

# **Ranakpur Jain Temple Architectural Marvel : A Case Study with Special Reference of Kalpvrikash Botanical Ornamentation**

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## ***Abstract :***

Art history & architecture is the study of art that covers every aspect of human history and experience from ancient times to the present day. This is because it looks at works of art not just as objects, but as a way to understand the contemporary societies in which they were created. Architecture is the art and technique of designing and building, as distinguished from the skills associated with construction. It is both the process and the product of sketching, conceiving, planning, designing, and constructing buildings or other structures. In other words, art history reflects the balance between historical authenticity and art aesthetic values.

Through the study of architecture and sculpture, knowledge of the art culture of Western India and the pan-global is automatically attained. The history of Western India is an example of mixed culture and different religions.

This study Attends to understand study documents of traditional and present techniques of art and architecture and the traditional designs of their religious and philosophical significance. As well as the contribution of ancient literature and silent features of different styles of Indian temple architecture. Themes derived from the rich heritage of Documentation of Indian temple style, master's builders, plan, science and technology, measurements, iconographic proportions, aesthetics, themes, and ornamentation of auspicious icons. In ancient time temples were constructed based on ancient literature like Samrangansutrathar, Aprajitprutchha, Devtamurtiprakaranam, Anshumanbheda, Mayamatam, Diparnav, Kshairarnav, Bhagavatisutra, Vishanudharmottar Puran, and some of the literature sources of master's builders of Sompuras, K.F. Sompura and so on.

Modern architecture is based on ancient texts that give long-standing life and new perspectives. To understand the interactions between the performativity and normative aspects of temple architecture in the modern era, it is vital to trace its past. Temple-building activity in India's past provides a picture of the fluidity of form; discreetly adapting and adopting wide-ranging features of temple architectural texts and practices

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## **Introduction :**

Art history and architecture is the study of art that virtually covers every aspect of human history and experience from ancient time to the present day. This is because it looks at works of art not just as objects, but as a way to understand the contemporary societies in which they were created. Architecture is the art and technique of designing and building, as distinguished from the skills associated with construction. It is both the process and the product of sketching, conceiving, planning, designing, and constructing buildings or other structures. In other words, art history reflects the balance between historical authenticity and art aesthetic values.

In my work, I gather information about the art and culture of Rajasthan and Gujarat through the study of architectural styles and iconographic features along with the analysis of the community.

In the Indian tradition, the temple is not only a structure but, it is a sacred place. The temple is a house of God—the most powerful source of Braham Shakti, where we can exchange our null energy into positive energy. The structure is made on the basics of geometric calculations and measurements.

The case study of the Ranakpur Jain derasar is referred to for his distinguished structure, artisans, and the form of the botanical ornamentation of “Tree of Life” Kalpvrikasha. The Kalpvrikasha is known as Ichha purti vrikasha. The botanical description of kalp taru is Genus: Adansonia.

The Ranakpur temple is situated in Pali, district, a village located in Desuri tehsil near Sadri town western part of the Aravalli Mountains range. 25.135 N 73.447 E. The Jain derasar of Ranakpur is situated on the bank of the Maghai River.

The Trustees of Sheth Anandaji Kalyanji of Ahmedabad, Gujarat have maintained and managed the entire Jain Derasar of Ranakpur

The renowned Jain derasar is dedicated to Adinath Bhagavan who was the first Tirthankara. The Ranakpur Jain derasar is believed to have been built by Dharna Shah in the 15th century CE, a minister to then ruler of Mewar, Rana Kumbha after he received a dream of a divine vehicle (Nalinigulm Vimana). The principal architect of this Derasar is Depa. When Darna Shah visited Rana Kumbha and requested a piece of land for constructing a Jain derasar, the king also advised building a town along with the derasar. The derasar’s construction began in 1446 Vikram Samvat and lasted for more than 50 years, with more than 2500 workers being actively involved with white Sangemarmar stone (Marble) The fifteen century is especially significant in western India from the viewpoint of architectural activities conducted by Jains. This was the time when the medieval architecture of the region, which has aptly been termed as “middle style” by James Fergusson (Mishra: 2009, P.91-92, Fergusson: 1967, P. 60).

