their political power over the area. Deities became the link between the ruler and the ruled. The patronage of local deities and their elevation helped the rulers spread the story that the local deity had been pleased with the new ruler or the deity had blessed the ruler or the ruler could please the deity. They used the emotional and religious attachment of the local communities to the deities. This was to draw support for themselves. This helped the rulers to legitimise their position in the area and to enjoy the support of the local people. This pattern emerged both because the rulers needed the support of the local communities who were in a majority and also because of the fear of the deity whose wrath might result from absence of worship. The incorporation of local communities into the wider social order and their indoctrination proceeded in multifaceted manner through ceremonial and enactment of hierarchical relations. So, multiple simultaneous processes of Hinduisation, Tribalisation and Localisation / Parochialisation are found in the linking between the Hindu Great Tradition and the local Little Tradition of Sambalpur. These processes of diffusion, acculturation and

assimilation were not one way flow from Hindu Great Tradition to local Little Tradition alone. In Sambalpur area, it was the simultaneous process of acculturation and deculturation. It proceeded through complex processes of interaction which are confirmed by myths, legends and historical evidences.

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Shakti Cult in Orissa

Balabhadra Ghadai

The worship of Mother Goddess or Shakti, can be traced back to the Pre-Vedic or Indus Valley Civilisation. Devisukta of the Rig Veda is the primary source of Shakti Cult. In the Rig. Veda there is a description of a goddess named 'Aditi'. She is depicted not only as Mother Goddess but also as an emblem of the divine spirit. But it is difficult to say when this cult made its first appearance in ancient Orissa. However, from the epigraphic and iconographic stand-point, it is obvious that the evolution of Shakti Cult in Orissa is not prior to the 4th century A.D.

The earliest epigraphic evidence regarding the Shakti worship in Orissa is found in a Copper-Plate Grant of Tushtikara Deva, who perhaps flourished about the 5th or 6th Century A.D. and was a worshipper of goddess Stambhesvari. There is a pillar of Stambhesvari at Sonapur and a temple of the goddess at Aska in Ganjam. We have reference to that deity in the Grants of Sulki and Bhanja kings. We are

also inclined to take Stambhesvari as another form of Khambesvari, the popular deity among the aboriginal people of some areas of ex-feudatory States of Orissa. The primitive tribes even today, set up a big piece of stone or a piece of wood with eyes, mouth painted crudely with indigenous colours, usually under a tree in some central place or outside the village and worship it as the guardian-deity of the village.



Jajpur, on the bank of river Vaitarani, was an old and prominent seat of Shakti Cult and tantric worship, and its history goes back to the days of the Mahabharata when it was considered a sacred place of pilgrimage. The

image of Viraja, now under worship in the temple at Jajpur, is a two-handed Mahisasuramardini, engaged in killing a Buffalo-demon. As the image of Mahisasuramardini depicted on the Gupta temple of Bhumara is four-handed, it is maintained that the present image of Viraja in

the temple of Jajpur belongs to the 5th Century A.D.

It was during the early Bhaumakara rule in Orissa, that the Durga image became eight-armed (Asthabhuj) and during the later Bhaumakara period, this image is found to be ten-armed (Dasabhuj). The popularity of Shakti worship at Jajpur is born out of the fact that the Bhaumakara queen Tribhuban Mahadevi compared herself with Katyayini (Durga or Viraja) at her accession.

During the Sailadhaba and Bhaumakara periods, Tantricism grew from 7th Century A.D. The Tantriks worshipped the Mother Goddess as the source of power or shakti and the origin of the highest spiritual bliss. From 7th century onwards Tantricism continued to dominate Buddhism, Saivism and Brahmanical religions. The great Saiva centre of Bhubaneswar has also a number of Sakta temples built during the Bhauma period. The most ancient Shakti shrine of Bhubaneswar is the temple of Vaitala and its sculpture clearly proves that the strange esoteric rites were being performed in it. Four Shakta shrines sprang up on the four sides of Vindu Saravara near the Lingaraj temple and they are now known as Vaitala, Mohini, Uttareswar temples. The name of the Shakta shrine on the east of the tank, which still exists, has been lost. These Shakta shrines contain either the images of Chamunda or of Mahisasuramardini. Of them, the Vaitala is the most prominent and a study of its sculpture and architecture indicates that the strange esoteric rites including human sacrifice, were being performed in it. The presiding deity of Vaitala temple is goddess Chamunda garlanded with skulls and she is of terrific form and is known as Kapalini. This Kapalini was the deity of the Kapalikas.

Besides the Vaitala temple, Kichakeswari (Chamunda) is also the presiding deity of the largest temple at Khiching in the Mayurbhanj district which is the creation of the Bhauma age.

The worship of Sapta Matraka (seven - Mothers) was another form of Saktism during the Bhaumakara period. The seven goddesses are Varahi, Indrani, Vaishnavi, Kaumari, Sivani, Brahmani and Chamunda. The deities are of two or four-armed. The earliest representation of such matrukas was found at Parasurameswar, Vaitala and Mukteswar temples at Bhubaneswar. The Sapta Matraka images have also been found at Jajpur, Belhandi in the Kalahandi district, Markandeswar tank at Puri, Salanpur in Jagatsinghpur etc. These Seven Mothers are accompanied by Ganesha and Virabhadra. The iconographic peculiarity divides the Matrukas of Orissa into two broad groups, earlier and later. The earlier Matrukas seem to have been in prevalence in the Sailadhaba and the Bhaumakara periods and the later group with the babies as the distinctive attributes, seem to have originated in the Somavamsi period. Sapta Matrukas found in the modern temple of Dasasvamedha Ghat on the river Vaitarani at Jajpur, Markandeswar tank and the image of Salanpur holding babies in arms belong to the later group.

In the Prachi valley, there is a temple of Varahi at Chaurasi near the village of Tulasipur. The special feature of the temple is that its Jagamohan resembles to that of Parsuramesvara temple at Bhubaneswar whereas the main temple is a replica of the Gouri Temple of Bhubaneswar. The presiding deity Varahi is a two-handed beautiful image with fish in one hand and a skull in the other hand. This temple can be definitely assigned to the Bhauma

Culture Age. Another Varahi shrine is found at Narendrapur near Gadi in the Balasore district. The part of an ancient fort named Kichakagarh at Khiching in Mayurbhanj district is known as Varhi which is a corruption of Varahi. It is believed that a shrine of Varahi must have existed here though it has not been traced.

With the rise of Tantric Buddhism and Tantric Saivism during the Bhaumakara period, the Yogini worship became popular in Orissa prior to the 10th Century A.D. The Kalika Purana mentions 'Odra' as one of the important Brahmanical tantric pithas of India. The temple of Hirapur, which stands not far from the south bank of the river Bhargavi, on which runs the well-known Jagannath road to Puri was first discovered by Sri K.N. Mohapatra in the year 1953. There is a similar temple of Yogini at Ranipur Jharial in the Titlagarh sub-division of Bolangir district. The dimension of this pitha is bigger than that of Hirapur.

During the Somavamsi rule, Shaktism gained momentum in Orissa. But the Gangas do not seem to have favoured and patronised the worship of Shakti. Madalapanji states that Chodaganga banished all goddesses from Orissa. Sarala Das in the Madhyaparva of his

Mahabharata points to the fact that Chodaganga was responsible for the removal of Ramachandi from her original shrine at Konarka to the sea-shore at Liakhia Muhana. But the worship of Shakti did not disappear; it

took a new form. In this period all male deities were provided with consorts or female counterparts. The temple of Parvati found in the Lingaraj compound was built in the Ganga period. They also built the temples of Lakhmi and Vimala inside the compound of the Jagannath temple at Puri.

Thus, evolution of Shakti cult, down through the centuries, indicates that worship of the Mother Goddess in various forms

continue unperturbed. There are numerous Shakti shrines in Orissa of which the shrines of Viraja at Jajpur, Samaleswari at Sambalpur, Bhagabati at Banpur, Mangala at Kakatpur, Charchika at Banki, Sarala at Jhankada, Kichakeswari at Khiching are most famous.



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The Lion : Mount of Goddess Durga

Pradeep Kumar Gan

Shaktism, the cult of Mother Goddess and Shakti, the female divinity in Indian religion symbolises form, energy or manifestation of the human spirit in all its rich and exuberant variety. Shakti, in scientific terms energy or power, is the one without which no leaf can stir in the world, no work can be done without it. The Goddess has been worshipped in India from prehistoric times, for strong evidence of a cult of the mother has been unearthed at the pre-vedic civilization of the Indus valley. According to John Marshall² Shakti Cult in India was originated out of the Mother Goddess and was closely associated with the cult of Siva. Saivism and Shaktism were the official religions of the Indus people who practised various facets of Tantra. Siva and Shakti, the dual deities were the principal deities of the non-Aryans of the Indus Civilization.³ The Mother Goddess assimilation into the Hindu Pantheon, however, took place long after Siva and Visnu had been accepted in two distinct phases; i.e. first the Indo-Aryan male gods were given wives, and then, under the influence of Tantric and Shakti movements, which had been gaining momentum outside orthodox Hinduism for many centuries, these shadowy female figures emerged as supreme powers in their own right and emerged into the great Goddess.⁴

Due to the wide prevalence of the worship of Shakti or the female energy in India from a very early period among almost all the different ethnological elements comprising the

vast mass of Indian population, Goddess Durga gradually became the supreme object of adoration among the followers of Shaktism.⁵ Studies on various aspects of her character in our mythology, religion, etc., grew in bulk and her visual representation is well depicted in our art and sculpture. It is interesting to note that the very origin of her such incarnation (as Durga) is mainly due to her celestial mount (vehicle or *vahana*) lion. This lion is usually assorted with her in our literature, art sculpture, etc. But it is unfortunate that in our earlier works the lion could not get his rightful place as he deserved.

In the Hindu Pantheon all the deities are associated in mythology and art with an animal as its specific *vahana*, conceived both on the figurative and the metaphysical plane. An animal acting as *vahana* owns some magical characteristics, in that each single example of its species, either living or carved in sculptural form, bears the implicit presence of the deity associated with it. In the realm of Indian sculpture art the *vahana* of a deity is generally depicted below the latter's pedestal.⁶ According to H.Zimmer, the *vahana* meant as an animate divine symbol supporting the anthropomorphic figure of a god or goddess, is an iconic representation of the power and character of the concerned divinity, or an incarnation of the same at an inferior stage and under a different aspect. The depiction of the *vahana* below the pedestal of the deity

dissipates any possible ambiguousness as to the latter's identity. Such treatment of the carved images of divinities may have originated in Mesopotamia in the course of the second millennium B.C.; from thence, through the medium of trade, it may have reached in Indian sub-continent in the subsequent epochs.⁷

In consideration of the mount lion associated with her in the myths or in sculptural art, goddess Durga can be alternatively conceived as Mahisamardini or as Simhavahini. The lion came to prominence in the Hindu pantheon with the origin of the goddess Durga, which was narrated beautifully in the *Markandeya Purana*.⁸ According to this text, after being completely defeated by Mahisasura, the gods, headed by Brahma, approached Visnu and prayed for the destruction of the demon. Thereupon all the gods including Brahma, Visnu and Siva emitted flames of anger which solidified into the effulgent form of a goddess (Durga) with three eyes and ten arms, each of which bore a weapon given by the mighty gods. During this time the Himavat offered a white lion to goddess Durga as her *vahana*.

The golden skinned hairy lion is an archetypal symbol for the golden rayed sun, the lord of the day, whose appearance kills the god of the night. Night, terminating the day in the evening, is equally well represented by the bull, whose horns connect it with the crescent of the moon. It seems possible that the lion and the bull also simultaneously personified other antithetic cosmic forces, such as heat and cold, fire and water, light and darkness, life and death.⁹

The lion has always been important in mythology, not only in India, but also in some other countries. In Mesopotamia, Ishtar the goddess of war, has always been associated

with the lion. The car of the Phrygian goddess Cybele, whose cult spread all over the Roman empire is dragged by lions. Goddess Cybele is popularly known as Mother of the mountain in ancient Rome, like the same in the Indian context, Durga and Parvati similarly associated with lion and in the different manifestations, they are also known as the goddess of the Mountain.¹⁰ The Egyptian goddess Sekmet has a leonine head, while the most archaic statues of the Greek goddess Aphrodite depict the deity as accompanied by a lion. Sculptural examples of a goddess associated with lion and paired with a god associated with bull have been recovered from Anotolia.¹¹

Durga, the beautiful goddess of dawn, life and victory, riding a lion, defeats the buffalo-demon Mahisasura. In all her exploits the lion is her mount, ferocious in look and action. The lion also symbolised in all ancient civilizations as the solar, igneous and luminous principle of life and knowledge.¹² The lion is well represented in our religious digests and others, adoration to him along with the goddess is enjoyed with reference to this point the *Vaikrtika Rahasya* appended to the Saptasasti states 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 right side.¹³

*Vamabhage grato devyas chinnsirsam mahasuram//29
Pujayen mahisam yena Praptam Sayujyam isaya /
daksine paratah simham samagram dharmam isvaram//30*

As the symbol of the divine energies embodied by the great Goddess, who is stated to have been born out of the *tejas* of all the gods in order to slaughter the buffalo-demon, the lion express the heroism and prowess necessary to defeat the *asurik* forces contrasting with the Hindu dharama. Furthermore, the lion can be even taken to represent the heroism and

strength required from the *sadhaka* to enter the dangerous path of Shakta-Tantric religious practices, full of pitfalls for the uninitiated.¹⁴ In Indian context the lion is considered to be an animal full of Shakti(power) with a devaic and *sattvik* being of rhythmic movement. As far as Shakta iconography is concerned, the lion almost invariably accompanies the images of Parvati, Mahisamardini and Simhavahini Durga and is also represented in the most part of the composite Saiva-Shakta images, such as Ardhanarisvara and Umamahesvara, as the symbolic animal lion associated with the feminine side of the sculpture. Of course, from an orthodox Brahmanical point of view, it was only the lion, that acted in all ages as the celestial vehicle of the Mahadevi.¹⁵ It represents lordly power in general and lordly power of wild beasts in particular. The image of this animal, expressing a sense of rhythm, is thought to be made up *Prakriti maya-shakti*. Therefore, the lion partakes in the divine essence of the great Goddess, the transforming energy of the universe.¹⁶

In the Brahmanical pantheon the lion not only has relation with the Goddess, but also with Siva and Visnu. A lion sculpture placed on its *Vahana-Stambha* faces the main portal of most of the Shakta Shrines. A Shakta *pitha* is always guarded by a image of lion facing its main entrance, just like a Nandi image in a Saivite Shrine and a Garuda image in a Vaisnavite Shrine. The decorative sculptural element of Orissan temples called *gajasimha*, formed by an lion trampling on a crouching elephant marked the victory of divine light over *asurik* darkness.¹⁷ The Saiva tradition, as attested in the *Varaha Purana*, knows a leonine form of Siva which the god assumed in his Virabhadra incarnation to kill the elephant demon Nila.¹⁸ The lion's association with Visnu appears more consistent due to his incarnation as Narasimha.

Lion, the royal beast, the mount of Goddess Durga, represents the best in animal creation. It can also represent the greed for food and hence the greed for other objects of enjoyment, which invariably leads to lust. Goddess Durga in Simhavahini form is a lesson for the control of animal instincts in human beings.

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Shakta Pitha Bhattarika

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Shakta Pitha Bhattarika of Badamba in the district of Cuttack is one of the notable holy place of Orissa. This sacred pitha is associated with Devi Bhattarika. The river Mahanadi the longest river of Orissa flows in the side of the temple of the Bhattarika. The river is deep here. In the foot of the Ratnagiri hill temple of Bhattarika is located. River Mahanadi, Ratnagiri hill, temple of Bhattarika, and famous places like Narayana, Nilamadhava, Vindhya vasini, Simhanath attract thousands of Pilgrims, devotees and tourists.



According to a popular legend this pitha is established by Parsuram and also he carved the image of goddess in the tip of his arrow. In this pitha Parsurama penanced to gain mercy of the deity to kill Bhattas or Kshetriyas. The Goddess became pleased with him and offered him the desired boom. So the Pitha is associated to the epic age. According to the Ramayan, Ram, Lakshmana and Sita on their

way to Panchvati paid prayer to the Goddess Bhattarika. The Mankadagadia hill on the other side of Mahanadi where the foot mark of Ram, Lakshmana and Sita are worshipped is also quite significant. Another legend says that Krishna and Satyabhama visited Bhattarika and

it was revealed to Arjun during his Agyantavasa. The Demon Gosimha kidnaped Satyabhama in disguise during that period. Arjun fought bravely and killed Gosimha demon. After that Krishna, Satyabhama and Arjun prayed Goddess Bhattarika; the presiding deity of

the Badamba royal family. The term Bhattarika has different meaning. According to History and legend of Badambagada, Gajapati of Orissa ordered Hattakishor and Mallakishor the two brothers to establish two villages named Sankha and Mahuri. After that they became king in that place. Tribal chief of that area opposed these two brothers when they tried to construct Fort. A terrible battle was fought and finally

tribal chief and his wife died in the battle. Before death the wife of the tribal chief advised king Hattakishore to worship the deity Bhattarika. Another name of the deity Bhattarika is Bruhadamba. The king named his state Bruhadamba bearing the name of the Goddess. But latter it is known as Badamba Devi Bhattarika seated in *Lalitasana* holding a lotus in one hand and the other hand in Varadamudra. She is *suryopasanatpara*. It is seen that the sun God is worshiped here. In the Jagamohan of the Bhattarika temple an image of sun god is kept. Another meaning of the Devi Bhattarika is "respectable lady." Devi Bhattarika associated with eight small images, five in *padmasana* and three in *Lalitasana*. The associated images are Prabha, Maya, Jaya, Sukshma, Visuddha, Suprabha and Abhaya. According to Buddhist "Yogachara" system the Devi is seated in the centre of Chakra associated with eight deities. The priest worships the goddess as Rajarajeswari, Mahamaya, Tripura Sundari, Siddha

Bhattarika. Some research scholars opine that the place was linked with Buddhism. At the time of Bhaumakara rule the particular place was associated with tantric Buddhism. The Somavamsis who were dead enemies of Buddhism might have converted the pitha into the Hindu fold. The tiny Buddhist image is now placed in the central niche. The present Tara image appears to be a later insertion. The worshippers of the goddess Bhattarika are non-Brahmin, this brings about a folk character of the deity. In the daily ritual of the deity the cooked fish is offered. Devi Bhattarika is considered as the deity of navigation and the Fisherman community. The popular myths, legends, archaeological evidence prove that Bhattarika Pitha has been Shakta Pitha.

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SHORT DURATION FRUIT CROPS : BANANA

The state has potentiality for both tall and dwarf banana varieties. The dwarf varieties are more prominent in inland districts while the tall varieties are widely grown in coastal tracts. Patakapura variety of banana belonging to Northman group is a traditional variety of Puri district. The fruits are more delicious and highly qualitative with poor keeping quality. This variety fetches very high prices in the market than the other types. This variety is very specific to the particular agroclimate. Under tall varieties, Champa and Chini Champa, Chakrakelli are improved types. Dwarf cavendish, Robusta, Srimanta are dwarf types grown successfully in commercial scale in the state. There are several hill bananas grown by tribals along the hill streams. The varieties are Muguni, Bukuphata, Podasingha, Birupakhi etc. There are several varieties of culinary types of Banana like Bantal, Gaja Bantal, Paunsia Bantal, Mendhi Bantal etc. Banana is considered as the most auspicious plant and the fruits are used as offering to Hindu Deities. Banana is produced in a total area of 24,700 ha. with approximate production of 2.80 lakh M.T.

