

## Two Kumāravihāras

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The Solāṅkī emperor Kumārapāla of Aṇahillapāṭaka (C.E. 1144-1174) is reported in the medieval Śvetāmbara Jaina writing of Gujarat to have built 32 Jaina temples, each named after him as 'Kumāravihāra.'<sup>1</sup> While Kumārapāla did show strong leanings toward Jainism—Jaina sources address him as 'Paramārḥata'—, he had not ceased to be 'Paramamāheśvara' on that account. For he had built the temple of Kumārapāleśvara in his capital and replaced the preceding building of Someśvara/Somanātha at Prabhāsa by a new and grandeur building, the Kailāsa-Meru *prāsāda*, in its place in C.E. 1169.<sup>2</sup>

At least 16 temples going by the appellation 'Kumāravihāra' have been traced from the Jaina literary sources.<sup>3</sup> It is a sad fact of history that the medieval Jaina chronicles and allied sources imputed desecration, even plausibly demolition, of several of these buildings by his nephew and successor Ajayapāla whose regime was very short, of three years.<sup>4</sup> In our own times, only three 'Kumāravihāras' are extant, the one enshrining Jina Ajitanātha at Taranga (Tāraṅgā, north Gujarat). It is a grand Meru class of building—and two in Rajasthan, namely the one in Achalagadh (Acalagadh, Mt. Abu (Ābū), and the other at Jalor (Jhalor, ancient Jābālipura).<sup>5</sup> These last two temples relatively are less known and hence dwelt upon in the present brief article.

**To the temples.** The Kumāravihāra at Achalagadh seemingly had escaped desecration by Islamic invaders when other temples in Dilwara (Delvādā, medieval Devakulapāṭaka), Mt. Abu, had suffered, that was in or before C.E. 1322. The Achalgadh temple's exterior images, of course, escaped mutilation on account of its odd location which helped it remain hidden behind a rocky extension and hence was side-tracked. However, it did not escape desecration and some damage caused to be done in the interior by Pralhādanadeva, the Paramāra ruler of Palanapur (Pālaṇapura, medieval Pralhādanapura), probably at the behest of his overlord, Ajayapāla.<sup>6</sup>

The temple faces east. It was sacred to Jina Mahāvīra as some medieval notices mention.<sup>7</sup> The temple consists of the three customary components in a linear layout of the

Jaina convention, namely the *prāsāda* (temple proper containing within it the *garbhagr̥ha*, sanctum) (Figs. 1.1-1.4), followed by the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* (closed hall) (Fig. 1.6), and the *navacaūkī* (*nava-catuṣkyā*) (Fig. 1.7), the latter articulated to the closed hall. The building, in elevation, consists of a *mahāpīṭha* (base), the *maṇḍovara* (wall proper) and a much simplified, unembellished and hence a bland *saṁvaraṇā* or bell-roof class of superstructure. The *mahāpīṭha* consists of three *bhittas* (plinth courses), *jāḍyakumbha* (inverted *cyma-recta*), *grāsapaṭṭī* (band of *grāsas* or gorgonoid heads), *kaṇṇikā* (sharp-edged arris), *antarapaṭṭa* (counter sunk minor band), *chajjikā* or *chādyakī* (simulated rooflet), *gajapīṭha* (band showing row of elephants frontwise), *siṁhapīṭha* (band showing lion figures in profile with heads turned toward the onlooker), and *narapīṭha* (course showing human figures in profile with heads in most cases turned toward the spectator). (At the central offsets, the *gajapīṭha* shows two elephants in profile with intertwined trunks: Fig. 1.5).<sup>9</sup>

Above the *mahāpīṭha* rises the *maṇḍovara* or wall proper which is composed of three major divisions, namely the *vedibandha* (moulded surbase), *janṅhā* (figure-bearing section) and *chādyā* (here corrugated cornice-roof). Above this starts the dull *saṁvaraṇā*, earlier noted.

The *vedibandha* section is composed of the usual five mouldings, the *khura* (hoof-moulding), *kumbha* (symbolic and schematized vase),<sup>10</sup> *kalaśa* (compressed globular pitcher-formed *torus*) decorated with *maṇibandha* (jeweled ornamental central motif and rounded pearl-string bands), next the *antarapaṭṭa* which is just a sunk string course showing *ratnas* or schematized diamonds in series. This moulding is topped by a *chajjikā*.

