

**DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE PHILOSOPHY
AND
PRACTICE IN LAKULISA-PASUPATA ORDER**

**A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO
THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY
OF
BARODA FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ART HISTORY**

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Dr. Deepak Kannal**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY AND AESTHETICS
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THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA,
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CERTIFICATE

*This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis titled, “Dynamics between the philosophy and practice in Lakulisa-Pasupata order” submitted by **Geetika Kaw Kher** for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History** , incorporates the results of independent investigation carried out by the candidate herself. All sources used by her have been acknowledged in the footnotes.*

Dr. Deepak Kannal
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INTRODUCTION

Prologue:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Purpose of the Study:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Muller-Ortega⁴ rightly observes:

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

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

Brief Review of Scholarship :

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

Sadyojita, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, Isana

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Overall Structure and Methodological considerations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The expression:

Jnatva Devam muchyate sarva-pasaih

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pre *Lakulisa Pasupata* developments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁸ *Ibid*, p 115

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iconographical study of *Lakulisa*:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Use of Ashes: Meanings and Metaphors :

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

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

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

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

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

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

Philosophical data gleaned through *Pasupata Sutra*:

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

Karya (effect)

Karana (cause)

Yoga (meditation)

Vidhi (behavior)

Dukhanta (cessation of sorrows)

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

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

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

Sadyojata

Tatpurusha

Isana

Vamdev

Aghora

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PS V.47 *karanadhikara-ivrtti*)

and he possesses the excellence of *Mahesvara*.

(PS V.40 *tatha vartamanena Mahesvaramaisvaryam praptam*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And she answers:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sarva-bhuta-bhavam jnatva Lingam-archati yah prabhoh

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

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

CHAPTER- 1

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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

Before dealing with the history of *Pasupata* system we need to briefly look into the concept of *Siva* itself. Even on the cost of repetition one cannot reject the seals found from Indus valley with the so called ‘Proto Siva’ figure etched on them. The horned figure seated in possible *Kurmasana* and surrounded by animals has been considered as a very crucial find. Chakraborti ¹ finds it of particular interest because of the yogic posture and the possible Ithyphallic aspect which connects very well in general with the yogic practices associated with *Siva* and in particular to the descriptions and images of *Lakulisa*. Moreover the central figure here is shown flanked by animals which again have led scholars to read the antecedents of future *Pasupati Siva* in it.



Illus1. Protosiva, Indus valley, 2500BCE

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

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

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



Illus2. Gundestrup cauldron 1st BCE, Denmark

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

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

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

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

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

³ Cernnunos: A Celtic deity

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

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

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

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

Flaherty¹⁰ states:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Early Textual References:

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

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

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

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

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

¹¹ *Ibid* pg 10

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

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

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

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

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

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

The expression:

Jnatva Devam muchyate sarva-pasaih¹⁸

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

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

Bhandarkar rightly observes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²¹ Ibid, p.4

²² Ibid, p.6

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

The text says:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

²³ Mahabharata, Book III Vanaparvan, Kirataparva, Section XXXIX

²⁴ Mahabharata, Drona Parvan, KirataArjuniya

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

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

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

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

²⁵ *Mahabharata, Saughtika Parvan, ch. vii*

²⁶ *Mahabharata, Saughtikaparvan,*

²⁷ *Anusasanaparvan*

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

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

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

Early Evidences from Art, Archeology and History:

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Sculptural Evidence:

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

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



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

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



Illus 9. Lakulisa, 7th -8th CE, Karvan, Gujarat



Illus 10. Lakulisa, 6th CE, Sindhavaimata Temple, Karvan, Gujarat



Illus 11. Ithyphallic Siva , Rishikesh,Uttarakhand, 2nd -1st BCE

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

Pasupata History:

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

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

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

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

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

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

He further states that:

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

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

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

⁴⁴ *Mahabharata, Santiparvan*, 349

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

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

⁴⁷ *Ibid* p.5

⁴⁸ *Ibid* p.5

⁴⁹ *Ibid* p.5

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

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

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

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

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.5

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p.5

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

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

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

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

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

***Srikantha* in the Saiva pantheon:**

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

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

⁵⁵ Dowman Keith, *Master of Mahamudra*, 2004

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

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

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



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

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

⁵⁸ *Ibid* p.10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁶⁴ *Tantraloka* XII, p.396

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

History of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order :

A lot of debate has ensued regarding the date of *Lakulisa*. The dating varies from 11th CE. To 2nd BCE. On the basis of two inscriptions mentioning '*Lakutesvara Pandita*' Fleet⁶⁶ dated *Lakulisa* to 11th C.AD. This dating was refuted by scholars like T.Gopinath Rao⁶⁷ on the basis of the mention of *Lakulisvara* in pre 11th C. literature. The date was further pushed back to late 1st C.AD. with the finding and later publishing of the Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II dated to 380AD, by D.R. Bhandarkar.⁶⁸ The inscription records the erection of two images *Kapilesvara* and *Upamitesvara* in a *Guruvayatana* by one *Uditacharya*, a *Pasupata* teacher. Moreover *Acarya Udit* is described as tenth in apostolic succession from *Kusika*, the immediate disciple of *Lakulisa*. Even this early date has been contested by some scholars who suggest an earlier date. U.P shah⁶⁹ feels that *Lakulisa* can be dated to 1st C.BC.. According to him the cult must have been popular in western India in early Christian era and Ksatrapas in that region who called themselves Rudradaman and Rudrasimha possibly had come under the influence of the said cult. R.G Bhandarkar⁷⁰ suggests 2nd C BC. as the probable date on the basis of the fact that *Lakulisa's* rise had been represented by Puranas to be contemporaneous with *Vasudev-Krsna*. Further he suggests that the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system was intended to take the same place in the *Rudra-Siva* cult that the *Panchratra* did in the *Vasudeva-Krsna* cult. Agreeing to this early date Banerjee⁷¹ argues that the term "*kusika-dasamena*" in the Mathura Pillar inscription should be taken in the sense of a spiritual descent and not in that of generation, hence allotting twenty-five years to each spiritual generation is nothing but a conjecture and cannot lead to any definite conclusion. The contention is substantiated by some early coins found at Ujjain (kade coins 3rd -2nd C. BC.), Vidisha, Pawaya and Kutwar depicting *Siva* holding a danda (staff) (*lakula*) and a Kamandalu (water pitcher) which is the earliest form of iconography for *Lakulisa*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Historicity of *Lakulisa*:

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

Textual Evidences

Inscriptional Evidences

Archeological Evidences

Important textual sources:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷⁵ *Ibid*,

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* II, 29 (c. 1st C E)

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

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

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

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

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

The story as given in *Karvanmahatmya*:

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

My translation and notes from the original text⁷⁸

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

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

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

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

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

(Ch 2 , Siva Purana)

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

(Ch 3, Siva Purana)

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

(Ch 4, Siva Purana)

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷⁹ *Thaker, Jayant, P., Ed. 'Visvamisritmahatmyam', Vadodara, 1997*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁸¹ *Kurma Purana Ch LIII*

⁸² *Bhandarkar, R.G., 'p.117*

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

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

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

⁸³ Bhandarkar, D.R. 'EI, XXX, 1ff

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Following verse is not clear

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

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

Sri-ekalinga Har-aradhana-pasupat-acharya

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁹⁵ Sharma Premlata, p.47

⁹⁶ Ibid p.49

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER- 2

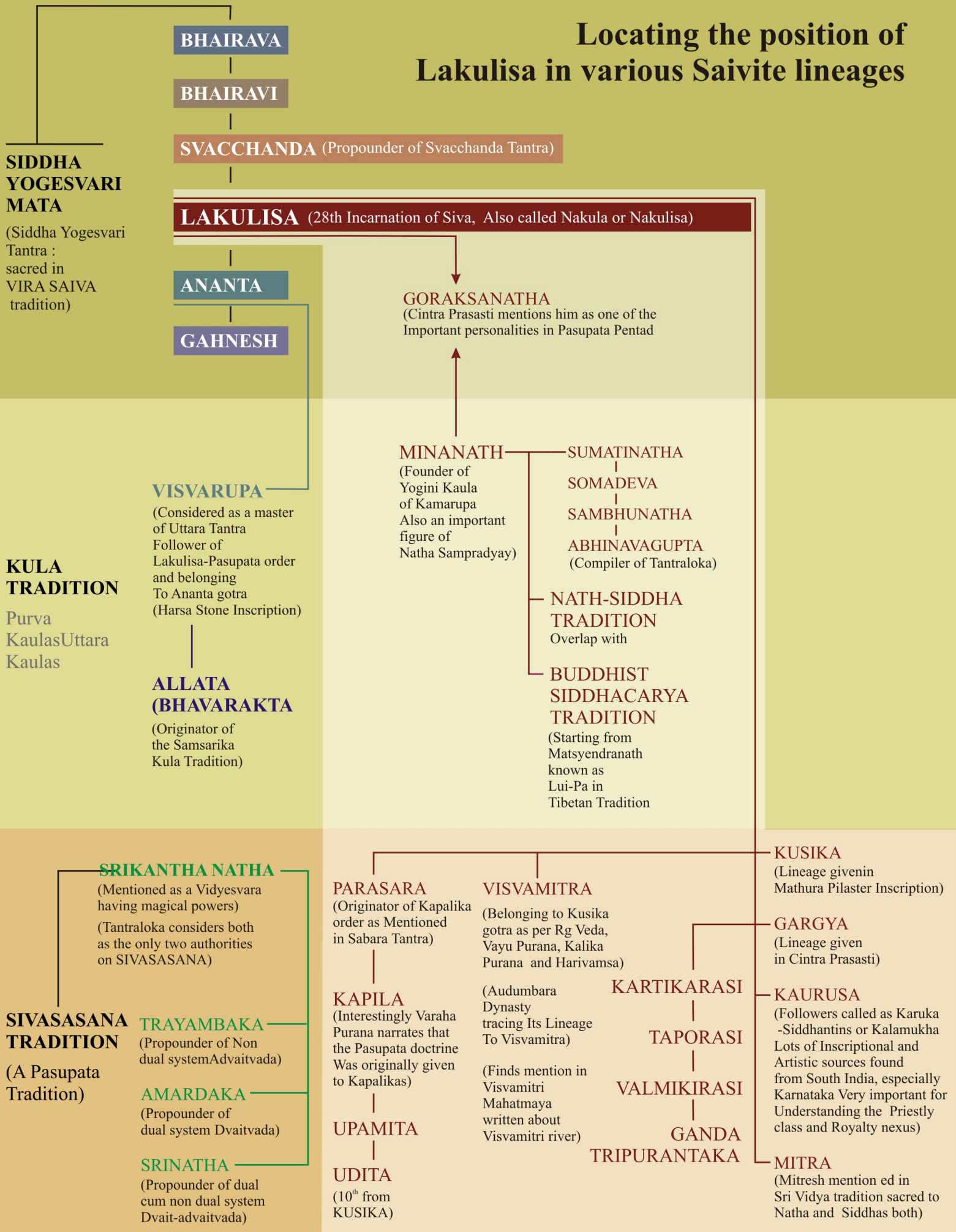
THE SPREAD AND TRANSITION OF *LAKULISA-PASUPATA ORDER*

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* , *Paramatman* 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.

Locating the position of Lakulisa in various Saivite lineages



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)*¹ and *Pancarthatbhasya (Pbh)*². 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. Bhandarkar³ 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 Mukhlingas 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.

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

² Ibid

³ Bhandarkar, D.R '*Mathura Pillar*

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 Gurvayatana 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 Suri⁴ mentions eighteen Tirthesas headed by Lakulisa and Kusika. The same list is also enumerated by *Bhava Sarvajna*⁵ 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*.

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

⁵ *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 5th -6th 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 5th -6th 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*⁶ 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

⁶ (Jayaratha's commentary on *TA* (*TA comm.*, xii, p383) Pathak V.S p.11

Bhairavadbhairvim 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 Chahamana⁷ 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**⁸ 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'.

⁷ The Harsha Stone Inscription of Vigrahapala Chahamana⁷ V.S 1030, EI Vol 1, p.122
Maharajavali chasau sambubhaktigunodaya, Shriharsah kuldevasyastasmadivayah kulakramah
Anantagocare srimanpanditautresvarah, Pancarthalakulamnaye visvarupobhavadguru

⁸ 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 Tantra⁹, 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, maintenance 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 Gayakarna¹⁰ 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.

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

¹⁰ *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 Collins¹¹ 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 Spink¹² 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. Huntington¹³ 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

¹¹ Collins, C.D, ‘The Iconography and Ritual of Siva at Elephanta’ p.13

¹² Spink Walter, ‘Ajanta to Ellora’ 1967

¹³ 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 Kramrisch¹⁴ 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

¹⁴ 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 Spink¹⁵ observes;

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

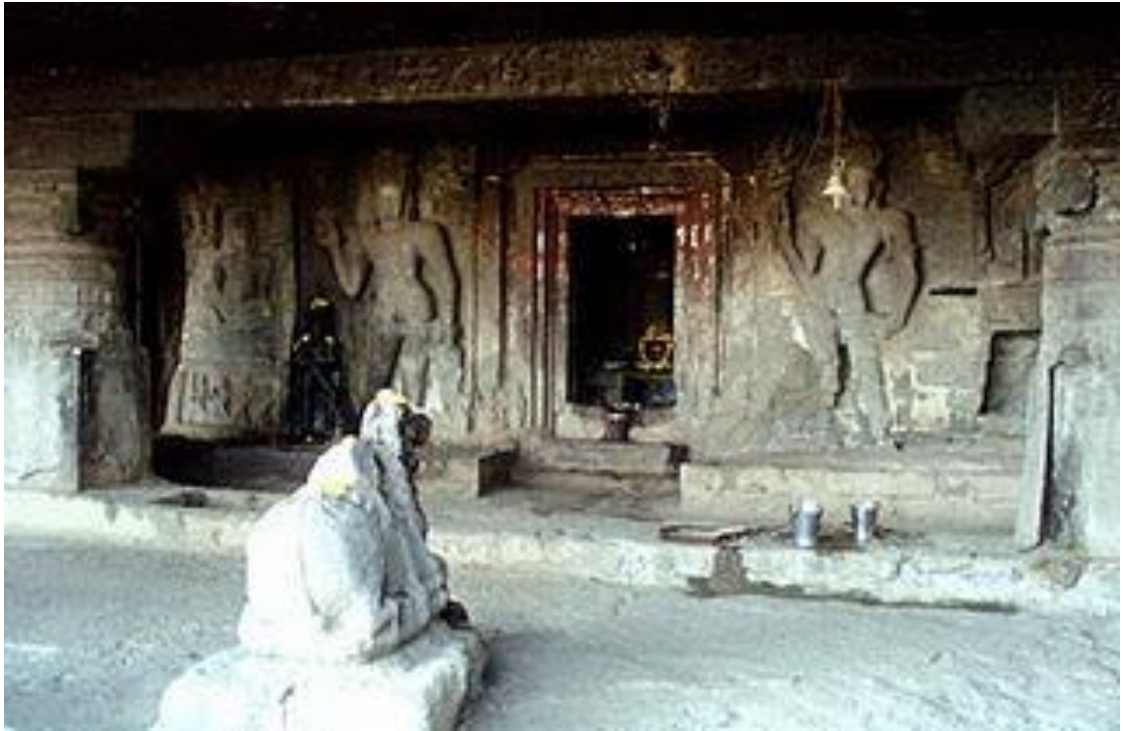
¹⁵ Spink Walter, 'Ajanta to Ellora', 1967

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, 6th 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, 6th -7th 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 Scuptural Panels seen at Western Indian Lakulisa-Pasupata Caves

	Jogeswari	Mandapesvara	Elephanta	Ellora 21	Ellora 29	Takali Dhokesvara
Lakulisa	P	P	P	P	P	P
Kalyanasun Daramurti	P	P	P	P	P	P
Ravana shaking 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 Shah¹⁶ 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 Torzsok¹⁷ 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 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

¹⁶ Shah U.P ‘Lakulisa, Saivite Saint’ in DOS Ed by Micheal Meister p.96

¹⁷ 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 writes¹⁸

“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.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The *Lakulisa-Pasupata* activity in Orissa:

Orissa comes across as a very important site for *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order. According to Panda¹⁹

“It is believed that Lakulisa-Pasupata cult was brought to Kosala and Kalinga in the 4th 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 Vastusastram²⁰ 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.

¹⁹ Panda Sasanka S, ‘(Saivacharyas and Foot Print Worship’ ,Orissa Review Jan 2005)

²⁰Visvakarma 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, 7th CE



Illus 22. Lakulisa, Mohangiri, 8th 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, 8th 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 10th 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 Somavansis 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 titled 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. Sanderson²¹ 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 Sidhhanta 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 10th 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.”

²¹ 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 observes²²:

“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 10th 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 Thom²³ 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 6th 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

²² *Ibid*

²³ *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 *Silvakaivalia* to carry on the tradition. Inscription²⁴ 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.

²⁴ *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 Bagh²⁵ 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 4th 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,

²⁵ 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 (matrsthanadevakula) had been established by the Pasupatacarya Lokodadhi in the village of Pincchikanaka.”

So it seems by 5th 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 Sanderson²⁶ 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 7th CE onwards in India and from 10th 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.

²⁶ 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, Pancaratika 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 11th-13th CE.Both Ramanuja and Kesava Kashmiri substitute Kalanana by Karuka Siddhanta. Thus Bhandarkar²⁷ 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 Inscription²⁸ 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 Lorenzen²⁹ 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.

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

²⁸ Ammaraja Tandikonda Inscription, EI, XXIII, p161-170

²⁹ 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 3rd -4th 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 7th 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, 6th CE

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



Ilus 25.Lakulisa on a Pillar, Badami, Chalukya, Karnataka, 6th 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 Lorenzen³⁰. This line of ascetics, who also controlled various other temples in the region has been studied initially by J.F Fleet³¹(Inscriptions at Ablur, EI,VC 1898-99 213-65) and also by a local scholar A. Venkata Subbiah³²

³⁰ Lorenzen Daved p.96-100

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

³² 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 Kedareshvara’, 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 Lakula³³Samaya’(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 itself³⁴. (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 11th-12th 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 Lorenzen³⁵ 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.”

³³ Lorenzen David, p,98

³⁴ Fleet J.F., Ed and Trans. ‘Sanskrit and Old Canarese Inscriptions, IA,X (1881) p. 126-131

³⁵ 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 8th CE³⁶. 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* ,10th 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.³⁷

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.

³⁶ *Ibid* p.132

³⁷ 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 5th 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* respectively³⁸. *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 Sanderson³⁹ 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*.

³⁸ *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana Ed. by M.A Stein, Delhi, 1961

³⁹ 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, 7th 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 11th 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 Kashmir in early centuries of Christian era can be seen at Harwan (identified as Shadarhadvana by Stein⁴⁰ (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.

⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹

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 2nd 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.

⁴¹ Kak R.C '*Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*,', Srinagar, Kashmir, 2002, p109-110



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

Sastri⁴² 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.

⁴² 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 *Bhagwati Sutra* and in Buddhaghosa's commentary on the *Samanna-phala-sutta*. As Basham⁴³ 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 makhal 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.

⁴³ 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*. Bhandarkar⁴⁴ 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*. Danielou⁴⁵ 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

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

⁴⁵ 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 district of present day Uttarakhand. 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, 7th-8th CE



Illus 30. Lakulisa, Jagesvara, Almora Dist, 8th 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 Nautiyal⁴⁶ 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.

⁴⁶ 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 Deshpande⁴⁷ 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.

Shah⁴⁸ brought to light an important Natha Sampradaya centre at Dabhoi in district Vadodara and published his findings in Nagari Pracharini Sabha (62nd 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 13th CE. This again hints at the continuous importance of *Siddha* cult in and around Baroda.

⁴⁷ Deshpande M.N, *Natha Sampradaya: An Anthropological Approach*,

⁴⁸ 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 Deshpande⁴⁹ 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 Gode⁵⁰ even in the 17th 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 Deshpande⁵¹ observes:

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Gode P.K., *ABORI*, vol 19, pp49-60

⁵¹ 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*)

Sanderson⁵² 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 9th 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 3rd 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 7th 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

⁵² 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 Budhhakshetra 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. Bhattacharya⁵³ dates the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* to 3rd 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. Dowman⁵⁴ describes siddhas as the men who embodied the tantirc ethos and the aims and the ideals of Indian culture between 8th -12th 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:

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

⁵⁴ Dowman Keith, ‘*The Eighty-Four Mahasiddhas and the path of Tantra*’, SUNY, 1984, p.2

Table: 2: List of Buddhist Siddhacaryas

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

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">• The theory explained by Abhinavagupta as wheel of time and the process of keeping oneself above its vagaries• The process of controlling time possible by controlling vital winds in the nerves through yogic practices followed by siddhas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Against the prescribed codes of study, discipline, conduct worship and ritual• Dohas and songs of siddhas as the main source of inspiration...time and again hinting on uselessness of purely philosophical discussions and debates• Everything lies in human frame..denotes the easiest and most natural way by which human nature will itself lead the aspirant to the truth• 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

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.⁵⁵ According to the Natha texts moon (soma) is the drug of immortality (amṛta) which resides in the Sahasrara or cerebral region of the body. In a normal human being this amṛta 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 amṛta is dropped is designated as 10th door. Now according to these adepts the 10th door can be closed and hence *amṛta* can be saved in the body which ultimately leads to immortality. The feat can only be achieved through vigorous 'Kaya Sadhana' or disciplining of the body.⁵⁶ These methods and processes of Hatha Yoga have been explained in detail by Briggs⁵⁶, 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 *Brhajataka*, *Varahamihira*, a famous astrologer enumerates the seven classes of ascetics and the heavenly bodies under whose influence they are born. He classified *Vṛddhas* to have been born under the moon (Soma). Interestingly the 10th CE commentator *Utpala* equated *Vṛddhas* with *Kapalikas* and identified them as wandering ascetics who seek refuge with *Maheśvara*. *Kalkacarya*, a Jain scholar from 5th CE too connects moon with *Kapalikas*. Interestingly there is a mention of *Vṛddhadeva* 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 *Vṛddhadeva*, which shows that there was a definite connection between both systems of thought.

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

⁵⁶ *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 Lorenzen⁵⁷ 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 rivers⁵⁸. Dated too 1047CE, it was dedicated to a muni called 'Dinakara Mahavratadhara' who was like Kapalin Sankara in bodily form.

⁵⁷ Lorenzen David p.28

⁵⁸ Ibid p.29

We know that the Kapalikas continued to exist in Gujarat until at least 12th CE from the 'Moharajaparajaya' of Yasahpala.⁵⁹ 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 10th 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

⁵⁹ *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 predessesor 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 connction 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 records⁶⁰:

“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. 7th CE Saivite saint *Tirunanasambandhar* 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

⁶⁰ Haldar R.R., *Inscriptions of the time of Hammir of Ranthambho'r*, EI XIX 45-52

the Tantric influence in temples at Orissa, K.C Panigrahi⁶¹ 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, Dharmaand to Somakhaddukas (ascetics wearing moon bracelets (*Kapalikas*) in the congregation of the Mundasrnkhalika (Pasupata acarya wearing a chain of heads) .⁶²

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*⁶³ 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*⁶⁴ writes how Ugra Bhairava tries to persuade Sankara to sacrifice himself by extolling great benefits of self sacrifice.

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

⁶² Lorenzen David. P.94

⁶³ *Goraksa Siddhant Samgraha*, Ed by Gopinath Kaviraj,

⁶⁴ 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”⁶⁵

Seeing his imminent 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.

⁶⁵ ⁶⁵ *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 Tantra⁶⁶ 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 8th 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 Matrgupta 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 14th 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”

⁶⁶ Dowman Keith, *Masters of Mahamudra*,

Dasgupta⁶⁷ 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 adds⁶⁸ ;

“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)

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

⁶⁸ 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 Lorenzen⁶⁹ 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*⁷⁰ 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”

⁶⁹ *Ibid*

⁷⁰ *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 ,6th 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 features⁷¹.

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 Purana⁷². 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.

⁷¹ Lorenzen David p.198

⁷² Fleet J. F, ‘Inscription at Albur’ 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.

Dasgupta⁷³ 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.

⁷³Dasgupta S.N ,*History of Indian Philosophy*,

CHAPTER- 4

THE RITUALISTIC CONTEXT

Ritual and Symbolism:

With respect to religious studies rituals can be described as time-honored patterns of sacred activity rooted in the psycho -cultural consciousness of a people, wanting to link the mundane or natural reality with the divine or transnatural. By invoking the sacred and transcendent with a series of mental, physical and verbal actions these acts tend to achieve a symbolic character which confers a completely novel significance and implication to them. As Krishna¹ has pointed out:

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

The rites and ceremonial processes which are responsible for this transformation of the natural or the casual into the cultural are closely allied to the attitude of the practitioners to time and space and to the symbolism extant in the order which they follow. The importance of this symbolism is rightly stressed on by Mircea Eliade² in following words:

“all research undertaken on a religious subject implies the study of religious symbolis. Religious symbols are capable of revealing a modality of the real or a structure of the world that is not evident on the level of immediate experience....An essential characteristic of religious symbolism is its multivalence, its capacity to express simultaneously a number of meanings whose continuity is not evident on the plane of immediate experience.”

¹Krishna Daya, 'Prolegomena to Any Future Historiography of Cultures and Civilizations', Delhi, PHISC Series, p.8

² Eliade Mircea, 'Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism' In *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology* Ed by Mircea Eliade and Joseph M Kitagawa , University of Chicago Press, 1959 p.95

Regarding the importance of such sacred symbology Geertz³ writes;

Sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos-the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood- and their world view-the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive idea of order.

For a scholar and an uninitiated I feel this is the most appropriate and fruitful entry point in any system of thought or practice. Saivite Scholars have been engaged in this process of interpretation, deduction, elucidation and explanation of various texts, rituals, myths, arts and so on yet it has remained an enigmatic area. As Ricoeur⁴ points out;

That symbols (especially religious symbols) tend always to have a double intentionality, that is to say, a first level obvious and literal signification as well as a second level indirect and oblique signification which is opaque, analogical and characterized by an inexhaustible depth. The interpretation of the symbol or a complex of symbols is thus, never simply an exercise in translation, difficult as this is. Interpretation, rather, is an attempt to understand and give expression to the 'transparency of an enigma' which any symbol or symbol complex represents.

To add to what Ricoeur says these religious symbols don't have one particular meaning but can be interpreted variously. While dealing with such data the idea of Foucault's floating meaning strikes us. And it is precisely this complexity which gives the religious symbol, (ritual, art or myth) its power and efficacy.

Susan Langer⁵ in her important study, *Philosophy in a New Key* states that:

Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects. In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves and it is the conceptions, not the things, which symbols directly mean.

³ Geertz Clifford, 'Religion as a Cultural System' in M Banton ed, *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, London, 1966 p.5

⁴ Ricoeur Paul, 'The Symbolism of Evil', California, 1980 p.14-24

⁵ Langer Susan K. 'Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, p.60

She further goes on to enumerate three types of symbols viz: Discursive symbol, Presentational symbol and Artistic symbol and being a Formalist considers the Artistic symbol to be the most significant one:

An artistic symbol- which may be product of human craftsmanship or (on a purely personal level) something in nature seen as significant form has more than discursive and presentational meaning: its form as such, as a sensory phenomenon has what I have called implicit meaning, like rite and myth, but of a more catholic sort. It has what L.A Reid called 'tertiary subject matter', beyond the reach of 'primary imagination' and even the 'secondary imagination' that sees metaphorically.

