

Antiquity, Continuity and Development of Civilization and Culture in Bharat & Sri Lanka

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The discovery of the Indus Civilization seems to have thrown a new light on the antiquity of Jainism. The time assigned by the scholars to this culture is 3000 B. C. on the archaeological evidence and on the evidence of the relations with the cultures of the other countries. The religion of the Indus culture seems to be quite different from the religion of the Aryans in the Vedic period. At Mohenjodaro and Harappa, iconism was apparent everywhere. But it is extremely doubtful whether images were generally worshipped in the ancient Vedic times. In the Rig-Veda and the other Vedas, worship of Agni, Sun, Varuna and various other deities can be seen. But they were worshipped in the abstract form as manifestations of a divine power. Many passages where the deities of the Rig-Veda are spoken of as possessed of bodily attributes are available. R. G. VIII 175 speaks of the limbs and sides of Indra and prays Indra to taste honey with his tongue. These images have been described by Marshal as the proto-type of Siva. But with due difference to the illustrious scholar, an argument can be hazarded that the word Siva meaning the auspicious occurs as an epithet of Rudra in the Rigveda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. It is only Rudra and not Siva who is praised in all hymns. He is represented in these hymns as a malevolent deity causing death and disease among men and the cattle. The physical description of Rudra is found in a number of hymns in great detail.

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