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Various Characteristics of Human Cells

- Dr Jeoraj Jain

We will try to reframe our understanding of the process of taking birth by a soul in human body as given in scriptures in the light of modern science.

As per scriptures, the most important event for starting of a Life by a soul (*jīvātmā*) is the development of food bio-potential (*āhāra paryāpti*), which takes the available food and converts it sequentially into 7 types of derivatives (*dhātu*). All the remaining 6 Bio-potentials, like Body and Sense bio-potentials etc. get developed from these *dhātus*, to make all types of cells and organs etc. of the human body.

It means, each *jīvātmā* develops full human body with necessary bio-potentials as per its *nāma-karma*. It maintains the Cells and organs and gets all its functions performed through them. They remain connected as parts of the living body through *śāstra-pradeśa* (AP), i.e. *cetanā* and do not work like an independent *jīvātmā* (Soul) of its own. Each one of the cells acts as per its written genetic codes, like a robot and continues to multiply.

When the cells are detached from the AP, these robots can duplicate and survive for a limited period, till its stored food lasts. Only stem cells, have the capability to duplicate, as well as to produce any other type of cells, required to produce human body. A transitory soul can enter into such cells to develop as *sammurcham*, human-beings. As per science, reproduction outside the body by asexual means is called agglutination or *sammurcham* method.

2. Behaviour of Cells

Nigodiyas: As per scriptures, infinite number of *nigodiyajīvas* may be present in a human body. It is said that each *nigodiya jīva* completes 18 cycles of birth and death in one *samaya* (breathing time). Infinite no. of such *jīvas*/ souls remain together and share one microscopic cell. They all breathe together with their common body. They are not pervaded by AP of Human *jīvātmā* and do not involve directly in the functioning of Human body. The difference in the structure of *nigodiya* and human cell is shown on the top right of fig 1.

Transplants : Organs of a body, like eyes, kidney etc. may be transplanted to another body (where another *jīvātmā* is present). Once they are detached from a body, they behave like robotic organs. The organ is received and accepted by another *jīvātmā* as its part, if the AP of the new *jīvātmā* pervades the organ and starts nurturing it. Normally, the transplants are done within a period of 48 minutes of its detachment from the previous *jīvātmā*, else these will also become dysfunctional (dead). They can, of course be preserved under suitable cryogenic conditions for longer periods. This is not against Āgama.

Death: According to Jain philosophy, the *jīvātmā* leaves the body on death and enters its new body within a maximum of 4 *samayas*. But the cells and organs of the discarded body can continue to do some of their functions, as per their pre-recorded genetic instructions, so long they continue to get their appropriate food and environmental conditions. The required food for their growth was either prepared by the leaving *jīvātmā* or is supplied by some other artificial method.

The Undifferentiated cells (Stem Cells) of a dead body have capability to develop as *yonī* structure, where a new soul can enter into it. This is because they have capability to produce various types of differentiated cells under the instructions of the new soul, pervading it. This enables it to grow as *sammurcham* human –being, developing up to 4 types of Bio-Potentials. However, the Differentiated cells cannot grow and duplicate to produce only their own copy cells, like a robot. It is assumed logically that they cannot produce *sammurchammanuṣya (SM)*.

3. Life Status of Cells in the Body : In Āgamas, we find mention of 2 types of Cells.

i) Reproductive Cells: They are 5-sensed Living-Beings. Innumerable of them are killed in one sexual act. When sperm and egg fuse together, they produce *garbhaja* Human-Beings (*Bhagvatī 2/5*). They are called mature cells in modern science. Jain canons and Science both consider mature cells as living-beings.

ii) Immature cells. They are of 2 types: Characterized and Stem Cells.

Both types duplicate themselves by mitosis process - under the instructions and supply of food from the pervading Soul (*jīvātmā*), as per their coded instructions.

The Characterized cells can only duplicate themselves for growth, replacement and repair of particular parts and organs in the body. The Stem cells can be characterized as well as be duplicated, as per the instructions from the Karmik body of the Soul.

We will now study the “nature of life” of Reproductive Cells and clarify some issues by answering certain questions.

