

**THE TEMPLE OF SAṄGHĪ JHŪNTHĀRĀMJĪ
“JAIN ON THE OUTSIDE – HINDU INSIDE”**

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Historians portray the Kacchāva rulers of Āmber/Jaipur kingdom as ardent devotees of Viṣṇu, in particular, of his reincarnation as Rāma. At the same time they emphasize that the Kacchāvas were tolerant in matters of religion and that other confessions, including Jains, flourished under their patronage.² But even a brief excursus into Āmber’s past - as captured by the collective memory of its residents – reveals a more contradictory picture.

During the first field trip to Āmber (in winter of 2000-2001) my guide through the town was a young local resident, a college graduate, who supervised the workforce involved in the restoration of an old *havelī* (an urban mansion). He narrated the following episode in the kingdom’s history and dated it back to the times of Mahārāja Jagat Singh (1803-1818):

“Jain Dhomu was a minister at the court of a local ruler. The Mahārājā trusted him completely. During his rule twenty-five or even thirty Jain temples were built in Āmber. Now only five or six remain.³ Rājā Jagat Singh didn’t know that Jain temples were being built. He thought that Dhomu built the Hindu ones. When the Rājā found out the truth, he ordered to destroy the temples. Only their walls were left intact. As a result, the remaining temples are Jain on the outside and Hindu - inside” (Y.B., a Hindu, Āmber’s resident, recorded on January 2, 2001).

¹ This article is one of many case studies presented in the forthcoming monograph in Russian *Диалоги с прошлым: этноистория раджпутского княжества (Dialogues with the Past: Ethnohistory of a Rajput State)*, which explores oral traditions about the past among four ethno-confessional communities of Rājasthān: Rājputs, Jains, Muslims and Mīṇās. Fieldwork was conducted between 2001 and 2010 in towns and villages situated within the territory of the former Āmber/Jaipur kingdom.

² For a brief review of the early Kacchāva rulers’ religious beliefs see Jain 1972: 387-91. For Mān Singh I (1589-1614) see Prasad 1966: 134-8; for Jai Singh II (1699-1743) and his successors see Roy 1978: 160-80.

³ In fact there are seven Digambara Jain temples in contemporary Āmber (Nyāytārth 1990: 93-100) and, to the best of my knowledge, at least three - Śvetāmbara ones.

The central motif of this narrative – of a benevolent but gullible ruler and his scheming minister – was obviously folkloric in its nature. Despite clear chronological attribution – the reign of a 19th century Mahārājā – it did not necessarily constitute a historical fact. But the reference to a communal conflict suggested a possibility of a counter narrative, which prompted me to look further into the matter in search of the “Jain side of the story”.

Further inquiries in Āmber conducted in 2002-2003 confirmed that the Hindu-Jain conflict remained preserved in local residents’ collective memory. Many respondents from various communities narrated similar stories of Jain temples’ conversions, but attributed these events to the ruling periods of different Mahārājās: starting with Mān Singh I (1589-1614) and up to the already mentioned Jagat Singh. Material evidence supported oral testimonies: following the leads offered by my respondents, I have come across two temples within the old town walls, which still bear clear signs of conversion.

The First Converted Temple of Āmber: Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī

It is a grand and fairly well-preserved temple with three tapering spires (a *tīn-sikhara*) and a round dome, situated off Sāgar road. A standard information plate installed at the entrance, informs visitors that this architectural monument is protected by the Government of Rājasthān, but contrary to the texts on other similar plates, it does not mention the name or the date of its construction, says nothing about its historical significance or artistic value. Despite the large hand-made inscription in *Devanāgarī* on the wall, surrounding the temple grounds, which says: Rudrā Mahādevjī kā mandir⁴, local residents keep referring to it as Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī kā mandir⁵. A photograph of the temple displayed in a small archeological museum on the premises of Āmber Fort and Palace complex is signed: “Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī, 1657”. The museum guide could not or would not provide any additional information.

⁴ Temple of Rudrā Mahādev - a title of Śiva.

⁵ Temple of Saṅghī Jhūnthārām. Saṅghī - an honorary title of a Digambara Jain community (*saṅgha*) representative, who donates money for collective pilgrimages, in more general sense - a leader of a *saṅgha*. Jhūnthārām - is a proper name.



Figure 1: The temple of Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī in Āmber: a *tīn-sikhara*

Traces of temple conversion are still visible: small marble bas-reliefs of Jinas above the main entrance, which leads into the inner court yard; similar images above the door to the altar room. A huge square marble platform in the middle of the altar room contains images of a *pāc-mukhī* (five-faced) *liṅgam* and bull Nandī. Pārvaṭī and Gaṇeś occupy a pillared verandah-like structure on the far side of the platform. Present in many Jain altars of Āmber and Jaipur, this structure imitates the setting of a medieval *darbār*, inside which Jinas are enthroned. In short, the altar in Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī is a typical Jain altar, but populated with Śaiva images. The priest confirmed that his temple had indeed been converted. He said that it happened long time ago, during the rule of Rājā Mān Siṅgh I, whose Jain minister by the name of Jhūnthārām built this temple. Behind the ruler's back the minister started to use the temple as the center of proliferation of his *dharma*. When Mān Siṅgh learnt about it, he ordered to take all the Jain images outside and to replace them with *liṅgams* (Interview with the priest of Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī, recorded on March 1, 2003).

