



Buddhism during the Bhaumakara Period: A case of study on Social life in Odisha

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I try to highlight on the Buddhist faith and believe in ancient period. Especially Bhaumakara dynasty regime what is the social condition of the society specific reference to Buddhism. Many of the inscriptional and literary sources tell about social system of Odisha during the Bhaumakara Period. Many of the scholars study it but anybody not clearly mention which of the question raise this paper. The Bhaumakara grant tells various titles like *Paramsaugata*, *Parambhattarak*, *Tathagata* etc¹ but the scholar and historian analysis it the Bhuamakaras are followed and patronized Buddhism but many of the land grant goes to Brahmins. It is clear that the Brahmins are staying and maintain high class in the society. If In Odisha the Brahman are lived with a high standard living style so after the Bhaumakara fallen the Somyavamsi king Yayati I why calling the ten thousand Brahman from the Kanauj²? Another question is that if he calling for the Aswamedha sacrifice then why he donate village for the permanent settlement? The Study of Buddhist literature says that the One Buddhist monk defeated to Brahman on the Gospel (*Sastra*) discussion. After this gospel discussion five hundred Brahman converted from Brahminical faith to Buddhist faith³. This paper is the based on the study of literarily and inscription sources and to get the answer to cast system during the period and increasing of the Buddhist follower. Further I try to this period can Buddhism emerges in the Brahminical faith? May this faith can effect of the social life of the people of Orissa.

Keywords: Buddhist faith, ancient period, Bhaumakara, Gospel

The periods from 7th to 12th century A.D. was very much significant from so many point so far as Buddhism in concerned in eastern part of India and transformation of his social and economic relation. It is the importance time to transformation in the Buddhist faith to get the royal patronage. Thereafter this period was a transitional one from ancient to medieval socio and economic condition and religious faith in Odisha. In Bhaumakara times they were grant many inscriptions. These grants were donation made by different rulers. This inscription engraved in Sanskrit language on single copper plates basically the text of these inscription are composed in both prose and verse. Same are the excavation conduct various place in Orissa provides lot of information about the time of Bhaumakara dynasty like Monument, Stupa

and Buddhist monastery. These are gives the much information regarding the Bhaumakara rule in Odisha. Except the archaeological sources most of the literary sources like puran- *Vishnu purana*, *Harioamsa purana*, *Matsya purana*, *The Odia Mahabharat* of Sarala das, *Bhakti Bhagabat Mahakabya* and *Madalapanji* are the importance to know the information of Bhaumakaras time. Foreign account like Lama Taranathas *History of Bhuddhism in India*, *Dantavamsa*, Fahien and Huen-Tsanga account, and many of the Buddhists monk own corpus also the great sources which was provide the information about the Bhaumakaras.

The origin of the Bhaumakara dynasty in Orissa who ruled for about 150 years is still a matter of controversy.

Regarding the historian R.C.Majumdar⁴, B.Mishra⁵, H.K.Mahatab⁶ and N.K Sahoo⁷ opinion that Bhaumakara belonged to Orissa. They were *Anubaya* community. The means of *Anubaya* like the spider nest (*Bhudiani Jala*). They not believe in Maya some copper plate inscription reference *Anubaya* Philosophy⁸. Other historian likes R.D.banerjee⁹, R.P.Chand¹⁰, K.C.Panigrahi¹¹, and P.C.Choudhary¹². Opinion that study of Vishnupurana a description bearing the name of Bhaumakara the live follows

Kalinga-mahisa mahendra bhauman guha bhoksanti¹³

These sentence described by the R.C.Majumdar and B. Mishra suggest that *mahendra Bhauman* as the Bhauma tribe of mahendra mountain that the *Bhuyan* were representative of the *mahendra Bhauman* of the *Vishnupuran*. The *Kalika purana* has it that the union of the lord Vishnu in his boar incarnation and goddess earth gave birth to a son named Naraka who was also known as Bhauma for his being born of the *bhumi* or earth¹⁴. Having come age Naraka went to *pragiyotisapura* identified with *Kamarupa* of Assam and became the king of that place after defeating its ruler. The earlier dynasties of *Kamarupa* traced their descent from Naraka¹⁵.