4. Development and Decay of Cell with Soul (*jīvātmā*)

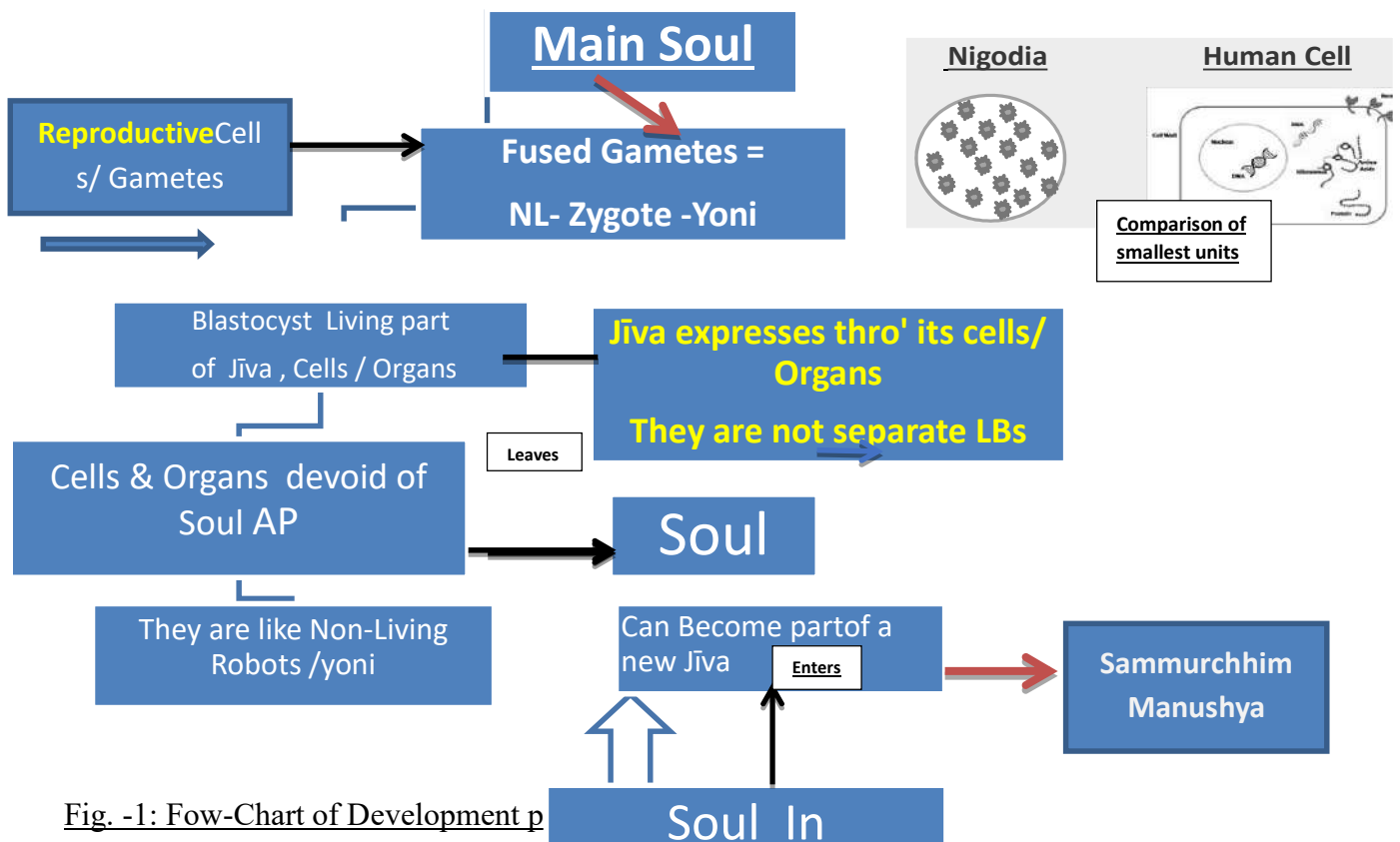


Fig. -1: Flow-Chart of Development p

5. Reproductive Cells.

A pertinent question arises as to what type of Living-Beings (LB) are the mature Cells?

They contain 23 chromosomes and are considered as 5-sensed LB. Sperm and egg-both should be treated as Neutral gender, because they cannot reproduce. Most sperm cells die before fusing with egg cells. A few die during fusion. Still these species don't vanish, because they are being continuously produced as Gametes by the special sex glands in the body.

The special process, in which an immature cell having 46 chromosomes is divided into 2 cells, each having 23 chromosomes, is called Meiosis process. Here 3 special things are noticed.

i) The parent immature cell (This is a differentiated sex cell) functions as a part of the main body, connected through AP (*ātmaprdesha- ceatnā*) as its integral organ. As per our hypothesis, it is not a Living-Being, but an apparatus (*upakaraṇa*) of main soul (*jīvātmā*), which divides itself as per coded instructions to produce gametes.

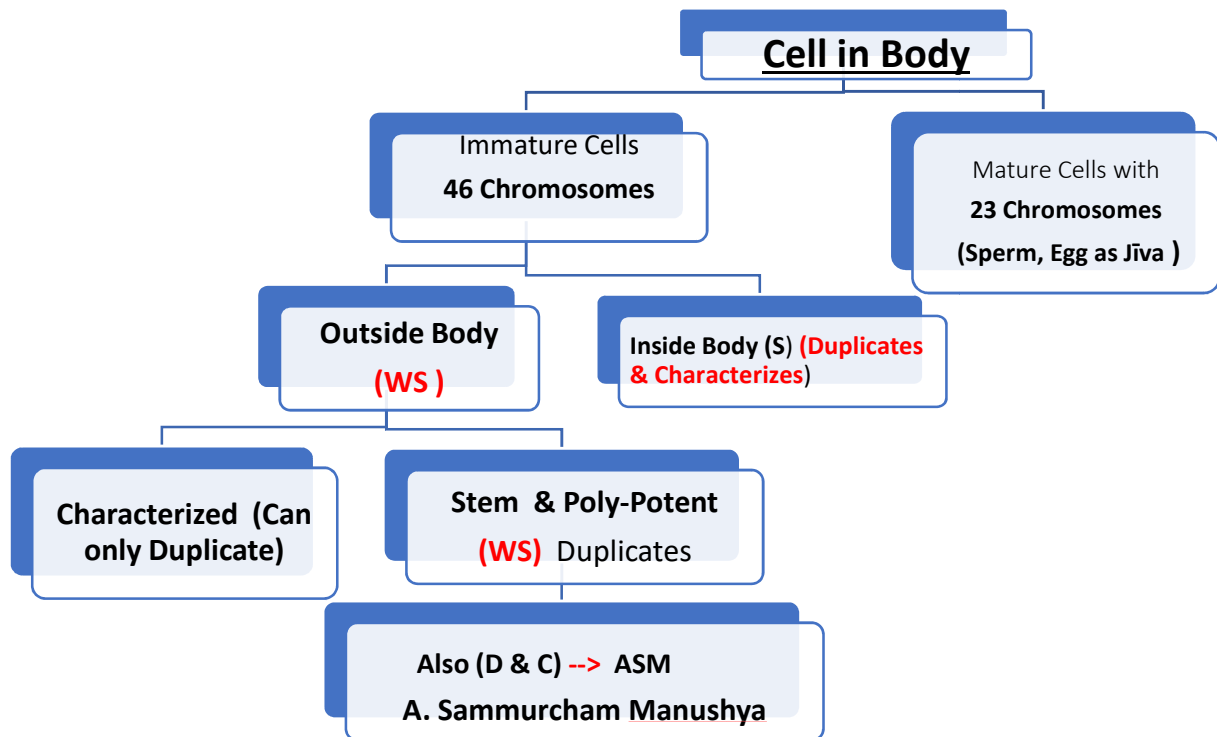
ii) The gametes (sperm and egg) logically start as *yonibhūta* (Potential birth place) mature cells and develop into *sammurcham* Living –Beings (LB), with 6 completed *pariyāptis*. Sperm is mentioned as Living-Being (LB) in scriptures.

Q: Is an Egg a LB or is it like a blood-cell, or meat? It is not clear. It needs searching Āgamas.

Logically it should be considered as a LB, produced in the same manner as sperm by Meiosis process by sex cell.

iii) When these *sammurcham- manushya* bodies fuse together, both of them die. A new cell is formed as a zygote, which forms a blastocyst and a Yoni to receive a new soul. It develops further as a *Garbhaj* manushya.

6. Different Phases and States of Cells



7. Status of Immature Cells Outside the body

Both types of immature cells come out from the body in 14 ways i.e., with excreta, blood, pus etc. as non-living-beings. After the Atma-pradeshas snap their ties with them, they may duplicate themselves a few times and then die.

Stem Cells

But the Stem and poly-potent cells behave as separate entities, like Yonis. They react with the Aerobic surroundings and start characterization and development, on receipt of fresh Souls, as 5-sensed *Apariyapta* Sammurcham Manushyas.

They get food from its surrounding source through its cell-covering. They can complete up to 4 Paryaptis, before they die.

