



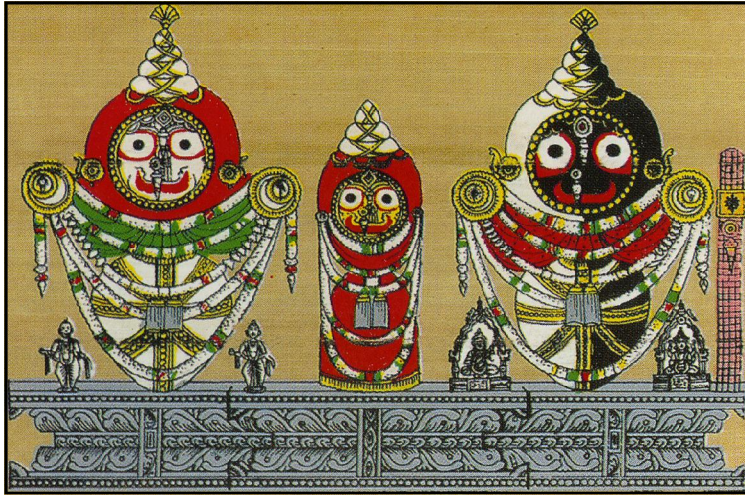
Lord Jagannath in Suryavamsi Inscriptions

Bharati Pal

The Ganga dynasty was followed by the Suryavamsi Gajapatis. After the accession of Bhanudeva IV, the process of Ganga disintegration became evident. Under the able leadership of Kapilendradeva, a new dynasty known as Suryavamsis emerged as a very strong political force in Orissa, and they firmly established and extended their kingdom from river Ganga to Cauvery. The period witnessed the greatest expansion of kingdom, the first renaissance in Oriya literature and the advent of Chaitanya faith in Orissa. Purushottama-Jagannatha became their tutelary deity, which gleaned from numerous inscriptions.

The Puri inscription¹ of Kapilendra was issued in the 4th Anka (year). The inscription deals with an order of the king Kapilendra, who remitted taxes on salt and cowries in favour of the God Purushottama.

As an usurper of the Gajapati throne, Kapilendra needed a special legitimation over a vast kingdom which had been ritually dedicated to Jagannatha about two hundred years ago. It was obvious that Kapilendra would try to revive the ideology of the divine mission of the Gajapatis as a deputy of Jagannatha.



The next Puri inscription² of Kapilendra is found in right side of the Jaya-Vijaya doorway of Jagannatha temple. It registers a gift of Sari cloth known as Pundarika

gopa by the king Kapilendra to the god Purushottama-Jagannath, while he was dining at the camp Purushottama on his victorious return journey from the Mallika Parisha. The order to this effect was conveyed through Raghudeva Narendra, the store keeper and the Superintendent.

In the 35th Anka (year), he issued an order³ which was written on the left side of the



Jaya Vijaya doorway of Jagannatha temple. It depicts the king's resolution before the deity Jagannatha to take disciplinary measures against his ungrateful nobles, infantry and cavalry.

Another inscription⁴ of Kapilendra is found on the left side of the Jaya Vijaya doorway of Puri. The inscription states that Maharaja Sri Kapilesvara, the hero, the lord of the Navakotti Karnata and Gulbarga, the lord of the elephants, the king serving the lotus feet of the deity Sri Jagannatha, gifted some precious jewellery which includes wrist ornaments, the two jeweled conch-shell and discus for the gracious arms of the Lord.

The Warangal inscription of Raghudeva⁵ describes Kapilendra as the Lord of Utkal at the command of Purushottama, the lord of the fourteen world.

The Madala Panji, the temple chronicle states that Lord Jagannatha had ordered the last Ganga Bhanudeva IV in a dream to nominate Kapilendra as his successor.

The Warangal inscription describes in the first line, God Vishnu as the imperial ruler of the earth and apparently as the ever lord of the emperor Kapilesvara of Suryavamsi Gajapati family of Orissa. The date of the record has been put against the background of eternity as it represented reign period of the said god. This is because of the fact as it is presumed from the Ganga inscription that Anangabhimha dedicated his kingdom in favour of the God Purushottama Jagannatha of Puri, who is regarded as a form of Vishnu, and that the Ganga king's successor as well as the later imperial ruler of Orissa including their theoretical successors, the present Maharaja of Puri regarded themselves as the viceroy of the deity who was considered the real lord of the country. This conception is noticed in several inscriptions of the Ganga dynasty. The present

epigraph is the only record outside the Ganga family which echoes the same ideas. There is however a slight difference in the conception as found in the inscription under review. The idea expressed in our record is that the God was the lord of the earth while Kapilesvara endowed with imperial style was the king of the Utkala country under him. This mode of introducing a king is possibly the only case of the kind in the whole range of Indian Epigraphy.

Further, the inscription states that Kapilesvara assumed the title as Mahesvara-Putra, Purushottama-Putra and Durga-Putra. The above passage is copied from the records lies in the Draksharama,⁶ Bhubaneswar and Kanchipuram inscription of Anangabhimha III and one of the Kapilas⁷ inscription of Narasimha I of Ganga. In the similar representation of Anangabhimha III and his son Narasimha I, one may notice the fact that these kings, inspite of their staunch devotion to the god Vishnu in the shape of Purushottama-Jagannatha of Puri, could not possibly dissociate themselves totally from the Saiva leanings of their ancestors. However, the hold of Vaishnavism became gradually stronger and stronger under the kings of Orissa. It is rather strange that the same epithets were applied to Kapilesvara who flourished two centuries later.

Raghudeva the issuer of the present charter called himself as Sri Durga-Vara putra as well as Sri Jagannathadeva labdha Vara-Prasada. He also bore the typical Saivite name Virabhadra. This prince as well as his father and grandfather is further represented as devotees of the god Mallinatha and the Goddess Gangamangachandi. These two deities are probably identified respectively with Siva and Parvati. As Raghudeva's grandfather was Kapilesvara father, it is possible to think that the family was originally Saiva and that Kapilesvara was the first of its



members who was devoted to the God Purushottama-Jagannatha. Kapilesvara may have become a devotee of the said deity after his accession to the throne of Bhanu IV, since theoretically the Ganga throne belonged to the God Kapilesvara is stated to have become a lord of the Utkala country at the command of the illustrious Purushottama, the lord of the fourteen world.

After Kapilendra, Purushottamadeva⁸ ascended the throne and granted some gift in favour of Lord Jagannatha.

On the left side of the Jaya-Vijaya doorway of Jagannatha temple records the gifts of some valuable ornaments in favour of Lord Jagannatha, when the king was campaigning at Purushottama-Kataka.

Another grant of Purushottamadeva also found from the Jaya-Vijaya doorway, which

records the remittance of the Chaukidari taxes leviable from the Brahmanas.

References:

1. JASB LXII - PP.92 ff
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Epi, Indica Vol XXXIII-P.129 ff
6. SII Vol-VI-1329
7. Epi Indica - Vol XXXIII - P.41
8. Evolution of Oriya Language and Script - K. B. Tripathy.

Bharati Pal is working as Assistant Curator, (Epigraphy), Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar.

