



Saptamatrka carved on monolithic rock at village Ghudar near Titilagarh, District Balangir

Sakti Cult in Upper Mahanadi Valley

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Learned scholar Rajeshwari¹ writes, “The conception of God as Mother is natural and ultimate. In almost all the ancient civilizations God is conceived as Mother. She is *Prakrti*, Earth and Mother Supreme.”

Saptamatrka

The creation of *Matrkas* is associated with the destruction of the *asura* Andhaka by Siva, which is elaborately described in the *Matsya Purana*² (179.1-90). We find details about the creation of the *Saptamatrkas* also in the *Vaman Purana*³ (44.1-96). T.A. Gopinatha Rao⁴ has dealt in detail about the purpose of the creation of these *Matrkas*. He has quoted the stories from *Matsya Purana*, *Vamana Purana*, *Varaha Purana*, *Kurma Purana* and the *Suprabhedagama*. The iconographical features of *Saptamatrkas* are found in *Agni Purana*,⁵ *Amsumadbhedagama*, and *Markandeya Purana*⁶ also. Learned scholar Dr. H.C. Das has elaborately dealt with the iconography and images of *Saptamatrkas* found in Orissa in his recently published book “Iconography of Sakta Divinities.” While all other texts put the number of *Matrkas* to be seven. *Varaha* and *Kurma Puranas* put it to eight (*Asthamatrkas*). The number and names of the *Matrkas* vary in different contexts. They are usually seven, sometimes eight or even

more. Varahamihira⁷ is silent about their number and has just mentioned that “Mothers are to be made with cognisances of gods corresponding to their names.” The *Saptamatrkas* are generally carved in relief on a rectangular stone slab in the order of Brahmani, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Camunda, being flanked by Virabhadra and Ganesa in both sides (first and last).

In the *Varaha* and *Kurma Puranas*⁸ it is mentioned that after Prahalada, Andhakasura became the king of the *Asuras* and by his auster penances he obtained several boons from Brahma and became invincible. Being harassed by him, the *Devas* prayed Lord Siva in Kailasa to come to their rescue. When Lord Siva was listening to their complaints, Andhakasura arrived there and challenged the Lord and even dared to try to snatch away *Devi Parvati*. This act of the *Asura* infuriated Lord Siva as a result of which he took the three great *Nagas*; Vasuki, Takshaka and Dhananjaya to be his belt and bracelets and got himself ready to fight with Andhakasura. Clad with his peculiar garments, the Lord started his expedition alongwith his *Ganas* to fight with the *Asura*. Visnu and other gods also went with him to offer help. But in the struggle that ensued Visnu and other *Devas*

had to run away. At last Lord Siva aimed his arrow and shot at the *Asura* and wounded him; blood began to flow in profusion from the wound and each drop of it, as touched the earth assumed the shape of another *Andhakasura*. Thus there arose thousands of *Andhakasura* to fight against Siva. Immediately Siva thrust his *Trisula* through the body of the real *Andhakasura* and began to dance. Visnu destroyed with his *Chakrayudha* the secondary *Asuras* produced from the blood drops of *Andhakasura*. To check the blood from falling down on the earth, Siva created out of the flame that was issuing from his mouth a *Sakti* called *Yogesvari*. Indra and other *Devas* also sent their *Saktis* to serve the same purpose. They are *Bahmani*, *Mahesvari*, *Kaumari*, *Vaishnavi*, *Varahi*, *Indrani* and *Chamunda*, who are the female counterparts of the gods, *Brahma*, *Mahesvara*, *Kumara*, *Visnu*, *Varaha*, *Indra* and *Yama* respectively and are armed with the same weapons, wear the same ornaments and ride the same *Vahanas* and carry the same banners as the corresponding male gods do. Such is the account of the origin of the *Saptamatrkas* or the seven mother-goddesses.

The seven *Matrikas* licked all drops of blood and checked from falling on the ground, as a result of which the multiplication of secondary *Andhakasura* could not take place. In the struggle *Andhakasura* finally lost his power known as *Asura Maya* and was defeated by Lord Siva. Nevertheless by the grace of Lord Siva, the *Asura* met a good end.

