

# Development of Jain Architecture from Caves to Temple Architecture in Maharashtra

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*Abstract: Jainism as an old religion in India has contributed to the architecture of India. Jain Art and architecture developed during different period are seen in various parts of the country as well as in Maharashtra. Different rulers rule the area in different period of time, as well as people from different parts of the country migrated to Maharashtra during different periods of time. With this, various types of architecture like cave architecture, various types of temple architecture were developed from the 5th century to the 21th century, almost all parts of Maharashtra. These are developed as Jain Tirtha Kshetras with tangible and intangible aspects associated with it and also they have religious, historic, associational and cultural values attached to it. The paper aims at understanding various types of Jain architecture developed in Maharashtra from cave architecture to temple architecture. The paper focuses on understanding the basic terminologies used in Jain temple architecture. The study also focuses on the type of architecture developed in different periods along with the architectural features and material used for construction. An attempt is made to understand, changing character of Jain temple architecture as a religious structure during this period. From the study it was found that, due to the change in social, economic and political conditions, the Jain architecture developed with new concept and new features. In the region wise study, it was found that, Jain Tirtha Kshetras were not developed in all regions of Maharashtra, in few regions they developed in big number and in some regions their development was negligible. For new developing temple architecture, it was observed that, they are adopting new technology and concepts keeping the soul intact and at the same time they are developing in all regions of Maharashtra.*

**Keywords :** Jain Architecture, architectural features, material, temple architecture.

## Introduction

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of world with its roots in India. It contributed to cultural, spiritual and social development of Maharashtra. Jain architecture from 5th century is still seen in different parts of Maharashtra. As per 2011 census, largest population of Jain resides in Maharashtra. The elements which are used in Jain Architecture are similar to other architecture but they are distinctively Jain. Jain architecture is found in various places in Maharashtra, in small and big scale. They are developed with the historical and religious importance of a place, with tangible intangible aspects associated with it. Jain religious

architecture includes architecture from cave temple carved in stone to construction of RCC temple. With the change of material and time, planning aspects are also changed. The paper focuses on understanding basic terminologies and elements used in Jain architecture along with various types of architecture developed in the Maharashtra. It tries to find out the religious ideas, ritual practices reflected in Jain architecture. For these, various examples from different parts of Maharashtra are studied. The study finds out, how these ideas the still in use in temple planning, by modifying them with the situation and location of a place. Study also shows that the style used is changing from time to time along with the change in material and it is responding to the modern age.

## Literature review

Maharashtra has a history of more than 5000 years and from the beginning, the region is stronghold of Jainism and Jains. The oldest Jain inscription in Maharashtra is found in a cave near Pale village in Pune district. (Sanglikar) Jainism flourished between 7th to 12th century, during Yadava, Chalukya, Rashtrakuta period. (Editorial Observations, 1974) Some of these dynasties were follower or patrons of Jainism. During their reign they constructed many important monuments. From this period the architecture developed was caves, temple cities, and temples. The oldest Jain cave temple is Maharashtra is found in Ter near Osmanabad and at Nagar and Mandhal in Vidarbha region carved in 5th to 7th century. (Kabade, 2015)

Jain architecture at various places is understood through three volumes of 'Jain Art and Architecture' by A. Ghosh. 'Jain art and architecture- Encyclopaedia' was useful to understand temple architecture in India. Then various articles in 'Tirthankar' magazine were useful in understanding the Jain tradition, about Muktagiri Tirtha and other places. Book by Edith Tomory on 'A History of Fine Arts in India and West' gives detail information of Jain caves along with its plan. James Fergusson in his 'History of Indian And Eastern Architecture' book discusses about Ellora caves in detail which are helpful in understanding the history of caves. And to understand the basic terminologies in Jainism book 'Olakh Jain Dharmachi' was useful, which gives the basic knowledge of Jainism and Jain architecture.

## Terminology

**Tirth Kshetra:** It is a sacred place and becomes a holy place in association with Jain values. Generally, they are located on hills or mountains, as those are the places from where the Jain monks achieved salvation. Hence, Jain temple, cluster of temples, statues are located on top of hills. (Hegewald, 2017) Tirth Kshetra are built by followers or devotees to keep the spiritual event of that place in continuous memory.

