

INTRODUCTION

Prologue:

Saivism has been intriguing and interesting scholars since a long time and there have been several attempts at tracing its history. Classic studies such as Bhandarkar's or more recent explorations by Gonda, Jash and Siddhantashastree as Muller-Ortega¹ observes provide only "*the thinnest outlines of the history of Saivism*". There are just too many lacunae in the sequence that leads from the Mohenjo-Daro so called Proto Siva to the *Vedic Rudra*, the *Yajurvedic Satarudriya*, the *Rudra-Siva* of the *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, the *Pancavaktramurti* and *Ashtmurti* of Puranic Siva. This lengthy process of historical development and the antecedent history of Saivism that leads to a scholar and unifier of ideas like Lakulisa and continues beyond him are extremely complicated. One often comes face to face with theological intricacies, the dense rituals with terribly cryptic written material if found any and the yogic and tantric complexities which add to the confusion. What one can glean through all the material scattered across time and space is the rise in the popularity of Siva, not simply as one of the deities of pantheon but as a divinity around whose worship developed various sectarian groups who in return projected their beliefs and customs on the image of the deity. This wonderful give and take has given rise to plentitude of Saivite sects which many a time on looking at superficially seem to have nothing in common with each other but the central deity.

Art history as a discipline has opened up gradually to include various branches of learning in it. No longer is the focus only on the art objects and its form and style. Various questions pertaining to patronage, politics of representation and the purpose of creation are taken into consideration. An interdisciplinary approach and questioning the earlier works leads to formation of new hypothesis which can tremendously increase the scope and importance of any art-historical work. Efforts have been made by scholars to contextualize the art-works, and to study them as a part of broader philosophical, historical, political and last but definitely not the least the theological discourse along with the usual formalistic and iconographical studies.

¹ Muller-Ortega Paul E, 'The Triadic Heart of Siva', Delhi, 1997, p 26

Such an approach demands a thorough and critical study of the texts, images, myths and whatever archeological evidences are available to go beyond the apparent literal meaning. The importance of such an approach for religious studies is deftly explained by Kapila Vatsyayan² in these words,

“While the myths constitute the kernel of philosophic schools, the speculative thought provides the basis for the emergence of iconic forms and symbols and a complex system of rites and rituals”.

Hence it is the magical coalescing of mythical, philosophical ritualistic and the artistic expressions each complementing and enriching the other which gives meaning to any religious system and which again needs to be looked into as a whole for a better understanding.

The limitations of a linear approach was felt by **Bhartrhari** as he said that , the process of deriving meaning is not a logical one and more so when one is dealing with religious art and philosophy. *Vakya Padiyam* II.130 succinctly differentiates between the language used in common parlance and language used in a sastra (a codified text) where in the latter the language is visualized as both word and meaning but the actual essence depends on whatever is the intention of the codifier.. The apparent literal meaning often leaves more to be desired and leads the query to unknown waters where many a times the researcher finds himself/herself completely at loss. So there is a necessity to go beyond the literal and seemingly ‘correct’ meaning and that can only be achieved if one delves deep without a pre-conceived notion.

Purpose of the Study:

Keeping all this in mind the present project aims at looking at the dynamics/ relationship between the philosophical expositions mentioned in the texts and the ritual practices to be followed by the aspirants of the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order. It employs a thorough and critical reading of seminal texts like *Pasupata Sutra* with its various translations, *Ganakarika*, *Vayu Purana*, *Nakulisa-Pasupataadarsan* of *Acarya Madhava*, *Eklingamahatmaya* and *Visvamitri Mahatmaya* in considerable detail along with iconographical and iconological schema of various sites and temples dedicated to this order.

² Vatsyayan Kapila, *Saivism and Vaisnavism* , in *‘The Variegated Plumage: Encounters with Indian Philosophy’* Ed by N.B Patil and Mrinal Kaul, Delhi, 2003 ,p 121

The genesis of the present study goes back to the first year of college study tour when among other sites we were taken to the cave temples of Elephanta and Jogesvari. While introducing us to the art and architecture of these caves we were given some insight into Pasupata Saivism and at Jogesvari were told about *Lakulisa*, the 28th incarnation of Siva. Being completely over-awed by the larger than life sized sculpture panels at Elephanta and fascinated by multiple images of *Lakulisa* at Jogesvari the desire to know more about the order responsible for excavation of these caves was felt by me. The fact that the extremely important theory of *Vibhavavada* (incarnation theory) of Vaisnavism, highly responsible for its later popularity, finds an interesting parallel in Saivism was a fascinating revelation to me³. During my college years I visited various Saivite cave temples of Ellora, Badami Aihole, Pattadakal etc. which added to my knowledge of Saivism and meanwhile also got introduced to the various philosophical texts and realized their richness and cryptic nature. I came across descriptions of *Pasupata-Sutra* one of the seminal texts of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order, attributed to *Lakulisa*, in various books on Saivism and I was baffled to read about the curious ritual practices (vidhi) suggested for the ascetic aspirant of the order. There seemed to be a total disconnect between the highly evolved philosophy and such apparently absurd looking ritual practices viz. laughing without reason, acting like a madman, making loud noises trembling and so on which provided the central enquiry of this project and has since then been the focal interest of this study.

My idea here is not to enumerate the number of *Lakulisa* figures, chalk out each one of them and suggest their find place. That I think has been done by various scholars on regional as well as national level. The problem that intrigues me is the discrepancy that one sees in highly evolved philosophy of the system and the ritual practices followed by the aspirants of this order. To see and find out links between *Lakulisa-Pasupata darsana* and *Vidhis* prescribed for its aspirants is my prime concern. The other part of enquiry which is actually nothing but trying to figure out the position of this order among various other Saivite orders plus to see in what all forms was it later propagated and if its vestiges can be presently seen in what form they are.

³ *The Periodic Incarnation Doctrine of Pasupata Saivism according to Linga Purana, 1.24, from Visvarupa by Maxwell, T.L pp 206-207*

After a general survey of the material and data available limitation of studying Lakulisa and the regional iconographical trends in isolation was realized and also such an isolated and linear approach could not prove helpful for the nature of my query. The need to look elsewhere was felt instantaneously and I delved deep in the texts, originals wherever I could find them and translations by various scholars and in various languages. For the purpose of the present project, I found it extremely productive to contextualize the system in the larger Saivite scenario and find its connections with earlier and later cults and orders. Rather than treating the system as a frigid and self sufficient one I have tried to study it as a construct, a living breathing phenomenon, constantly in a state of flux studying the iconographical developments and the themes preferred by the order, the mythologies they favored at various sites from all over the subcontinent and in many cases beyond the Indian border also helps in better understanding of the system.

Muller-Ortega⁴ rightly observes:

“Within this heterogeneous mass, various forms have coalesced from time to time into actual group, sects and movements. In tracing the appearance of various Shaiva groups, we do not encounter a linear, evolutionary progression”

Under such circumstances talking about historicity of *Lakulisa* seems to be a daunting job but nevertheless scholars have tried to reason out, give proofs and suggest various historical possibilities which will be studied in detail in the next section.

Brief Review of Scholarship :

Important Primary Sources: The first Sanskrit sources on the Pasupata system to be noticed by the scholars were the brief passages in the *Brahmsutra* commentaries , and the ‘Pasupata vow’ of the *Atharvasiras Upanisad*. In 1940 R.A.Sastri published the newly discovered *Pasupata Sutra*, the central scripture of the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* school attributed to *Lakulisa* himself. The five chapters of this sutra derive their name from five mantras of *Taittiriya Aranyaka* viz.

Sadyojita, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, Isana

⁴Ortega Paul E, ‘The Triadic Heart of Siva’, Delhi, 1997, p 27

In 1st CE *Kaundinya* wrote a commentary on the Sutra which is called *Pancarthabhasya*. *Tantraloka* of Abhinavagupta dated to 10th CAD also talks in detail about the philosophy and tantrik aspect of the said system.

The extremely well articulated and researched articles by Peter Bisschop on ‘The Sutrapath of *Pasupatasutra*’ and ‘*Pancarthabhasya on Pasupata Sutra* 1.37-39, recovered from a newly identified manuscript’ opened up new vistas for research in this rather untouched field. His studies on the importance of *Skanda Purana* and *Atharvaveda* helped in understanding the early Saivite religion and mythology to quite some extent.

Ganakarika, is the only available ancient text of *Lakulisa-Pasupatas*. Though it consists of only eight karikas (verses) it puts forth succinctly the mystic theology of the said system. The *Ratnatika* (commentary) on it not only explains and elaborates the points mentioned in the text but also describes all the main principles and doctrines of the system. Dalal who edited the text attributes the work to a 10th C.AD scholar *Bhasarvajna* but scholars like Hara who has worked extensively on Pasupata philosophy believe that the above mentioned author has written the commentary while the text itself has been authored by one *Haradatta* who lived much earlier.

The *Karvanmahatmaya* appended to Vayu Purana relates the story of birth of *Siva* as *Lakulisa* and also describes some important rituals and pilgrimages.

Perhaps the most important and significant step forward in the brief modern day scholarship on *Lakulisa* was the contribution made by Bhandarkar, father and son duo. Dr. D.R.Bhandarkar has described in a startling manner the discovery of ‘*Karvanmahatmaya*’ (a text dealing with the origin and genesis of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system), which may have been lost but for his persistent efforts. Only after convincing the villagers at Karvan that the document would be used for scholarly purpose he was given access to one of the two existing copies of this valuable manuscript which was later translated in Gujarati by Hirabhai Shyamalbhai Patel in 1963.

D.R. Bhandarkar in his article in Annual Report of the Archeological Survey of India (1906-07) has tried to reconstruct the entire story of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order from literature, epigraphs and historical data available to him. He also participated in the debate regarding the date of *Lakulisa* and also pleaded for latter's human origin. After him his son R.G Bhandarkar in his informative and chronologically researched work 'Vaisnavism, Saivism and minor Religious systems' (first published in 1913) talks at some length about the Pasupata order. He brought to attention another figure, *Srikanthacarya* who has been mentioned in *Mahabharata* and is considered as the founder figure of the *Pasupata* system. Such connections with earlier and later traditions help us to see Lakulisa-Pasupata system in a certain chronological context. Another very important work which throws considerable light on the connection between various Saivite orders and sects is a thorough work by V.S Pathak 'History of Saiva cults in Northern India, from Inscriptions (700 CE to 1200 CE). The inscriptional data presented in his work draws our attention to both doctrinal and practical aspects of Saivism as practiced in medieval period.

It is rather difficult to determine the exact date of *Lakulisa*. All the scholars mentioned above after establishing him as a human teacher entered this intriguing debate. On the other hand based on epigraphic records and their analysis D.R Bhandarkar attributes 1st-2nd CE to Lakulisa. While R.G Bhandarkar, on the basis of his being mentioned as contemporary of *Vasudeva Krsna* in seminal text like *Linga Purana*, *Vayu Purana* and *Kurma Purana* believed *Pancratra* that traditionally the system was intended to take the same place in the *Rudra Siva* cult that the did in the *Vasudeva Krsna* cult, hence placing Lakulisa a century after Panchratra system i.e. 2nd BCE. This earlier date is also agreed upon by V.S Pathak and he counters senior Bhandarkar's contentions by providing the alternative reading of the Epigraphic evidence from Mathura Pilaster.

Karvanmahatmaya found as an appendix to *Vayu Purana* and *Siva Purana* narrates the story of birth of *Lakulisa* and in the process reveals various interesting rituals and beliefs of the order.

That the system was popular in medieval times too is proved by inclusion of '*Nakulisapasupata darsan*' by *Sayana Madhavacarya* in his '*Sarva Darshan Samgrha*' compiled in 14th CE. This medieval text also refers to '*Ganakarika*' a cryptic document filled with mystic theology belonging to *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system. S.P Dasgupta's work on philosophy succinctly captures the essence of '*Nakulisa Pasupata darshanam*'.

Thus we see that the difficult beginnings of modern scholarship on this tradition appears quite fragmentary and self contained. Unfortunately it hardly points outside or wherever it does it just stops there.

In various cases while dealing with the texts the critical edition is missing. This fact is lamented by the poignant scholar of Pasupata philosophy, Minoru Hara in his extensive work '*Pasupata studies*'. Hara has pointed out loopholes in translations of *Pasupatasuta* by H. Chakraborty and comparing and contrasting the sutras from P.S with the ones in *Ganakarika* has given a variant translation of the verses.

Fortunately there is a thorough hindi translation of the P.S the seminal text of *Lakulisa Pasupata* order done by Alokmani Tripathi. Comparing and contrasting all the three translations has proved to be a rewarding exercise. Both Chakraborty and Shastri have also translated the *Pancartha Bhasya* of *Acarya Kaundinya* (the commentary on P.S.) without which the sutras would have hardly made any sense to the people uninitiated or outside the pale of the order.

Tripathi's well researched and comprehensive work also includes the commentary on *Ganakarika* by *Acarya Bhasarvajna*, *Vayu Samhita* of *Siva Purana*, *Brahmasutrashankarabhasya*, *Sankardigvijaya* and *Nakulisapasupata darsan* section of *Sarvadarsansamgrha* of *Madhavacarya*. All these textual references help in a better understanding of this order and the focus of the work is to find the philosophical position of the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system in the complex and vast world of Saivite philosophy.

The importance of Linga worship in the said system is beyond doubt. A detailed study of linga worship, types of lingas, chronological development of this symbol its manifestations and its presence in material art has not only been crucial to the entire study but has also tend to become the main focal interest of the study too. 'Discourses

on Siva' edited by Michael Meister with its multitude of well researched articles is a very good reference source for Saivism in general. The edition includes essays dealing with Lakulisa-Pasupata order and the ones with linga worship. The essence of the papers in this edition is best described in Meister's own words, "Papers in this volume deal synchronically as well as diachronically with the problem of divine form; the struggle to give divinity a manifest image is both historical and ever present in India"

The first paper in the volume by Stella Kramrisch titled 'The great cave temple of Siva in Elephanta: Levels of meaning and their form' completely justifies Meister's claim. While on one hand the paper delves on various philosophical issues pertaining the manifestation of Siva in the cave, on the other it helps in understanding the architecture and sculptural design of Elephanta, a hugely important *Pasupata* site. She draws an interesting parallel between the esoteric concept of Mantra manifesting into an image and the image of '*Sada Siva* 'being the embodiment of five such mantras (*Brahmamantras* as given in *Taittirriya Aranyaka*')

The concept of linga and its manifestation in art form the subject of two interesting papers by Mitterwallner and Srinivasan. 'Evolution of the linga' by Mitterwallner lays an archeological ground for discussion of Saiva images. For her 'aniconic linga' is a symbol of cosmic creativity which has been given an explicit sexual interpretation. Moreover she compares this symbol of Siva with other pillar forms like Axis Mundi and so on.

A detailed study on 'Significance and scope of Pre-Kusana Saivite Iconography' by Doris Meth Srinivasan explores the meaning of linga right from Vedic sources. She elaborates on important early Saivite images and has some interesting observations about mukhalingas as "Human parturition".

N.P Joshi known for his excellent knowledge of Indian iconography in his 'Early forms of Siva' examines early representations of Siva on coins, seals and sealings as well as in stone and terracotta. He studies all this visual material in the light of religious texts and Sanskrit literary texts.

All these three papers together offer a thorough understanding of Early Saivite iconography in general and evolution of linga form in particular.

A completely novel philosophical interpretation of Mukhalingas involving the process of parturition is given by T.X. Maxwell in his 'Nand, Parel, Kalyanpur: Siva images as meditational constructs' . He suggests the use of such imagery as “ meditational constructs” helping in raising the worshipper’s consciousness from the temporal to the transcendental.

The concept of *Lakulisa* as a Saivite teacher who was soon deified by his followers and ultimately recognized as an incarnation of Siva himself is dealt with directly in two papers in this valuable volume. The first one titled '*Lakulisa*, Saivite saint' by U.P Shah follows both the literary references and studies the various images and icons of *Lakulisa*.

The second one by Debala Mitra surveys the presence of *Lakulisa* images on temples in Orissa, an early Pasupata stronghold.

Both these papers help considerably in understanding the development of the iconography of *Lakulisa*.

Among the recent studies on the subject three works stand out and have been extremely useful for my study.

'*Lakulisa* in Indian Art and Culture' by M.C Choubey is a thorough compilation of *Lakulisa* images almost from every part of the country. It also delves into the history and chronology of *Lakulisa*. Though it touches upon various intriguing and important issues like ritual, philosophy etc it doesn't go beyond the factual compilation.

On the other hand a breakthrough research article by Alexis Sanderson, a renowned Saivite scholar titled 'Laakulas: New Evidence' raised novel questions about who were Lakulas or the later followers of *Lakulisa*. An interesting and thorough investigation of various Sanskrit texts is undertaken by Sanderson to explain this enigma. Connection is drawn with later *Kalamukha* sect who has helped a lot in substantiating few of my contentions.

The extensive survey by Charles Dillard Collins titled 'The Iconography and Ritual of *Siva* at Elephanta' surveys the pertinent Vedic, Epic and early Puranic literature as well as the contributions of Kalidasa for interpretation of the sculptural panels found at Elephanta caves. By alluding to various passages from P.S and GKK and trying to

decipher the ritual worship mentioned there in he suggests that the caves were used by adherents of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order. He focuses extensively on the counterclockwise circumambulation, an unusual practice but one which was practiced by followers of LP order and which also according to him seems to explain the position of various larger than life size sculptural panels.

Not underestimating the value of works done in hindi I must specially allude to Premalata Sharma's hindi translation of '*Ekalingamahatmaya*', a Puranic text which sheds quite some light on history as well as rituals followed by Lakulisa-Pasupatas. This text also helps in identifying the Saivite myths which were particularly focused on by the adherents of this order. The area is known to have been a stronghold of L.P order as the inscription found at Eklingji suggests so this text assumes considerably an important position in my study.

A thorough introduction to *Agamas* and *Tantras* is mandatory for understanding the Saivite thought and mythology in a proper perspective. N.N Bhattacharya's 'History of the Tantric Religion' is one such book which provided an entry point for me in such a complex and intriguing subject. This work studies the different aspects of Tantricism, its vastness and intricacies and also its heterogeneous and contradictory elements and last but not the least gives a historical perspective to the conglomeration of ideas and practices throughout Indian history.

'*Saivagamas: A study in the socio-economic ideas and institutions of Kashmir*' by V.N. Drabu discusses important facets of ritualism like initiation, position of a guru, and son on in considerable detail. The book in general examines the philosophy behind the doctrines of *Saivagama*, a well organized body of thought with its own logic and rationale.

During the course of my research it was a pure pleasure to get acquainted with poignant writings of Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj, a stalwart of Indian religion and philosophy. His work '*Tantrik Sadhana aur Siddhant*' talks about his mastery on the said subject. He has written elaborately on Saiva, Shakta and Buddhist tantras in this valuable volume. His work has been extremely important in helping me draw connections between various sects and orders of Saivism. His extensive work on '*Siddha* tradition' also has proved to be a very important reference to the sect. The article 'Some aspects of the history and doctrine of the *Nathas*' in short provide a thorough introduction to this obscure cult and its practices.

