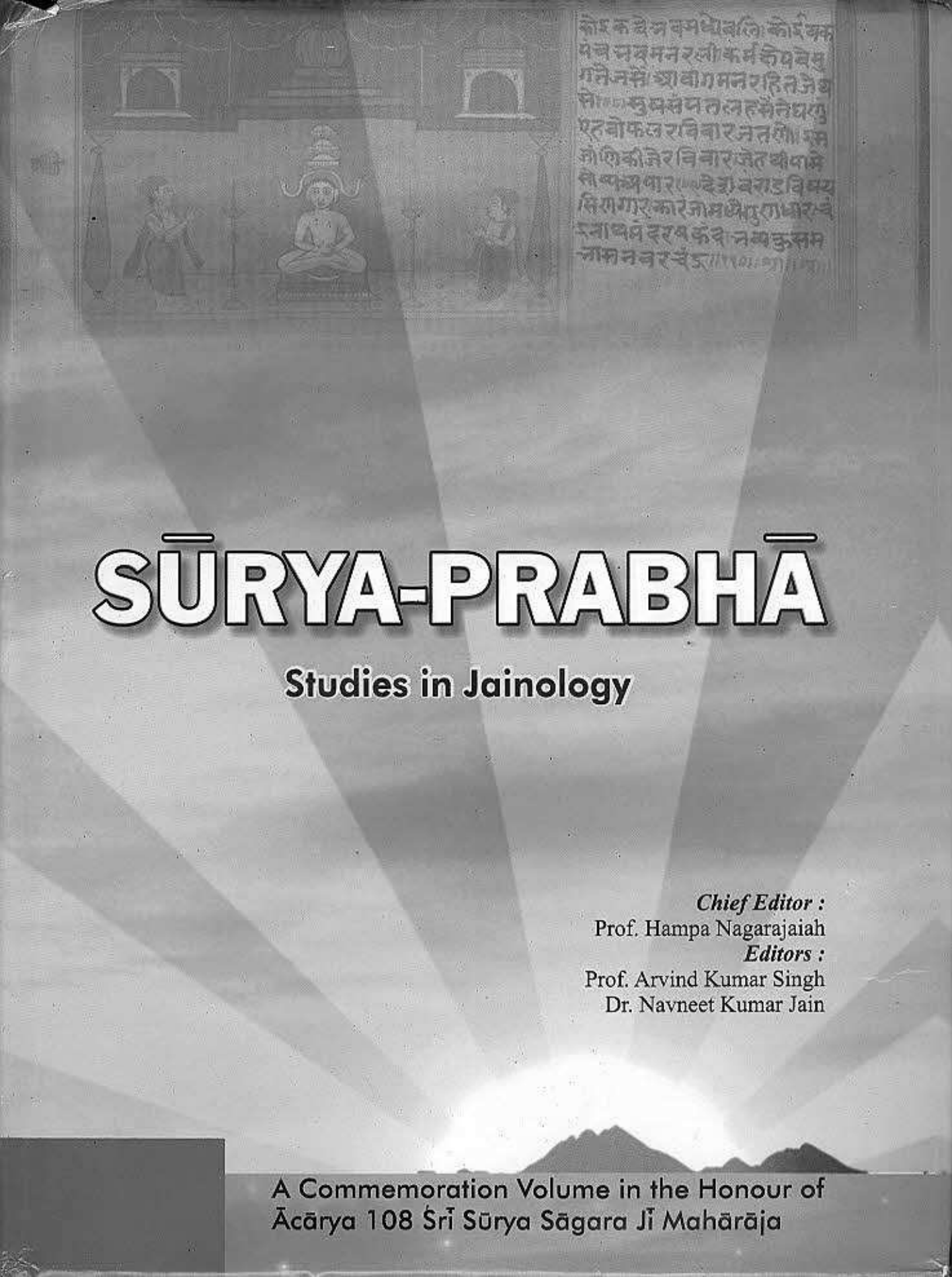




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ASPECTS OF JAINOLOGY IN RELATION TO MATHURA

Vinay Kumar Gupta

Mathura As Mentioned In Vividhatirthakalpa

Mathura enjoyed the rare distinction of being a prominent place in the history of all three major sects of ancient India. In the Jaina literary texts, Mathura has mentioned at many instances. One important fact in the history of Jaina literary texts is that, for the most part, the Jaina canon available to us, today, follows the texts of the Mathura council¹ headed by Ārya Skandila in the fourth quarter of fourth century AD. Mathura was the seat of the last *Arhat Kevalin* Jambuswami. Among all Jaina texts "*Vividhatīrthakalpa*" composed during 1307-40 AD by Jinaprabhasuri (an scholar during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq) provides us a detailed account of Mathura in it's chapter "*MathuraPuri Kalpa*"². The important references, which can be derived from it, are - Mathura was sacred because of 7th and 23rd Tirthankaras - Supārśvanātha and Pārśvanātha respectively. There was a stūpa built by some divine interference, of Supārśvanātha at a place Bhūtaramana Udyāna³, the presiding deity of this place was Naravāhanā Kuberādevi⁴. The iconographic features of Supārśva resembled with Buddha and Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu as well as with Śiva up to some extent and that's why a conflict arose among various communities about the ownership of the stūpa, which was finally decided in favour of Supārśvanātha. This stūpa was made of gold and studded with jewels, with images of *devas* (gods) surrounding it. Equipped with a *torāṇa* and a *dhvaja*, it was adorned with three *mekhalās* (railed-ways), each flanked by images and topped by a triple

