CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT (A)

VAISHṆAVISM, ŚAIVISM AND MINOR SECTS

I. INTRODUCTION

The theistic movement which began long before the Christian era continued their progress unchecked in the centuries immediately following it. Theism, in the shape of worship of popular and personal gods like the Yakshas, Nāgas, Devatās and others, prevalent among the Indian masses from the remote past, was at the root of the growth and development of the Bhakti cults connected with Brāhmaṇical Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The religious outlook of the people changed a great deal in course of time, and the orthodox Vedism was very much modified by the systematisation of these cults. It was not only the indigenous people who took to one or other of them with earnestness and zeal; but the foreign immigrants were also much attracted by them. In fact, the alien domination over a greater part of northern India in the first two or three centuries A.D. was favourable to their spread. Members of the ruling race, including many of the kings, chiefs and potentates, were glad to adopt the culture of the conquered people, and come under the influence, direct and powerful, of the religious systems of the country. Orthodox Vedism could not have been easily accessible to them or appealed to their intellect and emotion. But they sought and found ready ingress into the folds of the Bhakti schools, like Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism and Vaishnavism. Some of the Kushāṇa emperors were Saivas, others Buddhists. Many of the Satrapal rulers of northern and western India may also have belonged to different sects, and the names of several of them like Rudradāman, Rudrāśinha and Rudrasena on the one hand, and Sivaghosha, and Śivadatta on the other, possibly denoted their sectarian affiliation. Nahapāṇa’s son-in-law, the Śaka Ushavadāta (Sanskrit—Rishabhadatta), did many pious acts highly commended in the Purāṇas, and he probably belonged to one or other of these sects; but he was liberal in his benefactions, making endowments not only for the benefit of the Buddhist monks, but also in honour of the venerable gods and Brāhmaṇas (bhagavatām devānām brāhmaṇānām cha). In the Deccan, then mostly under the rule
of the Sātavāhanas and their feudatories, the more important of the Brahmanical religious systems appear to have existed side by side. The extant epigraphic data of the first three centuries of the Christian era from various parts of India, however, prove that these Brahmanical cults were not as potent as the Buddhist creed in its various aspects. Jainism was confined to a few localities. The Yakshas, Nāgas and such other folk-gods and goddesses, whose worship was prevalent side by side, were prone to be relegated to a subservient position, and some of them came soon to be described either as so many different aspects of the Brahmanical cult-deities, or as evil spirits vanquished by them.

Such was the religious background at the commencement of the fourth century A.D. The major part of the century witnessed the successful attempts of the first three Gupta Emperors to stabilize the political condition of Northern India and the fringes of the Northern Deccan. During the age that followed there was an all-round cultural development of the Indian people, and their literary and artistic genius manifested itself in all its splendour. It was during this period again that many of the sectarian religions were not only systematized but assumed a large variety of forms. Some of the early authoritative Purāṇas must have already gained almost their present form, and this literature was mainly utilized by the principal Brahmanical sectaries for the promulgation and exposition of their cult tenets. Other types of literature directly associated with the cults, viz., Samhitās, Āgamas and even a few Tantras, were also composed in the Gupta period, possibly mostly in its latter part. The sectaries again engaged the services of the best artists of the time—the sculptors, the bronze-casters, the painters and the architects,—who gave concrete shape to the ideologies expounded in the cult doctrines. These general trends in the religion and culture of the Indians were continued in the post-Gupta age till the end of the tenth century. As regards the Brahmanical sects in particular, it may be said that they mostly attained their highest developments by the end of this period, and any major changes in them in later period generally followed the earlier trends.

II BHĀGAVATA-PĀNCHĀRĀTRA-VAISHṆAVA CULT

1. Early Gupta Period

The Bhāgavata cult seems to have got a new impetus under the direct patronage of some of the Imperial Gupta rulers. The religious creed of the first two Gupta Emperors is not explicitly known, though it is probable that they were Bhāgavata by faith. The Chandra-gupta-
Kumāradevi gold coins do not bear the Bhāgavata emblem, the Garuḍa-dhvaja, which is, however, very often present on Samudra-gupta’s coins. That this great Gupta monarch had it for his signet is proved by the Allahabad Pillar inscription, and this possibly shows that he was a Bhāgavata.¹

But Samudra-gupta, like the king Sarvatāta of the first century B.C., also performed the Vedic Aśvamedha sacrifice, though both of them were probably Bhāgavatas by faith. There cannot be any doubt, however, with regard to the creed of the third Gupta emperor, Chandra-gupta II, who is described in some of his gold and many of his silver coins as parama-bhāgavata. On a unique and interesting gold coin discovered at Bayana (Bharatpur, Rajasthan) bearing his name, he is given the characteristic epithet chakra-vikramah, ‘(one who is) powerful (due to his possession of the) discus’ on its reverse; the obverse side of this specie carries the figure of the two-armed Chakrapurusha or Vishnu granting the discus to the king facing him.² The epithet parama-bhāgavata is also attributed to him in his own coins and inscriptions as well as epigraphs of his successors. Kumāragupta I is called parama-bhāgavata or simply bhāgavata in most of his silver coins and the Garuḍa emblem is very often found on his gold, silver as well as copper coins. Thus he was Bhāgavata by faith. But other data, both epigraphic and numismatic, seem to prove that he was also a devotee of the god Kāṛtikeya. None of his gold coins bear the aforesaid epiphets, and the elaborate iconic device occurring on the reverse of his ‘peacock type’ gold coins shows Kāṛtikeya’s figure, probably a replica of the very image of Kumāra-gupta I’s favourite deity enshrined in a temple built by him in the capital.³ He is described as paraṁ-daivata in many of his inscriptions, several of which also bear the Bhāgavata epithets. We cannot be sure of the creeds of many of the subsequent Gupta monarchs, though some of them, like Skanda-gupta, were Bhāgavatas. The Garuḍa-dhvaja on

¹ The word paramabhāgavata applied to Samudra-gupta in the Nālandā and Gaya plates issued in his name is not of much use in determining this point, for these two plates have almost unanimously been regarded by scholars as spurious and comparatively early forgeries; (cf. Fleet, CII, III, pp. 254 ff: Sircar, SI, I, pp. 262-66; IC, XI, p. 225). The Garuḍadhvaja emblem afterwards became a convention with the Gupta rulers, and at least in one case it did not indicate the user’s creed (Cf. the case of Vainyagupta as noted above).

² A. S. Alakear, Coinage of the Gupta Empire, pp. 143-50, pl. IX, figs. 8-9. The Chakra emblem occurs on the top left corner of the obverse of several ‘Aher’ type gold coins of this monarch. Kāśśa (Samudra-gupta ?) bears almost invariably the Chakra-standard in his left hand. (CGD, pp. 81-2, pl. VII, figs. 15-17; pl. II, figs. 10-13).

³ J. Allan, CGD, pp. 84-5, pl. XV. 5-11. J. N. Banerjea, DHI, pp. 159-60.
their coins alone would not always indicate their sectarian affiliation, for this is found also on the coins of Vainya-gupta Dyādasāditya who, as we know from his Cunaighar plate, was a devotee of Siva.

The Gupta inscriptions prove that the Bhāgavata creed flourished in different parts of the Gupta Empire, though there were other cults flourishing side by side. Many of them record the erection of temples in honour of Vishnu under various names such as Chakravarthi, Janaṛddana, Sāriṅga, Muradvish, and others. An inscription of the fourth century A.D., engraved on a steep isolated hill near Tusam (Hissar district, Haryana), records the construction of two reservoirs and a temple for Bhagavān (god) Vishnu by the Āchārya Somatrāta, son of Āchārya Vasudatta, grandson of Āchārya Vishnurātra and great-grandson of Ārya-sātvata-yogāchārya Yaśastra ṛta, and the younger brother of the Āchārya and Upādhyāya Yaśastrāta (II). The inscription is very important and interesting, for it refers to several venerable teachers and expounders, presumably of the Sātvata-(i.e., Bhāgavata or Pāṅcharātra) yoga, in succession, the first being described as ‘the successor of many men of preceding generations’ (anekapuruśahbhāgyagata). The last epithet seems to show that many predecessors of the first Yaśastra ṛta were also Bhāgavatas, thus incidentally showing the very long continuance of the creed in the region. Vishnu, the god invoked here is described as ‘the mighty bee on the water-lily which is the face of Jāmbavati’, and it shows that he is now the same as Vāsudeva; this fact, as well as the attribute ārya given to the Sātvatavoga, proves that the creed, though described in some early as well as late texts as un-vedic, had long been admitted into the orthodox fold by many. It may also point to the close connection between Yoga and Bhakti dedicated to the Bhagavat of the Sātvatas, which is one of the most noticeable features of the Gita.4 A Brāhmī inscription, engraved in a cave of the Susunia Hill (near Bankura, West Bengal) of about the fourth century A.D., records that the cave with the discus mark was dedicated by one Chandravarman, the king of Pushkarana and the son of king Sīhaharman: the dedicator describes himself as the foremost slave of Chakravāmin, evidently a name of Vishnu. The rock-cut cave shrine at Udavagiri near Sāńchī in Bhopal appears to have been a Bhagavata one, for the inscription dated G.E. 82 (A.D. 402), recording the pious gift of one Sanakānī dhala, a feudatory of Chandra-gupta II, is engraved over two relievo-sculptures—one of the four-armed god Vāsudeva-Vishnu, and

the other of a twelve-armed goddess. On a part of the facade of this cave shrine is carved a huge figure of the Varāha avatāra which also indicates its Bhāgavata affiliation. The Mehrauli iron pillar inscription (near Kutab Minar, Delhi) records that the dhvaja (flag-staff—the pillar itself) was set up by one king Chandra, having fixed his mind upon Vishnu on a hill called Vishnupāda’. The Chandra of this record has justifiably been identified by many scholars with Chandra-gupta II. The fragmentary Mandasor inscription of one Mahārāja Naravarman, most probably a feudatory of Chandra-gupta II, belonging to the Kṛita-Mālava year 461 (A.D. 404), was evidently a Bhāgavata record, though the portion containing its purport is lost. It begins with an invocation to the Purusha with thousand heads and immeasurable soul who sleeps on the waters of the four oceans as on a couch. It praises one Satya who took refuge in Vāsudeva, the granter of protection (śaranyā), the abode of the world (jagadvāsa), the immeasurable (aparamaya), the unborn (aiva) and all-pervading (vibhu).

This concept of Purusha-Vāsudeva is identical with that of Purusha Nārāyaṇa, one of the constituent elements of the cult-deity traceable in the late Vedic texts (cf. Vol. II, Chapter XIII). During the feudatory rule of Narvarman’s son Viśavvarman, under the suzerainty of Kumāra-gupta I, one Māvrākshaka, minister of the former, and his two sons Vishnubhāta and Haribhāta caused to be constructed a lofty and beautiful temple of Vishnu on the bank of the Garggarā (former Jhalawad State, Rajasthan) in the (Mālava) year 480 (A.D. 424). Māvrākshaka was a Bhāgavata showing extreme devotion towards the bearer of the discus and the club (purāṇa bhaktim vikhyānānupari chakragaḍādharasya). A red sandstone pillar found at 3 hitari (Ghaziipur district, U.P.) bears an undated inscription of the time of Skanda-gupta recording the dedication of an image of the same god under the name of Śārṅgīn (wielder of the Śārṅgī bow) by the king himself to the memory of his father Kumāra-gupta I. The copper-plate inscription of the Gupta year 128 (A.D. 488), found at Baigram (Bogra district, Bangladesh), records a land-grant by two persons, Bhoyila and Bhāskara by name, for daily worship in, and occasional repairs to, the temple of Govindasvāmin founded originally.

5. J. F. Fleet. CII, III. p. 22. The goddess has been correctly described by Cunningham as Durgā Mahishamardini (ASR. X. pp. 49 ff. pls. XVI, XVII; the buffalo-demon being killed by the goddess is clearly depicted in the relief. Fleet, and after him Rayehandhuri, have wrongly described it as Lakshmi. Durgā Mahishāsurasundarini has also Vishnuite association.

