

## Viṣṇu Veneration : West Odishan Context

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### Introduction

The Vaiṣṇava religion centres round the adoration of the paramount God Nārāyaṇa Viṣṇu. Though Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu are initially different Gods, they became one and identical later on, and the cult of Vaiṣṇavism appeared. Gradually the cults of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa and various Vyūha, Vibhava and other minor Gods have been assimilated into the main stream of Nārāyaṇa Viṣṇu. Thus it expanded and became a prominent and principal religious system in India. The centrality of Vedic Viṣṇu in the cult designated the religion and worshippers as Vaiṣṇava.

Vaiṣṇavism is a very ancient and popular cult of Indian religious systems. The origin of Vaiṣṇavism dates back to Ṛgvedic period. It subordinated various cults and obtained prominence among other cults in course of time. Though this religious sect was prevalent from Ṛgvedic time, its emergence in the soil of Odisha is noticed only in 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. i.e., during the ruling period of Māṭharas.<sup>1</sup> It may be also the result of the invasion of Samudragupta, which brought cultural wave with its trend. The Māṭhara kings claimed themselves as the worshipper of Bhagavat Svāmī Nārāyaṇa and styled themselves as Parambhāgavatas.<sup>2</sup> In their inscriptions occur the personal names like Vāsudeva, Keśava, Kṛṣṇa, etc.<sup>3</sup> which suggest the promulgation and popularity of the Kṛṣṇaism in this land. The wave of Vaiṣṇavism entered into the land of western Odisha during the reign of Nalas.

The Western Odisha comprises the modern districts of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Suvarnapur, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Boudh Kandhmal Navarangopur and part of Koraput. The tract of land once upon a time was an integral part of South Kosala. Present province of Chhatisgarh and Western Odisha constituted the ancient South Kosala state. The western part of Odisha was the eastern South Kosala. Western Odisha now, has been a meeting place of both East Odishan and Chhatisgarhi culture. In Western Orissa the

worship of Viṣṇu can be traced earliest in the records of Nala kings. The Podagadh inscription of Nala king Skandavarman<sup>4</sup> refers to a Pādamāla of Lord Viṣṇu, which was established by Skandavarman who was ruling Koraput-Kalahandi-Vastar region in the last half of the fifth century CE. A temple might have been constructed by the king where the foot-prints of Lord Viṣṇu would have been installed and consecrated. This inscription opens with an invocation to Lord Hari. It states that “Hari was victorious, is victorious and will be victorious. He Himself is the conquest, the object of the conquest and the conqueror.”<sup>5</sup> A pillar was also caused to be planted by the king himself. The name of the General of the king as known from inscription is mentioned as Pṛitibhāgavata, a purely Vaiṣṇavite name suggestive of popularity of the cult.

The Śarabhapurīya kings who were ruling over Raipur-Bilaspur-Kalahandi area declared themselves as Paramabhāgavats.<sup>6</sup> Rawan plates<sup>7</sup> reveals that Mahārāja Narendra had built a temple for Bhagavān Śrīdharasvāmin and had granted village Ārāmaka of Maṅṭarāja-bhukti for *bali*, *caru*, *sattra* and daily worship of the God. The temple was situated near Batapadraka. Malhar plates<sup>8</sup> of Pravararāja mention *śaṅkhacakra bhoga*. In this context, it is to note the references of *Paramasaṁhitā* and *Isvarasaṁhitā*, the Pañcarātra texts where it is described that after being initiated to Vaiṣṇava sect, the devotee is required to be branded with the marks of *śaṅkha* and *cakra*. On this occasion, the devotee gives Gurudakṣiṇā.<sup>9</sup> Probably the *śaṅkhacakra bhoga* refers to that offering. The coins of Śarabhapurīyas also depict the figure of Garuṣa flanked by *śaṅkha* on one side and *cakra* on the other. Gajalakṣmī was the popular emblem, which was adopted in the seals and sculptures of the Śarabhapurīya kings. Gajalakṣmī is shown standing flanked by elephants pouring water on the head of the deity. The later metropolis of Śarabhapurīyas also was named after Lakṣmī as Śrīpura. Śrīpura as metropolis began to appear in the copperplates of Pravararāja I and his successors. The images of Viṣṇu belonging to the period of Śarabhapurīyas are also noticed in the area, which indicate the popularity of Vaiṣṇavism in South Kosala.

