The extant epigraphic records as well as numismatic evidences belonging to the period from the 5th to the 14th century A.D. testify to the wide prevalence of the Brahminical religion in the upper Mahanadi valley. Most of the kings of this region were devout worshippers of Siva but epigraphic records reveal that they were catholic in their approach towards all religions and tolerant to the believers of other religious faiths. Some of the rulers were staunch Vaisnavites.

Vaisnavism prophecised by the rulers as well as the common people can be studied from the copper-plate charters issued by kings of various dynasties ruling the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa and stone inscriptions as well as numismatic study of the coins circulated by those royal houses.

The earliest inscription recording the Vaisnava religious affiliation of a king is the Podagad Stone Inscription of the Nala king Skandavarman (Reigning Period : Circa 480-515 A.D.) who was ruling from his capital Puskari, identified with Podagad in the Umerkot tahasil of the present Nawarangpur district of Orissa.

Both Bhavadattavarman and his son Arthapati were devout Saivite but Arthapati’s younger brother and successor Skandavarman was a worshipper of Hari. He is known from his Podagad Stone Inscription1 to have enshrined the foot-print of Vishnu with the hope of obtaining religious merit for his father, mother and other ancestors, as well as for himself. He also founded an Agrahara for carrying on the worship of Vishnu and endowed a Satra attached to the temple for feeding the Brahmanas, the ascetics, the poor and the destitute. The inscription has thirteen verses, most of which are composed in the Anusthup Chhanda.

The inscription starts with (Verse-1) Victory. The praise of (His) qualities (in) such (words) as "Hari was victorious, is victorious (and) will be victorious", is not that (i.e. appropriate). For, verily, the Divine (Hari) is himself the conquest, the object to be conquered and the conqueror."

This statement is comparable with the description of Vishnu as "Vijayo Jeta" given in Verse-16 of the Vishnusahasranama.

In Vrs.2 to 5 it has been mentioned that the foot-print (Padamula) was made by the illustrious king Skandavarman, the noble son of king Bhavadatta.

Vaisnavism in Upper Mahanadi Valley

Sasanka Sekhar Panda

Viranchi Narayana, Salebbata, Circa 9th century A.D.
In Vrs. 5 and 6 - "And for his worship in this (temple), with (liberation of) water and with abundant dakshina .... a holding (pura) for the Supreme Being (Purusha) to last as long as ....... the Sun and the stars. The proceeds have to be used entirely for the (free) feeding in a Satra of Brahmanas, especially of ascetics, of the poor and of the destitute ..... 

King Tustikara of the Parvatadvaraka dynasty was ruling from Tarabharamaraka, identified with village Talbhainra on the bank of river Tel in Kalahandi district. A copper-plate grant discovered at Teresingha village in 1947 was deciphered by the learned epigraphist late Pandit Satyanarayan Rajaguru, from which it is known that the doner king Tustikara was a devout worshipper at the feet of the goddess Stambhesvari, but we also get the mention of names of gods like Aditya (Sun) and Sulapani (Siva) in this Charter, and religious rituals like the Agnistomas and Yajna, observed during the time of granting of land by the king.2

The Parvatadvarakas were ousted from their capital Parvatadvara (most probably Maraguda in Nawapara district) by the Sarabhapuriyas or kings of the Amararyakula sometime in the first half of the 6th century A.D. As recorded in their copper plate charters, the Sarabhapuriyas were Parama Bhagavatas. They patronised Bhagavata Cult of Vaisnavism in a strong way. The royal seal attached to the copper-plates of the Sarabhapuriyas bears the figure of two-handed goddess Laksmi standing in the Samabhanga posture, being flanked by two elephants pouring water in their raised trunks on her head. The left hand of the goddess of wealth is in Katyavalambita, while the right hand is raised-up.

The repousse gold coins issued by them bear the emblems of a front-faced Garuda bird flanked by a Sankha and a Chakra.