6 The Gangdar Stone inscription of Viśavvarman, CII, III, pp. 75-6. The inscription also records the building of a temple of the ‘Divine Mothers’ by the same person. It is thus an evidence against sectarian exclusiveness.
by their father Sivanandin; the name of the founder of the Vaishnava shrine should be noted. The Junägaḍh (Käthiäwär) inscription records the erection of a temple of Vishnu under the name of Chakrabhrity by one Chakrapālita, a devoted worshipper of Govinda and the governor of Surāshtra-vishaya under Skanda-gupta, in the Gupta year 138 (A.D. 458). A stone inscription found at Gädhwā (Allahabad district, U.P.) bearing the Gupta date 148 (A.D. 468) refers to the installation of an image of Anantasvāmin and some grant to the same god under another name, Chitrakūṭasvāmin; it is needless to point out that both the designations stand for Vāsudeva-Vishnu. In the time of Budhagupta also Bhāgavatism flourished in eastern and central India. The Damodarpur copper-plate inscription as well as the Eran stone pillar inscription bear testimony to this fact. Two sectarian deities, viz., Kokāmukhasvāmin and Svetavarāhasvāmin, for whose images two temples were built according to the former, were connected with the Bhāgavata cult. The latter opens with an invocation of the all-pervading ‘four-armed god whose couch is the broad waters of the four oceans, who is the cause of the continuance, the production, and the destruction of the universe and whose ensign is Garuda.’ It records that Mahārāja Mātrivishnu, who is described as excessively devoted to the Divine One (ātyantabhagavadbhakta), with his obedient brother Dhanayavishnu, had caused to be set up the flag-staff of the god Jānārdana, the troubler of the demons. Even when shortly afterwards Eran was temporarily conquered by the Hūna chief Toramāna, Bhāgavatism flourished there, for the inscription on the chest of a colossal red sandstone image of a Boar (representing Vishnu in his Varāha incarnation), found there, records the construction of the stone temple of the Lord Nārāyaṇa in this form by Dhanayavishnu.

2. Late Gupta and the post-Gupta age

The gradual disintegration of the Gupta Empire did not witness the decline of Bhāgavatism, for during the succeeding age the creed flourished in different parts in India. The Mauhari king Ananta-varman caused to be installed a beautiful image of the god Krishṇa in the cave shrine at Barābar (old Pravaragiri) near Gayā. The kings of Uchchhakalpa, like Jayanātha, Sarvanātha and others were patrons of the creed, for some copper-plate inscriptions (A.D. 494-513) found at Khoh (Bhagelkhand district, M.P.) refer to several Bhāgavata en-

7 HBR, l, p. 400, n. 8.
8 CI/III. pp. 221-28.
downments by them. The shrine of the goddess Pīshṭapurī (or Pīṣṭapurī), the local form of Lakṣmī, at Māṇpur finds mention in some inscriptions. Grant to a temple of the same goddess by the Parivṛṣajaka Mahārāja Saṁkshobha (A.D. 529) is recorded in another inscription found at Khoi; it begins with the twelve-syllabled Bhāgavata mantra—Oṁ Na-mo Bha-ga-va-te- Vā-su-de-vā-ya (‘Om! reverence to the worshipful Vāsudeva’). It is interesting to note that here is one of the earliest references to the holiest litany of the creed. The vitality of the cult in this period is revealed by the fact that Mahārāja Dhruvasena I of Valabhi, most kings of whose line were devout worshippers of Śiva (parama-Māheśvara), was a convert to it, for he is described in the Maliya copper-plate (A.D. 572) of Mahārāja Dharasena II, one of his successors, as a parama-bhāgavata. The very fragmentary stone record of one Prakāṭāditya (c. seventh century A.D.) found at Sārnāth (Benares, U. P.) records the building of a temple of the god Vishṇu, under the name of Muradvish.

The flourishing state of Bhāgavatism in the Gupta and the early post-Gupta periods is also proved by a number of monumental and glyptic data. Many of the terracotta seal impressions unearthed in the course of excavations in the old sites of Bhita (near Allahabad) and Basarh (ancient Vaiśāli, Muzaffarpur district, Bihar) contain Vishṇuite emblems and inscriptions. Symbols such as the Kaustubhamañi or Śrīvatsa mark, shown on the breast of Vishṇu images, the attributes of Vishṇu like Śamkhā, Chakra and Gadā; the figures of Vacāha and Narasimha avatāras are found on many of them. Some again bear such Vaishṇavite legends as Śrī-Viṣṇupādasvāmi-Nārāyaṇa, Jayatyananto bhagavān Sāmbāh, Jitam bhagavatnanatasya nandesvarivarvasvāminah and namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya, etc. Bloch remarks about the seal with the first legend that ‘this looks as if the seal came from the authorities of a temple of Viṣṇupāda, perhaps, the famous shrine at Gayā; in that case the seal would prove the existence of this temple in the fourth century A.D. The last of the legends is nothing but the holy Bhāgavata mantra, already referred to, without the pranava (Oṁ). The goddess Lakṣmī also appears on many sealings found at Bhita, Basarh and Rajghat (Benares). Ruins of various temples as well as sculptures and reliefs found in places situated in such widely distant parts of India as Bhitargaon (Kanpur, U. P.), Cadhwa (Allahabad, U. P.), Deogarh (Jhansi district, U. P.), Mathurā (U.P.), Pathari (M.P.), Tigawa (M.P.) etc. would show how popular Bhāgavatism was in these regions.

9 Banerjea, DHl, pp. 209-14.
Evidence is not also wanting as regards the prevalence of Bhāgavatism in South India at the time. The various local dynasties ruling over different parts of the Deccan after the fall of the Śātavāhanas, such as the early Pallavas, the Kadambas, the Vishṇukundins, the Śālaṅkāyanas, the Vākāṭakas and others, and after them the Western Chāluukyas of Bāḍāmi, the later Pallavas, the Cholas, the Pāṇḍyas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas included many active patrons of the Vaishṇava faith. They erected numerous shrines dedicated to it, the remains of some of which are extant even now. The name of Vishnugopa, the Pallava king of Kāñchī, and a contemporary of Samudragupta seems to show that he had Vaishṇava affiliation; the name of the Vishṇukundin dynasty may also indicate the same. The Guṇapadeya copper-plate inscription of the time of the early Pallava king Vijaya-Skandavarman (fourth century A.D.) refers to a grant of some land by one Chārudevi, the queen of the Yuvamahārāja Vijaya-Buddharvarman (above, p. 316), to the god Nārāyana enshrined in the temple erected by the local elder named Kuli (Kulimahattaraka-devakulassu bhagavān-Nārāyanassa). A verse occurs at the beginning of an early Kadamba grant, which means ‘conquest is made by the lord Vishṇu on whose breast Śrī herself shines, and on the lotus issuing from whose navel (shines) god Brahmā (pitāmaha)’. The Poona copper-plate inscription of Prabhavatigupta (P. 136), the queen of the Vākāṭaka King Rudrasena II, and the daughter of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II, as well as many South Indian inscriptions of this period begin with the invocation jitam bhagavatā. It will be presently shown that the Vākāṭakas were great devotees of Siva; but Rudrasena II, was a Vaishṇava. Many of the early Chāluukya kings had Bhāgavata inclination though, like the Kadambas, they lived under the guardianship of the Saptamātrikās and had Kārttikeya as their favourite deity. This is proved by the Bāḍāmi cave shrine inscription of the time of Kirtivarman I (c. 566-67) referred to above (p. 416). Maigaleśa undoubtedly professed the Vaishṇava faith, for he is described as a paramabhaṭagavata; it is also recorded in the inscription that he built a Mahā-Vishṇugriha. The Bāḍāmi cave shrine contains interesting varieties of Vaishṇava images and series of reliefs carved on its walls, which elaborately illustrate the Krishṇayana scenes. The Durgā temple at Aihole of a somewhat later date, having in the subsidiary niches image-groups showing an admixture of Vaishṇava, Saiva and Sākta subjects, was probably originally asso-

10 Channak CII, III, p. 236. Presumably he was converted to the new faith after his marriage.

11 IA, X, p. 59.
associated with Vaishnava worship. The mixing up of different sectarian elements in the Chālukyan shrines has been explained by some scholars as due to the liberal religious outlook of the early kings. But it might also reflect the Śaṅkara attitude to these sectarian deities; they were to be venerated by an orthodox Śaṅkara according to his scriptural injunctions. The rock-cut temples at Ellora, mostly constructed during the time of the powerful Rāṣṭrakūṭa rulers, also include among them several Vaishnava shrines. The Bhāgavata creed of some of the later Pallavas of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. is proved by epigraphic as well as monumental data. The Narasāropet (Omgodū) copper-plate inscription of the 4th regnal year of Śivaharman describes the king as 'meditating on the feet of the Bhāgavat' (ḥagavatpādānudhyata) and as a parama-bhāgavata; another passage in it appears to describe him as 'the husband of Śri and Prithivi (Śri-Pṛithivi-vallabha), an epithet 'found in the inscriptions of the Chālukyas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas'. It probably refers to the claims of these kings to have incarnations of Viṣṇu. Vaishnava shrines of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., still extant in eastern and western Deccan, show the popularity of the creed among the subjects of the early Chālukyas and the later Pallavas. Temples at Bāḍāmī, Paṭṭadakal, Gaddag, Lakkunḍi etc. on the one hand, and Kāśi, Mahābalipuram etc. on the other, testify to the wide prevalence of the cult in South India in the late Gupta and early post-Gupta periods.

3. Some Traits of Gupta and Early Post-Gupta Vaishnivism

Before the history of Bhāgavatism, now to be described as Vaishnivism, is traced further, it is necessary to take note of some of the special features of the creed from the fourth century onwards. The name 'Bhāgavata' was more common in the Gupta period, though the term 'Vaishnava' had come to be used some time before the middle of the fifth century A.D. The coins of the Traikūṭaka kings Dahrasena and his son Vyāghrasena, who flourished in the latter half of the fifth century A.D., invariably describe them as parama-vaishnava, an epithet also attributed to Devaśakti, one of the early Kurjara-Pratihāra kings whose date falls near about the middle of the eighth century A.D. But there is no doubt that Viṣṇu was now more popular as the name of the cult-god than Vāsudeva-Kṛishna. The developed mythology of the creed at this period distinctly shows that all these three elements—Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, and Vāsudeva-Kṛishṇa—had together built up this concept. The association of the creed with Yoga philosophy and sun worship, which was long ago enunciated in the

12 D. C. Sircar, SI, I, 447, f.n. 2.
Bhagavadgītā and the Nārāyanīya section of the Mahābhārata, was much developed in the period. The theory of incarnation (āvatāra), which was first systematically expounded in the Bhagavadgītā, found prominence in the Gupta age, and Krishna was regarded as the most perfect āvatāra of Vishṇu. This shows that Pāñcharātra-Bhāgavata creed had come to be accepted as a part of orthodox Vedism. The names Bhāgavata and Pāñcharātra were, however, very much current even in the sixth century A.D. and afterwards, for Varāhamihira, while speaking about installation of images (pratishṭāvidhi) says that a Vishṇu image should be installed by a Bhāgavata; Utpala in his commentary on this passage remarks that such an installation should be done according to the Pāñcharātra rites. In the gradual transformation of Bhāgavatism into Vaishnavism, the āvatāra doctrine played a prominent part, and this is the principal reason why the worship of the āvatāras became a notable feature of Gupta Vaishnavism. Incarnations of Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa like Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana etc. are mentioned in some of the Gupta inscriptions, but the Puranic and other literature of this period, as well as many sculptures hailing from such widely distant regions of India as Udayagiri (M. P.), Mahāballipuram (Tamilnadu), Bādamī (Karnāṭaka), Gādhwā (U.P.) etc., distinctly prove that the concept of the Daśāvatāras was already on the way of being, stereotyped. Buddha and Rishabha seem to have been regarded by now as the incarnatory forms of Vishṇu, as is proved by the list of 39 incarnations given in the Sātvata Samhitā. As regards the two Rāmas (Bhārgava or Paraśu-Rāma and Rāghava or Daśarathi Rāma) and Kalki, it may be observed that the early mediaeval Daśāvatāra slabs found in some parts of India prove that their worship already formed a part of the creed. Images of Rāma Daśarathi are described by Varāhamihira (Brīhatasamhitā, Ch. 57) and Kālidāsa refers to this Rāma as the same as Hari (Rāmābhidhiṇo Hari, Raghuvaiṇīsa, XIII, I). It has been suggested by some scholars that the almost total absence of any reference to the vyūhas, viz., Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, in the inscriptions of the Gupta age indicates the disappearance of their independent worship, and that the ejection of the vyūhas by the āvatāras was one of the characteristic signs of the transformation of Bhāgavatism into Vishṇuisim. But it can be proved with the help of literary

