



## Reviewing Nāga Prathima's Scientific Findings On The Proposed Structure Of Nuclear Materials

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### ABSTRACT

Our Indian Vedic System is a treasure for modern sciences. Vedas are the roots of the Indian culture and tradition but today's modern science may not accept the all traditions that are followed as there is no specific validity for their believes. For example, people's worship to "Nāga Prathima" (Nāga deity-idol) in subramanya temple for their health, marriage and progeny related problems. To explore our Indian traditional knowledge to the world I started to understand hidden facts for the worship of "Nāga Prathima". Helical Serpents in the Nāga Prathima is symbol for the DNA model, currently what our science accepted. Worship of this Nāga Prathima is to grow healthy, for progeny. Single serpent in the Nāga Prathima symbolizes RNA and the sperm. Functions of DNA/RNA are meant for growth and birth. As our Indians worship the Nāga Prathima from eras to fulfills their desires like health and birth.

**Keyword:** : Nāga prathima, DNA and RNA.

### INTRODUCTION

The omnipresence of Nāga worship has remained in Hinduism, Jainism, and among some indigenous and even Christian and Muslim communities in India. Snake worship is a primeval custom that prevailed almost all over the India since the ancient time. It mostly revolves around Nāga, the hooded cobra. The origin of the word Nāga is Indo – Germanic which means snake in English. Nāga has been both a subject of fear and wonder. Worship of the Snake God / Nāga, which has found expressions in literature, art, architecture, sculpture, folklore and traditional paintings have been continuing in various forms. This custom has dominated the religious beliefs of the common people without any particular religious or caste barriers throughout the ages. Evidences from literature suggest that the antiquity of the cult goes back to the Vedic period. The evidence of Nāga worship can even be seen in the rock arts of prehistoric times. The excavations conducted at various archaeological sites have also thrown light on several antiquities related to the snake worship [1, 2].

#### Nāga Worship in the India:

The ancient texts i.e. literature of late Vedic period, the epics (Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana), the Bhagavatapurana (Canto 5, 25.1), Buddhist text and Jain cannons, gives ample evidence regarding the Nāgas. In Rig Veda, snake is mentioned as Ahi-vrita and in Atharvaveda snake was considered as the protectors of quarters (Chand 1999). Then Sūtra texts explain about the process of animal sacrifices in relation to Nāga worship. Epics also show different types of stories regarding Nāga. Epics explain the stories like mythical birth, Murder of King Parikshit, being rope in Samudramadhana, hostility between the Nāga and Pāndava, story of Kāliyamardana, story of Nāga padmanābha etc. regarding Nāga. Archaeological evidence also suggests that the cult was probably existed during pre-Vedic period [3].

One of the earliest representations of snake was found in rock art at Mesolithic Rock Shelter of Lakhma in Maukalan Village of Uttar Pradesh and many more other prehistoric rock paintings in northern India. Representations of snakes are also found on Harappan seals and potteries. The representation of Nāga in art

is common during the historical period. One of the earliest Nāga figurines on terracotta has been found at Buxār, which can be dated 2nd century B.C., suggests the importance of the snake or the cult. Independent Nāga sculptures or as subordinate in sculptural panels are found from Mauryan and Post Mauryan period mainly in Mathura and Gāndhāra School of art [4-7].

Such earliest representation of snake in rock art, seals and pottery suggests that snake was probably one of the animals, which was subject of reverence in the earlier period. Later on, probably it was incorporated into the various religious activities and representations. Nāgas are portrayed as a divine snake in Hindu, Buddhist, Jain religious iconography having often human face with expanding hoods and bodies of Cobras. Images, sculptures and narratives in literature represents the Nāga mainly in three forms i.e. Theriomorphic, Anthropomorphic, Therio-anthropomorphic. Nāga is depicted with the iconography of 'twenty-third Pārśvanātha' and the seventh 'Tirthankara Supārasvanātha'. Iconography of Śiva and Balarāma represented the presence of Nāga elements like five hooded Nāga covering lingams as well as placed behind the head of Balarāma [8].

Among the famous fresco of Ajanta, there are several representations of Nāgas shown as seven hooded Nāgarāja sitting in an easy pose with his consort. Similarly in the huge rocks of Māmallapuram a couple of serpent demons wearing with a snake hood have been shown. This cult remained very popular cult in the ancient time as well in the medieval period. Theriomorphic Nāga figures were a favorite subject of mediaeval art. Thus, it can be said that the cult associated with snakes continued in the mediaeval period. It is still a prominent cult practiced by the people in different parts of India.

### **Nāga Worship in the World:**

Nāga worship was very much common in almost all of the ancient civilizations and cultures throughout the world. Almost everywhere the snakes were treated as a part of socio-cultural and religious belief of the people. The evidence of snake worship has been brought to light in many ancient civilizations like Mayan (South America), Egypt, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Greece, and Europe. In addition, the presence of snake worship can also be seen in countries like China, Japan, Thailand, Srilanka, Cambodia, Malaysia and some Central Asia countries. In the biblical Books of Kings (2 Kings 18:4; composed c. 550 BC), the Nehushtan is the defamatory name given to the bronze snake on a shaft initially portrayed in the Book of Numbers which God advised Moses to raise so the Israelites who saw it would be shielded from kicking the bucket from the chomps of the "fiery serpents".

