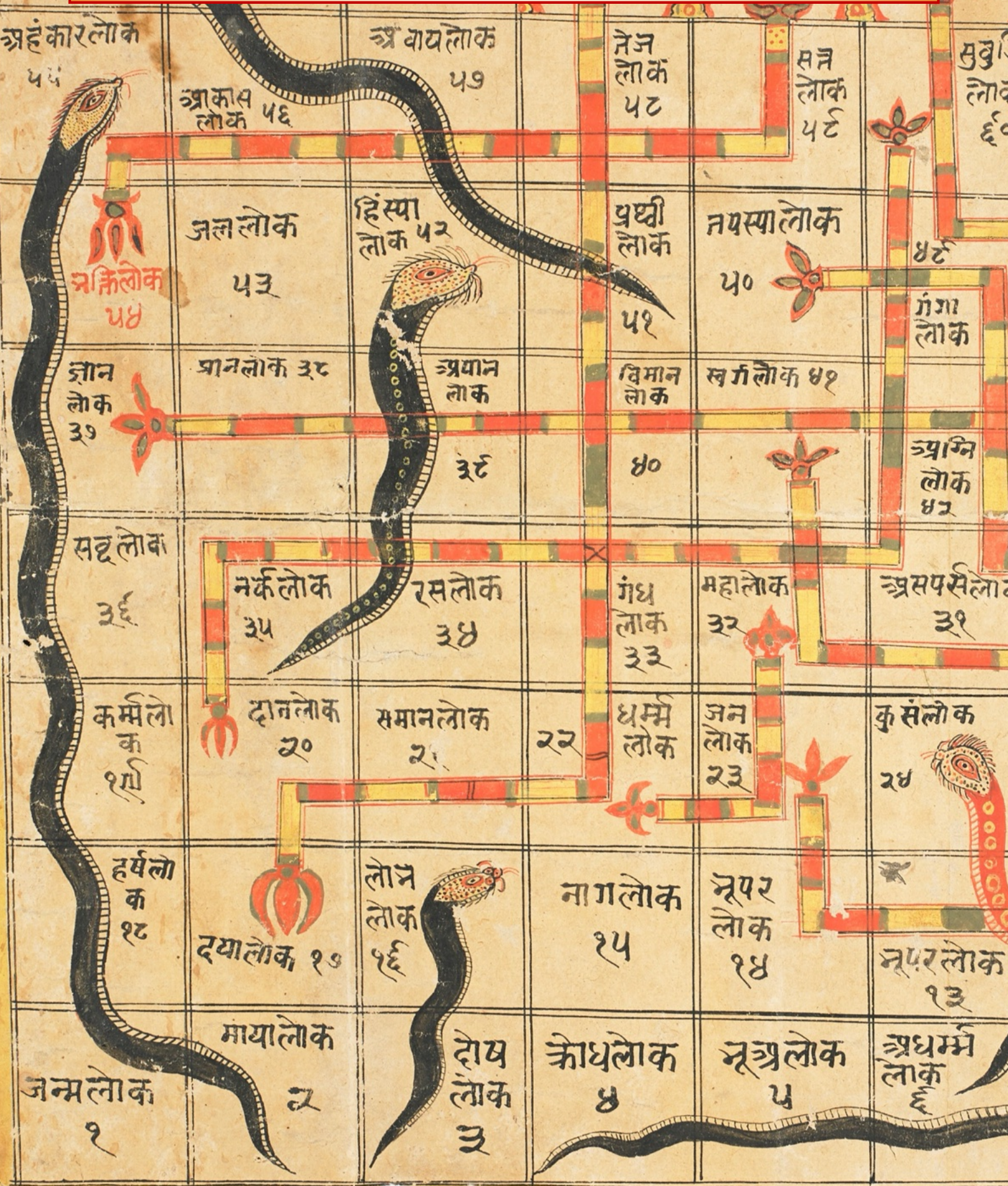


Jain Art and Tantrism

کمنڈ

Consulenze d'Arte





Jain Art and Tantrism

20th December 2023 - 6 pm CET

texts: Isabella Nardi (Jain artworks); Ilaria Bellucci (Tantric Art)

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1.
Candraprabha
Sandstone, 15 x 10 x 6 cm
North or Central India
8th–10th century

This is a representation of Candraprabha, the eighth Tirthankara, sitting in *padmāsana* position on a lion throne. The garment covering his throne displays his cognizance, the crescent moon (*candra*). Under the throne appears the *dharma-cakra* or the wheel of the law, an important symbol also found in Buddhist sculpture with which the Jains shared several iconographic features.

The Jina is protected by a three-tiered umbrella, symbolic of royalty and divinity. Branches of a tree with fan-shaped leaves rise from behind the enlightened figure. Next to the parasol, on the right, is a celestial figure. Flanking the Jina there are two naked figures which suggest that the sculpture pertains to the Digambara sect. The sculpture was produced in North or Central India between 8th and 10th century.

600/1000€



2.
A Jina standing in *kāyotsarga*
Copper alloy, 22.5 x 5.5 cm
Karnataka
9th century

This icon represents a Jina in *kāyotsarga* (abandonment of the body), a standing meditative posture indicating he is free from all bondage. His unadorned naked body exemplifies a perfect blissful state and the renunciation of the material world. The icon pertains to the Digambara sect which prospered in the Deccan Plateau.

The Jina features a youthful naked body with broad shoulders, long arms reaching down to the knees and smooth skin with delicate lines around the neck (*trivali*); his hair is arranged into spiral curls and his elongated earlobes reach down to the shoulders. These are conventional iconographic markers of a superior being. His face is heavily abraded due to continuous worship.

The icon stands on a round plinth on which there is no indication of the Jina's cognizance (*lāñcana*), thus the identity of the figure remains uncertain.

5.000/7.000€



3.

Pārśva flanked by two standing Jinas

Copper alloy, 23.4 x 15 x 7.5 cm

Gujarat

9th–10th century

This composition is known as *tri-tīrthika*, an image of a Jina flanked by two smaller standing Tīrthaṅkaras. The central figure sitting on the lion throne is Pārśva, whose head is protected by a seven-headed serpent surmounted by a parasol. The two flanking Tīrthaṅkaras stand in *kāyotsarga* posture and are surrounded by a halo and beneath a parasol. They wear loincloths indicating that the altarpiece belongs to the Śvetāmbaras tradition. Even though there are no specific emblems to identify them, we may assume that they represent Ṛṣabha and Mahāvīra, the first and last of the twenty-four Jinas, whose depiction would imply the presence of all the remaining Tīrthaṅkaras.

The plinth displays other interesting figures: below the throne there are the eight planets (*aṣṭagraha*) which had a protective function. On the sides there are four attendant figures holding emblems in their hands. The male figure sitting in the lower left of the composition may be *yakṣa* Sarvānubhūti, holding a citron and a bag of money in the form of a cornucopia. He is paired with *yakṣī* Ambikā, who is sitting on the right and who seems to be holding a child. The two remaining female figures, of which one is riding a horse, are unidentified.

The style of the altarpiece reminisces some of the bronzes discovered in Akota, near the city of Baroda in Gujarat in 1951 and published in Shah, 1959. Akota was the site of a Jain temple where such bronzes were installed and worshipped. Sixty-eight of them were recovered and they are now in the collection of the Baroda Museum.

Provenance:

J.R. Belmont Collection, Basel, before 1966

Pan-Asian Collection

Published in Christie's catalogue Indian and Southeast Asian Art, New York, 25 March 2004, lot 52, p. 42

References:

Shah, 1959.

Kumar, 1996.

Granoff (ed.), 2009, pp. 196–197.

Krüger, 2011.

20.000/30.000€



4.

Ensemble with twenty-four Jinas

Stone (chlorite schist), 19.6 x 12.5 x 5.5 cm

Karnataka

10th–11th century

This stone sculpture portrays a central Jina surrounded by the other twenty-three Jinas in a composition known as *caturviṃśati-paṭṭa* (tablet of twenty-four). All the Tīrthaṅkaras are sitting in *padmāsana* (lotus posture) with the hands resting on the lap in the meditation gesture of *dhyānamudrā*. They are all nude, as prescribed by the Digambara iconographic tradition.

Apart from his conspicuous size, the importance of the main Tīrthaṅkara is emphasized by other auspicious visual attributes: his head is encircled by a halo and protected by a three-tier parasol; on either side of his head there are fly-whisks (symbols of royalty or divinity) and his neck is marked by the three folds of skin (*trivali*).

