

Survival and Continuity of Folk Culture Amidst Jain Remains in Purulia District of West Bengal, India

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The history of ancient West Bengal's *radh* (pronounced- r-a-r-h) presents a myriad reflection of beliefs and practices which developed through time and under the influences of different religious ideals. Locating the region of study as a geographic entity through various historical records, it is important to keep in mind the significance of the survival of religious traditions of the autochthones/*vratyas*, constituting the various social groups (tribals, sub-castes, castes/*antyaaja* and other ethnic groups), who received special attention to reconstruct the regional religious historical tradition. Their survival strategy depends on the geo-physical specificities of their habitation and thus, the woodland areas in the plateau region, which has a large concentration of tribal population, with a subsistence pattern of fishing, hunting, etc. differs from the plain regions with an agro-pastoral economy (pastorals including Gop and, agriculturalists including Sadgop and other *antyaaja* groups like, Dom, Bauri, Bagdi, Hari and others).

The surviving pattern, in time, influenced the cognitive representation, reflected through various religious beliefs and practices in the region. Though the evidence pertaining to folk religious traditions is limited in nature with a lack of written sources, but various archaeological and historical records pertaining to various stages of settlement and economic activities in the region of study, does provide valuable information about the introduction of different religious beliefs and practices. This is specifically evident from the Historic period onwards and thus, our interpretation about the same may not be necessarily explained by following a specific chrono-cultural sequence, but various archaeological, historical and ethnoarchaeological evidences as mentioned above.

The history of the region, also traces the settlement pattern, which also saw the rise of local/feudatory powers or ruling authorities in the early medieval times and an influence of trading activities on the local religious traditions. However, not much evidence comes through pertaining to settlement pattern- until the Historical/Late Historical periods- when information pertaining to religious as well as developing economic activities are available. Though no records mention the religion and religious ceremonies/festivities of the autochthones/*vratyas*, yet a glimpse of this is available from the various records pertaining to the trade and commerce of the region, as well as the religions patronised by the royalty, both of which had everlasting effects on the religion of the autochthones. Socially, the assimilation of Hindu and Buddhist ideals and principles had already prepared the ground for a certain pattern of religious beliefs in Bengal, much before Buddhism was formally taken as a state religion under the rule of the Pala kings. The significance of such a process was immense, as is evident from the words of N.K.Bose, as he mentioned this to (1959:9), "gave rise in later times in Bengal to a number of unorthodox sects, in which the human body itself is treated as the mystic temple of God...it had its origin in the treatment of humanity as the highest value, in contrast to Vedic ritualdom." Through time, the religious traditions of the *vratyas* assimilated within the orthodox order of the Puranic Brahmanical religious

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traditions and the latter also borrowed from time to time from the former, giving rise to a peculiarity of beliefs in the region of study (one can refer to the upward mobilisation i.e. universalisation and downward mobilization i.e. parochialisation here). The influence of Buddhism and Jainism also continued through time and found a way of expression through the folk festivals of the region. This is apparent from evidences from neighbouring regions, as mentioned by Nagendranath Vasu (intro. ccxxxiv-ccxxxv:1911) about the forest tribes of Mayurbhanj (Orissa), where he mentioned the observance of Buddhists within the forests of Gadajats, and the fact that in “18th century, Buddhism was not altogether a lost creed- the much honoured memory of Buddha was not altogether a lost thing in India.” (*Ibid*).

