
JAMNU AND KASHMIR
Srinagar
Leh
Jamnu
HIMACHAL PRADESH
TIBET
PUNJAB
Simla
Firozpur
Chandigarh
Hardwar
PAKISTAN
HARYANA
DELHI
NEPAL
Kathmandu
Sikkim
Bikaner
Mathura
UTTAR PRADESH
Agra
Jaisalmer
Osian
Ajmer
Jaipur
Lucknow
Ayodhya
ASSAM
Jodhpur
RAJASTHAN
Gwalior
Ranakpur
Allahabad
Sarnath
Patna
Chittorgarh
Varanasi
Nalanda
Mount Abu
Khajuraho
Rajgir
BANGLADESH
Udaipur
Bodhgaya
Modhera
Sagar
Bhuj
Gandhinagar
BIHAR
Sanchi
WEST BENGAL
GUJARAT
Bhopal
Jabalpur
Ahmedabad
Indore
Calcutta
Dwarka
Jamnagar
Rajkot
Lothal
MADHYA PRADESH
Mandu
Seoni
Palitana
Gir
Rajpur
Jalgaon
ORISSA
Ajanta
Ellora
Bhubaneswar
Nasik
Chandrapur
Konarak
Puri
Aurangabad
Mumbay
MAHARASHTRA
Jagdalpur
Warangal
Solapur
ANDHRA PRADESH
Ratnagiri
Hyderabad
Bijapur
Amravati
Vijayawada
Guntur
Aihole
Raichur
Srisalam
Badami
Pattadakal
Kurnool
Panaji
Hampi
Guntakal
Hospet
GOA
Anantapur
KARNATAKA
Udupi
Halebid
Tirupathi
Belur
Bangalore
Chennai
Mangalore
Kanchipuram
Vellore
Sravanabelgola
Mamallapuram
Somnathpur
Mysore
Puduchcheri
Kozhicode
TAMIL NADU
Coimbatore
Thanjavur
KERALA
Ernakulam
Madurai
Rameswaram
Tirunelveli
Trivandrum
Kanniyakumari
SRI LANKA
0 100 200 300 400 km

CHAPTER TWO

JAINISM
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with Jaina temple architecture, and more specifically with the three-dimensional organisation of the temples. It is in this spatial structuring, as will be argued in the following chapters, that Jaina sacred architecture is distinct from the edifices of other religious groups in India. The reasons for this specific ordering of space lie in distinct Jaina religious concepts and in a characteristic form of temple ritual, which over centuries have moulded the architecture. Due to the art-historical and architectural focus of this investigation as well as to constrains of space, this introduction has to be preliminary and selective. The following presents a general overview of those aspects of Jaina doctrine, belief and practice, which are necessary for the understanding of the religion and those aspects of ritual practice which will be re-encountered in the course of the study. Principally, this chapter aims at providing the necessary foundation for the understanding of the architectural and sculptural material discussed in the core chapters on the architecture of the Jaina temple in the various regions of the subcontinent, and at explaining the reasons for specific architectural layouts and ritual functions of the religious structures.

THE LIVES AND TEACHINGS OF THE JINAS

Jainism is one of the oldest non-Vedic (*śramaṇa*) religious traditions in India. At the core of the religion stands a line of twenty-four Jinas (conquerors, spiritual victors). These are human teachers, who are regarded as having attained *kevala-jñāna* (infinite knowledge), and who preach the doctrine of *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa* (salvation).[1] The Jinas act as guides to their religious followers, numbering at present about four million worldwide.[2] These are called Jainas (followers of a Jina). Another term commonly used to refer to the twenty-four enlightened teachers of the Jaina religion is Tīrthaṅkara. The latter means 'builder of the ford,' most commonly translated as 'fordmaker.' This refers to the ford which leads across the ocean or river of suffering to salvation, an idea also found in association with Vedic religious traditions in South Asia. The Tīrthaṅkaras act as assistants and aids who help and guide the Jaina community to cross this ford. According to Jainism, the world and the Jaina religion have no beginning and no end. There is no creator god in the universe and within each half of a time cycle, from the timeless past until eternity, one set of twenty-four Jinas is born.[3] At the very beginning of each age before the first Jina is born, miraculous wish-fulfilling trees, referred to as *kalpa-vṛkṣa*s or *kalpa-druma*s, satisfy all human needs.[4] Despite today's emphasis on the veneration of figural representations of the twenty-four Jinas in Jaina temple ritual, there are

---

1 The complete list of twenty-four Jinas appears only to have existed since about the second or first centuries BCE. It has been suggested by Dundas that the set of Jinas was modelled on similar lists of saintly teachers described in the *Upaniṣad*s, and were used as an attempt to validate the Jaina religion by providing it with a historic lineage (1992: 35). For references in earlier text passages, mentioning incomplete sets of Jinas, see for instance Nagar (1999: 72).

2 Jaini (1990: 1).

3 In Jainism, time cycles are represented by the downward (*avasarpiṇī*) and upward (*utsarpiṇī*) movements of a wheel in motion. Each half of a time cycle is divided into six time stages (*kāla*), represented by the six spokes of the wheel. The cycle starts with a golden age (first three spokes), followed by an era of decline (forth spoke), the *kali-yuga*, also known as *duṣamā* (fifth), and finally a time when Jainism dies out (sixth and final spoke). Without a break, this is followed by the counter movement of the wheel, in which the same sequence is repeated in reverse order. More details on this subject are for instance available in Jaini (1990: 30-31) and Dundas (1992: 17-18).

4 Detailed descriptions of these wish-fulfilling trees can be found in the *Jambu-dvīpa-prajñapti* (20), the *Pravacana-sāroddhāra* (1067-70), the *Harivaṁśa* of Jinasena and the *Triṣaṣṭi-śalākā-puruṣa-caritra* (I. I. VV. 226-37) of Hemacandra. They are also known as *kalpa-taru* and *kalpa-vṛtya*, and in Pali as *kalpa-payaba*. Shah (1955: 75) and Nagar (1999: 399-400) provide further information on these miraculous trees.

Fig. 1 Map of India with major places of Jaina worship, displaying the main area of enquiry for this study.



1. Large-scale representation of a wish-fulfilling tree (*kalpa-vṛkṣa*), in the complex of the Pārśvanātha Temple at Lodruva.

still examples of these wishing trees in Jaina art and architecture. The majority of *kalpa-vṛkṣa* depictions are in paintings, where they are also closely associated with the sacred Jambū-tree, located in the middle of Jambū-dvīpa, the central world continent of the Jaina cosmos. Temple walls bear murals representing wishing trees, whilst others have mosaics in glass or mirror work displaying the same motif. Particularly well-known is a ceiling panel above the main entrance to the Ādinātha Temple at Ranakpur, portraying a *kalpa-valli* or *kālpa-latā*, a creeper that grants wishes.[5] There are also large-scale sculptural and architectural representations of the subject, such as the famous metal tree in the Pārśvanātha Temple complex at Lodruva (Ludrava) in Rajasthan (Plate 1).[6] A modern representation in concrete has been erected outside the Candraprabhu Temple at Arrah in Bihar.

Jainas regard their religion as uncreated and eternal and therefore, according to their own religious history, there is no religious founder in Jainism. All Jinas are regarded as propagators and invigorators of a timeless and eternal religious truth.[7] Although all Tīrthaṅkaras technically teach exactly the same path to salvation (*mokṣa-mārga*) without the addition of any new or personal insight, the last set of Jinas preceding the present age, is most intensely revered by the Jainas living today.[8] Amongst them, Ṛṣabha (Ṛṣabhanātha, Ṛṣabhdeva, Ādinātha), Neminātha (Ariṣṭanemi), Pārśvanātha and especially Mahāvīra are honoured in particular. In Westernised histories of Jainism, Mahāvīra is commonly portrayed as the founder of a new religious path, although this stands in clear contradiction to wider Jaina religious teachings. Mahāvīra and his predecessor Pārśvanātha are, however, the only two of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, whose historical existence can be attested to with any certainty.[9] Moreover, studied in an academic way and approached from outside the tradition, one is inclined to regard the socio-political situation which prevailed in India during the early centuries BCE, as an important motor and reason for the creation of reform movements such as Jainism and Buddhism, providing further reasons to locate the actual historical starting point of the religion in this period. Buddhist and Jaina thought undermined the status of the *Brāhmaṇical* elite, showed indifference to the established caste hierarchy and questioned the dependence on sacrifices as a means to reach salvation. It has been suggested, but also much debated, that the historical Pārśvanātha, born in Benares in about 850 BCE, assembled around him a community of ascetics and lay followers (Plate 2). This small lay community seems to have first included the parents of, and then also Vardhamāna himself, a young man who later became better known by the epithet Mahāvīra, 'Great Hero.'[10] From this point of view, Mahāvīra's teachings have to be seen as a continuation and further development of an earlier religious cult.[11]

---

5 In accordance with a local legend, pilgrims believe that any wish uttered whilst standing below the carving of the wish-fulfilling creeper and facing the main shrine will be granted.

6 There is a general disagreement amongst historians of art and architecture whether structures such as stupas and the large pyramids supporting *kalpa-vṛkṣa*s, which usually are solid, do not have internal spaces and therefore cannot be entered, should be referred to as architectural structures or whether they should be considered as large sculptures and commemorative monuments. For more details on this discussion, see the relevant sections on Jaina stupas and on *samavasaraṇa*s in the architectural introduction, Chapter Four.

7 This issue has been discussed by Jaini (1990: 2).

8 Jaini 1990: 3.

9 There is much controversy about the exact date of Mahāvīra's life, usually either placed around BCE 549-477 or 472-400 (Dhaky & Moorti 2001: 3). Also for Neminātha, a certain amount of historical information can be provided, however, even less than for the other two Jinas.

10 The name Vardhamāna is variably translated as 'increasing' or 'he who brings prosperity.' The child was allegedly given this name because his family prospered considerably during the pregnancy of his mother and after his birth. Whereas Mahāvīra is the epithet used most frequently to refer to him, Vardhamāna is also known as Vīra (hero), Sanmati (of excellent wisdom), as Kāśyapa, which is the name of his lineage, or as Jñātṛputra, the name of his clan (Jaini 1990: 9-10; Dundas 1992: 19, 22).

11 Both the Śvetāmbara *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* and the *Kalpa-sūtra* suggest that Mahāvīra and his parents were followers of Pārśvanātha, while none of Mahāvīra's biographies mention such a connection between the two consecutive Jinas. On the contrary, the life stories of the twenty-forth Tīrthaṅkara stress the fact that he reached his insight and renounced the world entirely by himself. For a detailed discussion of these issues, see for instance Dundas (1992: 26-29) and Jaini (1990: 10).



2. Wall painting in one of the halls of the Padmaprabhu Temple at Nadol, depicting Pārśvanātha with two of his devotees.

According to Jaina religious texts, the twenty-four Jinas do not only convey the same teachings, their life stories are also remarkably similar, following a stylised pattern.[12] The Tīrthaṅkaras with their stereotypical life-histories act as exemplars for the wider Jaina community and advertise the religious path to be followed. Their biographies start with their previous lives during which the Jina accumulated the virtues necessary for the attainment of Jinahood. In his final life, the Tīrthaṅkara-to-be is born into a *kṣatriya* family. This expresses the belief, that great worldly as well as religious leaders can only be born by a member of the warrior caste.[13] The Jina-to-be is unaware of his advanced state of knowledge and needs the *laukāntika* gods, who live at the end of the world, to awaken him and to urge him to accept his calling to become a great religious leader.[14] The being deemed to become a Jina does, however, not require a teacher for his initiation to become a *muni*, a wandering mendicant who has renounced the life of a householder. The state of ascetic homelessness is regarded necessary to bring about the right frame of mind towards the material world, to enable a person to reach a state of complete disconnection from action and as a consequence to enable him or her to reach a state of complete liberation.[15] After a period of harsh physical and mental austerities, the Jina attains *kevala-jñāna*, full omniscience.

Particular importance is dedicated to the following first sermon of a Jina, a stylised form of which came to be represented in art and architecture in the form of the *samavasaraṇa*,

12 In these descriptions, the Jinas do, however, differ in their physical size and in the length of their lifespans. Those at the beginning of a time cycle, or *avasarpiṇī*, are tall and live super-human time scales. The physical dimensions and the length of their life, however, diminishes towards the end of each world age, as does the period of time between two consecutive Tīrthaṅkaras (Dundas 1992: 18). There are also certain differences between the versions of the lives of the Tīrthaṅkaras as presented by Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras (Dundas 1992: 20).

13 For a discussion of this issue, see for instance Jaini (1990: 7-8). Noteworthy in this respect is that according to Śvetāmbara Jainism, Mahāvīra was first conceived by a *brāhmaṇ* woman; consequently, the embryo had to be transferred to the womb of a *kṣatriya* before his birth. Some Śvetāmbaras count the transfer of the embryo as a sixth auspicious incident in Mahāvīra's life (Jaini 1990: 7-8).

14 For further details, see for instance Jaini (1990: 11). The *laukāntika* gods (world-ender gods) are also known as *lokāntika* gods, as they live at the end of the world *(lokānte bhavāḥ)* (Kirfel 1990: 306).

15 On this issue, see for instance Dundas (1992: 37).



3. The mythical preaching auditorium of the Jinas (*samavasaraṇa*), embossed on the metal doors of the main Ādīśvara Temple on Mount Śatruñjaya.

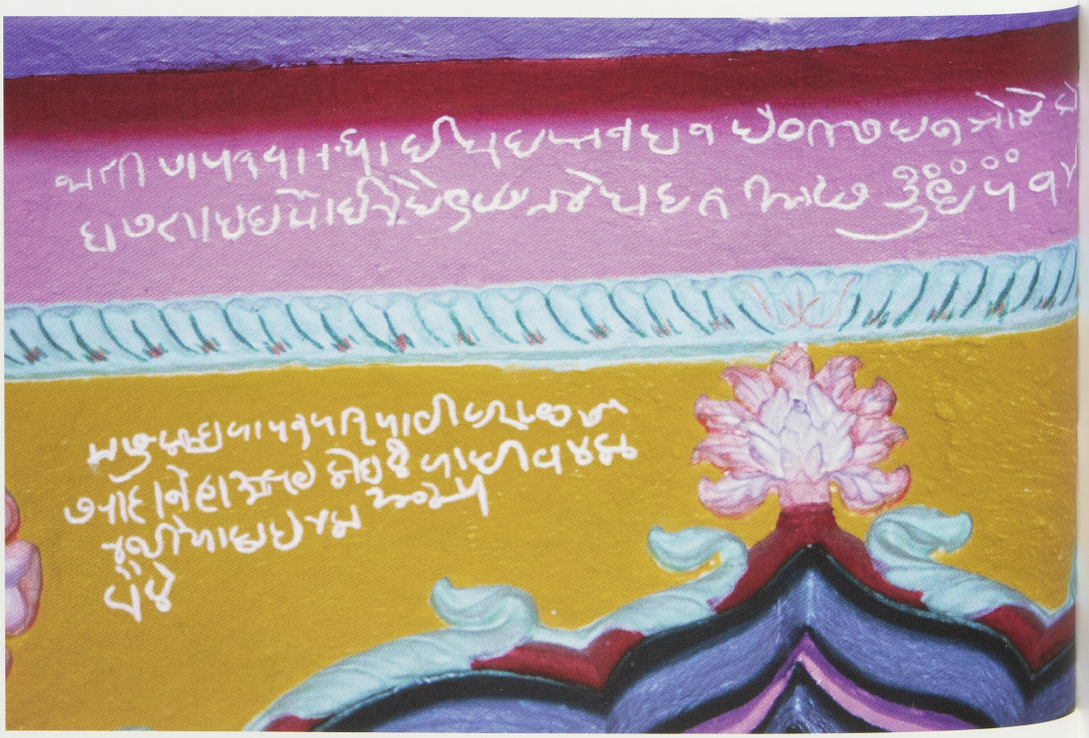
literally meaning 'place of assembly' or 'assembly of all.' The *samavasaraṇa* is an open-air preaching auditorium to accommodate the audience of listeners, consisting of animals, human beings and gods (Plates 3, 4). Due to this episode, Jainas are also known as *śrāvaka*s, 'listeners.'[16] The amphitheatre-like structure is miraculously constructed by the gods every time a Jina is about to formally preach for the first time after the attainment of omniscience. The visual shape of the *samavasaraṇa*, as well as representations in sculptural art and in architecture, will be discussed in the following chapter on Jaina temple architecture. According to the Digambara view, however, a fully-enlightened being does not engage in worldly activities such as speaking and teaching. They believe that a sound (*divya-dhvani*) miraculously emanates

4. *Samavasaraṇa* wall painting in the first hall of the Ādinātha Temple at Ponnur.

5. Ardhamagadhi inscription in the Ādinātha Temple (no. II) at Ramtek.

16 Carrithers & Humphrey 1991: 2.





from the body of the Tīrthaṅkara.[17] The divine sound, which represents the teachings of the fully-enlightened Jina, needs to be interpreted by his supporters or disciples (*gaṇadharas*),[18] who appear at the scene and act as mediators. According to the Śvetāmbaras, the teachings of the Jina are articulated in the sacred language of Ardhamagadhi, which automatically converts into the language understood by the listeners.[19] Ardhamagadhi as a language is still used for certain Jaina religious texts, and some temples, such as the Ādinātha Temple (no. II) at Ramtek in Maharashtra, bear inscriptions written in this language (Plate 5). The *gaṇadharas* also initiate the forming of the Jaina *saṅgha*, the community composed of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen (*sādhu* and *sādhvī, śrāvaka, and śrāvikā*), consequently also referred to as the fourfold assembly or fourfold *tīrtha* (*caturvidha-saṅgha*).[20]

Following a period of active preaching and the conversion of many to the Jaina faith, the Jina dies in deep meditation. At his death, the fully-liberated Jina passes into the forever bodiless state of *nirvāṇa* and becomes a *siddha*.[21] His purified and liberated soul floats up to the apex of the universe, where it remains in a permanent state of bliss. Jaina artists have been very imaginative in taking on the task of representing the nothingness and non-existence of this body-less state. The most common way of representation is a cut out, negative shape of a standing figural image, incised into a metal plate (Plates 6, 7). A more unusual example,

---

17 The Digambaras maintain that a person endowed with *kevala-jñāna* is entirely detached from the world and does not partake in any bodily activities, such as sleeping, eating or talking. The Śvetāmbaras believe that even an enlightened being, as long as it possesses a body, needs to participate in certain bodily functions. This is, however, done in a way which does not interfere with his omniscient state (Jaini 1990: 36).

18 *Gaṇadhara* literally means 'leaders of the troop.' It has been pointed out by various scholars of Jainism that this and other names, such as *gaṇa* (troop) and *saṅgha* (assembly), refers to a military style structuring of the first Jaina followers in warriorlike brotherhoods, an idea somewhat alien to a religion which stresses nothing more than peace, pacifism and non-harming (*ahiṃsā*). On the other hand, Jaina philosophy clearly describes and focuses on an inner battle, the fight against one's desires, pain, physical and mental exhaustion, which a person seeking enlightenment has to overcome. Dundas provides further details on this issue (1992: 14-15).

19 See for instance Dundas (1992: 61). He also writes in much detail about the different Śvetāmbara and Digambara versions of these events (Dundas 1992: 243, f.n. 18).

20 Further information on this subject can be found in Jaini (1990: 35), Dundas (1992: 129) and Shah (1975a: 477).

21 Jaini 1990: 37.



6. The cut out negative shape of a standing figure is representative of the bodiless state of liberation achieved by the *siddhas*.



7. *Siddha* representation in context in a shrine at the foot of sacred Mount Ponnur.





illustrating this exalted state, has been carved onto a pillar in the open hall in the first enclosure of the Pārśvanātha Temple at Melsittamur. In this carving, named a *siddha-śila*, several *siddha*s are seen floating above the ground (Plate 8).

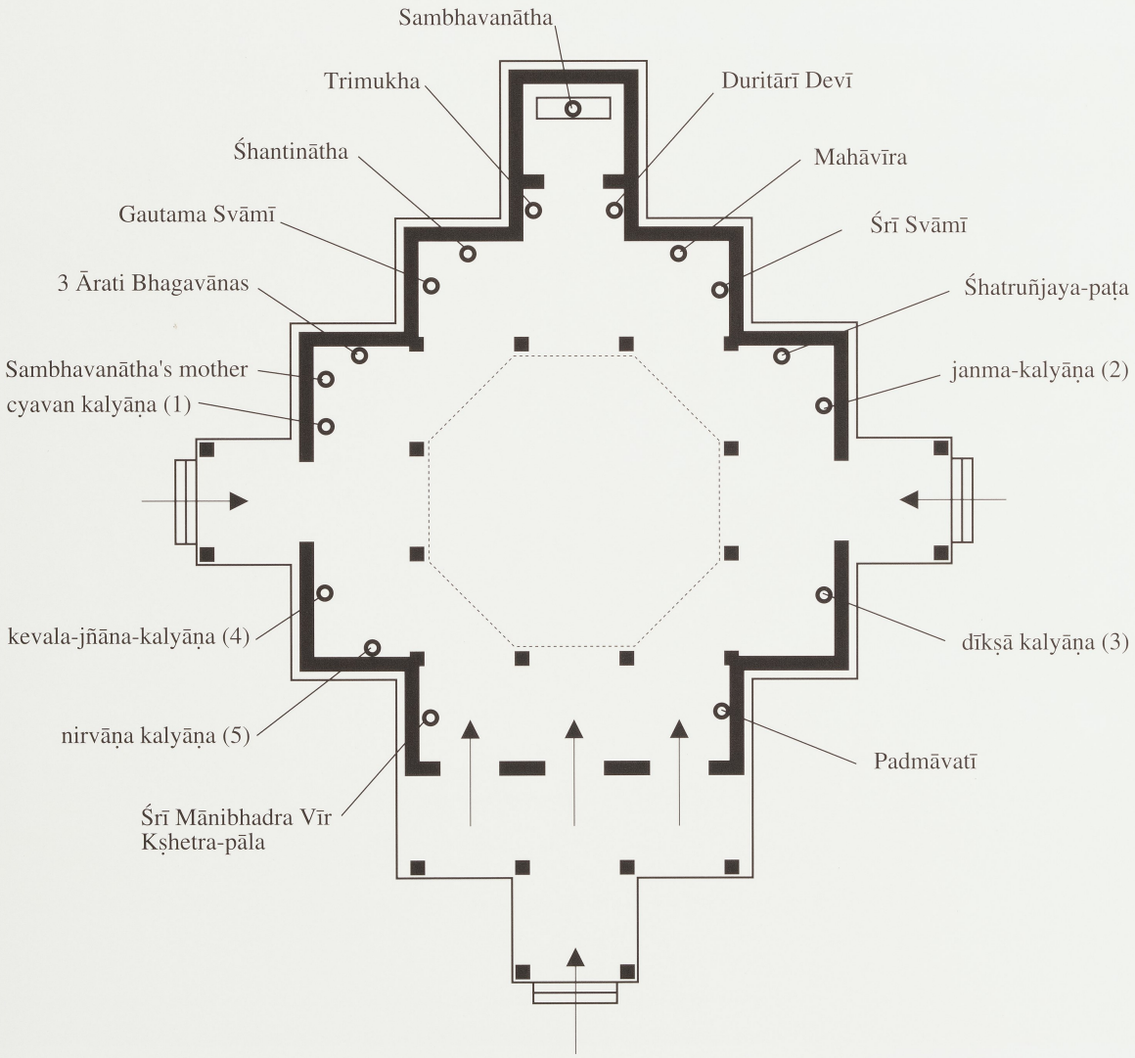
Especially important, and also frequently represented in Jaina art, are the five auspicious events or moments in the life of a Tīrthaṅkara, referred to as the *pañca-kalyāṇa*. These are his conception (*garbha* or *cyavana*), birth (*janma*), renunciation (*dīkṣā*, *vairāgya*, *tapas*, *pariniṣkramaṇa*), most significantly his enlightenment (*kevala-jñāna*, *jñāna*) and finally his deliverance at death (*nirvāṇa*). These sacred incidents have regularly been depicted, particularly on the outside of Jaina temple structures. This can, for example, be seen in separate panels representing the birth ablutions, the *dīkṣā* and the attainment of the state of *siddha*-hood, which adorn the outer walls of the Pañcāsara or Pañcāsrā Pārśvanātha Temple in Patan, Gujarat, and also on various architectural remains from the temples at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh (Plates 9, 10). Representations of the *kalyāṇa*s are particularly widespread in northern India, specifically in Śvetāmbara temples in Uttar Pradesh. Whereas in the Sambhavanātha Temple at Sravasti, niches represent the individual stages of the *pañca-kalyāṇa* (Fig. 2), in the Dharmanātha Temple at Ronahi, three of the four corner shrines as well as the central temple structure are representative of four of the sacred events.[22]

However, other incidents in the life stories of the Jinas have also been depicted in art. Particularly common are those linked to the story of the twenty-forth Tīrthaṅkara, Mahāvīra. Only representations of a few particularly typical events, which have prominently been represented in Jaina art, will be discussed in the following. One such story relates to the dreams which Mahāvīra's mother, Triśalā, had during the conception of her child, and which

9. Indra assisted by other gods performs the birth ablutions of the Jina at the summit of Mount Meru. Relief carving from Patan.