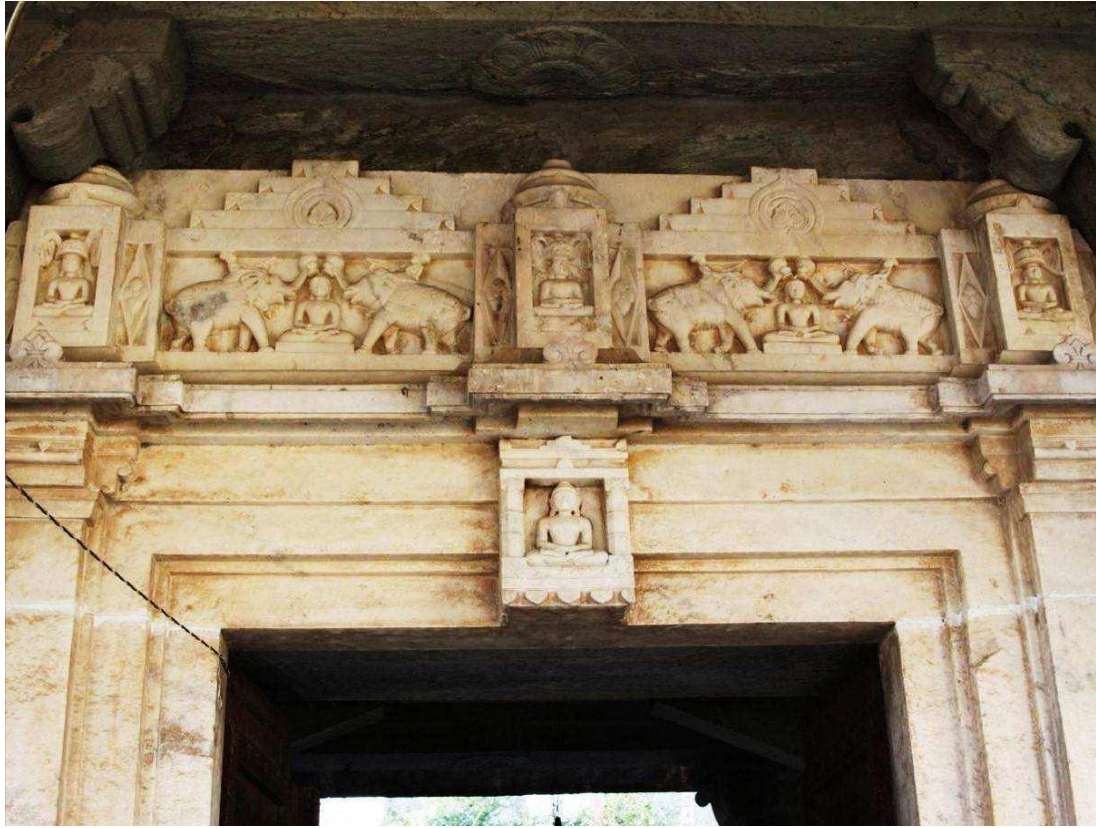


Figure 2: *Torana* above the main entrance into the temple of Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī (Āmber)



Figure 3: The courtyard of Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī (Āmber)



Figure 4: The main altar of Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī (Āmber)

The Second Converted Temple of Āmber

The second converted temple of Āmber, located on the left side of the old road Jaipur—Delhī, is now occupied by the Boys’ Secondary School. The building seems to be a later and smaller copy of the first one: another “*tīn-sikhara*” with a dome, an inner courtyard and the main room with a square altar in the middle. The altar is a modest replica of the one in the first temple: a stone platform with a *pāñc-mukhī liṅgam* and a herd of Nandī bulls of various calibers; Pārvatī and Gaṇeś inside the pillared verandah, adorned with a bas-relief of a Jina, surrounded by two elephants. The altar room serves today as teachers’ lounge. Those present agreed to answer my questions: the school had been situated on these premises for at least 50 years; they don’t know what used to be here before that, and whether it used to be a Jain temple; the temple doesn’t have a name and *pūjās* are not performed here (Interview with the school teachers, recorded on February 10, 2003). Yet the *liṅgam* in the altar was adorned with fresh flowers and yellow *tilaks* shone brightly on Nandīs’ foreheads.



Figure 5: The altar in the teachers' lounge of the Boys' Secondary School (Āmber)

All attempts to retrieve an alternative version of events from few Āmber Jains⁶ were unsuccessful. In response to my questions they invariably suggested that I talked to “someone more knowledgeable”, “to a Jain person of authority in Jaipur”. This was accomplished much later, and the results of the Jaipur part of investigation will be discussed below.

Historians of Āmber/Jaipur kingdom helped to shed some light on the temple's destiny. In K.C. Jain's (1972: 387-93) classic monograph *Ancient Cities and Towns of Rajasthan: a Study of Culture and Civilization* there is short chapter on Āmber, in which the author discusses the process of proliferation of Jainism in the kingdom during the period between the reign of Rājā Bharmāl (1548-1570) and the foundation of Jaipur in 1727. Most important for my purposes, he mentions an inscription on a stone plate dated 1657 A.D. “in a Jain temple of Amber”, which says, that Mohan Dās, the Jain chief minister of Rājā Jai Singh I (1621-1667) built the temple of Vimalnāth and adorned its *sikharas* with golden pinnacles (*kalaśa*) (ib., p. 392). B.L. Dhama (1955: 73), who supervised the Jaipur branch of ASI (Archeological Survey of India) in 1940s, clarifies that the above mentioned plate “was once

⁶ According to my estimates, no more than fifteen to twenty Jain families permanently reside in Āmber.

lying in Sunghī Jhunta Ram’s temple at Amber, and is now in the custody of the Archeological Department of the Rajasthan Government”.

Therefore we may conclude that the Śaiva temple of Rudrā Mahādev, invariably referred to by local residents as Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī, was originally the Jain temple of Vimalnāth, and dates back to the middle of the 17th century. K.C. Jain emphasizes religious tolerance of the Kacchāva rulers and draws a picture of steady and uninterrupted flourishing of Jainism in Āmber kingdom between the middle of the 16th century and up to the 1730s. He does not mention any episodes of Jains’ persecution or of their temples’ desecration during the Āmber period of the kingdom’s history, including the times of Jai Singh I and his Jain chief minister Mohan Dās. Therefore the oral tradition, which I recorded and reproduced in the beginning of this paper, formed later. Why did it develop? When and under what circumstances was the Jain temple of Vimalnāth converted? And, finally, who was Saṅghī Jhūnthārām, and why does the temple bear his name?