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The Ranakpur Jain derasar is known for its intricate carvings. It is considered an engineering marvel. The Jain derasar has four entrances. It consists of several small shrines inside, including the Chaumukhaderasar dedicated to the main deity Lord Rishabhdeva, the Surya temple. The derasar has 80 domes, 29 halls, and a pavilion with 1444 pillars. Each pillar is carved differently with botanical ornamentations and is unique in itself. The pillars are also engraved with the figurines of dancing goddesses and other motifs. All the iconographies in the Ranakpur Jain Derasar face each other. There are two bells in the derasar weighing 108 kg, each known to produce a melodious sound. Both are known for unique sound quality one is Nar and the other one is Manda (male-female).

There is a single marble rock with carvings of snakes and tails. The Jain Derasar has 80 domes, which are supported by nearly 400 columns, and has 24 pillared halls. The lower and upper part of the dome is connected through brackets. The Derasar's architecture is such that the main deity can be seen from all sides. Ranakpur Jain Derasar has a 48000 square feet basement with a ceiling carved with geometrical patterns and scrollwork. Chaturmukha Derasar: This Derasar is devoted to Lord Adinath, and it is made using white marble. It is the most popular derasar in Ranakpur. Because of its four-faced design, it is known as 'chaturmukha'. Suparshvanatha Derasar : This temple is famous for its artwork on the walls, and it is dedicated to Seventh Tirthankara in Jainism. Surya Temple: This temple is dedicated to the Sun god and was constructed much earlier than the Jain Derasar of Ranakpur, but this temple was reconstructed with the construction of Ranakpur because of several attacks it had faced (Mishra: 2009, P.92, Ghosh:1975, P.357-358).

The architecture of Ranakpur derasar is based on the previous experience of the Solanki and Vaghela style of Nagara temple style and has all the well-known constituents as the adhisthana, (raised platform) devkulikas, shikhara with their clustering anga-shikhara, pillared mandapas, gavakshas, etc. It creates a new form by elaborating the ground plan with a pivotal

square at the centre. The secret place of this type is usually known among the Jains as Choumukhas and approximates in general to the sarvotbhaadratype (Fergusson: 1967, P. 60).

In the Vastusashtra treatise Vriksharanav, written in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century a type of Jain four-faced palace with grand architecture and Meghnad mandap pavilions all around has been called Trailokyadeepak. There is a special similarity between the description of this Trailokya Deepak and the architecture of the derasar of Ranakpur.

Jainism has contributed significantly to Indian art and architecture. Jain arts depict life legends of Tirthankara or other important people, particularly with them in a seated or standing meditative posture. Yakshas and Yakshinis attendant spirits who guard the Tirthankara are usually shown with them. The earliest known Jain image is in the Patna Museum. It is dated approximately to the third century BCE (Shah: 1998 pp. 184).

The Jain tower maansthambh, in Chittor, Rajasthan, is a good example of Jain architecture. Ancient Jain monuments include the Udaigiri Hills near Bhelsa Vidisha and Pataini temple in Madhya Pradesh, the Ellora in Maharashtra, the Palitana temples in Gujarat, and the Jain temples at Dilwara Temples near Mount Abu, Rajasthan (Cunningham: 1879, pp. 31). Ancient Jain monuments in India

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### Interior and architectural view of Ranakpur derasar :



The 40-foot-high pillars of “Meghamandap” have been intricately carved and the magnificent dome with the delicately carved inverted lotus simply keeps one’s eyes glued to them. On the left side of Meghamandap on one of the pillars, the iconography of Sheth Dharana (4) Shah and Depa’s silpi (5) have been carved.

Between Vestibule to Garbhagrah on the ceiling, there is a beautifully carved Kalpvriksha. The Kalpvriksha is also known as Kalpvallari in Jain mythology. This is a secret letter of Om which formed into the Kalpvallri motif.

The Kalpvriksha is widely believed to fulfill human desires. The tree of life Kalpvriksha originated from the churning of the ocean along with the divine Kamdhenu cow. The king of the gods, Indra, returned with this tree to his paradise. Kalpvriksha is also identified with many trees such as parijata (Nyctanthes arbor-tristis), Ficus benghalensis, Acacia, Madhuca, Prosopis cineraria, Diploknemabutyracea, and mulberry (Morus nigra tree). The tree is also extolled in iconography and literature.

