

Shri Ashtāpad Mahā-Tirth Temple



3 Chovisi - 72 Tirthankars
Ashta - Pratiharya
5 Shikhar Design
(Model 10)

Shri Ashtäpad Mahä-Tirth



Shri Rishabhadev



Kailash at A.M.



Mansarovar

आज देव अरिहंत नमुं, समरुं तारुं नाम,
ज्यां ज्यां प्रतिमा जिन तणी, त्यां त्यां करुं प्रणाम.

अष्टापद गिरि उपरे, जिन चउविसे जोय
मणिमय मूरति माणशुं, भरते भरावी सोय.

श्रावक कवि ऋषभदास : सत्तरमी सदी

I bow down in reverence to Arihanta Bhagavän
I repeatedly recite the name of Arihanta with great reverence.

I bow down to his idol wherever it is installed, may it be on the Ashtäpad
Mountain where Chakravarti Bharat has installed beautiful gemstone
idols of all the twenty-four Tirthankars

Rushabhadas - 17th Century

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1.0 Introduction

Ashtāpad is one of the greatest Tirth in Jainism which is regarded as lost. Members of the Jain community of Jain Center of America, NY took it upon themselves to rediscover and bring Ashtāpad to our time.

The Jain scripture has singled out five central events (known as Pancha Kalyānak) that occur in a Tirthankar's lifetime as the most auspicious moments. The first event is the Tirthankar's decent into the mother's womb signified by the mother having the 14 auspicious dreams. The second is the actual birth of the Tirthankar celebrated with great splendor. The third is the renunciation of all the riches and wealth and start of the arduous and long ascetic life. After very deep contemplation and meditation, the Tirthankar attains omniscience (Keval-Jnān) - his fourth life-changing event. The last event is where the soul is finally free from all the karmic bonds and is liberated to attain Siddha status. Nirvāna-bhoomi, or the places where the Tirthankars attained the ultimate goal of breaking away from the circle of life, has turned into key pilgrimage places (five Mahā Tirth) for the Jains today. All 24 Tirthankars have attained nirvāna at the five places as explained in the following verse:

अष्टापदे श्री आदि जिनवर, वीर पावापुरी वरं,
वासुपूज्य चंपानयर सिद्धा, नेम रैवत गिरि वरं:
सम्मेत शिखरे वीस जिनवर, मुक्ति पद्दुंच्या मुनिवरं
चठवीस जिनवर नित्य वंदुं, सयल संघ सुखकरं.

Ādināth Bhagawān attained Nirvana at Ashtāpad,
Mahāvir Swami at Pāvāpuri,
Vāsupujya Swami at Champāpuri and,
Nemināth Bhagawān attained Nirvana at Girnar.

The other 20 Tirthankars attained Nirvana at Samet Shikhar.

I always bow down with reverence to all the twenty four Tirthankars,
which brings eternal happiness to us.

As per Jain scriptures, the first Tirthankar Bhagawān Shri Rishabhadev had attained nirvāna on the Ashtāpad Mountain. Shri Ashtāpad Tirth is one of the major Tirths and it is located in a tranquil region of the Himalayas. Chakravarti King Bharat (son of Shri Rishabhadev) had built a palace with precious stones at this place as a memorial to commemorate the nirvāna of Bhagawān Shri Rishabhadev. The name "Ashtāpad" is derived from the fact that there are eight (Ashta) steps (Pad) leading to the palace.

The following legend associated with Ashtäpad describes the absolute knowledge of the Tirthankars. Once after attaining absolute knowledge, Shri Rishabhadev Bhagawän was delivering a sermon while seated in Samavasaran. Out of curiosity, King Bharat asked if any human being living here would become a Tirthankar in the future. He replied affirmatively and said that his son Marichi will become the 24th Tirthankar after many life cycles and will be known as Mahävira. He subsequently explained the upcoming Chovisi (24 Tirthankars). This is how King Bharat came to know the details about the present Chovisi.



Samavasaran



Nirvāna Kalyanak



King Bharat

2.0 Details of Ashtäpad Mahä-Tirth

Location	Ashtäpad Mountain: Kailash- Himalayas.
Present Status	Not known – (JCANY is trying to locate)
When Constructed	Millions of years ago
In Memory Of	Bhagawän Rishabhadev (Nirvāna Kalyanak)
Constructed by	King Bharat (Son of Shri Rishabhadev)
Name of Palace	Sinha Nishadhyä Prasäd
Name of Architect	Värdhaki Ratna
Vidhikar	Shri Charan Muni
Material	Gemstones
Design	Omni-directional / Four Sided
Eight Steps	Hence the name Ashtäpad
Synonyms	Harädri, Rajatädri, Sfatikächal, Ratnamay
Related Stories	Appendix – I

3.0 History & References from Scriptures

1. The Ekādash Angādi Āgam, oldest text, mentions Ashtāpad as Mahā-Tirth.
2. Āchārānga Niryukti, verse 332 was the first to mention Ashtāpad Tirth.
3. Sutra Krutāngasutra mentions that Rishabhadev gave discourse to his son, King Bharat, on Ashtāpad.
4. Uttarādhyayan Sutra Niryukti says that anyone (Charam Shariri) who can scale Ashtāpad Tirth will attain nirvāna or Moksha (Chapter 10) and describes the Kailāsa as a Mountain of Gold and Silver.
5. Āvashyak Sutra Niryukti has the description of Ashtāpad.
6. Kalpasutra mentions Nirvāna Bhoomi of Rishabhadev at Ashtāpad.
7. Nishith Churni Divine has a description about Nirvāna of Rishabhadev Bhagawān on Ashtāpad Mountain.
8. Vividh Tirth Kalpa - Jinaprabha Suri wrote in Ashtāpad Giri Kalpa, that Gautam Swami entered Sinha Nishadhyā Prasād from the South.
9. Āchārya Dharma Ghosh Suriji's "Shri Ashtāpad Mahā Tirth Kalp" describes this Tirth as Sinha Nishadhyā Prasād which has four sides.
10. Gyan Prakash Deeparnave discusses the construction of Ashtāpad in detail
11. Uttar Purān has the description of Jain Tirthankar Rishabhadev and that, his son, King Bharat, constructed a golden temple with 72 idols of all the three Chovisis (24 Tirthankars of Past, Present, and Future).
12. Bhagawān Mahāvīr once said during his sermon that any human being, who can scale this mountain and stay overnight there, will attain liberation in his life time. Shri Gautam Swami, 2600 years ago, scaled this Tirth with his special powers, stayed over night and worshiped there.
13. Gautam Swami wrote the first two verses of Jag Chintāmani Sutra there (Probodh Tika Part 1). Shadāvashyak Bālāvabodha mentions that he performed Chaitya Vandana with the first two verses of Jag-Chintāmani Sutra.
14. Vasudevahindi in the 21st chapter says this mountain is related to Vaitadhya Mountain, it is 8 miles in height and Niyadi River is flowing at the foothills.