15 H. C. Raychaudhuri, op. cit., 2nd Edition, pp. 175-76. Raychaudhuri says that the Mahābhāshya, the Ghosundi and Nanaghast inscriptions refer to the Vyūha cult; but it has been shown that the two inscriptions certainly, if not the Mahābhāshya, refer to the Vira cult and not the Vyūhavāda (cf. above, Vol. II, Ch. XIII).
as well as archaeological data that the worship of the vyūhas was certainly not discarded from the Bhāgavata-Vaiśnava creed in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. The composition of some of the early authoritative Pāñcharātra texts, dealing exhaustively with the vyūhavāda, is to be ascribed to the Gupta age, and there can be no doubt that this peculiar tenet was systematised and developed during this period and afterwards. That it remained a potent force in the re-oriented creed can be clearly demonstrated. The four-faced images of Vishnu-Chaturmūrti of the mediaeval and even earlier period, from Kashmir, Mathurā, Benares and other places, fully prove that the vyūha element was one of the strong and living features of the Gupta and the post-Gupta Vaishnavism. The Vishnudharmottaram (of the late Gupta period) explains the symbolism underlying this peculiar Vishnu icon with the faces of a man (central one), a boar (left), a lion (right) and a demon (back), with the help of the self-same doctrine of the vyūhas; not only that, the very name Vishnu-Chaturmūrti shows that it embodied in one concrete form all the four primary vyūhas, the central human face standing for Vāsudeva, and the lion, boar and demon faces symbolising respectively in an esoteric manner the three other vyūhas, Saṃkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.16 Sri-Vaishnavism of later times, which owed much to the earlier Pāñcharātra theology reserves an honoured place for this tenet. It was in the early mediaeval times that the number of the four vyūhas was increased to as many as twenty-four, and separate images of many of them have been discovered in different parts of India.17 It should be noted that in the developed philosophy of the Pāñcharātras, as expounded in the Nārāyanīya and other later texts, the four original vyūhas are identified in the following manner: Vāsudeva is the supreme reality, Saṃkarṣaṇa, the primeval matter (prakriti), Pradyumna, cosmic mind (manas), and Aniruddha, cosmic self-consciousness (ahaṅkāra).

The worship of the goddess Lakṣmī, the principal consort of Vishnu-Vāsudeva, was another important trait of the Vaishnavism of the time. Homage was being paid to her by Indians from a very early period, but in the early phase of her worship she had no clear association with Vāsudeva and Vishnu. She was the goddess of beauty, luck and prosperity, and as such was revered by the rival sectaries of the Buddhists, Jains and the Bhāgavatas. But in the Gupta period

16 JISOA. XIII, pp. 86-89.
17 MAHI, no. 2; T. A. G. Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography, I, pp. 227-44 and plates.
and afterwards she seems to have been specially appropriated by the Bhāgavata creed, and some inscriptions of the period describe Vāsu-deva-Viṣṇu as 'the perpetual abode of Lakṣmī whose dwelling is the water-lily' (Kamalanīlayanāyāh śāsvatam dhāma Lakṣmyāh). But her old association with good fortune, wealth and prosperity was not only fully maintained, but more valued by the general mass of the people. This is proved by the Gupta seals unearthed at Bhita, Basarh and other places, many of which show her attended by pot-bellied Yakshas, mythical custodians of treasures (nidhis), doling out wealth from treasure-chests. The Maṅkandeya Purāṇa says that Lakṣmī is the presiding deity of Pādminī Vidyā whose containers (ādhāras) are the eight nidhis (the kings of the Takshas). The sealing legends show that many of the owners of these seals were traders and merchants (belonging to the order of the śresthi-sārthavāha-kulikanigama), and the association of the goddess with commerce is characteristically emphasised by one interesting Basarh seal-impression which shows her standing inside a barge.18 But her connection with Viṣṇu is clearly shown by the presence of many Viṣṇuite emblems on these impressions. Another consort of Viṣṇu, Bhūdevi (the Earth-goddess) is also an object of much reverence to the sectaries. Some inscriptions belonging to Eastern M. P. contain a formula in which the goddess Bhū is described as Viṣṇavī (Bhūr-Viṣṇavī). Many sculptures of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, hailing from all parts of India, illustrate the story of the Boar incarnation in which the rescue of the Earth-goddess from deluge is the principal theme. In South Indian images of the post-Gupta and later period Śrī and Bhū are shown as the two principal consorts of Viṣṇu. In their North Indian counterparts Śrī and Pushti occupy this honoured place, and the latter, carrying a lyre, reminds us of goddess Sarasvatī. The goddess Pīṣṭapurikā, reference to whose shrine at Manipur has already been made, may be mythologically allied either to one or both of the goddesses.

The foundation of religious establishments (mathas) associated with Viṣṇnavism is also proved by epigraphic data. The Apsad stone inscription of Ādityasena not only records the erection by him of a big temple in honour of Viṣṇu, but also the establishment of a religious college by his mother, the Mahādevi Śrīmatī, which resembled 'a house in the world of gods, (and) had been given by herself in person to religious people'.19

18 Banerjea, op. cit., p. 212.
19 Fleet, CII, III, p. 204.
4. The Ālvārs

The Vaishnava creed was popularised in South India by a body of saints, mostly Tamils, who by their ardent devotion to Lord Vishnu and by their simple emotional way of expressing it through the medium of beautiful songs composed in their mother-tongue, appealed to the hearts of the people. They were known by the name of the Ālvārs, a Tamil word meaning those who were immersed (in their devotion to the Lord). Such was the fame achieved by these South-Indian bhaktas, that tradition, recorded at least in one of the Purāṇas, says that, 'in the Kali age there will be found men here and there devoted to Nārāyaṇa, but in large numbers in the Dravida country, where flow the rivers Tāmraparṇī, Kṛitamālā, Kāverī and Pāvasvinī, and that those who drink the water of these rivers will mostly be pure-hearted devotees of Vāsudeva'.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa, from which this passage is quoted, seems to have been composed some time about A.D. 900, if not earlier, and it thus appears that most of these devotional Vaishnava saints of South India, if not all, flourished before that date. A detailed account of these Ālvārs will be given in Chapter XXX. It will suffice here to state that they played an important part in the moulding and dissemination of the creed throughout Southern India. The songs composed by them are known as Divya Prabandhas or Nālāyira Prabandhas which illustrate in all their genuine and simple emotion the different ways of approach to the Lord,—through bhakti (loving adoration) and prapatti (self-surrender)—, in which the personal bond between the worshipped and the worshipper is conceived and described in various ways. It is true that they were great devotees of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu-Nārāyanā, but in their creed there was no narrow sectarianism, and sometimes they regarded Śiva as equal to the god of their choice; reference to many Bhāgavata shrines of the South where Viṣṇu and Śiva were equally adored are to be found in many of their hymns. But as regards the attitude of some of them to Buddhism and Jainism, it must be said that it fell in line with that of their Śaiva counterparts, the Nāyana-mārs or the Nāyanaars. The hostility of these devotees of Viṣṇu and Śiva was one of the principal causes of the gradual disappearance of the heterodox creeds from South India. There was again no caste-rigour in their creed; out-castes and women were never disallowed from their fold; some of them were out-castes themselves, and one,

at least, a woman. They were held in great veneration by the South Indian Vaishnavas, and the founders of the Sriyaishnava creed though they were strong advocates of caste, were not loath to express their indebtedness to them. Not only were the songs of the Alvārs sung in the Vaishnava temples, but their images also were assigned an honoured place there.

5. The Literary Background of Vaishnavism

An extensive literature grew round traditional history, theology and metaphysics of the Vaishnava creed. The Mahābhārata, which gives an interesting history of this theistic school in its Nārāvanīya section (included in the Sāntiparvam), seems to have attained very nearly its present shape before A.D. 300. Both the epics contain many sectarian elements among which the Vaishnava ones were the most important. Harivaṁśa a supplement to the Great Epic, composed before A.D. 400, was a Vaishnava work. It deals with the life of Kṛishṇa, and specially the legends of his youth which had a great popular appeal. Only a few of the earliest Pāñcharātra Saṁhitās were probably written before the fourth century, but many of the early authoritative texts of this character were written later in the extreme north of India, probably Kashmir. They expatiated on the tenets of the school, the most important of which was the doctrine of the ṛṣiḥās, a succinct account of which has already been given (Vol. II, Ch. XIII). It was further developed in our period and the number of the emanatory forms of Lord Vāsudeva was raised from four to twenty-four. These Saṁhitās, Āgamas and Tantras were collectively the main sources utilised by the Śrī-Vaishnava Achārvyas like Yāmūnāchārya and Rāmānuja in giving shape to their doctrines. A full and elaborate Pāñcharātra text is supposed to deal with four topics, viz., charyā, kriyā, jñāna, and yoga, though in most of them the first two, dealing with the rules of conduct and pious actions recommended for a devout Pāñcharaṭrin, were described at much greater length than the others.22 Another body of literature which had a great hand in the dissemination of the Vaishnava doctrines was the Purāṇas, some of which were Vaishnava in character. As Farquhar says, 'The Vishnu Purāṇa is the best representative of the whole class of sectarian Purāṇas, since it is purely Vaishnava in its teaching from the beginning to the end, and yet retains with considerable faithfulness the character of the old unsectarian Purāṇas'.

22 Schräder has analysed the contents of the Pāñcha Tantra, a Pāñcharātra text. In this way, Introduction to the Pāñcharātra Aśeṣabdhika Saṁhitā, p. 22.
The theology, as expounded in the Bhagavadgītā and other Vaishnava sects of the Great Epic, is mainly followed in this work. The other Vaishnava Purāṇa was the Bhāgavata which was later than the Vishṇu Purāṇa. It gave a new and dynamic shape to Vishnu-bhakti, which in all its passionate self-abandon was regarded as the principal source of release from the physical bonds and elevation to the highest goal of a Vaishnava. The so-called erotic element in Vaishnavism, which centred round the extra-marital love of the Gopīs (cowherdesses) for Krishna, was first systematically expounded in this Purāṇa. It was further emphasised afterwards in the concept of the self-abandoning love of Rādhā, the chief of the Gopīs, in such late works as the Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa became the most venerated text of the Vaishnavas, and inspired a large number of early and late mediaeval Vaishnava theologians who became the founders of various sub-sects. Several other Purāṇas were also retouched and added to by theologians of this sect, who popularised their doctrines in this way. Another class of literature written by them for this purpose was the Vaishnava Upanishads like the Mahā-Nārāyanam Nyayiṣṭha-pūrva-tāpaniṣṭa, Nyayiṣṭhā-uttara-tāpanīya, Rāma-pūrva-tāpaniṣṭa, Rāma-uttara-tāpaniṣṭa, which were held in great veneration by the sectaries. Farquhar makes a plausible suggestion that the last four were the text-books of the Narasiṣṭha and Rāma sects, which must have come into existence in the Gupta period. A Basarh seal of the fifth century A.D. definitely proves the existence of the Mahā-lion incarnation as a cult-god, and literary and archaeological data prove that the Rāmaite sect was not as late as is believed by some scholars. But there can be little doubt that these flourished as so many sub-sects under the great Bhakti school of Vaishnavism. 23

III. SAIVISM

1. General Popularity

Though Saivism was not the creed of the early Gupta emperors, it was well patronised by their subjects, as well as by the Indian people outside their Empire. Vīrasena Sāba, a courtier of Chandragupta II, caused one of the cave shrines at Udayagiri to be made in honour of the god Śambhu (Siva) out of his great veneration to Him. It is here, as we have shown before, that another courtier or officer of the same Emperor made some Vaishnava endowment in the year

23 For Farquhar’s view about the origin of the Narasiṣṭha and Rāma Sects, cf RLI, pp 188-90; for the Basarh sealing, cf. ASIAR, 1913-14, seal no 191.
82 (A.D. 401-02), and the existence of a Vaishnava and a Saiva shrine side by side in the same place is worth noting. We shall show presently that a Sākta shrine also was there. A stone Śiva-liṅga, excavated from an ancient site near the village of Karamdāṇḍa (Faizabad district, U. P.), contains an interesting inscription at its base which throws some light on Śiva-worship in this region during the time of Kumāra-gupta I. It records a gift made by one Prathivīṣhena, a minister of Kumāra-gupta, for the worship of the Mahādeva known as Prathivīśvara with proper pious offerings to certain Brāhmaṇas from Ayodhyā, who were living in the vicinity of the Lord Saileśvara-svāmī Mahādeva, and who were 'proficient in observances, in sacred study, in the mantras, the sūtras, bhāshyas and pravachanas'.