chhatra. The central image of the stūpa was that of Supārśvanātha. twenty-third Tirthankara Pārśvanātha had arrived at the place in his Kaivalya stage and after that stūpa became a place of worship of Pārśvanātha too, in the form of a sculpture. Śrī Bappībhaddi Sūri in 826 V. S. placed here, an image of Mahāvīra for worship⁵.

Besides, here were five sthalas-Arka Sthala, Vira Sthala, Padma Sthala, Kuśa Sthala, Mahā Sthala and twelve vanas- Lohajanghavana⁶, Madhuvana⁷, Bilvavana⁸, Tālavana⁹, Kumudavana¹⁰, Vrnadavana, Bhāndīrvana¹¹, Khādirvana¹², Kamikavana¹³, Kolavana¹⁴, Bahulavana¹⁵, Mahāvana¹⁶. Here, were five laukika tīrthas-Vishrantika, Asikunda, Vaikuntha, Kalinjar and Chakratirtha.¹

The author also adds that the Śrāmāna Jinabhadraśāni, obtained the deteriorated manuscript of Mahānīshithasūtra and repaired the damaged folios, and that the God Śakra, went to Bhūtagrha¹⁸, near Mathura, for the elucidation of the nigoda by the Ārya Raksitsūri whose successors, Vatsapūsyamitra, Ghr̥tapūsyamitra and Durbalikapūsyamitra, also visited Mathura. The description of Vividhatīrthakalpa as well as the excavated material from Kankālī Tīlā clearly proves the *Devanirmita Thūpe* to be identical with the one mentioned in Jaina literature on more than one occasion.¹⁹ This stūpa was first dedicated to Supārśvanātha and, later on, the due importance was provided to Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra at the site. It also appears that there existed various Udyānas in ancient times, where a number of religious shrines were existed. This is corroborated by the nature of "Bhūtaramana Udyāna", which can be identified with the present day's Bhuteśvar-Kankālī area of Mathura. Undoubtedly, there existed Jaina as well as Buddhist stūpas, as various archaeological findings, like sculptures, railing-pillars etc. indicate. The Brāhmanical association is still reflected in the continuing tradition at Bhuteśvara Mahādeva temple, one of the most revered Śiva temple at South-West corner of ancient Mathura.²⁰

