Chapter-5. Religious Background of Terracotta Figurine

Besides serving as an evidence of art and material culture the clay figurines also throw light on the religious beliefs of the people. The development of Indian iconography is well represented in clay figurines and it is not difficult to draw from them a religious picture of the period beginning from late Śunga times. There is no marked difference between the figurines to be worship and the figurines to be used as toys. In many cases, they may have served as toys for children and images for the worshipers both. The religious and social life during the last two millennia have undergone so much changes that there is not much data to help precise identification of the figurines of a particular type as a toy or effigy.

India has been a country of different religions and sects, each one of which has flourished and interacted, with mutual benefit and seldom with any violent conflicts. It was this attitude of tolerance which sheltered all faith and also contributed to the worship of many deities resultant upon amalgamation of different cultures. Whether the people, or the teachers or the kings in India, all possessed a religious outlook which also helped in this direction\(^1\). In Bihar all the important religions, Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism, Śaivism etc. flourished together. In Pātaliputra (Patna) also all the important religions flourished together and the evidence of all religious activities found from Lohanipur, Kumrahar, Bulandibagh etc. The tolerant policy of the kings who ruled over the land and the liberal attitude of the people were outstanding. It greatly added in the peaceful development of all religions. Coomaraswamy has, therefore, rightly observed that the early Indian terracotta’s are of great importance, not only as the documents of religious culture but as documents of the history of Art\(^2\).
A variety of significant motifs and forms may be found in terracotta. The identification of the archaic figurines with mother-goddess was first suggested by Coomaraswamy. He wrote that ‘A nude and steatophygous types occurs through-out the most ancient world, from Central Europe in the Neolithic times to the Gangetic valley.’ Quoting Goltz he said, ‘she is the great mother. It is she who makes all nature bring from forth. All existing things are emanations from her. She is the Madona, carry the holy child or watching over him. She is the mother of men, and of animal too……… she even makes the plants grow by her universal fecundity … perpetuating the vegetative force of which she is the fountainhead.’ Coomaraswamy further pointed out that ‘ such a goddess is known in western Asia, where the nearest cognates of ancient Indian culture found by such names as Anahita and Ishtar; and in India such images of later mother-goddess. The Indian goddess Aditi has much common with the Babylonian Ishtar…… We can safely assert that the Indian nude goddess of fertility, for this is written unmistakably upon her image.

The terracotta art took its origin from clay, one of the cheapest and easily available materials and thus the civilization started making household utensils, toy and figurines of gods and goddess from it. Patna (Pātaliputra) is one of the important site which yielded various types of terracotta figurines ranging from the pre-Maurya to the post Gupta period. There are many types of religious terracotta viz. Mother-Goddess³, Sūrya⁴, Naigameśa⁵, Nāga⁶, Buddhist and Jainism.

**Mother-Goddess**

A man by nature is the worshipper of Śakti, or power, where he finds the special mention of Śakti, his attention is automatically drawn towards it, and in case it is found to be of a superior order, or in comparison with
what he experiences in himself, he pays homage to it. This tribute of respect of which a man offers to a superior manifestation of power may appear in diverse forms. Some manifestation of power may strike terror into his heart and others may inspire his heart with the feeling of admiration and reverence. The feeling of fear and hope, envy and admiration, awe and reverence, hostility and friendliness, repulsion and attraction etc. roused by the difference forms of the exhibition of power, gives rise to different forms of worship.

India possesses a long history of mother-goddess worship. Though in the pre-historic period mother-goddesses worship dominated the civilization in different countries of the world, yet any material evidence for her worship during the Stone Age in India is not found. Many Scholars have suggested that the cult of mother-goddess existed in some form and other among the early Indus people. From the excavations of the Indus Valley sites we came across that the mother-goddess worship was prevalent in India in that period. Evidence has also come down to us from different contemporary sites in west Asia. Scholars have also held that mother-goddess worship was prevalent over vast extent of land. The Indus Valley sites particularly Harappan and Mohen-jo-daro has been identified as sites where mother-goddess\(^7\) figurines are found. These female figurines are almost invariably in a damaged condition. On the other hand, it has generally been held that among the agricultural tribes, the cult of the mother earth, conceived as a female deity, is more prominent. The human mind calls for explanation of every types of power he faces in the daily life, but his mind can’t rest till he discovers the supreme power which is infinite, external omnipotent and absolute.

The supreme power\(^8\) sometimes transforms itself into the “mother” of all the beings and is also known as universal mother, the mother-goddess
or mother earth which viewed in the light of human nature, as explained above and could be traced from the Stone times. The Ancient Indian History has witnessed the presence of the mother-goddess from the earliest times and possibly in universe as a whole, because the adoration of the mother-goddess in one form or the other has been found from the ancient antiquarian remains of many countries of the world including Europe, Asia and Africa, besides the Indian sub-continent.

India is perhaps the only country of the old world where the cult of the mother-goddess though dominated the religious scene from the pre-historic past but continues to be followed up to the modern times. The representation of the Goddesses as revealed through archaeological investigations are to be found in cave paintings, bone, ivory, terracotta, stone, gold as also seals and sealing, coins, pottery etc. The literary evidence on the subject can however, be traced from the time of the Rigveda to that of the later Vedic literature the great epic of Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata and other Puranic literature.

Though the presence of the goddess can be traced in India right from the Palaeolithic times but it mainly is in stone, iron or pre-historic wall paintings etc. But our study has to be restricted to the presence of the goddess in the terracotta art in the country and for doing so we shall to peep into Mehrgarh, Mundigak, Kulli, Zhob sites and the sites of Harappa, Mohen-jo-daro and others. Many archaeological sites in Bihar have also yielded mother-goddess figurines.

On the other hand, it has generally been held that among the agricultural tribes, the cult of the Mother Earth, conceived as a female deity, is more prominent. Rituals based upon fertility magic must have played a very significant part in the agricultural societies. Female deities, writes Starbuck, have often enjoyed the highest place among the gods. This
depends upon the nature of the social organisation and the respect in which women are held in the clan life in which the mother is the head of the group is likely of lift the Mother Goddess into Supreme position\(^9\).

The numerous terracotta figurines from Mohan-jo-daro and Harappa, however, provide the investigator with more definite information on the subject of deities. These female figurines are almost invariably in a damaged condition, but there is strong reason to believe that they represent the great Mother Goddess, who was worshipped so widely in the Near and Middle East in ancient times and whose cult is almost universal amongst the lower-class on the principles of mother right was held by a number of scholars, but it was R.P. Chanda who asserted categorically that Śaktism arose in India under the same social conditions as those under which Astarte or Ashtart was conceived in Syria, Cyheb in Phrygia and Isis in Egypt\(^10\).