It seems that these Ayodhyā Brāhmaṇas were Śaiva clergicals, well-versed in the sectarian rites and theological lore, residing in the vicinity of the older shrine of Lord Saileśvara-svāmī Mahādeva (another earlier Śiva-liṅga). Mahādeva Prathivīśvara, evidently the inscribed liṅga in question, seems to have been set up by Prathivīṣhena himself, and was thus another nāma-liṅga or svanāmaliṅga (cf. the expression svākhya-liṅga in the Mañkapûr stone inscription). The invocation in the first line of the inscription, nāma-Mahāderāya (Obiesance to Mahādeva' i.e., the great god), is a seven-syllabled (saptākṣhara) mantra, which should be compared with the usual pāñchākṣhara mantra, namah Śivaṇa of a later date. Another point, worth noting about the Karamdāṇḍa liṅga, is that it had certainly shed some of its realism of the earlier period, though it had not fully attained the conventional shape of the Śiva-liṅga of the mediaeval and modern periods. Mahārāja Vainva-gupta was a devotee of Lord Śiva, for in his Gunaighar (Comilla district, Bangladesh) copper-plate inscription he is described as bhagavān-Mahādeva-pādānudhyāta, 'favoured by the Lord Mahādeva'. The Jānendrā (tribal lord) Yaśodharman, who flourished in the Mandasor region, Madhya Pradesh, in the first half of the sixth century A.D., and is described in his inscriptions as the vanquisher of the Hūṇa chief Mihirakula, was a devout Śaiva, as is manifest from his invoking the favour of the god Śuḷapāṇi (trident-bearer) in all his inscriptions. The Hūṇa chief Mihirakula was also an exclusive worshipper of Śiva; this is proved not only by his own coins bearing the figure of the bull Nandin (Śiva in his theriomorphic form) with the legend jayatu vrīṣah on the reverse, but also by an inscription of his rival Yaśodharman.

Continued patronage of the creed by various Indian chiefs in different parts of India in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods can be sub-

24 EI, X, pp. 70-72.
stantiated with the help of epigraphic data. Thus one Mahārāja Śrī Bhīmavarman, ruling in the Kosam region in the year A.D. 458, installed an image of Hara-Pārvatī. The Vākāṭaka rulers, with the exception of Rudrasena II, were all sectarian Śaivas, for they are described in some of their inscriptions as *atyanta-svāmimahābhairava-bhakta* (‘ardent devotee of the Lord Mahābhairava’), *atyanta Māheśvara* (an intense ‘Māheśvara’ or ‘Pāśupata’) etc. Again the Bhāraśiva dynasty of Mahārāja Bhavanāga, the maternal grandfather of the Vākāṭaka king Rudrasena I, ‘owed its origin to the great satisfaction of Śiva (caused) by their carrying a līṅga of Siva placed as a load upon (their) shoulders.’ Most of the Maitraka rulers of Valabhi, beginning from Bhaṭāraka, the founder, were *parama-māheśvaras* as their inscriptions testify. Two at least of the later Guptas of Magadha, Devagupta and his son Vishṇu-gupta, were the most devout worshippers of Māheśvara as we know from the Deo-Baranark inscription of Jīvita-gupta. Sarvarvarman is described in the royal seals as *parama-māheśvara*. Another earlier Maukhari chief, Anantavarman by name, however, seems to have been devoted to all the three principal creeds Vaishnava, Śaiva, and Śākta, as his Nāgārjunī hill cave inscriptions show. The Nirmanḍ (Kangra district) copper-plate inscription of Mahārāja Mahāsāmanta Samudrasena (c. seventh century A.D.) also gives us an interesting glimpse into the religious mentality of a section of the people in the region. It records the allotment of the village of Sūli-sagrāma by Samudrasena to a body of Brāhmaṇas who studied the Atharvaveda at the agrahāra of Nirmanḍa, for the purposes of the god Tripurāntaka or Śiva, who, under the name of Mihireśvara, had been installed by his mother Mihiralakshmi at a previously established temple of the same god under the name of Kāpāleśvara.25 Fleet thinks that the name Mihireśvara here may signify a combination of Saura and Śaiva worship. It will be shown afterwards that such composite cult-heroes like Mārtanda-Bhairava or Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa were worshipped in different parts of India. But Mihireśvara in this context may denote another specimen at svākhyaliṅga already referred to. The temple of Kāpāleśvara was originally erected by one Mahārāja Sarvarvarman according to the Nirmanḍ plate, and there is very little doubt that he was the same as the Maukhari king *parama-māheśvara Mahārāja* Sarvarvarman. The Hādāhā plate informs us that his brother Śūryavarman repaired and reconstructed a dilapidated shrine of Śiva (*Andhakabhīḍa*), and it is presumable that when Sarvarvarman was out on an expedition against the Hūnas in the Kangra region far to the north of his kingdom, he erected a temple in honour of the god of his

choice. The name Kapālesvāra of the earlier Śiva-linga is interesting, for it may incidentally show that the sect of the Kapālikas, the worshippers of Śiva, the Kapāli or Kapālishvāra, had long been in existence before the time of Sarvavarman. The body of the Atharvāna Brāhmaṇas settled in the agrahāra of Nirṛmaṇa, the recipients of Samudrasena’s donation, were evidently Saiva clericals, possibly the Kapālikas themselves, who were in charge of the Śaiva shrines of the much earlier Kapālesvāra and Mihireśvāra of later date.

2. Pāṣupata Sect

The Śaiva clericals referred to in the Karamdanda and Nirṛmaṇ records were preceded by those who are mentioned in earlier inscriptions and literature as Pāṣupatas or Māheśvaras. One of the earliest references to the Lakulīsa-Pāṣupatas is to be found in an inscription of the G. E. 61 (A.D. 380-81) in the reign of Chandra-gupta II at Mathurā and it has already been shown that their precursors were the Śiva-bhāgavatas of Patañjali and probably a section of the Ājīvikas (Vol. II, Ch. XIII). The Purāṇic as well as the inscriptive data show that Lakulīsa flourished some time about the beginning of the second century A.D. He reorganised the theistic school of Śaivism and was succeeded by four disciples, Kušika, Mitra, Gargya and Kaurushya, who were the founders of four lines amongst the Pāṣupatas. The Mathurā inscription, referred to above (p. 52), records that one Ārva Udītāchārya, tenth in apostolic succession from Kuśika, evidently the first immediate disciple of Lakulīsa, caused to be installed in the Teachers’ Shrine (guruvīyatana), (the lingas) Upamiteśvāra and Kapileśvāra (comprising the figures of) his teacher and his teacher’s teacher, Upamita and Kapila, for the commemoration of the preceptors (gurūnām cha kirtyartham). The donor of the record also mentions the name of one Parāśara who was the immediate apostolic predecessor of Kapila. All the four past gurus, Kuśika, Parāśara, Kapila and Upamita, are honoured with the supreme designation of bhagavat, usually associated with persons attaining to the rank of the divinity. Udītāchārya, the living Pāṣupata-teacher, is called Ārya which may

26 R. S. Tripathi’s suggestion that this Sarvavarman was a local chief and not the Maukhari Sarvavarman (THK, p. 54) does not bear scrutiny. The Maukhari king could have erected a Śiva temple far outside his own dominion in that of a friendly neighbour (probably the Vardhanas of Thāneśvara). That he is given the humbler title of mahārāja in the Nirṛmaṇ plate may be due to the fact that the reference is not contained in an inscription of his own dynasty or of his subjects.

27 Fleet points out that the meaning of the passage (lines 8-9 of the copper plate) referring the grant and its purpose is not quite clear; it may contain some incidental reference to Kapālika-vidhi.
mean, according to D.R. Bhandarkar, ‘a master, an owner, here the owner of the two memorial structures raised by him in the “teachers’ shrine”’. But the epithet may also be understood in the same sense in which it is used in the Tusham stone inscription referred to above (p. 782). The Māheśvaras and the Achāryas, for whose acceptance the structures were raised, were evidently Pāśupatas and Pāśupata-chārṭyas belonging to Kuśika’s line who were flourishing in the Mathurā region in the early Gupta period. We find evidence of the presence of another branch of the Pāśupatas at Somanātha in Kāthiawar at a much later date (thirteenth century A.D.) in an inscription usually known as the Cintra praśasti (originally it was in a temple at Somanātha and later it found its way to the Quinta of Don Juan de Castro at Cintra in Portugal). These were the Pāśupata teachers who belonged to the line of Gargya.28

The wide prevalence of the Pāśupatas in different parts of India in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. and afterwards is fully establish by literary data also. Varāhamihira enjoins in his Bṛhatasamhitā (Ch. 59, v. 19) that an image of Sambhu (probably a Siva-līṅga) is to be installed after due consecration by the ash-besmeared twice-born (sabhasmadoji). Upāla says that they were none other than the Pāśupatas, who followed in this installation ceremony a code laid down in the Vātula-tantra (lit. ‘the sacred lore of the lunatics’).28a The fourth tattoo (vidhi, i.e., the means by which a Pāśupata would attain his goal which is duḥkhānta, the cessation of misery), as summarised by Mādhava in his Sārvadarsānasamgraha, consists of such rites and practices which appeared as insane acts to one uninitiated in the sectarian mysteries. Bhāradvāja, who wrote a commentary (Uddyota) on Vāstīyāya’s Nyāyabhāśya, is described as a Pāśupata-chārṭya. But the most interesting evidence about the numerical strength of the Pāśupatas scattered throughout India is supplied by the Chinese Pilgrim Hsuan Tsang. He refers to them in his Si-yü-ki as many as twelve times, and some of these references are noteworthy. Thus the ten thousand Mahēśvara-worshipping sectaries, whom he saw at Benares, besmeared their bodies with ashes, went naked and bound their hair in knots; these were evidently the Pāśupata clericals. In the far south of India (Mo-lo-ku-ta-Malayānūta, the Malayalam-speaking tract), there were temples and worshippers of

28 For the Mathurā stone inscription, cf. EI, XXI, pp. 1-9; for the Cintra Praśasti, cf. EI, I, pp. 271 ff.

28a K. K. Das Gupta has shown that these Pāśupata Saivism of the Vātula-tantra type (cf. the Sūtras of one Vātulanātha, edited by M. Kaul in the Kashmir Sanskrit Series) contributed towards the growth of the Baul cult, a syncretic folk religious order of Bengal. J. N. Banerjea, Volume, Calcutta, 1959, pp. 339-52.
Maheśvara belonging to this sect. In the Mālava region of Central India there were several temples which were associated with the Pāṣupatas. In the far western and north-western corners of India, in the regions of Kach, Baluchistan and Bannu, there were numerous Deva-temples of which several were associated with the Pāṣupata creed. In the capital city of Lang-ka-lo (somewhere in the modern Makran region in Baluchistan) was a large temple to Maheśvara, very handsome, and held in great reverence by the Pāṣupatas.\textsuperscript{29}

3. The Offshoots of the Pāṣupata School: Kāpālika and Kālāmukha

The Pāṣupata was thus the principal Saiva sect in the Gupta period, and some of the other Saiva creeds that were evolved at that time or shortly afterwards appear to have originated from it.\textsuperscript{29a} It has just been shown that the four immediate disciples of Lakulīsa were the founders of four different lines of teachers, and it is possible that the tenets preached by the respective groups, though taking their inspiration from the same fountain-head, were characterised by individual traits of their own. There can be no doubt about the Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas being the extreme offshoots of the Pāṣupata order, and the antiquity of the first of the two at least goes back to the seventh century A.D. or even earlier. The wide prevalence of this sub-sect in the period is proved by the worship of Śiva as Kapāleśvara in far distant corners of India (\textit{supra}, p. 795). The copper-plate inscription of Pulakesin II’s nephew Nāgavardhana (seventh century A.D.) records the grant of a village near Īgatpuri in the Nasik district, Maharashtra State, ‘for the worship of the god Kapāleśvara, and for the mainenance of the Mahāvratins residing in the temple’. R. G. Bhandarkar has shown that the name Mahāvratīn, or ‘observer of the great vow’ designated the Kāpālikas or the Kālāmukhas. The \textit{vrata} (vows) of a Pāṣupata consisted of such practices as besmearing the body with ashes, lying down in ashes, muttering the Pāṣupata \textit{mantra}, circumambulating the divine image, laughing, singing, dancing, and \textit{hūḍuk-kāra} (making a sound resembling that of an ox). The ‘great vow’ of a Kāpālika or a Kālāmukha even far exceeded the above acts in their extreme form. Again, the fifth topic of a Pāṣupata is \textit{duḥkhānta}, the total destruction of misery. The above-noted Nirmaṇḍ plate (p. 795) describes the god Mihiṃśeśvara, as ‘compassionate to those who worship him and the destroyer of all sorrows’.