The Neulpur chater reveals that a line *bhaumanva-yadnvoad-vaptajanma*. This means one who had obtained birth in the race of Bhauma (Naraka). The Pasupati temple inscription of Nepal its donor Rajyamati the daughter of Harsavarman and the queen of Jayadeva-II of Nepal has been described as *bhagadattarakulaja* meaning that she was the daughter of Bhagadatta ruling of Assam. According the Chaurasi grant of the Sivakaradeva of Orissa was a branch of the Bhauma family of *Kamarupa* of Assam which mentions the donor as a descendant of the *Utkal kula* of the Bhaumas.

Bhuddism in Odisha during the Bhaumakara Period

In the history of Bhuddism particularly of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism rises in Bhaumakara Period. Most of the archaeological sources tell about the patronage of this religion by the Bhaumakara King. Due to the strong support of the ruler Buddhism transform itself to Mahayana to Vajrayana.

First of the Neulpur copper plate say that Three kings Ksemankara, Sivakara-I and Subhakara-I were strong supporter of the Buddhism. So they bore Buddhist epithets before their name like as *Paramupasaka*, *Paramaththagata*, *Paramsougat*. This is mention 2nd line, 3rd line and 4th line of the Inscription¹⁶.

The Denkanal plate of Tribhuvanamahadevi-I state that her predecessors exhausted the treasures of their vast empire on religious works in order to enlighten their country and other who decorated the earth by constructing in unbroken continuation various *mathas*, monasteries and sanctuaries. An analogous statement found in the Baud plates of Prithivimahadevi alias Tribhuvanamahadevi-II, which credits Subhakaradeva-I creation of a number of *Viharas* (line-5 and 6) it is clear that the early Bhuamakara Kings who were devote of Buddhist¹⁷.

The discovery of large number of Dhyani Buddha, Bodhisattvas and other deities of the Buddhist Mahayana pantheon discover from place like Khadipada, Rantagiri, Udayagiri, Lalitagiri and assignable to the 8th-9th century A.D. also clear indicate that Mahayana from of Buddhism flourished in Odisha during the Bhuamakara regime¹⁸.

The most importance Buddhist manuscript Gandavuyaha from Sivakaradeva-I Unmattasimh of the Bhuamakara dynasty (who had a deep faith in the sovereign law and who followed the practice of Mahayana) was sent by a China emperor T-sang trough a monk named Prajna who had translated it. HuenT-sang mention Prajna was born in Kapisa on a western verge of Indian and he stayed at Nalanda thereafter he stated the king of Wa-cha or Odra and study yoga¹⁹.

It-sing the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who visited India in 673-687A.D. refers in his account to the Bha-ra-ha monastery in Tamralipti. Most of scholar identified Tamralipti is modern Tamluk in the Midnapore district was situated Bhuamakara king. He also mentions the daily routine of the monk and his discipline. The nuns were not allowed to walk alone outside the monasteries and lay-women visiting the monastery were not permitted to enter the apartment of the priest. It is clear that the speared Buddhism in Orissa²⁰.

The Inscription of the Bhimata from Ganesh Gumpa inscription tells that the people of Viraja by the grace of lord Ganesh and the assembly of the sage it is clear that the Bhaumakara dynasty time it may be under the control of Buddhist monk. Further the Khadipada Image inscription A gosh suggest that the two word *Mahamandalcharya* and *Paramaguru* that is teacher of the great division and supreme preceptor respectively by and view that the Sri Shuvakaradeva was the change of as head of one of *mandal* may be (some monasteries) with the headmaster (*paramaguru*)²¹.