8. *Opposite* A *siddha-śila* from Melsittamur, depicting several liberated souls floating above the ground.

22 In the same region, further clear examples can for instance be seen at Ayodhya, Candrapuri and Kausambi.


Sambhavanātha
Trimukha
Duritārī Devī
Śhantinātha
Mahāvīra
Gautama Svāmī
Śrī Svāmī
3 Ārati Bhagavānas
Śhatruñjaya-paṭa
Sambhavanātha's mother
janma-kalyāṇa (2)
cyavan kalyāṇa (1)
kevala-jñāna-kalyāṇa (4)
dīkṣā kalyāṇa (3)
nirvāṇa kalyāṇa (5)
Padmāvatī
Śrī Mānibhadra Vīr
Kṣhetra-pāla


तीर्थंकर का अभिषेक
ABHISHEKA OF TIRTHANKARA BY GODS

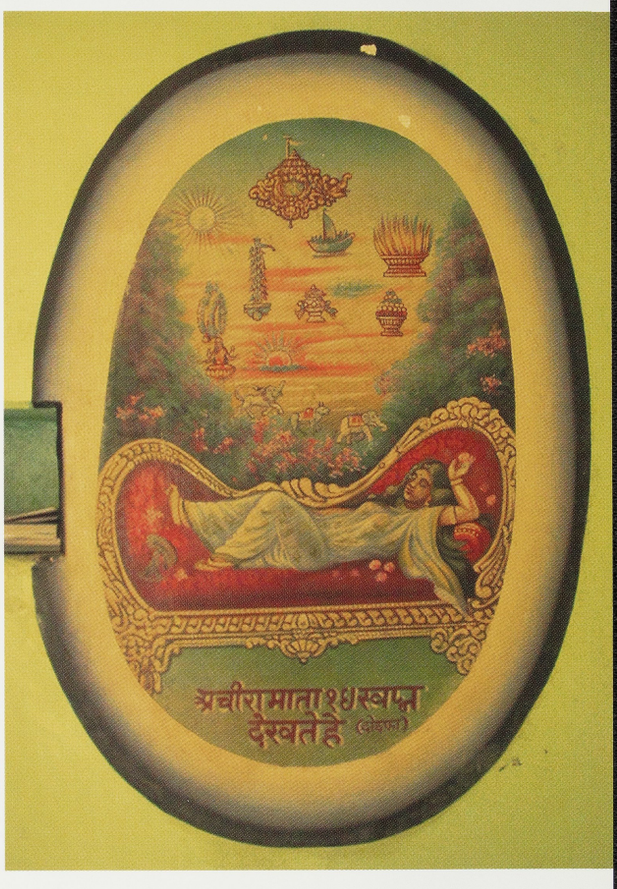
indicated that she was going to give birth to a son with a great destiny.[23] The precise number of auspicious dreams varies according to the tradition. Śvetāmbaras hand down fourteen dreams, while in accordance with Digambara teachings she witnessed sixteen visions. The dreams are represented by a white elephant, a white bull, a lion, an image of Śrī, also known as Lakṣmī the goddess of wealth and beauty, by garlands of *mandāra* flowers, the full moon, the rising sun, a large flag or banner with a staff, a vase of costly metal which is filled with water, a lake full of lotus flowers, an ocean of milk, a celestial palace, a treasure or large pile of jewels, a blazing fire without smoke, and for the Digambaras also by a lion throne and a pair of fish playing in a lake.[24] Jaini describes the dreams as an allegorical portrayal of the descent of Mahāvīra's soul into his mother's womb.[25] Depictions of the set of dreams are common in Jaina art and can be represented in different media, for instance, there are miniature paintings of this subject.[26] Also temple walls have been decorated with paintings of this theme, as can be seen in the Śāntinātha Temple at Nadol, Rajasthan, and with stone carvings, which is the case in the Pārśvanātha Temple at Patan. In the latter two examples, the sleeping Triśalā is depicted with the dreams arranged above her (Plates 11, 12). It is even more common to find symbolic representations of the dreams without the presence of the conceiving mother below. Schematic representations of the fourteen or sixteen elements displayed in the square shape of a check board grid have regularly been painted onto temple walls. An example can for instance be found in the cosmological shrine room of the Digambara Meru Temple in Old Delhi (Plate 681, background on the left). Representations of the fourteen individual dreams have also been carved onto the pillars of temples, as may be seen in the open hall of the Candranātha Temple at Dharmasthala, Karnataka. In other instances, they have been embroidered onto cloth hangings, which are displayed in Jaina temples. The latter have regularly been hung above religious icons in Śvetāmbara temples. On the fifth day of the Śvetāmbara Paryūṣaṇa festival, which marks Mahāvīra's birthday, the dreams are re-enacted by the laity and silver representations of the fourteen dreams are honoured in Śvetāmbara temples by garlanding them.[27] During the festival celebrating the *pañca-kalyāṇa,* not just the five auspicious moments, but also the dreams of the Jina's mother are commonly re-enacted.

Also other events in Mahāvīra's life, which in Jaina mythology have been linked to specific sites, have been developed in local pilgrimage cults and are then also represented in art and architecture. A story relating to the mental and physical difficulties which an ascetic has to endure to reach liberation, narrates an episode in which Mahāvīra re-encounters a man whom he maltreated in a previous life.[28] In the present life, the man is a cowherd who is searching for his lost flock of cattle. He encounters the meditating Mahāvīra, approaches him and inquires about the whereabouts of his animals. Deeply involved in meditation, Mahāvīra does not reply, which enrages the cowherd. In anger, the man takes revenge either by driving an iron rod or sharp blades of grass deeply into Mahāvīra's ears, seriously injuring him. According to Śvetāmbara tradition, this episode occurred at the Rajasthani site of Bamanvad, today a large pilgrimage centre with more than thirty temples located on and below sacred Mount Bāmaṇavāḍjī. The largest temple at the foot of the hill is dedicated to Mahāvīra and also a smaller, partly rock-cut temple nearby, is dedicated to the memory of this particular narrative. At the site, several paintings, pierced stone screens (*jālī*s) and sculptural representations translate this specific story into visual form (Plate 13).[29]

Fig. 2 *Opposite top* Niches in the Sambhavanātha Temple at Sravasti represent the five auspicious events in the life of Sambhavanātha.

10. *Opposite bottom* The first bath of the Jina, depicted in symbolic form on a temple door lintel from Khajuraho.

11. Wall of the Śāntinātha Temple at Nadol, illustrated with Mahāvīra's mother seeing auspicious dreams at the time of her conception.



23 Similarly to the dream which Sidhhārtha Gautama's mother, Māya or Mahāmāyā, had before the birth of her child, the dreams indicate that the son to be born would either become an influential worldly monarch (*cakravartin*) or a great religious teacher. On this issue, see also Jaini (1990: 7) and Dundas (1992: 31).

24 Additional information on the dreams can for instance be found in the publications by Jaini (1990: 6-7), Nagar (1999: 175, f.n. 18, 19) and Shah (1975a: 488).

25 See Jaini (1990: 7). With a certain amount of variation, the mothers of all twenty-four Jinas have such auspicious dreams prior to their conception.

26 An image of such a miniature has for instance been reproduced in Jaini (1990: figure 4).

27 Paryūṣaṇa-parvan and its specific ritual celebrations have also been discussed by Jaini (1990: 348), Dundas (1992: 58-59, 171) and Cort (2001: 8).

28 This story occurs for the first time in Bhadrabāhu's *Āvaśyaka-sūtra* (525) (Dundas 1992: 25).

29 Whilst Dundas narrates the story with reference to a bundle of grass (1992: 25), the version narrated at Bamanvad itself is with respect to a metal rod.



12. Triśalā's dreams arranged in an arch above her sleeping body on the walls of the Pañcāsara Pārśvanātha Temple at Patan.

13. Pierced stone screen (*jālī*) at Bamanvad, depicting a mythological story according to which Mahāvīra is punished for bad deeds conducted in the past.

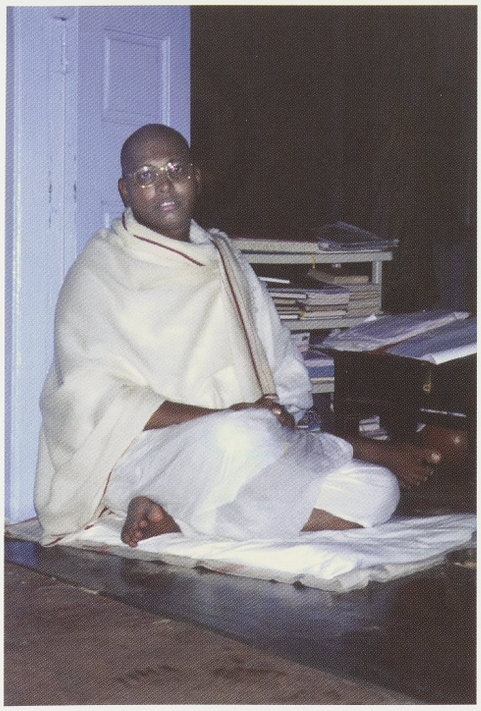


Although there are two main sects and various subgroups in Jainism, it seems that the teachings of the Jinas have remained surprisingly unchanged over the centuries. The path of the Jinas, representing the core doctrine of the religion and relating to issues such as epistemology, metaphysics, cosmology, ethics and practice, has not systematically been preserved in connection with the first sermons of the Tīrthaṅkaras, as we are dealing with an initially oral tradition.[30] One of the earliest and most complete sets of Jaina teachings are Umāsvāti's fourth or fifth century CE Sanskrit collection of aphorisms, known as the *Tattvārtha-sūtra*. This text is an early attempt to present a systematic presentation of Jaina teachings. Because it was composed before Jaina sectarian divisions had solidified, the text is accepted by Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras alike.

The aim of Jainas is to attain full enlightenment which is reached via a long and gradual path of religious purification and spiritual advancement, leading to transcendent knowledge and a clear vision of all forms of reality in the universe. The polluting or corrupting element preventing people's deliverance is *karma*. Known also to Hindus and Buddhists, *karma* in Jainism is different in so far as it is considered to be a physical substance, at times compared to dust.[31] According to Jainism, every wrong thought or wish, every unenlightened deed or untrue word spoken causes the material of *karma* to attach itself to the human soul. Jainas regard the soul of a person, *jīva*, as formless pure consciousness which is without substance, which attracts *karma* but is ultimately not affected by it. *Karmic* particles attach themselves to the soul but do not modify it. Their negative influence, however, inhibits the soul from understanding the world as it is and weighs it down, preventing it from rising up to loftier levels of the universe. Consequently, the aim is to reduce and ultimately to stop the accretion of further bad *karma* (*pāpa*), and to destroy already accumulated *karma* (*nirjarā*). This is achieved by burning away gathered *karma* through ascetic heat (*tapas*), or by transforming it through pious actions, which are considered as generating counterbalancing positive religious merit (*puṇya*). The level of *karma* at the end of each individual life span dictates the form of the next birth to come (*saṃsāra*). There is a clear difference between enlightenment (*kevala-jñāna*) and full spiritual deliverance (*mokṣa*). Having reached enlightenment, *kevalin*s continue to lead an embodied existence, to teach, and according to the Śvetāmbaras, even to feel human bodily sensations, such as hunger or thirst. The enlightened person, however, does not accumulate any new *karmic* substance through his or her actions or thoughts. Only after the completion of the *karm*-ically allotted duration of one's life, or after the last effects of life's *karma* have

30 On this issue, see for instance Dundas (1992: 74.)

31 See for instance Dundas's brief discussion of a description of *karma* in the *Daśa-vaikālika-sūtra* (12.10) (1992: 83). Further details can be found in Cort (2001: 7).





been expelled, can the enlightened person start to consciously run down all bodily operations and reach final deliverance in death. Having died and entered a bodiless state, without any attachment to earthly life, the soul of the *siddha* is believed to float up to the summit of the universe, to the realm of the liberated *jīva*s, where it remains in an eternal state of permanent bliss, free from any further births and suffering.

14. Śvetāmbara ascetics wear simple white cotton robes.

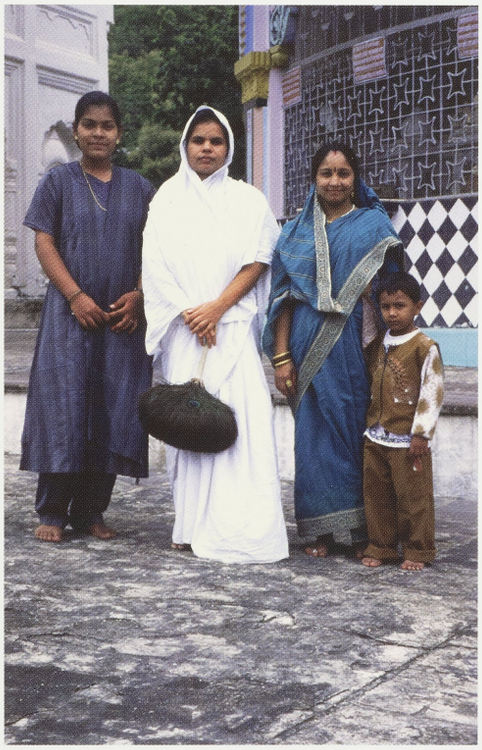
15. Digambara ascetics reject clothing and go naked. They use a peacock broom to brush small insects out of their way in order not to harm any living being.

SECTARIAN DIVISIONS AND SUBGROUPS IN JAINISM

The group of Jaina followers divides into two major factions, the Digambaras ('space' or 'sky-clad,' i.e. naked) and the Śvetāmbaras ('white' or 'cotton-clad'). The events leading towards this split occurred in about 300 BCE, when a famine affected the east of India. This resulted in the migration of the Jaina community away from the region. It is believed that along the way, the group broke into two major sections. One part, under the leadership of Sthūlabhadra, remained in the north but migrated further to the west, whilst the other portion of followers, allegedly led by the famous *ācārya* Bhadrabāhu, went south into the Deccan. Both groups established important pilgrimage centres in what are now the modern states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Karnataka.[32] After about twelve years in the south, and the death of their leader Bhadrabāhu, some of his followers are thought to have returned to the north-east of India, to Pataliputra, modern Patna in Bihar. Upon their return it is said, they discovered that according to their viewpoint, the party which had remained in the north had changed Jainism, by modifying and reinterpreting the sacred texts and by taking to the habit of wearing robes (Śvetāmbaras). As this was unacceptable to the recently returned monks from the south (Digambaras), a schism was inevitable. It is, however, important to bear in mind, that a single true and original form of Jainism cannot be identified. Various Jaina texts provide different, often conflicting versions on several core issues of the sectarian dispute, and an archetypal or ideal form of Jainism seems never really to have existed.[33] The great schism between the two major sects of Jainism has little to do with disagreements on doctrine or ethics. Essentially, it is based on conflicting interpretations of Mahāvīra's teachings and has largely to do with questions of dress (and consequently also with iconography as will be shown in the following chapter), the nature and

32 Various Digambara and Śvetāmbaras accounts have been transmitted with respect to the migration and schism of the Jaina community. See for instance Jaini (1990: 5).

33 For various passages and issues referring to the question whether Jaina monks should be dressed in simple robes or go naked, see for example the discussions by Jaini (1990: 12-15, 20-21, 39) and Dundas (1992: 40, 42-43).





16. Digambara nun with her family at the pilgrimage site of Kundalpur.

17. Relief carving on a pillar at Melsittamur, depicting a Digambara nun with her peacock brush receiving food offerings.

needs of the enlightened Jina, the interpretation of the status of women, and to a certain extend also with disagreements on Jaina history and cosmography. Summarised in brief, the main issues are that Śvetāmbara ascetics wear simple white cotton robes (Plate 14), they are allowed to use a bowl for begging and eating, they believe that an enlightened being needs to take food and drink, and that it is possible to reach deliverance from within a female body.[34] Contrary to this position, Digamabara monks go naked (Plate 15),[35] and only Digambara nuns are allowed to wear robes, an exception which in the Digambara view diminishes their status and at least partly leads to the belief that women need first to be reborn as men to attain enlightenment (Plates 16, 17). Digamabara mendicants eat only out of their cupped hands, they insist that an enlightened being does not partake in bodily functions such as eating and talking, and they reject the validity of the Śvetāmbara texts.[36] Because Jainas place, as Dundas describes it, "a high value upon correct pupillary descent which provides a channel of communication with ancient truths, manifesting itself most tangibly in correct forms of practice,"[37] it is understandable that this dispute, and consequently the division between the two major Jaina religious groupings, persists to the present day.[38] The close relationship between teacher and student has been represented in innumerable carvings (Plates 18, 19). Dress and outward appearance came to be regarded as crucial indicators of a proper understanding of the doctrine, and Digambaras see the abandonment of clothes as a necessary expression of the most perfected and absolute rejection of all possessions, as well as the conquering of all individual passions, such as the desire to own or to feel shame.[39]

---

34 Śvetāmbaras even argue that the nineteenth Tīrthaṅkara Malli or Mallinātha was a woman, stressing their view that women can also reach the highest levels of spiritual attainment (Jaini 1990: 40).

35 There are only two groups of not fully initiated Digambara monks, called the *kṣullaka* (lesser, minor or junior monk) and the *ailaka* (partly clothed) who are permitted to wear a robe (Dundas 1992: 134). *Ailaka* represents the highest state a Digambara layman can reach and in which he only retains one piece of clothing (Jaini 1990: 335). Zimmer remarks that by walking naked, Digambara ascetics express a complete separation from any normal order of society or from caste as, at least in the past, castes were often identified by the dress they wore (1983: 56).

36 For a detailed discussion of these issues, see for example Jaini (1990: 38-41) and Dundas (1992: 40).

37 Dundas 1992: 40.

38 See for example the various discussions of issues relating to this controversy in Jaini (1990: 15, 20-21).

39 Dundas 1992: 44.

Traditionally, it appears, Śvetāmbaras largely settled in the north and Digambaras in the south. Today, however, the demarcation between the two communities is no longer, and maybe in fact never has been, this clear. The available literature, with a clear emphasis on the Śvetāmbara tradition, conveys the feeling of numerical, and possibly even cultural superiority of the Śvetāmbara sect.[40] Research conducted throughout the subcontinent as part of this study, however, indicates that Digambaras may actually be more numerous, both in terms of numbers of members and with regards to the number of pilgrimage sites. Śvetāmbaras are in a clear majority in Rajasthan and Gujarat, and Digambara Jaina centres are more evenly spread over the rest of the country. However, also Śvetāmbaras, and this is predominantly for economic reasons, have settled in other regions of India at least during the past two hundred years. Although we have reports referring to members of both sects going on large pilgrimages together during the medieval period,[41] today it has to be a Jaina community so small and isolated as the one in Nepal, to support an active interaction between the two groups. The Jaina temple structure and the community facilities of the Bhagavāna Mahāvīra Jaina Niketan, established at Kamal Pokharī in Kathmandu in 1991, have been financed and constructed, and are jointly maintained and used by members of both Śvetāmbara and Digambara groupings.[42] This represents a great achievement in inter-sectarian dialogue, possibly favoured through location in a country which has a long history of syncretism and many pilgrimage sites, temples and even religious icons, which are jointly venerated and cared for by Hindus and Buddhists alike. But even in Nepal, the 'dialogue' is a superficial one, born out of necessity, and the local Hindu priest, employed by both assemblies for the care of their images, makes no secret of his astonishment and lack of understanding at the fact that members of one Jaina sect do not venerate the images of the other.[43]

The division into Śvetāmbara and Digambara groups, however, is not the only classification structuring the Jaina community. As this study focuses on the architecture of the Jaina temple, it concentrates on those groups of the Jaina community which pay homage to religious icons and construct temple buildings in order to accommodate them (*mūrti-pūjaka*). In Jainism, however, there also are subgroups opposed to image-worship. As their reasons for objecting to the installation of images are also of importance to those who venerate images and construct temples, also non-image worshipping Jainas will at least very briefly be mentioned in this introduction.

A first organised Jaina iconoclastic movement was initiated by the fifteenth-century Śvetāmbara Gujarati layman Loṅkā Śāha, also known as Lumpakā Śāha. His study and personal interpretation of the Śvetāmbara scriptures led him to argue that in true Jainism there is no place for elaborate ritual activities and the veneration of images. He founded the mendicant subdivision of the Loṅkā Gaccha of non image-worshipping Jainas, who rejected certain of the scriptures, strongly emphasised the doctrine of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) and compassion, and who paid homage only to living mendicant teachers who are seen as personifications of the fundamental principles of Jainism. Although this small group still exists today, the followers seem to have abandoned the strict anti-image stand of their founder within a century of his death. Although the ferocity of Loṅkā's arguments and the conviction with which he put them into practice were new, disputes about the validity and significance of objects of veneration in Jainism are much older than the fifteenth century. Most Jainas will agree that images and an expression of devotion towards them, are not necessary for the attainment of full religious knowledge, *kevala-jñāna*. Viewed especially critically are the erection of temple buildings, as their construction involves the disturbing of the ground and inevitably causes violence against creatures living in the earth. Other Jainas have defended the practice of building temples by comparing it to the digging of a well. The argument in both cases is that the violence needed for their construction is outweighed and compensated for by the benefits which are





18. 19. Rock carvings from Badami and Hanamkonda, depicting Jaina ascetic teachers and their students seated in front of cross-legged book supports.

40 See for instance Dundas (1992: 2, 43, 48, 190, 228).

41 Dundas 1992: 46.

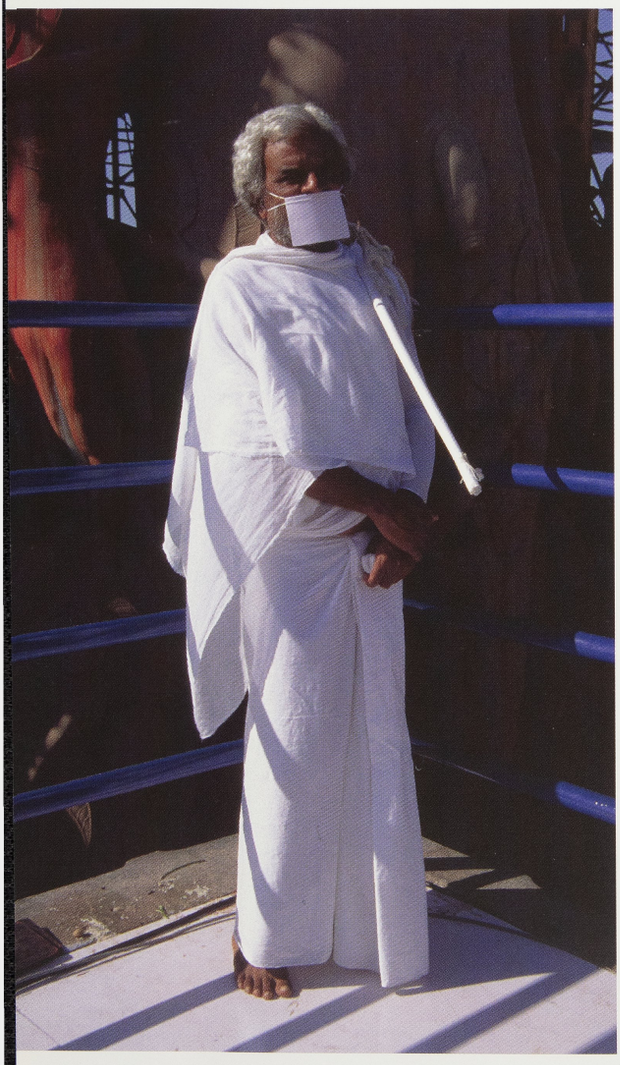
42 The ground floor level of the modern temple is used by the Digambara community, and the upper floor-level accommodates a Śvetāmbara shrine. Golchha points out that in Nepal, the four major facets of Jainas, the Śvetāmbaras, the Digambaras, the Sthānakavāsīs and the Terāpanthīs, are all part of a single religious association, called the Nepal Jaina Parishad (Golchha 1992: 256).