In the absence of an emblem (*lāñcana*), the identity of the central figure rests on speculative grounds. There are two identifiable figures on the side of the central Tīrthaṅkara: on the left there is Pārśva, the twenty-third Jina, with a seven-hood serpent on his head; on the right is Supārśva, the seventh Jina, with a five-hood serpent above his head. The base of the sculpture has an inscription in Kannada and on either side of the text there are two unidentified figures.

While there are several copper alloy *caturviṃśati-paṭṭas*, the same representations in stone are more unusual. For comparison, see Granoff (ed.), 2009, p. 182.

3.000/5.000€



5.

Rṣabha attended by the other Jinas

Copper alloy, 26.8 x 16.4 x 8.5 cm

Gujarat

12th century

The complex iconography of this altarpiece is known as *caturviṃśatī-paṭṭa* (tablet of twenty-four), it consists of a central Tīrthaṅkara surrounded by the remaining twenty-three Jinas who are geometrically arranged around the main icon.

The identity of the central figure is Rṣabha, the first Jina, whose distinctive symbol (*lāñcana*), the bull, is placed under the lion throne. The other twenty-three Jinas are positioned around the main icon, they are of varying sizes, and are either standing or sitting. Their stylization does not permit a precise identification of these figures; only the two bigger standing Tīrthaṅkaras next to the main image, with snake-hoods above their heads, can be recognized: the one on the left, with a five-headed serpent hood on the head, is Supārśva, the seventh Jina; the one on the right is Pārśva, the twenty-third Jina, with a seven-headed serpent hood on his head.

The composite altarpiece accommodates several other figures and, even though they are abraded, many of them could still be identified. Around Rṣabha are fly-whisk bearers, flying garland bearers and elephants. Next to the lion throne are two standing figures, the *yakṣa* and *yakṣī* associated to Rṣabha: on the left is Gomukha (Bull-Faced) and on the right is Cakreśvarī (Goddess of the Disc). To the left and right of the platform are two kneeling figures who may represent the donors. On the pedestal are eight planetary deities (*aṣṭagrahas*) accompanied by an unidentified central figure.

On the back of the altarpiece there is a dedicatory inscription written in Devanāgarī with a date that is unfortunately illegible. The image was exhibited in *Magie dell'India* at Casa dei Carraresi, Treviso, Italy (26 October 2013–31 May 2014).

References:

Krüger, 2011.

Krüger, 2013.

8.000/12.000€



6.
Three Standing Jinas
Copper alloy, 9.7 x 9.3 x 4.3 cm
Madhya Pradesh
Dated 1445 CE

This stela consists of three unidentified standing Jinas in *kāyotsarga* posture. The altarpiece suffered some damage since the auspicious umbrella over the head of the central figure is missing. The three naked figures indicate that the icon was produced in a Digambara context. The place of execution may be Madhya Pradesh where the sect was prominent.

The altarpiece with three unidentified Jinas was used for worship as suggested by the conspicuous wear of the three figures which received regular anointing and lustrations with liquids, such as water, milk, or curds. The back of the stela has an illegible inscription and a date that reads 1502 of the Vikram era, corresponding to 1445 CE.

Reference:

Jan Van Alphen (ed.), 2000, p. 159.

400/600€



7.
Pārśva attended by four Tīrthaṅkaras
Copper alloy with silver inlay, 20.8 x 12.2 x 7.9 cm
Gujarat
Dated 1477 CE

This type of icon is known as *pañca-tīrthika*, a term that refers to a composition comprising five Jinas: a central seated figure surrounded by four smaller Tīrthaṅkaras. The central figure is Pārśva, the twenty-third Jina, as indicated by the seven-headed snake hood above his head. He is flanked by four Tīrthaṅkaras (two standing and two sitting), each placed in an individual shrine. Next to the standing Tīrthaṅkaras are fly-whisk bearers, symbolic of the royal or divine status of the central figure. The standing figures in the composition wear garments around their hips thus identifying the altar piece with the Śvetāmbara tradition.

Pārśva, is seated in meditation on a throne supported by two addorsed lions. To the right and left of the throne there are a *yakṣa* and a *yakṣī*. Further down, on a plinth, there are nine knob-like elements arranged in a group of five and a group of four. These represent the nine planets (*navagrahas*) which are only identifiable by means of their position in the composition.

The piece is inlaid with silver which is used to highlight the eyes of Pārśva and the auspicious *śrīvatsa* mark on the chest of the secondary Jinas. Due to the lack of details, these figures cannot be identified. On the back of the image is the customary dedicatory inscription with a date of 1534 of the Vikram era which corresponds to 1477 CE.

Reference:
 Flügel, Krüger, and Shah, 2023.

500/700€



8.

Ṛṣabha attended by the other Jinas

Copper alloy, 27.8 x 18.2 x 9.7 cm

Gujarat

Dated 1449 CE

The altarpiece is a *caturviṃśati-paṭṭa* (tablet of twenty-four), a composition consisting of a central Tīrthaṅkara surrounded by the other twenty-three Jinas. The identity of the central figure can be established by an inscription on the back which mentions Ādinātha, the first Tīrthaṅkara, commonly known as Ṛṣabha. He sits on a throne supported by two lions and two bulls, the latter being his distinctive attributes (*lāñcana*).

The twenty-three Jinas positioned around the main icon are uniformly shaped and display great stylization. Among them, only the two figures in *kāyotsarga* or standing posture are identifiable through the snake-hoods above their head: on the right of the central Tīrthaṅkara is Supārśva, the seventh Jina, with a five-headed serpent hood on his head; on the left is Pārśva, the twenty-third Jina, with a seven-headed serpent hood on his head. As evidenced by their nudity, the altar piece belongs to the Digambara sect.

The three-tier platform accommodates other figures whose simplified representation does not allow a precise identification. The image is dated 1506 of the Vikram era, which corresponds to 1449 CE.

Reference:

Krüger, 2013.

4.000/6.000€





9.
A *parikara* fragment
Marble, 51.5 x 23 cm
Gujarat or Rajasthan
15th century

In Jain iconography, the term *parikara* (girdle) indicates elements arranged in a composition surrounding the main Tirthankara image, which is usually naked and unadorned.

This marble fragment was once part of a *parikara*, a decorative arch that encircled and protected the sculpture of a seated Tirthankara. The piece features three enthroned Jinas in yogic posture who are sitting in small shrines flanked by attendants figures. The attendants wear lower garments, associating the sculpture with the Śvetāmbara tradition. On the right side, there are celestial animals which once would have encircled the head of the main seated figure.

2.500/4.000€

10.

**Nine folios from a manuscript of the *Kālakācāryakathā*
Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 12 x 31.8 cm
Gujarat or Rajasthan
Mid-15th century**

The *Kālakācāryakathā* (Story of the Kālaka) is a famous legend frequently illustrated in Śvetāmbara manuscripts. The text is found in several languages, including Sanskrit and Prakrit. Its pages are often appended to manuscripts of the *Kalpasūtra* (“Book of Rituals” by Bhadrabahu, d. c. 385 BCE), the major canonical scripture of the Śvetāmbara sect. Both texts are recited during the eight-day rainy season festival of Paryuṣaṇ held in the month of Bhādrapada (August–September).

There are few complete manuscripts of the *Kālakācāryakathā*, however, several dispersed pages exist in collections around the globe. The present dispersed manuscript consists of nine loose horizontal folios with five illustrations. The text is distributed in seven lines, it is written in black ink with punctuation in red color. Instead of the canonical red dots found in Jain manuscripts – where the dot marks the place in which palm leaf manuscripts’ strings were threaded – here there are diamond shaped elements in gold surrounded by a red outline and blue decoration.

The paintings depict events from the story of Kālaka who rescues his sister, the Jain nun Sarasvatī, abducted by King Gardabhilla of Ujjain. The palette is limited with a predominance of gold, red and blue, the latter being used for the monochromatic background. The human figures are portrayed following the conventions of the Jain tradition in Western India, depicting the faces with pointed noses and the three-quarter profile with a projecting further eye. An important exception is the depiction of the Sāhi king, the ruler helping Kālaka to rescue his sister. His face is in full three-quarter profile, a visual convention of Sultanate painting. Gujarat was under the Sultanate of Delhi since the end of the 13th century and became the independent Sultanate of Gujarat in the 15th century.

References:

Del Bontà, 2014.
Parimoo, 2010.

