

Fabled Orissa: From Glory and Grandeur to Colonisation

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Orissa also known as Kalinga had a fabled past. Recorded history of the province authenticates those fairytale-fabled histories. From travelers to raconteurs and from potentates to commoners of yore years have described Kalinga's history in such word character that the reading of the same makes one believe that the fabled past of Orissa is a living reality even today. Their narration about the glory and grandeur of Kalinga led the readers believe as if the fabled land still exists. However, suddenly the great civilisational existence gave way to slavery of mind and body as in surprising turn of events the whole populace subjugated to foreign invasion. The colonisers became colonised without an iota of a resistance. The province, which conducted itself admirably during peace and peril for millennia had succumbed to simple trickery and to a few mitigating forces of foreign and domestic origin. In this article, I have discussed three principal subjects. Firstly, how Orissa had achieved legendary status in the ancient time; secondly how those achievements and glories vanished and how the province cleared ways for its invaders; and finally how the present generation has forgotten the fabled past and succumbed to the foreign imposed subjugation from where it never managed an escape till the present time.

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“If the past is a burden and an obstacle,” wrote English Historian Lord Acton, “knowledge of the past is the surest and safest emancipation” (Acton, 1906). What was Orissa's past? Why its past is significant and important today? Do we know enough and adequate about Orissa's past and why would we study about its past? To study past means to search for and discover the forces that are the causes of those results which appear before our eyes as historical events (Hitler 2003: 28). The past becomes something that leads up to the present, the moment of action, the future something that flows from it; and all the three are inextricably intertwined and interrelated (Nehru 2004a: 9). Penetrating through the dim mist of Orissa's thousandsof years and transforming the historical memory of the dead past into a living reality would allow young minds to savor the glory of Orissa's

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rich and flamboyant historical past. This article would not only endeavour to illustrate the past of Orissa by examples from the present but also make earnest effort to draw a lesson from the past for the present. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his masterpiece *The Discovery of India* wrote, “The root of that present lay in the past and so I made voyages of discovery into the past, ever seeking a clue in it, if any such existed, to the understanding of the present” (Nehru 2004b: 10).

The Fabled Land: Orissa

Strange is the present time for the Oriya or Kalingan population. The state’s inhabitants are living under poverty and under paranoia for a couple of centuries.¹ This state of affair is an oxymoron to the state’s flourishing and fabled civilisation during pre-Christian era. Although archaeological findings takes the state’s rich history to Neolithic period (10,000 years old), the flamboyance and luster of Kalinga is recorded adequately in the epic *Mahabharata* (Ganguly, 2006). One area where Kalinga surpassed all others in prominence was its maritime activities. In an international seminar held at the University of Bristol in March 1982 various authors and researchers presented papers based on archeological findings on maritime research. Sean McGrail from National Maritime Museum of Great Britain compiled the papers and published *Aspects of Maritime Archaeology and Ethnography*, as a book in 1984. This compilation, which mostly attributed to archaeological research, not only throws light on Kalinga’s maritime activities but also detailed the life, people, ports, sea routes and trade items in that remote era roughly before 3000 BC (McGrail, 1984).

The Jatakas stories written during the Buddhist period told Kalinga’s sea voyages to far off places in Southeast Asia (Francis and Thomas 1916: 344). During the third century BC, Meghasthenes in his *Indica* wrote about the strength and prosperity of Kalinga. He wrote, “The royal city of the Calingae is called Parthalis. Over their king 60,000 foot-soldiers, 1,000 horsemen, 700 elephants keep watch and ward in ‘procinct of war’” (Schwanbeck 1846: 106). A little later in the very third century BC, one Mauryan King Ashoka dominated almost all of South Asia sans Kalinga. So great was the strength and virile of Kalinga during the third century BC that Ashoka’s dictate could not extract a submission from Kalinga. A poor version of Kalinga’s culture and people were depicted in the 2001 *Hollywood* movie *Ashoka*. Ashoka decided to subdue Kalinga and fought the Kalinga War in the year 261 BC. However, despite his decisive win, the worriers of Kalinga mentally mutilated Ashoka. The death defying spirit of Kalingan worriers forced Emperor Ashoka to surrender arms forever for peace (Dhammika, 1994).