#### Types of Tirtha kshetra

1. **Nirvan Kshetra or Siddha Kshetra:** The place of salvation of any *Tirthankar* or an ascetic saint. In Maharashtra there are *Siddha Kshetra* like, Muktagiri, Gajpanth, Mangi Tungi and Kunthalgiri. (Kabade, 2015)
2. **Kalyanaka Kshetra:** Kalyanaka are five major events in *Tirthankar's* life. *Kalyanaka kshetra* are the places related to Garbha (Conception), Janma (Birth), Tapa / Deeksha (Accepting the penance), Gyan (Knowledge) Kalyanakas of Tirthankars. (Kabade, 2015) These are not noticed in Maharashtra.
3. **Atishaya Kshetra:** *Tirtha Kshetra* where a miracle or wonder is happened or seen about the temple, the idol or place is known as *Atishaya Kshetra*. In Maharashtra, *Atishaya Kshetras* are Kumbhoj-Bahubali, Bhatkuli, Kunthugiri. (Kabade, 2015)

#### Types of Jain architectures

- A. **Stupa (Chaitya):** These are not noticed in Maharashtra.
- B. **Layana (Caves):** These are to rock Cut Architecture also called as caves.
- C. **Jinalaya (Temples):** These are the religious building found after Stupa and Layana also called Jinalaya, Jinabhavana, Basadi, Basti, vihara, etc. In the beginning it was both rock cut and structural, but then remained structural and existed in plains.

**Manastambha:** It is part of temple, found in the front side of temple, having religious importance with an ornamental pillar structure carrying the image of *Tirthankar* on the top, on all four cardinal directions. (Jain S. S., 2007) *Manastambha* are constructed at the entrances of most of the temples in Maharashtra.

#### Methodology

The study started with the understanding of terminologies used in Jainism and Jain architecture. How the spaces are created in Jain religious architecture and importance of use of feature like *Manastambha* studied through literature study. The paper analyses development of Jain architecture in Maharashtra from historic period to modern period through literature study, through interviews and by visiting the places. Further, the study is carried out to understand the development of various types of *Tirthas* in Maharashtra. Through literature study it was understood that *stupa* type of Jain architecture is not noticed till date. But caves and temples are seen in Maharashtra. Maharashtra has total 36 *Tirtha Kshetras* and number of temples smaller and bigger sizes, located in almost each and every city, town. So, different

examples from Vidarbha, Western Maharashtra and Marathwada region are selected and studied. Based on that, analysis was done on various aspects, and then conclusion was made.

#### Types of Jain architecture

##### B. Caves

Caves are the earlier architecture found in Maharashtra, are of Digambara Jain sect. These are found from 6th century during Chalukya period and continued during Rashtrakuta period. Along with Dharashiv and Ter caves of 5th to 7th century, caves in Kharosa, Latur district carved in 6th century, caves in Ellora, Aurangabad district were carved in 10th century; caves at Gajpanth were carved during 11th century. Caves at Paaley-Pune district, Kundal-Sangli district, Mangi-Tungi, Ankai-Tankai and Anjaneri in Nashik district were carved during 10th-13th century. (<http://jainology.blogspot.in/2009/10/history-of-jainism-in-maharashtra.html>)

- i. **Ellora caves:** Cave number 30-35 at Ellora are Jain caves carved in 10th century after Buddhist and Hindu caves and are considered as modern. (James, 2011) These are named as Indra Sabha (Cave number 33), Jagannath Sabha (Cave number 33), Chota Kailasa (cave no. 30) which is the imitation of Kailasha Brahmanical cave. (James, 2011) Indra Sabha shows Manastambha and colossal image of Parswanath, carved in AD 1235 also between Indra Sabha and Jagannath sabha.



*Shikhar* of Indra sabha temple with *Manastambha*, deity Indrani And Mahavira with Yaksha and Yakshi and Carvings on the pillars of the Jagannatha Sabha

Photo source: [www.googleimages.com](http://www.googleimages.com)

- ii. **Mangi Tungi:** Mangi Tungi caves carved during 10th-13th century are the two peaks of mountain located in

Nashik district. Temple complex has *dharmashala*, temples, shops, office. The Siddha Kshetra has 15 temples together on both peaks and is climbed by 3500 steps. According to Jainism many Jain monks including Ram, Hanuman, Sugriv attained Nirvana from here. Both the peaks show carved caves. In 2016, the biggest Jain idol of first Tirthankar Aadinatha, of 33 m high was carved from a monolithic stone, which is also listed under Guinness book records that changed the character of a place.



