The Digambara Jainas of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka since the Late 19th Century:

Towards the Establishment of Collective Religious

Identity and a Digambara Jaina Community

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PREFACE

This thesis owes its existence, as well as its inspiration, to the interdisciplinary research project *Jainism in Karnataka: History, Architecture and Religion*. As a research assistant in the DFG (German Research Council)-funded Emmy Noether research group, I was given the opportunity to experience Digambara Jainism as a living tradition in various areas of Karnataka and South Maharashtra. I am greatly indebted to the DFG for their generous financial support. Furthermore, I would like to thank Julia A.B. Hegewald, head of the research project and supervisor of this thesis, for her guidance, support and patience. I would also like to express my gratitude to the other members of the project, especially the post-doctoral research associate Pius Pinto, who has been very helpful in the organisation of my field research, and the student helper Julia Lauer, who was a great travelling companion. Furthermore, I want to thank John Zavos, my second supervisor, for his valuable advice and his patience.

This research would not have been possible without the great support provided to me by local Jaina lay men and women. Since my first arrival at Gulbarga, North Karnataka, I have been introduced into a very helpful social network of Jainas at various villages and towns of Karnataka and the neighbouring area of Maharashtra, who willingly showed me around Jaina temples and sites, answered my questions, and allowed me to witness actual Jaina practices at their homes, in temples or at festivals. I also wish to thank the Jaina ascetics, mainly Digambaras but also some Śvetāmbaras, who patiently answered my questions and allowed me to observe their daily practice. Although my research has been focused on Digambaras, I also had the opportunity to meet and discuss with lay Śvetāmbaras, Hindus and Muslims, who have been very helpful.

I am especially grateful to Manish Modi and Bal Patil at Mumbai who discussed various aspects of Digambara identity with me, as well as to Sujata Sastri at Solapur who introduced me to various Indian scholars and who was a great host.

ABSTRACT

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The Digambara Jainas of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka since the Late 19th Century: Towards the Establishment of Collective Religious Identity and a Digambara Jaina Community

This thesis aims at locating the position of the Jainas within the Indian religious landscape. From the second half of the 19th century onwards, novel concepts of collective religious identities and the formation of exclusive communities among religious lines have led to the establishment of the popular image of India's religious landscape as consisting of a Hindu majority and several religious minorities. This model is based on exclusive, often antagonistic religious categories. However, by discussing the position of the Jainas within the framework of India's religious pluralism, the present thesis attempts to question this popular concept.

As will be argued, similar to members of other religious traditions, among Jainas too the identity discourse of the intellectual elite has introduced broader supra-locally, supra-caste-based concepts of community. However, this process of collective identity and community formation has not been based on, in Harjot Oberoi's terms, the "construction of religious boundaries" (1994) between Jainas and Hindus. These `blurred boundaries´ between Hindus and Jainas in the modern Jaina identity discourse defy a concrete positioning of the Jainas within the framework of India's religious landscape.

This thesis will begin with the analysis of the late 19th and early 20th century Jaina discourse of Western orientalists and intellectual Jainas, and its impact on the `definition´ of `Jaina values´ and the Jainas as a `community´. Mainly focusing on the regional sub-group of the Digambara Jainas of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, the research will also discuss the impact of non-middle-class `agents´ in the process of community building among Jainas. In this respect it will be argued that lay-ascetic interaction and the performance of distinct rituals and festivals largely contribute to the establishment of community among Digambara Jainas. The strict practice of Digambara ascetics also adds the element of asceticism to the `Jaina values´, which have been propagated by intellectual lay Jaina individuals and organisations from the early 20th century onwards. These propagated `Jaina values´, most prominently among them *ahiṃsā* and tolerance, make Jainism the most suitable religion for modern times, and symbolise ancient Indian `values´ in their `purest form´.

However, regarding the Jainas as a `community´, this Jaina discourse has remained rather vague and abstract. This vagueness finds its most concrete expression in the still undecided legal status of the Jainas regarding their inclusion among the nationwide religious minorities.

In comparison to other Indian religious minority traditions, the Sikhs and Buddhists in particular, the `Jaina case´ suggests a complexity of collective religious identifications in the Indian religious landscape, which defies any fixed model.

1. INTRODUCTION

> Clearly, then, the question of whether the Jains are a Hindu sect has been in many eyes a controversial one and, indeed, differences in the articulation of their identity can be found amongst the Jains themselves throughout India today. Thus, a northern Digambara might be happy to describe himself as a Hindu in that he might accept the term could have an encompassing sense, whereas Shvetambaras in Gujarat and Digambaras in Karnataka would be unlikely to call themselves anything other than Jain and would be more insistent on the exclusivity of their religion. Again, in Rajasthan, while many Jain merchants might often subsume their identity as Jains within the broader and, depending on context, more meaningful category of *mahajan*, the name of the merchant caste to which both Jains and Hindus can belong, others might be more conscious of their exclusive identity as Jains (Dundas 1992: 5).

Paul Dundas's statement, taken from his important study *The Jains* (1992), addresses the fluid, changeable and ambiguous character of religious and cultural identity, held by Jainas of different local and sectarian backgrounds. This thesis will take up the very question of the conception of a collective identity among a regional sub-group of Jainas, the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, in its historical development since the late 19th century.

With the emergence of new conceptualisations of collective religious identity and the establishment of `community´ along religious lines from the latter half of the 19th century onwards, the modern popular image of the Indian religious landscape is commonly conceived as consisting of a Hindu majority and several religious minorities. This popular model is based on mainly exclusive, often antagonistic religious categories, which find their expression not only in concepts of a Hindu-Muslim dichotomy, but also in the post-Independence history of communal conflicts, mainly between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians.

The present thesis aims at questioning the validity of this model, by analysing developments among the Jainas, a religious group whose `position´ within the Indian religious landscape has not been the focus of any comprehensive academic research yet. As will be argued in the following chapters, among Jainas too the identity discourse from the late 19$^{th}$ century onwards has led to a wider `shift´

towards supra-caste, supra-locally-based concepts of community and collective religious identity. This wider `shift´ did not `replace´ other forms of collective identities along sectarian, caste and regional lines. However, as will be argued in this thesis, broader concepts of community and collective identity have developed into a powerful intellectual concept. In this respect, like `Hindu´ or `Sikh´ the term `Jaina´ similarly emerged as an important identity marker. At the same time, however, as an independent, exclusive category, the term `Jaina´ has remained vague and unspecific in its relationship to the term `Hindu´. Regarding Paul Dundas's statement cited previously, the very nature of a `Jaina identity´ has remained fluid and ambiguous. The `Jaina case´, in comparison to other Indian religious traditions (namely Sikhs and Buddhists) will be the focus of the present thesis. Whilst, as will be argued, the Jaina identity discourse since the late 19[th] century has developed and propagated a `self-definition´ based on specific `Jaina values´, strict boundaries to other groups (most importantly the `Hindu majority´) have not been established. In this respect, as this thesis aims to illustrate, the position of the Jainas within the Indian religious landscape has remained vague and blurred, suggesting a disruption of the popular concept of Indian religious pluralism (as described above) as consisting of exclusive defined categories of a Hindu majority and several religious minorities.

The Socio-Political Setting

From the early 19th century onwards, the area encompassing British India and the Native States has witnessed a period of immense and substantial changes due to the impact of the colonial system and the convergence of Western and Indian culture. Western orientalism, education, philosophical and political ideas, as well as the introduction of the decennial census, has contributed to the development of new concepts of religious, cultural and national identity among members of the Indian intellectual elite. The works of European orientalism have attempted to `define´ Indian religious traditions by use of the Western concept of `a religion´ as a monolithic, uniform entity with fixed boundaries.

At the same time, Western attacks, especially those from Christian missionaries against what were considered `evil´ and `degraded´ social and religious practices, provoked response from the newly emerging Western-educated Indian elite. The first socio-religious Hindu reform movement, the Brahmo Samāj, was started in 1828 among Brahmins in colonial Bengal. In the course of the 19th century, further Hindu reform movements came into existence in different areas of British India. The main aims of these movements consisted in religious reform, most prominently in campaigns against polytheism, idolatry and the religious monopoly of Brahmins, as well as in the reform of popular social practices, such as abolition of child marriage, support of inter-caste dining and marriage, and widow remarriage. These ideas naturally did not stay confined to Hindu movements, but also had their impact on the intellectual elite from other religious backgrounds.

Newly emerging concepts of exclusive religious systems and adherence to one of these exclusive groups as an important `identity marker´ were substantially strengthened by the introduction of the decennial census in British India from the 1870s onwards. In these, an individual's caste and religion became important census categories, and `community boundaries´ were shifted towards religious lines. Clear-cut boundaries between these newly established exclusive communities based on religion were constructed by several means. Firstly, leading intellectuals set out to `define´ their religious tradition by determining its main values, rites, and beliefs. However, this discourse on their own religious identity did not merely consist in stating what their own religion was, but, equally importantly, depended on stating what it was not. In this regard, what Harjot Oberoi (1994) has called the "construction of religious boundaries" worked as an important means for the establishment of a separate and distinct religious identity by dividing between `us´ and `them´.

The presentation of an alleged numerical decline of Sikhs, Hindus and Jainas in the census data (created by rather confusing classifications in the census forms) alarmed lay leaders of different religious backgrounds. In Punjab, radical members of the Hindu Ārya Samāj and the Sikh Sabhā not only tried to `re-convert´ members of low castes back into the Hindu and Sikh fold but, more importantly,

contributed to the further growth of communal tensions by the creation of strict boundaries between their own and other religious traditions.

Research Questions and Argument

Although constituting only a small minority, among Jainas too a Western-educated intellectual elite aimed at positioning themselves and their religious tradition within the broader Indian cultural and political framework of colonial British India. The discussion of the dominant identity discourse produced by members of the Jaina intellectual elite from the end of the 19th century onwards, as well as their efforts at internal organisation, unification and reform, will focus on finding answers for the following research questions: to what extent has the wider `shift´ from locally confined, caste-based concepts of communities and communal identity to supra-caste, supra-local (even pan-Indian or `universal´) communal religious identifications found parallel developments among the Jainas? How did Jaina intellectuals react to Western orientalist discourse, Western critical writings on the Jaina tradition, and the introduction of decennial census takings? How have Jaina lay leaders attempted to position their own tradition within the framework of Indian religious pluralism? In what ways have modern, Western influenced, forms of religious organisation contributed to shifting concepts of community and collective religious identity among Jainas? How have non-middle-class `agents´, especially the non-highly educated Jaina masses, been involved in changing the concept of collective identity? To what extent has a `self-definition´ of the Jaina tradition as an independent religious system depended on the "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) between Jainas and non-Jainas, especially Hindus?

In discussing these questions, the present thesis aims at positioning developments among the Jainas within the broader context of the emergence of collective religious identities in India. To what extent is the `Jaina case´ similar to developments which have taken place among other Indian traditions, especially Hindus and Sikhs? What has been different, and what have been the most likely factors for that?

As this research sets out to illustrate, crucial elements in the formation of communal identities in colonial India have also found their counterpart in the identity discourse among intellectual Jainas. Important among these elements is the wider `shift´ from local caste-based to supra-local religious collective identifications. Furthermore, the establishment of supra-caste, supra-local concepts of community among Jainas has also largely relied on collective action in the colonial public sphere and the usage of Western models of organisation. Additionally, Western orientalist writings and critical attacks against Indian traditions prompted similar reactions from Jaina intellectuals as among Indian intellectuals from other religious backgrounds.

As the present study aims to show, we do find substantial parallel developments among Jainas and non-Jaina Indian religious traditions; yet we are also confronted with major differences. Unlike developments among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs (and from the middle of the 20th century onwards also among Indian Buddhists), the identity discourse among Jainas is missing the element of politicisation. Furthermore, the usage of external symbols and the establishment of distinct boundaries with Hindus have been far less accentuated in the `Jaina case´ than among other religious groups in India.

Considering these important differences, an analysis of the emergence of supra-local community building among Jainas does not merely contribute to the discourse on identity formation in a colonial setting. The study of the `Jaina case´ can provide valuable insights into the formation of collective religious identity among an Indian religious tradition which has neither been part of the Hindu-Muslim dichotomy nor has been exposed to aggressive communal tensions such as between Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and a determined Christian mission in Punjab.

The major differences between developments among the Jainas and among other Indian religious traditions, according to the main argument of this thesis, have been caused by the interrelation between external and internal factors. External factors, for instance, include the small number of Jainas and their distribution all over India; unlike the Sikhs, who are also a minority but in substantial numbers reside in Punjab, Jainas are scattered all over India. Whereas, among Hindus, Muslims and

Sikhs in North India, language has become an important constituent of collective religious identity, Jainas do not have a distinct language spoken by Jainas all over India. Furthermore, in their outward appearance and many social customs and practices lay Jainas are not distinct from the surrounding Hindu majority. While these factors have made an extensive usage of outward symbols (such as a spoken `Jaina language´ or a certain area as a `Jaina homeland´[1]) as well as a growing politicisation difficult, internal factors have further contributed to the blurring of outward boundaries between Jainas and Hindus. Most important among these internal factors has been the very nature of the dominant Jaina identity discourse and the reformist efforts of Jaina leaders. Regarding this latter aspect, although 19th century Jaina reformers started campaigns to `purge´ Jainism from alleged Hindu elements, their ambitions have neither been carried out as systematically or aggressively as among radical Sikhs nor has the movement against an alleged `Hinduisation´ ever held a very high priority among the reformist ideals of Jaina leaders.

More importantly, from the end of the 19th century onwards, Jaina apologetics have tried to define the distinctiveness of the Jaina tradition not so much in outward opposition to the Hindu tradition but, in more subtle ways, by presenting the Jainas as the `real Hindus´. Eternal Indian spiritual and moral values, so they argue, were developed in their purest form within the Jaina tradition. While vegetarianism and the principle of *ahiṃsā*, non-violence, are highly valued in Indian traditions, Jainas, so popular discourse goes, practise it at the most intense grade. The same, according to Jaina apologetics, holds true for asceticism and the deliberate limitation of one's possessions. India's `spiritual message´ to the world, therefore, is contained in a pure form in the Jaina teachings which, again according to popular Jaina discourse, makes Jainism much more important than the actual number of Jainas would suggest.

This Jaina discourse, as will be argued in the present thesis, has been successful in defining distinct `Jaina values´, which give the Jaina tradition a distinct `image´.

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[1] Although the Indian state of Gujarat, where the most important Śvetāmbara pilgrimage place, Mount Shatrunjaya, is located, in the imagination of Gujarati Śvetāmbaras could be regarded as a `Jaina homeland´, this notion is not shared by other Jaina groups, especially the Digambaras.

However, unlike in the case of the dominant identity discourse among intellectual lay leaders of other religious groups (especially the Sikhs) the boundaries between Hindus and Jainas have remained more blurred. Here, it has to be noted that regarding socio-religious practices and traditions fluid boundaries do not only exist between Jainas and Hindus, but also between other religious groups. However, as will be argued in the following chapters, it is in the field of intellectual discourse - or what can be called the way in which collective identity has been `imagined´ by intellectual reformers - where boundaries between Jainas and Hindus appear to be more fluid and less defined than the boundaries between Hindus and other religious groups, especially Sikhs.  As this thesis aims to show, these `blurred boundaries´ find their most concrete expression in the presently still undecided legal status of the Jainas as an Indian religious minority on a nationwide level.

The Digambara Jainas of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka

The main focus of the present research will be an analysis of the processes of supra-local identity formation among the regional Jaina sub-group comprising the Digambara Jainas of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka. Although the Jainas are a very small religious minority, they are far from constituting a uniform entity. Jainas are mainly divided into two broader branches, Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras. Among the latter, several further splits have taken place, which led to a division between image-worshipping *mūrtipūjaka* and non-image-worshipping Sthānakvāsī and Terāpanthi Jainas. Individual reform movements have also led to the creation of several smaller Digambara sub-groups, such as the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth. Opposition to some temple rituals, modes of worship and especially the religious authority of the pivotal figure of the *bhaṭṭāraka* as head of a Jaina monastery caused a major division of the Digambaras into Bīspanthīs and Terāpanthīs; however, this division is mainly confined to North India and the differences between both groups have been decreasing in modern times.[2]

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[2] For a short, but concise introduction to the different Jaina branches, see: Wiley (2004). For a general account of different Jaina sects, see: Dundas (2002); Jaini (1979).

Apart from sectarian differences, Jainas are divided into different castes, follow local traditions of their particular region and are engaged in different occupations which, in particular, substantially decide their social and economic status. Although the Jainas, as a whole, appear as a rather wealthy group dominated by trading business, Digambaras in South India (mainly North Karnataka and Southern Maharashtra) have traditionally been engaged in agriculture, corresponding with a lower economic status when compared with North Indian Jaina trading castes.

Considering all these differences, a general discussion of the emerging concept of a `Jaina identity´ and `Jaina community´ seems to be problematic as there is a danger of generalisation. Regarding the concept of collective religious identity among Jainas, multiple `layers´ or `levels´ of identity have to be considered. On the broadest level, the late 19th century discourse between Western orientalists, British colonial officials and Jaina intellectuals aimed exactly at `constructing´ or `defining´ a `general´ universal Jaina identity. Progressive lay reformers especially actively propagated the idea of internal unity between Jainas of all regions, castes and sects. Apologetic writings, as will be shown, focused on the `universal spirit´ of Jainism, and sectarian disputes had no place in the writers' universalistic outlook. In some instances, such as the introduction of the census category `religion´, the focus has also been confined to religious communities in the broader sense, such as `Hindus´, `Sikhs´ or `Jainas´. In this regard, intellectual reformers from different sectarian backgrounds were concerned with allegedly decreasing numbers of `Jainas´, whether North or South Indian, Digambara or Śvetāmbara.

On a more narrow level, notwithstanding the efforts of progressive reformers and their apologetic writings, sectarianism and caste-consciousness among Jainas proved to be far more resistant than intellectuals had hoped. Besides all reformist efforts, in practice the 19th century illiterate Maharasthrian Digambara farmer and the Gujarati Śvetāmbara trader lived in two different worlds with hardly any interaction (even if the latter had migrated to Maharashtra for business reasons). That said, it seems to be more appropriate to discuss the concepts of supra-local collective religious identity and community by focusing on the developments among one regionally confined sectarian branch of the Jainas. The group to be

discussed combines predominantly rural agricultural Digambaras of different castes who constitute what could be called the `Southern centre´ of Jainism - the Indian regions of South Maharahtra and North Karnataka.

Within this thesis, research will further focus on a small but highly influential group among the Jainas, namely the Western-educated professional middle-class. Unlike the low educated or illiterate masses, members of the intellectual elite were in a position to participate within the colonial discourse; furthermore, that elite, by means of Western models of organisation and the publishing media, made active use of the colonial public sphere. In this regard, professionals such as lawyers or teachers considered themselves as legitimate representatives of the Jaina masses. Although most of their reformist and apologetic writings, especially those published in English, remained inaccessible to the majority of non-highly educated Jainas, the small circle of intellectual reformers acted as `mediators´ between the common people and what they regarded as the `real´ form of Jainism and the concept of supra-local religious identity and community. In particular, the reformers' usage of the colonial public sphere, with pan-Indian networks, gradually spread these new concepts of religious identity and religious communities also among other classes of Jainas.[3]

Although the importance of the intellectual elite within the process of collective religious identity formation has been substantial, an analysis of identity formation and community building among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka shows that also other, non-middle-class-based, `agents´ have been having an immense influence on the developments discussed. These important factors, in the form of the `revival´ of the Digambara ascetic order, lay-ascetic interaction and the performance of special rituals, will also be analysed in this thesis. The impact of the Digambara ascetic order especially, whose members prior to their initiation mainly belonged to a very different social and economic class than Western-educated Jaina intellectuals, will be elaborated on. Although, as will be demonstrated, the Digambara ascetics and professional middle-classes who

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[3] For the importance of the Indian professional middle-classes' participation within the colonial discourse and their usage of the public sphere, see: Zavos (2000: 8-16). For a study of the development of the Indian middle-classes, see: Misra (1961).

dominated lay organisations pursue different, at times opposite, interests, both have largely contributed to a broadened concept of community among Digambara Jainas.

Again, it is important to stress that among Jainas, as among other Indian religious groups, multiple `layers´ of collective identity can be found. While, for instance, Western-educated lay reformers aimed at constructing a unified supra-locally-based `Jaina community´, more narrowly defined forms of collective identity, mainly along regional, sectarian and caste-based lines still play a dominant role. In this regard, this thesis does not want to claim that broader concepts of community along religious lines, postulated by a Western-educated intellectual elite, have completely `replaced´ other forms of community building. Rather, this research aims to illustrate in what way developments from the end of the 19th century onwards have contributed to new constructions and concepts of communities on a supra-locally, supra-caste-based scale. These new concepts have not replaced, but co-exist with other forms of collective identities, and most Jainas may regard these multiple forms of identities as compatible. In this respect, a local Digambara of North Karnataka may consider it of substantial importance that his child marries a spouse from the same Digambara caste. At the same time, the same individual can be a member of a Digambara organisation which represents Digambara Jainas of different castes and regional backgrounds. Finally, when stating his religion in the census takings, he may not mention the sectarian division of `Digambara´ at all, but simply may call himself a `Jaina´. On the other hand, for determined lay reformers and their declared aim to unify their own religious community the co-existence of multiple identities may represent a contradiction which requires further efforts at unification.

As already mentioned above, `multiple layers of Jaina identity´ - for instance based on  belonging to a specific caste, being Digambara or Śvetāmbara, among the latter belonging to an image-worshipping or non-worshipping sub-group -  largely depend on the context in which they are used, `constructed´ or `imagined´. In this regard, we also have to differentiate between what can be called `actual practice´ and intellectual discourse or `imagination´. While, for instance, in practice caste still plays a rather important role regarding the arrangements of weddings, at the

same time the reformers' discourse on the Jainas as a unified pan-Indian religious community has become an important conceptualisation of community on a more theoretical level. The same phenomenon, it has to be added, will be found among other religious groups in India and is not confined to Jainas.

What this thesis will mainly focus on is the latter aspect, namely collective Jaina identity as an intellectual construct. Though more narrow levels of collective identity formation may dominate the practice of socio-religious customs, the intellectual Jaina elites' discourse on a supra-locally, supra-caste-based concept of collective identity among Jainas has an important impact on the way community and collective identity can be constructed. It may be argued that the discourse on the Jainas as a unified pan-Indian religious community has not been successful in overcoming the boundaries of castes and sects, and that the notion of the Jainas as a supra-locally, supra-caste-based community is no more than an `intellectual imagination´; nevertheless, this `intellectual imagination´ is not confined to a theoretical level. This becomes clear in campaigns of Jaina associations and individuals for nationwide minority status, as well as in publications and campaigns aiming at the propagation of `Jaina values´. Therefore, though the concept of a universal Jaina community may be `imagined´, it is an important element in the construction of community and collective identity among Jainas today.

Definition of some Key Terms: `Community´ and `Identity´

Community

Before the next section, which will provide an overview of the important academic literature about the dynamics of religious community formations in India in general and on the establishment of community among Jainas in particular, some further clarifications of terms are needed. In this introductory chapter, the phrases `identity´ and `community´ have been constantly used, and it is these terms that play a fundamental role within the framework of this thesis. Both phrases are part of everyday language and are commonly understood in a similar way; yet, any generally accepted definition is missing. This holds especially true for the term `community´, which can be used in a sociological and a non-sociological sense (the

latter non-sociological usage does not concern the topic of this thesis and therefore will not be discussed further). In a sociological sense, a community can be described as a group of individuals bound together by having something in common.[4] On a more concrete level, a community consists of all those sharing the same geographical space, who are furthermore connected through a certain degree of interdependency and social interaction (Johnson 2000: 53).

From the standpoint of the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1963) the notion of community became closely connected with "a fairly strong feeling of belonging and mutual commitment based on a homogenous culture, shared experience, and close interdependency" (Johnson 2000: 53). Seen, in a less concrete sense, from a perspective of emotional belonging, a `feeling of community´ can exist between individuals sharing the same interests, professions or religious beliefs. Transcending geographical boundaries and the aspect of direct interdependency in everyday practical life, this concept of community in a broader sense leads to Benedict Anderson's (1991) term of "imagined communities" and his definition of a `nation´ as "an imagined political community" (1991: 6). `Imagined´, for Anderson, implies that the community consists of members who do not actually know each other or have ever met before, but nevertheless regard themselves as bound together by "the image of their communion" (1991: 6). Although Anderson focuses his analysis of `imagined communities´ on modern nation building, his term of `imagined communities´ can be used in a much broader sense than the establishment of nationalism. In this regard, he himself remarks: "In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined" (1991: 6).

Seen in the Indian colonial context, which marks the historical `starting point´ of this thesis, I regard Anderson's term as appropriate for the transformation leading to the emergence of the concept of distinct, exclusive and universal religious communities of `Hindus´, `Muslims´, `Jainas´ etc. For instance, the `construction´ of the Jainas or, more specifically, the Digambara Jainas, as an `imagined

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[4] For a short discussion of the term `community´ from a sociological perspective, see, for instance: Abercrombie et al. (1988); Johnson (2000); Scott and Marshall (2009); Williams (1988).

community´ is marked by the gradual shift in concept from a local `caste identity´ to a more universal `Digambara identity´.[5] This `transformation´ of identity and the concept of community leads from an exclusive focus on local caste affiliations to the concept of a more symbolic connection with others, in different localities, who have never met before. While the establishment of community among caste members, especially of the same locality, found its expression in a high degree of interdependency and social interaction regarding everyday life, the `construction´ of a more universal religious community relied heavily on a discourse similar to that of modern nationalism. This discourse thus tried to define the `common´ history, tradition, values and symbols, which connected the members of the newly emerging religious communities.

A further similarity in the establishment of communities, from more concrete local interdependent village communities to `imagined communities´ such as modern nation states or universal religious communities, is the marking of boundaries between group and outsiders. These boundaries can have a very concrete form, as in the case of geographic borders, village boundaries or rules of intermarriage and interdining. In the context of this thesis, boundaries between Indian religious communities have been much more fluid. Therefore, just as `imagined communities´ often rely on what the historian Eric Hobsbawm (1983) has called "the invention of tradition", they may also require an `invention of boundaries´ separating their members from outsiders. Here again, Oberoi's (1994) term the "construction of religious boundaries" comes to mind. The present thesis will illustrate, to what extent their usage, or, to connect Hobsbawm's and Oberoi's terms, the `invention of boundaries´, contribute to the establishment of distinct religious communities. As we will see, in the case of the Jainas, `blurred boundaries´ with Hindus have made the concept of the Jainas as a distinct, independent religious community rather controversial.

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[5] It has to be stressed, however, that Anderson (1991: 12-19) regards the rise of nationally `imagined communities´ as a `replacement´ of the older religiously `imagined communities´, such as Christendom and Islam. Nevertheless, his above cited definition of `imagined communities´ as groups of individuals "larger than primordial villages of face to face contact", bound together by "the image of their communion" (1991: 6) is considered appropriate to be used in the analysis of the formation of collective religious identities in late colonial India.

Within this thesis, the term `community´ will be used according to the short discussion given above. By analysing developments among the Digambara Jainas of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, the wider `shift´ from a more concrete conception of community (expressed by caste barriers, rules of interdining and intermarrying, and local geographic boundaries) to a more symbolic concept of a `community of belonging´ (transcending caste and local geographical boundaries) will be presented. In this regard, it will be considered appropriate to describe the emergence of supra-local, supra-caste conceptions of community among Jainas (as among other religious groups in colonial India) in Anderson's sense as the establishment of `imagined communities´. The emergence of the Jainas, or on a more narrow level the Digambara Jainas, as an `imagined community´ has not `replaced´ more traditional forms of community building, but has `added´ further forms of possible collective identities to existing ones. In this regard, Anderson's concept of `imagined communities' may not only be used to describe the `imagination´ of pan-Indian religious communities, but also of smaller groups among these larger units. In the case of the Jainas, for instance, the Digambaras are also an `imagined community´, just as other supra-locally and supra-caste-based groups. Here again, we find multiple possibilities regarding the conceptualisation of community. This multitude of co-existing concepts of community is also reflected in multiple forms of identity held by an individual or a group. This aspect will be further discussed in the following section.

Identity

The close relationship between `community´ and `identity´ becomes evident in definitions of community as a group of people who share "a common sense of identity" (Scott and Marshall 2009: 1). Similar to the term community, `identity´ also constitutes a word in everyday language that proves to be difficult to define. From an academic perspective, identity had first been a subject of psychology, while later the sociological conception of an individual's identity became the focus. Other sciences, such as anthropology or inter-disciplinary cultural studies have also

contributed to the discourse on identity and the `self´.[6] The sociologist Stuart Hall (1992: 275-277) outlines three different concepts of identity which can be simplified as follows: first, the unchanging `self´ of the Enlightenment subject; second, the more complex sociological subject forming itself in relation to its surrounding culture; and, third, the post-modern subject defined "as having no fixed essential or permanent identity" (1992: 277).

The post-modern concept of `identity´ has been the focus of academic works on an individual's search for identity in an era of post-colonialism and globalisation.[7] The complexity of the subject is illustrated in the following definition of `identity´ in the modern context:

> Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your social relationships, your complex involvement with others, and in the modern world these have become ever more complex and confusing. Each of us live with a variety of potentially contradictory identities, which battle within us for allegiance: as men or women, black or white, straight or gay, able-bodied or disabled, `British´ or `European´…The list is potentially infinite, and so therefore are our possible belongings. Which of them we focus on, bring to the fore, `identify´ with, depends on a host of factors. At the centre, however, are the values we share or wish to share with others (Weeks 1990: 88).

This definition, although referring to the context of contemporary multicultural Britain, nevertheless stresses important aspects which also lie at the basis of the concept of identity used within the present thesis: `identity´ is not restricted to the individual `self´, but, in the sociological sense, largely depends on the interaction between the individual and its surrounding culture. This constant interaction not only causes the formation of identity, but also its fluid character; furthermore, identity not only helps the individual to locate him or herself within society, but, at the same time, establishes what can be called a `community feeling´ with others

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[6] For a more comprehensive study of identity theories from various academic disciplines, see: Du Gay et al. (2000); Holland et al. (1998).
[7] See, for instance, the collected essays on identity and diversity published in: Rutherford (1990).

who share the same values. In this sense, a `collective identity´ can be shared by a group of people bound together by the same system of values.

While the present thesis mainly focuses on these sociological aspects of identity as produced in constant interaction between the individual and society, the post-modern conception of identity as becoming increasingly fluid in a globalised world is also taken into account. Within the historical context of the present thesis, the impact of modernity on identity formation is of special importance. The cultural, economic and political changes which occurred in colonial India over a rather short period substantially contributed to what can be called an `identity crisis´ among the members of the newly emerging Western-educated intellectual elite. Regarding this `crisis of identity´ Kobena Mercer (1990: 43) remarks: "One thing at least is clear - identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty."

