

WORLD RENOWNED

JAIN PILGRIMAGES

REVERENCE AND ART



MAHOPADHYAYA LALITPRABH SAGAR

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By

MAHOPADHYAYA LALITPRABH SAGAR

Photography

MAHENDRA BHANSALI



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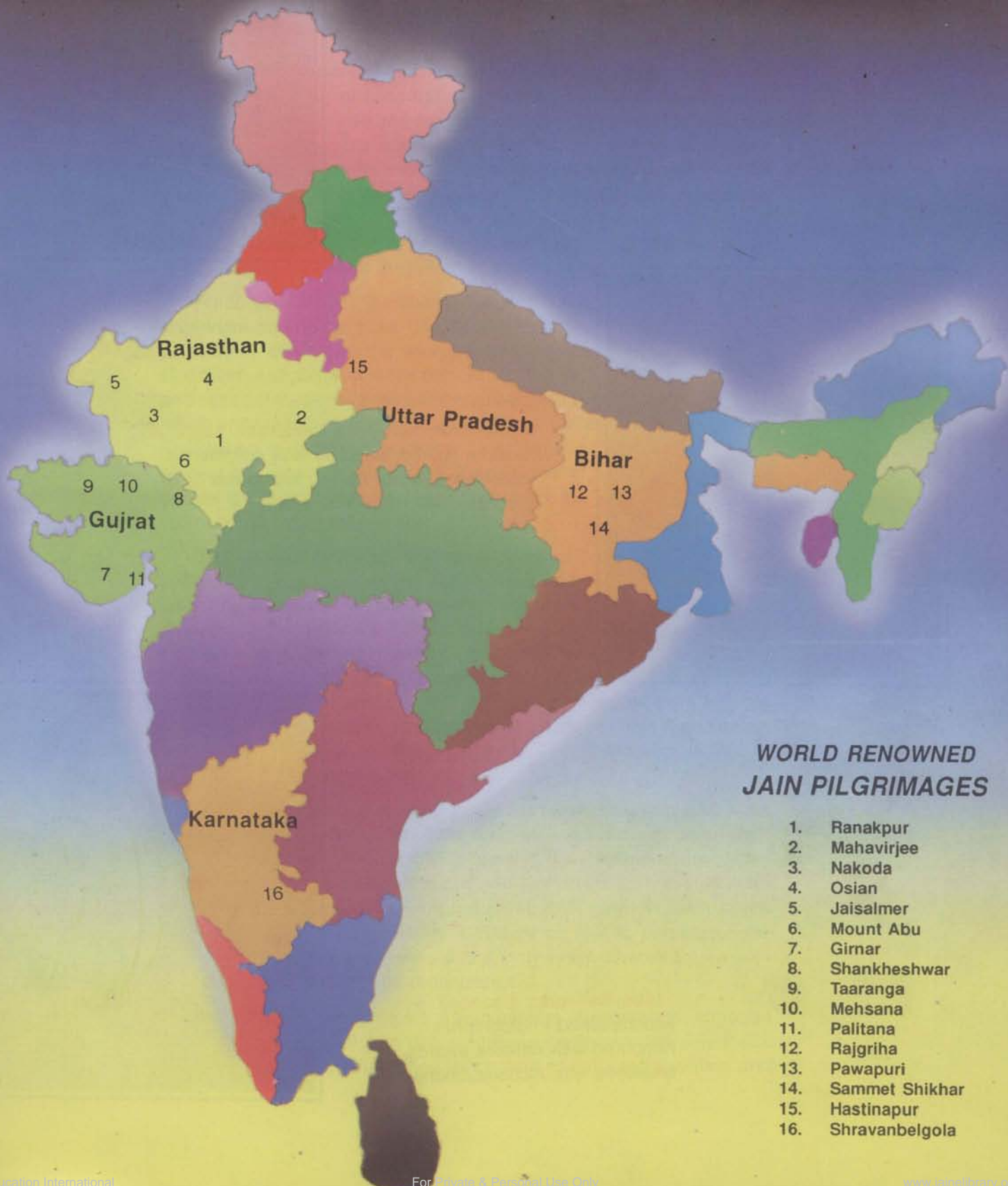
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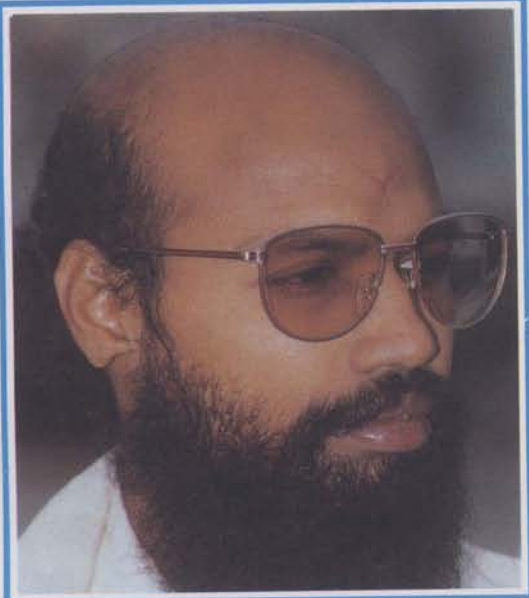
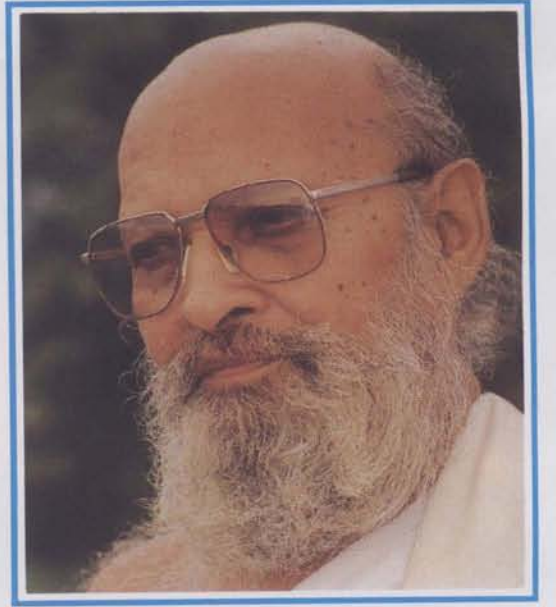
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WORLD RENOWNED JAIN PILGRIMAGES

1. Ranakpur
2. Mahavirjee
3. Nakoda
4. Osian
5. Jaisalmer
6. Mount Abu
7. Girnar
8. Shankheshwar
9. Taaranga
10. Mehsana
11. Palitana
12. Rajgriha
13. Pawapuri
14. Sammet Shikhar
15. Hastinapur
16. Shravanbelgola

Ganivar Shree Mahimaprabh Sagar Ji
Shasan-prabhavi Sthavir Sant dedicated
to humanity in all noble ways.



Mahopadhyaya Shree Lalitprabh Sagar Ji
Solemn figured, enriched with enlightened
conscience, erudite saint, impressive
preacher and litterateur.



Shree Mahendra Bhansali
Accomplished Photographer,
Honoured with national awards,
employed with Alcobex, Jodhpur.

PREFACE

*I*ndia is a treasury of devotion and art. Devotion, in fact, is the soul of India. Existence of temples, a variety of places of worship, and memorials in every nook and corner is evidence of this profusion of the feeling of devotion. The country has kept the remains of its spiritual past in state of preserve even after many artistically carved temples saw the ravages of time. This country has not only been devoted to constructing temples, it has also been actively conscious about protecting them. Who can suffocate the feeling of devotion of the nation where people sacrificed their lives to protect temples and images.

Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity are prominent among religions that spread throughout India. Islam and Christianity came from far away lands, whereas Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism were born here. The propagators, preachers and sages of these religions have enriched, nurtured and protected the length and breadth of this nation with their spiritual activity and message. The nation is indebted to them. Their sermons have become the guiding principles for this nation. The Ahimsa of Mahavir, the middle path of the Buddha and rectitude of Rama are the basic foundations of the national character of India.

Jain religion evolved and developed in India, the cradle of spiritualism. The melody of its songs has resonated every part of this land. Founded on moral, social and spiritual principles of ahimsa, truth, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy along with right-perception, right-knowledge and right-conduct, this religion has amply contributed to the all-round progress of this country. In this context the nation could call it the epitome of altruism. What to say of a page, not even a single line in the history of India could be found which conveys that Jainism has in any way damaged the glory of India. The message of Jainism is in fact the message of India.

Being the birth place of Jainism, India is the most auspicious, pious and revered land for Jains. This land saw the advent of all Jain Tirthankaras and Shalaka-purush (pioneers). It is this land where places of pilgrimage and temples were planned and erected, scriptures were written, and congregations were organized. Not only this, Jain sages covered the length and breadth of country on foot to perpetuate the message of ahimsa and peace and enrich every inhabited area with streams of detachment and renunciation.

This book compiles the art of Jain centers of pilgrimage. Although there are hundreds of Jain pilgrimages we have included only those which are popularly established as centers of faith and devotion and

those which are internationally discussed as examples of art and sculpture. Some pilgrimages do not excel in art and sculpture, but are centres of devotion, such as Shankheshwar and Nakoda. Some are unique examples of art and sculpture and tourists come to India specially to see them, such as Delwara-Abu, Ranakpur and Jaisalmer. Delwara has no parallel in sculptural art throughout the world. It is the crowning glory of Indian sculpture.

Palitana is a pilgrimage that is called the city of temples. For Jains, Palitana has the same stature of piety that Haridwar has for Hindus. In Jaisalmer and Osian, one can behold arts of remote antiquity. At Shravanbelgola, stands one of the wonders of the world - the monolithic and beautiful standing statue of Bhagavan Bahubali.

In this book we have presented a total of sixteen pilgrimages. Our main purpose was to magnify the sculptural aspect of these centres. We have tried to capture and display with the help of photographs the intricate and fine carvings made by stone artisans. Our intimate disciple, Shri Mahendra Bhansali has employed all his skill as a photographer. His commendable talent as a photographer is evident in the results.

When this work was published in Hindi, it created an increasing demand of an English version. The publication was commended throughout the world. Jit-yasha Foundation and Prakrit Bharti Academy, a publishing organization of national repute appreciated the usefulness of an English edition and took up the venture jointly.

We are indebted to Late Acharya Shri Jina Kantisagar Surishwar Ji Maharaj whose cherished blessings have been an inspiring force with us always. We express our reverence to respected Ganivar Shri Mahimprabh Sagar Maharaj under whose guidance this work was written and compiled. We express our sincere appreciation to Shri D.R. Mehta, Mahopadhyaya Vinay Sagar, Shri Prakash Kumar Daftary and all others who have actively contributed to the publication of this work.

Shri Shyam Shresth offered his praiseworthy services in the English version. The dedicated co-operation of following persons is highly praiseworthy in bringing this book in its beautiful shape : Composing - Shri Ganpat Lodha, Get-up - Shri Navin Kuthari, Printing - Shri Pramod K. Jain, Shri Alok Jain and Shri Akhilesh Jain.

Go through the book and visit the pilgrimage centres once. These pilgrimages and their art are vivid manifestations of Indian and Jain cultures. To visiting them, offering devotion and protecting them is religion.

The humble intent of writing and publishing this book is that the inherent devotion and art of our country reaches the people of this country and abroad.

Praise to all those who have contributed.

- Mahopadhyaya Lalitprabh Sagar

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*W*orld Famous Jain Pilgrimages : Devotion and Art presents the sculptural art of sixteen Jain pilgrimages in its artistic excellence. This book is not just an exposure of our devotional feelings but also an exquisite exposition of the art form. Besides the pictures of the pious images of Tirthankaras and an overview of the pilgrimages it also reveals the inner grandeur of these centres of piety.

Pilgrimages and temples are the revered objects of our devotion. Our ancestors constructed such grand temples at pilgrimages like Ranakpur, Mahavirji (Chandanpur), Nakoda, Jaisalmer, Osian, Delwara-Abu, Girnar, Shankheshwar, Taranga, Mehsana, Palitana, Rajgriha, Pavapuri, Sammet Shikhar, Hastinapur, Shravanbelgola that tourists, both Indian and foreign, are dumbfounded when they see them. Oh! such exquisite art in Jain temples! Indeed, even our stones speak the language of devotion and art. These temples are lively epics of our feeling of devotion.

It is a beautifully and artistically printed multicoloured publication. Special attention has been paid to its aesthetic composition along with the best available paper and printing. The text of this unique book has been prepared by a great scholar Mahopadhyaya Lalitprabh Sagar Ji and the photography has been done by an accomplished photographer



Shri Mahendra Bhanasli. Revered Shri Lalitprabh Sagar Ji is a saintly person filled with pulsating thirst for knowledge. He is well-known for his scholarship and impressive oration.

There was an increasing demand of an English edition of this book first published in Hindi. We have been able to publish this English edition with the inspiration of revered Ganivar Shri Mahimaprabh Sagar Ji Maharaj.

This publication is aimed at the universal exposure of the aesthetic grandeur of our temples and pilgrimages. We hope, it will be well received.

Prakash Kumar Daftary

Secretary

Jit-yasha Foundation

Calcutta

Maho. Vinaysagar

Director

Prakrit Bharti Academy

Jaipur



His Excellency President Dr. Shankardayal Sharma released the book "VISHWA PRASIDDHA JAIN TEERTH : SHRADDHA EVAM KALA" (World-famous Jain Pilgrimages : Reverence and Art) on 2 February, 1996 at Jodhpur. Photo shows the President presenting the first copy of the volume in Hindi to Mahopadhyaya Shree Lalitprabh Sagar Ji. For Private & Personal Use Only

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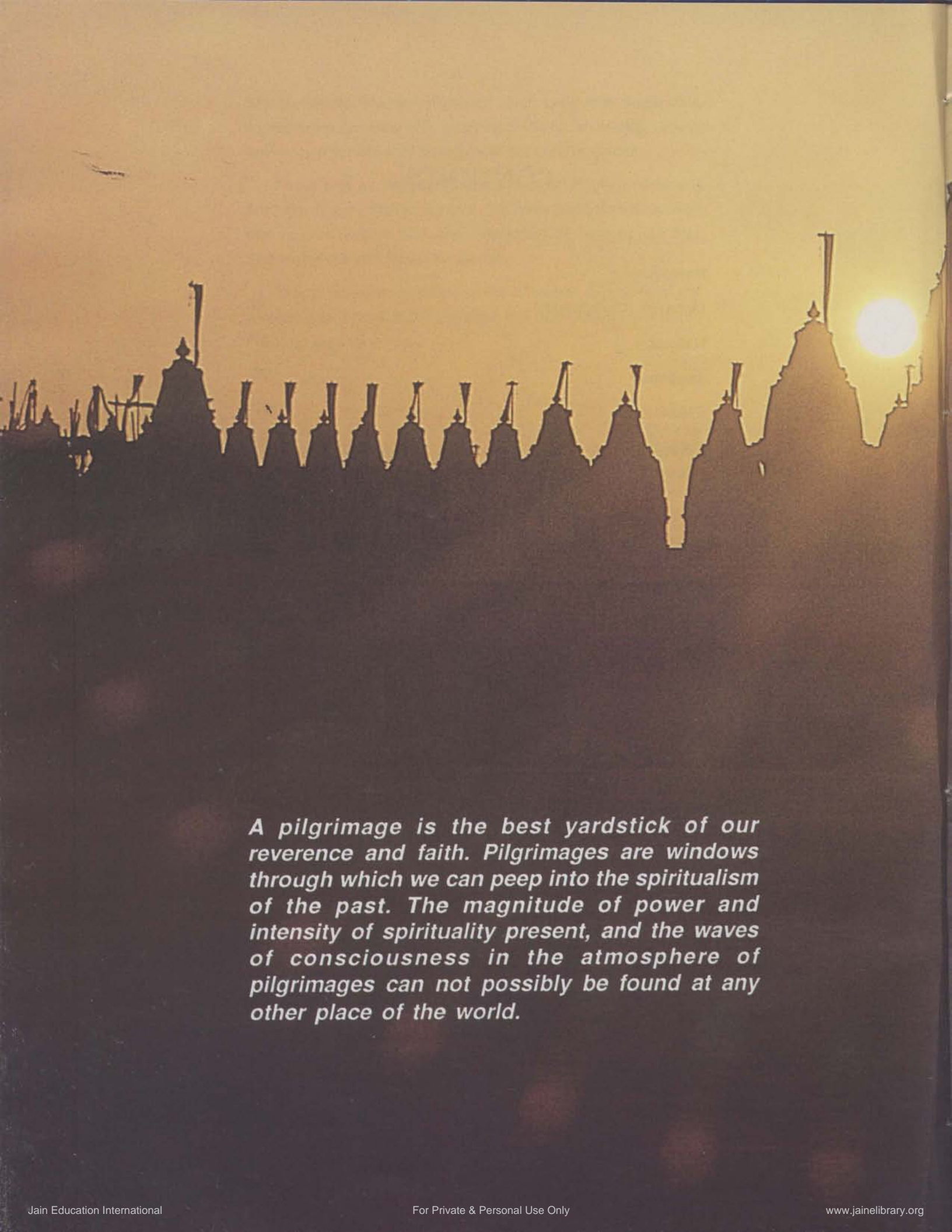
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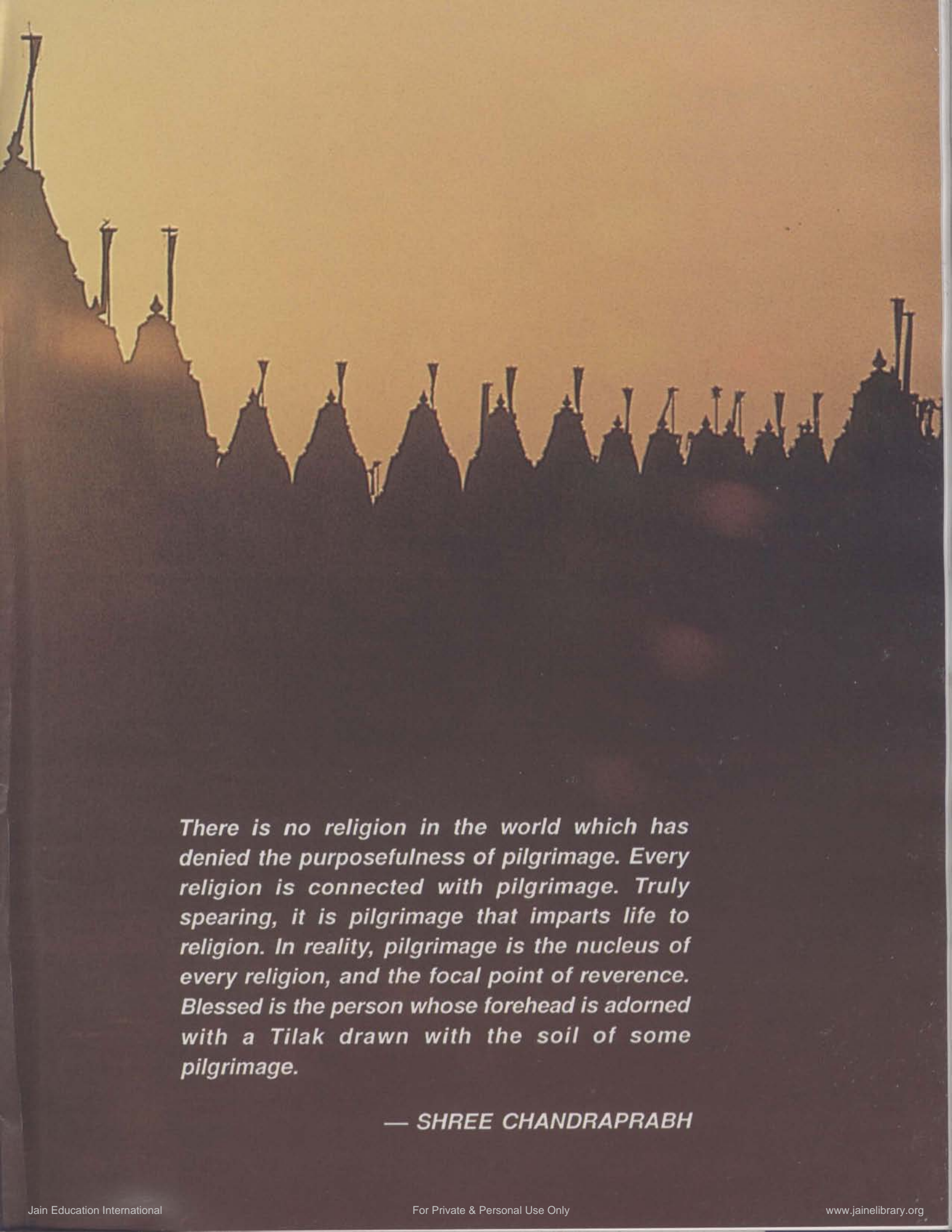
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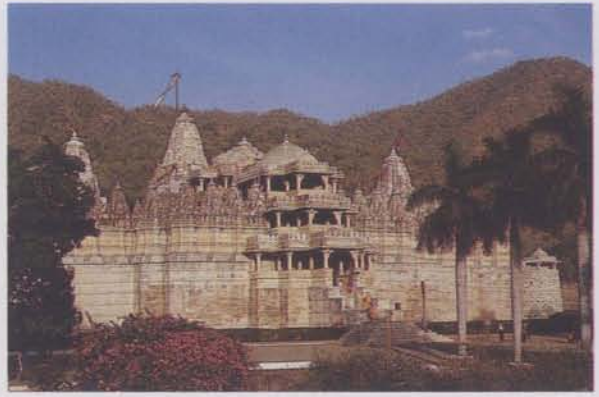
A pilgrimage is the best yardstick of our reverence and faith. Pilgrimages are windows through which we can peep into the spiritualism of the past. The magnitude of power and intensity of spirituality present, and the waves of consciousness in the atmosphere of pilgrimages can not possibly be found at any other place of the world.

The image features a silhouette of a row of Jain temples with multiple spires and flagpoles against a warm, orange-hued sunset sky. The temples are dark and detailed, with their spires reaching upwards. The sky is a gradient of light orange to a darker, more saturated orange at the top. The overall mood is serene and spiritual.

There is no religion in the world which has denied the purposefulness of pilgrimage. Every religion is connected with pilgrimage. Truly speaking, it is pilgrimage that imparts life to religion. In reality, pilgrimage is the nucleus of every religion, and the focal point of reverence. Blessed is the person whose forehead is adorned with a Tilak drawn with the soil of some pilgrimage.

— SHREE CHANDRAPRABH





● **RANAKPUR**

*R*anakpur is a place of homage for Jainism and a unique example of Indian architecture. Thousands of visitors who throng the temple to have a view of the art can not help but exclaim at the very first sight - Great! Incomparable !! Unparalleled !!!

In this huge temple, art is at its best on every inch; on every side there is the wonder of craftsmanship and the miracle of chisel. This land had the good fortune of being blessed by the supreme-being, the supreme-soul Shri Rishabhdev. Under his sacred influence, the pilgrimage extensively flourished and remained intact from the foundation to the top despite the upheavals of time. This Ranakpur pilgrimage, established amidst natural beauty, is the nucleus of Indian art.

Situated amidst the hills of the Aravali range, this pilgrimage is at a distance of 90 km. from Udaipur, and 33 km. from Phalna railway station. Standing amidst the natural beauty of unsculptured stones, the architecture of this temple is explicit in its splendour. This pilgrimage bears witness to how advanced was our Indian architecture, how skilled were our sculptors and how they animated the stones. On viewing the sculpturally rich domes and columns, one feels they are the diamonds studded in the ring of Indian architecture. Just on entering the temple we feel as if we have ascended to the land of the gods.

From an inscription on a column standing at the side of the entrance to the main shrine we come to know that Mahamantri Dharnashah is the chief founder and Depa is the art-director of this pilgrimage which expresses a synthesis of architecture and spiritualism. The name of Rana Kumbha has also been respectfully mentioned in the inscription which informs us that Rana Kumbha, a patron of art and architecture, had also contributed to the construction of this temple.

It is believed that Dharnashah lived in a village called Nandia, in the vicinity of Ranakpur. He was a minister of Rana Kumbha of Mewar.

Dharnashah wished to build such a temple of the first Tirthankar, Lord Adinath, as would be unique in itself. Ranakpur is the fulfilment of that very wish. He decided to make the design of the temple just like the divine Vimaan (aeroplane) named 'Nalini Gulm' which he had seen in his dream.



RANAKPUR : A glimpse



PARSHWNATH TEMPLE : A portion of columns



THE ELEPHANT KING : Saluting the devotees

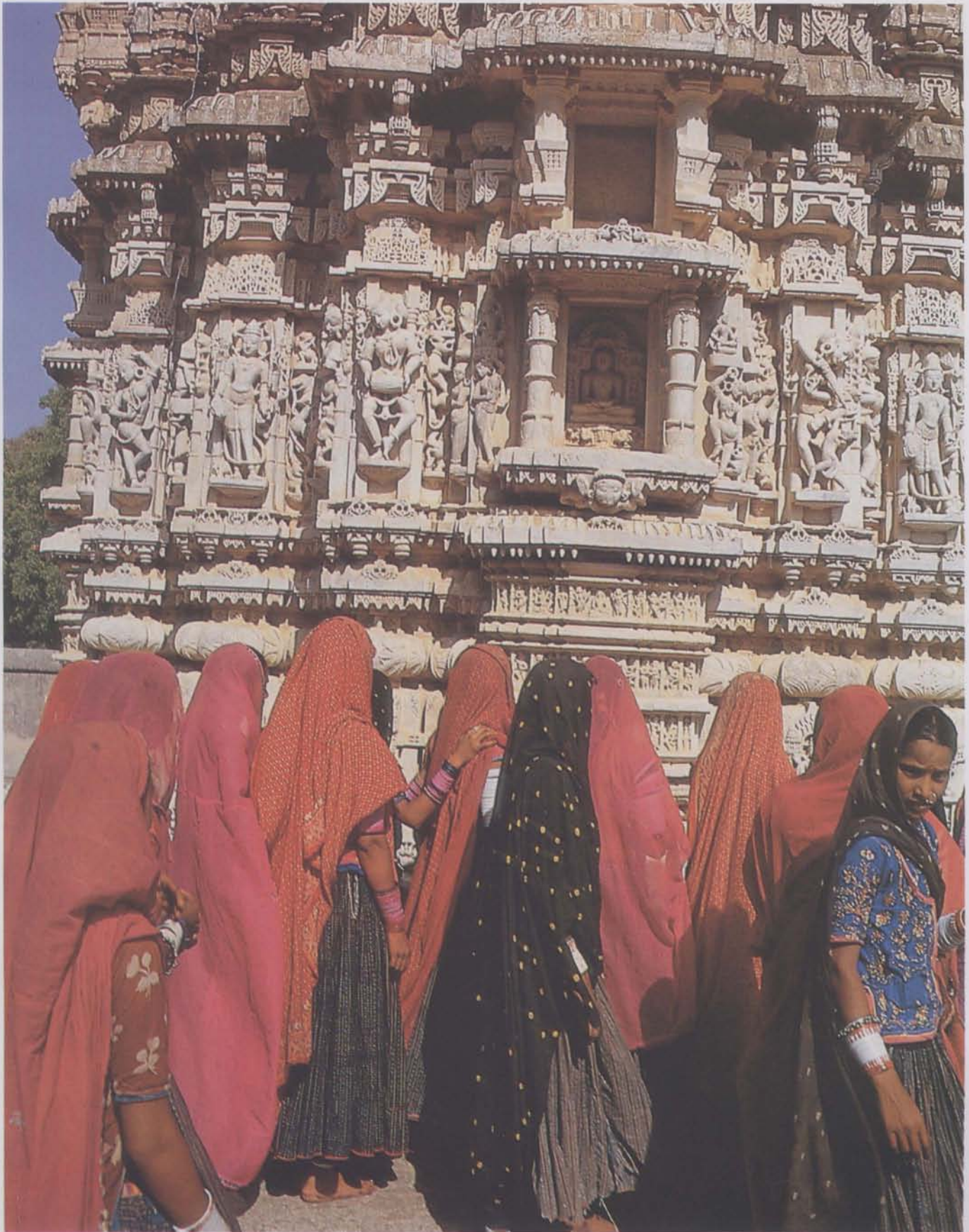


KALPA LATA (A Heavenly creeper) : Minuteness of engraving

LORD PARSHWANATH : Haloed by over a thousand Cobra-hoods →







TEMPLE-COLUMNS : Rural Women are the onlookers

Dharnashah got many a design-drawings of the proposed temple made by several art directors. He found the conceptualisation of the renowned art-director Depa not only conforming to his dream, but also having a glimpse of artistic foresight. Depa, by courtesy Dharna, made the mute rocks vociferous. Rana Kumbha had given a plot of land for the temple and also made a new town populated there when the temple was built. With a view to express gratitude for this devout contribution, Dharna named it Ranakpur after the title Rana.

The construction of the temple had begun in 1446 Vikram (1389 A.D.). The construction work was completed after continuous 50 years' labour. The temple had really become an ideal model of art. Dharna's wish was to make the temple still more artistic, but he had become very old. Therefore, this magnificent temple was consecrated by the sacred hands of Acharya Som Sundar in 1496 V. (1439 A.D.).

The Ranakpur temple is made safe by the surrounding Aravali hills. The tourist becomes enchanted on viewing the attractive form of the temple from a distance. As he approaches nearer and nearer to the temple, the ringing of bells resonating in air over the hillocks begins to move his heart. These vibrating sounds awaken our latent consciousness and gladdens it.

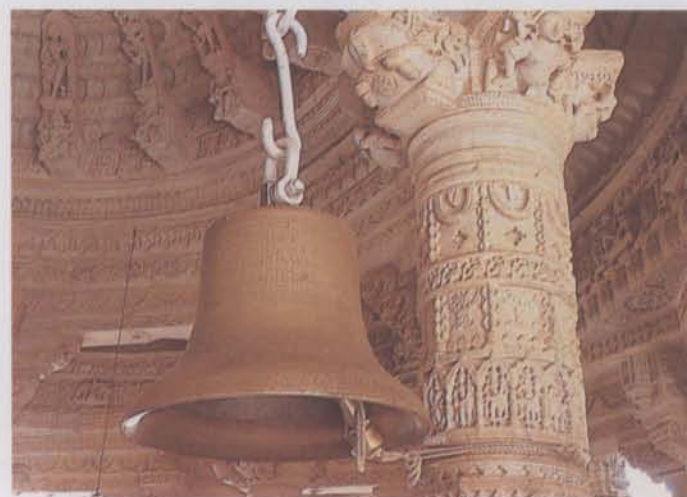
Invisible power of the supreme soul and the sacramentality of art affectionately invites the visitors and the devotees in the premises. Regardless of whether a visitor has faith in God, he finds his heart emotionally charged on coming here. Although the entire art of the temple has flowered in the Jain tradition, still the temple-builder has also got some selected scenes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata engraved. Even before knocking at the entrance of the temple, the fine examples of communal liberalism which the visitor comes across, cannot help but impress him. After ascending nearly 25 steps of the temple's staircase, the tourist gets attracted by the artistically engraved stone ceiling. There is a huge protruding figure of a valiant five-bodied person on the ceiling. This huge figure is probably related to Kichak, described in the Mahabharata, who had one head, but five bodies. This scene is very pleasant and enigmatic. Many episodes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have been sculpted on this very ceiling.

After crossing the entrance, we find two cells, adjacent to each other, housing the most ancient idols of Jain Tirthankars. Some of the idols have passed through the hands of those invaders who were bent upon sabotaging Indian civilisation and Indian beliefs.

After ascending a few more steps we come across the first courtyard of the temple where minute carvings on the temple can be seen but the bird's eye-view from there tends one to ignore the uniqueness of the sculptural art. Column after column are seen on whichever side you



PRINCIPAL DEITY LORD SHREE AADINATH



ONE OF THE MALE-FEMALE BELLS

cast your glance. The onlooker becomes wonderstruck on seeing so many columns together, but this enchantment effuses him with a sense of glory.

There are so many columns here that not as many earthenware lamps would have burnt in the palace of an emperor. Here we have 1444 columns representing the finest forms of art. Every column is a living example of art. The special feature is that a new form of art is etched on every column. Every column is in itself an independent dimension of art. There is no other building in the world that has so many milky lofty columns in marble.

When standing inside the premises we turn our eyes towards the ceiling, we see above a lavish and lively form of art the equal whereof is very difficult to find. On this ceiling is engraved a creeper of 'Kalpvalli-Kalptaru' (the wish-fulfilling tree). This is a beautiful view of the art of the temple. This is considered to occupy an important place in the history of architecture. This place is called Meghnad Mandap.

On proceeding four steps more the viewer finds himself under a balcony-cum-dome. The artistic dome-hangings look like jewel-studded ear-rings. At this place there are two columns on two sides which contain small statues of the builder and the architect of the temple. The statue of Dharnashah is on the left column and that of the architect Depa is on the right side.

Here, the arch built outside the sanctum sanctorum of the temple may be hailed as the finest example of art. A person standing in the premises identifies himself with the art-enriched devotion when his eyes get a glimpse of the magnificent idol of Lord Adinath, adorning the main sanctum sanctorum. This idol measures 62 inches and, in all, four such idols are placed facing four sides. Probably for this very reason, this temple is also renowned by its popular name Chaturmukh Jinprasad. The internal configuration of the sanctum sanctorum has been done in the form of a Swastik-shaped room. Outside the main temple there is an idol of the protector deity of the pilgrimage which is considered to be miraculous. There are two huge bells outside the sanctum-sanctorum which are differentiated as masculine and feminine. This difference is identified by the sound of the bell. Such a sound is emitted from the bells which makes one feel the sound of 'Om' being echoed.

There is a huge tree on the left of the main temple. It is called Rayan tree. Under this tree there are also the foot-images of Tirthankar Adinath. Factually, this scene reminds of the famous Jain pilgrimage Shatrunjaya. Near the tree is a column named Sahasrakoot which is incomplete. It is said that many efforts were made to complete it, but it could not be completed. Just as this huge pillar/column attained a particular height, it broke down forthwith. In front of the Sahasrakoot is a huge marble elephant, bearing the idol of Marudevi, mother of



INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE : Splendour of art at its zenith



SOME OF THE PILLARS OF RANAKPUR



CLUSTER OF PILLARS



PARSHWANATH TEMPLE : The rear portion of the external wall



DIVINE DANSEUSES CARVED ON THE WALL



MELODY OF MUSIC AND RHYTHM OF DANCE



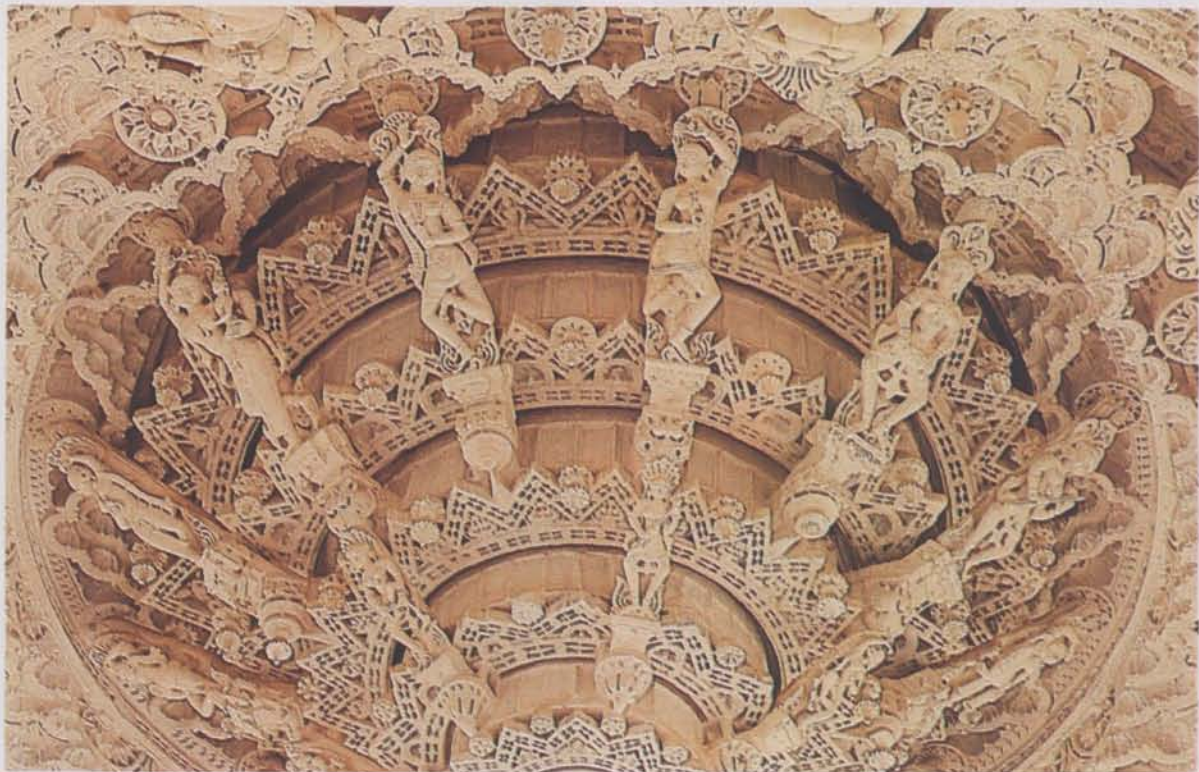
DANSEUSES ON THE COLUMNS : A unique presentation of art



A PORTION OF THE COLUMNS DECORATED WITH DANSEUSES



HANGING DOME : Grandeur of art



EYEFILLING DOME DECORATED WITH DANCES OF DIVINE DANSEUSES

Adinath. This elephant reminds of that episode wherein Marudevi attains the supreme knowledge while she was seated on an elephant. Closeby, there is a basement. During calamities the idols of the Lord were kept concealed in this very basement.

On the right of the main sanctum sanctorum there is an idol of Tirthankar Parshvanath whose head is shaded by the hoods of a thousand cobras. This is the only idol of its kind in the whole of India. The special feature of this idol is that all the cobras are entwined with each other and their tail-ends are invisible.

Here, among the planned domes, there is such a dome which, if not viewed carefully, would appear to be a hindrance in the prosperity of the art of the temple. This dome, constructed on the upper portion of the temple is in fact a conch-shaped 'mandap' (cell). The science of acoustics has been propounded there. A conch has been constructed at one extreme of the dome. The echo spreading within the conch is shown to be vibrating in the entire dome.

If a study is started from the square-shaped sanctum sanctorum, then a well-defined geometrical continuity is observed. As the temple is situated on the slope of the western hills, the vital portion of the temple has been made sufficiently high on the western side. The wall surrounding the slope measuring nearly 62 metres x 62 metres in area, plays the main role in the external construction of the temple's height. The four porticos of the temple are two-storeyed and are surrounded by walls on three sides. Among the fascinating porticos, the biggest is on the west and it is the main portico.

In the courtyard of the temple there are six attics, for six deities, which have small spires on them. These spires greatly add to the majesty of the temple. The spire of the temple is three-storeyed which enhance the beauty of the temple with artistically perforated delicate marble screens. The flag flying atop the lofty spire of the temple conveys the message of peace and love to the world. The view of the temple in a full-moon night is much more exhilarating. There are three more temples here of which two are of Tirthankar Parshwanath and one is of the Sun-god.

If the entire complex of this temple is to be described in just one single sentence, then it has to be said that the Ranakpur temple is an imagination materialized in stone. History, art-architecture and natural environment prove this place to be the crown of Indian tourist spots and places of worship. According to America's world-renowned architect Loui Joohan, it is a wonderful expression of architecture and spiritualism.



DIVINE BELLE : Engraved on the wall



KICHACK : Five-bodied warrior



● MAHAVIRJI (CHAANDANPUR)

Shree Chaandanpur Mahavirjee is one of the miraculous pilgrimages of Jains. This pilgrimage situated in Sawai Madhopur district is splendoured with natural beauty. Built at the bank of a river, this pilgrimage is a prominent centre of devotion for Jain devotees. So far as faith is concerned, it would not be an exaggeration if Chaandanpur Mahavirji is hailed as the heart of pilgrimages. This is a sacred place of the 'Digambar' sect, the main branch of Jainism.

