

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL DATA

(A) RELIGIOUS DATA

The work of Soddhala reveals some data on which an account of the religious and spiritual activities of the time can be built up. We attempt to give here a brief sketch of the same.

Pantheon :- The people were god-fearing and righteous. Temples of the Brahmanical gods and goddesses abounded in the land and the drift from the vedic to the Puranic worship had been completed. One gets the impression of the prevalence of the Puranic faith.

Vedic and Puranic gods :- Vedic Gods, Devas or Divaukasas (p. 10), viz., Indra, Agni, Varuna, Sūrya, Yama and Visnu with their various names have been referred to by the poet. They have been described with the later Puranic imprint on them. They are no more the anthropomorphic features of nature and have become personal gods to their respective devotees.

Of the new advents to the older pantheon the following have been named : Brahmā, Visnu, Siva, and their

Composite form of Trimūrti, Kubera, Śeṣa, Madana and Lokapālas (p. 123).

Goddesses :- Of the Vedic goddesses only Śacī, the consort of Indra and Sarasvatī (Bhārati - p. 14) are mentioned; but these also have been amply coloured by Puranic ideas. Sarasvatī and Bhārati are both indetical and denote the Goddess of learning. The Puranic goddesses who preponderate during this age are Lakṣmī and Pārvatī.

Mythical beings mentioned by Sodḍhala are Gāndharva, Guhyaka, Kinnara, Siddha, Vaidyādhara, Nāga, Bhūta, Pisāca, Vetāla and Gana. It is possible to clarify them under four headings¹ :-

- (i) Enemies of Gods, very rarely visiting the earth, Asura, Daitya and Dānava.
- (ii) Servants of the Gods, frequently connected with mortals, Gāndharva, Kinnara, Guhyaka and Gana.
- (iii) Independent super human beings, often mixing with mortals, Nāga, Siddha and Vidyādhara.
- (iv) Evil beings, hostile to mankind, Raksasa, Pisāca, Bhūta and Vetāla.

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1. Tawny, Penzer : The ocean of story, Vol. I (Appendix I).

Just as the number of Puranic gods have multiplied so has also grown that of the Daityas or Suradviṣas, for without the creation of important terrifying traits of the latter, the greatness of the former could have hardly been possible to extol. Rāvana, Kamsa, Kaiṭabha and Bali have therefore been alluded to. Rahu (p. 75) and Ketu (p. 55) represented by two evil planets have also been classed among the demons after the manner of the Purāṇas. Śiva has the following made up of the Ganas who belong to the class of spirits.

The spirits of the forest, Vanadevatās (pp. 36, 126) have been alluded to. Ancient historical and mythological personages and heroes like, Śaṁin, Parasurāma, Kārtavīrya, Hanumān, Sugriva, Nala, Nila, Angada, Rāma and others are endowed with almost divine powers.

Soddhala has referred to that phase of popular religion in which deification of animals becomes a marked feature. Thus Garuda (the eagle) is the vehicle of Viṣṇu, Śeṣa, the thousand-hooded serpent is the couch of Viṣṇu (p. 65) and the Crocodile is the vehicle of Kandarpa, the love-god (p. 67).

Some of the important gods and goddesses, both vedic and Puranic and other superhuman characters are discussed below:-

INDRA had been the most powerful God in the pantheon of the Rgveda. 250 hymns have been addressed to him;¹ but later on he was superseded by younger Gods of the Paṇic pantheon of whom Viṣṇu and Śiva became the ruling deities. Soddhala refers to Indra usually with regard to narratives regarding the cutting of the wings of the mountains with his weapon Vajra, Kulisa or Dambholi (pp. 76, 82) and also his curse to Urvāsi for descending to the human world (p. 52). His rape of Ahalyā has been referred to by Soddhala (p. 36). He presides over the eastern direction and hence the direction is said to be Paurandari (p. 73). He is endowed with a number of eyes (p. 55). He is referred to as Śatamakha (p. 10), Purandara (p. 20), Akhandala (p. 20), Maghavat (p. 25), Jisnu (p. 26), Śatamanyu (p. 36), Śakra (p. 52), Valabhid (p. 93), Vasava (p. 94), Surendra (p. 82), Harit (p. 72), Sankṣandana (p. 143), Indra (p. 55), Śatakratu (p. 76), Surapati (p. 129).