\textsuperscript{29} HTW, I, pp. 296, 331; II, pp. 229, 242.

\textsuperscript{29a} For an account of these offshoots, cf. V. S. Pathak, \textit{History of Saiva Cults in Northern India}, Varanasi, 1960 pp. 19 ff (KKDG).
(prañat-ānukampanas-sarva-duḥkha-kshaya-karasya). Bāna describes the Pāśupatas as dressed in red garments, and the description of the Kāpālikas to be found in such works as Bhavabhūti’s Mālatīmadhava bears a great similarity to that of Pāśupatas. Saikarāchārya refers to the view of the Māheśvaras that Pāśupati was the revealer of the five topics, the pañcha tattvas or the pañcha arthas of the Nakuliśa Pāśupata sect, and Rāmānuja and Keśava Kashmirin also refer to the Saiva systems as revealed by Pāśupati. The Mysore inscriptions of the tenth century A.D. and later periods go one step further and aver that the original teacher was Lakuliśa from whose teachings were developed those of other Saiva teachers. The Kālāmukhas, in one inscription, are specifically called Lākulas, and a member of the Saiva school is described in another as being also a Lākula or Pāśupata. The facts mentioned above leave little doubt that the principal Saiva system, which was founded by Lakuliśa on the basis of older Saiva orders in the first or second century A.D., became the fountain-head of the later Saiva sects such as the Saiva, the Kāpālika and the Kālāmukha, the last being probably described by some authors as Kārubasiddhāntin and by others as Kārunikasiddhāntin. R. G. Bhandarkar suggests that either the word Kāruka is a corruption of Kaurushya, one of the four immediate disciples of Lakuliśa, or Kaurushya may be the Sanskritised form of the original Kāruka. The four schools noted above, Nakuliśa-Pāśupata, Saiva, Kāpālika and Kālāmukha, are mentioned in the Vāyavīyasaśāntī of the Śiva Purāṇa (II. 24, 177) with this difference that the second is called Sidhāntamārga and the Kālāmukhas designated as Mahāvratadharas.30

4. The Tenets of the Saiva Schools

Of the four Saiva schools just mentioned, the first two, Pāśupata and Saiva, appear to have had more advocates than the other two. The Pāśupata creed, as systematised by Lakuliśa, deals with five topics which are (1) kārya, (2) kāraṇa, (3) yoga, (4) vidhi, and (5) duḥkhaṅtā. The first two topics consist of the Paśu (the individual soul), with its properties and associates, and the Pati (the Lord) in his character of the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer. The next two denote action or cessation from action, and operational measures which either bring forth union of the Paśu, the individual soul, with Pati, the supreme soul, or which, producing righteousness in the individual, prepare him for his ultimate release from misery. The last is the final deliverance which does not only indicate destruction of

misery for the individual soul, but also the attainment of certain supernatural powers by it (paramaśivaryaprāpti). The kārya or the effect, which is eternal according to this system, is the Paśu, with cognition (vīdyā) as its property, and organs (kālā) which are dependent on the cognitive individual. Cognition not only includes the conceptual operation (chitta) on the part of the individual through his instruments of knowledge, but also his internal perception of the nature of virtue or vice which determines and regulates his actions. There are two kinds of organs, the causal organs and the effected ones. The former are thirteen in number, the five jñānendriyas, the five karmendriyas, intelligence (buddhi), sense of ego (ahamānā), and mind (manas); the effected ones are ten in number, viz., the five gross (kṣhitī, āp, teja, marut, vyoma) and the five subtle (śabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa, gandha) elements. Paśu or the individual, in relation to whom the vīdyā and kālā principally exist, is of two kinds, impure and pure; the impure individual is that which has not yet severed its connection with the body and the organs, while the pure one has done so. The kāraṇa, i.e. the supreme cause is the eternal ruler Śiva who, on account of his various properties and functions, has many forms, such as lord (Pati), naturally powerful (Śādyā) etc. The word Śādyā emphasises his supreme sovereignty, which is his innate property not being dependent on any other factors or incidents. Yoga, by means of certain processes, both active such as the muttering of bijas and mantras, meditation etc., and passive such as samvid (mere feeling), forms a link between the Paśu and the Pati. The most interesting topic in the Pāṣupata creed is the vidoṣi or the operational process. In its primary aspect it is conduct (charyā) which is of two kinds: vows and means or doors (oratam dvārāṇi cheti). Some of the details about the first have already been mentioned (p. 798). The specific acts which constitute the second include the following: krāthana (teigning sleep when really awake), spandana (shaking the limbs as if afflicted by paralytic rheumatism), manḍana (walking in a way as if one’s legs and other limbs are disabled), śrīnagaraṇa (stimulating erotic emotion at the sight of a young and beautiful woman), avitatkarana (doing acts censured by people, as if one is devoid of the sense of what is right and what is wrong), and avitadbhāshana (saying words having no sense and apparently absurd). Vidhi, in its secondary aspect helping charyā, consists of such acts as bathing in the ashes (anusnānam) after worship, removing any sense of impropriety connected with begging, and eating the food left by others. Now these measures and acts, as productive of dharma (righteousness) and artha (nearness to the Lord Śiva who is also dharma), would
certainly appear as outlandish and insane to anybody who is not initiated into the sectarian mysteries, and Mādhavāchārya is constrained to admit that as they would appear such to ordinary people, these should be practised in secrecy (yat luki bhatanti tatraitsarvani gūdhain prayoktayam). The end attained after the faithful performance by Pāśupata devotee of the measures summarised above is not only the destruction of all his misery (duḥkhānta), but also the acquisition of supreme powers of knowing and acting. The powers of knowing consist of vision (darśana), audition (śravaṇa), cogitation (manana), discrimination (viñāna) and omniscience (sarva-vijñāna), all of a supernatural order, while the powers of acting are described as the possession of the swiftness of thought (muno-jñāṇa), the assumption of different forms at will (kāmarūpāṇa) and the faculty of expatiation, i.e., the possession of transcendent supremacy even when such organs are not employed (vikrama-dharmāṇa).31

The Śaiva system, which seems to have been an offshoot of the Pāśupata, was somewhat moderate in its approach to the higher ends in life. According to it there are three eternal categories, viz., Pati, Paśu, and Pāśa (tripadārtha), and four feet, viz., knowledge, action, meditation, and conduct (vidyākriyāyoga-charyākhyaś-chatuāraḥ pādāḥ).32 The creative power of Pati, the Lord Śiva, is dependent on the deeds of the Paśu, for, according to the Saivas, if this be not so, as the main body of the Pāśupatās maintain, he would suffer from the faults of partiality and cruelty. He has no body like that of the Paśu, but his body consists of five mantras (Īśāna—head, Tatpurusha—face, Aghora—heart, Vāmadeva—private parts and Sadyojāta—feet) and five kriyas (creation, preservation, destruction, grace and obscurcation). The mantras, their lord (Mantrasvāra) Mahēśvara (the laukika god, not the philosophical deity), and the individual souls that have been delivered (muktas) partake of the nature of Pati, the supreme Lord. The position of the individual soul (Paśn) is very important in this system; being freed of the shackles (Pāśa), i.e., delivered, he becomes Śiva for all practical purposes, with this difference that he is independent on Pati and does not possess the latter's power of creation etc. Different categories of individual souls, such as viñānakula, pralayakula and sakula, with their respective subgroups are described here. They indicate principally the various stages which the different types of Paśus have reached in their progress

31 For the full details about these powers and the general features of the Pāśupataśatra; see Cowell's English translation of the Sarvadarśanasamgraha, pp. 103-11.
32 This reminds us of the four parts of the Pāñcharātra system, such as charyā, kriyā, yoga and īśāna.
towards deliverance. Four varieties of Pāśa, viz., taint (mala), impression of deeds (karman), material cause (māyā) and obstructive power (rodhāsakti) bind a sakalā type of soul from which he frees himself by stages. A clear idea about the three eternal categories is incorporated under the Vidyāpāda or Jñānapāda, the other three pādas dealing with different topics associated with various measures enjoined in the Āgamas for the gradual liberation of the fettered soul, and specific details connected with yoga and charyā. A careful consideration of these would show that the Saivas were far more moderate in their beliefs and practices. It seems that in course of time a section of the Māheśvaras mellowed to a great extent the original teachings of the Pāṣupatas, and these modified teachings were incorporated in their religious works, the Āgamas and the Siddhāntas. But in one principal point the Saivas do not differ from the latter; both these schools are dualistic or pluralistic and maintain that the supreme and individual souls are distinct entities, and the pradhāna, the constituent cause of the material world.33

5. Saumya Schools of Saivism

The Pāṣupata system with such sub-orders as the Kāpaḷika and the Kalāmukha has been described by some as atimārgika or straying far from the path of social order and stability. They collectively illustrate the ghora-raudra (extremely terrific) aspect of the dual-natured god Rudra-Siva—the fierce and awe-inspiring and at the same time the benign and tranquil. Other schools, illustrating the latter (saumya) aspect of the Lord, were not long in making their appearance, and the beginning of one which took shape in Kashmir, can be traced to the end of our period. The two principal and early works of the Kashmir school of Saivism are the Śivasūtra and the Spandakārikā. Vasugupta, to whom the Śivasūtra (said to have been composed by the Lord Siva himself) was traditionally revealed, and his pupil Kallaṭa, the author of the Spandakārikā, flourished in the ninth century A.D. Another great Saiva theologian of Kashmir, who also flourished about the same time, was the great Somānanda, probably a second pupil of Vasugupta. He was the author of Śivādriśhti and himself wrote a commentary on it. These two great theologians, Kallaṭa and Somānanda, between themselves, laid the foundations of the two main branches of the Kashmir school, viz., the Spanda and Pratyabhijñā. Somānanda’s pupil Udayakara, better known as Utpala