Goddess Kali in Orissan Art : With Special Reference to Shyamakali at Puri

Santosh Kumar Rath

In the history of religion mother worship occupied a prominent place. The antiquity of mother worship in India dates back to Harappan civilization. The discovery of several terracotta female divinities testifies this fact. The Aryans also gave priority to the worship of mother goddesses. Later on during historical period *Devi* worship got wide acclamation due to the patronage of liberal kings. They used to build several temples for worship of the supreme goddesses like Parvati and Durga. In course of time many *Sakta* rituals and festivals have been created for the spread of Saktism. Later on many religious texts based on *Shakti* or *Devi* were written during medieval period. Till today *Devi* worship continues in full swing during Dassehra Festival held in the month of October.

Among the several manifestations of the supreme goddesses, her ten terrifying forms are popularly called *Dasamahavidya*. These ten forms are very popular since medieval period and also in modern age. The *Dasamahavidya* are Kali, Tara, Sodasi, Bhubanesvari, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Matangi, Kamala, Dhumavati and Vagalamukhi. Thus mentioned in Chamunda Tantra.

*Kali Tara Mahavidya Sodasi Bhubanesvari
Bhairavi Chhinnamastacha Matangi Kamalatmika/
Dhumavati cha Vagala Mahavidyah Prakirtitah/*

Among these goddesses Kali is the first and most important *Mahavidya*. Literally Kali means "Dark-complexioned One". According to *Mahabhagavata Purana*, Kali as a *Mahavidya* originated from the fury of *Devi Sati* to terrify Lord *Shiva*. According to *Saktisangama Tantra*, the *Mahavidyas* are linked with ten *Bhairavas*. In this way Kali is linked with 'Mahakala Bhairava'. Kali is also known as Ratri *Devi* or Kalaratri.

Legend has it, that after her fight with *Mahisasura*, *Devi Durga* became extremely angry and took the ferocious dark complexioned form, assumed short height and began to walk on the ground. This form of *Devi* came to be known as Kali. With lolling out tongue, she started dancing blindly. The gods and people in extreme fear appealed *Siva* for help. Lord *Siva* realising the gravity of the situation lay himself down on the way on which the ferocious naked Kali was coming. In her blind fury the *Devi* could not see him and stepped on his chest. On the very moment *Siva's linga* became erect and entered Kali's body. At that time Kali recognised her husband Lord *Siva* and pulled out her tongue in shame. This description of Kali engaged in reverse copulation with Lord *Siva* became very popular in texts and iconography. According to these texts her *Dhyanas* have been created. The above mentioned description confirms the iconography of *Daksina Kali* which is very popular.

Antiquity of Goddess Kali

Kali is regarded as one of the famous deities in India. The earliest reference of Kali can be found in the *Mundak Upanishad*.⁴

"Kali karalika manojabhaca sulohitaya ca sudhumra varna sphulingini visvarupa ca Devi lolayamanaiti saptajihva".

The Vedic literature associates Kali with another ferocious goddess Nirtti as both of them are dark complexioned. But during post-Vedic period Nirtti lost her popularity and Kali rose to prominence.⁵ According to scholars Kali is the later form of Vedic goddess Nirtti. The great epic *Mahabharata* also depicts about Kali. Goddess Chamunda is referred as Kali in the famous *Durgasaptasati*.⁶ It is to note that earlier in Hinduism Kali was not regarded as an important deity, but later on she is considered as a form of Durga. In *Agni Purana* and *Garuda Purana*, Kali is described as the furious aspect of Durga and worshipped for wining wars. It is also described that she resides in the cremation ground wearing a garland to skulls. Jadabharata worshipped Kali as the tutelary deity of the bandits. The famous text *Silapadhikaranam* of South India has described her as the goddess of death worshipped by the bandits.⁷ The *Kinasariya* Stone Inscription of Cacca dated 999 A.D. referred about Kali in her terrific form.⁸ In the Oriya *Ramayana* written by Balaram Das in the 15th c. A.D. vivid description about Kali occurs.⁹ In *Shyamasaparyavidhi* written by Kasinath in the year 1699 A.D., the first reference of Kali worship occurred.¹⁰

Kali worship is prevalent in whole India but it is very popular in eastern part (mostly in Bengal and coastal Orissa), next to the worship of Durga. She is worshipped both at home in her benevolent aspect and in shrines with tantric rituals. Besides daily worship at shrines Goddess Kali is specially worshipped on the

day of 'Dipavali'. Her *Vija-mantra* is *krim*. It is to be noted that animal sacrifice is a special feature during the worship of Kali. The present form of Kali worship is mainly based upon three texts namely *Kali Tantra*, *Tantrasara* and *Shyamarahasya*.

Various Forms of Kali

Devi Kali's position was raised to a greater height by several *Tantra Sastras*. According to *Tulaja Tantra*, *Devi's* well known forms are eight,¹¹ such as Daksina Kali, Siddhi Kali, Guhya Kali, Sri Kali, Bhadra Kali, Chamunda Kali, Smasana Kali and Mahakali. The *Mahakali Samhita* give the names of nine Kalis, such as - Daksina Kali, Bhadra Kali, Smasana Kali, Kalakali, Guhya Kali, Kamakali, Dhana Kali, Chandi Kali. The text *Tantraloka* written by Abhinavagupta mentions about thirteen forms¹², such as : Kalisri Kali, Samhara Kali, Sthiti Kali, Rakta Kali, Sukali, Yama Kali, Mrityu Kali, Rudra or Bhadra Kali (concert of Virabhadra), Paramaraka Kali, Martanda Kali, Kalagni Rudra Kali, Mahakali, and Mahabhairavaghorachanda Kali. The nine forms of Kali are described¹³ in the *Tantrasara* and *Agamatatvavilasa* of Raghunatha are as follows : Daksina Kali, Maha Kali, Smasana Kali, Guhya Kali, Bhadrakali, Chamunda Kali, Siddha Kali, Hamsa Kali and Kamakala Kali.

Kali in Orissan Art

Though Kali is regarded as an important deity in *Sakta* pantheon, but her images came into existence only from 15th c. A.D. onwards when *Dasamahavidya* worship gained popularity. Kali images are less depicted in temple walls in comparison to Mahisamardini images. It is noteworthy that after the completion of deplastering work of Jagannath temple at Puri, an image of Kali came to limelight.¹⁴ She serves as an *Avarana-devata*. The image is carved on the western side on the south-west corner in the upper *Angasikhara*

of the *Vimana*. The image is partially eroded. Here goddess Kali is seen standing in *Pratyalidha* pose. She has dishevelled hair and wears a garland of skull. She holds a sword and an indistinct object (possibly severed human head) in her right and left hands respectively. Her image is flanked by attendants. Perhaps this is the earliest Kali image as an *Avarana devata* in Orissan temple. Another image is located in the premises of Dhavalesvara Siva temple near Cuttack. Here *Devi* is seated in *Lalita* pose on a lotus under which a corpse can be seen. In her principal right hand she holds a rosary and holds a sword by her uplifted back hand. Her right middle arm as well as all the left arms are broken. She wears a *Kirita-mukuta* and possesses a third eye. In later examples when Kali images are standardised, many new things are added. A four-armed Kali image can be noticed in an exterior niche of the Samalai temple at Sonapur. Here Kali is depicted in dancing pose on a corpse. She holds a *Kartri* and a sword by her right hands while she holds a *Kapala* by her uplifted back right hand.¹⁵ She has placed her left hand in the neck of a standing figure, who is *Urdhvalinga*. She possesses dishevelled hair and wears *Patra-kundala*.

As a *Parsva-devata*, the images of Kali appeared from 10th c.A.D. onwards. For example the image of Kali as a *Parsva-devata* appear on the ruined Bhimesvari temple at Pedagadi, dated to late 10th c.A.D. In the compound of Samalai temple at Sambalpur a rare example of eight handed Kali can be noticed. She is seen seated in *Vajraparyankasana* on a lotus pedestal. Her front right and left hands hold a mace and a small pot while her other right hands are seen holding a rosary, trident and a sword. The remaining left hands hold a skull filled with severed human head, an indistinct object and a shield.¹⁶ She possesses dishevelled hair.

Another image is found at the base of the back *Rahapaga* of the Baliharachandi temple near Puri. Here Kali holds a serpent. She holds a skull and a severed head by her left hands. She stands in *Alidha pose* on the body of Lord Siva who is *Urdhvalinga*. Images of Kali as *Parsva-devata* are found in places like Palur in Ganjam district, Bhagavati temple at Sonapur, in the *Jagamohana* of Samalai temple at Sonapur, Bausani temple in Phulbani district, Daksinachandi temple at Kantilo etc.

Goddess Kali as a presiding deity can be seen in several shrines of Orissa. In the compound of Kosalesvara temple at Badakanjia in Puri district a two-armed image of Kali is worshipped as Rudrani. She is seen seated in *Lalita* pose on a corpse. She holds a sword over her head by her right hand while her left hand holds a severed head.¹⁷ She wears a garland of skull. On stylistic ground this image belongs to 16th/17th c.A.D. Another image is located near the Lankesvari temple at Junagarh, who is known as Bhubanesvari. She possesses four hands and is seen dancing on a corpse. She holds a severed head and a sword in her lower right and uplifted hands while her other corresponding hands hold a noose and a skull.¹⁸ One rare image of *Devi* is noticed in a small temple at Laksminarayanpur in Cuttack district. She possesses four-arms and stands on Lord Siva's body. She displays *Abhayamudra* and *Varadamudra* by her uplifted right and lower hands, while she holds a sword (now not in situ) and a severed head by her uplifted left hand and lower hand respectively.¹⁹ In the Mangala temple at Kakatpur, Kali is seen standing in *Alidha* pose on the prostrate body of Siva. *Devi's* right hands show *Varada* and *Abhaya murdras* while her left hands displays a sword and severed head. She also wears a skull garland.²⁰ The prostrate body of Siva is depicted with *Urdvalinga* pose here. The above description confirms the *Dhyana* of Dakshina Kali.

Goddess Kali is also depicted in the *Pattachitras* on cloth, interior wall paintings and in ritual murals. Specially in Ganjam district paintings of Kali can be seen in Osakothi festival. It is interesting to note that in a painting at Banasvaranasi, Kali stands on the bank of a river in the mountain landscape. She holds a scimitar and severed heads in her left hands while she displays *Varadamudra* in her right hand. Her uplifted right hand shows a trident.²¹ She is yellow coloured. Another interesting painting from the inner wall of the *Mandapa* of Raghunath Jew temple at Cuttack depicts Hanuman sacrificing Ahi Ravana, the son of Ravana born in Patala, before goddess Kali. Here she is depicted with her usual attributes. Besides these other paintings of Kali are noticed at Dadhivamana temple at Koilo near Salepur (Cuttack district), Paschimesvara temple at Talcher and in some temples at Puri.

Among the moving deities of Kali made of metal, mention may be made of an image in the Narayani temple at Paradipgarh. Another example of this type of image can be noticed in the Sambalpur University Museum. These images are either the above mentioned *Parsva-devatas* and presiding deities.

Goddess Shyamakali at Puri

Puri, the abode of Lord Jagannath, which is celebrated as a Vaisnava centre is also famous for its *Sakta* temples. Both inside and outside the premises of famous Jagannath temple there are several temples dedicated to *Sakta* divinities such as Vimala, Laksmi, Bhubanesvari, Harachandi, Daksina Kali, Shyamakali, etc. which indicates the popularity of Saktism at Puri. There is a temple dedicated to goddess Kali at Bali Sahi. Perhaps it is the earliest shrine where Kali (locally known as Shyamakali) is the presiding deity. The area where the temple is located is named as "Shyamakali Lane" after the name of the

goddess. There is a good approach road to this temple which connects the major road (locally known as "Uansa danda") which runs from Lion's gate to the sea.

From a text known as *Kali Archana Chandrika*, it is known that during the reign of Gajapati Kapilendra Dev, Shyamakali was worshipped under a Vakula tree.²² With the gradual march of time a secondary royal palace was built near that place by the Gajapati kings, of which little remains now. After Kapilendra Dev, his son Purusottama Dev became king. His *Rajaguru* Trilochana Dev and his wife Ratnavati were great devotees of Shyamakali. In the year 1599 A.D. Madhusingh, the brother of Mughal General Mansingh built the temple of Shyamakali.²³ During the Muslim invasion all the royal ceremonies were observed in the temple of Shyamakali. Till 1599 A.D., all the rituals were performed according to the text *Durgotsava Chandrika*. But afterwards *Kali Archana Chandrika* gained importance in the rituals of Shyamakali. During the first quarter of 18th c.A.D. the *Rajaguru* of king Ramachandra Dev- II, Paramalaksmi Rajaguru used to worship Shyamakali with tantric rituals. In the beginning of 19th c.A.D. the famous freedom fighter Jayi Rajaguru was also a great devotee of Shyamakali. Goddess Shyamakali is the tutelary deity of Gajapati kings. Till today, according to the royal custom, the new king after his coronation, first visits this temple and worship Kali. Now-a-days little remains of the said palace (earlier known as Puruna Nahara/Bali Nahara) are left. But other temples like Astasambhu and Radhakrishna alongwith Shyamakali temple stands testimony to the royal grandeur of the then age.

The iconography of Shyamakali confirms the *Dhyana* of Daksina Kali prescribed in the *Sastras*. Here Kali stands in *Pratyaldha* pose on the chest of Lord Siva and possesses four hands. She is engaged here in reverse

cohabitation with Lord Siva. She holds a sword and displays *Abhaya-mudra* in her upper left and right hands respectively while her lower left hand is holding a severed human head and the lower right displays *Varada-mudra*. In this context it is noteworthy that her benevolent aspect is attested by holding of the sword in her left hand. Because the sword in right hand symbolises destruction. She possesses three eyes and is surrounded by jackals and vultures carved on the side.²⁴ The height of the image is around four feet.²⁵ From artistic point of view this image belongs to 15th c.A.D.

There are other two images installed on the left side of Shyamakali. These images are four-handed and known as Vimala and Sarbamangala. Some ascribe them as Chandika. Like the famous Vimala image of Jagannath temple, this icon of Vimala is seen standing and holding a noose, a human figure and a vase. Likewise the seated image of Mangala holds a full moon, rosary and lotus. The significant aspect of this image is that she holds a pestle in her upper left hand.

Thus it is inferred from the above discussion that Kali has occupied a prominent place in *Sakta* pantheon. But most of her images came into existence from 15th century onwards. Among the different forms of the Devi, the Daksina Kali aspect is the most popular both in texts and iconography. Most of the Kali images including Shyamakali image at Puri confirms the *Dhyana* of Daksina Kali. Being the tutelary deity of the Gajapati kings of Puri, Shyamakali ranked one among the famous goddesses of Puri. From iconographic point of view, her image is the only of its kind in entire Orissa.

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Lajja Gauri : The Nude Goddess or Shameless Woman - Orissan Examples

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Striking images of a certain goddess having variously referred to as 'the shy woman', 'the shameless woman', 'the nude squatting goddess', 'the mother goddess' or because her historical name remains unknown, by numerous names, among them Sakambari, Prithvi, Aditi, Lajja Gauri, Renuka, Kottavi, Nagva Kabamdha etc. Usually one finds them lying in birth position, the spread-out legs drawn up laterally and bent at the knees, the soles of the feet turned upward, the arms bent upwards and the hands, each holding a lotus bud.. touch upon the petals of the large and open lotus blossom that crowns the image, as its neck and head.

India presents the unusual phenomenon of a traditional society that has produced religious art continuously from at least the third millenium B.C. to the present, within supposed canonical prescriptions, but actually with a great range of variation of forms. There are a great variety of mythological hybrids that are fixed features of the vocabulary of Indian art. Among them are found primordial and powerful symbols whose origins within the culture cannot be traced, yet whose omniscience within the art and culture indicate their usefulness within it. Lajja Gauri, in artistic and conceptual ancestry, descends from a group of ancient popular symbols, among others, the lotus and the purna kumbha, or brimming pot. Conceptually Lajja Gauri has antecedents, which may be, and in fact have been, traced back to the Indus or the Chalcolithic culture of India.

On the human level, the image of Lajja Gauri acts as a temporal reference point, that is, the female giving birth, an auspicious occurrence: she is the embodiment of the idea of fertility. On the divine level, Lajja Gauri is the embodiment of the idea of fertility, of generation, of life- force. On the cosmic level, the image suggests universal laws and processes of generation of life.

Lajja Gauri is almost always made to lie on her back, supine. The toes of the recumbent figure tensely splayed as if she is in the act of giving birth, yet there is no indication of pregnancy. Some say that the goddess is simply indecent, shameless, and the pose indicated sexual receptiveness although certainly, the pose is sexually suggestive. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, although some do give birth miraculously, Indian goddesses are never pregnant in imagery or myth. The pose of Lajja Gauri is ambiguous, but probably intentionally so since the pose of sexual receptivity and the pose of giving birth are the same. The human form and the intercourse/ birth pose are used as a metaphor for creation. In turn human parturition is used in this image as a metaphor for divine creation. We have seen women who do not get children for along time worship Lajja Gauri. Butter and red lead are applied on the vagina and breasts and they pray for children.

Figures of the goddess Lajja Gauri range in size from two inches to over life-size and

are made either through time and region from the minimal and nearly aniconic to the fully human. Truly these figures appear at the beginning of Christian era. In most of the Lajja Gauris, the vagina is prominently depicted as if the figure is about to give birth. In many cases these female figures are shown without the head. We do not know the exact reason behind this widespread motif. One of the suggestions is that, because of her nudity, the goddess felt ashamed, and hence the face was not shown. Whatever it may be this picture became very popular, because probably it satisfied the human aspiration for children. Hence it is not only represented and worshipped today in many parts of India but it is found depicted in churches and monuments as far as South East Asia.

We have got two Lajja Gauri plaques measuring 10 to 12 cm, carve don limestone from the Nuapada district of Orissa. On stylistic ground, it may be assigned to the 8th century A.D. It is carved on squatting position without stretched legs, the common posture of female during child-birth. Pendant breast, navel and vulva etc. are conspicuous features of its blooming youth and also a pointer to the fertility cult. The most outstanding features of the deities are that they are headless. Instead of the head, lotus leaves with stem are delineated on the neck, as if it is efflowering from it. Some lotus leaves along with elongated stems are also discerned on the right side of the shoulder, as if they emerge from the neck and bend to the right. Thus, the upper part of the figurine adorned with vegetation, unfolds a vegetative and fecundity aspects of its nature.