For members of the Western-educated Indian intellectual elite, the search for their `own identity´ which had been `in crisis´ and the emergence of new concepts of community were closely interrelated. In this regard, the conception of a distinct religious identity fostered the idea of exclusive religious communities and vice versa. The discussion of the emergence of exclusive religious communities, therefore, cannot be separated from the analysis of changing identities. This then becomes evident, for instance, in considering the shift of concept from a `caste identity´ to a `Digambara Jaina identity´, propagated by Western-educated Jaina intellectuals.

To summarise: `identity´, as used within this thesis, in the sociological sense, is a complex interaction between an individual's `self´ and surrounding society. Identity is not a static, unchangeable entity, and may change over time. An individual will furthermore hold several different identities at the same time, depending on his or her various roles in society, and the `hierarchy´ of these identities may also shift over time. Values held by a group of individuals establish a sense of belonging - a `collective identity´ - shared by all members of the group. Although stressing the sociological implications of the formation of `collective identities´, the present thesis also acknowledges the importance of post-modern concepts focusing on an

individual's loss of and search for identity in times of increasing globalisation and social and political change.

It may not be out of place here to stress an individual's multiple identities and a `hierarchy of identities´. A Jaina, for instance, may identify him or herself as the member of a specific caste, a specific regional sub-group, a Digambara or Śvetāmbara, and more generally as a Jaina. Depending on the context and specific circumstances, various identities will become more or less dominant. While arranging a marriage, an individual's caste may be much more important than any broader concept of a collective Digambara or Śvetāmbara Jaina (sectarian) identity; this focus on caste as the dominant identity marker may lose its importance in instances of communal disputes about important pilgrimage sites, claimed by Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras as belonging to their sectarian tradition; in a wider sense, then, collective identity established along sectarian lines is superseded by the stress on the concept of a supra-locally, supra-caste-based Jaina community in campaigns for nationwide minority status. In this respect, the present thesis' focus on the development of the concept of a supra-locally, supra-caste-based collective religious identity among Jainas does not suggest that multiple forms of identity and community formations do not exist among Jainas.

Literature Review

The following subsections will provide an examination of academic works which are relevant for the issues discussed in the present thesis. Before focusing on research surrounding the establishment of community among Jainas in general, and Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka in particular, important academic contributions to the study of the dynamics of religious community formation in late colonial India will be discussed.

The Dynamics of Religious Community Formation in India
The active role taken by members of the Indian intellectual elite within the colonial encounter has been discussed in depth by various scholars whose works focus on

the emergence of the concept of a supra-local, pan-Indian Hindu community. The growing dichotomy between Hindus and Muslims, which has taken on an aggressive character in communal disturbances and riots, has been analysed in research on the emergence of `communal identities´. The works of Gyanendra Pandey (1990) and Sandria B. Freitag (1989) discuss the formation of religious communities and their politicisation in the form of communalism in a North Indian context. In *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, Pandey argues that communalism in India has to be regarded as a modern phenomenon, whose emergence paralleled, and shared the same (colonial) context with modern Indian nationalism. Although Pandey's notion of the non-existence of larger supra-caste collective religious identities in pre-colonial India is not undisputed,[8] his discussion of a `shift´ from a caste-based to a religious concept of collective identity shows an important development in the establishment of collective religious identities in colonial India.

Sandria B. Freitag's important *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* analyses the profound impact of collective action in the public sphere on the establishment of community. Like Pandey, Freitag (1980) locates a change from a caste and village-based concept of community to larger units of `religious communities´ which took place at the end of the 19th century. Furthermore, Freitag's research highlights the special significance of symbols for the establishment of community:

> The late nineteenth century in particular was marked by a wide range of experimental explorations of the definition of the community behind each of the labels. By the second decade of the twentieth century these community identities had taken on a reality which could be expressed in a newly developed vocabulary or idiom drawing heavily on religious symbols (1980: 598).

The notion of representation within the colonial public sphere as an important element of religious organisation has also been discussed in John Zavos's *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India* (2000). Against the scholarly tendency to

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[8] See, for instance, Dipankar Gupta's review (1993) of Pandey's work, in which Gupta states that according to his own opinion "the anti-cow slaughter agitations, for example, could not have occurred without an identification with these larger unities" (1993: 341).

strictly divide between `reformist´ and `conservative´ or `traditional´ Hindu movements, Zavos illustrates that both kinds of movements not only participated in so-called `reformist´ or `modernist´ activities, but that the form of organisation of the movements themselves was profoundly influenced by Western concepts.

While several scholars, including Freitag (1989) and especially Ayesha Jalal (2000), discuss the emergence of the concept of an all Indian Muslim community, `blurred boundaries´ between exclusive categories of `Muslim´ and `Hindu´ religious practice are analysed by Jackie Assayag (2004) in *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*. Assayag's study of contemporary Hindu and Muslim interaction in religious worship in Karnataka is important as it shows that, in actual practice, exclusive religious affiliations can be superseded by individual motives and allegedly exclusive religious boundaries at times can be rather fluid.

The aspect of `blurred boundaries´, especially in popular worship, is also discussed in Harjot Oberoi's *Construction of Religious Boundaries* (1994). Oberoi's study (1994: 139-201) of the late 19th century identity discourse among Sikhs of the Punjab illustrates the religious diversity in 19th century Punjab at a time when fixed exclusive boundaries between `Muslim´, `Hindu´ and `Sikh´ worship had not yet hardened.

Identity formation in colonial Punjab in general has also been discussed by Kenneth W. Jones in his writings on the Ārya Samāj (1976; 1981b; 1989: 95-103) and other religious reform movements in Punjab (1989: 85-94; 103-121). The concept of a distinct Sikh identity and community has been analysed by various scholars[9] mostly with a special focus on the aspect of the politicisation of a separate Sikh identity (Barrier 1988; Kapur 1989; Attar Singh 1988; Mohinder Singh 1988). That the convergence of politics with the concept of exclusive religious communities is a substantial element within the emergence of collective religious identities has not only been demonstrated in publications on the Sikhs but also in above mentioned works on communalism among Hindus and Muslims.

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[9] See, for instance: Barrier (1988); Kapur (1989); McLeod (1976; 1989); Attar Singh (1988); Mohinder Singh (1988).

Academic discourse on the formation of religiously based communities in colonial India has, furthermore, stressed the use of symbols and symbolic action in the public sphere as a significant factor in the establishment and representation of religious collective identities. For example, the use of symbols has not only aimed at constructing common interests, as in case of the cow protection movement described by Freitag (1980). In addition, symbols could also be used to mark distinct boundaries between one religious community and another. The latter aspect is explicitly elaborated by Oberoi (1994), which makes his study of the dominant Sikh discourse a profound contribution to the field of identity formation in the setting of colonial North India.

While these works focus on the emergence of the concepts of religious communities among Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs and aim at positioning these groups within the modern Indian religious landscape, the Jainas have been largely ignored within the context of Indian religious community formation. In this respect, this thesis's target is to provide a more comprehensive approach to the study of the formation of collective religious identities in 20th century India through incorporating the Jainas as a group whose position within the framework of religious pluralism has remained blurred and vague.

In Search of the `Jaina Community´

Before discussing academic research on the establishment of community among Jainas some general remarks about scholarly works on the Jainas and Jainism must be made. As this thesis will further elaborate, the earliest 19th century academic studies on the Jainas have mainly focused on philological studies of ancient texts. In addition to philological works by Western orientalists,[10] from the first half of the 20th century onwards, various historical studies on the ancient and medieval history of the Jaina tradition have been published.

Regarding the history of the Digambara Jainas in South India (especially Karnataka) pioneering work consists of Bhasker Anand Saletore's *Mediaeval Jainism* (1938), and the research done by P.B. Desai (2001) which was first

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[10] The work of Western orientalists will be discussed in chapter two.

published in 1957 under the title *Jainism in South India and Some Jaina Epigraphs.* Both works are mainly based on inscriptional evidence which confines their focus to the documentation of grants given by wealthy donors for the erection of religious monuments or the maintaining of Jaina temples and monasteries. Ram Bhushan Prasad Singh's (1975) *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka (c. A.D. 500-1200)* aims to go beyond the description of epigraphs by discussing changes in ritual practice, religious belief and monastic organisation which had taken place during the early medieval period.

Though pioneering in the field of medieval Indian history, at the time of their publication, from the perspective of contemporary academic research these works' most obvious limitation lies in their uncritical acceptance of the existence of fixed homogenous religious communities in medieval India. This view of distinct religious boundaries in medieval South India is disputed by more recent academic research, such as Richard H. Davis' (1999) critical study of Hindu-Jaina relations in medieval Tamil Nadu which regards the religious environment of medieval South India as much more dynamic and interactive than had been presented in earlier historical research. [11]

Regarding academic publications providing a general overview of the Jaina tradition, Padmanabh S. Jaini's *The Jaina Path of Purification* (1979) and Paul Dundas's *The Jains*, first published in 1992 and revised in 2002, can be considered the most important contributions. While Jaini treats phrases such as `Jaina society´ (1979: chapter 9) as unproblematic terms, Dundas's excellent study also incorporates aspects such as the question of Jaina identity, reform movements of the 19th century and fluid boundaries between Jainas and Hindus. Due to the general introductory nature of Dundas' work, the discussion of these aspects has to remain short; nevertheless, the bibliography given by Dundas provides valuable information for a deeper study of the question of collective identity and community building among Jainas.

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[11] For the fluidity of religious boundaries in medieval South India, see also: Cort (1999a); Orr (1999).

From the 1990s onwards, some important publications from various academic disciplines have been discussing this very question. Unlike Vilas A. Sangave, who in his valuable sociological study *Jaina Community: A Social Survey* (1980) takes the existence of a full-fledged and static `Jaina community´ for granted, a few academic works have aimed at locating the emergence of the concepts of supra-local, supra-caste collective identity and community among Jainas within the colonial setting of the late 19th century. In "The Invention of Jainism: A Short History of Jaina Studies" (2005), Peter Flügel not only provides a short but important historical account of the beginnings of Jaina studies,[12] but also discusses early Jaina reform movements and the growing importance of the term `Jaina´ as an identity marker. Flügel's "A Short History of Jaina Law" (2007) is a valuable contribution regarding early Jaina reformers' aims to prove the existence of a distinct Jaina law, an issue which will be further discussed in chapter three of the present thesis.

In *Makers of Modern Indian Religion in the Late Nineteenth Century* (2002), Torkel Brekke dedicates one chapter to Jaina reform movements and the emergence of the concept of a separate, exclusive Jaina community from the 19th century onwards. In this valuable account, Brekke discusses important factors, such as the impact of the census and identity discourse among Western-educated Jaina intellectuals. Another historical account of organisational developments among Jainas since the late 19th century is provided by James F. Lewis in his article "Jains in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" (2001).

The works of Flügel, Brekke and Lewis are important for their summarising of the main developments which contributed to the emergence of supra-local and supra-caste religious collective identity among Jainas; research for the present thesis has benefitted from these historical publications, which have been used as secondary sources for the reconstruction of the late 19th and early 20th century Jaina identity discourse. However, discussion given in this thesis aims at a more comprehensive

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[12] An informative account of the interaction between Western scholars and reformist Jainas regarding the opening of Jaina libraries for academic research is found in Flügel's article "Jainism and the Western World: Jinmuktisuri and Georg Bühler and Other Early Encounters." (1999). Collaboration between Western orientalists and individual Jainas from the 19th century onwards is also discussed in: Emmrich (2003).

analysis, presenting extensive primary sources, and locating developments among a group of Jainas within the broader Indian context of religious pluralism. Furthermore, the inclusion of contemporary anthropological material widens the focus of the present thesis not only regarding the historical period under research, but also regarding the `agents´ or factors, which have contributed to shifting concepts of collective identity among Digambara Jainas.

During the last decades of the 20th century, the field of Jaina studies has been largely enriched by the publication of anthropological research on contemporary Jaina religious practice. The focus of these ethnographic studies has mainly been on urban Jainas of Rajasthan and Gujarat, mainly of the Śvetāmbara branch.[13] These anthropological works contribute in various ways to the discourse on religious identity and the organisation of community among Jainas in the setting of contemporary India. In general, anthropological research has sufficiently proved that the stereotypical picture of the Jainas as a homogenous group, as is often held among non-Jainas, has to be rejected.[14] James Laidlaw's *Riches and Renunciation*, furthermore, does not only explore social divisions among Jainas, but also the fluidity of boundaries between Jainas and Hindus (1995: 94-103). Marcus Banks' *Organizing Jainism in India and England* (1992) discusses "corporate Jain identity" (1992: 3) among Jainas in Gujarat and the British diaspora by analysing Jaina institutions and organisations in India and Britain. In conclusion, Banks argues that although actual Jaina practice and belief show many divisions, an underlying "ideal of cohesive ideology" (1992: 231) acts as a unifying factor for the Jainas as a `community´.

Among publications of collected papers, Michael Carrithers' and Caroline Humphrey's *The Assembly of Listeners: Jains in Society* (1991) has to be regarded

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[13] See, for instance: Babb (1996; 1998), focusing on religious rituals practiced by Śvetāmbaras in Jaipur and Ahmedabad; Cort (2001), based on extensive field research among Śvetāmbaras in North Gujarat; Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994), developing a theory of ritual based on the Śvetāmbara rite of worship; Laidlaw (1995), who conducted field research among Śvetāmbaras at Jaipur; Luithle-Hardenberg, who has been working on Śvetāmbaras in Gujarat (Luithle and Lehmann 2003; Luithle-Hardenberg 2006); Reynell (1991), whose research was conducted among Śvetāmbaras at Jaipur.

[14] See, for instance: Banks (1986: 447); Laidlaw (1995: 83-119).

as a profound contribution to the discourse on the establishment of community among Jainas. The various articles included in the publication discuss different aspects of Jainas as a community, including the organisation of local Jaina groups, boundaries to Hindus, and different `agents´ for the establishment of community. Carrithers and Humphrey (1991a: 6-7) base their definition of `Jaina community´ on different criteria, including: a common set of beliefs and practices (significantly different from that found in the surrounding society); an awareness of their own identity as Jaina; a collective effectiveness in social, political or economic life; and, finally, the ability to reproduce itself. All of these criteria, according to the argument, will hardly be found in any local group of Jainas. Furthermore, some groups will show more of the relevant criteria than others. Nevertheless, according to the conclusion, "even if Jain communities are potential and imagined, they are by no means unreal" (1991a: 12). Carrithers' and Humphrey's discussion is important as, like the articles included in the publication, it presents the formation of community among Jainas from various perspectives thereby leaving space for different conceptualisations of community.

Another important publication of collected insightful anthropological and historical research on `Jaina community´ and `Jaina identity´ is John Cort's *Open Boundaries: Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History* (1999a). Covering two geographical areas with a profound Jaina history - South and Western India - the various essays contextualise identity formation and the relationship between Hindu and Jaina traditions in different geographical and historical settings. By stressing the active role taken by Jainas in their encounter with Hindu traditions, the publication`s main contribution consists in its relocating of Jaina studies as an important element in the study of the religious history of South Asia.

Among the anthropological studies on Jainism conducted since the last decades of the 20th century, several scholars have focused their research on male and female ascetic orders within different Jaina sub-groups. Pioneering in this field has been Michael Carrithers' study on Digambara ascetics, "Naked Ascetics in Southern Digambar Jainism" (1989) which draws on field research conducted between 1982 and 1985 in the Kolhapur region of Maharashtra. In this publication, Carrithers

analyses the role of ascetics for the establishing of community among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra. In addition, a year previously, Carrithers (1988) had examined the impact of two Digambara ascetics during a communal conflict which focused on the Jaina pilgrimage site of Bahubali, near Kolhapur, from 1983 onwards.

Drawing on the work of Carrithers (1989), John E. Cort, in his article "The Svetambar Murtipujak Jain Mendicant" (1991), gives an excellent comparison of the hierarchical structure of Śvetāmbara and Digambara ascetic orders. In a further article, "The Gift of Food to a Wandering Cow: Lay-Mendicant Interaction Among the Śvetāmbar Mūrtipūjak Jains" (1999b), Cort defines the renunciation practiced by Jaina renouncers "as a socially interactive practice" (1999b: 89) expressed in "frequent interaction between the mendicants and the laity in both the private and the public spheres" (1999: 93). The ritual of giving food to Digambara ascetics is discussed by Robert J. Zydenbos (1999) who, while giving a comparison between scriptural and actual practice, draws on ethnographic evidence from the South Karnataka area. The work of Peter Flügel (2003; 2009) focuses on ascetics of the non-image-worshipping Śvetāmbara sect of the Terāpanthī, while his article "Demographic Trends in Jaina Monasticism" (2006), based on extensive demographic data, presents a profound overview of all present Jaina ascetic groups. Female Jaina ascetics have been covered in studies by N. Shanta (1997), which focuses on Jaina nuns in general, Savitri Holmstrom (1988) and Anne Vallely (2002) who discuss Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī nuns.

The academic research on Jaina ascetics provides substantial evidence of the profound role of ascetic-lay interaction for the establishment of community among groups of Jainas. Regarding the present thesis, especially the works of Carrithers (1988; 1989) and Zydenbos (1999) have been valuable secondary sources since both focus on Digambara ascetics in the geographical setting of South Maharashtra and Karnataka. While Carrithers' account of Digambara monks in the Kolhapur area has been very inspiring, the ethnographic material collected during field research for this thesis suggests important developments which have taken place since the time of Carrithers' field study in the mid 1980s. These developments, as

will be shown in chapter five of this thesis, have contributed to a more complex field of lay-ascetic interaction. Therefore, the present research, though indebted to previous studies - especially Carrithers' (1989) - will present novel and important material concerning the roles of Digambara ascetics for the establishment of community among Digambaras Jainas of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka.

The above mentioned anthropological studies, as well as publications from other academic subjects, have aimed at discussing the processes of identity formation and community building among groups of Jainas from different perspectives. One aspect analysed, especially in ethnographic research, is the formation of collective identity through the performance of Jaina temple worship, rituals and festivals (Babb 1996; Banks 1992; Cort 2001; Humphrey 1991; Laidlaw 1995). Interaction between lay Jainas and ascetics, as an important factor for the development of collective identity, is, in addition to the above mentioned works focusing on Jaina ascetics, also discussed in Laidlaw's study (1995) of Śvetāmbaras in Northwest India and Cort's *Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India* (2001), based on field research among Śvetāmbaras in North Gujarat. Other aspects of the formation of collective identity among Jainas, analysed in academic research, are the role of women in the establishment of community and the `reproduction´ of Jaina values to the younger generation (Carrithers and Humphrey 1991b; Kelting 2001; Reynell 1991); the impact of devotional songs (Kelting 2001); and Jaina pilgrimage (Luithle-Hardenberg 2006). Apart from religious practice, the concept of collective religious identity among Jainas also finds its expression in a distinct Jaina temple architecture and Jaina art (Hegewald 2009).

While this subsection has aimed at presenting an outline of recent academic publications discussing aspects of `Jaina identity´ and `Jaina community´ in different geographical settings, it is in the following subsection that more specific research on the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka will be discussed.

Establishing Community among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka

As the review of anthropological research on the Jainas shows, most studies have focused on the Śvetāmbara Jainas mainly residing in North and West India; the rural Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka have largely been ignored in sociological and ethnographic research. A few notable exceptions, however, must be mentioned. Among sociological studies, Vilas A. Sangave's previously mentioned *Jaina Community: A Social Survey* (1980) includes discussion of the Digambaras of Maharashtra and Karnataka as do Sangave's selected papers published under the title *Facets of Jainology* (2001).

Robert J. Zydenbos' historical and anthropological research has not only focused on lay-ascetic interaction among Digambaras in Karnataka (1999), as already noted above, but also discusses historical developments which have led to a decline of Jaina influence in the region from the late medieval period onwards (1986) and the aspects of goddess worship among Digambaras, especially in the Karnataka area (2000).

For the present thesis, the work of Michael Carrithers has been of special importance not only in regard to Carrithers' studies (1988; 1989) of the impact of ascetics on the formation of community among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra. Based on extensive field research in the South Maharashtrian Digambara centre around Kolhapur, Carrithers' articles discuss various aspects of community building among Digambaras in South Maharashtra and North Karnataka which are also important elements within the present thesis. "The Foundations of Community among Southern Digambar Jains: An Essay on Rhetoric and Experience" (1991), included in *The Assembly of Listeners*, is an invaluable study of the establishment of collective identity through the rhetoric of lay organisations and the foundation laid by Digambara institutions. In "Concretely Imagining the Southern Digambar Jain Community, 1899-1920" (1996), Carrithers demonstrates the impact of collective action taken by lay Jaina reformers within the public sphere on the concept of a supra-local, supra-caste Digambara community.

In his discussion of both aspects - the impact of lay reformers from the late 19th century onwards, as well as the role taken by Digambara ascetics as `leaders´ and `ideal Jainas´ - Carrithers' work has been an important secondary source for this thesis. Although the present research is highly indebted to Carrithers' pioneering studies (and most of his findings will be confirmed here) this thesis aims at going beyond the analysis given by Carrithers. One aspect of this `going beyond´ has already been mentioned in regard to lay-ascetic interaction. Here, original and novel material will be presented, demonstrating substantial changes which have taken place since the mid 1980s, and which have made the role of the ascetic within contemporary Digambara Jainism more complex. Additionally, while mainly focusing on the same geographical and sectarian framework as Carrithers' studies, this thesis aims at a broader conceptualisation and location of developments among one regional sub-group of Jainas within the wider framework of the emergence of supra-local, supra-caste religious-based communities on the Indian subcontinent.

The present study aims at contributing original material to the discourse on the emergence of collective religious identities in India from the end of the 19th century onwards, by discussing developments among a (hitherto academically ignored) Indian religious group, the rural Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka. A combination of historical and anthropological research will provide a more comprehensive study of the formation of collective identity among a group of Jainas, incorporating various factors into the analysis. In this regard, impacts on both ends of the social strata - the intellectual elite on the one hand, and the illiterate farmer on the other - will be taken into consideration. The originality of the present research, furthermore, consists on its focus on, in Harjot Oberoi's (1994) term, the "construction of religious boundaries" as an important means for the establishment of exclusive religious communities. Therefore, the discussion of the impact of the `intellectual construction´ of boundaries between different religious groups will, for the first time, aim at locating the Jainas within the broader framework of the dynamics of religious community formation and religious pluralism in late colonial and post-Independence India.

Methodology and Sources

Methodologically, the present thesis combines historical with anthropological research, thereby aiming at a chronological reconstruction of the emergence and development of new concepts of supra-local and supra-caste collective religious identities among a regional sub-group of Jainas. Taking the late 19th century as the historical `starting point´, the period leading up to the end of the British colonial rule - which witnessed the first apologetic writings of Jaina reformers, the establishment of the first Jaina organisations, and the `revival´ of the Digambara naked ascetic tradition - constitutes the main focus of historical research. This time period is of special interest for an analysis of the emergence of modern supra-local, supra-caste collective religious identities on the Indian subcontinent. Focusing historical research in this specific timeframe aims at locating developments among the Jainas within the broader framework of the dynamics of religious community formation in colonial India from the late 19th century onwards.

Main primary sources covering this period are the writings of Western orientalists and other Europeans, consisting mainly of missionaries, trying to `frame´ and `define´ Jainism and its alleged core values. The different volumes of the decennial Indian census takings (referring either to the whole of British India or individual districts) not only provide (more or less reliable) statistical data about the numerical strength of various religious communities, their educational standard, and economic status; but, more importantly, are a valuable source regarding the establishment of the Jainas as an independent `religious category´.

Among the primary sources used, the English apologetic writings of early Jaina reformers hold a very important position. These writings have either been published in book form, or have been printed in the main English language media outlet of progressive Jaina reformers - *The Jaina Gazette*, a monthly magazine published from the year 1900 onwards. Reflecting the contemporary historical, political and social background in which the respective articles were written, the various issues of *The Jaina Gazette* are a valuable source for the reconstruction of the Jaina identity discourse of the early 20th century. They also provide insight into

contemporary political and social changes, as well as developments among other Indian religious communities. In addition, the magazine is an important source for locating developments among Jainas within the broader Indian context. Furthermore, articles published in the magazine show the difficulties reformers experienced in their efforts to overcome the popular focus on caste. In this regard, *The Jaina Gazette* is an invaluable historical source illustrating the prevalence of various concepts of collective identity and community formation among different sections of the Jainas.

Other written sources providing information about the historical and political setting and the Jainas from the end of the 19th century onwards are mainly confined to official documents and publications produced under the British colonial administration. Among the published sources, the various district gazetteers are not only valuable for statistical information, but also for their descriptions of local castes and customs. They are especially important for their presentation of `popular practices´ - as found in local customs and caste restrictions - and the academic concept or `imagination´ of supra-locally and supra-caste-based religious communities - illustrated in the classifications used in statistics and other entries. Besides census reports and district gazetteers, a few selected works such as Anjilvel Matthew's (1979) biography of the Maharastrian Jaina educationist Bhaurao Patil and Annasaheb Latthe's (1924) biographical account of Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur contain information about the economic, social and educational condition of South Indian Digambara Jainas during the late colonial period.

Some further information is found in the popular biographies of the prominent Southern Digambara ascetic Śāntisāgar published in vernacular Indian languages. For the present thesis, several shorter Hindi language biographies of Śāntisāgar, written by Digambara ascetics, as well as Sumerucandra Divakar's (2006) officially authorised account of the ascetic's life, were used to gain some insight into contemporary religious practices and what will be called the `revival´ of the naked monk tradition. Although these biographies can resemble hagiographic writings rather than scientifically reliable sources, they are of substantial value for constructing a picture of the impact the figure of Śāntisāgar has held within the

imagination of Digambaras, especially those of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka.

Some material concerning the relationship between Jainas and the British authorities - for instance regarding the free wandering of naked Jaina ascetics - is contained in the India Office Records held by the British Library. All these historical written sources are used to reconstruct a picture of Jainism and the Jainas created in the writings of Western orientalists and other Western publications, as well as the Jaina identity discourse found in the apologetic books and articles written by the early Jaina reformers. Furthermore, the discussion of what will be called the `revival´ of organised groups of naked Digambara monks takes other, non-middle-class `agents´ and their impact on community building among Digambara Jainas into account.

The study of historical primary and secondary written sources establishes the basis for anthropological studies conducted during three periods of field research between January 2006 and July 2007. Most of the field research took place in the area of North Karnataka and South Maharashtra (with shorter stays at other parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra as well as the cities of Mumbai and Delhi). The material obtained comprises documentation of domestic and temple worship, special rituals and festivals, lay-ascetic interaction, and the conduct of interviews with lay Jainas and ascetics. Apart from anthropological field notes, interviews and picture material, otherwise unavailable written sources were obtained, mainly in Hindi, in the form of small booklets and brochures regarding popular Digambara monks and nuns, pilgrimage places, and Jaina institutions and organisations. Some of the material (in the form of written and oral sources) contributed to the reconstruction of Jaina movements and the `revival´ of the naked monk tradition during the early 20th century. Other information, especially that provided by personal interviews, helped in gaining a picture of the concepts of Digambara Jaina identity and the establishment of community among contemporary Digambaras in South Maharashtra and North Karnataka. Although most of the interview partners and informants were Digambaras, whenever possible conversations with non-

Digambara Jainas and non-Jainas were also initiated, discussing their personal impressions about Digambaras or Jainas in general.

Since a considerable period of time was spent documenting individual Digambara ascetics and their lay-followers, as well as the conduct of special Jaina rituals, the field research substantially contributed to the discussion of the role of ascetics and festivals for the establishment of community among Digambaras.

Individual Jainas provided valuable material about new Jaina organisations, such as the Young Jains of India (established in 2005) and contemporary petitions for the inclusion of the Jainas among India's nationwide religious minorities. Regarding some contemporary issues, such as Jaina organisations founded in the Western diaspora, and the modern discourse on the legal recognition of the Jainas as a statewide and nationwide religious minority, the use of material published on the internet in the various forms of discussions forums, newspaper articles or personal blogs proved to be helpful. In some instances, personal communication with the respective authors via e-mail helped to clarify the points expressed in the online material.

This combination of historical and anthropological research aims at presenting a comprehensive picture of developments which have taken place among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka since the end of the 19th century. Written historical sources, such as the biographies of the ascetic Śāntisāgar, are complemented by material obtained during field research, in the form of oral sources, conducted interviews and picture material. In particular, for a discussion of the present day impact of the early 20th century `revival´ of the naked ascetic tradition, anthropological research on the actual daily routine of ascetics and their interaction with lay followers has provided substantial information.

Throughout the present thesis, historical and anthropological research complement each other in locating developments among a sub-group of Jainas within the broader context of late colonial and post-Independence India.

Chapter Outline

Chapters two and three of the present thesis aim to conceptualise the developments analysed in the following chapters, which have led to a `shift´ in concept from a local caste-based to a supra-local Digambara identity. In this regard, chapter two will discuss what will be referred to as the 19[th] century orientalist `discovery´ and `construction´ of a religious entity called `Jainism´ and the concept of a universal `Jaina community´. In particular, the writings of 19[th] century Western orientalists and their impact on the concept of Jainism as a `universal homogenous religion´ will be analysed. Furthermore, the role of the decennial census (introduced from the 1870s onwards) on the formation of new concepts of religious communities will be elaborated.

While chapter two focuses on this discourse among Western orientalists and colonial officials, chapter three will discuss the reaction of Jaina intellectuals and their first efforts at defining, representing and organising their own religious tradition. The chapter aims at illustrating the ways in which Jainas themselves reacted and contributed to Western concepts, as described in chapter two. As chapter three argues, the `blurred boundaries´ between Jainas and Hindus in the modern Jaina identity discourse have origins in the first English apologetic writings and presentations of Jaina intellectuals.

In addition to analysis of the first apologetic English Jaina writings, chapter three will go on to discuss the impact of the first modern Jaina organisations on the establishing of community. In this respect, the processes of supra-caste and supra-local community building will be analysed by the example of a reform movement established by Digambaras at the end of the 19th century in North Karnataka - the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā.[15] The discussion will illustrate the extent to which reformist ideas, popular among Indian intellectuals of the late 19th and early 20th century, have entered this Digambara organisation, and in what way its leaders' efforts towards organisation and representation in the public sphere have contributed to the development of a broader concept of community among

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[15] Can be literally translated as `South Indian Jaina Organisation´.

Digambaras. Incorporating both aspects of the intellectual Jaina elite's activities - the propagation of `Jaina values´ through apologetic writings, and the establishment of broader concepts of community through Western models of religious organisation - chapter three is considerably longer than the other chapters. However, I consider it appropriate to combine these two aspects within one chapter, since both elements are closely interwoven and the chapter's `main protagonists´ - members of the Western-educated intellectual Jaina elite - were active in both fields.