15. Jambu Dweep Prajnapti says Ashtāpad Mountain is north of Koshal Desh. At the place of Ādināth or Rishabhadev Nirvāna, the heavenly god Indra erected 3 Stups. (Sutra 33)
16. As per the scriptures, Ashtāpad is situated 12.5 yojan north of Ayodhya and on a clear morning, one can see and have Darshan from a tree top.
17. Siddhānam Buddhānam Siddhastav Sutra describes the sitting arrangement of idols as “Chattari Aattha Das Doy (Four, Eight, Ten, and Two) Vandiya Jeenvara Chouvisam”.
18. “Ashtāpad Kalpa (old)”, written by Shri Purvacharya describes in detail the importance of this place and all the events that took place there.
19. Hemchandrāchārya in “Trishashti Shalākā Purush Charitra” describes Ashtāpad in detail. Chapter 10 says one who climbs the mountain with his spiritual powers (labhdhi) and stays there overnight can get liberated in the same life.
20. Dhaneshwar Suri writes in Shatrunjay Māhātmya, that King Bharat constructed a palace with the help of Vārddhaki Ratna near the Nirvāna Bhoomi (place) of Bhagawān Rishabhadev.
21. According to Abhidhān Chintāmani, Mount Kailash has many names: Rajatādri, Ashtāad, Sfatikāchal, Harādri, Himavat and Dhawalgiri. (ref 4-94)
22. Shahajānand Dhanji in his letters says that the 3 Chovisi idols (Total 72 idols of past present and future Tirthankars) are buried under the snow and that some Tirthankar idols are under the control of Buddhist monks.
23. As per the Jain scriptures, we have Avasarpini and Utsarpini era of the time cycle. Each era has 24 Tirthankars. Rishabhadev is the first of 24 Tirthankars of this present era. His life is mentioned in various scriptures and in the Vedas and Purān. He was the first king and first reformer who taught Art, Commerce and Agriculture (Ashi, Masi and Krishi). He was also the first saint.
24. As per the historians, ancient civilization is 10 to 12 thousand years old. According to M.I.T.- human civilization started at Tibet. The ancient history of western Tibet, Kashmir & Himachal Pradesh clearly confirms this view.
25. Around 1400 BC, there were semi Tibetan people called Jian mixed with Shang people. Jian may be a synonym of Jina (Tirthankar), which means conqueror.
26. Lord Munisuvrat Nāth (Swami) did meditation and penance there.

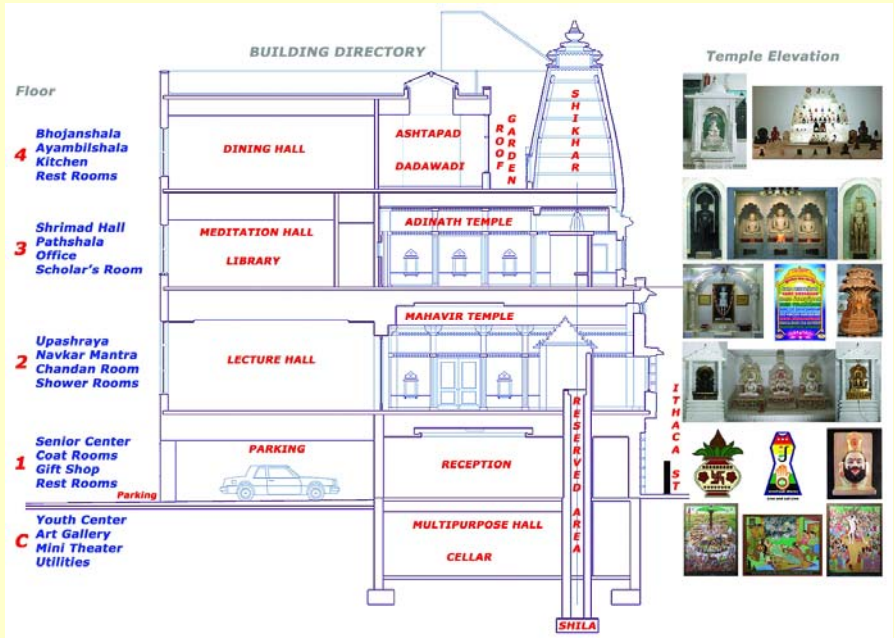
27. According to one Mongolian monk, Shri Rishabhadev meditated and prayed on Ashtāpad which is mentioned in Kanjur & Tanjur books.
28. Potala Palace has some old books, written on palm leaves which describe Nirvāna of Rishabhadev at Ashtāpad-Kailash.
29. Kangari Karchhak - Tibetan Kailash Purān mentions that Kailash is the center of the whole universe (awaiting English translation).
30. Gangkare Teashi – White Kailash – mentions that Jains lived here before Buddhist known as Gyal Phal Pa and Chear Pu Pa. Their first god's name is Khyu Chok – Lord Rushyanath. Mahāvīr is Phel Wa. According to this book, a lot of Jain principles match with theirs.
31. Dr. Lata Bothra is doing a lot of work on antiquities of Jainism, and her book on Ashtāpad has a lot of cross references on this subject.
32. The literature obtained from various sources describing Ashtāpad has been compiled into 13 volumes. These volumes have lot of information from scriptures and history and about the ongoing research work and related subjects.