Why Kalinga’s maritime was so enriching? Ocean and mountainous walls, which separated India from other countries, was never an obstacle for its inhabitants to operate lucrative trade routes. At all periods both settlers and traders have found their ways over the high and desolate passes into India, while Indians have carried their commerce and culture beyond her frontiers by the same route (Basham 2002: 1). “Silk Route” was one such moving example. Those who travelled through the “Silk Route” like Xuanzing (also known as Hiuen Tsang), Marco Polo, Wilhelm of Rubruck and other Jesuit priests left behind intriguing tales; tales of romance and adventure so titillating that they make the heart ache for a similar journey (Rashid, 2011a; Rashid, 2011b). A question arise here is

“what was the relation of ‘Silk Route’ with Kalinga’s maritime trade during the early age”?

Recorded history interprets the 2200 years old “Silk Route” as the rough road connecting ancient China with ancient India, Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan and the fringe of Europe (Hopkirk 1980: 200-202). The existence of a maritime version of “Silk Route” predates the overland “Silk Route”.² Some arteries of this maritime version of “Silk Route” were running through Kalinga. Countless authors had written how lucrative India’s trade with China was in the “Silk Route” (Duiker and Spielvogel 2006: 242), and how religious traffic on the “Silk Route” became a two-way affair with Chinese Buddhists heading for Khotan, Kashmir and beyond in search of texts, relics and spiritual guidance (Keay 2008: 203). One Chinese monk, Xuanzang outshone all in providing clarity on India’s trade in the “Silk Route”. Xuanzang left Dunhuang (China) in 629 AD for a pilgrimage-cum-research to the Buddhist “Holy Land” of India (Nehru 2004: 142). In the early fifth century another Chinese monk, Faxian, had gone west overland to India and returned home by Sea. He had written a brief account of his travels (Rath, 2012). The sea route Faxian took to return China was running through Kalinga and his navigator was preparing to sacrifice Faxian on the high sea to escape from bad omen. However, Faxian convinced the navigator to spare his life, which was granted with some difficulty. The maritime “Silk Route” started from Guangzhou port, located in Southern China and run through coastal Vietnam, southern Cambodia, Thailand, Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Burma, India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Persia and Iraq. This was one of the reasons behind Kalinga’s flourishing maritime trade and the state’s resultant prosperity.

Pakistani historian Salman Rashid insisted, “Our (Indians’ and Pakistanis’) ancestors were great travelers. Not only did they discover the ‘Silk Route’ into Turkestan by the Karakoram Pass, they were great seafarers as well. Much of our trade with Africa, the gulf states and even with China was by sea”.³ This assertion is an indication and testimony of Kalinga’s rich maritime activities. Not only Kalinga was rich in maritime activities, material prosperity and warfare but also the state was endowed with its own script known as Kalinga script. Once the Brahmi script was deciphered by James Prinsep, it became known that the Kalinga script was a product of its parent Brahmi script. During the second millennium AD, the script was modified to Oriya script. The great Chinese monk Xuanzang visited Kalinga during his long stay in India. In his *Si-Yu-Ki* Xuanzang wrote, “Their (Ucha or Udra or Orissa) words and language differ from Central India. They love learning and apply themselves to it without intermission.” For long Kalinga has been famous for its learning activities and educational advancement. Xuanzang further informed us that, “On the border of the ocean, is the town Charitra. Here it is merchants depart for distant countries, and strangers come and go and stop here on their way” (Tsiang 645: 205). A. Cunningham has suggested that Xuanzang’s Charitra or Charitrapura was modern Puri. Kalinga was an amazing land then.

