Mountain Temples and Temple-Mountains
Masrur

In the first half of the eighth century, Indian craftsmen cut back a high ridge of sandstone, its back to the Beas River and the plains beyond, and carved a grand temple-complex facing northeast toward the Dhauladhar range, the first outcropping of the great Himalayan Mountains. The structure itself was an embodiment of the earth and mountains around it (Figure 1). The temple at Masrur—in the present Indian state of Himachal Pradesh—was never completed. Masrur seems today half returned to its primordial condition. It was damaged by successive earthquakes that sheered the stone and folded parts of the complex back into the hill. Its ground plan, partial section, and a roof plan drawn by an Indian draftsman were published in the second decade of the twentieth century, but scholarship since has neglected and misrepresented the site.

It is possible to reconstruct the intention of the planning of this important complex, however, and to reposition it in a historical and symbolic context. Not only did its creation mark a movement of political power in the eighth century, from the Gangetic valley into the hills, but the temple also mapped cosmological power and the construction of a “world-kingdom” in a new way. The metaphor of temple as mountain runs throughout India’s traditions of building, but the temple at Masrur, beyond all others from the Indian subcontinent, provides the antecedent and conceptual model for the great “temple-mountains” of Cambodia soon to be built by kings in southeast Asia (Figure 2).

Formal and Political Competition in the Eighth Century

Many stone temples in the Himalayas—most typically in Kashmir—have pyramidal towers with pent-roof gables (Figure 3). Under King Lalitāditya in Kashmir in the eighth century, this stone typology took on an exemplifying role, characterizing that mountain kingdom and distinguishing it from all others. Yet as early as the beginning of the eighth century a distinctive type of curvilinear tower, with offset planes and vertical bands (-latá)—the “latina Nāgara” temple of middle India—was introduced into the hill regions of the lower Himalayas (the states of Himachal and Uttaranchal Pradesh) (Figure 4). The Nāgara formula—most often a single sanctum with tower and an axial entry hall or portico—evolved in the sixth century in the Gangetic valley and central India, establishing itself widely in the next century from Saurashtra and the Salt Range in the west and the northwest to Orissa and Bengal in the east, and from the hill states of the lower Himalayas to the Deccan in the south (see Figure 2).

The introduction of a Nāgara stone-temple formula in the hill states early in the eighth century may represent political inroads made by Yaśovarman, king of middle India, ruling from Kanauj (Kānyakubja). Monuments in some cases offer more solid data than texts, and I argue that in this case they do. I begin my narrative with a discussion of two medieval royal documents—one a poem about Yaśovarman’s conquests written in the eighth century, the other...
Figure 1 Masrur, Himachal Pradesh, rock-carved Śaiva temple complex, view from the north, ca. eighth century

Figure 2 Map showing Masrur's geographic context
a chronicle of Lalitāditya’s successors in Kashmir written in the twelfth century—with the poetics, contradictions, and anachronisms of such sources very much in mind.8 The validity of historical frames in South Asia must always be questioned. Reconstructions of history found in medieval documents and sources and in modern scholarship at times take on the characteristics of a myth.9 By examining ancient sources in the light of the monumental record, however, I hope to draw conclusions about the movement of political power in the lower Himalayas in the eighth century.

To determine patronage and stylistic sources for the Masrur temple, reconstruction of a political and historical context is essential. Yaśovarman, ruling over middle India, where Nāgara architecture first developed, and Lalitāditya, king of Kashmir, who marked his kingdom with a distinctive pyramidal type of temple (see Figure 3), were rivals for territory and fame in the eighth century. Both claimed the poetic trope of conquering the four quarters of a world kingdom.10 It is clear that they also interacted and collaborated politically.11 Claims by Kalhaṇa, the twelfth-century court chronicler of Kashmir, that privilege king Lalitāditya, however, need not be an accurate rendering of facts of the eighth century.12

In his verse chronicle, the Rājaṭarāṅgini (River of Kings), Kalhaṇa compiled historical data to eulogize the Kashmir rulers of his time, but he in part also mythologized their lineage and important earlier forebears, such as Lalitāditya.13 Vākpatirāja, the court poet who wrote the “great verse” narrative (mahākavya) about King Yaśovarman’s conquests, on the other hand, was a contemporary of Yaśovarman and wrote the Gaiḍavaho based on tropes and observations of his own lifetime.14

Historical sources as well as architectural remains suggest a more nuanced rivalry between Yaśovarman and Lalitāditya in the eighth century than Kalhaṇa’s twelfth-century chronicle recalls, but they require some reframing. Lalitāditya and Yaśovarman both sent emissaries with messages to China; in one of these, Lalitāditya claimed Yaśovarman “as his ally.”15 Vākpatirāja, as poet in Yaśovarman’s court, wrote beautifully of the physical and human land-
scape that Yasovarman's army encountered in its wanderings—in so doing delineating the extent of the kingdom—but he detailed little about specific battles and made no mention of Lalitaditya or Kashmir, emphasizing always his king's primary position.

In the twelfth century, however, Kalhana felt it necessary to portray Lalitaditya as "withering in a moment the mobile army of the mountain-like Yasovarman," reducing him "to the position of a minstrel to eulogize his virtues." "What more need be said?" Kalhana went on, "The territory of Kanyakubja [Kanauj] from the bank of the Yamunā to the bank of the Kālikā was, like the courtyard of his residence, under his subjection. Passing over Yasovarman, like the Gaṅgā over the Snow-Mountain, [Lalitaditya's] army reached in comfort the eastern ocean" (the Bay of Bengal [see Figure 2]). Perhaps the point of this passage is that Kalhana, in the twelfth century, had to explain away Yasovarman's continuing power in central India in order to argue that Lalitaditya had been able to reach eastern India in his royal wanderings, as required of a world-king. More striking to me is Kalhana's semiological referencing of Yasovarman as both "mountain-like" and the "Snow-Mountain."

Kalhana's continuing praise of Yasovarman is perhaps more revealing than his story of Yasovarman's defeat. "The ruler of Kanyakubja appeared to those, who were versed in affairs of state, to be one possessing understanding. . . . His colleagues were even more than him full of self-assurance; more fragrant than even the spring is the breeze from the sandal tree." Yasovarman proposed a treaty—"written with diplomatic skill" according to Kalhana—that read: "This is the treaty of peace concluded between Yasovarman and Lalitaditya" of Kashmir. This was rejected by Lalitaditya's jealous minister because a "document which did not give precedence [to Lalitaditya] indicated the lack of superiority of his sovereign." This quibble Kalhana himself recounted was "disliked by the generals who were uneasy at the prolonged duration of the war."