4.0 Development of the Concept



The Jain center of America in New York has constructed a new building for its temple and other religious activities. As a tribute to 24 Tirthankars, it is customary to make idols of 24 Tirthankars in a temple and place them around Gabhārā (Main place of worship in a temple). We wanted to install Shri Chovisi (24 idols of Tirthankaras) in the Bhamati area but due to lack of space this could not be installed. As the thought process was evolving and the Jain Center temple building blue prints were being finalized, we thought of making 24 idols out of the gemstones and house

them in “Ratna Mandir” (gemstone temple) around the Gabhārā wall on the 2nd Floor. This would need a much smaller space. At this stage a preliminary design of the Ratna Mandir was drawn.



JCA Temple Building Information

While the idea of the Ratna Mandir was taking shape, one happened to visit a temple in Jaipur (India) and saw an Ashtāpad PAT; this was the turning point from the “Ratna Mandir” concept into “Ashtāpad”.



2-Blue

2-Green

2-White

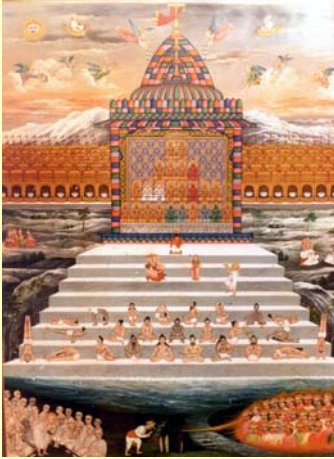
2-Red

16-Gold

Shri Chovisi

Preliminary research into Shri Ashtāpad revealed that there was very little information available about this Tirth but this was one of the most important Tirths being the nirvāna place of Bhagawān Shri Rishabhadev. Now our energies were focused on one thought: How to morph “Ratna Mandir” into “Shri Ashtāpad” without losing the good work that was already done? This led us to research further into the facts about “Shri

Ashtāpad”. We got some leads from scholars, who were generous in providing us with photocopies of a few articles from old Jain literature which allowed us to draw considerable knowledge about Shri Ashtāpad. These articles gave us detailed information about Shri Ashtāpad and also provided an impetus to our thought process about how to make a model of Ashtāpad Tirth.



Shri Ashtāpad Tirth Pat

Our research resulted into following visualization of the actual Ashtāpad: “Shri Ashtāpad Tirth is situated in the tranquil region of the snow covered mountains of Himalayas and is open to the skies. It is known by several names such as.....

Ratnamay - A palace made of gemstones and houses 24 idols of Tirthankars made of gemstones, **Rajatādri** - Rajat Adri or Silver Mountain; because Ashtāpad Mountain is snow covered and looks like silver, and **Sfatikāchal** - Sfatik Achal: meaning a mountain of crystal

The above description helped us in defining the attributes of the model of Ashtāpad Tirth. To be able to replicate the real scenario, a mountain should be carved out of crystal stone (naturally available in transparent and translucent shades) that could provide the look and feel of the snow-covered mountain. Provide eight steps at the base and 24 niches (Gokhalās) for Shri Chovisi in the center of the mountain that will fulfill the desire of “Ratna Mandir”. The whole structure would be assembled to appear as a mountain.

Thus the idea of making a model of “Shri Ashtāpad” with “Ratna Mandir” Chovisi (24 Tirthankar idols) installed on the Ashtāpad Mountain was born.

5.0 Development of the Ashtāpad Design:

Once the concept of Ashtāpad was firm, the next step was to develop a design of the model on the drawing board. It was important to identify all the constraints upfront because it is almost impossible to go back to make changes to a sculptured or carved product. Moreover precious material and months of craftsmanship work would be wasted if any constraints forced the change or necessitated discarding a particular model or part of it. Accordingly, a top down approach was adopted. The process began with assessment of available space for housing the final model, aesthetics and religious requirements and the process was carried on with the required analysis to the material level.

5.1 Religious Consideration:

Positioning of any religious object is determined by the religious guidelines laid out in the scriptures or as directed by the Āchāryas. The original design of Ashtāpad was four sided as per the picture given below, also called as Sarvatomukhi – Omni-directional. Space constraint forced us to make a unidirectional unit viewable only from the front. Now an architectural blueprint was developed to a scale based on the available space. Height and width of the mountain (Ht 13'.1" x W 14'.6" x D 5'.1") were determined according to the space available in the conservatory.

The sitting arrangement of idols in multiple rows as shown in the photos was done as per the following verse (Shloka) from scripture;

चत्वारि अट्ठदसदोयवंदिया जिणवराचउच्च्वीसं;
परमट्ठ-निट्ठिअट्ठा सिध्धा सिध्धिं मम दिसंतु

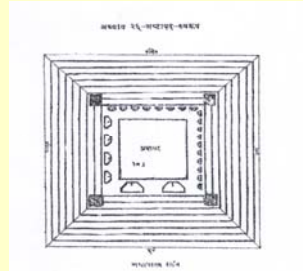
-सिध्धाणं बुध्धाणं सूत्र

चत्वारि अट्ठ दश गाथाना जुदा जुदा अर्थो-

चार दक्षिण दिशामां, आठ पश्चिम दिशामां, दश उत्तर दिशामां, अने बे पूर्व दिशामां, एम अष्टापद उपर वंदन करायेला अने जेमणे परमार्थने (मोक्ष) संपूर्ण सिध्ध कर्यो छे तेवा चोवीसे तीर्थकरो मने सिध्धि आपो.

