

## CHAPTER- 2

### THE SPREAD AND TRANSITION OF *LAKULISA-PASUPATA ORDER*

---

*Pasupatas* as we saw in the last section come across as one of the most important and archaic class of Saivas. Interestingly *Ramanujacharya*, a great critic of Saivism considered *Kalamukha*, *Kapalikas* and all *Agamanta Saivas* as *Pasupata*, on the basis that all of them use the terms *Pasu*, *Pati* , *Parmatman* and *Jivatman* in their discourses. The contention by itself hardly holds any weight but it does throw light on the importance and threat of *Pasupata* system in medieval times. *Yamunacarya* too openly considers them a menace to his system of thought. The fact that *Pasupata* thought existed and seems to have been flourishing well by this time points at well developed schools which propagated the ancient thought ofcourse not without some external changes.

Going back to *Lakulisa*, we are informed by various Puranic and Inscriptional sources that he had four disciples and each of these propagated a branch of learning according to their interpretation of the teacher's words. Thus four 'gotras' or four different lineages came into being from four main disciples of *Lakulisa viz: Kusika, Garga , Kaurusa and Mitra*. The fifth one *Ananta* lineage is also of equal importance though he is not mentioned along with the other four in the above mentioned sources and is generally discussed with respect to *Siddhayogesvari mata*.

Various lineages to which this order belonged or which derived out of this order have been shown in the chart below and will be referred to as and when necessary.

## ***Kusika and the Ascetic Aspirants: Early form of Lakulisa-Pasupata order***

*Kusika*, considered as the first disciple of Lakulisa finds mention in *Pasupata Sutra(PS)*<sup>1</sup> and *Pancarthatbhasya (Pbh)*<sup>2</sup>. Both these texts talk about his getting directly initiated by *Lakulisa* in Ujjain. The Mathura Pilaster Inscription ,(380CE) published by Bhandarkar in 1933 threw considerable light on this lineage and on some of their practices. The inscription talks about a Saivite teacher *Uditacarya*, described as tenth in apostolic succession from *Kusika*, who established two lingas in the memory of his teacher *Upamitacarya* and teacher's teacher *Uditacarya* in the *Guruayatana*, the gallery where memorials were kept to commemorate various gurus of the lineage. The place seems to have been something like a Kusana devakula and the presence of such spaces to commemorate ancestors since ancient times is corroborated by Bhasa's play 'Pratima Nataka' based on Ramayana. Bhandarkar<sup>3</sup> suggests that the term '*gurupratimayuto*'(choubey 52) should be read in space illegible after the term guru in the above mentioned inscription, and he further contends

***"apparently the representations showed as if Upamita and Kapila were standing each with a Linga on the head"***

Though Bhandarkar's suggestion about the missing words seems probable, after discussion with some Sankritists I came to the conclusion that the word '*yuto*' only means '*along with*' so the inscription suggests that the linga along with the representation of the revered teachers was established in the sacred space with due rites. I am tempted to see these lingas as '*mukhalingas*', as they also were called as *Upamitesvara* and *Kapilesvara* respectively. Moreover this contention is further supported by the presence of the Lakulisa images from Karvan. The concept of Mukhalingas will be dealt in detail in the later section on Siva Lingas but one can definitely see the importance of this philosophical concept right in early years of Lakulisa-Pasupata order.

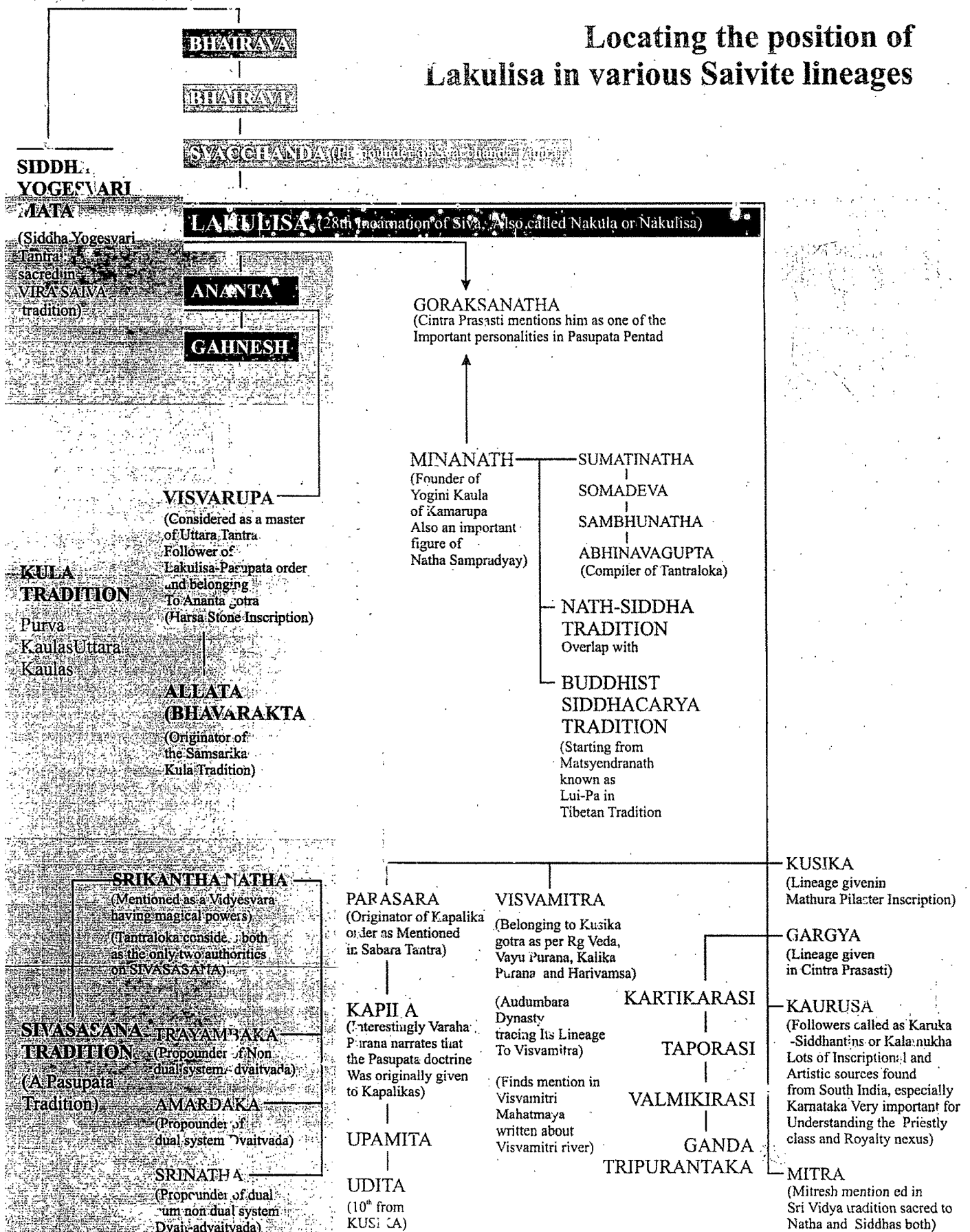
---

<sup>1</sup> Chakraborti Haripada, trans. '*Pasupata Sutra with Pancarthatbhasya of Kaundinya with an Introduction on the history of Saivism in India*', Calcutta, 1969

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Bhandarkar, D.R '*Mathura Pillar*

## Locating the position of Lakulisa in various Saivite lineages



To set up a lingam to represent a dead teacher was a practice followed by aspirants of this order in various other places too. In the Bharati Matha of Bhubaneswar, the same practice is still being followed. A Gurvatana has sprung up within its compound as a result of this practice.

As many as fifteen miniature temples of sand stone and laterite are now there in the compound, each of which contains a linga. In the open space and the niche, a number of lingams are to be found also and most of these temples were constructed under Bhauma rule, which started around 736CE and were great patrons of Pasupata Saivism.

Many more temples are still buried in the kitchen garden according to the *Mahanta* of the *Matha*. It can reasonably be concluded that the origin of the *Matha* goes to the time of the earliest standing temples, since each of the lingas represents a generation of teachers. In the seventh chapter of the *Ekamra Purana* it is clearly mentioned that Pasupatas were highly responsible for constructing most of the temples in and around Bhubaneswar and it mentions that Yama, gave a splendid matha to a Pasupatacharya who lived in the close vicinity of the temple and who was also the builder of the temple.

Interestingly Kusika is connected to the famous sage *Visvamitra* who is supposed to have belonged to Kausika gotra. Yaska too subscribes to this and considers Kusika to be the 'father' of Visvamitra. Connected with Audumbaras on one hand and Kusika on the other Visvamitra comes across as an important figure in Lakulisa-Pasupata Saivism. The argument is supported by the fact that his image is given due importance in the newly constructed temple at Karvan, hence pointing at his importance in this tradition. Born a Ksatriya he was later converted into a Brahmin by his deeds which was possible easily in Pasupata order as it was open for all castes.

The Udaipur Inscription of Naravahana (V.S 1028= 971CE) refers to Kusika and records that ascetics who besmear their bodies with ashes and wear barks and have matted hair, appeared in his line. This important disciple finds mention in '*Saddarsana Samuchchaya*' of Haribhadra Suri and commentary on *Ganakarika*(GKK) too. As comes across through all these descriptions the followers of this order were usually ascetics and mendicants for whom probably the injunctions of *PS* were written. The teaching and learning aspect seems to be of supreme importance for them.

Haribhadra Suri<sup>4</sup> mentions eighteen Tirthesas headed by Lakulisa and Kusika. The same list is also enumerated by *Bhava Sarvajna*<sup>5</sup> in his commentary on Ganakarika. In this context of continuous teacher-student lineage it would be interesting to look at the figure on the Mathura Pillar inscribed in the year 61 of the Gupta era (AD 380) sculpted with a trident. The base shows a potbellied standing figure, nude with two hands, leaning on a staff and with a third eye. D.R.Bhandarkar believes the figure to be Lakulisa but Agrawala points to the absence of the *urdhvaretas* and hence disagrees with the above contention. U.P Shah suggests that the pillar inscription invokes *Bhagwan Danda* which could very well have been a personification of an attribute (*ayudha purusa*) 'danda' of Lakulisa and could have been used as a metonymy for the saint-teacher.



Illus. 16. Bhagvana Danda (inscribed), Mathura Pillar, 380CE, Mathura Govt. Museum

Here I would like to stress that it need not be established as an image of *Lakulisa* in particular but it might have been a portrait of a teacher from the same lineage. Though the third eye clearly hints at superhuman aspect it could very well have been an image of a guru who had attained *Bhairavahood*, a concept not alien to early forms of Saivism. A dead teacher was visualized as having merged with Siva and in a way a part of the Lord himself. In metaphysical terms he lost his human body only to become part of a divine consciousness and attained *Rudrahood*.

<sup>4</sup> Choubey, M C. *Lakulisa in Indian Art and Culture*. Delhi : Sharda Publishing House, 1997 p.78

<sup>5</sup> *Ganakarika of Acharya Bhasarvajna*, Ed by Chimanlal D. Dalal, Oriental Institute, M.S.U, Baroda, 1966



The earliest images of *Lakulisa* from Mathura datable to 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> CE show him seated with two arms. Holding his club in the crook of his arms with a yogapatta on his knees and a rosary which he is probably meditating with, he appears very much like a Saivite teacher with no signs of apparent divinity in him. Marked with a sign of third eye and invested with a sacred thread, he appears calmly in state of teaching. Though this early and interesting image is conspicuous because of its absence of erect phallus, here we can see the *danda* itself has taken a form of a linga probably combining both the aspects.



Illus 17. Lakulisa, Mathura 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> CE, State Museum Lucknow



Illus 18. Lakulisa with two disciples, Svamighat Mathura 5thCE, ASI

These early images present him clearly as a teacher, many a times seen with his disciples flanking him on both sides. Here *Lakulisa* maintains his human essence and comes across as a guru rather than a deity. Another lineage of *Lakulisa* deeply connected with this pure teaching-learning aspect is the *Ananta lineage*.

### Rise of *Tantric* Elements in *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order

***Ananta lineage: Siddhayogesvarimata and affiliation with the Kula cult of Samskarikas:***

*Siddha yogesvarimata*, an Agamic tradition also comes across as one where *Lakulisa* is mentioned as an important teacher. The continuation of *Lakula* doctrine through his disciple *Ananta* is clearly indicated in *Tantraloka*<sup>6</sup> and the ascetics of this line belonged to *Ananta* gotra. (Refer Table). Hence this tradition traces the lineage of *Lakulisa* to Swachchandanatha and back to Bhairavi and Bhairava like any other pure Tantric tradition. Regarding the importance of *Siddhayogesvari Tantra*, *Tantraloka* mentions that the original version of the *Malinivijayottara* seems to have been

<sup>6</sup> (Jayaratha's commentary on TA (TA comm., xii, p383) Pathak V.S p.11

*Bhairavabhairvim praptam siddhayogesvari matam, Tatahswachchandeven swachchandallakulen tu Lakulisadnanten anantadaghanashipim.*)

composed by a number of *Siddhayogis* of the *Siddha-sampradyaya* who explained and elaborated the practices of yoga because of which it was called Siddha yogesvari mata. The fact that *Lakulisa* was mentioned as an important personality in this lineage points at the affiliation of LP order, atleast one branch of it (Ananta gotra) to the later developments in monistic Saivism of Kashmir on one hand and the *Siddha* cult on the other, both of considerable importance.