Especially pertaining to Jainism in the region- evidence available from Early Historic literary examples, including Jain texts *Acharanga Sutra* and *Kalpasutra* (which mentions the region in its Prakrit form as *Radha* i.e. *Ladha* and speaks of an earlier date, when Mahavir travelled through the region, especially Subbabhumi). From these texts, mention is also found of *Ladha*, to be comprised of two specific divisions- Vajjabhumi and Subbabhumi- which might have corresponded with the present southern, western and northern parts of the Radh country of Purulia district. Information from these texts also mention the region as a riverine, low-lying, flood-prone terrain, which is corroborated by archaeological findings of microliths, which are seen in easy abundance in forests and along riverbanks and along hill slopes. The archaeological references of Early Historic period of the region of study suggests a possible existence of hunter-gatherers and a rather primitive farming in the high plateau and effective agriculturists in the plain- where both were integrated within a network of resource distribution, like copper and tin, which could have come only from the high plateau. This could also suggest the existence of the original inhabitants in the high plateaus and the relatively new settlers to the region in the plains. However, further studies pertaining to the same is required since the West Bengal black-and-red ware sites in the areas which also have presence of “microlith-using hunter-gatherers, does not have any specific chronological or cultural significance” (Chakrabarti, *Op.cit*:204-205). It also suggests that the agricultural subsistence pattern of modern pre-industrial Bengal, basically goes back to this period. (*Ibid*). Thus, it can also be surmised that associated with the agrarian pattern and the mode of living, much part of the folk beliefs, rites and rituals could also have had their continuity from this time. Similarly, the evidences of the agrarian festivals mentioned in the Asokan edicts of early historic age of Dhauli and Jaugad, could also have existed at this same period. From these Rock Edicts, it was ascertained that even at the time of Asoka, there used to take place local festivals, which corresponded with the modern-day period of Tusu festival in the region.

All of these evidences testify the importance of the religion of Buddhism, corresponding with the time of the Guptas in Bengal. (Datta. *Op.cit*. 119-120). It is also essential to mention to perceive the period as a time which is associated to the “process of transformation to visibility of the goddess cults” through the very prominent visibility of the Brahmanas and their rituals” (Chattopadhyaya, 2005:181-182). This is further explained by the appearance of the “cult of goddesses from disparate geographical locations and at different points in time”, taking place mainly because of the linkage established between such cults and emerging monarchies through the mediation of the Brahmanas and their rituals”, which has further been postulated to represent the process of “Brahmanical mode of cult appropriation” (*Ibid*:182). Thus, supplementing archaeological records with those from history, it can be surmised that the period witnessed the gradual development of various religious traditions, alongside the prevailing animistic religion of the *vratyas*, which ran as an under-current and alongside the religion that was patronised by royalty and different vassal chiefs. Thus, at a time when Buddhism, followed by Hinduism

and the principles of Saktism and aivism were making their presence felt in the region of study, the religion of the masses continued alongside, obviously with strains of communication influencing and thereby assimilating their ethnic identity.

Throughout the time of the Early and Late historical periods, the religions of Jainism and Buddhism gained popularity through royal patronage, evident from the various relics of temples and idols, which are found till date, in scattered manners across the region of study and were also evident from places like- Pakbira in Purulia. All the regions of study provided vital information to throw light on the surviving evidences of Jain and Buddhist influences in the region. The post-Sasanka period saw an age of anarchy in Bengal, with various small administrative units fighting for survival and in the process, trying to conquer each others territories. From an introductory piece in an administrative document (*sashon-patter upakramanika sloka*) of 9th century, it is known that the region of Bengal underwent several small divisions of kingdom after the death of Sasanka, from the time of the end of 8th century (Sen, *Op.cit*:69). The Pala rulers patronised Buddhism, which was their official religion., and though they also encouraged Brahmanism, yet the strains of Vaisavism, under the royal emblem, started decreasing from earlier times as is found in the family names of the Pala dynasty, since after Dharmapala, there is seen some names which are non-Vaisavite names

On the other hand, in a natural process, the popularity of Buddhism decreased under the subsequent Sena rulers, under whom, the socio-cultural scenario saw a resurgence of Hindu beliefs and practices by importing Brahmans from Kanauj. Consequently, acute casteism grew. Between 6th and 7th century A.D. heterodoxy flourished in Bengal and the Puranic Brahmanical religion was imposed later in this region by ruling dynasties.

It is important to mention here that the appropriation of various religious ideas and beliefs could do little to effect and influence or eradicate the local religious traditions, including various strains of Buddhism and Jainism, which continued to exist as an under-current and suffered a last blow under the attack of Bhaktiar Khilji, when several of the Buddhist monasteries, including the ones at Radh region suffered severe damage and destruction (Datta.*Op.cit*. 119-120).