If Kalhana exaggerated Lalitaditya's dominion over Yasovarman in order to defend Kashmir's claim to universal rule, he also had clear access to sources defining Yasovarman's "mountain-like" stance.

In contrast to Kalhana's later account, in Vākpatīrīja's Gaiḍaṇava Yośavarman ended his tour of royal conquest of the four directions (digvijaya) by going north. In the celestial city of Ayodhya he "built up a heavenly temple in one day." Various forest regions with their lovely aspects were observed by his army-men, who met in victory different countries on the earth in all directions. From Ayodhya he moved to "the Himalayan tract including the Kailasa mountain" (a mythical rather than specific place). Vākpatīrīja's long description of this large region led his translator to observe that "Vākpatīrīja must have traversed these parts in person to observe them minutely and collect the details." 24

The modern hill states of Himachal and Arunachal Pradesh are one small part of the western Himalayas (see Figure 2). Located between Kashmir and the Gangetic plains, their high mountains and fierce river valleys have kept back invaders through many centuries. While our understanding of who controlled these areas over time is limited, the evidence of monuments, texts, and inscriptions might suggest that this "liminal" region—both a margin and a threshold—had no single conquering raj. Were the Varman kings who founded a small kingdom at Dharmour (high above an offshoot of the Ravi river valley above Chamba, north of Masrur) early in the eighth century feudatories to the contemporary Varman rulers—Yasovarman and his successors—in Kanauj? Were there political links to the Varman kings who had established themselves in Cambodia well before the eighth century? We know only that they introduced Indic ideas of kingship, deities, and architecture into Southeast Asia. We know that a re-formed Chamba state fell briefly to a king of Kashmir in the eleventh century, as reported in the Rājarājanī and in a chronicle of the Chamba kingdom compiled in the seventeenth century; yet only the "gradual but noticeable change of symbols provides indicators in the changing process of those who ruled." 29

Architectural remains may provide evidence of Yasovarman's importance relative to Lalitaditya that is more convincing than Kalhana's twelfth-century panegyric. Nāgara stone architecture in the lower Himalayas in the eighth century suggests a movement of power and patronage from the plains to the hills. Small stone temples with barrel-vaulted and simply layered superstructures related to Nāgara were first built in the hills at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century. At Masrur and Bajaura, two mature and developed Nāgara stone temples—both commissions requiring significant patronage and political stability—had been constructed by the end of the century (Figure 5; see Figures 1, 4). 32

These temples demonstrate, in contrast to Kalhana's catalogue of Kashmir valley's many pyramidal temple sites (see Figure 3), that patronage in the hill states had, by the eighth century, incorporated Nāgara forms then dominant in Yasovarman's India. The story of these temples in the hills has not been adequately told. That a thirteenth-century (and later) Nāgara temple at Baijnath in Kangra, taken as a touchstone, for many decades was dated to the early ninth century by a misread inscription, is one indication of the literature's many confusions. 34

Most remarkable, under-studied, and mis-presented of these Nāgara hill temples is the large rock-cut Śaiva complex at Masrur (see Figure 5), recently nominated as a
UNESCO World Heritage Monument. It is this mountain temple that I wish to analyze as a forerunner for the famed temple-mountains of Southeast Asia.

Masrur’s Temple and Its Scholarship

A civilian officer, Henry Lee Shuttleworth, visited the “rock-hewn Vaishnava temple at Masrur” [emphasis mine] in “the Panjab sub-Himalaya district of Kangra” in April 1913, commenting in his report that there “is no evidence that it had been seen by any European prior to my first visit.” He shared his photographs and notes with Harold Hargreaves, Officiating Superintendent, Buddhist and Hindu Monuments, of the Archaeological Survey of India’s Northern Circle, who visited the site in October 1913 and published a final report in the Survey’s annual report. Hargreaves corrected Shuttleworth’s “Vaishnava” attribution of the ancient temple (although Viṣṇu’s incarnation as Rama remains the cult in current worship) by observing an image of Śiva carved at the center over the sanctum doorway, but described the site as having multiple temples, a confounding that has led many subsequent scholars to count and re-count the number of towers. Hargreaves cited Masrur’s presence in nineteenth-century district-listings, as had Shuttleworth, but added an important detail: “The senior draftsman now attached to my office, and to whom I am indebted for the excellent drawings which illustrate this article, was a member of the staff of the short-lived office of the first Archaeological Surveyor in the Punjab, and in 1887 assisted in the preparation of certain sketches of details of the temple. Of these drawings only two sheets have been preserved and were made over by the Public Works Depart-
doorways, and ornament. The perfect symmetry of the design, all centering in the one supreme spire, immediately over the small main cella, which together form the vimāna [temple], can only be realized after a careful examination of each part in relation to the other.\textsuperscript{50}

**Restoring the Roof Plan**

We are particularly lucky to have the carefully measured drawings of Hargreaves's draftsman. Of the three, only the ground plan has often been reprinted (see Figure 6). Of uncommon interest, however, is his roof plan (see Figure 7), sketching the surviving remnants of existing spires, which can actually be superimposed on the plan itself. With these restored and with the four spires to the east added (Figure 8), Shuttleworth's "perfect symmetry of the design" becomes somewhat more obvious.

Hargreaves, on the other hand, wrote of a "defect of . . . design" caused by the "marked difference between the height of the main pinnacle and the śikharas of the sur-
rounding shrines,” which he felt the architect had seen and rectified by placing two sikharas flanking the central spire on the roof (nos. 10, 11 in Figure 8). These, however, as Hargreaves observed, “are, from their position, incapable of marking any shrine whose cella could be indicated below.”

Hargreaves starts his description with the central sikharā, then in a somewhat meandering fashion follows the ordering I have numbered in my restoration of his roof plan (see Figure 8). His enumeration of these spires notably lacks the sense of architectural composition and grouping found in Shuttleworth’s index. To his description of these “thirteen shrines and two staircases” Hargreaves adds the two free-standing “cruciform monolithic” shrines (Figure 9) with “sixteen-sided polygon” spires set in the eastern court, to the right and left of the portico of the central sanctum’s mandapa, making a total of fifteen shrines. The four rectangular gopura (gateway)-like structures (marked A–D in Figure 8), described a few pages later, he called “subsidiary” shrines.