Jaina Mythology, it's association with History and Mathura

What is most important in considering the historicity and imaginary nature of Tirthankaras is the fact that prior to Pārśvanātha (c. 8th century BC), the proto-historic period is not well known to us. Although, there might be some historic facts in Jaina mythology prior to Pārśvanātha, it is difficult to prove. But there are certain evidences, which indicate towards the co-existence of some of the characters mentioned in Jaina and Brāhmanical texts. They might have drawn inspiration from a common source. The first Tirthankara Rṣabhanātha's similarities with Śiva are well known. Vedic *Vatarasana* (nude) sage *Vrsabha* is sometimes identified with *Rṣabha* by some scholars. One very important mention of the characters of Rṣabha and MahāPārśva is found in Yuddhakānda of Rāmāyana²¹, although, their Jaina association is not clear. But more important is the fact that 21st Tirthankara Nemi onwards all the three Tirthankaras have some mythological association with Brāhmanism and some simple references indicating their historical character.

Nimi as a Mahātmā Ikṣvāku vāmśī ruler has been mentioned in Uttarakanda of Vālmīki Rāmāyana.²² That is in essence related with the theme of *Kṣtriyas* trying to equilibrate the power of Brāhmanas (here sage Vasiṣṭha). The character of Jaina Tirthankara revolutionising the practice of existing faith is slightly akin to it. Hence, Rāmāyana's Nimi slightly does not appear to be out of context of Jainism.

Legend of Ariṣṭanemi and Identification of Ariṣṭapur

The next Jina, Ariṣṭanemi is much more important in such mythological associations. In Jaina tradition, Nemi is termed as the cousin of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and these three are shown in sculptural representation from 1st century AD onwards. It means, by that time this association was very well popular in Jaina tradition. Ariṣṭanemi shares the same dynastic traits as Kṛṣṇa i. e. he was born to parents, one belonging to Sūrya vāmśa and the other to Candra vāmśa. In the life saga of Ariṣṭanemi, he is also said to have migrated from *Saurapura* to Gujarat, like the other members of Yādava clan. This often-made reference of such migration certainly indicates to some historical event resulting in such a migration much before the Mahājanapada period. The birthplace of Ariṣṭanemi is said to be *Soriyanagar* or *Saurapura*.²³ M. A. Dhaky has written that Nemi, supposed in Jaina tradition to have been born in *Saurapura* in Kusāvarta, adjacent to Surasena province, where Mathura is located, naturally got associated with *Dvaravati-Raivataka* setting.²⁴ It is generally identified by Mathura, but U. P. Shah has tried to prove that *Saurapura* was different from Mathura. I would like to put some new suggestions about the identification of *Saurapura*. In the local Braj tradition, a small town Aringa in between Mathura and Govardhan, is said to be the place of the great demon Ariṣṭasura, who was killed near Radhakunḍa by child Kṛṣṇa. To me, this Ariṣṭasura seems to be a later deviation of Ariṣṭanemi, who had deviated from the orthodox sect. The town of Aringa has an extensive mound of about 600 m x 500 m x 12 m under government protection and from here in addition to well known P. G. W. times, some O. C. P. and late Harappan finds have also been reported. So this takes back the antiquity of the site prior to 15th century BC. A number of sculptural remains ranging between Kuśāṇa period and medieval times have been found from here and in addition to Hindu pantheon, some of them might be belonging to the followers of Jaina religion. I am of the opinion that by the name of Saura vāmśa or a great warrior in *Yadu* clan, the whole region around Mathura was known as Saurasena Janapada and *Saurapura* was the place where he was born or from where he ruled for some time. After the popularity of Ariṣṭanemi or his legend later on, this *Saurapura* started to be known as *Ariṣṭapura*, which by the time changed into *Anhilapura* and now the present day form Aringa. After the famous migration of *Yadu* clan from here, a new city in Gujarat also started to be called as *Ariṣṭapura* or *Anhilwada*. Besides, a popular Jaina place Mangraul in Gujarat also indicates towards this migration, because in Braj region most of the places are known in this way, like Mangalpur changed to Mangraul. A number of such names in Braj, like Mangrauli, Tarauli, Ganthauli, Gangrauli, Kagaraul, Harnaul etc. are examples of this.