Chapter four will present an important development within Digambara Jainism of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, which did not take its origin among the professional middle-class, but among mainly illiterate agriculturists. With the re-emergence of groups of naked wandering Digambara ascetics during the first centuries of the 20th century, a new religious authority developed. This new authority, it will be argued, substantially contributed to the broadening of the concept of community among Digambaras of the region and beyond the geographical borders of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Furthermore, ways in which the `revival´ of the Digambara naked ascetic tradition added the element of asceticism to the `Jaina values´ propagated by lay Jaina reformers will be discussed.

In chapter five different constituents of Digambara Jaina identity in a modern-day context will be analysed. As the chapter argues, the most concrete form of Digambaras as a community finds its expression in the interaction between lay Digambaras and ascetics and in the performance of distinct Digambara rituals. The discourse of the early Jaina reformers (discussed in chapter three) has proved persistent, in as far as the `image´ of Jainism as the most suitable religion for modern times is still found in the rhetoric of lay organisations today. This `image´ of Jainism, however, remains abstract regarding clear-cut boundaries between Jainas and Hindus.

Finally, in chapter six, these `blurred boundaries´ will be discussed in their most concrete aspect - the still undecided contemporary status of the Jainas as a nationwide Indian religious minority. The chapter will present arguments used in official petitions written by Digambaras for their inclusion among religious

minorities. In comparisons to developments among other Indian religious groups which have been officially included among the religious minorities (especially Sikhs and Buddhists), the `case´ of the Jainas will be analysed including external and internal factors which have contributed to the `blurred boundaries´ between Jainas and the Hindu majority.

In conclusion, chapter seven will summarise the impact of different factors on the broadening of the concept of collective religious identity among Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka. Whilst, according to the main argument presented in this thesis, the discourse of identity among the Jaina intellectual elite has successfully produced a certain `image´ of Jainism and the Jainas, it has not established clear boundaries between Jainas and Hindus. Whereas the rhetoric of Jaina lay organisations has proved to be persistent in representing Jainism as the most suitable universal religion for modern times, this `image´ of Jainism and the Jainas still remains abstract concerning external boundaries separating Jainas from Hindus. Regarding the establishment of community among Digambara Jainas, its most concrete embodiment is found in lay-ascetic interaction, as well as the conduct of distinct rituals and festivals. Finally, the undecided legal status of the Jainas concerning their inclusion among India's nationwide religious minorities has been the result of different internal and external factors which differentiate the `Jaina case´ from developments among other Indian religious groups.

Setting the historical `starting point´ of this research, the following chapter will introduce early Western orientalist works on the Jaina tradition, published from the second half of the 19th century onwards, and analyse orientalist discourse on the Jainas and their religious tradition. Furthermore, the impact of the decennial census on the emergence of new concepts of supra-local religion-based communities in colonial India will be discussed.

2. THE WESTERN `DISCOVERY´ AND `DEFINITION´ OF JAINISM

> Of all the sects the Jains are the most colorless, the most insipid. They have no literature worthy of the name. They were not original enough to give up many orthodox features, so that they seem like a weakened rill of Brahmanism, cut off from the source, yet devoid of all independent character. A religion in which the chief points insisted upon are that one should deny God, worship man, and nourish vermin, has indeed no right to exist; nor has it had as a system much influence on the history of thought (Hopkins 1902: 296-297).

This coarse account of the Jainas[16] by the American Sanskrit scholar Edward Washburn Hopkins, although in its tactlessness certainly surpassing other negative statements of its time, reflects some of the main stereotypes about the Jaina tradition. The description of the Jaina religion as a dry, life-negating ascetic tradition can still be found in modern popular images. To discover its origins, one has to go back to the 19th century, when a separate religious entity called `Jainism´ or `Jinism´[17] slowly started to be developed by the combined forces of orientalist research and intellectual Jainas reacting to Western ideologies and new concepts of religion and religious identity. This is not to say that Jainism as a religious, philosophical and cultural tradition had not existed before. In fact, the Jaina scholarly tradition has a long history of polemical writings in which the Jaina system was defended and clearly demarcated to other religious systems. However, the definition of Jainism as a coherent religious system, based on European concepts[18] is a quite recent development, which had its origins in the 19th century. Around the same time, new concepts of an individual's religious identity began to spread among the Indian intellectual elites. Under the British administration, an

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[16] The Sanskrit term *Jaina* derives from *jina*, a spiritual conqueror. A *Jaina* is the follower of a religious path, which was taught by a line of human teachers, the Jinas or Tīrthaṅkaras. *Jaina* can also mean "pertaining to the Jina" (Flügel 2005: 3, footnote 9). The use of the term *Jaina* and the vernacular form *Jain* as a self-designation seems to be a development which started only in the 19th century (Flügel 2005: 3). For the term *Jain* and *Jaina*, see: Dundas (1992: 3); Flügel (2005: 2-5).

[17] For the terms `Jainism´ or `Jinism´, see: Flügel (2005: 2, footnote 5); Glasenapp (1925: 1); Schubring (1935: 3, footnote 7).

[18] For a discussion of the development of the term `religion´ and its plural form `religions´ in the West, see: King (1999a: 35-61); Smith (1991: 15-50).

increasingly elaborated system of census taking was introduced on the Indian subcontinent. The census takers focused on the religion, caste, sect and race of every individual, thereby creating more or less fixed categories into which every person had to fit.

The present chapter will focus on the Western `discovery´ and `definition´ of Jainism as a distinct separate religion, based on Western concepts. The discourse of Western orientalists, historians and administrators will be the basis for the discourse among Jaina intellectuals themselves, which will be taken up in the following chapter.

Before the first works of Western scholars on the Jainas and their tradition will be discussed, some further clarifications regarding the colonial discourse on Indian religious traditions are necessary, in order to avoid misleading interpretations of `Jainism´ as a mere abstract orientalist `invention´ without any real substance.

Colonial Discourse and the `Construction´ of Indian Religions

The Jaina tradition with its specific practices, beliefs, institutions and philosophical system was certainly not `invented´ by the Western orientalist discourse; nor have the Jainas themselves merely acted as passive absorbers of Western concepts. The first aspect is clearly illustrated in the long history of the Jaina textual tradition defining the Jaina system. Regarding the latter point, the work of European scholars largely depended on the cooperation of local lay followers and ascetics. The same holds true for other Indian religious traditions, which had come into the focus of Western orientalist research earlier than the Jaina tradition, most prominently what has become known as `Hinduism´.

Since the first publication of Edward Said's influential *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* in 1978, various academic publications have contributed to the discourse on the hegemonic Western `construct´ of the Orient. During the last decades of the 20th century, the new historical approaches of post-colonial theory and subaltern studies have furthermore challenged traditional Eurocentric academic research.

While Said (1978) confined his discussion of the colonial construction of the Orient as the `other´ to the Islamic world, Ronald Inden's *Imagining India* (2000) examined the impact of colonial legacies in the academic field of Indology. In his harsh critical analysis Inden (2000) argues that Indological research had mostly failed in acknowledging an active, rational role taken by Indians themselves within the colonial encounter.[19] Already several decades before Inden's critical discussion of Indological scholarship, cultural interaction in the colonial setting of British India had been the subject of academic research. One of the earliest and most influential contributions is David Kopf's *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, first published in 1969. Kopf amply illustrates the impact of different `colonial agents´, namely orientalists, Anglicisers and evangelical missionaries, on the concept of `Hinduism´. Though path-breaking at the time of publication, Kopf's work, as rightly remarked by Brian Pennington (2005: 10), has its limitations based on a historical conception, which regards cultural impacts in colonial settings as travelling along `one-way streets´. As Inden two decades after Kopf rejected the academic reduction of the Indian subject to the role of passive absorber of Western ideas,[20] recent studies in the field tend to regard impacts as flowing in both directions (Pennington 2005: 10). Furthermore, as Pennington adds, colonialism can no longer be simplified as "the effect of collective attitudes, intentions, and policies", but rather "as a largely unconscious, unintended system of often contradictory, contested power arrangements that pervaded the British/Indian encounter at every level" (2005: 10).

Academic discourse on colonial encounters in the setting of British India from the 1960s onwards has, as one of its main aims, focused on a discussion of the term `Hinduism´ and the role of different `agents´ in its alleged `construction´. Various publications focus on the impact of so-called `Hindu reform movements´, from Rammohun Roy's Brahmo Samāj, founded in 1828, onwards, and mainly regard influences in the form of Western orientalist scholarship, philosophy and Christian

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[19] For Inden's critical discussion of what he refers to as "Orientalist discourse" (1986: 401), see also: Inden (1986).

[20] For a fierce counter-criticism, see Kopf's (1992) harsh review of Inden's *Imagining India*, published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.

concepts as responsible for the emergence of `Hinduism´ as a monolithic universal religion.[21] From the perspective of post-colonial theory, Richard King's (1999) influential *Orientalism and Religion* analyses how colonial discourses have shaped the concept of the `mystic East´. The academic discourse on the `constructed nature´ of Hinduism has also found its expression in various publications focusing on an etymological analysis and definition of the terms `Hinduism´ and `Hindu´.[22] Within this discourse some scholars regard the term `Hinduism´ as nothing more than a theoretical construct.[23] An especially radical position, as taken by Robert E. Frykenberg, regards the uncritical acceptance of the term as "not only erroneous, but […] dangerous" (1997: 82).

While colonial impact on the emergence of the concept `Hinduism´ is not denied, various scholars express different theories about the level of Western impact. In this regard, Brian Pennington's (2005) work again has to be mentioned, since the very title of his important study *Was Hinduism Invented?* reflects the academic controversy about the `constructed nature´ of Hinduism. After a short presentation of the different positions taken by scholars regarding the alleged orientalist `invention´ of Hinduism as an essentially meaningless category, Pennington (2005: 171-172) argues that without an already existing `base´ on which orientalists could `construct´ the category Hinduism, their work would not have made any sense. He therefore concludes:

> A gaping absence of indigenous critique of the category "Hindu" itself must suggest, at the very least, a ready acceptance of the label among many Hindus and that the concept itself corresponded to some elements of Indian self-understanding. It seems even more likely that the idea, if not the label, was already common Indian currency. The British did not mint this coin; they traded in it because Hindus handed it to them. The historical role of the colonizer was not to invent Hinduism either by blunder or by design, but to introduce an economy of concepts and

[21] For publications on the so-called `Bengal Renaissance´ and the Brahmo Samāj, see for instance: Damen (1983); Jones (1989); Killingley (1993); Kopf (1969;1979); Lavan (1981); Pankratz (2001); Poddar (1970; 1977); Robertson (1995); Van M. Baumer (1975).
[22] See, for instance: Sharma (2002), and the collected papers in Günther-Dietz Sontheimer's and Hermann Kulke's *Hinduism Reconsidered* (1997). For the orientalist `construction´ of the term `Hinduism´, see: King (1999); Pennington (2005); Smith (1991); Sugirtharajah (2003).
[23] See, for instance: Frykenberg (1997: 82); Stietencron (1997: 7-10).

power relations that dramatically enhanced the value of such identity markers (2005: 172).

Although Pennington focuses on the terms `Hindu´ and `Hinduism´, his conclusions are also important for the study of other Indian religious traditions within the colonial discourse. In this regard, it would also be misleading to regard the categories `Jaina´ and `Jainism´ as Western `inventions´ per se. As already mentioned, Western orientalist scholarship did not only largely depend on the cooperation of Indians, intellectual Jainas themselves joined the discourse on the nature of Jainism and the Jainas as a separate religious community, thereby defining the `main characteristics´ of the religious category `Jainism´. The latter aspect will be further discussed in chapter three. For the present chapter it is important to note that the discourse of Western orientalists, missionaries and census officials, analysed in the following sections, did not `create´ Jainism where there had been nothing `Jaina´ before. The main impact of the orientalist discourse rather consisted in the introduction of new concepts of religion and religious identity, profoundly contributing to the emergence of religious communities as exclusive categories and collective identity markers.

The following section will discuss the beginnings of European philological research on Jaina texts, which eventually led to the academic establishment of `Jainism´ as a separate religious category.

The Academic `Birth´ of Jainism

The German scholar Walther Schubring stated the year 1807 as the "birth year" of academic research into Jainism.[24] In this year Colin Mackenzie's collected reports on the Jainas were published under the title *Account of the Jains* (1807a) in Volume nine of the *Asiatic Researches*. In the same volume, extracts of his journal from 1797 (Mackenzie 1807b) and that of Francis Buchanan (1807), followed by H.T. Colebrooke's *Observations on the Sects of Jains* (1807), dealt with accounts of the Jainas. While Mackenzie and Buchanan limited their writings to the description of

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[24] "Das Geburtsjahr der Jaina-Wissenschaft ist 1807" (Schubring 1935: 1).

Jaina cosmology, mythology and religious practices, Colebrooke, basing his *Observations* on their works as well as his own research, focused on the Jainas as "a sect of *Hindus*" in relation to "the followers of the *Vedas*" and the "Baudd'has" (1807: 288-289).

The word `Jain´, in its plural use made widespread by Colebrooke's article (Flügel 2005: 4), can, in different variations, already be found earlier in European traveller and missionary accounts of the 17th and 18th century.[25] The first Western translations and editions of ancient Jaina texts only became published from 1847 onwards.[26] The second half of the 19th century witnessed the growing involvement of German scholars in the field of Jaina studies. Among the earliest ones, mention must be made of Albrecht Weber (1825-1901), who wrote several influential works on ancient Jaina texts.[27] His work and that of other German scholars owes much to Georg Bühler (1837-1898) and his collection of manuscripts, accomplished during years of travel in search of old Indian texts.[28] Bühler acted as one of several scholars in British service, who were authorised to search Indian libraries and purchase valuable material for government institutions. In this way, duplicate copies were made available for Western universities and their scholars (Schubring 1935: 4). The search for manuscripts in ancient Jaina libraries was to a great part only made possible through the help of some eminent Jaina ascetics and their influence over local Jaina groups.[29]

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[25] See: Flügel (2005: 3-4). For accounts of the Jainas, written by authors of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, see: Zachariae (1977).

[26] In 1847 Otto Böthlingk and C.P.H. Rieu published the *Abhidhanacintamani* of the Śvetāmbara scholar Hemacandra in Sanskrit and German. Shortly afterwards, in 1848, the British missionary J. Stevenson's English translation of the *Kalpa Sutra* and *Navatattva* were published in London.

[27] For further information about Albrecht Weber and his work, see: Stache-Rosen (2000: 69-72); Winternitz (1991: 346-356).

[28] For Bühler and his collecting work, see: Emmrich (2003: 366-368); Schubring (1935: 4-5); Stache-Rosen (2000: 88-90).

[29] Bühler, for instance, owed his success in gaining access to the famous Jaina library of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, mainly to his friendship with the influential Jaina ascetic Jinamuktisūri (Emmrich 2003: 366-367). The sometimes questionable attitudes and methods of Western and Indian scholars regarding the opening of Jaina libraries for scientific research are discussed in: Emmrich (2003: 366-370).

The history of the Western study of Jainism can be found in most introductions to Jainism and has also been dealt with by some authors in greater detail.[30] Here it is more important to examine the approaches, theories and methodology used by the early scholars working with Jaina material. First of all, what most of the writings on Jainism, produced by Western scholars during the 19th century, had in common, was their exclusive philological approach. As was the case with other Indian traditions, the interest of European scholarship was mainly confined to texts.[31] Furthermore, the study of Jaina scriptures was firstly taken up for other reasons than the study of Jainism as such: "The history of Western Jaina studies reflects the influence of scholars who looked to Jainism for that which was other than Jainism itself - for Buddhism, Ajivikism,[32] historical facts, art, linguistics, etc" (Jaini 2000: 33). While early Western scholars tended to consider the value of Jaina scriptures mainly in regard to the study of the languages they were written in, Jaina texts became also instrumental for the study of Buddhism, in whose mighty shadow Jainism remained for a long time. Although acknowledging the importance of Jaina studies for their own sake, Ludwig Alsdorf in 1965 still remarked:

> Yet, especially for the Buddhologist, the knowledge and comparative study of Jinism is of great importance. In many cases, the ancient Jain texts can contribute just as much, if not more, in the elucidation of the old, `original´ Buddhism that can the late Tibetan, Chinese and Mongolian translations of Buddhist texts […] (2006: 6).

But while for Alsdorf the study of Jaina texts as an instrument for the better understanding of Buddhism was just one possible approach,[33] during the 19th century most scholars considered Jaina studies merely complementary for research into other fields, which were seen as more important.

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[30] For short accounts, see: Folkert (1993: 23-33); Glasenapp (1925: 2-5); Schubring (1935: 1-17). More details can be found in: Alsdorf (2006), who deals with the achievements, neglects and future tasks of Jaina studies.

[31] For the textual focus of Western religious studies, see: Folkert (1993: 53-76); King (1999: 62-81).

[32] The Ajivikas were an ascetic order sustained by a community of lay followers. They already existed at the time of the 24th Tīrthaṅkara, Mahāvīra, and evidence of them can still be found in the 13th century CE. See: Dundas (1992: 25-26).

[33] Alsdorf went on stating: "However, the more I am convinced of the usefulness of Jain studies for the study of ancient Buddhism, the less I should like to see Jain philology to be considered as only a complementary science of Buddhology" (2006: 10).

Interaction between Westerners and Jainas were mainly limited to the purchase of manuscripts and philological work on these texts (Emmrich 2003: 360). Field research and a detailed description of Jaina lay practices remained neglected.[34] In the eyes of European scholars, this neglect was acceptable, since the `real´ or `original´ form of a religious tradition had to be found in the ancient texts, anyway, and not in the popular practices of lay men and women which were seen as corruptions of the ancient ideals laid down in the scriptures. Therefore, the essence of Jainism was considered to lie in the manuscripts which were studied. These manuscripts dealt mainly with the ascetic order and emphasised the value of austere practices. While some scholars openly expressed their dislike of the texts they studied,[35] most Western writers laid down the picture of Jainism as a life-negating, colourless tradition of ascetics, which only stood out against other Indian traditions through its "wilder" mythology (Wilkins 1887: 103), the "sad extravagance" of its "external asceticism" (Mitchell 1905: 206), its "grotesque exaggeration" of non-violence (Hopkins 1902: 296) and, in the missionary view of Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, "the pathos of its empty heart" (1915: 289). The focus on certain Jaina customs, considered peculiar by Western observers and often misunderstood, strengthened the picture of Jainism as a strange philosophical system with a grotesquely exaggerated stress on the principle of non-hurting.[36] The neglect of

[34] Mrs Sinclair Stevenson's *Heart of Jainism*, first published in 1915, was the first detailed account of Jainism based on extensive field research among Śvetāmbara Jainas in Gujarat. Due to Mrs. Stevenson's Christian background as a member of the Irish Mission in Gujarat, the book shows much missionary zeal and therefore got criticised by Jaina intellectuals, such as the popular Jaina lawyer and reformer Jagmander Lal Jaini, who published a fierce review in 1925, which will be discussed in chapter three of this thesis. Nevertheless, Mrs. Stevenson's book found a widespread readership and has been reprinted several times.

[35] Dislike of the Jaina literature was not only expressed by scholars with a very negative opinion about the Jaina tradition, such as Hopkins. Albrecht Weber's comment about the Śvetāmbara texts he worked with, criticising them for their vastness, monotony and intellectual scantiness (1883: 240), "in time became received wisdom" (Dundas 1992: 7).

[36] Up to the present day, the wearing of a mouth-shield (*muhpattī*) and the brushing of the floor before sitting or lying down are stereotypes presented in many popular accounts of the Jainas. However, only a minority of the Jainas wear the *muhpattī* (among the Śvetāmbara sects of the Sthānakvāsī and Terāpanthī, ascetics only remove it while eating, whereas Śvetāmbara *mūrtipūjaka* mendicants use it to cover their mouth when preaching or reciting sacred texts). Brushing the floor before sitting or lying down is also only practiced by ascetics. An example for an often misunderstood Jaina tradition is *sallekhanā*, the ritual of fasting to death. This ritual is controlled by very strict regulations and may only be performed under special circumstances, such

research into lay practices reduced Jainism, as defined during the 19th century, to a strict ascetic system of austerities, in its `real form´ only followed by a small number of monks and nuns. The Jaina scriptures became regarded as dry and lifeless, full of complicated classifications, with no real literary value.

But not all Western scholars of Jainism approached their subject with a negative attitude. Among the Germans, who took an interest in Jaina studies from the last decades of the 19th century onwards, Hermann Jacobi (1850-1937) dedicated not only much of his time to the edition and translation of Jaina scriptures, but also took a very sympathetic approach to the subject of his studies.[37] He visited India twice, the first time in 1873-74, when he had the opportunity to accompany Georg Bühler on his journey to Rajasthan in order to obtain manuscripts (Stache-Rosen 2000: 118). Jacobi's name as a pioneer of academic Jaina studies is well established in the history of Jainology, as well as among Jainas up to the present day.[38] From the first accounts on the Jainas, they had either been considered a heretical Hindu sect, or a branch of Buddhism. The latter view is expressed in the *Report on the Census of the Madras Presidency*, *1871*:

> The Jains are now the small remnant of the professors of a religious creed that was once dominant in India, and which, spreading to other eastern lands, is the prevailing faith of upwards of 400 millions of the human race.
>   In the land of its birth Buddhism is dead and it is now represented solely by the few survivors of the Jaina sect […] (Cornish 1874: 114-115).[39]

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as a terminal disease. Many Western authors, however, have misinterpreted *sallekhanā* as religiously sanctioned suicide. Regarding the practice, Hopkins, in his usual tactless way, stated the following: "Asceticism should be practiced by monk and nun, if possible. But if one finds that he cannot resist his passions, or is disabled and cannot endure austerities, he may commit suicide" (1902: 291).

[37] For a short account of Hermann Jacobi's life and works, see: Stache-Rosen (2000: 118-120).

[38] In interviews with Digambara Jaina ascetics and lay followers, conducted during ten months of field research in Karnataka and Southern Maharashtra, Jacobi's name was frequently mentioned, when I asked my interview partners if they could name some non-Jaina scholars of Jainism.

[39] The view that Jainism was a branch of Buddhism was held by several scholars, such as Albrecht Weber and H.H. Wilson. The main reasons for the theory were the similarities found between the Jaina and Buddhist tradition, and the assumption that Jainism was the younger one and therefore must have been a schismatic sect of Buddhism. For further details, see: Bühler (1963: 18-19, especially footnote 11).

What made Jacobi become a pioneer of Jaina studies, apart from his important translations of Jaina scriptures, was the fact that he convincingly argued for the antiquity of Jainism over Buddhism, and thereby laid the academic foundation for the establishment of Jainism as an independent religious tradition. In the introduction to his English translation of the Jaina *Akaranga Sutra* and *Kalpa Sutra*, published in F. Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* series, Jacobi set out to prove the independence of the Jaina tradition from Buddhism:

> Two sects which have so much in common could not, it was thought, have been independent from each other, but one sect must […] have grown out of, or branched off from the other. This à priori opinion has prejudiced the discernment of many critics, and still does so. In the following pages I shall try to destroy this prejudice, and to vindicate that authority and credit of the sacred books of the Gainas to which they are entitled (Jacobi 1964: iv).

By comparing the accounts of the Buddha's and the last Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra's life, Jacobi concluded that there was no reason to hold on to the popular orientalist theory that Mahāvīra's life story had been invented or modeled on the example of the Buddha's biography. While, according to Jacobi's argument, the resemblances between both personalities were due to the fact that both lived the life of ascetics, Jacobi showed a number of differences between both life stories. Regardless of other similarities between the Jaina and Buddhist tradition, Jacobi laid stress on particular differences, especially concerning philosophy. He therefore concluded "that Gainism is as much independent from other sects, especially from Buddhism, as can be expected from any sect" (1964: xlvi-xlvii). [40]

Jacobi's efforts not only put Jaina studies as an independent academic subject on a firm ground,[41] but also proved to be an important tool in the intellectual Jaina elite's efforts to establish the Jainas as an independent religious community. The latter point will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three of this thesis. Regarding Western approaches to Jainism and Jaina studies, the work of Jacobi also

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[40] For Jacobi's detailed argumentation, based on a thorough study of Jaina and Buddhist textual sources, see: Jacobi (1964: ix-liii). For Jacobi's work, see also: Glasenapp (1925: 3-4); Jaini (2000: 24); Schubring (1935: 5).

[41] "In a sense, then, up to Jacobi's time there was no `Jainology´ as a field that could be readily delimited" (Folkert 1993: 27).

had its impact in another field: through his work Jacobi underpinned the Śvetāmbara claims to possess the oldest Jaina canonical works (Emmrich 2003: 360). Right from its first beginnings, Jaina studies had been focused, for several reasons, on the Śvetāmbara tradition. One important reason for this development can be seen in the Śvetāmbaras' more liberal attitude towards their scriptures.[42] Therefore, the scriptures made available for Western scholars were mainly Śvetāmbara works. In terms of interaction between Europeans and Jainas, the contacts were mainly restricted to some individual Śvetāmbara ascetics[43] and their followers, who encouraged Western research by providing textual materials and explaining Jaina doctrine and practice.

In the published correspondence between the Śvetāmbara ascetic Vijayendrasūri, Vijayadharmasūri's spiritual successor, and Western scholars, Digambaras are hardly mentioned, and it is only the German scholar Helmuth von Glasenapp, who mentioned Digambara ascetics at all, while enquiring about their organisation.[44] The condition of the Digambara ascetic tradition in the 19th and early 20th century will be discussed in chapter four. It is sufficient here to say that contact and interaction between Western scholars and Jaina ascetics were limited to Śvetāmbara monks. Therefore it is not surprising that Śvetāmbara doctrine and scriptures were considered the more authentic tradition.

Hermann Jacobi's study of ancient Jaina and Buddhist texts had led him to the conclusion that not only Mahāvīra, but also Pārśvanāth, the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara, was a historical person. The proposed historicity of Pārśvanāth not only found acceptance among most Western scholars, but also contributed to the establishment of

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[42] Christoph Emmrich considers the long history of reform movements within the Śvetāmbara tradition as crucial for this more liberal attitude (2003: 360-361).

[43] Apart from the already mentioned Jinamuktisūri, who proved helpful to Bühler in opening up the Jaina library in Jaisalmer, mention must be made of Vijayarājendrasūri (1827-1906), Vijayānandasuri (also known as Muni Ātmārāmjī, 1837-1897) and Vijayadharmasūri (1868-1922) (Emmrich 2003: 369-370). For details about Vijayānandasuri, see: Brekke (2002: 139-143); Jaini, Lala Jaswant Rai (1918: III-VI). For Vijayadharmasūri, see: Brekke (2002: 135-139).

[44] "How are the Digambara monks organised? I am told, that there are only very few naked monks living solitarily in the jungle […]" (Glasenapp 1960: 62).

Jainism's antiquity, which was to play an important role in the Jaina identity discourse discussed in this thesis. Jacobi's further assumption, however, that Pārśvanāth did wear clothes and only Mahāvīra in later times made absolute nudity compulsory for a male ascetic, indirectly underpinned the Śvetāmbara claim to be more authentic than the Digambaras. Since Śvetāmbara ascetics wear white robes, while fully initiated Digambara monks move around completely naked, Jacobi's assumption of Pārśvanāth having worn clothes could be used as an argument for the greater antiquity of the Śvetāmbara tradition.[45] Regarding the Western study of Jainism, Jacobi's argument seemed to further justify the academic neglect of the Digambara tradition (Jaini 2000: 27-29). Several modern scholars rightly stress the fact that "Western Jaina scholarship, then, has been essentially Śvetāmbara scholarship" (Jaini 2000: 28).[46]

According to the Western definition of a religion, based on the model of the Semitic traditions, a `holy book´ or, at least, a fixed corpus of sacred literature had to lay down the essence of a religious tradition. Orientalists, therefore, also tried to discover and `define´ the `holy books´ of the religious traditions they found in India. Regarding the Jainas, it became common belief that the Śvetāmbara canon consisted of 45 texts. But, as Kendall W. Folkert (1993: 46-47) has pointed out, this list has but one source, Georg Bühler, who had employed a well-educated Jaina ascetic for the task. Bühler's list was accepted by other Western scholars and, perhaps even more important, by Jainas themselves who introduced it into their tradition: "The point to be made out of all this is that Bühler's list transmitted to European scholarship more than a number of texts arranged in a certain order. It also transmitted the notion of a fixed `canon´, with all the nuances borne by the term" (Folkert 1993: 47). The `definition´ of a fixed Śvetāmbara canon, which was in this form not accepted by the Digambaras,[47] further stressed the assumed

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[45] For Jacobi's interpretation and its impact on other scholars, see: Jaini (2000: 27-30).
[46] See: Alsdorf (2006: 120-122); Emmrich (2003: 360-361); Folkert (1993: 30-31); Jaini (2000: 27-30); Schubring (1935: 6).
[47] The Digambara texts, on the other hand, were considered a "secondary canon" (Folkert 1993: 79), `imitating´ the Śvetāmbara canon. See: Folkert (1993: 79).

authenticity of the Śvetāmbara tradition and could be taken as a means to decide whether other Jaina traditions had to be considered `orthodox´ or a later `heresy´. Regarding his research on the Western canonisation of the Jaina scriptures, Folkert concludes:

> Western scholars have treated the Jain scriptures as a closed canon, on the model of the Bible, dating from the fifth century C.E. Scholars have therefore tended to treat deviations from this closed canon as indications of `heresy´ or of sectarian tendencies. However, my own research indicates that the standard treatment may be in error (1993: 88).[48]

The Orientalists' Legacy

After the concept of Jainism as a defined religious entity had been established among the academic circle of Western orientalists during the last decades of the 19th century, many misrepresentations, based on the mainly exclusive focus on textual evidence and the neglect of field research into lay practices, remained. The popular picture of Jainism as a dry, rigid, life-negating ascetic system, only focused on the otherworldly, the attaining of spiritual liberation, survived far into the 20th century. The `real essence´ of the Jaina tradition was, according to the orientalist approach, considered to be written down in the ancient texts, whereas practices and beliefs, which did not agree with the textual sources, were seen as corruptions from the `original´. Jainism, once `discovered´ and `defined´ by Western scholars, was treated as a religious entity, which, in its core, had remained unchanged for several thousand years. Where changes had appeared, they were explained as `heresies´ or the influence of other religious traditions, mainly Hinduism.