43 The discussion in the chapter on Jaina images and iconography, Chapter Three, will explain the different approaches the two sects take to statues of the Tīrthaṅkaras, and their inability to venerate those of the other group.

to be gained.[44] Other Jainas opposed to the veneration of images will even go as far as saying that temple worship, which involves the offering of cut flowers, and the pouring of water and other sacred fluids, which ultimately are deemed to destroy fragile life forms, should be avoided by pious Jainas.[45] Loṅkā's rejection of images, however, also has to be viewed in the context of the period. During his lifetime, Islam dominated the face of Ahmedabad and much of Gujarat as a whole. In this light, aniconic tendencies have also been interpreted as an expression of Islamic stimuli on the Jaina religion. Whether this affect signalled a true conviction and agreement with the rejection of the veneration of images on Loṅkā's side, or whether it was simply pragmatic to cease to install figural representations which inevitably would attract the attention of the iconoclastically-minded Muslim elite and consequently lead to their desecration and destruction, is not entirely clear.

Loṅkā, however, was not the first or last Jaina to reform the religion by excluding images and temples. The seventeenth century, for instance, saw the establishment of the non image-worshipping Śvetāmbara Sthānakavāsī movement. Sthānakavāsī means 'living in lodging houses' and contrasts the followers of this group with an earlier form of non image-worshipping Jainas, whose extreme form of asceticism led them merely to stay in ruins, as well as with image-worshipping Jainas who stay in *upāśraya*s, monastic lodgings near temples. The Sthānakavāsī movement was founded by two Gujarati merchants, Lavajī and Dharmasiṃhajī. Both had been members of the Loṅkā Gaccha but regarded their practices as not radical enough. Instead of focussing on images, the two propagated the performance of a contemplative mental worship (*bhāva-pūjā*) in the form of meditation, and stressed the aspects of non-violence and compassion. However, even better known than for their stance against images and Jaina temples, Sthānakavāsī ascetics permanently wear a mouth-shield (*muh-patti*) in order to prevent them violating airborne bodies or destroying small insects through breathing in or out (Plate 20).[46] This is a habit also temporarily taken up by laymen and laywomen, also of image-worshipping factions, during periods when they come in close contact with sacred objects, such as texts, images or symbolic representations (Plate 21). The cloth is also designed to prevent impurities from being breathed onto a sacred object. In extension, the *muh-patti* also symbolises control of speech (*saṁyama*).[47]

20. Sthānakavāsī monk from Gujarat wearing a mouth-shield (*muh-patti*) to prevent him breathing in any small insects or other minute living organisms.



Also the monks and nuns of another anti-image sect can easily be recognised by constantly wearing mouth covers. These are the Terāpanthīs or Terāpanthas, and while the Sthānakvāsī cloth worn over mouth and nose is usually square, the piece of cotton cloth worn by the Terāpanthīs is usually more elongated.[48] The Terāpanthī movement, a derivative from the Sthānakavāsīs, is a mid eighteenth-century conception of the radical Śvetāmbara reformer Ācārya Bhīkanjī. Their founder originated from Marwar and to the present day, this particular subgroup of Jainism has remained particularly closely associated with this specific area as well as with the wider region of Rajasthan.[49] Noteworthy is the popularity of this group amongst female Jainas with more than twice as many nuns as monks.[50] The survival and strong position of this sect, also in post-independence India, seems partly due to its strict hierarchical organisation in which all power and decisions are centralised and placed in the hands of a single *ācārya*.[51] Jaina ascetics are usually only permitted to travel on foot, however reform within the Terāpanthī movement now permits monks and nuns limited travel, as well as a break with the practice of not eating food which has been purposely prepared for them. This has allowed certain Terāpanthī ascetics, referred to as *sāmana*s (male) and *sāmanī*s (female), to travel abroad and to teach and strengthen the role of Jainas outside of India.

The discussion above has delineated the grouping of Jainas into Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras and into image and non image-worshipping groups. Further divisions subdivide Śvetāmbara *mūrti-pūjaka* mendicants into smaller divisions or mendicant lineages, referred

---

44 These issues have for instance been discussed by Dundas (1992: 214).

45 Dundas 1992: 164-165.

46 Further common forms of this term are *muha-patti, muh-pattī* and *muha-paṭṭikā*.

47 Shah 1955: 114.

48 For further information on this group and possible translations of their name, see for instance the discussion in Dundas (1992: 219-220).

49 Marwar refers to the region, and today also to the modern state, of Jodhpur. Traditionally, it also includes the neighbouring regions and districts of Rajasthan.

50 Dundas 1992: 223.

51 This is quite unusual for Jainism which otherwise has no central authority (Dundas 1992: 43).

to as *gacchas*. Lay people align themselves with specific monks and thus also with a certain *gaccha*. All the Śvetāmbara *gacchas* which emerged from the eleventh century onwards had one dominant *ācārya* or *sūri* at their head.[52] Despite the questions surrounding the veneration of figural images of the Tīrthaṅkara, most Jainas regard sculptural representations of the Jinas as proper and valid, and use them as aids in their quest for spiritual advancement. It is the temples of these groups of Jainas, who venerate images, which form the focus of this study.

THE FOURFOLD ASSEMBLY

Jaina ascetics of both sects, Śvetāmbara and Digambara, can be male (*muni*, *sādhu*) or female (*sādhvī, āryikā*). Originally, they were referred to as *śramaṇas* (strivers) or *nirgranthas* (bondless people), terms not commonly employed anymore today.[53] Jaina monks and nuns are homeless wandering mendicants who only occasionally, and for the primary reason of preaching to and interacting with the lay community, are allowed to reside for longer periods in one place.[54] A further exception to this rule is the four-month rain retreat (*cāturmāsa*) incumbent on all Jaina ascetics, who are not permitted to travel during the monsoon period.[55]

A mixture of religious motives and social reasons seems to account for the radical decision of these men and women to abandon their worldly lives and to seek renunciation, a step generally regarded as auspicious by family members.[56] The initiation ceremony of

---

52 Detailed information on *gacchas* are for example provided by Dundas (1992: 158), Cort (2001: 13, 42), Burgess (1884: 276), v. Glasenapp (1999: 49) and Lalwani (1997: 66).

53 In the Buddhist Pali Canon for example, Mahāvīra is referred to as Nirgrantha or Niganṭha Nāṭaputta (Dundas 1992: 3, 206) and the term 'Nirgranthism' is at times used to describe an earlier form of Jainism (Dhaky & Moorti 2001: 3).

54 As the Śvetāmbara *yatis*, descendants of the temple-dwelling monks, and the Digambara *bhaṭṭārakas*, are not fully initiated ascetics, they are permitted to reside in a fixed place. For additional material on *yatis* and *bhaṭṭārakas*, see for instance Dundas (1992: 131, 154, 158) and Cort (2001: 43-46).

55 This prohibition on movement is due to the general difficulty of travelling during the rainy season, but also to the fact that during the fertile monsoon period, ample insect life is on the move and could be crushed by wandering ascetics (Dundas 1992: 136, 149). *Cāturmāsa* is the correct Sanskrit term, however most Jainas refer to the four-month rainy season simply as *cāturmās*. In Hindi, it is also known as *comāsu* (Cort 2001: 206).

56 This issue has for instance been discussed by Dundas (1992: 132, 133).



21. Śvetāmbara laywoman, wearing a protective cloth over her mouth whilst venerating a small ritual image in a temple at Vijayavada.



22. Representation of an initiation ceremony (*dīkṣā*) below a tree, involving the changing of clothes and the pulling out of all bodily hair.

an ascetic, male or female, is referred to as *dīkṣā*. It represents a rite of passage, marking a formal change of status for the individual. Full initiation consists of two stages: First comes the *choṭī dīkṣā* or little initiation, originally referred to as *pravrajyā* (going forth, renunciation), followed by the *baṛī dīkṣā*, the big or great initiation, in the past known as *sūpasthāpana* (ordination).[57] Although there are certain sectarian differences with regards to initiation rituals, they commonly involve a formalised farewell from family and friends, either the abandoning of clothes (Digambara) or the receiving of a simple monastic robe (Śvetāmbara), as well as the pulling out of one's hair, today often replaced by the shaving of the head (Plate 22).[58] The most important aspect of becoming a fully initiated ascetic of either sect, however, is the taking of the five great vows, the *mahā-vratas*.[59] These involve the promise not to harm any living being, not to lie, not to take what has not been given, to abstain from sexual activity, and to lead a life without any physical or mental attachments.[60]

The content of the first vow, the concept of non-violence or *ahiṃsā*, is of central concern to Jainism and represents its primary moral precept.[61] The importance of the virtue of non-killing is not unique to Jainism, also Buddhism supports the idea of non-injury. In no other religion, however, does this tenet seem to have been developed so clearly and so all important.

---

57 Additional information can be obtained from Dundas (1992: 134).

58 Ascetics are also presented with a whiskbroom (*daṇḍa-poñchanaka*, *rajoharaṇa*), to brush away insects on the path, and with a begging bowl. Whereas the whisks given to Śvetāmbaras are usually made of wool or some natural plant fibres, those given to Digambara monks and nuns have usually been made of peacock feathers. Terāpanthīs and Sthānakavāsī ascetics also receive the mouth-shield (*muh-patti*), a piece of cloth preventing them from breathing in tiny life particles (Dundas 1992: 134-135; Shah 1955: 114-115). Fascinating passages in the life stories of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras relate to their renunciation from the mundane world and their initiation into monkhood. For the story of Mahāvīra's renunciation, see for instance the relevant passages in Jaini (1990: 12-14).

59 The habit of taking five great vows seems to be a more recent phenomenon, and the result of a gradual process. The oldest preserved Jaina texts only refer to the taking of two vows, and for a long period initiation rituals involved the adoption of only four great vows. For a discussion of these issues consult for instance Dundas (1990: 27-28, 136) and Jaini (1990: 15-21).

60 A sixth vow relates to not eating after dark. For the historical development and the wider implications of the Jaina ascetic vows, see for instance Dundas (1992: 135-138).

61 Ample Jaina stories are concerned with and further expand the idea of *ahiṃsā*. These tales include one, repeated particularly frequently, which relates to Mahāvīra as an embryo. It is said that following the tenet of non-injury, Mahāvīra did not even kick out in his mother's womb. Because he was keeping so still, he had to move slightly from time to time in order to reassure Triśalā that he was still alive. References to this story and other aspects relating to *ahiṃsā* can be found in Jaini (1990: 8, 36) and Dundas (1992: 36, 138-140, 240 f.n. 13).





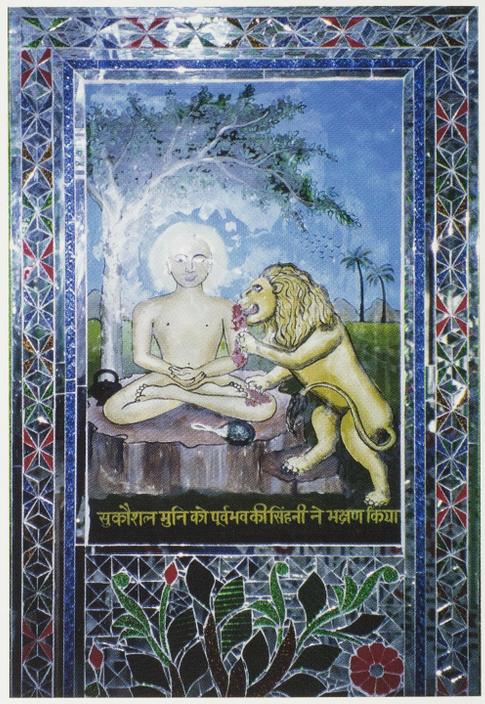
As a result certain mendicants wear mouth-shields at all times to avoid inhaling and killing small insects, a practice also at times taken up by the laity when conducting temple rituals. Also as a consequence, ascetics have to filter or boil their water before drinking it, and they should avoid bathing and washing altogether. In Jaina literature, the ideal of non-harming has often also been transferred to animals. There are for instance many stories relating to wild beasts living on sacred Mount Śatruñjaya. The animals are described as having become so affected by the sacred aura of the site, that they have ceased their natural carnivorous inclinations and fast. Relating to such stories are depictions in Jaina art, where the concept of *ahiṃsā* has been represented by depictions of various animals, usually a lioness or tigress in association with a white cow. The two natural enemies are not only depicted eating peacefully out of one and the same bowl, but are shown feeding the other's young (Plate 23).[62] Other representations depict the path from violence and war, via the study of the Jaina scriptures towards enlightenment (Plate 24), or portray Jinas attacked by wild animals and not defending their life, in the perfect act of *ahiṃsā* and asceticism (Plate 25). Due to the importance attached to the concept of *ahiṃsā*, the Jaina laity has tended to prefer professions in which no killing or disruption of the earth is required, leading to a strong presence of Jainas amongst the traders, merchants, bankers and jewellers of India.[63] In order to ensure *ahiṃsā* and to prevent the accumulation of *karma*, Jaina world renouncing ascetic mendicants aim to reduce all activities and to control their mind, body and speech.

Important aspects in the fulfilment of this ideal are the six daily obligatory actions or essential duties, the *āvaśyaka*s. These represent the ritual and liturgy of the Jaina ascetics and include equanimity (*sāmāyika*), praise of the Jinas (*bhakti*), homage to the teacher (*vandana*),

23. A cow and a lion eating peacefully out of one and the same bowl and feeding each other's young are symbolic of the ideal of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*). Representation from Mount Droṇagiri.

24. Rock carving from Ellora, illustrating the path from war and violence, via the study of the scriptures, to an ascetic life and salvation.

25. Representation of a meditating ascetic ignoring the violent attack of a wild lion, seen as the ultimate act of asceticism and worldly detachment.



62 This motif might also be related to the life stories of the Tīrthaṅkaras according to whom the increasing holiness of a Jina leads to the creation of such a peaceful atmosphere in his vicinity, that wild animals start to behave against their nature and live alongside their natural pray in a calm and peace-loving manner. See for instance the discussion of Pārśvanātha's youth in Zimmer (1983: 57). References to the sacred atmosphere on Mount Śatruñjaya and the influence this has on animals have been made by Dundas (1992:191).

63 Religious theoreticians have even drawn up lists with professions prohibited for Jainas, as they involve the killing or disruption of human, animal or vegetal life forms (Dundas 1992: 163). Nevertheless, there are many Jainas who work as farmers and who inevitably, when ploughing the ground, harm insects and other life-forms. There are also Jainas who own mills and whose factories use large amounts of water and fire, all activities theoretically prohibited by orthodox Jainas. The essential issue, however, and this has repeatedly been stressed in Jaina texts relating to the issue of *ahiṃsā*, is one's inner intention. An act of violence which occurs unintentionally, and while great care has been taken, is to a certain extent at least excusable.



26. The striking natural scenery surrounding the pilgrimage centre on Cūlagiri at Bavangaja.

repentance (*pratikramaṇa*), abandonment of the body (*kāyotsarga*)[64] and abandonment (*pratyākhyāna*). The performance of these mandatory activities and the ritual formulae employed vary considerably between the two main Jaina sects and their sub-divisions. Digambara Jainas, for example, reverse the order of the last two obligations.[65]

The most extreme cessation of action practised by Jaina ascetics, is the voluntary and closely controlled process of slowly starving oneself to death. The rite is know as *sallekhanā*, although Śvetāmbaras today also employ the term *samsthara* (death-bed) to refer to it.[66] This slow and conscious termination of one's life through an extreme fast does not only present the absolute termination of any action, but also the utmost austerity and penance, both in a physical as well as in a mental sense. *Sallekhanā* can only be performed with the permission and under the strict guidance of a religious teacher and in its strictly regimented manner is very different from an impulsive suicide, involving passion or other strong feelings. In this form of Jaina ritualised death, the withdrawal of food and water is not regarded as a violent action, but as a conscious and complete end to any action, and of any participation in the world. The person dies in meditation, controlling mind, body and speech to the very final moment.[67] Even though voluntary death through the rejection of food and water is more common, and indeed represents the ideal form of death for an ascetic, once permission of a teacher has been gained, this ultimately ascetic practice is also accessible to pious laypeople. It seems, however, to have

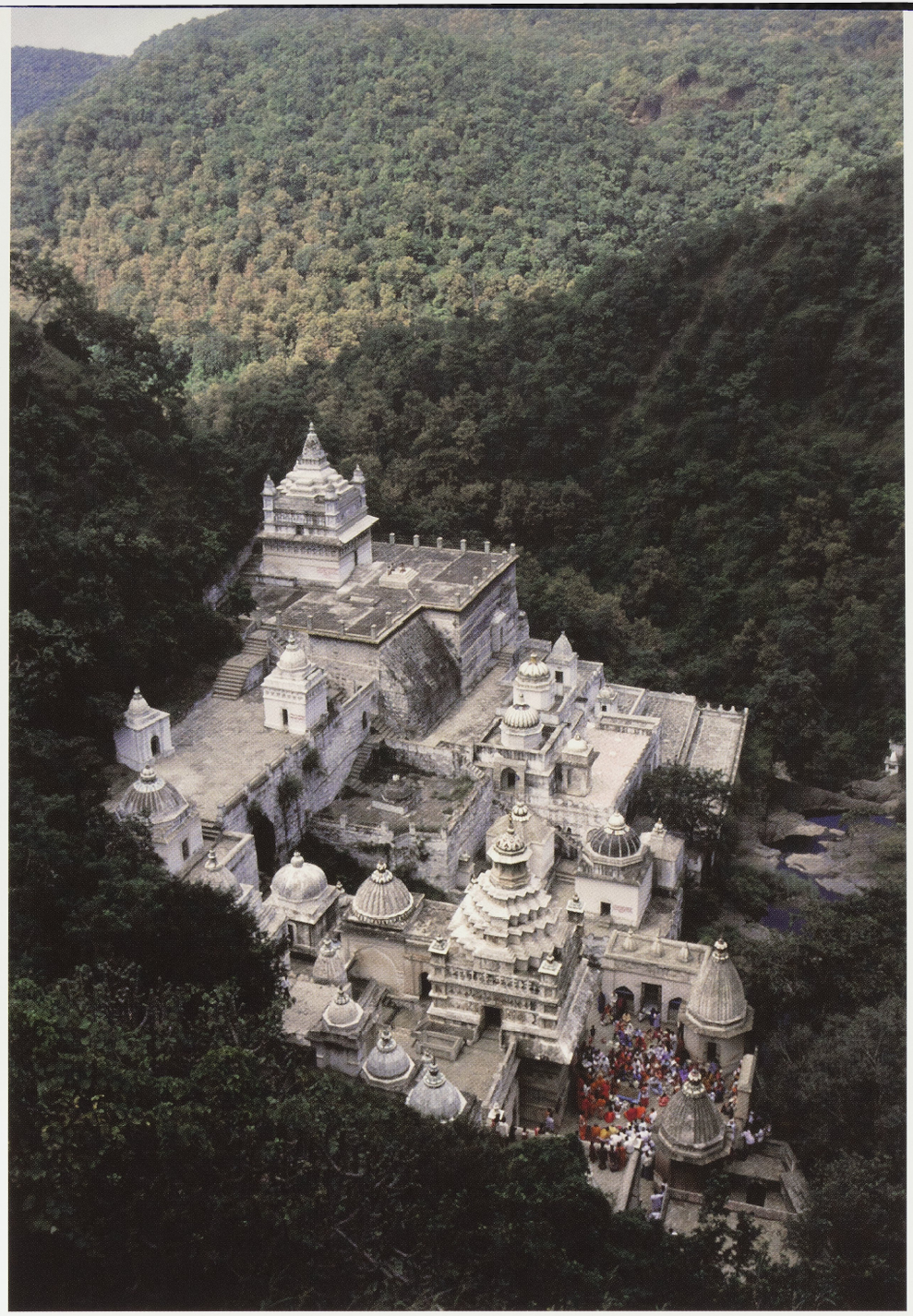
---

64 *Kāyotsarga*, abandonment of the body (also referred to as the laying down of the body), refers to the act of meditation. This can be performed in a sitting or in a standing position (Jaini 1990: 344).

65 Detailed explanations of the wider implications of these six activities performed by Jaina ascetics can be obtained from Dundas (1992: 146-149).

66 See for instance Dundas (1992: 156).

67 Further information on the rite of *sallekhanā* can, for instance, be found in Settar (1986, 1990), Tukol (1976) and Dundas (1992: 155-156).



27. The Jaina temple city on sacred Mount Muktāgiri is surrounded by hills, water falls and dense forests.

ceased to play any important role for the laity from about the twelfth century CE.[68] Many Jaina pilgrimage places discussed in the following chapters were founded at sites sanctified through the conscious death of a Jina or enlightened teacher, and certain places such as Candragiri at Shravanabelgola, are especially well-known for the deliberate religious deaths of large numbers of Jaina ascetics as well as laypeople. It is noteworthy that sites where complete liberation has been attained by some, which commonly are referred to as *siddha-kṣetra*s, are frequently located on the summit of steep hills and at other remote and inaccessible sites. These are often of particular natural beauty with striking views and the feeling of closeness and exposure to nature and its inherent powers (Plates 26, 27). Not all *siddha-kṣetra*s, however, are explicitly connected with the performance of *sallekhanā*. The place of death of an important person or teacher seems almost always to be regarded as an auspicious site. It is a place where it is believed, spiritually advanced beings consciously depart from this earth and if not completely liberated, they are expected to be reborn on a higher level, closer to the attainment of deliverance. The sacred death of one important teacher will sanctify the ground and attract others to choose the same spot for their departure from life, leading frequently to lists of saints and enlightened teaches who all died at one and the same place. Especially noteworthy in this

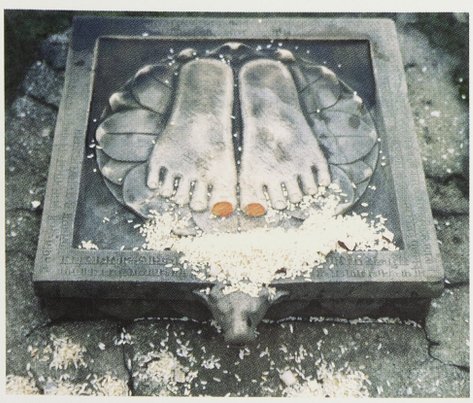


28. On Droṇagiri, sacred footprints (*pādukās*) raised on a small platform mark the place of final release of an ascetic teacher.

68 Dundas 1992: 156, 161.

29. *Pādukās* carved out of the natural rock surface at the summit of holy Mount Tirumalai.

30. Offerings of uncooked rice grain are made to the many *pādukās* which commemorate the death and liberation of countless teachers on Mount Paraśnātha.



respect are the sacred mountains: Śatruñjaya, Paraśnātha, Girnār, and Candragiri, but also sites of more local significance, such as Nainägiri in Madhya Pradesh. The actual spot of death is frequently marked by *pādukās* or *caraṇa*s, sacred foot imprints (Plate 28). In this context, the mere imprints of their soles seem to reflect the last presence of these holy persons and express their abandonment and liberation from earthly existence more strikingly than an image of the body of the living person could ever do (Plates 29, 30).

Although Jaina texts are critical of evolved cults relating to the commemoration of the dead and the veneration of relics, there are sites where the ashes of deceased ascetics and Jaina teachers have been enshrined in funerary structures. Best known are the red pyramidal tuff stone structures, erected for the *muni*s and *bhaṭṭāraka*s at Mudabidri. At Padabetta, in the foothills near Penukonda in Andhra Pradesh, step-like constructions are raised in memory of deceased ascetics. A hill south of the Ādinātha Temple at Ranakpur also has model-like miniature temple constructions, stepped monuments and *pādukā*s, which have been constructed to commemorate the dead.[69]

Despite the fact the emphasis in Jainism lies on the monastic community (Plate 31), it is wrong to assume that Jainism is exclusively concerned with ascetics who, relieved from family and other worldly ties, can practice the teachings in its most pure and extreme form.[70] Traditionally,

---

69 Photographic representations of these structures can be found in Chapter Four on Jaina architecture. For a fuller discussion of ascetic life, the mendicant way to liberation, the structure of the monastic community and monastic rules, see for example the excellent studies by Jaini (1990: 241-273), Dundas (1992: 129-160) and Cort (2001: 118-141). For reasons of space and a clear focus on the temple environment in this study, these issues cannot be analysed in any more detail in this chapter.