This suggests that the stem cells, which were working as *apparatus / Robot*, start functioning as Yonis, when detached from the *Atma-Pradesha* of the main body (*Avashyak – Pratikraman*).

This is an important phenomenon. Inside the body, they cannot do this, even after detachment from the main Jivātmā (in Excreta etc.), because of probably the prevailing Anaerobic conditions ?

8. Table-1: Properties of Mature Cells

SN	NOMENCLATURE	SYMBOL	PROPERTY	REMARKS
1a.	Mature cell (2 Types)	C_m	Once ejected, it detaches from main Atma Pradesh (AP) and is an independent Living-Being (LB)	What type of Jiva it is? It must be Sammurchhim Jiva. It cannot be Garbhaj type.
1b	Sperm Cell	C_s	Sperm dies during fusion. A sachitt Yoni is created. A new Soul enters.	Yoni gets a new Soul in blastocyst (It is enveloped, but not integrated by AP of parent).
1c.	Ova / Egg Cell	C_e	$C_s + C_e = C_h = 5$ sensed Garbhaj	A new Jiva after Zygote grows ,, ,,

9. Table-2: Properties of Immature Cells

SN	NOMENCLATURE	SYMBOL	PROPERTY	REMARKS
2.	Immature Cells (Characterized or Specialized cells)	C_{im} or C_{sp}	When they come out of Body, they get Aerobic conditions. But they can only multiply as per coded instructions for a few generations. Inside the body they are Sachitt parts (<i>Upkaran</i>) of the Main body under Anaerobic conditions. They can form Tissues.	They get disconnected with AP. They die as cell only
2a	Multi-potent cell	C_{mp1}	Form specific type of cells (C_{sp}) and Tissues, as per Karmic load of main AP	Remain connected with AP
2b	Stem Cell	C_{mp2}	Can form any type of cell/Tissue. Outside the body, they can multiply, as Sachitt Yonis. They can also start developing, on receipt of fresh Souls, as Sammurchham Manushya	Sammurchham Manushya dies as Aparyapta only (4).

10. What type of Jivas are the Characterized Cells, outside the human body?

Q1: Is it single sensed or *Aparyāpta* of 5-sensed *sammurcham* human(SM)?

It duplicates because of its coded genes, but cannot be called a human, because it cannot develop any other cell-type or Tissue or human faculties.

It remains only as a part of a tissue, as *Upakaraṇa*.

Q2: How many sense organs it has?

For duplication due to coded genetic instructions, two functions have to be performed by the cell, viz, touch and mouth for its growth and division.

Q3: Should we conclude that the other 3 senses are not developed or they are totally absent?

As a matter of fact, these cells don't have any regular sense organ. For example, duplication of characterized cells, outside human body is a mechanical process. They come under *acitta* cell / meat category.

Inside the body they remain connected with its *ātma-pradrśa* of its *jīvātmā* (Soul) and perform duplication as well as Tissue formation under the explicit command of its AP and its Karma.

They do not develop into separate *Jīva*.

Their growth and division activities are under the instructions of main Soul.

As such they are neither *sSammurchhim* nor *nigodiya* Living-Being.

11. Whether human body cells can be regarded as NigodiyaJīva?

For the last more than 10 years, there has been a difference between the opinion of Dr Anil Jain and Prof Ashok Jain (Gwalior) with that of mine. I give below my opinion.

11.1. If infinite number of similar type of single sensed *jīvas* can share one common body, they are termed as *nigodiyajīva*. They are one sensed *jīva* and belong to normal plant bodied beings(*sādhāranvanaspatikāya* - *Swet*).

11.2. However, one human cell may or may not contain evenone *jīva*, although it has potential to multiply innumerable times to produce similar cells.

11.3. Notice the difference between the two.

i) In the former case, one body has infinite number of *jīvas*, physically present in it. At any moment, if that body is broken into two, each will have infinite no. of *jīva* residing and breathing together in it.

ii) On the other hand, a human cell body has a potential to produce by duplication innumerable cells. But by breaking the body of a cell into two parts may not yield even two *jīvas*, although it had a high potential for multiplication. As such the cell body seems to have only one such physically present *jīva*, which has only potential to multiply.

As such the characteristics of both types of *jīvas* are clearly and conclusively different. That means, a Cell is not *nigodiya*.

Q4. Whether human body cells can be regarded as NigodiyaJīva?

As per the Canonical treatises, when the cells come out of human body (in 14 ways) and break its ties with the parent *ātma-pradeśa*, they get potential to produce *sammurcham* Human-beings (SM) within a span of less than 48 minutes.

When the cell was inside the human body and was pervaded by the *ātma-pradeśa* (*cetanā*), it did not possess the capability to produce SM ! Now we understand scientifically, that this happens due to the difference in effect of Anaerobic and Aerobic surroundings. But this can happen only when cell is not considered to be a *nigodiya*, because a single-sensed *nigodiya* body cannot become a 5-sensed *yoni* to produce humans.

Table-3; Comparison of different types of living- Cells

SN	Criteria	Human Cells	Bacteria / Virus inside the Body.	Nigodiya
1.	Food	Food is prepared and supplied to them by <i>Jīvātmā</i> . They are not parasites.	They are parasites. Get food from foreign cells.	All the <i>nigodiyas</i> in a body take breath or food jointly at a time.
2.	Soul	The cell does not have soul, but is pervaded by main	Each one has its own independent Soul.	Each cell has innumerable souls in

		body Soul.		it.
3.	Cetanā	They harbour cetanā (Consciousness) and remain connected with the main body Soul and follow its instructions.	They are not pervaded or connected with the main body Soul.	They are not pervaded or connected with the main body Soul.
4.	Reprod-uction	They grow and multiply as per the robotic memory card. They do not form a colony, but are used for repairs of tissues. It is not reproduction, but is a duplication process. In fact a robot like cell cannot be considered to be a Living-Being.	Virus can also form a single-sensed cell colony and go on extracting food from foreign cells.	Since science does not recognise any such type of <i>Jīva</i> , its exact reproduction mechanism is yet to be properly understood. Although the reproduction mechanism of Potato is known in general, but what happens to innumerable <i>jīva</i> inside its cell, has to be understood.
5	Excreta	It is generally not seen.	It is generally not seen.	Not known for a cell, containing innumerable souls.

Q5. What exactly is a cell then ?

As mentioned above, it is not a *Jīva*, but an instrument (*uUpkaraṇa*) for the main *Jīvātmā*. It can easily explain transplantation etc. This was also clear by our experiment of fixing of an additional Bone on to a leg of a dog, which will be explained in a separate write up (Point 12).

