

# Examination of Jaina Paintings of Bazaar Temple, Nagarparkar

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## Abstract:

*Jaina temples of Tharparkar present a different genre of art and architecture compared with the other temples in Pakistan. Because of the geo-political and socio-religious connections, Jaina community of Tharparkar was a part of wider Rajasthani and Gujarati communities. Such a direct connection is evident from Gujarati inscriptions, Rajasthani Dress and Jewelry of the figures in the paintings and the architectural resemblance with the Jaina temples of Khajuraho etc. To have a deeper insight in the matter, present paper describes and analyses Jaina iconography in the form of beautiful mural paintings of the Bazaar Mandir, Nagarparkar, based on a systematic study carried out by the author under the supervision of Dr Muhammad Hameed, department of Archaeology University of the Punjab.*

**Keywords:** Jaina Art/ Iconography, BazaarMandir, Paintings, Nagarparkar, Heritage of Sindh

in the sub-continent with a continuity through Sultanate, Mughal and colonial periods (Flugel & Ahmad, 2018) for that there are references not only in the written sources but also in the material evidence in the form of built heritage. Before the partition of the sub-continent, Jaina population comprised almost 1% of the total population of this region that dramatically almost fell to zero during the chaotic periods of 1940s, 1970s, and finally 1990s. A very few Jaina households are still living in Mithi, Islamkot and Nagarparkar, without any operational centers for religious practices.

Jainas have an ancient tradition of compiling *pattavalis*, or the memoirs of the *sangha* members, that contain their history. They have been doing this for centuries with more interest and details (Roy, 1984), as a religious duty to maintain *Bhandara*, i.e. the treasury of *Tirthas* (Thapar, 2002). One medium of preserving their history and religious

## Background

Sindh has millennia old history of culture, society and religion, Jainism being a noticeable chapter of it, since its presence in the region can be traced back in the remote past (Lambrick, 1941). Tharparkar was a suitable place in many ways for the Jain sanghas e.g. for practicing ahimsa and brahmacharya. It also provided Jaina merchants with a great opportunity to trade through the ancient port of Parinagar (Ojha, 1966). Though some folklores suggest much earlier Jaina existence in the region, their recorded historical presence comes in limelight in the earlier period of Muslim occupation

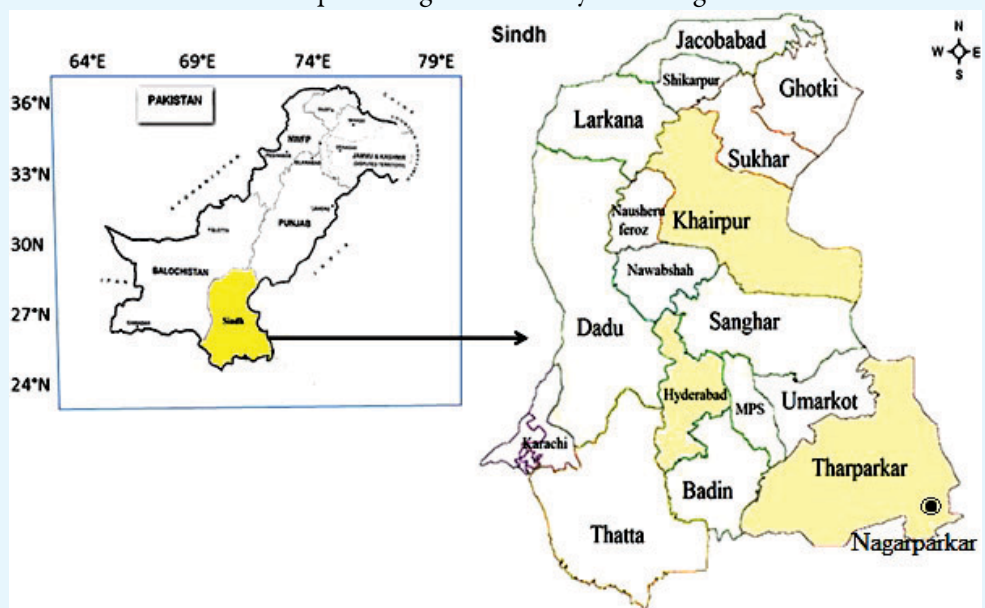


Figure 1 Location of Nagarparkar (Google)

tradition is the depiction of such historical or legendary narrations in the form of mural paintings in their temples. With no doubt *Jaina Temple of Nagarparkar* is the best example of such depictions in Pakistan. Locally known as *Bazaar Mandir*, *Jaina temple of Nagarparkar* is located on the South-West of the Nagarparkar city, at the foot of Karoonjhar Hills (see fig. 2).

## History and Importance of Paintings

Art in the form of paintings, as compared to the sculptural art (as defined characters), is much older.