The assimilation

However, it is also important to mention the prominent assimilation of thought processes evident during the course of the fieldwork- ranging from Jainism, Buddhism, Vaisavism and Saivism and Tantrism with local religious traditions. These religious ideas also seem to have borrowed from time to time from each other and thus, in turn left their influences on the socio-cultural environs of the region and its inhabitants. Different examples were evident during the course of the field-work to suggest this across the region of Purulia. And several such evidences reflect the transformation through time, incorporating the beliefs, ceremonies and religious practices of the *vratyas*/local inhabitants within the Puranic Brahmanical rules and regulations which dominated all of society's norms and customs till then. The invasion of the Portugese and still later, the British helped to further add to the variety in the life of the inhabitants, variously reflected in myriad nature through ceremonies, rites, rituals and festivals, including certain typical stringent Brahmanical rules and regulations of the society. These are variously available from different records of English merchants and mention may be made of the accounts of East India Company merchant- Thomas Bowrey- who visited the region much before the Battle of Plassey.

Finally, it is also important to mention the close bond that existed between the local inhabitants with the local chiefs, especially with the gradual increase and spread of pluralism from the time of the intrusion of Islam in the region and thereafter the Portugese and the British, binding the independent and semi-independent principalities and the locals together. With particular socio-cultural traits, their sense of homogeneity helped them to bind themselves together inspite of the spread of such religious thought processes like Jainism, Buddhism and Tantric influences,

Brahmanism, Saivism or Saktatism and also the liberal Bhakti cult. The cultural interactions changed the beliefs and practices of the people to a certain extent and also the cultural life of the original inhabitants, resulting in the important survival of folk and mainstream religion within the same milieu. Thus, several of the erstwhile idols of religions like Jainism, Buddhism or the different facets of Brahmanism survived through time in the folk religion of the region of study in a transformed manner and in the present area of study, several Jain and Buddhist idols of possible deities and Tirthankaras were observed to be worshipped as different folk gods and goddesses, including Dharmaraj/Yama, Bhairab, Manasa, Candi, Sini, Sitala and others. A similar fact of the association and subsequent survival of Jainism was also echoed by Dr. Roy as he spoke about the association of Jain idols with the folk culture of the region when he described Jainism to be the earliest form of “Aryanised religion in the region that left a long-lasting impression on the local religion, but it is always the association with the folk religion that stands as an important character of the idols in recent times, which was also variously evident during the course of fieldwork from all the three districts of study. Thus, the patronsied religion by the royalty often differed from the popular believes of the locals/*vratyas*, yet the folk ceremonies, festivals and religious ideals survived as an under-current throughout history and often merged with the former. Interestingly enough, these folk beliefs seemed to have survived with or without royal patronage and are reflected in present times through such evidences of the local royalty of Jamkuri, Panchkot, etc. Though various gods and goddesses exist as their family deities, yet their association and patronage of local Gajan/Charak, Manasa puja, Dharmaraj or Sini puja is evident even in modern times.

Assimilation also gave rise to the very significant aspect of survival of a historical tradition till present times as most of these festivals, rites and rituals are attended by different devotees from not only the same village- but several villages across the region. Thus- maintaining the strain of history and also preserving an important perspective for the future. The ruins highlight and speak of not only history- but of unity, integration and survival.

Village information

Chharra, Purulia

Location- 10 kms from Purulia Town. The village lies on the left hand side of the Barakar Road from Purulia town. Mauja- Chharra. Assorted number of antiquities, found embedded in concrete and mud in front of the Dharmaraj *mandir*, located in the *Dom para* of the village in the north-western part of the village of Chharra, including an *amalaka* and a *kalasa*, possibly of Jain origin. The other images of the temple of Dharmaraj, found near the entrance and also inside, displays images possibly of Jain origin.

