



Pigment-painted scrolls and hangings, known as *pata*, *chitrapata*, and *pata-chitra*, have a pan-Indian origin, traceable since ancient times. Jaina *patas/vastra-patas* were made primarily in Gujarat and Rajasthan. We have literary references to the use of these ceremonial artefacts from as early as 2nd century CE, although the earliest surviving examples are datable to the 14th-15th centuries. When studied side by side with Jaina manuscript paintings, one would notice that the *patas* share a close resemblance to the regional pictorial style, best exemplified in the protruding second eye added to a face in profile, bold outlines in black and a generous use of red, yellow and indigo for the colour schemes. The *patas* have an important social and religious significance for Jains, amongst both, the monks and laity. As Jainism teaches to control and perfect one's destiny through asceticism and ritual practice, metaphysical knowledge, and ethical conduct, these *patas* served as external aids to facilitate the spiritual wisdom.

Jaina *patas* can be divided into two major categories, *Tantric* and *Non-Tantric*. *Tantric patas* have sacred words or mantras inscribed on them to meditate on, while others with complex diagrams known as *yantras*, are used for the physical emancipation of the self. Each *pata* is identified by the symbol or syllable, like *om*, *hrhim*, *krim*, etc. Monks are ceremoniously presented with specific *patas* when they graduate into the role of *acharya* or high-ranking preceptor of a Jaina order.

The Non-Tantric category is more like *chitrapatas*, and has no use in *tantric* rituals. Examples of these are: *Tirtha Pata*: large pilgrimage maps used in temples for community viewing, *Lok-purusha pata* and *Adhidvipa pata*: figurative representations of Jaina cosmology, narrative banners, *Vijnyapti-patras* or letters of invitation, and game boards for the *Gyan-bajis* that teach spiritual values.

Tantric Patas: The *mantra-patas* come in great variety. All Indian religious practices involve the chanting of sacred words in the form of a *mantra*, a formula of words and sounds possessing divine power. The visual representation of the *mantra* as a mystical diagram full of occult power is called *yantra*. The *mantra-patas* are highly complex diagrams used for performing rites and rituals and serve as aids in meditation. They represent various deities and have specific purposes for their

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Fig.5.5 : *Lokapurusha*, Bikaner, Rajasthan
dated VS 1795 = 1852 CE
opaque watercolour on cotton
182.3 x 121.1 cm, LD Museum
Ahmedabad, Acc.No. LDM.2014.1

worship. Mostly used and carried around by monks, occasionally some *mantra-patas* are also used in domestic shrines.

The *Hrhim-Mantra-Pata*, Fig.5.1, an early 15th century example, represents the *tantric* genre. It's worn-out condition is due to it being folded and carried around. At the centre of the *pata* we see three and a half circles, with the letter *hrhim* on top and *krim* at the bottom. Inside the circle is a geometrically drawn six-pointed star. The three syllables, *OM HRHIM KRIM* are overlaid one above the other. *Hrhim* is believed to be the most powerful *mantra* for reaching higher states of consciousness and illuminating higher wisdom. It can be recited on its own, or in conjunction with other *mantras*.

The *Vardhamana-Vidya-Mantra-Pata*, Fig.5.2, symbolizes the *mantra Vardhaman-vidya*. It begins with the syllables of *Om* and *Hrhim*. According to one 14th-century Jaina ritual text, the *Vardhamana-vidya-pata* was traditionally bestowed to a monk at the end of the ceremony by which he was elevated to the position of *acharya*. The *mantra* and *pata* together served as instruments to stimulate the mind and soul of the practitioner during meditation. A prayer using this *mantra* invokes powerful energy. This *mantra* can be used for different purposes: for general welfare, conquest of death, and to grant all wishes. Most striking about this *pata* is the profusion of calligraphy which includes *mantras* and instructions regarding ritualistic usage. It is also dated, by an inscription on the uppermost band to the right, to 1475 CE. The *pata* was consecrated by Shri Vijayaraja, the disciple of Shri Rajatilaka Suri. Symmetry and order are strong visual features of this *mandala*. All the common geometrical shapes of *yantras* are found here, the triangles, circles and squares. The focal point here is the figure of Mahavira enthroned in the syllable *Hrhim*, enclosed by the intersecting triangles that form a six-pointed star. In the language of *yantras*, the triangles signify the male and female energies.