It is agreed about this pilgrimage that the idol of Shree Mahaveer, the principal deity of the pilgrimage temple, was found during an excavation. Some 'Kaamduhadhenu' (self milching cow) used to pour out its milk everyday upon a mound near Chaandanpur village. It was surprising for the owner of that cow and the villagers. They excavated the mound. The villagers were overwhelmed with emotion on witnessing the emergence of the idol of the Lord. The news of appearance of the idol spread everywhere. The masses surged to have a glimpse. The wishes of people began to be fulfilled and thus a magnificent temple was built to ceremoniously instal this uniquely miraculous idol of Lord Mahaveer.

Between 17th and 19th centuries, this temple had been occasionally renovated. In respect of art, the magnificence of this temple is, on the whole, praiseworthy, but in view of its auspiciousness, Mahaveerjee is a pilgrimage without a peer. Millions of devotees visit this temple every year to pay their floral reverence at the feet of the Lord.

Even the royal lineage of Jaipur rulers has been respectful towards this pilgrimage. The kings have been providing grants for the management of this temple. Activities related to the service of humanity have also been performed here.

A marble-umbrella has been built over the spot where the idol had emerged, and a pair of foot-images ('Charan paduka') has been ceremoniously installed to symbolise the Lord's feet. The architecture of the temple is interesting and magnificent. The scenic beauty of the cluster of spires of the temple wins the heart at a single glance.

Drenched in the full moonlight, Chaandanpur pilgrimage conveys the message of purity and peace to the humanity at large.



THE MAIN DEITY SHREE MAHAVEER



The golden glass temple



A bird's eye-view of the temple



The spire and the tower



'KIRTI STAMBH' : The tower of glory



● **NAKODA**

NAKODA pilgrimage, built in the desert land of Rajasthan, bears a gloriously pious dignity. It is universally accepted that so much is dedicated by the devotees at this place of pilgrimage that the receipts not only help management of small pilgrimages, but also many schools, colleges, hospitals and 'dharmshalas' (charitable lodges) are being constructed and managed. The glory of Lord Parshwanath and the protecting deity of the pilgrimage Shree Bhairavji Maharaj is so much world-renowned that they are considered by the devotees as 'Haath-Ka-Huzoor' (Lord at hand) and 'Jaagti Jot' (Living light). This place has a thousand miraculous anecdotes. Wishes made in the name of this place attain fulfilment. The common masses maintain that the 'Prasad' (offerings in the form of sweets, fruits etc.) dedicated here should be distributed within the precincts of the pilgrimage. Taking the 'Prasad' elsewhere from the parameter of the pilgrimage is not considered to be proper.

As per historical references, Nakoda is related to a person named Nakorsen who lived in the third century before Vikram era. It was Nakorsen who had founded a city called Nakor, which in course of time became famous as Nakoda. Nakorsen had got a temple constructed here which was consecrated by the lotus hands of Acharya Sthoolibhadra.

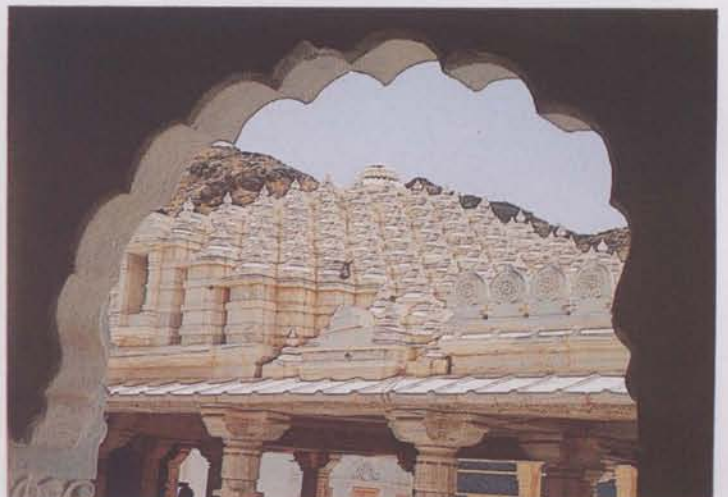
Many great acharyas (head of a Jain order or a group) and kings, notable among them being Acharya Suhastisuri, Siddhasen Diwakar, Mantungacharya, Kalkacharya, Haribhadra Suri, king Samprati and king Vikramaditya had visited this place as pilgrims. Jain acharyas also got this pilgrimage renovated by those kings. In the twelfth-thirteenth centuries, invasions of Muslim rulers had occurred on this pilgrimage, during which the temples were heavily damaged. This pilgrimage was reconstructed in the fifteenth century. The idol of Lord Parshwanath which is installed here now was consecrated in samvat 1429. According to one belief, since this idol was found in Nakor city, it became famous as Nakoda Parshwanath, whereas according to an ancient traditional legend a 'shravak' named Jina Dutt, had found it from a lake near Sindhari village and it was consecrated by the lotus hands of Acharya Shree Udaysuri.



Glimpse of the main temple at Nakoda pilgrimage



Rows of pillars of SHANTINATH TEMPLE on the top of the mountain range



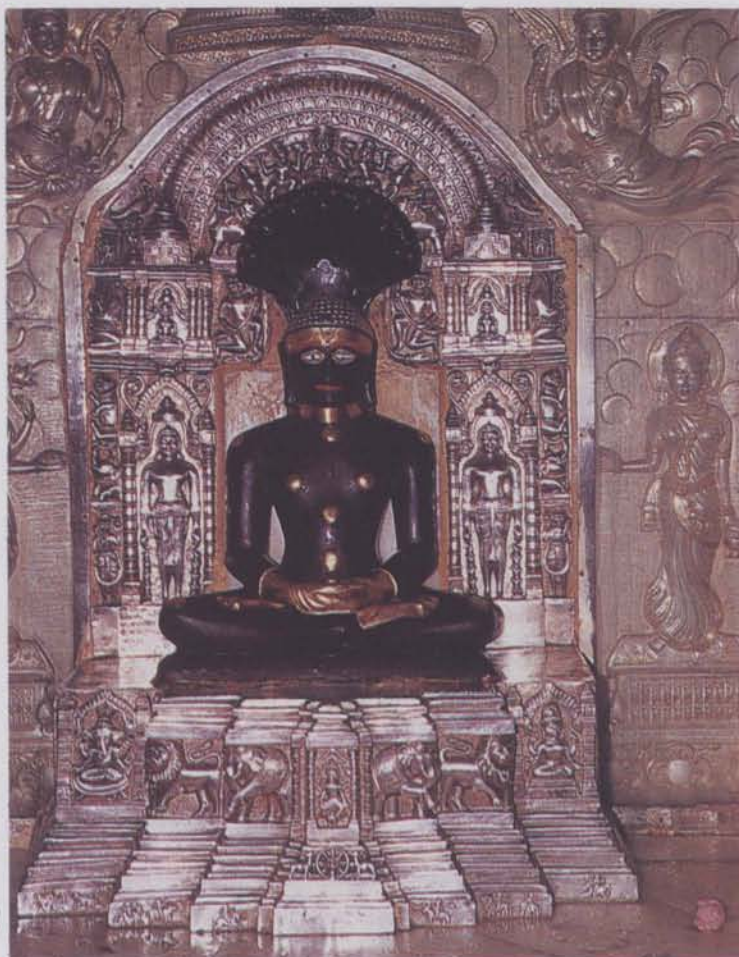
One of the spires of the temple



SHREE AADINATH TEMPLE : Artistic external wall



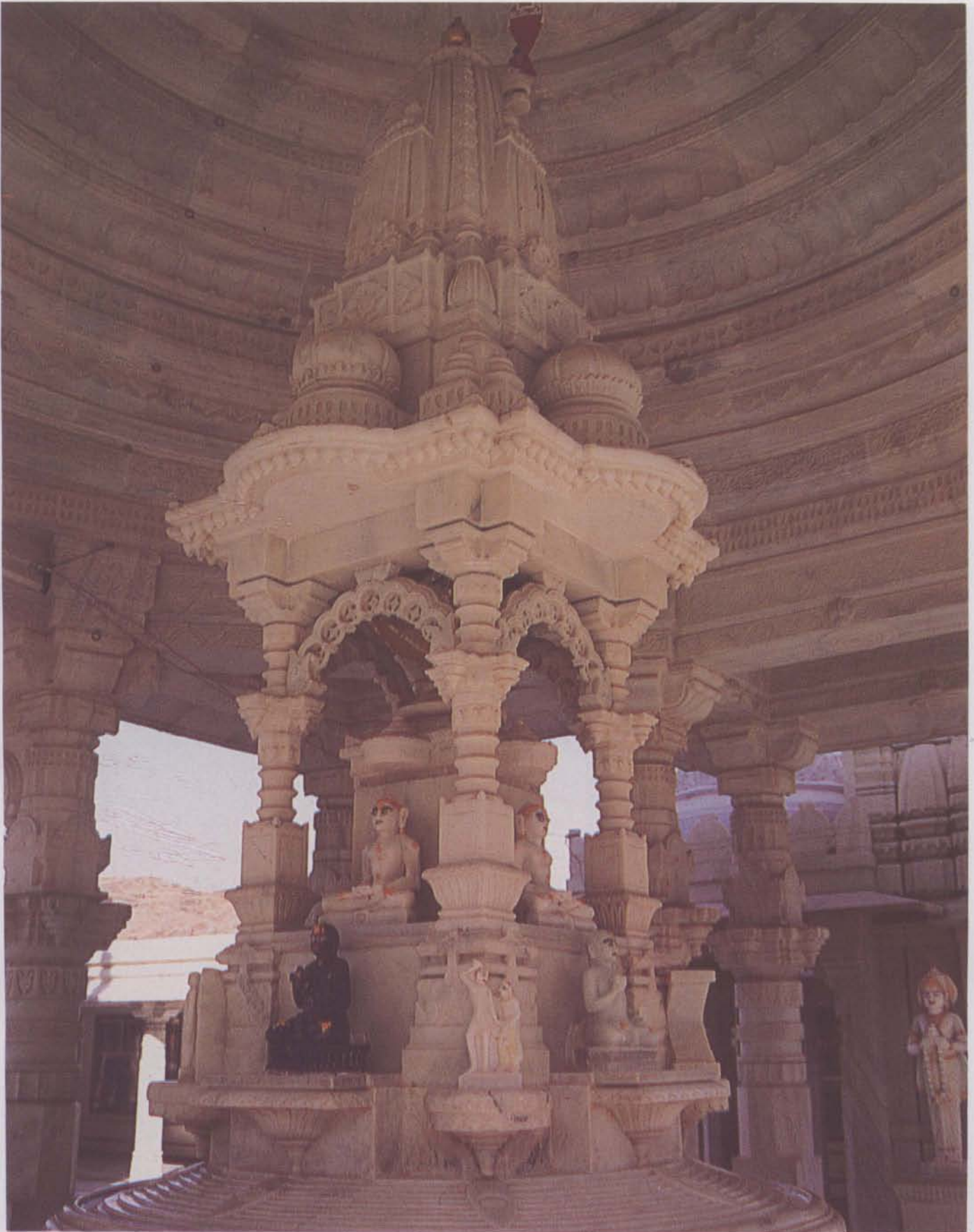
THE PROTECTING DEITY : Shree Nakoda Bhairav



Master of the pilgrimage LORD SHREE PARSHWANATH



SHANTINATH, the giver of 'Shanti' (peace)



SHREE SIDDHACHAKRA TEMPLE



The pillars of the SHANTINATH TEMPLE



A divine pair depicted on the wall of the Aadinath Temple



*A danseuse engraved on the wall :
an unprecedented depiction of art*

The miraculous deity of this place, Shree Bhairavji Maharaj was ceremoniously installed here in samvat 1511 by Acharya Kirtiratna Suri. This pilgrimage continuously prospered after the installation of Nakoda Bhairav. The miracles of this place found abode in the minds of the people. The devotees poured in from various places of the country and abroad. From time to time the pilgrimage has been restored and salvaged too.

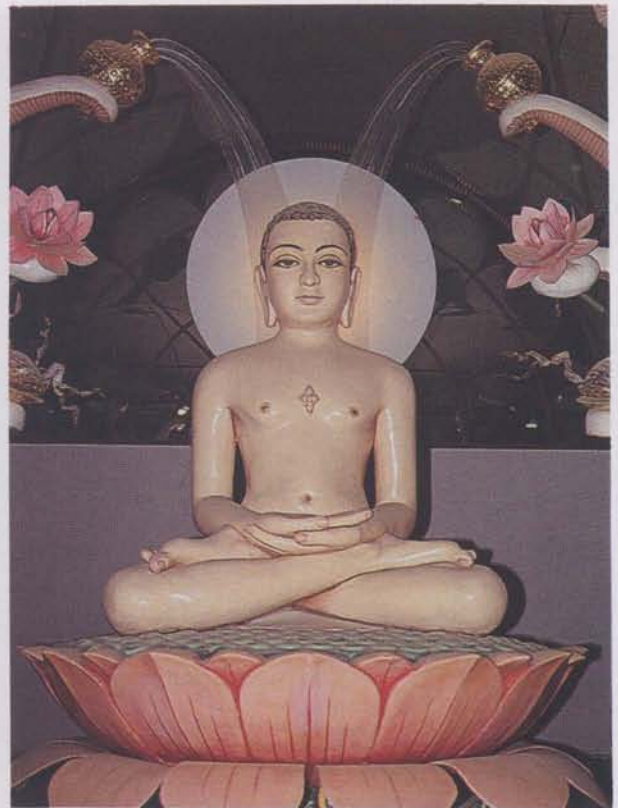
Till the seventeenth century, Jains were in majority in this pilgrimage, but later on, the residents of this place went to other villages and towns nearby and settled there.

Hundreds-thousands of travellers come here daily from every corner of India and maintain partnership in the name of Bhairav even in their business. This is indicative of a unique faith towards Bhairavdev. A big fair is held here on Poush Krishna Dashami, which is the birthday of Lord Parshwanath.

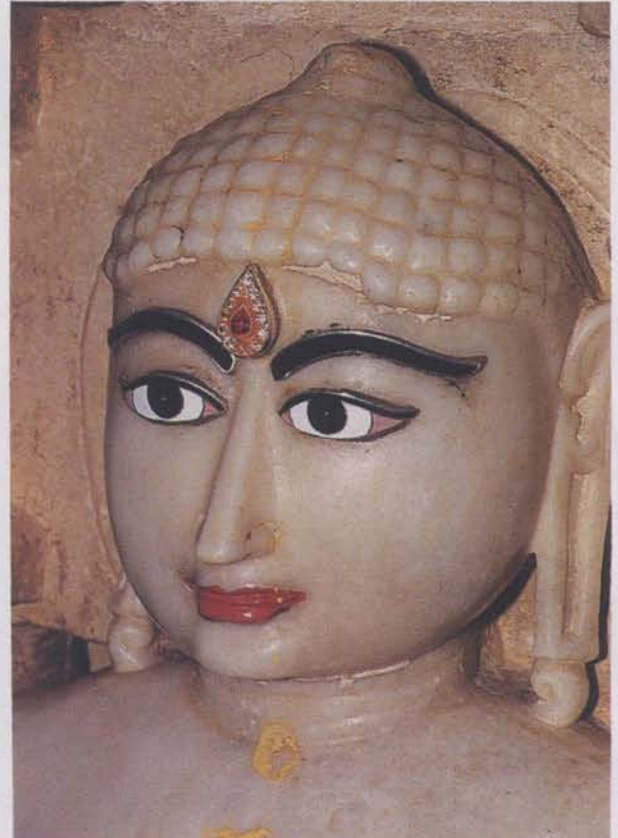
There are several small and big temples near the main temple. On the right side of the temple a magnificent idol of 'Sanwalia' (dusky) Parshwanath is installed. In this very chamber the idols of Mother Sarswati, Dada Jindutt Suri, Acharya Kirtiratna Suri et al are also installed. There is the magnificent temple of Lord Aadinath at the rear of the main temple. The outer arch of this temple is very artistic.

On the right, outside the main temple, stands the magnificent temple of Lord Shantinath. Here the full-size images of Lord Parshwanath and Lord Shantinath are etched on marble. Outside the main temple two ancient idols of Lord Neminath stand in meditational posture. On viewing the solemn countenance of the idol, the heart becomes enchanted. In this very temple are installed the ancient foot-images of Dada Jindutt Suri. At the rear of the temple there is a small but beautiful Siddhachakra temple. For the convenience of the pilgrims, there are huge 'dharma-shalas' where thousands can stay at a time. Besides the huge dining hall, there is Mahaveer Kala Mandir outside the temple premises which fascinates the hearts of the visitors. Inspiring and eye-filling collection of magnificent pictures concerning the life of Lord Mahaveer are displayed there.

Nakoda pilgrimage is a centre of worship for the masses due to its miraculous peril-preventing power. On remembering Nakoda, the Lord makes the path of life hurdle-free and paved.



LORD MAHAVIR'S fascinating idol in Mahavir Bhawan



LORD NEMINATH : Gracious countenance



● LAUDRAWA-JAISALMER

Jaisalmer is world famous for its specialised art. This is that centre of art where finest engravings are seen not only in the temples but also on the mansions belonging to citizens. Not only this, the houses of even the common citizens are ornamented with art. On seeing the city it becomes apparent that the residents of this place had heartfelt love for art. The arches and the domes of the temples of this place are the finest examples of art. At the same time ceilings and balconies of the houses of rich people and traders are excellent examples of very fine perforations and engravings.

Not only from the viewpoint of art, but also as a museum of the oldest books, Jaisalmer has been much talked about. Among the libraries here, even the manuscripts penned on palm leaves hundreds thousands years ago, are available, besides the Jain scriptures written in letters of gold. These libraries also contain a unique collection of the ancient style paintings. The library at Jaisalmer is considered to be one of the most excellent libraries in the world.

Although the population of Jaisalmer is not so large today, but references indicate that once there were the houses of 2,700 elite Jains here. The saints and the poets have highly praised the glory of Jaisalmer pilgrimage in their writings.

Jaisalmer pilgrimage was constructed in the 13th century. The idol of the master of the pilgrimage, Lord Parshwanath, measures 105 cm., the consecration whereof was solemnised by the auspicious hands of Acharya Shree Jinkushal Suri. Mention has been found that Shree Jinpati Suri had caused the consecration to be done here in samvat 1263. As per the instruction of Acharya Shri Jinraj Suri, the renovation and salvation work on the temple began in samvat 1459. In 1473 samvat, Shree Jaisingh Narsingh Ranak got it reconsecrated by Acharya Shree Jinvardhan Suri.

On the fortress, there are, besides this temple, seven more temples, and there are five temples in the city which were built in the sixteenth-seventeenth century.

This temple built in Jaisalmer, in view of fine engraving, is an example of lively architectural creation conforming to the universalization and multidimensional sentiment of the Jains. The pillars, the arches and the gateway of this place are miracles in themselves. The



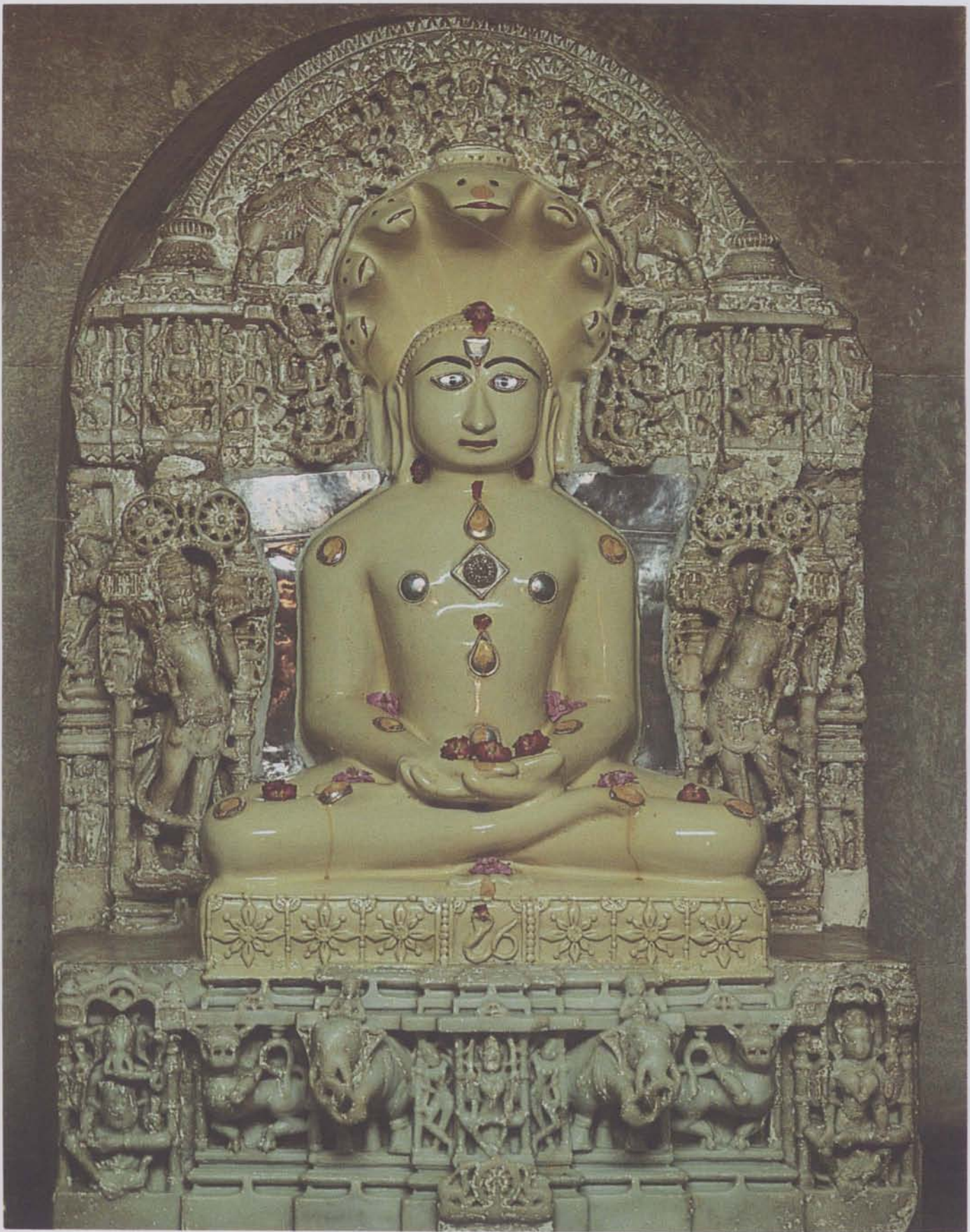
SUMMIT OF THE SHANTINATH TEMPLE, built in the Chinese style



The crown of the gateway which is a lively testimony of art in stone

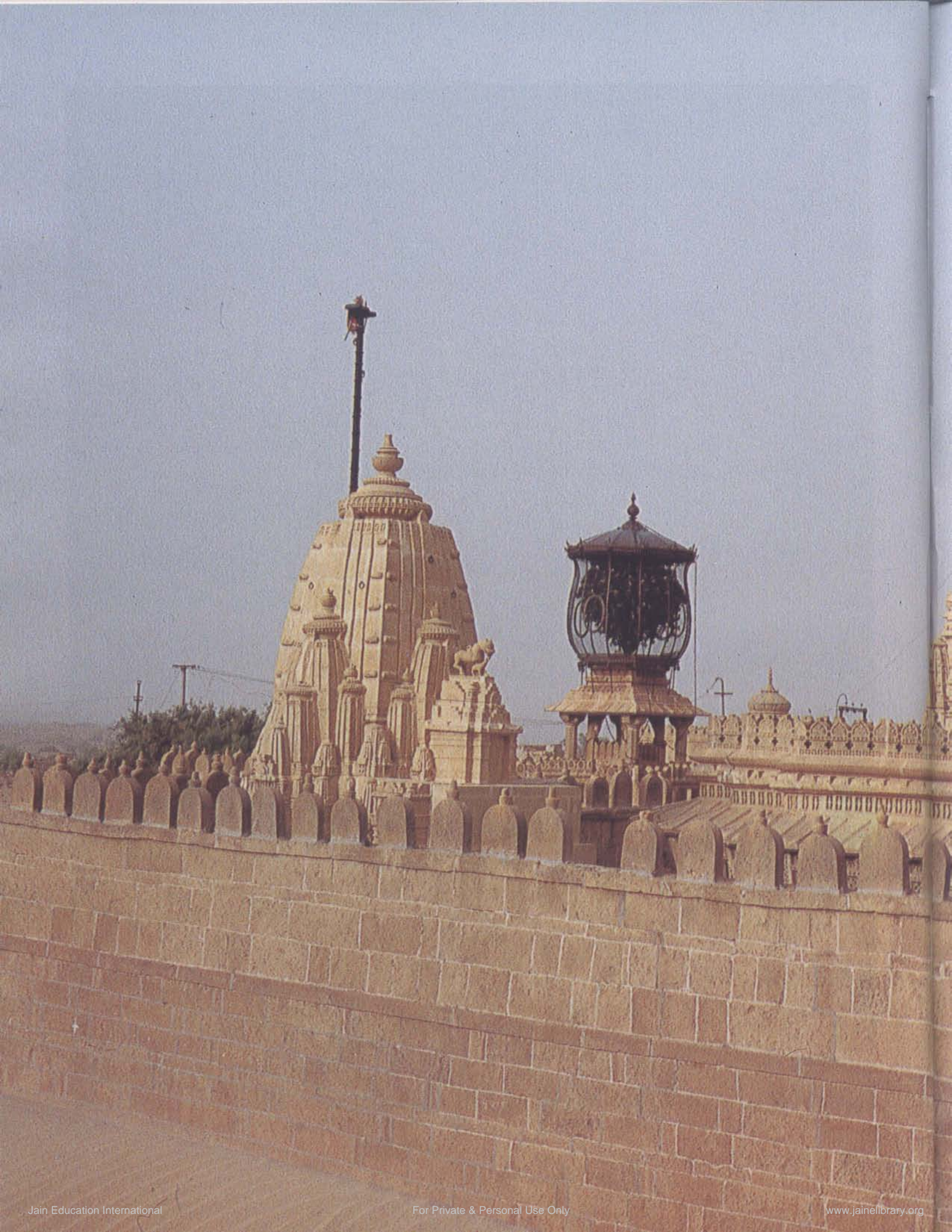


An ancient image of SHANTINATH



Statue of sand, besmeared with paste of pearls : THE MAIN DEITY SHREE CHINTAMANI PARSHWANATH

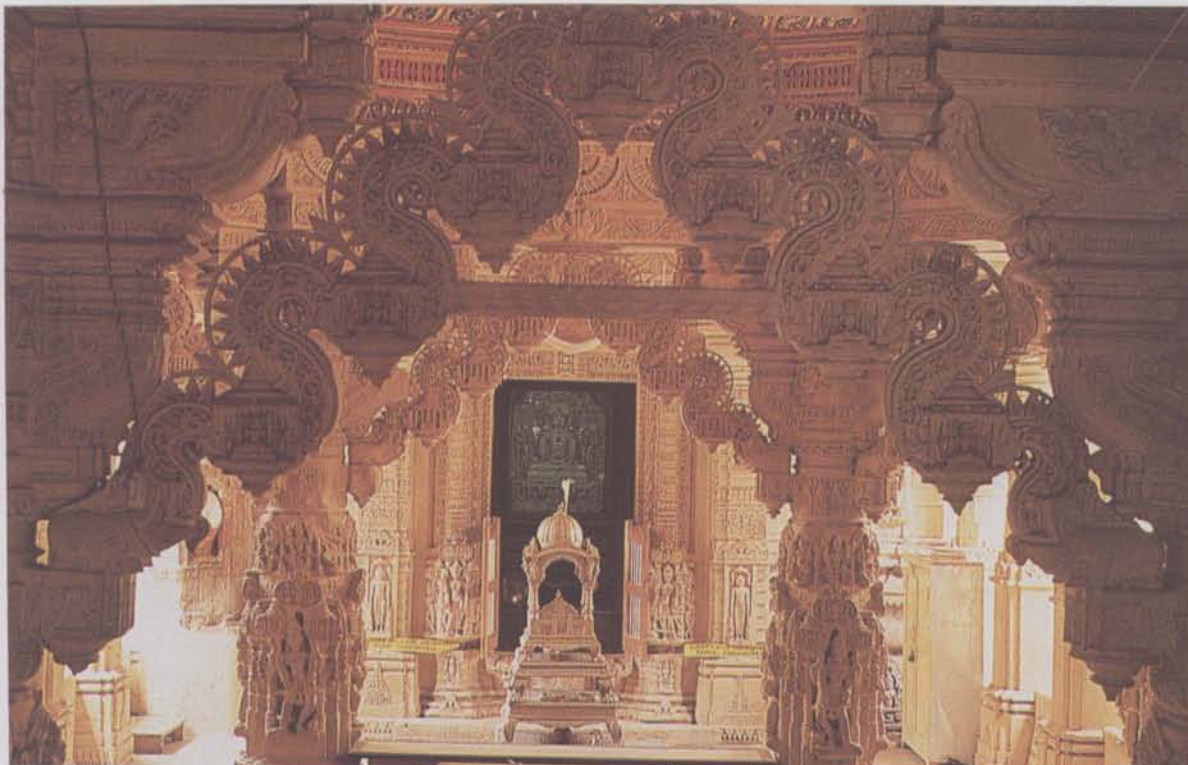
The spires of LODRAVA pilgrimage →







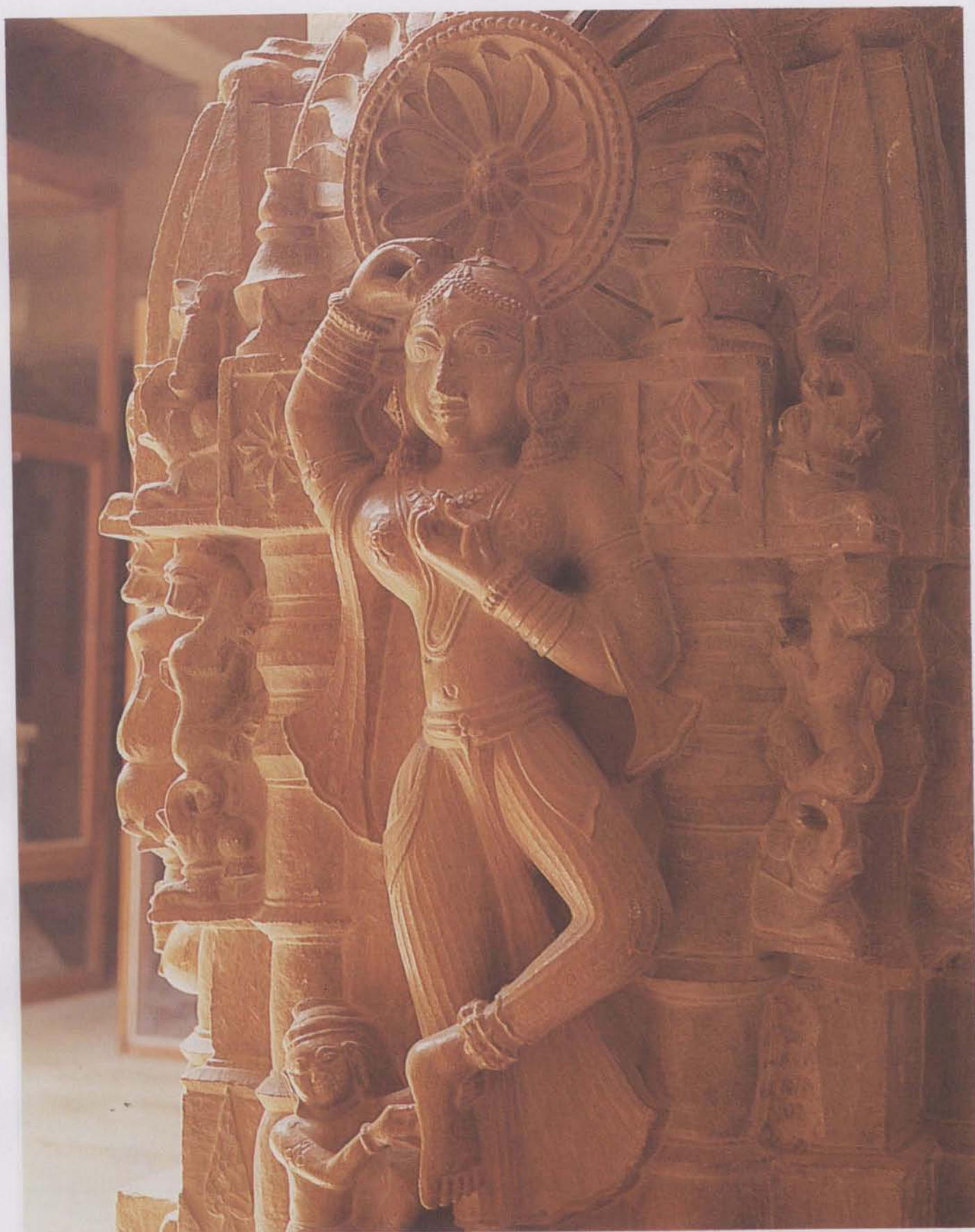
The engraved walls of the temple in NALINI VIMAN shape Pillars and arches : This is Indian art



Pillar & Gateway : The Indian Sculpture



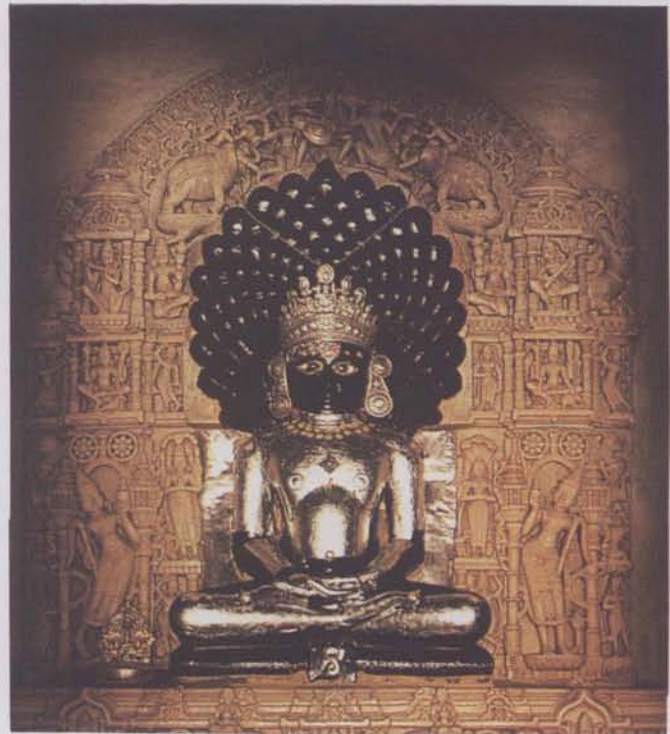
The magnificent image of Goddess Ambika



A lively presentation of art

sculptors have left not a single piece of stone where some form of art is not visible. In the temples of Jaisalmer, unique art forms of pillars-arches-puppets-dances-dramas have been engraved. The kind of excellent samples of the art of Western Rajasthan which can be seen here, are nowhere else to be found. On having a glimpse of the art of this place, the viewers are reminded of Abu-Delwada, Ranakpur and Khajuraho, and they are compelled to fix their gaze. The Jaisalmer stone is considered to be very hard, despite this, the kind, of fine engraving the sculptors have done, ought to be cited as an example in the history of sculptural art. Besides the temple, the engravings done on buildings viz. the haweli (palatial house) of the Patwas, Saalam Singh's haweli, Nathmalji's haweli are also no less important. These have been discussed even in foreign countries. Factually, Jaisalmer is that place where the viewers and the tourists come across the lively models of art at every nook and corner. The tops of the temples, which are built with yellow stones look like summits of gold.

In the vast library of Jaisalmer the 800-year-old shawl as well as other personal effects of the first Dada Shree Jindutt Suri is still preserved. It is believed that these items couldn't be burnt down at the time of the performance of the last rites of Dada Gurudev. It was a



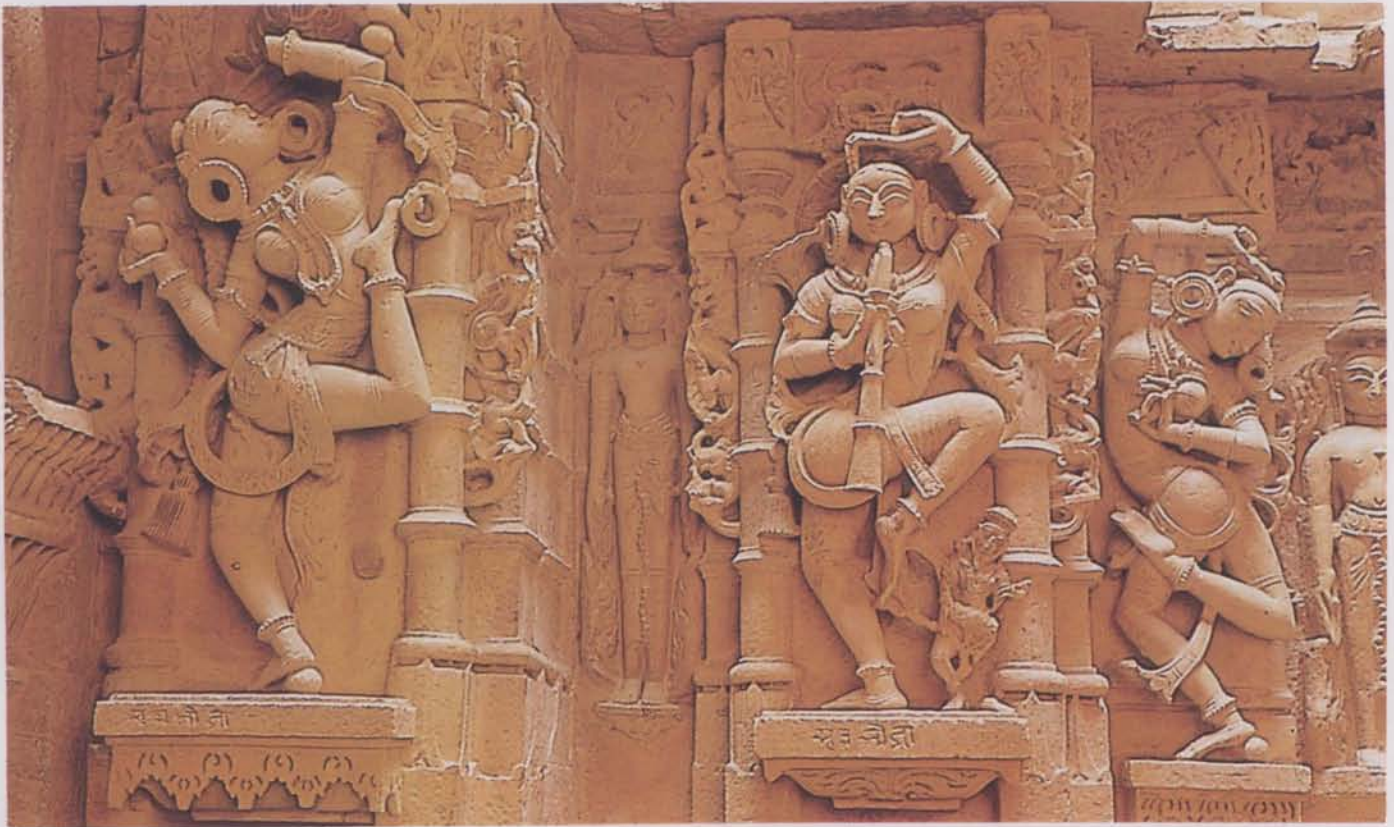
SHREE LODRAVA PARSHWANTH with beautiful inner walls



The most splendid arched-gateway built in the eighth century



An idol with wall, carved in Jaisalmer's yellow stone



Divine danseuses dancing on balls



Divine figures in the SAMBHAVANATH TEMPLE : Coordination of dance and music



Artefacts engraved on the pillars, depicting BRAHMA, VISHNU, SHIV, INDRA, AGNI, SHAKTI



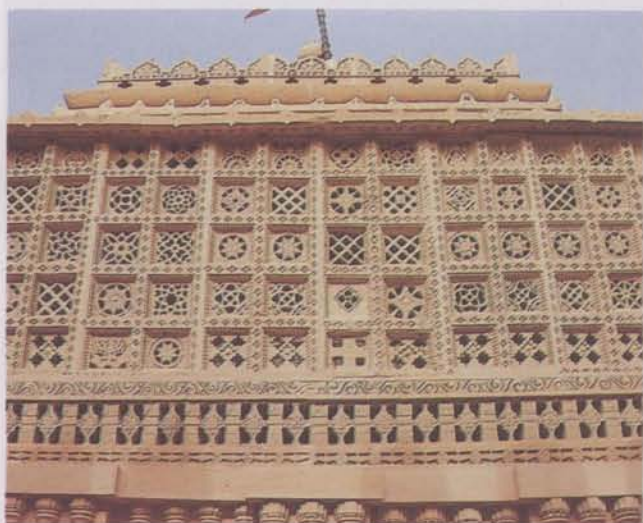
Depiction of dance on stone

great miracle for the devotees. The devotees of the Guru kept this shawl preserved in the book museum which the viewers see even today with a sense of surprise. Several influential saints, viz. Acharya Shree Jinvardhan Suri, Acharya Shree Jinchandra Suri, Mahopadhyaya Samay Sundar et al visited this place. With the active co-operation of prosperous businessmen like Seth Shree Thirooshah, Sanghvi Shree Pancha, Seth Shree Sandasa and Jagdhar, Jaisalmer has today become a legacy of the entire country. There was a time when the journey to Jaisalmer was considered to be very hazardous but it is not so now. Everyday hundreds and thousands of tourists may be seen here scrutinising and enjoying the sculptural art.