Interestingly similar representation is also found among the Bhiyans, a hunting gathering and shifting cultivator community of Orissa. Indeed, we do not know whether the tribals are the imitators, or have continued the tradition of their distant forefathers, the

chalcolithic people who are believed to have been the early inhabitants of India. Another example comes from the Bastar region of Madhya Pradesh. Here outstretched leg posture of a female is found carved in Gotul or youth dormitory of Muria tribe. The outstretched leg posture of semi squatting position of the motif, thus conveys the sense of kama (sexuality). At the same time, sexuality correlates with fertility ritual or vice versa. Belief in the relation of sex and vegetative-fertility is fathomed by many tribal communities of Eastern India.

We have a Harappan seal, in which a woman is shown with her legs stretched wide apart and a plant issuing from her vagina. This indeed is a symbol of fertility. For centuries this continued to hold the Indian mind, as examples from historical period testify.

The village goddess of fertility, embodies, very often the composite features of sex and fertility. As such, numerous female deities of fertility-nature either in anthropomorphic shape or in aniconic features are commonly found in peasant India. The fact reveals thus the highest regard accorded to the woman folk, who coalesced in her person sexuality and fertility, like copulation, conception and birth. The idea traversed to the Art Tradition of India where erotic art found fused with fertility. The artist who carved Lajja Gauri images were aware of the more simply erotic images, but they distinguished her image through incorporation of rich symbolism.

Meanwhile, the image of Lajja Gauri still remains enigmatic. It is obvious that there still remain quite a few questions regarding the identification, status, affiliation and disappearance of the intriguing Lajja Gauri to be answered.

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A Peep into the *Candi* Text

Rajkishore Mishra

Saptasati Chandi

Sri Candi is not exclusively a single independent treatise. It is the portion of *Markandeya Mahapurana*. To be precise it contains the narrations described in the 81st to 93rd chapters of the said text. In the *Markandeya Purana*, this portion is otherwise known as *Devi Mahatmya* or *Saptasati* as it comprises seven hundred mantras.

Narration of Prodigious Birds

Once sage Jaimini (the author of *Mimamsasutras* and the disciple of Vedavyasa) approached Markandeya rsi to get some intricate questions raised in the *Mahabharat* clarified. Since Markandeya was otherwise busy he advised Jaimini to approach the erudite sons of Dronamuni (i.e. Pingaksa, Viradha, Suputra and Sumukha) who were then transformed to birds on account of paternal curse and were perching in a cave-habitat on the Vindhya mount. When approached, they clarified all doubts of Jaimini. Being glad Jaimini further asked the bird-shaped sons of Dronamuni about the 14th *manvantara*. In reply the birds reiterated what they had heard in the past when sage Markandeya was enlightening Kraustiki (or Bhaguri), the son of a brahmin.

Savarni and the 8th Manvantara

The sage Markandeya first told Kraustiki about the seven *manvantaras*, i.e. Svayambhuva, Svarocisa, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Caksusa and Vaivasvata. Being further asked Markandeya enlightened Kraustiki about the evolution of the eighth Manu Savarni. Savarni was son to Savarna and Surya who later became sovereign in the 8th *manvantara* (a period spanning over 4320,000 solar years). Earlier in the second *manvantara* (i.e. during the regime of Svarocisa) Maharaja Suratha (who was born in *Caitra* clan) was a great devotee of Candi. By her grace he was blest to be born a Manu in the eighth Savarnika *manvantara*. This episode and the stories relating to the slaying of Madhu-Kaitabha, Mahisasura and Sumbha-Nisumbha form the corpus of the *Candi* running over 13 chapters.

Medhas Narrates Before Suratha

Back in the hoary past, it was Medhas muni who narrated the glories of the Devi before the king Suratha who was in the company of a merchant named Samadhi. Markandeya knew this. So he narrated it before Kraustiki (alias Bhaguri). The bird-shaped sons of Dronamuni who were privileged to hear this now narrated the same before the sage Jaimini.

Devi Mahatmya in Other Texts

This *Devi Mahatmya* as described in the *Markandeya Purana* also finds place in other *purana*-s either in clipped or extended formats.

The episode of Maharaja Surath finds mention in chapters 32, 34, 35 of the 5th canto and in the 10th chapter of the 10th canto of *Devi Bhagavat*. It is also narrated in 61-64 chapters (*Praktikhanda*) of *Brahama Vaivartta Purana* (said to predate *Markandeya Purana*).

The slaying of Madhu-Kaitabh finds mention in 6th-9th chapters and 11th chapter of the 10th canto of *Devi Bhagavat*. Besides, it is also mentioned in the 72nd chapter of the *Uttara kanda* of the *Ramayana* and in the 347th chapter of the *Santi Pava* of the *Mahabharat*.

So also the mention of Mahisasura's death is mentioned in the *Devi Bhagavat* (5/2-20, 10/12), in *Vamana Purana* (ch. 17-30) and in *Skanda Purana* (Ch.83, *Prabhas Khanda*, ch.36 *Arbuda Khanda*, ch 67 *Brahmakhanda* and ch.s 119-121, *Nagara Khanda*).

The death of Sumbha-Nisumbha is reflected in *Devi Bhagavat* (5/21-31), *Vamana Purana* (Ch 55 & 56) and in *Skanda Purana* (*Arbuda*-24).

Saptasati with Technical Divisions

Sri Candi is otherwise known as *Saptasatistava* which apparently means that it comprises 700 verses (*ś'loka*-s). But it is not true. In fact it contains only 518 *sloka*-s which is spread over 100 *mantra*-s. Tantracarya Bhaskar Ray alias Bhasurananda Nath of Tanjore in the 17th C. has made a clear-cut division of *Saptasati Candi* as per the following :

1. *Slokatmaka*(verse-oriented) *Mantra* - 537
2. *Ardhaslokatmaka* (half-verse) -do- - 38
3. *Tripad* (three-lined ones) -do- - 66
4. *Uvaca* (Thus said) -do- 57
5. *Punarukta* (Said again) -do- 2

700

Three Primal Manifestations of Candi

The *Candi* treatise is divided into three segments. The first segment or *Prathama carita* refers to the 1st chapter, the second segment or *Madhyama carita* refers to the whole of 2, 3 and 4 chapters whereas the third segment or *Uttama carita* refers to the narrations starting from the 5th to the conclusive 13th chapter. Three deities, i.e., Mahakali (or Yoganidra who was instrumental in slaying the demons Madhu and Kaitabha by Narayana), Mahalaksmi (a unique deity who was recipient of all valour and glamour of gods and who crushed the fierce demon Mahisasura) and Maha Sarasvati (who sprung from the body of Gauri to kill Sumbha and Nisumbha) are verily the primordial forms of Candi as described in the above-mentioned segments.

Mahakali presents a fierceful dark figure with ten faces, ten hands and twenty eyes. She holds in her hands a sword, arrow, mace, club, conch, disc, an iron bar, a fire arm, a club-shaped bludgeon etc and a bleeding human skull. She embodies the *tamas* attribute of Sri Candi.

Mahalaksmi is of motley colours as she is recipient of multiple hue from numerous gods and divinities. Her face is white, hands are blue whereas her feet are crimson. She is eighteen-armed. She carries in her hands a rosary, lotus, an arrow, sword, a thunder-bolt, mace, disc, trident, conch, a gong, noose, a

spear, a drinking vessel and a *kamandalu* etc. She embodies the *rajas* attribute of Sri Candi. she confers on her devotee great erudition (*esa sampujita bhaktya sarvajnatvam prayachhati*)

Maha Saraswati is eight-armed. She embodies the *sattvik* aspect of Sri Candi. She holds in her hands an arrow, a club, a pestle, conch, disc, gong, a plough and an arch etc. She confers wisdom on her devotee.

Efficaciousness of Candi Reading

Matsya Purana prescribes repetition of three times of Candi recitation (*triravrtta*) for cure from physical ailments, for relief from malefic planets five times (*pancavrtta*); from impending disaster seven times; for ensuring peace nine times; for winning royal favours eleven times; for overpowering foes twelve times; for release from prison twentyfive times; for cure from cancer thirty times; for relief from great dishonour a hundred times; to mitigate loss of wealth and for steady prosperity one thousand times etc.

An aspirant devotee enjoys all prosperity and disease-free life if he involves himself in the reading of *Candi*. One who does not aspire for material prosperity can also gain scholarship. Maharaja Suratha in the days of yore got unmixed prosperity whereas the merchant (*Vais'ya*) Samadhi was endowed with divine knowledge. If Sri Candi is pleased, she confers on her astute devotees both earthly prosperity and erudition (*Sa yacita ca vijnanam tusta rddhim prayachhati*).

Obligatory Prelude to Candi Patha

Before reciting the *Candi* text one should bear in mind that the Rg Veda (125th hymn of Xth *mandala*) contains the essence of the Mother Spirit. The famous hymn therein is

known as *Devi Sukta* or *Vak Sukta*, expressed through a woman-seer named Vak, daughter of Maharsi Ambhruna. This *Devi Sukta* is the gateway to the *Candi* text.

It has also been prescribed that a dedicated devout should, before the commencement of reading of *Candi*, read *Argala Stotra*, *Kilaka Stava* and *Devi Kavaca* in a sequential order. *Argala* is a door-closing device. One should unhook it for smooth passage. It contains 27 couplets. Soon after reading out the *Argala* one should concentrate on the *Kilak Stava*. The *Kilaka* is another device for obstruction. It is a curse levied by Mahadeva on the *Candi* text so that no layman can have access to *Candi* for selfish purposes. The *Kilaka Stava* contains 16 couplets. The *Devi Kavaca* then follows it. *Kavaca* means a shield. By reading this a devotee shields both his mind and body for an unimpeded journey in life. So many divinities including nine forms of Durga, seven *Matrkas*, ten Dikpala-s etc are invoked in this *stava* to make the devotee invincible and inviolable and worthy of studying the *Candi* text. *Japet saptasati candim krtva kavacamaditah / Nirvighnena bhavet siddhiscandijapa - samudbhava*. This *kavaca* authored by Hariharabrahma contains sixty couplets. After reading out all these and complying with all instructions therein, one should commence on reading the *Candi* text with profound concentration.

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Sakti Worship in Orissan Inscriptions

Bharati Pal

The Supreme deity of the *Tantra* is known as the Sakti, inseparable from Siva. It is the Sakti in the *Tantra* which is said to have brought the Universe into existence, and that preserves it from the disruptive forces. She governs the Universe and overwhelms us with wonder and awe. In other words it can be said that Sakti denotes divine energy, glorifying the Mother aspect of God. This Universe, is begotten of her free will, who is the beginning of all. She is Kali, Tara, Bhubanesvari, Bagala, Bhairavi, Chinnamasta, Matangi and Kamala. She appears at times to destroy the *Asuras* and assumes four hands and occasionally two, six, eight, ten or even thousand hands. She resides in the cremation ground, where all the worldly objects are being reduced to ashes. Maha Sakti is Maha Yogini connecting the links of creation, preservation and destruction of the Universe. She creates the Universe, preserve it and destroy it with all its animate and inanimate objects. She is worshipped as *Adya*, being the beginning of all. She is the origin of all and, She is said to be the great creator and the commander of all.

In the form of the Mother Goddess she was the popular deity in the ancient period. A terracotta figurine from Harappa represent a nude female with a plant issuing out of her womb. She represents mother Sakambhari.

Kautilya mentioned "Devi" in his Arthasastra as a spirit of vegetation in connection with the sowing of seeds. From the Earth Goddess she was later conceived as the war Goddess for the protection of her devotees. The cult of Sakti worship is thus wide and varied both in space and time. Her most common feature is that she has beautiful yellow complexion and her arms holds weapons to kill Mahisasura.

In the earliest epigraphical evidence regarding Sakti worship in Orissa, we find mention in the Teresingha Plate of Maharaja Tushtikara, who worshipped the goddess Sakti in the name of Stambhesvari. He ruled as an independent king over the Kalahandi region during 5th - 6th century A.D and worshipped Goddess Stambhesvari (*Stambhesvari Pada Bhakta*). It is also revealed from the copper plate grants of Sulki family, who ruled as subordinate rulers under the Bhaumakaras in 9th -10th century A.D that they were the great devotees of goddess Stambhesvari. She was worshipped as a '*Kula-devata*' or tutelary deity of the Sulki dynasty. It is written in the plates of Ranastambha '*Asya Kuladevata-Bhagavati-Stambhesvari-Bhattarikam-Sakshini-Krutva*'. The Hindol Plate of Kulastambha also refers to the grant having been made the '*Kuladevata -Stambhesvari- Bhattarika*'. Further it is written '*Asmad Kula-Devata Stambhesvari-*

Bhatarika -Pramani Krutya'. The Hindol Plate of the same king contains a similar statement, with some addition to the epithet of Stambhesvari. It describes the gift as having been witnessed by the '*Kuladevata*' Stambhesvari who is worshipped by the gods, demons, learned men and ascetics, as '*danam-idam-asmad-adi-Kuladevatam-bhoga-vitim-Sur-asura-vidvainMuni-manuja-Vandita-Srimat Stambhesvari-Bhatarikam-Pramani Krutya Pratipaditam -asmai*'.

Besides the king Sulki, in the Plates of Bhanja Ranabhanjadeva, we get reference of goddess Stambhesvari. The epithet written as '*Samadhigata-Pancha-Mahasabda*' describe him as having obtained the favour of the goddess Stambhesvari. (*Stambhesvari-Labdha-Vara- Prasada*).

As regards the Stambhesvari, the family deity of the Sulkis, it is said that the representation of goddess was probably made out on a *Stambha* indicating a Siva-Linga, Such a Linga with the representation of the Sakti is no doubt found among the sculptural remains of Eastern India. It should, however be pointed out that whatever may have been the form of the goddess worshipped by the Sulkis, the deity Stambhesvari is still adored by the people of the different castes of Orissa and in some parts of the country under the Prkritic name Khambesvari and in the shape of a post or pillar. Therefore the word Stambhesvari seems to indicate merely the goddess of the pillars without any special association with the Siva linga.

The cult of this goddess is an instance of the Hinduization of an autochthonous deity, whose worship is still prevalent in Western Orissa, although she is no longer always represented by a post.

In the Chamunda Image Inscription of Vatsadevi of Bhumakara dynasty , we get reference of Sakti worship. Queen Vatsadevi installed the image of goddess Chamunda in the Trilochana temple at Jajpur. The inscription simply refers that "*Siddham-Rajni-Vatsadevayah Kirttih*" (Let there be success. This image of goddess Chamunda is the fame of the queen Vatsadevi.)

In the Jatesingha and Dungri Plates of Mahasivagupta of Somavamsi dynasty there is mention of the establishment of goddess 'Sri Panchambari Bhadrabika' in Suvarnapura, who at the prayer of all people grant them boons in her mercy. We also get reference of Sakti worship during the Suryavamsi period. In the Warangal Inscription of Raghudeva we get the name goddess 'Gangamangalam Chandi'. It is mentioned that he was the devotee of goddess Gangamangala Chandi or Durga and also having been a favourite son of the goddess Durga.

In the Balasore Plate of Purushottama deva, the charter begins with the line '*Sri Jaya Durgayai Namah*'.

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Reminiscence of Gandhiji's Visits to Puri

Dr. Binodini Das

In the year 1915, Gandhiji returned from South Africa to India with his successful experiments on 'Satyagraha'. He also made further experiments on Satyagraha at Champaran (1917), in the Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918) and against the Rowlatt Act (1919). His Satyagraha is based upon a cardinal principle of truth and non-violence. He advocates in his *Young India*, "Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute." His pragmatism made him to realise that it was too difficult to raise a war against a mighty power like English. But to energise the spirit among the people of India, he enthusiastically encouraged to carry out a peaceful resistance against the British rule in India. His political messages emboldened with philosophies electrified the nationalist sentiments of the people irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

The Jallianwall Bagh Massacre of 13th April, 1919 at Amritsar gave rise to Khilafat Movement and it paved the way for Hindu-Muslim unity in Lucknow Session of All India Congress Committee (AICC) meet. The combined efforts of Hindus and Muslims in the form of granting liberty to Swami Sradhanand to preach from the pulpit of Jama Masjid and permitting Dr. Kitchlu to hold the key of Golden Temple at Amritsar could not

break the audacity of the British authorities: the Rowlatt Act was not revoked; there was no sign of making any amends for the atrocities in the Punjab, or granting Swaraj to the nationalists. The Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement was not a successful one.

In the special session held in September 1920 at Calcutta, Gandhi suggested to carry out a non-cooperation movement against the Government so long the latter would not redress the follies committed by her and also would promise to satisfy the nationalist urge for self-government. All the Congress leaders present there extended their enthusiastic support to Gandhiji. Once again, it was endorsed in the Annual Meet of AICC held in Nagpur in the month of December



1920. Gandhiji instructed the Non-Cooperation programme to be launched in a peaceful manner with boycotting government educational institutions, organisations, offices, law courts, and legislatures, etc. Side by side, this programme was to be constructively oriented, i.e. to popularise the cult of Charkha and Khadi. This was, of course, a dynamic move and had brought dynamic changes in the attitudes and activities of the Congress leaders.

Gandhiji's charismatic appeal mobilised the people struggling for Swaraj in India. An urge was felt that Gandhi should make visits to different provinces in order to baptize the people with his political mission imbued with socio-economic development programmes. This would, of course, lead to gather momentum and to provide impetus among the people. Orissa was also infested with same impulses. It was Gopabandhu Das of village Suando of Puri district who, like Bhagiratha, persuaded Gandhiji to visit Orissa. And accordingly, Gandhiji paid his first visit to Orissa on 23rd March 1921. He reached at Cuttack on the same day and delivered his speech in different meetings. Then he went to Bhadrak from where he returned back to Satyabadi School on 27th to see its functioning. One thing appealed him here was that he noticed the spark of nationalism among the poor sections of the society who, ignoring their utter poverty, contributed paisa, pie and its fragmental units.²

On the same day, Gandhiji with his followers like Kasturba, Rajendra Prasad, etc. proceeded to Puri where he received a hearty welcome from a large crowd from which a pretty number hailed from the remote areas. He addressed a large crowd-nearly 50,000 in number-in front of Simhadvara of the Great Temple. He also addressed the women in a

special meeting "on the same day. Another notable event that deserves to be illustrated here is that Gandhiji raised his voice of protest against the use of foreign clothes in the temple of Lord Jagannath and also made it a general issue in the public meeting at Puri. As a result, the people of Puri put a pressure on the temple authorities to stop the use of such practices. Gopabandhu in his editorial in "The Samaja" on 18 June 1921, strongly advocated the old practice of the temple rituals in which no foreign element of any sort was used.³ As a result of this bold pressure, the chief priest of the temple made an appeal to the people of the country not to offer any kind of foreign clothes to the deities as they were pledged to use only Swadeshi articles for worship.⁴

During his second visit to Orissa on 5th December 1927, Gandhiji spent 8th December at Banpur and from there he went to Bolagarh on 9th where he spent three days consecutively. On 11th, while he was busy in talking with Dinabandhu Andrews, he saw a bent old man holding a piece of straw in his mouth came to him. The man prostrated himself before Gandhiji. He learnt from the old man that as he was an untouchable; he did this only to show proper respect to Gandhiji. Furthermore, the old man told that the people of his caste were used to country liquor and also ate the flesh of dead animals. Gandhiji was really shocked at this information. The man again expressed his sad plight that it was not possible on his part to follow Gandhiji's advice because of the fear of being made outcast by his fellow-men. This time Gandhiji did not insist on him to contribute something for the national cause. But he pressurised the old man to practise three principles. They were: (i) he should not prostrate before anybody else; (ii) he should not be addicted to any kind of alcoholic drinks;

and (iii) he should not eat the flesh of the dead animals. Out of grief and remorse, Gandhiji wrote: "I have never seen in any place such kind of dead-peace."⁵

Gandhiji started his historic Padayatra from Puri on 9th May 1934. He attended the 'Gandhi Seba Sangha' Conference at Beraboi in Puri district in the year 1938 along with his wife Kasturba, Maulana Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel and others, but not Jawaharlal Nehru. In his address at Beraboi Conference, Gandhiji highlighted the Hindu-Muslim conflict and also suggested for the necessity of organisation of a peace-force (Santisenana). He also clarified the aims and objectives of peace-force. Of course, the peace-force started its initiative programme from Puri.⁶

There is no need to evaluate the historic importance of Gandhiji's Puri visits or other visits to different parts of Orissa. He preached the doctrine of self-sacrifice, self-reliance and self-sustenance among the people of Orissa.

