CHAPTER IV

A. ASPECTS OF SOCIAL LIFE

1. Society and Natural environment

The everyday life of the people of ancient Bengal received due attention from the contemporary terracotta artists and in this life the flora and fauna played a recognisably significant role evidently for their efficacy in matters of creation. The world of flora and fauna was looked upon as inseparably connected with the world of the humans and in the art under review this connection is impressively delineated.

Among the trees and plants the plantain tree finds a prominent depiction in several terracotta plaques from Pāhārpur. A representative specimen (ht. 18 cm.) is now preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi. ¹ Next comes the banyan tree, which is met with on a plaque from the same site. A tree with horizontal marks and fruits at the stems of the long leaves, depicted in one of the Pāhārpur plaques may stand for the coconut palm. ² This is prolific on several plaques from Chandraketugarh where it is seen as being uprooted by a mad elephant. A tree with drooping branches on another example from Pāhārpur may be taken as a willow or reed, which is commonly found on the soil of riverine Bengal. Apart from this, depiction of Champaka and Kadamba trees are also seen.

1. VRM No. 2077.
A terracotta round inscribed (dia. 3 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, bears on its obverse the impression of the ears of corn united at the bottom or some plant motif with three branches (PLATE : I1a ). Another circular inscribed flat clay seal from the same site bears in low relief three stalks of wheat plant. 3 Similar symbol is also found in a seal from Mahāstāṅgarh, 4 both datable to the Gupta Period.

A terracotta sealing from Bāngarh of late third-fourth century B.C. contains on the obverse the design of rice-plants with five nicely carved stalks. This design, a local one, is typical of the rice producing land of Bengal. On the reverse of the seal marks of small fibres and something like a plantain leaf is visible. 5

Sandhyākaranandī suggests that in his days lotus added to the scenic beauty of Varendra. And indeed this flower is seen on several plaques as young buds, full blown and also with leaves. Some plaques hailing from Chandraketugarh and Tamluk depict full-blown lotuses in association with Goddess Śrī-Lakshmī and several Yaksha figures (PLATE : IIb ). The Bodhisattva figures, the Buddhist Goddess Tārā and several Gandharva figures from Pāhārpur are shown as holding lotus buds or full-blosomed flowers. In a terracotta plaque (ht. 24.5 cm.) in situ from Bhāṣu Vihāra, an excellent representation of a lotus flower in full

bloom is seen as placed on a large pod of the flower. The petals of
the flower is neatly carved. A terracotta plaque from Ananda Vihāra,
Mahāmatī, depicting an almost similar stylized blue or night lotus
merits mention.7

The animals in Bengal terracottas are experienced from within. An
interior life force pervaded and animated these figures sensitively. They
are defined by a profile of bold and simple contours with gently
glowing vitality throbbing from within. They vibrate the warmth and
pulse of actual life. These animal figures communicate a very strong
resemblance to the other plastic works of the contemporary world. They
were the mask of the universal life force and substance that inhabits
equally with the human frame.

Among the animal figures the bull seemed to be the most ancient
and venerated one. In the Hindu belief bull is the theriomorphic
representation of the God Śiva. It is also his yāhana or vehicle. As
such the figure of bull as a cult object appears in numerous terracotta
pieces.

A humped bull (ht. 10.1 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Harinārāyappur
(I), probably belonging to the proto-historic period deserves mention.
This terracotta piece represents the fore-part of a brāhmaṇī bull with a
large fan shaped hump. The perforation on the mouth was obviously

6. BA., 1, No. 1, 1979, p. 63.
7. Ibid., p. 211.
meant for pulling it with a string like the toy-carts. A round plaque (dia. 4 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, containing the depiction of a horned humped bull with upraised tail and another (ht. 5 cm.; private collection) in movement are also of great interest. The physiognomy and the treatment of the figures are remarkable. Here mention may also be made of the seated humped bull of the Gupta epoch illustrated in a seal from Maṅgalkot. Another hard burnt humped bull (ht. 7 cm.; private collection) in blackish red of seventh-eighth century, hailing from Häbrā is also a specimen of high aesthetic value.

A terracotta square plaque (8.5 cm. sq.; Asutosh Museum) from Bāngarh shows a running bull of robust body with upraised tail. Another plaque (ht. 6.9 cm.) from the same site, contains a similar bull but not in running attitude (PLATE : IIc). In a circular plaque from Bāngarh the feet of a bull are depicted in such a way as to express motion. A terracotta sealing from the same site also contains the figure of a running bull. Another seal (State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of the first century B.C. or the first century A.D., depicts a bull as running free. The hind portion of a charging bull from the same site (private collection) is also notable. The anatomical details with pent up volume of the muscles, high hump and upraised tail of these figures bespeak of the skill of the terracotta artist of Bengal. They are indeed full of life and vigour. The frequent occurrence of this animal in plaques and sealings suggests that bull was probably a cult object.

8. 'Vartamān', April 21, 1990.
The elephant in order of popularity ranks next to bull. It was a favourite animal portrayed in the terracotta art of ancient Bengal. It is available not only in modelled shapes with applied and stamped accessories but also in moulds singly or in procession.

An almost square plaque (6.6 cm. sq.) from Bāngarh contains an elephant figure holding an object like a tree by its trunk and carries something on its back9 (PLATE : Iic). Several terracotta plaques from Chandraketugarh of about first century A.D. depict elephant figures in various moods. One of them (ht. 6.2 cm. ; private collection) shows the animal with floral background and the other (ht. 6 cm. ; private collection) depicts the elephant with unusual elegance and another (ht. 9.5 cm.) though corroded clearly represents an elephant possibly trying to put down a tree with its head and front leg. A terracotta plaque (ht. 24.5 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra with a fine naturalistic representation bears the figure of a wild male elephant trampling lotus flowers and plants.10 Another plaque (ht. 24.5 cm.) from the same site represents a wild elephant being shoted by a Śavara archer.11 The nature of the execution of a plaque (ht. 29.5 cm. : Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur is attractive. It shows an elephant in motion with full vitality and strength (Plate : IId). Here the robust body and the act of fleeing in fear is undoubtedly naturalistic. The adorned procession in a

10. BA., op. cit., p. 61.
plaque (ht. 8.4 cm.; National Museum of Bangladesh) from Mahāsthānagreh of first century B.C., is also remarkable. 12

Elephants carrying human figures on its back is also a common theme of Bengal terracottas. Here also the regalia over the body and ornaments made the animal more dignified. A fragmentary plaque (ht. 10.2 cm.; Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk of about second century B.C., depicts four harnessed elephants driven by a devatā or a māhout. The arrangement of the figures, the ornamental bands round their fore-heads and the portrayals of thick wrinkled skin of the animal is praiseworthy.

With the passage of time the elephant came to be regarded as an auspicious animal. So in more than one occasion the Buddha is called an elephant. In Buddhist mythology, the Buddha is represented as having entered the womb of Māyādevī in the form of white elephant. Terracottas from Bengal depict the dream of queen Māyā in several occasions. The six-tusked elephant (symbolising the Buddha) depicted in a plaque narrating the Chhaddanta Jātaka and the representation of the white elephant in the plaque telling the story of Vessantara Jātaka are also noteworthy.

Deer, one of the most attractive beast of the animal world is portrayed in Bengal terracottas with much care and as such they show

considerable maturity in form and style.

A seal (dia. 1.9 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Harinārāyahāpur (I) of proto-historic period represents a deer in an archaic form. The figure here is delineated in linear abstraction. The unknown symbol engraved on the right sides makes the seal more enigmatic. Another significant seal from the same site shows a pair of archaic deer and two human figures confronting each other.

One of the most realistic studies of this animal form portraying a doe with her fawn in the act of fleeing in a plaque (ht. 7.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century B.C. (PLATE: III a) and another from Tamluk (ht. 8 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) are unique. Another plaque (ht. 27.3 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur also show a doe with her fawn in the act of fleeing with the fore-legs upraised. The treatment of the figures are much cruder than the above ones. An excellent depiction of a deer with her young is found in a plaque (ht. 25.4 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra with natural representation and refined expression. Another plaque (ht. 25.4 cm.) from the same site 'in situ' depicts a doe with its fawn resting its head on her back. The head of the doe here is broken and missing. The most mature diction of Pāla art representing this theme is another plaque (ht. 31 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra (PLATE: III b). It contains a doe with slender graceful body

14. VRM No. 2062.
and long limbs, decorated with a scarf and a ribbon with a bell round its neck. The fawn is shown as resting its head on her body. The face of the figure is slightly damaged.\textsuperscript{15}

A plaque (ht. 5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh represents a standing deer with its head turned up and looking in front. One remarkable representation of such posture is shown in another (ht. 27.9 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārupur\textsuperscript{16} where a deer with curled horns over its forehead stands on the tips of the hoofs and looks at the back. The physiognomy and the treatment of the figure is quite natural. Another plaque\textsuperscript{17} (ht. 27 cm.) in the same museum shows a standing deer with its head upward. Here the figure is slimmer than the former and is much more natural.

A running deer with slender body, marked hoofs and horns depicted in a plaque (ht. 7.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh is remarkable. Here the presence of the deer in a wood is indicated by the representation of a tree on the background which is partly damaged. A fragmentary potsherd from Mahāsthāṅgarh\textsuperscript{18} bear in low relief a herd of a deer and a centaur which are chased and discharged with an arrow by a man on a chariot.

\textsuperscript{15} Bangladesh Lalitkala, op. cit., pl. VII fig. 6.
\textsuperscript{16} VRM No. 2187.
\textsuperscript{17} VRM No. 2060.
\textsuperscript{18} ASIAR., 1928-29, 1933, pl. XLII.
A hard burnt terracotta head (length 6.5 cm.; private collection) from Boral represents a single horned deer, an uncommon species which has not surpassed the eyes of the clay modellers.

A fragmentary part of a terracotta vase (ht. 10 cm. private collection) from Chandraketugarh show the head of a deer in frontal position. The horns and the long attractive eyes are natural. The perforation of the mouth suggests the use of the vessel as a tea-pot or anything similar to that. Another fragmentary portion of a potsherd (ht. 8.5 cm.; private collection) from the same find spot stamped with a stylistic rein deer is also remarkable (PLATE: III C).

Horse which was introduced in India by the Indo-European people is very commonly depicted in terracotta art of Bengal. The swiftness of the horse is equated with the pervading quality of the Gods and is called 'Āśva', meaning pervador. As such horse is used as a vehicle of a large number of deities like Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa and Sūrya. In Buddhist Philosophy the horse stands as a symbol of renunciation.

In a terracotta plaque (ht. 6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh a horse is represented amidst a background decked with flowers. This probably confers upon the beast a heavenly quality. The figure of a winged horse (ht. 5.2 cm.; private collection) portrayed in a specimen, found at Chandraketugarh, is of an uncommon variety. Here the figure bears wings over its shoulder and is shown with tail upraised. This representation remains us of the mythical horse, Pakṣhīrāj which has the power of flying (PLATE: III d). The caprisoned
horse in motion depicted on a plaque from Mangalkot \(^{19}\) (I) of the Kushāna epoch is also striking. One of the unique representation of this animal is shown in a pique (ht. 19.1 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur. It shows a mad or angry horse with fierce look trampling over a human body. The action of the horse here is so natural that it strucks the eye of the gazer.\(^{20}\) Another plaque (ht.27.9 cm.) from the same site, preserved in the foresaid museum represent the head of a horse beneath a pavilion. Here the horse's head in profile bears dignity and power. The curved manes falling over the shoulder, the long ears and the treatment of the face are attractive.\(^{21}\) Apart from this, several terracotta toy-carts from Bengal bear the effigy of a horse with rein and other ornaments. These toy-carts also represent the horse as vāhanas of gods and are often shown as drawing chariots.

Buffalo, another quadrupade is rarely portrayed in terracotta art. A temple plaque (ht.25 cm.; Indian Museum) from Maināmatī of eighth-ninth century represents a recumbent buffalo as scratching its ears with its legs. Stylistically it has a close resemblance to the terracotta plaques from Pāhārpur.

Another buffalo figure on a terracotta plaque from Mahāsthāngarh is also notable. Here a buffalo at rest or asleep with curled up body, curved neck and head resting against the legs is a very convincing naturalistic representation with simple but a naive direct fashion.

\(^{19}\) Mukherjee, S.K., 'Terracotta figurines of the Kushāna period in the Gangetic Valley', Historical Archaeology in India, New Delhi, 1990, p.275.

\(^{20}\) VRM No.2207.

\(^{21}\) VRM No.2172.
With the development of Hinduism the buffalo or mahisha as the Titan foe of the Goddess Durgā appeared in some terracotta plaques. In such a plaque from Tamluk (Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre), the buffalo is shown lying beneath the Goddess who places her left leg over its back. The animal here rests its fore-part on the ground with folded legs. This part is shortened probably due to the paucity of space (PLATE : IVa).

The scarcity of the lion on Indian soil prevented the artists in carving fine figures like those of other animals. Their representation lacked spontaneous vigour. They failed to move into the sphere of reality and remained conventional in style and execution.

A terracotta plaque (ht. 3.2 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of first century B.C. or first century A.D. represents a lion in a roaring attitude with upraised tail. Another figure of a seated lion roaring with tail upraised is represented in a fragmentary plaque (ht. 27 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur. Here the fore-part of the lion is much bigger than its hind part and thus more conventionalized than natural. Another plaque (ht. 31.2 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from the same site represent a Pañchatantra story where a lion is shown on its fore legs over a well. Here the figure bearing an angry look lacks spontaneous vigour.

22. VRM No.2176.
23. VRM No.2066.
A large terracotta plaque (ht. 45.4 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra shows the representation of a fine lion holding in its paws a meek and mild bird and a hare (PLATE : IV b ). A terracotta corner plaque in situ (26 cm. sq.) containing the figures of lion on elephant is also a popular motif in Maināmatī.

A damaged plaque (ht. 6.9 cm. ; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh bears a winged lion seated on a pillar base. The figure is distinct and is in forefront, though its head is lost. It sits on its haunches and the wings emerge from the joint of its fore-legs. The tail rests on its back. Here also in spite of the maturity of the artist the style remained conventional.

With the passing of time the lion became the vehicle or vāhana of Goddess Durgā. This aspect of the beast is noticed in a plaque from Tamluk. Here the lion makes a magnificent bound for the adversary (PLATE : IV a ).

A well burnt terracotta seal (length 2.6 cm) from Rājbāgīdāṅgā contains on its obverse the motif of a cattle with upright horns engaged in chewing leaves of a plant. Below it is shown a calf engaged in sucking. Aesthetically this is a superb representation.

A plaque (ht. 24.8 cm ; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpar is second specimen where a cow is shown with her calf. The

beast here with her face in profile and the forelegs slightly raised stands in a graceful posture. The young one is a replica of its mother. Here the treatment of the muscle and the contour of the body is so natural that it may be classed with the other animal figures of the contemporary world (PLATE : IV c.).

Monkey the long-tailed primate is represented most realistically in the ancient terracottas of Bengal.

In a round miniature plaque (dia. 3.2 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, the monkey is posed as climbing on a branch of a tree with hands and feet firmly grasping on it. This natural portrait is hardly expected in those days. The head of a monkey (ht. 4 cm.; private collection) from the same site with hairs marked by incised lines and the witty face is worth notice.

The Buddha as a Bodhisattva is said to have born as a monkey in several occasions. The episodes of the Vānerindra or Vānara Jātaka, the Teyodhamma Jātaka and the Mahākopi Jātaka are illustrated in Bengal terracottas with care and perfection. A few plaques representing some Rāmāyana stories and fables also bear monkey figures (cf. infra., pp.134-135,141,148)

Among the other animals rhinoceros portrayed in plaques from Chandraketugarh (ht. 4.9 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) and Maṅgalkoṭ (Department of Archaeology, Calcutta University) are notable for the realistic portrayal of the voluminous mass and the hide. The
trotting goat (ht. 4.1 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) and the boar (ht. 4 cm.) both from Chandraketugarh and preserved in the same museum also deserve mention. The most natural treatment of boar is found in a plaque (ht. 30 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur where the animal with its fore-legs slightly upraised and the tail twisting over the haunch looks upward.26 The Pāhārpur plaques among other animals rarely represent donkey, camel and bear. Smaller animals like hare and tortoise, the mongoose and the other, porcupine and lizard are sometimes depicted.27 Crocodile is also represented in a few examples. Figures of ram and tiger in the form of toy-carts and also as vāhanas of divinities are frequently depicted.

Terracotta art is predominantly decorative in character and as such birds also occupy an important position. Peacock, the beautiful bird is portrayed in Bengal terracottas with great care. In a circular medallion (dia. 7.5 cm.) from Bāngarh,28 a peacock with its tail and feathers turned upward is shown as bending down towards the left. The bird is in a couchant attitude and has tuft on the head and holds a snake in its beak. A rosette, probably to decorate the empty space is shown between the tail and back of the bird. Stylistically this medallion is a product of the Śuṅga age.

26. VRM No. 2211.
A terracotta plaque (ht. 18 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra\textsuperscript{29} contain an excellent bas relief of a peacock. It has stylized wings and tail ending in ornamental scrolls. Though the corner of the plaque containing the tail is broken yet in style and execution this plaque is superior to those excavated at Maināmatī and Pāhārpur.

Bodhisattva, in one of his birth was born as a golden peacock. This Mora or Mahāmore Jātaka is illustrated in a terracotta plaque (ht. 5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, where the peacock with open beaks express the moment of chanting a note. The fine craftsmanship and execution of this plaque assigns it to about the second century B.C. Another fragmentary plaque (ht. 6.3 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from the same site, depicts the same story. It shows a peacock with tuft at the head and feathers marked by incised lines. Beside it, is a male figure adorned with peacock's feather above his fore-head. The bird here is abnormally big. (FIGURE: a).

A terracotta sealing (dia. 6.5 cm. approx.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh depicts a peacock standing between three horizontal architraves. The torana perched with a beautiful-tailed peacock perhaps represents a dynastic insignia (lāṅchhana) or it may be associated with some particular cult deity.

\textsuperscript{29} BA, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 61.
A terracotta toy cart (ht. 10 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) representing a peacock with its spread up plumage is a striking specimen of the Śrīṅga art idom. (PLATE: IV d)

In art creations the haṁsa is figured as a sacred bird. It is prominent both in Brahmanical and Buddhist belief. This bird is depicted in a terracotta plaque (ht. 11.4 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh where it is shown as pecking at the beads of the ornamented tassels of a lady.

In this respect a particular reference may be made to those unearthed from Pāhārpur, Maināmatī and Bhāsu Vihāra. In a plaque (ht. 29.3 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur, a haṁsa or swan is shown with its head turned backward and open beaks. The tail and wings of the bird is depicted in conventional ornamental scroll. In another plaque (ht. 31.3 cm.) from the same find-spot and preserved in the same museum the bird with the ornamental floral tail is shown as holding something like a staff in its bill supported by the legs. In another occasion (ht. 23 cm.) the bird with unusual heavy tail twisted upward is shown as standing with a fish in between its bills. This representation from Pāhārpur betray the same traits as visualized in Maināmatī examples. A terracotta plaque (ht. 25.4 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra contains the best representation of a Rājhaṁsa holding a pearl necklace in its bill (PLATE: V a). This highly naturalistic superb

30 VRM No. 2167.
31 VRM No. 2059.
carving may be compared with the products of Gupta classical art. Another plaque (ht. 25.4 cm.) from the same site 'in situ' depicts a Rājhaṁsa with stylized wings and tail ending in ornamental scrolls and pecking a lotus with its bill.32

A completely different character of a frieze of haṁsas of about the sixth-eighth century is met with in a row of terracotta plaques (4.1 cm. sq.) hailing from Rājbāḍīdārā.33 This band of birds may possibly be a part of an earthen pot containing perhaps sacred relics or any other object of religious significance.

The birds on two jointed plaques stand face to face almost touching each other's bills which holds strings of beads or pearls. In another row, pair of birds stand back to back. The mouth of the birds are indicated by a cut dividing the culmen into two ridges. The birds are shown with long and graceful necks, deep incised circles of eyes with a bold dot in the middle. The hairs are arranged into a tuft and the fan shaped tail covert. They have short legs with webbed feet. The extant traces of the white colour shows that the plumage was originally pure white.

The presence of the tuft of hair arises the problem of identifying this bird with haṁsa. In earlier times the haṁsas are represented naturalistically. But in later periods its form became

32. BA., op. cit., p. 63.
considerably stylized. The tuft of hair and the fan shaped foliated tail are the marks of this conventionalized form.

Scene of suka krIgā have been copiously used by the Bengal artist. The bird represented here is mainly parrot. The parrot is the vehicle of the God of love (Kāmadeva) and as such its association with females is apparent. In a terracotta plaque (ht. 14.3 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Pokharpa, of about the second century B.C., a lady is shown as holding a pet parrot in her left hand (PLATE: Ic). In another plaque (ht. 13.9 cm.) from Chandraketugarh, of about first century B.C., now collected in the same museum, a Yaksha or a prince is shown as holding a parrot.

Several plaques (5.2 cm. sq.) from Chandraketugarh also depict two parrots as pecking a lotus bud. In a plaque (ht. 26.9 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur a parrot with her baby standing on two high pedestals are executed with great care. Here the baby bird with open beaks is looking upwards at her mother while the elder one looks to her young as if demonstrating something (PLATE : Vb).

The parrot is also associated with the Bodhisattva. The story of 'Kālabahu Jātaka in a fragmentary round plaque (dia.4.7 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, where two parrots are shown as eating something from a pot. The bird shown on the right seems to be bigger than the other.
Cranes are also represented in Bengal terracottas in association with Yakshas and Yakshinis. In a pique (ht. 13.2 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Borai, a Yakshi is portrayed as offering fruits to her beloved crane eagerly raising its long neck to collect it. From the same site a Yaksha is also shown with a crane which looks upward in great astonishment.

Terracottas of Bengal also depict the figures of cock. An example (ht. 5.7 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century B.C. shows a cock with two chicken one in front and the other at the back. The cock holds some fruits with his beaks.

Among other birds representation on an owl is occasionally found in terracotta toys carts (ht. 10 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh. Here the bird resting upon a miniature elephant figure possibly represent a folklore (PLATE: Vc).

Thus we find how the floras and faunas have enriched the total form of the terracotta art of Bengal sometimes as an individual unit and sometimes as an integral part of the whole theme.

(ii) Social Stratification

The terracotta finds from ancient Bengal, specially of the eastern region throw light on the different strata of the contemporary society.
At the apex of this society was the king. Several terracotta plaques from Chandraketugarh of about the second century B.C. depicts him, not often with his mahāhi or queen, with befitting dress and ornaments. Generally they are shown as seated in mahāraja-līlās on an elaborate throne, but their presence on elephants' back and with several attendants is also not rare. The royal figures represented in terracotta plaques from Bhāsu Vihāra are noteworthy for their graceful physical charm and the stylistically elegant ornaments. Such plaques depicting royal couples are to be dealt elaborately under separate head.