Pāṇini in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* has mentioned a city by the name of *Ariṣṭapura*.²⁵ Vasudeva Saran Agrawala tried to identify it with a city by this name in the Buddhist literature, which lied in the *Sibi Janapada*.²⁶ I think that this *Ariṣṭapura* might be the one in *Sūrasena Janapada*, which played an important role in trade activities and was somehow associated with Indian mythology.

Relation of Pārśvanātha with Braj

The 23rd Tirthankara Pārśvanātha is also associated with Mathura by the fact that his iconography matches a lot with Balarāma, an incarnation of Śeṣa, the legends and iconography of whom originated from Mathura. Besides, *Nāga* cult was well associated with Mathura and Pārśvanātha is also associated with it in the form of *Nāga Dharanendra*. The stūpa at Kankālī Tilā was earlier dedicated to Supārśvanātha and, later on, to Pārśvanātha as the Jaina literature suggests it. Other references locate a park by the name of Bhamdīravademsia (*Bhāndīravatamsaka*) visited by Pārśvanātha at Mathura.²⁷ Here, too, was the shrine of the yaksa, Sudamśana, to which people made pilgrimage. This reference indicates towards two important points- one is the thriving cult of local deities and second is the location and the ancient route, which Pārśvanātha followed. This yaksa has been identified as yaksa Sudarśana. I would not hesitate reading it Sudamśana, which mean *well hooded one or a great serpent*. Whatever might have been the perfect reading, there is no denying that at Mathura, especially in this area near Bhāndira Udyāna, there were ancient local cults of yaksa and Nāga in vogue, which, later on, played an important role in the formation and propagation of Indian religions. I have identified this Bhāndira vana or Udyāna by the same name, popular in Braj traditions. It is located about 25 kms. from Mathura along river Yamunā, near Mānt (Mat). This *Bhāndiravana* with its village name—*Chhanhri* is regarded as the place of their origin by a number of north Indian Brāhmanas (Bhārdwaj, Tiwāri etc.). This site lies on one of the ancient trade routes between Mathura and Sravastī (Sahet-Mahet). Before entering ancient Koil country (Aligarh district), it passed through Mathura, Isapur, Ghosana, Raya, Barnauli ki Dhāi, Mant, Bhandirvana, Bhadravana, Tentigaon, Ogaha, Mirpur, Naujheel etc., most of which are pre-Mauryan sites except two. The antiquity of Bhandirvana and Mant sites dates back to Kuśāṇa times at least. The nearby *Bhadravana* site along Yamunā dates back to P. G. W. culture times (10th century BC). At Bhandirvana, I observed few sculptural remains of a 9th–10th century temple, which seem to be of Vaisnava cult, but their Jaina link (Svetambara) can not be out rightly rejected. When considering about Bhāndira Udyāna, we should also keep in mind the fact that it served as a garden for rest and enjoyment on the highway and the settlement near it should be at a distance of few hundred metres from it as in the case of Bhadravana and Mant sites.

The last 24th Tirthankara Mahāvīra is also said to have arrived at Mathura during the reign of king Sridamana²⁸. He is also said to have been born at Mathura in his previous birth.

New Jaina Finds In Braj Region

During my explorations in the whole region, I found some new sites belonging to Jaina religion. One of these is already mentioned site of Aring from where one of the sculptures seems to be belonged to this faith.