Her approach instantly draws a connection between the ritualistic activity, mythological exegesis and the artistic manifestation. In all traditional societies and orders **myth and ritual** are two central components of a religious practice. Although myth and ritual are commonly united as parts of religion, the exact relationship between them has been debatable. One of the approaches to this problem is "the myth and ritual, or myth-ritualist, theory", which holds that "myth does not stand by itself but is tied to ritual". Eliade too subscribes to this theory which suggests myths are created to explain a certain ritual.

There is an entire gamut of scholars who believe in the ritual purposes of myths hence at once increasing the importance of ritualistic behavior. According to Frazer⁶, "myth changes while custom remains constant; men continue to do what their fathers did before them, though the reasons on which their fathers acted have been long forgotten. The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason, to find a sound theory for an absurd practice."

The explanation somewhere rings true, as even nowadays people follow rituals without realizing their actual import. Logical questions will yield no satisfactory answers so many a times a ritual is blindly followed to continue a tradition. Burde⁷ divides religious rituals into four categories: worship rituals, rites of passage, festive

⁶ Frazer James, 'The Golden Bough', Macmillan 1922 p.477

⁷ Burde Jayant, as quoted by S.S.Toshkhani in 'Rituals of Kashmiri Pandits

rituals and sacraments while Tachikawa and Hino⁸ divide religious activity in two kinds: That which takes as its goal the spiritual well being of the individual ; and that which has the purpose of enabling the group or the society to operate smoothly (festivals, initiation rites etc.) . Toshkhani⁹ concludes that whether performed with the purpose of spiritual or material well being of an individual or religious cultivation of a social group, rituals serve as a means of communicating with divine beings or transnatural powers that are believed to guide and influence the course of human actions.

Locating the Lakulisa-Pasupata rites in the world of Saivite rituals:

The extremely important body of literature which can throw major light on the ritualistic practices and modes of worship in Saivism are the *Saivagmas* with their threefold categorization viz. dualistic, dualistic cum monistic and monistic. This Agamic literature, deriving its essence from practioners of *Saiva Sadhana* comprises of a well organized body of thought with its own intrinsic logic and rationale.

To summarize in short all the three categories mentioned above focus on the concept of 36 tattvas and *Parama Siva*, the ultimate principle is described as the 37th tattva. This 37th tattva is conceived of as purely undifferentiated transcendent consciousness which is beyond the purview of the rest of the 36 elements. His ‘*Svatantra Sakti*’ roughly ‘free will’ is considered responsible for all the creation which is nothing but his evolution in the world of multiplicity, his *lila* (sport). By this logic every created being has a *Siva tattva* in him/her and it’s by bypassing the rest of the elements and by realizing Siva in oneself that a spiritual aspirant seeks the higher realm. The arcane secrets which guide the aspirant on various paths leading to Siva are codified in various Tantric and Agamic texts.

Derived from the root ‘gam’ the word *Agama* means coming near or approaching and would literally convey the sense of achievement on coming nearer to lord. Broadly speaking the *Agamas* can be subdivided into two main portions the first being the philosophic section and second dealing with various practices and rituals. They talk

⁸ Tachikawa and Hino as quoted by S.S.Toshkhani in ‘Rituals of Kashmiri Pandits

⁹ Toshkhani S.S, Rites and Rituals of Kashmiri Brahmins, Pentagon Press, Delhi, 2010 p.5

about various pooja paddhatis (methods of worship) and also throw major light on the temple building and temple art. Rather than standing for any particular book or treatise they stood for a system of thought and a body of practices which were verbally transmitted from guru to his disciple and committed to the memory. Thus here the knowledge seems to have been essentially a confidential affair between the initiated practitioner and his master. Later when these Tantric and Agamic texts were penned down then too the language used was so cryptic and symbolic that one had to be in the lineage of the disciples to understand the actual meaning of the text. Literal reading of such texts can be an extremely futile and many a times misleading exercise and in Drabu's words¹⁰

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

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

Gudha-vidya tapa-anantyaya prakasate (PS 4.1)

The literal translation would be:

“Learning, when concealed becomes penance and leads to the state of the infinite

Now in itself the literal meaning does not suggest much and it is only by referring to the commentary that one can better understand the aphorism

Explaining the sutra Kaundinya writes¹¹ (p136-38)

¹⁰ Drabu V.N, ‘Saivagamas: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, Delhi 1990

¹¹ *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970, p. 136-138

‘Guhu’ means ‘to preserve’. It should be preserved, that means it should not be disclosed. Concealment means not disclosing. Learning, mentioned before manifests (discloses) itself and others like the lamp. Concealed learning means that it should not be brought to light by the marks of the aspirant. Now the question is –what is the result, attained by the concealment of vidya by the Sadhaka? So the answer is ‘Tapa anantyaya prakasate (penance leads to the stage of infinite) this is the reading. Or ‘kuravonmahitavat tapo’ nantyaya prakasate- this is the alternative reading. So here that itself is a penance. Its etymology is mentioned earlier. ‘An’ (the state of the infinite) is also taken to be a particular Yoga in the shape of remaining firm. That is the effect of penance like the states of ‘Atigati’ and ‘Sayujya’ (complete identification of the Sadhaka with Mahesvara). Now is the word ‘anantyam’ used to mean the limited or the unlimited or both the limited and the unlimited? The answer is –this word ‘anantya’ is used in the senses of both the limited and the unlimited, for all pervasiveness in the unlimited and in also in both of them. This word of ‘anantya’ is in the sense of His states, good and bad because it is said- “And these are not my only forms”.

From here the commentator goes on to enumerate the various forms of unlimited Brahman and ways and means of keeping the penance hidden from public. The Tantric Sadhana is claimed to lead an aspirant to spiritual ‘siddhi’ and ‘mukti’. The Lakulisa-Pasupata system seems to amalgamate the orthodox vedic teachings with more esoteric meanings and symbolism of tantras. Regarding the system Pathak¹² observes,

Vedic Saiva school appears to be same as Lakulisa-Pasupata...It may however be noted that even Lakulisa-Pasupata is originally Agamic but it is described in Puranas as Vedic because it is comparatively more orthodox and in the beginning it recognized the Vedic institution of Varna.

Seeing tantric systems as opposed to Vedic system again is a very reductive way of looking at things. We have various examples to show give and take between both traditions. Vedas too had its esoteric sections full of symbolic meaning and the practices which are usually associated with tantras. AV is full of such rites and rituals.

¹² Pathak, V.S. *History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD)*. Varanasi: Tara Printing Works, 1960 p.14-15

On the other hand practitioners of tantras use various Vedic mantras besides the ones composed in *Tantra shashtra* itself. The use of *Bija Mantras* and mantras associated with mystical syllable forming part of a mantra used as an amulet (*kavaca*), the heart (*hrdaya*) and mentally assigning and invoking various parts of the body to tutelary deities (*Nyasa*) to attain various *siddhis* is the root followed by tantric aspirants. They envisage the entire macrocosm in their own bodies and the practices of *Nyasa*s, various *Mudras*, *Yantras* and *Mandalas* are nothing but invoking the divine presence and extending the limited physical body into limitless macrocosm. To achieve these ends Tantras lay stress on external factors like the place, time and instruments used for the sadhana. The deities are invoked with hand gesture and finger manipulation (*Mudras*) and particular position of the hand on different parts of the body to render it fit for adoration. As Drabu¹³ observes

“Basic to both yantra and mantra is the belief that these operate both within the gross physical body and the subtle body, which was to be organized as to promote the goal of yoga by a process of reintegration of rituals, symbolic and suggestive.”

Thus all the paraphernalia associated with Tantric exegesis is primarily to focus the individual's concentration and make him/her aware of the divinity residing inside the body, a form of 'yoga' union of the micro and macro-cosm. In short tantras provided a practical discipline of the mental and psychological Vedic side.

As Sanderson¹⁴ observes the reference of Agamic tradition can be found as early as in *Atharvaveda* and its ancillary tract known as *Atharvaveda parisista* is filled with mention of Saiva practices and *Ucchusmakalpa* (*Parisista* 36) talks in detail about the fire sacrifice to achieve supernatural ends that invoke *Ucchusma Rudras* with esoteric Saivite mantras. Major importance here is paid to the *Pasupata* vow to which a whole *Parisista* is dedicated (*Parisista* 40: *Pasupatavrata*). The literature of the Agamic Saivas is dominated by the prescription of rituals through which the Saivas initiated candidates into their religious discipline (*Diksa*), consecrated successors to office (*Abhisekah*), installed images and other objects of worship (*Pratistha*) and performed the repeated services of worship (*yagah*) and propitiation (*Mantrasadhana*).

¹³ Drabu V.N, *Saivagamas, A study in Socio Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1990 p.89-90

¹⁴ Sanderson Alexis, *Atharvedins in Tantric Territory :The Angirasakalpa Texts of the Oriya Paippaladins and their connection with the Trika and the Kalikula*, From alexissanderson.com

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

The active ascetic initiates of this order seem to have been few in number yet throughout the history of subcontinent Saivism has exerted a tremendous influence on the religious life of common people and as Sanderson¹⁵ observes:

..there can be no doubt that for several centuries after 6th CE it (Saivism) was the principal faith of the elites in large parts of the Indian subcontinent and in both mainland and insular South East Asia....only Mahayana Buddhism was able to rival the popularity of Saivism and that too in its 'Mantramarga' way, a system to ritual, meditation and observances in which Buddhism itself borrowed heartily, if not in essence but atleast in form and style from Saivism.

The fact that by 6th CE Saivism had become a very important and powerful mainstream religion followed by royalty as well as commoners points towards an interesting shift from the essentially *Atimarga* Saivism to *Mantramarga* one, from a faith and set of beliefs associated largely with ascetic sects to a popular religion of a householder. While the more esoteric and difficult practices were restricted to the initiates, the support of a wider community of uninitiated lay followers was sought. Sanderson refers to an unpublished corpus of texts comprising principally the *Sivadharmas* and *Sivadharmittara* which contain observances recommended to the laity. Moreover he believes that inclusion of lay followers by simplifying the religious system was to counter the popularity of Buddhism and its wide appeal to general people:

¹⁵ Sanderson A, *Religion and the State: Saiva officiants in the territory of the kings Brahmanical chaplain*. Alexissanderson.com

...following the example of the Buddhists the Saivas had propagated a lesser religion of merit gathering that centered on the support and veneration of the persons and institutions of the religion proper, promising that those who followed it would be rewarded in death by a period in paradise of Siva (sivalokah, rudralokah) before returning to the world in the most desirable of rebirths.¹⁶

An insight into Asceticism:

The term ‘*tapas*’ which applies to ascetic practices in general recognizes the efficacy of the endurance of discomforts and of the difficulties which such an aspirant has to face. The importance of *tapas* is stressed upon in *Ait. Brahmana*¹⁷ in these words

“Heaven is established on the air, the air on the earth, the earth on the waters, the waters on truth, the truth on the mystic love and that on tapas.”

Upanisads too uphold the idea of *tapas* especially the *Jabala Upanisad* which advocates an extreme form of asceticism and asks the aspirants to root out all desires from their hearts. Coming to the Epics, both *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in its main and auxiliary plots mention various hermitages full of ascetics who acquired supernatural powers and privileges due to their extreme and prolonged austerities. The story of *Kirata-Arjuna* where Arjuna takes the *Pasupata* vow and meditates on Siva by performing austerities is a well known event from *Mahabharata*.

The pen picture of an early form of Saivite ascetic is met with in Kesi Sukta of Rg Veda¹⁸ where a muni is described as follows:

“The hairy one supports the fire

The poison-fluid, and heaven and earth;

He is all sky to look upon,

The hairy one is called this light

The Munis, girdled with the wind,

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ (*Ait Brahmana*, .11,6,4)

¹⁸ *Kesi Sukta of Rg Veda as quoted by G.W Briggs in ‘Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis’, Delhi, p.214*

*Wear garments soiled, of yellow hue;
After the wind's course follow they,
When once the gods have entered them.
Transported with the ecstasy
Of Munihood we mount the winds;
Ye, mortal men, are able now
To see our bodies and no more.
He flies through regions of the air,
Beholding all the various forms-
The Muni, who was made a friend
Of every god for ministry.
The steed of Vata, Vayu's friend,
The Muni, by the gods impelled,
In both the oceans hath his home,
In eastern and in western seas.
Treading the path of sylvan beasts,
Gandharvas and Apsarases,
The hairy one knows every thought,
Sweet and most stimulating friend
Vayu has twirled for him;for him
He breaketh things most hard to bend;
When he , the hairy one,has drunk
With Rudra from the poison-cup."*

This hymn describes an ecstatic ascetic who looks wild in his exterior but possesses the supernatural powers matching the deities and has done away with the fetters (*pasa*) which bind him to the wordly life.

Radhakrishnan¹⁹ summarizes the description given in Ath Veda in these words:

We hear of great ascetics who obtain the mastery of nature by tapas. They reduce the elemental forces to their control by this asceticism. It was then well known that ecstatic conditions could be induced by the mortification of the body. Man can participate in divine power by the hidden force of magic. The possessors of magic and witch-craft were accepted by Vedic seers and their calling was dignified with a result that magic and mysticism soon became confused. We find people sitting in the midst of five fires, standing on one leg, holding an arm above the head, all for the purpose of commanding the forces of nature and subduing the gods to their will.

Thus all sorts of marvelous achievements were made through extreme penance. Our epics and Puranas are full of stories which suggest the power of tapas. Indra got rid of *Brahma-hatya* by meditating upon *Pasupati* and performing severe austerities for thousand years. *Ravana* is known to have worshipped *Siva* in the most difficult ascetic methods and received the boon of invulnerability in return. *Visvamitra* the *Ksatriya* compelled the gods to grant him the birth and rights of a Brahmin by performing severe austerities. The power of asceticism is well summarized by Manu in these words²⁰

“Whatever is hard to be traversed, whatever is hard to be attained, whatever is hard to be reached, whatever is hard to be performed, all may be accomplished by austerities; for austerity possesses a power which it is difficult to surpass”.

As comes across through various myths and legends *Siva* himself is the ideal ascetic. Rather Puranic *Siva* is an interesting amalgam of a worthy householder and a thorough ascetic.

¹⁹ Radhakrishnan S. 'Indian Philosophy', Oxford University Press, 2008 vol 1, p121

²⁰ Manusmrti as quoted by G.W Briggs "Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis", Delhi, p.217

What characterizes *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system is not only its philosophical side or spiritual discipline (*sadhana*) but also the rites and rituals it prescribes. *Kaundinya* in the beginning of his bhasya offers adoration to *Pasupati* who has created the whole world beginning from the *Brahman* for the good of all. He says that the five subjects of discussion in the *Pasupata* system are:

Karya (effect)

Karana (cause)

Yoga (meditation)

Vidhi (Behaviour)

Dukkhanta (cessation of sorrows)

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

***Diksa* (Initiation):**

Diksa is defined as a process of imparting real knowledge (*jnana*) and a perceptorial instruction which removes the karma-vasana (acts- latencies) of a pasu as mentioned in *Tantraloka*²¹ , . Guided by the guru a *Sadhaka* applies himself to passing successively beyond the behavior patterns and values meant for pasu (the bonded soul). In other words the social and moral rules which apply to a layman no longer apply to the aspirant. Infact *diksa* is a process which witnesses a transformation to another mode of being who strives towards a spiritual upliftment by following the rules and rites of the order in which the person is initiated. It is supposed to ‘kill the pasu’ in jiva and to lead him to moksha. It creates so to say a new body, a ‘mystical body’ which enables the aspirant to enter the transcendent mode of being.

²¹ *Tantraloka Ahnika 1 P.80*

The incarnation of *Siva* as *Lakulisa* by entering a corpse is probably the best mythical example of this rite. One has to be dead to the world to rise as *Siva*.

*Svachhanda Tantra*²² suggests that for ordinary aspirants or samayis there is the provision of reciting vacanas, listening to oral discourses, vedic studies, japa, dhyana and so on and their souls are purified by these traditional practices but the case for an ascetic aspirant is very different and follows a strict code of conduct. This *Putraka Diksa* is for those who desire to attain liberation from the bondages, who want to break all the fetters (*pasa*) which bind them to their physical existence. Regarding the 'Putraka' which derives from the term 'Putra' (son) SvaT²³ says that *Putraka* is the son of the guru who is not his biological issue but is born of the womb of Vagisi and whose vasanas (desires) are subdued by the divine grace. It seems that the history of *Putraka* goes back to the period of Brahmanas when it was thought that the Acarya himself bears the child. By placing his right hand on the disciple's head the guru was supposed to have conceived the disciple and hence the latter became his mind-born son. The Vedic, Puranic as well as Tantrik texts are full of references to such mind-born sons which seem to have been the worthy disciples who carried the knowledge acquired the guru further thus maintaining the lineage from antiquity. This *Sparsa Diksa* was meant for highly developed disciples and after being blessed by the guru the disciple was supposed to take his 'new birth' as a Brahmana alongwith Savitri who seems to have been introduced to emphasize the sharpening of his intellect. The guru seems to divinize the Sadhaka by his mystic touch and this touch is highly venerated in most of the religious texts. The idea of re-birth is of prime importance and hence the concept of 'death' assumes a major significance.

According to Eliade²⁴, *Yoga* techniques aim at escaping the limitations of the body, allowing the soul (*atman*) to rise above *maya* and reach the Sacred (*nirvana*, *moksha*). Imagery of "freedom", and of death to one's old body and rebirth with a new body, occur frequently in Yogic texts, representing escape from the bondage of the temporal human condition.

²² *Svachhanda Tantra with Commentary by Kshemraja Ed by Madhusudan Kaul, KSTS, Bombay, 1921*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Eliade Mircea, 'Yoga, Immortality and Freedom' trans. Willard R. Trask. Bollingen Series, no.56, Princeton University Press, 1970 p.301*

Considering the purpose of diksa as the imparting of jnana, the means to obtain it, the spiritual exertion by the guru to wash off the impurities accumulated in the disciple's inner heart (antastala), communication of right knowledge and a mantra in a systematic way, we have a list of a number of diksas quoted in Tantraloka. One of these called *Pranatakramana diksa*, whereby the disciple's body falls off to attain moksha in a body less form has been mentioned. Through the performance of Jalandhara a dead disciple was traced out and initiated at the place where he lay after his death²⁵. Quite in the same vein KM ch 3.4, 3.5 says

Ankekrvachatambalam gatasajalasanidau

Devkhatetataudevi! siptosauvipulejale

Nitauasau kachhapedevi! Yatrajalesvarah

Jalmadhye mahalingamtisthate chavaranane²⁶

Holding the child to her bosom she went to the water body and immersed the corpse of her son upside down in the devkhat lake

O devi, that child (Lakulisa) then was taken to the Jalesvara linga in the middle of the water body by a group of tortoises

The pattern followed here too is the death of the miraculous child and then the resurrection of the same when thrown in the waters or when taken to Jalesvara linga. It is quite tempting to read this entire episode as the mythical explanation of the *Jalandhara*. The entire idea of *Siva* entering a corpse points at the initiation after the physical death. The next line which talks about '*Pretanjali*' too focuses on the aspect of death very clearly.

Pretanjalitattodattva haputra! Tvamkutaugattva?²⁷

After giving Pretanjali to his dead son he said, O My son where did you go?

²⁵ Drabu V.N, 'Saivagamas: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, Delhi 1990

²⁶ Patel H. H.S. Ed. Shri Kayavarohan Tirth no Itihas, Ahmedabad, 1964 p.21

²⁷ Ibid p.22

The severing of bonds is clear in this section and later on too when the child (Lakulisa) refuses to return home and instead says:

Kumara uvaca:

Mamasparsantimunyau mammatapitatatha

Astikaryamparamkincit srnvantaumuniuttamah

Tayajsokamvishalaksi! Namematakadachan

Srnvanturishiyah sarveitihhasampuratanam²⁸

Kumara (Lakulisa) said:

O Munis, my mother and my father, don't you touch me

O great Munis there is something great to be done, listen carefully

O long eyed lady, stop grieving, I never had a mother

O Rishis listen properly to me, I will enlighten you with ancient knowledge (history)

The importance of diksa comes across clearly by an Agamic injunction which suggests that diksa is the only knowledge which without internal jnana has capacity to emancipate the aspirant

Looking more closely we see that the mystery of liberation which is nothing but return of the elements (tattvas) to Siva tattva, signifies an anticipation of death. The Yogico-tantrik exercises and rituals are only an anticipatory visualizations of the merging and return of elements in the higher *Sivatattva*, a process set in motion by purification through *Diksa*. Abhinavagupta too has amplified the concept of such a diksa which according to him is the diksa leading to the separation of the body or death and attaining Sivahood. Explaining this Drabu²⁹ writes

“When death approaches a disciple, he through Samkari diksa goes to Siva. Thus to reach Parama-Pada the aspirant has to raise himself to another mode of being and to reach it , he must die to this life and sacrifice the personality that has issued from temporality, that has been created by history.”

²⁸ *Ibid* p.22-23

²⁹ Drabu V.N, ‘Saivagamas: A Study in the Socio-Economic Ideas and Institutions of Kashmir, Delhi 1990

Thus by initiating a disciple, his guru withdraws the aspirant from the outside reality into his own self, awakens his *kundilini* which lies dormant in uninitiated people and sets him on a way on which he can get united with the supreme force. In the process the bonds of *Maya*, (apparent reality or illusion) are broken by making the aspirant go through vigorous processes. All these procedures and the *vidhis* followed by the practioners of this order are only means of realizing the Highest Reality and the experience is totally internal and takes place in ones consciousness. So a major importance is paid to condition the body and mind to situations which are challenging and require extreme self control.

To be initiated and to meditate is to rise to such planes of existence unknown , unfathomable and inaccessible to the profane .Thus the path of Initiation is the path of death and mystical Resurrection and in all Saiva diksas the goal is to transcend the earthly existence and to move from imperfect ignorance to perfect knowledge.

Broadly speaking the diksa for the ascetic aspirants of this order comes under the heading '*Jnana diksa*' which aims at the purification of an aspirant and thus emancipating jiva from its animality (*pasutva*). To reach such a stage the ascetic has to undergo vigorous practices and do exactly the opposite of what human nature normally forces one to do. The *vidhis* or the rites mentioned in PS will be understood better if seen in the light of these speculations, rather than by studying them independently as some aberration or irrational behavior.

Briggs³⁰ suggests that the most of the Saivite sects that preceded *Kanphatas* were *Pasupatas*, *Lakulisa-Pasupatas*, *Kalamukha* and *Kapalika* (and probably *Aghoris*) all of which could be broadly classified under the term *Pasupatas*. These initiation rites were well thought psychological acts is clear from a passage in Briggs³¹ about initiation in Kanphata order.

"Initiation is divided, roughly into two stages, the first, a probationary period, followed by ceremonies leading to preliminary discipleship; the second during which the ceremony of splitting the ears which leads to full membership in the sect is performed. An initiate in the first stage is called an Aughar; in the second he becomes

³⁰ G.W Briggs in '*Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*', Delhi, 1973 p.218

³¹ *Ibid* p.27-28

a full fledged Yogi.....The candidate is first closely confined for a period ranging from forty days to three to six months, that is , for a period of testing satisfactory to the guru. During this time the candidate is tried as to his resolution and ability to carry through his undertaking. At the same time he is dissuaded from becoming a Yogi, the guru pointing out to him the hardships that his initiation and his life as a Yogi would entail.”

Only if the *guru* is completely satisfied that the disciple has enough discipline and self control then he is initiated in the system which is marked by fasts and presenting of two edged knife for piercing the ear, an act which has given the order its name (*kan-phata*). Then he takes his vows of *ahimsa* (non-injury) and receives the *guru-mantra* (initiatory verse) and he is officially recognized as the disciple of the one who initiated him. This is followed by ritual shaving of the head and wearing ochre robe. In the second stage the guru pierces his ears puts around his neck the *singnad janeo*, or sacred thread of the order.

The antiquity of such rational and well thought over rites of Initiation can be gleaned through initiation rites of *Ajivikas*, an extreme ascetic order whose connection with *Lakulisa-Pasupatas* has already been discussed. As is the case with *Kanphatas* there is no one form of initiation and the ceremonies vary from one group to another. Unfortunately most of the written sources available for this sect have been extracted from Buddhist and Jain sources hence they have been described as derogatory. Their practices are ridiculed *Tittira-Jataka* and the extremism completely mocked at.

Two Pali references give us some indication of the probable initiatory rites of *Ajivikas*. Only by reading these critically rather than taking them on face value can lead to valuable information.³² narrates an incident of a false ascetic who after a career of fraud and deception is judged and executed by a lion. The tiger who prosecutes the hapless ascetic while talking about the religious leanings of the latter says, “he has burnt his hands by grasping a lump”. The commentary elaborates these lines ; “At the time of his going forth as an *Ajivika* his hands were burnt by grasping a heated lump”. ***‘Hattha daddha pindapatiggahanena’***. This Basham believes points at

³² *Tittira Jataka* as quoted by Basham, A.L. *History and Doctrine of The Ajivikas*. London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1951p, 104

the fact that Ajivikas were sometimes initiated by a painful ordeal and he further suggests that there are suggestions of the survival of the practice at a much later date too. Painful procedures seem to be the watch word of these ascetic orders. It seems that physical as well as mental endurance were tested to the maximum by these extreme practices.

Another more explicit description is given in *Mahanaradakassapa Jataka*³³ where the ascetic Guna is described as an ignorant, naked, wretched and blindly foolish Ajivika. ***‘ajanantam nagga-bhoggam nissirkam andha-balam ajivikam’***. The aspect of nudity is stressed here and this was considered as a major negative aspect of Ajivikas by Buddhists. There are various references to show the latter's abhorrence of nudity. An inscription at Belagami, Mysore, dated 1162 CE catalogues the types of ascetics to whom alms were given at the Kodiya math; among those there is a mention of Nagna-Bhagnas, who seem to have been habitually naked and who according to Basham³⁴ were naked Ajivika mendicants. Interestingly such naked ascetics are mentioned in *Rajatarangini*, the first ever recorded work of history in India. While describing the Iconoclastic activities of Harsha in 10th CE, the text refers to ‘Rugna-Nagnataka’ ascetics, with ematiated or decayed noses, feet, and hands who may have been Ajivikas.³⁵ (*Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, book vii, 1092-94).

Verses as translated by Stein are as follows:

“In order to defile the statues of gods he had excrements and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away.” (1092)

“Crippled naked mendicants and the like covered the images of the gods which were dragged along by ropes round their ankles, with spittings instead of flowers.” (1094)

The mention of *Ajivikas* can be found on and off in Kashmir and in my paper on Harwan³⁶ monuments I have tried to see *Ajivika* leanings in the monuments unearthed there and in the previous section have tried to see them as a Saiva ascetic group.

³³ *Ibid.* p.105

³⁴ *Ibid.* p.108

³⁵ *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, Book vii, 1092-1094 Trans and Ed by M.A Stein, Delhi, 1961

³⁶ Kher Kaw Geetika, ‘An Enquiry into the sectarian affiliation of ruins at Harwan’ in *Heritage of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, Ed. by G.L Badam and K.K Chakravarty, Research India Press, 2010

Hence in light of all the evidence Basham sees ‘nagna-bhagna’ as ‘naked and crippled’ and believes that *Ajivika* initiatory ordeals may have resulted in harsh mutilation and deformity in the body of the ascetic.