Next to the king come the common members of the class he belongs to. The warriors of the Kshatriya order find notable depiction on these terracottas. A medallion (dia. 10 cm.) of third or fourth century B.C. discovered near the confluence of the Ajay and Kunoor in Burdwan district, portrays a female warrior astriding a horse, thus showing that a woman in those days could also accept the job of a warrior. This Amazonian figure may be a representation from any popular lore or mythology.

A mutilated terracotta plaque from Tamluk of about the first century A.D. somewhat uniquely represents a warrior holding a long spear by his right hand and displaying a dancing pose. The figure looking upwards with large ear rings and dishevelled hair is fascinating in his dancing attitude. Athletic sprightliness combined with emotional fervour marks the male figures of the early Kushāna period.

A terracotta plaque (ht. 10.3 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Bāngarh, of about the second century A.D. shows a slim warrior holding a spear in his left hand. He wears a short dhūti, the folds of which are indicated with bold incised lines. The figure betrays the expression of a confident war veteran.35

Several terracotta plaques (each ht. 20.8 cm. approx.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur depict male warriors each carrying a sword and a shield of varying shape and size36 (PLATE : Vd). All of them are bare-bodied with only short clothes worn from the waist up to the thigh. Terracottas portraying warriors of the same group carrying bows and arrows from the same site are also not uncommon. On two such plaques (each ht. 30.6 cm. approx.) of the said museum they are seen carrying a long bow and in the attitude of picking up arrows from the quivers tucked behind.37 Another plaque (ht. 33 cm.) from the same site and in the same museum interestingly shows a male carrying an axe-like weapon instead of the usual ones, he may be a warrior but may also be a hunter or a wood cutter.

Rectangular terracotta plaques from Maināmatī are similar to their Pāhārpur counterparts in depicting male warriors, except that in a majority of instances the warriors are bedecked with ornaments. A terracotta plaque (ht. 32.5 cm.) of the Gupta epoch from Bhāsu Vihāra represents a warrior with a long curved sword and long rectangular shield bent in the centre. The style of carving is at once bold and refined.38

36. VRM Nos.2034, 2188 and 2192.
37. VRM Nos.2082 and 2083.
38. BA., op.cit., p.61, Acc.No.628
Bangladesh, depicts a warrior with a short sword in right hand and in tight striped dress with ornamental belt. He wears short beard and his long curly hair is tied by ribbon or fillet. His ornaments include necklace, armlets and circular earrings,

An overview of these plaques depicting warriors with various weapons seem to indicate some distinction among the members of this class. Warriors possessing more skill and prowess were probably given more sophisticated weapons of the day whereas others are mere fighters.

The brahmins, forming the first order of the four-fold society were held in usual esteem as suggested by a terracotta plaque (ht.31.5 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra showing a high priest of a monastery as professing benediction to female lay-worshippers. A section of them took the life of ascetics and several terracotta plaques bear figures of such ascetics and sages. A fragmentary plaque (ht. 10.5 cm., 3 private collection) from Chandraketugarh, shows the lower part of an ascetic who wears fine garment with one end hanging over his left leg and carries a kamandalu in his left hand.

The Buddhist bhikshu also formed a class by themselves. In a terracotta plaque (ht. 6 cm., private collection) from Chandraketugarh such a bhikshu is shown with his begging bowl. He wears a decorated turban like head-dress and folded utīya over his right shoulder, simple but elaborate ornaments are his other accessories (PLATE:VIa).

39. SVM No.114.
40. BA., op.cit., p.60, Acc.No.163.
Beyond the pole of the four fold society lived numerous men and women with varied professions. A terracotta plaque (ht.34.9 cm.; Indian Museum) from Pāhārpur depicts a bearded running old man carrying on his shoulder a carcass like object presumably killed by the instrument held in his right hand. The old man, probably a member of the Śabara tribe is shown naked, except for a piece of rope tied round his waist. Another plaque (ht.33 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from the same site portrays a woman of the same tribe as carrying in her left hand a dead animal (probably a jackal) which she has killed. The Śabarās seem to have had a distinctive place, although low in the eyes of the members of established orders, in the contemporary society. While they figure prominently in contemporary literary texts, a Tāntrika Buddhist deity named Panna-Śabari is suggestive of her original association with them.

Reference may be made to a few more examples. One plaque (ht.28.8 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur has on it a seated bearded Śabara male with rows of leaves tucked round his waist. He is carrying a bow in his left hand and is ready to pick an arrow from the quiver shown behind his right shoulder (PLATE : VIb). While another (ht. 27.8 cm.) from the same site and lying in the same museum shows a young Śabara wearing leaves strung over his waist engaged in action. Still another Pāhārpur plaque (ht.31.5 cm) preserved in the foresaid museum portrays a Śabara couple seated in an easy posture with their right hand over their breasts and wearing tribal head-dress.

41. VRM No.2203.
42. VRM No.2033.
43. VRM No.2031.
(iii) Occupation

The means of livelihood of men and women in ancient days, as known from the terracotta source, was diverse. We meet with fishermen on the terracottas from Bāngarh (PLATE : Vİc), vendors (PLATE : VId) and acrobats from Pāhārpur and a women Vegetable-seller on a piece from Harinarayanpur.(I) (PLATE : VІİa). These terracotta specimens have been discussed in details under sections (vii) and (viii).

(iv) Food and Habit

An idea of the food habits of the people of ancient Bengal may be obtained from the depiction of the plants and animals on the objects under study. This idea gets clear from the collateral materials lying in literary and epigraphical sources, for instance, one verse of the Prakṛtapāṅgala ⁴⁴ includes rice, cow-ghee, milk, fish, leaves of jute in the menu of meal, while the Barrackpore copper-plate of Vijayasena and the Madanpāḍā copper-plate of Viśvarūpasena mention mango, jack fruit, betel-nut and coconut trees. ⁴⁵ Representation of rice-plant in a sealing from Bāngarh⁴⁶ of late third or early fourth century A.D. proves it to be the staple food of the people of riverine Bengal, while a few such specimen from Chandraketugarh and Mahāsthāngarh depicting wheat plant indicate this item also as a familiar food in those days. Apart from that

⁴⁵. Majumdar,N.G., Inscriptions of Bengal, III, Rajshahi, 1929,pp.66 and 130.
⁴⁶. Goswami,K.G.,op. cit., p.12, Acc.No.1035
impression of ears of corn also proves its popularity. Among fruits coconut palm was commonly favoured. Fish was an important item of their diet, as scenes of catching fish and their individual representation with prominent scales from Sīkōṭā are remarkable. The tribal inhabitants had a preference for animal flesh and hunting animals and carrying the dead beasts are well-known themes of Pāhārpur terracottas. The drinking of wine was also prevalent. Probably the aristocratic ladies too preferred wine. A terracotta plaque (ht.11 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh (PLATE : VIIb) shows an unbalanced lady with trembling feet being supported by a male to her right and a female to her left; her dress and the hair-do betrays some alien influences and she remind of her sisters whom we meet with in the early art of Mathurā engrossed in Bacchanał repertoire.

(v) Costumes, Ornaments, Head-Dress, Coiffure, Foot-Wear etc.

Costumes, ornaments and such items of personal decoration reflect the material culture of a people. Teracottas under study speak of the culture of the people they belong to.

A study of these objects reveal that both male and female used to wear simple yet varied dresses. Mens' apparel consisted of dhuti and chādar or uttarīya. The extant pieces of the protohistoric and Maurya period do not inform much of the nature of clothing of the

47. BA., op.cit., p.30,
male of the age. The Śuṅga-Kushāṇa epoch introduces a new fashion in costume. Male dresses of this period consisted of a long dhūṭī falling to the ankles in graceful folds. The uttāriya generally passed over the shoulder and wrapped round the left arm was thrown back in stiff folds. The terracotta male figure (ht.14.1 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh bearing all these traits is indeed remarkable. A fragmentary plaque (ht.4.5 cm.; private collection) from the same site represents a dancing male as wearing a dhūṭī below the navel. The horizontal folds of the drapery is distinct. One end of the garment in parallel folds is suspended in the middle (PLATE : VIIc). A fragmentary rectangular (ht.5 cm.; private collection) and a circular medallion (dia. 6.3 cm.; private collection) from the same site also show a man in dancing pose and as wearing a dhūṭī. A piece of cloth goes round the waist and hangs in a rhythmic way in the middle. The tassels at the edge of the cloth is also prominent. In a terracotta specimen from Tamluk of about the first century B.C. or the beginning of the Christian era a male wears a dhūṭī with one end tucked at the back as a kachchhā and the longer one folded and tied at the waist. A male torso from the same site, now preserved in the Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre puts on a dhūṭī well above the knee. The longer end of the dhūṭī is arranged in a similar fashion like the previous example. An uttāriya is noticeably placed over the left shoulder (PLATE : VIIid). A figure (ht. 18 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, wears a dhūṭī of fine fabric. The garment is clasped tight to the right leg up to the ankle and just below the knee of the left leg. A kilt-like garment in parallel vertical folds is shown as covering the left thigh, which encircling
the hips hangs loose beside the right one. A thick and broad girdle keeps the garment in position. The figure no doubt exhibits male dress of high quality. A plaque from Pāhārpur depicts a male as wearing a dhūti in vikāchchha fashion. The figure wears an uttarīya as his upper garment which is thrown over the shoulders without covering the body. Plaques from Pāhārpur also show men with short dhūti coming up to the knees which is tucked by a komarbandha or a waist-band. The front pleats of the dhūti in serpentine curls are also notable. Another plaque from the same site illustrates a man as wearing a dhūti in folds on either thigh. One end of the garment is shown as resting on the left thigh. Several Pāhārpur plaques depict the Śabara males as wearing short dhūti ending well above the knees. The dhūti worn in kāchchhā fashion is shown in schematic folds on either thigh with dot patterns between the folds. The dhūti worn little below the navel is held in position by a flat belt round the waist. Representations of musicians, warriors, semi-divine beings etc. in several plaques with dhūti worn in various fashions are also remarkable.

A male terracotta figure (ht. 11 cm.; Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk, of the post-Gupta period wears a peculiar garment. The dress is full-sleeved with a deep round neck. It is a single piece which also covers his private part and is placed on the thigh like a brief. A girdle is probably attached to his waist (FIGURE : b).

Males wearing transparent lower garment (chiton) is also
portrayed in Bengal terracottas. A terracotta plaque (ht. 12.2 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about first century A.D., depicts a figure as wearing a Graeco-Roman kilt above a fine costume. The skirt or kilt with parallel rows of vertical metal is fastened by a waist band.

Terracotta male figures wearing full-sleeved jackets and trousers are also common. A headless seated male figure from Tamluk, (Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) wears an open vest round-necked full-sleeved jacket and a close-fitting trouser (PLATE : VIIIa). This male figure of the first century A.D. has its counterparts in terracottas from Ahichchhatra. A mutilated terracotta plaque from Pāhārpur depicts a warrior who like, the Ajantā marketeer, wears a long-sleeved and fairly close fitting tunic with round neck. It has no opening in front. Like the dancing figure from Pawayā in Gwalior the tunic is kept in position by means of a belt. A Gandharva figure from the same site riding a rhinoceros also appear to wear a similar dress. A plaque from Mahāsthānagāra depicts a man as wearing a full-sleeved, short, close-fitting, open fronted jacket with 'V' shaped neck. A clasp is being placed in the centre to hold the two parts together. A Yaksha figure represented in a plaque from Maināmatī also wears a open-fronted full-sleeved jacket. A short jacket with circular designs worn by a Śabara archer is also remarkable.

A terracotta Buddha in dharmachakrapravartana mudrā (ht. 7.5 cm.; Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk, wears a saṅghāṭi which hangs from both the hands. The robe seems to be a heavy one. (PLATE : VIIIb).
A Pāhārpur plaque show a man as wearing trousers ending little above the ankle. The trouser is fastened to the waist by a waist-band and the long end of it hangs in front. A Nāga figure in a Pāhārpur terracotta seems to wear a tight fitting trouser down to his ankles. This garment may be compared with the white trouser worn by a Bodhisattva from Ajantā. Another example represents a seated man with his head bent. He possibly wears a drawer ending well above the knees. The drawer with horizontal stripes indicated by double lines at regular intervals and dots between them may be classed with the drawers worn by Amarāvatī sculptures.

Figures wearing langotī or kaupīna is also common. Plaques from Pāhārpur, Maināmatī and Mahāsthāngarh depict ascetics, divine figures and warriors as wearing langotī which are fastened to the waist by flat and narrow belts.

The Śabara male figures depicted in Pāhārpur plaques wear leaf-girdles which are hardly sufficient to cover the private parts (PLATE : VIb).

Terracottas of Bengal realistically depict dresses of females. Several female figures wear sāgī below the waist exposing the deep and prominent navel. Besides numerous ornaments the upper part of the figures generally appear to be bare. Such a headless female figurine of a about the first century B.C. or the beginning of the first century A.D. from Tamluk, (Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre), deserve mention. She wears a sāgī in parallel ridges upto
the knees which are blown slightly. One end of the sāḍī passes round the right arm of the figure and hangs loose in front. An exquisite terracotta figurine (ht. 13.5 cm) of about the second century B.C. from the same site and preserved in the same Museum wears an elaborate costume. The sāḍī in parallel ridges covers the body below the waist and quite above the ankle. The drapery hangs in separate volume on both sides. A girdle keeps the garment in position. A mutilated terracotta piece (ht.4.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, represents the hind portion of a female wearing a sāḍī. The horizontal-marked drapery covering the back of the figure holds a fanshaped design probably made by one end of the garment. It is kept in position by a knot (FIGURE : c). The drapery held considerably above the ankle shows beaded borders. This specimen no doubt bespeak the high quality taste and sophistication of the females in those days.

Another fragmentary lower portion of a plaque (ht.3.6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, depicts a female with a simple sāḍī. The extant part shows that the folds of the sāḍī gathered in front is tucked to the middle. The lower end of it is left free and is marked by parallel vertical lines. The other plaques (ht.7 cm.; private collection) from the same site represents the upper part of a lady carrying a pitcher on her left waist. Here the lady wears a heavy robe covering the navel and breast underneath. One end of the sāḍī placed over the right shoulder is flung behind and is possibly tucked to the hair at the back in order to keep it in position (PLATE : VIII c).
The terracotta plaque (ht.7 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh represents a lady with a beautiful dress. The lower part of the figure is broken and hence it is difficult to say whether she wears a sādī or a skirt. The garment in vertical folds hangs from the waist and is covered by a waist-band. The lady wears a scarf with a boss in the middle which passes round the shoulders without covering her body (FIGURE : d). The features and costume of the figure attest to some foreign influences on it.

A plaque from Pāhārpur portrays a woman as drawing water from a well. A child stands on her left side and a pitcher lies close to her left leg. She wears a sādī ending a little above her ankles. The garment is worn in kachchha fashion which is discernible from the double lines at regular intervals. The indistinct upper part is also covered. Another example from the same site (Varendra Research Museum), depicts a woman with a baby. She wears a sādī below the navel. The sādī worn in kachchha fashion is marked by lines. A piece of cloth covers her breasts whose loose ends are placed on both sides. One of the Pāhārpur plaques representing Šabara women shows a lady with a sādī worn in kachchha fashion which is fastened by a waist-band. The pleats of the sādī dangles down on the right foot of her partner. The Šabarī wears a scarf on her upper part which is thrown over the shoulders without covering the body.

Terracotta plaques representing the Buddhist Goddess Tārā show the sādī as her usual apparel. Tārā seated on a lotus wears a sādī which reaches the calves. Passing over the right side of the waist
one part of the sādī crosses the chest diagonally and seems to fall on the back (PLATE : VIIId). The Goddess depicted as standing in another plaques wears the sādī in the vikachchāfashion. One part of the garment from the waist falls in folds and covers the lower part of the body; the other part is worn in similar manner as the previous one. In both the cases the sādī worn below the navel is kept in position by a girdle belt.

The terracotta specimen from Mahāsthāngarh portraying an amorous couple shows the female as wearing a sādī with pleats hanging loose in front. The sādī worn in kachchha fashion is rightly placed by a beaded girdle. On another plaque from the same site a woman wears a sādī down to the ankles in vikachchā fashion. It is held tight by a girdle. On her upper part she wears a scarf one end of which is placed over her right shoulder.

Women of Bengal also preferred wet or transparent drapery (māgnamsūka) that clings to the body with soft and delicate creases (FIGURE : e). Such costumes exposed the grace of the lady which may be classed with the beauty of the famous Nāginī of Maniyār Math, Rajgir in Bihar.

Apart from that a Pāhārpur plaque depicting a lady (in dancing pose with a child) wearing something like shorts which end above the knees is interesting. The garment worn little below the

48. ASIAR., 1936-37, pl.XVd.
navel are tied with a decorated waist band. She covers her breasts with a bodice which is probably knotted at the back. She also uses a scarf which is thrown over the shoulders without covering the body.49

Some of the Pāhārpur plaques represent women as wearing vertically striped trousers coming down to the ankles and sometimes ending a little above the ankles. The trousers are held in position by a waist band (which is sometimes decorated) the long end of which dangles between the legs.

The Śabarī women in the Pāhārpur plaques besides sādī are seen as wearing leaf girdles. In one instance the Śabarī in addition to a leaf-girdle puts on a simple garland of leaves in the upavīta fashion. A plaque representing a Sabara couple shows the Śabarī as wearing a kucha-bandha round the breasts. Her lower garment is a leaf girdle.

Terracottas from Chandraketugarh and Tamluk depict female figures with garments of foreign inspiration. The headless female figure from Chandraketugarh with a thick robe arranged orderly in the right leg upto the knees with a waist band, now preserved in the American Institute of Indian Studies is Interesting. The young damsel from the same site (private collection), shown as wearing a frock like garment with thick ridges towards the neck is noteworthy (PLATE : IXa). The double folded skirt with numerous thin pleats and lacing

49. MASI., 55. pl. XLIC.
at the junction and bottom as reflected in a terracotta from Tamluk (PLATE : IXb) resembles its quality with an apoptygma of the Graeco-Roman World. The hooped skirt worn by a female figure (private collection) from Tamluk of about the third century B.C. and another from Chandraketugarh of the same epoch are remarkable. The drapery in the earlier one is shown in appliqué and tied by a waist band and a scarf in both the specimens. These wind-blown opaque garments may be classed with the wanton sisters of the Hellenic world.

Both men and women of ancient Bengal used ornaments for personal decoration as well as for faith in certain rituals. The earliest example of the use of ornaments may be traced in a solitary terracotta Mother Goddess from period III (around first millenium B.C.) of Pāṇḍu Rājār Ďhibi, who is adorned with a girdle shown by pin-hole decorations. The semi-precious beads excavated from this site show the preference for ornamentation.

The terracotta female figurines of the Maurya period used several round discs, ribbons and fillets to keep their knots or buns of hair in place. An example (ht.8.9 cm.; Archaeological Survey of India) from Tamluk with its hanging ribbons, fillets and discs and the female head (ht. 4.5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) with the usual Maurya discs from Chandraketugarh are really interesting. Both the examples are of about the third century B.C. The female figure (ht.5.9 cm.; private collection) from Maṅgalkot (I) of second-first century B.C. attired with a boss and two streaming bands with punched circlets is also notable.

50. Biswas, S.S., op.cit., pl.III.
The Śuṅga period provides a variety of head ornaments as a part of hair decoration. Apart from the conventional hair pins resembling weapons the Yakṣinī figurines of this epoch used to tie their braids with bejewelled and embroidered bands. The terracotta Yakṣinī figure from Chandraketugarh wearing strings of beads twined over the coiffure, the bejewelled crown with a set of hairpins worn by another figure, the floral crest composed of beads worn by a Yakṣinī in the middle of her two big coifs are interesting.

A Yakṣinī figure (ht. 9.5 cm.; private collection) of Gupta workmanship from Berachāmpā wears discs—one above her forehead and two on either sides. The inverted head of a trisūla hanging from these two discs are unique (PLATE : IXc).

A plaque from Mahāsthānagārha depicting a human couple shows the female as bedecked with an ornamented diadem. In Pāhārpur plaques of the seventh-eighth century both divinities and humans are shown as wearing fillets for their coiffure. Broad fillets inlaid with jewels and the fillet of beads or pearls were common.

The early variation of the kiritamukta worn by Viṣṇu, Sūrya and Kuvera found its expression in the head ornament of Kuvera figure (ht.13.5 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century A.D., which is adorned with jewel bands studded with gems. The female head (ht.8.5 cm.; private collection) of uncommon variety from Ātgharā, generally a proto-type...
of Bārāthākura-Nārāyaṇī (deity worshipped in the Sunderbans to protect land) wears a three-crested crown of simple design (PLATE : IXd). The hard burn grey terracotta male figure (ht. 10.5 cm.; private collection) from Dhopāgāchī burning ghat on the bed of Ādī Gaṅgā is crowned by a two-tiered mukuta (cf. infra., p. 192). A female head bedecked with a ratnamukuta from Mahāsthāṅgarh is the most noteworthy of all head ornaments of ancient Bengal. A female head of Barathakura-Narayan (deity worshipped in the Sunderbans to protect land) wears a three-crested crown of simple design (PLATE : IXd). The hard burn grey terracotta male figure (ht. 10.5 cm.; private collection) from Dhopagachi burning ghat on the bed of Adi Gangā is crowned by a two-tiered mukuta (cf. infra., p. 192). A female head bedecked with a ratnamukuta from Mahāsthāṅgarh is the most noteworthy of all head ornaments of ancient Bengal. Mention may also be made of the bejewelled crowns of the Bodhisattvas. In a specimen from Pāhārpur, now an exhibit in the National Museum of Bangladesh the crown of Amitābha’s remarkable (PLATE : Xa).

The Śuṅga woman also preferred forehead ornaments (tilakalalāṭikā). The head of a Yakṣīṇī (ht. 9 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century B.C., with the radiating tikli over her forehead no doubt enhances her beauty and itself is a fine specimen of jewellery. Same type of ornament is seen on the forehead of a terracotta Yakṣī (6 cm. sq.; private collection) from Harinārāyaṇpur (I) and on a bright red terracotta female head (ht. 5.5 cm) from Chandraketugarh.

In ancient Bengal both male and female loved ear ornaments (kundalas). The figurines of the Maurya period from Harinārāyaṇpur (I) are seen as wearing simple ear-studs or ear-rings (PLATE : Xb). But the Śuṅga-Kushāṇa period witnessed a variety of ear ornaments of mature workmanship, the common type being the large ear-studs and ear-discs either voluted or bearing floral impressions. One of the

The finest specimen of such ornamentation is a terracotta aṣparā (ht. 12.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh of the first century B.C. or the first century A.D. She wears a big ear-stud in the right ear while the other is adorned by a disc-like ornament with floral motif. The torso of a male (ht. 10 cm.) of the Gupta period from Chandraketugarh wearing hollow round ear tubs deserve mention. The heavy ear drums of the female figure (ht. 4.3 cm.; private collection) from Borāl and the round ear tubs on the right lobe and a kettle-drum like ornament on the left of another female figure (ht. 5.5 cm.; private collection) from Deulpotā are interesting. To the same period belongs a yakṣīṇī figure (ht. 9.5 cm.) from Berāchāmpā having a folded leaf-like ornament on her right lobe and a basket type one on the left.