The Harsha Stone Inscription of Vigrahapala Chahamana<sup>7</sup> V.S 1030 records the guru *Visvarupa* who belonged to the Pancharthika order of the Lakulas in Ananta gotra to have flourished in '*the tradition of Kula*' while his disciple's disciple Allata or Bhavarakta (refer table) is described as originators of the Kula cult of the Samsarikas.(Refer Chart). This information is of vital importance as it shows the affiliation of *Kula* school with the *Lakulas*. The contention is further substantiated with a passage given in *Kularnava tantra*<sup>8</sup> which while talking about a Kula Yogi suggests:

*"A Kula yogi may dwell anywhere, disguised in any form, unknown to anybody. Such yogins in diverse guises, intent on the welfare of men, walk the earth unrecognized by others. They do not expend their self knowledge at once. In the midst of men they live as if intoxicated, dumb, dull.....Adepts in Kaula yoga speak in the manner of the uncivil, behave as if ignorant; appear like the lowly. They do so in order that men may ignore them and not flock to them; they talk nothing at all....Such a yogi lives in a way that this world of men may laugh, feel disgust, revile and seeing, pass at a distance leaving him alone. He would go about in different guises, at times like one worthy, at times like one fallen, at times like a ghost or a demon."*

Significantly these practices of Kula yogis are quite similar to injunctions given in PS in third chapter dealing with subsidiary practices for an LP aspirant .It encourages the ascetic aspirant to court dishonor and live with the insults and abuses showered on him.It seems to be the test of the patience and humility that one can muster after observing severe penance and is a manner of internal purification, cleansing of soul, getting rid of the narrow 'I'.

---

<sup>7</sup> The Harsha Stone Inscription of Vigrahapala Chahamana<sup>7</sup> V.S 1030, EI Vol 1, p.122  
Maharajavali chasau sambubhaktigunodaya, Shriharsah kuldevasyastasmadivyah kulakramah  
Anantagocare srimanpanditautresvarah, Pancarthalakulamnaye visvarupobhavadguru

<sup>8</sup> Kularnava Tantra, Introduction by Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), Readings M.P Pandit,  
Sanskrit Text: Taranatha Vidyaratna, MLBD, Delhi 1965.p.67-68



***Avamatah (PS 3.3)***

*[Insulted]*

*...The wise Brahmana should not covet for praises as for ambrosia and should hate praise like poison. The ascetic lies happily beign insulted and disconnected with all...*

***Paribhuyamana-s-charet (PS 3.5)***

*[He should wander while being assaulted]*

*It means that he should remain in the utterance of abuses, that is he is condemned in the acquisition of dharma and in the performance of his duty.*

The **PABbh** clearly suggests that the assault here is the physical assault with sticks and fists. It means the yogi is supposed to encounter the wrath of the people, rather ask for it and then bear it too, a sure shot method for testing ones physical endurance. One has to remember that this stage comes after a long time and after attaining the miraculous powers. Once such *siddhis* are accomplished the aspirant is warned to keep his ego and false pride in check. Hence such situations are created so that one can purify oneself of base feelings of pride and power. Real test of a yogi is to remain calm and collected even on being insulted and assaulted by common people. It should be understood as a sincere and serious step towards high form of self discipline.

Physical movements like trembling, swooning ,limping faking sleep, amorous gestures too are prescribed in PS.(3.12-3.15)

***Kratheta va (PS 3.12)***

*[Or he should pretend to be asleep while awake]*

***Spandeta va (PS 3.13)***

*[Or he should tremble]*

***Manteta va (PS 3.14)***

*[Or he should walk limping]*

***Sringareta va (PS 3.15)***

*[Or he should practice wooing]*

And the result of all these practices well performed in public is given in sutra 3.19 which says:

***Paribhuyamano hi Vidvan krtsna-tapa bhavati (PS 3.19)***

*[Being assaulted he becomes learned and a performer of all penances]*

*He is called learned who attains the senses of the words and who knows the measures of gain and loss (of merit and demerit) by reasoning. The term 'krtsnam' means enough of the attainment of practices and not of that of delight due to miraculous powers (harsa)*

Svachchanda Tantra<sup>9</sup>, the authoritarian text of this tradition, clearly talks about two types of worshippers, the first one who is always engaged in path of knowledge recitation of mantras and meditation and the second one who follows the path of the world and performs '*Ista*' and '*Purtta*' activities. While '*Ista*' activities consisted of Vedic studies, agnihotra, asceticism, maintainance of guests and Vaisvadeva puja, the latter *Purtta* activities were excavations of wells, tanks and other kind of water reservoirs, the construction of temples and monasteries and the establishment of charity homes and rest houses.

That these *Purtta* activities became very important by medieval times is proved by the Tewar Stone Inscription of Gayakarna<sup>10</sup> which clearly states that the final deliverance of the ascetic is attained by *Purtta* which is Nivartaka activity and knowledge. Bhavabrahma, a Saivite guru therefore desired salvation by building a temple of Siva.

Now it is evident that the ascetic for whom *PS* was written was not supposed to have access to the kind of wealth which would make such *Purtta* activities possible. This aspirant was supposed to live majorly on alms given and live a frugal life. But somewhere in the course of history these followers of Lakulisa's tenets had attained wealth as well as power mainly due to their nexus with the royalty and that is what changed the entire approach and outlook of the order in later times.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Swacchanda Tantra with commentary by Ksemaraja*, edited by Pandit Madhusudan Kaul Shastri, Bombay 1921

<sup>10</sup> *Tewar Stone Inscription of Gayakarana, EI*,

The dynastic patronage to early *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* can be seen clearly at cave temples of Jogesvari, Elephanta, Manddapesvar and later at Ellora. These activities point at the time when the followers of this order started gaining favor with the royalty and started indulging in *Purtta* activities. Probably it is here that one sees a shift from a strict *Ati Marga* Saivism to much more widely accepted form of Saivism.

**Western Indian Caves dedicated to *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order:**

**Jogesvari Cave Temple:** In the light of above information we can locate the Jogesvari Cave temple near Amboli in the lineage of Ananta gotra. The fact that the cave is dedicated to *Lakulisa* and is of *Pasupata* origin has been established by scholars. Earlier the cave was supposed to have been dedicated to a goddess *Yogesvari* and Rau as Collins<sup>11</sup> writes was of the opinion that there are footprints of the goddess in natural stone but the fact that there are four images of Lakulisa centered on the lintels above entry and shrine doors proves undoubtedly that it was a Lakulisa-Pasupata site. As seen above the tradition itself 'Siddha Yogesvari mata' came to be personified as a feminine deity. Evidence for such personification is provided by a late copper jar discovered in a cistern in the west wing of Elephanta. The dedicatory engraving says the jar was made in Samvat year 1143 (1086CE) in the district of Sripuri of the goddess Jogesvari.

In 1967 Walter Spink<sup>12</sup> published a chronological treatise, 'Ajanta to Ellora'. Herein he gave some cultural background for the Kalachuris and proposed that they were responsible for creating the cave-temples at Jogesvari, Mandapesvara and Elephanta between 520 CE to 550 CE. Mirashi too opines that Kalachuris are the most likely patrons of these caves. On basis of comparison of Elephanta sculptural panels with those found at Badami he dates the former to 550-600 CE. He suggests that Kalachuris were fervent devotees of Mahesvara and were followers of Pasupata sect as seen by their land grants and they seem to have been the only dynasty during that period which could afford the carving of grand scale cave temples. Huntington<sup>13</sup> too suggests that these caves were excavated during the reign of Kalacuri kings in Western Deccan. Breakthrough came with the discovery of some 31 coins of Kalacuri king

---

<sup>11</sup> Collins, C.D, 'The Iconography and Ritual of Siva at Elephanta' p.13

<sup>12</sup> Spink Walter, 'Ajanta to Ellora' 1967

<sup>13</sup> Huntington Susan, 'Art of Ancient India' p.75

Krsnaraja at Elephanta and Shobna Gokhale's contention that these low value coins were probably distributed as wages for the workmen during the excavation of the Elephanta cave. Similar coins were also found at Ellora cave 21 (Ramesvara )complex and interestingly iconographically too one can draw parallels between Jogesvari, Elephant and Ramesvara caves.

Spink mentions the composite nature of Jogesvari cave temple and its apparent movement away from a Buddhist vihara prototype as found in Ajanta. Interestingly he remarks on its peculiar '**confusion of focus**' caused by a long, primary east-west axis at odds with the brightly illuminated south façade wall, even though the main entrance is in the east. This confusion was felt very much by me during my multiple trips to the cave complex. The problem of axis seen also at Elephanta assumes a humongous proportion here and leaves the visitor completely confused. Regarding this confusion Kramrisch<sup>14</sup> observes:

*"The immediate antecedents of the great cave temple at Elephanta, the cave temples of Yogesvari and Mandapesvar close to Bombay, both show tentative assemblages of excavated space. The plan of the Yogesvari temple is ambitious in combining a protracted east-west orientation with an emphatic north-south one, but fails to create a unified interior space."*

This so called problem of axis can be studied as an architectural manifestation of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* ritual of anti-clock wise circumambulation. The half pradiksina too becomes a rule in this tradition hence demanding a structure which would allow such complex rituals. Collins has done an indepth study of rituals conducted at Elephanta caves and has explained the visual pun seen in sculptural panels there.

Hence in this context both the plan and the sculptural panels seen at Jogesvari can give important information about the order. Unfortunately most of the sculptural panels here are heavily damaged yet they reveal a well thought and probably a ritualistically inclined set of narratives which find exact parallels in important Siva cave temples. Descending a flight of stairs on the east, a panel depicting 'Ravana

---

<sup>14</sup> Kramrisch Stella, *The Great Cave of Siva in Elephanta: Levels of meaning and their form*, DOS Ed Meister p.1



shaking Kailasa' is seen above the first doorway leading into a gallery. Side chapels, set off by rows of four columns, flank this east gallery, very much similar to Elephanta east wing. On the right (north) wall in separate niches are the images of *Mahisasurmardini*, *Ganesa* and *Kartikkeya* and facing these deities on the south wall one can see a Matrka panel interestingly consisting of eight seated *matrkas* flanked by Virabhadra and Ganesa. A second doorway leads into the apparently unfinished and open east court, where one can only see a *Natraja* figure accompanied by ganas above the doorway. The doorway leading to the main hall is highly sculpted and has figures of dwarfpalas and their attendants. On the lintel of this main doorway we find the image of Lakulisa in the centre flanked by four disciples. On the upper right side are Siva and Parvati on Mt. Kailasa and on the upper left is a panel depicting *Kalyanasundaramurti*. Importance of *Lakulisa* in the entire iconographical schema can be gleaned by the presence of a *Lakulisa* image on the lintel of both east and west doors leading to the shrine in the main hall

Again another figure of *Lakulisa* can be seen depicted in the vestibule to the west side of this main shrine accompanied by a *Natraja* figure in the adjacent shrine. The large south wall of the hall becomes a façade with three doors and two windows. Above the centre doors are figures in balconies with an *ekamukhalinga* in the center; above the left window is a panel showing *Andhakasuravadhamurti* and a Durga.

The need for describing the position theme and placement of these panels is felt because it is in this arrangement of space and themes that one can find the possible order to which the religious heads of this cave belonged and also the themes which were favored by them. Moreover by tracing these iconographical depictions in other monuments I will try to ascertain the spread and influence of Lakulisa-Pasupata order.

The prominence given to *Lakulisa* figures here point at a Lakulisa-Pasupata lineage beyond doubt but the somewhat haphazard and tentative placement of the sculptural panels point at the novelty of the tradition and regarding them Spink<sup>15</sup> observes;

***“they appear in all shapes and sizes, with no apparent program as far as their placement or even their purpose in concerned.”***

---

<sup>15</sup> Spink Walter, 'Ajanta to Ellora', 1967

This idea of having no apparent program can be easily contested. The repetition of more or less the same themes at Elephanta, Ellora 21, Ellora 14, Ellora 29 and also points at a definite purpose and an iconological sequence. Interestingly the lesser known and explored Saiva caves at Takali Dhokesvar also depict same themes pointing at importance of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order at this site too.



**Illus 19. Lakulisa, Jogesvari, Kalacuri, 6<sup>th</sup> CE, Maharashtra**

During my visit to these sites I found extreme similarity between the iconographical structure of Mahadeva cave at Takale Dhokesvara and Elephanta main cave.. Though the sculpture has badly been eroded , yet one can see the remnants depicting similar themes as that in Elephanta.



**Illus 20. Mahesvara Cave at Takale Dhokesvara, Maharashtra, Probably Kalacuri, 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> CE**

A comparative study of these panels from various sites focusing on myths and style will be undertaken in the next chapter. The table given below gives an idea about the main themes which are seen repeated in each of these monuments and which are closely connected to the philosophy of Lakulisa-Pasupata order.

