STUDIES IN JAINISM
AND
BUDDHISM IN MITHILĀ
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BY
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To
MY GURU
PROF. DR. J. N. BANERJEA
WITH PROFOUND GRATITUDE
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PREFACE

I took up the study of this work about six years ago, but could not make any appreciable progress because of certain unavoidable circumstances beyond my control. The major part of the work was done in Gorakhpur when I joined the University of Gorakhpur as Assistant Professor of Ancient History, Culture and Archaeology in September, 1958. In 1959 when I re-joined the Patna University I undertook the work again, and I am glad that the work is now complete despite the numerous odds I had to face from time to time.

I am very much grateful to Dr. G. C. Pande, Professor and Head of the Department of Ancient History, Culture and Archaeology, Gorakhpur University (now Rajasthan University); Dr. R. S. Sharma, Professor and Head of the Department of History, Patna University; Śri S. V. Sohoni, I. C. S. and Prof. Radha Krishna Choudhary, Head of the Department of History and Ancient Indian History and Culture, G.D. College, Begusarai, from whom I have received various kinds of help and suggestions in the course of this work. I must express my thanks to my esteemed friend, Śri R. P. Shrivastava, M. Com. who has as usual helped me in all possible ways. I have also to acknowledge my debt to Śri Rājeśwar Jhā, Office-Incharge, Bihar Research Society, Patna and other friends but for whose efforts the publication of this work would have been further delayed. I am responsible for any errors of fact and judgement that may have remained unnoticed, for which I crave indulgence of the learned scholars.

Patna University
16-5-64

Upendra Thakur
ABBREVIATIONS

**ABORI.** Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

**AGI.** Ancient Geography of India (Cunningham).

**AIE.** Ancient Indian Education (Mookerjee).

**AIHT.** Ancient Indian Historical Tradition (Pargiter).

**ARASI.** Annual Reports of the Archæological Survey of India.

**ASB.** Asiatic Society of Bengal.

**ASR.** Archæological Survey Reports.

**CHI.** Cambridge History of India, vol. I.

**DDG.** Darbhanga District Gazetteer.

**DHNI.** Dynastic History of Northern India (Ray).

**EHI.** Early History of India (Smith).

**EI.** Epigraphia Indica.

**HB.** History of Bengal (Majumdar).

**HM.** History of Mithilā (Thakur).

**HMI.** History of Mediaeval Hindu India (Vaidya).

**IA.** Indian Antiquary.

**IHQ.** Indian Historical Quarterly.

**J.** Jātaka.

**JASB.** Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

**JBBAS.** Journal of the Bombay Branch of Asiatic Society.

**JBORS.** Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.

**JBRS.** Journal of the Bihar Research Society.

JIH. Journal of Indian History.
JRAS. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
MDG. Muzaffarpur District Gazetteer.
PAIOC. Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference.
PHAI. Political History of Ancient India (Raychaudhuri.)
PTS. Pāli Texts Society.
ŚB. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
SBE. Sacred Books of the East.
VR. Varṇana Ratnākara.
STUDIES IN JAINISM AND BUDDHISM
IN MITHILĀ
CHAPTER I

Introduction

There are few regions of India possessing an ancient civilisation about which we have less definite historical information than the region north of the Gaṅgā variously known as Videha, Trabhukti or Mithilā. Its history does not centre round feats of arms but round counsels given to higher pursuits of learning. It was in the halls of the city of Mithilā that the great and unparalleled philosophical discussions ever attempted in the history of human thought were held. It was from the battlements of Simrāon that Harisīṅhha, the last king of the Simrāon dynasty long defied the arms of the Muslim conquerors. The extant remains of the cities of these ancient kings still remind us of their glorious part in the political and cultural life of ancient India¹.

The Land:

Mithilā, the ancient country of the Maithilas, is the name of the tract lying between 25° 28' and 26° 52' N. Lat. and between 84° 56' and 86° 46' Long. It is bounded on the north by the Himālaya and on the east, south and west by the rivers Kośī (Kauśikī), Gaṅgā and Gaṇḍaka respectively. It comprised the present districts of Champaran, Saharsā, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, parts of the districts of Monghyr, Bhagalpur and Purneā and the Terāi under Nepal lying between the districts and the lower ranges of the Himālaya. It is a well marked natural region with its size varying in different ages. From the foot hills of the Himālaya in the north to the Gaṅgā in the south it is 100 miles broad and from the Mahānandā in the east to the Gaṇḍakī in the west it is 250 miles long. Its area is 25,000 square miles².

1. HM, pp. 1 ff.
From the Purāṇas we learn that the territory of Mithilā extended from the river Kauśikī in the east to Gaṇḍakī in the west, and from the Gaṅgā in the south to the forest of the Himālaya in the north. The forest on the bank of the Gaṇḍakī was known as Campāraṇya. The Śakti-saṅgama-tantra says that “from the banks of the Gaṇḍakī (Gaṇḍakītiramūrabhya) to the forest of Campā the country is called Videha, also known as Tirabhuerti.”

This Gaṇḍakī-tīra appears to indicate the southern boundary of the country. Campāraṇya (modern Champāran) seems to be the northern boundary. Moreover, the Mahānandā flowing through the districts of Purneā and Maldā (now in West Bengal) is the oldest bed of Kośī that should be taken as the eastern boundary of Mithilā at the very early stage. The name Tirabhukti still survives in its modern form, Tirhut.

The Name:

The name Mithilā or Videha is said to have derived from king Videgha Māthava or Videha Mādhava who came from the banks of the Sarasvatī. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa narrates an interesting anecdote regarding the origin of this name, and we are told that the new settlers are the Māthavas or descendants of Māthava. The name of Mithi Vaideha, the second king in the epic and the Purāṇic lists, is reminiscent of Māthava Videgha.

Nimi, the son of Manu, came to this land of sacrifices and his son Mithi founded a kingdom which was named Mithilā after him. He was also named “Mithi” because of his birth from attrition. He was also called “Janaka” on account of his extraordinary birth and “Videha” as his father was bodiless. The country henceforward came to be known as “Mithilā.”

2. For other details, see HM, pp. 2 ff.
3. 1. 4. 1.
4. See the following pages.
5. For other references see HM, p. 6, fn. 1-2.
The Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas also explain how the country came to be known as Mithilā. The first mythical king of this part of the country was Nimi who was doomed to die by the curse of his preceptor, Vaśiṣṭha who was a great Rṣi and who was enraged by Nimi employing another priest, Gotama, to officiate at a sacrifice without Vaśiṣṭha’s permission. After his death, all the great Rṣis assembled, and after bathing the dead body with its sacred water, attrited it. Out of it was produced a resplendent body who was named Mithi and his country came to be known as Mithilā.

According to Pāṇini, however, Mithilā is the country where enemies are crushed: “Mithilādayaśca”; mAthyaṇte ‘tra mithilānagarī. This derivation seems more convincing and it is probable that like the great Bhārata tribe, after whom the entire Āryāvarta came to be christened as Bhāratavarṣa, the Maithilas, doubtless, a brave people, named the country of their glory and achievements after themselves.

Besides Mithilā, it has various other names too, such as Videha, Tirabhukti, Tapobhūmi, Śāmbhavi, Suvarṇa-kānana, Mantili, Vaijayantī (Janakapura) etc. Of these Mithilā, Videha and Tirabhukti are well known to the tradition and to the history as well. The name Videha we first of all come across in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, referred to above. Tirabhukti or Tirhut is, however, a later term, also mentioned in the Trikūṇḍa - Śeṣa. The name Tirabhukti also occurs on some of the seals discovered in Vaiśālī belonging to the Gupta period (4th century A.D.): Tirabhuktau Vaiśālī Tūrū. (Basārh excavations, 1903 - 04). This clearly refers to a land situated on the bank of the river and is a direct proof of the fact that Vaiśālī was known to have been in Tirhut.

1. For details see Ibid, pp. 4-11.
2. Uṇādi, 60.
3. HM, p. 7.
4. Bhāvaprakāsa Purāṇa (Mithilākhaṇḍa) gives twelve names.
5. p. 59.
6. For detailed discussion, see HM, pp. 8-11.
We have yet another interpretation of this term. According to some scholars, the word, Tirhut is a corruption of Tṛhutam i.e. the country of three sacrifices—(i) the sacrifice at the birth of Jñanakī or Sītā who married Rāma, (ii) Dhanuṣayajña or the sacrifice on the occasion when the great celestial bow was broken by Rāma and (iii) the sacrifice in honour of the marriage of Rāma and Sītā1. This interpretation, however, seems far-fetched, and the name was popular as far back as the fourth century A. D., if not earlier.

The People:

Mithilā or Tirhut is the land of the people who have carried conservatism to the excess of uncouthness. It is a country with an ancient history, traditions of which it retains to the present day. It is a land under the domination of a sept of Brāhmaṇas, extraordinarily devoted to the mint, anise, and cummin of the law. For centuries it has been a tract too proud to admit other nationalities to intercourse on equal terms. For centuries it has passed through conquest after conquest, from the north, from the east and from the west without changing its ancestral peculiarities. The story goes that the Brāhmaṇas of Mithilā did not spare even Rāmacandra for, at the time of his marriage they showed the same pride2 which is characteristic of their descendants of the twentieth century. This has been a very important trait of their character as a result of which the Brāhmaṇical domination has left its ineffaceable marks upon the nature of the rest of the population.

Mithilā is one of the most congested parts of India. Of the various districts, Muzaffarpur is the most and Darbhanga the least densely populated, but the pressure on the soil even here is as great as 870 to the square mile. It is essentially a rural land and the great majority of the people have been engaged in agricultural pursuits since time immemorial, but they

1. Bhadrārājā Purāṇa (Mithilākhaṇḍa).
2. cf. the curse pronounced by Rāmacandra on the Māthila Brāhmaṇas, HM, Chap. I.
have hitherto developed no marked tendency to go to the urban areas. As a result of this non-commercial and non-enterprising attitude, the inhabitants of the area are none-too-prosperous. Its inhabitants increase and multiply and impoverish the earth. They are reluctant to seek other means of life than agriculture which does not yield enough for their sustenance or other lands on which to practise the one art with which they are acquainted.

The age-old geographical isolation has no doubt profoundly influenced the character of the people. Even when the lands to the west of the river Gaṅḍaka and south of the Gaṅgā were constantly subjected to turbulent influence that naturally accompanied the invasions of the Muslim invaders and the subsequent establishment of the Muslim rule for a pretty long time, Mithilā, to the north of the Gaṅgā, remained more or less at peace under Hindu kings of the Karṇāṭa and Oinavāra dynasties. The results of this long seclusion may be seen even in the present day as the people in general are more backward and less enterprising than those of other parts.

Of the principal castes inhabiting the land for centuries mention may be made of the Brāhmaṇas, Rājpūtas, Bābhānas or Bhūmīhāras, Goāūs or Ahīras, Dosādhas, Dhānuakas, Koiris, Mallāhas, Chamāras, Kevaṭas, Khatawes, Kūrmtis, Musaharas, Tāntis and Telis—all Hindus. Among the Muḥammadans, Sheikhs, Jolāhās, Dhuniās and Kunjarās are well represented. Besides these, the Deoharas and the Dhitmaras or Dhiṭbaras are two small castes peculiar to the land, forming separate castes by themselves. Moreover, there are many other small castes that do not merit much attention.

All through the ages the Maithila society has experienced no remarkable changes in its centuries-old social structure. It stood rock-like and survived all catastrophes, resisting outside influence with all its vigour and force. It is true that numerous books on Smṛti, daily duties, marriages, re-

1. *HM*, Chaps. V-VI.
religious rites, prohibited degrees of relationship, performance of and officiating at sacrifices, purification, the duties of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Śūdras and Vaišyas, agriculture, commerce etc. were either written or digested or complied throughout the centuries, but it is equally true that nothing new, nothing revolutionary, nothing extra-ordinary in the shape of changes in the society is perceptible anywhere during the centuries preceding the current one, inspite of hundreds of books produced. On the other hand, majority of the law-givers came out openly in support of the deep-rooted caste-system and pernicious social evils and vices through their extra-ordinary jugglery of words. They stubbornly advocated status quo in the social order and suggested new methods by way of social regulations to make it more and more elaborate and rigid.

The advent of the fourteenth century witnessed a significant change in the social status of the Maithilas—significant because it violently shook up the very structure of the society. Instead of giving a progressive outlook to it, it was made more rigid and conservative. The new change was the introduction of the Maithila Kulinism aimed at re-organising the Maithila society (1310-1313), the credit for which goes entirely to king Harisimha Deva, the last king of the Karnāṭa dynasty. As a consequence, in their social structure the Maithilas gave birth to an elaborate system of genealogical records called in common parlance, the Pañjis. It is claimed that the system was introduced with a view to protecting the "purity of blood" in Maithila society by making people record their ancestry, and avoiding the forbidden degrees of relationship and marriages. This so-called social reform, most reactionary in character and outlook, was enforced and imposed on the society under the royal patronage and supervision, and the entire State machinery was geared up to work to its thorough completion and consummation. Accordingly, the Brāhmaṇas—let alone the other castes—were now forced to split up themselves into four sub-classes—the

1. HM, p. 359.
Śrotṛiyas, the Yogyas, the Pañjikāras, and the Jaibāras in order of grade and merit. We have already discussed the various gradations with all their implications elsewhere\(^1\).

These rules further gave birth to a new class – the class of Pañjikāras and Ghātakas (i.e. the marriage-contractor). The Pañjikāras, in compliance with the strict royal order, kept these genealogical records of gigantic proportions and were fully authorised to issue such “marriage-certificate” (adhiṅkūra-pantra or adhiṅkūramālā) to the intending parties without which no marriage could be negotiated or performed.

Like the Brāhmaṇas, the Kāyasthas were also divided into two classes – the Kulinas (i.e. of high birth) and the Gṛhaṇtas (i.e. of ordinary birth). The same mālas were also thrust on them as those on the Brāhmaṇas. They also got the “certificate of marriage” by the Pañjikāras, called the Kāyastha-Pañjikāras. Moreover, such genealogical records were not limited to Brāhmaṇas and Kāyasthas only, those of Kṣatriyas are also known to have existed\(^2\).

In addition to gotras or exogamous groups, they were also distinguished according to their māla and dīha. The māla or origin is the name of village where the earliest known members of the gotra lived, while the dīhas refer to the villages where their descendants subsequently settled. And, they are even now known and distinguished accordingly.

The exponent of this outstanding social reform might have had some honest motive – for instance, preserving social order and encouraging virtuous and noble life – behind their zeal, but the only motive we can see through now, seems to have been the so-called “preservation of the purity of blood”. This, in turn, instead of proving a boon, spelt severe curses on the society and caused devastating impact on the morale of the people.

Besides other evils, a new ferocious monster of Bikṣauṣ or the so-called Kulinas or the Bhalamānuṣas was born. The exaggerated importance placed on the value of being born

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1. see HM, pp. 360 ff.
in a high *kula* gave a licence to these gentlemen of the society who gave up all their sacred practices and adopted marriage as profession instead. The emergence of the worst type of polygamy was a natural corollary to the undue and undeserving importance attached to this particular class. They married sometimes thirty to forty wives, and as a result, the number of widows grew awfully staggering for, the death of one man caused the ultimate tragic widowhood of at least twenty to thirty women. Thus, the ill-fated girls were reduced to a band of despised creatures worse than the slaves. It was only recently that this evil practice was done away with. But the “rules” have been implicitly followed through centuries up to the present time. Harisimha, the greatest protagonist of these rules, is no more. Even his family has faded away from the memory of the people, except a few students of history. But the “marriage rules” are unaffected and yet dominate the social life of the Maithilas with all their vicious implications.\(^1\)

The other castes are commonly regarded as of mixed descent and various legends are current as to their genesis. Many of their religious ceremonies have been the same as among the Brāhmaṇas. Most of these castes, including the Bābhānas or Bhuinharā or Bhūmiharāka are said to have remained Buddhists for a long time, and later switched on to cultivation as their main occupation, possibly after the large-scale destruction of the Buddhist monasteries by the Muslim invaders. The Bhuinharās were probably an offshoot of the Brāhmaṇas themselves as their *mūlas* and *gotras* tend to suggest.

But, the search for at least some grains of divine enlightenment fallen from the overflowing store of the ancient masters in this erstwhile “home of Hindu enlightenment” is now in vain. It is a sad reflection on the Hindu social system that in Mithilā “where it reached a high degree of development, its influences on the material and moral condition of the people at large were in the direction, not of amelioration

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2. For details, see *DDG*, 39–41.
but of degradation. The priestly and intellectual aristocracy was so predominant that it set itself to suppress any attempt at social or mental emancipation outside its pale\(^1\). Their attempt was so successful that it is in this same ancient centre of learning and enlightenment that, in spite of the spread of western education and culture, ignorance, fanaticism and religious susceptibilities are yet staggeringly rampant and inflammable and the state of the lower classes is most degraded and most depressed and the proportion of the illiterate is the greatest\(^2\).

**History:**

From the remotest dawn of history Mithilā had had a unique and distinct position in the body-politic of Āryāvarta. It was ruled over by a galaxy of philosopher-kings. The story of the colonisation of this part of Āryāvarta by the Aryan settlers is indeed fascinating—a story which is vividly told in the *Vedas* themselves and which has hardly any parallel in the history of mankind. The adventurous clan of the Videhas, led by Agni Vaśvānara and their priests of the Gautama’s race, dashed from across the Sadānirā (the modern Gaṇḍakī), swooped down upon the marshy and uncultivated land, caused Agni, the Fire-God, to taste it through sacrifices and ultimately established itself into the region which later came to be renowned as the famous land of the Videhas under the Janaka dynasty, a supreme seat of learning and philosophy in the ancient world\(^3\).

Long before the advent of the Buddha and also during his life-time, the eight clans including the great Videhas and the Licchavis inhabiting this land, formed the confederation of the Vṛjīs and established the famous republic of the Vṛjīs or the Licchavis, probably the oldest republic in the history of the world. No republics except that of the Licchavis lasted in history for a thousand years. Neither Athens nor the republics of Venice and Genova can claim a similar

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2. Ibid.
3. *HM,* pp. 5-7 & Chap. II.
greatness. The non-monarchical tradition with the departure of the Licchavis from the Indian political stage became a thing of the past, and at the end of the 5th century A. D. republics disappeared from Hindu India. Republicanism was the first to begin the great departure to lead the dirge of political nirvāṇa. The community now ceased to breathe freedom and the old life refused to return.  

With the fall of the mighty Licchavis, Ajātaśatru occupied Vaiśālī and became the master of Mithilā. Thus, Mithilā formed a part of the Magadhan empire, but it still retained its distinctive features. The Mauryas and the Guptaśas honoured its age-old democratic traditions. The historical matrimonial alliance between the Guptaśas and the Licchavis was largely responsible for the rise and eminence of the Guptaśas who have referred to this episode in their epigraphic records. Samudragupta used to refer to himself with pride as "the son of the daughter of a Licchavi" (Licchavi-dauhītra). Under them, Mithilā now came to be known as Tirabhukti (TirabhuktaVaiśālī-tūrā).

The exit of the Guptaśas was promptly followed by the coming in of other powers. Almost all the upstart political adventurers, attempted, once atleast, to reach the foot of the Himalaya for the attainment of the much coveted, though hollow, glory of "earth-conqueror". It had thus fast developed into a cock-pit of power politics, and witnessed the glorious rise and tragic fall of various powers on and from her political horizon. Mithilā, after Harśa's death, came to be ruled over and ravaged by the Tibetans, the later Guptaśas, the Maukharis, the Pālas, the Gurjara-Pratihāras, the Rāṣṭra-kūṭas and the Candelas in succession, till the advent of the Kārṇāṭa king Nānyadeva, the founder of the celebrated Simrāon dynasty (1097 A. D.). It was, therefore, after a long spell of nearly about fourteen hundred years of subjugation since the break-up of the Videhan monarchy and the Vajjian confederacy that she rose again under the brave and inspiring leadership of Kārṇāṭa Nānyadeva and asserted her inde-

1. Ibid., pp. 62-66 & Chap. III.
pendence. And, the foundation of the Karnāṭa or Simrāon dynasty ushered in a new era—an era of kingdom-making, an era of splendid glory and great achievements. Under Nānya and his descendants Mithilā prospered exceedingly and became again a unique centre of philosophy, law and literature\(^1\). After a rule of two centuries and a quarter over Mithilā and a direct rule of about a century over the Nepal valley, the celebrated Karnāṭa dynasty made its tragic exit from the political stage of Northern India. In 1324 A.D., it came under Muhammadan rule. A little later (c. 1354 A.D.) Emperor Feroz Shah Tughlak handed over the Rāj of Tirhut to Kāmesvara Ṭhākura, a Maithila Śrotiya Brāhmaṇa who founded a new dynasty known as Oinavāra dynasty\(^2\). Mithilā was ruled over by the native Brāhmaṇa kings of this dynasty for nearly two centuries. During this period also Mithilā was the leader of thought in North-eastern India. It was really the golden age in the history of Mithilā.

The fall of this dynasty was followed by a short interregnum during which the Muslims succeeded in wresting power\(^3\). Akbar, the great, it is said, bestowed the Rāj of Tirhut (c. 1556 A.D.) on the Brāhmaṇa scholar, Mm. Maheśa Ṭhākura, the founder of the Khaṇḍavāla dynasty or the Darbhanga Rāj\(^4\) of which the late Mahārājādhirāja Sir Kāmesvara Siṃha was the last scion in whom vested the cultural and social leadership of Mithilā.

**Cultural Achievements**

Though the end of the Karnāṭas and the Oinavāras was tragic, their period made brilliant contributions in the spheres of art and literature. In this respect, the Mithilā of the Karnāṭas and the Oinavāras resembled very much that of the

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1. For details see *Ibid*, Ch. lv-v; R. K. Choudhary in *ABORI*, XXXV, pp. 91-121.
Janakas and Yājñavalkya. The two periods, though standing apart by about four thousand years, have somewhat their similar contributions to the growth of human mind in general and Indian culture in particular.

A great centre of learning from the very beginning of its history, Mithilā stands apart pre-eminently as the land given to intellectual pursuits and consequently to speculations about the spiritual well-being of man. It is the celebrated land of the Upaniṣads which embody the highest truths ever found out by man about life, soul and hereafter, and record the great impetus given to those speculations by the unrivalled Janaka (Kṛtī Janaka), the philosopher-king of Mithilā. It is the land of the disinterested Videhas where the great Brahmanādi, the essence of Vedānta and the kernel round which Hindu culture has grown and developed, was perfected. Thus, it is the land which bore the torch that has radiated light throughout India and even beyond through all these ages.

Speaking of Mithilā’s contributions to Indian culture one is reminded of that unique name, Yājñavalkya who first developed the Mādhyandini branch of Yajurveda, universally known as Śukla which was embraced by the whole of North India. In the field of Civil Law (Śmṛti) Yājñavalkya’s work (Yājñavalkya-śmṛti) superseded that of Manu (Manu-śmṛti). The continuous development since his time in ritualistic and Civil Law was so tremendous that later it came to be duly recognised and respected as the Mithilā School of Hindu Law. Among the great Maithila contributors to this branch of literature (Śmṛti), special mention may be made of Lakṣmīdhara, Śrīkara, Halāyudha, Bhavadeva, Śrīdhara, Aniruddha, and Caṇḍēśvara and many others who shine the brightest on the pages of history. The biography of Yājñavalkya is indeed the cultural history of his country in his times. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that “from the days of Yājñavalkya-śmṛti down to the modern times the land of Mithilā has produced writers whose names are illustrious.”

1. For details, cf. Sūtra, Ch. ii.
A stronghold of conservative orthodoxy, Mithilā also proved to be a very congenial soil for Jainism and Buddhism to thrive on. It was the land of the birth of many of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras. Vardhamāna Mahāvīra was an inhabitant of Vaiśālī. Similarly, Buddhism had its stronghold in Vaiśālī. Buddha lived for sometime near Vaiśālī and had high praise for the Licchavis. Even after his death, Tīrābhukti continued to be an important Buddhist centre. The second council of the Buddhists was held in the city of Vaiśālī. It was here that the creed was divided into Yānas i.e. the Hinayāna and the Mahāyāna. Tirhut played its important part in the development of Mahāyāna, which was later responsible for the growth of the Tāntrika cult of which Mithilā still continues to be an important centre.

In the realm of knowledge Mithilā's achievement and contributions have been so prolific, so very profound and so far-reaching that they have no parallel. All branches of knowledge have been cultivated here and enriched. Its contributions to philosophy of which India is justly proud, are, however, superb. Nyāya was first systematised by Gautama, and in the twelfth century Gaṅgeśa gave it a new orientation. In the history of Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, Udoyatākara, Maṇḍana, Prabhākara, Vācaspāti (1), Pārthasārathi Miśra, Udayanācārya, Murāri Miśra, Gaṅgeśa, Pākṣadhara, Bhavanātha and Śaṃkara are some of the illustrious names.

During the time of the great Gaṅgeśa (1200 A.D. onwards) Mithilā was a celebrated seat of learning and scholars from different parts of the country came to receive highest training in Logic and other branches of learning in the universally reputed University of Mithilā. It was here that the great Raghunātha Śiromaṇi received his training in Logic and later started the famous University of Nadiā in Bengal. After Gaṅgeśa, a long line of scholars in Mithilā kept up the

1. Supra, Ch. iii.
2. Supra, Ch. iv.
3. Supra, Ch. ii.
glorious tradition of Mīmāṁsā for centuries. This brilliant tradition was gloriously maintained by the Brāhmaṇa kings of the Khaṇḍavāḷa dynasty or the Darbhanga Rāj till the middle of the present century.

**Literature:**

Nor has literature or grammar been neglected. An important school of grammar was started by Padmanābha Datta with his Supadma Vyākaraṇa and its various supplements. On Rhetoric and Erotic some of the most popular books were written by Bhānudatta Miśra, the author of Rasamañjari. Ratanśvara commented upon the Sarasvati-kaṇṭhābhāraṇa in rhetorics, while in erotics Jyotirṣvara wrote Pañcaśāyaka and Raṅgaśekhara, off-quoted in mediaeval Sanskrit literature. Among literary compositions, Bhavadatta’s commentary on the epic-poem, Naiṣadha-caritam is yet studied with great interest. Pṛthvividhara Ācārya’s commentary on Mṛcchkaṇḍa is yet another popular work. Besides, Jayadeva, the author of Prasannarāghava; Murāri, the author of Anargharāghava, Govinda Ṭhākura, the author of Kavyapradya; Jayadeva, the author of Candrāloka; Saṅkara, the author of Rasūraṇava; Kṛṣṇadatta, the author of Gitagopipati and others illuminated the field of poetry and poetics. In Lexicon, Śrīkara-Ācārya’s commentary on the Amarakośa is a remarkable gem of Sanskrit literature.

Maithili, the language of Mithilā, was also cultivated and greatly enriched during this period. Jyotirṣvara deserves special mention for his composition of the earliest extant work in Maithili, Varṇana-Ratnākara. His period was indeed the golden age of Maithili and Sanskrit studies. As a matter of fact, there is abundance of literary work in Maithili—dramas, poetry, prose—dating from about the eleventh century.

While the Kāmeśvara - period (the founder of the Oinavāra dynasty) was made famous in the literary world by the erudite and versatile scholar, Jagaddhara, the Mithilā of Śivasimha was illumined by the divine sparks of the celebrated
poet, Vidyāpati whose name has come down to the posterity in connection with Maithili songs as a house-hold word throughout the whole of Bengal and Bihar. Vidyāpati (born c. 1360 or c. 1340 A.D.) the contemporary of Chaucer (born c. 1340 A.D.), the great English poet—was author of Kirtitilatā and specially the anthology, Padāvālti—songs that stirred up the later Vaiṣṇava writers and preachers of Bengal and reverberated like the enchanting heavenly music through the forests, rivers and dusty villages of Mithilā. He also wrote on Smṛti (Vibhūgasūra, Gaṅgā-vākyāvalī and Dānavākyāvalī); on Nītī or moral tales (Śaīva-sarvasvasūra and Puruṣa-Parikṣā); on Pūjā (Śaīva-sarvasvasūra and (Durgā- bhakti-taraṅgīṇī) and on literary composition (Likhanāvālti).

The days of Vidyāpati (c. 1340-1448 A.D.) were the days of the glory of the Mithilā University. A scion of a distinguished family of scholars, a voluminous writer, a widely read scholar and a Sanskrit poet of eminence, a charming lyric poet and the first of old Vaiṣṇava master singers, a general and an administrator and the brightest jewel of Śivasimha’s court, Vidyāpati overshadows all Vernacular poets, even Caṇḍīdāsa, “the child of nature”. His short hymns of prayer and praise became great favourite of the modern Vaiṣṇava reformer of Bengal—Caitanyadeva and through him his songs (padāvāli) have become as well known in Bengali households as the Bible is in an English one. He was thus a poet and finished scholar, whose similes and metaphors, choice of expressions and the higher flight of imaginations are brilliant poetical feats which at once captivate the ear and dazzle the eyes. The scene of sensuality and lust in his poems are strange combination of holy and unholy, of earthly and heavenly. His earlier poems are full of sensualism, his later of mystic ideas1.

The Khāṇḍavālā dynasty (1556 A.D. onwards) also made its definite contributions to different branches of Sanskrit

1. For details, see HM, pp. 375–82.
learning and Maithili literature. There is an interesting anecdote that Mm. Maheśa Ṭhākura, the founder of this dynasty, greatly inspired the saint-poet Tulastdāsa by saying that his “Rāmāyaṇa” (Rāmacarita - mānasā) would be loved more and more by the people in future. This encouragement, we are told, was offered at Kāśi while Maheśa Ṭhākura was proceeding to the Delhi Durbar.

Summing up, it may be said, that altogether Mithilā was “the home where the enlightened and the learned might always find a generous patron, peace and safety, where courts were devoted to learning and culture and where poets and philosophers lived in honour and affluence”.

Sources:

The sources of our present study are almost the same as provide the basis of the political and cultural history of the land. The study has, therefore, to be mainly based on literary sources—Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist and Jaina—the precise dating of which has been a baffling problem and as such we have adopted the generally accepted view regarding the chronology of the literary texts. In our case we have literature enormous in extent and most varied in character dwelling upon the various aspects connected with our study.

Further, the Brāhmaṇical and non-Brāhmaṇical texts seek to establish the supremacy of their own faith and hardly show any sympathy for the views of their opponents. On the other hand, they endeavour to establish their own viewpoints with a missionary zeal as it were, and spare none in the wordy duel and bitter wranglings that had become the order of the day for centuries. We have, therefore, to be very cautious while handling these texts and compare and contrast the conflicting nature of evidences from the rival sources before finally pronouncing our own judgement or arriving at definite conclusion.

Literary sources are sometimes corroborated and supplemented by archaeological sources. Innumerable finds of Jaina and Buddhist antiquities in various parts of Mithilā in recent years make us bold to convincingly refute some of the purely conventional, dogmatic and fantastic views about the rise, growth and popularity of Jainism and Buddhism in Mithilā. Orthodox scholars and local Paṇḍitas fastidiously cling to the view that Mithilā was not in the least influenced by the rise of these new orders nor were the inhabitants ever worried over the growing popularity of Buddhism. Archaeological evidences on the other hand have altogether a different tale to tell. They unequivocally speak of the great crisis of conscience that siezed the land of Mithilā for many centuries. They further confirm that Jaina and Buddhist religions were an article of faith with a section of the society just as Brāhmaṇism was with the majority of the people.

The present work has been undertaken not only to provide an adequate treatment of the rise, growth and influence of Jainism and Buddhism but also to present a connected picture of the various religions and philosophies that inspired and characterized the religious outlook of the people of Mithilā through the ages. In order to explain and illustrate certain positive developments in this field wherever possible comparisons have been made between different systems that clashed and shaped the currents and cross-currents of the religious life of the people of this ancient land.
CHAPTER II

Mithilā and Brahmaṇical Religion and Philosophy

Introduction:

In the post-Vedic age the religious convictions of the people were more or less the same as they were in the Vedic age. While the popular superstitious beliefs in spirits, imps, spells, incantations and witch-crafts prevailed as before, the sacrificial aspect of the religion developed tremendously. With the eflux of time the Rgvedic monotheistic and monistic tendencies became more and more marked. The Prajāpati-story contains in it the germs of the later doctrines of avatāras or divine incarnations. It bears a new spirit of symbolism and spirituality. In the Brāhmaṇa Prajāpati stands for Puruṣa and the sacrifices are conceived as constantly recurring in order to maintain the universe.

The Religion of the Upaniṣads:

The Upaniṣads also take up the same doctrine and elaborate it. It deals with Brahman or Ātman as the only underlying and ultimate reality. The Upaniṣads indeed expound a new religion which was opposed to the sacrificial ceremonial. It represents the philosophical aspect of Hinduism and aims at the deliverance from mundane existence by the absorption of the individual into soul (Brahma) through correct knowledge. Ritual is useless for such an aim and knowledge is all important: tat tvam asi—that art thou “that dwelleth in every thing, that guideth all beings within, the inward guide, immortal”¹. Thus Brahman or Absolute is grasped and definitely expressed for the first time in the history of human thought in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad² by the great seer Yājñavalkya. It is these various Upaniṣadic doctrines—along with the doctrines of Māyā, Karma, Mukti. Transmi-

1. HM, pp. 94–95.
2. iii. 4, 1; iv. 5, 1.
gration etc. interpreted anew in each period — that have dominated Indian thought ever since.

But, these higher subtleties of religion were confined to the intellectual section of the society and the common people did not understand these obstruse theological and philosophical speculations. They stuck to the worship of the dieties of the Rgvedic period. These deities were, however, not so prominent as Indra and Varuna. Rudra or Śiva, the great God and Lord of animate beings; Viṣṇu, the deliverer of mankind in distress and other gods now came into prominence. This movement was parallel with the development of philosophy in Mithilā and elsewhere. It led to the religions of modern India.

But the Upaniṣadic age is remarkable in as much as it witnessed revolutionary changes in the religious outlook of the people, which was in the following centuries responsible for the rise and growth of two new heretical sects—Jainism and Buddhism. The Brāhmaṇas or the priests went to the extreme in exploiting the religious beliefs and fantastic superstitions of the masses which culminated in a sort of intellectual revolt in Mithilā and other parts of North India. The period intervening the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic ages, i.e., the age of Brāhmaṇa may actually be termed as the age of sacrificial ceremonials. The society was gradually passing from pure and simple nature of devotion to that of artificialities. The Śatapatha period was still the golden days of the āryans. It referred to worship and adore and gave only a subordinate place to rigidity and privations. Devotion of mind was regarded as the predominant factor in their religious life. It was, however, not without the signs of those competitions that gradually eat up the vitality and sound the death-note of a great race. Unfortunately the tradition of ṚK composition was now given a go-by and the meaning (i.e., meditation) of the Vedic Ṛcīs and mantras lost all its significance. The Hindu theory that religions do not come from without but from within was

1. ŚB. 1, 4, 4, 1. “मनस्तः हृ वै वाक्याय जुजी देवमभो यह: बहुत्:”
ridiculously ignored. It was now a thing beyond their knowledge, beyond their access, beyond their comprehension. The priests simply got them by heart and their meaning true or false—became exclusively their own property. The result was obvious. These mantras in course of time came to be regarded as a thing of magic—known only to the priests or Yajñikas. Fast steeped in superstitions and pseudo-religious beliefs, the people acclaimed them as gods on the earth (Bhūdevas). Numerous intricacies were now introduced in the sacrifices and the ceremonies and rituals grew into infinite. Sacrifices were continued for years and hundreds of priests were engaged for the purpose. The commands of the Bhūdevas must be obeyed in any case, or else, they would have to face innumerable divine calamities.