The *janṅhā* starts from a *mañcīkā* (pedestal), *ratnapaṭṭīkā* (decorated with schematized diamonds)<sup>11</sup> followed in the upper register formed by a series of *khattakas* or niches showing Dikpālas (Regents of the Directions) at the bifacial *kaṇṇa*-angles, *sāsanadevatās* (defender-deities of the Jaina sacred places, at the *pratirathas* (facets on either side of the *kaṇṇas*) and *surasundarīs* (heavenly damsels), at the *uparathas* (minor vertical sections neighbouring the flanks of the *bhadra* or central offset). The large *khattakas* at the three *bhadras* of the wall today are vacant but once must have contained the seated Jina figures.

Above the staggered *udgama* (pediment) of the *janṅhā*-niches occurs a minor *grāsapaṭṭī* capped by *bharaṇī* (ribbed echinus). Then comes *chajjikā* and an *antarapaṭṭa* or a sunk *ratnapaṭṭī* followed by a *chajjikā* and once again a sunk *ratnapaṭṭī*. This is followed by a plain *cyma recta* moulding topped by an uncorrugated *khuracchādyā* (awning).

The *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* as also the preceding *kapilī* or the conjoining portion of the wall coming after the *prāsāda*, show the continuation of all of the mouldings of the *prāsāda* except that the *bhadrāvalokana* (projecting central balcony) of the hall is blind although it

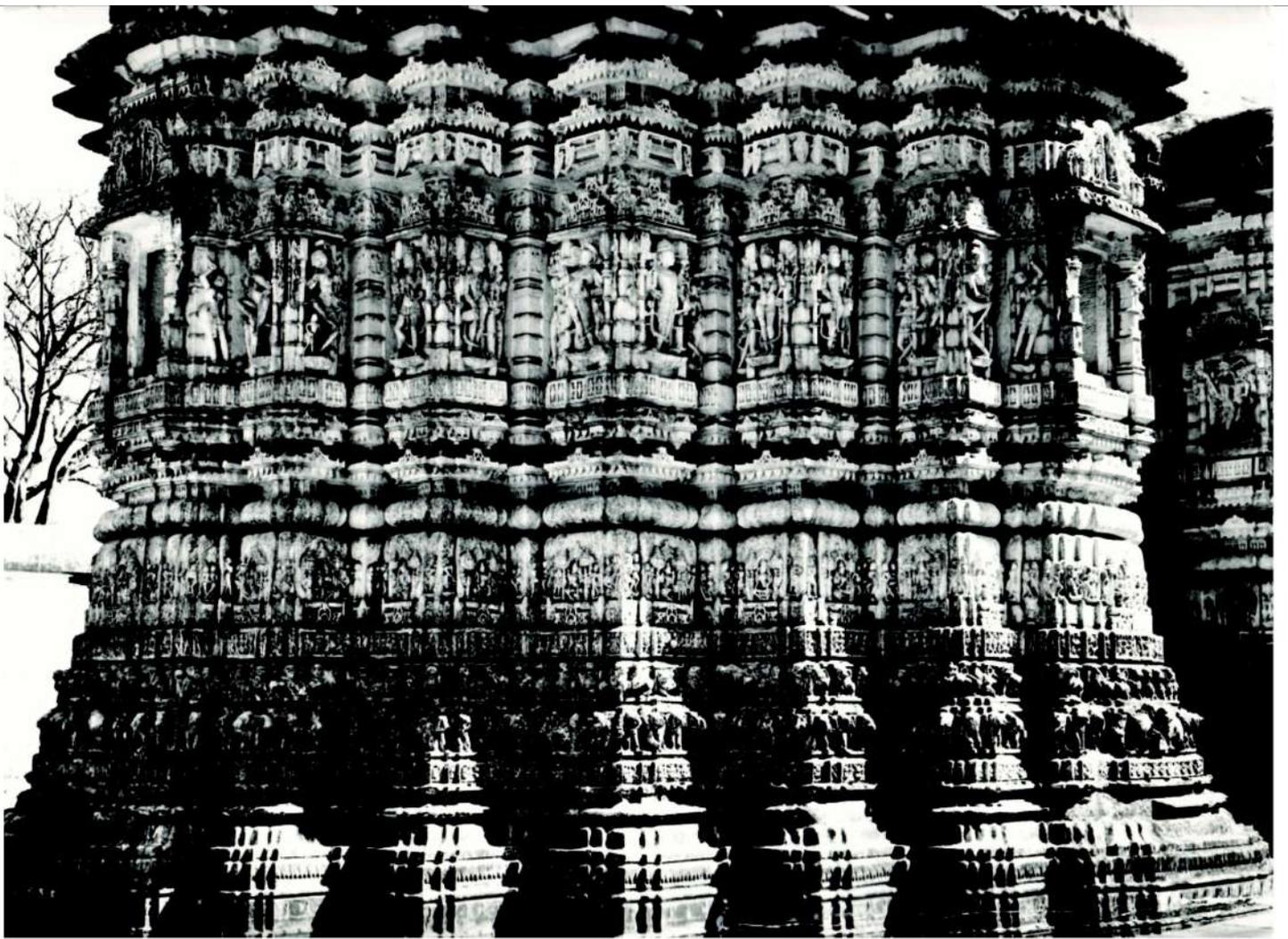


Fig. 1.1: Kumāravihāra, mūlaprāsāda, southwest, c. 1165-1166 C.E., Mt. Abu, Rajasthan