LODRAVPUR

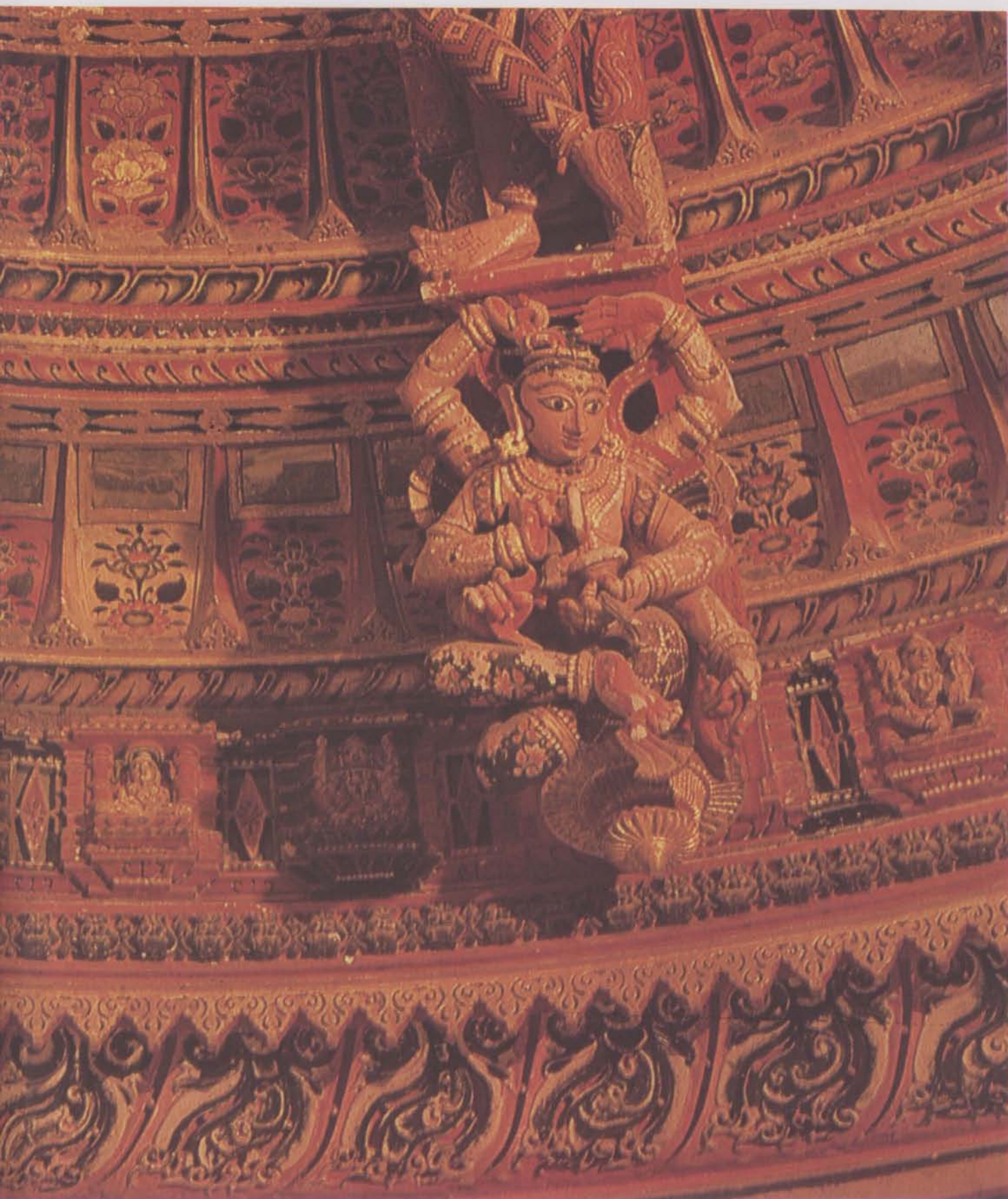
Lodrapur is situated at a distance of 15 kms. from Jaisalmer and 10 kms. from Amarsagar. Once it had been a very prosperous capital city of the Laudra Rajputs. This is the place where the oldest university of India was established but as a result of the conflict between Jaisalji and Rawal Bhojdev, Laudrapur today remains as ruins. Jaisalji entered into a truce with Muhammed Ghori and invaded Laudrava, the capital of Bhojdev Rawal. Bhojdev and thousands of warriors were killed in the battle. The soldiers of Ghori converted Laudrav into ruins. Laudrav temple was damaged too. However, the idol of Shree Parshwanath which is installed at the Jain-pilgrimage Jaisalmer is factually the same which was established at Laudrapur pilgrimage before the battle.

Thirooshah got this great temple rebuilt. Regarding the idol which remains installed here today as the principal deity, it is said that some top grade sculptors who were proceeding towards Multan, received a divine message in their dream that the idol which they were taking to Multan, should be bequeathed to Lodrapur pilgrimage. Thiroo Shah had received the idol after amply rewarding the sculptors. According to another belief, after salvaging



The stone grills of Lodrava : Fine engraving





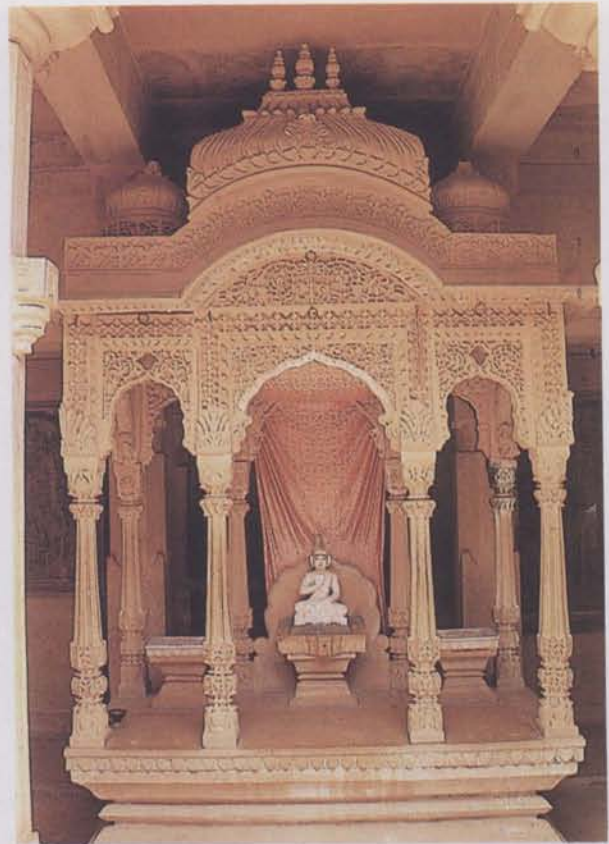
Glass gilded with gold : fascinating artefacts

the Lodravpur pilgrimage, Thirooshah had set out with a pilgrim-party for the pilgrimage of Palitana. While returning back he had brought this idol from Patan. The chariot on which the idol had arrived here, remains preserved here even today whereas some people maintain that this chariot belongs to those sculptors who were proceeding to Multan. A stone plaque engraving informs that the idol was consecrated by the lotus hands of Acharya Shree Jinrajsuri on Migsar Shukla Dwadashi in Vikram Samvat 1673. This idol of the principal deity Shree Sahasraphana Chintamani Parshwanath which glorifies this pilgrimage is the oldest rare idol in the country which is ornamented with a thousand cobra-hoods.

Although the work of renovation has been completed recently, the real credit of building and preserving this pilgrimage goes to Thiroobhai Shah. From near and around Laudrapur up to distant places, the ruins of thousands of buildings remind us of the ancient history. This very beautiful pilgrimage established in a peaceful environment amidst the sandy mounds of the desert, is like a blooming wish-fulfiller Kalpavriksha.

Unprecedented samples of the architectural art can be seen within the temple precincts. The gateway as well as the campus of the temple are extremely beautiful. At the summit of the temple there are the remains of a Kalpvriksha about which it is said that it is really a wish-fulfiller. For the preservation and beautification of this tree, the management has placed an attractive cover on it. The pillars, ceilings and spires of the temples here are exquiste examples of finest engravings.

The presiding deity of the temple is also considered to be extremely miraculous and influential. Besides the common travellers and tourists, highly placed commanders of the Indian army also come here to pray and to worship. It is popularly believed that the reigning deity fulfills the wishes expressed in his name. Here the Nagraj (serpent god) is also sometimes seen.



Artistic 'CHHATRI' OF KUSHAL GURU



Artistic water-outlet



KALPA VRIKSHA (The divine tree that gives whatever one wants)



Due to specialised architectural splendour, Osian pilgrimage has always been talked about amongst artistic temples. The architecture engraved on the hardest stones is really famous, the temple's own hugeness and its extraordinary beauty is also remarkable. The sanctum sanctorum of Lord Mahaveer, the principal deity of the temple, is a unique presentation of Rajasthan architecture. The main temple and the idols of its principal deities symbolize the early Jain architecture.

On perusing the historical facts related to this pilgrimage it is learnt that its ancient name was Upkeshpattan, Urkesh, Navneri et al. It is also known from Gacch Pattawali of the 14th century that Acharya Ratnaprabh Suri had arrived here in the fourth century before the Vikram Era began and its king Upaldev and minister Uhad, on being preached by him, had adopted Jainism. References reveal that the area of the city was widespread when king Upaldev had got this temple constructed, and it was considered to be one of the prosperous cities of the country.

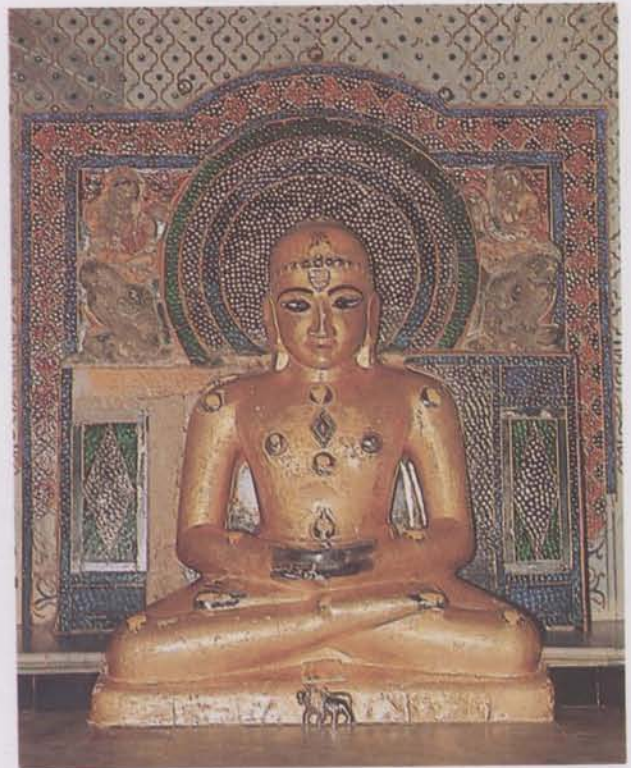
From another mention, it is learnt that the idol of the presiding deity, established in the temple, was obtained from inside the earth and was consecrated in Samvat 1017 Magh Krishna Ashtami. According to archaeologists, the sculptural art of this place dates back to nearly 8th century.

On studying various references, it appears that this city had been established 70 years after the 'nirvana' (passing away) of Lord Mahavir, and the temple was also built almost during this period. Its ruins were salvaged and renovated in the eighth century.

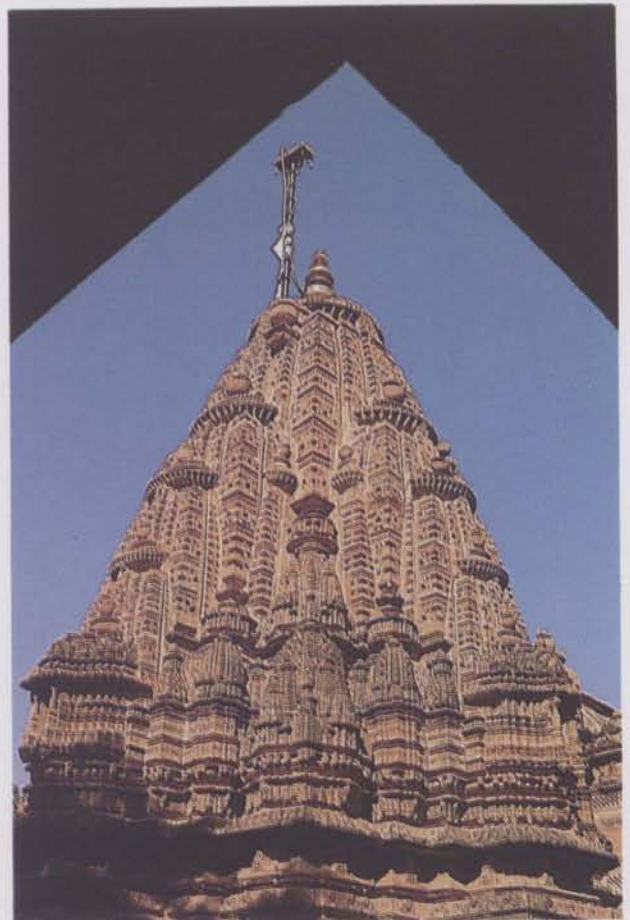
Oswal caste too, which is a prominent part of the Jain society, had originated from Osian itself.

According to archaeologists, Osian is a famous centre of the early medieval art and architecture. Some of the temples here had been constructed in the 8th century while some others were built in the 11th century. The principal deity of this pilgrimage is Tirthankar Shree Mahavir. His golden-coloured 80 cm. high idol seated in the 'padmasan' (lotus posture) is auspiciously present here. The construction of the main temple is supposed to have taken place in the 8th century, and it faces towards the north.

Near the gateway is an elevated place for congregation with an artistic arch which was constructed



LORD MAHAVIR : The Presiding Deity of Osian pilgrimage



The splendid spire of the temple



The reception entrance of the pilgrimage



A dome : representing the sculptile art of Rajasthan



An artistic part of a temple decorated with artefacts

in Samvat 1016. On both sides of the sanctum sanctorum and at the rear, a covered alley has been built. The sanctum sanctorum is square-shaped. Bhadra, Pratirath and Karna - all the three styles have been accommodated here. The Kumbh at the altar has been decorated with ornamented small idols of gods and goddesses including the statues of Kuber, Gaj-Lakshmi and Vayu (Wind) etc. which attract the viewers towards them. Artistic forms of the protectors of the directions have also been sculptured on the pedestals of the gods. The edifices of the sanctum sanctorum have been joined to those windows with highly artistic ornamental hangings, which are placed on Rajsevak (royal valet), Vedika (small altar) and Asanpatt (seat cushion). The presentation of the windows are also no less attractive. These have been ornamented with lotus-flowers, potted plants and herbs-shrubs arranged in various ways.

The ceiling of the deep sanctum sanctorum is the life of the temple's art. The ceiling has a three - tier chandelier. Here the splendoured beauty of architecture has come forth in such a magnificent manner that the viewers forget to bat their eyelids. In the first tier are engraved the forms of melodious divine singers and the dancing 'gandharvas' (heavenly musicians). All the four corners of the first tier are decorated with beautiful musical instruments. In the second tier 'Singh Karn' has been sculptured. In the middle of the third tier all around 'Singh Karnas' have been sculptured, and at its top beautiful forms of pot bells have been constructed.

The summit of the 'Triak Mandap' is in two-tiered chandelier style, like the one over the 'Goodh Mandap' (sanctum sanctorum). On its north are constructed the idols of the goddesses like Gouri, Vairitya and Manasi on Singh Karn. And, on the north of the Western chandelier are the attractive statues of Yakshi, Chakreshwari, Mahavidya, Mahakali and Vagdevi.

The chandelier-ceiling of the gateway 'mandap' is covered by a huge bell. In the three plaques of its triangular arches are sculptured the idols of Mahavidya, Kali, Mahamasi, Varun, Yaksha, Ambika et al. On the thresholds of the temple, the episodes of the lives of Jain Tirthankar Neminath and Lord Mahaveer have been very deeply depicted.

All the four pillars of the hall are quadrangular. These have been ornamented with creepers and plants, nooses of cobras and faces of persons of glory. 'Dev Kulikas' (small idols of gods) have been sculptured on the walls of the Goodh Mandap. A splendid arch is built on the summit of every 'Kulika'. The artistic side of this place too is worth a glimpse. Smaller images of Gods engraved in the temple are actually the jewels of architecture.

This temple is as respected in respect of art, as it is popular in respect of devotion. Here the protecting deity known as Poonia Baba is installed in the form of a cobra couple, who fulfills the wishes of the devotees.

Constructed nearly a km. away from the temple is the popular temple of Shree Sachchitaya Mata, where hundreds of devotees visit every day to get their wishes fulfilled.



Intricate engravings on the pillar



A divine beauty blowing conch shell prior to beginning her dance



Among the prominent tourist spots of India, the name of Mount Abu has been renowned for centuries gone by. Developed in the midst of high mountain ranges, the natural form of this tourist spot is like the Heaven itself. Also the Delwada Jain temple here has been the main attraction on world level. At least 15 lakh tourists come here every year to have a glimpse of and pay their homage to this temple. Probably there is no other temple or building in the world which can be compared with the sculptured art of the Delwada temple. The Taj Mahal is considered to be one of the most magnificent buildings of India. But when any tourist, after being fascinated by the Taj Mahal comes to Delwada and observes the minutest details of the temple here, he becomes spell-bound, and exclaims - Oh..... ! Wonderful....! Unprecedented !! Rare.....!!!

There is such a variety of art in the temple here that its finesse cannot be gauged even after scrutinising it for several days. Factually Delwada, Ranakpur and Jaisalmer represent the Indian sculptural art.

Delwada has preserved in itself the immortal wealth of a unique structural art form. Made of milk-white bright marble the temples here present the rare artistry of the artistes on the one hand, whereas on the other hand, the saintly Jain statues convey the message of peace and penance and proffers a spiritual environment with boundless beauty. By viewing the temples, the visitor becomes so much emotionally charged that the closed windows of his heart gets opened, and his consciousness becomes eager to become dedicated at the auspicious feet of the supreme soul.

Delwada is in fact, a cluster of five temples. Two of the temples here are indeed very big and the remaining three temples are the complements of the temples' vastness. The finesse of architectural beauty, their delicacy and the minute ornamentation of the domes and the cornices win the hearts of the tourists at the very first glance. The sculptural images of artistically engraved depictions of dance and drama are unprecedented, unique. The domes hanging and rocking on the roofs of the temple and in the campus spreading around the artistically sculptured idols of Mother Saraswati, Ambika, Lakshmi, Shankheshwari, Padmavati and Sheetala goddesses are unprecedented examples of sculptural art. In order to view the finesse of the sculptural art, seeing the nails and the nose tips of these idols are enough.

The sculptors of Delwada temples have wielded the chisels so skilfully that the artistry which they have shown on marble will be difficult to be shown on ivory. Almost all



Beholding the VIMALWASAHEE



LOONWASAH TEMPLE : A treasure of art



The upper portion of the mini-temples of Devrani-Jethani

the idols of the temple have been engraved on very hard marble which makes itself evident how much effort the sculptors had to put in to carve these idols.

On observing the engravings of the temple deeply, it appears that the main trend of the sculptors of that period was only in the engraving of ornamental visualisations. The sculptors had acquired special proficiency in making the idols of gods rather than creating statues of human beings. The carvings of these idols of the divinity including the carvings of the nayakas, vidyadharas, apsaras, vidyadevis and other gods-goddesses of Jainism, have been done on the domes, pillars and arches of the temple.

It is but natural that the glimpses of Jain philosophy will be seen in a Jain temple, but the builders, the planners and the sculptors of this temple have also presented artistic rendering of the entire Hindu culture and the Indian culture. Even the scene of a woman waiting eagerly for her lover has been accommodated here. There are altogether six temples here out of which five pertain to the 'Shwetamber' and one to the 'Digambar'.

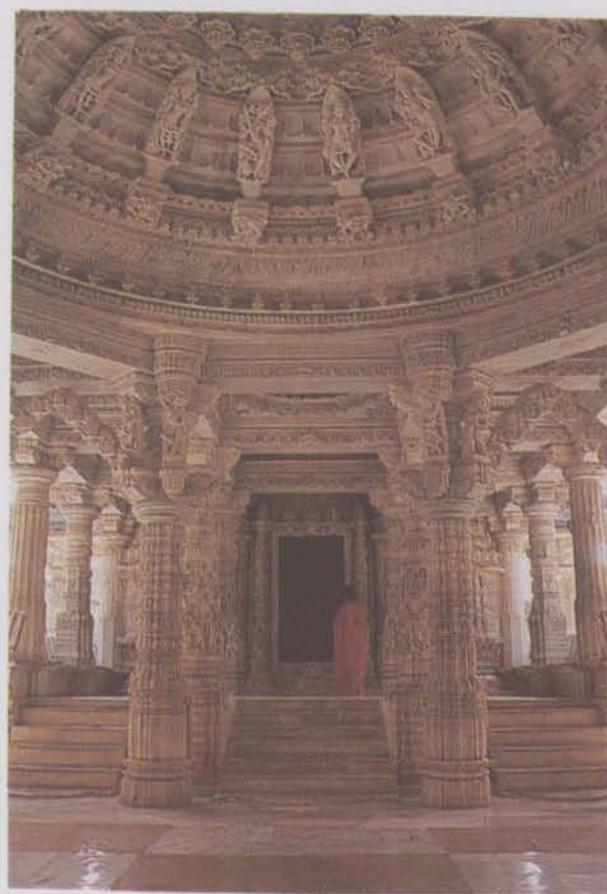
THE TEMPLE OF LORD MAHAVIR—Including Lord Mahavir, the twentyfourth 'Tirthankar' of Jainism, nine 'Jinas' have been established here. This is the smallest and the simplest of all the temples constructed here. It was built in 1582 A.D. The paintings of Arayish on the ceilings of the internal part of the temple have become somewhat damaged.

VIMALWASAH TEMPLE — This is the most magnificent temple of the Delwada campus. Mahamantri (prime minister) Vimal Shah had got it constructed. Vimal Shah, Chanakya of Gujarat, was the minister-cum-army general of Maharaj Bheemdev. This most splendid temple had been built under the direction of the great sculptor Kirtihar of Vadnagar (Gujarat). Nearly 1,500 artisans and 1,200 labours worked together for 14 years to get this temple materialised. In those days, the construction of the temple cost 18.53 crore gold-coins. The great consecration ceremony of this temple was performed in 1031 A.D. in the auspicious presence of Acharya Shree Vardhman Suri. Prithvipal, the descendant of Vimal Shah had renovated several entrances of this temple between samvat 1204 and 1206. He also built a stable of elephants just in front of this temple with a view to immortalize the glory of his ancestors. At the main portion of its door is the statue of Vimal Shah on a horse-back.

In 1311 A.D. Alauddin Khilji had damaged this temple which was later repaired by Beejad and Laalak brothers of Mandor (Jodhpur). Just on entering the main gate, the heart becomes gladdened on viewing the temple's magnificent artistic ceilings, domes and the arched entrances. Glimpses of the ornamental engraving, the magnificence of sculpture and finesse can be seen on every side here. This temple has in all 57 edifices with background arches in which the statues of various Tirthankars have been established. Inside the engraved door of every edifice there are two domes, whose artistic



The sacred idol of AADINATH majestically seated in the sanctum sanctorum



Fascinating scene of the temple

*Salutations by the goddess →
An attractive posture of a dance depicting blessed devotion →*





sculptures on the ceilings overwhelm the viewers.

Outside the tenth edifice of the temple, there is the scene from Tirthankar Neminath's biography. Besides the minute engraving of the marriage procession of Lord Neminath, Lord Krishna's water-sport has also been sculptured here.

Between the twenty-second and the twenty-third edifices, there is a cave-like temple, wherein a huge dusky-green coloured image of Tirthankar Aadinath has been installed. Vimal Shah had retrieved this idol from inside the earth by the grace of mother Ambika, before the construction of Vimalvasahi. Archaeologically, this idol is very ancient and has an importance of its own. In this portion of the temple, there are several ancient idols of various sizes.

In the twenty-third edifice there is an attractive idol of Mother Ambika who has been the object of worship of the builders of the temple. In the thirty-second edifice, there is the scene of the defeat of the Kaalia snake at the hands of Shree Krishna. On one side Shree Krishna is lying on the bed of live entwined coils of Shesh Nag (divine snake), and on the other side Krishna and Baldev are playing 'gullidanda' (a game played with a wooden stick and a wooden bell similar to those put atop the stumps in cricket), on the bank of river Yamuna. In the thirty-eighth edifice there is the artistic image of Vidyadevi with sixteen hands and riding a lion.

On the dome of the forty-second edifice, there are fascinating images of Saraswati (goddess of learning) riding a peacock, Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) riding an elephant and goddess Shankheshwari riding on Garud (a huge divine bird). The minute details of the sculpture are view-worthy.

In the forty-fourth edifice there are the engraved arch and the image of Lord Shree Varishen with background arch. Outside the forty-sixth to forty-eighth edifices, the images of sixteen-handed Sheetala, Saraswati and Padmavati carved on the dome, are extremely beautiful.

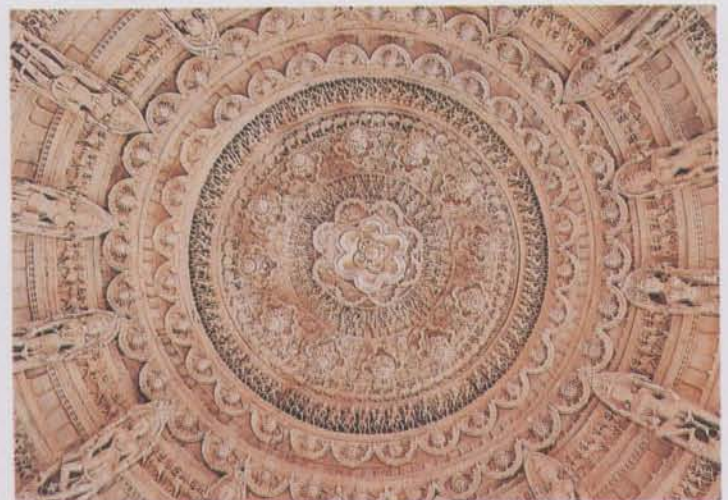
The most artistic part of the temple is its stage with auditorium. From a big round dome, supported by twelve ornamental pillars and artistically beautiful arches, are suspended eleven roundish garlands of elephants, horses, ducks, dancers etc., together with the bunches of crystal-hangings. Atop every pillar are damsels playing musical instruments and above them are very beautiful and impressive images of sixteen Vidya Devis riding on various kinds of vehicles. There are nine square-shaped 'Chaukis', above the stage, on the ornamented ceiling with various kinds of beautiful engravings.

In the main sanctum sanctorum a very delicate and eye-filling idol of Lord Rishabhdev is installed. In the deep mandap, the idols of Lord Parshwanath, standing in meditational postures are also fascinating. Outside the Vimalvasahi temple is the stable of elephants which was restored in 1991 A.D.

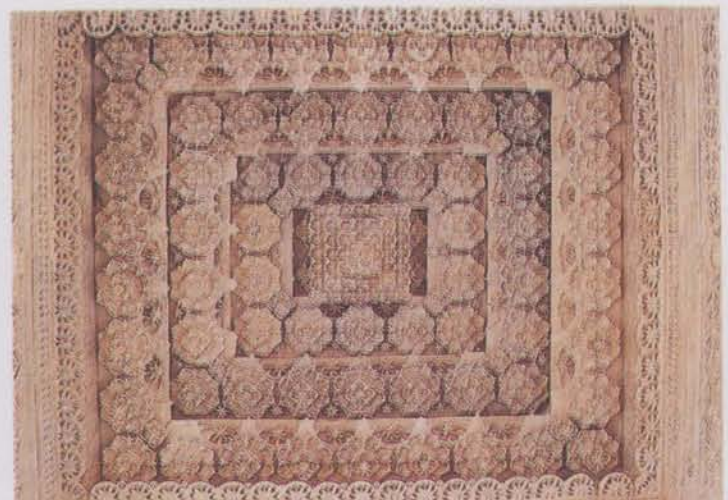
LOONA VASHI TEMPLE – This temple is the heart



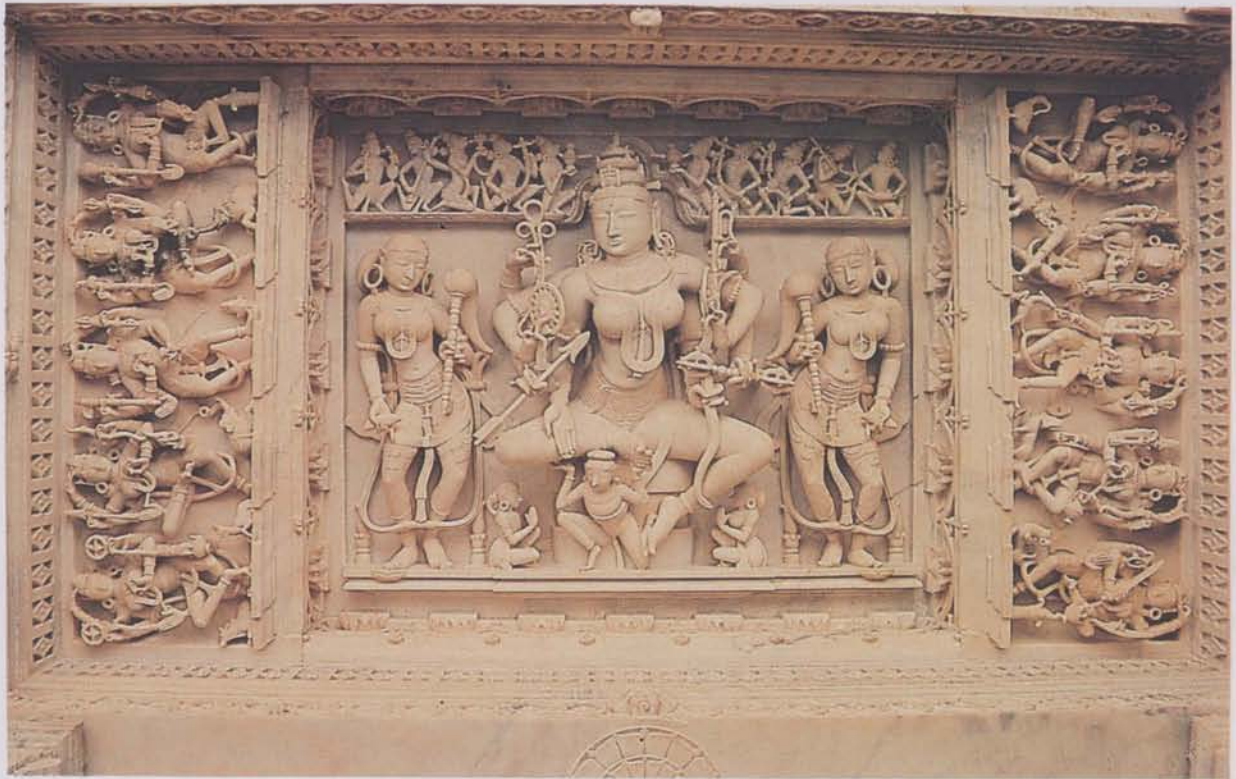
Sunflowers hanging from the dome



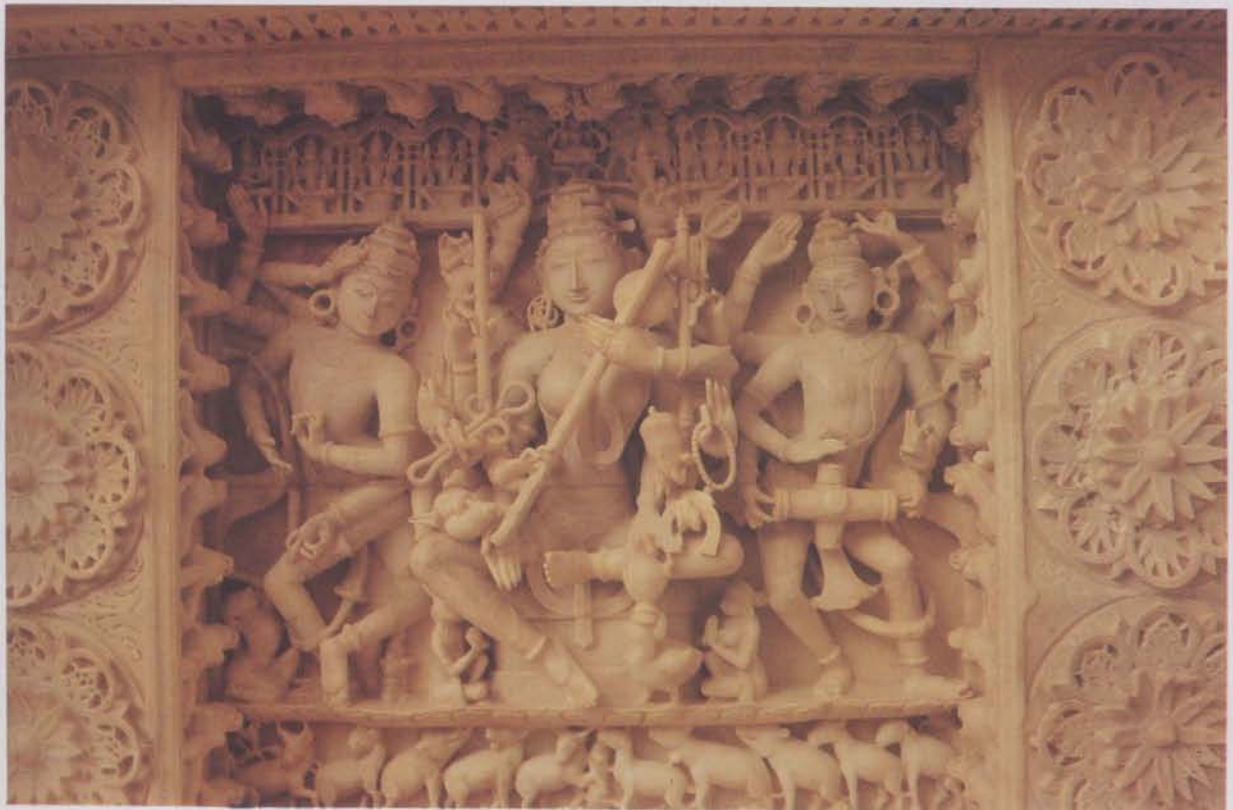
One of the over-a-hundred domes



Flowers blooming on stone : A dome



The magnificence of the goddess engraved on the outer ceilings of the temple

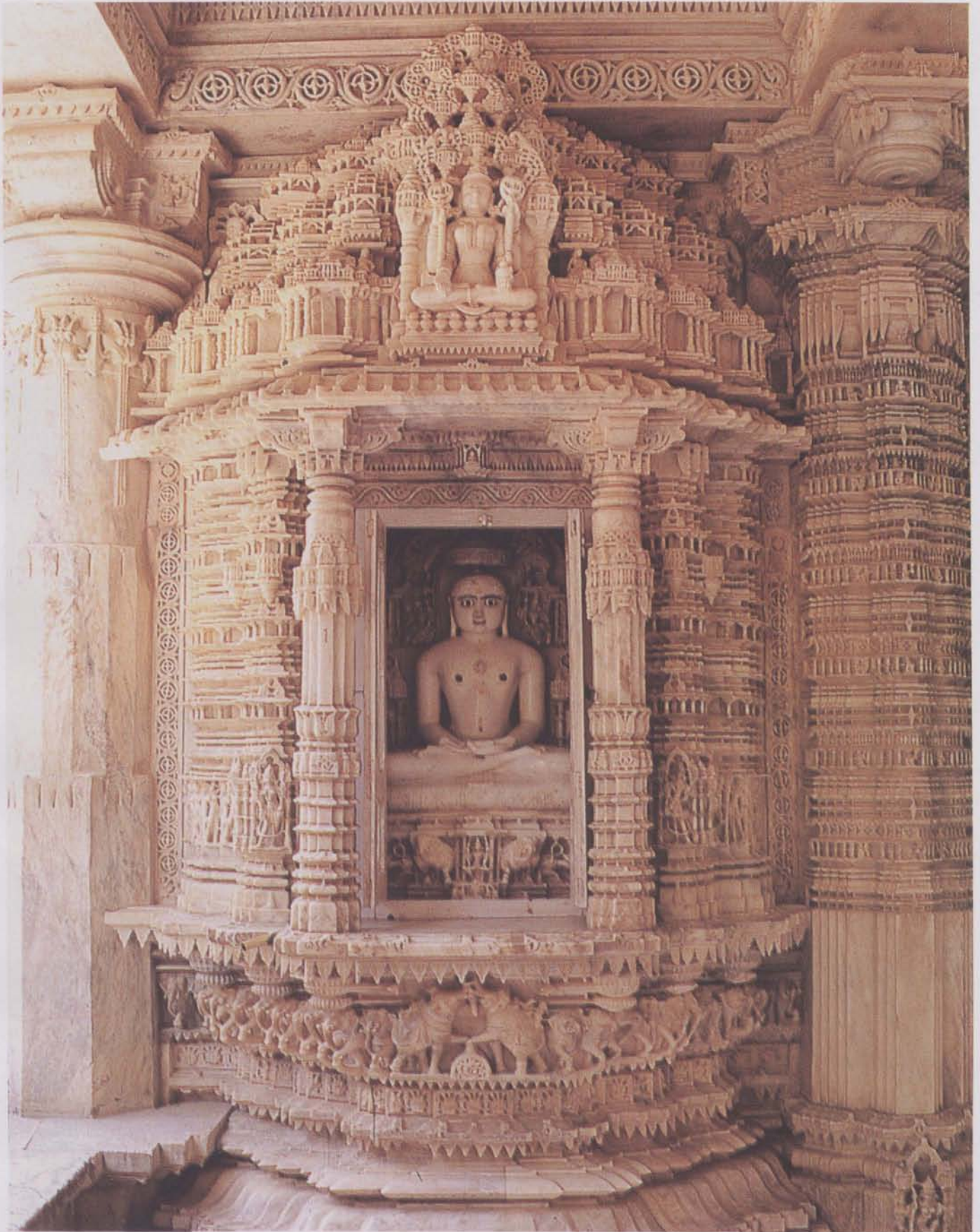


Mother SARASWATI : Fine engraving

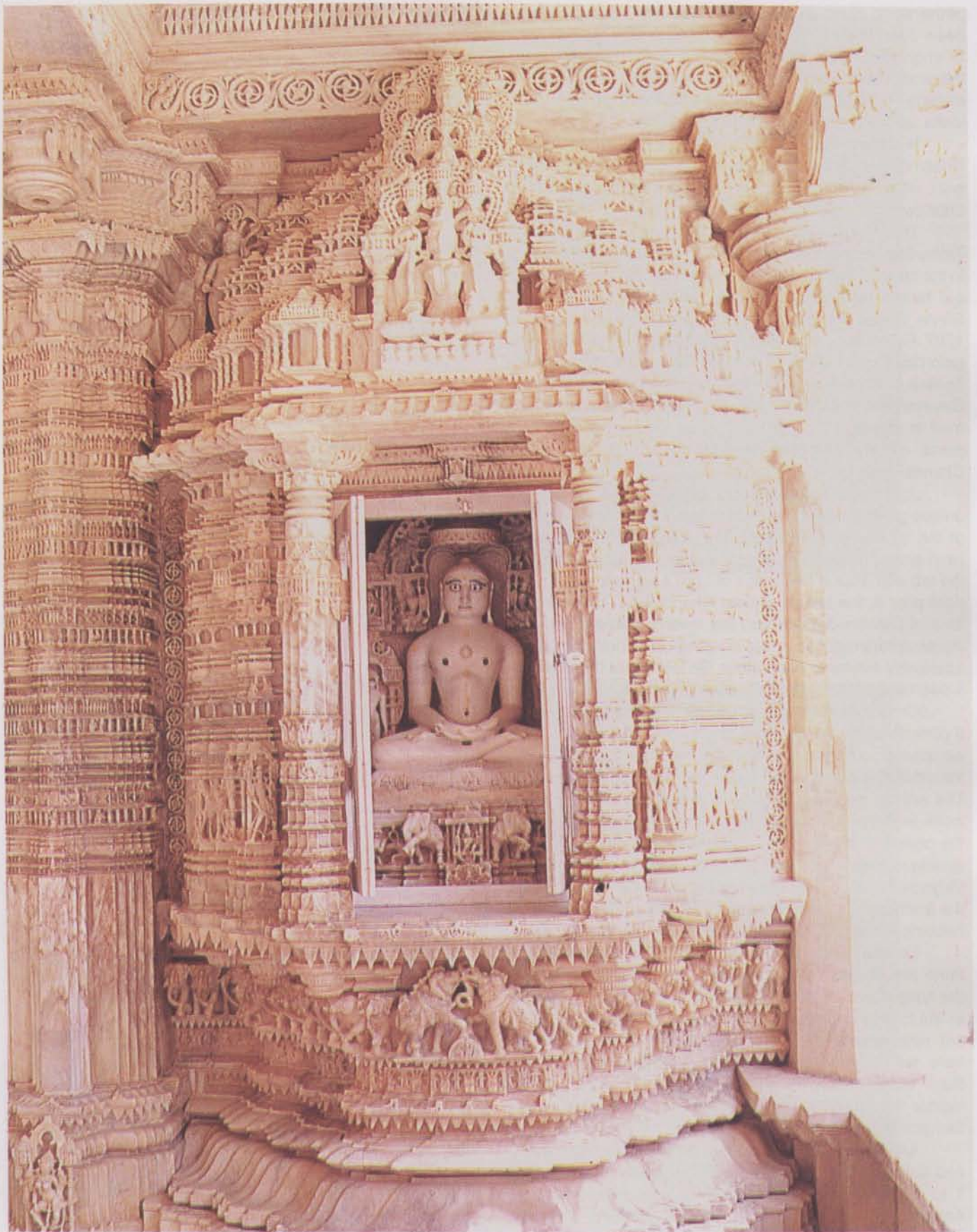
Fine engraving inside the dome →







The mini-temple of Devrani



The mini-temple of Jethani

of the world of art. In the temple such fine engraving has been done that on first sight the viewer is wonderstruck. In engraving larger than largest on stones smaller than the smallest, the sculptures of this temple appear to be experts. To look at this priceless treasure of art if one looks up he does not wish to look down.