The Greek ambassador Meghasthenes described handsomely about Kalinga’s prosperity. The state had sound trade contact with the Romans during the 3rd century BC and 1st century AD. Archaeological excavation at Sisupalgarh had unearthed Roman bullae, Romans coins and an iron caltrop.⁴ The Romans used to check the speed of their speeding horses and elephants with Caltrops. Chanakya’s *Arthashastra* and Claudius Ptolemy’s *Geography* inform us that trade of Kalinga during the abovementioned period was highly

specialised and improved (Gerini 1909: 743; Shamasastri 1915: 51-185).

Kalinga's Colonisation

The dominance of Kalinga continued for long. Not only the kingdom flourished in the hinterland of India but also enterprising Kalingan warrior stretched their empire beyond the border of Kalinga. Pandit Nehru said "The early colonist are supposed to have gone from Kalinga on the east coast (Orissa) but it was the Hindu Pallava Kingdom of the south that made an organised effort at colonisation. The Shailendra dynasty (of 8th century AD), which became so famous in South-East Asia, is believed to have come from Orissa" (Nehru 2004: 216) When Constantinople, the seat of Roman Empire disintegrated in the 15th century after a good 1100 years of reign, Kalinga was flourishing and colonising the whole of Southeast Asia. The Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque of Constantinople, presently known as Istanbul, which was built during the 15th and 16th century respectively are considered as the glory of Roman Empire.⁵ However, none of these fabled structures could rival a single 13th century structure of Kalinga, the Konark Sun Temple.⁶ When Roman Empire receded into history, Kalinga's modern renaissance was at its peak. The marvels called Konark, Lingaraj and Jagannath Temples, hewed in stone, gigantic in size and open to grace and glory were product of this period.

What happened to the virility, vigor, strength and sophistication of Kalinga? When exactly the state succumbed to the foreign invasion? What led to the colonisation of a whole warrior class, famous for colonising far and distant land? The long history of matured Kalinga Empire, its culture and statecraft was replaced by a strange infiltration of foreign philosophy during the onset of 17th and 18th centuries. Till then culture, literature and religion in Kalinga were going hand in hand with its ruthless warfare techniques, its risky business enterprise and its high capacity to dominate the sea. However, during the 17th and 18th centuries, Kalinga was swept and dominated by litterateurs and religious preachers of varying hues. This was preparing the stage for the British Empire to colonise Kalinga. It was during this time that the Bhakti movement revived and centred around the temple town of Puri. Kalingans were led to believe that *moksha* (salvation) could be achieved through inaction. The worrier class – the Paikas, the Savaras, the Khandayats and the highly effective tribes of Kalinga living in Jungles left in lurch and no more recruited for major warfare. The Vanikas, the community of sea voyager, who acted as the agent of Kalinga's material glory and who were the self-appointed spy or messenger of the Kalingan kings to report on the affair pertaining to the Southeast Asian and Arabic countries stopped risking their lives in the deep sea. Business halted, so was the once mythical voyages to far off countries. This was all happening probably due to a punishing foreign taxation system by foreign governments headed by the Mughals, the Marathas and the British. The art, architecture and building of mighty fortresses have now long been forgotten. The warrior class of Kalinga was replaced by an army of Bhakti preachers. Intoxicated by the new Bhakti movement, the followers of the new movement had started enjoying their daily *Kirtan*⁷ day and night, a practice still prevalent in most part of Orissa.

This led to the belief that, Kalinga is one of the most vulnerable parts of India, which could be conquered by a fragile tail of Mughal or Maratha force and subsequently by the British with even a weak intension. What was amazing is such a virile and chivalrous

Kalingan population surrendered to the philosophy of inaction and lost in transition with unimaginable haste. How all that happened?