VARUNA of the Rgvedic pantheon becomes a water-god (p. 60). He bears a Pāśa, the noose of chastisement (p. 72). He is the presiding deity of the western direction (p. 72).

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1. Macdonell : Vedic mythology, P. 59.

YAMA also called Danda¹ and Antaka² has been mentioned fifty times in Rgveda³ and three whole hymns are dedicated to him in the 1st and the 10th Mandalas. He gives bliss to the good and woe to the bad in Rgveda. He is the god of death who destroys the world. Yama in his epithet Antaka or Krtanta has been referred to by Soddhala as devouring the worlds, Bhuvanabhojin (p. 75) and also bearing the deadly danda (pp. 76, 82).

BRAHMA is one of the principal deities and forms along with Visnu and Śiva, the wellknown Hindu triad called trimūrti referred to as Hari-Hara-Brahmanāh (p. 70). He is alluded to as Prajāpati, the creator of all the mobile and immobile universe (p. 68). In this manner, Brahmā has been given the epithets of Vedhas (p. 124), Viśvasṛjā (p. 124) and Pitāmaha (p. 67). He is also said to be Caturmukha (p. 14) and Viriñci (p. 94), Ambhojabhava (p. 133), and Pañkajabhū (p. 1). He shows favour to those who are cursed (p. 94). Sarasvatī is said to be born from the mouth of Brahmā, the lotus-born god (p. 1).

1. Kālidāsa : Kumārasambhavam II - 23.
2. Bhatta Nārāyaṇa : Venisamhāra, III - 32.
3. Macdonell : Vedic mythology, P. 171.

VISNU, a deity of Rgveda is reborn in Puranic Pantheon and has acquired a new glory and boundless power. New epithets are given to him as for example, Hari (p. 94), Trivikrama (pp. 75, 124), Muraripu (p. 11), Murāri (pp. 36, 98), Caturbhuja (p. 78), Upendra (p. 95 & 99), Cakra-pāni (p. 68), Manārdana (p. 73 & 94), Kamsāri (p. 111), Murajit (p. 96), Acyuta (p. 119), Sārṅgin (p. 23), Kaitābhāri (p. 54), Madhuripu (p. 55) and Asuradvīṣ (p. 53).

Visnu in Rgveda is a sun deity, who like the sun takes three strides (vikrama) across the three kinds of space. There his weapon as a precursor of the later Cakra is a revolving wheel represented like the sun. The inferior position of Visnu as a sun-deity in Rgveda is changed to one of supreme importance in the Brāhmanas, where he already assumes the form of a dwarf and rescues the earth from the Asuras in three strides. In the story of the great deluge in the Śatapatha, the fish that towed Manu's vessel into safety was the incarnation of Prajāpati Brahman. The later mythology, however, ~~has~~ transferred the functions of the fish, boar and tortoise from Prajāpati Brahman to Visnu¹.

Visnu, according to Soddhala who obviously follows the Puranas, is one of the most important gods of the later

1. HCL, Vol. III - P. 415.

Hindu pantheon, and to-day, besides Śiva, he is the supreme deity who is worshipped by the Hindus through one or the other of his incarnations.