Figure 2 Bazaar Mandir, Aerial View (Google Earth)

The paintings considered to be the earliest are from *Bhimbetka* rock shelters of Madhya Pradesh, dated about 30,000 before present (Klostermaier, 1933). On the other hand, Indus valley civilization seems to be barren in this regard with no paintings at all (Brown, 1959) other than the painted motifs on pottery. After this gap until the Mauryan period there is a continuous tradition of ever evolving painted art, religious and secular in the sub-continent from the paintings of *Ajanta* (2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E.) up till now (Rowland, 1953). *Jaina* art tracks the same timeline and thus advanced the same way with embellishments of several subordinate deities between 800 C.E. to 1200 C.E. and miniature paintings around 1500 C.E. (Bruhn, 2011). The fresco paintings of the *Jaina Temple of Nagar Parkar* contain both of these superfluities that suggest a passé later than the 15<sup>th</sup> century C.E. for the erection or at least the artistic treatment of the temple.

Artistic treatment of a temple has a significant role in converging the feelings and devotion of the worshipper. Paintings also aid in narrating the religious stories and consequently the visitors and the worshippers become familiar with the lives and aims of *Jinas* and religious mythos (Bhattacharya, 1939). The artists of Tharparkar have adorned most parts of the temple with painted figures of religious leaders and their stories in the form of friezes and stepped landscape paintings (multiple scenes on different parts of a wall) to achieve the above-



Figure 3 Bazaar Mandir Nagar Parkar



mentioned purpose. In the following passages the detailed description and possible identification of the paintings of the temple has been presented with an analytical note and conclusion at the end.

## 1.0. Paintings in *Gambhara*

*Garbhagriha* or (in the case of a *Jaina* temple) *Gambhara* i.e. the sanctum is the holiest part of a temple, where a believer is supposed to be at the height of devoutness, calmness, concentration and repudiation of worldly thoughts. To attain it, sanctum is adorned with many sacred and persuasive elements that can be seen in the sanctum of this temple. Apart from the empty niches (that once probably contained the sculptures of the *tirthankara*), ceiling (now covered with the ashes of smoke), floor (with its marble tiles being removed) and the wall above the shelf on the Eastern side that exhibit no painted motifs, all other parts of the *gambhara* have a blue background. Intermediate zone between the stepped-domical roof and side-walls display some marks of painted motifs distorted by a thin layer of smoke.

### 1.1. Eastern Wall of *Gambhara*

Between the central brackets in the cornice area on the Eastern wall of the *gambhara*, there is an eight-pointed star painted in red in a yellow circle. Such an eight-pointed star appear in the art of different religions to depict life, from birth to death.

The portion of the Eastern wall below the *murtisthana* has been divided into recessed and projected panels. Each panel has been adorned with the paintings of

(left to right) a parrot, an elephant, a woman fanning the lower niche in the center that probably is a secondary *murtisthana* (now empty). On the other side of this assemblage (left to right) there is another woman fanning the central niche, an elephant and a lion (head and shoulders are damaged) (see fig.4). All the figures are heading towards the niche. Parrot on the outer side is holding a bud of flower with stem in its beak. Elephants on either side, holding chauri in their trunks, have been painted in motion.

These panels (from top to bottom) have been divided into seven friezes (see fig. 4). The first frieze at the top is a floral band with the flowers of different colors with a blue background. The second frieze from the top display petals of diverse colors. The third frieze contains a geometrical motif in the form of two zigzag spires intertwined with each other. The fourth and the central broader frieze has the assemblage of attendants discussed above. The figures of the attendants have been decorated with flowers to fill in the space in the panels. Fifth band contains a frieze of chess board pattern with a red background. The sixth band is a frieze of botanical motifs in the form of a yellow vine with green leaves and a red background. The last frieze has been left unadorned.

### 1.2. Northern and Southern Walls of *Gambhara*

The horizontal shelf in the *gambhara* runs on the Northern and Southern walls nearly to their two-thirds. There is an empty niche imitating as arches on both the walls above this shelf. On the spandrels of both of these arches flying female figures with wings



Figure 4 Assembly of Attendants (Eastern Wall of *Gambhara*)

wearing ornamented gown and pajamas, crown on their heads, and necklace around their neck have been painted. Women on the Western side of both the walls hold musical instrument in their hands. While the other women hold garlands in their hands. Under these figures (on the eastern corner) there are painted figures of *Svetambara* monks in white robes, covering their mouth with *mukhpati*, that is a small piece of cloth they wear to avoid inhale of any *jiva* from the air. The monk on the Southern wall holds a *chauri* in his right hand raised in the air and a lamp in his left hand. The other monk on Northern wall has a *chauri* in his right hand that rests on his shoulder and a bouquet in his left hand (see fig. 5).

### 1.3. Western Wall of *Gambhara* (inside *Gambhara*)

On either side of the door frame of the *gambhara* a male attendant has been painted with bare torso and dhoti or lungi as a lower garment (see fig. 7). Their ornaments include armlets and necklaces. *Chauri* is in their right hand that rests on right shoulder and *khamandlu* or the water-pot in their left.