Another element in the *Ajivika* initiation, is described in *Dhammapada* commentary while narrating the story of Jambuka³⁷.

Jambuka's habits are so disgusting that his parents decide that he is not fitted for ordinary life, but only for Ajivikas (Ajivikanam esa anucchaviko). Therefore they take him to a local group of Ajivika ascetics, apparently while he is still a child and request that he be initiated into their community. The boy is placed in a pit up to his neck, planks are laid over the pit, above his collar bones, and sitting on the planks, the Ajivikas pull out his hair with a piece of the rib of a palm-leaf.

This painstaking ordeal seems to have been a part of initiation only as we find Ajivikas with matted hair depicted on Borobudur stupa. The pit in which the novice was placed most probably symbolized his spiritual rebirth from the womb of Mother Earth after being dead and surpassing the pain and torture of the physical world.

The Ajivika reputation for asceticism apparently reached the Far East. Chinese and Japanese Buddhist literature classes the Ashibikas (i.e. Ajivikas) with the Nikendabtras or Nirgranthas as practicing severe penance.

In this context Sugiura³⁸ writes:

“They both (Ajivikas and Nirgranthas) hold that penalty for a sinful life must sooner or later be paid and since it is impossible to escape from it it is better that it be paid as soon as possible so that the life to come may be free for enjoyment. Thus their practices were ascetic- fasting, silence, immovability and the burying of themselves up to the neck were their expressions of penance”.

We don't find direct reference to Initiation rites in Lakulisa-Pasupata system but the commenatary on PS does furnish information about the discussion between Lakulisa and his immediate disciple Kausika which throws considerable light on the nature of such an initiation. R A Sastri³⁹ elaborating on PS (p11) notes that Lakulisa went to

³⁷ Basham, A.L. *History and Doctrine of The Ajivikas*. London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1951p, 104

³⁸ Sugiura, S, *Hindu Logic as Preserved in China and Japan*, Philadelphia, 1900 p 16

³⁹ *Pasupata Sutra*, Ed by R.A Shastri, University of Trivandrum, Trivandrum, 1940

Ujjain and taught a Brahmin called Kusika who had come from Brahmavarta country (near Cawnpore) to receive formers blessings. The teaching he further suggests were in the form of present sutras hence connecting them directly to the initiation process. All the five sections of the Sutras are devoted to instruct students how to pray to God and to reach the lord Rudra (Rudra Sayujya) hereafter.

The first aphorism is explained and contextualized in deatail by Kaundinya and since it provides a major insight in the philosophy and content of the whole text it needs to be looked into critically:

Athatah Pasupateh Pasupatam Yogavidhim Vyakhyasyamah (PS 1.1⁴⁰

(Now then we shall expound the Pasupata Union and rites of Pasupati)

After offering obeisance with the head (bent) to that Pasupati, the Lord of the house (world) who created the entire world beginning with Brahma for the good (of all), Kaundinya following the tradition of his predecessors makes the commentary known as Panchartha (five categories), the best of its kind, enriched with significance and knowledge of the highest order.

After a brief explanation about the analysis of the words and compound words used Kaundinya goes on to enumerate the qualities of a Pasupata teacher and his disciple:

..this preceptor is the best of all Acharyas, because he has the direct vision of the effect (Karya=World) and its cause (Karana=Pasupati), he is a learned Brahmana (vipra) and he has direct knowledge of means and its end, he answers the questions and he is in the state of the all powerful, as he is emancipated, he is within the range of mind and the not-mind because he has power of assuming forms at his sweet will. Similarly for insisting the 'brahmana', prohibition of women and instruction for conquering the senses as mentioned in – deafness, blindness, want of smelling capacity, dumbness, dullness, madness, leprosy, impotency, lameness etc' thus free from all these diseases and possessed of active senses is the Brahmana disciple.....The Acharya is inclined to pronounce the injunctions for the sake of

⁴⁰ *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 p47-55

favour. And because of instruction for worship, prompting favour and the desire to attain the Good (Siva) the disciple aiming at reaching the end of all pains (dukhanta) is here inclined to approach the guru (preceptor) but not for dharma, artha (wealth), kama (desires) and moksa.”

Knowledge comes across as the cherished acquisition that a disciple of this order was aiming at. The idea was to reach the end of sorrow by burning all desires and breaking all the fetters which bound them to their physical existence. The unified perception of all manifest reality as composed of Siva and the destruction of bonds resulting from finite differentiations are the goals of the process of initiation. Abhinavagupta deftly summarizes the main purpose of initiation and the paraphernalia associated with it in these words⁴¹

“Here what is to be perfected is only the attainment of that mantra, but neither vows nor formulas are of any useful assistance whatsoever. The only thing of any use here is the complete destruction of the disease of doubt, because doubt the essence of which is uncertainty and error, is the principal obstacle to an absorption whose nature is the cognition of that which has one taste.”

Then the commentary goes on to give an account of *Lakulisa*’s birth in *Kayavatarana* and his interactions with *Kusika*⁴².

“Again , as the good are accepted as authority, for being actuated by (special) desires to assume forms at will and because of his not being born God in the shape of man took form of a Brahmana and became incarnated in Kayavatarana. And he walked to Ujjaini, How (known)? By the authority of the Sistas (good and learned persons) and by the sight or hearing of symbols. He assumed the mark remarkable for the highest stage (asrama) and pronounced the injunctions; he lived on the altar of ashes in a pure spot for the connection with the disciples in a house, as mentioned in his own scripture, as bath by ashes, lying down and re-bath with ashes, garland of flowers and a single garment are prescribed an as the temple is reputed for being the resort.

⁴¹ Muller-Ortega P.E, ‘The Triadic Heart of Siva’Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-Dual Shaivism of Kashmir (Suny Series, Shaiva Traditions of Kashmir)p.169

⁴² *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 p.56-57

Hence being prompted by Rudra the worshipful Kusika approached the Acharya, marked in him signs of excellence beginning with the highest pleasure and the opposite signs in himself, paid homage to his feet and according to the custom related his caste, gotra ,learning and freedom from debts .The disciple stood like a patient before the Acarya who was like a physician.”

Then follows a philosophical discussion on cessation of sorrow and authority of Pasupati between the preceptor –disciple duo. Importance of Yoga-vidhi is stressed upon in the next paragraph and these vidhis are explained one by one in context of Yoga and other important factors.

“The question is –‘Is Yoga attainable simply by knowledge? The answer is , because it is said –for attainment of that we shall expound the practices (vidhi). Here the term ‘Yoga-vidhi’ means the practices of Yoga, a certain course of action”

In the last part parts of *Vidhis* are given as follows:

Here the question is –the portion, accepted is being duly explained first. Now to think of this .What is the beginning, the middle or the end, or of how many parts is the Vidhi?

The answer is –the first ‘vidhi’ is by ashes, the middle is by abuses and the end is in being dull and that vidhi has three parts viz. gift, sacrifice and penance. How is it known? Because.....

Hence Pancarthika initiation is a rite of passage into the practice of the religion. And then begins the next sutra on importance of ashes and is followed by two more with the same concern.

Guru:The divine preceptor:

Siva in his form as a teacher of yoga, music and other sciences is known by the name of *Daksinamurti*. He is called so because he is believed to have imparted the knowledge of yoga to rishis while facing the south.

PS 1.9 says : “**Mahadevasya Daksinamurteh**” and to explain Kaundinya⁴³ writes:

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

The last line clearly suggests the importance of *Daksinamurti*, i.e. Siva in form of a teacher in the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* order. Vidya, knowledge being of prime importance for a *Lakulisa-Pasupata* aspirant, the guru automatically assumes a significant position and is identified with Siva himself. The merger with Siva is what a guru is supposed to achieve after he leaves his mortal frame. The *Daksinamurti Upanisad* and the *Suta-Samhita* give the esoteric meaning of this icon. It is stated that He is the supreme god who at the end of an aeon (kalpa) absorbs within himself the whole universe and remains dazzling with joy. Further it is stated that Jnana (knowledge) is known as daksina and since daksina is ever *Daksinamurti* in front of Siva and is gazing at him in the aspect of *Daksinamurti* he is called *Daksinamukha*. The *Apasmara-Purusa* under his foot (also seen under *Najrajamurti*’s foot) is the personification of the ignorance of the living beings which he keeps under his power. i.e. he has power to dispel ignorance at his own sweet will⁴⁴.

As far as visual representations are concerned an image of is seen in four different aspects viz. as a yogic teacher, as a player of vina, as a knowledge giver and as tutor of Shastras i.e. *Vyakhyanamurti*. Of these the last form is the one which is most frequently seen in the temples and hence its iconography and form will be discussed in detail.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p.58

⁴⁴ *Gopinath Rao, T.A, Elements of Hindu Iconography, 4 Vols, Madras, 1916 ,p.277*

Vyakhyana Daksinamurti:

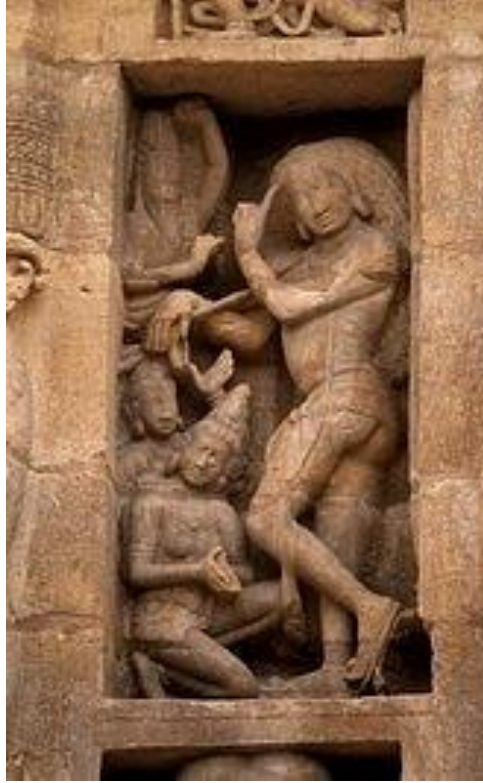
As an expounder of Shastras *Daksinamurti* is represented as seated on a secluded spot on the Himalayas, under a banyan tree, on a seat covered with a tiger's skin; or seated on a white lotus (padmasana). Three eyed and four armed he is usually shown sitting in virasana with his right leg dangling and many a times resting on the apasmara-purusa. His front right hand is in jnana mudra and front left hand is either in varada or danda mudra. The other two hands hold aksamala and agni(fire)/sarpa (snake). Sometimes he is shown holding a book too. His hair is matted and his jatas sometimes are seen to be held together with a patta-bandha and often the smiling face of goddess ganga can be seen in middle of his jatabhara. The face is shown calm and relaxed and his gaze is fixed upon the tip of his nose in a meditative pose. Interestingly surrounding this teacher-god are seen rishis, his disciples usually seven in number. Different texts give different names of these rishis but interestingly most of them are directly related to Pasupata school of thought as can be gauged from the chart.

Name of the text	Rishis mentioned
Amsumadbhedagama	Narada, Jamadagni, Vasishta, Bhrigu, Bharadvaja, Sanaka, Agastya
Kamikagama	Kausika, Kasyapa, Bharadvaja, Atri, Gautama
Karanagama	Agastya, Pulastya, Visvamitra, Angirasa

Texts mention that these rishis should have a jatamukuta on their heads, the garland of rudraksa seeds round their neck and white yajnopavitas on their person and their bodies should be completely covered with ashes⁴⁵.

This image of Siva as daksinamurti has a lot in common with Lakulisa murtis seen all over the country.

⁴⁵ *Ibid* p.278-280



Illus 32. Siva as Daksinamurti, Kailashnath, Kanchipuram, Pallava, 8th CE

Vidhis:

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

Use of Ashes: Meanings and Metaphors

Bhasmana trisavanam snayita (PS 1.2)

One must take bath by ashes in three periods of a day

Bhasmani Sayita (PS 1.3)

One should lie down in ashes

Anusnanam (PS 1.4)

Re-bath (with ashes)

Use of ashes in initiation ceremonies can be seen in Kanphata yogis who after first stage of initiation are besmeared with ashes to signify their death to the world and their rebirth in the new order. Mention of ashes is found from KM⁴⁶ (4.3) while describing the form of Lakulisa;

Drtyagnopavitam cha mekhalabhasmasanyutam/

Prahastmanassarve nityam protphullocanam//

He (Lakulisa) was seen adorned with a yagnopavita, mekhala and had ashes smeared all over. He had beautiful eyes like blossoms and was seen running

Hara⁴⁷ believes that the importance of use of ashes is fundamentally based upon the ancient Indian belief that attributes special cleansing efficacy to the ashes, which are the remnant of all burning fiery energy.

Regarding the nature of ashes commentary on PS 1.2 says⁴⁸: (p 56)

Here ashes mean the object which is given to Vama (Pasupati) and which is produced by fuel set on fire. That is made by others, it is an earthly food and shining. Ashes should be acquired like alms from the villages. Because ashes are helpful to the observances of bath, lying down and rebath, they must be taken and because they have nothing to do with injury they are the purest and best things and they should be taken profusely as the means of spiritual rise....`

Interesting reference can be found from Caryapada by the Sahajyana siddha Kanhapada (Krsnapada or Kanu-pa). Equating himself with a Kapalin and explaining the essence of a true kapalin Kanha says⁴⁹

‘the yogin Kanha has become a Kapali, and has entered into the practices of yoga, and he is sporting in the city of his body in a non-dual form The ashes he smears on his body are the ashes of passion(raga), aversion (desa,dvesa), and attachment (moha).....

⁴⁶ Patel H. H.S. Ed. Shri Kayavarohan Tirth no Itihas, Ahmedabad, 1964 p.23

⁴⁷ Hara Minoru. Pasupata Studies ed by Takashima Jun, Vienna, 2002 ,p.61

⁴⁸ *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970, p.56

⁴⁹ Lorenzen David N, *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas: Two lost Saivite sects*, Delhi, 1972 p.69-70

Here one is reminded of the story of sage Mankanaka narrated twice in and is repeated in important texts like Skanda Pu, Padma Pu., Vamana Pu, and Kathasaritsagar. Here the sage Mankanaka having performed austerities for many years accidentally cut his finger on a blade of grass. Instead of blood he saw vegetable sap flowing from the wound. The sage became ecstatic and began to dance at his achievement and power developed by years of penance. To teach him a lesson Siva dressed as a Brahmin came to him and tapped his fingers together and they were turned to ashes. When the sage saw such a miraculous feat he realized his vanity and base passion. The fact that 'One's own body is only made of ashes' dawned upon him completely and he went back to his penance. Such successes as Sukumari Bhattacharji⁵⁰ observes belong to Yoga as a discipline. Thus Siva's feat is indicative of attaining higher success for ashes in this context symbolize the complete mortification of the flesh, the triumph of the spirit over the physical world and also the supreme detachment. In short Siva is seen here as a supreme sage –a Yogisvara and in this aspect he reflects the Samkhya concept of inactive Purusa as well as 'Avyakta' of Svetasvatara Upanisad. Hence the yogic aspect is somewhere linked with inactivity but at the same time this period of inactivity raises the potential of Siva as a creator.

The symbolism of ashes does not end there. The enigma of the symbolism of ashes is brought out very well by O'Flaherty⁵¹ in these words which reconcile both erotic and ascetic aspect of Siva.

On an explicit superficial level, the ashes are ascetic, disgusting (being the ashes of corpses), and simply anti erotic. But, for all their apparent loathsomeness, the ashes assume an erotic and creative significance upon Siva by their association with the burning and resurrection of Kama and Sati.

This contention is further substantiated by the passage given in Hathayogapradipika which mentions that the ashes were used in rites of expiation and were used in place of sandalwood paste upon the bodies of a couple who had performed Tantric ritual intercourse. While on one hand they always reminded the aspirant of the universal

⁵⁰ Bhattacharji Sukumari, 'The Indian Theogony: A Comparative Study of Indian Mythology from the Vedas to the Puranas', Calcutta, 1978 p.200

⁵¹ O'Flaherty Wendy, 'Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva, London .1973 p246

truth i.e ‘Everything is ashes’, on the other they were used for their practical antiseptic value too. Rather the practical value has been presented in a garb of metaphysical expositions to stress on the importance of the ashes. By this logic ashes assumed the symbol of sin-destroying object which Siva grants to his worshippers.

This can be better understood in context of *Pasupata* concept of Sauca (Purity) as mentioned in PS.

As seen above the Lakulisa-Pasupata’s had invented a new set of Niyamas in which they included rites and practices related to ashes in a big way. Hara⁵² believes that ashes were used by the ascetics of this order primarily for cleansing and purification purposes. Kaundinya too suggests the importance of this concept in his commentary on PS 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4)⁵³

“Purity (Sauca) is established in the system (tantra). How? Because we have the teaching (in our scripture) that one should bathe with ashes (bhasma snana). Again this purity is of three kinds: purity of body (gatra-sauca), purity of mind (bhava-sauca) and purity of soul (atma-sauca)...

Ashes burn all those defects which are born of company, which owe their origin to parents, which are due to food and drink, which are caused by cross-breeding and which resort to the body, bones and marrows. And again it is said – The good thinkers say that the impure food caused by hairs and worms becomes eatable, if it is only touched by ashes”.

The fact that bathing with ashes is classified along with purity of mind by removing desires and purity of soul by courting dishonor points at its importance as a major purificatory rite. This triple division of purity is also seen in the Ratnatika on GK by Bhasarvajna though he uses the words kaya sauca, antahkarana sauca and atman sauca instead of the ones used in PS. This purificatory device is taken to a metaphysical and mystical level can be seen in this passage again cited from PBh which quotes from scriptures from other orders⁵⁴:

⁵² Hara Minoru. *Pasupata Studies* ed by Takashima Jun, Vienna, 2002 p.57-60

⁵³ *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 p.72-73

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.75

He who drinks wine, approaches the wife of the teacher, steals and kills a brahmana; is released from sins, when he besmears himself with ashes, lies on the heap of ashes and reads the chapter on Rudra. He who is self controlled and who always takes to bath by fire (ashes), saves twenty-one generations and goes to the blissful state. Thus in other scriptures also bodily purification by ashes is reputed

Daily practices:

After initiation and being marked with ashes PS recommends that the ascetic aspirant should live in a temple, cave or natural ghettos and perform daily rituals

Ayatana-vasi (PS 1.7)

(A resident in a temple) (chakroborti p 59)

Pbh elaborates⁵⁵:

..The aspirant should live in that house made by others and so he is the resident and takes the house. He lives in a place on earth, in the sky (in caves or upper floors?) in the root of a tree or goes on wandering at large anywhere.....It has been said "If there is any holy place (a temple) of Mahesvara in a village or a forest, that is the residence of the virtuous and that is the grandest spot for spiritual success..

Apart from following the ash rites and other rites of purification some special functions had to be performed in the temple by the aspiring ascetic practitioner. These have been mentioned in both PS and GK

Hasita-gita-nrtta- Dundunkara-namaskara-japyopahareno patisthet (PS 1.8)

(One should worship with laughter, songs, dance, sounds of dum-dum, salutations, mutterings and presents)

Laughter is the first of six forms of worship that are to take place in the temple. The character of each is explained in both PS and GK and compiled in these points by Collins⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Ibid p.59

⁵⁶ Collins Charles D, 'The Iconography and Ritual of Śiva at Elephanta., SUNY Press, 1988 p.135-137

- Laughter is a wild loud laugh, with the throat and lips wide open (Pbh).
- Song is performed according to the rules of the Gandharvasastra and in which, in public hearing, the names of God , those which derive from his qualities , his substances, and his acts are called to mind (Pbh) while singing, the adept rises to his feet (GK RT)
- Dance is what is performed according to the rules of the Natyasastra and consists of all possible motions of the hands and feet: upward, downward, inward, outward and shaking motion (Pbh). Both Pbh and GK RT mention that this dance should be accompanied by a song “Whatever is sung in Sanskrit or Prakrta in ones own composition or others’ should be sung”
- Dumdumkara [Huduk-kara as per GK] is the sacred sound like the bellowing of a bull, produced by the contact of the tongue-tip with the palate (Pbh) GKRT elaborates that this is to be performed after the dance when the devotee has again sat down and is still meditating on Siva.
- Inner worship or Namaskara is to be done mentally (Pbh)
- Japyam means the concentration of an idea with mind on the lines of the mantras known as Sadyojata etc

GK RT notes that laughing , singing and huduk-kara are verbal activities, dancing is a bodily one while Namaskara and Japa are mental. These six modes of worship or offering as they are called (upahara) are done in front of a image of Daksinamurti, the ascetic-teacher form of Siva. It further continues that after the sixfold worship is completed , one meditates on the God and declares that he will perform the avabhrtha-snana or purificatory ablution. He also pays homage to the teachers of the order and then he then departs, making obeisance to the lord and after that slowly circumambulates the image or the shrine while praying. Then he performs certain meditative practices outside the temple. This completes the prescribed regimen for the first religious stage.

Nudity:

The aspect of nudity is explained and advocated in sutras 1.10 and 1.11 as an important step to detachment from the worldly desires

Ekavasah (PS 1.10)

[Having only one garment]

..by the significance of this sutra only ,all objects being rejected, the disciple should be initiated to possess only one garment. The question is – when will he have the removal of shame ? The answer is –by knowledge and sinlessness

Hence it is stressed that once the true knowledge dawns upon the aspirant all sense of shame and desires are lost completely and he moves to the stage when he can be roam about naked and feel no embarrassment.

Avasa va (PS 1.11)

[Without any garment]

He should live without clot , naked as he was born and without any possession...For the sake of living without accepting and for the exposition of something not good – these two needs should be marked.

And naked is how he is supposed to enter the villages and approach people for alms and ashes but at this stage he has to be careful not to talk to women and low caste people as the former can re-ignite the worldly passion which the aspirant is trying to conquer. If by any chance such an encounter is made the aspirant is supposed to smear himself with ashes perform breath control exercise, japa and wander around to control his mind and to wipe out the sinful thoughts.

When these jealousy and other thoughts do not rise, the seed being destroyed, then that should be taken as the highest purity of thought.

Once the mind is calm and all base emotions and feelings controlled then the aspirant gains Yoga and various miraculous powers like power of seeing ,hearing , thinking and knowing from a distance, power of omniscience, swiftness of thought, power to assume forms at will, faculty of expatiation and in short becomes a Siddha.

Regarding such a yogi Kularnava Tantra⁵⁷ says:

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

The method of worship of Pasupati by the Lakulisa cult is described in the commentaries of the SDS and GK in detail and has been summarized here.

An aspirant is supposed to perform panchagnisadhana. After cleaning his feet and teeth and performing ablutions in the morning, he smears his body with ashes and meditates on Siva. At noon and in the evening, a similar procedure is prescribed. After his bath he proceeds slowly to garbhagrha. On the right of the image, he kneels on the ground and placing his hand on his chest, visualizes Siva and meditates. While meditating on Siva, he laughs loudly; then he sings and dances. He then sits in the manner prescribed above, meditates on Siva, voices hudukkara three times, does namaskara six times and performs the japa. While coming out of the garbhagrha he salutes three times and goes around the deity also three times while continuing the japa. While bathing in a lonely place he pays homage to all the Tirthesas from Lakulisa to Rasikara, and then does one pradakshina around the deity. The place selected for meditation is examined in the morning and cleaned of dirt and impurities. When darkness descends the site is again cleaned with the end of a piece of cloth and purified with ashes. He stays there until he is tired and overpowered by sleep. He thereupon gets up and spreads the ground with plenty of bhasma (ashes), then sleeps and when on awakening repeats the procedure. When he obtains jnana, with the permission of the guru he performs krathana, spandana and mandana in the midst of the people.

⁵⁷ *Kularnava Tantra: Introduction by Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), Readings M.P Pandit, Sanskrit Text: Taranatha Vidyaratna, MLBD, Delhi 1965. P 67,68*

Besides these Pasupata ascetics are advised to act in asocial manner e.g, pretend to sleep when they are not actually sleeping, shaking their legs as if suffering from a paralysis attack, walking like a lame man and exhibiting signs of lust at the sight of young beautiful women. The above description leaves no doubt that they are supposed to make themselves repulsive to the society in general.

If one sees such irrational sounding behavior in the light of philosophical position of the order and in light of material furnished by various texts, it starts assuming a coherent meaning. This nature is succinctly explained by Eliade⁵⁸ in these words:

“Pain exists only to the extent to which experience is referred to the human personality regarded as identical with purusha, with the Self. But since this relation is illusory, it can easily be abolished. When purusha is known, values are annulled; pain is no longer either pain or nonpain, but a simple fact; a fact that, while it preserves its sensory structure, loses its value, its meaning. This point should be thoroughly understood, for it is of capital importance in Samkhya and Yoga and, in our opinion, has not been sufficiently emphasized. In order to deliver us from suffering, Samkhya and Yoga deny suffering as such, thus doing away with all relation between suffering and the Self. From the moment we understand that the Self is free, eternal, and inactive, whatever happens to us sufferings, feelings, volitions, thoughts, and so on no longer belong to us.”

Such observation is corroborated by Vatulnatha Sutra (VS)⁵⁹ which comprises of thirteen esoteric aphorisms dealing with abstract Saiva thought. It is believed that it was penned down by Siddha Vatulanatha, who was a Kaula Siddha and probably lived in 12th CE.

VS-12 states: ***Mahabodhasamavesat Punyapapasambandhah***

The literal translation would be:

By entering in the state of Supreme God Consciousness one totally surpasses the limitations of good and evil

⁵⁸ Eliade M, ‘Yoga, Immortality and Freedom p.28

⁵⁹ Vatulnatha Sutra with an exposition of aphorisms in English by Swami Lakshmana Joo, Ed by N.K Gurtoo and M.L. Kukiloo, Ishwar Ashram Trust, Kashmir, 1996

The Sutra has been explained by Swami Lakshmana Joo⁶⁰ to mean that in our mundane lives it is very important for us to know what is right and wrong, otherwise there will be a total degradation. But for a realized soul who is established in God-Consciousness all sort of dualities vanish. So what is considered bad or shameful for a lay person will have no such meaning for a true ascetic.

Irrespective of all the seeming irrational behavior such ascetics have been part of Indian folk culture since ages. The figure of the *jogi* with all his idiosyncrasies appeared persistently and ubiquitously in Sanskrit as well as regional literatures and various folklore genres of India. Although a renouncer of the world and worldly pleasures, he often interfered in the affairs of the householders to whom he went for alms, helping them to solve their problems or to have their mundane wishes fulfilled through his mysterious supernatural powers. These included, among other things, the powers to bestow a child, more often a son, to infertile couples and to restore the dead to life. In many folktales related to the Jogis, we see those performing miraculous feats in a matter of fact manner, which made them favourite characters of the common people.

⁶⁰ *Ibid* p.24

CHAPTER 3

THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

Introducing Lakulisa-Pasupata philosophy:

The only way to reconstruct the theology and ritual of the *Lakulisa-Pasupatas*, the highly diffused sect of early Saivism, is to resort to their basic texts, the Pasupata sutras (PS)¹, along with its commentary, the *Pancharthabhasya* (PABh) by Kaundinya and *Ganakarika* (GK)² with the *ratnatika* (RT) by Bhasarvajna.