We should accept that Gandhian touch revolutionised the people's mind in Orissa as a result of which they rose from their slumber and exhibited their potency in the freedom struggle for India.

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Shri Debasis Nayak, Minister for Information & Public Relations, Sports and Youth Services inaugurating the Conference of Information & Public Relations Officers at Bhubaneswar on 16.10.2004. Dr. Subas Pani, Chief Secretary of Orissa is seen addressing the Conference. Shri Digamber Mohanty, Commissioner-cum-Secretary and Shri Baishnab Prasad Mohanty, Director, I & P.R are also present.

Organic Farming for Sustainable Agriculture

Dr. B.B. Mishra
Dr. K.C. Nayak

Intensification of agriculture through massive adoption of high yielding cultivation, increased use of synthetic inputs like chemical fertilizers and pesticides, greater exploitation of irrigation potentiality of surface and ground water resources and farm mechanization have largely been responsible for a spectacular achievement in the food grain production that we have achieved over past three decades. Paradoxically however overexploitation of natural and renewable resources and indiscriminate and irrational use of synthetic inputs like inorganic fertilizers and pesticides in view of producing more and more from unit piece of land are being increasingly realized to seriously impair the ecological balance and putting the environment in jeopardy. High yielding cultivation is more fertilizer responsive which often led to aggravation of pest problem as the plants become succulent enough to be fed upon by a variety of crop pests. This in turn necessitates increasingly huge amount of pesticides to combat pest problem. Increased use of pesticides has emerged as a potential source of danger to sustainability of environment that endangers the existence of all forms of life on this planet. Perils and pitfalls of pesticides have been well evidenced due to their residual toxicity in our food chain. From a number of trials conducted across the country,

toxic residues of pesticides have been revealed in the food stuff not only of plant but also of animal origin like milk and milk products, fish, meat and egg etc. at concentrations much higher than the permissible level of human body. Therefore the apparent contradiction of our necessity for nutritional security on one hand and environmental sustainability on the other makes it inevitable to resort to the organic or eco-farming system as it appears to be a possible option to meet both these objectives. The later implies a farming system that primarily aims at cultivating land and raising crops under ecologically favourable condition. It emphasizes restricting the use of chemical inputs whether it is inorganic fertilizers or pesticides and instead, relies more on an integrated approach of crop management practices making use of cultural, biological and natural inputs. Addition of organic manures such as FYM, recycling of organic wastes through composting, green manures and biological inputs like vermicomposts and biofertilizers etc. constitute important components for plant nutrient management in organic farming. Similarly it also takes utmost advantage of the natural mechanism for pest management with utilization of bioagents such as predators and parasites available in nature in plenty and the botanical pesticides which

are effective in controlling crop pests posing no risk to the environment. Agronomic practices such as crop rotation with judicious selection of crops, inter cropping and companion cropping, stubble mulching and use of resistant varieties are among the important factors contributing to organic farming.

Organic Manures in Organic Farming

Organic manure in a broad sense includes composts from rural and urban wastes, crop residues, agro industrial bio wastes and green manures, apart from the commonly used FYM. Organic manure improves soil physical condition including soil porosity and water holding capacity and microbial environment, replenishes essential micronutrients in soil, increases the utilisation efficiency of applied fertilizers and favours micronutrient availability to the plant. Organic manure is of paramount importance not only in augmenting the crop production but also for making the agriculture sustainable as an ecofriendly means of soil health management. It is well established that FYM plays an additional role than its capacity to contribute NPK. Unlike chemical fertilizers that supply only the major nutrients, FYM is a store house of several plant nutrients and acts as a good soil conditioner.

Green manuring has recently been under practice by our farmers for decades. Estimates suggest that a 40-50 days old green manure crop can supply up to 80-100 kg. N/ha. Even if half of this N is crop utilizable, a green manure crop can be a substitute to 50-60 kg. fertilizer N/ha. Some of the potential green manuring legumes are dhanicha, sunhemp, cowpea, mung, bean, guar and berseem etc. Dhanicha, sunhemp, mung bean and guar grown during kharif season as green manure crops have been reported to contribute 8-21 tones of green

matter and 42-95 kg. of N/ha. Similarly, Khesari, cowpea and berseem grown during rabi season can contribute 12-29 tons of green matter and 67-68 kg of N/ha.

Vermicomposting

Vermicomposting is an effective means of composting the decomposable organic wastes using earthworms naturally present in the soil. Vermicomposting is a mixture of worm casts enriched with macro and micronutrients (N, P, K, Mn., Fe, Mo, B, Cu and Zn.), some growth regulating substances such as gibberellins and auxins) and useful micro flora (Azospirillum, Actinomyces and Phosphobacillus) etc. The nutrient level of vermicompost (1-1.5%N, 0.6-0.8% P and 1.2-1.5 K) is higher than any other compost. From the available information it is well documented that earthworms can consume all types of organic matter and convert them into available form of nutrients. Vermicompost improves the physical and biological condition of soil, improves soil fertility and pulverizes it through their churning and turning action in addition to contributing plant nutrients, improves aeration and water holding capacity. It is reported that soils with casts contain 5 times nitrogen, 7 times phosphorus, 11 times potash, 2 times magnesium and 7-8 times actinomyces more than in soils without earth worm casts. It being a natural means of soil fertility management fits well into integrated plant nutrient management strategy for sustainable agriculture.

Exploitation of Biological Nitrogen Fixation

Atmosphere containing as much as 78% nitrogen can be a potential source of this essential nutrient to soil utilizing the nature's own mechanism of biological nitrogen fixation. It not only offers an economic and ecofriendly

source of nutrient supply, moreover evidences show that nitrogen so derived is less prone to loss than fertilizer nitrogen and as a long term effect it builds up a reserve of readily mineralizable organic nitrogen. Thus it plays an important role in sustainable agriculture, reduces the requirement of externally applied nitrogen fertilizer and favourably influences the soil microenvironment. BNF is a natural system of biological mobilization of atmospheric nitrogen which can be easily available to and utilized by plants mediated by microorganisms like some eubacteria, cyanobacteria, actinomyces and a few archaeobacteria which are commonly called diazotrophs. They have the ability to convert atmospheric elemental nitrogen (N₂) to ammonia (NH₃) with the help of nitrogenase enzyme system. The efficacy of true bacteria like *Rhizobium*, *Azotobacter*, *Azospirillum* and cyanobacteria like *Anabaena*, *Aulosira*, *Nostoc*, *Plectonema* and *Tolypothrix* etc. have already been well established under field conditions and such microbial inoculants have gained wide acceptance due to their high nitrogen fixing potentiality.

Cultural Recommendations

Minimum Tillage

The conventional tillage operation has disastrous effect on soil erosion causing greater loss of nutrients. This has led to necessity of stubble mulching. In the stubble mulching the soil is protected by the crop residues left on the soil surface during fallow periods. This has now become well established that in stead of frequent tillage operations minimum tillage is more useful not only because it offers cost effectiveness but also contributes to conservation of soil and moisture. Available information reveals that it

gives as good as or even better yield than the conventional tillage practices. It aims at reducing tillage to the minimum, necessary for ensuring a good seed bed, rapid germination, satisfactory crop stand and favourable growing conditions.

Selection of Crops for Crop Rotation, Inter Cropping and Companion Cropping

Crop rotation has an important role to play in organic farming. Judicious selection of crops in crop rotation helps in efficient utilization of plant nutrient from different depths of soil. The practice of inter cropping also helps in minimizing the risk of crop failure due to uncertain rainfall and infestation of pest and diseases. Available information reveals that in case of inter cropping of sorghum and red gram at 2:1 row ratio it resulted in 70% higher yield over the individual cropping of both the crops. Besides it also reduced the wilt diseases of red gram. Another advantage was that nitrogen fixed by the red gram could be utilized by the sorghum crop. Another trial of companion cropping comprising of three rows of gram followed by one row of linseed revealed that incidence of pod borer in gram as well as fly in linseed was remarkably reduced and yield also increased by about 14% in this inter cropping over the sole cropping of both the crops.

Integrated Pest management

The multifarious harmful consequences of indiscriminate use of pesticides have cropped up as a serious threat to the ecosystem. In view of the fact that increased use of pesticides has been drastically endangering the environmental sustainability, integrated approach to pest management needs adequate importance to make the agriculture ecofriendly.

Like integrated plant nutrient management, IPM also makes use of an ideal combination of physical, chemical, biological and cultural methods to contain pest damage with minimum ecological implication. It takes the utmost advantage of natural mechanism of pest suppression. Modifications of crop environment to make it unfavourable for infestation of pests, use of resistant cultivars and transgenic alongwith a judicious and need based use of preferably safer chemicals are the major components of IPM. Biocontrol is

an integral component of integrated pest management strategy. It employs natural mechanism of pest suppression in which the natural agents like predators, parasites and microbial agents suppress the pest population. If the natural enemies can be effectively conserved, the need of other control will automatically reduce.

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Shri Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister laying foundation stone of Jayadev Road under Special PMGSY at Baliana on 11.10.2004.

Women and Mental-Health : A Rural Scenario

Dr. Alhadini Dhir

Many women in Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as we have written records of social organisation and family life, although she is the center point of the family. Her role in the family and society is versatile. The health of woman is the concern of the family and community and is very useful for the healthy life of a community." A sound mind lives in and gives a sound body." This saying clearly brings to light the importance of the body. Without proper health there cannot be a proper frame of mind. Herbert Spencer has rightly observed - "To be a good animal is the first requisite to success in life and to be a nation of good animals is the first condition to national property." The distinguishing feature between a man and animal is intelligence and rationality. Rationality, a product of mind, therefore cannot function properly unless we have a healthy mind.

The objective of our life is to establish adjustment with the changes that continuously go on in the environment. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to have an integrated and balanced mentality. Every individual tries to solve the complications that come in her/his own physical way. Some times

one achieves success and some times faces failure. In case of failure frustration arises. So the persons that are not able to tolerate and successfully face frustrations in their life develop various mental problems.

Mind is the master of the body. When the mental condition is good a woman may take various responsibilities of a family and herself. She may understand the complications, try to solve them, plan for future and may adjust happily with others. So she may become mentally strong.

The percentage of uneducated women in rural and tribal area is high till today. To manage all the tasks of the family they may face some hurdles. If this situation will continue for a longer period the woman is unable to maintain her daily work. The time she thinks that she cannot take so be understood that she has some mental problem. There is a say "if the forest will be burnt every body will know but if the mind is burnt no body knows." Therefore mental health is completely different from physical health and mental health problems are more important than physical health problems. This is the high time to take it into account and provide proper treatment.

Common Causes of Mental Health Problems :

Self Esteem

It is an attitude of respecting self and others. Self-esteem, worth and identity are closely related to feeling of adequacy and social approval is the need to feel good about self and worthy of respect of others. The woman who feels that she has some contribution towards her family and neighbour, she feels having self-esteem has its early foundation in childhood. This development depends upon the behaviour of the important persons related to her, such as, father, mother, brother, sister, neighbour, teacher, mentor and preacher. If these persons give her importance, admire and encourage while performing difficult tasks, she feels herself more valuable.

In some situation girls get less opportunity to develop their self-esteem. For example : in a family boys are provided facilities to read and attend school regularly, to take a lion share of qualitative food. The girls feel inferior in all such circumstances. Gradually these experiences become so intense that even after marriage they do not expect good food or clothing, good behaviour from in-laws, care during illness and the necessity of developing knowledge and skill.

Self-esteem is a part of mental health. A woman having good mental health realize that she can face problems in her day-to-day life. To develop self-esteem she should recognize her value within herself about which she may not be aware. This will influence her attitude towards her health.

Mental Pressure in Daily Life

Mental pressure is a vital cause of mental health problems which arise due to various

conditions such as hard work, being scolded by others without any fault and so on. Even during pleasure situations like getting a job or a childbirth, there is mental pressure as these events bring changes in her life. Sometimes she ignores her illness and works hard. She believes in sacrificing herself while taking care of others. This causes a great problem.

In our society a barren woman has no importance. A mother of so many daughters not of a son also suffers from mental pressure.

Death and Loss of Property

In the death of near or dear ones, or in loss of service, home or valuable property woman becomes very sad. If unfortunately she becomes ill or handicapped, then she will be depressed. Crying is a natural reaction, which provides mental relaxation to some extent in the above situations. But in many families it may not be possible to cry at least. This also leads to mental problems.

Changes in Life and Society

Migration due to war calamities, forced displacements and poverty may be responsible because they change the life and society, which has great impact on individual and family.

Mental Shock

Violence in family, rape, torture, cruelty, natural and manmade calamities give maximum shock to the woman. So she becomes afraid, feels insecure and helpless and does not believe the surrounding. In such cases it will take time to cure the person.

Physical Problem

Some mental health problems are also the result of some physical problems. Those are -

- hormonal changes in the body

- Malnutrition
- Contamination of HIV
- Gas pollution, insecticide, pesticide etc.
- Kidney and pancreatic diseases
- Excess use of medicine, wine etc.

Common Mental Health Problems of Rural Women

In crisis the mental state of women may be affected more due to sensitiveness. It is not so easy to know the minds of others. Because

- There is no specific margin between normal reaction to any event or situation of life and reaction to the same with mental problem.
- Each individual may face some or less difficulties in life. People show different types of symptoms in different situation.
- Symptoms may vary from place to place. Some behaviour may not be accepted by others but it may be normal for a particular region according to their culture.

Sorrow

Death and disappearance of loved ones may be the cause of sorrow. But if the following symptoms will continue for a long time, it will be clear that she has some mental problem.

- Unhappiness in maximum time
- Sleeps more than normal or does not sleep at all
- Unable to think clearly
- No interest in daily work, taking food or sexual activity etc.
- Various physical problems may appear without cause eg. Headache, abdominal pain etc.

- Speaks slowly and walks slowly Feels weak
- Think about death and suicide.

Worry and Anxiety

Worry is described as "imaginary fear" which is specific to the situation. Anxiety is a generalized emotional state. Anxiety often develops after a frequent and intense worry that undermines self-confidence. The other common names of these feelings may be tension, neurological complication and weak heart. Each individual may come across such type of feeling and after some time may be normal. In case it increases, continues or becomes serious, happens without cause, we may say it as mental problem. Intense sorrow at long run may lead to commit suicide. The symptoms are :

- Frequent movement of hands
- Sweating
- Feels suffocation without any cardiological problem.
- Incapable to think clearly
- Complain frequently about physical problem without illness.

Simple Depression

The outstanding symptoms in simple depression are a loss of enthusiasm and a general slowing down of mental and physical activity. The individual feels dejected and discouraged. Work and other activities require tremendous effort and some how do not seem worth bothering with any way. Feelings of unworthy, failure, sinfulness and guilt dominate her sluggish thought process. Her loss of interest in things about her extends to eating and usually reflected in loss of weight and

digestive difficulties such as constipation. Conversation is carried on in a monotone, and questions are answered with a meager supply of words. In general she prefers just to sit alone and seeing no hope for the future.

As it is noted suicidal preoccupation is common and actual suicide attempts may be made.

Mental Shock

People exposed to automobile accidents, explosions, fire, earthquakes, and tornados, sexual assault or other terrifying experiences frequently show shock reactions. Other events such as social disgrace, imprisonment and severe financial losses may prove extremely traumatic. In these cases shock may show a wide range of symptoms depending on the nature and severity of the terrifying experience, the degree of surprise and the personality make up of the individual. Among the victims of tornados, fires and other catastrophes a "disaster syndrome" has been delineated that causes -

- Inability to think clearly,
- Inability to concentrate,
- Difficulty in decision making,
- Extreme sensitivity,
- Discouragement
- Sleep disturbances
- Excessive sweating
- Sustained Muscle tension
- Remembering all the furious events and dreams at night or may not sleep at all.
- Trials to remain away from the person or place, which are associated with that event.
- Feelings of unsafe and insecurity and does not get a sound sleep.
- Anger with past event or feels ashamed.

- Guilty feelings as she is escaped and others died or severely injured.
- Violent behaviours at times and does not know what she is doing.

The above reactions are very normal. But it becomes severe and recognizable after a month of the particular event. Then only it is known that the person has mental health problems. The consequences are -

- raising the rate of heart beat
- raising blood pressure
- frequent breathing/laboured breathing
- poor alimentary functions leading to acidity, ulcer etc.

We always give importance to physical causes of illness. But we should be very sensitive towards the emotional causes of illness also. There are some ways to remove the stress and strain of mind. Motivation and awareness are necessary to solve the problem. By acquiring Knowledge, changing Attitude (Attitude is the mood, reflection, feelings, position or idea shown by our facial expressions, posture of our body, tone of voice, words and action.) and Practising the best one (KAP) the village women can live happily.

Self Help and Helping Others

There is no particular provision for mental treatment in many places. Woman can do a lot of work by using minimum resource or she can make good friendship with others. It has great impact on her life style which may be helpful to maintain good mental health.

- i) Ability to maintain balance with the situation :

Women do not save time to take care of themselves. It is not at all good for her. She should do things according to her choice. Many times we do not care for very minor activities

like spending a little time alone, shopping, gardening, cooking with friends, singing a song or playing a musical instrument which may help us to maintain mental balance.

Generally, we see that when we have worked for sometime we get tired. The tiredness is nothing but fatigue. It may be physiological or psychological. Fatigue is a sum total of all those factors that are responsible for diminishing the working capacity. Rest provides mental relaxation. Due to this mental relaxation the body and mind become fresh and becomes possible for a woman to take up work again.

ii) To remove the negative experiences from mind :

It is difficult "to make up one's mind" especially when each alternative offers values that the others do not and the choice is an important one. When we cannot open our heart to others, write it as poem, story or draw as picture. For this purpose it is not necessary to be a good artist. Simply we can express our feelings. It will give good result.

iii) To create and be amidst pleasing atmosphere :

Our home may be small one, but we can do things as we wish, like Decorate our home with alpana or flowers. Learn to make various decorative articles. Listen to music, enjoy natural scenes, spend time in our kitchen garden or flower garden.

iv) To practice some traditional habits :

Tradition, custom, culture and belief help us to be mentally strong. We should acquire and practise some habits which may be helpful.