These extremely rigid forms of religious sacrifices evoked spiritual unrest and revolt and voices of protests were uttered by intellectual giants like Yājñavalkya, Janaka Videha, Ajātaśatru of Kāśi, Pravāhana Jaivali and many other representative thinkers of the age who refused to submit to the hierarchical pretensions of the Brāhmaṇas and asserted their right of performing sacrifices without the intervention of the priests. These protests ultimately gave rise to a new spiritual force and the Upaniṣadic philosophers accorded the knowledge of Brahman and Ātman the supreme place. Thus a new age dawned and a new wave of thought engulfed the whole country which heralded a glorious chapter in the history of human thought and Mithilā’s contributions to it have been second to none.¹

In the following period the Brāhmaṇical religion or the religion of the Vedas remained confined to a small section of the people. Among the various revolts springing up inevitably against Upaniṣadic religion two were most important in the centuries before Christ—Jainism and Buddhism. These religions found many followers among the inhabitants of Mithilā and Vaiśālī. But, inspite of their great popularity

¹. For details, see H.M., pp. 94-99.
a great body of the people of the Vajji country remained staunch followers of their ancient faith. Indeed, the religious belief of the Licchavis in general was not different from the form of worship prevalent in other parts of North India.

Throughout the centuries the Maithilas had been orthodox in their religious outlook. It is true, the Buddha had many followers among the inhabitants of the land, but his influence disappeared soon after the decline and fall of the Buddhist order. The priestly and intellectual aristocracy became once more predominant after the revival of Brāhmaṇism during the time of the Śuṅgas and the imperial Guptas. It set to itself to suppress any attempt at social or mutual emancipation outside its pale. Rigid rules for Śūdras and other than Brāhmaṇas were formulated and enforced. Elaborate treatises on religious rites, gifts, ritual for consecration of houses, temples, divine images, rules for performing śrāddhas, philosophy of the bhakti doctrines and the duties enjoined to the followers of that doctrine, the Bhāgavata Sampradāya, philosophical disquisition on sacrificial rites, religious duties of Śūdras and women were written mostly by the same law-givers.

Śiva: Śakti and Viṣṇu:

The people of Mithilā were strong believers in Varnāśrama-dharma and simple devotion to Hindu gods and deities. The three main figures who have inspired and animated their souls through the ages, are Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu. They valued them equally as capable of giving supernatural rewards. The three-fold marks (yet visible) on the forehead of the Maithilas represent the following symbols—the horizontal lines marked with ashes represented their devotion to Śiva; the vertical sandal-paste in white represented their faith in Viṣṇu and the dot of sandal-paste in red or of vermillion represented their veneration for Śakti.

The worship of Śiva was, however, most wide-spread among the men and women-folks (especially the Brāhmaṇas). The

1. For details, see, Supra, ch. iii, iv.
popularity of fast fasting on (Krṣṇapakṣa) Caturdaśī; the worship of lacclay-made Śiva-śīla in special occasions; the two kinds of popular songs of Śiva—Nacīrī and Maheśavāti and the volumes of pure devotional songs composed by poets—from Vidyāpatt down to Candra Jhā (Candra Jhā) and Śiva temples in almost all the villages (even now) definitely point to the great place that Śiva occupied (and occupies) in their hearts.

The literary sources apart, archæological finds also speak of the great popularity and veneration in which Lord Śiva was held in Mithilā. Respect for Nandi seems to have been great which indicates that even his vāhana had a great place in the Śiva sampradāya. The Bull had a respectable position and we learn from the Pancobh copper plate of Saṃgrāmagupta\(^1\), a feudatory of the Karnātās of Mithilā—that the bull was the insignia of that family, as Saṃgrāmagupta himself was a devout worshipper of Maheśvara. Further, the images discovered in Birpur and Barāipur and other places show that almost all the sects prevalent during the Pāla period and after, were known to the people of this area\(^2\).

Moreover, from the discoveries made in Baheṛā and other places it appears that the phallic emblem of Śiva was more popular in the dominion of the Karnātās. Large numbers of phalli have been discovered in different parts of Mithilā. Ekamukhaliṅga variety is the commonest one though Caturmukhaliṅga has also been noticed in different parts of Tirhut, the best specimen being one at Bheetha belonging to the Pāla period. The arghya and nālā (both at Baheṛā and Birpur) bear wavy incisions indicating that the water usually poured on the top of the liṅga passing along the surface of the four busts on the liṅga. The Baheṛā sculptures are finely carved specimens of the 13th - 14th century and are in keeping with the Karnāṭa tradition as these show close agreement

with the plastic representation of South Indian texts. The cult of Sadāśiva was very popular in South India¹.

The worship of Śakti was no less popular. She was supposed to give siddhis only but Lord Śiva could award mukti or salvation. Some of Mithilā's greatest saints and upāsakas have been associated with Śakti, for instance, Devāditya, Vardhamāna, Madana Upādhyāya and a host of Tāntrikas. The very first verse taught to a child was in praise of Śakti, i.e., the popularity of Āripana or Alipana or the painted yantras on the ground. Moreover, the Śābara rites of Mithilā's women, the sensuous character of the people; pāga or their Tāntric headdress, the wide-spread worship of earthen images of Durgā; the Mātrakā Pājā and the prevalence of dikṣā (iṣṭamāntraprakāra) etc. strongly point to the great importance and ineffaceable impact of Śakti in Maithila religious life. The impact was so great that it often found mention in epigraphic records. The Khojapur Durgā Image inscription² found in the village of Khojapur in the district of Darbhanga may be cited as a point in instance. In this connection another point of interest is the establishment of the shrine of Tulajāmātā or Tālejumā, a Śakti Goddess held in high esteem by the Newārs of Nepal—who later became the titular deity of the Malla (Newār) dynasty of Kāntipura (Kathmandu) in the seventeenth century. The goddess was equally the especially worshipped deity of the Maithila (Karṇāṭa) dynasty started by Harisimha at Simrāoṇ (c. 1326 A.D.). Moreover, the Ambā Bhāvanī of Tulajāpura in the former Hyderabad State is one of the most important Śāktā shrines in the Deccan. The institution of Deccan Brāhmaṇas (Mahārāṣṭriyas) as priests in charge of Paśupatinātha was probably a direct result of the Karṇāṭa connection³. All these were a direct legacy of Tāntricism which we have discussed in detail elsewhere in this chapter.

1. Ibid, 370.
2. JBRS, xxxvii, pts. iii-iv, pp. 10-13.
The proximity of the Śālagramī river, the observance of all principal Vaiśṇava fasts and festivals and the immense popularity of Bhāgavata, Harivaniṣa and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇas prove the great influence excercised by Vaiśṇava worship on the Maithila mind. The long and rich tradition of Maithili love-poetry that found its greatest exponent in Vidyāpati is proudly associated with the great Vaiśṇava literature. Śiva and Śakti were, however, predominant devotional mainsprings of the Maithila mind, which is further evidenced by the existence of a large number of temples of Śiva, Durgā or Śakti, Rāma and Sītā, Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu scattered all over Tirhut, architecturally known as the Tirhut type of temples.

Vaiśṇavism seems to have been a prominent feature much earlier and specially in the Pāla period. The discovery of a large number of Viṣṇu images from Bengal and Bihar bears testimony to the fact. Recently in Birpur (North Bihar) three images of Viṣṇu, one of Narasimha, one of Vārāha (incarnation of Viṣṇu) at Jayamaṅglāgarb, yet another of Vārāha in black stone at Baheṛā and one of Viṣṇu at Naulāgargh are very important as they clearly point to the widespread popularity and influence of Vaiśṇavism in Mithilā. The development of this system had a hand in the growth of the avatāra theory and the Pālas were aware of it. Though the systematisation of the theory of avatāra took place in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, the Pāla inscriptions refer to several avatāras like Vārāha, Narasimha, Vāmana and Parasurāma. Jayadeva mentions ten avatāras. Thus, the Pāla records speak of both the systems which prevailed in Eastern India in those days.

The Sun Cult:

Besides these three important cults, worship of the Sun cult also seems to have been popular as is clear from the Bhavāditya temple inscription of Narasimhadeva of the

1. For details regarding these temples, see HM, pp. 384-86.
3. Ibid. 376.
Oinavāra dynasty in Kandahā. It is inscribed on stone doorframes of a temple dedicated to a sun-image called Bhavāditya. We have yet another rare Sūrya image from Barauni (North Bihar), and a few Sūrya images found in Bihar. These images are remarkable in various ways. The body is carefully modelled with considerable regard to realism and the same commendations may be bestowed on the attendants. The decorative frame work is carefully treated and the whole composition produces an imposing and a very pleasing effect. The mechanical execution is perfect and the design is more restrained. The prominent Kirtimukhas convey supreme reality. We know that Kirtimukha was very frequent in the Gupta age not only in images but also in temples. The Kirtimukha tradition continued in the later period and it was one of the prominent features of the Eastern School of mediaeval sculpture. Another peculiarity of the image is that it is decidedly of the period when the foreign influence was on the wane but had not completely disappeared. The two legs are booted and as such the foreign influence on this image is perceptible. The booted Sūrya is a peculiarity of the Gupta period and, therefore, the present image can be tentatively assigned to the later Gupta period. In other words, the Sun cult in Mithilā and other parts of Bihar was a popular cult in the Gupta times and after.

Thus the Mithilā inscriptions—the Simrāon inscriptions of Nānyadeva, the Andhrā Ṭhārht inscription of Śridharadāsa (referring to the worship of Viṣṇu); another inscription in the same place and also at Śrīnagarā in the Madhipura Sub-Division of Saharasā district referring to Śaivism; the Bheet Bhagavanpur inscription of Malladeva; the Matiāhi stone inscription referring to Viṣṇu worship; the Kandahā inscription of Narasimhadeva referring to Sun worship; the Tila-

1. fbrs, XX; HM, p. 373; R. K. Chaudhary, Inscriptions of Bihar, Intro. 20.
keśvara temple inscription (also known as the Hävidhātha inscription of Karmāditya) recording the erection of an image of Haihaṭṭa Devī; the Bhāgirathapura inscription of Kaṇṭanārāyaṇa recording installation of a temple, a few bricks of which also bear the specimens of some Tāntrika Cakras; the Barantapura Cānḍīsthāna inscription; the Khojapur Durgā image inscription; the Madhuravāṃśvara temple inscriptions, the Videśvara temple inscriptions and a few others, though not politically important, throw considerable light on the social and religious life of the people. On the basis of the inscriptions and also from the discoveries of the different Hindu gods and goddesses in large numbers in practically all the parts of Mithilā as well as a thousand temples at Mukuṭika Grāma in Kalaśapota of the Kakṣa Viṣaya in Tirhut during the Pāla period, it can reasonably be inferred that Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śakti and Sun were widely worshipped in Mithilā.

Besides the above, we have also mention of a different religious sect. i.e., the Tapasi. They have been stigmatised as mandajātīya (low-caste). They were probably different from the adherents of Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu, or they were so called as they lived by begging because of their gruelling poverty.

Islam:

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries this predominantly Brāhmaṇical country faced the inroad of a new religion i.e., Islam, which the conquering Muslims had brought along with them. The Muhammadans, no doubt, conquered Tirhut, but they did not colonise it, and the tide

of conquest passed over the land without shaking the firm root which Hinduism had struck in the minds of the people. Islam as such could never hold a strong position in Tirhut, and the country has always retained its pronounced Hinduism. The legal writers and religious preachers of Mithilā asserted themselves and for long resisted its onrush. But in course of time, like rest of India, they also appear to have made minor adjustments in their outlook for, there are several features even now which show a complete fusion of Hindus and Muslims. The large number of Persian and Arabic words used by the Maithilas, the adoption of Maithilli by majority of the Muslims in Mithilā; the deliverance of judgements in the courts of Mithilā in strict accordance with traditional Hindu manner till as late as the eighteenth century A.D.; the respect of Maithilas for Muslim festivals (e.g., Taziā-Dāhā as the Maithilas call it) and the Muslims’ reverence for Hindu festivals, the adoption of Fasli era (started by Akbar) as the national Maithila era, the devotional songs sung in praise of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa both by Hindu and Muslim saints, the impact of Sufism; the incorporation of Iman and Firadaust rāgas by the celebrated Maithila musician Locana in his Rāgatarangini etc. in the following century are some of the examples of this gradual fusion.

Tāntrika Religion:

Hinduism during the mediaeval period, as in modern times, was largely Tāntric. The Tantra was then, as now, the great Mantra and Sādhana Sāstra (Scripture) and the main source of some of the most fundamental concepts still prevalent such as worship, image, initiation, Yoga, the importance of Guru and so forth. Haṭhayoga, and the various kinds of spiritual training form the greater part of the Hindu ritual which is known as Sādhana. As a matter of fact, Hinduism—both esoteric and exoteric—is, to all intents and purposes, largely Tāntric. Generally speaking, the Tantras may rightly

1. For details, see HM, pp. 373-76.
2. Avalon, Principles of Tantra (Tāntrataţvā), Pref. pp. 1 ff.
be termed as “so many encyclopaedias of the knowledge of their time”. They practically deal with all matters of "common belief and interest from the doctrine of the origin of the world to the laws which govern kings and the societies . . . . medicine and science generally. The Tantra is . . . . the repository of esoteric belief and practices, particularly those relating to yoga and mantra-tattva”¹. In them we find the description of the Supreme Being, the creation and the destruction of the Universe, the classification of creatures, the origin and worship of the gods, the heavenly bodies, different world and hells, man and woman, cakra (centre of the human body), dharma, āśramas and the sacraments, mantra, yantra (magic diagram on which to worship), various forms of spiritual training, japa, vrata, worship (internal and external), medicine, science and many other things.

It has been argued that the Tantras are a recent Śāstra and are largely creation of the people of Eastern India which is supposed to be its stronghold. The antiquity of the Tantra has, however, been proved beyond doubt to be as ancient as the Śruti itself². In fact, not only in Eastern India, but throughout the whole of India the upper classes of Hindu community are governed by the Tāntric religion as far as initiation (dikṣā) is concerned. There are Śāktas, Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas all over the country. The Śāktas are initiated by the Śakti-mantra, the Vaiṣṇavas by the Viṣṇu-mantra and the Śaivas by the Śiva-mantra. All these mantras are the exclusive properties of the Tantra. Like Mithilā, Madras, Bengal, Bombay, Kāśi (Banaras), Kashmir, Assam and other such notable places of India have Śāktas, Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas in a large number following the Tāntric system. It is, therefore, absurd to argue that this system is the exclusive creation of the people of Eastern India only. Sadhakas have appeared on the scene almost everywhere, and the Maithila

Sādhakas and Pañḍitas, like those of Bengal and other places, have "only prepared compendia and developed the practical side of it to a considerable extent" for the benefit of humanity at large.

The theory that Tantra has come out of the Mahāyāna doctrine of the Buddhists who worship Tārā, Vajrayoginī, Kṣetrapāla and use mantra, bija, and japa, is faulty, hardly supported by any corroborating evidence. There is, no doubt, a similarity of doctrines and practices in the two systems but this hardly justifies the view that one has been borrowed from the other. Scholars are generally unanimous on this point that the Cīna-Tantra is the originator of the worship of Tārā and that this Tantra existed in India much earlier than the time when Mahāyāna Buddhism made its appearance. Apart from the insignificant minor similarities here and there, there is a very great dissimilarity viz., the animal sacrifice. It is a well-known fact that in Pañcatattva-sādhanā, the Tāntrikas lay much stress on the animal-sacrifice while the Buddhists hold quite an opposite view.

It is interesting to note that the Śakti devatā (the mother goddess) is worshipped and revered and the Śakti-pīthas (the seat of mother goddess) are established in almost all parts of India: Kāmākhyā is worshipped at Kāmarūpa; Vindhyavāsini on the Vindhya hills; Yogamāyā and Pūrṇa-mātī at Vṛndāvana; Annapūrṇā, Saṅkaṭa, Tripurabhairavi, sixty-four Yoginīs, Kālabhairavi, Durgā, Śītalā, Maṅgalā and Devis at Kāśi; Guhyesvāri in Nepal, Gāyatrī and Sāvitrī in Rajputana, Lalitā at Prayāga; Ugratārā in Mithilā (Tirhut); Jayakāti in Calcutta; Jvālāmukhī and Chinnamastā in and near Jālandhar; Kṣṭrabhavānī near Kashmir and other Devis in almost all parts of India. Vimalā, Sarasvatt, Bhuvane-

1. Ehatacharya, p. 7; Avalon, pp. 69 ff.
3. Tārā is also referred to in the Rgveda.
4. Ehatacharya, p. 8; Avalon, pp. 60 ff.
5. Jvālāmukhī, Ćaṇḍī, Tārā, Durgā, etc. are also worshipped in Mithilā at different places.
śvarti, Kāli and Ṛakṣatī are worshipped and paid obeisance
to, in Utkala, the seat of Lord Jagannātha\(^1\). To say that
Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya of Bengal was the first to prescribe
for the worship of Durgā, as provided for in the Tantra,
would be quite wrong and misleading for we know that
previous to him many other thinkers in Mithilā and Bengal
and elsewhere had done so. Vidyāpati, Śrīdatta, Harinātha
Upādhyāya, Vidyādhara, Ratnakara, Bhojadeva, Jīmūtavā-
hana, Ḫalāyudha, Vācaspati Miśra, Madhavācārya and even
Śaṅkarācārya had admitted the authority of the Tantra while
explaining philosophical doctrines. Vācaspati Miśra, the
celebrated Maithila thinker and commentator on the six
Darśanas, has in his commentary on the \textit{Patañjali Darśana},
recommended Dhyāna of Devatās as prescribed in the
Tantra\(^2\). Moreover, many well-known books written in
Mithilā and elsewhere, before the age of Raghunandana,
contain provisions for Durgā-Piṭā, such as the \textit{Durgā-Bhakti-
Taraṅgini}, \textit{Saṁvatsara-pradīpa}, \textit{Kālakaumudi}, \textit{Jyotiṣārṇava}, \textit{Smṛti-
sūgara}, \textit{Kālpa-taru}, \textit{Kṛtya-mahārṇava}, \textit{Kṛtya-ratnākara}, \textit{Kṛtya-
and others pertaining to the worship of Durgā and Kāli\(^3\).

The Bengali practice of worshipping earthen images of
Durgā and Kāli with great pomp and ceremony is followed in
Mithilā in all details. It is true that this practice does not receive
the same favour, as in Mithilā and Bengal, in other parts
of India but it is also true that She is everywhere worshipped
in \textit{ghatās} (earthen jars). Shrines containing her images
are reverentially visited, nine-day \textit{vratas} performed, fasts
duly observed and the sacred \textit{Caṇḍi} read on the Mahāāśāṁti
day. Even now women-folk bathe in the rivers or tanks
early every morning for the first nine days of the bright
fortnight of the month of Āśvina and worship the small
images of the Devī, made of clay, with all devotion. All these

\(^{1}\) For further details, see Avalon, pp. 63-64.
\(^{2}\) cf. Avalon, p. 67.
\(^{3}\) For other details, see \textit{Ibid}, pp. 65 ff.
undoubtedly show that this practice of worshipping the Devi has been followed from times immemorial without any break.

The most peculiar characteristic of this religion is that women and Śūdras are not at all prohibited from practising the Śādhana. The Rudrayāmala says that a woman may also be a Guru who is kulina (practising kulācāra), of auspicious appearance, fair-faced and lotus-eyed, endowed with intellect, calmness of mind, proficient in mantras and in their meanings, ever engaged in japa and devoted to the worship of her Iṣṭadevata. The Gautamiya Tantra declares that the people of all castes, irrespective of sex, may receive its mantras. In the Cakra there is no caste at all, even the lowest Caṇḍāla being deemed, whilst therein, higher than Brāhmaṇas. The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says: “That low Kaula who refuses to initiate a Caṇḍāla or a Yavana into the Kaula dharma, considering them to be inferior, or a woman out of disrespect for her, goes the downward way. All two-footed beings in this world, from the vipra (Brāhmaṇa) to the inferior castes, are competent for Kulācāra.” This is no doubt the most revolutionary aspect of this religion which in the course of centuries attracted millions of followers to its fold.

Another great factor that contributed to its tremendous growth and popularity is that in the Tantras, the duties of each of the castes as well as those of the king are not prescribed much differently from Manu, the great law-giver. The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra speaks very highly of the family-life. It rigorously prescribes that one should never be allowed to take to ascetic life who has children, wife or such like near relations to maintain. We have in the ninth chapter of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra (Sāṁskāras) “sacraments from conception until marriage”, entirely in consonance with Brāhmaṇic texts. In the tenth chapter we have the direction for the

1. Cf. “Sarma sarppahikāropes māyānām yogamena ca”.
2. Chap. xiv, vs. 187 & 184.
3. Avalon, pp. 807-08 ff.
disposal and the cult of the dead (Śrāddha). “A peculiarity of the Śāktas in connection with marriage consists in the fact that side by side with the Brahma marriage for which the Brāhmaṇic prescriptions are valid, there is also a Śaiva marriage, that is, a kind of marriage for a limited period which is only permitted to the members of the circle (cakra) of the initiates. But children out of such marriage are not legitimate and do not inherit”. Thus, the Brāhmaṇic law also applies to the Śāktas, and as such the section concerning civil and criminal law in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra substantially agrees with Manu.

History, as hitherto read and understood, speaks of the Brāhmaṇas of the pre-Buddhistic age, their growing alienation from the Jhāna-kāṇḍa or the Upaniṣadic wisdom, their impotency to save the orthodox Vedic communities from the encroachments of the non-Vedic hoards and races, their ever-deepening religious formalism and social exclusiveness. “But this history is silent on the marvellous feats which the Upaniṣadic sects of anchorites, were silently performing on the outskirts of the strictly Vedic community, with the object of aryānising the new India that was arising over the ashes of the Kurukṣetra conflagration”. This new India was not strictly Vedic “like India of the by-gone ages, for it could not claim the religious ministrations of the orthodox Vedic Brāhmaṇas”. This spiritual process consisted in absorbing communities of men into the fold of Vedic religion. The prevalent Vedic ritualism of the days was too powerless to face these new communities springing up all over the country. From the Karmakāṇḍa we have, therefore, to turn to the only other factor, Jhānakāṇḍa in the Vedic religion which

1. Avalon, 117. It is, however, incorrect to call them illegitimate children. On the other hand, off-springs of a Brahma-marriage are preferential inheritors.
2. Avalon, 558.
3. Ibid., 558.
4. Cf. the discourse about the conception of Śiva.
finds elaborate representation in the Upaniṣads. Besides the earlier ritualism of yajñas being philosophised upon the earlier Upaniṣads, we find that the foundation for a new elaborate ritualism was fully laid in many of the later Upaniṣads. The philosophy of Pañcaupaśanā (fivesfold worship viz. the worship of Śiva, Devī, Sun, Ganesa and Viṣṇu) was developed out of the mystery of Praṇava (‘OM’), of which some features are also to be clearly seen in the Brāhmaṇas¹. As a matter of fact such upakaraṇas of Tāntric worship as grass, leaves, water etc. seem to have been adopted from the Vedic worship along with their appropriate incantations. This may thus be regarded as the earliest configuration which Tāntricism had on the eve of “these silent but mighty social upheavals through which the Aryanisation of vast and increasing multitudes of new races proceeded in pre-Buddhistic India, and which had their culmination in the eventful centuries of the Buddhistic coup-de-grace”².

The great problem to be tackled was the aryānisation of this new India that was rising and surging furiously from every side against the fast-dwindling centres of the old Vedic orthodoxy struggling hard for its existence. The religious movements of the Bhāgavatas, Śāktas, Sauras, Śaivas, Gaṇapatyas, Jainas and Buddhists absorbed many of the non-Aryan races and cast their life in the mould of the Vedic spiritual ideal which largely minimised the gulf existing between them and the Vedic orthodoxy, ending in their gradual amalgamation in the course of a few centuries. Thus, the pre-Buddhistic phase of Tāntric worship is a fact to be reckoned with in the early history of India much before the appearance of the Buddha. Its foundation was so widely and firmly established that, notwithstanding the ceaseless efforts, Buddhism could not dislodge it, but was in turn itself swallowed up by this Tāntric worship within a short span of few centuries. This wonderfully transformed Buddhism soon appeared on the arena in its new attractive garb as the Mahāyāna³.

The Tantra is wrongly stigmatised as a libidinous phallic necromancy. This is all due to the excesses of some misguided Vāmāmārgins or Vāmācārīs. The real Tāntrika is neither a cynic nor a hedonist. He is rather an eudemonist than a slave to passions. The much-ridiculed five M’s (makāras) are only esoteric symbologies: Wine (Madya) is the lunar ambrosia flowing from the Soma Cakra; Woman is the Kūḍalini Śakti sleeping in the lower plexus (Malādhāra); Mutsya (fish) is the annihilation of “I” and “mine”; Māṁsa (meat) is the surrender of the limited human to the unlimited divine; Mudrā (gesture) is cessation from evils and Maithūna (sexual union) is the union of the Śakti with the Śiva in man. The Tantras do not consider woman to be an object of pleasure. She is described as Parāsakti and deified and adored. The Tantra is the only science that has explored the divine regions of man and woman. It is the only method that enables man to rise Phoenix-like from the dead ashes of the sexual passion. It analyses and scrutinises every atom of the human synthesis and thereby awakens the latent dynamism in all the places of consciousness.

The worship of Śakti was predominant in Mithila and Bengal. Like the worship of Śiva, the worship of Śakti was equally wide-spread. There is, however, a great difference in that there is a marked paucity of legends and stories recording any attainment of the Siddhis by the worshippers of the Lord Śiva whereas the stories regarding Sākta devotees attaining miraculous powers are numerous in Mithilā. This is probably because Śakti was supposed to give these Siddhis only, but the god who could award mukti or salvation was Lord Śiva, which was certainly a higher thing. Some of the greatest saints and upāsakas of Mithilā, such as Devāditya, Vardhamāna, Madana Upādhyāya,

1. Ibid., For other details, see Ibid., xv-xix, 1-14; 15-117; Avalon, The Principles of Tantra, 10-105, 539-725. For the two different sects Vāmāmārga and Dākṣiṇāmārga, see Woodroffe, Śakti and Šākta, 57, 71, 153-54 etc.
Gokulanātha Upādhyāya, Mahārāja Ramesvara Siṁha, Gaṇanātha Upādhyāya, Lakṣmīnātha Gosāin and a host of others, were associated with Śakti. Every house-hold has a Gosāuni (Śakti goddess). There are still many pīṭhas and centres of Tāntricism where Śādhakas from different parts of the country come to practise Śādhana. We have already noted above that the first verse taught to a child is in praise of Śakti. The popularity of Aripaṇa or Alipana (painted Yantras on the ground); the names of Maithilas such as Tantradhārī, Tantranātha, Khaḍgadhārī, Tārācaraṇa, Ādyācaraṇa etc., the Śābara rites of Mithilā women; the vogue of fish and meat eating; Pāda or the Tāntric head-dress; the offering of sweet-cooked rice in milk and the feeding of Kumārīs (virgins) known as Pātari ceremony on all auspicious occasions; the wide-spread public worship of the earthen images of Durgā in Daśaharā or Vijayādaśamī; the worship of the Lingam (a veritable Tāntric symbol); the Mātrkā Pujā, the performance of Nainā-Yogina and the prevalence of Dikṣā—all these briefly point to the great importance of the Śakti cult in the life of the Maithilas in general. But all told, the fact remains that the glory and honour that the Tantras had, and received, in the time of those great Śādhakas and Māhārājas Kṛṣṇacandra and Śivacandra of Bengal and Lakṣmītsvara Siṁha and Ramesvara Siṁha of Mithilā no longer exist. This is the reason why the Tāntric Śādhakas of Bengal and Mithila are not so well-known at present.

As regards the origin of Maithila Tāntricism it is generally believed that the village of Mahist (Bangāon-Mahist) in the district of Saharsā, associated with the celebrated name of Maṇḍana Miśra and well known to the students of Indian history for the remarkable discovery of the Bangāon copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III of the Pāla dynasty, was the birth-place of this cult where flourished innumerable Śādhakas and devotees in the past. It is undoubtedly one of the most important archaeological sites of Bihar which hitherto remains unexplored and completely ignored by the archaeologists.
It is situated on the bank of the river Dhemurā, a tributary of Kośi, the river of sorrow, which has relentlessly ravaged the entire area.

Besides the images of Tārā, Nīlasarasvatī, Ekajalā, Lakṣmi-nārāyaṇa, Tripūrāsundari, Sītalā, Tārānātha and other gods and goddesses kept in a brick temple and two small thatched huts, there are there at present six kuṇḍas, viz., Tārākuṇḍa, Tārākaṇcukikunḍa, Vaśiṣṭhakuṇḍa, Gautamakuṇḍa, Akṣobhya-kunḍa and Mānasarovarakunḍa. These kuṇḍas have been described in the famous Tāntric work, Cīnācāratantra.

The tradition goes that Dakṣa performed a sacrifice in which neither Śiva nor Pārvatī was invited. Hearing this Satī (Pārvatī) went to her father's place of her own accord where she was so much shocked at the insult of her husband (Śiva) by her father (Dakṣa) that she jumped into the Yajña-kunḍa. When Śiva came to know of the great tragedy, he at once rushed down to the place and lifted the dead body of Satī over his shoulders. He was very much irritated and infuriated which set Viṣṇu thinking. In order to prevent Śiva, Viṣṇu, thereupon, started with his cakra and began to cut down the parts of the dead body. The eyes of Satī fell in Mahiṣī and since then it turned into a very great centre of Tāntric worship in Mithilā.

According to another tradition, Vaśiṣṭha brought Sakti from China and placed her at Mahiṣī which was then the den of asuras. The local tradition, however, says that it was the capital of the asura king, Mahiṣāsura, and hence its present

1. The book is now preserved in the Raj Library, Darbhanga. We have the following details about these kuṇḍas. :-

"वशिष्ठकुण्ड पार्वत्य, कुण्ड जो नीलसारसवती
कष्मीयकुण्ड सप्तर, बैतल्लान्त्रिन्दितिसिद्धित "
तत समीपे महीषशक्ति सरोवरास सचकन्
माहिष्मात्राच महात्मशृणु साधु वरानी
विष्णु समानिता तारणो चीन देखूँे
नारिब्रजह अवधारीसे तथा नीह सरसवती
अक्षोभ्य गहणायुक्त ह्यापिता वन छूटरी।"


name. Rāni Padmāvati, queen of Mahārāja Narendra Simha of the Khanḍavalā dynasty of Mithila (or the Darbhanga Raj) got the present temple constructed there as she herself hailed from Mahist.

Thus Mithila since time immemorial has been a celebrated centre of Tāntric cult where flocked Śādhakas and devotees from all parts of the country to receive proper initiation in the remarkable cult. It has been rightly held that “the Śakti cult was revealed in the Gauḍa, popularised by the Maithilas, here and there, prevails in Mahārāṣṭra and has disappeared in Gujerāt”. We have the following description of Durgā in the Devīmahātmya in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa: “The energy of Śiva was on her face, Yama’s power in her hair, in her arms lay Viṣṇu’s strength, her breasts were like unto the moon, her waist had the vigour of Indra, and her legs and thighs, the speed of Varuṇa”. The goddess Nilasarasvatī of Mahist may be identified with the Tāntric deity, Mahā-nilasarasvatī, to whom we have a veiled reference in an inscription of Nayapāla found at Gaya.

The Mithilāmāhātmya of the Bhadviśṇu Purāṇa while describing Mahist refers to its association with Tāntricism as being very old. We read in the Śakti-pīṭhas: Trisotāyāṁ vāmapādo bhrāmari bhairavesvarāh. In a footnote in the above work, D. C. Sircar suggests: “A. M. suggests another reading: Tirotyāyāṁ vāma pādasvāmari bhairavo-ḍamaraḥ, which refers to Tirhut—Mithilāyāṁ vāmadeye Ugradevi mandodari. Mahist’s Tārā is known as Ugratārā. Mahist is also said to be a Siddhāpiṭha. The Kubjikā-tantra enumerates Māhiśmati as one of the Siddhāpiṭhas:

“कमल विमल भैव तथा माहिष्मती पुरी
बाराही निपुरा भैव बामती नीलवाहिनी”

1. For detailed description of this dynasty, see my forthcoming book, History of Mithila, Vol. 11, chap. III.
2. R. P. Chanda, Indo-Aryan Races.
3. R. K. Chaudhary, Inscriptions of Bihar, 74: “उक्तनीकृपा!”
4. D. C. Sircar, Śakti-pīṭhas, 47.
5. Ibid., 65.
At Kandāhā, one inscription of Narasimhadeva of the Karpaṭa dynasty was found, and three miles east of Kandāhā there is a temple of Bāṇeṣvara Mahādeva in Devanagopāla. Tradition attributes this liṅga to Bāṇāsura. What is, however, very important in this connection is that Tārā, Bhavāditya and Bāṇeṣvara are established on triangular point (trikovayantra) which definitely indicates the importance of the region of Mahist as an important centre of Tāntricism. In other words, the origin of Maithila Tāntricism may safely be traced to this place.

Jayamaṅgalāgarh is yet another important seat of Tāntric cult in Mithilā. It is regarded as one of the important Piṭhas of India. We do not exactly know as to when and how this Piṭha came to be established there, but the fact remains that Goddess Jayamaṅgalā, a Tāntric deity (after which the place is said to have been named) is mentioned by almost all the Maithila scholars in their works. This goddess also finds mention in the Mithilāmāhātmya, Brahma-vaiśvarita Purāṇa, Devībhāgavatam and Praṇātoṣint. It is generally believed that Lord Śiva, after having killed Tripura rākṣasa, established this piṭha here.

According to a Siamese Buddhist traveller, Jayamaṅgalāgarh was a sacred Buddhist place in ancient times but later became the centre of Tāntric Buddhism. Even to-day it is regarded as an important centre of Tāntric cut and Sādhakas come here from far-off places like Bengal and Nepal. It seems probable and this place became a renowned

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3. Tradition is preserved in the following folk-song:

   "भव भवायिरि देवनार माहेश
   वनगाँ ( वनगांव ) हुरागू मिसरे कुलेशा
   लोरे महुृत बाञी दूंगा" (Ibid, 383).
4. Cf. P. Jhā, Mithila - viśāra; Das, Mithilā Darpana, etc.
centre of Śakti cult after the Pāla period. Tāntric cult in later times, as we know, was a continuation of Tāntric Buddhism, and the establishment of Pīṭha was a natural development of the propagation of the cult.