### 1.4. Western Wall of *Gambhara* (outside)



Figure 5 Upper Half of the Southern Wall of *Gambhara*

In the lower portion of both the side-walls there is a square opening in the center. A *Svetambara* monk in white robe, wearing *mukhpati*, has been painted on the side of this opening on either side-walls, seated with their left knee raised, holding a *mala* in their hand (see fig. 6).

Overhead the *gambhara's* door frame on the outer side a distinctive and well-preserved assemblage of attendants heading towards a deity has been painted (see fig. 8). Four-handed *Shri Lakshmi* is the central figure, who is riding on her elephant ride (with a *chauri* in its tusk). She is holding minor elephants in her two raised hands, while a golden pot or *khamandlu* in her other left hand and a *mala* in her lower right hand. She is wearing a golden crown ornamented with pearls, earrings, necklaces, *malas*, and bracelets. The label above her reads her name as: *Shri Lakshmi Ji*. On either side of *Lakshmi* two horse riders carrying a *chauri* in their one hand that rests on their shoulders and a golden pot in the other hand have been

painted. Gamboling horses of these riders have been portrayed as if they are crushing the enemy who carry sword and shield in their hands. Next to these horse riders there are mythical zoomorphic feminine figures, each on one side, with eagle feet, snail-spire-like thighs, holding *chauri* in the hand that rests on their shoulder and a *khamandlu* in the other hand.





Figure 6 Svetambara Monk (Lower Half Northern Wall Gambhara)



Figure 7 Shrivaka (Western Wall)

Figure 8 Lakshmi with attendants and Tirthankara







*Figure 9 Door frame of Gambhara*





Next to these figures there are painted shrine models of *tirthas* with *Rishabanatha* i.e. the first *tirthankara* on the right side and *Ajitnatha* who is the second *tirthankara* on the left side in seated posture with their respective rides i.e. bull and elephant carved on it (Gupte, 1972). This assemblage has been framed inside an ornamental arch segmented by pillars with twisted shafts. Above the arch a pair of peacocks and on the spandrels a pair of flower roundels have been painted.

On the pilasters of the *gambhara*-doorframe, four seated *tirthankaras* on each side have been painted. on the bases of these pilasters painted sculptures of a *Yaksha* (right) and a *Yakshini* (left) with their elephant rides have been carved. The doorframe has been ornamented with botanical motifs. Above the doorframe there is a painted marble sculpture of a seated *tirthankara* (see fig.9).

## 2.0. Paintings of *Antrala*

*Antrala* has been decorated with a number of figures and motifs with an overall blue background. Both the side walls of *antrala*, known as *praggriva*, have identical treatment. In the upper part of the painting, an eagle, flanked by flowers, has been painted. Under the eagle there is a *swastika* painted in yellow (see

fig.10). *Swastika* is the sign of the seventh *tirthankara* i.e. *Suparshvanatha* (Bhattacharya, 1939).

In the scene painted below *swastika* a *Sthanakvasi* *Svetambara* monk in white robe (that seems to be in a yellowish orange tone probably because of the discoloring of the painting) wearing *mukhpati* on his mouth is sitting on a decorated sofa (see fig.11). The monk is holding *shastra* in his left hand while pointing the index figure of his right hand in an addressing pose in front of a seated *shravaka* or a commoner. Other articles that can be seen in the scene are: a *Khamandlu* or the water pot under the sofa, a small table in front of the monk with a *pichi* or the broom on it, a tripod on the table with *shastras* hanging with it, and a box that probably contains rest of the *shastras*.

Figure 10 Swastika and Eagle (*praggriva*) {colors enhanced}

Figure 11 Svetambara Monk and Shravaka (*antrala*)







On the top of the niche on *antrala* wall, *Nakoda Bhairava* (a male guardian deity) riding his elephant ride (Aukland, 2010) with two flanking female attendants (see fig.12) have been painted on high relief sculpture. *Nakoda Bhairava* is revered in western Rajasthan that is adjacent to district Tharparkar. He is more popular in the *Svetambara* Jains than in *Digambara* sect. Presence of its image in Bazaar mandir gives strong evidence about the Rajasthani *Svetambara* affiliation of the temple.

On the lower half of the *antrala* wall a mustached male figure (probably a local *raja*) seated on a low seat has been painted. A multicusp arch frames the seated *raja*. On the spandrels of the multicusp arch celestial winged female figures with *mala* in their

hands have been shown. Further below this frame a *chauri* bearer elephant with some botanical motifs around it has been depicted. Overall frame painted on *antrala* wall has colorful margins and floral motifs.

### 3.0. Paintings of the *Mandapa*

In the vertical cross-section of the *mandapa*, three distinctive parts i.e. dome; cornice and walls can be seen. The walls have been transformed into an arcade of 8 arches around an octagonal plan. Each part of this arcade, dome and cornice has been painted with distinctive scenes and motifs that have been described in the following paragraphs separately.





