

SOCIAL CHANGE IN EASTERN INDIA: TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE OF KALAPAHAD REINTERPRETED

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Abstract: This article is related to the study of the formation of the famous Kalapahad tradition of Eastern India. It highlights the process of the construction of the tradition for transmitting a message of social change in Eastern India in the pre-colonial and colonial phases. But after its construction which demanded reform of Hinduism and prevention of conversion it had many modifications in the 19th and 20th century A.D. In the expanded form of this tradition on Kalapahad reconversion to Hinduism was articulated. While historians ponder over the many secrets of the Kalapahad tradition literary figures-poets and playwrights consider this tradition as a story of radical protest and social reconstruction.

I

The traditional account on Kalapahad, the Afghan general of the Nawab of Bengal, Suleiman Karrani (16th century A.D) is a significant aspect of the study on the social history and literature of Eastern India. The nature and the stages of expansion of this traditional account help to unravel some aspects of the social change in Eastern India. This traditional account is widely spread in Bengal, Odisha and Assam. Traditions abound with stories on Kalapahad while historians furnish only an outline of his life and deeds. Hence it is necessary to delve deep into all the accounts covering Kalapahad. Also, it is necessary to debate how far it has influenced Indian social historiography and has become

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a significant aspect of social history. In this article, I would present the origin, formation and expansion of this traditional account and also show how it has influenced the Odia literary and social space after a revisit of several literary documents.

II

In order to study the origin of the Kalapahad tradition, it is necessary to study its immediate historical context. There was conflicting relation between Mukunda Deva (A.D. 1560-1568), the ruler of Odisha and Sulaiman Kararani, the Sultan of Bengal by A.D. 1565 for multiple reasons (Mukherji 1953,112-113). Mukunda Deva gave shelter to Ibrahim Sur, an enemy of the Sultan of Bengal. He also offended the Sultan by welcoming an embassy from Akbar, the Mughal emperor. In 1565, the Mughal emperor Akbar sent two envoys to the court of Mukunda Deva to enlist his support in case of a conflict with Sulaiman. Also according to Madalapanji (chronicle of Jagannatha temple in Puri), Mukunda in his 10th regnal year encamped on the banks of the Ganga and indulged in sports in boats on the Ganga which alarmed Sulaiman as it was his frontier¹. Taking advantage of Akbar's pre-occupation in the siege of far-ff Chitor, Sulaiman sent a powerful force to invade Odisha and in this military operation Kalapahad, the general of Bengal Sultan, had taken the leading role. All Muslim chronicles conclusively prove that Kalapahad was a full-blooded Afghan. The title of Kalapahad was also used by Muhammad Khan Farmuli, a nephew of Bahlol Lodi. Kalapahad Farmuli, Mian Muhammad Kalapahad and similar names are also found in Muslim texts like *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* and *Waqiat-i- Mushtaqi* (Mukherji 1953,117). In several literary texts in Odisha, he was also described to have conquered Odisha as a general of the Nawab of Bengal and also to have desecrated the images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra, Sudarsana of Puri temple (Mukherji 1953,114-115; Haque 1980,53-63). Despite this reliable information on his activities and Afghan connection, he was associated with many traditions of the pre-colonial and colonial phase in Eastern India. It is therefore necessary to find out how the traditional accounts associated with the historical Afghan Kalapahad were constructed or even invented and the purposes of the construction/invention². In this essay, we have taken into consideration two significant traditional accounts associated with him.

- (1) The first traditional narrative is based on the situation in the royal household of Mukunda Deva after his defeat by Kalapahad. There was a well-known tradition on this aspect linking with Kalapahad. So far our investigation goes this situation of the royal household of Mukunda Deva after his defeat by Kalapahad was described in *Riyas-us-Salatin* which was written around A.D. 1786. In *Riyaz-us-Salatin* it is stated that Kalapahad by successive and numerous fights, vanquished the Raja's forces and brought to his subjection the entire dominion of Odisha so