Jainism existed in Orissa with very low popular support during this period we also to prove that after the decline of the Bhaumakara in the 10th century A.D. Buddhism suffers a great setback and rise of Saivism, Vaisnavism. In Baudh plate of Prithivimahadevi describe them as *Prama Vaisnavi* as himself *Katayani* on his Denkenal Charter²².

Social Condition

Cast system has been very most important feature of the Indian society in early time. From the epigraphic record of the Bhaumakara it appears that the division of the society into four cast prevailed during his time in Odisha but this fourfold Varna system no longer remains a functional reality the land grant accompanied by the transfer of various right both secular and religious drones and the process of feudalization affected the pattern of social stratification more than any other factor like religion unequal distribution of land and power in a large scale affected the traditional varna system by the creation of new social groups.

Several ruling dynasties of this period including Bhaumakara followed the practice of giving large scale land grant to the Brahmins and religious communities. This process helped in the increase of food production and in rural expansion.

Though the early Bhaumakara kings were Buddhist, they tried to enforce *varnasramadharm* Brahmanic concept of cast system. The Neulpur copper plate Cleary tell Bhaumakara king Subhakaradeva-I Ksemankara put varna in their proper with four casts²³. Terundia copper plate of Subhakaradeva-II points out that the donor age parity in strict accordance with the scriptures²⁴. There

were constant efforts from the Bhauma ruler to curb *varnasankara* (mixed cast) and uphold *varnasramadharm*. If we have know Buddhism not believed in cast system but the ruler of Orissa did not stopped in their way of maintaining the cast system in society.

Brahman

Some of the Other Source that the Brahmins occupied a height position in the society hierarchy Brahmins enjoys great honor in society for their pious life and devotion to the studies of the Vedas. The Dharmasastras praise them and say that they are the agent of god on earth. Though the Mastyapuram²⁵ declared Odra to be a land of degraded Brahmins stile in this period we find the flow of Brahmins from Madyadesh, Sravasti. Another reason for the influx was the growing completion among the Brahman in other part of India which them seek outlet in Orissa which offered them states and position under royal patronage. The *Utkalkanda* of *Skand puran* speak that Brahman is the guru of all *varna's* due to many reason the Brahman migration different gotra, i.e. *Karanas*, *Pravaras* and *Sakhas*. These *gotra* of Brahman suggest that the Somavamsi king Yayati-I call him for the *Aswamedh* sacrifice. And this is clearly mentioning his copper plate. But here is a question In Odisha having Brahmins in Bhaumakara period why the Somavamsi king Yayati-I call One thousand Brahman from the outside. After finished of sacrifice Yayati give him land at solenpur. This place identified by the Historian with Solampur near the Jajpur. But in Dharmasala Thahesil found a village name Salepur where is more Brahman living till date as same *gotra*. May be this study of the plate of Somavamsi ruler we can say in Orissa there are few Brahman in Bhaumakara Period.

Kastriya

In the presence of Kastriya in Bhaumakara period most importance source are the account of Huen T-Sang and the *Skandpuranas of Utkalkanda*²⁵ along with the epigraphy source like grant of copper plate. In HuenT-sang²⁶ account a major name found i.e. Ranaka and Maharaja, Mahasamata. It also described in *Skandpurana*. Some inscription tells about the matrimonial relationship by the Bhaumakara with *Ksatriya* families of outside

of Odisha. The princess of Pritivi Mahadevi sister of Yayati-I or daughter of Janmejaya-I married with Bhaumakara king Suvakaradeva-IV.

In origin and cast of the Bhaumakars till have been the controversies. R.D Banerji²⁷ is opinion that the Bhaumakaras were non Aryan of Asuras of Kamarupa. But the copper plate of Dandimahadevi has led it suggest that the Bhaumakara belonged to the Lunar race. It indicates they were katriya. To legitimize their position they had matrimonial contact with nobles of outside power. The ruling chief proclaimed themselves as Ksatriya by tracing their lineage to a mythical Brahmanas. The use of epithets by the king like *Paramesvara*, *Paramabhattacharaka*, *Paramaupasaka* etc. shows that the ruler try to connect themselves with divinity.