Two copper-plate grants, one of king Mahajayaraja and the other of Mahasudevaraja of the Amararyakula have been discovered so far in western Orissa, both in the Nawapara district of Orissa. In both the charters, Purana Dharma Slokas from Vyasa's Bhagavat Gita have been quoted to make the subjects aware of the Dharma.3 & 4

Towards the beginning of the seventh century A.D. a dynasty called Panduvamsa emerged in the scene. The founder of this dynasty was Mahasiva Tivara, who was the son of one Nanna. Nanna was a very high official in the service of the Sarabhapuriya king Mahasudevaraja II. Mahasiva Tivara was a devout worshipper of Visnu and the royal seal attached to his copper-plate charter bear the emblems of a Garuda, a Chakra, a Sankha and a flower device. Panduvamsi kings like Mahasiva Tivara, his son •Laksmi Narayana, Belkhandi, Circa 8th century A.D. •Laksmi Narayana, Narsinghanath, Circa 12th century A.D.
Nanna II and grandson of his younger brother (Harsagupta) were all Parama Vaisnava. A long stone inscription, now known as the Laksmana Temple Stone Inscription, having twenty-six verses in the 6th-7th century Nagari characters was discovered by Mr. Henry Cousens in 1904 while clearing debris of the Mandapa of Laksmana temple at Sirpur. This inscription starts with salutation to Lord Purusottama Nrsimha. (*Om Namah Purusottamaya*).

Towards the first half of the 9th century A.D., the Panduvamsis left their capital Sripura and moved further east towards Suvarnapura to carve out a kingdom for themself in the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa, in which venture they succeeded. The new dynasty came to be known as the Somavamsa instead of Panduvamsa.

All the kings of this dynasty were Parama Mahesvara, but the royal seals attached to their copper-plate grants bear the Vaisnava emblem of seated Gajalaksmi. From the Vakratentuli grant of the founder king of Somavamsi rule, Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya, it is known that the names of gods like Aditya (Sun), Varuna (Water God), Visnu, Brahma, Soma (Moon) and Hutasana or Agni (Fire) are still quoted in the Purana section of this one and all his land grants. This tradition was followed by his son Yayati-I and grandson Bhimaratha also.

From the Sonepur Plates of the 17th Regnal Year of Janmejaya-I, issued from Arama, it is known that the Kamalavana Vanikasthana (a merchant association) bought Gettauikela village from the king and donated the same for charity, oblation and offerings as well as for repairing wear and tear in the temples of Kesava and Aditya, situated at Suvarnapura.  

Three sets of copper-plate grants of the Somavamsi king Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya were discovered at Gopalpur village in the Loisingha police station area of Balangir district in around 1990. Those are collected and preserved in the Orissa State Museum now. In Verse-4 of the grant issued in the 1st Regnal Year of the king, his father Svabhavatunga has been compared with god Visnu (Hari) in the form of a boar (Varaha incarnation) supporting the earth on his arms. In Verse-6, we find the mention of the birth of his illustrious son Janmejaya who assumed the *viruda Sriyovasa* (Abode of Fortune). He is also compared to a wish-fulfilling tree (*Kalpataru*).

In the 2nd Gopalpur Grant issued in the 10th Regnal Year of the king, it has been recorded that the said grant was declared by Bhatta Sadharana for donation of three-eighth part of the donated village Jollamura to meet the cost of the offerings of *Bali, Charu* and *Naivedya* as well as services and repairs of the temple and for worship of Jalasayana form of Narayana Bhattaraka, constructed by him at Suvarnapura. This is the only land-grant of the Somavamsi period, which closes with the
Vaisnava sectarian formula, *Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*.

Bhatta Sadharana was a high official under king Janmejaya, who has been mentioned as the sole abode of *Dharma*, and "was foremost among the intelligent people and having risen to the office of *Amatya* (minister) protected and maintained his subjects even as the divine preceptor Brhaspati had done for Sakra (Indra) and Vasistha had done for Dasaratha (Vrs. 8-9 of 1st Gopalpur Grant).

The Patna Museum Plates of Mahabhavagupta Yayati-I, issued in his 8th Regnal Year speaks in Line-43 of Svabhavatunga, the *most powerful* Somavamshi king's victory over the Chaidya (Chedi) and again in Lines 48-50 about his son born like Visnu who killed the epic Chaidya or Sisupala in the *Rajasuya Yajnya* performed by Yudhisthira. The Chedis mentioned in this copper-plate grant are the Kalachuris (Chedis) of Jabalpur region (Dahala Mandala) with whom the Somavamsis were at war constantly, due to the fact that the growing power of the Kalachuris forced their ancestors to leave their capital Sripura and moved towards the upper Mahanadi valley in Orissa (the present western part of Orissa state.)