Prior to the publication of these basic texts, the only systematic account of Pasupata theology and ritual available to the scholars was Madhava's *Nakulisapasupata darsanam*, the sixth chapter of his *Sarvadarsanasamgraha* (SDS)³, Moreover there are sporadic references to their practice in Sanskrit katha literature and dramas and also a brief but fairly accurate information in the commentators remarks on the *Brahmasutra* 2.2.37, where the Vedantin refutes Pasupata Saivism

Based on such cursory information the system was commented upon by stalwarts like Gopinath Kaviraj⁴, S.Levi⁵, H.T Colebrooke⁶ R.G Bhandarkar⁷ E.B. Cowell and A.E.Gough who translated the entire text of SDS. Levi in his work on SDS in 1889 had earlier lamented the loss of PS and GK because it was realized that Madhava's account owed a lot to both these texts and its commentaries. Hence when finally these texts were published many scholars like K.C Pandey⁸, J.Gonda⁹ and others took

¹ *Pasupata Sutra*, Ed by R.A Shastri, University of Trivandrum, Trivandrum, 1940

Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970

Pasupata Sutra, Pancartha Bhasya with commentary, Ganakarika of Bhasarvajna, Vayusamhita, Siva Purana, Brahmasutrasankarabhasya, Sankaradigvijaya and Nakulisapasupat darsan Ed. by Alokmani Tripathi, Delhi, 1998

² *Ganakarika* of Acharya Bhasarvajna, Ed by Chimanlal D. Dalal, Oriental Institute, M.S.U, Baroda, 1966

³ E.B.Cowell and A.E Gough Ed. And Trans: 'The Sarvadarsanasamgraha or Review of the Different Systems of Hindu Philosophy by Madhava Acharya, Trubners Oriental Series, London (1882)

⁴ Kaviraj Gopinath, 'Notes on Pasupata Philosophy, Antiquity of the Pasupata Sect, The Princess of Wales Sarasvati Bhavana Studies, Vol 9, sec II 99-106, 1934),

⁵ Levi S. 'Deux chapitres de Sarvadarsanasamgraha', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Sciences religieuses*, vol I 281 ff. 1889)

⁶ Colebrooke H.T. 'On the Philosophy of the Hindus, Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, vol I, 569-574, 1828

⁷ Bhandarkar R.G., 'Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems, Strassburg, 1913 pg 121-124

⁸ Pandey K.C. 'Bhaskari, vol 3 no. 84, The Princess of Wales Saraswati Bhavana Text, (Lucknow, 1954)

interest and tried to either refer to them or translate portions from them. It was finally S.N Dasgupta¹⁰ who in his pioneering work on the history of Indian philosophy first gave a brief but very useful outline of the system, based on the PABh of Kaundinya. He also discussed various problems of Pasupata Saivism and studied its connection with other schools of Indian philosophy.

Brief Summary of Pasupata Sutra as collated from various sources:

It is believed that Siva incarnated himself as *Nakulisa*, the 28th incarnation according to both *Vayu Purana* and *Linga Purana*. This incarnation is supposed to be the author of PS.

Sastri¹¹ thinks that Kaundinya the commentator on PABh may have lived between 4th -6th AD.

PS along with bhashya of Kaundinya do not give us any philosophy of Saivism per se. They deal mostly with the ritual or rather modes of life. As Dasgupta suggests it may be quite plausible that such ascetic forms of life as mentioned in these texts existed from early times and that later the philosophy of Saivism was added. Though the rituals and vidhis mentioned had hardly any visible connection with the later Saiva philosophy, they have a general anthropological and religious interest, as these forms of asceticism remain connected with the life of those who believe in Saiva philosophy, however abstract it might have become. Even in SDS of *Madhavacharya* the Pasupata system is not indentified with any form of philosophy but with different kinds of ascetic practices.

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

Karya (effect)

Karana (cause)

Yoga (meditation)

Vidhi (Behaviour)

Dukhanta (cessation of sorrows)

⁹Gonda, J. *Visnuism and Sivaism: A Comparison*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976

¹⁰ Dasgupta S.N. 'Doctrines of the Pasupata Sutras, A history of Indian Philosophy, vol V, Delhi, 1975 pp130-148)

¹¹ *Pasupata Sutra*, Ed by R.A Shastri, University of Trivandrum, Trivandrum, 1940

The teaching of Pasupata system is for the total annihilation of all kinds of sorrow and this teaching can only be communicated to proper disciples. When the disciple follows the ascetic practices recommended by the lord he attains liberation through His grace. Though there is no direct mention of *Saktipata* but the idea of grace seems to echo the same sentiment and plays a major role in Pasupata philosophy. In PS we are told that liberation comes directly from the grace of Siva and interestingly theory of Karma and rebirth is not given any importance.

The word pasu means all conscious beings, excluding the saints and enlightened beings. Their animality or pasutva consists in the fact that they are both impotent and ignorant of their true selves and this is the cause of their bondage. This bondage which means their complete dependence on the causal power is without a beginning.

The word *pasu* is connected with the word *pasa* which means ‘cause and effect’, technically also called *kalā*. Hence all *pasus* are thus bound by the cause and effect, the sense images and their objects and become attached to them. Moreover the word *pasu* is also derived from the Sanskrit word *pasyanti*. Though *pasus* are actually all pervasive and eternal they can only perceive their physical bodies. They do not understand the nature of cause and effect and their general understanding cannot go beyond material and visible world.

An interesting point to note is that a person regarded as fit for receiving *diksa* or initiation must be a Brahmin with keen senses and disease free body. Chakraborti¹² observes that the caste distinction was rigidly followed, probably as a reaction against the Buddhist practices.

The word Yoga is used to denote the contact of self with isvara or god (*atmesvara-samyogo yogah*). The contact thus means that the person who was otherwise engaged in worldly affairs leads himself to the supreme object, or it may also mean that the contact is due to the dual approach of both God and the person until they meet. This yoga must have disinclination to worldly things as the first condition.

¹² *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakraborti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970

This kind of yoga or 'union' as it is used in the text cannot be attained by mere knowledge but one has to follow a certain course of action called yoga-vidhi. Vidhi is of two orders, the principal and the subsidiary. Of these the principal is the direct means of merit, religious exercise known as carya and the subsidiary one is of the purificatory nature. It was mainly because of the nature of these *vidhis* that the system was criticized by various scholars and religious teachers including the great thinkers like *Yamunacarya*¹³, *Ramanuja* and *Sankara*.

Describing the two kinds of perceptual knowledge Kaundinya distinguishes between sense perception and self perception. Usually most perceptions occur through senses and are regarded as valid proofs (pramana) like you recognize a cow when you see one or you can sense the burning smell from the kitchen and so on. It is the individual perceiver to whom things are proved by means of the pramanas.. Now self perception means the totality of the relation that is produced by citta and antahkarana, ie the mind and the thought. Inferences (*anumana*) is based on such perceptions. This relationship between the thought , the mind and the self expresses itself in diverse forms and produces diverse impressions and memories. And these lead to other kind of awareness that is the spiritual awareness. This awareness or thought product is called *Samvid*, *Samcintana* or *Sambodha*. It is through these that true knowledge is revealed. The process of knowledge continues from the first moment of inception to the completion of knowledge. This idea of inference has been important for Indian aesthetic thought too, and this can be related to Sri Sankuka's 'Chitraturaganyaya' where he clearly states that art is nothing but inference.

Turning to the practices it is said that one should collect ashes and bake them and then smear the body in the morning, midday and afternoon with these ashes. The real bathing is of course through the attainment of virtue by which the soul is purified. One should also lie down on the ashes. The ashes are to be used for bathing instead of water, both for purification and for bearing the signs of a Saiva. The ashes (bhasma) are therefore called linga or an indicatory sign of a Pasupata ascetic and distinguish him from ascetics from other sects. The pasupata ascetic may live in the village, in the forest or in any place of pilgrimage and there he may employ himself to various practices.

¹³ *Agamapramanya* of Yamunacharya, Ed. by Dr. M. Narsimhachary, Oriental Institute , M.S.U. Baroda, 1976

In introducing moral virtues great emphasis is laid on the yamas consisting of non-injury, celibacy, truthfulness and nonstealing. Next there are niyamas consisting of non-irritability (akrodha), attending to the guru, purity, light diet and carefulness (apramada). Non-injury is highly emphasized as a virtue, almost as strictly as Jains. Brahmacharya meaning all kind of sense control particularly the organ of taste and sex is suggested to be strictly followed. Any kind of association with women is strongly discouraged, hence suggesting that the followers were all young males and there was no place for a woman as a disciple in this harsh ascetic system.

The discussion about truth is quite an interesting one. The final standard of truth is the amount of good that is rendered to people by one's words. It is categorically mentioned that even a misstatement or a false statement if beneficial to all beings should be regarded as preferable to a rigorous truthful statement which benefits no one. Such a diplomatic stance is hardly understandable in such a rigorous and strict ascetic system and seems more in accordance with Kaundinya's time when the order had started gaining popularity among the royal dynasties and lay people. Pasupata system forbids all kind of commercial dealings and trades and an ascetic of this order has to earn his living by mendicancy alone.

It is emphatically laid in the text that a Pasupata ascetic should be a Brahmin and he is prohibited to address women or sudras, except under special circumstance. Under such exceptional circumstances one should purify oneself by bathing in ashes and also by pranayama and muttering of 'rudra gayatri' This is suggested for purifying the mind as there is a chance that the ascetic would get angry and thus cause injury to his mind and probably lose his concentration too.

As a fruit of all this staunch asceticism and when the mind is completely purified one attains various miraculous powers. But an ascetic is soon warned of misusing such powers and falling into decadence, the process of spiritual worship can only be done through the surrendering of oneself in one's mind to the supreme lord and one has to continue to do it without losing the focus in between. The lure to use siddhis is great but a true ascetic is supposed to overcome all that and surrender himself completely to Siva. Lord is regarded as *Sakala or Niskala*, immanent or transcendent but even in His transcendental aspect He has in Him all the powers to extend His grace to all beings. And He is the only one who can bestow the eternal liberation to a devoted ascetic who has completely surrendered to him.

The real Saiva ascetic after acquiring the miraculous powers is supposed to dispense with all the external practices so that no one can recognize him as a Saiva ascetic. Thus ignored by the society his mind will delve more in Siva. He is further asked to move about like a poor lunatic, besmeared with ashes and dirt to create repulsion in people who encounter him and treat him like an outcaste. This insult further helps him on the path of disinclination and spiritual advancement. We might simply understand it as a harsh test of one's patience and humility. When the ascetic bears the insults showered upon him by the ignorant people he rises higher and attains fortitude. Its almost like performing a hard penance in the world to rise over it and its material being. With such behaviour he is not only purified but is spiritually ennobled. Ingalls¹⁴ compares such courting of dishonor by Pasupata ascetics to the similar practice followed by Cynics of ancient Greece. Hara¹⁵ in his monumental work on Pasupata studies hints open the transferring of merit from the abuser to the abused and the use of such technique by Pasupata ascetics to gain maximum merit.

Thus when a person is firm in *Yama and Niyama* practices and meekly suffers the indignities and abuses showered on him by other people he is considered to be well established in the path of asceticism. Indra is supposed to have performed this harsh Pasupata vrata to atone for his sin of Brahma hatya

The supreme lord is referred to by many names and yoga in this text means a steady union of the soul with him. Now for this '*sayujyam*' (union) the person should be completely detached from all objects present, past and future and be emotionally attached to *Mahesvara*. The union of self with Siva must be so intimate that no physical sounds and disturbances should lead the person away. In the first stages the attachment with Siva takes place by the withdrawal of the mind from other objects and making it settle on the lord; then the association becomes continuous. This constant or continuous contact constitutes the eternity of self. The self is then regarded as unborn, in the sense that it is not born anew along with the chain of sensations and other activities of mind or in other words it remains the same through all its experiences. At this stage it is called '*Maitra*' as it can remain in the state of equanimity and in attachment with the supreme lord when all its desires, antipathies and efforts have disappeared.

¹⁴ Ingalls Daniel H.H, *Cynics and Pasupatas: The Seeking of Dishonor*, *Harvard Theological Review* 55, no.4 , 1962, p.281-98

¹⁵ Hara Minoru. *Pasupata Studies* ed by Takashima Jun, Vienna, 2002

The kind of detachment referred in the text can only be attained by the control of all the cognitive and conative senses, manas , buddhi and ahankara. The control of senses here means that their activities should be directed towards good acts and they should not be allowed to stray away into the commission of evil deeds. Moreover Kaundinya categorically states that the definition of final goal as described by philosophers of Samkhaya and Yoga schools is not right. According to him the teachings of both these schools are impure and to be finally liberated means to be connected with Lord siva and not to dissociate from all things as preached in these schools.

It is mentioned that a Pasupata ascetic should live on mendicancy alone and should bear all hardships like animals and be satisfied with whatever he gets , vegetable or meat by begging.. The yogin who has realized his goal is not affected by any actions or sins. He is also unaffected by any mental troubles or physical diseases. The supreme Lord has the infinite power of knowledge and action by which He controls everything, and this lord should be meditated upon in His aspect as formless (niskala) i.e., formless. In PS 5.7 it is mentioned that god is unassociated with anything that can be expressed by speech. The supreme lord is therefore called Vag –Visuddha. Interestingly at this stage cremation ground is suggested as the place to stay for the ascetic. Hence not having any association with the outside world and taking away his mind from all sense objects he concentrates on the lord. By this means all the network of causes that produce the defects are cut asunder. The defects are classified as various sensations of sound touch etc from which we get the feeling of desire, anger, greed and so on. The suffering of a man commences from the time of birth and continues throughout his life, till the time of his death so the aim of the ascetic is put a stop to his cycles of births and rebirths by fixing his mind on Siva. The self which is thus fixed in Siva becomes static (niskriya) and is also called niskala. The mind in this state is devoid of all good and bad thoughts. When this yoga ideal is reached the person becomes omniscient and he cannot be drawn to any illusory notions.

So the liberated yogin, according to this Saiva yoga, does not become a kevalin like the yogin following the Patanjali yoga, but he becomes omniscient and has no sorrows and this happens by the grace of god. A very strong hint of monotheism can be seen here. He becomes absolutely liberated in the sense that he can arrest any future aggression of evil or time and he is not dependent on anybody. In this way he shares the supreme power of the lord.

A survey of the PS with Kaundinya's bhasya suggests in all probability the same type of Lakulisa Pasupata system as referred by Madhava in SDS in 14th AD. According to Dasgupta¹⁶ it may also be the same system of pasupatas as referred to by Sankara in his bhasya on the second book of the second chapter of the Brahma-sutra. There is absolutely no reference here to maya nor to the doctrine of monism as propounded by Sankara. Even at the time of emancipation the liberated souls do not become one with Siva. The emancipation here means that by mental steadiness the devotee is in perpetual contact with Siva and this is what is meant by the word 'rudra-sayujya', used often in the text. Apparently as the text suggests, god though omnipotent has no power over liberated souls. He is the creator of world and all the living beings but the system does not make any special effort to explain how this world came into being.

As mentioned earlier Pasupata system as mentioned in this text is represented as a Brahmanical system as only Brahmins could be initiated, but gradually as the order progressed we see the inclusion from all sections of the society which gave a boost to propagation of this order but changed its basic structure.

Critical rereading of PS:

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

PS is divided into five chapters and the nomenclature of this chapterisation is based on five mantras from Taittiriya Aranyaka viz. Sadyojata, Tatpurusha, Isana, Vamdev and Aghora. After offering obeisance to Pasupati, Kaundinya in PABh says that he is writing a commentary on this Sutra, according to the traditional knowledge he has acquired through the line of the pasupata acaryas. Kaundinya is identified with Rasikara the 17th acarya of Lakulisa-pasupata line starting from Lakulisa himself.

¹⁶ Dasgupta S.N, *History of Indian Philosophy*,

The first word of the very first sutra suggests that the knowledge of PS was possibly carried verbally from guru to shishya through guru-shishya parampara. Detailed analysis of this first sutra gives some insight in the nature of the text as well as in some of its important contents.

PS 1.1 Athatah Pasupateh Pasupatam Yogavidhim Vyakhyasyamah

The first word Athatah itself is the combination of two words

Ath =Then

Atha =Therefore

“Then therefore we shall expound the Pasupata union and rites of Pasupati”¹⁷

Starting the text with words like ‘Then Therefore...’ suggests that the material in the text is the continuation of some ongoing discussion or a dialogue. Probably these sutras were only theoretical part of an all comprehensive knowledge system comprising of various disciplines. Hence seen in isolation they yield no comprehensible meaning at all.

The use of word Pasupateh is in the sense of someone from whom all the knowledge in the said scripture was received and can be very well seen as the very first teacher. It is from this ultimate Acarya that all the knowledge emanates.

The focus on the teaching aspect is very vivid in almost all the Lakulisa sculptures one comes across around the country. The tedious word to word translation and analysis in PABh is justified by the author by giving an apt example. He says that words that we see employed in the Sutra have been used in a certain context with a separate sense than what one usually understands. He further explains¹⁸,

“That is why it is said –as a man is not identified though his body is exposed, if his head is covered, so the sutra conveys no sense if its compound is not analyzed ”

¹⁷ *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakrabarti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 p.10

¹⁸ *Pasupata Sutra with Panchartha Bhasya of Kanundinya* Trans. by Haripada Chakrabarti, Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1970p.12

The beauty of Indian texts and literature lies mainly in the kind of wonderful and appropriate examples the author furnishes to justify his argument. In Dhvanyaloka , the great aesthete Anandvardhana has discussed nearly 500 such examples at length to give his discussion a sharper edge. *Anandvardhana* and his commentators and others use these examples from *Prakrit* and *Sanskrit* literatures to isolate various properties of speech that facilitate poetic communication by concealing, negating, erasing of primary sense the *mukhyartha*.

Philosophical nature of PS and PABh:

Hara¹⁹ suggests that Kaundinya took advantage of the Samkhya philosophy for the formation of his own doctrine. As mentioned earlier, PS does not have philosophical speculation as its major concern and is essentially theistic in nature and didactic in approach.

Realising that his system would look similar to Samkhya and Yoga system, the author right in the beginning starts to differentiate between them and his own doctrine. Hence both these systems become object of his harsh criticism while the pasupata claims its superiority.

The famous three-fold classification of suffering (duhkha) which is first mentioned in Samkhya-Karika repeatedly occurs in PABh and forms a very important part of the whatever philosophical idea the text furnishes.²⁰

E.g., PABh p4 line 8-10

PABh p25 lin 8-10

PABh p69 line 4-6

PABh p121 line 3-4

PABh p143 line 12-13

¹⁹ Hara Minoru. *Pasupata Studies* ed by Takashima Jun, Vienna, 2002

²⁰ Hara p.25,69,121 and 143

But at the same time the author, Kundinya repeatedly tries to belittle former philosophical system and its adherents. Right in the beginning of the commentary his bias can be seen. Distinguishing between the released souls who have attained emancipation through Samkhya and Yoga schools on one hand and Pasupata system on the other he says²¹:

“Even the people who have attained the highest state of emancipation (Kaivalya-according to Samkhya and Patanjali Yoga) are found to have experienced miseries. This preception (i.e. the Pasupata Acarya) is the best of all Acaryas because he has the direct vision of the effect (karya=world) and its cause (karana=Pasupati)”

PABh has been written in a question answer format i.e. the author asks a question and goes on answering the same. It sort of reminds us of FAQ sections in various books and websites that we come across. Probably the questions were the doubts that arose in the minds of the disciples undergoing the rigorous training. The urgent need to set pasupata system as a separate and superior to others comes across in the following quasi-dialogue²²

Q: The question raised that in other systems such as Samkhya and Yoga etc. the state of perfect isolation (Kaivalya) together with sovereignty (aisvarya) is attained by abandoning of effects and instruments just as is taught in our system, so there would be no difference?

A: The difference lies in regard to the means i.e. ati-dana (transcendent giving) ati-yajana (transcendent sacrifice) and ati-tapa (transcendent Asceticism that are to be followed by the disciples of this system- Now since means are different goals one is aspiring for has to be different

Again he asks

Q: What goal does the Brahmin achieve with these transcendent forms of giving, sacrifice and asceticism?

A: In an answer to this, the author categorically states that the goal promised by Pasupata system is much higher than what the followers of Samkhya or Yoga are promised viz. success (abhyudaya acc. to Samkhya) and perfection, isolation (Kaivalya acc. to Yoga)

²¹ Ibid

²² Hara p 115

The Pasupata aspirant who has attained the transcendent goal (ati-gati) by the transcendent means and thus is united with God (Yukta) not only outshines all the souls released by other systems but also all the gods beginning with Brahma.

Taking the dialogue further the Pasupata aspirant is supposed to have true knowledge while the ones released according to Samkhya and Yoga are here mocked as those who are in a swoon (sammurchitavat)- as they lack knowledge of themselves or anyone else and hence are misled.

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

Interestingly the released soul (kaivalya) is categorized as Pasu, (soul in bondage) in pasupata system.

PABh p5 line 15-16

“Those who have won the release through Samkhya and Yoga, the gods of Samkhya and Yoga indeed all creatures from Brahman down to animals are called pasu in the true tradition.

Indeed the category of kaivalya, the perfect isolation is clubbed together with profane objectives like artha, kama etc. and thus stating that duty of a pasupata aspirant is to aim at end of suffering (dhukhanta) and he should not care for ordinary purposes of merit, wealth, sensual gratification or even perfect isolation.

PABh p3 line 11-12

Siddhi in PS and YS

According to Jacobi²³

“as the Samkhya ideas formed the scaffolding of the pasupata doctrinal edifice, so also the yoga ideas constituted a similar scaffolding of its practical (ascetic and meditative edifice)”

²³ Hara 56

The text, PS is replete with the Yogic terms of self control and meditation. Terms such as yama, miyama, pranayama, ahimsa, sauca, tapas, dharana and others repeatedly appear throughout the Text, though the semantic content is not always the same as in YS of Patanjali

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

Here the aspirant approaches the god through his religious practices ²⁴(PABh p41 line 12, SDS line 79)

While the god approaches him by codana etc²⁵ (PABh p6 line 10)

Hence Pasupata yoga means a sort of communion for it is said that by virtue of this yoga the pasupata aspirant partakes of the attributes of the god Mahesvara²⁶ (PABh p41 line 17-18)

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

The concern comes across quite clearly in PS 2.12²⁷

PS 2.12 Harsa Pramadi

It has been explained in PABh as a warning for aspirants not to get too excited or overjoyed by the acquisition of this supernatural power and indeed they are literally they are asked to refrain from getting “intoxicated with delight”

This section of the text as well as the commentary is sort of confusing but the gist of the section is that the aspirant has to maintain his sanity and go on humbly concentrating on Siva and not loose focus by gaining these powers.

²⁴ PABh p41 line 12

²⁵ PABh p.6 line 10

²⁶ PABh p.41 line 17-18

²⁷ PS 2.12

The powers mentioned as tras in PS 1.21, 1.22, 1.23, 1.24, 1.25 are:

Miraculous Power of seeing, hearing, thinking and knowing from a distance

Omniscience

The possession of swiftness of thought

The quality of assuming forms at will

Ability to perform actions even without using organs

It is interesting to note that while on one hand the aspirant is strictly warned against indulging in such supernatural practices Kaundinya states that this power can be (should be) used to attract new pupils²⁸

PABh p42 linw 1-3

“ Here we may grant that after one has achieved Yoga, the material categories no longer apply, still the following matters are raised like a bright flag (ranga pataka) in order to attract the pupil”

As is evident from the above quote siddhi is not considered a goal but remains as a means or as an agency for propaganda. The need for such a strategy talks of the kind of competition that the system might have faced. This portion also reminds one of various miracles performed by Budhha and Jesus Christ for mainly gaining followers.

So simply understood it seems like the USP's of a certain practice were displayed in public to lure followers and disciples. History is full of such examples where godmen have tried to stun people with their supernatural powers for various reasons.

However for an aspirant who hasn't yet reached the final stage there can be a total downfall and losing of all the tapas if he is not cautious.

Quoting from Mahabharata (3.2.62) PABh p67 line 7-15) Kaundinya²⁹ says, “ Even at reaching on to this stage there can be a total downfall if the aspirant gets carried away by his body and bodily functions just as a charioteer even if intelligent may be carried away by ill-trained horses.

²⁸ PABh p 42 line 1-3

²⁹ PABh p67 line 7-15

Thus at this stage when the temptations are maximum the aspirant is asked to continue his practice of pasupata yoga-vidhi and it's only by the power (sakti/bala) of Mahatmya that aspirant is able to follow his goal. Explaining this concept of Mahatmya PABh says (PABh p.67 line 16-17)

“Mahatmya (greatness) is the force (virya) the strength (bala) , the power (sakti) of the asceticism (tapas) of one who has not strayed from correct conduct”

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

PS 5.47 karanadhikara-ivrtti

and he possesses the excellence of Mahesvara.

PS 5.40 tatha vartamanena Mahesvaramaisvaryam praptam

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

At this juncture it is important to state that other systems too advised aspirants to ignore the siddhi. According to P.V Kane³⁰ out of 195 sutras of YS , 35 (3.16-3.50) are devoted to the description of siddhi”. Yet among these sutras we see one which advises yogins to ignore these siddhis i.e Y.S 3.37

YS 3.37 ‘te samadhav upasarga vyutthane siddhayah’

‘In concentration these supernatural activities are obstacles (though) they are (considered to be) in the emergent state as perfections”

Vacaspatimisra explains the sutra as follows³¹:

³⁰ Kane P.V, ‘History of Dharmasastras, vol 5 poona 1930-1950,p.1451-1452)

³¹ Ibid.

A man whose mind-stuff is emergent (vyutthita citta) thinks highly of these perfections, just as a man born in misery considers even a small bit of wealth a pile of wealth. But a yogin whose mind stuff is concentrated (samahita-citta) must avoid these (perfections) even when brought near to him. One who longs for the final goal of life (purusartha) the absolute assuagement of the three-fold anguish how could he have any affection for those perfections which go counter to the attainment of that goal”

Hence it is clear a serious aspirant in whatever the system he adhered had to simply consider Siddhi as a byproduct and not an end in itself. Classical sanskrit literature is filled with examples of ‘false ascetics and nuns’ who got strayed from their goal and started abusing their miraculous power. Bloomfield³² has explored this area thoroughly and has come up with many examples.

Classification of the system as an *Ati-margika* one:

The height of asceticism practiced in the system becomes clear by studying the concepts of *ati-dana*, *ati-yajana* and *ati-tapas* in detail.

After warning the aspirants of the hazardous nature of siddhi the text proceeds to explain the means (upaya) to attain the highest goal.

In answer to the question if there is any qualification concerning giving ‘dana’ PABh³³ says,

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

³² Bloomfield, ‘On False Ascetics and Nuns in Hindu fiction’, JAOS vol 44 pg 202-242

³³ PABh 56

Moreover the sacrifices agnistoma and others are classified as Kuyajana, wrong sacrifices because they are accomplished only by a process which involves activities such as seizing (samgraha) accepting (pratigraha), killing (himsa) and so forth, secondly because they bring about no greater result and results produced are temporary inferior and impure. The statement reminds us of ‘Daksa Yagna’ in which Siva is not invited and hence considered as an outcaste and this considering of such Yagnas as wrong sacrifices probably talks about this antagonism.