The Pāṇḍuvarṁśīs or the early Somavarṁśī kings of South Kosala were devout worshippers of Viṣṇu. Tīvaradeva and his son Nannarāja II proclaimed themselves as Paramavaiṣṇava. The seal of Tīvaradeva<sup>10</sup> has the depiction of Garuḍa, *śaṅkha*, *cakra* and a floral device, which are all Vaiṣṇavite symbols. The Adbhar plates<sup>11</sup> mention that he has received the blessings of Bhagavānnārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka whom he worshipped in many previous births. This charter also

describes Nannarāja was the son of Tīvaradeva as Pradyumna was the son of Kaiṭabhāri. The Sirpur stone inscription of Queen Vāsaṭā initiates the text with a salutation to Lord Puruṣottama (*Om Namaḥ Puruṣottamāya*). Queen Vāsaṭā was a staunch devotee of Lord Puruṣottama Nṛsimha. The opening three stanzas of Sirpur stone inscription are invocatory verses dedicated to Lord Nṛsimha.<sup>12</sup> Vāsaṭā is also said to have built a temple of Lord Viṣṇu. The epigraph describes that Harṣagupta, the husband of Queen Vāsaṭā, after his death, went to the abode of Hari where he lived worshipping Acyuta. Vāsaṭā has been compared with the Saṭā (locks) of Lord Nṛsimha.<sup>13</sup> She has been called as *Śrī svayamī* – Lakṣmī herself. Balarāma has been described as Sīrāyudha and elder brother of Kaṁsanisūdana. Further, it states that Hari was born as Māyāmaya Kṛṣṇa who would be born as Kalki in future. In the Somavamui inscriptions, Viṣṇu has been mentioned as Bhāgavat,<sup>14</sup> Nārāyaṇa,<sup>15</sup> Kaiṭabhāri,<sup>16</sup> Puruṣottama,<sup>17</sup> Cakrin,<sup>18</sup> Kaṁsanisūdana,<sup>19</sup> Hari,<sup>20</sup> Kṛṣṇa,<sup>21</sup> Acyuta,<sup>22</sup> Keśava,<sup>23</sup> Madhusūdana,<sup>24</sup> Upendra, etc. Tīvaradeva is described as Garutmat<sup>25</sup> the mount of Viṣṇu. The inscription of Tīvaradeva refers to Viṣṇu who is sleeping on the back of Ananta in the ocean of milk.<sup>26</sup> The references of Anantaśāyī Viṣṇu is found in the Gopalpur plates<sup>27</sup> issued in the tenth year of Janamejaya where he is described as Jalaśayana Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka. A part of the village Jallamura was granted for *bali, caru, naivedya* and *devakula karma* of Jalaśayana Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka. The same plate closes the text with the twelve-syllabled Viṣṇu *mantra* '*Om Namaḥ Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*'. The Sonapur charter of Janamejaya<sup>28</sup> refers to a temple dedicated to Keśava. Yayāti II, in his Jaṭeṣingā Dunguri plates,<sup>29</sup> has been referred to as '*Pratinidhir Madhusūdanasya*', the representative of Madhusūdana. Kolāvatīdevī, the queen of Yayāti II has been described as Lakṣmī. Dharmaratha is mentioned as second Paraśurāma. Pṛthvī Mahādevī, the daughter of Janamejaya was a Paramavaiṣṇavī. The Kalighāna plates<sup>30</sup> of Janamejaya mention the Kaustubha gem, the favourite ornament borne by Viṣṇu on his chest. Devapya (Devapriya), son of Sakilla, was a feudatory of Janamejaya I. He calls himself a Paramavaiṣṇava in his charter.<sup>31</sup> The wide prevalence of Vaiṣṇavism is amply reflected in the sculptural representations and constructional activities of religious edifices of the Somavamśī rulers. The Viṣṇu temples at Sirpur, Rajim, Adbhar, Janjgir, Seorinarayana, Pujaripali, Ranijhola, Saria, Panchadhar, etc. in Chattisgarh and Gandharadi, Ranipur-Jharia, Saintala etc. in Western Odisha were erected during this period (late ninth and early 11<sup>th</sup> century CE). The life size images of Viṣṇu