Besides the above important centres, there were many other centres of Tāntric cult scattered all over Mithilā, some of which flourished till recently. That the cult was very popular with the Maithilas is evidenced by the enormous volume of literature on Tantra composed by celebrated Maithila scholars like Vācaspati Miśra (1), Prabhākara, Mm. Vidyāpati Ṭhākura (probably different from the celebrated poet Vidyāpati)², Maṇḍana and others. Vidyāpati, the author of the Āgama-dvaita-nirṇaya, refers in his work to his own sampradāya implying thereby that he belonged to a particular Tāntric school of Mithilā. In the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa³, Vidyāpati is described to have been a scion of the family of an āgamabhūsaṇa who was initiated in the Vīra-cult of Tantra and that he himself attained Siddhi, perhaps in the same Vīra-cult⁴. In the Mithilā Pañjīs the Tāntrika Siddhas of Mithilā are generally distinguished by the title Gosāi, for instance, Laksminātha Gosāin and others. The great men of the Ucita family, of which the above Vidyāpati is said to have been a celebrated scion, have been ignored in the Pañjīs probably because of the great disfavour with which Vīra-cult has been looked down upon in Mithilā. All the great men who were initiated in the Vīra-cult and followed vāmācāra of the Tantra, kept this a secret and never avowed this openly in the society.

In Mithilā, there have been many celebrated families of great Tāntrikas, and Vidyāpati also belonged to one such family which fact the members of that family avowed with great pride. His father Mm. Govinda Ṭhākura, was

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1. For other details, see Supra, chap. iv.
2. For different views see JGNJRI, vol. vi, pp. 241-47; viii, 91-99 etc.
3. Quoted Ibid., vi, 246 ff.
4. Ibid., vi, 247.
a great Tāntrika and wrote many works on Tantra which are yet held in great esteem. This was the Ghosauta family belonging to Vatsya gotra, besides the Ucitt family noted above. Govinda Ṭhākura had eight sons, all of whom were renowned scholars, styled as Mahāmahopādhyāyas in the Pañjis. Besides Vidyāpati (his second son) Devanātha was his fifth son who is styled as Āgamacārya Tarkapañcānana and who wrote many Kaumudis on Tantra, Mantra, Smṛti, Māṁśā etc. His seventh son Mm. Madhuvīdānā wrote the many Kaṭṭakoddhāras on Nyāya and Smṛti also. Devanātha in his Mantra-Kaumudi eulogises his family in very glowing terms and calls his father Govinda, Sakalatantrasarojaśūryaḥ. This Govinda is the celebrated author of the Kāvyapradīpa on the Kāvyapratikāśa and Pāṇḍapradīpa, a work on the Tāntrika mode of worship. They probably flourished in the 15th century A. D.1

Besides the above, the great Maithila jurist, Caṇḍesvara has in his Kṛtyacintāmanī described his grand-father Devāditya as Mantraprabhavahapatapravartihīlsūnyakāndhatamasaḥ and cakravijanānāṁ priyāḥ meaning that “he was possessed of extraordinary powers given to him by the siddhi of mantra by dint of which he could dispel the blinding darkness caused by the enemy kings” and that “he was favourite of the dvija sitting in a cakra”. This cakra, as we know, is a term used for a secret conference of people following the vāmācāra.2 In other words, Devāditya was an adept in Mantra-Siddhi and was a patron of Tāntrika of the Vīra-cult, if not himself a Vīra. From the above references, it is obvious that some of the great Śādhakas of Mithilā practised vāmācāra, while the majority favoured the Dakṣinācāra.

This reference for, and adoration of, Śakti has immensely influenced the script and literature of the land. Not only there are a large number of Tāntric works written and compiled in Sanskrit, not only there are almost all writers praising

1. Ibid., viii, 97-98.
2. Ibid., viii, 98-99.
Śakti or the Primal (Ādyā) Energy, but the very script of Maithili, called Mithilakṣara or Tirahuta has developed in accordance with Tāntric Yantras. The history of this peculiar development of the Vārṇas has been elaborately dealt with in the Kāmadhenu Tantra and the Vārṇoddhāra Tantra. Let us, for instance, take the formation of the letter ra (ṛ). The three lines form the trīkoṇa and the line inside is a modern development of a Bindu which is to be found in mediaeval Maithili inscriptions. The āṭhī (F) sign in the beginning of Maithili alphabet is again due to the Tāntric influence, for it represents the Kuṇḍalinī (Mūlādhāra).

Another very important result of this Tāntric predominance over the Maithilas has been the composition of the popular Gosāumi-ka-Gītā (the song of the Goddess Durgā) in Maithilī literature, without which no auspicious religious ceremony can ever begin in Mithilā. Besides a large number of songs popularly known as jogs, there are a great number of documents relating to incantations and charms in Maithilī which, though not fully understood now by the experts of the Mantra-Sāstra, nonetheless, serve their purpose very efficaciously.

Thus the influence of the Tāntric practices has been so great upon the life of the Maithilas that all their daily activities are practically dominated and governed by the principles of the Tāntric religion. The Kaula and Daśamahāvidyā however, gained wide popularity in Mithilā in course of time. The Kaulas became the protagonists of Vāmācāra or Vāmamārga sect and Daśamahāvidyā. Kālī, Tārā and Bhubanesvārī have now prominent place in the life of the Maithilas. Āgama does not necessarily mean “a sacred book appealed to by vāmācārins” as opposed to Nīgama of the followers of Dakṣiṇācāra. Nor is the term Vāmācārin itself a synonym for Kaula, for a person may be the first without being the second.

In ancient Mithilā Dakṣiṇācāra was more popular and widely practised. It produced great Sādhakas. But in course of time the Maithilas came to be intensely influenced by the Vāmācāra practices. The mode of worship in the two mārgas is quite different. It is true, one who follows the Vāmācāra attains Siddhi soon; but it is very difficult to practice it successfully and as such there is every chance of a fall in this mārga. Vasīṣṭha and other Sādhakas followed Dakṣiṇācāra and were great devotees of the Goddess Tārā. Great Sādhakas have from time to time appeared on the scene and inspired people to practise this religion. Tāntric Buddhism, as we know, also greatly influenced it with the result that Mithilā came into contact with Mahā Cīna (great China)\(^1\). Dakṣiṇācāra was, therefore, (and is still) looked upon with high regard. Innumerable Sādhakas in Mithilā followed this path, whose life-history, full of miraculous feats and wonderful achievements, has now passed into legends handed down from generation to generation and is yet an object of popular study and reverence.

Side by side with Dakṣiṇācāra, Vāmācāra and Kaula also gained much popularity and soon gave rise to Abhicāra-karma\(^2\) (black magic, mummary, witch-crafts etc.) among the low classes and women. This had no doubt a dangerous-ly demoralising effect on the morale of the common people, and it was this Karma that largely contributed to unpopularity of the Tantras in general and the growing hatred for the Sādhakas in particular in Mithilā, Bengal and Assam. Indeed,

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2. This *Abhicāra-karma* was unfortunately the indirect result of the *Arimardana Hema* or *Nigraha Hema*, i.e., "the object of punishing an enemy" fully dealt with and enumerated in the thirty-first chapter (*Arimardana Hema*) of the celebrated work *Tantrarāja-Tantra* (*The King among Tantras*) edited by Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon). Verses 3-6 of this chapter speak of certain things which should be known regarding the enemy before a ḍhema is begun.
the divine qualities inherent in this sect are very difficult to practise, and, therefore, in the absence of the right interpretations and understanding people took to degrading forms of debauchery under the garb of the Tāntric Śādhana. The result was obvious. The divine Tantras came to be stigmatised as a libidinous phallic necromancy.

The use of Bhāṅga (something like the Soma-rasa of the ancient Hindus) among the Maithilas is the direct result of their association with Vāmācāra. Those who refrained from taking wine, probably took to Bhāṅga for intoxication.

Lakṣmīdhara, in his commentary on the thirty-first verse (śloka) of Saundarya-Lahari of Śaṅkara-cārya has given the names of sixty-four Tantras, i.e., Candrakalā, Jyotsnāvati, Kalāṇidhi, Kulārṇava, Kuleśvāri, Bhuvanesvāri, Bārhaspatya and Durvāsamata, in which the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas, the Śūdras and even the mixed castes have been given equal rights to perform meditation. The first three are advised to attain Siddhi through Dakṣiṇācāra practices and Śūdras and the mixed castes are required to undergo Śādhana through Vāmācāra. It is due to this liberal attitude that there have been no religious disturbances in Mithilā since hoary past to the present day. One finds Śaivas, Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas living together in perfect harmony in one and the same family. Whenever fish or meat is prepared in a family, the members, though belonging to different sects, sit together in one row and take their meals ungrudgingly, the only difference being that the Vaiṣṇavas keep away from taking fish or meat. Inspite of their catholic outlook and tolerance, wearing kaṭhī or Tulasimāla (the garland of Tulaśī), a symbol of Vaiṣṇavism, is not looked upon with favour by the Maithilas. The Brāhmaṇas, however, daily worship the Śālagrāma (Viṣṇu) and rub Śrīkhaṇḍacandana and ashes (bhasma) of Śiva on their forehead, arms, ears and other parts of their body. Side by side with these gods, they worship Iṣṭadevī, the symbol of Śakti and also put vermillion marks on their forehead. Durgā Pūjā is celebrated

1. Umesha Miśra, op. cit., 18 ff.
with the same zeal and vigour as Kṛṣṇāṣṭami or Janmāṣṭami and Śivarātri\(^1\). All this has resulted in wonderful blending of different religious sects and perfect harmony among their followers, a feature hardly to be seen elsewhere. Even the most orthodox Brahmaṇas participate in Muslim religious festivals and also those of the low castes, and vice-versa. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that in Mithilā and Bengal we have the real Indian culture in all its broad aspects, still flourishing, to which the celebrated Tāntric religion has made its unique contributions\(^2\).

**Philosophy:**

Intermingled with religion is philosophy which is looked upon as the natural outcome of religion. Whether religion leads to philosophy or philosophy to religion, in India the two are inseparable. Upaniṣad or the Vedānta philosophy is the logical outcome of the Sāmkhya and pushes its conclusions yet further\(^3\). Its exponent was Kapila, the father of all psychologists. The ancient system taught by him is still the foundation of all accepted systems of philosophy in India which are known as *darśanas*. Kapila denies the existence of God as creator, and *Prakṛti*, according to him, is sufficient to work out all that is good. The Sāmkhya system does not believe in the unity of all the souls. The Vedānta, however, believes that all individual souls are united in one cosmic being called Brahman. Kapila’s theory of “the universal extension of matter unbroken”—one substance changing to another substance called *mahat* which in one state manifests as intelligence and in another state as egoism—is practically the stepping-stone to Vedānta. There is thus no philosophy in the world which is not indebted to Kapila\(^4\).

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2. For details, see Upendra Thakur, “Development and Growth of Tāntric Religion in Mithilā” in *IHQ*, xxxiv (Nos. 3-4), 1958, pp. 193-204.
Vedânta means the end of the Veda and as such it recognizes its dependence on the Vedas and oneness of religion and philosophy. They are the highest consummation of the Brâhmanic religion. They lay stress on knowledge as the means of salvation. Taratī sokeri âtmanit, i.e., "the knower of Âtman crosses all sorrow"; brahmaâvid brahmaâiva bhavati i.e., "the knower of Brahman, indeed becomes Brahman".

The existence is what Kapila calls Puruṣa or Âtman and the Vedânta Self. The whole universe is one. There is only one existence. When it is passing through the forms of time, space and causation, it is called Intelligence, self-consciousness, fine matter, gross matter etc. The whole universe is one which the advaitists call Brahman. Brahman appearing behind the creation is called God; appearing behind the little universe the microcosm is the soul. The very Self or Âtman is therefore, God in man. The liberated soul feels his oneness with God so intensely that he calls himself "the creator of the world—I am the food, I am the foodeater, I am the subject, I am the object . . . . . I am the centre of the world, of immortal Gods". There is one individual existence in the universe, ever free and ever blessed and that is what we are"—this is the last conclusion arrived at by the Advaitists.

The general spirit underlying the Upaniṣads may be described as the search for truth in life. "Lead me from the unreal to the real; lead me from darkness to light; lead me from death to immortality"—prays the sage in the Brhadâranyaka Upaniṣad. "Whence are we born, where do we live and whither do we go?" asks the Upaniṣadic poet, and upon reflection he gets solutions to his queries. He finds that "all we can say about God is negative—it is not this, it is not that". The only possible assertion that the mystic saint makes is when he comes face to face to him: "That

1. Muqîl. Up. 11. 2. 2; Kâth. Up. 11.15, Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. ii,
2. Taitt. Up. iii; Radhakrishnan, op. cit.
3. viii. 12.
art thou—*tat tvam asi*. Ānanda, the Supreme Soul, “creates the world and enters it”, so that “the world is full of Him” etc. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* also makes an important addition to the doctrine in the form of the gospel of *karma* (action) which determines a man’s death, the nature of his next.

The doctrine that Self is yet essentially unknowable through the ordinary venues of knowledge is as old as the Upaniṣads. The puzzle was first started by Yājñavalkya, the great Maithila philosopher of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* in his famous dialogues with Maitreyi, his wife and Gārgī. The puzzle has remained engrained in the Vedānta philosophy of a later age and has found in Śaṅkara (*9th cent. A. D.*) one of its most powerful exponents. In the history of western thought a strikingly similar doctrine has been the upshot of Kant’s critical anyanalysis of knowledge. The nucleus of Yājñavalkya’s *Philosophy of Fictions* is explained in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* where he is telling his wife Maitreyi that “it is only where there is an as-it-were duality”; that “one is able to see another, to know another, to smell another, to hear another, but where to the realiser the whole world is Ātman, by what and what could he see, by what and what could he think, by what and what could he hear?”—these are the three steps which the Vedānta philosopher has taken and “we can not go beyond, because we cannot go beyond unity”.

In the history of the great thinkers of the Upaniṣadic period with their distinctive contributions the following names stand out—Mahidāsa Aitreya, Raikva, Śaṅḍilya, Satyakāma Jābāla, Jaivali, Uddālaka, Śvetaketu, Bhāradvāja, Gargyāyana, Pratardana, Bālāki, Ajātaśatrū, Varuṇa, Yājñavalkya, Gārgī, Maitreyi, Janaka Vaideha (*Kṛti Janaka*), Śaibya Satyakāma, Kausalya Āśvalāyana, Bhārgava Vaidarbhi and Kabandhi Kātyāyana.

Yājñavalkya:

The name of Yājñavalkya, the first reputed author of the *White Yajurveda*, a prominent authority on the rituals in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, and on philosophy of *Brahma* and *Ātmā* first propounded in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, is one of the most illustrious among Vedic sages. We have numerous references to this promulgator of the *White Yajurveda* in our ancient literature. From the *Mahābhārata* we learn that there was a quarrel between Vaiśampāyana and his pupil Yājñavalkya with the result that the latter worshipped the Sun and received the revelation of the *White Yajurveda*, the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* and etc. We have references to this interesting rupture between the great teacher and the great taught in almost all the *Purāṇas* though they somewhat differ from the account contained in the *Mahābhārata*. But they all agree on this point that there were strained relations between the two.

In the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* we have several allusions to the dialogues between Yājñavalkya and Janaka Vaideha (Kṛṣṇi Janaka) on Agnihotra. It is again at the end of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* that we learn that Yājñavalkya promulgated the bright Yajus formulae from the Sun. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* he appears as a very great philosopher who taught the doctrines of *Brahma* and immortality to Maitreyī, his philosopher-wife. Further, we are told that he carried away one thousand cows, set apart by Kṛṣṇi Janaka, the great philosopher-king of Mithilā for the most learned Brāhmaṇa. He also taught Janaka the knowledge of the destiny of the soul after

1. Śānti-Parva, chap. 312.
2. For other details, see *HM*, 39-46.
3. Viṣṇu. 3.5; Bhāgavata, xii, 6.61-74 etc.
4. Śat. Brā. xi. 6.2; SBE. Vol. 44, p. 46.
5. Śat. Brā. xiv. 9.4.33: “आरिस्वानीयां श्रुत्तिः चाद्विषि गात्मकत्रेष्व वास्तव्यवेश्यायायायते”
6. II, 4; IV. 5. For other details see *HM*, 99-101.
it is released from the bonds of flesh and worldly affections. All these evidences, when read together, clearly show that in the history of the great thinkers of the Vedic period with their distinctive contributions, the name of Yājñavalkya stands most pre-eminent whose doctrines constitute the very backbone of Indian philosophy.

This Yājñavalkya is also credited with having composed the *Smṛti*, renowned as Yājñavalkya-Śmṛti. There is, however, a great controversy regarding the authorship of this work. In the Yājñavalkya-Śmṛti itself the author claims the authorship of the Āraṇyaka that he received from the Sun and Yogaśāstra composed by him.

This celebrated code of law is only second in importance to that of Manu’s. Its well-known commentary, Mitakṣarā is the leading authority of the Mithilā school. While Manu is said to have legislated mainly for Brahma-rṣideśa, Yājñavalkya is no doubt associated with Mithilā, the erstwhile celebrated seat of learning and philosophy. The *Smṛti* is comparatively modern in respect of its style and doctrines, and as such it is difficult to accept that he was the author of this work. P. V. Kane has rightly observed that “from the style and doctrines of the *Smṛti* it is impossible to believe that it was the work of the same hand that gave to the world the *Upaniṣad* containing the boldest philosophical speculation couched in the simplest yet the most effective language.” That the same man was the author of the *Smṛti* and the Āraṇyaka is not admitted without reservation even by the orthodox Indian opinion, inspite of the fact that “the Yājñavalkya-Śmṛti is much more closely connected with White Yajurveda and the literature particularly belonging to it than with any other

1. Also cf. Pāṇini, III, 3, 105.
2. III, 110: “केर्पं चारण्यमाणिं वदादिविवदवार्तै। गोगशास्त्रं न मत्योक्तं केर्पं गोगमोहिपस्ताः”
Veda. The Mitakṣara also says at the very beginning that a certain pupil of Yajñavalkya abridged the Dharmaśāstra in the form of a dialogue. It is thus certain that the Smṛti is a later compilation of the views of the great master, which was prepared probably during the first two centuries of the Christian era or even a little earlier.

His birth-place:

Scholars generally hold that this Yajñavalkya was a native of Mithilā. Regarding his birth-place, it has been asserted that some passages of the Brāhmaṇas make it, if not absolutely certain, highly probable that he belonged by descent to the Videhas. This is further confirmed, it is claimed, by the fact that his name does not occur in the group of the Kuru-Paṇcāla Brāhmaṇas who flocked to Janaka’s court—a fact which we have, in the following pages, proved to be incorrect and unfounded. It is true, he was the most distinguished philosopher of the court of that equally distinguished philosopher-king, Janaka (Kṛti) of Videha, but the assertion that Mithilā was the land of his birth does not seem convincing in view of the conflicting nature of evidences contained in ancient literature.

During the period under review, Mithilā was the home of Vedic culture, and intellectually most advanced, which attracted renowned scholars from the remotest parts of the

1. Ibid., 169, For other details see, 181 ff.
2. Ibid. 169: “याज्ञवल्क्यविद्वान्: विशिष्टोऽवस्थितं याज्ञवल्क्यप्रणीतं भमदानं संभवद्यमानस्”
3. Besides Yajñavalkya-Smṛti we have three other works connected with his name, viz., Vṛddha-Taj., Bhad-Taj. and Tega-Taj. For a detailed discussion of these works and their dates, see Kane, Op. Cit. 188-90.
4. The writer of these lines formerly also held the same view (HM. 102) which, in the light of new materials does not seem correct. Also, see S. V. Ketkar Maharashtra Jātsakola (Poona, 1932), Pratīyana Khanda, 1, Vīhāga 3, p. 448.
5. Mookerjee, Men & Thought in Ancient India, 55.
country. Yājñāvalkya was undoubtedly the most prominent figure and the centre of all philosophical activities in the court of the Maithila king. His very name, according to Pāṇini, means, "one who promulgates sacrifices."

First of all, he appears as one of a small group of wandering scholars including Śvetaketu Āruṇeya and Śuṣma Śātyayājānī when they met Janaka of Videha and had a discussion on some obstruse rituals. Janaka asked them to explain the offering of Agnihotra oblation. Yājñāvalkya gave a satisfactory answer, but it contained some flaws which were pointed out to him by the former who later himself explained the offering of Agnihotra. He then put questions to Yājñāvalkya and thenceforward became a Brāhmaṇa or Brahman i.e. knower of Brahman.

This episode must be treated as a very important one, for it gave a break in Yājñāvalkya’s life who was now greatly respected as a teacher by the great Janaka. It has another significant aspect too. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa clearly states that these wandering scholars were all from the Kuru-Pańcāla country. In other words, Yājñāvalkya originally hailed from Kuru-Pańcāla which in ancient times included western U.P., the Punjab, parts of Gujrat and the adjoining tracts. When Janaka respected him as his teacher, he probably settled down in Mithilā and became his most renowned court-philosopher. It was there that he postulated his celebrated theory of the means of self-realisation which later led him to the crowning act of his life—the renunciation of the world and adoption of a mendicant’s life, and thence became renowned as Yogīsvāra. It was but natural that such a great philosopher should have been hailed and accepted as a Maithila after his settling down there by the scholars of the land who took great pride in following his leadership in the

1. IV. 2. 104 : “अन्यप्रस्तुतम्”
3. Śat. Brā. XI, 6. 2. 1.
world of letters. According to Mithila-tradition, the signs of his āśrama are yet extant. A large banian tree at Jogaban near the Kamataul station on the N. E. Rly. (in the district of Darbhanga) is adorned as his hermitage. The *Mithila-tirtha-prakāsa*, however, places his āśrama near Dhanukhā in the village of Kusuma in Nepal \(^1\) which was once the part of the Maithila territory.

That Yājñavalkya was not a child of the soil but just a domicile, is also borne out by several facts which have not yet received proper notice of scholars who have unanimously accepted him as a native of Mithilā. History is full of such instances of emigrants as have passed for the original inhabitants of the land where they first came and settled down, and in course of time merged with the local elements so completely as to render it impossible to distinguish them from the original inhabitants of the country. Against this background, the following facts, having bearing on the life and birth-place of Yājñavalkya, may be taken into consideration:

(i) From the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*\(^2\) we learn that Janaka Vaideha once performed a *Bahudakṣiṇa* sacrifice. All the learned Brāhmaṇas of the Kuru-Paścāla country were invited. Janaka wanted to know as to who was the most learned of these Brāhmaṇas. The term, *these* Brāhmaṇas, undoubtedly refers to those coming from the Kuru-Paścāla country. Of the eight renowned philosophers of the time who put difficult metaphysical questions to Yājñavalkya, Aśvala, the hotri-priest of Janaka was also one. This shows that Yājñavalkya by this time was treated as a foreigner even by the hotri-priest of Janaka. Had he been accepted as a leader of Maithila philosophers, it is but natural to presume that at least Aśvala would have refrained from putting questions to him with a view to discrediting him. It was probably after this memorable episode that Janaka, out of respect for his great learning, offered

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2. 3. 1.
him his entire kingdom and wealth and persuaded him to settle there and live in his court as his most respected teacher.

(ii) Had he originally belonged to Videha, Janaka would not have been unaware of his erudite learning and scholarship, which any king or country worth the name would rightly have been proud of.

(iii) Even during the time of the Buddha, Kuru-Paṇcāla was a recognised seat of philosophy which enjoyed unrivalled fame in this field right from the time of the Rgveda down to the rise of Yājñavalkya, though by this time Kaikeya, Kāśi and Videha also gradually came to be celebrated as seats of learning and scholarship. With Yājñavalkya domiciled in Videha, now the centre of learning gradually shifted from Kuru-Paṇcāla to Videha\(^1\), which later came to be recognised as the undisputed home of advancement and enlightenment.

(iv) Moreover, the name ‘Yājñavalkya’ is quite peculiar to Mithilā tradition and has never been popular either with the educated or with the uneducated, whereas the names of the sages and philosophers have found favour with the Maithilas who have adopted them for naming their children.

**Literary Evidence:**

We have, however, no mention of his birthplace in our ancient literature. Some scholars\(^2\) believe that he was born in Camatkārapura, Vṛddhanagara (modern Vaḍanagara in northern Gujrat) but later he accepted the citizenship of Videha on the request of King Janaka and settled there\(^3\).

He was a scion of the distinguished family to which Viśvāmitra, Cārāyaṇa, Devarāta, Brahmaraṇa, and other

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1. For other details, see R. Sāṅkrtyāyana, *Darsana-digdarsana*, 457–58.
3. *Ibid.* "नागामुनियंश्वंस्यामवल्लचलकारपुरं, वदधनगरं ( वदधनगर शितं उत्तरण्गरात्रात्‌ प्राणे स्वितं) वा अभिवसत्ति स्म। वदधं च जनकाकर्तव्य देशिकपदम्‌ गोक्तकार तरांनी भिदिलाम्निपितबान्***"
great seers belonged, and the name of his mother was Sunandā.

Regarding his exact birth-date and year there is a great controversy among scholars and nothing definite can be said in the present state of our knowledge\(^1\).

Though nothing definite can be adduced in favour of the above contention, there is, however, a very strong factor, besides the literary evidence quoted above, which supports his Gujrāti birth. There is still prevalent in Gujrāt a *gotra* after his name amongst the Brāhmaṇas\(^2\), whereas no such *gotra* or anything of the kind is to be traced in Mithilā which claims his nativity. On the other hand, we have in this part of the country numerous *gotras* named after the great seers who once flourished there and enriched the land by their sparkling genius. Had Yājñavalkya been a child of the soil, he would not have been ignored when even comparatively much smaller seers and philosophers have been immortalised by the Maithilas in various ways. This is undoubtedly a very strong proof in support of Gujrāt or the adjoining Kuru-Paṇcāla country being the land of his birth.

The above discussion makes it absolutely clear that Mithilā in no case was the birth-place of the great philosopher. It was only after the historic meeting between the great philosopher-king and the great philosopher that the latter settled down in Mithilā after the former accepted him as his teacher; and it was in the great halls of Mithilā that Yājñavalkya shone the brightest among the luminaries of the age and of all times to come. It was, therefore, natural that the Maithila scholars should have accorded him all honour and respect and unanimously accepted him as their sole and undisputed leader who had no match, no rival in the field of learning.

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2. I am indebted to my esteemed friend Prof. Šobhākānta Jha of the Mithilā Research Institute, Darbhanga for this valuable piece of information.
Pūrva-mīmāṃsā and Vedānta:

The story of the growth and development of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta or the Uttara-Mīmāṃsā — the two different systems of Indian philosophy — is indeed a fascinating chapter in the history of human thought and culture. It is the story of the centuries of struggle of the great seers and teachers in quest of the sacred wisdom and truth and the knowledge of God and spiritual life; of the sacred hopes and aspirations of sincere souls like the rṣis of the Upaniṣads and of the supreme efforts and ceaseless endeavours of the later thinkers to justify by reason what faith implicitly accepts.

This consistent search for truth and knowledge gave birth to different systems of thought or darśanas of which six became more famous and pronounced — (i) Gautama’s Yoga, (ii) Kaṇḍa’s Vaiṣeṣika, (iii) Kapila’s Sāṅkhya, (iv) Patañjali’s Yoga, (v) Jaimini’s Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and (vi) Bādarāyaṇa’s Uttara-Mīmāṃsā or the Vedānta. These six systems are treated as Brāhmaṇical, since all of them accept the authority of the Vedas. But, the two mīmāṃsās are directly wedded to the Vedas. The Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā investigates the nature of dharma propounded in the former section of the Vedas i.e., Karma-Kāṇḍa, while the Uttara-Mīmāṃsā or the Vedānta (the concluding portions of the Vedas) investigates the nature of Brahman in the latter section, i.e., Jānaka-Kāṇḍa. As the former recognises the Vedas as the sole authority on dharma, it is treated as an orthodox system of philosophy (āstika-darśana). These are known as darśana, because these systems aim at the final release of man through the highest knowledge and realisation of the highest truth.

The rules of interpretation of the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā literature were formulated for the first time by Jaimini in a systematic work known as Jaimini-stūtra or Mīmāṃsā-stūtra. A number of writers later commented on this work, but of all these, that of Śabara, called Śabara-bhāṣya became the most renowned and has formed the basis and starting point for all later Mīmāṃsā works. Śabara might well, therefore, be regarded as the ‘Father of Mīmāṃsā-Literature’. Indeed, he had attained this position
as early as the time of the great Śaṅkara who quotes his words as those of Śaṅkara who quotes his words

The Upaniṣads are said to be the Vedānta and they betray two different tendencies — ( i ) that which affirms the identity of Brahman, the individual soul and the world and ( ii ) that which distinguishes them. Efforts have been made to harmonise and reconcile the two different sets of statements, first of all in the Brahma-stūtra or the Vedānta-stūtra of Bādarāyana. From this work we know that seers like Auḍulomi, Bādari, Jaimini, Kārṣṇājini and Āśmartha made attempts to systematize the thought of the Upaniṣads prior to Bādarāyana. Their works are, however, not known, and naturally Bādarāyana’s work gained more prominence.

The Upaniṣads, the Bhāgavad-Gītā and the Brahma-stūtra constitute the prastāhāna-traya ( the triple basis ) of the Vedānta system. The Brahma-stūtra is also known as the Uttar-Mīmāṃsā as distinct from the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā which deals with the ritual or the karma-kāṇḍa. It has been differently interpreted by different thinkers of which the chief are the Advaita, the Viśiṣṭādvaita, the Dvaita, Bhedābheda and Śuddhādvaita associated with the great names of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka and Vallabha respectively. Of these, however, Śaṅkara’s interpretation of the Vedānta philosophy ( the Advaita ) is outstanding which had a far-reaching influence on the philosophers of the later epoch.

The land of Mithilā proved to be the most fertile soil for the two systems of philosophy — Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā — to thrive on. From Gautama to Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya is a fascinating story of the tremendous growth and development of these systems of philosophy which germinated and blossomed forth into an ever-expanding quest for knowledge, truth and ultimate reality touching all problems of human mind. Besides Nyāya, the philosophy of Mīmāṃsā found its three great exponents in Kumārila, Prabhākara and Murāri, culminating in three different schools. Once again, in the early mediaeval age, the

1. Śaṅkara-bhāgava, 1. 1. 4; also cf. G. N. Jha, Pūrva-mīmāṃsā in its Sources, pp. 14–15.
abligation to protect orthodox culture from the sudden onslaught of all heterodox schools of thought pushed Mithila—the ancient land of Janaka, Yājñavalkya and Gautama—to the fore to take up the cudgels for the defence of the cause of her ancient faith which in its turn saw the birth of some of the unrivalled Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas in the country between 750 and 1250 A.D. in the person of Kumārila, Maṇḍana, Vācaśpati, Udayana and a host of others.

The rise of Kumārila & S'āmkara: the Bhāṭṭa mata

The age of Kumārila and Śaṅkarācārya was the age of great religious ferment and Brāhmaṇic revival. Śaṅkara’s commentary on the Brahmasūtras is the root from which sprang forth a host of commentaries and studies on Vedāntism of great originality, vigour and philosophic insight.1

Kumārila was the vigorous exponent of the Brāhmaṇical orthodoxy which assumes the authoritativeness of the Vedas and the supremacy of the priest. He commented on the Mīmāṃsā-sūtra of Jaimini (Jaiminiyasūtra) and the Śabara-bhūṣya, a commentary on the Jaiminiyasūtra. His work is in three parts. He is variously known as Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, or Kumārila Śvāmin (or Miśra) or Tutata Bhaṭṭa. He is one of the brightest gems of Indian philosophy, and flourished in the 7th century A.D. and was contemporary of Dharmakīrti (with whom he had a long controversy) and a senior contemporary of the great Śaṅkara.2

There is a controversy among scholars regarding his birth-place. According to some, he was an inhabitant of South India; according to others, of North India. There are, however, reasons to believe that he was a Brāhmaṇa of North Bihar or Mithila whence he had also been to South India. Ānandagiri in his Śaṅkara-digvijaya also attests that

he came from the North. He uses the term *Udakadeśa* (the land of water) for the north which, though quite vague, probably refers to Tairabhukti or Trabhukti (i.e., desa situated on the bank of the rivers)—another name for Mithilā1 which in later times became the enlightened home of hundreds of mīmāṁsakas and naiyāyikas and which was very close to the home of Buddhism. Ānandagiri also refers to Maṇḍana Miśra as being the bhaginīpati (sister's husband) of Kumārila. This is a further confirmation of his nativity as Maṇḍana was undisputedly a celebrated thinker of Mithilā and this marriage could have been possible only if Kumārila belonged to Mithilā2. Tradition widely current in Mithilā says that Kumārila belonged to the village of Bhaṭṭapura or Bhaṭṭapurā (in the district of Darbhanga) which later on came to be renowned as the seat of Bhaṭṭa school of Mīmāṁsā.

It was in the age of Kumārila that Buddhism had spread its influence far and wide. The University of Nālandā was then at the height of its glory and there was a large number of Buddhist thinkers in the country who were vehemently attacking Hindu religion and philosophy. But, inspite of this wide influence, corruption had already set in the Buddhist order. Dharmakīrtti tried his best to arrest this dangerous process of deterioration and disintegration in the great order but he met with utter failure. Kumārila rose equal to the occasion, challenged Dharmakīrtti, rejected his views threadbare and registered the fatal blow to Buddhism in India. He has criticised the Buddhists in his masterly works such Śloka-vārttika and Tantra-vārttika.

The *Saṃkaradigvijaya* and the Tibetan works give us many interesting stories regarding his controversies with Dharmakīrtti. It is said that he was formerly a Buddhist and having learnt all the secrets of Buddhism, later switched on to Hinduism and gave crushing defeat to Buddhists on all fronts in open debates and challenges3. His knowledge of Buddhist

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1. For detailed discussion, see Thakur, *History of Mithīla*, 8–11.
3. Cf. the *Saṃkaradigvijaya*, vii.
philosophy was much more profound and accurate than that of the great Śaṅkara, and this decidedly gives him a unique place in the history of Indian thought.

The Ślokavārttika, the Tantravārttika and the Ṭuptika are the three well-known parts of his commentary on Śabarabhāṣya, noted above. Besides these, he is also the author of Bṛhaṭṭika and Madhyamaṭṭika. He has referred to the former in his Ślokavārttika.¹

The Ślokavārttika is a versified commentary on the first Pāda (also known as Tarkapāda) of the first chapter of the Śabarabhāṣya. It deals with the problems of philosophy from the stand-point of Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā and sharply refutes the Buddhist stand², and gives his own views on the conception of mokṣa, the nature of the Ātman, Kāla and the existence of a subtler body, Ātivāhikaśarīra.