Let us first have a look at the various places in and around Mathura, where any kind of Jaina remains have been found earlier. The first and foremost is the famous Kankālī Tīlā at the periphery of ancient Mathura. Hundreds of Jaina remains have been unearthed from there through various excavations. Other sites in Mathura city are Chaubia Para, Shitala Ghati, Gujar Ghati and some other unidentified areas in ancient Mathura city. Besides, on the periphery of ancient city some sites, like Chaurasi mound, Balbhardra kunda, Katara Keshavadeva, Potara Kunda, a place between Kankali and Chaubara- all in and around Kankali tila have provided one or more Jaina art and architectural remains. Some other places outside Mathura city, but very close to it like Isapur along Yamuna, Pali-Khera, Salempur have also provided some Jaina evidences. In the district, some other areas, which have already provided some Jaina sculptural remains are Chaumuhan, Bandi-Anandpur. As far as sites of Mathura city are concerned, all are lofty archaeological mounds on which the present day population has habituated. The sites, which are close to Kankali Tila are all famous for Kushan archaeological and art evidences, the sites of which are no more existing. Similar is the case with the sites of Isapur, Pali-Khera and Salempur all of which are now non-existent because of human activities. Chaumuhan and Bandi-Anandpur are two ancient mounds on which the respective villages are situated. One very important point about all these sites is that none of them is limited only to Jaina religion i. e. remains of Brāhmanical as well as Buddhist religion have also been found from these sites.

At Chaumuhan, a place about 18 kms. distant from Mathura on the national highway no.2 to Delhi was found a Jaina *Chaumukhi* (Fig. 32), after which the place was started to be called as Chaumuha. This was actually a Jaina image, which was mistaken called a four headed Brahma image. F. S. Growse has mentioned that it was, in reality, the circular pedestal of a Jaina statue or column, with a lion at each corner and a female figure at each of the four intervening spaces: the upper pattern being roughly carved with the Buddhist rail pattern.²⁹ During my exploration, I found that the site of Chaumuhan is a fairly large mound of early historic period over which the present village is situated. The actual *Chaumukhi* for which it was known as Chaumuhan, was stolen from the local Brahma temple by the smugglers some 30 years back. However, I could find a very important clue of the ancient image in the form of a lion pedestal on which the main image would have been kept. On one side, two lions are shown sitting back to back. Over them, two human riders, one male and one female are shown. The female rider is holding the reins of a lion while the male rider is holding some very important religious object. A very important point is that on the other side the two lions are winged without any rider. In the centre of the square pithika, there is a hole to put the tenon of

the main image, here in this case, it may be a *Pratimāsarvatobhadra*. These features are not clear in this Chaumuhan pedestal but have been noticed from a similar pedestal (Fig. 33) kept in National Museum, New Delhi which has been found from famous site of Khokarakot in Rohtak district of Haryana, possibly an import from Mathura. Here, the most significant point is that the main *Pitha* of the *Pratimāsarvatobhadra* has not been found associated with any such image of Kuśāna period. Besides, scholars have not been able to find any literary evidence of ancient period to relate with these Kuśāna images. The literary references of Jaina Chaumukhi are found in the medieval period and that is related with the concept of samavasarana, where on all the four sides the same Jina is represented. Such types of examples are found from medieval period onwards from various places. But the Kuśāna *Pratimāsarvatobhadra* images from Mathura are limited to this region only and are not found after 3rd century AD except for two early Gupta images, one from Mathura and the other from nearby M. P. region. In Brāhmanical religion Chaturmukha lingas and Vaisnava Chaturvyuhas were common in that period and also in Buddhist pantheon, there are one or two such examples. The *Pratimāsarvatobhadra* presents four Jinas, facing outward on each side of the four sides of an upright as the expression of perfection achieved by these supra-normal beings. Nudity is symbolic of purity achieved by means of asceticism. The standing, totally static, posture (*kāyotsarga*) of each Jina in the image also expresses the perfections of omniscient awareness. It can not be considered a multifold Jina image as is manifested by various Brāhmanic deities as universal creative power. If this Jaina identification of the pithika comes to be true, then it will provide us with a new kind of thinking regarding this.