The Reverse Wind

India, Great Britain and America are, three of the most interesting great powers in the modern age. The age begins at around 1500 AD. In a map of that time England and America are nowhere on the radar screen. Western Europe was just a cluster of dukedoms, city-states. The US had scattered tribes. In England, most of the population of around 2.5 million lived in a state of misery and impoverishment. Around 90 percent of the population lived rurally and worked on the land, going hungry during the frequent food shortages. Begging was common, and the vast majority of the English people were illiterate and superstitious; the discontent of communities often boiled over into rioting and witch-hunts (Tunzelmann 2008: 12). The Mughal Empire, however, during this time had expanded to the size of fifteen Englands (Kennedy 1989). In 1577, the average Indian peasant enjoyed a relatively higher income and lower taxation than his descendants ever would again. In the bazaars were sold gold from Jaipur, rubies from Burma, fine shawls from Kashmir, spices from the islands, opium from Bengal, and dancing-girls from Africa (Wolpert 2004: 128-30; Tunzelmann 2008: 11). And the story of India as one of the great world powers was reasonably established.

The real key to the change in the story is the development of sea power by Western European states. Early Southeast Asian and Portuguese ships sailing to the Kalinga and Calicut in 1490s were amazed at India's sheer riches. During this period – London was a mere town. New York did not exist (Kennedy, 2004). When the contemporary European and American powers were living a tribal life, Kalinga was at its height of material glory. During this period, somewhere at the eastern part of India, some Kalingan sisters were busy fighting with their beloved brothers about the colour and quality of their Bangles. Young and brat Kalingan girls “arguably” the most “beautiful” in India had a delicate sense of fashion consciousness in those days of limited communication.⁸ Conscious of the prevalent fashion and the inferior quality of locally made bangles, the Oriya girls outrightly rejected it and demanding its replacement with those made from Malaya, Java, Sumatra and Bali. Their sea faring agile Oriya brothers could do little but to oblige to their lovely demand. The passionate persuasions of the Oriya girls use to get gems and jewelry for them from far off countries. This was when the naval trade of Orissa was engagingly flourishing.

Meghasthenes, Ptolomy, Xuanzang and other foreign travelers named numerous ports and harbours all along the coastal line of Orissa. Some of the ports mentioned by those ancient writers includes Tamralipti (Tamluk), Kosambia (Balasore), Dosarene (Dhamarra), Manada (Mahanadi), Pakura (Palur-Risikulya), Konnagar (Konark), Nanigain (Puri), and Kalinganagar (Vamsadhara). However, what distinguished the European powers was precisely the capacity to organise military force at sea. Small Portuguese ships would sail half way around the world. Indians ships did not do so, even though it could have afforded to. The most successful seafaring European nation was best geographically placed: Great Britain (Kennedy, 2004).

The other singular British advantage was the invention of steam power and the consequential Industrial Revolution. For the first time, an animated source of energy, i.e.

coal was used. Before steam power in 1750, Britain and India had the same per capita level of industrialisation. They both had horse-drawn transport, craftsmen, traditional textile, some iron production, hungry peasants and rich landlords, maharajas and dukes. By this time, Orissa's fate was attached with India as the British imperialism was lurking at the doors of India. Because of steam power, Britain's productivity had jumped ahead massively and so India fell from equal status to lagging a hundred times behind Britain in a mere century and half. Surprisingly, Great Britain comprised of a few small islands with 2 percent of the world's population ruled over one quarter of the world's land and pretty well all the sea surface. Great Britain's prying eyes concentrated on Orissa during the 17th century.