The Tantravārttika is a prosaic commentary on the Śabarabhāṣya from adhyāya I, Pāda ii to the end of adhyāya III. A unique work, it reflects his euridite scholarship and thorough mastery over other schools of thought as well. From a study of this work it is clear that Kumārila believes in the creation and dissolution of the Universe³. "Mīmāṁsā", according to him, "is based upon the Vedas, upon ordinary experiences and also upon direct Perception and Inference based upon these, and it has been reared up by an unbroken line of scientific teachers"⁴. Like the Veda, ākāśa, dik, kāla, Ātman, and paramāṇyu are all eternal. He differs from Śabarā on the manifestation of sound⁵ and remarks that the great master has omitted the interpretation of six of the more important sūtras⁶.

¹. Cf. Sūtra 5, Asthāpattiparichcheda, verse 9: "भव्यवस्थापनतमालापद्वाग्रहण-प्रयत्नः पञ्चोपवर्तव्र ‘भोगदिनारितितत्त्व’ भित्तियिनः ‘ब्रह्मभाव’ विशिष्ट हस्तान्—भक्तरोपिनिति”
². For his views, see G. N. Jhā, Op. Cit. chaps. II-IX, XVI-XVIII.
⁴. Ibid. p. 80.
⁵. Ślokavārttika (Banaras ed.), p. 786.
⁶. Tantravārttika (Banaras ed.) pp. 915-16.
Tuptika, the third in the series, is very brief and not so important as the other two. Various commentaries have been written on these works including those by Umbeka Bhatṭa (Taitparyatikā), Sucarita Miśra (Kāśikā) and Pārthasārathi Miśra (Nyāyaratnakara) all on the Ślokavārttika; Someśvara Bhatṭa (Nyāyasudhā), Kamalākara Bhatṭa (Bhāvavṛtha), Gopāla Bhatṭa (Mitākṣara), Pārthasārathi Miśra (probably Mīmāṃsā-nyāyaratnakara) and a host of others (all on the Tantravārttika) and Pārthasārathi Miśra (Tantraratna) and others on the Tuptika.

Kumārika’s writings are brilliant and his criticisms of opponents’ views quite convincing. His originality of thought and interpretation is writ large on all the pages of his Vārttikas. Moreover, he has suggested new lines to explain the knotty philosophical problems, and that way his contributions are unique and second to none. His deep scholarship and profound influence can well be judged from the fact that he came to be celebrated as the founder of a new school of thought in mīmāṃsā, popularly known as the Bhūṭṭa mata or School1.

Maṇḍana Miśra:

Maṇḍana is undisputedly a celebrated name both in the field of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. Mādhavacārya in his Śaṅkara-digvijaya says that Maṇḍana was defeated by Śaṅkara in debate and was consequently controverted to Vedānticisim and was re-named Sureśvaracārya, the famous author of the Vārttika on the Bhūṣya which he could not do owing to the intrigues of Śaṅkara’s other pupils. He, however, wrote a treatise, Naishakarmyasiddhi and toed the line of the great master in expounding the orthodox faith and denouncing the Buddhists2.


This identity is, however, controversial and Dr. Jha, S. Kuppuswami Sastri, P. V. Kane and others do not believe in this Maṇḍana-Sureśvara equation and place him between 615 and 695 A.D. or 690 and 710 A.D. Any way, he flourished sometime in the 7th century and was a senior contemporary of Śaṅkara.

According to a tradition current in Mithilā he was a Maithila Brāhmaṇa and lived in the village of Māhiṣmatī (modern Mehsi) in the district of Saharsa. He was fairly old at the time of his disputation with Śaṅkara who was then in the prime of his youth. From the Śaṅkaradīgyaṭāya we further learn that he was husband of Kumārila's sister. According to some, he was also a disciple of Kumārila. Other words, Kumārila, Maṇḍana and Śaṅkara were contemporaries.

Maṇḍana was the earliest expositor of the Bhāṭṭa system and wrote a commentary on Kumārila's Tantravārttikā. His other important works on Mīmāṃsā are — Vidhīviveka which deals with the import of Vidhi-liṅ and refutes the stand-point of both Bhāṭṭa and Guru (this is regarded as an important work so much so that it has been honoured by an extensive commentary by the great Vācaspati Miśra, known as Nyāyakarṇika; Bhavanaviveka commented upon by Umbeka; Vidhramaviveka which discusses four types of Khyātis; Mīmāṃsānukramaṇikā.

4. Some scholars also identify him with Umbeka (Vidyāranya, Śaṅkaradīgyaṭāya, VII. III–117) which is wrong (vide—Paśca-Mīmāṃsā, App. 33).
7. Published from Banaras.
8. Edited by Dr. Jhā in the Sarasvatībhavana Series, Banaras.
10. Ed. by Dr. Jhā in the Sarasvatībhavana Series, Banaras.
a versified summary of Mīmāṃsāsūtra written with a view to recapitulating all the topics of the adhikaranas of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Sphotaśiddhi, a work written to defend the theory of sphota against varṇavādins wherein he has criticised the views of his own Guru—Kumārila.  

In his Vibhramaviveka he has briefly but critically reviewed four chief theories of bhrama (khyātivāda) – (i) ātmakhyāti, (ii) asat-khyāti (iii) Akhyāti and (iv) anyathākhyāti. He has tried to maintain the Bhaṭṭa theory of vīparitakhyāti which is practically the same as the Nyāya theory of anyathākhyāti with slight variations. In this Maṇḍana incidentally prepares the way for the advaita theory of anivarcanyakhyāti. Moreover, he has thoroughly refuted through an elaborate course of reasoning the akhyāti theory of the Prabhākaras.  

Maṇḍana, the Vedātin is no less great than Maṇḍana, the celebrated Mīmāṃsaka. He is universally recognised as a very great authority on the advaita school of Vedānta and wielded tremendous influence on his contemporaries and also on the later advaitins. That Śaṅkara had to walk all the way from South to Mithilā to win him over to his side to establish his own view-point, indeed, speaks of his great popularity and influence as a scholar and thinker. His Brahmasiddhi (a text-book on pre-Śaṅkara Vedānta) forms a land-mark in the history of Vedāntic study, on which the great Vācaspati wrote the commentary, known as Brahmatattva-samikṣā. The Brahmasiddhi consists of four chapters – (i) Brahmakāṇḍa, (ii) Tarkakāṇḍa, (iii) Niyoğa-kāṇḍa and (iv) Siddhikāṇḍa in the form of verses (kārikā) and long annotations (vytti).

Of these the Brahmakāṇḍa is most remarkable as in it he explains the most important Vedāntic concepts including the nature of Brahman. In the Tarkakāṇḍa he argues that “difference” cannot be perceived through perception and as such Upaniṣadic texts cannot and should not be inter-

1. For other details, see Purva-Mīmāṃsā, 21–22.
2. Vibhramaviveka, Intro., ii ff.
interpreted on dualistic lines, for perception reveals difference. In the Niyogakāṇḍa he strongly refutes the Mīmāṃsā regarding interpretation of Upaniṣadic texts according to Mīmāṃsā principle of interpretation and in the Siddhi-
kāṇḍa he explains that "Upaniṣad texts show that the manifold world of appearance does not exist at all and that its apparent existence is due to the avidyā of Jīva."¹

His other works on Vedānta are Naiṣākarmyasiddhi² referred to above and his most important works are his two Vārītikas on the Śaṅkarabhāṣya on the Brhadāraṇyaka and Taittiriya Upaniṣads. Dasgupta³ ascribes these two Vārītikas to Suresvara who, according to popular tradition, was no other than Manḍana.

Prabhākara Miśra : the Guru-mata.

Propounder of a new School of Mīmāṃsā, the Prabhākara School (also popularly known as the Guru-mata), Prabhākara Miśra was one of the most intelligent and independent interpreters of the Śaṅkarabhāṣya. He is traditionally said to have been a class-mate of Manḍana Miśra and a great disciple of a great teacher — Kumārila and is respectfully called Guru by the mīmāṃsakas.

The story goes that he was a pupil of Kumārila who was so much pleased with a novel interpretation given by Prabhākara, the disciple, that he nicknamed the latter as Guru, and he is generally spoken of by this title in later Sanskrit philosophical literature on Mīmāṃsā⁴.

There is, however, a great controversy regarding the relative chronological position of the two great thinkers. Dr. Jhā believes that he was senior to Kumārila and the two

². Ed. by Prof. Hiriyana in the Bombay Sanskrit Series.
⁴. For different stories current amongst scholars about his relation with Kumārila, see G. N. Jhā, The Prabhākara School of Pūra-
Mīmāṃsā, pp. 9 ff; Pūra-Mīmāṃsā, pp. 15-16; Brhad of Prabhākara Miśra (ed. S. K. Rāmanātha Sastri), Intro. 4 ff, etc.
were contemporaries. This view is based mainly on the style of his monumental commentary Bṛhatti on Saharabhāṣya which resembles that of Śabara in its “natural grace, simplicity and directness”, amongst others. Some scholars, however, take him to be a junior contemporary of Kumārila. Jhā places him between 600 and 650 A.D., while others assign him the period between 610 and 690 A.D. Notwithstanding this controversy regarding their chronological position, there is no doubt that they were contemporaries. Later researches have convincingly shown that Prabhākara, Kumārila and Maṇḍana were not far removed in time and that all of them flourished during the sixth-seventh centuries A.D. These two writers became the celebrated founders of the two Schools of Mīmāṃsā, to which a third was later added in the person of Murāri Miśra II. Consequently, in Mīmāṃsā-literature, the view of Prabhākara is generally referred to as Guru-mata, that of Kumārila as Bhāṭṭa-mata and that of Murāri as Miśra-mata. And, all the later commentators belonged to either of these three different schools.

Like his great contemporary, Prabhākara also wrote a very faithful commentary on the Saharabhāṣya known as Bṛhatta or Nibandhana which forms the basic text for the Prabhākara School. He wrote another commentary on the Bhāṣya, called Vivaraṇa or Laghī. The former consists of 12,000 ślokas whereas the latter contains 6,000 ślokas. These works have been commented upon by Śālikanātha Miśra, known as Rjuvimala (on Vivaraṇa) and Dīpaśikhā (on Niban-

2. Ibid. 15-20.
3. For a detailed discussion of different views see Ibid. 15-20, App. 29; Jhā, Prabhākara School, 9 ff; Śāstrī, Bṛhatt of Prabhākara Miśra, Intro; Kuppuswāmi Śāstrī, in Proceedings of the Third Oriental Congress, 1924 and also his Introduction to the Brahma-siddhi, p. Ivii etc.
4. Ed. by S. K. Rāmanātha Śāstrī, published by the University of Madras, 1936 (Tarkādīda section with the Rjuvimala Pāńekā of Śālikanātha Miśra).
dhana or Bṛhatī). Unfortunately the complete version of the Bṛhatī has not yet come to light and is found up to the middle of the adhyāya vi only, though later researches have brought to light some portions of the seventh and the eighth adhyāyas also.

Prabhākara believes in the determinate knowledge. Sādṛṣya (resemblance), according to him, is a distinct category. Inference and analogy are distinct means of cognition, and negation is not a distinct Pramāṇa. He believes in the theory of Satkārā for only the Laukikas or Tārkikas believe in the distinctive nature of cause and effect. Cognition is self-valid and does not require another means of cognition to support its validity. Motion is an object of inference. Here he differs from the Vaiśeṣika according to whom it is recognizable through direct perception. And, Ākṛti is a category that depends on the usage of an old man through the methods of Agreement and Difference.

Vācaspati Miśra:

The great Vācaspati Miśra’s is a name to conjure with in the field of Indian philosophy. He wrote a sub-commentary on Nyāya-Vārttika of Udyotakara, elaborated its conceptions and defended them against heterodox and Buddhist criticisms.

1. Ibid, Foreword, 1.
3. Ibid, 107; also see Pāṇa-Mīmāṃsā, 19 ff.
5. Ibid, 118.
6. Ibid, 82.
7. Ibid, 84.
8. Ibid, 98.
9. Vai. Su. IV. 1. II.
He is said to have belonged to village Thāḍhī in the district of Darbhanga. We stand on a firm ground as regards his date and time. In his Nyāya-suci-nibandha he has given the date as 898 (vasv-āṅka-vasu-vatsare) which in the saṅvat era corresponds to A. D. 841 or 842. In other words, he flourished in the ninth century.

A master of all the six systems of philosophy, Vācaspati was popularly known as śaḍ-darśanavallabha or Sarvatatantra-svatantra and Dwādaśa-darśana-ṭikākāra in the world of intellect. His marvellous exposition of Udyotakara’s Nyāya-vārttika with a view to making clear the right meanings of the latter which was “sinking in the mud as it were through numerous other bad writings” (dustarakunibandhapaṅka-magnānām) earned him the celebrated title of Tātparyācārya meaning “the great expositor”. In this work he has militantly defended Udyotakara against the charges of the Buddhist philosopher Dignāga and has sharply attacked his views with all the armoury of his debating skill and logical prowess. His celebrated commentary, Bhāmati (named after his wife who was childless) on Saṅka-rabhūṣya or Brahmasūtras occupies a unique place in the whole gallery of Vedāntic works, in which he has referred to the Buddhist doctrine of pratitya-samutpāda.1

He has also quoted from Dignāga in his Tātparyāṭikā2 and strongly refuted his views on the contact of sense-organ. His another commentary, Saṁkhya-tattva-kaumudi on Iśvara-kṛṣṇa’s Saṁkhya-kārikā is unanimously regarded as an authoritative work in the field of Saṁkhya literature. He is further credited with having written commentaries on Maṇḍana Miśra’s Vidhīviveka and Brahmasiddhi, known as Nyāya-kaṇṭikā and Tattva-samikṣā, Tattva-vindu and other works on Nyāya, Saṁkhya and Yoga. The unique popularity and influence of Vācaspati can well be judged from the fact that he was recognised as an unquestioned authority on Vedānta in northern India.

2. 1, i, 4.
Vācaspasi’s Vedāntic works are Bhāmati and Tattva-samikṣā (a work not yet published) and a commentary on Maṇḍana Miśra’s Brahmasiddhi. But Bhāmati is undoubtedly a very great work and constitutes one of the pillars of Vedāntic studies. “As to the method of Vācaspasi’s commentary, he always tries to explain the text as faithfully as he can, keeping himself in the background and directing his great knowledge of the subject to the elucidation of the problems which directly arise from the texts and to explaining the allusions and contexts of thoughts, objections and ideas of other schools of thought referred to in the text.”

Truth and reality are defined by Vācaspasi as immediate self-revelation (sva-prakāśatā) never to be contradicted (abādhita). Accordingly he rejects the definition of reality as the participation of the class-concept of being, as the Naiyāyikas hold, capacity of doing work (arthakriyā-kārītya), as the Buddhists hold. He speaks of avidyā being twofold. All appearances accordingly originate from Brahman in association with or with the accessory cause (sahākāri-kāraṇa) of the two avidyās (avidyā-dvaitayasaścivasya).

Vācaspasi’s well known work on Mīmāṃsā is his commentary on the Vīdhiviveka, called Nyāyakaṇḍikā. S. C. Vidyābhūṣanā wrongly took it to be a work on Nyāya. In it he has discussed many important philosophical topics, such as the asatkāryavāda, the Khyātis, Validity of dream-cognition, Tamass as a substance, and several Buddhist topics. In the Tattvavindu, which is his independent work, he has mainly discussed the processes of the śabdabodha according to various schools, and has closely followed the view-point of the Bhāṭṭa School, and here too, he is as authoritative as elsewhere.

3. Both the works are published (vide—Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, App. 35–36.)
Thus, in the shining galaxy of the great Advaita thinkers, Vācaspati’s is a unique place. His profound and deep impression on the later epoch in the evolution of advaitic thought has unanimously earned for him the respectful title of Ācārya by the advaitic philosophers of the later times. An undisputed originator of a separate school of thought, Jivāśrita-avidyā-pakṣa and also of the famous school of Dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda, his greatness as a versatile thinker and scholar exceeds the domain of Advaita Vedānta thought. His unrivalled genius invades almost all the trodden or untrodden fields of Indian philosophy — heterodox as well as orthodox, materialistic as well as unmaterialistic. Judged from this viewpoint, it can safely be remarked that he has no parallel in Indian philosophy. Be it the school of the atomist Naiyāyika or ritualistic Mīmāṃsāka, the mystic YOGIN or the subtle Sāṁkhya, Vācaspati shines and shines the brightest. An intense desire to face the fundamental truth of one’s being, the profound philosophical genius and the never-missing discerning attitude borne of an irresistible aptitude for reality are some of the outstanding characteristics that distinctly place Vācaspati above all other philosophers. Every system of Indian philosophy, thus, owes a deep debt to Vācaspati without whom it is poor and loses most of its interest.

Pārthasārathi Miśra.

After Kumārila and Prabhākara, Pārthasārathi Miśra is another celebrated name in the field of Mīmāṃsā Literature, who was as faithfully devoted to Kumārila as Sālikānātha was a faithful interpreter of the views of Prabhākara. He was well-versed in both the schools, was an inhabitant of Mithilā and learnt the Śāstra from his father, Yajñātman who was a great scholar of his time. He probably flourished sometime in the 10th cent. A. D.¹

Unlike the running commentaries of Śabara, Prabhākara

¹. Dasgupta places him in the 9th century A. D. and Gopīnātha Kavirāja assigns him the 13th century A. D. Umesha Miśra places him in the 10th century A. D. (Vide — his Introduction to the Mīmāṃsāśāstrasaratveda of Halāyudha, pp. 30—31).
and Kumārila on the Jaiminīyastūtras, the commentary of Pārthasārathī, known as Śāstradīpikā runs only on the main stūra of each and every section ( adhikaraṇa ) and by way of reference gives the substance of stūras also. Viewed in this context, Śāstradīpikā¹ may be regarded as the earliest commentary of its type. It very faithfully elucidates the views of Kumārila on mīmāṃsā and is unquestionably the most important work which attracted a large number of celebrated scholars to write commentaries on it. A comprehensive study on the School of Kumārila, it frequently criticises the views of Prabhākara and refers to Maṇḍana, Nyāyaratnamūla and Tatraratnam² ( the latter two being important works of Pārtha- sārathī on Mīmāṃsā ), Śaṅkarabhāṣya on the Brahmasūtra and the Bhūgavādrāmāyana.

His another famous work is his celebrated commentary on the Ślokavārttika, called Nyāyaratnākara³, a very popular name among the mīmāṃsakas. It is one of the best commentaries in which he has frequently referred to his own works, Nyāyaratnamūla and Śāstradīpikā, Kumārila’s Bhāṭṭīkā, Bhavadeśa and Bhartṛmitra. He can thus easily be ranked with the great mīmāṃsakas of all ages⁴.

Udayanācārya

Udayanācārya or Udayana was yet another great thinker who was a militant champion of the Brāhmaṇic faith, and bitterly criticised and mercilessly attacked the Buddhists on all fronts⁵. He is one of the most shining stars on the firmament of Nyāya philosophy.

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3. Published along with the text in the Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Banaras.
4. For other details regarding his views etc., see Purva-Mīmāṃsā, App. pp. 37-43.
5. Mithilā tradition avers that in the beginning Udayana was so scared of Buddhist influences that he left Mithilā, went over to Bengal and became Dharmadhikaraṇīka in the court of the
He was born in village Kariyan which is situated about 12 miles south-east of Darbhanga. In his *Lakṣṇāvalī* he has given his date as 906 śaka saṁvat which corresponds to A. D. 9841.

He was the celebrated author of several works some of which rank the highest in the field of Nyāya literature. He wrote a sub-commentary on Vācaspati’s *Tātparyāṭikā* called *Tātparyāṭikā-kāpariśuddhi*. He was also the author of *Nyāya-Kusumāṇjali*, a classical work in which he has tried to prove the existence of God whom the Buddhists openly denied and criticised in their arguments. This work ought to be read with its commentary, *Prakāśa* by Vardhamāna (13th century A.D.) and its sub-commentary, *Makaranda* by Rucidatta (towards the end of the 13th century), both Maithila thinkers. But, his uncompromising stand against, and pernicious attack on the Buddhists find full play in his *Ātmatattvaviveka*, also known as *Buddhādhikāra* or *Buddhādhistikāra*, a polemical work against the Buddhists in which he has tried to establish the Nyāya doctrine of soul (Ātman) by refuting the Anātma vāda (no-soul theory) of the Buddhists2.

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1. Cf. *Lakṣṇāvalī*, p. 3:

"तत्त्वादर्शऽ प्रतिचित्तवितुः प्रवक्तः
वषयप्रत्यत्तत्ततः सुव्रतः व्रजावकची"  

2. This great work of Udayana is divided into four parīcchadās. In the first the author tries to refute the theory of momentariness of the world. In the second he examines the subjectivism of the idealists. In the third he discusses the theory of non-existence of substance apart from its qualities. And, in the fourth he attacks the theory of non-existence of things in this world. This parīcchada is most important, for herein the celebrated Naiyāyika puts forth his vigorous arguments to prove the existence of God and the individual self as against the Buddhist theory of anātma vāda. This work has been extensively commented upon by many scholars such as Saṁkara Miśra, Raghunātha Siromani, Bhagfratha Thākura, Atreyā Nārāyaṇa Ārya and others.
Besides he was the author of Kiraṇavali, Laksanavali and Nyāyaparīśīṭa and Bodha-siddhi. Udayana treated Nyāya from the stand-point of Vaiśeṣika and should, therefore, be considered as the direct predecessor of the Maithila School of Navya-Nyāya.

A zealous exponent of theism, Udayana was first and last a Naiyāyika, and not a Vedāntin which is supported by a critical study of his whole work. He believed in the existence of Ātmā which differs from body, mind and other elements — a view fundamentally opposed to the monism of Vedānta.

Śrīdhara wrote in śaka 913, a sub-commentary on the Bhāṣya of Prāstastapāda, known as Nyāya-kandali in which he has acknowledged only six categories. The Maithila or Gauriya School, however, gave little or no recognition to this work. On the other hand, his contemporary, Udayana’s Kiraṇavali, another sub-commentary on the same Bhāṣya in two sections (dravya and guņa) powerfully influenced the later Navya-Nyāya schools. In this commentary he also speaks of only six categories. In his Laksanavali (on definitions), however, he divides categories under two heads — the bhāva with the six categories and the abhāva (the seventh) which is in complete agreement with Śivāditya’s classification.

Besides the famous Ātmatattvaviveka or the Baudhāṇḍhik-kāra, his Nyāya-kusumānjali (a handful of Nyāya flowers) in stavakas or bunches, consists of 71 kārikās or verses on the existence of God, with a commentary of his own, the Kusumānjali-prakaraṇa in which he relentlessly attacks the views of Saugatas, Digambaras, Cārvākas, Māṁsakas, Sāṁkhya, and also Vedāntists. The seventeenth verse of the fifth bunch is symbolic of his noble ideas which are unique:

"Iron-souled are they in whose hearts thou canst find no place, though thus washed by the repeated inundations of ethics and Vedic texts; yet still in time, Oh Merciful One,

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1. The work is printed in the Vizianagaram series.
thou in thy goodness canst save even those who oppose our proposition, and make them undoubting in their conviction of thy existence”

We have a very interesting anecdote concerning the life of this great thinker. It is said, he strove hard to prove the existence of God, but God in his turn did not prove to be equally kind to him. Hard pressed and mentally distressed, one day this greatest supporter of God challenged him in the following words:

“Aśvāryanadamatto’si māmavajñāya vartase
Punarbaudhīe sanāyūte madadhīnā tava sthīthī’

(O God, you have become intoxicated with power and so you disregard me: But remember that if my existence depends on you, Your existence also depends upon me when You are assailed by Buddhists.)

It is, however, interesting to note that this long story of polemics between the Buddhist logicians and the Hindu Naiyāyikas and the subsequent attacks and counter-attacks were ultimately responsible for the tremendous growth and development of Indian logic and Vedānta philosophy which attained its highest stature and glory by the end of the 10th century A.D.

Mūraṇī Mīśra: the Mīśra-mata

After Pārthasārathi Mīśra and before the rise of Mūraṇī Mīśra (II), the propounder of Mīśra-mata in Mīmāṃsā, the scene was dominated by a great many mīmāṃsakas including Bhāvanātha Mīśra, the author of Nāyaviveka regarded as a

1. Cowell’s trans. of Nyāyakusumājyāli, p. 85; also see M. M. Chakravarty, op. cit. 263.

2. According to some scholars, in this verse, in his crusade against the Buddhists he had really challenged the Lord Jagannātha, who is also regarded as the incarnation of the Buddha (cf. Mīśra, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 500; P. Jhā, op. cit., pp. 105–09 etc.); also see Sūtra, Chap. IV.

3. He was different from Bhāvanātha Mīśra, popularly known as Ayācī Mīśra, the celebrated Mīmāṃsaka-father of the celebrated Śāṅkara Mīśra. He flourished in the 15th century and was a Maithila Brāhmaṇa.
masterpiece by scholars (sometime in the 10th century just after Pārthasārathi Miśra); Gurumatācārya Candra, author of Nyāyaratnākara, a commentary on the Jaiminiyasūtras and Amītabindu, an independent treatise (before 1100 A.D.) and Paritoṣa Miśra, author of the commentary, known as Ajīta or,Tantraṭīkānibandhana on the Tantravārttika (12th century).1

Murāri Miśra, the propounder of the third School in Mīmāṃsā, appears to have struck out a fresh path in relation to certain important topics which has led to the famous saying among the scholars: Murārestṛtiyāḥ pantaḥ (the third path or school of Murāri), the first and second apparently being Prabhākara and Kumārila. His views are quite distinct and convincing, e.g. his independent view on the theory of the validity of knowledge (pramāṇavyāda). Mīmāṃsakas in general support the theory of the Self-validity of knowledge (svataḥ pramāṇavyāda) and the Naiyāyikas support the parataḥ pramāṇavyāda. While Prabhākara supports the former, Kumārila’s views are somewhat different from him. Murāri (who also happened to be a great Naiyāyika) differs from both these and suggests an entirely new line which is slightly influenced by the Nyāya system.

As regards his work, only two small but very important fragments of his commentary on the Jaiminiyasūtras known as Tripūrānīniyam and Ekādaśāylvādhikaranam2 were discovered recently otherwise much is not known except through references in other works. Pakṣadhara Miśra in his Āloka has briefly but neatly brought out the distinction among the three schools of Mīmāṃsā in regard to the Validity of Cognitions3.

He flourished sometime between the 11th and 12th centuries

1. For details regarding these scholars, see Pāra-Mīmāṃsā, App. 43-45.
2. Published and edited by Umesha Miśra in 1928.
3. For other details regarding his maṭa, see Pāra-Mīmāṃsā, 23-24, App. 45-46.
A. D.¹ Vardhamāna, son of Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya, has referred to him in several of his works.

After him, a long line of scholars in Mithilā and Bihar kept up this glorious tradition of Mīmāṃsā for centuries. It is said that even in the 15th century, during the reign of queen Viśvāsa Devī, there was a vast gathering of scholars in Mithilā in which some fourteen hundred mīmāṃsāsaks alone were invited to her court on the eve of a sacrificial ceremony² — a unique gathering indeed!

Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya: The Navya-Nyāya School:

Besides Mīmāṃsā, a new school of Nyāya philosophy, known as Navya-Nyāya (neo-logic) was started in Bihar during the period under review, the credit for which goes to Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya (1200 A. D.³) of Mithilā. It was a distinct and marvellous contribution to the Indian system of thought which dominated the philosophical scene for centuries. Mithilā during this period was a celebrated seat of learning and scholars from different parts of the country came to receive the highest training in logic and other branches of learning in the universally reputed University of Mithilā.

Gaṅgeśa, the founder of this new School, belonged to Mangaraunt, a village (near Madhubani) in the district of Darbhanga. It is said, he had established his reputed academy at the village Kariyana⁴, the birth-place of the great Udayana who was also one of his predecessors in the field.

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1. Ibid. App. 46. For other mīmāṃsāsaks who flourished after him see pp. 47-74.
2. For this grand conference of mīmāṃsāsaks, see Thakur, History of Mithilā, p. 378.
3. For different views regarding his date and time, see M.M. Chakravarty, op. cit. 264-68; Materials for the study of Navya-Nyāya Logic (Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 40.), pp. 4-6; Dasgupta, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 308; Chintaharan Chakravarty, History of Navya-Nyāya in Mithilā; Thakur, op. cit., pp. 4, 305, 376 & 378.
4. Vidyābhūṣāṇa, History of Indian Logic, p. 405; Materials for the study of Navya-Nyāya, 4-6; M. M. Chakravarty, op. cit, 266; Thakur, op. cit, 375 ff; History of Navya-Nyāya, etc.
Navya-Nyāya or the new School of Logic is based on an amalgam of old Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. The standard works on both these systems were constantly used and referred to by the later writers. The first real commentator was Vacaspati Misra on the sūtras and their vārttika which we have noted above in the preceding pages. Udayana was a direct predecessor of this Maithila School. Besides, Śrīharṣa’s Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khāḍya (The Sweets of refutation) had a hand in moulding the views of the Navya-Nyāya School. Then came Gaṅgeśa, the founder, who wrote his masterly work, Tattva-cintāmaṇi (The Thought-jewel of fruits) in which he has criticised Śrīharṣa’s views.

The Tattva-cintāmaṇi constitutes a land-mark in the history of Indian thought. Gaṅgeśa accepts many tenets of the Vaiśeṣika School, and in this respect his work differs from the oldest Nyāya. But the more significant change is “in the direction of Gaṅgeśa’s artillery. The old Nyāya had directed its argument against Buddhism. Gaṅgeśa, living in an age when Buddhism had almost disappeared in India, directs his attack more against the Mīmāṃsā, the Vedānta and other living schools of philosophy. But above all, the newness of Gaṅgeśa’s method is a newness of style and of organization. He is far more precise, more careful to define his terms, than were his predecessors. These virtues of his work are responsible for the fact that perhaps half of Navya-Nyāya literature is based either directly on the Tattva-cintāmaṇi or on a commentary on the Tattva-cintāmaṇi.1"

Gaṅgeśa accepts only the four pramāṇas (Gautama’s fourfold classification of proofs) admitted by the Nyāya, viz, (i) Pratyakṣa (perception), (ii) anumāna (inference with a special sub-section on Īśvar-ānumāna or the inference about God), (iii) Upamāna or comparison and (iv) Ṣabda or affirmation, and not on any of the topics of Nyāya metaphysics. These sections are further sub-divided into Vādas or discussions: Pratyakṣa having twelve, anumāna seventeen, Ṣabda sixteen and Upamāna none.

GAṆGEŚA: THE NAVYA-NYĀYA

The whole field of Nyāya has been reviewed by Gaṅgeśa who defends it against the attacks of other systems. He has criticised their views with noble and original remarks. The Sāṁkhya and Vaiśeṣika are criticised least, but he has ruthlessly and unspareingly slashed the mīmāṁsakas, especially the Bhāṭṭas and the Prabhākaras. While quoting the views and opinions of the previous thinkers he has referred to a select few, e.g., Jayanta, Maṇḍana, Vācaspati, Śivāditya Miśra, Udayana etc.

One thing, however, deserves special mention in connection with his Tattva-cintāmaṇi. Of all the Pramāṇas, his discussions on anumāṇa (inference) attracted widest attention in Navadvīpa (Bengal) and other parts of the country. Large numbers of commentaries and commentaries of commentaries were written on the anumāṇa portion of his work. The nature of Vyāpti (the relation of universal concomitance between the middle and major terms, otherwise known as the problem of Induction in Logic), the basis of all inference, was subjected to the most critical examination. Though one of the knottiest problems, Gaṅgeśa discussed it threadbare in the minutest detail. In addition to this, many independent treatises on śabda and anumāṇa also came to be written by the scholars of Bengal which became subsequently the home of Nyāya studies for some centuries, well known as the Gauriya School or the Nādiā School founded by the celebrated Raghunātha Śiromaṇi (1500 A.D.), a disciple of the great Pakṣadhara Miśra of Mithilā. The commentaries of Raghunātha, Mathurā Bhaṭṭācārya (1580 A.D.), Gadādhara Bhaṭṭācārya and others were widely read and commented upon in Bengal. Thus, in course of a few centuries, commentaries, sub-commentaries and glosses by successive generations of scholars gave birth to a vast literature round the original work. Judged by this standard, it can hardly be gainsaid that the popularity of the Tattva-cintāmaṇi has been unique and unequalled.

1. Daagupta, op. cit. vol. I. p. 308; M. M. Chakravarty, op. cit. 272-92; Materials for the Study of Nyāya-Nyāya, 6 ff; History of Nyāya-Nyāya in Mithilā.
Gaṅgeśa also wrote two other small works, called the \textit{Lakṣaṇamāṇḍari}\footnote{This work is different from a work of the same name by Ruciddatta.} in which he covered part of the ground covered by the \textit{Tattva-cintāmaṇi} and the \textit{Lakṣaṇatattvam}\footnote{Materials for the Study of Nyāya-Nyāya, p. 6 & fn. 15.}

\textbf{Vardhamāna Upādhyāya:}

Vardhamāna, son of the illustrious Gaṅgeśa, is the author of some of the famous Vaiśeṣika commentaries. He is perhaps the oldest commentator on Udayana’s works and on Śrīharṣa’s Vedantic work. His commentaries on Nyāya include the \textit{Tattvacintāmaṇi-prakāśa} (a commentary on Gaṅgeśa’s \textit{Tattvacintāmaṇi}), the \textit{Nyāyanibandha-prakāśa} (a commentary on Udayana’s \textit{Nyāyavārttika-tātparyapariśuddhi}), the \textit{Nyāyapariśiṣṭa-prakāśa} (a commentary on Udayana’s \textit{Nyāyapariśiṣṭa}), the \textit{Prameyanibandha-prakāśa} or the \textit{Prameyatattvav-bodha} (quoted in Ruciddatta’s \textit{Nyāyakusumāṇjali-prakāśa-makaranda}). Besides, he wrote \textit{Kīraṇavali-prakāśa} (a commentary on Udayana’s work in two sections — \textit{Dravya} and \textit{Guṇa}), the \textit{Nyāyakusumāṇjali-prakāśa} (a commentary on Udayana’s famous polemical work), the \textit{Nyāyavīrati-prakāśa} (a commentary on Vallabhaṅgara’s work quoted in Jayadeva’s or Pākṣadharā’s \textit{Āloka}) on Vaiśeṣika and the \textit{Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhāḍya-prakāśa} (a commentary on Śrīharṣa’s famous work) on Vedānta\footnote{In the introductory verse of his \textit{Lilāvati-prakāśa} he refers to his father: \textit{“न्यायभोजपतल्लव सीमासांत्यहस्तये, गोभीराव गुरुवे विनिद्व नमः”}}. In other words, Vardhamāna was the celebrated author of prakāśas.

He flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century and was an illustrious pupil of his illustrious father-preceptor\footnote{Mādhavaṅcārya (Vidyārānya of Vijayanagara) in his \textit{Śarva-}} Mādhavāṅcārya (Vidyārānya of Vijayanagara) in his \textit{Śarvav-}
darśana-saṅgraha respectfully refers to him and this no doubt speaks of his great influence and importance. His commentaries greatly facilitated the study of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika and helped establish the Navya-Nyāya School of his father on a solid basis. It is true, the Navya-naiyāyikas have continued to improve their techniques almost down to present times, but the boundaries of their subject-matter were set by the Tattva-cintāmaṇi and also by the Vaiśeṣika commentaries of Vardhamāna\(^1\).