A very important site has been found at Hathras. Hathras or Mahamayanagar is the district headquarters of the same name. One of the largest archaeological mounds is situated in the heart of the city, known as Hathras Qila, which is surrounded by an artificial moat. The site is under the protection of Archaeological Survey of India, but lacks proper upkeep. Here a number of remains of a huge Jaina temple are lying at two different Hindu shrines. One Tirthankara image (Fig. 34) is being worshipped as *Pathwari mata*. Exact identification of it is not possible because of excessive vermilion applied over it, but it is definitely a Jaina image belonging to c. 10th century AD. A lintel (Fig. 35) and some other part of door-jamb (Fig. 36) of the same temple are also lying at that temple. At a nearby temple of Hathrasī mata on the other side of extensive mound at Hathras, a number of architectural remains (Fig. 37, 38) are lying in a heap. One of the life sized broken image seems to be of yakṣi Ambika, of 22nd Tirthankara Neminātha, who was of local Braj lineage and had often been represented in sculptural art in Kuśāna period. All these indicate towards the presence of a large Jaina temple at Hathras in c. 10th century AD. Now-a-days very few people of Jaina community reside at Hathras, but at the nearby cities of Aligarh and Agra their number is still significant. There must had been a great number of Jaina followers in the whole of Braj region till the medieval period, although its density at various centres like Mathura, Hathras, Agra etc. continued to vary a lot.

The site of Bhandira vana, which has already been discussed again comes to notice here. Two sculptures (*Fig. 39*) lying there might belong to Jaina temple. Some architectural fragments (*Fig. 40*) of a Jaina temple are also scattered there.

After all this analysis, we can draw the conclusion that the whole Braj region served as a very significant centre in the history and development of Jaina religion and its tradition. All the three indigenous sects of India draw inspiration from a common source, which indicates towards some historicity in their traditions. At least for the last three Tīrthankaras, their historicity can not be denied with solid proofs. In this chapter a humble attempt has been made to identify some of the ancient places mentioned in Jaina literary texts with their modern counterparts.

Notes and References:

1. *Kalpasutra- vrtti* (by Samayasundara), Bombay and Surat, 1939, p.107; *Nandisutra-cūrṇi*, Benaras, 1966, p. 9; *Nandisutra-vrtti* (by Malaygiri), Bombay, 1924, p.51; Shah, U. P., *Studies in Jaina Art*, Banaras, 1955, pp.110-111.
2. *Śrī Jinaprabhasuri-Rachita-Vividhīrthakalpa*, translated by Agarchand Bhanwar Lal Nahta (Hindi), Balotra, Rajasthan, 1976, pp.36-43.
3. It appears to be the modern day Bhuteswar area of Mathura.
4. It refers to an earlier existing folk cult at the site in the form of Yakṣi Kuberādevi.
5. It indicates towards the increasing popularity of Mahāvīra during medieval times in this area.
6. It seems to be Lohavana across Yamunā.
7. It seems to be Maholi near Mathura.
8. It seems to be Bihara vana near Kosikalan.
9. It seems to be Tarsi on Bharatpur road.
10. It seems to be Kota near National Highway.
11. It seems to be Bhāndira vana (Chhanhri).
12. It seems to be Khayara in Chhata Tehsil.
13. It seems to be Kaman (Bharatpur district)
14. It seems to be Koyala near Township.
15. It seems to be Bacchavana, Sehi, in Tehsil Chhata.
16. It seems to be Mahāvana near Gokul.
17. All five are more or less known by similar names in Hindu religious cult.
18. It may be a reference to the underground shrine at Bhuteswar Mahādeva temple.
19. *Brhatakalpasutrabhasya* also mentions it by this name as well as Haribhadrāsuri, c. 7th century AD. That there were five stūpas at Mathura can be inferred from Digambara tradition of *Panchastūpanvaya*.
20. The other three Siva temples were Rangeśvar, Gokarṇeśvar and Pipleśvar.
21. *Rāmāyana (Vālmīki)*, 2nd, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, p.-414.