Monks who worship the *Suri-mantra-pata*, Fig.5.3, seek to emulate Indrabhuti Gautama, the foremost disciple of Mahavira, who is an emblematic figure both as a disciple and teacher. Gautama is usually shown seated at the centre on a fully bloomed lotus. The *pata* is used for recitation of *mantras* and for meditation or worship when monks are initiated into the higher grades of religious hierarchy.

The *Siddha-chakra Yantra*, Fig.5.4, is considered the most auspicious and versatile mystical diagram in the Jaina religion, and therefore most revered. *Siddha* means "perfected ones" and *chakra* means "the cycle of *karmic* bondage". *Yantra* stands for a mystical diagram. When one worships the *Siddha-chakra Yantra*, one's soul becomes liberated from *karmic* bondage. Monks and laity both use this *yantra* for daily worship. The remarkable beneficial results occurring when rituals are performed with full devotion to the *Siddha-chakra Yantra* worship were first described in the text, *Sripala-katha* compiled in 1362, written in *Ardha-Magadhi* language. Later, this account was repeated in the Gujarati ballad of *Sripala Rasa* composed in 1738 CE, popular amongst the Svetambara Jains of modern Gujarat. As the points of focus in this *yantra* are the nine *padas* or virtues of a person, it symbolizes the very essence of the Jaina faith, and thus acquired great sanctity and popularity amongst believers.

Knowledge on the usage of the *mantra-patas* was paramount. The diagrammatic *yantras* centred on a single point upon which meditative concentration was gradually made, an absolute necessity for meditative progress. The aim of this meditation was to achieve eternal bliss, be it individual or for the mass.



Fig.5.1 : *Hrim-Mantra-Pata*, Western India, c.15th century, opaque watercolour on cotton, 28 x 28 cm, LD Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, Acc.No. LDII.Ga-2

Lokapurusha Pata : The image of the cosmos in the shape of a human being forms a favourite subject in Jaina cloth painting. Although using the human body as analogy of the cosmos is not unique to Jainism, here the theme is developed to an advanced level of complexity. Ancient commentaries regarding the cosmos are found in various Jaina scriptures, most particularly in the *Sangrahani Sutra* (1136) by Sri Chandrasuri.

In the diagram, Fig.5.5, the cosmological scheme is superimposed on the human body, to merge the universal macrocosm and human microcosm. The human figure is divided hierarchically into the three cosmological realms, the upper world *Urdhva-loka*, middle world *Madhya-loka*, and lower world

Adho-loka. The upper realms, chest and head, are occupied by gods and enlightened beings, where blissful escape can be achieved. The navel and below, are the seven levels of *naraka* or hell where eternal punishment of graded degrees is inflicted. The middle world, shaped as a disc on the abdomen, represents Jambudvipa with human and animal populations. Jambudvipa has the mythical mount Meru at the centre, from which radiate the continents, oceans and rivers. This small section is the only place where humans live and may achieve liberation. Being born as a human being has a great significance in the Jaina path of spirituality, for it affords the best opportunity to follow the teachings and achieve liberation. It is believed that good deeds lighten the soul and allow it to ascend into the higher worlds, while bad deeds accumulate negative karma which weighs down the soul making it sink into the lower lands of hell. Jaina texts of all periods include vast detail regarding the cosmos. Names of the places, mountains and oceans, rivers and cities are mentioned, along with numbers giving their

Fig.5.2 : Vardhamana *Vidya-Mantra-Pata*, Western India, dated VS 1532 = 1475 CE
 opaque watercolour on cotton, 50 x 52 cm, LD Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, Acc. No. LDII.Ga-10





Fig.5.3 : *Suri-Mantra-Pata*, Rajasthan
perhaps Jaipur, c.1850 CE
opaque watercolour and emulsified gold
on cotton, 108 x 96 cm
LD Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad
Acc. No. LDII.Go-1