found in Saria and Panchadhar have close similarities with the image of Nīlamādhava at Gandharadi. The images of incantatory forms noticed at Saintala, Janjgir, Gandharadi speak of popularity of avatāra cult of Viṣṇu. The cult of Nārāyaṇa and Anaṅtaśāyī Viṣṇu also had a deeper influence in the mind of the people. In the Śiva temples at Charada and Vaidyanatha the images of reclining Viṣṇu are noticed. In the lateral transepts of Vaidyanatha temple are found the representations of various scenes of the activities of child Kṛṣṇa. In Saintala temple, Kṛṣṇalīlā scenes are found carved in the pillars. The Viṣṇu temple at Janjgir contains the depiction of scenes from *Rāmāyaṇa* theme on its exterior wall. R.D. Banerjee<sup>32</sup> has reported that there were images of Vāmana, Matsya, Kūrma and Varāha in the temple of Nīlamādhava at Gandharadi. At Saintala, two Viṣṇu images are noticed in a damaged state. In one slab, the central image Viṣṇu is found in somewhat better condition while the images carved on both sides of the god are damaged incarnatory forms. But the other slab has the images of incantatory forms around the main deity which are in quite discernible condition though the image of Viṣṇu, the main deity is completely damaged except its feet. The images around the central deity represent the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. In the Indralath temple at Ranipur-Jharia, a figure of Monkey God is found carrying the mountain Gandhamardan and images of Nṛsimha and Varāha as *pārśvadevatās*.

The Bhañja dynasty was ruling over Khiñjali *maṇḍala* comprising present Sonapur-Baudh area in eighth-ninth century CE. The Bhañja rulers, Śatrubhañjadeva and Raṇabhañjadeva were Paramavaiṣṇavas.<sup>33</sup> In the Sonapur Grant of Śatrubhañjadeva I,<sup>34</sup> son of Śīlabhañja, calls the donor king a Paramavaiṣṇava. In the Kumurkela charter<sup>35</sup> of Śatrubhañja, son of Aṅgaśi, reveals that the king who was a Paramavaiṣṇava granted the village Jaintamura and Kumurkela on Kārttika Śukla Dvādaśī for Viṣṇu Bhaṭṭāraka (Viṣṇu Bhaṭṭāraka uddiśya). This charter opens with an invocation to Viṣṇu wherein is described the amorous sport of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, which is also depicted in Odishan art. The Patna Museum plates,<sup>36</sup> the Taspāikera charter,<sup>37</sup> Dasapalla charter,<sup>38</sup> Baudh grants<sup>39</sup> of 26<sup>th</sup> regnal year and 54<sup>th</sup> regnal year<sup>40</sup> and an undated grant of Raṇabhañjadeva<sup>41</sup> declare him as Paramavaiṣṇava. In all these grants, Vaiṣṇava names like Vāsudeva, Padmanābha, Nārāyaṇa, Śrīdhara, Balabhadra, Padmākara, Dāmodara, Keśava, Viṣṇusvāmī are found either as donors or officers. The Orissa Museum plates of Neṭṭabhañjadeva IV,<sup>42</sup> son of Vidyādarabhañja, have stated here that the grant of the king would endure as long