Apart from these very crucial references, I have referred to various general books and articles on Saivism, Iconography, Aesthetics and Philosophy. I would be quoting them in my footnotes as and when necessary. To name a few important works, 'The Variegated Plumage: Encounters with Indian Philosophy' Ed by N.B Patil and Mrinal Kaul, 'Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis' by G.W Briggs, 'The Triadic Heart of Siva' by Paul Muller Orgeta, 'Elements of Hindu Iconography' by T.A Gopinath Rao, 'Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva' by W.O'Flaherty.

Overall Structure and Methodological considerations:

Before embarking on a chapter wise detail it is necessary to mention how the outlook of the study changed within the course of my research. Though the initial intention of this thesis was to study the dichotomy between ritual and philosophy but the examination of varied data led to interesting revelations which prove that the dichotomy is only apparent and does not really exist. On closer observation one finds that this idea of dichotomy with which I started emerges out of ignorance and lack of understanding of the system. The so called 'wild and horrid practices' possess a logic of their own and are not 'Pre Aryan' aberrations as many scholars would like us to believe. As I tracked the antiquity of such practices interestingly while on one hand I was directed to various tantric texts it also led to various Vedic texts too. Same is true also for the inquiry into the nature of *Siva-linga* which again lead to Vedic precedents. This knowledge has greatly contributed to my understanding of the said system and also opened up various novel possibilities of looking into the system with renewed interest.

The section on '**The Historical Context**' largely employs text-historical method comprising of textual, iconographical and archeological analysis. In the first subsection titled '**Re-reading the history of Saivism**' an effort is made to reread and re-interpret the history of Saivism as presented in important textual and visual sources. The data is presented in a chronological manner with a focus on the development of the concept of bhakti or to be precise *jnanottar-bhakti* which finds favor in seminal texts like *Svetasvatara Upanisad* and in later text like *Atharvasiras Upanisad*. The contention that it is this concept of *Bhakti* which paved a way for the popularization of Saivism and transformed it from an order of ascetic aspirants to religion of a common man, or which changed the nature of '*Ati-Marga*', esoteric form of Saivism to a more acceptable religion is discussed in detail.

Forging of close links with the institution of kingship and thereby with the main source of patronage did a great deal in popularizing the order in the subcontinent and beyond. By occupying the position of a *Raja-guru* (royal preceptor) and giving *Saiva diksa* (Saiva initiation) to the king followed by a specially modified version of the Saiva consecration ritual (*abhisekah*) as an empowerment to rule, the Saivite ascetics assumed a very powerful and economically viable position in the society by medieval times. These Saiva officiants assumed the power to legitimize a dynasty by various rites and rituals and then by constructing Siva temples and installing a Sivalinga bearing the name of the ruler as its first half. Now this practice of installing a Sivalinga reminds one of the *Acarya Uditas* (*Lakulisa-pasupata* lineage) establishing of two Sivalingas in the honor of his teacher *Upamita* and teacher's teacher *Kapila* bearing the name of *Upamitesvara* and *Kapilesvara*⁵. This same practice was extended to the royalty. Apart from being the royal teachers and priests these officiants also performed various protective, therapeutic and aggressive rites bordering on black magic, hypnosis and witch craft. Such practices made their presence formidable to a kingdom and this added to their power and indispensable nature. These priests were given big chunks of land on which they could collect taxes thus forming a parallel government in the system.

Though *Svetasvatara Upanisad* does not have any overt sectarian connotations it does contain the germs of the doctrine of later Pasupata school as the most elevated concept of *Rudra-Siva* is established here. Gonda⁶ dates the text around 5th -6th B.C.E. The theory of monotheism and that of the impersonal Brahman of the earlier *Upanisads* are blended together in *Rudra-Siva* and the deity is considered one without a second. This sort of philosophical thought paves way for *Bhakti* i.e. Individual devotion to one god. The second chapter of SU reveals the process of Yoga which purifies the nature of the individual soul and unites it with the supreme soul. *Rudra* here is seen possessing the threefold power to create, protect and destroy everything. It is interesting to note that *Rudra* has been eulogized as the only God, and by knowing whom one is freed of all bondages.

⁵ Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II, E.I, XIX,

⁶ Gonda, J., Visnuism and Saivism, A Comparison, New Delhi, 1976

The expression:

Jnatva Devam muchyate sarva-pasaih

is repeated many a times thus pointing at the importance of this text in development of later Pasupata order. The work overall lays stress on meditation and Yoga. Bhandarkar⁷ rightly observes:

“The Svetasvatara Upanisad, therefore stands at the door of the Bhakti cult and pours out its loving adoration on Rudra-Siva instead of Vasudeva-Krsna as the Bhagavad-Gita did in later times when the Bhakti doctrine was in full swing”.

In this context it is quite interesting to see that *Linga Purana* mentions *Lakulisa* the 28th *avatara* of *Siva* to be contemporaneous to *Vasudeva Krsna* and we do come across the reference to *Siva Bhagvatas* as early as in *Patanjali's Mahabhasya*.. As the study progressed it was realized that the concepts of Incarnation (*Avtaravada*) and *Bhakti*, both generally associated with Vaisnavism were intrinsic to Saivite thought and probably their seeds were sown in Saivite literature. The contention is substantiated by Bhandarkar's observation that when *Vasudeva-Krsna* emerged as an important deity, his human character appealed to people and thus the germs of *bhakti* were speedily developed and transferred from *Rudra-Siva* to *Krsna*.

The development will be further traced in Epic and Puranic literature and enough evidences furnished to present another hypothesis that the earlier form of Saivism mentioned in these important texts seems to be of *Pasupata* nature. Probably one can go further and suggest that the Pasupata Saivism was the beginning of Saivite thought. These speculations will be looked into in detail in appropriate chapters. Here it would suffice to mention that the major early textual references that one finds for Saivism have a strong tilt towards *Pasupata* philosophy and practice.

The hypothesis is further substantiated with early archeological, numismatic and artistic evidences.

The next section is titled as '**Locating *Lakulisa* in the context of *Pasupata* History**'. Various textual and visual evidences will be furnished to prove that *Lakulisa* was a human being and an acarya who systematized a certain existing system and his disciples and followers were responsible for its later propagation and popularity in various forms.

⁷ Bhandarkar R.G 'Vaisnavism and Saivism and Minor Religious Systems', Poona, 1928, p 110

Pre *Lakulisa Pasupata* developments:

Before one starts to ask questions about *Lakulisa* and the order founded by him one needs to look into any possible precedents of *Pasupata* thought. Embarking on this journey one encounters an intriguing character '*Srikantha*', who is considered as the original founder of *Pasupata* school. In later traditions he is completely deified that his having been human being has been questioned by various scholars. We should remember it is the same tradition which has deified *Lakulisa* to an extent that scholars had to go to great lengths to assert his humanity.

R.G.Bhandarkar who along with D.R Bhandarkar played a great role in bringing the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* school to forefront and pleaded that *Lakulisa* was a human teacher ,somehow for whatever reasons best known to him downplayed the humanity of Srikantha. He rather considered him an incarnation of Lord Siva and only one of the nomenclatures used for the Lord in *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system.He remarks⁸:

"Lakula was the general name by which the Saiva sects were called ...this general name has for its basis the historical fact that a person of the name of Lakulin or Lakulisa founded a Saiva system corresponding to the Pancharatra system which the Vayu and Linga Puranas consider to be contemporaneous with it".

But the tradition preserved in authoritarian texts⁹ like *Tantraloka* ,*Sivadrishti*, the *Brihadyamala*, *Pingalamata* and *Siva Purana* have a different story to tell. *Tantraloka* mentions Srikantha and Lakulisa as only two authorities on Siva Sasana and Srikantha as a unique teacher on the earth. Further it mentions a text '*Mangalya Sastra*' in which Srikantha discussed the nature of Sakti and Saktiman.

Hence to assert that the *Pasupata* order existed before Lakulisa, I have dedicated a small section to Srikanthacarya who comes across as a great authority on Siva Sasana.

For my enquiry this section is of tremendous importance because it roots *Lakulisa* in an existing tradition and provided important insights in its connection with Tantrik and *Siddha* tradition which will be thoroughly explored in the second chapter. All these examples go on to prove that the seeds of *Pasupata* thought or order were already sown probably much before *Lakulisa* emerged. Yet the importance that the

⁸ *Ibid*, p 115

⁹ Pathak V.S, '*History of Saiva cults in Northern India from Inscriptions, Varanasi, 1960, p 5-6*

latter got in the system points at him as being a very influential and unificatory factor, a systematizer of sorts, someone who managed to create a theology, philosophy and practices which had its own separate body of literature. His significance lies in providing a framework to what appears to have been a complex and scattered system and this is clear by the didactic and strict approach that the aphorisms of the *Pasupata Sutra* employ for the aspirants. It seems that some practices followed earlier were not favored by the author and he wanted his disciples and followers to get rid of them.

After this the next section will deal with the '**Historicity of Lakulisa**'

From the list of the periodic doctrine of Pasupata Saivism as given in *Linga Purana* 1.24 we can glean that Lakuli was the 28th incarnation of Siva, incarnated in 28th cycle *Dwapar/Kali Yuga* in the *Varaha Kalpa*. That doesn't talk much about the historicity of the figure but the fact that the list includes incarnations like *Sveta* (twice), *Atri*, *Somasarman* who have been known as the important sages responsible for creation of various texts or starting a spiritual lineage, points towards the fact that *Lakulisa* was a human teacher, a great sage later deified by his followers. Moreover traditions mentioned in *Tantraloka* and various other tantric texts strengthen this contention.

Vayu Purana with its lower limit dated to 5th BCE by Dikshitar¹⁰ contains the earliest textual reference to the *Lakulisa-Pasupatas*.

According to the catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts in the library of India Office (Pt. V. ed. by Julius Eggeling, 1896) there are a good number of mahatmyas which profess to the part of the *Vayu Purana* and among these we have The first chapter of *Mahatmaya of Karvan* or *Kayavarohana* which gives the story of birth of *Lakulisa*.

The other three chapters of the *Mahatmaya* are included in *Siva Purana*.

Vayu Purana interestingly preaches the 'path of yoga' to realize the oneness of *Isvara*, *Mahesvara*, *Narayana*, *AdiBrahma* and so on. It moreover alerts the reader that the *Siddhas* or *yogins* wander in different disguises in the world and the man of wisdom must take care to offer puja to them whenever they come to them. Virtually three chapters are devoted to the elucidation of *Pasupata yoga*.

¹⁰ Dikshitar V.V.R., 'Some Aspects of the *Vayu Purana*', *Bulletins of the Dept. of Indian History and Archeology* No. 1, Ed. By Nilakantha Sastri, University of Madras, 1933

Regarding the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system the Purana says that in the 25th *mahayuga* when *Visnu* incarnates himself as *Vasudeva* on the earth, Siva takes the incarnation of *Lakuli* by *Yogamaya* and enters a certain dead body in the burial ground of *Kayavarohana*, a *Siddha Ksetra*. The mention of the area as *Siddha Ksetra* points that there was yogic activity already being taking place before the emergence of *Lakulisa*. The interesting query here would be what set *Lakulisa* apart from the other siddhas whose name got lost in oblivion while the former became an important aspect of early Saivism. Further the text informs us about the four pupils of *Lakulisa* viz. *Kausika*, *Gargya*, *Mitraka* and *Rusta* who will be initiated into what is known as Mahesvara Yoga and who will ultimately find solace in *Rudralokam*. With some slight difference the story is mentioned in *Linga Purana* and *Kurma Purana* too. The story finds mention in the late *Nakulesvara-Mahatmaya* section of 17th CE text *Vishwamitri Mahatmaya* professing to be a part of *Skanda Purana* thus pointing at a continued tradition.

From there on a section is dedicated to the dating of *Lakulisa* and opinion given by various scholars and reasons furnished for considering 2nd BCE as the probable date for emergence of *Lakulisa*. Various inscriptional, textual and iconographic evidences will be furnished to strengthen the contention.

Iconographical study of *Lakulisa*:

This subsection will discuss the visual representations of *Lakulisa* found from various places and also it will trace the antiquity of the icon as well as the attributes associated with the help of numismatic and artistic sources.

A manuscript of the *Visvakarma Vastusastram*¹¹ in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona gives a prescription for the form of a *Lakulisa* image, according to which *Lakulisa* should be represented with *urdhvamedhra* (ithyphallic), either resting on a lotus seat or in *padmasana* and holding a citron in his right hand and staff in the left. It also indicates that the *Matulinga* (citron), an attribute of *Lakulisa* represents many atoms of the universe. Such figures are common in Orissa, especially in Parasuramesvara temple and seem to be later.

¹¹ Choubey M.C, *Lakulisa in Indian Art and Culture*, Delhi, 1997, p.116

The early iconography of *Lakulisa* did not show the *matulinga* and the earliest known images of *Lakulisa* with *matulinga* do not appear before 6th C AD.-7th C.AD. That the earlier images of *Lakulisa* showed the *Danda* and the *Kalasa* or a rosary in both his hands can be inferred from the images at Jogesvari, Ellora and the like; the two hands could also be seen in *Vyakhyana mudra* with the *danda* supported in the crook of one elbow which stressed the image of *Lakulisa* as that of a *Yogacarya*. Formalistic Iconographical similarity with Buddha and Jina images is unmistakable.

Special attention will be paid to two *Lakulisa* murtis attached to the linga found at Karvan near Baroda and antiquity of such images emerging out of or merging in the linga will be traced right from Guddimallam linga. The philosophical, ritualistic and mythological importance of such figures will be studied in detail in the chapter of Siva-linga. Here only formalistic and iconographical analysis will be done.

The next section '**The Spread and Transition of the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order**' is broadly based on the chart prepared to show various links and connections between different cults and orders and analyzing the different lineages which mention *Lakulisa* in it. Studying the essential similarities and differences between these systems of thought is inspired by Structuralism methodology though it does not follow any one in particular and has been presented in this format for the sake of convenience and easier understanding of complex data available from various sources. This section has majorly benefited by enlightened works on religion and Tantricism by Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj.

The methodology followed will be based on step by step analysis of the chart and studying the visual and verbal data available in the light of various traditions mentioned. Puranas also talk about the four disciples of *Lakulisa* viz. *Kusika*, *Garga*, *Maitreya* and *Kaurusya* who were responsible for establishing four schools of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system The statement as found in the Puranas is corroborated by a stone slab inscription dated to 1274-96 AD which originally belonged to Somnath temple in Kathiawar but is now in Portugal at Cintra. Whether all these four immediate disciples started a lineage or a gotra of their own is difficult to say as all four of them feature in the same lineage started from *Lakulisa* .What one can definitely say is that the *Kusika* lineage carried on at least till 5th CE when *Rasikara* (*Acarya Kaundinya* wrote his commentary on *Pasupata Sutra*) and this lineage can be considered as the primary one emerging from *Lakulisa* tradition as *Kusika* is mentioned to have interacted with *Lakulisa* and got the *diksa* right from him.

This chapter will focus also on *Siddha Yogesvari tradition, Kaula tradition and Natha-Siddha tradition* and the impetus they have given to the development of art and iconography. The connection with obscure cults like that of *Ajivikas* and highly esoteric ones like *Vajrayana Buddhism* will be presented in detail. Both sections will largely draw from data collected and arguments presented in my two research papers¹² on Harwan monuments and its possible *Ajivika* leanings and Role of Buddhist *Siddhacaryas* in developing *Vajrayana* iconography.

‘The Ritualistic Context largely draws from Mircea Eliade’s idea of a ‘homo religiosus’, an imaginary religious person and describes how this homo religious would view the world. This does not mean that all religious practitioners actually think and act like *homo religiosus*. Instead, it means that religious behavior "says through its own language" that the world is as *homo religiosus* would see it, whether or not the real-life participants in religious behavior are aware of it.

With respect to religious studies rituals can be described as time-honored patterns of sacred activity rooted in the psycho-cultural consciousness of a people, wanting to link the mundane or natural reality with the divine or transnatural. By invoking the sacred and transcendent with a series of mental, physical and verbal actions these acts tend to achieve a symbolic character which confer a completely novel significance and implication to them. As Krishna¹³ has pointed out :

“rituals transform the biological cycles which is the most fundamental of all cycles into a cultural cycle. That is why in all cultures birth and death are not just biological phenomenon but profound cultural events associated with a lot of ritual and ceremonies which transform the biological into the cultural.”

The rites and ceremonial processes which are responsible for this transformation of the natural or the casual into the cultural are closely allied to the attitude of the practitioners to time and space and to the symbolism extant in the order which they follow

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- ¹² *An enquiry into the sectarian affiliation of the ruins at Harwan: Published Proceedings of the seminar organized by IGNCA in ‘Heritage of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh’, ed by G.L Badam and K.K Chakravarty, Research India Press, New Delhi, 2010*
 - *Vajrayana Art and the role of Buddhist Siddhacharyas: presented in the International Seminar on “Buddhist Heritage” organized by MSU and Government of Gujarat, Jan 2010, publication awaited*

¹³ Daya Krishna, *Prolegomena to Any Future Historiography of Cultures and Civilizations*, Delhi, PHISC Series, p.8

The next section deals with **locating the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* rites in the world of Saivite rituals**. The extremely important body of literature which can throw major light on the ritualistic practices and modes of worship in Saivism are the *Saivagmas* with their threefold categorization viz. dualistic, dualistic cum monistic and monistic. This Agamic literature, deriving its essence from practitioners of Saiva Sadhana comprises of a well organized body of thought with its own intrinsic logic and rationale

They talk about various pooja paddhatis (methods of worship) and also throw major light on the temple building and temple art. Rather than standing for any particular book or treatise they stood for a system of thought and a body of practices which were verbally transmitted from guru to his disciple and committed to the memory. Thus here the knowledge seems to have been essentially a confidential affair between the initiated practitioner and his master. Later when these Tantric and Agamic texts were penned down then took the language used was so cryptic and symbolic that one had to be in the lineage of the disciples to understand the actual meaning of the text. Literal reading of such texts can be an extremely futile and many a times misleading exercise and in Drabu's¹⁴ words,

"They are written in a language which can be read by all but understood by few".

The actual import of these words was understood by me when I started going through the text of PS considered and emphasized as a *Tantra* by *Kaundinya*. It made absolutely no sense in the beginning and I realized if we didn't have access to *Kaundinya Bhasya* which contextualize these sutras these aphorisms would be totally obscure. Following the same order as *Lakulisa* the commentator had access to the verbal injunctions that go with the sutras and hence he could throw light on the discussions which were accompanied while transmitting these sutras.

The reference of Agamic tradition can be found as early as in *Atharvaveda* and its ancillary tract known as *Atharvaveda parisista* is filled with mention of Saiva practices. *Ucchusmakalpa* (*Parisista* 36) which talks in detail about the fire sacrifice to achieve supernatural ends that invoke *Ucchusma Rudras* with esoteric Saivite mantras

¹⁴ Drabu, B.N, 'Saivagamas, A study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, New Delhi 1990, p 58-59

Major importance here is paid to the Pasupata vow to which a whole Parisista is dedicated (*Parisista 40: Pasupatavrata*). The literature of the Agamic Saivas is dominated by the prescription of rituals through which the Saivas initiated candidates into their religious discipline (*Diksa*), consecrated successors to office (*Abhisekah*), installed images and other objects of worship (*Pratistha*) and performed the repeated services of worship (*yagah*) and propitiation (*Mantrasadhana*)¹⁵.