In the early Vedic period the female deities are generally honoured and referred to as consorts of the male deities. But when Vedic Rudra was absorbed as the Pre-Aryan male deity, who was also three faced, Pasupati and Yogi with urdhvalinga, the Mother Goddess cult was also taken over and she became the consort of Śiva and was known as Ambikā, Rudrānī, Bhavānī, Durgā, Katyāyanī and Umā\(^11\). But because of her pre-aryan origin, the Goddess, in spite of being the partner of siva, also continued to be an independent deity. In separate image, she was worshipped in both her destructive and benevolent forms. The worship of Umā as a consort of Śiva became a dominant feature of Paurānic Śaivism. This worship of the Mother-Goddesss as the most powerful deity lies at the root of Tantricism and consorts of other gods also come to be worshipped. The archaeological discoveries of the image of Parvati and Durgā in Bihar belonging it this period corroborate the above mentioned facts.
Some terracotta figurines have head-dresses which has lamp like designs on both the sides and they have been identified as forerunner of Dip Lakṣmī. Besides these terracotta figurines on different seals and sealing we get the depiction of mother Goddesses. One oblong terracotta sealing found at Harappa appears a nude female figure upside down with legs wide apart and with a plant issuing from her womb. On the other side on the Harappa sealing a lady figure is shown seated on the ground with raised hands and disheveled hair. In front of her a male figure is depicted with knife like object in his hand. The female figure with a plant issuing from womb has been taken to be of the Earth goddess and it has also been held that the scene on the other side depicts human sacrificial. Whether we agree with this or not but it is certain that the sealing is connected with Mother Goddess worship. The female figure with the plant coming of womb may be of earth Goddess. On another seal a female figure is shown standing in between the branches of the tree which has also been identified as a Mother Goddess. From the Jatakas we get references that Goddesses reside in the tree. So in the Indus Valley period people also conceived of tree Goddess. It was natural for the people to conceive of earth as a mother because tree and plants grow on her surface and people survive on them. Not only the mother Goddess but a male god was also worshipped during the Indus valley period as we get the depiction of a Trimurti figure on a seal identified with the Śiva concept of the later times. Hence it has been held that the Śiva-Sakti cult was predominant in the Indus valley period. It’s symbolic worship was also proved, as we get from Mohan-jo-daro ring stone and cylindrical stones identified with yonī and līṅga respectively. From the Vedic literature we do not get any evidence suggesting that Śiva-Sakti cult predominant during the early Vedic period, rather the early Aryan hated the linga worshippers. It is only
in the later phase of the Vedic period that pre-Vedic elements began to appear in the religion of the Aryans. There is no doubt that a large number of Goddesses appear to the Rgveda who were also conceived anthropromorphically Aditi, Ushās, Prithivi, Saraswati, Sri are some of them. However, male gods predominated the vadic period. In the later phase when the pre-Aryan elements were observed new Goddess began to appear and the Vedic Goddess also began to get predominance. While in the Rgveda, Prithivi generally appears in conjunction with Dhyaus, but in the Atharv Veda we get a separate hymn addressed to Prithivi. In the Indus Valley civilization tree Goddess was worshipped, in the Vedic literature also Arnyani is goddess of forest. In the post Vedic period many goddesses are referred to as residing in different trees being worshipped by people and being offered sacrifices also. Though we do not get archaeological evidence with regard to the Vedic period, but from the post-Vedic period we begin getting archaeological evidence also.

The excavation at Oriup in the district of Bhagalpur has however, yielded a terracotta female figure of Mother Goddess, which possesses all the characteristic features of a pre-historic type\textsuperscript{17}. The figure has been found from the earliest level in association with the black-and-red ware, bone object and copper pieces. On the basis of the stratification it may be ascribed to the post-Harappan period.

The Mother Goddess is normally represented at Vaiśālī by archaic terracotta figures, entirely modelled by hand. They are characterised by bird-like face, prominent breasts, broad hips, tapering arms and legs and appliqué and punched ornaments which include collar, necklace and a prominent girdle. Eight examples of different varieties have been recovered from excavation. Vaiśālī has also yielded a few moulded specimens of the Mother Goddess\textsuperscript{18}. 
Another form of Mother-Goddess cult which became popular was the worship of the Mother Goddess with a child. On a seal discovered at Nalanda we have a seated Goddess with a child and having a tree to her right. On one of the seals the Goddess is seated on a lotus with a child on her left knee and a serpent by the side. Many inscribed images of the Pāla period have been found in Bihar which has lady with a child.

The recent excavation at Kumrahar and Bulandibagh (Patna) have, Provided terracotta female figurines of mother-goddess, which possesses all the characteristic feature as like slanting eye, arched eyebrows, pinched nose and slit mouth, all indicated by raised lines. While those from Pātaliputra have more or less straight outlines (Patna 9369), though not always. On the other hand a torso with a female nivibandha, is conspicuous by a very broad waist and ‘straight shape of the body’ (Bulandibagh 4153). Such types must have been so well known in their implication, that our present uncertainty with regard to this sex is only one of the many to which these figures gives rise, unsupported as their existence and meaning by ancient text. Present practice, however, may be a guide and it especially the ‘star shaped’ variety which are considered as children- protected by Shasthimātā the mother-goddess.

Besides Patna, the terracotta female figurines of mother-goddess have also been discovered from Buxar in Bihar. They have typical bird like faces, slanting eyes, pinched nose, and slit mouth. The ear-holes are prominent having cup shaped depression marked with floral designs. The neck is narrow but quite prominent. The breasts are appliqué and hands are stretched on both the sides. In some later specimens, the hair is arranged in a sophisticated manner and the head wears disproportionately large turbans or caps beautifully decorated with geometrical and floral designs.
Sūrya (Sun-worship)

The Sun or Sūrya, the visible celestial luminary has been illuminating the universe from the time immemorial. Sūrya, therefore, because of his luster which removes darkness, being adored since the remote past. In fact numerous religious beliefs and sun cult have appeared on earth ever since the evolution of man on earth. While some of them have lost their relevance from the global scene as rapidly as they had mushroomed, other faded from human memory or lost their relevance with the passage of time. Still there remain certain cults and beliefs which never lost their relevance though during the long period of history they got eclipsed for a short spell of time. The cult of Sūrya happens to be one of such beliefs, whose relevance is still in vogue, and could not be diminished, through their followers may not be many.

In the vast Indian literature as well as the epigraphical records, there are numerous reference in which the grandeur of a particular god or a monarch is equated with the luster of the Sun. There are also instances in which it was claimed that the fame of a particular person or a monarch would last as long as the Sun and the Moon shine in the sky. The case of Satī pillars, so abundantly found in the country is an interesting example. In these Satī pillars the Sun and the Moon were projected in a symbolic form. But in due course of time he was worshipped in the temples exclusively made for his worship.

The Vedas refer to him and his various aspects as Savitr, Pusan, Bhāgā, Vivaśvat, Mitra, Āryaman and Vishnu. The idea of the god riding on a chariot drawn by four or seven horses so frequently found in post-Vedic texts and illustrated in early reliefs has already been well formulated
in Ṛgvedic hymns. An elaborate story is current in the Epics and the Purānas about Sūrya’s marriage with Viśvakarmā’s daughter Sñjna.

The worship of the sun god and his various aspects continued in the later vedic period. In the post vedic age it was more advanced and the two Epics are full of allusions to Sūrya and his various aspects. One passage in the Mahābhārata describes him as Devesvara, Lord of Gods. Many other Sanskrit works of a general character belonging to the Gupta period and afterwards, also contain similar references. All these facts suppose the existence of a school of Sun-Worshippers, known as the Sauras. The cult of the Sun-Worshippers seems to have had its adherents in north and south India in the early periods.