This glorious tradition of Navya-Nyāya was brilliantly kept up till the seventeenth century by a galaxy of illustrious thinkers and scholars like Jayadeva (alias Pakṣadhara) Miśra, Vāsudeva Miśra, Rucidatta Miśra, Bhagīratha Ṭhakkura, Maheśa Ṭhakkura, Šaṅkara Miśra, Vācaspati Miśra II (the abhinava Vācaspati), Misaru Miśra III, Durgādatta Miśra, Devanātha Ṭhakkura, Madhusūdana Ṭhakkura and others in the following centuries\(^2\).

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2. M. M. Chakravarty, op. cit. 267–71; Materials for the Study of Nyāya-Nyāya, 6–27; History of Nyāya-Nyāya; Thakur, History of Miśkila, vol. II (MS), Chap. V.
CHAPTER III

THE RISE AND GROWTH OF JAINISM

Introduction:

As in the history of Buddhism, so in the history of Jainism, Mithilā or North Bihar played a very significant part for centuries.Few places in India have stronger claims upon the veneration of both Jainas and Buddhists. Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Tīrthaṅkara of the Jainas, and commonly spoken of as "the founder of the Jaina Church", was a scion of the noble family of Vaiśālī where he was born and spent the early part of his life. It is, therefore, a place of pilgrimage for the Jainas just as Sāranātha and other places associated with the life of the Buddha are of the Chinese, Burmese and the Buddhists of other countries. Thus, Vaiśālī is to the Jainas what Jerusalem is to the Christians and Mecca to the Muslims. The tragedy, however, is that Brāhmaṇical works and traditions ignore Vaiśālī, and we do not come across any remarkable event in the history of orthodox Hinduism which seems to be connected with the locality. In the 7th century A.D., when Yuan Chwang visited this place, the region abounded in Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries, mostly dilapidated and deserted, and numerous Jaina establishments. The Nirgrantha monks are said to have still lived at Vaiśālī in large numbers. Neither had it become a place of pilgrimage to the Jainas in modern days, such as Pāvāpurī in the Patna district where Mahāvīra died or Campā near Bhagalpur, nor had any body cared to look for the Jaina antiquities there till recently. The archaeologists have betrayed a colossal indifference towards searching for Jaina remains on this site. As a matter of fact, they have concentrated their efforts exclusively on tracing Buddhist remains and holy places as described in Buddhist works and in the accounts of travellers like Yuan Chwang and others.

Their reports on the whole have nothing to support or confirm Basārh area as being the birth-place of Jainism\(^1\) — a fact which is otherwise evidenced by volumes of literary sources. In the following lines, we propose to discuss in detail the various literary and archaeological sources which have a strong bearing on the rise and spread of Jainism in North Bihar, hitherto ignored and uncared for.

**Vaiśāli : The Birth-place of Mahāvīra :**

The importance of Vaiśāli does not lie only in its being the capital-seat of a strong and well-organised republic but also in its being a very great centre of the currents and cross-currents of various religious thoughts and philosophies. Vaiśāli, the ancient seat of the Licchavis and the erstwhile capital of republican Videha\(^2\), first of all, emerges into history as the sacred birth-place of Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, one of the great leaders of Jainism. He was born at Kuṇḍagrāma, one of the three districts of Vaiśāli\(^3\) and belonged to the Jāātrika clan\(^4\). He, therefore, came to be known as Vesālie or Vaiśālika meaning a native of Vaiśāli, or the first citizen of Vaiśāli\(^5\). His father, Siddhārtha was the Chief (Kulapati) of the Naya clan (Jāātrika clan) whose wife Trīśāla was sister of Cetaka, king of Vaiśāli. She is called Vaidehi, or Videhadattā, because she belonged to the ruling family of Videha, and hence Mahāvīra is also known by various maternal names such as Videha, Vaidehadattā, Videhajātya and Videhasukumāra\(^6\).

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2. For a detailed geographical and historical account of ancient Mithilla, see the writer's book, *History of Mithila*, pp. 2 ff; *Sopra*, Chap. I.
3. For other details about Vaiśāli, see *Ibid.*, Chap. III.
5. *Ṣūra-Kṛtāṅga*, 1, 3.
6. *Āestrāngasūtra*, 389. "समर्थसः छं भगवध वहारीरस्त अभमा वाहिद्द-स्थल्युष्ण होरियं तिथिं नाः, तं — तिथिः इव विदेहदिन्मिता इव वियथारौ इव।" Also see J. C. Jain, *Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jaina canon*, pp. 254, 355.
The story of Mahāvīra's birth is as interesting as the story of Buddha’s birth. It is said, one night Rāni Trisalā dreamt of an ox, an elephant, a lion, a garland of flowers, Lakṣmī (the Goddess of wealth), the moon, the sun, the flag, a pond and the ocean of milk etc. When the Paṇḍitas heard of her dreams, they prophesied that she would give birth to an extra-ordinary child who would be a great conqueror or a great teacher. The prophesy turned out to be too true.

Mahāvīra was born of Trisalā in 561 B.C. He was married to Yasodā, the daughter of Samantavīra, of village Basantapura. Ten years after his marriage, he was blessed with a daughter, Priyadarśana. Two years later he gave up his life of luxury and pleasures and dedicated himself to a life of austerities and after twelve years of severe penance he attained Divine Light at the age of 42 at the village Ambhika on the bank of the river—Rajupalikā. After propagating his mission for 31 years he attained nirvāna at Pāvāpurī, near Patna at the age of seventy-two.

From the above accounts it is clear beyond doubt that Mahāvīra was an inhabitant of Vaisālī (from his father side) and a citizen of Videha or Mithilā (from his mother side).


Inspite of volumes of evidences supporting Vaisālī as the birth-place of Mahāvīra, P. C. Roy Choudhury (Jainism in
Mithilā or Videha, therefore, has a much greater claim on Mahāvīra whose personality and teachings rapidly built up Vaiśālī as a centre of Jainism and of the spiritual discipline and asceticism upon which it was based. Besides Mahāvīra, Basupûjya, the twelfth Tīrthaṅkara is said to have attained his nirvāṇa at Campāpura (Bhogalpur) and Naminātha, the twenty-first Tīrthaṅkara was also born in Mithilā. Mahāvīra himself is said to have spent twelve rainy seasons in Vaiśālī and six rainy seasons in Mithilā.  

It will thus be seen that Aṅga, Magadha, the territories of the Vṛjji-Licchavis, the Mallas and the kingdom of Kāśi-Kosala were the scenes of wanderings of Mahāvīra and activities of his Nirгранtha followers in the life-time of the Buddha. It is from the Buddhist texts that we learn that Mahāvīra and his immediate followers concentrated their religious activities in Rājagṛha, Nālandā, Vesālī (Vaiśālī), Pāvā and Sāvatthi. We further learn that in Vaiśālī Mahāvīra had a large number of staunch supporters and followers among the Licchavis and the Videhans. Some of his followers appear to be men of the highest position. The Vinaya Piṭaka says that Siha or Simha, a Licchavi general (who was a follower of the religion of Mahāvīra) was afterwards converted to the Buddhist faith. Saccaka, a Nigaṇṭha, challenged the Buddha himself to a discussion on philosophical tenets before an assembly of five hundred Licchavis. We have thus numerous instances of such converts in Buddhist works, as clearly point

1. Kalpa-Sūtra (vide—Law, op. cit., pp. 32 ff.);
2. Law, Mahāvīra, pp. 7 ff.
to the great influence of Mahāvīra on the life of the people, high and low, in Vaisālī and Videha, even during the life-time of the Buddha. Further, according to the Jainas, Mithilā or Videha was included in the Jaina Āryan countries. These countries were known as Āryan for it is said that the Titthayaras, the Gakkavattis, the Baladevas and the Vāsudevas were born here. These great men are said to have attained omniscience in these countries and by attending to their preaching a number of people were enlightened and had taken to ascetic life.¹

Vaisālī thus appears to have achieved an early reputation in the religious world of India and her teachers, devoted to the practice of uttermost penance and austerity preached by Mahāvīra, the great apostle of this creed, had gained fame far and wide. It was the quest of a teacher that attracted the unknown Buddha, the Bodhisattva (after he renounced the world and became a monk) to Vaisālī, then well-known for its abundance of teachers,² and it was there that he found Ālāra Kālāma, a native of Vaisālī, his teacher³ who is said to have been “so advanced in meditation that sitting on the road, he did not hear or see even 500 carts rattling past him.”⁴ According to Mrs. Rhys Davids, Buddha found his first two teachers—Ālāra and Uddaka at Vaisālī and under their teachings, even started his religious life as a Jaina.⁵ His resort to a course of rigid austerities associated with Jainism and adoption of a way of life of a good Jaina, like Mahāvīra, undoubtedly speaks of his Jaina beginnings on way to Nirvāṇa. This extreme of mortification, however, told dangerously upon his health, and under compulsion of circumstances he bade good-bye to Jainism and ultimately discovered the well-known middle-path (i.e. the path lying between the two extremes of self-torture and self-indulgence) for himself which soon became

the dominating force of the new Order. These slender threads of evidences, when knit together, leave no doubt that Vaisālī and Videha had been a very prominent centre of Jaina activities long before the rise and spread of Buddhism.

**Socio-religious Condition:**

Scholars generally believe that Jainism like Buddhism was born of discontent and hatred against Brāhmaṇism. The fact, however, remains that the orthodox Brāhmaṇas in general were not so hostile to Jainism as they had been towards Buddhism through out the centuries. Mahāvīra was nodoubt the founder of Jainism as it exists today, but he had been preceded by several Jinas of whom Pārśvanātha the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara and immediate predecessor of Mahāvīra, may at least be said to have been an historical figure. In other words, Jainism was not a revolt in the strict sense of the term against the existing Brāhmaṇical hierarchy. On the other hand, the creed had already originated and spread though it received a great impetus with the advent of Mahāvīra on the scene. Mahāvīra’s protest against caste-privileges nodoubt provoked the opposition of the Brāhmaṇas who in turn criticised the Jaina religion and philosophy, but not so militantly and bitterly as they did Buddhism and its philosophy, for the latter had adopted a much more aggressive missionary career than the former. Moreover, Mahāvīra did not criticise the authority of the Vedas so strongly as did the Buddha. Infact, he supported casteism in a way and recognised the status of the Trīvāna, i.e., the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya.

The socio-religious condition of North India in the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha was almost the same. The abuses begotten of the privileges of the caste-system and the

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1. For a detailed discussion of this aspect, see the writer’s paper, “A Brief Survey of Buddhism and Buddhist Remains in Mithila” in *JBRAS.* (Buddha Jayanti special Issue, Vol. II); also see H. L. Jain’s paper, “Contribution of Jainism to Indian Culture” in *JBRAS.* XLV, pp. 1–2.
monopoly held by the Brāhmaṇas in matters of religion were ultimately responsible for the growth of the deep-rooted institution of priesthood which was vehemently attacked and ruthlessly criticised even by the great Upaniṣadic seers and philosophers including Janaka and Yājñavalkya, the champions of the revolutionary reforms in Brāhmaṇism during the Upaniṣadic period.¹ Indeed, the Brāhmaṇa priests committed excesses in the name of the Yajña-ceremony which gradually became more and more elaborate and involved. They went to such extreme as to unscrupulously call themselves bhūdevas, i.e., gods born on the earth.² This state of affairs was not destined to continue for long. The appearance of Mahāvira and the Buddha on the socio-religious scene gave a rude setback to the Brāhmaṇical pretensions and violently shook the society out of its bottom. This anti-Brāhmaṇic revolution, whatever may have been its cause, was certainly an expression of the general ferment of thought fomented and inspired to a great extent by the Kṣatriya protest against the caste exclusiveness of the Brāhmaṇas. This is further corroborated by the fact that “the pioneers of this new system probably drew their suggestions from the sacrificial creed and from the upaniṣads and built their system independently by their own rational thinking.”³

These social abuses indulged in by the Brāhmaṇas gave Mahāvira a splendid chance to preach the Dharma of Pārśva after a slight modification. He taught man to look not beyond himself for hope and aid. His teaching proved so effective that even a section of the Brāhmaṇas are said to have recognised him as a great teacher.⁴ According to C. V. Vaidya,

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¹ See the writer’s book, History of Mithila, pp. 94–97.
³ Kalpadvīra (Sukhabodhikā-īṭka), pp. 112, 18 “प्रमु: अपापवुष्ठात्मा... जगत: तस्महै भाषाग: भिन्नता: ·······चतुर्वषांवरिष्ट्यच्छातानांनि इत्यः प्रभुविन्नता:”
"intellectual Brāhmaṇaṣ also joined the ranks of Jainas as of Buddhists from time to time owing to conviction as well as for honour, and contributed to the maintenance of this reputation of the Jainas for learning." But Jainism gradually spread among the poor and the lowly as it emerged as a strong protest against caste-privileges. In the eyes of Mahāvīra, the Brāhmaṇas and the Śūdras, the high and the low, were the same. He recognised the Brāhmaṇa not by birth but by proper action or qualification. Accordingly, a low-born Cāṇḍāla, possessing requisite qualifications, could enjoy the highest position in the society. Moreover, Jainism, like Brāhmaṇism, is also based on the same dogmas of the transmigration of soul and seeks for deliverance from the endless succession of rebirth. But it does not agree with the Brāhmaṇic penances and abstentions to achieve it, while it aims at attaining, not union with the Universal spirit, but Nirvāṇa, i.e., absolute release from all bodily forms and activities. This difference is, however, minor and, above all, it is distinguished by its relation to castes. Mahāvīra neither opposed them nor accepted everything as it were. According to him, men are born in lower and higher castes, determined by their sins or good works in a former existence, but by a life of purity and love, by becoming a spiritual man, everyone may attain at once the highest salvation. In accordance with this doctrine caste made no difference to him and he looked for a man even in the Cāṇḍāla.

Miseries and sufferings of existence beset all alike: there is no escape from them. He, therefore, preached the law of grace for all. Caste-system, according to him, was just circumstantial and it is easy for a spiritual man to break the fetters of this system. The gift of supernatural vision was no mono-

2. SBE, XXII, 213.
3. Haribhadra in his Saḍdarśana-samuśaya, V. 52, says: "विवेकानिधिः वियोगल देहस्वादिग्रहं उस्मये"
4. Uttarādhyāyana, XII, 1; SBE, XIV, 50: "वोभामानुकलसम्भृतो इरियत्व बनो..."
5. G. J. Shah, Jainism in North India, p. 20.
poly of any order or caste or sex, and in this matter he made no distinction between men and men or between men and women.\textsuperscript{1} Further, the Jaina belief has been that a Jīna must always come from a Kṣatriya or some such noble family. In other words, Mahāvīra though did not support the age-old caste-system, yet did not oppose it so vehemently as did the Buddha which provoked strong reaction from the Brāhmaṇas and culminated in a bitter wordy duel for centuries which was ultimately responsible for the growth and development of Indian logic and philosophy.

The Age of Logical Disputation:

Coming to the philosophical disquisitions, it is true, sometimes the Jainas and the Brāhmaṇical philosophers have criticised each other, but this seems more by way of passing reference than deliberate attempt on the part of the philosophers belonging to two different schools. Mahāvīra encouraged his followers in the study of the Pūrvas and in developing their power of reasoning and arguing. From the Buddhist records we learn that there were some able and powerful disputants among the Nirgrantha recluses and lay-disciples.\textsuperscript{2} The medieval logic was almost entirely in the hands of the Jainas and the Buddhists. For one thousand years, from 600 B.C. to 400 A.D., the Jainas and the Buddhists were fully occupied in questions of metaphysics and religion though there are occasional references to logic in their works of that period. "At about 400 A.D. began an epoch when they seriously took up the problems of logic, and all the texts-books on the Jaina and the Buddhist systems of logic date at or after that time."\textsuperscript{3} The scenes of activities of the Jaina logicians belonging to the Śvetāmbara sect were at Ujjainī (Mālwā) and Valabhi (Gujrāt) whereas the Digambaras confined their activities to Pāṭaliputra and Dravida including the Kārnāṭaka about the 8th cent. A.D. The Nyāyaśāstra of Siddhasena Divākara, dated c. 533 A.D.

\textsuperscript{1} Law, Mahāvīra, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{2} Majjīma-Nikāya, I, 227, 374-75.

\textsuperscript{3} Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Indian Logic: Mediaeval School, Intro. xviii.
may be said to be the first systematic work on the Jaina logic\(^1\), although the real founders of the mediaeval logic were the Buddhists\(^2\).

Ddhasena Divākara (c. 533 A. D.) for the first time laid the foundation of a science called logic (Nyāya) among the Jainas by compiling a treatise, Nyāyavatāra consisting of 32 stanzas, referred to above. He is also credited by the Jainas with having converted Vikramāditya to the Jaina faith. According to Vidyābhūṣaṇa, he was no other than Kṣapaṇaka, a Jaina sage, who is traditionally known to have been one of the nine gems that adorned the court of Vikramāditya\(^3\).

Samantabhadra (600 A. D.) was another great Jaina logician of Digambara sect who composed the famous commentary on Umāsvāti's Tattvārthadīdhyogama-Sūtra called Gandhasti-Mahābhūṣya. The introductory part is known as Devāgamastotra or Āptamāṁśa which, besides elaborately discussing the logical principles, also presents a review of the contemporary schools of philosophy including the Advaitavāda\(^4\). The celebrated Maithila philosopher Vācaspati Miśra (I) has also cited Āptamāṁśa in explaining Śaṅkarācārya's criticism of the Vyādīvāda doctrine in the Vedānta-Sūtra\(^5\). Samantabhadra is further mentioned by Jina Sena in the Adipurāṇa (c. 838 A.D.) and is referred to by Kumārila who was a contemporary of the great Buddhist logician, Dharmakṣetri.

1. Ibid. Intro. xix.
2. For details see the writer's paper "Buddhism in Mithila" in JBRSA, Buddha Jayanti Special Issue, Vol. II; Vidyābhūṣaṇa, op. cit. -xix-xi.
3. Vidyābhūṣaṇa, op. cit. pp. 14–15. In the Pañcatantra and other Brahmanical works as well as in the Avadhānakaḍalata and other Buddhist Sanskrit works the Jaina ascetics are nicknamed as Kṣapaṇaka (see Ibid. p. 16, fn. 1).
4. Āptamāṁśa, v. 24: "अद्वैतियात्प्रक्षेपं दृष्टे भेदविवर्ण्ये कार्यवाला किरायास्य नैवें स्वर्माद भजाते".
5. Bhāmaś (Bibliotheca Indica, p. 468: "स्वाधाद: सत्येकाश्मायानात फ्रुitusविविधिदेहि:
सत्यविविधपेत्य हैवदेह विशेषतः");
For further details, see Vidyābhūṣaṇa. op. cit. p. 23, fn. 2 & 1.
Akalaṇka or Akalaṇkadeva or Akalaṇkacandra (c. 750 A.D.) was yet another famous Jaina logician belonging to the Digambara sect who wrote a commentary on Āptamāṁśa known as Aṣṭa-saṁti, which is supposed to be “a most precious work on the Jaina philosophy.” It deals mainly with logic. It is said, once he was involved in a controversy with a Buddhist logician whom he ultimately defeated and discomfited in a heated debate.

Vidyānanda, a Digambara logician of Pāṭaliputra (c. 800 A.D.) has been mentioned by the great Hindu philosopher, Mādhavācārya in his Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha. In his Āptamāṁśa-āṅkṛti, also known as Aṣṭasāhasrī, an exhaustive sub-commentary on the Āptamāṁśa he has strongly criticised the doctrines of the Sāmkhya, Yoga, Vaiśeṣika, Advaita, Mīmāṃsaka, and Saugata, Tathāgata or Buddhist philosophy and has referred to Dignāga, Udyotakara Dhamakṛiti, Prajñākara, Bhartṛhari, Śabaravāmī, Prabhākara and Kumārila.

Prabhācandra (c. 825 A.D.) of the Digambara sect in his famous logical treatise, Prameya-kamala-mārtanda, a commentary on Parikṣaṁukha-sūtra of Māṇikya Nandi, has referred to and criticised the views of Bhagavāna Upavarṣa, Śabaravāmī, Bhartṛhari, Bāṇa, Kumārila, Prabhākara, Dignāga, Udyotakara, Dhammakṛiti and others.

Mallavādin (c. 827 A.D.) of the Śvetāmbara sect was the famous author of a commentary on the Buddhist logical treatise, Nyāyabindu-ṭīkā called Dharmottara-ṭippanaka. That sometimes there was a bitter clash or wordy duel between the Buddhists and the Jainas is clearly evidenced by a Jaina legend relating to the life of this Jaina philosopher. Accordingly, we are told that Malla was the son of king Śilāditya’s sister and was called Vādin or logician as he had, by virtue of his unrivalled debating genius, vanquished the Buddhists in a dispute.

3. Trans. by Cowell and Gough, p. 66.
4. Aṣṭasāhasrī, Chap. I.
5. Vidyābhūṣaṇa, op. cit., p. 34, fn. 1–3.
and had re-established the Jaina faith and brought to its former glory the great figure of Ādinātha on Mount Śatruṇājaya (in Kathiāwar)\(^1\).

The Buddhists apart, often there was a clash among the two sects of the Jainas themselves. We have reference to Pradyumna Suri (c. 980 A. D.) of the Śvetāmbara sect, said to have been a very great logician, “who, using sharp logical expressions, made his irrelevant opponents to sweat and thereby to be cured of the fever of pride”\(^2\). Moreover, from Māṇikya Candra’s Pārśvanātha-caritra we learn that Pradyumna defeated the Digambaras of Venkapaṭṭa in the presence of the King of that province, and in all he had to his credit, eighty-four triumphs in disputations over his rivals\(^3\).

Abhayadeva Suri (c. 1000 A. D.) of the Śvetāmbara sect was yet another eminent logician and author of Vāda-mahārnava (Ocean of Discussions) who is described as “a lion that roamed at ease in the wild forest of books on logic. That the rivers of various conflicting opinions might not sweep away the path of the good, Abhayadeva wrote his Vāda-mahārnava”\(^4\). We have, however, no reference to any logical disputation that took place between him and the Buddhist and the Hindu logicians, though he has criticised their views in his work.

Deva Suri, also known as Vādipravara (the foremost of disputants) of the Śvetāmbara sect and author of the well-known work on logic, Pramāṇa-naya-tattvālokāṅkāra had defeated the Digambara Kumuda-Candrācārya in a dispute over the salvation of women\(^5\)—a fact which clearly points to the bitter hostility between the two different sects of the same faith.

Candraprabhā Suri (c. 1102 A. D.), the contemporary of Hemacandra Suri (1088–1172 A. D.), was the author of several works on logic, including the Prameya-ratnakoṣa and

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1. Ibid. p. 34.
2. Ibid. p. 35.
3. Ibid. p. 36.
4. Ibid. p. 37.
5. Ibid. p. 38.
Nyāyavātārarāvīrti. The latter is an excellent commentary on Siddhasena Divākara’s Nyāyavātāra in which he has strongly criticised the views of the Buddhist logicians like Dharmottara, Arcaṭa and others and also the views of Saugata, Naṇḍyāya, Mīmāṁsaka, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Cārvāka, Baudhā, Aksapāda, Brahmavādi etc. Following him, Nemicandra Kavi (c. 1150 A.D.), who is said to have been a great teacher of logic, criticised the views of Kaṇḍāda, the great Hindu philosopher.

Āvaṇand Suri and Amaracandra Suri (1093–1150 A.D.), who were nick-named Tiger-cub (Vṛāghra-śīṣu) and Lion-cub (Śīṁha-śīṣuka) are said to have been two great Jaina logicians whom the celebrated Maithila philosopher, Gaṅgeśa Upādhya, the founder of the Navya-Nyāya school, has mentioned in his Tattvacintāmaṇi under Śīṁha-Vṛāghri-Lakṣaṇa of Vyāpti.

Haribhadra Suri (c. 1168 A.D.) was another famous Śvetāmbara Jaina logician who wrote several treatises on logic including Saḍḍarśana-samuccaya. In the chapter on Baudhādārśana he has referred to the views of Dignāga, Dharmakīrtti, and others. Moreover, the six systems treated by him are (i) Baudhā, (ii) Naṇḍyāya, (iii) Sāṅkhya, (iv) Jaina, (v) Vaiśeṣika and (vi) Jaiminiya. He is said to have protected the word of the Arhats like a mother by his 1,400 works. He has used the word, viraha (separation or sorrow) as his mark in the last verse of each of his works. A Brāhmaṇa by birth, he was one of the greatest champions of the Jaina faith, and had sent his two pupils, Harṣa and Paramahamsa as missionaries of the Jaina faith who are said to have been slain in the Bhoṭa country (Tibet) by the anatical Buddhists whom they sought to convert. It was because of the sorrow

2. Cf. the following verse:

(Quoted, Ibid, p. 47, fn. 4.)
emanating from their death that he used the word *viraha*. The incident further shows that sometime the wordy duel between the Jainas and the Buddhists culminated in violent bloodshed and deaths on either side.

Mallisena Suri (1292 A. D.), in his commentary *Syādvāda-mahā-jāri* which contains an exposition of the Pramāṇa, Saptabhaṅgīnaya etc., criticised Akṣapāda’s theory of *Pramāṇa, Cāla, Jāti, Nigrāhasthāṇa* etc. He has also bitterly attacked the doctrines of the Sāṃkhya, Jaiminiya, Vedānta, Yogācāra, Madhyamika, Cārvāka etc. Jñānacandra (1350 A. D.) also criticised the Buddhist logicians including Dignāga and others. Guṇaratna (1409 A. D.), another Śvetāmbara Jaina logician has in his *ṣaḍdarśana-samuccaya-vṛtti* criticised a host of Buddhist and Hindu logicians including Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, the Maithila philosophers like Akṣapāda, Udyotakara, Vācaspati, Udayana and others. He was followed by Dharmabhiṣaṇa (1600 A. D.) and others who have also refuted the doctrines and views propounded by Buddhist and Hindu logicians.

The above account clearly shows that logical disputations among the Jainas and the Buddhists and the Hindus were the order of the day. But it was never so bitter between the Jainas and the Hindus, as it was between the Buddhists and the Hindus which we have dwelt at length in other places. As a matter of fact, the Śramaṇa—Munis (the Jainas) and the Vedic Rṣis “continued to flourish through the earlier ages of our history side by side, being more or less equally honoured by the people, inspite of the differences in their ideals and practices”. It is true, a certain amount of rivalry and intolerance seems to have developed between the two schools, “as their ideologies became more and more sharply marked, but in the public mind, both the Rṣis and the Munis remained objects of reverence, so that gradually the terms

became synonymous and interchangeable" and the Śramaṇas themselves in course of time began to claim that they were really the true Brāhmaṇas. Any way, these disputations proved a great boon to Hindu philosophy as they tremendously helped the growth and development of Indian logic.

**Royal Patronage: A Historical Survey**

Though no Aśoka or Harśa rose to champion the cause of Jainism with missionary zeal and vigour, we have nonetheless, several instances of kings embracing this faith of the Jainas. The Jaina sources suggest that Pārśvanātha himself was the son of one Aśvasena, a king of Kāśī. By virtue of his descent, Pārśva's influence in royal families must have been great and in no way less than during the days of his successor, Mahāvīra.

The Sūtrakṛtāṅga and other Jaina canonical works say that Pārśva had a large number of adherents in and about Magadha even in the days of Mahāvīra whose very family was attached to the religion of Pārśva. Mahāvīra had to face some of these adherents and win them over to his reformed church in the sixth cent. B.C.

Like Pārśva, Mahāvīra also belonged to the ruling dynasties of the age. The sixteen Mahājanapadas included the eight confederate clans known as Aṭṭhakula of whom the Videhans, the Licchavis, the Jñātrikas and the Vajjis proper were most important. We have already shown above his relations with the Videhans as described in the Jaina Sūtras. Besides the blood relationship, there are certain other indications in the Jaina canonical texts which definitely point to the Videhans taking a living interest in the Jaina church. Nimi (or Nami or Nemi) the founder of the Janaka dynasty of Mithilā is

4. Cf. the Āśṭāṅga-sūtra, the Kalpasūtra, the Uttarādhyayana-sūtra etc.
5. For other details regarding the Janaka dynasty of Mithilā, see the writer’s book, *History of Mithilā*, chap. II.
represented in the Jaina Sūtras as having embraced Jainism. The *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra*¹ says that "Nami humbled himself; enjoined by Śukra in person, the king of Videha (Mithilā) left the house and took upon him Śrāmaṇahood"². Besides, we have already noted above that Mahāvīra had spent six rainy seasons in Mithilā. On the basis of these evidences we can safely conclude that if not all, atleast a section among the Videhas, were ardent followers of this faith.

Besides the Videhas, the Licchavis along with the Jnātrikas must have come directly under the influence of the teaching of Mahāvīra. The cases of Trīsalā, Siddhārtha, Cetaka, Cellaṇā and others, cited above, suggest that the Licchavis had a distinct sympathy and respect for the Jainas. Furthermore, Cellaṇā, one of the seven daughters of King Cetaka, was married to Bimbisāra, with the result that both of them became ardent Jainas.³ And, the other six daughters of Cetaka married to different kings are also said to have been strong supporters and followers of Jainism⁴.

Campā, the capital of Aṅga (modern Bhagalpur), was yet another important centre of Jaina activities where Mahāvīra spent three rainy seasons and where Vasupūjya, the twelfth Tīrthaṅkara was born and died. There are signs of old and new Jaina temples of both the Digambara and the Śvetāmbara

1. IX. 61; XVIII. 45 (*SBE*, XIV. pp. 41, 87); also see, Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, pp. 147–60.
2. IX. 61. We have the following verse:

"नमो नमेव अपवाण तप्तेः सन्तोषः चोरो
यथालयग गङ्गा च वेदेद्विश सामणी प्रकुटिल""

This Nami or Naminātha has also been identified with Janaka or Mahājanaka II of the Mahājanaka Jnātaka (J. C. Jain, *Life in ancient India as depicted in the Jaina Canons*, p. 372 fn. 5–6, p. 377). This view is controversial as the Buddhist texts also claim him to be a follower of Buddhism. For other views, see Śrāmaṇa Bhagavāna Mahāvīra, Vol. I, pt. I., pg 40.

sects built for Vasupujya and other Tirthankaras. From the Vvasagadasaño and the Antagadadasaño we learn that there was a temple called Punnabhadda (which we have dealt with in the following lines) at Campā in the time of Sudharman, one of the eleven disciples of Mahāvīra, who succeeded him as the head of the Jaina sect after his death. It is said that the town was visited by Sudharman, at the time of Kuṇika Ajātaśatru who went there barefooted to see the Gañadhara outside the city which was again visited by Sudharman’s successors.

It may thus be rightly said that it was through the ruling dynasty of Vaisālī or the Licchavis that Mahāvīra got solid support from all directions in his early days, and “it was through them that the religion of Mahāvīra had spread over Sauvīra, Aṅga, Vatsa, Avanti, Videha and Magadhā, all of which were the most powerful kingdoms of the time”. The Buddhist works, therefore, do not mention Cetaka, though they have a lot to tell us about different aspects of Vaisālī in general. Jacobi, therefore, rightly suggests that “the Buddhists took no notice of him as his influence......was used in the interest of their rivals. But the Jainas cherished the memory of the maternal uncle and patron of their prophet, to whose influence we must attribute the fact that Vaisālī used to be a stronghold of Jainism, while being looked upon by the Buddhists as a seminary of heresies and dissent”.

The Jaina sources also tell us that like the Videhas and the Licchavis, the Mallas were also devotedly attached to Mahāvīra. The Kalpasūtra says that the nine Mallikas or Malla chiefs, like the Licchavis, also observed fast and instituted an illumination to mark the passing away of the great Jina. From the Antagadadasaño we further learn that the Mallikas,

along with the Ugras, the Bhogas, the Kṣatriyas, and the Licchavis went to receive Ariṭhanemi or Ariṣtanemi (the king of Videha?), the twenty-second Tirthaṅkara when the latter had been to the city of Bāravai. And, this was also the case with the Gaṇarājās of Kāśi and Kosala. Bimbisāra, Nandas, Candragupta Maurya, Samprati, Khāravela and other powerful rulers are also represented to have been associated with the Jaina church of Mahāvīra in the successive periods.

The late Śuṅga and the early Śaka-Kuṣāṇa periods (c. 150 B.C. – 100 A.D.) were remarkable in the history of Vaiśāli as they “marked a phase of affluence and artistic activity on the site” of the Garh area of Basārh as its recent excavation indicates. During the Gupta period it was an important administrative seat, which is proved by the Vaiśāli seals and also by the reference in the epigraphic records of the Guptas. Moreover, the account of Fahien, (A.D. 399–414), its frequent mention in an ancient Chinese source of A.D. 517 and the reports of excavations in 1903–04, 1913–14, 1950 (February) and since 1958, all refer to Vaiśāli as being a prosperous provincial capital-city during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries A.D., where followers of all religions lived peacefully. Later it presumably declined either due to the ravages of some invaders or natural calamity or calamities. The Garh area, however, seems to have been “deserted after the late Gupta period, i.e., in c. 600 A.D.”

2. For details, see C. J. Shah, pp. 108–111.
4. Vaiśāli Excavations (Krishnadeva & V. K. Mishra), 1950, p. 3.
7. Vaiśāli Excavations, 1950, p. 5. This was also the period of the desertion of Pāṭaliputra (Kumrahar Excavations, p. 12.)
Yuan Chwang or Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 629–645) visited Vaiśālī in the seventh century A.D. and found that the capitalcity of Vaiśālī was to a great extent in ruins, but abounded in several hundred saṅghārāmas which were mostly dilapidated. The followers of the Nirgranthas (Jaina ascetics) were, however, very numerous. Probably this is the last definite reference to the existence of a good Jaina population at Vaiśālī. During the Pāla period we have evidences of certain images of Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras being made and honoured here (c. 750–1200) and Jaina writers like Jinasena (eighth Vikrama era) and Gūpbadra (ninth Vikrama era) knew Kuṇḍapura to be in Videha.

During the time of the Guptas, however, a very important event connected with the Jaina history took place, as, it is said, the canonical and other literature of the Jainas was put down in writing during this period. On the basis of this account it can safely be concluded that the Jainas had by this time spread more or less all over India. Moreover, from the sixth century onwards, the inscriptions referring to the Jaina communities become very numerous. Yuan Chwang also records their spread in India and even outside in his accounts. All these show that the Jainas remained an important religious community to be reckoned with in the Indian society during this period and after. It seems, however, that by the 13th and 14th centuries A.D., the influence of the Jainas and the Buddhists had practically become non-existent in North Bihar and the adjoining regions, for we have no mention of the Jaina and the Buddhist followers in the account of Dharmasvāmi, the famous Buddhist traveller (13th cent. A.D.) from Tibet, who refers to Tīrhubut as a "non-Buddhist kingdom."