**Table 1**

**Important Sulptural Panels seen at Western Indian Lakulisa-Pasupata Caves**

|                           | <b>Jogeswari</b> | <b>Mandapesvara</b> | <b>Elephanta</b> | <b>Ellora<br/>21</b> | <b>Ellora<br/>29</b> | <b>Takali<br/>Dhokesvara</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Lakulisa                  | P                | P                   | P                | P                    | P                    | P                            |
| Kalyanasun<br>Daramurti   | P                | P                   | P                | P                    | P                    | P                            |
| Ravana shaking<br>Kailasa | P                |                     | P                | P                    | P                    | P                            |
| Nataraja                  | P                | P                   | P                | P                    | P                    | P                            |
| Andhakavadha              | P                |                     | P                |                      | P                    |                              |
| Saptmatrka                | P                |                     | P                | P                    | P                    |                              |

Regarding the ancillary deities and the possible pantheon of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order Shah<sup>16</sup> observes

*“The pantheon of this sect is not known from literature but can be inferred from figures carved on temples such as the Parasuramesvara, the Sisiresvara and the Rajarani at Bhubaneswar that probably belonged to the Lakulisa sect. Images of Skanda Karttikeya, Aja-Ekapada and of Sapta or Astamatrkas were included from an early stage in the pantheon. Parvati performing pancagni tapas believe that such images may either have been introduced by this sect or at least were favorites.”*

Significant information in this regard can be gleaned through the doctoral work by Dr Judith Torzsok<sup>17</sup> on **Siddhayogesvarimata**, a text which was popular among at least one of the branches of Lakulisa-Pasupata order. As the name itself suggests the focus of the text is on feminine element and it advocates a certain Tantrik ritual methodology to be followed by its adherents.

Interestingly it concludes that the cult of the three mantra goddesses includes elements of archaic worship of the so called seven mothers or **Saptamatrkas**, fusing it with with cult of Saraswati, the goddess of learning. Sculptures of Sapta Matrkas are seen in almost all the earlier Lakulisa-Pasupata sites. Their importance is gleaned through the fact that usually a separate shrine is attributed to them, as is the case in Elephanta

The text while talking about Initiation focuses on these three points:

1. Rules of conduct to be observed by Initiates which have tremendous similarity with the ones followed by Lakulisa-Pasupata initiates. Torzsok says:  
*“this tradition teaches observances associated with the ancillary mantras to be performed before starting a ritual to obtain super natural powers-The observances are reminiscent of Pasupata and Lakula ones”*
2. The manner in which a worshipper has to transform his body into the deity, points towards its Tantric nature and focuses on the strict regimen of behavior, not unlike the one prescribed in **PS**. Moreover Ch 31 explains the mantras are awakened by

---

<sup>16</sup> Shah U.P 'Lakulisa, Saivite Saint' in DOS Ed by Micheal Meister p.96

<sup>17</sup> Torzsok Judith, 'The Doctrine of Magic Female Spirits, A Critical edition of selected chapters of the Siddhayogesvarimata (tantra) with annotated translation and analysis', 1999



the laughter of Bhairava and thus they become effective. This again reminds one of the mad loud laughter that a Pasupata aspirant is supposed to practice. The fact that it is only the laughter of someone who has become a **Bhairava** which can activate the mantras point at extreme esoteric importance of such rites on one hand and connects the injunctions given in PS with this Tantric text. The importance of Bhairavahood is hinted in various traditions. Abhinavagupta is supposed to have attained to Bhairavahood after entering a cave in his last days on this earth. As explained earlier also this was a stage very much within reach of the practicing yogis.

3. The structure of universe whose different levels are governed by various groups of goddesses like Mothers and hence she sees the representation of these female deities as the personified representation of Macrocosm, somewhat like a later Mandala.

Overall Torzsok studies the growth of importance of feminine aspects in various systems and sees it as a significant step in popularizing a certain cult or order. Thus this association with feminine deities close to people's heart played a major role in popularizing the various cults and orders and significantly in making Lakulisa-Pasupata order from an ascetic's faith to the faith of laity. She writes<sup>18</sup>

*“As we ascend through these levels from Mantrapitha to the Yamala tantras and thence to the Trika and the Kali cult , we find that feminine rises stage by stage from subordination to complete autonomy.”*

The Saiva mainstream was, as one might expect, focused on Siva. This is so in the earliest forms of the religion, which later Saivas would call the Atimarga, practised by such Saiva ascetics as the Pancarthikas, Lakulas, and Somasiddhantins, and it continued to be so in the Siddhanta, the core tradition of the Mantramarga that emerged out of the Atimarga from about the fifth century onwards, first in the corpus of Nisvasa scriptures and then in a number of others Tantric sources.

It is this Tantrik form of Lakulisa-Pasupata order that we come across very strongly from Eastern part of the country and maximum evidences can be seen from Orissa.

---

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

### **The *Lakulisa-Pasupata* activity in Orissa:**

Orissa comes across as a very important site for *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order. According to Panda<sup>19</sup>

*“It is believed that Lakulisa-Pasupata cult was brought to Kosala and Kālinga in the 4<sup>th</sup> CE in the train of the military campaign of the Gupta monarch Samudragupta.”*

*Lakulisa* images with *Lakuta* (club) in hand, seated in *Yogasana* posture and *Dharma Chakra Pravartana mudra* (of Buddha) are found in the Parasuramesvara and Bharatesvara temples of Bhubaneswar, which were built in 7th century A.D and the last temple bearing the *Lakulisa* image in coastal Orissa is the Muktesvara temple of Bhubanesvara which is believed to be architecturally marked by parting of ways between the Bhaumakara and Somavamsi periods. Muktesvara temple is dated to the second half of the 10th century A.D. Some of these temples like Parasuramesvara have multiple depiction of *Lakulisa*, along with the representation of other Tantric deities.

A manuscript of the *Visvakarma Vastusastram*<sup>20</sup> 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.

---

<sup>19</sup> Panda Sasanka S, 'Saivacharyas and Foot Print Worship', Orissa Review Jan 2005)

<sup>20</sup> *Visvakarma Vastusastram* in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona as quoted by Chobey M.C.p.119



Illus 21. Lakulisa above sukanasi, Parasurmesvara temple, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa, 7<sup>th</sup> CE



Illus 22. Lakulisa, Mohangiri, 8<sup>th</sup> CE, Orissa

An interesting variation can be seen from the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa and to be precise from Mohangiri. Though a late representation, 8<sup>th</sup> CE, the focus in this icon is completely on teaching-learning aspect. In the panel from Dhavalesvara at Mohangiri, Lakulisa is seated in his usual sitting-posture, and to his left, seated figure of a bearded *Yogi* in profile with folded-hands in obeisance to *Lakulisa* as well as the figure of a bird seated and staring back are carved. The other yogi as scholars have observed seems to be *Kusika*, the first and direct disciple of *Lakulisa*. The panel reveals that the site was dedicated to *Atimargika* saints who probably believed in the injunctions of PS because depicting *Lakulisa* with *Kusika* points at the transfer of Sutras by word of mouth from *Lakulisa* to *Kusika*.

It appears from a study of the existing temples at Bhubaneswar that Pasupatism, Tantrism, Saktism and Saivism all became inseparably mixed up. A strange amalgam is formed in the early medieval period of the then Orissa due to this strange mix up.

In this context the images of *Lakulisa* seen at Vaital Deul opens up a new area of study where probably one can find links of LP order with Kapalika one. Vaital Deul bears images of Lakulisa and other Tantric deities while the presiding deity is Chamunda. There we find *Bhairava*, *Virabhadra*, *Amoghasidhi*, *Gajantakari* and the male deity with the head of a boar. Assigned to the Bhaumakara period, the adjacent Siva temple of Sisireswar, bears on it the Tantrik images like Amoghasidhi, Avalokitesvara and Kubera etc, which points at the overlap between Buddhism and Saivism in this region. Particularly during the Bhauma period, a mixed form of religion has been followed by the then Orissa. It appears that in the early medieval period, Saivism cannot be extricated and treated separately. Sakta shrines on the four sides of Bindusagar were established during this period only. They bear the influence of Saivism as much as Saktism. It appears that Saivism took precedence over other sects in the region, atleast during early medieval period upto 10<sup>th</sup> CE but the kind of Saivism practiced there had a deep influence of Sakta cults.



Illus 23. Lakulisa, Vaital deul, mid 8th CE, Bhubaneswar, Orissa



Tantra had become inextricably mixed up when Somavanshis started their rule about 931 A.D. in this region. As per *Bhakti Bhagavata* a Sanskrit work of Ganga Period, the earth was submerged into the ocean of Tantras during the Bhauma period.

## **The Nexus between *Pasupata* ascetics and Royalty:**

### **Nisvasasamhita and Saiva Initiation of the kings:**

While exploring the tantric angle I came across a body of work tilted under *Nisvasasamhita*. This work which appears in all lists of the *Saiddhantika Saiva* canon of scripture as one of the eighteen Raudra tantras, survives in a single palm leaf manuscript preserved in the Nepalese National Archives in Kathmandu. Though it is not dated its being written in Nepalese 'Licchavi' script assigns it approximately to 850-900 CE. Sanderson<sup>21</sup> has found an earlier version of one of the texts '*Nisvasakarika*' from South India and hence believes the work to be of an earlier date and possibly one of the earliest Siva Sidhanta scriptures belonging to a formative period. Regarding this early corpus which he considers as an important connecting link in the Saiva studies Sanderson writes:

*"It shows a greater awareness of Pre Agamic Saivism than other texts of this tradition; it contains a striking number of features that it shares with that Saivism and it shows elements of non dualistic practice that suggest the dichotomy between Saiddhantika and Non Saiddhantika Agamic Saivism where the former is strictly dualistic in this sense and the latter more or less non dualistic had yet to develop."*

He further writes:

*"Perhaps it was for these very reasons that it soon fell into obscurity in India. By the time of the first commentaries in the late 10<sup>th</sup> CE the text seems to have been no longer in the front line. It was cited sparingly time to time but received no commentary and was not taken as the basis of ritual, observance or doctrine."*

---

<sup>21</sup> Sanderson A, *Laakulas: New Evidence of a system intermediate between Pacarthika Pasupatism and Agamic Saivism*, Alexissanderson.com

Sanderson believes that two teachers of Siva Sasana as mentioned in TA by Abhinavagupta as Srikantha and Lakulisa followed Agamic and Pancarthika Pasupata systems respectively and regarding the position and nature of the order in the intermediate period between appearance of these two masters he observes<sup>22</sup>:

*“Given the very different characters of the two kinds of Saivism that are known to us through surviving texts and the evidence that there might be as many as four or five centuries separating their emergence, one is bound to wonder whether there were not intermediate developments of which all evidence is lost or the evidence for which has not yet been examined and correctly evaluated”*

The importance of the text comes across as a passage of *Varaha Purana* equates the appearance of the *Siddhanta* in the *Kali Age* with the revelation of Nisvasasamhita. What is of tremendous importance to us is the fact that this corpus seems to have served as the point of reference and source of various expositions taught by *Svacchanda Tantra*, hence connecting it with *Siddha Yogesvarimata*.

Interestingly these authoritarian texts were in use by Khmers for Saiva Initiation ritual from at least 10<sup>th</sup> CE. To quote an example an inscription of the reign of the Khmer king Rajendravarman (944-968CE) tells us that a certain *Sivacarya* who was a 'hotar' not only of Rajendravarman himself but also of his royal predecessors had become a celibate Saiva officiant through initiation into the Mandala of Siva taught in this scripture.

The inscription of Sdok Kak Thom<sup>23</sup> mentions the mystic cult of *Devaraja* alongwith some tantrik texts used in Cambodia during the reign of king JayavarmanII who came to the throne in 802CE. Jayavarman II came from Java to rule over Kambuja and a new Saiva cult was introduced shortly after his ascent to the throne of Kambuja. Interestingly it is the story of this Saiva cult that is told in this inscription. The officiating high priest of Jayavarman was Siva Kaivalya, who inherited a piece of land in the kingdom which was given by kings of Bhavapura who ruled 6<sup>th</sup> CE onwards. Siva Kaivalya was the guardian priest of a Sivalinga called Devaraja installed in a temple in the village. After coming to the throne Jayavarman got the

---

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> *The inscription of Sdok Kak Thom Pathak p. 23*

temples of Devaraja built in his new capital Mahendra Parvata (Phnom Kulen) and Siva Kaivalya was appointed the royal Chaplain. Interestingly the deity was moved to the new capital Hariharalaya (late Angkor) when the capital was shifted which points at its importance.

**Devaraja** is a Sanskrit word which could have different meanings such as "god-king" or "king of the gods". In context of Khmer the term was used in the latter sense, but occurs only in the Sanskrit portion of the inscription. It taught that the king was a divine universal ruler, a manifestation of the god Śiva, whose divine essence was represented by the linga (or lingam), a phallic idol housed in a special mountain temple. The king was deified in an elaborate and mystical ceremony. The inscription of Sdok Kak Thom of the eleventh century is an important record of the formation of Angkor. Its description of the proceeding during the coronation of Jayavarman II, allows us to have some insights about the cult of Devaraja itself. Performed by the Angkorian chief priest of the same family descended from the Brahman *Sivakaivalia*, the Devaraja's rituals proclaimed an Angkorian monarch as the protégé of a God King. It became the crowning ceremony to be performed faithfully at the Angkorian court. The inscription was erected by the last member of the family, during the reign of king Udayavarman II. Besides providing a complete list of Devaraja kings, the inscription provides other valuable information about how it was acquired and performed during the coronation of a Cakravatin Monarch.