much so that he carried off the Rani together with all household words (Zaidpuri 1902, 17; Dash, K.C. 2013,13). Afterwards, it was also presented in *Kataka Rajavamsavali*. The text stated-Kalapahad spoiled the racial beauty of the royal queens, etc., by having contact with them (*Rajamabishyadinambhogena Jatidhvansakrita*) which is not stated in the earlier text called *Rajabhoga* of *Madalapanni* (Tripathy and Kulke, 1987,36; Dash, K.C. 2013,12-13). The contact of the queens of Mukunda Deva with Kalapahad was well-known in Odisha in the last part of the 19th century A.D. which is stated in the History of Odisha in Odia by Pyarimohan Acharya which states that Kalapahad was satisfied with the pleasure of beef served by the queen of Mukunda Deva³. This well-known adage in Odisha was slightly changed by Kripasindhu Mishra as he used Hira(diamond) for Heda(beef) in his famous article entitled *Barabati Durga* which was serialized in *Mukura*(Odia monthly) from 1913 (Mishra 1913,184). It was also found in his book entitled *Barabati Durga* both in the first and second editions (Mishra 1918,24). G.N.Dash on this change of adage by Kripasindhu Mishra stated-”The idea that the queen of Mukunda Deva, the last Hindu monarch of Orissa, ever served beef to Kalapahad(and by implication became Kalapahad’s mistress) was painful, abhorrent and not acceptable to the Oriya nationalists and nationalist historians. Therefore, they replaced the word ‘heda’ (meaning beef) with ‘hira’ (meaning diamond), thereby suggesting that she offered diamonds to Kalapahad as a bribe and thus escaped from his clutches” (Dash 2001, 228). But although Kripasindhu Mishra as a nationalist historian changed this adage to cover up the humiliating situation his contemporary and associate Godavarish Mishra did not feel it to change the original adage. His masterpiece *Alekhika*, published in 1923, contains a poem on *Kalapabada* which refers to the original context as was used before Kripasindhu Mishra⁴. Not only Godavarish Mishra this original adage on Kalapahad current in the 19th century was also used by the other Odias as we find the echo of this version in *Utkala Sahitya*⁵. Godavarish Mishra in his poem *Kalapabada* had another significant addition which stated about the fierce resistance and battle of the queen of Mukunda Deva while Kalapahad began to capture the fort of Barabati in the initial stage of the conflict with Mukunda Deva. According to his poem, Kalapahad was badly defeated by the queen after fighting with her for three days and he was humiliated. He then left with the determination to demolish the fort very soon⁶. We do not know the basis on which Godavarish came to this conclusion on Kalapahad’s capture of the fort of Barabati in the initial stage and his failure due to the resistance of the queen. This might be a fanciful account of Godavarish Mishra. But when we take into account the description on this aspect in *Kataka Rajavamsavali* we

presume that there might have historical evidence at its back, though the original evidence is still lacking to warrant the authenticity of the traditional account.

- (2) The second traditional account of the iconoclastic imaginings on Kalapahad is related to a significant aspect of social history. In this account, the Hindu origin of Kalapahad and his iconoclastic programmes have been clearly articulated. Several Muslim sources and even in the traditional literary texts in Odisha Kalapahad is the name of an Afghan Muslim (Dash, 2001:231). Also in *Rajabhoga* of *Madalapanji* his name has been stated as Allahabad Kalapahad (Dash G.N. and Das, R.K., 2010,171). In fact, M.M. Chakravarti in his paper which he read in Asiatic Society in 1899 had stated the name Illahabad *Kalapahar* for the first time in his description of Mukunda Deva (Chakravarti 1900,189). Despite this fact, there is a traditional account of the Hindu origin of Kalapahad. This traditional account has two significant versions. The first version probably began in the last part of 18th century A.D or even earlier and later on being revised and elaborated in the last two decades of the 19th century A.D. expanded in full form in the 20th century A.D. (which became the second version). Professor Dash has combined both the traditional accounts on Kalapahad and presented a new interpretation and his discourse is an interesting addition to the social history (Dash 2001, 227-251). But here in our study we have given the necessary emphasis on the two traditional accounts separately and present a new interpretation for our context. We have presented the origin of this Kalapahad tradition and then elaborated on the revision and expansion of the account. The original traditional account on Kalapahad as was known from the last part of the 18th century to the last two decades of the 19th century A.D. was incorporated in the literary texts. The first was from the side of Bengal, a text in the Persian language on the history of Bengal entitled *Riyaz-us-Salatin* (Zaidpuri 1902:17-18). It states- “Of the miracles of Kalapahad, one was this, that whenever in that country, the sound of his drum reached, the hands and the feet, the ears and the noses of the idols, worshipped by the Hindus, fell off their stone-figures, so that even now stone-idols, with hands and feet broken, and noses and ears cut off, are lying at several places in that country. It is said at the time of return, Kalapahad left a drum in the jungle of Keonjhar, which is lying in an upset stage. No one there from fear of life dares to set it up: so it is related” (Zaidpuri 1902, 18). In this version, there is no reference to the Brahmin origin of Kalapahad and only his iconoclastic programmes (desecration of Hindu temples and Hindu idols) have been articulated. The Brahmin origin of Kalapahad and his renegade nature (desecrating the Hindu idols) have been articulated in two Odia texts-*Gopi Bhasa* of Janarddana Das and