as the *cakra* of Śrīdeva Puruṣottama would continue to shine. Lord Śrīdeva Puruṣottama referred to here is obviously Puruṣottama Jagannātha. It is definitely an important reference of Lord Puruṣottama in an inscription belonging to 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. Neṭṭabhañjadeva has been described in his copperplate charters as Paramavaiṣṇava. Śatrubhañjadeva, son of Śīlabhañja and grandson of Vidyādarabhañja in his grants found from Dasapalla<sup>43</sup> and Ganjam<sup>44</sup> proclaims himself as Paramavaiṣṇava. A beautiful prayer to Lord Viṣṇu is found in the Jurada grant<sup>45</sup> of Paramavaiṣṇava Neṭṭabhañjadeva, son of Raṇabhañjadeva. The Bhañjanagar charter<sup>46</sup> issued by him also contains the same prayer. Here Lord Viṣṇu, the wielder of *cakra*, *gada*, *asi* and *dhanuṣa*, has been prayed and the lord has been described as the maker of the wives of Ditija (sons of Diti, i.e. Daityas) widow and as the grantor of *mokṣa* (salvation) to his devotees. Solanabhañja, son of Durjayabhañja, was also devout worshiper of Viṣṇu. The text of this Baudh copperplate grant begins with the Nārāyaṇa Mañtra “Om Namō Nārāyaṇāya”. Thus, most of the Bhañja kings had great inclination towards Vaiṣṇava faith.

The Teluguchoda king Someśvaradeva has granted villages Phullamuthi and Doḥalī to Brahmins for the pleasure of Lord Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka,<sup>47</sup> *Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka prītaye*. The Ponnuturu grant reveals<sup>48</sup> that Sāmanta Varmnan, the second Gaṅga king of Trikaliṅga, designated his capital as Śrīnivāsa, the abode of Śrī (Lakṣmī). Though the early eastern Gaṅgas were Śaivas, they had equal veneration for Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī. The Narisṁhapalli charter<sup>49</sup> of Hastivarman, the third king of early Eastern Gaṅga who declares himself as Lord of entire Kaliṅga, mentions that Hastivarman granted villages to Lord Nārāyaṇa, who resides in seven oceans, who is prayed in seven Sāmavedic hymns and who is the sole lord of seven worlds. Such a verse is also noticed in *Raghuvaṁśa*. The Rithapur grant<sup>50</sup> is known to have been issued from the Pādāmūla of Rāmagiri Svāmī. Rāmagiri is identified with Ramagiri close to Gupteśvara near Jeypur in Koraput district of Odisha.<sup>51</sup> This grant was issued by Prabhāvatīguptā, the Gupta princess and Vākāṭaka queen.

The Telugu Chodas were defeated by the Kalachuris of Ratnapur who ruled the Sonapur-Bolangir-Patnagarh area for about a century. Unfortunately, the Kalachuris have left nothing worth mentioning about their contributions to the land of Western Orissa. Not a single Kalachuri inscription is found recording donation either in cash or in kind for repair/worship/maintenance of temples of this area. The Kalchuris were driven out in the second decade of 13<sup>th</sup> century CE by

Anaṅgahimadeva III.<sup>52</sup> The Maufi Grants reveal that Anaṅgahimadeva III granted lands for the worship and maintenance of the Dadhivāmana temple at Kumbhari and Jagannātha temple at Tamparsara in the Sambalpur district. Vaiṣṇavism could not gain importance up to the expectation in Western Odisha during the Gaṅga rule in Orissa. But to its good fortune, provincial dynasties rose to prominence in various areas of this western zone. The Chauhans began to rule in Patnagarh-Bolangir-Sambalpur area, the Nāgas ruled in Kalahandi and the Paramāras and Kadambas in Sundargarh area. Most prominent among these dynasties were the Chauhans who ruled from 14<sup>th</sup> century CE to 20<sup>th</sup> century CE. During the Chauhan rule, Vaiṣṇavism began to flourish along with other major religious sects.