By studying such literature related to Lakulisa-Pasupata system, which extends from spiritual texts claiming the authority of divine revelation e.g. PS to commentaries and treatises on these texts e.g. (*Pacarthatbhasya*) to manuals (*Paddhatih*) of both transregional and local reach e.g. (*Ganakarika*, *Eklingamahatmaya*, *Visvamisri mahatmaya*) we can make out a detailed picture of comparative analysis arrive at some understanding to how these model rituals changed overtime , were adapted in different regions and were related to those of the similar systems of ritual seen in the literature of *Pancaratrika Vaisnavas* , *Mantrayan or Vajrayana* Buddhist and ascetic sects like *Ajivikas*.

The next section titled ‘**An Insight into Asceticism**’ traces the antiquity of asceticism and importance of penance in various philosophical and mythological texts. It will trace evidences right from *Kesi Sukta* of *Rg Veda* to Epic-Puranic mythology thus finding a continuity and intrinsic logic. . Epics and Puranas are full of stories which suggest the power of tapas. *Indra* got rid of *Brahma-hatya* by meditating upon *Pasupati* and performing severe austerities for thousand years. *Ravana* is known to have worshipped *Siva* in the most difficult ascetic methods and received the boon of invulnerability in return. *Visvamisra* the *Ksatriya* compelled the gods to grant him the birth and rights of a Brahmin by performing severe austerities. Importance of asceticism in *Lakulisa-Pasupata* tradition will be studied in detail and the injunctions given to the aspirant to follow harsh practices will be analyzed in proper context. The panel depicting *Parvati Panchagni Tapas* depicted in Ellora cave 21 (Ramesvara cave) will be analyzed in detail.

¹⁵ Sanderson Alexis, *The Lakulas: New Evidence of a system intermediate between Pancharthika Pasupatism and Agamic Saivism*. Sanderson Website

This will be followed by a section on **Initiation Rites (*Diksa*)**

The teaching of Pasupata system is for the total annihilation of all kinds of sorrow and this teaching can only be communicated to proper disciples. When the disciple follows the ascetic practices recommended by the lord he attains liberation through His grace. So the most important step is to get initiated in the system which is termed as *Diksa*.

Diksa: *Diksa* is defined as a process of imparting real knowledge (*jnana*) and a perceptorial instruction which removes the *karma-vasana* (acts- latencies) of a *pasu* as mentioned in *Tantraloka, Ahnika I*. Guided by the *guru* a *Sadhaka* applies himself to passing successively beyond the behavior patterns and values meant for *pasu* (the bonded soul). In other words the social and moral rules which apply to a layman no longer apply to the aspirant. Infact *diksa* is a process which witnesses a transformation to another mode of being who strives towards a spiritual upliftment by following the rules and rites of the order in which the person is initiated. It is supposed to 'kill the *pasu*' in *jiva* and to lead him to *moksa*. It creates so to say a new body, 'a mystical body' which enables the aspirant to enter the transcendent mode of being. The incarnation of *Siva* as *Lakulisa* by entering a corpse is probably the best mythical example of this rite. One has to be dead to the world to rise as *Siva*.

Broadly speaking the *diksa* for the ascetic aspirants of this order comes under the heading '*Jnana diksa*' which aims at the purification of an aspirant's karma rooted in his consciousness (*samvit*) and thus emancipating *jiva* from its animality (*pasutva*). To reach such a stage the ascetic has to undergo vigorous practices and do exactly the opposite of what human nature normally forces one to do. The *vidhis* or the rites mentioned in PS will be understood better if seen in the light of these speculations, rather than studying them independently as some aberration and irrational behavior. From here the antiquity of such harsh rites will be traced to *Ajivikas* and the same will be compared and contrasted with the rites of *Kanphata Yogis* who trace their lineage to *Gorakhnath*.

The nature of a *Guru* in *Lakulisa-Pasupata* tradition will be explored in the next section titled, **The divine preceptor**. *Siva* in his form as a teacher of yoga, music and other sciences is known by the name of *Daksinamurti*. He is called so because he is believed to have imparted the knowledge of yoga to rishis while facing the south. *Pasupata Sutra* 1.9 says: “**Mahadevasya Daksinamurteh**” and to explain *Kaundinya*¹⁶ writes:

Here daksina is in the sense of a quarter or direction. The Sun divides the quarters. The quarters again divide the image. The image here means that form which the Sadhaka, seated near on the right side of the Lord with his face turned north realizes and which is characterized as Vrsa-dvaja (the bull symbol) as Sulapani (with trident in his hand) as Mahakala and as Urdhava-linga (with penis raised up) etc. Or the people go the temple of Mahadeva and so there the Sadhaka should worship. The Daksinamurti being taken, the images on the east, north and west are to be discarded.

The last line clearly suggests the importance of *Daksinamurti*, i.e. *Siva* in form of a teacher in the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order. *Vidya*, knowledge being of prime importance for a *Lakulisa-Pasupata* aspirant, the guru automatically assumes a significant position and is identified with *Siva* himself. The merger with *Siva* is what a *guru* is supposed to achieve after he leaves his mortal frame. The *Daksinamurti Upanisad* and the *Suta-Samhita* give the esoteric meaning of this icon.

We don't find direct reference to Initiation rites in *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system but the commentary on *Pasupata Sutra* does furnish information about the discussion between *Lakulisa* and his immediate disciple *Kausika* which throws considerable light on the nature of such an initiation. R A Sastri elaborating on PS (p11) notes that *Lakulisa* went to Ujjain and taught a Brahmin called *Kusika* who had come from Brahmvarta country (near Cawnpore) to receive former's blessings¹⁷. The teaching he further suggests were in the form of present sutras hence connecting them directly to the initiation process. All the five sections of the Sutras are devoted to instruct students how to pray to God and to reach the lord *Rudra* (*Rudra Sayujya*) hereafter.

¹⁶ Chakraborti Haripada, 'Pasupata Sutram with Panchartha Bhasya of Kaundinya, 1969, Calcutta, p 61-62

¹⁷ R.A Sastri ed., *Pasupata Sutra* p11

From here the chapter moves on to the analysis of various ritual practices '*Vidhi*'. According to *Kaundinya*, *Vidhi*, or behavior constitute those activities which bring about merit (dharma). That is to say that yoga cannot be attained only by gaining knowledge but a certain course of action has to be followed by the aspirant to make him realize the fruits of yoga. *Vidhi* is of two orders, the principal comprising of direct religious practices '*carya*' and the subsidiary one comprising of purificatory rites.

Use of Ashes: Meanings and Metaphors :

Lakulisa-Pasupata's had invented a new set of *Niyamas* in which they included rites and practices related to ashes in a big way. Hara believes that ashes were used by the ascetics of this order primarily for cleansing and purification purposes. *Kaundinya* too suggests the importance of this concept in his commentary on PS 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4)¹⁸

The fact that bathing with ashes is classified along with purity of mind by removing desires and purity of soul by courting dishonor points at its importance as a major purificatory rite. This triple division of purity is also seen in the *Ratnatika* on *Ganakarika* by *Bhasarvajna* though he uses the words *kaya sauca*, *antahkarana sauca* and *atman sauca* instead of the ones used in PS. This purificatory device is taken to a metaphysical and mystical level becomes evident by this passage again cited from PBh which quotes from scriptures from other orders and traditions.

The section will be followed by smaller sub-sections on daily practices, and unusual behavior shown by the aspirants of this system. The concepts such as feigning sleep, acting mad and nudity will be studied here

The fourth chapter '**The Philosophical Context**' critically looks at the philosophical material provided in the important texts like *Pasupata Sutra* and *Ganakarika*. The thought is compared and contrasted with thoughts from other Saiva and non Saiva system. A special attention is paid to the concept of '**Ati-Marga Saivism**' and a certain form of **Monotheism** propagated by this order

¹⁸ *Chakrabarti Haripada, 'Pasupata Sutram with Panchartha Bhasya of Kaundinya, 1969, Calcutta, p 56-58*

The only way to reconstruct the theology and ritual of the *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* , the highly diffused sect of early Saivism, is to resort to their basic texts, the Pasupata sutras (PS), along with its commentary, the *Pancharthabhasya* (PABh) by Kaundinya (Trivandrum Sanskrit Series (TSS) 143 (1940) and Ganakarika (GK) with the ratnatika (RT) by *Bhasarvajna*. Gaekwad's Oriental Series (GOS) 15 (1920).

Philosophical data gleaned through *Pasupata Sutra*:

Kaundinya in the beginning of his bhasya offers adoration to *Pasupati* who has created the whole world beginning from the *Brahman* for the good of all. He says that the five subjects of discussion in the *Pasupata* system are

Karya (effect)

Karana (cause)

Yoga (meditation)

Vidhi (behavior)

Dukhanta (cessation of sorrows)

The teaching of *Pasupata* system is for the total annihilation of all kinds of sorrow and this teaching can only be communicated to proper disciples. When the disciple follows the ascetic practices recommended by the lord he attains liberation through His grace.

Reading PS and PABh in the light of other schools of Indian philosophy one is struck by the similarities in various concepts and terminologies with *Samkhya* philosophy. As for the main text PS , it comes across as a manual of rituals pertaining to Pasupata Saivism and the main philosophical discussions are presented in the commentary. Sutras as we shall see were small formulas, holding a wealth of knowledge in them but only for the pupils who could manage to decode and expand the meaning. Reading Sutras without its commentary can prove to be an entirely futile attempt because meaning is quite cryptic. Unless one knows the context and the verbal instructions that are supplied along with these formulas one is at complete loss in making out any sense out of these aphorisms.

PS is divided into five chapters and the nomenclature of this chapter is based on five mantras from *Taittiriya Aranyaka* viz.

Sadyojata

Tatpurusha

Isana

Vamdev

Aghora

Hara¹⁹ suggests that *Kaundinya* took advantage of the philosophy for the formation of his own doctrine. Realizing that his system would look similar to Samkhya and Yoga system, the author right in the beginning starts to differentiate between them and his own doctrine. Hence both these systems become object of his harsh criticism while the *Pasupata* claims its superiority.

PABh has been written in a question answer format i.e. the author asks a question and goes on answering the same. It sort of reminds us of FAQ sections in various books and websites that we come across. Probably the questions were the doublets that arose in the minds of the disciples undergoing the rigorous training. The urgent need to set Pasupata system as a separate and superior to others comes across in the following quasi-dialogue. Taking the dialogue further the *Pasupata* aspirant is supposed to have true knowledge while the ones released according to *Samkhya* and *Yoga* are here mocked as those who are in a swoon (*sammurchitavat*)- as they lack knowledge of themselves or anyone else and hence are misled.

He goes on as far as stating that the aspirants who claim to have been released and to have attained peace through these systems are wrong. It is like seeing of two moons by a *dharana* man with astigmatism. The correct view is that he (who is united) is simply united and not (yet) released (Summarized from PABh p115 line4-13).

¹⁹ Hara Minoru, 'Pasupata Studies' ed by Jun Takashima, Vienna, 2002, p18-19

The next section goes on to explore the concept of *Siddhi* in *Pasupata Sutra* and compares and contrasts it with the same concept elaborated in *Yoga Sutra* of *Patanjali*. According to Jacobi as the Samkhya ideas formed the scaffolding of the *Pasupata* doctrinal edifice, so also the yoga ideas constituted a similar scaffolding of its practical (ascetic and meditative edifice). The text, PS is replete with the Yogic terms of self control and meditation. Terms such as *yama*, *niyama*, *pranayama*, *ahimsa*, *saucha*, *tapas*, and others repeatedly appear throughout the Text, though the semantic content is not always the same as in YS of *Patanjali*

As mentioned earlier the word 'yoga' has different connotation in PS and is not similar to the ones in YS. It is broadly explained as 'union' between *pasu* and *pati* and is one of the five fundamental concepts '*pancarthas*) of *Pasupata* theology.

Here the aspirant approaches the god through his religious practices (PABh p41 line 12, SDS line 79)

While the god approaches him by *codana* etc (PABh p6 line 10)

Hence *Pasupata yoga* means a sort of communion for it is said that by virtue of this yoga the *pasupata* aspirant partakes of the attributes of the god *Mahesvara* (PABh p41 line 17-18)

The aspirant who practice the *pasupata yoga vidhi* diligently attains *ashtasiddhi* and also eightfold *siddhi-laksana* appear to him. But at the same time PABh warns the ascetic not to get too excited by attainment of such miraculous powers because it is not the ultimate goal and indulgence in them might even prove dangerous.

Hence in a nutshell it is by avoiding the *dosa* of *harsa* (delight) by *apramada* (intoxication) and being protected by the *guna* of *Mahatmya* that aspirant can advance further. Such aspirants attain the infinite power as much as *Siva* and their position is distinctly mentioned by *Kaundinya* when he says that *Pasupati* is the lord of all *pasus* except the *Siddhesvaras* and the liberated soul is beyond the jurisdiction of *Pasupati*.

PS V.47 *karanadhikara-ivrtti*)

and he possesses the excellence of *Mahesvara*.

(PS V.40 *tatha vartamanena Mahesvaramaisvaryam praptam*

It is also stated that he becomes the master of all powers of *Siva*, except that of creation.

The use of prefix *ati* and classification of the system as an *Ati-margika* one:

The height of asceticism practiced in the system becomes clear by studying the concepts of *ati-dana*, *ati-yajana* and *ati-tapas* in detail. After warning the aspirants of the hazardous nature of *siddhi* the text proceeds to explain the means (*upaya*) to attain the highest goal.

In answer to the question of there is any qualification concerning giving '*dana*' PABh says

"The *dana* or gifting of material objects is worthless and scripturally it is considered as wrong path (PS4.18) The actual and true *dana* is the transcendent giving (*ati-dana*) and it is nothing but offering of oneself (*atma-pradana*) This leads an aspirant to *Rudra*(*rudrasamipa*) finally and absolutely as it brings about the final non-return (*anavrtti*) to the cycle of transmigration.

The last and important section of this chapter will discuss the '**Apparent Monotheism**' seen in *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system.

Now the question arises how exactly the *Pasupata* system is different from other schools if it preaches almost the same concepts. The difference as far as I have understood lies in the total theistic flavor of the system as opposed to full or partial philosophical nature of other systems

Trying to put the history of Indian theism in a simple perspective Swami Hiranmayananda observes that Vedic polytheism soon developed into sort of Henotheism, where each god was elevated to a supreme position by his devotees. In the due course this led to a kind of Monotheism which on further philosophical speculations culminated in Monism. One can probably place *Lakulisa pasupata* system somewhere in the transition period between monotheism to monism as its philosophy is neither completely dualistic nor monistic. It has been classified by scholars as 'dual cum non dual Saiva system'

According to *Lakulisa Pasupata* system God is seed cause, the instrumental cause of the entire world and his will is at the root of all activities of this *pasu* world. *Siva* is also considered to be the absolute cause and the actions of the *pasus* (individuals) are effective only insofar as they are in conformity with the will of *Siva*. Hence theory of

Karma so important in later Indian thought is not given any importance in this system. The *pasus* are but His manifestations, all effects of the same God who is omnipotent and omniscient. He grants liberation to all who properly undergo the *Pasupata* discipline. The final *dukkhanta* (final deliverance from sorrow) is attained only when the *pasupata* ascetic passes through the different stages of *sadhana* and reaches *Rudra*. What is '*mukti*' to other systems is "*Sayujya*" to the *pasupata*. The liberated souls do not get merged in God, as the Vedantins aim but become united i.e. eternally associated with *Siva*. They remain by their mental steadiness, in perpetual contact with *Siva* and they never return to the cycle of birth and death.

It is important to note that the *pasupata* system of the PS hardly considers the importance of *prakṛti* (the female principal) as energy (*śakti*), as we find in Puranic *pasupata* system. None of the categories of Samkhya appear to be of any relevance regarding the creation of the world. Even the concept of yoga in PS is different from the Puranic concept or Yoga-sutra of Patanjali. Here in PS as we have seen the word yoga itself has been used in the sense of continuous contact with the almighty while in the *Patanjali yoga-sutras* it is taken as suppression of all mental states (*citta-vṛtti-nirodha*) which precedes *Kaivalya*. The *Yogasutras* of *Patanjali* do not try to establish *Isvara* of God but only accepted it as one of its necessary postulates. Rather interestingly none of the Indian philosophical systems have tried to establish God by any logical means except Naiyayikas who according to tradition are Saivas. Hence such an overarching importance given to the supreme deity in the *pasupata* system comes across as an interesting point for speculation.

The overarching role of *Pasupati* the protector of all is envisaged in *Kaundinya's* remark that the liberation from sorrow i.e. *dukkhanta* cannot be attained by knowledge (*jñāna*), disinclination or total renunciation (*vairāgya*), virtue (*dharma*) and giving up of one's miraculous powers (*aishvarya tyāga*) but only by the grace (*prasāda*) alone. While on one hand such a statement points at complete monotheistic nature of the sect on the other it covertly criticizes the other ascetic systems like Jains and Buddhists. This ultimate image of *Pasupati* reminds one of the so called *Pasupati* seals from Indus valley where we see various animals flanking a horned human figure, in some cases an ithyphallic figure identified by scholars as Proto *Siva*. Are the animals symbolic of *Pasus* (the fettered soul) aspiring for the divine grace which would lead them to final redemption from all kinds of sorrow is worth asking?

‘The Mythological Bridge’ delves into important mythological narratives which provide an interesting link between the philosophical expositions and the ritual practices. The mythological stories narrated in important texts like *Karvan Mahatmaya*, *Skanda Purana*, *Eklinga Mahatmaya*, *Visvamiṭri Mahatmaya*, *Vayu Purana* and *Linga Purana* will be analyzed in detail and connection will be drawn with available artistic depictions found at various sites. A section on the panels found at Elephanta caves and parallels found at other sites will be studied at length. The mythological explanation will be sought for existence of various rituals and iconographical depictions.

‘Siva-linga, an iconological study’ forms a seminal part of the entire thesis and will utilize material from earlier chapters to formulate new hypothesis. Dealing with a topic which aims at understanding the dynamics between ritual and philosophy in the Lakulisa-Pasupata order the interdisciplinary study of history, philosophical meanings and the ritual practices related to this potent symbol have proved to be very useful. The idea that this practice was simply a fertility rite followed by “less civilized and barbaric people” has long been rejected. The more scholars have worked on the levels of meanings it conveys, more they have been convinced of dangers of too simplistic or literal a reading. Now this does not go to say that all phallic symbolism associated with it is just a farce. On the contrary the visual representation is definitely phallic but its meaning is not limited to fertility and reproduction. Man creates symbols according to his ideas. The idea of creativity and procreation is associated with sexual organs. Here one is reminded again of Upamanyu’s discourse with *Kṛṣṇa* (from Mahabharata) where he categorically specifies that it is Siva and Devi that are the true gods because we all humans are marked by their symbols, rather born with them while you don’t see a child born with a conch or a chakra. That is to say the most fundamental characteristic that we as humans share with the supreme reality is the process of creation and hence anything which is responsible for such a similitude becomes worth worshipping sheer by the law of synecdoche and assumes automatically assumes a mystical and awe-inspiring aspect.

