

JAINA TEMPLES OF WEST BENGAL

D. R. Das

I

The Śvetāmbara Jaina āgama work, the *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*¹, gives an indication that the attempt to bring Bengal within the fold of Jainism commenced as early as the time of Mahāvīra. Though Mahāvīra's mission does not appear to have met with much success, Bengal did not for long remain aloof from the impact of the Nirgrantha-darśana i.e. Jainism. Traditions contained in literature suggest the introduction of the Jaina religion in this region already before the 2nd century B. C.² It is, therefore, no wonder that vestiges of Jainism in the form of images and ruined monuments have been noticed in different parts of Bengal. But the domination of Jainism seems to have been nowhere so overwhelming as it was in the Chotanagpur tract of West Bengal. Beglar³ was the first archaeologist to report the Jaina monuments and images in Chotanagpur. Apparently, Beglar's report failed to initiate any effort for the preservation of the remains of the past in the Chotanagpur plateau. When Bloch visited this region at the beginning of the present century, some of the temples described by Beglar already had disappeared⁴. Unfortunately, Bloch's visit was also not followed by any protective measure for the existing temples. As a result, much has been irretrievably lost and what remain are on the verge of collapse. Among these precariously standing temples, the Jaina affiliation of one temple is confirmed by the presence of the installed image representing Śāntinātha. The Jaina association of a few others has been implied by the existence of Jina images in their neighbourhood. The temples, which are believed to have been built to serve the need of Jainism, are standing at the following sites : Pakbirra, Charra and Deoli in the Purulia District⁵; Ambikānagar, Harmashra and Deulbhira in the Bankura District⁶; and Balihati in the Midnapore District⁷.

II

(a) Pakbirra (Pls. I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII)

During the course of his archaeological tour in 1972-73, Beglar noticed "numerous temples and sculptures, principally Jain" at Pakbirra⁸. He recognised a total of 17 temples of which 12 were of stone and the remaining were brick-built. But eight stone temples and four brick temples were already in an advanced stage of disintegration. Besides, two mounds evidently representing 'the remains of two other brick temples' came to his notice. The process of dissolution of the temples at Pakbirra continued unabated after Beglar's tour. Bloch, who visited the site in 1902, writes, "fragments of four stone and one brick temple still exist, but in utter ruins; especially the brick temple has suffered very badly during the last thirty years, and only a small tottering fragment of its spire is still standing."⁹ Bloch's visit did not improve the steadily worsening condition of these temples. Thus, in 1961, McCutcheon reports : "Today only three temples are still standing, all of them in a badly ruined condition, having lost

most of their facing stones... the large brick temple, which was still standing in his (Beglar's) day, ... is now a mere mound."¹⁰

As asserted by Beglar, the Jaina association of the temples at Pakbirra seems to be unquestionable on account of the presence of a large number of Jaina images around them¹¹.

With most of the temples now lost, the report of Beglar becomes our principal source for having a general idea about them. In this report he says, "A large brick temple, the only one now standing, of brick, faces east, and has its doorway of the usual overlapping type and without the stone sill cutting up its height into a doorway proper and an illuminating window; the temple, externally and internally is remarkably plain, the only ornamental projection, & c. being at the corners; the bricks are all set in mud; the interior was once plastered, but it is now bare; probably the exterior was also plastered; there is no interior roof to the wall, the pyramidal hollow of the tower being open to the sanctum; there is no object of worship inside."¹² Now represented by a 'mere mound', this temple is preserved in a photograph taken at the time of Beglar's visit. From the photograph it appears that the temple belonged to the *rekha* order (Latina) and was built on a *pañcaratha* plan. In its (*tryaṅga*) *bāḍa* section, the *pābhāga* (*vedibandha*) is beyond recognition while the *jāṅgha* (*jaṅghā*) (*kaṭi*) does not bear any evidence of the *bāndhanā* (*madhyabandha*). The *baraṇḍa* (*varaṇḍa*) has a deep *kāṅṭi* (*kaṅṭha*) between two moulded courses. The *gaṇḍi* (*śikhara*) rises almost in a straight line before taking a pronounced bend near the top. It is not clear whether the *gaṇḍi* was divided into *bhūmi*-stages by the *bhūmi-āmalakas* (*Karṇāṇḍakas*). But what is evident is that the *ratha-pagas* on the *gaṇḍi* were not serrated by the *bhūmi-baraṇḍikas*. Only their edges were ribbed by the *khurā-heads*. The peak of the *gaṇḍi* is badly mutilated leaving no trace of the *mastaka* (*āmalasāraka*).

To the north of the brick temple, Beglar noticed four stone temples in a line. Of them one was broken. North of this was another but irregular line of three brick and two stone temples. Among these five temples, only one stone temple was found standing by Beglar. To their north was another line of the stone and one brick temples, all in ruins. To the east of the brick temple, existing in his time, were two mounds "evidently the remains of two other brick temples." There were also ruins of three stone temples, once standing in a line to the south of the two mounds.

The two north-facing temples, currently standing side by side, undoubtedly belong to Beglar's row of four, immediately north of the 'large brick temple.' The other extant temple, which is a little more than a shapeless pile, represents the lone survival of Beglar's group of three brick and two stone temples. For the purpose of reference, these temples are given identifying numbers. Henceforth, temple 1 will refer to the north-facing temple on the extreme east, temple 2 to the one standing on its left and temple 3 to that 'shapeless pile' standing alone to their north-west.

It is probable, as Beglar suggests, that these temples once stood on a large stone-paved

floor. Beglar actually came upon a stone pavement while excavating near the foot of one temple. But otherwise none of them was provided with a plinth, as a result of which they appear to stand directly on the ground. On plan all of them are *triratha*, the *rāhā* (*ratha*) in front being wider and deeper than at the sides. A passageway tunneling through the front *rāhā* leads to the *garbhagr̥ha*, which is square. In every instance, the thickness of the wall enclosing the *garbhagr̥ha* seems to be half the length of the sanctum chamber. The lower portions of temple 1 and 2 are buried in earth. It makes the *pābhāga*, the lowest section of the *bāḍa*, in each of them invisible. Beglar, however, gives a drawing of the base mouldings of a temple at Pākbirra¹³. These base mouldings, as drawn by Beglar, are four in number, exhibiting as they do in a vertical sequence *khurā*, *kumbha*, two *khurās* clasped face to face and *khurā*. This drawing may have a reference to any or both of temple 1 and 2. From the exposed portions of these two temples, it seems that the *jānḡha* was treated identically in both of them. It was of one *tala* in which the *rāhā* was occupied by a niche. Apparently meant for accommodating an image, the niche was fashioned like a miniature shrine. Its superstructure was *triratha* and serrated in the lower part. The *rāhā* of the superstructure was crowned by an *āmalaka*. On either of its flanking *pagas* was placed a *khākhara*. A large *khākhara* covering the entire length of the superstructure appeared over them. Every *kaṇika* segment in the *jānḡha* section carried a tall and thin shrine. Its elongated superstructure was relieved by *bhūmi-āmalakas* and surmounted by a *khākhara*. An *āmalaka* was placed on the *khākhara* as a crowning member. The shrine had, on its outer flank, a slender pilaster with an undecorated shaft between a base and a capital. A similar but sectional pilaster was carved at the junction between the *kaṇika* and the *rāhā*. The *baraṇḍa*, which appeared immediately above the *jānḡha* to demarcate the *bāḍa*, i. e. the perpendicular wall section, from the superstructure, was similar in temple 1 and 2 and characterised by a *kāṇṭi* bordered from below by a *khurā* moulding. In temple 1, the *gaṇḍi* rising from above the *baraṇḍa* is so much mutilated that its original appearance is beyond recognition. The *gaṇḍi* of temple 2 is also not better preserved but it still retains its curvilinear outline. Of the *mastaka* the *beki* alone is present. Undoubtedly, the missing parts of the *mastaka* consisted of an *āmalaka* and a *kalaśa*, several of which are lying about. So far as the interior is concerned, temple 1 and 2 present little difference. In either instance, the *garbhagr̥ha* is provided with two ceilings. The lower of the two ceilings, placed immediately above the *garbhagr̥ha*, interrupts in the midway the corbelled rise of the inside of the superstructure. The upper ceiling acts as the lid on the superstructure and the *vedī* for supporting the *mastaka* as well. According to the nomenclature followed in Orissa, these two ceilings are known respectively as *garbhamuda* and *ratnamuda*¹⁴. The *garbhagr̥ha* opens through a passageway whose two sidewalls are spanned by a corbelled arch. As the overlapping courses of the arch begin very near the ground level, the entrance doorway becomes triangular in appearance. From the presence of many pillars at the site it may be assumed that these temples once had pillared porches or *maṇḍapas* in front.

From the dilapidated structure of temple 3 very little information can be gained. As told above, this temple, facing east, seems to have been built on a *triratha* (*dvi-aṅga*) plan. Its square *garbhagrha* was probably provided with *garbhamuda* and *ratnamuda*, and approached through a triangular opening. Apparently, in other respects also, it did not differ from temple 1 and 2.

(b) Deoli (Pls. IX, X, XI and Fig. 1)

At this village, a *pañcāyatana* temple-complex was noticed by Beglar¹⁵. As he says, "The temple was once a very fine and large building, and had four sub-shrines near the four corners, of which two still exist; the main temple is too far buried in and surrounded by rubbish for its plan to be made out without excavation, but it consisted of a sanctum, an *antarāla*, a *mahāmaṇḍapa*, an *ardhamāṇḍapa* and probably a portico; the ruins of the superstructure now have so shut up that the only means of access is by crawling through, much in the manner of snakes; the ornamentation consisted of plain straight lines of mouldings, sparingly used, and the execution, as also the material, is coarse, the last being a coarse-grained sandstone." Beglar further comments, "The temples appear to have been Jain, as in the sanctum of the largest exists, *in situ*, a fine Jain figure, now known as Arunanath..." A deer carved on the pedestal of the standing image makes it a representation of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkara Śāntinātha¹⁶.