22. *Ibid*, p. 735.
23. *Āvaśyaka-cūrni*, Ratlam, 1928-29, pp. 192-93; *Vāsudevahindi*, Bhavanāgar, 1930, 31, Vol. 1st, pp. 10-11.
24. Dhaki, M. A., *Urjayantgiri And Jina Aristanemi*, JISOA, Vol. XI.
25. *Asiādhyāyī (Pānini)*, 6/2/100.
26. Agrawala, V. S., *Pānini Kalina Bharatavarsa*, Varanasi, 1955, p. 86.
27. *Jnatadharmakatha*, Bombay, 1980, p. 156.
28. *Vipakasutra*, Bombay, 1920, p.26.
29. Growse, F. S., *Mathura: A District Memoir*, Delhi, 1882.

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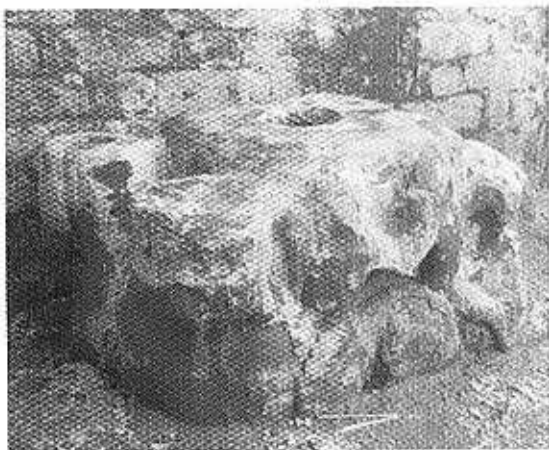


Fig. 32 Possible Pitha of a Jaina Sarvatobhadrika, Chaumuhan, Mathura (U. P.).



Fig. 33 Possible Pitha of a Jaina Sarvatobhadrika, Khakhrakot, Rohtak, National Museum, New Delhi.



Fig. 34 Tirthankara, worshipped as Pathawari Mata, Hatharas (U. P.).

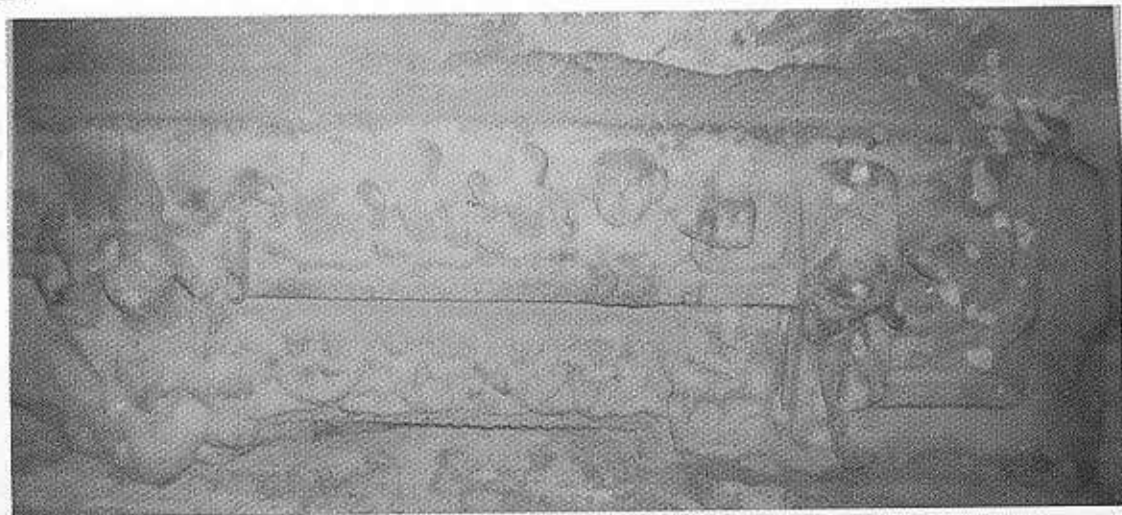


Fig. 35 Lintel of a Jain Temple, Pathawari Mata, Hatharas (U. P.).