Physical Exercise gives corrective, mental and moral benefits -(1) Power of

judgement (2) Tolerance (3) Power of determination.

Moral benefits bring about social efficiency -

- Discipline
- Self-control and self-confidence
- Team spirit
- Co-operation
- Mutual helpfulness
- Courage and
- Skill.

Exercise like walking, jogging, playing etc. make one generally happier, calmer and more clear headed. Relaxation can improve the ability to think clearly. Examples - Breathing, Meditation, Prayer, Yoga etc. A more exacting form of Yoga, under the direction of a trained practitioner, helps to develop a spiritual sense of inner strength and control. The mental skills are thinking analysing and perceiving the situation. We can take it as a challenge and an opportunity to show our skill. Develop our emotional skill. Handle the negative emotions. Learn the advantages of emotional balance by diverting them into constructive work.

v) To keep good relationship :

Two or more persons determine to know and understand each other - between friends, relatives where they are working together. In this situation both sides, agree to listen to each other. They express their common problems during this time.

vi) To make friendship :

When two persons understand each other gradually there will be a good friendship. It will take sometime to have faith upon each other. Then only one can express her mental

problem to the other. It can be done in a group also. They will listen to each other, may find solution, help somebody and realise the benefit of making friendship. The experiences may not be equal therefore are should-

- Try to listen sincerely to others
- Try to understand others' feeling
- Don't pretend while listening, rather try to recollect our experience which may be same to some extent.
- Think only one thing -"how to help her".
- Don't disclose one's confidential matter to others. But if it is necessary to save her life you may disclose it with her consent.

Conclusion

The health of India means the health of rural people who are about 80% of the population. Health is primarily a personal responsibility just as religion. It is well known that how difficult to make the horse drink though it may be taken to the water front. The living example is the failure of the latrine programme and of keeping up the environment clean.

What is then lacking ? Womens' active participation and their own realization that Health (Physical or Mental) is their own property, not of the Government of the country. Besides there are other components in community living, which should be simultaneously handled.

Control of our emotions are under our own control if we accept facts we should remember that happiness doesnot depend upon who we are or what we have. It depends upon solely what we think.

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Shri Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister giving away prizes to the students on the occasion of the celebration of 50th Wild Life Week at Jayadev Bhawan on 7.10.2004.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra : The Light House for Rural People

*Dr. Ashish Kumar Dash
Dr. Monoranjan Mishra*

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (K.V.K.) is a noble concept developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) which was rest upon a solid base of transfer of technology from laboratory to farmer's field with respect to Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandary, Flouriculture. Bee keeping, Mushroom Cultivation, Broiler Farming and allied subjects. As per the recommendations of Mohan Singh Meheta Committee during 1974, K.V.K.s were established in different states. Gradually working guidelines are prepared to make the K.V.K. as the light house for the rural people.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research emphasized on the research on agriculture and allied subject during 1960's to generate new technology for increasing crop production in different agroclimatic zones of the country. A lot of technologies were generated through constant effort of the scientists to boost up the production. But the technologies so generated in the research field are not transferred through extension agencies of different state Government. It is observed that a lot of technologies could not reach the farmer due to high cost of adoption, lack of the interest of the extension agencies. Hence the transfer of the technology was not complete and effective.

Later on K.V.Ks were established for easy and active participation of farmers through Front Line Demonstration and on Farm Testing.

As per the mandate of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, K.V.K. will operate under the administrative control of State Agricultural University (SAU) or Central Institute situated in a particular area. Different scientists from different disciplines as per the specific requirement of that particular area are posted in the Krishi Vigyan Kendra as Training Associate. Generally there are six categories of scientists posted in the K.V.K. i.e. (i) Training Associate (Crop Production) to look after the experiment on field crops as well as provide training and advice on different field crops. (ii) Training Association (Horticulture) looks after the training and demonstration on horticultural crops such as vegetables, fruits and flowers. (iii) Training Associate (Plant Protection) Provides training and demonstration on control of different pests and diseases in different crops. He also imparts training and advice on different types of pesticides and insecticides, their methods and time of application. (iv) Training Association (Animal Science) looks after over all growth and management of animal resource of that particular area. He also imparts training and advices on broiler farming, dog rearing as well

as rabbit rearing etc. (v) Training Associate (Agricultural Engineering) looks after the use of different agricultural implements in the field for different agricultural operations through training, demonstrations and on farm testing. (vi) Training Associate (Home Science) involved in the improvement of skill and attitude of the farmers and farm women as well as provides advices and training on kitchen gardening preparation of nutritional food and different handicrafts. She also imparts training regarding the preservation and storage of fruits and vegetables for rural youths of the adopted village.

Training Organiser, head of the K. V. K. family coordinates the work of all scientists for smooth functioning of the K.V.K. as well as for the benefit of the rural people of that particular area. He is also liaisoning with other line departments for coordination and effective implementation of different programs of the K.V.K. in the adopted village. Every K.V.K. has adopted 4 to 6 economically, culturally and technologically backward villages situated within 10-20 Kms radius of the K.V.K. These villages are not too small or too large. Before adoption a detailed survey of the village was conducted to study the socio-economic and cultural status of that village. Now-a-days Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool was used to conduct the survey in which the village people are actively participated in the process. The village map was drawn by the help of different colour by the villagers themselves and different prominent structures of the village such as school, temple, river, club etc. were depicted in that map. These structures will help the scientists to conduct the survey easily and smoothly. Basing upon the survey the field crop maps, animal resource map and other ancillary

maps were prepared for future use. After the survey work detailed plan of work was chalked out and depending upon the requirement different activities were undertaken in different areas by K.V.K. scientists.

The objectives of all the activities undertaken by K.V.K. are :

- (a) To demonstrate the new improved technology to the farmers as well as to the extension agencies directly in the farmers field with their active participation.
- (b) To identify the important problems of that area as per the need of the farmers and prioritization of the identified problems as per their importance.
- (c) To collect feed back from the farmers and extension agencies and to communicate these message to research scientists for modification of technology.
- (d) To impart training on different topics to different group of the villagers. .
- (e) To provide new and important information to the extension agencies and NGOs for wider circulation in that locality to improve their economic condition.
- (f) To prepare different extension models and verify these models in the farmers field with their participation to create confidence among them.

To achieve the above mentioned objectives K.V.K. undertake following types of activities in the adopted villages :

- (1) Farm Advisory Service
- (2) Training programme for different categories of people.
- (3) Training programme for the extension functionaries.
- (4) Front Line Demonstration (Fill)
- (5) On Farm Testing (OFT).

Farm Advisory Services:

Krishi Vigyan Kendra otherwise known as Farm Science Center. It provides solution to any problems related to agriculture and allied subjects as and when faced by farmers of that particular locality. Interested farmers /persons can get proper advices regarding the establishment of new entrepreneurship on non traditional sector. The main function of advisory service center is to provide continuous and constructive advice along with sound theory and practical knowledge to the contact villagers regarding agriculture and its allied subjects for their cultural and economical improvement. The objectives of the Farm Advisory Center are as follows:

- (a) To study the socio economic status of the villagers.
- (b) To keep close relationship between K.V.K. and villagers.
- (c) To prepare individual farm model for uplift of rural people.
- (d) To provide training and advice to the rural people so as to enable them to take part in the agricultural planning of the village, blocks as well as district.
- (e) Formation of farm club farm center or village committee for easy transfer of new information related to agriculture to the villagers in short time.

Training programme for different categories of people:

Training is one of the most important activities of Krishi Vigyan Kendra. Training is planned and systematic effort to increase the knowledge, improves the skill and change the attitude of a person towards a particular subject. Training need assessment is the first

and foremost factor to be considered before conducting any training programme. Depending upon the need and categories of trainees, K.V.K. imparts mainly following three types of training:

- (a) Training to the practising farmers and farm women:

Training on different subjects were conducted by the scientists of the K.V.K. as per the need of the local farmers of a particular area as well as the types of trainees and different audio visual aids are used to increase the efficiency of the training. As the trainees are practising farmers and farmwomen, more emphasis was given on the practical than theory to improve their skill to change their attitude and increase their knowledge for that particular topic.

- (b) Training to the Rural Youth:

This type of training was imparted to the rural youth (Both male and female) mostly those are left their education in midway i.e. school dropouts. The main objective of this training is to provide sufficient knowledge and skill regarding a new entrepreneurship so that they can start their own business singly or collectively and generate some income for their livelihood. The main thrust areas of this type of training are mushroom cultivation, bee keeping, preservation of fruits and vegetables, broiler farming, goat rearing, tailoring, wool knitting, hand crafts and exotic vegetable cultivation etc. for more profit. In this training more emphasis was given on the practical aspects and trainees were do the practical themselves to get more confidence. The scientists of the K.V.K. provide knowledge regarding the availability of the raw materials as well as the marketing of different products

in that particular locality for the interested participants.

- (c) Training programme for the extension functionaries :

In this group mostly government employees of agriculture along with extension functionaries of line department and members of different NGOs operated in that locality are trained in different aspects. The main objective of this type of training is to refresh the memory and up grade the knowledge and skill of the extension functionaries by providing recent and new information regarding new techniques as well as new approach of solving different problems faced by farmers of that locality. As the extension functionaries of different department act like a bridge between the scientists and villagers, the refinement of the knowledge is highly essential and quite helpful for effective and efficient transfer of the technology.

Front Line demonstration:

Front Line Demonstration (FLD) is the field demonstration conducted under the close supervision of the scientists because the technologies are demonstrated for the first time by the scientist themselves before being fed into the main extension system of the state department of Agriculture in that particular area. In this method newly released crop production and protection technologies and its management practices are adopted in a block of two to four hectares in the farmers field. Only critical inputs and training for this demonstration are provided by Krishi Vigyan Kendra. In FLD both farmers and extension functionaries are target audience. From the FLD, it is possible to generate some data related to factors contributing to higher yield and also constraints of production under

various farming situations. Front Line Demonstration is conducted in a particular area after thorough discussion and consultation with the farmers of that locality. Depending upon the requirement of that area highly efficient new proven technology with higher potentialities is selected for this programme. Generally a field day is observed in the demonstration field when the crop is at maturity stage and interaction between the scientists, farmers and extension functionaries takes place in the field. The crop is harvested in the presence of the interested group of farmers so that they can visualize the importance of new technology easily and effectively.

On Farm Testing (OFT):

Testing of any improved technology along with the farmers practice in the farmers field with active participation of both the scientists and farmers is known as OFT. In this method two to three improved varieties or two to three improved technologies are tested in the same field so as to compare the results of these treatments. As per the suggestions of the farmers as well as local soil and climatic conditions the improved technology may slightly be modified by the scientists of K.V.K. to get maximum return.

All these activities of the K.V.K. are undertaken as per the suggestion and approval of the Scientific Advisory Committee. This committee consists of representative from the Vice-chancellor of State Agricultural University or Director of the Institute, representative from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, representative of the District Collector, representatives from Department of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandary, Sericulture, progressive male and female farmers, male and female

social workers of that area and Training Organizer of the concern K.V.K. The Scientific Advisory Committee held once in a year to review the work of K.V.K. and provide suggestions for future plan of work. The future technical programme of the K.V.K. is prepared as per the suggestion of the farmers of that particular area.

Besides these activities each K.V.K. has got different demonstration units such as Mushroom unit, Biofertiliser unit, Vermicompost unit, Broiler farming unit, Bee keeping unit, Fruit preservation unit etc. for the lagers. When a person will visit K.V.K., he will be able to see all the enterprise in the demonstration unit and he can interact with the scientists regarding the establishment of his own enterprise. These units will help the villager to increase his confidence on a particular enterprise.

From these discussion it can be concluded that the scientists of K.V.K. provide required knowledge, impart training to improve the skill and attitude of the people towards a particular subject, provide proper guidance to solve any problem faced by the people related to agriculture and allied topics. Krishi Vigyan Kendra provides inspiration, constructive and constant advice to the people of that area to start new entrepreneurship for their livelihood and show them proper way when need actual help as the light house help the sailor in the sea. So we can rightly say that Krishi Vigyan Kendra is the light house for the rural people.

Dr. Ashish Kumar Dash and Dr. Monoranjan Mishra are working in the K.V.K., G.Udayagiri in the district of Kandhamal.



Dr. Damodar Rout, Minister, Culture and Panchayati Raj releasing a poster on PARAB-2004 at 3rd floor Conference Hall of Secretariat on 5.10.04 in the presence of Shri Balabhadra Majhi, Minister, Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes Development (Scheduled Tribes Development).

Sarala Dasa, The Originator of the Oriya Literature

*Debendra Nath Bhoi
Priyadarshini Bakshi*

Sarala Dasa was one of the great scholars of Oriya literature whose work formed perennial source of information to the succeeding generations. It was a perennial spring from which the later Oriya literature flowed like a stream without a break. He was the first scholar who wrote his works in Oriya in 15th century A.D.

The life of Sarala Dasa is very obscure. The date of his birth can't be accurately determined, but he can safely be placed on the second half of the 15th century A.D. He was born at Kanakavati Patana is known as Kanakapura, one of the Sidhikshetras in Jagatsinghpur District. His early name was Siddheswar Parida, later he was known as Sarala Dasa by the boon of Goddess Sarala.¹

There is a story, which tells us that Siddheswar in his boyhood was once ploughing his father's field and singing so melodiously that the goddess Sarala stopped and listened to his song and endowed him with her power of composing beautiful poems. Such stories are also similar with the early life of other Indian poets. Particularly of the great poet Kali Dasa, who is said to have illiterate in his early life but he could become a great poet through the grace of goddess Saraswati.

Sarala Dasa belongs to Sudra Caste and a cultivator by profession. The title 'Dasa' means a slave or a servant of a particular gods or goddess.

We have this a long list of poets preceding and succeeding Sarala Dasa; whose names end with Dasa e.g. Vatra Dasa, Markanda Dasa, Sarala Dasa, Jagannatha Dasa, Balarama Dasa, Yasovanta Dasa etc.²

Saral Dasa was famous for his three books like -Mahabharata, Vilanka Ramayana and Chandi Purana. He has also written the book, Laxmi Narayana Vachanika. The Adi Parva Mahabharata opens with a long invocation addressed to the Lord Jagannatha of Puri, from which it is known that Sarala Dasa started writing his Mahabharata in the reign of Kapileswar, otherwise known as Kapilendra, the famous Gajapati king of Orissa (1435-67 A.D.). He tells us that Maharaja Kapilesvara with ennumberable offerings and many a salute was serving this great deity and hereby destroying the sins of Kali age.

There were reasons for the rise of Oriya literature in the reign of Kapilendra. In Gopinathpur stone inscription a verse proves that Kapilendra was a native of Orissa. After a centuries a native of Odra-desa or Orisa

ruled its own people, giving them a sense of pride and self-respect, hopes and aspirations leading them to battle fields for his extensive conquests and opening to them a new geographical horizon. A love for the Oriya language and literature and culture therefore is an inevitable consequence of the new format created by the strong and vigorous rule of Kapileswar.³

Sarala Dasa followed the main outline of Sanskrit Mahabharata in writing the Oriya Mahabharata. He made numerous deviations and added to it copiously the stories of his own creation and various other matters known to him. In the final form Sarala Dasa's Mahabharata is a new creation analogous to Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa based on the Ramayana.

Mahabharata brought to light about the eighteen parva's like. 1. Adiparva, 2. Sabhaparva, 3. Vanaparva, 4. Virata Parva, 5. Udaya Parva, 6. Vishma Parva, 7. Drona Parva, 8. Kanna Parva, 9. Slaya Parva, 10. Surtika Parva, 11. Stri Parva, 12. Shanti Parva, 13. Anusasanika Parva, 14. Asramavasika Prava, 15. Mahaprasthanika Parva, 16. Asvamedha Parva, 17. Mausala Parva, 18. Swargarohana Parva.⁴

The Chandi Purana⁵ is based on the well-known story of Durga killing Mahishasura (the buffalo headed demon) given in Sanskrit literature but here also the Oriya poet has chosen to deviate from the original at several points. His earliest work Vilanka Ramayana is a story of the fight between Rama and Shahasrasira Ravana (thousand headed Ravana).

Sarala Dasa had no systematic education from early age. What he achieved through self-

education and untiring efforts have all been attributed to the grace of the goddess Sarala the deity of the devotion and inspiration. Poetry was in the blood of Sarala Dasa and it flowed from his iron stylus as words flow from his mouth. What he wrote once was final. His verses are simple, forceful and musical with no trace of artificiality in them. He had a finer sense of composition and application of all colloquial words for his poetical purpose. His writing was free from Sanskritization.

Earlier Oriya folk songs were orally popular and were being used in various folk dances. Such as Ghoda-nacha (Horse Dance). Dandanacha and Sakhinacha (Puppet Dance). One metrical peculiarity of these songs is that both the lines of a verse do not contain an equal number of letters though the last letters of both the lines produce the same sound. All the works of Sarala Dasa are found to have been composed with this metrical peculiarity and therefore, the metre use by him can be regarded as a direct descendant of the metre used in the folk songs. By the fifteenth century the Oriya language had assumed almost its modern form and had become ripe for literary compositions.⁶

The predominant sentiment in Sarala Dasa's poem is not love but war. He was also motivated by a strong religious zeal to compose religious books in a language intelligible to all and to make them available to the general public in Orissa. He tells in no uncertain words that he composed his poems for the benefit of "human beings". There are several indications in his Mahabharata that he served as a soldier in the army of the Gajapati King of Orissa and his association with the army brought to him a variety of experiences. The stories he heard the battle scenes which he witnessed, the places that he visited with the company of the

army the historical incidents and names that he could know all remained stored up in his mind to be utilized in his writings.⁷

Sarala Dasa spent his last time at Bila Sarala but the native place Kanakavati Patana known as Kanakapura at Tentuliapada with a religious establishment known as Munigoswain, which marks as the traditional spot, where he composes his works. Thus, Sarala Dasa was really an originator of Oriya literature. His works inspired the succeeding generation of writers to make it more popular among the people.

References :

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2. K.C. Panigrahi, History of Orissa, Cuttack, 1995, PP 291. 3) Ibid., PP 288-89
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Shri Naveen Patnaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Orissa going round the newly constructed library and reading room of the OAS Association at Bhubaneswar on 2.10.2004.

Palmleaf Manuscript Legacy of Orissa and National Mission for Manuscripts

Dr. C. B. Patel

Orissa is exceedingly rich, since ancient times in exquisite and excellent palmleaf manuscript expanse of textual and illustrative eminence. The varied palmleaf manuscripts galore, now found in the collection of museums, private institutions and individuals amply testify to the exuberance and efflorescence of this great tradition from about 10th Century A.D., as is evident from the epigraphic reference to Oriya language and *Kutila* script found in an inscribed sculpture of Jaina monk-Kumarasena discovered from Gandhi-bedha in Balasore district. They formed the treasure house of wisdom and knowledge on different aspects of Orissan history, culture, artistic & architectural legacy. Because of the easy availability of palmleaf in abundance in Orissa, the palmleaf manuscript culture became very popular through ages. It also becomes easy to scribe and engrave different subject matters with an iron stylus. The Oriya writing due to its round and linear shape, facilitated the growth and development of palmleaf manuscript writing and this tradition even continues till the present days.

