

# Jainism and Jaina Culture in India



*Edited by*  
**Projit Kumar Palit**



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## Contents

Foreword	vii
Prologue	ix
Introduction	xi
List of Plates	xix
Contributors	xxi
1. Jainism and Jain Culture in General <i>Swami Suparnananda</i>	1-6
2. Asceticism as Propounded in the Jain Canons <i>Jagat Ram Bhattacharyya</i>	7-16
3. The Abode of the Jinas Adjoining the Eastern Indian Plateau: An Archaeological Study <i>Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay, Swati Ray</i>	17-69
4. Jaina Sarvatobhadra Pratimas or Camukhas from Purulia District of West Bengal: An Iconographic Discourse <i>Shubha Majumder</i>	70-92
5. Jainism in Bengal from a Literary and Archeological Point of View <i>Anupam Jash</i>	93-109
6. Jaina Sculptural Remains from Satpatta Village, District Bankura, West Bengal <i>Rupendra Kumar Chattopadhyay, Swati Ray, Shubha Majumder and Dipsikha Acharya</i>	110-120
7. Study of Jaina Art as a Source of Indian History and Culture <i>Maruti Nandan Pd. Tiwari &amp; Shanti Swaroop Sinha</i>	121-128



## Jaina Sarvatobhadra Pratimas or Caumukhas from Purulia District of West Bengal: An Iconographic Discourse

—Shubha Majumde,

*Caumukha* is a very popular votive object among the Jains, which is a miniature shrine-like object representing the Tirthankaras in each of the four faces. This object is in fact an essential accompaniment of Jaina monastic establishments and variously known as *caumukha*/*caumukhi* or *caturmukha* or *sarvatobhadra pratima*. The antiquity of this quadruple art object among the Jains is evident from the Kushana level finds at Kankali Tila, Mathura (Shah 1955:11-12). The site yielded a large number of this type of quadruple images having four Jains on four sides, facing the cardinal directions. Some of these art objects are inscribed with the term *pratima sarvatobhadrika* on their pedestals which was useful in identifying such sculptural specimens (Smith 1946: 47). The term *pratima sarvatobhadrika* might be taken to mean 'auspicious from all sides' and these of images later became popular as *caumukhas*. It must, however, be remembered that not all the four-fold images found from Kankali Tila, Mathura have inscriptions referring to them as *pratima sarvatobhadrika*.

Jainism, one of the important religious ideologies in ancient Bengal, has scattered its archaeological antiquities across the length and breadth of this part of the Indian subcontinent. During the extensive explorations in different regions of ancient Bengal, I came across varieties of archaeological assemblages associated with Jainism in the form of images of Tirthankaras, Yakshas and Yakshis, *caumukhas* and architectural fragments (Mukhopadhyay 1984:156-



164; Bhattacharya *et. al.* 1986; Chakrabarti 1993; Chattopadhyay 2010; Chattopadhyay and Acharya 2010, pp. 9-31; Chattopadhyay, Ray and Majumder 2011-12 & 12-13: 119-152; Majumder 2013:1250-1260; Majumder and Biswas 2012: 262-285; Ray, Chattopadhyaya & Majumder 2015: 226-8). *Caumukhas* account for a large number of these recorded finds. Different varieties of this sculptural specimen were reported from the different sites of ancient Bengal (Majumder 2012: 33-37). The present discourse will try to highlight the artistic features of Jaina *Caumukha* / *Caumukhi* or *Caturmukha* or *Sarvatobhadra Pratima* images till recorded from the different sites of Purulia district of West Bengal. At present some of these specimens are kept on the sites and some are displayed in local museums in this district. The iconic details of the documented *caumukhas* along with the brief details of the archaeological sites are as follows:

#### (A) Pakbirra

The present site, which seems to have been the most prolific heritage site (Bhattacharya *et. al.* 1986; Chakrabarti 1987: 351-357) for the reconstruction of Jaina religious traditions in West Bengal, is situated about 56km south-east of Purulia town under the Pancha Police station and in close proximity to the western border of District Bankura. Periodic visits by the British administrators at the site from the middle half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century unveiled its rich cultural heritage; their reports simultaneously inform about the gradual deterioration of the site as well as its cultural paraphernalia. The site now presents three standing *tri-ratha*, single-celled temples and numerous sculptures of Jaina ideology (42 specimens of Jaina Tirthankaras, images of Ambika, 5 specimens of Jaina tutelary couple, 1 *Ashtapadatirtha*, besides four *caumukha* shrines and miscellaneous sculptures, comprising both complete and fragmentary/broken specimens).

- The present *caumukha* (57.5 x 23cm) is representative of a *pidha deul* (Fig. 1). The shrine has two mouldings in the *pabhaga* region—just above these mouldings on the four facets stands a Tirthankara in *kayotsarga*, under niches formed by stout pilasters relieved with criss-cross floral designs supporting the lower most *pidha*. The four Tirthankaras are Chandraprabha, Santinatha, Rsahabhanatha and one is not identified. The Tirthankaras stand under a *chhatra* and





Fig. 1 : Caumukha from Pakbirra

the shrine is decorated by an *amalakashila* and was most probably surmounted by perhaps a *kalasha* which is now lost.