Fig. 36 Remains of a Jain Temple, Pathawari Mata, Hatharas (U. P.).



Fig. 37 Remains of a Jain Temple, Hatharasi Mata, Hatharas (U. P.).



Fig. 38 Remains of a Jain Temple,
Hatharasi Mata, Hatharas (U. P.).

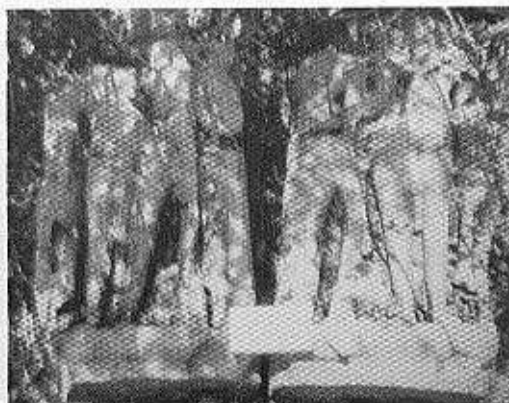


Fig. 39 Jain Sculptural Remains,
Bhandiravana (U. P.).

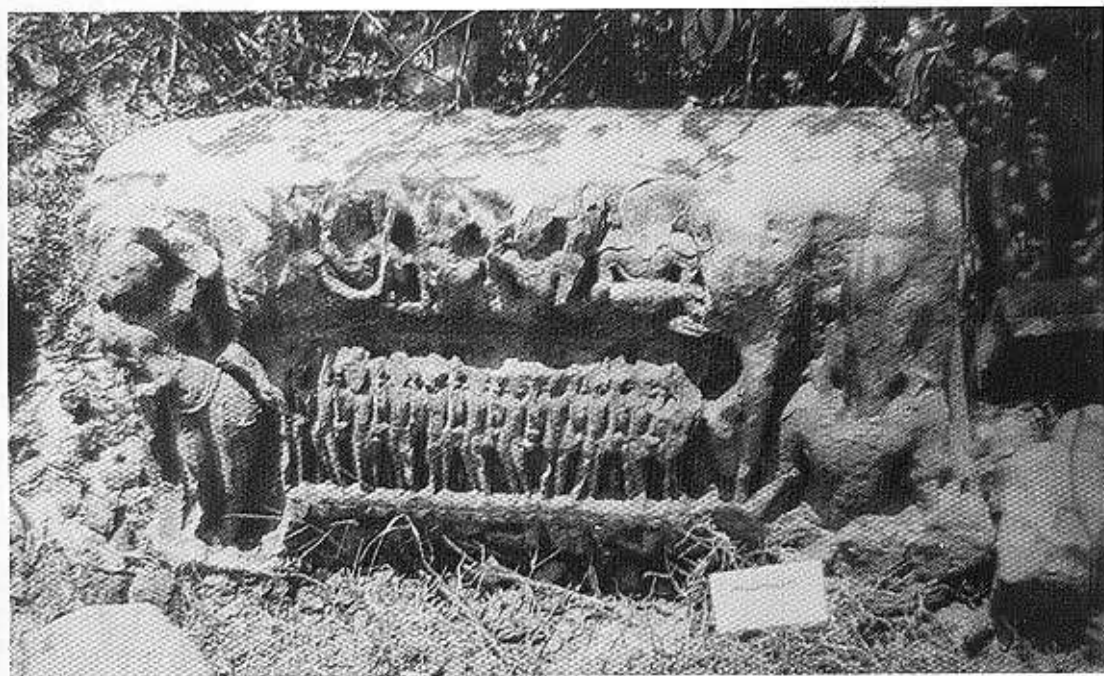


Fig. 40 Jain Architectural Remains, Bhandiravana (U. P.).