5.000/7.000€



10.1
Prince Kālaka meets Guṇākara and decides to become a monk

The painting depicts the crucial moment that inspired Prince Kālaka, to give up his royal life and become a monk. The scene is divided into two registers. In the bottom panel, Kālaka is depicted riding on his horse when he hears the preaching of the Jain monk Guṇākara. On top, Kālaka is listening to the monk who is sitting near a tripod while holding a *muhapatti*, a square white cloth used to cover the mouth. In both scenes, Kālaka is still wearing a crown indicating that he is not yet a monk, but this is the moment in which he decides to become one.



10.2
Sarasvatī is abducted by King Gardabhilla

Gardabhilla, the evil king of Ujjain, is smitten with the nun Sarasvatī, Kālaka's sister, and plots to abduct her. The scene is divided into two registers: on top, King Gardabhilla on horseback meets Sarasvatī who is accompanied by another Jain nun wearing the same dress with white dots; on the bottom, the king is still riding his horse and in front of him is an attendant carrying Sarasvatī on his shoulder. Kālaka will subsequently try to persuade the king to release her but he is unsuccessful in his attempt.



10.3 Kālaka at the court of the Sāhi king

Kālaka travels west, on the bank of the Indus river, where he meets a Sāhi king and asks him for help. The Sāhis, usually known as Śakas or Indo-Scythians, were nomadic people of Scythian origins who migrated to India. Historically, they invaded the area of Ujjain in 78 CE. The figural type of the Sāhi king and the members of his court appears in the full three-quarter profile. The ruler sits on a throne, he has beard, mustache and long hair and he wears a composite headdress and Central Asian boots.



10.4 The siege of Ujjain

The army of the Sāhi king approaches Gardabhilla's capital where it must face a major obstacle. Gardabhilla owns a magical she-ass whose braying would kill the king's enemies. Thus, Kālaka devises a plan: since the followers of Jainism must refrain from killing, he asks the best archers to fill the mouth of the magic she-ass with arrows when she is about to open her mouth to bray. Thus they defeat Gardabhilla and release Sarasvatī.

Gardabhilla sits in his palace whose crenelated walls form a protective arch near his figure. Above his figure, in a secluded space, sits the nun Sarasvatī. In front of him, at the gate of the palace, is the magical she-ass in blue color. Outside the palace, four archers on foot, and Kālaka on horseback, shoot arrows.



10.5 Kālaka expounds the doctrine to Śakra

The god Śakra (Indra) is informed of the existence of a great teacher, and the god decides to meet the teacher. In the top register, god Śakra in the guise of an elderly *brahmaṇa* approaches Kālaka. In the bottom, the four-armed god reveals his identity to the monk.



11.
Plaque from a portable shrine depicting Pārśva
Gouache on wooden board, 9.2 cm
Rajasthan
Mid-19th century

Jain texts describe the attributes and colors for all twenty-four Jinas. Pārśva, the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara, is recognizable by his green color and the presence of a cobra on the base of his throne and the serpent hoods above his head. The image is painted on a wooden roundel which was probably fitting inside a portable shrine, a round box in brass with a lid. Hand painted portable shrines or prayer boxes were common in Rajasthan where they were not only used by the Jains but also by the Vaishnavas and other religious communities.

300/400€



12.



13.



14.

12.+ 13 + 14

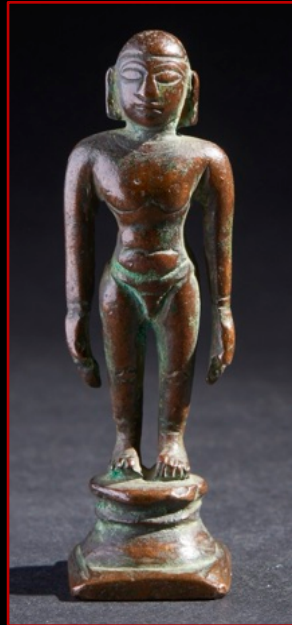
Three pages from a Kalpasūtra manuscript

India, Rajasthan, 19th century with 20th century painting or repainting

10.5 X 24.5 cm

Painting following the conventional style of the Jain tradition in Western India, the stronghold of the Śvetāmbaras. Its style is characterized by black ink outline for the human and divine figures, faces in three-quarter profile with a projecting further eye. The color palette is limited with the scenes painted against a red monochromatic ground. The canonical red circles on the border of the pages recall earlier palm-leaf manuscripts in which the red dot highlighted the thread-hole.

250/400€



15.
Portable Jina
Copper alloy, 6.5 cm
Karnataka or South India
16th–17th century

This small portable Jina devotional image is one of the twenty-four teachers of Jainism, but his exact identity remains unknown since there are no visible symbols, specific iconographic features, or inscriptions on the piece.

The Tīrthaṅkara stands in *kāyotsarga* posture, he rests on a circular plinth which is placed on a rectangular pedestal. The portable image has the auspicious attributes of long arms reaching down to the knees, rounded shoulders, elongated earlobes, and face with large almond-shaped eyes. The nude body points to the Digambara tradition.

200/300€



16.

Jvālāmālīnī

Copper-alloy, 34.6 x 20.4 x 14.5 cm

Southern Maharashtra or northern Karnataka

17th–19th century

In Jainism, each of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras is guarded by two attendants, a *yakṣa* and a *yakṣī*, whose function is to protect that particular Jina and his teachings. In the Digambara tradition, Goddess Jvālāmālīnī is considered the *yakṣī* of Candraprabha, the eighth Tīrthaṅkara.

This portable image is made up of three separate pieces: the body of the goddess, the pedestal, and the decorative arch in the form of a flaming halo embellished by a five-headed serpent and an auspicious *kīrti-mukha* (face of glory) on the top. Casting different parts of an icon separately was a common practice for copper-alloy images produced in Maharashtra and

Karnataka. The three pieces facilitated transport and they were easily fitted together for worship.

The body of the goddess is rich in iconographic details. There are flames issuing from her head (Jvālāmālīnī means “the one who wears a garland of flames”), a composite crown that includes a seated Jina, a heavily abraded forehead, and eight arms carrying emblems. On the proper right of the deity are (top to bottom): trident, wheel, lotus bud, and her hand in *varada* mudra, the gift bestowing gesture. On the proper left are: noose, fish, bow, and citron. She sits in royal ease (*lalitāsana*) placing her foot on a buffalo which is her vehicle according to the Digambara tradition.

A similar icon of Jvālāmālīnī is in the Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (object number: 2011.34.2a-c).

References:

Cort, 2013.

Settar, 1969.

3.000/5.000€



17.
Standing Jina
Copper alloy, 16 x 5.5 x 5.5 cm
Karnataka
17th–18th century

This image represents a Jina in a standing meditative posture or *kāyotsarga*. The figure stands on a rounded lotus pedestal on which appears a stylized lion. The animal is the symbol or cognizance (*lāñcana*) of Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Tīrthaṅkara.

The figure has the typical iconographic attributes of a recognized holy figure: broad shoulders, elongated arms and earlobes, curly hair and three lines around the neck (*trivali*). The body is smooth, and the face is softly worn by continuous worship and anointing. The nude body exemplifies the doctrine of renunciation of worldly values. The icon belongs to the Digambara tradition which prospered on the Deccan Plateau.

1.500/2.000€



18.
Bāhubali
Copper alloy, 8.5 x 6 x 5 cm
South India, Karnataka
18th century

Bāhubali is a popular figure and a legendary Jain saint. He is easily recognized by his iconography: a nude body with entwining vines encircling his legs and arms. According to tradition, he was a prince and the son of Ṛṣabha, the first of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras.

He embraced *ahiṃsā* (non-violence) after a violent battle of succession with his brother Bharata. He attained liberation from rebirth after a long meditation: after standing in motionless contemplation (*kāyotsarga*) in the forest, vines and creepers started to grow around legs and arms. Even though he attained an heroic Jina-like status, he was not included in the pantheon of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras.

Bāhubali, also known as Gommaṭeśvara, is the focus of Digambara devotion in the pilgrimage center of Shravanabelagola in Karnataka, where a monumental monolithic sculpture of this figure was erected in 948 CE, at the time of the Western Ganga dynasty. The important image inspired the production of smaller devotional icons, such as this one. Apart from the identifying climbing vines, the figure features the more general attributes of curly hair, elongated ears, and broad shoulders. He stands with feet firmly planted on a lotus pedestal emerging from a square base.