In Varahamihira it is mentioned that the worship of Sūrya of different heights is beneficial for one who intends to be endowed with wealth, peace and abundance. There is no doubt that the considerable numbers of people of Bihar were worshippers of Sūrya, the Dvadasadityas and Navagrahas. Thus a large number of figures of Sun God have been discovered in Bihar at different places.

Sun was being represented in Indian art by means of various symbols before the inception and development of any cult cantering round him. These symbols were made use of by the vedic retualists in the performance of sacrifices. A wheel, a round golden plate, a lotus flower, etc., were commonly used on these occasions. Sūrya in human form was not also very late in making his appearance in Indian art, though such figures of his are almost invariably associated with non-Brahmanical cults. The God is seen riding on a one-wheeled (ekachakra) chariot drawn by four horses on an ‘upright’ of the old stone railing at Bodh-Gayā. The Ṛgvedic description of Sūrya as riding a chariot drawn by one, three, four, or seven horses seems to have been the basis of such representations.
It has been assumed by some that the early north Indian Sūrya image had its prototype in the Iranian Mithra. But the ancient Iranians themselves did not represent the Sun God in human form in the earliest times and like ancient Indian they used to represent him by means of such, symbols as a ‘solar disc’, wheel etc. The mediaeval Sūrya reliefs of eastern India usually fall under two categories, one showing the god standing in the company of his attendants, the other showing him seated in padmasana, the former outnumbering the latter. The first group again has more than one variety, some illustrative of the earlier tradition in which Dandī, Pingalā, Ushā, Pratyushā, Ārubā and the seven horses are shown on the relief, besides the lotus carrying two armed central figures of Sūrya dressed in Udicyavesa. The latter are very often profusely ornamented, the stela is usually pointed with the Kirttimukha design on its top centre and the companions of the main deity are arranged in several parallel layers by his side.

The western Indian images of Sūrya, though stylistically different from their eastern Indian counterparts, resemble the latter in the broad outlines of their iconography. One of the earliest Sūrya images of the South Indian variety belongs to the Parasurāmeśvara temple at Gudimallam. It stands bare footed on a pedestal on which neither Aruna nor the seven horses are shown, the upper part of the body is left bare and there are no attendants, the hands of the god are raised to the level of the shoulders holding two lotus buds.

The representation of the Solar symbol on most of the punch-marked coins rather on almost all the coins shown that the sun-worship was prevalent in Bihar even in the Mauryan period. The data of the punch-marked coin is generally placed in between 600 B.C. and 200 B.C. and as such the antiquity of the Sun worships in Bihar on the basis of the coin may go back even to 600 B.C.
The earliest figures of the Sun God found in Bihar are those found on terracotta from Patna\textsuperscript{28} and in sculpture on a railing pillar at Bodh-Gaya\textsuperscript{29}. In the Patna plaque, the God is standing on a four-horsed chariot, ready with his strung bow and arrow. The object held in the right hand of the charioteer to impel the horses is curious. It resembles a goad, rather a whip. There is a disc encompassing the God and his chariot\textsuperscript{30}. This arrangement, according to Marshall goes to the figure of a wheel, which in India, as elsewhere, was one of the first symbols of the divine power of the Sun that man began to worship.

Sūrya on the Bodh-Gayā railing pillar appears to be the first example of the canonical form of the Sūrya image. The God is represented, surrounded by the Sun disc, on a four-horsed chariot with one wheel. The God is under an umbrella and is attended by two female archers, Ushā and Pratyushā\textsuperscript{31}.

In this example of the Sun-image mentioned above, we find that the image of the Sun-God is made in such a manner that his legs are hidden by the body of the car. But in the later image of the Sūrya, belonging to the Kuṣana, the Gupta and the Pāla periods, the God is shown dressed in a purely foreign costume such as conical head-dress, armour and high boots in his legs. In none of the mythological or iconographical texts, it is mentioned that the legs of the Sun-God should be covered with high boots. From the Bhavishya Purāṇa\textsuperscript{32}, we know that Visvakarmā, the divine artificer, put the god on the lathe and reduced his splendour by slowly anointing him with nectar. But the God did not allow this to be done any further than above the knees and since then his legs have always been covered. This traditional convention not to represent the feet of the God may have conveniently been utilised to introduce high-boots with the Sun-images by the Kuṣana rulers who had special honour for the Sun. Thus in
the words of Coomaraswamy\textsuperscript{33}, “the Kuṣana kings.......may have set up and popularised a form of Sūrya images dressed in their own fashion”. This foreign influence in the images remained in vogue in most northern Sun-images either in natural or conventional form.

From the above references of the Sun-images, it is evident that the worship of the Sun-God was in vogue in this state from the very beginning as is clear from the Patna Plaque of the Sun image (3\textsuperscript{rd} century B.C.)\textsuperscript{34} and the Sun image on Bodh-Gayā railing which belongs to a period before the advent of Sakas and the Kuṣana in India. However, the advent of the Sakas and the Kuṣanas who were also worshippers of the Sun-God is heralded by the introduction of new forms of images which became very common in later period. This form of image is beautifully described in the Brihatsamhitā\textsuperscript{35}.

In the beginning of the period under review, we get epigraphic references to the prevalence of the Sun-Worship in Bihar. One of the seals discovered from Basarh\textsuperscript{36} contains according to Spooner, a very perfect example of fire altar with probably solar disc, the legend in ‘Bhagavata-Adityasya’, i.e. the seal of the God Sun. Spooner finding the association of Persian fire altar with the worship of the Sun believes in the pronouncedly, persian Cult of the Sun in Eastern India in the Gupta period. We have another reference to solar worship during the reign of Skanda Gupta\textsuperscript{37}. But this record is found at Indore.

It is during the reign of Adityasena and Jivita Gupta II that we get references to a regular cult of solar worship in the State of Bihar. It is, therefore, proved that the sun worship was certainly prevalent in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D.

A large number of images of Sūrya have been discovered in Bihar at different places like Patna\textsuperscript{38}, Nālandā\textsuperscript{39}, Bodh-Gayā\textsuperscript{40}, Barabar\textsuperscript{41},
Monghyr, Kurkihar, Arrah, etc. Besides these there a few more images which may be taken to be of Sūrya, one from Bodh-Gayā and another from Jayamangalagarh (Monghyr).

These images found at various places clearly prove that the Sunworship was widely prevalent in the State of Bihar during the later Gupta and the Pāla periods. The Agnī Purāṇa refers of the Sun-worship associated with the ‘Shashthi-vrata’, which is perhaps similar to chhattha worship of the modern period, widely prevalent specially in the State of Bihar.

The adoration of the Sun worship started possibly with the emerging of human on earth, when he was still a savage, roaming over the earth in pre-historic times, since he could have better visibility; better movement of food collection, etc. during the day. When the earth was filled with sunlight, than in the darkness of night, he could better accomplish his feats like hunting or collecting the food during day time as compared to night. He is realized the utility of the Sun during winter and gradually became aware of the utility of the Sun in food production and other activities and he started adorning him.