Independent *Saptamatrka* images are found amidst loose sculptures at *Belkhandi* in *Kalahandi* district and *Chandital* in *Baud* district. Rock-cut *Saptamatrka* panels are found on monolithic rocks, two at *Ghudar* and another set of two at *Ranipur Jhari* in

Balangir district. Huge stone-blocks having the carved figures of *Saptamatrkas* were once upon a time adorning the pedestals meant for central deities in temples at *Udeypur* and *Ranipur Jhari*. The huge stone block once adorning the temple at *Udeypur* is now lying half-buried in the embankment of a peddy field to the south-east of *Udeypur* village near *Titilagarh*.

But the *Saptamatrka* stone slab of *Ranipur Jhari* is missing now, except we know about it from a photo taken by the *Archaeological Survey of India*. Plate No.3319 in the book '*Hindu Temple Art of Orissa*', Vol.III by Prof. Thomas E. Donaldson). A broken part of it having three of the seven *Matrka* figures has been shifted by Dr. C.B. Patel, the present Superintendent of the *Orissa State Museum* in around 1985 from the *Ranipur Jhari* site and now it is lying uncared in the *District Culture Office* at *Sambalpur*. Before it is lost it should be shifted to the *Orissa State Museum*. This stone slab was most probably installed in the *Liyahari* temple at *Ranipur Jhari* in the original state.

On the door-lintel of the *Garbhagrha* of the *Khambeswari* temple of *Sonepur*, a panel of ten lady figures are carved in one panel. In the first and tenth positions are two front-faced ladies in the *Dvibhanga* standing position with both hands folded in obeisance, whereas rest of the eight goddesses (including *Gajalaksmi*) are in the seated position. *Gajalaksmi* is in the centre, flanked by three and four seated *Devis* to her proper right and left respectively. all these seven seated *Devi* figures are carved under *Chhatra* design and on their left thigh they hold one child each, seated on it. In the *Gajalaksmi* motif, *Laksmi* is seen to be seated in *Lalitasana*. Most probably, this is a unique



*Chamunda, Ranipur
Jharial, Dist. Balangir*

Chamunda

The *Devi Mahatmyam* (chap.7) Section of the *Markandeya Purana* tells the story of Chamunda. According to this story a dazzlingly beautiful goddess named Kausiki sprang from the Supreme Goddess to annihilate the demon king Sumbha and his brother Nisumbha. In course of her fight she had to face in the beginning the demons Chanda and Munda. Being furious by this, Kausiki created from her forehead Chamunda, a goddess of terrible countenance, black and scowling, with drawn sword and lasso, holding a *Khatvanga*, wearing a garland of skulls, clad in a tiger skin, hungry and emaciated, mouth hideously distorted and the tongue protruding out. She plucked off the heads of Chanda and Munda, and presented both heads to Kausiki.

We find nine of her names like Rudra Charccika, Rudra - Chamunda, Mahalaksmi, Siddha Chamunda, Siddha Yogesvari, Rupavidya, Ksama, Dantura and Kubjika in *Agni Purana* (44.41-47).

According to the *Vamana Purana* (29.47-85), when Kausiki killed the demon Ruru, she skinned him right from the ear to the feet and with that skin she tied her locks. But

as one of the locks could not be tied, she uprooted it and threw it on the ground. This form produced the terrible goddess Chandamari. This Chandamari is Chamunda, so called as she presented the crest of skulls prepared from the heads of Chanda and Munda to Durga. She is also called Kumarika, (*Skanda Purana* VII. 1.242.19). In the *Vamana Purana* (44.41.47) again it is mentioned that she was born from the perspiration that gathered at the forehead of Siva when he fought with the demon Andhaka. As she was said to be "smeared" with blood, she came to be known as Charccika. The goddess Charccika is said to be at the boundary of the Utkala country. She is said to be decorated with a garland of human skulls. The *Skanda Purana* (II.2.11.91-92) mentions her in connection with a king named Indradyumna (of Ujjayini) who travelled to the Utkala country, got down from the chariot and paid respect to her. (Sk.P.II.2.11.91- 'Simamutkaladesasya Vibhajantim Vanantare I Margastham Carcikam Prapa Carcitam Mundamalaya II'. An eight-handed Chamunda is worshipped as Charccika at Banki, which can be taken as the border of Utkala and Daksina Kosala in ancient period. As mentioned in the *Visnudharmottara*, Chamanda is described as living in the funeral ground under a *Vata* tree surrounded with many ghosts. She likes flesh, wine and fat, her face is smeared with flesh and fresh blood (*Navarudhira-mukha*) and she sits on a corpse in the *Padmasana* pose (*Pretapadmasanastha*). As a *Yogini* she likes flesh, wine and fat, her face is smeared with flesh, fresh blood (*Navarudhira-mukha*).