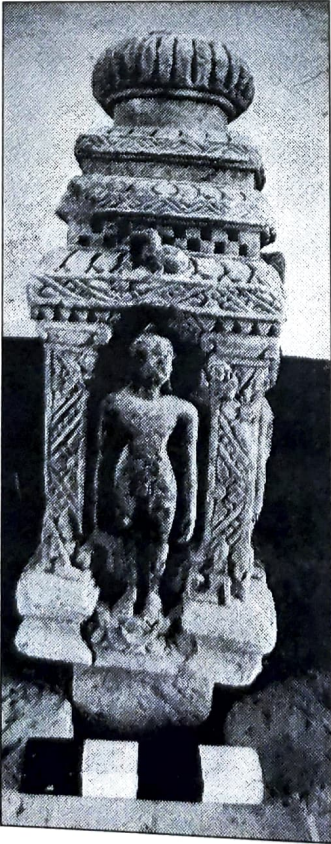


Fig. 2 : Caumukha from Pakbirra

are attended by seated *camaradhara* on either side. Very small figures of *vidyadharas* holding garlands project from the top of the pilasters flanking the Jainas. The *gandi* of the shrine has three *pidhas* with intervening recesses, the lowermost of which is perforated and shaped like windows. The *pidhas* are embellished with horizontal bands of criss-cross floral festoons and petals. At the top of the lowest *pidha*, on all four facets, there is a figure of a swan pecking at a garland with its beak. The top of

- This *caumukha* (Fig. 2) is very similar to the earlier one. It measures 52x18cm. In this specimen the *shikhara* has only two *pidhas* which are separated by a comparatively large recess with perforated window designs. Four Tirthankaras are seated in *dhyana* on a *padmasana* on the four facets of this *caumukha*. Their respective *lanchhanas* are carved in the centre of the lotus seats and it is on the basis of these *lanchhanas* that the four Tirthankaras are identified as Tirthankaras Ajitanatha, Candraprabha, Santinatha and Neminatha. The lower *pidha* shows, on all four facets, figures of a swan couple holding a long garland with their beaks. The crowing element of the



shrine is a thick and broad *beki* surmounted by a large *amalaka*. The pedestal of this *caumukha* is decorated with a double-petalled lotus.

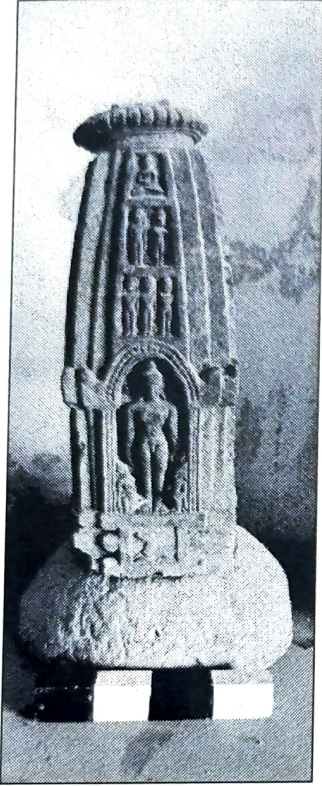


Fig. 3 : Caumukha from Pakbirra

- This *caumukha* (44x16cm) is architecturally different (Fig. 3) from the earlier two specimens and it is represented in the form of a miniature *rekha* temple of the *tri ratha* type. The *padapitha* consists of three mouldings projecting outwards, at the centre of which are shallow niches which extend over the four sides of the *caumukha*; these niches consist of the *lanchhanas* of the respective Tirthankaras. Above the *padapitha*, deep niches have been carved on the extended plan of the central projection, each containing a standing Tirthankara in *kayotsarga* posture with the attendant figures. On the basis of their respective *lanchhanas* the Tirthankaras are identified as Rsabhanatha, Candraprabha, Santinatha and Parshvanatha. Just

below the feet of the Tirthankara Rsahabhanatha, a single-line inscription is noticed. However, the present condition of this inscription is very bad and it is very difficult to decipher it properly. The upper facets of the niches projected outward in the shape of a *chaitya* motif, flung out on two sides which rest on thin pilasters. On the *shikhara* portion of this *caumukha* are to be found shallow niches arranged in vertical order, which hold Jaina figures in diminishing numbers from the top. The damaged flat *amalaka* is capped by a stunted pot.