The Sun worship has been described as the most real and the most ancient religion of India. It is not difficult to understand, how in the low land flooded with sunshine where every phase and function of life is dependant in the kindly warmth of the Sun and his destructive powers are felt in the utmost extremes of the heat and it should have been man’s primary business to placate him and win his favor. The pre-historic cave man, realizing the importance of the Sun worshipped him and projected him in cave art as well, which practice was followed by the posterity.

Though there is no distinct sect adoring the Sun god in the country exclusively, still there are some prominent Sun temple like Konark,
Modhera, Martandya etc. But the images of Śūrya are found in most of the Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śakti temples, either individually or in the company of other gods or he is invariably projected in the Navagraha panels so frequently found display in the medieval temples. The essentials of the Sun worship are present everywhere in all sects more or less avowedly or in guise and combine with other cult and his practical and decisive influence on daily life is universally recognised for tracing the archaeological evidence of Sun worship one has to revert to the Harappa, Mohen-jo-daro and other Chalcholithic sites in Sind, Baluchistan and India, where terracotta figurines have been unearthed in large number. Other sites in north India, like those at Pātaliputra, Basarh, Rajghat, Kosambi, Mathura, Samkisa and other which have also yielded a mass terracotta material testify to the presence of various cult objects belonging to the remote past including Śūrya. Some of which have been describe hereunder:

A black terracotta plaque of Maurya-Śunga period discovered from Bulandibagh, Patna (8570), depicts Śūrya standing over a chariot drawn by four horses. He wears a coat of mail and a quiver and shoots an arrow from his bow. The charioteer on his right holds with his left hand the reins of the four horses and the right hand with a long staff. A bird is perched behind the chariot and from the harness of the horse. Flat diagonally streaked rim; a hole to the left of Śūrya’s head-dress can be seen. The back of the plaque is compressed with two concentric rings, the outer with crescent shape and the inner with the deeply holed dot set in a zig-zag manner. It has a circle in the middle with an indistinct floral pattern.

Naigameśa

Naigameśa was the name of a much dreaded follower of Kārtikeya. A person possessed by him showed symptom of foaming, vomiting and
talking like mad man. According to tradition, Naigameśa had the head of goat but the torso of a human being. Samskrit authorities refer to Naigameśa as a male person. Terracottas, however, shows that the deity was also depicted as a female. Perhaps his worship in the form of a female was due to the tanric influence of Śakti worship.

A large number of male and female figurines have been found at various sites like Mathura, Ahichchhatra, Rajghat, Kumrahar, Vaiśālī etc. which have an animal face with goat like features and long dangling ears having either pierced holes or slit-marks. The mouth is indicated below a hooked nose by a deep cut slit. The projecting simple topknot is also pierced with one or two holes. The arms extend obliquely from the shoulders and the hands, all without details of fingers, are indicated simply by a spoon like depression. The same feature occurs in the feet. Some female figurines have been found with all the above features but the goat face is replaced by the human face. At Kumrahar (Patna), a sufficient number of terracotta image of the Naigameśa have been unearthed. Their dates vary from 100 A.D. to 500 A.D. on the basis of the stratification of the layers marked in the excavation. V.S. Agrawal has suggested that the goat-like head connects them with the god Harinaigameśa, who was invoked as the presiding deity of child-birth and was considered to be another form of Śkanda under the name of Naigameya. He identifies his female counterpart with Shasthī, the consort of Śkanda, who, as guardian goddess of child-birth, was the subject of universal worship.

Naigameśa is represented in Jaina religious art, as a male figure, either with the head of ram or antelope or goat. We have the noteworthy example of god icon in the Jaina antiquities of Mathura. In this, Naigameśa is represented as bearing a goat’s head. The god with his
various names mentioned in the Kalpasūtra, Nemināthacarita and Antagadasao. He is primarily the caption of the foot forces of India, at whose command; he transferred the embryo of Mahāvira from the body of the Brāhmani Triśalā. Hence, he acquired the power of granting the boon of child-birth. Thus we find him, in later literature connected with the procreation of children.

The goat-like head connects this type with that of the goat Harinaigameśa whose iconography is familiar by about a dozen stone specimens from Mathura. Originally he was invoked as the presiding deity of child-birth and was considered to be but another form of the god Škanda under the name Naigameśa. In the course of time he became popular among both male and female forms with a goat head and in female form with a human head. All the forms occur in Mathurā art.

The conception of the God does not seem to be wholly original as Prof. Keith has supposed. The three ideas connected with the deity, namely, the deer face, goat-face and power of procreation, were derived from the mythology of Dakṣa Prajāpatī. As Prajāpatī, he is fundamentally associated with work of creation and procreation. The Brāhmanic mythology refers to the incident in which Šiva is said to have afterwards restored him of life. According to another account a demon came out from a torn hair of Šiva in rage, who beheaded Daḵa and put a goat’s head on his neck.

Dr. Buhler rightly explained that the goat faced figure was the deity called Harinegami in the Kalpasūtra, Naigamesī in the Namināthacarita and Naigameśa in other works. According to Kalpasūtra we get the following account of this strange deity.

“When Indra became aware that Mahāvīra had taken the forms of an embryo in the Brāhmani Devānanda’s body, he paid his reverence to the
Arhat that was to be born. It then occurred to him that an Arhat ought not to be born in a low Brāhmanical family, but only in a noble royal race and that it was and always had been the duty of the reigning Indra to transfer the embryo, in case through the influence of his Karman and Arhat had descended into the body of a female of the Brāhma caste. In order to fulfil this duty Indra directed Harinegamesi, the divine commander of infantry, to transfer Mahāvīra from the body of Devānanda to Triśalā, a body of the Jaatri family of Kshatriyasa who was also child. Harinegamesi then repaired first to the Brāhmanical quarter of Rundagrama, took Mahāvīra from Devānanda, cleansing him from all impurity and carried him carefully in his folded hands to the Kshatriya quarter of the same town, there he took Triśalā embryo from her like-wise duly cleansing it and put Mahāvīra in its place. Next he returned to Devānanda and placed Triśalā’s child in her body. During these operations the two bodies and their attendants lay in deep magic sleep. Finally the deity returned to Indra abode and reported to him that his orders had been carried out”.

Dr. Buhler also quoted an interesting story from the seventh canto of the Namināthacarita which shows a connection of the story of god Naigameśa with the life of Krishna starting how the latter invoked the help of the deity to obtain for Satyabhamā, a son equal to Pradyumna. The propitiated god fulfilled this desire. Definite evidence is thus furnished by the early Jaina literature and by Kuṣana sculptures that a goat faced deity called Naigameśa was being worshipped as the presiding deity of child birth.

The goat-like head connects this type with that of the goad Harinaigameśa whose iconography is familiar by about a dozen stone specimens from Mathurā. Originally he was invoked as the presiding deity of child birth and was considered to be but another form of the god
Skanda under the name Naigameśa. In the course of time he became popular among both male and female forms with a goats head and in female form with a human head. All the forms occur in Mathurā art. Amongst the terracotta specimens too, we find three varieties existing together.

The questions of identification of these forms present a problem. The male goatheaded type is certainly that of Naigameśa or Naigameya, which was but another name of Skanda. The popularity of Skanda, Visaka and Mahāsena (possibly another name of Naigamesha) is proved by the discovery of these names on the Kuśana coins in the early centuries of the Christian era.