3. Biography of Dharmasvāmin (ed. by G. Roerich), p. 60. For details, see Supra, chap. V.
Jaina Antiquities:

Apart from the literary evidence, we have also numerous remains of Jaina art and architecture scattered all over Northern India. As a matter of fact, “the Hindu art owes to them a great number of its most remarkable monuments. In the domain of architecture in particular they have reached a degree of perfection which leaves them almost without a rival.”

Though Bihar in general is rich in Jaina antiquities, we have, however, a very few remains in North Bihar which do not help us in presenting a connected history of Jaina art in this part of the country. It is indeed surprising that the modern site of Vaisālī is entirely devoid of any remains belonging to this religious order. According to Smith, “some ten years ago two statues of Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras, one seated, the other standing, were discovered about eight feet below the surface,” 500 yards west of Baniyā. T. Block doubts its authenticity: “The only thing I could discover was that two images had been placed inside a mud-hut in the south-western corner of Chakramās, from where they had been taken away more than ten years ago. Nobody could give me any impression as to what they represented, although the floor of the hut was still pointed out, and Mr. Garrick who refers to them (ASR. XVI. 91) tells us that he arrived late in the evening at the village when it was too dark to discern these statues.”

We have, however, several references to Jaina antiquities in Vaisālī and its suburbs in the Jaina literature. The Uvasagadasaṇōś says that the Jñātrikas possessed a Jaina temple, outside their settlement at Kollāga bearing the name of Dūpältās. Cetiya is the term used for Jaina temple which, according to Hoernle, means “properly the name of a Jaina temple or sacred shrine, but commonly applied to the whole sacred enclosure containing a garden, grove or park (Ujjāīna, Vana-

2. JRAS. 1902, p. 282.
4. Hoernle, i, p. 2.
saula or Vana-khaëla), a shrine and attendants' houses. This religious establishment might have been kept up for the accommodation of Mahavira on his periodical visits along with his disciples to Kusdapura or Vaisali.

Like the Buddhist tradition, the Jaina traditions also refer to the practice of erecting stupas over the ashes of the Jainas. One such stupa existed at Vaisali, dedicated to the Jaina Muni Suvarata, and another at Mathura dedicated to Suparsvanatha. Stupa-worship in Jainism seems to have been a predominant feature. The Avalyaka Curni, while referring to the above stupa at Vaisali, gives the story of the 'Thubha' in illustrations of Parinamika Buddha. The Avalyaka Nityukti merely gives the catch-word, 'Thubha' "which shows that the author of the Nityukti knew of the stupa of Muni Suvarata at Vaisali". Moreover, recent excavations at Kausambi and Vaisali have shown that the so-called Northern Black Polished ware was available in different colours and sometimes painted also. Though we are not very certain about the centre of this technique or the place of its origin, it seems, however, quite probable that it was Magadhā.

According to some scholars, it would be a mistake to suppose that Cetiya in the Buddhist passages of the Mahaparinibbana Sutta and the Digha Nikaya referred to funeral mounds or stupas only of Udena, Sattambaka and others. The Bahunittika-cetiya in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta may be

1. Ibid., ii, p. 2, fn. 4. For different interpretations of this term, see U. P. Shah, Studies in Jaina Art, pp. 43–55.
2. C. J. Shah, p. 106.
5. Infra. fn. 4.
8. Ibid. p. 71.
10. II. 113. Also see Law, Geography of Early Buddhism, App.
said to be identical with the Caitya of the same name at Viṣālā (Vaisālī) and Mithilā referred to in the Jaina Bhagavatī and Vīpāka Sūtras. This Bahuputtikā or Bahuputrikā Caitya was dedicated to a goddess of a name who was a proto-type of the later Buddhist Hārīti. “Some of these Buddhist cetiyas were, therefore, similar to the Pūrṇabhadra Caitya described in the Aupapātika Sūtra”, called a Yakṣa-āyatana after the well-known ancient Yakṣas, Pūrṇabhadra and Māṇibhadra by Jaina commentators.

The description of this Pūrṇabhadra Caitya, as given in the Aupapātika Sūtra, supports more or less the interpretations advanced by Hoernle, quoted above. It is said that this Caitya was in the Udyāna or park, called Āmrasālavana, situated to the north-east of the city of Campā. It was very old in age (cirāṭta), recognised by people of the ancient (porāṇa), famous, praised everywhere, and jhāta. It was decorated with an umbrella (or umbrellas), banners, bells, flags, atipatākās (flags surmounted on flags), whisks or brushes of peacock-feathers (lāmapatthaga) and having a railing (vitarkika-vedikā). It was sprinkled all over with perfumed water; and garlands were hung; it was odorous with flowers of five colours, and with burning incense of kālāguru kundurukka and turukka. It was haunted by actors, dancers, experts in mimics (viḍambaka), ballad-singers, ... lute-players and minstrels. Many people visited the shrine which deserved praise, offerings, worship with sandal-paste etc., gifts, adoration and respect. It deserved a gift of a share from sacrifices. On all sides of it was a big forest-grove (vanakhaṇḍa) with a central big Aśoka tree (a caitya vṛkṣa) with a Pṛthvi-śīla-patī under it attached to its stem.

1. Ibid. p. 55
2. Sūtras, 2–5.
3. U. P. Shah (op. cit. p. 55) is inclined to believe that the term jhāta probably means “of the Jāṭar people” of which Mahāvira was a celebrated scion. The description tends to suggest that it was probably Dātipātika, built by the Jāṭrikas, outside their settlement at Kolāgā, referred to above.
4. For details, see U. P. Shah, op. cit. (section on Caitya-vṛkṣa).
Recently an image of Mahāvīra (in black basalt stone) of the Pāla period was discovered at Vaiśāli which is now kept in a modern temple situated to the west of Vaiśāli-garh near a tank. This image is respectfully worshipped in the name of Jainendra by the Jainas who flock there from all over the country. We have reference to another Jaina image discovered in Vaiśāli and many more in recent excavations conducted under the auspices of the K. P. Jayaswal Institute, Patna. Moreover, innumerable clay-sealings and seal-impressions of more than 120 varieties, mostly of unbaked clay were found by Drs. Block, Spooner and others in course of excavations at the site. Jainism undoubtedly had a very great influence in the area during the period to which these relics belong. But no definite evidence of Jaina antiquities can be ascertained on the basis of these huge finds. Besides these, we have no information regarding any other Jaina antiquities discovered in the area in recent times. Jayamaṅgalāgarh (North Monghyr) is popularly believed to have been an ancient seat of the Jainas, thought we have no definite corroborative evidence, literary or archaeological, to support or reject this traditional view. The Mauryan ruler Samprati is also held by tradition as a great patron of the Jainas and builder of numerous Jaina temples, but unfortunately no remains are extant today.

In the case of Bhagalpur district, the ancient Aṅga Deśa (some portions of which definitely formed parts of ancient

1. This information was kindly given to me by my friend, Dr. B. S. Verma, Research Fellow, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna.
4. For the antiquities, history etc. of Jayamaṅgalāgarh, see G. D. College Bulletin Series, Nos. 1–4.
Mithilā) we have a few Jaina antiquities. Mandāra Hill is supposed to be one of the sacred places of the Jainas. It was here that Vasupājyānātha, the twelfth Tīrthaṅkara attained his nirvāṇa. The top of this hill is a great object of veneration for the Jaina community. The structure is said to have belonged to Śrāvakas or Jainas and one of the rooms still contains a carana. A few other Jaina relics were also found on the top of the hill².

Karṇagarh hill near Bhagalpur also contains numerous ancient Jaina relics. We have reference to a Jaina Vihāra to the north of the ancient fort. There is no doubt that if large-scale excavations are carried on the hitherto ignored but important sites in North Bihar, Jaina antiquities would be found in large numbers.

Numerous sculptures common to most of the Digambara sites in Central India, Uttara Pradeśa and Bihar dating from C. 900-1200 A. D., have been found but of these we have none from North Bihar. Thousands of Jaina bronzes are found scattered over Western India most of which are related to the miniature paintings of the Western school which flourished in the mediaeval period. Like Rājasthān, Bihar and Bengal had its own school of sculpture and painting known as the Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval sculpture with a slight difference in style among the Bengal and Bihar specimens. The Jaina zone of influence appears to have extended from the southern bank of the Gaṅgā to the western bank of the Bhāgirathī right upto the northern frontier of the Jungle country of the wild Gonds. All the Jaina images belong to the Digambara sect².

Conclusion:

Thus from the above discussion, it is clear that while the Buddhists disappeared from India in course of time, Jainism with all its schisms and divisions is nevertheless a living force even now. The fact is that they kept open the doors of their

church to lay representatives—a factor which contributed much to the stability of Jainism. Moreover, it adopted a less active missionary career than Buddhism and the followers preferred more secluded sites as their chief centres of worship. It was the result of this seclusion that the Jainas did not incur the terrible wrath of the Brāhmaṇas and as such resisted more successfully the stress of the Brāhmaṇical revival and the Muhammadan persecution under which Buddhism in India ultimately collapsed. According to Tiele, “the toleration extended to them by the Brāhmaṇas, even though they were regarded as heretics, led large numbers of Buddhists to take refuge in their community in the days of persecution”¹. And, it was this Brāhmaṇic toleration, denied to the Buddhists, that saved the Jainas from perpetual persecution and harassment. As a result of this, Jainism, though confined to a small minority, is yet a living religious force, an article of faith with a section of the people all over the country².


CHAPTER IV

The Rise and Growth of Buddhism

Introduction:

Sixth century B.C. marks a cardinal epoch in the history of the world. It was remarkable for the spiritual unrest and intellectual ferment in many countries. We had Lao Tzu and Confucius in China; Permenides and Empedocles in Greece; Zarathustra in Iran and Mahāvīra and the Buddha in India, who worked upon their inheritance, developed new points of view and announced new religion and philosophy which marked a turning point in the history of human civilisation and thought.

Like other great teachers and reformers of the age, Buddha also utilised the Hindu inheritance to correct some of its expressions. The extremely rigid forms of religious sacrifices and ceremonies of the Brāhmaṇic period evoked a great spiritual unrest and revolt against "formalism and exclusiveness of the Brāhmaṇical system" in the Upaniṣadic age. The expensive sacrifices and ritualism were denounced as "irreligious and foolish" by intellectual stalwarts like Yājñavalkya, Janaka Videha, Ajātaśatru of Kāśi, Pravāhana Jaivali, Asvapati Kekaya, Uddālaka Āruṇi, Śvetaketu Āruṇeya, Satyakāma Jābala and Dṛpta Bālāki. The reaction and protest against this worn-out system proved so bitter that Janaka Videha refused to submit to the hierarchical pretensions of the Brāhmaṇas and asserted his right of performing sacrifices without the intervention of the priests. The Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad denounces the upholders of such sacrifices as "fools and fanatics." The Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad goes a step further. It addresses those who work in

1. Rapson, Ancient India, p. 63; H.M, p. 97;
2. 1. 2. 7.
ignorance as "the draught animals of the Devas". The knowledge of Brahman and Ātman was accorded supreme place by the Upaniṣadic seers. A new age dawned, a new wave of thought overtook the Upaniṣadic men.

The Upaniṣads and Buddhism:

But the Upaniṣadic period was also not without its drawbacks. The general spirit underlying the Upaniṣads may broadly be described as the search for truth in life. The sage in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad upon reflection, finds that "all we can say about God is negative—it is not this, it is not that," and the doctrine that the Self is yet essentially unknowable through the ordinary avenues of knowledge presents a puzzle, first started by Yājñavalkya, and has since then remained engrained in the Vedānta philosophy of a later age which found in Śāṅkara one of its most powerful exponents.

Scholars generally agree that Buddhism was but a natural reaction of this stiff and high philosophy of the Upaniṣads which was quite unintelligible to the ordinary minds. It was as such absolutely cut off from the ordinary mass and became an exclusive property of the few. Popular discontent grew and began to seek some outlet elsewhere. The leaders of Hinduism had thus themselves prepared the ground which proved very fertile for the new religion—Buddhism to thrive on. This is all the more remarkable, for Buddhism originated in the same region to which we have to allot the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, for instance, the country of the Videhas, the Kosalas and the Śākyas. Moreover, the doctrine promulgated by Yājñavalkya in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad are in fact more or less Buddhistic. The result was that with the advent of the Buddha and Buddhism, the Brāhmaṇical religion or the religion of the Vedas was, for the time being, pushed into

1. VIII. 10; G. C. Pande, op. cit. pp. 313 ff. The term 'Devas' is here used in the sense of wise men.
2. HM, pp. 98–104; 2500 years of Buddhism, Chap. II; G. C. Pande, op. cit. chap. VIII.
oblivion and confined to a small section of the people. At the
time of the rise of Buddhism, however, the worship of the
popular deity Śrī or Sīrī, the goddess of luck, of plenty
success; spirits of the earth and the great mountains; the Four
Great Kings (Digpāla or guardians of the four quarters);
tree-worship; serpent-worship; river-worship etc. were preva-
 lent. The mass of the people believed in age-old spells, incan-
tations, charms and spirits. The religion of the mass was,
therefore, purely animistic 1.

Buddha vehemently denounced these heretical views of the
time as "fruitless." Though there was a real and progressive
civilisation and ideas and customs were no doubt changing and
throwing, there was a certain dead level, if not a complete
absence of philosophic thought. Then suddenly and almost
simultaneously there is evidence about the sixth century B. C.
in each of these centres of civilisation "of a leap forward in
speculative thoughts, of a new birth in ethics, of a religion of
conscience." 2 Brāhmaṇism had by now become "an island in a
sea" 3 and majority of the people followed the new order. 4

Mithilā and Vaiśāli:

Vaiśāli, the capital-seat of the Licchavi republic (which also
included the sacred land of the Videhas) was the first to become
the stronghold of both Buddhism and Jainism. The Buddha
loved Vaiśāli and the Licchavis so much that he paid atleast
three visits to the city. The Vajjis sought his help on many
occasions for the solution of their problems. As a matter of
fact, the confederacy of the Vajjians in Eastern India looked
up to him as adviser on critical occasions in national politics. 5
From the king in the palace to the beggar in the street, from
the most serious man of the day to the notorious boys in the

1. K. B. Pathak Comm. Vol. pp. 76-79; Rhys Davids, Buddhist India,
  pp. 144 ff.
2. Buddhist India, pp. 155-56.
3. Ibid.
4. HAF, p. 148.
field all listened to him in reverence and paid their worshipful obeisance.¹

Notwithstanding this influence and veneration, a great body of the people of the Vajji country stuck to their ancient faith. Buddhism, as we know, at this early stage was a form of faith for ascetics only, not a religious creed for all people. The Buddhists formed only one of the many ascetic sects of Northern India. The Vedic religion was still in full vigour in North-eastern India as the references to Vedic sacrifices in Buddhist texts show. The Vedic gods—Indra, Prajāpati or Brahmā were still popular deities in the regions where the Buddha preached.²

Against this changing social and religious background it is claimed that inspite of the great popularity of the Buddha and his new creed, Mithilā, the land of the Videhas, could successfully ward off the so-called pernicious influence of this new Order, and that the atmosphere of the Hindu Society in general was quite calm, peaceful and devotional.³ The claim does not seem fully justified, for we know that Mithilā and Vaiśālī in ancient times formed a single and inseparable geographical entity.⁴ It was a well-marked natural region which is frequently referred to in the Buddhist and Jaina texts. Videha is often used in a wider sense to include Vaiśālī also. The upsurge of new ideas and social convulsions in one part, therefore, almost inevitably affected the other parts of the country.

That the land of the Videhas was markedly influenced by the new Order is manifest from the numerous references contained in ancient literature. Manu brands the Videhas, like

². Law, *Some Kṣatriya Tribes*, pp. 69 ff., 149.
⁴. *HM*, pp. 2-3; *Āṣṭāṅga Sūtra*, II; 15, 17; *SBE*, XXII, Intro.
the Licchavis, as Vṛātyas. According to him; “the offspring of a Vaiśya father and Brāhmaṇa mother is a Videha, a native of Videha. They live by guarding the harems of kings. The duties assigned to them are charge of bolts and bars for protecting the privacy of women of respectable house-holders.”

The Videhas, it seems, were not held in high esteem because of the chastening of the caste-rules caused by the spread of Jainism and Buddhism. Moreover, the classification of the Videhas (and the Licchavis) as Vṛātyas (the impure castes) is a sign that Manu’s book is long posterior to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa where the Videhas appear as the leading representatives of Brāhmaṇism. The position allotted to this tribe may perhaps further be connected with the fact that “the Videhas (and specially the Licchavi family of them) exercised material influence on the growth of Buddhism.”

It is further corroborated by evidence from Buddhist sources wherein we are told that most of the later Videhan monarchs were too much influenced by Buddhism to take up arms against their enemies with the result that like the successors of Aśoka in a later age, they were also unable to face any external invasion whatsoever. Their detached outlook towards and complete renunciation of the world is said to have chiefly accounted for the deterioration that gradually set in the mighty fabric of the Videhan kingdom resulting in its complete collapse.

The Jātaka-stories also refer to many Videhan kings turned ascetics. We have mention of a Videhan king, Janaka Janadeva who is said to have given up his hundred teachers and followed Pañcaśikha, the first disciple of Aśuri. The Nīmi Jātaka7 says that a certain king, Makhādeva ruled over Mithilā

1. Manu, x. 22.
2. Ibid. x. 11, 17, 19, 26, 33 & 47; Gautama, IV. 17; Barnett, Antiquities of India, p. 133.
3. For the Vṛātyas, see R. K. Chaudhary’s forthcoming publication, The Vṛātyas in Ancient India.
5. HM, pp. 60 ff.
7. No. 541; Fausball, VI. 96.
and renounced the world at the later stage of his life. After him came Nimi who was “born to round off” the family “like a hoop of a chariot-wheel.” His son was Karāla or Kalāra Janaka who also renounced the world and brought this family to an end.\(^1\) There was another king, Sādhīna whose virtues and goodness were praised by all.\(^2\) Infact, an all-round attempt was made to re-interpret the word “Brāhmaṇa” in a spiritual manner and besides the lower castes, many Brāhmaṇas joined the new Order\(^3\).

But, barring western Mithilā, Buddhism in its later phase does not seem to have gained strong foothold in Mithilā proper. It is no doubt true that the first popular wave of Buddhism shook the entire country out of its bottom, and that the spread of the new Order passed more or less unchallenged as an accomplished fact. But, when the followers of Buddhism began to attack the ancient Vedic traditions right and left with their arguments borne out of jealousy and hatred, the Maithila scholars shook off their complacency, essayed and reinforced the tottering edifices by taking up the new challenge in its letter and spirit. They bade good-bye to their spiritual pursuits for the time being and concentrated their entire energy on the preservation of their ancient culture and tradition\(^4\). This ushered in a new era of logical disputations and it may rightly be said that the bitter clash between these two conflicting currents of thought for ages was ultimately responsible for the tremendous growth of and unprecedented advance in Indian logical system. If Magadha was the birth-place of Buddhist logic, Mithilā was similarly the citadel of Brāhmaṇic philosophy\(^5\).

This strong Brāhmaṇic reaction and opposition to the new Order seems to have dangerously influenced and demoralised

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1. Ibid.
5. Rāhula Sāṅkrityāyana in Mithilākā, p. 11.
the Vajji followers of the great Master, immediately after his death. The Second Council at Vaiśālī is a significant pointer to it. It is said that only a hundred years after the passing away of the Master, the Vajjiputtaka Bhikṣus and the residents of Vaiśālī indulged in practices utterly prejudicial and detrimental to the interest of Buddhism. They proclaimed "ten indulgences" as permissible. Thereupon the Buddhist Elders convened a Council at Vaiśālī known as the Sattasatika or the Convocation of the Seven Hundred, with a view to suppressing the heresies among them (the Vajjiputtakas). The assembled Bhikṣus were brought together by venerable Yaśa. The "ten indulgences" were thoroughly enquired into and a judgment of suppression was finally announced. But the following century again witnessed schisms in the Buddhist clan—this time too wide to be bridged, with the result that within a few hundred years, Buddhism, ironically enough, was wiped off the very land of its inception.

Royal Patronage:

Aśoka's patronage contributed much to the spread of Buddhism within the empire and outside, but he too could not meet the Brāhmaṇic reaction effectively. According to some writers, the Buddhist priests from Magadha and Tirhut (Vaiśālī) went in large numbers to preach their religion to Tibet during his time. Nonetheless, the orthodox Maithilas seem to have been adamant in their anti-Buddhistic attitude, and one of the causes leading to the fall and break-up of the Magadhan empire was no doubt the violent Brāhmaṇic reaction.

The following period saw the recrudescence of Brāhmaṇic learning and culture under Śuṅga monarchs. Buddhism now lost official patronage and was replaced by Brāhmaṇism. From the Buddhist account it is clear that Puṣyamitra Śuṅga was a

2. HM, p. 151. For details see 2500 years of Buddhism, pp. 41–44.
4. For different views see, PHAI, pp. 364–61.
persecutor of the Buddhists. A champion of militant Brāhmaṇism, he revived and re-established the ancient priestly traditions by performing two aśvamedha sacrifices.

The famous Indo-Greek king Menander was also a Buddhist and his name is associated with the well-known Pāli work, *Milinda-pañho* or *Questions of Milinda*. This is one of the standard works on Buddhist Philosophy in which figures the great Buddhist philosopher, Nāgasena.

Gautamiputra Sātakarnī, though himself a Hindu, made liberal grants and donations to the Buddhist institutions which is evident from the literary and artistic works of the period.

Kaniṣka’s reign is a land-mark in the history of Buddhism. A great patron of Buddhist religion, he also associated himself with a galaxy of Buddhist masters who shaped Buddhism in later times. It was in this period that the Indo-Greek School of Buddhist art, *i.e.*, the Gāndhāra School, achieved its greatest development. Moreover, a new form of Buddhism, the Mahāyāna, of far-reaching consequence, also came to be evolved at the same time, and the third Great Council was also convened during his reign. He is further credited with having carried off the famous alms-bowl of the Buddha from Vaiśālī in or about the first century A.D.

The advent of the Gupta dynasty also gave a new impetus to Buddhism. Although Bhāgavatas by faith, the Gupta monarchs were sympathetic towards the cause of Buddhism. A number of important inscriptions beginning from the fifth century A.D. till the end of the sixth, and a large number of records by the Chinese pilgrims and others from the middle of the seventh century A.D. throw a good deal of light on the condition of Buddhism in this period. It had reached its height in extent; the great centres of Buddhist study like Nālandā and Valabhi were still keeping the light burning

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1. *HM*, p. 151. For details, see 2500 years of *Buddhism*, pp. 41-44.
2. For other details, see Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, 1923, pp. 45 ff.
vigorously and Harṣa’s conversion to Mahāyāna Buddhism lit the flames once again. But, nowhere is it mentioned that these zealous champions of Buddhism succeeded in converting the orthodox section of the Brāhmaṇas to their faith. On the other hand, the wordy war between the protagonists of the two systems was still going on in full vigour, and evidences tend to show that Buddhism, unable to bear the Brāhmaṇic onslaughts, defeated and discomfited, was gradually retreating from the very land of its birth, and was sooner or later confined to Kashmir, Swāt Valley, Valabhi and other places on the north in a none-too prosperous condition.¹

Even during the time of Harṣa, the Great Order with all its royal patronage, omitted certain dangerous symptoms of decay. Yuan Chwang’s accounts leave us in no doubt that some thing had gone terribly wrong with the vast religious empire reared up by the genius and life-blood of the Buddha. In 635 A. D. the pilgrim visited Tirhut (Mithilā and Vaiśālī) and found Buddhism waning in that region.² On the other hand, Jaina Digambaras were in a large number at Vaiśālī, Puṇḍravardhana and Samataṇa. Brāhmaṇism had asserted its complete supremacy with its strongholds at Mithilā, Kāśi and Prayāga during this ti-which is evident from Yuan Chwang’s reference to Indiā as the “the country of the Brāhmaṇas”³ (Po-lo-men-kuo) as well as Bāṇa’s mention of the “followers of Kapila, Kaṇṭhā and Upaniṣads, i.e., Vedāntins”⁴.

The century that followed Harṣa’s death dealt a death-blow to the already decaying religion in Vaiśālī, Videha and its neighbouring tracts. If the story of conflict between Arjuna, Harṣa’s minister and the usurper of Tirhut after his master’s death and the combined attack of the Tibetan and Nepalese forces, as told in the Chinese records, is to be believed, it is natural to conclude that Buddhism by this time had become a dead force, without any sign of life whatever, in these regions.

1. For details, see 2500 years of Buddhism, pp. 64 ff.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
It is said that Arjuna or Aruṇāśva, just after Harṣa's death, insulted and injured the second Buddhist Chinese mission of Wang-hiu'en-tse. The latter thereupon fled to Nepal and returned with a large army consisting of 1200 picked Tibetan soldiers supplied by the Tibetan king Srong-btsan-gampo and supported by a Nepalese contingent of 7,000 horsemen. The combined army stormed Tirhut and the horrible cruelty and rapaciousness with which the Chinese envoy massacred the inhabitants of Tirhut reflect little credit on a Buddhist mission. The account as given in the Chinese records, seems to be a highly exaggerated one and reads more like romance than a piece of sober history. What, however, seems to be true is that after Harṣa's death, Arjuna, a petty Brāhmaṇa governor of Tirhut asserted independence and insulted the Buddhist mission probably because of his inherent hatred towards them. Full of revenge, the envoy with the combined support of the Tibetan and the Nepalese kings (who were also strong adherents of Buddhism) attacked the Brāhmaṇic chief, defeated him and massacred the Brāhmaṇic inhabitants of Tirhut.¹ We have yet another instance of a sanguinary fight between the Buddhists and the Brāhmaṇas recorded in a popular Maithila tradition which suggests that the opponents of the systems, when unable to meet the viewpoints of one another, often exchanged pen for the sword. It is said that after the Great Bhārata battle, Kṣatriyas, the traditional defenders of Brāhmaṇic faith, became too weak to arrest the influence of anti-Brahmaṇic faith. The Brāhmaṇas, therefore, retired to the Abu mountains and performed sacrificial rites there with the result that out of the fire-pit were born great Kṣatriya families—the Paramāras, the Cauhānas, the

¹ For details, see JASB, vi, p. 69; iv, p. 20; Tripathi, History of Kānauj, pp. 180–90; Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British, Foreign, India, China and Australia, 1836, pp. 220–21; IHQ, III, p. 792; HB, I, pp. 91–93; JRAS, 1880, pp. 528 ff; JIH, xxxii; HM, pp. 198–200; EHI, pp. 366–67; DHNI, I, p. 274; Ls Nepal, II, pp. 174–75; JMOS, 1011, p. 133; JBORS, xxii, pp. 161 ff; Antiquities of Tibet, II, p. 82; IHQ, xv. (suppl), pp. 59–6 ci
Solankis and the Pariharas. Of these the Paramaras were represented by Vikramaditya, the great legendary figure and ruler of Ujjain who had extended his kingdom up to Mithilā. As to his conquest of Mithilā, it is said, there took place a great philosophical disputation between the Buddhist and the Maithila scholars at Harihara-kṣetra in which the latter were insulted by the former who had the support of the Nepalese king ruling over the tract. This greatly infuriated the Maithila Paññitas who sent Jayāditya Miśra, son of the celebrated Vararuci Miśra, to represent their case before Vikramaditya, the new defender of Brahmānic faith. Incidentally they met each other in the Mahākāla Śiva Temple on the bank of the Śiprā river at the time of performing worship to the great God. Having thus acquainted himself with the actual state of affairs, Vikramaditya mobilised his forces, swooped down upon Mithilā, conquered the land and the adjoining territories and chased the Buddhists out of its boundaries. The Gandhavariyā Rājaputs of Mithilā even now trace their descent from the said Vikramaditya. Whatever the credulity of the legend, or otherwise, the fact remains that the wordy war and mutual hatred and jealousy between the adherents of the two systems had reached such a dangerous point that it often culminated in violent bloodshed and massacres—a fact which finds echo in later Brahmānical works, for instance, Udayana’s writings, Jyotirīśvara’s Vargana-Ratnakara etc. dealt with elsewhere in the following pages.

In Sind, Buddhism had degenerated from the sublimest philosophy to the vilest superstition whereas in Kashmir it was gradually supplanted by Hinduism, though temples of the Buddha were also raised. King Avantivarman had Buddhist leanings. In Orissa, however, Buddhism continued to be a dominant religion up to the end of the fifth century A. D. The modern Vaiśṇavas of Orissa are crypto-Buddhists professing a faith which is a later development of the Mahāyāna system. Similar was the case of Bengal where Buddhism gradually

1. For the so-called dialogue between Jayāditya Miśra and Vikramaditya, and other details, see P. Jhū, Mithilā-tattva-vimarśa, pp. 95-96.
2. Ibid. p. 96.
degenerated into a number of cults. The Haihayas were the first Buddhists but they changed their religion in the eighth century A.D. In south India also, the earliest Pallavas of the Prakrit records were Buddhists. The Pallava ascendancy no doubt witnessed the decline of Buddhism but they were tolerant to other sects and made grants to the Buddhists. Under the Vākāṭakas and the Cālukyas of Bādāmi Buddhism influenced a considerable section of the population.

While Buddhism was thus slowly disappearing from the land of its birth, it witnessed another great, though temporary, revival under the patronage of the Pāla monarchs. Most of these rulers were devout Buddhists and innumerable pieces of art of this period have been discovered in Mithilā and elsewhere. These Pāla kings were also responsible for new endowments to the Nālandā monastery and for the foundation of new monasteries such as Vikramaśilā, Odantapurī and Somapuri1, which dominated the whole of the Buddhist world nearly for six centuries, from the sixth to twelfth century A.D. i.e., till the advent of the Muslims, when the conquests of Bakhtyār Khilji in Eastern India (Bihar and Bengal) put finish to this long, long story2.

The Age of Logical Disputation:

Coming to the scholarly and logical disputations between the followers of Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism, we find that the exponents of these systems wrote numerous books refuting the views of their opponents. The thinkers of these schools were accustomed often to meet together and defeat their rivals in actual debates. The result of these wordy wranglings frequently proved very important in determining the prestige of a school of thought. For example, if a Buddhist logician defeated a greater Nyāya or Mīmāṁsā thinker in a great public debate, attended by learned scholars from every part of the country, his fame at once spread all over the country and he

1. 2500 years of Buddhism, pp. 175 ff.
2. ibid. Also cf. Rāhula Sākhriṅtyāna, Buddha-carīpa, Intro. 11; R. K. Chaudhary, Siddhārtha, pp. 187-203,
could also secure a large number of followers on the spot. This debating spirit was also largely responsible for the extensive tours of disputation undertaken by great masters for the sole purpose of defeating the teachers of the opposite school and of securing adherents to their own. “These debates were, therefore, not generally conducted merely in a passionless philosophical mood with the object of arriving at the truth but in order to inflict a defeat on opponents and to establish the ascendancy of some particular school of thought.” Advanced Sanskrit philosophical works criticise these debators by exposing their inconsistencies over self-contradictions. As a matter of fact, all the resources of the art of controversy find full play for silencing the opponent before the final philosophical answer is given.

Thus, it was in the wake of this new trend of debating and speculative currents and cross-currents in the world of intellect that the systematization of Nyāya in the Sūtra form was completed by Gautama or Akṣapāda during this period of intellectual turmoil and unrest. Sūtra work now gave prominence to categories, like Discussions, Disputation, Wrangling, Fallacies, Casuistry, Futile rejoinder and Clinchers. In fact, the sixteen categories elaborated by Gautama in his Nyāyasūtra clearly tend to show that there was a definite motive, a mercenary zeal, not detached scholarly view, behind presenting all these systematizations and enumerations. The entire system seems to have been motivated by the sole purpose of meeting the opponents in controversies to refute the rivals’ arguments, assert one’s view-point through logical dissertations and lastly to guard one’s own views against the wrong reasoning of the rivals.

4. I. I. I. For the date and authenticity of Nyāyasūtra and its enumeration of 16 subjects, see Dasgupta, *op. cit.* 1, pp. 277–301.
It is thus likely that the earliest beginnings of Nyāya are to be found in the disputation and debates amongst scholars trying to find out the right meanings of the Vedic texts for use in sacrifices and also in these disputation which occurred between the adherents of different schools of thought aiming at defeating and discomfiting one another. Such disputation took place in the age of the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads and the art of disputation was regarded even then as a subject of study.

The Nyāyasūtra of Gautama, therefore, forms a landmark in the history of Indian logic. Vātsyāyana wrote a commentary on it about 320 A.D., known as Vātsyāyanabhāṣya. Udyotakara, the great Maithila logician, wrote a Vārttika on Vātsyāyana’s bhāṣya, about 635 A.D. with a view to establishing the Nyāya view and refuting the criticisms of the great Buddhist logician, Dignāga (c. 500 A.D.) in his Pramāṇa samuccaya. The celebrated Vācaspati Miśra I (840 A.D.) wrote a sub-commentary on the Nyāya-vārttika of Udyotakara, called Nyāyavārttika-tātparya-ṭika in order to make clear the right meanings of Udyotakara’s Vārttika which was “sinking in the mud as it were through numerous other bad writings.” He also wrote his celebrated commentary, Bhāmatī on Śaṅkara’s commentary on the Brahmaśūtras in which he has referred to the Buddhist doctrine of Pratītya-samutpāda. He has also quoted from Dignāga in his Tātparyaṭīka and strongly refuted his views on the contact of sense-organ. In addition to these works, the Nyāya-maṇjarī of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa (880 A.D.) is most important in mediaeval times. Jayanta flourished shortly after Vācas-

1. Vide—The conference of scholars at the court of Janaka Videha at the time of horse-sacrifice (Śat. Brā. xiv. 6, 1-4; Brāh. up. III. 5).
2. Daṇḍinī. op. cit. i. p. 276.
5. Ibid. p. 307 (dustarākṣithakṣaṇaḥ ṭaṅkamagnīnām).
6. Bhāmatī. 11. 11; Daṇḍinī, i. p. 418.
7. 1. i. 4; Mishra, op. cit. p. 479.
pati and has discussed the Nyāya views quite independently, criticising the views of other systems, particularly the Buddhist.

Udayanācārya or Udayana (984 A.D.), the great Maithila philosopher, was a militant champion of the Brāhmaṇic faith, and he bitterly criticised and mercilessly attacked the Buddhists on all fronts. He wrote a sub-commentary on Vācaspati’s Tātparyaṭīkā, called Tātparyaṭīka-pariśuddhi. He was also the author of the famous work, Nyāya-kusumāṇjali in which he has tried to prove the existence of God whom the Buddhists openly denied and criticised in their arguments. This work ought to be read with its sub-commentary, Prakāsa by Vardhamāna (1225 A.D.) and its sub-commentary, Makaranda by Rucidatta (1275 A.D.), both Maithila scholars. But his uncompromising stand against, and pernicious attack on the Buddhists find echo in his Ātmatattvaviveka, also known as Bauddhādhiṅkarā or Bauddhādhiṅkāra, a polemical work against the Buddhists, in which he has tried to establish the Nyāya doctrine of Soul. In his crusade against them he is even said to have challenged the Lord Jagannātha, who is regarded as the incarnation of the Buddha.