Chumbaka Malika of Baranga Das, an associate of Sisu Ananta Das which were composed in the last phase of the 18th century A.D. (Mukherji 1939,1-4). Apart from the two texts in Odia a *Rajavamshavali* compiled in the last part of the 18th century refers to the Brahmin origin of Kalapahad (Stirling 1837,763-764). This *Rajavamshavali* was translated into English and was also used by A. Stirling as a source for his account of Orissa Proper or Cuttack in 1825 before it was published in the Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1837 (Stirling 1825, 258). It states- “This Kalapahad was originally a Brahmin, the story of his conversion to Muhammedanism is thus told. The king’s daughter became smitten with his person and determined to gratify her passion, she endeavoured to visit him but was deterred from approaching near him by the appearance of his household goddess who was shown like a flaming fire. She was then obliged to have recourse to stratagem and contrived with the consent of her father and mother to make him eat flesh and drink wine in consequence of which acts he lost caste, his guardian deity had abandoned him, and he became an apostate from his faith” (Stirling 1825,258; 1837,763). This account emphasizes that Kalapahad was originally a devout Brahmin and later under pressing circumstances by the contrivance of the daughter of the Sultan took flesh and wine and lost caste. Consequently, he was abandoned by his family deity. Similar account is also found in Assamese *Burunji* on Kalapahad (Bhuyan 1947,21-23) In the Assamese *Burunji* Kalapahad was described as *Pora-Sultan*, *Pora-Kutbar*, *Kala-Sultan* or *Kala-Jaban*. According to the report of *Burunji*- “A Brahmin of pure descent living at Benares had a son born to him. The astrologers calculated his stars and made the following prediction. ‘This boy will in future be fallen from his caste and religion by carrying on liaison with a Jabani or Muhammedan woman, but he will be wealthy, virtuous and learned.’ The boy after attaining maturity, and being fully cognizant of the ordinances of his stars, visited several places of pilgrimage, and made offerings to the gods and did acts of piety to propitiate his stars. Ultimately he came to Gaur, where, as predestined, he saw the daughter of Husain Shah Padshah of Gaur, and became mad for her love. He forgot the prophecy and became fallen by secretly gratifying his sexual instincts with the princess. The Begum reported the matter to the Sultan who was pleased to learn that the offender was a Brahmin of pure blood and summoned him to his presence and asked him about it. The Brahmin replied that it had been inscribed in his Book of Fate and that it was caused by his predestination. Husain Shah, the Sultan wanted his consent to marry his daughter. The Brahmin also consented. After the marriage, the Sultan conferred him a mansab of 10000. After some time the Brahmin became disgusted with himself

and thought- 'I have not been able to avert the decree of my fate.' So one's destiny always reigns supreme. All attempts to undo it are in vain. Thus saying he descended into the Ganges and solemnly discarded his penance, prayers, incantations, the Gayatri and his sacred thread. After this he proceeded to destroy Hindu temples and domes, some were demolished and others were burnt. He also destroyed the temple of Kamakhya. He climbed up to the summit of the Garurachal Hill and surveyed thereupon his own land of Gaur and he also saw *Letai Dhubuni* (Odia *Nitai Dhubani*) washing her clothes. Fearing that the enemies of Gaur might reconnoitre the land from that hill-top with hostile intentions, he kicked the earth thrice with his feet and depressed it by three fathoms. He died there and was buried according to Muhammadan rites. Shah Shuja, a son of Emperor Shah Jahan, while at Rajmahal, made an endowment of Paiks and lands for the maintenance of worship at his tomb which is continuing. This renegade iconoclast was known as Pora-Sultan in view of his desecration and burning of Hindu temples and shrines." This traditional account on Kalapahad as narrated in Assamese *Burunji* started from the Hindu sacred centre at Banares and ended in Gauda and Assam. We do not know the exact date of this traditional account of *Burunji*; but based on the historical characters like Shah Shuja and Shahjahan, the Mughal Emperor probably originated either from the end of the 17th century or even from the 18th century. Possibly this was the beginning phase of the formation of the Kalapahad tradition and later on, it began to expand to Bengal and Odisha.

By the beginning of 19th century A.D., this Kalapahad traditional narrative had already expanded in Odisha as its shortened version was found from the *Rajavamshavah* which was translated by A. Stirling and used in his report in 1825 (Stirling 1825, 288). He stated- "At last however came Kalapahar, General of the Bengal forces, the destined conqueror of Orissa, with his wonder-working kettledrum, at the sound of which the ears and feet of the idols would drop off for many koss all around. The Hindus say of this dreaded enemy of their enemies and superstition, that he was originally a Brahmin, but lost caste through a contrivance of the princess of Gaura, who was smitten with the manly beauty of the person. He then married her, turned Mussalman and became a relentless persecutor of the adherents of the faith from which he had apostatized."