In the Brahmesvara Temple Inscription of Kolavati, the mother of king Udyotakesari, it has been mentioned in Verse-1 and 2, 'Let the full-moon which was born with Sri from the midst of the ocean called Ksirodadhi (Ocean of Milk) when it was churned with the Mandara Mountain, encircled by the king of serpents, serving the purpose of the churning rope and pulled by Brahma, Upendra (Visnu), Mahesvara, Indra and Bali, spread over the three regions with the light as sweet as nectar. In his (moon's) family was born Raja Janmejaya ....... whose bright fame was incomparable among kings.' It has been further mentioned in Verse-11 of this stone inscription that 'His (Udyotakesari's) mother, Kolavati by name, was the daughter of the Solar race and the chief queen of the Lunar race (of Yayati-II) and was like Durga and Laksmi in beauty and action.

In Lines 22-23 of the Narasinghapur Plates of Mahabhavagupta Udyotakesari, issued in his 4th Regnal year from the capital city Yayatinagara, king Yayati-II (the predecessor of Udyotakesari) has been mentioned as Vidyanidhih Pratinidhi-rmadhusudana. In the Ratnagiri Plates of Mahasivagupta Karnadeva also Yayati-II has been mentioned as the 'Representative of Madhusudana Visnur' in the Line-18. In his Jatesingha - Dungri Plates, issued from Pattana Suvarnapura, Mahasivagupta Yayati-II Chandihara has been mentioned as a king, whose character resembles such renowned kings as Nala, Naghusa, Mandhata, Dilipa, Bharata and Bhagiratha.
The Rastrakuta feudatories (Mahamandalika, Ranaka) like Mahamandalika Mugdhagondaladeva\(^\text{14}\) (of the reigning period of Somavamsi king Janmejaya-I), and Ranaka Parachakrasalya\(^\text{15}\) were Parama Mahesvara like their overlords, but the royal seals attached to their copper-plate grants bear the conventional Vaisnavite symbol of Garuda with a snake which was also the dynastic emblem of the Rastrakutas of the Deccan. In the royal seal of Mugdhagondaladeva, the emblem of Garuda with outstretched wings and beak-nose have been carved in low relief. It is in the running posture with its left hand extended to the front as if to catch the snake which is also depicted below. But in the seal of Ranaka Parachakrasalya, the upper part of Garuda is shown with folded hands in obeisance and a crown on the head as well as two outstretched wings on the back. Ranaka Devapya of the time of the Somavamsi king Janmejaya\(^\text{16}\) and Ranaka Jayarnnama of the time of the Somavamsi king Karnadeva\(^\text{17}\) were Parama Vaisnava (great devotees of Visnu) and simultaneously were worshippers of goddess Stambhesvari.

The Bhanjas of Khinjalimandala were driven out by the Somavamsi king Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya who finally established the Somavamsi rule at Suvampaapura sometime in the 2nd half of the 9th century A.D. The Bhanjas of the Vasistha Gotra were ruling the upper Mahanadi valley in Orissa in the last quarter of the 8th century A.D. and first half of the 9th century A.D. forming the Udbhaya Khinjalimandala lying in both banks of river Mahanadi from the present Sonepur to Dasapalla.

In all the copper-plate grants issued by the Bhanja king Satrubhanja and his son Ranabhanja, Lord Bhairava (the Ugra aspect of Siva) has been worshipped in the invocatory verses, except in one case, i.e. the Kumurakela Plates\(^\text{18}\) of the 15th Regnal Year of Satrubhanja, where Laksmi Narayana have been worshipped at the beginning: Anabarata Bahala Pulaka Laksmyikuchapanadana Duritambah / Apaharata Sura bh i Parimalasusatapadamurasthalam Visnuh // (Tr. Prof. Rajkishore Mishra - Laksmi in constant caress of Lord Visnu appears to be trans and drops of sweat coming out of her breast with all its ardour, wipe out sins and cleanse the Universe). Bhanja king Satrubhanja was a devout worshipper of Lord Visnu (Parama Vaisnava). He seems to have patronised the Laksmi Narayana Cult in the last quarter of the 8th century A.D. In Lines 21-22 of the Singhara (Sonepur) Plates,\(^\text{19}\) issued in
the 9th Regnal Year of Ranabhanja, we find mention of 'Sri Narayana Bhattaraka Muddisya.' In the Patna Museum Plates, issued during the 22nd Regnal Year of king Ranabhanja, the names of Aditya, Varuna, Visnu, Brahma, Soma, Hutasana and Lord Sulapani (Siva) have been mentioned in the Dharma portion.