Photos showing two peaks Mangi and Tungi along with temples, caves and newly constructed Aadinath standing Statue of Ahimsa  
Photo courtesy: Author and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangi-Tungi>

iii. **Gajapantha:** Gajapantha caves carved in 11th century is a Siddha Kshetra of Digambar Jain sect located near Nashik. 23rd Tirthankar Parshwanath is the 'Mulnayak' of temple. There are three caves of 900 years old also known as '*chamar leni*' and two temples. It is accessed by 450 steps of black stone that lead to cave temple. The base of the hill has *dharmashala*, temples, book shop and a museum; together it forms a temple complex.

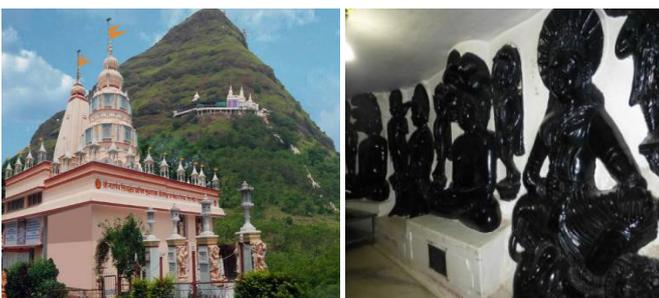


Photo showing temple complex along with Gajapantha hill and carving in cave showing Tirthankar along with attendants  
Photo courtesy: <https://www.indiamart.com/derajinigandha-hotel/services.html> and Author

### C. Temples

i. **Temple cities:** In later years Jains started building temple cities on hills because of the religious importance of

place. Number of temples used to be group together to form a city of temples. Sometimes the architectural style and form of each temple used to be different than another; still they used to be form a group. There were no rules followed for the construction of these temples. Such temple cities are seen in Vidarbha region.

#### a Muktagiri

Muktagiri is constructed in 10th century in 'Satpuda' Mountain range. *Siddha Kshetra* is now part of Madhya Pradesh but earlier it was in Maharashtra state. There are total 52 temples and also known as 'Mendhagiri' or 'Medhrgiri'. (<http://www.herenow4u.net/index.php?id=78216>, 2012) There are many miraculous stories associated with the place, hence also referred as *Atishay Kshetra*. The temple city is developed in its sporadic way without any rules. It is the largest group of temples situated on a platform at the foot of a waterfall. Temple number 10 and 11 are approached by crossing a bridge on waterfall. (<http://www.herenow4u.net/index.php?id=78216>, 2012) Though there is no specific style followed in construction of temples, but it shows influence of Mughal features as few temple *shikhars* are dome shaped and arches copied from Mughal style. The temples stand on a terrace and are surmounted by one or more spires.



Photo showing views of Muktagiri temple city  
Photo courtesy: <http://www.herenow4u.net/index.php?id=78216>

#### b Ramtek

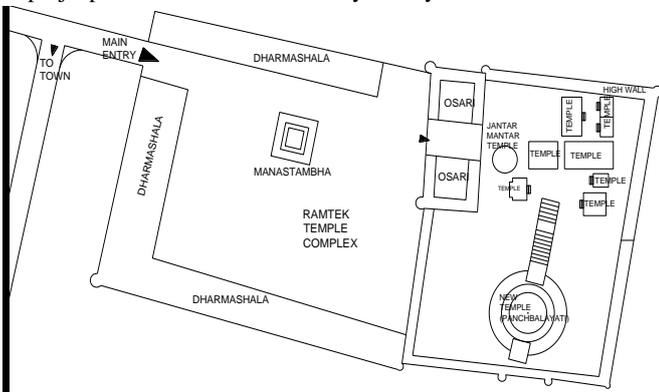
Ramtek is also known for ancient Jain temple with 16th Tirthankar Shantinath as '*Mulnayak*'. The temple is constructed during 18th century during Nagpurkar Bhonsle on Maratha style architecture. (<https://gazetteers.maharashtra.gov.in/cultural.maharashtra.gov.in/english/gazetteer/Nagpur/places.html>)