The First Episode of Jain Temples’ Conversion

A prominent historian of Jainism in Rājasthān K.C. Kasliwal (1982: 153-9) also describes the Āmber period of the kingdom’s history as favorable and prosperous for the Jain community. In the middle of the 16th century (during the reign of Rājā Bharmāl) the “throne” (*gaddī*) of *bhaṭṭāraks*⁷ moved from Delhī to Āmber and settled in the temple of Nemināth⁸. It was active all through the history of Āmber as the first capital of the Kacchāvas. When the court moved to the newly-built Jaipur, *bhaṭṭāraks* followed and established their “throne” in one of the oldest Jain temples of Jaipur – the Pāṭodī temple.

During the reign of Mahārājā Mādho Singh I (1751-1768) and at the very beginning of his son and successor Pṛthvī Singh’s rule (1768-1778) a series of disturbances destroyed communal harmony:

“[D]uring the short period from *Saṁvat* 1818 to 1826 [i.e. between 1761 and 1769 A.D.] the religious and social atmosphere of the city remained quite unpeaceful. Several Digambara Jain temples of the city and of other places

⁷ *Bhaṭṭāraks* - domesticated Digambara monks, who in late medieval times replaced naked wandering monks (*munis*). They served as caste *gurus* and had “thrones” in major temples or monasteries (Cort 2002: 40f.).

⁸ The temple of Nemināth is one of the oldest Jain temples of Amber. Local residents call it “Sāṁvlājī” (from *śyām* - dark, black), because the central image - statue of Nemināth - is made of dark blue stone. About it see Nyāyatīrth 1990: 93f.

were desecrated, but this condition could not remain for a long period, and the citizens of Jaipur city once again enjoyed peace” (Kasliwal 1982: 159).

Kasliwal, as we see, is very cautious in his statements: he emphasizes that the conflict was a short and fortuitous episode. Further in his text, he absolves Mādho Singh and his successor of any responsibility for it:

“[T]he rulers of Jaipur never supported any of the sects or religions against another.⁹ The Jainas were appointed on top posts” (Kasliwal 1982: 159).

Describing the communal strife of 1760s, Kasliwal refers to and quotes from *Buddhivilās* (Sāh 1964), a manuscript, completed by the Jain poet Bakhtarām Sāh in 1770, i.e. one year after the conflict was over. Most contemporary Indian histories of Jaipur kingdom are eloquently silent about the eight-year conflict, starting with the chapter on Mādho Singh’s rule in Jadunath Sarkar’s *A History of Jaipur* (Sarkar 1984: 242-58) and up to the summary of his rule in the recently published fundamental *History of Rajasthan* (Hooja 2006: 679-81). The only non-Jain Indian historian, who refers to *Buddhivilās* while describing the events of 1760s, is A.K. Roy. In a separate chapter devoted to the Jain community of Jaipur (Roy 1978: 180-91) he writes, that after Mahārājā Jai Singh II (1699-1743) founded Jaipur, he personally invited several prominent Jain families from Āmber, Sāngāner and Cāksu to move to the new capital. During his reign nine Jains held prominent positions in his *darbār*. Communal atmosphere remained peaceful during his elder son and successor Īśvarī Singh’s rule (1743-1750) and in the beginning of Mādho Singh’s rule. To support this statement Roy quotes from a letter, dated February 1764, which was mailed by the organizers of a religious festival Indradhvaj Pūjā Mahotsav¹⁰ in Jaipur to prominent Jain families of Delhī, Āgrā and other major North Indian cities:

“[In Jaipur] all the courtiers are Jaina; and all the merchants are Jainas. Though others are also there, they are in minority, not in the majority. Six, seven or eight or ten thousand Jaina traders live here. Such a large gathering of Jainas

⁹ This is not entirely true. Besides the two anti-Jain campaigns, which are discussed in this paper, there was at least one more. The Śaiva *guru* of Mahārājā Rām Singh II (1851-1880) enjoyed his royal patron’s full support in persecution of the Vaiṣṇava sects of Jaipur. This long and bitter conflict became known as *tilak-vivād* (an argument over *tilak*) and was reconstructed in detail in Clémentin-Ojha 1999.

¹⁰ Literally: “a festival [on the occasion] of a *pūjā* to the flag of Indrā”. Description of the festival see in Cort 2002: 58.

would not be found in other cities; and mainly the *Saraogis*¹¹ live in this country” (Roy 1978: 183).

The note of self-satisfaction and confidence in future prosperity sounds clearly in this letter, but very soon the community’s political influence and well-being shall be seriously undermined. The author of *Buddhivilās* writes¹²:

“Eighteen years have passed and on top of that another eighteen¹³
Appeared at that time someone [named] Śyām Tivāḍī, a very arrogant man and
a hypocrite ||1289||
By ruse he gained support of the twice-born and the traders,
He used the Rājā, over-powered him (by magic?)¹⁴; Mādhav Singh appointed
him his *rājguru* ||1290||

Galtā¹⁵, Bālānand¹⁶ and others remained seated with their eyes wide-open¹⁷,
[The Rājā] put [Śyām Tivāḍī] above everyone else, even at the head of the
Vaiṣṇavas ||1291||

[The Rājā] drank the water [with which Śyām Tivāḍī] washed his feet¹⁸ and
shifted [on him] the burden [of responsibility for] his kingdom;
Few days passed, and major turmoil started ||1292||

¹¹ *Sarāvgī* - from *śrāvak* (a listener) - a term used in Jaipur for Digambara Jains.