Restoring the Ground Plan
The ceiling of the excavated sanctum has been fully carved with elegant lotus patterns, but its walls were left rough, unfinished, with their height (16 feet) greater than the square sanctum’s apparent width (13 feet) (see Figure 7). If I use Hargreaves’s ground plan as a measure of the mandapa and portico existing on the east, and these are then superimposed as extensions completing the large unfinished excavations from the north and south (see Figures 13, 16), it seems apparent that the architect intended to have entries from these three directions (see Figure 7).
Figure 8) whether or not these could ever have been fully realized. It is these entries that most clearly demonstrate cessation of work at the site, not only because of their yawning cavities, but on account of a matrix of blocked-out but unfinished pillars and partially carved bands of ornament.55

Only one antecedent for a three-entry, four-faced Śaiva shrine comes to mind—the remarkable cave temple at Jogeśvari near Bombay from the early fifth century, with its meandering corridors and entry halls leading to a four-faced linga sanctum (Figure 17).56 The cave at Jogeśvari, excavated into a low hill of rock, however, has no exterior massing and only the pathways from the east and west entries reach the surface. The temple at Masrur, however, like Jogeśvari, was conceived in part from a ferment of Śaiva thought that sought
Figure 9. Masrur, cruciform monolithic shine with sixteen-faced spire in court (no. 15 in Figure 8).

Figure 10. Masrur, central spire and complex from the northeast (no. 1 in Figure 8).

Figure 11. Masrur, rectangular barrel-vaulted "gateway" structure (A in Figure 8).

Figure 12. Masrur, rectangular, central, and "stairway" spires from the southeast (A, nos. 1, 2 in Figure 8).
Figure 13 Masrur, entry on the north, unfinished excavation (spires visible are nos. 5, 1, 11 in Figure 8)

Figure 14 Masrur, roof level, central wall-projection of spire 1

Figure 15 Masrur, roof level, southeast “corner” spire (no. 3 in Figure 8) with bālapaṭāra recess as part of its ornament (niches in recess to right)

Figure 16 Masrur, southwest “corner” shrine (no. 3 in Figure 8) as frame for an unfinished south entry
physical means to express the process of the divine coming into cosmic form.\(^5\) Ronald Inden has characterized the shift from surviving “Vedist” (sacrificial) to “Deist” (image worshiping) liturgies over this period as a discursive process of “augmentation,” utilized by both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava sects, that led to the substitution of temple rituals for those of sacrifice.\(^5\)

In my preliminary reconstruction of Masrur’s conceptual plan, the two \(\text{sikharas}\) that flank the central spire stand above the centers of \(\text{mandapas}\) on the north and south (see Figure 8). This might suggest that the temple was also meant to have had a fourth entrance, with \(\text{sikharas}\) over the existing east \(\text{mandapa}\) and on the west (Figure 18). In her study of the “hundred-and-one temples” listed in the important eight-century text, the \(\text{Viṣṇudharmottara}\) (\(\text{VDbP}\)), Stella Kramrisch identified one category—“whose \(\text{Maṇḍapas}\) are essentially part of their plan”—that seems particularly relevant to what we find at Masrur: “The temple (type called) Kailāsa heads the list. It has 5 \(\text{Śikharas}\), 4 \(\text{Maṇḍapas}\) and 4 doors. The \(\text{Maṇḍapa}\) being in the four directions, the entrances at the cardinal points, this cross-shaped temple would have one central \(\text{Śikha}\) and each \(\text{Maṇḍapa}\) would have a lesser \(\text{Śikha}\) of its own.”\(^5\) This is a crucial and definitive description of the temple we find at Masrur. The \(\text{VDbP}\), a vast conglomerate text compiled finally in Kashmir early in the eighth century, contains sections on painting and image-making as well as temple types, and much else that will take on further significance as my narrative continues.\(^6\)

Both Shuttleworth and Hargreaves acknowledged the possibility of a symmetrically planned, though now vastly damaged, west side to the temple. Hargreaves gave dimensions for the “intervening portion of the living rock” as “160 feet in length and not less than 105 feet in width,” noting that the “back of the monument is now destroyed, so that it

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**Figure 17** Jogeśvari (Bombay), Maharashtra, Śaiva cave-plan compared to Masrur’s ground plan restored with entry halls on north and south to complete the unfinished excavations.
Masrur, overlays restoring flanking spires on the east and west and suggesting a fourth entry hall on the west (compare Figure 8).

Figure 18 Masrur, overlays restoring flanking spires on the east and west and suggesting a fourth entry hall on the west (compare Figure 8)

is impossible to state with certainty its original width."61 Shuttleworth’s rough index plan (see Figure 6), on the other hand, had placed a solid line on the west, flanked by an outline of the two missing “stairway” spires, parallel to the eastern hall.62 Hargreaves wrote more ambiguously that “a similar arrangement of these secondary shrines [on the southeast] appears to have formed the back of the monument, so that the principal temple stood in the centre of eight smaller ones, the whole hewn in the base of a more or less rectangular mass of rock.”63 Neither, however, could explain the unfinished excavations to the north and south or dared to suggest multiple entries for the whole structure.

Shuttleworth did observe that all of the site’s Nāgara spires, excluding only the four rectangular “gateway” pyramids (see Figure 11), “are cruciform at their bases;”64 Hargreaves’s draftsman had also carefully recorded the base moldings then surviving on the west face (see x, y, z, in Figure 18), which can be compared to those on the east. On
Figure 19  Masrur, temple compound measured by an overlaying grid determined by the dimensions of the sanctum; below, an analysis of the central tower using an 8 x 8 proportioning grid compared to the plan of the cruciform shrine in the court (Figure 9)
the northwest face, these base moldings extended as far as the angle where a *maṇḍapa* would once have projected. I have been able to confirm some of his details at the site and to record remnants of wall ornament surviving on the west that can be matched to the better preserved east façade.65

Proportion, *Bālapaṇjara*, and Innovative Turned-Square Design

If such a four-faced plan is analyzed using the sanctum as the module, substantial correspondences can be seen with the developed plan of the complex (Figure 19).66 The central sanctum and its tower, which at the roof level is articulated as if with first-story walls (see Figure 14), can also be similarly analyzed. If the sanctum is divided into 4 x 4 = 16 squares,67 the corners of the tower above then approximate sixty-four squares and each central buttress projects by about two squares. Measurements of this damaged tower on the roof deviate somewhat, but when compared to the ground plans of Masrur's cruciform shrines and of the Śiva temple at Bajaura, their correspondences seem apparent (see Figures 4, 9, 19).68