To reinstate the cult, Jayavarman II had to invite an Indian priest from abroad to perform and teach the local priest *Sivakaivalia* to carry on the tradition. Inscription<sup>24</sup> states:

*"There was a Brahman named Hiranyadama, learned in the "siddhi" science, came from Junapada at the king's invitation to perform a ritual designed to ensure that the country of Kamboja would no longer be dependent on Java and that its sovereign would become the only one cakravartin."*

The Brahman *Hiranyadama* who performed the rituals of *Devaraja* was quoted to be from India, most likely from Magadha.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

*“This Bhraman performed the ceremony by Vinasikha, and finished by the Nayottara, the Sammoha, and the Siraccheda. He showed from beginning to end in order to be written down to Lord Sivakaivalia and ordained Lord Silvakaivalia to perform the ritual of the Devaraja. The king and the Bhraman Hiranyadama took an oath to assign the family of Lord Silvakaivalia, and not others, to conduct the tradition of the Devaraja. The Lord Sivakaivalia, the chief priest, assigned all his relatives to the task.”*

After the ceremony, the crowned king became a protégé of the God King and proceeded to fulfill his obligation as a *Cakravartin* Monarch. His earned merit and prestige was used to enable him in becoming another god king after his death and received a posthumous name. According to the concept of Devaraja, the posthumous name was conceived to allow Brahmans to invoke his spirit, when needed. As a divinity in Saiva folklore, the Devaraja kings may reincarnate among the line of their descendants. Strict conformity of the tradition allows us with certainty to trace back the ancestors of a Deva king from the identity of his lineage. For instance, the god king Bhadravarman was the common ancestor of all descendants from the first Bhadravarman whom was identified as Kaundinya or Sivanandana which as the name suggests might have been a Pasupata guru.

The close relationship between Saivism and royalty goes back to Kusana time. Among the early rulers the Kusanas, Bharasaivas, Vakatakas and Kalacuri can be considered as ardent patrons of Saivism and Saivite art. But it is in medieval times that these Acaryas started to assume an extremely important position.

Significantly enough Copper Plates from Bagh<sup>25</sup> which record the land grants given by the kings of Valkahas, is one of the earliest explicit epigraphical reference to such a close nexus between kings and the Saivite ascetics orders. At the same time they are the earliest example of copper plate grant recording endowments for temple worship mentioning Pasupatas as the recipient of this grant. The inscriptions are datable from the mid 4<sup>th</sup> CE. Seven copper plates in total in this collection refer to Pasupatas as recipients of grants for the performance of worship in temples (Nos. III, V, VI, IX, X,

---

<sup>25</sup> Bagh



XII, XIV). What these grants show is that not all Pasupatas followed the rigorous ascetic system of Kaundinya, but that there were others who served the needs of a larger, lay Saiva community.

One of the grants (no. X) also records

*“that a shrine to the Mothers (matrasthanadevakula) had been established by the Pasupatacarya Lokodadhi in the village of Pincchikanaka.”*

So it seems by 5<sup>th</sup> CE the order had made inroads in the society and the nexus between royalty and *Pasupata acaryas* had started to form and interestingly this is the time when we start witnessing a hoard of Lakulisa images simultaneously from all parts of the country.

According to Sanderson<sup>26</sup> four major aspects of the interaction of Saiva Gurus with royalty evidenced in inscriptions and/or reflected in the Saiva literature.

These are

1. The Creation, Empowerment and Supervision of the royal temples
2. The performance of fire rites (agnikaryam homa) for Siddhis the accomplishment of super natural results of protection, attraction, expulsion, weather control, destruction and the like for the benefit of royal patrons wishing to secure the prosperity of their realm and the confounding of their enemies.
3. Development of an apparatus of rituals enabling Saiva gurus to take over the traditional role of a brahmanical royal chaplain (Rajapurohita)
4. The practice of giving Saiva Mandala initiation to the king as a key element in the ceremonies that legitimated his office and added to his regal lu

That from the early 7<sup>th</sup> CE onwards in India and from 10<sup>th</sup> CE onwards among the Khmers of mainland South East Asia royal Saiva initiation was a well established convention in those kingdoms the majority, in which Saivism was the principal recipient of royal patronage.

---

<sup>26</sup> Sanderson Alexis, 'Initiating the Monarch: The Adaptation of a Saiva practice for the propagation of Esoteric Buddhism in India, Inner Asia and Far East, Lecture Handout, Dec 16 2004

That Royal initiation was conflated by the Saiva officiants with the Brahmanical royal consecration ceremony (rajyabhiseka) so moving from the private is to the civic domain

That in reference to it outside the technical literature it was cut adrift from its theologically defined function to be openly promoted as a means of sanctifying royal authority and enhancing royal power.

*"The dominance of Saivism is also manifest in the fact that the other main bidders for royal patronage, Buddhism, Pancaratrika Vaisnavism, and Jainism, as well as the earlier forms of Saivism itself, were fundamentally revised or expanded along the lines of the Saiva Mantramarga as they sought to maintain their hold on the sources of patronage. As for the other two cults that held the allegiance of kings during this period, those of the Goddess and the Sun-God, the former was progressively subsumed within Saivism, and the latter, though once equipped with its own canon of scriptures, suffered a similar fate."*

In his article Sanderson argues from ample textual and epigraphic evidence that Saivism rose to its position of dominance by expanding and adapting its repertoire to contain a body of rituals and normative prescriptions that legitimated, empowered, or promoted the key elements of the social, political and economic process that in its various regional adaptations characterized the working of the state in the early medieval period

In this form it was indeed a powerful means of propagating the religion. It was rewarded through the daksina paid to the officiant who performed the ceremony with a lavishness that enabled the Saiva monastic network to spread out into new regions and raised the leading pontiffs to an authority that reached far beyond the confines of a single kingdom. This nexus can be most strongly seen and studied in the relation between kings and Kalamukha subsect of Lakulisa-Pasupata order.

***Kalamukhas: The politically organized Saivite ascetics:***

The Kalamukhas are said to have descended from the third disciple of Lakulisa , Kaurusa.or Karuka and they inhabited the Karnataka region mainly between 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> CE.Both Ramanuja and Kesava Kashmiri substitute Kalanana by Karuka Siddhanta. Thus Bhandarkar<sup>27</sup> rightly considers both to be identical and the contention is further confirmed by an inscription dated 1177CE which claims that Kalananas were professing *Lakulagama Samaya*.A stronger proof is provided by Ammaraja's Tadikonda Inscription<sup>28</sup> where the history of the Kalamukha saints is traced back to Lakulisa.. It states that Ramesvara Pandita, the preceptor of the early Kakatiyas, was the head of the Silamatha of the *Kalamukhas* of Srisailam and is described as the master of the doctrine of *Lakulisvara*.

Judging from the large number of epigraphs recording donations to *Kalamukha* temples and mathas these ascetics must have wielded considerable influence in the region. These epigraphical evidences reveal the existence of at least two major divisions of the *Kalamukha* order- the *Sakti Parisad* and the *Simha-Parisad*. Records of the latter division have been found over a wide area including various parts of Andhra Pradesh and Mysore.As Lorenzen<sup>29</sup> observes(p 97), approximately 65 inscriptions from 18 Sakti-Parisad temples have been found and published and point at their tremendous power and position in the State.That these ascetics had their own land and armies further strengthen the contention that they were almost running a parallel government and had kings completely in their sway.

Interestingly saint *Lagasipu*, the founder of the *Simhaparisad* at Bezwada had actually 'Pasupati' as the suffix to his name.

---

<sup>27</sup>Bhandarkar R.G 'Vaisnavism and Saivism and Minor Religious Systems',Poona, 1928, p.54

<sup>28</sup> Ammaraja Tandikonda Inscription, EI, XXIII, p161-170

<sup>29</sup> Lorenzen David N, *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas: Two lost Saivite sects*, Delhi, 1972 p.97

### **Pre *Kalamukha Lakulisa-Pasupata* activity in South India:**

Even before these *Kalamukha* ascetics assumed great power in the region, the area had been a stronghold of Pasupata Saivism. Gudimallam linga and its formalistic affinity with Karvan lingas prove the antiquity of the Pasupata thought in the region. The 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> CE image found from Mukhalingam depicts a man with a club in his left hand, usnisa on his head and wearing a *yajnopavita* is identified as an early form of *Lakulisa* though the third eye and erect phallus are missing. From 7<sup>th</sup> CE onwards standing figures of *Lakulisa* are seen from various places in Karnataka. The tradition extends from the image at Sangamesvara temple at Kudavelly to the images on the walls of the temples at Mahakut and Mallikarjuna temple at Pattadakal. Interestingly in such figures Lakulisa is represented like a Yaksha standing on the body of a dwarf, very much like Guddimallam linga.



**Illus 24. Lakulisa, Sangamesvara Temple Chalukya, Mahakut, Karnataka, 6<sup>th</sup> CE**



An interesting four armed image of Lakulisa can be seen from Badami cave 1.



Ilus 25.Lakulisa on a Pillar, Badami, Chalukya, Karnataka, 6<sup>th</sup> CE

**Sakti Parisad:** The most prominent division of *Kalamukhas* was centered in the Kedaresvara temple at Belgave in Shimoga district. Almost 50 out of 65 epigraphs refer to this line of ascetics. Most of the records found at this temple have been edited and translated by B.L Rice in EC Vol VIII and collated by Lorenzen<sup>30</sup>. This line of ascetics, who also controlled various other temples in the region has been studied initially by J.F Fleet<sup>31</sup>(Inscriptions at Ablur, EI,VC 1898-99 213-65) and also by a local scholar A. Venkata Subbiah<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Lorenzen Daved p.96-100

<sup>31</sup> Fleet J.F. 'Inscriptions at Ablur, EI,VC 1898-99,p. 213-65

<sup>32</sup> Subbiah,A.Venkata 'A twelfth century University in Mysore, *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore, VIII (1917) p.157-96

The full name of the form of Siva who presided over the Belgave temple was 'Daksina Kedaresvara', alluding somewhere to the Kedar in North India and hinting at the possible migration of this line of ascetics from North India. These ascetics were considered as 'an ornament to Lakula <sup>33</sup>Samaya'(doctrine) and the list of subjects studied at the Matha in addition to all traditional Sanskrit texts included 'Lakula Siddhanta' and 'Patanjali Yogasutra'.

So while on one hand it links this very powerful group of ascetics to Lakulisa, on the other it points at Kedarnath, the important pilgrimage spot in North India to be considered as an important center of worship for them.

Several Kalamukha priests in Mysore bore the name 'Kasmira Pandita' and this fact led Subbiah to assert that the *Kalamukha* sect originated in Kashmir. The contention was further substantiated by an inscription from Muttagi in Bijapur district dated to 1147CE. The record eulogises a line of Saivite priests who had migrated from Kashmir and had settled in Bijapur. The priesthood is clearly identified by Desai as a Kalamukha one which has also been mentioned in a grant of 1074-75 found from Bijapur itself<sup>34</sup>. (Ed and Trans. By J.F Fleet,). As comes across in the inscription, the priests seem to belong to '*Bhujangavali*' another branch of Sakti Parisad and interestingly two main ascetics of this branch are named as 'Kasmira Pandita' and 'Lakulisvara'.

Now the migration from Northern parts to South does not come as a surprise, especially in 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> CE when both Northern and Western parts of India was continuously grappling with Islamic invasions. One only has to read the history of Somanath temple in Gujarat and its repeated plundering to understand the gravity of the issue, especially for the ascetics linked with various Mathas and temples. As Lorenzen<sup>35</sup> also observes:

*"Many parts of North-Western India were being rocked by the incursions of Mahmud of Ghazni at about this time and this may also have been a factor in the move to the South."*

---

<sup>33</sup> Lorenzen David, p,98

<sup>34</sup> Fleet J.F., Ed and Trans. 'Sanskrit and Old Canarese Inscriptions, IA,X (1881) p. 126-131

<sup>35</sup> Lorenzen David, 108



Significantly Lorenzen talks at length about the lineage of an Kalamukha Acarya , 'Bhujanga' who migrated from Kashmir. This lineage comes across as very important and mystic branch settled around Bijapur with many similarities with Nath Siddha cult and many of its ascetics were supposed to possess various Siddhis. In 1074-75CE, a governor of Somesvara II of Kalyana Calukyas built a temple dedicated to lord 'Sri Svayambhu Siddhesvara' for an ascetic Yogesvara and his pupils who hailed from Bhujanga's lineage. Moreover it is recorded that some land too was dedicated to these Acaryas for the upkeep of the temple. Apart from being experts in Vedic knowledge these Acaryas were very well versed in *Lakula* shastra and their aim was to attain 'Bhairavahood', very much like *Abhinavagupta* and his followers.

These teachers were favored and held in high esteem by Kriyasaktis , a powerful group of *Kalamukha* priests of Sakti Parisad, who are known to have been royal preceptors of Vijaynagara kings and are given the titles of 'Rajguru' and 'Kulaguru'. Few sources imply the existence of a close relation between these Kriyasaktis and the Advaita gurus of the famous Sringeri Matha founded by Samkaracarya after coming back from Kashmir somewhere in 8<sup>th</sup> CE<sup>36</sup>. One of these Kriyasaktis is said to have induced his disciple 'Madhava-mantrin to give a village to eighty learned Brahmanas from Kashmir. This alludes to the importance and growing power of these north Indian ascetics in Southern kingdoms.