- This *caumukha* is rather simpler than the earlier ones, although it is really important for it's a short dedicatory inscription. This *rekha*-type miniature shrine (Fig. 4) has a *tri ratha* plan having on each of its four sides the figure of a Tirthankara standing in *kayotsarga* posture under the decorated trefoil arch. The





Fig. 4 : Caumukha from Pakbirra

with three *ratna patras* and a figure of a kneeling devotee in *anjali mudra*. Just below this, the lower moulding contains a short inscription—this is most probably a dedicatory inscription. This shrine has a short *beki* surmounted by an *amalaka* crowned by a small pot. It measures 47x12cm

### (B) Chharra

The site Chharra (23°22'N and 86°25'E) is situated 4 miles north-east of Puruliya town on the Barakar road under the jurisdiction of Puruliya Mafashal (Chakrabarti 1993: 128). It is quite interesting that the site stands on a large hill outcrop. It is a renowned village of religious significance that received the attention of several scholars from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Periodic visits by the British administrators at the site from the middle half of the 19th century have unveiled its rich cultural heritage. At the same time, their reports also inform about the gradual deterioration of the site as well as its cultural paraphernalia. The present author explored the site and documented several Jaina sculptural remains from three different localities i.e. Basanti Devi Mandir, Shiva Mandir and Dharmaraj Mandir. In front

Tirthankaras are attended by miniature bejewelled *chamaradhara* on either side. The *padapitha* consists of three lower mouldings and one upper mouldings and one upper moulding (just below the *padapitha* of the Tirthankara), at the centre of which are found the *lanchhana* of the respective Tirthankaras. On the basis of these *lanchhanas* we are able to identify the four Tirthankaras as: Rsahabhanatha, Naminatha, Neminatha and Parshvanatha. Tirthankara Parshvanatha stands under a canopy of seven snake hoods; a snake is also depicted on his *padapitha*. The central moulding of one *padapitha* at the side is decorated



of the Dharmaraja Mandir are kept some architectural remains, along with two *chaturmukhas* and a *dvi tirthika* type image (Majumder 2015).



Fig. 5 : Caumukha from Dharmaraj Mandir, Chharra

- The first specimen of *caumukha* or *chaturmukha* shows a miniature shrine (Fig. 5) of Orissan *rekha deul* style. It has a *tri-ratha* plan. The four cardinal sides have images of the Tirthankaras Rsabhanatha, Parsvanatha and Santinatha and another who cannot be identified. The Tirthankaras stand in *kayotsarga* posture on a small lotus pedestal under trefoil arches and are flanked by attendants on both sides. The lotus pedestal of the Tirthankaras consists of their respective *lanchhana*. The *gandi* has three divisions. The central *paga* have each, one row of shallow niches arranged in vertical order, holding Jina figures in diminishing numbers from the top. The remaining *pagas* have *khura*-shaped mouldings. The top of the shrine is decorated by an *amalakashila* and was most probably surmounted by perhaps a *kalasha* which is now lost. The *padapitha* of the present specimen is not visible and it may be assumed to have had some mouldings. This superb piece of miniature shrine which is called by the Jainas as *chaturmukha* or *caumukha* is made of grey-coloured stone. The extant part measures 52x14cm.





Fig. 6 : Caumukha from Dharmaraj Mandir, Chharra

- The next specimen is a slim miniature shrine of Orissan *rekha deul* (Fig. 6) variety. It is square in plan. The four central niches are filled with four standing (*kayotsarga*) Jinas placed artistically under the arches. The lower portion of the specimen is buried underneath, as a result of which it is not possible to identify the four Tirthankaras. The *gandi* portion of this specimen has three divisions. The central *pagas* of the specimen is plain while the other two *kanikapagas* are decorated with *khura*-shaped mouldings. The other features depicted here are identical with those of the previous one and the measurement is also the same.

• Apart from these two *caumukha*, the Haripada Sahitya Mandir Museum in Purulia town possesses another specimen of a Jaina *caumukha* (Fig. 7) collected from this site. The present *caumukha* is a superb



Fig. 7 : Caumukha from Chharra (Now in the collection of the Haripada Sahitya Mandir Museum, Purulia)



artistic specimen and it measures 56x20cm. This specimen is a miniature form of a *rekha deul* and is *tri ratha* in plan. The four central niches are filled with four Tirthankaras standing in *kayotsarga* posture placed on a small lotus pedestal. The images are flanked by attendants on both sides. In the niches the four Tirthankaras are placed artistically under the trefoil arches. The existence of these arches is very interesting because we do not find the use of such arches in the *rekha* temples of Manbhum standing to this day. The *padapitha* consists of three lower mouldings projecting outwards at the side, which again is beset with three upper mouldings in the centre producing a shallow niche showing the respective *lanchhanas* of the Tirthankaras. The four Tirthankaras are Santinatha, Parshvanatha, Candraprabha and Rsahabhanatha. The *gandi* portion of the present specimen has 5 divisions. The central *paga* have each, one row of shallow niches arranged in vertical order, holding Jina figures in diminishing number from the top. The other *pagas* have *khura*-shaped mouldings. This miniature temple most probably was crowned by an *amalaka* surmounted by *kalasha*. Unfortunately, these two are not present.