The same text gives a list of weapons found in her hands which are *Musala, Kavaca, Bana, Ankusa, Khadga, Khetaka, Pasa, Dhanu, Danda* and *Parasu*.

In the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa independent images of Chamunda are found in the Suvarnameru Siva temple at Sonepur, Siva temple at Mahagaon, Siva temple at Junagad (Himgir), Ramesvara temple complex at Baud, amidst temple ruins at Deogaon (Tarbha), Bhulia Sikuan and Chheliagarh to suggest that those images in their original state were enshrined in *Sakta* shrines as the presiding deities.

As *Avarana Devata* her figure is carved in a *Mundi* niche design of the *Kanika* on the south-west corner of the Indralath brick temple at Ranipur Jharial. Chamunda image is also found among the *Saptramatrka* panels on monolithic rocks at Ghudar and in two places at Ranipur Jharial. A big figure of a four-handed Chamunda, seen to be seated in *Ardhapyanka* posture on a *Visvapadmasana* is also carved on a huge monolithic rock to the south-west of the *Chausathi Yogini* temple at Ranipur Jharial. In the back side of this rock a *Saptamatrka* panel is carved. This big Chamunda figure is seen to be sitting on a corpse, which is being eaten by a jackel. Her body is totally emaciated, garlands of skulls are hanging from her neck and also seen around her waist as waist-band. In her upper and lower right hands are *Kartri* and *Dambaru* respectively, while in the lower left hand is a *Kapala*. In her upper left hand, she is cradling a long *Trisula*, on the top of which, a corpse is lifted up and at the same time she is seen biting the little finger of that hand. She is almost bald, but whatever little hair left is tied as a knot in the centre of her head. The skin of the elephant demon has formed a halo in the back-slab just behind her figure. An image of Chamunda having exactly similar iconographic feature is found alongwith other six images of the

Saptamatrka group of goddesses amidst temple ruins at Belkhandi and Chandital.

Similarly her figure is carved in the *Saptamatrka* panels on huge monolithic rocks at Ghudar and in two places at Ranipur Jharial. The Chamunda of the *Saptamatrka* panel is devoid of having any child seated on her lap, while in the cases of other *Matrkas* except Kaumari, a child is seen on their left thighs. This might signifies her horrifying nature.

In the niche number thirteen of the hapaethral *Chausathi Yogini* Temple at Ranipur Jharial a two-handed Chamunda in her Dantura aspect is found as one of the *Yoginis*. At Deogaon (Tarbha) an image of Chamunda, is seen to be seated in the crouching posture on the body of a male flatly lying below with his hands raised up. But in the case of the Chamunda found in the *Matrka* group in the *Jagamohana* of Samalei temple at Sonepur, she is eight-handed and dancing in *Lalita* posture on a corpse lying below, with it's hands raised up over the head in *Anjalimudra*. Another dancing *Chamunda* in her skeletoned body is seen to be carved on a huge monolithic rock in the *Bhainro Pahad* (Hill of Bhairav) at Ghudar.

The antiquity of goddess Suresvari, the central deity of the Suresvari temple at Sonepur seems to be very old. It is a sixhanded figure of Devi who is standing on a corpse. She is biting the finger of one of her left hands. In rest of the left hands she holds *Panapatra* (skull-cup) and *Khetaka* (shield); while one *Khadga* (sword), *Aksamala* (rosary-beads) and a *Sula* (small trident) are in her right hands. A garland of skull is hanging from her neck. Goddess Suresvari seems to be none-else than Chamunda. She is seen to be standing on a pedestal having two moulding courses with one



Parvati, Kapilesvar Temple, Charda

round-shaped medallion design in the centre, connecting them. This medallion is having the carving of two inter-twined snakes and flanked by two floral motifs in both sides. Below this design there is a design of two small lotus buds. Iconographically this sculpture can be taken to be of the Somavamsi period, i.e. circa 10th century A.D.

In fact, while the seated images of Chamunda are found at many places, only four of her images in dancing pose are located in places like Sonepur, Ghudar, Ranipur Jharial and Bhulia Sikuan. The aspect of Chamunda in the dancing pose is called Varuni Chamunda. In the sixth niche of the *Causathi Yogini* temple at Ranipur Jharial, the image of a two-handed Varuni Chamunda is fitted, while at Bhulia Sikuan a six-handed image is found. In such aspect of her, she has her pendulous breasts hanging and a flabby belly, although generally Chamunda figures are skeletoned.