Though the condition of the temples at Deoli has further deteriorated since the time of Beglar, the central shrine and the two corner shrines, one on the south-west and the other on the north-east, are still standing in different stages of preservation. As at the time of Beglar, the central shrine and its adjuncts are largely buried in their own ruins. It is, therefore, impossible to prepare properly the plan of these structures. What is discernible is that the central shrine, facing north, was connected to a fore-hall by a vestibule. Besides a paved floor, they were not provided with a plinth. The central shrine is much damaged, but at the same time it is not difficult to identify the shrine as a *rekhā deula* (Latina *prāsāda*) from its partially preserved *ganḍi*. It is built on a *pañcaratha* plan, the ratio of the *rathas* being as follows : *rāhā* 3, *anuratha* 1, *kaṇika* 2. The *garbhagrha*, a square chamber, is half the length of the *bāda*. In elevation, the *bāda* is divided into three segments, namely *pābhāga*, *jāṅgha*, and *baraṇḍa*. The *pābhāga* is a square of dado simulating a plinth. The *jāṅgha* is severely plain excepting a niche on the *rāhā*. Designed like a *bhadra deula*, its superstructure rises in two gradually receding *piḍhā* stages and supports a *mastaka* consisting of *beki*, *āmalaka*, and *kalāśa*. Present on three sides of the *deula*, all the niches are empty though at one time they might have contained an image each. The *baraṇḍa* above the *jāṅgha* has three elements, namely a *khurā* at the bottom, a *paṭā* in the middle and a *kāṅṭi* on the top. Demarcated from the *bāda* by the *kāṅṭi*-frieze of the *baraṇḍa*, the unserrated *ganḍi* rises in a convex curve, which is not pronounced in its lower section. Only a part of the *ganḍi* has escaped destruction and, as such, the *mastaka* kept on it can no longer

be traced. However, there is little doubt that the members of the *mastaka* were like those on the superstructure of the niche. The interior of the *deula* still retains the *garbhamuda* over the sanctum chamber. It appears some way up the corbelled inside of the *ganḍi*. Apparently, the *deula* was sealed by the *ratnamuda*, which is now missing. A passageway, probably the *antarāla* of Beglar, emerging from the *garbhagrha*, communicates with the fore-hall. The passage, widened near its outer end, is covered by a two-sided corbelled vault. The widened section of the passage is divided into two storeys by a ceiling inserted between the side walls and the vault. The upper storey resembling a triangle is screened from outside by a thin wall. In some areas of Orissa, this triangular space above the passageway is known as *gamā*¹⁷ and henceforth, it will be referred to by this term. Once the passageway opened into a fore-hall, the *mahāmaṇḍapa* of Beglar. It is now a completely collapsed structure with all of its features obliterated. If the *mahāmaṇḍapa* was preceded by an *ardhamāṇḍapa* and a *mukhacatuṣkī*-portico, as stated by Beglar, they are now reduced to a heap of débris.

On the analogy of the two existing subsidiary shrines, it may be held that all of the original four were of the *rekhā* order but without any *mukhaśālā*. The north-west and the south-west corner shrines were facing east and those on the north-east and the south-east were facing west. Of the two existing examples, the shrine on the north-east is better preserved. Raised on a low plinth it is *pañcaratha* on plan excepting the front where it is *triratha*. The *rathas* are in the following ratio : *rāhā* 1.5, *anuratha* I, and *kaṇika* 1.5. The square *garbhagrha*, in dimensions, is double the thickness of the wall. It has over it the usual *garbhamuda* and *ratnamuda* ceilings. The passageway also has the *gamā* on it. The exterior of the temple displays a *bāḍa* having two vertical divisions, namely *jāṅgha* and *baraṇḍa*. It is inexplicable why the *pābhāga* is absent from the scheme of the *bāḍa*. The *jāṅgha* is plain while the *baraṇḍa* is like that of the principal *deula*. Rising above the *bāḍa* the tall *ganḍi* is curvilinear in profile. But the curvature of the *ganḍi* remains almost imperceptible to the major part of its height. In conformity with the plainness of the *jāṅgha*, the *ganḍi* is neither serrated nor divided into *bhūmi* stages. The *mastaka* on the *ganḍi* has a *beki* and a damaged *āmalaka*. Probably a *kalaśa* was placed on the *āmalaka*.

It seems that the temples at Deoli once were plastered with a layer of stucco. Traces of such a plaster can still be detected. There is little doubt that decorative designs were made on the plaster. The disappearance of the plaster makes these temples bland and bare.

(c) Charra (Pl. XII)

According to the local tradition, confirmed by scattered pieces of ruined structures, several temples once stood in this village. But at the time of Hunter's visit only two temples were standing¹⁸. Beglar and after him Bloch also found these two temples¹⁹. Since then one temple has collapsed. As the images lying here and there at Charra display, with the exception of one stone *liṅga*, undisputed Jaina characteristics, Bloch

took these deserted temples to belong originally to the Jainas.

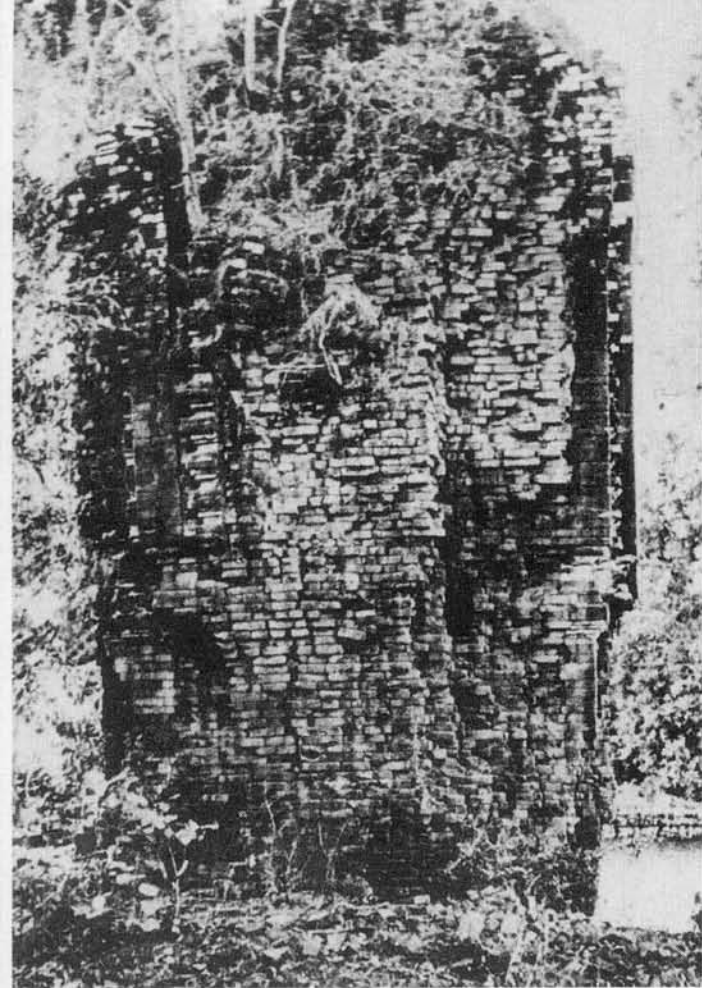
The extant temple is a stone construction. Surrounded by rural huts, its entrance doorway is sealed by a modern brick wall. It faces east and rises to a height of about 21 feet. On plan the temple is *triratha*. Though the lower portion of the temple is buried in an accumulation of rubbish, the ratio of the *rāhā* and the *kanika* seems to be 1 to 1. The measurement taken by McCutchion²⁰ suggests that the *garbhagrha* is almost half the length of the *bāḍa*. In elevation, the *bāḍa* is divided into *pābhāga*, *jāṅgha* and *baraṇḍa*. Details of the *pābhāga* cannot be ascertained, because it is buried in earth and rubbish. McCutchion says that it was marked by 'rudimentary mouldings.'²¹ The *jāṅgha* bears no decoration. The *baraṇḍa* is composed of a *kāṅṭi* bordered by *khurā* mouldings. The *gaṇḍi* is curvilinear and divided into six *bhūmis*. Each *bhūmi* has two *bhūmi-baraṇḍikas* and a right angled *bhūmi-āmalaka*. The *mastaka* on the *gaṇḍi* retains the *bekī* and the *āmalaka*.

McCutchion says that the ruined temple at Charra was *pañcaratha* and facing south. Entirely plain, it had no base moulding²². From a published photograph²³, this temple appears to have differed little from the Śāntinātha temple at Deoli.

(d) Ambikānagar (Pl.XIII and Fig. 2)