Figure 12 Nakoda Bhairava with female attendants

### 3.1. The Dome of *Mandapa*

The *mandapa* dome is made up of layers of dressed stone panels set in the form of progressively narrowing seven circles making seven layers one above the other with the key-disc or the plaque at the top. Each of the circular level was decorated with miniature painted scenes taken from *Jaina* folklore. Most of these are now too fragmentary to comprehend the subject matter depicted in these paintings due to the withering of the painted material. The available in-situ details confirm that all the circular levels had figural depictions in the form of continuous friezes. Each of the friezes is further divided into a number of registers containing a variety of scenes. A few scenes and figures that can be identified are given in the following table.

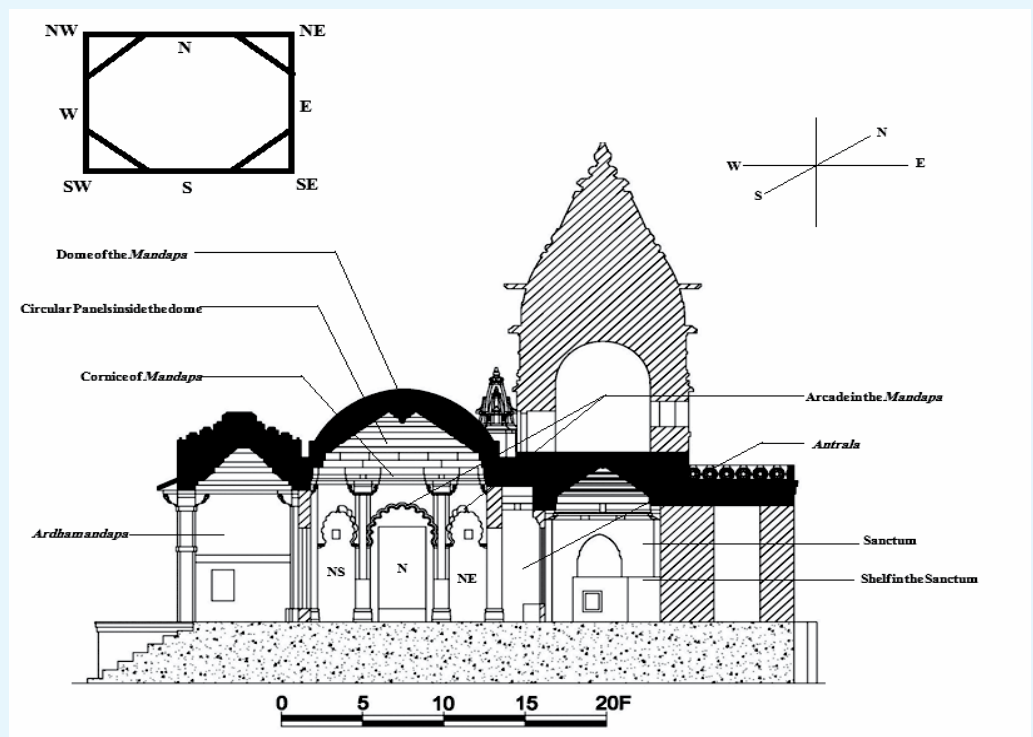







Figure 13 Section of the Temple with the plan of mandapa in the offset (by Ashfaq Jutt)






No.	Painting	Image	Location
1.	Botanical motifs		Sixth layer from outside
2.	A pair of elephants with their tusks twisted together		Forth layer from outside
3.	<i>Tirthankara</i> seated on a podium framed in pillars flanked by female devotees		Third layer from outside



No.	Painting	Image	Location
4. ■	Two seated <i>Tirthankaras</i> framed in pillars with twisted shafts		Third layer from outside
5. ■	Female figures wearing Indian dress and ornaments	Too withered to be seen in the image	Second layer from outside
6. ■	Heaps of cooking pots, two storey building in Western style, multi-storey buildings with female devotees on different storeys holding devotional good	Image given below 	Outer most layer



No.	Painting	Image	Location
7.	Palm trees, horse rider with a servant holding an umbrella followed by women and another raja behind them sitting in a <i>doli</i> on a bull cart welcomed by a <i>dholki</i> bearer	Image given below (next section of the frieze given above) 	the outer most layer
8.	few animals, <i>tabla</i> bearer facing a winged female figure with a crown attended by a sitting man followed by a bearded horse rider with a servant fanning him	Image given below 	Outer most layer
9.	A few mustached and other beard men with hats, two much diminished winged characters playing guitar.	Image given below 	Outer most layer



No.	Painting	Image	Location
10.	A pair of bulls carrying a cart, with a rider, two females in a <i>doli</i> , same is repeated behind this carriage and armed men are marching in the end		Outer most layer

Depiction of Tirthankaras, figures of devotees depicted in yatra procession and animal figures augmented with floral and geometric patterns on

the inner side of the dome has its parallel in Gauri Temple of Tharparkar with a much better state of preservation (see fig. 14).