On trying to trace these ascetics to their roots in Kashmir and other places in north India one is usually faced with paucity of verbal as well as visual evidence. Saivism in Kashmir, especially post *Abhinavagupta* ,10<sup>th</sup> CE, became more philosophical and gradually lost touch with rituals. Later on imbibing the Trika doctrine it became more intellectual and present day Saivism is known for it's profound insight in philosophy and psychology rather than the practice which took a back seat. . Unfortunately not much has survived to suggest the importance and extent of *Lakulisa* order in Kashmir, but the fact that Abhinavagupta, the 10th century AD philosophical giant, grants the school a position next only to his highly evolved system, speaks of its importance.<sup>37</sup>

There are multiple clues to suggest that Kashmir was home to a more rustic and ritual oriented Saivite thought which seem to have a strong *Lakulisa-Pasupata* origin.

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid* p.132

<sup>37</sup> Pandey K.C 'Abhinavagupta, A historical and philosophical study,MLBD, Delhi, 2000

### Traces of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order in North India:

Saivism has a long history in Kashmir. Pre 5<sup>th</sup> CE foreign rulers like Kusanas and Hunas were known as ardent Saivites and so were local dynasties like Utpala and Loharas. Huna kings like Mihirakula, Baka, Gopaditya, Khinkhila and Tunjina established the temples for Siva named as *Mihiresvara*, *Bakesvara*, *Jyethesvara*, *Narendraditya*, *Tungesvara* respectively<sup>38</sup>. *Tunjina Pravarsena* established a temple called *Pravaresvara* together with a circle of mothers (*Matrkacakram*), already proved as an important element in early *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order.

Tunjina Ranaditya is known to have established a Matha for *Pasupata* Saiva ascetics while his wife *AmritaPrabha* and his son established temples dedicated to Siva. King *Jalauka* built various Siva temples. His religious preceptor is said to have been the Saiva Siddha *Avadhuta*, who *Kalhana* records vanquished various followers of Buddha. His queen *Isanadevi* as *Kalhana* records got a *Matrkacakra* constructed. As can be seen from these examples it is evident that *Pasupatas* enjoyed a position of authority in early religious life of Kashmir and it is only after the coming of *Samkaracarya* and later formulation of *Trika* philosophy that such raw forms of religion were relegated to background. Regarding such early initiation and funerary ritual which *Sanderson*<sup>39</sup> wanted to study in Kashmir he writes:

*"When I began work in Kashmir, I was told that this tradition had now died out and that no Saiva initiation or funeral rites had been performed for about fifty years. What had survived was the purely Gnostic Trika of Saivas whose ritual life was confined to the Smarta level"*

That the order was known in northernmost part of the country can be seen from the representation of *Lakulisa* on temples of Payar, Pandrethan and Manasbal. The Siva temple at Payar depicts our major forms of Siva in four trefoiled niches above the doorways. The niche on the eastern front gate depicts *Lakulisa* with his four disciples, the southern niche *Bhairava*, the northern niche *Siva-Trimurti* and the western or back niche represents six armed *Nataraja*.

---

<sup>38</sup> *Rajatarangini* of *Kalhana* Ed. by *M.A Stein*, Delhi, 1961

<sup>39</sup> *Sanderson Alexis*, 'The History of Hinduism in Kashmir'  
Lecture at University of Hamburg April 2010, Lecture Handouts



**Illus 26. Lakulisa with his disciples, Pediment, Payar temple, Kashmir, 7<sup>th</sup> CE**

Though Lakulisa images are also known from two other temples of Kashmir located at Pandrethan and Manasbal lake but Payar temple distinguishes itself by having Lakulisa image on the *lalatabimb* of the main doorway indicating without doubt that it is a Lakulisa temple. Unfortunately because of major iconoclastic activity in Kashmir hardly any temples survive from earlier periods but the fact that Abhinavagupta mentions Lakulisa's system of thought second only to his, talks about the importance of the system in Kashmir around 11<sup>th</sup> CE. The mention of Srikantha strengthens the contention that the Pasupata system was quite popular in the valley from early times. Kulacaryas of Kashmir who resorted to various occult and mystic practices seem to have had close connection with Lakulisa, but somewhere they assumed a back seat in Kashmir Saivite thought and were relegated to niches. Most probably these were the Kashmiri-Pandit scholars who migrated to South India and have been mentioned profusely in Kalamukha inscriptions.

## **An insight into Mystical and Esoteric Aspects of *Lakulisa-Pasupatas***

### **Evidence of *Ajivika* cult in Kashmir and its possible connection with *Lakulisa* order:**

Some early examples about the kind of cults and sects prevalent in Kash<sup>3</sup>mir in early centuries of Christian era can be seen at Harwan (identified as Shadarhadvana by Stein<sup>40</sup> (grove of six saints), a locality mentioned in *Rajatarangini*.

These days, strenuous efforts are being made to project Harwan as an unproblematic Buddhist site and promote it as a destination for cultural tourism by linking it with the great Central Asian tradition. In this effort, scholars have deliberately underplayed facts and attributed all monuments found in the area to Buddhists, ignoring any other cultic possibility.

Immediately around the Buddhist stupa is a narrow fringe of figured tile pavement. Closer examination showed that nearly all pieces were fragmentary and no group of adjacent pieces completed a motif. Such incoherence is usually seen in monuments which are constructed using fragments of existing monuments, such as the Quwat-ul-Islam mosque in the Qutb complex, made from the remains of 22 Jaina and Hindu temples. Though iconoclasts in their zeal to ravage whatever is left of the past try their best to eradicate proof of its existence, there are always some clues, some hints hidden at deeper levels, and it is for the discerning eye and questing mind to locate them.

The tile pavement thus raises interesting questions regarding the original monument to which the tiles belonged. Closer scrutiny of the hillside revealed that the ruins were arranged in level terraces, on each of which stood several buildings. On the highest terrace was excavated a large apsidal temple built in picturesque diaper-pebble style masonry. The temple consists of a spacious rectangular antechamber with a circular sanctum covered with a terracotta tiled floor with various motifs. The plan of the temple is very similar to Lomas Rishi cave in Barabar hills (Bihar) and the early chaitya at Kondivite near Bombay.

---

<sup>40</sup> Stein M.A., 'Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*,' Vol. II, p. 455 & Vol. I, Book I, p. 31, Delhi 1989

There is no trace of a stupa, while what remains at the site is a low section of the wall and original floor of the courtyard, which were faced with stamped terracotta tiles. The floor tiles were arranged to suggest the form of an enormous open lotus, possibly representing the cosmic lotus. The lotus symbology pervades all Indian art, whether Hindu, Buddhist or Jaina. Similarly, the motifs found on these floor tiles do not point towards any sectarian affiliation. That these tiles occupied exactly the position they were laid in by ancient workmen is borne out by the fact that each one bears a number in Kharoshthi script, the order of the tiles in a series being in strict accordance with their consecutive numeral order. The existence of Kharoshthi numerals also more or less allows one to tentatively date the tiles. According to R.C. Kak, by the 5th century AD Kharoshthi ceased to be the main language in the area and the fact that even a common labourer was expected to know the language points to the time when the language was at its peak popularity; hence he suggests 3rd-4th century as the date of the structure.<sup>41</sup>

Most curious and interesting are the tiles running all around the temple, depicting three naked ascetics in the central band with a row of geese holding half blown lotus in their bill in the lower band.

The upper band portrays figures conversing above a railing. The division of space as well as the conversing figures on the top band is very similar to Kusana Mathura sculptures from 2<sup>nd</sup> CE . On the basis of the script and style, the tiles can be dated to 3rd-4th century AD. The facial features resemble faces found at Ushkur and Akhnur regions.

Most interesting here is the **posture and the nakedness of the ascetic figures** – both unseen in Buddhist representations. Hence one cannot club them together with the stupa and vihara ruins. This shows that before the Buddhist monuments were constructed, a part of the site or the whole site was dedicated to some other sect or cult. The ascetics are shown seated in '*kakasana*' and seem to be in meditation.

---

<sup>41</sup> Kak R.C 'Ancient Monuments of Kashmir, ', Srinagar, Kashmir, 2002, p109-110





Illus 27. Naked Ascetics seen sitting in Kakasana, Harwan , 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> CE, Kashmir

Sastri<sup>42</sup> in his work on **Ajivikas** states:

*“...The Ajivikas covered their bodies with dust and ate ordure of a calf. Other austerities they practiced were painful squatting on heels, swinging in the air like bats, reclining on thorns and scorching themselves with five fire (panchagni tapas). These mendicants roamed about the country propagating their mysterious themes... Their love of solitude, disdain of comfort, even of decencies, performing penances which almost broke their mortal frame attracted the society”*

The possibility of the monument being dedicated to *Ajivikas* seems probable, because the ascetic figure seems to fit the description of an *Ajivika* ascetic. Plan-wise also, it has similarity with Lomas Rsi cave which along with Sudama cave have been dedicated to *Ajivika* monks.

<sup>42</sup> Sastri N., ‘Ajivikas (from Tamil Sources)’, *Journal of Sri Venkatesvara Rao Institute*, 1941, p. 419-422



Unfortunately none of the original works of *Ajivikas* survives, though we know of their existence through various Buddhist and Jaina sources. Asoka's Pillar Edict VII mentions *Ajivikas*, and Barabar hills have a dedicatory inscription clearly mentioning that the cave was dedicated to this sect.

It is believed the original Ajivika texts were written in an eastern Prakrit, perhaps similar to the Jaina Prakrit Ardhamagadhi. Quotations and adaptations from these texts appear to have been inserted into Jaina and Buddhist accounts of the Ajivikas. Makkhali Gosala is regarded as the founder leader of the Ajivikas, and one source of his teachings is the Buddhist Digha Nikaya.

Three Tamil texts, the *Manimakalai* of the Buddhists, the *Nilakesi* of the Jainas, and the *Sivajnanasiddhiyar* of the Saivites, all contain outlines of Ajivika doctrine. The stories of the origin of Ajivika leader *Makkhali Gosala* are to be found in the *Bhagvati Sutra* and in Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Samanna-phala-sutta*. As Basham<sup>43</sup> points out, both these texts clearly show dislike and scorn felt by both Jainas and Buddhists for Makkhali Gosala

Bhagvati sutra states that Gosala was a slave who, while walking over a patch of muddy ground holding a pot of oil, was hailed by his master with words 'don't stumble old fellow' (tata makhali iti). Despite the warning, he carelessly tripped and spilt the oil. Fearing his master's anger, he tried to run away, but his master chased him and managed to catch the edge of his robe. Leaving his garment behind, Gosala escaped in the state of nudity and hence he became a naked mendicant and acquired the name of Mankhali. These and several other such statements clearly point towards an abhorrence of nudity, while on the other hand come across as fabrications of people who want to put down another cult or sect.

Jainas and Buddhists, considering *Ajivikas* their most dangerous rivals, show how popular the sect was, especially in the 5th -4th centuries BC when the different sects were forming. Asoka in his Seventh Pillar Edict ranks Ajivikas third in importance among the religious groups he patronized after Buddhists and Brahmans. They were thus ahead of the Jainas. After this period the Ajivikas declined and the main references to them are found only in Tamil literature; there is evidence they survived in South India until the fourteenth century.

---

<sup>43</sup> Basham A.L., 'History and Doctrine of Ajivikas; a vanished Indian religion,' 1951

Gosala started his ascetic life as a *mankha*, an ancient class of mendicants, whose symbol was the carrying of a bamboo staff. Scholars differ regarding the religious leanings of Ajivikas. Kern considers them a sub-division of Vaisnavas, worshipping Narayana. Bhandarkar<sup>44</sup> opines that the Ajivikas or a section of them were the predecessors of Lakulisa Pasupatas or even Sivabhagvatas of Patanjali.

This can be collated with the fact that Kalkacharya, a fifth century Jaina astrologer, calls Ajivikas as *bhagvatas*. Daneilou<sup>45</sup> goes further and calls Lakulisa an Ajivika ascetic.

*“It was an Ajivika called Lakulisa, one of those wandering monks who maintained the heritage of the ancient knowledge in an occult tradition, who judged the moment opportune to reveal it, causing a great revolution in society. This corresponds to the greatest period in Indian civilization, which was to last for more than a millennium. Lakulisa (the name means “Club-bearing Lord”) restored an extraordinary impetus to Saivism, reestablished the pre-Aryan culture, and united, under the name of the Pashupata(s) (followers of Pashupati, Lord of Animals), the different sects that had survived in semi-secrecy for centuries.”*

The similarities one comes across in the practices of *Ajivika* and *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order are too many to be just coincidence. To start with, ascetics following both orders carry a bamboo lance (*danda*), perform *panchagni tapas*, move around naked and resort to song and dance as a medium to reach ultimate reality. During his last years, Gosala observed a vow of silence (*vacam pahaya*) and lived in a state of trance. He practiced dance and drunkenness and like certain Saivite saints pondered upon the mysterious term ‘*Halla*’, to invoke the Supreme Being during ecstatic dances. All *Ajivika(s)* used music and dance as ecstatic media and knew the secret of the technique of resuscitating the dead by the transfer of their own vital energy, one of the

---

<sup>44</sup> Bhandarkar D.R., ‘Ajivikas,’ *Indian Antiquity*, 1912, p. 286-290

<sup>45</sup> Daneilou A, ‘*Gods of Love and Ecstasy: The tradition of Siva and Dionysus*’, *Inner Traditions Bear & Company*, 1992 p.64

*Siddhi(s)* (powers) obtained through Yoga. This power was called *pautta parihara* by the disciples of Gosala. Hence the connection of *Ajivikas* with Saivas seems quite plausible. Utpala too in his commentary on *Brhajjataka* says ‘*Ajivika cshaivdandi*’ So *Ajivikas* are classified as nothing but danda holding Saivas, very much like Lakulisa.. If we go deeper in the history during the early centuries of Christian era we find that one of the principle characteristic mark of the Siva Bhagvatas was the carrying of an iron-lance.