Fig. 8 : Jaina Caumukha from Chharra  
(Now in the collection of Ramkrishna  
Mission Museum, Purulia)

- Similar type of a Jaina *caumukha* or *caturmukha* from Chharra (Fig. 8) is presently displayed in the Ramkrishna Mission Museum, Purulia. The specimen measures 54 x 18 cm. It is well carved and represents a miniature *rekha deul*, which is *tri-ratha* in plan. The *pabhaga* portion of this specimen has two mouldings and is decorated with the respective *lanchanas* of the 4 Tirthankaras. The *jangha* part has a central niche in the cardinal directions. In the niches, the Tirthankaras (Candraprabha, Santinatha, Parsvanatha and Mahavira) are depicted artistically under a



beautifully carved trefoil arch and is surmounted by a stylized *kirtimukha*. The *shikhara* shows a typical *madhyalata* with some *gavaksha* motifs flanked by *pratiratha* and *karnaratha*. There are no corner *amlakas* on the *karnaratha* composed of *kapotapali* mouldings. The tall *shikhara* is crowned by a heavy *amlaka* surmounted by a small damaged *kalasa*.

- Another image of a Jaina *caumukha* or *chaturmukha* from Chharra is presently in the collection of Indian Museum, Kolkata. A photograph of this specimen was earlier published in *Indian Archaeology- A Review*, 1960-61 (p. 67 & pl. LXXVIII B). It shows the curvilinear form of the roof with vertical rows of decorative features, consisting of replicas of the temple with figures of Jaina Tirthankaras in between them. According to R.C.Mazumdar, 'this is a distinctive feature and not found in any actual temple of this type in Bengal' (Mazumdar 1943: 167).
- The State Archaeological Museum of West Bengal exhibits a damaged specimen of a *caumukha* recovered from Chharra. It measures 31 cm x 15 cm. The *deul* is *tri-ratha* in plan with curvilinear outline of the *gandi*. The *bada* portion is decorated with 3 niches placed vertically, one above the other containing e pairs of Tirthankaras placed in 3 vertical friezes on the *raha* of all the 4 sides. The lower portion of the specimen is completely lost and the crown is also badly damaged (Sengupta and Saha 2014: 248).

### (C) Baramoshya

The site is situated about 1km east of Puncha-Manbazar road and 3 km from Pakbirra. Just at the outskirts of the village, only 1.5 km away, there are structural remains locally know as Deulbhira. In the centre of the village there is a modern temple, constructed by the Shri Bharatvarshiya Digamber Jain (TS) Mahasabha, New Delhi. The temple houses fifteen Tirthankara images along with two *caumukhas* or *Pratimasarvatobhadrikas* and one image of an unidentified female deity.

- Among the two *caumukhas* the finest one is made of grey coloured stone and measures 60 x 18cm. The *deul* is *pancha ratha* in plan (Fig. 9) with the curvilinear outline of a *gandi*. The *shikhara* is decorated with horizontal bands rising in receding steps and the



Fig. 9 : Caumukha from Baramoshya

*chamaradhara* on either side. The *padapitha* of this *caumukha* has three mouldings.



Fig. 10 : Caumukha from Baramoshya

central portion is carved with floral scroll. Unfortunately, the crowning members (*amalaka* and *kalasha*) of this miniature shrine are completely missing. The *bada* portion of this *caumukha* is decorated with 4 arched niches which contain the figures of four Tirthankaras. They stand in *kayotsarga* posture and their respective *lanchhanas* are carved in the centre of the lotus thorn; on the basis of these *lanchhanas* the four Tirthankaras are identified as Rsahabhanatha, Candraprabha, Santinatha and Parshvanatha. The Tirthankaras have miniature figures of

- The other *caumukhas* is highly abraded (Fig. 10) and it is very difficult to identify the three Tirthankaras. Only Tirthankara Parshvanatha is identifiable on the basis of the snake canopy. In the case of the other three Tirthankaras, their respective *lanchhanas* are carved on the centre of the pedestal though the conditions of these *lanchhanas* are very bad. This *caumukha* is more or less to the similar to the earlier one; however, this slim miniature temple is *tri ratha* in plan with three mouldings in the *pabhaga*. In the central niches are



sculptured four standing figures of Tirthankaras under tri-foiled arches. The *gandi* has three divisions of which the central one has some floral decoration. This *caumukha* has a miniature *amalaka* surmounted by an abraded *kalasha*. It measures 48x10cm.

#### (D) Suissa

The site is located about 50 km away from Purulia town under the jurisdiction of Baghmundi. No archaeological vestiges exist at this site anymore—except for a group of sculptures and the remains of Bhumij cemetery. 11 sculptures are presently housed inside an enclosure supposedly constructed by the West Bengal Directorate of Archaeology. Beglar's report (1878/1966: 190) constitutes the references to these same images which were then kept under a tree. Among the sculptural specimens, the icons of different Tirthankaras mainly dominate the assemblage—including two images of Yakshi Ambika and a solitary specimen of a fine quality *caumukha* (Chakrabarti 1993, p. 126). Along with these, a solitary example of a Visnu image and a few pieces of architectural members are also made out in the same assemblage. It may be assumed that these artifacts form a part of the abandoned Jaina temple complex at Deuli.