Stylistic variations in the ear ornaments come to view in terracotta female figurines of the late and the post-Gupta epochs, as exemplified by the comparatively large sized specimens from Mangaikot (II), now preserved in the site museum of Mahāsthamarh. They range from the sixth to the eighth century. Of such ornaments a rectangular tub attached by a semi-circular ring which reaches her cheek, deserves special attention (FIGURE : f). Besides these, there are large rings, both of round and spiral shapes. The voluted form obviously recall the petrakūndalas of ancient times. This type of big round kūndalas worn on the lobe of the ear are also seen in most of the plaques from Mahāsthamarh, Maināmatī and Pāhārpur. In one specimen from Pāhārpur we find a three tier rectangular ear-stud of which the middle one is thinner in size.
Now about the items of neck embellishment. As in the past these include necklaces (hāra) varying from tight fitting collars to dalliers or necklaces. The terracotta figurines of the Maurya period show two types of neck ornaments - one is a neck collar resembling the hāsuli of the present day and the other is a short necklace composed of two rows of squares probably of precious metal (FIGURE:g). In the following Śuṅga-Kushāna epoch neck ornaments became varied in shape and design. They displayed collars decked with valuable jewels or beads, flat chains, reel and bead chains, chains with pendants, beaded necklaces etc. Of them quite interesting is a neck collar or torque worn by a lady in a terracotta sample from Tamluk. Here the torque is marked by an ornate grace of filigree which is thread like; it has wavy repeated curves (FIGURE:h). In this connection the Yakshī figurine of about first century B.C. in a squatting posture from Chandraketugarh (State Archaeological Gallery), shown as holding an ornate neck-collar in her right hand; and the portrait (?) of a lady from the same place (Asutosh Museum) wearing a neck-collar with tassels, a female bust (ht.4.3 cm.; private collection) from Borāl also decorated with a thick beaded neck-collar deserve mention. A plaque from Mahāsthānagārh of sixth-eighth century representing an amorous couple of which the female wears a torque with an oblong ornament in the middle is also notable.

The terracotta examples of the period ranging in date from the Maurya to the Gupta periods exhibit thick and plain necklaces (muktāvalī), although the above noted Tamluk specimen of the Śuṅga age apart from a neck collar, wears a long beaded necklace between
her breasts. A triple stringed beaded necklace with a row of big beads between the smaller ones on both sides and hanging above her breasts, as depicted in a headless female figurine from Chandraketugarh is simple but artistic. The Chandraketugarh plaques are interesting for the variety of necklaces they exhibit and some of them are of artistic merit. These include the ornaments with five beaded strings or pañchalahari muktāhāra (FIGURE: j) held by a jewel, (of a female figurine now in the Asutosh Museum) and delicately designed items with suspended tassels. Broad necklaces with floral designs and decorated with jewels are also common. Both men and women also wore long beaded necklaces or vañjayantikā reaching the navel (FIGURE: k). The ornamented headless bust (ht. 4.5 cm.; private collection) of about sixth century A.D. from Chandraketugarh wears a three beaded strings of pearls and two stringed long beaded necklace with a floral locket. The locket with beaded centre and bloomed petals is beautiful (PLATE: X c). This kind of ornament no doubt enhanced the beauty of the figural terracotta sculptures of Bengal.

Terracotta figures of the post-Gupta times, such as those from Pāhārpur and Mahāsthāngarh are also marked by necklaces of variegated shape and designs. Of these a five ovoidal pendant worn by a man figured on a Pāhārpur sample and the beaded necklace with an oblong-shaped ornament in the middle seen as decorating a male on a terracotta plaque from Mahāsthāngarh where he appears with his lover or wife are remarkable.
Apart from necklaces a simple but beautiful chain (hāra) with a star-shaped pendant worn by the famous Yaksini figure from Bāngarh (Asutosh Museum) and the female figure (probably Goddess Sarasvatī) from Harinārāyaṇpur (I) adorned with an equally simple chain but without any such pendant are worth noticing. The simple twisted rope-like chain met with in the Mahāsthāṅgarh and Maināmatī plaque and the broad chain with small globular shaped pendant in a Gandharva figure from Pāhārpur are also note-worthy.

A cross-garland or chhannāvīra is seen in a terracotta plaque of about the first century B.C. from Harinārāyaṇpur (I) which shows a lady and a heron. The Vishṇuite terracotta figures additionally wearing the characteristic flower garland (vanamālā) is also fascinating.

Both male and female of ancient Bengal included bangles or bracelets (valaya) as items of their personal decoration. Such bangles ranged from simple circular shape to the most complicated designs. Figures are very often represented with beautifully designed three to five types of bangles which seem to be heavy. A female figure from Tamluk, of about the second - first century B.C. (Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) shown with numerous bangles (PLATE : IX b) and resembling the ornaments of the aboriginal female of the Harappan culture is indeed unique. The female figure of about the fourth century A.D. is notable for the profuse beads of pearls worn on her hands (FIGURE : 1). Pāhārpur figures are decorated with plain and thick bangles. A warrior in one Maināmatī plaque wears a bracelet
with a boss in the middle. Another plaque from the same site depicts a Gandharva with a bracelet having a bead-shaped appendage on the lower part of the middle portion.

Armlet or keyūra is occasionally represented in Bengal terracottas. Probably this was a prized ornament. The coiled armlet worn by a Apsara (ht. 13.5 cm.; Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk of about second century B.C.; armlet with decorative beads and floral design (PLATE : X c); and beaded tassels dangling down represented in a female figure (ht. 10.3 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century A.D. are no doubt some of the noteworthy specimens of this kind of jewellery.

Early Bengal terracottas reveal waist bands or girdles as a part of jewellery. Several types of waist bands from plain and simple strip put in appliqué to one or four stringed girdles with decorated discs and beautifully spaced by beads of numerous shapes deserve attention (PLATE : X d). Here mention may be made of the Yakshīṇī from Chandraketugarh of about the second century B.C. who wears a large and elaborate girdle made up of rosettes. The pearl strings attached to the girdle reaches down the knees. The Yakshīṇī figures also show ornamentation over the thigh and knees suspended from the girdle (PLATE : XI a). A few, Buddhist and Hindu deities of post-Gupta epoch from Pāhārpur show plain waist bands with a clasp.

the centre. The woman in a dancing pose with a girdle belt ornamented with chain pattern is beautiful. In the Maināmatī plaques both men and women wear flat and narrow belts to keep the lower garment in position.

The terracotta figurines also exhibit various types of anklets mostly worn by females. A Kuvra figure (ht. 7.8 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandrakėtugārā of about the second century A.D. and an Apsarā (ht. 13.5 cm.; Tāmralipta Museum and Research centre) of the same epoch wears a plain circular anklet. Round discs tied by knots, beaded strings and anklets representing crowded heads were common. Anklet consisting of a chain band fringed with little bells (kinkinī) and four-stringed nūpura are represented in our repertory. Among the notable examples are anklets adorned by a bow tied by knots which are displayed in a fragmentary plaque (ht. 15.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandrakėtugārā. On the insteps are placed a round medallion which is beaded and from it passes two decorated wings right below the bow forming the shape of a butter fly (PLATE XI b). Such elaborate foot ornamentation envisages the sophisticated outlook and love for jewellery by rich women of the then Bengal.

That the people of ancient Bengal were fond of hair-dressing is told by the unpretentious objects under review. Indeed from the very birth of human civilization people practised hair dressing sometimes by trimming the unwieldy hair and sometimes by binding them to a desired shape and adorning them with jewelleries of various kind and this is true of Bengalis in the past.
The earliest excavated evidence of hair dressing is noticed in the figures from Pāṇḍu Rājār Dhābi of which one is seen wearing a conical helmet with diminishing circles and the other with a peculiar fan-shaped hair-do marked by vertical scratches.

The Maurya period witnessed a sophisticated style of hair-do. The female figurines of this period are generally represented with neatly combed hair parted in the middle which allows the masses of hair to fall on either side of the forehead. Bicornate hair-do decorated with medallions and precious jewelleries are also a common feature of this epoch. In this connection mention may be made of a female face depicted on a medallion (dia. 5 cm.; Department of Archaeology, Calcutta University) from Maṅgalkoṭ (I). Here the figure is adorned with bicornate head-dress probably secured in a piece of cloth. Another female head (ht. 4 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh shows nicely arranged hair on both sides and above the ears, the fine scratches indicating hairs over forehead are bedecked with ornamental medallion in the middle and floral bands on both the side knots. Another style so common in the Maurya age and in succeeding periods too is the back-brushed hair and the side knot, as instanced by a couple of interesting terracotta female heads (each ht. 5 cm. approx.) of this period, one from Āṭgharā (private collection) and the other from Chandraketugarh (Asutosh Museum). The hairs brushed back and central decoration with curved lines in the

57. Das Gupta, P.C., _op. cit._, p. 32, pls. XXVI and XXVIII.
former (PLATE : XI c) and rows of beads in the latter represent a type of hair-do which was of common occurrence in the Western World. They bear the hand of an artist with predilection for foreign taste and outlook. Another variety of this style is discernible in a terracotta female head (ht. 6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh which exhibits the puffy hairs brushed back with a high side knot. The hair is being arranged like a bow the end of which hangs by the side of her left ear and the braid is beautified all through with beaded bands. A female figure (ht. 6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh bearing long matted hairs on the back represents another style of hair dressing during this period (PLATE : I b).

The succeeding Śūṅga-Kushāṇa epoch displays in addition to the above noted hair-dos a few more modes of arranging hair ranging from simple combing of the same to the most complicated ones. The Yakshiśī figurines of this era have their coiffure generally with neat puffy hairs, carefully arranged over the forehead. Sometimes these female figures have beautiful braided hairs bound in charming knots as noticed in the earlier period, while a female head (ht. 4.5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) of about the second century A.D. from Chandraketugarh marks an advancement on the same in its elaborate hair knot decked with jewels; ornamental strings of beads hang down from the flower-like circular knot. To the same genre belong a female head from Tamluk (Ṭāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) and similar figure (ht. 5.9 cm.; private collection) from Maṅgalkoṭ (I), both datable to the second-first century B.C. They are, however,
slightly different from each other. In the former the lady has her hair arranged in the big and ornamented puffy knot placed on her left shoulder, in addition to string of beads on her head (FIGURE: m) and in the other piece the woman has her central hair knot bedecked with flower from which emanate two streaming bands with punched circlets.

A torso of a female (ht. 5 cm.; Archaeological Survey of India) from Tamluk of this period adorning the long hair exhibits a different style with strings of pearls and in her long bejewelled braid swinging back in a movement of her piquant grace. Of some interesting terracotta samples from Chandraketugarh a dampaḷī figure probably from royal family in a rectangular plaque shows the male as wearing a turban placed in the left just adjacent to the hair, gathered in the form of a knot; the hair of the female is arranged in six braids, slanted to the left which is kept in position by a band, while the hair on the left is arranged in a round ball placed sidewise. The coiffure is decorated with beads or pearls (FIGURE: n). Another figure displays an almost similar arrangement with five braids set in order by a band, with tails hanging down artistically (FIGURE: p).

Besides the ribbon, fillet and ornaments like pearl strings and diadem employed in the arrangement of hair, pins are also found in use, but interestingly enough, only in the figurines of Yakshiṅīs as exemplified by Śuṅga specimens from Chandraketugarh and a figurine from Tamluk now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Both of them exhibit a manner of twist of hair with a three fold knot on the left
from which hangs beaded tassels and the puffy hair arranged over
the head decorated to the left by traditional hair pins; the hair
 tied as a circular knot with a spiral projection at the top of the
crown is indeed remarkable. The second example in which the hair is
bedecked with strings of beads, pearls and other conventional hair
pins, some hairlocks are cut short and arranged over the forehead in
horizontal lines which are kept in position by a golden band or
ratnapetta.

During the period under review, the males preferred long
hairs and occasionally dressed their hairs like females. The puffy
hair with front knots (one round and the other oblong) envisaged in a
terracotta head (ht. 5.5 cm.; private collection) from
Chandraketugarh adorned with ratnapetta is one of the noteworthy
specimen. Males also liked to have long hairs neatly brushed back
which gracefully fell along their shoulders. Examples from
Chandraketugarh, Harinarayanpur (I) and Tamluk also show male
figures with circular head dress decked with tassels. A male head
from Chandraketugarh (Asutosh Museum) which deserves more than a
passing notice is marked by a beautiful head-gear decked with a
ratnapetta and crowned by a bejewelled medallion. (FIGURE : q).

The repertoire of the Kushāna age comprises terracotta figures
with elaborate head-dresses, rather than hair-do. But females with
puffed hairs and a top-knot, sometimes parted in the middle and
sometimes decorated with strings of pearls were common. A terracotta
plaque of about the first century B.C. from Chandraketugarh (Asutosh
Museum) representing the bust of a female which shows her hair as divided into two rolls from which again fall down on either side a decorated fillet. Similar fashion of hair-do is noticed in a plaque from Kaushambi. A terracotta head (ht. 5.5 cm.; Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk of the first century B.C. - first century A.D. shows a beautiful hair-do resembling a butterfly. The strands of hair are indicated by fine wavy lines and are decorated with strings of pearls.

The Kushāṇa figures have turbans (śirastrakas) of variegated designs which fit the heads as elegantly as hats (PLATE : XII a). Generally a long strip of cloth is bound round the head creating an elliptical ridge filled with a part of the same cloth (PLATE : XII b). Turbans decorated with jewels and pearl strings and forming top or side-knots represent another variety (PLATE : XII c). Head dress with horizontal spiral projection is also remarkable. A female head (ht. 7.5 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of about second century A.D. wearing a heavy turban with eye-like socket in the middle is remarkable (FIGURE : r). Another head from the same site and in the same museum shows a cap with pointed top. A curved hair is projected from the cap towards the right side of the figure. The other figure shows the arrangement of the head-dress with two puffy sections parted in the middle like a simanta.

The most charming head-do of this period is noticed in a female head from Tamluk (Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) which shows a coiffure fashioned like a hat and which is kept in
position by a jewelled band placed over the forehead (FIGURE: s.). The simple hair-do of the era is noticed in a female head from the same site and in the same museum. Her simple bun placed on the back (a portion of which peeps to the left) is decorated with a single flower placed just above the ear. The prevalence of fan-shaped hair-dresses in the Kushāna age is exemplified among others by a female head (ht. 7.7 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh (PLATE: XI d) this sample bears close affinity with some figures from the Hellenic-Hellenistic art. Figure of a young damsel (PLATE: IX a) from the same place (private collection) having her hairs rolling down up to her shoulders instead of long hair or elaborate coifs and a female head (ht. 3 cm.; private collection) of the same age and also from the same site with open hairs tucked in the centre and over the forehead by ornamented meltallion deserve more than a passing notice.

The practice of hair dressing attained a refined character in the age of the Imperial Guptas. The up-turned curly hairs found in some figures from Tamluk (Tāmrālipta Museum and Research Centre) and Chandraketugarh (private collection) arranged in a top knot (FIGURE: t) and suggesting the crown or divine uṣhṇīṣa of the Buddha found its counterparts in the Greek art as the Krobylos of Apollo. Neatly brushed curly hairs or long curls of hairs falling on the shoulders are also typical of the Gupta era. Some interesting Gupta terracotta plaques from Deulpotā and Harinārāyaṇpur (I) representing both male and female busts and heads exhibit unique

hair styles. The male figures generally show chhatrākāra style in which hair covers the head as a semi-circular parasol and from the central top knot emanate locks of hair; on both the sides alakāvalī or spirals of wig-like hair falls down to the shoulder in three or more gradually, superimposed horizontal tiers. Other male figures show similar hair style, but with a central parting designated as keśavīthi or sīmanta in literary texts.

The female figures of the Gupta era show trefoil design in hair dressing; it consists of two prominent side masses with central crest-pendant adorning the sīmanta. This fashion is termed chaṭulatilakamani or akhanda-khandikā jewel.

Terracotta plaques from Pāhārpur, Mahāsthāṅgarh and Maināmatī show a variety of hair dressing. A male head and a Gandharva figure from Pāhārpur show a top knot with thick tresses falling on the shoulders. Here the top knot is kept in position by a fillet. In case of the male ringlets of hair are visible on the forehead. Curls long hairs falling on shoulders with ringlets or curls on the forehead in certain cases is notable. Hair gathered at the back like a bun generally by warriors and ascetics and short haired Gandharva figures are also interesting.

Contextually with the coiffure, the male figures having moustache and beard may be mentioned. Emphasis on pointed edge

beard is noticed in the figures of Ṣabara males depicted on the plaques from Pāhārpur (PLATE : VI b).

Common man in India generally used to go bare-footed in their everyday life in the past. Shoe was a luxury and fashionable item. 60 The terracotta samples from Bengal reveal a few variety, as for instance, a first century specimen (length. 9.5 cm. ; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh depict sandals decorated with floral motifs (PLATE : XIII d). The practice of wearing sandals of Graeco-Roman style with simple straps, ornamental medallion and resembling a strapped shoe is also attested by some specimens (Asutosh Museum, private collection) of about the second - third century A.D., hailing from Chandraketugarh. A headless seated male wearing a jacket and a trouser from Tamluk (Tāmrālipta Museum and Research Centre) with a pair of boots (PLATE : VIII a) and a few Garudharva figures from Pāhārpur with the same type of footwear demonstrate its prevalence in a section of the contemporary society.

Our repertory also throws light on the mode of conveyance of the past. In early days riding of animals was a common practice and the divinities have their own characteristic vāhanas like horse, elephant, tiger and ram, as well as birds (including mythical ones). Royal couples are often depicted on elephants' back. A terracotta seal from Bāngarh represents something like a bullock cart which was

probably used as a transport during the Śuṅga-Kuśāna age. Another bullock cart carrying coins is shown on a mutilated plaque from Tamluk. This is supposed to be a representation of the story of the purchase of Jetavana for the Buddha by the merchant Anāthapiṇḍaka. Another plaque from the same site represents a part of a chariot drawn on a multi-spoked wheels by the driver and the hind legs of a bull. A bullock chariot also finds depiction in a terracotta mould from Chandraketugarh; here the couple and their two attendants (one in front and other at the back) are shown on the chariot. A fragmentary plaque (ht. 10.2 cm.; Tāmrālipta Museum and Research Centre) of about the second century B.C. from Tamluk shows an elephant-drawn quadriga driven by a māhout with four harnessed elephants. Chariots drawn by horses are delineated with great care in some plaques from Mahāsthānagāra and Chandraketugarh.

In the riverine Bengal a common mode of conveyance was boat and ship. A small flat-bottomed terracotta boat of red colour with centrally pierced applied eyes from Pāṇḍu Rājār Dhībi is noticeable. A terracotta sealing (dia 3.2 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) portrays horizontally a full-rigged ship with a flag flying over the main mast head. It lies at anchor and its sails are rolled up and fastened with the circular rings which hangs horizontally near the

62. Ibid., pl. LIIa.
63. Das Gupta, P.C., op. cit., pl. XL.
mast head. The huge hull of the ship rests in the water and is tied with a stern. Another round sealing (dia. 2.6 cm.) from the same site bears the impression of a ship on the obverse; here also the ship lies in horizontal position and the other accessories are as above. In this context reference may also be made of similar motifs depicted on a sealing (dia. 2.8 cm.) from Harinārāyānpur (I) (PLATE XIII a) and Tamluk. These ships resemble the high masted ships engraved on the coins of Imperial Rome.

(vii) Daily Life

The terracottas under review are unpretentiously significant documents of the everyday life in ancient Bengal and as such provide a valuable source material for the reconstruction of their socio-cultural past. The males generally engaged themselves in outdoor works and the aristocratic ladies preferred indoor jobs. But this restriction was flexible among the rural folk and both the sex worked at home and outside simultaneously.

The familiar scene of house-wives of rural Bengal returning after bath from a river or a tank with pitcher on their waist are of common occurrence on the objects under study. Some of them depict youthful women of exceptional beauty as descending the staircase of a tank or a river. A fragmentary terracotta plaque (ht. 5.2 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century A.D. portrays a woman as carrying a water-vessel (kalasa)
from which some stalks of sprouting lotuses are seen coming out. Another plaque (ht. 10 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from the same site of slightly later date depicts the same scene but without the flowers. The soft and graceful proportion of the figure with bare body and well-developed breasts is no doubt attractive. She wears a sādī with vertical folds hanging in front. The other plaque (ht. 7 cm.; private collection) from the same site again represents a lady as carrying a pitcher in her left waist. She is shown as placing her folded right palm beneath her chin in great astonishment. She wears a thick sādī with vertical folds and a bejewelled necklace and a mukūta or crown over her head. Her sophisticated appearance speaks of her aristocratic status (PLATE: VIII c). A rectangular plaque (ht. 39.9 cm.; Indian Museum) from Paharpur shows a woman standing with a rope in her hands. She is probably engaged in lifting water from the well. This is conspicuous by the presence of pitcher by her side. Surprisingly a human figurine shown as emerging may represent a hitherto unknown folk-tale.

A fragmentary plaque (ht. 9.5 cm.; private collection) from Harinarayanpur (I), depicts a woman as carrying a basket full of vegetables and fruits on her head (PLATE: VII a). Probably this common scene of rural Bengal represents a fruitseller who is on her way to market place.

Ladies holding a mirror and dressing themselves to enhance their charming physical beauty is a very familiar theme represented in early terracottas of Bengal. In a terracotta plaque (ht. 10.2 cm.;
Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century A.D. a standing female is shown as holding a mirror in her right hand. She is in the act of dressing herself in a cheerful mood. Another similar plaque (ht. 11 cm.; private collection) from the same site represents a female with a mirror in her left hand. She looks as if her make-up is complete and smiles a hearty smile. The other tiny plaque (ht. 5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century. A.D. depicts a lady as holding a mirror in her left hand and putting vermilion with the right one. A water-jar near her feet is noteworthy. Such toilet scenes are also reflected in the sculptural art of Khājurāho and in the paintings of Ajantā.

The depiction of the movements of affection and love is also a favourite theme of the Bengal artist. One of the finest specimens (ht. 6.5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century B.C. portrays a mother and a child. The sophisticated grace of the mother and the way of embracing her child with great affection recall the idyllic love of Yaśodā for her child Krishṇa. The terracotta plaque (ht. 31 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur also deserves mention. Here a lady with charming appearance is shown as playing with a child carried by her hands. She herself in a rhythmic pose is possibly enjoying the child with songs or rhymes.

Terracotta plaques from Bengal often portray the life of fishermen. A plaque (ht. 13 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Bāngarh represents a man of robust physique as standing in knee-deep water
with the upper part of his body bent forward in the act of catching fish from water by both his hands. For the purpose of keeping the fish a basket is shown as hanging on his back. The indication of water by means of wavy lines are indeed beautiful. The modelling and expression of the scene is quite rigorous (PLATE: VI c). A plaque (ht. 5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh of the same variety show a man in the act of pulling a net from water. The figure endowed with motion and vitality bends his body backward as if to pull the net with full force. A big tortoise instead of a fish is caught inside his net. This scene may represent a familiar mood or a folk tale.