Fig. 1.2: Same temple, mūlaprāsāda, west, central aspect



Fig. 1.3: Same temple, mūlaprāsāda, west, northwest aspect



Fig. 1.4: Same temple, mūlaprāsāda, west, southwest aspect



Fig. 1.5: Same temple, mūlaprāsāda, south, gajapīṭha and siṅhapīṭha



Fig. 1.6: Same temple, gūḍhamaṇḍapa, southeast



Fig. 1.7: Same temple, trika (navacatuṣki), southwest

is provided with the customary *vedikā* (railing member), *āsanapaṭṭa* (seat), *kakṣāsana* (seat-back) as also a pair of terminal dwarf pillars above; but, unusually, instead of void (that is an opening) between the pillars, what is met is an inset *bhadra-khattaka* for enshrining an image within, though now vacant. The domical roof covers the hall.

The *navacatuṣkī* articulated to the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* is lately closed at the two sides by walling up the originally left open space between the moulded, but plain, faceted columns. The original doorframe of the sanctum is no more and the interior of the hall is renovated along with its entry-way.

The Maru-Gurjara style of the Solankī period was at the peak of perfection in early 11<sup>th</sup> century. After that date, the decorative and figural art progressively degenerated even when the architecture conceptually and formally progressed. The Acalagadh's overly decorated Kumāravihāra is qualitatively not remarkable for its sculptural art. It is, though, interesting from the standpoint of history and archaeology, the presence of the *siṃhapīṭha* in the base is noteworthy.

The next surviving temple caused to be built by Kumārapāla, in C.E. 1165, is at Jalor. It faces north. On plan, it is a triple shrine with a shared *gūḍhamaṇḍapa*, a *mukhamaṇḍapa* (forehall) added to it in C.E. 1215. But, what today is present in latter's place is a structure of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> According to the *Kumārapāla-pratibodha* of Somaprabhācārya C.E. 1185, among the Jaina temples built by Kumārapāla in Pattana (Aṇahillapāṭaka), one was called *trivihāra*.<sup>13</sup> On that analogy, the Jalor's triple shrine must be called a *trivihāra*.<sup>14</sup> The king had built it for the Bṛhadgaccha to which the illustrious Vādi Deva Sūri belonged. And there lived the blind poet and hymnist Rāmacandra, a grand disciple of Vādi Deva Sūri, in late 12<sup>th</sup>, early 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.<sup>15</sup> The temple (implicitly its central shrine) was dedicated to Pārśvanātha.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike the shrine of the Kumāravihāra at Achalgadh, each of the three shrines of the *trivihāra* temple is smaller in dimensions. In elevation the base here stops at the *grāsapaṭṭī* (Fig. 1.9). The *kumbha*-faces of the *vedibandha*, particularly of the central shrine, shows niched Jina divinities, the *kalaśa* above it, though, is plain, the sunken *antarapaṭṭa* is of the *ratnapaṭṭa* type: this is followed by a *chajjikā*, the *mañcikā* and, the niches of the *janḡhā* that bear Dikpāla figures at the *karnas*, *yakṣīs* such as Cakreśvarī, Nirvāṇi *et cetera* stand in the *pratirathas*' niches, and the *surasundarīs* at the *upabhadras* (subsidiary offsets of the *bhadras*) as well as in the *salilāntara* recesses between the *rathas*. The *bharaṇī* above the *janḡhā* is at places elegantly ribbed (Fig. 1.8). (Fig. 1.10 shows the details of the east shrine). At the *bhadras* occur large, beautifully proportioned and well-embellished *khattaka*-



Fig. 1.8: Kumāravihāra (trivihāra, triple shrine), central of the three shrines, south, Jalor, Rajasthan, Mt. Kāñcanagiri

