

## Some Selected Jaina Sculptures from Gandharvapurī, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh and Deogadh, Uttar Pradesh

M. A. Dhaky

A few decades ago, Krishna Deva had given me a set of the photos of a few Jaina sculptures of the early Paramāra period from Gandharvapurī, located in the Dewas area of Mālavā (ancient and medieval Mālavadeśa). A team of the American Institute of Indian Studies subsequently made a fuller documentation of the sculptures located in Gandharvapurī. The sculptures are affiliated to Jaina (Digambara) as well as to Brahmanical sect. From this lot, I have selected some ten Jaina sculptures for discussing in the present article.<sup>1</sup> (The two sculptures [Figs.7 & 10], however, are not from Gandharvapurī.)

The article wishes to dwell on four *kāyotsarga* Jina images, one Jina figure seated in *padmāsana*, and three of the Yakṣīs (one of them illustrating Cakreśvarī, the two representing Ambikā), as also one slab showing the 'Parents of Jina,' and one large solid square piece carved on all the four sides, which, as demonstrated by its carvings, symbolically represents the *Sahasrakūṭa*.

The first example (Fig.1) shows a *Jina-paiṅcaka* in which three nude Jinas are standing in the *khadgāsana* posture, the central larger one showing a *padmaprabhā* or



Fig.1: Jina-paiṅcaka, kāyotsarga, Gandharvapurī, Mālavā, c. 10<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

lotus aureole behind the head and the triple umbrella above, seemingly topped by a jar-finial, the two smaller standing Jina figures flank the central or principal image. Below each one of the two lateral nude Jina figures stands a *cāmaradhara* or flywhisk-bearer, each placed beside the feet of the central Jina figure, the head of the *cāmaradhara* standing at the left is lost. A pair of *ārādhaka* or adorer figures shown in seated posture close to the Jina's feet has facial features now defaced. Flanking the *prabhā* is a pair of *mālādhara*s or garland bearing angelic figures: and a pair of small seated figures of Jinas flanks the *trichatra*. The composition of the iconogram, simple and serene, is aesthetically very satisfying. Stylistically, the image seems of the tenth century.

The second example (Fig.2), apparently was intended to be a *Jina-saptaka*<sup>2</sup>. It shows a central larger nude figure of the Jina in *kāyotsarga* posture, flanked by a pair of miniature pilasters of the Mālavān order, both of which exhibit at the



Fig.2: *Jina-saptaka*, *kāyotsarga*, Gandharvapuri, c. early 11<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

middle part of their shaft a shorter standing image of the Jina. Each of the two latter images, in turn, is flanked in the recess by an attendant female figure, above which occurs what seems to be the customary *gajavyāla-makara* trio.<sup>3</sup> The capital of each of the pilaster bears a Jina figure seated in *padmāsana* and set within a *rathikā*-niche, the *phamsanā* or tiered roof of the right *rathikā* is severely damaged. The little oblongish aureole behind the head of the central Jina shows a surround of an elegantly done *āndola-toraṇa* exhibiting a winding pearl string tie. Above the roof of the left *rathikā* is shown what seems a *mālādhara*, head mutilated, the corresponding right one's head has disappeared completely. And above the damaged apex of the *torana* comes a *paṭṭikā* (band) showing a pair

of tiny figures of seated Jinas in panels, the adjoining recess, in each case, shows unidentifiable seated figures (adorers?). Believably, there was a seventh Jina figure which may have been placed in a niche situated at the apex, now no more existing. 11<sup>th</sup> century for this example is indicated by the style of sculpting. The composition betrays complexity but is for certain impressive.

The third instance (Fig.3) represents a *caturvīṃśati-paṭṭa*<sup>4</sup> where the large figure of the centrally situated Jina is having a *padmaprabhā*-aureole bordered by a narrow *maṇipaṭṭikā*. Above it is a damaged *chatratrayī* flanked by a pair of *vidyādhara*s. The lower end of the stele illustrates a pair of *cāmaradhara*s standing close to the feet of the principal Jina.