or Utpalāchārya, who flourished in the tenth century A.D., was the
next great expounder of the Pratyabhijñā branch and wrote sev-
eral treatises, the chief of which was the Pratyabhijñākārikā, known
also under the simpler name of the Śūtras. There were other great
thinkers who expounded the religio-philosophical tenets of this
school of Saivism in both its branches, but they mostly flourished
after the tenth century A.D. The Kashmir Saivas are monistic in their
doctrine, maintaining the ultimate oneness of the supreme soul and
the individual soul, the apparent difference between them being due
to the ignorance of the latter. Again, the universe is not treated
as a mere illusion in this system; it is through the process, techni-
cally known as shining out (ābhāsana ābhāsa) of the experience of
the Parama Siva, the highest reality, that it becomes manifest. This
manifestation does not depend on any prompting cause, like the
karman of the individual soul or on any material cause like the
pradhāna. It is ushered into existence by the sweet will of the Lord
Siva, the Great Magician, who creates everything out of his own
experience which was in a potential state (pralaya) in himself. This
system thus deals with three categories, the Trika,—the Pati, the
Paśu, and the Paśa, or in other words Siva, Sakti, and Anu, and its
philosophy is known by the name of the Trika system; but Paśu and
Paśa, according to it, are mere adjuncts to Pati, the first being really
identical with the Lord, and the second owing its manifested state
to His sweet will, having no material cause at its root. The Spanda
school of the Kashmir Saivas maintain that all this true knowledge
only appears to the devotee in a sudden vision which is given the
name of Bhairava, after he has prepared himself for it thoroughly
with the aid of his spiritual preceptor, and engaged in deep medi-
tation. The Pratyabhijñā or the recognitive branch also holds that
the identity of the individual soul with the supreme soul is lost due
to the māyā or rodhaśakti of the Lord, but the way of final realisa-
tion of this identity is recognition. An Upanishad verse saying that
‘everything shines when He shines, His light illumines everything’
(tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvam tasya bhāśa sarvamidaṁ vibhāti;
KU, 5, 15; SU. 6. 14; MU, 2. 2. 10) is quoted as an authority in
support of the view that the knowing power of the individual is
co-extensive with that of God, for it is His illumining power that
makes everything fully cognisable to the former. It thus partakes of
the nature of Siva, but its conditioned existence deprives it of the
joy and elevation which are God’s own and which would be its own
when it is made to recognise the oneness of itself and Parama Siva.
The theologians of this school illustrate this by a very apt simile.
A maiden falls in love with a person unseen and unknown by her on hearing about his beauty and qualifications from others; when he appears before her, she remains indifferent at first, being unaware that he is no other than the object of her best love. But when she is made to recognise that he whom she loves with her heart and soul is by her side, her joy knows no bounds. The individual soul does not know, conditioned as it is, that the supreme soul is nowhere outside it, but lies actually within it; when this truth is recognised it feels 'the serene bliss of godly nature'. The nature of the doctrines of these Kashmir schools of Śaivism shows that they belong to a class quite apart from the extreme forms of the sect like the Kāpālika and Kālāmukha. Thus they do never come under the Lāṅkula or Pāśupata group, much older in point of date. It is probably for this reason that a fresh revelation was claimed for Vasugupta, though some of the doctrines of the more sober Śaiva school were preserved in the Spanda system.34

6. The Matta-mayūras, a Class of Saiva Ascetics in Central India

Some inscriptions of the Chedi country refer to a large number of Śaiva ascetics, belonging to the clan of Mattamayūra, the earliest of whom was Rudraśambhu, also named in the inscriptions as Kadamba-guhādhivāsin. Ninth in spiritual succession from him were Prabodhaśiva and Vyomaśiva who flourished in the eleventh century. These Śaiva clergists, many of whom were the spiritual preceptors of some of the Haihaya kings of Tripurī, were granted large estates by their royal and other disciples, and they founded monastic establishments through which their particular form of Śaiva faith was propagated.35

7. Śaivism in South India

R. G. Bhandarkar has suggested that 'both Śaivism and Vaishṇavism penetrated to the extreme south of India after the revival of Brāhmaṇism in the North during the fourth and fifth centuries'.36 But it is much more probable that these cults were present there long before the period, though concrete evidences regarding this are few and far between. Several archaeological data in support of the early existence of the Vaishṇava and Śaiva faith in the Tamil and other

34 R. G. Bhandarkar, op. cit., p. 131; see also J. C. Chatterji's Kashmir Śaivism, for the tenets of the Kashmir school of Śaivism.
regions of the South have already been discussed in Vol. II, Ch. XIII. But, as in the North, so in the South, the sects were much developed and systematised in the Gupta period and afterwards. Saivism was popularised in the Tamil land by a band of religious devotees who are usually known in Tamil language as Nāyanmāras or Nāyanārs, meaning Śivabhaktas, to whom detailed reference will be made in Chapter XXX. Their traditional number is sixty-three and several amongst them are well-known and distinguished personalities. They were recruited from all orders of society, viz., Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. Some were crowned monarchs, others ruling chiefs, many were Vellālas and a few were cowherds, potters, fishermen, hunters, toddy-drawers, weavers, washermen, oilmen and pariahs. This fact shows the liberalistic outlook of South Indian Saivism. As the Alvars represented the emotional side of Vaishnavism in South India, these ardent devotees of Śiva emphasised the lyrical side of Siva-bhakti, composing beautiful songs in their mother-tongue. Much of the extensive Tamil literature on Saivism of the early period consists of these songs or hymns, the first seven collections of which came to be known as Devāram and compared in sanctity to the Brāhmaṇic Veda. R. G. Bhandarkar is of opinion that Saivism, prevalent in the Tamil land during the time of these Nāyanārs, was generally of a simple devotional character, as seen from their hymns. But there must have been deep trends of philosophical thought underlying some early phases of Tamil Saivism, as he himself has shown by referring to Rājasimha Atyantakāma’s inscription in the Rājasīnheśvara temple at Kāṇchi puram. It describes the illustrious Atyantakāma, irresistible among the Pallava kings, as ‘rid of all impurity by his being well-versed in many principles incorporated in the system of the Saivasiddhānta.’ In another inscription of the same temple, which contains as many as 237 birudas of this great Pallava king, he is endowed with such names as matta-pramattah, mattavikārah, māyāchārah and āgaṃānusāri. These epithets, specially the last one (meaning ‘the follower of the Śaiva Āgamas’), leave little doubt that the tenets of the Pāṣupata and the Śaiva systems were well known in the Tamil country in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., if not earlier. The Siddhāntaśāstras, a class of literature said to have been composed by the group of Śaiva theologians known as Santāna-Āchāryas, were philosophical works on Saivism, and they might have been developed out of the Siddhānta system mentioned in the early Pallava inscriptions.

IV. SĀKTISM

Sāktism in the Early Gupta Period—its Various Constituent Elements

It has been shown in chapter XIII of Vol. II that the origin of the worship of the female principle can be traced to a period long before the beginning of the Christian era. But there is little doubt that its development took place in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. The epic literature contains clear indications regarding the upsurge of the cult in the early centuries of the Christian era, and it must have been systematised to some extent by the beginning of the Gupta period. The two Durgāstotras, one put into Yudhishthira’s mouth in the Virāṭaparva and the other uttered by Arjuna in the Bhīshmaparva, show that the goddess Durgā-Pārvatī, with her various names and aspects, had become one of the most important objects of worship. The hymn addressed to Yoga-nidrā, one of her aspects, which appears in the Harivaṁśa, (III, Āryāstāva) also establishes this fact. A comparison of these adulatory hymns shows that the ‘Bhīshmaparva’ and the Harivaṁśa stotras are the originals from which the ‘Virāṭaparva’ one seems to have been derived. The Devī-māhātmya section of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, one of the most ancient and important of all the extant Purāṇas, also contains some characteristic references to the worship of the goddess Durgā-Mahishāsuramardini. The Epic and Purānic passages, when carefully read between the lines, give us some idea of the various constituent elements which were instrumental in developing the cult into one of the important Brāhmanical religious systems of India. First and foremost among them were the concepts of goddesses like Ambikā, Umā, Haimavatī, and Durgā (Kālī, Karāli and Bhadra-Kālī) mentioned in such Vedic texts as the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, Taittirīya Āranyaka, the Kena and the Mundaka Upanishads, and the Sāṅkhāyana Grihyasūtra. These elements cannot necessarily be described as Aryan in character, for they might have come into the Vedic fold after the immigrant Aryans had considerably mixed with the original settlers of India. The non-Aryan element is clearly indicated and emphasised by such names of the Devī as the Vindhyavāsinī, Aparnā (unclad or uncovered with leaf garments), Nagna-Savarī (a naked Šavara woman) etc; the Harivaṁśa passage clearly says that the goddess was very much worshipped by the Šavaras, the Barbaras and the Pulindas (Šavarair-Barbaraiś-chaiva Pulindaiś-cha supūjitā). The Mahāyāna goddess Pārṇa-Savarī (leaf-clad Šavara woman) is undoubtedly the developed Buddhist adaptation of this original non-Aryan goddess through the Brāhmanical...
cal medium. Her fiercer aspects go under the names of Kālī, Karālī (same as two of the seven tongues of Agni identical with Rudra), Chandī, Chāmunda, and the Nava-Durgās (Ugra-Chandā, Prachanda, Chandogrā, Chandanāyikā, Chandā, Chandavati, Chandarupā, Atichandikā and Rudra-Chandā) and others. Her placid form is characteristically illustrated by the mother-concept of the divinity present among a large section of the early Indians, one of its aspects in a developed form being that of Sākambhari, i.e., 'producing or nourishing vegetables' (the food for living beings). In this latter aspect, she also symbolises the vegetation spirit, so well-emphasised in the nava-patrikā-pravesa ceremony in the autumnal worship of the goddess Durgā in Bengal. Another resultant aspect from the motherhood of the goddess was that of Sakti or energetic principle potent behind such principal gods as Brahmā, Maheśvara, Vishnū, Indra and others. Their Saktis were the so-called Divine Mothers or Mātṛikās, whose names were early stereotyped into seven, viz. Brahmāṇī, Māheśvari, Vaishnāvī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī, Kaumārī and Chāmunda. The worship of the Divine Mothers was also very intimately associated with the Tāntric aspect of the Sākta cult. This Tāntric phase is regarded by some scholars as comparatively late in its development, but there can be no doubt that it was also largely systematised in the early Gupta period. In fact, the Tāntric approach to religious concepts and experiences had much to contribute towards the development of such major rival Brahmānical cults as Vaishnavaism and Saivism.

That the principal cult-icon of the Sāktas, Durgā-Māhishāsuramardini (the slayer of the Buffalo-demon), had already been evolved in the early Gupta period is characteristically demonstrated by the twelve-armed figure of the goddess killing the buffalo-demon, carved by the side of the four-armed Vishnū on the facade of the inscribed cave at Udayagiri constructed in A.D. 401 during the reign of Chandragupta II.38 The mythological association of Vishnū and Durgā, so well-emphasised in the Durgā-stotras of the epic literature and some of the Purāṇas, is suggested by the juxtaposition of the images of Vishnū and Durgā on the cave facade. This is further established by the Brihatsamhitā (ch. 57, vv. 37-39) which says that the image of Ekāna-mā, another aspect of Durgā, should be placed between Krishnā and Baladeva, and the goddess, when two-armed, should have a lotus in her right hand, the left one resting on her hip (kaṭi-sansthita-vāmakarā sarvajitarena chodvahatī). The reverse device of Chandra-

38 Cunningham, ASR, X, p. 50. (The image-type evolved in the Kushan period infra, section on 'Iconography' KKDG).
gupta-Kumārādevī coins and of the lion-slayer type coins of Chandra-
gupta II shows the goddess-on-lion holding a lotus flower in her
right hand, and it may be presumed that she represents one type of
the Ekaśānā aspect of Durgā. The stone inscription, dated in
the year A.D. 423-24 found at Gangdhar in Western Malwa, inter-
estingly alludes to the prevalence of the cult in this part of India. The
inscription records that one Mayūrakshaka caused to be set up not
only a temple of Vishṇu by his sons Vishṇubhata and Haribhata,
but he himself also 'caused to be built, for the sake of his religious
merit, this very terrible abode,... full of female ghouls, of the
Divine Mothers, who utter loud and tremendous shouts in joy, (and)
who stir up the (very) oceans with the mighty wind rising from the
magic rites of their religion.39 Some interesting facts connected with
the cult can be deduced from it; partly proving the association of one
phase of Saktī-worship with Vishṇu-worship, it seems to indicate that
Mayūrakshaka himself had Sākta leanings; it also definitely shows
that Tāntric ritualism had become well-known at the time, and the
worship of the Divine Mothers with their companions, the Dākinis,
formed one of the principal parts of the cult. An inscription of about
the sixth century A.D., found at Deogarh (Jhansi district, U.P.) records
the construction of a temple of the Divine Mothers, the mothers of
the Universe (mātrīnām lokamātrīnām), and invokes their blessings.40
Varāhamihira also emphasises the existence of Sākta ritualism with
the Divine Mothers as the cult-icons, when he incidentally refers to
the cult.41 The seven mothers of the universe (saptaloka-māturaḥ),
along with Svāmi-Mahāsena (Kārttikeya), became the special objects
of worship and tutelary divinities of the early Kadambas and the
early Chālukyas, as their inscriptions prove.42 The association of the
Divine Mothers with Skanda-Mahāsena is also shown by a fragment-
tary Bihar stone pillar inscription.43 Some other phases of the
Sākta cult are also emphasised by the archaeological and literary data
of our period. The Bihar stone pillar inscription refers to Bhadrāryā

39 Fleet. CII, III p. 78. One of the earliest uses of the word tantrā is found here in
the compound tattrodhbhāta translated by Fleet as 'rising from the magic rites of their
religion'.