So far we have assumed that only Stem cells, because of their multi-potent quality, have the capability to become *yonibhūta*, but it may also be possible that all types of characterized cells might be capable of becoming *yonibhūta*, after 48 minutes of their exit from the body, in aerobic environment to produce *aparyāptaSM*, as per the *nāma-karma* of the transitory souls.

It should be possible in modern times to find it out by designing some appropriate experimental set-up.

12. Our Experiment with Cells

Some medical scholars in Germany failed in their experiments of grafting a leg bone on the leg of another Dog, just by tying process, as is the prevalent practice for Trees / plants. (The cells were not becoming a part of the new *Jīvātmā* of Dog, even when appropriate food condition was made available to it.)

They invited the Welding Institute, to find whether the Bio-Cells of bone organ can be welded together. A team of 3 welding experts was formed to work with the Team of Medical Professionals.

i) Expert in dynamics of Mechanical Strength during cooling of liquid state of melting materials (The Team Leader Prof U. Franz)

ii) Expert in Strains and Stresses of welded joints of non-living materials. (Prof R. Schmith)

iii) Expert of Welding by non-thermal processes (Dr Jeoraj Jain)

When the bio-cells of leg bone were successfully cold Welded on to the leg of another dog, it became an integral part of that soul and started growing.

The potent cells of the piece (They were not LB) got connected with the AP of Dog through its other similar body cells and started following its instructions to function as an organ. The *Jīvātmā* of dog was able to accept the bone as its own part and supply food to it.

Findings:

The characterized cell (detached from a Soul) was not a Living-Being, but when got pervaded by the AP of another Living-Being, it worked as its instrument to multiply and grow as an organ, under its instructions and supplies.

13. Contents flowing inside the Veins and Organs

A) They are of two types.

i) Living matter, a) like *nigodiyas* and *tras-jīva*(mobile beings), which are dependent on the Parent *Jīva*, but not pervaded by AP (*cetanā*),

b) Human mature cells, which are pervaded by AP

ii) Excreta, a) Stored excreta matter (Bladder, Bowls, Pus, Chest etc.)

b) Circulating Excreta, (Intestines etc.)

c) Human cells leaked in the stored and circulating excreta.

An interesting question arises, as to at which point do they (i) and (ii) get detached from the AP ?

It is known that they become detached, when they are forced out of the human body. But when inside the body, what type of connections the a, b, c type of excreta will have with AP at different locations of their Journey to the exit hole/gate?

B) First let us consider the Food, taken in by the *Jīvātmā*. As per my understanding of Jainism, it postulates that it gets converted sequentially into 7 types of Derivatives. The first is Juice. Then comes blood, meat, fat, bone, *majjā*(probably bone marrow), *vīrya* (probably semen). The first product 'juice' remains uncovered by AP. But as soon as it is absorbed by the body parts, like glands, cells, nerves to produce the next product, they are taken into the fold of AP.

This leads to an important conclusion that all the six derivatives, except the juice, are always pervaded by *cetanā*, so long as they are within the body.

(It is to be properly understood, as to how the bloodless milk, coming out of glands is considered to be in juice form?)

Discussion on point (ii):

Since juice is not pervaded by AP, the excreta, generated by food, should also be remaining outside the regime of AP (*cetanā*). However, it may contain some leaked cells of the other 6 types of AP- pervaded derivatives, as it travels or is stored at specific locations within the body. Because the cells in the various types of excreta (particularly, i) are pervaded by AP and also have anaerobic surroundings, it cannot produce SM there.

(Within 48 minutes after coming out of the body, they start producing SM)

Discussion on point (I b):

How can the mature cells develop as SM? So long they remain stored in the body; they function as 5-sensed Living-beings. But when they are ejected out, either they die or they dry up after some time, depending on the surrounding conditions.

(It is said that these mature cells can, after some time, also produce SM! The mechanism needs to be investigated further.)

14. Conclusion:

Thus it is established that human cells cannot be treated as *nigodiyas*. The Human Soul pervades the whole body, including its cells, tissues and organs. When these parts come out of the body, their tie with the soul is snapped. In that condition they may be attached / transplanted to the body of other soul. The cells also become *yonibhūta* and give birth to special Human-beings, called *sammurcham* human-beings. However, these microscopic beings would die before the full development of *paryāptis*. They remain *aparyāpta manuṣya*.

15. Glossary (Cells in the Body) and Notations used.

- LB = Living-Being,
 - S = Connected with Soul (*ātma pradeśa*),
 - WS = Cells, without Soul- connection
 - Characterisation of cells = It is done on cells by Soul
 - Duplication of cells = It is done automatically by the cell as per the coded instructions engraved on its genes, on availability of appropriate food and surrounding conditions.
 - D & C = Duplicates and Characterizes
 - SM = *sammurchammanuṣya*, / *Reproduction by Agglutination method*
 - ASM = *aparyāpta sammurchammanuṣya* (Not having all the 6 *paryāptis*)
 - PSM = *paryāpta sammurchammanuṣya*
 - *Paryāpti* = *Bio-Potential*. It is the building up of the material potencies at the very beginning of the birth of *Jīva*.
 - *Oz āhāra*: It is the material aggregate, which is consumed by a *Jīva*, in the very first moment of its new birth from the surrounding environment or zygote.
-

JAIN HERITAGE OF PURULIA

– Arpit shah

Since ancient ages, the Purulia district of West Bengal has been bestowed with the fortune of being extremely rich in heritage and culture. As mentioned in one of my previous blogs as well, the *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, states that Lord Mahāvīra visited a region known as *Rāḍh* region shortly after initiation (*dīkṣā*), where he had to face numerous calamities. Also, in the *Bhagavatisūtra* it has been stated that Lord Mahāvīra spent many 'cāturmāsa' in *Panit Bhūmi*, which is a portion of *Rāḍh* region.

As per Encyclopedia Britannica, the geographical & historical indicators state that *Rāḍh* region is a toponym for an area in the Indian subcontinent that lies between the Chota Nagpur Plateau on the West and the Ganges Delta on the East. Although the boundaries of the region have been defined differently according to various sources throughout history, today it is mainly coextensive with the state of West Bengal also comprising some portions of the state of Jharkhand and Bihar in India.

Therefore, it is evident from the above facts that Lord Mahāvīra blessed this region in the 6th century BCE. Further, between the 8th and 12th Centuries CE, many Jains, especially from northern and central India started trading by transporting their ships to Bay of Bengal via various rivers namely Damodar, Kangsabati, Dwarkeshvar, Subarnabaluka, and Shilavati which flow through this region. As their networks spread, these traders evolved from mere trading to exporting various natural resources which were mined from this mineral rich region.