A herostone is seen being used at present as part of an entrance door of a village house, near the entrance of the village (6 L x 1 W). The structure has an eroded image of a sitting lion at the top

Para, Purulia

Location- 20 kms from Purulia Town. The village lies on the eastern bank of Harai River. Block- Panchakot

A sculpted structure (possibly Jain in origin), seen at the rear end of the village, referred to as the Yamraj *sthan*. This place is visited by people returning from the cremation grounds outside the village after performing the last rites. The structure is approximately 5 L and 8" W with a sculpted, standing male figure, facing the village at present.

Harup, Purulia

Location- 50 kms (approx) from Purulia Town. Approximately 7 kms from the juncture where the main Bagmundi road from Purulia bifurcates between Kalimati and Suissa. Post office- Suissa. Thana and Panchayat- Bagmundi

Referred to as Hatiya Sini, an image of an ornamented male warrior is seen lying under a tree at the outskirts of the village, near Harup *bandh*. The figure has four hands and is astride an elephant. It is holding a raised sword in the right hand and an ornamented stick on the left, the end part of which looks like an axe. The area has an annual *mela* referred to as Harup *mela*. With a meager population of 45 people in the village, the *mela* is attended by people from adjoining villages of Deuli and Suissa as well.

Suissa, Purulia

Location- 50 kms (approx) from Purulia Town. 5 kms (approx) from the juncture where the main Bagmundi Road from Purulia bifurcates between Kalimati and Suissa. Post office- Suissa. Thana and Panchayat- Bagmundi

An assorted number of 11 images are seen kept inside an enclosure, which at present acts as a temple. There is no regular officiating priest, but *puja* is offered by locals at will and mainly for wish fulfillment. These images are preserved in the enclosure through the works of West Bengal State Archaeology Department. The sculpted images in the antiquities reveal possible Jain standing, sitting and meditating images of Tirthankaras.

Anai, Purulia

Location- 20 kms (approx) from Purulia Town. The village is located on the Anaijambad Road that comes out of the western side of Purulia Town. This road comes under Pradhan Mantri Sarak Yojna and has been metalled in 2007. Block- Purulia 1. Thana- Kenda Pareshnath Mahadev Bera Ananda Asram has the herostones. This Asram is located on the southern side of Anai village. One herostone is located on the backside of the present structure that is referred to as Shibananada Giri Maharaj s Samadhi *sthan* (4 L x 10" W & B). Another herostone is seen lying next to the left wall of this Samadhi *sthan* structure (visible length of the structure is 3 x 6" W & B). A third part of a herostone is seen jutting out from the backside of the same Samadhi *sthan* structure (visible size of the structure is 10" L x 10" B x 8" W)

Open field on left bank of Kangsabati, 2 kms from Ralibera, Purulia

Location On the left bank of Kangsabati- 50 mts from the main river bed, and moving ahead from the village of Ralibera. The area comes under village- Phatadiri. Thana- Kenda. Post Office- Ralibera Within an area of 50 ft (approx) in diameter stray structures can be seen with heavy marks of erosion on its body making the distinction of any visible structure difficult. In total 9 sculpted herostones and remains of old structures could be seen. There is only one ornate structure seen on leftmost part (3 L x 1 B x 9" W). The one next to this (3 9" L x 1½,, W) has no visible marks of sculpture or inscription on it. 5 of the structures, located approximately in the middle of the diameter area are visible 1 ft above ground. At the farthest end of the diameter area, away from river Kangsabati, are seen two more structures, one of which is ornate with a heavily eroded carved figure visible on its body (7" L x 8" B x 7" W). The other one is seen devoid of any sculpture (3 9" L x 9" B x 1 W). This area is completely submerged under water during rainy season, this is the reason, along with heavy wind, the structures are exposed to heavy erosion at all times of the year. The area also suggests a good prospect of being part of structures underground and is a good prospective site for excavation.

Palma, Purulia

Location- Ralibera main road connects to Daradi More (crossroads) at a distance of about 4 kms. From this crossroad, the village of Palma is further 4 kms towards Shitalpur and Puncha. The village has Kalyaneswari River, located 1½ kms (approx) on its eastern side. Several herostones are seen at the end of the village, displaced over an area of 200mts, at the outskirts of the village at the western end. The one farthest from the village has two vertical herostones, out of which one is carved (5 4" L x 11" B x 7" W) and the one next to is devoid of any sculpting (6 4" L x 11" B x 9" W).