Reference:

Pal (ed.), 1994, pp. 157–158.

600/800€



19.
Standing Jina
Copper alloy, 17.7 x 5.5 x 5.6 cm
Maharashtra or Karnataka
18th–19th century

This unidentified Jina stands in *kāyotsarga* (abandonment of the body) posture completely unencumbered by material possessions, including clothing. Skin folds on the body highlight the knees, the groin, and the pectoral region. Similarly, incised lines render the eyes and eyebrows whereas the nose and mouth are worn down by continuous veneration.

The nude figure suggests that it was commissioned by a Digambara devotee. The square pedestal does

not indicate the Jina's cognizance (*lāñcana*), thus the image cannot be precisely identified.

400/600€



20.
Candraśila from a private shrine
Inlay work on white marble, 33 x 40 x 6.8 cm
Northern or Western India
18th–19th century

This crescent-like shape architectural element is known as a *candraśila* (moonstone), a decorative footstep placed before the entrance to the *garbhagrha* or *sanctum* of a temple. This can be found in Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu religious buildings.

Due to its small size, this element most likely belonged to a household shrine and it may have been

produced in Northern or Western India, where wealthy Śvetāmbara devotees often erected ornate private shrines in their houses. These shrines were modelled after important temples, and they were made as a sign of devotion and social status. The favored material for household shrines in Western India was wood, though white marble was used in Jain temple architecture in the region.

The semi-circular platform has decorative inlay in green marble, yellow, and red sandstone. Its extremity is finely carved with conch shell (*śaṅkha*) and flower bud motifs. The technique of white marble with semi-precious stone inlay flourished during the Mughal period (1526–1857). While this piece does not reach the refinement of Mughal decorative arts, it is still appreciable for its delicacy, detailed carvings, and geometric patterns.

500/700€



21.
Ornamental *torana*
White Makrana marble, 65.5 x 122 cm
Rajasthan
18th–19th century

This ornamental arch or *torana* in white marble is formed by two serpentine brackets joined in the center by a diminutive shrine. The architectural element was probably part of a private shrine where the arch was decorating the entrance to a sanctuary, which would have enshrined the main image of a Jina for worship.

The symmetrically carved *torana* features elephant heads with vines emerging from their open mouths. The bigger elephants on the left and right have inlaid black eyes. The smaller elephants, perhaps *makaras* (mythological sea creatures) with elephant heads, are placed next to small shrines housing Jina figures in yogic posture. There is evidence that the arch was once more complex and embellished with fine marble carvings, now lost.

The Jina in the central shrine on top features a serpent hood protecting his head, thus he may be identified with Pārśva. The two other Jinas have parasols above their heads and branches of a tree with fan-shaped leaves near the parasols. None of the Jinas feature distinctive symbols on the base of their thrones which would help in recognizing them with precision. Their naked bodies point to the Digambara tradition.

3.000/5.000€



22.

***Abhiṣeka* tray and small table (*chowki*)**

Silver

India

Early or mid-20th century

This silver repoussé two-piece set comprises a ritual tray and a table. Each piece is beautifully repousse decorated with geometric designs and flowers.

The ritual or *abhiṣeka* tray is a utensil used for bathing and worshipping deities and *śivaliṅgas* by pouring different types of liquids on them during *pūjā*. The matching small table may have been used as a stand for the tray or employed as a small table for placing icons and auspicious articles during worship.

The tray has a *makara-prañāla*, that is a spout in the shape of a *makara*, a composite marine creature, used to drain out the ritual fluids. The rim of the tray is embellished with *kīrti-mukhas* of which one is placed on top of two birds. The table is supported by three elephantine legs.

3.000/4.000€



23.

A Jain papier maché book cover with *aṣṭamaṅgala* auspicious symbols

India, Rajasthan, 19th century

15.5 X 29.2 cm

A papier maché red lacquered rectangular cover painted with the Svetambara Astamangala eight auspicious symbols. At the back: *Nandavarta*, food vessel, *kalasa*, a pair of fishes, *Srivatsa*, *Bhadrasana* (the chair), the mirror and the svastika. The front showing the 14 dreams of Trishala, mother of Jina Mahavira and Shri Devi.

150/250€



24.
Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Tīrthaṅkara
Opaque watercolor on paper, 19 x 14 cm
Jaipur, Rajasthan
Mid-19th century

This refined painting illustrates Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth and last Tīrthaṅkara, seated on a golden throne inside a white marble pavilion topped by a curved *bangaldar* roof. The Jina is flanked by two princely male attendants holding fly-whisks and wearing crowns. The figures wear garments around their hips, thus identifying the painting with the Śvetāmbara tradition. Seated in the foreground is a small lion, the distinctive symbol or cognizance (*lāñcana*) of Mahāvīra.

The painting, executed in Jaipur, is richly decorated in gold and floral motifs. A pink and maroon striped curtain is rolled up above the scene, as if the viewer is glimpsing a usually private *pūjā*. On the red border there is a Devanāgarī inscription that identifies the figure followed by the number “24” which suggests that the folio was part of a complete series illustrating the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras.

600/800€

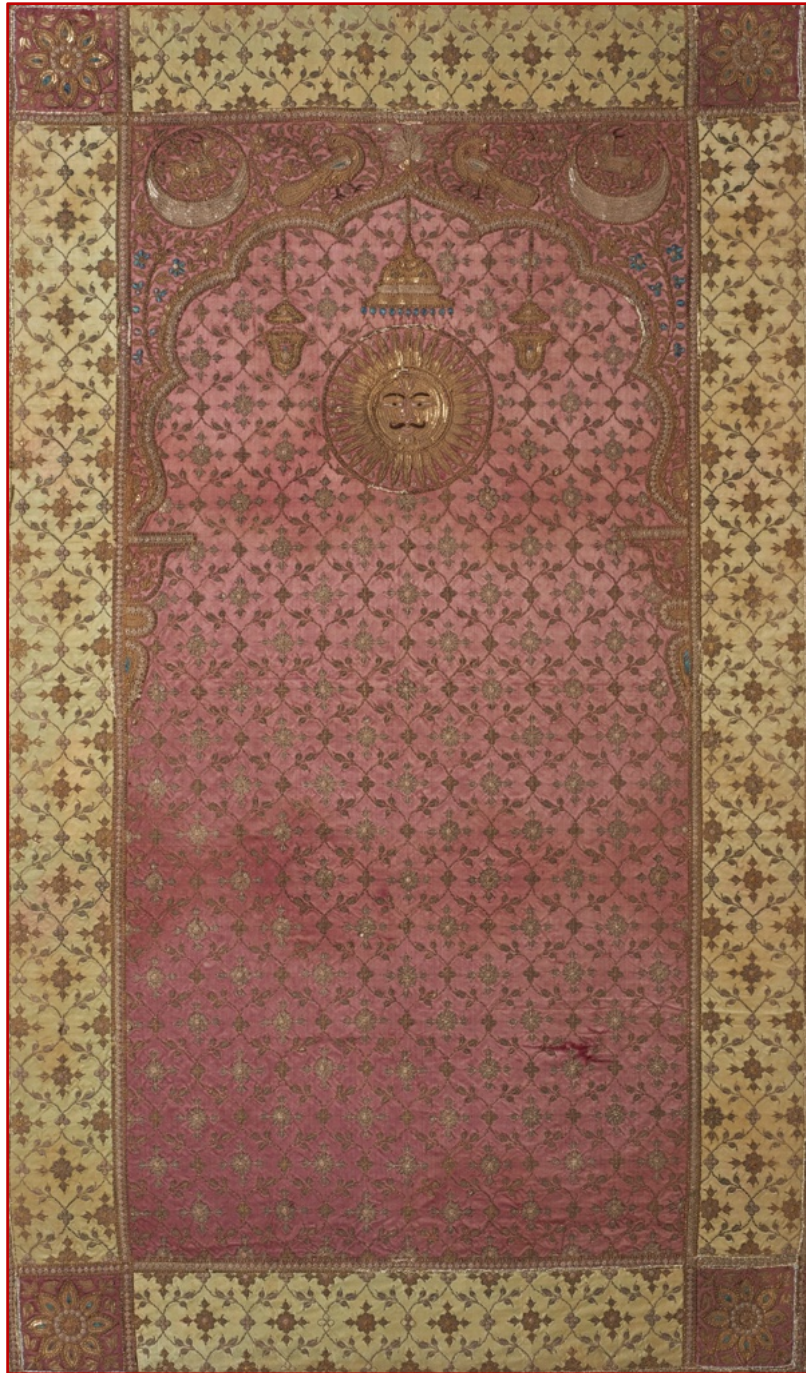


25.
Two Jain Tirthankaras
Opaque watercolor on paper, 19 x 14 cm
Jaipur, Rajasthan
Late 19th or early 20th century

This interesting composition comprises two Jinas in an ornate white marble temple placed on a high plinth. The figures are identifiable through Devanāgarī inscriptions in gold above the temple spires which indicate the sixteenth Tirthankara, Śānti (left), and the fifth Tirthankara, Sumati (right). The two figures wear green garments around their hips, thus associating the painting with the Svetāmbara tradition.