Unfortunately the sexual symbolism here has selectively been associated with eroticism and its other more important function as the creative principle has not been given much thought by early scholars of Indian Art and culture. The apologetic Indian scholars too joined the gang and openly disowned this disturbing symbol and blamed it on so called 'Non Aryan' people who were untouched by highly philosophical expositions of Veda's. They elaborately quote from Rg Veda's mention of *Sisna deva* the only example but repeated again and again to emphasize the otherness of Linga worship. Sayana in his commentary has clearly explained *Sisna devas* as licentious people and not as people who worship linga.

I have tried in this section to compile all that I have seen, read and analyzed as it has strong links with the developmental stage of Saivism i.e. Lakulisa-Pasupata order. Siva linga being the main object of veneration for the aspirants of this order its esoteric meaning has been delved deeply in their literature. Moreover in this tradition Siva as well as Lakulisa himself are shown as **Ithyphallic**, a concept which will be looked into in detail.

Coming to the word 'linga', we need to historically contextualize it before pondering about its ritual and philosophical meanings. Przyluski who on basis on a linguistic study suggests that the terms like Linga, Langula etc. were originally Austric words and the 'Aryans' borrowed them from pre-Aryan population of India has also lost its currency as the term has been used extensively and meaningfully in early Vedic literature and does not come across some haphazard word borrowed from another civilization.

Interestingly it is in Epic Mythology, to be precise in castration myth narrated in *Sauptika Parvan* of *Mahabharata* (10.17) that the word linga is associated with Siva's organ for the first time. When *Brahma* asked *Mahadeva* to create but the latter preferred to do *tapas* in water instead. Failing to convince Mahadeva Brahma created *Prajapati* and asked him to create, whence he created creatures of various species. When Siva arose from his meditation and saw the beings were already created he tore his 'linga in anger and placed it on the ground and again went to perform austerities. It is interesting to see how a myth functions to create links between an object and a symbol which probably earlier had nothing to do with the object. By an imaginative approach the character of 'golden phallus' from *Samhita* literature is attributed to Siva and thus he automatically gets transformed into the omnipresent and omnipotent creator.

This is further substantiated by a rather long but thought provoking passage by Srinivasan²⁰ in which she asks the fundamental question and answers it by quoting various texts:

"If linga expresses the theological belief in the immanence of the transcendental in nature, in a subtle form, why does that form take the shape of a realistic phallus?"

And she answers:

"An instructive Vedic passage indicates that already in the Samhitas, the phallus is the sign symbolizing the Creator's capacity for unlimited production. The passage occurs in the Atharva Veda, hymn 10.7, a hymn to Skambha. (lit. prop, support, pillar) Skambha is the cosmic generative force whence the entire material world originates. However Skambha is not postulated as the active demiurge who gives rise to phenomenality. Rather Skambha is the cause which gives rise to the agent who in turn takes over the creative process. As such, Skambha generates Prajapati. It is thus of more than passing interest that a vetasa-hiranyaya (a golden phallus) standing in the water represents the hidden (guhya) Prajapati. Indeed what is being said is that the first evolute of cosmic creative energy is a hidden, or unperceivable progenitor symbolized by a golden phallus in water."

Hence it provides the distinct use of phallic symbolism in Vedic literature thus at once providing a paradigm shift in the study of Saivism. Moreover sexual symbolism was not a taboo in Vedic literature as we were given to believe and Dange²¹ has profusely quoted from various Vedic texts like *Satapatha Brahmana*, *Aitareya Brahmana* etc. to substantiate his point. Here I would cite a few examples occurring in the ritual context:

"In the new moon and full moon sacrifice the after offerings are three sisna, in the Caturmasya, the kraidina oblation is the male organ, in Pravargya, the cauldron is the penis and the two handles are the testicles, in the preparation of the Ahavaniya in the Agnicayana, the pestle is the sisna, the mortar the yoni... Upon close analysis, the union between male and female, mithuna, is allegorically described throughout the Vedas."

²⁰ Srinivasan Doris Meth, 'Significance and Scope of Pre-Kusana Saivite Iconography, in 'Discourses on Siva' Ed by Michael W Meister, p 40-41

²¹ Dange S.A, 'Sexual Symbolism from the Vedic ritual, Delhi, 1979 p 88

An interesting passage narrated in *Mahabharata* throws light on the worship of Siva in both anthropomorphic form and linga form. Here *Vyasadeva* explains to *Asvatthama* that he faced defeat by *Krsna-Arjuna* because they worshipped *Siva* in the potent form of linga while he paid his homage to Siva's image. (Tabhyam Linge'archito Deva-s-tvaya'rchayam yuge yuge ..)This clearly points at some kind of superiority attached to linga worship. The next two verses further elaborate that one who is spiritually advanced and can realize Siva in all forms and see linga as the source of all creation is only entitled to worship the linga.

Sarva-bhuta-bhavam jnatva Lingam-archati yah prabhoh

This passage hints at the highly esoteric and subtle meanings associated with linga worship which probably was not meant for lay folks who needed an image to concentrate. (Linge sukshma-sarire archayam pratimayam) (Mbh 7.200.92) suggesting that linga is the subtle body or form while the image (*pratima*) is the 'archa'.

A detailed chronological analysis of Lingas found from various parts of the country will be done with a focus on development and changes occurring in the form and its importance in Lakulisa-Pasupata system. The emergence and development of '*Mukhalingas*' will be studied in detail both its philosophical and mythological aspect. The concept of '*Pancamukha-linga*' will be analyzed at length and its esoteric relevance will be studied.

CHAPTER- 1

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Forethought: A brief history of *Saivism* with a focus on *Pasupati* aspect:

Before dealing with the history of *Pasupata* system we need to briefly look into the concept of *Siva* itself. Even on the cost of repetition one cannot reject the seals found from Indus valley with the so called 'Proto Siva' figure etched on them. The horned figure seated in possible *Kurmasana* and surrounded by animals has been considered as a very crucial find. Chakraborti¹ finds it of particular interest because of the yogic posture and the possible Ithyphallic aspect which connects very well in general with the yogic practices associated with *Siva* and in particular to the descriptions and images of *Lakulisa*. Moreover the central figure here is shown flanked by animals which again have led scholars to read the antecedents of future *Pasupati Siva* in it.



Illus1. Protosiva, Indus valley, 2500BCE

¹ Chakraborti Haripada, '*Pasupata Sutra with Pancarthabhasya of Kaundinya, Translated with an Introduction on the history of Saivism in India, Calcutta, 1969*

Considering the extremely scanty and scattered material from Indus valley I would like to restrain from reading too much into one particular visual representation. The seal I could see preserved in the National Musuem ,Delhi at the most can lead one to form contentions. The enthusiasm with which scholars like Chakraborti try to link it with *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order though tempting requires further research in the nature of religion in Indus Valley civilization

Interestingly Daneilou², a French scholar compares the content of the seal with a scene etched on the Gundestrup cauldron, a richly decorated silver vessel dated to C.1st BCE from Denmark. The scene in question depicts a horned male deity in somewhat crosslegged position holding what seems to be a rosary in one hand and a snake in the other. This central figure is flanked by animals on both sides. To the left is a stag with antlers very similar to the deity and there is a dog-like figure on the right. (coincidentally both elements of later *Siva* and *Bhairava* iconography)



Illus2. Gundestrup cauldron 1st BCE,Denmark

² Daneilou A. 'Gods of Love and Ecstasy: The tradition of Siva and Dionysus', Inner Traditions Bear & Company, 1992

Compositionally the comparison seems to be justified and the fact that the vessel was used for ritualistic purposes establishes the religio-ritualistic importance of the central figure usually identified with Cernnunos³, a Celtic deity. Moreover in his 1928 book *Buddhism in Pre-Christian India*, Donald Alexander Mackenzie⁴ proposed the figure was related to depictions of the Buddha as *Virupaksha* which has again connections with Siva thus stressing on a common stock for all the three icons.

Here it would suffice to say that certain ancient rituals and practices are not initially associated with a particular religion. Some forms, iconographies, rituals as well as folklore associated with them have parallel in various parts of the world. Though these may be known by different names in different places the practices, the esotericism and to quite some extent the visual depictions on closer examination reveal a common reserve maybe pointing at a very distant common past which all individuals must have shared. To be precise some aspects preserved in 'Collective Unconscious', a term taken from Carl Jung. While explaining the concept Jung⁵ says:

"in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche, there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents."

Coming back to the figure on Indus seal the 'urdhavalinga' or the erect phallus is not clear enough and even if for a moment we believe it exists then its symbolic meaning again raises further questions like , Is it the virile symbol of male energy ready for creation or is it the male trying to retain the semen and channelize it in other form of energy viz: mental, spiritual or psychical. Here I am reminded of the Freudian idea of

³ Cernnunos: A Celtic deity

⁴ Mackenzie D.A, 'Buddhism in Pre-Christian India', 1928

⁵ Jung C.J., *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (London 1996) p. 43)

libidinal energy⁶ which according to him is the actual vital energy, the ultimate life force which is stored in Id in form of sexual energy and can be channelized into various energies.

O'Flaherty's excellent work 'Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva'⁷ explains this dichotomy in a very comprehensive and acceptable manner. To begin with she talks about the western scholars of Saivism who had access to very limited translated material and who found the sexual ambiguity in the nature of Siva as a result of his 'Non-Aryan' antecedents (a term used, abused and misused by various scholars). The derogatory references to the 'Sisna devas' in *Rg Veda*⁸ was directly read as references to linga worshippers. However, Sayana⁹ explains the term Sisna-deva in a different way to mean wanton and sensual people. A simple example like this should warn us of too literal a translation of highly complex texts like Vedas.

Flaherty¹⁰ states:

The Siva of Brahmin philosophy is predominantly ascetic; the Siva of Tantric cult is predominantly sexual. But even in each of these elements of the contrasting nature are present, and in the myths which form a bridge between rational philosophy and irrational cult-Siva appears far more often in his dual aspect than in either one or the other

She then painstakingly refers to various Vedic, Vedantic and Epic texts to bring out this ambiguous sexual nature of Siva and suggests that :

*The ambiguity of ithyphallicism is possible because, although the erect phallus is of course a sign of priapism, in Indian culture it is symbol of chastity as well"*¹¹

⁶ Freud Sigmund, 'The Unconscious', Penguin Classics, 2005

⁷ Wendy O'Flaherty 'Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva, Delhi, 1975

⁸ *Rgveda-Samhita (text in Devanagari) English Translation, Notes and Indices* by H.H Wilson, Ed. W.F Webster, Nag Publisher, Delhi, 1990, Hymn vii 21:5, x 99:3

⁹ *Rgveda-Samhita* Srimat Sayanacharya virchita bhasya-sameksha Ed. by N.S Sontakke, Published by Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Pune, 1972, Hymn vii 21:5, x 99:3

¹⁰ Wendy O'Flaherty 'Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva pg 6

Early Textual References:

Vedic Sources: Coming to the Vedic texts we have *Rg Vedic*¹² *Rudra*, the mighty power behind the dreadful and destructive phenomenon of nature like storms, thunderbolts, wild fire and the epidemics, a malignant deity constantly in a need to be appeased. On being propitiated by prayers and offering the same fearful deity becomes *Siva*. The term '*Siva*' (auspicious) here is used as an adjective to qualify the noun *Rudra*. On being duly appeased the wrathful god become *Pasupa* (literally the protector of cattle but if taken in a more philosophical sense then it can be read as the protector of the individual soul).

The concept is further developed in *Satarudriya*¹³ section of *Krishnayajurveda Taittiriya Samhita* where the hundred names of *Rudra* manifest both his benign and terrible aspects hence attributing a dual character to the deity. The names like *Sambhu*, *Sankara* and *Siva* which occur at the end of the list show his benevolent aspect. Here he is called the son of *Usas* and *Prajapati* conferred eight names on him. Out of these eight names seven are same as the ones given in *Athravaveda* viz., *Rudra*, *Sarva*, *Ugra*, *Bhava*, *Pasupati*, *Mahadeva* and *Isana*. The eighth one is *Asani* (the thunderbolt). *Sivaramamurti*¹⁴ sees the section as one justifying the *Visvarupa* of *Siva* and traces all later Saivite iconography to this section.

Regarding the development of the concept of *Rudra-Siva* Bhandarkar observes:

“Thus the terrible and the destructive God became, when he was propitiated by men in a variety of ways, a benignant God and attained to the whole majesty of he godhead by the time of the YV and AV.”¹⁵

It is on this majestic form of the god that the theosophic speculations of *Svetasvatara Upanisad*¹⁶, are based. *Svetasvatara Upanisad* which does not have any overt sectarian connotations does contain the germs of the doctrine of later *Pasupata* school as the most

¹¹ *Ibid* pg 10

¹² *Rgveda-Samhita (text in Devanagari) English Translation, Notes and Indices* by H.H Wilson, Ed. W.F Webster, Nag Publisher, Delhi, 1990, Various hymns from book 1

¹³ C.Sivaramamurti, *Satarudriya, Vibhuti or Siva's Iconography*, New Delhi, 1976 pg 3

¹⁴ C.Sivaramamurti, *Satarudriya, Vibhuti or Siva's Iconography*, New Delhi 1976 pg 3

¹⁵ R.G Bhandarkar, 'Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor religious systems', New Delhi, 1983, p.43

¹⁶ *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, Venkatesvara Press, Bombay, 1910

elevated concept of *Rudra-Siva* is established here. Gonda¹⁷ dates the text around 5th-6th BCE. The theory of monotheism and that of the impersonal *Brahman* of the earlier *Upanisads* are blended together in *Rudra-Siva* and the deity is considered one without a second. This sort of philosophical thought paves way for *Bhakti* ie. individual devotion to one god. The second chapter of *SU* reveals the process of *Yoga* which purifies the nature of the individual soul and unites it with the supreme soul. *Rudra* here is seen possessing the threefold power to create, protect and destroy everything. It is interesting to note that *Rudra* has been eulogized as the only God, and by knowing whom one is freed of all bondages .

The expression:

Jnatva Devam muchyate sarva-pasaih¹⁸

(By knowing this Lord one is freed of all bondages)

is repeated many a times thus pointing at the importance of this text in development of later *Pasupata* order which focuses on the aspect of *pasa* and release from it. The work overall lays stress on meditation and *Yoga*.

Bhandarkar rightly observes

The Svetasvatara Upanisad, therefore stands at the door of the Bhakti cult and pours out its loving adoration on Rudra-Siva instead of Vasudeva-Krsna as the Bhagavad-Gita did in later times when the Bhakti doctrine was in full swing.¹⁹

Thus this important treatise contains the theistic ideas of *Upanisad* in quite a mature form and concocts an idea of a distinctly personal god to whom the devotee surrenders completely, which is further elaborated in Epic and Puranic texts.

The writings of Panini²⁰ and Patanjali²¹ also furnish additional information about Rudra-Siva. Panini refers to him as *Rudra, Bhava, Sarva and Mrda* (iv,1,49), the names we come

¹⁷ Gonda, J. *Vismuism and Sivaism: A Comparison*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976

¹⁸ *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, Venkatesvara Press, Bombay, 1910, 1.11

¹⁹ Bhandarkar 'Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor religious systems', New Delhi, 1983 pg 110

across also in Vedic literature. He mentions the name 'Siva' in a Sutra (4,1,112) which starts with words '*Sivadibhyo....*' suggesting the presence of *Siva* worshippers as early as 5th B.C.E.. Patanjali mentions both *Rudra* and *Siva* and has referred to an animal sacrifice in connection to *Rudra*. Reference to *Rudra*'s medicines which are found highly effective is also found in *Mahabhasya*. He further mentions *Siva* as an important god and refers to the images of *Siva* seen along with those of *Skanda* and *Vishaka* usually made of precious metals being worshipped.

Interestingly *Siva* is also mentioned in the contemporary Buddhist literature. The *Chullavagga* and the *Samyukta Nikaya* mention *Siva* as *Deva* or *Deva-putta*. *Isana* is also mentioned along with *Vehnu* in *Digha Nikaya*. 'Deva' mentioned in a list of divinities in *Niddesa* in all probability seems to be the *Mahadeva*, an epithet of *Siva*..

A Saiva sect known as '*Siva-bhagavatas*' covering their bodies with animal skin and carrying in hand an iron lance as an emblem of the deity is also distinctly mentioned in the *Mahabhasya*. Moreover *Sivapura*, *Udichya grama* or *Saivapura* are mentioned by Patanjali as a village of the northern country. Thus we can envisage a group of followers, and most probably ascetic followers who were solely dedicated to the worship of *Siva* and who were his bhaktas, pointing at the one point devotion to a personal god. The fact that the aspect of *Bhakti* which became a very important concept in later Vaisnavism and gave a real boost to its propagation was initially seen in the ascetic followers of *Siva*. Chakraborti²² is of the opinion that these ascetic followers belong to the Pasupata order mainly because of their carrying a danda which can be identified with *Siva*'s staff seen on various coins found from Ujjain and Taksasila belonging to 3rd -2nd BCE. This staff is variously designated as *Brahmadanda*, *Bilwadanda* and *Kaladanda* and is an important component in *Lakulisa*'s iconography and till present day occupies a very important place in rituals followed by Dandin Swami order.

²⁰ Chakraborti Haripada, '*Pasupata Sutra with Pancarthabhasya of Kaundinya, Translated with an Introduction on the history of Saivism in India, Calcutta, 1969, p.4*

²¹ Ibid, p.4

²² Ibid. p.6

The sectarian aspect becomes absolutely clear in *Atharvasiras Upanisad* , a late but highly important text. Here we can see Rudra being identified with Vedic gods like *Brahma, Prajapati, Indra, Agni, Soma, Varuna* etc on one hand and on the other with Puranic deities like *Skanda, Vinayak* etc.

The text says:

"He who is Rudra, is Bhagavat, and also is Brahmadeva, a bow to him"

The commentary by Samkarananda elaborates on the Pasupata vow (vrata) mentioned in detail in the text and hence making it extremely crucial for our study.

For the knowledge of Rudra one should use moderate food, devote himself to reading (Sravana), thinking (Manana) etc. become a Paramahansa or a single minded devotee and spend his time thus. One should undertake the Pasupata vow which is of the following nature. Greed and anger should be given up. Forgiveness should be realized. The muttering of Om should be practiced and meditation resulting in Avagati, or perception should be resorted to..... Then follows a guideline to besmear the body with ashes by repeating the words:

"The ash is fire, the ash is water, the ash is earth, everything is ash, the ether is ash, the mind, the eyes and other senses are ash"

This is the Pasupata vow (vrata) enjoined for removal of the noose with which the Pasu or the individual soul is tied. The expression '*Pasupasavimoksana*' which means the loosening of the noose tied round the necks of beings is achieved when one is blessed by *Pasupati* himself.

Epic Sources: Among the Epics, *Mahabharata* sheds quite some light on the worship of Siva and carries the seeds of development for later Saivite mythology. The story of '*Kirata Arjuna*' in the *Vanaparyana* narrates the fight between Arjuna and Siva in form

of a Kirata (hunter)²³. On being vanquished Arjuna builds an altar, puts flowers on it and prays to Siva. After sometime he sees the offering of flowers on Kirata's head and recognizes his rival as *Siva* and completely surrenders to him. *Siva* thus propitiated asks him for a boon and he asks for the weapon presided over by *Pasupati* (***pasupatastra***) which possess the power of destroying all dreadful enemies.