Displaced about 100 ft on its left are 3 herostones out of which one is lying horizontal on the ground (2 4" L x 10" B x 9" W). The one next to it, standing erect has a highly eroded sculpture (2 3" L x 9" B x 10" W). Another herostone is seen facing the village and is partly broken on the side (6 3" L x 11" B x 3" W), worshipped as Indra/Ind for blessings for rain. The *puja* is officiated by a Brahman priest, carrying a surname of Chatterjee who is from the Sadar *Para*, also known as Brahman *para* of the village. At the time of the *puja*, the horizontal herostone is used as a base to erect an umbrella over the top of the vertical one. The *puja* also has a goat sacrifice during Ind *puja*. This *puja* comes under *Gram Sholoana Commiittee*. Local lore has it that these were erected by the people from Bhumij caste who stays closest to these clusters of stones and at the rear end of the village, as memorials for grave of their deceased ancestors.

Another 80 mts from these 3 herostones is another cluster of 6 herostones. From the right, the first one measures 4 8" L x 10 B & W. The one next is sculpted, yet due to heavy erosion the figure is very indistinct. The side of the figure faces the village. (3 7" L x 7" B x 1 3"W). The third (4 8" L x 9" B & W) and fourth (3 7" L x 8" B x 7" W) are unsculpted. The fifth one again has a sculpted and heavily eroded male figure facing the village (2 2" L x 1 2" B x 6" W). The last one is again unsculpted (3 7" L x 8" B x 7" B)

Pakbira, Purulia

Location- About 48 kms from Purulia Town and 3 kms from Puncha towards the east on the Puncha Main Road. Post Office, Block, Thana, Panchayat- Puncha

Stray examples of images, *kalas* and parts of broken images possibly of Jain origin are seen accumulated within an enclosure that also comprises of 3 temples of laterite stone. The temples also consist of images, possibly of Jain origin. No *puja* takes place at the temples, excepting at the image of Jain Tirthankara, locally referred to as Bhairabnath iva and thus, the image receive *puja* regularly on Mondays. Special *puja* by devotees are also performed on any other day. The officiating priest resides in the Ray *Para* of the village. Most of the structures, as mentioned in the J.D. Beglar report (A tour through the Bengal Provinces, Volume 8, pp- 193-195) could not be noticed at present, however, the extensive architectural details suggest the existence of a possible large and elaborate temple complex.

2 ½ kms from Puncha, towards Budhpur, near a field on the Manbazaar main road, Purulia

Location- Post Office, Block, Thana, Panchayat- Puncha

A stray sculpted herostone is seen with a male figure, facing east, towards Puncha and is holding a shield on its left hand and a sword on its right. The feet are seen in a running position with the left foot bent and placed on the ground and the right is bent and raised. This stone is placed at the base of a Banyan tree and occasionally worshipped as Sivasthan.

Budhpur, Purulia

Location- 6 kms from Puncha on the South-west, going through Manbazar Main Road.

4 sculpted herostones in front of a iva temple- the one farthest away from the temple is 4 L x 1½ B x 5" W. Of the two facing each other, the one on the left of the entrance of the temple has a prominent and sculpted, though eroded, head of a sitting lion (4 L x 1½ B x 8 W), and the one on the right and facing the previous herostone has a completely eroded head (3 4" L x 2 10 B x 5" W). The one farthest from the temple and placed on the right hand of the entrance of the temple (4 3" L x 1 10" B x 6" W), has the *yupa kastha* in front for goat sacrifice during the regular *puja* on Mondays and also during the time of *Gajan*. All the herostones have images of a warrior with a raised sword on right hand and a shield on left and facing away from the temple, towards the east. The *puja* at the temple is managed at present by the *Gram Sholoanna Commiitee*.

Deulghata, Purulia

Location- in Arsa, 25 kms from Purulia Town (approx). This place is centrally visited by all villagers from surrounding region.