Ministers Vastupal and Tejpal of the Solanki king Bheemdev of Gujarat got this world famous temple built with white-coloured marble. The temple was named Loonawasahi after Lavanya Singh, the son of Tejpal.

The black touch-stone idol of the twenty-second Tirthankar, compassion incarnate Neminath, is installed in the temple. The consecration of this idol, which captures our hearts just on being seen, was done by Acharya Shree Vijaysen Suri on Chaitra Krishna Tithiya in Samvat 1287. References available reveal that more than 13 crore gold coins were spent in building the temple. The artistic finesse of the temple is credited to the renowned sculptor Saumandev. In Samvat 1368, the troops of Alauddin Khilji tried to damage the sacrum sanctorum as well as other parts of the temple. In Samvat 1378 Shreshthi Chandsingh's son got it repaired.

Just on entering the main gate of the temple, a unique gift to humanity, the magnificent and attractive form of the temple can be seen. The world-famous Gokhlas (wall-altars) of Devrani-Jethani are built in this temple. On the left wall-altar is the image of Lord Aadinath and on the right altar is the image of Lord Shantinath. The peerless love of Devrani-Jethani and the incomparable artistry of the sculptors resulted in the shaping-up of both the altars absolutely similar to each other. On looking at these altars it seems as if the artistes have infused life in them.

On reaching the rostrum of the temple, we can have a glimpse of the tenderness, beauty and excellence of its wonderful sculptural art, and an indelible impression of the art of the artists is etched in the heart of the viewers. The artistic pendant hanging in the centre of the dome, looks like crystal drops. Wherever we cast our glance at the ceiling of the temple, it really appears that everything is unique here. On every pillar stand the idols of sixteen Vidyadevis riding different animals/birds. On every side of the auditorium the arches are so artistic that the viewers become emotionally overwhelmed.

On the south of the hall on the walls and ceilings there are scenes of the birth of Lord Krishna, mother in the lying down posture, the prison, the cowboys etc. are in the form of engraved art-pieces. Ahead of the auditorium are nine square-shaped seats. In each of the ceilings here, we find wonderful art work of the best engravings. Such tender branches of flowers have taken shape in marble that at the very first glance the viewer exclaims—unprecedented !! unsurpassable !!!

Around the temple there are 50 edifices whose walls and domes are ornamented with fine artefacts. In edifice 1 to 10 there are respectively the images of goddess Ambika, flowers, danseuses, artistic plaques with the figures of goose, Dwarka and Samavasaran.



One of the arches of the temple



The miracle of fine engraving : A dome of the temple



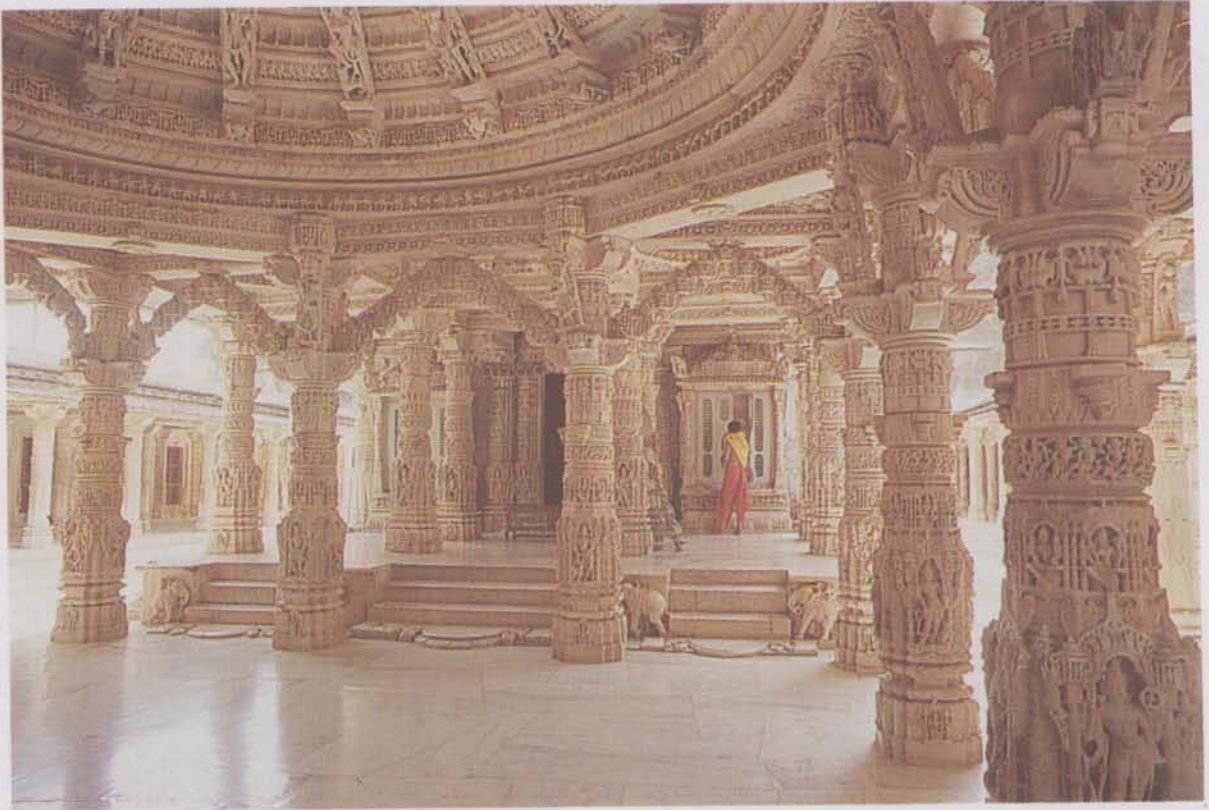
Divine danseuses carved inside the temple domes



Apsaras (divine beauties) dancing amidst arranged cluster of flowers



Images of Goddesses symbolic of peace



Internal view of VIMALWASAHİ TEMPLE



Incomparable art on the pillars



Goddess playing a flute : How artistic indeed !



Goddess playing on 'Jhinjha'

There are seven rows in the eleventh dome. The artistic presentations of elephants - horses, dramatic art, biographical episodes of Lord Neminath's marriage, ordainment etc. - and the figure of Rajul seated at the window, gladden the heart.

Also in the domes of the edifices eighteenth to twenty-sixth various aspects of art have been highlighted. Between the edifices twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh is situated the sprawling elephant stable. Here are ten very beautiful marble elephants. The statues of the builders of the temple and also their 'gurus' (teachers) are also installed here. In the edifices from 27 to 50 various kinds of scenes have been depicted. In the fiftieth dome, the artistic scene of a deep water reservoir has emerged.

On the right of the Loonwasahi Temple stands the Digambar Jain temple of Kunthunath. On descending down the steps there is a pillar of black stone known as 'Kumbh Stambh'. It was built in 1449 A.D. by Mewar's Maharana Kumbha. At this very place on the right amidst the trees the arcade (umbrella) of Yug Pradhan (The most prominent person of his era) Dada Shree Jindutt Suri has been built. The footprints of great miraculous and influential acharyas of Jainism, Dada Jindutt Suri and Jina Kushal Suri are kept here.

PEETLAHAR TEMPLE – This temple was built by Bheema Shah. Therefore, it is also called the Temple of Bheema Shah. The temple is supposed to have been built in 1374-89. It was renovated by Sundar and Gadaa of Gujarat. A 41-inch fine metal image of Lord Rishabhdev is installed in the temple. The 'parikar' (parameter) of five metals is eight times of 5½ feet. Due to presence of excessive quantity of 'Peetal' (brass) in this idol, this temple is also called Peetlahar Temple. This idol was consecrated in 1468 by the lotus hands of Acharya Lakshmi Sagar Suri. There are other huge marble idols of the Jina in the temples.

KHARTARWASAH - PARSHWANATH TEMPLE – This temple built on the left side is sufficiently big. This temple was built by Shrawak Mandalik, follower of Khartar-gaccha. Therefore, it is called Khartar-wasahi Temple. Even in Palitana pilgrimage there is a huge Jina-temple named Khartar-wasahi. In this three-storeyed temple there are four idols of Lord Parshwanath facing the four directions. That is why it is also called Chaturmukh Temple. The consecration of this great temple was performed by the lotus-hands of Acharya Shree Jina Chandra Suri on Ashadh Krishna 1 in 1515 A.D.

The summit of the temple is really beautiful and at the same time the white-coloured idols of the principal deity Shree Parshwanath and their surroundings are very artistic. There are big auditoria on the four sides of the temple. On the external walls of the temple the aesthetic creations of the Diggals, Yakshinis, Sal Bhanjikas and women are fascinating in view of their emotional expressions.



Loonwasahi Temple : Treasure of art



A portion of a pillar



● GIRNAR

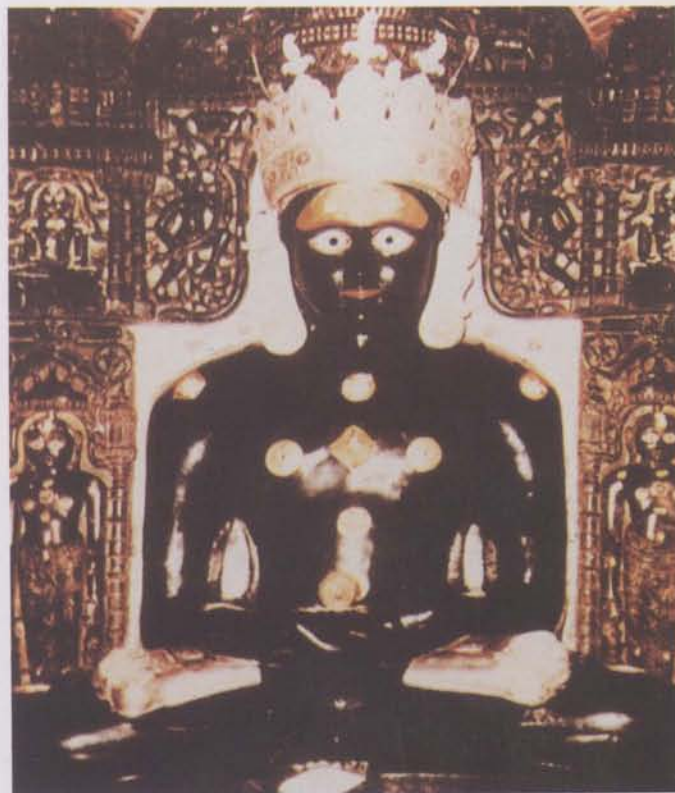
Girnar is that pious place to which are connected the hair-raising sagas of Nemi-Rajul's love, separation, renunciation, penance and passing away. Kumar Arishtanemi arrives at the door of Rajimati for marriage, but on learning the pathetic wailings of the animals collected for the feast, he declines to marry. The doors of the slaughter-house are opened and the animals are released. Arishtanemi who was ready to marry, proceeds towards the Girnar mountain instead of accepting the 'Varmala' (nuptial garland) from Rajimati. The story of Arishtanemi's renunciation of domestic life is sung and narrated in every house. So much so that the twenty-third Jain Tirthankar Parshwanath becomes impressed by this great compassionate episode and accepts 'pravrajya' (monkhood).

The nuptial-garland remains in the hands of Rajimati. Tamarind and 'mehandi' do produce their colours, but before her forehead becomes adorned with vermillion, such a divine flow of compassion and non-violence starts that Arishtanemi becomes an ascetic residing at Girnar. Rajimati too follows in his auspicious footsteps. While performing penance on Girnar mountain, in course of sublime meditation, Arishtanemi attains the supreme knowledge. Rajimati who was once to become Neminath's consort, becomes the founder and discipliner of the 'Sadhvi Sangh' the organisation of female ascetics. Arishtanemi's time dates back to nearly seventy-two thousand years before Mahavir.

Besides Arishtanemi and Rajimati, several saints, temple-chiefs and enlightened yogis got liberated at Girnar mountain. Really, it is a place which represents the Indian places of worship.

Girnar is a mountain range 3100 feet high from the sea-level, near Junagarh in Gujarat. This auspicious pilgrimage, built amidst lofty mountain peaks, is a holy pilgrimage for both Jainism and Hinduism. Among the Jains too, the followers of both the Shwetambar and Digambar sects, come here to smear their forehead with the holy earth of this pilgrimage. According to one viewpoint it is considered to be the fifth Toonk (a peak with a Temple) of the great Palitana pilgrimage. Although the climb of the mountain is hazardous, but in Samvat 1222, due to the efforts of Kumarpal's prime minister Amradev, the hard-to-negotiate upward slope has been rendered comparatively easy.

The temples situated on the mountain make its top



The reigning deity TIRTHANKAR SHREE NEMINATH



The exterior wall and a part of the spire



The grandeur of GIRNAR

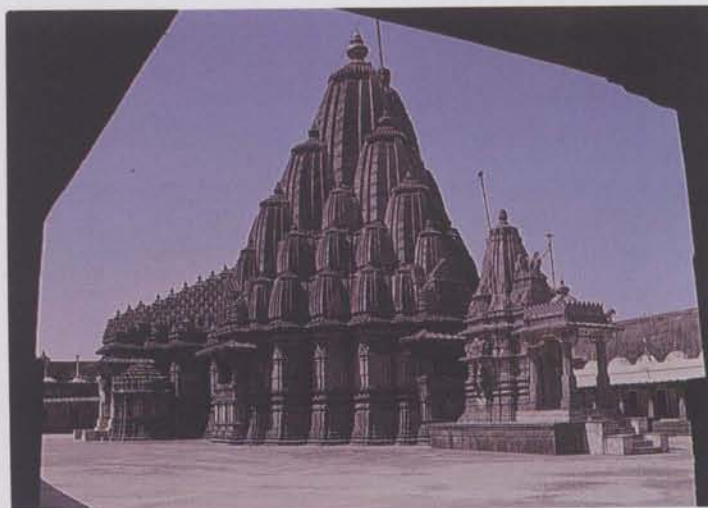
look like a village of temples. The magnificence and the beauty of the temple is unique in itself. According to the kind of art and form of temples as are approved in classic traditions, the temples of Girnar mountain should be called ideal. Here we can see the treasure of the sculptural art of the excellent sculptors of Gujarat. Whether the temple is seen from outside or from inside, devotion and art both have been depicted with complete splendour.

Girnar mountain too has not remained untouched by foreign invaders; but despite this, from time to time several emperors and devoted businessmen have played important role in the repair-renovation and development of this pilgrimage.

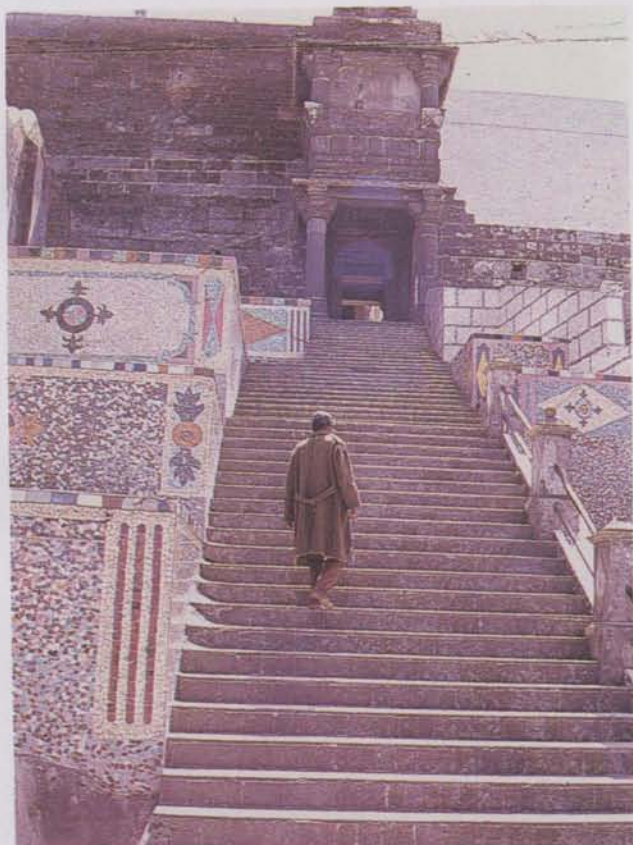
Reference is available that in Samvat 609 Kashmir's businessman Ajit Shah and Ratna Shah got renovated the pilgrimage. The twelfth century renovation by Siddhraj's minister Shree Sajjan Shah and the famous prime-minister Shree Vastupal Tejpal has been mentioned in a stone-scripture here. In the 13th century, King Mandalik had built a temple plated with gold here. The pilgrimage was restored by Samar Singh Soni in the fourteenth century and by Vardhman and Padmasingh in the seventeenth century. Reference is available of restoration done by Keshavjee in the 20th century. Besides them, several emperors and chiefs have played important roles in the development of this pilgrimage, mentionable amongst them being the names of King Samprati, King Kumarpal, minister Samant Singh, minister Sangram Soni and minister Amradev etc.



GIRNAR : Pilgrimage of NEMI-RAJUL



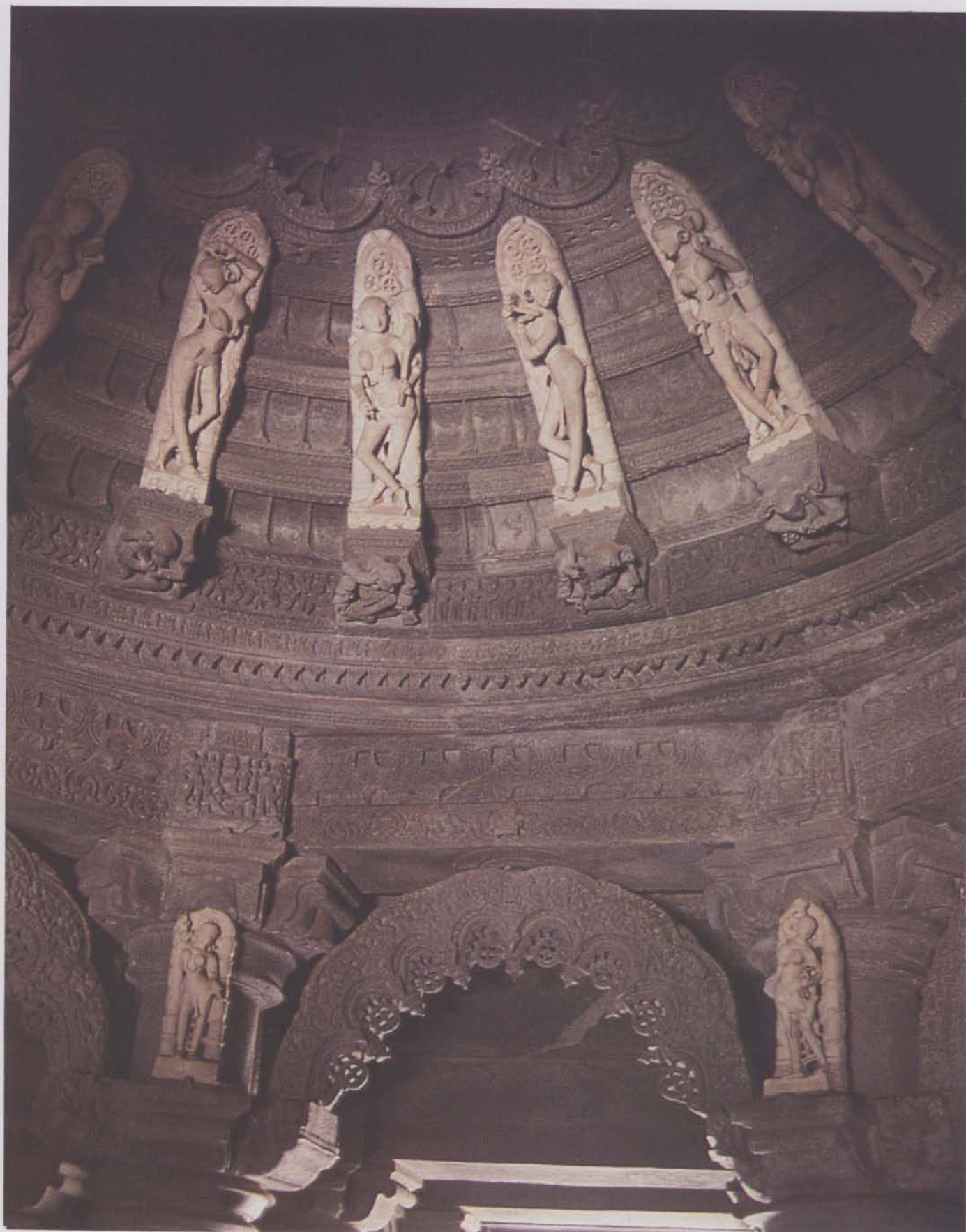
A fascinating view of the temple



THE STEPS OF SALVATION



The topmost summit of Girnar



Danseuses in various dance postures on the inner sphere of the dome



Sky-scraper summit



Unprecedented depiction of Panch Pushp (five flowers)

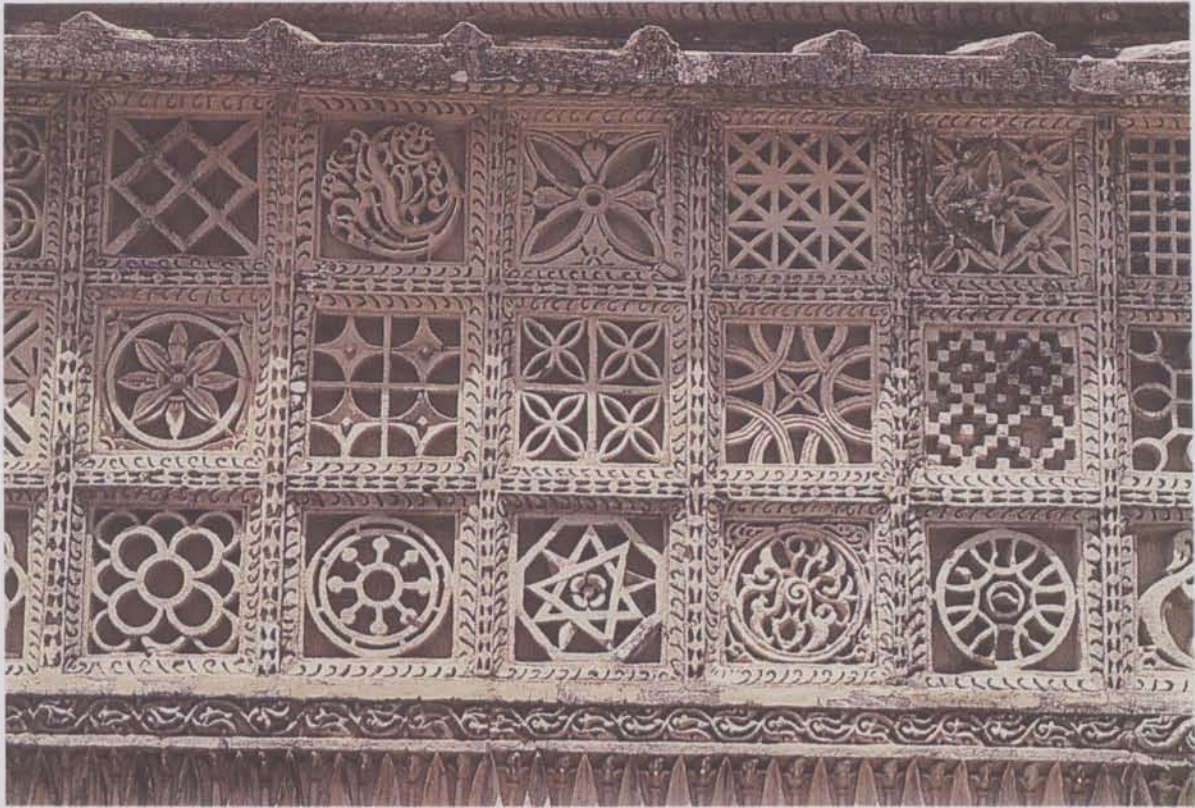


Artistic hangings from the dome

The majesty of the artistic internal dome of GIRNAR TEMPLE →



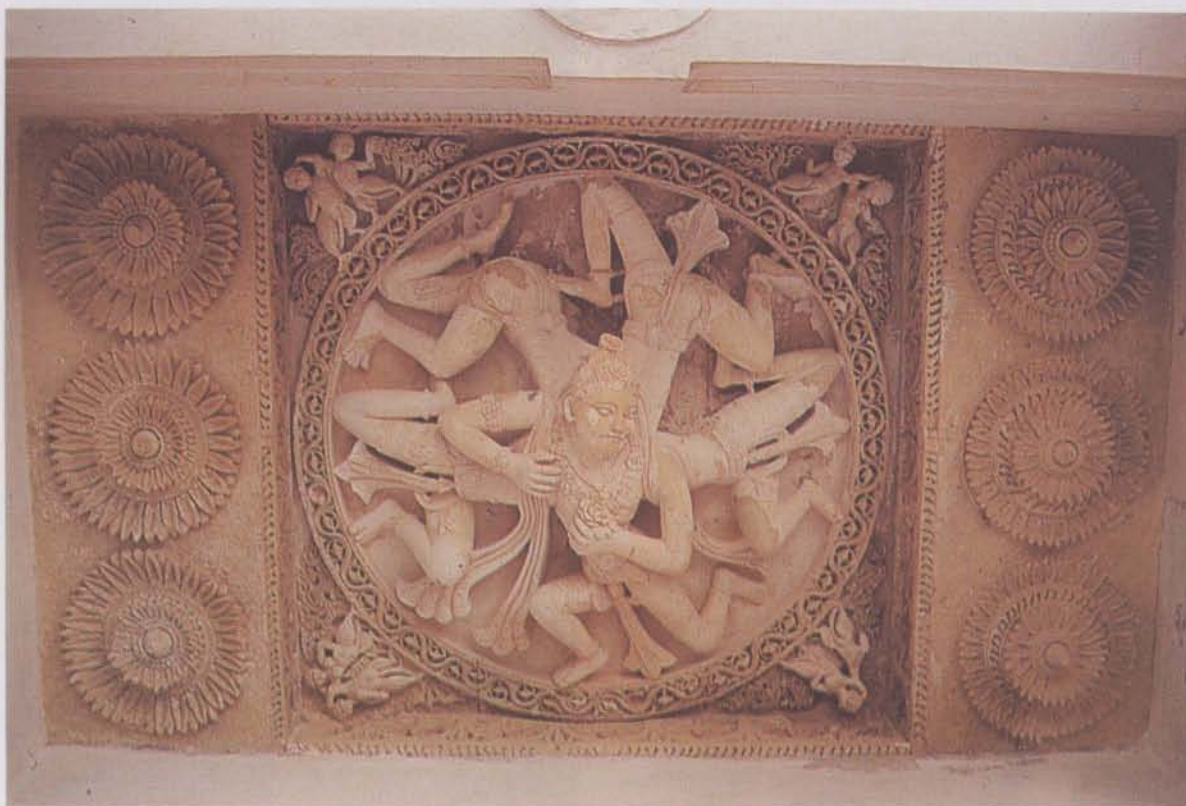




Variety of art-forms on window



Danaseuses engraved on wall columns



Strange composition : One head on five bodies



Playful merriment in group

At the foot of the Girnar mountain there are two Shwetambar temples and one Digambar temple. Close to the temples at the foot-hill begins the climb of the mountain which is very hazardous. On a nearly 3 km. long path there are nearly 4,000 steps, but when the heart of a devotee becomes eager to have a glimpse of the Lord, then the difficult path ceases to remain difficult.

After completing the ascent, the door of the main sanctum sanctorum of Lord Shree Neminath becomes visible. Here a Jinalaya (abode of the 'Jina') built at the centre of a sprawling 90'x130' 'Chowk' (courtyard) evinces its unprecedented splendour. Just in front of this Jinalaya, there is a mini temple of Maansang Bhojraj. The principal deity of this temple is Shree Sambhavanath. On the north of the main peak-temple is 'Melakwasahi Toonk' at a small distance. Built by Siddhraj's prime minister Sajjan Seth, this 'toonk' has the principal deity Shree Parshwanath with his head shaded by the hoods of a thousand cobras. There is a huge idol of Tirthankar Aadinath whom people also call 'Adbhut Jee' (the strange one). A little distance away from here is the 'toonk' of Sangram Soni. It is learnt from available references that this temple was built by Soni Samar Singh and Maaldev. The main temple is two-storeyed whose principal deity is 'Shree Sahasraphana Parshwanath'.

Ahead of the 'toonk' of Sangram Soni is the 'toonk' of king Kumarpal. It is learnt from the available references that this 'toonk' was built by King Kumarpal in the 13th century. The principal deity here is Shree Abhinandan Swami. Nearby here is Bheemkund and also Gajapad Kund. At a little distance away from this 'toonk' is the 'toonk' of Vastupal-Tejpal. It is learnt from the stone scripture here that this 'toonk' was built in Samvat 1288. There are the temples of Lord Shree Parshwanath, Lord Shree Rishabhdev and Lord Shree Mahavir. Now, the image of Shree Shamla Parshwanath adorns the temple of Rishabhdev Swami.

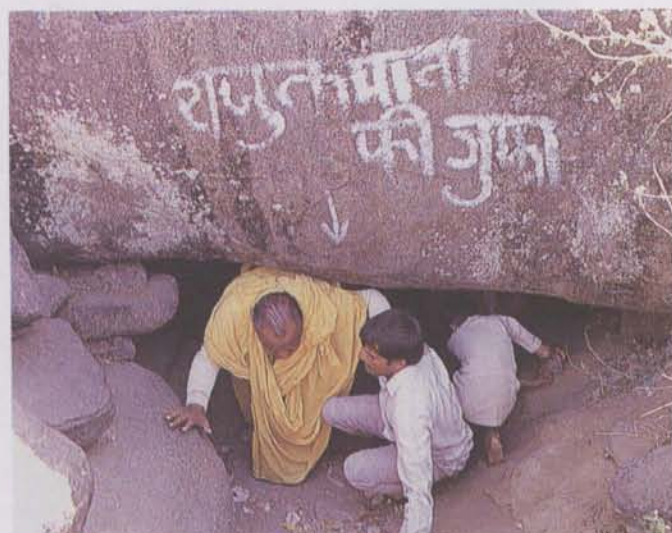
Very close to this 'toonk' is the 'toonk' of king Shree Samprati. The temple is very huge and ancient. The principal deity of this place is Lord Shree Neminath. A little distance away from here are respectively the 'toonks' of Shree Chaumukhjee, Lord Shree Sambhavanath, Dharmashee Hemchandra, twenty-four Jineshwar, Sati Rajulmati's Cave and Gaumukhi Ganga.

Five 'toonks' of Girnar are famous. The first 'toonk' is that of Tirthankar Neminath. The second 'toonk' is that of Shree Ambaji. The third 'toonk' is called 'Oghad Shikhar' where the foot-prints of Lord Neminath have been ceremoniously installed. The auspicious feet of Neminath adorn also the fourth 'toonk'. The fifth 'toonk' is situated in a dense forest at the top of the mountain; it contains the foot-prints of Neminath and Vardutt Ganadhar.

A visit to this pious pilgrimage is life's good fortune. Salutations to Nemi and Rajul, the touch of whose feet have graced and blessed the Girnar mountain ranges. Salutations also to those souls who become blessed on touching the holy soil of this place.



Ruins of the past



The cave of RAJIMATI



● SHANKHESHWAR

Shankheshwar is considered to be the most miraculous and universally revered among the Jain pilgrimages of India. Shankheshwar and Nakoda are those two pilgrimages about which it is famous that the wishes of the devotees are fulfilled here. The devotees observe three fasts for worshipping this pilgrimage which in traditional vocabulary are called 'Tela' or 'Attham'. It is said that the worship of Shankheshwar pilgrimage performed with 'Attham' penance (fast) protects from peril and promotes happiness and prosperity.

Shankheshwar means the lord of the conchshells. According to mythological references, in the battle that took place between Jarasandh and Lord Krishna, Jarasandh threw 'Jara' on the army of Krishna. Then the evil effect of 'Jara' was rendered ineffective with the water consecrated by this image of the Lord.

In Samvat 1155, inspired by Acharya Devendra Suri, Siddharaj Jai Singh's prime-minister Sajjan Shah got the Shankheshwar Teerth restored. On the inspiration of Acharya Shree Vardhmaan Suri, Mahamantri Vastupal-Tejpal got the necessary renovation of this pilgrimage done and on the summits of fifty-two edifices installed golden pots. In Samvat 1302, according to available references, King Durjansalya also got this temple renovated.