अथवा

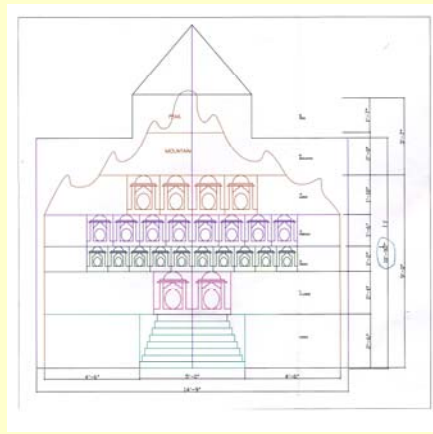
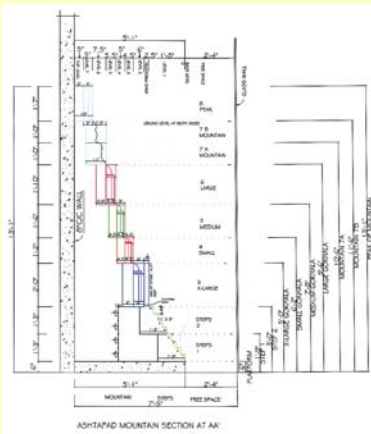
चार उपरनी मेखलामां, आठ वच्चेनी मेखलामां, दश नीचेनी मेखलामां, अने बे सौथी नीचेनी मेखलामां, ए प्रमाणे पण अष्टापद उपर वंदन थाय छे.



As per Scripture

Original Design

This verse indicates that the four Tirthankars are sitting at upper level (numbers 3 to 6), eight at the middle level (numbers 7 to 14), ten at the lower level (numbers 15 to 24), and two at the lowest level (number 1 and 2). This way the idol positions were determined for a unidirectional unit in four horizontal rows, one above the other. Dimensions of the idols will vary as per available space in each row.



Proposed Design

5.2 Structural and Engineering Consideration:

Once a decision was made to use crystal for the making of the mountain, the weight of the material, which is about 10 tons became a structural challenge. Overriding constraint was the weight bearing capacity of the temple on the 4th floor. Permissible weight was not to exceed 12 tons. A steel frame weighing one and a half ton was designed in Jaipur to hold the whole structure. There are eight layers one above the other in the steel framing. As this is a mountain the slope was taken into consideration. The whole structure has 5.1' depth at the bottom but only 0.75' depth at the top.

5.3 Crystal & Gemstones

The rough crystal stone weighing 30 tons was imported. After processing and carving the final weight of the mountain will be about 10 tons. This will be supported on a 1.5 ton steel frame. Various colored gemstones were imported from all over the world and used to carve idols of different sizes. Each idol is a single piece as acquired and as found in nature. All stones are certified by the Gemological Lab. There are no joints and each stone is carved as per religious rules and measurements. We have tried to use the best quality gemstones. These idols will form the part of the final unit. Some of the stone names are emerald, ruby, amethyst, kunzite, tourmaline, rose quartz, sodalite, and so on.

Rough Stones from which Idols are Carved



Sodalite



Tiger Eye



Rhodochrosite

6.0 Model Making

A series of progressive prototypes were developed to experiment with various materials, layouts, designs and dimensions. These prototypes also helped in visualizing the ultimate design of the model of Shri Ashtāpad. The prototype number 5 is a 3-D model. The first two original prototypes were in 2-D model design, made of serpentine stone. In some models, gokhalas were carved independently. Now we are installing the idols in individual niches carved in the mountain itself. This has enhanced the appearance of the model.

We made ten models and learned from experience, while working with crystal and gemstones and improving the design as well. It was a difficult and time consuming effort. Drawings and designs kept changing, but finally we formed a reasonable concept of the whole structure.



Model 2 (2-Dimension)



**Full Size Marble
Model 9 (3-Dimension)**

6.1 Ashtāpad Mountain

The mountain is the main body and is made of crystal quartz. Various blocks of crystal (50+) each weighing 100 to 300 kilo, were assembled to provide a sloping pattern on the front and sides in order to replicate the appearance of a real mountain. Eight steps are constructed in the center leading to the first row of the Gokhala. 24 Gokhals are sculpted in the mountain itself where the idols will be installed. This model is built to 1/5th scale compared to the final unit.

The mountain is carved in eight layers of crystal blocks. First two layers are for steps, next four are for idols and last two layers are for Shikhar. A five Shikhar design has been added at the top to give the whole structure, the appearance of a temple. All Shikhar are carved as per the design in the scripture, and will be adorned with gold kalash. The Dhwajā (flag) will be at the top.



Rough Crystal



Crystal Blocks

In the model number 10 (front cover), one can see past and future Chovisi installed on the sides with five Shikhar design.

Ashtāpad Mountain Dimension	
Height at Center	13'.1"
Height on Sides	9'.6"
Width	14'.6"
Depth	5'.1"
Depth from Glass	2'.5"
Size of the Steps	5' X 1'8" X 2'6"

Under the current plans, it is intended to create an effect of snow-capped mountain by appropriate measures. The wall at the back will be suitably decorated with faux painting to depict Mount Kailash area in open sky.

6.2 Gokhalas (Niches)

There are 24 Gokhalas of varying sizes to house 24 idols. All gokhalas of each row are equal in size. Originally gokhalas were carved separately as an individual unit. But later on it was decided to carve it in the mountain itself, so that it becomes a part of the mountain. All the gokhalas have a base with two pillars in the front, a niche for idol, an arch, a chhajja, and a shikhar at the top.

A design with regular carving was done in the beginning but later on a Ashta-Pratiharya design was added and hence all 24 Gokhalas will have a Ashta-Pratiharya design. Individual Yaksh Yakshini will be carved at the base next to the Singhasan. The Shikhar will be fully carved and will have a Kalash.



