JAINA TEMPLES OF WEST BENGAL

D. R. Das

I

The Śvetāmbara Jaina āgama work, the Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 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 Nirgranthā-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. 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. Beglar 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 disappeared. 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 District; Ambikānagar, Harmashra and Deulbhira in the Bankura District; and Balihati in the Midnapore District.

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 Pakbirra. 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.” Bloch’s visit did not improve the steadily worsening condition of these temples. Thus, in 1961, McCutchion 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.”

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 them.

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.” 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) bāda section, the pābhāga (vedībandha) is beyond recognition while the jaṅgha (jaṅghā) (kaṭī) does not bear any evidence of the bandhanā (madhyabandha). The baraṇḍa (varaṇḍa) has a deep kāntī (kantha) between two moulded courses. The ganḍi (śikhara) rises almost in a straight line before taking a pronounced bend near the top. It is not clear whether the ganḍi was divided into bhūmi-stages by the bhūmi-āmalakas (Karnāṇḍakas). But what is evident is that the ratha-pagas on the ganḍi were not serrated by the bhūmi-barandikas. Only their edges were ribbed by the khorā-heads. The peak of the ganḍi is badly mutilated leaving no trace of the mastaka (āmulasāraka).

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 garbhagṛha, which is square. In every instance, the thickness of the wall enclosing the garbhagṛha 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 pabhāga, the lowest section of the bāda, in each of them invisible. Beglar, however, gives a drawing of the base mouldings of a temple at Pākhirra. These base mouldings, as drawn by Beglar, are four in number, exhibiting as they do in a vertical sequence khura, kumbha, two khurās clapsed face to face and khura. 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 jāṅgha 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 kanika segment in the jāṅgha section carried a tall and thin shrine. Its elongated superstructure was relieved by bhumī-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 kanika and the rāhā. The baranda, which appeared immediately above the jāṅgha to demarcate the bāda, i.e. the perpendicular wall section, from the superstructure, was similar in temple 1 and 2 and characterised by a kānti bordered from below by a khura moulding. In temple 1, the gāndī rising from above the baranda is so much mutilated that its original appearance is beyond recognition. The gāndī 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 garbhagṛha is provided with two ceilings. The lower of the two ceilings, placed immediately above the garbhagṛha, 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. The garbhagṛha 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 (dvī-āṅga) plan. Its square garbhaṅgṛha was probably provided with garbhamūda and ratsanmūda, 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 Beglar. 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 mahāmanḍapa, an ardhamanḍapa 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 Arunānath..." A deer carved on the pedestal of the standing image makes it a representation of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkara Śāntinātha.

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 rekha deula (Latina prāśāda) from its partially preserved gāndī. It is built on a pañcaratha plan, the ratio of the rathas being as follows: rāhā 3, anuratha 1, kaṇika 2. The garbhāṅgṛha, a square chamber, is half the length of the bāḍa. In elevation, the bāḍa is divided into three segments, namely pābhāga, jāṅgha, and baranda. The pābhāga is a square of dado simulating a plinth. The jāṅgha is severely plain excepting a niche on the rāhā. Designed like a bhadrā deula, its superstructure rises in two gradually receding piṛāḍa stages and supports a mastaka consisting of beki, ṣāmalaka, 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 baranda above the jāṅgha has three elements, namely a khurā at the bottom, a pāṭā in the middle and a kāṇṭi on the top. Demarcated from the bāḍa by the kāṇṭi-frieze of the baranda, the unserrated gāndī rises in a convex curve, which is not pronounced in its lower section. Only a part of the gāndī 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 gāndī. 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 gamā17 and henceforth, it will be referred to by this term. Once the passageway opened into a fore-hall, the mahāmandapa of Beglar. It is now a completely collapsed structure with all of its features obliterated. If the mahāmandapa was preceded by an ardhamanda and a mukhasatūkṣṭi-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 1, and kanika 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 bāda having two vertical divisions, namely jāṅgha and bāranaṇa. It is inexplicable why the pābhaṅga is absent from the scheme of the bāda. The jāṅgha is plain while the bāranaṇa is like that of the principal deula. Rising above the bāda the tall gāndī is curvilinear in profile. But the curvature of the gāndī remains almost imperceptible to the major part of its height. In conformity with the plainness of the jāṅgha, the gāndī is neither serrated nor divided into bhūmi stages. The mastaka on the gāndī 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 \textit{triratha}. Though the lower portion of the temple is buried in an accumulation of rubbish, the ratio of the \textit{rähā} and the \textit{kanika} seems to be 1 to 1. The measurement taken by McCutcheon\textsuperscript{20} suggests that the \textit{garbhagrha} is almost half the length of the \textit{bāda}. In elevation, the \textit{bāda} is divided into \textit{pābhāga}, \textit{jāṅgha} and \textit{baraṇḍa}. Details of the \textit{pābhāga} cannot be ascertained, because it is buried in earth and rubbish. McCutcheon says that it was marked by ‘rudimentary mouldings.’\textsuperscript{21} The \textit{jāṅgha} bears no decoration. The \textit{baraṇḍa} is composed of a \textit{kānti} bordered by \textit{khūra} mouldings. The \textit{gāndi} is curvilinear and divided into six \textit{bhūmi}s. Each \textit{bhūmi} has two \textit{bhūmi-barandikas} and a right angled \textit{bhūmi-āmalaka}. The \textit{mastaka} on the \textit{gāndi} retains the \textit{beki} and the \textit{āmalaka}.