40 EI, XVIII, pp. 125-27. The inscription is engraved over a panel containing a
row of nine seated figures—those of the seven mothers and their guardian angels,
Virabhadra and Ganesa.

41 Brīhatsaṁhitā, Dvivedi's Edition, ch. 59, v. 19; only the Sāktas, described here as
manḍalakramaściva, are entitled to install the images of the Mātrikās.

42 IA, VI, pp. 27, 74; VII, p. 162; XIII, p. 137. The early Chālukyas also describe
themselves as the kindred of Māṇavya, the descendants of Hārītī, having acquired
their sign, the Boar, through the favour of the holy Nārāyaṇa.

and her shrine, and this must have been another designation of the cult-deity. It has already been shown that the Maukhari king Anantavarman, somewhat eclectic in spirit, caused to be built cave shrines in the Barabar and Nagärjuni hills near Gayā, where images of Kṛishṇa, Ardhanārīśvara Śiva and Kātyāyanī were enshrined. In one of the Nagärjuni hill cave inscriptions, the goddess is described both as Kātyāyanī and Bhavāni, and the latter has distinct Vedic association (Bhavāni, the Śakti of Bhava, one of the eight names of Rudra mentioned in the Atharva Veda and Satapatha Brāhmaṇa). While the name Kātyāyanī, shows that she was the tutelary divinity of the Brāhmaṇic family of the Kāyas, Kauśikī, another of her names, indicates that she was the goddess of the Kauśikas. But there can be no doubt that Kātyāyanī was the same as Mahishāsuramardini, as is proved by the iconographic texts as well as the first line of the inscription, which is nothing but a partial description of the enshrined image of the Devī.

The Śākta cult became fairly widespread in India in the post-Gupta period, but it was specially prevalent in particular regions. Kashmir, where the Saradā monastery was situated, Bengal, Mithilā, Kāmarūpa, south-western Rajasthan, Kāthiāwār peninsula etc. were the regions where the cult had numerous adherents. The other two major creeds in some of these regions, particularly eastern India, were influenced by it to some extent. Their sculptural and other remains testify to this fact in a very interesting manner. The Mātri images of Jajpur (Orissa), where Virajākshetra was situated, the Umā-Mahēśvara images of Bengal and Bihar (which in a very interesting manner symbolise the Tāntric concept of the Devī seated on the lap of her consort, Śiva, in the Mahāpadmavana), and many other typical Śakti icons, the reference to the godless Stambheśvarī as the patron-deity of some of the Bhaṇja and Kulki kings of Orissa, and many other data help us to note the flourishing state of Śaktism in this part of India. That Śākta ritualism was also known among the Tamil and Kanarese-speaking people of the South is substantiated by archaeological evidence. Sculptures of different aspects of the Devī in the early temples of Bādāmi, Mahābalipuram, Ellorā and other places indirectly support the conclusion. One particular relief in one of the Rathas of Mahābalipuram, showing a person about to cut off his own head as an offering to the goddess Pārvati, reminds us of one of the rituals prescribed in the Śrīśchchheda Tantra.45 That royal personages in

45 BSOAS, VI, pp. 539-43, and plaques. Somewhat similar motifs are found in a few Paharpur and Mathurā terra-cotta plaques. See IHQ, XVI, pp. 489-96.
some parts of India also became adherents of the Śākta creed is clearly proved by some inscriptions. The copper-plate grant of the Gūrjara-Pratihāra king Vināyakapāladeva, dated A.D. 931, counts as many as three Śāktas among his predecessors. These were Parama-bhagavatībhaktas Nāgabhaṭa, Bhojadeva, and Mahendrapāladeva. It would be of interest to note that some of his predecessors were Paramavaishnāvas, one at least Parama-Māheśvara, and he himself and one at least of his predecessors (Rāmabhadradeva) were Sauras (Paramādityabhāhuṭa). It shows that individuals were quite free to choose each his own creed according to his own religious bent of mind.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF TĀNTRIC RITUALISM

That Tāntric ritualism, as a part of the worship of the Mother-goddess, developed to a great extent some time before the sixth or seventh century A.D., is proved by certain early literary data. The worship of the Śākta pīṭhas might have been one of its later phases, but its beginnings go back to the early centuries of the Christian era. The Tīrthayātrā section of the Mahābhārata (Vana-parva) mentions three Śākta pīṭhas connected with the yoni (pudendum muliebre) and stana (breasts) of the goddess. These are the two Yoni-kunḍas, one situated at Bhīmāsthana beyond Pañchanada (Panjab) and the other on the hill called Udyataparvata (probably in the Gayā region), and one Stunakunḍa on a peak known as Gaurīśikhara (possibly in the Gauhati region). The evidence of the epic passages, probably earlier than the rise of the Guptas, is partly corroborated by Huan Tsang who refers to at least one of these holy places. The pilgrim records that there was a great mountain peak in ancient Gandhāra (modern Peshawar district in Pakistan), which possessed a likeness (or image) of Maheśvara’s spouse Bhīmādevī of dark-blue stone. According to local accounts this was a natural image of the goddess; it was a great resort of devotees from all parts of India. At the foot of the mountain was a temple to Maheśvaradeva in which the ash-smearing Tīrthikas performed much worship. The existence of a very sacred shrine of all-India fame with the natural image of the goddess (probably an aniconic stone) and the temple of Śiva nearby reminds us of the developed pīṭha conception of the Śāktas, in which the worship of a particular aspect of the Śakti and its variety

46 Mbh, II, 82, 83-5; III, 84, 93-95; 151-53 (cf. D. C. Sircar, Śākta Pīṭhas; JRASB.
47 HTW, I, pp. 221-22. Bhīmādevī-parvata and the site of Maheśvaradeva’s temple below have been identified by Foucher with the hill known at present as Mt. Karamar and the modern village of Showa; cf. Notes on the Geography of Ancient Gandhāra.
of Bhairava (Siva), her guardian angel, is closely associated. The Mahāmāyūrī, also a Sanskrit Buddhist text composed in the early centuries of the Christian era, probably refers to the shrine of Bīmā, when it lays down that Sivabhadra was the tutelary deity of Bīsha-pā (Sivabhadrās-cha Bīshāṇe).48 The interesting account of the Chinese pilgrim about the prevalence of Sakti worship in C.ūndhāra is further supplemented by his account of the popularity of Tāntric practices in the Uḍḍiyāna region. He writes: ‘The people... were fond of learning but not as a study, and they made the acquisition of magical formulae their occupation.48a The Ṣevajra Tantra (c. eighth century A.D.) enumerates the following four holy regions as pīthas: (1) Jālandhara, (2) Oḍiyanā (Uḍḍiyāna in the Swat valley), (3) Pūnagiri and (4) Kāmarūpa.49 Thus there is little doubt that in the early post-Gupta period Tāntrism and Sakti worship were fully developed in various parts of India, specially in the north-west and east. The history of the Pālas of Gauda-Vaiga and Magadha contains many allusions to the spread of Tāntric lore in eastern India. It is true that much of it was intimately associated with such forms of Buddhism as Mantrayāna and its other developments, but it must have contained among its various strands much that was originally Brāhmānical in character. Many of these Brāhmānical elements again were derived from non-Aryan beliefs and practices which found a ready shelter in the Sakti cult.

VI. THE SAURAS

Evolution of the Solar Cult

It has already been shown (Vol. II, Ch. XIII,) that the sun-god was held in great veneration by the people of India from a very early time. Sūrya and his various aspects were worshipped throughout the early and late Vedic age. The Gṛhya-sūtras frequently testify to the great veneration in which he was held. The importance of the gāyatri, a Vedic solar prayer in that metre, in the life of a twice-born proves the sun-god’s prominent position in Indo-Aryan religious beliefs. The two epics are replete with allusions to Sūrya and various myths connected with him, and he is sometimes described as ‘Devēśvara’ (‘Lord of gods’, Mbh, II. 50, 16: bhāṣi divī devēśvaro yathā). Yudhishṭhira’s hymn to the Sun-god (Mbh, III. 3, 36-69) shows that he

48 For detailed discussions about Bīmā-Bīshāṇa, cf. the writer’s article in IHQ, XIV, 1938, pp. 751-53.
48a HTW, I, p. 225.
was specially invoked by people for food, health, freedom from diseases, and long life. The Great Epic (VI. 82, 14-16) tells us about Yudhishṭhira’s encounter with one thousand Brāhmaṇa sun-worshippers who had a large number of followers. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa extols Sūrya in various ways and describes how the prominent gods of the Brāhmaṇical pantheon were indebted to him for many of their characteristic attributes or emblems. Mayūra, a courtier of Harsha, sang the praise of the god in one hundred stanzas (Mayūra-raśataka) for cure from the cruel disease of white leprosy from which he suffered. Many other Sanskrit works of the Gupta and the post-Gupta periods contain evidence of this nature, and it is natural to conclude that there was a sect which had the sun-god as its exclusive object of worship. A brief account of this Saura sect is given in the Saṅkaradigvījaya kāvyā of Ānandagiri. The Sauras believed that the Sun, the principal object of their worship, was the supreme soul, the creator of the universe; they referred to the Śrutis as well as to the Smritis in support of their belief. The Rigvedic verse (I. 115, 1) says that the ‘sun is the soul of moveable and immovable things’ (Sūrya ātmā jagatastasṭhushaścha). Ānandagiri describes six classes of Sauras all of whom bore nāmaṁ (caste-mark) made of red sandal paste, wore garlands of red flowers and repeated the Sūrya gāyatrī of eight syllables. The difference between these sub-sects lay in the mode of their concepts about their principal deity and their ritualistic methods. It is probable that the evolution of this type of the Saura cult proceeded systematically along its own lines.