Terracottas representing other usual moments of daily life are found in a plaque (ht. 28.9 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Paharpur where a bearded old man is shown as carrying pitchers in three tiers hanged on both sides of a pole over his shoulders. The right hand of the figure is placed on the rope tucked over the pole and the left one kept loose over his left thigh as if to keep the balance. The man with bare upper body wears a striped short pant like garment. The fan shaped head-dress of the figure reminds of the aboriginal tribes of rural Bengal (PLATE VI d).

Thus the joy and hardy moments full of tension and anxiety of daily life are vividly portrayed in terracottas of ancient Bengal. They are indeed fascinating.
Sports are a pleasant diversion. They break the monotony of life and bring into one's life a touch of variety. This refreshing tonic is visualized from several terracotta plaques of ancient Bengal. These scenes of pleasure and pastime release the springs of joy held down by the burden of duties and responsibilities.

Scenes of śuka krīḍā have been vividly depicted in terracottas of Bengal. Like the Kauśāṃbi potter, Bengal artists also displayed a diversity in the treatment of the subject which Vātsāyaṇa in his Kāmasūtra mentions as one of the important pastime amongst the sixty-four arts of his times. Sanskrit literatures also contain many references of the activities of the bird kingdom. The most striking example of śuka krīḍā is noticeable in a plaque (ht. 14.3 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Pokharna of second century B.C. Here the figurine in low relief holds a pet śuka or parrot in her left hand. With her heavy dress and ornaments she stands in an elegant pose and expresses a queenly glamour and a seductive grace (PLATE : I c). This beautiful poetic conception of śuka krīḍā is also depicted in connection with the Yaksha and Yakshiī figurines (cf. infra., pp. 176, 182).

Among the indoor games dice and chess seem to have been very popular. In chess, sixty-four squares on a piece of cloth is occupied with the pieces known as rāja, mantrī, geja, aśva and vadiā. A miniature aśva figure in dark grey (ht. 4 cm.; private collection)
from Chandraketugarh, undoubtedly represents a disc of the chess board. This terracotta specimen shows that this game must have been well known in the early centuries of Christian era (PLATE : XIII b ).

Music, both vocal and instrumental, dance and theatrical performances were also favourite pastime of the people of ancient Bengal. Music and dance were cultivated both by men and women and specially by the devadasis in temples. There are frequent references in literatures and inscriptions to music and dancing. Several representations of these scenes are discussed later (cf. infra., pp. 192-200).

Among outdoor pastime men generally favoured wrestling, acrobatics and hunting. In one plaque from Mainamati an acrobat is shown as attempting difficult feats.64 The figure with chest resting on the floor balances his whole body by upraising the lower part. His upraised hand are being supported only at the knees.

(ix) Royal Scenes

In the early terracottas from Bengal human motifs are represented by a substantial number of what may be called royal scenes, as suggested by the dress, ornaments and weapons of the represented figures. These figures are generally tall and slim with

broad chests or full breasts, narrow waist and long graceful limbs. The ornaments worn by these figures are not only matured in form and style but are also graceful.

Some of the terracotta plaques represent the king and the queen on animals' back. One such fragmentary plaque (ht. 6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh represents the king and the queen on elephant's back. Another such plaque (ht. 5 cm.) from the same site and under same collection depicts three figures—probably the king, the queen and an attendant. The middle figure, i.e. the king holds a bag in his right hand and with the left hand he is shown as embracing his consort.

A mutilated plaque (ht. 8.2 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh, represents possibly a procession scene. Here a lady with a fly-whisk is shown as attending a royal personage wearing a Roman kilt. Over his head is depicted an umbrella with a staff of superimposed segments spreading upwards.

An interesting terracotta plaque recently discovered from Harinarayanpur (I), depicts a woman with a baby in her arms. This figure perhaps represent a female nurse engaged in charge of babies of royal or aristocratic family. These professional nurses are referred to in the Divyāvadāna. Such plaques are frequently found in many ancient sites of North India and most of them belong to the Gupta period.
In an old, decayed and slightly damaged terracotta plaque (ht. 31.3 cm.; site Museum, Mahāsthāngarh) from Bhāsu Vihāra, the king is depicted with a sword in hand and the queen seated on his right thigh. Both the figures decorated with ornaments show a touch of classic Pāla art with somewhat idealised human form. Another plaque (ht. 31.3 cm.) from the same site represents two figures: the one with princely garments and ornaments seated in mahārāja-llāsana on an elaborate throne seems to be the king. He holds a child on his left thigh and another is seated between his feet. Both the child figures are now almost damaged. The other male figure probably king's general or a prince holding a sword stands in a pose of obedience. It appears to represent a scene from the royal court. The other terracotta plaque (ht. 31.5 cm.) from the same site with its upper part broken and missing represent on both corners of the plaque two male figures seated on a high brick platform. A royal lady as envisaged from her sophisticated jewellery is shown seated on the floor between the pedestals. The scene perhaps shows a female lay-worshipper as receiving benediction from the high priests of the monastery.

( x ) Sex Life

Early historic sites of Bengal abound in terracottas depicting men and women in coitus. These terracottas offer a close study with the later temple reliefs of Konārak and Khājurāho and the sexual postures described in the Kāmasūtra of Vātsyāyana. They are not only what is known in Indian art as mithuna in which a man and woman
usually stand side wise in a caressing mood, but also emphasize totally on the copulatory aspect of the male-female union.

These terracottas on a purely cultural-historical level carry some implications. The depiction of physical union in a medium like clay suggest that a systematic study of erotics in Bengal was in process as early as the second century B.C. The tradition seem to be much earlier but it is in the Śuṅga period that it gained its popularity both in clay and stone.

The causative factor behind this growth is itself suggested by the terracottas. It shows that the sexual behaviour was clearly codified and was not always shy of orgies. These terracottas are not mere perversion but surely they have a cultural explanation.

Ethnographically it is believed that at the base of early historic phase fertility rites leading to sexual union was common among the tribal communities in lower Bengal. With the dawn of civilization this particular knowledge was systematised in a refined way and was incorporated with the fabric of cultured urban society.

The terracotta pieces revealing the physical union may be studied under several groups:

First, we can discuss those plaques which show couples impatient for union. To this category belongs a complete terracotta plaque (ht. 7.4 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh which
represent a well-dressed couple in dalliance. This plaque depicting
the figures with supple and attractive soft contours is undoubtedly
one of the finest creations of Bengal art. An amorous couple in
dalliance portrayed as seated on a couch (ht. 5 cm.; private
collection) and another (ht. 5.5 cm.; private collection) showing the
couple embracing each other from the same site are also
praiseworthy. A red round plaque (dia 4.8 cm.; private collection)
from Chandraketugarh seems to be a rare specimen which depicts a
seated female with outstretched legs and showing (as if to any one
else) her yoni or female organ with her both hands (PLATE : XIII
c). A mutilated terracotta plaque (ht. 8.5 cm.) depicts a standing
couple. The male is seen engaged in disrobing the nāyikā. The
posture of the figures clearly resembles with its counterpart in a
partly similar motif in stone from Sarguja, U.P., belonging to the
Kushāṇa period. Stylistically all these plaques from Chandraketugarh
belong to the Śunga period.

A lotus shaped medallion from Govinda Dhāp at Mahāsthāngarh
shows a couple, apparently conversing with each other. The female
holds a casket-like object in her left hand while the right hand is
missing. The male standing to her left has his left hand on his thigh
and the right missing from the fore-arm was probably turned to the
female in an intimate caressing gesture. Scholars sometimes identify
the figures as Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu exemplifying the famous Śringāra
rasa. Whatever their identity may be the ornamentation and
sophistication of the figures show a soft and sensuous modelling of
the Gupta craftsmanship though in a remote manner.

65. ASIAR., 1936-37, pl. xvi.
A plaque from Pāhārpur (ht. 15 cm. approx.; Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi), of the eighth-ninth century A.D. represents a couple standing graciously and intimately in their longing to embrace each other. Though much cruder in workmanship than the lithic counterparts of the same temple this plaque is no doubt remarkable in execution.

The second group abounds in a number of plaques depicting the sexual union of male and female in different postures as enumerated by Vātsyāyana in the Kāmasūtra. Several plaques from Bengal depict a male and a female alone in complete or partial union with each other. In a plaque from Chandraketugarh the woman seems to recline on a couch with her legs apart. One of her legs seems to touch the ground while the male stands in a slightly stopping fashion. Another specimen (ht. 4.6 cm.; private collection) from the same site show the female in profile and as half relaxed who places her right leg over the standing male's shoulder who is represented in the act of inter-course. The other plaque (ht. 6 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh, depicts the union of a couple in a peculiar way. The male here is shown standing while the recumbent female holds her legs upwards which touches the head of the male. The posture showing a man standing and supporting the woman with her legs entwined around his waist or shoulder is referred to in the Kāmasūtra. This posture has an exact parallel in the figures of the left hand couple on the south-east wall of the subsidiary shrine of the Lakshmana temple at Khājurāho. Another plaque (ht. 4 cm.) from the same site and in the same museum depict a woman in arch pose.
as engaged in sexual cohabitation with a male who is shown in action. An interesting plaque (ht. 15 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century B.C., depicts a couple in sexual union. Here the female adorned with ornaments is shown as reclining on a well-cushioned high-backed chair with her legs outstretched. The male is shown in the act of copulation. By the side of the figures are shown a wine jar and a tray full of food. The environment of the scene manifests the urban taste and may be associated with the sophisticated nāgaraka class of ancient days. Another plaque (ht. 4.5 cm.; private collection) from the same site, echoes almost the same scene. Only here the male holds probably his worn-off drapery with his right hand and with the left he clasps the female's hands. Apart from the basket full of food the background here represents a tree. In some plaques from Chandraketugarh we find the women seated on a couch as holding up both her thighs, while the man kneels over her. This particular posture seems to find reflection in the Kāmasūtra and is called bhūgnaka or the rising position. A plaque (ht. 6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, depicts a couple in copulation who are not completely naked. The female here seated on something (not clearly visible) meets the male who stands like a bow. The male with his right hand touches the female's head and the left is placed on her abdomen. She embraces the male with deep love and satisfaction.
A terracotta plaque (ht. 7.5 cm.; Archaeological Survey of India) from Tamluk of about the second century B.C., represents an interesting type of human congress known as vaiperīya mālthuna (coitus revertus). Here the man reclines on a high-backed couch with his feet touching the ground. The woman sits on his lap. Though here the situation is not exactly a reverse one, yet the treatment is extremely sensual. This coital posture of an aristocratic couple reflects an urban approach to the sex play which is probably influenced by the contemporary Kāmasūtra. A round terracotta plaque (dia. 5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh, also represents the same mode of human congress. Here the man is shown as seated below while the woman placing her female organ on his knee is placed above. Another specimen (ht. 5 cm.; private collection) from the same find-spot depict the standing male with the female on his lap in copulation. The female embraced the male with her hands. They are associated by two females on both sides who dances with hands upraised in joy and delight.

What is known as animal posture in the Kāmasūtra also finds depiction on samples of our survey and instructive examples are provided by a group of plaques from Chandraketugarh; in them the woman is shown as kneeling on all fours and the man kneeling over her from behind. A variation of this posture is noticed on some plaques where the male is seen in action from behind the lady who is half seated (PLATE: XIII d).
Terracottas from Chandraketugarh also represent the method of oral intercourse or auparishtaka. Such a plaque depicting the female as sucking the penis of her partner is preserved in the Asutosh Museum (PLATE : XIV a ). Though a rare representation, the theme is found in a few other plaques too, now under private possession.

Terracotta plaques from Chandraketugarh representing group sex are also common. Such an erotic group is represented in a plaque (ht. 7.6 cm. ; Asutosh Museum) where the central figures are shown in the act of fellatio. The female is represented as seated with outstretched legs on the lap of the male who is shown in the act of copulation from behind. Two attendants standing at the back help them to stay in their position. The other two female figures seated with outstretched legs and disposing anjali mudrā are engaged in sexual relation with the central male figure by other means. The central woman is also shown as having some sex play with a figure on the left. Another plaque (ht. 5 cm. ; private collection) from the same find-spot portrays a copulatory couple where the standing male carries the female whose legs are inter-twined to the male's waist. On both sides of the central figure are shown two dancing females (PLATE : XIV b).

Another Chandraketugarh plaque (ht. 6.5 cm. ; private collection) depicts a woman in a peculiar pose who bends from her waist backward. She is involved in sex play with a male on the left who makes some gesture with his raised left hand and is engaged in a frontal congress with the man on the right. In the other one (ht.
a female figure is represented with legs outstretched upwards who is being copulated by a male shown as half bending backwards. The male with his left hand holds the right leg of the female and with the right places his linga inside her yoni. The female by her left hand embraces the neck of another male standing to her left while her right hand is placed on her head. The man standing on the left holds the male with her right hand and caresses her breasts with the left. The female figure balances her body by placing her left leg over the waist of the standing male. (PLATE : XIV c). In another occasion (ht. 5 cm. ; private collection) a female is represented as half reclined on a platform. The upper part of her body is erected and is shown as turned in front. The male sits on the legs of the female and are engaged in fellatio. The two other figures are shown facing on opposite sides.

Terracotta plaques revealing cohabiting animals and birds are also common. Some of the plaques from Chandraketugarh represent the scene of copulation of elephants. A terracotta medallion (dia. 5.2 cm. ; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh depicts two copulatory birds kissing each other. The male bird is shown as riding over a female one. The scattered feathers all around speaks of their excitement (PLATE : XIV d ).
Scenes of Foreign Inspirations

The terracotta art of Bengal is essentially indigenous in form and content, yet examples revealing foreign idioms are by no means rare.

Excavations at Pāṇḍu Rājār Dhibi have yielded several terracotta fragments from period III and IV which are very interesting. These terracotta heads reveal some traits of style and treatment unknown to Indian tradition. The long nose starting down from the forehead, large applied eyes and the protuberant chin and the personality of the figures recall the conventional style of the Aegean world and its neighbourhood including some of the Hittite, Philistine and Phrygian sculptures (cf. supra., p. 38).

More interesting than the above is a terracotta winged female figurine (PLATE : XV a) burnt in deep red. Hailing from Jhikrā, (adjacent to Berāchampā) it claims our attention for its beauty and technical finish. Stylistically assignable to the Śuṅga-Kushāṇa period it is bedecked with ornaments and it wears a full sleeved and vertically beaded long diaphanous drapery. Below the deep navel is a girdle. The hands are placed on both sides of the hip and the female organ is prominent. The crowned head, the open hairs and the pleasant smile endow the whole figure with an immaculate beauty. The Jhikrā figurine, like a few counterparts found elsewhere, baffle

satisfactory identifications. In general they appear to represent Yakshiṇīs of Indian tradition, although references to winged Yakshiṇīs are absent in Indian literature or iconographical texts. E.H. Johnston has traced a deity called Meia in the Oxyrhynchus's Papyrus No. 1280 found in the Middle East, who is portrayed there as the giver of flood, rain and fertility. This deity seems to be the foreign counterpart of Indian Māyā who figures in Asvaghosha's Saundarananda. However, the present figurine seems to have been inspired by similar winged figurines depicted on the seals from ancient Mesopotamia and Akkad and on other objects from ancient Europe. Indeed such winged figurines are not uncommon in art of the West, and we are reminded, for example, of a youth with wings, probably of Oedipus, portrayed on a vase of the pre-christian era and of a winged couple driving the chariot of Aphrodite, the Goddess of love and beauty met with on a terracotta plaque of the fifth century B.C. from Lokri in ancient Greece. Other noteworthy examples of the western art include a winged figure painted on a toilet box of the same period, preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rome; the effigy of the winged cupid, the son of Venus, with a bow and arrows now an exhibit in the Capitoline Museum, Rome; and the large winged figure of Samanus in stone relief from Rome. Collectively, the winged figures in terracottas from Bengal can favourably be compared with their western counterparts and they bear an undeniable affinity with the latter.

The young damsel from Chandraketugarh, now in a private collection, of the first-second century A.D., engaged in the act of paying respect by touching one's feet, articulates a different idiom. Unlike other figurines wearing diaphanous drapery she wears a frocklike garment. Conventional long hairs and elaborate coifs are absent here (cf. supra., pp. 92 and 107). While the skirt and the hair style betray the undeniable Graeco-Roman and Egyptian affinities, in conception and workmanship it harps a note different from the one of the indigenous terracotta art. (PLATE : IX b )

Another terracotta object, provided by a button-seal with a circumference of 62 millimetre and a thickness of 7 millimetre discovered at Chandraketugarh, depicts on the obverse a pair of human figures leaping above a humped bull with outstretched arms. The bull looks rightwards while the acrobats are leaping towards the left. In order to bring out the effect of space one of these acrobats has been shown as smaller than the other. The reverse shows a twin-tree with stylised leaves appearing as semi-circular tiers comparable to the early designs of the Harappān civilisation. The importance of the seal lies in the fact that it inevitably recalls the famous ritual of bull-leaping in the art of Minoan Crete.68 The twin-tree has an obvious relevance with the ritual. But it is still a matter of investigation whether this practice originated in India or was ever in vogue for a certain stretch of time. However, the seal furnishes an

unimpeachably evidence of the contact of the Lower Gangetic Valley with the Aegean world.

A male hard-burnt terracotta head (ht. 5 cm.; private collection) from Harinārāyaṇpur(I) (FIGURE : t ), may be classed with the similar finds from Gandhāra revealing affinities with the Graeco-Roman pantheon. The pointed sharp nose, long neck and the hair tucked at the top like a knot are strongly reminiscent of the similar features of the figural art of Greece. It may be compared with an almost similar head from Naukratis, now collected in the British Museum. To this may be added a female head (ht.7.7 cm.) from the same place and in the same collection. It has curly open hairs and a fan-shaped hair dress which are similar to those of the female depicted in the Hellenic - Hellenistic art. The face of this figure beams with a spiritual experience and the poise and dignity which mark it are sometimes met with in similar figures of the Roman and Egyptian repertoires (PLATE : XId).

Mention may also be made of a terracotta depicting a warrior hailing from the same place. The head-gear of this figure appears to be of Perso-Hellenic origin. The terracotta male figure (ht. 9.5 cm. : private collection) from Harinārāyaṇpur (I) represented like the Portuguese soldier is also remarkable. The coat and cap worn by the figure is alien to Indian norms and traditions (PLATE : XVC).

Terracottas of Tamluk sometimes reveal traits of exotic art expressing Hellenistic formality and appreciation of physical charm.
Both male and female figurines from Tamluk are occasionally found as wearing chiton-like garments thus indicating a close affinity with the West.

A terracotta double-headed deity (ht. 18 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Tamluk of about the second century A.D., wearing a helmet, marks of tilaka on foreheads and fish shaped eyes appears to be the replica of Janus, the ancient Italian deity of war and enterprise. The figure has a large ring above as a handle and square pedestal below. Both the heads are conspicuous by the absence of ears.

Several terracottas from Tamluk show new ethnic varieties unknown to India art. They found parallel in the temple boys of ancient Greece. The seated boy (ht. 6.1 cm.; Asutosh Museum) of the first—second century A.D., with the treatment of head-dress and physiognomy betrays unmistakably a Hellenistic impression. Many of the male heads from Tamluk and Chandraketugarh appear to be in general finish and conception a simplified version of the Roman portrait figures (PLATE : XVc).

Mention may be made of another plaque from Tamluk depicting a standing male and a female of about third century A.D. The male wears dhti and a scarf flowing round the shoulder and a thick necklace. Both the upper and lower garments of the female and the mode of wearing them by both the male and the female figures are
similar to those of some of the West-bound figures of the Gandhāra art.

A male terracotta figure from Tamluk with the high head-dress, elongated ear-drums and a jacket with round collar and borders on both sides across the shoulders as well, the dignified manner in which he places the hands on both sides of his waist breathes a spirit of the Western art (PLATE : XIIa).

The last but not the least is an example from the proceeding place. The figure is of a female with hands full of bangles - the right one of which is placed on the right side and the left loosely hanging down. She wears a double folded skirt (cf. supra, p.92-93) whose artistic quality and the mode of adopting such unusual dresses in Bengal testifies to the inspiration served by the foreigners into the contemporary society of Bengal (PLATE : IXb).

B. ASPECTS OF CULTURAL LIFE

(i) Realm of Ideas and Imagination

The myths and legends of India record every experience and emotion of mankind: love and hatred, courage and cowardice, nobility and meanness, compassion and wit. Many such myths and legends narrated in our extensive literature usually find a partial or summary and rarely a detailed depiction in the terracotta art of
Bengal. And expectedly the terracotta specimens which carry these depictions are comparable to their counterparts in stone and other materials. In character they are secular as well as religious and in regard to religious association they are affiliated to Brahmanism as well as to heterodox system.

A terracotta plaque from Mahāsthānagāraḥ portrays a woman sleeping gracefully on a couch with her left hand supporting her head. The extended right hand of the lady touches an animal (either elephant or a bull) descending from skies. Assuming the animal to be an elephant, the scene represents Gautama's mother Māyādevī's dream before the birth of the Buddha, and a notable example of this scene is provided by a relief of Bhārhut of the second century B.C. Another example from the same site, in a better state of preservation, depicts the same theme. In it Māyādevī is shown as lying on a bedstead (pāḷāṅka) with ornamented legs, below which the empty spaces are filled by some accessories like spittons and lamp stands (?). The flowering end of the sāği of the lady at the top balances the whole scene. This depiction probably suggests the agitation of the lady when in her dream the birth of the Buddha was announced. Both these specimens from Mahāsthānagāraḥ belong to the fourth century B.C.

In a terracotta plaque (ht. 11 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century A.D., a lady is shown:

69. ASIAR., 1936-37, pl XV a.
as standing in a graceful tribhanga pose holding the branches of a tree probably Śāla, with her upraised hand. The lady here may be identified as Māyādevī at the moment of Gautama's birth.

Among other avidurenidāna stories met with in the old terracotta art of Bengal are prince Siddhārtha's cutting off the hair before his great renunciation and the purchase of the prince Jeta's park by the rich merchant Anāthapindaka for the Master. The first incident in the life of Gautama occurs in the Sārnāth sculpture, but it seemingly did not gain popularity. However, interestingly it is depicted in several terracotta plaques from Maināmatī and incidentally it needs mention that the stylistic treatment in them is almost similar to the corresponding scene in mediaeval Burmese sculptures and terracottas. A fragmentary terracotta plaque from Tamluk, now in the Tāmrālipta Museum and Research Centre, finds an impressive portrayal of the gift of Jetavana by the merchant. The plaque shows the part of a traditional bullock cart bearing coins, and it strongly reminds us of a plaque on the railing of Bhārhut where the theme is more elaborately delineated.

A terracotta plaque from Chandraketugarh, now displayed in a private collection, portrays a smiling lady seated on an elephant's back. She is lightly ornamented and carries an āṅkuśa. She is accompanied by a female carrying a staff. A similar scene is found in the frescoes of Ajantā caves. The younger lady is perhaps the wife of Yaśadeva, the first disciple of Lord Buddha while the other her mother.

The durenidana or Jātaka stories in Pāli centuring round the previous birth of Gautama as Bodhisattva have been depicted in the early terracotta art of Bengal. Superior to others in talent and wisdom Gautama appeared in this phase as a benevolent leader dedicated to the welfare of his fellow creature. The identification of these stories on terracottas are no doubt difficult as the stories here are extremely abbreviated and condensed. Yet they play a great part in the cultural tradition of Bengal.