Figure 14 Murals on Mandapa Dome of Gauri Temple, Tharparkar







Figure 15 South-Eastern Cornice-Panel

### 3.2. Wall Cornice of *Mandapa*

Wall cornice of *Mandapa* has been divided into five decorative horizontal bands. There are eight such bands corresponding to the arcade of the *mandapa*. Most of the painted scenes on these panels are too dull and withered to be recognized.

The figure of *Surya* with his seven-headed horse ride (Gupte, 1972) has been painted on the right side of the panel above the eastern wall (see fig.15). There is a mustached horse rider on the left of the same panel wearing a

golden headdress. Between these two riders a plant with flowers, has been painted. The lower band has floral motifs on the sides with a projected square at the center in which a painted deer is seated in the crescent. South-Eastern panel bears a scene with a 7-tusked white celestial elephant (see fig.16). A male figure is sitting in the *doli* on the elephant, followed by an attendant wearing a *lungi*. In front of the elephant there is a painted shrine model of a *Nagara*-style *tirtha* with a *tirthankara* seated inside.

Another important representation is in the form of a rectangular water-pond with four projections. An aquatic-bird carrying a fish in its beak, a snake, a peacock, and a rodent have been painted around the pond. At the center of the panel the second *tirthankara* *Ajitanatha* in sitting position with his ride i.e. an elephant has been painted in a roundel. The pond-scene is repeated on the other side of the roundel. Five men carrying a *raja* in a *doli* have been shown coming towards the *Ajitanatha* for probably a pilgrimage. Below the *tirthankara*-bearing roundel a mustached male face on the projected square with

Figure 16 *Surya*







Figure 17 Male  
Figures on  
Mandapa Pillars

is younger (see fig.17 left and middle). The faces of shafts that face each other have paintings of *Svetambara* monks wearing white shrouds and *mukhpati* standing on a box with a cushion on it (see fig.17 right). On the base of each of these two pillars, a motif similar to the pistil of a flower with a *chakra* within it (instead of an ovule), have been painted (see fig.17 right). On the western face of the square part another *Svetambara* monk has been painted.



Figure 18 Rajasthani  
Dress in a Wall  
Painting Udaipur,  
Rajasthan

On the upper octagonal part there are winged and without wings female figures in traditional *Rajasthani* dress wearing heavy jewelry (see fig. 18) that resembles very much with traditional Rajasthani dress (see fig. 19). *Surya* (the sun-god) in human form has been painted on the capital, with his seven headed horse-ride with the label in *Devanagari* (see fig.20). On the capital of another pillar, a fourhanded mustached male riding a horse has been painted with the label *Soma* i.e. moon god (see fig.21). Comparable characters have been depicted on other pillars too but the details of these paintings are not recognizable.

flanking floral motifs has been painted. Paintings on the other such panels of the cornice area have been withered to a greater extent.

### 3.3. Pillars of *Mandapa*

Pillars of *mandapa*, with square lower half of the shaft and octagonal upper half of the shaft, support the multicusped arches of the hall. They have been adorned with human figures, and botanical and zoomorphic motifs. The faces of the square part of the shafts towards *antrala* have been painted with the figures of labeled *shravaka* (one on each side) in devotional posture standing on a podium, in off-white long gowns, loose trousers, green turbans with white strips and green scarf bound on waist and held in arms. *Shravaka* on the northern pillar is an old man while the other one



Figure 19 Traditional  
Rajasthani Dress (Wall  
Painting, Udaipur,  
Rajasthan)



Figure 20 Surya on his horse-ride



Figure 21 Soma on his Horse-ride



### 3.4. Walls of *Mandapa*

The basic square plan of the *mandapa* has been converted into an octagon with the addition of archways at the corners (see fig.13). Therefore, the description of the paintings in these parts have been given under the heading of their respective archways in the following paragraphs.

#### 3.4.1. Eastern archway

Eastern archway leads to the sanctum through *antrala*. Above the apex of the multicusped arch there is a sculpture of a painted male figure in high-relief playing a musical instrument. On the spandrels, on either side of the male figure, two winged female figures playing musical instruments have been depicted. These women wear crown on their heads, bangles in their arms, earrings, *malas* around their necks and loose trousers (see fig.22). Different floral motifs have been drawn to fill-in the gaps.



Figure 22 Eastern Archway of Mandapa

#### 3.4.2. South-Eastern Archway

South-Eastern archway covers Eastern and Southern walls' joining corners (see fig.23). Eastern corner-wall has been halved by two different scenes painted on it. Upper part of this part of the wall depicts a scene with an elephant, on a high platform with steps on one side, is trying to uproot a tree housing birds, rodents and a bear on its branches with the help of its trunk. A layman is trying to reach a branch of

the same tree with his stretched arm, and a deer is standing on the ground. The lower part of this corner bears a beautiful framed portrait of a *Raja* standing on a pillow-podium. He has been painted wearing a turban decorated with pearls, blue gown with golden borders, armlets, anklets, and a shawl on his shoulders. He is also carrying a staff and a dagger in his hands.