Illus 3. Kiratarjuniya, Pallava, 8th CE, Kailashnath temple, Kanchipuram

This story suggests both the prevalence and importance of *Pasupata* order. The importance of ***Pasupatastra*** can be gauged by another myth in the *Dronaparvan*²⁴ where again the attainment of the *Pasupatastra* (this time mentioned as a bow and arrow) by Arjuna is narrated. In this story there is no fight between Siva and Arjuna instead Krsna and Arjuna are seen bowing down to *Samkara* to propitiate him and ask him for the *Pasupatastra* whence they are directed to a lake where they see two venomous serpents which assume the form of the desired bow and arrow.

²³ Mahabharata, Book III Vanaparvan, Kirataparva, Section XXXIX

²⁴ Mahabharata, Drona Parvan, KirataArjuniya

In *Saṃskṛtapaṇḍita*²⁵ (chap 7) *Asvatthaman* is mentioned to have propitiated Samkara and obtained a sword from him with which he managed to create havoc in the Pandava camp. The text mentions that Siva himself entered the body of *Asvatthaman* and attributed him great strength and invincibility. The Castration myth occurring in the same chapter provides a great impetus for development of later Saiva mythology especially the myths related with linga worship which I have elaborated on in Ch 4.

Story of castration was narrated by *Kṛṣṇa* on being asked by *Yudhisthira* the secret of *Asvatthaman*'s strength. The story goes on as follows:

Once *Brahmadeva* asked Siva to stop his creation and so he hid under water for years to meditate. When again the need for creation was felt *Brahmadeva* created *Prajapati* who in turn created a large number of beings. On seeing this new creation Samkara got angry and cut off his phallus and stuck it into the ground and went away to perform austerities. What is of interest to us here is the fact that similar incident is repeated in *Vāyu Purāṇa* (chapter 10). In the latter text after stopping creation it is mentioned that Siva performed hard austerities and resorted to *Pasupata yoga*. The incident seems to be an interesting link between the beginning of linga worship and its connection to *Pasupata* order which will be discussed in detail in a separate section. It seems whenever creation ceases the yogic austerities begin, probably this can explain the naked celibate Pasupata aspirant who were advised to shun women. Hence both creative and yogic aspects are like two sides of the same coin.

It is in the same chapter that we can see the preliminary aspects of myth of *Dakṣa yagna*²⁶ which establishes the supremacy of Siva on other godheads and also which assumes a very important position in later Saiva mythology. But it is the myth of *Upamanyu*²⁷ narrated in *Anuśaṇapāṇḍita* (ch 14) which truly ascertains the importance of Siva and hints at significance of linga worship.

²⁵ *Mahabharata, Saṃskṛta Paṇḍita, ch. vii*

²⁶ *Mahabharata, Saṃskṛtapaṇḍita,*

²⁷ *Anuśaṇapāṇḍita*

Krsna tells Yudhisthira that when god created the rite of sacrifice and assigned no oblation to *Rudra*, the latter was full of wrath and destroyed the sacrifice; whereupon the gods assigned him a portion.

In the *Anusasanaparvan* (chapter 14) Krsna is again seen narrating the glories of Mahadeva. Desiring to have an efficient son by his wife *Jambavati* he went to Himalayas. On the way he met Upamanyu, a great devotee of Lord Siva and entered into a long discourse with him on benignant nature of Siva once he is propitiated by austere practices. Even a Daitiya Sakalya was granted a boon to be a great author and his son was blessed to be a composer of Sutras. Hence Siva appears here in a role of a knowledge giver deity which fits well with the tradition of *Pasupatas*. Interestingly it is mentioned that Upamanyu started his austerities on the behest of his mother. When Siva came to him in disguise of Indra and offered him boons, he refused to accept them and boldly declared that he would have boons from Samkara alone and that he would become a worm or a butterfly at the command of Samkara but did not desire even the sovereignty of the three worlds given by Indra. In the course of his narrative, Upamanyu says that *Mahadeva* was the only god whose organ of generation (*linga*) is worshipped by men. He and Uma were the real creators of animals, as these bear the marks of the two, and not discus or the conch-shell or marks of any other god. Hence this discourse with Upamanyu clearly seems to be valorizing *Siva* as well as justifying and ennobling the *linga worship* which must surely have been prevalent at that time. Here *Krsna*, one of the main protagonists also is seen deep in meditation and practicing harsh austerities to gain boon from Siva. Thus here Siva comes across as a powerful yet generous deity who can go to any length to fulfill the desire of a true bhakta who propitiates him with meditations and austerities, a quality which till present day is associated with the deity and the name '*Bholenath*' (easily pleased lord) being a common epithet for him.

One thing we can glean from all these stories in the fact that the kind of Saivism and Saivite practices which are mentioned in the Epic are of *Pasupata* nature. Or probably one can go further and suggest that the *Pasupata* Saivism was the beginning of Saivite thought. These speculations will be looked into in detail in appropriate chapters. Here it would suffice to mention that the major early textual references that one finds for Saivism have a strong tilt towards *Pasupata* philosophy and practice, which is the core hypothesis of my study.

Early Evidences from Art, Archeology and History:

The earliest historical record which mention the worship of *Siva* is that of Megasthenes²⁸, the Greek ambassador to the court of Pataliputra in 4th BCE. He describes two Indian deities under the name of Dionysus and Heracles commonly identified with *Siva* and *Krsna* respectively. We learn of these worshippers of *Siva* existing in Punjab about a century after Panini from the Greek records. The people termed as Sibae or Siboi living during the time of invasion of India by Alexander are mentioned in the treatises of Greek historians like R. Curtius, Deodorus²⁹ and others. The Siboi as described by these classical writers appears to be devotees of *Siva* because their descriptions agree partly with the descriptions of the Saivas in the *Mahabhasya* and interestingly they are mentioned as carrying clubs and wearing animal hides.

Numismatic records: One of the earliest numismatic data in connection with the worship of *Siva* is found in the device of some silver punch marked coins which as a class typify the most ancient forms of Indian currency. It shows a human figure schematically represented holding a staff and a water vessel (danda and kamandalu) in his hands. On the basis of its similarity with several die-struck coins hailing from Ujjain and Taksasila, belonging to 3rd CE to 2nd CE Banerjea³⁰ identifies the figure as that of *Siva*.



Illus 4. Early Form of *Siva* with a danda and kamandalu depicted on a coin from Ujjain, 200 BCE

²⁸ Sastri K.A Neelkantha Ed. *A Comprehensive History of India*, New Delhi, 1987, p. 394

²⁹ Sastri K.A Neelkantha Ed. *A Comprehensive History of India*, New Delhi, 1987, p. 395

³⁰ Banerjea J.N, 'The development of Hindu Iconography' New Delhi, 1985, p 45

Tradition associates Ujjain with the worship of *Siva* as *Mahakala*, and some coins found there contain the anthropomorphic, theriomorphic and phallic forms of the deity as their devices. The human form is sometimes three headed, emphasizing the panchvaktra form of *Siva* (two faces one on the back and one on the top being invisible in this two dimensional representation). The staff and water vessel in the above image connects it to *Lakulisa* very strongly as all early images of *Lakulisa* are seen holding a staff and a water vessel. Here it would be interesting to note that *Rasikara (Kaundinya)*³¹ states that *Lakulisa* preached his first sermon at Ujjain thus drawing a very strong *Lakulisa-Pasupata* connection with the region. Not only Ujjain a good number of coins are found at Vidisha, Pawaya and Kutwar which depict *Siva* holding a *danda* and a *kalasa*.

Such representations of *Siva* can also be found on other ancient coins of indigenous and foreign chiefs and kings who ruled in parts of northern India from 1st BCE to 2nd CE. The coins of many Indo-Greek rulers bear the figure of a bull on one side and scholars believe this bull to be the early theriomorphic representation of *Siva* which was one of the tutelary divinities of Puskalavati, the old capital of Gandhara. This coin depicts the figure of a bull with the legend 'Tauros' inscribed in Greek and 'Usabhe' in Kharoshti script.

On the obverse of a few silver coins of the Audumbara chief Dharaghosha, two armed *Siva* is shown holding a trident battleaxe in his right hand and a lion's skin in his left. On their reverse are found the Saiva emblem, trident battle-axe on a pedestal and a tree within railing. Many a copper coins of Dharaghosha and two other chiefs of the tribe, Rudradasa and Sivadasa, have a clear representation of a two tiered Saiva shrine with the same composite emblem before it³².

³¹ Chakrabarti Haripada, 'Pasupata Sutra with Pancarthabhasya of Kaundinya, Translated with an Introduction on the history of Saivism in India, Calcutta, 1969, p.24

³² Encyclopaedia of Saivism, Compiled by Swami Parmeshwaranand, Delhi, 2004, Audumbara



Illus 5. Audumbara Coin showing a Sivasthala and the composite emblem, 1st BCE

Numismatic considerations tend to place the Audumbaras in the period extending from 2nd BCE-1st CE. An interesting connection is drawn between the famous sage *Visvamitra* and the audumbara tree (fig tree). *Swami Parmeshwarananda*³³ observes that:

The evidences furnished by the Brahmanda-Purana regarding the tribe are identical with those of the Vayu Purana and thus these two Puranas assign the Audumbaras to the Kusika or Kausika gotra and so to the family of the celebrated sage named Visvamitra who belongs to the same gotra.

Kalika Purana believed to have been composed between 7th -10th CE further establishes the association of *Visvamitra's* birth with Audumbara tree (fig tree)³⁴. The fact that Audumbara Brahmins of Gujarat even at present belong to the gotra of Visvamitra furthers this contention³⁵

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Gupta Parmanand, ' Geography from Ancient Indian coins and seals' ,Concept Publishing Company,1989 p.19-20*

Maues, who ruled over north- western India from 1st BCE had the image of *Siva* inscribed on many of his coins. Of particular interest are some of the square copper coins on which can be seen a two armed standing figure holding in his right hand a club and a trident in his left hand. On comparing these coins with an inscribed bronze seal found at Sirkap by Marshall, Banerjea³⁶ proved that the figure stood for *Siva*. The Prakrit legends on the Sirkap seal written in two scripts (Brahmi and Kharoshthi) on either side of the club and trident bearing standing figure read '*Sivarakshitasa*' (belonging to one protected by *Siva*) and might have been the image of the patron deity of the owner.

There is another seal of about the same period found at Taxila which is of quite some interest to us. The device in this case consists of a two-armed standing human being with one foot placed on a bull shaped figure. It was described by both Marshall and Konow³⁷ as '*Herakles trampling down a bull-shaped dragon*'. Konow read the inscription inscribed as '*Badusa Vispamitrassa*' (of the young Brahmin *Vispamitra*) which Konow believes can be read as '*Visvamisra*', considering the phonetics of Kharoshthi language. The words '*Vispamitra*' is written in Kharoshthi across the body of *Siva* on the silver coin of Dharaghosha noted above too. Thus it probably talks about the association of Sage *Visvamisra* with *Siva* which is further strengthened by the evidences supplied in *Vishvamisra Mahatmaya*.

These evidences go on to prove that the early form of *Siva* was that of *Pasupati Siva*, an ascetic yogi, associated with austere meditation and esoteric practices.

From the archeological evidence we find a section of the foreign immigrants adopting *Siva* worship as well as Indian names. Gondophares, the Indo-Parthian ruler 1st CE very often describes himself in his coin legends as *Devavrata* or '*Sudevavrata*' meaning one vowed to *Deva* or *Sudeva*, an epithet used for *Siva*. The suffix '*vrata*' could possibly refer to '*Mahavratas*', later Kalamukhas and important sub-sect of Lakulisa-Pasupatas³⁸.

³⁶ Banerjea J.N., '*The development of Hindu Iconography*' New Delhi, 1985, p.121

³⁷ Konow Sten, '*The religions of India*', G.E.C Gad Publisher, 1949, p.12

³⁸ Sastri, K.A. Nilakantha (Ed.), '*A Comprehensive History of India, Vol II*, New Delhi, 1957, p.401



Illus 6. Early form of Siva on the coin of Gondophares, Parthian, 1st CE

In several passages from Hiuen Tsang's 'Si-Yu-Ki'³⁹ it is stated that ,

“Outside the western gates of Pushkalavati was a Deva temple and a marvelous looking image of the Deva”.

While on one hand such early descriptions talks of prevalence of Siva worship on the other it talks of images of the deity being made and worshipped in the temple. The profuse depiction of Siva in anthropomorphic form can be seen on the coins of Kusana emperor Wema Kadphises and to also to some extent on the coins of his successors Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasudeva. The fact that no other deity or his emblem appears on Wema's coins proves his whole hearted allegiance to Saivism. The reverse device of most of his coins depict two armed Siva holding his various attributes. Moreover the epithet 'Mahesvara' in the reverse legend singals him out as a devotee of Siva. The example given below is of special interest to us because it shows Siva in his ithyphallic form, an aspect which links to the later ascetic forms of Siva and especially to Lakulisa who is always shown with an erect phallus.

³⁹ Sastri, K.A. Nilakantha (Ed.), 'A Comprehensive History of India, Vol II, New Delhi, 1957, p403



Illus 7. Ithyphallic Siva seen on Wema Kadphises coin, Kusana, 2nd CE

The coins of later Kusana kings show the development in iconography of Siva where the deity is shown as two/four armed holding in his hands two/four of the following attributes –thunderbolt, water vessel, antelope, elephant goad, trident, noose, spear, club etc. Around this time as Konow⁴⁰ mentions we come across a Kharoshthi inscription discovered at Panjtar or Salimpur in the region of ancient Gandhara (Peshawar district) and bearing the date 122 of an unspecified date referring to construction of a Saiva sanctuary (Sivasthala) by someone named Moika, the Urumuja Scion..

The fact that well developed Sivasthala existed as early as Audumbara times points towards the rising popularity of this godhead among the dynasties of North India.

Sculptural Evidence:

The discovery of Guddimallam linga in 1903, a significant archeological find from Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh came as a major breakthrough in Saiva studies. The earliest Saiva sculpture that we come across is the one carved on the face of Gudimallam linga housed in the Parasuramesvara temple. It had been dated to 2nd BCE on the basis of similarities shared with Bharut and Sanchi Yakshas but digging within the temple's garbhagrha revealed that this linga of hard igneous stone and dark brown color belongs to the temple's earliest phase, that is 3rd BCE thus revealing a well developed Saivite artistic and iconographic tradition as early as that in South India

⁴⁰ Konow Sten, *'The religions of India'*, G.E.C Gad Publisher, 1949, p.41



Illus 7. Guddimallam Linga, Parasuramesvara Temple, Andhra Pradesh, 3rd BCE

The sheer height (5feet) of the image and absence of a yoni pitha points at a time in history when linga was worshipped independently as a potent symbol rather than a symbol of union of male and female. This again connects perfectly with Lakulisa-Pasupata tradition where the feminine force is completely absent and focus is on retaining the male energy for higher creation. Rather it is storing of precious energy than letting it flow into the mundane channel of reproductive cycle, hence pointing at the extremely esoteric and austere nature of the order. Two armed *Siva*, carved in high relief, standing on a *yaksa* presupposes the form of later mukhalingas to some extent but seems to be a direct prototype for the *Lakulisa* images seen at Karvan though iconographically there are some differences. As the image is not ithyphallic one can read it as a *Siva* image, probably Pre-Lakulisa image but with strong *Pasupata* leanings.



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Pre Lakulisa ithyphallic image: That there was no dearth of such images can be gleaned from the fact that we find ithyphallic Siva images right from 2nd BC. Siva in ithyphallic form as seen on Wema Kadphises coin is also found in stone around this time in North India. A statue of red mottled stone, typically a characteristic of Mathura school was found at Rishikesh. Interestingly the height of the statue is 4'9'', almost similar to the Gudimallam linga. It can be seen standing in *abhaya mudra*, with kamandalu in the left hand and the characteristic draping of the dhoti and scarf. Being an ithyphallic (*urdhvareta*) image at once separates it from other *Yaksha*, *Naga* or Vasinavite vyuha figures seen around this time and points at his being Siva and most probably, the ascetic lord of *Pasupata* Saivites..

Two other extraordinary Saivite reliefs datable to 1st-2nd CE are found from Musanagar pillar presently situated in the Mukta devi temple. In centre on one of the top panels a two armed ithyphallic Siva figure crowned with Pre Kusana type of fluted turban is seen seated in *lalitasana*...Iconographically the most interesting features are the three auxiliary male forms emerging from the central figure of *Siva*. Two arise from either side of his shoulders; each is two-armed and wears headgear. The middle form emerges directly from Siva's headdress. The other relief shows a standing *Siva*, associated with attributes similar to the seated Siva. He is ithyphallic with right hand in *abhaya*, left hand holding a jar near the waist. A lion and a yaksha flank him to the right and left respectively.



Illus 12. Ithyphallic Siva, 1st-2nd CE, Musanagar pillar, Mukta devi temple

In these early depictions *Siva* is shown alone, his female counterpart absolutely absent again proving him to be a god of ascetics.

The early *Ardhanarisvara* images probably were perhaps the symbols of all creative and generative aspect of *Siva* who was in no need for a female counterpart to create, a precursor to the ideas of later *Natha Siddhas* who believed that both male and female powers lie within us and its only by yogic, meditational and esoteric practices one can gain access to the opposite sex in oneself and hence create without the need for the other⁴¹. This concept is at the root of the images of *Ardhanarisvara*. Both male and female are aspects of one and the same reality and are differentiated only when *Siva* wants to create. This contention is substantiated with the fact that The *Linga Purana* states that when *Brahma* discovered that beings created by his mental process failed to multiply and thus to continue creation, he approached *Bhava* for help. Thereupon the lord caused himself to be born from *Brahma*'s forehead in the form of *Ardhanarisvara* and hence continued the process of creation.

An early *Ardhanarisvara* image from Late Kusana period, emerging from a linga very much like *Guddhimallam* image points at popularity of this concept at least among some Saivite orders and the fact that the image is ithyphallic again points at some ascetic order.



Illus 13. Siva Ardhanarisvara, Kusana, 1st -2nd CE,

⁴¹ Briggs G.W.Ed, 'Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis' Delhi, 2001 p201

Pasupata History:

An interesting passage quoted in *Varaha Purana*⁴² narrates the story of Sage Gautama who had given refuge in his ashram to some rishis during a long famine. When the famine was over these rishis desired to go to various pilgrimages but fearing Gautama's refusal they cheated him and wrongly accused him of 'go hatya' (cow slaying) and so on that pretext left his ashrama. To repent for his supposed sin Gautama went to Himalayas and prayed to Siva for a hundred years and finally obtained from Lord's jatamandala, some *gangajala* to sprinkle on the dead cow. After reviving the cow this holy water flowed in the form of Godavari. On realizing the cunning of the rishis Gautama cursed them to be *Vedabahyas* or those outside the pale of vedic religion. On being appeased by the apologetic rishis he mellowed down and granted that they could only rise to heaven through bhakti. The fallen *rishis* went to *Kailasa* and prayed to *Siva* to grant them some sastras which had a few vedic rites at least. Thence they were decreed to be born to the *Raudras*, the lovers of spirituous liquors and flesh, who sprang up from the sweatdrops which flowed from Siva while he was in the aspect of *Bhairava* and to these rishis he gave the *Pasupata Sastra*. This last sentence sheds quite some light on the position of *Pasupatas*.