In the Astangabridaya by Vagbhatta we find reference to Skanda, Visaka and Naigamesha as three important Grahas equal to affecting children 58.

From the Astangabridaya reference it may be taken that Naigameśa was being worshipped as a common tutelary Graha about the Gupta period. Thus, Naigameśa was widely accepted at guardian and protector of children in the Gupta and Late Gupta periods.

A peculiar type of clay figurine, both male and female occurs at Ahichhatra in between 450 A.D. to 650 A.D. 59 Its special feature is an animal face with goat-like features and long dangling ears having either pierced holes or slit marks. Below a hooked nose the mouth is indicated by a deep cut slit. The projecting simple top knot on the head is also pierced by one of two holes. The arms extend obliquely from the shoulders and the hands all without details of fingers, are indicated simply by a spoon like depression. The same feature occurs in the feet when they are preserved (c.f., no. 126 Kumrahar excavation).
Amongst the terracottas from Ahichchhatra we find a group of figures distinguished by their long dangling ears and comprising the following four types-

1. A clay figurine of a goat-headed deity carrying a child on each shoulder which is exactly similar to the Mathurā figure.

2. A goat-headed male figure with long ears, being entirely modelled by hand. There are no details of fingers in hands and feet which have the form of a shallow spoon and the figure does not carry a child, either on shoulder or in arms.

3. A goat-headed female figure similar style (no. 2) above, in fact a female counter part of the same, but without association with a child.

4. A female figure with long dangling ears but with a human face having a vermillion dot, hair indicated on the forehead, eye-brows and eye-lids indicated by slight ridge and a face having a short round chin.

The goat-like head connects this type with that of the god Harinaigamesa, whose iconography is familiar by about a dozen stone specimens from Mathurā. Originally he was invoked as the presiding deity of child birth and was considered to be but another form of the god Skanda under the name of Naigameya.

The type of clay appears to have had a wide distribution in north India as specimens are known from such remote places as Mathurā, Ahichchhatra and Rajghat. The same type with a human face is present in many specimens from Rajghat and in a couple of specimens from Ahichchhatra. One example is illustrated by Gordon but incorrectly stated to be as old as the early Mother-Goddess figurines of the archaic style.
At Vaiśālī two female goat headed figures have been found, one is illustrated by the head and bust of a female figure with goat like face and the second is a torso of a female figure with slender waist and broad hips.

The variation of the goats head and human head in depicting the forms of the deity continued as a matter of tradition. The association of a goat with the ceremonies of childbirth became a permanent feature of a popular religion. It is mentioned in the Kadambari as part of the birth ceremonies of Prince Candrapida when a grown up goat was brought and tied at the door of the sutikāgriha at the time of the Shaṣṭhipujā. The same practice prevailed up to our own times.

Peculiar types of Naigameśā figurine from Kumrahar (4332), goat like features as like face having two surfaces slant from each ear to the nose. They meet in a vertical ridge from head to mouth. Short and broad chin, no eyes, ears consists of enormous lobes only with long rectangular slits (not perforated), Flat, trapezoidal head-wear, perforated in centre by hole. Very broad neck, round and high seated breasts modelled in one with flat body. Arm-stumps are held laterally downwards with an arched outline. They end flat and with a shallow cup like depression. The rest of the body is suggested flat surface, broad at the hips.

The variation of the goats head and human head in depicting the forms of the deity continued as a matter of tradition. The association of a goat with the ceremonies of child-birth became a prominent feature of a popular religion. It is mentioned in the ‘Kadambari’ as the part of the birth ceremonies of prince Chandrapida when a grown up goat was brought and tied at the door of the Sutikāgriha at the time of Sṭha thi-pujā. The same practice prevailed up to our own time.
The Nāgas and the Nāgis had been worshipped in the Indian religious thought from the time immemorial. They were associated with several deities, the most important of them had been Śiva, who is supposed to have snake ornaments over his body, so much so that he, in the Purānas, has been conceived to have consumed the poison, that emerged out of the churning of the ocean. Besides that, there had been a separate snake cult in ancient India, with considerable following. Before the question of the iconographic details is discussed, it would be necessary to say a few words about the cult itself. The practice of adoration of the serpent is quite primitive in India and to some extent. It is associated with the Vedic ideology, which could be the result of the culture contacts of the Āryans and the earlier settlers of India. Various snakes are found mentioned in the Vedic literature and they are also associated sometimes with Gandharvas, Apsarās, Yaksas and the Manasā. Various snake-gods are mentioned by name in the Atharaveda in different context. Dhatavastra is one name of a Nāgarajā who is mentioned in later Brāhmanical and Buddhist text. He the best of the Nāgas according to the Mahābhārata passage (IV.2, 17) and later confusion between the two meanings of the word Nāga seems to be present in another statement in the same passage that Airāvata is the best among elephants).

An epic also speaks about the divine origin of the Nāgas. The Chief of Nāgas is the “Sesha Nāga” which dwells in the northern region and which sustains the entire weight of the earth. The Viṣṇudharmottara (book III, ch. 65, verse2-8) describe Ananta Nāga, who is four armed, endowed with many hoods with the beautiful earth goddess standing over the central hood, in the right hand of the god are to be placed pestle and...
lotus, while the left hand should hold a plough share and a conch shell. The 17th century text of Śilpratna characterises the iconography of the Nāgas in two verses which lay down that “the Nāgas have to be human in shape, from the navel upwards, their lower part being serpentine in form; they have encircling hoods on their heads; the hoods may be one, three, five, seven, or nine; they should have two tongues and should hold a sword and a shield in their two hands”.

Two earliest figures of Nāgarajas are found in the Bharhut railings. Of these, the Elāpatra on the Prasenjit pillar is found in the scene of the Nāga chief’s meeting the Buddha is quite interesting. The five hooded Nāgaraja is in his natural form with a damsel standing on his middle hood. Then in the right corner, he is shown advancing towards the left with the hands held in namaskāra-mudrā; accompanied by his queen and a daughter. In the left corner, he alone is showing kneeling down and paying homage to the Buddha symbolised by the Bodhi tree with a Vajrāsana beneath it. Similar representations of the said Nāga are found elsewhere as well.

Though the representation of the Nāgas is quite common in the early sculptural art of the country, but their representations in terracotta art are very far lesser in number. In Bihar the Nāga cult is of much antiquity. Its worship is traced from the pre-historic period down to the present times. From Chirand, we have female figurine from Chalcholithic period which has been identified as mother goddess. As a matter of fact, from the Mauryan times down to a very later age, the traces of the Nāga cult in Bihar have been brought to light by archaeological findings. In the year 1935-36 ‘Excavation at Rajgir’ round the main structure at the Maniyar Math brought to light two walled enclousers. The spout mostly has got the design of serpent. Such pots have long necks with round or flat base. These potteries which have got numerous spouts are not found anywhere else in
India. These might have been used in connection with the snake worship. The fact of such potteries are only found in Bihar, suggests a wide prevalence of the Nāga cult at this place. There are numerous terracotta serpents, which suggests that they were meant for worship.