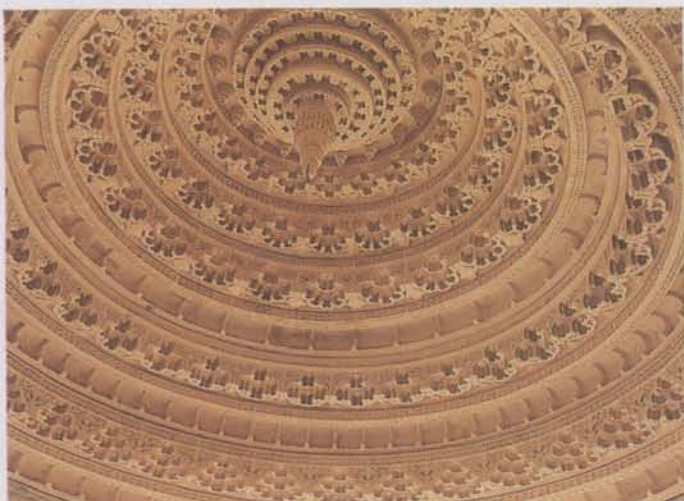
Under the anti-temple campaign and invasions of Alauddin Khilji, heavy damage was caused to this temple



The grandeur of 108 - PARSHWANATH TEMPLE



A fascinating view of the sub-spires



The intricately deep form of the inside of the dome

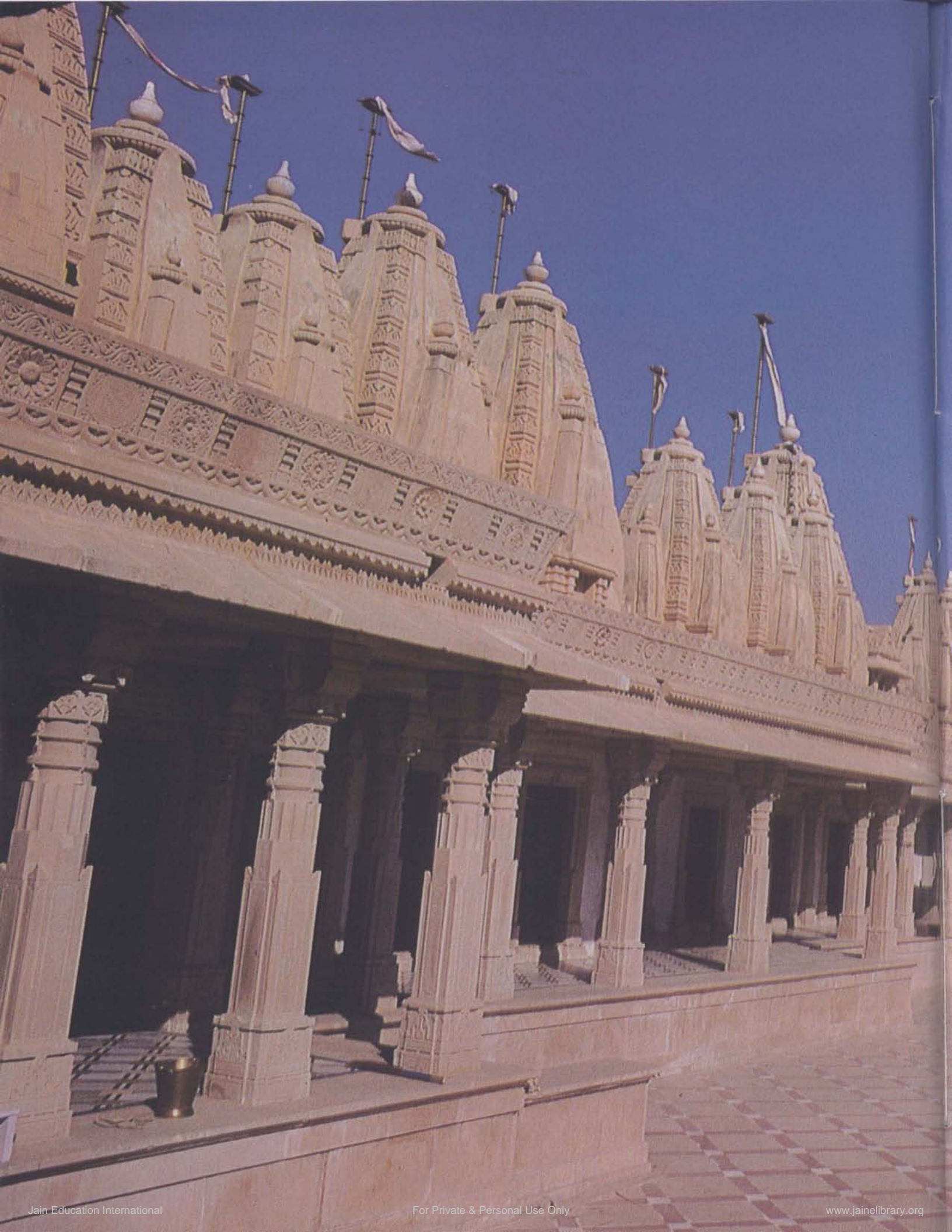


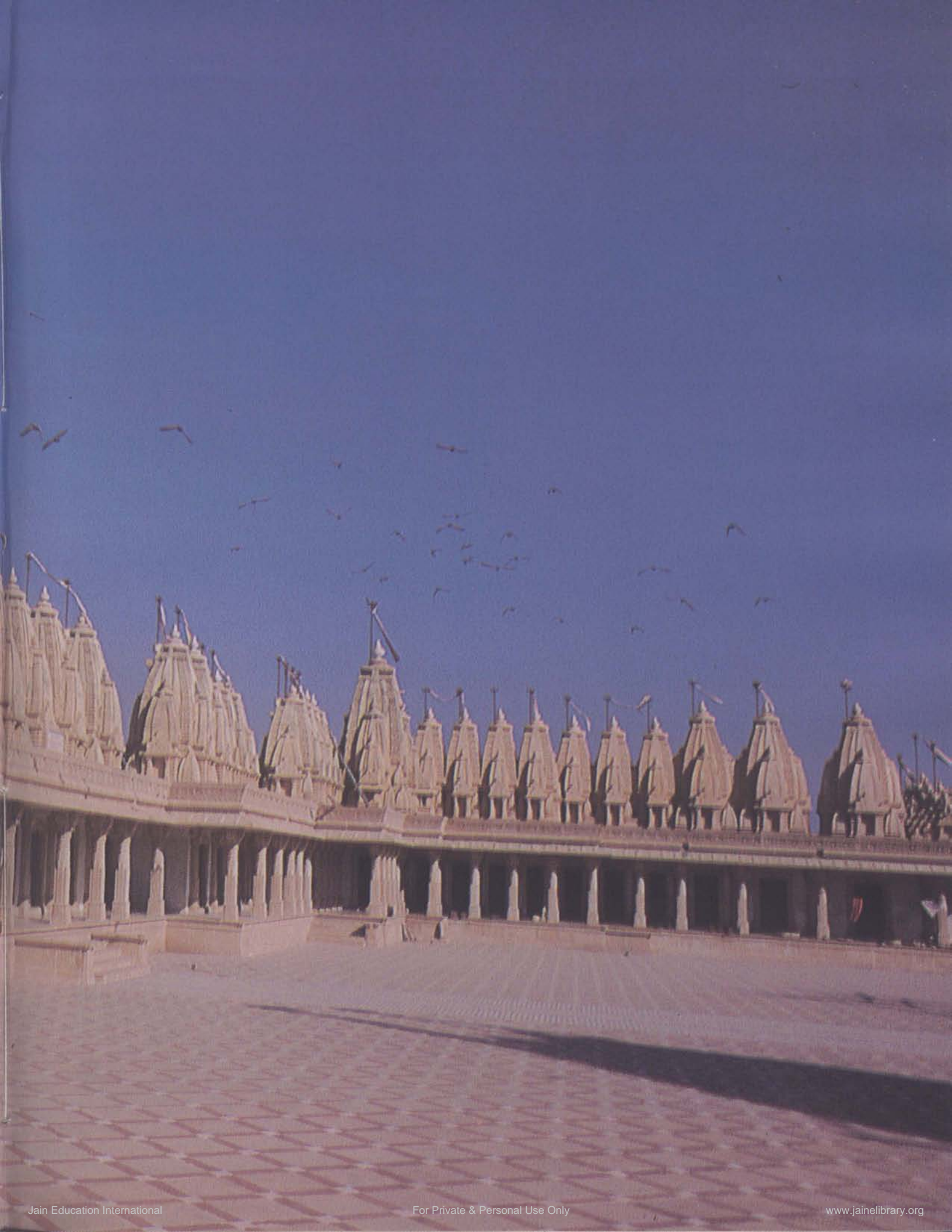
The spires of SHANKHESHWAR

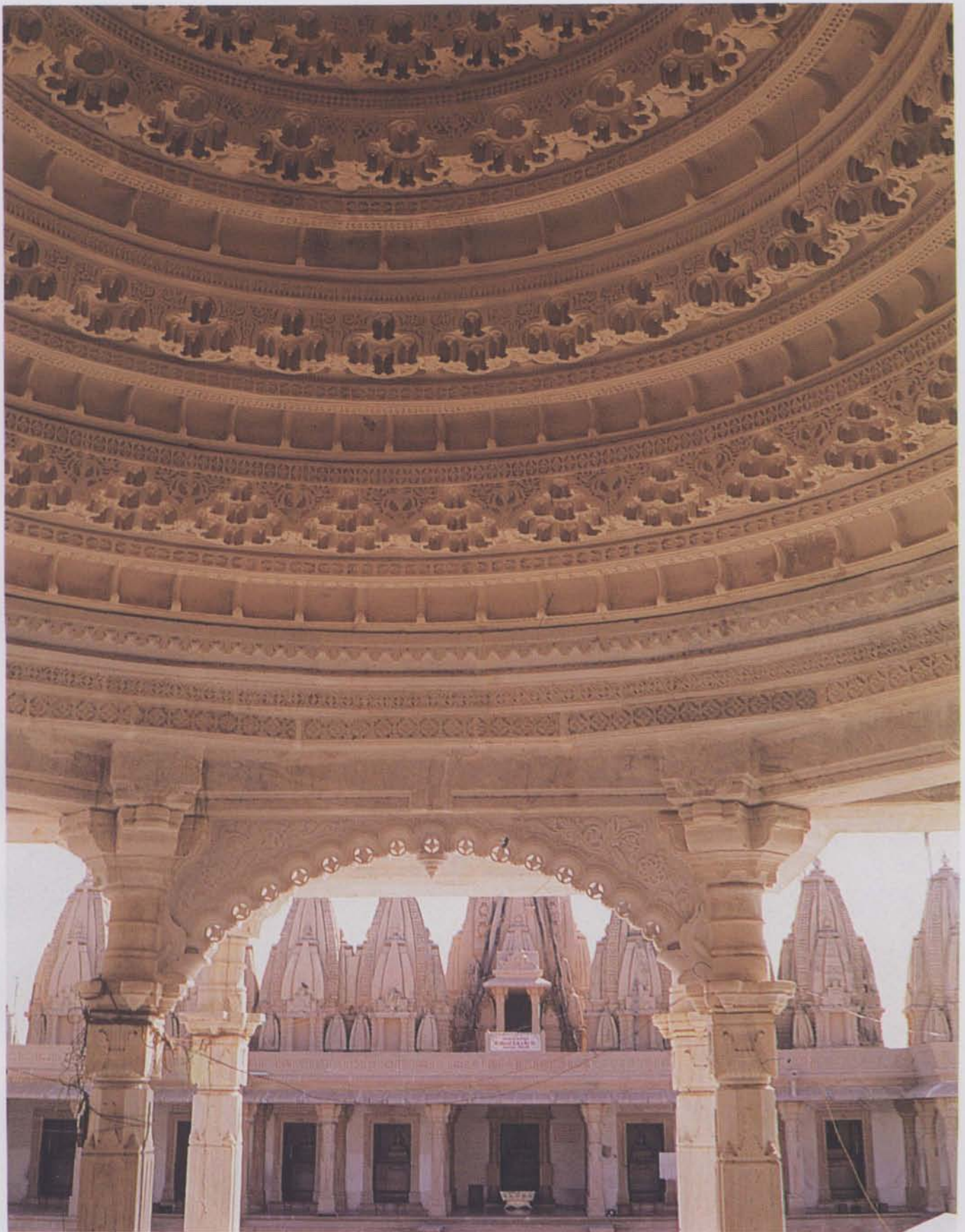


The grandeur of the spires of SHANKHESHWAR

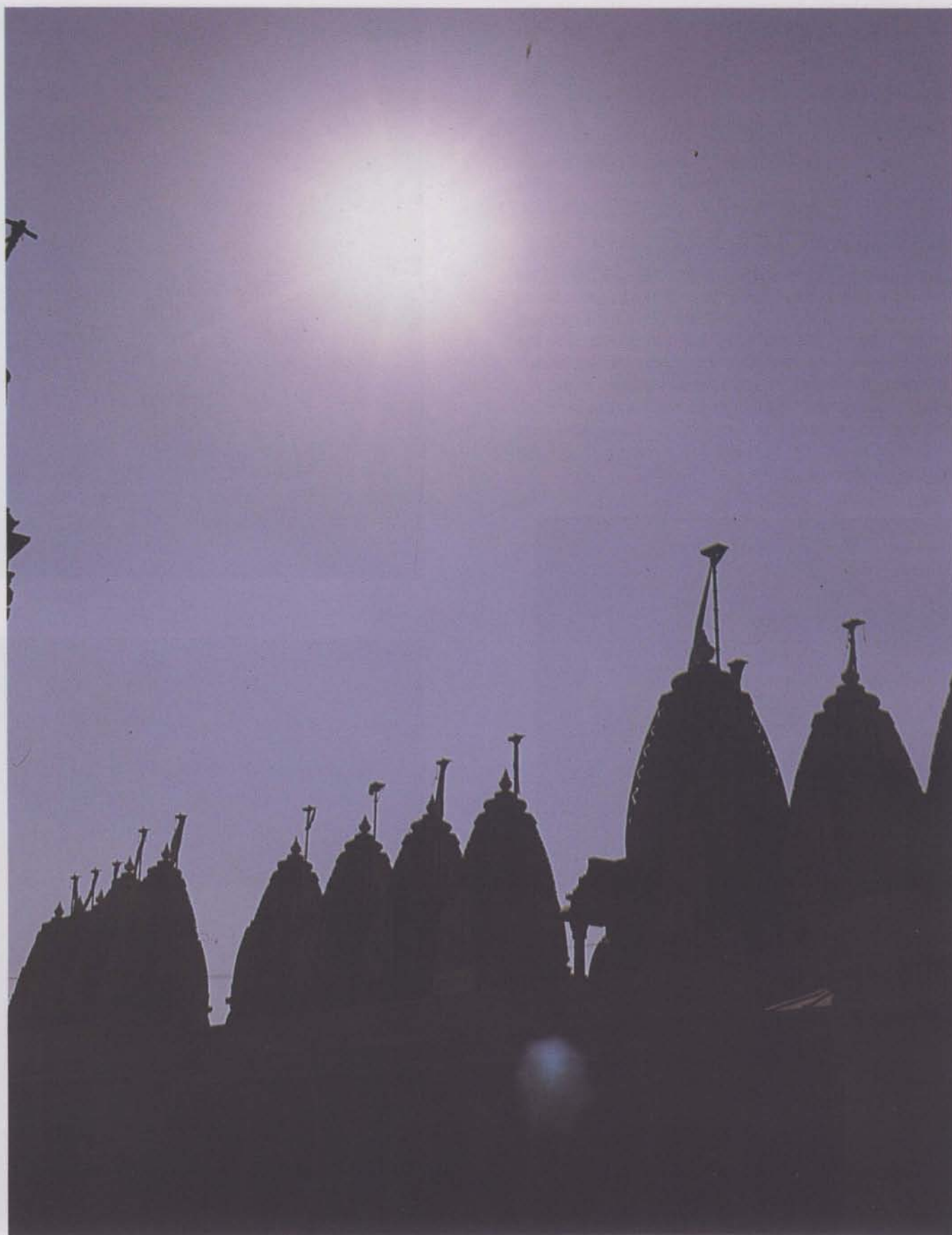
Array of spires →







A portion of the dome



Be blessed by divinity from the temples

also, but the image had already been transferred by the 'Sangh' (religious organisation). In Samvat 1656, emperor Shahjehan permitted the construction of the pilgrimage by issuing an imperial order. In Samvat 1760, according to an available reference, the pilgrimage was consecrated again by Acharya Vijayratna Suri. Within the sprawling precincts of the Shankheshwar pilgrimage, several mini-temples have been constructed, besides the main temple. That is why it is also called Fifty-two Jina-abodes. There are several temples inside and outside the main temple, notable among them being Aagam Temple, 108 Parshwanath Jinalaya, Dadabari et al.

The main pilgrimage temple at the centre of the sprawling ramparts looks like a divine 'Vimaan' (aeroplane) descended on this earth. The small and big bells hanging from the summits automatically move to and fro with the gush of winds. The ringing of bells sounds like music, and makes the hearts of the devotees vibrate musically.

Shankheshwar pilgrimage conveys to the sleeping humanity the message of awakening. Shankeshwar is the source of all the happiness for getting rid of the disasters of life.



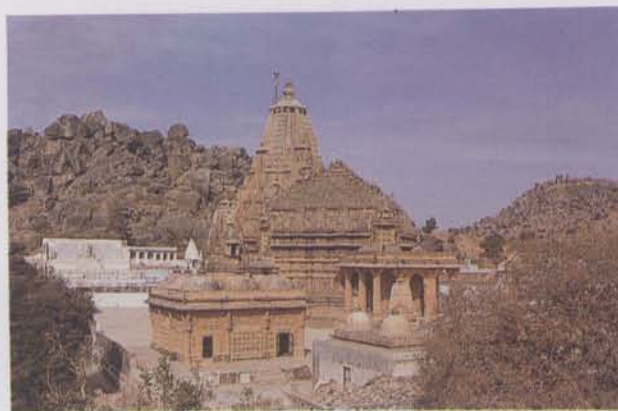
Presiding deity Shree Shankheshwar Parshwanath



A female gate-keeper



An eye-filling image of Parshwanath



*I*n the pious land of Gujarat an unpre-cedented coordination of devotion and art has taken place. Taaranga pilgrimage is a living evidence of this. On arriving at this pilgrimage situated in the lap of the mountains far from the madding crowd of the city-life in the calm and quiet environment, the traveller not only feels self-peace, but he also becomes wonder-struck on viewing the art of the temple. Standing outside the temple if one sees around then the rare beauty of the mountains can be viewed. And, if one enters the temple, then the divine image of the Lord seems to speak out.

In the Jain scriptures several names of Taaranga are found viz. 'Taaurur', 'Taarawar', 'Taarangiri' etc. Mention has been made in the informative book on Kumarpal written by Acharya Shree Somprabh Suri in Samvat 1241 that, inspired by Bapputacharya, King Vatsraya got the temple of Shree Siddhayika Devi built here. It is learnt from available references that king Kumarpal also got a 'Jinalaya' built here in Samvat 1212.

It is learnt from the stone-scriptures found in the pilgrimage that in 1284 'Sanghpati' (President of the Jain organisation) Vastupal got installed two idols of Lord Aadinath. Although none of those two idols are available today in the pilgrimage campus, the seats of both the idols mentioned in the stone scripture are present in the temple even today. Reference is available of the restoration of this pilgrimage in Samvat 1479 by Shree Govind Shreshthi of Idar. The last repair of the pilgrimage had been done under the inspiration of Acharya Shree Vijay Sen Suri. Besides this, several other persons also got niches and cells and images built in this temple. The main temple is 142 feet high, 150 feet long and 100 feet wide. The vastness of the hall is also worth viewing. The white coloured image of Tirthankar Shree Ajitnath in the lotus posture adorns the temple. This 2.75 metre high ancient image even today scatters its brilliant halo.

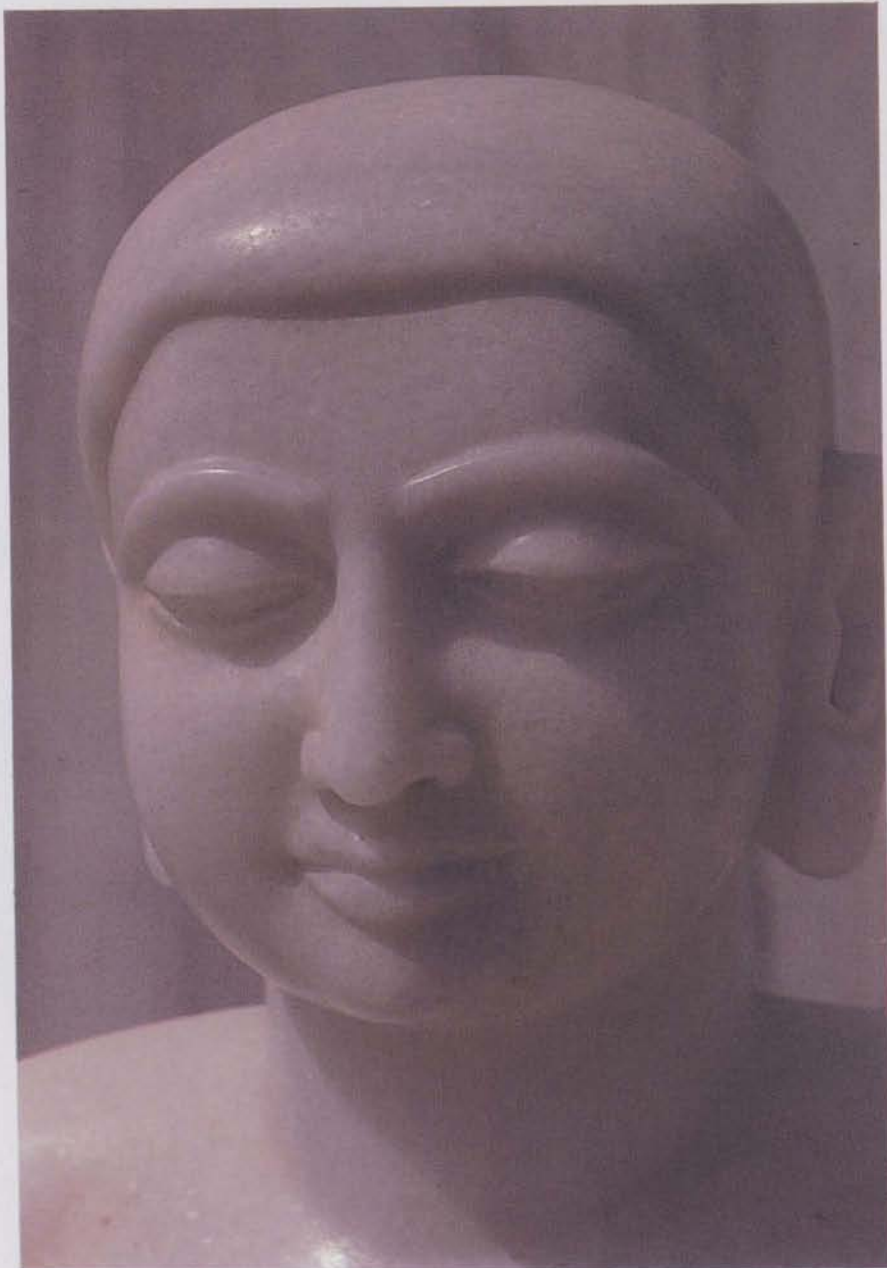
On the southern side of the main temple is the 'Koti Shila'. Many a sage had attained salvation by practising self-penance here. Besides the main temple there are 4 Shwetambar temples and 5 Digambar temples. Nearly one kilometer away is the 'Mokshabari Toonk' where the image of Tirthankar Shree Ajitnath is installed. There is the magnificent pedestal of the Lord erected in Samvat 1255.



Principal deity Tirthankar SHREE AJITNATH

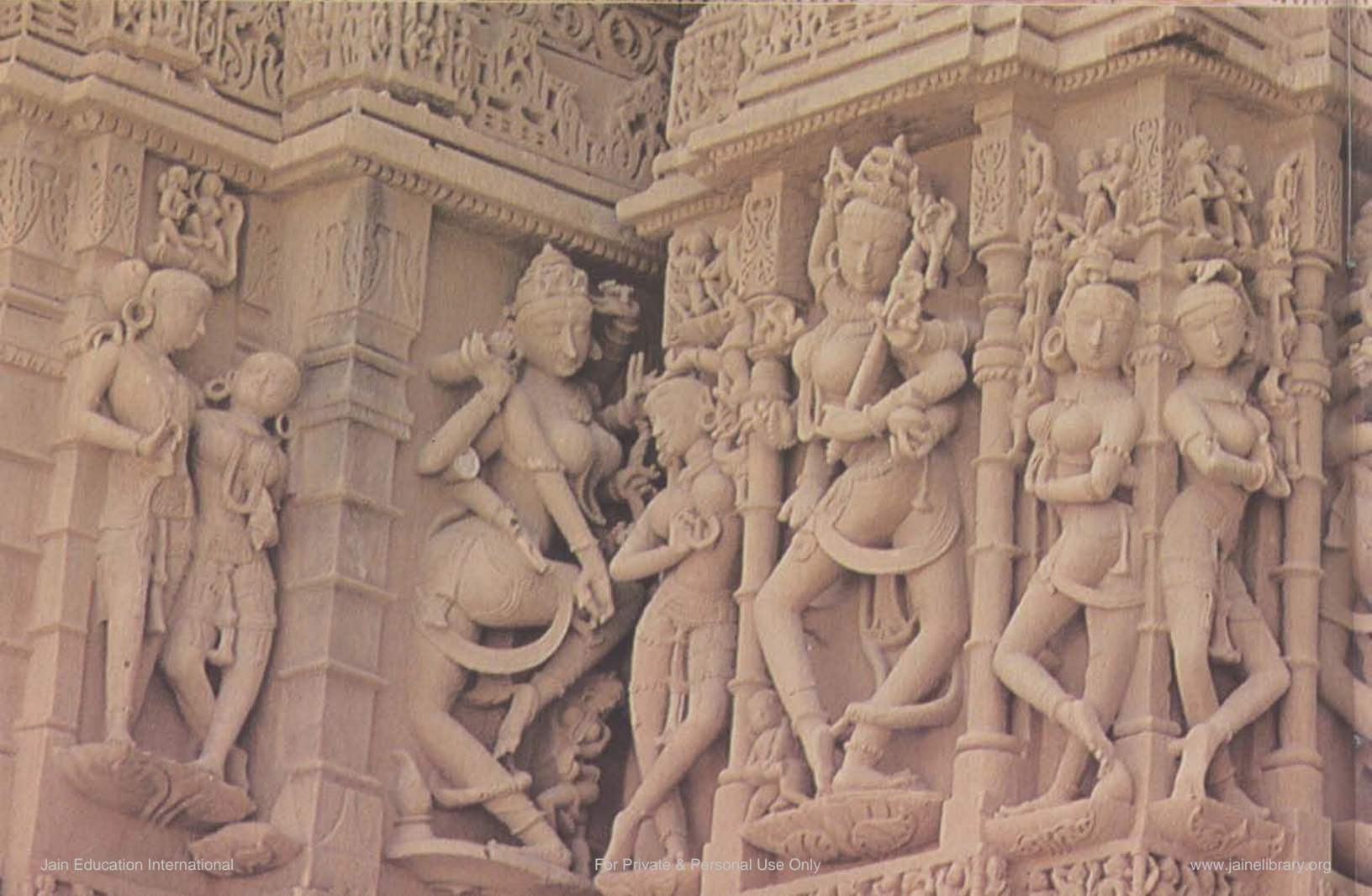
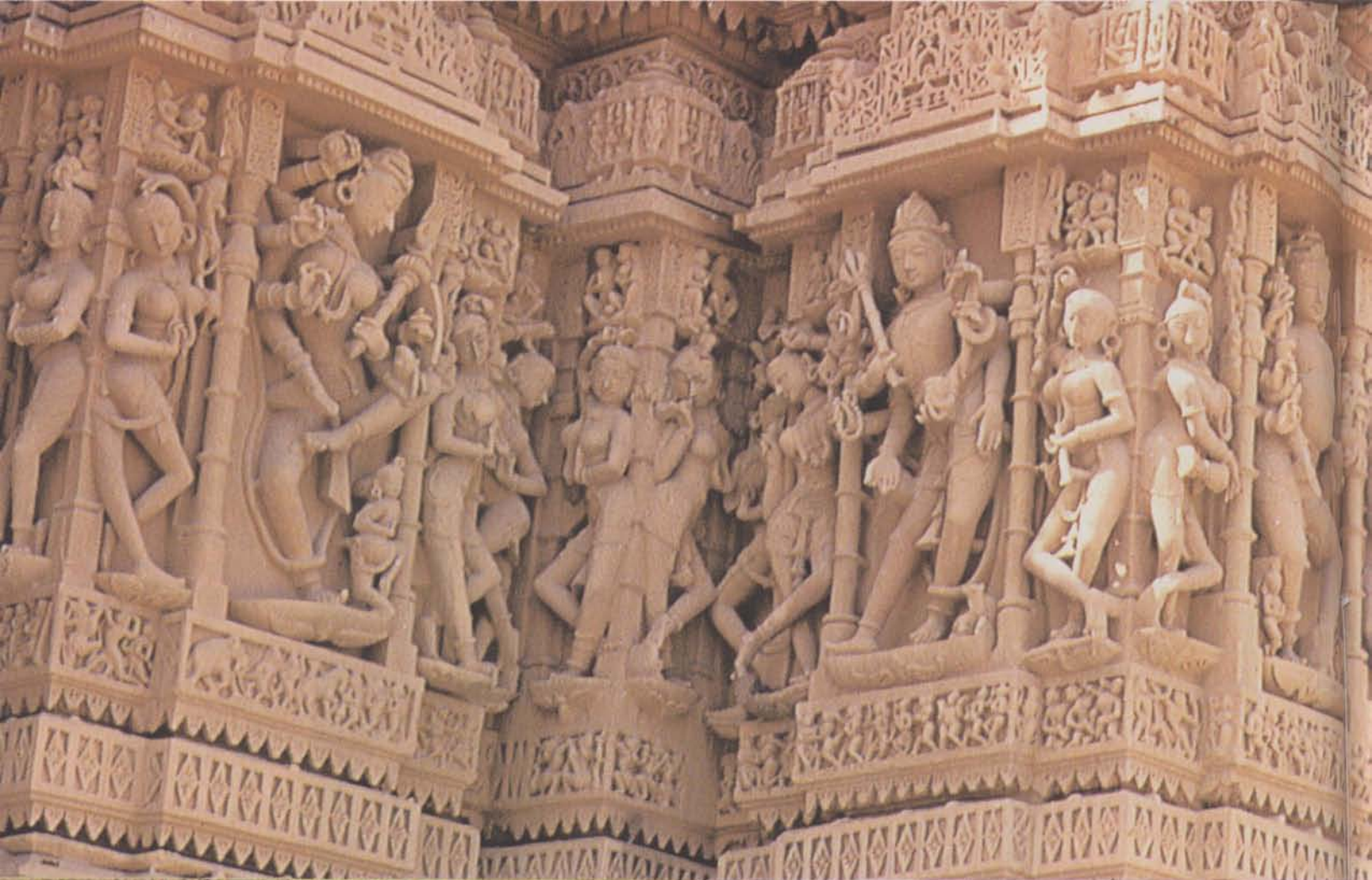


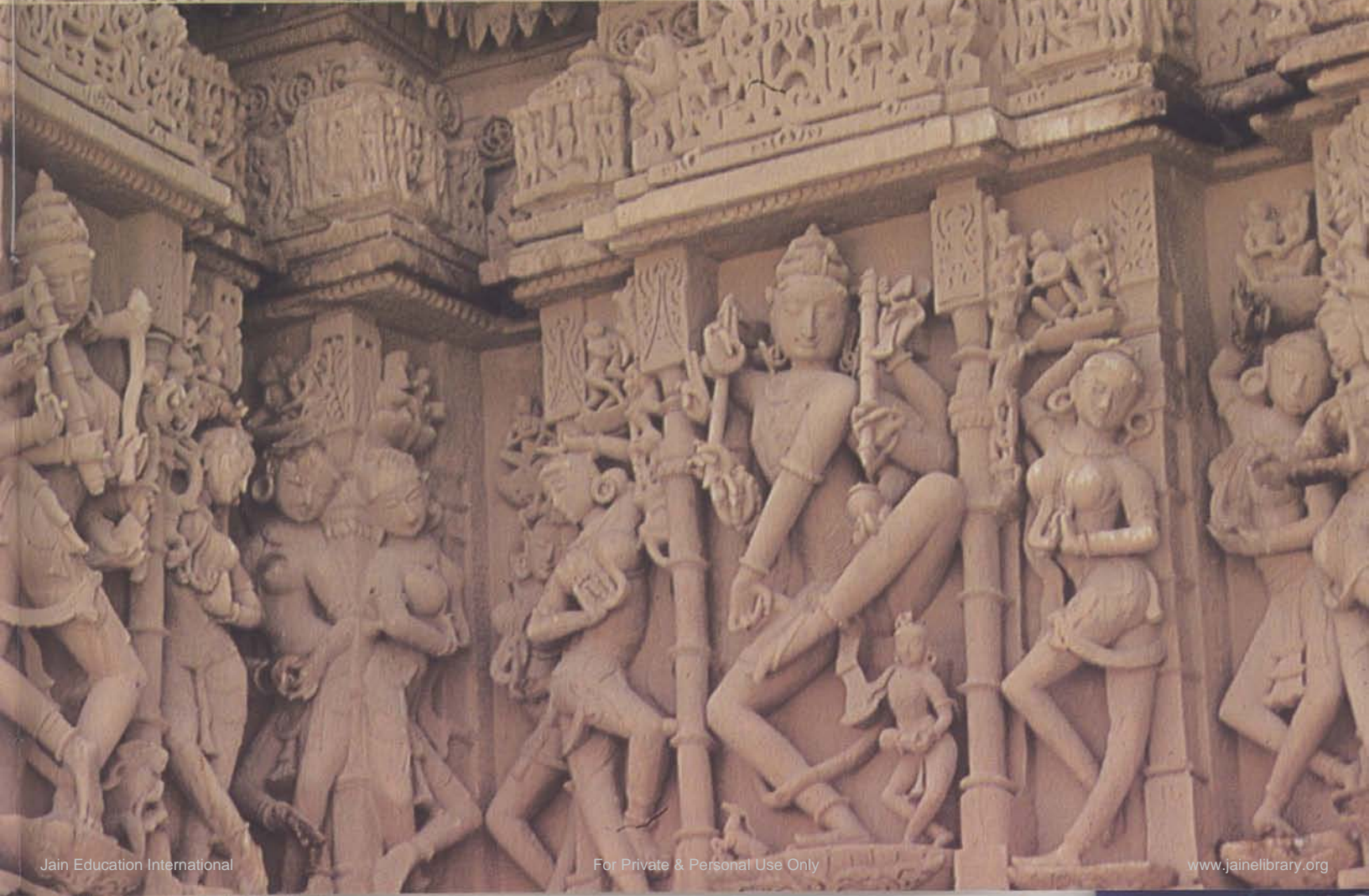
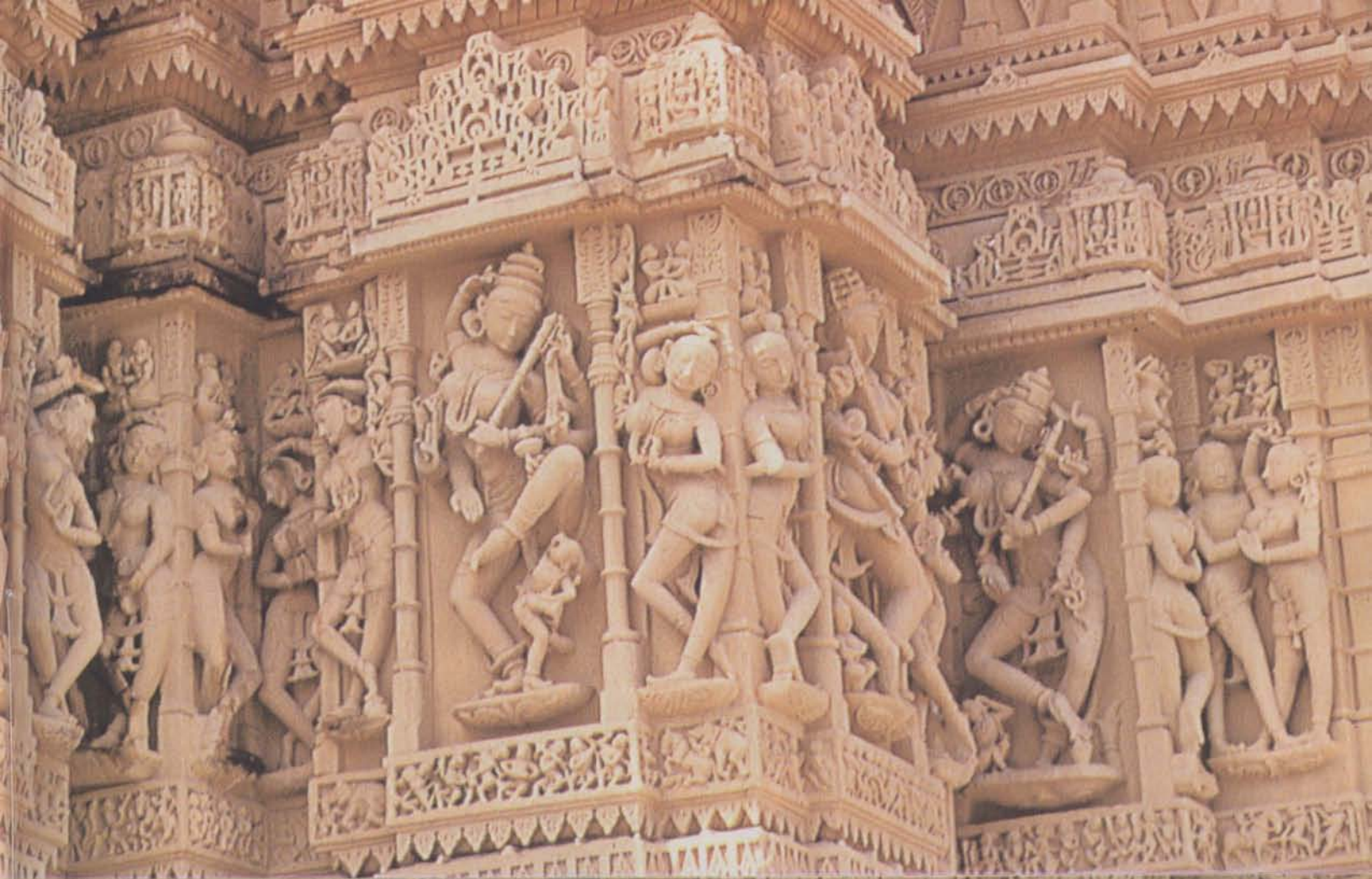
The front portion of the temple

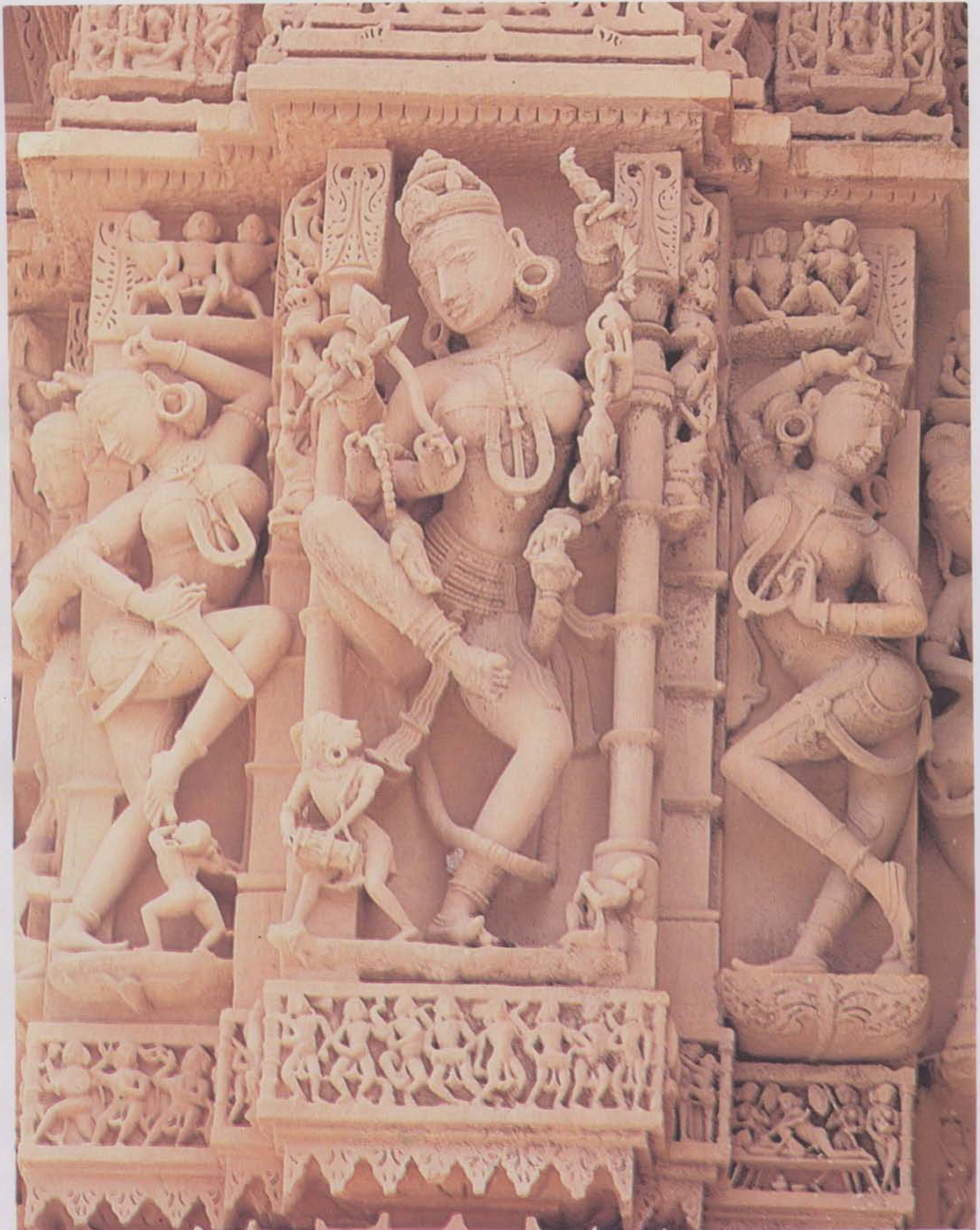


The facial expression of BAHUBALI

Danseuses in performance depicted on the walls of the temple →







Even the walls of the temple are ornamented with fine engravings



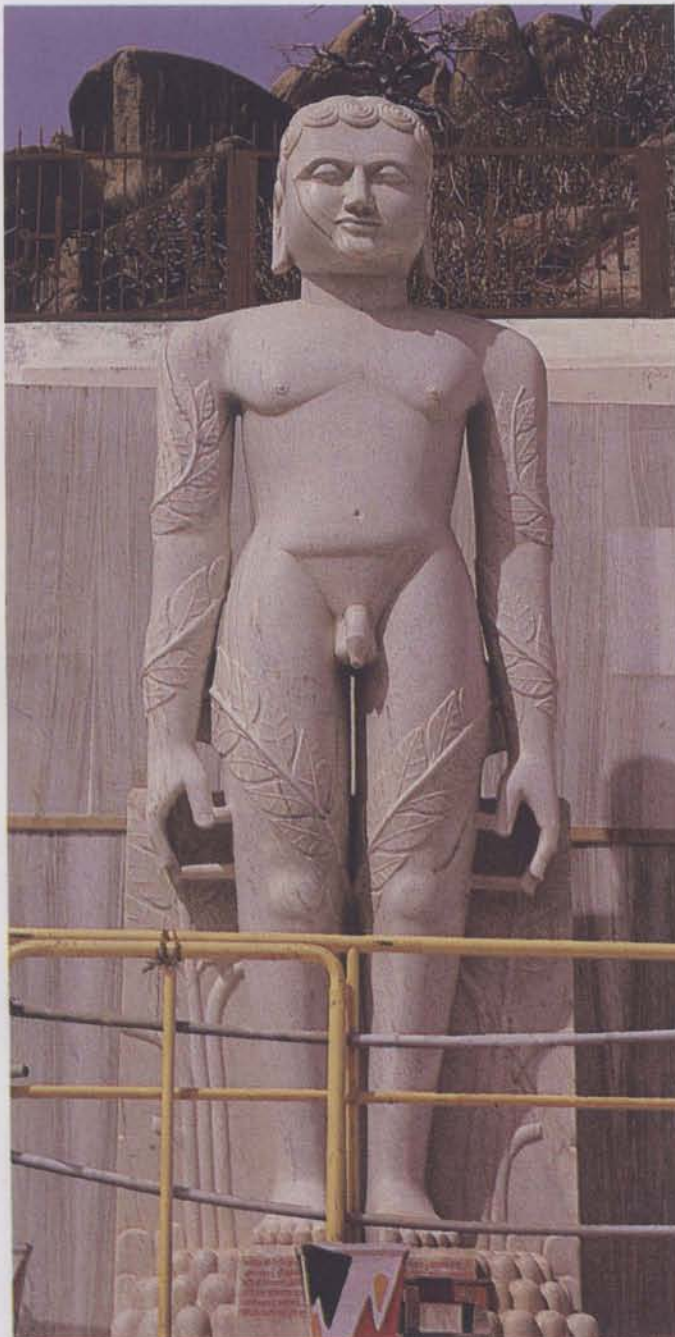
Male and female dancers : art personified on the wall

Unprecedented depiction of art can be seen inside the temple premises. The sculptors of Gujarat have presented their unique art in carving out various postures of dancing divine belles, their eyes, noses and other parts of the body. There are hundreds of images of dancers, but every image is different from the other in its art.