Now the type of sacrifices advocated is Ati-yajana (transendent sacrifice) performed either in the temple (ayatana) or in the world (loka). The former is a set of ritual practices peculiar to the Pasupata such as bathing in ashes and so on and the latter is a series of strange actions performed in public to deliberately invite abuse.

Ganakarika (GK³⁴):

Haradattacharya, in Gaṇ akārikā, explains that a spiritual teacher is one who knows the eight pentads and the three functions. With the kind help of Dr. Shette I have tried to summarize the essence of GK by referring to Bhasarvajna’s commentary of the said text.

The disciple asks the guru that by following Pancartha will he be able to acquire the cessation of sorrows (Dukhant), the final goal of the Lakulisa-Pasupata aspirants. It is in answer to this query that the Guru expounds the importance of rituals for attaining the mantrasiddhi and also importance of the right guru who can lead an aspirant to higher planes and he himself must have reached the highest level. Here the text warns the aspirant that if the guru is not capable enough or not well initiated in the system he can lead his disciples to ‘mahanaraka’. So he states categorially referring to PS that only by following rituals according to the text can one acquire dukhant. It is only by the grace of yoga that one can be totally free of sorrows but the ladder has to be climbed step by step from Jnana, Anugraha, Vidhi, Yoga and finally Moksa. All through the spiritual training the aspirant should remember all the instructions and knowledge gained by heart, so that if books are lost they don’t make any mistakes and finally the aspirant is told if he does not have patience and ability to go through all the vidhis or if he gets carried away by the miraculous powers attained then there is a sure downfall.

³⁴ *Ganakarika* of Acharya Bhasarvajna, Ed by Chimanlal D. Dalal, Oriental Institute, M.S.U, Baroda, 1966 (GK)

The eight pentads of Acquisition(result of expedience), Impurity(evil in soul), Expedient(means of purification), Locality(aids to increase knowledge), Perseverance(endurance in pentads), Purification(putting away impurities), Initiation and Powers are mentioned and discussed.

Apparent Monotheism:

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

Trying to put the history of Indian theism in a simple perspective Swami Hiranmayananda³⁵ observes that Vedic polytheism soon developed into sort of Henotheism, where each god was elevated to a supreme position by his devotees. In the due course this led to a kind of Monotheism which on further philosophical speculations culminated in Monism. One can probably place Lakulisa-Pasupata system somewhere in the transition period between monotheism to monism as its philosophy is neither completely dualistic nor monistic. It has been classified by scholars as ‘dual cum non dual Saiva system’

As noted philosophers and scholars have observed early Samkhya system is primarily atheistic (nirisvara) in its outlook. The eternal existence of souls or Purusas who are permanent and supreme is inconsistent with the infinity and creatorship of God. The Samkhya admits the godhead of certain released souls and does accept the popular gods , but they are also believed to be subjected to laws of samsara.

In YS of Patanjali that one gets a glimpse of the God in these lines³⁶

“He in whom pre-eminence reaches the zenith is god . he is not a different category but is a singular type of Purusa. He is the first teacher because unlike other teachers he is not limited by time. Though he has no desire yet out of his grace towards all beings He saves people immersed in samsara by imparting knowledge and virtue to them. He is made up of pure sattva; He is ever free and ever the pre-eminent and he is Omniscient” (Vyasa’s bhasya on YS i.23-26).

³⁶ YS Vyasa’s bhasya on YS i.23-26).

Use of terms like ‘grace’ and ‘teacher’ has glimpses of Pasupata concept of God.

Another school of philosophy which seem to have direct links with pasupata school is the theistic (Sasvrya) school of Naiyayikas. God in Their system is omnipotent. He is a particular kind of atman possessing benign attributes, devoid of vice, wrong knowledge and mistakes and is eternally endowed with what are known as asht siddhis (eight supernatural powers). The great Naiyayika Udayanacarya has written an elaborate logical thesis on the proofs of the existence of God in his famous treatise ‘Kusumanjali’³⁷. At the beginning of his book, he says,

“What doubt can there be in God , experience of whom is admitted throughout the world?”

Thus, stressing that any proof of his existence is unnecessary and redundant from the standpoint of Naiyayikas.

Regarding his works he says,

“This logical consideration of God is tantamount to thinking (manana) about Him. It follows hearing (sravana) about Him and is undertaken as a form of worship (upasana)”

In putting forward the various inferential proofs, the author writes,

From effects, conjunction, support etc. from the use of things, from the authoritativeness of the Vedas ,from the composition of the Vedas, from sentences and from particular numbers, an immutable all-knowing God can be deduced. The first of these is the casual argument-from consideration of effects (karya) God can be deduced. The earth etc. must have a maker since they are effects like the pot. Everything that is composite must possess an intelligent cause. Without such a cause, the material causes cannot produce definite effects. Everything that is composite must possess an intelligent cause. Without such a cause, the material causes cannot produce definite effects. To be this cause entails possessing direct knowledge of the material causes, a desire to realize some aim, and power of will to accomplish this aim. God must be such a cause.

The second proof is from conjunction (ayojana) At the beginning of creation two atoms must join to form a molecule. All works require an intelligent agent. At the beginning of creation , when two atoms join together to form a dyad, even that, being a work ,must requite an intelligent agent, who must be God.

The third proof arises from the consideration of inhibition of celestial bodies from fall. Just as a piece of wood is supported in space by a bird, so also the universe is withheld from falling down by someone's support. And that someone is God.

The word etc. (adi) signifies dissolution. God is the author of the destruction of the world.

From the phrase 'use of things' (padat) it can be inferred that there must be a teacher for imparting the knowledge of using the things. As teachers are required to teach the students the crux of modern art so for the traditional arts which are current from endless time, there must be an instructor. And that instructor must be God

The next proof is to have from the authoritativeness of Vedas (prtyayatah).This knowledge is authoritative like all true knowledge. So that authoritativeness must have a cause which is God.

The Vedas are composed by somebody. Now as the authorship of Vedas cannot be ascribed to any human being, its author must be God. The further argument 'from sentences (vakyat) denotes that since the Vedas contain sentences so they must have been composed by someone

Then comes the argument 'from number (sankhya visesat). According to this argument, the magnitude of dyad is not caused by individual atoms; it depends on number because atomic magnitude is eternal and insignificantly minute. But number requires the distinguishing perception (apeksa buddhi) which must be God's

Kanada³⁸ in Kanada-Sutra state that Udayana accepts that scriptures independently prove the existence of God.Thus Vaisesika system believes inference and scriptures to be the valid means of the knowledge of God

The need to discuss these statements in detail is to show that theism had to be justified and established and lot of other systems had to be proved wrong. The scriptures were considered an authority to justify the same and that is the reason for considering them (vedas or agamas) as ‘other worldly’. According to Sankara , the vedas are the only means of the knowledge of God. Reason in itself is futile. (Brahma-sutra, Ramanuja Bhasya I.1.3)

Thus it is in this time of debate and questioning that Kaundinaya must have written his commentary and his treatment of PS as a tantra (as often mentioned in PABh) clearly shows that he wanted to give another worldly and supernatural status to the text.

According to Lakulisa Pasupata system God is seed cause, the instrumental cause of the world and his will is at the root of all activities of this pasu world. Siva is also considered to be the absolute cause and the actions of the pasus (individuals) are effective only insofar as they are in conformity with the will of Siva. Hence theory of Karma so important in later Indian thought is not given any importance in this system. The pasus are but His manifestations, all effects of the same God who is omnipotent and omniscient. He grants liberation to all who properly undergo the Pasupata discipline. The final duhkkhanta’ (final deliverance from sorrow) is attained only when the pasupata ascetic passes through the different stages of sadhana and reaches Rudra. What is ‘mukti’ to other systems is “Sayujya’ to the pasupata. The liberated souls do not get merged in God, as the Vedantins aim but become united i.e., eternally associated with Siva. They remain by their mental steadiness, in perpetual contact with Siva and they never return to the cycle of birth and death.

It is important to note that the pasupata system of the PS hardly considers the importance of prakrti (the female principal) as energy (sakti), as we find in Puranic pasupata system. None of the categories of Samkhya appear to be of any relevance regarding the creation of the world. Even the concept of yoga in PS is different from the Puranic concept or Yoga-sutra of Patanjali. Here in PS as we have seen the word yoga itself has been used in the sense of continuous contact with the almighty while in the Patanjali yoga-sutras it is taken as suppression of all mental states (citta-vrtti-nirodha) which precedes Kaivalya. The yogasutras of Patanjali do not try to establish Isvara of God but only accepted it as one of its necessary postulates. Rather

interestingly none of the Indian philosophical systems have tried to establish God by any logical means except Naiyayikas who according to tradition are Saivas. Hence such an overarching importance given to the supreme deity in the Pasupata system comes across as an interesting point for speculation.

The overarching role of Pasupati the protector of all is envisaged in Kaundinya's³⁹ remark that the liberation from sorrow ie dukhanta cannot be attained by knowledge (jnana) , disinclination or total renunciation (vairagya), virtue (dharma) and giving up of ones miraculous powers (aishvarya tyaga) but only by the grace (prasada) alone. While on one hand such a statement points at complete monotheistic nature of the sect on the other it covertly criticizes the other ascetic systems like jains and Buddhists. This ultimate image of Pasupati reminds one of the so called pasupati seals from Indus valley where we see various animals flanking a horned, in some cases an ithyphallic figure identified by scholars as Proto siva. Are the animals aspiring for the divine grace which would lead them to final redemption from all kinds of sorrow is worth asking?

While discussing 'dukhanta' the final ideal of the pasupata doctrine Kaundinya states:

“tasmat prasadat sa dukhantah prapyate /na tu jnana-vairagya-dharmaishvarya-tyagamatrad ity arthah” PABh p6 line 1-2

“From this grace of god the end of suffering is attained and not from mere knowledge ,dispassion,merit , sovereignty or their opposites ..this is the meaning’

Here Prasada (Grace) is of the primary importance and outshines the philosophical concepts peculiar to Samkhya philosophy. So ultimately it lies in the hands of that final absolute to redeem the aspirant from all the miseries

A similar theistic flavor according to which God has priority to the philosophical ideas is met in Kaundinya's etymological explanation of the word 'bhava'

“Because they are created by a process of becoming (bhavana) and of causing to become (bhāvana), each cattle (pasu) becomes a god, human or animal and the lord causes them so to become..”⁴⁰PABh p54 line 7-9

³⁹ PABh p.6

⁴⁰ PABh p74 lines 9-12

Almighty's power is not limited to obstructing the eight aspects of buddhi given in Samkhya philosophy but also is extended to transforming them. In his commentary on Kala-vikrana (an epithet of Siva), Kaundinya says

PABh p74 lines 9-12

“His being able to transform the material components means that he has the ability to join the individual souls to the material components which are called effect and instrument and join them to merit, knowledge, dispassion, lack of sovereignty etc., through a process of distributing the souls to (their respective) places (of birth), bodies, bodily organs and their objects etc. and this ability is exerted in a general way, an analytical way and a specific way. Thus in view of the superiority of the Lord and inferiority of other individual souls, it is rightly said, homage to Him who transforms the material components”

Thus one realises the eight aspects of buddhi, 4 Satvikka ones viz. Dharma, Jnana, Vairagya, Aisvarya and 4 tamasic ones viz. Adharma, Ajnana, Avairagya and Anaishvarya, as enumerated in Samkhya Karika appear in PABh with no differentiation between first and second group. Moreover there is no reference or importance given to jnana as distinct from and superior to rest of the aspects i.e. one of the most crucial teachings of Samkhya as taught in Samkhya Karika 63, 65 & 67. Here it is the Almighty who can be seen standing far above these eight aspects while the latter though philosophical concepts are allotted an inferior rank. Even the final ideal of Pasupata, dhukhanta is attained not by dharma, jnana or so forth but simply by the grace of god (prasada)

Perhaps the apparent antagonism held against the other philosophical and theological systems to uphold the superiority to their God seems to have been best illustrated by an inscription at Balagami dated 1035 AD. In the inscription which registers grants that were made over to 'Lakulisvarapandita deva, a pasupata ascetic of great note, we read⁴¹,

⁴¹ Fleet J.F. *Inscriptions at Ablur, EI, vol 5 (1899) p227*

“(to the holy Lakulisvarapandita) who is a saw to cleave asunder the great trees that are the Lokayatas; he who is a great Vainateya (Son of Vinita i.e., Garuda) to the large serpent that is Samkya doctrine; he who is an axe to the trees that are those who propound the Advaita philosophy; he who is a very Trinetra (siva) to burn the three cities in shape of Akalanka.”

Superconsciousness and a Theological explanation:

Since it has been established that the vidhis followed by the aspirants of Lakulisa-Pasupata order had a strong intrinsic logic and rationale of its own, it is important to understand this curious aspect with a focus on theology also. To explain such practices Swami Akhilananda says:

To explain further Swami Akhilananda⁴² states,

“Indian psychologists (yogic practitioners) have always laid great emphasis on the understanding of not merely the conscious, but also the various kinds of superconscious and extra-sensory perceptions. They have not been mere objective observers and speculative thinkers, so far as psychology is concerned, but they have also realized that the various states of mind cannot be properly understood without bringing in the subjective element, namely training of the perceiving mind. They have never been inclined toward behaviourism of the Western type. In order to understand the objective validity of the superconscious and other forms of extra-sensory perceptions (and in order to know the unconscious) one must experience these states....It is an undeniable fact that the main emphasis in Indian psychology has been on religious experiences of various types (though some non-theistic systems were developed in the process of self analysis) Both Hindu and Buddhist psychologists systematized their psychological concepts in the course of their religious experiences. As their investigation and development of mental powers progressed they discovered that the unified mind could have some experiences which were not religious, even though they were extraordinary and extra-sensory. The mind, when concentrated and trained develops tremendous power to understand and control the various gross and subtle laws of nature, though these may not be perceived with the naked eyes...The mind can also control these laws through definite discipline and training”

⁴² Swami Akhilananda, 'Extra-Sensory and Superconscious experiences by in *The Cultrual Heritage of India*, Vol iii ed by Haridas Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1937

He considers the Yoga-Sutra by Patanjali, Hathayoga-paradipika and various tantras like Satcakraniupana and Padukapancaka as thoroughgoing studies of various aspects of ESP (Extra Sensory Perception) in which different methods of developing these powers, which are nothing but hidden functions of mind, are described. Hence he concludes by saying that superconscious states cannot be really understood unless one experiences them. As chemical laws cannot be verified without laboratory experiments, so superconscious realization or samadhi of various types cannot be properly understood by unprepared or untrained minds, however intellectual or well intentioned they may be.

CHAPTER - 5

THE MYTHOLOGICAL BRIDGE

Mythological Studies investigate the understanding of human experience revealed in mythology and in the diverse links between myth and ritual, literature, art, culture, and religious experience. Regarding the importance of myth and mythological studies Doniger¹ observes:

“Myth is cross-culturally translatable, which is to say comparable, commensurable. The simultaneous engagement of the two ends of the continuum, the same and the different, the general and the particular, requires a peculiar kind of double vision, and myth, among all genres is uniquely able to maintain that vision. Myth is the most interdisciplinary narrative”

Skanda Purana: Providing the building blocks for Saiva mythology

The study of *Saiva* mythology has made significant progress during the last two decades with the ‘discovery’ of the original *Skanda Purana*.. Chitgopekar believes that Puranic myths are “multivocal”; having several layers of meanings, hence our approach to them should be eclectic. As all myths are part of an ongoing oral and textual tradition, rather than tracing the stages of their evolution, she has delineated their salient features.

With the discovery of the ancient 6th -7th CE text of *Skanda Purana*, *Saiva* mythology has made significant progress. The orders and sects relegated to background in later Saivite texts like *Pasupatas* and *Kapalikas* are now seen in a completely different light. Explaining the importance of this text in understanding early forms of *Saiva* religion Chitgopekar² says:

‘This anonymous 6th/7th-century text stands as a model of an early Saiva Purana presenting an integrated view of the cosmos and its affairs in which the god Śiva is regarded as supreme.’

¹ Doniger, Wendy. *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.9

² Chitgopekar, ‘Encountering Saivism, the deity, the milieu, the entourage’, Pub. By *The Hindu*, 1998

The *Siva Maha Purana* starts with the *Siva Purana Mahatyam*, which is actually an extract from the *Skanda Purana*, hence implying the importance of the latter text. *Skandapurana* furnishes a description of sacred Saiva sites. It comes across as a very valuable source for the history and geographical spread of early *Saivism*. In addition it contains an account of the origins of the *Pasupata* movement in its descriptions of Karohana, the site of Siva's descent as *Lakulisa*. Bisschop³ talks about two different versions of *Skandapurana*, one transmitted in early Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts, another transmitted in two later recensions styled *Ambikakhanda* and *Revakhanda*. The latter version has never been published before and opens up new perspectives for the study of the transmission of Puranic literature and the historical development of *Saivism*. While talking about early *Saivism* the text focuses a lot on *Pasupata* form of *Saivism* hence making it very important for my study. Out of seven khandas three *Mahesvara*, *Kashi* and *Prabhasa* khanda are important for our study.

Mahesvara khand as the name itself suggests its importance after eulogizing Siva and attributing a subsidiary status to Visnu and Brahma moves to explaining the myth of *Daksavadha*. Interestingly the myth is narrated by *Lomas Rishi* and apart from narrating the story he focuses on the importance of *Purta* activities like building temples for Siva and its merits. *Lomas Rishi* has been established as a *Saivite* ascetic following a very harsh regimen, in the earlier chapters. The possibility of his being a *Pasupata* has also been discussed.

“Sage Lomesh told the assembled sages--- One who brooms the courtyard of Shiva temple attains to Shiva loka. Those who make offerings of incense to lord Shiva not only liberate himself from the bondage of this world but also both his 'Kulas'. One who gets constructed a Shiva temple or renovates it, attains incomparable virtue. One who chants the holy mantra 'OM NAMA SHIVAY' daily and begins his day by visiting Shiva temple in the morning becomes absolved of all his sins.”⁴

³ Bisschop Peter, *Early Saivism and the Skandapurana: Sects and Centres*, Groningen, The Netherlands Egbert Forsten 2006

⁴ Tagare, G.V, *Skanda Purana*, MLBD, Delhi, 1996

It is after killing *Daksa* for his insolence that we counter the raudra form of *Siva* who gives way to a yogic *Siva*, a lord unmoved by everything around. O'Flaherty has aptly described how *Siva* at this stage of extreme asceticism comes across as the most efficient seducer. This handsome ascetic form of *Siva* seduces the wives of saptarishis and in their anger they curse him to get castrated. Significantly *Skanda Purana* does not mention this 'Myth of pine forest' which seems to have a different and probably late origin. It rather talks about extreme asceticism of *Siva* which the gods wanted to break as it was prophesied that only *Siva's* son could kill *Tarakasura* who was creating havoc in all the three worlds. So the birth of *Skanda* and creating the right atmosphere for this noble birth is what this section of *Skanda Purana* is majorly dedicated to.

The deities were aware that after the death of *Sati*, *Siva* had lost all interest in life and was living like a recluse and to get him back to the act of creation was a daunting task. Meanwhile *Sati* was born as *Girija*, the daughter of *Himalaya* with a wish to get *Siva* as her husband. When *Siva* remained unmoved gods appointed *Kamadeva* to hit *Siva* with his arrow and arouse passion and desire in him. *Siva* was angered and he opened his third eye to burn *Kamadeva* to ashes. The significance of ashes is suggested here. The PS maxim:

"Every thing is ashes" is proved here. The body of desires is nothing but ashes.

Now *Girija* commenced her penance to please Lord Shiva. There was a great turmoil in the world on account of her penance. Lord Visnu led the deities to *Siva* and requested him to marry *Girija* so that the world could be protected from the torments of *Tarakasur*. Finally, *Siva* gave his consent and went to the place where *Girija* was doing penance.

This act of *Parvati* to win *Siva* or rather to counter *Siva's* extreme asceticism with her own extreme penance forms an interesting motif. To use O'Flaherty's terminology the route of 'asceticism' was chosen by *Parvati* to become a partner of 'erotic' *Siva*. Matching his asceticism she wanted to win him over.

After reaching to the place where *Parvati* was meditating, *Siva* found her engrossed in her penance. *Parvati* was surrounded by her few trusted companions. *Siva* decided to test *Parvati's* devotion towards him. So he disguised himself as a hermit and asked her companions about the reason why *Parvati* was doing such a severe Penance. Jaya, one of *Parvati's* companions informed him that her friend was doing penance in order to get *Siva* as her husband. Lord Shiva, who was in the guise of a hermit said—

“Why is this tender girl so eager to marry Shiva who is an embodiment of inauspiciousness--who carries a skull in his hand and who lives in a crematorium. How can your friend think of marrying one who has been expelled by Daksha from the yagya ceremony? Does your friend know that Shiva wears a snake around his neck and is surrounded by numerous spirits and ghosts?”

Parvati, who had been listening to all those nonsensical utterances, told Jaya---'This fellow seems to abhor Shiva. We should not talk to this evil person. Tell him to leave at once.' Lord *Siva* was extremely pleased by *Parvati's* unwavering devotion towards him. He appeared in his original form and said--'You can ask for anything you wish.'

But *Parvati* replied--- 'O Supreme Lord! I am the same Sati for the sake of whom you had destroyed *Daksha's yajna*. Don't you recognize me? There is a great purpose behind my reincarnation. A son born to us would kill Tarakasur. So go to my father and request for my hand in marriage.' But Lord Shiva refused to make a request to Himalaya considering it as an undignified act. He then returned to the place where he had been meditating. After a while, *Himalaya* and *Mena* arrived there and asked *Parvati* how her penance had been progressing. *Parvati* narrated the whole incident how Lord Shiva had finally given his consent to marry her. *Himalaya* and *Mena* were extremely pleased by this good news.⁵

⁵ Details from 'Excerpts from Skanda Purana, www.gita-society.com/scriptures/ALL18MAJORPURANAS.IGS.pdf

This myth can be seen materialized in various sculptural panels from West and South India showing the marriage of *Siva* and *Parvati* but the elaborate description in cave 21 at Ellora (Ramesvara) is worth mentioning separately. It is believed to have been inspired by *Kalidasa's* poem *Kumarasambhava* written about the birth of *Skanda*. *Kalidasa* seems to have been well versed with the mythological details of this incident and he even mentions the kind of penances and hardships faced by young *Parvati*. These practices like “*pancagni tapas*”, wearing animal skin and so on reminds us of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* aspirants and their harsh practices⁶.

Kalidasa's epic *Kumarasambhava* ("Birth of *Kumara*") details with matchlessly lyrical beauty the story of the maiden *Parvati*: her devotions aimed at gaining the favor of *Siva*, the subsequent annihilation of *Kamadeva*, the consequent fall of the universe into barren lifelessness, the subsequent marriage of *Parvati* and *Siva*, the immaculate birth of *Kumara*, and the eventual resurrection of *Kamadeva* after *Parvati* intercedes for him to *Siva*.

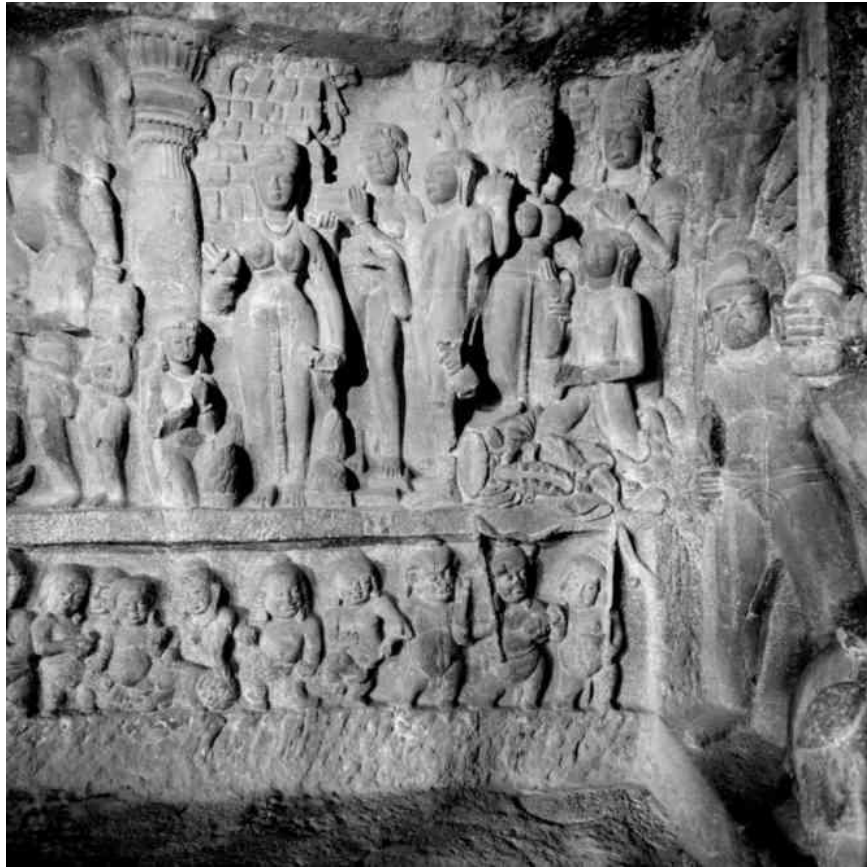
The depiction of *Parvati's* marriage to *Siva*, in the *Siva Purana*, could be seen as an allegory illustrating the desire of an individual to achieve a state of liberation from a life of strife and banality. If one sets aside, for the moment, the idea of *Siva* as a male entity, and sees him instead as representing a state beyond human suffering, then *Parvati* becomes symbolic of the aspirant who wishes to achieve nirvana, and the story becomes something considerably more than a quaint romantic tale⁷.

Iconographical Explanation:

Interestingly marriage of *Siva* and *Parvati*, *Kalyanasundaramurti* is seen in almost all the cave sites dedicated to *Lakulisa Pasupatas* and also it seems to have been popular theme in Orissan art, but the elaboration it has received in cave 21, Ramesvara, at Ellora is matchless. Almost an entire wall is dedicated to depicting the scene and unlike other places it is not only the marriage scene that is depicted but the entire narrative is sculpted in stone. Interestingly *Parvati* on right hand side is seen in an ascetic form surrounded by five fires (*pancagnisadhana*) practiced by the *Lakulisa-Pasupata* aspirants.

⁶ *Kumarasambhava of Kalidasa*, Ed. M.R.Kale, Delhi, 2011

⁷ Dayal Harendra Thakur, 'The Visnu Purana Social Economic and Religious Aspects' Published 1983, p.92



Illus 33. Kalyanasundaramurti, Cave 21, Ellora, Kalacuri, 6th CE



Illus 34. Kalyanasundaramurti, Cave 1, Elephanta, Kalacuri, 6th CE

The theme receives a great grandeur at Elephanta but the ascetic aspect of both *Siva* and *Parvati* are not depicted here and they appear more like a royal couple. It is in this form that they are remembered and worshipped by Brahmins of Kashmir on Sivaratri, as sovereign rulers of the entire creation.

The purpose of marriage was the birth of *Skanda*, would be slayer of *Tarakasur*. What comes as a surprise is the fact that the gods feared the force of *Siva* and *Parvati*'s power together and decided to rob *Parvati* of *Siva*'s seed. Now *Skanda Purana* does allude to *Agni* taking up a part of overflowing seed and depositing it in *Ganges* and getting cursed in return by *Parvati*.