It is interesting to note that between the Vātsyāyanaabāṣya and Udyotakara’s Vārttika no Hindu work of importance on logic seems to have been written. We may, therefore, safely infer that non-Buddhist Naiyāyikas, during this period, probably proved incapable of resisting the great onrush of Buddhist thought and putting up any hard fight against the Buddhist logicians, and as such the science of logic was entirely in the

2. Mithilā—tradition records that in the beginning Udayana was so scared of Buddhist influences that he left Mithilā, went over to Bengal and became Dharmādhiṅkeraṅka in the court of the legendary Bengali king Adinātra (P. Jhā, op. cit. p. 106). The tradition, however, lacks corroboration from other sources.
5. Ibid. p. 307; Ibid. p. 500.
6. For details, see Sūtra, chap. II.
hands of the Jainas and the Buddhists. The real founders of mediaeval logic, however, were the Buddhists.

It was in fact Dignāga’s criticism of Hindu Nyāya in general and that of Vātsyāyana-bhāṣya in particular that aroused Udyyotakara to write the Vārttika. Had there been any Maithila or other outstanding Hindu logician in this intervening period, Udyyotakara would not have proclaimed in the beginning verse of his Nyāyavārttika: “This treatise is being written by me for the purpose of removing the blemish of error cast by inferior logicians (namely Dignāga and others) upon these doctrines which the chief of sages, Akṣapāda propounded for peace and welfare of the world”.

Besides Dignāga, there flourished another great Buddhist thinker, Jñānaśrīmitra before Udayana. He hailed from Gauḍa and had a high place of honour among the scholars in Vikramaśilā as the second Mahāstambha (great pillar) among the gate-keeping scholars of the Vikramaśilā Mahāvihāra. The great Atiśa is said to have sought his advice on esoteric matters before his departure for Tibet. His work, Kāryakāraṇābhiṣāḍhī is still preserved in Tibetan translation. A number of his works brought from Tibet show how he criticised Vācaspati and what provoked Udayana to write his Nyāyavārttikā-tātparyaśāstraṇī or Baudhāyānīkā. He belonged to the school of Āryamaitreyanāthapāda which was successively strengthened by Vasubandhu, Dignāga and Dharmakirti. Dharmakirti’s Pramāṇavārttika was the basis of three different schools,

   For detailed discussion, see the author’s paper, “A Brief Survey of Buddhism and Buddhist remains in Mithila” in JBRS (Buddha Jayanti Special Issue, Vol. II); Šūtra, chaps. IV and III.


3. Mahāśaṅkara Rāhula Sāṅkṛityāyana brought the photo-prints of palm-leaf manuscripts of works in original Sanskrit in course of his pilgrimages to Tibet which are now preserved in the Bihar Research Society, Patna. Jñānaśrī’s works are in all twelve (Vidg.-Anantatala Thakur, “Jñānaśrīmitra and his works” in JBRS, Buddha Jayanti Special Issue, Vol. I, pp. 186 ff.)
and Jáannaśrī belonged to the religious school started by Prajñākara-gupta, the author of the *Pramāṇavārttikakhaṇḍa*. That he was a great thinker is evident from the fact that he has left his influence on all the three branches of Indian logic, Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist and Jaina. He has spared no pains to refute the views of Śaṅkara, Bhāṣavarajya, Trilocana and Vācaspāti I. Udayana, Gaṅgeśa, Śaṅkaramiśra, and Mādhavācārya have quoted from his works and often criticised his views. Ratnakīrti, the Buddhist philosopher, quotes him as an authority on *Tarkabhāṣya* and the Jaina logician Vādi Reva quotes him several times in his work.¹

But, the Buddhist and Jaina method of treating logic separately from metaphysics as an independent study was not accepted by the Hindus till we come to Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya with whom the new school of Nyāya philosophy, known as *Navya-Nyāya*, started about 1200 A. D.²

The most important Buddhist logician, after Dignāga and before the rise of the great Śaṅkara and Maṇḍana Miśra, who dominated the scene was Dharmakīrti (c. 635 A. D. or 7th century A. D.), the famous author of *Nyāya-bindu*, a Sautrāntika doctrine of Buddhism or the Sautrāntika theory of inference. He has been referred to by great logicians like Vācaspāti Miśra I, Jayanta, Śrī Harṣa, Śālikanātha Miśra, Pārthaśārathi Miśra and several other later logicians. He was the celebrated author of several original works and commentaries. Of these the most important is his *Pramāṇavārttika*, a commentary on Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya* in which he has sharply criticised the views of Udyotakara (*Nyāya-vārttika*) and Kumārila (*Ślokavārttika*). In his writing of this *Vārttika* he was undoubtedly influenced by Udyotakara as his first verse is quite in tune with the beginning verse in Udyotakara’s *Vārttika*. Moreover, it reads like a counter-reply to Udyotakara who has


². Dasgupta i. pp. 309–10; For details regarding this new school of logic, see M.M. Chakrabarty’s paper, “History of *Navya-Nyāya*” in *JASB*. 1915 (N. S.); Mookerjee, *AIE*, p. 597; *HM*, pp. 376–78, *Sūtra*, chap. 11; *History of Navya-Nyāya in Māhīśita* etc.
criticised Dignāga as an inferior logician. Dharmakīrti says: "Ordinary person of weak intelligence not only shows his indifferences to the good work (of Dignāga) but is malicious, envious, and jealous towards it. Therefore, it was not of great use. Thinking it so with my aptitude developed with the long and continuous study of the good work, I undertake the present one"\(^1\). But, inspite of his vigorous defence of Buddhism, euridite learning and vast scholarship, it seems, he did not receive as much recognition as was his due. From a verse attributed to Dharmakīrti in the *Sadākṣi-karṇamṛta* by Śṛdhara Dāsa\(^2\) it is clear that he felt more or less ignored by his contemporaries for, in the last verse of his *Pramāṇavārttika* he mournfully says: "My view whose path has not been reached by the capacity of mighty intelligent brains, whose correct sense has not been grasped even with great efforts, and which has not found in this world an appreciator befitting it, will, like water (which is absorbed and lost) in the ocean attain old age and will perish in my own person"\(^3\).

From the above it is clear that Dharmakīrti was not at all happy over the existing state of affairs. The revival of the orthodox Hindu ideals under the dynamic leadership of Udyotakāra, Kumārila (a contemporary of Dharmakīrti\(^4\)) and others and the encouragement and support that it slowly received from the people in general may have largely been responsible for the gradual withering away of Buddhist influences and ideals which led Dharmakīrti to give expression to such disappointing utterances in seer mental agony. According to Stcherbatsky, "notwithstanding the great scope and success of his (Dharmakīrti's) propaganda he could only retard, but not stop the process of decay which befell Buddhism on its native soil. Buddhism in India was doomed. The most talented propagandist could not change the run of history. The time of Kumārila and Śaṅkarācārya, the great champions of

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2. p. 327. For the translation of the verse see Mishra, *op. cit.* p. 485.
brāhmaṇical revivals and opponents of Buddhism was approaching...........Buddhism at the time of Dharmakīrti was not on the ascendancy, it was not flourishing in the same degree as at the time of the brothers—Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. The popular masses began to deturn their face from the philosophic, critical and pessimistic religion, and reverted to the worship of the great Brāhmin gods. Buddhism was beginning its migration to the north where it found a new home in Tibet, Mongolia and other countries".

The Age of Kumārila and Śaṅkara :

As we have noted above, the age of Kumārila and Śaṅkarācārya (788 A. D.) was the age of great religious ferment and Brāhmaṇic revival, for they are supposed to have been avowed opponents of Buddhism and Śaṅkara’s commentary on the Brahmaśūtras gave birth to a host of Commentaries and studies on Vedāntism of great originality, vigour and philosophic insight, which was further championed by Maṇḍana Miśra (800 A. D.) of Mithilā, who strongly denounced the Buddhists.

According to a popular legend current in Mithilā and elsewhere Śaṅkara chased the Buddhists out of India. He not only defeated and discomfited them in logical debates, but it was also by his order that King Sudhanvā drowned thousands of Buddhists into the ocean and mercilessly massacred them.

1. Buddhist Logic, i. 35. For other Logicians after Dharmakīrti see Vidyabhūṣāna, History of Indian Logic; Mishra, op. cit. pp. 487 ff; Rāhula Śākṛityāyana, Mithilāsaka, pp. 11-18.

2. For the date of Kumārila and Śaṅkara, see Buddhacarita, Intro. pp. 11-12. For other details about Kumārila, see Dasgupta, i. pp. 370 ff. and Supra, Chap. II.


4. Dasgupta, i. pp. 418 ff. 432; ii. pp. 82-102. For other details see Supra, Chap. II.

5. Cf. the following verse in Mādhava’s Śaṅkaraśloka : 
"स्वतःसमाध्याद्रवर्षितर्वधानान्वद्धाबलिकाः
nā hanti yaḥ sa hantavyo bhṛtyāṇityanvaśāñopaḥ" 
"( Kumārila )—bhaṭṭapāradanusāri-rājena Sudhanvanā
dharmadviṣo bauddha vināśitaḥ"
Also see Buddhacarita, Intro. ii, fn. 1.
Sanskrit scholars in general do not in the least doubt the historicity of this exaggerated legend, but the facts of the contemporary history do not at all support their contention, for we have already noted above that during this period, under the patronage of the Pāla kings of Bengal, Buddhist Universities like Vikramāśilā (in Champā or Bhagalpur) and Odantapurī (in Magadha) were established. The numerous archaeological remains, grants, endowments, monasteries, Buddhist images and brilliant pieces of art and sculpture also tend to suggest otherwise. The above legend, therefore, probably points to the bold and vigorous stand of Śaṅkara against Buddhism and his supreme efforts to mitigate the last vestiges of its influence from its native soil.

As a matter of fact, the Sanskrit scholars of Northern India, in general and those of Mithilā in particular, were strongly averse to recognising the authority of Śaṅkara, a South Indian scholar, for a long time. They changed their attitude only when the versatile and matchless thinker and philosopher, Vācaspati Miśra I of Mithilā, the only recognised seat of philosophy in Northern India, wrote his celebrated Commentary, Bhāmati, referred to above, on Śaṅkara’s Śārīraka-bhāṣya, which received unanimous ovation by scholars all over the country. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say, had there been no Vācaspati, there would have been no Śaṅkara as we know him today. All honour and credit, therefore, to Vācaspati Miśra, the grand old Naiyāyika of Mithilā for defeating the Buddhists and putting an end to their supremacy and influences in Northern India by rehabilitating the orthodox Vedāntic faith. It is, therefore, no wonder to see that a host of Mithila scholars, Udayana and others, following in the foot-steps of Vācaspati, re-asserted themselves in denouncing the Buddhists with the result that Buddhism lost all its force and vigour in the following centuries.

Although the advent of the Muslim invaders and their

subsequent conquests wiped away the last vestiges of Buddhism, the age-old tirade against them had not yet stopped. Their virtual extinction could not satisfy the Maithila scholars who would not otherwise shake off their traditional hatred towards them.

But, inspite of this under-current of feeling among a section of the populace, it seems that Maithila kings in general were tolerant towards Buddhists. From the accounts of Dharmasvāmin, the Tibetan Buddhist traveller, who visited India between 1234 and 1236 A. D. we learn that Rājā Rāmasimhadeva of the Karnāta dynasty presented the Buddhist traveller rice, gold, medicine etc. and requested him to stay for a few days more. Though himself a devout follower of Brāhmaṇical religion, Rāmasimha offered him the chief priesthood which Dharmasvāmin politely refused. The spirit of tolerance is very much evident from this offer, though according to Dharmasvāmin himself, Tirhut was a “non-Buddhist kingdom”.

Notwithstanding this tolerance, evidences of later period show that they were still up in arms against them. In the 14th century, the Maithila Brāhmaṇas treated the Buddhists, and not the Muslims, as their worst enemies, even two hundred years after the destruction of Nālandā and other Buddhist centres of learning. Jyotirīvarācārya (1325 A. D.), the scholar-minister of Harisimhadeva of the Ṛkarnāṭa dynasty of Mithilā, denounced them as “degraded and dangerous” and applauded Udayana’s stand against them as “pleasant and commendable”. The story of the massacre of the Buddhists and their patron, king Arjuna of Saptarī (Nepal) by the Droṇavāra Maithila king Purāditya of Raj Banault after Śiva-

1. For details see HM, Chap. VIII.
2. Ibid, Chap. V.
   For other details, see Chap. III.
4. HM, pp. 278–86.
5. Varnasa-Raṅgākara (ed. Chatterjee and Misra), p. 39:
   “Buddhapakṣa aśana ṣṭāta bhiṣaṇa, Udayanaka siddhānta aśana prasanna”.
siṃha’s death\(^1\), is yet another significant pointer to it. These stray references clearly manifest the bitterness that the Brāhmaṇas nourished against the Buddhists all through the centuries.

**Rise of Mahāyāna and Tāntricism:**

In the field of Tāntric religion and practices however, the Maithilas were immensely influenced by the Buddhist Tāntric practices. In fact, both popular and esoteric Hinduism is in its practical aspects, largely Tāntric\(^2\).

A great controversy centres round the origin of Tāntric religion and practices. While some scholars believe that the Tantra is a direct legacy of the Mahāyana doctrine of the Buddhists, others trace its origin in the Vedas themselves\(^3\). Nonetheless, scholars are unanimous on this point that the Buddhists encouraged the Tāntric cult and under its garb spread large-scale corruption amongst the innocent mass\(^4\). The Maṃjuśrī-mūlakalpa in fact served as a licence for those who took to these degrading methods in the name of the so-called sacred Tāntric sādhana\(^5\). The Vāma-mārga is its direct contribution and its adherents, the Aghora saints, attracted a large number of followers. These pseudo-Siddhas in course of time came to be regarded as the embodiment of divine powers and miraculous charms and spells\(^6\). Wine, woman and meat were the chief sources of their Sādhana or meditation which even the kings and the common people gladly offered to appease

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3. For a full discussion of this problem, see *Sūtra*, Chap. II.
them, partly out of devotion and partly out of fear of severe
curses being hurled on them. In other words, Hindu society,
since the eighth century A.D., came to be dominated by
these bands of debauches and pseudo-sādhakas who exercised
a sort of hypnotic spell over them. Their prestige, influence
and luxurious living attracted even the Maithilas and the fol-
lowers of other religions who now freely resorted to these degra-
ding and dubious practices to gain fame and wealth. And, like
Bengal and Assam, Mithilā also produced Tāntric Sādhakas,
some really great who were followers of Dakṣiṇa-mārga (based
on pure Yogic practices) as opposed to the Vāma-mārga in the
following centuries. The impact of this religion on the Mai-
thila society may well be judged from the fact that even today
all aspects of their daily life are more or less governed by
this cult, though not in the degrading form as practiced by
the Buddhists and their followers.

Fast-steeped in these demoralising practices, the Buddhists
soon fell the worst victims to the Muslim onslaughts. Their
magical powers, emanating from the so-called Tāntric cult,
could not dull the sharp wrangling swords of the Turks which
fell heavily on their heads. The monasteries were mercilessly
plundered and destroyed and their inhabitants massacred. The
king and the commoners who were so long hypnotised by their
magic spells, discovered, to their utter bewilderment and
surprise, in these so-called Siddhās, bands of wretched debau-
ches and drunkards, too weak to arrest the process of destruc-
tion, caused by the new invasion, which was fast approaching
them. Dejected and frustrated they had now nothing but
contempt for them and got bitterly opposed to contributing
funds for the repairing of the monasteries and Vihāras which
now symbolised vices, debauchery and degradation.

Unlike the Buddhists, only a small section of the Brāhmaṇa
Tāntrikas had taken recourse to Vāma-mārga, whereas the
larger section were adherents of the Dakṣiṇa-mārga which

1. Ibid., pp. 10 ff.
2. Buddhāsāraya, Intro., pp. 13–14; R. K. Choudhary, Bihar, the
Homeland of Buddhism, pp. 50–52,
preached Sādhanā through purely Yogic practices. This section as such still retained their hold on the society by virtue of their ideal character and noble deeds. It is, therefore, no wonder to find that whenever Hindu temples were desecrated and destroyed by the Muslims, they were immediately repaired and reconstructed with the large funds voluntarily contributed by the same Hindu kings and chiefs. Dreaded and demoralised, a large section of the Buddhists now fled to Tibet, Nepal and other countries, and those who remained became converts either to Hinduism or to Islam within two centuries¹.

**Buddhist Antiquities in Mithila:**

Contrary to the literary accounts, archaeological remains, found in different parts of Mithilā, have altogether a different tale to tell. Although no large scale excavations have been undertaken in this part of the country except the Vaisālī or Basārh excavations, yet the stray finds and the scattered remains of the numerous images of the Buddha and beautiful fragments of Buddhist art and other Buddhist objects of antiquarian interest throw considerable light on the popularity of Buddhism even in this most orthodox part of the country.

According to Maithila scholars themselves, Saptarī, Bhālā pargana, Buddhāma (Buddhagrāma), Ratnapura, Brahmapura, Visālā (Visārā), Veticaliyā or Bettiā, Raḍhiā and Māṭhiā (in Champaran) and other places were strong-holds of Buddhism in Mithilā². There were Buddhist pillars in Raḍhiā and Māṭhiā while in Bakharā (in Visālā or Visārā pargana) there were big monasteries and stūpas³ where Buddhists flocked from all over the country.

Vaisālī was the biggest strong-hold of Buddhism in early days. The Buddha announced his approaching nirvāṇa here, and after the nirvāṇa the Licchavis are said to have erected a stūpa over their share of the remains of the Master. During

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the third Vaisālī excavations¹ (13th January, 1958) under the auspices of the K. P. Jayaswal institute, Patna, A. S. Altekar claimed to have discovered this stūpa of the Licchavis, and the relic-casket found inside according to him “most probably contains the relics of the Blessed one himself”². Besides Rājā Bisāl kā garh, Yuan Chwang also refers to thirteen stūpas at Vaisālī of which eleven were commemorative and two relic-stūpas—one, being that of the Buddha and the other of Ānanda.

The Rāmakunḍa in Vaisālī identified by Cunningham with the ancient Markaṭa-hrada (monkey’s tank) is believed to have been dug by a colony of monkeys for the use of the Buddha. To the north-west there is a ruined mound about 15 ft. high and with a diameter of about 65 ft. at the base, which has been identified with the remains of the Aśoka stūpa mentioned by Yuan Chwang. There stands now a modern brick temple on the summit of this mound enshrining a mediaeval image of the Buddha.³

At Kolhuā two miles to the north of Rājā Bisāl kā garh, there is a monolithic pillar, known as Bhūmasena’s Lāth. The line of pillars in the Champaran and Muzafarpur districts at Kesariyā, Rāmapurvā, Lauriya Ararāja, Lauriya Nandana-garh, Jānaktigarh, and Kolhuā is believed to have marked the stages of Aśoka’s journey from Pāṭaliputra to Lumbini which he undertook in the twentieth year of his consecration.⁴

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¹ The first two excavations were carried under Block and Spooner in the years 1903–04 and 1913–14 respectively (vide—Arch. Surv. Rep. 1903–04 and 1913–14).

² Vide—A. S. Altekar’s article, “Stūpa of the Licchavis” in the Searshlight, Patna, April 17, p. 4. Also cf. Indian Archaeology, 1957–58, pp. 10–11. The view was much publicised but nothing definite can be said in the present state of our knowledge as the so-called relics still await chemical examination.

³ For other details, see 2500 years of Buddhism, pp. 320–22, 278 ff. For Lumbini, Bodhagaya and other places of Buddhist interest, Ibid, Chap. XII; R. K. Choudhary, op. cit. pp. 118–39.

⁴ For a full discussion of these places, see Qureshi, Ancient Monuments of Bihar and Orissa; Arch. Surv. Ind. Rep. 1903–04 and 1913–14 (reports on Vaisālī); HM, p. 170; PHAI, p. 309.
Kesariyā in Champaran district is supposed to be the spot where the Buddha took leave of the Licehavis and where he presented his alms-bowl to them. It is believed that they erected a stūpa over the spot where the alms-bowl was presented by the Lord.¹ But, unfortunately there is a total absence of any distinct symbol of Buddhism on the seals found in Vaiśāli.

The earthen stūpas or caityas of Lauriya Nandagarh probably form part of those alluded to by the Buddha himself in his sixth question to Ānanda about the people of Vṛji.² It is also believed by some to be the site where the “Ashes Stūpa” was erected over the ashes taken from Buddha’s funeral pyre.³

Through the efforts of Yazdani, several new frescoes were brought to light in the thirties of the present century. One of the frescoes in cave XVI refers to a Jātaka story. It says: “Once the Bodhisattva was born as Mahosadha, son of Sirivaddha, in the kingdom of Mithilā. King Videha was astonished to see his intelligence and was advised by sages like Senaka, Pukkusa, Kavindra and Devindra, to send for the boy to be appointed as his minister. In course of the test of his intelligence, the sages asked him to solve some riddles”. “Once a child was stolen and it was through the efforts of Mahosadha that the mother got the child.” This is also illustrated in the Ajantā fresco. It seems that the figure represented as delivering the Mahosadha. The Mahāummagga Jātaka was very popular with the Buddhist artists and several representations of this Jātaka are found in sculpture and paintings at Bharahūta, Ajantā, Nāgārjunikonḍai, Bāgha and Amarāvati.⁴ The

³ Vide-Smith’s paper on Kuśinārā or Kuśinagārama in JRAS. 1902.
above instances clearly suggest the influence of the Buddha over Mithilā in those days.

The growth of Buddhism in Eastern India (Bihar and Bengal), as we have already noted above, was largely due to the establishment of the Buddhist Universities of Nālandā, Vikramāsilā, Udyantapura or Odantapura and Vajrāsana, all situated in South Bihar, and Mithilā or North Bihar was not completely away from the main current of Buddhism. There were many Buddhist sites in Mithilā during this period (600–1200 A.D.). They served either as vihāras or as places of Buddhist worship where many images of Buddhist religion have been discovered. The following Buddhist sites deserve special mention.

Kolhuā in the Vaiśāli area in the district of Muzaffarpur where a good image of the Buddha with an inscription of the Pāla period was discovered; Ponjha, a village two miles east of Goraull railway station in the district of Muzaffarpur where an image of the Buddha was found about three years ago (this is a new site, not noticed so far); Chaugamā, Pandaul, Jarahatiya and Andhrā-Thārhi in the district of Darbhanga and Naulāgarh, Jayamaṅgalāgarh, Bihat, Sāmho in the district of Monghyr, north of the Gaṅgā. Of these Naulāgarh and Jayamaṅgalāgarh are most important and second only to Vaiśāli in North Bihar; Mathahi, Mehisi, Birpur, Śrīnagar in the district of Saharasā and Gorodih in the district of Purnea.

The Naulāgarh excavations recently conducted by Prof. R. K. Choudhary have yielded some excellent results which have strong bearing on the history of Buddhism in North Bihar. On the basis of the materials discovered there, it can be said that Naulāgarh (Eastern Monghyr, to the north about 16 miles from Begusarai) had a continuous history from the beginning of the Buddhist age down to the Muslim period. The exploration of Jayamaṅgalāgarh and

1. For a full report see G. D. College Bulletin Series Nos. 1–2,
2. Ibid. No. 2, pp. 11–19. Jayamaṅgalāgarh is situated very close to another ancient fort, Maṅglāgarh in the Ṣamastipur Sub-
other adjoining sites and the discovery of the black (Gaya) stone image ranging from the Gāndhāra School to the Eastern School of Mediaeval Sculpture discovered from Bihat, Birpur, Naulāgarh and Jayamaṅgalāgarh point to the existence of a big ancient establishment in this part of the country.¹ These finds unmistakably show that Jayamaṅgalāgarh and Naulāgarh were two important ancient Buddhist sites.

From the surface-finds of the rampart area a large number of N. B. P. (Northern Black Polish) pieces; near—N. B. P. glazed pottery pieces; grey pottery pieces; a fine piece of polished stone and various kinds of beads and terracottas have been collected which, taken together, indicate that Naulāgarh had acquired much prominence during the Buddhist period.² In this connection, it is significant to note that a black stone image of Bodhisattva in Gāndhāra style has also been discovered there.

The Naulāgarh inscription No. 2 (11th–12th century A.D.) is another brilliant discovery³ and is unique in the sense that it gives an idea about the existence of a Buddhist vihāra for the first time in North Bihar or Trabhukti. The purpose of this inscription appears to record the erection of a monastery.⁴ Though we have references to ten Buddhist monasteries in Monghyr (e.g. Rajaonā, Urena⁵ etc.), we have had no information about the existence of any such site on the northern

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1. Ibid. No. 2, p. 1.
2. Ibid. Nos. 2–3. Specimens of these varieties are preserved in the Jayaswal Archaeological and Historical Society and Museum, G. D. College, Pegasusal (Monghyr District).
3. Ibid. No. 1, p. 10, pl. 3; No. 2, p. 6.
side of the Gaṅgā before the discovery of this inscription. We, however, know that there were some important religious centres where the Chinese travellers flocked to pay their homage. Of these Sin-che temple was the most important centre which was visited by at least four Chinese travellers.¹ Sin-che temple lay somewhere between the Aṅguttarapa region² (Aṅguttarapa Janapada) and the Kuśa country. An important Buddhist centre in the beginning, it later on developed into a vihāra,³ and, “the establishment of the Pāla political power in Naulāgarh was followed by the establishment of a vihāra there⁴”. Various mounds at Naulāgarh, besides the fortification area, definitely point to the existence of vihāras and other establishments.

The whole area of Jayamaṅgalāgarh is dotted with mounds and the place seems to have been the religious centre of the ancient rulers of Naulāgarh. There is still a temple of the goddess of Jayamaṅgalā, probably the Tāntric deity, and on every Tuesday and Saturday people assembled there to worship the goddess. It was regarded as one of the most important pīthas of India.⁵

A Siamese Buddhist traveller who came to Jayamaṅgalāgarh in 1936–37 to pay a visit to the sacred Buddhist shrine pointed out that in ancient times it was a sacred Buddhist place frequently visited by the pilgrims from China and Siam. According to him, the place later became the centre of Tāntric Buddhism. He also referred to the Siamese Buddhist tradition

2. According to Buddhist literature, Aṅguttarapa lay to the north of the Gaṅgā, meaning thereby north Monghyr and North Bhagalpur (Begusarai, Saharasa and North Purmea). It was a small Janapada and is even today represented linguistically by the Eastern variety Maithilt (vide-Vidyāśāktra and Mehta, Bihar, p. 12; Watters, i, p. 382). Also see G, D. College Bulletin Series, No. 2, pp. 15–16.
4. Ibid. 10.
5. Ibid. 11.
which records the establishment of numerous caityas and stūpas at the place.\(^1\) Whatever his contention, the fact remains that Jayamaṅgalāgarh is still regarded as a very important centre of Tāntric cult and attracts Tāntrikas from different parts of the country. Recently a Bengali and a Nepalese Paṇḍītas came over and practised Tāntric rites there for three years continuously.\(^2\)

Local tradition also avers that this place has been visited by a host of Siamese and Chinese travellers.\(^3\) It is very likely that after the Pāla period this place became an important centre of Śakti cult. Moreover, we know that the Tāntric cult was a continuation of Tāntric Buddhism and the Pīṭha came to be established later.\(^4\)

The Barantapura Caṇḍīsthāna inscription is yet another important discovery throwing light on the state on Buddhism in Mithilā. Temples at Barantapura and Rahota (in Saharasa) were built by some Buddhists in about 1100 A. D. The inscription refers to Sarvasimhadeva, adorned with every virtue and the joy-bestowing moon of the lotus-lineage of Buddhēśa\(^5\). The Bongāon copper-plate inscription (in Bongāon, District Saharasā) of Vighrapāla III is yet another important document which says that the village Vasukavarta in the Hodreya Viṣaya of Trabhukti was granted in the name of Lord Buddha with the specified privileges in accordance with the bhūmichidranyāya in favour of a Brāhmaṇa\(^6\). It clearly shows that the

1. Ibid., p. 11. There are still four undisturbed mounds there popularly known as Dāiyāṭika. One of these mounds is certainly a stūpa and the other a caitya.
3. For the list of Chinese travellers who visited North Bihar, see Ibid., p. 16.
4. For a description of the images of different gods and goddesses, see Ibid., pp. 18–19.
5. R. K. Choudhary, Inscription of Bihar, Intro. 20, p. 127: "क्रोमगाइत्री कर्मच किङिन्या विराज बुद्धेश समस्य सत्रिव्य श्रीमदश्रविदोही".
Pāla kings, though themselves Buddhists, showed toleration towards other sects and bestowed gifts on them. Besides these, many other inscriptions in Bihar of the Pāla period clearly show that Buddhism was then a dominant force.

It will not be out of place to mention here a few words about some of the important stray finds made at different places in the locality, for they have a strong bearing on the Buddhist cult in North Bihar. A small black stone image, found in village Bihat (near Teghra Station on the N. E. Railway), belonging to the Gāndhāra school, as is evident from its head-dress, probably represents the Buddhist art in the Gupta period.

We have another very fine image of standing Buddha with the image of Buddha on all sides, in various mudrās. It bears an inscription at the pedestal which is the famous Buddhist mantra as found on other similar images of the period. Palaeographically it can be placed in the ninth century A.D. It is significant, for the Buddha is represented here in most of his various mudrās. A similar image in black stone with the same inscription is preserved in village Sāmho in Begusarai Sub-division and is now worshipped by the villagers.

A rare image of Avalokiteśvara Buddha in black stone bearing an inscription, was discovered recently in Lakhisarai (Monghyr District). Avalokiteśvara is all compassionate

2. This image is now in possession of Śrī Bisheshwar Narain Singh of Begusarai. For the inscription, see Ibid, pp. 20–21.
3. For the description of the various mudrās of the Buddha, see J. N. Banerjea, Development of Hindu Iconography (2nd Ed.); G. D. College Bulletin Series No. 2, pp. 20–22; N. K. Bhattasali, Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures in the Dacca Museum, pp. 16–19.
Bodhisattva. It looms large in the varied pantheon of Northern Buddhists as a Bodhisattva is said to have emanated from the Divine Buddha. *Ava* signifies active energy. Thirty-one *sādhanas* are enumerated for the worship of his different forms. Iconographically, the image is rare as it is one-faced and a-seated. The Pāla rulers of Bengal and Bihar were Buddhists and the Buddha was regularly invoked. This innovation was responsible for the depiction of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas in the most developed Mahāyāna form, and of all the various types the image of Avilokiteśvara was most important during this period. Mahāyānism influenced Vaiśṇavite art and gradually there was a blending of the older Bhāgavata class of Vaiśṇava images and the Lokeśvara of the later Mahāyāna School of Buddhism. Palaeographically, the inscription may be assigned to the twelfth century when the Pāla Empire under Gopāla III had already begun to show signs of crack.

Remains of a Buddhist Stūpa have also been discovered from Gorodi (Purnea) and numerous valuable objects of Buddhist antiquities in the Madhepura Sub-division (of Saharasa district) have been practically washed away by the Kośi floods of which we have unfortunately no traces left now. Recently, different images of the Buddha in different *mudrās* were found in Mathiahi, a Railway Station on the Saharasa-Madhepura line (now N. E. F. Railway). Moreover, numerous Buddhist shrines and temples in North Bihar are lying buried under the deep water of the Kośi river. Several Buddhist images have recently been found in Mehisi.

4. For details, see *Arch. Surv. Ind. Rep.*, 1903-04.
village, an old seat of the Maithila Brāhmaṇas (Saharasa district).

The district of Purnea also abounds in Buddhist relics. If the identification of Pauḍravardhana or Puṇḍravardhana with portions of Purnea and Malda are to be relied upon, then Yuan Chwang’s visit to that place via Kajangal is remarkable. According to Wilson\(^1\), the ancient kingdom of Puṇḍra- deśa included the districts of Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Malda, Bogra and Tirhut. The country is said to have been situated between the rivers Mahānandā and Karatojā. This boundary conforms to that of Tirhut or Trirabhukti in ancient times which also included a part of the district of Purnea\(^2\). Linguistically, eastern Purnea still forms an inseparable part of Mithilā. That the entire area right from Mithilā or Tirhut down to Kajangala or Rajmahal was dotted with Buddhist shrines and monasteries hobbing with life, along with Deva (Brāhmaṇic) temples, is clear, beyond doubt, from the accounts of Yuan Chwang\(^3\).

In Sultaganj, in the district of Bhagalpur, Buddhist remains were discovered as far back as 1864. "There is a singular mass of granite towering abruptly to the height of about a hundred feet from the bed of the river Gaṅgā, known as Jaugirah, surmounted by a small stone temple of the deity Gaibinātha, a form of Śiva. The face of the rock is covered by a number of bassi-relievi, most of which are Hindu and include repre-

3. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, ii, pp. 182–83; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 547–48; N. L. Dey, *op. cit.* p. 83; *JRAS*. 1904, pp. 86–88. Cunningham takes Kajangala to be Rajmahal while Dey identifies it with Kajra, one of the stations on E. I. Ry. in the district of Monghyr. Three miles to the south of this place, there are still many remains of the Buddhist period and also many hot springs.
sentations of Ganeśa, Hanumāna, Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, Vāmana, Ananta sleeping on a snake, Śiva and other Purāṇic deities. But, there are a few which are decidedly of Buddhist and Jaina origin. The Buddhist figures, mostly Buddha in the meditative posture, occupy more central positions than the Hindu ones and appear to be more worn away than the latter; both circumstances affording conclusive evidences of the place having been originally a Buddhist sanctuary which the Brāhmaṇas have propitiated to themselves since the downfall of Buddhism. A Jaina temple still exists on one side of the rock to which a few pilgrims occasionally come to offer their adoration to Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third teacher of the sect.

Of the relics collected by Harris, in course of his excavations at this place, the most important appears to be a colossal figure of Buddha (now in the Birmingham museum) which was found lying on a side of the hall. The statue weighing nearly one ton is of copper and seems to have suffered no injury from the hands of the destroyer, except the mutilation of the left foot across the ankle. The figure bears a close resemblance to the sand-stone statues largely found at Sāranātha. It stands in abhayadāna mudrā. Besides, the articles numbering more than fifty-four discovered at this place unmistakably point to the building being a large Buddhist monastery or vihāra such as existed at Sāranātha, Sānchī, Bodhagayā, Manikyāla and other places.

Though we know nothing of the history of this vihāra, it is nonetheless evident from its extent and the style of its construction, that at one time it was a place of great repute and the resort of innumerable pilgrims. "But its glory set a long while ago, and even the name of the place where it stood is now lost in obscurity. The present appellation (Sultanganj) is quite modern, not more than two or three centuries old, and is due to a prince of the house of Akbar". We have no mention of this monastery in the account of Fa-Hian. Yuan Chwang no doubt talks of the ruins of several large monas-

1. JASB, xxxiii (1864), p. 360.
teries in the neighbourhood of Bhagalpur but gives no clue to this important monastery. It may, therefore, be presumed that it had been ruined or forsaken, or at least had fallen into decay, before the coming of Yuan Chwang. "The inscription on the minor figures, in the Gupta character of the third and fourth century, show that the vihāra with its chief lares and penates had been established a considerable period before that time, probably at the beginning of the Christian era or even earlier, for Campā (modern Bhagalpur) was a place of great antiquity and the Buddhists took possession of it very early as the capital of Eastern India and established many vihāras and caityas in and about it". Though most of them have been destroyed by the cruel ravages of time, there are yet Buddhist monuments of yore in the vicinity.