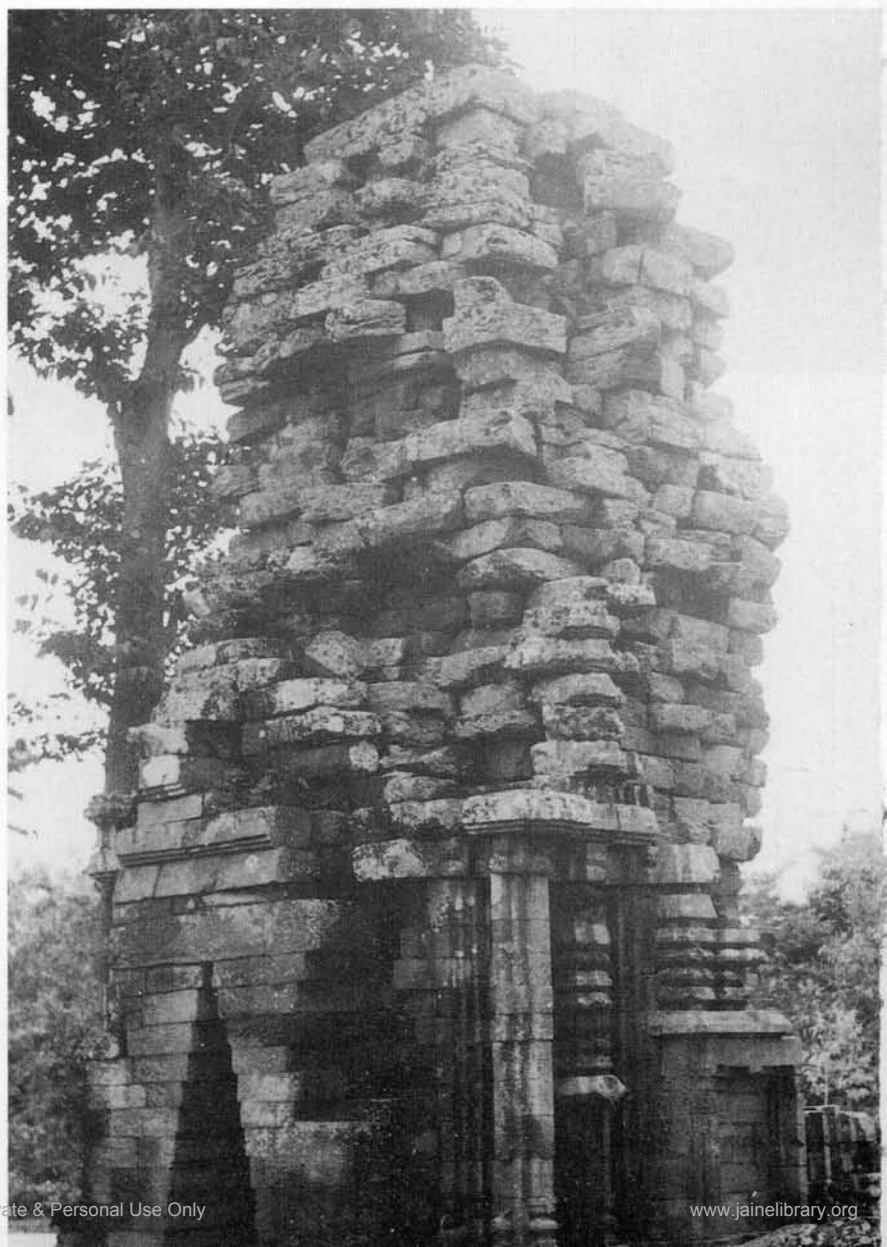
A half-ruined sandstone temple stands at this village on the bank of the river Kamsāvati. It faces east and enshrines a *liṅga*, which seems a modern installation. Probably the temple was dedicated to Ṛṣabhanātha, whose image is lying beside the *liṅga*. In front of this shrine is a brick temple of recent origin. The deity enshrined by it represents the fragment of an image of Ambikā, the *Śāsanadevī* of Neminātha²⁴.

The temple of Ṛṣabhanātha is *triratha* on plan and has a *tri-aṅga bāḍa*. Excepting a trace of the *gaṇḍi*, nothing of the temple is left above the *bāḍa*. It faces east on which side the *rāhā* is wider and deeper than on other sides. The ratio of the *rāhā* and the *kanika* is 1 to 1 at the sides while it is 2 to 1 in front. The length of the *garbhagrha* and that of the *bāḍa* are in the ratio of 1 to 2. The *garbhagrha* has a *garbhamuda* over it. When the *gaṇḍi* was complete, there obviously was a *ratnamuda* on the summit. The passageway leading to the sanctum chamber has the *gamā* on it. On the exterior, the *bāḍa* has the three conventional divisions of *pābhāga*, *jāṅgha* and *baraṇḍa*. The *pābhāga* has four mouldings, namely *khurā*, *kumbha*, *khurā*, and *khurā*. In the *jāṅgha* section, the *rāhā* on each side seems to have once accommodated a niche. The *kanika* on either flank of the *rāhā* is relieved by pilasters. The shaft of the pilaster is undecorated while each of its base and capital has a pair of *khurā* placed back to back. The *baraṇḍa* has a *kāṅṭi* between two *khurā* mouldings. The *gaṇḍi*, of which only a little remains, was serrated and probably rose in *bhūmi* stages. Doubtless, it had had a curvilinear contour.



Pl. I Pakbirra. Lost Brick temple.

Pl. II Pakbirra. Temple No. 1.





Pl. III Pakbirra. Temple No. 2.



Pl. IV Pakbirra. Temple No. 3.



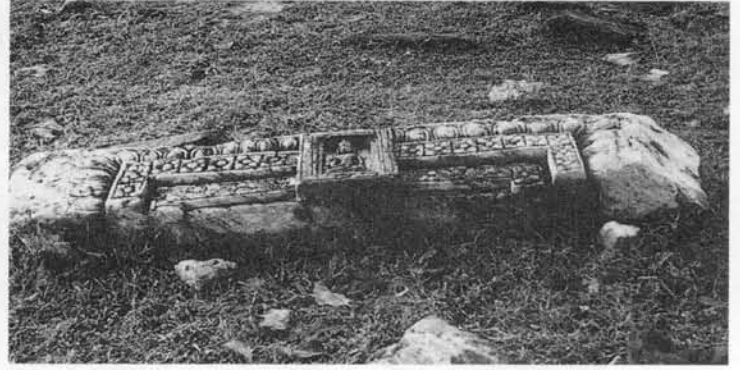
Pl. V Pakbirra. Side wall of temple No. 1.



Pl. VI Pakbirra. Side wall of temple No. 2.



Pl. VII Pakbirra. Jaina Images
at the temple-site.



Pl. VIII Pakbirra. Detached Door-lintel.



Pl. IX Deoli. Śāntinātha temple (general View).



Pl. X Deoli. Śāntinātha temple (principal shrine).



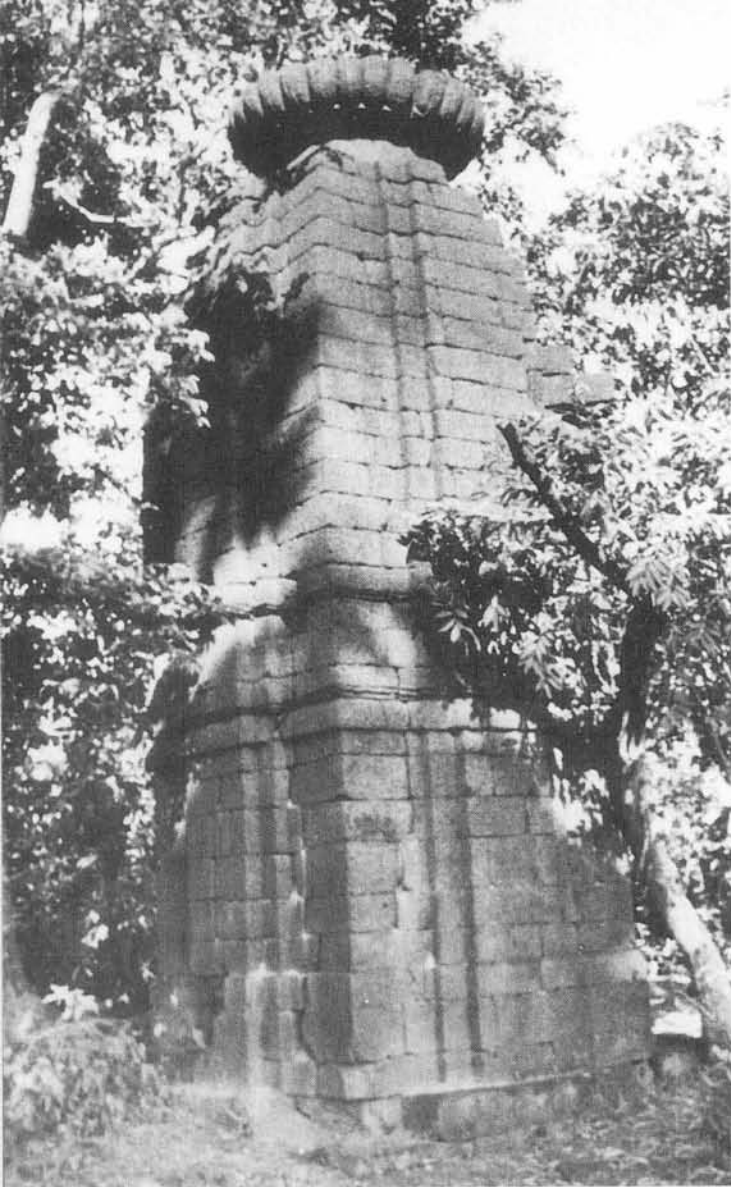
Pl. XI Deoli. Śāntinātha temple
(N. E. Corner Shrine).