Fig.5.4 : Siddha-chakra Yantra

Western India or Rajasthan(?)

early 19th century, opaque watercolour and gold on cotton

78 x 72 cm, LD Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad

Acc. No. LDII.Go-6

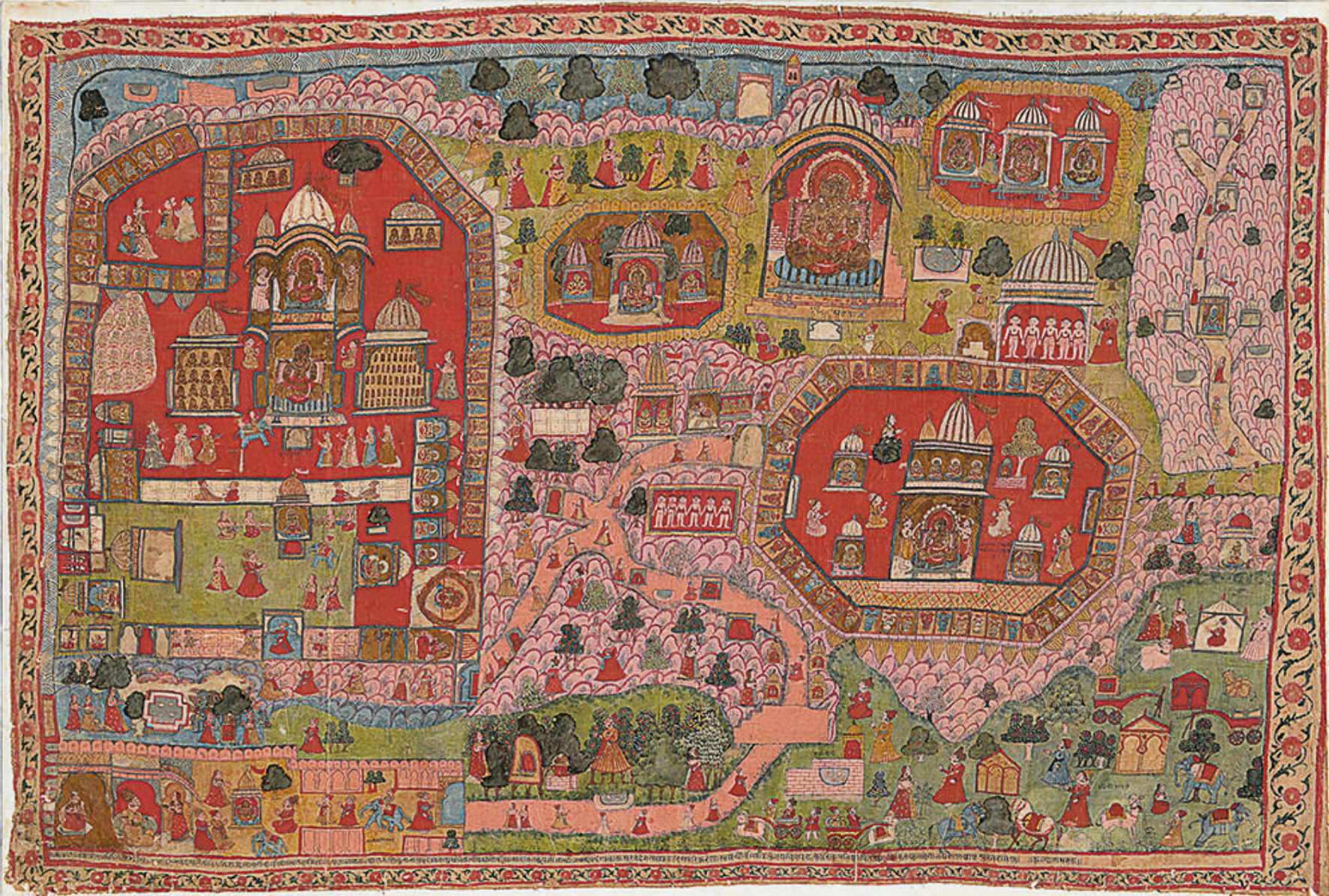
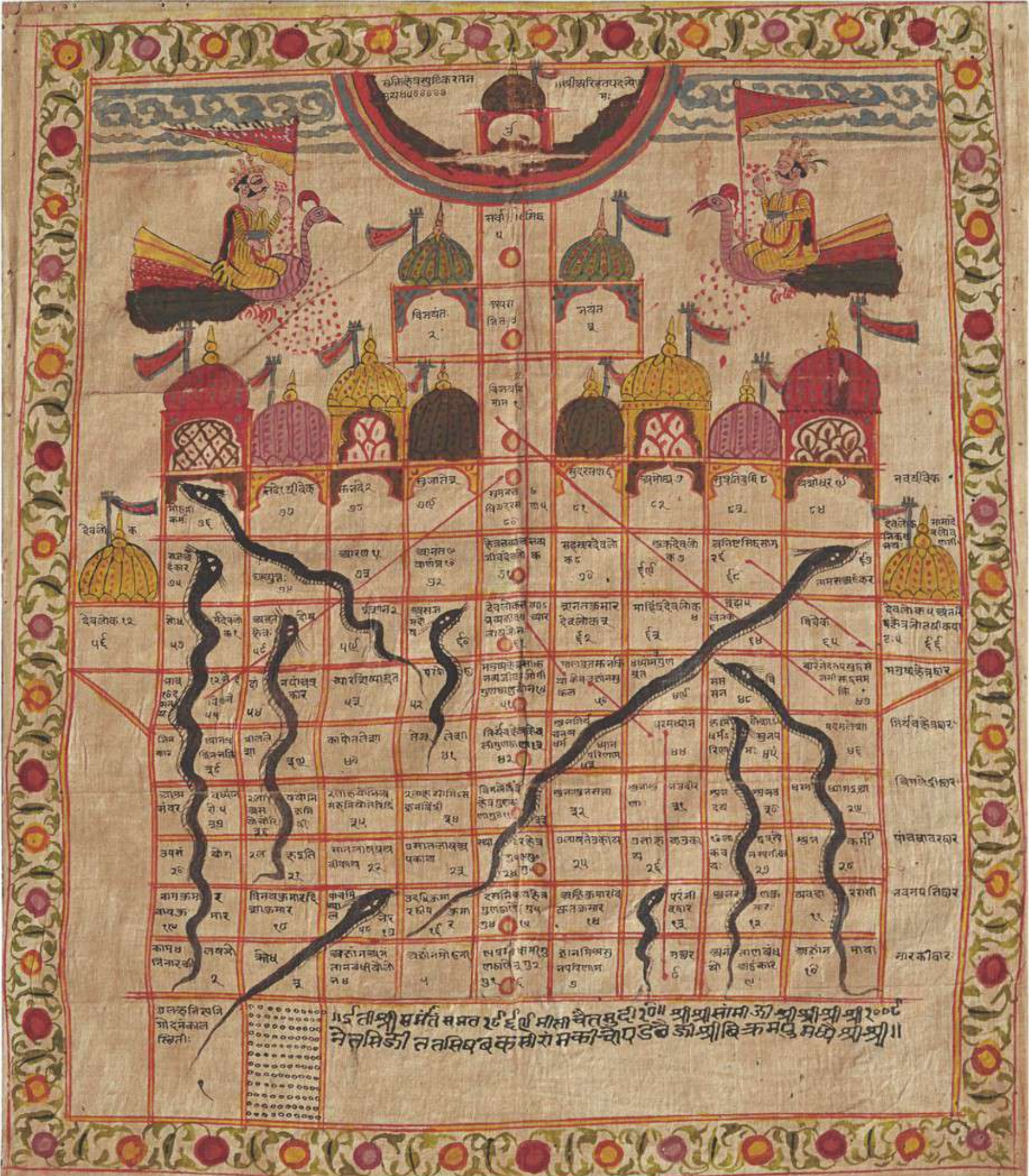