¹² My translation. For the original text see Sāh 1964: 151-3.

¹³ I.e. in V.S. 1818.

¹⁴ In the text: “*vasi kiyau*” - from *vaś-kriyā* (an act of over-powering by drugs or magic).

¹⁵ Galtā - a place to the east of Jaipur; the seat of Rāmānandī Vaiṣṇavas’ sect. About Rāmānandīs see Horstmann 2002.

¹⁶ Mahānt Bālānand - the head of a sub-sect of Rāmānandīs in mid-18th century. About him see Roy 1978:191-4.

¹⁷ I.e. “in bewilderment” (?)

¹⁸ A metaphor of utmost respect or veneration.

On the ruler's order [Śyām Tivāḍī] forced Jains to take food at night, and
burned down their temples during the day,
Where the righteous kingdom of Jains used to be, not even the name of Jain
dharma remained ||1293||

In Ambāvati¹⁹ only the temple of Śyām²⁰
Remained the prop of *dharma*, escaped [destruction as if] by a miracle ||1294||

Some [temples he destroyed] partially, others – completely; only the protected
ones survived,
In some [he] installed *śivmūrtis*²¹; such mayhem was caused by Śyām ||1295||

[...]

Suddenly the Rājā got very angry, and on [the same] day, in the afternoon,
expelled [Śyām Tivāḍī] from his kingdom,
Dressed in [nothing but] a *dhotī* and a *dupattā*, the twice-born and his wife
were expelled [by the Rājā], [...?] ||1299||

For the sins, which [Śyām Tivāḍī] committed, [the Rājā] took away the [the
post] of the *rājguru*,
For the deeds as black as his own name, Śyām paid [already] in this birth
||1300|| (Sāh 1964: 151-3).

Further in the manuscript there is no mention of Āmber or of its temples' conversions, but
problems of Jaipur Jains continued. After a short period of communal peace the second wave
of persecutions started. Sāh dates its beginning with the same precision as he had dated the
rise of Śyām Tivāḍī, i.e. by 1766. According to the author of *Buddhivilās*, the new wave was
caused by slander: Brāhmaṇs complained to the Mahārājā that Jains had been removing
liṅgams and reinstalling Jain images in their desecrated temples. Jain persecutions in Jaipur
resumed. Several community leaders were put into prison. The third wave of anti-Jain

¹⁹ Ambāvati - an old name of Āmber.

²⁰ I.e. the temple of Nemināth/Sāmvajāī. See fn. 8 of this paper.

²¹ *liṅgams*.

campaign started in 1769, during Pṛthvī Singh's reign (1768-1778) and continued for at least a year (Sāh 1964: 153-5).

So “the Jain side of the story” does exist, although not as an oral tradition, but as the written testimony of an eyewitness. Ideologically it is an inversion of the narrative, recorded in Āmber: the culprit of temple conversion was not the over-zealous Jain minister Dhomu, but the insidious Hindu *rājguru* Śyām Tivāḍī. At the same time both versions share a similar plot: atrocities happen behind the Rājput ruler's back. When the Rājā learns about them (in *Buddhivilās* – overcomes evil charms), he restores justice and punishes the culprit.

Assuming that Bakhtarām Sāh's testimony is accurate, the only Jain temple of Āmber, which escaped desecration, was Nemināth/Sāmvlājī. Other temples were either fully destroyed or converted: *śivlingams* were installed in their altars. So if the Jain temple of Vimalnāth had been converted in 1760s and since then remained the Śaiva one, a question still stands: when and under what circumstances it became known as Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmī kā Mandir?

Second Episode of Jain Temples' Conversion

According to the majority of my respondents, Saṅghī Jhūnthārām – the leading actor on the political arena of Jaipur during the regency of 1819-1835 – was a notorious villain. Most historians seem to share this point of view. The following reconstruction of events is based on Sarkar (1984: 332-7), Roy (1978: 188f.) and Stern (1988: 63-84), as well as on the collection of essays by a famous Jaipur journalist (Pareekh 2000: 61-8). Besides that, the 19th century European visitors to Jaipur had witnessed and described different stages of the political conflict in their travelogues (Heber 1828: I; 505-7; II; 3-24 and Jacquemont 1934: 33-48).

Mahārājā Jagat Singh (1803-1818), who had signed the Treaty of Subordinate Cooperation between Jaipur and East India Company in 1818, died the same year leaving behind twenty-four widows and no heir. Two months after his death one of his widows - Rānī Bhaṭiyānī - announced her pregnancy, and in 1819 Jaipur “begot” another Jai Singh - Jai Singh III (1819-1835). According to the established tradition his mother became the regent (*rājmatā*) until the child comes of age. Jhūnthārām, her former *kāmdār* (manager of the Rānī's estate), was promoted first to the position of the revenue minister, and soon after that - to the position of the chief minister of the State. A woman named Rūpān (a *baḍāraṇ* - manager of the house-hold) became another principal adviser to the regent queen. Since Rānī Bhaṭiyānī strictly observed the *pardā*, Jhūnthārām a Jain and a Baniyā, became the *de facto* ruler of the kingdom, which caused discontent among many influential Rājput.

The East-India Company too had serious reasons for discontent. According to the Treaty of Subordinate Cooperation, Jaipur was expected to pay an exorbitant price for British

protection: Rs. 400,000 in the second year of the Treaty; Rs. 800,000 by the sixth year; and after that “in perpetuity” Rs. 800,000 plus five-sixteenths of the *darbār*’s annual revenues in excess of Rs. 4 million (Stern 1988: 64f.). These obligations were not and could not have been maintained by the State, which, prior to the Treaty, for decades kept being ravaged by Marāṭhā and Piṇḍārī raids.