The original complex has nine temples. Each temple is constructed on different platform as a different structure with different *shikhar* style. It is surrounded by high walls from all four sides. The temple complex includes *Manastamba*, *dharmashalas*, office and other ancillary buildings. All the temples are constructed out of stone. A new, tenth stone temple is constructed in the same complex with round dome. (<http://www.jainjagat.com/viewtemple.php/Tirthankars/Shantinath/321>)



Photo showing Shantinath temple with carving, new Panchabalayati temple and Ramtek temple complex during the construction of Panchabalayati temple

Photo courtesy: Shri Kiran Meghal and <http://janpratinidhi.com/ConstituencyGallery/C624-Ramtek>



Schematic Plan of temple complex at Ramtek

## ii. Temples in cities/towns

Jain temple construction majorly started between 11th to 14th centuries in Maharashtra. Temples at Anjaneri, Phaltan were also constructed during this period. (Kabade, 2015) These used to be constructed in stone in Nagar style, Hemadpanthi style and used to carve by depicting 24 Tirthankars and attendants called Yaksha-Yakshini. (Shah) In later period use of brick also started. Various types of temples are started constructing throughout Maharashtra. After 14th century, *Bhuyar* temples started constructing to protect the temples from unstable political and social condition. So, that in case of emergency, basement used to be use as hiding place of shrines. Later this type of temple planning became common and basement became the integral part of temple planning. Another type of temple is Chaumukh temple, where the shrine is located on all four sides and entrance to the temple is also provided from all sides. In Shikhar temple type, *shikhar* of the temple is provided above *Garbhagriha*. Temples constructed without *shikhar* are called Chaityalay temples. Temples also

constructed with number of *vedis* placed in main prayer hall of a temple, located in different directions, where '*Mulnayak*' used to be located in central *vedi*. In other type of temple planning, temple has a single *vedi*, located centrally with circumambulation path is provided surrounding it; this type of planning is reflected from the religious idea '*Samavsharan*' of Jainism.

### a Jain temples, Anjaneri

It is 12th century Jain temple Complex of Five temples and another of two temples near to each other are in ruined and dilapidated condition situated in Anjaneri near Nashik. The place also has two Jain caves situated on nearby hill. The remains of Jain temples are scattered in the region. The stone temples show carving of *Tirthankars* and their attendants. The pillars of the temples are carved and has cubical shape at the bottom whereas cylindrical at the top. *Tirthankar* figures and their attendants' sculptures are carved on the temple with Hemadpanthi style *shikhar*.

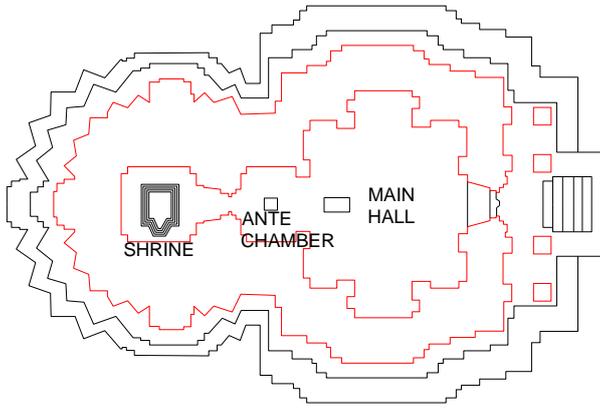


Photos showing remains of Anjaneri Jain temple and encroachment by people staying nearby areas