The Chauhans were devotees of *Pañcādevatās* – Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, Durgā and Gaṇeśa. Rāmadeva, the first Chauhan ruler of Patna state (present Balangir, Sonapur and Sambalpur district) is said to have prayed and worshipped *Pañcādevatās* at the time of his coronation.<sup>53</sup> The Narasimhanātha temple inscription<sup>54</sup> reveals that Vaijaladeva had built a temple for Biḍāla Nṛsimha, the feline incarnation of lord Narasimha, and granted the village Luhāsīmha along with one hundred cows for the day to day worship of the God. The conception of God as Biḍāla Nṛsimha (cat-lion form) is unique in India. It is believed by the people of this area that Lord Rāma in the form Cat-lion is waiting in the temple for the Mūṣika *daitya* to come out of the hole which lies in front and in which the demon is still hidden. An image of Nṛsimha is kept in the kitchen of the Narasimhanātha temple. It is an unparalleled one – only of its kind. The back slab of the image is cut in such a way that it appears to be in a stone frame. The image is carved in high relief. The image is *sthānaka* and in *abhaṅga samapāda* pose on a pedestal. The image is four-armed. It has a lion face and human body. The matted hair falls on both sides of the chest through the shoulder. It reminds the mane of lion. The god is flanked by a female attendant on both sides. The attendants could be identified with Śrīdevī and Bhūdevī also. The upper hands are raised upwards. The left holds a conch and the right a lotus. The lower right hand has a mace while the lower left exhibits *varada* pose. The lower half of the God is clad by a *dhotī*. The Lord wears necklace, wristlet, armlet, girdle and simple ear ornament. The *vanamālā* is hanging down to the knee. The most remarkable feature is the pair of high boots worn by the deity. The upper ends of the high boots are very near to the knees. The lion-face looks ferocious. The Indian iconology does not know any God

wearing high boots excepting the Sun God of northern variety. Nṛsimha wearing high boots suggest his solar inclinations. The image is a composite one combining the features of Nṛsimha-Viṣṇu and Sūrya.\* It may be composite form of Sūrya-Narasimha. K.K. Dasgupta<sup>55</sup> has rightly designated the image as Sūrya-Narasimha. Donaldson<sup>56</sup> has dated the image to 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century CE. Here, Narasimha is shown alone. The demon Hiranyakaśipu is absent.

\* This reminds the syncretic figure of Sūrya-Varāha assignable to the Gupta period housed in the Jñāna-Pravāha Museum, Varanasi – Editors.

On the entrance lintel of the Gopālji temple is seen a beautifully carved small image of Narasimha seated in Utkuṭikāsana. Narasimha worship in Western Odisha was very much popular. Nṛsimha image noticed on the wall of Gopālji temple exhibits Śaivite character. The third eye is carved on the forehead of Nṛsimha. During the rule of Pratāparudra I, the king of Patna region, the poet Chaitanya Das of Khariar<sup>57</sup> composed a number of books in Purāṇic style propagating the Orissan Vaiṣṇavism, i.e., the cult of Jagannātha. He has written *Nirguṇa Māhātmya* and *Viṣṇugarbha purāṇa*. The poet belongs to *Mālī* caste (garland maker). In *Viṣṇugarbha purāṇa*, he narrates the origin of five Viṣṇus from the Ādiviṣṇu. N.N. Basu<sup>58</sup> places the poet at par with the famous *Pañca Śākhās* due to his delineation and promulgation of the philosophy of Jagannātha. Vajaladeva II, the ninth ruler of Patna region wrote a grammar entitled “*Probodha Candrikā*”.<sup>59</sup> The Grammar is composed applying *Rāmāyaṇa* theme for easy understanding. It is a valuable contribution to Vaiṣṇava literature and it indicates the popularity of Rāma cult in that area. In the opening stanza, he calls himself as a devotee of Hari, Hara and Guru (*Hari Hara Guru bhaktaḥ*).<sup>60</sup>