Several times during the regency of 1819-1835 British residents in Jaipur together with the partisan Rājput nobility attempted to circumscribe the power of the so-called “*zanānā* party” (the regent queen and her supporters) by appointing the chief minister of their choice - Rāval Bairīsāl Nāthāvat (*thākur* of Sāmod). In 1826 these attempts brought Jaipur on the verge of an armed conflict. Charles Metcalfe (at the time the Company’s Resident in Delhi in charge of Rājputānā) interfered and advised to his agents in Jaipur that the queen-mother had the right to appoint her own ministers. Jhūnthārām should be given his due: he managed to derive maximum benefit from Metcalfe’s advice. By the end of the regency the highest positions in the *darbār* were held by his elder brother Hukum Cand, his nephew Fateh Lāl, his in-law relative Amar Cand²² and many other Jains, with the exception of a Muslim, named Hidāyatullā Khān.

In 1834 the queen-mother passed on and less than a year later the seventeen year-old Jai Singh III met sudden death under suspicious circumstances. N.K. Pareekh (2000: 66-8) narrates the popularly accepted version of this event, which is based exclusively on hear-say, and *cui bono*²³ assumptions: after the queen’s death the young man became a direct threat to “*zanānā* party’s” power. Jai Singh’s last public appearance occurred on *basant pāñcamī*²⁴ of 1835, when he rode through the city on an elephant at the head of the royal procession. The same night Jhūnthārām entered his room and assassinated him. Citizens were informed that the young Rājā died of a urinary infection, but no one believed this explanation. People of Jaipur were convinced that he had been poisoned²⁵:

“His cremation at Gaitor was conducted amidst a cordon of sepoy, but a furious mob assembled and the Sanghi and his associates were stoned. The

²² Hukum Cand’s daughter was married to Amar Cand’s son (personal communication with G.C. Hinduka).

²³ *cui bono* or *cui prodest* (Lat.) - literally: “to whose benefit”.

²⁴ Literally: “the fifth day of spring” – a popular festival before *Holi*.

²⁵ According to Pareekh 2000: 66, a public performance by the popular musician and singer Bansidhar Bhatt became the source of the poisoning version. Bhatt sang, that on the fifth and the sixth day of spring the Mahārājā played *Holi*, on the seventh day he was given poison, and on the eighth day – cremated.

whole city rose against the Sanghi and his community. *Many of the Jain temples were attacked and the idols of Shiva consecrated in them* [italics added - E.K.]. The Sanghi and his family remained in hiding in the Palace for four days” (Pareekh 2000: 66).

A.K. Roy confirms, referring to Hanuman Sharma’s *Nāthāvatom kā Itihās*, that “immediately after the funeral of the ruler an anti-Jaina riot flared up, in which some Jaina temples were attacked and images were destroyed” and emphasizes that the incident had not been mentioned by other historians of Jaipur, either Indian or British (Roy 1978: 188f.).

The Company interfered: Political Agent for Rājputānā Major N. Alves arrived to Jaipur from Ājmer and summoned Rāval Bairīsāl Nāthāvat, who by then must have lost all hope of becoming the chief minister. Jhūnthārām and Rūpān were detained. But the turmoil in Jaipur did not end with their arrest. On June 4, 1835 there was an armed assault on Alves, which resulted in the murder of Martin Blake (Assistant Agent to the Governor General) (Sarkar 1984: 334-6; Stern 1988: 80f and Pareekh 2000: 67f.). The trial (AST) sentenced Jhūnthārām, Hukum Cand, Amar Cand, Hidāyatullā Khān and several other persons to death by hanging. At the last moment the Governor General changed the death sentence for Jhūnthārām and Hukum Cand to life imprisonment in exile. Others were hanged. The fifteen-year period of Jain political dominance in Jaipur kingdom ended tragically.

The “Jain side” of this story is summarized in K.C. Kasliwal’s *Khaṇḍelvāl Jain Samāj kā Vṛhad Itihās*:

“Saṅghī Jhūnthārām was one of the most prominent ministers in the history of Jaipur kingdom. He held the minister’s position in V.S. 1881-1891 [i.e. 1824-1834 A.D.]. He was a skillful politician of his time, a talented and wise man of strong principles. [...]

At the time local kingdoms were subjugated by the British. In Jaipur there was a period of regency – the reign of *rājmatā* Bhaṭṭiyāñī. She didn’t like British interference. Saṅghījī shared her views. [...] Rāval Bairīsāl held different views: he supported the British and was an adversary of Saṅghījī. [...] When Saṅghījī became the chief minister, the State treasury increased and people enjoyed peace and prosperity. Everyone praised Saṅghījī.

Then *rājmatā* died, and soon after that Jai Singh III died too at the age of seventeen. Adversaries accused Saṅghījī of the Rājā’s murder. Rānī Candrāvātī²⁶ protested against these accusations. But the British kept scheming.

²⁶ Rānī Candrāvātī - mother of Jai Singh III’s only child and successor - Mahārājā Rām Singh II (1835-1880).

Saṅghījī and his supporters found themselves in a situation, which often falls to independent ministers' lot. They were blamed for the Rājā's death. There was an investigation, but it did not produce results. Nevertheless, Saṅghījī was accused of anti-state conspiracy, imprisoned and exiled to Dausā, where he died three years later, in 1838.

Historians portrayed Saṅghī Jhūnthārām in a false light: such brave and dedicated ministers are not found often" (Kasliwal 1989 I: 207f.).

According to this alternative version, shared by local Jains, *rājmātā* and her loyal minister were consistently fighting for Jaipur kingdom's independence; the accusations against Jhūnthārām were unfounded, and the sentence - unjust.