Dating of the Masrur temple to the eighth century has on the whole followed the suggestions of Hargreaves and Shuttleworth, but with little further investigation.69 Its sculptural decoration strongly resembles that of the wood temple at Chatrari, usually dated to early in the eighth century, based on the epigraphy of bronze inscriptions from the time of Meruvarmaṇa, a local ruler.70 A crucial architectural element for my estimation of the temple's dating is the presence of a well-formed *bālapaṇjara* (the string of pillared pavilions in the recess to the right in Figure 15) in some of Masrur's *latina* *ṣīkharas*.71 This element is a critical and defining remnant of Nāgara formation of the seventh century, found at widespread sites from Mahua in Madhya Pradesh to Alampur in Andhra, that disappeared in middle India by late in the eighth century.72 While it may never be possible to determine the duration of excavation and carving at Masrur, I would suggest the second and third quarters of the eighth century, overlapping the reigns of both Yaśovarman (ca. 725–754) and Lalitāditya (ca. 724–760).73

The stairway *ṣīkharas* also are a critical indicator of both the architects' sophistication and their links to architectural experimentation in middle India (Figure 20). Based on four turned squares, these spires had eight *lātā* spines alternating with eight right-angled projections, a kind of rotating geometry that had appeared in middle India by the seventh century and was realized with great subtlety in the Śiva temple at Indor, Madhya Pradesh, in the mid-eighth.74 The two free-standing cruciform shrines with “polygon”75 spires at Masrur use the same geometry to locate sixteen spines (see Figure 9). Such faceted “circular” *ṣīkharas* remained rare, but became somewhat more prominent by the tenth century in central India, as at Chandrakuta,76 where they were in part associated with the spread of Śaivite Mattamayuṇa monks. The cruciform plan of the base, however, has a parallel in the stairway and “corner” shrines at Masrur, and in the four-faced Bāsēsara Mahādeva temple at Bajaura (see Figures 4, 19, 20).77

Temple-Mountains and Cambodia

To conclude my conceptual reconstruction of the architect's ambitious plan at Masrur, I would compare the symmetrically reconstituted four-faced plan I propose to that of what Helen Ibbitsen Jessup identifies as the “oldest known example of the temple mountain” found in Cambodia, the eighth-century brick structure of Prasat Ak Yum in Siem Reap (Figure 21).78 Jessup writes that the “royal temple-mountain, first created by the Khmer in the eighth century, and not known in India, was a highly visible means of worshipping adopted deities.”79 By contrast, Fiona Kerlogue asserts: “Fundamental to Hindu influence on art in Southeast Asia is the cosmological conception of the universe with Mount Meru, the abode of the gods, at its centre.”80 These symmetrical four-faced structures, with multiple surrounding spires, developed in complexity and with great creativity over four centuries, and had their most famous and evolved expression in the twelfth century at Angkor Wat.81

That the mountain temple at Masrur was also conceived as a “temple-mountain,” however, is a matter supported as much by myth and poetry as by its material form. Temples in India were thought of as being like a mountain, even before they looked like one.82 Śiva's home was Kailāśa—both a mountain and palace. His wife’s father was an incarnation of the Himalayas. Mount Meru was at the center of India’s early cosmology; and in the symbology of temples palace, mountain, and cosmos were perpetually entwined.83 “If he follows his priest's advice,” according to the *Mahābhārata*, “a king may aspire to win all of Merū-crowned, sea-girt earth.”84 If the Śiva temple at Bajaura architecturally simulates a mountain (see Figure 4), the organization of Śiva’s multiple faces on the sides of the temple’s tower (*ṣīkara*) makes its mountain-body the embodiment of the deity’s cosmic form.85

To the east of the temple at Masrur, a large rectangular tank, 85 by 155 feet, spans the breadth of the compound. Shuttleworth reported this was “hollowed out of the rock,” which might support the probability that such a tank was part of the temple’s original conception. Hargreaves
Figure 20 Masrur, analysis of the turning-square geometry of the "stairway" spires and spires of the cruciform subshrines in the court (nos. 2, 15 in Figure 8), and comparisons with plans from Bajaura (Figure 4), Indor, and Chandrehi (labeled "Candrehe" here)
Figure 21 Masrur, ground plan; overlays to suggest the conceptual cruciform plan for the Masrur complex, compared to the plan of the eighth-century "temple mountain" of Prasat Ak Kum, Siem Reap, Cambodia
recorded that “although perched almost on the hill top and apparently fed from an exceedingly small catchment area, it is reputed to contain water even in the driest seasons.”86 In telling the story of Indra, Lord of Heaven, clipping the wings of the flying mountains to make them settle to earth (one of the most remarkable tropes for the role of kingship in the Gāṇḍavahā),87 Vākpatīrāja wrote:

147. One would imagine that it was not the mountain that [entered] the ocean, but the ocean itself entered the mountain in impetuous haste, flooding in to roll [inside] its valleys and caves, as huge as the interior of the nether world;

156. The earth disintegrated, the circle of mountains smashed and the seas pushed far back, the three worlds were [thus] brought to universal Destruction, as it were, by Indra, longing for peace and stability;

235. “The great Indra even, who had clipped the wing-rows of these mountains . . . nodded his head in admiration at the thought of this King [going on his expedition].”

Masrur’s temple-tank embodies the relationship of water to the temple’s range of towers (see Figure 5). Varāhamihira’s seminal sixth-century text, the Bhūtab-Saṃhitā—“on the forward cusp of a new, even ‘modern,’ architecture meant to shelter newly manifest images”—provides a very short chapter with a “brief description of various temples.”88 This begins, as if referring to the location of Masrur: “Having made great water reservoirs and laid out gardens, let one build a temple, to heighten one’s reputation and merit . . . . The Gods used to haunt those spots which by nature or artifice are furnished with water and pleasure-gardens.”89

Mountains are not singular, but exist in ranges. It is in part to recognize this concept that Masrur’s ridge was cut to allow lateral prolongation of the central square (see Figures 1, 5, 6). The Mahābhārata described an arena circled by “high-rising pavilions that seemed to scratch the sky like the peaks of Kailāsa.”90 The Bhāgavata Purāṇa represented Mount Kailāsa as “inhabited by gods. . . . Its summits are made up of various kinds of gems.”91 I might even speculate that the “crown” held by flying celestial figures over niches and doorways at Masrur (Figure 22) and elsewhere in Himachal (a “tiara type” described by Subhashini Aryan as “high pinnacles elaborately ornamented with jewels and strings of beads”) is a “crown of mountains,” a symbol of the “Merū-crowned, sea-girt earth” of conquering kings.92