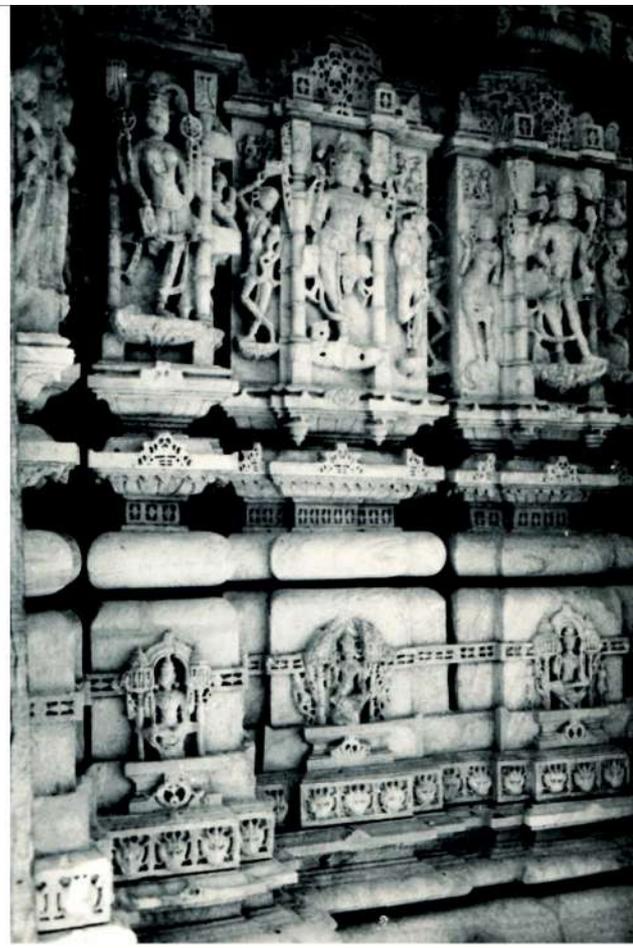


Fig. 1.9: Same temple, kapilī, east



Fig. 1.10: Same temple, east shrine, southeast corner

niches covered with a *khuracchādyā* and ultimately topped by an *illikāvalaṇa* type of pediment containing in the centre a *yakṣī* figure. All of the three shrines show lime coating and their superstructures as well as that of the *maṇḍapa* are the replacements of the later period.

The temple is popularly identified with the ‘Yakṣa vasatī’ built by the Pratīhāra monarch Nāgabhaṭṭa I (c. 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E.). But that temple long ago had disappeared.

## References and Notes

1. Notices to that effect are found in the *Mohaparājaya-nāṭaka* of minister Yaśaḥpāla (c. 1173-1176 C.E.), the *Prabhāvākārita* of Prabhācandra (C.E. 1278), and the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅgācārya (C.E. 1305). In these sources, it is mentioned that, following the advice of Hemacandra, he built the 32 temples after the 32 teeth in repentance of his earlier being a non-vegetarian.
2. The temples for the Jinas he apparently built between C.E. 1160-1166. The temple of Kumārapāleśvara he must have built soon after ascending the throne in C.E. 1144. That he never had abandoned the dynasty’s faith-Śaivism-is clear by his rebuilding the temple of Someśvara at Prabhāsa in C.E. 1169, a date which is posterior to his Jaina buildings’ dates inferable from literary sources. This fact proves the point. The temple of Somanātha built by Kumārapāla was the third building in sequence at the site, the first was built by the Solāṅkī king Mūlarāja I in c. 960 C.E.. This, since desecrated by Mahamud of Gaznā in C.E. 1026, was replaced by Bhīmadeva I in c. 1027 C.E..
3. See our article “Kumārapāla ane Kumāravihāro” (Gujarātī), *Pathika*, 10 (1-2), Ahmedabad, Oct.-Nov. 1970. (The co-author of this article was Harishankar Prabhāshankar Shastri). The article subsequently had been incorporated in the collection of the author’s papers and articles, embodying researches done within the Jaina field, in the *Nirgrantha Aitihāsika Lekh-samuccaya*, pt. 2, Ahmedabad, 2002.
4. He was assassinated by his *pratīhāra* (chamberlain or guard) Vaijayalladeva as reported in the “Ajayadeva Prabandha” inside the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*. The Jaina writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Mohanlal Dalichand Deshai and a few others) painted Ajaypāla as a hater of Jainism. The *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* branded him as *dharma-sthānaka-pātana-pātaki*, the sinner who demolished (Jaina) places of worship (temples). He also perpetrated some ghastly deeds such as killing the Jaina *muni* Rāmacandra (chief disciple of Hemacandra), assassinating the Jaina prime minister Kaparddi as also the Jaina *daṇḍanāyaka* of Bharucha, Āmrabhaṭa. The Brāhma (Brahmanical) historians, without producing evidence, see it all as fanciful imputations by the Jaina writers, simply because Ajayapāla did not patronize Jainism. (The Brahmanical writers were K.M. Munshi, Durgashankar Shastri, and A.K. Majumdar). I have discussed the problem in its entirety in an article with the title “King Ajayapāla and the Jinas,” currently in press.
5. For saving the Ajitanātha temple at Tāraṅga, the Jaina tradesman Abhayada (toward whom the king was well-disposed) had to make special efforts, use as he did an unconventional method. Since the temples at Achalagadh and Jalor lay within the territory of the feudatory princes, they plausibly had escaped total demolition.
6. Pralhādanadeva is reported to have melted down the Jina image of the sanctuary and cast a Nandi figure out of its metal for placing before (the *garbhagṛha* of the) Acaleśvara Mahādeva in Achalagadh.