A.K. Roy and N.K. Pareekh, a historian and a journalist, are the only ones, who left behind some scarce evidence that Jaipur riots of 1835, caused by the sudden death of the young Mahārājā, were anti-Jain in their sentiment and were accompanied by desecration and conversion of Jain temples. Owing to professional generosity of Alan Babb and John Cort, who shared with me their Jain contacts in Jaipur, in 2006 I got the opportunity to check this information, and it proved to be accurate. Upon my request local Jains compiled a list of converted temples of Jaipur and assigned an imposing gentleman to accompany me during the inquiries, but advised to proceed cautiously, because "the issue is very sensitive"²⁷. The list included:

1. The Śaiva temple of Śrī Cār-mukhī (four-faced) Mahādev, situated in the neighborhood of Moḍhī-khānā, on the premises of Dīgambara Jain Sanskrit College. The College was founded by the Jain community in 1885, but the temple seems to be an earlier structure; it may have been built before the events of 1760s (Nyāyātīrth 1990: 46). The altar in the middle of the main hall has a rare for local Jain temples shape - a tall three-tiered platform (*samavasaraṇ*) topped with an ornamental pavilion (*chatrī*) and adorned with *caṁvardhārī* *Indrās* (*Indrās* with fly-whisks) on each side. The place of an unknown *tīrthaṅkar* is occupied today by a four-faced *liṅgam*, Pārvatī and Gaṇeś. Exquisite red, blue and gold wall-painting with floral design includes images of Jain pilgrimage places (*tīrtha-kṣetra*).

²⁷ Precisely for this reason I am not revealing here the names of prominent Jain intellectuals of Jaipur, who provided immeasurable and highly-appreciated help in this investigation.



Figure 6: The main altar in Śrī Cār-mukhī Mahādevjī, Moḍhī-khānā (Jaipur)



Figure 7: Jain pilgrimage places on the walls of Śrī Cār-mukhī Mahādevjī, Moḍhī-khānā (Jaipur)

2. An unnamed Śaiva altar on the premises of Kamla Nehru's Girls' College in the vicinity of Jauharī Bāzār. A bas-relief of a Jina, heavily coated with ochre paint, above the entrance to the altar room and the altar itself, similar in shape to the one in Āmber's temple of Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī, betray the Jain origin of the former temple turned into a school.

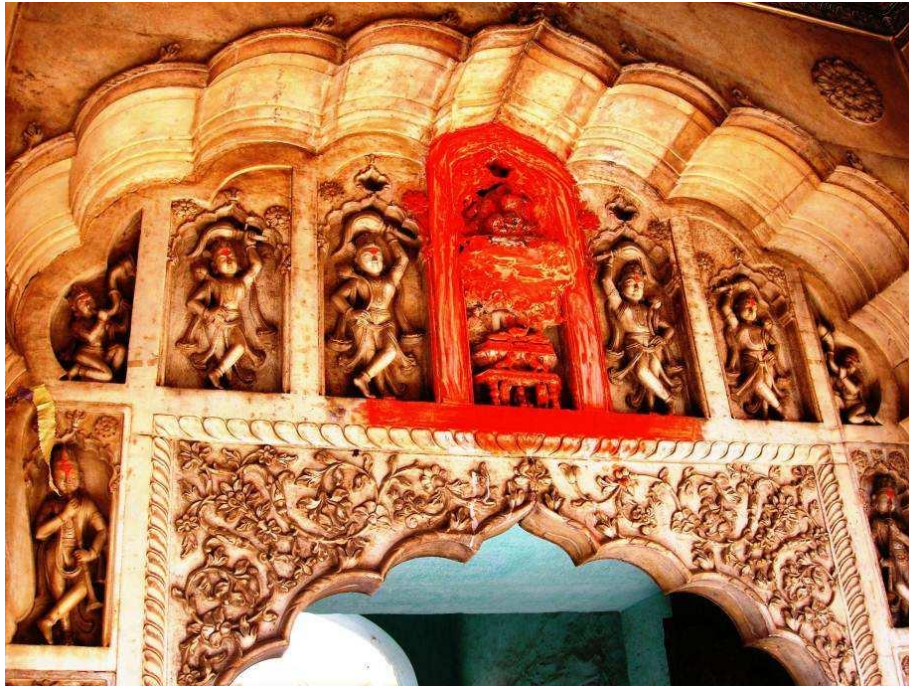


Figure 8: The main entrance into the altar room in Kamla Nehru's Girls' College (Jaipur)



Figure 9: The main altar on the premises of Kamla Nehru's Girls' College (Jaipur)

3. The temple of Gobardhannāthjī which belongs to Puṣṭi-mārg²⁸. It is located outside of old Jaipur, on Galtā Road, in Mohan-bāḍī neighborhood²⁹. Traces of conversion are evident: typical for Jain temples' interiors floral design (in blue, white and gold) on the walls was partially destroyed and replaced by murals, illustrating Vallabhācārya's hagiography. Unlike other Jain temples, the altar is situated not in the middle of the room, but in a deep niche in the wall. The niche is framed by a *toraṇa* of Jain origin: in the upper part there is a partially effaced but still visible image of a sitting Jina and at the bottom – two bas-reliefs of *Indrās* with fly-whisks. Inside the altar there is a smaller copy of the famous Śrī Nāth from Nāthdvāra³⁰.



Figure 10: The temple of Gobardhannāthjī in Mohan-bāḍī (Jaipur): Vaiṣṇava murals in a Jain setting

²⁸ Puṣṭi-mārg - is a *bhakti* sect, founded by Vallabhācārya (1478-1531) in Brāj.

²⁹ According to Nyāyīrth 1990: 74f, this neighborhood is populated by Digambara Jains and initially used to be called Muni-bāḍī. The renaming probably occurred together with the temple's conversion, because the new name has a clear Vaiṣṇava connotation: Mohan is one of Kṛṣṇa's names.