Just like other parts of Bengal, Purulia too faced the vicissitudes of time and yet the people from this part responded lively to every cultural event. Jainism had been one of those cultural events and quite interestingly the local people of this region embraced Jainism first and still today they follow certain folk rituals, the origin of which can be traced back to Jainism who are known as 'Sarāk'. Thus, as the Jain influence spread a lot of Jain temples were constructed not only by wealthy traders, but also local chieftains and ministers under the rule of Anantavarman Chodaganga. Today, Jain idols, temples and ruins have been found in hundreds of villages in the Purulia district which prove that Jainism thrived in the ancient era. Some of them are as below -

1. **Sankra/ Sankda** – Ancient idols of Lord Pārśvanātha and Lord Śāntinātha excavated and worshipped as Dharmaraj.
2. **Anaijambad** - Idols of Lord Ādinātha, Lord Pārśvanātha and Candraprabha bearing the mark of Pāla era excavated.
3. **Sitalpur** – Idol of Ādinātha Bhagawan covisi excavated which is worshipped as Bhairavji. *Bali* (animal sacrifice) is conducted in front of the idol on the Āṣāḍha and Vaiśākḥapūrṇimā
4. **Bhangra** – Chaumukhi idol of Mahāvīra Swāmī, Lord Ādinātha and Candraprabha Swāmī excavated. One idol of Shri Ādinātha Bhagawan is pasted on the back wall of a Shiva temple and worshipped as Bhairava. Sadly, as the idol is kept in the open, local children have damaged parts of the parikar by using the idol as a 'wicket' for playing cricket.

7. **Sanka:** Beautiful Covīsī idol of Shri Ādinātha Bhagawan currently protected by Shree Digambar Jain Tirth Sanrakshini Mahasabha. One Jain idol lying in ruins near the local pond whereas one idol of Shri Ādinātha Bhagawan has carvings of Katisutra.
8. **Rakshatpur:** An exceptionally beautiful idol of Shri Pārshvanātha Bhagwan with carvings of *Katisutra* and a Tirthaankar idol preserved by Shree Digambar Jain Tirth Sanrakshini Mahasabha.
9. **Barra:** A badly damaged Sahastrakut (due to constant pasting of sindoor) and a *Caitya Caturmukhi* shrine is placed outside a Hindu temple.
10. **Telkupi** – 1200 year old ruins of Jain temple which was submerged deliberately under the newly constructed dam by Damodar Valley Corporation without allowing any scope for documentation or translocation. Telkupi was a major Jain settlement with temples and other artefacts dating back to the 9th century Pāla period.
11. **Gurudi:** Idols recovered from Telkupi worshipped here in a shrine maintained by Shree Digambar Jain Tirth Sanrakshini Mahasabha. Idols of Shri Ādinātha along with Bharat & Bāhubalī worshipped here.
12. **Lakhara** – Idols of Lord Ādinātha (*Covīsī*) and Lord Candraprabha (*Pañcatīrthī*) excavated from a field.
13. **Dhadhki** – Idols of Lord Ādinātha, Lord Śāntinātha and Lord Mahāvīra Swāmī excavated, which are worshipped as Kāla Bhairava.
14. **Lagara** – 3 idols of Jain Tīrthaṅkars were excavated and placed in the local Kali Temple. However, many antique idols stolen in the past years from this region as well.
15. **Barmasia** – Idols of Lord Ādinātha, Ajitanātha, Chandraprabha and various *covisis* excavated.
16. **Paruldiha** – A 5ft tall idol of Lord Ādinātha excavated from a villager's house which is worshipped as Bhairava.
17. **Bhasardanga** – *Caumukhī* idol excavated from a field
18. **Tusiama** – Idol of Lord Ādinātha excavated.
19. **Manbazar** – Idols of Lord Ādinātha and Śāntinātha Bhagawan excavated
20. **Polma** – 7ft headless idol of an (unidentified) Jain Tīrthaṅkara excavated along with idols of Lord Ādinātha & Sambhavanātha.

21. **Paglara** – Beautiful idol Pārśvanātha has been excavated which is worshipped by the local villagers as Kāla Bhairava. Despite requests by Jains, regular animal sacrifice conducted in front of the idol.
22. **Charrah** – Ancient relics of Jain temple as well as multiple Jain idols excavated. An idol of Shri Ādinātha Bhagawan used as a ‘*Dvārapāla*’ (gatekeeper) of a Kāli Mata temple.
23. **Golamara** – Ancient 7 ft damaged idol of Lord Mahāvīra without hands worshipped as Bhairava by locals.
24. **Banda** – Ruins of an Ancient Jain temple.
25. **Para** – 2 temples and an ancient idol of a Tīrthankara worshipped as Bhairava where a sacrificial altar has been newly constructed for regular animal sacrifices.
26. **Deulghata** – Ruins of beautiful Jain temples.

While these ruins recount the glorious past of Jainism, one such village in the Purulia district stands out – Pakbirra. Situated around 50 kms from Purulia town on the Purulia-Pancha road, this village houses a treasure trove for Jains. Pakbirra came into the limelight when a plethora of antiquities related to Jains were discovered along with three temples with unique shape dating back to the 9th & the 10th Century CE. More than 100 years ago, Pakbirra was an open archeological gallery, housing several temples and innumerable Jain statues. Today, after utter neglect only three temples remain standing while several priceless statues are turning into ruins.

Mr. J.D. Beglar, one of the pioneer scholars of Indian archaeology started to explore the place and what he found was quite amazing. In 1872 when he started exploring the place, there were only 3 temples remaining out of 24. The material used to construct these temples was greenish chlorite stone, which is found in abundance in the area. All the temples are built in ‘*rekhā deul*’ style of Odisha school of architecture. In first temple, the entrance is built like a chariot with a corbelled entrance. The second temple also faces north while the third faces east.

These temples, buried several feet upto the level of the wall niches, still have some of the lower façade stones, which give an idea of their appearance. They have the basic *tri-ratha* plan with simplified squad of moldings. The large *āmalaka* fragments lying about, and the stone kalasha’s with lotus buds emerging, make it obvious that most of the temples here belonged to the usual *nagara* order.

The most significant excavation from Pakbirra was an 8 ft high idol of Lord Śīitalanātha/ Padmaprabha standing on a lotus flanked by two celestials with fly-whisks. As the idol is now worshipped as Bhairavnath, a Hindu celestial, the forehead and feet are full of oil and vermilion and a trident placed next to him. Along with the large idol, an idol of *AdhiṣṭhāyikāDevi* was also found which has also been kept next to it. The local population along with the local authorities and the State Government has named this site as “Bhairav Sthān” and a Hindu temple is being constructed where this idol will be worshipped as Bhairavnath. Very soon the remaining traces of Jainism will be lost until the Archaeological survey of India wakes up and takes corrective action. The locals bath here in the nearby pond while the children play cricket creating further damage to this heritage site.