Orissa's Encounter with European Colonisers

Orissa's first encounter with any European power, which had an intention of colonisation of the province, was with that of the Portuguese. In 1498, the Portuguese arrived in India via the Cape, and during the next sixteen years established themselves on the Madras coast. The natives, alarmed by their growing importance, fell upon their principal fort, temporarily expelled the foreigners, and about 1514 AD pushed them northward to the Subarnarekha in Orissa. Here they founded a fugitive colony at the town of Pippli, now a ruined and silt-locked village, about ten miles up the river, but then a fine harbour commanding a free approach from the sea.⁹ They did not seem, however, to gain very much by their new settlement, and while the names of the Dutch, French, Danes, and English still live in the mouths of the people, that of the Portuguese has utterly disappeared. The British contact with Orissa began in the first half of the 17th century. Britain's earliest factory in Bengal lay within Orissa's boundaries, but even this factory does not represent the first connection of Orissa with a European Power. Sir William W. Hunter said, "the two Orissa harbours — Pippli, founded in 1635, and Balasore, founded in 1642 — formed the basis of our future greatness in Bengal" (Hunter 1872: 39). Hunter further said, "True to our national character, we settled in Orissa as merchants long before we made our appearance as rulers" (Hunter 1872: 37).

Orissa came within the orbit of the East India Company's political interest after the Battle of Buxar in 1764. At the throne of Bengal, Mir Jafar was succeeded by his son-in-law Mir Kasim in the year 1760. Mir Jafar had handed over the districts of Chittagong, Midnapore and Burdwan to the Company. Mir Kasim attempted to recover Bengal from the hands of British. In 1764, he enlisted the help of Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II and Nawab Shuja Ud Daulah of Oudh. But their combined troops were defeated in the Battle of Buxar in 1764 by the company troops led by Major Hector Munro. The victory at the battle of Buxar offered Lord Robert Clive¹⁰ the fabulous Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.¹¹ But "Orissa", in the said grant, was nothing more than the single district of Midnapore, now in the state of West Bengal. The titular Mughal Emperor used the term "Bengal, Bihar and Orissa" as those territories had long formed one administrative unit in the days of the great Muhgals. Soon after the grant of the Diwani, Clive attempted to get possession of Orissa proper through negotiation with Marathas. In 1766, he sent Thomas Motte to Sambalpur to explore the possibility of diamond trade. At the same time, he was required to meet the Maratha Subahdar at Cuttack to initiate political talks.

Accordingly, Motte met Bhawani Pandit, the Subahdar, twice. In their first meeting,

Motte handed over Clive's letter to Bhawani Pandit. The latter reminded him of the "just demand" of his master, Janoji Bhonsla, on the East India Company for the arrears of tribute due from Bengal and Bihar. In reply Motte suggested that it would be better for mouth of Janoji to give up Orissa to the Company on payment of a stipulated sum. On his return journey from Sambalpur, Motte again reminded the matter to Bhawani Pandit who agreed to convey it to Janoji. But nothing came out of Clive's policy to get Orissa by negotiation.

Warren Hastings opened negotiation with Janoji's successor Madhoji Bhonsla and succeeded in bringing him into some understanding with the British during the First Maratha War in 1782. The British troops were permitted to march through Orissa under the command of Col. Pearse. But he could not get the possession of Orissa from the Marathas.¹² After Warren Hasting's departure, Lord Cornwallis opened negotiations for defensive alliance with Madhoji by sending George Forster, a civil servant, on the Madras establishment, to Nagpur. Forster's attempt also failed, but Madhoji's successor Raghujii II permitted British troops to march through Orissa in time of the third Mysore War in 1790.¹³

From Robert Clive to Charles Cornwallis, the East India Company had tried to get possession of Orissa by any means but failed comprehensively. It was finally left to Lord Wellesley to conquer Orissa during the Second Anglo-Maratha War in 1803.¹⁴ A delicate war build up was commenced and all power of the East India Company employed for the purpose of annexing Orissa.

The Colonisation of Orissa

At this time all Orissa lay at the mercy of Afghan, Mughal, and Marhatta banditti. However, the English Factory at Balasore grew into a great seat of maritime trade. The British easily got over the difficulty of the want of a local manufacturing population, by making that city the only safe place for peaceful industry in the Province. In Ganjam, the District adjoining Orissa on the south, the British commanding officer proposed a regular military occupation of every important weaving village. His plan broke down, as the country was seventy miles long, and of great breadth; but the weavers were concentrated into large villages, and there protected while at work by the East India Company's troops. This system of removing the weavers from their old habitations, and arbitrarily fixing them in new centres of industry, opened a door for tyranny and forced labour on the part of the Factory.