Outside the temple, there are a male and a female figure holding fly-whisks and wearing crowns. The Jaipur painter put much attention to detail, from the use of tiny pearls for the ornaments of the Jinas, to the blue and gold temple hanging behind the icons. The background boasts lush vegetation of banana and mango trees. Celestial figures fly in their chariots in a dramatic dark sky while showering flowers on the two Tirthankaras. The dark sky and fruiting trees indicate this is the monsoon, a time of abundance.

600/800€



26.
Zardozi hanging
Silk ground embroidered with zardozi, 140.5 x 82 cm
Surat, Gujarat
19th or early 20th century

This richly decorated hanging is embroidered with gold and silver *zardozi* (metallic thread embroidery) on red silk. The pattern consists of a cusped arch design, terminating in two ornamental capitals. In its center an anthropomorphic sun surmounted by a parasol is flanked by two ornamental lamps. Above the arch, there are a pair of long-tailed peacocks and two crescent moons. The central field is covered in gold and silver thread-work of a floral trellis with blooming flowers. A similar motif is repeated in the border of the beige field.

Hangings like this one were produced in Surat, an important commercial town in Gujarat that, from the first half of the 17th century, became a thriving international port of the Mughal empire. Surat was particularly important for its precious textiles, which became one of its most lucrative economic activities. An early example of an embroidered velvet with a design similar to this was a temple hanging of the Vaishnava tradition dated to the mid-17th century now in the TAPI Collection in Surat. Similar hangings were also used by the Jain community in the region. Since the iconography of this piece is not clearly defined, it is difficult to identify the specific religious milieu in which it was used.

References:

Krishna and Talwar, 2007, pp. 148–150.

Mehta, 1956.

600/800€



27.

Brocade Hanging

Silk brocade, 141 x 76.5 cm

Ahmedabad or Surat, Gujarat

19th or 20th century

Religious communities, such as the Vaishnavas and the Śvetāmbara Jains used sumptuous textiles as backdrop hangings in religious functions. This may have been hung behind a sacred icon or a religious leader.

200/300€



28.
Devotional canopy with the eight auspicious symbols
Velvet with gold and silver thread, 82.5 x 81.5 cm
Gujarat
19th or 20th century

This square velvet in maroon color is lavishly decorated in fine *zardozi*, an embroidery technique that employs gold and silver metallic wires. The technique is still practiced today in Surat, Gujarat, one of the most important commercial port towns of the Indian subcontinent. Surat was the center of maritime trade through the centuries and was especially famous for luxury textile production during the Mughal rule (1526–1857).

The devotional textile, named *candarvo* in Gujarati, is used as a ceremonial canopy suspended above a deity or a Jain religious leader and it is usually part of a set of three pieces: the canopy itself, a festoon (*torana*), and a wall hanging (*chor*, *choḍ* or *puthia*) hung in the background.

These elaborate textiles are usually commissioned by devotees to celebrate special occasions (ritual fasts, promotion of a monk) then donated to a temple after the celebrations. The canopy has a distinctly Jain iconography. Around the open lotus flower motif in the center are placed the eight auspicious symbols or *aṣṭamaṅgalas* according to the Śvetāmbara tradition. In the upper band (from left to right), there are the *śrīvatsa* mark, the vessel, and the solar symbol or *svastika*. In the middle band there is a water pot or *kalāśa* on the left and on the right, there is the maze-like symbol known as *nandyāvarta*, whose shape recalls that of a *svastika*. In the lower band there are the throne, the mirror, and the pair of fish.

Reference:

Balbir, 2021.

500/700€



29.

Festoon or toraṇa

Velvet with gold and silver thread, 20.5 x 184 cm

Gujarat

19th or 20th century

This red velvet festoon or *torāṇa* was used to decorate a ceremonial canopy which, in turn, was suspended above a deity or a Jain religious leader. The artefact is usually part of a set of three pieces: a canopy, a festoon and a rectangular wall hanging. This piece is decorated with fine *zardozi*, an embroidery technique famous for its use of gold and silver metallic wire threads, still practiced in Surat, Gujarat.

The *torāṇa* is formed by two long ornamental registers: on the upper register is a vine with leaves and flowers; on the lower register there is a band with a distinctly Jain iconography of stylized versions of the eight auspicious symbols (*aṣṭamaṅgala*) interspersed by flowers.

Reference:

Balbir, 2021.

600/1.000€



30.

Cover for a Jina sculpture

Silver, 82 x 49 cm

Gujarat

19th or early 20th century

The ritual worship, or *pūjā*, in the Śvetāmbara tradition includes the decoration (*āṅgī*) of Jina sculptures and guardian deities. These decorations not only include the use of sumptuous clothes and jewels but also metal body covers (also called armors) specifically commissioned and donated by wealthy devotees to protect and adorn the body of an icon.

This richly embossed and chiseled silver cover was donated to a temple for an image of Vimāla, the thirteenth Tīrthāṅkara, as specified in a Gujarati inscription and indicated by the presence of his emblem, the boar, engraved on the base.

The cover is in the shape of a body seated in a cross-legged posture with the hands resting in the lap and the palms turned upward for meditation. The cover is marked by the diamond shaped *śrīvatsa*, one of the eight auspicious symbols of Jainism. The silver cover not only protects the body of the Jina, it also embellishes it with a crown, a pair of full ear covering earrings and an elaborate halo encircling the head and reaching to the waist.

The piece is not dated but it features several Gujarati inscriptions. One of them mentions Visnagar, a city in Gujarat.

6.000/8.000€



31.
Sīmandhara Svāmī
Marble, 23 x 18.5 x 9 cm
Gujarat
20th century

According to Jain cosmology, there are different sets of Jinas. Those we have encountered so far are the twenty-four Jinas of the present time cycle but there is also an infinite number of Tīrthaṅkaras who lived in past eras and those that will come in future eras of time.

This image belongs to yet another category, one of the Jinas that belong to the present cycle of time but are active in a different part of the universe. His name is Sīmandhara (Vartamāna Tīrthaṅkara Śrī Sīmandhara Svāmī) as identified by the Gujarati inscription on the base of the sculpture. He is currently preaching in Mahāvīdeha, the land of enlightenment, a region of the Jambūdvīpa continent where the mythical Mount Meru is located.

Temples dedicated to Sīmandhara are rare but reported since at least the 12th century. In the 20th century this figure became particularly prominent in Gujarat where a few modern temples were erected. The present white marble icon originated from this renewed interest.

The sculpture has faint traces of paint on the face, chest and platform indicating that the icon was once partially painted. Its iconography shares several traits with the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, such as the band of curled hair, elongated earlobes touching the shoulders, smiling expression and *śrīvatsa* mark on the chest. Though he is sitting, it is possible to see his wrap-around garment which indicates the image was commissioned within the Śvetāmbara community.

Reference:
Cort, 2010, pp. 184–185.

400/600€



32.
A portable brass reliquary depicting
Gaja Lakshmi
Diam. 10 cm

A round brass box and cover containing a miniature painting of Gaja Lakshmi being bathed by two elephants. Mirror at the inner side of the cover.

200/300€



33.
A small brass figure of Parshvanath
Central India, dated to the 16th century
6 cm

Cast metal small devotional figure of the 23rd Tirthankara, seated underneath the snake canopy. Devanagari inscription engraved at the back of the base reading an illegible date starting with 15XX.

150/250€



34.

Śatruñjaya paṭa

Painting on cotton cloth, 330 x 293 cm

Palitana, Gujarat

Dated 1940 CE

This monumental painting on cotton cloth (*paṭacitra*) depicts Mount Śatruñjaya, a location near Palitana in Gujarat and the most important pilgrimage site for the Śvetāmbaras. Associated with Ādinātha or Rṣabha, the first Jina, the site is mentioned in texts from the 5th century CE, to gain prominence in the medieval period with a proliferation of buildings on the sacred mountain. The site developed its current appearance in the 19th century with the renovation of many existing temples and the creation of new ones.