McCutcheon says that the ruined temple at Charra was \textit{pañcaratha} and facing south. Entirely plain, it had no base moulding\textsuperscript{22}. From a published photograph\textsuperscript{23}, this temple appears to have differed little from the Śāntinātha temple at Deoli.

\textbf{(d) Ambikānagar (Pl.XIII and Fig. 2)}

A half-ruined sandstone temple stands at this village on the bank of the river Karmśāvatī. It faces east and enshrines a \textit{linga}, which seems a modern installation. Probably the temple was dedicated to Rśabhanātha, whose image is lying beside the \textit{linga}. 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 Śāsaṇadevi of Neminātha\textsuperscript{24}.

The temple of Rśabhanātha is \textit{triratha} on plan and has a \textit{tri-aṅga bāda}. Excepting a trace of the \textit{gāndi}, nothing of the temple is left above the \textit{bāda}. It faces east on which side the \textit{raḥā} is wider and deeper than on other sides. The ratio of the \textit{raḥā} and the \textit{kaṇika} is 1 to 1 at the sides while it is 2 to 1 in front. The length of the \textit{garbhagrha} and that of the \textit{bāda} are in the ratio of 1 to 2. The \textit{garbhagrha} has a \textit{garbhamūḍa} over it. When the \textit{gāndi} was complete, there obviously was a \textit{ratnamūḍa} on the summit. The passageway leading to the sanctum chamber has the \textit{gamā} on it. On the exterior, the \textit{bāda} has the three conventional divisions of \textit{pābhāga}, \textit{jāṅgha} and \textit{baraṇḍa}. The \textit{pābhāga} has four mouldings, namely \textit{khūra}, \textit{kumbha}, \textit{khūra}, and \textit{khūra}. In the \textit{jāṅgha} section, the \textit{raḥā} on each side seems to have once accommodated a niche. The \textit{kaṇika} on either flank of the \textit{raḥā} is relieved by pilasters. The shaft of the pilaster is undecorated while each of its base and capital has a pair of \textit{khūra} placed back to back. The \textit{baraṇḍa} has a \textit{kānti} between two \textit{khūra} mouldings. The \textit{gāndi}, of which only a little remains, was serrated and probably rose in \textit{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.

IV Pakbirra. Temple No. 3.

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. XII Charra. Deserted temple.

Pl. XIII Ambikanagar. Rśhanārāha temple.
Pl. XIV Harmashra. Deserted temple.

Pl. XIX Deulbhira. Deserted temple.
Pl. XVI Balighati. Deserted temple.
(e) Harmashra (Pl.XIV and Fig. 3)

Banerji 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 mukhasāla, 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 kañika is 1.5 to 1. The length of the garbhagṛha and the wall thickness are in 2 : 1 ratio. The square garbhagṛha has the usual garbhāmudā and ratnamudā ceilings and the passageway is provided with the gamā. On the exterior, where no decoration was applied, the bāḍā 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 khorā, paṭā, and kañṭi. The gaṇḍi 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)

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 kañikas are indented. The ratio of the rāhā including the sub-rathas and the kañika is 1.5 to 1. In the case of the length of the garbhagṛha and the wall thickness, it is 1 to 1. The garbhāmudā and the ratnamudā ceilings are placed one upon another on the garbhagṛha. The gamā is present on the passageway. The wall screening the gamā from outside produced a gable-shaped śukanāsa on the façade. It is divided into two storeyes by a recessed frieze. A squatting lion is placed on its summit. In the bāḍā 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 khorā, paṭā and kañṭi. The niche on the rāhā in the jāṅgha segment resembles that in the same place on the main temple of the pañcāyatanā complex at Deoli. The gaṇḍi of the temple is curvilinear but in its lower section the curvature remains almost imperceptible. The mastaka on the unserrated gaṇḍi is missing.

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

Covered by vegetation, a desolate temple recently was discovered at Balihati. No deity was found inside this temple to determine its religious affiliation. But Jinsar (i.e. Jinaśahara meaning abode of the Tirthaṅkaras), 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 kanika 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 rekha 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 norther 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, Sastri 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 1866. 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 nearby. At the time of Bloch's visit only some stone pillars and two Tirthankara images were lying among the debris of the temple. Jaina temples seem once to have existed also at Pabanpur, Arsha, and Anai-Jambad in the Purulia District.