This version of Kalapahad tradition was well circulated in Bengal and Odisha in the 19th century A.D. Gobind Chandra Sen who presented the Bengali translation of History of Bengal of Marshman in 1840 also used this shortened version on the Brahman origin of Kalapahad without any reference to his desire for reconversion in Puri Jagannatha temple (Sen 1840,33-35). Pyari Mohan Acharya in his History of Odisha in 1879 had used

this shortened version of Stirling (Acharya 1879,94). In Bengal, this version was found to be incorporated by Rajkrishna Mukhopadhyay in 1879 (Mukhopadhyaya 1879,34). This version has several aspects of social history. It points out that Hinduism was rooted in superstitions and dogmatic beliefs. It needed change and mobility. It also points out that conversion to Islam should be prevented. If this conversion was not prevented a Hindu after being converted into Islam would be hostile to his original religion and would desecrate Hindu images and temples for the end of Hinduism as was done by Kalapahad. If Kalapahad was not converted into a Muslim, he would not have been intolerant to Hinduism. Hence at first, the Hindu reformists had given out this traditional account for the prevention of conversion from Hinduism. They had taken Kalapahad as a Hindu name because by the end of the 18th century the Muslim identity of Kalapahad was not well known to the general people (Dash 2001,232). So in the first phase, this tradition was invented to prevent or even oppose conversion and to reform Hinduism. In course of time after its circulation there had appeared several other problems in the Hindu society. Therefore, the primary version of this traditional account on Kalapahad was revised and expanded to incorporate further changes in the Hindu social order.

III

In all probability, the formation of the revised and expanded version of the Kalapahad tradition was possible from A.D. 1880-1890. This is because the new aspects of this tradition began to be articulated in the newspapers in Odia of this phase. The revised and expanded version was absent in the History of Odisha of Pyari Mohan Acharya in 1879. But it was found in a debate entitled “Protest for Caste Difference” (*Jatibheda Pratibada*) in Odia in *Sambalpur Hiteisini* of 1893. In an interesting debate on caste between Biswanath Kar, the famous reformer and ‘one Hindu’ it was stated by the latter in *Sambalpur Hiteisini*- “Those who were ignorant of the scriptural evidence were to be considered as *Kalapahadias* (followers of Kalapahad) whom nobody could be ready to reconvert to Hinduism. It is also certain that such types of people (*Kalapahadias*) were also not interested to return to the original Hindu religion. He warned the new followers of social reform not to be biased by the so-called *Kalapahadias* and requested them to go through first with the help of real scriptural experts the theory of caste difference and if they were not convinced by the experts let them give up the caste system” (Kar 1893, 63). This indicates that there was significant addition in the original version of the Kalapahad tradition between 1880-1890. This addition was- a person could not be reconverted into a Hindu once he left that religion and embraced Islam or any other religion even if he sincerely intended reconversion. For that reason, he was a *Kalapahadia*. It means Kalapahad being originally a Brahmin embraced Islam and desired to be reconverted to Hindu (Brahmin) or the measure to reconvert him into a

Hindu after he became a Muslim for the end of his anti-Hindu programmes. In *Sambalpur Hiteisini* of 20th September, 1899 in a poem entitled *Bisadini* or *Ratnamani* this aspect was well described in the context of the plots (debates and discussion) of the gods and goddesses in one place on the activities of the renegade Kalapahad. There it was described- it is now known that all contrivances or plans of the gods and goddesses would be futile in course of time. Lord Jagannatha himself would suffer in Nilachala (his abode) for his design (not allowing reconversion to Kalapahad when he desired to accept his original Religion-Hinduism). Though born in a Brahmin family he was a blot on the Brahmin society for his marital relation with a Muslim lady. He had boasted of his intimacy with the Muslim race- the incarnation of sin. He called himself Kalapahad and the general of the Muslims. He has raised the banner of sin for destroying the pious religion of the Hindus (Dash, K.C. 2016, 46). This poem in *Sambalpur Hiteisini* of 1899 thus refers to the significant addition in Kalapahad tradition-his desire for expiation before Lord Jagannatha for reconversion after he was converted into Islam. This became a significant aspect of the revised Kalapahad tradition. This revised aspect of the Kalapahad tradition became well known in expanded form at the beginning of the 20th century A.D. By 1908 Durga Charan Sanyal had used this revised and expanded version of the Kalapahad tradition in his first edition of *Banglar Samajika Itibasa* (Sanyal 1908, 93-102). This first edition in 1908 was read by Chandrashekhar Nanda (a famous Odia writer) and he also used it in his essay on Kalapahada which was published in *Utkala Sahitya* in 1908 (Nanda 1908-9, 115-119). Famous historian Prabhat Mukherji in 1939 also in an Odia essay used this revised version on Kalapahad; but in no place of his article did he refer either to Sanyal or Nanda (Mukherji 1939, 1-4). Later on in his famous work on the Gajapati kings of Orissa in 1953, he also used the same revised tradition without referring to his source in this context (Mukherji, 1953, 116-117).