Another very interesting proof is the the inscription from Barabar hills which clearly suggests that the caves were excavated for ascetics of various sects and the caves Lomas Rishi and Sudama were dedicated to *Ajivika* sect.

Interestingly Lomas Rishi is worshipped till today at Rewalsar in Mandi. He has another temple at Pekhri in Banjar Tehsil where he is considered as a great Saivite saint. According to locals it was at Rewalsar that Lomas Rishi propitiated Siva and acquired seven islands from the latter in form of boons. Two other temples of Bhutanath and Triloknath are also seen in its vicinity.

This Rishi has been mentioned in *Ramayana* in the episode where ‘*Kakbhusandi*’ reveals to Garuda that he has heard the story of Rama from Lomas Rishi, who in return had learnt it from Lord Siva. *Padma Purana* Uttara khand too praises this ascetic and says that he has lots of hair (Lom) on his body. As one Kalp passes, one hair of his body falls, that is why his name is Lomash. He knows all about past, present and future and thus alludes to miraculous powers that the sage is supposed to have. Moreover a better known *Pasupata* saint Parasara has two temples dedicated to him at Mandi and Kulu district and *Saura-panju* in Bhadon and Kamandipor in Magh ar two famous fairs which are till today held in his honor.



**Illus 28. Temple dedicated to Lomas Rishi, Rewalsar, Mandi , Himachal Pradesh**

So *Lomas Rishi* so strongly connected with Siva on one hand and *Ajivikas* on the other provides the important connection to link this lesser known cult with Saivism. This can be collated with the fact that Kalkacharya, a fifth century Jaina astrologer, calls *Ajivikas* as bhagvatas..This link has been discussed by Daneilou also who goes further and sees Lakulisa as nothing but an Ajivika ascetic.

The major importance of this order in North Indian hills in Medieval times can be seen in Jagesvara group of temples in Almora distric of present day Uttaranchal. There is no definite proof about the construction of Jageshwar group of temples but these are stated to belong to post-Gupta and pre-medieval era and are estimated to be about 2500 years old. These temples range in the period from 8th century (early Katyuri Dynasty to 18th century (Chand Dynasty). It is certain that these temples were renovated during the reign of Katyuri King Shalivahandev. There is an inscription of Malla Kings on the main temple premises indicating their devotion to Jageshwar. Katyuri Kings also donated some villages to the temple for its maintenance. Chand Kings of Kumaun were the great devotee and patron of Jageshwar temple. The local belief suggests that Adi Shankaracharya visited this place and renovated and re-established many temples before finally departing for Kedarnath.





Illus 29. Lakulisa, Jagesvara, Probably Katyuri dynasty, Almora Dist, Uttarakhand, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> CE



Illus 30. Lakulisa, Jagesvara, Almora Dist, 8<sup>th</sup> CE

Apart from being an important worship centre and a centre of Lakulisa-Pasupata order, Jageshwar had been the cremation ground of Chand kings. The term 'Jagesvara' is nothing but a version of Siva *Yogesvara*. Apart from the *Lakulisa* images mentioned by Nautiyal, I came across some other representations of the saint teacher in various smaller shrines. Most of these shrines house a linga like any other Saiva temple, but the strategic location of a *Lakulisa* image on the *lalatabimb* clearly hints at its Pasupata lineage. Moreover the other ancient complex, is known as Dandesvara and hence points at Siva being worshipped there in form of a Danda holding teacher. So indirectly this too points at its *Lakulisa-Pasupata* lineage though there is nothing at site to prove it to be so.

The iconographical connection with Jain Tirthankaras is also pointed out by many scholars like Nautiyal and he suggests that the Jains wielded lot of power in the region and lot of Jain remains can be found from the area. To me it is the teaching-learning aspect which makes the iconographies of Jain tirthankaras, Buddha and Lakulisa seem alike. All three of them are shown in sermon giving mode and the last two are often depicted along with their disciples. The similarity in iconography rather than an 'influence' can be seen as iconography associated with a great teacher who had tremendous impact on later followers.

Regarding the sudden disappearance of *Lakulisa Pasupata* order in Northern hills Nautiyal<sup>46</sup> observes:

*"The region of Kumaon abounds in Lakulisa sculptures. The reason for it may be that the sect probably obtained enough hold over the entire area. During the early medieval period and later it got itself absorbed with the "Kanphata", class of Sadhus in Kumaon."*

Hence according to Nautiyal most of the customs and traditions of early Lakulisa-Pasupatas were carried on by later Kanphata yogis who trace their lineage back to *Goraksanahta* and indirectly to *Lakulisa* himself.

---

<sup>46</sup> Nautiyal N.K, *Journal of Oriental Institute of Baroda*, 23 (1974-75) pp54-58



### ***Goraksanatha and Natha Sampradaya:***

Regarding the importance of *Gorakhnath* in Natha Sampradaya Deshpande<sup>47</sup> writes;

*“Gorakhnath , the disciple of Matsyendranath , was a great organizer and by his strict adherence to the path of sadhana he spread the Natha yogic order in almost all parts of India. He is such a familiar saint in many parts of India that he is claimed to have hailed from Punjab, Bengal and Maharashtra by the people of the respective provinces.”*

The philosophy of Natha Sampradaya can be traced to Sankhya philosophy and it seeks to establish complete identity between pinda and brahmada. And this total identity can be intuitively experienced by a yogi in a state of Samadhi after his kundalini is aroused and it reaches the highest cakra after passing through six cakras. Very much like ascetic aspirants of Lakulisa-Pasupatas they too believed in strict body regimen like (hathayoga) , breathing exercises (pranayama), meditation (dhyana) etc.

Their major difference with early *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* is in the extreme importance they pay to Sakti. According to them Sakti resides in Siva and likewise Siva in Sakti and they are inseparable like the moon and moonlight. Moreover they consider all classes and castes as equal.

Later various *Mathas* of *Natha Sampradaya* spread over in different parts of India compiled their own list of *Natha Siddhas*. Among such lists, a short list of nine *Nathas* became important in various parts of the country. These nine were viz:

*Gorakhnath, Jalandharanath, Charpatinath, Adabanganath, Kanifnatha, Matsyendranath, Chouranginath, Revananath and Bharthaharinath.*

Shah<sup>48</sup> brought to light an important Natha Sampradaya centre at Dabhoi in district Vadodara and published his findings in Nagari Pracharini Sabha (62<sup>nd</sup> yr vol 2 and 3). He noticed almost thirteen *Natha Siddhas* represented on one of the magnificently carved doorways(Mahudi or Champaner gate) of Dabhoi town datable to 13<sup>th</sup> CE. This again hints at the continuous importance of *Siddha* cult in and around Baroda.

---

<sup>47</sup> Deshpande M.N, *Natha Sampradaya: An Anthropological Approach*,

<sup>48</sup> Shah U.P as quoted by Deshpande

The interesting overlap between ,*Buddhist Siddhacaryas* teachers of Kapalika sect and Nathas of *Natha Sampradyay* points at certain similarities between these highly esoteric cults. The fact that the same *Siddha* is considered as a Natha and also as a Kapalika teacher talks of a common spiritual tradition followed by these great masters irrespective of the religion they followed or the religion with which they got associated. It throws light on the mutually exclusive nature of spiritual lineages and religion in India. Interestingly *Natha Siddhas* consider the five main Nathas to be emanations of Adinatha very much like five *Dhyani Buddhas* are emanations of AdiBuddha.

**Table:2: Overlap between ,*Buddhist Siddhacarya*, Kapalika sect and Natha Sampradaya**

| Buddhist Siddhacarya | Natha           | Kapalika teacher acc. To Sabaratantra |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Nagarjuna            |                 | Nagarjuna                             |
| Luipa or Luhipada    | Matsyendranath  | Minanath                              |
| Goraksa              | Gorakhnath      | Goraksa                               |
| Carpati              | Carpti natha    | Carpata                               |
| Jaladhari pa         | Jalandhar natha | Jalandhara                            |

In this context the cave temples of Panhale-Kaji located in Konkan region in Maharashtra come across as a very important site. Regarding the site Deshpande<sup>49</sup> writes:

*“Since Panhale lies in the Konkan region and was celebrated centre of Natha sampradaya, one is tempted to suggest that Konkananatha, a name appearing in the list of Navanathas according to Kadali matha may be a Nath yogi who popularized the order in this region”*

It is further interesting to note that according to Gode<sup>50</sup> even in the 17<sup>th</sup> CE, Nathism was practiced in the Konkan region. Now the fact that earlier caves at this very site are dedicated to fierce *Vajrayana* deities like *Mahacandarasana* talks about it being sacred to these Vajrayana followers too. Regarding the shift from *Vajrayana* to Natha worship Deshpande<sup>51</sup> observes:

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Gode P.K., *ABORI*, vol 19, pp49-60

<sup>51</sup> Deshpande M.N. above cited

“While the Vajrayana followers were entrenched at Panhale, Saivism seems to have made its appearance on the scene with deities like Siva, Ganesha, Saraswati, Kali , Bhairava whose loose as well as fixed images have been found at Panhale.”

Cave 13 particularly occurs as an interesting case study. It seems that followers of *Natha Sampradaya* took over this early Vajrayana cave and transformed it into one dedicated to *Goraksanatha*. Similarly in others caves too later interpolated images of various *Nathas* can be seen.

### **A brief insight in Vajrayana Buddhism:**

The Saiva practice of royal Mandala initiation (*Sivamandaladiksa*) was among the elements of Saivism that Indian Mahayana Buddhist chose to adopt when they adopted Saiva ritual models to their own Buddhist purposes in constructing their way of Mantras (*Mantrayana or Vajrayana*)

Sanderson<sup>52</sup> suggests that such *Vajrayana* Initiation can hardly be seen in India but we have abundant evidence its practice as means of propagating the Buddhist faith in Tang China and later in Japan 9<sup>th</sup> CE onwards. Even in propagation of Tibetan Buddhism it has played a major role

The *Vajrayana* school of Buddhism is believed to be a product of 3<sup>rd</sup> C.AD. According to Taranath such tantrik ideas of a secret nature were as old as the time of the great Buddhist teacher Nagarjuna. He further informs us that these teachings were handed down from guru to his disciple secretly for almost 300 years and finally these teachings got sufficient publicity during the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> C AD. through the teachings and mystic songs of the 84 Siddhas. It is also around this time that we see the inclusion of *Vajrayana* deities in Indian art.

The fact that tantrik and mystic practices as described in *Vajrayana* literature were prevalent from antiquity and were well known to Buddha himself can be corroborated by the example from the *Pag-Sam-Zan-Zang*, a Tibetan text compiled in 1747 A.D. and the *Sadharmapundarika*, another Buddhist scripture. Both these texts have interesting references to Vajrayana Buddhism. According to them, Buddha had

---

<sup>52</sup> Sanderson Alexis, 'Initiating the Monarch: The Adaptation of a Saiva practice for the propagation of Esoteric Buddhism in India, Inner Asia and Far East Dec 16 2004, Lecture Handout

assured Sariputta, one of his chief disciples, that after countless generations, Sariputta would be reborn as Padmasambhava (**the person who popularized Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet**), and he would attain enlightenment at Buddhakshetra Uddiyana, the place from where the Vajrayana sect is believed to have originated. Moreover in *Sannyasa Upanishad* II.13 it is stated that though Buddha himself was well versed in tantrik rituals, he did not permit the use of panchmakaras by his disciples. Hence even during his lifetime many monks revolted against his injunctions and were thrown out of the order

Probably this resulted into formation of secret conclaves called 'Guhya-Samaja'. The followers of Guhya-Samaja introduced their doctrines into Buddhism by the composition of a new Sangiti or collection of verses, all of which interestingly were supposed to have been delivered by Buddha himself in a secret assembly. Bhattacharya<sup>53</sup> dates the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* to 3<sup>rd</sup> C.AD. which agrees with Taranath's account.