Before one starts to ask questions about *Lakulisa* and the order founded by him one needs to look into any possible precedents of *Pasupata* thought. Embarking on this journey one encounters an intriguing character 'Srikantha', who is considered as the original founder of *Pasupata* school. In later traditions as we will see he is completely deified that his having been human being has been questioned by various scholars. We should remember it is the same tradition which has deified *Lakulisa* to an extent that scholars had to go to great lengths to assert his humanity.

⁴² Hazra, Rajendra Chandra (1987) [1940]. *Studies in the Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. pp. 96-107.

Mahabharata mentions *Pasupata* as one of the five religious schools. It is supposed to have been revealed by *Srikantha*, the consort of Uma(*uma pati*) and son of a Brahmin (which has been translated as *Brahma* by V.S Pathak.)⁴³ but which clearly speaks of a Brahmin parentage and does not claim *Brahma* to be the father⁴⁴

The tradition recurs in several works belonging to various schools of Saivism and composed in different parts of the country but it is rather difficult to ascribe any date for the origin of this order. R.G. Bhandarkar who played a great role in bringing the Lakulisa-Pasupata school to forefront somehow for whatever reasons best known to himself downplayed the humanity of Srikantha. He rather considered him an incarnation of Lord Siva and only one of the nomenclatures used for the Lord in *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order ..He remarks⁴⁵

“Lakula was the general name by which the Saiva sects were called ...this general name has for its basis the historical fact that a person of the name of Lakulin or Lakulisa founded a Saiva system corresponding to the Pancharatra system which the Vayu and Linga Puranas consider to be contemporaneous with it.”

He further states that:

“The other general name Pasupata arose by dropping the name of the human individual Lakulin and substituting that of the the god Pasupati, whose incarnation he was believed to be”

But the tradition preserved in authoritarian texts like *Tantraloka*⁴⁶ (Kashmir Shaivism ,pp 5-6, *Tantraloka*, I,p27), *Sivadrishti*⁴⁷, the *Brihadyamala*⁴⁸, *Pingalamata*⁴⁹ and *Siva Purana*⁵⁰ have a different story to tell.

⁴³ Pathak V.S, 'History of Saiva cults in Northern India from Inscriptions, (700AD -1200AD) , Varanasi, 1960, p.6

⁴⁴ *Mahabharata, Santiparvan*, 349

⁴⁵ Bhandarkar R.G 'Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor religious systems', New Delhi, 1983 '(pg 171-172)

⁴⁶ Pathak, V.S. *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD)*. Varanasi: Tara Printing Works ,1960 p.5

⁴⁷ *Ibid* p.5

⁴⁸ *Ibid* p.5

⁴⁹ *Ibid* p.5

Tantraloka mentions Srikantha and Lakulisa as only two authorities on Siva Sasana and *Srikantha* as a unique teacher on the earth. Further it mentions a text '*Mangalya Sastra*' in which Srikantha discussed the nature of *Sakti and Saktiman*.

Interestingly a commentary on the *Saradatilaka*⁵¹ begins with a salutation to *Srikantha*, who is considered the first teacher of the doctrine which was later followed by *Vasumanta*, *Vasugupta*, *Somananda*, *Utpaladeva*, *Laxmanacharya*, *Abhinavagupta* and by *Kshmeraj*. In this tradition *Srikantha* is considered as a *Vidyeshvara* who gave instructions to three disciple *Trayambaka*, *Amardaka* and *Srinatha* to descend and teach the Saiva doctrines of non-duality (tantric), duality and dual cum non duality respectively⁵². Now *Trayambaka*'s daughter is supposed to have founded a fourth school, '*Ardhatrayambaka*' which can be identified as the *Kaula* tradition. What comes across is the sure shot connection between the *Pasupata* school of thought and later *Kaula* school which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The colophon of a manuscript of the *Tantrasara* deposited in the Nepal Darbar Library mentions *Sriknathnatha*, (another form of Pasupati) , the great *Pasupata* teacher as the writer of the book⁵³.

Moreover there is a manuscript in the Nepal Darbar Library which seems to be a compilation of the 8th CE. In the first Patala of the work called *Aksara vidhana*, the Isvara relates the origin of the *Tantras*⁵⁴. He says that he worshipped the lord Srikantha devotedly for thousands of years and *Srikantha* , being thus propitiated, communicated to him the great store of spiritual knowledge in a versified language. Now this knowledge is represented by *Sada-Siva* himself and was communicated in 125 thousand verses by Amrita to others , and through generations to *Srikantha* who communicated it to others in amplified versions in crores of *Slokas*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.5

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.5

⁵² Muller-Ortega P, '*The Traidic Heart of Siva*', Delhi, 1997 p.15

⁵³ Bagchi P.C. *Studies in the Tantras, Part I*, Calcutta, 1975 p 6-8

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

The denomination of this Tantric text is *Pingalamata* and it follows *Pratisthakalpa* called *Jayadratha (yamala)* belonging to the *Brahmayamala* and was composed for goddess *Pingala* by *Bhagvan Srikantha* comprising of 8000 verses.

Moreover *Srinatha*, one of the mind born sons of *Srikantha* is mentioned as the originator of *Kapalika* school in *Sabara tantra*⁵⁵ where his name finds mention in the list of twelve *Kapalikacharyas*. They are *Adinatha, Anadi, Kala, Atikalika (Vaikalika), Karala, Vikarala, Mahakala, Kalabhairavnatha, Batuka, Bhutanatha, Viranatha and Srikantha*⁵⁶. Interestingly there is a passage in *Varaha Purana* which narrates that the Pasupata doctrine was originally given to *Kapalikas* thus drawing an interesting connection which will be discussed in detail in the later part of the study.

Srikantha in the Saiva pantheon:

Like many other Saiva teachers like *Goraksa, Lakulisa, Ananta etc. Srikantha* is also recognized as a god in the Saiva pantheon. He is mentioned as a deity in various positions in Trika school. He is often equated with *SadaSiva* in his *panchmukha* form, probably because he revealed the doctrine having five sources (*panchsrotarupa*). He is also considered as guardian protector of *Siddhis* and by that logic an important deity for *Siddhas*.

A mention about the *Pasupata* school founded by *Srikantha* is found in a Malkapram Inscription⁵⁷ of a Kakatiya king Rudradeva where it is described as five-fold, as having five sources (*panchsrotarupa*) and all other Saiva schools are described to have originated from it.

⁵⁵ Dowman Keith, *Master of Mahamudra*, 2004

⁵⁶ Lorenzen David, 'The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas, Two lost Saivite sects', Delhi, 1972 p.37

⁵⁷ Pathak, V.S. *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD)*. Varanasi: Tara Printing Works, 1960 p.8-9

Unlike *Lakulisa* whose images are virtually found from all parts of the country no images of *Srikantha* are found though the form of *Srikantha* with five faces was accepted in the *Lakulisa* order also. Interestingly during my field visits in Kayavarohan I came across the image of *Srikantha* on the outer wall of the renovated temple of Bhagwan Lakulisa .The iconography of this modern day sculpture agrees with the pen picture of him found in *Rupamandana* where *Srikantha* is described as clad in embroidered clothes and ornaments with *Yajnopavita* of super workmanship. He has four arms and only one face. He is carrying *khadaga*, *dhanusa*, *bana* and *khetaka*. In another description *Srikantha* has four arms, in two of which he carries the sula and the tanka and holds the others in abhaya and *varada mudra*. He is standing on a *padmapitha* and is draped in red garments.⁵⁸



Illus 14. Srikantha from Temple of Brahmesvara Karvan, Baroda Dist, Gujarat, 1972

In the above image *Srikantha* is shown holding a *khetaka* (shield), *bana* (arrow) ,*dhanusa* (bow) and a *tanka*.The lower right hand holding the bow is also seen in *Varada mudra* hence completely following both the descriptions of *Srikantha* given in *Rupamandana*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid* p.10

The Cintra Prasasti⁵⁹ clearly mentions a temple was built for *Srikantha-panchmukha* by Ganda Tripurantaka. The Bilhari stone inscription of the time of Yuvarajadeva II records that he dedicated his whole empire to *Saiva Siddhanta* preceptor who was engaged in the worship of *Srikantha*.⁶⁰

The following verses (40-46) inform us that Tripurantaka built five temples dedicated five statues and erected a torana supported by two pillars –a sort of a triumphal arch.

The five temples were situated according to verse 40 to the north of the mandapa or hall of the temple of somevara close to the splendid old water clock (ghatikalaya and on the site of *srikantha panchmukha*

Note: this may mean either that the 5 temples were built on the site of an ancient decayed temple or that the site was sacred to the god mentioned

The Shorinarayan inscription of Jajalladeva ii pays obeisance to Srikantha. The Ratanpur stone inscription of Prthvideva ii mentions the construction of a temple of Srikantha at Varelpur⁶¹.

Pathak believes that the tradition of *Srikantha* as a teacher of the Saiva religion occurring in the works of various schools of Saivism from different parts of the country, the mention of his name in the list of teachers, his description “as unique teacher on earth” and lastly quotations from works attributed to him are very strong indications in favor of his historicity⁶².

Though Bagchi⁶³ has casually remarked that *Lakulisa* was *Srikantha*'s disciple and both together were responsible for the foundation of the Pasupata religion, it doesn't seem quite probable. There is no evidence suggesting the above and the accounts of *Srikantha* and *Lakulisa* available from literature and inscriptions do not represent them as teacher

⁵⁹ *The Cintra Prasasti of the reign of Sarangdeva* B.G. Buhler EI vol I 1888

⁶⁰ V.V Mirashi ed. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol iv, Ootacamund (1955) p214

⁶¹ Pathak, V.S. *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD)*. Varanasi: Tara Printing Works, 1960 p.9-10

⁶² Pathak, V.S. *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD)*. Varanasi: Tara Printing Works, 1960

⁶³ Bagchi P.C. *Studies in the Tantras, Part I*, Calcutta, 1975 p 6-8

and disciple while a tradition in *Agama* quoted by *Abhinavagupta* records the receiving of the doctrine by *Lakula* from *Swachhhanda*,. plus there is a fundamental difference between their approach to religion and philosophy. *Tantraloka*⁶⁴ associates *Lakulisa* and *Srikantha* and calls them as only two authorities on Siva Sasana and in the same text *Lakulisa* along with other Saiva incarnations are presented as proclaimers of the glories of *Srikantha*. This indirect yet very important connection will be explored in the next chapter.

As Pathak⁶⁵ observes like many other human teachers in Saivite tradition *Srikantha* has also been deified and so are deified the important path breaking teachers like *Lakulisa*, *Goraksa* etc. *Srikantha* has been mentioned as a very important deity in *Trika* school and is sometimes regarded as identical with *Sadasiva* having 5 faces probably because he revealed the doctrine having five sources (*panchsrotorupa*)(pg 8 note 5). The connection of number 5 with 5 chapters of PS which have supposed to have been revealed by 5 faces of Siva respectively is unmistakable. His connection with *Siddhas* too comes across strongly by the epithet he has of guardian protector of siddhis. The fact that Kayavarohana and area around it was called *Siddhi Ksetra* before the emergence of *Lakulisa* might point at the followers of *Srikantha* to have been active there. So probably before *Lakulisa* started his activities already a *Pasupata* school was flourishing. Coincidentally the form of *Srikantha* with 5 faces was accepted in *Lakulisa* school. All these examples go on to prove that the seeds of *Pasupata* thought or order were already sown probably much before *Lakulisa* emerged. Yet the importance that the latter got in the system points at him as being a very influential and unificatory factor, a systemitizer of sorts, some one who managed to create a theology, philosophy and practices which had their own separate body of literature.

⁶⁴ *Tantraloka* XII, p.396

⁶⁵ Pathak, V.S. *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD)*. Varanasi, Tara Printing Works, 1960, p.6

History of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order :

A lot of debate has ensued regarding the date of *Lakulisa*. The dating varies from 11th CE. To 2nd BCE. On the basis of two inscriptions mentioning '*Lakutesvara Pandita*' Fleet⁶⁶ dated *Lakulisa* to 11th C.AD. This dating was refuted by scholars like T.Gopinath Rao⁶⁷ on the basis of the mention of *Lakulisvara* in pre 11th C. literature. The date was further pushed back to late 1st C.AD. with the finding and later publishing of the Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II dated to 380AD, by D.R. Bhandarkar.⁶⁸ The inscription records the erection of two images *Āpilesvara* and *Upamitesvara* in a *Guruvayatana* by one *Uditacharya*, a *Pasupata* teacher. Moreover *Acarya Uditā* is described as tenth in apostolic succession from *Kusika*, the immediate disciple of *Lakulisa*. Even this early date has been contested by some scholars who suggest an earlier date. U.P. Shah⁶⁹ feels that *Lakulisa* can be dated to 1st C.BC.. According to him the cult must have been popular in western India in early Christian era and Ksatrapas in that region who called themselves Rudradaman and Rudrasimha possibly had come under the influence of the said cult. R.G Bhandarkar⁷⁰ suggests 2nd C BC. as the probable date on the basis of the fact that *Lakulisa's* rise had been represented by Puranas to be contemporaneous with *Vasudev-Krsna*. Further he suggests that the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system was intended to take the same place in the *Rudra-Siva* cult that the *Panchratra* did in the *Vasudeva-Krsna* cult. Agreeing to this early date Banerjee⁷¹ argues that the term "*kusika-dasamena*" in the Mathura Pillar inscription should be taken in the sense of a spiritual descent and not in that of generation, hence allotting twenty-five years to each spiritual generation is nothing but a conjecture and cannot lead to any definite conclusion. The contention is substantiated by some early coins found at Ujjain (kade coins 3rd-2nd C. BC.), Vidisha, Pawaya and Kutwar depicting *Siva* holding a danda (staff) (*lakula*) and a Kamandalu (water pitcher) which is the earliest form of iconography for *Lakulisa*.

⁶⁶ Fleet J.F, *Siva as Lakulisa*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1907 p.419-426

⁶⁷ Rao, T.Gopinath, '*Elements of Hindu Iconography*', Delhi, 1971

⁶⁸ Bhandarkar D.R., ed and trans *Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II*, G.E 61, EI XXI, 1931-32

⁶⁹ Shah U.P, *Lakulisa ; Saivite Saint in Meister, Michael W. Discourses on Siva*. Philadelphia, Bombay 1984

⁷⁰ Bhandarkar R.G '*Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor religious systems*', New Delhi, 1983 '(pg 171-172)

⁷¹ Banerjee P, '*Early Indian Religions*', Delhi, 1973 p.57,58

A short history of Pasupata school and locating *Lakulisa*:

Pathak⁷² believes that the tradition of *Srikantha* as a teacher of the Saiva religion occurring in the works of various schools of Saivism from different parts of the country, the mention of his name in the list of teachers, his description “as unique teacher on earth” and lastly quotations from works attributed to him are very strong indications in favor of his historicity.

From the list of the periodic doctrine of *Pasupata Saivism* as given in *linga purana* 1.24⁷³ we can glean that *Lakuli* was the 28th incarnatin of Siva , incarnated in 28th cycle *Dvapara/Kali Yuga* in the *Varaha Kalpa*. That doesn't talk much about the historicity of the figure but the fact that the list includes incarnations like *Sveta* (twice) *Atri*, *Somasarman* who have been known as the important sages responsible for creation of various texts or starting a spiritual lineage, points towards the fact that *Lakulisa* could have been a human teacher, a great sage later deified by his followers.

Historicity of *Lakulisa*:

To establish the historicity of *Lakulisa* we get support from various evidences , three main being:

Textual Evidences

Inscriptional Evidences

Archeological Evidences

Important textual sources:

*Vayu Purana*⁷⁴ contains the earliest textual reference to the *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* and chapter XXIII verses 217-225 talks about *Lakulisa* in *Kayavarohan*. The scene of this Purana considered to be one of the earliest of the extant Puranas is laid in the *Naimisaranya* forest where sages and learned Brahmanas were assembled for participating in a sacrifice (yajna) of king *Adhisimakrsna*.

⁷² Pathak V.S, 'History of Saiva cults in Northern India from Inscriptions, (700AD -1200AD) , Varanasi, 1960, p.6

⁷³ Maxwell T.S, *Visvarupa*, Oxford University Press, 1988,p 206-207

⁷⁴ Dikshitar V.R.R, 'Some aspects of the *Vayu Purana*', *Bulletins of the Department of Indian History and Archeology*, No. 1 ed by K.A Nilakantasastry, University of Madras, 1933

According to the catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts in the library of India Office (Pt. V.ed by Julius Eggling ,1896) there are a good number of mahatmyas which profess to the part of the *Vayu Purana* and among these we have The first chapter of *Mahatmaya* of Karvan or *Kayavarohana* which is of special interest to this study. The other three chapters of the *Mahatmaya* are included in *Siva Purana* hence the *Mahatmaya* seems like a later interpolation and hence it becomes mandatory for us to figure out the upper limit for the date for the *Vayu Purana* which is only possible by studying the text critically.

VayuPurana ch 27 talks about eight forms of *Siva* as (*Neellohita, Rudra, Bhava, Sarva, Pasupati, Isana, Bhim, and Mahadeba*)..while ch 41 talks in detail about Mt. Kailash, Ch 54 gives an account of Lingodbhava, an extremely important concept in *Lakulisa Pasupata* system.

Now among the six schools of Hindu philosophy only three viz The *Vedanta* , The *Samkhya* and The *Yoga* school are mentioned in this *Purana* and interesting as Dikshitar⁷⁵ observes

“while the Vedanta principles underlie the philosophic concept of the whole Purana the Yoga seems to preponderate at first sight. The Purana came to narrate this ancient tradition and it is probable that after the introduction of the Yoga school as such it's philosophical tenets were ushered in as supplementing in a manner the older tradition”

So one can assume the inclusion of the chapter on *Karvanmahatmaya* must have occurred somewhere during the period when the importance of ancient knowledge of Yoga was realized and moreover given an important place in the philosophical system of the important texts. The fact that the eight limbs of *Yoga (ashtanga yoga)* viz..*Asanam* (Sitting Postures), *Pravarodha* (Suppression of the breath), *Pratyahara* (Abstaining from sense objects), *Dharani* (Mental Concentration) ,*Dhyanam* (Religious meditation), *Samadhi* (Ecstatic contemplation on the supreme soul) , *Yama* (Paramount duties) and *Niyama* (Minor duties) received a detailed mention in one of the important chapters of the text points to the raising popularity and acceptance of this ancient esoteric spiritual practice.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*,

The same eight limbs are mentioned in *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali too (yama-niyamasana pranayama pratyahara dharanadhyana samadhyostavangani) ⁷⁶. Interestingly in the slightly earlier *Maitri Upanisad* only 6 limbs of yoga are referred to and no mention of yama and niyama can be seen

From this one can see the gradual development of the *Yoga* system and it is only later that the Advaita school claimed a large number of adherents to its fold by incorporating into it the salient features of both the *Yoga* and the Samkhya so that the general principles of different schools became common and readily acceptable.