At Pātaliputra also some terracotta Nāga and Nāgis figurines have been discovered. On the basis of the depth in which the Nāgis terracotta figurines have been found, we may suggest that the Nāga cult at Pātaliputra was prevalent right from the Mauryan period down to very later times. A figure of Nāgis resembling was discovered from Pātaliputra (Patna) (8929) which dates back to Mauryan period. The figurine shows with a serpent head, streaked horizontally with lines impressed and eyes pierced. Breast shows as rims around circular plaques. Long waist with two parallel horizontal lines and diagonal streaks were leading to circular marks of navel. Broad hips with horizontal lines, short fin-shaped three dimensional leg strumps and feet. Terracotta figurine are found from Bulandibagh (4171) is the same feature as the terracotta found from Pātaliputra.

Gayā and Bodhgayā have provided images of a female with a crown of coiled snake canopied by a seven hooded snake and of Kulika Nāgarāja respectively. Lord Buddha is said to have crossed the Ganges, on his way from Sravasti to Rajgriha on the hoods of the Nāgas. All these facts point out that snakes were taken to be sacred and that they possessed immense strength due to which they were feared and worshipped. Probably they were regarded as the protecting deity because they were sometimes seen to adorn the crown.

Most of the Nāga and the Nāginī figures of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods are shown in the role of accessories to the higher cult gods, especially Viṣṇu. Śeṣa a Nāga or his consort in the Varāha reliefs are shown however, according to the conventional hybrid form their upper part
being human and lower, serpentine. But when shown singly, the Nāga appears as a human being with snake hoods attached behind his head.

At Kauśambī there are several slate pieces showing the serpent Goddess or Manasādevī as Dr. Kramrisch calls them. These have either heads of a bird or a serpent, long necks thin waists, broad hips and are further shown without arms. The legs look like stands to give support to the figurine. The body is marked by cross designs eyes and breasts are shown by punched ringlets of clay. At Kauśambī only two serpent hoods have been recovered.

A terracotta head of a Nāginī has been discovered from Pāṭliputra which probably belongs to the Mauryan period. There is also an image of Nāga goddess from Nalanda which is dateable in the 7th century A.D. A stone sculpture depicting the Nāga-Rājā Muchhalinda protecting Lord Buddha has been found at Bodh-Gayā. At Buxar also, a few Nāga terracotta figurines have been found. The Nāga here is canopied by five hooded serpents.

Thus the snake worship in Bihar was very deep rooted during the Śunga-Kuṣana period. Even nowadays the snake worship is continuing in Bihar. There is one particular day for the snake worship ‘Nāga-Paṁchamī’.

**Buddhism**

Though the Buddhist literature holds the Buddha in high esteem and the supreme ‘lord of the universe’, the Hindu pantheon also considers him to one of the incarnation of Visnu, which has been supported by several of the Purānas and other texts. The stage of which the Buddha has been admitted into the Brahmanical fold would be difficult to explain, but nevertheless he was present as an incarnation of Visnu, in Visnu, Matsya and other Purānas. He rose over the Indian historic and religious horizon by
about the sixth century B.C. It was, however, Aśoka, who patronised the Buddha and carried his message, not only in the entire length and breadth of the country but also exported it to the country beyond the Indian frontiers, like Sri Lanka. But in spite of the height of the reverence in which the Buddha was held by Aśoka, he failed to introduce the worship of the images of the Buddha, which was adopted at much later a date, because by 2nd and 1st century B.C. his image worship was absent. The railing of the Bharhut and Sanchi Stupās display the adoration of the Buddha in the form of a Bodhi tree, an empty throne or an empty pedestal or his foot prints. The image worship of the Buddha possibly started during Kushāna period as would be evidence from the stone images found relating to that period from Gandhara, Mathurā and other sites, which were shown clad in a typical dress of the Buddhist panteon.

Magadha can very legitimately claim to be the home of Buddhism. It was in Bodh-Gayā that Siddartha attained enlightenment and became the Buddha and, the people of the kingdom of Magadha helped actively in the propagation of Buddhism in the early period. In Bihar many terracottas and plaques representing religious figures depict Buddha, Bodhisatava and other minor Buddhist divinities in various postures and displaying various attitudes.

Buddhism is a religion of kindness, humanity and equality. Another special feature was that Buddhism denounced all claims to superiority on the ground of birth as the Brāhmanas claimed. It denounced all social distinctions between man and man and declared that it was Karma, the action of man that determined the eminence or lowness of an individual.

Another feature of great sociological significance in Buddhism was the fact that it threw open doors of organised religious life to women and
men alike. It is said that the Buddha was at first unwilling to admit women into the religious organisation of the Sangha.\footnote{80}

A few decades after the Mahāparinirvāṇa of the Buddha there arose a serious conflict among his followers as to the correct interpretation of his rules of discipline indispensable to a monk. This led to the formation of the two divisions of one orthodox and the other radicalist, named sthavira and Mahāsamghika respectively. By the beginning of christen era, Buddhism had permanently split up into two main broad divisions known as Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. Later on Mahāyāna helped the development of Vajrayana and Tantric forms of worship. We find Hinayāna, Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhism all prospering in Bihar, with varying fortunes in different periods.

The Mahāyāna form of Buddhism, perhaps under the influence of non-Aryan or aboriginal popular cults in the lower strata of society, came to assume a darker and debased form of tantrism. The ideals of Hinayāna and Mahāyāna are clearly described by Asanga in his “Matryāna-Sūtralankara”. Both the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna worshipped stupas. Large numbers of Votive stūpas have been found in Nalanda and in some seals also there are representations of stupas\footnote{81}. We have a unique inscription on the pedestal of an image which shows that Kasyapa, a native of Rājagrha and a close companion of the Buddha was deified and worshipped\footnote{82}.

When Fa-hien came here he found at Vaiśāli a double galleried vihar and the monastery\footnote{83} built by Amrapali, in a good condition. At Pātaliputra the imperial city of the Gupta rulers, he had seen two beautiful monasteries belonging both to Hinayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism respectively. He describes these monasteries as the centres of advanced learning\footnote{84}. He also describes the grand procession of the image of the Buddha which was taken out in the city of Pātaliputra.
The Hinayānist believes in the Buddhist Trial and reverse and worships it in the order of Buddha, dharma and Sangha but the Mahāyānist changes the order into dharma, Buddha and Sangha\textsuperscript{85}. Thus gradually the Mahāyānist drifted farther and farther away from the simple teaching of the Buddha and developed a form of religion based intensively on devotion and ritualism.

The Chinese pilgrim, Yuan-chwang writes about the different schools of Buddhism, which became famous for the propagation and defence of some peculiar doctrine\textsuperscript{86}.

Thus from the general survey of the history of Buddhism during the period under review, we find that the Buddhism of this period was neither the ancient ethical Hinayāna nor the philosophical Mahāyāna, but a new creed called Tantrayāna with ritual and magical innotations which in due course of time were absorbed into Hinduism. The introduction of Tantra and the worship of a large number of gods and goddesses in this new form of Buddhism narrowed down the gulf between Buddhism and Hinduism.

Many Buddhist terracotta figurines and plaques were discovered at Antichak, Bodh-Gayā, Dharawat and Patna. At Antichak Buddha in one of the Plaques, has been represented as seated in Vajrāsana in bhumisparsa mudra. A circular halo behind his head is clearly noticeable\textsuperscript{87}.