Mahasiddhas are famous for attaining direct realization of the Buddha's teachings within a single lifetime, for their miraculous powers, and for giving impetus to tantrik art in Buddhism. When Buddhism took root in Tibet, these Siddhas provided important links between Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, giving life to lineages and art forms which have continued in Tibet up to the present. Dowman<sup>54</sup> describes siddhas as the men who embodied the tantric ethos and the aims and the ideals of Indian culture between 8<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> CE, as generators and directors of the creative energy that converted the people and transformed society. According to him the number 84 of the *siddhas* is more symbolic than actual as there is lot of discrepancy in their names in various texts. Thus the 84 *Mahasiddhas* can be seen as archetypes representing the thousands of adepts of the tantric way. However the most important names which one comes across in almost all the texts as well as visual depictions is given in the table below:

<sup>53</sup> Bhattacharya N.N; *History of the Tantric Religion*, Delhi, 1982, p.269-270

<sup>54</sup> Dowman Keith, *The Eighty-Four Mahasiddhas and the path of Tantra*, SUNY, 1984, p.2

**Table: 2: List of Buddhist Siddhacaryas**

| <b>Taranath's account</b>   | <b>Srichakrasambhara</b>   | <b>Sumpa's account</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| Siddhas imparted knowledge during Pala period. They were <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saraha/Rahulbhadra author of Buddhakapala tantra, born in a Brahmin family but ridiculed the caste system</li><li>• Luipada author of Yoginisamcharya</li><li>• Kambala and Padmavajra authors of Hevajra tantra</li><li>• Krsna, author of Samputatilaka</li><li>• Lilavajra, author of Krsnayamari tantra</li><li>• Gambhiravajra, author of Vajraamrta</li><li>• Kukhuri, author of Mahamaya</li><li>• Pito, author of Kalachakra</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saraha</li><li>• Nagarjuna</li><li>• Siddhasabari</li><li>• Luipada</li><li>• Dombi pa</li><li>• Tili (Tilopa)</li><li>• Naro/Naropa</li><li>• Dombi junior</li><li>• Kuselibhadra</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saraha</li><li>• Nagarjuna</li><li>• Sabari</li><li>• Lui</li><li>• Vajraghanta</li><li>• Kacchapa</li><li>• Jalandhari</li><li>• Krsnacharya</li><li>• Guhya</li><li>• Vijya</li><li>• Tailo (Tilopa)</li><li>• Naro (Naropa)</li></ul> |

The major distinction between these siddhas and other sanyasis was that the former lived with people on the grassroot level. Many of them married and did not shun the pleasures that life offers and taught more by examples and attitudes than sermonizing and philosophizing. Infact their contempt for hairsplitting logic and complex theological and philosophical debates can be seen in their various songs. Their teachings were completely unconventional and had no regard for societal rules and regulations.

The ultimate goal that they strived for was '*Mahamudra siddhi*' i.e. the mystical experience of the oneness of all things and an ultimate feeling of emptiness '*Sunyata*' (Vacuity) symbolized esoterically by the Yab-Yum figures seen widely in Vajrayana art.

### Sahajayana and the point of overlap:

Siddhas were well known in literature of medieval Indian alchemy. Two main offshoots of Vajrayana which have been popularized by the Mahasiddhas are , Kalachakrayana and Sahajayana.

**Table : 3 Comparision: Kalchakrayana and Sahajayana**

| Kalachakrayana   | Sahajayana   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The theory explained by Abhinavagupta as wheel of time and the process of keeping oneself above its vagaries</li><li>• The process of controlling time possible by controlling vital winds in the nerves through yogic practices followed by siddhas</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Against the prescribed codes of study, discipline, conduct worship and ritual</li><li>• Dohas and songs of siddhas as the main source of inspiration...time and again hinting on uselessness of purely philosophical discussions and debates</li><li>• Everything lies in human frame..denotes the easiest and most natural way by which human nature will itself lead the aspirant to the truth</li><li>• Conception of an internal female force in the navel region of a male corresponding to 'kula-kundalini' Sakti of the non Buddhist tantras...similar to Natha tradition</li></ul> |

In philosophy the term *Sahaja* denotes the ultimate inner nature of beings and elements and in a spiritual sense it denotes the easiest or the most natural way by which human nature itself can lead the aspirant to realize the truth. It believes that by suppressing desires and thereby straining the human body with the prescribed codes of study discipline conduct and worship and ritual truth can never be found. It considers the human body itself as the seat of all human experience including that of *Sahaja-Mahasukha*. According to the followers of *Sahajayana* everything, every mystery, every answer lies in human frame; and the human body is in essence a microcosm of the universe. All their effort is channelised at realizing the wonders of ones own body and its immense power. The aim is to develop the hidden powers of mind which when properly evolved were believed to be much more powerful than material forces.



All these three traditions lay a great emphasis on two major points

- The imperative necessity of making the body sufficiently strong and fit before starting the Yogic practices
- Conception of an internal feminine force in the *Nirmana cakra* (cakra around navel region) corresponding to that of *Kula-Kundilini* of non-Buddhist tantras

The main aim of the Natha aspirants very much like a *Sahajayana* aspirant is to feel within his own self the ideal of non-duality which is possible by attainment of immortality and renovation of the body.<sup>55</sup> According to the Natha texts moon (soma) is the drug of immortality (amrta) which resides in the Sahasrara or cerebral region of the body. In a normal human being this amrta dropped from Soma is consumed by sun which resides in the navel region through a serpent like channel. The face of this channel from where the amrta is dropped is designated as 10<sup>th</sup> door. Now according to these adepts the 10<sup>th</sup> door can be closed and hence *amrta* can be saved in the body which ultimately leads to immortality. The feat can only be achieved through vigorous 'KayaSadhana' or disciplining of the body.<sup>56</sup> These methods and processes of Hatha Yoga have been explained in detail by Briggs<sup>56</sup>, and are similar to ones followed by Siddhacaryas. Hence it is the cult of body that connects all these three esoteric sects

### ***Kapalikas and the cult of body:***

In *Brhajjataka*, *Varahamihira*, a famous astrologer enumerates the seven classes of ascetics and the heavenly bodies under whose influence they are born. He classified *Vrddhas* to have been born under the moon (Soma). Interestingly the 10<sup>th</sup> CE commentator *Utpala* equated *Vrddhas* with *Kapalikas* and identified them as wandering ascetics who seek refuge with *Mahesvara*. *Kalkacharya*, a Jain scholar from 5<sup>th</sup> CE too connects moon with *Kapalikas*. Interestingly there is a mention of *Vrddhadeva* in *Karvanmahatmaya* which could very well have been a *Kapalika* Siddha hence suggesting that the area around Karvan was sacred to them. There is also a mention of *Lakulisa's* temporarily staying with *Vrddhadeva*, which shows that there was a definite connection between both systems of thought.

---

<sup>55</sup> *Bhattacharya N.N.; History of the Tantric Religion, Delhi, 1982, p.269-270*

<sup>56</sup> *Briggs G.W., 'Gorakhnath and Kanphata Yogis', Calcutta, 1938*

Literature as well as texts are full of fantastic stories about the Kapalika ascetics, usually maligning them and showing them as some horrific, power crazy and materially inclined savages. Hence Bana's sympathetic and detailed description of these ascetics as highly religious and knowledgeable group in *Harsacarita* seems to give a truer picture. He gives a detailed physical description of the sage Bhairavacarya whom he sees as a powerful and highly knowledgeable soul, though he is seen performing 'Sava puja' in a cemetery to become a *Vidhyadhara*. This powerful spell called Mahakala-hrdaya is not mentioned elsewhere in such a positive light. Other works of literature like '*Malati Madhava*' and '*Mattavilasa*' etc portray them as wild, pathetic souls usually having a petty materialistic motive. .

As Lorenzen<sup>57</sup> has rightly observed the figure of a *Kapalika* is used in literary work to arouse the feeling of Jugupsa , to produce Bhibatsa Rasa. All the paraphernalia surrounding a *Kapalika* adept like human bones, flesh, blood, skulls , cemetery etc have immense capacity to produce disgust in a layman and this pen picture is evoked not to give any genuine information about the sect but to produce *Bhibatsa Rasa* and I would also add *Bhayanaka Rasa* to it. The fearsome aspect becomes a factor for enjoyment in these works and hence the focus on all the gory details by the writers who wanted to create a heightened state in their readers. But for a researcher such works can prove a deterrent if taken as a proof. Hence there is a need to dig into other sources which would give us a better picture of the sect.

The Epigraphical sources for *Kapalikas* are very few. Only two inscriptions, one from Nasik district and another from Baroda district have been found which clearly register donations to *Mahavratin* ascetics. However the term '*Kapalika*' does appear in three Jain inscriptions from southern Mysore state.

Interestingly one of the most important Kapalika grant, a copper plate was found in the bed of the Karmada at Tilakwada in Baroda district hence giving credence to the contention that Karvan and areas nearby were a stronghold of Kapalikas at one time. This grant registers the gift of a village named Viluhaja for a temple of Srighatesvara and was issued from the temple of Manesvara at the confluence of the Mana and Narmada rivers<sup>58</sup>. Dated too 1047CE, it was dedicated to a muni called 'Dinakara Mahavratadhara' who was like Kapalin Sankara in bodily form.

---

<sup>57</sup> Lorenzen David p.28

<sup>58</sup> Ibid p.29

We know that the Kapalikas continued to exist in Gujarat until at least 12<sup>th</sup> CE from the 'Moharajaparajaya' of Yasahpala.<sup>59</sup> This probably explains the iconography of the all the stray images in Karvan which have been displayed at the site museum. The tantric element is unmistakable in most of these images, though hardly any coherent theory can be formed about them.

### **Connection between *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* and *Kapalikas*:**

Prabhasa has been known as a sacred pilgrimage spot for Saivas since ancient times and its merits have been enumerated in Mahabharata. From 10<sup>th</sup> CE we start getting the inscriptions mentioning the importance of *Somanatha* temple at Prabhasa. According to these inscriptions Soma to free himself from consumption founded the city of Prabhasa and constructed a golden temple for the lord of Somanatha. Interestingly there is a mention that the authority of the temple was given to the *Acaryas of Pasupata* school by Soma after his own creed had gone out of vogue in the Kṛta age by the curse of Parvati. The legend gives us an interesting lead in the connection between *SomaSiddhantins* (Kapalikas) and *Lakulisa-Pasupatas*. To further substantiate my contention, in Siva Purana and Vayu Purana Siva is told to have incarnated himself at Prabhasa as Somanatha having four disciples viz. Aksapada, Kanada, Uluka and Vatsa. Here it is significant how Cintra Prasasti of Sarangadeva (1286CE) records how Siva came to Lata and dwelt at Karohana as Lakulisa in order to bestow favor on the universe and also to favor the off-springs of Ulka who for long were deprived of sons in consequence of a curse laid upon their father.

The taking up of the authority at *Somanatha* by *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* from early Kapalikas somewhere points at the break in the earlier tradition. However the exchange of authority seems to have been a peaceful process hence suggesting that there was some close connection between in Kali Yuga was called Icchapuri in Kṛta Yuga, in Treta as Mayapuri and Meghavati in Dvapara. Presently it is identified with

---

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* p.30

the village Avakhal near Karvan. The incarnation in the first yuga was Isvara(Isana), second *Mahabala*, third *Vrddhadeva* and fourth as *Lakulisa*. Hence before Kaliyuga *Vrddhadeva*, which seems to have been lord of Kapalikas was considered as an important incarnation of Siva and predecessor of *Lakulisa*.

The famous Prasasti, originally from Somanatha discloses the existence of Gargya gotra ascetics. It refers to the reign of Chalukya king *Sarangadeva* of Anhilvad Patan in whose time it was composed mainly in honor of the consecration of the five lingas in as many temples built by Saiva ascetic Tripurantaka at Devapattan in Saurashtra. Tripurantaka is supposed to have visited all the holy places of Pasupata Saivism and paid his homage to *Mallinatha* at *Sripurvata* in South India. This incident throws light on a spiritual and religious connection between Kapalikas of *Sripurvata* and ascetics of *Gargya* gotra in Gujarat. One understands the changing hand of the spiritual authority between *Kapalikas* and *Pasupatas* better in this light.

Till today people from various parts of Gujarat come to Kayavarohana to get cured of their diseases. While talking to some local pilgrims I was told that they had come specially to get some medicine which could only be found there. Interestingly various temples dedicated to Kapilesvara have been famous for such special power of healing. An inscription from a temple of Kavalji (Kapalin) in Kotah (Rajasthan), dated to 1288CE records<sup>60</sup>:

*“May the god Kapalisvara through compassion manifest that which is desired of by men and destroy the pain of bodies spoilt by leprosy, elephantiasis and cutaneous eruptions”*

The most famous *Kapalesvara* temple located at Mylapore near Madras is also known for such powers. 7<sup>th</sup> CE Saivite saint *Tirunanasambandar* is said to have revived a dead girl whose bones had been kept in a pot by her father in the temple. Curing, healing and magical control over empirical knowledge all these things have played an important role in popularizing such saints and sages all over the country. Regarding

---

<sup>60</sup> Haldar R.R., *Inscriptions of the time of Hammir of Ranthambho'r*, EI XLX 45-52

the Tantric influence in temples at Orissa, K.C Panigrahi<sup>61</sup> argues that some of these temples and especially Vaital Deul was originally a Kapalika shrine, as the main deity in the shrine is ferocious looking *Camunda*. Moreover the other fierce deities sculptured around the inner shrine and the panel of erotic couples all point at its Tantrik lineage. The fact that one finds multiple images of Lakulisa in this temple points at the connection between *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* and *Kapalikas* in this region too

Another important inscription focusing on the link is found at famous *Pasupatinatha* temple in Nepal. This inscription written in Sanskrit and belonging to the reign of King Jisnugupta (630CE) records a gift to 'Varahasvamin, Dharma ....and to Somakhaddukas (ascetics wearing moon bracelets (Kapalikas) in the congregation of the Mundasrnkhalika (Pasupata acarya wearing a chain of heads)'.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Samkaracarya and Kapalikas:***

A very violent and derogatory image of Kapalika has been created by hagiographical works on Sri Samkaracarya by his disciples and followers. Three incidents which mention Samkaracarya's interaction with *Kapalikas Ugra Bhairava, Kracaca and Unmatta Bhairava* leave no stones unturned in mocking and ridiculing these ascetics who are seen ultimately defeated by Samkara's knowledge of Vedanta. While going through the insightful works of Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj I came across a totally different version of Samkara's encounter with *Ugra Bhairava* in the writings of famous Natha Siddha, *Goraksanatha*<sup>63</sup> which on one hand connects *Kapalikas* with *Natha Siddhas* and on the other shows the limitation of taking the written word at its face value.