Two Siva temples of terracotta are seen. Both are heavily eroded and receive *puja* regularly on Mondays. The temple region has regular *Gajan* festival and a *mela*, attended by people from surrounding villages. The first temple on the right has an unsculpted herostone (4½ L x 8" B & W). Within an area of over 600 ft, surrounding these two temples, several relics, including base of pedestals, broken pieces of *amalaka* (each measuring between 1½ to 2½ diameter), stone bricks and broken pieces of the base of images in meditating and sitting position are seen, possibly of Jain origin. This site also contains newly constructed temples, facing the iva temples- from right- Bhairabi, Singhi, Jagattaraini and Ranachandi. Another frequently visited iva temple also adorns the site, where marriages take place, apart from *Gajan* festivals regularly. This is a recent construction. A Ganesha and a Kali temple,

along with a temple devoted to one Suniti Pathak, who is ascribed to have erected the modern temples at the site also is found at the site. However, the images within these temples are not recent ones as is reflected through the sculptural details.

Talajudi, Purulia

Location- 30 km from Purulia on Kasipur-Bankura Road. Thana- Kasipur. Panchayat- Barandi

5 herostones outside Baruneswar iva Mandir and one inside the temple premises. Three of the herostones are sculpted with standing, eroded images, possibly of Jain Tirthankaras, with each measuring to a height of 4 L & 7" W. The sculpted herostone (being a worshipping image, this deity was not allowed to be touched for measurement, so the approximate measurement is 5 L x 1½ B x 7" W) inside the temple is worshipped as Shiva, especially on Mondays and also during *Gajan* on the 27, 28 and 29th of *Caitra* every year. This place also receives regular goat sacrifice.

North Bandwan

Location- P.O.- North Bandwan. The site is a flat area under a tree and next to the main road.

According to the local people, the idol has been lying under the tree ever since they moved into the village. They worship the image on 12th day of *Magh* as Kal Bhairab. The site has a total of three images- all of possible Jain origin. One of the idols stand under a *peepul* tree, in North Bandwan, (1 km south of Banjore)- next to the main road that connects to Banjore. The area is close to the house of one Dibakar Mahato. Possibly an idol of Adinath (90 cms L x 40 cms B x 15 cms W and 12 cms peg and 35 cms (approx) pedestal). The second idol- possible of Parsvanath (75 cms L x 40 cms B x 12 cms W, 10 cms pedestal), was seen about half a kilometer from the first image and next to a pond and outside a iva Temple and close to the main road towards Banjore- referred to as iva *sthani* and has four days of *Gajan* in *Phalgun* as well as 5th day of *Baisakh* every year. The village also had a single herostone (2m, 15 cms L x 35 cms B x 15 cms W [approx]), lying close from the main road that connects to Banjore next to a cowshed. The locals refer this to stand erect and vertical in an area about six ft away, but due to the construction of the main road, connecting to Banjore, it was removed and kept horizontally near the cow shed. The stone was removed last *Kartik* from its former position.

Ranipukur

Location- P.O.- North Bandwan.

A total of eight artifacts were seen. This had a single antiquity, resembling a *kalas* (50 cms L x 22 cms B x 22 cms W) is worshipped as Khelaicandi, with a special *puja* every 5th *Phalgun*, with a *mela*. Officiating priest is one Laya. *Puja* entails regular fowl and pigeon sacrifices. And mostly attended by married women for blessings for a child. A possible herostone (1m 20 cms L x 25 cms B x 15 cms W [approx]) is also seen outside a iva temple- referred to as iva *sthan*. Another possible herostone [1m, 75 cms L x (Upper carving)= 70 cms L x (Upper carving)= 30 cms B x (Upper carving)= 25 cms W x (Lower carving)= 1 mts L x (Lower carving)= 28 cms B x (Lower carving)= 28 cms W] stands vertical inside the iva temple, near the Banjore road. The village also yielded a broken idol of Surya [lower part= 67 cms L x 90 cms B x Pedestal (which has the 7 horses being driven by Arun)= 35 cms]-