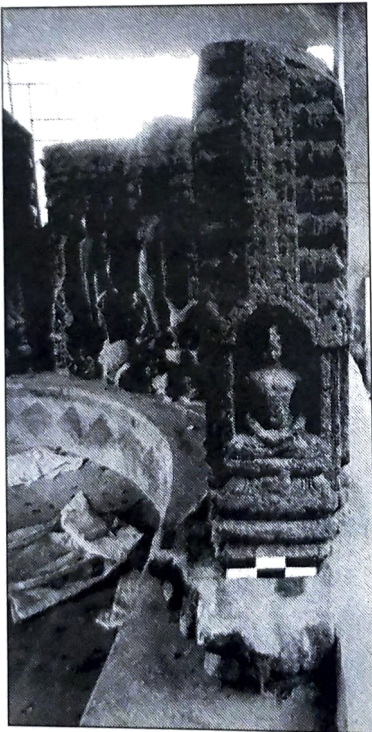


Fig. 11 : Caumukha from Suissa

- The *caumukha* specimen of Suissa is a miniature form of a *rekha deul* and is *tri ratha* in plan (Fig. 11). The four central niches are filled with four Tirthankaras seated in *dhyana* posture placed on double-petalled lotus pedestal. At the centre of their pedestal, respective *lanchhanas* of the Tirthankaras are depicted and on the basis of these we are able to identify the four Tirthankaras i.e. Rsahabhanatha, Santinatha, Parshvanatha and Mahavira. The *padapitha* consists of three mouldings. The *shikhara* is decorated with horizontal bands rising in receding steps, the central *paga* of which is carved by floral

scrolls; it is wide at the base but grows narrow as it mounts to the top. The *beki* portion of this specimen is totally lost. The other *pagas* have *khura*-shaped mouldings. This specimen is made of grey coloured stone and measures 80 x 28cm.

#### (E) Vasardanga

The village is 3km from the famous site of Budhpur on the way to Pairachali and is under the jurisdiction of the Pooncha Police Station. An exquisite image of *pidha deul* variety of *caumukha* is presently worshipped in a newly constructed temple. According to the local villagers they brought this image from a place near the Kansavati river bed. This specimen is made of chlorite stone and measures 80x25cm (Ray, Chattopadhyay & Majumder 2015: 16). Four sides of this miniature shrine have the figures of the Tirthankaras standing in *kayotsarga* and *samapadasthanaka* postures on a full-blown lotus. The Tirthankaras are placed between stout pilasters relieved with floral scroll designs. The *padapitha* has two mouldings, the area between which is decorated with window designs. The respective *lanchanas* of the Tirthankaras are placed just below the lotus pedestal of the Tirthankaras which help in the identification of the Tirthankaras as: Rsahabhanatha, Candraprabha, Parshvanatha and Mahavira. The *gandi* of the shrine has 6 *pidhas* with intervening recesses which are also decorated. The *pidhas* are embellished with two horizontal bands i.e. drooping lotus petals and floral scrolls. Although this is a *pidha deul*, the *gandi* portion has a central *paga*, decorated with three *chaitya* motifs. The crowning element of the shrine is a thick and broad *beki* surmounted by a large *amalaka*.

#### (F) Badra

The site is situated 3 km away from Cheliyama, along the Cheliyama – Barda road. In the center of the village a modern Siva temple is situated and in the left side of the temple an unique Jain antiquity is fixed on a wall. Close to the temple site of the village there is a ritual spot known as *sasthi tala*. In this place a highly abraded Jaina *caumukha* shrine is kept and worshipped as *sasthi* (Majumder 2014: 8). It is made of grey stone and measures 55 x 20 cm. The present *caumukha* looks like a miniature temple, circular in shape, and above the *sikhara* an *amlaka* is depicted. This specimen most



probably looks like Orissan *rekha deul* variety, however, due to the bad stage of condition we felt to study the detail artistic features of this votive specimen. The images depicted on the four faces of the shrine have been carved in low relief. Interestingly, the Jinas carved are in *dhayanasana* posture, which is not regularly found in the *caumukhas* from Purulia. This specimen is assignable to *circa* 12<sup>th</sup> century CE.

### (G) Sonadaha

The village Sonadaha is seven km east of Barabazar, along the road that runs between Barabazar and Amrabera and is under the jurisdiction of the Barabazar Police Station. At the western part of the village in the locality known as Khelaicandi there is a modern temple and it has three specimens of exquisite sculptures, an Rsabhanatha icon installed in the temple and two *caumukhas*. According to the villagers the specimens were brought from a nearby abandoned structural site called Pabanpur. Incidentally, Pabanpur is a major sculptural site in Jharkhand. Herbona, another sculptural site is not far away from this village (Ray, Chattopadhyaya & Majumder 2015: 226-8).



Fig. 12 : Two Caumukhas  
from Sonadaha

Incidentally the shape of the towers and the series of mouldings in both the specimens are different. The decoration on the central *paga* in both the sculptures depicts floriated motifs constituting separate patterns. The *bada* portion is decorated with arched niches containing figure of Tirthankaras one each on four sides. The *sikhara* is decorated with horizontal bands rising in receding steps, the central portion of which is carved by floral scrolls. The bigger specimen measures 20.7 x 6 cm while the other one measures 19 x 6 cm (Fig. 12).