The Avatāras of Viṣṇu :

An Avatāra or incarnation of a god differs from mere identification of two gods in this, that in the former case the god that is considered an incarnation acts like a human being or even a brute, at the same time he has the miraculous powers of a god. The Avatāras of Viṣṇu are variously given by various authorities.¹

Kūrma (p. 94), Varāha (p. 94), Nṛsimha (p. 82), Vāmana (p. 94), Paraśurama (Bhārgava) (p. 8), Rāma (p. 110, 111) and Kṛṣṇa (Kaitabhāri p. 55) have all been identified with Viṣṇu. They were all famous incarnations of Viṣṇu, the most benevolent of the gods. In the Kūrma incarnation, he protected the Vedas. In his Varāha incarnation, he rescued the earth from the Daityas. In the Nṛsimha incarnation, Prahlāda was rescued from his father, Hiranyakāśipu, whose chest was torn assunder by sharp nails. In the Vāmana incarnation, assuming the form of a Brāhmaṇa-dwarf, he traversed the earth, air and heaven in three strides and gained the earth from

1. Utgikar N. B. : Collected works of Sir. R. G. Bhandarkar,

Bali, the lord of the demons. As Parasurama, the son of Jamadagni, he after having killed the Kṣatriyas filled the ponds in Kurukṣetra with their blood and with it gave funeral offering to his dead father. In the incarnation of Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, he killed Rāvana and as Vāsudeva, he rescued the people from the clutches of cruel Kansa, Kaitābha, Madhu, Mura and others.

VISNU reclines on the couch formed by Śeṣa, the thousand-hooded serpent (pp. 36, 65). He is referred to as resting on the lap of Lakṣmī (p. 53, 144) and wearing on his chest a gem named Kaustubh (p. 100) and he is waited upon by the humble Garuḍa (p. 117).

SIVA along with Brahma and Viṣṇu make up the Hindu Triad. He is the most favourite deity of Soddhala whom he invokes in the beginning of his work, "Victorious is the three-eyed god, who is the primal cause and the pillar of the great house called the universe charming with three worlds (also three storeys) and in whose Body shines forth the Goddess, the daughter of the king of mountains (Pārvatī) as a decorative image" (p. 1). Moreover, he concludes the work with a stanza eulogising Śankara¹, "Victorious in

1. UK : P. 158

जयति जयति जयति जयति जयति जयति
जयति स च पिनाकिन्युज्ज्वला यस्य भोगे ।
जयति जयति चासाजने वाम्पूजनाय
शिवशक्तिपदपूजां हन्ता सारस्वतश्रीः ॥

the three worlds is the favourite deity Śankara, the wielder of Pinaka. Victorious is he, who possesses a great devotion to wards the God and greatly victorious is the literary glory, full of eulogy of Śiva, which exists in this Campu story."

From this as well as from his frequent references to the deity it seems that the poet was a worshipper of Śiva. He describes his own descent from Kalāditya who is said to be the descendant of Kayastha a gana of Śiva. The names and attributes that are assigned to him bring out well his powerful character. They are :- Trinetra (. 1), Astamūrti (p. 10) Bhava (p. 10), Umeśa (p. 12), Mahādeva (p. 12), Śiva (p. 53), Ambikanātha (p. 65), Dhurjati (p. 95), Purajit (p. 96), Candraketu (p. 104), Sambhu (p. 107), Ardhendusekhara (p. 115), Mahēśvara (p. 115), Śankara (p. 116), Candīśa (p. 107), Andhakāri (p. 105), Andhakavipātaka (p. 92), Hātakesvara (pp. 102), Somanātha (p. 143), Candravibhusana (p. 144) and Pinākin (p. 158). Several temples were dedicated to Śiva. Kālidasa refers to a Jyotirlinga called Mahākāla at Ujjayini¹, and of Viśveśvara² or Viśvanātha at Banares.

Soddhala has also referred to a temple of Śiva (p. 65),

1. Kālidasa : Raghuvamśa, VI 34, and Meghadūta, 36.

2. Kālidāsa : Raghuvamśa, XVIII 24.

where people offer prayers and bow down to him for the accomplishment of their desired object. Kumārakesari while praying to Sankara gives as vivid picture of the image of the God. He says, "May God Sankara whose dripping elephant-skin, the snake around the neck, ashes besmeared to his body and the third eye on his forehead are looked upon by Parvati as a white Silken garment, a necklace, sandal dust and saffron mark respectively by means of her eyes endowed with deep love which as if works as an unguent of magic collyrium." (p. 65).