A type of Sun-cult, alien in nature, however, entered into India at a very early period. Literary and archaeological data prove that it came from eastern Iran in the early centuries of the Christian era, and captured the imagination of a large number of people of the North and West. It is almost certain that during the Śaka-Pahlava and the Kushāṇa occupation of Northern India, large bands of worshippers of Fire and Sun (Mithra-Mihira) came to, and settled in, the northern and western regions of India. Gradually they spread over the whole of eastern India also, and the cult which they brought with them seems to have influenced the older indigenous sun-worship of India. Some passages in the Epics and the Bhavishya, Sāmba, Varāha and other Purāṇas allude to the story of the introduction of this type of sun-worship from Sakaḍvīpa through the agency of Sāmba, a son of Krishṇa by Jāmbavatī. It narrates how Sāmba was cursed, for some alleged misconduct on his part, by his father to be afflicted with leprosy, how he was advised to get himself cured of
this fell disease by worshipping the solar deity in the Magian way and not in the Indian manner, how he went to Ṣakadvipa (Seistan-Sakastāna, eastern Iran), and prevailed upon some Magi priests of Mithra-Mihira to come with him to India. Sāmba had a temple of the god built in Mūlasthānapura (modern Multan) on the bank of the Chandrabhāgā (Chenab) in the Panjab, and had the image of Sūrya installed by the Magi (Magas). After worshipping the god there in the Magian way, he became once again hale and hearty. His name is associated in the Purāṇas with some other Sun-temples of northern and western India. The account which is given in the Bhavishya Purāṇa about the origin of the Magas, and their very name indicate their Iranian origin. Then name of the characteristic waist-girdle worn by them is avyāṅga, which is nothing but the Sanskritised form of aiwiyonghen, the sacred girdle Iranians. Varāhamihira describes an image of the sun in his Brihatasahhitā in a manner which leaves little doubt about the origin of the cult-picture. According to him, Sūrya should have the dress of a northerner (udichyacesha) and his body from the feet to the top of his breasts should be covered; he should wear a viyaṅga (avyāṅga) etc. (ch. 57, vv. 46-48). In chapter 59 of the same work, it is expressly laid down that it was the Maga Brāhmaṇas alone who were entitled to install the images of the sun god. The extant Sūrya figures of Northern India from the early Gupta period onwards distinctly show these alien features; they were gradually eliminated, and the cult-picture Indianised to great extent, though the boots on the legs of the god and his attendants, both male and female, were persistently shown up to quite a late period. That the comparatively small number of the extant Sun icons of the post-Gupta period in southern India do not show these features clearly proves that the local Sun-cult, whatever position it might have enjoyed there, was not influenced by the Iranian Mithra-worship. Sun-temples are very rare in south India, and the image enshrined in one of them, called Sūryanārkovil, in the Tanjore district, is absolutely free from any alien elements.51

The comparative frequency of the images and temples of the sun in the North, specially in its eastern and western zones, definitely proves that the descendants of the Maga Brāhmaṇas settled in large numbers in these tracts. A class of Brāhmaṇas, named Bhojakas, are referred to in the Deo-Barañārk (Shahabad district, Bihar) inscription; they were supposed to have been descended from the sun-worshipping Magas by intermarriage with the women of the Bhoja

race. The Purānic account of the Bhojakaś also establishes their foreign association. The Brahmin-group known as Āchāryas in some part of eastern India, who took to the profession of astrology and sooth-saying and thus were often described as Daivajñas, can be connected with the ancient Magas. The sun-temples for the use of their remote ancestors in the extreme north of India are mentioned both in indigenous and foreign texts. One of the earliest sun temples is said to have stood in the city of Takshaśilā, when Apollonius visited it during the reign of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares. Mathurā and its adjoining regions in the Śaka-Kushāna period were very intimately associated with the reoriented Sun-cult. Many images of the Sun-god peculiar to this region and belonging to the second and third centuries of the Christian era have been found. Central, western and eastern India also abounded in solar shrines that were erected in the Gupta and post-Gupta period. The Mandasor stone inscription of the time of Kumāra-gupta I refers to the erection of a magnificent sun temple, ‘which touches the sky, as it were, with its charming spires’, in a.d. 435-38, by a band of silk-weavers who were immigrants from the Lāṭa-vishaya (central and southern Gujarat) into the city of Daśapura (modern Dasor or Mandasor in western Malwa). The same guild was also responsible for its restoration about 36 years later, when part of it fell into disrepair. It is of interest to note that some members of the guild were masters in the science of astrology, and it is presumable that they were the descendants of some of the early Iranian settlers in India. The Indor (Bulandshahr district, U.P.) copper-plate inscription of the time of Skanda-gupta records a perpetual endowment by a Brahmin for the purpose of maintaining a lamp in the temple of Sun at Indrapura. The Gwalior stone inscription of the time of Mihirakula records the building of a temple of the Sun by a person named Mātricheṭa. The Deo-Baranārk inscription mentioned above records the continuance of the grant of a village to the Sun (evidently an image installed in a shrine) characteristically named here as Varuṇavāsin (probably meaning ‘a dweller of the sky-ocean’). Burgess refers to the discovery of many old sun-temples (from the Gupta to the late mediaeval period) from Multan down to Cutch.52 The widespread prevalence of the Sun-cult all over Gujarat and an extensive area of Rajāsthan from the late Gupta period onwards is substantiated by a number of inscriptions, and the distribution of monumental remains of the cult at Moḍherā, Thānā and Prabhāsa in Gujarat and Dholpur, Osia, Sirohi and Bharatpur in Rajāsthan, and also by of numerous stone sculptures

52 ASW/1, New Imperial Series, IX, Architectural Antiquities of Northern Gujarat.
of the solar pantheon. The remains of the Mārtāṇḍa temple, most probably built by King Lalitāditya Muktāpiḍa in the middle of the eighth century A.D., testify to the presence of this cult in Kashmir in the early mediaeval period; the same king also built a temple of Āditya at Latapur. Hiuan Tsang refers to a Sun temple at Kanauj; he says that besides many sacred Buddhist buildings near the city, there were splendid temples of the Sun-god and Maheśvara. The mediaeval Sun temple at Konārak, Orissa, designed in the shape of a huge chariot on wheels, is an unambiguous evidence of the prevalence of the cult in this region. Tradition associates different parts of Orissa with some of the principal Brāhmaṇical cults; the Ekāmrakshetra at Bhuvesvara was specially associated with Śaivism, the Śri-kshetra at Purī with Vaishnavism, the Virajakshetra at Jajpur with Śaktism, and the Arka-kshetra at Konark with solar worship where the great Orissan king Lāngulīya Narasimhavarman of the Kesārī dynasty erected the magnificent shrine of Sūrya.

The archaeological data collected above establish the wide prevalence of the Sun-cult in north India, and there is little doubt that much of it was due to its reorientation in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Some distinguished kings of the early mediaeval times were exclusive worshippers of the Sun-god. Mahārāja Dharapatta, one of the Maitraka kings of Valabhi, is described in the Maliya copper-plate inscription of his grandson Mahārāja Dharasena II, as Paramādityabhakta. So were Mahārājādhirāja Prabhākara-vardhana of the Pushyabhūti dynasty and his father and grandfather (above, p. 242). One at least of the Gurjara-Pratihāra kings of Kanauj, Mahārājādhirāja Vināyakapāladeva, was also a great devotee of the solar deity (paramādityabhakta).

VII. WORSHIPPERS OF KĀRTTIKEYA AND GANAPATI

1. Skanda or Kārttikeya

It has been shown in Vol. II, Ch. XIII, that there were exclusive worshippers of the war-god Kārttikeya who, in the Paurānic mythology, was the son of Śiva. The Yaudheyas were great devotees of this god, and their State was a theocratic State, their suzerain being the Lord Svāmi Brahmanya-deva Kumāra. They were conquered


54 For details, see Dasgupta, K.K., THAI, pp. 202 ff, 219 ff. RCM.
by Samudra-gupta and it is presumable that they continued the worship of the god after their defeat. The Yaudheyas or a particular section of the tribe were known also as the Mattamayūras which came to designate a particular branch of Śaiva ascetics as noted above (p. 804). References to permanent shrines of the god Kārttikeya in the period are not wanting. Thus a Kumārasthāna or shrine of Kumāra-Karttikeya is mentioned in the Abbotabad inscription of about the third century A.D.\textsuperscript{55} The Bilsāl (Etah district, U.P.) stone pillar inscription of the time of Kumāragupta I (96 G.E. = A.D. 415-16) records the construction of a pratoli ('a gateway with a flight of steps'), the erection of the column with the inscription on it before a temple of Svāmī-Mahāśena, and the establishment of a dharma-sattra by one Dhrūvaśarman. Kumāragupta I seems to have been an ardent worshipper of the god, for on some of his coins we find a replica of the image of his favoured deity.\textsuperscript{56} Kārttikeya, perhaps the very image enshrined in a temple built probably before his reign in the royal capital.\textsuperscript{57} The king was no doubt a paramabhāgavata, as we know from some of his inscriptions and coins, but he is also called in many of the former as paramadaivata, and it is likely that the 'Devatā Karttikeya' was also his special object of worship. Skandagupta, his son and successor, was also his devotee and some of his silver coins bearing the figure of a fan-tailed peacock (the vāhana of the deity) bears testimony to the fact. Mention may also be made of the Uchchakalpa king Sarvanātha of the sixth century A.D., who is known to have built a temple of the god and granted a village for its maintenance.\textsuperscript{58} A few more records may be cited as attesting to the popularity of Kārttikeya in our period, though there is no reference to the separate existence of a cult centering round him. Presumably the Purānic mythology about his origin was principally responsible (in the seventh-century Apsad inscription of Adityasena, for example, he is called Śiva's son) for his merger in the Śaiva cult. The Skandotpatti-parvādhyāya in the Mahābhārata (III, Ch. 224), however, seems to contain earlier traditions about the origin of this god or a group of kindred gods later amalgamated.

\textsuperscript{55} EI, XXX, pp. 59 ff.
\textsuperscript{56} Mention may be made in this context of the Apratigha coins of the King. K. K. Dasgupta has shown that these coins originated from the coin-type of the Kushāna King Huvishka representing Skanda-Kumāra, Viśākha and Mahāśena, and has drawn attention to the fact 'that the names Skanda-Kumāra of the coin-type of Huvishka were identical with those of the Gupta crown-prince and the emperor respectively'. \textit{IHQ} XXXV, no 3, pp. 265-70.
\textsuperscript{57} CH, III, pp. 42 ff
\textsuperscript{58} EI, XIX, pp. 127-31.
which had rare association with Siva. Subrahmanya, another name of Kārttikeya, came to be recognised as a highly popular object of worship in Southern India in the medieval times, and comparatively late images and shrines of him are found there in large numbers. Beautiful loving songs in the name of Murugan, the Tamil name of the pet child of Siva and Pārvatī, were composed in the Tamil language, but it must be observed that the veneration paid to him was a part of the homage paid to Siva.

2 Ganañapati

The worship of the elephant-headed and pot-bellied divinity Ganañapati, however, came to enjoy a position of its own in the later Gupta period. There is a reference to the existence of a separate band of people who exclusively worshipped the different aspects of Ganeśa in the times of Saṅkarāchārya. The Saṅkara-digvijaya-kāvyā mentions the encounter of this great advocate of monism with the chiefs of the six different groups of the Ganañapatyas, the exclusive worshippers of Mahā, Haridrā, Svarṇa, Santāna, Navanīta and Umattā-Uchchhishṭa forms of Ganañapati. This information recorded by Saṅkara’s admirer, if it is authentic, would prove that the original cult must have come into existence at least a couple of centuries, if not more, before the eighth century a.d., for by that time it had as many as six subdivisions within its fold. R. G. Bhandarkar has suggested that as none of the Gupta inscriptions contains the faintest allusion to the sect or the cult image, the one was post-Gupta in its origin. He supports this suggestion by pointing out that the epic allusion to Ganeśvara is really to Siva, and the story of Ganañapati’s serving as an amanuensis or Vyāsa, while the latter composed the Mahābhārata, was a late interpolation in the Great Epic. But the non-mention of a religious custom in a particular group of records, whether literary or archaeological, does not necessarily prove that the custom was non-existent at the period. Extant images of Ganañapati of the early Gupta period show that he was then worshipped in some form or other; but it is still possible that a regular cult centering around him was systematised only at a somewhat later age. The four Brāhmaṇical cults that are mentioned by Varāhamihira59 are Vaishnava, Saura, Śaiva and Sākta, and it is probable that the Ganañapatyā cult had not come to enjoy any importance in his time; it is also to be noted that his description of an image of Ganañapati is found only in one or two of the manuscripts of the

59 Brīhatsamhitā, Ch. 59, V. 19.
Bṛihatsaṁhitā, and Kern adjudged it an interpolation. The earliest
cult-image of this god so far known is found in a niche of the
Bhumārā Siva temple dated in the sixth century A.D., and it is pre-
sumable that by that time the cult had been systematised to some
extent. A large number of images of the God and his various as-
pects from the early post-Gupta period onwards testify to the
growth and development of this cult. The discovery of a marble
image of Gaṇapati (called 'Mahā-Vināyaka' in the inscription on its
pedestal) at Gardēz, about 70 miles to the south of Kabul, of about
the seventh century, and a few images of the god in Java and Cam-
bodia, proves that the cult had already migrated to the distant lands
in the west and the east.