A terracotta plaque (ht. 6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh of second-first century B.C., represent a monkey on a crocodile's back (PLATE : XVd). In another specimen the monkey is shown as leaping. These plaques no doubt depict the episode of the Vānarindra Jātaka (No.57) which is re-told in the Vānara Jātaka (No.324). Though the story is abbreviated in its representation, yet its identification with the Jātaka story cannot be denied.

The Tayodhamma Jātaka (No.58) is told in a plaque (ht.9 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh of the second century B.C. Here the mother monkey wearing ear-rings and bangles is shown seated. She places her right hand over her baby just seated in front. The portrayal of the mother monkey expresses her fear who tries to cool down her baby and prevent him from going to his cruel father. Two perforated holes just below the ear-rings were probably meant for suspension (PLATE : XVa).
The interesting story of the Mahākopi Jātaka (No.407) finds its depiction in a square terracotta plaque from Bāngarh. Here a big monkey is accompanied by its young ones. One of them is seen riding on the back of its mother and another between her fore legs. This plaque in terms of style and execution is a product of the Śuṅga repertoire. It may be classed with the scene of the Mahākopi Jātaka illustrated on the Bhārḥut railing.

On another occasion Bodhisattva was born as a peacock. This life of his is described in the Mora-Jātaka (No.159) and Mahāmora Jātaka (No.491). A square plaque (5 cm. sq.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh depict a peacock in gay mood. His movement and the open beaks express the moment of chanting the theme. The fine craftsmanship and execution dates back this terracotta piece to the second century B.C.

The Kālabahu Jātaka (No.329) is told very summarily in a fragmentary round plaque (dia 4.7 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh. Here two parrots are seen eating something from a pot. The bird shown on the right seems to be bigger than the other. This plaque is also datable to the second century B.C.

The Chhaddanta Jātaka (No.514) is found depicted in a moulded plaque (ht. 7.5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Tamulk. Here a herd

72. Das Gupta, P.C., *The early terracottas from Tamralipta*, p.34.
of sporting elephants are seen flanked by a tree where on the branches seats two apes. The playful acts of these monkeys creates a sylvan environment. The volume and naturalistic treatment and the firm lines with minor details help to assign it to the first century B.C.

The Vessantara Jātaka (No.547) is illustrated in several plaques. In a mutilated plaque (ht. 7 cm.) from Tamluk\textsuperscript{73} show eleven standing figures arranged vertically in three rows. The lowest one show a man walking with a small baggage on his shoulder, accompanied by a lady wearing chiton and two boys. The other figures upwards are adorned with precious ornaments and rich turbans. Another plaque (ht.6.7 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandra ketugarh represent Vessantara's exile with his wife and children. The aggrieved citizens are depicted at the back. A narrative illustration of this episode may be found on the northern gateway of Sāñchi.

The Padakusalamānava Jātaka (No.432) deals with the story of Aśvamukhi, a horse headed Yakṣī. The scene of abduction of a young brāhmaṇa, said to be the father of Bodhisattva by Aśvamukhi may be detected in several terracottas from Bengal. A specimen (ht.7.3 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketunagar of about the second century A.D., depicts this scene carefully. Here the youth is shown as holding a harp in his right hand. He wears two amulets of triratna design and a necklace with a tailsman. Another

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., p.26.
plaque (ht.14.9 cm.; private collection) from the same site and of the same epoch depict this scene where Aśvamukhī is shown as wearing a vastra-upavīta.

The Apānnaka Jātaka (No.1) on the other hand deals with a guileful Yaksha richly adorned with fresh lotuses. He is represented in a large mould (ht.7.3 cm.) from Tamluk belonging to the second century B.C. The figure shown in semapadesthānaka pose holds long stalks of lotuses in both of his hands resting on his waist. He wears elaborate head-dresses, necklace and coiled bracelets. The association of lotuses with this Yaksha figure recalls the Jātaka episode.

The episode of the Jātaka story of Bodhisattva Mātaṅga (No.497) is depicted in a moulded rectangular plaque (ht.14.5 cm.) from Tamluk of about the second century B.C. It represents four figures: one elderly lady caressing a young girl by touching her chin; the central figure pointing to a stifly standing male carrying a staff (?) in the extreme right and a turbaned head above these figures probably a mere passer-by. This plaque possibly depicts the first encounter of Bodhisattva and Ditthamaṅgalika. The central figure with all probability is the merchants' daughter and the standing male in the extreme right is Mātaṅga. It is interesting to note here is the attitude of the young lady in the centre who points to the

75. Ibid., pp.22-23.
male figure with her left arm and at the same time is seen conversing with the elderly lady. The ladies in this plaque wear elaborate coiffures, the *chhananvīras* or cross garlands, transparent skirts with heavy waist girdles. The composition and the two dimensional treatment recall the earlier styles of Bhārhut.

But the most realistic creation of the Bengal artists is the representation of a deer with his fawn fleeing in an alarming situation of attack (PLATE : IIIa). This scene may be compared with the flight of deer in a relief at Rain Gumphā, Khāndāgiri hills, Orissa. The motif probably interprets a moment from the episode of *Mrīga Jātaka* or the *Sutasoma Jātaka* as painted in Ajantā caves.

Apart from dealing with subjects of the Buddhist lore the artists of Bengal selected legends also from the classical literatures including the works of masters like Bhāsa and Kālidāsa. For example, a plaque (ht.9 cm.; Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk depicts the elopement scene of Vasavadattā, the front part of the plaque is missing but the remaining part retains the ample evidence of Udayaṇa and Vāsavadattā as feeling from Avantī.

A fragmentary plaque (ht. 5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Māhāsthānagrh of about the first century A.D. depicts the scene of king Dushyanta's hunting in the hermitage of rishi Kanva. This story is graphically related in the classical writing of Kālidāsa's
Abhijñāna Sakuntalam. The earlier simpler version of the story is related in the Mahābhārata. In the plaque under discussion a personage of lordly bearing is shown as driving a chariot with a drawn bow and flock of deer fleeing in front.\(^{76}\)

A fragmentary plaque of the first century A.D. from Tamluk (Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) depicts a scene from the Krishna legend.\(^{77}\) Here the story of dethroning of Kaṁsa by Kṛiṣhṇa is shown with great emphasis on volume and realism. This recall the early style of Mathura and as probably eastern version of the Graeco-Roman statutory in general. Scenes of the Kṛiṣhṇa legends are also represented in Pāhārpur specimens. One such example show a boy holding the trunk of trees on either side. This depiction seem to represent Kṛiṣhṇa’s exploit of uprooting the twin Arjun trees (Yamālārjuna)\(^{78}\). Another plaque represent Kṛiṣhṇa as killing Keśīn.\(^{79}\)

Scenes from the age-old epics the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata can be recognised in some plaques and clay vases from various sites of Bengal.

In a plaque from Chandraketugarh of about the second century A.D. the scene of abduction of a lady by a grimacing hefty demon is vividly portrayed. Here in the plaque an effect of

\(^{76}\) This theme is also found on some sculptural relief of the Udayagiri hills and in some terracotta plaques from Kausāmbī.


\(^{78}\) MASI, 55, pl. XXVIIId.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., pl. XXVIIIa.
considerable movement is brought to visualize the surprised woman
and the triumphant predator wearing matted hair. This is no doubt
the scene of the carrying away of Sītā by the demon King Rāvana.

Several terracotta plaques (ht.5.5 cm.; private collection) from
Chandraketugarh show a monkey as holding a cloth bag. In the
Rāmāyana it is told that while carried away by Rāvana in his
chariot, Sītā put off all her ornaments which were collected by the
monkey people living in the plains of the hilly areas. The figure
depicted in the plaque may represent the monkey king Sugrīva who
after collecting all these ornaments is on his way to return it back
to Rāma.

A fragmentary moulded terracotta plaque (ht.12.5 cm.; State
Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh, of about the second
century A.D. depicts a dramatic event when a lady in a wood is
being observed by a monkey. In another plaque a female mirror
bearer appear friendly with the lady represented in the previous
one is shown here in a reverential pose. Both the plaques may
depict the story of the discovery of Sītā in the Aśoka grove by
faithful Hanumāna. The other lady or the lovely rākṣasī portrayed in
the latter may be identified with Saramā, the wife of Vibhīśaṇa.80

(PLATE: XVd.)

Some of the plaques from Chandraketugarh collected in private
possessions depict fierce rākṣasā figures as wearing typical skirt
like dresses. These figures may represent the rākṣasācf the Laṅkā
as described in the Rāmāyana.

80. 'Ancient Terracottas recovered', Ananda Bazar Patrika, February
15, 1981.
Another terracotta plaque (ht.4.8 cm.; Asutosh Museum) of the same site of about the second century A.D., shows two standing monkeys in the act of wrestling. This scene recalls the famous combat between Vālī and Sugrīva as told in the Rāmāyāṇa.

A terracotta plaque (ht.8 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century B.C./A.D., shows the metallic trappings of the horse and a Chakradhvaja. The rider on the horse is almost bare bodied. He only wears a dhuti tucked at his waist by a knot. The appearance of this horse rider standing still may allow us to refer to the Rāmāyāṇa story of Rāma's Āsvamedha and the defiance of his sons, Lava and Kuśa who had been brought up in the hermitage.

The plaques from Pāhārpur represent an ascetic with matted hair standing beside a banana tree with a bow in the left hand.81 In another plaque he is shown as seated on a cushion with two quivers hanging on the back and a bow on the left side.82 It is stated in the Rāmāyāṇa that though the two brothers Rāma and Lākṣmaṇa were exiled in a forest for fourteen years by Daśaratha, the king of Ayodhya and was enjoined by Kaśyapa, the queen-mother to keep matted hair and wear barks they took bows and arrows for the fear of Rākṣasas.83 Thus it seems that the two figures of the Pāhārpur plaque represents the two princes of Ayodhya in exile. The figure of the garlanded monkey in Pāhārpur plaques may be

81. MASI, 55, pl.XLVIIIc.
82. Ibid., pl.XLVIIIb.
84. MASI, 55, p.60.
taken to represent Sugrīva, the monkey king with whom Rāma made friends while searching for Sītā.

In another plaque from Pāhārpur a man is depicted as trying to pull down a hillock. This scene may be taken as a depiction of Rāvana, the king of Lāṅkā as trying to uproot mount Kailāśa.85

Several inscribed terracotta plaques86 (ht.39 cm approx.; National Museum of Bangladesh) from Palāśbāgī, datable to the sixth - seventh century A.D. depict the scenes of the Rāmāyana. The notable specimens represent (i) Janaka welcoming Viśvāmitra, Rāma and Lāṁkṣiṁa with a plate full of dānas; (ii) Janaka standing in front of three persons, the first with extended hands shown as accepting the gifts while the middle one is represented with folded palms; (iii) five seated persons are shown in various poses. Of them Rāma in half kneeling posture possibly salutes Janaka; (iv) Rāma here with strength and energy is portrayed as shooting an arrow with his bow. The figure behind him places his hand below the chin in deep astonishment. The sharply defined features of both the figures exhibit the effect of Gupta plastic idioms; (v) a scene of rejoicing where a woman holds a buggle and a man is shown with a drum like instrument. Their draperies fluttering with the tune of instruments and the slowly gliding curves of the body express the rhythm; (vi) a dead person covered all over is shown lying on a

85. Ibid., p.71
86. Acc.Nos.E 83.454; E 83.4; E 83.453; E 83.3753; E 83.3752, etc.
bed. Three ladies with deep sorrow and apathy are shown as weeping. One of them is standing near the head of the dead person and the other with upraised arms seems to be crying louder while the third is unconsciously lying on the floor. This plaque probably represents the death scene of King Daśaratha where the king himself lies dead on the bed and his three wives Kauśalyā, Kaikeyī and Sumitrā are depicted as grive striken.

All the figures depicted in these plaques have round puffy face, wide open eyes, full protruding lips and plain hanging drapery whose fingers and toes are only indicated, not modelled.

Apart from terracotta plaques Rāmāyana tales are also portrayed in terracotta vases. Such an interesting terracotta vase of uncommon variety of eleventh-twelfth century A.D. from Tildā is now in the collection of the Asutosh Museum of India Art. It bears a continuous band of relief work in a single row round the shoulder section of the body of the vase. Unfortunately the vase is now in a fragmentary condition. But for the study of the subject matter presented in the mode of continuous narration it may be divided into five convenient sections running from right to left.  

Section-I

Although a fragmentary part, yet it represents a deer (only mouth and hind legs are visible) being viewed by three persons—the males and the females. Both the male figures have three tier knot of hair, the upper part of their body being bare except a cross belt passing over both shoulders and fashioned cross-wise in front of the chest. They are equipped with a bow and arrow and a quiver fastened over their left shoulders. The standing male figure in the extreme right faces to the left while the other seated in a yogic posture is pointing towards the charming animal.

This relief clearly recalls the Rāmāvata episode. Here Rāma seated with his consort Sītā and brother Lakśmana look gazely to the golden deer (Svarṇemṛiga). It is told in the epic that while in exile in the forest they came upon the golden deer who was none other than Mārīcha, a rākshasa in disguise. Though the narration in the relief is condensed yet it is not difficult to construct the incident from the great epic.

Section-II

The section begins after a small margin of space behind the deer. Here a male and a female facing each other are shown on either side of a stem of a tree. The female seated with folded legs wide apart addresses the male with ashtonished look and is pointing something with her right hand. She wears earrings and has bun shaped hair dress. The upper part of her body is totally bare. The
male adorned with usual dress while listening to her is probably agitated. His agitation is depicted in a humorous manner. He raises both his hands in a gesture to cover his ears and his flat turban like hairdress is violently agitated while his lower garments are thrown in whirling movement.

This portion of the relief show that Sītā hearing the distant echo of Mārīcha's distress call for help in imitation of Rāma's voice urges Lakṣmaṇa to follow his brother. Lakṣmaṇa helplessly covers his ears, not to listen to the abusive words of Sītā.

Section-III

In this section a male is shown in the act of discharging an arrow to a therio-anthropomorphic demon placed beyond a tree. His bow fully drawn and the body with multiple bends shows the posture of shooting. Adorned with usual hair style and a cross belt he wears short lower garment with long central fold in the shape of a swallow's tail. The animal sustaining the fatal wound of an arrow beneath his left arm turning his head, facing and gazing points to his mortal foe with his unnatural long left hand.

This portion portrays Rāma's successful encounter with the demon. The relief show Rāma in the heart of the forest and Mārīcha knowing his impending death assumed the therio-anthropomorphic shape.
Section-IV

This part depicts a male with short lower garments and a cross belt. He is being offered something by a female seated on the ground inside a half-drawn arch. The two figures are also shown as conversing with each other.

We learn from the Rāmāyana inspite of the magic circle drawn by Lakshmana as a protection against all unforeseen calamities, Rāvana was successful in tempting Sītā to come out of it and give him his alms. It is that part of the story which finds depiction in this section.

Section-V

The scene is portrayed within a rectangular frame work. Here the human figures are shown in diagonal posture, and a large flying bird is drawn at a level equal to the frame. Probably it depicts the flying motion of the bird. The frame here is the part of the flying chariot, inside which a seated female is shown at the rear. The male holds a club in his left hand and a noose in his right. The huge bird combatantly confronts the chariot and holds a section of the flying instrument with its beak and claws.

This portion depicts the violent resistance offered by Jātāyu, the devotee of Rāma. He realised the misdeed of Rāvana and came to rescue Sītā. He bravely charges the chariot, Pushpaka with his beak and claws, while Rāvana with his club tries to ward off the menace.
The story portrayed in the vase thus ends somewhat abruptly, probably due to the paucity of space. But still it is, the rare example from Bengal art which represents almost a complete story. Here the artist lays stress on the human figures apart from its religious content. Rāma's poise and gallant, Lakshmana's humour, Sītā's feminine beauty and charm, Mārīcha's mask-like facial and the tremendous efforts of Jātāyu, all are delineated with natural enthusiasm.

In this context mention may be made of a cubical terracotta piece preserved in the collection of the Asutosh Museum. This upside broken piece contains male figures with bows and arrows and a female figure too. A small doe is also visible in the scene. The female's face is rubbed, but her hands are represented clearly with numerous bangles. The scene probably represents a tale from the Rāmāyana. Here the two brothers Rāma and Lakshmana along with Sītā are shown as roaming in the forest. The doe here indicates the atmosphere of the forest.

In ancient Bengal the Mahābhārata also gained some popularity. An interesting sealing 88 (dia.2.5 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh portrays a devī standing facing, hands akimbo and wearing a chiton betraying Graeco-Roman influence. She bears a coiffure arranged in a trefoil pattern. By her

right hand she holds a boy nimbate and half seated to her right. On her left shoulder appears a bird (owl?) sitting on a roost. The conception of the devī holding a boy or child reminds us about the rākshasi Jara mentioned in the Mahābhārata.

Numerous terracotta plaques from Pāhārpur illustrate the stories from Pañchatantra. The first katha of the first tantra, kilotpāti vānarā (the wedge-pulling monkey) is represented in a plaque where the monkey is shown as perched on a beam in an inclined position as happens in the process of sawing. The treatment of the figure is no doubt naturalistic. The story of the second Tantra, 'the winning of friends' is also illustrated in a Pāhārpur terracotta specimen where a deer is shown as grazing or drinking water. The sixth katha of the first tantra deals with the story of a lion, Madanmattā, looking into the well. In a Pāhārpur plaque (ht. 26.5 cm.; Varendra Research Museum), the story is represented in a condensed manner. Here only the lion is shown as looking down into the well. The expression speaks of its anger and excitement. The story of the 'talking cave' is also depicted in several plaques from Pāhārpur. The essential element of the story is that a jackal stood in front of a cave and his imaginary conversation with the cave leads the lion to respond in roars. Here only the lion, inside a cave apparently in roaring attitude is portrayed. The presence of the jackal is eliminated. The fable of the 'elephant and mice' illustrated

89. MASI, 55, pls., LII, a, b, d and e.
in a terracotta plaque shows an elephant in captivity with three mice on its body all in the act of nibbling away the cords on binding beck and legs. This represents another Panchatantra story of 'the mice that set elephants free', and obviously it portrays only the scene of the rescue of the kind elephant.

b. Demons and Supernaturals

The early terracotta artists of Bengal also included demons and supernaturals like Gandharvas, Nāgas, Vidyādharas, Garuḍas, Kinnaras, Kimpurusha, Makaras, Rākshasas, Kīrtimukhas and several composite figures in their decorative programme. These demi-Gods seem to have been venerated by all regardless of their personal religious beliefs.

Gandharva

The Gandharvas are secondary Gods in the Vedas who knew and revealed the secrets of heaven and divine truth. They are musicians in Indra's heaven and in addition to their duty of attending banquets of the Gods, they are to prepare some juice for the Gods. They are delineated as flying either singly or with the Vidyādharīs or Apsaras as their female counterparts, as exemplified by numerous plaques from Pāhrāpur. In each a plaque91 (ht. 35 cm.) a well-ornamented Gandharva is shown as holding a sword by his right hand

91. MASI, 55, pi. XLVII f.
and a noose by the left, and as floating in space with up turned legs indicative of the act of fight; his curly hairs arranged in the fashion of a crown at the top of his head and some locks fall on his shoulders, while his legs are covered with lotus shaped boots which are common with the other Gandharva figures of Pāhārpur. Gandharvas at Pāhārpur are also shown as holding an ustrung necklace, as instanced by a plaque from the first terrace verandah of the main shrine of the temple at Pāhārpur. In general adornment and physiognomy the figure is similar to the preceding one but here it is more elongated and more rhythmic. Here mention may also be made of the Gandharva figure riding a rhinoceros.

Gandharvas are also represented in the Maināmatī plaques as plying on a damaru, beating time on a pitcher or beating a drum.

A large terracotta plaque (ht. 37 cm.; Directorate of Archaeology, Bangladesh) from Bhāsu Vihāra represents a prince or more probably a flying Gandharva wearing boots and profusely adorned with simple but highly effective jewellery. The treatment of the minor details of the limbs, the ornaments, the folds of the drapery and the overall impression bespeak the Gupta tradition.

Nāga

Nāgas are mythical semi-divine beings. Indian popular belief

92. Ibid., pl. XLVII b.
93. Ibid., pl. XLVI e.
recognizes a much venerated class of snake gods (Nāgas). The Pāli Buddhist literature carries indication of the deep reverence of the Nāgas towards the Buddna.

Nāgas are represented in early terracotta plaques of Bengal in two forms: (a) as a human with a serpent hood attached to the back of the head; and (b) as snake faced with human body. Several terracottas from Maṅgalkoṭ datable to about the sixth-eighth century, now preserved in the Mahāsthānagarh Museum, Bangladesh and the Pāhārpur plaque representing a snake faced human figure as playing cymbals are worth mentioning.

Nāgas as simple reptiles also appear in the art under review. Some examples from Pāhārpur (all in the Varendra Research Museum) represent the nāga or cobra, as it is generally called, in various mood and manners. One such plaque (ht. 37.5 cm.) showing a coiled cobra encircling a Śivalīṅga within a frame reveals the connection of nāgas with Śiva or the Śaiva cult. Another plaque (ht. 23.6 cm.) depicts a nāga hood over a līṅga (?) or a platform. On some of the Pāhārpur plaques (ht. 26 cm.) two nāgas are seen facing each other.

**Vidhyādhara**

The name Vidyādhara means 'possessor of knowledge'. In the Brahmanical mythology the Vidyādhāras are described as celestial

95. MAS I., 55, pi. XLVI b.
96. VRM No.2068.
97. VRM No.2179.
98. VRM No.2096
beings, secondary Gods and attendants upon Indra, and as inhabiting the regions between the earth and sky.

In several plaques from Mainamati Vidyādharaś and Vidyādharaś are represented as flying and holding a garland while hovering in the sky. Such plaques appear to have been set in the buildings without any coherent sequence.

**Garuḍa**

The mythical bird, Garutmat Suparna or Garuḍa, the lord of the Feathered race, the enemy of the serpents and the vehicle of Vishnu, is also figured, though sparsely, in the terracotta art under review. While a Pāhārpur plaque portrays a Garuḍa in human form one such piece from Mainamati, now preserved in the Sālavana Vihāra Museum, carries on it the figure of a bird striking the hood of a cobra.

**Kinnara**

A particular class of semi-divine being with human bust and bird legs and claws, classed as Kinnaras appears as a decorative motif in Bengal terracottas. A mutilated terracotta piece (ht. 6 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the first century

100. MASI., 55, pl. LIV, 6.
B.C., depicts a group of animal-headed figurines (probably Kinnaras) in various acts. On a terracotta plaque¹⁰¹ from Maināmatī a Kinnara has a horse's head and human body. Another plaque¹⁰² from the same site illustrates a Kinnara with animal legs and upper body and face human with wings instead of arms. But perhaps the most interesting is the double-bodied Kinnara figured on an eighth-century angular terracotta plaque from Mahāsthāṅgarh now in the National Museum of Bangladesh. Figures of Kinnara from Pāhārpur (ht. 20.5 cm.) and of Kinnarīs from Maināmatī preserved in the same museum are noteworthy. The Mahāsthāṅgarh Museum has also some interesting specimens of Kinnarīs found in the locality in course of excavations and explorations.