Training in military science and art of warfare was very much essential for the Ksatriya princes during this period before taking the responsibilities of administration of a kingdom. The Talcher plate of Sivakaradeva described Subhakara IV as deeply conversant with the *sastras*.

Karanas (Kayasthas)

We can't find the many of inscriptional sources in 10th century A.D. the existence of the Kayastha as a cast but we find the term like *Mahakayas*, *Kayasthas*, *Karanas* etc in 10th century onwards. The origin of *Kayasthas* cast R.S. Sharma is opinion that constant transform of land and revenue made by the kings to various done must have led to the rise of a class of series down from the literate member of the higher *varnas*. Who is later known as *Karana*. It is interesting to note that while in many part of north India and wrote charter and official document in Orissa.

Vaisyas

Same as the *Utkalkand* of *Skandpurana* reference Odisha as the land of lord Jagannatha or Purusottamksetra say that agriculture; trade and cattle rearing were the occupation of the Vaisaya. No inscription of Bhaumakara speaks about the Vaisaya but according to S. Jaiswal the Vaisya varna did not emerge in Odisha during the early medieval period²⁸. It seen that the course of acculturation and peasantization the landowner peasantry must

have got themselves distinguished from the culturally backward tribes. They were the ones who must have entered into large scale trading activities since they had the necessary capital and power to employ turn them into castes. Due to their wealth the Vaisya must have enjoyed some importance in the Odishan society.

Sudra

According to the *Skandpurana* of *Utkalkanda* the Sudra of Odisha were describe as being soft spoken and religious in nature. It farther described that the Sudra served the Brahmanas no direct inscription to Sudra during the period is found in any of the inscription. It may be believed that the tribes who extended into the Brahman fold as peasants and served to the higher cast come to be known as Sudra. Some records of Bhaumakara found the term²⁹ like *tantavayas* (weaver), *Saundhikas* (distiller), *gokatas* or *gaudas* (Cowherd) etc. which may have lower cast Sudra but some scholar count in Vaisya. The study of monuments we can assume the existence of *Svarnakaras* (Goldsmith), *Karmakara* (Blacksmith) *Kumbhakara* (pottery maker) *Patakara* (carpenter) etc. it is a fact that in order to prepare the copper plate for the grant the service of the *Kamsakara* must have been required. Reference to garland arrangers (*Pratihara*) washerman, barber and gatekeeper are also available in the record of Bhaumakaras.

Low Castes

The adequate information is available so far the low caste of our period is covered. The *dohas* written in proto-odia during this refer to *Domas* and *Candalas* of Odisha. They were regarded as untouchables. Other untouchable include the *Hadis*, the bamboo makers, the *Panas*, the *Chamaras* and the *Dhobi* (washerman). These casts were lived outside of the town or village.

An Arab geographer Ibn Khuradadhbha a contemporary of Bhaumakaras period mentioned that the *Sandalia* and *lehud* were regarded as untouchables during this period³⁰. May this have assumed *lehud* community who adopted music and dance as their professions? Same many of the aborigine present this time like Gonds, Bhuiyan, Juanga, Khonda, Santalas, Savaras etc. this

name only Savara and Gonds mention on their copper plates.

Position of Women

According to some sources basically the copper plate grant of Bhaumakara it is known that the women of Odisha during the period enjoyed an important position in society. Here the queen played the role of both *de jure* and *defacto* sovereign. Not less than six queens of this dynasty are found to have adorned the throne. The peaceful rule of the queen proves that the people of Orissa had no reason to view the reign of female rulers with disfavour. These female rulers had to grant lands to the Brahmans and religious establishments like the male ruler. The contribution of these female rulers to the cultural and political history of Odisha was very significant.