The “mythical geography” of this “terrestrial globe” is well described in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa: “I am now desirous to know all about the dimensions and characteristics of those continents, in detail. For the mind, when concentrated on the Lord’s gross form—the physical universe . . . becomes capable of entering into and transfixing on the attributeless, subtle-most, self-refulgent, transcendent Brahman.”93 If I may paraphrase and abbreviate some of G. F. Tagare’s translation: “In this island continent in which we live (Jambūdvīpa) . . . there are nine continents . . . clearly separated from each other, by eight mountain ranges.” At the center of the inner continent “stands the all-gold mount Merū, the king of all the mountains.” On the summit of Merū, at its center, is “the city of gold,” god’s capital, square, surrounded by “eight cities of the guardian deities.”94 “Some people describe eight minor sub-continents attached to Jambūdvīpa. They are said to have been made by the sons of Sagara who excavated the earth on all sides.”95

There is a logic to these shared mythical landscapes that anyone who has seen the high-mountain snow-range of the “Kinner Kailāsa” from Kalpa, or the spires of Masrur’s mountain-made “golden city,” can recognize. The temple at Masrur was a remarkable attempt by an architect to make the cosmos and its transcendence—as well as the divine world and political potency on earth—material.96

Masrur’s Kailāsa Crown

I have tried to demonstrate that the Masrur complex was intended to be quadriform. If so, I may also expand Har-geaves’s draftsman’s partial section (see Figure 7) to suggest the temple’s cross-sectional elevation (Figure 23). The sanctum, broadened by the presence of four entry porticoes (see Figure 18), is crowned by the central śikhara. Set above four halls in cardinal directions, four flanking śikharas would

Figure 22 Masrur, southeast “gateway-shrine” door frame (see Figure 11), central flying figures holding up a crown of spires.

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have made of Masrur an exemplar of the VDbP’s Kailāsa temple-type: “This cross-shaped temple would have one central Śikhara and each Maṇḍapa would have a lesser Śikhara of its own” (Figure 24).97

The four cruciform stairway-towers combine with these cardinal śikharas to make a (rotating) ring of eight pinnacles around Masrur’s central peak, set much like the “eight cities of the guardian deities.”98 Paired cruciform spires flanking the four cardinal entryways formed a second range of eight towers. These, however, vary along the two axes. The “corner” shrines to the north and south stand further from the sanctum, the porticoes between flanked by four rectangular “gateway” spires (see Figure 9, A–D). Smaller dvi-anga (square with one offset) towers flanked east and west entrances.99 The four cruciform free-standing shrines in the courts were aligned with these eight entry spires (see Figure 21b), restoring the compound—through what I might call symmetrical asymmetry—to a rectilinear plan.

This varied, complex, and beautifully suggestive plan—the crown of Kailāsa at the center, ringed like Mount Merū by the forms of “the physical universe” inhabited by a pantheon of Hindu deities (Figure 25)—far exceeds for its time the tentative contemporaneous explorations of a mountain-temple type found in Cambodia, such as the temple of Prasat Ak Yum (see Figure 21). Of king Yaśovarman, Vākpatirāja wrote: “You have so ascended on top of the world, elbowing out [others] on all sides, that only the crown [on your head] looms [over all] like a dome.”100
Kashmir and Copycat Cosmographies

One eighth-century text already cited above, the VDbP, can help further to provide a contextual frame for the temple at Masrur. Inden has described this vast compilation of texts with a Vaiṣṇava agenda as "both articulative of and articulated by its historical circumstances." He goes on, "We can see the VDbP as a series of textual wholes, as a 'scale of texts' that have been articulated by its complex author acting as a reader or user of other texts." Inden has interpreted the VDbP as an attempt to construct a Vaiṣṇava kingdom in Kashmir, from the hands of a Pāñcarātra preceptor.

Perhaps most relevant to the study of Masrur is one section of the VDbP described by Kramrisch as "a genealogical survey of the shapes of the temples at the time of its composition, after the seventh century, at an age when the fully compacted Hindu temple [the Nāgara temple] emerged." These included the Buddhist stūpa (Aīdvāka), Kashmiri pent-roof (Himavān) (see Figure 3), middle-Indian Nāgara (see Figure 4), valabbi (see Figure 11), and many other forms. Inden, in his analysis of the political implications of the text, chose to focus his attention primarily on the Vaiṣṇava Sarvatobhadra temple, the 101st temple of the VDbP's list—"auspiciously open on all sides... the massive shrine housing the four-faced image of Viṣṇu"—and on its political component: "This is the summa of all temples, the temple that the [Vaiṣṇava] Pāñcarātra king of kings is supposed to build after his conquest of the earth."

Inden acknowledged that no Nāgara type of temple was built in Kashmir, and few "Himavān" Kashmiri-related structures beyond the Himalayas: "The style that the VDbP recognized as emblematic of a claim to universal rule was the style associated with the Gangetic plains, and especially the Middle Region. . . Squaring the Kashmiri style with the universal style of northern India [Nāgara] was not the only problem Lalitādiya and his Pāñcarātra preceptor had to confront in their drive to constitute a Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇava kingship as the paramount kingship of India." Yet the typology of the Sarvatobhadra temple-type is not specifically Vaiṣṇava, nor dedicated to a single sect. It
rather is one expression of the VDbPs eighth group of temple-types, of which, according to Kramrisch, “Kailâsa heads the list.” “The [four-faced] temple Sarvatobhadra of the Viṣṇudharmottara [VDbP] is the foremost of its ‘Maṅḍapata-temples.’” But as Kramrisch warned in 1946, never in her very wide experience of Hindu temples having seen one that fit the description: “Where in reality the Sarvatobhadra of the ‘Viṣṇudharmottara’ was built and when, cannot be said as yet.”

This was certainly true until the “Kailâsa” temple found at Masrur could better be understood. By focusing his attention on the specific story of the VDbP—on its authors, patrons, and Vaiṣṇava Pâñcarâtra frame in early eighth-century Kashmir—Inden misses in part the text’s paradigmatic core. The issue with such a temple—Sarvatobhadra or Kailâsa—is more one of kingship than of sect. A king in India, at least from the time of the law books of Manu (ca. 500 B.C.E., compiled ca. 1st–2nd century C.E.), had been described in cosmological terms as created “out of particles of the eight Regents of the Quarters, so as to make him a superman.” Such a depiction of Indian kingship is not sectarian, but emphasizes the symmetry and centrality of kingship itself. More cogent than a temple’s cultic dedication is the geography it creates for kings. The VDbP’s version of a Sarvatobhadra temple is a Pâñcarâtra (Vaiṣṇava) response and analogue to Śiva’s palace on Mt. Kailâsa.