### (H) Bhangra

It is an important archaeological site situated about 8km east of Purulia in the vicinity of Karcha More along the

Purulia-Bankura Road. The site possesses an ancient temple complex that has undergone long courses of renovation. In all probability, a solitary specimen of Jain *caumukha* (Bhowmick 1983: 39-41) along with a figurine of Tirthankara and a Hero stone now installed in the modern construction form a part of the original temple complex. The modern Durga temple of the village also contains a sculpture of Jaina Tirthankara Rsabhanatha measuring 104 x 50 cm.



Fig. 13 : Caumukhas  
from Bhangra

The *caumukha* (Fig. 13), presently kept in the reconstructed Jaina temple, is stylistically important and similar to some other *caumukha* specimens reported from Purulia. This *caumukha* is a slim miniature shrine of Orissan *rekha deul* variety. It is square in plan. The four central niches depict standing Jinas. The lower portion of the specimen is plastered, as a result of which it is not possible to identify the individual Tirthankaras. The images are flanked by attendants on both sides. In the niches, the four Tirthankaras are placed artistically under the trefoil arches. The existence of these arches is very interesting because we do not find the use of such arches in the *rekha* temples of

Manbhum standing to this day. The *gandi* portion of this specimen has three divisions. The central *pagas* of the specimen is plain while the other two *kanikapagas* are decorated with *khura*-shaped mouldings. This miniature temple most probably was crowned by an *amalaka* surmounted by *kalasha*. Unfortunately, these two are not present. This *caumukha* is made of grey-coloured stone and the extant part measures 42x14cm.

### (I) Palma

This is a well known archaeological site situated in the P.S. of Kendra, at a distance of about 20 km from Purulia town along the Purulia-Manbazar road on the left side of river Kasai. A brief



description of the antiquities of this site was first published by E.T. Delton (1866: 186-7). He refers to a temple which was "on a mound covered with stone and brick", and to numerous Jaina Tirthankara images lying at different places. Among these images, one Tirthankara image was larger than life-size which was "broken away from the slab on which it was cut, and the head, separated from the body, lies near". W.W. Hunter in his report (1877: 289-99) also mentioned about the archaeological ruins of Palma. His report about Palma was probably based on the information which was given by Dalton. However, Delton's account about Palma contains a serious error regarding the location of Palma which he states was within a few miles of the station of Purulia and near Cossai river (Delton *op.cit.*). This led Coupland (1911: 263-4) to tag the description of Delton to a place named Balarampur, also of some antiquarian importance. Information about the site also came from the account of Bloch in 1902 (Bloch 1903: 14) when he noticed a heap of debris with some stone pillars and two images of Tirthankaras at this locality (see also Patil 1963: 356). There were some other sculptural specimens reported from this place now housed in the Patna Museum. The Sarak Samity of Dhanbad had constructed a temple at Palma which also possesses three Tirthankara sculptures. During our recent visit at the site we documented ten specimens of different Tirthankara images from four localities of this village. We also noticed a huge structural mound at the entry point of this village which is presently occupied by the villagers. They admit to collecting different architectural and sculptural remains from this mound in different times. The eroded part of the mound which gradually extends to the interior of the village has some exposed structural remains, though presently they are reduced considerably and presently stand in a severely damaged state of condition.

The *caumukha* specimen of Palma is a miniature form of a *rekha deul* and is *panca-ratha* in plan (Fig. 14). The four central niches are filled with four Tirthankaras seated in *dhyana* posture placed on double-petalled lotus pedestal. At the centre of their pedestal, respective *lanchhanas* of the Tirthankaras are depicted and on the basis of these we are able to identify the four Tirthankaras i.e. Rsahabhanatha, Candraprabha, Parshvanatha and Mahavira. The

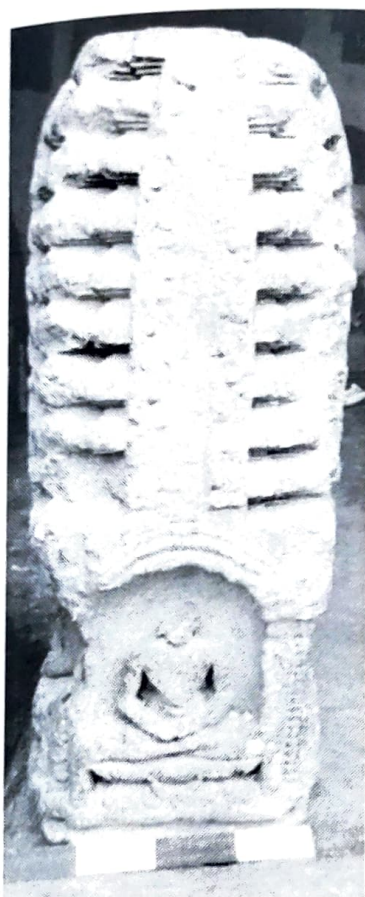


Fig. 14: Caumukha from Palma

*shikhara* is decorated with horizontal bands rising in receding steps, the central *paga* of which is carved by floral scrolls; it is wide at the base but grows narrow as it mounts to the top. The *beki* portion of this specimen is totally lost. The other two *pagas* have *khura*-shaped mouldings. This specimen is made of grey coloured stone and measures 56 x 18cm.