By virtue of their topographical subject, paintings of Mount Śatruñjaya are known as *tīrtha paṭas* or “pilgrimage site paintings”. They were commissioned and produced by the Śvetāmbaras and were already known in the 15th century, assuming monumental proportions in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Śvetāmbaras are required to visit this sacred place at least once in their lifetime. Every year, after the monsoon season, on the full-moon day of the month of Kārttika (October–November), Śvetāmbaras commence pilgrimage after a gap of four months during which pilgrimage is banned. Those who cannot undertake such a pilgrimage, go to a nearby temple where a Śatruñjaya *paṭa* is hung for worship. Thus, these monumental *tīrtha paṭas* function as a substitute of the pilgrimage itself and bring the same religious merit. This type of mental pilgrimage is known as *bhāva yātrā*.

The pilgrim uses the *tīrtha paṭa* as a mnemonic device to identify the topographical details of Mount Śatruñjaya. The mental exercise requires a prior visit to the sacred place to recognize each site.

The present Śatruñjaya *paṭa* follows an established scheme. The lower register depicts the village of Palitana with its buildings and the pilgrim routes leading to the sacred mountain. The upper register represents the mountain itself, where many temples and shrines are located. The biggest compound on the left is the Ādinātha temple characterized by a red ground. On the right of the composition there are at least seven temple compounds each with a distinctive color for the ground. Each compound has a central temple housing a Jina icon and a courtyard surrounded by several smaller shrines. The painting also includes smaller shrines and several pilgrims engaged in religious activities.

On top, there is a band representing the sky with gods flying in their chariots and a central cartouche with an inscription indicating this is a Śatruñjaya *paṭa*. At the very bottom of the painting another inscription in Hindi indicates that the painting was executed in Palitana by an artist by the name of Jayantilal Javeri in 1997 of the Vikram era which corresponds to 1940. Hindi inscriptions are also scattered on the surface of the painting where they identify the different temple compounds (*ṭuṅk*).

Reference:

Luithle-Hardenberg, 2015.

3.000/5.000€



Tantric ritual devices

Tantrism is a philosophical, spiritual and esoteric practice that developed in the Indian subcontinent around the 6th century CE, influencing the major Indian religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Some scholars relate this emphasis on the esoteric to the incorporation of practices related to Shivaism and *Shakti* (energy) in traditions outside the Hindu context¹.

...Jainism was certainly among the traditions influenced by these developments, but little has been investigated about the Jain appropriation of Shiva-Shakti practices.²

There is no "tantra" category within the Jain scriptures, there is no text that can be defined as completely and properly tantric, thus a categorization can only be extrapolated from the ca. 500 Jain texts in which the subject is treated³, with little distinction between Svetambara and Digambara sects.

Tantric texts deal with cosmogony, astrology, metaphysics, magic, ritual techniques, hymnology and meditation through a complex symbology of esoteric and initiatory nature.

Tantric practices are accessible to all, regardless of caste or gender. They include: the recitation of mantras and magical formulas; the reproduction of the complex cosmogony in diagrams (*yantras*); and the display of mudras.

Yantras are aids to meditation and they look like interconnected geometric forms with no iconography. They are divided into different categories: some of them are stylized images of the cosmos, others depict a deity whose essence and ephemerality are represented by the engraved *mantras* (thus sounds); other *yantras* are emblems of the energies of the cosmos.

In their extreme stylization, *yantras* are small, portable mediation devices, engraved on metal, wood or minerals, including rock crystal.

Often *yantras* are inscribed with *mantras*, magical formulas and salutations to the deities to whom they are dedicated.

As far as Jain art is concerned, Jain diagrams divide the cosmos into Upper, Middle and Lower worlds, sometimes illustrated through the metaphor of the Cosmic Being (LokaPurusa) who embodies the relationship between macro and micro. Frequently, Jain diagrams are accompanied by charts measuring the understandable adopting magic squares and mathematical formulas.

Some symbolic motifs are recurrent in the modern and contemporary Tantric production, including:

- brahmāṇḍa* primordial egg, also interpretable as Shivalingam, or the anionic form of Shiva,
- the snake: symbol of longevity and of the *kundalini* energy ascending the *chakras* until it reaches the state of fusion with the unifying principle.
- Radial representations and wheels of time;
- Hands and feet of Vishnu;
- Palmistry
- Stylized depictions of the Mount Meru
- Mandala, depictions of the *chakras*, depictions of sacred syllables (*hrim*)

¹ Sanderson 2009 in Gough E., 2012, p. 1

² *ibidem*

³ Gough E., 2020, p. 568



35.
 A tantric *patakas* depicting Ravana
 India, Rajasthan or Gujarat, 1900
 ca.
 24 X 26 cm

Drawing on paper depicting a multi
 faced Ravana surmounted by the
 donkey's head. The drawing is
 completed with spells, mantras and
 formulas.

150/200€



36.
 LokaPurusha (Cosmic being)
 India, Rajasthan o Gujarat, 1900 ca.
 24 X 11 cm

A Jain representation of a giant being embodying the
 universe, exemplifying the relationship between micro
 and macro cosmo.

The cosmic figure can also be identified with a woman
 (like the one we are looking at) whose wide skirt hosts
 the Lower World (*adholoka*) with its seven infernal
 levels. The Middle World (*madhyaloka*) in the shape of a
jambudvipa diagram is shown at the waist while the torso
 and the head contain the Upper World (*urdhvaloka*)
 where gods, planets and stars live. The lady's vest is
 refined with a chequerboard pattern which is very
 recurrent in Jain *Yantras* and astrological charts.

150/250€



37.
Two paintings from the Vishnu Chakra series
India, early 20th century
24 x 20 cm

Belonging to the same series devoted to the Vishnu Chakra and composed of three of his attributes, namely the naman, the chakra and the shankha. Our paintings depict the latter two, both standing on a gilded base underneath a lotus flower canopy and enriched with luxury vestments.

300/400€



38.
A tantric miniature painting over red ground
Northern India, 1900 ca.
26.4 X 34.6 cm

Depicting two unidentified deities, one with greyish complexion and bearing a sword and a mala as attributes, seated on the shoulders of the other, the latter characterized by a sword and a bow as attributes. The both over a red background filled with spells, mantras and four clock like cartouches painted with black ink in devanagari script.

250/350€



39 e 40
Six pairs of *pādukā* sandals
Wood
(19th or) 20th century

These wooden sandals, known as *pādukās* (also *pādukas*, sandal, foot-image), are associated with holiness in countries across South and Southeast Asia. They consist of narrow stilts, a sole and a single toe post and they can be made of wood, ivory or silver and can feature decorative inlays. In the Hindu and Jain traditions, they can be donated as religious offerings or treated as objects of devotion.

300/400€

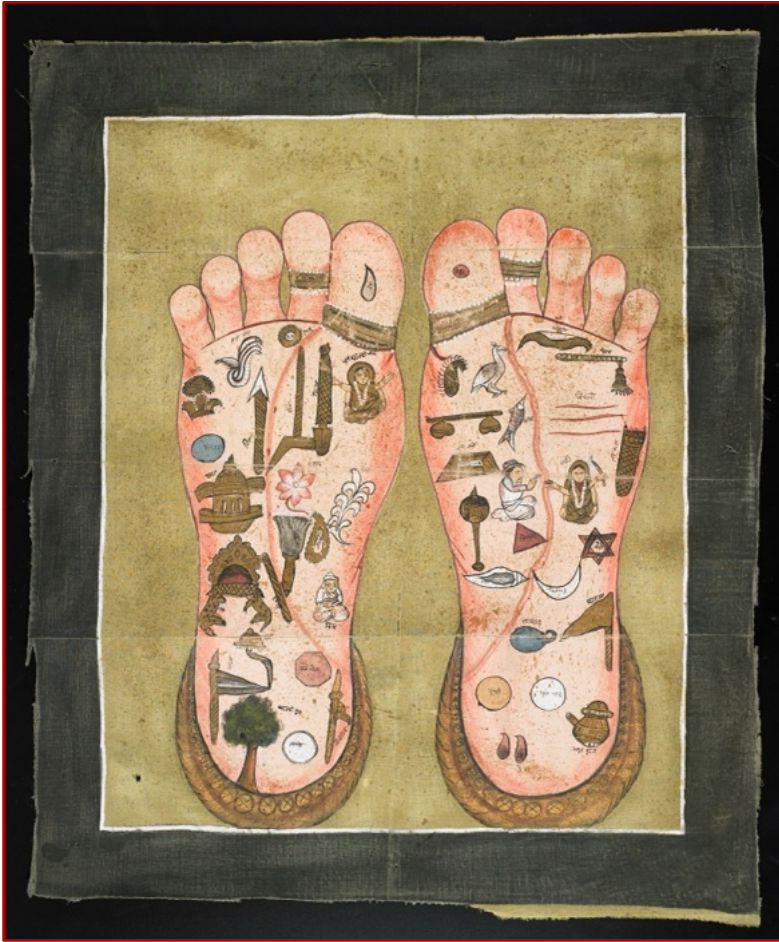


41.
A marble footprint icon
India, 20th century
30.5 X 31.6 X 6 cm

Framed inside a square panel, this high-relief footprint icon, or *pādukā*, represents the feet of an important figure. *Pādukās* are used as objects of worship in both the Śvetāmbara and the Digambara sects, as well as in Buddhism and Hinduism. In the Jain tradition, footprints are aniconic representations that symbolize the presence of a Jina or of a religious leader. Originally, they were