The smallest temple facing the east houses a beautiful idol of Śrī Chandraprabha Swāmī with a *Covīsī*. Although the idol is not damaged, its Parikar which houses the *Covīsī* has been partially destroyed. The other two temples facing the north, house 2 beautiful and undamaged idols of *Lord Ādinātha and Lord Mahāvīra* each with a Parikar housing a *Covīsī*. Another idol of Lord Ādinātha with a Panchtirthi in its parikar is also housed in the third temple.

Apart from these, many other idols of Tīrthānkara's and celestials were also unearthed, which have now been kept in a room which is planned to be converted into a museum. The room houses multiple images of Lord Ādinātha with different hair designs (Lord Ādinātha is represented with locks of hairs as when the Lord was plucking his hairs before *Dīkṣā*, Indra dev requested him that they looked divine and not to pluck them).

Another interesting relic discovered from the excavations was a *Sahasra-paṭa* - a stone plate housing 356 idols of Tīrthānkaras with Lord Ādinātha seated in the middle. Two damaged idols of Lord Pārsvanātha were also found with Dharanendra and Padmāvātī carved on them. While these ruins at Pakbirra are being looked after some members of the Jain community, we still have a far way to go to preserve our heritage. It has to be preserved soon, otherwise no trace of our roots will be left in this region.



Jain idol at Sankra



Recovered Jain idols at Digambar Jain Temple, Anaijambad



Shri Adinath Bhagwan, Sitalpur



Shri Adinath Bhagwan, Sanka



Damaged Jain idol lying in ruins near a pond in Sanka



Idol of Shri Adinath Bhagwan at Sanka



Idol of Shri Parshwanath Bhagwan at Rakshatpur



Locals playing cards in front of a Jain Chaturmukhi shrine in Barra.



Ruins of Jain temple at Telkupi (Source: Wikimedia Commons)



Shri Adinath Bhagwan, Gurudi



Jain idols at Lakhara (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



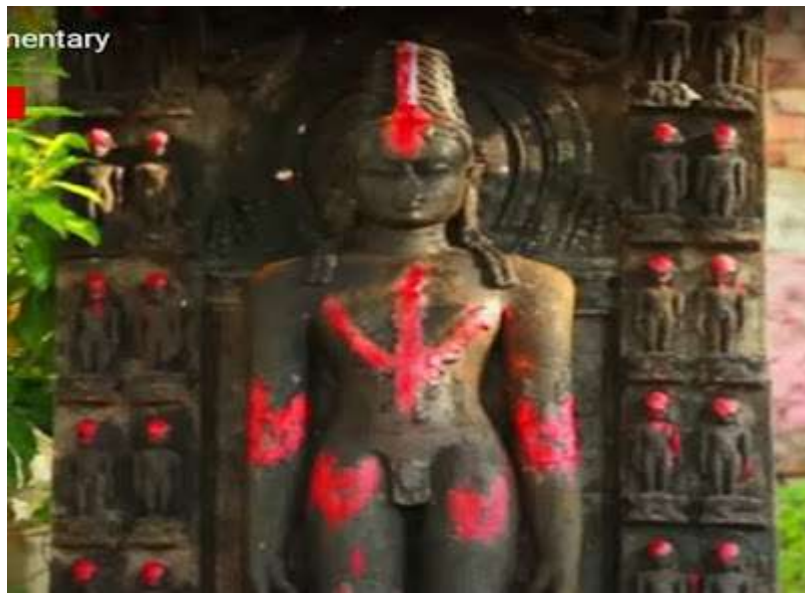
Dhadhki (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Jain idols at Lagara (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Jain idols at Barmasia (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Shri Adinath Bhagwan worshipped as Bhairav at Paruldiha (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Chaumukhji at Bhasardanga (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Shri Adinath Bhagwan, Manbazar



Jain idols at Polma (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Shri Parshwanath Bhagwan, Paglara (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Jain idols at Charrah



Idol of Shri Adinath Bhagwan used as a "dwarpal" (gatekeeper) of a Kali Mata temple



Remains of an ancient Jain temple at Charrah



Jain ruins at Charrah



Damaged idol of Lord Mahavir at Golamara (Source: Bharat Bahubali TV)



Banda Deul (Source: Outlook India)



Para Deul



Deulghata Jain Temple (Source: Wikimedia Commons)



Pakbirra Jain Temples



Pakbirra Jain temple during excavation. Source: British Library



The third and the smallest surviving Jain temple at Pakbirra



8 ft idol of Lord Shitalnath/ Padmaprabh at Pakbirra worshipped as Bhairavnath by locals



Idol of Chandraprabh Swami at Pakbirra



Idol of Lord Adinath at Pakbirra



Idol of Mahavir Swami at Pakbirra



10 idols of Lord Adinath - all with different hair designs at Pakbirra



Idols of various Tirthankar's at Pakbirra



Sahastra Pat at Pakbirra



Damaged idols of Lord Parshwanath with Dharnendra & Padmavati at Pakbirra



Chaumukhi Shrines at Pakbirra

Jain Sculpture of Mahabalipuram

From "Mahabalipurathu Jaina Sirpangal", (Tamil), Mylai Seeni Venkatasamy, 1950 – English translation by M.D. Rajendra Jain



Mamallapuram, also known as **Seven Pagodas** or **Mahabalipuram**, is a town in Chengalpattu district in the Southern State of India, Tamil Nadu. It is on the coastline 58 kilometres (36 mi) south of the city of Chennai. An ancient historic town and a bustling seaport in the 1st millennium CE, is now a beachside tourism center with a group of stone cut monuments declared as UNESCO world heritage site, it is one of the most visited towns in South India.

Mamallapuram was one of two major port cities by the 7th century in the Pallava kingdom. Along with economic prosperity, it became a center of a group of battle monuments carved out of rock. These are dated to the 7th and 8th centuries: rathas (temples in the form of chariots), mandapas (cave sanctuaries), giant open-air rock reliefs such as the famous *Descent of the Ganges*, and the Shore Temple dedicated to Shiva, Durga, Vishnu, Krishna and others. The contemporary town plan was established by the British Raj in 1827 (Wikipedia).