Kalpvriksha is common to the Hindu Bhagavatas, the Jains, and the Buddhists. The tree also finds mention in the Sanskrit text Mānāsara, part of *ShilpaShastras* (Toole:2015,p.73, Agrawal:2003p.87, Beer : 2003, p.19)

As per Jain cosmology, in the three Aras (unequal periods) of the descending arc (Avasarpini), Kalpvrikshas provided all that was needed, but towards the end of the third ara, the yield from them diminished. Eight types of these trees are described in some texts, each of which provided different objects. Thus from the “Madyanga tree” delicious and nutritious drinks could be obtained; from the “Bhojananga”, delicious food; from “yotiranga”, light more radiant than the sun and the moon; while

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from “Dopanga” came indoor light. Other trees provided homes, musical devices, tableware, fine garments, wreaths, and scents (Dalal: 2014, p 620).

Tiloya Panatti or Trilokaprajanapatti composed by Acharya Ytivarshabha is referred to as one of the earliest Prakrit references in Jain cosmology. The text referenced Pananga, Turiyanga, Bhusananga, Vatthanga, Bhoyanga, Alayanga, Diviyanga, Bhayanang, Malanga, Tejanga with excellent drinks, music, ornaments, garments, edibles and ready-made dishes, mansions to live in, lamps, utensils and garlands of flowers respectively while the last type, namely Tejanga, seems to be self-luminous, serving the purpose of heavenly luminaries (Shah:1987, p71)



The iconography of 10th-century Jain Tirthankara Shitalanatha with his symbol of Kalpavriksha.





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The clear evidence of ego. The incomplete pillar in Ranakpur Jain derasar. There is one incomplete pillar in the AdinathBhgvn'sDerasar, it is believed to protect from the evil eye this pillar is a bit slanted. The Jain Marble Pillar of the main Shrine, Ranakpur, is still incomplete.



The deity of Shri Parshwanathjee with 108 heads of snakes and numerous tails. One cannot find the end of the tails.

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The ceiling at the entrance is decorated with akichaka, a bearded man with five bodies representing fire, water, heaven, earth, and air.



The Charanpaduka of Adinathbhagvan and tree of Rayan. The place where he got gyan. Report of a Tour in the Central Provinces in 1873-74 and 1874-75.

## **Conclusion :**

Jainism is teaching a path to spiritual purity and enlightenment (ahimsa, literally “non-injury”) to all living creatures. Jainism is one of the oldest religions of the Indian subcontinent, and the Jain temples are not only a place of worship but also show the grandeur of ancient times in terms of wonderful architecture, carvings, and decorations.

Jain religion is known for philosophy, In Jainism, moksha and nirvana are the same. Jaina texts sometimes use the term Kevalya, and call the liberated soul as Kevalin. As with all Indian religions, moksha is the ultimate spiritual goal in Jainism. It defines moksha as the spiritual release from all karma. Buddhists called Nirvana, Vedic, called Moksha, the same Jainism believed in soul liberation as Kevalgyan. By philosophically there are two parts “Jeev” & “Ajeev”, till the world attains the

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attainment of nirvana, it is called life. Jiv means consciousness when it is in its purest form, then infinite knowledge, Eternal darshanam, Eternal happiness, and infinite growth these four attainments are supreme.

Karma is supreme in Jain philosophy. As well as Samyakdarshan, Samyakgyan, and Samyakcharitra, are also part of satvikjeevana. In Jainism, a Tirthankara is a savior and spiritual teacher of the dharma (righteous path). The word Tirthankara signifies the founder of a tirtha, which is a fordable passage across the sea of interminable births and deaths. 24 Tirthankara's got supreme jinpada and merged with Almighty.

The kalpvriksha is an auspicious tree in Jain, Hindu, and Buddhist mythology. There are two divine and auspicious trees in Ranakpur Jain Derasar. The one which fillshumandesigns and the other one is a tree of Rayan under the Rayana tree BhagvanAdinath got self-enlightenment (Divyagyan).

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