The popular modern picture of Jainism and its adherents, the Jainas, has also been influenced by the Western academic focus on the Śvetāmbara tradition and North and Western India, where some Śvetāmbara monks and their mostly wealthy lay followers had cooperated with Western scholars. As has been shown in chapter one,

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[48] In *Scripture and Community*, collected essays, Kendall W. Folkert deals in detail with the phenomenon of `sacred scriptures´ and the canonisation of the Jaina texts. See: Folkert (1993: 35-94). For the canonisation of the Jaina scriptures, see also: Emmrich (2003: 259-365).

when in more recent times philological research was combined with anthropological work on lay Jaina religious practices and lay-ascetic interaction, most of the field research conducted also remained confined to urban Śvetāmbaras of Gujarat and Rajasthan. It is therefore hardly surprising that the stereotype of the Jaina lay follower as an urban-based, well-to-do tradesman still dominates the popular concept. The focus on the Jaina class of urban wealthy businessmen, combined with the orientalists' stress on severe asceticism as the core value of Jainism, had led the sociologist Max Weber to state a close similarity of the Jainas to the Christian Puritans of his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.[49]

Certainly, it is true that a substantial number of Jainas, Śvetāmbaras as well as Digambaras, belong to trading castes, and a majority of these Jaina families belong to the wealthy class. The popular concept of the typical lay Jaina as an influential, rich trader, however, ignores the fact that a substantial number of Digambaras are comparatively much less well off regarding their economic status. Most of these Digambaras reside in the rural areas of modern North Karnataka and Southern Maharashtra, the regional focus of this study. For centuries, their family occupation has been farming, sometimes accompanied by small-scale trading. The orientalists' legacy, therefore, not only carried the misconception of a homogenous religious tradition, labelled as Jainism, but also contributed to the concept of `the Jainas´ as a rather homogenous group. The `elaboration´ of the latter concept, namely the idea of a universal `Jaina community´, was largely influenced by the introduction of the census in British India, and got further refined through the discourse among Jaina intellectuals. The impact of the census on the formation of the concept of supra-local, supra-caste collective religious identity among Jainas will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. Before moving on, the influence of Western orientalist scholarship, as summarised on the preceding pages, will be the focus of discussion. One substantial factor has already been stated: the Western academic approach to the Jaina tradition led to the construction and definition of Jainism as a uniform and universal religion, whose adherents, the Jainas, were bound together into a distinct group. This simplified Western concept had a substantial impact on the newly

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[49] For this comparison, see: Weber (1996).

emerging Indian Western-educated intellectual elite, whose members tried to get to terms with the environment of the colonial times.

The orientalists' writings, furthermore, caused different reactions on part of the Jainas. The citation of Edward W. Hopkins at the beginning of this chapter certainly is a rather drastic example of a Western scholar's hostility towards his subject.[50] Nevertheless, Hopkins was in agreement with other, mainly British authors, such as the already cited W.J. Wilkins or Murray Mitchell, who both included a paragraph about Jainism in their accounts of Indian religions. As in the case of Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, author of *The Heart of Jainism*, who had come to Gujarat as the wife of a Christian missionary, a substantial number of other English accounts of Indian religions also reflect a strong Christian and missionary bias.[51] The negative representation of Indian religions, therefore, does not come as a surprise. Apart from the Christian bias represented in many Western orientalist writings, Western orientalist discourse, as postulated by Said (1978), was also used to legitimate imperialistic and colonial suppression of the Eastern world by Western forces. The men (and sometimes women, as in the case of Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson) who, under the British rule, had come to India and used their experiences abroad to inform a Western readership about the customs and beliefs of the Indian population were, in most cases, either missionaries or British civil servants. In neither case, however, did they come completely unbiased regarding a feeling of Western (including Christian) superiority. It is not the place here to discuss Said's theory about the relation between colonial power and orientalist discourse. Neither is it the place for some unreflected generalisations, for not all British orientalist writings about Indian religions, among them the Jaina tradition, were without any sympathy

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[50] Interestingly, Hopkins, in later years, partly renounced his harsh judgment, after he had visited India and had met groups of Jainas himself. This change of opinion is expressed by Hopkins in a letter to the Jaina ascetic Vijayendrasūri, written in 1924, in which he states: "I found at once that the practical religion of the Jains was one worthy of all commendation and I have since regretted that I stigmatized the Jain religion as insisting on denying God, worshipping man, and nourishing vermin as its chief tenets without giving due regard to the wonderful effect this religion has on the character and morality of the people. But as is often the case, a close acquaintance with a religion brings out its good side and creates a much more favourable opinion of it as whole than can be obtained by a merely objective literary acquaintance" (1960: 92).

[51] W.J. Wilkins belonged to the London Missionary Society, while J. Murray Mitchell was a reverend.

for their subject. Negative statements against Indian religious beliefs and practices, however, are reflected in many orientalists' works. These writings naturally provoked a reaction among Indian intellectuals. Apologetic works in defence of what was considered their own religious tradition had first appeared among Hindus who had been the primary target of Christian missionary attacks. Although their confrontation with Western, and especially Christian attacks had been considerably milder than the one against Hindus and Sikhs in colonial Bengal and Punjab, some Western-educated Jaina intellectuals took writings such as Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson's as an affront to their religious tradition and answered in defence. In this way, the first English apologetic Jaina writings, addressed to a non-Jaina and mainly Western audience, were produced. These works, as will be shown in chapter three of this thesis, not merely served the cause of representing (and defending) the Jaina tradition to non-Jainas, but furthermore substantially contributed to the Jainas' own discourse about a collective Jaina identity and the core values of Jainism.

To understand another, equally important reaction that Western orientalism provoked on the part of the intellectual Jaina elite, Edward Said is again a relevant focus. Since the first publication of Said's *Orientalism* critics have repeatedly noted that his work especially focuses on French and British orientalism, while German orientalists and their discourse go unnoticed.[52] Germans, however, were not only, as Suzanne Marchand remarks, "the most important orientalist scholars between about 1830 and 1930" (2001: 465), but have been immensely influential in the field of Jaina studies. The German scholars, who studied Jaina scriptures and in some cases had the opportunity to visit India themselves, had neither a missionary nor an imperialistic background. It is true that scholars such as Albrecht Weber complained about what was regarded as the monotonous style of Jaina scriptures. Generally speaking, however, the most important figures among German orientalists interested in Jaina studies[53] took a rather sympathetic and positive

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[52] For some recent examples, see: King (1999b: 148-149); Marchand (2001: 465).

[53] In this regard, apart from Hermann Jacobi and Georg Bühler, the names of Ernst Leumann (1859-1931), Walther Schubring (1881-1969) and Helmuth von Glasenapp (1891-1963) have to be mentioned here.

approach to their subject of study. From the perspective of Jaina intellectuals, however, more importantly, scholars like Hermann Jacobi had established Jainism as an independent, ancient and distinct Indian religion and could therefore be cited as authorities for the independent status of Jainism. As will be shown in chapter six of the present thesis, the works of German orientalists are still cited as proof of Jainism's independent status in recent petitions for the granting of nationwide religious minority status to the Jainas. Progressive Jaina lay leaders from the beginning of the 20th century onwards have never been tired of praising the work of German scholars, first among them Jacobi. This attitude of praise, combined with critical remarks on alleged misrepresentations of Jainism, is illustrated in the following statement, taken from *The Jaina Gazette*, the English language organ of progressive Jaina leaders:

> Some have branded Jainism as an Atheistic religion, some have regarded it as an off shoot of Buddhism, some have confounded it with Charvakas, some have gone the length of saying, that it originated after Shankaracharya and some have stigmatized it as a religion without any philosophy. Some were so bold as to say that Shri Parshwanath and Mahabir were mythological personages, and the real founder of Jainism was Gautam Budha.
>
> Our educated bretheren, the flower of our community, bore all these insults patiently, and never cared to contradict the false statements of the orientalists. Who then dispelled this misunderstanding? A German scholar came forward and announced to the world that Jainism is as old as the Vedantic religion, and that Shri Parshwanath and Mahabir were historical personages (Kesraichand 1910: 3).

During his visit to India in 1914, Hermann Jacobi was honoured with the title *Jaina darśana divākar* (`sun of the Jaina philosophical system´) by the All India Jaina Association, "in recognition of his eminent service to the cause of the Jaina Philosophy, and his epoch-making researches on the antiquities of Jainism" (Prasada and Jaini 1914: 40), as remarked in *The Jaina Gazette*. At a time, when the antiquity of a religious tradition, as well as its distinctiveness, were used as important ideological tools in the emerging discourse on separate religious communities in India, the work of Jacobi and his successors received an enthusiastic welcome on the part of the small Jaina intellectual elite.

What has been called the `orientalist legacy´ in this paragraph had, however, not only a strong impact on Jaina intellectuals. The classifications and definitions of orientalist scholars also served as an important academic basis for further elaborated classifications. These were undertaken by the British administration through the introduction of the decennial census system on the Indian subcontinent. The methods and definitions used, as well as the data delivered by the census enumerations, were to play an influential role in the emergence of the concept of distinct collective religious identities and the idea of separate religious communities in India.

The Census and the Jainas as a `Distinct Community´

In 1801, with the first census taken in Britain, the institution of counting the population according to certain criteria every ten years was started. From 1850 the British had been planning to carry out a census in British India. Besides some first efforts to produce gazetteers and take census data in some provinces, which had already started during the first decades of the 19th century, the first general census of the inhabitants of British India was attempted in 1872.[54]

What is important for the study of the emerging conception of distinct collective religious identities and separate religious communities during the 19th century is the fact that the British census takers focused on a classification of the population according to castes and religions: "It was felt by many British officials in the middle of the nineteenth century that caste and religion were the sociological keys to understanding the Indian people" (Cohn 2000: 242). But to classify into special categories, definitions were needed. The work of Western orientalists had tried to define Indian religious traditions according to the European concepts of `a religion´ and its plural, `religions´. In this way, the terms `Hinduism´ and `Buddhism´ were created, followed by `Sikhism´ and `Jainism´ as further `-isms´. The adherents of these more or less constructed religious entities were called `Hindus´, `Buddhists´,

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[54] Initially, the first general census was planned for 1861, but the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857 and its suppression intervened. For the first census takings in India, see: Cohn (2000: 225-254); Conlon (1981: 103-117); Jones (1981a: 73-98); Martin (1981: 61-63).

`Sikhs´ and `Jainas´. These definitions, however, proved to be rather tricky when put into practice. Census enumerators soon found out that any given definition was very likely to prove less clear-cut than expected. In case of the question, who should be regarded as a `Hindu´, in 1872 the following instructions were given to the enumerators in the Bombay Presidency: "All believers in the *Vedas* must be entered as *Hindoo*, and so, too, must those wild tribes - as *Bheels* - whose original religions are lost, and who now, to all intents and purposes, are Hindoo by *Religion* though not by *Race*" (Census of the Bombay Presidency 1872, Part I: 97). Here, the phrase `Hindu´ is used in two aspects, `race´ and `religion´, which does not really help in clarifying the definition of a `Hindu´.

In the same census, the Jainas were placed under the category of `Buddhists.´[55] This reflects the impact of Western orientalist scholarship, which at that time still tended to consider the Jainas a branch of Buddhism. First doubts about this classification, however, had already been raised. In the *Report on the Census of the Madras Presidency*, *1871* (Cornish 1874) and the *Report on the Mysore General Census of 1871* (Lindsay 1874) Jainas are also classified as `Buddhists´, but in the latter volume some doubts about this classification are already mentioned:

> It is doubtful whether Jains ought to be called Buddhists, as various authorities allege they refuse to acknowledge Budda as their teacher, while others assert that Budda or Vishnu in his 9th avatar is merely the Sanskrit name for the Supreme Being worshipped by the Jains of Mysore in his Kanarese name of Jainisvara. Be this as it may, they are generally called Buddhists and considered heretics by orthodox Hindus, whilst they in return profess to be upholders of the ancient primitive religion and deny the supremacy of Brahmans (Lindsay 1874: 28).

The census of the Bombay Presidency, taken in 1872, lists Jainas under the category `Buddhists´, and, regarding the rather high literacy rate among `Buddhists´ of the presidency, it is remarked: "Our so-called BUDDHISTS are most of them

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[55] See the several volumes of the census of the Bombay Presidency of 1872 (Government of Bombay 1875a; 1875b; 1875c). The only exception is found in the table *General enumeration of people in Southern Division (Poona, Ahmednuggur, Rutnagherry, Belgaum Zillahs) 1845, Dharwar Zillah April 1846*, where Jainas are listed under "Shrawuk and Jain", while the category `Buddhist´ is not mentioned at all (Government of Bombay 1875b: Statement A: 5). The phrase `Shravuk´ is most probably an English adaptation of the word *śrāvaka* (literally `a listener´, a lay follower of Jainism).

engaged in trade, so it is not surprising that the percentage of their educated *males* is as high as 43, 64" (Government of India 1875b: 197). The phrase "our so-called BUDDHISTS" reflects the growing tendency among academic scholars, to consider Jainas the adherents of a separate religious tradition.

The Indian Census of 1881 eventually introduced further categories and among them Jainas were listed separately (Government of India 1892). Officially, then, as Jainism was no longer considered a branch of Buddhism, the Jainas ceased to be categorised as a Buddhist `sect´. However, although theoretically counted as a separate religious community, their identity remained blurred in the following census takings. It seemed to be more a matter of indifference on the part of the Jainas, than on part of the census takers. Already in 1883 the exactness of the enumerations regarding those persons, who belonged to the Jaina religion, was doubted: "Many Jains have, however, undoubtedly given their religion as Hindoo, and in some cases, though these are not many, I am inclined to think the enumerators have returned as Hindoos persons who really stated their religion to be Jain" (Plowden 1883: 23). The reason stated for this tendency introduces the difficulty of distinguishing the concepts of `religious´ and `cultural´ identity: "As the followers of the Jain creed are generally held, and themselves generally claim, to be Hindoos, this is not surprising; nor is the error of importance, for the domestic and social economy of the Jains differs little from that of the orthodox Hindoo" (Plowden 1883: 23). The fact that many Jainas stated their religion as `Hindu´ caught the attention of the census takers during the following census operation. In the report on the census of the Bombay Presidency of 1891 "considerable confusion in the entry of Jain and Hindu" is mentioned, so that "[i]t has not been uncommon to find a man recorded of the Hindu religion and of `Jain caste.´ Of course, there is no such thing as a Jain caste […]" (Drew 1892: 44). The following two census takings of the Bombay Presidency from the years 1901 and 1911 are silent on the issue, but remark a steady decrease of persons numbered among the category `Jain´ (Edwardes 1901: 22; Mead and Macgregor 1912: 56).

For the census takings of the Bombay Presidency of 1921, the enumerators got instructed that "Jains should be entered as Jains and not as Hindus, even though

they themselves regard themselves as such" (Sedgwick 1922: 61). Furthermore it was stated: "In the case of *Jainism* it is doubtful whether any student of comparative religion could possibly class Jainism as a sect of Hinduism. Yet it is a fact that many Jains regard themselves and are regarded as Hindus" (Sedgwick 1922: 68). The reason for this state of affairs was seen in the confusion of the terms `Hindu´ and `Indo-Aryan´. While `Hindu´, according to the census administrators, described the member of a religious community, Hindus as well as Buddhists, Sikhs and Jainas were to be classed as `Indo-Aryan´ regarding their `race´: "It therefore comes to this that Indians often use the term Hindu for what we call in the Census Indo-Aryan. Yet as a religion Jainism is definitely distinct" (Sedgwick 1922: 68).

This distinctness in terms of religion, first stated by orientalists and, following their writings, by the British census administrators, does not seem to have been of much importance for most of the Jainas, as the above mentioned citations show. It is doubtful, if the mass of the population really bothered about the answers they gave to the census enumerators.[56] The average Indian had more immediate concerns than the religious categories constructed by Europeans based on their idea of `a religion´ as a well-defined, closed system, whose adherents formed a community with fixed boundaries. But the census and its stress on classification and definition nevertheless had a strong impact on Indian society, as Bernard S. Cohn states:

> If there was a direct effect of the census on the mass of the Indian population, it was on the enumerators. To carry out the census in the late nineteenth century at least half a million Indians had to be involved in the process, and it was probably more than that. […] The Indians who mainly on a voluntary basis made the census possible were a highly significant group as they were literate and educated, even if only at a primary school level (2000: 248).

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[56]If they were questioned at all. In this regard, Bernard S. Cohn remarks: "I suspect in many instances that the questions weren't even asked and that many of the enumerators filled in the forms on the basis of their knowledge of their neighbours- particularly on questions of caste, language and religion" (2000: 248). Similar statements were made in interviews with Jainas in Karnataka and Maharashtra, conducted for the present thesis. Regarding the census takings, several Jainas expressed the opinion that also nowadays many enumerators do not bother much about asking questions, but fill in the forms according to their own assumptions.

The data collected in the census did not matter to the average villager, but it did to members of the educated Indian elite in towns and cities.[57]

The census takers' classifications according to caste and religion did not remain limited to the counting of members, but were extended to nearly all fields of human life. Therefore, the members of the specific castes and religions were compared in several social and economic aspects, such as their professions, the average marriage age, the proportion of widows, their educational standard and the degree of their literacy in English. That the newly defined religious communities, however, were not homogenous groups, but showed substantial local differences, was reflected in the census data itself, as the following example of the variation of the literacy rate among Jainas shows: the census of the Bombay Presidency taken in 1911 revealed a huge gap in the degree of literacy between the merchant classes of Jainas in Gujarat and trading centres such as Bombay, and the mostly agriculturist educational backward Jainas in the area of the modern South Maharashtra and North Karnataka. While the first, as a rather wealthy trading community, naturally showed a high rate of male literacy, the educational backwardness of the rural Southern Digambaras found its expression in a very low literacy rate. Regarding these differences, the report on the census data for the Bombay Presidency of the year 1911 offered the following comment:

> There are two great bodies of Jains in the presidency, in Gujarat […] and the Southern Maratha […] Country. The former are traders, the latter cultivators, and the influence of their occupation is directly reflected in their educational statistics [...]. […] there is probably no ethnic connection between these two centres of the Jain religion. The Jain in the Karnatak is indistinguishable both in appearance and dress from the local cultivators, and the comparatively low ratio of literacy is due to racial causes (Mead and Macgregor 1912: 140).

This statement is interesting for its usage of `ethnic´ and `racial´ categories. The Southern Digambaras, accordingly, differed from the Jaina merchant classes of Gujarat not only in terms of occupation, but also in their `ethnic´ origin.

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[57] For further information about the formation of caste *sabhās* (literally `associations´, `meetings´) in towns and cities, and their petitions for the change of their caste status, see: Cohn (2000: 248-249).

Notwithstanding these rather significant differences, both groups, however, were still categorised as belonging to the same, namely the `Jaina community´. Here, we meet with a quite contradictory approach to classifications taken in the census operations: the entries in the different census takings are rather precise in stating regional differences in main occupation, as well as educational and economic background. The various district gazetteers furthermore provide very detailed descriptions of local socio-religious customs, marriage patterns, religious practices and beliefs. In this regard, significant differences between, for instance, a wealthy Sthānakvāsī moneylender of Gujarat and an illiterate Digambara farmer of North Karnataka become obvious. In most aspects both seem to have more in common with those sharing the same regional, occupational, economic and social background, and in real life most probably there would hardly be any social interaction between the two. Nevertheless, according to the census classifications, the Gujarati trader and the Kannadigan farmer belonged to the same category, for both of them were members of one religious community, the Jainas. What constituted the connecting link was the adherence to the same universal religion, Jainism, as defined by Western orientalism.

When we ask, however, in which way a Jaina differed from a Hindu, the answers provided by the orientalists' writings and the census entries remain abstract and rather blurred. In general, as stated by Jacobi and other scholars following him, Jainism was a distinct religious tradition for the reasons that its philosophy was different from Buddhist as well as Hindu philosophical traditions, and the Jainas (along with the Buddhists) rejected the authority of the Vedas (Jacobi 1964; Glasenapp 1925). Furthermore, as highlighted in general accounts of the Jainas, not the Hindu gods, but the 24 Tīrthaṅkaras were the main centre of worship, while in daily life the utmost stress was laid on the non-harming of any kind of life. These points are found, for instance, in W.J. Wilkins' short account of the Jainas' main principles:

> They deny the divine origin and infallible authority of the Vedas; they hold that certain saints have, by a life of purity and self-mortification, attained not only to an equality with, but even superiority over, the

deities commonly worshipped by the Hindus; and they show excessive regard for all forms of animal life (1887: 99).

While for Wilkins the mentioned criteria were at least sufficient to differentiate the Jainas "from the main body of Hindus" (1887: 99),[58] for orientalist scholarship and the categories used in the census, this scanty definition was enough to make distinctions between Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas.

In practice, however, census data from different localities, as well as detailed anthropological descriptions, as collected for the district gazetteers, presented a more complicated picture. Just as the main occupation of Jainas varied across different regions, so did the languages spoken, the dress worn and the customs locally practised. To give one example: the gazetteer of the Belgaum District, first published in 1884, had the following to say about the local (Digambara) Jainas. They are divided into four castes, the "Shetváls, Chaturthas, Bogárs, and Panchams", whose members do not intermarry. Regarding their professions they are traders, agriculturists or labourers, while some are in government service. From their outward appearance "men and women look like Lingáyats" and their native language is the local Kanarese (Campbell 2001: 102). They "have their own priests and do not employ Bráhmans" but do "keep the regular Hindu holidays" (Campbell 2001: 103). In contrast to these descriptions, we read the following about Gujarati Jainas, who had come to the Belgaum area as traders. Apart from their native language, "Gujaráti mixed with Hindustáni", most of them also speak Hindustani and Marathi. Economically they are "well-to-do people" working as shopkeepers, merchants and money-lenders. The men wear the "Gujarát- Váni turban." They conduct their marriages with caste fellows from Gujarat, have "their own Gujarát Bráhman priests […] keep most Hindu fasts and feasts, and during the *Diváli* holidays in November worship the goddess Lakshmi in their shops" (Campbell 2001: 101). About the social intercourse between local Jainas and Jaina immigrants from West India, it is stated: "The Gujarát Jains do not dine or have any social intercourse with the Belgaum Jains" (Campbell 2001: 101).

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[58]Wilkins (1887) considered Jainas, along with different groups of Sikhs, a Hindu sect.

These citations clearly illustrate that Southern Digambaras and Gujarati Jainas did not have too much in common. The above cited descriptions also show that a definite distinction between Jainas and Hindus is difficult to make. In both cases, the Jainas described are in many important aspects such as profession, language, outward appearance and forms of worship hard to distinguish from Hindus of the same local and professional background.

Apart from the theoretical level of orientalist definitions, in practice it remained a difficult, if not impossible task, to define a clear-cut boundary between Hindus and Jainas. This difficulty not only finds its expression in rather doubtful presentations of sudden decreases of the Jaina population, as reflected in various census takings, but lingered on in confusing and contradictory classifications of the Jainas in official documents. In this regard, although listed as a separate religious community from the 1882 census onwards, Jainas are still classified as members of a Hindu caste in the Belgaum and Dharwar District Gazetteers of 1884 (Campbell 2003; 2004).

The Jainas' religious distinctiveness, as highlighted by scholars like Hermann Jacobi, and their classification as a separate religious community in the census takings from 1882 onwards, naturally did not lead to the sudden emergence of a distinct collective Jaina identity, expressed in clear-cut boundaries between Jainas and Hindus. These boundaries, as will be argued in the following chapters, have remained rather vague and blurred. However, the notion of Jainism as a separate religious tradition, and the Jainas as a distinct religious community (however blurred the boundaries between Jainas and Hindus in practice may have been) was registered among the small Western-educated Jaina elite, whose members responded to the data collected in the census. The fact that the Jainas (as other newly defined religious communities) were far from being a homogenous group, was more or less ignored, while the main message proposed and received was the new concept of distinct religious communities, among which the Jainas had their place. As Kenneth W. Jones puts it:

> […] [T]he census reports provided a new conceptualization of religion
> as a community, an aggregate of individuals united by a formal
> definition and given characteristics based on qualified data. Religions

became communities mapped, counted, and above all compared with other religious communities (1981a: 84).

Along with the new concept of community based on the adherence to a universal religion, the census data opened the door to comparisons between these newly defined religious communities. Although, on the whole, the Jainas' level of education, in comparison with other religious communities, was quite high at the end of the 19th century and kept improving during the first decades of the 20th century, the census takings revealed one fact that alarmed reform-minded Jaina intellectuals. Not only compared with the male literacy rate within the Jaina community, but also in comparison to all other communities, the very low degree of female education among Jainas stuck out: "Compared to the males, there are less female learners among the Jains than among any other class" (Drew 1892: 114). This state of affairs was hardly a matter in which Western-educated Jaina intellectuals would take pride. The same held true for census data regarding the average marriage age and the proportion of widows. While child marriage had been a common practice in India, the census of 1881 revealed a comparatively low marriage age among "Jains and other Hindoos" (Plowden 1883: 68). Furthermore, it showed that the Jaina community had the highest proportion of widows out of all communities (Plowden 1883: 68). Thirty years later, the census of the Bombay Presidency presented a similar picture, and it was stated: "The Jains do not allow a widow to take a second husband so they naturally show a higher proportion of widows than the Hindu castes some of which allow re-marriage" (Mead and Macgregor 1912: 116).

These rather sobering census data regarding the low degree of female education, the low marriage age and the high proportion of widows among Jainas stuck out when compared with the high degree of male literacy and economic success among the Jainas. Therefore, as topics like female education, abolition of child marriage and campaigns for widow remarriage, since the second half of the 19th century, became urgent reform goals for the Indian Western-educated elites, Jaina reformers also took their stand against what were considered `social evils´, as will be further discussed in chapter three of this thesis. Although the census data presented, for the

first time, statistical information about the proportions of these `social evils´ and their prevalence among the newly defined religious communities, they would also have been noticed regardless of any census. Here the census can be rather seen as an indicator of the dimensions these practices had in Indian society, and, more important, among the different religious communities. In this way, the census data could stimulate social reformers and could also be used by them as proof for the need of social reform.

The census operations, however, also presented a trend, which most probably would have gone unnoticed without the statistical data, for in most cases it owed its very existence to the data collection itself. This phenomenon, which caught the attention of the census takers and alarmed members of the Indian intellectual elite, was the picture of steadily decreasing, or, to put it more dramatically, `dying´ religious communities. Since the census administrators took keen interest in numbers, the increase or decrease of the population, again divided into different religious communities, was measured and interpreted with great care. For the Indian intellectual elite, more importantly, the power of their respective community was seen in its numerical strength. Especially at a time, when constitutional changes brought more democratic rights, the numerical strength of a community was equal to political power (Jones 1981a: 95).

Among Hindu intellectuals, Christian conversions were considered a major threat which led to numerical decrease. The actual steady decline in the number of Hindus counted in the decennial census collections was caused by several factors. Apart from conversions, a main factor for the decline was the further elaboration of the census classifications and the changing definitions of a `Hindu´. In this regard, the so-called `Hindu community´ first `lost´ the Sikhs and the Jainas, who were considered separate communities in the census from the 1870s and 1880s onwards.[59] Regarding the lowest section of the social hierarchy, a number of the so-called `untouchables´, along with tribals, were converted to Christianity. When,

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[59] This `loss´ of Sikhs and Jainas, however, occurred gradually and was no coherent process. While Jainas, as shown above, in many cases remained within the `Hindu´ category, a number of Sikh groups were also still considered Hindus after the census had introduced a separate category `Sikh´. For more details on the Sikhs and the census, see: Oberoi (1994: 207-213).

at the beginning of the 20th century, separate census categories for the `untouchable´ castes were considered, Hindu leaders became even more alarmed, fearing a further numerical decline of the Hindu community (Jones 1976: 305). This threatening trend, an apparently steadily decreasing Hindu population, while the Muslim community prospered and increased in number, was highlighted in the census data.

Among the Sikhs, the decennial census data of the Punjab presented a tendency, which led, in Harjot Oberoi's words, "to the birth of a powerful colonial myth" (1994: 212), predicting the steady decrease of the Sikh population. This decline in numbers, alarming the British administration as well as Sikh intellectuals, was, however, neither caused by an increase in conversions to Christianity, nor in a lower fertility rate among Sikhs. As census officials by 1931 had slowly begun to realise, the decline in Sikh numbers owed its existence to unreliable census data. Oberoi (1994) has shown that the definition of a `Sikh´ turned out to be problematic, just as the definition of a `Jaina´ was. In the case of the Sikhs, however, the British administration was furthermore led by the preconception, that only those persons who by wearing certain symbols and sticking to certain rules of behaviour were physically identifiable as `Sikhs´, should be counted in the category. This concept, further publicised by radical Sikh leaders, led to the exclusion of a substantial number of groups, whose members did not adhere to the propagated `Sikh ideal´ (Oberoi 1994: 207-213).

As already mentioned above, the numbers of Jainas counted in the census enumerations did not prove to be any more reliable. The census data presented a picture of an alarmingly decreasing Jaina population. In the Indian Census of 1911 it was stated: "Since 1891 the number of Jains has been steadily diminishing, and a loss of 5.8 per cent in 1901 has now been followed by one of 6.4 per cent" (Gait 1913: 126-127). The diminishing numbers of persons counted as Jainas from 1891 to 1911 created special attention on the part of the census administrators. While the decrease in several provinces was explained by emigration of Jaina merchant classes or the local outbreak of diseases (Gait 1913: 127), the main reason for the

declining numbers was seen in the popular tendency among Jainas to consider themselves Hindus:

> As already stated, the Jains form an integral part of the Hindu social system and are thus often disposed to regard themselves as Hindus. In quite recent times a number of them have joined the Arya Samaj. In the Punjab, United Provinces and Bombay they are prone to take part in Hindu festivals, and are likely gradually to become merged in that religion (Gait 1913: 127).

Whether the decline was real, through conversions and lower birthrates, or, more likely, caused by wrong enumerations, the trend alarmed leading Jaina intellectuals, who feared the extinction of their already very small community. In his "An Open letter to Jain Brothers", published in *The Jaina Gazette* in May 1910, Manilal Hakemchand expressed his concern in the following appeal:

> Thus now our decline and fall has been tremendous. Diminished in numbers, reduced in strength we exist only in name and form an almost negligible quantity in the sum total of humanity. […] [T]he leading and influential minority of the most loyal, quiet and law abiding community of Jains should have no serious difficulty in obtaining a representative of theirs in the Council of the Governors and that of the Viceroy; and why should there not be higher posts in the Government, to be given to deserving Jains? But only if we approach the Government as a Jain community, as a nation, as an assemblage of people with common interest, and not separately in the name of the different sub-divisions of a community (Hakemchand 1910: 2).

Hakemchand did not only mention the Jainas' "decline and fall", but also what he considered a necessary step for gaining strength, namely the striving for unity and cooperation among the Jainas. The topic `unity equals strength´ has played an important role for Jaina leaders, which will be further discussed in chapter three of this thesis.