An image of Laksmi Narayan in the same style of Uma-Mahesvara image is found at Belkhandi along-with images of Saptamatrikas, Bhairava, Surya and others. From stylistic ground, it can be dated to the second half of the 8th century A.D. or first half of the 9th century A.D. Another Laksmi-Narayan image is found at Narsinghnath, which can be dated to around 12th-13th century A.D. The Laksmi Narayan image of Belkhandi has been taken as the earliest of its kind by learned scholar J.P. Singh Deo.

In the Baud Plates of Ranabhanja, issued in his 58th Regnal Year there is mention of gods like Aditya, Varuna, Brahma, Soma, Hutasana and Sulapani as found in the Somavamsi copper-plate grants. (Adityo Varuno Visnu Brahma Soma Hutasananah / Sulapanistu Bhagavan Abhinandati-bhumidam //) Bhanja king Ranabhanja might have followed this style of mentioning names of gods including Visnu from such mention in the Somavamsi land grants of Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya, his contemporary and also adversary. As this sloka mentioning Visnu has been mentioned in the Patna Museum Plates, issued by queen Vijaya Mahadevi, during the 22nd Regnal year of Ranabhanja and as Vijaya Mahadevi was a devout worshipper of Lord Visnu, she might have influenced her husband to change her religious faith from Saivism to Vaisnavism.

It seems that the Nalas, Parvatadvarakas, Sarabhapuriyas, Panduvamsis, Bhanjas and the Somavamsis, who were ruling the upper Mahanadi valley in Orissa from around 5th century A.D. to the 11th century A.D. patronised Vaisnavism in the same spirit although most of them were staunch Saivites. The Bhanja king Ranabhanja was a Parama Mahesvara, but for a pretty long period (32 years: From his 22nd Regnal Year to 53rd Regnal Year) he was a Parama Vaisnava due to the influence of his queen Vijaya Mahadevi, who was an ardent worshipper of Lord Visnu.

In around 1070 A.D. the Telugu Chodas captured power at Suvarnapura ruled for around 44 years upto 1114 A.D.

In the Mahada Plates of another Telugu Choda king Somesvara II in Line-35, Mukunda, a name of Lord Visnu has been mentioned, although Somesvara was a Parama Mahesvara. Similarly in the Patna Museum Plates, the Telugu Choda king Sakala Kosaladhisvara Mahavyuhapati Ranaka Srimadraja Somesvaradeva III has declared himself as a devout worshipper of both Siva and Visnu (Parama Mahesvara Parama Vaisnava). In Line-24 of this grant occurs Narayana Bhattarakasya Pritaye (to please Lord Narayana). It is worth-noting here that all the Telugu Choda kings, ruling from Suvarnapura during the period from 1070-1114 A.D. have mentioned themselves as Baidyanatha Pada Pankaja Bhramarah (A Bee on the Lotus Feet of Lord Baidyanatha).