Makara

The aquatic monster makara with the head of an elephant or crocodile representing the life-force of water is forcefully portrayed in some specimens; its precise modelling is also appreciable. A highly ornate effect is sometimes produced by the arabesque-like treatment of the monster's snout and tail. Such a figure is met with in one of the slightly damaged Mahāsthāṅgarh plaques with long, curved, trunk like snout, highly ornamental wings and short webbed feet; the snout is toothed and the eyes, wings and tails are

¹⁰². Ibid., pl. VI, 1.
damaged. Another sample from Bhāsu Vihāra (ht. 40.5 cm.) of the same site carries on it a much better representation; in it the mythical animal is seen with wide burning eyes and open moth with its tail ending in ornamental scroll. Sometimes it is partially shown and is exemplified by a terracotta plaque from Pāhārpur (ht. 30.5 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) its head with bulging eyes and wide open toothed mouth emitting a floral object on this piece can hardly escape attention of a discerning eye (PLATE:XVI b). Another plaque (ht. 24.5 cm.) from the same site and lying in the same museum portrays a makara face with upraised snout emitting something (but not floral) as in the previous piece from its mouth; the ear of the figure is typically decorated, but the comparatively smaller eyes are free from a ferocious look.

Rākshasa

The demoniac feature with a fierce outlook, pot belly and with somewhat inhuman appearance is frequently represented in terracotta art of Bengal. Perhaps unique of its kind it is terracotta rākshasa toy cart of an early Kushāna style from Chandraketugarh, now deposited in a private collection. It envisages a grimacing tusked but bejewelled head, devouring with great relish a huge python and tightly holding an elephant as the next item in its lunch basket. The figure expresses a supernatural strength. Its bulk can be easily

103. BA., op. cit., p. 62.
104. VRM No. 2063.
105. VRM No. 2182.
106. Marg., XXIII, 1, December 1969, p. 11.
obtained by comparing it with the proportion of the diminutive elephant.

Another sample of a seated rākshasa (ht. 13 cm.; private collection) from the same site shows him wearing an uncanny smile; adorned with leaf-like ornament in the right lobe, and a round flower on the left, this pot-bellied figure holds an indistinct object in his hands. In this context mention may be made of another red hard-burnt standing rākshasa figure (ht. 10 cm.) from the same find-spot as holding a basket of food on the left hand and supported over the shoulder, the right hand also carrying something which is not clear (PLATE: XVI c). A similar mutilated rākshasa head (ht. 8 cm. approx.; private collection) hailing from Dābu may be mentioned in this connection.

**Kimpurusha and Kīrtimukha**

Though the representation of Kimpurusha and Kīrtimukhas are rare in Bengal terracottas, they are not altogether absent in the art under review. Kimpurusha, synonymous with Kinnara, supposedly has a human face and the body of a bird and such a figure of Kimpurusha is represented on a single plaque from Maināmatī. The representation of a Kimpurusha[107] is also found in a plaque from the same site.

Kīrtimukhas, generally mythical faces, were used to decorate the walls of a temple. A plaque from Pāhār pur (ht. 25.5 cm.; preserved in the National Museum of Bangladesh) represents a Kīrtimukha. Such plaques are also excavated from Maināmatī, but their number is limited (PLATE: XVI d).

Other Miscellaneous Figures

Apart from the preceding figures of human and non-humans of diverse strain and nature several interesting figures have been met with in the terracotta art of ancient and early mediaeval Bengal.

Such a complete plaque\(^{108}\) (ht. 33 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihām with the bas relief of an excellent composite animal deserves special mention. It shows the fore part of a young elephant and the hind part of a dragon with its tail ending in ornamental scrolls. This is no doubt one of the best specimens of Gupta classical art. to the same thematic genre and same stylistic form belongs another specimen\(^{109}\) (ht. 24 cm.) showing the bust of youth reclining on a foliage with its lower part ending in ornamental floral scrolls (PLATE: XVII a). Like the preceding one, this also comes from the same site. A third plaque\(^{110}\) (ht. 10 cm.) with trace of dark reddish slip from Bhāsu Vihām represents a fabulous composite being

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108. BA., op. cit., p. 61.
109. Ibid., p. 62.
110. Ibid.
made of a human bust and the hind part of a fish (Matsya-Kumāra). The staring eyes and the thick parted lips of the face makes the figure some what grotesque.

In respect of composite figures Pāhāṛpur did not lay behind. A plaque¹¹¹ from this place (ht. 27.5 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) depicts a composite figure of a man and a bird. This standing figure bears the bust of male with wings instead of arms and the lower part that of a bird with webbed feet. The figure expresses a dynamism and a dimension which characterised the Pāla art form and style. In another example¹¹² from Pāhāṛpur (ht. 29.4 cm.; Varendra Research Museum), a composite figure of a human bust with folded palm and lower part of a fish is shown in a typical way. The figure expresses a calm and serene outlook with deep devotion for something (PLATE : XVII b).

Terracotta figures of pot-bellied dwarfs with comical face, holding the weight of the structures on their hands and shoulders are commonly represented. One such plaque¹¹³ (19 cm. sq.) in situ from Bhāsu Vihāra deserves mention. Apart from this, individual dwarf figures are also seen in the terracotta plaques.

¹¹¹. VRM No.2209.
¹¹². VRM No. 2055.
¹¹³. BA., op.cit., p. 63.
c. Divinities

(i) Brahmanical

The most prominent feature of the religious life of the people of ancient Bengal was image worship and the five principal deities of Śmata Hindus are Vishṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, Devī (i.e. the goddess representing female energy) and Gaṇapatī, were worshipped by them sometimes aniconically. Worship of these five deities, known as Pañchopāsanā or Pañchāyatana pūjā gave an impetus to the artists of Bengal who fashioned the deities in materials like stone, metal and clay. The terracotta representations of these divinities, both aniconic and iconic, are noteworthy for their iconographic details and aesthetic quality.

Vishṇu

As an important member of the traditional Brahmanical triad and the central deity of a specific cult, Vishṇu came into prominence much before the second century B.C. A terracotta plaque\textsuperscript{114} from Pāhārpur represents Vishṇu as seated on a lotus cushion with the presence of usual attributes viz. conch in the lower left hand and probably a short club in the upper left hand.

A terracotta seal\textsuperscript{115} (dia. 6.5 cm.) from Rājāsana ḍhibi of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{114} MASL, 55, p. 59. \\
\textsuperscript{115} Bhattasali, N.K., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 68.
\end{flushleft}
Sābhar, now in the National Museum of Bangladesh, depicts four-armed Vishṇu with Gadādevī and Chakrapurusha as his ayūdhas. Of the other two hands, he holds a lotus by the stalk with his right hand and with the left he holds a conch. On both sides of the deity is inscribed some words in seventh-eighth century characters. On the reverse appear one perpendicular and six horizontal string marks. The discovery of similar seals from Bāsarh, the ancient Vaiśalī prove that they were used for closing official and prive letters.

An oval-shaped terracotta plaque from Sābhar bears the impression of a standing figure of Vishṇu with a few letters inscribed on it. The inscription appear to be "Om namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya" (Salutation to the Divine Vāsudeva). The exterior edge of the plaque is shaped like a discuss or chakra, one of the chief distinctive marks of Vishṇu. The God here holds only the saṃkha (conch) and padma (lotus) in his upper two hands, the lower one being placed over the heads of the two figures, a male and a female. They are identified as the personifications of two remaining attributes viz. the chakra (wheel) and gada (mace).

A terracotta Vāsudeva Vishṇu (ht. 19 cm.; private collection) from Borāl, moulded in brick red without any indication of elbows, wrists, fingers and even legs only show the arms like parabolic

116. ASIAR., 1927-28, 1931, fig. 183.
curves. The figure is well clad with a thick robe and wears a kiritamukuta. Stylistically this figure may be ascribed to the Maurya age.

A mutilated boar headed Vishnu (ht. 18 cm.; Asutosh Museum) with human features discovered from Pānā of about the third century A.D. is a remarkable representation of the boar incarnation of the God.

Śiva

Another important member of the Brahmanical triad, Śiva is generally connected with the act of destruction (ānāṁhāra) or absorption (pralaya). He is also looked upon as the performer of the acts of anugraha or prasāda i.e., 'conferment of grace' and tirobhava i.e., 'power of concealment or obscuration'.

In several plaques from Pāhārpur Śiva is represented in various forms. Aniconically he is represented as a līṅga which is but a cylindrical object standing on a rectangular pedestal (piṭha). The surface of the plaque is decorated with garland by followers and flying banners by the side.117 Another one is a mukha līṅga object of chaturmukha type. Being a relief only three faces are discernible.118 A representation of Śiva as Pañcānana119 (five faced), of which only three are visible is remarkable. With his ten

117. MASL, 55, pl. XXXIX f 1.
118. Ibid., pl. LVI c.
hands Śiva here holds different weapons. He wears a dhūṭi which goes up to the knees. In another plaque (ht. 30 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) a bust is shown with the hair arranged in the form of jaṭā on the top of the head and some locks falling over the shoulders. The third eye on the fore-head helps to identify the figure as Śiva. Śiva as a naked ascetic showing the urddha-medhṛa ('penis erectum') in the most determinate fashion seated on a lotus with the distinctive third eye and holding the spiral shaped staff of the ṛṣīḍāla is another characteristic feature depicted on a specimen from Pāhārpur. Another Pāhārpur plaque shows a clad image of Śiva standing with a spear in his left hand and a garland of skull over the shoulders. The widely open mouth and spear characterizes the bhairava aspect of Śiva. A miniature of burnt clay (ht. 6.35 cm.; National Museum of Bangladesh) from Raghurāmpur, depicts the ghora aspect of Śiva, i.e. Vatuka Bhairava with a flabby belly, and a long garland of skulls. The round and rolling eyes with lips parted in a horrible smile creates a fearful sensation. The god is four-armed, holding a sword in the upper right hand, a staff in the upper left, and a skull cup on the lower left and the upper left having been broken, nothing can be said about the object held in it. This figure is not naked and does not wear wooden sandals like the Indian Museum image. The dog is also absent here.

120. VRM No. 2052.
121. MASI., 55, pi. XLIV e.
122. Ibid., pi. XLI. d 2.
The benign or saumya aspect of Śiva is represented through a terracotta modelled in the round (ht. 20 cm.) from Chandraketugarh. Here Śiva is shown on Mount Kailās, where the Himalayan peaks are conventionally represented at the base by rounded tops of stones resembling Śivalingas. The faithful attendents of the god or the ganaś are shown standing on the mountain peaks. These pot-bellied dwarfish figures reminds one of the 'dwarf atlantes' on the western gateway of the Sāncī stūpa. The god is shown seated in an easy posture with his right leg hanging down and the left bent. He plays on a vīṇā which rests on his left shoulder and is held by his left hand. He probably wears a cloth round his waist and a turban on his head in the style reflected on the head of a Śūrya on the Bodh Gayā railing pillar of the first century B.C. He also wears elaborate round ear-rings with spheroid shaped bosses all around the edge. He possibly wears wrist ornaments and round neck collar with a pendant. Behind the throne on which he sits is an impressive halo with decorated border. The dignified and majestic expression over his face makes the whole composition impressive. It may be stylistically assigned to the late Śuṅga or early Kushāṇa phase.

A unique fragmentary terracotta plaque (ht. 8.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh shows Śiva lying slantingly on the

123. Ghose Ajit, 'An early Bengal Vīṇādhara Śiva', Lalit Kālā, 18, pp. 18.
ground. He keeps her left hand beneath his head, the right not clearly shown wears a dhiiti upto the upper part of the thigh. He is also shown with jatajuta over the head, a somewhat conical flower shaped ear rings and a snake encircling his neck. The footmark over his chest is the most interesting part of this plaque. Probably the foot mark is of the mother Goddess Kālī, because Śiva lying beneath her feet is a common feature in Hindu śāstras and iconography. Stylistically this plaque seems to be of seventh-eighth century.

Sūrya

Originally an atmospheric deity par excellence, the Sun-God is depicted on several toy-carts of ancient Bengal. A unique figure of Sūrya represented on a toy-cart (ht. 19 cm.) from Chandra-ketugarh is shown as standing on his divine chariot flanked by two female attendants, probably Ěshā and Pratyūshā; a giant representing darkness seen as being trampled under the rolling wheel of his celestial car. This scene recalls the one depicted on the cave-sanctuary of Bhājā, near Bombay. Another terracotta toy-cart (ht. 18.4 cm.; Asutosh Museum) of the same date and coming from the same place portrays Sūrya as seated and not as standing as in the above piece. Here he is seen with an expanded circular numbers with large round ear rings and also with a band worn over his right shoulder probably to attach his sword to the waist. Two faces on each side of the deity are probably those of Ěshā and Pratyūshā; the God is seen driving a horse-drawn chariot which tramples the demon
of darkness. A small fragmentary plaque (ht. 7.2 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) again from the same site and of the same time, represents the blazing horses of the Sun-God in a fascinating manner. This depiction is a duplicate version of solar horses of the Bodh-Gayā railing. A divine image of a Sūrya of the post-Gupta period from Pāhārpur\textsuperscript{124} is shown as seated in a cross legged posture with a nimbus behind his head. He is seen holding full-blown lotuses in both of his upraised hands. The depiction of the booted legs instantly reminds us of the Bodh Gayā railing and the other early lithic representations.

\textbf{Ga\̄neśa}

Ga\̄neśa, also known as Ganapati or Vināyaka, is one of the five principal Gods of Hindu Pantheon.

The earliest representation of the God is found in a terracotta toy-cart (ht. 9.9 cm.; Asutosh Museum) of about the first century from Chandraketugarh. In it he is seen with his consort, who decked with turban and ear-rings holds a lādduka before his trunk. Her left hand is firmly attached to a tusk. Together with it may be mentioned another similar toy-cart (ht. 11 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) depicting the deity. (PLATE : XVIIc).

\textsuperscript{124} MASI., 55, p. 60.
A four-armed baby Gaṇeśa sucking his mother's breast is also a common feature in terracotta pieces of Bengal. Such a tender moment is represented in a plaque from Tamluk (Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) and another from Chandraketugarh (Ānandāniketan Kīrtiśāla). The latter is a much more sophisticated production of the Bengal art.

Among the objects of the Pāhārpur repertoire, one plaque\textsuperscript{125} represents the four-armed Gaṇeśa straddling his vāhana, the mouse; he has a vertical third eye on his forehead. But perhaps the most fascinating representation of the deity is perhaps a dancing figure from Pāhārpur\textsuperscript{126} (35 cm. sq. approx.) of the eighth-ninth century A.D. The deity is depicted as holding a tuft of flowers or sprouts in the upper left hand and a goad in the upper right. The lower left hand rests on the thigh and the lower right expresses the varādamudrā. His hair, arranged in the fashion of a jatāmukuta, is marked by deep incisions. The third eye in the middle of his forehead is also visible. His mount, placed between the legs, affectionately looks towards his lord.

A ninth-tenth figure of the pot-bellied God (ht. 12 cm.) from Bāngarh\textsuperscript{127} seated on a pedestal with both the legs resting below and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{125} MASI., 55, pl. XLIV d.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Das Gupta, C.C., Origin and evolution of Indian Clay Sculpture, University of Calcutta, 1961, p. 244, fig. 173.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Goswami, K.G., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 17, Acc. No. 1287.
\end{itemize}
also shows him with four hands with an akshamāla in the lower right hands; the upper left arm is worn out while the lower left is placed on the knee. An interesting feature of the object is the position of the trunk which is turned towards the right in the place of the usual left. And in this respect it recalls another sample of a stone image on south-eastern wall at Pāhārpur where the trunk is disposed in the same fashion. The execution of this terracotta is very crude. The other specimen (ht. 8 cm.; private collection) from Āṭgharā as in the preceding portrays the deity with his trunk curled towards the right; he wears a dhūṭi and a halo is seen behind him.

**Devī**

Terracottas of Bengal show the Devī, the embodiment of primodial female energy, in both her placid (saumya) and terrific (urga) aspects. And as the great Mother she was and still is Universally popular.

A couple of figures from Harinārāyanpur (private collection) carry babies sucking their breasts in their left arm, signify this mother aspect. Additionally they bear some interesting features - the nose in the form of birds' beak, the ears outstretched, thick necks and hairs arranged in the form of a mukuta. One of these figures places her right hand on the mukuta. The iris of the eye, the hair-do, the heavy breasts are all combined together in an appliqué technique. None of the figures bears any Indication of nudity. However, the absence of any signs of drapery which is not unoften
seen in the representation of the Great Goddess is noteworthy.

A break-headed torso of a Mother Goddess in brick red (ht. 6 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Pāṇḍu Rājār Dhibi, demonstrating an archaic style portrays the deity with ample breasts and nipples marked by pin-holes.

A second century example 128, now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London represents the fertility aspects. It combines the symbols of abundance with staring 'fish eyes' characteristic of a deity expecting sacrifice.

Another unique piece (ht. 6 cm.) from Chandraketugarh, probably of the second century A.D., is somewhat different from those cited above. Here a cat-faced female figure is shown as wearing a skirt and round ear-rings. The disproportionate arms and legs, the voluptuous breasts and protruding abdomen symbolise her fecundity. The cat face here recalls the popular Bengali cult of Shashtī whose mount is cat. She is also called Jaṭāmatrī-devatā or chharchikā having the face of a cat (Maṅjaranā). 129

With the development of the Pauranic religion in the Gupta period, Devī in one or in various other forms came to be associated

with different male divinities. She is usually looked on as the energy of Śiva, but in some cases she is also associated with Vishnu.

Such depiction of Devī as Pārvatī and Umā with her male counter-part Śiva or Mahēśvara is expressed in two Gupta-style terracottas from Chandraketugarh. One of them (ht. 11 cm.; private collection) depicts Śiva and Pārvatī seated on a vrisha or mahisha. The Goddess here sits with her left leg forming a right angle and the right one partially hanging loose; her left hand rests on the mount while the right one touches Śiva with deep love and emotion. She wears ornamented girdle round her waist and has a sophisticated style of hair do and decoration (PLATE: XVIII a). The other plaque (ht. 12 cm.; private collection) represents Umā and Mahēśvara on the mount vrisha again. This plaque less ornamented than the former, expresses the benign aspect of the deity. Here the Goddess, scantily draped holds up her left hand in varada-mudrā and with the right she touches her consorts abdomen; she sits in sukhāsana with her left leg dangling and the right leg placed over Mahēśvara's left leg (PLATE: XVIII b).

The finest specimen displaying the ghora or terrific aspect of Devī is perhaps a terracotta piece hailing from Tamluk (Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre). This fifth-sixth century fragmentary plaque, with only the lower part surviving, deals with the elaborate theme of killing the buffalo-demon Mahishāsura. The partial figure of

the Goddess Durgā shows her wearing an ornamented girdle hanging loosely in the middle; she is probably four armed, the upper two are missing. With her lower right hand she holds a snake and with the right back hand she probably holds a sword. She places her right foot on her mount lion (who bites the right thigh of the demon) and the left on the buffalo lying underneath. The demon with full vigour raises his both hands (probably holding weapons) to protect himself from the blow (PLATE: IV a).

It seems that this form of the Devī enjoyed considerable popularity in Bengal during the period c. A.D. 550-750. This is evidenced by occasional literary references to her under the name Kātyāyāṇī in Bāṇa's Kādambarī. She is also described as a form of Ambikā.

The other placid forms of Devī, Lakshmi and Sarasvatī (variantly ŚrīLakshmi and PushtiSarasvatī), generally termed vyantara devatās (intermediate divinities), are also met with in the terracotta art of Bengal. Lakshmi, the Goddess of fortune and wealth, is sometimes seen as standing or seated on a lotus (padmastha) and holding a lotus in one of her hands (padmadhāra).

A second century fragmentary plaque (ht. 3.5 cm.) depicting a standing female figure in the middle attended by a female figure

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(with folded palms) on each side is a curious specimen from Bangarh. The central figure with girdle enveloping the waist and in katihasta posture wears a crown (or karandamukuta) on her head and prominent ear-rings (sankhapatra-kundala). This figure is seemingly placed within a circle (siroschakra) as is indicated by the traces of a halo near the edge. This central figure with her two female attendants also wearing head-dress and ear-ornament undoubtedly stands for a divinity. Since the lower part is missing, it is not possible to say as to whether she had any lotus under her feet as in the similar terracotta figure from Lauriya-Nandangarh. It will not be unreasonable to hold that she represents the Brahmanical Goddess of fortune. Another fragmentary plaque (ht. 12.5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from the same site shows the lower part of Śrī Lakshmī standing on a full blossomed lotus with pillars on either side; the latter probably depicts a shrine connected with her; she wears numerous bracelets on each arm, heavy anklets and girdle of three strands with barrel-shaped beads alternated by smaller ones and her drapery with decorative portion hanging in front keeping the prominent navel bare just like the sculptures of the Śuṅga period both in stone and clay, seemingly date her representation to the second century B.C. The treatment of the figure is somewhat rigid and petrified. Another plaque (ht. 10 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh and of about the second century B.C., only shows the lower part of the deity who stands on the pericarp of a lotus. The figure is flanked by sprouting lotus stalks.
The fairly preserved interesting plaque (ht. 12 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from the same site of the second century A.D., shows a standing deity on a full-blown lotus with two long lotus stalks held in her hands. This figure of ŚrīLakṣmī represents the ideal feminine beauty with attenuated waists, round thighs, slender arms, prominent breasts and a round face with a peculiar style of the arrangement of hair. Another plaque (ht. 11 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from the same place and of the same date portrays a female deity as standing on a domical shaped body probably made of stalks of corn. A nude woman with a tray of offering on her head appears by her side. A bulky male, Yaksha or a human being with raised hands, stands by her side and carries some offerings apparently for the deity. This divine figure may also be taken as Lakṣmī.

A fragmentary plaque (ht. 6.5 cm.; private collection) of second-third century A.D. from Harināraṇyapur (I), portrays a moderately ornamented deity playing on a lyre (vīnā). The figure with a slight tapering at the back is headless and sits with her legs folded. She wears a sādī, the lower part of which passes over the knees. Her right hand is placed on the right thigh and the left hand holds the instrument. On account of a vīnā she may be indentified as Sarasvatī, the Goddess of learning and fine arts.

The deities styled Mātrikās happen to constitute a distinct group. The conventional number of this form of the Devī is usually
seven. One of them Varāhī, the female counterpart of Varāha Avatāra of Vishṇu who fought against Andhakāsura, is depicted in a massive terracotta (ht. 32 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Pānnā of the fifth-sixth century. The twisted tusk, the ornamental head dress, the widely open mouth and elongated ear-lobes seems to endow the goddess with immense power and energy. In respect of plastic quality and conception it deserved to be included among the best pieces of early Bengal art.