Ashta-Pratiharya Carving



Five- Shikhar Design

6.3 Idols of 24 Tirthankars – Shri Chovisi

The 24 Idols are carved to represent the 24 Tirthankars. Each one has its own symbol at the base that identifies the idol to a viewer. All idols are carved out of gemstones. Due to limitations of the available gemstones, the color will not confirm to the original colors of each

Tirthankar. Idols will be installed as per their position according to religious rules as discussed earlier. Sizes of idols vary according to the level where they are being installed based upon sitting arrangement – the lowest two are the tallest 9"-11" in Ht (idols 1 and 2), then top 4 are 7"-9" in Ht (idols 3 to 6) then 8 are 5"-7" in Ht (idols 7 to 14) and finally 10 are 3"-5" in Ht (idols 15 to 24), are the smallest. This matches proportionately to the original height of each Tirthankar as per the scripture.

Gokhalā & Idol Dimensions:

Level	Size	Tot	H In	W In	Tirthankars	Idols	H In	W In	D In
1-Lowest	Ex. Large	2	24"	22"	1 to 2	2	9"-11"	9"	5"
2-Lower	Small	10	14"	12"	15 to 24	10	3"-5"	4"	2"
3-Middle	Medium	8	18"	15"	7 to 14	8	5"-7"	6"	3"
4-Upper	Large	4	22"	18"	3 to 6	4	7"-9"	7.5"	4"



Amethyst
Ht 5" W 4" D 2" Wt 2892 Cts
Purple Shri... Brazil



Smoky Quartz
Ht 7.3" W 5.75" D 2.9" Wt 8195 Cts
Smoky Shri... Africa



Amazonite
Ht 11.25" W 9.1" D 4.5" Wt 31057 Cts
Green Shri... Russia



Blue Topaz
Ht 4.4" W 3.5" D 3.4" Wt 8095 Cts
Blue Shri... Brazil

7.0 Carving of Related Stories

There are many legends associated with Shri Ashtäpad Tirth, out of which the following 24 have been depicted in individual carved units. Related stories are briefly narrated separately.

Initially, the stories were carved in a two-dimensional design at the base, on the sides of the mountain, in the first two prototypes. As the concept matured, these carvings depicting various stories related to Shri Ashtäpad were developed into separate three-dimensional carved units.

1. Shri Rishabhadev Janma Kalyänak
2. Shri Rishabhadev Varsitap Pärnä (fast breaking ceremony)
3. Shri Rishabhadev Bhagawän in Samavasaran
4. Shri Rishabhadev - Nirväna Kalyänak.
5. King Bharat Chakravarti.
6. King Bharat at Rang Mandap* on Ashtäpad
7. King Bharat in Areesha Mahal (palace of mirrors)
8. King Sagar's sons and Näg Kumar.
9. Gautam Swami seeking permission from Bhagawän Mahävira to visit Ashtäpad.
10. Gautam Swami climbing Ashtäpad with the help of Sun-rays (Ätma Labhdhi).*
11. Gautam Swami – scripting of Jag-Chintamani Sutra.*
12. 5 Täpas on each of the first 3 steps, total 15 - representing 1503.*
13. Gautam Swami and Täpas – Kheer Parna.
14. Gautam Swami and Tiryank Jrumbhak Dev Updesh.*
15. Bali Muni and Ravan Viman.*
16. Ravan lifting Ashtäpad.*
17. Ravan and Mandodari devotion (Bhakti).*
18. Ravan and heavenly god Dharnendra Dev Dialogue.*
19. Rani Veermati (previous life of Damayanti) and 'Tilak' Story.*
20. Shri Munisuvrat Swami's Visit to Ashtäpad.
21. Shri Padlipta Suri's Visit to Ashtäpad.
22. Sagar Dutta Visit (Shri Parshwanath in past life).
23. Sunrays with Laser Effect.*
24. Indra Viman and Angels with Garland.*

*On the mountain and others are in the front of the mountain

8.0 Research

In recent history, no one has witnessed the actual Ashtäpad Tirth as described in the scriptures. Pilgrims and visitors travel to the mountain where this Tirth is believed to be hidden somewhere. Many individuals and organizations are involved in research to unravel the mysteries of this legendary place.

8.1 Compilation of Literature on Ashtäpad

One has tried to put together the literature on Ashtäpad from scriptures and other sources. This has been printed in the form of 13 Volumes I to XIII, containing over 6000 pages. This includes the historical perspective and details about antiquity of Jainism, Ashtäpad Pujä, Stuti, Stavans, Geological aspects, Bon Po Religion, Gemstones, & all the research work that is being done. All the above material is available on DVD, including an index booklet.

8.2 Field Trip

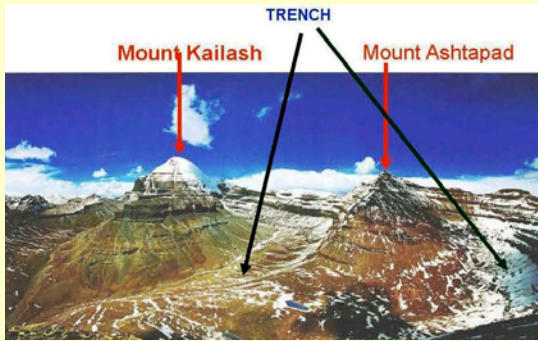
Jain Center of America, New York (JCA) is currently in the process of constructing a model of Ashtäpad. This Center is interested in locating Ashtäpad Mahä Tirth and Ashtäpad Mountain. A research trip was arranged by JCA to visit and research the central Himalayas from May 28 to June 21, 2006. The main objectives of this excursion were to:

1. Add depth and breadth to the research already conducted.
2. Find the location/existence of Ashtäpad as described in Jain literature.
3. Prove the existence of Ashtäpad geographically and archeologically.

Ashtäpad Research Group 2006



Poster Picture Commercially Available



8.3 Probable Site of Ashtapad

The map shows the probable position of the Ashtāpad Mountain up in the Himalayas. It is about 168 miles north of Badrinath. Kailash Mountain also known as KANG RIM POCHE, is 25 miles north of Mansarovar. Between Mansarovar (Padma Had) and Kailash, about 5-7 miles NE, is another mountain called Ashtāpad.