And by their side occurs a standing smaller figure of a Jina each. Above them serially occurs a trio of strata, each stratum bearing small figures of seated Jinas flanked in each case by a pair of smaller standing Jinas. Above this arrangement comes the flying *mālādhara* with a consort, occurring as they do on both the flanks of the aureole. And above the *mālādhara* of each lateral portion occurs a seated Jina (probably Pārśva and Supārśva, visage and multi-cephalous cobras in both the cases disfigured), and next a standing Jina figure is seen at both the flanks. This totals to the figure 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 24<sup>th</sup> (plausibly Jina Vardhamāna), apparently was carved above the apex of the triple umbrella, is destroyed. The date seems late tenth or early 11<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig.3: *Caturvīṃśati-paṭṭa*, *kāyotsarga*, c. late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

Next may be discussed an unusual example (Fig.4), which exhibits a pair of standing Jinās which may or may not have been intended to represent Ādyantanātha, for neither of the figures shows the Ādinātha's characteristic hair-tufts resting on the two shoulders. A pair of *cāmaradharas* stands near the feet of each Jina. Moreover, the *padmaprabhā* adorns the head of each Jina. The triple umbrella above each Jina is much mutilated, the flanking tree-leaves depicted there in one case hints at the presence of a *caitya-vṛkṣa* standing behind each Jina. A small, considerably damaged, seated and niched Jina figure occurs in the space between the triple umbrellas. Such representations indeed are rare to be met,<sup>5</sup> this one seems to date from early 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup>



Fig.4: Ādyantanātha-Jina (?), Gandharvapuri, c. 11<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

The Fig.5 shows a seated Jina in a niche with the *padmaprabhā* behind the head surrounded by a plain orbicular band, and two standing *cāmaradharas* at the two flanks of the Jina. Above the *cāmaradharas* on either side, are gliding *vidyādhara* (or its type *mālādhara*) couples and above them are a pair of elephants surviving of the two Hiraṇyendras, the riding Indra figures in both the cases gone.<sup>7</sup> They flank the (mutilated) *chatratraya* that occurs above the *prabhā*.<sup>8</sup> The presence of two round pillarettes of the niche flanking the Jina is indicative of the fact that the niched image was intended to be set in a niche, its



Fig.5: Jina seated in *padmāsana*, Gandharvapuri, c. 10<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

pediment though has disappeared. This niched image originally may have been fixed either at one of three *bhadrās* of the sanctuary-wall, or more palpably (since it is rather broad) the *bhadra* part of one of the two lateral walls of the *gūḍhamaṇḍapa* (closed hall) attached to the *prāsāda* or temple proper. The date of the image (and hence plausibly of the temple to which it belonged) seems early 11<sup>th</sup> century. It is one of the finer Jina images of that period.

The Fig.6 seemingly shows what plausibly may have been a four-armed Cakreśvarī, *śāsanadevī* of Jina Ṛṣabha. She is shown seated in *ardha-paryāṅkāsa* on what may have been a *pīṭha*. Prominently rendered anthropomorphic *garuḍa* appears below her angled left leg. Two female attendants are stationed at the lower flanks of the image. The ornaments she wears are the *bāhubalas* (armlets), *muktā-hāra* (pearl string), and, *hr̥ṇamālā* or longer necklace, also the *kuṇḍalas* or hanging earrings and a *kirīṭa* type



Fig.6: Yakṣī (*Śāsanadevī*) Cakreśvarī, Gandharvapurī, c. 11<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

of crown on the head. Her lower right arm carries a plain ring-shaped *cakra* and the left arm holds a *kuṇḍikā* or water-jar. Behind the head is a worn out floral *prabhā*. A flying angel (now disfigured) appears at the right side of the *prabhā*. The image, as earlier noted, perhaps was four-armed but the upper two arms, if they were there, are destroyed. The image may have been sculpted in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It is a fairly good example of the period.