Jajalladeva, the Kalachuri king of Ratanpur Branch defeated the king of Suvarnapura in around 1114 A.D. and the upper Mahanadi valley went to the hands of the Kalachuris. The Kalachuris had prolonged
warfare with the Gangas of Kalinganagara. During the rule of the Ganga king Anangabhimadeva III (1211-1238 A.D.), they ultimately captured this region, which was amalgamated into their empire, but still remained a neglected border region. During the time of the Ganga king Bhanudeva-II (Circa 1306-1328 A.D.), a Samanta was posted at Sunapura to administer that region as known from the Khambhesvari Temple Stone Inscription. When the Ganga power was weakened, Sonepur region was captured by a Bhanja royal house of the Kasyapa Gotra in the 14th century A.D. as evidenced from the Baud Plates of Solanabhanja, a Parama Vaisnava with capital at Suvarnapura. In this charter the invocatory verse starts with prayer of Lord Visnu, 'Namoh Narayanaya'. Another king of this dynasty Kanakabhanja also issued a land grant called Baud Plates issued in his 8th Regnal year. Kanakabhanja has described himself as 'Vikramena Visnu' (Like Lord Visnu in valour) in this copper plate grant. But taking advantage of the distance of this place from the capital of the Gangas there emerged a royal power, i.e. of the Chauhans in the Balangir-Patna region of Orissa also. From legends it is known that the Chauhans patronised the Jagannath Cult in a strong way. Ramaideva, the first Chauhan king constructed a temple at Patnagar where the Holy Trinity, Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra were enshrined. As enumerated in the District Gazetteer, there are around thirty Jagannath temple in Balangir district. Even for Balabhadra there are seven temples and for Dadhibaban or Dadhibaman, sixteen temples in Balangir district alone. The Dadhibaban temple constructed by Ramaideva in the 14th century is still standing at Berhampura near Patnagar town of Balangir district.

The Gond tribals, who are predominantly inhabiting central India stretching from Orissa state to Maharastra state, worship two major gods called Bad Deo (Dev) and Jangha Deo (Dev). Are they Bada Devata or Balabhadra and Lord Jagannath? If so then the tribal origin of these two gods can be established. The cult of Stambhesvari or the worship the Goddess of Pillar or Post can be traced back to the 5th-6th century A.D. at Parvatadvara, the capital of king Tustikara's fore-fathers. It is really astounding to be noted that during excavations in 1983, late Prof. N.K. Sahu, the Archaeological Advisor to the Government of Orissa discovered an image of Mahisamardini Durga, having an inscription on the pedestal, which has been deciphered as 'Mahesvari Bhadeidam' (From This Grows Mahesvari) by learned epigraphist Pandit Satyanarayan Rajaguru. The Dumals, who are believed to be of the tribal origin, live in the upper Mahanadi valley in large number, with a major concentration in Anugul, Sonepur, Baud, Balangir, Sambalpur and Bargarh districts. Their supreme goddess is Mahesvari who is taken as co terminus with Khambesvari or Khamsiri or Stambhesvari. Therefore, the Stambhesvari worship which has its origin at least in the 5th century A.D. was found in the form of Mahesvari worship at Maraguda. The Somavamsi king Mahasivagupta Yayati-II Chandihara (Circa 1023-1040 A.D.) was a great monarch who was made the ruler of the entire region comprising of Kosala and Utkala. Mahesvari who was later on known as goddess Bhagavatya Panchambari Bhadrambika and was enshrined at Pattana Suvarnapura might have been introduced as Subhadra (Bhadra Ambika who is having the
Pancha Ambara) into the Jagannath Cult. Does *Bhagavatyā* mean a goddess related to the *Bhagavata* cult of Vaisnavism? A sculptural panel on the southern *Jangha* portion of the *Mukhasala* of the Surya temple at Konark depicts the Linga-Purusottama (Jagannath) - Mahisasamardini Durga clearly suggesting that in the 13th century A.D., during the reigning period of the Ganga monarch Narsimhadeva-I (Circa 1238-1264 A.D.) the Holy Trinity was representing Siva in Linga form, Jagannath in the present form and Mahisasamardini Durga representing Panchambari Bhadrambika of the Somavamsi period (Circa 11th century A.D.). Similar panel also from Konark is found in the National Museum at New Delhi also. The great *Vaisnava* saint Chaitanya Das was thriving during the ruling period of the sixth Chauhan king Prataparudradeva of Bolangir - Patna line (Circa 1455-1480 A.D.). He composed two epoch-making *Vaisnava* texts, called *Nirguna Mahatmya* and *Visnugarbha Purana*. Another great king of the Chauhan dynasty was Vaijal Dev-I (Circa 1410-1430 A.D.) who constructed a temple for Lord Narasimha in the feline form at Narsinghnath in around 1413 A.D as known from the Proto-Oriya Narsinghnath Temple Stone Inscription.

"Namah Sri Nrusinghaya ..... Patana Nagarasthita Vatsaratadeva Rajankara Putra Vaijaladeva Manohara Putrarthe Gandhamardana Parvate Virala Narasinghanatha Svaminkara Deula Tolaila . . . . Prasastikara Agha Narasinghasya Pritaye." His wife Rani Durlabha Devi also constructed a temple for Lord Harishankar (Hari-Hara) at Harishankar, both places situated in the Gandhamardan mountain range on the border of the present Barghar and Balangir districts.