Vaiṣṇavism was in a flourishing state in Sambalpur during the reign of Madhukar Sai who ruled about 1630 to 1660. His son Banshi Gopal embraced Vaiṣṇavism and established at Sambalpur probably the biggest Vaiṣṇava *Maṭha* in Western Odisha. The *Mahanta* or Head of the *Maṭha* became the conventional preceptor of the kings of Sambalpur. He constructed two temples, one for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the other for Jagannātha trinity in the *Maṭha* premises. The former one is known as Gopālji temple and latter as Baḍājagannātha temple. The temple walls are adorned with Vaiṣṇavite images. He donated lavishly all his shares for the cause of Vaiṣṇavism. He is said to have built a Gopālji *Maṭha* at Sonepur also. He is credited with the building of Kuṭhajagannātha temple in Sambalpur town.

*Kośalānanda kāvya* composed by Gangadhara Mishra, who was a court poet of Baliar Singh and contemporary of Banshi Gopal, reflects much about the religious condition of Chauhan period. Gangadhara Mishra was himself a staunch Vaiṣṇava. The *Kāvya* begins with an invocation to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Beautiful invocatory verses dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa are also found inside the text.<sup>61</sup> Balabhadradeva, the third ruler of Chauhan House of Sambalpur being influenced by the cult of Jagannātha built the famous Jagannātha temple in Jhaduapada of Sambalpur. It is known as Brahmapura temple. Here is found the images of Balabhadra, Jagannātha and Subhadrā. The temple was built during the first quarter of 17<sup>th</sup> century CE following the style of Jagannātha temple of Puri. Dadhivaman temples were there in the Patna-Sambalpur state even before the Chauhans, if we believe the Maufi records which mentioned the donation of land by Anaṅgabhīmadeva III to the temples of Desh Kambhari and Tamparasara. The temple of Jagannātha of Khariar is also an early temple to which D.R. Das ascribes a Pre-Chauhan date. The Dadhivaman temple of Bhatali near Bargarh is considered sacred and it commands profound reverence from the people. The Kṛṣṇaite temples like Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Gopālji, Sākṣī Gopinātha, etc. at various places in Western Orissa are noticed in large number. Narasimha cult was also very much familiar in this area. The existence of Narasimha image and temple at Narasimhnātha, Narasimha temple and *Maṭha* in Sambalpur, Narasimha images are also found on the niche of the walls of Gopālji temple and Baḍājagannātha temple, Narasimha temple and *Maṭha* at Bolangir, Guṇḍichā temple at Sonapur and a number of Narasimha images attests to the importance of the cult. Guṇḍichā temple is probably the highest temple of Western Orissa. It was built by Guṇḍichādevī to commemorate the birth of her son Nīlādhar Singh. The beautiful image of Lakṣmī-Narasimha made of brass was worshipped in this temple as the presiding deity. Raghunāthjiu temple and Rāmji temple of Sambalpur point to the Rāma worship. Rāmji temple at Balibandha was built by Āśākumārīdevī, the daughter of Nārāyaṇa Singh, the last Rājā of Sambalpur state. The *vratas* and *upavāsas* relating to Vaiṣṇavism, like *Janmāṣṭamī*, *Rāmanavamī*, *Narasimha Caturdaśī*, *Ananta Caturdaśī Vrata*, *Bhāgavata Janma*, *Ekādaśī Vrata*, *Rādhāṣṭamī*, *Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa Vrata*, *Vāman Janma*, etc. were being observed and are now being celebrated with much pomp, purity and austerity. Most of the temples of Chauhan period are now in functional state.

To sum up, Vaiṣṇavism entered into Western Odisha in fifth century CE.