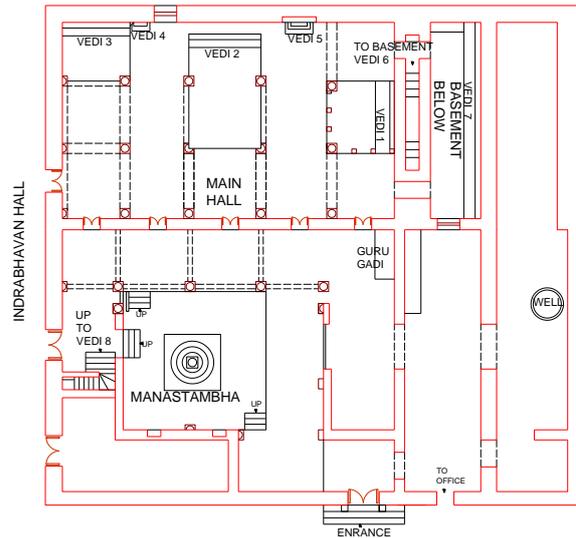
Photo courtesy: Author

### b Jabareshwar temple Phaltan

The stone temple was constructed in 12th-13th century and was originally dedicated to the 23rd *Tirthankar*, Paraswanath. The originally constructed Jain temple was later converted to Hindu temple is located into centre of Phaltan town. The Hemadpanthi style shows intricate carvings; iconography on the exterior walls. (circle) the temple has four pillars at the entrance, main, ante chamber and *garbhagriha*. The *shikhar* of temple fallen.



[http://www.asimumbaicircle.com/images/satara\\_jabreshwar-mahadev-templemap\\_bigimg.jpg](http://www.asimumbaicircle.com/images/satara_jabreshwar-mahadev-templemap_bigimg.jpg)  
Plan of Jabareshwar temple, Phaltan



Schematic Basement and Ground floor plan of temple



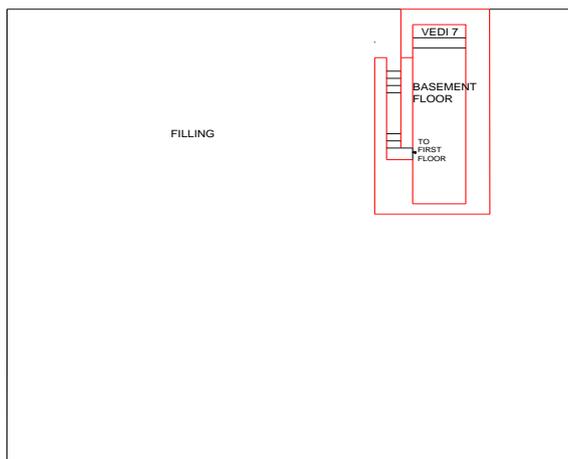
Photos showing Jabareshwar temple, Phaltan  
Photo courtesy: Author



Photos showing mandapa, main hall and basement of temple  
Photo courtesy: Mrs. Pratibha Meghal and Author

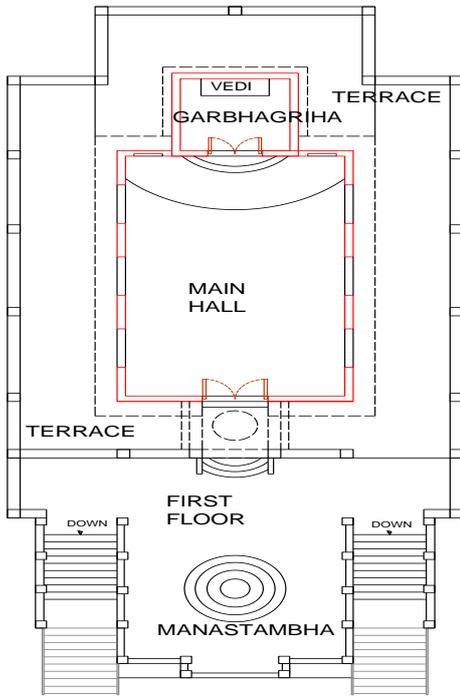
### c Shri Parshwaprabhu Digamber Jain temple, Itwari, Nagpur

The temple was constructed 450 years ago with use of Maratha elements but it also shows influence of Mughal architecture. The temple has basement, ground and first floor. *Manastambha* is later addition located at the entrance of the temple. The temple also shows glass work as well as carving in main hall. The temple is constructed out of brick and stone. It is planned on the concept of number of *vedis* in one hall showing six *vedis* in main hall, with number of big and small shrines kept on it, one *vedi* is in basement and one small is located on first floor above *vedi* number two, total eight *vedis*. *Vedi* one, two and three has three different *shikhar*.