Interestingly, the European scholars were greatly attracted to study the Oriya palmleaf manuscript collections during the nineteenth century. Rev J. Long published the first research article in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and subsequently scholars like Col.

Makenji, Sir John Beams, the-then Collector of Balasore, R. L. Mitra, M. M. Chakravarti, H. P. Shastri and Prof. Macdonel etc. contributed significantly to the study and



research of palmleaf manuscript tradition of Orissa which cast a flood of new light on the manifold aspects of variegated and glowing Orissan Culture.

After Orissa became a separate province in 1936, a series of serendipities and reconnaissance works were taken up to prepare a list of palmleaf manuscripts found preserved under different agencies through the help of local Pandits and as many as 15 thousand titles were recorded out of which 11 thousand are now available in Orissa State Museum. Education Department, Govt. of Orissa thereafter, collected a large variety of palmleaf

manuscripts with the initiative of Prof. G. S. Dash and Prof. N. Banerji with the assistance of Prachi Samiti under the banner of newly founded Ravenshaw college Museum. Scholars like Padmasree Paramananda Acharya, Purna Chandra Rath and Kedarnath Mohapatra contributed enormously in their official and individual capacity to the enrichment of palmleaf manuscript collection. When the Ravenshaw College Museum was shifted to Bhubaneswar during 1947- 48 Sri P. Acharya the - then Superintendent of Orissa State Museum and K. N. Mohapatra the - then curator of Manuscripts opened a separate section of manuscripts in the Museum. This has now proliferated into an institution of international reputation with about 40 thousand manuscripts comprising 6 sections, Manuscripts have been classified under 27 subjects namely :

1.Veda, 2.Tantra, 3. Jyotisha, 4.Dharmasastra, 5. Ayurveda, 6. Ganita, 7.Silpasastra, 8. Samgita, 9. Abhidhana, 10.Vyakarana, 11.Sanskrit Purana, 12.Sanskrit Kavya, 13.Alamkara, 14. Bengali (Sanskrit), 15. Bengali, 16. Devanagari, 17.Oriya Purana, 18. Oriya Kavya, 19. Oriya Prose, 20. Oriya Historical Literature, 21. Sanskrit Paper Manuscripts, 22. Oriya Paper Manuscripts, 23. Arabic Manuscripts, 24. Darsana Manuscripts, 25. Telugu manuscripts, 26. Copied Manuscripts and 27. Illustrated Manuscripts.

Simultaneously Sambalpur University, Berhampur University and Utkal University have opened their manuscript collections. Dr. N. K. Sahu organised a palmleaf manuscript section in Sambalpur. This has developed into a palmleaf manuscript library of Sambalpur University which has in its collection manuscripts covering a wide range of subjects. They are *Veda*, Grammer, *Tantra*, Astronomy, Medicine, Religion, Philosophy, *Alankara*,

Epics, *Puranas* etc. Among these the illustrated palmleaf of *Bhagavata* has evoked great interest from the scholars and Indologists of India and abroad as well. Berhampur University has also a number of rare collection of manuscripts including that of renowned poet Upendra Bhanja. Many private organisations like Raghunandan Library at Puri, Banchhanidhi Library, Nayagarh, Sainatala College, District Bolangir and Veshja Patel College of Duduka, Sundargarh, Titilagarh College, Titilagarh, individual collection of Sri Jitmitra Singh Deo, Khariar, Dileswar Patel of Kantapali, Dist. Jharsuguda, Dr. M. K. Misra of Kalahandi and Sri D.Pattnaik of Bhubaneswar have housed different varieties of palmleaf manuscripts.

In the arena of Indian philosophy, Oriya palmleaf manuscript writers have carved out a permanent nich for themselves. Since the advent of Buddhism, philosophers like Dharmakirti, Kavidindima, Jivadevacharya, Acharya Narsimha Vajpeyi, Gaudiya philosopher Baldev Vidyabhusan, Indrabhuti, Laxmikara etc. have contributed greatly in this field of study. Oriya dictionaries that were composed in Orissa such as *Trikanda Sesha* and *Haravali* of Purusottama Dev and *Medini Kosha* of Medini Kara have received wide recognition in India since early medieval times.

The Vedic manuscript collection of Orissa State Museum are not that large as because people are orthodox in nature and reluctant to part with their traditional individual collections because till date people of Orissa perform Vedic rites and rituals as per the diction of Vedic manuscripts. Therefore, unlike Bengal, Vedic palmleaf manuscripts are found in plenty in almost every Oriya house. Some manuscripts of *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda* have been brought from Midnapur district of West Bengal, Characters of these manuscripts are Oriya in content and nature

which hints that originally they had been written by Oriya pandits and script writers. It is also a known fact that Midnapur region was part of Orissa till ancient times.

M. M. Shastri has mentioned the names of great Pandits like Jalesvara Misra, Bhaskara Parivrajaka and Haladhara who wrote valuable commentaries on the Vedic works. Late Pandit D. N. Bhattacharya, an erudite scholar of Bengal was fortunate to get a complete manuscript of the *Paippalada Sakha* of the Atharva Veda from Jagannathpur in the District of Puri which was not available in any other part of India. Some *kandas* of this unique Vedic work have been published so far. There are a number of these manuscripts in our collection containing different archas (chapters). There are three manuscripts containing Sayana's *Bhasya* on the *Kanvasamhita* of which one is complete in twentyone chapters of its second part of *Bhasya*. Our collection is not enriched by the acquisition of the manuscripts of different *Brahmanas* of the *Yajurveda Upanisads*, *Tapinis* and *Angirasakalpa* of the *Atharavaveda*, some of which are as yet unknown to the scholars. Orissa was a popular centre of Tantric cult from 6th century A.D. Baladeva Rath and Gaurahari Parichha etc. contributed enormously to the Oriya literary exuberance of this epoch. Their activities, inspired a number of followers to compose more creative compositions in the field of art and literature. They are Pitambar Deva's *Akhila Ratha Chintamani*, Kesava Ratha's *Ananga Ragini*, *Anuraga kalpalata* of Shyamasundar Deva, *Haravati* of Ramachndra Pattnaik, *Anuragavati* of Padmanabha etc. In addition to these we find a number of lesser known writers like Madhavi Dasi, Rani Mohan Kumari, Rani Kshirod Mali, Krishnapriya Jema, Sivapriya Dei, Kalpalata Jema, Madhuri Dasi, Achuta Jema and host of others. We find

a good number of palmleaf manuscripts of historical prose and translation works. Oriya scholars have also contributed to Bengali and Hindi manuscript composition. Among the Bengali works to have been composed by Oriya poets are *Krishnalila* of Ramachandra Pattanaik, *Manasamangal* of Dwarika Dasa, Govardhan *Utsava* of Gourachandra Parichha, *Basanta Rasa* of Pindika Srichandan, *Dolarasa* of Natabar Dasa, *Navanuraga* of Shyamabandhu Pattnaik, *Ganga Mahatmya* of Jagannath Dasa. In Hindi we find literary works *Brajaboli gita* of Ramananda Patnaik, *Jayachandrika* and *Kosalananda* of Prahallad Dube, *Gundicha Vije* of Brajanath and poems of many other poets. Besides we also find palmleaf manuscripts written in Telugu, Tamili, Sarada, Newari, Persian and Urdu. The manuscript gallery of Orissa State Museum is now adorned with such rare palmleaf manuscripts collection.

Sarala Dasa, the writer of *Mahabharata* in Oriya has contributed a number of works of eminence like *Saptakanda Ramayana*, *Chandi Purana*, *Valmiki Ramayana*, *Malasri Janana* and *Mahalaxmi Vrata* etc. These manuscripts are now found in the collection of State Museum. He established Oriya as a rich language in the 15th century A.D.. *Mahabharata* of Krishna Singh, Purusottam Dasa, Jagannath Das and Kapileswar Nanda are also some of the prize collections of the manuscript section. *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* became very popular in Orissa as they were written in Oriya languages and script due to the initiative of Balaram Dasa, Maheswar Dasa, Kirshna Chandra Rajendra, Kesava Tripathi and Purusottam Dasa. The *Madala Panji*, the temple chronicle of Puri written in palmleaf is a storehouse of knowledge which needs a thorough and separate study.

Bhagavata Purana was translated by Jagannath Das and has become the Bible of Oriya people. He completed this work in the Jagannath temple before the advent of Sree Chaitanya in Puri. His mastery over Sanskrit literature enabled him to translate this work into a very lucid and simple style. We have several copies of this masterly work in our collection. The works *Bhagavata Lahari*, *Harivamsa*, *Padmapurana* by Achyutananda and the works of Mahadeva Dasa, Haladhara Dasa, Nilambara Dasa, Pitambara Dasa are also a few unique acquisition of the section. Few poetic compositions have historical value like Jagannath *Charitamruta*, *Chaitanya Charitamruta* and *Bhaktamala*, Copies of *Veda*, *Tantra*, *Dharmashastra*, *Jyotisha*, *Vyakarana*, *Kavya*, *Alankara* etc. have enriched the manuscript legacy of Orissa. They have been written in Sanskrit language with provincial Oriya script. A few notable works in these fields are mentioned below for reference of researchers and tourists.

1. *Vedartha Praveshatika or Sayana Bhashya* of Yajurveda,
2. *Paippalada Samhita* of Atharvaveda,
3. *Brahmanas* according to Kanva Sakha or Yajurveda,
4. *Jnanavalli Tantra*,
5. *Durga Janana Dipika*,
6. *Bhubaneswari Prakasa*,
7. *Tarini Kulasudha Tarangini*,
8. *Bhasvati*,
9. *Kritya Kaumudi*,
10. *Vaisvanaresti Paddhati*,
11. *Vidyakara Padhati*,
12. *Nityacharadipa*,
13. *Vaijalakarika*,
14. *Prakriyasara*,
15. *Sarasidhanta Samagraha*,
16. *Anyopadesasataka*,
17. *Abdaduta*,
18. *Gitagovinda*,
19. *Gundicha Champu*,
20. *Bhakti Bhagavatamahakavyam*,
21. *Bharatamrita Mahakavyam*,
22. *Manimala Natika*,
23. *Rukmini Parinaya*,
24. *Raghavayadaviyamahakavya*,
25. *Kavya Prakasa Vivarana*,
26. *Sahityabhusana*,
27. *Gita prakasa*,
28. *Sangitanarayana*,
29. *Sangitakalpalata*.

Charles Fabri remarks that those who carved the masterpieces of sculpture in the 9th, 10th and 11th century A.D. must have been also able to carve lovely pictures on their palmleaf manuscripts. Unfortunately we do not find any specimen prior to the 15th century A.D. As palmleaf manuscripts are perishable, the earlier paintings and engravings must have been obliterated. However, we find lively specimen from 15th century A.D. onwards as reported by Prof. Ganguly. Thus the history of the incised drawings on palmleaf manuscripts goes back to a definite datum line. Difference between stylus incised line drawings and coloured paintings is enormous. They seem to belong to two worlds even if one recognizes the elements of hieratic drawings, the ready-made formula for eyes, hands, lips etc. of the line drawings being re-employed as a basis for paintings. He has referred to the live leaves of a palm leaf manuscript by one Lokanath Dasa now found in the Raghunandan Library, Puri. They are illustrations of *Ushaparinaya* text and their date has been assigned to the 18th century. In the painting, women don't put on blouses except the end of the *saree* draped over their breast. There is one complete naked woman in leaf-4 from the top left side and she is draped under an element whom she appears to embrace. Such erotic illustrations we find in other private collections also. In *Ushaparinaya* compositions, male figures are found wearing typical Mughul tang *paijama*. i.e. tight fitting leggings. In another illustrations we find four palmleaves from a *Ramayana* manuscript in the collection of Sadasiva Rath Sharma. All the men were found wearing tight Mughul trousers and belted coats, and Marathis turbans. The females wear blouses and saree. Sita seems to have put on a *ghaghara*, *choli*, *orni* that is skirt, blouse and handkerchief. The Orissa State Museum has obtained a good collection of such illustrated manuscripts some

of which are in display. The subjects are mostly derived from *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagabata Purana*. In many cases temple styles, gods and godlings are also found. The most interesting is one *Kandarpa Ratha* illustrated over a bunch of palmleaves cut to size and stiched together horizontally in a rectangular shape. Enchanting and impressive maidens are intricately arranged to form the chariot with Radha & Krishna in embrace placed at this centre. Another most important treasure of the section is the *Gita Govinda*. The plates are plam leaves size and every plate contains about 17 lines on each side.

We also find musical texts in palmleaf manuscript. The Oriya poets have experimented the use of music in a traditional Sanskrit lyric. This indicates that music was prevalent in the country prior to Jayadeva. From the style of collection of this text, it is believed that Southern Orissa and Puri were main centres of this musical culture where regular musical performance alongwith textual discussions were being held. From the days of Bharatmuni, Orissa had a special style of music. The *Natya Shastra* of Bharat has given special importance to the Udra style of music. It is an irony that old Sanskrit scripts dealing with music are not available in Orissa. Such texts generally belong to late medieval times. They include *Samgita Kaumodi*, *Gitapakash*, *Samgita Kalpalata*, *Samgita Narayana* and *Natyamanorama* etc.

Orissa, the land of temples and shrines has also received the prolific impress of palmleaf manuscript art diction. However, few texts are now available among which *Bhuvanpradipa* occupies a conspicuous position. N. K. Bose refers to some of the palmleaf manuscripts and says that they are writtent with an iron stylus. In the *Bhuvana-pradipa* we find description of temples, altars, and similar structure. There is no reference to

secular architecture. Hence the word *Bhubanapradipa* may be taken to mean the lamp which sheds light on the characteristics of the abode of the Gods. We do not find names of artists who constructed the colossal temples of Bhubaneswar, Puri and Knoark but in the *Bhuvanapradipa* there is reference to Pingla, the artist and Ahidhar the carpenter, along with information regarding parting dues of each functionary at the end of the ceremony of the construction of the temple, which reads that the Brahmin who will perform *Japa* will get his dues equivalent to the astrologer. Many manuscripts are found uncared in the villages which are a in state of decay and destruction. They are the depository of our cultural heritage and should be restored by popular drive through various institutions and individuals dedicated to the cause of saving the extinct palmleaf manuscript heritage of Orissa.

The precious palmleaf manuscripts of the Museum deserve special mention. It is ascertained from records that 37,273 manuscripts have been collected out of which fifty two manuscripts have been published. Ten descriptive catalogues of manuscripts, five alphabetical catalogues and one alphabetical catalogue of authors have been made. The manuscript section comprises twenty seven sections such as Veda, Tantra, Darsana, Historical records, Silpa Sastra, Abhidhana, Ayurveda etc. It has Palmleaf, Bamboo leaf, Handmade paper, Old paper, Ivory manuscripts, Bhurja bark, Manuscript, Kumbhi bark manuscripts, Garland shaped, Fan shaped, Fish shaped, Sword shaped, Rat and Parrot shaped varieties of manuscripts and different types of stylus are displayed in the section.

Three hundred sixty six illustrated manuscripts of coloured and monochrome variety are found. Important variety such as manuscripts of *Gita Govinda* of Kali Charan

Pattnaik, the Usha harana, Ushavilasa etc. and different varieties of cover design of palmleaf manuscripts are in the collection. As many as seven thousand manuscripts have been conserved scientifically and manually by way of dry and wet cleaning filling of holes made by worms, use of preservative chemicals and reinking of invisible writing of manuscripts. A microfilming unit is functioning in this section since 1985-86 with the donation of Ford Foundation. One thousand seven hundred ninety eight palmleaf manuscripts have been microfilmed up to date. It is worth mentioning that even today palmleaf is used for recording horoscope (Jataka) of new born babies. For invitation to God, it is also used. In 15th century A.D. the palmleaf tradition has reached pinnacle of excellence with wide distribution.

Etching and painting on palmleaf is a very ancient art diction of Orissa. Origin of this art form marked the beginning of dissemination of written version. It is, therefore, part of our literary tradition. With the magnificence of Orissan rulers, illustrated manuscripts reached climax of excellence vindicating the ancient nomenclature of Utkal i.e. "land of art of exuberance and efflorescence". Even to this day, the glorious tradition thrives in the work of handicraft artisans of Orissa. The art form comprises inscribed letters and paintings of various designs. Such a piece of work is a befitting item for presentation as memento or Souvenir.

It is heartening that Government of India have recently launched National Mission for Manuscripts for documentation preservation and dissemination of the manuscript heritage of the country. In Orissa in this Project uptill now more than eighty thousand manuscripts have been documented and disseminated in addition to the 40,000 collection of Orissa State Museum.

The National Mission for Manuscripts seeks to develop a holistic approach in locating, documenting, protecting and making accessible the significant information of the manuscript heritage of India. This challenging task is carried out through wide networking with institutions and scholars across the country and abroad who have manuscript holdings and interest in their preserves. The NMM has identified some of the most prominent institutions across the country with considerable manuscript holdings and has designated them as Manuscript Resource Centre (MRC). Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi has been identified as the National Nodal Agency and Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar has been designated as the MRC to carry out the survey and listing work of manuscripts in Orissa. Dr. C. B. Patel, Superintendent of Orissa State Museum has been designated as Project Co-ordinator. Orissa Art Conservation Centre, Orissa State Museum has been identified as the Manuscript Conservation Centre for Orissa. Keeping in view the above, MRC/OSM is organizing different Awareness Campaigns, Workshops to popularise the mission work and to document manuscripts. Donation from individual & institution are accepted free of cost for organisation of Central Manuscript Library by NMM at IGNCA, New Delhi. An extensive five days sample survey of palmleaf manuscripts in all the thirty districts of Orissa is already on the anvil. It is hoped, on completion, the National project will open many new avenues of exuberant Orissan palmleaf tradition, idiom and diction.

Dr. C.B. Patel is presently working as the Superintendent of Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar.



Goddess Durga, Banei

Durga Worship in Upper Mahanadi Valley

Sasanka S. Panda

We find the traces of the worship of goddess Durga in her Mahisasuramardini aspect as early as the sixth century A.D. This is evident from the discovery of the ruins of a collapsed brick temple containing a two-handed Mahisasuramardini Durga image in the *Alidha* posture in the *Garbhagriha* and having an inscription on the pedestal in the box-headed Brahmi alphabets of the sixth century mentioning goddess Mahesvari. The temple was unearthed by the noted historian, late Prof. N.K. Sahu, in 1983, during excavation in the Maraguda valley of the Nuapada district. A *Sakta Math* (Monastery), said to be the earliest of its kind was also unearthed near this temple during this excavation.¹ The discovery of the two-handed Mahisasuramardini Durga image in the *Garbhagriha* of the Maraguda temple ruins as well as the Sakta monastery testify to the existence of the Mahesvari cult as early as the sixth century A.D.