We find another reference to a temple of God Candraketu (p. 104). He is waited upon by young maidens with the intention that their desires may be fulfilled. Siva has been spoken of as possessing eight forms (p. 10), viz. the five elements, the sun, the moon and the Soma-sacrificer.¹ He is alluded to have taken a deadly poison named Kālakūṭa at the time of the churning of the ocean. This gave a dark blue colour to his neck and in consequence of it he bears the names Nilakantha and Śitikantha.

The author has frequently alluded to the destruction of Kāmadeva through his third eye (pp. 23, 36, 95) and that

1. Kālidāsa : Abhijñānaśākuntala - I, 1.

of Tripura, three cities of demons through the fire of his arrow (p. 84) and thus he is Purajit. He is known for his loud laughter. (p. 14) Soddhala refers to the composite figure called Ardhanārīnāṭeśvara represented by Śiva with Pārvatī as forming part of his body (p. 1).

SACI or Indrānī is the wife of Indra (p. 53, 144). SARASVATĪ or Bhārati (p. 23) is born from the mouth of Brahmā and is the goddess of speech and learning, the revealer of divine wisdom and the patroness of arts and sciences. She holds a Vinā in her hand. She is also said to be Vagīśvari (p. 14) and Brāhmī (p. 16). Soddhala while praying to Sarasvati says, "Let the Goddess, the mistress of speech, born from the mouth of the lotus-born God (Brahmā), purify the world - the Goddess who witnessing simulataneously the whole of the literary world subsists in the mind's eye of the poet like its pupil." (p. 1).

LAKSMĪ or Śrī to whom several references are made in the text, is the consort of Viṣṇu (pp. 25, 53) and is represented in sculpture as shampooing the feet of her lord reclining on the Sesā. A complete picture of this pose has been given by Kālidāsa, where she is said to sit on a lotus, her silken robe covering her girāle and Viṣṇu's feet lying on her lap.¹

1. Kālidāsa : Raghuvamśa, X, 8.

UMĀ, the consort of Śiva (p. 143, p. 53) has been referred to by the poet under several names like Girīndradu-hitā (p. 1), Adrisutā (p. 144), Pārvatī (p. 65), ~~Adrisuta~~ (p. 143), Ambikā, Bhavāni and Gaurī (pp. 28, 52). He has also referred to her pañcāgni penance (pp. 28, 52).

KĀLĪ, the destructive counterpart of Mahākālā Śiva, wears a necklace of human skull and serpents as her ornaments. She holds the staff of a big sūla as her weapon (p. 61). She cannot be indentified with Umā. Her other epithets are Katyāyanī, Candī, Cāmundā, Gandikā, Durgā and Mahākālī (p. 61). Soddhala gives the characteristics of Cāmundā in her praise by Kumārakesarī. There, the deity is referred to as wearing the bracelets of snakes and holding a big trident in her hand. Her body is covered with a long garment densely woven by means of human heads. Even Indra is said to be bowing down to her feet (p. 61).

NĀGAS have been treated in great extent, as the heroine of the story is a Nāga princess. They are divided into eight Kulas or families, namely Āvanta, Vāsuki, Taksaka, Karkota, Kulika, Saṅkhaṇḍa, Mahāpadma and Padma (p. 108). They reside in the nether world. They assume different forms at their will. Their movement is unobstructed in all the worlds. They are beautiful, divine and strong (p. 93).

An enemy dies as soon as he is touched by them. They are indifferent to the wealth of others and therefore they are appointed as the protectors of wealth by people. It is wonderful that they live like Yogins, only on wind as their food. The aged Śeṣa bears the wide-spread earth at ease, as if it is a bunch of flowers (p. 94). Vāsuki is said to be the chief of the Pātāla region. Śikhandaṭilaka, the father of the heroine is referred to as the descendant of the family of Sankhapāla and a favourite attendant of Śaṅkara, the god of the mobile and immobile (p. 95). Sankhapāla seems to be the same as the father of Śaṅkhacūḍa, the serpent who was given protection by Jimūtavāhana, the hero of the drama, Nāgānanda. According to Śaṅkhacūḍa,¹ the fame of his family was as white as a conch-shell which was a popular standard of comparison for witness. Sankhapāla was the name of one of the eight families of Nāgas as shown above.