³⁰ Nāthdvāra is a town in the South-West of Rājasthān, famous for its temple, containing Puṣṭi-mārg's main object of worship - the image of Śrī Nāth.



Figure 11: The altar of Gobardhannāthjī in Mohan-bāḍī (Jaipur)

4. A large old *havelī*, situated outside of Jaipur, in a neighborhood, called Purāṇa-ghāṭ, off Āgrā road. Judging by the sign above the locked main entrance - Mandir Śrī Fatehkunj Bihārjī - there is a Kṛṣṇa temple inside. The right wing of the *havelī* has a separate entrance into the Śaiva temple of Śrī Jagateśvar Mahādev. A square marble platform in the middle holds images of a four-faced *liṅgam*, Pārvatī and Nandī. There are also two additional side altars, which are typical of Jain temples - with images of Gaṇeś inside. The temple priest, Rām Caraṇ Vyās, was the only one, who agreed to discuss the circumstances of conversion, others temples' priests avoided conversation, insisting that they were ignorant of or ill-informed about the past events: Jagateśvar Mahādevjī indeed used to be a Jain temple. Rām Caraṇ doesn't know its original name. The *liṅgam* was consecrated here after *dīvān* Jhūnthārām had killed Mahārājā Jai Singh III. At first the *havelī* with the temple became royal or state property

(*khālsā*), but during Mahārājā Rām Singh II's rule (1835-1880) Rām Caraṇ's great grand-father Maṅgal Vyās had been assigned to perform *pūjās* here. There are documents in Jaipur Palace archives, which confirm his family's rights to the temple (Interview with Rām Caraṇ Vyās, recorded on January 31, 2006).

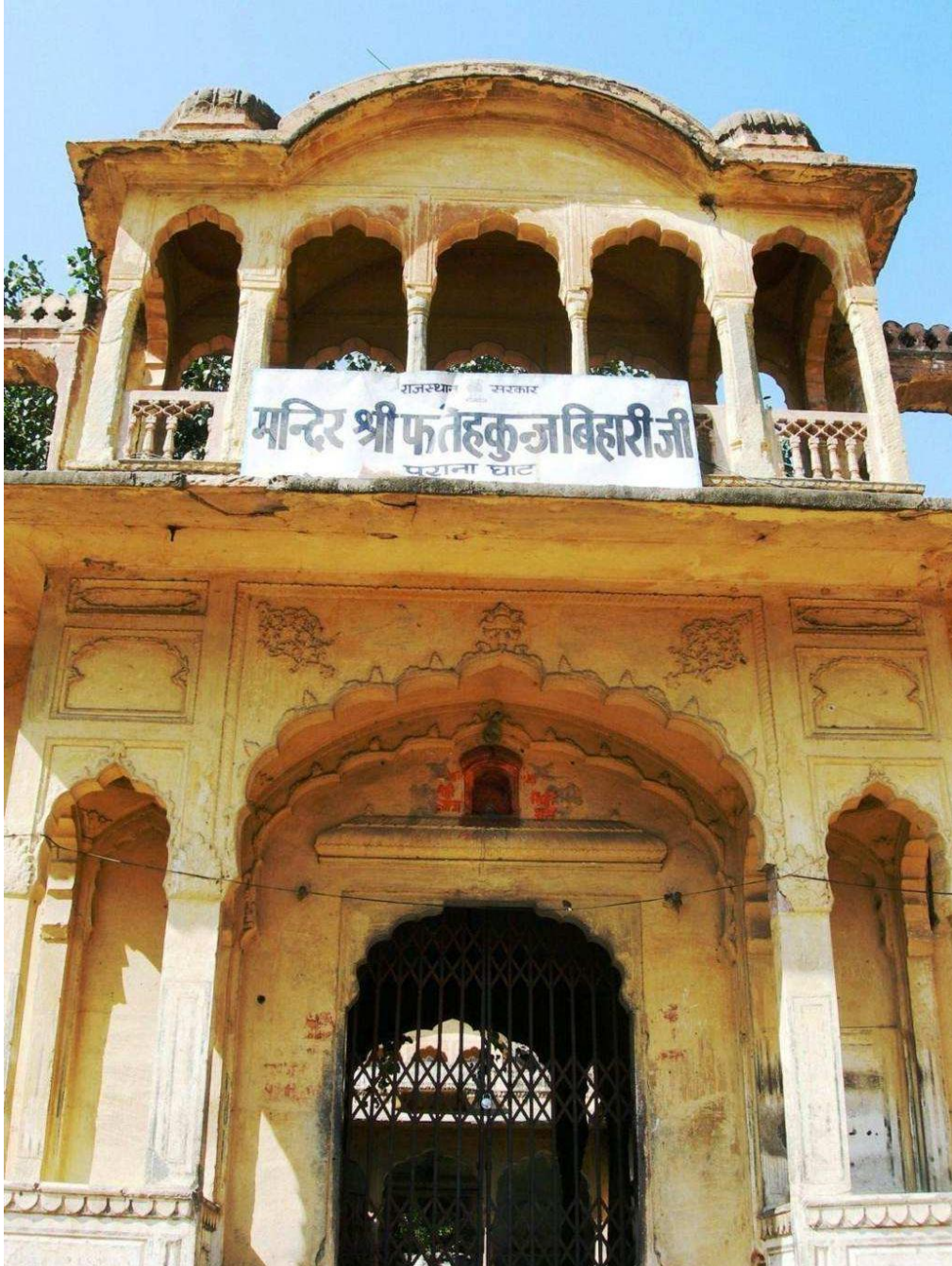


Figure 12: The grand *haveli* on Āgrā road of Jaipur hosting two Hindu temples



Figure 13: The main altar in Śrī Jagateśvar Mahādev on Āgrā road (Jaipur)



Figure 14: The temple priest at the side altar of Śrī Jagateśvar Mahādev on Āgrā road (Jaipur)

There are two possible scenarios of the *havelī*'s history: the building may have originally been intended as a Jain temple³¹, but later the confiscated property was divided between two confessions: Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas; or it may have originally been a private residence with a *caityālay* (a home shrine) in the right wing, which belonged to a prominent Jain family of “*zanānā* party's” supporters.

