

Jaina Studies

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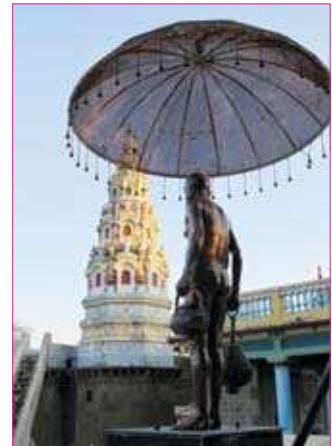
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On the Cover

Statue of 'Cāritracakravartī' Ācārya Śāntisāgara 'Dakṣiṇa' (1872-1955), who in the 20th century revived the Digambara *muni* tradition, in 'Digambara Jaina Siddhakṣetra' Kunthalagiri, Photo: Peter Flügel, 2012



Worshipping Bhaṭṭārakas

Tillo Detige

For most of the second millennium CE, *Bhaṭṭārakas*, or clothed, sedentary renunciants, were at the helm of the Digambara monastic lineages, surrounded by celibate *brahmacārīs* and lay *paṇḍitas* or *pāṇḍes*. Far less regular in this period are references to naked, peripatetic monks (*muni*) and nuns (*āryikā*). *Bhaṭṭārakas* were instrumental in the preservation and copying of manuscripts, and some were prolific litterateurs themselves. They held an important position in the lay community that supported them, leading pilgrimages, administering vows, and negotiating on their behalf with secular authorities. One of their most important activities was the consecration of Jina images in their capacity of *pratiṣṭhācārya*. In countless Digambara temples, the *bhaṭṭārakas*' legacy is still activated daily by the worship of Jina icons consecrated by them in past centuries.¹

Although an important, albeit more dormant, art-historical and archeological legacy remains to evince this, it is much less well known that deceased *bhaṭṭārakas* themselves were also worshipped, and pavilion-shaped funerary monuments (*chatrīs*) were erected in their honour throughout Western India. (Figure 1, 2) Most of the sites feature a number of *chatrīs* and are situated near former *bhaṭṭāraka* seats, such as Āmer, Jaipur, and Ajmer. Installed under the *chatrīs* are *caraṇa pādukās*, bas-relief carvings of the *bhaṭṭārakas*' feet (Figure 3, 4, 5), or, alternatively, *niṣṭhikās* (also *nisedhikā*, etc.), small pillars with carvings of Jinās as well as naked ascetics, probably *bhaṭṭārakas* (Figure 6).² Inscriptions on the *pādukās* and *niṣṭhikās* typically mention the name of the *bhaṭṭāraka* represented and his lineage, the date of consecration of the *pādukā*, and by whom it was performed, usually the immediate successor on the *bhaṭṭāraka* seat or sometimes the second successor in line.

The inscriptions on the *pādukās* and *niṣṭhikās* constitute an important historical archive for the study of the chronology and spread of the *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages yet to be studied.³ At least as interesting is the question of their ritual function. Today most *chatrīs*, even those that are renovated, are visited only occasionally. At only few of the sites, offerings of water and uncooked rice are made at the *pādukās*, or sandalwood paste is applied.⁴ How-



Figure 1. *Bhaṭṭāraka chatrīs* at the Kīrtistambh Nasīyām, Āmer.

ever, the *pādukās*' former ritual function is evident from sculptural indications like drainage channels, which suggest that they were designed for the ritual oblation of liquids. A ritual (*pūjā*) focused on the *pādukās* of deceased *bhaṭṭārakas* is also confirmed by some textual sources, which I discuss further below.

Bhaṭṭāraka chatrīs seem to have been built usually at the site of cremation. Some of the sites are still used for the cremation of ascetics, as recent *pādukās* of Digambara *munis* found at Candragiri and Ṛṣabhdev-Kesariyājī show. Furthermore, although there are no external indications to prove this, it is possible that relics were buried beneath the *bhaṭṭāraka chatrīs*.⁵ The worship of *bhaṭṭāraka pādukās* might also have been related to a belief that the protection and assistance of deceased *bhaṭṭārakas* who have been reborn in heaven can be called upon through ritual.⁶ As such, the *chatrīs* and *pādukās* are not merely places of commemoration but also sites of empowerment.⁷

1 Jōhrāpurkar 1958 remains the most important study of the North Indian *bhaṭṭārakas* so far. K.C. Kāślīvāl has studied the literary output of the *bhaṭṭārakas* of Rajasthan and Gujarat and their *brahmacārī* pupils in a number of monographs (i.e. his 1967). See also Deo 1956: 545-58, Jain, M.U.K. 1975: 83-132, Cort 2002a, Flügel 2006: 344-7.