70 In this context Michell, for instance, wrote: "Like early Buddhism, Jain doctrines were designed

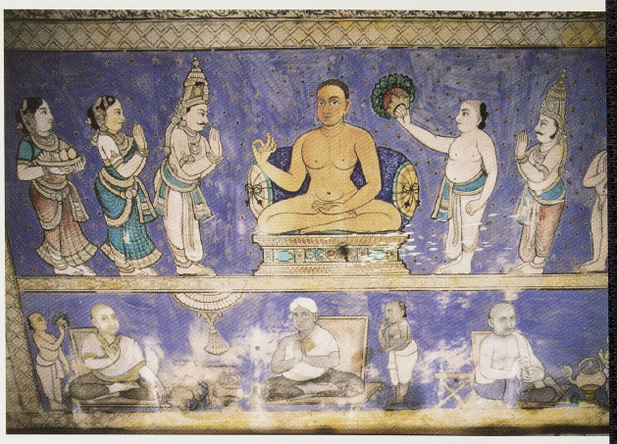
ascetics represented the core of the Jaina religion but with time, partly due to the distance from Mahāvīra's lifetime, but also due to the belief that in this age full enlightenment cannot be achieved, a movement away from a primary emphasis on asceticism and extreme austerity is noticeable. Whilst harsh physical and mental afflictions, were initially clearly the focus, to burn away bad *karma*, a tendency towards a more prophylactic approach of preventing the accumulation of such matter and the conscious nurturing of religious merit, can nowadays be noticed.[71] This clearly strengthens the position and the validity of the laity and its role in providing a link to the ascetic community.

Ascetics and laypersons (*upāsaka*s, *śrāvaka*)[72] share the same religious beliefs and both aim at reaching the same idealised objective in life. Also on a more practical level, the two groups have a closely interdependent relationship. Mendicants depend on the laity for food and shelter, whereas the lay community requires spiritual guidance and validation from the monks and nuns (Plate 32). From a religious point of view, interaction with the laity is generally regarded as potentially dangerous for ascetics. For the lay community on the other side, it is an important area to advance spiritually and to improve their standing in society. Jaina laymen and laywomen provide shelter to wandering ascetics, offer alms in the form of food and generally partake in religious giving (*dāna*) which generates religious merit on their behalf.

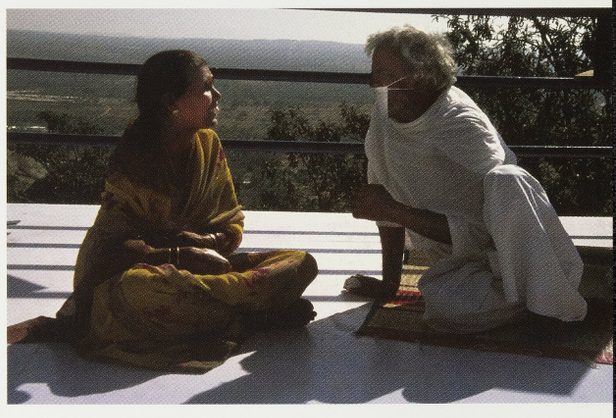
The food given to the ascetics but also that consumed by the laity should be strictly vegetarian. In Jainism, this does not only exclude all kinds of animal flesh, but also eggs and even certain vegetables and specific types of fruit. To be avoided amongst these are onions and garlic, as these make the food tasty and are considered aphrodisiacs, all green vegetables as well as vegetables and fruit which contain large numbers of seeds, such as tomatoes and aubergines. The latter are considered to harbour potential life-forms. Other Jainas also avoid vegetables which grow under the ground, such as potatoes and carrots, as their removal disturbs the earth and potentially harms animal life.[73] Generally, no food should be prepared or eaten after sunset.

There is a certain tendency in Jainism to model the religious path of the laity on that of Jaina ascetic values. This is for example expressed in the eleven successive stages (*pratimā*), gradually guiding laymen and women towards a withdrawal from worldly life, and in the twelve lay vows. At the core of the latter stand five vows, the *aṇu-vrata*s (lesser or minor vows). To a large extend, these mirror the major ascetic vows.[74] The set of formalised rules governing the lives particularly of laymen seem, however, progressively to have lost their significance and today it is very rare for lay vows to be taken formally. Although on certain important festival days or when on pilgrimage, ordinary householders will participate in ascetic practices such as fasting, the emphasis on ascetic values amongst the lay community seems to have diminished. Fasting is one of the few ascetic practices which is still continued by Jaina householders today. It is especially common for women to engage in long, often also waterless fasts, to express their commitment to a holy life and to pious Jaina ideals.[75] Communally, fasting becomes a

31. Monastic scene, painted on the ceiling of the Five-shrined Temple at Melsittamur.



32. A Śvetāmbara Jaina laywoman on pilgrimage in Karnataka seeking spiritual guidance from a Sthānakavāsī monk.



---

to be taught and practised by ascetics. Unlike Buddhism, however, Jainism never developed beyond this stage; it scrupulously preserved its original doctrines and practices." (1990: 25).

71 According to the Jaina religious view, in this age it is impossible for laypeople as well as for ascetics to progress beyond the fifth and sixth stages of spiritual development. Therefore, the ascetic approach to life has only a theoretical value (Dundas 1992: 83, 129-130).

72 For the difference in emphasis expressed by these two terms, *upāsaka*, 'one who attends, serves,' and *śrāvaka*, 'hearer,' and the gradual movement towards a preference for the latter term, see the discussion by Dundas (1992: 161-162).

73 Also alcohol and certain milk products should not be consumed. The logic behind this is that during the process of fermentation, living beings can be harmed. During fasts or when on pilgrimage, the list of items not to be consumed is usually extended also to include oil, sugar, salt, and any other substance enhancing the taste of the food. Dundas (1992: 152-153, 166, 172) and Zarwan (1974: 135) have for instance written on the subject of Jaina vegetarianism.

74 Additional details on the eleven successive stages and the lay vows can be found in Dundas (1992: 161-165).

75 The importance of fasting in Jainism is based on the many stories of the Tīrthaṅkaras, said to have engaged in extreme fasts as an expression of gaining control over their minds and bodies. Especially in Digambara Jainism, it is also related to the belief that the fully-enlightened being does not require food, and as such fasting is seen as a transient imitation of this enlightened stage. Fasting temporarily brings the participant closer to this distant ideal. Longer discussions of the issue of fasting in Jainism can for instance be found in Dundas (1992: 171-172) and Jaini (1990: 21).

public statement and fasts are often conducted publicly by groups of people assembling in community halls.

With the far-off aim of deliverance unreachable in the distant future, however, the aim of lay members is not so much the imitation of ascetic practices, but primarily to lead a good religious and ethical life in order to gain merit, to prosper and to be reborn on a higher level.[76] It is, however, not enough to act properly in one's family and business affairs alone. Jainas, or at least prominent members of the community, are also expected to express their pious intentions publicly. This can for instance be done through an involvement in community affairs and charitable acts, through participation in worship and religious ceremonies, and through the donation of images and temples, which in many places has led to the continuous expansion of temple buildings and sacred pilgrimage sites. Through such selfless religious activities, in which private wealth is directed outward in religious giving (*dāna*), the individual's honour,

76 Dundas 1992: 162.



33. A religious auction is conducted as part of religious celebrations in front of the Pārśvanātha Temple on Muktāgiri.

34. The winner of the auction, assisted by further donors, is allowed to carry the main temple icon out of the shrine to be washed and anointed in front of the temple.



reputation and prestige, as well as that of the wider community, is enhanced.[77] *Dāna* is one way in which the laity is expected to actively engage in, to demonstrate their commitment to the religion, and to stress the purity and prestige of their individual family. This can also take the form of religious auctions, in which laymen bid for the right to conduct part of a ritual. The winner, who through generous giving has expressed the least attachment to money and wealth, is publicly reconfirmed and legitimised as a truly pious and honourable member of the community (Plates 33, 34). Ashok Kumar Patni, a marble trader from Kishanganj in Rajasthan for example, won the right to pour the first *kalaśa* and to open the auspicious celebration of the great Mahā-mastak-ābhiṣeka at Shravanabelgola in February 2006. He bid 1.08 *crore rupees*, at the time worth an estimated 200,000 EUR. The money raised in such religious auctions is usually donated to some charitable occasion or institution, or for the upkeep and restoration of Jaina temples and other sacred structures. From a Jaina religious point of view, fasting and religious giving, frequently involving bidding, are the most important aspects of pious lay conduct. The lay activities of greatest concern to this study are the donation of icons and temple buildings, and the veneration of religious images as part of temple worship.[78] The latter will be discussed in the following section.

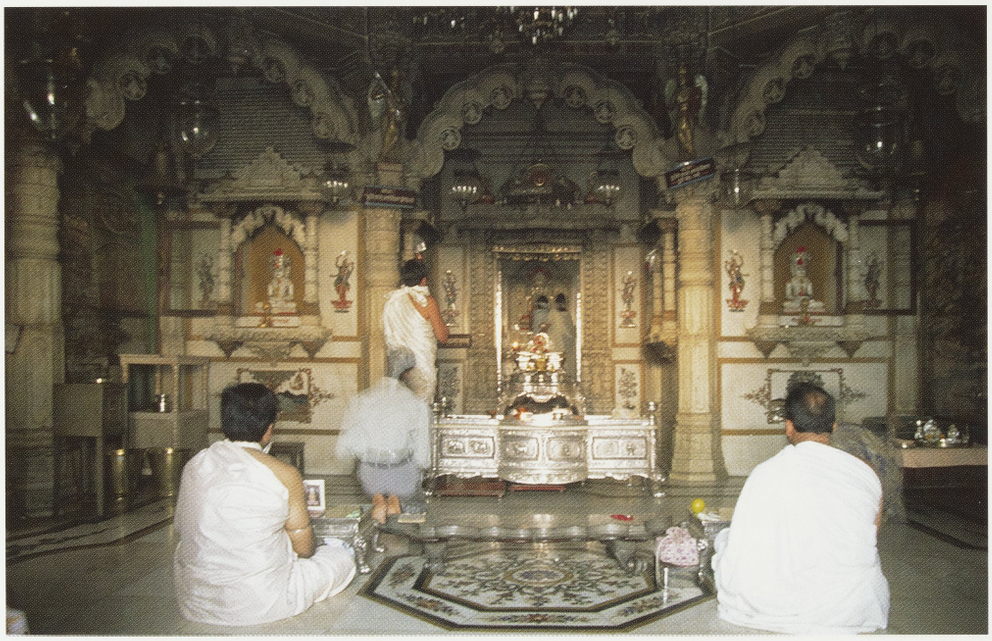
JAINA TEMPLE WORSHIP

In Jainism, the worship of figural images and symbolic representations is referred to by the pan-Indian term *pūjā*. Veneration can take place at home or in a purpose-built temple structure. At home, householders often have a small area of a room set aside for religious purposes (Plate 308), while larger mansions might have a specially constructed domestic shrine. This is usually found on the top floor or on the roof of the house. The main focus for the veneration of Jaina icons, however, is provided by larger temples structures, the architecture of which represents the major issue of inquiry for this study. Jaina temples and the veneration of sacred images, are only part of the religious cult of the image-worshipping (*mūrti-pūjaka*) Jaina sects.

Despite disagreements between various Jaina factions on the validity or meaning of venerating images, and the absence of textual references to such practices in early Jaina texts, the devotional worship of Jaina icons seems to have been an important aspect of the Jaina religion from the very beginning. The Jaina *Āvaśyaka-sūtra* for instance, clearly expresses the

77 Issues relating to public giving have for instance been analysed by Dundas (1992: 169).

78 Jaina ascetics have no private belongings and as such cannot participate in *dāna*. For them, fasting and devotion are the focus of attention, and ascetic devotion can be expressed in temple rituals. However, ascetics are not permitted to touch religious images and as such their devotion is of a purely contemplative nature (Dundas 1992: 146, 176).



35. Śvetāmbara priests and laymen carrying out morning worship (*pūjā*) in a temple in Kolhapur.

36. *Pūjā* conducted by Digambara families and guided by two priests in the monastic establishment at the foot of Muktāgiri.

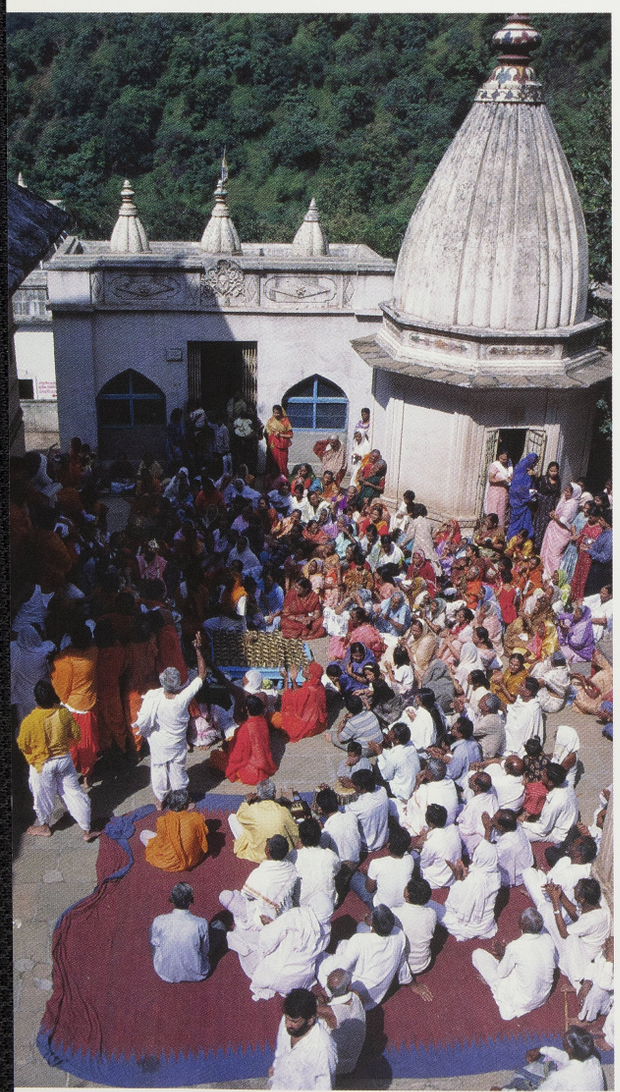




37. A Śvetāmbara laywoman has laid out sacred symbols on an offering table, and is reciting and chanting from a religious textbook as part of her private adoration of the Jinas.

38. 39. Communal worship conducted as part of the celebration of the Daśa-lakṣaṇa-parvan festival on Muktāgiri and in Varanasi.

40. *Brāhmaṇ* priest working for a Śvetāmbara Jaina temple in Patan, wearing simple white clothes.



devotional nature of Jainism.[79] Jaina texts referring to events in the distant past also contain ample references to the construction of temple buildings containing images, such as the representation of Ṛṣabhanātha which his son Bharata installed at the place of his father's death on Mount Śatruñjaya. According to Jaina cosmology, temples dedicated to the Tīrthaṅkaras do not only exist in the human world. Jaina images are described as being placed in shrines in distant parts of the universe, and it is those on the island continents of Nandīśvara-dvīpa which are amongst the best known. On this island, there are fifty-two hills, crowned by an equal number of shrines, dedicated to the worship of the Tīrthaṅkaras. Inaccessible to humans, only the gods of the Jaina pantheon can reach this place and show reverence to the liberated Jinas. The earliest securely dated textual reference to an artistic representation of a Tīrthaṅkara is the famous Khāravela inscription from Orissa, dating from the first century BCE. Also epigraphic evidence from the first centuries CE from Mathura further attest to the installation of devotional Jaina images.[80]

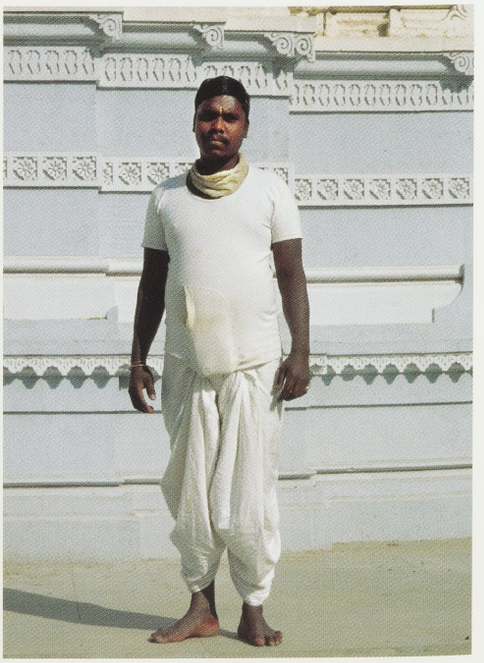
The meaning of worship and the veneration of images in Jainism has been much debated (Plates 35, 36). *Pūjā* is generally seen as an act of giving, in this instance not to the community, but to the Jina or other holy representations, to a venerated object or sacred concept. Jaina teachers and devotees regularly stress the point, that it is not the icons of the Tīrthaṅkaras which are being venerated. It is the perfected qualities of the Jinas, represented in sculptural form, which are honoured. Consequently, what is being adored are the inner qualities of the Jina, with which the material image is invested or which it is believed to embody. The figures also represent a meditative support or mental prop to help the devotee to focus. In practice, such interpretations largely relate to *bhāva-pūjā*, mental worship. It is, however, true that having died, attained *kevala-jñāna* and broken all ties with the mundane world, the Jinas cannot hear, respond to or act on behalf of the devotee. The adoration of the images does not bring about an active response from the Jinas, but it can destroy *karma* and generate religious merit. As such worship effects an internal transformation inside the devotee who as a consequence becomes spiritually cleansed. In this sense, paying homage to images of the fordmakers is believed to grant some kind of grace (*kṛpā*) to the worshipper and may lead to a favourable rebirth or even to salvation.

Ordinary worship in Jainism is a private matter and not a communal activity (Plate 37). It should be performed in a meditative way, paying no attention to other worshippers present at the time. Communal temple worship is conducted on festival days or special occasions and can involve the bathing and anointing of images, the singing of devotional hymns (*bhajan*) as well as dance performances (Plates 38, 39). Although in Jainism, with its strong emphasis on

79 See for instance Dundas (1992: 174, 147).

80 For the beginnings of sculptural art in Jainism, see also Chapter Three on iconography.





contemplation and meditation, no priest is necessary as a mediator, Jaina temples usually use the services of people referred to as priests, who act as ritual functionaries.[81] In Śvetāmbara Jainism, these priests are in most instances not Jainas but come from the *brāhmaṇ* caste of the local Hindu community (Plates 40, 41). Because in most Digamabara temples, laypeople are not permitted to touch the figures, Digambara priests, designated *upadhye*, are employed to bathe, adorn and entertain the main temple sculptures. These can be Hindu *brāhmaṇ*s again (Plate 42), but in a Digambara context, particularly in Karnataka, the priests often come from the Jaina community themselves (Plate 43). In Śvetāmbara Jainism, the decoration of Jinas and other representations can usually be conducted by lay followers, and the Śvetāmbara priests, referred to as *pujārī*, are mainly employed to tidy up the temples after offerings have been made in front of the images.[82] In some temples, however, only temple servants, *upadhye*s or *pujārī*s, perform rituals on the images housed in the central shrine room (*mūla-nāyaka*, *adhi-nāyaka*), whilst the laity conduct *pūjā* on smaller metal images, referred to as *vidhi-nāyaka*s. It is, however, difficult to generalise about Jaina ritual, a point amply stressed in the available literature. Whereas in certain temples the laity in general, or women in particular, are barred from touching any image, in other shrines laywomen routinely conduct major rituals on the central *mūla-nāyaka* or on smaller metal images (Plate 44). This diversity is partly due to the large geographical area under discussion, but also with differences between Śvetāmbara and Digambara approaches to images, and those of their various subgroups to one another. In general, however, Digambara Jainas appear to be more concerned about issues of purity and are more likely to rigorously enforce rules preventing physical contact with religious sculptures.[83] Ascetics of both main sects do not usually touch sculptural representations of Jinas, of Jaina divinities and symbolic representations. They purely perform a contemplative worship (*bhāva-pūjā*).[84] This contemplative or meditative element, expressed through an appropriate inner



41. Temple priest from Rajasthan, clad in auspicious red and yellow robes.

81 Additional information on this subject can be obtained from Dundas (1992: 175).

82 Also in Śvetāmbara Jainism priests can perform *pūjā* if no layperson has visited the temple during the day (Dundas 1992: 175).

83 Non-Jainas are often barred from proceeding towards the main image beyond a certain point inside Digambara temples. Actual examples of such temples will be discussed in the following chapters, particularly in Chapter Eight on the region of south India.

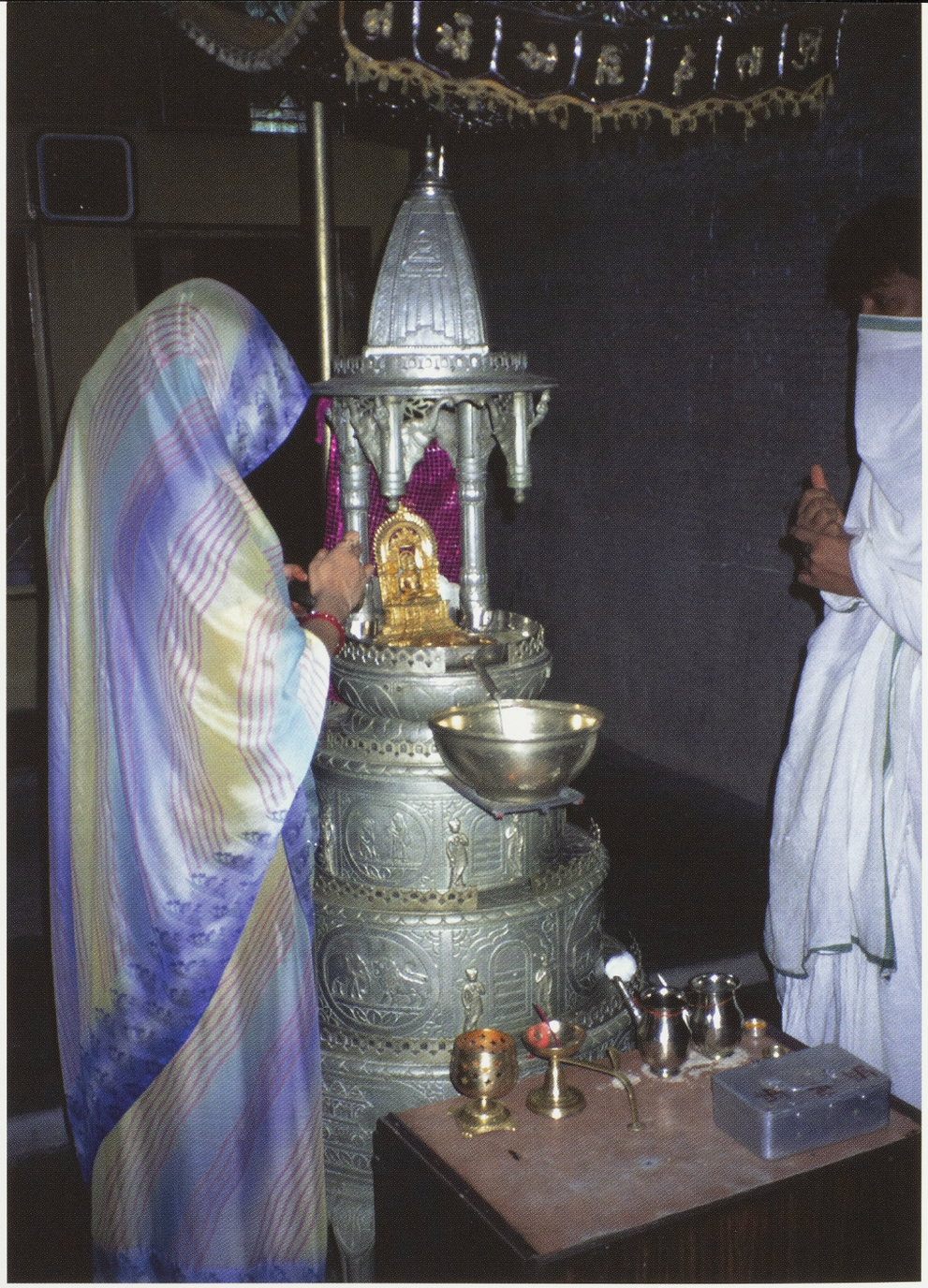
84 The reason for the ascetic prohibition on touching images is twofold: In order not to harm any minute organisms, monks and nuns are not permitted to wash regularly and are therefore perceived as too impure to touch the sanctified images. As they have no belongings, they own nothing and cannot buy anything to present as offerings in a temple. Jaina ascetics do not usually reject the making of offerings. As an expression of their religiosity, however, they do not actively participate in it. See also Dundas (1992: 176) on this issue. As usual, however, there are exceptions to this rule and during the

42. A *brāhmaṇ* priest, wearing the sacred thread, is employed to carry out duties in the Mallināṭha Temple at Melsittamur.