installed in the place where these important individuals were cremated but with the development of their worship, *pādukās* appeared in temples as well.

300/400€



42.
Vishnu Pada footprint tantric painting
India, 20th century
45.5 X 37.5 cm

Depicting the footprints of Lord Vishnu with symbols of the tantric cross religion tradition enclosed, identifying his revelation as Cosmic Man. Among the emblems there are: *Astamangala* symbols such as the victory banner, the lotus flower, the fly whisk, the parasol, the pot, the chair; Vishnu's attributes including; the club; Vishnu's avatars: the fish (*Matsya*) and Rama evoked by his bow and quiver and other relevant emblems to the Hindu mythology such as the multi headed snake Shesha, the moon and the rivers.

100/200€



43.
Yantra on cloth
India, Rajasthan, first half 20th century
50 X 49.5 cm

Depicting five triangles inscribed within a solar symbol enriched with lotus flower petals over a checkerboard pattern with protruding four ends. These sort of *yantras* are to be connected with the releasing of *Shakti* (energy). The symbols are also reminiscent of the the third Manipura chakra.

150/250€



44.
The fertilized World Egg
Rajasthan, 20th century
88.5 X 114.5 cm

A large painting on cloth depicting the World Egg with its nine fields and currents of energy. It is illustrated as a lingam with a central *bindu* (dot) symbolizing Shakti (power) and the feminine principle that, together with the lingam (aniconic form of Shiva) shapes the universe itself.

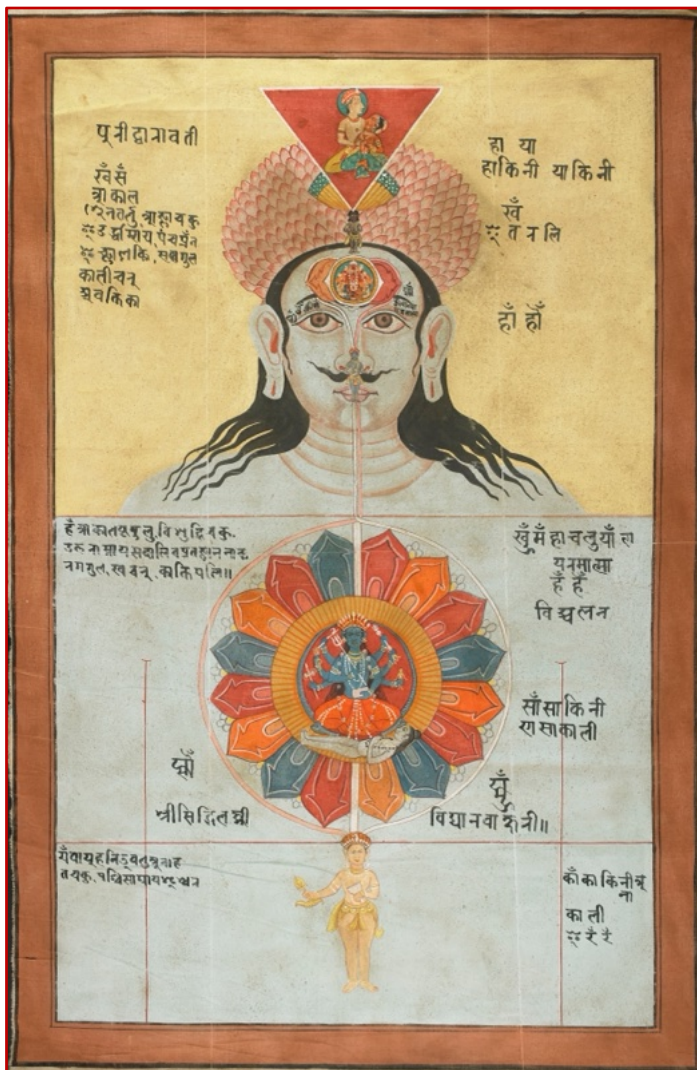
The powerful combination Shiva-Shakti is at the origin of the tantra philosophy.

Four lines of devanagari script within a

cartouche commenting about mountains with a focus on the Mount Meru, the centre of the world in many Indian traditions.

The original painting is published in Mookerjee A.; Khanna M.; *The Tantric Way*, Thames and Hudson, 1989, p. 91

400/500€

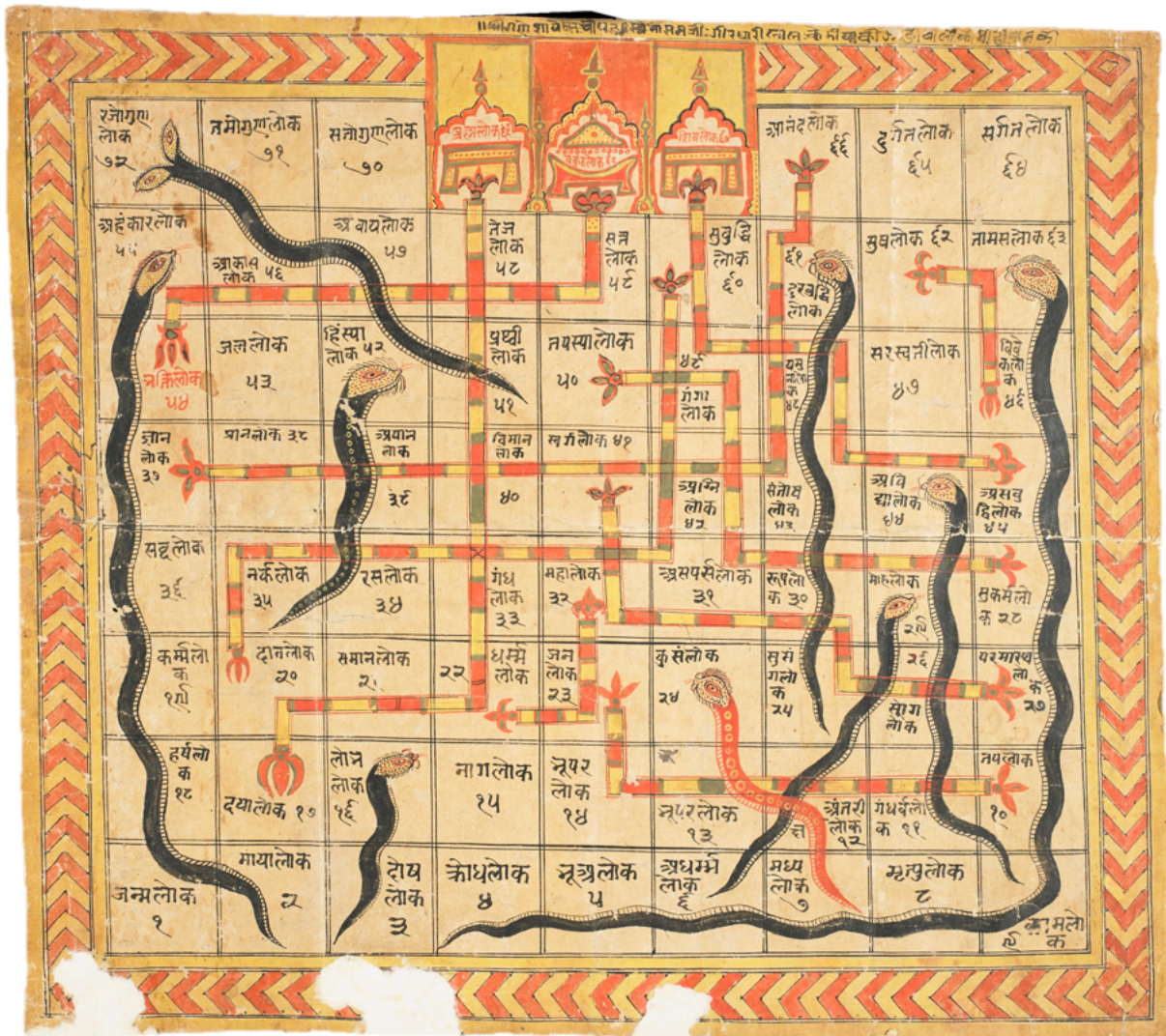


45.
Crown, Brow and Throat
Chakras
India, early 20th century
114 X 72 cm

Large painting depicting an imposing man, most possibly identifiable with Nath Siddha with his shoulder-length deadlocks, massive figure, meditating gaze and the 1000 petals cakra over his head.