Śeṣa-nāga was a mythical figure, the personification of a serpent and the king of Nāgas. His body formed the couch of Viṣṇu, resting on the waters of the milky ocean, while his thousand hoods were the god's canopy. He is also supposed to be supporting the earth on his hoods (pp. 52, 93, 94).

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1. Śrīharsa : Nāgānanda, P. 102.

The many-hooded cobra was used as a rope for the churning of the ocean. He now accompanies both Siva and Visnu and is worshipped throughout the country on a particular festival day of his own, the Nāga-pancamī.

The Vidyādhara, Kinnaras and Siddhas have been treated by the poet as endowed with divine powers in which the popular belief is reflected. They are supposed to haunt the highest peaks of the Himalayas.

Madana is the handsome god of love. He has a flower-bow having a string of bees and five flowery arrows. He shrewdly awaits the proper opportunity to strike Siva. Unfortunately the pride of his bow is humbled by Siva's fortitude, and he is immediately burnt to ashes. Rati is a consort of Madana. The character of Rati is vividly drawn in the famous Rativilāpa of the Kumārasambhava.¹ Soddhala has alluded to Madana and Rati in his work. His attributes and functions can be understood by the epithets given by the author. They are as under :- Minadhvaja (p. 3), Manobhava (pp. 25, 66, 100), Manmatha (p. 52), Kusumapatrini (p. 48), Kusumasāyaka (p. 50), Cetobhū (p. 53), Jhasaketana (p. 121), Pancesu (p. 123), Puspāyudha (p. 66), Puspadhanvan (p. 66) Manobhu (p. 66)

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1. Kalidāsa : Kumārasambhava, IV.

Manasija (p. 66), Madana (p. 102), Kandarpa (p. 100), Ananga (p. 96), Sankalpajanman (p. 96), Makardh~~ra~~ja (p. 96), Kusuma-kāramuka-pāni (p. 74), Smara (p. 96), Makaraketu (p. 99), Karmukapāni (p. 133). The poet also refers to the drinking of wine by cupid and Rati (p. 67), Scattering of the red jewels of the necklace put on by cupid, who has been struck by the foot of Rati in anger (p. 48), movement of Rati along with cupid (p. 53) and her swooning at the burⁿing of cupid (p. 52). Cupid has his banner of an alligator and bears a staff of sugar cane (p. 99).

CHURNING OF THE OCEAN

Soddhala¹ has given a number of stray references to Samudramanthana, the churning of the ocean already described in the Purāṇas.² The gods and demons assembled together wanted to churn the ocean. The mountain Mandara was made the churning staff. Sesa was used as the rope of the staff. Bali was made the chief of the activities and demons were associated with the gods in the churning. Visnu in his fourth incarnation as a tortoise came out from Pātāla. He was the resting place of Mandara mountain. Visnu at the request of the Gods and demons supported the churning

1. ~~Soddhala~~ : UK, pp. 6, 9, 10, 13, 64, 65, 68, 124.

2. Matsyapurāṇa Ch. - 249 - 251.

staff. They churning^{ed} the ocean for hundred years and received the fourthen jewels, viz., Laksmī, Kaustubha, Pārijāta, Surā, Dhanavantari, the moon, wish-yeilding cows, the elephant Airāvata, Sārnga, the horse Uccaiḥśravas, the nectar, an umbrella, a bow, Kundalas and the Kalakūta. Viṣṇu received Laksmī, Kaustubha and a Sārnga bow. Indra received the elephant Airāvata and the horse Uccaiḥśravasa and the Kundalas. Sūrya received Dhanvantari. Varuna received the umbrella. Vayu received Pārijāta. The poison was drunk by Śiva. For the sake of the nectar there issued a battle among the gods and demons. Viṣṇu assumed the Mohinī form and the demons handed over the pot of nectar to him. During the battle, the gods drank the nectar. Rāhu, in divine form was also drinking the same amongst the gods. As soon as the nectar reached his neck, the sun and the moon revealed his identity and Viṣṇu cut off his head from the body. Since that time his enmity with the sun and the moon continues up till now.