If the information about Jaipur temples' conversions of 1830s may be at best qualified as “scarce”, the name of the temple in question – Saṅghī Jhūnthārāmjī – seems to be the only evidence that Jain temples of Āmber were affected by the events as well. Connection between Jhūnthārām and the temple bearing his name, became clear, when I read a hand-out (a leaflet), which was offered to me by an employee of a prominent Jain temple, located in Jaipur's neighborhood of Moḍhī-khānā – Śrī Digambara Jain Mandir Saṅghījī. The text said:

“This Jain temple was built four years after the foundation of Jaipur, in V.S. 1788 [i.e. in 1731 A.D.], by Saṅghī Ajit Dās, who was the son³² of Saṅghī Mohan Dās - *dīvān* of Āmber - and an *ancestor of Saṅghī Jhūnthārām* [italics added - E.K.]”.

K.C. Kasliwal (1989: I; 173; 206f.) confirms this relationship and adds that in 1820 A.D. (i.e. in the beginning of the regency period) Jhūnthārām had installed a *vijay-yantra*³³ in the above-mentioned Jaipur temple of Saṅghījī, built by his ancestor Ajit Dās.

Thus it became clear that Jhūnthārām was a descendant of minister Mohan Dās, who had built the Jain temple of Vimalnāth in Āmber in 1657 A.D. during the reign of Rājā Jai Singh I. Jhūnthārām must have patronized his ancestor's temple actively and generously enough to leave his name in local residents' collective memory. Furthermore, one of my long-term Āmber informants confirmed that the temple in question had been converted in the beginning of Rām Singh II's rule and added, that the grand *havelī* across from the temple used to belong to Jhūnthārām during his stay in power (Oral communication with K.L.S., recorded on January 10, 2006). However, although residents of Āmber keep calling the temple by the Jain minister's name, the name itself doesn't say much to the majority of them. A chance interlocutor even suggested that Saṅghī Jhūnthārām was “some Jain deity”.

³¹ According to John Cort 2001: 29, some “older urban temples in the north are in an architectural style modeled upon the residential *havelīs*”.

³² It is more likely that Ajit Dās was not a son, but a grandson of Mohan Dās. The time difference between the construction of the Jaipur temple of Saṅghījī (1731) and the Āmber temple of Vimalnāth (1657) equals 74 years.

³³ A symbolic diagram, covered with victory *mantras*.

Conclusion

A plausible scenario of the temple's fate is as follows: there is no direct evidence - only a high probability - that Āmber's temple of Vimalnāth was desecrated and converted into a Śaiva temple during the events of 1760s. If it had been converted, it may or may not have been reclaimed by the Jain community after the turmoil was over. I shall remind here that the author of *Buddhivilās* briefly mentioned Brāhmaṇs' complaints to the Mahārājā that Jains kept removing *liṅgams* and reinstalling Jain images in their desecrated temples (Sāh 1964: 153). Since Jhūnthārām's patronage of the temple is an established fact (otherwise his name wouldn't be associated with it), the temple must have belonged to the Jain community at least during the period of his political influence. Sometimes during the reign of Rām Siṅgh II it had been converted again and remained a Śaiva temple since then.

Therefore we may conclude that the oral tradition, recorded in Āmber and reproduced in the beginning of this paper, is not based on historical facts. There was no period in the history of Āmber /Jaipur kingdom, when a Jain minister kept building temples behind the ruler's back, so that the ruler had to restore justice by destroying Jain temples or converting them into Hindu ones. Why then did this tradition develop and what is its socio-cultural meaning?

It is easy to notice that both episodes of Jain temples' destruction/conversion coincide with periods of this community's increased political influence. In the first case - the events of 1760s - the text of the letter sent by the organizers of Indradhvaj Pūjā Mahotsav testifies to the absolute dominance of Jains at the court of Mahārājā Mādho Siṅgh I. The second case is even more telling: a Jain and his close relatives had been ruling Jaipur kingdom for fifteen years. From the standpoint of the regional culture this situation must have been perceived as unacceptable. Alan Babb (2002, 2004) has convincingly demonstrated that other communities of Rājasthān identified Jains first and foremost as Baniyās - a social group, whose identity (based on the principle of non-violence) made them the "cultural opposites" of Rājput. Historically Baniyās, especially Jains, have been close to power, holding high positions of revenue or chief ministers, managers of estate, etc. at the courts of Rājput rulers. Constant proximity to power must have roused their political ambitions on more than one occasion, especially during regencies or reigns of weaker rulers³⁴. The oral tradition recorded in Āmber is an idiom of the popularly shared social truth: Jains' aspirations to political power were perceived as groundless, because they were not sanctioned by the regional culture of Rājasthān.

³⁴ See an interesting discussion about the political rivalry between Rāo Rai Siṅgh (1573-1595) of Bikāner and his Jain chief minister Karamcandrā Bacchāvat in Jain 2012: 46-51.

In a more general sense the case study illustrates the coexistence of two alternative and mutually exclusive versions of the past. Most academic histories of Jaipur kingdom treat the Kacchāvas as the sole rightful subjects (makers) of history and politics and tend to ignore or minimize the roles of other ethno-confessional communities. Other communities' intellectuals attempt to cure the historical amnesia by representing their castes, confessions or ethnic groups as important social and political entities.

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