Unlike other Indian traditions that promote the equivalence between the cosmos and the self, Hatha yoga aims to the transformation of the human body into the cosmos through the *kundalini-shakti* (female energy) piercing each chakra.

400/500€



46. **A Vaishnava snakes and ladders board (*gyan chaupar*)**
Northern India, early 19th century
47.5 X 53.5 cm

Painting on paper depicting the popular traditional Indian game imported even to England with some variation (simplified and secularized). The extant surviving examples are to be dated to the 18th and 19th century.

There are three main sectarian types: Hindu, Jain and, more rarely, a Sufi Muslim variant. Ours is of the Hindu type, with its 72 squares instead of the 84 that are typical of the Jain version. The theme is common in all these declinations and it is the spiritual liberation from the misadventures of *karma* and passion ascending through the ladders from the lower level to the highest (reaching *Vaikuntha*, the abode of Vishnu), while snakes operate demotion, symbolizing the corruption of the soul.

For a close related example cfr. Beltz J., *Being Jain. Art and culture of an Indian Religion*, Rietberg Museum, 2022, pp. 140-141.

800/1.200€



47.
Two Tantric Yantra paintings on paper
India, 20th century
27.5 X 19.5 cm (the largest)

One *Hastakara yantra* depicting a hand for palmistry. The other depicting and a *Hrim Yantra* with central syllable surrounded by the oceans.

200/300€

48.
Two Tantric Yantra paintings on paper
India, 20th century
32.3 X 13.2 cm (the largest)

Including one stylized *Rishimandala* or *Hrim yantra* with central double superimposed triangles; the other depicting a coiled snake, possibly symbolizing the kundalini energy.

250/350€



49.
Two Tantric Yantra paintings on paper
India, 20th century
32 X 20 cm (the largest)

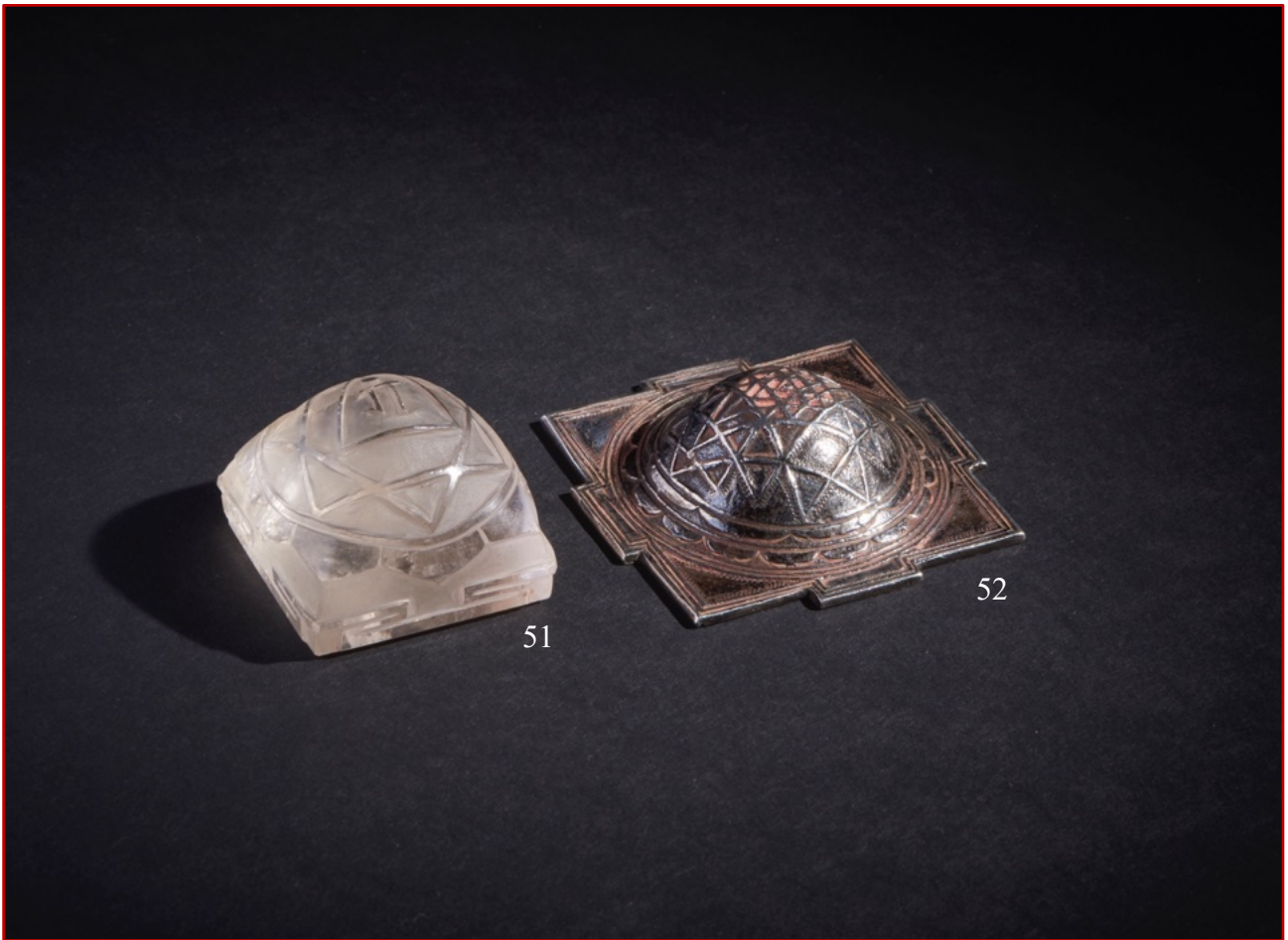
One depicting the *Kalacakra* wheel of time with radiant segments; the other depicting the cosmos with a central three headed snake symbolizing the energy. The latter possibly drawn from a *Laghu Sangrahani Sutra*.

200/300€

50.
Two Tantric Yantra paintings on paper
India, 20th century
26 X 17.5 cm (the largest)

Including a Meru Parvat tantra painting in the shape of a Victory Tower wiggling with snakes and a *Kalasarpa yantra* depicting a snake lasso around a central flower. This Yantra is revered when a Kaal Sarp Dosha is in one's horoscope. The verso of this folio bears drawings of faces in profile.

250/350€



51.
A rock crystal yantra of Ganesh
India, 19th century
3.7 X 3.7 cm

of square shape engraved with 2 triangles facing opposite and a third final one containing the syllable Gam, associated with Ganesh.

300/400€

52.
A silver domed Sri yantra
India, 19th century
6 X 6 cm

Cast silver with traces of red polychromy. The most revered yantra is the Sri Yantra which is the tantric form of Goddess Tripurasundari. It shows 9 superimposed triangles with a final dot symbolizing the seed, or the union of female and male principles. Also known as Sri cakra, it includes in itself the whole consciousness unifying all levels of the universe.

250/350€



53.

A group of 3 bronze Sri yantras

India, Rajasthan, 18th-19th century

6.5 x 8.5 cm (the largest)

The most revered yantra is the Sri Yantra which is the tantric form of Goddess Tripurasundari. It shows 9 superimposed triangles with a final dot symbolizing the seed, or the union of female and male principles. Also known as Sri Chakra, it includes in itself the whole consciousness unifying all levels of the universe.

500/700€