The Ganga dynasty followed by Suryavamsi Gajapati King, under Kapilendra Deva, the founder of the new dynasty, Orissa established political supremacy over a vast kingdom extending from the river Ganga to Cauvery. This period witnessed the greatest expansion of the kingdom, the first renaissance in Oriya literature and the advent of Chaitanya faith in Orissa. Kapilendra inaugurated a new epoch in the history of Orissa. Making his way to the theme from a humble position he carved out an extensive empire.

From the historical records we assume that Gajapati rulers were followers of Vaishnava faith and Purushottama-Jagannath became their tutelary deity. But originally the Gajapatis appeared to be Saktas, which gleaned from numerous inscriptional records. The epithet Sri Mallinatha Deva-gana Mangala Chandi Charana-Sarana applied to Jagesvara, father of Kapilendra-deva. The Warangal\(^1\) inscription of Raghudeva describes that Kapilesvara the founder of the Suryavamsci dynasty used the epithet as Mahesvara-Putra, Purushottama-Putra and Durga Putra. In the similar representation of Anangabhima-III and his son Narasimha-I of Ganga dynasty one may notice the fact that these kings, inspite of their staunch devotion to the God Vishnu in the shape of Purushottama-Jagannath at Puri could not possibly dissociate themselves totally from Saiva-Sakta leaning. However, the hold on Vaishnavism became gradually stronger on the kings of Orissa, it is rather strange that the same epithets were applied to Kapilesvara who flourished two centuries later. Raghudeva also called himself Sri-Durga-Varaputra as well as Sri Jagannathdeva-labhda-Vara Prasad. This prince as well his father and grand father are further represented as devotees of the god Mallinatha and the goddesses Gana Mangala Chandi or Mangala Chandi. These two deities are to be identified respectively with Siva and Parvati, since the name Mallinatha is known to be often applied to a Siva-linga and Chandi and Mangala Chandi are both well known names of the said goddess. From this record it is possible to think that the family was originally Sakta and that Kapilesvara was the first member, who was devoted to Purushottama-Jagannath. Kapilesvara may have become a devotee of the said deity after his accession to the throne of Gajapati Bhanu-IV. Since then theoretically the Ganga throne belonged to the god.

The Santaravuru\(^2\) inscription of the time of Purushottamadeva, records the consecration of the idols of Lakshmidevi and Bhudevi in the temple of Chennakesava and also the grant of Khandikas of land for the daily offering to the deities by king Purushottamadeva. The Balasore plate\(^3\) of
Purushottamadeva begins with line "Sri Jayadurgayai Namah."

The Warangal inscription of the time of Prataprudra narrates the exploits of one Chitta Paksha of the Bhogi-kula, son of Manaya and Gauramba and Gammadson of Naga. He conquered Rajadri and other forts. Having vanquished the Muslims, he wrested from them the beautiful city of Ekasilapuri formerly ruled by the Kakatiya kings. For the worship of the gods and Brahmanas, he reinstalled the images of the god Panchalaraya (Krishna), goddess Kakati, Lakshmi of Kakatiya kingdom and of Siva, which were earlier removed by the Turushakas in their respective shrines.

The Velicherla grant of Prataprudra describes the grant of the village Velicherla, the gem amongst the villages situated in the region of Jaladanki, in the district of Paka-nudu by king Prataprudra Gajapati to a Brahmana named Kondayya, the son of Tammaya and the grandson of Narayana Yavana of the Bharadvaja gotra. The gift exempted from the thrity six kinds of demands and other imports, was given to last till the moon and the son endure, to be enjoyed from son to grandson. The gift was made in the presence of Durga and Jagannatha for the increase of the merit. The charter is ratified by fixing a royal seal consisting of a 'rampart lion', which is a vehicle or vahana of Goddess Durga.

Reference:
1. Epi Indica Vol.XXXIII, p.125 ff
2. SII Vol.X, No.731
3. The Indian Antiquary Vol.I, p.355 ff
4. Inscriptions of Suryavamsi Gajapati of Orissa, R. Subrahmanyam, p.170ff
5. Epi Indica, Vol.XXVIII, p.205 ff

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The Editorial Board sincerely regrets the inadvertent digital error in misplacing the photograph of Saheed Birsa Munda in the August issue of Orissa Review, 2006.