43. Priests who come from Digambara Jaina families are responsible for the ritual activities in the temples at Ponnur.

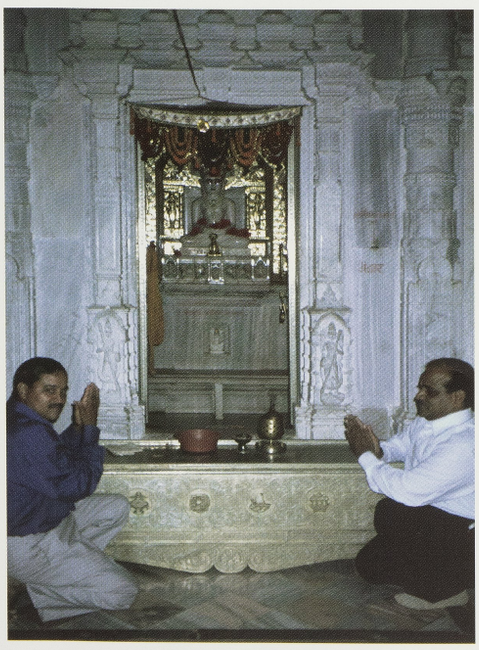






44. Śvetāmbara laywoman at Tirunelveli, conducting *pūjā* on a small metal image placed on a ritual stand.

45. Jaina laymen taking *darśana* from the main sacred image in the Pārśvanātha Temple at Mandu by gazing at the icon with their hands in *namaskāra-mudrā*.



spiritual disposition (*bhāva*), also lies at the centre of any other kind of *pūjā* a Jaina layperson may perform.

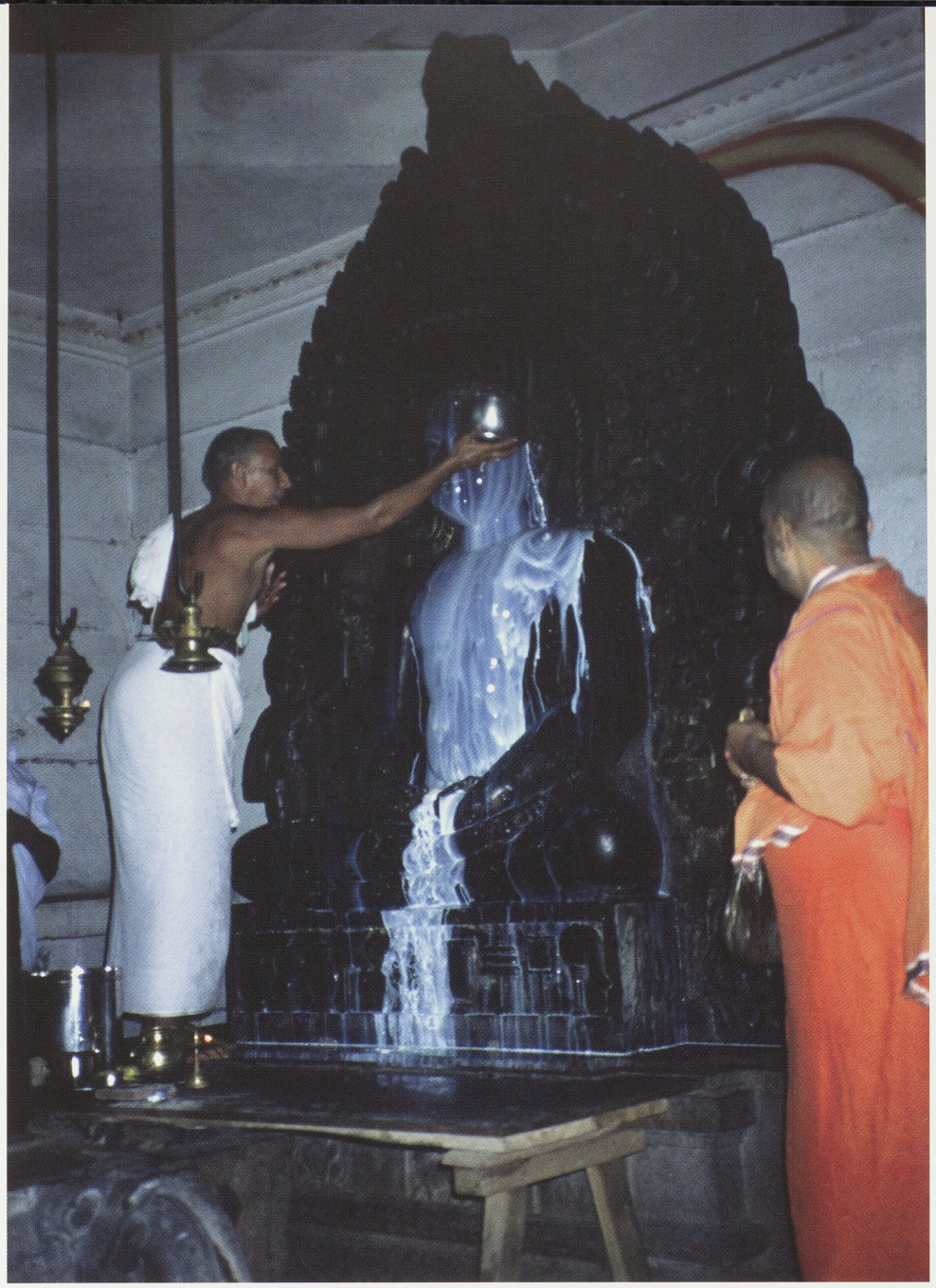
There are several forms of *pūjā* which, when carried out in a temple, are referred to as *caitya-vandana*, temple worship. The simplest form is to look upon an image and to take *darśana* from it with hands held in reverence, in *namaskāra-mudrā* (Plate 45). In Jainism, however, *darśana*, the contemplation of an image, does not take the form of a reciprical dialogue, but concerns the contemplation of the Jina's intrinsic qualities, in a subjective relationship between the devotee and the Jina.[85]

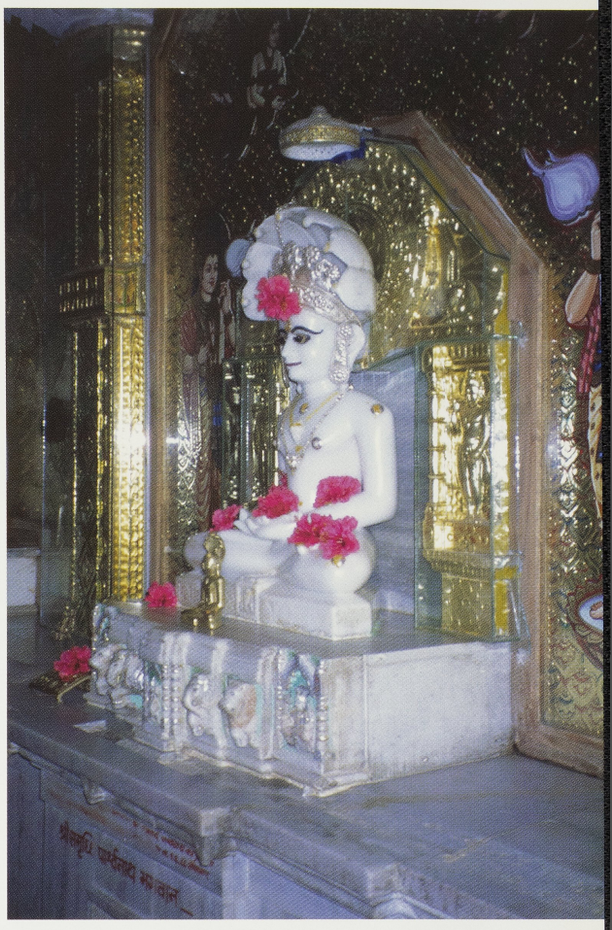
A more complex form of veneration involves the washing, anointing and decoration of the image with various kinds of materials (*dravya*), consequently referred to as *dravya-pūjā*. *Dravya-pūjā* describes the physical veneration of images. Though more elaborate ceremonies can be conducted for specific purposes, in most instances, eight substances are employed

---

sacred period of the Mahā-mastak-ābhiṣeka at Shravanabelgola in 2006 for example, Jaina monks and nuns assembled every day at the feet of the colossal statue of Bāhubali in order to brush them with their feather whisks, to pour water over them, and to touch them for long periods both with their hands and foreheads, as if taking in the sanctity of the statute.

85 This issue has been discussed at great length by writers such as Jaini (1990: 193, 196) and Dundas (1992: 175).



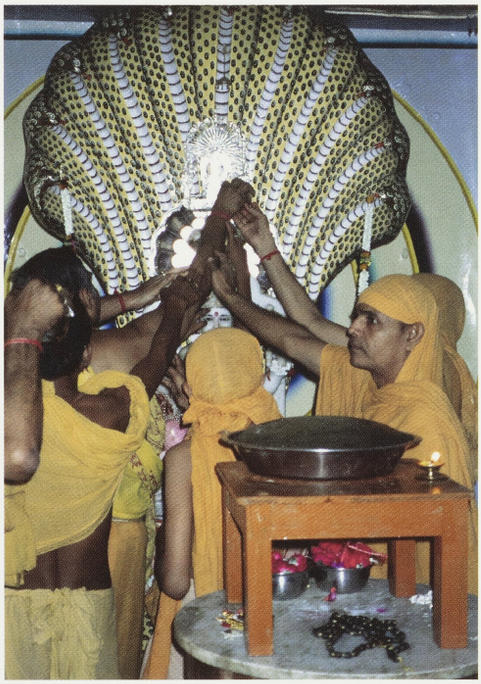


during Śvetāmbara and Digambara *pūjā*. This is referred to as the eightfold *pūjā*, or more commonly as the *pūjā* of eight substances (*aṣṭaprakārī-pūjā*). The latter usually involves a mixture of milk and water, a paste of perfumed materials such as camphor and sandalwood, flowers, incense, a flame, rice, sweets and fruit. This kind of formalised veneration seems to have emerged during the medieval period and to have undergone many changes and modifications. Even today, a substantial amount of variation and improvisation can be observed in the performance of the eightfold *pūjā*, when conducted by different communities. There are, however, certain accepted and recurrent procedures to be followed. The *pūjā* of eight substances is performed in the morning. A state of purity, achieved through ablutions and the wearing of clean unstitched clothes, and an inner attitude inclined towards leaving the material world behind is required of the performer and considered necessary for the effectiveness of the ritual. First the image on which the *pūjā* is to be performed is to be circumambulated three times in a clockwise direction (*pradakṣiṇā*). This ambulation expresses that the object the person walks around, or the concepts this object symbolises, lie at the centre of the devotee's life. *Pradakṣiṇā* plays a particularly important role in Jainism and has strongly influenced and shaped temple architecture. Especially in the region of eastern India, concentric layers and consecutive ambulatories are amongst the prominent driving forces in temple design. Fascinating is that circumambulation is not only of importance for image-worshipping Jainas, but that also groups who reject religious icons and temples, perform *pradakṣiṇā* around living ascetic teachers to honour them.

46. The image of Pārśvanātha at Melsittamur is bathed with a mixture of milk and water.

47. Colourful and sented, freshly cut flowers are used to adorn the purified and anointed icons of the Jinas.







48.-51. A figure of Padmāvatī Devī at Varanasi is undressed, washed and anointed, dressed in new clothes, and then decorated with garlands and fresh flowers.



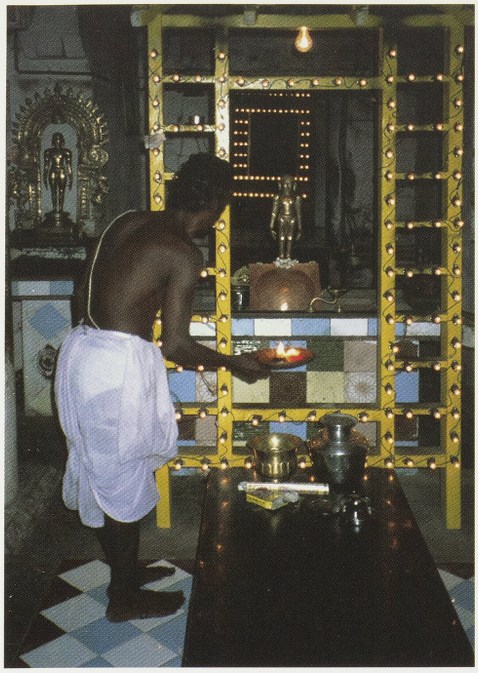
In temple ritual, *pūjā* proper starts after this circumambulation of the image, with the bathing of the sculpted figure. This is conducted with a combination of milk and water (Plate 46). When washing the image, the worshipper is meant to visualise him or herself as Indra, who at the summit of Mount Meru carries out the first ablutions on every newly born Jina.[86] Consequently, a mixture of ritually cooling substances (*gandh*), usually containing camphor and sandalwood paste, are applied to the purified body of the Jina figures. This is followed by the offering of flowers (Plate 47).

After this initial period of direct contact with the religious icon, in which three of the eight substances have been presented to the image, worshippers usually move into the hall in front of the shrine. The subsequent five substances can also be offered to the image independently of the earlier bathing and anointing of the image. Religious images other than those of the Jinas are also dressed in precious garments before they are garlanded with flowers (Plates 48-51). The following involves the waving of incense and a flame in front of or in the direction of the image, which is commonly referred to as *ārati*. The waving of a flame in front of images is especially common in the south of India, where it is also conducted whenever a devotee or visitor enters a Jaina temple (Plates 52, 53).[87] After the performance of *ārati*, as part of a major *pūjā* ritual, the sacred flame is also brought to worshippers witnessing the ceremony (Plate 54). Devotees first touch the sacred flame and then apply its purifying and blessing powers to the cranium and to their eyes. During the performance of the eightfold *pūjā*, this is followed by the presentation of rice, sweets and fruit, laid out on the ground or on low metal tables positioned in the hall in front of the shrine (Plates 55-56). Food offerings are also arranged in the shape of a swastika topped by three dots and a crescent shape enclosing a further single dot (Plates 57-60). In Jainism, the swastika sign signifies general auspiciousness and represents the four main states of existence. The three dots are usually interpreted as symbolising right faith, right knowledge and right conduct, the so-called 'three jewels of Jainism' (*ratna-traya*).[88] Finally, the single dot at the top is a symbolic representation of the disembodied liberated souls, the

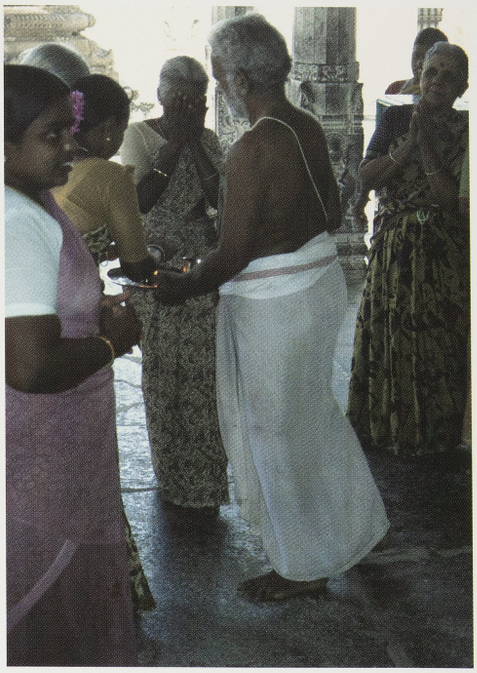
86 For further information, see the article on this topic by Hegewald (2005).

87 The practice of *ārati* seems to have been incorporated into Jaina temple ritual from Hindu practices. In a Jaina temple context, the waving of a flame and the use of fire is somewhat problematic as Jainas believe in the existence of life-forms within fire and usually follow rules against its excessive use (Dundas 1992: 163, 177).

88 Jainas frequently add a fourth jewel to the core group of three, mentioned here. The fourth element is correct asceticism. The integration of this element into this important and precious group expresses the central position and significance attached to ascetic practice in Jainism (Cort 2001: 7). Sacred Jaina symbols are further discussed in the following chapter on images and iconography, Chapter Three.





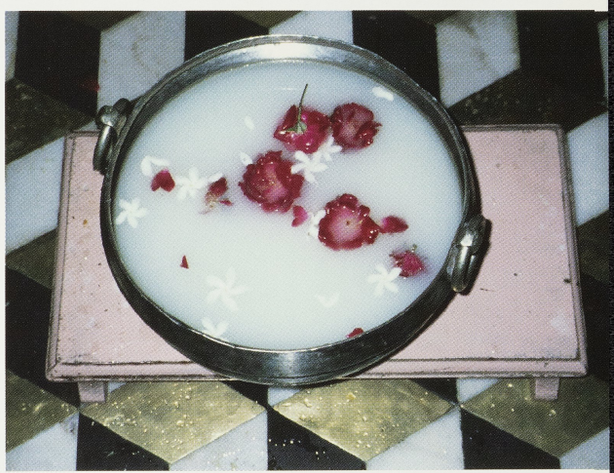




52. 53. A priest performs *ārati*, light *pūjā,* in front of the Jinas and divinities housed in various shrines and temple buildings in the complex dedicated to Ādinātha at Odalavadi.

54. At the end of the *ārati* ceremony, the sacred flame is also brought to the worshippers who witnessed the ritual.

55. 56. Colourful food offerings laid out in the porches and vestibules (*antarālas*) of Jaina temples at Dharmasthala and Ujjain.





62. 63. *Opposite top* Groups of laywomen at Bavangaja and Nadol, chanting religious hymns (*bhajan*) in honour of the Jinas.

64. *Opposite bottom* Stick-dance performance (*daṇḍa-rāsa*), organised and donated by a pilgrimage group from Chennai in honour of the Jinas at Jiravala.

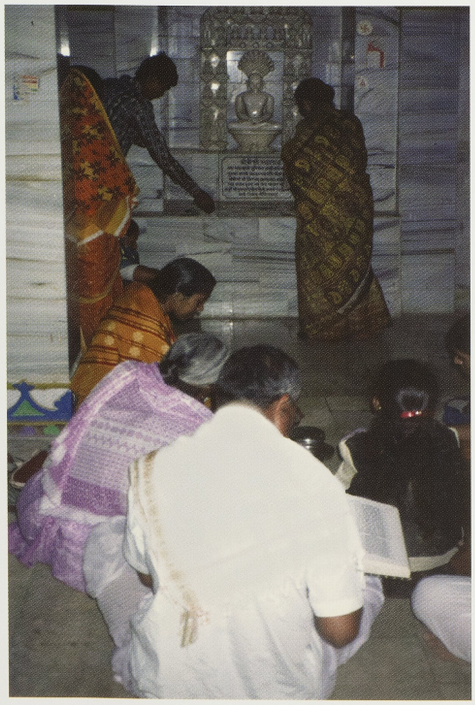
57.-60. Uncooked rice offerings arranged in the shape of an auspicious swastika of varying complexity. The main sacred symbol is topped by three dots, a crescent shape and a further dot, created either by an almond, a lemon or a coconut, illustrated by examples from Tirunelveli, Madras, Jalor and Ujjain.







61. A layman reciting sacred prayers from a ritual manual whilst on pilgrimage with his family on Muktāgiri.



*siddha*s, who have floated to the apex of the Jaina universe. According to various Jaina ascetic writers, the *pūjā* of eight substances epitomises an exercise in self-control, the attainment of positive spiritual goals and the elimination of negative ones.[89]

Reverence is also paid to the Jinas by reciting sacred texts or prayers (Plate 61) and singing religious hymns (*bhajan*) in front of the images (Plates 62-63). Devotees also donate ceremonial dance performances to be conducted in honour of the Jinas inside Jaina temples. Even though the habit of dancing by young women in front of images of Tīrthaṅkaras seems to have diminished,[90] the author witnessed a stick dance performance, referred to as *daṇḍa-rāsa* or more colloquially as *daṇḍya-rās*, a dance-*pūjā* performed by young men from Rajasthan. The dancers and musicians conducted their performance inside one of the open pillared halls of the Pārśvanātha Temple at Jiravala in front of a small metal image. The same hall also accommodated the singing and rhythmically clapping audience, a large group of pilgrims from Chennai, who commissioned the performance as part of a more elaborate *pūjā* (Plate 64). More communal worship in the form of music recitals and dance presentations, which are normally part of special *pūjā*s and festival celebrations, are usually performed in front of ritual metal images, *vidhi-nāyaka*s, displayed on pyramidal ritual stands, called *siṁhāsana*s.[91]

---

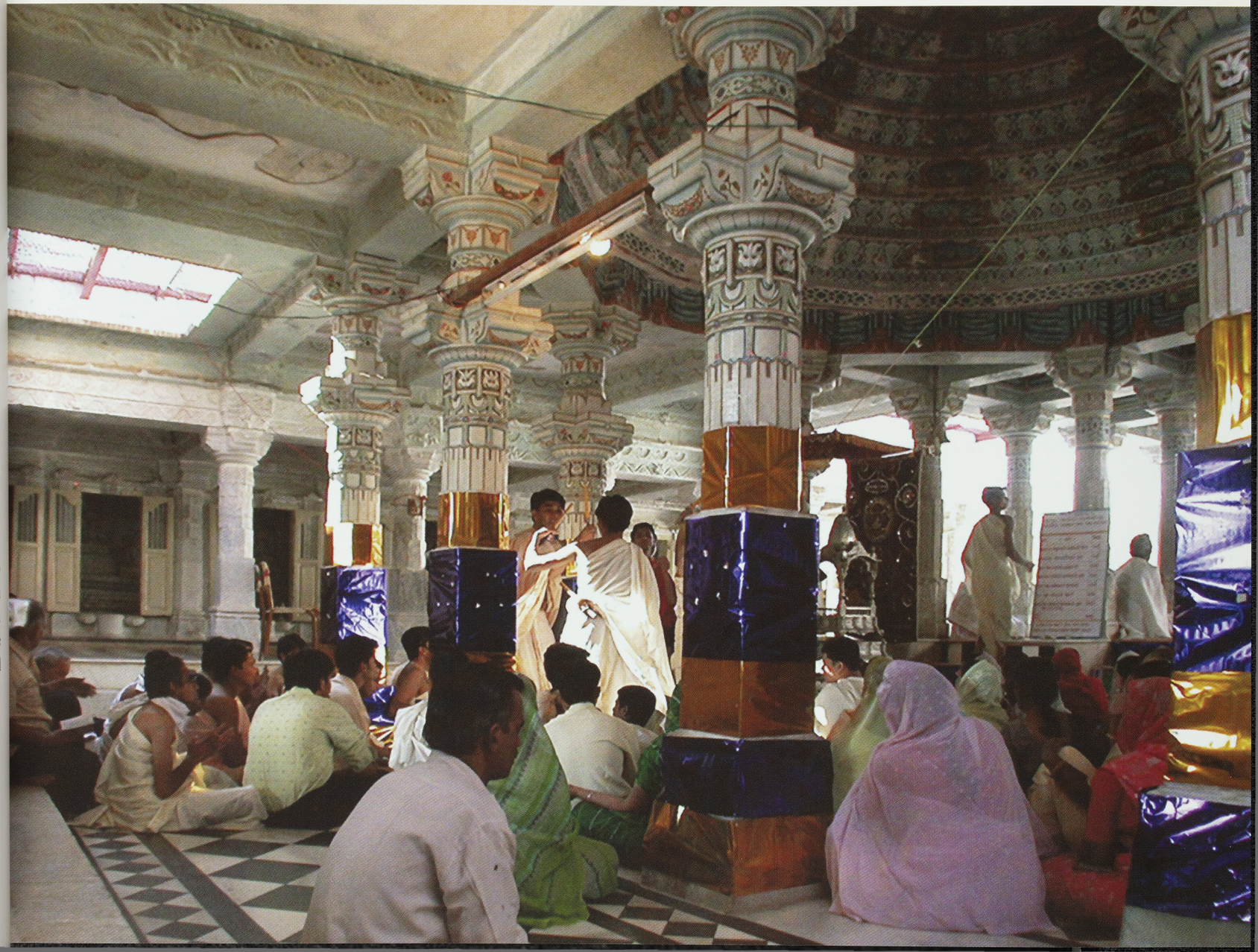
89 Dundas 1992: 179.

90 This issue has for instance been discussed by Dundas (1992: 177). The fact that such dance performances, however, have not died out entirely, is illustrated by a photo in the study published by Titze (1998: 243, plate 342).