Inden placed great emphasis on his text’s construction of a Vaiṣṇava kingdom, but even he acknowledged that Kashmir was ruled by Vaiṣṇava kings for only a brief period: “Kashmir’s day in the sun lasted for perhaps twenty-five years. Kashmir continued to be an imperial kingdom, but under a new dynasty it opted for a Śaiva order as the preeminent form of Theism.” Of greater import is his recognition that the consequence of this text in Kashmir was “an imperial formation . . . in which the Theism of the Pâñcarâtras and Pâśupatas [both Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas], with its liturgy of images and temples . . . would be institutionalized as hegemonic” in the definition of kingship. Inden himself thus acknowledges a common effort to assert image-worship as the dominant form of temple liturgy, equally applicable to king Yaśovarman as to Kashmir’s king Lalitādiya.

A description of Indian kingship—more germane than the priest’s or preceptor’s sectarian point of view in the VDbP—that can be applied to the world created by Masur for its royal patrons is a statement paraphrased from a tenth-century source that “exalts the king to the level of the three Highest Deities of the Brahmanical pantheon”:

The king . . . becomes Brahmā in his childhood when as a student he resides in his preceptor’s household and studies the sciences; he becomes Viṣṇu when after attaining sovereignty and receiving the ceremonial initiation at his consecration he attracts the love of his subjects by his qualities; and he becomes Śiva when with increased strength and with the possession of the highest authority he sets about extirpating thorns of State and becomes a conqueror. . . . When the king justly protects his subjects, all quarters fulfill the desires of people, the rains fall on time, and all beings live in peace.

From the time of Yaśovarman in the third century B.C.E., through a variety of kingly lineages that claimed the status of world-ruler (cakravartin), kings have been patrons of multiple sects, peoples, directions, and regions. While each might choose a personal deity, their role as ruler was to order the universe, not to create a sectarian kingdom.

In my view, the most plausible patrons for Masur’s temple construction were Yaśovarman, his successors, and feudatories. For me to find firm evidence for Yaśovarman’s conquest of the hills in forms of temple building, or to associate a Śaiva structure with what the VDbP calls the supreme Pâñcarâtra type, may seem to contradict conventional views of eighth-century Kashmir, where Lalitādiya’s wide hegemony is assumed. Yet in the broader cosmology of Indian kingship, it mattered less which king—or which divinity—was there than that the mountain crown be put in place.

Notes

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Prof. Deborah Klimburg-Salter of the University of Vienna and I co-organized parallel seminars on art in Himachal Pradesh and the Northwest in spring 2004 in anticipation of a joint collaborative study-tour for students from the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Vienna, ably led by Verena Widorn. The Program for International Relations, University of Vienna, supported Prof. Klimburg-Salter’s travel.

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1. Punjab District Gazetteers, vol. 7, pt. A, Kangra District 1924–25 (Lahore, 1926), 35, cites a Punjab government document no. 619 dated 27 April 1905 that describes a major earthquake in that year: “The sensation experienced shortly after 6 A.M. on the 4th April appears . . . to have been a preliminary tremor of brief duration followed immediately by first a violent counter-shock from north to south then an equally violent counter-shock in the opposite direction, and finally a third shock like a downsinking.”

2. H. Hargreaves, “The Monolithic Temples of Masur,” Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1915–16 (Calcutta, 1918), 39–48. The temple at Masur is at an altitude of ca. 2,500 feet. Because the site had not been doc-

3. The concept of a *sakratarin* or world-king goes back at least to the Mauryan empire and King Asoka in the 3rd century B.C.E.; this trope of kingship requires the king—at least symbolically—to rule over the four quarters (and eight directions) of the universe.


8. “European scholars searched for histories of India but could find none that conformed to the familiar European view of what a history should be . . . . The only exception according to them was the twelfth-century history of Kashmir.” Romila Thapar, *Early India From the Origins to AD 1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2002), 1.


11. “After a successful campaign against the Tibetans in conjunction with Yaśovarman of Kanauj, [Lalitāditya] renewed his dynasty’s relationship (733) with the Tāng emperor.” Inden, “Imperial Purāṇas,” 82.

12. “Kalhaṇa depicts Lalitāditya as taking command of [Kanauj] (which, with the historian’s hindsight, he probably made more important than it was).” Inden, “Imperial Purāṇas,” 85.


14. “Thus is (he) who is praised for merits, which are facts (bhūattā) by bards and great poets.” Vākpatirāja, *Gaūḍavata*, verse 253.


17. It is interesting to note S. P. Pandit’s hesitation in the introduction to his early edition of *The Gaūḍavata: A Historical Poem in Prakrit by Vākpati*, Bombay Sanskrit Series 34 (Bombay, 1887), xcvi–c, cited in Vākpatirāja, *Gaūḍavata*, lxxiii. Suru, the editor, remarks that “Yaśovarman must have slain the Gaudān king, long before he was himself deprived of his throne by Lalitāditya, which event must have occurred, if it did occur, in the very early part of the 8th century.”


19. Inden attributed to “Lalitāditya and his Pāṇcārātra preceptor” a goal “to constitute a Pāṇcārātra Vaisnavia kingship as the paramount kingship of India.” Inden, “Imperial Purāṇas,” 87.

20. Kalhaṇa reported that Yaśovarman “had been served by Vākpati[rāja] and the illustrious Bhavabhūti” and may well have had access to the *Gaūḍavata*. Kalhaṇa, *Rājatarangini*, vol. 4, 144.

21. Vākpatirāja, *Gaūḍavata*, verse 511. It is worth pointing out that in this respect Vākpatirāja might seem to contradict Goetz’s fanciful reconstruction of the direction of Lalitāditya’s campaign to the south and east. Kalhaṇa, however, claimed that Lalitāditya—before undertaking his campaign—“tore [king Yaśovarman] up from the root.” Kalhaṇa, *Rājatarangini*, vol. 4, 140.


23. Ibid., verse 658; conquering the four directions was a repeated trope for Indian kingship; Vākpatirāja’s close observation of the northern regions was not.


25. Perhaps the major imperial mission, for both Yaśovarman and Lalitāditya, in this maze of Himalayan valleys was to contain the growing influence of Tibet (see n. 11).


30. “The Kashmiri style of temple building . . . was not only distinct from other styles, it was apparently one that even the [Viśnuḥarmottara Purāṇa] recognized as national.” Inden, “Imperial Purāṇas,” 86.