Thus, *Agni*, who was suffering from extreme heat that generated in his body, sat at a lonely place waiting eagerly for a woman to arrive there. He did not have to wait for too long, as six *Kritikas*, shivering with cold arrived there to warm themselves. The seeds of *Siva* entered into their bodies through the pores.

When their respective husbands learnt about their pregnancy they cursed them. As a result they got transformed into '*Naksharas*' and established themselves in the sky. But, they aborted their respective foetus at Himalaya mountain before getting transformed into six constellations. The holy *Ganges* carried that foetus to a secluded place, which was covered with dense bushes of reeds. In course of time, Lord *Kartikeya* manifested from those reed bushes. He had six heads. The deities were delighted at the birth of *Kartikeya*. Lord *Siva* along with *Parvati* went to the place where *Kartikeya* had incarnated. *Parvati* took young *Kartikeya* in her embrace.

This unnatural and fascinating birth story of *Skanda/Kumara* probably again talks about the shifting status of *Siva* from an ascetic to an householder, yet maintaining his stature as a great *yogi*.

Another form of *Siva* and *Parvati* seen in this context of union is the *Ardhnarisvara* form. Collins⁸ observes

“*Siva as half male and half female is a dynamic personification of a dualist principle that is specifically related to the Pasupatas in the Linga Purana*”

⁸Collins, Charles D. *The Iconography and Ritual of Siva at Elephanta*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1991 p.81

This form of *Siva* is mentioned briefly in the *Mahabharata* several times: in Book XIII, Chapter 14, *Upamanyu* praising *Siva*, says “Who else is there that has half his body occupied by his dear spouse”

Ardhanarishvara is depicted as half male and half female, split down the middle. The right half is usually the male *Shiva*, illustrating his traditional attributes.

Ardhanarishvara represents the synthesis of masculine and feminine energies of the universe (*Purusha and Prakriti*) and illustrates how *Sakti*, the female principle of God, is inseparable from (or the same as, according to some interpretations) *Siva*, the male principle of God. The union of these principles is exalted as the root of all creation.

The conception of *Ardhanarishvara* may have been inspired by Vedic literature's composite figure of *Yama-Yami* later adopted as *Yab-Yum* figures in *Vajrayana Buddhism*. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says that *Purusha* splits himself into two parts, male and female, and the two halves copulate, producing all life – a theme concurrent in *Ardhanarishvara's* tales.

The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* sows the seed of the *Puranic Ardhanarishvara*. It declares *Rudra* – the antecedent of the *Puranic Siva* – the maker of all is the root of *Purusha* (the male principle) and *Prakriti* (the female principle), adhering to *Samkhya* philosophy. It hints at his androgynous nature, describing him both as male and female.

In a story from *Skanda Purana*, *Parvati* requests *Siva* to allow her to reside with him, embracing "limb-to-limb", and so *Ardhanarishvara* is formed.

In other Puranas like the *Linga Purana*, *Vayu Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Kurma Purana*, and *Markandeya Purana*, *Rudra* (identified with *Siva*) appears as *Ardhanarishvara*, emerging from *Brahma's* head, forehead, mouth or soul as the embodiment of *Brahma's* fury and frustration due to the slow pace of creation. *Brahma* asks *Rudra* to divide himself, and the latter complies by dividing into male and female. Numerous beings, including the 11 *Rudras* and various female *shaktis*, are created from both the halves. In some versions, the goddess unites with *Siva* again and promises to be born as *Sati* on earth to be *Siva's* wife⁹.

⁹ Kramrisch Stella, '(1981). *The Presence of Siva*. Princeton University Press. . pg 200-208)

Tamil temple lore narrates that once the gods and sages had gathered at Shiva's abode, they prayed their respects to Shiva and Parvati. However, the sage *Bhringi* had vowed to worship only one deity, *Siva*, and ignored *Parvati* while worshipping and circumambulating him. Agitated, *Parvati* cursed *Bhringi* to lose all his flesh and blood, reducing him to a skeleton. In this form *Bhringi* could not stand erect, so the compassionate ones who witnessed the scene blessed the sage with a third leg for support. As her attempt to humiliate the sage had failed, *Parvati* punished herself with austerities that pleased Shiva and led him to grant her the boon of uniting with him, thereby compelling *Bhringi* to worship her as well as himself in the form of *Ardhanarishvara*. However, the sage assumed the form of a beetle and circumambulating only the male half, drilling a hole in the deity. Amazed by his devotion, Parvati reconciled with the sage and blessed him. An interesting visual depiction of this myth can be seen from Aihole and curiously it is clubbed with *Gangadhar* aspect of Siva too.



Illus 34. Gandhadhar Siva with Parvati and Bringhi, Ravan Phadi , Aihole, Karnataka, 6th CE

Kalika Purana states that, *Parvati* (called *Gauri* here) is described as having suspected *Siva* of infidelity when she saw her own reflection in the crystal-like breast of *Siva*. A conjugal dispute erupted but was quickly resolved, after which *Parvati* wished to stay eternally with *Siva* in his body. The divine couple was thereafter fused as *Ardhanarishvara*. Another tale from North India also talks about *Parvati*'s jealousy. Another woman, the river *Ganga* – often depicted flowing out of *Shiva*'s locks – sat on his head, while *Parvati* (as *Gauri*) sat on his lap. To pacify *Gauri*, *Siva* united with her as *Ardhanarishvara*. Thus the presence of both myths together in one panel is justified by such connections drawn in Puranic and regional legends.

Another panel indirectly hinting at the discomfort that *Parvati* felt after *Siva* held *Ganga* in his locks is the one seen at Elephanta where the artist cleverly has used the space between *Siva* and *Parvati* to suggest uneasy silence between the divine couple.



Illus 35. Gangadhar Siva with Parvati, Cave 1, Elephanta, Kalacuri, 6th CE

It is in Ramayana that we find *Siva* agrees to hold *Ganga* in his locks to control her torrential flow. On one hand we see *Ganga* as the carrier of *Siva*'s seed and on the other as a prisoner in his locks, both suggesting an intimate link between both.

Mythopoeic imagination reads this relation as that of a consort and she is often shown as a female figure emerging out of *Siva*'s *jata*. This aspect comes across clearly in *Kalidasa's Meghaduta*¹⁰:

“From there you should go to Jahnu's daughter who descends

From the Lord of the peaks near Mount Kanakhala

And once served Sagara's sons as a stairway to heaven

It was she ,Ganga, her foam like laughter”

An elaborate description of this theme can be seen in a panel in Mahabalipuram which depicts the harsh penance of Bhagiratha to please Siva.



Illus 36. Gangavtarana Panel, Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, Pallava, 7th CE

¹⁰ *Meghaduta* as quoted by Collins p.75

Another interesting myth one encounters in *Skanda Purana* is the myth of *Kaalbhiti* who did not leave the womb of his mother for four years as he feared Kala. After being reassured and granted a boon he grew up to be a virtuous person. He used to engage himself in various kinds of austerities and was a great devotee of Lord *Siva*. One day, as *Kaalbhiti* was meditating under a 'bael' tree (wood apple), he went into trance. The joy experienced during trance period was something, which he had never experienced before. He decided to regularly meditate under that tree. He did penance for one hundred years standing on his toe pleasing *Siva* who appeared in form of a linga and freed him from fear of death. Since he had conquered death he was known as Mahakaal. This myth connects strongly with the *Mahakaal* temple at Ujjain and it evidently has some *Kapalika* or *Siddha* connection as aspirants of both cults desired to conquer death and gain perpetual immortality through harsh yogic practices. The importance given to *pancbrahmamantras* in this tradition point at him being a *Pasupata* saint.

Siva Nataraja:

Dancing form of *Siva* full of philosophical meaning is depicted almost all over the country. It is in both *Kurma Purana* and *Linga Purana* that this form of *Siva* is described in detail where it is linked with *Tandava* aspect i.e. dance of dissolution due to his extreme yogic power.

Linga Purana talks about *Siva*'s sojourn in Daruvana which alludes to the better known 'Pine Forest myth'. While describing him as stark nude, smeared with ashes he is seen dancing and begging for alms. It is this Bhibatsa yet Adhbhut form that wives of Rishis fall for and this irresistible and seductive form is attained by nothing else but deep asceticism.

Thus these accounts of *Siva*'s dance often juxtapose it with his *yoga* and his ability to project maya or cosmic illusion upon the phenomenal world hence assuming tremendous importance. An interesting panel can be seen from Mandapesvara cave, presently converted into a church but once seems to have been an important site for *Lakulisa-Pasupatas*. Here in this panel the artist has combined *Nataraja* aspect of *Siva* with *Kalyanasundaramurti*, hence stressing on their highly philosophical nature.



Illus 37. Nataraja Siva along with Kalyanasundaramurti, Mandapesvara Cave, Kalacuri, 6th CE



Illus 38. Nataraja Siva, Cave 1, Elephanta, Kalacuri, 6th CE

Ravananugrhamurti: Both *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* mention *Ravana* as a great devotee undergoing various *Pasupata* austerities .Not highly favored by Puranic literature this theme assumes a tremendous importance in the works of *Kalidasa* and hence is one of the most commonly repeated themes in the western Indian caves as well as in art of Pallavas and Cholas. *Ravana* is supposed to have composed ‘*Sivatandavastuti*’ to praise Siva when he was realized the power of the lord.

Usually in these panels *Ravana* is seen shaking Kailasa mountain, the abode of Siva and the latter is seen pushing his toe to send *Ravana* to netherlands. It is after this incident that *Ravana* is supposed to have become a great devotee of *Siva* and performed harsh austerities to please the lord.



Illus 39. Ravananugrhamurti, Cave 21, Ellora, Kalacuri, 6th CE

It is interesting to find the depiction of this theme from the temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia and it does talk about it being a very important theme for South Indian art which provided the thematic base for Saiva temples in South East Asia.



Illus 40. Ravananugrhamuti, Angkor Wat, Cambodia, 12th CE

Andhakasuravadhamurti: Talking about the aspect of reconciliation in Saiva art and mythology the myth of *Andhaka* becomes very important. Most of the sources maintain that *Andhaka* after being killed by *Siva* was revived and accepted in latter fold. Some sources even maintain that his initial lust for *Parvati* was converted into the motherly love and after his repentance *Parvati* forgave him and accepted him as his son. The story has many a shades and a great potential for in-depth study.



Illus 41. Andhakasuravadha, Cave 14, Ellora, 6th CE



Illus 42. Andhakasuravadha, Cave 29, Ellora, Kalacuri, 6th CE

Siva and Parvati playing chausar (dice): A very frequently depicted theme in these LP caves is this dice play between *Siva* and *Parvati*. While on one hand it lends a human feel to the divine couple on the other it focuses on the aspect of *lila* (sport) , the main reason for creation of universe. Indirectly it suggests that it is this divine play that has brought everything to life, hence assuming a very important philosophical meaning. But this higher meaning has not stopped the artist from expressing his creative urges and giving it a lighter feel, especially on the lower register in Cave 14 Ellora where he depicts *ganas* playfully teasing *Nandi*.



Illus 43. Siva and Parvati playing chausar, Cave 14, Ellora, Kalacuri, 6th CE

The extremely dramatic depiction at Elephanta focuses on the human element more clearly as it points at cheating in the game. *Siva* was probably shown holding *Parvati*'s hand and the latter is agitated as can be seen from her hand gestures.



Illus 44. Siva and Parvati playing chausar, Cave 1, Elephanta, Kalacuri, 6th CE

Summing up: Studying all these myths depicted at early *Lakulisa-Pasupata* sites one can see their importance as tools for propagating the philosophy of the order in the most graphic manner. These panels apart from their aesthetic merit follow a certain iconographical pattern which in case of Elephanta, Collins¹¹ has connected with LP rituals.

As Meister¹² observes

“The task of religious imagery in India is twofold: it must reveal divinity to man, and help manifest divinity in man”

Hence divinity in India is seen in both aspects, tangible and intangible. and as Kramrisch observes is characterized by ‘otherness’ and ‘ease of access’ a dichotomy seen at various levels in Indian religions, especially Saivism. From this enquiry into manifested form of *Siva* we will move to study of abstract *Siva-Linga* in the next section.

¹¹ Collins, Charles D. *The Iconography and Ritual of Siva at Elephanta*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1991

¹² Meister, Michael W. *Discourses on Siva*. Philadelphia, Bombay 1984, Introduction

CHAPTER – 6

SIVA-LINGA : AN ICONOLOGICAL STUDY

Siva-linga and its symbolism:

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

Unfortunately the sexual symbolism here has selectively been associated with eroticism and its other more important function as the creative principle has not been given any thought by early scholars of Indian art and culture. The apologetic Indian scholars too joined the gang and openly disowned this disturbing symbol and blamed it on so called ‘Non Aryan’ people who were untouched by highly philosophical expositions of Veda's. They elaborately quote from *RgVedic* mention of *Sisna deva*, (people whose lord was the sexual organ) (*Rg Veda* 7.21.5; 10.99.3)

the only example but repeated again and again to emphasize the otherness of *Linga* worship. *Sayana*¹ in his commentary has clearly explained *Sisna devas* ,as licentious people and not as people who worship *linga*.

Language is never wholly transparent, rather the beauty of language lies in its opacity. To derive such final statements on the basis of one or two verses from whole gamut of Vedas points at if not a strategic plan but definitely to a lack of understanding. Here I would like to say that those scholars who have shown any depth in their studies and have not treated the subject like some laboratory experiment have left their studies open ended realizing very well the limitations of a scholarly approach to a subject which needs an initiation to begin with.

Susan Langer² in her important study, *Philosophy in a New Key* states that:

“Symbols are not proxy for their objects, but are vehicles for the conception of objects. In talking about things we have conceptions of them, not the things themselves and it is the conceptions, not the things, that symbols directly mean”.

She further goes on to enumerate three types of symbols viz: Discursive symbol, Presentational symbol and Artistic symbol and being a Formalist considers the Artistic symbol to be the most significant one:

*An artistic symbol- which may be product of human craftsmanship or (on a purely personal level)something in nature seen as significant form has more than discursive and presentational meaning: its form as such, as a sensory phenomenon has what I have called implicit meaning, like rite and myth, but of a more catholic sort. It has what L.A Reid called ‘tertiary subject matter’, beyond the reach of ‘primary imagination’ and even the ‘secondary imagination’ that sees metaphorically.*³

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

¹ *Rgveda-Samhita Srimat Sayanacharya virchita bhasya-sameksa* Ed. by N.S Sontakke, Published by Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Pune, 1972

² Langer Susan, *Philosophy in a new key, A Study in Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art*, Harvard University Press, 1996

³ *Ibid.*

Human narcissist tendency is such that it is always believed we are moving to a more progressive level as the time passes. The technology that we today boast of would have been a marvel for our ancestors and hence the aspect of philosophizing is considered to have been beyond their reach. Rather my enquiry started very much at this point where I wondered how can an order which follows radical and extremely objectionable practices have a highly evolved philosophy. At the beginning I also thought that philosophizing must have taken place at a later stage but in due course I was surprised to find both the streams progressing together. We were seriously missing out something in between, something not as easily legible as a direct word and here is where mythology and art comes to the rescue. It wonderfully bridges the gap between the esoteric ritual practices and complicated philosophical speculations former due to its narrative and human approach and the latter because of its wide appeal and tangible form. The orientation of early Saivite art is decidedly theological. The emphasis is on knowledge of God's nature and the translation of this knowledge into forms fit for worship. Hence here while on one side I will be studying the historical development and philosophical speculations on the subject, on the other hand myths related to *Linga* worship and their depictions from various places will be subjected to an iconological study.

Historicity:

The term *linga* rarely occurs prior to the *Upanisads* and in the latter texts the term and its opposite *alinga* by no stretch of imagination are used for a male sexual organ. Srinivasan⁴ clearly points out that the word that defines the latter is *sisna* or *vetasa* in Vedic literature and they are nowhere linked with any form of worship. *RgVeda* describes the *Sisna devas* as the inhabitants of cities and they were supposed to be the 'Pre Aryan' people and builders of planned cities like Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Such discourse largely propounded mainly by Western Indologists essentially saw the practice as a non Vedic one. On the contrary the important commentators of Vedas 'Yaska and 'Sayana'⁵ provide us with more inclusive meanings which points at the

⁴ Srinivasan Doris Meth, *Significance and Scope of Pre-Kusana Saivite Iconography*, in Meister M Ed DOS p.33

⁵ *Rgveda-Samhita Srimat Sayanacharya virchita bhasya-sameksa* Ed. by N.S Sontakke, Published by Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Pune, 1972

selective suggestion of the above hypothesis. *Yaska* explains ‘Sisna-devas as a non-bhrhmacharin group (4.19 on Rgveda, 7.21.5). *Sayana* too furnishes a meaning similar to this to mean a group of immoral people and nowhere has it been suggested that they are non Vedic. These interpretations one needs to know are just based on few verses and only because they have been repeated again and again they sound as only possible explanations..An excellent work by Srinivasan on *Rudra-Siva* and his vedic antecedents throws a considerable light on the subject and demands the Rudra’s ‘outsider to vedic culture’ label to be considerably revised. She writes: ⁶.

“For Rudra’s most fundamental characteristics-his ambivalent capacity for benign and fearful action, his asura-hood, his close association with the most ancient stratum of the Vedic gods, his relation to the Vedic ritual, especially the remnant-brings him into the very centre of Vedic norms and ideals.”

A tribe (*jana*) called *Siva* is mentioned in *Rgveda* (7.18.7). Some scholars believed the Siboi of Greek writers were actually the *Siva jana* mentioned above. It may not be unlikely that *Siva*, probably a tribal god was gradually identified with *Rudra* in the process of later amalgamation which is not unheard of in religious studies. Banerjee⁷ opines that the *Siva linga* engraved on three oldest coins (of Taxila and Ujjain mentioned in earlier chapter) 2nd-3rd BCE is the mark of a local or tribal god .

Coming to the word ‘*linga*’, we need to historically contextualize it before pondering about its ritual and philosophical meanings. Przyluski ⁸who on basis on a linguistic study suggests that the terms like *Linga*, *Langula* etc. were originally Austric words and the ‘Aryans’ borrowed them from pre-Aryan population of India has also lost its currency as the term has been used extensively and meaningfully in early Vedic literature and does not come across some haphazard word borrowed from another civilization.

⁶ Srinivasan p.36

⁷ P. Banerjee, "Some aspects of the early history of Saivism", IAC 14, 1965, p. 215-231

⁸ Bagchi P.C tr. *Pe Aryan and Pre Dravidian in India* by Sylvain Levi, J Przyluski and J. Bloch, Calcutta, 1937 p.66

The *Katha Upanisad* (6.8) speaks of *Purusa* who is higher than the unmanifest(*avyakta*), “as all pervading and without any mark” (*alinga*). In a somewhat similar manner *Svetasvatara Upanisad* (6.9) declares that *Mahesvara* (Siva in 5.14) has no *linga* in the world and he is the first cause. Book 6.11 explains this further, saying “ He is the One God hidden in all things..alone and devoid of attributes (*nirguna*). The same text gives an elaborate connotation of *linga*⁹:

“Just as the material form (murti) of fire when latent in its source (yoni) is not seen even though its linga is not destroyed, for it is perceptible again by kindling in its source (yoni). Similarly both indeed are found in the body by Om.”

The above passage in distinguishing between ‘*murti*’ and ‘*linga*’ elaborates on the importance and subtlety of the latter concept. Whereas *murti* is a concrete apprehensible form, the gross body ‘*linga*’ is the sign, non material and therefore unchangeable, more like a subtle body.

This concept of having both source and its material form together in one body seems to have provided the seeds for the concept of *Ardhanarisvara*. On the other hand it also lays foundation for various practices followed by *Natha Siddhas* who visualize both genders within one body. Both the examples are discussed in detail in appropriate sections.

References to *linga* or *alinga* in several later heterogeneous works have also not used it as an erotic symbol. *Caraka*¹⁰ states that *alinga* describes a state attainable by the doctrine of ultimate renunciation while in *Buddhacarita* of *Asvaghosa*¹¹ *linga* denotes marks of an ascetic or mendicant.

Maha-Narayana Upanisad dated by Gonda¹² to C.3rd BCE, contains a series of prayers which correlate *lingas* with Rudra-Siva. To be precise prayer number 271-316 are dedicated mainly to Rudra-Siva and contain the formulaic repetition of the term *linga*. In each instance homage is first paid to a particular attribute of the supreme and then to the *linga* of that power or attribute:

⁹ *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, Gita Press, p.123

¹⁰ *Caraka* as quoted by Srinivasan p.41

¹¹ *Buddhacarita* of *Asvaghosa* Ibid 42

¹² Gonda, J. *Visnuism and Sivaism: A Comparison*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976 p,42

“Urdhvaya namah, Urdhva-lingaya namah, Hiranyaya namah, Hiranyalingaya namah, Suvarnaya namah, Suvarnalingaya namah, Divyaya namah, Divyalingaya namah,

Bhavaya namah, Bhavalingaya namah, Sarvaya namah, Sarvalingaya namah,

Sivaya namah, Sivalingaya namah, Jvalaya namah, Jvalalingaya namah

Atmaya namah, Atmalingaya namah, Paramaya namah, Paramalingaya namah”

This set of *linga* verses follow an important set of prayers which invoke a pentad of names ,the five *Brahma Mantras* which the later tradition records as the five faces of a pancamukha linga viz.

Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Isana

On the basis of *Sayanacarya’s* commentary we learn that the five mantras were addressed to five faces of Siva. Earlier the VDP Purana (5th- 6th CE) and Aparajita Prchcha mentions the five aspects of Siva in the list of eleven Rudras. The major point of interest here is that *Lakulisa-Pasupata’s* have elevated these *Brahm Mantras* to the level of *Bijamantras*, popularly known as *Pancartha* and PS is divided into 5 sections according to these names. It is clear that this esoteric and abstract form of worship was considered as the highest form fit for an ascetic aspirant. *Chitrasutra of VDP* states that when king Vajra asked Markandeya about the meaning of having an image when God is actually formless, the latter answered that these images were meant for laity and for real or true ascetics meditation on formless God is the highest form of worship.

Interestingly it is in Epic Mythology, to be precise in castration myth narrated in *Saṃpṛāptika Parvan* of *Mahabharata*¹³ (10.17) that the word *linga* is associated with Siva’s organ for the first time. When *Brahma* asked *Mahadeva* to create ,the latter did not feel inclined to obey. Failing to convince *Mahadeva*, *Brahma* created *Prajapati* and asked him to create,whence he created creatures of various species.When *Siva* arose form his meditation and saw the beings were already created he tore his ‘*linga*’ in anger and placed it on the ground and again went to perform austerities.

¹³ *Mahabharata, Saṃpṛāptika Parvan 10.17*

It is interesting to see how a myth functions to create links between an object and a symbol which probably earlier had nothing to do with the object. By an imaginative approach the character of 'golden phallus' from *Samhita* literature is attributed to *Siva* and thus he automatically gets transformed into the omnipresent and omnipotent creator.

This is further substantiated by a rather long but thought provoking passage by Srinivasan¹⁴ in which she asks the fundamental question and answers it by quoting various texts;

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

And she answers :

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

Hence it provides the distinct use of phallic symbolism in Vedic literature thus at once providing a paradigm shift in the study of Saivism. Moreover sexual symbolism was not a taboo in Vedic literature as we were given to believe and Dange¹⁵ has profusely quoted from various Vedic texts like *Satapatha Brahmana*, *Aitareya Brahmana* etc. to substantiate his point. Here I would cite a few examples occurring in the ritual context:

¹⁴ Srinivasan p.41

¹⁵ Dange S.A, 'Sexual Symbolism from the Vedic ritual, Delhi, 1979 p 88

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

Hence it is seen that erotic symbolism was not unknown to Vedic literature. An interesting passage narrated in *Mahabharata*¹⁶ throws light on the worship of *Siva* in both anthropomorphic form and linga form. Here *Vyasadeva* explains to *Asvatthama* that he faced defeat by *Krsna-Arjuna* because they worshipped *Siva* in the potent form of linga while he paid his homage to *Siva's* image. (*Tabhyam Linge'archito Deva-s-tvaya'rchayam yuge yuge ..*) This clearly points at some kind of superiority attached to linga worship. The next two verses further elaborate that one who is spiritually advanced and can realize *Siva* in all forms and see linga as the source of all creation is only entitled to worship the *linga*.

Sarva-bhuta-bhavam jnatva Lingam-archati yah prabhoh

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

Worship of *linga* requires the complete concentration of the devotee, with his soul and mind fixed on the linga and all senses have to be completely in control. Now such rigorous meditation can be expected out of a yogi only. Moreover the text suggests that the devotee already should have a high spiritual level.

¹⁶ *Mahabharata, Vanaparava, Kirata Parvan*

This term ‘linga’ has been used in the *Pasupata Sutra* (1.6). An elaborate translation and analysis of this cryptic sounding sutra with a wealth of associated meaning which was passed from one generation of adepts to another is found in Kaundinya’s commentary on the otherwise cryptic sutras. As mentioned earlier these sutras were formulae in which the basic tenets of the system were codified. On their own they make no sense to the reader because they were essentially a part of a discourse. Hence PABh of *Kaundinya (Rasikara)* comes across as a very important source as it contextualizes the aphorisms in their holistic discourse.

‘Lingadhari’ (1.6)

*Kaundinya*¹⁷ in his commentary explains the sutra as:

Here as persons of other castes and stages of life have marks , distinctive of their own. There the householder has as his mark three clothes, bamboo staff, water-jar-filled with water, shaving of moustaches, sacred thread etc. So the marks of a brahmacarin are staff, water-jar, girdle by munja grass, sacred thread , skin of black deer etc. Likewise the Vanaprastha has also the marks of a water-jar, bark garment, bristle, matted locks of hair etc. And the bhiksu has the marks of three staves, shaven head, water jar, ochre coloured cloth, water strainer and Kusa grass etc. Thus here also the mark of a Pasupata-Yoga means the distinctive mark of the stage as for example, ashes-bath, lying down in ashes, re-bath, garland, single cloth, etc. and this mark becomes a part of his body creating the idea of Pasupatas among the people. The lingam is due to the act of merging and that of marking. Bearing that he becomes the holder of the mark. Like the wielder of staff.

It is certain that linga here is used as in other vedic texts to mean a sign. So *Kaundinya* goes on to enumerate the external signs exhibited by various sections who followed the order. A *Pasupata* aspirant is to worship Linga in the abstract sense of the term is confirmed by the highest mode of sadhana , noted in the commentary text. A true aspirant had to sever all ties with sense and sense objects (*chhitva dosanam hetujalasyamulam*) and concentrate on Siva with undiverted attention so as to attain the blissful state. In the end he notes down the external marks exhibited by an ascetic who has taken *Pasupata* vow. The marks like ashes bath, lying down in ashes, rebath , garland etc refer to the earlier aphorisms from the same text viz.