The revised and expanded tradition on Kalapahad which was presented by Nanda in *Utkal Sahitya* of 1908-9 needs to be studied and interpreted properly to unravel the mystery associated with it. A shortened version of this revised tradition has been presented here. The original name of Kalapahad was Kalachand Roy. In his childhood, his mother named him Raju. He was a descendant of the family of Jagadananda Roy. His abode was located in the village called Birjaon in the district of Rajshahi. His father Nayan Chand Roy was a bhuinya (landlord) of this and surrounding villages. Besides this, he was working in the faujdari department of the Sultan of Gauda. He was not a Raja, but he was a well-behaved person. He had an early death. His son Kalachand was a minor child when he died. After his father's death, his grandmother became his guardian. After some years he married the two daughters of Radha Mohan Lahiri of Tripura. Two years after his marriage he came to the Sultan of Gauda named Saliman for a job. The Sultan appointed him in the post of a faujdar having been impressed with his wisdom, family background and behaviour. His

residence was located near the palace of the Sultan. Kalachand every day would return to his residence in the early morning after his bath and prayer in the river Mahananda. He would go to the durbar for his job after his daily prayer and worship. He would every day take a bath after his return from his job centre and then he would take his food. The way which Kalachand crossed for his regular bath and prayer in the river Mahananda was very close to the backside of the palace of the Sultan. The daughter of Sultan Dulari Bibi was very beautiful. Once while returning from his usual bath and ritualistic work in the river Mahananda Kalachand was watched by Dulari who was then on the terrace of the palace accompanied by her maids. She was bewitched by the sight of Kalachand who appeared to him very handsome. She also wanted a relationship with him. Her maids described the unusual love of Dulari for Kalachand before the queen of the Sultan. The queen also saw Kalachand on the terrace of the palace and collected information on him by the maids and requested the Sultan for the marital link between them. The Sultan agreed to the proposal of his queen. But Kalachand could not accept this proposal. The Sultan could not be successful at the beginning of this venture though he followed all strategies. Being enraged the Sultan ordered his death sentence. But his life was saved by the intervention of Dulari. Kalachand was impressed by the beauty and behaviour of Dulari and accepted the marriage. The process of his marriage was not known. But even after marriage Kalachand was not converted into a Muslim. But he was made an outcast by the Hindus for this marriage. His mother began to arrange for his expiation. But according to the strict rules of Hinduism, this expiation was not granted. It is said that Kalachand even went to Puri to perform the ceremony of expiation in the temple of Jagannatha. He fasted there for one week but got no permission for expiation. Moreover, the priests insulted him when they got his identity and he was driven back. Kalachand came back to Gauda smarting under humiliation. He embraced Islam and became determined to destroy Hinduism. After he was converted to Islam he was called Mahammad Farmuli. But he was popularly called Kalapahad for his renegade and iconoclastic nature. (Nanda 1908-9,115-119) Though Man Mohan Chakravarti presented his paper on Gajapati kings of Odisha in the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Kolkata in April 1899 where he pointed the name of the Afghan general as Illahabad Kalpahara which must have been heard and appreciated by the Bengali historians, Durga Charan Sanyal in his *Banglar Samajik Itihis* in 1908 appreciated the tradition on Kalapahad and used the name as Mahammad Farmuli. Also till 1894 though the Brahmin root of Kalpahad was given out his name was not Kalachand. In the first phase he was only described as the son of a Brahmin before he accepted Islam, but in Viswakosh for the first time in 1894 N.N. Vasu noted Raju as his second name (Vasu 1894,21). Probably a Hindu name was given to him which was called Kalachand Ray thereafter as we find this name for the first time in the *Banglar Samajik Itihasa* by Durga Charan Sanyal in 1908. In

fact, Kalachand was a popular name in Bengal as we find a novel in Bengali entitled Kalachand published in 1890 and also one Kavya entitled Sri Kalachand Gita associated with Chaitanya faith. This indicates the nature of social history at the beginning of the 20th century in Bengal which appreciated the traditional narrative more than even a reliable historical document.