31. These temples were built at sites such as Jagesvara and Narayanakoti.

32. Krishna Deva notes that the simply layered curvilinear structures in the Himalayas “are crowned by āmalāśaraka [ribbed stone] . . . never by ghāṭā [bell]” and are curvilinear and not shallow pyramids. “As such, they seem more clearly associated with Nāgara formulas than . . . pent-roof pāṭhasañā structures,” but he chose to “continue to use the term Pāṭhasañā for both

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34. Coomaraswamy cited "temples apparently of the ninth century" at Bajnath (History, 107) (see n. 2). Thakur summarizes the complicated historiography of the inscription's early dating and then re-dating from 804 to 1204 C.E. (Architectural Heritage, 78) (see n. 5).

35. India has a long tradition of rock-cut caves and temples, but only those at Masrur in Himachal and Dhamnán in Malwa are Nágara. See EITA 2, no. 2, 116–18, 311–14. Perhaps the most fabulous rock-cut complex in India, the Kailása temple at Ellora, in a South Indian style, architecturally takes the form of Siva's palace with clustered shrines. See EITA 1, no. 2, South India, Upper Dravidadictions, Early Phase, ed. Michael W. Meister and M. A. Dhaky (Philadelphia, 1986), 111–24; Carmel Berkson, Ellora: Concept and Style (New Delhi, 1992).


38. H. L. Shuttleworth, "Note on the Rock-Hewn Vaishnava Temple at Masur, Dera Thesil, Kangra District, Panjab," The Indian Antiquary 44 (1915), 19–23. He does acknowledge that "brief allusions are made to it in the lists of...archaeological Monuments in the Panjab, published in 1875 and 1889," and that "native subordinates of the Archaeological Department have seen it on two occasions." The British Library catalogues the 1891 list as published in 1895, with the note "date of publication taken from entry in old printed IOL catalogue": Charles J. Rodgers, Revised List of Objects of Archaeological Interest in the Punjab, compiled from returns sent in by deputy commissioners of districts, from old lists of the Public Works Department and from reports of the Archaeological Survey (Lahore, 1895). The title page of the British Library's copy shows no printed date, but is hand-inscribed "Jan 12, 1905" and stamped "W. D. Secretariat Library Punjab." Shuttleworth does not acknowledge Shuttleworth, writing that the Masrur temple "was inspected in 1912 by the Assistant Surveyor [perhaps an Indian] and by myself in October 1913." Hargreaves, "Monolithic Temples," 40 (see n. 2). The description of the site given in Rodgers, Revised List, 1895, makes clear, however, that someone quite observant had already surveyed the monument (45).

40. There are multiple sects that worship Śiva and Vīṣṇu. The Vaiśnava Pañcarātrins, Śaiva Pāsūpants, and Mattamānyūras are perhaps most directly relevant to the present discussion. The sanctum's overdoor at Masrur has a central Śiva; his sons Gaṇeṣa and Skanda to each end; two goddesses; and the four Lokāpalas (guards of the quarters).

41. "The group comprises several temples....The number of shrines is thought to be seven, nine, and fifteen....In my opinion there are more than fifteen temples in all." Aryan, Himadri Temples, 46 (see n. 5).

42. Hargreaves cites Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Punjab and Its Dependencies (Lahore, 1875), 6, and a passage from Rodgers, Revised List, 41: "The ridge of the hill has been cut through in two places and the intervening ridge has been cut into nine temples. Only one [sanctum] was excavated but nine towers were cut out and sculptured on the outside." Hargreaves, "Monolithic Temples," 40.

43. Hargreaves also wrote that Masrur "was inspected in 1912 by the Assistant Surveyor"—possibly this same draftsman—before either he or Shuttleworth had visited the site, "and by myself in 1913, when plans and photographs were obtained." Hargreaves, "Monolithic Temples," 40.

44. This draftsman's experience at the site in the nineteenth century was important for his preparation of these drawings for publication, particularly in view of further destruction caused by a major earthquake in 1905. The wide devastation is described in Punjab District Gazetteers, Kangra District 1924–25 (see n. 1): "The area in which the shock was felt most severely was the portion of the Kāṅgāra valley lying between the Beás River on the south and the Dhaulā Dār mountain range on the north," precisely the location of Masrur (35).

45. Thakur reproduced Shuttleworth's drawing but changed his numbering "for the sake of convenience." Thakur, Architectural Heritage, 41 (see n. 5).

46. "Access to the flat roof from the court is or was given by two staircases, inside two small spires, flanking the doorway of the cela (plan, nos. 5 and 6). Probably, to judge from some fallen fragments, there were two counter-balancing spires on the other side of the temple (plan, nos. 14 and 15)." Shuttleworth, "Note," 21, 23. Shuttleworth's index drawing indicates nos. 14 and 15 symmetrical with 5 and 6 on the west, and a space between which is analogous to the mandapa on the east.

47. Hargreaves described these stairway spires as "star-shaped in plan" and concluded that "when complete, [they] must, like that of the cruciform temple, have resembled more nearly the pointed spires of Europe rather than the Indian sīkbara." Hargreaves, "Monolithic Temples," 46.


49. Shuttleworth takes no note of these. Hargreaves shows these two unfinished excavations clearly in his draftsman's ground plan, but his text reduces them to "a verandah of noble proportions" that "joined each pair" of "tower" shrines. Hargreaves, "Monolithic Temples," 45.

50. Shuttleworth, "Note," 20; Shuttleworth's "small" sanctum is actually ca. 13 square feet, small only in relation to the mass of the whole structure.

51. Hargreaves, "Monolithic Temples," 42, 44. No other sanctum has been excavated, save the one at the center.

52. Ibid., 42. Hargreaves seems not to have noticed that the two stairway spires (and two more on the west face) had already been included among his "thirteen shrines." Of these stairways, he wrote that "on either side of the mandapa rose a sīkbara which did not, however, mark the sanctum of a shrine but masked the stairs leading to the level of the flat roof."

53. Ibid., 42, 45.

54. Hargreaves wrote of these rectangular structures "the spire is suggestive of a Dravidian gopura [south Indian gateway]." Ibid., 45. He provided more pertinent references to examples at Sarnath in the Gangetic valley and Jagnerwa in Uttarakhand Pradesh. "Valabhi" (barrel-vaulted or ridge-roofed) structures of this sort are also described in the Vīṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa; see Stella Kramrisch, "The Hundred-and-one Temples of the Vīṣṇudharmottara," in Kramrisch, Hindu Temple, 411–26 (see n. 2).

55. Hargreaves provides some evidence that masonry was used to patch flaws in the sandstone in some places, but the nature of the cessation of ornament suggests abandonment of patronage at an overly ambitious site rather than a structural catastrophe. Hargreaves, "Monolithic Temples," 42–43.