The British understood the fact that as long as the Mughals or Afghans retained their hold on Orissa, trade was possible if protected by cannon. But after these races abandoned the Province to Maratha misrule in 1751, British operations became circumscribed within the factory walls. Thirty years later the Maratha demanded black mail from the then British Province of Bengal and the British found themselves too weak to venture on any bolder policy than conciliation and bribes. The Secret Despatch to the Court of Directors, dated April 30, 1781 tells the fact that Warren Hastings paid 120,000 as bribe to the Marathas.¹⁵

But the experience of the next twenty years convinced the British, that if they want to remain in India, the Maratha must be driven out of Orissa. In this Province, they had

fixed themselves between the British territories of Madras and Bengal, and they used their position as a stronghold from which to sally out on both.

The following year the Orissa Marathas trampled out every vestige of British civil rule beneath their horses' hoofs, and the supreme hour of British. After infinite disturbances, the Collector plainly informed the Madras Government that he could not "declare the Revenue certain without some regular troop". One course alone remained. As long as the Marathas held their position in the Mahanadi delta, and could sally forth on plundering expeditions secure of a retreat amid its network of rivers, British dominion in the Districts, alike to the north and to the south, hung by a hair. Accordingly, in 1803, Lord Wellesley resolved to root out once and for ever the Marathas from Orissa.¹⁶

On two separate occasions, detachments of British troops had passed through that Province, and British generals possessed a detailed account of the route. On September 4, 1803, British troops marched out from Ganjam, and, keeping along the shore, halted for the night on the desolate sandbanks of Paradeep, the frontier village on the Orissa Coast. Next morning the little army crossed the boundary, with eight hundred bullock-carts of grain, and 145,000 Rupees in the military chest. As they marched up the narrow sandy strip which separates the Chilka from the sea, one chieftain after another came out to greet them. The Marathas had made themselves hated by every class of the people; the petty princes trembled for their lands; the peasantry during two generations had lived in a chronic state of flight into the jungle; and even the priests of Jagannath had learned to detest their Maratha co-religionists for their endless extortions and rapine. A couple of cannon and 300 men might have disputed for days the dangerous channel through which the Chilka poured through the narrow sandy strip into the sea. But instead of an opposing army, British general found only a deputation of venerable white-robed Brahmins, who begged that their temple, the religious key to the Province, might be placed under the protection of the British.¹⁷ The possession of the god had always given the dominion of Orissa, and on September 18, British army encamped within the shadow of his walls.

But what were the Maratha Governors about during these precious fourteen days? Though with no hope of help from an outraged people, they might at least have struck a blow for themselves. Yet day after day British troops advanced up the narrow strip and across the boiling outlet of the Chilka, seeing nothing of the enemy except a distant whirlwind of dust, and light-armed horsemen hovering far in the front. At Puri, these outlying clouds consolidated into a Maratha camp firmly posted on the other side of the river, which flows past that city. They could have chosen no better post for making a great defence. During the summer, the stream dwindled into a chain of marshes and lakes, with intervals of dry land between. But in the rainy season, towards the end of which British invasion took place, it came down in uncontrollable freshets, with huge floods and backwaters, in some places too shallow for boats, in others too deep to ford. The pacific proclamations, by which Lord Wellesley had assured all classes of the natives in their rights, could have but small effect with the dark masses of foreign Maratha horse, drawn up on the other side of these treacherous waters. They opened a sharp fire on the British troops and there was every possibility that the British would suffer heavy casualty. But half a century of license and misrule had left to the Marathas little trace of that unflinching courage which a generation before had decided the fate of a hundred battles (Hunter

1870: 234). Their cavalry broke and fled before a few whiffs of English grapeshot.