¹⁷ Chakrabarti Haripada, ‘*Pasupata Sutram with Panchartha Bhasya of Kaundinya*, 1969, Calcutta p.59

Bhasmana trisavanam snayita (PS 1.2)

Bhasmani Sayita (PS.1.3)

Anusnanam (PS. 1.4)

Nirmalyam (PS 1.5)

But the passage that really caught my attention was the last line where *Kaundinya* uses the phrases ‘merging in the linga’ . Here one is reminded of a passage from *Karvan Mahatmya* which talks about the merging of *Lakulisa* in the body of *Brahmesvara linga*. The entire text has been narrated in a form of a dialogue primarily between ‘*Isvara* ‘ and ‘*Devi*’, about *Siva*’s 28th incarnation ie *Lakulisa-avataar*.

Srimahadeva uvac –

Vrddasya vacanam srutva lakuliso varanane!

Brahmesvaram samasadhya tasminevalayam gatah

Stithsabhagvan tatrakayarupimahesvarah

*Yenkayavtarosautenedam kayarohanam*¹⁸

Sri Mahadeva says:

After listening to *Vrddhesvara*’s words *Lakulisa* meditated on *Brahmesvara* and finally merged with him. There *Lakulisa* bhagvan along with his physical body merged with *Mahesvara* as his avatara, that is why the place became famous as *Kayavrohana* (identified with present day Karvan). Interestingly we find two *Siva* lingas, (one in *Bhramesvara* temple and other in the *Raja Rajesvara* temple situated in the Karvan village) superimposed with a figure of *Lakulisa* which visually depicts what has been narrated in the passage above. Regarding the development of this icon *Shah*¹⁹ writes:

¹⁸ Patel H.S. Ed. *Shri Kayavarohan Tirth no Itihas*, Ahmedabad, 1964

¹⁹ Shah U.P, ‘*Lakulisa: Saivite Saint*, in *Meister M DOS* p.98

“From at least the seventh century Lakulisa was shown in western India seated in front of a Siva linga. Ithyphallic, with long matted locks, jewelry, some times with the yogapatta, this type shows Lakulisa holding a citron in his right hand , the danda in his left.”

During my visit to Karvan I noticed there are two such images which are under worship, one in the main temple ‘*Brahmesvara*’ and other in a smaller temple in the village and that is known as ‘*Rajarajesvara*’ by local people.



**Illus 45 Rajarajesvara linga in Karvan village, Baroda dist. Gujarat
(looks like a late copy of the original)**

This *linga* at Kayavarohan is included in the list of 68 *Svayambhuva* lingas in the commentary on his *Jirnoddhara-dasakam* by Nigamajnanadeva of Vyaghrapura, son of Vamadevasivacharya²⁰. *Kamikagama*²¹ describes *svayambhu lingas* as ones which rise up and come into existence by themselves and have existed from time immemorial. The importance of this type of *linga* is gleaned from the fact that it was believed if by any chance this *linga* is removed completely from its place it would cause downfall of the kingdom and complete destruction of the ruler. This might be pointing at covert power that the ascetics managing the shrines housing such lingas had and might even throw light on the huge popularity of Saivite Rajagurus in medieval times.

The earliest documented *Sivasthala* (Sivathale in Kharoshthi inscriptions) was unearthed within the late historic *Parasuramesvara* temple complex at Gudimallam (Chittoor Dist. of A.P.). The form of the God was carved in three-fourth relief over a standing *Linga*, of almost life-size. The aspect of merging in or emerging out of the *linga* is quite prominent here. It has been identified as a figure of *Rudra* on the frontal facet without the *Yajnopavita* and the third eye. The God has a horned animal in the right hand and a water pot (*kamandalu*) in the left hand with a *danda-parasu*. The date previously determined on stylistic grounds to be 2nd BCE was pushed back to 3rd BCE after examining the finds of the dig. Digging within the temple's *garbhagrha* revealed that the *linga*, of hard igneous stone and dark brown color, belongs to the earliest phase of the temple. The *linga*, shaft and nut is about 5 feet in height and the realistically carved nut is differentiated from the cylindrical shaft by a deep slanting groove near the top.

²⁰ *Jirnoddhara-dasakam* by Nigamajnanadeva as quoted in Gopinath Rao, T.A, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 4 Vols, Madras, 1916

²¹ *Kamikagama* as quoted in Gopinath Rao, T.A, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 4 Vols, Madras, 1916

The archaeological data unearthed here makes it a hypaethral *Sila Vedika Linga Sthana* in open, Such simple open-air *Silapata* shrines are well known from the coin depictions from north-west India and can be seen prominently in this early Kusana panel now housed in government museum of Mathura.



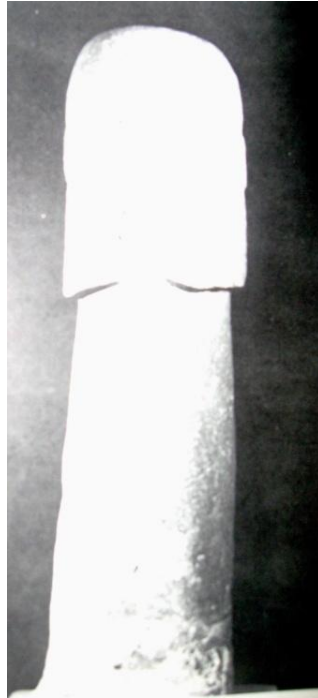
**Illus 46. Worship of Linga, Early Kusana ,
1st-2nd CE, Mathura Museum**

Illus 47. Guddimallam Linga,Parasuramesvara Temple, Andhra Pradesh, 3rd BCE

Srinivasan²² observes that the crouched figure probably of a yaksha on whom Rudra is standing has fish shaped feet and his ears have shape of a conch. These symbols she connects with water and deduces that the yaksha might have been associated with the aquatic realm hence suggesting the linga is emerging from deep waters. Sarma hypothesizes that the *lingapitha* within the *vedika* stood in the open and was worshipped much like a *vrksacaitya* (caitya with a sacred tree) in antiquity. Sivalinga surrounded by a *vedika* was worshipped in open usually under a tree can be seen from depictions. A relief panel from Mathura (Mathura museum no 3625) shows a plain realistic looking linga, quite similar to the gudimallam linga, being worshipped under a tree. Numismatic evidences too confirms the presence of free-standing lingas closely associated with trees. On the obverse of Allan's variety e, of class 1 Ujjaini coppers, the linga is seen between two different trees in railings.

²² Srinivasan, p.37

A free standing plain linga quite like the one in the above mentioned relief has been found at Kankali Tila (Mathura) and is now housed in the State Museum , Lucknow . It is again realistically carved in red sand stone featuring the nut with the central fold and is encircled with a wide band. This linga is 38.2''*10.2'' above ground and has a rectangular socle intended for insertion into the ground.



Illus 48. Free standing Siva Linga, Pre Kusana, Kankali tila, Mathura 1st BCE

Hence in this first phase of Saiva iconography we see huge lingas depicted like a realistic looking phallus with no reference to yoni pitha. This exclusion of feminine element so deep rooted in later Saivism I feel downplays the role of linga as a fertility symbol. On the contrary it might be signifying the abstainance and channelizing of sexual energy into spiritual energy which only an ascetic order could be propagating. *Brhat-Samhita* (59.19) mentions that the Brahmins, besmeared with ashes, evidently the Pasupatas (according to Utpala) would set up *Sivalinga*. The dangers which a woman can lead to is elaborated in a shocking manner in the PABh²³ and woman is openly declared to be the gateway to hell.

²³ *Chakraborti p.66*

*“The inclination of the mind towards women is the rope for tying. The meritorious go severing it but the bad men do not forsake it. One goes out of a village for woman, commercial dealings are also due to woman, woman is the source of all evils and wise should never embrace her. She, whom people regard as woman, is poison, fire, sword, and more clearly a terror and maya (illusion) incarnate. The fools and not the learned revel in the body, full of impurities and worms, foul smelling by nature, unclean and the storehouse of urine and excretion an ephemeral. One gets maddened at the sight of a woman and not by drinking wine; so one must shun a woman whose sight creates madness from a distance. The world is bitten by the snake in the shape of the sex-organ of woman, which has its mouth cast downward, which moves in between the thighs and which cannot be controlled by all scriptures. The entire world is blinded by a woman like the foot step of the female deer, having hairs, ugly appearance, foul smell and bad skin. Woman is like burning flame and man is like a pitcher of clarified butter. Those who are attached to women are lost and those who **stand controlled**, go to heaven. As the fire fed with fuel manifests great light, so the light of one’s self is manifested by the control over senses. Patience lies in celibacy, penance lies in celibacy and those brahmanas who practice celibacy go to heaven. Those brahmanas who practice celibacy drink milk, honey and soma juice with ambrosia and become **immortal** after death. Thus celibacy is established in the Tantra.*

The idea that both male and female principles are present in the body of Siva is represented emphatically by enchanting *ardhanarisvar* aspect of *Siva*. The early depictions of this icon are mainly found attached to the linga and the figure is shown with one breast on the left side and is also ithyphallic. The discovery of male and female in one body has been advocated by various tantric texts and was followed profusely by Natha Siddhas of medieval times. In this context the 33 cm high linga of late Kusana period with the image of *ardhnarisvar* carved out of red mottled sand stone, found from Mathura and presently in Pritzker collection Chicago provides an important example. The left hand rests on a feminine looking waist and right hand seems to be in abhaya mudra. The elegance and grace which is the watchword for later *Ardhnarisvara* images can be seen here too. The slight bent in the body lends extensive charm to the well executed image. But it is the ithyphallic nature of the sculpture that points at the tantric references about arousing one’s feminine side.

The importance of women is stressed upon in some verses from KM which at first look might be contradicting the tenets of the system but on closer observation it is realized that the texts like *Mahatmyas* were generally written for laity and thus would not suggest same set of rules which apply to an ascetic aspirant.

Bharya nama nram bhadre! Sarvakamarthsadhini

Yashsriyah kamyukta putrada kulavardini

*Bharyahino vishalakshi! Kuto bhadrani pashyati?*²⁴

O blissful one, a wife fulfills all her husbands desires and is responsible for him getting fame, prosperity and sons. She is the one responsible for maintaining the family lineage

O large eyed lady! How can a man without a wife think of being happy?

Gopinath Rao²⁵ has compared Gudimallam *Linga* to the manusha *Linga* of *Bhita* dated to 1st BCE, presently in Lucknow Museum. It has been described in detail for the first time by Banerji (Rao 63) .Right below the heads is carved a phallus is shallow relief which may or may not have been the part of actual schema.To the left of this is an inscription which reads as follows²⁶:

Khajahutiputanam (im)go Patithapito Vasethi-Putena Nagasirina piyayta(m)d(e) vata

(The linga of the sons of Khajahuti was dedicated by Nagasiri the son of Vasethi. May the deity be pleased)

²⁴ Patel p.24

²⁵ Rao Gopinath p.63

²⁶ Rao Gopinath p.63



Illus 49. Manusi Linga from Bhita, 1st BCE, Lucknow Museum

Banerjea²⁷ identifies in this form the earliest form of *Sadasiva* with the *urdvaretas* (Ithyphallic) . the great yogi Siva. This inscribed linga of buff sandstone displays an interesting and novel iconographical pattern. The central shaft of the linga is carved into the shape of a two armed male which Srinivasan²⁸ identifies as *Isana*, (*urddhavamukha*,) and who is shown with long matted hair not very unlike later images of *Daksinamurti* Siva. He holds a kamandalu in the left hand and right hand seems to have been raised in abhaya mudra. Below the bust of this central figure, four different faces in four cardinal directions can be seen carved on the linga shaft. It seems to have been a linga of a *Panchmukhalinga* variety but its curious iconography raises interesting questions. The importance given to the figure of Isana, the topmost face of Siva as compared to rest of the four faces is unmistakable.

²⁷ Banerjea J.N, Banerjea J. N. *Religion in Art and Archaeology (Vaishnavism and Saivism)* .Lucknow: The Upper India Publishing House Ltd, 1968, p.459

²⁸ Srinivasan p.35

PS 1.9 says : “**Mahadevasya Daksinamurteh**” and to explain Kaundinya²⁹ writes:

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

The last line clearly suggests the importance of Daksinamurti, i.e Siva in form of a teacher in the Lakulisa-Pasupata order. Vidya, knowledge being of prime importance for aspirants of this system the teaching aspect is to be focused on. PS 5.42 says : “**Isanah Sarva-vidyanam**” literally meaning that Isana is the lord of all vidyas . Kaundinya explains the sutra as :

Here he is called Isana because of his lordship. Here the cause is stated when Isana is explained by his power of lordship. Isana means the Lord, the creator. Now-whose Lord is this? The answer is –He is the Lord of all. The word ‘sarva’ means all without excluding any of the branches of learning. He is the master of all branches of learning, meant for the accomplishment of virtue, wealth, desire and emancipation.

Regarding the complex nature of Isana , Rupamandana³⁰ says :

Sadhyovamanatataghoram tatpurusamcaturmukham/

Pancmanctathsanam yoginamapyagocaram//

This verse suggests that the Isana face is even beyond the understanding of yogis.

Interestingly here both forms *Daksinamurti* and Isana are linked with disseminating knowledge to their worshippers and in former sutra it is clear that the *sadhaks* have to concentrate on this form of Siva to attain knowledge. In the process they have to “discard” the other forms. Here discard has to be understood in the sense of not being concentrated upon. It could probably mean at this stages aspirants were not supposed to worship Siva in his various *lilamurtis* i.e *Kalyanasundara murti*, *Gangadhar murti*, *Siva playing chausar* and so on. The focus had to be completely on learning as it required one-pointed devotion.

²⁹ Chakrabarti p.64

³⁰ Rupamandana as quoted by Pathak V.S. Pathak, V.S. History of Saiva Cults in Northern India (from inscriptions 700 AD to 1200 AD). Varanasi: Tara Printing Works ,1960

Such strict directions about what to worship in what form and also the earlier passage on women reminds one of Plato's writings in Republic where he declares artists to have corrupting influence on the people and thus bans them from his Utopia. Artists he feels represent an immoral world which can lure people away from reason and divert their attention from essential work.

Another very important evidence which connects the worship of *Sivalinga* strongly with this order is the Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandra Gupta II dated to 380 CE which provides extremely information fro the date of *Lakulisa* which has been already discussed in detail. It records that *Uditacarya*, a *Pasupata* teacher of *Kusika* lineage established two images called *Kapilesvara* and *Upamitesvara* in the *Gurvayatana*. D.R Bhandarkar³¹ who edited this important inscription opines that Upamita and Kapila who seem to have been great adepts in *Pasupata* passed away like yogins and were believed to have merged with *Siva*, so they are recorded in this inscription as Bhagavat in whose commemoration *Uditacarya* established two Lingas in the "Teacher's shrine". He further states the term 'guru-pratima-yutau' in line number 10 in place of the illegible space in the inscription

Lines 9 and 10

9 *gurunamchkitrayarthupamitesvara-kapilesvarau*

10 *guruvyatane guru.....pratisthapitau*

Explaining the import of the inscription he writes,"apparently the representation shows as if Upamita and Kapila were standing each with a Linga on the head". Sircar too seconds this interpretation (I.H.Qly vol18,p27 ff). Moreover this inscription also contains an injunction to the Acaryas and worshippers of Mahesvara to take charge of the Lingas and worship without fear. Now from all the visual repertoire linked with Siva Linga we don't come across images of preceptors bearing a linga on their head but we do find a vast array of Mukhalingas from various parts of the country. **Could the inscription be referring to two Eka-Mukhalingas established in the special**

³¹ Bhandarkar D.R., ed and trans Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II, G.E 61, EI XXI, 1931-32

shrine for the demised gurus? In that case the evidences might not only point at wide acceptance and importance of the Linga symbol in this order but also suggest this order had a major role to play in formulating the new semiotics related to Lingas. **Could it be this order which popularized the philosophical aspect of Sivalinga among people? Could it be the Acaryas of this order who sheathed this symbolic form in Vedic philosophical garb?**

K.C. Panigrahi³² notes that (p 639) similar tradition is still being followed in Bharati Matha in Bhubaneswar, as a result of which a guruvayatana has sprung up within its compound. There are now as many as 15 miniature temples of sandstone and laterite each of which contains a linga. Besides a number of lingas are found in open spaces and niches made in the temple and the Mahant of the matha with whom Panigrahi interacted believes that there are many more lingas lying buried in the kitchen garden.

Several *linga* types are known from Bhita and Mathura regions. An *Eka Mukhalinga* of the Sunga period is found from Mathura. A figure of Siva against a pillar of the pre-Kushana phase is now in the Philadelphia Museum. R. C. Agrawal reported a similar *linga* from Gamri (Bharatpur, Rajasthan). These attest to the popularity of the *Linga* worship in Mathura, Ujjaini and Madhyadesa. *Lingas* on raised brick platforms (*arghapithas*) with no *pranala* arrangement indicate that *abhishekha* ritual has not yet come to vogue. The *Linga pithas* under (*Sthalavriksha* or *Yaksha Sadam*) and in open were found vividly among the sculptural depictions dated to Kushana and post Kushana periods in Mathura, Taxila, and Ujjain.

Brick temples with *Linga-pithas* are found in the various *Satavahana* sites of Deccan (2nd-4th centuries A.D.) Ter in Maharastra, Aihole in Karnataka and more extensively at Nagarjunakonda.

Sarma³³ observes , “The *Kshatrapas* were devout worshippers of Siva and *Lakulisa*. Several *Linga* shrines at the famous Kayavarohana (Karvan in Gujarat) and Saurashtra mark the growing of Lakulisa-Pasupata”.

³² Panigrahi K.C., Panigrahi K.C, *Sculptural Representation of Lakulisa and other Pasupata Teachers*, *Journal of Indian History*, Vol-38, April 1960

³³ Sarma.I .K, *The Development of early Saiva Art and Architecture*, Sandeep Prakashan, 2004

***Mukhalingas* and esoteric meanings:**

Mukhalingas are a variety of *Manusha-lingas* bearing one or more sculptured faces of Siva on it. Most of the Agamas and Tantras provide detailed descriptions about making of a mukhalinga and hence their importance is stressed upon. Summarizing the essential points from these texts Rao³⁴ writes:

“The substance of these is that a Mukhalinga should be made on the pujabhaga of the Savrvsama-linga and that it might have one, two, three, four or five faces corresponding to the five aspects, Vamadeva, Tatpurusha, Aghora, Sadyojata and Isana of Siva.”

He further suggests that the number of faces on the linga were equal to the number of doorways of the garbagrha, Hence if there was only one doorway, *ekamukhalinga* was established and if there were four then *Caturmukhalinga* was established.

An important *ekamukhalinga* is housed in The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Interestingly it shares the realistic depiction of gudimallam linga and other free standing lingas belonging to pre Christian era. Here an incised rim circles the neck just above the central fold and above this point emerges the human head. On basis of the style Srinivasan³⁵ dates it to 1st BCE which seems quite plausible.



Illus 50. Ekamukhalinga, Pre Kusana, 1st BCE , Mathura (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

³⁴Rao Gopinath p.64

³⁵Srinivasan p.34

Another interesting Pre-Kusana *ekamukhalinga* comes from Aghapur (Bharatpur District, Rajasthan). Carved out of mottled red sandstone it echoes the similar realism seen in the early lingas from Mathura. Siva's face carved on the shaft is seen wearing an elaborate turban and which as one can see in the table is showing the east face displaying the kingly characteristics of the lokapala Indra.



Illus 51. Ekamukhalinga, Pre-Kusana, Aghapur, U.P (Govt. Museum Bharatpur)

An *ekamukhalinga*, showing Siva as *jatamukuta* is carved on an architectural fragment presently housed in State Museum, Lucknow. On the basis of style it can be dated a little later than the earlier ones discussed above, i.e c. 1st CE, possibly the early Kusana period. Still the nut and the shaft are seen visibly differentiated with a help of a deep line which goes round the *linga*. The top portion is decorated with a patterned band, tied as if to secure Siva's face to the linga. Like all the early linga forms this too is free standing and is installed upon a brick platform, situated before a spreading papal tree. Two worshippers are seen on the right standing in front of a broken figure.

The fact that a number of '*mukha-lingas*' are found from Thailand as enumerated by Indrawooth³⁶ⁱ shows that this cult was popular in the area around 5th -6th C.. A number of Siva lingas have been reported from Southern Thailand especially from 'Chaiya' , 'Nakhon Si Thammarat' 'Songkla' and 'Pattani'. Besides these sivalingas the existence of Saivism on Peninsular Thailand during this period is well supported by the 6th C. Sanskrit inscriptions from 'Khao Chong Khoi' in 'Nakhon Si Thammarat' province. The commercial trade contact hugely responsible for exchange of ideas between South India and Thailand were well established from Pallava period (6th C.) onwards though there are earlier scattered proofs of contact with east and central India.

In her extensive article on 'Saivism in early southern Thailand she has meticulously recorded the Saivite archeological remains in the area and also has referred to some important inscriptions. She has also thrown some light on Sivalinga cult and the number of *Sivalingas* found in the said region. She concludes her article with,

"The predominance of *Sivalinga* and Siva images as well as Saiva sacred places indicates that Saivism was flourishing in the peninsular Thailand during Srivijaya period³⁷."

Another enlightening article on the subject is by Prapandvidya³⁸ on 'Saivism in Thailand as recorded in Inscriptions and old documents from 6th c ad to early Ayudhya period'. The detailed study of these inscriptions and their bent towards Saivism is clearly pointed by the scholar. He further observes that from the reign of King Bhavavarman I till king Jayavaraman VII's accession to the throne, the major religion in the north eastern region of ancient Thailand was Saivism

³⁶ Indrawooth Phasook, 'Saivism in early Thailand based on archeological evidence' in 'Sahrdaya, Studies in Indian and South East Asian Art in honour of Dr. R. Nagaswamy' Ed by Baumer Bettina, Misra R.N., Prapandvidya Chirapat and Handa Devendra, Tamil Arts Academy, 2006 p 69-73

³⁷ Ibid p.73

³⁸ Prapandvidya, 'Saivism in Thailand as recorded in Inscriptions and old documents from 6th c ad to early Ayudhya period' evidence' in 'Sahrdaya, Studies in Indian and South East Asian Art in honour of Dr. R. Nagaswamy' Ed by Baumer Bettina, Misra R.N., Prapandvidya Chirapat and Handa Devendra, Tamil Arts Academy, 2006 p 62



Illus 52. Ekamukhalinga, Mon-Dvaravati Period, 8th CE, Thailand

In case of *Caturmukhalinga* in addition to the four visible faces there is one supposed to be on the top which is usually not carved and which represents *Isana* aspect of Siva. *Tatpuruṣa* is represented by the east facing face and *Aghora* by the southern one. *Sadyojata* is represented by western face and *Vamadeva* by the northern one. In the case of four faces, these should be attached to a body which ought to be represented to the level of the chest. Such a representation can be seen clearly in *Pancamukhalinga* from Bhita. Joshi³⁹ opines that:

³⁹³⁹ Joshi N.P, 'Early Forms of Siva' p.52 dos

“Three of the four faces on the caturmukhalingas –the terrifying (*aghora*), the shaven (*mundin* or *yogin*) and the turbaned (*usnisin*) are male, while the fourth one is female (*vama*). In Post Kusana sculptures turbaned and shaven faces disappear and are substituted for by normal faces”

Epic and Puranic mythology provide a mytho-poetic explanation of emergence of this interesting form of Siva. Mahabharata, a storehouse of interesting and valuable myths narrates the story of celestial nymph Tillotama who was going around in the assembly of gods. Bewitched by her beauty Siva didn’t want to take his eyes off her even for a moment so he developed four faces, one at each cardinal point to enjoy an unimpeded view of Tillotama. (Adi-parvan, 210.23-26, 605-6). Another reason is provided in Anusasan-Parvan of Mbh where Siva appears to explain this form saying that with his eastern face he rules as Indra, the western one is his normal face, his southern face is meant for destruction and that with his northern face he converses with Uma. Joshi⁴⁰ suggest that here Siva has taken over the function of four lokapalas.

Direction	Lokapala	Function	Aspect	
East	Indra	King and Administrator	Turbaned	Usnisin
West	Varuna	God of water and fertility	Normal	Saumya
South	Yama	God of death and destruction	Terrifying	Aghora
North	Soma/Kubera	God of beauty/God of wealth	Feminine	Vama

The Suta Samhita also conveys the notion about the nature of the five aspects of Siva represented by the five faces. Thus *Isana* is ether (*akasa*), *Tatpurusa* air (*vayu*), *Aghora* fire (*agni*), *Vamadeva* water (*jala*) and *Sadyojata* earth (*bhoomi*). The text states that the universe is pervaded by the ‘Panca Brahma’ and the person who is able to realize this attains liberation from bondage (is free of *pasas* which bind him to *Sansara*) (choubey p 36). In his *Brahma Mimamsa-Bhasya* Srikanthasivacharya interprets these five faces as representing five senses viz. *Sadasiva* is sound (*sabda*), *Isvara* touch (*sparsa*), *Rudra* form (*rupa*), *Visnu* taste (*rasa*), and *Brahma* smell (*gandha*).

⁴⁰ *Ibid* p.52-53

Now the esoterism of the *Mukhlingas* may be traced in the *Narayanopnisd* which was largely used by the *Pasupatas* for their sacred hymns. PS preached these mantras to be used as *Bija-Mantras* for sadhana.

Sadyojatam prapadyami Sadyojataya vai namah / bhava bhava natibhave bhajasva mam bhavodbhvaya namah/

Vamadevaya namo jyesthayah namah sresthaya namo, Rudraya namah, kalaya namah kala-vikaranaya namo balavikaranaya namo bala-pramathanaya namah sarvabhutadamanaya namo manonmanaya namah//

Aghorebhyotha ghorebhayo gora-ghora-tarebhyah/ sarvatah sarvasarvebhyo namasti-astu Rudra-rupebhyah//

Tatpurusaya vidmahe Mahadevaya dhimahe tan-no Rudra prachodayat//

Isanah sarva-vidyanam-isvarah sarva bhutanam brahmadhipatir brahmanodhipatir - Brahma Sivo'astu Sadasivom

These are hymns to Siva in five different aspects, each with a certain specific attributes. Thus *Sadyojata* is conceived of as *Bhavo'dbhava*, similarly *Vamadeva* is given nine attributes as suggested by the terms *Jyestha*, *Srestha* etc. *Aghora* is invoked as having two attributes, *Ghora* and *Ghoratara*. *Mahadeva* and *Rudra* are the attributes of *Tatpuruṣa*. *Isana* is addressed as being the supreme lord of learning, of animate objects, of the Vedic knowledge and also of Brahman, as *Sadasiva*. It is from Sayana's commentary⁴¹ on these verses that we know these five mantras were addressed individually to five faces of *Mahadeva* by those who aspired for enlightenment and that four faces of the lord were turned to four cardinal directions and the fifth one towards the sky. Such esoteric form of worship was mainly followed by ascetic aspirants with all its philosophical significance. *Sayana* does not suggest any reason for emergence of these five faces, he simply says that the Lord assumes such physical forms only to show mercy to his devotees.