*Samkara's* meeting with *Ugra Bhairava* seems to have occurred somewhere along the Krishna river; Lorenzen contends perhaps at a spot near Sri Sailam (Sripurvata) a site renowned since ancient times for Saivite worship. *Madhavacarya* in his *Samkara Digvijaya*<sup>64</sup> writes how *Ugra Bhairava* tries to persuade Sankara to sacrifice himself by extolling great benefits of self sacrifice.

---

<sup>61</sup> Panigrahi K.C., *Sculptural Representations of Lakulisa and other Pasupata Teachers*, *Journal of India History*, Vol-38, April 1960, 635-640

<sup>62</sup> Lorenzen David. P.94

<sup>63</sup> *Goraksa Siddhant Samgraha*, Ed by Gopinath Kaviraj,

<sup>64</sup> Lorenzen David, 'p. 96

*“In offering your head you will acquire wondrous fame in the world and I will acquire Siddhi...You are indifferent to worldly desires and care nothing for the body...and so on....Men like Dadhyanci who abandon their transient bodies for sake of others, acquire an immutable body of fame (yasah sarira)”*

It is further stated that Sankara to prove the greatness of Advaita Vedanta and illusory nature of physical world agreed to abide by latter's decree. As Samkara assumed the Siddhasana and was ready to sacrifice his body for the sake of his belief, his disciple Padmapada realizing the fate of his guru assumed the form of Nrsimha and pounced on the Kapalika ascetic and killed him.

“Running up with great speed he tore open with his claws the breast of Kapalika who was striking with his trident”

This same incident is narrated in the *Goraksa-Siddhanta-Samgraha* belonging to the Kanphata tradition. The similarity of various traditions in both Kanphata and Kapalika is unmistakable. Here it is stated that god Sri Bhairava himself assumed the form of *Ugra Bhairava* in order to bring Sankara to test. In this form former requested Sankara's head as an offering to Bhairava by alluding to *Advaita Vedanta* concept of Maya. Hereafter the GSS version follows the same narrative as SDV, till Ugra Bhairava gets killed by Padmapada. After being stuck by Padmapada, Ugra Bhairava manifests his true identity as Bhairava and declared in a thunderous voice:

“Sir this is defeat for advaita, what has become of that which you said about friend and foe. As a wrestler causes his opponent to fall by falling himself, I have accomplished the ruin of my opponent's doctrine through the loss of my body”<sup>65</sup>

Seeing his immanent defeat Samkara stood motionless and the Kapalika with the help of yogic power, (yogamaya) cut off the heads of Samkara and his four disciples which were afterwards revived and only from then onwards 'true detachment arose'. Here the cutting of heads is a symbolic representation of cutting the pride and hence suggesting the defeat of an idea rather than the physical assault.

---

<sup>65</sup> <sup>65</sup> *Goraksa Siddhant Samgraha*, Ed. Gopinath Kaviraj, Princess of Wales, Saraswati Bhavana Texts No 18, Banaras, 1925, p.17



The favorable attitude of *Natha Sampradaya* towards *Kapalikas* also comes across through their belief that Kapalika doctrine was also revealed by Natha (Siva). The overlap between *Kapalikas* and *NathaSiddhas* can be seen in various Tantrik texts and according to Sabara Tantra<sup>66</sup> Goraksa himself was a disciple of a Kapalika. While explaining why Kapalika path was revealed, *Goraksanatha* narrates the story where some avtaras of Visnu had become obsessed with pride and power and were creating a havoc. To teach them a lesson Natha assumed the form of 24 Kapalikas who cut the heads of these avtaras, indirectly cutting their pride.

Collating the information about the distribution and dates of Kapalikas from available sources we find that they existed throughout most of Deccan plateau as early as 8<sup>th</sup> CE. They are connected specifically with Kanci, parts of Mysore, western and central Maharashtra, Ujjain, Gwalior and Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh. Some evidences of their presence in Orissa as well as Gujarat can also be seen. According to Bhavabhuti, Sripavata in Kurnool district was a particularly important Kapalika center in his time. Also the legend of the kings Vikramaditya Harsa, Pravarsena II and Matrigupta narrated in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* identify the Kapalikas with Pasupatas and connect them both to Sripavata. In one of these stories a Pasupata Siddha Asvapada is the central character and he himself declares that he belongs to the Kapalin sect. Lorenzen is of the opinion that this Kapalika sect was completely absorbed by other Saivite tantric orders such as Kanphatas and Aghoris by 14<sup>th</sup> CE.

### ***Kapalikas and Natha Siddhas:***

A direct connection between Kapalikas and Nathas can be seen in famous old Bengali songs (carya gita) of Kanhapada (Kanu-pa), a Natha adept and also considered as a Mahasiddha by Buddhists. Kanha calls himself a Kapali in various verses and in this form (form of a Kapalin Yogi) he becomes the lover or husband of the Dombi (washer woman) who in symbolic terms is the goddess Nairatmya (goddess of Essencelessness, a Buddhist counterpart of Kula-Kundilini Sakti)

*"Thou art the Dombi and I am the Kapali, for thee have I put on a garland of bones. The Dombi destroys the lake and eats up the lotus stalk I shall kill thee, Dombi, and take thy life"*

---

<sup>66</sup> Dowman Keith, *Masters of Mahamudra*,

Dasgupta<sup>67</sup> translates this at first go sinister sounding verse as:

*“As the earthly Dombi should not be touched by the orthodox, so the divine Dombi is inaccessible to them. She lives outside the city (the world of senses). Unless she is killed (i.e controlled) she spoils the lake (the body) and eats the lotus stalk (the bodhicitta or mind of enlightenment)*

*“Of what nature is O Dombi, thy cleverness, the aristocrats are outside thee and the Kapalins are within. You are the Kama Candali-there is no woman more cunning and unfaithful than the Dombi”*

The use of coded language (sandha bhasa) is evident in such songs and the need to understand them in a proper light of the spiritual practice is must before interpreting them. This is also a feature of Tantric visual art where the literal meaning can completely baffle and disgust the onlooker. In the third song Kanha clearly mentions that the yogin Kanha has become a Kapali; and has entered into the practice of yoga, and is sporting in the city of his body in a non-dual form. Explaining the outer signs of a Kapalika he further adds<sup>68</sup>;

“His earrings (kundala) are the sun and the moon (Upaya and Prajna, equivalent to Siva and Sakti). The ashes he smears on his body are the ashes of passion (raga), aversion (dvesa) and error (moha). His pearl necklace is supreme salvation (parama mocha) and the song ends with his narrating how he killed his mother and other relatives in his house.

This highly symbolic description has been studied by scholars and decoded to mean that he cut his bonds with his senses (his relatives) and went beyond illusion to become one with the lord.

*Yajnavalkya Smṛti* states that anyone who kills a Brahmin unintentionally has to take the Mahavrata vow for twelve years and atone for his sin. Apart from the usual injunctions of living a simple life and sustaining on alms, the text mentions that one must carry on his stick (danda) the skull of the person slain, like a flag. (Y.S ed by N.R Acarya, III)

---

<sup>67</sup> Dasgupta S.N, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol V, Delhi, 1975

<sup>68</sup> Lorenzen David p.129

This gory imagery reminds one of *Khatvanga* a weapon carried by various Tantrik deities, comprising of a skull attached to a danda. The imagery is closely related to the myth of *Kapalamocana* interestingly narrated with respect to various temples all over the country.

It is believed that after killing Brahma, Siva incurred *Brahmhatya* and the former's head got attached to Siva's hand. To get rid of this head Siva went to various religious places and when he reached the site (identified with various temples in North India but Kasi is considered most important ) the head is broken into thousand pieces and Siva is freed from guilt. Thus Lorenzen<sup>69</sup> observes :

*"the ultimate aim of the Kapalika observance was a mystical identification or communion with Siva. Through their imitative repetition of Siva's performance of the Mahavrata, the ascetics became ritually homologised with the god and partook of or were granted some of his divine attributes, especially the eight magical powers (siddhis)."*

The psychological basis of such rituals has been explained by Eliade in detail and will be discussed in later chapter on rituals. Lorenzen stresses on the Eucharistic aspect of partaking '*Panch Makara*' (Five M's ) by a *Kapalika* aspirant. The Eucharistic significance of these ingredients (*panch makaras*) is explained in various Tantric sources.

*Kularnava Tantra*<sup>70</sup> says

*"Wine (sura) is Shakti, the meat is Siva; the enjoyer of those is Bhairava himself. The bliss sprung from the union of those two is called Moksa. This bliss which is the form (rupa) of Brahman is established in the body of the worshipper. The wine makes it manifest"*

Another text *Mahanirvana Tantra* says:

*" Wine (sura) is Tara herself in liquid form, who is the saviour of beings, the mother of enjoyment and liberation"*

---

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>70</sup> *Kularnava Tantra* Ed. by V. Taranath and Arthur Avalon, Calcutta 1915

Importance of sacrifice and especially self-sacrifice is often hinted at in this tradition. This concept subsumes a wide range of activities from self immolation or suicide to self mutilation and from physical penances to simple exercises of mental discipline. One of the visual parallels to such an act of self sacrifice can be seen on a relief sculptural panel in Draupadi Ratha at Mahabalipuram. In this panel one can see a *devi* figure in the centre and a man sacrificing his own head to the *devi* can be seen from back. The theme is unmistakably that of self sacrifice.



**Illus 31. Panel inside Draupadi Ratha, , Mahabalipuram, Pallava, Tamil Nadu ,6<sup>th</sup> CE**

### ***Kalamukhas and Virasaivas: The present day tradition :***

A considerable amount of circumstantial evidence points to the existence of a close historical link between the *Kalamukhas* and the later *Virasaivas*. The early history of the Vira Saivas is buried in a maze of legends . The founder of this sect is usually believed to be Basavesvara, who was a minister in the court of Kalacuri king Bijjala (1145-67). Evidences suggest that it was a sort of a subsect of earlier Kalamukhas with some additional and reformatory features<sup>71</sup>.

The chief ViraSaiva source for their own early history are two Kannada works, the *Basava Purana* (1370CE) and *Canna Basava Purana* (1585), both eulogizing the founder. A different and not so favorable account can be seen in 'Bijjalarayacarita' , a Jain work. After furnishing some basic information about the parentage of Basava, Basava Purana states that he became the chief minister of Bijjala and soon along with his nephew Canna Basava began propounding the Virasaiva doctrine and won a number of converts. Moreover it is stated that on being opposed by the king, Basava gathered together a large army (reminiscent of large Kalamukha armies) of his followers and defeated the king and later also ordered the murder of the king. What is of major interest to us here is that after murdering the king Basava went to the shrine of Sangamesvara and was 'absorbed in the godhead', very much like Lakulisa who got merged with the linga of Brahmesvara.

A more authentic and relevant information can be gleaned through an inscription of about 1200CE found at Somnath temple at Ablur in Dharwar district. It mentions a Saivite priest named 'Ekadanta Ramayya' who is described as a Vira Saiva saint in the Canna Basava Purana<sup>72</sup>. He is supposed to have vanquished Jain scholars in Shastrarth and later destroyed their shrine and built a large temple of Vira Somanatha in its place.

The record also mentions him to have delivered a sermon in the Brahmesvara temple at Ablur, which was earlier headed by a Kalamukha priests and later became famous as temple of Basavesvara and thus a major Virasaiva shrine.

---

<sup>71</sup> Lorenzen David p.198

<sup>72</sup> Fleet J. F, 'Inscription at Ablur' above cited

A significant number of former Kalamukha temples are presently controlled by Virasaivas . Belgave, the former seat of the Sakti Parisad is now center of Virasaiva activity and has become a major Virasaiva pilgrimage site. Two of the most famous Virasaiva Maths are at Sri-Parvata and Kedarnath both known to have been early Kapalika strongholds.

Dasgupta<sup>73</sup> observes that the philosophical content of Basava's vacanas is negligible and is quite similar to Pasupata doctrine. The idea that the distribution of the fruits of Karman is managed and controlled by God ,rather than being automatic and autonomous is according to Dasgupta a doctrine which Revanarya (Virasaiva scholar) borrowed from the Pasupatas.

The followers of *Virasaiva* cult are found till today mostly from southern parts of the country. They are seen carrying a linga on their person and their ascetics are broadly called as Jangam Jogis. Their return back to the roots and essential theocratic form of the order is reminiscent of what *Lakulisa* has proposed in PS.

---

<sup>73</sup>Dasgupta S.N , *History of Indian Philosophy*,