We find another two-handed Durga image at Dharapgarh village of Balangir district, which can be dated to the same period. The



Goddess Durga, Lalei, Sundargarh District

textual references to the goddess with two arms is quite rare, though *Suprabhedagama*, *Purvakarmagama* and *Uttarakarmagama* describe Durga as having two hands.² R. Chanda has suggested that the two-armed figures of the goddess were confined to the pre-Gupta period.³ But as the Brahmanisation process seems to have started in western part of Orissa only after the subjugation of this area by the Gupta monarch Samudragupta during his military expedition to the

Daksinapatha in the middle of the fourth century A.D., both the two-handed Durga images of Western Orissa can be taken to be of the post-Gupta period. Another unique image of two-handed Durga, sitting on Her mount lion holding two swords in both Her up-raised hands is found fitted in a niche of the exterior wall of the Bahari Gopalji Temple at Sonapur, situated in front of the destroyed palace of the



Ten-handed Durga,
(Goddess Kusangei)

erstwhile feudal ruler of Sonapur Ex-Princely State. Four-handed Durga images are found at Belkhandi and carved on a monolithic rocky escarpment at Ranipur Jhari along with figured panel of *Saptamatrka*, Uma-Mahesvara and standing Ganesa. Noted historian Dr. J.K. Sahu takes the four-handed Durga images to be of the seventh century.⁴ Six-handed Durga images are found at Belkhandi, Gandharadi and in the *Parsvadevata* niche of the Ramesvara Siva temple at Sonapur, as central deity in the Durga temple at Bausuni and enshrined as Vindhyaasini Durga at Narsinghnath. The six-handed Durga images can be taken to be of the eighth/ninth century when the Bhanjas and other local dynasties were ruling this region.

The worship of the Mother Goddess or the female principle can be traced in India as in other regions of the world to the most ancient period. In India the worship of Mother Goddess has been traced in the archaeological findings from Indus Valley. An oblong terracotta seal from Harappa depicts a nude female figure upside down with her legs wide apart, and with a plant issuing from her womb.⁵ Marshall has further mentioned that such figurines have been found in various regions situated in a wide belt of the ancient world from the Indus to the Nile. He is of the opinion that they are 'effigies of the great Mother Goddess.' Such depiction of the goddess with the similar position, but with a lotus issuing from her neck instead of from

her womb has been found on a terracotta sealing of the Gupta period (circa 4th-5th century A.D.)⁶ Ringstones and discs found from sites of the Maurya and Sunga periods (300-200 B.C.) were probably associated with the cult of Mother Goddess symbolising the *Yoni*. Ringstones, popularly known as *Pandka Pathar* is found in many places of archaeological importance in the rural area of the upper Mahanadi valley. One carved *Yoni* has been discovered during digging of the spill way of the Jonk Dam at Patora in the Maraguda valley in 1982, which is in the private possession of the noted historian Jitmitra Prasad Singhdeo of Khariar. In the meantime four more stone *Yonis* have been found in places like Dangrital, Chuipain, Soseng and Mundapada village, all in the Nuapada district.⁷

The Mother Earth in the shape of *Yoni*, the female organ of generation, in the opinion of the learned scholar O.A. Wall, still very widely worshipped in the Asiatic religions, and the worshipper of *Yoni* are called *Yonicitas*.⁸

Yoni is worshipped as goddess *Duarseni* at Patalganga in Nuapada district and at Sindhekela in Balangir district in shrines built for the goddess by the local populace.

Even much before the Vedic period or even the time when the Indus Valley civilisation



Goddess Durga,
Vaidyanath, District Sonapur

flourished, *Yoni*, the origin of the mankind and other living world, was worshipped in the rock-shelters by the pre-historic cave-dwellers of the upper Mahanadi valley.

Learned scholar Dr. Pradeep K. Behera while doing exploration work in the dense mountain ranges of Hemgir belt of Sundargarh district in 1987-88 encountered hundreds of small and large rock shelters, out of which six yielded evidence of pre-historic occupation and artistic activities. In two of those rock shelters out of the six discovered by Prof. Behera, peculiar triangular engravings were found, which have been identified by him as stylised depiction of female genital organs (*Yoni*). Dr Behera is of the opinion that pre-historic people were somehow connected with the process of procreation among the human beings, which has been subsequently referred in the religious literatures as fertility cult.⁹ In Western Europe also we get evidences of the prevalence of the stylised of Mother of Venus¹⁰ in the Upper Palaeolithic and subsequent pre-historic cultures.¹¹

The Fertility Cult or the worship of the Mother in the child-delivering postures has been emphasised in the Lajjagouri or the Aditi Uttanapada images found all over eastern,



Rock-cut figures of Four-handed Durga and Ganesh, Ranipur Jharial, District Balangir

western, southern and central India. Two such images carved on stone plaques, depicting Lajjagouri has been



Two-handed Goddess Durga, Sarsara, District Sundargarh

discovered in the Nuapada district. One was discovered by the learned scholar J.P. Singh Deo in the Kotipadar village, situated at a distance of 10 kms from Khariar and the other one was found during digging of the plinth of the Panchayat College Building at Komna.

In this images, the goddess is depicted as headless and instead of head, a full-blown lotus is issuing from the neck. This goddess has been identified with Aditi Uttanapada by Stella Kramrisch.¹²

H.D. Sankalia has identified her with Lajjagouri.¹³ The prominent exhibition of vulva in this images emphasize the *Yoni* type of the fertility figurines.¹⁴ The sprouting of vegetation or lotus from her throat, thereby forming her head, allure scholars to identify her with goddess Sakambari.¹⁵

In Parvati legend, her sexual aspect, nourishing nature and headless figure is meet with in her Sakambari aspect. In the *Laksmi Tantra* we find mention of the blue coloured goddess Sakambari who was produced from the body of Parvati during the fourteenth cycle of *Vaivasvata Manvantara*.¹⁶

Learned scholar Dr. Baba Mishra has rightly pointed out that the evolution of Durga-Parvati and Sri Laksmi cults have the same cardinal traits like headlessness, amorous



Eight-handed Durga,
Rampur (Patnagarh)

aspect and fertility / nourishment features.¹⁷

Therefore in the Brahmanical culture, although Durga-Parvati and Sri Laksmi appear to be different, yet, they are considered as one. They both as the manifestation of a single Universal Mother

Goddess has been mentioned in the Durgastotra of Mahabharata¹⁸ at least since the later Vedic period. In a Gupta coin, Laksmi has been depicted as seated on a lion, the vehicle of goddess Durga.¹⁹

In this context the story of Renuka, the wife of sage Jamadagni can be cited. She is worshipped as goddess Matangi, Yellama and Prthvi etc. for procuring offspring by barren women even today.²⁰

In this context it is important to be noted that during the *Baliyatra* at Sonepur, religious rituals of esoteric nature are performed during Dussehra in the Khaulgad, (most probably symbolising *Yoni* or vulva), in a place called *Renukapitha*, near the Suresvari temple.

The nourishing mother aspect of mother goddess Parvati is emphasised on an unique image of mother-son (Parvati and her son Karttikeya), fitted to the northern *Parsvadevata* niche of Dhavalesvara temple at Mohangiri in Kalahandi district. It is the standing figure of a heavy-breasted female wearing a flat *Mukuta*,

Makara-kundala in both ears and a broad neck-lace. This lady is calm and while her right-hand is in *Abhaya-mudra*, the left hand is put around the shoulder of a youth whose mouth is near her left breast. This youth is holding a Kartri in his left-hand. The lady-figure is wearing long cloth hanging from waist below up to her feet while the youth is wearing cloth from waist upto knee-portion and *Uttariya* hanging from their shoulders in both cases. It seems to be the mother-son figure of Parvati and Karttikeya.

The association of vegetation with the goddess has been described in her Sakambari aspect in the *Markandeya Purana*.²¹ This concept is given much emphasis even during the present time, in the *Navapatrika* ceremony of the autumnal Durga worship, associating nine plants. 'She is the mother *par excellence* sustaining her children, the men and animals of the universe, with food produced from her body.'²²

Although we donot find mention of goddess Durga in the *Rg Veda*, Her name occurred for the first time as Ambika in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* as the consort of Rudra.²³ She has been mentioned as D u r g a Vairocani, Katyayani and Kanyakumari in the same work also.²⁴



Saumya Durga, Bausuni, District Baud



Goddess Durga,
Kumari Temple, Banei

The names of the Supreme Goddess as Bhadrakali, Bhavani and Durga etc. are mentioned in the later Vedic texts like the *Sankhyayana* and *Hiranyakesin Grhyasutras*, and also in the *Taittiriya*

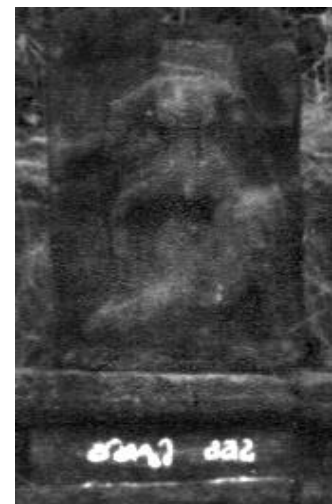
Aranyaka. The two *Durgastotras* of the *Mahabharata*²⁵ and the *Aryastava* in the Supplement of *Mahabharata* have vividly outlined the constituent elements underlying the development of the Sakti Cult.

The *Devimahatmya* Section of the *Markandeya Purana* is the most authoritative text, which contains *Devistutis* elaborately presenting various multi-farious strands that contributed to the formation of the concept of the composite Mother Goddess Durga. The last couplet of the *Narayani-stuti*²⁶ describes the glory of the Great Goddess, who will so often incarnate herself to kill the *Danavas*. The *Stuti* express the ideas of the divine power and energy centering around the Supreme Mother Goddess Durga, the central deity of the Sakti cult. In the 82nd Chapter of the *Markandeya Purana* we get vivid description about the Great Goddess, who emerged as the accumulated fury of the Great Gods Brahma, Visnu and Siva (the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the Universe) and endowed with all the accumulated power of many other major and minor gods of the Hindu Pantheon. Then she set herself in the war path to the kill the demon king Mahisasura and his retinue.²⁷ She is taken as the most powerful Shakta

Tantric goddess, revered by all sections of people. 'Durga in her perfect nature represents a consolidated idea of different aspects of truth as divine power. She is described as the most powerful martial goddess, equipped with the sharpest weapons and making terrifying sound and as the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent creator, preserver and destroyer of the Universe.'²⁸

In the upper Mahanadi valley, mention about the worship of the Mother Goddess in the form of Stambhesvari is found in the Teresingha copper-plate grant of king Tustikara,²⁹ who was ruling from Tarabhramaraka in the 5th century A.D. He was a devout worshipper at the feet of Stambhesvari (the Goddess of Pillar or Post) - '*Stambhesvari Padabhakta*.' Stambhesvari worship also flourished in the later period and was such a popular cult among the local populace that to appease their subjects, who were predominantly tribals, the later ruling family like that of the Sulkis (circa 700-900 A.D.) of Kodalaka Mandala, corresponding to the present Dhenkanal-Angul-Talcher region, made goddess Stambhesvari their tutelary deity, the *Istadevi*.³⁰

B . C . Majumdar has rightly pointed out that Stambhesvari was an aboriginal goddess worshipped by the non-Aryan tribes of the hinterland of Orissa and in course of time she



Two-handed Durga,
Maraguda, District Nuapada



Goddess Durga, Banei

was like many other tribal deities given a place in the Hindu pantheon.³¹

D e v i Stambhesvari, "The Goddess of the Post or Pillar" till the present day is widely worshipped in the hilly tracts of the u n d i v i d e d Sambalpur, Balangir, Phulbani, Kalahandi, Dhenkanal and

Ganjam districts of Orissa in the form of a post or pillar of wood or stone. It might have been worshipped either in this form or in the form of a figure carved on pillar in the early days also. Learned scholar J.P. Singh Deo has taken the four-handed Devi figure holding a sword and a club in her right hands and a shield and a severed human head in her left hands, carved out in the top-portion of a ten-foot high cut-rock pillar found at Dumerbahal village of Nuapada district to be the earliest image of goddess Stambhesvari and further putforth his opinion of this deity being Hinduized from Stambhesvari to Samalesvari.³²

This goddess Samalesvari, otherwise known as Samalei became the family deity of Raja Balaram Deva, the first Chauhan king of Sambalpur line, who carved out an independent kingdom out of the Balangir-Patna state sometime in the sixteenth century and even built a temple at Sambalpur where the goddess is

enshrined. Most probably Balarama Deva by accepting Samalei, the goddess of tribals of the Sambalpur region as his family deity tried to win over his subjects.³³ The image of Samalei, enshrined in the Samalei temple at Sambalpur is certainly a deity of tribal origin as it does not conform to any of the icons of the Hindu pantheon iconographically. Such icons are enshrined in all three places like Sambalpur, Barpali and Patnagarh in the Samalei temples. The temple of Samalei at Sambalpur, the earliest of these three, is said to have been built by Balaram Deva (Circa 1575 A.D.), while that of Barpali was built by Zamindar Vikram Singh in around 1690 A.D.³⁴

Although the Chauhans of Sambalpur accepted Samalei as their tutelary deity, the early Chauhans of this line continued the worship of their tutelary deity, Patanesvari at

Patnagarh in the Balangir district, the capital of their Balangir-Patna kingdom. For the worship of goddess Patanesvari, which is actually an image of ten-armed Mahisasuramardini Durga, Ramai Deva, the founder ruler of the Chauhan kingdom of Balangir-Patna sometime in the later part of the fourteenth century, built a temple at Patnagarh, the



Goddess Durga, Somesvar Temple, Sambalpur



Goddess Durga, Belsara Gad

capital of his kingdom.³⁵

In their copper-plate grants, the Bhanja kings of Khinjali Mandala, and the Tungas of Yamagarta Mandala have also mentioned themselves as the devout worshippers of goddess Stambhesvari.

The Bhanja king of Khinjali Mandala, Ranabhanja who ruled Baud - Sonepur region for long 58 years some time in between 790-850 A.D. has mentioned in his copper-plate grants that he was blessed by goddess Stambhesvari (*Stambhesvari Lavdha Vara Prasada*). As mentioned above, a Mahisasuramardini Durga image was discovered by late Prof. N.K. Sahu, the-then Advisor in Archaeology to Government of Orissa in June 1983 during excavation of a mound in the Maraguda valley of Nuapada district, on the pedestal of which is a stone inscription deciphered as '*Mahesvari Bhavedam*' (From This Grows Mahesvari) by learned epigraphist late Dr. Satya Narayan Rajaguru.³⁶ Dr. Rajaguru has further stated through his correspondence with this researcher that it is the Mahesvari aspect of goddess Durga. He has dated the inscription to the 6th century A.D. palaeographically.

Another epigraphical reference to Durga worship is found in the Jatesingha-Dungri plates of the Somavamsi king Mahasivagupta

Yayati-II Chandihara, in which it has been mentioned that goddess Bhagavati Sri Panchambari Bhadrabika was enshrined at Pattana Suvarnapura, the present-day Sonepur.³⁷

The temple ruins at Sarsara in the Sundargarh district is of considerable importance, due to the two-handed Durga image found here which can be dated to the 6th-7th century A.D. In this image, the demon Mahisa is depicted in a complete buffalo form, but very peculiarly holding a sword in its proper right foreleg which is designed like a hand. The goddess is standing in *Dvibhanga* posture, putting her proper left hand on the head of the buffalo and pressing its head which is looking up. In the proper right hand Devi is holding a long *Sula* piercing it on the neck of the demon. Her *Vahana* lion is seen in the right side of the pedestal near her proper left foot. It is an unique image of goddess Durga, but unfortunately the head is missing.

A four-handed Durga image in profile is worshipped by the villagers of Ranipur in Balangir district. This sculpture is kept under a tree near the collapsed pillared *Jagamohana* of a Siva temple to the



Goddess Parvati and Kartikeya, Mohangiri, District Kalahandi

west of the village. As the bottom portion of this sculpture is buried underneath the earth, Her *Vahana* lion is not visible. The goddess is wearing *Hara*, *Aksamala* on her wrists, arms and waist-portion and anklets on her feet. Both her lower hands are placed on the knee-portion of her left leg, which is raised and placed on the chest of the demon, Mahisasura. A snake (*Sarpa*) is attacking the demon from the back portion of his head. This *Sarpa* is most probably hold by Devi in her upper left hand, which is broken. The upper right hand is raised, but the object in it is not clear. The peculiarity of this sculpture of Mahisamardini Durga is that the *Trisula* (long trident) is not there in the hands of the goddess.

Another four-handed Durga in her Mahisasuramardini aspect is enshrined in a separate shrine to the north of the brick built *Jagamohana* of the Kosalesvara temple at Vaidyanath in Sonepur district. In her up-raised proper right hand is a *Khadga*, while in the lower left hand is a *Dhanu*. She is holding a long trident in her upper left hand which is pierced into the month of the demon. In her lower right hand she is holding the tail of her *Vahana* the lion. The *Jatabhara* adorning her head is specifically suggesting the Panduvamsi feature, i.e. of the 7th-8th century A.D.

In the temple enshrining Kevala Narasimha at Podagad in Nawarangpur district, four images; two of Durga, one of Uma

Mahesvara and one of four-handed Ganesa are worshipped by people. Among two Durga images, one is four-handed, while the other one is six-handed. In both cases Durga is in the conventional *Alidha* posture of an archer. The four-handed image is of the goddess in her Mahisamardini aspect, as the demon is depicted in the buffalo form. Durga is lifting the entire body of the animal by holding its tail in her lower left hand, and piercing the long *Sula* (trident) by her lower right hand deep into the neck of the buffalo. Objects in her upper left and right hands are *Pasa* (Noose) and *Gada* (Staff) respectively. Her hair is forming a *Jatabhara* on her head. *Patrakundalas* are in her ears and a *Hara* is around her neck. This image is of the breadth of around eight inches and height of fifteen inches. It can be dated to the fifth century A.D. iconographically, because four-handed image of Durga is a quite earlier representation of the goddess in the sculptural art of India.



Fourteen-handed Saumya Durga, Khambesvari Temple, Sonepur

Another image of Durga kept inside this temple is a six-handed one and of the same dimension. In her left upper and middle hands are spear and *Sakti* respectively, while in her lower left hand she is touching the tail of the *Mahisa*(buffalo). In her right lower hand is a *Sula* which she is piercing into the neck of the *Mahisa*. In her upper right hand is a *Sarpa*. A *Karanda Mukuta* is adorning the head of the goddess. She is also wearing *Patrakundalas* in both her ears and a *Hara* around her neck. Garment is flowing between both her legs. In the top-most

corners of the stone-slab in both left and right sides, front-faced *Vidyadharas* (male and female) with garlands in hands are carved, which depiction assign a slightly later date, i.e. Circa 8th century A.D. to this image, because by the 8th century A.D. flying *Vidyadharas* appeared in the sculptural art of the upper Mahanadi valley. A four-handed Durga image, holding *Chakra* and *Trisula*, engaged in fierce battle with the theriomorphic buffalo-demon Mahisa by riding on it is fitted to the southern *Parsvadevata* niche of the Bad Jagannath temple, situated in the Gopalji Math precinct at Sambalpur, which is an excellent piece of early Chauhan art of the 17th century A.D. As the *Trisula* is hold vertically it is the latest form of Durga, associating Vaisnavism in Her Cult.