During the time of the Chauhan king Narasingha Deva his younger brother Balarama Deva carved out an independent kingdom. He was the founder-king of the Chauhan rule at Sambalpur (called Humadesh). The Chauhans of Sambalpur Branch also patronised Jagannath Cult in a strong way. Balarama Deva defeated the king of Sarguja in a battle as a result of which truce occurred and the king of Sarguja gave her daughter in marriage to Balarama Deva, the king of Sambalpur. The princess of Sarguja brought an image of Anantasayana Visnu, which was installed by Balarama Deva in a temple constructed by him. That temple is known as Anantasajja temple which is situated in the Old Fort area of Sambalpur town near the Jemadei Mahal at Kamli Bazar. His grandson Balabhadradeva Deva (Reigning Period : Circa 1561-1591 A.D.) was a great devotee of the Holy Trinity, who constructed the oldest Jagannath temple called Brahmapura temple in Sambalpur town. The third son of king Madhukar Deva of Sambalpur, and grandson of Balabhadradeva Deva, Vansagopal was a great *Vaisnava*. He renounced the worldly comfort, established Gopalji Math in the old fort area near the Samlei temple at Sambalpur and spent his entire life worshipping Lord Gopalji as well as Radhakrishna and the Holy Trinity there.

It seems that when the Bhanja rulers of Suvarnapura shifted their capital to the Baud region, Sonepur area was captured by a tribal chief of the Gond tribe named Dom Gond, whom prince Madan Gopal, the younger brother of Baliair Deva, the fourth Chauhan king of Sambalpur defeated in around 1650 A.D. and started Chauhan rule at Sonepur.

King Baliair Dev was a great devotee of Lord Lagannath. His court poet Pandit
Gangadhar Mishra composed the great Sanskrit work *Kosalananda Kavyam* in around 1664 A.D. where *Rath Yatra* of Lord Jagannath at Puri has been described vividly in 17 verses. A later ruler Chhatra Sai (Reigning Period: Circa 1657-1695 A.D.) also built a temple for the worship of the Holy Trinity, which is called Hutapada Jagannath temple in Sambalpur town.

Vaisnava images as sculptural decorations are many, although not plenty in number in the temples of western Orissa. The worship of Kesava, Aditya and Sesasayi Visnu at Suvarnapura has been mentioned in the Sonepur Plates and 2nd Gopalpur Plates of the time of the Somavamsi king Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya (Circa 850-885 A.D.) A beautiful Viranchi Narayana image has been shifted from Salebhatta in the Balangir district and is now kept in the Sambalpur University Museum. Also, an exquisitely carved Sasasayi Visnu panel has been shifted from Ranipur Jharial and fixed to the outer wall of the residential office chamber of the Collector of Balangir district. Description of such Visnu image is found in the ancient texts like *Tantrasara* of Madhavacharya.

King Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya has been taken as the founder of the Somavamsi rule in the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa. His father Svabhavatunga has been compared with 'Bhu Varaha' in the 1st Gopalpur Plates of Janmejaya. A profile figure of four-handed Bhu Varaha of the height of around four feet and breadth of two feet and a half is carved on the huge boulder of ten feet in height and twenty five feet in length, situated on the south-eastern embankment of the Samiabandh tank at Ranipur Jharial.

As mentioned above, the Somavamsi king Mahasivagupta Yayati II Chandihara (Circa 1023-1040 A.D.) has been mentioned as the 'Representative of Madhusudana' in the copper-plate grants of Udyotakesari and Karnadeva. A four-handed image of Madhusudana Visnu is found inside the Garbhaagra of the Indralath brick temple at Ranipur Jharial. The iconography of this image is that of Madhusudana, one of the twenty-four aspects of Visnu, which is found mentioned in the ancient texts like *Padma Purana*, *Chaturvarga Chintamani*, *Dharmasindhu*, *Vriddharahita Smriti* and *Abhilasa Chintamani*.

Epigraphic evidences on Vaisnavism should be studied in the right perspective to know more about the origin and evolution of Jagannath cult in the western highland of Orissa.

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