In Bengal the serpent-Goddess Manasā is worshipped as a earthen vessel and anthropomorphically as a woman carrying serpents. Endowed with serpent heads, splayed hips and narrow waists, without arms and with legs are very common in Bengal terracotta art. Flat terracotta piece (ht. 5 cm.) of typical pre-Maurya or Maurya strain from Chandraketugarh represents stylised form of a nāginī. She rests on two leg stumps, has ample hips with a striped neck crowned by a tapering hood and indication of eyes and girdle with circles. The half-human and half-snake forms of the Goddess, possibly the earliest excavated sculptures of Bengal, clearly recalls similar figures from Hastināpur. they are undoubtedly the most attractive pieces so far discovered.

Manasā in her anthropomorphic form is not given herself the serpent shape. She holds the serpents in her hands or a vessel. She presides over the obscurity of the serpent - its beneficial and
malign potentiality. In one such plaque from Pāṇnā (State Archaeological Gallery), of the post-Gupta period the youthful Goddess holds a snake in her left hand and wears a garland that slides unsteadily below outlining the hood of a snake.

Minor Deities

Brahmā

Same as Prajāpati of the Vedic renown, Brahmā lost his importance and is now a minor deity of the Brahmanical pantheon. A plaque from Pāhārpur (35 cm., sq. approx.) of about the eighth or ninth century carries his representation usually iconic (that is, four headed, being a relief three heads only are visible), showing him seated on a cushion and holding a rosary in the right hand and possibly a vase in the left.

Dikpālas

Some of the Dikpālas or Lokapālas (guardians of the quarters of the world), conventionally numbering eight, appear in the art under review, as Indra (the lord of the east), Agni (of the southeast), Yama (of the south) and Kuvera (of the north).

A terracotta piece (ht. 12.7 cm.; Asutosh Museum) of the first century from Chandraketugarh, shows Indra as seated on an elephant,

(apparently his mount, Airāvata) adorned with its divine regalia. The calm round face and the childish expression of the deity recalls the practice of such image making of the Far East. Another piece of the same site (ht. 12.5 cm.) and in the same collection show the deity seated cross-legged in an elegant manner. (PLATE: XVIIid).

An interesting terracotta piece (ht. 18.4 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of the first century portrays Agni as riding a chariot drawn by a pair of rams, the favourite mounts of the God. His face bears a mysterious smile and he wears hāras, kundalas and a sīrastraka with a round knot in the middle (PLATE: XVIII c). Another figure of Agni (ht. 18.8 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from the same site but a century later in date is also seen as driving a chariot drawn by bejewelled rams; here the god is flanked by two females possibly his counterparts Svāhā and Svadhā.

A single plaque of Yama from Maināmatī shows a figure seated in sukhāsana and holds a noose in his hands which encircles the head like an aureole.

A hollow terracotta piece (ht. 13.5 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century represents a seated Kuvera. The nude figure is profusely ornamented and wears a jewel crown. He holds an unidentifiable object in his right hand. The torso of a Kuvera (ht. 7.8 cm.), similar to this representation, only indicates a flower in his right hand instead of any other
object. A bare-bodied seated Kuvera in the form of a rattle (ht. 7.7 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh wears a striped shawl and holds a bag (of wealth?) in his right hand. This is indeed an interesting piece. Here mention may be made of another rattle (ht. 8 cm.; private collection) depicting a seated Kuvera hailing from Barachampā. Besides these specimens, they are seen on other stray finds, some of which are earlier in date.

Kāmādevā

The God of valour and youth, Kāmādevā has his effigy on a specimen from Pāhārpur, which is now preserved in the Asutosh Museum. Here the figure stands on a pedestal with bare upper body and a dhoti-like garment worn up to the thigh is shown with a bow in his right hand. He is seen in action and is ready to pull off an arrow from the quiver placed at his back. Barring a crest-like headdress he is devoid of any personal decoration. His robust body and placid expression reflect his dignity and determination, and indeed it is a solitary instance of noteworthy artistic merit of the representation of the God of love in the terracotta medium hailing from any site of ancient Bengal.

Krishṇa

Krishṇa, the ninth Avatāra of Viśṇu, is also portrayed independently, in his various forms and aspects. An eighth-ninth century terracotta moulded piece (ht. 9 cm.; private collection) of
crude workmanship, from Chandraketugarh shows him as crested, standing cross-legged and as playing a venu or flute.

Yakshas

The semi-divine Yaksha allegedly endowed with beneficial powers of wealth and fertility are figured on the terracottas in various attitude and environment. In a first century terracotta plaque (ht. 10 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh a handsome Yaksha portrayed against a flower-decked background with a crane looking at him upward at his left; he wears a thick robe up to the ankle and an uttarīya hangs up to the knee on both sides, tucked up by an ornamented girdle; the right hand of the figure is placed on his breast and the left held above. Another piece (ht. 13.9 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from the same site represents a well-dressed Yaksha with elaborate jewellery and head-dress and as holding a parrot. The quiet elegance and sophistication of the terracotta is indeed remarkable. A third specimen also from the same site but fragmentary in nature (ht. 6.7 cm.; private collection) depicts a male figure (whose male organ is clearly visible) just below the neck and up to the thigh; he wears a three-stringed pearl necklace hanging up to the navel, and heavy bangles and a two-fold girdle - the first one probably a cloth, is tucked up in a bow where one and

134. They are classed as vyantara devatas and in the Bhagavata Gītā the term tāmasa bhakti probably centered round the worship of this intermediate cult.
falls down and holds in his right hand a roundish thing and places the left on an indistinct object. A still another piece (ht. 18 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh depicts a headless Yaksha up to the ankle. Here the figure stands with his right hand resting loosely over the thick beaded girdle attached to his waist; he wears a fine striped cloth almost covering his right leg and probably the left one too. Over the left thigh and round the hip is a pleated thick robe hanging up to the knee. The traces of this robe is visible behind the right thigh. The slightly protruded belly with heavy breasts prominent nipple and clear display of phallus no doubt ranks him with the Yaksha figures - the embodiment of fertility and fortune (PALTE: XVIII d). A terracotta mould hailing from Tamluk, how in the Asutosh Museum, depicts a Yaksha standing akimbo in the samapadasthānaka attitude (with the feet facing in two opposite direction). The figure wears semi-diaphanous drapery and a turban, ear studs, necklace, armlets and bangles and an ornamented girdle. The two wings spring out from two sides of the shoulders. Each hand resting on the waist holds two full bloomed lotuses with long stalks. Each lotus is so depicted as to stimulate a pitcher (ghata) with leaves sprouting out of it. The stylistic treatment of the figure dates it to the second-first century B.C.

A class of terracottas deserve more than a passing notice for carrying representations of winged figures. Such samples mostly hailing from Chandraketugarh (PLATE :II b) and Tamluk, and whatever their significance, they need a thorough study.
An almost round fragmentary plaque (ht. 9 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh depicts a winged figure up to the thigh with all the respective qualities mentioned above. The figure in this plaque is splendidly ornamented and presents a heavenly smile over his face. Stylistically this figure also belongs to the same epoch. The perforated holes on both sides of the chest supposes its spurpose of hanging (PLATE: II b). Another winged figure (ht. 7 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh is very simple in execution without any ornamentation and is shown up to the waist; he stands with his left hand akimbo and the right hanging down. He wears turban like head-dress and simple but heavy earnings. Two wings emerge from two sides of his shoulders. He bears a calm and serene outlook and may be stylistically described as a product of the early Kushāna phase. This particular figure under discussion has been variously interpreted by scholars as a winged Yakṣha, a winged God, Sun-God etc. Similar figures may be noticed in terracottas from Kauśāmī and they also bear close affinity with the one found in Seleucia.

More interesting than the representations of Yakṣha are the Yakṣinī figurines, quite a number of which show Maurya-Śūngā

135. Indian Folklore, I, pp. 23-24 ; Saraswati, S.K., ESB, p. 120, Biswas, S.S., op.cit., p. 79.
138. Van Ingen, Figurines from Seleucia on the Tigris, pl. LII, Fig. 376.
traits. Supposedly the Goddess of fertility and reproduction, as well as protectors and promoters of all creative impulse, Yakshiṣīs are depicted in terracotta art as examples with large hips and nubile breasts. Among the terracotta figures from Chandraketugarh a three dimension Maurya example showing a Yakshiṣī in it is light burnt red in colour and is an example of timeless variety. The pointed nubile breasts, the ear-rings, necklace with two fish-like objects on both sides and the open hairs falling at the back is made in applique technique. The now-mutilated hands were probably kept on the waist. Fish, being the symbol of fertility, helps to rank this figures as a Yakshiṣī. Another such figurine (ht. 9 cm.; private possession) from Chandraketugarh though different in character from the former is also of the Maurya epoch. This mutilated two-dimensional figure is simply ornamented. The bare upper part of the body show traces of five garments hanging loose from the shoulders. The simple but unusual ear-rings and necklace are noteworthy. The half-circled necklace is thick and plain. The figure wears a disc-like object one above her forehead and two on either sides. From the disc on the right side an Inverted head of a trisūla or two tufts of corn with a fish in between is shown as hanging on her right ear. She wears a folded leaf-like ornament while on the left she has a basket type one. The face is marked by serenity and sense of contentment.


The characteristic variety of Yakṣinī figurines from Bengal are usually Pañchachūḍa (five hair pinned) and Daśachūḍa (ten hair-pinned), but in few instances Sashtachūḍa (six pinned) is also traceable. Yakṣinīs of the Śuṅga period (for example an unique specimen from Berāchampā, PLATE: XIX a) are fascinatingly beautiful expressing the feminine charm beneath diaphanous robe, ample bosoms, barrow waist, broad hips, deep navel and prominent female organ. These figures are profusely ornamented. The main attraction of these figurines are their coiffure decorated with five traditional hair-pins, of auspicious meaning. This number is very significant for it is the number of vegetation (flowers have mostly five petals), the symbol of earthly life, the number of Aphrodite whose emblem is the pentagon (pañchakona), it kills all sins. These symbols has a row of beads on top and such bead chains are also laid on the head and elsewhere. The Yakṣinīs with conventional five magical hair-pins resembling weapons (sword, arrow battle-axe, trident and the goad) are by far very common in Bengal terracottas. In this context mention may be made of a multilate plaque (ht. 9 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh depicting the large head of a Yakṣinī with five hair pins and strings of beads entwining the coiffure, ear-rings and a row of honey-suckle motif, a recognizable trait of the Maurya-Śuṅga art. The flat treatment of the

141. Kālivilāsa Tantra, Chapter 33, Śloka 13.
143 These are called bindu mandalas and by knowing the undiminishing bindu mandala the performer attains salvation, the eternal peace. Kālivilāsa Tantra, Chapter 25, Ślokas 27 and 29.
Marked by delicacy and ornamental exuberance is a terracotta Yakṣiṇī head (ht. 9 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century B.C. It shows the figurine with five decorative hair pins. Her demure beauty with the radiating tikli over her forehead and the honey-suckles and rosettes on the stele creates a charming environment. A Pañchachūḍa Yakṣiṇī (ht. 10 cm.; private collection) from Borāl of about the same time although fragmentary is notable for its simple ornamentation consisting of a necklace, a long hāra and the beaded hair pins, all being plain in appearance; her side buns with a beaded fillet above the forehead which is crowned by a crest are equally simple in arrangement.

Among the rare representative of Yakṣiṇīs with six hair pins is a piece (ht. 15 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh, datable to about the first century A.D. It shows her with usual ornaments and jewellery, including a set of hair pins (numbering six, hence Sāṣṭhačūḍa) radiating from both sides of her coiffure.

An example of a Daśachūḍa Yakṣī represented on a soft burnt, bright red coloured plaque (ht. 5 cm.; private collection) is attractive for her hair do, round ear ring on the right lobe and a drum like one on the left.
Among the early Yakshinī figurines seen along with their pet birds is a plaque (ht. 73.2 cm.; Asutosh Museum) hailing from Borāl. Assignable to about the first century B.C., it shows the Yakshinī offering fruits to her beloved crane who eagerly raises its long neck to collect them. In another plaque of about the same period from Harinārāyanpur (1), a bird (heron) is shown caressing the fingers of a standing female figure wearing channavīra or cross garland. Heron is met with also in a multilolated plaque of similar nature from Chandraketugarh of about the same time. Another figurine (ht. 8.1 cm; State Archaeological Gallery) in a squatting posture from Chandraketugarh of the first-second century A.D. is shown as holding a parrot in her left hand. With her right hand full or five bangles she holds an ornate neck-collar. The figure though bare- bodied wears a broad necklace. Her well-developed breasts and protruding belly above the waist-girdle are symbolic of fecundity.

Some fragments of the lower part of terracotta Yakshinīs also bring out some important features. A grey coloured multilolated figure of a Yakshinī (ht. 7 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh shown from waist up to the knee portrays her with a diaphanous drapery with a three-fold beaded girdle and triangular marks on the thighs; the deep navel and the prominent yoni are symbolic of her maternity and fertility, the hands probably with heavy bangles (faintly traceable) are placed on both sides of the girdle worn below the navel. Another specimen (ht. 9 cm.) from Chandraketugarh
of about the first century B.C. depicts her as wearing a diaphanous skirt with fine folds which not only sensuously drapes but also reveals the modelling of lower limbs. The mark of the three fold line around the navel reminds one of the similar treatment of the famous Didārganj Yakṣīṇī. The emphasis on delineation of voluptuous charm with a realistic touch is reminiscent of the coquettish poses of the Kushāṇa figurines on the railing pillars of Mathurā. In this respect another such plaque (ht. 6 cm.) from Chandraketugarh executed in the Gupta style deserves special mention.

(ii) Buddhist Buddha

Some of the objects under study speak of Buddhism as their creative stimulus. A small grey coloured oval terracotta seal from Sītākunḍu (dia. 2 cm.; private collection) depicts a Bodhi tree with a pedestal, upon which four worshippers, two on each side of the tree are shown in the act of adoration with folded palm. The inscription on the reverse of the seal reads Mahāti Aṭē in the character of Aśokan Brāhmī. Undoubtedly this is a unique specimen of the symbolic worship of the Master in ancient Bengal. (PLATE: XIX c). Terracotta sealings from Chandraketugarh and Bāngarh bear the impression of a tree within railing, this depiction also symbolically represents the attainment of knowledge - by the Buddha.
An eighth-century terracotta seal from Pāhārpar showing a wheel or a dharmachakra on a three-tier vedikā or pedestal flanked by two deer on both sides, and similar seals of about the same period from Śālavana Vihāra in Maināmatī and seals of the seventh century from Rājbaḍādānā in Murshidabad symbolically portray the preaching of the Buddha’s first sermon. A circular baked clay sealing (dia. 2.54 to 3.8 cm.) hailing from Bhāsu Vihāra is also important. On this sealing is impressed a crude design of the traditional Buddhist symbol of dharmachakra flanked by two seated deer on top and two lines of short inscription in proto-Bengali script. Here the symbolic representation of dharmachakra denotes the first preaching of the Buddha’s sermon at Benaras.

The human figure of the Buddha is represented in the terracotta art of Bengal in various poses and attitude. Most of these figures belong to the Gupta and Pāla style of art.

In a rectangular plaque (ht. 18.6 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Tildā of the Gupta period, the Buddha seated in padmāsana on a raised seat is shown as displaying dharmachakrapravartana mudrā. The eyes of the Enlightened one are introspective and half closed in deep meditation. The serenity of the figure reminds us of the classical idiom of Sārnāth. Behind the head of the figure is an oval aureole flanked on both sides with legends of Buddhist faith in early Gupta characters. A fragmented terracotta (ht. 7.5 cm.; Tāmralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk of the Gupta period, also
represents the Buddha in dharmachakrapravartana mudrā. The head and the lower part of the body is lost. The existing parts are covered by sāṅghati which hangs from both the hands. (PLATE: VIII b)

A terracotta plaque (ht. 12 cm.; National Museum Bangladesh) from Raghurāmpur, P.S. Munsiganj, district Dhaka, carries a representation of the Buddha in bhūmisparśa mudrā under a trifoliate arch surmounted by a śikhara or pinnacle. It seems that the artist intended to represent the Buddha inside the great shrine of Vajrāsana Vihāra, i.e., Bodh Gayā. On either side of the figure are two big stupa and six other small ones scattered about him at varying distance. Beneath the lotus seat of the Buddha is inscribed the Buddhist creed in the eleventh century characters. Several terracotta slabs (ht. 25.4 cm.; National Museum of Bangladesh) from Rājāsan at Sābhār, containing five, eight or seventeen niches represent the Buddha in bhūmisparśa mudrā along with the Bodhisattvas grouped in different postures. In a terracotta plaque from Pānārpor the Buddha is shown as seated in bhūmisparśa mudrā on a seat balanced on the stone, the central one of which probably depict an unusual vajra symbol. The halo behind the head of the figure with marks of leaves on both sides seem to denote the Bodhi tree. The structures or the hills on either side of the Buddha are not generally met with. Perhaps it is the artist's attempt to represent the hilly landscape of the nature. In this context mention may be made of a

144. Bhattasali, N.K., op. cit., p. 31, pl. IXa.
145. Ibid., pl. Xa.
Buddha figure from Maināmatī in vajrāsana with the right hand in bhūmisparsā mudrā.

In another plaque from Pāhārpur the Buddha is shown in the lalitāsana pose. His right knee tucked up and with the right hand he exposes abhayamudrā and the left resting on the thigh. The modelling of this figure reminds us one of the fragmentary terracotta plaque (ht. 15.2 cm.) from Bāngarh showing a torso of a male. The attitude of the figure as appears from the left-out portion seems to represent the Buddha with his right hand near the chest.

Two terracotta seals (dia. 2.2 cm.), excavated from Satyāpir Bhiṣā, Pāhārpur, represent the Buddha in dhyānamudrā with inscription of the unusual Buddhist creed or of a mystic formula. It appears from the seals that during this epoch special sanctity was given to the figures of the Buddha.

**Dhyānī Buddhas**

The five dhyānī Buddhas of the Buddhist pantheon are depicted in Bengal terracottas too. In a plaque\(^\text{146}\) (ht. 29.6 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur, five dhyānī Buddhas are shown in three tiers. In the first and the third tier the five figures are shown seated with both the hands folded over their breast. They

\(^{146}\) VRM No. 2091.
are seated in padmāsana with their body covered by thick robe. The halo behind the figures, elongated ear lobes and the matted hair illuminates the figures with an eternal beauty. The middle tier also comprises of such five figure, larger in size than the other one. They are shown as seated in padmāsana and exhibiting bhūmisparśā mudrā.

A plaque of twelfth century from Sābhār, (National Museum of Bangladesh) shows dhyāni Buddhas in different postures. It is also a plaque of great interest.

Bodhisattvas

Bodhisattvas, who derive their origin from the five dhyāni Buddhas, also found depiction in the terracotta art of Bengal and are represented more frequently than the Buddha figure. The first Bodhisattva mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures as Mahājñānī, is met with in several plaques from Pāhārpur. In one of them he is shown seated and as turned to left. The right knee is tucked up and the blue lotus (the distinguishing marks of Mahājñānī) is shown in the background. He is again represented in another plaque as seated in līlāsana on a full-bloomed lotus and holding a sword in his right hand. A strange object, neither of Mahājñānī’s normal emblems is depicted above the lotus on the left side of the figure. It may be a curved knife or chopper (?) . Mahājñānī can also be recognised in
another plaque from Paharpur where by the side of the seated figure occurs a manuscript.

The most popular in the host of Boddhisattvas is Avalokitesvara, the lord of compassion. In his non-täntrika form he is called Padmapâni. In a terracotta plaque from Mainamati the Padmapâni is shown as seated in mahârâja-lîlâ pose with the right hand resting on ground and the left holding a lotus by its stalk.

A unique plaque (15 cm.; sq. approx.) from Pâhârpur shows Padmapâni as seated in vajrapârayâjña pose with upturned soles on a cushion with lotus flowers bisected by beaded columns. He holds with his right hand a full-blown lotus near the chest, the stalk of which is held by the left hand. He wears a pointed cap, a fillet decorated with foliage along the line of the forehead and an upper garment thrown across the arms and a girdle with a flower clasped in front.

In his täntrika form the Avalokitesvara is called Lokâśvara or Lokanâtha, both meaning the lord of the Universe. A thin plaque from Râjâsan (National Museum of Bangladesh), contains a figure of a Bodhisattva, probably Lokanâtha in the lalitâsana posture. A terracotta head (ht. 4.5 cm.; Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk of second-third century A.D. is a unique specimen of Bengal art. The treatment of curls, the drooping eye
Lids, the round cheeks and the full lips expressed the calm inner grandeur of the Bodhisattva icons.

Apart from these figures of Bodhisattvas, Vijrapāṇī and Maitreya are also found depicted in some terracottas from various sites of ancient Bengal. Amitābha, the celestial Buddha of Infinite light is represented in a ninth century plaque from Pāhārpur, now in the collection of the National Museum of Bangladesh (PLATE : X a).

**Jambhala**

Jambhala is the Buddhist god of wealth. He is represented in a plaque from Pāhārpur as seated on a lotus in Ilāsana. He carries an indistinct object somewhat like a vase (ghāfa). In the crest of his crown is depicted a figure of Dhyānī Buddha. A lotus is also visible in the right background of the plaque.

**Trailokyavijaya**

Trailokyavijaya is the state of Mahākrodhakāya manifested by Vajrasattva to destroy the enemies of the Buddhists of the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and under world). The Sadhanas describe the deity as four faced and eight armed who stands over Śiva Pārvatī in the graţyālīgha pose.

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147. MASI., 55, pl. XLVc.
In a plaque from Mainamati the figure of Trailokyavijaya is represented in aśīgha pose. He holds vajra in one left hand, but this is not clearly visible in the reproduction.

Tārā

The adoration of the female principle was introduced in Buddhism in the form of Goddess Tārā. In the seventh century she took two distinct forms - White Tārā and Blue Tārā. She is a Saviour Goddess. In her early and simple form she is, two handed but in course of time multiplication of hands and variation in cognizances and posture appeared.

The White Tārā is the consort of Avalokiteśvara and her symbol is the full-blown lotus. In a seal from Satyapīr Bhīṭā, Pāhārpur (dia 7.2 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) the Goddess White Tārā is represented as seated in bhūmīśāna on a double petalled full-blown lotus seat. Her right leg hanging down rests on the stalk of the flower and the left one folded and resting on the pericarp of the flower. The deity with a gay smile over her face and a decorated aureole behind, is eight handed and carries several weapons (not clearly visible) in her six hands. Her principal right hand rests easily by the side of right knee and the left one on the pericarp. She wears simple ornaments and a fine

garment through which her ample bosoms and the deep navel are clearly shown. She wears a mukuta with three upraised pointed edges along the forehead (PLATE: VIII d).

A terracotta plaque (3.5 cm sq. approx) from Paharpur representing Tārā as seated in Īllāsana on a double lotus seat to some extent resemble the above figure.

The Goddess is also shown in some plaques as seated or standing with her right hand in varada mudrā. In this form she is called the Green Tārā, the Śakti of Amoghasiddhi. In such form she unusually sits in paryāṅkāsana with her right hand in the boon-giving pose and the left holding a viśva-vajra over a lotus.

Figures of Tāntrika Buddhism

Apart from the Tāntrika form of Avalokiteśvara like Lokeśvara mentioned above, the art under review also introduces us to a few deities of Tāntrika or Tantrayāna Buddhism in which the female principle played a dominant part.