### (J) Arsha

The present site is situated about 6km south-east of Baram. This was an important Jain centre and at present ruins of two abandoned temple complexes are noticed at two different localities of this village, Nakti Deul and Deuli Mandir. Inside the Visnu temple of this village two magnificent Visnu images are installed along with two Jain *caumukhas*. Both these *caumukhas* are the result of high quality of craftsmanship.



Fig. 15 : Caumukha from Arsha





Fig. 16 : Caumukha from Arsha

The smaller one is measure 54 x 15 cm. and the bigger one is 80 x 18 cm. including its page. Both these *caumukhas* are closely similar with the Bhangra and smaller specimen of Sonadaha. These two are made of grey coloured stone and gradually lost the iconographic details due to the regular worship. The smaller one is *tri-ratha* in plan (Fig. 15) with the curvilinear outline of a *gandi*, while the bigger one is *panca-ratha* in plan (Fig. 16). In both the cases *shikhara* is decorated with horizontal bands rising in receding steps and the central portion is carved with floral scroll. In both the *caumukhas* the *amalakas* are visible however, unfortunately, the crowning member i.e., *kalasha* of this miniature shrines are completely missing. The *bada* portions of both the *caumukhas* are decorated with four arched niches which contain the figures of four Tirthankaras. They stand in *kayotsarga* posture and their respective *lanchhanas* are carved in the centre of the lotus thorn; on the basis of these *lanchhanas* in both the cases the four Tirthankaras are identified as Rsahabhanatha, Candraprabha, Santinatha and Parshvanatha. The Tirthankaras have miniature figures of *camaradhara* on either side.

### (K) Tumba

This village is about 3 miles north of Arsha village. Few years ago during the digging of a pond three Jaina images including one *caumukha* were unearthed. These images have been housed in a newly constructed temple at the western part of the village and worshiped as Brahmanical deities. It is very interesting to mention here that the present temple was constructed over the ruins of ancient habitation. In and around this temple, we documented some architectural fragments including *amlaka*, damaged portion of door-jambes and some broken pillars.

The *caumukha* of Tumaba (Fig.17) is badly weathered and measures 50 x 20 cm. This specimen is similar with the *caumukha* from Bhangra



Fig. 17 : Caumukha from Tumba



Fig. 18 : Caumukha from Sirgi

and it is Orissan *rekha deul* variety. The four central niches depict standing Jinas, placed artistically under the trefoil arches, i.e. Tirthankara Rsahabhanatha, Candra-prabha, Santinatha and Parshvanatha. The images are flanked by attendants on both sides.

The *gandi* portion of this specimen has three divisions. The central *pagas* of the specimen is plain while the other two *kanikapagas* are decorated with mouldings. The crowned *amalaka* surmounted by *kalasha* was missing.

#### (L) Sirgi

The present site is about 3km west of Sasandihi an important archaeological site. At the centre of the site, known as Devasthan or Gram-Devatar Sthan, is scattered with the fragmentary pieces of sculptural specimens and architectural members, most of which are assignable to Jaina religious ideology. Among these sculptural remains we documented a Jaina *astapadatirtha* along with a *caumukha*

The present *caumukha* (Fig. 18) is a superb artistic specimen and it measures 46 x 20 cm (Majumder 2016: 240). It has a *tri-ratha* plan. The four cardinal sides have images of the Tirthankaras Rsabhanatha, Parsvanatha and Santinatha and Mahavira. The Tirthankaras stand in *kayotsarga* posture on a small lotus pedestal under trefoil arches and are flanked by attendants on both sides. The lotus pedestal of the Tirthankaras consists of their respective *lanchhana*. The *gandi* has



three divisions. The *shikhara* is decorated with horizontal bands rising in receding steps and the central portion is carved with *khura*-shaped mouldings. The top of the shrine is decorated by an *amalakashila* and was most probably surmounted by perhaps a *kalasa* which is now lost.

#### (M) Raghunathpur

A broken Jaina *caumukha* was also noticed during the recent exploration from the Raghunathpur village, 6 km away from Bandoyan block of this district. The specimen is kept in the modern temple of the village known as Bura Babar Mandir and this is under worship. The *caumukha* measure 44 x 19 cm and the *bada* portions of the *caumukha* is decorated with four arched niches which contain the figures of four Tirthankaras (Fig. 19). They stand in *kayotsarga*

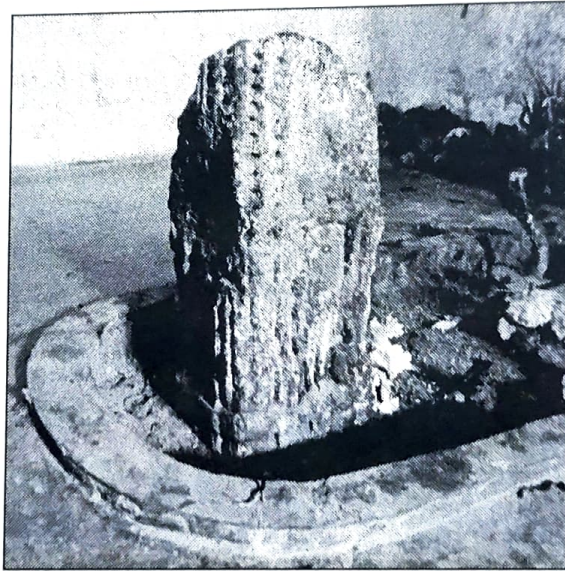


Fig. 19 : Caumukha from Raghunathpur

posture and their respective *lanchhanas* are carved in the centre of the lotus thorn but due to the abraded condition it is not possible to identify the four Tirthankaras.