This metamorphosis took place it seems around the period of Upanishads which are nothing but Vedantic treatises effecting a reconciliation with other schools of thought and philosophy

Vayu Purana interestingly preaches the 'path of yoga' to realize the oneness of *Isvara*, *Mahesvara*, *Narayana*, *AdiBrahma* and so on. It moreover alerts the reader that the *Siddhas* or *yogins* wander in different disguises in the world and the man of wisdom must take care to offer puja to them whenever they come to them. Virtually three chapters are devoted to the elucidation of *pasupata yoga*.

Another injunction of the *Purana* is that these *siddhas* and *yatis* (ascetics) must be fed on the Sraddha occasion. A Sraddha performed with one yogin is said to be superior to a Sraddha with a 1000 brahmins or brahmcarins. No clear mention of Tantricism which entered the mainstream texts after 5th CE has been seen in the text hence pointing at the antiquity of the text. While talking of other systems there is no mention of Buddha or Mahavira which prompts Dikshitar to date the lower limit of the text to pre 5th BCE.

Vayu Pu. is earlier to the time when Poet Bana flourished, as the latter refers to it twice in his works. In *Harshacharita* he mentions *Pavamana Prokta* meaning uttered by pavamana. In other renditions of the same text the term used is *Pavana Prokta* and in commentaries *Vayu Prokta* is used hence equating all the three terms: *Pavamana*, *Pavana*

⁷⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* II, 29 (c. 1st C E)

and Vayu. In other work *Kadambari*, *Bana* uses the term *Vayu Prokta*. So we can say *Vayu Pu* existed before *Bana* ie before first half of 7th CE. And the fact that it was quoted shows it was well known and established by that time so it can go two centuries back. Enlightning evidence is produced by the text itself while giving an account of the royal dynasties which enjoyed the sovereignty of the earth. Bhandarkar⁷⁷ opines:

“In this verse the Guptas are spoken of as the princes who according to the usual prophetic tone of the Puranas, will hold Prayaga, Saketa and Magadha country along Ganges before they become paramount sovereigns.”

Moreover we can deduce from both Allahabad and Eran inscriptions that the dominions of Samudragupta had spread as far as the Western Indian and South Indian kingdoms (refer the inscription). hence it can be deduced that the description of Gupta achievements described in *Vayu Pu*. refers to the time shortly before the reign of Samudragupta. Hence early 4th CE tends to remain the earliest upper limit for dating *Vayu Pu*.

Regarding the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system the Purana says that in the 25th mahayuga when *Visnu* incarnates himself as *Vasudeva* on the earth, Siva takes the incarnation of *Lakuli* by *Yogamaya* and enters a certain dead body in the burial ground of *Kayavarohana*, a *siddha ksetra*. The mention of the area as *Siddha ksetra* points to the yogic activity already being taking place before the coming of *Lakulisa*. The interesting query here would be what set *Lakulisa* apart from the other *siddhas* whose name got lost in oblivion while the former became an important aspect of early Saivism. Further the text informs us about the 4 pupils of *Lakulisa* viz. *Kausika*, *Gargya*, *Mitraka* and *Rusta* who will be initiated into what is known as *Mahesvara Yoga* and who will ultimately find solace in *Rudralokam*. Similar legend can be seen mentioned in *Karvanmahatmya* too.

⁷⁷ Bhandarkar D.R, *An Ekalingji Stone Inscription and the origin and history of Lakulisa sect*, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1905-7 p

The story as given in *Karvanmahatmya*:

The text describes the 28th incarnation of *Siva* at *Kayavarohana* in *Bhruguketra* which is identified with present day *Karvan*, a town in the *Dabhoi Taluka*, near *Baroda* in *Gujarat*. The work starts with an obeisance to *Maheshwar* who incarnated in this world as *Lakutapanisa*. Further it relates the story of the birth of God *Siva*, as the son of a *Brahmin* in the village of *Ulkapuri* and his manifestation at *Karvan* as *Lakulisa* and explains the methods and merits of an important ritual 'pattabandha' (worshipping and tying a silk cloth to the image of the *Lakulisa*.)

My translation and notes from the original text⁷⁸

The text starts with an obeisance to Sri Ganesa and Sri Lakutpani. It moves on to invoke Mahadeva, Mahakala and Mahabahirava form of Siva which talks of its tantric aspect.

The text starts with Devi (Parvati) asking Ishvara the merits of the ritual of Pattabandha in reply to which Ishwar narrates the story of birth of Lakulisa. Between Kali and Dwapar yuga I incarnated in a form even hearing about which can liberate one In the lineage of a devrishi Atri who has done mahatapas there emerged a meritorious brahmin Visvarupa and his equally pious and beautiful wife Sudarshana in the village of Ulkapuri.

On 14th of the bright moon of Chaitra month she gave birth to a healthy son with yellow eyes, hair and golden colored body.

After performing the rites for the new born child the Brahmin had a desire to go for a pilgrimage to Kurushetra to worship his ancestors and after explaining the rites of agnihotra and other rituals to his wife he left for his pilgrimage (here ends the ch 1 as given in Vayu Purana)

⁷⁸ Patel, H.S., Ed. 'Shri Kayavarohan Tirth no Itihas', Ahmedabad, 1964

(Ch 2 , Siva Purana)

After her husband left the lady prepared the material for all the rituals and rites meticulously. One day as she went to fetch a bhramin to perform the rites and came back to see the fire already kindled and rites of agnihotra performed. She was taken by surprise and decided to find out the secret and night after night saw her six month old child performing the rituals and offering homa to his ancestors, gods , rishis and siddhas. After her husband returned from his pilgrimage she narrated the miraculous incident to him. And both saw their son performing the rites.

(Ch 3, Siva Purana)

Out of love and compassion the parents inquired of their son whether he doesn't feel tired by performing such tiresome rites. Hearing this the child fell in a swoon and died. Seeing her seven month old son dead sad Sudarshana immersed the body in a pool near Devakhata. Once in water the child was carried by a tortoise to Jalesvara, the mahalinga situated in the middle of the water. Listen O Devi to the secret of moksha. Brahmanas were surprised to see the child playing in the water and enquired about his real identity and started praising and paying obeisance to him by invoking him in the form of Mahadeva, Mahesvara, Maharudra, Mahasiddha and finally as Lakutesvaram who can relieve us of all our sins and lead towards moksha.

(Ch 4, Siva Purana)

The child then manifested his divine form with 3 eyes, matted hair and yagnopavit, girdle and ashes .The child then becoming invisible ran away to the bank of Aurva river. The parents and the Brahmanas entreated him to return. The child refused and narrated the merits of Ulka tirth .Then he came to Kayavarohana and asked his parents to stay there. With a streak of the staff the child got River Ganga there. This place was called Dirghika. Near the place lay the temple of Vrddhesvara whom the child requested for temporary residence .The god replied that the temple was much congested and asked him to go to Brahmesvara. Once there the child merged himself into the god . Hence with a staff in the left hand and a citron in the right Lakulisa merged himself in the linga of Brahmesvara.

Significantly the story finds mention in the late 17th CE text *Vishwamitri Mahatmaya*⁷⁹ too. The colophons of the VM clearly states that it is a part of the *Skanda purana*. It has a section called *Nakulesvara-mahatmya* but the twist that the story takes is quite interesting. Here in *Naklesa* is considered as a form of *Vishnu* and not *Siva*. The text is in the usual form of dialogue, between the sage *Vishwamitra* and the king *Trisanku*. On being asked by the king the importance of Kayavarohan (present day Karvan) as the sin destroying holy place and existence of crores of lingas (sahasra linga), sage answered him thus:

In a prominent place Urdhvakhela (probably modern day Avakhal) a pious and penance practicing yogi *Yajnavalkya* meditated on *Siva* and being propitiated *Siva* told him to ask for a boon. The yogi asked to be able to establish a great place for Brahmanas.

After the boon was granted *Yajnavalkya* became a Brahman named *Devasarman* and along with his pious wife he maintained all the Vedic rites including the sacred fire in which oblations were offered daily. Somewhere the story talks about a yogi, most probably a non Brahmin getting accepted in the vedic system and getting all the rights to perform various vedic sacrifices. *Siva's* grace was needed by this yogi to be able to become a Brahman. Though it is a late text while narrating this story it alludes to the time of great reconciliation and amalgamation.

As the pious couple grew old Lord *Visnu* was born as their son and he was named as '*Nakula*' by his father. Interestingly the text talks about *Nakula* as the incarnation of *Visnu* rather than *Siva* but the most interesting part of the text is when it reconciles the concept of both these god heads under one imagery.

Devasarman had to go to some other place for few days and he explained to his wife the importance of all the rites and asked her to arrange for oblations and to call a Brahmin everyday to perform the rites.

⁷⁹ Thaker, Jayant, P., Ed. '*Visvamitri-mahatmyam*', Vadodara, 1997

On arriving back with a Brahman she found to her wonder that offering was duly made to the five sacred fires as per scriptural injunctions. The other night as she was keeping vigil she saw the child lying in the cradle took the form of a boy consecrated with sacred thread with the sacred staff in his hands, wearing a girdle of the munja grass and an antelope hide took kusa grass in his hand and offered oblations to the sacred fire and instantly after the deed was completed lied down again in his cradle.

In this way the child performed the ceremony daily and his mother observed him taking the form of a celibate. When her husband came back she confided the same to him and both spied on the child. Thinking the child might feel tired the parents held his hand at which the child freed himself and ran away. His abashed parents followed him but the child disappeared in the *Vacchadeva-muni-ksetra* and reappeared in the *Kasyapa-muni-ksetra*. With his trident he created an oblong lake with 3 kundas sacred to god Brahma, *Visnu* and *Hara*. His parents took ablutions in the lake and became Siddhas and by grace of their son appeared as two lingas and to this day it is believed those who worship them in this form attentively, instantly gets freed from the debt that he owes to his parents and goes to the abode of lord Siva..

Now comes the interesting part which quite poetically explains the existence of *Lakulisa* images embedded in lingas found in Karvan. Thereafter *Nakula* entered the first linga and became *Nakulesa*, having matted hair seated in *padmasana* posture and having two hands. The text tells us that this image should be recognized as the union of *Hari* and *Hara* along which crores of other self born lingas thrive.

As lord *Visnu* (*Hari*) in form of *Nakula* descended along his body (*kayavarohanam cakre*) into the linga, that sacred place became famous among the people as *Kayavarohana*. Thereon Lord *Nakulesa* remembered lord *Vishvanatha* of Kasi along with his retinue and so all the emblems of Kasi appeared in *Kayavarohana*. Similarly lord *Kedaresvar* along with mother goddess *Gauri* came to reside here and brought a crores of lingas called Kotilingas and similarly lot of holy places especially of Saivism were remembered and summoned by *Nakulesa* to have a parallel in *Kayavarohana*. Hence the place has become very important and pious. The text suggests that the religious merit of worshipping lord *Nakula* here equals that of a hundred *Aswamedha* sacrifices, a 1000 *Rajasuya* sacrifices and a 100,000 *Vajapeya* sacrifices.

Other Puranic texts having a clear Saivite leaning too talk about *Lakulisa*. *Linga Purana*⁸⁰ talks about *Lakulisa in Kayaavtar*. The substances of the verses is briefly as follows:

In the 28th yuga when *Visnu* son of *Parasara* will incarnate himself as *Dvaipayana-Vyasa*, *Krsna* will become incarnate as *Vasudeva*. At that time I (Siva) shall as brahmchari (celibate) enter a dead body thrown in a cemetery without anybody to guard it, by means of yogic power and shall bear the name of *Lakuli*. At that time *Kayaavatara* will become famous as a sacred place and remain so till the earth endures. And there will be born the ascetic pupils *Kusika, Garga Mitra and Kaurushya* and these *Pasupatas* will repair to the Rudra loka from where they will not return

*Kurma Purana*⁸¹ gives the list of 28 incarnations of *Siva* known as *Yogacharyas* starting from *Svetacharya* and ending with *Nakulisa*. Each of them had four pupils. Thus the total number of *Yogacharyas* came to be 112. The last incarnation has been named as *Nakulesvara* and his pupils are mentioned as : *Kunika, Garga, Mitra and Ruru (Rushya)*. Unlike Bhandarkar I don't think there is a need to jump to the conclusion that the reading of '*Ruru*' or '*Rushya*' is corrupt. These texts are known to have devoted various names to one god or personality. eg, would be the use of *Lakuli, Lakulisa*, *Nakulisa*, *Naklesvar* all these names for *Lakulisa* and *Karuka Sidhantin* or *Kalavakra* for *Kalamukha*. Moreover we know *Ruru* as a Bhairava and there is also a Tantra by that name. As such *Kurma Pu.* is a later text and does not help much than to suggest the tradition was well preserved by medieval times.

Mathura Pillar Inscription and debate about the date of *Lakulisa*: R.G. Bhandarkar⁸² places the rise of the *Pasupata* school mentioned in the Narayaniya section of the *Mahabharata* about a century after that of *Panchratra* system ie about 2nd BCE. The reason for such dating seems to be the fact that he wanted to establish *Lakulisa* as the first teacher of Pasupatism which was followed by the Siva-Bhagavatas as referred to in the *Mahabhasya*. But D.R. Bhandarkar suggested on the basis of the Mathura Pillar

⁸⁰ *Linga Purana*, CH XXIV verses 124-133

⁸¹ *Kurma Purana* Ch LIII

⁸² Bhandarkar, R.G., 'p.117

Inscription⁸³ of the time of Chandragupta II that Lakulisa should be better placed in the second quarter of the 2nd CE. This inscription records that Uditā founded two *Siva lingas* known as *Upamitesvar* and *Kapilesvar* in 61 Gupta Era (380CE) after the names of his Guru Upamita and guru's guru Kapilacharya. This also records his (Uditā's) position as 10th from Kusika in the chain of preceptors and disciples. D.R. Bhandarkar takes this Kusika as the immediate disciple of Lakulisa. Thus Uditā stands eleventh from Lakulisa and calculating 25 years for each generation as is the usual practice Lakulisa has been ascribed to the second quarter of the 2nd CE.

Now if this view is accepted then *Lakulisa* cannot be regarded as the teacher of the *Siva Bhagvatas* of the period of Patanjali who is generally accepted as belonging to 2nd BCE. The practice of carrying staves (*danda*) by *Siva Bhagvatas* of *Mahabhasya* is found to be continued by followers of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order.

V.S. Pathak⁸⁴ contests D.R. Bhandarkar's dating on the basis of *Rajasekhara's* writings (14th CE). The latter mentions 17 gurus from *Lakulisa to Rasikara*⁸⁵ Pathak suggests that this list and also a commentary on it by Gunaratna mention two Kusikas, the second guru and the tenth one. On placing *Rasikara* in 4th CE. He further suggests if *Rasikara* was seventh from Kusika II, Uditā of the inscription of 381CE would be naturally tenth from Kusika II and then if we repeat the process of backward dating by calculating 25 years for each generation we get 2nd BCE date for *Lakulisa* which more or less agrees with R.G. Bhandarkar's ideas. Now this important suggestion gains weight as it is supported by an Indonesian tradition⁸⁶ which represents the four disciples of Lakulisa along with Patanjali as the *Pasupata pentad*.

⁸³ Bhandarkar, D.R. 'EI, XXX, 1ff

⁸⁴ Pathak V.S., 'History of Saiva cults in Northern India from Inscriptions, (700AD -1200AD) , Varanasi, 1960, p.9

⁸⁵ List of Gurus according to *Saddarsana Samucchaya of Rajasekhara*
Nakulisa, Kausika, Gargya, Maitreya, Kaurusa, Isana, Paragargya, Kapilanda, Manusyaka, Kusika, Atri, Pingalaksa, Puspaka, Brhadarya, Agasti, Santana Kaundinya or Rasikara, Vidyaguru

⁸⁶ Pathak V.S., 'History of Saiva cults in Northern India from Inscriptions, (700AD -1200AD) , Varanasi, 1960, p.12

Another very important inscriptional source for understanding *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order is Cintra Prasasti⁸⁷ of the reign of Sarangdeva, originally from Somanath dated to 1294-96 CE. It was first published in Murphy's travels in Portugal (1798) together with a translation by Sir Charles Wilkins. The inscription contains a prasasti composed in honor of the consecration of five lingas which a saiva called *Tripurantaka* erected at Somnathapattana or Devapattana or Prabhasa.

Verse 14- 39 *Uluka* devoted to the spiritual family of *Tripuranaka* the benefactor of the tirtha of *Somnatha* and to an account of his virtues and his adventures

Verse 14- 'the god who wears the infant moon on his head and who grants rewards for the multitude of performances of austerities himself became incarnate in form of *Bhataraka Sri Lakulisa* ,in order to bestow favor on the universe'

Verse 15- 'and in order to favour the offspring of who long were deprived of sons in consequence of a curse of their father , he came to and dwelt at Karohana the forehead as it were of the earth , an ornament of the Lata country.'

Verse 16- 'in this (place) appeared in order to fulfill particular pasupata vows 4 pupils of his ,*kusika, gargya, kaurusha and maitreya*

Verse 17- afterwards the race of these ascetics which grew up in 4 (branches) adorned the earth that is bounded by the 4 oceans

On summarizing the relevant parts of the Prasasti the information derived is as follows

Siva became incarnate in the form of *Bhataraka Sri Lakulisa* and came to and dwelt at Kayavarohana in the Lata country, in order to favor the offspring of *Uluka* who were deprived of sons in consequence of a curse of their father . Interestingly this *Uluka* can be compared to the disciples of either *Sahisnu* or *Somasarman* two previous incarnations of Siva (26th cycle and 27th cycle)⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Buhler, B.G. 'The Cintra Prasasti of the reign of Sarangdeva' *EI*, Vol 1, 1888, p.211

⁸⁸ Maxwell T.S, *Visvarupa*, Oxford University Press, 1988, p 206-207

One could assume that there was a break in tradition after *Sahisnu* and it was only revived by *Lakulisa* later. Bhandarkar reads 'putra's' as 'sisyas' (ie spiritual sons and not biological ones). In this context the idea of curse and pining for a child I feel probably talks about the break in tradition.

The *Eklingji* stone inscription throws considerable light on the history of *Lakulisa* sect. It was first edited in the Bhavnagar Sanskrit and Prakrit Inscriptions but Bhandarkar⁸⁹ realizing the importance of the information and being prompted by Pt. Gaurishankar prepared a fresh estampage and reedited the entire inscription and prepared a fresh translation.

The inscription is in the temple of Natha presently used as a store-room near the main temple of Eklingji, 14 miles to the north of Udaipur. It is incised on a slab stuck up into the proper right hand niche in the outside wall, facing the east, of the sabhamandapa of the temple. It contains eighteen lines of writing in Devnagri characters of the 10th CE, covering a space of 2' 9 1/2" broad by 1' 4 1/4" high.. The first line of the inscription is almost destroyed and nearly half of it on the proper left side has peeled off.

The inscription opens with obeisance to *Lakulisa*. The first verse is completely lost and the second probably invokes *Saraswati*.

The next two verses contain the mention and description of a city by the name Nagahrada. Verse 5 tells us that in this city there flourished a king named Sri Bappaka, the moon amongst the princes of Guhila dynasty.