The corner of the Southern-wall in this archway also has two parts with respect to the painted scenes on it. The upper part has a niche in it that forms a shrine model topped by a blue dome and a golden finial. The lower part of this corner has the portrayal of three Nagara-style temples (built on a raised brick-platform) with green domes and golden *sikharas* housing four *tirthankaras*. Below the platform, there are some small mounds with trees, peacocks and other animals, a shrine, commoners (climbing the steps), and a nude *Sadhu* in the center of these mounds. Below these mounds an assemblage of eight people (i.e. from left to right) including two *shravakas* in green and white gowns respectively, a *Svetambara* monk in white robe holding *Kamandalu*, two female devotees in blue frocks and green *dopattas*, a male horse rider followed by two attendants have been painted approaching the shrines probably for offering pilgrimage to the *tirthankaras*. Most of the characters and a few of the other elements in the scenery have labels in *Devanagari*.

South-Eastern arch has been with painted with different decorative motifs including a painted flower in high relief with a winged female figure on either side in the spandrel area. Both are wearing a golden head dress adorned with pearls, and rest of the jewelry and dress same as the other similar figures mentioned above. The left one is holding a pair of *tabla* and the other a *sitar* in her hands. Spandrel area has botanical motifs.

#### 3.4.3. Southern Archway

Much of the painted part of this archway has been withered. It is too fragmentary to be described in detail. The bits and pieces of the paintings on this area reveal parallels of the painted scenes and figures in them as mentioned above.

#### 3.4.4. South-Western Archway

Winged female figures on the spandrels holding musical instruments in their hands and a few floral motifs are the only painted elements that can hardly





*Figure 23 South-Eastern Corner of the Mandapa*





Figure 24 pendulum Clock in SW archway

Figure 25 Raja on NW Archway



be recognized in this part of the hall due to the fading of colors. Southern corner has a painted niche in the form of a shrine-model and a procession scene in much withered state below the niche. Western corner wall of this archway has a very unique feature that helps in setting a time period of this temple's construction i.e. a pendulum clock mimicking a clock tower with a dial clock with Roman numerals. The clock is set at 6 O'clock (see fig.24). The lower part of the clock is an actual niche in the wall. Below the niche there is a painted figure of *Raja* in a white gown standing in a devotional posture on a raised podium.

### 3.4.5. Western Archway

Western archway forms the main entrance to the *mandapa*. No identifiable element survives in this part.

### 3.4.6. North-Western Archway

Western corner-wall covered by the North-Western archway has a niche with all the elements in the painted area diminished almost completely. There is a portrait of a *Raja*, similar to the one mentioned above, below the niche (see fig.25). On the Northern corner-wall there is a scene painted under the niche (see fig. 26) that appears to be a representation of an urban street with a few multi and other single storey buildings, temples and a nude female taking elms from a monk in yellow cloak, holding a *pichi*, standing a step higher. On the left a circus or some other game scene has been depicted. There is a large frame of bamboo. People are trying to climb it. Drum beaters are beating drums.

### 3.4.7. Northern Archway

Northern archway frames the side entrance to the *mandapa*. Most of the painted motifs on this archway have been diminished. Tip of the multicusped arch is topped by a painted peacock on high relief. Spandrels have been festooned with botanical motifs. On the left side of the arch, a white seated bull, a golden standing bull and two others, pulling a farm cart with a man standing by the side have been painted in a scene. Very diminished traces of more bulls above the door frame can hardly be seen. Under the right springer a scene of mountains has been painted. Two lions, one on a mountain and the other on the foothills, have also been painted. A rabbit, a few trees and other motifs are also part of this composition.





Figure 26 Scene of an Urban Street

### 3.4.8. North-Eastern Archway

The corner of the NE archway that overlaps the Eastern wall has been divided into two parts like other corners (see fig.27). The upper quarter has an empty niche at the center surrounded by a scene of *tirtha yatra*. At the top there is a painted figure of a seated *tirthankara* (probably the first *tirthankara* *Rishabanatha*) on a high platform. There is a *Svetambara* monk climbing the steppes on the side of the mountain. Two bulls (the ride of the first *tirthankara* (Gupte, 1972)) standing below the high platform have turned their faces towards the *tirthankara* seat. Below this layer, two female devotees have been painted in *prarthana* posture. In the same scene another *tirthankara* seated below the niche has

been portrayed. Trees, palms, and shrubs have been used to beautify the landscape. The lower larger frame of this corner represents portray of a *Raja* (with his bust damaged altogether) framed in wide floral band. *Raja* stands on a cushion podium, wearing blue gown, armlets, anklets, bracelet, and a green shawl on his shoulders that is also tied around his waist. He is holding a golden scepter in his left hand and a dagger in his right hand (see fig.27 left).

Corner of the Northern wall inside NE archway again, has been divided into two parts. The upper half has an empty niche (forming a shrine model) has been capped by a dome with a finial. Lower part of the actual niche has been flanked by a pair of painted niches.