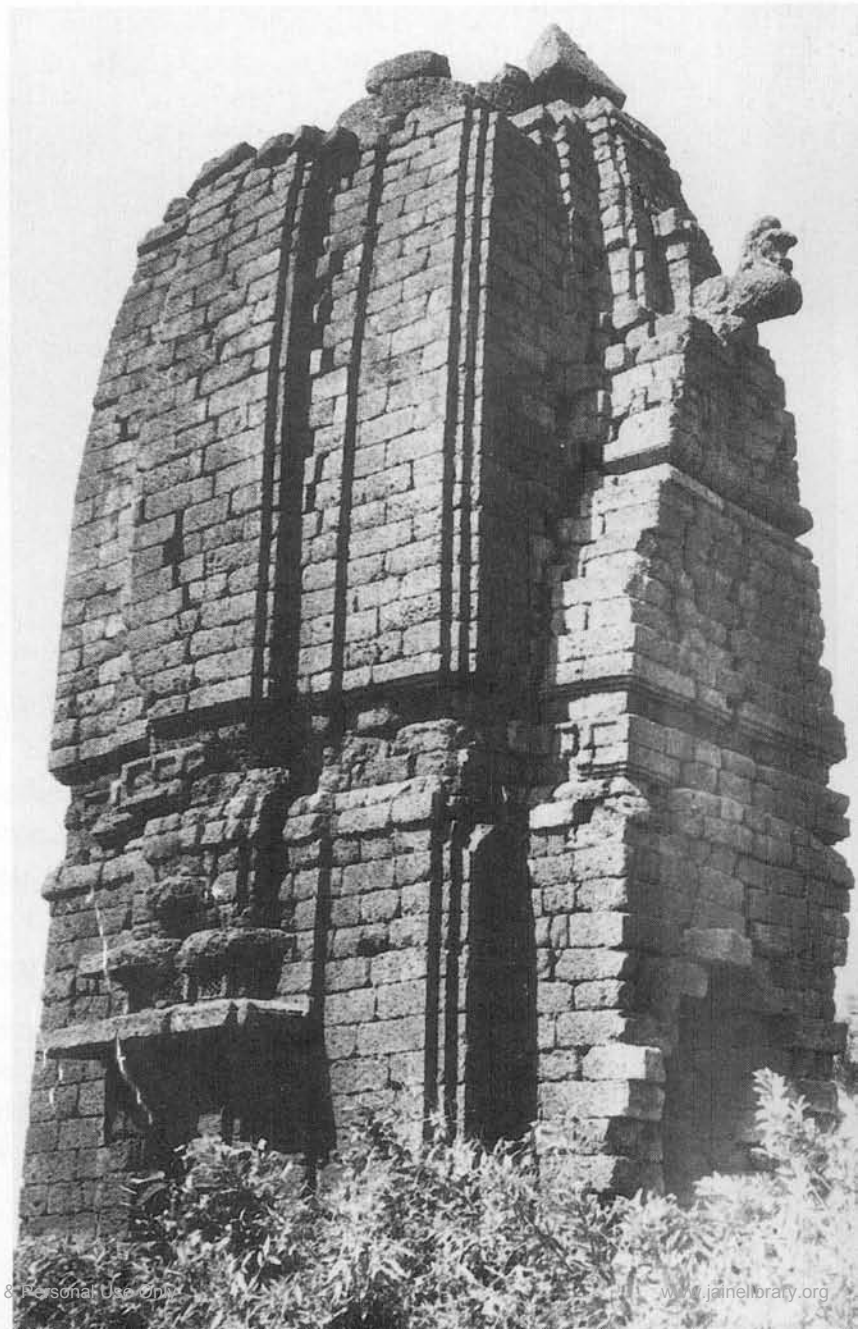
Pl. XII Charra. Deserted temple.



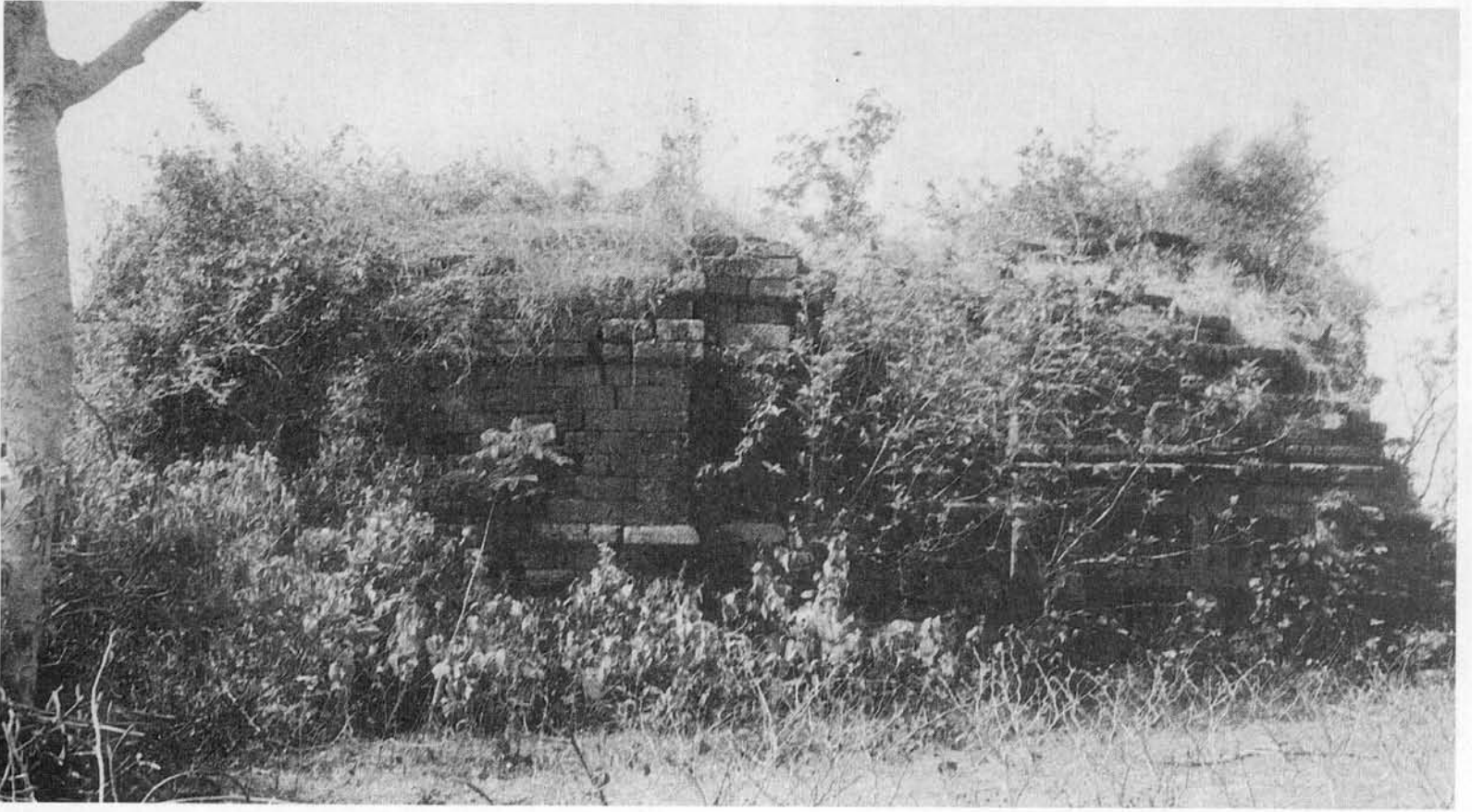
Pl. XIII Ambikanagar. R̥sabhanātha temple.



Pl. XIV Harmashra. Deserted temple.



Pl. XV Deulbhira. Deserted temple.



Pl. XVI Balihati. Deserted temple.

(e) Harmashra (Pl. XIV and Fig. 3)

Banerji²⁵ noticed for the first time a deserted temple made of laterite at this village. The presence of several Jaina images at this village may suggest that the temple was built by the Jainas. It is a small temple rising to a height of 21'-6" and facing east. That it had a *mukhaśālā*, can be recognised only by its foundation. The temple stands on a low base and displays a *triratha* plan. A *pañcaratha* effect, however, is obtained by producing sub-rathas (*uparathas*) on the *rāhā*. The ratio of the *rāhā* including the sub-rathas and the *kaṇika* is 1.5 to 1. The length of the *garbhagrha* and the wall thickness are in 2 : 1 ratio. The square *garbhagrha* has the usual *garbhamuda* and *ratnamuda* ceilings and the passageway is provided with the *gamā*. On the exterior, where no decoration was applied, the *bāda* shows three vertical segments. Of them the *pābhāga* is a rightangled dado, the *jāṅgha* is severely plain and the *baraṇḍa* is demarcated, as at Deoli, by three elements, namely *khurā*, *paṭā*, and *kāṅṭi*. The *ganḍi* commencing from above the *baraṇḍa* is neither serrated nor divided into *bhūmi* stages. It rises almost perpendicularly for the major part of its height and then curves inward to introduce the flat *vedī* on its summit. The *mastaka* on the *vedī* currently shows a large *āmalaka* supported on a *beki*.

(f) Deulbhira (Pl. XV and Fig. 4)²⁶

A temple made of laterite and facing east is standing in this village. The image installed in this temple is missing. But the discovery of a number of Jaina images including one of Pārśvanātha near the temple-site suggests that the temple was Jaina in affiliation. It is built on a low plinth and has a *triratha* plan. However, a *pañcaratha* plan is simulated by introducing sub-rathas at the sides of the *rāhā*. The edges of the central projection of the *rāhā* and those of the *kaṇikas* are indented. The ratio of the *rāhā* including the sub-rathas and the *kaṇika* is 1.5 to 1. In the case of the length of the *garbhagrha* and the wall thickness, it is 1 to 1. The *garbhamuda* and the *ratnamuda* ceilings are placed one upon another on the *garbhagrha*. The *gamā* is present on the passageway. The wall screening the *gamā* from outside produced a gable-shaped *sukanāsa* on the façade. It is divided into two storeyes by a recessed frieze. A squatting lion is placed on its summit. In the *bāda* section of the temple, the *pābhāga* is a square dado, the *jāṅgha* is plain excepting for a niche on the *rāhā* and the *baraṇḍa* is indicated by *khurā*, *paṭā* and *kāṅṭi*. The niche on the *rāhā* in the *jāṅgha* segment resembles that in the same place on the main temple of the *pañcāyatana* complex at Deoli. The *ganḍi* of the temple is curvilinear but in its lower section the curvature remains almost imperceptible. The *mastaka* on the unserrated *ganḍi* is missing.

(g) Balihati (Pl. XVI and Fig. 5)

Covered by vegetation, a desolate temple recently was discovered at Balihati²⁷. No deity was found inside this temple to determine its religious affiliation. But Jinsar (i.e. Jinaśahara meaning abode of the Tīrthāṅkaras²⁸), a neighbouring village, yielded several Jaina sculptures. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the temple at Balihati had

belonged to the Jaina sect.

The temple is built of laterite and faces east. Because of its extremely dilapidated condition, it is not possible to ascertain the general appearance of the temple. What can be gathered is that the temple belonged to the *sāndhāra* type, which required the sanctum chamber to be surrounded by a covered ambulatory. Access to the ambulatory was obtained through a long passage with transepts. The passage was developed into a porch on the outer face of the wall enclosing the ambulatory. To the north of the porch a staircase was built in the thickness of the wall. A chamber was attached to the north-eastern corner of the temple. A similar but smaller chamber was attached to its opposite end, i.e. on the north-western corner. Of the latter only the foundation remains.