Saumya Durga

Another important sculpture found at Ranipur Jharial is that of the seated figure of *Devi*, around two feet and a half in height and at present kept inside the *Jagamohana* of the Somesvara temple. The head of the *Devi* is adorned with a *Karanda Mukuta* and *Kundalas* are also hanging from her ears. Her waist-portion is heavily ornamented by *Katimekhala*. She is four-handed, holding a *Pasa* (Noose) in her upper left hand, while in her lower left hand there is a *Panapatra* (Hour Glass). The upper right hand is raised over her head in which she is holding a *Khadga* (Sword) and

the lower right hand is completely broken. On the pedestal portion, the figure of her *Vahana* lion is carved. Two standing female attendants are carved in both sides of this figure of *Devi* and above those figures, two elephant heads with raised trunks looking at the opposite directions are carved over her head. This seems to be an aspect of *Devi Parvati*.

Kausiki

A stone-block, measuring around 30" in height and 24" in breadth, depicts the image of a fourhanded Durga, standing in *Dvibhanga* posture. Object in her up-raised right hand is a *Ghanta*, while a *Khadga* is in the other right hand. She is holding a *Khetaka* in her lower left hand, while touching the top portion of the blade of *Khadga* in her upper left hand. Her *Vahana* lion is standing near her right leg on the pedestal. *Jatamukuta* is adorning the head of *Devi*. Her body is also adorned with all ornaments. The local villagers worship her as Mangala. It is an image of Kausiki,⁹ an aspect of Parvati. She has three eyes and is holding a bell in one of her hands. It is said that she killed the demons Sumbha and Nisumbha at the Vindhya mountain.¹⁰ She is also identified with Ekanamsa. This goddess is said to be the resident of the Vindhya mountain.¹¹

Inside a hut called *Chandi Mandir* at Topigaon in Kalahandi district, there is a standing figure of sixhanded Durga of the height of about three feet in her pacified (*Saumya*) form, "Bhuvaneshvari". Her lower left palm is placed on the head of her *Vahana*, the lion, which is standing behind her



Kausiki, Lalei, Dist. Sundargarh

in profile. In her middle right arm, she is holding a long trident while other arms are broken.

Daksina Kalika

On one monolithic rock of a rocky mountain called Tandel Dangar, situated to the west of Dunguripali village near Budhi Komna in Nuapada district the figure of a female deity is carved, standing in the *Alidha* position, copulating with a male which is lying flat below with *Urdhvalinga*. It is called goddess *Jharni* by the local tribal populace. But it seems to be the rock-cut sculpture of goddess Daksina Kalika, who is generally depicted as having intercourse with Lord Siva her consort. The iconography of this goddess corresponds to description found in the *Karpuradi-stotra*,¹² giving the *Mantroddhara* of the deity. In her aspect of Daksina Kalika, she represents the beneficent Grantor of *Nirvana* : "I worship Kali the Destructress of Kala and Shining One, who is the *Bija Krim*, who is Kama, who is beyond *Kala* and who is Daksina Kalika."

An image of fourhanded Daksina Kalika is found alongwith images of *Matrkas* like Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi and Nrsimhi in separate niches inside the *Jagamohana* of the Samlei temple at Sonapur. The goddess is depicted as seated in *Lalitasana*, engaged in sexual congress with Lord Siva, who is lying on his back with his hands folded in *Anjalimudra* over his head. The hair in Kali's head is dishevelled. She is holding a severed head in her major left hand while the major right hand is in *Varadamudra*. In her other left hand is a *Khadga*, while the up-raised major right hand is in the *Abhayamudra*. It seems to be an image belonging to the 18th century A.D.

Such images of Daksina Kalika in *Viparita Rati* with Lord Siva are found in the

Budharaja temple at Atgaon in Balangir district, Tara Tarini temple at Bhawanipatna and Asthasambhu¹³ temple at Icchapur in Kalahandi district.