This revised and enlarged traditional narrative on Kalapahad was probably expanded in Bengal and Odisha in the 20th century. G.N. Dash, a famous authority on the study of traditional accounts, has appreciated this revised and enlarged tradition on Kalapahad and has in fact for the first time presented a new approach in the social history of Eastern India (Dash 2001, 227-252). Dash has however claimed this revised and enlarged version as the original version and stated- "The original version of the traditional account was created in order to convey a message to the Hindus and particularly to their orthodox leaders that they should be less rigid in socio-religious matters and allow reconversion from Islam. The message was clear: Hindu society invites only peril and disaster by prohibiting reconversion" (Dash 2001, 240). In fact, the reconversion question was not there in the original tradition as the account relates only to the fact that Kalapahad who was originally a Brahmin started destroying temples and images after his conversion into Islam. G.N. Dash who combined the original version with the revised version of Kalapahad tradition for highlighting the message of reconversion also has linked Kalapahad's prayer for expiation in the Jagannatha temple of Puri with an episode of the Khurda king Ramachandra II's story of conversion into Islam (Dash 2001, 244). But it appears to be incorrect. Ramachandra Deva II, the Raja of Khurda (1725-41) married a Muslim princess (said to be an illegitimate daughter of Shujauddin Muhammad, the Nawab of Bengal from 1727 to 1739) and in the process most probably embraced Islam, but as stated by Dash precise information about these events is not available (Dash 1985, 475-87; Kulke 1879, 183-96). Through this marriage of Ramachandra II with a Muslim girl is stated in *Rajabhoga* of *Madalapanji* and *Bhakta Baligaon Dasia Bhagabata*, there is no description of his expiation in them. (Dash 2001, 245). On the other hand, G.N. Dash stated- "Raja Ramachandra II lost his caste as well as religion as a result of this marriage. According to the information supplied by two Persian texts, he even assumed the name Hafiz Qadar which indicates his conversion to Islam. But in the royal letters or *Chhamu Chitans*, he issues after his supposed marriage to the Muslim princess he continued to call himself Ramachandra Deva (and not Hafiz Qadar) which is significant" (Dash 2001, 245). If this is correct Kalapahad tradition had no link with it because, in the original tradition, there is no evidence of Kalapahad's desire for expiation in the temple of Jagannatha. G.N. Dash also supported the view of Chakradhar Mahapatra and stated- "According to tradition, leaders of the Brahmanas residing in the Sasana villages near Puri and perhaps the priests of Jagannatha temple were

divided over the issue. Some broadminded people among the Brahmanas, priests and the population supported the Raja and did not accept the rumour that he had lost his religion. But if at all he had-they opined-he should be allowed to come back to the Hindu fold after performing requisite expiration or prayaschita. But the orthodox element of the society opposed the Raja and maintained that he had lost his caste and religion and therefore also the right to perform his services to Lord Jagannatha, as his Adya Sevaka and as a result his right to the Khurda throne too. Moreover, they insisted that he could never come back to the Hindu fold even if he performed prayaschita. It can be imagined that the people of Orissa got divided over the issue, but according to tradition the people who supported reconversion lost and the orthodox won” (Dash 2001, 245-46). This cannot be accepted as Chakradhar Mahapatra whom G.N. Dash has supported, has no authentic evidence on this context. Also ongoing through the history of that phase as narrated by K.N.Mahapatra and M.A. Haque we have nothing to accept this imagined view (Haque 1980, 180-188; Mahapatra 1969,181-196; Mahapatra 1969, 228-234). If this debate was so well known in tradition, why it was not articulated in the original tradition on Kalapahad? On the other hand, in the 1880s Rani Suryamani of the Puri Raj family in her memorandum to the colonial government attached a fabricated *Madalapanni* which stated that Ramachandra Deva after his conversion into Islam was deprived of his right of entry into the temple of Jagannatha for worship and that consequently for enabling his darshan of Lord Jagannatha a statue of Patitapaban-Jagannatha was installed in the singhadwar of the temple. (Dash 1885, 475-487). This indicates that reconversion became known in the tradition after the 1880s. In the tradition on Kalapahad which originated either in the middle of the 18th century or towards the end of the 18th century a person leaving Hinduism and accepting Islam considered himself as an enemy of the original religion. Possibly in that phase in the Kalapahad tradition reforming of Hinduism was demanded as it related that persons like Kalapahad after conversion into Islam would be hostile to Hinduism and would take interest in destroying Hindu temples and images. So in all probability, the anonymous reformers of the original Kalapahad traditional narrative articulated the message of opposing or preventing the conversion from Hinduism to Islam first. For that reason, in *Sambalpur Hiteisini* of 20th September 1893 in the debate on Caste Difference (*Jatibheda*) only one aspect of the term of Kalapahadia has been presented. In one sense the *Kalapahadias* do not want to return to their original religion as the original religion does not satisfy them (which is actually articulated in the original Kalapahad tradition). The other implication is described in *Sambalpur Hiteisini* of 15th November 1893 which stated that the *Kalapahadias* are reformist by nature and that they want to return to their original religion for reforming it. In all probability by 1892-93, this question of reconversion was known in Odisha and by the beginning of the 20th century in Odisha, this was widely circulated. We would have