91 The form and function of *siṁhāsana* ritual stands will be discussed in the architectural







PILGRIMAGE AND JAINA FESTIVALS

For Jainas, as for the followers of other faiths in India, pilgrimage is an important religious and social force. Although there is no obligation for Jainas to visit holy places, it is a very common and popular religious activity. Pilgrimage is often conducted in groups, by families (Plate 65) or by local communities associated with a Jaina temple. These can also be grouped around a prominent ascetic whom devotees follow on pilgrimage (Plate 66). While certain pilgrimage sites have particular importance for only one of the major sects of Jainism, others are under joint control and are sacred to both Śvetāmbara and Digambara Jainas alike.[92] Image worshipping Jainas go on pilgrimage in order to gain spiritual merit, to temporarily participate in an ascetic lifestyle, to share in the sanctity of a place associated with their religion and to become purified through the performance of religious ceremonies.[93] In many cases, these rituals represent a participation in the past and as such symbolise the re-enactment of mythical events.[94] On a more mundane level, pilgrimage also offers the opportunity temporarily to break out of one's everyday framework and to travel.

Most holy Jaina sites, referred to by the Sanskrit term *tīrtha* or *tīrtha-kṣetra*, are linked to an important event in the life of a Jaina ascetic or one of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras. *Tīrtha*s are frequently associated with one of the five auspicious occasions in the life of a Jina (*pañca-kalyāṇa*), such as his conception, birth, renunciation, attainment of omniscience or death. Sites sanctified through the occasion of one or several of these events are referred to as *kalyāṇa-kṣetra*s (Plates 67, 68). Most commonly venerated are places sanctified through the birth, enlightenment or final release of a Jina or important teacher. Rajgir in Bihar, for instance is celebrated as the birthplace of Munisuvrata, and Ponnur Hill in Tamil Nadu is the *mokṣa-sthāna* of Kundakunda. Blessed through the departure of countless Jinas and their followers in particular, are Mount Śatruñjaya in Gujarat and Mount Paraśnātha in Bihar. Other pilgrimage sites are considered holy because a miraculous or mythical event is said to have taken place there. These are generally called *atiśya-kṣetra*.[95] Prominent places linked to miraculous acts

---

introduction, Chapter Four.

92 For instance the sites of Pavapuri and Mount Paraśnātha, both located in Bihar, are mutually controlled by both main groups who hold equal jurisdiction over the temples and the sacred land.

93 It is noteworthy that whilst non image-worshipping Jainas do not visit holy places, they go on pilgrimage to pay homage to living Jaina ascetics (Dundas 1992: 188).

94 Eliade has written in much detail on this subject (1987). See also J. Jain's detailed study on the relationship of cosmic and mythical space with ritual space in a specific Jaina context (1977).

95 For a discussion of the various categories of Jaina pilgrimage sites, refer in particular to the publications by Jaini (1990: 205-206) and J. J. P. Jain (1983: 128).

65. Jaina family conducting a group pilgrimage to Mount Paraśnātha.

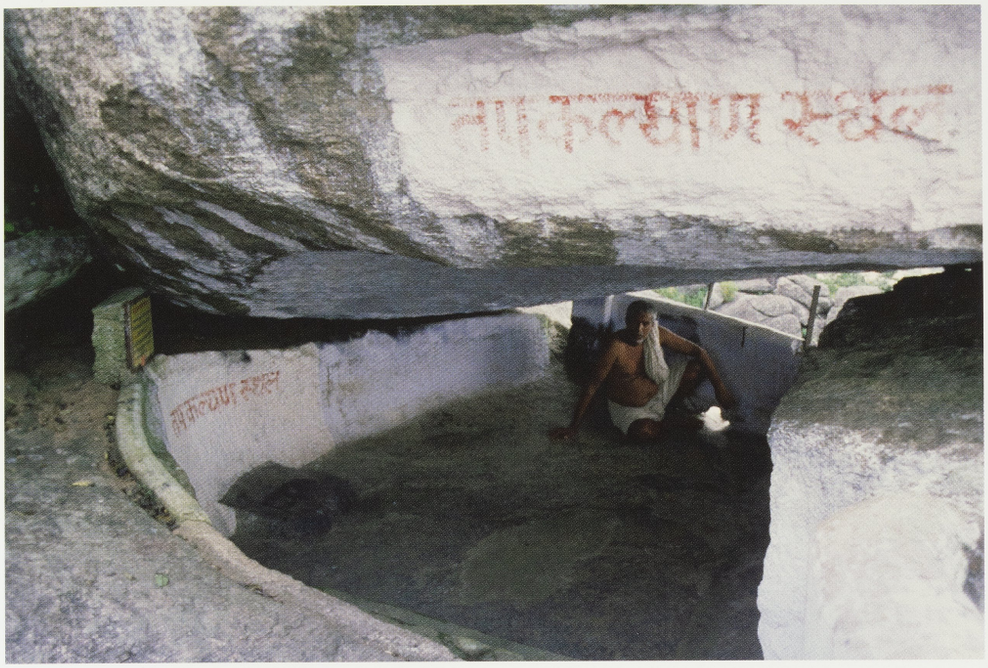
66. Pilgrimage party grouped around an elderly female ascetic on Muktāgiri.







67. 68. *Kalyāṇa-kṣetras*, sacred pilgrimage places commemorating the birth of Mahāvīra at Kundalpur and the enlightenment of Vāsupūjyajī on Mount Mandar near Campapuri.





69. Miraculous events are believed to have taken place on the hill at Pisanhariki Mariya making the place sacred.



70. The striking landscape features of the needle-like summits of the twin peaks of Maṅgī and Tuṅgī attracted the attention of early Jaina ascetics.

are for instance Kundalpur in Bihar, Pisanhariki Mariya in Maharashtra and Papora in Madhya Pradesh (Plate 69). Some sites are also linked to more than one important event. Although the various categories of Jaina *tīrtha*s are all regarded as sacred, the place of final liberation of a Jina (*siddha-kṣetra*, *nirvāṇa-bhūmi* or *mokṣa-sthāna*) is ritually of the highest importance. This is due to the fact that death after the attainment of enlightenment (*kevala-jñāna*) represents the final stage in the spiritual development of a Jina (*mokṣa*). There will be no further rebirth and the Tīrthaṅkara has achieved the final goal of the Jaina religion and the end of his journey through many lives and levels of spiritual advancement.

According to the Śvetāmbara tradition, it was Bharata, the son of the first Tīrthaṅkara Ādinātha (Ṛṣabanātha), who initiated the custom of commemorating the place of death of a Jina through structures housing an image of the deceased.[96] Most *nirvāṇa-bhūmi*s are located on steep hill-tops, and it became customary to build temples at these sites as part of defining and shaping the sacred landscape. Because of the importance of pilgrimage in Jainism and the sanctity attached to many places, large numbers of Jaina sacred sites attract generous donations from devout members of the religious community. The donors usually wish to contribute to the splendour of the sacred *tīrtha*, to partake in its sanctity and to express their detachment from wealth and their willingness to partake in religious giving which creates religious merit. As a consequence, many pilgrimage sites have been transformed into important centres and have become magnets for large numbers of pilgrims from India and abroad. In some cases, geographically nondescript but historically or mythologically important places have

72. *Opposite bottom* In the Pārśvanātha Temple at Jiravala, the most sacred image is housed in a small niche on the outside of the temple, sheltered by a roof. Large crowds assemble in front of the image for *darśana*.

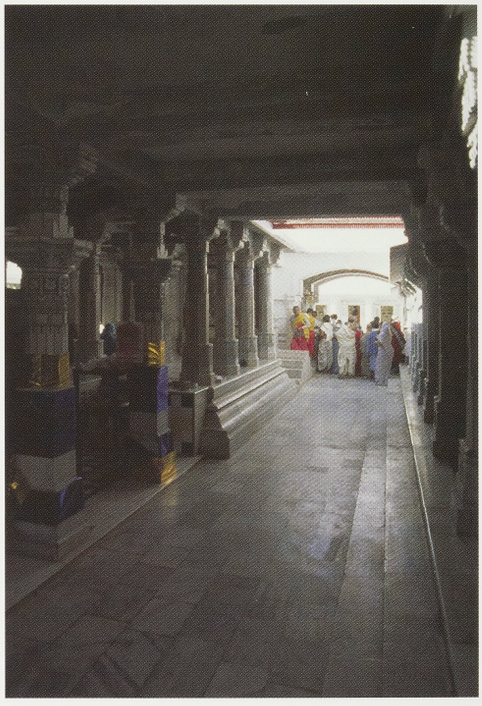
96 On this issue, see for example Granoff (1994: 66) and J. Jain (1977: 36). On Mount Śatruñjaya an architectural structure survives today which Jainas believe to be the original shrine constructed by Bharata to commemorate his father Ṛṣabanātha. However, the small temple has entirely been rebuilt and bears a date of 1685 CE (J. Jain 1980: 47).



been artificially shaped and consciously developed. A clear example of such a conscious transformation is Pavapuri, the site of Mahāvīra's enlightenment, first teaching, final liberation at death, and cremation.[97] In other instances, striking natural sites, such as the twin peaks of Maṅgī Tuṅgī, also known as Maṅgī Taṅgī, in Maharashtra, the quiet river valley at Ranakpur, or the crescent-shaped ridge surrounding the lake at Kundalpur in Madhya Pradesh, have been chosen and transformed into cultural and religious landscapes (Plates 70, 71). The sites usually undergo a series of stages. At first they are recognised and identified as places of religious importance, they are officially validated and named, and consequently transformed into religious centres, which act as markers in Jaina cosmic geography and in the creation of a sense of territory for the followers of the religion.

In addition to *kalyāṇa-kṣetra*s, *atiśya-kṣetra*s, and *siddha-kṣetra*s, there are also Jaina pilgrimage sites which are considered potent because of the presence of a particularly powerful image. In many cases an unusual feature, usually derived from a mythical story connected with the sculpture, accounts for its uniqueness, fame and powerful popularity. The importance of such images often reaches far beyond the local area. A small image of Pārśvanātha, allegedly formed out of river sand and milk, for instance, is the main reason why pilgrims visit the Pārśvanātha Temple at Jiravala in Rajasthan. Although this representation of Jīrāvala Pārśvanātha is regarded as the prominent icon at the site, the unusual image is not housed inside the main shrine. This most potent representation at the site rests in a small niche on the outside of the *mūla-prāsāda*. Today, this special image is protected by a small roof segment, connecting the side of the temple *prāsāda* with the arcade surrounding the temple complex (Plate 72). Another example is the famous Pārśvanātha image in the Mahāvīra Temple

71. At Kundalpur, a crescent-shaped ridge half encloses a large lake and today also the Jaina pilgrimage city.



97 Detailed discussions of the history, significance and development of the site of Pavapuri can be found in Hegewald (forthcoming: b and e).



73. Representation of Nākoḍā Bhairava in the Śaṅkeśvara Pārśvanatha Temple at Tirunelveli in the south of India.

at Seoni, Madhya Pradesh. The sculpture had been commissioned to be enshrined in a Jaina temple in Jabalpur, but was sculpted some distance from the site. After its completion, whilst being transported to Jabalpur, the entourage paused at Seoni. There, the image pronounced that it was not to proceed any further. Eventually a shrine was constructed for it at this site. Nowadays the famous image, around which the sanctity of the place developed, is housed in a smaller shrine of the large and very complex Mahāvīra Temple. The importance of this legendary sculpture, however, is clearly indicated by beautifully decorated silver doors, fitted to its entrance.[98] According to local legend, the image of Ādinātha housed in the main temple at Narlai in Rajasthan came from Palitana, and is believed to have reached the temple through its own efforts, by yogic flying.[99] It is particularly common for such images, which through specific events and legends have been individualised and associated with a specific place, to have been imitated or recreated at other sites. This is particularly often the case with sculptures which are of great sanctity for Rajasthani and Gujarati Śvetāmbara Jainas. Being to a large extent a trading community, Jainas from this area have travelled widely and settled in distant parts of India and abroad. In many instances they have taken images, representing the sacred icons of their homeland, along with them and have enshrined them in temples at far away sites. Innumerable images of Śaṅkeśvara Pārśvanatha and Pañcāsara Pārśvanatha, of Ghaṇṭākarṇa Mahāvīra and Nākoḍā Bhairava found throughout India, follow this scheme (Plate 73).[100]

There are countless stories and legends associated with individual Jaina images accounting for their particular religious power and influence. Especially widespread are legends describing the miraculous rediscovery of images buried in the ground.[101] One of the

98 According to a related story, the temple was constructed by local Muslim families. When the image on its way to Jabalpur suddenly lost its head of its own accord when pausing at Seoni, the local Muslims honoured the sculpture by erecting a shrine to it in order not to be accused of having desecrated the image.

99 Also some ascetics are believed to have such supernatural abilities and the *maṇḍapa* of the same temple shows paintings of *muni*s flying in the sky. Yogi-rāja Vijaya Śānti Sūriśvara, who reached enlightenment in a cave at the sacred Mount Bāmaṇavāḍjī in Rajasthan, for instance, has been credited with the ability to perform yogic or Tantric flying. This is a practice already described in early texts, such as the *Bhagavatī-sūtra* (20.9, sū 684, 794). The latter refers to a certain class of Jaina monks who can fly to Nandīśvara-dvīpa and venerate the sacred images on this mythical island continent (Shah 1955: 52).

100 Such replicas, however, even exist within the closer region of north-western India, as the Śaṅkeśvara Pārśvanātha Temple at Sadri in Rajasthan shows. This temple also has representations of Ghaṇṭākarṇa Mahāvīra and Nākoḍā Bhairava.

101 For discussions of this issue in the available literature, see for instance



74. A hole in the ground marks the entrance to a subterranean cave in which the main sculpture of the Pārśvanātha Temple at Bijapur was kept safe.

earliest legends of this kind relates to an ancient image of Mahāvīra, which was buried in a sandstorm and was excavated only much later.[102] Especially during the period of Islamic incursions in north and central India, the *mūla-nāyaka*s of many Jaina temples were secretly buried in the ground, often below or in close vicinity of the temples. For example the image of Candraprabhu belonging to the Candraprabhu Temple at Candravad in Uttar Pradesh, and the Śāntinātha image of the Neminātha Temple at Nadol in Rajasthan, were later rediscovered buried in the earth. We know of a monk by the name of Samayasundara, who describes many such hidden images being excavated and reinstated during the somewhat more peaceful seventeenth century.[103] Noteworthy is that many such rediscovered images are later only stored in side-chapels or the closed halls of temples, as is the case in the latter temple from Rajasthan. The same applies to the situation at Bijapur. The present temple of Pārśvanātha is a modern reconstruction of a former temple of Mahāvīra, destroyed in the Muslim assaults on the area. Before the destruction, the *mūla-nāyaka* was buried, and a hole in the temple courtyard is still shown to visitors today, as the entrance to the subterranean cave in which the religious figure was kept (Plate 74). Also this old image of Mahāvīra, however, has not been enshrined in the main *garbha-gṛha*, but is kept in the porch of a subsidiary shrine to Pārśvanātha (Plate 75). It is not entirely clear why some of the rediscovered images are not reinstated as *mūla-nāyaka*, and often only continue to play a subordinate role in the temples. Possibly, because of years of neglect and burial below ground, the images are considered to have lost some of their potency, or because newly constructed temple structures have been provided with new icons, the images are kept outside the main temple. Although some of these excavated images are not again provided with a central role in the temple ritual, they play an important part in the historical conscience of the local Jaina community. Desecrated former central ritual images, but also vandalised sculptures which adorned the outer temple walls of Jaina structures, have regularly been placed outside Jaina temples which are again in ritual use. These are employed as symbols of Jaina victory and survival over hostile external threats (Plate 76).[104] Not just at Bijapur, Jaina sculptures were kept in underground caves, or in shrines constructed below ground level. There are many similar examples and it appears that at least some of them remained accessible to worshippers for active veneration in their underground locations during those hostile times.

Dundas (1992: 31, 128, 188).

102 Shah 1974: 86.

103 Dundas 1992: 188.

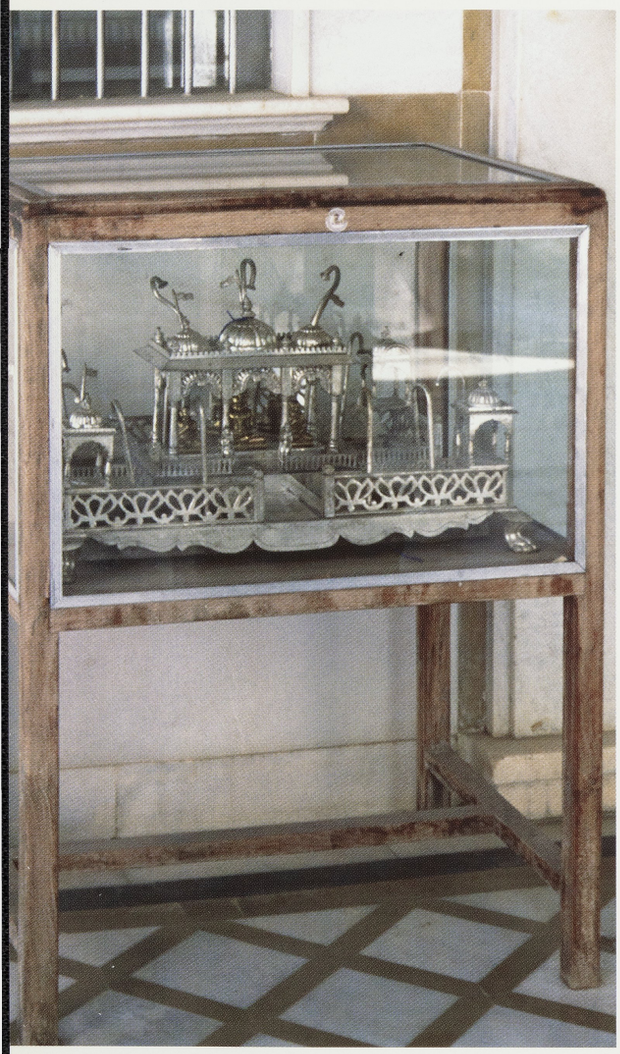
104 This is even more the case with vandalised Jaina images, which are not usually venerated any longer. For a discussion of this issue, see for instance Choudhury (1956: 89). For examples of decapitated sculptures of Jinas, which are kept as reminders of past desecrations, see the temples at Lakkundi and Lakshmeshvar in Karnataka, and at Kausambi in Uttar Pradesh.



75. The old sculpture of Mahāvīra, which was hidden in the subterranean cave and only later rediscovered, has been placed in a subsidiary shrine.



76. Sacred image from a destroyed Jaina temple on Cūlagiri at Bavangaja. The desecrated icon has been positioned outside the new temple and acts as a reminder of past conflict.



77. 78. Metal representations of the Jala Mandir at Pavapuri housed in glass boxes are worshipped in the Jaina temples at Nadol and Margaon.

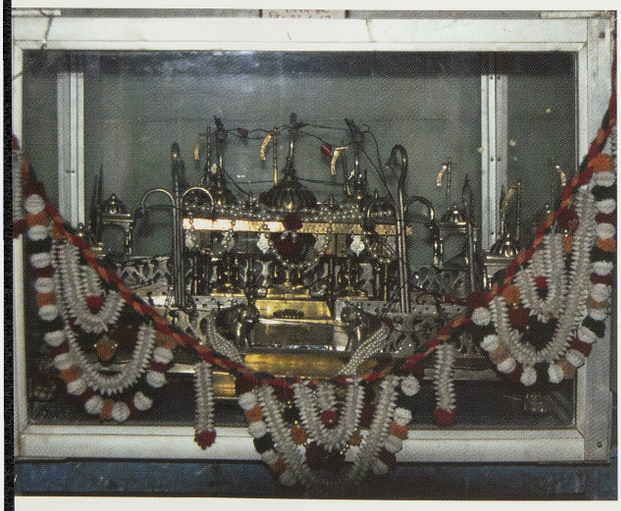
In fact, many icons are still kept and worshipped in underground chambers to the present day. Therefore even today, many Jaina temples throughout India have their main religious image housed below ground. A good example is the Śvetāmbara Ādinātha Temple at Badnavar in Madhya Pradesh, in which the main image of Ādinātha is housed in a subterranean shrine reached by long sets of stairs. Several underground image chambers below the Pārśvanātha Temple on Culagiri at Khaniyan in Rajasthan, house particularly precious images. Also underneath the Ādeśvara Temple in Sirohi in Rajasthan, about one hundred bronze and gilt metal images, are still kept in a subterranean vault.

Other temples have tunnels connecting the inside of the sacred precincts with other temples or safe locations in the surrounding area. During sudden assaults, sacred images and temple treasures could be moved out of the temples via these subterranean channels. Allegedly, the tunnel associated with the Neminātha Temple at Nadol in Rajasthan is twelve kilometres long and leads to neighbouring Narlai. The Śāntinātha Temple at Sanderav has two such underground passages, both between fifteen to twenty kilometres in length. Their destinations, however, are still guarded as well-kept secrets. According to local history, the sacred Jaina images from Valabhi were taken to Prabhasa, Vadhvan, Kasindra, Harjia and Bhinmal, when Muslim armies approached the site in the late eighth century.[105]

In order to prevent the sacrilegious despoliation of images, figural representations of the fordmakers which have not been installed according to *śāstric* conventions and which consequently are not treated as sacred icons, were installed on the ground floors of many Jaina temples. These served as decoys to redirect attention away from the venerated sacred figures installed on obscured floor levels, either below or raised inside the temple towers.[106] In many instances the temple constructions above ground were entirely destroyed, collapsed on top of the buried images and over the centuries were lost and forgotten. Consequently, the discovery of concealed images in the earth frequently leads to fierce battles about the rightful ownership of the land as Jainas take the presence of buried images as an indisputable sign of the former presence of a Jaina temple and of Jaina legal possession of the land. A famous case relates to the pilgrimage centre on sacred Mount Ābū, holy also to Hindus, where the excavation of a buried image provided the Jaina community with the authority to also develop it as a sacred Jaina site. Disputes about the rights to sacred land do, however, not only cause problems between Jainas and other religious groups. Also the different sects of Jainism compete for

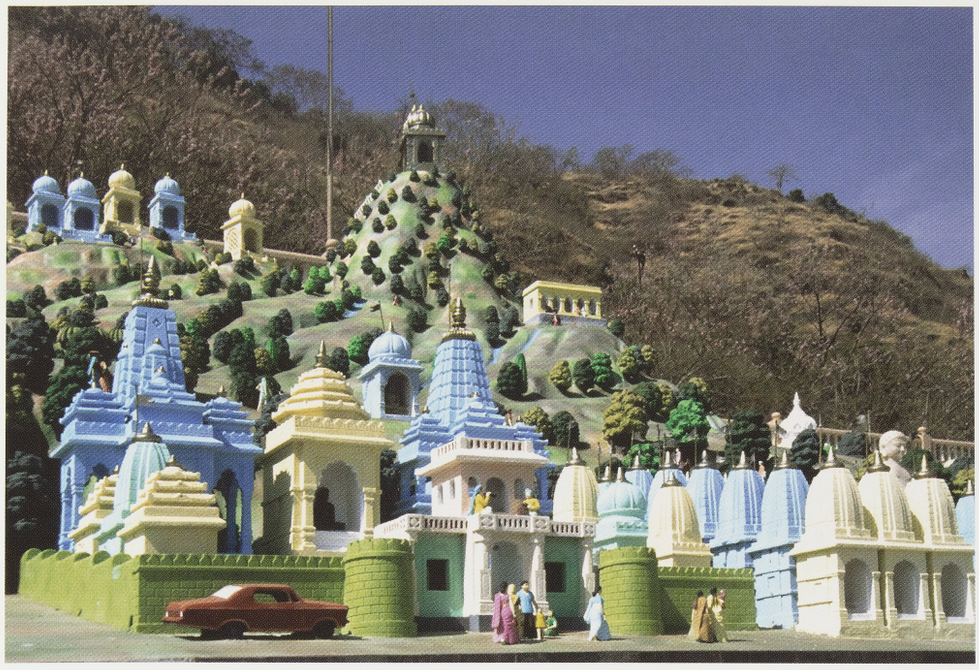
105 Further information on this example can be obtained from Dhaky & Moorti (2001: 9).