The lower half portrays a very important scene i.e. all the 24 *tirthankaras* seated on podiums that carry their respective ride-signs. They have been arranged in two rows, 12 in each, in a *tirtha* raised on a brick platform with steppes on the left. *Tirtha* has four domes. With their finials *Jaina* flags have been painted. A *Svetambara* monk (on the upper step) and three *shravakas* (on the lower steps) have been painted as if they are trying to approach the *tirtha*. The further lower part bears a beautiful scene of a hilly forest in which animal figures (a rhinoceros, an antelope, a lion, and a few rodents) many botanical elements adorn the sight with a *Sadhu* sitting in the middle (see fig.27 right).



Figure 27 Paintings in the NE Archway





Figure 28 Painting and Gujarati inscription on the Southern wall of Satsangh Hall

## 4.0. Monochrome Paintings

The outer walls of the temple complex have been bejeweled with the crimson color band having botanical motifs that runs through the length of the walls and some painted figures and friezes. On the wall between the two entrances of the *satsangha* or the community hall (on the Southern side) there is a beautiful painting with three figures and a *Guajjarati* inscription in a painted frame (see fig.28) with botanical motifs. The figures include two women wearing traditional dress and heavy ornaments and a zoomorphic animal figure of special interest. The animal has the body of a lion, head of an elephant, and a small elephant at the tip of its tusk. There is a peacock riding on its back, and another four small elephants under each of its feet.

On the Eastern wall of the community hall, a mythological nude winged figure of a female with her head being completely eroded, riding on a lion has been painted (see fig.29).

On the outer side of the front wall of the temple, i.e. the Western wall, a beautiful assembly of a parade scene, with horse and elephant riders and other people walking on foot has been painted in crimson color. Different botanical motifs including potted plants have been painted on intervals.

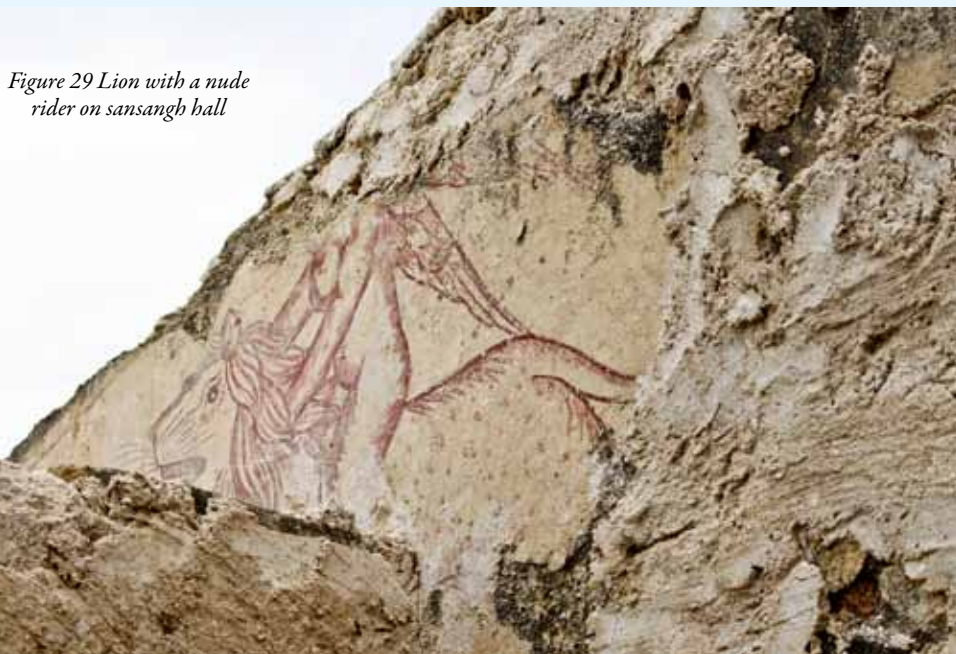


Figure 29 Lion with a nude rider on sansangh hall



## 5.0. Factors Influencing Paintings of Bazaar Mandir

In 1843 Tharparkar region was merged into larger Kutch political agency. Earlier than that in the British period Sindh was a part of Bombay presidency (Pakistan Emergency Analysis, A Profile of District Tharparkar, 2014). Hindus living in Tharparkar have links with the Indian state of Gujarat and Rajasthan. *Parkari* people have been divided through borders on both the sides since the partition. *Parkari* culture still retains distinctiveness of its Eastern neighborhood (Soharvardi, 2012). Adjacent to Nagarparkar, Indian villages of Balasar, Desalpar and towns of Tharrad, Vav etc. Presently have notable *Jaina* population and *tirthas*. Furthermore, *Jaina* temples of Palitana on *Shatrunjaya* hills, Mount *Girnar* in *Junagarh*, *Mabudi* in *Gandhinagar*, *Shri Mahavira Ji* in *Karauli* and Mount Abu in *Sirohi* and *Shankheshwarin Patan* (Jainism in India, 2016) are the most sacred *Jaina* pilgrimage sites situated in the adjacent states of Tharparkar district i.e. *Gujarat* state of India. Such historical, religious and cultural ties suggest an integral link between the two sides from remote times. Some Hindu Brahmins of Nagarparkar use religious texts and historical accounts of their local community written in *Gujarati*. And as the strongest evidence, the *Gujarati* inscription on the Southern wall of the community hall (see fig.28) and the marble *Gujarati* inscription confirm Eastern affiliation without any doubt.