accepted the viewpoint of G.N. Dash on Kalapahad tradition if the original version on it would have contained clearly any hint on Prayaschita. But the original tradition was entirely silent on reconversion. G.N. Dash has not stated anything in his article on this silence on reconversion in the original tradition on Kalapahad. On the other hand, all available sources justify that this issue of reconversion was well articulated in the last decade of the 19th century A.D. So it seems that this revised version containing reconversion in the Kalapahad tradition came to proper highlight only after a socio-religious movement like the Arya Samaj Movement of Dayananda Saraswati. In Bengal in the late 1870s and 1880s, there was a strong movement for the revival of the Arya religion. The movement for the revival of Arya religion was so strong that a magazine entitled Ariya Darshan was regularly issued in the 1870s which focused on the development of Arya religion in various discourses. In the first volume of this magazine, there was an advertisement for the circulation of a newspaper entitled Arya Sanskaraka in the Bengali language by Gopal Krishna Bandyopadhyay which indicated the intention of the revival of Arya Dharma in Bengal, Arya Darshan was edited by Jogendranath Bandyopadhyay from 1875. Dayananda's visit to Bengal during this phase might have accelerated the religious movement. A significant example can be given for the justification of this context. In this phase in 1885 was published a comprehensive text entitled Aryan Samaja Sanskaran by Surendranath Gupta Majumdar (Gupta Majumdar, 1885). This text contains a few hints and suggestions regarding the reformation of the Aryan Society of India and the conservation and promulgation of the Aryan religion-the Sanatana-dharma. In the preliminary note, the author stated to have visited several places of India and watched considerable decadence of Arya Hindu religious life and suggested measures for the reconstruction of Aryan Bharatiya society. He advocated social cohesion (Samaja-bandhana) as the best means for the progress of the society and insisted on the formation of Bharatiya Arya Mahasabha with branches all over India (Gupta Majumdar, 1885, 133-186). This indicates that there was a consistent attempt for the reconstruction of the Aryan structure in Bengal during this phase. Hence there was the probability of an addition of this tradition insisting on reconversion in the Hindu society in the extant Kalapahad narrative from the side of Bengal.

IV

The revised traditional account on Kalapahad in the 20th century became a significant aspect of social history. The historians were inclined to study the Kalapahad tradition for searching its authenticity in Odisha. But Odia literature was deeply influenced by the tradition. Stories were created on the theme of Kalapahad with an imaginative vision as we find in the story of "Pradipa Nirvana" by Dayanidhi Mishra in the 1920s (Mishra, Dayanidhi 1920-21, 92-99). In 1922 Aswini Kumar Ghosh in his drama on Kalapahad

1922 also captivated the nationalist Odias. (Dash 2001,231). More interesting is the interpretation of Kalapahad tradition in terms of social protest in Odia literature. Kalapahad was interpreted as a social reformer in Odisha. In this respect, the study of the poem “Kalapahadi Gatha” is very significant (Kalapahad 1915-1916, 390, 449-450; 1916-1917, 17-18;1917-1918, 244, 546-47). This poem which was serialized in *Utkala Sabitya* articulated Kalapahad as one who would force the Odias to take beef which means Hinduism which was opposed to change would be flexible. This poem made an attack on the old and orthodox values in the Odisha society and it demanded radical reform. In all probability, Biswanath Kar once raised the issue of *Kalapahadia* reformers in course of a debate on caste in *Sambalpur Hiteisini* of 1893 and so he allowed this poem on radical protest and reform through the medium of Kalapahad in his edited literary magazine called *Utkal Sabitya*.

The tradition associated with Kalapahad which was invented in the 18th century was originally intended to reform Hinduism and made it strong by preventing the process of conversion which was attempted by Islam. In course of time, this tradition was expanded to allow reconversion into Hindu society in the last decade of the 19th century in Bengal and Odisha. The unknown reformers of Hinduism by giving out the revised tradition that Kalapahad who was originally a Brahmin became a Muslim under the pressing circumstance and again wanted to be reconverted to be a Hindu by prayaschita (expiation) transmitted the message to the leading members of the Hindu society that they should appreciate reconversion without being hard and conservative in their attitude. The reconversion(Suddhi) was very much appreciated by the Arya Samaj reformist group and at least in Bengal, it was well known in the last three decades of the 19th century. Bankim Chandra himself advocated a similar type of change in the Hindu society (Basu 2002,115). For that reason, in *Sambalpur Hiteisini* of 15th November 1893 in the article on caste debate, Biswanath Kar accepted Bankim Chandra as a *Kalapahadia* (symbol of social change). This expanded Kalapahad tradition was well known in 20th century Bengal and Odisha and then some social groups associated Kalapahad with social protest and reconstruction. In Odia literature also such a trend was appreciated by Sachi Routray whose poem entitled Kalapahad published in *Nabeen* of July 4, 1933, presented an account of social protest and reconstruction (Dash, K.C. 2016, 49; 2016a,199-213). The poet praised Kalapahad, the so-called iconoclast in the traditional account of Eastern India, for liberating god’s idol by breaking the temple which he considered to be a prison. Almost reformist in tone and temper, the poet stated that he liberated humans and their gods from old, worn-out ideas and narrow religious spaces. He stated very emphatically that those temples should be destroyed where gods in stone mocked progress made by human beings.