During this period, the Nalas patronized Vaiṣṇavism. The early Eastern Gaṅgas also showed their inclination towards this cult. The Śarabhapuriya kings, who ruled in the seventh century CE, accepted Vaiṣṇavism and worshipped Nārāyaṇa with Lakṣmī. The early Somavaṁśī kings of Sonepur also took Vaiṣṇavism as their religion as revealed from Sirpur Temple Inscription. In the charters of Bhañja kings are found several references of Viṣṇu cult. In their grants the names of Vyūha and the twelve names of Viṣṇu along with the twenty-four names occur as the names of God and donors. Among these names, Śrīdevapuruṣottama and Balabhadra are significant because the former one refers to Puruṣottama Jagannātha at Puri and Balabhadra is purely Odisan name of Saṁkarśaṇa, the elder brother of Jagannātha. The Somavaṁśī kings of Odisha, who were ruling in 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century CE, also display their soulful adoration to Lord Viṣṇu. The Teluguchodas and the Gaṅgas also are known to have bestowed reverence to Lord Nārāyaṇa and Viṣṇu. The Chauhans during their rule accepted and propagated Vaiṣṇavism by building number of Temples and *Mathas*. Vaiṣṇavism has been a very much living religion even at present in Western Odisha.

## References

1. Bibbili grant', *E.I.*, XXVII, pp.35-36. See 'Chicacole grant of Nanda Prabhañjana Varman', *I.A.*, XIII, pp.48-50. And also see 'Ningundi grant of Prabhañjana Varman', *E.I.*, XXX, pp.12-18.
2. Ningundi grant', *Ibid.*
3. S.N. Rajguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.I; Pt.II, Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, 1958, pp.1-55 and pp.75-80.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, pp.94-97. 'Poḍagādh Inscription of Skanda Varman'.
6. Arang Plate of Sudevaraja', *E.I.*, XXIII, p.153.
7. Rawan Plate of Narendra', *JESI*, VI, pp.44-45.
8. *E.I.*, XXXIV, pp.52-54.
9. *Parama Saṁhitā*, III, pp.22-23, *Īśvarasaṁhitā*, XXI, pp.40-41.
10. *E.I.*, XXXIV, p.115. Also see *E.I.*, XXXI, p.231.
11. *E.I.*, XXXI, p.220.
12. *E.I.*, XI, p.1191. S.N. Rajguru, *Inscriptions of Orissaa*, Vol.V, Bhubaneswar, 1996, pp.74-80. The first verse of the inscription speaks of the "sharp claw, which creates a sound caused by the wind passing through the long space between the fingers each other. It looks more fearful with the jaws shining with the flame of rays radiating from the nails. When they were raised up through the mass of dark clouds in the sky and revealed the stars with their partly brilliance

like a lion who overwhelmed the storehouse of darkness, i.e., the elephant, jumps about scattering the brilliant pearls from his temples. This description may be applicable to Nṛsimha or Trivikrama. The second verse states "Let that Nṛsimha protect you who looking with eagerness (at his own) nails for the enemy (Hiraṇyakaśipu) who had not been secured for being torn with these (claws) happened to see him hiding through fear in the cavern like cavity in the interior of the deep hollow of those (nails). With a laugh (at his foolishness in taking shelter in the place where he could be easily crushed out) and joy (at finding him out) and contempt (at the miserable creature), he split the demons at once with the point of the other claw and threw him away with wrath like dirt that had collected there." The third verse compares his jaws with conch, tongue with sword, face with burning discus and eye brows (as if carrying) the mace. His appearance is like the God of Death.