next to a mustard field and close to a pond- named- Ranipukur, after which is the name of the village. There is Brahma and Maheswar on either sides of the image. There is also a miniature depiction of Ketu on the right side and Rahu on the left side of the deity. The lower part of idol had waist up [83 cms L x 90 cms B x 10 cms W]. The material is chloride stone, with high relief in form. The image has Gandharva, Kirti Mukha and Nabagraha around it. It has also seated images of other Nabagrahas. Another possible herostone [1m, 12 cms L x 45 cms B x 25 cms W] of chloride stone was also seen amidst a tomato field. No *puja* takes place. The backside of sculpture is undressed and front covered with high relief. The top of the stone is crowned. There is a depiction of lion and also a sword. Type is also rare in Bengal and has association with Utkal. The village also had several historical antiquities, like the oval *amalaka*. Amalaka (1m, 15 cms L x 65 cms B and 23 cms W) Information regarding the site from the memory of the local people. The material is chloride stone.[65 cms L x 32 cms B x 25 cms H).

Kurmasor

Location- P.O.- Kuda, the area has Sindhri Barabazar in South and Rajnoagarh on North. Taking a left turn from Taldih More (close to Bandwan) near Mahara High School and go straight to Kurmasor

Possible Jain deities (sitting under a *kalpataru* and the upper part has Dhyani Tirthankara and Vasuki) within a temple at the entrance of the village, whom the local worship as Hara-Parvati. Important *puja* on Gajan and *mela* on 1st, 2nd and 3rd of *Baisakh*, accompanied by Chchou dance of Purulia.

Mahara

Location- P.O.- Mahara. On Manbazar-Purulia Road and 18 kms from Manbazar

The region yielded six artifacts. One of them, being an entire and unbroken piece of *amalaka* (located at the doorstep of a Deuli at the very entrance, close to the centre of the village). Another *amalaka* in broken fragments was seen with the housing complex (of one Neelkamal Mahato, at the entrance of village), which the villagers refer as *purono pathar* (old stone) and worship as iva. One of the artifacts is also a Jain Image (possibly Parsvanath, 85 cms Lx 50 cms B x 10 cms W), plastered against the rear wall of a Deuli, and referred to as the „god in the Deuli. A herostone (1m L x 25 cms B x 10 cms W) was observed at the centre of the village and near a Deuli, which the locals sometimes use to tie cows. Another herostone (75 cms L x 22 cms B x 12 cms W) was observed close to the main road of the village. A herostone complex was seen in the *upar para* area of the village.

Purru

Location- P.O.- Daka Kendo. From Akhra at the entrance of the village main road connecting Sindhri to Banjore and travelling 2 kms towards Sindhri. The region yielded one herostone (90 cms L x 22 cms B x 10 cms W), close to the main road of the village at Akhra (at the very entrance of the village main road connecting Sindhri to Banjore). The local people are aware about the stone being a *purono pathar* or old stone

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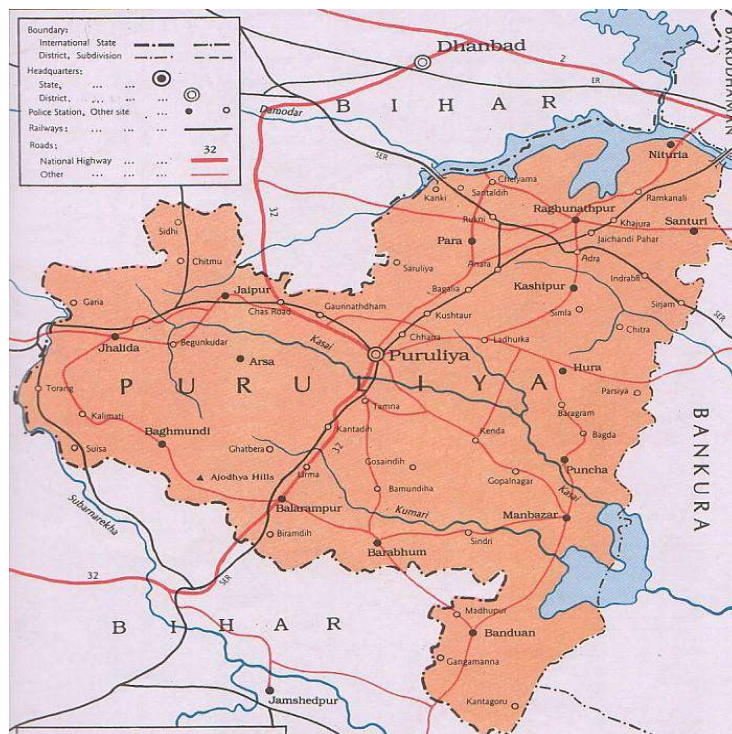