The threat of numerical decline, which found its alarming expression in the census data, naturally also had its impact on other allegedly `declining communities´, namely Hindus and Sikhs. Both groups, more confronted with the threat of Christian conversion, in course of time developed their own systems of `re-converting´ former members or outcasts back into their fold. At the same time,

however, it was felt, that the own community had to be defined and internally unified. This could take the form of a rather aggressive self-definition in opposition to other religious communities, which, for instance, found its expression in the growing propagation of a Hindu-Muslim antagonism. To stress the distinctiveness of their own religious tradition, more radical reformers among Hindus and Sikhs aimed at creating boundaries between their communities and outsiders. This could be achieved through the use and propagation of languages, myths, rituals and outward symbols. When we look at the reactions of intellectual Hindu, Sikh and Jaina leaders we find similarities but also differences. These differences also existed between members of the same religious community, for there have been many different ideas about how to define each community. When we compare, however, the reactions of, for instance, radical Ārya Samājists and Sikhs of the Punjab with that of Maharashtrian lay Jaina leaders, we have to take into consideration various different factors. While the Punjab generally presented a more aggressive atmosphere in religious competition, strongly influenced by a determined Christian mission, Maharashtra, as the centre of the Non-Brahmin movement, witnessed a stronger political antagonism between Brahmins and Non-Brahmin castes, among them the Jainas. When Hindus pushed for Hindi as a national language and radical Sikhs began to propagate Punjabi as the `Sikh language´, the Jainas, as a tiny minority spread among the whole of India, had no spoken language which could be used as a specific `Jaina language´. To give one more example: while the Sikhs, with their last guru's establishment of the *khālsā*, a kind of religious order, had a system of outward symbols which could be propagated as essential for a distinct Sikh identity, Jaina lay men and women were, from their outward appearance, indistinguishable from Hindus of their specific region. These differences will be further discussed in following chapters. Here, however, it is important to stress that the census data, and especially the picture of `declining communities´, caught the attention of Indian intellectuals belonging to different religious traditions. What these men had in common, was their active participation in the discourse on new concepts of universal religions and separate religious communities. New concepts and ideas, propagated through the

orientalists' works and the classifications of the census administrators, had a strong impact on the discourse among Indian intellectuals. The writings of Western orientalists prompted, as has been mentioned in the previous section and will be further discussed in chapter three, different reactions among Indian intellectuals. While some Western philological and historical works could be used to prove the antiquity and distinctiveness of their own religious tradition, alleged misrepresentations had to be rectified by apologetic writings.

The census, furthermore, provided reform-minded Western-educated intellectuals with data concerning the extent to which what they regarded as `social evils´ were being practised within their respective communities. The concept of these separate religious communities, some of them allegedly threatened by extinction, called for internal unity and the establishment of a distinct common religious identity.

The example of allegedly `dying communities´, mentioned above, illustrates that concepts of collective identity and the formation of community heavily rely on specific circumstances. While multiple forms of identity were (and still are) prevalent among members of all of the newly defined religious communities, specific external factors and developments have contributed to at times similar, at times different constructions of collective religious identity by intellectual leaders of various religious groups. The need to propagate internal unity was felt by Sikhs, Hindus and Jainas alike. The focus on external boundaries, however, had a higher priority among Hindu and Sikh leaders in the Punjab where community formation became more and more entwined with politics and political representation. This politicisation of collective religious identity will be further discussed in chapter six of this thesis. Here, it is important to stress that multiple identities and `blurred boundaries´ between their own religious group and outsiders are not a `unique feature´ of the Jainas. Although radical Sikh leaders propagated the ideal of the easily recognisable initiated member of the Sikh *khālsā* as the `real Sikh´, other forms of identity still exist among Sikhs. In this respect, an exclusive `unified Sikh identity´ is also largely based on the theoretical `construction´ or `imagination´ of the intellectual elite. In the case of the Sikhs, however, their radical reformers have been more successful in presenting this `imagination´ of the Sikhs as a unified,

distinct community not only to Sikhs, but especially to non-Sikhs, as will be further discussed in chapter six.

Referring back to Manilal Hakemchand's already cited "An open Letter to Jain Brothers", published in 1910, the phrase of "a Jain community […] an assemblage of people with common interest" (1910: 2) is used. Hakemchand's exact definition of the Jainas as a `community´, bound together by common interests, remains unclear in this appeal. The following chapter aims at providing more clarity about the Jaina discourse among men like Hakemchand, Western-educated Jaina intellectuals, and their definition and propagation of a separate, unified `Jaina community´ and a collective `Jaina identity.´

3. THE LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY JAINA IDENTITY DISCOURSE: APOLOGETIC WRITINGS AND THE NEED FOR ORGANISATION AND REFORM

> It is well to recognise that the Jainas are not a bagful of castes and sects with diversified cultures, conceptions and creeds. Jainism is not, and has never been at any time in the past, and never will be in the future, a religion of castes and sub-sects, a mere cult of castes, if I may be permitted to put this. There is one doctrine, one religion, one culture, one community of the Jainas, and also one Law (Champat Rai Jain 1941: 19-20).

This statement was written by the lawyer Champat Rai Jain (1867-1942), one of the most ardent Jaina apologetic writers of the first half of the 20th century. Its message is simple: Jainas form a uniform body bound together by the adherence to "one doctrine, one religion, one culture […] and […] one Law" (1941: 19-20). Jain's main concern, here, was to argue for the official acknowledgement of a separate `Jaina law´. In this context the claim that Jainism at all times had been a uniform religion, governed by one universal law and unaffected by the concepts of caste and sect, became a crucial argument. The definition of Jainism as a universal religion, which held an important message for the whole world, had already been highlighted in Champat Rai Jain's earlier apologetic works. In the present chapter, the work of Champat Rai Jain and other Western-educated Jaina apologetic writers and reformers will be discussed. Who were these men, under which circumstances did they act, and what were their contributions to the concept of a supra-caste, supra-local Jaina community and collective Jaina identity? The first part of this chapter will be dedicated to these questions, while the main aim is to demonstrate that the early apologetic writings in English built an influential foundation for the construction of a specific `image´ of Jainism and the postulation of special `core values´ universally stressed by Jainas. This definition of Jainism, however, was not founded on the propagation of qualitative differences between Jainism and Hinduism. The missing focus on the "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi

1994), as will be argued in course of this thesis, largely contributed to rather vague boundaries between Jainas and Hindus.

The second part of the present chapter will present a small case study about a reformist Digambara Jaina organisation, the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā (`South Indian Jaina Association´), which was founded in the area of the present North Karnataka and Southern Maharashtra in 1899 and is still existing today. It is true that the reform-minded Jaina intellectuals, who started their campaigns for internal unity and social reform from the end of the 19th century onwards, shared a similar economic, educational and professional background, and propagated cooperation of various Jaina groups. Champat Rai Jain's earlier cited postulate, which portrayed the Jainas as unaffected by the concepts of `caste´ and `sect´, however, seemed to derive from a Jaina reformer's wishful thinking, not from historical reality. Although the need for unity and cooperation was part of the reformers' agenda, in actual practice the first Jaina organisations were restricted to, or at least dominated by, members of the same sectarian division, and, in many cases, also the same caste.[60] Furthermore, the work of most associations was confined to different regions. The chosen example, the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā, is noteworthy in several respects. Although restricted to Digambaras of the area which under British rule was known as South Maharashtra, its sphere of influence nevertheless included a relatively large area, comprising the present districts of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, with its centres at Kolhapur, Belgaum, Sangli and Hubli. Like the leaders of other Jaina and non-Jaina reform movements, its members mainly belonged to a small intellectual elite, supported by some wealthy reform-minded merchants. The Digambara population of the area, however, in the majority consisted of illiterate or poorly educated agriculturists, with their educational and economic standard differing from Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras in North and West India. In this respect, a case study of the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā is suitable for illustrating the general features the association shared with other Jaina and to some extent also non-Jaina organisations founded at the end of the 19th century, as well

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[60] The practice of caste among Jainas will be discussed later in this chapter.

as the organisation's specific features, caused by its individual historical and regional context. The example of the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā during the first decades after its establishment intends to explore how successfully its leaders' reformist ideas were put into practice. As will be argued, social reform has met only with very limited success, while the association mainly contributed to the establishment of the concept of a more universal supra-regional and supra-local collective Digambara identity. This conceptualisation did not `replace´ regional, sectarian and caste-based forms of collective identities. However, by introducing broader concepts of community among Digambara Jainas, irrespective of caste and region, the terms `Digambara´ and `Jaina´ developed into important identity markers.

The following section will generally introduce the first efforts at organisation and reform among Jainas of different regions and sects.

First Efforts at Organising and Reforming the Jainas

Much has been written about modern Hindu reform movements, such as the Brahmo Samāj, the earliest of its kind, founded by Rammohun Roy at colonial Calcutta in 1828.[61] The impact of the British colonial system on young Bengalis, and the emergence of a new class of Western-educated young intellectuals, popularly placed under the phrase `Bengal Renaissance´ has also been discussed at length by Indian and Western historians,[62] and shall not be repeated here. The interaction between the Indian elite and Western agents has naturally been neither restricted to Bengal, nor to Hindus.

When it comes to reformist activities among intellectual Jainas, however, information is rare. A main reason for this has already been mentioned. As a tiny minority, Jainas were distributed over the whole territory of British India and the Native States. Though regional centres with a higher Jaina percentage of population

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[61] Among the richness of sources about the Brahmo Samāj and its leading members, see, for instance: Damen (1983); Jones (1989: 30-39); Killingley (1993); Kopf (1979); Lavan (1981); Pankratz (2001); Robertson (1999).

[62] See, for instance: Jones (1989); Kopf (1969); Poddar (1970; 1977).

did exist, unlike Hindus and Sikhs, Jainas nowhere formed a numerically influential part of the population. Nevertheless, Jainas naturally did not remain aloof from the cultural, intellectual and political developments which prompted the emergence of a new definition of `identity´ and `belonging´ along religious lines. The Jaina discourse and its means of communication generally shared its main features with the discourse among leaders of other newly defined religious communities. First of all, like other modern religious reform movements, the first Jaina organisations were founded and led by a small intellectual elite. Their early apologetic writings were addressed to Westerners and Western-educated Indians, who could communicate in English.

Among the important Jaina lay leaders of the early 20th century, lawyers played an influential role. They had been among the first Jainas who had taken to university education and had not only a profound knowledge of the English language, but had, in some cases, also spent some time abroad in Europe and North America. From the 1880s onwards, the first modern Jaina organisations came into existence at urban centres. Most of these associations, in their structure largely influenced by the model of modern Western organisations, were exclusively meant for members of one specific caste and their influence was confined to one locality. Some others, however, aimed at representing all Jainas of one specific sect. In this regard, in 1893 the Bhāratavarṣīya Digambara Jain Mahāsabhā was founded at Mathura. The image-worshipping branch of the Śvetāmbaras followed suit and established the Jain Śvetāmbara Conference at Bombay in 1902. The Sthānakvāsī, finally, founded a nationwide lay organisation, the Akhil Bhāratavarṣīya Śvetāmbara Sthānakvāsī Jain Conference, at Morvi, Gujarat, in the year 1906.[63] Though formed along sectarian lines, cooperation among the different Jaina sects was set as a desirable goal by all three organisations. A step in this direction had already been taken in 1895 by the formation of the Jain Young Mens' Association by young intellectuals of different Jaina branches. It is important to see these organisations, and especially the newspapers which, in vernacular languages and in

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[63] For more information about nationwide Jaina organisations, see: Farquhar (1999: 329-335); Lewis (2001: 366); Wiley (2006: 41-42).

English, were published by them, as an important public platform for lay Jaina leaders and reformers. The spread of printing presses in India during the 19th century had not merely contributed to the rising production of books and pamphlets. With the emergence of the mass media in the form of newspapers and magazines it had also provided a powerful public forum for the discourse among the Indian intellectual elite. From the end of the 19th century onwards, `community newspapers´ served as the organ for lay leaders among the different religious traditions. Newly established Jaina associations followed the example of other modern organisations and started publishing magazines, such as the Hindi *Jain Gazette* (Bhāratavarṣīya Digambara Jain Mahāsabhā) and *Jain Mitra* (published by the Bombay Digambara Jain Sabhā, established in 1895). Some vernacular Jaina newspapers were also published by individuals, such as the Marathi monthly *Jain Bodhak* published at Solapur by the Digambara merchant Seth Hirachand Nemichand Doshi (1856-1938), or the Urdu monthly *Jain Pracharaka* and the Hindi *Jain Pradipa* published at Devaband (Uttar Pradesh) by Babu Jyotirasadaji Jain (1882-1937).[64]

Among Jaina periodicals, *The Jaina Gazette*, established as the English mouthpiece of the Jain Young Mens' Association, provides an especially interesting insight into the reform goals and mindset of progressive intellectual Jainas at the beginning of the 20th century. The Jain Young Mens' Association, whose name was changed into Bhārat Jain Mahā Mandal (`All India Jain Association´) in 1910, was the public forum for progressive Western-educated lay Jainas. The different volumes of *The Jaina Gazette*, published from the year 1900 for several decades up to the time after independence, contained sophisticated and popular articles about Jaina doctrine, philosophy and history, as well as appeals to their readers for social reform and the raising of educational standards, especially regarding English education, among Jainas. The publishers considered the motto `unity is strength´ important, as it was seen as the only way to gather political and social influence, and ensure the survival of the Jainas as a community. Therefore,

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[64] For more information about the first Jaina periodicals, see: Farquhar 1999: 330; Lewis 2001: 367-368; Sangave 2001: 62; Wiley 2006: 41-42.

publishing of articles which could offend the members of other sectarian divisions was condemned, and cooperation between all Jaina groups became the maxim of the Jain Young Mens' Association.[65] Right from its beginning, *The Jaina Gazette*'s direct impact was naturally confined to a small circle of Western-educated progressive Jainas. Since it was this group which produced most of the reformist Jaina leaders who tried to reform and define Jainism, *The Jaina Gazette* provides important source material for an analysis of the late 19th/ early 20th century Jaina identity discourse.

One important reform movement started at the end of the 19th century, which finds some documentation in various issues of *The Jaina Gazette*, was the movement for the printing and translating of religious scriptures. The interest of Western scholars in the rich literary heritage of Indian religious traditions had its impact on Indian intellectuals, who welcomed the Western scholars' approach to make religious scriptures also accessible for lay men and the general (literate) public. Among the Jainas, some liberal minded Śvetāmbara ascetics and reformist lay men started to collect ancient literature for printing and preservation. This undertaking was opposed by more conservative Jainas, who feared the pollution of their sacred scriptures through contact with non-vegetarians and objected to the use of printing presses for religious reasons.[66] Furthermore, many Jainas considered religious manuscripts objects of worship rather than study. This ritualistic approach to the scriptures made the task of collecting and printing religious texts a difficult one. The so-called Śāstra-mudrāṇa virodhī āndolana (`Anti-Scripture-Printing Movement´) was led by traditional Jaina scholars and was also supported by the main organisation of the Digambaras in North India, the Bhāratavarṣīya Digambara Jain Mahāsabhā based at Mathura (Sangave 2001: 62). *The Jaina Gazette*, however, represented a forum for the supporters of printing and publishing of religious

scriptures. In 1910, the reformist Jaina activist, Ajit Prasad, for some time editor of *The Jaina Gazette*, used the magazine to make the following appeal:

> Hundreds and thousands of our Shastras are, as a matter of fact […] locked away, buried down, encased in dark, dreary holes […] and there they lie, rot and are every moment being transformed into the excreta of those forms of life which live on paper and Tar-patra. While this speedy destruction of our sources of right knowledge, our springs of divine inspiration, is proceeding apace, we Jains strut proudly and feel glorified in our high deeds of religious merit in forced fastings and shows of wealth and pomp. It is high time that we should know better, and turn our attention to acts nobler and higher (1910: 9).[67]

The example of the controversy about the printing of religious scriptures demonstrates that among the members of the newly founded Jaina organisations there was no uniform approach to reform. Although the structure of these Jaina associations was largely influenced by Western models of organisations, the opinions of the individual members regarding social and religious reform varied, and some organisations were more conservative or progressive than others.

Referring back to the progressive fraction's campaigns for the translation and publication of religious scriptures, reformers not only criticised the physical neglect of the Jaina scriptures, but also the Jainas' indifference towards Jaina studies. For this purpose, the achievements of Western scholars were praised and set into sharp contrast with the alleged ignorance and lack of interest prevailing among Jainas. Naturally, Jaina reformers did not act within a cultural vacuum, uninfluenced by developments taking place around them. While efforts were made to reform and strengthen the Jainas as a community, activities among Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh groups caught the special attention of intellectual Jainas. As mentioned in chapter two, the `tale of the declining Jaina community´ had a profound impact on members of the intellectual Jaina elite. What had to be done? One answer to this question was provided by a comparison with other religious groups: "Look to other communities. They have done much for the salvation of their religion. […] But we Jains have done nothing in this direction, and have lagged far behind in this

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[67] Further information about the movement for the preservation and printing of Jaina scriptures is given in: Chand (1911: 1-44; 55-61); Flügel (2005: 5); Lewis (2001: 367-368); Sangave (2001: 70).

progressive age" (Kesraichand 1910: 2). What others, with Western help, had achieved, and what Jaina reformers considered crucial for the "progressive age" (Kesraichand 1910: 2), is further explained in the article "To adopt means to spread our principle of Ahinsa, and to bring non-Jains into the fold of Jainism", published in *The Jaina Gazette* in 1910. Since I regard it as of special importance for the Jaina discourse, it will be cited in detail:

> In this age of materialistic tendencies, it is very difficult to find out means for the spread of Religion. But fortunately for us, this difficulty has been almost solved by the Theosophical Society. It has done much for the regeneration of all religions in general and Hinduism in particular. During the short space of three decades, the Society has worked wonders and has branches established all over the world. This is a living example of what patience and system can do.
> But this became possible only when the educated took it into their head, with every reverence for Hinduism, to study it, to expound the principles on modern system and to put their labour of several years' deep study, within the easy reach of all. But the Western scholars had to pioneer the reform. They paved the way and others followed.
> I think we shall have to do nearly the same. We shall have to look to the help of the Western scholars for the systematic expounding of our religious principles to suit the requirements of the modern educated Jains, and then we shall be able to stand on our own legs.
> The condition of our religion is simply pitiable at present. We cannot find a single scholar amongst us [...] who can uphold the cause of Jainism and keep its prestige in these changed times (Kesraichand 1910: 3).

What the Jainas, according to this statement, lacked most, were scholars, who not only studied the Jaina texts in depth, but, more importantly, could explain the Jaina principles within the context of modernity, and therefore show their relevance for the modern world. The first step in this direction had been accomplished by translations of ancient texts into English and some Indian vernacular languages. However, it was felt that more was needed. The task of explaining the Jaina principles to Western-educated Jainas and non-Jainas was taken over by some progressive Jaina intellectuals who composed the first apologetic writings in English and delivered speeches to a Western or Western-educated audience.

Jainism `Defended´ and `Defined´ from Within

The first of these speeches was not only delivered in front of a Western audience, but in the West itself, when the Gujarati-born Śvetāmbara lawyer Virchand R. Gandhi (1864-1901) represented Jainism at the World's Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893. Gandhi was a lay scholar of Jainism, had received a degree from Elphinstone College, Bombay, and had been appointed the first honorary secretary of the Jain Association of India in 1885. Originally, the Śvetāmbara ascetic leader and scholar Vijayānandasūri (1837-1896), known by Western scholars because of his willingness to support their academic studies of Jaina texts, had been invited. Due to his ascetic vows, however, which did not allow travel by any mechanical conveyance, Vijayānandasūri appointed Gandhi as a representative.[68] Gandhi, well-versed in Indian as well as Western philosophy, gave several speeches during the Parliament. Afterwards he followed invitations from some American theosophical, spiritual and liberal Christian groups, and delivered further lectures on Jainism and Indian philosophy at different places in the United States. In the following years, Gandhi visited the United States again twice, in 1897 and 1899, and established several associations, such as The Gandhi Philosophical Society and The Society for the Education of Women of India. During his visit to England, Gandhi delivered further lectures on Jainism and deeply influenced the English man Herbert Warren, who wrote an explanation of Jainism, based on Gandhi's lectures, entitled *Jainism in Western Garb, as a solution to Life's great Problems.*

What was the message, this first `representative of Jainism´ delivered to a Western audience? First of all, Virchand Gandhi's speeches echoed the theosophical and universalistic atmosphere of the Parliament. He introduced himself "as simply the mouthpiece of Muni Atmaramji [Vijayānandasūri], the learned high priest of the Jainas in India" (Gandhi 1964: 2), representing "Jainism,

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[68] In order to answer questions about the Jaina tradition, put to him by the conference organisers, Vijayānandasūri wrote a book in Hindi, which, in its English translation, got published under the title *The Chicago-Prashnottar (or Questions and Answers on Jainism for the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago U.S.A. in 1893).*

a faith older than Buddhism, similar to it in its ethics, but different from it in its psychology, and professed by a million and a half of India's most peaceful and law-abiding citizens" (1964: 1). Along with providing an introduction to Jaina philosophy and metaphysics, Gandhi's lectures defined a Jaina as "a follower of Jina, which is a generic term applied to those persons […] that have conquered the lower nature - passion, hatred, and the like - and brought into prominence the highest" (1964: 16). Jainism, Gandhi explained, shared with other Indian traditions the doctrine of transmigration, which was best fitted to explain suffering in the world, and which had been the doctrine held in the East and West alike, before the church of the middle-ages managed to suppress it (1964: 60-61). Jainism, as presented by Gandhi, was a religious system in harmony with science and reason. Its philosophical doctrine of *anekāntavāda*, or the doctrine of many-sidedness, reconciled different standpoints into one universal truth (1964: 23). God, according to the Jaina tradition, was no personal being, but spiritual energies, inherent, yet not fully developed, in every living being. Therefore, Jaina worship was free from selfishness, "the object" of Jaina prayer "is not to receive anything from that entity or from that spiritual nature, but to become one like that" (1964: 29). This `becoming´, however, had to be achieved without any supernatural help, but by the improvement of someone's own personality. Dynamic self-improvement, again according to Gandhi, was the base of Jaina philosophy, for the "Jainas are the advocates of the development theory; hence their ideal is physical, mental, moral and spiritual perfection" (1964: 77). Since the goal of highest spiritual perfection was held by every living being, Jainas paid the highest respect to every life form: "Live and let live is their guiding principle. Ahiṁsā paramo dharmaḥ- Non-injury is the highest religion" (1964: 83).

Virchand Gandhi's message was positively received among an audience of intellectuals, who looked to the `mystic East´ for spiritual inspiration and a universalistic and logical approach to religion. Jainism, according to Gandhi, offered a scientific system, free from blind belief and based on the principle of gradual self-perfection and the highest morality.

Although among the Parliament's Indian delegates Swami Vivekananda and his interpretation of Vedanta gained the highest prominence, Virchand Gandhi's lectures also contributed to the popular idea of India as the ancient home of spirituality and universal religion. Gandhi's contribution to the Parliament, as well as his following lectures and founding activities, were not merely the representation of Jainism. He came as a delegate of Jainism, but his expositions also revealed him as deeply influenced by theosophical ideas prevalent among intellectual circles of his times. Furthermore, Gandhi made it clear that he considered himself not merely a representative of Jainism, but a representative of India. During the Parliament, he severely criticised the Reverend George F. Pentecost, who had attacked the alleged Hindu custom of prostitutes being employed by temples. Hindu society, so Gandhi argued, was aware of some few doubtful cases and was engaged in abolishing these practices. The "un-Christian spirit" (1964: 10) of Pentecost's attack, furthermore, prompted the following response of Gandhi:

> I am glad that no one has dared to attack the religion I represent. It is well that they should not. But every attack has been directed to the abuses existing in our society. And I repeat now what I repeat every day, that these abuses are not from religion, but in spite of religion, as in every other country. […] If the present abuses in India have been produced by the Hindu religion, the same religion had the strength of producing a society which made the Greek historian say: `No Hindu was ever known to tell an untruth, no Hindu woman ever known to be unchaste.´ And even in the present day where is there a more chaste woman or a milder man than in India? (1964: 10-11)

This statement shows Virchand Gandhi as an ardent defender of what he calls "the Hindu religion" (Gandhi 1964: 11). Although Gandhi seems to distinguish between Jainism as the religion represented by him, and the Hindu religion attacked by Pentecost, boundaries between `Hindu´ and `Jaina´ remain fluent and blurred in Gandhi's usage. Hindus, Jainas and Buddhists form one society, and it does not seem to matter to Gandhi, if this society may be called Indian or `Hindu´.

The ambiguity of categories also found its reflection in contemporary American newspaper articles about Virchand Gandhi, in which he variably was described as "Hindu philosopher and scholar", representative of "the Jainist sect", preacher of "the universal brotherhood of man", and "Jain Hindu" (Gandhi 1964: 90-92). This

ambiguity, however, will hardly have mattered to Virchand Gandhi himself and his audience, since the spirit of universal religion, preached by Gandhi, Vivekananda and others, was meant to transcend any sectarian divisions.

Virchand Gandhi's exposition of Jainism as a scientific and rational religion had much in common with the apologetic writings of some other progressive Jainas, who, like Gandhi, had also attained university degrees and were qualified lawyers. One of the most active among these young intellectuals was the North Indian Digambara Jagmander Lal Jaini (1881-1927). Jaini forged an impressive professional career with degrees from Allahabad and Oxford, was trained as a Barrister-at-law, and at the time of his death in 1927 held the position of President of the Legislative Council at Indore. He attained an M.A. degree in English and from 1904 until 1927 he intermittently acted as editor of *The Jaina Gazette*. As a member of the Royal Asiatic Society he engaged himself in the translation and publication of several ancient Jaina texts. Jaini's activities as author and publisher also included some English works about Jainism, such as his *Outlines of Jainism*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1916, and *Jaina Law*, published in the same year. In 1909, he established the Jaina Literature Society, London, with Herbert Warren as secretary, followed by an association called Mahavira Brotherhood or Universal Fraternity founded in London in 1913. Given the universalistic outlook of their members, who were attracted to the concepts of vegetarianism, progress and universal religion, Peter Flügel is right when he characterises these and later Jaina organisations founded in Europe during the first half of the 20th century in the following words: "The character of these societies […] resembled the Theosophical Societies and it would not be out of place to call their members `Jain Theosophists´ "(2005: 8).

Although in 1893 at the World's Parliament of Religions Virchand Gandhi had been able to declare himself "glad that no one has dared to attack the religion I represent" (1964: 10), after the publication of Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson's *The Heart of Jainism* in 1915, Jagmander Lal Jaini certainly could not. In 1925, Jaini published a fierce review of Stevenson's work. His defence of Jainism is an interesting source, for it provides us with Jaini's main concepts about Jainism as a

religious system, which, in his opinion, was misunderstood by Stevenson and other Westerners. According to *The Heart of Jainism*, the Jaina tradition was `ritual´ rather than `religion´, leaving its followers spiritually unsatisfied, and was unsuitable for the needs of modern men:

> The more one studies Jainism, the more one is struck with the pathos of its empty heart. […]
>
> The younger Jainas are worried by the old ascetic ideal that is placed before them. They feel, even when they can hardly express it, that the ideal needed for modern life is the development, not the negation, of personality; they are also increasingly bewildered by the conflict between modern science and their own faith. […]
>
> But it is when talking to the older men and women that one realizes most how restless and dissatisfied they are at heart, since the ideal their religion offers them is a ritual rather than a personal holiness (Stevenson 1915: 289-290).

These Western stereotypes of Jainism as a ritualistic, life-negating tradition, in which any kind of change or development of an individual's personality had no room, were strictly opposed by Jaini. According to him, Jainism did not lack in any Christian values, but, on the other hand "[t]he Jainas have already got what Christ gave as his teachings. But the Mammon and Mars-mad followers of Christ need to understand and follow the noble doctrines of *ahimsa* and *daya*" (Jagmander Lal Jaini 1925: 42). Regarding the assumed conflict between science and the Jaina religion, Jaini remarks:

> Once again science is everyday pushing back the secular history of India, unearthing the past-glories of many a civilized Empire, the very fact of which lies unread in the oblivious bosom of the past. I for one am not afraid of science knowing Jainism. I fear rather that the custodians of Jaina truth will keep it from Science and thus delay the progress of Science and happiness of Humanity (1925: 45).

Social and religious decline did not have its roots in Jainism itself, but was part of the general "national […] decline" India had been suffering (1925: 50). But, on the whole, the Jainas were "still remarkable for their sober, law-abiding, peaceful and prosperous lives" (1925: 3).

Jaini's review is worth citing, for his argumentation has much in common with the writings of other Jaina reformers of his time, and in some aspects is still used today.

Confronted with the attacks of Christian missionaries, the reaction of Jaina apologetic writers, like Jaini, resembled those of Hindu leaders. Their own religious tradition was presented as compatible with the Christian teachings, or as superior to Christianity.

The already cited North Indian Digambara Champat Rai Jain, like Jaini a Barrister-at-Law, and an ardent Jaina reformer, aimed to show in his various English works the basic unity of all religions. But he did not stop there. According to him, among all religions, Jainism held the most superior position, since it was the only rational and scientific tradition which did not use allegories and therefore did not need interpretation: "As a matter of fact, the Creed of the Tirthamkaras furnishes the only platform where all other creeds may meet and be reconciled to one another" (Champat Rai Jain 1928: 429). From the 19th century onwards the conflict between traditional religion and modern science had become an important topic. Theosophists and Unitarians rejected religious myths, superstitions and empty rituals, considering the real essence of religion compatible with reason and science. The proof of the scientific validity of their own religious tradition, therefore, became an urgent need for Indian religious reformers. When Champat Rai Jain praised Jainism as the religion which was best suited for modern times, he appealed to the perfect compatibility between Jainism, science and reason:

> Most of the religions of the world, however, have only dogma and myth to offer, in place of the scientific thought, which alone can satisfy the demands of reason, and from which alone can flow the desired good, under all circumstances. Jainism differs from all other religions, in so far as it is a perfectly accurate, definite and exact science, free from misty and mystic ritual, unholy superstition and fear-engendering devotion. It does not ask its devotee to accept its teaching on the authority of anything other than Reason, and invites all to understand the nature of the subject before pinning their faith on it (1950: 5).

Since men did not owe their existence to a creator god, the Jaina religion had not been founded by a divine act of revelation: "In Jainism alone will the seeker find a complete answer […]. Religion is founded by MAN. It is a perfect science" (Champat Rai Jain 1929: V). When Christian missionaries, Theosophists or Unitarians objected to Jainism for its alleged atheism and idol-worship, the

argument of the man-made religion could also be used in defence. In a lecture given in 1901, Lala Benarsi Dass, headmaster of Victoria College, Lashkar (Gwalior), had already remarked:

> Our God is the highest being, the highest standard for our copy, the highest ideal for our imitation. And that God is our own soul after it has attained Nirvana. […] Those men greatly err who call us Nastikas [`atheists´]. Certainly they are wrong, totally wrong. […] We believe in God (1902: 57-58).