It is very much difficult to find the reason for the status and position. Except the queen we can't know the any sources which tells the high position of any women. The influence of Buddhism on the royal family as well as the people of Odisha as Buddhism has given high position to the women hood. Another reason is that due to rise of Sakti cult during this period³¹. The sati or concubine has not mentioned any sources because one of the widow queens lives after the death of her husband. The *purdha pratha* was unknown during this period because it can be said that during this period beginning of *devadasi pratha*. Most important source to us copper plate grant of Karnakeshari at Rantagiri. For the Talcher Copper plate says the existence of Nunnery (Monastery like Jayarampur Bihar).

Marriage

The account of Ibn Khردادhba and contemporary epigraphy record refer to inter caste marriage of the *anuloma* from in India this period but it is doubtful whether it was prevalent in Odisha. Polygamy was known and practised in the royal society in Orissa. The one of the evidence King Subhakaradeva-I married two princesses i.e. Gaurimahadevi and Vakulamahadevi which would prove the existence of polygamy during this period³².

Food and Drink

Basically the Brahmans preferred to take vegetarian food during this period. The cereals which were commonly used were rice, wheat and barley. Sweets milk and fruits along with different wine were also used as drink.

Dress material

Many of the sculpture of this period give a clear says regarding the dresses used by male and female. The male dress consisted of a lower garment or *adhivasana* like *Dhoti* round the waist where as the female dress consisted of two garments, upper and lower, fastened by a girdle. The folds in the female garment are sometimes gathered passed between legs and tucked in behind. Both male and female dresses have folds in the front and hang down to the knee or just below it. Sometimes the women were dresses in close fitting tunic. This is undoubtedly the dress of the dancing girls. Sometimes women put only the lower garments thereby exposing the upper part of their bodies. The garments are usually ornamented with embroidery.

The sculptures of the Bhaumakara period have the representation of variety of ornaments, used by both male and female. They were *Kundala* (ear ring) *ratnahara* (neckless) *mekhala* (girdle), *Keyura* (armlet), *manjira* (foot ornament), *Kankana* (bracelet) etc.

These Ornaments were made of gold, silver, and diamond along with various stone. . It seems that use of costly ornaments was restricted to high and rich class people. The poor could hardly afford to wear such precious ornaments.

Different style of hair dressing were prevalent in the society during the period for hair dressing mirror and combs hairs are fix flower on the locks of their hair were used o coloured. Their feet with *yubaka* (*Alata*) and decorate their lips and cheeks with *patranakura* on special occasion. The males generally kept long hairs and used a tiara, sandal, paste in incense were used as perfumes by the rich people.

Education

The Anugul copper plate of Dharma Mahadevi has state that Shantikara deva-II made scholar happy Sivakaradeva-IV is stated in his Talcher plate to have sharp faculty of understanding the spirit of the text of the Gospel (*sastras*)³³. The Hindol plate of Subhkaradeva-III sates that he acquired profound knowledge of the *Agamantas*³⁴. Sivakaradeva-I sent to the Chinese king Te-Sang an autobiography manuscript of the dealing with the practice and vow of Boddhisattava Samantabhadra is the hand of Pranja who studies at Rantagiri is sometime. Rantagiri was the importance centre of Buddhist yoga in 8th century A.D. The yoga and philosophy was the main subject during the period of Bhaumakaras. Subhakaradeva-II granted a village for upkeep of a collage established by some learned Brahmins.

We have evidence as many of organisation founded and maintained by the people from the king down to common individual and both of the Brahman and non Brahmins are both teacher and student of this period.

This period basically Veda, History, Politic, Pottery, Logic, *Sastras*, Astronomy, Medicine and Yoga, Smritis are the subject of learning the study various copper plate it is clear Sanskrit language is the medium of the language of the study. Because some inscription seen the partially prose and partial verse. This mode of expression has reached the excellence of *kavya* writing found in most of the famous works of Sanskrit literature. The *sloka* are work of long compounds.