2 The inscriptions on most *niṣṭhikās* do not indicate whether they indeed depict *bhaṭṭārakas*. However, *kīrti-stambhas*, a type of pillar found in Āmer, Dungarpur and Sāgvādā featuring carvings of the successive pontiffs of the monastic lineage, carry similar representations of naked *bhaṭṭārakas* with inscriptions of their names and dates.

3 Jōhrāpurkar 1958 included none of the inscriptions of the sites discussed below. The prevalence of the construction of *bhaṭṭāraka chatrīs* has not yet been noticed, let alone has any sustained study of these sites been conducted.

4 The Vidyānandī Kṣetra in Surat, is a notable and so far rare exception. Here, an annual festival (*mela*) is still held on the death anniversary of Bhaṭṭāraka Vidyānandī, the second occupant of the Mūlasaṃgha Sūrataśākhā (VS 1499-1537).

5 Relic worship is a controversial issue amongst both the Digambaras and the Śvetāmbaras. See Flügel 2008, 2010, 2011. While it is sometimes deprecated as not ordained by scriptures or as impure, I have heard attestation of the inclusion of vessels with relics under *chatrīs* of several contemporary Digambara *ācāryas* and *munis* (a.o. Ācārya Bharatsāgara at Aḍindā, 2011; Ācārya Yogīndrasāgara at Sāgvādā, under construction), as well as of the currency of this practice.

6 For parallels of Śvetāmbara monks who are believed to have been reborn as gods and as such can offer assistance and protection as 'miracle workers' (*camatkārti*), see Laidlaw 1995: 51, and 71ff; Babb 1996: 108-9; Flügel 2008: 20.

7 Flügel 2011: 6 makes the distinction between sites of commemoration and sites of empowerment.



Figure 2. *Bhaṭṭāraka chatrīs* at the *Bhaṭṭārakīya Nāsiyām*, Jaipur.

A preliminary survey in Rajasthan yielded about two dozen *bhaṭṭāraka chatrīs*, ranging from the 16th to 20th centuries, and related to all the *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages known to have been substantially active here. These are the Nandītaṭagaccha of the Kāṣṭhāsamgha and three branches (*śākhā*) of the Mūlasamgha Balātkāragana: the Dillī-Jayapuraśākhā (founded at the end of the 14th century by Bhaṭṭāraka Śubhacandra, a pupil of Bhaṭṭāraka Padmanandi), the Īdaraśākhā (founded by Bhaṭṭāraka Sakalakīrti, another pupil of Padmanandi, in Īdar, Gujarat), and the Nāgauraśākhā (a sub-branch of the Dillī-Jayapuraśākhā founded by Ratnakīrti in the first half of the 16th century centered on Nagaur and Ajmer).⁸

The Mūlasamgha Dillī-Jayapuraśākhā is known to have shifted its seat consecutively from Delhi to Chittor, Sanganer, Āmer, Jaipur⁹ and finally Mahāvīrjī. So far two sites with *chatrīs* of its *bhaṭṭārakas* have been found in Āmer and Jaipur. The Kīrtistambha Nāsiyām in Āmer has the *chatrīs* of Devendrakīrti (date in the inscription

⁸ I follow the names of the lineages and dates as given by Johrāpurkar 1958.

⁹ Hoernle 1892: 83.