The images in Jaina temples did not symbolise any supernatural beings, but human beings, who had attained perfection. Therefore their worship was not, according to Dass and other Jaina writers after him, idol-worship, but "ideal-worship" (Dass 1902: 72). Not the idol was the object of worship, the ideal of meditation, represented by the statues, was the focus of veneration. Dass's argumentation against Jainism being an atheistic system, in which human beings were the centre of worship, is still frequently used today.[69] While the need to put one's own religious tradition on the same level with Christianity, or show its superiority to the latter seems not to be felt anymore, the compatibility between Jainism, reason and science, however, interestingly still dominates Jaina accounts of their tradition.[70]

Since Virchand Gandhi had called the Jainas "India's most peaceful and law-abiding citizens" (1964: 1), the picture of the Jainas as a very small, but nevertheless important community has been painted by several Jaina leaders. As "sober, law-abiding, peaceful and prosperous" (Jagmander Lal Jaini 1925: 3), the Jainas were of substantial importance for the national welfare. Although only a very small minority, the Jainas' influence in economics and business was profound. Besides being an important factor in the economic progress of the country, Jainas were also portrayed as morally advanced, loyal and law-abiding citizens. To

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[69] Many educated lay Jainas interviewed during field research in Karnataka and Maharashtra argued in a similar way.

[70] The main emphasis is placed on newly discovered physical laws already being expressed in the teachings of the Tīrthaṅkaras. Regarding ethics and practice, vegetarianism is praised as the healthiest diet. These arguments were frequently recounted by Jaina lay followers as well as ascetics (without a direct request for their opinion about the compatibility of Jainism and science) during field research, and are also found in several popular books about Jainism. See, for example: Mardia (2002); Parikh (2002); Upādhyāya Muniśrī Kāmakumār Nandī (no date).

underpin this, the South Maharashtrian Digambara Annasaheb Latthe (1878-1950), who was to make an impressive political career and as a leading member of the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā will be further introduced later in this chapter, in his *An Introduction to Jainism*, first published in 1905, cited the proportion of prisoners in jail for the year 1891. According to him, "the proportion of jail-going population is a good index to the moral condition of a community" (Latthe1964:35). Since the statistics showed the lowest proportion of prisoners out of the main religious communities among Jainas, he concluded "that the Jains stand highest in morality" (1964: 36).

But, according to the Jaina leaders, Jainism had more to offer than followers with high morals, who worked hard for the progress of the Indian economy. In an academic surrounding, in which antiquity was considered equal to originality, the historical proof of Jainism's great antiquity became an important topic. As mentioned in chapter two, orientalist works, especially Hermann Jacobi's, were used to demonstrate the historicity of the 23rd and 24th Tīrthaṅkaras and, at the same time, to establish the independence of Jainism from Buddhism. Therefore, the Jainas could claim their tradition to be one of the oldest indigenous Indian religions, which made them one of the most ancient religious communities in India.

From the first half of the 19th century onwards, legal cases have taken place in which Jainas tried to enforce a particular `Jaina Law´ for Jainas. Since several Jaina leaders, such as Jagmander Lal Jaini and Champat Rai Jain, were lawyers by profession, the independent religious status of Jainism, according to their opinion, also included a separate `Jaina law´, distinct from the Anglo-Hindu law, codified through the efforts of the British administration. What Jaina reformers claimed to be a uniform law, accepted by all Jainas, was more a collection of local traditions, mostly dealing with customs of inheritance and adoption. Nevertheless, Jaina reformers aimed at compiling and enforcing a unified Jaina law, to further unite the Jainas.[71] To support their cause, the distinctness of Jainism as a separate religious tradition, as established by Jacobi and others, was stressed.

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[71] For the Jaina leaders' efforts to create an independent Jaina law, see: Flügel (2007).

But when Champat Rai Jain, as cited at the beginning of this chapter, presented the Jainas not only as a separate community, but also as a homogeneous group with "one doctrine, one religion, one culture", therefore forming "one community" (1941: 20), the declaration was rather far from reality. This becomes clear when the Jaina leaders' strenuous efforts for unity and cooperation between different Jaina sectarian divisions, and within these divisions between different Jaina castes, are studied. The various issues of *The Jaina Gazette* give testimony to the rather uncooperative attitudes among different Jaina sects, whose members were criticised for wasting their time, money and energy arguing with each other.[72] Regarding caste exclusivism, prevalent among Jainas regardless of their sect, the practiced ban on intermarriage was considered a possible reason for the alleged numerical decline of the Jaina population[73] and a hindrance to the gaining of political influence

The issue of caste among the Jainas of the 19th and early 20th century will be further discussed later in this chapter. Here, it is important to note that progressive Jaina reformers considered a lack of unity, as well as of a central, nationwide authorative body, the main obstacle for the gaining of a political voice and the securing of their own interests. In this regard, the achievements of other religious communities were repeatedly praised in *The Jaina Gazette*. In an article called "Jainism at stake", published in 1930, the author Anant Pershad Jain defines the missing of an active central religious organisation as the "greatest drawback" (1930: 81) of the Jainas, who he compares with the Ārya and Brahmo Samāj. Both organisations, according to Jain, had not only successfully made converts, spread around the country and gained political influence, but had "regained the lost power and prestige of their forefathers" (1930: 82). All this, Anant Pershad Jain concludes, had been possible within a rather short period through good organisation and cooperation (1930: 82).

The Ārya Samāj was mentioned several times in *The Jaina Gazette*, and its members' achievements were praised as significantly greater than that of the Jainas. A short notice in 1930, for instance, reported that at the celebration of the

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[72] See, for instance: Hakemchand (1910).
[73] See: Latthe (1912: 39-43).

anniversary of an Ārya Samāj educational institution, the sum of 150 000 rupees had been collected. In contrast to this, according to the short note, Jainas spent many thousands of rupees for what reformers regarded as `unnecessary´ activities, like pompous religious processions and excessive temple building. At the same time, however, the Jainas proved to be unable (or rather unwilling) to support a Jaina high school.[74] This notice reflects the general tendency among progressive Western-educated lay leaders to regard the `progress´ of their respective religious community through social reform and education as much more important than the performance of expensive public demonstrations of religion.

Regarding other Indian religious communities, not only the efforts of Ārya Samājis are praised, but also Sikhs and Buddhists gain a positive entry in *The Jaina Gazette*, and are shown as examples for excellent organisation and administration of their religious institutions and funds. While the Jainas, according to Ajit Prasad, failed to take care of their old and precious temples, the efforts of the Buddhist Mahabodhi Society had led to the erection of a Buddhist temple at the historical place of Sarnath (near Benares).[75] "Will the Jains", as stated in Prasad's final appeal, "think of establishing a committee like the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee of the Sikhs and carry through the Indian Parliament a Bill like the Sikh Gurudwara Act?" (Prasad 1931: 210).

The dilemma, in the eyes of progressive Jaina reformers, can best be described like this. Although Jainism, due to the works of Western orientalists, had been academically established as not only an independent, but also one of the oldest indigenous Indian religions, a lack of unity and activity on the part of the Jainas prevented them from gaining political power and influence. Though their religion, as popularly presented by men such as Jagmander Lal Jaini or Champat Rai Jain, was based on perfect science and the highest ideals of morality, which made it ideally suited for modern times, Jainas were declining in numbers, while religious

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[74] "Notes and News." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol.XXVI, No.12, December 1930: 253.
[75] According to Buddhist tradition, the Buddha attained spiritual enlightenment while meditating under a Bodhi tree in an area which later became Sarnath.

organisations such as the Ārya Samāj proved to be very successful in attracting new members.

What progressive lay Jaina leaders, however, through their discourse in apologetic writings and speeches, had achieved, was a definition of the Jaina tradition which was very much in line with popular Western intellectual concepts of their time. The focus on non-violence, vegetarianism, spiritual self-perfection, rationality and universalism attracted some Western intellectuals, such as the already mentioned Herbert Warren, and F.W. Thomas, Sanskrit professor at Oxford. Outside some small intellectual circles, whose members, in Peter Flügel's phrase, can be described as "Jain Theosophists" (2005: 8), Jainism, however, did not gain any influence in Europe and North America.

Jainism, as defined by the Western-educated intellectual Jaina leaders of the early 20th century, was a distinct and separate religious system, not only older than Buddhism, but one of the oldest indigenous Indian religious traditions. As a community the Jainas, although very small in number, in terms of their economic success and law-abiding, loyal attitudes, represented an important segment of the Indian society. As a religious system Jainism was shown to be compatible with reason as well as modern science. This aspect, combined with the Jainas' stress on peace and *ahiṃsā*, made it, according to the reformers, the perfect universal religion, best suited for modern times. The following citation of Jagmander Lal Jaini from 1921 exemplifies the Jaina reformers' argumentation:

> Every body in all the four corners of the globe is groaning against all the miseries, political, social, economic and of all kinds. Many remedies are prescribed and tried. But only one can cure, and that always comes from Jainism. America saves herself from ruin by going dry: Jainism has taught the strictest abstinence from all intoxicants for thousands of years. India is to be led. M. Gandhi rises to lead it in a most difficult stage; he charms all hostility into silence, or inactivity. What makes him so harmless and so exempt from the hostility of all? His non-violence or *ahimsa*, which is the first step and a *sine qua non* of the life, thought, speech and action of all rational beings according to Jainism. Let the world read its riddle and misery in the light of the mere A.B.C. of Jainism in an unprejudiced attitude of sympathy and faith; and it will at once find the cleanest, clearest solution to its riddle and cure for its misery (1921: 304).

It will be seen in course of this thesis, how the early Jaina reformers' definition of Jainism has been carried on in the Jaina discourse up to the present day.

Here, however, the question remains: how did Jaina reformers define the Jainas as a community in their relationship to the Hindu majority? It has been shown that many Jainas used to regard themselves and were regarded by others as Hindus in the census takings, which alarmed reformers who feared the extinction of the Jainas. The aim of the reformers, then, was to show that Jainism was not a heretical branch of Hinduism, but "a quintessential Indian religion that preserved the most valuable aspects of ancient Indian culture" (Brekke 2002: 144). These "most valuable aspects" were mainly seen in the Jaina principle of *ahiṃsā* and, related to it, the habit of vegetarianism, found also among non-Jaina Indians. In this regard, the already cited Lala Benarsi Dass in 1901 provided a quite original definition of the term `Hindu´:

> Gentleman, remember we are Hindus. We are the descendants of those who were Hindus or from *whom him* or *himsa* was *du* or *dur*, i.e., away; (him= himsa and du= dur, i.e., away.) Hindus were not those who originally lived on the banks of the river Indus. Hindus were those from whom *himsa* was away (1902: 75).

According to this definition, Jainas were the `real´ Hindus. Without going as far as Dass did in this statement, Jainism, in the argumentation of Jaina reformers, represented the `purest´ and `best´ of ancient Indian culture. Rather than emphasise the differences between Jainas and Hindus, Jaina leaders stressed the original `Indianness´ of their tradition and the cultural contribution it had made to the whole Indian society. In this way, Jainas and Hindus could be seen as sharing the same cultural heritage, while at the same time the originality and independence of the Jaina tradition could be postulated.

This independence, however, did not, in the eyes of most lay Jaina leaders, find its right expression when it came to official recognition. Issues of *The Jaina Gazette* from the year 1921 document the reformist Jainas' protests about Dr.H.S. Gour's so-called `Hindu Code´, compiled on commission of the Government, in which Jainas were included under `Hindu Law´. In a lengthy article protesting against the `Hindu Code´, Jagmander Lal Jaini tried to define the word `Jaina´:

> A Jaina is a man who believes that the soul of man or any living being can, by proper training etc., become omniscient like the soul of the *Jina*, Conqueror of all passions; that the world consists of six eternal, uncreated, indestructible substances; and that the path to eternal freedom lies along the triple road of right belief, right knowledge and right conduct as disclosed in the Jaina sacred books, in accordance with the tradition of Lord Mahavira. This is the essential minimum. If a man falls short of this, whoever he may be, he is not a Jaina (1921: 299).

This definition merely focuses on belief and leaves aspects of practice, such as rituals etc., completely aside. In this context, a Jaina could only be distinguished as such if he stated his personal belief to be in accordance with the Jaina teachings stated by Jaini. How, then, would the relationship between `Hindu´ and `Jaina´ be defined?

> If a Hindu be defined as one born in India, or at the best one born in India and who was not a Mahomedan or Christian by birth then certainly every Jaina is a Hindu.- Some say *Hindu* is one from whom injury (*Him*-sa) is removed (*Du*-r). If this is so, only Jainas are the first and best Hindus; whereas meat eating, hunting Hindus will not be Hindus at all. Others say,-a Hindu is one who owes allegiance to the Vedas or the Brahman. There again Jainas are not Hindus.
>
>   Really it is an idle and futile problem. It all depends on what you mean by a Hindu. Let the Hindus agree upon *one universal definition of a Hindu*, and then it would be easy to answer the question whether a Jaina is a Hindu (Jagmander Lal Jaini 1921: 299).

In Jaini's conclusion, this lack of a valid definition for `Hindu´ makes `Hinduism´ and `Jainism´ two separate entities: "Why is Hinduism so eager to claim Jainism as a part of its fold? Hinduism is vague, indefinite, diplomatic here and there. Jainism is always clear, definite and absolutely uncompromising with error" (1921: 303).

 The alleged "clear" and "definite" nature of Jainism nevertheless does not prevent the boundaries between `Hindu´ and `Jaina´ from being blurred. Jaini certainly makes a point when he lays the blame for this on the lack of a universally accepted definition for the term `Hindu´. However, the discourse of Western-educated Jaina leaders did not help in clarifying the confusion between `Hindu´ and `Jaina´ which has been carried on in some legal documents and proceedings up to the present day. In all probability, it was never meant to do so. The apologetics of men such as Virchand Gandhi, Champat Rai Jain or Jagmander Lal Jaini aimed at showing the

timeless and universal spirit of Jainism. In this context, sectarian disputes would have been rather out of place. While addressing a Western or strongly Westernised audience, an aggressive construction of boundaries between Jainism and other traditions was neither in the interest of the authors and narrators, nor their readers and listeners. What was regarded as more important by reform-minded lay leaders was the `construction´ of the Jainas as a unified community and "not a bagful of castes and sects with diversified cultures, conceptions and creeds" (Champat Rai Jain 1941: 19), as the reformist writer Champat Rai Jain had argued. This uniform character was largely based on the `imagination´ of the Jaina reformers, and in actual practice diversity along regional, sectarian and caste-based lines remained. This `imagination´, however, proved to be significant in the establishment of a broader form of collective identity, as will be argued in the next section. Here, it is important to note that while the Jaina reformers' aims at propagating the concept of the Jainas as a uniform religious community had much in common with reformist developments among Hindus, Sikhs and others, the way in which this concept was constructed was mainly influenced by external circumstances and the individuals leading the dominant discourse. As was shown in this section, the dominant Jaina identity discourse was led by intellectuals whose religious outlook was strongly influenced by theosophical concepts and universalistic ideals of religion. This discourse focused on the presentation of Jainism as a universal, scientific, completely rational and tolerant religion, which combined `the best´ Indian spirituality had to offer, and showed Jainism as a tradition which was best suited for modern times. It did not, however, contribute to a clear distinction between `Jainas´ and `Hindus´, which, as will be discussed in chapter six of this thesis, would prove problematic in the Jainas' later campaigns for the official religious minority status.

In the second part of the present chapter, the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā, a Digambara reform movement, and its impact on the establishment of a supra-local, supra-caste-based concept of community among Digambara Jainas will be discussed.

The Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā

Reviving a Jaina `Golden Age´

> Those Jain visionaries who were moved by the poor and pitiable position of the then Jain community were prompted by an ardent desire to promote the interests of the community. They established the institution, then called <u>Dakshin Maharashtra Jain Sabha</u>, on 3rd April, 1899, at Shri Kshetra Stavanidhi (Belgaum District, Karnataka State, India). They had before them the lofty and laudable goal of starting renaissance in the social, cultural, educational and industrial fields. There-by they hoped to regain the past glory by rejuvenating and activating the society towards the achievement of all-round development (Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā 1993).

The above cited text is taken from a leaflet of the Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā,[76] published in 1993. It contains several interesting phrases, which make it worth being cited. The "poor and pitiable position" of the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, which desperately required a "renaissance […] to regain the past glory" (DBJS 1993) strongly resembles the picture of history as it had been drawn by Hindu reformers before. Here, the approach is similar to the historical development of what had come to be called Hinduism. A once glorious past had to be restored by a `renaissance´. One of the first Indian reformers to argue that `original Hinduism´ as found in the Vedanta, had been free from alleged later `degradations´ such as polytheism, idol worship and socio-religious practices like polygamy and *satī*[77] was the Bengali Brahmin Rammohun Roy. In his translations and expositions of Shankara's commentaries on the Vedanta, Roy addressed an English as well as a Bengali audience.[78] Influenced by Christian Protestant concepts of an apostolic Christianity which had been corrupted in later times and,

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[76] Originally called Dakṣiṇ Mahārāṣṭra Jain Sabhā, the organisation changed its name into Dakṣiṇ Bhārat Jain Sabhā after 1963. In the following, I will use its short form, DBJS, regardless of the period referred to.

[77] The burning of the widow along with her deceased husband's corpse. The practice of *satī*, though popular only among a few high castes, was among the first Indian customs which got strongly criticised by Westerners and Indian reformers.

[78] The English and Bengali editions, however, differed due to the fact that each audience had a different social, cultural and religious background.

eventually, was restored to its former `purity´ by the movement of the Reformation,[79] he aimed to show "that the superstitious practices which deform the Hindoo religion have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its [the Vedanta's] dictates" (Roy 1999: 3). The orientalist concept of a once glorious `golden age´ of Hinduism had an immense impact on Indian intellectuals and reformers such as Roy. As it had been for him before, social and religious reform remained an important field in which later reformers aimed to `reconstruct´ an ancient, `glorious past´. Though less focused on rationality and tolerance as the Brahmo Samāj, Swami Dayanand Saraswati's Ārya Samāj, with its belief in the infallibility of the Veda, was also based on the idea of a later degradation of Hindu religion and society. This decline, according to Dayanand, had found its expression in the change from an ancient monotheism to the polytheism of `popular Hinduism´. This `popular Hinduism´ brought along practices such as idol-worship, child marriages, the ban on widow remarriage, the system of caste hierarchy with the superiority of Brahmans and the concept of untouchability. Only their removal, combined with a stress on (mainly religious) education, open for all, irrespective of caste and gender, could safeguard the reconstruction of the ancient glory.[80]

The idealisation of an alleged glorious past, however, did not stay confined to Hindu reformers. The establishment of the concept of a distinct Sikh identity also largely depended on the `re-writing´ of Sikh history by highlighting a period of `religious purity´ and a martial spirit, which had allegedly degraded into the `Hinduisation´ of Sikh rituals, customs and beliefs, and a loss of political influence.[81] While Hindu reformers differentiated between a `glorious original Hinduism´ and a `degraded popular Hinduism´, radical Sikh leaders considered the

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[79] Niranjan Dhar cites a statement of Roy, made in conversation with the Scottish missionary Reverend Alexander Duff: "`As a youth I acquired the knowledge of the English language. Having read about the rise and progress of Christianity in appostolic [sic] times, and its corruption in succeeding ages, and then of the Christian Reformation which shook off those corruptions and restored it to its primitive purity, I begin to think that something similar might have taken place in India, and similar results might follow from a reformation of popular idolatry […]´"(Rammohun Roy, cited in: Dhar 1977: 42).
[80] For a detailed discussion of Dayanand Saraswati's concept of a `golden Vedic age´, its decline and the proposed way to its reconstruction, see: Jones (1976: 30-50).
[81] The `re-writing´ of Sikh history is discussed in: Oberoi (1994: 303-377).

Sikhs of the 19th century a `degraded and weakened community´. Blurred or often non-existent boundaries between `Hindu´ and `Sikh´ customs, rituals and beliefs were interpreted as `a backfall´ into Hinduism. In this regard, the `re-writing´ of Sikh history focused on the establishment of fundamental differences between Hinduism and Sikhism and the `purification´ of Sikhism and the Sikhs from Hindu elements, practices, customs and beliefs. Harjot Oberoi, while discussing the concepts and activities of radical Sikh reformers, uses the phrase of "Sikhizing the Sikhs" (1994: 306).

When we return to the leaflet of the DBJS and the organisation's stated goal of re-establishing "the past glory" (DBJS 1993), we have to ask several questions: how was this `past glory´ imagined; how was it to be regained; and, finally, did the `regaining of the past glory´ involve something similar to the `Sikhising´ movement among the Sikhs, a kind of `Jainising the Jainas´?

First of all, the concept of a `golden age´ had its impact on Jaina intellectuals, as it had had on Hindus and Sikhs. The nature of this `Jaina golden age´, however, lay somewhere in between the Hindu and the Sikh concept. The `golden age´ of Hinduism was seen in a mythic, remote, ancient past, and heavily relied on the re-interpretation of the Veda and Vedanta, in order to `harmonise´ the ancient texts with concepts of modernity. In the case of radical Sikh leaders, re-interpretation and `re-writing´ of history played a crucial part in the construction of a golden age. To foster a uniform Sikh identity, the ideal of the *khālsā*, a kind of martial religious order, established by the last Sikh Guru Gobind Singh at the end of the 17th century, was propagated as the pure embodiment of Sikhism. The stress on the keeping of the so-called five k's, outward symbols,[82] and a martial spirit was popularised through stories of martyrs who allegedly had died for the keeping of the symbols (Oberoi 1994: 329-334). "Sikhizing the Sikhs" (Oberoi 1994: 306) for radical reformers meant the adoption of the *khālsā* symbols and rituals by everybody who wanted to call himself a Sikh, as well as the `purification´ of the `Sikh community´ from alleged Hindu practices and beliefs. The `golden age´, in this regard,

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[82] Most prominent among these five symbols, which, in the Punjabi language, all start with the letter `k´, are unshorn hair (covered by a turban) and beard, which make (adult) male Sikhs easily identifiable as Sikhs.

comprised a recent time (compared with the distant past of the `Vedic golden age´ of Hindu reformers), though strenuous re-interpretation and re-writing on the part of the reformers were needed to postulate the picture of a pure and idealised Sikhism embodied in Guru Gobind's *khālsā* .

When Jaina reformers used the phrase of a "past glory" (DBJS 1993), they referred to a time, when Jainas had "produced rulers, kings and emperors."[83] These Jaina rulers, according to Annasaheb Latthe, "are celebrated in ancient history" (Latthe 1964: 73). Apart from wielding substantial political power, the former influence of Jainas had also reached into other fields: "They [the Jainas] have made great and indelible contributions to the all-round development of the Indian Nation, in the fields of art, culture, literature, architecture, philosophy, trade and industry" (DBJS 1993).

This `golden age´, in which Jainas had contributed to all fields of Indian life, had been reconstructed mainly due to the British administrators' efforts to preserve, collect, systematise and analyse the relics of the past. While Jaina religious and secular literature was `rediscovered´, translated and published by Western orientalists, archaeological findings established a rich Jaina heritage with a multitude of ancient temples, statues and epigraphical material, which seemed to suggest, that both the number and the influence of Jainas in parts of India had been much greater from the first centuries CE until the medieval time, than in the 19th century.

Especially the reconstruction of the history of Karnataka revealed a rich Jaina heritage, not only in art and architecture, but also in the development of literature in the local language, Kannada. The Jaina history of Karnataka started to be systematically explored from the second half of the 19th century onwards. In 1879 Lewis Rice published the *Mysore Inscriptions*, a volume with translations of ancient inscriptions, collected in several parts of Mysore State.[84] In 1888 an Archaelogical Department was formed under him. His *Sravana Belgola Inscriptions,* published in 1889, consisted of 144 Jaina inscriptions from Shravana

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[83] "Notes and News." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol XIX, No.11, November 1923: 272.
[84] Mysore State consisted not only of Mysore District, but several of the present districts of Karnataka, among them the Bangalore, Tumkur and Hassan Districts.

Belgola and created much interest in academic circles. Up to 1906 nearly 9 000 inscriptions and their translations were published in the various volumes of the *Epigraphica Carnatica.* In 1909 Rice published a summary of his epigraphical works entitled *Mysore and Coorg from the Inscriptions.*[85] In the *Mysore Gazetteer* of 1929 Rice's accomplishments in throwing light on the history of the Jainas are praised in the following words:

> The Jaina traditions relating to Bhadrabahu and Chandra Gupta have excited great interest in learned circles. The inscriptions at Sravana Belgola have established beyond doubt the antiquity of the Jains and their priority to the Buddhists, while at the same time, they have furnished new information of the utmost importance regarding Kannada literature and its antiquity. It is worthy of note that though the Jain sect is one of the most ancient in India, its discovery should have been first made in Mysore (Rao 1929: 663).

These archaelogical and historical findings, which established the Jainas not only as one of the most ancient, but also a formerly influential group with a rich heritage, were received by Jaina reformers and apologetic writers with the greatest interest. The `golden period´ of Jainism, which was contrasted with the 19[th] century Jaina community's "poor and pitiable position" (DBJS 1993) was less hidden in a mythic and ancient past than the `Vedic age´ propagated by Hindu reformers. Nevertheless, it also relied, to a substantial part, on interpretation. The tendency, to interpret the past by using contemporary concepts of distinct collective religious identity and supra-locally, supra-caste-based communities has led Jaina leaders and historians up to the present day to claim great historical figures and dynasties of the past as `staunch Jainas´, as well as to make assertions about the numerical strength of the `Jaina community´ during the medieval times.[86] This tendency, which has not been restricted to Jaina historians, contributed to the idealisation of a `golden age´.

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[85] For Lewis Rice and the Archaelogical Survey of Mysore, see: Rao (1929: 660-663).

[86] Regarding the question of royal patronage in ancient and medieval India, one has to bear in mind, that the great majority of rulers did not confine their patronage to one single religious tradition. Most dynasties patronised several or all influential religious groups residing within their domain. Political stability and the ruler's aim to legitimise his authority in many cases overshadowed his personal religious persuasion. The same individual may in one inscription be called a pious follower of the Tīrthaṅkaras, while at the same time being praised as a devotee of Śiva in another. Even more important, since the concept of distinct separate `religious communities´ did not exist before the 19th century, it is impossible to make any verifiable

Apart from political, cultural and social influence, combined with a greater numerical strength, the `heyday´ of the Jaina tradition, according to the 19th century reformers, was also a period of learning and great scholarship. Up to the present day the strong connection between the history of Kannada literature and language, and the works of Jaina lay and ascetic scholars of the medieval period has been cited by Jaina historians to show the high degree of scholarship among Jainas in earlier times.[87] The South Maharashtrian Jaina scholar Vilas Sangave in his appraisal of the educational achievements of ancient and medieval Jaina monks goes as far as stating the Jainas as `the educationists of the common people´:

> More than anything else, the role played by the Jain saints in the realm of learning is supreme. They educated the rising generations from the rudimentary knowledge […] to the highest levels of literary and scientific studies. […] It must be said to the credit of the Jain saints that they took a leading part in the education of the masses. […] Thus in south India, the Jain saint came to be regarded as a symbol of learning and passed into the proverb as a scholar par excellence (2001: 201-202).

Though it is rather doubtful if the use of the phrase "education of the masses" (Sangave 2001: 201) is appropriate for any historical period before the late 19th century, Sangave's message is clear: the `golden age´ of the Jaina tradition was a period of Jaina scholarship.

The glorious past of the Jaina tradition, as imagined by Jaina reformers and historians, stood in strong contrast with the "poor and pitiable position" (DBJS 1993) of the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka at the time of the establishment of the DBJS. As a mainly rural population of agriculturists and small traders, the Digambaras of the region were, in the majority, economically poor and hardly educated at all. Especially the lack of education, though not remarkable given their agricultural background, was seen as a `disgrace´ for the followers of a religious tradition, which had once been famous for its ascetics'

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statements about the numerical strength of the followers of a religious tradition (which, of course is also rather difficult for other reasons such as missing data, especially regarding the mass of the population).
[87] See, for instance: Sangave (2001: 186-187; 201-203).

learning. The biographer of Bhaurao Patil (1887-1959),[88] a South Maharashtrian Digambara who was to become a leading figure in the education of the masses during the first decades of the 20th century, portrays the dilemma of Bhaurao's grandfather as symbolic for the Jainas of South India in the 19th century. Although Deogounda Jyotigounda Patil, who acted as manager of the Nandani *maṭha*, near Kolhapur, was a highly respected man among whose ancestors were two *bhaṭṭārakas* of the same *maṭha*, he had to admit defeat when he was not able to sign an official paper with his own name. In this respect, Anjilvel Matthew concludes:

> When I think of the noble descent of Deogounda Jyotigounda Patil and consider along with it the fact of his inability to sign his own name, I seem to find in it a reflection of the whole history of the Jain community in South India. […] As for Southern Maharashtra, though the Jains had *maths*, *swamis* and *ganas* in Kolhapur and other neighbouring places from the twelfth century A.D., they were by the 18th and 19th centuries counted among educationally and culturally backward communities (1988: 34-36).

Educational Progress and Reform

When the DBJS was established in 1899 at a small pilgrimage place in North Karnataka, education of the Digambaras of the area was the first and most important goal. The `regaining of past glory´ through a focus on education, however, did not aim at the return to an idealistic glorious period, when Jaina monks roamed the country, writing sophisticated works while preaching to and educating the masses. Some Western-educated intellectuals among the founding members of the DBJS had more pragmatic concepts. The importance of education, especially English education, as a means for social and economic progress was stressed by social reformers from the 19th century onwards. The Indian upper classes, among Hindus especially the Brahmins, soon discovered the importance of

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[88] Bhaurao Paigonda Patil was born at the village of Kumbhoj in the Satara district of Southern Maharashtra. As a strong opponent of any kind of caste discrimination, education of the masses became his main aim in life. In 1919 he established the Rayat Śikṣāṇ Saṃsthā for the imparting of education to children in villages. In 1924 he founded and managed a student hostel at Satara, which was open for all students, regardless of caste. Although born as a Digambara, Bhaurao Patil did not become a reformist leader of the Jainas, but made himself a name as an important educationist of the masses. For more information about Bhaurao Patil and his work, see: Matthew (1988); Phadke (2003: 64-67).

English education for professional careers in administrative positions. In the course of the 19th century individuals and reform movements, such as the Brahmo and Ārya Samāj, started the propagation of education for sections of society whose members had traditionally been excluded from receiving education, namely women and the lower castes. Radical reformers such as the Maharashtrian Jotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890)[89] and the already mentioned Bhaurao Patil were staunch activists for mass education, including the lowest strata of society, the so-called `untouchable´ castes.