Amid beginning of the Oriya language was made during the period under survey. Some Sanskrit name like *Unmattasimha*, *Layanachara*, *Pettapala* have been represented in the inscription in their corrupt forms in *Unmastsimha* in the *Lonabhara padapa*. These corruption and such words as their (*Sthira*) *purva* (purva) accruing in the inscription of this period suggest the influence of regional Prakrit on Sanskrit and the gradual evolution of modern Oriya language. We also notice the use of some Oriya word like *Jota*, *Gohiri* (fallow land), *Khata* (dump), *bagya* (tiger), *Kheta* or *Bila* (field), *polla* (bridge) etc written in Hindol plate of Subhakaradeva-III and Talcher plate of Subhakaradeva-III

Brahmins Converted to Buddhism

Most of the Buddhist literature Created from the 4th century Ad to 8th Century A.D. This literature created by the Buddhist monk. After reading some literatures clearly mention the monks cast. Majority there were Brahmin. Who latter converted him as a Buddhist and believed Buddhist faith. Aryadeva is one of the most famous philosophers of Buddhism. He had born in a Brahmin family at Singhpur. Her other name Kanadeva and Nilanetra. He wrote famous *tika Cittasuddi Prakarana*. Other Scholar of Buddhism was Basumitra. He had born in Odisha in a Brahmin Family. He also defeated one of the Brahmin philosopher *Makhika* and her students. After that Makhika and her student converted himself as Buddhism. Diganaga is one of the Brahmin born at Singhbakra in Kanchi state. He learns all Tripitaka of Buddhism. He also teaches Yoga at Nalanda and Odisha. He also spared Buddhism. Basumitra was other Scholar who works converted many of the Brahmin towards Buddhism. Archya Silabhadra also a famous scholar of that time. He had born in a Brahmin Family. He also takes the charge of vice chancellor of Nalanda in 637 A.D. Archya Dharmakriti born in a Brahmin family of Chola state. He defeted famous Brahmin philosopher of Kumarika Bhatta on the gospel and converted five hundred Brahmin toward Buddhism. He written famous book *Nayabindu* and *Badanyaya*. Archya Kanupada was born in a Brahmin family in Odisha. He wrote many of the religious books about the Buddhism and after study of Baud³⁵.

CONCLUSION

The social changes during the period help for the unification of modern Odisha. After the Bhaumakar followed by Somavamsi try built a large empire. So Odisha could setup a large state including rise up to Mahanadi valley with a complete Odisha. During this time the Brahmin are height cast and class along with Ksatriya enjoyed became a high caste. Some Kayasthas and Karanas occupy high position but the Ksatriyas controlled the administration and economic activities of the people. The ruler believes the Dharmasastra maintained caste system. Here Kshemakara was a Buddhist but they believe in caste system where as

Buddhism not believed in cast system thus the Brahman are control the administration and religious merit. The women are position very high is proved by the queen. But cant not understood other general women can get the same position this period? The education learning reaches the glorious period in the religion of the study. The learners are come out of the country and inside the country. The Sanskrit language developed this period and the Odia language origin this time. This period witnessed a great increase of cultivation in Odisha. The pressure of a growing population, the growing desire of the priests for material prosperity, and the religious zeal of the kings all were responsible for the extension of agriculture lands. The some land come hand of the Brahman and Ksatriya they became developed as the feudal. Further the study of much literature and it clear that in pre Bhaumakara period to Somavamsi period the Buddhism rising in Odisha. The Brahman was many of them converted to Buddhism. So as this cause the Somavamsi Ruler Yayati-I calling ten thousand Brahman from the Kaunaj and try to establish the Brahminical faith in Odisha. As may this cause some land donated to these Brahman for their permanent settlement which help groth of the Brahminical faith in Odisha.

END NOTES

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