Figure 3. *Carāṇa pādūkā* of Bhaṭṭāraka Devendrakīrti, *Kīrtistambha Nāsiyām*, Āmer.

obliterated), Narendrakīrti (died VS 1722), Surendrakīrti (died VS 1733) and Jagatkīrti (*pādūkās* consecrated VS 1771) (Plate 1). At the Bhaṭṭārakīya Nāsiyām in Jaipur, a platform raised on pillars supports the *chatrīs* of three further *bhaṭṭārakas* of this lineage: Mahendrakīrti (*pādūkās* cons. VS 1853), Kṣemendrakīrti (cons. VS 1853) and Surendrakīrti (cons. VS 1881) (Figure 2). A comparison of these two sites shows the stylistic evolution of the *pādūkās*. Those at Āmer are installed in a small shrine under the *chatrī* and are sculpturally rather simple (Figure 3). The later *pādūkās* of Jaipur, installed on a low, lotus-shaped plinth, are more finely carved and stylistically more elaborate, also featuring representations of ascetics' paraphernalia like *kamaṇḍalu* (water pitcher), *picchī* (whisk) and *mālā* (rosary) (Figure 4). A lotus flower motif under the feet is likely an allusion to the notion of the guru's lotus-feet (*pāda-padma*, *caraṇa-kamala*).

The largest *chatrī* site to be found in Rajasthan so far, the Āmṭeḍ Nāsiyām in Ajmer (Figure 5), is related to the Mūlasamgha Nāgauraśākhā. It has nine *chatrīs* and eighteen *cabūtarās*, or simple octagonal platforms. Amongst these are also the *pādūkās* of a number of *pañḍitas*, installed on *cabūtarās* or under small *chatrīs*. Some of the *pādūkās* on the site have been lost, but twenty-two remain. This site has the oldest datable *bhaṭṭāraka pādūkā* surveyed so far, as well as some of the newest. The *pādūkā* of Bhaṭṭāraka Ratnakīrti has an inscription dating the establishment of the *chatrī* to VS 1572. Two larger square carvings mounted on waist-high plinths, both consecrated by Bhaṭṭāraka Harṣakīrti in VS 1992, feature the *pādūkās* of Bhaṭṭāraka Lalitakīrti and Ratnabhūṣaṇa, combined with the *pādūkās* of respectively two and eight *pañḍitas*.

Chatrīs of two consecutive *bhaṭṭārakas* of the Mūlasamgha Īdaraśākhā are found on the outskirts of Udaipur. The Śantināth Digambara Jaina Mandir in Ashok Nagar has a *pādūkā* and a *niṣṭdhikā* of Bhaṭṭāraka

Kṣemakīrti (cons.VS 1759¹⁰), while the Candraprabhu Digambara Jain Caityālaya at nearby Āyaḍ has a *pādukā* of Bhaṭṭāraka Narendrakīrti (cons. VS 1769). Another *chatrī* of the Īḍaraśākhā is that of Bhaṭṭāraka Candrakīrti at the Candragiri hillock in the pilgrimage place Rṣabhdev-Kesariyājī. This *chatrī* has a rare, complex *niṣṭhikā* (cons. VS 1869?, date difficult to read in the inscription) with *caraṇa pādukās* integrated into the structure at waist-height on all four sides (Figure 6). At the latter site also lies the *pādukā* of Bhaṭṭāraka Yaśakīrti of the Kāṣṭhāsangha Nandītaṭagaccha (VS 2035), apparently the last *bhaṭṭāraka* of Northern India. In Surpur, near Dungarpur, finally lies a dilapidated and overgrown site with four *chatrīs* and several other *pādukās* installed on platforms and in simple shrines. This seems to have been a cremation ground shared by several communities. Apart from *pādukās* of *bhaṭṭārakas* of the Mūlasaṃgha Īḍaraśākhā and the Kāṣṭhāsangha Nandītaṭagaccha, it also has several Śvetāmbara *pādukās*.¹¹

As mentioned above, some textual sources evince a ritual focused on the *bhaṭṭāraka pādukās*. A *guṭaka* (bound manuscript) of the Āmera *śāstra-bhaṇḍāra* contains three short, Sanskrit ritual texts in praise of some of the Āmer *bhaṭṭārakas* mentioned above.¹² Two of these are compositions for the eightfold worship (*aṣṭaprakārtī-pūjā*) of *bhaṭṭāraka pādukās*. One of these two *pūjās* is written by Bhaṭṭāraka Jagatkīrti in worship of his guru Surendrakīrti, while the other worships Jagatkīrti himself.

10 Another *niṣṭhikā* installed under this *chatrī* in the same year is that of Ācārya Viśvabhūṣaṇa. It is not clear whether the title *ācārya* here refers to a naked monk.