The sanctum chamber of the temple was square inside and *pañcaratha* on the exterior. The relative proportions of the *rathas* were found to be as follows: *rāhā* 4, *anuratha* 1 and *kaṇika* 3. The ratio of the length of the *garbhagrha* and the wall thickness was 1 to 1. The *bāda* of the sanctum had only two vertical segments, namely *pābhāga* and *jāṅgha*. In the *pābhāga* there were four mouldings at least two of which were of the *khurā* variety. These mouldings were spaced at regular intervals by miniature shrines probably of the *rekhā* order. The *jāṅgha* was bald and bare in the absence of any decorative design.

The passage connecting the sanctum chamber with the ambulatory, was spanned by a corbelled arch. The corbelled space was not converted into *gamā*.

The wall enclosing the ambulatory is partially preserved. It shows an alcove-like recess on the northern side. In this alcove a window having lithic uprights and cross-bars is made. Probably similar alcoves with windows were present in other sides where the walls are missing.

Garbhagrha, vestibule, ambulatory and entrance passage of the temple were all covered by corbelled vaults. On the *garbhagrha*, it was like a cloister vault with four sides while on the rest, it was a tunnel vault with two sides. Over these vaulted ceilings rested the flat roof of the temple. The presence of the staircase may suggest the existence of a second storey on this flat roof. But the dilapidated condition of the temple stands in the way of saying anything conclusive in that regard.

(h) Other Sites

At different places in the districts of Purulia and Bankura remains of ruined Jaina temples may be noticed. At Gholamara, about two miles north-west of Charra, Sastri²⁹ came across the ruins of a temple where the main image was a Jaina Tirthaṅkara. Remains of a pre-Muslim stone temple is reported from Balarampur (Purulia District) where Dalton found a collection of Jaina Tirthaṅkara images in 1866³⁰. Hunter saw at Palma (Purulia District) the large mound of a Jaina temple, covered with stone and bricks and with numerous Tirthaṅkara images scattered about, as well as other

mounds nearby³¹. At the time of Bloch's visit only some stone pillars and two Tirthaṅkara images were lying among the debris of the temple³². Jaina temples seem once to have existed also at Pabanpur, Arsha, and Anai-Jambad in the Purulia District³³.

While undertaking a survey of the Jaina antiquities in a limited area in the Bankura District, Mitra came across the remains of Jaina temples at Kendua, Barkola, and Pareshnath³⁴. The temple near Kendua was made of stone and probably dedicated to Pārśvanātha, whose image was found to be lying near it. The ruined temple at Barkola was brick-built. Three Jaina images were discovered from its ruins. At Pareshnath, the temple was made of sandstone. On its plinth, which happens to be the only extant part of the temple, a damaged image of Pārśvanātha was found.

The religious affiliation of the Jaina temples in Bengal is not expressed through their architectural features. It is, therefore, not possible to assert that Bengal developed anything like a Jaina temple architecture. These temples belong to what the *Bhuvanapradīpa*, an Orissan text on temple architecture, describes as the *rekha* type³⁵. The temple at Balihati, however, constitutes a class by itself. All of them are either *triratha* or *pañcaratha*. When *triratha*, the *rāhā* and the *kaṇika* stand in the ratio of 1 : 1 or 1.5 : 1. In the *pañcaratha* temples, this uniformity is lacking. On the other hand, the ratio of the length of the *garbhagrha* and the wall-thickness is, irrespective of the number of *rathas* on plan, 2-to 1.

For laying out the plan of a temple, a paved floor or a very low platform was made. In elevation the temple was divided into three principal parts, namely *bāḍa*, *jāṅgha*, and *mastaka*. The *bāḍa* was subdivided into *pābhāga*, *jāṅgha* and *baraṇḍa*. The *pābhāga* was demarcated either by a set of four mouldings or a plain dado. The types of moulding employed in the *pābhāga* were confined to *khurā*, *paṭā*, and *kumbha*. In the *jāṅgha* the *rāhā* usually contained a niche resembling a miniature shrine. Occasionally, tall and slender pilasters appeared on the *kaṇika*. The *baraṇḍa* was of two types. In the one, it was composed of a *kāṇṭi* between two mouldings. In the other, it had *khurā*, *paṭā* and *kāṇṭi*. The *gaṇḍi* was a curvilinear structure with or without the *bhūmi* divisions. The curvature of the *gaṇḍi*, in some instances, was not emphatic in its lower part. As a result, the *gaṇḍi* appeared to rise perpendicularly like a chimney shaft. The *mastaka*, its aspect wherever preserved, shows a large and flattish *āmalaka* supported by a *beki*. It may be assumed that a *kalāśa* was placed on the *āmalaka*.

Sometimes, the body of the temple was plastered with a layer of stucco. Apparently decorative designs were cut (or painted ?) on this plaster.

In the interior, the *garbhagrha* was provided with double ceiling, namely *garbhamuda* and *ratnamuda*. The *garbhamuda* never rested directly on the perpendicular wall section of the sanctum cella but appeared some way up the corbelled inside of the superstructure. The *gamā* was another common feature to be found on the passageway.

The Jaina temples of Bengal, like other such temples of this region, bear a striking resemblance with the *rekhā* temples of Orissa. The rising of the temple from the ground, relative proportions of the *rathas*, ratio of the thickness of the wall and the extent of the *garbhagrha*, shape of the *ganḍī*, large flattish *āmalaka* with convex ribs, *garbhamuda* and *ratnamuda* ceilings on the sanctum chamber, and *gamā* on the passageway are some of the common characteristics linking the temples of these two regions together. The pilasters on the *kanika* are identically treated at Khiching in Orissa and in Bengal. The temple at Balihati, despite its uncommon plan, betrays Orissan inspiration in the formulation of the *pābhāga*, the construction and design of the windows, the manner of placing the ceiling on the sanctum chamber and the ratio of wall-thickness and length of *garbhagrha*.

IV

There is little conclusive evidence to determine the chronological sequence of the Jaina temples of West Bengal. McCutchion, however, is not inclined to place them before the 12th century A. D., because, in his opinion, "it is hard to believe that the stiff rudimentary mouldings of the temples and the cursory chiselling of the sculptures at Pakbirra and Deoli, for instance, could belong to the 12th century or earlier."³⁶ In this connection it may be noted that the treatment and arrangement of the pilasters on the *kanikas* of the temples at Pakbirra are so similar to that of the pilasters on the Candrasekhara temple at Khiching (Mayurbhanj District, Orissa) that the temples of these two sites should not have a wide chronological gap between them. The presence of the *piṣṭa* and five mouldings in the *pābhāga* do not favour a date earlier than the tenth century A. D. for the Candrasekhara. On this ground a date around the tenth century for the stone temples at Pakbirra may be suggested. From the temple-site at Pakbirra have been discovered images bearing inscriptions which, on palaeographic ground, have been placed between the 9th and the 11th century³⁷. Decorative designs, like a typical lotus petal, four-petalled flower in square panel and demi-flower framed by half lozenge, found on a votive shrine (Pl. VII) and a detached lintel (Pl. VIII) near these temples are not known to have occurred after the 10th century A. D. These circumstantial evidences lend support to the date suggested for the stone temples at Pakbirra.

The extant temple at Charra should also be placed in or after the tenth century for the simple reason that its *ganḍī* is divided into six *bhūmis*. Temples belonging to an earlier epoch, usually, exhibit five *bhūmis* in the *ganḍī*. The right-angled *bhūmi-āmalakas*, however, make the possibility of this temple going beyond the 11th century extremely remote. Mention may in this connection be made that a little more than 1:5 ratio of the length of the *garbhagrha* and the height of this temple is a characteristic of the 11th-12th century temples of Orissa³⁸.

The Ṛṣabhanātha temple at Ambikānagar may be a near contemporary of the temple at Charra. Its *bāda* bears a general resemblance, particularly in respect of the *pābhāga*

and the pilasters on the *kaṇikas*, with that of the Temple No. 16 at Telkupi (Purulia District)³⁹. The latter temple has to be dated not earlier than the 11th century A. D. on account of the presence of round *bhūmi-āmalakas* in its *gaṇḍi*. If the temple at Ambikānagar was similarly adorned with round *bhūmi-āmalakas*, it should also be dated after the tenth century A. D.

The absence of details forbid the ascription of any specific date to the brick temple at Pakbirra. Its seemingly perpendicular rise of the *gaṇḍi*, however, favours a date not before the 11th century. Indeed none of the brick temples in this region appears earlier than of the 11th century date.

As the three temples at the sites of Deoli, Harmashra, and Deulbhira and the ruined temple at Charra present similar architectural features, they should belong to the same period. In the three extant examples, the ratio of the extent of the *garbhagrha* and the height of the *deula* is around 1 to 5.5. All of them simulate a *pañcaratha* plan. The *baraṇḍa* in each temple has three elements which are not found in the temples so far discussed. The lion on the *śukanāsa*-pediment of the temple at Deulbhira is also a new introduction. As shown by the latter and the temple at Harmashra, the acceptance of laterite as the sole building material marks a departure from the practice of using sandstone for the same purpose. In Orissa lion on the façade is unknown before the 11th century, a 1:5.5 ratio of the length of the *garbhagrha* and the height of the *deula* becomes common since the 12th century and laterite as the principal material for constructing a temple is not favoured before the 13th century. It, therefore, may be reasonable to assign these four temples after the 11th century.

The temple at Balihati seems the latest in the series of Jaina temples in West Bengal. The spacing of its *pābhāga* with miniature shrines is a phenomenon absent from pre-Muslim temples. Its construction with laterite blocks is another late feature. The shape and design of the window in the wall of the ambulatory connects this temple with very late temples of Orissa. On the other hand, the provision of a staircase in the thickness of the wall associates it with the late medieval *ratna* temples of Bengal. Probably the ambulatory around its sanctum cella anticipates the covered verandah on the three sides of the *ratna* temples of late medieval Bengal. Under the circumstances, a not earlier than the 14th century date for the temple at Balihati seems very likely.