Snake worship also existed in most of the countries where it played an important role in ritualistic aspects of common people. There are several festivals associated with Nāga/snake in almost all over the world. Among this, the most important festival, related to snakes, takes place in the Cocullo village in Italy during the first Thursday of May. This festival is even associated with Christian religion. Nāga icons and different types of religious marks were found near the water bodies in temples at Mayan civilization of South America too [9].

Serpents were believed as a God for prosperity and fertility in Egypt. Among this, God Rannut is believed to be a God of fertility and harvest, and the rituals and customs of this particular deity is very much similar to the Nāga worship in several parts of India in general. Hih or Hoh is another snake-headed Egyptian goddess and is associated with Apollo and Athene, the Grecian deities of wisdom.

In Greek mythology, the Goddess of wisdom and the Goddess of victory hold a shield painted with a snake form. The hairs of the Goddess of reprisal are also in the shape of snakes. The Greeks regarded certain non-venomous snakes as sacred to Asclepius; the Greek god of healing, who was depicted carrying a wand with a serpent coiled around it. Certain Greek myths explain the snakes as a symbol of fertility. Snakes/Nāgas were used to consecrate inside the temples to show or force to remember as a symbol of virginity. In Greece, there are many temples which are dedicated to Nāgas. It is believed that the snakes are the providers of Rains. There are also some Gods and Goddesses which completely resemble like snakes. Here it is clearly mentioned that the snakes were worshipped by offering different kinds of sacrifices by Phoenicians and Arab people believed that "Jinn" embodied in the snakes. Likewise, the existence of Nāga worship can be seen in art and literature of Far East countries, China and Japan. Particularly in China, the anthropomorphic figures of Nāgas were very common in their costumes displaying the dragon hood placing behind man. The stories of the snakes are very much popular in China. Here the people consider Pan Ku is as an ancient ancestor and the creator of the world. It is believed that he looks like a combination of dragon's head and a snake's body [10].

The existence of such a primitive cult is completely depended on the environment, as its worship believed to provide care and protection to the devotees. Hence, it has a strong ecological significance. Among the educated, Nāga worshippers at present, it is more or less conventional without much change. However, it can be concluded that Nāga worship is passing through its diminishing phase as a form of religious worship. In spite of the religious, cultural and social changes in the life of people in India, the tradition of Nāga cult also has some changes and adaptation in its characteristics. Snake deities in Central Kerala appear in the form of Theriomorphic, Anthropomorphic and symbolic. Therio-anthropomorphic figures are seen only in the mural paintings of several temples. For instance, such mural paintings can be seen in the outer portion of garbhagriha in Guruvāyūr temple (Vaishnavite Sect) and the doors and walls of the Amedamangalam temple (Mother goddesses' sect).

There are quite a few ancient temples like Thiruvanchikkulam Śiva temple, Bhagavati temple in Trissur district having the theriomorphic representation on the walls of gōpuram and these temples were dated to

medieval period. The worship of Nāga can also be seen in Kallil Jain temple at Perumbavur, 24 km from Ernakulam. Nāga worships are more common in Śaivite temples than Vaishnavite temples in Central Kerala. There are many Nāga icons and scared groves (Sarppakkāvus-kerala; Nāgapanchami-Andhra Pradesh & Telangana) found in across the India during the field exploration. There are families who are devotees of the snake god and have monument around their settlement and even in their houses which is one of the most important cults in Indian regions. Worship of Nāga deity is our Indian heritage comes from the ages so there is need to identify the scientific reason behind the worship of Nāga especially for prosperity and fertility [11-12].

If we know the exact date of the Nāga worship we can find the scientific reason behind the worship but it is difficult to trace when and how Nāga worship began in India. There are no direct and conclusive evidences found so far regarding the origin of Nāga worship. However, the antiquity of Nāga worship in India could be traced from the Megalithic period. The evidence is found in the form of pictorial representation of a snake in the rock shelter of Nelsinathittu at Marayoor, Idukki district, Kerala. More recently, excavations at the Megalithic site in Kerala have yielded one of the artifacts made of iron having similarities to the Nāga icon [13].

**DNA:** Many people believe that American biologist James Watson and English physicist Francis Crick discovered DNA in the 1950s. In reality, this is not the case. Rather, DNA was first identified in the late 1860s by Swiss chemist Friedrich Miescher [14-16].