A terracotta figurine from Burārtat, shows a tapering object placed on a round pedestal with a naked woman embracing it with her raised hands in squatting pose. Her hair like snakes falls

151. Rise of Tantrayāna Buddhism may be assigned to the ninth-tenth century A.D.
behind. A similar figure has also been found in Khulna, Bangladesh. Here instead of the tapering object a man is shown seated with his hair falling on the two sides. He wears an ornamented cap. A woman is shown as embracing him with her hands at the neck and her legs pass around the waist of the man. Her forehead touches his chin. Though these figures cannot be definitely identified, it is not unlikely that the male figure represents Hevajra. These pieces may be dated to the ninth century A.D.

A hard burnt grey terracotta piece (ht. 110.5 cm.; private collection) from Dhopagachi burning ghat of the Adi Gaṅgā bed depicts a male figure seated cross-legged in a lalitāsana pose. The right hand is placed on the right knee and the left one is pointing towards a lotus. The figure is crowned with a two-tiered mukuṭa.

(ii) Realm of creativity

Dance and Music

The creative urge of the people of ancient Bengal found a significant expression in the art of terracotta. Apart from the aesthetic sense in the delineation of human and animal forms, moments of cheer and jubilation are seen animated in the humans engaged in singing, dancing and playing on musical instruments in the tiny objects fashioned by the common man of Bengal in the distant days. Collectively, they give us a picture of a people who could keep their sorrows away by their joys and pleasures.
Dance, a rare moment of beauty found expression in early Bengal terracottas. Both male and female in various postures and rhythm are depicted in terracottas with great care and reality.

A first century plaque\textsuperscript{153} (ht. 6.2 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Tamluk skilfully depicts a dance performance accompanied by music. A male is shown here seated on a high stool and playing a stringed harp. With the musical notes dances a lady whose foot work exhibits the rhythm of dance. Another plaque (ht. 12 cm.; Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) from the same site and of the same epoch, though fragmentary impressively delineates Surasundari\textsuperscript{154} (heavenly nymph) in profile, dancing with the accompaniment of music. She wears a embroidered full-sleeved blouse and a thick striped sādi covering her hips and thigh, the ends of which are fluttering at the back. A male figure with clasped hands over the breast and in a delighted posture is shown as if enjoying the dance. The next plaque of second century (ht. 8 cm.; private collection) is that of an apsara from Chandraketugarh who is seen as dancing in joy and ecstasy with her hands clasped over her head. With her unbraided hair, elaborate ornaments, longish eyes and smiling face the heavenly nymph presents herself in feminine charm (PLATE: XIX d). She is almost akin to a lavishly ornamented

\textsuperscript{153} Biswas, S.S., \textit{op. cit.}, pl. XLIX e.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., pl. XLd.
dancing figure met with on a specimen (ht. 11 cm.; private collection) from the same site and same date where a small head probably carrying a round musical instrument (like gypsy) is shown on her right side (PLATE: XX a). A plaque155 (ht. 33.5 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Paharpur depicts a female dancer. She wears a striped lower garment and a chadar hanging over the two arms, places her legs apart and the hands under her prominent breasts which signify a gesture of offering.

Dancing males are also not uncommon on the pieces under review. A first century plaque (ht. 5.7 cm.; Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) from Tamluk depicts the upper part of a dancing male snapping fingers by his left hand. The figure adorned with elaborate jewellery and a circular head-dress with ornamental uprights attached with tassels stands in a tribhanga posture. An almost similar plaque from the same site and in the same museum represents the upper part of a dancing male but unlike the former without any elaborate ornamentation. A terracotta male figure (ht. 14.1 cm.; Asutosh Museum) coming from Chandraketugarh portraying a human or a gandharva and another sample (ht. 9.5 cm.; private collection) with a similar figure (PLATE: VII c) and a round plaque (dia. 5 cm.; private collection) from the same site show male figures in each case with arms thrown apart in the rhythm of dance and the legs crossed. Like Chandraketugarh the well known site of

155. VRM NO. 2041.
Pāhārpur has yielded several terracottas now preserved in the Varendra Research Museum which depict human figures in a variety of dancing poses. In one such plaque\(^{156}\) (ht. 31.9 cm.) a male is seen dancing with instruments in both of his hands; his legs being almost folded and like his Chandraketugarh cousin he wears a dhūti. Another plaque (ht. 31.1 cm.) depicts a similar dancer with the right hand over the breast and the left folded towards the shoulder in a posture of rhythm and force. The dancer in a third specimen\(^{157}\) (ht. 22.5 cm.) wearing a striped dhūti up to the knee is depicted in profile with head slightly bent sidewise, his hands are placed on both sides and his nearly kneeling down posture expresses a moment of joy and delight. Another plaque\(^{158}\) (ht. 25.1 cm.) shows a dancer wearing a short lower garment with a pointed tail between his legs. The legs are placed wide apart and rest on the tips, his right arm shows a parabolic curve and the left is placed high on the level of the head.

The study of the variety of instruments and the musicians playing on them as portrayed on the Bengal terracottas is no less rewarding. The instruments include vīnā, esrāi and violin-type objects, harp, lute, drum and the like. Vīnā is met with on several specimens, for instance on two first-century plaques from tamulk one (ht. 4.5 cm.) and the other (ht. 16.5 cm.) both in the Tāmralipta

\(^{156}\) VRM No. 2034.
\(^{157}\) VRM No. 2045.
\(^{158}\) VRM No. 2035.
Museum and Research Centre. On the first only one person while on the other two musicians are found; on the latter the vīnā reminds us of the lyre of Samudra Gupta on his lyrist type of coins. In a fragmentary terracotta sealing (dia. 3.2 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh a standing lady is shown on the obverse as wearing a chiton like costume and carrying a lyre in her left hand. This inscribed sealing is a product of the first century B.C.

(PLATE:XX b). In a plaque (ht. 25.5 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur, the instrument is depicted with clarity. The neck of this stringed object is long and is shaped like the head of a swan, and it seems to have reeds at interval. The curly-haired and dhuti-clad musician playing on it seems to have been lost in a trance. The vīnā on another plaque from Pāhārpur, is more or less identical with the preceding one, but its neck is bit thick. The round resonator or the head of the Instrument is here carried over the shoulder which appears to have no support at the neck for resting on the floor. Thus it is different from the modern vīnā.

Somewhat like modern esrāj, is an instrument which is found in the left hand of a lady featured on a second century sample (ht. 12.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh. In the right hand she holds the plectron used for playing the instrument. This figurine with prominent female organ, deep navel and nubile breasts

160. MASL., 55, pl. LI f.
seems to be a Yakshinī, who stands in an alluring posture. Another similar plaque (ht. 12 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from the same site and of the same time shows the torso of a charming lady who possibly holds a plectron for strumming the stringed instrument by her right hand resting on her hip (PLATE: XX c).

A violin type instrument is seen in the right hand of a person depicted on an example (ht. 8.5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh of the first century B.C. or the first century A.D. Harp was a popular instrument in Bengal and in other parts of India. A plaque ¹⁶¹ (Tāmralipta Museum and Research) hailing from Tamluk represents a figurine seated on a pedestal and playing on a harp. Beside her another figure plays some other instrument. Similarly, another one stringed instrument is depicted on a plaque ¹⁶² from Pāhārpur. Shaped like a bottle-gourd on either side, this lute(?) like instrument without neck but slightly curved in the middle and with its back flat is played on by a male musician. A flower is empossed on either end of the lute through which passes the string fixed to it.

Now about the drums. Terracotta from different sites of Bengal show them in various shapes and sizes. A multilated plaque ¹⁶³ (ht. 4 cm.) from Tamluk has on it a small drum attached to the waist of a musician girl which she beats; she recalls the female musician of Indra's paradise depicted in Bhārhut railings of

¹⁶¹ Biswas, S.S., op. cit., pl. XLXd.
¹⁶² MASI, 55, pl. LI d.
¹⁶³ Das Gupta, P.C., The early terracottas from Tāmralipta, p.33-34.
the second century B.C. An oblong shaped drum covered by vellum on one side only, similar to the present day tabla is encountered on a plaque from Pāhārpur; a man seated on a stool is playing on it. A small cylindrical drum with a strap in the middle is found on another plaque from the same site, which is held by a man. Oval shaped side-drums played on by Gandharvas are seen on some example from Maināmati. Along with them are the damarus, small drums or tabors. The damarus shaped like hour-glasses are played on by the Gandharva. Tabor is held in the right hand and is played with the left by a Gandharva. Interestingly a sample from Pāhārpur depicts a man as beating at a time on two pitchers of equal size and seemingly giving the sound of a same note. Besides these instruments a fragmentary part of a terracotta plaque (ht. 6.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh shows a female as playing musical notes with a decorative gypsy. (PLATE: XXd)

Representation of a group of musicians are also common in the terracotta art of Bengal. A plaque (ht. 16 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh shows a musical party in procession. The first figure is however missing, but the second and the third hold drums (PLATE: XXia).

165. MASI., 55, pl. LI b.
167. MASI., 55 pl. L c.
The plaques from Pāhārpur also gives evidence of cymbals used for playing the musical note. One such plaque show a man playing a circular cymbal with an inside hollow curve, while another shows a Nāga playing with small cymbals, the ends of which are flat and round with handles straight and long. The instrument somewhat resembles the kartāla of modern days. An instrument shaped like a gong circular in shape with an incised border is represented in a plaque from Pāhārpur.

Instruments like flutes are also delineated on plaques from Maināmatī. Among the wind-blown instruments, conches are common in terracotta repertoire of Pāhārpur.

Terracottas of ancient Bengal portrayed not only common people playing on all these various instruments but also placed them in the hands of the divinities. A beautiful specimen from Chandraketugarh shows Śiva Vīnāḍhara who is seated in sukhasana with his right leg hanging down and the left having on it the lower part of his vīnā. The instrument in its early form perhaps, rests on his left shoulder and, is held by his left hand (cf. supra., p. 162). The figurine (probably representing Goddess Sarasvatī) on a plaque from Harinārāyanpur (I) playing on a vīnā is remarkable for its simple representation (cf. supra., p.171).

168. Ibid., pl. XL, c.
169. Ibid., pl. XLVI b.
170. Ibid., pl. LI a.
172. MASI, 55, pl. XXXIX b.
All these terracottas hailing from various sites of ancient Bengal give us an idea of the creative ability of the people of the contemporary Bengal in delineating various musical instruments and their talented users.

**Architectural Motif**

Existing architectural monuments both religious and secular of ancient Bengal are rare. Buddhist manuscript paintings in collaboration with religious structures viz. stūpas, vihāras etc. speak of the buildings of by-gone days. Some early terracottas have provided us with a tolerably good idea about the styles of the religious architecture in general, and the Buddhist architecture in particular.

A fragmentary terracotta plaque (ht. 9.5 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) of the second century B.C. from Chandraketugarh shows the motif of a stūpa in an elaborate manner. The shrine is no doubt a fascinating architecture with its outer and inner rails, a pavilion, an ancillary monument and a blooming lotus under an arch of stars. On the flat top of the cylindrical upper part of the stūpa-shaped structure is placed the feet of a female divinity. The ornamented beautiful feet probably depicts Śrī, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. The coins or kārshāpāna on the body are represented by square punch-marked metallic objects.
Another piece (ht. 7.8 cm.) of the second century B.C, from the same site and preserved in the same collection, but much fragmentary depicts a stūpa enclosed by an upward tapered decorated rail. The decorated hemispherical dome is surmounted by conventional chhattrīvalī. This is probably a depiction of the earlier phase of stūpa architecture.

A terracotta seal \(^{173}\) (dia. 3.4 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) from Chandraketugarh of about the second century B.C., depicts a torana of similar linear obstruction through which the stūpa or some venerable object is shown by a dot. A peacock perching on the uppermost architrave is interesting. A conch (śaṅkha) and lotus (padma) are also shown on both sides of the torana. A terracotta miniature gateway (ht. 34.9 cm.; Asutoosh Museum) from Tamluk the second - first century B.C. (PLATE: XXI c) is also similar to the unique gateways of Sāñchī stūpa and those of Jaina Āyagapata from Mathurā. This terracotta piece, thus establishes a close connection between the art and culture of Bengal with that of Vidiśā. A fragmentany miniature gateway (ht. 6.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh also deserves mention. This terracotta piece shows a decorated gateway with wavy finial shaped top. The floral boss depicted just beneath the top horizontal borders speaks of the artistic taste of its creators.

\(^{173}\) Biswas, S.S., op.cit., pl. XLIVa.
The terracotta example\textsuperscript{174} (ht. 7 cm.; Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre) from TamLuk of the first-second century B.C. depicts the motif of a gavāksha with a finial at the top. Stylistically this façade of a chaitya or a vihāra recalls the similar architectural designs of the Lomasha Rishi cave at Barābar hills in the Gayā district of Bihar and the rock cut caves in Western India.

Another terracotta plaque (Asutosh Museum) almost a fragmentary one from the same site is a Buddhist or Jaina establishment showing a vaulted vihāra with a row of finials is early Kushāṇa style. It also shows the wooden beams by the projected ends outside and the semi-circular wooden ribs that supports the original vaulted roof.

A mutilated terracotta plaque\textsuperscript{175} from Chandraketugarh shows a vase (identical with ornamented stone pillars of Kārle, Nāsik and others) carrying an octagonal shaft or pillar. This style of fixing wooden posts in vases recalls the association of amphorae with Roman architecture. The vase may also be noticed in another terracotta plaque\textsuperscript{176} from the same site which is supported by a winged - lion on a three-storeyed platform. It may be noted here that winged lions often appear on pillars of the cave shrines of Bhāja, Kārle and other places but not at their bases.

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., pi. XLVa.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., pi. XLVc.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., pi. XLVd.
A miniature terracotta temple (ht. 7.5 cm., private collection) from Berachampa, seems to be architecturally unique. The bell-shaped gradually diminishing three-storied šikhara rests on two round pillars. On both sides of the main šikhara balancing on the pillars is a slanting covered roof. The architectural style of this miniature temple (may be the reminiscent of a toy cart) reveals a Buddhist affiliation. It may be a proto-type of a Buddhist pagoda. The lower portion of the temple shows a fragmented human head wearing a turban. The character of the indistinct inscription in Brāhmī, visible on the back of the temple tends to assign it to about the forth-fifth century (PLATE: XXIc).

Almost equally unique is a terracotta temple holding a Śiva-liṅga inside from Tamluk, now preserved in the Tamralipta Museum and Research Centre. The vedikā with five projections makes it to be a temple of the pāñcharatha plan. The jaṅgha section contains parallel divisions with horizontal lines. The plinth is decorated with floral designs. The lower and the upper part of the structure is connected with a thick band. The gaṇḍi section is clustered by diminishing aṅgašikharas. The mastaka is crowned by a kalasa (PLATE:XXId). Thus all these features largely assign it to be a miniature piece of the temple style of Orissa.

Another architectural motif is encountered on a plaque177 (ht. 33.9 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur. Here over a plinth of two stages stands an ornamental cylindrical part. The middle

177. VRM No. 2166.
one with a rectangular box is decorative on all sides with circular designs. Similar designs are shown on both sides. This plaque though seems to be of less votive value is no doubt valuable as a piece of embellishment.

Remains of secular architecture are visible on some plaque from Chandraketugarh and Pāhārpur. A mutilated terracotta specimen (ht. 6.5 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh, of about the first century A.D. depicts a female climbing stairs. Here an octagonal pillar with pot base is visible by her side. A badly damaged plaque (ht. 19.7 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from the same region, of about the second century A.D., portrays a couple under a flat roofed pavilion supported by round pillars with rows of conical decorations. The male and the female wearing elaborate costume and jewellery stand on a circular and square pedestal respectively. It provides a noteworthy architectural style of ancient Bengal. A third specimen from the same site showing a pavilion at the back with a divine couple riding on a tiger-like animal is of special interest. The thatched roof surmounted by a finial was probably a common style not even in ancient days but in modern times also. Another plaque (ht. 5 cm., private collection) from Chandraketugarh shows a female figure curiously looking through a window. In front a head just below her breast is also visible. The arch shaped window top with two posts on each sides are important in this connection. A plaque (ht. 26.6 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) from Pāhārpur shows a

179. Ibid., pl. XLa.
180. VRM No. 2204.
A large number of decorative terracotta plaques of varied shape and size coming from different sites, specially from the shrine areas of Eastern Bengal, deserve more than a passing notice. The designs and decorative patterns carried by them include, among others, floral designs, and motifs of stepped pyramids, dental edge, wavy lines and chains as well as geometric designs. In Buddhist sites of Pāhārpura, Bhāsu Vihaṇa and Maina-maṭī the lotus petal and stepped pyramid were the most popular and common variety. These plaques were generally used for decorating the outer walls of the shrine and also the cornices to enhance their beauty. They were also placed in the plinths and doorways of shrines and in front facades of the monasteries probably to attract the eyes of the
visitors. These plaques are no doubt impressive as a popular device of decorative purposes. Below is cited some unique examples of this decorative art.

A fragmentary plaque from Chandraketugarh (ht. 8.5 cm.; State Archaeological Gallery) depicts two eight-petalled flower in a same parallel line with cone shaped stalk. The pericarp of the flower is round and marked by fine lines. On the right side of the flower is a part of a plant with edged leaves facing down wards. The plaque though simple is remarkable for its aesthetic quality (FIGURE:u).

Terracotta plaques from Harinārāyaṇpur (II) now preserved in the Ānanda Niketan Kīrtisālā, delineate flowers with round petals within a circle. A rectangular plaque from the same site depicts such a flower with stalks and two leaves, one on the left above the flower and the other on the right below the flower.

Among the decorative plaques hailing from Pāhārpur the most potable in respect of the theme and workmanship, is the one (ht. 22.8 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) depicting a club-shaped motif with thick shaft marked by incised lines and a domical shaped member crowned by a plain circular top. On the left side of this motif is a semi-circular part with lotus petals on the edge. On the right is placed a wavy leaf like motif. On the other one (ht. 24.5 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) the flat surface of the plaque is

181. VRM No. 2212.
covered by a conch shaped floral design with simply marked leaf patterns issuing from the edge towards the centre (FIGURE:v). Another plaque\textsuperscript{182} (ht. 23 cm.; Varendra Research Museum) depicts a flower with twelve pointed petals within a circular ring. Over it rests some inverted triangular motifs marked by incised lines. The whole thing like a disc stands on a pedestal.

A terracotta plaque\textsuperscript{183} (ht. 124 cm.) from Bhāsu Vihāra contain the bas relief on ornamental vase (maṅgal-ghata) with wide angular shoulder and narrow neck-tied round with a scarf. Such representations are also found in terracottas from Pāhārpur and are meant for decorative purposes.

Decorative terracotta plaques hailing from Mahāsthāṅgarh also deserve special mention. Such a rectangular plaque is divided into five angular parts which contains floral patterns both with sharp edge petals and a round one too. Apart from that, wavy lines forming chain motifs envelope some parts. Plaques showing floral designs encompassed within a circle or a cube are also common in Mahāsthāṅgarh plaques. Here the petals and their representations vary from one plaque to another. Terracotta pieces with the depiction of geometric designs within a concentric semi-circle is also found. Plaque showing parallel designs in various line curving along

\textsuperscript{182} VRM No.2213.
\textsuperscript{183} \textit{BA.}, \textit{op. cit.}, p.61.
with floral motifs are also common. The most notable among the Mahāsthāṅgarh plaque is the one depicting a decorative lotus with a stalk. Above the pericarp of the flower rises an ornamented large sized petal with beaded crown at the top. Beside the flower is depicted the leaf in ornamental scroll (FIGURE: w).

Terracottas preserved in the Śalavanā Vihāra Museum, Maināmati, are also notable. Here like other sites occur plaques depicting flowers of various shapes and sizes. But the most interesting pieces are the one showing a vase decked with ornamented petals containing a thin curved part towards the left; the rectangular plaque with semi-circular designs on both sides marked by nine petalled flower and separated by horizontal thick block designs; and the wheel design curved with great care. A terracotta plaque from Ānanda Vihāra, Maināmati, showing a flower with four petals (one half visible) and the leaf on the left forming an ornamental scroll design also deserve special mention.

Thus the decorative plaques in whatever aspect they are considered made a significant contribution to the terracotta art tradition of ancient Bengal.

**Faiths and beliefs**

From the evidences furnished by the terracotta finds from various sites of ancient Bengal, it appears that the people of this
region were religious minded. They had great faith in image worship which no doubt received impetus from the ruling power. The people of ancient Bengal believed that all havocs and dangers might be over-come by propitiating Gods and Goddesses. And acquisition of Gods' grace was the only way to worldly success.

The smarta Hindus of ancient Bengal worshipped five principal deities viz. Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, Devī and Gaṇapati. This worship of five deities was known as Pañchopāsanā or Pañchāyatana. Apart from this Brahmā and the Dikpālas were also worshipped. Besides the Brahmanical deities, Buddha and Buddhist divinities, particularly of the Tantrayāna form received veneration from a large chunk of the people and Pāla Bengal of the eighth-twelfth centuries bearing representations of all these divine and semi-divine beings have been discussed before (cf: Supra, pp. 158-192).

Apart from their deep veneration for cultic deities of both Brahmanical and Buddhist orders, the people of ancient Bengal had considerable faith and belief in ascetics and fore-tellers. The plaques from Bhāsu-Vihāra carrying figures of female or male lay worships receiving benediction from the high priest will tend support to this supposition. Incidentally, a round fragmentary terracotta plaque (ht. 6 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh depicting the chart of a horoscope in a cyclic order indicates the popular belief in fate and forecast.
Rites and Rituals

As to the rites and rituals of ancient Bengal, the objects under study give us some information. For example a terracotta plaque (ht. 5.5 cm.; private collection) from Chandraketugarh indicates the prevalence of the Āśvamedha sacrifice apparently by members of royal class. It shows a horse being fed by a male figure standing in an easy posture; the man may be the king who sacrificed the horse (PLATE : XXI e ).

A fragmentary plaque\textsuperscript{184} from Chandraketugarh (private collection) depict the ceremony of rural Bengal i.e., Navānna-Utsava, connected with the first crop of the year. Here a group of men and women are shown in festive mood. Some of them carry corns on their shoulders. An elephant, also a part of the ceremony, is shown with stretched trunk, probably signifying a gesture of happiness. The presence of the musical instruments has enhanced the festive mood of the people. This plaque of the Śrūṅga-Kushāṇa epoch is a vivid representation of the ritual of the common people of Bengal.

Another fragmentary plaque\textsuperscript{185} (ht. 14.6 cm.; Asutosh Museum) from Chandraketugarh, datable to the first century A.D., depicts a female as holding a couple of strings from which suspends two


\textsuperscript{185} Acc. No. 66/427H/84.27.
fishes, seemingly carp. The association of the twin fish with the
cult connected with folk rituals and magic is probably the theme of
depiction. Here it may be noted that the celebrated Oxford figurine
(cf. supra., pp.47-48) is also adorned with amulets representing twin
fish.

Thus it may be concluded that the people of ancient Bengal
succeeded in portraying the various aspects of their everyday life
with admirable skill and felicity.