Besides representing the Buddha, the Plaques, amongst the Buddhist divinities also depict the Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Manjusri and the future Buddha Maitreya. Another Buddhist male god who figures on one of the terracotta plaques from Antichak is Jambhala, the Buddhist counterpart of the Brāhmanical Kubera the god of wealth who had greater following and received worship in various forms.

Among the Buddhist goddesses, Tārā and Mārichī have been found to have been represented on the terracotta plaques from Antichak\textsuperscript{88}.
The large sized clay figurines of the Bodhisattvas discovered from Antichak deserve special notice and in all probability they belong to this period. In one of the plaques found from Antichak, Avalokitesvara Padmapānī has been shown standing gracefully in a slightly dvibhaṅga pose with his left arm brought near the chest and holding the stalk of a fully blossomed lotus by it, the latter being carved to the proper left of the deity’s head. The right arm of the deity is broken, but the trace left on the plaque suggests it to have been stretched down in the varada pose.

The terracotta plaques found from Dharawat show that they were fashioned mainly for religious purpose or for votive offerings. They depict figures of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas and some of them are even inscribed showing that they definitely belong to this period. Cunningham saw a very fine image of life sized statue of Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara lying outside and now worshipped as Bhairva. Near the clay stupa were found two interesting seals. Of them a larger one contained a representation of a stupa with an inscription below, reading “Tathagatasya Buddhasya”. The other smaller seal is almost similar but the words of the inscription on it are reversed and read only ‘Buddha’. Nine unburnt clay seals, made from the same stamp, were found along with a broken Buddha figure.

At Bodh-Gayā many Buddha figurines have been found. In one figure, a head of Buddha in three lobed niche from the sikhara above issue branches and leaves of Bodhi-tree, have been discovered. One of the terracotta plaques depicts the temple of Bodh-Gayā which indicates that the artists gave equal importance of Buddhism.

Discovered Buddhist figure have also been, at Antichak, the supposed site of the Buddhist establishment of Vikramaśīlā, 13 kilometres north of Colgong railways station. The village and its neighbourhood have very extensive mounds covering an area of not less than 10 square
kilometres. In one of the mound, which revealed three structural phases, the middle phase yielded a terracotta votive stūpa\textsuperscript{94} bearing an inscription, Sri Dharmadhara......Devasya, in the late Pāla script which suggests that there might have been some sort of a monastic establishment at the site.

One beautiful round terracotta plaque\textsuperscript{95} (4419) is found from Kumrahar which is related to Buddhism. The obverse shows, in the centre, a five storied rectangular temple crowned by a stupa, complete with chhatrāwali. The storeys are marked by railing and gavāksha motives. A rectangular railing surrounded the shrine. In front of this railing is a wall and this opens with a gate, the railing pattern above stops short or either side of it. On the left proper in a high column with an elephant is standing on his capital. The gap in the railing gives room for part of the Kharoshthī inscription which is very faint at this place while it is distinct on the right proper. A broad path, flanked on either side by a railing, leads to the wide arch opening in the ground floor of the shrine in which a large image of the Buddha, with the right hand in abhayamudrā.

Between the two lateral railings are diminutive figures of two elephants and in the centre, a tiny human figure, all of them in movement, can be discerned. Similar small figures of elephants etc. are to be seen amongst the delicate trees inside the rampart and the railing, and also outside the rampart, and approaching the gate.

Within the main railing two standing figures of Buddha are conspicuous. They have ovaled head, which are crowned by a globular ushnīsha, are fully covered by monk’s robes. To the right of the standing Buddha on the left proper a diminutive elephant is clearly visible paralleled with the sloping shape of the railing. This elephant is shown lowering its head, as it being subdued by the Buddha. Similarly the standing Buddha figures on the right proper is shown with two small figures to his left. They
are possibly, the robbers. With their bodies, completely covered by their robes, and their large avoid heads, these Buddha figures can’t be compared with any type of Buddha image at the time in India. The movements of the hands are too indistinct for identification. All around the temple precincts the ground of the plaque appears covered by a delicate tracery of many trees with their leaves and branches. Houses or shrines of various sizes are frequent, especially in their lower part of the plaque. There is also one two storied building within the temple wall, on the extreme left corner. None of these building, including the gate to this grove can be compared with representation on Indian reliefs, the Toranas from Bharhut, Sanchi, and the frequent representation of such Toranas in Mathurā reliefs on in the Vengī school. The type of gates the modes of showing the shrines are familiar in sculptured versions from China.

In the grove, a part from these buildings occur horizontal devices. One is clear, a sort of chankrama, where the walking Buddha is approached by two small human figurines. Another is seen just above it to the right. There, however, only the bust of the Buddha is to be seen above the horizontal device. Similar in outline and proportion to this shape are the many other shapes, hitherto considered to be stupa. Some of them, for instance, the one between the temple and the chankrama are surrounded by a leafy arch made of the adjacent trees. This is however, also the case with regard to the Śiraśchakra of the Buddha on the chankrama are large motive to the right and the level with the crowing stupa is indistinct and damaged and its counterpart on the left is altogether broken off. Two pairs of extra ordinarily mobile flying Devatās, with high crest on their heads approach the stupa.

The inscription in Kharoshthī as read by Sten Konow (J.B.O.R.S., vol., XII, 126 pp. 179-182)
The back (reverse) has in the centre a flat hook (for passing a cord through it). Two irregular shapes raised near the edge, like small legs on the convex and roughly finished surface.

**Jainism**

The terracotta figurine in Jainism has been quite rare, mainly for the reason that Jaina Śilpaśāstras hardly recognise the clay as the mode of using of the terracotta for the votive purpose. Their emphasis has been in the use of stone, bronze etc. for expressing their devotional feelings, which are found throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Bihar has played a very great role in the history of Jainism. The last Tirthankara, or the path-finder of Jainism Vardhamana, also called Mahāvira, was born on the soil of Bihar. His father was Sidhartha, the Nathvanshi Kshatriya chief of Kundalpur in Videha, which stands now identified with Kundalpur in Vaiśālī district. Vardhamana Mahāvira led a domestic life till his thirteenth year as Brahamachārī. Then he took Dikshā and practised sanyāsa for 12 year. He obtained Kaivalya Jñāna, or omniscience, at the age of 42.

He obtained Kaivalya Jñāna, or omniscience, at the age of 42. He continued in his Kaivalya Jnana for another 30 years and obtained Nirvāna at the age of 72 years. After obtaining Kaivalya Jnana, Mahāvira started propagating the creed of Jainism. The followers were known as the Jains. After spending about 30 years in propagating the Jain religion, Mahāvira obtained Nirvana at Pawapuri.

According to the older historians, particularly of the western school, the Jainism arose out of Buddhism or that it was founded by Mahāvira, who was a contemporary of Buddha. Both of these ideas have been proved
to be wrong by the modern researches of western and Indian scholars. The original Jainism can be traced back to the vedic age\textsuperscript{97}. The Yajurveda men mention the name of three Tirthankaras, Rishabha, Ajitanatha and Aristanemi. According to the Bhagavata Purana, Rishabha was the founder of Jainism. Even the Jains believe that their system had previously been proclaimed through countless ages by each one of a succession of great teachers\textsuperscript{98}. In the beginning of the historical period, Jains had their strong hold in Bihar. Parshvanatha, the 23 Tirthankara, preached the Jain religion and got Nirvana at Parshvanatha Hill (in the Hazaribagh district) as it is traditionally known\textsuperscript{99}. The last Tirthankara of Jainism was Mahavira who was born in Vaisali and died in village Pawa in Patna district.