Fig.5.6 : Shatrunjaya Pata, Bikaner, Rajasthan, dated VS 1849 = 1792 CE
opaque watercolour on cotton, 113 x 169.5 cm, LD Museum, Ahmedabad, Acc. No. LDM.1984.1

dimensions. The mathematics of Jaina sacred geography is vast and intricate. The *Lokapurusha* diagrams allowed the meditator to grasp the vast scale of the universe, and possible passage of the human soul depending upon *karmic* deeds.

Tirtha Patas or Pilgrimage Maps: Alike the Buddhists and Hindus, the Jainas attach great importance to pilgrimages offering immense opportunity for the Jaina laity to gain spiritual merit. Most Jaina holy sites are linked to an important event in the life of *Tirthankaras*, or even that of a Jaina ascetic. Great significance was placed on the five auspicious moments in the life of a *Tirthankara/Jina*, known as the *Pancha-kalyanaka*. These are his conception (*garbha*), birth (*janma*), renunciation (*diksha*) and his attainment of omniscience (*kevala jnana*) being the most significant, and, finally, his full spiritual deliverance at death (*nirvana, moksha*). The place of final liberation of a *Jina* is referred to as *siddha-kshetra* and is of highest religious importance. It became customary for the pious donors to build temples at those sites to define and shape the sacred landscape. Jaina pilgrimage centres are stationed throughout India. Nonetheless, Mount Shatrunjaya and Girnar Hill in Gujarat, Mount Abu in Rajasthan, Samved Shikar in Bihar are of great importance.

Shatrunjaya Pata: Shatrunjaya is a hill located in the town of Palitana, Gujarat, Fig.5.6. It is the most important of all Jaina pilgrimage sites, and is associated with Adinatha, the first Jaina *Tirthankara*. For the devout Jainas, a visit to Palitana, Shatrunjaya is an aspiration of the lifetime. But Jainas have an alternative for the less fortunate laypeople, who are unable to make the pilgrimage, a surrogate in the form of a topographical painting of the sanctified site. This serves the same purpose. Every year, on



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 नेतसिडी लतसिखबकसोरो मकीचोपडेवे जी श्री दि क्रमपु मके श्री श्री ॥

Fig.5.7 : Gyan Chaupad

Western India or Rajasthan(?)

dated VS 1869 = 1832 CE

opaque watercolour on cotton, 57 x 48.7 cm

LD Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, Acc. No. LDII.GOL.20

auspicious days, such pilgrimage *patas* or *tirtha-avatara*, "shrine incarnations", are hung in the vicinity of a temple, for devotees to worship. *Tirtha patas* are some of the largest Indian paintings to have survived. One such elaborately rendered Shatrunjaya *pata*, Fig.5.6, is a visual map of the pilgrimage site, showing the important temples and landmarks. On the upper right top, Mount Girnar is shown, an unusual depiction to see both the sacred mountains in one single depiction.

Gyan-chaupad: Although later turned into the popular game of snakes and ladders, *gyan-chaupad* or *gyanbaji* is a reminder of the ultimate goal of human beings, and also shows the steps to its attainment. This has Hindu, Muslim, and Jaina versions, and played universally in India since ancient times. The *pata*, Fig.5.7, is a fine example of the Jaina version. The checkered board of 84 numbered squares represents the progress of one's life. Each square has notings pointing out rules of conduct and their good and bad results. Ladders or arrows denote the good behaviours that elevate the player to a higher level, while the snakes drag to the downfall. The pavilion on the top represents the heaven. On its summit is the crescent shaped *siddha-shila* flanked by peacocks, where liberated ones reside.

The Technique

In executing a *pata* the most important aspect is the correctness of the rendering, that influenced the potency of the *mantra*. Thus, *patas* were made either by the Jaina ascetics, *yati*, or by the professional painters, *Mathen*. The *mantra-patas* housed at the LD Museum have been attributed to Patan, the ancient capital of Gujarat and a centre of Jaina patronage. Finely woven cotton is primed, dried, following which the surface is burnished with agate, to make it smooth and suitable for drawing and colour application. The red used is vermilion, and the blue is lapis lazuli. At the same time, gold and silver have been lavishly used. Finally, the writing of the symbols, *mantraksharas*, is done, using lamp black or red. *Patras* have *nandyavarta* or *svastika* symbol drawn on the reverse, to mark them as sacred artefacts of the sect.

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