The history of the DBJS and its aims at promoting educational institutions, and, to a larger degree, student hostels, has, however, not only been substantially influenced by the general atmosphere of social reform with a focus on education, but was also closely interlinked with the personal background and aims of its most prominent founding member and leader, Annasaheb Latthe.[90]

Latthe was born into a Digambara family in 1878 at Kurundwad, South Maharashtra. His father had come into close contact with educated Brahmins and regarded the higher education of his sons as essential for their future career. Annasaheb received college and university education at Kolhapur, Poona and Bombay, where he obtained an M.A. degree in English in 1903. While studying at Deccan College, Poona, Latthe and his friend Anna Faddyappa Chougule, a student of law at Bombay, became founding members of the DBJS. Latthe's later

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[89] Jotirao Govindrao Phule, born at Poona as a Hindu of the gardener caste, was a strong opponent of Brahmin supremacy in the Hindu social system. His main efforts were devoted to the education of women and the lower castes, whose members, according to him, had been prevented from the attainment of knowledge and power by the Brahmins. He established schools for girls and lower castes, and founded an orphanage for the illegitimate children of widows. In 1873 the Satya Śodhak Samāj (`Society of seekers of truth´) was founded and he became its first president. The organisation was open to all, irrespective of caste, and strongly opposed Brahmin supremacy. Phule criticised Hindu reform movements such as the Brahmo Samāj and Prārthanā Samāj as being dominated by Brahmins and therefore not representing the masses of the Indian population. Regarding the Indian freedom movement, Phule saw caste restrictions as a main obstacle to the creation of a national identity. For a short account of Phule's life and aims, see: Phadke (2003: 11-18).

[90] The following account of Latthe and his work for the DBJS is mainly based on an unpublished PhD by Padmaja A. Patil, submitted to Shivaji University, Kolhapur, in 1986. Further sources about the history of the DBJS are leaflets published by the organisation, and personal communication with present members of the DBJS, which took place at their offices at the Jaina hostels in Belgaum and Hubli during the period between January 2006 and March 2007.

professional career included work as an advocate at Belgaum, lecturer at Rajaram College, Kolhapur, Diwan of Kolhapur State, and minister of the Bombay Province. Like the North Indian Digambara lay Jaina leaders Jagmander Lal Jaini and Champat Rai Jain, Latthe had received university education and held a degree in law. At the same time he was well-learned in Jaina philosophy and had also written an English book about Jainism, called *An Introduction to Jainism*, first published in 1905. Unlike Jagmander Lal Jaini, Champat Rai Jain and Virchand Gandhi, however, Latthe was less inclined to theosophical concepts of universal religion. As his impressive political career would suggest, Annasaheb Latthe was less an idealist than a pragmatic leader and politician. In his political outlook he had especially been influenced by the atmosphere of the Maharashtrian Non-Brahmin Movement, which opposed Brahmin supremacy in receiving education and attaining government positions. [91] Furthermore, Latthe had been on close terms with Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj (1874-1922), the ruler of the princely state of Kolhapur. During Shahu's rule, from 1894 until his death in 1922, reform movements such as the Non-Brahmin Movement, led by the Satya Śodhak Samāj, and the socio-religious Ārya Samāj gained substantial influence in Kolhapur. Shahu was a staunch supporter of the Non-Brahmin Movement [92] and the establishment of educational facilities for the members of non-Brahmin castes. His support for the establishment of student hostels had a great impact on the establishment of several Jaina student hostels to accommodate young men of rural background during their secondary education. Between 1901 and 1921, twenty-three student hostels for different castes were established at Kolhapur. Latthe, who after Shahu's death acted as his official biographer, seemed to have been a staunch supporter of Shahu's anti-

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[91] For a detailed account of the Maharashtrian Non-Brahmin Movement, see: Omvedt (1976).

[92] Apart from his sympathy for reform movements such as the anti-Brahmin Satya Śodak Samāj and, even more, the Ārya Samāj, Shahu's opposition to Brahmin supremacy and caste restrictions most probably had its roots in negative personal experiences he had with Brahmins, when his own priest refused to perform the Vedic rites for him, since he regarded Shahu as a low caste *śūdra*. For Shahu's confrontation with the Brahmins of Kolhapur in the so-called `Vedokta Controversy´ (1900-1905), see: Khane (1994). Further details about Shahu and the Non-Brahmin Movement are given in: Copland (1973). For other aspects of Shahu's policy, see: Phadke (2003: 55-63); Salunkhe (1994).

Brahmin politics. In his *Memoirs of His Highness Shri Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaja of Kolhapur*, published in two volumes, Latthe especially praised the establishments of different hostels "to create a higher non-Brahmin atmosphere congenial to the growth of fellow-feeling and solidarity among all the Backward Communities, Hindu or Mussalman" (Latthe 1924: 567). Separate boardings for different castes and communities were motivated by pragmatic reasons and, according to Latthe, did not contribute to the creation of a communal atmosphere:

> And we may as well ask: were these communal movements really communal in spirit? Why then did His Highness - a true Maratha - encourage and assist the Jains and the Lingayats, the Mussalmans and the Namdevs and even the Daivadnya and Saraswat Brahmins themselves? Why did the Maratha Hostel accommodate the Mussalmans? […] And why did the Marathas, Jains and others combine under his leadership to help the depressed classes? If the spirit which pervaded this kind of work is sectional, it ought to be welcomed as the sure foundation of a truly national life (1924: 157-158).

For Latthe, the local Digambaras were one of the non-Brahmin or backward communities. Their progress in economic and social terms was, as in the case of other backward communities, first of all to be achieved through education. This concept had been generally held by Indian reformers, and the importance of education and educational institutions for the enhancement of the Jainas as a community has constantly been propagated in *The Jaina Gazette*.[93] The DBJS's special focus on the establishment and running of student hostels, however, has to be seen in connection with the regional environment, especially the student hostel building activities under Kolhapur's ruler Shahu, and the Non-Brahmin Movement's stress on education for the majority of non-Brahmin castes. Unlike Jainas in North and West India, the Digambaras of the region were counted among educational and economic backward communities. Since the vast majority lived in rural surroundings, most families could not afford to send their boys to bigger places like Kolhapur or Belgaum to receive higher education. The establishment of student hostels, however, was meant to provide young Jainas with free or affordable boarding and lodging.

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[93] See, for instance: Chakravarti (1920: 148); Hakemchand (1910: 6); Bansi Dhar Jain (1931: 125-129).

The first meeting between Latthe and Shahu took place in 1900 at Bombay, when Latthe was a student and stayed at a hostel for Jaina students. Shahu showed his interest in the issue of boarding houses, and, with the financial help of Manikchand Hirachand Jhaveri, a wealthy Digambara merchant of Bombay, a Jaina student hostel got built at Kolhapur and the inauguration ceremony was held by Shahu in 1905. The boarding house was run and supervised by the DBJS, and from 1905 until 1914, Latthe acted as its first superintendent (Patil 1986: 8). Padmaja A. Patil states the number of students at the boarding as 43 in the year 1907. Out of these, ten were fully paying, four paying only half, and 29 were staying for free (1986: 61). In 1924, when Latthe gave a description of the hostel's present state, it mainly consisted of rooms for the accommodation of 100 students, a lecture hall and a temple. About 90 male students stayed at the hostel, out of which about 20 studied at college level (Latthe 1924: 143-144). To maintain the boarding house, the DBJS mainly depended on donations from wealthy Digambara merchants. An important part of Latthe's skills as politician and leader seemed to have been his success in winning over influential Digambara traders for the work of the DBJS. From its beginning, the organisation had financially greatly benefited from Seth Manikchand Hirachand Jhaveri, Bombay, and the Solapur-based Seth Hirachand Nemichand Doshi. The latter was also the publisher of a Marathi Jaina magazine and presided over the yearly conference of the DBJS in 1904.

How was the routine life at the boarding house organised? First of all, its residents were supposed to stick to strict rules. Physical education and religious studies were compulsory. In 1929, Latthe, at that time Diwan of Kolhapur, in his position as chairman of the boarding committee had made a list with rules for students staying at the Kolhapur hostel. According to Padmaja A. Patil, who had access to a handwritten copy of Latthe's document, the students had to get up at 5.30 am and until 10.30 pm residents had to devote their time to "three hours for serious studies", physical exercises, a visit to the temple, attending a religious education class or studying religious texts by themselves (Patil 1986: 71). The evening meal had to be finished by 7 pm (Patil 1986: 71). Apart from school text books, no books or newspapers "not recommended by the superintendent" were to be brought to the

boarding (Patil 1986: 70). Other than attending classes, students had to ask the superintendent's permission if they wanted to leave the hostel (Patil 1986: 71). These rules make clear that the hostel was not merely meant to provide board and lodging. Western education was to be combined with a disciplined, clean life-style and religious instruction and practice. The nature of the `religious education class´ which, according to Latthe's rules, had to be attended, remains unclear, since further material was not available. Efforts at establishing a Sanskrit school, whose students were supported by the hostel, did not show any concrete results in the longer term. Most students, it seems, were more attracted towards English education, and soon after its establishment in 1902 the Sanskrit school had to be closed down again. A re-opening in 1913, with the employment of a religious teacher from Benares, also ended in failure, for which, this time, Latthe blamed the teachers in charge of religious education, whom he criticised for caring more about the worship of Jaina scriptures than their study (Patil 1986: 44-46). Latthe's opinion in this matter echoed the statements of other progressive Jaina reformers, who accused more conservative Jainas of wasting their time and money on elaborate religious processions and functions, displaying their wealth, instead of studying and teaching the Jaina scriptures.[94]

In the following years, student hostels for Digambaras were founded at Hubli (1909), Belgaum (1915) and Sangli (1919), which are still managed by the DBJS today.

Right from the beginning of the DBJS, the imparting of female education was regarded as an important aim. The importance of education for girls had already been stressed by social reformers such as Phule, while members of the Hindu reform movement Brahmo Samāj, among other members of the intellectual elite,

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[94] The February edition of *The Jaina Gazette* from the year 1923, for instance, included the detailed description of a session of the more conservative All-India Digambara Mahāsabhā, which was opened by a splendid procession involving horses, camels and an elephant. The (unnamed) author of the article regarded this procession, as other activities held during the conference, as a waste of money and an unnecessary display of wealth. See: "The Delhi Activities (By our own Representative)." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol. XIV, No.2, February 1923: 48-54.)

had began to consider the education of their wives and daughters crucial for the social and cultural progress of society.

Among the Digambaras of the 19th century, also with regard to female education a contrast between the contemporary "poor and pitiable position" of the local Digambaras, and an imagined "past glory" (DBJS 1993) could be seen. While female education had, when contrasted with the level of male education, been neglected in all of the newly defined religious communities, the census data from the end of the 19th century presented the Jainas as the Indian community with the widest gap between the male and female literacy rate (Drew 1892: 114). Among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, with a high male illiteracy rate, literate females around the middle of the 19th century were hard to find. The neglect of female education among Jainas could also be interpreted as a sign of decline by reformers, especially when compared to the often cited Jaina tradition, that the first Tīrthaṅkara Ṛṣabha, before becoming an ascetic, had taught the arts of writing and mathematics to his two daughters.[95] The reason for the alleged decline in female education among Jainas was seen in the adoption of the practice of child marriage, which, again, was considered a decline from the ancient form of marriage.[96] As shown in chapter two, according to the census data of the late 19th and early 20th century, the Jainas were not only the Indian religious community with the widest gap between the percentage of male and female literacy, but had also been among the communities with the lowest marriage age. Furthermore, the number of widows among the Jainas surpassed that of any other community (Plowden 1883: 68).

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[95] This tradition goes back to the *Ādipurāna*, the first part of the *Mahāpurāṇa* (ca 9th century CE). In this work, Ṛṣabha is described as advising his two daughters, Brāhmī and Sundarī: "[…] only when you would adorn yourself with education your life would be fruitful because just as a learned man is held in high esteem by educated persons, a learned lady also occupies the highest position in the female world" (Ādipurāṇa, XVI, 97-98, translated and cited in: Sangave 1988: 172). During the field research in Maharashtra and Karnataka, several Digambaras took pride in the fact, that one Indian alphabet is called `Brāhmī- script´, which, according to their opinion, proves the Jainas as the inventors of the art of writing.

[96] See, for instance: Sangave (1980: 172).

The social problems of female illiteracy and a high number of unsupported child widows led to the establishment of so-called *śrāvikā āśramas*.[97] Thereby, two functions could be combined: child widows were provided with a safe shelter, while they were given instruction in some practical skills and basic education. *Śrāvikā āśramas* were founded by individuals as well as the DBJS. One of the main promoters of female education and the institutions of *śrāvikā āśramas* in particular, was the daughter of the already mentioned Bombay-based merchant Manikchand Hirachand Jhaveri, who was also an active member of the DBJS. Paṇḍitā Maganbai (1876-1930),[98] as she became known, lost her husband when she was 19. Her father took her back into his household and began to provide education for her. Supported by him, Maganbai travelled throughout India, promoting the cause of female education. Between 1901 and 1918 thirty-eight *śrāvikā āśramas* supported by Maganbai's efforts, were established in different parts of India.[99] In its combined January and February edition of 1930, *The Jaina Gazette* published a memoriam to the deceased Maganbai, who had been bestowed by the All-India Jaina Association with the honorary title *Jaina mahilā ratna* (`Jaina lady jewel´) in 1913. As the only Jaina female she was honored by the government with the title Justice of the Peace, in acknowledgement of her work for female education. Apart from her support for *śrāvikā āśramas*, especially the *śrāvikā āśrama* at Bombay, she was the founder of the All-India Jain Women's Association.[100]

From 1903 onwards, a *Jaina mahilā pariṣad* (`Jaina Ladies' Assembly´) was held along with the yearly conferences of the DBJS. In 1904, under Latthe as its head, the DBJS started a department for female education (Patil 1986: 78-79).

The DBJS opened its first *śrāvikā āśrama* in 1908 at Kolhapur. Education was to be provided to adult women and young girls in the vernacular Marathi language.

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[97] Literally `lay women refuges.´

[98] *Paṇḍitā*, the female form for a scholar, was added to Maganbai's name as a title of respect.

[99] The description of the *śrāvikā āśramas* is mainly based on: Patil (1986: 78-84) and an unpublished MPhil dissertation (1989) by Rutuja V. Khot, submitted to Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

[100] "In Memoriam." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol.XVI, No.1 and 2, January and February 1930: 36-37.

The syllabus included basic education in "Jain religion", Indian history and geography, maths "for practical purpose", "knowledge of stitching" and "the capacity to advise regarding religion" (Patil 1986: 80-81). The *āśrama* was situated in the Kolhapur Jaina *maṭha*. The few young girls and women who attended the class were relatives of progressive DBJS members themselves, among them Latthe's wife Dnyanmatibai. Since the number of students was only 14 in 1910, the institution was closed down and the students were sent to the Maganbai Shravikashram at Bombay. In 1923 the *āśrama* re-opened, a new building for it was erected, and this time it managed to attract more students. It has continued to provide accommodation for female students up to the present day.

Although the DBJS regarded female education as one of its most important goals, and several, mostly female members were very active in campaigning for the necessity of imparting education to girls, the public response had been rather poor at the beginning and was improving only very slowly. As among Hindus, the first educated women among the Digambaras of the area were the daughters and wives of progressive reformers. The *śrāvikā āśrama* movement was mainly propagated by young widows with a wealthy family background, whose fathers were also active for social reforms among Digambaras and had been closely connected to the DBJS.[101]

Apart from efforts at improving the educational standard of the Digambaras of South Maharasthra and North Karnataka, which met with limited success (especially regarding female education), the DBJS launched a variety of other reformist activities, among them campaigns for `the spread of religious education´. Although, as we have seen, the establishment of a Sanskrit school had been unsuccessful, the leading members of the DBJS held on to their plan for religious education. A programme "of preaching Jainism to the Jains" (Patil 1986: 40) was developed and members of the DBJS delivered speeches on different aspects of

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[101] Another noteworthy figure was, for instance, Dharmachandrikā Kankubai (1876-1939), the daughter of Hirachand Nemichand Doshi from Solapur (Maharashtra), who had become a widow in 1900 at the age of 25 (Khot 1989: 38-39).

religion. As other reformers had done before them,[102] the medium of *kīrtans* (group singing of religious songs, accompanied by instruments) was used for preaching. The DBJS tried to propagate the use of *kīrtans* in religious festivals instead of arranged dance programmes and music (Patil 1986: 41-42).

Did religious reform, in order to revive a Jaina `golden age´, aim at `Jainising the Jainas´? As Hindu reformers had contrasted a `pure original´ with a degraded `popular Hinduism´, radical Sikh leaders, as described by Oberoi (1994: 305-377) had started vigorous campaigns to `purge´ Sikhism from alleged Hindu elements, up to the point where all elements considered undesirable by the reformers were regarded as `Hindu´.

Given the general intellectual atmosphere prevailing at the time, the tendency for religious `purification´ to be found among Jaina reformers was expected. This `purification´ concerned, as in the case of the radical Sikhs, some rituals and ceremonies. While, for instance, the performance of the *śrāddha* ceremony by Jainas was attacked as a `purely Hindu´ custom which had no place within the Jaina tradition, other ceremonies were intended to be `reformed´ by giving them a distinct Jaina form. As in the case of Sikhism, the marriage ceremony was, according to some Jaina reformers' wishes, no longer to be performed by usage of the Hindu ritual and the help of Hindu priests. In 1903 the DBJS published a book with marriage rituals to be used in Jaina marriages (Sangave 1976: 424). Unlike in the case of the progressive Sikhs, however, whose reformed marriage ceremony, the Anand Marriage Rites, replaced the circumbulation of the sacred fire by the circumbulation of the Guru Granth Sahib and found its official recognition in the Anand Marriage Act, the Jaina reformers' efforts at reforming life-cycle rituals have been far less pronounced. As described in chapter two, lay Jainas were, from their outer appearance, language, professions and, to a degree, also from their rituals, hardly distinguishable from Hindus of their particular locality. The adherence to local social customs has been a long accepted practice among Jainas, which had also been religiously justified by the writings of medieval Jaina ascetic

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[102] During the 19th century the Brahmo Samāj leader Keshub Chandra Sen, for instance, used *kīrtans*, as did the Satya Śodhak Samāj (Patil 1986: 41-42).

scholars. The fact that lay followers of the Jaina tradition are part of a bigger social and cultural system, had, for instance, been acknowledged in the writings about rules for lay men of the 10th century South Indian Jaina ascetic Somadeva Sūri. Regarding `right behaviour´, Somadeva distinguished between two different kinds of *dharma* for the Jaina householder:

> […] *laukika*, `worldly´, and *pāralaukika*, `otherworldly´. *Pāralaukika dharma* is the true path to liberation […] which every Jain - indeed, every man - should follow in order to attain Ultimate Knowledge. But there is also a *laukika dharma*, consisting of social norms, customs, laws, rules, institutions, upheld by the people among whom the Jains live. No harm is done, says Somadeva, if a Jain follows the *laukika dharma*, provided this does not undermine or distort the performance of *pāralaukika dharma* (Lath 1991: 27).

Social practices prevalent among Jainas, such as the taking of dowry and child marriage, were attacked by Jaina reformers not because they were considered `Hindu´, but because they were regarded as `social evils´, which had no place in a universal, rational and scientific religion, as Jainism was propagated by reformers. To describe these practices as `foreign to Jainism´, and therefore as `adopted Hindu customs´, helped to justify their abolition.

Progressive Jaina reformers shared a `protestant approach´[103] to religious reform with other Indian intellectuals of the 19th and early 20th century. In accordance with other Indian religious reformers, they propagated the publication and study of sacred scriptures instead of their worship. They considered donations for educational and social institutions of greater merit than the performance of elaborate rituals, and they objected to pompous religious processions and excessive temple building activities, which they regarded as an ostentatious display and a waste of money. While `protestant´ Hindu reformers, however, strictly objected to the worship of idols, and among Sikhs heavy arguments about the removal of `Hindu´ statues from Sikh holy sites took place, so-called `idol-worship´ did not bother progressive Jaina leaders much. This does not mean, however, that the question of `idol-worship´ and especially the question of the worship of Hindu

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[103] For the notion of a "Jain Protestantism" (Carrithers 1991: 274), similar to the late 19th/20th century Buddhist protestant movement in Sri Lanka, see: Carrithers (1991: 273-274).

deities had never been a focus among Jainas. While the first question had led to a major split among the Śvetāmbaras, with the establishment of the non-image-worshipping sect of the Sthānakvāsīs during the 15th century, the second question has mainly been focused on the acceptability of the worship of *yakṣīs*, female goddesses, which is widely practised among many Jainas, while objected to by others.

Though some progressive early 20th century Jaina reformers supported the abolition of what they regarded as the worship of `purely Hindu´ deities and the celebration of `Hindu´ festivals, efforts in this direction remained much less pronounced than campaigns for social reform and educational progress. As was seen in the first part of this chapter, the Jaina reformers' definition of `a Jaina´ was rather abstract, only concerned with belief, leaving practice and customs mainly aside. In this regard, an image-worshipping and a non-image-worshipping believer in the Jinas were both equally regarded as Jainas. "Sikhizing the Sikhs" (Oberoi 1994: 306) concretely meant giving the Sikhs, as a community, a uniform appearance with distinct outward symbols and rituals, which constituted their identity in contrast to the surrounding religious traditions, especially to Hindus. `Jainising the Jainas´, on the other hand, was less concerned with the construction of outward boundaries, than with the establishment of internal unity. This unity, in the case of the radical Sikhs, focused on uniformity in appearance, ritual and belief. In the case of the Jainas, it meant the transformation of focus from a local `caste identity´ to a more universal supra-local, supra-caste collective religious identity. This does not mean that in the case of the Sikhs, for instance, a local `caste identity´ had not to be transformed. Unlike in the case of the Jainas, however, the establishment of a Sikh community was, through the construction of outward boundaries, more `concretely imagined´.[104]

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[104] The term `concretely imagined´ is freely borrowed from Michael Carrithers, who uses the phrase in his article "Concretely Imagining the Southern Digambar Jain Community, 1899-1920" (1996).

Towards the Establishment of a `Digambara Jaina Community´

How, then, was this transformation among the Jainas to be accomplished? The Digambaras in the area of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, which were to be united under the banner of the DBJS, belonged to five different castes, namely the Caturthas (mainly agriculturists), the Pancamas (mainly small traders and shop-keepers), the Upadhyes (acting as priests in Jaina temples), the Kasars (traders in brass vessels and bangles) and the Setvals (merchants). By far the most numerous castes in the area were the Caturthas and the Pancamas. Members of one caste would usually form a neighbourhood and worship in their own temple (Carrithers 1996: 526). Similar to Hindu castes, Jaina castes had their own caste guru, called *bhaṭṭāraka*, a celibate head of a *maṭha*. In the Kolhapur area, the Caturthas were closely linked to Jinasena *bhaṭṭāraka* residing over the Nandani *maṭha*, while the Pancamas regarded Lakṣmīsena *bhaṭṭāraka* of the Kolhapur *maṭha* as their religious authority. Michael Carrithers, who had access to the DBJS's magazine *Pragati āni Jinavijaya*, makes important observations about the prevalence of a `caste identity´ among the local Digambaras during the first decades of the 20th century:

> Two usages of that time which have since fallen away convey how thoroughly circumscribed the experience of most Digambars was by caste practices and attitudes. One was the habit of identifying a temple by a caste name […] whereas now the caste name is not used. The other was the habit common to both Digambars and others referring to Digambars - routinely and in very nearly all contexts - by the name of their caste and not as Jains or Digambars at all. People were then aware of the designation `Jain´, but it had little purchase in the conduct of affairs, whereas it now names a significant social category (1996: 526).

How was this focus on a `caste identity´ to be transformed into a focus on a more universal `Digambara Jaina identity´? The early history of the DBJS shows that the task which progressive leaders such as Latthe had taken upon themselves, was a difficult one. Established at Stavaniddhi, a pilgrimage place, and the only locality in the region which was visited by all Digambara castes, the DBJS itself was, from its beginning, not free from caste tensions. Especially regarding the issue of inter-caste marriages between members of the two main Digambara castes of the region, the

Pancamas and Caturthas, arguments between progressive and more conservative members started. Since the main founding members of the DBJS, among them Latthe and Chougule, belonged to the Pancama caste, Caturthas regarded the organisation as dominated by Pancamas. Therefore, in 1903, Caturthas aimed at establishing their own institutions, linked to the Nandani *maṭha* of Jinsen *bhaṭṭāraka*. A permanent split in the young organisation could, however, be avoided, and in the DBJS's yearly conference in 1904 both parties agreed to work together (Carrithers 1996: 536). The practice of inter-caste marriage, whose propagation had enraged the conservative fraction of the DBJS, remained an important aim for the progressives, though actual inter-caste marriages remained a rare phenomenon. In *The Jaina Gazette* from April 1914, Latthe published a "Report on Social Reform Work". In this, he described "a movement to amalgate the Chathurth and Pancham subsects of the Jains"; a declaration had been signed by more than "100 leading gentlemen expressing approval of the movement […]" (Latthe 1914: 153). Then, Latthe goes on to declare: "As a result of this I married my niece Shermatibai to a Chaturth boy last week. I am a Pancham Jain and this is the first marriage between the two sects" (1914: 153). It was, however, to remain one of very few inter-caste marriages. While for Latthe the breaking down of caste barriers had linked both his activities as a reformist Jaina leader with his active support for the Non-Brahmin Movement, progressive Jaina reformers in other parts of India also propagated inter-caste marriages as a means to unify the Jainas. For those willing to marry their son or daughter to a spouse from a different caste, *The Jaina Gazette* tried to give its support in finding a like-minded family. An example for these `matchmaking activities´ is found in *The Jaina Gazette* from October 1915. Under the headline "Wanted", it says: "A bride of any Jain sect for a young Digambar Jaini who has studied up to B.A. […] The bride must have education […]."[105] The stress on an `educated bride´ furthermore gives an impression of the reformist tendencies prevalent among young intellectuals at the beginning of the 20th century.

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[105] "Wanted." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol.XI, No.10, October 1915, no page number.

In the few instances when an inter-caste marriage among Jainas took place, the event provoked an entry in *The Jaina Gazette*. That inter-caste marriages had not become much more common 20 years after Latthe had reported his niece's marriage is suggested by the fact that *The Jaina Gazette* issue from June 1936 also considered the report of a Jaina inter-caste marriage between an Agarwal from Allahabad, and a Pusad from Berar worth mentioning.[106] Though highly propagated by progressive Jaina leaders as a substantial means for the unification and therefore strengthening of the Jainas as a community, inter-caste marriages remained rare and mainly stayed confined to the families of Jaina reformers.

Apart from the practice of inter-caste marriages, Latthe had also tried to propagate commensality, the free eating together irrespective of caste. The general resistance, it seems, was not much smaller than that to the idea of inter-caste marriages. Michael Carrithers (1996: 538-541) gives a detailed description of the controversy about commensality, fought by progressive and conservative Jainas, which shows that the actual influence that reformers such as Latthe had over the public opinion was rather small. One small sphere of influence, however, which the DBJS had, was its approach to student boardings (Carrithers 1996: 540). At special occasions taking place at these boardings, the reformers' ideal of unity could be illustrated by Digambaras from different castes eating together. These events, rare as they may have been, could, however, be used to propagate the ideal of unity. In this regard, the already mentioned `community newspapers´ were a substantial means to spread the idealised picture and the message of unity among different castes. The DBJS had already started the magazine *Jinavijaya* in 1902, with Latthe as its first editor. In 1908 Latthe started publishing the weekly paper *Pragati*. The two papers were merged in 1911 and afterwards became known as *Pragati ani Jinavijaya*. This newspaper was not only the mouthpiece for social reform, but also for the propagation of the ideal of a united Digambara Jaina community. This ideal, however, did not only include the breaking down of caste barriers among the local Digambaras, but reached at the establishment of a collective identity, which was

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[106] This marriage, however, was also mentioned because of its "inter-provincial" nature ("Intercaste Marriage." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol.XXXIII, No.6, June 1936: 193).

not limited to a special locality. In this regard, Latthe was also actively publishing in *The Jaina Gazette*, which was meant to reach educated Jainas all over India. News of the successful bringing together of different castes were therefore not only reported in the DBJS's own vernacular newspaper,[107] but also published through the nationwide forum of *The Jaina Gazette*.[108]

Regarding the DBJS's rather unsuccessful propagation of inter-caste marriages and commensality, Michael Carrithers considers their campaign for unity a failure. Nevertheless, the reformers achieved, according to Carrithers "largely unintended", the success of "creating a palpable and vivid sense of a Jain public" (1996: 541). While, as argued by Carrithers, the breaking up of caste boundaries had failed (marriages, commensality), the public meetings of the DBJS had, rather `unintendedly´ contributed to the establishment of a concrete Digambara Jaina community acting in the public sphere. The invitation of prominent Jainas from other places outside their own region fostered the sense of a community transforming regional boundaries. The DBJS presented itself as an organisation, which was run by and spoke for Digambara Jainas irrespective of their local background and caste. In this regard, Carrithers concludes, the DBJS, with its public meetings and conferences, created the occasions for the public presentation and experience of a Digambara Jaina community (1996: 541-548).

The process described by Carrithers was not restricted to the DBJS and the Digambaras of the area of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka. A well-working network of progressive Jaina leaders contributed to the establishment of the idea of a universal Jaina community. We have already seen how Latthe, though leader of the Digambaras of South Maharasthra and North Karnataka, frequently contributed to *The Jaina Gazette* as the nationwide organ of progressive Jainas, irrespective of caste and sect. The same held true for other Jaina reformers. During the meetings of the DBJS, not only prominent and influential Jainas from cities such as Solapur and Bombay (which, strictly speaking, geographically did not

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[107] Carrithers cites the *Pragati ani Jinavijaya* reporting a meal held at the Jaina hostel, Kolhapur, with different castes freely eating together (Carrithers 1996: 540).

[108] In the April edition of *The Jaina Gazette* of 1914, Latthe reported "two public dinners given to members of [the] Jain community without any distinctions" (Latthe 1914: 153).

really belong to the `main area´ of the DBJS) attended the sessions. At the DBJS's yearly conference of 1932, held at Stavaniddhi, the North Indian Jaina reformer Champat Rai Jain delivered the presidential address. In this way, the image of a nationwide community, consisting of Jainas irrespective of caste, language, profession and local background was presented.

  This `sense of community´ found its expressions in various ways, rhetorical, such as in speeches and newspaper articles, as well as practical, as in the way Jaina leaders such as the South Indian Latthe and the North Indian Champat Rai Jain worked openly together. Sometimes, rhetoric and practice joined together, as the following example illustrates. Starting from 1929, over several years, the Jaina temple in the village of Kudchi, Belgaum District, was several times molested by Muslims, who formed the local majority. What thirty years before most probably would have remained a local village affair, now caught the attention of Jaina reformers. Champat Rai Jain and Motilal Ghasilal Javeri, President of the Digamber Jain Yuwak Mandal, Bombay, intervened on behalf of the local Jainas. The main action was taken by Champat Rai Jain, who repeatedly corresponded with the local government authorities to punish the culprits and protect the local Jainas' interests. In this regard, Champat Rai Jain expressed his solidarity with other Jainas through his active intervention on behalf of villagers, who according to the reformers' concepts were members of one united Jaina community. Apart from this practical presentation of unity and solidarity, Champat Rai Jain's correspondence with the local authorities also includes the rhetorical usage of a united Jaina community. In this regard, Jain writes:

> The Jains all over India were concerned in the matter. Does the Government of India wish us to believe that all the Jains from one end of India to the other had lost their senses merely on the report of the Kudchi Jains? Some of the outside people including the Life President of the Digambara Jain Pariṣadh from Upper India, visited Kudchi and saw for themselves (1931: 6).