SOMANĀTHA AND HĀTKESVARA

Soddhala has referred to Prabhāsa-kṣetra, on the coast of Kathiawar, where the shrine of Śrī Somanātha had been already established. People worshiped somanātha for the fulfilment of their desired object. At the time of Soddhala

a great number of people went on a pilgrimage of Somanātha. The author refers to the huge crowd of pilgrims gathered together on a sacred day. He also refers that this shrine fulfilled the desires of the devotees.¹

According to a reference in the Skandapurana the sacred shrine of Somanātha must have been ~~shrine~~ shrine of Bhairavanatha before it came to be known as Somanātha.² Sri Jote R. B. considers that the worship of Somanātha is connected with the worship of the moon and the fire³ and also notes that the worshipers of Śiva according to Soma-vidyā, the special cult of worshipping Śiva along with the moon, were in great numbers at Prabhāsa. In order to corroborate this argument he quoted the verse⁴ in which it is mentioned that the river Sarasvatī, the ocean, Śiva along with Umā, the moon and Somanātha, these five whose names begin with Sa are difficult to be obtained. Thus he has come to the conclusion that the name Somanātha was given to the sacred shrine of Śiva at Prabhāsa by the Saiva devotees who worship the sacred līṅga according to the tradition of

1. ~~Sodhale~~ : UK, P. 143.

2. Skandapurāṇa, Prabhāsa khaṇḍ, Prabhāsa mātmya, 4.

3. Jote R. B. : Somanātha, P. 55 ff.

4. Jote R. B. : Somanātha, P. 67.

सरस्वती समुद्रश्च सोमः सोमगृहस्तथा ।
यश्चैव सोमनाथस्य संकारः पञ्च दुर्लभाः ॥

Soma-vidyā.

Soddhala has also referred to Hatakesvara twice in the text (pp. 102, 140). An aged sage Pātālagana by name has been said to be a devotee of Hatakesvara. Having received Brahma lotuses for the worship of the deity in Caitrikā Parvan on the full moon day of Caitra, he returned from heaven to the earth (p. 102). In the second reference Soddhala suggests that Hatakesvara, the original deity of the sacred shrine of Hatakesvara was in the Nāgaloka; the serpent region. This suggestion can be obtained from the mention of Tārākirīta who worships Hatakesvara on one Āstami day, in the serpent region (p. 140). There is also a reference to a practice that Hatakesvara was specially worshipped on Āstami and Caturthī day. This deity also was considered to be fulfilling the desires of the devotees.

The Puranic references to Somanātha and Hatakesvara are ancient ones.¹ Brahmā established the linga of Śiva in golden image in order to worship the god, ^{and} it was the beginning of the worship of that linga. At present, Hatakesvara is a favourite god of the Nāgaras of Gujarāt. But according to

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1. GSI, I, P. 227.

references found in the Purāṇas¹, Śiva is a beloved god of Nāgas and Nāgendras always worship him.

According to Mānasānkarbhāi² in Nāgrotpatti, Hātakesvara is an original god of Nāga people but later on he was received by Nāgas when the god arrived at Vadanagara from the Pātāla region. In the Liṅga Purāṇa after worshipping the Hemaliṅga, a verse³ is recited in which Śiva is referred to as the protector or the god of Nāgas. Umāsankara Joshi refers to Hātakesvara Kṣetra in Anarta to the south-east of the Arbuda mountain. Later on it was also mentioned as a Camatkārapura Kṣetra. It is near Vadanagara.⁴ Sridhara Śāstri enumerates the following names for Vadanagara :- Anandapura, Camatkārapura, Skandapura, Madanag^{na}ara, Madanapura, Anartapura, Vardhamānapura.⁵ Its length and breadth

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1. Skandapurāṇa, Nāgarakhanda, Adyāya - 2.