The above arguments provide adequate evidence to believe that the *Jaina* community of Nagarparkar and the artists who produced the exemplary masterpiece in the form of Bazaar temple were influenced by *Gujarati* and *Rajasthani* School of art.

## 6.0. Analysis of the Paintings

Bazaar temple, Nagarparkar has probably been more decorated with the paintings of religious significance than any other temple of Pakistan. Except a few damaged and some intentionally left blank parts, almost every corner of the *vimana* from inside and many parts of *prakara* (i.e. the outer wall) have been beautified with friezes, portrays, complex scenes, images of reverend figures and motifs of different variety.

After setting the issue of regional affiliation the next problem to be solved is of religious and more precisely sectarian affiliation. According to the recent

study of the *Jaina* Heritage of Pakistan (carried out by a team of SOAS, UoL and NJC, Pakistan); many *Jaina* merchant families of this region influenced by the teachings of *Jinakuśalasūri* started following *Kharataragaccha* tradition of *Svetambara* sect, which consequently became the leading *Jaina* tradition of Tharparkar (Flugel & Ahmad, 2018). Bazaar Mandir (*Jaina* temple Nagarparkar) seems to be affiliated with the same tradition. Though no documentary evidence recovered so far confirms the fact, the paintings of the temple depicting *sadhus* in white robes at least verify it to be a *Svetambara* temple.

*Jains* usually dedicate their temples to a deity, most probably to a *tirthankara*. The temple in question has Bulls (ride of first *tirthankara Adinatha* also known as *Rishibhnatha*) Elephants (Ride of the second *tirthankara Ajitanatha*), ,swastika (symbol of the 7<sup>th</sup> *tirthankara Suparshvanatha*), moon (symbol of the 8<sup>th</sup> *tirthankara Chandraprabha*), rhinoceros (ride of the 11<sup>th</sup> *tirthankara Shreyanasanatha*), deer (ride of 16<sup>th</sup> *tirthankara Shantinatha*), fish (symbol of 18<sup>th</sup> *tirthankara Aranatha*) and lion (ride of the 24<sup>th</sup> *tirthankara Mahavira*) (Bhattacharya, 1939) in painted scenes, elephants and lions being more prominent and frequent.

In the assemblage painted under the sanctum-shelf a combination of painted two elephants, and a lion along with a parrot points to the temple's dedication to *Ajitanatha* and *Mahavira*. On the top of the sanctum's entrance there is another assemblage with the figure of *Lakshmi* seated on her elephant ride and attendants approaching her (see fig.8). All the painted figures also propose the portrayal of the fourteen auspicious visions of *tirthankara's* mother that she dreams before *tirthankara's* birth. The visions include the sight of includes *Shri Lakshmi*, pool of water with fish in it, a bull, a lion, an elephant, a pair of garlands, *Surya*, *Chandra*, fire, flag, lotus pool, celestial ship and a throne (Stevenson, 1915).

Monochrome march scenes with assemblages of elephant and horse riders painted on *prakara* is unique in Tharparkar and other *Jaina* temples of Pakistan as well.

Another question to be resolved is establishing the time

period of the Temple. Though the propagation of *Kharataragaccha* hints to a period somewhere in Mughal period but there is more evidence in the paintings as well. The paintings of a pendulum clock on *mandapa* wall (see fig.24) and armed men painted



in a frieze on *mandapa* dome (see fig. in entry 10 of the table). Pendulum and balance spring clock were invented by Christiaan Huygen in the mid of 17<sup>th</sup> century (Milham, 1945) and hints that the temple was constructed sometime in or after the 18<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

## 7.0. Conclusion

The analysis based on the data available as the painted depictions in the temple in question and the available written sources provide evidence for the fact that the Bazaar Temple, Nagarparkar is a *Svetambara Jaina* temple without a specific-deity affiliation. *Ajitanatha*, *Mahavira*, *Lakshmi* and *Nakoda Bhairava* are the important characters to whom the *Jaina* community of Nagarparkar probably dedicated the temple though they revered all the 24 *tirthankaras* of *Jaina* religion. The temple seems to fall in the category of late-medieval temples built between the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. The *Jaina* community of Nagarparkar was a fraction of greater *Jaina* community of Gujarat state. The patrons, artisans, artists and the *sangha* members related with the temple were more inclined to Gujarati School of art and architecture than that of Punjab or *Gandhara*. Sindh Endowment Fund has been doing significant restoration work of Bazaar temple and other *Jaina* temples of Tharparkar. The need is to carry on such restoration works with greater expertise in the field of religious art of the subcontinent and to spread awareness in the locals to protect national heritage as it belongs to every citizen of Pakistan.

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