13. *Ibid.*, p.192.
14. *E.I.*, XXXI, p.220.
15. *Ibid.*, p.205.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *E.I.*, XI, p.190.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *E.I.*, XXIII, pp.248-55.
25. *C.I.I.*, III, p.294.
26. *Ibid.*
27. G.C. Patnaik, *et.al.*, *The Somavamsi Rediscovered*, 1990, pp.10-16.
28. *E.I.*, XXIII, pp.248-55.
29. *JBORS*, Vol.II, 1916, pp.45-55.
30. *I.H.Q.*, Vol.XX, p.24.
31. *Journal of Orissan History*, Vol.II, Pt.I, 1981, pp.01-05.
32. *JBORS*, Vol.XV, pp.64-86.
33. S. Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.VI, Inscriptions of Bhañjas of Kṣiṣjili mandala, pp.51-52, 92, 98, 119, 150, 156, 185.
34. *E.I.*, XI, pp.99-103.
35. *JBORS*, Vol.II, pp.429-435 (lines 110-11).
36. *E.I.*, XX, pp.100-104.

37. *JBORS*, Vol.II, pp.167-177.
38. *JBORS*, Vol.VI, pp.266-273.
39. S. Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.VI, Bhubaneswar, 1974, pp.98-104.
40. *Ibid.*, pp.105-111.
41. *JKHRS*, Vol.I, Pt.II, pp.1181-83.
42. *OHRJ*, Vol.XI, Pt.I, pp.9-17, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.VI, p.159.
43. *OHRJ*, Vol.I, pp.208-212.
44. *OHRJ*, Vol.IV, pp.67-77.
45. S. Tripathy, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.VI, Orissa State Museum, 1974, pp.215-219.
46. *Ibid.*, pp.220-225.
47. *E.I.*, XIX, p.97.
48. *E.I.*, XXIII, pp.62-67. *Bhāgavate Saptarṇavaśayine Saptasāmopagītaya Sapta Lokaika nāthāya, Ranabhītodayabhīdānāya. Nārāyaṇāya Vali Charu Sattra Pravarttanāya ...* This is very much akin to the description of poet Kālidāsa found in *Raghuvamśam*, which is like this : *Sapta sāmopagitam saptārṇava Jalaśayam Saptarchchi mukhamachakṣuḥ, Sapta lokaika Samsrayam, Raghuvamśam*, 10<sup>th</sup> Canto, 21<sup>st</sup> Verse (Śloka). Thus suggests the influence of Kālidāsa's literary works upon the poets of Gaṅga kingdom at least in the last quarter of the sixth century CE, the date of the inscription.
49. D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, pp.415-416.
50. N.K. Sahu, *Oḍiā Jātira Itihāsa*, Bhubaneswar, 1974, pp.330-332, 372-373.
51. *E.I.*, XXIX, 1951/52, pp.121ff.
52. Gangadhar Mishra, *Kośalānanda Kāvyaṃ*, Sonapur, 1929, Canto-7.
53. *I.H.Q.*, Vol.V, pp.345-346.
54. N. Senapati and N.K. Sahu (Eds.), *State Gazetteers of Orissa, Bolangir*, pp.51-52; A Eschemann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathy (Eds.), *The Cult of Jagannātha and The Regional Traditions of Orissa*, New Delhi, 1978, pp.390-394.
55. K.K. Dasgupta & G.C. Chauley, "Two Unique Viṣṇu Icons", in P. K. Mishra (ed.), *Cultural Tribal History and Freedom Movement*, Delhi, 1989, pp.137-140.
56. T. E. Donaldson, *Iconography of Vaiṣṇava Images in Orissa*, New Delhi, 2001, p.143, 56.
57. N.N. Basu, *Modern Buddhism and Its Followers in Orissa*, Calcutta, 1911, p.38-39.
58. K.N. Mohapatra, "Prabodha Chandrika Praneta Sri Baijala Deva", in *Jhankar (Oriya)*, Vol.II, No.4, 1950, pp.335-336.
59. *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Special Volume on K.N. Mohapatra, Bhubaneswar, 1982, pp.80-92.
60. Gangadhar Mishra, *op.cit.*, 1929, Canto-1, Verse 1; Canto-7, Verses 1-10.
61. *Ibid.*