56. This exceptional cave-temple has been analyzed and dated by Walter Spink in his "Jogeswari: A Brief Analysis," The Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Dr. Moti Chandra Commemoration Volume, special no. (1978), 1–35. See also K. R. Srinivasan, "Jogeswari," in Architectural Remains Mon-
ument and Museums, pt. 1 (New Delhi, 1964), 137–38. It should be said, however, that all Nāgarā temples implicitly are quadriform, with a functional entrance along the axis of entry, with three others as blind doors or niches on cardinal faces; Michael W. Meister, “The Hindu Temple: Access and Access,” in Kapila Vatsyayan, ed., Concepts of Space, Ancient and Modern (New Delhi, 1991), 269–80.


58. Pāśupata and Pāścarātra belong together in the sense that both were sciences advocating theism . . . Śiva was the author of Pāśupata. The Pāścarātrapras of the VDeP considered Śiva to be a manifestation of Viṣṇu. Inden, “Imperial Purāṇas,” 46 (see n. 9). “Procedures for temple construction and image installation replace those for the performance of multiform sacrifices.” Ibid., 53. “The earliest versions of these texts must, thus, be placed in the sixth to eighth centuries, and probably later rather than earlier, when brick and stone temples of a scale and complexity required by the Āgamic liturgy were first built.” Ibid., 54.


60. Priyabala Shah, ed., Viṣṇudhvārmatattaparāṇi, Third Khand, Gaekward’s Oriental Series, vols. 130, 137 (Baroda, 1958, 1961); Priyabala Shah, PAURANIC RITUALISM OF THE FIFTH CENTURY (Sri Viṣṇudhvārmatattaparāṇi) (Calcutta, 1993), and Viṣṇudhvārmatattaparāṇa: Purānic Legends and Rebirths (Delhi, 1999); and Inden, “Imperial Purāṇas,” who is especially interested in the mechanisms used by Vaiṣṇava priests who introduced this text as a means to advance Pāścarātra interest in the Kashmir court.

61. Hargreaves, “Monolithic Temples,” 39. See also Rodgers, Revised List, 41 (see n. 38): “It is in the possession of attendants who cannot, however, preserve the temples from the effects of the weather, by which the southern and exposed portions of the pile have been entirely destroyed.”

62. Shuttleworth annotated his plan: “Broken lines indicate parts of the temple that have disappeared.” Shuttleworth, “Note,” 21 (see n. 38).

63. Hargreaves, “Monolithic Temples,” 42; Hargreaves’s “eight smaller” towers around the central tower, however, were the four “corners,” two “stairways,” and two flanking spires shown in his roof plan.

64. Shuttleworth, “Notes,” 23.

65. The base moldings on the southwest have been covered by new masonry as part of recent conservation; but patches of decoration from the west wall survive and the configuration of the plan Hargreaves’s draftsman recorded on the northwest can be corroborated from fragments at the site.


68. Thakur provides a useful 8 x 8 = 64 grid analysis of the Bāśēśāra Mahādeva temple, Bajaura. Thakur, Architectural Heritage, 141 (see n. 5).


70. See Goetz, Early Wooden Temples (see n. 26). “This temple shares numerous motifs with these wooden shrines.” Aryan, Himadri Temples, 50.


72. See Meister, “Prāṣāda as Palace” (see n. 4).

73. Yasovarman must have been the sponsor of the very large Teli temple built in Gwalior fort in the first half of the eighth century. EITA 2, no. 2, 15–17. See also Krishna Deva, “Teli-kā-Mandir, Gwalior,” in Frederick M. Asher and G. S. Gai, eds., Indian Epigraphy, Its Bearing on the History of Art (New Delhi, 1985), 161–64. On Yasovarman’s immediate successor, see Michael W. Meister, “Āma, Āmril, and Jainism in Gwalior Fort,” Journal of the Oriental Institute 22, no. 3 (1972), 354–58.


77. Deva, “Hill Dynasties,” 114–16 (see n. 77). “It is quite clear that these temples were built in a time when Śaivism received a great impetus in northern India.” Thakur, Architectural Heritage, 53 (see n. 5).

78. Jessup, Art and Architecture, 61 (see n. 37).


80. Fiona Kerlogue, Arts of Southeast Asia (London, 2004), 70.


82. Kramrisch, “The Image of ‘The Mountain and the Cavern,’” in Hindu Temple, 161–76 (see n. 2). An eighth-century inscription on the base of a brass Nandi image in Bhatmorr describes a temple built by Merūvarman in terms that suggest wooden chambers, but uses the powerful simile, “unto Mount Merū in the top of the Himavant,” Vogel, Antiquities, 144 (see n. 29), quoted in Aryan, Himadri Temples, 112 (see n. 5), where the author added “in our opinion, this description fits the earlier [wooden] temple style.” An inscription of ca. 423 C.E. refers to a king, Viśvarman, “who surpassed (the mountain) Merū in firmness,” and to his son who had a Vaiṣṇava shrine built at Gangdhar in eastern Rajasthan “resembling the lofty peak (of the mountain) Kaḷāsā.” John Faithfull Fleet, Inscriptions of the Gupta Kings, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol. 3 (Calcutta, 1888), “Texts and Translations,” 77–78. This comes at a time when stone temples were still small cubical structures, but the scribe still felt it necessary to remark that the sun, seeing its lustrous spire, “reins in his chariot-horses [and] runs away in fear.” Ibid., 78.

83. Michael W. Meister, “Symbology and Architectural Practice in India,” in Emily Lyle, ed., Sacred Architecture in the Traditions of India, China,
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Figure 6 (top). Shuttleworth, “Note,” 23
Figure 6 (bottom). Hargreaves, “Monolithic Temples,” pl. 28
Figure 7. Hargreaves, “Monolithic Temples,” pls. 29, 30
Figures 8, 17 (bottom), 18, 19, 20 (top row; middle row; bottom row left),
21 (top; bottom left), 23, 24. Based on Figures 6, 7, edited and with
overlays by the author
Figure 17 (top). Spink, “Jogeswari,” fig. C
Figure 20 (bottom center). EITA 2, no. 2, North India: Period of Early
Maturity, 1991, fig. 57
Figure 20 (bottom right). EITA 2, no. 3, North India: Beginnings of
Medieval Idiom, 1998, fig. 9
Figure 21 (bottom right). Jessup, Art and Architecture, fig. 59 (after Bruno
Buguiuer, Le Pratit Ak Yum, État des connaissances, Recherches nouvelles
sur le Cambodge [Paris, 1994]).