In another place i.e. Banei in Sundargarh district also, we find a rare four-handed Durga image in the *Alidha* posture amidst loose sculptures found in the Kumari temple precinct, on the right bank of river Brahmani. Here Devi is seen to be putting her uplifted left leg on the back of the beast *Mahisa*, while pressing its head with her lower left hand so that the head is turned to one side by that pressure and simultaneously piercing its neck with the *Trisula*, which is in her lower right hand. In the up-raised upper right hand of goddess Durga is a *Khadga*, while there is a *Sankha* in her upper left hand. Her *Vahana* lion is seen to be seated crouching, while biting



Goddess Durga,
Banesvara Temple, Deogaon (Banei)

the tail of the *Mahisa*. Here the human figure of Mahisasura is absent. This image can be dated to the 7th-8th century A.D. also. Another Durga image, six-handed but all hands broken except one right hand, is also found amidst this temple ruins. The moustached Mahisasura with sword and shield in hands is lying right on the back of the lion. His head is slightly raised and Devi is seen piercing the *Trisula* on his

waist portion rather than on the chest or neck. The body of the goddess is heavily bedecked with ornaments like *Katimekhala*, *Udara-bandha*, *Kankana*, *Keyura*, *Hara*, *Mukuta*, *Kundala* and many others. Her *Mukuta* deserves special attention. It is a *Jatamukuta*, behind which there is an oval-shaped *Sirascakra* formed by the design of lotus-petals. This *Jatamukuta* is adorned with *Kirtimukha* heads on the top. Strings of pearls are coming out of the mouth of the *Kirtimukha* heads from both the left and right sides and swallowed by the central *Kirtimukha*. From the

mouth of the central *Kirtimukha* is hanging a rectangular-shaped flower-design pendant in a string of pearls. This image of Mahisasuramardini Durga can be placed in the 10th century A.D.

The Mahisamardini Durga image of Bausuni in Baudh district about which noted historian late R.D. Banerji has written is a six-handed figure of Devi, exquisitely carved on red stone. Very peculiarly enough, her *Vahana*,

the lion is absent. The cut-head as well as the body of the buffalo is lying below and the kneeling Mahisasura is looking up holding a sword and a shield. Goddess Durga is seen in an archer's pose (*Alidha*), putting her right raised leg on the Mahisasura and piercing the long trident (*Trisula*) by holding it in her right middle hand into the head of the demon. In her left upper, middle and lower hands Durga is holding a shield (*Khetaka*), bow (*Dhanu*) and snake (*Sarpa*) respectively, while a sword (*Khadga*) and a wheel (*Cakra*) are in her right upper and lower hands. This image is enshrined and worshipped in a separate temple, constructed in the Siva temple complex at Bausuni, on the right bank of river Mahanadi.

An exquisitely carved image of eight-handed and three-eyed Durga image is found amidst loose sculptures in the Chandi temple site at Lalei, situated

on the left bank of river Brahmani, just opposite Banei town in Sundargarh district. It is carved on a stone-block measuring around thirty inches both in height and breadth. *Vidyadhara* couple (in the proper left side female and right side male) with garland in hands is carved in both sides in the top-corners of the stone slab.' The theriomorphic composite figure of demon *Mahisa* in the human form with the head of a buffalo is lying below. Goddess Durga is seen putting her left foot on the body of the demon. In her upper-most left hand she is pressing the

horn of the demon, while piercing the *Sula* hold in her lowest right hand on his neck. Here goddess Durga is depicted in a warrior pose, bringing out one arrow from the quiver hanging on her back in her upper-most right hand. The long *Khadga* of her lower-most right hand is also penetrated into the neck of the buffalo head. In her second upper right hand is a *Sakti*, while in the second, third and lowest left

hands are *Khetaka* (Shield), *Ghanta* (Bell) and *Dhanu* (Bow) respectively. Two lions are biting the body of the demon in both left and right sides of the pedestal. There is a lotus-petalled *Prabhavali* behind her head on the back-slab. A beautifully carved *Karanda Mukuta* is on her head. The goddess is heavily bedecked with all ornaments. The iconographic features date this image to the pre-Somavamsi period, i.e. 8th-9th century A.D.

Another exquisitely carved image of the eight-handed Mahisasuramardini Durga is

adorning the northern *Parsvadevata* niche of the Banesvara temple at Deogaon, near Banei also. Devi is seen holding *Ankusa*, *Dhanu*, *Sarpa* and *Khetaka* in her four left hands, the *Sarpa* seems to be strangling the Mahisasura by going around his neck and biting the demon on his face. The right leg of the Mahisasura has not come out fully from the cut-neck of the *Mahisa*, while the fully-exposed left leg is bitten by the lion in the knee-portion. Devi is in her usual *Alidha* posture, seen putting her left foot on the back of her *Vahana*, the lion, while the slightly raised right foot on the back



Ten-handed Durga,
Dadpur, District Kalahandi

of the Mahisa, lying below. In her raised uppermost right hand is a *Khadga*, while in her second upper right hand she is pulling out one arrow from the quiver hanging on her back from the right shoulder. The broken top-portion of the long *Trisula* is still in her third right hand and in her fourth right hand is a *Cakra*. Her body is bedecked with all sorts of ornaments and a peculiar *Jatabhara* is adorning her head. On the pedestal are foliage-designs with a bud in the central portion. This image is having all the iconographic features of the Somavamsi period, i.e. 11th century A.D.

In 1990, a beautiful eight-handed Durga image, of the size of around fourteen inches in height and ten inches in breadth was discovered at Salebhata in Balangir district from underneath the earth in a mound situated to the left of the state highway behind the Dak Bungalow on the right bank of the river Ang, a major tributary of river Mahanadi. This image is exquisitely carved on red stone, with a thin layer of stucco pasted on it. It displays the beauty of the plastic art that prevailed during the period of the Panduvamsis and their successors, the early Somavamsis. The goddess is in the usual *Alidha* posture with her right leg on the back of the buffalo stumbling below and left leg on the back of a diminutive figure of her *Vahana*, the lion. The lion is seen biting the right foot of the demon Mahisasura who is looking up



Kusangei Temple, Kusang, District Balangir
(Circa 11th Century A.D.)

while trying to give a tough resistance in the fight. A long trident held by the goddess in her third right hand is pierced right into the face of the demon. A long sword is held by Durga in her first upper right hand over her head. She is holding an arrow in her second upper right hand over her shoulder, while the object in her fourth right hand (the lowest one) is not clear. In the left hands, from top to below, objects held by the Devi are *Pasa* (noose), *Dhanu* (bow), *Ankusa* and *Khadga*. The *Khadga* (sword) held by Devi in her fourth (lowest) hand is very peculiar in shape. It has a long handle which is fixed to her wrist with the help of two rings in it. She is seen piercing this sword in the naval-portion of the Devil. Goddess Durga has a smiling face. She is wearing a *Jatamukuta* on her head. A long garment which goes around her shoulders is hanging upto her knee-level. The cut head of the buffalo is lying below near the right foot of Mahisasura. This image is heavily bejewelled. At present, this image is kept in the Siva temple of Salebhata and can be iconographically dated to the 9th century A.D.

An unique image of eight-handed Mahisamardini Durga, of the height of around two feet and a half and breadth of eighteen inches was unearthed a couple of years back on the back of a rivulet named Suvarnarekha (Mayabati) at Rampur, situated on the outskirts of Patnagarh town of Balangir district. Objects hold by the Goddess in her proper right hands

from top to bottom are *Khadga*, *Sula*, arrow and the lowest one in *Abhaya mudra*, while objects in proper left hands are *Khetaka*, *Dhanu*, *Kunta* and *Nagapasa*. In the proper right side of the pedestal demon *Mahisa* in the theriomorphic buffalo form is already beheaded, as a result of which trembling down on its fore-legs, and the anthromorphic form of the demon coming out from the cut neck of the buffalo.

The demon is depicted in the kneeling down position and being attacked by the goddess, who has plunged the long trident deep into the face of the Mahisasura while strangulating his head by putting the serpent-noose around his neck. Her *Vahana*, the lion is seated in the left side of the panel, which seems quite unusual. The heavy ear-rings hanging from her ears and the *Karanda Mukuta* on Devi's head as well as absence of the *Vidyadhara* couple on both the top-most corners of the back-slab suggest an early dating, i.e. 7th-8th century A.D. for this image. This image was for the first time reported by learned scholar Dr. Jadumani Mahapatra.³⁸

Another eight-handed Mahisamardini Durga image is worshipped as Chandi in a small dilapidated temple of the *Triratha* order at Dekhala near Bijepur village, in the Titilagarh subdivision of Balangir district and also at Durgeikhol near Narsinghnath.

Besides this eight-handed Durga image another image of Durga in the *Alidha* posture is fitted to the proper left of the doorway to the inner sanctum of the Siva temple at Salebhata. It is a six-handed image of Durga. The left leg of the Devi is on the back of the diminutive figure of a buffalo, while the right leg is slightly raised up and placed on the profiled figure of her *Vahana*, the lion. No weapon is held by

Mahisasura, which is in a running posture in between both legs of the Devi, just below. In her upper right hand, which is touching her hair, tied as one *Jata* in a round shape. In her left middle hand, she is holding a *Kapala* with *Agni* in it. Both the lower hands of Devi are put in a dancing posture. Durga is seen wearing a *Hara* with a bell hanging from its centre as pendant. It is a peculiar form of Durga iconographically, so far found in this region. This image is of the height of around ten inches and breadth of six inches. This image can be iconographically dated to the 7th century A.D.

Ten-handed Durga is worshipped as goddess Kusangei in a temple of the 11th century, at Kusang in Balangir district, which temple is a proto-type of Lingaraj temple of Bhubaneswar, most probably built by the Somavamsi king Yayati II (circa 1024-1060 A.D.). Patanesvari, enshrined in a temple at Patnagad is none else than ten-handed Durga in her Mahisasuramardini form.

Another ten-handed Durga image in her Mahisasuramardini aspect is found carved on a rectangular stone-block, having an *Asthadalapadma* (eight-petalled lotus) symbol carved on the pedestal, which denotes its relationship with *Tantra*. It is found in the southern side of the Somesvara temple at Balibandha in Sambalpur town.

Goddess Suresvari is worshipped in the Vana Durga *Mantra* in the Suresvari temple at Sonapur. Images of ten-handed dancing Durga and four-handed Devi sitting in *Lalitasana* (Bagala of the *Dasamahavidya* group) on the *Visvapadma* pedestals are fitted to the *Parsvadevata* niches of this temple. In the *Parsvadevata* niches of Khambesvari temple at Sonapur images of fourteen-handed Durga, standing in the Samabhanga and eight-handed

Durga dancing in the *Lalita* mode are found. The eight-handed Durga is depicted as dancing with her right heel raised and all hands arranged symmetrically. The goddess is holding *Vajra*, *Sula*, arrow, *Khadga*, small *Khetaka*, *Dhanu*, *Parasu* and an unidentified object in her hands. She is wearing *Naramundamala*, a long garland of skulls. *Sarpas* are coiled around her ankles and wrists as *Nupura* and *Kankana*. She is wearing ornate ear rings and her hair is arranged in a *Jatamukuta*. The ends of a scarf is hanging upto her feet-level. A profiled figure of her *Vahana*, the lion is carved on the pedestal just below her feet. It is a unique image of goddess Durga in the pacified form belonging to the Chauhan period, i.e. 18th century A.D.

A four-armed standing figure of pacified Durga is adorning the northern *Parsvadevata* niche of the Siva temple of Bausuni. The goddess is holding a *Sarpa* and an *Ankusa* in her upper left and right hands respectively, while the lower right hand is in *Varada Mudra*. In her lower left hand is a *Padmanada*. She is seen wearing a *Dhoti*-type garment, *Kuchavandha*, *Katibandha*, *Keyura*, *Kankana*, *Hara* and also a big garland of rosary beads hanging upto Her thigh-level. It is a *Saumya* aspect of the Devi with a smiling face seen wearing a *Karanda Mukuta* and beautiful ear rings. Her *Vahana*, a roaring lion is sitting near her right leg.

Another four-handed standing figure of *Saumya* Durga is of the height of about one feet and a half is found inside the *Jagamohana* of the Nilakanthesvara temple at Dadpur in the Kalahandi district, which can be dated to the Ganga period, i.e. 12th-13th century A.D. wearing a *Karanda Mukuta*, *Patra-kundala*, *Hara* and *Katibandha* etc. She is seen holding an *Ankusa* and a *Nilotpala* flower in her upper

right and left hands respectively while keeping lower hands in *Varada* and *Abhaya Mudras*. Her *Vahana*, a roaring lion in profile is seen to be standing behind her figure. A ten-handed Durga image is also found at Dadpur in the Bhawanipatna sub-division of Kalahandi district.

With the rise of the Somavamsis in Western Orissa, the eight-handed and ten-handed Durga images were installed and worshipped in the temples as central deities. An eight-handed Durga image is worshipped as Chandi in the Chandi temple of Saintala, where Visnu images as well as temple pillars depicting scenes from the childhood of Krsna are kept. Both these Durga images can be taken to be of the Somavamsi period, i.e. the ninth-tenth century A.D. The most excellent of all these Durga images is the one having twenty hands, which has been collected from Salebhata and now preserved in the Sambalpur University Museum. The *Visnudharmottara* as quoted in the *Vachaspatya*, describes the twenty-armed Mahisamardini under the name of Chandika.³⁹ This Salebhata image can be taken as a rare one. We get another twenty-armed Durga image at Bheraghat in the Jabbalpur district of Madhya Pradesh. The twenty-armed Durga can be dated to the 11th Century A.D. The ten-armed and twenty-armed images can be taken of the period in between 10th-12th century A.D.

During the time of the Chauhans also, Mahisamardini Durga was worshipped as a principal deity. We get four-handed Mahisamardini image in the *Jagamohana* of the Samlei temple of Sonapur, and another in the Gokarnesvara temple precinct of the same town.

An image of a four-armed Parvati but seated cross-legged in *Padmasana* is kept in the northern *Parsvadevata* niche of the Siva temple at Ramgarh in Baud district situated on the right bank of river Mahanadi. A long garment is around her neck which is hanging from both shoulders upto the feet-level. She is holding *Sakti* and *Dhvaja* in her raised upper left and right hands respectively, while the lower left and right hands are in *Abhaya* and *Varada Mudras*. The *Vahana* lion in profile is carved in the centre of the pedestal in the running posture.

From the above evidences it can be surmised that from the pre-historic age till the present days the worshipped of the supreme Mother Goddess is prevailing in the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa.

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State Govt. Signed MoU with Jindal Steel and Power Limited

Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) signed MoU with State Government on 18.10.2004 to set up a two million tonne capacity steel plant in Keonjhar district. The MoU also envisages establishment of a 80,000 tonne capacity ferro alloys plant and a 200 MW captive power plant. The entire project will cost Rs.4000 crore.

Energy Secretary R.N. Bohidar and Vikrant Gujral, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, JSPL signed the MoU on behalf of the State Government and JSPL respectively in the presence of Chief Minister Sri Naveen Patnaik, Chief Secretary, Shri subas Pani and Executive Vice-Chairman and MD of JSPL Sri Naveen Jindal.

The proposed project will provide employment to more than 10,000 people in Keonjhar and Angul districts. The company is contemplating to increase capacity of the proposed steel plant to six million tonne per annum in the second phase with an additional investment of Rs.6,000 crore.

The project report of the enhanced capacity will be submitted to the State Government shortly.

The Chief Minister underscored the need for implementation of a comprehensive rehabilitation package for the affected families. He said, the State Government expects to raise revenue of Rs.300 crore per annum after commissioning of the plant.



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CONTENTS

Editorial

God as Divine Mother	<i>Durga Madhab Dash</i>	...	1
Origin of Tantricism and Sixty-Four Yogini Cult in Orissa	<i>Dr. Janmejay Choudhury</i>	...	7
Samalei to Sambaleswari - Ashapuri to Samalei	<i>Dr. Chitrasen Pasayat</i>	...	10
Shakti Cult in Orissa	<i>Balabhadra Ghadai</i>	...	19
The Lion : Mount of Goddess Durga	<i>Pradeep Kumar Gan</i>	...	22
Shakta Pitha Bhattarika	<i>Pabitra Mohan Barik</i>	...	25
Goddess Kali in Orissan Art : With Special Reference to Shyamakali at Puri	<i>Santosh Kumar Rath</i>	...	27
Lajja-Gouri : The Nude Goddess or Shameless Woman - Orissan Examples	<i>Pradeep Mohanty J.P. Singh Deo</i>	...	32
A Peep into the Candi Text	<i>Rajkishore Mishra</i>	...	34
Sakti Worship in Orissan Inscriptions	<i>Bharati Pal</i>	...	37
Reminiscence of Gandhiji's Visits to Puri	<i>Dr. Binodini Das</i>	...	39
Organic Farming for Sustainable Agriculture	<i>Dr. B.B. Mishra Dr. K.C. Nayak</i>	...	42
Women and Mental-Health : A Rural Scenario	<i>Dr. Alhadini Dhir</i>	...	46
Krishi Vigyan Kendra : The Light House for Rural People	<i>Dr. Ashish Kumar Dash Dr. Monoranjan Mishra</i>	...	52
Sarala Dasa, The Originator of the Oriya Literature	<i>Debendra Nath Bhoi Priyadarshini Bakshi</i>	...	57
Palmleaf Manuscript Legacy of Orissa and National Mission for Manuscripts	<i>Dr. C.B. Patel</i>	...	60
Durga Worship in Upper Mahanadi Valley	<i>Sasanka S. Panda</i>	...	66



*Ya Devi Sarvabhutesu Matru Rupena Sansthita
Namastasei Namastasei Namastasei Namoh Namah*

EDITORIAL



*Ya Devi Sarvabhutesu Matru Rupena Sansthita
Namastasei Namastasei Namastasei Namoh Namah*

Thorough search and detailed analyses into the origin of the Shakti Cult deftly denies possible perception of the human mind. Any inference drawn on the basis of targeted studies carrying various perspectives of the Mother Goddess always forms a particle of the whole ocean that dissolves all whims and caprices that tend to trespass principles and order of the society evolved with an objective of peaceful co-existence. To cite here a saying of the super human sensibility Sri Aurobindo in his august creation 'Savitri' has reflected "Shakti is the energy principle activating the descent of Purusha on Prakriti and the ascent of Prakriti on to Purusha."

The observance of the Durga Puja with multi-coloured mood all over the country signifies the feeling to be identified in the whole with unfatigued juvenile spirit by accumulating the inner spirit. Durga, acclaimed for her prowess and strength primarily symbolises the war goddess. She, according to Durga Saptasati, assumes the forms of Mahakali, Mahalaksmi and Mahasarasvati. These three entities are different aspects of the same Supreme Power. Mahalaksmi is the

goddess of secular glory and embodies the principle of sustenance and beauty. Mahakali is emblematic of violence and fury of destruction, dread and horror. Mahasarasvati is an embodiment of knowledge. These three entities are seen combiningly as a causative principle of Creation, Protection and Destruction. Durga is called 'Nihsanga' or without any attachment. Thus, propitiating Durga plainly evokes an atmosphere rich, happy and resourceful, at the same time devoid of any attachment on self-interest.

Sprinkling all these impressions on the October issue of Orissa Review, it has basically been considered as a sacred duty on our part which, we hope, will provide at least a base for initiating interesting interactions on an issue warranting further research for attaining spiritual bliss.



*Ya Devi Sarvabhutesu Matru Rupena Sansthita
Namastasei Namastasei Namastasei Namoh Namah*