This mountain is 8 miles in height and is covered with white rocks and hence also known as Dhawalgiri. One can walk from "DARECHIN" after crossing about 15-20 mountain hills, and one will reach there in 4 to 6 hours.

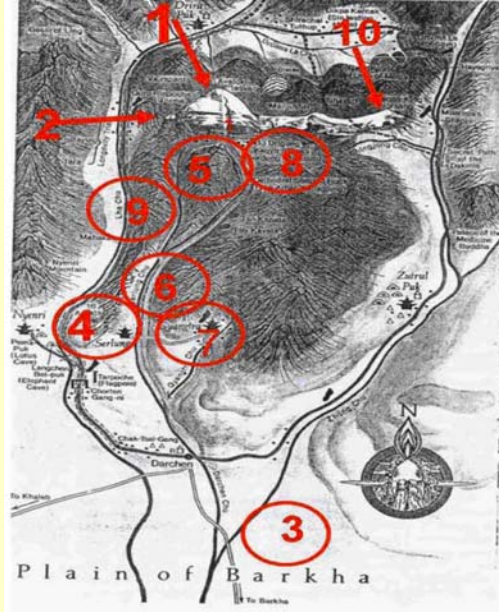
Buddhist pilgrims call this mountain "Kang Siche." About 40 km away there is another mountain peak called "Gurala Mandhata". Mandhata is a name derived from King Sagar's ancestors. Between Kailash and Gurala Mandhata, there is a lake called Rakshash Tal.

Bharat Hansraj who took many pictures of Nandi Mountain, says that the pictures match the description of Ashtāpad with the 8 steps and a sphinx.

We are trying to work with the satellite pictures so that one can locate any buried structure. Latest report from Mr. P.S. Thakker is being studied. Ref Vol XI Chapter 80 Article B Pg 4973.

The probable site of Ashtāpad is located to the south east of Mt. Kailash (6638m), which is 5996 meter high. Mt Kailash is known as to Kang Rinpoche/ Gang Ti-se. It is 5km SE of Dira Phug: 5 km s/w of Dolma La. 7.5 km NW of Zutul Phug: 8 km NE of Gyandreg Monastery: 8.5 km N/E of Serlung Gompa. 9 km N/E of Darphoche/ Yam Dwar, or Moksha Dwar. It is 2.5 km to the east of 13 Drigung- Kagyu Chorten: 2 km to the east of Ser Dung Chuksun La, or 2.5km SW of Gangpo- Sanglam La. The site is easily approachable from Serdung Chuksun La or Gangpo Sanglam La.

SHRI ASHTĀPAD MAHĀ-TIRTH



Probable Site for Ashtāpad

(1) Mount Kailash, (2) Bonari near Kailash, (3) Barkha plains, (4) Tarboche, (5) Nandi Parvat, (6) Mountain between Serlung Gumpa and Gyandrag Monastery, (7) Gyandrag Monastery, (8) 13 Drigung Kagyu Chorten, (9) Probable site of Ashtāpad known as Gombo Phang or Trinetra or Mahakal, (10) The site was detected using satellite data by Mr P.S. Thakker and known as Dharma King Norsang.



Satellite Picture of Kailash Area

9.0 Summary

We are trying to form an Ashtāpad Research International Foundation (ARIF) to coordinate the research work; it will be registered in India as well as overseas. All major cities in India will have a branch.

ARIF will coordinate with Geological, Archeological, and other related departments of government of India and China. They will also approach National Geographic and Discovery Channel for help.

A team of Geologists and Archeologists are involved. They are helping and guiding us as to how to proceed with further research. We are trying to get high resolution space satellite data of the area shown on the map.

We will publicize the research work - This will create a lot of enthusiasm among the younger generations, professionals and researchers. This will also help to present our case to various governmental agencies.

We will have exhibits & seminars to educate people and give them updated information.

Finally a question arises as to what happened to Ashtāpad in 2600 years, when Shri Gautam Swami had visited the place as per our scripture. That time 1503 Tapas were also trying to climb but could not. There has not been any major geological or historical change to our knowledge that may damage or cause it to disappear. This needs an explanation.



Appendix – I

Stories Related to Ashtāpad Mahā-Tirth

There are many legends associated with Shri Ashtāpad Tirth. Some of them are briefly narrated here.

1.0 Shri Ādināth or Rishabhadev Bhagawān

During the third Ārā (era), King Nābhirāj and Queen Marudevi ruled over the land of Bharat Kshetra. One night the Soul of Bhagawān Rishabhadev descended from heaven and entered the womb of Queen Marudevi. At that moment she had 14 auspicious dreams. In due time, the Queen gave birth to a son on the 8th day of second half of the month of Chaitra. Indra Dev carried the God to Mount Meru and celebrated the bathing ceremony. On the 12th day Indra named him Rishabha as Marudevi Mātā had Vrishabh (ox) as her first dream.

Shri Rishabha became King after Nābhirāj. He ruled well and taught Asi, Masi and Krishi i.e. various arts, crafts, languages, commerce, agriculture, and self defense to the people & established a good society. As life went by, he decided to renounce the world. He donated all his worldly possessions for 1 year (Varsi Dāna) and at the end, after 2 days of fasting he took a solemn oath of renunciation from worldly matters. He plucked his hair, became a monk and bowed down to all liberated Souls.



Janma Kalyānak



Varsitap - Pārñā

2.0 Varsi Tap Pārñā of Rishabhadev Bhagawān

As a monk Rishabhadev went for Gochari (food) from house to house continuously for about 13 months, but people were ignorant and did not offer any food instead they offered gold and other valuable items, which he could not accept. At last when Rishabhadev reached the city of Hastināpur in northern India, King Shreyāns Kumār bowed down and offered him fresh sugarcane juice in Gochari. Rishabhadev consumed 108 pots of juice without spilling a single drop, as the King poured the offering in his palms. The entire universe resounded with words “Aho

Dānam” meaning “best gift”. This day is known as Akshaya Tṛitiya. Since then, the tradition of Varsi Tapa penance and its fast breaking ceremony “Pārṇā” has been followed.