The rock relief sculpture popularly known as "Arjuna's Tapas" or "Descent of the Ganges – Bagiratha's Tapas", it is actually a sculpture based on Jaina scripture "Trishasti Shalaka Purusha Caritra" which talks about the 63 worthy persons of jain legend. This hypothesis was presented, before the Archaeological Society of South India in 1947 in the presence of Prof. Rao Saheb A. Chakravarthy, by Tamil historian Mylai Seeni Venkatasamy and it was published as a book, titled "Mahabalipurathu Jaina Sirpam" in the year 1950.

His contentions were;

- If the person in yogic posture of tapas is Arjuna and the devta in front of him is considered as shiva, who are others represented by rest of the images. What is the significance of Nagakumaras, deva ganas, elephants, ganges river, temples, three headless bodies and other figurines.
- As per legend, Shiva went before Arjuna doing penance in the form of a hunter along with Uma devi in the form of hunter's wife. There is no such depiction in this image.
- If the scene is that of Bagiratha's tapas, the deity in front of him is not depicted as Shiva as the figure has no symbolic trident or shiva's locks of hair. In fact, Ganga's forceful descent was arrested by the locks of shiva's hair. Why Gangadara Murti was not depicted here. In fact, Gangadara's beautiful sculptures were made by Pallavas in many other places, including at Mahabalipuram in Dharma's ratha.
- **The scene is a vivid depiction of the life of Sagara Chakravarti from the period of Jain Tirthankara Ajitanatha. This story is found in jaina tamil literature viz. Sri Puranam (University of Madras,Ed.1946) Jivasambodanai (Jain Siddanta Noorpathippu Kazagam, Ed.1957) and in Hindi Trishasti shalaka Purusha Caritra and its English translation by Helen M. Johnson (Gaekwad's Oriental Series).**

Sagara and Ságara's Story

Long time ago, an emperor named Jitasatru was ruling Bharata continent. He had two sons, the elder named Ajita and the younger sibling named Sagara. The elder son renounced the worldly life and became Ajithanatha, the second Jaina Tirthankara. The younger one, Sagara became the emperor after his father. Once, Sagara along with his retinue visited Kandaprabada mountains where he performed three days of fasting to propitiate an Indra by name Natyamalaka. In appreciation, the Indra appeared before Sagara and granted bountiful wealth and promised to help whenever required. The emperor again performed another fast for three days at the banks of Ganges and obtained nine great boons (Navanidhi), viz.

1. Naisarpam – to build houses, villages, towns with embankments and arsenal
2. Pandugam – a storage full of agro products, rice, wheat, pulses and other food
3. Pingalam – a storage of ornamental materials for men, women, horses and elephants
4. Mahapadmam – a storage of dress materials of soft silk in multi colors and dresses of many shapes
5. Kalam – a device that presents past, present and future and scenarios of outcomes in crafts and agriculture.
6. Mahakálam – which produces precious stones and metals, iron implements, etc.
7. Mánavam – which creates armed forces of cavalry, elephants, chariots, infantry and armaments.
8. Sangam – which creates objects of entertainment such as flute, harps, etc.
9. Sarva nidhi – gives seven types of wealth which are living beings (jivaratna) and seven types of wealth that are inanimate (ajivaratna).

Enjoying such wealth and happiness for a long time, Sagara begot 60,000 sons known as Ságara Kumaras, the eldest of them is known as Janu. These sons at an appropriate age approached their father and requested his permission for going on a tour of their empire. Sagara gave them the permission and sent with them six jivaratnas (excluding the 7th, viz. maids) and seven ajivaratnas. After touring many countries and towns under

their dominion, the Ságara Kumaras reached **Ashtapad mountain which is the Mount Kailash where their forefather and the first Tirthankara Bagawan Rishabadeva attained mokasha**. Emperor Bharata, son of Rishabadeva had constructed a temple here with an image of himself listening to the discourse of Rishabadeva.

After visiting this temple, the Ságara Kumaras felt that the wealth of the temple may be plundered in the future era of Dushama and wanted to fortify it. Hence, using the one of the ajivaratna, viz. Danda ratna, they dug out a mote around the temple. As the Danda ratna was very powerful, it disturbed the subterranean world. Its inhabitants, Nagas became terrified and their king named Jwalanapraban came over and looking at them angrily asked why are they destroying their abode bavanaloga and their behavior is inappropriate for the sons of Sagara who is the brother of Tirthankara Ajitanatha. Janu, the Ságara Kumara, replied that it was unintentional, and they wanted only to fortify the temple and assured the Naga kind that no harm will come to them. Then they used Danda ratna again to bring the water of the Ganga. The water filled the deep mote and also flooded the Nagaloga. Nagaraja, the Jwalanapraban got angered as an elephant pierced with the elephant goad (ankus) and came near the Ságara Kumaras. Due to anger, the poison in his eyes burnt all of them to ashes. The waters of Ganga, after filling the mote started to flood villages and countries around Mount Kailash. Hearing their plight, the grief stricken emperor Sagara, ordered his grandson Bagirata to take the Dand ratna and divert the Ganga to the sea. And Bagirata completed this task.

It is this story that is depicted in the Mahabalipuram rock panel.

Discovering Sagara's story in the Mahabalipuram rock panel sculpture



Figure 1

The above picture is the left panel of the sculpture for the viewer. The yogi with sunken belly, over grown hair and beard, standing on one leg with raised hands is Sagara chakravarti performing tapas at Kandaprabada mountains. Indra Natyamalaka is standing before him with four hands and holding his vajra dandayuda weapon. In various Jain literature Indra is depicted with four hands. But in Saiva or Vaishnava sculptures Indra is depicted with two hands only. (Refer; Saiva Vaishnava Baudha Jaina Sirpakalai, p.101-105, published as article in 1008th publication commomerative issue of Saiva Siddantha Noorpathippu Kazagam, 1961. Author – Mylai Seeni Venkatasamy).

Also seen near Sagara and Natyamalaka are six dwarf figures. There are two more dwarfs on top left of the panel totaling eight dwarf figures. Along with these eight boodha gana one can also count 8 pairs of deities which appear to flying in the sky. These eight pair deities and boodha gana represent the eight of the nine nidhis or boons received by Sagara through tapas. Each nidhi had one deva leading it with a force of thousand boodhas. Thus there were eight devas and eight thousand boodhas serving Sagara. The devas are depicted with their consort devis and thousand boodha ganas are represented by one dwarf figure. On account of space constraint eight thousand boodha ganas are represented by eight dwarf figures. While deities are shown as hovering in the sky, the ministers and other members of the king’s retinue are shown with arms standing on the ground. The forest environment of the Kandaprabada hills is shown by animal figures of lion, tiger, deer, monkeys, etc.