Next are two images of Yakṣī Ambikā (Figs.7 and 8), their body parts from the breast downwards are totally gone. The first instance is from Ujjain (Fig.7)<sup>9</sup>. It carries a child on left arm rather excessively extended shoulder emerging behind the child's mutilated head, the left shoulder is severely damaged. She wears a bejeweled *paṭṭabandha* at the front line of the hairdo in good relief and a pearl-studded *dhammila* band at the rear side. Only the right side of the mango tree showing three whorls in descending order of thick leaves (looking like bananas in bunches), each whorl carrying small sized three mangoes, each mango with the lower end curved, a kind today not meeting the



Fig.7: Bust of Yakṣī Ambikā, Ujjain, c. 9<sup>th</sup> cent. CE



Fig.8: Bust of Yakṣī Ambikā, Gandharvapurī, c. 10<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

view.<sup>10</sup> Stylistically, the figure indicates mid-late ninth century. Her eyes though do not reflect a meditative look which generally the images of the period before the mid tenth century retain as a legacy of the preceding centuries. Yet they are gracefully delineated in a painterly fashion. The face possesses dimensions of serenity and nobility.

In Fig.8 appears an image of Ambikā, which has a head more like a *surasundarī* than a goddess, the figure's belt above the forehead shows curls and further up is noticeable a *dhammila* ornamented by a heavy twisted pearl string

alternated with a thin rope(?). The elegant complex *hāra* in the neck and above it is seen a *kañṭha-hāra* and still above it a pearl string, the three necklaces together elegantly decorate the part of the torso above the breasts, beginning from below the neck. Heavy but nicely done ear-studs of the earlier form are present among the other ornaments she wears. The mango-tree behind her head is slightly off-centre; there, on the right side, four whorls of leaves (with a bunch of three mango-fruits in each case) are clearly discernible, a fourth one above is partly damaged. The third whorl of the bunches of leaves at the right, by its side, shows a figure, whether a monkey or a young boy is not clear. The corresponding arrangement at the left side has the fourth whorl almost effaced.

Above the trunk of the tree is shown a Jina figure, plausibly Jina Ariṣṭanemi, seated on a lotus and flanked by hanging bunches of mangoes and by their side is a *mālādhara* gliding in the air, that at the right side has its head mutilated. As for the date of this beautiful sculpture, tenth century seems closer to the truth.

To my knowledge, U.P. Shah was the first scholar to identify such a pair which shows a juxtaposed seated male and a female figure (Fig.9) as the 'parents of Jina', the instances available in good number and with a variety of details, particularly from Madhya Pradesh.<sup>11</sup> (This includes the famous 11<sup>th</sup> example from Khajuraho.<sup>12</sup>) In the present example, sequentially upwards, first comes a *jagatī*, the lower half of which is destroyed but had a countersunk figural frieze showing plausibly a part of some event in a narrative. Above the *jagatī*, the aforementioned two figures are shown seated in the



Fig.9: Parents of Jina, Gandharvapuri, c. 10<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

*ardha-paryāṅkāśana*, and each placed on a *masūraka* resting on a *bhadrapīṭha*. The father of the Jina has lost his head together with the larger portion of the *padmaprabhā*. His right leg, too, is also largely gone leaving just a paw. He wears a *kaṭimekhalā* (waist band), bejeweled *keyūras* (armlets), a complex *upavīta* and an intricately fashioned *hāra*. A small figure of a female attendant stands to his right side. The figure of the mother of the Jina is almost intact save for the facial features which are worn out and her palms are destroyed. Besides the waist-band, there is an ornamental string of a rare kind coming from behind the back and passing below the armlets. She wears a necklace and on the head an exquisitely rendered pearl-set *dhammilla* crown. Her *padmaprabhā* is partially broken at the upper right corner. A female adorer who may have commissioned this piece is shown seated near her right leg. A tree trunk is visible between these two parental figures, the leaves preserved only at the upper left corner of the stele. Just below the leaves is stationed a female attendant, the corresponding attendant for the Jina's father has disappeared due to mutilation of the larger portion of the stele at the upper right side.