3.0 Keval-Jnān & Nirvāna of Rishabhadev Bhagawān

Bhagawān Rishabhadev traveled extensively for many years. All along he led an austere life, walking barefoot and engaging Himself in the meditation of self. After fasting for three consecutive days (Attham Tapa), while sitting under a banyan tree in deep meditation, he attained Keval-Jnān (absolute knowledge). Indra and other gods thronged there to celebrate the fourth Kalyānak (Keval-Jnān). They constructed a divine Assembly Hall known as Samavasaran for Rishabhadev’s first sermon. When he learnt that his life is coming to an end, he went to Mt Ashtāpad along with 10,000 monks for Santhārā (fasting unto death). After six days of fasting, Bhagawān attained Nirvāna and became Siddha, a pure soul.

4.0 King Bharat Chakravarti

Bharat was the eldest son of Ādināth or Rishabhadev Bhagawān. After Ādināth Bhagawān’s Dikshā Mahotsav, Bharat became the King. Upon hearing of Ādināth Bhagawān’s Nirvāna, Bharat went to Ashtāpad Mountain to pay his homage. Overwhelmed by grief, Bharat lit the funeral pyre. After the cremation, he decided to construct a Ratnamay (gemstone studded) palace in the memory of Ādināth Bhagawān on Ashtāpad Mountain and installed idols of 24 Tirthankaras as per the description given by Shri Ādināth Bhagawān during his sermon.



Bharat Chakravarti



Areesha Mahal

5.0 King Bharat and Areesha Mahal (Palace of Mirrors)

Once, King Bharat was looking in the mirror in his palace, after adoring himself completely with ornaments from head to toe. Accidentally one of the rings fell down from his finger. Now his bare finger made him wonder how he would look without ornaments on his body. He removed all his ornaments. Suddenly, he realized that his beauty was due to the ornaments and hence illusionary. He realized that true beauty does not

lie in material possessions but comes from within. He realized that “all these years I have been taking great care of my body and spending a great amount of time adorning it. I should rather renounce all worldly pleasures and desires and focus on what lies within.” Thus by reaching the highest form of contemplation in his mind, he was able to break away from the bonds of Ghāti Karma and attained Keval-Jnān at that moment.

6.0 Shri Gautam Swami

When Bhagawān Mahāvīr established the Chaturvidha Sangha (a society consisting of Shri Sādhus (monks), Sādhvis (nuns), Shrāvak, and Shrāvikā (household people) at Pāvāpuri, Indrabhuti Gautam was the first disciple of Bhagawān Mahāvīr along with his 500 followers.

Once Bhagawān Mahāvīr said in his sermon, “A person who scales Ashtāpad and offers prayers to all 24 Tirthankars attains liberation (Moksha) in the same life”. When Gautam Swami learned this, he decided to go to Ashtāpad after seeking permission from Bhagawān Mahāvīr.

When he arrived at the bottom of the Ashtāpad Mountain, he saw 3 ascetics, with 500 disciples each trying to scale Mount Ashtāpad. One group could climb only up to the 1st step, the other group climbed only up to the 2nd step and the third stopped at the 3rd step. None of them could climb further. With the help of spiritual power (Ātma-Labhdhi), Gautam Swami scaled the Ashtāpad Mountain by holding the sunrays as a rope. He offered his prayers to all the 24 Tirthankars and stayed there overnight. There he compiled the first two verses of Jagachintāmani Sutra.

That night a heavenly god named Vaishraman (Tiryank Jrumbhak dev, in one of the previous life of a great sage Vajra-swami) also came there to worship. He saw Gautam Swami who looked very handsome and healthy. He thought how can this monk do penance and still look this healthy. Gautam Swami read his mind and told the story of Pundarik and Kandarik and explained that an emaciated body is not the indication of penance. But to control the soul through meritorious meditation is real penance. This way he cleared the doubt of the heavenly god.

Next morning when he came down, all 1503 Tāpas were impressed by his achievement and wanted to be his disciples. Gautam Swami insisted that they should be Bhagawān Mahāvīr’s disciples. However due to their earnest desire he initiated them. As all the Tāpas were fasting for 3 days, Gautam Swami arranged for Kheer (rice cooked in milk) Pārnā. Even though the quantity of Kheer was not enough, due to his spiritual power he could feed Kheer to all of them by putting his thumb in the vessel. During Pārnā, 501 Tāpas, now ascetics, became Kevali. On the

way, Gautam Swami gave a description of Mahävîr Swami, listening to which another 501 tãpas became Kevali. Upon arrival, they saw Mahävîr Swami in Samavasaran, and the remaining 501 tãpas became Kevali. At that time, Gautam Swami asked all Tãpas to sit along with other Sãdhus. Then Bhagawãn Mahävîr said, "Gautam! You need to bow to these Kevalis." Now Gautam Swami realized that all the Tãpas had become Kevali.



**Shri Mahävîr
Swãmi**



**Gautam Swãmi
Tãpas Kheer-Pãrnã**



**Nãg Kumar
Sagar's Sons**

7.0 Nãg Kumar and King Sãgar's Sons

King Sagar had sixty thousand sons. Once they went to Ashtãpad and prayed to all the 24 Tirthankars. Impressed with the beauty of Ashtãpad temple and considering the precious material it was made of, they were concerned about the safety of the temple and were afraid that it may be destroyed in times to come. In order to protect the temple, they dug a big trench all around the mountain. While digging, they disturbed the King of serpents (Nãg Kumar) and their homes. Nãg Kumar Dev was very angry and met the princes in a fury. The Princes apologized to Nãg Kumar and explained that they had dug the trench to protect the Ashtãpad temple. Nãg Kumar pardoned them and went away. Meanwhile all the princes thought this trench would get filled up as time passes so they decided to fill it up with the holy water from the Ganges. This disturbed Nãg Kumar Dev again, so he came out and with his fiery power, reduced all the 60,000 princes to ashes. Having learned of the sad demise of his 60,000 sons, King Sagar renounced the worldly life and became a monk under Bhagawãn Ajitnãth, the 2nd Tirthankar.