The above discussion throws enough light on the distribution of Jaina *caumukhas* in the Purulia district of West Bengal. Most of these specimens are well-carved and hence, iconographically deserve special attention. The style of these miniature stone temples shows architectural similarity with the extant temples in this district. Most of these *caumukhas* are of *rekha deul* variety; however, among these collections there are some of *pidha deul* varieties also. All the *caumukhas*

described and discussed above are on stylistic and iconographic grounds may be assigned to the period between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries CE.

After the details study of the *caumukhas* from Purulia district of West Bengal here I have try to discuss about the brief details of the earlier researches regarding the origin and antiquity of the *caumukha* image in Jaina ideology. B.C. Bhattacharya opines: "In place of the Brahmanic *Trimurti*, there is the Jaina Quadruple, popularly known as '*Chaumukhi*'. It has the further name of *Sarvatobhadra-Pratima* i.e. auspicious from all sides. It is a broad obelisk representing the figure of a Tirthankara on each of the four sides. There seems to be no regularity as to the particular Jainas to be sculptured there. But the most important of them have, as a rule, been selected for representation in a *chaumukhi*" (Bhattacharya 1974: 34). On the other hand, R.D. Banerji states that "*Chaturmmukhas* or *caumukhas*, as they are called by Jainas of the present day, were made in a peculiar fashion. Images of four patriarchs occupy the four sides of a miniature temple. In this respect, these *chaturmmukhas* differ from their prototypes of the ancient period e.g. the four-fold images or *pratima sarvatobhadrika* of the Mathura School of sculpture and from the modern and medieval *chaturmmukhas* of Rajputana and Central India. They are more or less like the Buddhist miniature temples of the Eastern School" (Banerji 1981:144-146).

U.P. Shah opined that the idea of the *caumukha* shrine seems to have originated from the concept of *samavarsana* which means "preaching of a Tirthankara after the attainment by him of the *Kevala* knowledge". In the *samavarsana* programme, a raised platform was built and the Jina sat in the centre. However, in order to make him visible to the entire audience who had gathered on all sides of the central platform, three images of the same Jaina were installed on the remaining three sides. Shah's opinion regarding the present form of *caumukha* image, i.e. four different Jaina images on the four sides, is, therefore, advancement upon the original earlier conception of *samavarasana* (Shah 1987: 25-26).

Sudhin De, (1971: 27-30) in his work, supported the view of U.P. Shah regarding the Jaina *caumukha* sculpture and similarly postulates that the installations of such *caumukha* in ancient times were possibly



symbolic representations of *samavasarana*. He highlighted the fact that the *caumukha* sculpture later influenced the *caumukha* variety of temples of which the Paharpur temple was the best example. This form of architecture even travelled outside the country and some of the temples in Indonesia, such as the temples of Chandi Sewn and Chandi Lorojongrong exhibited traits of this architectural form.

Thus, one can conclude that the concept behind the origin of Jaina *caumukha* sculpture was, to some extent, influenced by the concept of *samavasarana*. However, none of the early Jaina works like *Kalpasutra* and the *Paumachariyam* refer to the installation of Jaina images on the remaining three sides during the *samavasarana* programme. It is first mentioned only in the works of the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century CE. It is rather difficult to find any traditional basis for the conception of the Jaina *caumukha* from the Jaina works. On the other hand, we come across a number of such sculptures in contemporary and even earlier Indian art which might have inspired the Jainas to carve Jaina *caumukha*. It is not impossible that certain representations, such as the Sarnath and Sanchi lion-capitals and multi-faced Yaksha figures, and later on some multi-headed Brahmanical deities, may have been the source of inspiration for the *caumukha*. We are also tempted to call these Jaina *caumukha* figures—showing four different Jainas, equal in status on four sides, a form of composite (*samghata*) icon, which thus marked the beginning of the rendering of syncretic images in the Jaina context. Detailed studies are required to determine the proper concept behind the origin of this unique sculptural specimen.

On the basis of the above discursion it is generally observed that the *caumukhas* are generally regarded as votive offerings by the laity and the presence of a good number of *caumukhas* at different sites indicates the popularity of Jainism. The presence of such *caumukhas* at different sites in the present discourse leads us to postulate that perhaps the Jaina establishment of these sites like Pakbirra, Chharra, Baramoshya and Sonadaha had grown into a pilgrimage centre during the early medieval period. These sites need fresh and detailed investigation along with the other sites from where only *caumukhas* were recorded to understand the growth and development of Jaina religious ideology in the *Radha* tract of ancient Bengal.

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