मया ह्यग्रे स्थितं लिङ्गं हाटकेन विनिर्मितम् ।
ख्यातिं यास्यति प्राप्तात् हाटकेश्वरम् ॥ ६५ ॥
तद्वाच्यं लिङ्गं ललितं जानानां गेन्द्रसत्तमाः ।

Skandapurāṇa, Kumārikā khand.

2. GSI, I, P. 228.

3. GSI, I, P.

स्वस्वतो मेधाय मेधयन्ता ते नमः ।
जगो अगवते तुभ्यं नाशस्तं सत्यं नमः ॥

4. Joshi Umāsankara : Purāṇamān Gujarata, P. 216.

एतस्मात्प्राप्तं लिङ्गं हाटकेश्वरसंश्रितं ।
अस्ति जैमिन्यदिशभागे देवे चानतमिराके ॥ स्कं. पु. ना. खं. अ. ४/१२.

5. Sridhara Śāstri : Yājñavalkya Caritra, P. 7.

are said to be of five Kosas. A mythical story regarding the establishment of the linga i.e. Hatakesvara has been given differently, in the Skandapurāna (Nāgarakhaṇḍa, Kumārikākhaṇḍa and Prabhāsa khaṇḍa) and in the Linga Purāna.

Prabhāsa and Hatakesvara Kshetra as being connected with approximately the common traditions regarding the worship of Śiva and the references to Śiva as the God of Nāgas and the same of the Nāgaras, throw light on the historical importance of the linga worship in the region of Gujarat and also of Nāga-jāti and Nāgaras.

(B) SOCIAL DATA

Soddhala has written an imaginary story where we cannot expect a real picture of the social conditions of the time besides the religious conditions as mentioned before.

Various Quarrels :

However, in the contest of Malayavāhana with the demon Mayābala,¹ Soddhala gets an opportunity to criticise the various quarrels observed in the society of the time, and he ridicules them in scathing words. He points out that the quarrel between widows waxed great on account of lying bare the private secrets of one another. The quarrel of

1. UK : P. 79.

co-wives chiefly consists of shouting against each other and twisting the bones of the fingers. The quarrel between go-betweens is characterised by loud and obscene abuses against each other. The quarrel between Brahmanas is characterised by beating oneself and such other expressions of self torture. The quarrel between traders is characterised as a profuse show of raising hands but still it is devoid of striking. The quarrel amongst the untouchables is characterised by profuse noise of a crowd of relatives. These quarrels have particular characteristics according to the castes or the particular nature of those who quarrel.

There are other quarrels in which there is censure of mutual actions. Others depict the obligations conferred on each other. Others only consist of a great noise of shouting and still others are full of one's own praise. In such rare cases Soddhala shows his keen observation and a sense of satirical wit.

Gambling has been referred to by Soddhala¹ in the story of Kumārakesari. The condition of a gambler as described by him follows the description of a gambler found in the literature beginning from Rgveda onwards.²

1. UK : P. 56.

2. Rgveda, X, 34., Mahābhārata, Sabhāparva, Ch. 58-62,
Sūdrak : Mācchakatika Act II.

This description notes that when a person is addicted to gambling, it is very difficult to withdraw from it. He has to suffer insults from his creditors in public places. In this description of gambling Soddhala notes that there were various types of gambling such as Andhika i.e. the blind gambling, etc.

Appointment of a Minister :

Soddhala has also expressed certain thoughts as regards the appointment of a minister.¹ He points out that out of the four castes, Brāhmana, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Śūdra, only a Ksatriya individual is fit to be a minister. A Brāhmana, even though he possesses the qualifications for being a minister, would not accept the post, through the fear of being involved in matter which preclude him from spiritual reflections. A Vaisya is engrossed in the acquisition of wealth through trade and agriculture and consequently, he possesses a miserly heart and thus becomes unfit for the post. Śūdras are not even to be considered on account of their faithlessness at the proper time. So according to Soddhala only Ksatriya deserves to be the chief minister for counselling the king. Therein also the Ksatriya should be of the same family and

1. UK : P. 8.

have an intimate relation with the king. If a Ksatriya from another family gets entrance to the administration of a king, he naturally gets an opportunity to usurp the throne of the latter and so such a course is not advisable. Of course, Soddhala makes it quite clear that the minister must possess extraordinary intelligence to cope with the difficult duties of administering a kingdom.