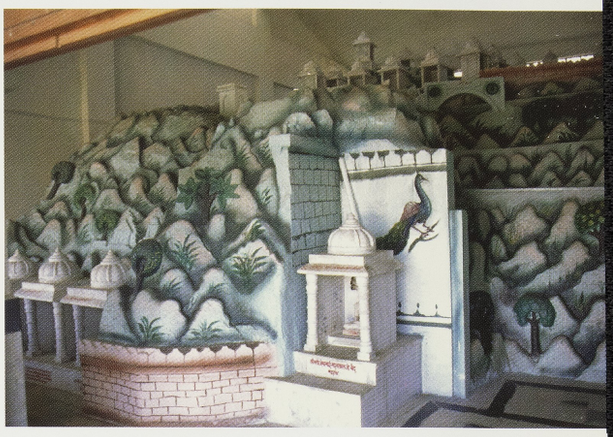
106 This was for instance the case in the Mahāvīra Temple at Chandakheri in Rajasthan, in which the only sanctum containing a properly installed sacred religious image, had been dug into the ground below the temple structure. For further information on this specific temple and the religious significance of its images, see K. C. Jain (1963: 128).



79. Miniature replicas of India's sacred Jaina pilgrimage places are enshrined and venerated below Bāhubali Hill.







80. Reproduction of Mount Sameṭa-śikhara with representations of pilgrims arriving in cars, on display at Kumbhoj.

81. Representation of Mount Paraśnātha in the mythological and cosmological hall at Mandu.

the control of temples and entire pilgrimage centres, leading frequently to sectarian conflict. Especially well-known examples of such disputes surround Mount Girnār and the sacred hill of Bāhubali near Kolhapur in Maharashtra.[107]

The religious significance of a particular pilgrimage site is expressed by the number of pilgrims frequenting it, by the amount of donations and votive offerings made to it, but also by the recreation and imitation of it in the form of images and reproductions at other sites. Important pilgrimage centres have frequently been represented in paintings, in the form of architectural models or the construction of imitation temples or replica hills at other sites. There are for instance countless replicas of the temple at Pavapuri. Most are in miniature shape, made of metal and kept in protective glass cases. The models of the sacred water temple at Pavapuri can be found in Jaina temples throughout India (Plates 77, 78). The marble reproduction of the Jala Mandir at the foot of sacred Mount Bāhubali is still relatively small, but there are many full-scale temples, named *jala mandir*s, housing representations of Mahāvīra and

107 The disputes engulfing these sites have for example been discussed by Dundas (1992: 46-47).

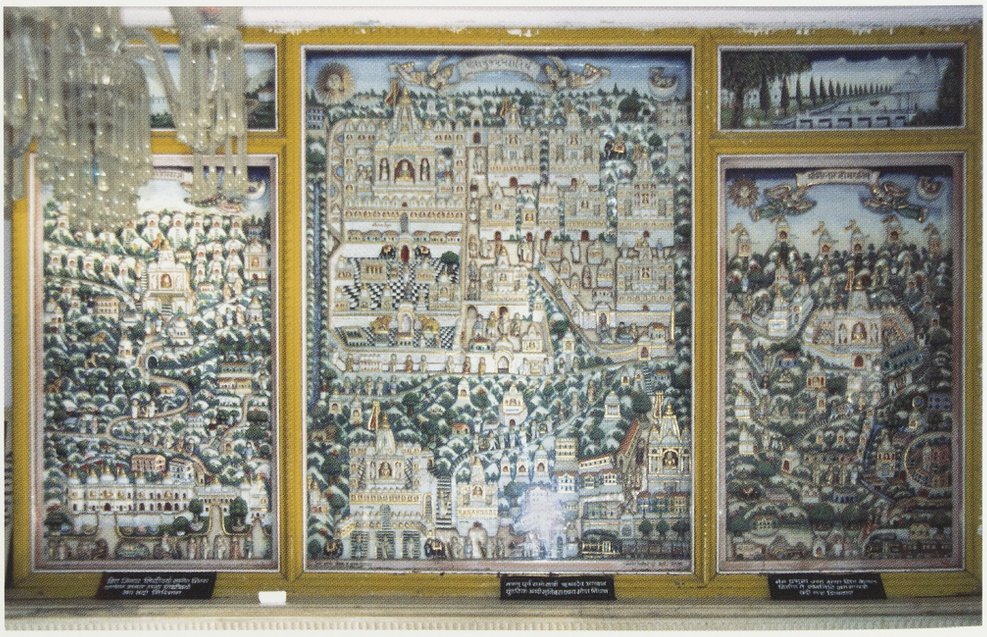




82. 83. Painted pilgrimage banners (*tīrtha-paṭa*s), depicting Mount Girnār and the sacred hills at Rajgir, adorn the walls of the Vāsupūjya Bhagavāna Temple at Khaniyan and the Digambara Jaina Baṛā Temple in Delhi respectively.



84. 85. *Tīrtha-paṭa*s carved onto marble plaques and then painted, line the walls of many Jaina temples, such as those at Vijayavada and Sanderav.



recreating the sacredness of Pavapuri at other sites throughout India. Countless examples of such temples will be discussed in the following regional chapters. Other religious sites which have regularly been replicated, are Mount Śatruñjaya and Mount Paraśnātha. Models of these sacred mountains can greatly vary in scale. Small reproductions displayed in glass cases, but also larger copies of these and other sacred sites can be found on the terraces below sacred Bāhubali Hill (Plates 79, 80) but also at other pilgrimage sites (Plate 81). Even larger is for example the replica of Śatruñjaya recreated outside Delhi which visitors can walk through and where they can enter small shrines imitating the sacred temples of the original site.

In other instances, pilgrimage sites have been represented in different media, such as painting. Especially well-known are the pilgrimage banners, *tīrtha-paṭa*s. Their motifs have either been painted on cloth hangings or temple walls, or they have been carved on marble panels and then displayed in Jaina temples throughout India. Of particular importance for our study are permanently displayed painted (Plates 82, 83) or carved versions of such *paṭa*s (Plates 84, 85). Jaina temples in Bihar regularly have *tīrtha-paṭa*s in stone, displayed on either side flanking the entrances to the central shrines of temples (Plate 86). Whereas such panels from north-western Indian Jaina temples are commonly painted in vivid colours, examples





86. Plain stone *tīrtha-paṭa*s flank the entrance to the central image chamber of the Dharmanātha Temple at Arrah.

87. Śatruñjaya-*paṭa* displayed in the Śvetāmbara temple complex in the fort of Mandu.

from the east of India have usually been left in their unpainted, white or grey natural colour. As part of the installation ritual of painted or carved *tīrtha-paṭa*s in Jaina temples, a mirror is placed in front of the depiction and the reflection in the mirror is provided with a sacred bath. The mirror image represents the painting or relief itself but also the actual pilgrimage place.[108] Due to its long association with Jaina history and the liberation of the Jinas, Jaina teachers and countless followers (e.g. the five Pāṇḍavas), but also because it is considered an eternal place, Mount Śatruñjaya is of utmost importance for Śvetāmbara Jainas. They consider it the holiest of their pilgrimage sites, and countless painted and carved *tīrtha-paṭa*s throughout the country represent the twin peaks and the intermediate valley of this sacred mountain temple city (Plate 87). Pilgrimage to this hill is equivalent to visiting all other sacred Jaina places together.[109]

Through the conversion or translation of the spatial concepts into two dimensional media, the sacred landscape of the pilgrimage place becomes a portable object. Small versions of *tīrtha-paṭa*s can be purchased at pilgrimage sites, and most Jaina households will own printed versions of at least one important place (Plate 88). The printed maps are not simply kept as pilgrimage momentos but are sacred objects which are stored in the house shrines and believers take *darśana* from them in the same way as they would from a figural representation of a Jina.[110] Large paintings on cloth or carved panels in marble are usually only commissioned by larger temple establishments. While marble tablets are permanently displayed inside special shrines, in the *pradakṣiṇā-patha* of temples or in pavilions set up in temple precincts (Plates 89, 90), large-scale painted versions of pilgrimage sites are kept in temple storage rooms and religious libraries (*bhaṇḍāra*s) and are exhibited annually for worship in shrines and specially constructed shelters. The venerated pilgrimage sites, whether the primary 'original' place or a replica constructed elsewhere, provide the Jaina community with a clear framework of firmly placed and recognisable historical sites. Their replication, multiplication and conversion into abstract images, which are used as potent symbols in a religious and domestic Jaina context, have imbued these sites with additional significance and embrace issues of religiosity, historical continuity, and group identity.

Due to the long history of Jainism and its spread throughout the subcontinent, there are vast numbers of sacred Jaina sites in all parts of India. As is common also with other religious groups in South Asia, Jainas have established connections between certain pilgrimage sites and organised them in groups and sets of auspicious numerals. Especially popular are groups of five sacred pilgrimage sites.[111] Jaina pilgrimage places are visited by individuals, families

88. Printed version of a Droṇagiri pilgrimage map for sale to pilgrims at the site.



108 J. Jain 1977: 40.

109 Dundas 1992: 190.

110 Talwar & Krishna 1979: 83.

111 Examples are for instance the five north-western Indian venerated places, including sacred Mount





and large pilgrimage parties. The latter have often been organised and paid for by an important lay member of the community, referred to as *saṅgha-pati* (lord of the assembly), a highly regarded religious title.[112] At times, entire trains are hired and decorated to take large numbers of people on mass pilgrimage. When conducted on foot, also ascetics may join to pay homage to sacred places of Jaina historical and religious importance. Smaller, more localised places may be visited on a regular basis, whilst sites of more universal significance, such as Mount Śatruñjaya in Gujarat, and Mount Paraśnātha (also known as Śrī Sameṭa Śikhara or Śikharjī) in Bihar, are of national and international importance for the Jaina community and are often only visited once in a lifetime. The deep religious significance of Jaina sites, which are closely connected with historic or legendary events in the lives of the Tīrthaṅkaras, is expressed very strongly in the explanation of a Jaina pilgrim talking about the moving experience of visiting the site at Bhamanvad in Rajasthan. It is the site where according to legend Mahāvīra either had an iron rod or blades of grass driven into his ear. A pilgrim, the son of an industrialist from Bangalore who has patronised the construction of a major temple at the site, explained: "we have beautiful temples in Bangalore, but these places here are our holy places like Mecca." They are sites where people today can encounter and partake in religious history and from where they return changed, by having touched the ground a great Jina is believed once to have walked upon.

89. 90. *Opposite* Marble tablets depicting sacred Jaina places are permanently displayed inside the *pradakṣiṇā-patha* and in specially constructed pavilions of Jaina temples at Nadol and Varkana.

Pilgrimages are frequently conducted during what are considered to be particularly auspicious periods or dates relating to specific events in the Jaina religious calendar, such as Mahāvīra's birthday (Mahāvīra-jayantī). Of particular importance is the celebration of Kārtika Pūrṇimā, the fifteenth day of the bright half of the month of Kārtika, which marks the official end of the monsoon period. During this period, ritually defined as a four-month period (*cāturmāsa*), travel has traditionally been severely restricted. The prohibition to travel aims at preventing the killing of animals, especially insects, which are particularly active and restless during this season, and the injury to plants which grow excessively throughout the monsoon.[113] On Kārtika Pūrṇimā, the pilgrimage site of Śatruñjaya officially reopens again to pilgrims and it is customary for mass pilgrimages to this and other famous Jaina pilgrimage sites to re-commence. On this occasion, painted pilgrimage banners depicting Śatruñjaya are publicly put on view in Jaina temples. The popularity of this festival and its particular, although not exclusive, association with Mount Śatruñjaya may account for the large number of Śatruñjaya-*paṭa*s, in contrast to representations of other pilgrimage places depicted on painted cloth banners owned by temple establishments. The painted versions of popular pilgrimage centres are displayed in local Jaina temples for those members of the community who are not able to travel to the actual sacred sites.[114] The *tīrtha-paṭa*s represent surrogates for the elderly, impaired or those who cannot afford to travel long distances, and make the sacred sites accessible to a wider audience.

91. The rainy season, when ascetics reside in the community, provides occasion for the celebration of religious festivals and the reconsecration of sacred temple icons.



Lively celebrations are also associated with the climax of the four-month ascetic rain retreat, called Paryūṣaṇa-parvan by Śvetāmbaras and Daśa-lakṣaṇa-parvan by Digambara Jainas, representing one of the most important festivities of the Jaina ritual year. The auspicious nature of this festival is partly accounted for by the presence of ascetics at many sites, who are not permitted to travel during the rainy season and consequently live in relatively close association with the laity during this period. The auspiciousness and importance of the festival is further increased through the celebration of Mahāvīra's birthday, falling in the middle of the festival period. During the ten day phase of the Digambara celebrations, elaborate temple ceremonies are conducted, which frequently involve the bathing and re-consecration of images (Plate 91).[115] Jainas also participate in certain festivals shared with other religious

---

Ābū and the sites of Achalgarh, Kumbharia, Idar and Taranga. Further sets of sacred sites list the five Śvetāmbaras mountains Mount Śatruñjaya, Mount Girnār, Mount Ābū, Mount Sameṭa-śikhara and Mount Kailāśa (Aṣṭāpada), or another group of five sacred sites known to consist again of Śatruñjaya, Sameṭa-śikhara, Ābū and Girnār but this time connected with Candragiri, one of the two sacred hills at Shravanabelgola. For further details on these lists of five sacred places, see for instance Titze (1998: 154-169), Dundas (1992: 252) and Dey (1927: 10).

112 Dundas 1992: 187.

113 Dundas 1992: 136.

114 On this issue, see for example J. Jain (1980: 50 and 1977: 40), Andhare (1994: 84) and Talwar & Krishna (1979: 83, 86).

115 Śvetāmbaras usually celebrate the festival for nine days only (Cort 2001: 8).

groups in India, such as Dīvālī, which in Jainism commemorates the death and final liberation of Mahāvīra. Worship on ordinary days is conducted on an individual level, whereas the celebration of festivals and the participation in large-scale pilgrimages, provide the opportunity for communal veneration and celebration. This frequently involves religious processions, the attendance of important sermons, and discourses delivered by ascetics. However, also fasting, reflection, confessions and other pious activities designed to generate religious merit and to reflect a temporary abandonment of lay life, play an important role during the celebration of Jaina religious festivals.

JAINA COSMOLOGY

For Jainas, cosmology is not predominantly a science but a soteriological concept. Consequently, it has less to do with the geography of the world, than with the path to salvation. The logic behind this is that in order to leave the physical world, governed by *saṃsāra*, one has to understand the structure of the universe, in order to find the right path to enlightenment (*mokṣa-mārga*). As a result, Jainas have dedicated a large amount of attention to the study and portrayal of their perception of the cosmos.[116] The descriptions of the various cosmic oceans, islands and mountains, of the different levels of the underworld and of countless heavens are exceedingly complicated. For this reason, cosmographical paintings, sculptures as well as large-scale architectural structures, simplifying often complex cosmological concepts, have been created in order to aid the understanding of the devotees. Cosmic temple structures will be examined in the chapter on the architecture of the Jaina temple, Chapter Four, as well as in the regional core chapters. In this brief introduction to the religious background, only the underlying issues of those aspects of cosmology will be discussed, which immediately relate to specific temple buildings mentioned later in this study.[117]

---

116 Although it is difficult to pinpoint the beginning of the creation of a developed cosmology in Jainism, it seems not to have been of great importance during the early phase of the religion (Dundas 1992: 38). Noteworthy, however, is that Jaina cosmology became more and more significant, and is, at least since the fifteenth century, used as a feature of differentiation from other religious groups.

117 For a longer discussion of the issues surrounding cosmic Jaina art and architecture, see also Hegewald (2000: 3-42).

92. 93. The Jaina cosmos is depicted in the shaped of an hourglass, as can be seen at Ponnur, or as a standing cosmic man (*loka-puruṣa*), as shown in a shrine on Mount Śatruñjaya.







94. Wall painting from the Śrī Dhana-vasahī Tunk at Palitana, illustrating the middle world.

According to the Jaina view, the universe is uncreated and eternal, vast but finite. It is known as the *loka*, or more precisely the *tri-loka*, the triple-world. This refers to the basic structure of the universe, which consists of the three major parts of under-world, middle-world and upper-world. The three main cosmic areas have been arranged in the shape of an hourglass, also represented as a cosmic being (*loka-puruṣa*) (Plates 92, 93). The bottom part represents various hells. This is topped by a thin disc, corresponding to a system of oceans and island continents, in the middle of which lies the world of man (Plate 94). Above this are a series of superimposed heavens, culminating in the place of the liberated souls (*siddha-loka*, *īśat-prāgbhārā-bhūmi*). Outside the *tri-loka* is non-space, *aloka-ākāśa*. From about the sixteenth century onwards, there are frequent depictions in Jaina art, painted on paper, cloth and temple walls, or carved onto stone plaques, representing the three layers of the cosmos (Plate 95).[118] The distinctive Jaina depiction of the cosmos as a standing person became so representative of Jainism, that today it frequently is employed as a sign, symbolic of the religion and its distinctive features as a whole. In these semiotic representations, the hourglass design has often been combined with further Jaina symbols, most commonly the open palm of a hand in the lower part and a swastika topped by three dots and a crescent shape above (Plate 96).[119]

Also common are cosmic representations focussing exclusively on the human world, the innermost part of the middle-world. This area is of such importance for human beings, as it is the only place in the vast Jaina universe, in which beings are born who in their present life are capable of attaining omniscience. The central part of the Jaina cosmos is a thin disc, consisting of innumerable concentric islands, separated by rings of oceans (*samudra*). At the core of the flat disc is a solid circular island called Jambū-dvīpa (the rose-apple tree island), in the middle of which rises the central world mountain (Plates 97, 98). This is described as having three main receding tiers and being topped by a self-created or natural Jaina temple (Plate 99). The central mountain is most commonly known as Meru, Sumeru, Sudarśana Meru, Mandara or as Aṣṭāpada.[120] The mountain is located in the central continent or world region (*varṣa*) of the



95. The three main parts of the cosmos, carved on a marble panel and venerated in the Digambara Pārśvanātha Temple at Khaniyan.

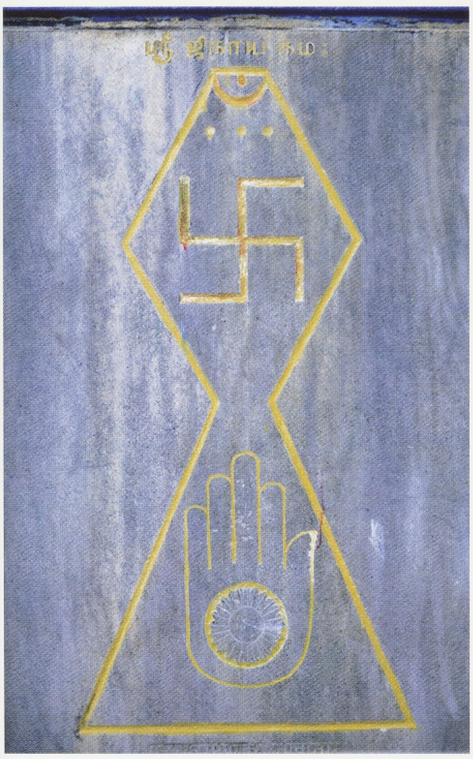
96. The shape of the Jaina cosmos combined with images, such as the open palm of a hand and the swastika, are used as a symbol of Jaina identity at Ponnur Hill.

97. 98. A carving from Palitana and a wall painting from Ponnur depict the central island continent of Jambū-dvīpa.

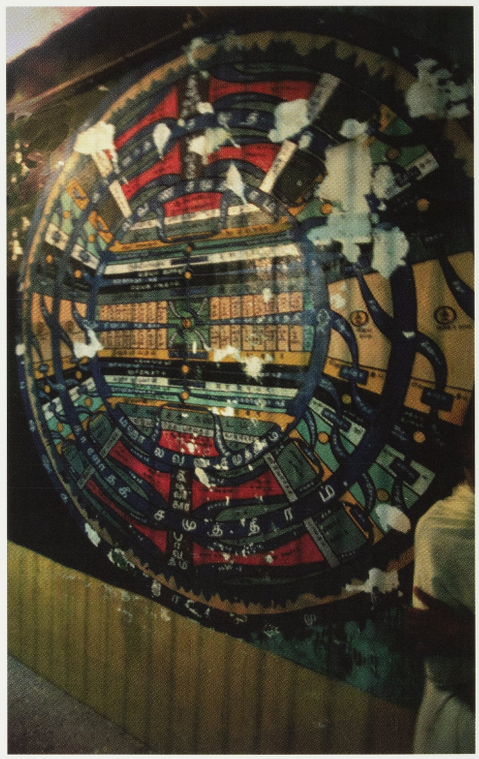
118 Further details on the dating of early cosmological representations can be found in Dundas (1992: 78) and Caillat (1981).

119 The particular significance of these symbols will be discussed in the following chapter on Jaina images and iconography.

120 Meru and Sumeru, however, are the most commonly applied terms to describe the central world mountain. Meru is Sanskrit and Sumeru (or Sineru) derives from Pali literature (Gombrich 1975: 119). For the usage of the other terms, see for instance Lishk (1998: 20, 27), Shah (1955: 117),













island of Jambū, named Mahā-videha or Videha, and represents the central axis of the universe (*axis mundi*). The Mahā-videha *kṣetra* is further subdivided into four countries. These are Purva-videha to the east, Avara-videha to the west, Deva-kūra to the south and Uttara-kūra to the north. In each of the latter two continents grows a large cosmic tree. That in Deva-kūra (the *kūra* of the gods) is called the Śālmalī or Kūḍasāmalī and the tree in Uttara-kūra (the northern *kūra*) is referred to as the Jambū-vṛkṣa.[121] It is this tree, after which the entire central world island is named. These trees are *kalpa-vṛkṣa*s, wish-fulfilling trees, which are typical of the *bhoga-bhūmi*s where life is effortless but Jinas cannot be born and liberation cannot be attained.[122] Both regions together are said to contain ten types of *kalpa-vṛkṣa*s. The innermost part of Jambū-dvīpa is surrounded by six regions which are separated from each other by long chains of mountains (*vāsadhara-pavvaya*), interspersed with lakes (*mahā-ddaha*). These accommodate floating lotus-shaped islands. Various rivers spring from these raised lakes and eventually flow into the Lavaṇa Samudra, the Sea of Salt, which surrounds the central island of Jambū on all sides. Beyond this ring of water are innumerable concentric rings of land, separated by further ring-shaped oceans.

Human beings are not only believed to inhabit Jambū-dvīpa, but also the next island ring of Dhātakī-khaṇḍa-dvīpa and the inner half of Puṣkara-vara-dvīpa, the third island continent from the centre.[123] These are referred to as the Aḍhāī-dvīpa, the two and a half islands, or more generally as the *manuṣya-loka*, the human universe. In addition to depictions focusing merely on the innermost island continent of Jambū-dvīpa, representations of the Aḍhāī-dvīpas are common-place (Plate 100). The two and a half islands are *karma-bhūmi*s, regions of labour, where one has to work for one's living but where escape from the cycle of rebirth (*mokṣa*) can be achieved. Each continent of the Jaina cosmos is described as having an elaborate system of rivers and lakes, as well as innumerable mountains, forests, gardens and temples to the Jinas. The version provided above is only a very brief and simplified description of the middle-world but many of the diverse elements mentioned here have been given visual shape in Jaina art and architecture, as will be shown in Chapter Four.

In order to provide clear markers of Jaina identity and to advertise or underline their sectarian denomination, the entrance porches of innumerable Jaina temples throughout the subcontinent display carved panels, wall paintings or iron gates depicting the entire cosmos, the innermost island of Jambū-dvīpa or the large circular disc of the entire middle-world (Plates 101-103).[124]

Depictions of the middle world always centre around Mount Meru, but the central world peak is not the only sacred mountain which has been portrayed in Jaina cosmological literature and represented in art. There are also other examples, usually referred to more generally as *meru*s or *parvata*s, which play an important role in cosmological descriptions. There are further sacred hills and mountain chains located on Jambū-dvīpa, and also on adjacent island rings, and also sets of venerated hills, such as the *pañca-meru*. There are many visual images representing such sacred mountains in Jaina art.

In paintings and sculpture, depictions of the *meru* usually follow a simplified and schematised formula. In the standard version, it consists of three truncated cones, each one smaller and both narrower and flatter than the one below it. These have been placed one on top of the other. At the apex is a throne, usually sheltered by a pavilion or small shrine,

---

Schubring (1995: 217) and Singh (1982: 154).

121 For further details, see Lishk (1998: 21) and Schubring (1995: 217).

122 The *bhoga-bhūmi*s are the regions of enjoyment, where human life is always full of happiness and where all desires are granted by the *kalpa-vṛkṣa*s. Because such an environment, however, is not conducive to asceticism, Tīrthaṅkaras cannot be born in this part of the cosmos. For additional details, see Amar (1975: 518), S. K. Jain (1997: 61) and Babb (1998: 40). Outside the *bhoga-bhūmi*s lie the *karma-bhūmi*s.