Fig.1 District road map of Purulia showing few important villages and towns explored during the course of the work (Total area- 6259 sq kms between 22°43N- 23°41N latitudes and between 85°49E- 86°54E longitudes) (After— <http://www.calcuttaweb.com/maps/purulia.shtml>)

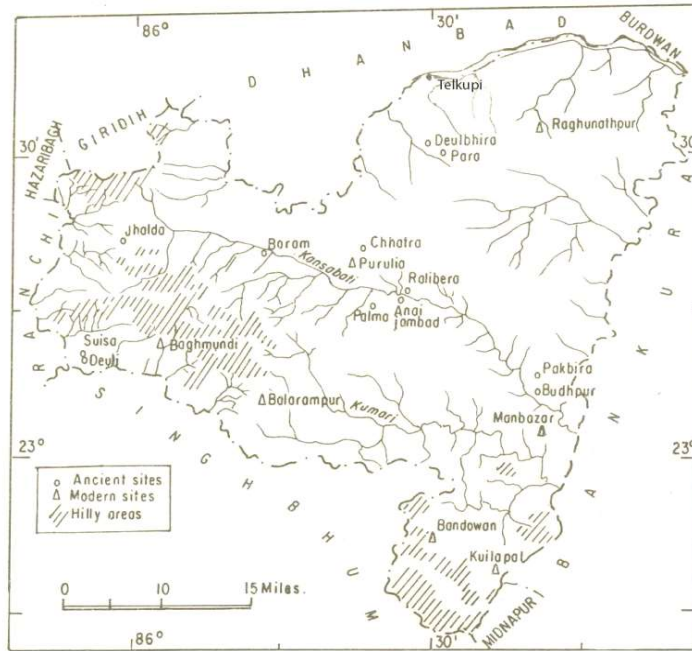


Fig.2 District map of Purulia showing few important villages and towns explored during the course of the work with latitude and longitude (After- R.K. Chattopadhyay, Dept. of Archaeology, University of Calcutta)



Fig.3 Yamaraj, Para, Purulia

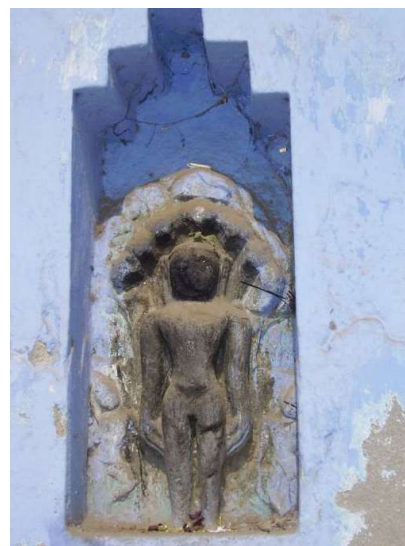


Fig.4 Idol of Jain Tirthankara on the Outside wall of Dharmaraj temple, Chharra, Purulia



Fig. 5 Various idols of possible Jain origin within The temple of Dharmaraj, Chharra



Fig.6 Idols of possible Jain origin within an enclosure in Suissa, Purulia



Fig.7 Temple at Pakbira, Purulia



Fig.8 Jain idol, Pakbira, Purulia



Fig.9 Idols of Jain Tirthankaras housed within Paresnath Mahadev Bera Ananda Asram, Anai, Purulia



Fig.10 Jain idols/ village deities, Palma, Purulia