On October 2, 1803 the British had hastened the movements of Marathas by a night attack on their camp, while they were leisurely eating their dinner. After two weeks, the British reached Cuttack City, which they entered unopposed the gates open, and all the inhabitants' houses empty. After another six days, the British attacked the Fort. The Fort was a stronghold, firmly fixed between two branches of the Mahanadi, formed the one difficult fortification in Orissa. Faced with stones, defended by eight small towers, surrounded by a high rampart and a deep moat, 20 to 30 paces broad, and in some places by a double ditch, its single weak point was the number of hollows in the neighbouring fields, which afforded good cover for the besiegers.

At 10 am on October 14, 1803 an English officer blew open one of the small gates, receiving a wound the same moment in the neck, and a storming party dashed into the heart of the fortifications. A few moments ended the struggle. The Colonel of the attacking party fell with a wound in his leg; two or three soldiers were killed; the Marathas leaped the ramparts and streamed out of the other gates; about thirty of their dead bodies were carried out in bullock carts to the river, where they were eaten by wild beasts and birds. The great Province of Orissa, with its 23,907 square miles and three million souls, passed under British Rule.¹⁸

Conclusion

The British conquest in 1803 was an easy task for two reasons. First, the Raja of Nagpur Raghuji Bhonsle then ruler of Orissa did not possess the desirable number of troops in Orissa to resist the British onslaught. In fact, only a feeble resistance was given to the enemy in time of occupation. Secondly, the British army had earned a sound knowledge of the topography of Orissa during their march through the territory on two previous occasions under the command of Col. Pearse in 1781 during the second Anglo-Mysore War and Col. Cockrell in 1790 during the third Anglo-Mysore War. In 1803 they took only one-month i.e., from September 14, 1803 to October 14, 1803 to occupy the province.

However, William Hunter provided a detailed explanation on the reason of British victory in Orissa. He wrote: "Plassey, which gave us Bengal, with its forty millions of souls, and potential supremacy throughout the whole - Indian Empire, cost us seventy-two European soldiers. If we won, the great Province of Orissa with little loss to, it is because we deserved to do so". Hunter provided tremendous importance to the timing of the attack and the intelligence received before the attack. He said,

Had our troops started a month earlier or a month later, the four hundred litter-bearers for the sick would have had much heavier work. A few weeks before, the state of the floods would have rendered the country impassable by our artillery, and the malaria would have killed off our men like an infected flock of sheep. A few weeks later, the dry, flat rice-fields would have afforded exactly the sort of fighting ground, which the Maratha cavalry loved.

Hunter revealed that (Hunter 1872: 59):

We chose exactly the time which a Collector of an Orissa District, after years of

acquaintance with the country, would now recommend for the advance of a column of infantry against masses of cavalry. Our free-handed outlay of money for provisions and carriage — our carefully collected information as to the route — our pacific Proclamations to the people — our politic benevolence to Jagannath and his priests — above all, our ceaseless movement forward in the face of the Marhatta soldiery, who were as much foreigners as ourselves, and more hateful to the natives, — in short, every incident of the campaign, merited success and obtained it.

After the year 1803, Orissa joined the misery of India under the British rule. Gradually a foreign government afflicted the whole of the state. The province reduced to the exploitation field of a wild European country – Great Britain. A permanent halt was imposed in every field and the only activities allowed were to promote the British economy and imperialism. Entrepreneurship, maritime trade, cultural development and material prosperity gave way to exploitation and abject poverty. For one and half century, the exploitation continued which reduced the once warrior and brave Kalingan people into a mere subjugated subject of the British. So great was the exploitation of Orissa that even homegrown predators – like the Bengalis – wanted to dismember the ancient Kalinga script. Their effort to replace the Oriya script with Bengali received a jolt when in 1903 separate Orissa state movement took place.