Miscellaneous Features of Society :

Early in the morning, musical instruments were played upon in the temples of gods. The city guards kept a whole night watch. The profession of prostitutes was in full vogue. People were very fond of pet birds like Sārikās and parrots whom they kept in cages. Old women sang songs of praises to Viṣṇu. Young sages began their daily religious routine by praises to God.¹

Hospitality to the guest was highly regarded even by a ploughman.² In the birth festival, keeping awake on the sixth night and the sacrament of naming etc., were celebrated for the welfare of the child.³ The virgins in the royal harem passed their days happily. They engaged themselves in

1. UK : P. 144.

2. UK : P. 33.

3. UK : P. 96.

various activities and amusements such as, drawing portraits, playing on Vāṇās and flutes, playing ball-games, swinging, conversation with parrots and sārīkas, sports with the deer and the swan, testing fresh creepers, plucking fresh flowers and plunging in the pleasure lake.¹ The Danda-rāsa was played on the stage.² Narration³ of Purāṇa stories and dissertations of learned persons were prevalent in the society.³ People used Araghatta machines for watering gardens and the banks of canals were repaired in the beginning of autumn.⁴

A noteworthy social custom prevalent at the time may also be noted here. At the time of Soddhala there was the practice of the tonsure of widows, who after the death of their husbands put on only white garments. Soddhala refers to this practice in the Verse,⁵ "When the sun

1. UK : P. 97. विचित्रपद्मच्छेदविद्यया - - - एवमस्याः - -
कला इति न सुखान्धुभवन्त्याः प्रयान्ति दिवासाः॥
2. UK : P. 130. पुष्पिलवत्तलाते गहरिजे स्थिता इव ।
खेतानि लहरीदण्डैर्दण्डरासमयां क्रियः॥
3. UK : P. 37. पुराणकथोक्तीतनादिषु वैदग्ध्यमधुरासु च
विभ्रमालाप ओष्ठीषु - - - ।
4. UK : P. 27. अरघद्वयजैषु चरीमालामण्डलानि विरचितान्य -
ति वृष्टे विद्यारितानि कुल्पासु लटानि वल्लानि - - ।
5. UK : P. 74. कमलिनी भुवनान्तरिते रौ व्यपगतात्किंलापशिरोरुहा ।
परिदधे विधवेव सुधाकरधुलिनितानामिषेण सितशुक्लम्॥

disappeared from the world the lotus creeper whose hair in the form ^{of} the swarm of bees were lost, put on like a widow a white garment under the pretext of the moon-light."

From the description of the city Pratiṣṭhāna, we can guess that big cities were surrounded by strong ramparts and encircled by deep ditches of water. Sacrifices were popular. Houses were strongly built and large in size. They were surrounded by extensive court-yards containing hills and tanks. The cities were rich and the trading community was opulent. Goldsmiths and jewellers had an extensive scope for their profession on account of the wealth of the citizens.¹

For the acquisition of wealth people perhaps took to shady adventures as magic, mining of rich ores and jewels and facing goblins and spirits in their dark recesses. The Science of curing poisonous snake-bites seems to have an extensive popularity.²

When newly married couples came near their residence, they were received with great honour. For them the path was swept clean and sprinkled with water. It was decorated with figures of swastika and pitchers full of water were placed on both sides.³ In festivals similar preparations were

1. UK : P. 20.

2. UK : P. 21.

3. UK : P. 146.

made; people decorated themselves in bright clothes and dazzling ornaments. City squares were decorated by scattering flowers and erecting decorative arches and flags, and pitchers full of water¹ were also placed at suitable places.

1. UK : P. 147.