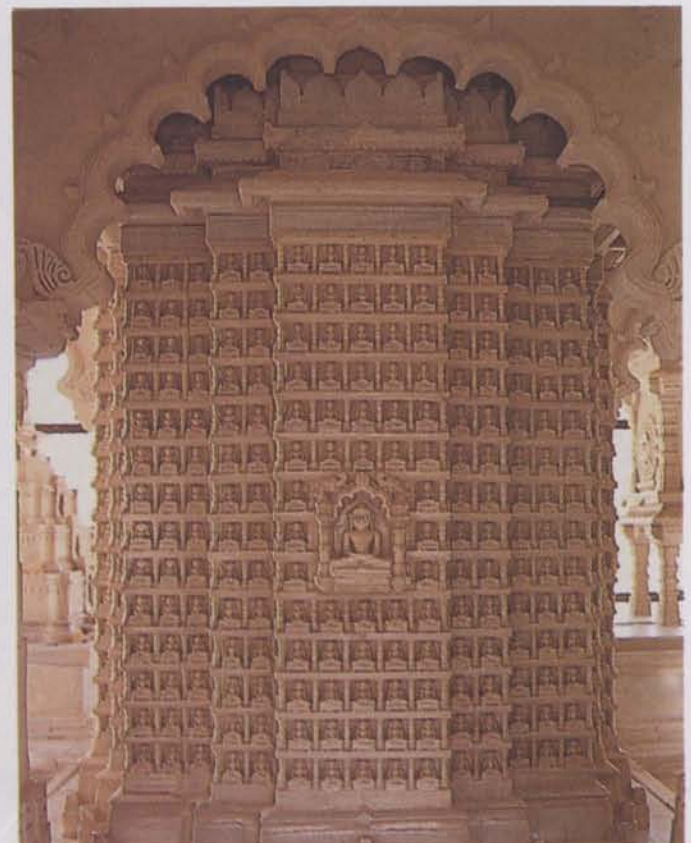
This four-storeyed temple has been built with sandal coloured stones. On seeing the lofty spire it appears as if it is spreading the message of world peace as joy in the jungle.



Splendid exterior of TARANGA TEMPLE



Life ensconed in the idol



SHREE SAHASRAKOOT TEMPLE



● **MEHSANA**

*M*ehsana is a popular pilgrimage of Jains. Constructed under the inspiration of Acharya Shree Kailash Sagar Suri Ji, the building of this temple enchants the viewers even from a distance. As evidence of its antiquity epigraphs of the 11th and the 12th centuries are found in this city, but the pilgrimage-temple which we wish to present before the world, is a contribution of the present age.

The Shree Seemandhar Swami Jain pilgrimage Temple of Mehsana is a contribution of the 20th century. Among the pilgrimages established in a new form during this century, the name of Mehsana pilgrimage tops the list. Not many years have passed since the temple was constructed, but the speed with which this temple has acquired the status of a pilgrimage, is a wonder in itself.

In the Jain temples the images of Tirthankars of the Bharat region, are installed. But in this temple a huge idol of Lord Shree Seemandhar Swami, who at present lives in the Mahavideha region, has been installed. Mahavideha region is another region like the Bharat region where even now Tirthankars' birth, renunciation and 'nirvana' take place.

Among the temples of Lord Seemandhar Swami this temple is considered to be the largest. The temple has been built with very good visualisation and artistic presentation which in itself is a model for others. The grandeur of the temple and the huge image ornamented artistically impresses tourists and devotees at just one glance.

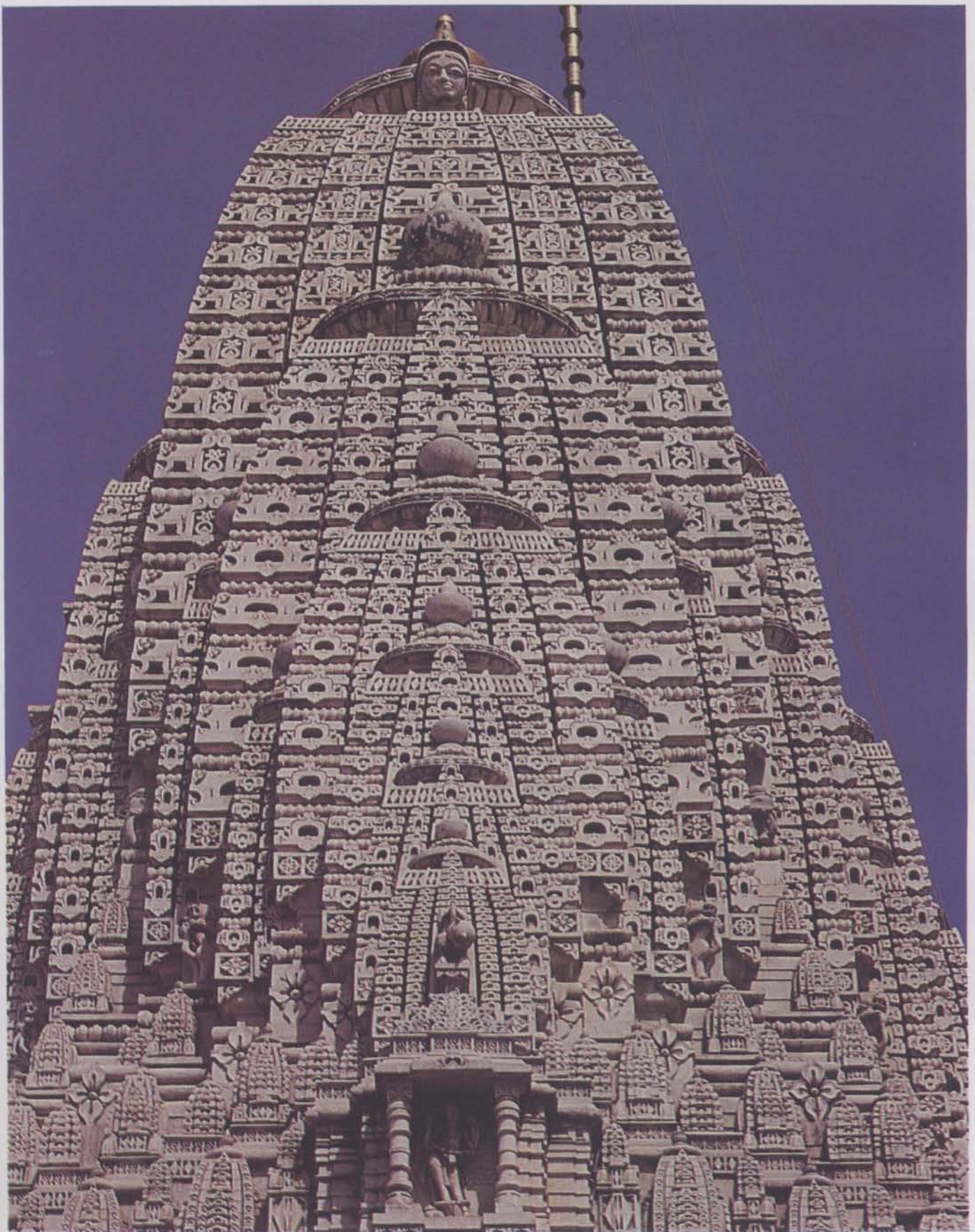
Besides this temple, there are 14 more temples in this city. Whenever there is an opportunity, the Mehsana pilgrimage must be seen.



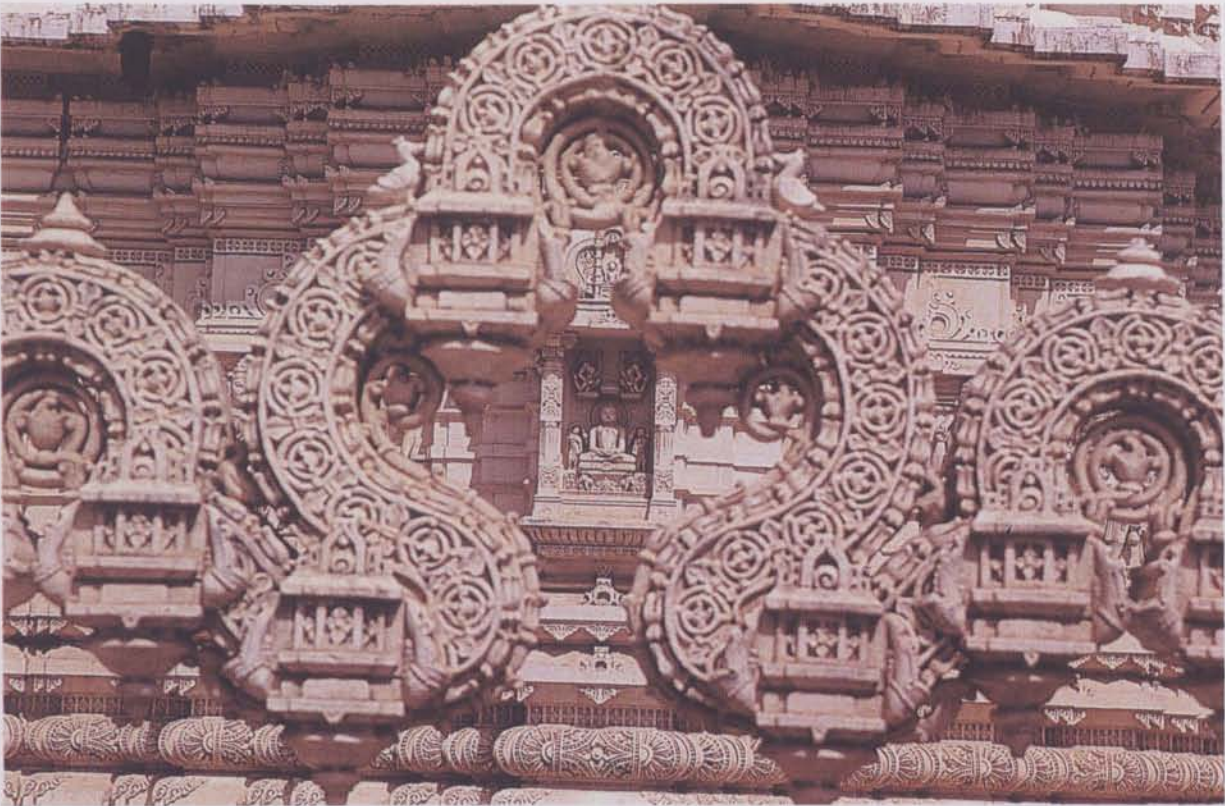
Principal deity SHREE SEEMANDHAR SWAMI



Isometric view of the temple



The most magnificent spire of the temple



A portion of the wall around



Gateway of the pilgrimage



● **PALITANA**

*I*n context of reverence and art, Palitana is the topmost pilgrimage of Jainism. There are auspicious pilgrimages in every state of the country but every pilgrimage points towards Palitana. Countless saints, great souls and ascetics have attained the supreme salvation here. In every particle of this pilgrimage there is the radiance of transcendence and omniscience. Each and every 'Kankar' (pebble) of this place is Shankar (Lord Shiva). Every particle of the soil of this pilgrimage is in itself a holiest temple. Besmearing the forehead with the soil of this place is the basic process of destroying the sins of cycles of reincarnation.

It is said that even the gods pine for anointing their heads with the soil of Palitana. Not only humans but also the gods become blessed on getting a chance to go on a pilgrimage to Palitana. In fact Palitana is that pilgrimage where the divinity of the gods can be seen in every direction. However worried one may be, Palitana is that sacred land where the devotee becomes free from every worry.

Rarely there may be a Jain who has not travelled to Palitana once in his life-time. It is believed that if anyone, has not travelled to the two pilgrimages - Palitana and Sammet Shikhar - his birth in a Jain family has become worthless. Being the topmost pilgrimage of Jainism, it is always overcrowded with pilgrims. The account of the divinity and magnificence of this pilgrimage has reached every nation of the world. Generally the tourists come to India for sight-seeing, but Palitana is that holy pilgrimage where the tourists arrive to offer their reverence.

Palitana is the biggest centre of the holy Jain ascetics. There is probably no other pilgrimage where Jain ascetics are found in such massive numbers. The ascetics are themselves mobile pilgrimages. With this viewpoint, the pilgrimage to Palitana is considered to be a pilgrimage from both the movable and the immovable viewpoints, greatly meritorious.

Wherever you cast your glance in this pilgrimage, only temples and 'dharma-shalas' (charitable boarding houses) are seen. Prominent among the special features of this pilgrimage is the existence of hundreds of temples and hundreds of 'dharma-shalas'. On the nearly 5 km. long main road of Palitana city, there is a long row of charitable



The Himalayan spire of the temple



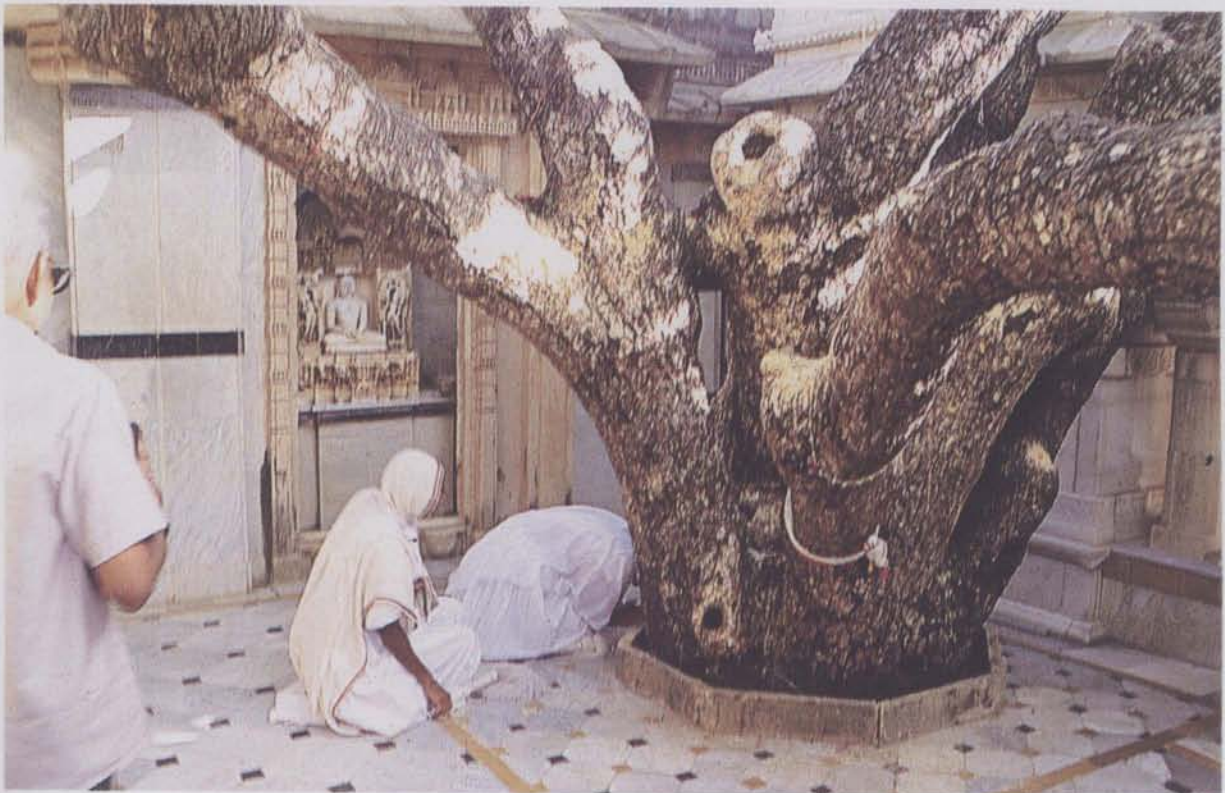
Sky scraping tops



Temples galore

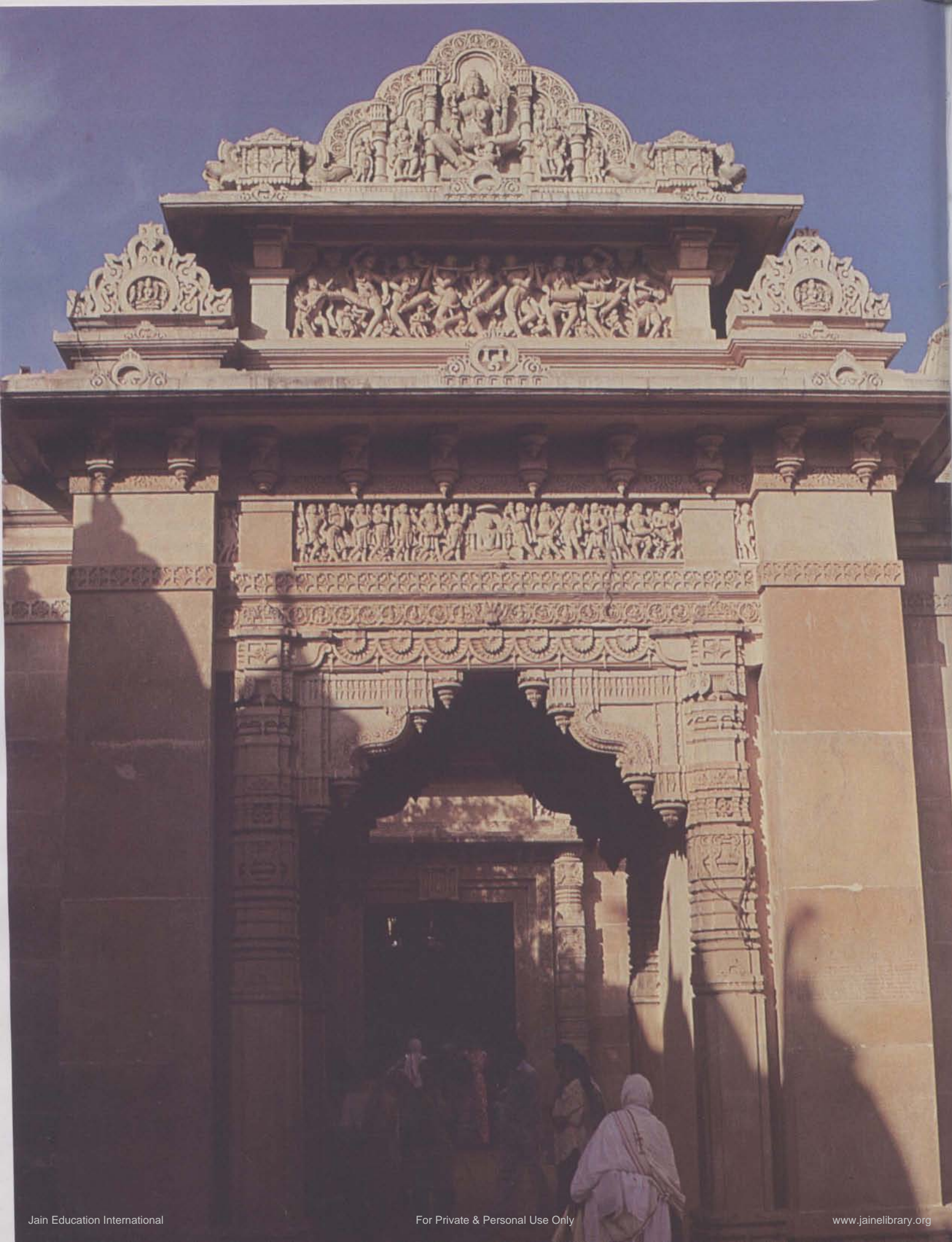


Presiding deity of the pilgrimage : TIRTHANKAR SHREE AADINATH



RAYAN TREE : Under which Aadinath performed penance

Sooraj Pol : The gateway to liberation →





Cluster of spires



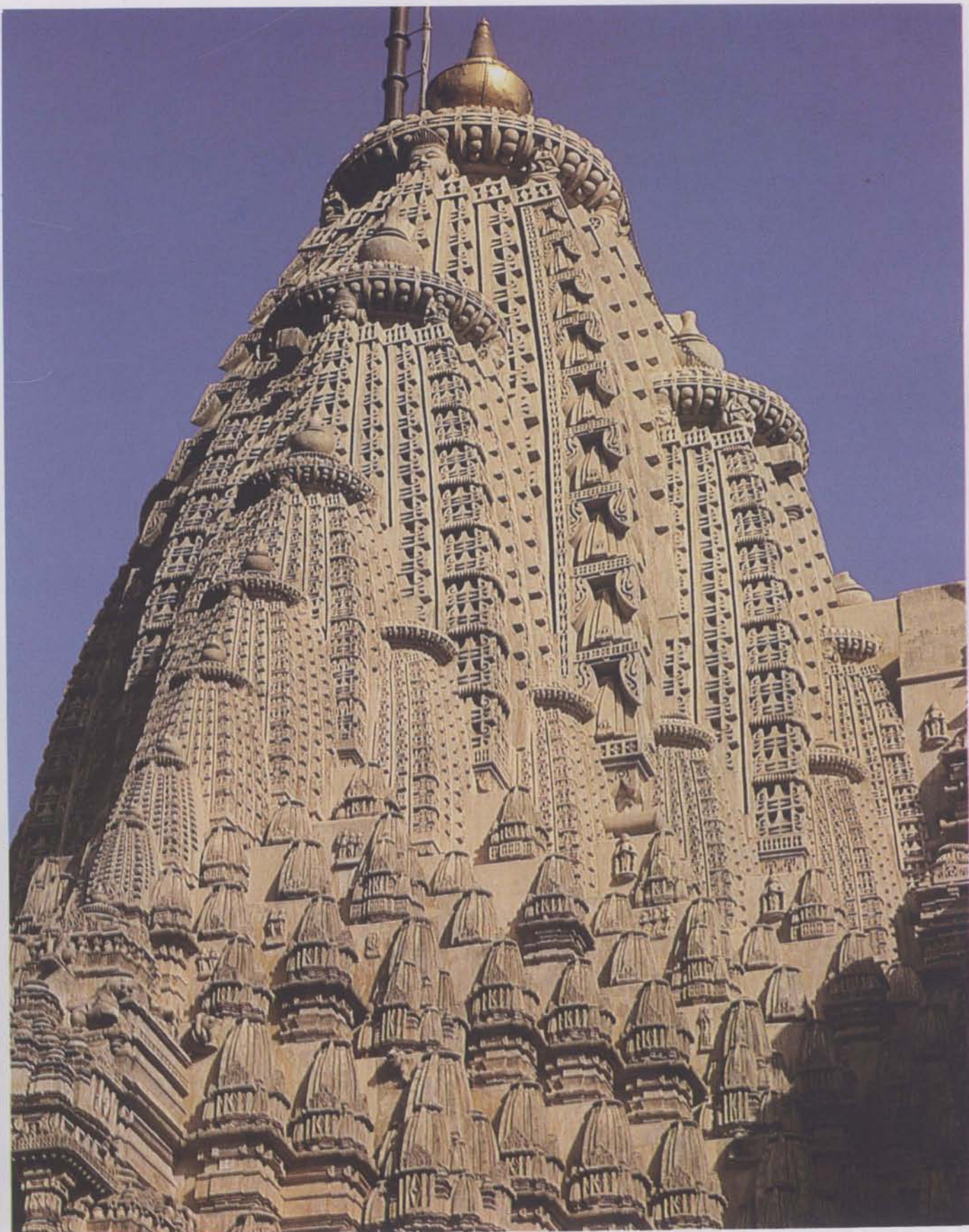
KESHARIYA NATH TEMPLE situated at the foot of the hill



SHATRUNJAY : Temples at every step



'TOONK' OF MOTISHAH SETH : A satellite town of temples



The majestic spire

boarding houses and resting places. On the road, everywhere holy 'Jinalayas' (temples of 'Jinas') are built, but the actual pilgrimage begins from the foot of the Palitana hill. The devotees become emotion-charged just as they set their feet at the foot-hill. Their hearts become grateful to the grace of God which has enabled them to get the best fortune of visiting this great pilgrimage.

Palitana pilgrimage may be in a sense, called the city of temples. With which other pilgrimage can this one be compared, where there are 8613 temples and nearly 33 thousand idols? Really such a place is the pilgrimage of the pilgrimages; it is unique, beyond every comparison. Only Palitana itself can be cited in comparison to Palitana. In the entire world, this is the only mountain where there are so many temples.

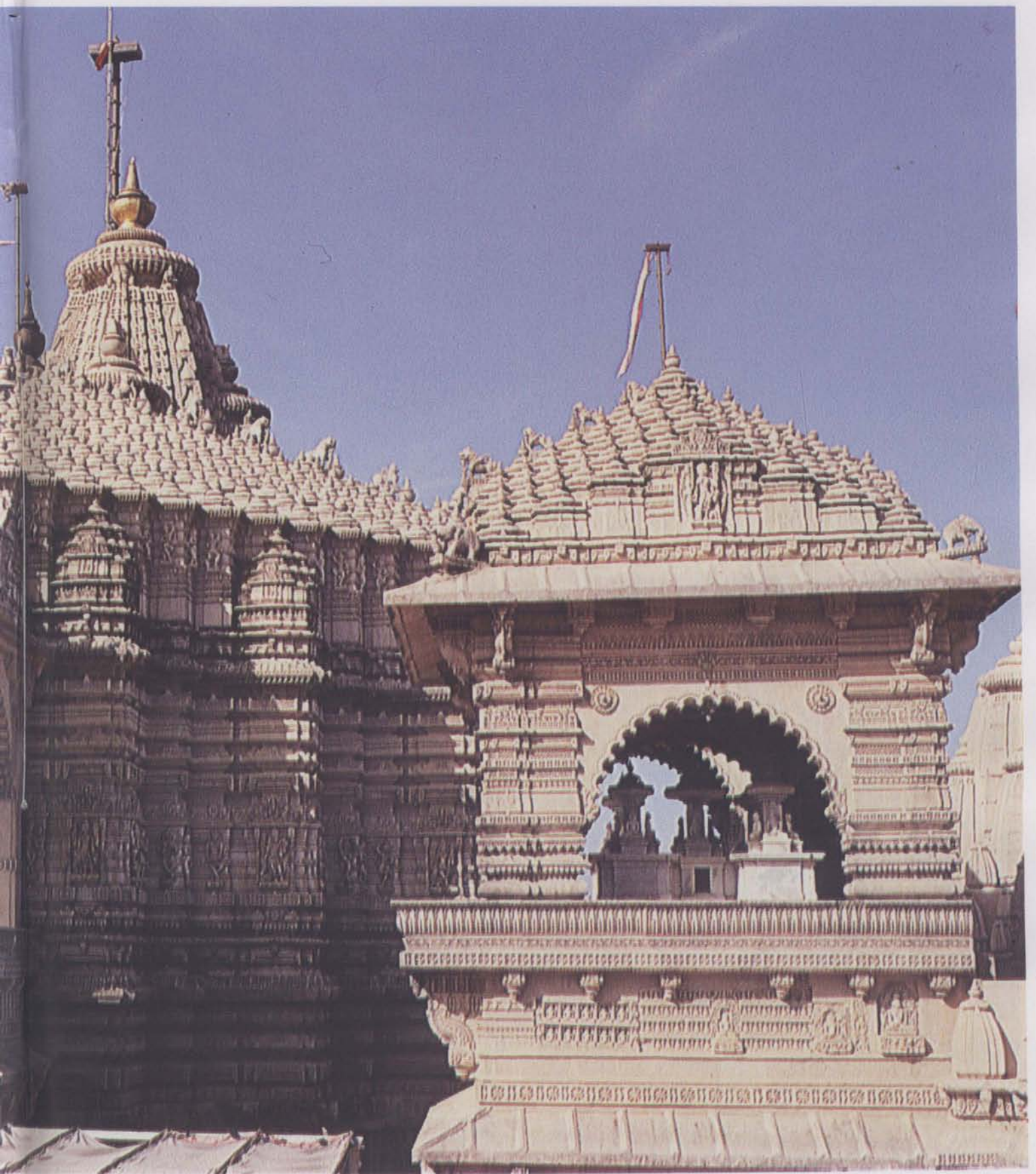
At this pilgrimage adorning the mountain ranges, an unprecedented confluence of devotion and art has taken place. It seems that the religious wealth of the gentlemen having faith in Jainism, has become vociferous in its absolute reverence and devotion. Among the nine Toonks built on the mountain, the Toonk of Motishah Seth, stands with the uncompartable splendour of temples. How very difficult it must have been to carry such gigantic stones through unapproachable mountains, but when devotion holds its sway then even the impossible deeds become possible.

Palitana is considered to be an eternal pilgrimage. It was here that thousands and lakhs of souls embraced 'samadhi'-death and lit the Supreme Light of 'mahanirvana'. Of the 24 Tirthankars of Jains, 22 Tirthankars enhanced the glory of this pilgrimage by blessing it with their touch. Lord Rishabhdev visited this pilgrimage 99 times. This great journey performed by the first Tirthankar Shri Rishabhdev, is in itself an inspiration for the followers of Jainism. Even today thousands of devotees visit this pilgrimage 99 times which is called 'Navanu Yatra'. Due to special connection with Lord Aadinath, the solemnisation of the 'Varshee-tap' (penance performed for full one year) is also done by people here on 'Akshay Tritiya' or 'Aakhateej'. Every year thousands of 'Varshee-tap' observers visit this pilgrimage and perform final rituals of this 'tap' (Penance) here.

'Tap' is the main feature of Jainism. 'Varshee-tap' (one full year of penance) is considered to be the longest and the hardest. But, thousands of Jains every year observe this 'tap'. In this 'tap' fasting is observed on one day and food is taken on the next day. This sequence continues for full one year. The 'parna' (concluding ritual of this 'tap') is considered to be auspiciously important both at Hastinapur and Palitana.

Palitana is actually the modified present name of Padliptapur. Being unvanquished by the enemies it is also called 'Shatrunjaya' (Vanquisher of enemies). In the scriptures, mention has been made of a total 100 names of Shatrunjay pilgrimage, the prominent among those







Where to find such grandeur ?



Pillar-formed great temples



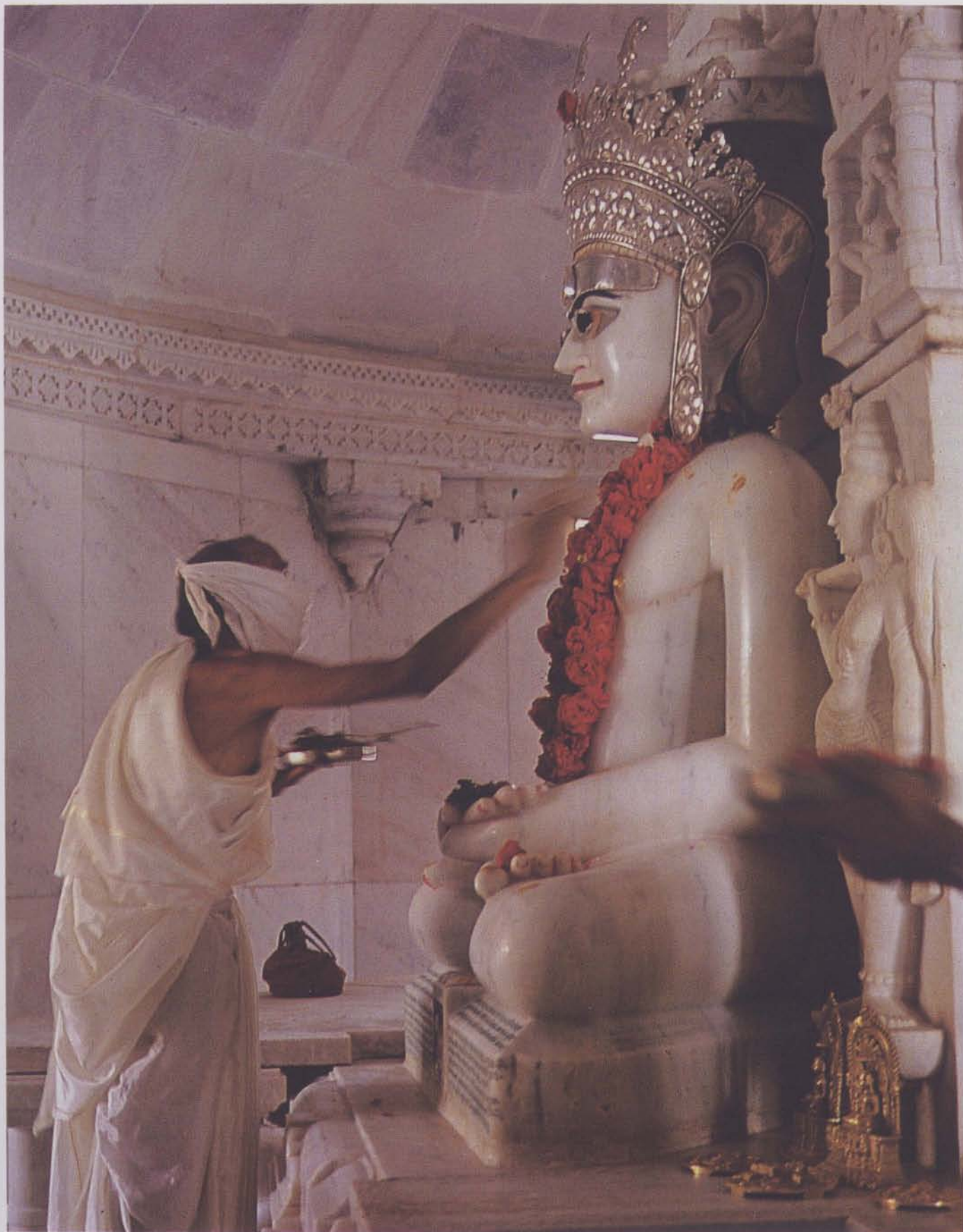
Palitana where there are temples and art all around



Spires and sub-spires



One of the nine 'TOONKS'



LORD AADINATH installed at Hastigiri

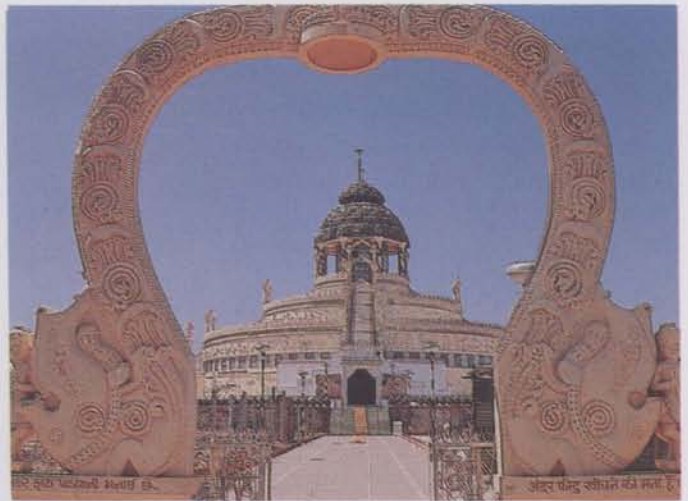
being Pundarik Giri, Vimalachal, Siddhachal etc.

The advent of Lord Rishabhdev occurred in the third 'Kalp' of the present time cycle, but the existence of Palitana/Shatrunjay pilgrimage is supposed to date back even earlier than that. Scriptures have it that Chakravarti Bharat, son of Lord Rishabhdev himself got this pilgrimage repaired. From time to time, several times more, restoration and renovation work of this pilgrimage were done. Specially notable among these being the repair work got done by Maharaja Sagar, Lord Shriram and the Pandavas. Sixteen restoration works on the pilgrimage are famous. The temples which are present today on this pilgrimage, were built from time to time by the 'Shreshthis' (rich businessmen) and the 'Samantas' (royal generals). Four special fairs are also organised at the Palitana pilgrimage every year. Besides the fairs held on Kartik Purnima, Falgun Shukla Trayodashi, Chaitra Poornima and Baishakh Shukla Tritiya, another fair is held on Baishakh Krishna six. In fact, this day is the day of consecration of Lord Aadinath in the main Toonk by Mantri (minister) Karma Shah. On Falgun Shukla Trayodashi more than one lakh people walk in procession for over 10 kilometers.

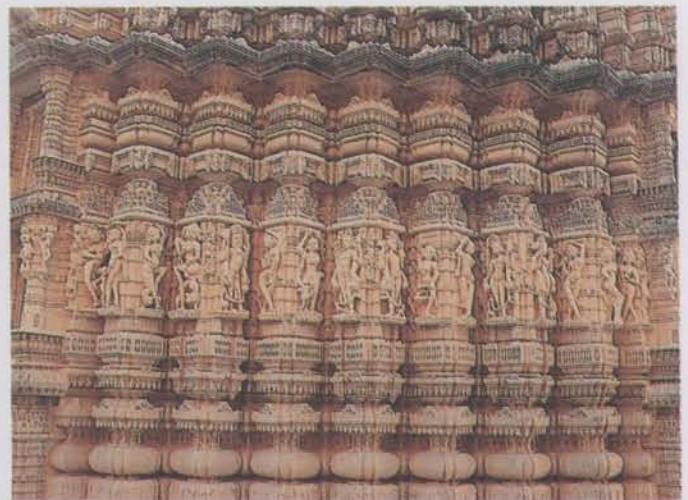
The glory of the Shatrunjay river is described as much as the glory of Shatrunjay pilgrimage itself. This river flowing on one side of the mountain ranges of Shatrunjay pilgrimage is considered to be as holy as the mother Bhagirathi Ganga in Vedic religion. It is considered to be more fruitful to set out for pilgrimage after bathing in the Shatrunjay river. This city of temples situated on the Shatrunjay Hill is on the north of Palitana city. The temples here are constructed on the twin-summits of the hill which is 600 metres high from the sea level. On each summit which is nearly 320 metres wide, these temples have been built in a systematic row. On seeing from a distance this row looks like the letter 'S'. The Jina idols, adorning the temples galore, are conveying the message of detachment from worldly allurements. These temples of Shatrunjay still may not be at par with Delwada or Ranakpur, artistically, but the total effect of the countless temples and the quietitude prevailing in the atmosphere here are some of such special features that become attractive to the visitors.

Palitana pilgrimage is beautifully placed amidst the mountain ranges. For reaching this pilgrimage we have to ascend nearly thirty-two hundred steps. The pathway is very neat and clean. The beauty of nature is to be seen to be believed. A splendid temple stands at the foot of the hill. It was built in Samvat 1950 by Shreshthi Dhanpat Singh Lakshmipat Singh. There being fifty-two ('Baawan') cells in this temple, it is also called 'Baawan Jinalaya'.

We come across several other small temples which contain feet-images of Chakravarty Bharat, Lord Neminath's Ganadhar Vardatt, Lord Aadinath, Parshwanath and the images of Varikhill, Naarad, Ram,



SAMAVASARAN : Latest presentation



Wall : Art at every angle



The entrance and the wall

Bharat, Shuk Paribrajak, Thawachcha Putra, Selak, Suri, Jali, Mayali and other gods and goddesses. Midway, we come across Kumarpal-Kund and Sala-Kund as well. Near Sala-Kund lies Jinendra-Toonk, in which are the idols of the gurus and the gods. Among these idols, the image of Mother Padmavati Devi is very beautiful from the art point of view.