The rock-cut caves on the Barabar hill bear Mauryan inscription which mentions that these caves were excavated for the ajivikas (i.e. the Jain monks) during the time of Dasaratha, the grandson of Asoka. Most of the important caves of Orissa, Ananta, Rani and Ganesa Gumphas were excavated in 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C. The Ananta Gumpha contains symbols like Trisula and Svastika on its back wall. Moreover, the countryard of the cave possesses images of many Jain deities and saints\textsuperscript{100}. The Rani Gumpha is elaborately decorated with scenes of human activities some of which may represent Jain religious festivals\textsuperscript{101}. These facts would show that image worship was popular among the Jainas, several centuries earlier than the Christian era.

Jain’s built stupas like the Buddhists and the earliest example of this was found at Mathura, known as the Kankali Tila. Mathura was a very important seat of the Jainas. The Jainas were primarily founder worshippers, but their mythology includes besides the 24 Tirthankaras a number of other deities. One of the most important deity of this class is Naigameśa. Naigameśa is represented on the obverse of a fragment of a
Jaina sculpture discovered at Mathura. The deity (Naigameśa) is a goat-headed one, seated on a low seat in an easy attitude. The archaeological excavations there have revealed the remains of a Jaina stupa, temples and sculptures ranging from 2\(^{nd}\) century B.C. to 3\(^{rd}\) century A.D. The Tirthankara image are purely of Indian conceptions and do not betray any foreign influence. One of the striking features of the Jaina figures is their nudity which distinguished them from Buddha and Buddhist images. Nudity however is true only of the Digambara images, whereas the Svetambaras cloth their figures.

Still earlier sites of Jaina stūpas, chaityas or temples were discovered near about Patna itself at Lohanipur, Kumrahar and Bulandibagh. The polish of the bricks and the images, which came to light at these sites easily, enabled scholars to recognise them as belonging to the Mauryan age. The broken Jaina image from Lohanipur, now deposited in the Patna Museum bears testimony to this fact. This figure resembles very much with a broken statue discovered at Harappa which is identified as the figure of a Jain Tirthankara in Kayotasarga mudra. There are other figures on the Indus Valley seals either in the sitting or free standing postures which also resemble with the Jain images in Dhyana Mudrā or Kāyotsarga.

An image of Mahāvira (in block basalt stone) of the Pāla period was discovered at Vaiśalī, which is now kept in a modern temple situated to the west of Vaiśalī-garh near tank. This image is now worshipped in the name of Jainendra by the Jainas. Moreover, innumerable clay sealings and seal-impressions of more than 120 verieties, mostly of unbacked clay were found by Bloch, Spooner and other in course of excavations at the site. But no definite evidence of Jaina antiquities can be ascertained on the basis of these huge finds. Jayamangalagarh is popularly believed to have been an ancient seat of the Jainas, though we have no definite corroborative
evidence, literary or archaeological to support or reject this traditional view. The Mauryan ruler, Samprati, is also held by tradition as a great patron of the Jainas and builder of numerous Jaina temples but unfortunately no remains are existent today.

A few Jaina antiquities have been found in Bhagalpur district. Mandara Hill is supposed to be one of the sacred places of the Jainas. On the top of the Hill is a great object of veneration for the Jaina community. A few other Jaina relics have also been found on the top of the Hill.

Karmagarh hill near Bhagalpur also contains numerous ancient Jain relics. We have a reference to a Jain Vihara to the north of the ancient fort. Among the images which have been found in Bihar, the most common are those of Riṣabhadeva, Parśvanātha, Mahāvīra and Śāntinātha who are identified by their symbolic marks. For example, Riṣabhadeva is always associated with bull where as Parśvanātha is shown sitting under the canopy of a snake hood and Mahāvīras symbol of identification is a lion and a wheel.

Thus it is found that, through Jainism was not patronised by any ruling dynasty, it was not altogether dead in its place of origin, viz., Bihar. People had respect for this religion and is still a living faith in India. Jain image discovered in the district of Singhbum, Manbhum, Patna and Shahabad point out that Jainism continued to have adherents in different parts in Bihar.

Thus we have numerous terracotta seals from Vaiśalī which were definitely associated with the Jain religion. As a matter of fact there are very few evidences in terracottas of the Jain images but the symbols like Svastika and pair of fish in a tank on some of the seals from Basārh may prove their association with the Jain religion. Further, the terracotta torso of a male figure from Bulandigarh closely resembling with the Lohanipur
torso on the one hand and Harappa torso on the other may be regarded as a torso of a Jain Tirthankara in in Kayotasarga mudra. Besides, there are large numbers of nude terracotta figurines from different sites of Bihar which sometimes being doubt in the mind to their association with the Jain religion. A standing terracotta male figurine found from Basārh belongs to the Mauryan period. Its head, left lower arm legs from a little below the knees are lost. It is a nude figure. It wears a dog-collared necklace and a belt round the waist. It should however, be pointed out that this figure bears some resemblance to image of Jain Tirthankars in their nudity. But in the absence of the corroborative evidences we are not on sure grounds that they actually belonged to the Jain sect. However, we may infer on the basis of the above evidence that the terracottas of Bihar throw some light, if not adequate on the popularity of Jain religion in ancient times.

Still earlier sites of Jaina stūpas, chaityas or temples were discovered near about Patna itself at Lohanipur, Kumrahar and Bulandibagh. The polish of the bricks and the images, which came to light at these sites easily, enabled scholars to recognise them as belonging to the Mauryan age. The broken Jaina image from Lohanipur now preserved in the Patna Museum bears testimony on this fact.

References:-

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14. Cf-ASR, 1911-12, pl.XXIII, 40.

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16. Museum of the Dept. Of *AIH & ARCH*, P.U. pl. II, Fig. 4.

17. *Vaiśāli Excavation*; p. 50-51, Pl. XII, Fig. A-B.


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32. Bhavishya Purana, CXXIII, 55-60 and 77-81.
34. Patna Museum, Arch No.8570 Pl. VII, Fig, 3.
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42. Patna Museum, Arch No.9763.
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44. Ibid., Arch No. 6015.
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49. Ancient India, No. 4, p.135.
51. The Jaina Stūpa and other antiquities of Mathura by V.A. smith, Pl. XVIII.
52. Coomarswamy, Early Indian Terracotta, Pl. XII Fig. 7.
53. *Indian methology*, A.B. Keith.
60. *Patna Museum*, Arch No. 4332. Pl. XIII, Fig. 1.
61. Coomaraswamy, *Early Indian Terracotta*, pl. XII, Fig. 7.
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87. *J.B.R.S.* Bhagwant Sahai-1971, Fig. No. 2 p. 1 XXV, Fig. 2.

88. *J.B.R.S.* Bhagwant Sahai-1971, Fig. No. 8.

89. The figure is fastened round a stone pillar in Antichak.


91. These terracottas are in the Patna museum. Pl. XXIV, Fig. 1.


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