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 Pareshnath. 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 Bhuvanaspradipa, an Orissan text on temple architecture, describes as the rekha type. The temple at Baihati, however, constitutes a class by itself. All of them are either triratha or pañcaratha. When triratha, the rāhā and the kaṇīka 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 bāda, jāṅgha, and mastaka. The bāda was subdivided into pābhāga, jāṅgha and bārāṇḍa. 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 kaṇīka. The bārāṇḍa was of two types. In the one, it was composed of a kānti between two mouldings. In the other, it had khurā, paṭā and kānti. The gaṇḍī was a curvilinear structure with or without the bhūmi divisions. The curvature of the gaṇḍī, in some instances, was not emphatic in its lower part. As a result, the gaṇḍī 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 kalaśa 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 garbhānuda and ratnamuda. The garbhānuda never resided 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 gāndī, large flattish āmalaka with convex ribs, garbhamaṇḍa and ratnamaṇḍa 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.” 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 century. 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 gāndī is divided into six bhūmis. Temples belonging to an earlier epoch, usually, exhibit five bhūmis in the gāndī. 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 Orissa.

The Rṣabhanātha temple at Ambikānagar may be a near contemporary of the temple at Charra. Its baṇḍa bears a general resemblance, particularly in respect of the pābhāga
and the pilasters on the kanikas, with that of the Temple No. 16 at Telkupi (Purulia District). 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 gāndī. 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 forbids the ascription of any specific date to the brick temple at Pakbirra. Its seemingly perpendicular rise of the gāndī, 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 garbhagṛha and the height of the deula is around 1 to 5.5. All of them simulate a pātcaratha plan. The barandā in each temple has three elements which are not found in the temples so far discussed. The lion on the sukanāsa-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 garbhagṛha 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’ 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 Bengal. Jainism in Bengal probably started to decline in consequence of the
increasing popularity of Caitanyite Vaśnavism. 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 Rśabhanātha. 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 bada, 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 gāndi, 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 gāndi. 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 bada and entablature with several string courses are features of the post-tenth century period.

3. Circumstantial evidence tends to prove that the Siddhāśvara temple at Bahulara (Bankura District) was not a Brahmanical shrine. The site is pre-dominantly Jaina. The image of Rśabhanātha 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 Siddhāśvara. 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 aṅgaśikharas on the gāndi 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 kalaśa finial. On the kaṇikas of the jāṅgha, a pilaster was treated like a khākhara superstructure. The garbhagṛha, 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.


5. David McCutchion (“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 votive shrines, carved with Brahmanical images, strewn around it had nothing to do with Jainism. McCutchion seems to have realised the mistake before his untimely death.
6. McCutcheon (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.


11. Ibid., p. (39).


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.


20. McCutcheon, p.(40).

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.


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.


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.


35. Bose, pp. 78f.


37. P. Banerji, p. 158.


42. This term is coined by Bose (*Canons of Orissan Architecture*, p. 183).
Glossary

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

āmalaka: spheroid member ribbed at the edges

*a: limb or part; tri-, three parts
*antarāla: vestibule

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

*ardhamañḍapa: porch

bāda: wall (elsewhere in North India, kaṭi)

bāndhanā: moulding (single or multiple) dividing jaṅgha (jaṅghā) into tala-registers

barāṇḍa: (varāṇḍa, varāṇḍikā): a set of mouldings constituting the topmost section of bāda

beki: (grīvā): cylindrical neck of mastaka

bhādra deula: temple with a tiered pyramidal superstructure

bhūmi: horizontal (symbolic floor) division of gaṇḍī

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

bhūmi-baṇḍikā: moulding in a bhūmi

deula: (devakula): temple

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

gauga: superstructure

garbhaṣṭha: sanctum chamber

garbhāmūla: ceiling over the sanctum chamber

jaṅgha: (jaṅghā): section of bāda between pābhāga and barāṇḍa

kalaśa: pitcher-shaped member of mastaka

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

kāṭṭi: (kaṭṭha): 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

linga: phallic symbol of Śiva

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

*maṇḍapa: hall
* mastaka: section crowning ganđi
mukhaśalā (gūḍhamaṇḍapa): fore-hall
pābhaga: (vedībanabha) lowermost part of bāḍa, usually marked by a set of mouldings
pañcaratha: s. v. ratha
* pañcāyatana: five-shrined temple, having four sub-shrines standing of the four corners.
patā: (paṭa): moulding with a square profile
piṇḍhā: tier of the superstructure of a bhadra deula
piṣṭa (pūṭha): 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
ratnamudā: ceiling above garbhamudā
rekhā deula: temple with a curvilinear superstructure
* sāndhāra: temple with covered ambulatory around the sanctum
* sukanāsa: gable-shaped pediment/antefix at the sikhara façade
* tala: storey.
* tri-aṅga: s. v. aṅga.
triratha: s. v. ratha.
* vedī: pedestal, platform.

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