11 I have meanwhile surveyed further sites in Rajasthan (Aḍindā, Sāgvāḍā, Naugāmā, Pratāpgarh, Bijauliyām and Būndī), Madhya Pradesh (Sonagiri and Gwalior) and Gujarat (Surat and Īḍar). The Vidyānandī Kṣetra in Surat features no less than eighty-two *pādukās*, amongst which many of *bhaṭṭārakas*, of multiple lineages. A single *chatrī* in Sāgvāḍā has eighteen *niṣṭhikās* related to the Īḍaraśākhā and Bhānapuraśākhā of the Mūlasaṃgha.

12 *Guṭaka* No. 1 (cat. no. 199).



Figure 4. *Caraṇa pādukā* of Bhaṭṭāraka Mahendrakīrti, Bhaṭṭārakīya Nasīyām, Jaipur.

Explicitly referring to the *pādukās* (*guruṇaṃ caraṇa, pa-dapadma*, etc.), these texts prescribe the offering of the usual eight substances of *bīspanthī aṣṭaprakārtī-pūjā*: *jalam* (water), *gandham* or *camdanam* (sandalwood), *akṣatam* (unbroken rice), *puṣpam* (flowers), *caruḥ* or *naivedyam* (sweets or sugar), *dīpam* (lamps), *dhūpam* (incense), and *phalam* (fruits). The first composition has the invocation formula (*āhvānana*) typically used at the start of Digambara *pūjā* liturgy. Using several seed syllables, this invocation calls the object of veneration to the vicinity of the worshipper, for the purpose of worship: *om hrīm paramacātrapātraguruṇaṃ caraṇa | atrāvatarāvātara saṃvauṣaṭ āhvānanaṃ (om hrīm, [may] the feet of the supreme guru, invoked, incarnate here, incarnate, samvauṣaṭ)*. While the third composition merely praises Bhaṭṭāraka Jagatkīrti, without mentioning

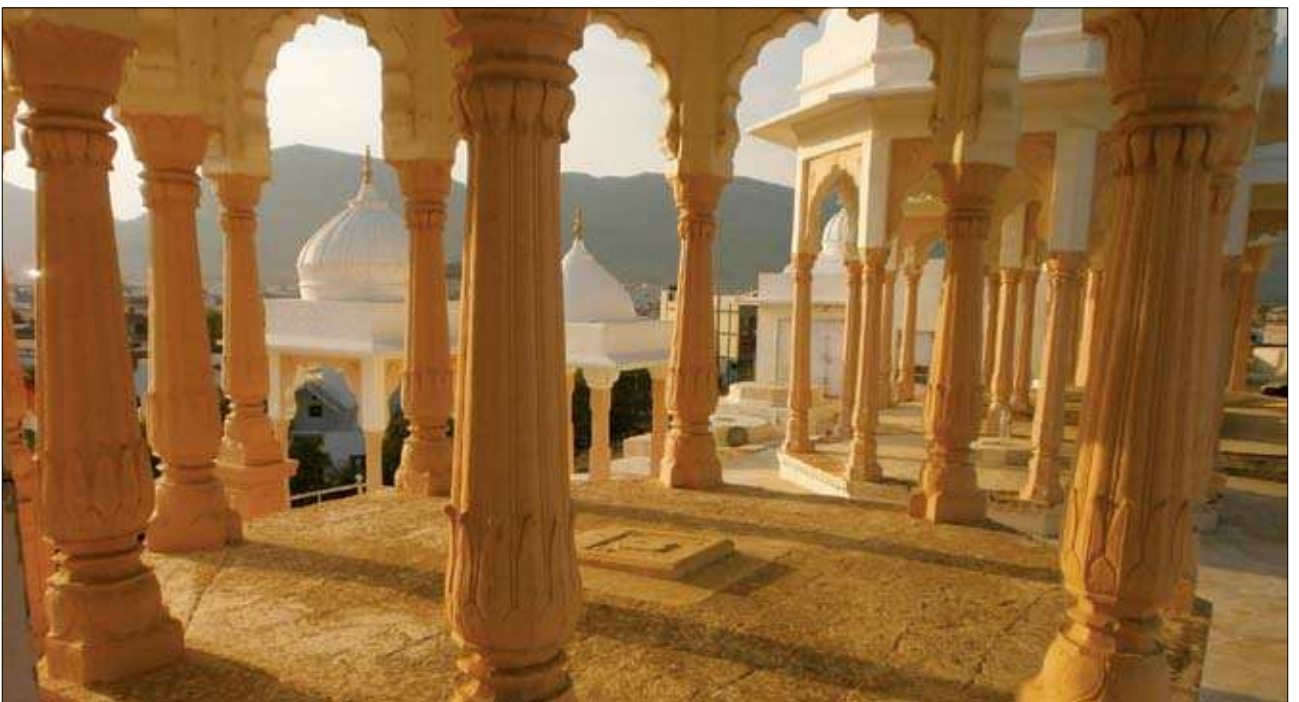


Figure 5. *Āmṭeḍ Nasīyām*, Ajmer.