Ksemankari

Two important images are kept in two separate rooms, constructed in front of the Dhavalesvara temple at Mohangiri in Kalahandi district and are worshipped as Durga and Chandi respectively. One is that of a standing fourhanded goddess of the height of about 3'.6", three hands broken and in the lower right hand holding a vase. Here Devi is standing in *Samabhanga* pose. The other one is also that of an eighthanded goddess figure, locally known as Durga, seated with the leftleg resting on the pedestal while the right leg is hanging below. *Devi* is seen to be seated on a *Padmapitha* (lotus-pedestal). She is wearing a *Kirita Mukuta* on head and *Patra Kundala* in both ears. Objects in her hands are small *Trisula* (right-upper), *Khadga* (right-upper-second) *Chakra* (right-lower third) and *Samkha* (right-lower-fourth) as well as *Khetaka* (left-upper), *Dhanu* (left-upper-second), Arrow (left-lower-third) and left-lower-fourth hand in *Varada Mudra* respectively, while the leftupper hand is broken. In the extreme right portion of the pedestal is a male seated-figure in *Yogasana* with folded hands in obeisance near chest and to his right a seated female devotee in profile also in folded-hands as well as that of a third devotee in the extreme left side are depicted. The head of her mount, a roaring lion is seen in the left side of the pedestal, *Devi's* right foot being put on it's back. This seems to be the figure of goddess Vana Durga, while the standing one as described above, that of Kshemankari, another form of goddess Durga, who bestows good health to her devotees.

Lajjyagauri

Another important piece of art found from Kotipadar in Nuapada district is a squatting figure of Lajjya Gauri, carved on a flat stone-plaque. It is a seated female figure in squatting posture, with both her legs spread apart. She has round breasts and instead of head, there is a super-size fully-bloomed lotus (*Kamala*), with prominent central pericarp, the lower calyx indicated above the pearl are prominent while the girdle and the abdomen are thinner and supple. She wears a short garment around her waist. Both upraised hands are supported on the knees, in her left hand is *Vajra*, while object in the right hand is broken. The head of Lajjya Gauri as *Sahasra Padma* (Thousand Lotus) symbolises the rise of *Kundalini* to *Sahasrara*. Stone plaque of the similar size (3½" x 3½"), red in colour and having the Lajjya Gauri figure carved on it, has been discovered at Komna, also in Nuapada district. Dr. Stella Kramrisch identifies the Lajjya Gauri figure with goddess Aditi. "The Lotus head of Aditi placed on her shoulder overlays her throat with its petals." The lotus part above the neck, instead of human head finds mention in *Vishnudharmottara* - "*Divyascha Mastake Padman Tatha Karyam Manoharam, Saubhagyam Tad Vijnahni*."¹⁵

Most of the Lajjya Gauri figures date from the beginning of the Christian era when the concept of *Yoga*- 'the *Mahakundalini*' - had taken deep roots and had virtually been assimilated by all subjects of Indian religion. It is the imagery per excellence of Yogins. Similar Lajjya Gauri figures in stucco, terracotta and other soft stones are obtained from the later *Satavahana* levels at Nevasa, Ter, Kondapur, and Yellaswaram etc.¹⁶ Such figure but in nude are reported from the

Chalukyan temples of Alampur, Bhavanasi, Sangamesvaram, Yellala and Pratakota also. A figure of Lajjya Gauri wearing 'langoti' type underwear, carved on a square grey slatestone plaque measuring nine centimetres was found in the *Sanctum* of a brick temple at Keesaragutta (Andhra Pradesh) during excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India. This figure is dated to the 4th century A.D. These figures are taken as cult figures in which rituals related to *Kanya* and *Kumari* worship for progeny assumed deep roots and spread widely in the South India during the early centuries A.D.¹⁷ Lajjya Gauri figure are reported from various parts of upper India like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattishgarh, Maharashtra and Gujarat as well as from down below, from Karnataka.¹⁸ Such a figure is found to be kept in the A.S.I. Museum at Malhar in Bilaspur district of Chhatisgarh State also, which can be dated to circa 9th-10th century A.D.¹⁹ Similar figures are reported from Bharhut, Mathura and Sanchi also.²⁰



Lajjya Gauri, Khariar, in private possession of historian J.P. Singhdeo

It is apparent that the sculpture of Lajjya Gauri ranges in date from the early christian era to almost the 12th century A.D. and thus was popular in that time as well.²¹

Tapasvini Parvati

Another sculpture under discussion, is that of Parvati which is at present worshipped in a small shrine, situated to the north of the Suvarna meru temple at Sonapur. This image is called Bhubanesvari by the priests and the

local people. It is a fourhanded figure of the *Devi*, seated in *Padmasana* on a *Padmapitha*. In her upper left and right hands she is holding *Pasa* and *Ankusa* respectively, while her lower left and right hands are in *Abhaya* and *Varada*. She is wearing *Patrakundalas* in her ears and *Karandamukuta* on her head. Diminutive bells are hanging from her *Katimekhala*. It can also be taken to be of the 15th century A.D. and exhibits the uniqueness of the early *Chauhan* art in the upper Mahanadi valley of Orissa.