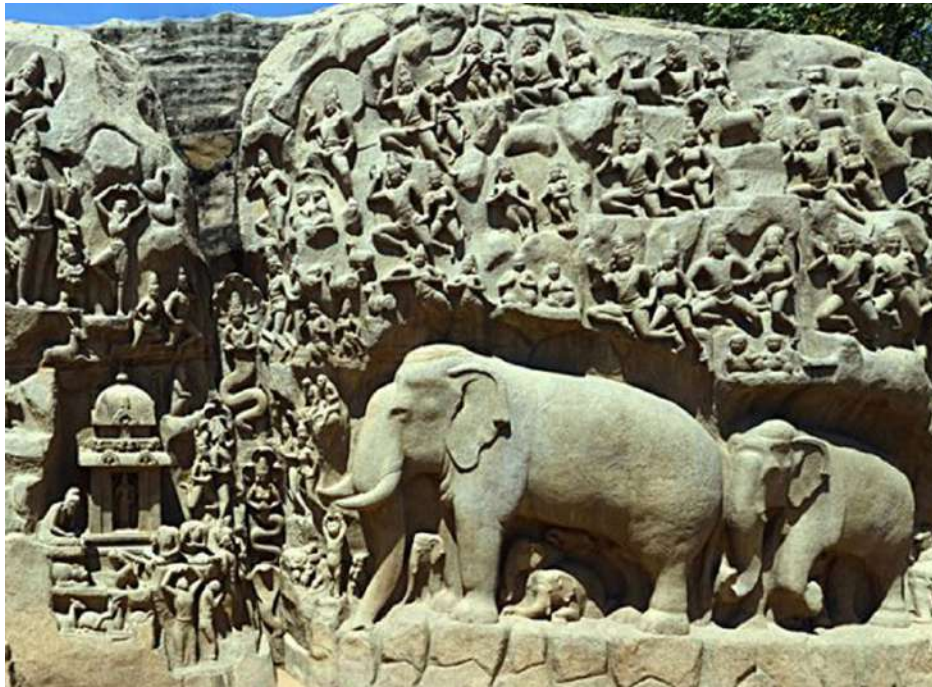


Figure 2

The picture above is the panel on the viewer’s right. This represents Sagara’s ninth nidhi, viz. sarva ratna which includes seven jiva ratnas and seven ajiva ratnas. Jiva ratnas are, gruhapathi, senapathi, viswakarma, prohit, horse, elephant and maids. Ajiva ratnas are chakra, imperial umbrella, sword, danda (shaft), choodamani (precious stone) and kakini (for illumination). The nidhi for entertainment and musical instruments is depicted as kinnaras, half bird half human figures. So far we have seen about Sagara Chakravarti’s tapas and his getting nine boons by that austerity.

There is also a scene depicted wherein, before a temple a sage is worshipfully listening to the lord. This is a representation of the Rishabadeva’s temple at Kailash built by Bharata Chakravarti. It is his image which is worshipping at the temple. Though it is contemporarily explained as some sage, It should be noted that in

ancient India even kings and emperors grew hair and beard. Near this temple a river and images of naga raja and devi are sculptured. It is wrongly interpreted as Ganges, whereas it is the deep mote dug by Sāgara Kumaras. The snake figures are Jwalanaprabhan, his queen and other nagas. This is the scene capturing their first warning to Sāgara Kumaras. It can also be seen that there are three headless bodies and facing them are elephants. Pallava king Mahendra Varman was a scholar in Sanskrit. This sculpture perhaps elucidates his signature involvement in sculpting this. The headless bodies represent the death of Sāgara Kumaras. As all the sixty thousand sons of Sagara king have died, three headless bodies are shown to signify multiple people based on Sanskrit grammar which has three counts viz. single, dual and multiple. Similarly, the leading elephant is beautifully sculptured to show its anger in the eyes. The elephants represent the deities of Nagaloga led by Jwalanaprabhan. In the story, when the nagaloga gets inundated by flooding waters of the Ganga, Jwalanaprabhan came out with fury in his eyes and the fire in his eyes were so poisonous, it burnt all the sixty thousand sons of Sagara. Sculpting nagas as elephants instead of snakes in the second instant is also the poetic liberty of the sculptor as the word “nāgam” in Tamil can mean either elephant or snake as per context.



Figure 3

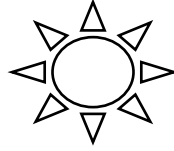
In picture 3 above, we find few men. One of them is carrying a pot over his left shoulder. People call it a priest carrying water for temple ceremonies like abhishek. But the person carrying the ashes/bones of the dead people to disburse in the water. While Bagiratha diverted the Ganga waters towards sea, the ashes of the dead were washed away the river. Tirthankara Ajithanath swamy puran states that the practice of disbursing dead people’s ashes in the Ganga started with Sāgara Kumaras. Another man nearby is seen holding something long and heavy on his shoulder. People misinterpret it as a man squeezing his wet clothe and some as a Greek cornucopia. However, more appropriately it is the Dandaratra with which was used to dig the mote and also used by Bagiratha to divert the Ganga.

While carving the Rishabdev temple at Kailash, it is seen that image of Vishnu had been sculpted. The reason could be that in Srimad Bagavad, it is said that Rishabdev is an avatar of Vishnu and thus we find here Rishabdev in the form of Vishnu.

Apart from the images relevant to the story of king Sagara, some animal figures such as monkeys, tiger, a cat in meditation with mice playing around were also done to beautify the panel.

This story of Sagara could have been popular in 7 AD when Jainism was at its peak in Tamil Nadu and almost everybody would have been aware of this. Also the motive behind sculpting this story would have been to emphasize on jaina principle of karma, be it the sons of a powerful emperor who has greatest of the boons such as navanidhis.

The sculpture reminds the viewers about one of the twelve meditations enjoined upon jains, viz. Anitya bhavana (meditation on transient nature of life). The meditating cat and mice running around signifies the jain characteristic of samata bhava (equanimity) while observing austerities. One has to give up desires and hatred to be a true yogi. The sculptor once again proves his intellect in selecting cat and mice as characters to show forgotten enmity and also satirically bring before the viewer the tamil proverb rudraksha poonai (rudraksha cat). Mahendra Varman was famous for his satirical work on contemporary religions "Mathavilasa Prahasanam" written in Sanskrit. He was a follower of Jainism before converting to Shaivism.



Ref: Mahabalipurathu Jaina Sirpam, Mylai Seeni Venkatasamy (1950), III Ed. 2004. In the year 2000 Govt. of Tamil Nadu has nationalised all his writings.

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