With the passing of time efforts of Oriya people had preserved the separate identity of Orissa province. Oriya script received respect and recognition. Nevertheless, the foreign imposed poverty in every field remained with the Oriya people. The departure of the British and independence of the country changed little for Orissa. The psyche of generations of suppressed people is still to come in term with its glorious past – where great Kalingan people had challenged the might of indefatigable emperors; where the Kalingan people had surpassed insurmountable boundary to colonise countries; where enterprising Kalingan used to interact with Europe from a point of dominance; and where the Kalingan used to impress sagely travelers with their wit, wisdom and wealth.

Notes

¹ Presently although Orissa is no longer the most indebted state of India, a dubious distinction it had enjoyed for a long time, the state is well below middle-income states in terms of its Human Development Index; “Orissa”. World Bank Study Paper 2012, undated, viewed on February 30, 2012.

<http://go.worldbank.org/U3YA770CC0>.

² Fifth century Chinese monk, Faxian and 13th century Venetian merchant took this route for their return to China and Italy respectively; Nehru, Jawaharlal (2004): *Glimpses of World History* (New Delhi: Penguin Publication), p.141.

³ Author’s communication with Salman Rashid, January 28, 2012.

⁴ Excavation conducted at Sisupalgarh (20°13'; 85°51') Dt. Khurda, Orissa by the ASI under B.B. Lal in 1948 has revealed that the site was in occupation from the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. to the middle of the 4th century AD; “Important Excavation”, Archeological Survey of India, Viewed on February 20, 2012

http://asi.nic.in/asi_exca_imp_orissa.asp.

⁵ Author's fieldwork in Istanbul, December 2010; Hagia Sophia was originally built in 360 AD. However, the structure had undergone destruction both manmade and natural for not less than half a dozen times before the present structure built in 15th century.

⁶ Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore wrote about Konark as, "Here the language of stone surpasses the language of man".

⁷ Devotional songs and dance with a set of movable musical instruments.

⁸ Emperor Ashoka was struck and mesmerised by the flawless beauty of Kaurwaki, daughter of a Kalingan fisherman; Queen's Edict, Allahabad.

⁹ Joannes de Last, de Imperio Magni Mongolis, bears witness to the Portuguese at Pippli (Philip-patam) in 1631. Mr. Lethbridge, the able editor of that work, says that an interesting account of this port is to be found among the Dutch archives, transferred in 1853 from Chinsura to The Hague.

¹⁰ Robert Clive enters Company's service as writer, 1742. Twice in India, he made failed attempt to commit suicide to get rid of his forced job in India. He made his third and successful suicide attempt on November 22, 1774 in England but not before serving as Governor of Bengal, 1765-67 and establishing the foundation of the British Empire in India.

¹¹ The establishment of British paramountcy along with the Diwani (revenue administration) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was the major significance of the Battle of Buxar.

¹² Warren Hastings acts of extortion vis-à-vis Indian rulers, as well as other charges pertaining to his conduct of Indian affairs, became the basis of Hastings' impeachment in Parliament. In other respect his encouragement to Charles Wilkins rendered the Bhagwat Gita get translated into English.

¹³ The British used the two thoroughfares allowed by the Maratha, first under Col. Pearse and second under Col. Cockreil, to survey the routes for future attacks.

¹⁴ Lord Wellesley one of the most brilliant Governor-Generals of Bengal introduced the Subsidiary Alliance system to undo with the French influence and bring the Indian princely states of Oudh, Nagpur, Gwalior, Indore, Baroda, Hyderabad and Mysore within the purview of the British power of Jurisdiction.

¹⁵ Vide Memorandum on Records, Foreign Department, Secretary to the Record Commission, 1865, p. 43.

¹⁶ From J. Green Well to Warren Hastings, Governor-General, dated November 30, 1780.

¹⁷ Commissioner's Letter to Board of Revenue on the affairs of Jagannath, August 26, 1843.

¹⁸ Sergeant Christopher Samuel Plummer's narrative to W. W. Hunter, quoted in Hunter, William W. (1872) *Orissa: Or the Vicissitudes of an Indian Province Under Native and British Rule, Vol. II* (London: Smith, Elder and Co. Publication), p. 59.

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