Finally, these structures are models or miniature representations of sepulchral monuments, and they owe their origin to an injunction in the Buddhist scriptures which recommend the dedication of such monuments as an act of great religious merit. Hence they have engaged the earnest attention of the followers of Gautama from an early age, and many are the ruins in India which now attest the lavish expenditure which some of its former kings and princes incurred in raising them in a manner worthy of their ambition.

Very recently pieces of Buddhist art were discovered in course of a trial excavation conducted in the Chaugamā village under the Bahera P. S. (in Darbhanga Sadar). The site is full of ancient mounds. The excavation has brought to light the existence of a beautiful complete structure of a temple, perhaps the only specimen of a temple-architecture in Mithilā. The temple contains an image of Varāha, and is a definite indication of the Buddhist art in black stone in the Gupta period. A gargoyle with jāladhāri belonging to the ninth century A. D. of the type that is lying in the Patna Museum has also been discovered. Some exceptionally beautiful relics,

1. Ibid, p. 369.
3. Inscriptions of Bihar, Intro. 18.
metal images, Asvamedha type of bricks etc. belonging to the Gupta period have also been unearthed. The whole village of Bahera is dotted with mounds. Within a radius of fifteen to twenty miles there are no less than fifteen mounds of considerable importance and some of them are associated with the ancient Buddhist sites.

Recently a red stone life-image of the Buddha, weighing about 30 mounds, belonging to the Gupta period, has been discovered in a village near Pandaul in Madhubani Sub-division of the district of Darbhanga. A few years back, a big image of the Dhyāni Buddha was unearthed in a field to the west of the tank, said to have been dug by order of Mahārāja Bhairava Siṃha of the Oinavāra dynasty of Mithilā in village Jarahatiya in Madhubani Sub-division. The image also bore an inscription on the pedestal, but it was too blurred to be deciphered. Maithila scholars believe that it was an important Buddhist site in ancient times. Alongside the famous Kamalāditya temple in village Andhrā-Tharhī (in Madhubani Sub-division), constructed by Śrīdhara, the Prime-minister of Nānyadeva, the founder of the Karṇā dynasty of Mithilā (1097 A. D.), a pillar with the inscription Magaradhaja Jogi 700 (probably of the 12th-13th centuries) was also found.

2. Ibid.
3. For this piece of information I am indebted to my esteemed friend, Śrī Tilak Nath Mishra, B. A., B. L. dealer in antiquities.
4. HM, Chap. VI.
6. HM, Chap. V.
7. P. Jhs. sp. cit. p. 104. This inscription has been found in different parts of Bihar, U. P., Orissa, C. P., and Rajputana. According to some, Magaradhvaja was a Śaiva teacher having 700 followers all over India (cf. Inscriptions of Bihar, Intro. 19, fn. 4; Also see Supra, Chap. 11.) It is possible that when the Buddha was admitted as an avatāra into the fold of Hindu pantheon, the Śaivas claimed it as their own.
Magardhaja Jogi means Makardhaja Yoga but the true import of the figure “700” is not clear. Maithila scholars believe that the inscription probably refers to the seven hundred Buddhist samghas or Maṭhas in the region, for it is also known to be an ancient Buddhist site.

Conclusion:

From the above survey it is clear beyond doubt that inspite of the wordy duel, sometimes culminating in bloodshed, Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism flourished side by side in Mithilā, though in the course of a few centuries the latter lost its hold on the soil. But the process of borrowing and intermingling never stopped. The Hindus borrowed from the Buddhists goddesses like Mahāchinnatārā, Tārā, Manasā, Chinnamastā symbolising the Śakti cult. The Buddhists, on the other hand, absorbed Hindu gods, like Yakṣēśvara, Gandhārīt, Dhyāna, Aparājita and others. It is true, the latest form of Vajrayāna weakened Buddhist influence on every aspect of Indian life, but it is also true that it has left a permanent mark on the culture of India. The Hindus in later years reconciled to their viewpoint by accepting the Buddha as the tenth avatāra and put a finis to the age-old controversies and bitter wranglings. The Hindu faith has absorbed the best of its ethics. "A new respect for life, kindness to animals, a sense of responsibility and an

1. Ibid, p. 104. My esteemed friend, Prof. Rama Kant Jha, M. A. B. L., of R. K. College Madhubani informs me that besides the life-image of the Buddha there are a big door-frame of iron and numerous Buddhist remains lying scattered over the entire area. These remains tend to indicate that there must have been a big monastery or Maṭha as most of these objects are still lying half buried and can be seen from the āṭikā. For other Buddhist sites in Mithilā and the adjoining tracts, see Inscriptions of Bihar, Intro, 11 ff; writer’s forthcoming book, History of Mithilā, Vol. II. App. D.


3. For other details, see Sūtra, Chap. V.
endeavour after higher life have been brought home to Indian mind with renewed force. Thanks to Buddhist influences, the Brāhmaṇical systems have shed those parts of their religion which were irreconcilable with humanity and reason”¹.

CHAPTER V
The Last Phase

Introduction:

The main phases in the development and growth of Jainism and Buddhism from their earliest appearance in Mithilā till the advent of the Muslim rule may be roughly indicated. The notion that Mithilā was not in the least affected or influenced by these religions is thoroughly erroneous as we have conclusively shown in the preceding pages. Like all other parts of India, the land of Mithilā was also for a long time under the spell of both Jainism and Buddhism though the latter was more forceful and militant in character. The greatest influence may yet be seen in the daily life of the people, which speaks of the gradual synthesis of these systems of thought, so largely responsible for the emergence of a new force that ultimately dominated the general run of life in this most orthodox land.

The Last Phase of Jainism in Mithilā:

It is true that Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism at times clashed violently with one another but so far as the conduct of their followers was concerned, it is now fully admitted by scholars that the systems are really not antagonistic, but complimentary to one another. Moreover, these clashes instead of spelling a curse really proved a great boon to Indian thought which was greatly enriched by the sparkling genius of a large number of erudite and versatile thinkers and scholars who advanced new logic in order to refute the views of their opponents. The wordy duel continued for centuries and contributed most to the development and growth of Indian logic and philosophy. In this great intellectual warfare Mithilā's contributions are really superb and second to none.

The notion that Jainism arose out of Buddhism or that it was founded by Mahāvīra, a contemporary of Buddha, has now been proved to be erroneous. On the other hand, the origin
of Jainism can be traced back to the Vedic age. As we have shown in the preceding pages¹, the Rgveda glorifies a class of ascetics known as Vātaraśanā Mumayāḥ i.e., the wind-clad sages. They have also been frequently referred to in the Atharvaveda, and the rest of the Vedic as well as later literature. Their leader was Keśi who has been identified with Rṣabha Deva described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa as a saint belonging to the class of Vātaraśanā Munis, the first Jaina Tīrthaṅkara of that name². It is thus clear that the Śramaṇa Munis and the Vedic Rṣis flourished side by side in the earlier ages of our history. Notwithstanding the differences in their ideals and practices, they were equally honoured by the people. Their difference in approach to worldly problems lay in the fact that while the Vedic Rṣis valued material prosperity and developed elaborate system of prayers and rituals to achieve their end, the Śramaṇas stressed upon the transitory nature of all worldly belongings and pleasures, and as such condemned sacrificial rituals and emphasised the suppression of inner passions like love and hatred. The word Brahma originally meant a “prayer” or “sacrifice” and one who practised them was called a “Brāhmaṇa” whereas a “Śramaṇa” endeavoured to conquer the self and pacify all violent feelings ( samana ). Inspite of marked rivalries and intolerance between the adherents of these two schools, they were yet objects of great reverence for the common people, and the terms Rṣis and Munis gradually became synonymous and interchangeable. Later, the Śramaṇas themselves began to claim that they were the true Brāhmaṇas.

The school of Śramaṇas had its stronghold in Eastern India, particularly Bihar. Amongst the Śramaṇas grew numerous kinds of ascetic practices and ideologies and as such they were split up into various branches. The Jaina texts refer to no less than 363 of them. We have mention of quite a few in the Pāli texts also. The sects had in Mankhali-gosala, Pra-kuddha Kātyāyana and Ajitakesakanbli some of their most

¹ Supra, Chap. III.
² JBRS, XLIV, p. 2.
important leaders. One of these organisations to attain particular celebrity was Niggrantha or Nirgrantha. This name was probably substituted for Vātaraśana Muniś in the time of Pārśvanātha about 250 years before the rise of Mahāvīra who is also called Niggrantha Nātha-putra.

Mahāvīra and Buddha, however, gave a definite shape to the Śramaṇa ideology, practice and organisation, both in his own way. Both started their ascetic career with the practices which were then current, and soon marked out their own new ways—Mahāvīra taking to the extremes to attain kaivalya and Buddha, the Majhima-patipāda (the middle path) to attain nirvāṇa which we have already discussed in the previous chapters.

As contrasted with the Upaniṣadic thought, Jainism recognises two ultimate realities, the living and the non-living, the latter manifesting itself in the form of matter, space and time. Besides this, the Jaina metaphysics peculiarly enough recognises two other non-living elements—dharma and adharma, thus making motion and static state possible in space. The Jaina system is dualistic like the Sāṅkhya system with its own primary elements—Puruṣa and Prakṛti, from which the Jaina ideas, however, differ widely in details. Thus, in contrast to the immutability of the only reality brahma, the Jaina philosophy explains all substances to have a real existence, and existence as characterised by origin, decay and continuity. In other words, it reconciles the seemingly opposite views of Vedānta and Buddhist philosophy, as the latter emphasises the kṣanikatva (momentariness) of all existence.

The contributions of Jaina thinkers to the formulation of their moral code are unique and the ten virtues they have propagated are to be found in some form or other in all the societies of the world. Moreover, their contributions to the growth and enrichment of ancient languages of the people and their literature, Prākṛt and Sanskrit, philosophy, sciences such as astronomy and mathematics and art, paintings, sculp-

1. Ibid, p. 9.
2. For other details, see Ibid, pp. 5–7.
ture and architecture and Indian culture as a whole have been second to none. It has not remained confined to any particular part of the country and its fundamental ideal has been peace and promotion of goodwill amongst all and attainment of supreme knowledge as the highest goal of life.

Coming to the actual state of Jainism in Mithilā or North Bihar proper, we find that it was on gradual decline from c. 600 A.D. to 1200 A.D., for during this period we have stray references to the existence of Jaina population in Vaiśāḷī and elsewhere.1 But, after this period there seems to have been a great set-back to this religion in the region as we are surprised to note that the Jainas gradually forgot their real tradition and the actual birth-place of their prophet, Mahāvīra. The tragedy is that some of the Jaina authors betray their colossal ignorance of the place of Mahāvīra's birth, and distort geography either deliberately or due to their ignorance. Asaga (eleventh Vikrama samvat) mentions Kuṇḍāpura in his work but keeps silent over its exact location. Some of the Digambara Jaina works go so far as to refer to Viśāḷā as having been situated in Sindhu-viṣaya or Sindhu-desa.2 Thus, according to them, Tīrabhukti or Videha lay in Sindhu-viṣaya—an assumption too absurd and far-fetched to merit serious attention.

Madanakīrtī, a Digambara Jaina of Ujjayinī, in his small work, Śāsanacatustrīniśikā3 describes twenty-six Jaina tīrthas but does not include Kuṇḍāpura or Kuṇḍāgrāma or Vaiśāḷī in this list. Dharmasvāmin (A.D. 1197–1264), a Tibetan Buddhist monk, who visited India in 1234–1236 A.D. passed through Vaiśāḷī in 1234 A.D. He was “told that the inhabitants were in a state of great commotion and panic-stricken, because of rumours (about the arrival) of Turushka troops”.4 He found a “stone-image of Ārya Tārā” and “a female lay-

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1. Supra, Chap. III.
3. Quoted, Ibid. p. 231.
supporter was seen staying in the street". But he does not say anything about the Jainas there. It clearly shows that there was no Jaina population worth the name there.

A century later, Jinaprabha Sūri, in his Tīrthakalpa (A.D. 1332) says that an image of Vīra was at Kuṇḍagrāma. While giving lists of famous Jaina tīrthas of the time he mentions Kuṇḍagrāma twice, but devotes no independent chapter to the birth-place of the last Tīrthaṅkara.

The destruction of the main city of Vaiśālī sometime in the sixth century A.D. as testified to by Yuan Chhwang and its desertion in c. 600 A.D. as proved by the archaeological excavation in 1950 of the Garh area, was largely responsible for the decline in the fortunes of Vaiśālī as a Jaina centre and also due to frequent changes in the river beds at Vaiśālī. By this time Śrāvasti and Pāṭaliputra were also in ruins which must have told heavily upon the trade-route from Śrāvasti to Pāṭaliputra via Vaiśālī. With the commercial importance of this intermediate city gone, the mercantile Jaina community of North Bihar must have been hard hit and the decline that followed subsequently in the economic prosperity (besides political reasons) was partly responsible for the migrations of the people of Vaiśālī to places like Nepal, Burma, Tibet and Ladak.

The diversion of Jainism towards South and West India was no less responsible for this gradual decline of Vaiśālī, with the result that the Jainas lost all contact with the birth-place of their prophet, which soon lost all its glorious traditions. The Jaina munis, authors and thinkers also went to the court of these South and West Indian kings to receive their patronage.

1. Ibid., p. 61.
3. Ibid., pp. 8, 286. For the lists, see pp. 8, 282-87.
The growth of Buddhism and Brähmanism in North Bihar during this period also led to the mass-scale migrations of the Jinas from the place of its birth towards South and West¹.

The Muslim conquest of Bengal and Bihar registered the last blow to its already tottering edifice. The new conquerors persecuted not only the Buddhists but also the Jinas. The finale came when the Hindu kingdom of Tirhut was conquered by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in 1324 A. D.².

With the coming of the Muslims, Islam gradually replaced both Jainism and Buddhism in the Vaisālī area. During the period 1434-1495 A. D. Sheikh Muhammad Qazin of the Shuttari Order preached Islam at Vaisālī and later his mausoleum was erected on a high Buddhist stūpa in that village³. "This and the additional emphasis in the succeeding age on sea-trade (from A. D. 1498 onwards) and the possible changes in the course of the Gaṅḍaka river making Vaisālī distant from the river bank must have discouraged the Jinas from taking interest in Vaisālī".⁴

Thus, while Jainism was unfortunately completely fading out in North Bihar, it witnessed great revival in South Bihar in this and the subsequent periods, as is clear from the study of several inscriptions belonging to this period found in Jaina shrines in South Bihar. Strangely enough, not even one Jaina inscription is found north of the Gaṅgā during this period⁵. In South Bihar, their centre of intense activity evolved round Rajgir-Pāvāpurī-Bihar Sharif area. Rajgir or Rājagṛha had been a Jaina tīrtha since the days of Mahāvīra. In the beginning of the thirteenth century (1203 A. D.) the Jinas came

1. For details, see Supra, chaps. II and IV.
2. For details, see HM, chap. viii.
to be associated with Pawapur or Pāvāpūrī when an image of Mahāvīra came to be installed there.

Madanakīrtti (second quarter of the thirteenth century) refers to Pāvāpūrī (with the image of Śrī Vīra Jīna) as one of the twenty-six Jaina tīrthas of his time¹. Jinaprabha Śūrī (A.D. 1332) devotes two full chapters to Pāvāpūrī. It is thus clear that the status of Pāvāpūrī as a sacred Jaina Tīrtha (where Mahāvīra is believed to have attained nirvāṇa) had well been established by the fourteenth century.

It appears that after the establishment of this nirvāṇa tīrtha, the Jainas made serious endeavours to find out the location of their master’s birth-place², who was known to them as the son of the Jñātrika leader of Kṣatriya—Kuṇḍalapura or Kuṇḍalapura and the maternal son of a Licchavi chief. The Digambara Jainas identified this place with Kuṇḍalpur near Nālandā³. The Śvetāmbara Jainas, on the other hand, found out a village, Lachwād or Lachuār in south Monghyr as Mahāvīra’s birth-place. Thus, Kuṇḍalpur near Nālandā and Lachuār in south Monghyr came to be regarded in course of time as the birth-place of the last Tīrthaṅkara by the Digambaras and the Śvetāmbaras respectively. They came to be regarded as the Jaina places of pilgrimage and several temples and dharmaśālas were built up over there. Thus, these places sprang up overnight as Kuṇḍalapura whereas the actual birth-place was completely forgotten by the Jainas. This is further confirmed by a Śvetāmbara Sanskrit text, Tīrthamālācaktyavandana (17th century)⁴ which gives seventy-six names of ancient Jaina Tīrthas, partly mythological and partly genuine, but omits Vaiśālī or Kuṇḍalapura. In other words, these genuine tīrthas were gradually pushed into oblivion and no body in the Jaina hierarchy cared to find out their exact location.

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1. Tīrthakalpa, chaps. 14 & 21, pp. 8, 41, 282, 287 etc.
3. Ibid.
Fortunately for Vaisālī, its ancient glory as the birth-place of the last Tīrthaṅkara was revived in 1948 after a complete neglect of several centuries and since then it has been attracting large numbers of Jaina visitors, throughout the year and particularly on the 21st April (Caita sudī 13) of every year partly through the co-operation of the Government and partly through the efforts of the Vaisālī Samgha.

**The Last Phase of Buddhism in Mithilā:**

Like Jainism, Buddhism had also its stronghold in Vaisālī, though its home lay in south Bihar. Its importance can be seen from the fact that the Buddhist texts give us a description of eight of its famous caityas which the Licchavis had given as presents to the Buddha. The recent excavations on the site have also confirmed the literary evidences bearing on the popularity and influence of Buddhism in Vaisālī and elsewhere in North Bihar which we have fully discussed in the preceding chapter.

The Chinese accounts make it clear that by the time Jainism had lost its force in Vaisālī, Buddhism was yet a dominant religious force. During the time of Fa-hien's and Yuan Chwang's visit, there were large numbers of vihāras, remains of Ambapāli's garden, Bhikṣus and other places of Buddhist importance, though most of them were now in a dilapidated condition and almost in ruins. Later the Buddhists, like the Jainas, seem to have migrated to south Bihar where the universities of Nālandā, Vikramaśīlā, Odantapura and Vajrāsana attracted thousands of pupils to their fold. Moreover, the emergence of Brāhmaṇism in full swing by this time demoralised them to the extent that they found a safe place in their sanctuaries to escape the Brāhmaṇic onslaughts. Thus, from the sixth century A. D. we find that the influence and popularity of Buddhism in North Bihar was almost gone, and it was from Magadha, their stronghold, that they directed their attacks against the Brāhmaṇic logic and thought.

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1. For details, see J. C. Mathur & Yogendra Mishra (ed.), *Homage to Vaisālī, Vaisālī, 1948*, pp. 185–204.
Notwithstanding this total decline in the fortunes of Buddhism in the region north of the Gaṅgā, it must be said that their contributions to the rise, growth and tremendous development of Indian logic and philosophy in the following centuries and earlier have been most significant. Their contributions to ancient language and literature, art, paintings, architecture and sculpture and finally to the growth of democracy have been equally brilliant\(^1\), which may yet be seen all over the country including Mithilā.

But, the story of the last phase of Buddhism is quite interesting. The incorporation of the Buddha into the cosmopolitan and ever-expanding Brāhmaṇic pantheon\(^2\) as one of the ten incarnations in which Lord Viṣṇu comes down on earth at different times, by the orthodox Brāhmaṇaś, who were at one time the severest critics of the Buddha and his new Order finally put a finis to the long, long story of the bitter wordy duel and violent wranglings between the adherents of the two opposite schools of thought. The Vṛ̥rāhāpurāṇa (chap. 47) says that as a result of the observance of the vow of Buddha-dvādaśi king Śuddhodana had as his son Lord Viṣṇu in the form of the Buddha\(^3\). Similar festivals in honour of other incarnations of Viṣṇu to be performed in different months of the year are also described. But, it is not known when and where they were or are in vogue. As a matter of fact, Buddhism, in its essence was not hostile to Brāhmaṇism and, therefore, it is not surprising to find that the Buddha later came to be

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3. Also see Hemādri’s *Caturvarga-vināśa* (third quarter of the thirteenth century), *Vrataśāstra*, Bib. Indica Series, No. I, pp. 1037–58; Lakṣmīmādhava’s *Kṛṣṇakālpateru* (second quarter of the twelfth century A. D.), Gaekwad Oriental Series, pp. 331–32. The *Buddhadeśāśa* falls on the twelfth day of the bright half of the month of Śrāvana.
worshipped as an incarnation by the followers of the Brāhma-
nic faith.

Thus a revaluation of the testimony of foreign scholars, inscriptions and contemporary digests makes it clear that with the advent of the thirteenth century A. D., Buddhism was but the last flicker of the lamp, and its old moorings were gone. The Buddhists tried to cope with the changing times and successfully brought in a reformation. Mahāyāna Buddhism was now replaced by Tāntric Buddhism and Sahajiyā Buddhism. Tāntric Buddhism, as we have shown in the preceding chapter, led to further decline and fall of Buddhism in India. And, the process of this disintegration could not be checked inspite of strenuous efforts of Ācārya Asta of the Vikramaśilā University, who expelled the Tāntric teachers like Naṭekana and Vajrapāṇi from the monastery of Vikramaśilā in order to maintain the purity of Mahāyāna Buddhism.¹

The birth of Sahajiyā Buddhism was indeed an expression of revolt against ritualism and formalism and an aversion to scholarship. The leaders of this new sect within the Buddhist fold further attempted to accommodate the lower classes of the community who had by now been completely cut off from this Order. On the basis of the songs in the Cāryāpadas, regarded as the earliest form of the Bengali and Maithili literatures, it can safely be presumed that the Sahajiyās had successfully communicated their thoughts to the intelligentsia of the time. The introduction of Sahajiyā Buddhism and the recognition of the Buddha by the Brāhmaṇa legists clearly suggests the revival of Buddhism in Bihar, Bengal and Uttar Pradesh during the early medieval period and after.

A perusal of the literary works of the twelfth century convinces the readers that Buddhism by this time was not disdained by the Brāhmaṇa community and the followers of Brāhmaṇism, barring a few exceptions. Śrīharṣa and Lakṣmīdhara assigns an honourable place to the Buddha in the Brāhmaṇical

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¹ For details see, B. P. Majumdar’s paper in JBRS (Buddha Jayanti Special Issue, Vol. I), pp. 180-82.
pantheon. In the Naiṣadhatuṁśaṁ the Buddha is regarded as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Lakṣmīdhara in his Kṛtyakalpataru prescribes that the Buddha is to be worshipped on two occasions: (i) on the first of Caitra and the seventh of Vaiśākha—both time along with other deities. We have further details to be performed on these occasions. Moreover, the Buddha had long been recognised as an avatāra of Viṣṇu in the Matsya, Bhāgavata, Gāruḍa, Liṅga Purāṇas etc. besides the Vaiśākha Purāṇa quoted above.

Coming to North Bihar, we find that Buddhism continued there in some form or other till the thirteenth century A.D. Dharmasvāmin worshipped an image of Tārā in Vaiśālī. Tārā had been a famous Buddhist deity since this period. A work called Vajravali opens with an invocation to God of thunderbolt. It gives details of a rite called Vajravrata. Tārā, Mārtci and others are also armed with Vajra. That Tārā became a famous Buddhist deity is evidenced by a painting of the twelfth century A.D. We find among the inscribed miniature paintings of the two palm-leaf mss. a mention of “the Tārā of Vaiśālī in Tirabhukti.” In this connection the Buddha-image in Vaiśālī is remarkable as he is seated in the Vajrāsana pose.

4. I, 3; II, 7, 37; VI, 8, 19.
9. ARASI., 1903–04, p. 82.
10. Ibid. pp. 216 ff; also cf. JASB. VI, pp. 128–38 (extracted from the Journal of Mr. J. Stephenson).
It is true that Buddhism, as a religion, had almost declined in Mithilā, but Buddha, the new avatāra, continued to be worshipped as one of the members of the Brāhmaṇical pantheon in Mithilā proper. Caṇḍesvara, the versatile scholar-Prime minister of Harisimhadeva of the Karṇaṭa dynasty of Mithilā, has in his Keśyaratnākara prescribed that the Buddha was to be worshipped on the first day of the bright fortnight of Caitrā (tamase Buddhaye caitva namah prakṛtaye tatha). Again, the Buddha was to be worshipped along with the river Gāṇgā on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha. His image was to be erected on that day and then the festivity was to be held consecutively for three days. Dramas were to be staged, dances to be performed and monks to be fed and given books and dress. On these occasions, alms and clothes were to be distributed to the poorer section of the society.

Further, according to Caṇḍesvara, the exclusive worship of the Buddha was prescribed on the twelfth day of the month of Śrāvana. A golden image of the Buddha was to be worshipped on that day and the golden image was to be given away to a Brāhmaṇa after due worship and ritual. The Buddha was neither born, nor received enlightenment nor Parinirvāna on any of these dates, but it is well known that the full moon day of the month of Vaiśākha is connected with all the three above-mentioned events in his life.

But, it seems that all was not well with a section of the Maithila scholars who still struck a discordant note contrary to the general accommodating spirit of the age. Jyetirīśvara in his Varṇana-Ratnākara (A. D. 1324) denounces Buddhism as “degraded and dangerous” (bauddha pakṣa-aisana ṛpétabhī-

1. H. M., Chap. v.
3. Ibid., p. 160.
4. Ibid., p. 247.
5. For details, see B. P. Majumdar, op. cit, pp. 171–85.
which shows that a section of the Maithilas had not yet reconciled to the fast changing times. From all available accounts, however, it is clear beyond doubt that except a few, the majority of the people had accepted the Buddha as the tenth avatar of the Hindu pantheon, and worshipped him accordingly.

From the account of the Sufi saints of Bihar given by S. H. Askari in a series of articles, it appears that strangely enough the sufis also chose those very places as their seats which had been in the preceding centuries the strongholds of Buddhism. Sufis of all orders like Chisti, Suhrwardi, Qadri, Firdausi, Madari and Shuttari contributed to the Islamic mysticism of Bihar. As the Buddhists had promoted a mystic outlook and mitigated the rigours of the caste system it is but natural that the Sufis should have found a congenial soil for the inculcation of their religion and faith in these areas. The most celebrated Sufi saint was Hazrat Sharfuddin Ahmad Maneri (661 A. H.-782 A. H.). In North Bihar, Sheikh Fattu, Sheikh Burhan and Ismail spread the Islamic religion, and at or near Hajipur lived Syed Muhammad, Syed Ahmad (who died as martyr at Jaruha), Abul Fateh Hidayatullah (at Tankol), Mir Ibrahim Chisti; at Basarh, Sheikh Qazin Shuttari; at Muzaffarpur, Abdur Rahman of Sargyaganj; at Tajpur (Purnea), Sheikh Husain Dhukkurhposh; at Samastipur, Shah Tajuddin and in Darbhanga, Sheikh Shamsuddin Saman Madari, Pir Shah Nazir and Sheikh Tajuddin Madari. Similarly in South Bihar there were hosts of Sufi saints preaching Sufism and Islam.

Conclusion:

From the above facts we infer certain irresistible conclusions. The teachings of Buddha went against the grain of
Hindu psychology and as such could not take an abiding root in India. Hinduism was based on śabdaprāmaṇa (the Vedas) whereas Buddha repudiated all authority and traditions. The Hindus were metaphysical while the Buddhists showed indifference towards it. The existence or non-existence of God did not at all interest Buddha as, according to him, man was the architect of his own future. Naturally therefore, there is no place for ritualism in Buddhism. Moreover, he did not succeed in compelling his hearers or followers to adopt an attitude of suspended judgment on the ultimate question. His conception of Dharma was not sufficiently concrete for practical purposes. The result was obvious. The Buddha gradually came to be deified and Buddhism was very much influenced by the Hindu thought. On the other hand, Buddhism too exercised a great, almost overwhelming influence on Hinduism. It gave birth to neo-Hinduism which absorbed the best elements of Buddhism. It was the result of this influence that the Śaivas borrowed the monistic and contemplative elements of Mahāyāna Buddhism; the Vaiṣṇavas borrowed devotional and humanitarian elements; the Vairāgīs replaced philanthropic Mahāyāna Śramaṇa and the Buddha was given a place in the Hindu pantheon as the tenth avatāra¹.

There is no doubt that Mahāyāna was built on wholesale borrowing from Hinduism, and this process of intermingling went on and on until in the sixth century A.D. Buddhism was borrowing even from Śāktism, the most esoteric form of Hinduism. It ultimately gave rise to Tāntricism and Vajra-yāna with the result that the feminine divinities now found their way in to Buddhist pantheon. Prajñāpāramitā was the personification of the qualities of the Bodhisattva. The theme, being like the Hindu view that the God might best be approached through Goddess, was like the Śakti of the Hindu pantheon. It was thought in sexual unions, an idea as old as

¹ R. K. Choudhary, Bihar: The Homeland of Buddhism, pp. 85-86.
the *Rgveda* itself. Sexual symbolisms were introduced combined with a new magical mysticism. It could best be attained by acquiring magical power, *Vajra* (thunderbolt) and as such this third school (eighth century A.D.) came to be known as the Vajrayāna in Eastern India and grew rapidly in Bihar and Bengal. The chief divinities were now Tārā, Mātaṅgi, Piśāci, Yogini and Dākints. This new school was responsible for the presentation of the Buddha in ferocious poses. It was this form of Buddhism modified by primitive local cults and practices which was firmly established in Tibet as a result of missions sent from the great Vajrayāna monastery of Vikramaśilā, and which dominates the Buddhist art of the period and after.

The Sahājiyā sect of Bengal and Bihar classed as Vaiṣṇavas also originated from the decadent Buddhism of later times. A good number of works were composed in Bengali on this cult. This process of assimilation began when in about the sixth century A.D., Sūnyavāda, the highest doctrine of Buddhist philosophy of the Mādhyamika school, was accepted as the sole truth in the *Yogavasiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* which attempted at bringing about a harmony between this doctrine and the theme of the *Gītā*. In the eighth century, Ācārya Gauḍapāda of Bengal affiliated the said doctrine to the Vedānta which ultimately became the theme of the *Brahmasūtras*, at the hands of his grand disciple, Śaṅkara and finally attained a predominant position in the Indian philosophical thought. It is, therefore, sometimes argued that Śaṅkara drove away Buddhism out of India. He represents the complete synthesis of Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist streams of thought, and his concept of *Brahma* is nothing but neo-Sūnyavāda. In his *Daśāvatāra Stotram* he described the Buddha as the prince among the Yagts who dwelt in the centre of his heart. He was, therefore, called a

pracchanna Baudhā. The acceptance of his view by Vācaspati, the celebrated Maithila thinker (vide-his Bhāmati) was ultimately responsible for the worship of the Buddha as the tenth avatāra in Mithilā proper, though the conflict of economic interest perhaps, for the time being, reinforced the hostility of the Māmānsaka Brāhmaṇas towards the Buddhist monks. But then, it was a passing phase for we know that a commentary on the original Yogavāśīṣṭha, namely Vivartavāda alias Mayāvāda was also written by Ānandabodhendra Bhāṭṭāraka of the Śaṅkara school, several centuries after Śaṅkara himself, in order to propagate this pseudo-Buddhistic faith. According to R. C. Temple, “Do we not see here the ideas that led to the latter day Parameśvara, the supreme of the Hinduism? Indeed, there is very much of Hinduism in the Ādi Buddha who is the Svāyambhū or self-being; in Avilokiteśvara, the Redeemer; in Maṭjuśri the Helper, and the Bodhisattvas generally, who are now fully developed. In fact, the rise of Yogacāra school explores the tenets of Śaṅkhya, Vaiśeṣikas, Pāṣupatas and other philosophical schools and religious denominations of Brāhmaṇa origin.

With the emergence of Vaiśnāvism in a new form in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Buddha was taken as an avatāra, entirely different from the Bhāgavata by Jayadeva in Bengal and others in Mithilā.

The age-old Buddhist hostility to the caste-rigidity was continued in neo-Vaiśnāvism which accepted caste-system, as a mere social institution, without any bearing on religion and the creed of non-violence preached by Buddhism was accepted by Vaiśnāvism.

The Sahajiyā sect still flourishes in many places, for instance in Bengal. Though inclined towards Vaiśnāvism it has really deduced itself from the old Sahajasiddhi of Tāntric Buddhism

2. H. Vedāntaśāstra, op. cit. p. 75.
and till now in their esoteric Sādhana they use Buddhistic terminology.  

The image of Buddha is worshiped here and there in Bengal and Mithilā and other places, somewhere as Viṣṇu, somewhere as Śiva and somewhere as some Goddess. The worship of some gods and goddesses, the images of which are but images of Buddha, is even now in charge of lower class people such as Dhomas, Namaḥśūdras etc., which is certainly reminiscent of Buddhist practices.

Dharma is one of the three ratnas of Buddhism and the worship of Dharma or Dharmarāja is very popular with a section of the Brāhmaṇas as well as the masses, especially of the lower classes in Mithilā and Bengal.

Thus, before the dawn of the seventeenth century Buddhism lost its entity as an independent faith and Vaiṣṇavism finally incorporated the faith of the Buddha into the parent-stock. The process was accelerated by the rising tide of Muslim invasion which swept over Bengal and Bihar and gave a shattering blow to the last vestige of Buddhism. The process that had begun in the sixth century A. D. took final shape in the closing part of the twelfth century when Buddha was accepted as an avatāra by the Brāhmaṇas including the Maithilas all over the country, and running through different phases over a period of four hundred years, Buddhism became fully incorporated into the body of Hinduism in the later part of the sixteenth century, mainly through the medium of neo-Vaiṣṇavism.

Thus died Buddhism in Mithilā, Bengal and elsewhere, but death concerns the body, and not the soul. And, in this case also we find that Buddhism is still living, though in a different garb. A close study on comparative basis would show that Buddhism has been incorporated into the body of Hinduism.

1. H. Vedāntaśāstra, op. cit. p. 75.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
and the former still lives in the cults of the Vaiṣṇavas, the Sahajiyās, the Śaivas, the Bauls, the Dervishes, the Sūfis, the Saṅnyāsīs\(^1\) and also in Tāntricism and Advaitavedānta.

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1. Even now in village Nahāra Bhagavatipura, near village Koilkakh in Madhubani sub-division, there is a Durgā-temple in which stray finds of Buddhist sculptures are collected. There is no image of Durgā in the said temple, and only the Buddhist images are worshipped. There are many Saṅnyāsīs there, who now form a caste and trace their origin from their Buddhist ancestors. A coin of Vigrahapāla III was also discovered there which is now in possession of Prof. Tantrānāth Jhā of C. M. College, Darbhanga, who kindly gave me this information.
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Terracotta Toys from Vaiśālī (Animals) (Buddhist Period)
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