Then, in the decades following Miescher's discovery, other scientists, notably Phoebus Levene and Erwin Chargaff--carried out a series of research efforts that revealed additional details about the DNA molecule, including its primary chemical components and the ways in which they joined with one another. Without the scientific foundation provided by these pioneers, Watson and Crick may never have reached their groundbreaking conclusion of 1953: that the DNA molecule exists in the form of a three-dimensional double helix

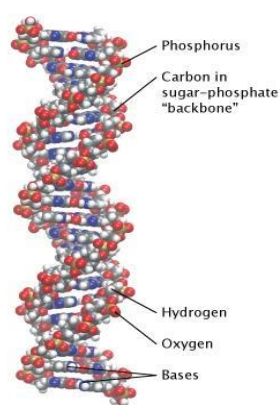
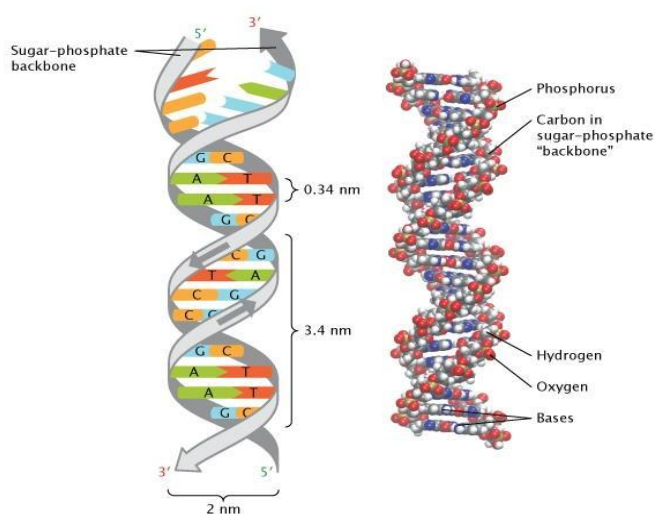
**RNA:** Today, researchers know that cells contain a variety of forms of RNA—including messenger RNA (mRNA), transfer RNA (tRNA), and ribosomal RNA (rRNA)—and each form is involved in different functions and activities. Messenger RNA is essentially a copy of a section of DNA and serves as a template for the manufacture of one or more proteins. Transfer RNA binds to both mRNA and amino acids (the building blocks of proteins) and brings the correct amino acids into the growing polypeptide chain during protein formation, based on the nucleotide sequence of the mRNA.

The process by which proteins are built is called translation. Translation occurs on ribosomes, which are cellular organelles composed of protein and rRNA.

The study focused to prove scientific evidence behind the Nāga deity with respect to the suggested structure of DNA/RNA.

Upon close observation of Nāga Prathima of Dodaballapur, about 60 km from Bengaluru which was about more than 600 years old, two snakes that are coiled forming helix which resembles DNA helix (Fig.1&2).

We would like to prove that Our vedic history very well familiar with the DNA which are denoted with the coiled snakes and Single serpent in Nāga prathima, as RNA/Sperm (Fig.3).



**Figure 1 Watson & Crick model**

**Figure 2 Nāga Prathima-1**

**Figure 3 Nāga Prathima-2**

There are attempts made by various scholars to understand the Nāga worship of India. All these scholars have tried to explain the presence of Nāga in literature, art and architecture. However, some authors have attempted to write about Nāga as a deity and its worship only in a religious perspective. There are some scholars who have studied serpent worship with reference to its representation on art, architecture, ancient

literature and regional serpent lore of Kashmir. Some researches tell about Nāga worshipping community like Nāyar, Pulluvan and their system of Nāga worship. Malayalam work entitled *Sarpāradhanayum Prakriti Samrakshanavum* by M. Suresh discussed how serpent worship has brought about the protection of the environment and different varieties of snakes in Kerala.

However, he does not focus on Nāga worship in ethnographical and archaeological aspects. In 1817, Dubois published a book on *Character, Manners and Customs of the People of India*. In this book, he provides information about Serpent worship as an animal worship and has given a frame work about the word Nāga as a Hindu name for the Serpent. In Kerala there are some valuable study done by several scholars over Tribes and Castes in Kerala.

These works have concentrated more on collecting the information about their origin, population, religious, social, economic and cultural life of the Tribes and Caste in Travancore princely state. Among this, the tribe called Nāyādi has been worshipping Nāga in prominent places. Iyyer says, "the Nāyādi habitat in Karunāgappilly (Kollam district) is not significant by the existence of large number of Dolmens, as is Malabar, but is an area containing many isolated serpent groves, where image of Nāgaraja and Nāgayakshi were found. As far as the available information is concerned it says about the popularity of serpent worship in almost all areas of Kerala. Likewise, there are also a number of other general works which have given particular information concerning this cult. Above mentioned works deals with several aspects of Nāga worship like worshipping community, ritual spaces, literary evidences and art forms, which will be helpful for study of this cult. However, there is ample scope to study the nature of the cult by adopting ethnographical and archaeological approach and trying to understand why India is so famous for snake worship.

### CONCLUSION

The current review focused to fill the vacuum in Nāga iconography in various forms of India and their community affiliation. Further studies are necessary to validate the different nāga images like theriomorphic, anthropomorphic and symbolic representation can be seen both in worship with respect to the genetic structures of life.

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