⁴¹ *Rgveda-Samhita Srimat Sayanacharya virchita bhasya-sameksa* Ed. by N.S Sontakke, Published by Vaidika Samsodhana Mandala, Pune, 1972

Classifies PS into five sections each ending with an exhortation to meditation eg. Bhasya on sutra 1.8 says , “*atra idam Brahma japet-japyam nama....*”. But Kaundinya’s bhasya does not give any idea of the iconographic form associated to these invocations. The attributes of *Siva* in these mantras are explained in this commentary and are invoked in their formless abstractions with stress laid on the concept of *Brahmans* (*panchbrahma*). Though Kaundinya does not clearly talk about panchmukhas (five faces) but from his bhasya on sutra 1.9 it is clear that though Mahadeva has faces turned to other directions PS is only majorly concerned with the *Daksinamurti*. In the earlier sutra 1.8 he states distinctly that the *Pasupata* disciple should invoke the image of Mahadeva on the southern side i.e. the southern face of the image of the Lord. The icon *Daksinamurti* is known from its various depictions as representing a teacher and its no wonder *Siva* was worshipped in this form by the aspirants of *Lakulisa-Pasupata* system , who combine the aspect of *bhakti* with *jnana* (*jnannottar bhakti*).

The importance of certain Saiva images as abstract meditational devices has been hinted upon by Maxwell⁴² and he compares them to a mandala. He classifies some conjoined anthropomorphic figures in this group and he believes they are intentionally depicted in an unnatural manner. The first image to be discussed is the so called ‘Nand Linga’ and regarding this Maxwell⁴³ observes:

“*Here we have a sculpture that is visually analogous to my definition of meditation with its interconnected disciplined stages (the emanatory gods) linked by a continuum (the column) leading to transcendence (the freedom of the top four figures around a domed apex-the dome being the symbol of universality, facing, as it does the entire horizon and all angles of space leading to the zenith)*”

⁴² Maxwell, T.S. *Saiva Images as Meditational Constructs* p. 64-65, in Meister M ed. DOS p.

⁴³ *Ibid* p.66



Illus 53. Nand Linga, Kusana, 2nd -3rd CE ,Rajasthan

Interestingly Maxwell's observations sound as abstract as most of the Sanskrit texts on the subject. He reads similar functions in the Siva image from Parel.



**Illus 54. Saiva heptad, Candikadevi Temple, Barh Mata,
Parel,(Bombay), Maharashtra, 6th CE**

Kramrisch⁴⁴ too considered this panel as an important discovery and observed:

“The image from Parel is based on meaning of lingam, of Yaksha and yoga power. It visualises Siva not with the cosmical suggestiveness of the Nataraja image. This shows Siva in this everlasting activity beheld from without. The image from Parel shows Siva realised from within his state of power”

The importance of *Linga* in this system is stressed upon in *Pauranic Eklingjimahatmya* datable to Kumbha's rule C 15th CE translated by Premlata Sharma in hindi. First four chapters of the text narrate the reasons behind the manifestation of *Eklingji*. Interestingly the myths of Daruvan and birth of Skanda are narrated in third and fourth chapters of the text. Sharma⁴⁵ writes (I have transliterated it from hindi pg 8,9)

*“On being asked by Saunak about the significance of Medhpat ,(Mewar) Suta answered: In the central region of the Jambudweep there was a forest named Daruvan inhabited by various rishis. Once Siva and Parvati were passing through the forest and playfully Parvati asked Siva to seduce the pious wives of the rishis. Siva refused to comply with her whim and warned her of the Bhramtej with which Rishis could curse them but Parvati remained adamant. So Siva took a form of an extremely handsome man and started roaming in the forest. When the rishi patnis saw the handsome youth they were taken over by passion and were completely enchanted. Siva soon became invisible causing the hapless women to faint. Once these women regained consciousness they began to look for Siva like allover ,driven mad by their passion. Rishis were shocked to see their pious wives in a complete state of abandon and through their mental powers realized Siva's game. **Getting angry they unanimously cursed Siva's linga to fall on the earth”***

Hence here we see the connection between linga and phallus is established completely. Now it's the fifth chapter of the same text which talks about the manifestation of *Eklingji*⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Kramrisch Stella 'Indian Sculpture', Philadelphia, 1960, p 176

⁴⁵ *Eklingamahatmya* (Ekling Mandir Ka Sthal Purana evam Mewar Ke Rajvansh ka Itihas) Trans.

Premalata Sharma, MLBD, Delhi, 1976p. 8,9

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.10

*Here for the welfare of the gods cursed by herself, Devi asked the Siva linga to fall in the beautiful kingdom of Mandhata. **The linga would then enter the pataloka (netherland) and will only emerge on being meditated upon by Kamadhenu.** All the gods cursed to turn into stone will settle around this linga in their personified forms and the ' thief of my womb 'Ganga will flow there as 'Kutla'. All important pilgrim places will gather around this linga and I too will be manifested there in the form of Vindhya-vasini on the banks of Kutla.*

Eight Chapter narrates the manner in which Kamdhenu made linga emerge out of the bowels of the earth⁴⁷

On reaching the spot Kamdhenu filled the void in which the linga had fallen with her milk. Due to her maternal care and love linga emerged out of the hole , floating on the milk and became famous as Eklingji.(p 10)

In chapter nine its clearly stated though Siva was *ekalinga* but due to devotion of various beings he became *Bahu-linga* in various aeons. In *Satyuga* due to *Indra*, in *Treta yuga* due to *Nandini-dhenu*, in *Dwapar* due to *Takshak* and in *Kaliyuga* due to *Bashap-Harita*.

Troubled by Vrtrasura gods invoked Narayana. Visnu advised them to cheat the demon in believing that the gods were on his side and after gaining his complete faith to kill him. The gods did the same and finding the right occasion killed the demon on sly. But after killing the demon Indra incurred the sin of Brahmathya and asked Brhspati to suggest ways of getting rid of the terrible sin. The latter asked Indra to worship Eklingji. Indra came to Nagahrda and first worshipped goddess Vindhya-vasini .When the goddess asked him for a boon,Indra asked to be free of sin. Devi directed him to invoke Eklingji which required austere tapa (ugra tapa).Indra dug a lake with his vajra and Eklingji was pleased and absolved him of his sin and declared the 'Indra saras' to be a pious pilgrimage site.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.10

This incident reminds one of ‘*Pasupata vrata*’ mentioned in *Mrgendra Agama*. The text was written in the form of a dialogue between Harita and his disciples. *Indra* after killing *Vrtrasura* incurs brahmhatya and praised Visnu with 1000 names (visnu sahastra nama) along with various rites, recitations and rituals. Visnu gave him a ‘*Narsimha cavaca*’ and asked him to adore Siva in that attire. Here *Indra* takes up *Pasupata* vows and adores Siva for thousands of years. (translated from the French introduction to the version found in Puddukotai). Such myths connect the concept very strongly with Vedas. PS also substantiates this in sutra 4.10,

P.S. 4.10 Indrova agre Asuresu Pasupatamacharat

Coming back to Pu.EKM the last part of the 10th chapter gives an interesting story of Harita-rashi and Bashapa.

In Kaliyuga both Nandi and Chand were born as Harita and Bashap, the preceptor and the aspirant. Both got together near Ekalingji and worshipped the lord. Harita performed austere and harsh tapa while Bashap served his guru and Ekalingji both. On being propitiated Devi Vindhyavasini advised Harita to write a prose in praise of Siva. Harita wrote a beautiful piece and Siva was pleased and Harita for a boon. Harita asked Siva to bless him with the ability to enter the Siva’s abode with his physical body intact and Bashap asked to become the king of Medhpat (Mewar). Siva complied with their wishes.

This incident extremely important for explaining the history of Mewar finds parallel in various local legends which I have tried to summarize:

The king of Nagahrda was killed by his enemies and his pregnant wife did not commit Sati for the sake of the unborn child. To escape the enemies the queen disguised herself and her son and took refuge in a Brahmin household. The child was called Bappa and on growing up took to serving the Brahmin who had given refuge to him and his mother. Meanwhile his Kshtriya nature made him excel at the art of archery and weaponry. Meanwhile the Brahmins wife noticed that one of her cows was not yielding enough milk and suspected Bappa of drinking her milk. Bappa who was dejected on being blamed decided to find out the reason. He started keeping an eye on the cow and saw that while grazing she stops at a spot and milk automatically oozes out of her. Bappa was quite surprised. Nearby he saw Acarya Harita, an ascetic deep

in meditation and out of reverence cleaned his surroundings. He began to serve Harita everyday and inretun the ascetic instructed them in sacred lore of Siva and one day harita asked him to dig the spot where the milk oozed out of the cow. Bappa and his friends were surprised to find a siva linga under the earth. That Sivalinga was adored as Ekalingji and bestowed the boon of moksa on Harita and Kingship on Bappa.

What is quite significant and connects this motif quite strongly to Pasupata order is its similarity with myth preserved in Gopala Vamshabali of Nepal. It mentions that a cow used to spill her milk at a particular mound in *Mrgasthali* forest and was once noticed by a cowherd of Kirtipur named Nema Gopala. Nema was surprised to witness the act and decided to unfold the mystery by digging the mound. He found a ‘*jyotirling*’ hidden under the mound but was soon burnt to ashes by the heat of the linga. After his death Ne-Muni, the well known ascetic of that area installed the son of Nema Gopala as the king of Nepal⁴⁸. The parallels between both legends are unmistakable and the connection with kingship raises interesting questions about the role of *Pasupata-Acaryas* in the royal set-up and might throw light on the later *Rajaguru* tradition. As we know Nepal is connected with the worship of Pasupati since a long time and till this day the temple of Pasupati exists on the banks of Bagmati river and commands great devotion. Nepal Mahatmaya of *Skanda Purana* preserves the myth of formation of this site. It says that Siva was highly taken in by beauty of the forest and started roaming around in form of a deer with golden horns and that is why the place began to be called as *Mrgasthali*. As other gods got to know about this he left his deer form and returned back to Kailasa but not before **installing himself** in this area as Pasupati. The passage here could very well be talking about the linga which was installed here and according to Gopala Vamshabali can be dated to 1st CE.

⁴⁸ *Encyclopaedia of Saivism, By Swami Parameshwaranand, 2004 (Pasupatinatha*



Illus 55. Ekamukhalinga, Mrgasthali, Nepal, 6th CE.

The worship of *Siva linga* was popularized around Gupta period when the Puranas began to establish that the linga represents the *Nirguna* state of *Siva* like *Para Brahman* of Vedas . A repertoire of mythological literature emerged around the symbol to confer multiple meanings on it, meanings which lay people could understand ,which required no ascetic initiation to understand. Mythology provided the pivot around which the symbol attained apparently simplified meanings quite different from it's earlier esoteric and abstract meaning.

EPILOGUE

An academic study has to come to an end though the queries might be everlasting. It is with this feeling that I am winding up my work but I am sure I will very soon start digging again into the ravages of past for more.

Each and every chapter that I have discussed in my study can be elaborated into a separate study in itself. For me the most enlightening aspect has been the links that I could manage to find and establish between Lakulisa-Pasupata order and other such esoteric orders like Siddhayogesvarimata, Kaula tradition , Natha Sampradaya and Vajrayana Buddhism to mention a few important ones.

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

Dealing with texts originals, translations and adaptations helped me contextualize the thoughts and beliefs of this order into the larger body of Saivite thought. In this process the the early Saivite imagery and its iconological import proved to be very helpful. Visiting sites like Karvan, Elephanta, Jogesvari, Jagesvara and Ellora helped me see the visuals in the new light. Earlier during study tours I had seen and understood the panels in these sites from an iconographical perspective but now I could see them as didactic panels trying to popularize a certain line of thought. The interesting link between theology and literature is represented in the most apparent manner in the panels seen at all the temples dedicated to Lakulisa-Pasupata order. The impact of Kalidasa’s writings on art brings the point home completely.

The query started when I read about the extremely irrational sounding rituals prescribed for the aspirant of this order. Moreover I was agitated by the antifeminist declarations in PS where it asks aspirants to shun women. Left at that the study would not have progressed further and like most people the order would have appeared as a male chauvinistic one to me. understanding the nature of the sutras I realized that these injunctions were meant for young male aspirants who had to follow brahmacharya and interaction with a woman would have meant losing all the concentration and dedication that this order demands. I could find parallel between such suggestions and Plato's banning of artist from Utopia on the pretext that they can delude people. This idea of 'possible delusion' and to keep their precious disciples under control seems to have been the reason for such harsh words against women.

Philosophically the concept of mukhlingas and pancmukhalinga has been very important for LP order. It is clear that the narrative panels were meant for the laity but a true ascetic had to concentrate on the Sadasiva aspect, pancavaktramurti of Siva which is much more abstract. This idea has been discussed at length by Maxwell and Kramrisch in their papers and in this context two images 'Nand Linga' and 'Saiva heptad from Parel' comes across as interesting examples of Saiva images as 'meditational constructs.'

The imposing image of Sadasiva seen at Elephanta too falls in the same category and so do mukhlingas from various parts of the country and beyond.

The detailed study on ling and linga worship opened new vistas for me. The juncture at which this term started to be used as a phallic symbol was interesting to figure out. The erotic symbolism in Vedas as presented by Dange helped me better in understanding this potent symbol.

Seeing Vedic and Tantric thought not as two antagonistic streams but two different methods addressing the same query shattered many a myths that I had been taking for granted. I am greatly indebted to insightful writings by Pt.Gopinath Kaviraj whose words for the first time made me see this connection and which I hope to carry further in my future research.

SOME MYSTICAL ASPECTS OF THE KASHMIRI FOLKTALE *AKANANDUN*

Geetika Kaw Kher

Folklore reflects folk values and folk beliefs which are interactive and integral components of culture and ethos of a people. Various genres of folklore like folktales, folksongs, ballads, oral epic, folk theatre and other forms essentially contain features that enrich social life with all their vivacity and variety. Kashmir has rich folkloric traditions that go back to centuries, sharing many pan-Indian traits and characteristics and yet retaining a distinct regional flavour. Today origins of several themes that appear in Kashmiri folklore forms have totally faded away from folk memory, while some themes have not survived in their original form, having undergone mutations and variations due to a number of undetermined factors.

While magic, mystery and the supernatural element form inseparable aspects of folklore, there are several folktales in Kashmiri, as in other Indian languages, which have themes and structures permeated by elements that lend themselves easily to allegorical interpretations and reveal a vast potential for “atemporal- mystical” meaning. Not the surface or literal meaning that can be baffling and confusing at times as it defies logical thinking, but the deeper message that may need semiotic tools to decode it. One such tale from Kashmir which has terribly fascinated me with its intriguing central motif of mystical restoration to life or renewal of life is the story of *Akanandun*. The story, which has a didactic aspect, has been told, retold, presented many times, hence I am focusing on the core of the story rather than the details which might have been added later.

Apart from the central motif the other recognizable one with which the story starts is that of an intense desire that people have for a male child. The anxiety to have a male heir to perpetuate the ancestral lineage is a most commonly discerned trait in patriarchal communities. There are stories about the absurd lengths that parents go to in order to have this desire fulfilled. In the story of *Akanandun* too we find *Akanandun*’s parents, who happen to be a king and a queen, desperate to have a son

although they already have seven daughters, the number seven not being without symbolical significance. On their part, the daughters too are shown filled with intense longing to have a brother. It is at this psychological moment that the Jogi appears as if out of nowhere and making his crucial entry in the story, offers to grant them their wish, though not without a condition. They are unable to believe their ears, with the prospect of having a son so overwhelming them that they are prepared to do anything to have him. The Jogi knows their weaknesses, the intensity of their desperation, and elicits from them the promise that they will return the child bestowed on them through his miraculous powers, exactly twelve years after his birth. Without giving a second thought to the implication this could actually have, Akanandun's parents, accept the Jogi's condition. Delirious with joy at his birth, they rejoice and bring him up offering all the pleasures that they can provide, imagining the period of twelve years to be an eternity away.

Lost completely in the flow of happiness that the presence of their son brings to them, the royal couple tries to wish away the future. Probably the fear of losing the child may have lurked somewhere in their subconscious, but they do not let that come to the surface and hamper their joy. Once engrossed in the pleasures that they experience in boy's company, they totally lose sight of the threat that looms over them because of the promise. But the Jogi does not forget; he remembers the promise very well and returns exactly at the stipulated time, demanding that the boy be returned to him. Suddenly they wake up as though from a dream. The reality of the Jogi's appearance shatters their reverie and they beg the Jogi to spare the child and take whatever else he wants.

Here the story seems to highlight the aspect of '*moha*'. The couple and their seven daughters have grown extremely fond of the boy and they weep, wail and use every stratagem to invoke the Jogi's sympathy. But the latter has given up the world and along with it all materialistic concerns. He remains unmoved, untouched by the extreme emotions displayed by the family and makes it plain that he will have nothing but the child. He harshly reminds them of their fateful promise. As the moment of realization of the actual implication of the promise dawns, gloom descends upon the minds of Akanandun's parents. It is a state of unmitigated despair.

Greatly aggrieved and pained, the parents oblige with a heavy heart and call Akanandun, a young, energetic and handsome lad of 12 who has shown great promise in all the fields, asking him to go with the hard-hearted ascetic. But what follows is unimaginable horror, something worse than the worst of nightmares. The Jogi instead of taking the boy with him commands that he be cleansed and draped in new clothes. And when the child is ready, he takes him to a side and axes him in full view of his parents. How terrible it must have been for them to witness the gory act! But their horror does not end here. The Jogi starts cutting the boy's body in small pieces and nonchalantly separates the flesh from the bones. This leaves the parents shell shocked but helpless. In front of them is their dear son, killed and chopped into pieces. Imagine the condition of the mother who was then ordered by the Jogi to wash the pieces of the meat and cook them as a dish. The fact that she is shown complying with such a gruesome order cannot be explained except in terms of faith and points to the awe and reverence with which such ascetics were held. Fear of a curse or the demonstration of his tremendous supernatural powers by the Jogi can be of course a plausible cause, but it is not out of fear alone that a mother can force herself to take such a horrible step. Somewhere, it implies a trust in the spiritual prowess of the Jogi who had given her the greatest happiness of her life. But he is shown going a step further in this drama of horrors. Crossing all limits, he commands her to taste the flesh to see if it is properly cooked and also to serve the dish in seven vessels and cover them with a white cloth. Again she complies, almost mechanically. But she can control her feelings no more when the ascetic asks her to call Akanandun to partake of his share of the horrible meal. She bursts into tears and says that in no way can this be possible for her. She cries her heart out, but the Jogi does not relent. There must have been something in the Jogi's voice that makes her call her son, but she does so in most pitiful a voice --a wail of a lamenting mother on whom the extent of her loss has just dawned. But even as she is undergoing these extreme emotions, Akanandun comes rushing into the room and takes his place, ready to have the meal. Dazed and bewildered, the family can believe their eyes no more. They turn their questioning glances towards the Jogi, only to find no one there. The holy man has disappeared along with the seven vessels. There is nothing which can remind them of the dreadful act they had witnessed only moments back. Was it all unreal, an illusion, *maya*? Who was the Jogi in reality and what was the purpose of his testing them in this manner?

The story is full of macabre and violent imagery, suffused to the core with *bibhatsa rasa*, arousing tremendous *jugupsa* (disgust), yet I feel that somewhere it has a cleansing power. A catharsis of sorts is achieved by reading and sure enough by watching the story being enacted. The narrative takes us through different planes of emotion, increases our heartbeats, purges us of the emotions of pity and fear embedded in our psyche. On one hand it has its own value as a moving human story; on the other it offers us an outlet into the realm of the mysterious, of supernatural powers and miracles accessible only through faith. Probably this is why the narrative has had a great appeal for Kashmiri Sufi poets like Samad Mir, Ahad Zargar and others who have used it to illustrate their concept of *tawakkul* or submission before God's wish – an important stage in their spiritual practice.

As it emerges, the Jogi is a central character in the story of *Akanadun*. What is of great significance is that he connects the folktale unmistakably with the pan-Indian tradition of a sect of renouncer ascetics who have passed into folklore from their origins as followers of the Nath *sampradaya* that was founded by the legendary Gorakh Nath or Gorakshanatha, probably in the 10th century. Their beliefs and practices are largely associated with Shaivite asceticism and Buddhist Tantrik ideology, the word *jogi* being a derivative of Skt. *yogi*. Following Gorakh Nath's teachings, the *jogis* practice various meditative and physical techniques to achieve self-realization. About Gorakh Nath, to whom these *jogis* trace their lineage, the legend goes as follows:

Once a devotee of Shiva desired offspring, so the god, at Parvati's intercession, gave him some ashes from his *dhuni* or fire and told him to make his wife eat them. His wife, however, was incredulous and did not comply but let the ashes fall on a heap of cow dung. Eventually the devotee found a child where the ashes had been thrown, and took it to Shiva, who said that the child will grow up to be a yogi, a great spiritual soul and will return back to him.

Jogi is the popular designation of Gorakh Nath's followers, the adherents of the Nath cult. Their cult spread rapidly through many parts of India, especially in the north, and in popular thought they came to be associated with certain external trappings and peculiarities of behavior. Smeared with sacred ashes and wearing ochre robes and

large earrings in split ears with a begging bowl in hand they went from village to village and town to town to beg for alms, fervently making utterances like “*Alakh Niranjan*” or invoking the name of Shiva. Stories and tales of their extraordinary spiritual powers and secret knowledge, believed to have been acquired by them through rigorous cultic practices and strict self-discipline, gathered volume and became a remarkable part of popular lore over time. The figure of the *jogi* with all his idiosyncrasies appeared persistently and ubiquitously in Sanskrit as well as regional literatures and various folklore genres of India. Although a renouncer of the world and worldly pleasures, he often interfered in the affairs of the householders to whom he went for alms, helping them to solve their problems or to have their mundane wishes fulfilled through his mysterious supernatural powers. These included, among other things, the powers to bestow a child, more often a son, to infertile couples and to restore the dead to life. In many folktales related to the Jogis, we see them performing miraculous feats in a matter of fact manner, which made them favourite characters of the common people.

Our Jogi in the Kashmiri tale of *Akanandun* too is endowed with these extraordinary powers and fits well with the general character of such ascetics in the pan-Indian Nath traditions. The tale has survived from submergence under the flood of Islamic religio-historical themes probably because of its popularization by the Sufi poets, for whom, as pointed out earlier, it served as an illustration of concepts related to their spiritual practice. The Jogi features as a character in a few other Kashmiri folktales as well, but with only minor and peripheral roles to play. The power of restoration to or renewal of life that the Jogi demonstrates in the *Akanadun* story is its main motif. This motif is not, however, confined to the *jogi* lore alone, but is a cross-cultural one. It can be seen, for instance, in the well known Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac as the motif of resurrection. Gen 22 NIV states that God ordered Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, to the region of Mariah and sacrifice him as a burnt offering to Him.

A story related to the myth of resurrection is also found in Egyptian Myth of Osiris, the god of afterlife who was cut into pieces by his arch enemy Set and was brought back to life by his wife Isis. Isis collected all the body parts and arranged them in order and started singing a song while going around the pieces until her husband came back to life and later on came to be known as the ‘god of afterlife’.

One finds in these different stories a stress on faith and trust, which appears to be their point of intersection. Somewhere in our story of Akanandun too it is faith and trust of the family, especially the mother, in the Jogi that seem to have been tested. One sees here a willing submission to the wishes of someone who has blessed her with a son. But the story appears to go even beyond that. What the Jogi wants to demonstrate through his act of disappearance towards the end is that the nature of both life and death is illusory.

As Subhash Kak observes, the idea of *paroksha* or paradox, in Epic myths can be extended to folk literature too. In such narratives the moral ambiguity works like the hubris of Greek myth and drama, creating a space that is not quite in the realm of gods, although it is superhuman. The story of Akanandun has definitely a mystical message to convey at the allegorical level. This can be decoded only after studying the violent imageries in the tale in the light of their motivational factors and the elements it has in common with the popular lore related to the Jogi tradition in other regional languages of India.

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE SECTARIAN AFFILIATION OF THE RUINS AT *HARWAN*

Geetika Kaw Kher

This paper seeks to address questions of representation and interpretation of the monuments unearthed at Harwan, Kashmir. 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.

Stein identifies '*Harwan*' with *Shadarhadvana* (grove of six saints), a locality mentioned in Rajatarangini [Stein M.A., '*Kalhana's Rajatarangini*,' Vol. II, p. 455 & Vol. I, Book I, p. 31, Delhi 1989]. According to Kalhana, the great Buddhist thinker Nagarjuna belonged to this place; hence the Buddhist connection is inevitable.

Following a chance discovery of few moulded brick tiles at the beginning of the 20th century, the importance of the site was realized, though it took another 10-15 years to seriously survey it. The area was filled with cornfields, but interestingly, there was a square patch of land which had no cultivation and was covered by turf only. This aroused interest and the area was excavated to reveal the ruins of a Buddhist site situated halfway up the slope of a mountain bordering a lateral branch of the main valley. These walls were constructed in what has been called "diaper rubble style," wherein a number of large undressed boulders are placed in one row with intervening spaces filled with smaller stones, so that the entire façade presents a diaper effect, hence the name. Among the buildings constructed in this style were found

- 1] The triple base of a medium sized stupa
- 2] A set of rooms which might have been Buddhist viharas

The stupa is built in the middle of a rectangular courtyard facing north. Digging under its foundations revealed a copper coin of Toramana, the White Hun ruler who flourished around the 5th century AD. His monuments at Eran (Madhya Pradesh) dated around the same time point to his peak period of activity. Hence the stupa could not have been constructed earlier than the 5th century AD. The viharas surrounding the stupa must have been constructed after or simultaneously with the stupa, hence whatever proof we find of Buddhist activity is all post 5th century AD.

Apart from these structures there were excavated some more walls in crude pebble style (still seen in many village temples in Kashmir) and in a style which can be called a cross between pebble style and diaper style.

Immediately around the 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.

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 Rsi cave in Barabar hills (Bihar) and the early chaitya at Kondivite near Bombay.

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 [Kak R.C, 'Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,' p. 109-110, Srinagar, Kashmir, 2002].

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 the second century AD. 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.

Sastri 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” [Sastri N., Ajivikas (from Tamil Sources), Journal of Sri Venkatesvara Rao Institute, p. 419-422, 1941]

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.

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 Bhagwati Sutra and in Buddhaghosa’s

commentary on the Samanna-phala-sutta. As Basham points out, both these texts clearly show dislike and scorn felt by both Jainas and Buddhists for Makkhali Gosala [Basham A.L., 'History and Doctrine of Ajivikas; a vanished Indian religion,' 1951].

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 makhal 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.

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 opines that the Ajivikas or a section of them were the predecessors of Lakulisa Pasupatas or even Sivabhagvatas of Patanjali [Bhandarkar D.R., 'Ajivikas,' Indian Antiquity, p. 286-290, 1912]

This can be collated with the fact that Kalkacharya, a fifth century Jaina astrologer, calls Ajivikas as bhagvatas. Danielou 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 Laulisa-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 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.

Nevertheless, the philosophy of both orders is drastically different. While Ajivikas believed in Niyativada, Lakulisa seems to have formulated a school of thought which bridged the gap between early dualistic Saiva philosophy and later monistic school of Kashmir Saivism. 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 [Pandey K.C., 'Abhinavagupta, A historical and philosophical study,' 2000].

A tradition in the Agama, quoted by Abhinavagupta, records the receiving of the doctrine by Lakula from Swachchhanda, thus linking the system with much complicated and curious Bhairava tradition of Kashmir. Moreover, the images of Lakulisa seen on Pandrethan and Payar temples point towards its worship in the valley somewhere in the seventh and eighth centuries.

It is beyond our scope to dig into the antiquity of Lakulisa-Pasupata order, but one has attempted to show that cultural and artistic heritage never perishes but only transforms from one form to another. 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.

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