V

In view of what so far has been said, the assertion that 'Jainism was a spent force in Bengal from the eighth century onwards'⁴⁰ needs to be modified. The Chotanagpur belt comprising the districts of Purulia, Bankura and parts of Burdwan and Midnapore in West Bengal, Singhbhum, Ranchi and Dhanbad in Bihar and Mayurbhanj in Orissa remained a stronghold of the Jainas well after the 8th century. That Jainism did not disappear from other parts of Bengal during the Pāla-Sena epoch is proven by the discovery of the 10th-12th century images of Jaina divinities from both northern and southern Bengal⁴¹. Jainism in Bengal probably started to decline in consequence of the

increasing popularity of Caitanyite Vaiṣṇavism. One after another, the flourishing Jaina centres began to be deserted. Left to themselves, temples at these sites entered a process of disintegration and in course of time most of them collapsed. A few precariously surviving temples will also disappear unless anything is done for their conservation.

POSTSCRIPT

The paper, written more than a decade ago, needs revision in view of certain new discoveries and the widening of the horizon of our knowledge during these years. Without attempting a thorough revision, some essential additions and alterations have been made here, avoiding of course much elaboration.

1. At Puchra (Burdwan District) stands a hitherto unnoticed stone temple once enshrining an image of Ṛṣabhanātha. The image still lies in front of the deserted temple. A few images of other Jaina divinities are preserved in two collections at the village. The temple concerned is an amorphous structure awaiting the day of its ultimate collapse. Details and date of this shapeless pile cannot be ascertained.
2. The abandoned brick temple at Sat Deuliya (Burdwan District) (Pt. XVII) was undoubtedly a Jaina shrine as the site yielded several images affiliated to that religion. On the other hand, no Brahmanical image as yet have been discovered at the place. The temple is *pañcaratha* on plan. The lower part of its *baḍa*, though damaged, never had displayed the *pābhāga*. In this section, however, the wall is divided into two *talas* by a *bāndhanā* moulding. The entablature is marked by a number of outstepped string courses. The *gaṇḍī*, is a ponderous structure divided into *bhūmi* stages by rightangled *bhūmi-āmalakas*. The carved bricks, finished with stucco plaster, liberally textured the body of the *gaṇḍī*. Extensive damage, peeling off the plaster and invasion by moss have reduced this exquisite example of brick architecture into a hapless wreck. The *pañcaratha* plan, rightangled *bhūmi-āmalakas* and heaviness of form make the Sat Deuliya temple one of the earliest of its kind in Bengal. However, the triangular door-opening, *bāndhanā* in the *baḍa* and entablature with several string courses are features of the post-tenth century period.
3. Circumstantial evidence tends to prove that the Siddheśvara temple at Bahulara (Bankura District) was not a Brahmanical shrine. The site is pre-dominantly Jaina. The image of Ṛṣabhanātha inside the temple was in all likelihood its original presiding deity.

Beglar (*op. cit.*, p. 202 and Pls. VII & XVIII) has left a short account with a couple of illustrations of the Siddheśvara. The *saptaratha* groundplan with the *rathas* segmented into sub-*rathas*, *pābhāga* composed of six, mostly hybridized, mouldings, the *bāndhanā* dividing the *jāṅgha* into two *talas*, *baraṇḍa* showing double cornice between bold and heavy mouldings, presence of *aṅgāsikharas* on the *gaṇḍī* which possesses a

nearly straight lined contour and round *bhūmi-āmalaka* in each *bhūmi* push the Siddheśvara to about the 13th century.

4. Site clearance and mindless 'restoration' by the State Government Department concerned, while obliterating many features and altering the physical appearance of the temples at Pakbirra (Purulia District), have exposed their buried portions. It is now evident that the temple stood on a *triratha* plan. The *rathas* were segmented. The segments were multifaceted. The *rāhā* was wider than the *kaṇikas*. The *pābhāga* mouldings of Temple 1 and 2 were six and five respectively.

Apart from *khurā* and *kumbha*, no other moulding belonged to any formal category. On the *rāhā* of the *pābhāga* was displayed a spired shrine with a *kalāśa* finial. On the *kaṇikas* of the *jāngha*, a pilaster was treated like a *khākharā* superstructure. The *garbhagrha*, entered through a triangular door-opening, was surmounted by more than two ceilings.

The diversification of the plan with segments and facets, six elements in the *pābhāga*, novel design of the *pābhāga* mouldings, occurrence of a miniature shrine on the *pābhāga*, treatment of the pilaster on the wall and triangular door-opening are positive indications of the Pakbirra temples dating not before the 12th century.

5. The temple of Charra has three mouldings (*khurā*, *kumbha* and *khurā*) in the *pābhāga*. Its *rāhā* and *kaṇika* are of equal length. Inside it has at least two ceilings.

Note : The chronology of the early Bengal temples, including the Jaina shrines, have been reconstructed in D. R. Das, "Eastern India : Lower Bengal and Chota-Nagpur" in *Art and Architecture in India*, Ed. M. A. Dhaky (as part of the project entitled History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture), Indian Council of Philosophical Research (to be published).

Annotations :

1. I. 8.3; *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII (Jaina Sūtras, Pt. I), p. 84; also see *History of Bengal*, Vol.I (ed. R. C. Majumdar), Dacca 1943, p.36.
2. Majumdar, *History.*, p. 410.
3. J. D. Beglar, "Report of A Tour through Bengal Provinces in 1872-73," *Archaeological Survey of India Report* (Ed. A. Cunningham), Calcutta, Vol.VIII.
4. *Archaeological Survey of India, Bengal Circle, Annual Report*, 1902, p.14.
5. David McCutcheon ("Notes on The Temples of Purulia District, "Census 1961 : West Bengal — District Census Handbook : Purulia," p. (33)) includes Tuisama within his list of Jaina centres with temples and images in the Purulia District. But the temple at Tuisama having vorive shrines, carved with Brahmanical images, strewn around it had nothing to do with Jainism. McCutcheon seems to have realised the mistake before his untimely death.

6. McCutchion (*Notes.*) believes that the Siddheśvara Śiva temple at Bahulara in the Bankura District originally was a Jaina shrine. Though the temple is built on a site, previously occupied by the Jainas, no evidence is there to indicate that it ever belonged to them.
7. On account of the discovery of a few Jaina images at Sat Deoliya in the Burdwan District, a brick temple at this village is sometimes identified as a Jaina shrine (P. Banerji in *Jaina Art and Architecture*, Ed. A. Ghosh, New Delhi 1974, Vol.1, p.154). But unconfirmed report regarding the discovery of Brahmanical images also from the same site makes the Jaina association of this temple uncertain. For a brief description of the temple at Sat Deoliya see S. K. Saraswati, *Architecture of Bengal*, Book-I, Calcutta 1976, pp.57f.
8. Beglar, pp.193-95.
9. *Archaeological Survey of India, Bengal Circle, Annual Report*, 1902, p.14.
10. McCutchion, p. (38).
11. *Ibid.*, p. (39).
12. Beglar, p. 194.
13. *Ibid.*, Pl.XV.
14. See N. K. Bose, *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, Calcutta 1932, p.120.
15. Beglar, pp.189f. Bloch (*Archaeological Survey of India, Bengal Circle, Annual Report*, 1902, p.14) failed to locate this particular village and commented that no ancient remains whatever existed at a wellknown village of the same name.
16. Obviously, without understanding the import of Beglar's note, P. Banerji (his p.157) describes it as an 'image of Aranātha'.
17. Bose, *Canons.*, p.121.
18. W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol.XVII, London 1877, p.299.
19. Beglar, p.182; *Archaeological Survey of India, Bengal Circle, Annual Report*, 1902, p.14.
20. McCutchion, p.(40).
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. R. D. Banerji, *History of Orissa*, Vol.II, Calcutta 1931, Plate facing p.128.
24. Debala Mitra, "Some Jaina Antiquities from Bankura, West Bengal," *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Letters*, Vol.XXIV, No.2, 1958, p.131.
25. R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture*, Delhi 1933, p.151.
26. S. K. Saraswati (*op. cit.*, p.52 and f.n.8) refers us to Beglar's tour report (*op. cit.*, pp.189f.) for information regarding the temple at Deulbhira. In fact the site was unknown to Beglar and those pages of his report, supposed by Saraswati to contain an account of Deulbhira, actually

bear a description of the remains at Deoli.

27. David McCutcheon, *Late Medieval Temples of Bengal*, Asiatic Society Monograph No.20, Calcutta 1970, p.16.
28. *Jinanagara*, an equivalent of *Jinaśahara*, occurs in the epigraphs in the sense of a Jaina temple and *Jinanigama*, a similar expression, means 'a township in the possession of a Jain temple or, more probably, a Jain temple' (D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Delhi etc. 1966, p.135).
29. A. P. Sastri, "Ruins at Gholamara," *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol.V, 1919, pp.285-87. Sastri confuses the head of a Tirthaṅkara image with that of Buddha.
30. See McCutcheon, "Notes.," p. (41).
31. Hunter, "Statistical.," p. 298.
32. *Archaeological Survey of India, Bengal Circle, Annual Report*, p. 14.
33. Boram in the Purulia District has been referred to by P. Banerji (his p. 157) as a Jaina site. But the place has not yet yielded any Jaina antiquity.
34. Mitra, "Some Jaina.," pp. 132-34.
35. Bose, pp. 78f.
36. McCutcheon, p. (33).
37. P. Banerji, p. 158.
38. For a structural analysis of some temples of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, see N. K. Bose, *Cultural Anthropology and Other Essays*, Calcutta 1953, pp. 240-43.
39. Debala Mitra, *Telkupi (Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 76)*, Delhi 1968, pp. 29-32 and Pl.XIX B.
40. J. N. Banerjea in *History of Bengal*, Vol.I (Ed. R. C. Majumdar), p. 464; also see p. 411 for a similar comment by P. C. Bagchi.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 464f.
42. This term is coined by Bose (*Canons of Orissan Architecture*, p. 183).

Glossary

(* marked terms are not present in the *Bhuvanapradīpa* whose nomenclature otherwise is followed here.)