On proceeding a little further we find the road bifurcated - one leads to Nine Toonks and the other to the main Toonk of Lord Aadinath. On going towards the main Toonk, first of all Ram Pol and Gaadhan Pol are seen. Further, while entering Haathi Pol, Sooraj Kund, Bheem Kund and Ishwar Kund are seen.

On the road to nine Toonks the first Toonk is that of Seth Narshi Keshav who got this Toonk built in Samvat 1921. The idol of Tirthankar Shantinath adorns this beautiful Jinalaya.

Second is the Khartarwasahi Toonk. This is also called Chaumukhji's Toonk. This temple is built on the northern summit of the hill. This is the highest Toonk among all the Toonks built on the Shatrunjay Hill. The lofty top of this temple can be seen from far away. The renovation of this very lofty Jinalaya was done in Samvat 1675 by Seth Sadasomji. Four huge idols of Lord Aadinath adorn this temple as the Chaumukhji facing four sides of Lord Aadinath. In this very Toonk, the temple of Tirthankar Rishabhdev's mother Marudevi is also built. At the rear portion of this temple are the idols of five Pandavas, mother Kunti and Draupadi.

The third Toonk was built by Chheepa brothers; therefore, it is called Chhepawasahi Toonk. Tirthankar Rishabhdev adorns, as the principal deity, this temple which was built in Samvat 1791.

The fourth Toonk is Saakarwasahi. In this Toonk built by Seth Saakarchand Premchand, there are the idols of four immortal Jineshwars Rishbhanan, Chandranan, Varishen and Vardhmaan.

The sixth Toonk, Heemwasahi, was built by Heema Bhai in Samvat 1886. Here the principal deity is Lord Shree Ajitnath.

The seventh is Premwasahi Toonk. Built by Modi Shree Premchandra Lavjee, the principal deity of this temple is Tirthankar Shree Rishabhdev.

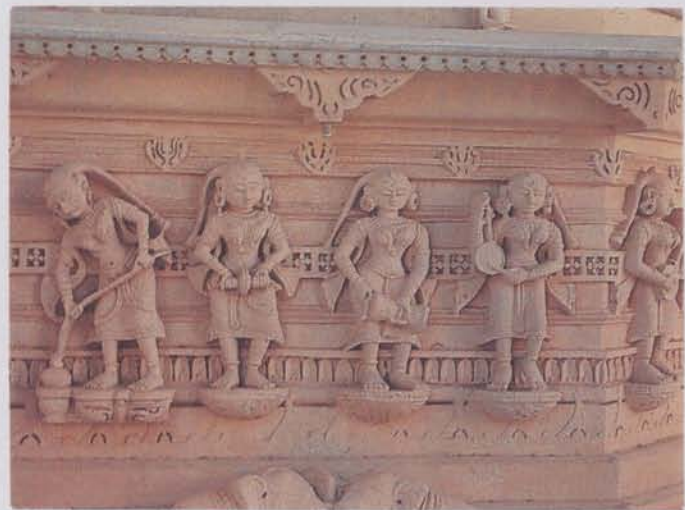
The eighth one is Balawasahi Toonk. This temple was renovated in Samvat 1193 by Bala Bhai. The principal deity of this temple is Lord Aadinath.

The ninth is Motishah Toonk. This biggest temple had been built by Seth Motishah, and his worthy son Khemchand had got it consecrated in Samvat 1893. This temple is in itself a cluster of some big and some small temples. The principal deity of this temple is Lord Shree Aadinath.

A special temple has been built near Premwasahi Toonk. An 18-feet high idol of Tirthankar Aadinath in Padmasan (lotus posture) adorn this temple. This idol is also identified as 'Adbhut Baba'.



Palitana : The megacity of temples

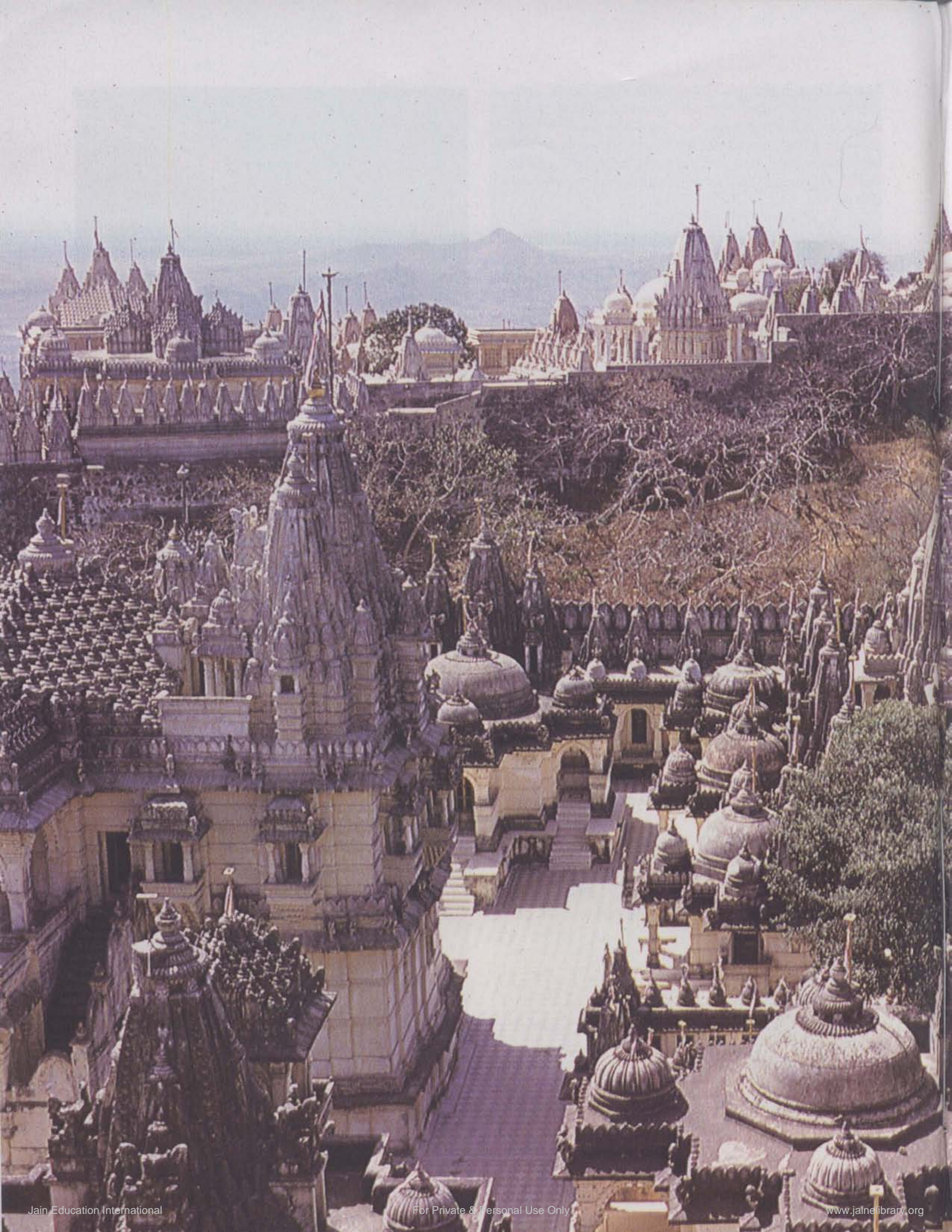


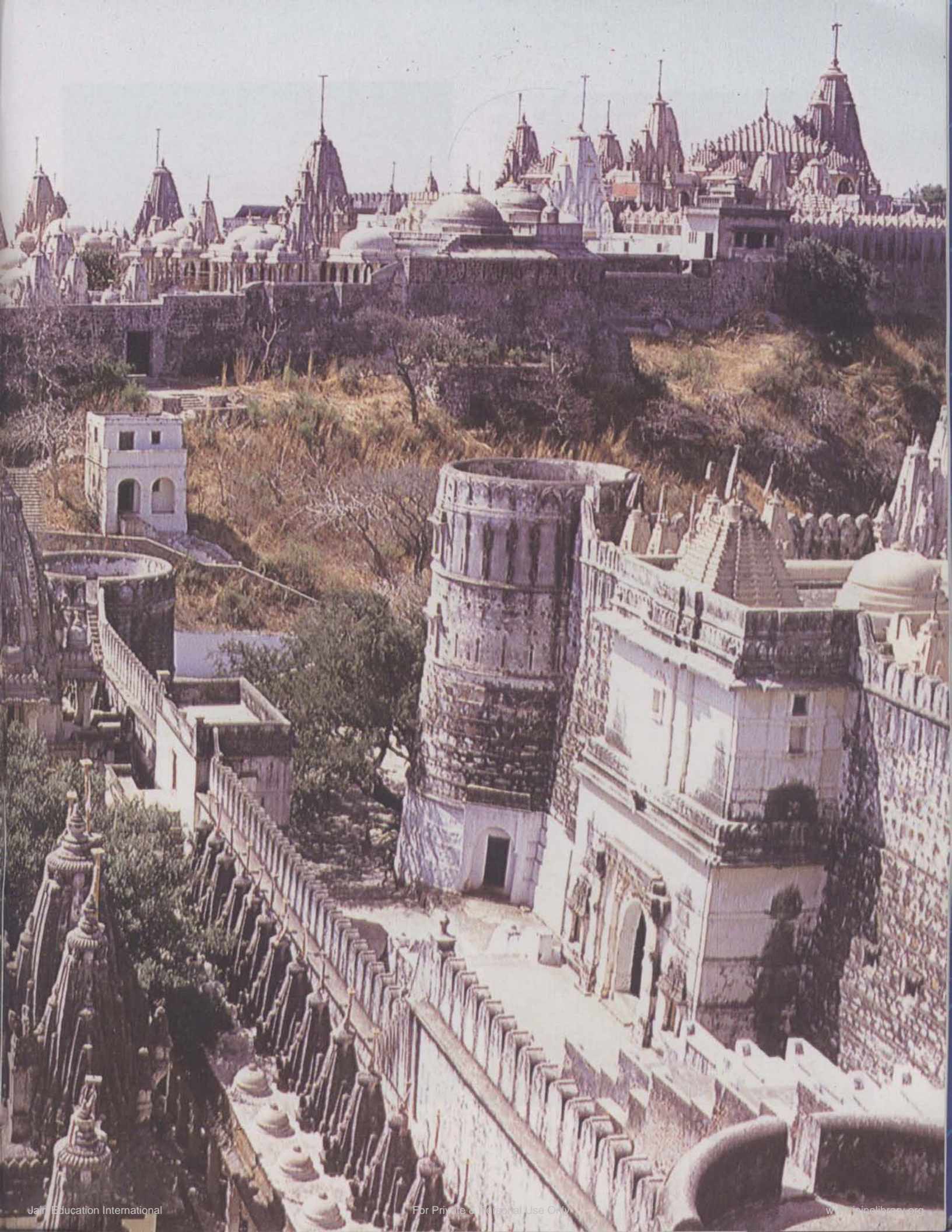
'Immersed in devotion' depicted by Gujarati sculptors



A fine facade

SHATRUNJAY : Megacity of temples →

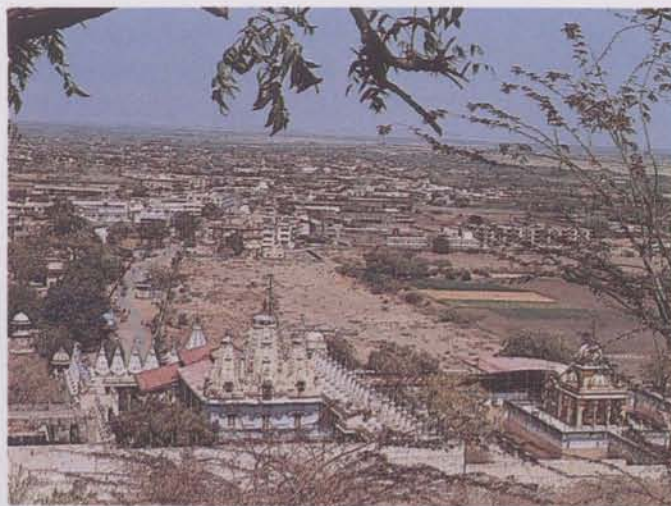




The idol of Tirthankar Rishabhdev adorns the main Took of Shatrunjay hill. This white-coloured holy image is 2.16 meters high. People pine for seeing and worshipping this extremely holy idol. Just on viewing this idol, a sea of devotion surges on. It is due to the holiness of the hill and this idol that it has been said : "He who hasn't visited Shatrunjay pilgrimage is living in womb".

On the rear portion of the temple is the Ravan Tree, which is very ancient. It is said that Tirthankar Aadinath had practised a long penance under this very tree. Huge image of foot-prints of Tirthankar Aadinath measuring 47 x 25 inches adorn this place.

Besides the hill in Palitana, at the foot-hill are Samawasaran Temple, Aagam Temple, Jamboo Dweep, Sprawling Museum etc. which are worth a visit. The journey to this great pilgrimage is really the most fortunate moment of life.



Palitana village and the foot-hill : a grand view



Dandia Raas : A Gujarati dance form



The magnificent steps leading upwards to SHATRUNJAY



The SHATRUNJAY river



● **RAJGRIHA**

*R*ajgriha has its own importance from the Puranic point of view. It has been the place of activities of Lord Mahavir and Lord Buddha. Lord Mahavir performed Twelve 'Chaturmas' here and sprayed his spiritual ambrosia on this district. Of the nearly seven lakh hermits and nuns devoted to Lord Mahavir, nearly one-fourth belonged to Rajgriha district. From this viewpoint it can be said that Lord Mahavir had a boundless influence on Rajgriha district.

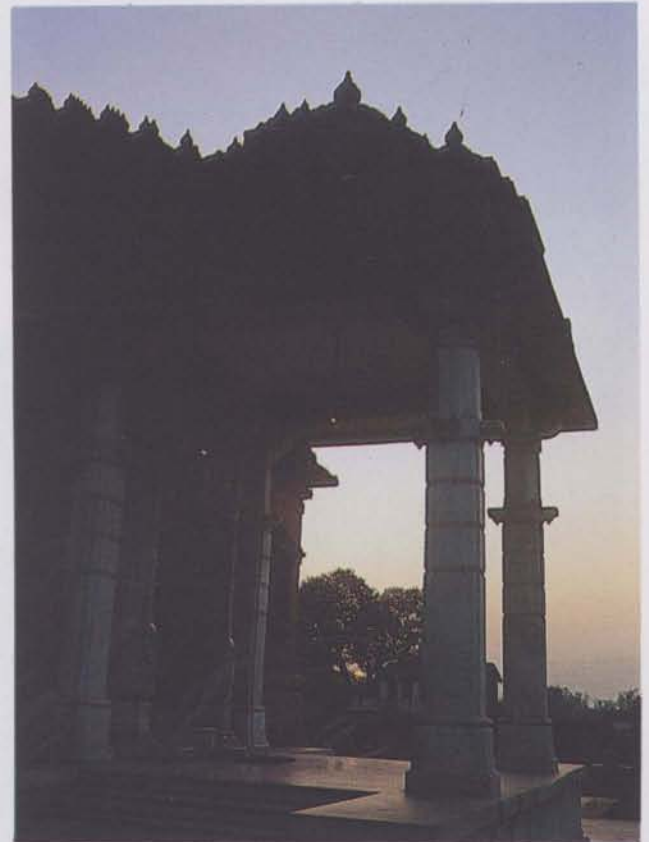
Lord Buddha had a special relation with Rajgriha. In fact the inhabitants of Rajgriha accorded full respect to religion and spiritualism. They saw in Lord Mahavir and Lord Buddha the fragrance of divinity and enlightenment due to which both these great personages had absolute dominance over here. It is due to this very reason that in the mountain ranges and caves situated around Rajgriha, Jain sages and Buddhist monks both used to remain in 'Sadhana' (spiritual practices) here. After the 'nirvana' of Lord Buddha the first religious conference of the Buddhist monks took place but in Rajgriha. What we call 'Saptaparni' cave today is actually the venue of the first conference/synod of the Buddhist monks. The kings such as Raja Shrenik and Raja Ajatshatru (Kunik) etc. who have been mentioned in Jain scriptures with great veneration, were as a matter of fact, the rulers of this very district. Raja Shrenik is considered to be one of the principal disciples of Lord Mahavir. Shrenik savoured the nectar of enlightenment emitted by the omniscience of the Lord, and even though he was an emperor, he led a life of austerity and equanimity. Although Shrenik died an unnatural death, he had gathered so much virtue and means of attaining salvation that he carved a niche for himself, as per Jain tradition, amongst the would be 24 Tirthankars. What we know as Padmanabh Swami, is actually the name of the future reincarnation of Raja Shrenik.

Rajgriha has been the birthplace of exemplary personalities like Metarya, Dhanna, Shalibhadra, Meghkumar, Abhay Kumar, Jambooswami, Poornia etc.

Besides being a place for spiritual practices, Rajgriha has also been maintaining its importance in view of trade, prosperity and tourism. Today, at Rajgriha only ruins have remained in the name of city, but being an equally important place of worship for the Jains, the Buddhists and the Hindus, travellers keep thronging this place. The famous Jain pilgrimage situated on the hills, besides the renowned Buddhist Stupa, also has a hot-water spring called 'Brahm Kund'. 'Virayatan' has also been constructed here for



The principal deity MUNI SUVRAT SWAMI



The dawn knocking at the threshold of the temple



The SAMAVASARAN TEMPLE

education, service and art.

This pilgrimage has been constructed on five hills. At a little distance away from the Jain Dharmshala built at the first foot-hill is the Vipulgiri hills. After ascending about 2 km. we come across the Vipulgiri 'Toonk'. On the hills are situated the temples of both the sects - Shwetambar and Digambar.

On descending down nearly 2 kms. from Vipulachal hill and then again ascending 2 kms. we come to the Ratnagiri hill. On this Ratnagiri hill are also situated Shwetambar and Digambar temples. There is a huge temple of Lord Buddha on the Gridhakoot hill just in front of the Ratnagiri hill. Nearly 4 kms. away from the Ratnagiri hill is the Udaigiri hill. The ascent of this hill is very complicated.

Swarnagiri is the fourth hill here. It is also known as Shramangiri. This hill is five kms. away from the 'dharmshala' (charitable boarding house). The ascent distance is nearly 3 kms. There are two caves on the southern part of this hill. 'Jina' images have been carved on the walls in the caves. Vaibhargiri hill is situated 2 kms. away from here. There is the Shalibhadra temple also besides the 'Jina' temple. On the left of this temple is an ancient dilapidated temple. There are many ancient and artistic idols in it.

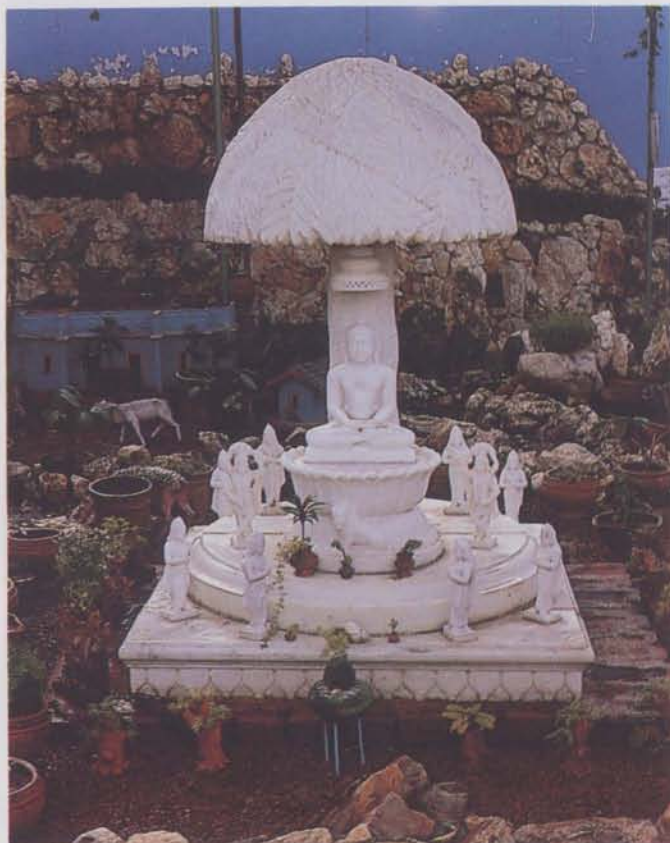
Besides the mountain pilgrimage, there are several magnificent ancient and modern 'Jinalayas'. The journey to this pilgrimage may be helpful in the journey to the inner self.



The Vipulachal Mountain



The temple atop Rajgriha Hill



A fascinating view of the idol of LORD MAHAVIR at Veerayatan



Divine idols of LORD MAHAVIR installed on the hill



● PAVAPURI

*P*avapuri is the choicest of the kalyanak (auspicious moments in a Tirthankar's life) places of Jainism. This is that great pious land where Lord Shree Mahavir Swami, the last Tirthankar of Jains, attained nirvana. Also, it was on the soil of Pavapuri that the Lord had delivered his first sermon. It bestowed enlightenment upon great souls like the great sage Indrabhooti Gautam. It is also a matter of great significance that the Lord selected the pious land of Pavapuri for laying down his mortal body. Continuously for sixteen sessions the Lord delivered his sermon before his 'nirvana'. Really, Bihar is that immensely fortunate state of India where the advent, enlightenment and the great departure of immortal personalities like Lord Mahavir and Buddha took place.

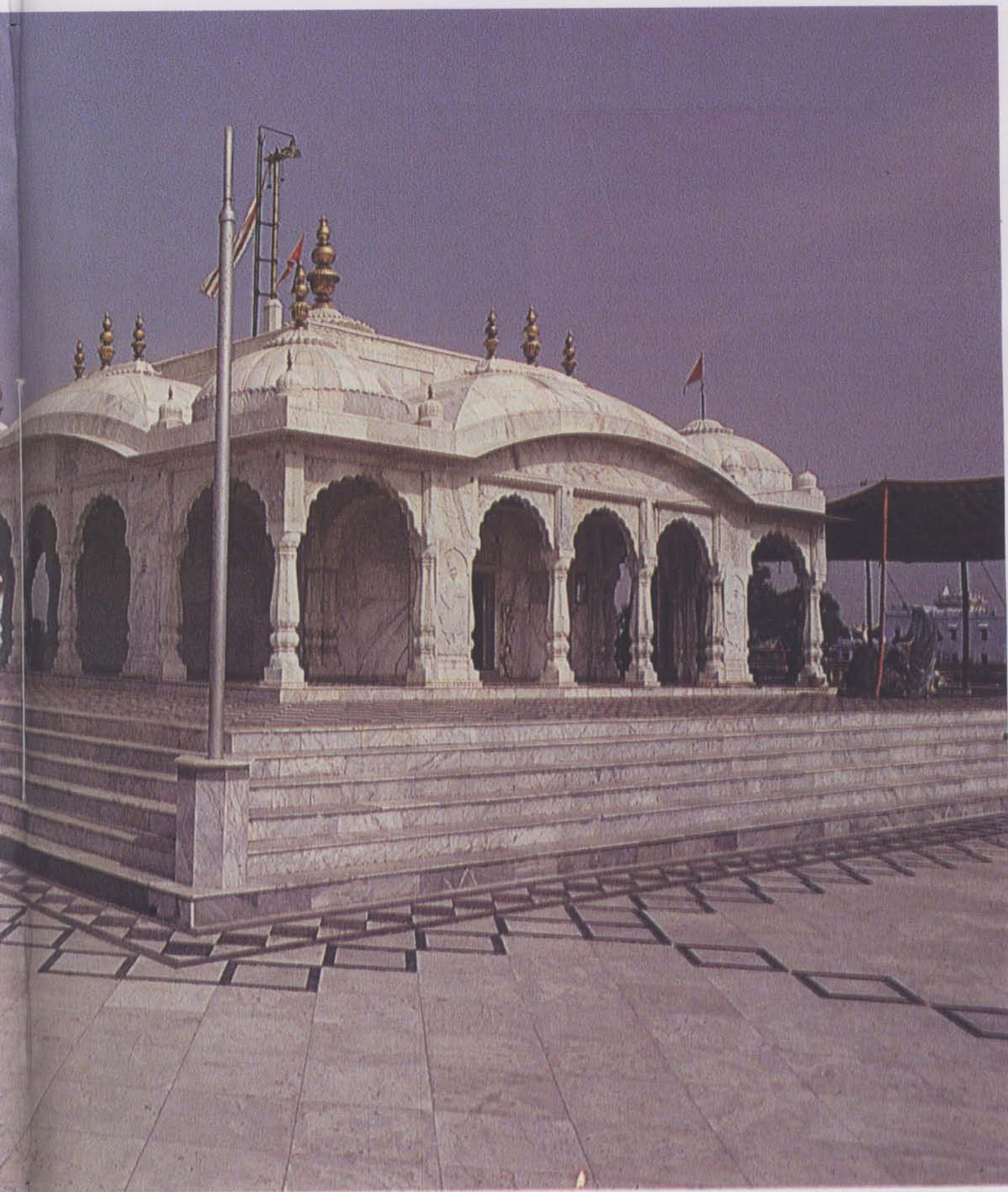
Pavapuri and Rajgriha are both near each other. Both these places are holy pilgrimages of India. Journey to this place is the journey to the welfare-bestowing lands which have touched the feet of Lord Mahavir and Buddha.

It has been the belief of Jainism that the 'Deepavali Parv' (festival of lights) had its auspicious beginning from this very place following the 'nirvana' of Lord Mahavir. The holy soil of this very Pavapuri had the good fortune of lighting the first light by way of introduction of 'Deepavali'.

After the 'mahanirvana' of Lord Mahavir where the last rites of his sacred body were performed, people carried the soil of that place on their heads to their houses and respectfully placed it in their places of worship. Just as the 'Kalash' (pitcher) gets filled up drop by drop, so also the water oozes out of the pot drop by drop. Even if people had taken only a few pinches of the soil a pit would have been formed. But since thousands of people had done so, it is not surprising that a pit was formed at that place. King Nandivardhan, elder brother of Lord Mahavir found a pond and at the centre of it a temple was constructed which became famous as 'Jal-mandir' (Water temple). This temple may not be very big, but, built in the middle of the pond surrounded by lotus flowers, it looks very beautiful and fascinating. Thousands and lakhs of people every year come to this water temple and offer their reverential floral homage to Lord Shree Mahavir.

In the sanctum sanctorum of the water temple, the ancient foot-prints of Lord Mahavir have been auspiciously installed. Sitting near these foot prints for even ten minutes is sufficient to get rid of all the sins committed in this





world. This place is so much energized by the halo of Lord Mahavir that even a visit to this place by a devotee is tantamount to acquiring the blessed company of an awakened and enlightened person.

Near the water temple, there is one more big temple of Lord Mahavir, where the Lord is worshipped according to 'Digambar' rites. On proceeding a little farther, a grand temple called 'Samavasaran Mandir' is seen. Believably, this is that holy place where the Lord had delivered his last sermon. There is yet another huge temple in the middle of Pavapuri village. This is considered to be that place where the Lord had laid down his earthly body for his 'mahanirvan'. The 'rajjukshala' of king Hastipal, renowned in history, was situated at this very place. King Hastipal was a subordinate ruler of Ajatshatru, emperor of Magadh. Near this temple a huge 'dharma-shala' has been constructed as the resting place of the travellers. Really, the holy land of Pavapuri conveys the message of peace, devotion, sacrifice and salvation to all the people.



The halo scattering on the pilgrimage



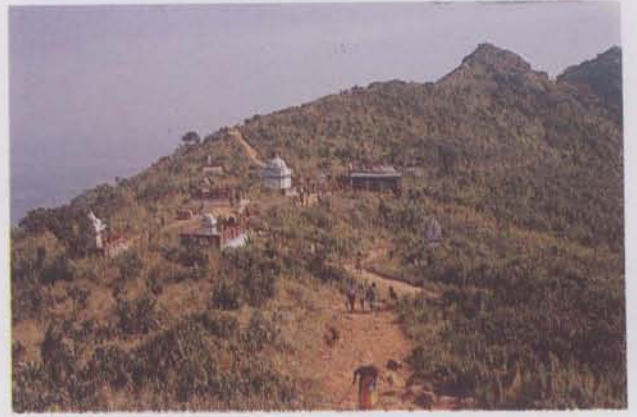
The principal deity MAHAVIR in the Samavasaran temple



The marks of LORD MAHAVIR'S feet inside the Jal Mandir



Devotees standing in a queue to have a glimpse of the Lord



● SAMMET SHIKHAR

Sammet Shikhar and Shatrunjay are the most prominent among all the Jain pilgrimages of India. Shatrunjay pilgrimage is on a hill-top in western India and Sammet Shikhar is in eastern India. When just one auspicious event of one Tirthankar, can convert a place into a pilgrimage, it will be quite impossible for human intelligence to assess the holiness and power of that pilgrimage where as many as twenty Tirthankars have lit-up the inextinguishable light of 'nirvana'. Although the first light of 'nirvana' was lit-up in Ashtapad (in the Himalayas), today that pilgrimage is invisible to us. Under such a circumstance, Sammet Shikhar is that pilgrimage which we can hail as the 'Shikhar' (Summit) of the first light of 'nirvana'. The truth is that Sammet Shikhar is the topmost light of 'nirvana'.

Of the twenty-four Tirthankars of Jainism, twenty Teerthankars namely, Ajitnath, Sambhavnath, Abhinandanprabhu, Sumatinath, Padmprabhu, Suparshwanath, Chandraprabhu, Suvidhinath, Sheetalnath, Shreyansnath, Vimalnath, Anantnath, Dharmnath, Shantinath, Kunthunath, Arnath, Mallinath, Munisuvrat Swami, Neminath and Parshwanath spent the evening of their lives on this great mountain and attained the supreme status of 'moksha'. Every Tirthankar made efforts to enliven the density of power of this place, and consequently for millenniums this place has been vibrant, awakened and annointed with their halo. Really, Sammet Shikhar is an astonishing, unique and awakened holy pilgrimage.

Even today the atmosphere of Sammet Shikhar contains a sort of holiness. This mountain's own special feature is that it always remains redolent with the fragrant trees of a large Sandal forest situated over it. Several rare herbal medicines are found on this mountain. The melodious sound of the cool water-falls flowing on this mountain gladdens our heart.

The most ancient reference of Sammet Shikhar has been made in the Mallijin chapter of the scripture known as Jnatadharm Katha. Describing the 'nirvana' of Tirthankar Mallinath two phrases - 'Sammeya pavvaye' and 'Sammeya sel sihare' - have been used for this mountain.

In the 'Parshwanath Charitra' (biography of Parshwanath) of Kalpsutra, describing the 'nirvana' of Tirthankar 'Parshwa', the phrase 'Sammeya Sel Siharanmi' has been used to denote Sammet Shikhar.



The Kothi Mandir situated at the foot-hill



ANUTTAR YOGI (The Incomparable sage) LORD PARSHWANATH :
The principal deity of the KOTHI MANDIR



The sacred feet-marks of the Lord inside the PARSHWANATH TOONK

In the medieval literature 'Samidigiri' or 'Samadhigiri' is also found to denote Sammet Shikhar. The local people address it as Parasnath Hill. It is also mentionable that this pilgrimage is called 'Sammet Shikhar' in the Shwetambar tradition and 'Sammed Shikhar' in the Digambar tradition. The main reasons of this is not the difference in traditions, but the difference in the ancient languages. In the Shwetambar tradition Ardhamagadhi Prakrit is used whereas in the Digambar tradition Saurseni Prakrit is used. As the linguists know in Saurseni Prakrit 't' becomes 'd' in use. That is why in the Digambar tradition 'Sammet' is pronounced as 'Sammed'.

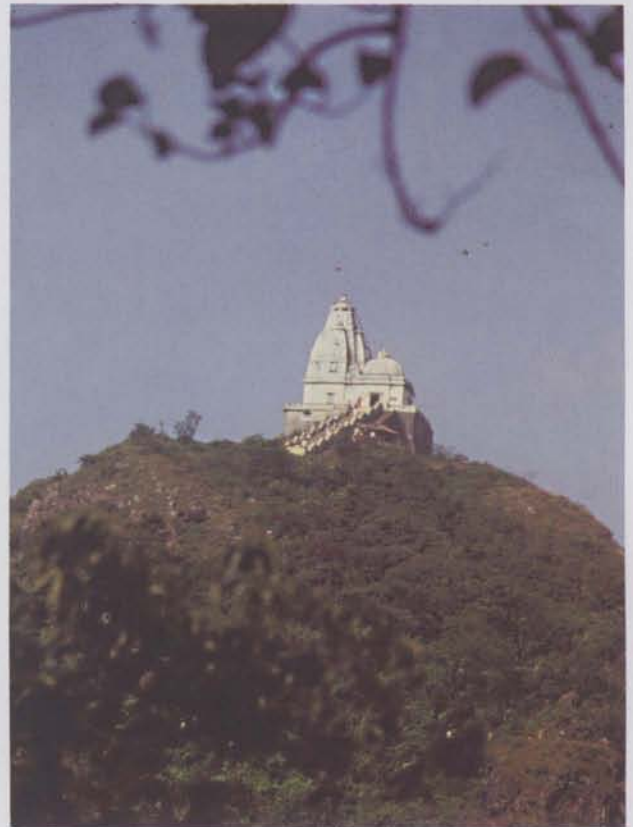
Bhomiaji Maharaj of Shikharji is world famous. In Jainism, two powers are world-famous as the protecting deities - Nakoda Bhairav in Rajasthan, and Shikharji's Bhomiaji in Bihar. On the sprawling mountain of Sammet Shikhar, whether it is midnight or noon, the devotees are found to be travelling. Who else but Bhomiaji protects them all.

Bhomiaji Maharaj not only protects the pilgrimage, but also fulfils the wishes of the devotees. At the foot-hill which is known as Madhuvan, there is a fascinating temple of Baba Bhomia containing his haloed idol. People worship the Baba with oil and vermilion and offer their bountiful homage at the door of the Baba. Every year on the day of Holi festival, a grand fair is held on Shikharji at the door of the Baba.

In the ninth century Acharya Yashodev Suri's disciple Pradyumna Suri had travelled in Māgadh for a long time. In course of this travel he also visited Sammet Shikhar pilgrimage seven times. In the early ninth century Sammet Shikhar became a victim of religious bigotry, and the temples of that place were destroyed. At the close of that very century the pilgrimage was renovated.

In 1592 A.D. emperor Akbar had gifted this mountain to Acharya Shree Heervijay Suri on being impressed by his personality. In 1670 A.D., Shree Kumarpal Sonpal Lodha renovated the Jina-temples here.

In Samvat 1809, Delhi's emperor Ahmed Shah, being impressed by the acts of Murshidabad's Seth Mahtab Ray gifted to him Madhuvan Kothi, Jaypar Nala, Jalhari Kund and 301 bighas land in the valley of Parasnath Hill. In Samvat 1812, emperor Abu Alikhan Bahadur had declared this hill tax-free. The ardent desire of Seth Mahtab Rai was that this holy pilgrimage should be renovated. As luck would have it, Seth Shree Mahtab Rai died even before the repair-work began. The renovation work of Sammet Shikhar pilgrimage began under the guidance of his son Seth Khushal Chand, and as per the divine signals spots for twenty 'Toonks' were selected and the Toonks were built there. These were consecrated in Samvat 1825 on Magh Shukla Tritiya by the auspicious hands of Acharya Shri Dharm Suri. Under this very renovation plan on the mountain, the Jal-Mandir, seven temples in Madhuvan, Dharmshala and the temple of Shree Bhomiaji the protecting deity of the hill, were completed and consecrated.



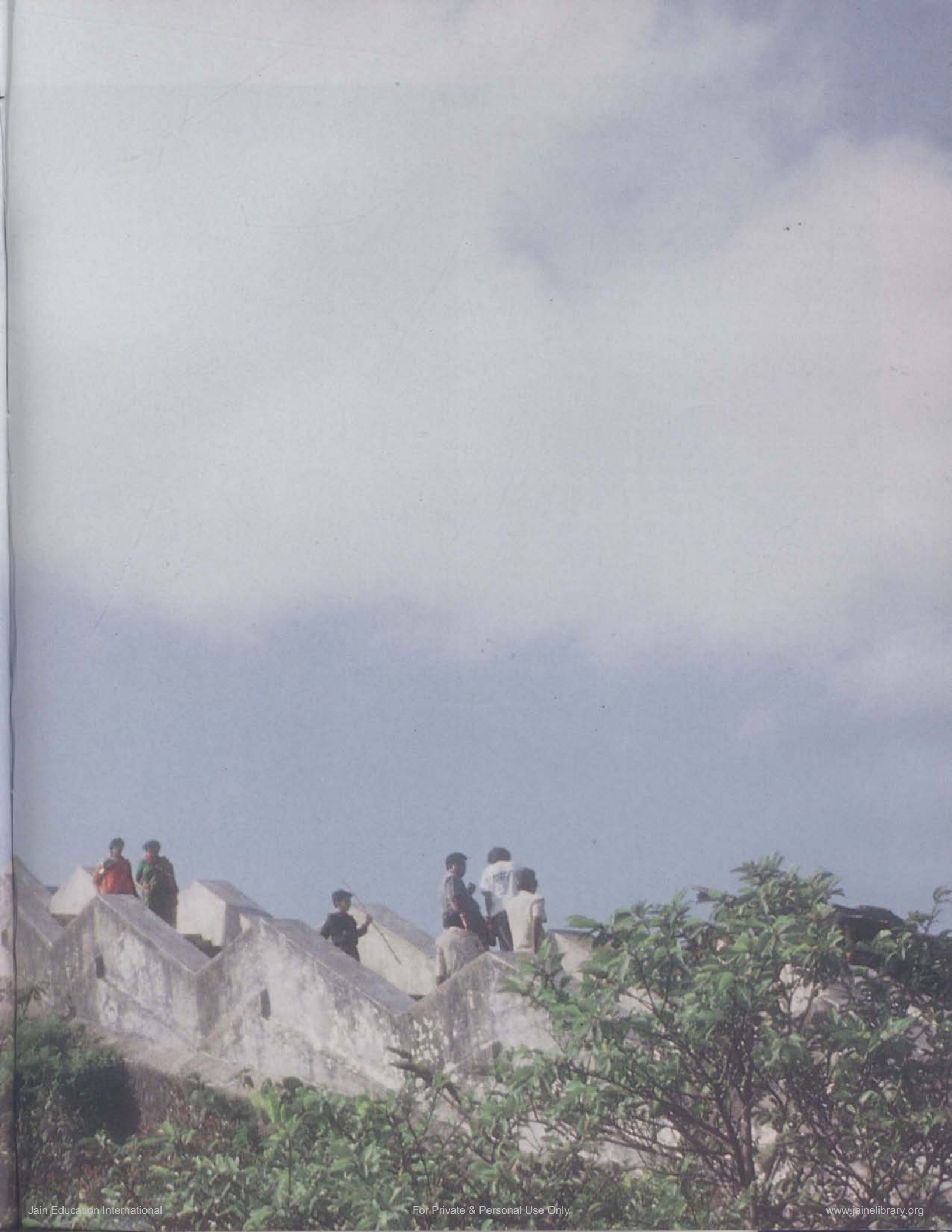
PARSHWANATH TOONK : The highest summit of the pilgrimage



Travellers on the pilgrimage

PARSHWANATH TOONK : A close view →





The renovation work of this pilgrimage was done again from Samvat 1925 to 1933. In course of this renovation new 'dehris' (small temples with prominent thresholds) of Lord Aadinath, Lord Vasupoojya, Neminath, Mahavir and the eternal Jineshwar Shree Rishabhanan, Chandranan, Varishen, Vardhmaan et al were constructed too.

In the flowing current of time one more crisis befell the mountain. King Palganj made a public announcement for sale of the mountain. On getting the information Rai Bahadur Shree Badridas Jauhari of Calcutta and Shree Bahadur Singh Doogar of Murshidabad signalled the India-level Shwetambar organisation Anandjee Kalyanji's Pedhi to purchase this mountain. With the active co-operation of those two virtuous persons the Pedhi (Trust) purchased this mountain on 9.3.1918 for Rs. 2,42,200 and the development of the pilgrimage began in a systematic manner.