7. Cf. Jinaprabha Sūri in the 'Śrī Arbudagirikalpa' inside his *Kalpaprādīpa* (c. 1333 C.E.), Somasundara Sūri in his *Arbudagirikalpa* (c. mid 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E.), Nanna Sūri in his *Arbudacaitya-paravādi* (1498 C.E.), Śīlavijaya's *Tīrthamālā* (C.E. 1690) and Jñānavimala's *Tīrthamālā* (C.E. 1698). For discussion and citations, see "Kumārapāla and Kumāravihāro," pp. 157 and 166.
8. This is the only surviving instance of the *simhapīṭha*. Also, the available western Indian *vāstusāstras* of the medieval period take no notice of this moulding. Instead, they invariably note *aśvapīṭha* (horse-band) which in point of fact is ubiquitously noticeable. However, the *Vatthusāra-payaraṇa* (Skt. *Vāstusāra-prakarāṇa*) of Thakkura Feru (1326 C.E.) does notice this moulding of the rarest occurrence. (The work, as I recall, was published by Pt. Bhagwandas Jain of Jaipur. It is at present not handy with me). Predictably, in some guilds' tradition, this may have been included in the corpus of base mouldings, perhaps was employed as indicative of a royal foundation.
9. This motif for the first time appears here and next at the Navalakhā temple at Ghumlī (c. late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century C.E.) and in the *pīṭha* of the two monumental *khattakas* in the *navacaukī* of the Luṇa Vasahī temple at Delvādā, Mt. Abu.
10. The *khuraka* here is unusual in form in that, instead of the customary plain undecorated band as a basal part of the *kumbha*, it is shown as consisting of two minor mouldings bearing a *gavākṣa* or, what in the medieval parlance was called *ṭhakāra*, as a carved architectural ornament at the face. The *phālanās* or corner facets of the *kumbha* are profusely decorated with standing, largely female figures. The central face shows niched Jaina divinities, namely the *yakṣīs* and the *vidyādevīs*. The shoulders of the *kumbha* bear stylized leaf decoration.
11. The *ratnapaṭṭa* in this position is of rare occurrence. It is there at the Ādiśvara temple (c. 1155-57 C.E.) on Mt. Śatruñjaya and it likewise figures at Tāraṅga's Ajitanātha temple (c. 1165 C.E.). Seemingly, this is an additional moulding beneath the *khattaka* of the *jaṅghā*, plausibly introduced in Kumārapāla's times.
12. The style and details of ornamentation of this *mukhamaṇḍapa* suggests that date.
13. Somaprabhācārya has so noted.
14. In Brahmanical convention, the triple shrine enshrined Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and hence was called '*tripuruṣa-prāsāda*.' The Jainas, in its place, coined the analogous nomen '*trivihāra*.' In the pre-medieval and medieval times in western India, the term *vihāra* came to signify 'temple' instead of monastery just as the term *caitya*, which originally stood for *stupa*, also began to be equated with temple in the Śvetāmbara Jaina tradition.
15. An important inscription engraved on a pillar of the Jalor's triple temple (now in the Jāmi masjid in the town below) gives this information as also other particulars of the events that followed. For example, it notes that Deva Sūri's disciple Pūrṇa Sūri did the consecration of a *torāṇa et cetera* in C.E. 1209 and his disciple—the earlier noted Rāmacandra—hoisted the golden flag staff in C.E. 1212 (For the text of the inscription, cf. Pt. Ambalal Premchand Shah, *Jaina Tīrtha Sarvasaṅgraha* (Gujarātī), Vol. I, pt. 2, Ahmedabad, 1953, "Jalor," p. 189.)
16. As inferred from the above-noted inscription, supported by the content of the six or seven hymns composed by Rāmacandra since they all are addressed to the Pārśvanātha of Jābālipura.

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