Another image of fourhanded Parvati, seated in *Padmasana* is adorning the western *Parsvadevata* niche of the Godhanesvara temple at Godhanesvara in Sonapur district. In her raised upper left and right hands she is holding a *Sakti* and *Sarpa* respectively, while her lower left and right hands are in *Abhaya* and *Varada*. A conical *Mukuta* is adorning her head and a long garland is hanging from her neck upto the pedestal-level. She is wearing *Patrakundalas* in her ears. It can be taken to be of the late Ganga period, i.e. circa 13th century A.D.

One seated Parvati figure somewhat smaller in size is fitted to the northern *Parsvadevata* niche of the Siva temple at Champamal in the same district also, it being around eight inches in breadth and eighteen inches in height. The goddess is depicted as two-handed, the left hand in *Abhayamudra* and the right in *Varadamudra*. She is seated in *Padmasana* and on a *Pitha* having three moulding courses.

In the northern *Parsvadevata* niche of the Kapilesvara temple at Charda in Sonapur district a four-handed image of Parvati, seated in *Padmasana* is housed. Her major right hand is in *Varadamudra*, while her major left hand is in *Abhayamudra*. In her up-raised left and

right hands she is holding a *Nagapasa* and a small *Sula* (trident) respectively. It is of the size of 18" in height and 12" in breadth approximately and can be dated to the 10th century A.D.



Parvati, Belkhandi,
Dist. Kalahandi

A four-handed image of Parvati, standing in the rigid *Samabhanga* posture is found amidst other sculptures at Belkhandi in Kalahandi district. In her up-raised hands the goddess is holding an *Aksamala* (rosary) and *Kataka* flower respectively, while in her lower left hand is a *Kamandalu*. Her right hand is in the *Varadamudra*. Two standing figures of lady attendants, also holding one *Kamandalu* each in their right hands are carved on the pedestal in both sides of the central figure. Both sides of the back-slab are designed as decorative pilasters and a semi-oval floral band is forming the *Prabhavali*. In both top-corners of the back slab flying *Vidyadhara* (one male and one female) couples are carved. Like other sculptures of the 8th-9th century A.D. a thick layer of stucco has been administered on the stone surface to enable the sculptor to do intricate art work. The hair of the goddess is arranged in a tall coiffure.

In the outer side of the Kosalesvara temple at Patnagarh in Balangir district an image of *Tapasvini* Parvati is kept, leaning against the southern exterior wall of the *Jagamohana*. The front hands of the goddess are crossed in front of her body, while the back hands are broken off. An oval halo is forming the *Prabhavali*. Two standing lady attendants

are seen in both sides of her legs on the pedestal. A *Sivalinga* with *Yonipatta* and a pot-bellied seated figure are carved in both sides of the *Prabhavali*. In the top-most portion of the back-slab nine heads are carved, possibly depicting the *Navagrahas*.

In the southern interior wall of the *Jagamohana* of Kapilesvara temple at Charda, a four-handed image of goddess Parvati, of the height of around four feet is fitted. She is wearing *Haras*, *Katimekhala* and *Mukuta* etc. and holding *Sakti* and *Khetaka* in her up-raised right and left hands respectively, while both her lower hands are in *Varadamudra*. Above her head, in both sides, flying *Vidyadhara* couples are seen with garlands in hands. Near her left leg, two antelope-like animals are standing, while beside her right leg, a lion-like figure with the head of a female and hump (of a bull) on its back is standing on the hind legs. There is a female attendant standing besides her right leg also on the pedestal. It seems to be an image of *Tapasvini* Parvati also. Similar life-size image of a two-handed *Tapasvini* Parvati wearing a Maharastrian type headgear or *Pagadi* and holding a *Kamandalu* in her left hand is also found fitted to the southern interior wall of the *Jagamohana* of Kosalesvara temple at Vaidyanath in Sonapur district. It is also flanked by two female attendants, standing in both sides of her on the pedestal.

All these images found in different places of the upper Mahanadi valley amply testify to the fact that Saktism flourished in the full-swing right from the early centuries in this part of Orissa.

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