the eight substances, it also refers to the ‘establishing’ (*sthāpanam*) of the *pādukās*.¹³

Today, the medieval Northern Indian *bhaṭṭārakas* are predominantly perceived as a kind of cleric, credited with the preservation of the Digambara tradition during the ‘inauspicious’ period of Muslim rule, but devoid of any ascetic charisma. The installation and worship of *bhaṭṭāraka pādukās*, however, is an indication of their contemporaries’ devotion towards them. It shows the importance of the ‘devotion of asceticism’¹⁴ in Digambara Jainism and the continuity of the worship of the ascetic ideal even when the ‘ideal’ (i.e. naked and peripatetic) ascetic was hard to come across. At this time, it would seem, the practices and feelings of devotion and worship of asceticism were projected on the *bhaṭṭārakas*, even when the latter only took the minor vows. This alters and enriches our understanding of the late medieval Northern Indian *bhaṭṭāraka* institution. In the framework of the research project ‘North Indian Digambara Jainism (13th-17th century): the Age of the Bhaṭṭārakas’, my ongoing PhD research at Ghent university, I aim to continue surveying *bhaṭṭāraka chatrīs*, *pādukās* and *niṣṭdhikās*, and researching the broader phenomenon of the *bhaṭṭāraka* tradition throughout the wider region.

All photos are by the author.

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¹³ I have recently found several more similar *bhaṭṭāraka pādukā pūjā* compositions in *guṭakas* preserved in temple manuscript collections in Ankleśvar and Īdar, both in Gujarat. *Aṣṭaprakāri-pūjās* of modern Digambara *ācāryas* have now become popular and can be found in many editions of collected *pūjā* texts. While the verses are now more often written in Hindi, the same Sanskrit ritual formulas are still used.

¹⁴ Cort 2002b. In conjunction with this, and as important, is no doubt devotion to the teacher (*guru-bhakti*).

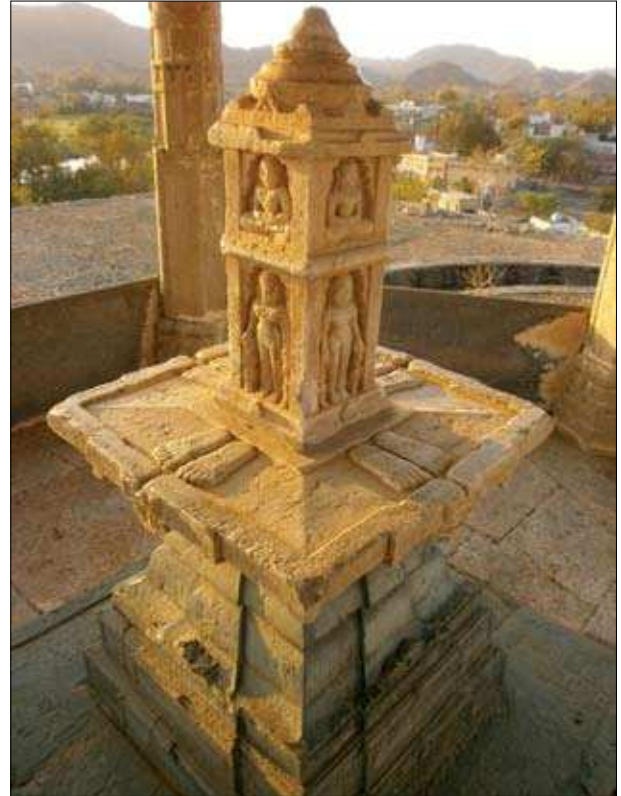


Figure 6. *Niṣṭdhikā* of Bhaṭṭāraka Candrakīrti, *Candragiri*, Rishabhdev-Kesariyaji.

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