āmalaka : spheroid member ribbed at the edges

* *aṅga* : limb or part; *tri-*, three parts

* *antarāla* : vestibule

anuratha : the projection next to the *kaṇika* (koṇa, kaṇa) in temples having more than three *rathas*

* *ardhamaṇḍapa* : porch

bāḍa : wall (elsewhere in north India, *kaṭi*)

bāṇḍhanā : moulding (single or multiple) dividing *jāṅgha* (jaṅghā) into *tala*-registers

baraṇḍa : (*varaṇḍa*, *varaṇḍikā*) : a set of mouldings constituting the topmost section of *bāḍa*

beki : (*grīvā*) : cylindrical neck of *mastaka*

bhadra deula : temple with a tiered pyramidal superstructure

bhūmi : horizontal (symbolic floor) division of *gaṇḍi*

bhūmi-āmalaka : sectional *āmalaka* at the edge of *gaṇḍi* demarcating one *bhūmi* from another

bhūmi-baraṇḍikā : moulding in a *bhūmi*

deula : (*devakula*) : temple

gamā : corbelled triangular space above the passageway of the sanctum chamber

gaṇḍi : superstructure

garbhagṛha : sanctum chamber

garbhamuda : ceiling over the sanctum chamber

jāṅgha : (jaṅghā) : section of *bāḍa* between *pābhāga* and *baraṇḍa*

kalaśa : pitcher-shaped member of *mastaka*

kaṇika : (koṇa, kaṇa) : corner segment of a temple

kāṇṭhi : (kaṇṭha) : recess between mouldings

khākhara : (karkara) : semi-cylindrical member with S-like profile

khurā; *inverted cyma recta* or hoof-like moulding

kumbha : a moulding shaped like a vase

liṅga : phallic symbol of Śiva

* *mahāmaṇḍapa* : large hall (usually of the 'closed' type)

* *maṇḍapa* : hall

- * *mastaka*⁴² : section crowning *gaṇḍi*
mukhaśālā (gūḍhamāṇḍapa) : fore-hall
pābhāga : (vedibanbha) lowermost part of *bāda*, usually marked by a set of mouldings
pañcaratha : s. v. *ratha*
- * *pañcāyatana* : five-shrined temple, having four sub-shrines standing of the four corners.
paṭā : (paṭṭa) : moulding with a square profile
piḍhā : tier of the superstructure of a *bhadra deula*
piṣṭa (*pīṭha*) : pedestal
rāhā : (ratha, bhadra) : projected central segment of a temple
ratha, ratha-paga : segments produced upon the face of a temple by subjecting part of it to one or more projections; *tri-*, temple having three *rathas*; *pañca-*, temple having five *rathas*
ratnamuda : ceiling above *garbhamuda*
rekhā deula : temple with a curvilinear superstructure
- * *sāndhāra* : temple with covered ambulatory around the sanctum
- * *śukanāsa* : gable-shaped pediment/antefix at the *śikhara* façade
- * *tala* : storey.
- * *tri-aṅga* : s. v. *aṅga*.
triratha : s. v. *ratha*.
- * *vedī* : pedestal, platform.

Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to Śrī Bimalendu Kumar, a silent but dedicated art historian, with whom he covered most of the sites mentioned in this paper. He is likewise grateful to Śrī Arun Ghosh, Śrī Heramba Bhattacharya, and other members of the Lok Sevak Sangha for their help in exploring the Purulia District. Sincere thanks are also due to Śrī Bansidhar Biswas for extending all possible help in visiting Harmashra and the neighbouring sites. Śrī B. Chattopadhyaya and Śrī Suprakash Sen assisted the author in salvaging a photograph of Beglar's time. The Archaeological Survey of India holds the copyright of this photograph published in the present paper as Plate No. I.

Editors' note : The Sanskrit terms introduced in parenthesis for Oriyā (or Kaliṅgan Sanskrit) terms by us are from Central and Western Indian medieval texts composed in Sanskrit Vāstusāstras).

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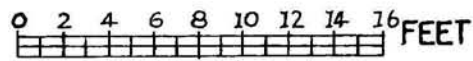
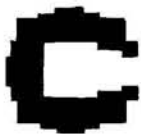
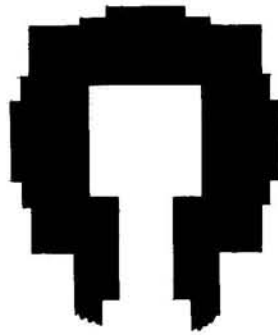
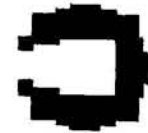


Fig. 1 Deoli. Ground plan of the Śāntinātha temple.

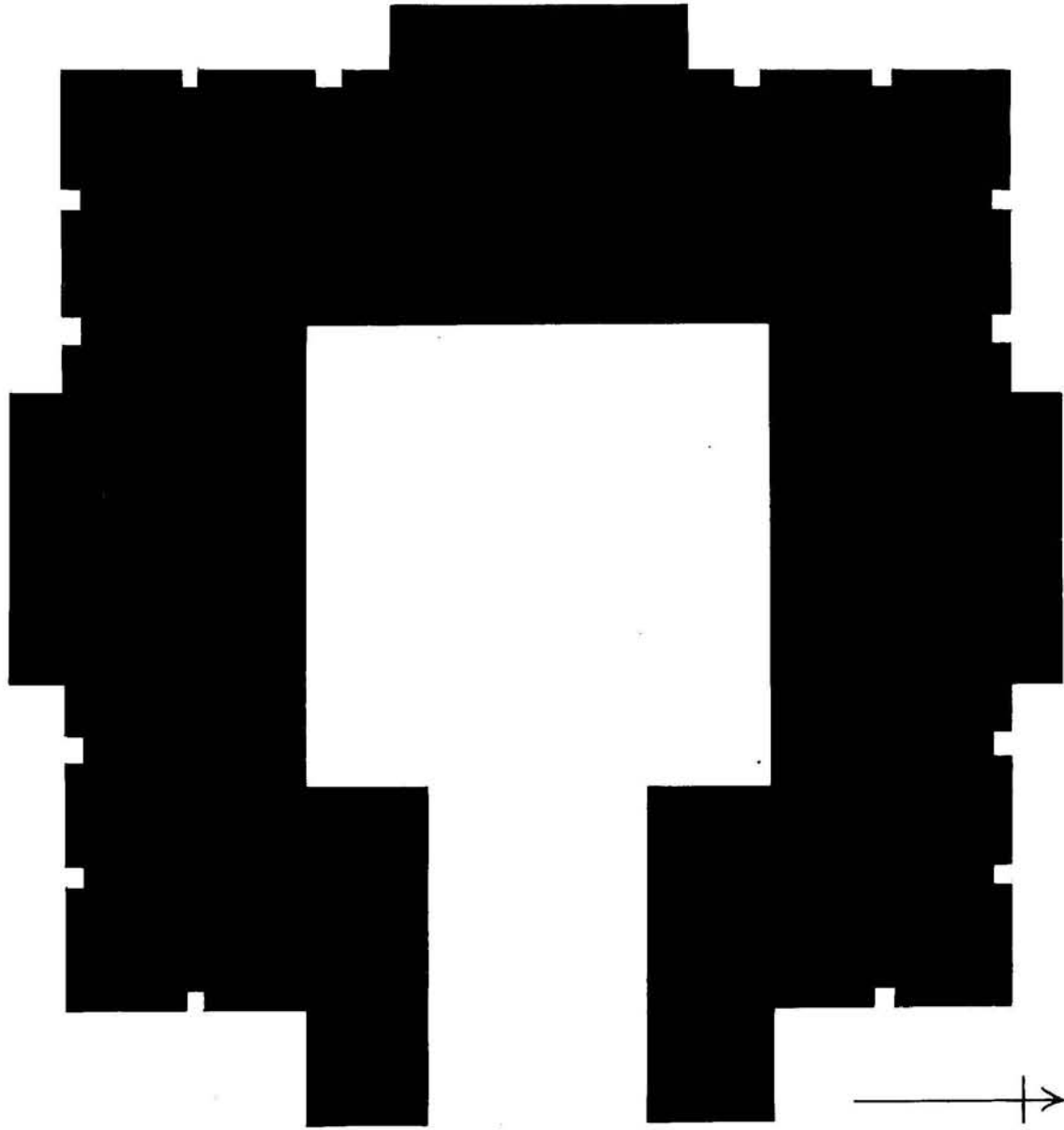


Fig. 2 Ambikanagar. Ground plan of the R̥sabhanātha temple.