Owing to the untiring efforts of Sadhvi Shree Surprabha Shree the renovation of this pilgrimage was undertaken again in Samvat 2012 which was completed in Samvat 2017. It was the twenty-third renovation of this pilgrimage. Whatever we see today at this pilgrimge is the final form of that very renovation.

The journey to this holy pilgrimage rids misery, confers piety and destroys sin. The journey begins after bowing the head in Bhomia Baba's temple. On ascending nearly 3 kms. of the upward slope comes Gandharvna. Here the pilgrims take rest for some time. At this very place there is 'Bhataghar' where people take breakfast on returning. From here, after ascending 2 kms. and 500 steps of the staircase, comes a vast span of level land. All around here 'Toonks' of Tirthankars have been built.

The first 'Toonk' is that of Ganadhar Gautam Swami. Images of foot prints of twenty-four Tirthankars and ten Ganadhars have been installed here. Among these the dusky-greenish coloured feet are those of Gautam Swami. These were installed in Samvat 1825. A few steps away from here stands the Toonk of Shree Kunthunath, which was consecrated in Samvat 1825.

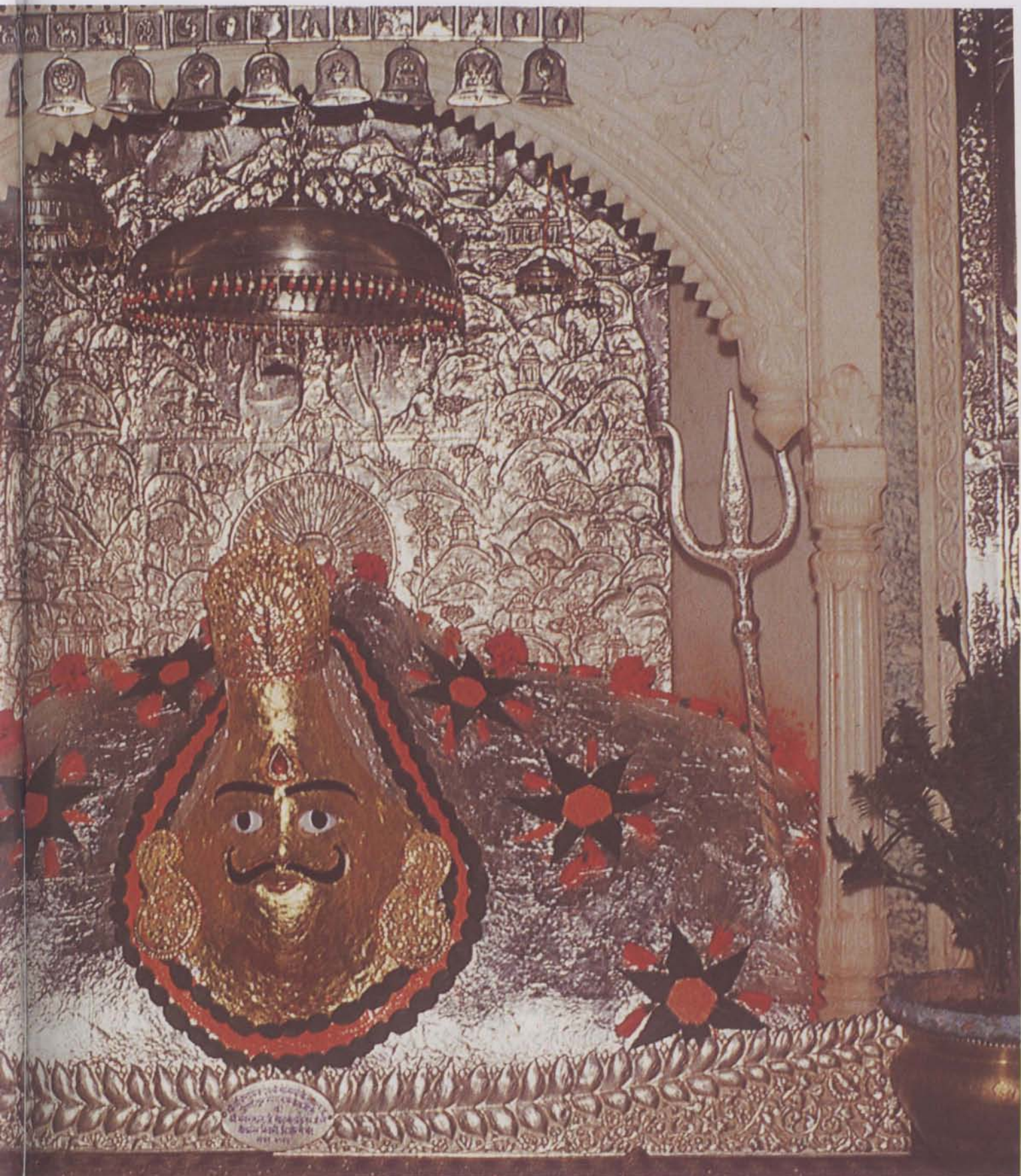
Near Lord Shree Kunthunath's Toonk is the Toonk of the eternal Jina Shree Rishabhanan. Close by is the Toonk of another eternal Jina Chandranan. Near it is the fifth Toonk, of Tirthankar Shree Neminath.

The sixth Toonk belongs to Tirthankar Arnath. The Lord had attained 'Nirvana' here on Margsheersh Shukla Dashami. The foot-prints were installed here in Samvat 1825 on Magh Shukla 3.

After the Toonk of Tirthankar Arnath, comes the Toonk of Tirthankar Shree Mallinath. Here the holy feet-marks were installed in Samvat 1825. Ahead of this is the eighth Toonk, that of Tirthankar Shree Shreyansnath. Here too the holy feet-marks were installed in Samvat 1825.

On walking a little ahead there is the ninth Toonk. Here the ninth Tirthankar Shree Suvidhinath had attained 'nirvan'. The tenth Toonk is that of Tirthankar Padmaprabhu. At a little distance away stands the eleventh





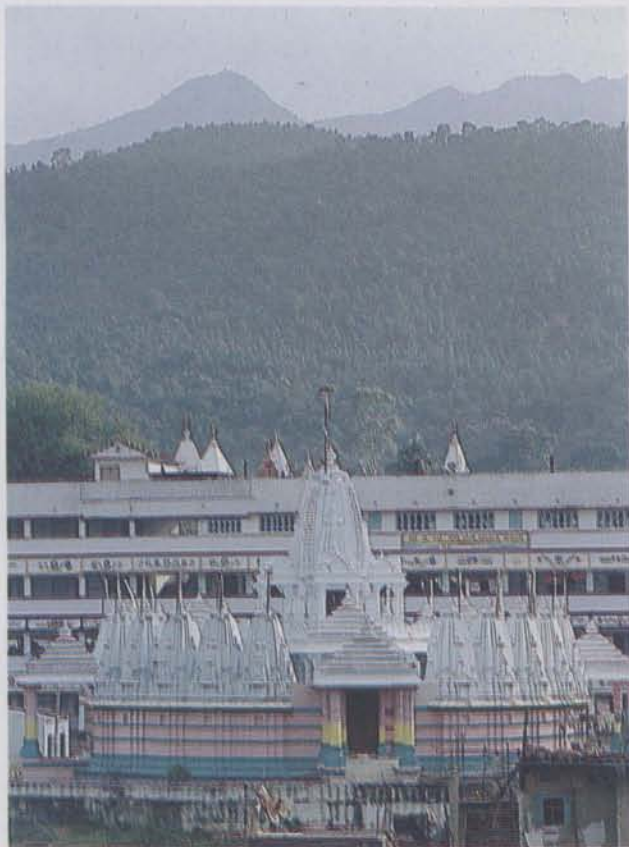
The protecting deity of the Sammet Shikhar SHREE BHOMIA JI MAHARAJ

Toonk of Tirthankar Shree Munisuvrat Swami. At a high summit a beautiful Toonk is seen from here. This Toonk is dedicated to Tirthankar Shree Chandraprabhu. Really, on reaching here, the heart becomes so very indescribably glad! Here are installed the dusky-greenish coloured feet-marks of the Lord. A huge cave is also here which is deeper than the other caves of the mountain and negotiable.

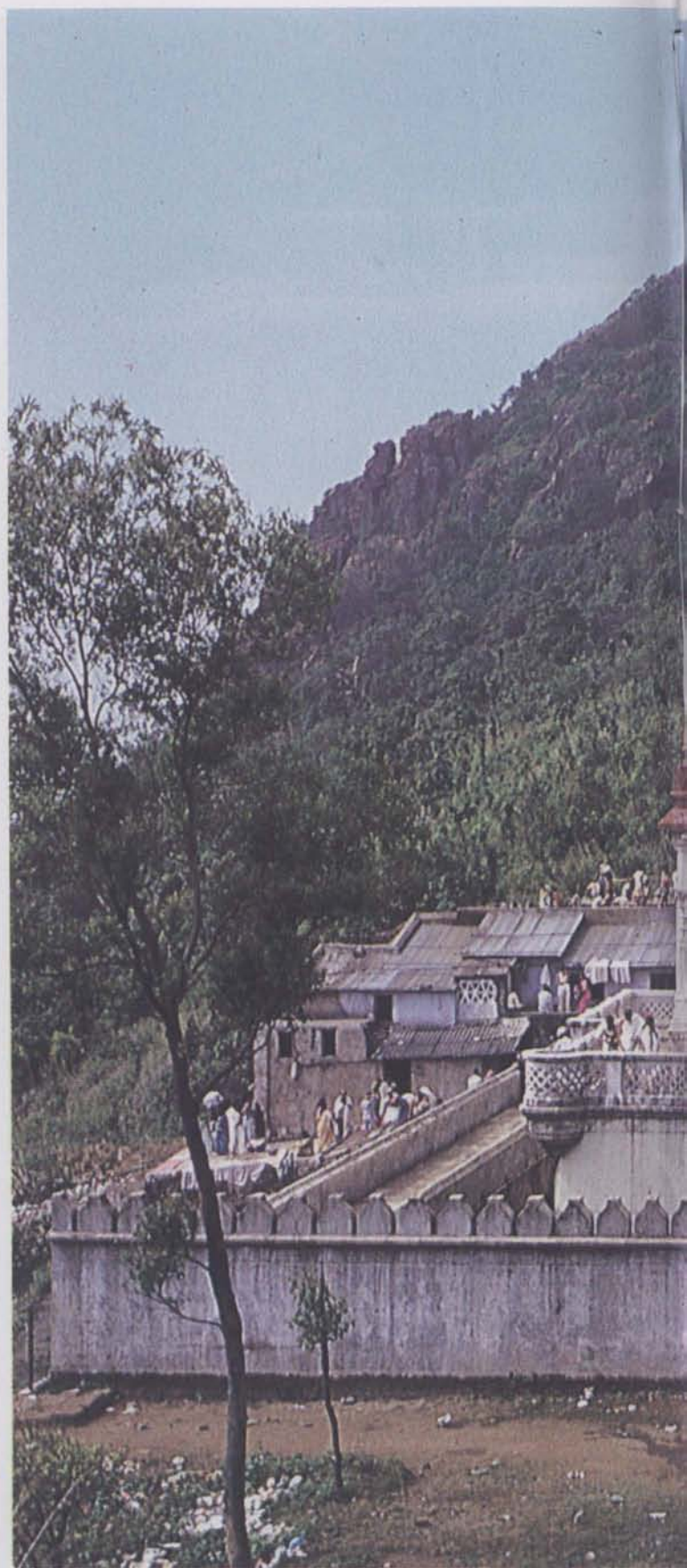
The Jal-Mandir is 2 kms. away from here. On the way we get a glimpse of Lord Shree Aadinath's Toonk. At a little distance away from here is the fourteenth Toonk. The feet-marks of the fourteenth Tirthankar Shree Anantnath are installed here. The fifteenth Toonk is that of Tirthankar Shree Sheetalnath. The sixteenth Toonk belongs to Shree Sambhavnath.

The seventeenth Toonk is that of Lord Shree Vasupoojya. The feet were installed in Samvat 1825. The eighteenth Toonk is that of Tirthankar Shree Abhinandan Swami. Here too the feet were installed in Samvat 1825.

The Jal Mandir stands at a little distance away from here. In the lap of holy mountains, built amidst the lush green tall trees this Jina temple is really a unique gift of the devotees to nature. This is the only temple on the entire Sammet Shikhar where the idols of the Tirthankars are auspiciously present. On the three sides of the temple there are natural 'Jalkunds' (ponds). Therefore, it is called 'Jal Mandir'. The dignified solemn idol of Lord Shamaliya Parshwanath majestically installed in the temple as the



Beholding the spires of the BEES JINALAYA TEMPLE





JALMANDIR on the top of mountains

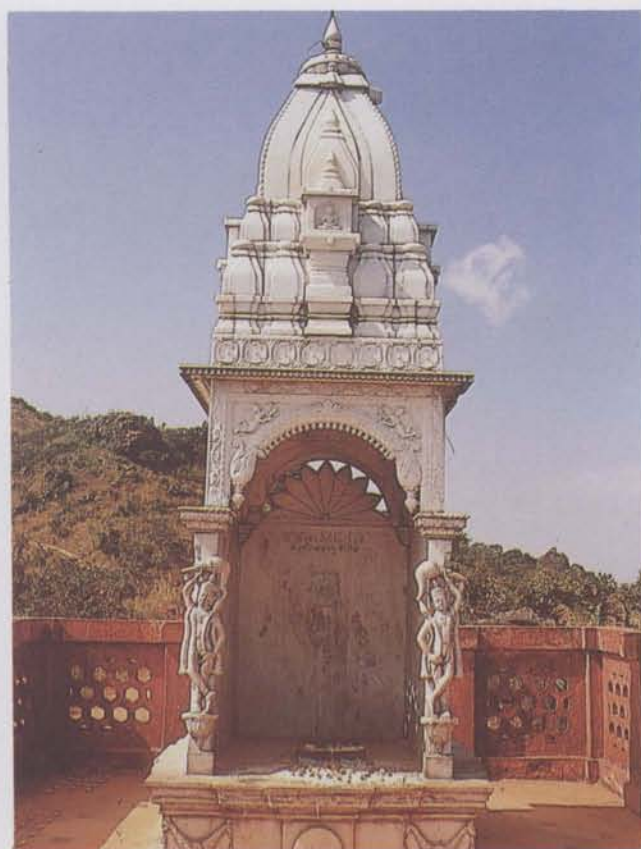
principal deity spontaneously soaks the heart with a sense of devotion.

This temple was built by Jagat Seth Shree Khushal Chandji. Those were the days when there were no means of transport. As such, all the building-materials were collected at the Madhuvan, and thereafter brought here on elephants.

On the way from Jal Mandir to Parasnath Toonk, the first Toonk that comes by is the twentieth Toonk of Shree Shubh Gandhar Swami. Ahead of it, the twenty-first Toonk is that of Tirthankar Shree Dharmnath. The holy foot-prints installed in this Toonk were consecrated in 1825 A.D. On the way ahead of this is the Toonk of the eternal Jina, Shree Varishen. At some distance is the twenty fourth Toonk of Tirthankar Shree Sumatinath. Here the Lord had attained 'nirvana' on Chaitra Shukla Navami. The twenty-fifth Toonk is that of Tirthankar Shree Shantinath.

The twenty-sixth Toonk is that of Tirthankar Mahavir Swami. The twenty-seventh Toonk belongs to Lord Shree Suparshwanath. Ahead of this is the twenty-eighth Toonk, of Tirthankar Shree Vimalnath. The twenty-ninth Toonk is that of Tirthankar Ajitnath. The thirtieth Toonk has been dedicated to Tirthankar Neminath. Here in Samvat 1934 the holy foot prints of the Lord were installed.

The last and the highest Toonk of the great Sammet Shikhar pilgrimage is that of Lord Parshwanath. In the whole world there is no Jain Temple situated on any



SHRI SHANTINATH TOONK : A pleasant spot of peace



THE SAMADHI MANDIR OF PARAM PITA



The 'toonk' of SHREE SHUBHSWAMI



LORD PARSHWANATH in the Jain Museum : The ultimate meditation

summit higher than this. That is why this 'Shikhar' (summit) is the summit not only that of Lord Parshwanath but that of entire Jainism. Its height is so much that sometimes the entire temple becomes covered clouds. Therefore, it is called Meghadambar Toonk (temple covered by clouds). The summit of the temple is visible even from a distance of 30 kms. Here the dusky-green holy foot prints of Lord Parshwanath have been installed. This Toonk is at a height of 4479 feet from the sea level. This is the last Toonk of Sammet Shikhar.

The foot of the Sammet Shikhar mountain is called Madhuvan. All around it there are large clusters of trees sprinkling 'madhu' (honey). That is why it is called Madhuvan (Honey-forest). There are several other spots worth viewing :

SHWETAMBAR KOTHI and TEMPLE - Just on entering the Kothi (bungalow) we find the temple of Shree Bhomiaji Maharaj, the protector-deity of this pilgrimage. The temple is amply attractive. Inside the Kothi itself there is the huge Jina temple in the form of a cluster of eleven temples. This may also be the Talhati Mandir (Foot-hill temple). A 90 cm. idol of Lord Shamalia Parshwanath is installed here as the principal deity. At the rear of the 'dharma-shala' stands the Dadawadi which is worth viewing.

DIGAMBAR JAIN TERAH PANTH KOTHI - In the middle of it is the majestic temple of Lord Shree Chandraprabhu. Samvasaran temple has been built on the left side of the third door of this temple.

TWENTY-FOUR 'TOONKS' - On entering here first of all we come across the magnificent 25 feet high idol of Bahubali. Twenty-four Toonks of twenty-four Tirthankars have been built here. Samvasaran temple is built in this temple-campus.

KACHCHHI BHAWAN - Fifty-two Jinalayas have been built here. This temple houses the idols of many Jain Tirthankars. The spire of the temple is very beautiful.

JAIN MUSEUM - Among the spots worth viewing in the Shikharji pilgrimage, this is the most important. The Museum has been built by Shree Jityasha Foundation, Calcutta under the inspiration of Ganivar Shree Mahimprabh Sagar Ji Maharaj. On the first floor of the museum various things concerning Jainism have been collected. Just in front of the sprawling hall the most majestic 6 feet high idol of Lord Parshwanath in the meditational posture is auspiciously seated. All around on the walls there is an exhibition of pictures depicting Jain architecture. In the whole of India, this is the only museum which contains a collection of all the postage stamps issued on Jainism.

On the first floor itself there is a collection of ancient art-pieces made of ivory and sandal-wood. On the second floor of the museum, 50 scenes depicting special sequence of events of Jainism have been shown. The depictions are so lively that you will be enchanted.

Besides these, Dharmmangal Vidyapeeth, Bhomia Bhawan, Madhyalok etc. are also worth viewing.



A fascinating tableau in the Jain Museum



SAMVASARAN TEMPLE : The latest presentation of the past



JAIN MUSEUM : Centre of art



*H*astinapur is considered to be the most ancient capital city of India. This city has been the venue of all the politics related to the Mahabharat. In Hastinapur wars between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, virtue and vice, truth and falsehood had been fought. The soil of Hastinapur gave birth to a great soul like Bhishm Pitamah who conveyed the messages of politics and theology that lasted through the ages. The policies of Vidur were also framed on the soil of Hastinapur. Really, Hastinapur has been that part of India's history on whose surface the wheel of time has witnessed several ups and downs with self-impartiality.

The history of Hastinapur has been more ancient than even the aforesaid referred time. Hastinapur has had historical relation with Jainism's first Tirthankar Lord Aadinath. The conception, birth, ordaining and enlightenment of Lords Shantinath, Kunthunath and Arahnath had occurred at this very place. Needless to say, the place which has been connected with four Tirthankars, remains pulsating with holiness.

Beginning with Chakravarti Bharat, there have been altogether 12 Chakravartts out of which 6 Chakravartis were born here. This is the birth-place of Parashuram too.

According to scriptural reference, the first Tirthankar Shree Rishabhdev had performed the concluding rites of his one-year long penance giving the honour to king Shreyans Kumar here. Tirthankar Rishabh could not procure pure foodstuff for one year after embracing monkhood. For being ignorant of the ritual of 'Supatradaan' (offering pure food to the deserving) the devotees wanted to offer him jewels, elephants, horses etc. But what was the need of all these to a monk ? Rishabhdev had to live without food for almsot 400 days. At last, king Shreyans made the Lord ceremoniously conclude his long fast by offering him sugarcane juice. This 'tap' (penance) is called 'Varshitap' (penance for one full year or more). Since the Lord had ceremoniously concluded his 'Varshitap' in Hastinapur other people too began to perform the 'Parna' (concluding rites) of their 'Varshitap' here. This day is considered to be a day of 'akshay' (undiminishing) virtue; therefore, it is called Akshay Tritiya.

Emperor Ashok's grandson Samprati had made 'Jinalayas' (temples of Jain Tirthankars i.e. divine teachers). Influential Acharyas like Shree Yakshdev Suri, Siddh Suri, Kakk Suri had visited this place along with 'Sangh' (religious entourage).



The reigning deity of the pilgrimage LORD SHREE SHANTINATH



The spires of the temples



LORD RISHABHDEV and king Shreyansh : Solemnisation of Varshitap (Year-long penance) with sugarcane juice



CHARAN PADUKA MANDIR : The temple housing the footprints of the deity



A portion of JAMBUDWEEP

A majestic view of JAMBUDWEEP →



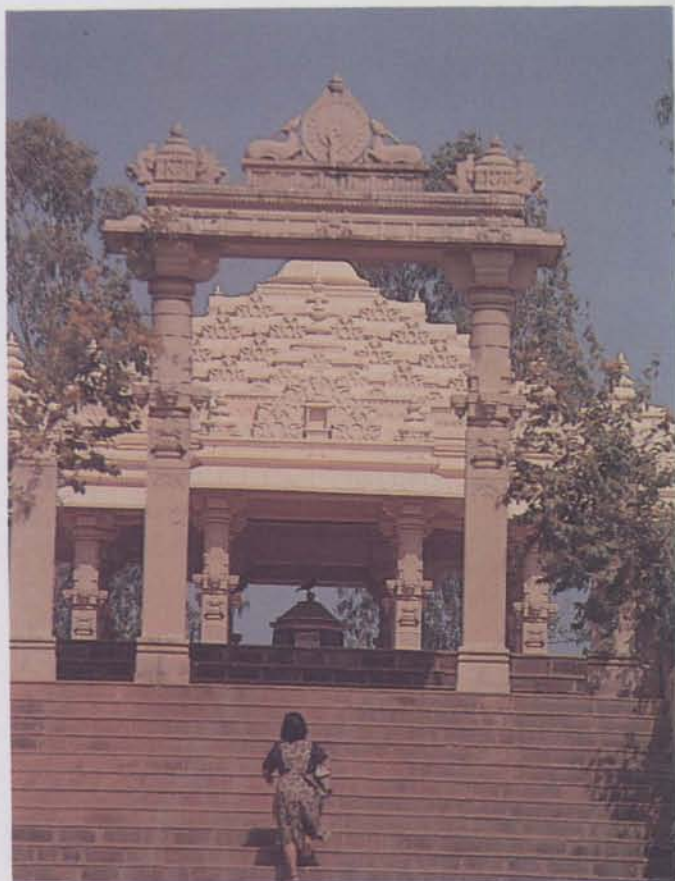
Acharya Shree Jinprabh Suri had come to Hastinapur in Samvat 1335 with a touring 'Sangh' (religious entourage). Available references reveal that at that time the temples of Lords Shantinath, Arahnath and Mallinath were already constructed here.

In Samvat 1627 Acharya Jinchandra Suri had also arrived here. At that time four temples were already constructed here.

Right now there are huge temples of both the Shwetambar and the Digambar sects. The last renovation of the Shwetambar temple was completed in Samvat 2021 and the Digambar temple was consecrated in Samvat 1853. At the rear of the Shwetambar temple 'Parna' temple has been built which contains the splendid idols of Shreyans and Lord Rishabhdev. The former is shown making the latter perform 'parna'. Outside this very temple in a huge courtyard the 'Parna' of 'Varshi-tap' is performed. For this purpose the management committee has built a hall in a sprawling campus. This 'Parna Day' is really a big fair for Hastinapur.

Besides the charitable guest-house and the dining hall there is one more temple of Lord Aadinath where the Lord had performed 'Parna'. In memory of that episode, the foot-prints of the Lord have been ceremoniously installed there. This region is enriched with prosperous sugarcane farming.

'Jamboodweep' is a special feature of Hastinapur pilgrimage. Along with its dazzling white artistic creation the Kamal Mandir (Lotus Temple) is also unique in itself.



Ancient CHARAN MANDIR



The LOTUS TEMPLE



● SHRAVANBELGOLA

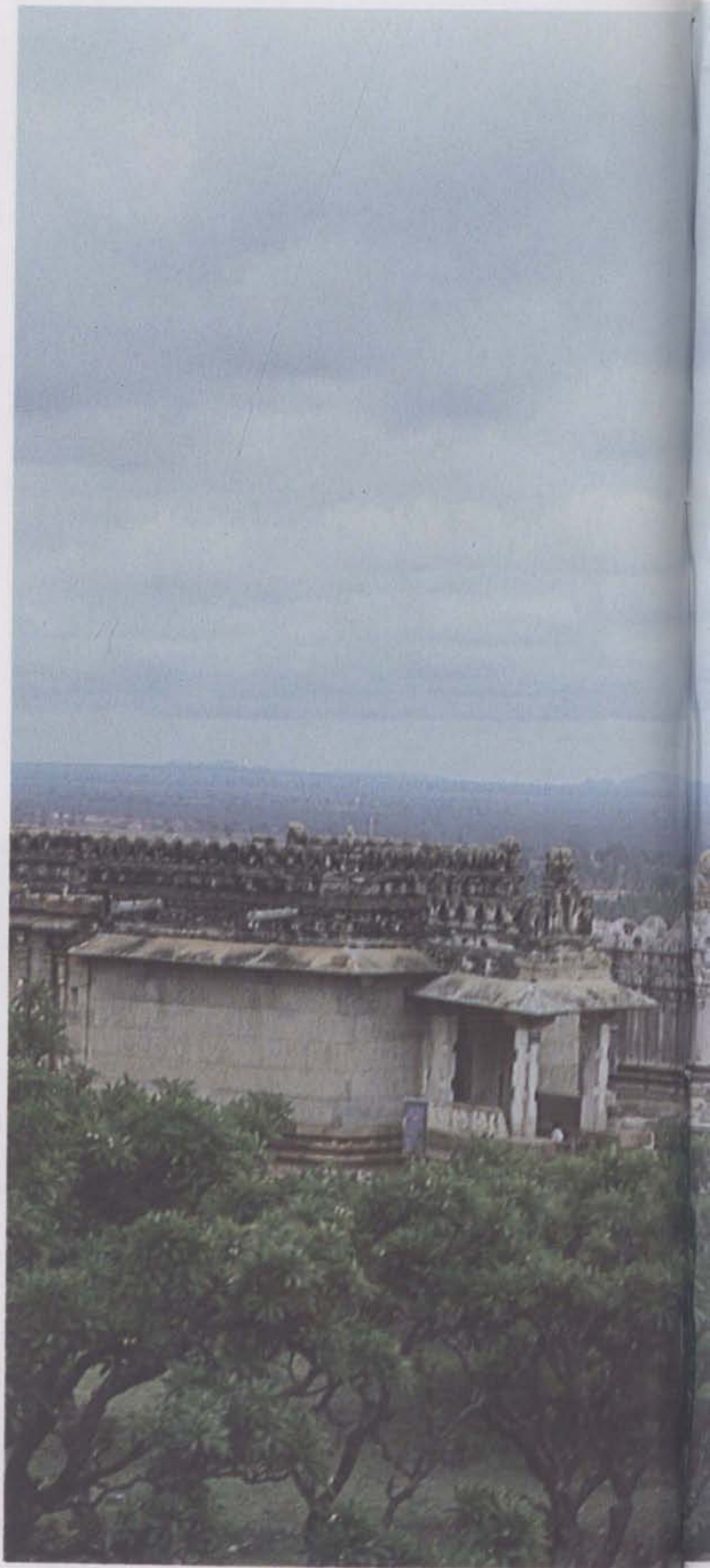
*S*hravanbelgola is the holiest pilgrim-age containing the relics of Lord Bahubali.

This is a pilgrimage upon which a status of one of the tallest statues of the world has been generally conferred. Generally too, wherever there are statues of Lord Bahubali in India, their heights are considerably much. The statue of Bahubali situated at Shravanbelgola measures 57 feet. The special feature of this statue is that it has been carved out of a mountain. The stone of the mountain and the stone of the statue are both joined to each other, interconnected and inseparable. This hill is 595 metres higher from the foot-hill.

The Bahubali of Shravanbelgola is also called Gomateshwar. The word 'Gomat' is the synonym of summit. In view of the presence of the huge statue of Bahubali, it has become famous as Gomateshwar. The fame of this gigantic statue has spread to foreign countries. Thousands of foreign tourists come here to see this huge statue. Millions of pilgrims visit this place every year. Mahamastakabhishek (the greatly auspicious ceremony when the head of the statue is washed with milk and crowned with flowers etc.) of Gomateshwar Bahubali is performed after every twelve years. Participating in this 'abhishek' (annointing with milk) ceremony is believed to bring good luck and virtue. The late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had participated in this 'abhishek'. India has accepted this statue as the glory of its past and has also issued a commemorative postage stamp on it.

This statue of Lord Bahubali had been built in the 11th Vikram Century. According available references, the mother of Shree Chamund Rai, Chief of Raja Gangras was going to Podnapur in Samvat 1037 to have a glimpse of Bahubali. She took rest on the Chandragiri mountain opposite the Vindhyagiri mountain. It was here that some invisible power inspired her to instal a huge statue of Lord Bahubali on the Vindhyagiri temple. Shree Chamund Rai opened the chests of his treasury to fulfill the wish of his mother. It was an extremely painstaking task, but the hand of some super power was behind this construction too, as a result of which, the huge image took concrete shape.

An interesting incident took place in the great consecration ceremony of this statue. The mixture of water, milk and sandal which was being poured over the statue's



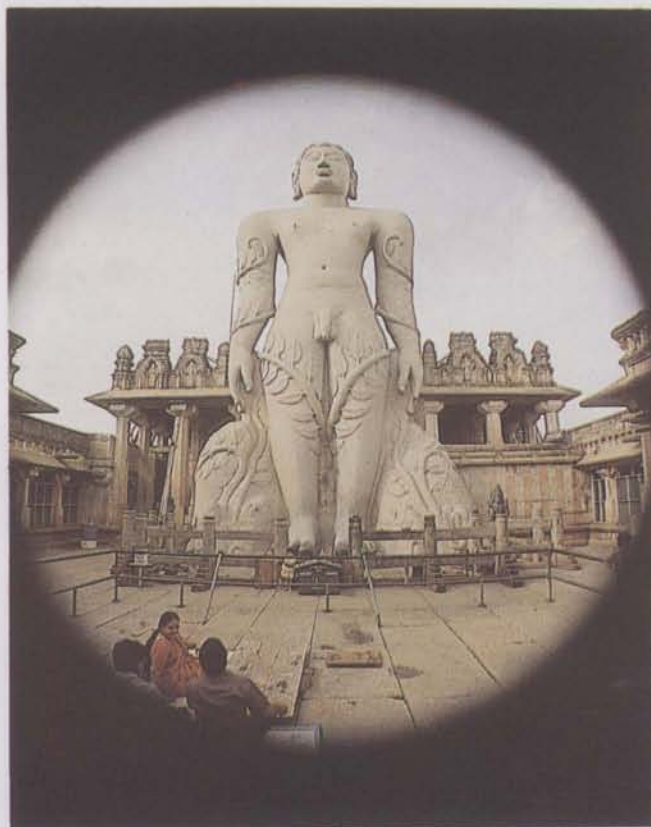
SHREE CHANDRAGIRI PARVAT →



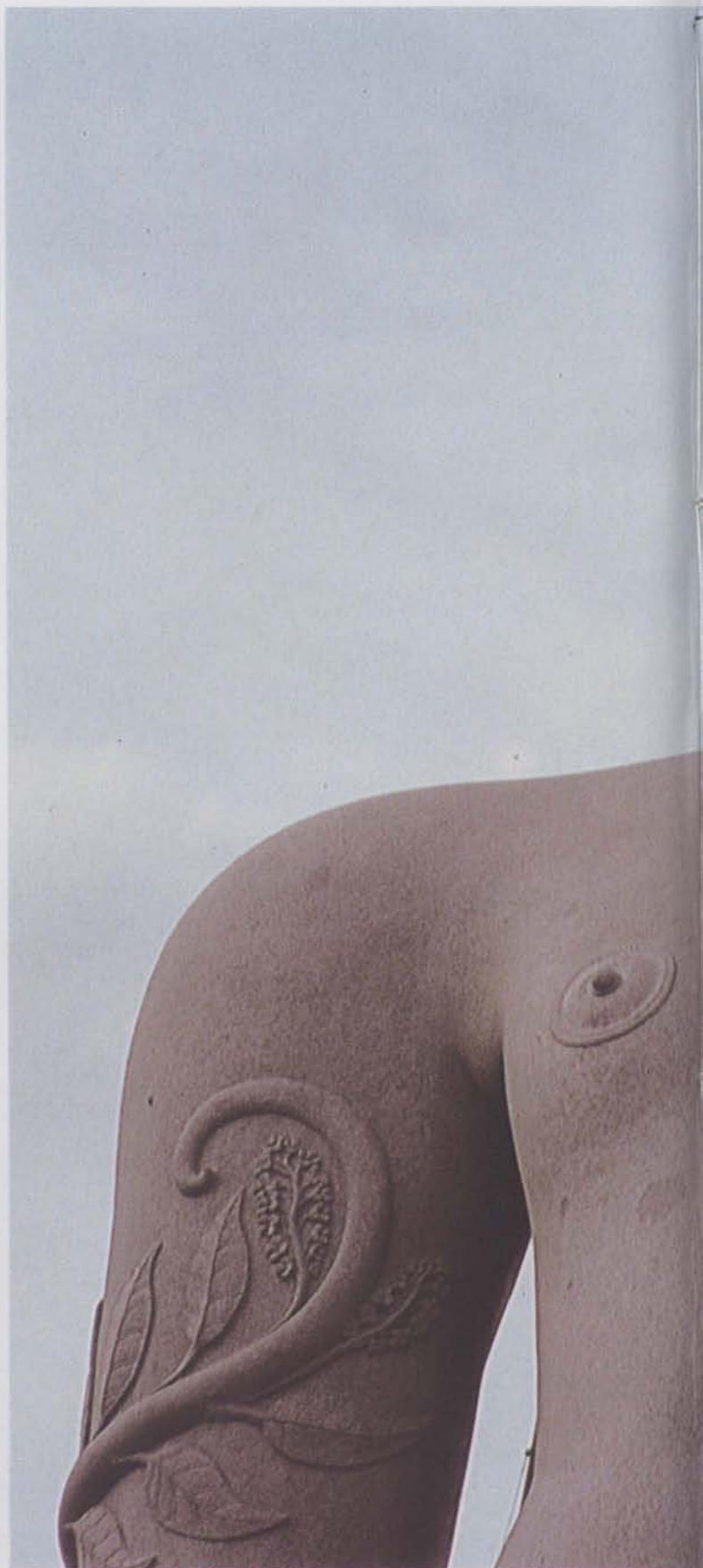
head dropped from its head directly to the ground. Until and unless the water and the milk poured over the head do not touch the feet, the consecration is said to be incomplete. When after countless efforts this work could not be done, then at last a poor woman named Ajjikaguli achieved the glory of getting this incomplete ceremony completed. The Lord accepted the pure milk brought in the leaf bowls from a distant village. To commemorate this inspiring incident, a statue of Ajjikaguli was also built here.

Just in front of the Vindhyagiri mountain is the Chandragiri mountain. There are in all, seven temples on the Vindhyagiri whereas there are altogether fourteen temples on Chandragiri. It is said that nearly 2,000 years ago emperor Chandragupta had also visited this place accompanying Acharya Bhadrabahu Swami. The emperor embraced death while in trance in course of his penance here. That is why this mountain came to be known as Chandragiri Parvat. The most ancient temple of Lord Aadinath stands here. There are also the foot prints of Acharya Bhadravahu Swami. There is also an incomplete statue which is said to be that of Lord Aadinath's son Chakravarti Bharat.

There is also a Jain monastery at Shravanbelgola. Here seventeen divine statues made of nine jewels can also be seen.



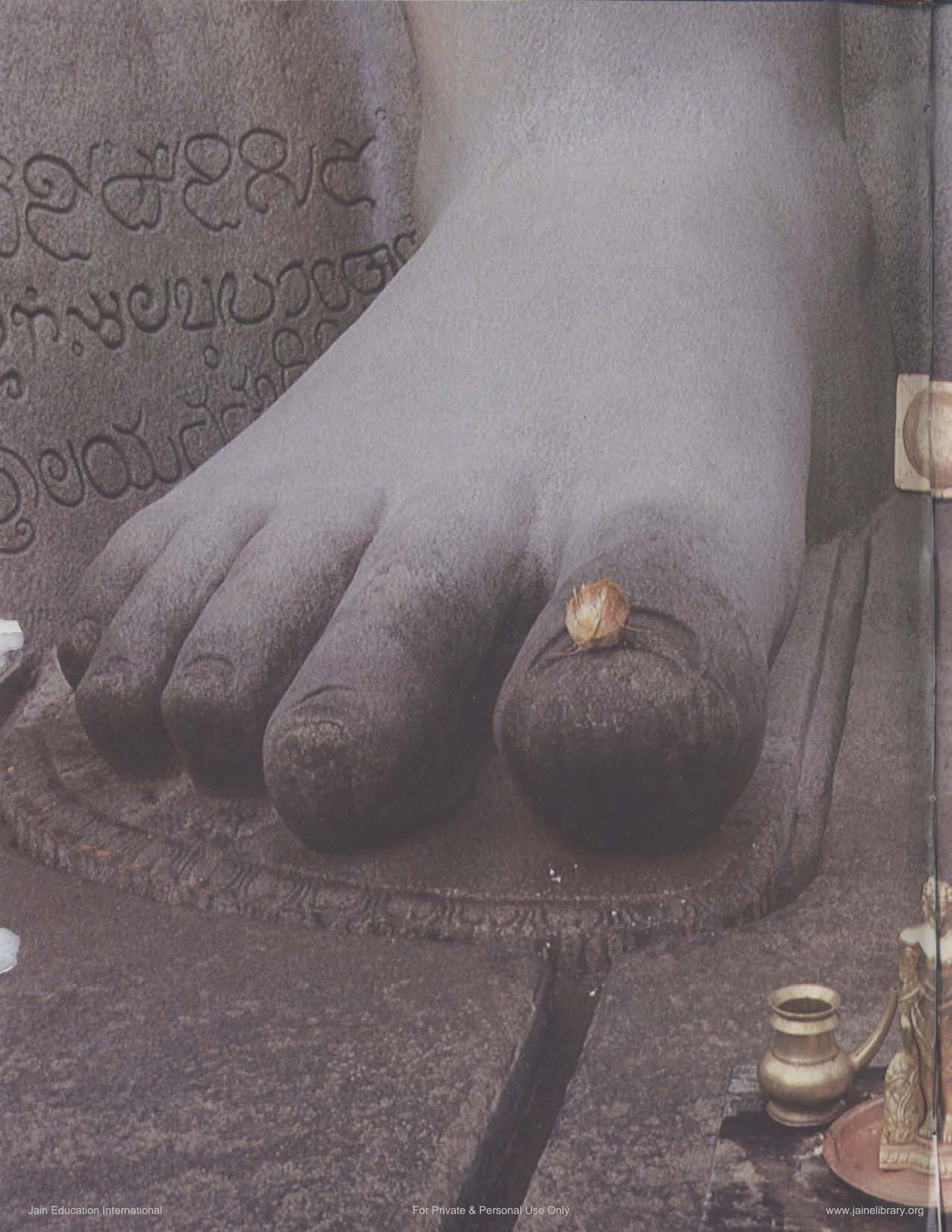
BAHUBALI : One of the tallest statues of the world





BAHUBALI : The symbol of penance

The Sacred Feet of BAHUBALI →







A statue standing close by : A representation of Southern art