123 Half-way across the island of Puṣkara-vara-dvīpa is an impassable mountain ring, called Mānuṣottara Parvata. Beyond this only so-called *tiryañca*s (sub-humans or animals) reside and no human being can survive.

124 Further striking examples can for instance be seen in the Ādinātha Temple at Narlai, Rajasthan, in the Mahāvīra Temple at Sholapur, Maharashtra, and in various temples at Ponnur, Tamil Nadu, and Mudabidri, Karnataka.





101.-103. Representations of the cosmic man are used as markers of Jaina identity above the gateway, next to the entrance, and in the porch of Jaina temples at Arrah, Patna and Melsittamur.

accommodating a Jina image.[125] The upper part of the arrangement is usually referred to as *cūlikā*. Painted representations of *meru*s have not only been preserved in manuscript collections and painted on palm leaf. There are more sizable sheets of paper which have been adorned with this cosmological motif. We also have a large number of cosmic mural paintings adorning the walls of temple complexes. Amongst the circa eighteenth-century wall paintings in the Śrī Agravāla Digambara Jain Temple in Delhi for example, is a beautiful representation of a *meru* (Plate 104).[126] Also the Śvetāmbara temple complex in the fort at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh, has a large cosmological hall with modern wall paintings, depicting amongst others various aspects of the *meru*.[127] When translated into sculpture, *meru* representations can either be relatively small, about one metre high and made of bronze, or they can be larger sculptural arrangements, usually fashioned in white marble. Small metal sculptures topped by Jina images are commonly kept in side chapels, antechambers, the *maṇḍapa*s immediately outside the main *garbha-gṛha* or on a small altar or table below a major figural image. The larger stone representations and their figural images are usually venerated as the main object of worship in a Jaina temple (Plates 105-107). A beautiful small bronze sculpture of a *meru*, which is crowned by a seated Jina protected under a small glass dome, is venerated in the south-eastern shrine on the first floor of the Mahāvīra Digambara Jaina Temple at Seoni in Madhya Pradesh (Plate 108).

Even more common than a representation of a single *meru* cast in metal are those of the five *meru*s, the *pañca-meru*. According to cosmic Jaina literature, the *pañca-meru* are located on the innermost two and a half island rings of the human world, the *manuṣya-loka*. The five hills are Mount Sudarśana at the centre of Jambu-dvīpa, Mount Vijaya in the east and Mount Acala in the west of Dhātakī-khaṇḍa-dvīpa, and Mount Mandara in the east and Mount Vidyunmāli in the west of Puṣkara-vara-dvīpa. In a Śvetāmbara context, and also when shown as part of overall cosmic depictions, the five sacred hills are usually arranged in a horizontal line (Plates 109, 110). Digambara temples in central, and particularly those in southern India, however, frequently house bronze representations where the five mountains are arranged vertically, one on top of the



99. *Opposite top* The three tiers of the *meru*, topped by a Jina temple, illustrated in a mural from Mandu.

100. *Opposite bottom* Joint representation of Jambū-dvīpa and the Aḍhāī-dvīpa, the innermost two and a half islands of the Jaina cosmos.

125 For detailed textual descriptions of the *meru*, see for example Caillat & Kumar (1981: 30, 130, 156, 160). The same monograph also contains a large number of reproductions of *meru* paintings.

126 In addition to its *meru* wall painting, the main shrine of the Śrī Agravāla Digambara Jaina Temple, a courtyard-house type temple in central Delhi, also houses a three-dimensional *meru* sculpture. The *meru* of Candraprabha accommodates a single sculpture of the eighth Jina positioned at the summit of the three-tiered mountain base.

127 For published reproductions of the *meru* painting in the cosmological hall in the compound of the Śvetāmbara temple complex at Mandu, see Hegewald (2000: 18, Fig 10), and for the one from the Delhi temple, see Hegewald (2007, fig. 1).



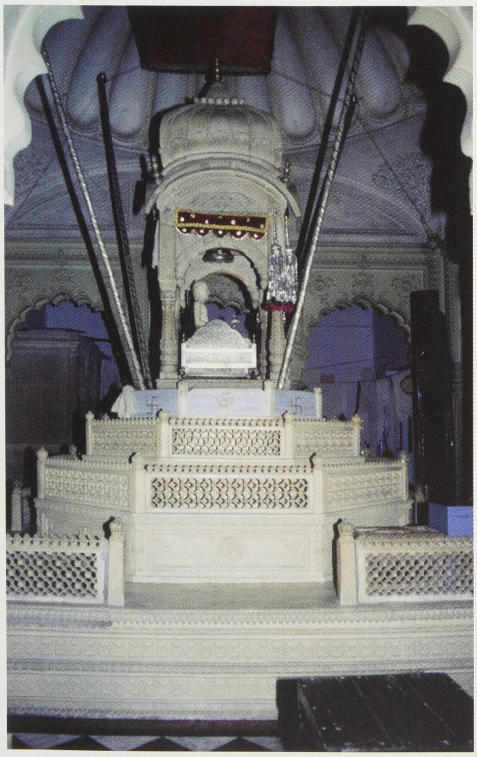
104. Wall painting of the *meru* in the Śrī Agravāla Digambara Jaina Temple at Delhi.

105. Large white marble *meru* representation, supporting the main religious icon (*mūla-nāyaka*) of Pārśvanātha at Allahabad.

106. Black Jina seated at the summit of the *meru* pyramid and under an elaborate pavilion roof in the Ādinātha Temple at Allahabad.

107. The *meru* of Pārśvanātha, housed in one of the multiple image chambers in the main Jaina temple at Jabalpur, is made of stone but has been painted.

other. The bronzes consist of five superimposed sections. Those common to southern Indian Jaina temples are slightly conical and taper towards the apex, while those from central Indian Jaina temples usually have straight sides (Plates 111, 112). The vertically aligned sections create tall tower-like sculptures. At the bottom they are raised on a base, and at the summit they are crowned by a domed or circular feature with a pointed finial which frequently represents the fifth segment of the five layered mountains. Every well-preserved traditional south Indian Digambara Jaina temple has at least one *pañca-meru* bronze. They are particularly common in the region of Tamil Nadu, where this theme has also been represented in stone carvings (Plate 113). Good examples from central India can be seen inside the Digambara Baṛā Jaina Temple in the centre of Jabalpur, and in the Mahāvīra Digambara Jaina Temple at Seoni, both in Madhya Pradesh. Whilst such *meru* representations from central India do not usually contain any figural images, *pañca-meru* bronzes from the south have commonly been decorated with







small Jinas. Shah sites two unusual instances, where five sets of vertically aligned *caturmukha* images have been employed to represent the *pañca-meru*. The first example is housed in the Daṇḍianu Dehrā, a Digambara shrine at Surat in Gujarat, and the second is to be found in the *hasti-śālā* of the Luṇa-vasahī on Mount Ābū in Rajasthan.[128] The latter *meru*, a rare example from the Śvetāmbara tradition, is made of white marble. The Ādinātha Temple at Ranakpur also houses a similar example (Plate 114).

It is, however, more common for *meru* sculptures in stone not to display superimposed *caturmukha* images and to be housed in the main shrine of a temple. Such stone representations are particularly common in the north of India and show a large range of variations. In most instances, they support the *mūla-nāyaka*, the main ritual image of a temple. In the *meru* paintings and the single or *pañca-meru* bronzes, the *meru* itself is the main object of veneration. In larger stone arrangements, the pyramidal *meru* bases are somewhat subordinated and reduced to the function of providing an elaborate pedestal or sculpted altar, displaying the main image.[129] Their presence and importance in such sculptural constellations, however, is clearly acknowledged in the name given to such arrangements. They are usually referred to as the '*meru* of…' followed by the name of the central image seated at the apex. Most examples are made of white marble and have three octagonal terraces frequently delineated by low *jālī* screen-like balustrades of the same material. A simple example of this type is the *meru* of Ṛṣabhdeva in the Digambara Jaina Baṛī Mandir at Namdev Chowk in Sanganer, Rajasthan. There is quite a close relationship between stone representations of the *meru* and of *samavasaraṇa*s which are also frequently housed in the shrines of Jaina temples. It is, however, more common for *meru* sculptures to be octagonal, and in rare instances to have a square base, whereas three-dimensional *samavasaraṇa*s tend mostly to be round. Additionally, *meru*s are usually topped by a single main image, while it is an important aspect of the *samavasaraṇa* to support a fourfold (*caturmukha*) image.

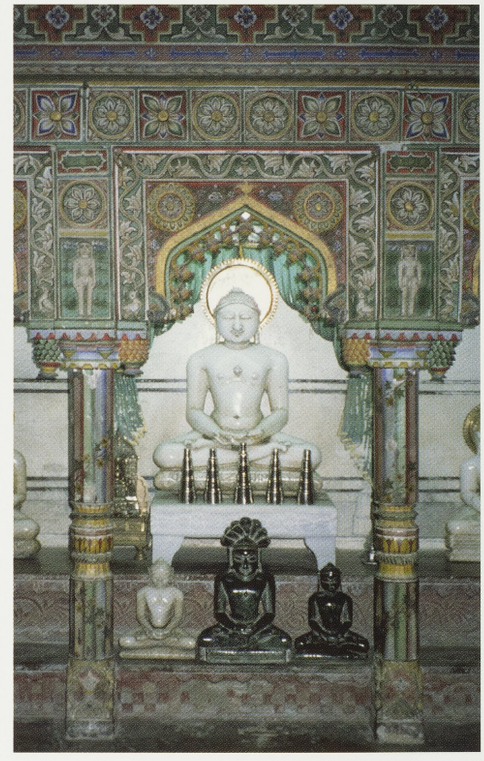


108. Small metal sculpture of a *meru*, venerated in a shrine on the upper floor level of the Mahāvīra Digambara Jaina Temple at Seoni.

128 See the discussion by Shah (1955: 117–118, fig. 78; 1987: 21, fig. 184). Somewhat confusing is that although in the text, Shah describes the images as *pañca-meru*s, the caption of fig. 184 identifies the structure as Mount Meru. Also the date of installation, CE 1456, has once been converted to VS 1514 and in the other instance to VS 1513. For a detailed description of the sculpture from the sacred mountain Ābū, see also Singh (1982: 106).

129 Cort describes these bases or altars in one of his papers and relates them to the throne of a king. Seated on his throne, the Jina is represented as the king of the three worlds who has chosen to become an ascetic and lord of the universe instead of a worldly ruler (2001a: 33).





109. 110. Representations of the five sacred mountains (*pañca-meru*) arranged in a line and displayed in temples at Ponnur and Sanganer.







111. 112. South and central Indian versions of the *pañca-meru*, from Venkundram and Seoni, in which the hills have been stacked up in the form of towers.

113. Relief carving from Melsittamur, depicting the *pañca-meru* in the common south Indian fashion.

Different from the standardised representations of the *meru* and the *pañca-meru*, discussed so far, are depictions of Mount Aṣṭāpada, recognised generally as Mount Kailāśa in Jainism, and also associated with Mount Śatruñjaya in Gujarat.[130] Aṣṭāpada is the place of Ṛṣabha's enlightenment and cremation, and the place where Bharata erected the first temple to commemorate the glory of the Jinas. In order to protect the sacred site, he made the upper part of the mountain straight and steep and surrounded the bottom with 'eight steps' or enormous terraces (*aṣṭa pada*), impossible for human beings to climb.[131] The specific features, which gave the hill its name, have been represented in artistic representations of the sacred mountain. A sculptural image of this hill is for example venerated in the Ādinātha Temple at Ayodhya. Sculptural as well as painted representation of the sacred mountain often depict human beings on its lower section. These are shown trying to climb the hill. This episode relates to a story in which Mahāvīra tells his main disciple Gautama that the person who can reach the summit of Aṣṭāpada will attain immediate enlightenment. Following this, Gautama Gaṇadhara climbs the invincible rock, which is also being attempted by some *brāhmaṇ* ascetics (*tāpasa*s). Although these do not manage to reach the summit, they eventually gain liberation through the sight of Gautama's enlightened self. In contrast to *meru*s and *pañca-meru*s, of which sculptural representations in particular are very common, the majority of Aṣṭāpada depictions are two-dimensional in the form of temple wall paintings or carved and painted relief panels, usually displayed in combination with *tīrtha-paṭa*s (Plates 115-116). Most of them come from a Śvetāmbara background.[132]

The central island of Jambū-dvīpa is surrounded by an infinite number of concentric island rings. We have referred to Dhātakī-khaṇḍa-dvīpa and Puṣkara-vara-dvīpa, the second and the third cosmic islands on which the four mountains of the sacred group of *pañca-meru* are located. Most texts on Jaina cosmology provide the names for at least the sixteen innermost and the sixteen outermost concentric island rings.[133] The only other island, apart from Jambū-dvīpa, however, which has frequently been represented in sculptural and architectural form,

130 The close connection between these sacred mountains has for instance been discussed by Bhattacharya (1974: 21).

131 Additional information on the structure of Mount Aṣṭāpada can be found in Shah (1955: 116).

132 This issue has also been discussed by Shah (1955: 117).

133 For further information on this issue, see for example Lishk (1998: 16-18).

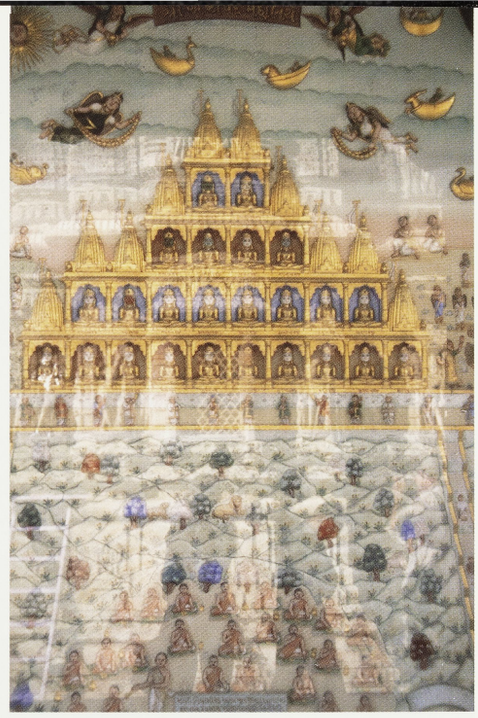


114. Large-scale Śvetāmbara representation of the five sacred mountains from the Ādinātha Temple at Ranakpur.

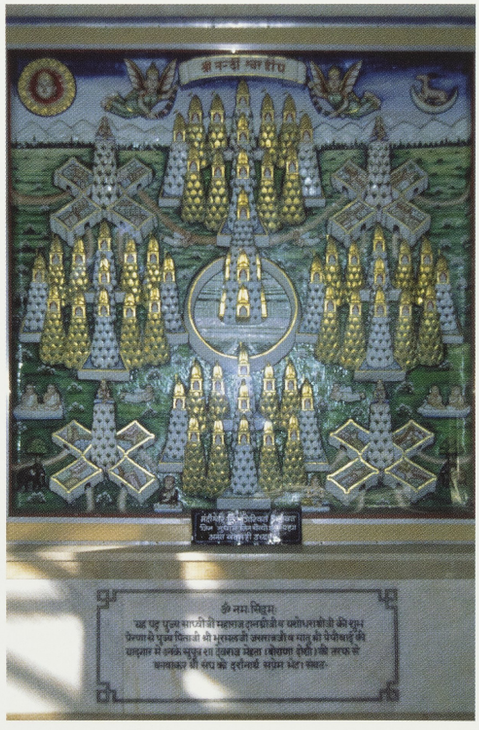
is the eighth island from the centre named Nandīśvara-dvīpa. Also on this island, there are a large number of sacred mountains and shrines dedicated to the Jinas. There are four groups of thirteen mountains each, located in the four cardinal directions. At the summit of each is a self-created natural Jaina temple, leading to a total of fifty-two sacred mountains and temples of the Jinas on the island of Nandīśvara.[134] There are four Añjana Parvatas, mountains of black

134 The Jaina temples are all said to have one hundred and eight *garbha-grha*s or platforms, each housing or supporting an image of one of the Jinas. It is noteworthy that many Jaina temples have large numbers of image chambers and that in the north-west of India in particular, there are temples which are surrounded by either one hundred and eight or fifty-two subsidiary shrines. These are representative of simplified Nandīśvara-dvīpa arrangements and are known by the same name. Temple complexes following this complex layout will be discussed in Chapter Five.





115. 116. Aṣṭāpada images carved in stone and painted, which are displayed behind glass in Jaina temples at Varkana and Sadri.



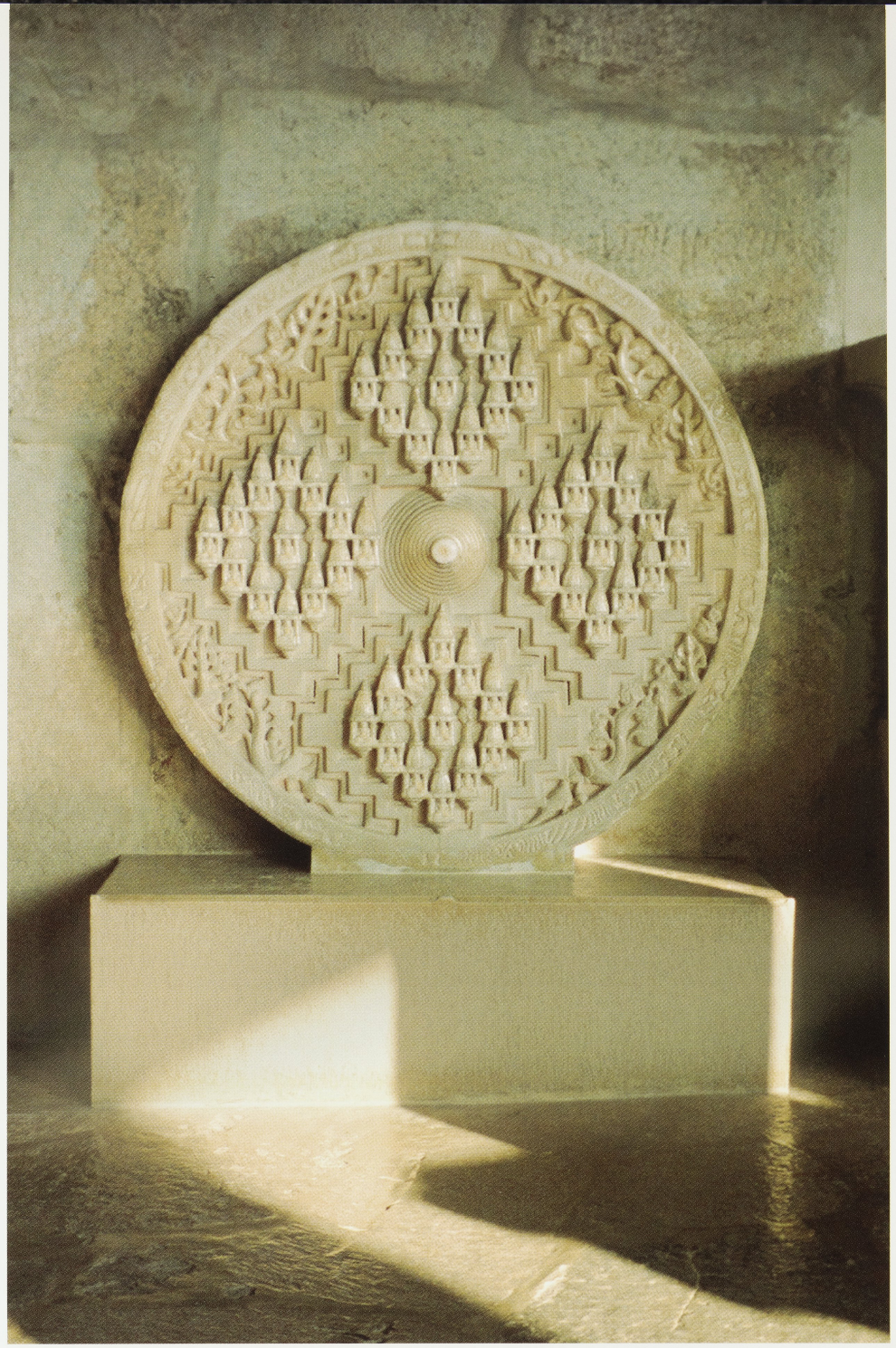


117. 118. Murals from Sanderav and Narlai, illustrating the layout of the fifty-two hills on Nandīśvara-dvīpa.

colour, which are located at the four cardinal points of direction. Each of these four peaks is again surrounded by four crystal or curd-coloured mountains, the Dadhi-mukha Giris, and by another eight golden mountains, the Ratikara Giris. All together, they create four groups of thirteen mountain peaks each, located in the four cardinal directions.[135] Painted representations found in temples throughout India depict the stylised arrangement of sacred hills and shrines (Plates 117-118).

Many Jaina temples, in the north of India also contain stylised diagrammatic representations of the eighth island carved on circular stone plaques. These are referred to as *citra-paṭa*s and usually depict a central mountain hub surrounded by four lozenge or diamond-shaped groups of thirteen pavilions, frequently surrounded by trees or foliage

135 This brief account is based on descriptions in the *Triṣaṣṭi-śalākā-puruṣa-caritra*, the *Harivaṁśa* of Jinasena, the *Tri-loka-sāra* of Nemicandra, the *Sthānāṅga-sūtra* and the *Āvaśyaka-cūrṇī* as summarised by Shah (1955: 119-120) as well as on the descriptions by Kirfel (1990: 253-257), Lishk (1998: 54-57) and Amar (1975: 525-529). There is a certain amount of variation between the different accounts listed here.





119. 120. Carved diagrams of Nandīśvara-dvīpa from temples at Ranakpur and Kumbharia.

(Plates 119-120). Although such sculptural representations show the island of Nandīśvara as a solid disc, texts describe the island as a ring. Only the central continent of Jambū-dvīpa is a solid land mass and all the other islands surrounding this inner space are ring-shaped, alternating with and interspersed by circular oceans. The presence of the next inner six island rings located in between Nandīśvara and Jambū-dvīpa is not usually depicted in Jaina sculpture and architecture, although cosmological paintings from western India, dating largely from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, may show simplified versions of the innermost island and ocean rings. Nandīśvara-dvīpa panels, however, usually have a representation of the central world mountain or the *pañca-meru* at the centre. As a consequence, either the central island of Jambū-dvīpa, or the three innermost islands of the Jaina cosmos, carrying the five *meru*s, are at least symbolically represented by the presence of one or five mountain images in the art. Another possible interpretation for the depiction of mountains on a technically ring-shaped and therefore hollow island, is the repeated statement in Jaina cosmology that each island continent is twice the size of the preceding one but has an identical arrangement.[136] As

136 See for instance K. S. Jain (1997: 60).





121. 122. Three-dimensional Digambara representations of Nandīśvara-dvīpa from Ellangadu and Melsittamur.

a result, there should be a mountain in the centre of each island which, however, is difficult to imagine on an island ring and is therefore less convincing as an explanation. Since all islands, however, enclose and surround Sumeru, they all must have it as their centre. Representations in south Indian Digambara shrines are even less closely related to textual descriptions or painted versions. These usually are in metal and have a three-dimensional, pyramidal shape (Plates 121-123).[137] Similar to metal representations of the *pañca-meru*, Nandīśvara-dvīpa bronzes also belong to the standard ritual equipment of developed Digambara Jaina temples in the south of the subcontinent.

The material presented in this chapter has illustrated that Jainism is an Indic religion, which is part of the wider Indian religious sphere, from which it has absorbed ideas and to which it has contributed, but that nevertheless Jainism is a distinct religious tradition. There are similarities with other Indian faiths, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Despite shared aspects, however, Jaina ritual practices are clearly delineated. Of particular importance for the main focus of this study, are the distinct Jaina view of images and their specific form of veneration, the evolved form of religious giving in Jainism which leads to constant additions of religious icons and further building elements, the emphasis on the rite of *pradakṣiṇā* which strongly shapes the layout of sacred architecture, the position of Jaina mythological stories which have been translated into art and architecture, as well as the development of an evolved cosmology, leading to temple forms entirely unknown to other religious groups in the subcontinent. The following chapter will focus in more detail on the various objects of veneration, which form the centre of attention in a Jaina religious context, and around which the architecture of the Jaina temple has evolved.

123. *Opposite* Nandīśvara-dvīpa pyramid in the Ādinātha Temple at Ponnur.

137 Further published reproductions of south Indian Nandīśvara-dvīpa bronzes can be found in Jain & Fischer (1978: 19) and in Shah (1955: plate XXIV, fig. 63).