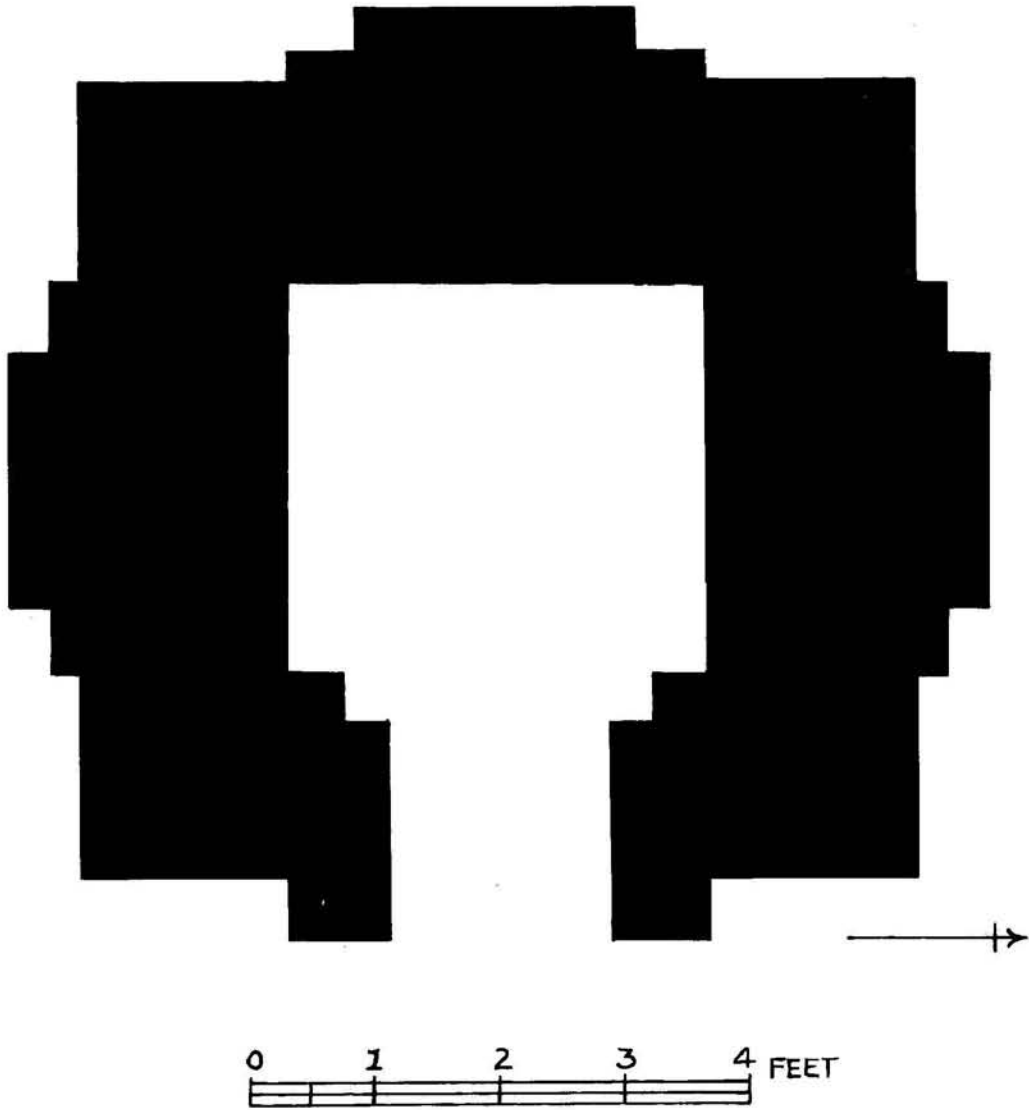


Fig. 3 Harmashra. Ground plan of the deserted temple.

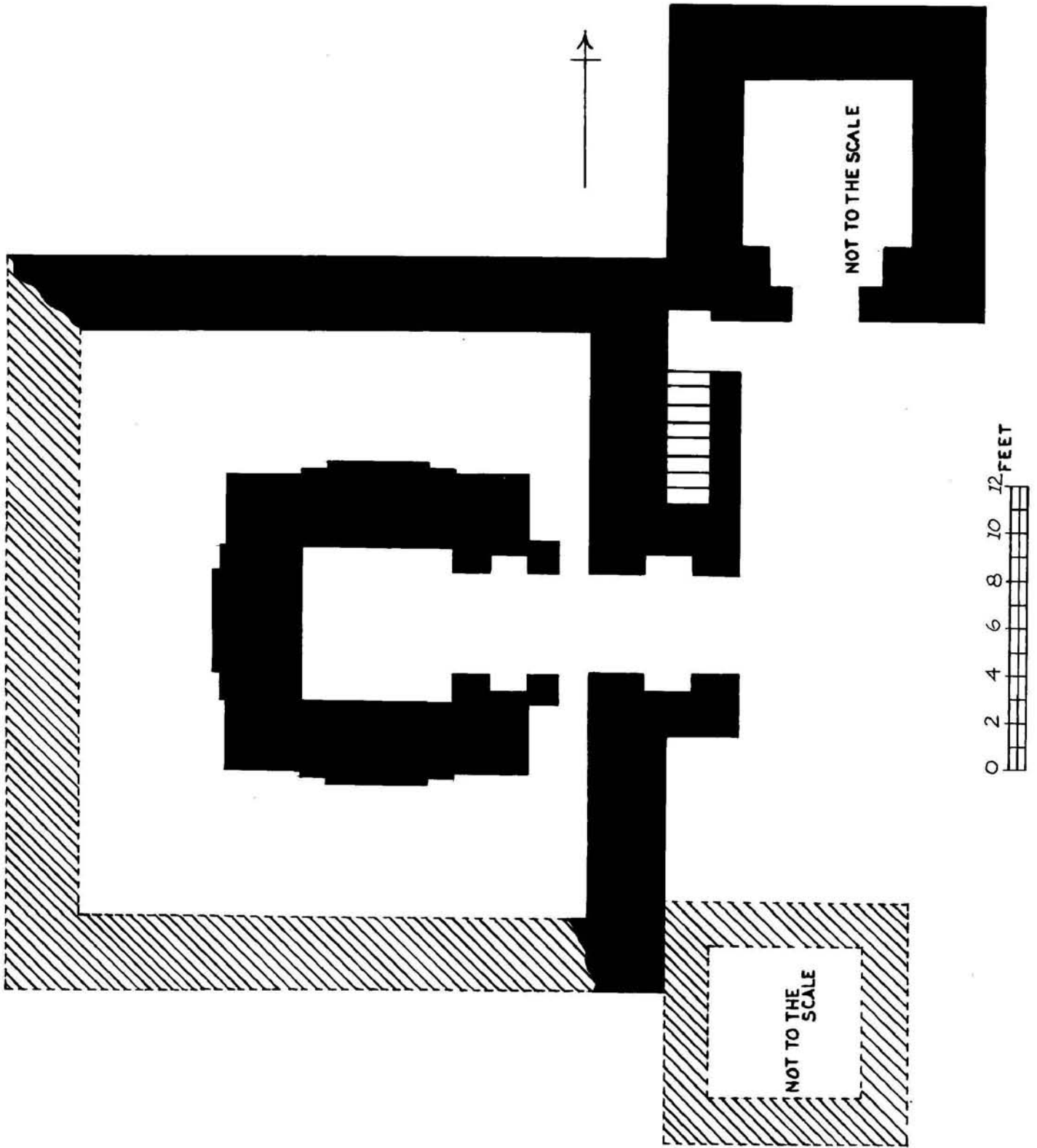


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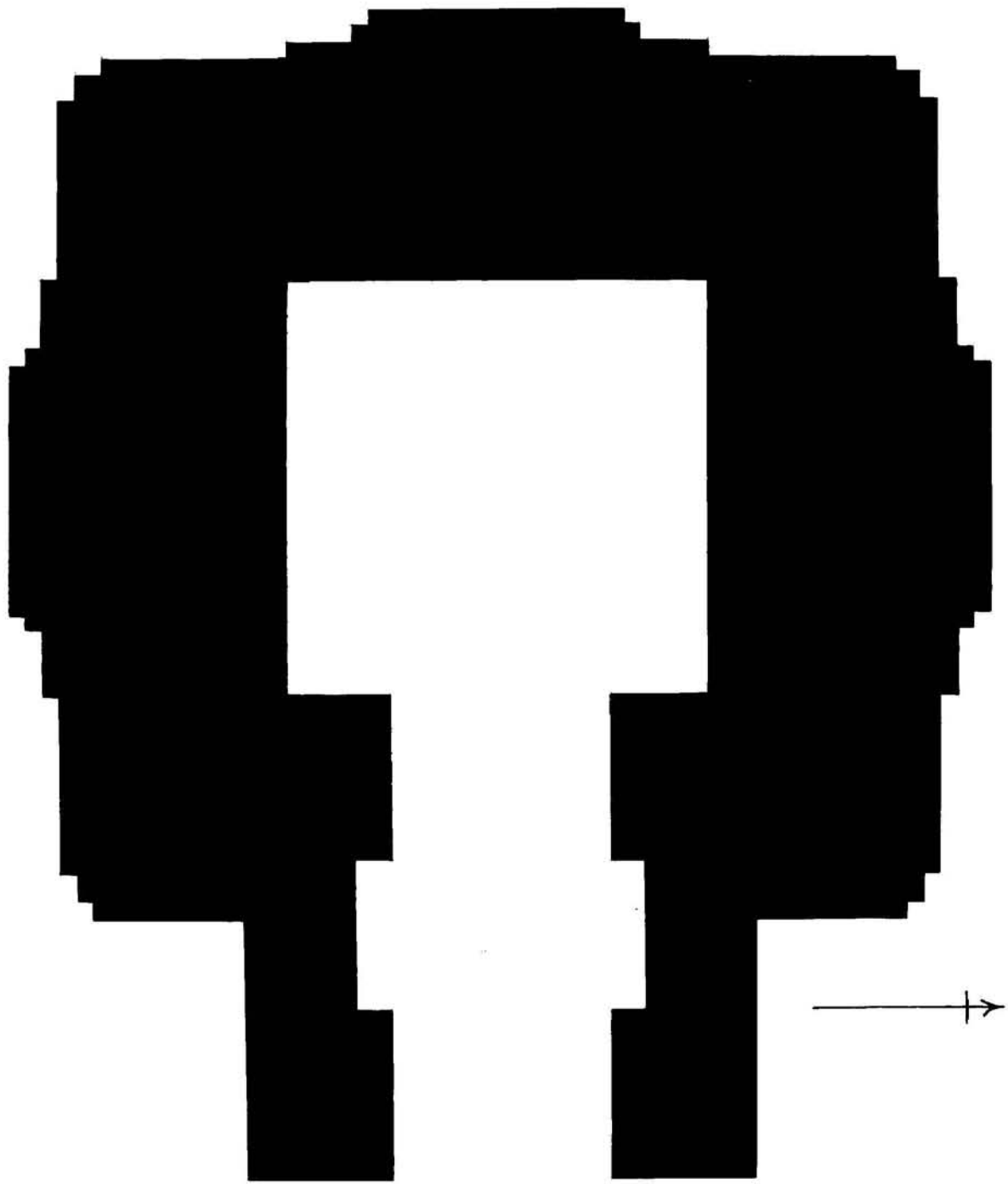


Fig. 5 Balihati. Ground plan of the deserted temple.