V

In its first formation, a traditional account is intended for transmitting the society a message. But the account and the message have their mobility and transformation in course of time due to the contact with several social forces and counter-forces. Then the original account gets an expansion in ideas and messages for the society. This is well explained in the Kalapahad tradition. An interesting historical basis on which this tradition on the iconoclastic imaginings on Kalapahad was his success in throwing the wooden images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarsana into the fire for their destruction. This is well explained in all Muslim sources (Dash 2001, 227-247). Kalapahad completed this work of destruction of Jagannatha images because after the death of the king of Odisha who was Mukunda Deva Kalapahad might have thought that Jagannatha was the central aspect of Gajapati kingship in Odisha and that the end of Gajapati kingship in Odisha would be completed not by the death of the king who was a mere deputy of Lord Jagannatha as Jagannatha was declared the emperor of Odisha kingdom from the phase of the Ganga king Anangabhima III in the 13th century A.D.⁷ So by the destruction of the images only the entire Gajapati kingship would be subverted. In that respect, Kalapahad had a purely political decision as the contemporary records of 16th century A.D. do not subscribe to the wanton iconoclastic programme of Kalapahad which was vividly presented in the traditional accounts on him in the 18th century A.D. The original version of Kalapahad tradition was constructed to reform Hindu static and conservative values, but in course of time with the rise of several socio-religious issues and problems in the Hindu society particularly in Eastern India it began to incorporate more changes to cope with the reformist Hindu society. Hence in this context, it is necessary not only to study the original shape and messages of the tradition on Kalapahad but also the shape and messages in course of their modification and expansion.

Notes

1. A bathing-ghat near Hughli (which was the mainstream of the Ganga during the reign of Mukunda Harichandan) at Tribeni is still associated with his name. He built the ghat probably to commemorate his achievement. See for this *Madalapanji*. Mohanty 1940/1969,60, For details Mukherji 1953,113.
2. Eric Hobsbawm stated in 1983 that traditions that appeared or claimed to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 1983:1 The traditional accounts in Odisha have been interpreted in this light by G.N. Dash. He has accepted the theory of construction in his study of the Kanchi-Kaveri tradition much before the publication of the views of Hobsbawm. See Dash, 1979, 2001, also see Dash, K.C 2011, 22.

3. A popular saying on Kalapahad is – “*Aila Kalapahada bhangila luharabada piila Mahanadi pani, Suvarnatalire hedapasile Mukundadevanka Rani*. It means-Kalapahad came, pulled down the iron fence, drank the water of river Mahanadi, the queen of Raja Mukunda Deva served beef to him on a golden plate. Pyari Mohan Acharya recorded this popular saying in 1979, See Dash 2001,228.
4. The poem entitled Kalapahada by Godavarish Mishra was included in his collection called *Alekhika* which was published in 1923. In that poem it is stated- “*Aila Kalapahada; kede tana baba, Barabatigadu bhangilaluharabada/ Ghadikethate ta delete sukbei Mahanadi pani; Subarnathalire Hedapasile Mukunda Devanka Rani/* It means-Kalapahada came with his well-built arms, broke the iron fence from the fort Barabati. His army dried up the water of the river Mahanadi by drinking among themselves. The queen of Mukunda Deva served him beef on a golden plate. See Mishra 1923/1955,131; Dash, K.C. 2016,43; Banerji-Dube Ishita 2018; 64-65.
5. The long poem of ‘Kalapahadi Gatha’ which was composed by one Sri Kalapahada and was serialized in *Utkala Sahitya* (premier Odia literary monthly) contains a veiled reference to this adage. It stated-*asilu ambhe Kalapahada/ Bhangibu ambheluharabada/ pibu Mahanadirapani/ Subarnathalire beda kbuaibu kete Odiankuani/*”. It stated that Kalapahada came, he and his group would break the iron fence, would drink the water of Mahanadi, would feed beef to many Odias on a golden plate. Though a changed version in *Utkala Sahitya* it reminds us of the previous saying on the queen of Mukunda Deva. See Dash, K.C. 2016,49.
6. The poem Kalapahada of Godavarish Mishra refers to the initial war between Kalapahad and the queen of Mukunda Deva and the defeat of the former by the latter. According to the poem Kalapahad fought for three days but he was defeated by the chief queen in Barabati fort though he was successful in defeating the Paiks of the Gajapati king. He was humiliated because he was defeated by a lady. See Mishra 1923/1955,120-121. Also see Dash, K.C. 2016,43.
7. An interesting study on the deputy ideology of the Ganga-Gajapati kingship has been furnished by Hermann Kulke. See Kulke 1978; Dash 1997,220-245.

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