### d Mahaveer Digamber Jain temple, Manikbaug

The temple is a RCC structure and was constructed in 2008. The plan of the temple shows two staircases that lead to first floor, where the main temple is situated; the *Manastambha* is located in front of the main hall on first floor. The temple has big hall and only one *vedi* in *garbhagriha* where the main deity is placed above which *Shikhar* located. The temple hall is surrounded by terrace which acts as circumambulation path. The ground floor of the temple has big hall which is used for conducting programs and small rooms, used for other purposes. The temple plan is modified from traditional temple plan to suit the context and need of the time.



Schematic First floor plan of temple



Photo showing view of Manikbaug temple, Manastambha and Photo courtesy: Author

**e Shri Gyan Tirth Digamber Jain temple, Shirdi**

The temple is totally different from the concept of temple. The temple is under construction and located at a higher level and is accessed after climbing number of steps, the shape of the temple is of lotus flower and is constructed with modern material. Open planning of the temple is different from traditional temple plan. The shrine is visible from the road.



Photo of Shirdi Jain temple  
Photo courtesy: Author

**Findings**

Jain architecture changes from place to place and time to time. Jain caves are seen in Western Maharashtra, Khandesh and Marathwada region constructed from 5th century to 13th century. Gajapnatha is a combination of cave temple as well

as temples. While Mangi-Tungi shows two mountain peaks with caves carved on it and a recently carved statue 33 m high of Aadinatha, called 'Statue of Ahimsa' which is recorded under Guinness book and due to which the character of a place changed and the place is emerging as new tourist place. After cave architecture, period of 11th to 14th century shows stone temple construction as seen in Anjaneri temple and Jabareshwar temple. During 10th century, Muktagiri emerged as a temple city in scenic location with 52 stone temples and with different styles of dome. The temples show influence of Mughal architecture. The temple complex of Ramtek constructed in 18th century during Bhonsle period is covered by high walls or bastions from all sides which is a feature of Maratha style architecture. Stonework and stone used for Shantinath temple is different from other temples in the same complex due to which it stands out differently. It shows influence of Maratha style architecture. New temple of Panchbalayati in same complex is also a stone temple. The temple in Itwari Nagpur was also constructed during Bhonsle period shows use of Maratha style for columns and brackets and use of Mughal style for arches.

It has a basement which is an important element of Jain architecture and in this instead of providing number of temples; number of *vedis* are provided in main hall, creating a different type of architecture. The temple in Pune, though is a recent work of RCC construction, it is modified from traditional temple plan but it tries to keep the character of the temple. It has no basement and main temple along with *Manastambha* is planned on first floor. No separate circumambulation path is provided inside the temple, but terrace of the temple is used as circumambulation path. Whereas, the temple in Shirdi is a modern temple type in all the above examples designed on different concept, leaving behind traditional concept of temple architecture.

Place of worship	Vidarbha	Khandesh	Marathwada	Western Maharashtra	Konkan
Caves	-	Patana Devi	Ellora, Dharashiv, Kharosa	Nandgiri, Ankai-Tankai, Gajapantha, Anjaneri	-
Jain Tirth	Bajargaon, Wadhona, Kaudanyapur	Kesapuri,	Paithan, Jatwada, Ashta, Ter,	Namokartirth, Podanpur-Borivali,	-
Temple city	Muktagiri, Ramtek	-	Shirad-Shahapur	-	-
Siddhakshetra	Muktagiri	-	Kunthalgiri	Mangi-Tungi, Gajapantha, Kundal	-
Atishaykshetra	Shirpur, Bhatkuli, Vijaygopal, Muktagiri	Mandal	Kachner, Jatwada, Paithan, Savargaon, Nemgiri	Dahigaon, Kunthugiri, Bahubali-Kumbhoj	-
Temples	All cities	All cities	All cities	All cities	All cities

### Conclusion

Jain architecture developed in Maharashtra from 5th century and from then the architecture type, its planning, and material is also changed. This change is clearly noticed in all above examples from Ellora caves, Anjaneri temples to recently constructed Shirdi temple. When divided into regions, Marathwada and Western Maharashtra shows maximum development of Jain architecture from ancient times, while Khandesh shows minimum and Konkan area shows no development of Jain architecture. Vidarbha shows development of all types of architecture except cave architecture. But with the change in time, new temples are getting built in all regions of Maharashtra including Konkan. And they are constructed by using modern material, techniques and planning concept.

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