8.0 Ravan & Bali Muni

Once king Rãvan was flying over mount Ashtãpad and suddenly his Vimãn (plane) came to a halt. This happened as he did not pay respect to a monk named Bali Muni, who was in meditation there. One is supposed to pay respect to a Monk in meditation. This made Rãvan very angry and he decided to punish Bali Muni. Rãvan uprooted the whole mountain with intent to throw it in the ocean along with Bali. Bali with his

special Knowledge (Avadhi-jnān) came to know of this and with the idea of protecting the temple; pressed the mountain with his toe. Because of the unbearable pressure Rāvan started crying and begged for pardon.

Subsequently Rāvan went up the Ashtāpad Mountain with his wife Mandodari to worship. Filled with joy she started dancing while Rāvan played the Veena (musical instrument like guitar). Accidentally a wire from the Veena broke. Thinking this could be an interruption in her devotional dance; he pulled out a vein from his arm (with the help of Lāghav Vidhyā) and replaced the broken wire of the Veena. This way he kept playing Veena. And then they performed pooja and offered prayers to all the idols. Thus Rāvan attained Tirthankar Nām-karma and a place in the future Chovisi.

There Rāvan met with Dharnendra Dev, who was visiting the Ashtāpad Tirth. He was very impressed with his devotion and his musical talent. He presented him with Amodh Vijaya Shakti.

9.0 Rani Veermati

In one of the previous life of queen Damayanti, while traveling Mamman King and queen Veermati met a monk (Muniraj). The monk delivered a sermon about the uselessness of worldly affairs. Mamman King then apologized and bowed to Muniraj. He asked Muniraj, where was he going? Muniraj replied that he was going to visit Ashtāpad Tirth and to worship there also. Since then Rani Veermati decided to visit Ashtāpad Tirth and worship there. After long penance, Shāsan Devi (goddess) came to help with her Viman and took her to Ashtāpad. She prayed to all 24 Tirthankaras and placed a gold Tilak studded with Gem Stones on the forehead of all the idols. Due to this, subsequently during the life of Rani Damayanti her forehead was glowing like Ruby Tilak which she had adorned on all the Tirthankaras in her previous life.

10.0 Shri Munisuvrat Swami

The 20th Tirthankar Shri Munisuvrat-swami went to Ashtāpad for meditation and penance during his life time with his disciples. As per literature he is the only Tirthankar after Ādināth who went to Ashtāpad for meditation and penance.

11.0 Shri Padliptsuri

Āchārya Pādliptsuri who was staying on Shatrunjay, decided to move to Girnar. At that time, he went to Ashtāpad with the help of Ākāsh Gāmi Vidhyā (spiritual powers to fly) to worship there.

Appendix - II

Exhibitions and Seminars in Major Cities

The Ashtāpad Model and all 3 Chovisi (72 idols of Tirthankars) and other idols were exhibited to many major cities. This was done with the purpose of exhibiting so that many people can pay their respect to all the 3 Chovisis. This way one makes people aware of Ashtāpad Tirth. The thirteen Volumes of Ashtapad Literature and many other items were also exhibited. Kailash Mansarovar research trip video was very well received. We have already exhibited it at Mumbai, New York, Surat, Antwerp, Palitana, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Delhi and Kolkatta. In July 2007, we will exhibit it at the Jaina Convention.

Exhibition at Mumbai 2003



Exhibition at Surat 2004

Excerpts from Gujarat Mitra



ન્યૂયોર્ક લઈ જવા પૂર્વે સુરતમાં લવાયેલી
રત્નો જડિત ૨૪ તીર્થકરોની પ્રતિમાઓ

24 Idols Carved from Gemstones
were brought to Surat before
going to New York

Exhibition at Palitana 2005



Exhibition and Ashtāpad Pujā at Ahmedabad 2005



Seminar at Ahmedabad 2005



Excerpts from Gujarat Samachar 2005

અષ્ટાપદ મહાતીર્થનું રહસ્ય
ઉકેલવા વ્યાપક સંશોધનની જરૂર

આદી તીર્થકર ઋષભદેવના
પુત્ર ચક્રવર્તી ભરતે
અષ્ટાપદ સ્થાપ્યું હતું

તિબેટના બરફમાં ૭૨ જિનાલયો દટાયેલા હોવાનું મનાય છે પ્રાચીન
સુમેરુ મંદિરો અષ્ટાપદ તીર્થના વર્ણન સાથે મેળ ખરાવે છે

Research work needed to find the details about the Ashtāpad Tirth and to locate the same.

King Bharat, son of Rishabdev, constructed the Ashtāpad Tirth.

72 Jeenalaya are buried under the snow in Tibet. Description of Old Sumeru temple matches with Ashtāpad Tirth description.

Exhibition at Jaipur 2005



Exhibition, Lecture and DVD Presentation at Delhi-2006



Exhibit at Kolkatta 2006



Ashtāpad at Jaipur



Jaipur Jewelry Show



Exhibition at Mumbai- JITO Conference and Excerpts from Mumbai Samachar 2007

૪૨ દેશમાંથી એક લાખથી વધુ સંખ્યામાં
હાજર જૈનોએ અભૂતપૂર્વ રસ દાખવ્યો
જેનોના ચારેય ફિરકાને એક થવાની મુનિશ્રી
નયપદ્મસાગરની અપીલ

Over hundred thousand Jains from 42 Countries were present at JITO Conference. Muni Shri Naya Padma Sagar appealed for unity of all four traditions



Appendix – III

Shri Munisuvrat Swami Special Presentation



Shri Munisuvrat Swami Idol 51" in height
made from sodalite stone - one piece

Parikar 102" in height from sodalite stone
under carving process at present

Shri Ashtäpad Mahä-Tirth



Ashtäpad - Model 3

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