The twin images bearing stele seems of early tenth century and from the standpoint of art, one of the finer of its class of representation.<sup>13</sup>

The Fig.10 demonstrates a symbolic representation of the *Sahasrakūṭa* temple in miniature and is thematically a Digambara object of worship. It figures in the early



Fig.10: *Sahasrakūṭa*, Deogadh (Lalitpur Dist.), Madhya Pradesh, c. 11<sup>th</sup> cent. CE

medieval Digambara literature and fragments of its concrete representation dateable to the ninth century (but in circular form) I had noticed in the collection of sculptures in the Gwalior Museum. The Śvetāmbaras began to carve *Sahasrakūṭa* apparently from mid 15<sup>th</sup> century, as the inscribed example placed within the Caturmukha temple (Dharṇavihāra) at Ranakpur indicates<sup>14</sup>. Neither the Śvetāmbara literature nor the inscriptions before that date mentions *Sahasrakūṭa*. Its mythical conception, historically and sectarially, Digambara.

In the present example, in the middle section, are seen a larger figure of a seated Jina flanked by standing image of Pārśva at the right and Supārśva at the left. Altogether an impressive representation, plausibly of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

## References

1. There also are some other Jaina images at the site; but, for the present Journal, since limited number of photo-illustrations are allowed to go with the text, the discussion on the remaining Jaina sculptures eventually will appear in one of the issues of the *Sambodhi*, Ahmedabad.
2. Such an arrangement is rare to meet.
3. That at the right side is completely gone.
4. The *caturvīṃśati paṭṭas* mainly are of two types. The first, which more frequently appears in the Śvetāmbara sect, is the composition of the 24 tiny figures of Jinas arranged in four rows or in a few other ways of composing. The other type shows the arrangement of 23 Jinas surrounding the central large, usually seated (though sometimes standing) Jina image. All of these, of course, are noticeable only in the medieval period.
5. To my knowledge, two juxtaposed standing figures of the Jinas carved on a stele, so far has not been met in the Śvetāmbara context.
6. The pre-medieval (particularly 9<sup>th</sup> century) and medieval Jina images, whether standing or seated, most often display a variety of surrounding subsidiary details cast in a large number of the forms of compositions. For some such examples, consult Klaus Bruhn, *The Jina-Images of Deogarh (Studies in South Asian Culture, Volume 1)*, Leiden (Brill) 1969; also see Gerd J.R. Mevissen, "Corpus of Jaina Stone Sculptures Bearing graha-s as Subsidiary Figures," *Berliner Indologische Studien*, Band 13/14, Berlin 2000, pp.343-400. And also see his "Three Interesting Jaina Sculptures from Dinajpur," *Journal of Bengal Art*, Volume 6, 2001, pp.9-20.
7. The Hiraṇyendras are more characteristically and, a bit more frequently, noticeable in the Śvetāmbara examples.
8. The third uppermost *chatra* is gone.
9. The image was exhibited in Vikram Kirti Mandir, Ujjain, when photographed by the AIIS team.

10. A pre-medieval mango fruit cast in metal and found in the Akoṭā (Gujarat) hoard strongly resembles today's famous Al Phonso mango from Koṅkaṇa, Maharashtra. (I am not sure whether the Akoṭā example has been illustrated anywhere.)
11. For similar such instances, *cf.*, Mevissen, "Corpus," *BIS*, Figs.25-26, pp.370-371. If all of these do not represent the 'parents' of Jina, they alternatively could be Jina's *yakṣa* and *yakṣī*.
12. It has been reproduced in several publications.
13. *Cf.* Mevissen, as in annotation 11, above.
14. As I recall, it is unfinished for the upper section.

All of the photo-illustrations are reproduced here by the courtesy and kindness of the American Institute of Indian Studies, New Delhi/Gurgaon.