(Nagahrada is to be identified with Nagda, 14 miles to the north of Udaipur, whose ruins stretch to the extent of a mile and half at the foot of the hill on which the temple of Eklingji is situated.. The present Sanskrit name of the place is Nagendra but in a Jain temple called Padmavati amongst the ruins of Nagda I found two inscriptions were found in one of which the place is called Nagahrada and in other as Nagadaha. Thus Nagda appears to have been the old capital of Guhila dynasty and the temple of Eklingji was in existence before 971 CE. Moreover it lends credibility to the legend of Bappa Rawa, Harita Rasi and explains how the Ranas of Udaipur came to have intimate connection with the Eklingji temple as that of high priests in which capacity they still officiate.

⁸⁹ Bhandarkar, D.R., 'An Eklingji stone inscription and the origin and history of the Lakulisa Sect, 1905-7

The verse following probably mentioned the name of the king *Allata*, father of *Naravahana* to whose reign the record refers itself and whose glory is described in verse 7 and 8.

The next three verses are incomplete but according to Bhandarkar are sufficiently preserved to supply important information about *Lakulisa* cult.

The information gleaned through the verses can be summarized as such:

In the country of Bhṛigukachchha (identified with modern day Bharuch in Gujarat), through which the Narmada, daughter of Mekala flows the sage Bhṛigu being cursed by *Murabhid* (Visnu), propitiated the lord Siva. The latter in the presence of the hapless sage incarnated himself with a club (*lakula*) in his hand. As Siva thus descended on earth in an earthly frame the place where this occurred was called *Kayavarohana*. This is followed by a short description of the place and it is told that by staying in *Kayavarohana*, Siva forgot his Kailasa clearly hinting at the local sensibility of the person responsible for the engraving of the inscription, who wanted to grant the holy place of his cult no less stature than that of Mount Kailasa.

Following verse is not clear

The next verse suggests that there lived sages like *Kusika* and others who were conversant with the *Pasupata yoga* and who resorted to the use of ashes, barks and had matted hair.

From verses 14 and 15 we glean that certain ascetics whose fame had spread from the Himalayas to Rama's bridge (Lanka) always worshipped the god *Ekalinga* as by them as verse 16 suggests this *Lakulisa* temple on the mount *Asvagrama* was built (There can be no doubt that they were connected with the temple of Ekalingaji. That the priests of this temple were *Pasupatas* may be seen from an inscription⁹⁰ in which *Haritarasi* is called :

Sri-ekalinga Har-aradhana-pasupat-acharya

⁹⁰ *Journal of Bengal Asiatic Society, Vol LVpt. I p. 48*

From the next two verses we learn that there was a celebrated dialectician called Sri Vedanga muni who defeated in argument the proponents of Syadvada (Jainism) and Saugata (Buddhism) and other sects, and his pupil was the poet Amra, son of Adityanaga who composed the prasasti.

From verse 19 we obtain the date of the inscription as 1028 VS i.e. 971 CE. The last verse is not complete and expresses the wish for permanence of either the Prasasti or the temple (not clear which one)

Then follow the names of *Karapakah* (those responsible for building the temple) such as *Supujitarasi*, *Vinischitarasi* and so on, whose obeisance is recorded. Hence they were the *Pasupata ascetics* who erected the temple and dedicated to *Lakulisa*.

The figure above the door of the sabhamandapa of the temple of *Natha* where the inscription was found is unfortunately a little defaced but on closer inspection it looks like a *Lakulisa* image. Similar figure is found above the shrine door of the celebrated temple of Sitala Mahadeva at Jhalrapatan. (Bhandarkar pg 158) That *Lakulisa* was known and worshipped at this place is clear from the inscription incised on the pedestal of an image of *Varaha* in a chhatri not far from the temple: (pg 158 sans. Text)

Here the mason who sculptured the image of *Varaha* is called a servant of *Isanajamu* who is praised for his piety and is compared to *Lakulisa*. He seems to have been the head pujari of the temple no doubt of *Lakulisa Pasupata* tradition. This temple is dated to 7th CE by Fergusson⁹¹

⁹¹ Fergusson James, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 1899 p217

Interestingly all the sources ,*Vayu Pu*, *Linga Pu* ,*Cintra Prasasti* and *Eklingji Prasasti* gives a different reason for the cause and manner in which *Siva* becomes incarnate as *Lakulisa*. *Mahatmya* of *Eklingji*⁹² too furnishes valuable information about the order. We find two versions of the *Mahatmya* , first being the *Puranic Eklingamahatmya* (also known as *Ekling PU*.)and second *Poetic Eklingmahatmya*.The latter was composed during Kumbha's rule (15CE) as at various places it praises the king. Some passages from *Pu. Eklingamahatmya* are seem in the poetic one hence proving the fact that the former text is earlier to the latter. Thus the upper limit for *Eklinga Pu*. can be fixed at 15CE though lower limit is not sure.

Puranic Eklingamahatmya: The text falls in the category of *SthalaPurana* constantly trying to link itself with *Vayu Pu*. It is interesting how every text dealing with any facet of *Pasupatism* tries to connect itself with *Vayu Pu*. e.g *Karvan Mahatmya*.Time and again we find the phrase like "as per the injunctions of *Vayu PU*....) so the credibility of any argument is supported by reference to *Vayu Pu* hence proving the importance of the text in the system.

The main orator of *Vayu Pu*. is *Lomaharsana Suta* and *Vayu* is only the second narrator while in *Puranic Eklingamahatmya* the main orator is *Vayu* himself and *Narada* is the second orator.

Eklingji is considered as the main deity of *Suryavamshi* royal family of *Mewar*. Interestingly the kings ruling *Mewar* were known only as governor's and *Eklingji* was considered the real king, hence *Siva* by this time had already assumed the royal demeanor. The royal looking *Lakulisa* figures found from *Rajasthan* can probably be explained in this context. Though *Lakulisa* maintains his teaching pose, he is shown with a crown and jewelry befitting a king.

⁹² Sharma Premalata,Ed. '*Ekling mandir ka sthal purana evam mewar ke raj-vansh ka itihas*',MLBD,Delhi, 1976



Illus 15. Lakulisa with 4 arms ,7th CE, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan National Museum, Delhi

The temple of *Eklingji* is situated at 13 miles north of Udaipur between two hills. The name of the village is Kailashpuri. The temple is fortified. According to the local legends the temple was constructed by Bappa Rawal and Maharana Mokkal (Maharana Kumbha's father) renovated it .Rana Raimal (15th CE) reconstructed the temple as we can presently see it and also installed the *chaturmukha linga* which can be seen in the main sanctum sanctorum of the temple. There are many small and big temples in the same compound.

The entire contents of the 32 chapters of the text can be divided into 5 parts. Ch 1 to 9- Puranic story of manifestation of Eklingji Ch 13-18- Important mahatmyas of other regions which seems to have the same sectarian affiliation- Places being Lomas ashram, Somnath, Mahendari, Shrireshvar, Gautam, Gautamesvar, Mahakala Ch 19-21, ch 24-26-Bappa Rawal's mantra sadhana and geneology Ch 24, 29, 30, 31 Manner of worship (Pooja paddhati) .Mainly tantric in nature Ch 10 to 12, 22, 23, 27, 28 and 32 deals with subjects related to pilgrimage, ways of doing it, nature of Kaliyug and so on.

The Puranic text was first edited by referring to a manuscript in the collection of Maharana of Udaipur Bhagvat Singh. This manuscript dated back to 1915 during the reign of Maharana Shri Swaroop Singh, as mentioned in the manuscript itself.

The poetic text was edited on the basis of a manuscript found in Ancient Saraswati Bhandar library which was dated to 1477. It is supposed to have been composed by Maharana Kumbha himself.

To actually glean historical information from these texts is a difficult proposition. Except for giving a dynastic order that too different in both and both different from the inscriptional evidence don't shed much light. Ojha⁹³ raises some interesting issues. He has explained the concept of brahmkshtriya extremely important to understand the nature of Guhila dynasty responsible for upkeep of *Eklingji* temple. He gives the example of Suryavamshi kings Mandhata, Visnuvrudh and *Harita* and Chandravamshi kings like Vishwamitr and Aristasen who were Ksatriyas by birth but became Brahmins later on. Hence *Bappa Rawal* is called a suryavamshin and a vipra and dwija simultaneously in the text.

The father of Guhila (Guhadutt) was killed leaving behind an expecting widow. After the child was fifteen days old the queen deciding to become sati left the child in hands of a Brahmin *Vijayaditya* who was praying in *Kotesvara* temple for having a son. Initially the Brahmin was reluctant to bring up a Ksatriya child but the queen promised him that for 10 generations her family will follow the life and actions of a Brahmin.

⁹³ Ojha, 'Udaipur Ka Itihas', Jaipur, 1923

Moreover the text tells us that *Nandi* was sent as *Bashap (Bappa)* on this earth by Parvati to rule like Indra and then to go back to heaven. (This strongly is reminiscent of the incident in *Mrgendra Agama*⁹⁴ where *Indra* has to follow *Pasupata yoga* to get rid of Brahmatya he incurred on killing Vrtrasura.) Parvati informed him that his lineage will continue on the earth but gradually generations to come will fall into the company of those who reject Varna system and will forget vedic knowledge, their religion will get corrupted and they will behave like *Shudras* as *Kaliyuga* has a form of *Shudra* itself.

After Kumbha's death, possibly after ten generations the strife started in the kingdom. To begin with Kumbha was killed by one of his sons. From there on the kings followed 'Shudrachar' according to the text and the kingdom faced major difficulties, including Maleccha (read as Islamic by Sharma) invasions which were kept under check till Kumbha's rule.

After an intense fight the princes of this lineage came to Brahmin *Vidhyacarya, Harita rasi's* disciple and asked for forgiveness and an independent kingdom. The Brahmin told them to worship Siva and *Eklingji* according to the proper rites. These princes did perform the worship but the text informs us it was done by Shudrachar meaning in a Shudra way, yet the benevolent *Eklingji* listened to their prayers and summoned goddess Rashtasena to help them win the war. Thus they were reinstated in the kingdom of Chittor and since then they adopted the ways of Kshatriyas. The text interestingly mentions whenever they have forgotten their patron deity, *Eklingji* their kingdom would be attacked by Malecchas. A lot can be read in the above passage but what is most important for us here is a certain break with the tradition.

Significance of the term 'Medhpat' (present day Mewar): According to Ojha this place was ruled by Medh or Mer people. A part of Mewar is still known as Mewal and he believes till today Mer people live in Merwada area near Ajmer. Many a scholar consider Mers as a branch of Hunas but Ojha believes that these people trace their roots back to Iran and might have something to do with *Mihira* (the sun god). Moreover their being Suryavamshi's lends credence to the assumption. He opines perhaps they were vassals or a branch of Western Kshatrapas. The idea if proved can lead to interesting cross cultural studies.

⁹⁴ *Mrgendragama (Karyapada et Caryapada) avec le commentaire de Bhatta Narayankantha, Ed. by N.R. Bhatt, Pondicherry, 1962*

Manner of worship as given in *Eklingajimahatmya*(*Pooja paddhati*): On comparison with the Pooja paddati mentioned in *Linga Purana and Sharda Tilaka Tantra* we realize that the one discussed in Ek Pu. is totally different and thus not similar to popular manners of worship.

Panchvaktra pooja described in ch 24 of purana is very important and throws considerable light on the method so worship followed by the followers of the system. Apart from *Eklingji* this kind of *Panchvaktra* pooja is mentioned in Nepali tradition at *Pasupatinatha* temple. Some important elements of Nepalese form of worship are given in *Pasupati hradayam* by *Brahmrishi Devratta*⁹⁵. Sharma⁹⁶ further writes that the sectarian affiliation of the *Eklingji* can be clearly traced back to Lakulisa-Pasupata. To substantiate the argument she quotes Ojha,

“On the south of *Eklingji* temple on some height the head of matha constructed a temple of *Lakulisa* in 971CE. On some distance slightly below the temple is the temple of *Vindhyavasini*. He further says that Bappa Rawal’s guru *Haritarasi* was the Mahant of *Eklingji* temple and it were his disciples who continued the tradition of worship there. These disciples whom he terms as ‘naths’ had their ancient math to the west of *Eklingji* temple. It is further written that increasingly these *Naths* started to move away from preached religion, started to keep women and enjoy the material pleasures of life. Because of such reasons they were divested from power and the responsibility to look after the temple was taken over by a celibate sect Gosai.

Mrgendra Agama too gives as an interesting Tantric glimpse in the *Pasupata* order and its nature. Tantra is a term highly misinterpreted and misused. The great scholars like Gopinath Kaviraj⁹⁷ have thrown light on the system and his major contribution is the idea that Tantra and Veda are not two mutual exclusive traditions. They often right from the beginning overlap each other. This kind of insight will actually help us to understand the traditions better than to segregate them and try to see ‘influences’ and ‘appropriations’. He considers Vedas as nigamas and tantras as agamas. (Athravaveda vi,81,2 xix,35,3) gives the definition of agamas as derived from root ‘gam’ and meaning to come near or approach and would literally convey the sense of achievement or accomplishment.

⁹⁵ Sharma Premlata, p.47

⁹⁶ Ibid p.49

⁹⁷ Kaviraj Gopinath, ‘Tantrik Sadhana Aur Siddhant’ trans by Pt. Hanskumar Tiwari, Patna, 1994

Taittiriya Aranyaka also gives an interesting description of the word as a class of works teaching the highest yoga and mystical formulas (mostly in the form of dialogues between *Bhairava and Bhairavi*). Now such vedic positive definitions of tantra are somehow ignored by the writers who try to sever all ties of tantra with Vedas and try to see it as a separate 'subaltern' tradition. In my opinion it would be more fruitful if one looks at it as a branch of esoteric wisdom meant only for the initiates and which right from the beginning had a place in vedic texts. Law⁹⁸ in his 'laments the fact that the writers of religious history pay scant attention to the *Sadhana* which forms the essence of Indian religions.

On the basis of the classification of *Tantras* made by *Abhinavagupta* in *Tantraloka* the *Agamas* are classified under heads Siva, Rudra and Bhairava. The Mrgendra comes under the category of the dualistic dvaita class called Rudragamas as against the dvaitadvaitvada of *Bhairava agamas*.

According to the *Pasupata* system Mrgendra Agama, the relation between the creator and the created is that of the sheep and the shepherd. The pasu when freed from its fetters reaches the creator but is not merged with him.. The Mrgendra according to the Agamic tradition is said to have streamed forth from the upper face of *Svacchanda Bhairava* from whom according to *Tantraloka*, *Lakulisa* received his knowledge. This scripture offers adoration to *Pasupati* as the universal consciousness under the name of *Isa or Isana*.

Interestingly in *Mrgendragama* we find an remarkable incident of a powerful Vedic deity Indra narrating the story of discovery of this tantra. Siva emerges as the founder of the tantra and is accepted as the supreme deity by vedic exegesis.. Indra is only made an agency for bringing the sacred knowledge to the world after direct contact with Siva himself. V.N Drabu⁹⁹ sees it as establishing the supremacy of tantra over the Vedas but I find interesting is the reconciliation of Veda and tantra which seems to have been a tradition in *Lakulisa Pasupata* system. The best example would be the use of five mantras from *Taittiriya Aranyaka* for the title of his five chapters of *Pasupata sutras*.

⁹⁸ Law N.N., 'Studies in Indian History and Culture' London, 1925

⁹⁹ Drabu V.N., 'Saivagamas: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, Delhi, 1990 p.20

The introduction to the text seems to be late compared to other sections; it's vocabulary is rich and it abounds in poetic imagery. Similarly references to the frequent use of surgical instruments in performing operations hints at this portion having been composed in the age of *Susruta*, *Caraka* etc. (Pasulaksana-Prakarana, v.18). As Drabu (pg50) observes the siva cult referred in the tantra reflects the view of life known in early centuries of the Christian era. The evolution of the agama falls between the 1st-2nd CE to 5th-6th CE i.e. when Srautas had to undergo a long struggle to rationalize the worship of the personified deity. The tantra was written in the form of a dialogue between *Harita* and his disciples.

Mrgendra is an abridgement of the *Kamika Tantra*. Indra received the doctrine when he was wearing the *Narsimha kavaca* given by Visnu. The long period of 1000 years meditation of Indra indicates that purificatory rites must have been very arduous and trying. It also points out to an order of ascetics whose worship of Pasupati in his natural surroundings was most familiar. The Himalayan belt seems to have been dotted about by the hermitages of these ascetics where the tantric sadhana and ritual was most popular. The vedic god Indra was initiated into the tantric lore only when he atoned for his murderous act of killing the demon *Vrtra*. This would suggest that vedic practice had to conform itself to the tantric practices which had a firm stronghold in Kashmir, Nepal, Bengal, Assam etc.

It seems that the entire literature of *Bhairava agama* did not exist before 4th CE. On the other hand it is probable that by the time of composition of Siva Sutras in 6th-7th CE most of the Agamas had been composed.

I could lay my hands on this particular text which deals with kriyapada and caryapada of *Mrgendragama*¹⁰⁰ important for us. The version is edited by N.R. Bhatt and published by French Institute of Indology in Pondicherry hence the introduction was in French which I have translated and summarized. Bhatt writes:

¹⁰⁰ *Mrgendragama (Kriyapada et Caryapada) avec le commentaire de Bhatta Narayanakantha, édition critique par N.R. Bhatt, Institut Français d'Indologie, Pondichéry 1969*

“During our search for Agamic manuscripts and related literature we found with Sri G. Svaminatha Sivacarya of Tiruvattur a text of Mrgendra which contained the kriyapada and some portions of caryapada. At Perunkalur (Pudukottai dist) we recovered another version with the commentary of Bhattanarayankantha. Unfortunately the caryapada is incomplete and is bereft of 1st chapter. Soem idea of what it might have contained can be gleaned through the text ‘Aghorasivacaryapaddhati’ and some other texts.”

Indra after killing Vrtrasura incurs brahmhatya and praised Visnu with 1000 names (visnu sahasra nama) along with various rites, recitations and rituals. Visnu gave him a ‘Narsimha kavaca’ and asked him to adore Siva in that attire. Here Indra takes up Pasupata vows and adores Siva for thousands of years.

Now the Mulagama is Kamikagama and Mrgendra (Narsimha) being one of the three Upagamas of kamikagama along with Vaktraragama and Bhairavottaragama.

The most interesting and important point for us here is the gurushishya parampara mentioned herein and also the names of preceptors and their disciples who inherited the knowledge of the tradition.

Haradindraye (From Hara (siva) to Indra- From Indra to Bhardawaj-From Bhardawaj to Harita...and in this order did gurushishya parampara continued

The text seems to be Shankara 8th CE as it quotes Brahmsutra of Badarayana and it talks about various philosophical schools like Vedanta, Samkhya, Jain, Vaisheshika but it is quiet on Advaitvada of Sankara.

The tantra in its present form has come to us with the commentary of Narayanakantha who was near contemporary of Utpaladeva 9th CE. He quotes a verse from the Isvara Siddhi of Utpaladeva (stanza 55) which suggests he must have live in second quarter of 9th CE.

Drawing on various textual, numismatics, and sculptural evidences I have tried to locate Lakulisa in a certain historical context. The aim has been to contextualize the Lakulisa-Pasupata order in a certain historical perspective so that it's earlier precedents and later branches can be studied in detail. The next section will deal with this enquiry and try to find various branches and lineages which either mention Lakulisa as a great teacher or consider him as an important god-head.