Here, Champat Rai Jain transforms a local village affair into a nationwide `Jaina affair´, in which "Jains all over India were concerned" (1931: 6). This incident reveals, how, from the beginning of the 20th century, not only the rhetorical, but

also the concrete and practical concept of a supra-caste, supra-local Jaina community emerged. Although the Jaina reformers during this era, similarly to other Indian reformers, did not succeed in removing caste restrictions, especially regarding marriages, they were much more successful in establishing the concept of Jainas as a community, which included Jainas from all over India and from different sects and castes. While broader concepts of a `Digambara Jaina community´ and – in the widest sense – a united `Jaina community´ did not `replace´ other froms of collective identity, they represent an important conceptualisation of community formation among Jainas.

In the present chapter, it has been shown how 19th century Jaina apologetic writers have tried to present and define Jainism. These writings were composed by and for members of the small Western-educated Jaina elite. When looking at the history of the first modern Jaina reform movements, such as the described DBJS, we find their membership also mainly confined to Western-educated intellectuals and the wealthy elite of traders and landowners. Regarding the question, to what extent new concepts of collective religious identity and supra-caste, supra-locally-based religious communities spread among the Jainas as a whole, Torkel Brekke states two factors, which according to him could have supported easier communication among Jainas compared with that of Hindus: first, the fewer number of Jainas, second, a higher level of education on the part of the Jainas (Brekke 2002: 121). This theory is weakened by the fact that the census enumerations for the first decades of the 20th century suggest that many Jainas regarded themselves, or were regarded, as Hindus. Furthermore, as was seen for the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, not all Jainas were well-educated. Therefore, it can be deduced that the concept of a supra-caste and supra-local collective religious identity only gradually spread among the Jainas.

Even so, although at first confined to a small circle of Jaina intellectuals, the Jaina reformers' discourse eventually reached the mass of Jainas. What early 20th century Jaina apologetic writers had defined as `core values´ of Jainism, namely its

compatibility with science, logic and rationality, as well as its alleged tolerance and universalistic outlook, became generally accepted.

The identity discourse among Western-educated Jaina intellectuals greatly reflects the universalistic outlook of the first apologetic writers. The main aim of men such as Virchand Gandhi, Champat Rai Jain and Jagmander Lal Jaini was not the "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994), but the representation of their own religious tradition as compatible with modern thought and in its values suitable to be universally adopted. Reflecting the motivations of those who participated in it, the Jaina identity discourse was not based on the differentiation between `us´ and `them´. In this regard, boundaries to non-Jainas, especially Hindus, remained blurred.

It has to be noted that the intellectual discourse with its focus on universal `Jaina values´ and internal unification also tended to `neglect´ or `blur´ existing boundaries between Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras. Considering the motivations of the reform-minded Jaina leaders this is unsurprising. In the context of this thesis, however, this at times results in difficulties distinguishing the `layer´ of identity reformers were appealing to. While the construction of a unified, supra-local Jaina community was the reformers' ultimate goal, in practice campaigns for inter-caste marriages, for instance, remained mainly restricted to marriages between members of regionally confined Digambara or Śvetāmbara castes. Similarly, modern organisations, such as the DBJS, targeted specific sub-groups of Jainas. In this regard, the reformist activities of lay Jaina leaders represent two different approaches towards the establishment of collective identity among Jainas. In the more practical sense, the main focus was on organisation and unification among smaller regional sub-groups and mainly along sectarian lines; in the domain of intellectual discourse, however, all these regional sectarian groups were to be combined into a pan-Indian, or even universal Jaina community.

The discussion of a Digambara Jaina reform movement, the DBJS, has shown that in many aspects the aims of progressive Jaina reformers resembled those of reformers from other religious backgrounds and reflected the general intellectual atmosphere of the early 20th century. The special focus on education as a means of

progress, however, was not only a substantial feature of contemporary reform movements, but gained further importance due to the local historical context, the Maharashtrian Non-Brahmin movement and the hostel building activities in the princely state of Kolhapur. In this respect, the historical development of the DBJS reflects general intellectual and reformist developments of the late 19th century as well as a specific regional and social context.

Although the leaders of the DBJS had much in common with other `protestant´ Indian reformers, religious reform, especially regarding so-called `idol-worship´, did not gain a very prominent position among the reform goals of progressive Jainas. In this regard, we do not find any pronounced `purification´ or `Jainising the Jainas´ movements.

Caste exclusivism among Digambaras, as was shown in the example of the progressive DBJS leaders' campaigns for intermarriage and commensality, proved to be deeply rooted and difficult to overcome. Although the reformers' aims at creating a more universal, supra-caste concept of community and collective religious identity by propagating inter-caste marriages and commensality did not succeed, a sense of supra-locally, supra-caste-based community was established among Jainas by different means. Especially the reformers' representations of a broader Jaina community in the public sphere, through rhetoric as well as practical cooperation, gradually led to a wider shift in the concept of community and collective identity. In the case of the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, the terms `Digambara´, and, in a broader sense, `Jaina´ gradually became important `identity markers´, where before a `sense of community´ had been confined to a specific locality and caste. Here, we do not encounter the complete `replacement´ of one concept of identity building and community formation by a different conceptualisation; rather, it is illustrated how these concepts develop over time, with a co-existence of multiple forms of collective identities. Within these multiple identities `shifts´ are taking place, and the `hierarchy´ of these different `layers´ of identity largely depends on external factors, as was demonstrated in the case of the DBJS's focus on the Digambaras of North Karnataka and South Maharashtra as part of the `backward castes´. While in

actual practice castes and sectarian sub-groups have remained an important identity marker, broader concepts of a universal Digambara or - in a wider sense – Jaina community were mainly spread through the activities and the rhetorical usage of the Western-educated intellectual elite, as was illustrated in the present chapter.

The following chapter will focus on developments at the different end of the social strata, namely among uneducated agriculturists. In the form of the re-emergence of the naked Digambara ascetic, these developments also substantially contributed to the establishment of the concept of a collective Digambara identity and a supra-locally, supra-caste-based Digambara Jaina community, as will be argued in the following chapter.

4. THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY: THE `REVIVAL´ OF THE DIGAMBARA NAKED ASCETIC TRADITION

The present chapter will discuss what shall be called the `revival´ of the Digambara naked ascetic tradition. This development originated during the first decades of the 20th century in the area of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, and led to the emergence of a new religious authority among Digambaras. The same historical period also witnessed an increased lay Jaina activity for reform and organisation. What both developments had in common was their impact on the emergence of a broader concept of supra-locally, supra-caste-based community among Digambara Jainas. Although their protagonists - mostly very liberal urban Western-educated lay Digambaras on the one side, and mainly uneducated rural, often very conservative Digambara ascetics on the other - belonged to different social and economic groups, both contributed to the construction of a certain `image´ of Jainism with different `core values´, which have been able to co-exist without contradicting each other. As will be argued in this chapter, in addition to its impact on the construction of a supra-locally, supra-caste-based sense of community among Digambara Jainas, the revival of the naked ascetic tradition also largely contributed to the public awareness of strict and uncompromised asceticism as a `core value´ of Digambara Jainism.

Before the 20th century `revival´ of the naked Digambara ascetic tradition will be discussed, some important remarks have to be made. The Digambara ascetic order is not restricted to male ascetics. Although female ascetics are, due to social conventions preventing women from practising complete nudity in public, traditionally considered to be on a less advanced ascetic stage than their male counterparts, Digambara nuns in general, and some individuals in particular,[109]

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[109] One of these highly revered individual female Digambara ascetics, for instance, is Āryikā Jñānamatī (born 1934) who studied and translated several cosmographical works and inspired the establishment of a cosmographical research institute (Digambara Jain Trilok Śodh Saṃstān) at Hastinapur, Uttar Pradesh. For more information, see: Wiley (2006: 113).

have been highly revered by lay Digambaras. Apart from some specific restrictions in their ascetic practice,[110] the ascetic hardship endured by female mendicants is not less remarkable than that of male mendicants. In this respect, the present chapter's focus on male Digambara ascetics is not meant to diminish the importance of nuns within the Digambara ascetic tradition. However, one important characteristic element of Digambara asceticism discussed in this thesis, namely public nudity, has traditionally been restricted to monks. This element, as will be argued in the present chapter, makes the male ascetic not only a very distinct figure from his outer appearance, but also contributes to the image of the naked monk as a `living symbol of Digambara Jainism´.

   The following section will discuss the few available historical sources regarding the Digambara ascetic tradition during the 19th century up to the early 20th century, when the tradition of an ascetic order was re-established.

The Digambara Ascetic Tradition during the 19th and Early 20th Century

> The lowest of the [Jaina ascetics'] grades is an ordinary ascetic or Sādhu. If he is Digambara, he is nude, lost to the world and immersed in meditation, eating only once a day and tearing out his hair as it grows. In these days, there are few or no Digambara[s] of this type (Nanjundayya and Iyer 1930: 453).

This statement, found in *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, published in 1930, is one of the very few ethnographic remarks about naked Digambara ascetics published during the first decades of the 20th century. According to the few English language publications of the period, which mention Digambara ascetics at all, the tradition of the fully naked (*digambara* - `sky-clad´) monk, had more or less gone into complete extinction. While, as Georg Bühler had remarked in 1887, their original tradition of nakedness had been given up, due to "the advance of civilization"

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[110] These restrictions are based on the Digambara concept, that a woman cannot be fully initiated into the final ascetic stage as a naked mendicant. In this regard, a nun will follow a slightly less strict ascetic practice than a fully initiated monk. The differences in practice mainly concern the possession of clothing, the consumption of food in a sitting position, and the usage of vessels while eating.

(1963: 2), other sources described Digambara ascetics as either wearing coloured clothes, which were only removed during meal times,[111] or, in a few cases, as solitary naked mendicants, staying completely aloof from society, hiding their nakedness in the forests.[112] For the Western (Victorian) eye it was only too evident that an ascetic's nudity prevented any social intercourse with lay followers, as the following statement illustrates: "The Śvetāmbara laymen complain that their ascetics interfere too much in their conferences. This complaint is never brought against the Digambara ascetic whose lack of clothing interns him for life in the wilderness" (Nanjundayya and Iyer 1930: 449).[113]

While, as was seen in chapter two, some 19th and early 20th century Śvetāmbara monks rose to prominence through their activities as religious reformers, writers, scholars, promoters of the printing of Jaina scriptures, and their open cooperation with Western scholars,[114] Digambara ascetics during the same period remained in obscurity. Judging from the above mentioned descriptions of Digambara ascetics wearing coloured clothes, it seems most likely that the respective authors were writing about *bhaṭṭārakas*, who carry the two visible objects of a Digambara ascetic, the *piñchī* and *kamaṇḍalu*,[115] but do wear orange clothes, instead of

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[111] This statement can be found in: Sturrock (2003: 190).

[112] See, for instance: Nanjundayya and Iyer (1930: 431); 448; Thurston (1975: 420).

[113] This statement, however, gets weakened by the fact that the same section about the Jainas contains a photograph entitled "Jain Sanyasis" (`Jaina ascetics´), which shows the naked ascetic Śāntisāgar (whose biography will be discussed in the following section of this chapter) with six male disciples (four also naked), sitting in the meditating position, posing for the photographer (Nanjundayya and Iyer 1930: 449). This photo, taken in front of an unidentified building, shows, that the mentioned "lack of clothing" does not necessarily limit the ascetic's life to one solitarily spent "in the wilderness", without any contact with Jaina lay followers.

[114] Noteworthy among these are: Ācārya Vijayānanda Sūri (1837-1896), the former Sthānakvāsī monk Ātmārāmjī who took a second initiation and became a Śvetāmbara image worshipping (*mūrtipūjaka*) ascetic; Buddhisāgara Sūri (1874-1925), "a voluminous writer" (Dundas 2002: 183); Sāgarānda Sūri (1875-1950), promoter of the printing of Śvetāmbara scriptures; Ācārya Vijayadharma Sūri (1868-1922) who was an important promoter of the publishing of Jaina texts and worked together with Western scholars. The list is far from complete, though shall not be continued here. For further information about eminent Śvetāmbara ascetics of the 19th and early 20th century, see: Brekke (2002: 139-143); Cort (1991:658-659); Dundas (2002: 183-184); Lala Jaswant Rai Jaini (1918: III-VI); Wiley (2006: 16-17; 21-239).

[115] A broom made out of peacock feathers (*piñchī*) and a water pot (*kamaṇḍalu*). The *piñchī* is used to gently wipe the floor before sitting or lying down, in order to avoid causing hurt to tiny life forms. The *kamaṇḍalu* contains water boiled by lay followers and is given to the ascetic for the purpose of washing hands and feet and cleaning oneself after excretion.

practising complete nudity. These *bhaṭṭārakas* acted, as mentioned in chapter three, as `caste gurus´, and 19th century sources furthermore describe them as caste respective "head priest[s]" or "high priest[s]" (Pathak 1999: 135-136) and "Teacher[s] or *svámi[s]*" who have the "power to fine or excommunicate" (Campbell 2004: 103) members of their caste.

The few available contemporary sources, therefore, construct a picture of the Digambara ascetic tradition during the 19th and early 20th centuries, which can be simplified as follows. On the one hand, there are the dressed ascetics - in all probability identical with the *bhaṭṭārakas* - who exercise special powers such as the excommunication of members over their respective castes. The designations `high priests´ and `*svāmis*´ denote the religious authority of these dressed ascetics. Naked ascetics, on the other hand, are more or less seen as `exotic species´, staying completely aloof from society (and therefore from the Digambara lay followers). For several reasons, the cited Western sources have to be treated with caution. Among these reasons, the general neglect of ethnographic research (in favour of philological studies), and of the Digambaras (in favour of the Śvetāmbara tradition) have already been mentioned in chapter two. The Victorian sentiment against public nudity, furthermore, in the Western scholars' worldview, made the naked ascetics' exile in the wilderness a necessity, which had not to be questioned or discussed.

Recent academic works on the contemporary Digambara ascetic order[116] trace its beginning back to a kind of `revival´ of the naked tradition, which had taken place in the area of North Karnataka and South Maharashtra at the beginning of the 20th century.[117] Due to the lack of sources, it is not known what exactly had happened in the region between the 12th and the 19th century. Although the actual events are very difficult to reconstruct,[118] some literary[119] and epigraphical sources,[120] as well

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[116] For recent anthropological research on Jaina ascetics in general, and Digambaras in particular, see chapter one of the present thesis.
[117] See: Carrithers (1989: 232-233); Dundas (2002: 184-186); Zydenbos (1999: 291-292).
[118] The DFG (German Research Council)-funded Emmy Noether Research Project *Jainism in Karnataka: History, Architecture and Religion* has been dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of

as the significant number of destroyed, converted or mutilated Jaina temples and images found all over the Karnataka and South Maharashtrian area[121] testify to a drastic decline of the Jainas' influence in the area. The majority of scholars also suggest an accompanying decline in the Digambara monastic tradition during this time period, which had led to the abandoning of the obligatory nudity and the extinction of monastic orders with teacher-disciple lineages. Vilas Sangave (2001: 133) and Robert Zydenbos (1999: 291) both hold a growing unacceptability of the ascetics' nudity at public places mainly responsible for a decline in the Digambara tradition of naked ascetics. According to Padmanabh S. Jaini and B.A. Saletore, however, the decline of the ascetic tradition had already started before the general decrease of the Jainas' influence in the Karnataka area began. Jaini (1979: 306-308) considers the moral and spiritual decay of Digambara ascetics, which was linked with the growing economic strength of the monasteries during the medieval period, a fundamental reason for the Jainas' loss of influence. Saletore (1938: 279) sees a lack of effective leadership as one of the crucial factors. The lack of actual textual sources, however, obstructs a verification of these hypotheses. Whatever had happened between the 12th and the 19th centuries, and whatever the reasons for this had been, for the purpose of this study it may remain an unclear development. In the context of the present chapter, which focuses on developments during the first decades of the 20th century, the centuries before matter only as much as some definitions are concerned. Questions of definition, for instance, include the notion

the political changes in medieval Karnataka, which led to a decline in the Jainas' political power, and the impact these developments had on Jaina art, architecture and religion in the region. The results can be found in the forthcoming publication: Hegewald, Julia (ed.): (forthcoming) *Jainism in Karnataka: History, Architecture and Religion.*

[119] See, for instance, a work of the late medieval (ca 12th century CE) Jaina poet Brahmaśiva: "'All who are strong and wealthy/ Become devotees of Siva; Jainism is empty, therefore the people of our land/do not take to it,´ thus the fools speak. `If Jainism is so good,´ they say, `then why don't people join? All people become Śaivas, because that cult wins their heart,´ thus the fools speak." (Translated and cited in: Zydenbos 1986: 183-184).

[120] Inscriptional evidence mentions the Jainas' defeat against Śaivas in debates, including `miracle contests´, and the Śaivas' `victories´ over "the wild beasts which are the Jainas" (inscription found at Annigeri, Dharwad District, dated 1184 CE, translated and cited in: Desai 2001: 398). See, for instance: Desai (2001: 398-399); Lorenzen (1991: 45; 169).

[121] For more details, see: Hegewald (forthcoming). During field research for this thesis, conducted in 2006/2007, many places, especially in the area of North Karnaraka, were visited, which were rich in Jaina relics.

of the `emergence of the naked Digambara ascetic as a new religious authority´. The `re-emergence of a (once established and later declined) religious authority´ in the form of the naked monk may be viewed as a helpful concept in this regard. The aim of this chapter, however, is not comparison of the religious authority naked Digambara ascetics held in ancient and medieval times, with the authority they developed during the 20th century. The focus will be on the analysis of the (20th century) historical development which caused a shift of religious authority from the figure of the bhaṭṭāraka as a regional `caste guru´, to the locally independent wandering naked monk. In this regard, the phrases `emergence´ and `new religious authority´ seem more appropriate.

In the following section, one of the most prominent figures of the modern `revival´ of the Digambara naked tradition will be introduced. The phrase `revival´ does not imply that naked monks by the beginning of the 20th century had completely ceased to exist. The following account, however, will show how a living link between ascetics in a teacher-disciple lineage, as well as a close interaction between ascetics and lay followers, has been newly established in modern times.

Ācārya Śāntisāgar[122] and the Re-Establishment of an Ascetic Order

When the field research in the area of North Karnataka began in January 2006, one common remarkable feature of the Digambara temples which were visited, was the following. In nearly all of them, the same picture was placed on a wall, showing the photo of an elderly, enfeebled looking naked ascetic. Sitting on a small platform placed on the ground, hands folded in his lap, his broom of peacock feathers and water pot resting next to him, he looked at the photographer with a straight, solemn

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[122]An *ācārya* holds the highest rank within the Digambara ascetic tradition. He is empowered by the scriptures to give initiations and to teach.
 Since the spiritual names given at the time of a Digambara ascetic's initiation are not unique, several different ascetics can have the same name. In case of Śāntisāgar, the *ācārya* meant here and in the following is known as `Ācārya Śāntisāgar *Dakṣiṇ*´ (`the Southern Ācārya Śāntisāgar´). Nearly at the same time another ascetic named Śāntisāgar came into prominence in Rajasthan, who was known after his birthplace as `Ācārya Śāntisāgar Chānī´.

expression on his face. The photo, as was explained, shows Ācārya Śāntisāgar. When enquiries were made about Śāntisāgar and the immense popularity his figure seems to hold in the imagination of Digambara Jainas, especially those of South India, most Digambara lay followers gave a similar explanation for Śāntisāgar`s popularity. Some simply called him `the first *muni´*[123] of modern times, others were a little more specific and described him as `the first *ācārya´* of the 20th century. Both answers were thought-provoking, in terms of discovering further details concerning the ascetic's life and influence.

The pre-eminent position, Śāntisāgar is given in the imagination of 20th century and present day Digambaras is not only reflected in the multitude of graphic and plastic[124] illustrations, but also becomes evident in the number of publications about him, mainly in the form of biographies. While there is no monograph existing in English or any other European languages, several accounts - published in the form of books or, more often, smaller paperback booklets - have been published in Indian vernacular languages. Some of these are written by Digambara ascetics themselves, others by lay followers. In the following account of Śāntisāgar's life, some Hindi publications will be drawn upon, which were collected during the field research in Karnataka and Maharashtra.[125] Furthermore, personal communication from lay Digambaras of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bombay and Delhi was relied upon. These persons happen to have developed a deep interest in the life of Śāntisāgar. Several of them had met Śāntisāgar during his lifetime or had (already deceased) family members who had done so. Whenever the chance was given, male and female Digambara ascetics were asked about their impressions of

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[123] Among Digambaras, the word *muni* (literally: `silent one´) describes a fully initiated naked monk. See: Wiley (2006: 144; 151).

[124] At quite a few temple complexes and Jaina institutions which were visited in North Karnataka and Maharashtra a statue of the monk could be found.

[125] These publications are: Āryikā Jñānamatī: 2004, *Prathamacarya Shri Shantisagar Maharaj.* Digambar Jain Trilok Shodh Samsthan, Jambudvipa-Hastinapur; Āryikā Viṣudvamatī: (n.d.) *Bisvi Sadi ke Mahan Digambar Jainacarya Param Pujya Caritra Cakravarti Shri 108 Shantisagarji Maharaj ka Sankshipt Jivanvratta. Shri Bharatvarshiya Digambar Jain Mahasabha*, Lucknow; Divakar, Sumerucandra: 2006, *Caritra Cakravarti.* Shramanshiromani Acarya Shantisagar Maharaj ka Punya Caritra, Shri Bharatvarshiya Digambar Jain (Shrut Samvarddhini) Mahasabha, New Delhi, eighth edition.

Śāntisāgar.[126] Although none of them had met Śāntisāgar in person, all of them regarded him as the example of an eminent Digambara *muni*, which gives an idea of the high position, he holds within the imagination of present day ascetics. This imagination contributes to the religious authority given to Śāntisāgar as the `ideal ascetic´ and to Digambara ascetics after him.

Śāntisāgar was born in the year 1872 as Satgauda Patil into a farmer's family of the village Bhoj,[127] Belgaum District, North Karnataka.[128] As the majority of Digambaras in this area were agriculturists, the family's main profession also was farming, though they additionally ran a small cloth shop. They belonged to one of the two main castes of the area, the Caturthas.[129] Satgauda received school education for about three years. Although, as the family name `Patil´ suggests, his father acted as the head of the village, and Satgauda at least received some basic education, his family background presents a rather typical picture of South Indian rural Digambaras.

Due to the lack of sources, it is difficult to reconstruct a picture of the religious life in rural North Karnataka at the time of Satgauda's birth and youth. Regionally, as mentioned before, the area was one of the centres of Digambara Jainas, and, though statistics about the 19th century are unavailable, according to a local Digambara interviewed,[130] the village of Bhoj today has a Jaina population of about 20%. According to Paul Dundas and Michael Carrithers, only one naked Digambara monk can be historically traced during the 19th century, an ascetic

[126] During the ten months spent on field research, individual interviews were conducted, which lasted between ten minutes and up to more than an hour, with ten male and four female Digambara ascetics at Bangalore, Gulbarga, Humcha, Malkhed, Shedbal, Varur (all Karnataka) and Delhi between January 2006 and June 2007.

[127] His actual birthplace was the near-by village Yelagula (Kolhapur District, Maharashtra), his mother's native place.

[128] The following account of Śāntisāgar's life is mainly based on: Āryikā Jñānamatī (2004); Āryikā Viṣudvamatī (n.d.); Divakar (2006).

[129] Interestingly, Divakar (2006: 92) stresses the (alleged) *kṣatriya* origin of this Jaina caste, as if to link *Śāntisāgar* more closely with the Tīrthaṅkaras who are all believed to have been *kṣatriyas* by birth. Eminent historical and mythological figures, closely related to the Jaina tradition, are in most cases also members of the warrior and ruler's class. The symbolic connection between warrior kings and Jaina ascetics becomes evident in the ascetics' popular title as *mahārāj(a)*, for, according to Jaina tradition, the Jaina ascetic is the true conqueror and victor (over all worldly bonds and bodily pleasures).

[130] Personal communication with Prakash Patil at Bhoj, 1.12.2006.

called Siddhasāgar (1828-1903).[131] In all likelihood, however, there were some more individual ascetics, and the biographies of Śāntisāgar mention four more Digambara monks, who lived around the area of North Karnataka during the late 19th and early 20th century. What is important, however, is the fact that these ascetics did not seem to be connected by any ties of a teacher and disciple relationship. This lack of a monastic lineage is illustrated by the account of Siddhasāgar's initiation into full monkhood. No Digambara *ācārya* or *muni*[132] gave him *dīkṣā* (initiation). Instead, Siddhasāgar became a naked *muni* by taking off his clothes in front of a Jina statue (Dundas 2002: 184). As these ascetics did not seem to have any connections among each other, they may also have had only very limited interaction with lay Jainas, mainly confined to the begging for food and occasionally for temporary shelter. Religious authority lay mainly with the `dressed acetics´, the *bhaṭṭārakas*, who not only presided over their respective *maṭhas*, but also held the authority over caste affairs and led religious functions, temple rituals and the consecration of new temples and images.

Religious education was given at home, and, according to Śāntisāgar's biographies, both parents are described as deeply religious. The religious practice of Satgauda's mother seemed mainly to have consisted in the visit to the temple and the worship of the Jina statue by laying flowers. This practice was accompanied by domestic asceticism, in which, as stressed in the biographies, the father engaged, too.[133] The religious practices and values Satgauda absorbed during his childhood therefore mainly consisted in temple worship and domestic asceticism, as practised at his home. Given the scarceness of religious experts and teachers, this religious upbringing was in no way extraordinary. According to Michael Carrithers and Caroline Humphrey, Jaina values are derived from two sources: "the strict

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[131] For short accounts of Siddhasāgar, see: Carrithers (1989: 232-233); Dundas (2002: 184).

[132] According to Digambara tradition, male and female ascetics receive initiation by a spiritual teacher, ideally, but not necessarily, of the rank of an *ācārya*.

[133] Domestic ascetic practices, mainly in the form of fasting, seem to be more commonly practiced by female members of the family. See, for instance: Carrithers (1991, 1989); Reynell (1991). Field research for the present thesis among Digambara and Śvetāmbara families at Maharashtra and Karnataka also testified to the stronger female engagement in fasting.

teachings and instructions of the appointed leaders, ascetics and pandits, on the one hand, and the informal but devout upbringing by Jain women on the other (1991b: 294)." Here, we clearly find the second source responsible for Satgauda's early religious education. Regarding the first-mentioned source, ascetics and pandits were rare in Satgauda's childhood environment. Except for the few *bhaṭṭārakas* who presided over *maṭhas* in the area of South Maharashtra and Karnataka,[134] "appointed leaders" (Carrithers and Humphrey 1991b: 294) of the Digambara Jainas, who were educated enough to teach Jaina values, were hard to find.

Nevertheless, Satgauda and his family did have contact with some individual ascetics, who, however, rather took the role of providing an ideal in asceticism, than that of religious teachers in a stricter sense. Satgauda seems to have been especially fond of serving[135] an ascetic called Ādisāgar, who seems to have been mainly popular for his strict ascetic practices, especially his fastings. He is described as having taken food only once a week in the form of very limited substances (Divakar 2006: 45). The only characteristic given of him is his severe asceticism. If the biographies are accurate, it was especially this strict and uncompromising asceticism which greatly impressed Satgauda.

The importance of the ascetic element in Śāntisāgar's life before and after his initiation into the rank of an ascetic dominates the biographical accounts of his life. Having been married in his ninth year, Satgauda stayed a *brahmacārī* (celibate) for

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[134] The nearest *bhaṭṭāraka* seats from Satgauda's birth place were the Nandani and Kolhapur *maṭhas*. Their respective *bhaṭṭārakas*, Jinasena and Lakṣmīsena, were closely linked to the area's two main Digambara Jaina castes, the Caturthas and Pancamas. The *bhaṭṭāraka* seats in the area of present Karnataka which exist up to the present day are the following: Shravana Belgola (Hassan District), Mudbidri (South Kanara District), Karkal (South Kanara District), Humcha (Shimoga District), Sonda *maṭha* (North Kanara District) and Narasimharajpur (Chikmagalur District). A *maṭha* at Malkhed (Gulbarga District, formerly within the territory of the Nizam of Hyderabad) was active until the first decades of the 20th century, but is extinct today (Sangave 2001: 136).

[135] `Serving´ here means the giving of food, which has been prepared especially carefully, according to the very strict dietary rules of Jaina ascetics. This food, in theory, must not be prepared intentionally for the feeding of a mendicant. In practice, however, it mostly is, since many lay Jainas follow less strict dietary rules than ascetics. Apart from meat, fish, eggs and honey, which are generally not taken by Jainas, ascetics also avoid some kinds of vegetables which are considered to contain a large quantity of living beings. While some lay Jainas also permanently or temporarily avoid this kind of food, others do not. `Serving´ can also mean the provision of temporary shelter for an ascetic.

life, after his young wife had passed away within six months of the wedding. Already as a lay man, Satgauda gradually started to put strict restrictions on the food he took and on his possessions,[136] and undertook several pilgrimages to Jaina centres. In the year 1915, he approached the Digambara ascetic Devendrakīrti, who gave him *kṣullaka dīkṣā*[137] at the small Maharashtrian village of Uttoor, and named him Śāntisāgar.[138] In 1918 Śāntisāgar took the next step of initiation, *ailaka dīkṣā,*[139] at the Jaina pilgrimage place Mount Girnar (Gujarat) in front of a statue of the Tīrthaṅkara Neminātha. One year later, in 1919, a big Jaina festival, a *pañcakalyaṇaka* ceremony,[140] was held at the village of Yarnal (Belgaum District, Karnataka). Śāntisāgar used the opportunity[141] and approached Devendrakīrti, who took part in the ceremony, to receive *muni dīkṣā* from him.

Following his first initiation, he travelled on foot through the South Maharashtra and North Karnataka region, only spending a longer time at one place during the four months of *cāturmāsa*, the rainy season, when ascetics are not supposed to travel.[142] Local Jainas took the opportunity to invite him to their towns and villages

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[136] At eighteen years of age he stopped using a pillow and mattress, and at 25 he gave up wearing shoes. When he was 32 he renounced oil and butter in his food (Āryikā Viṣudvamatī, n.d.).

[137] *Kṣullaka dīkṣā* is the first level of initiation into full monkhood. A *kṣullaka* stays completely aloof from all family ties and business activities. He sustains himself through begging for food, eating only once a day. His sole possessions are the *piñchī*, *kamaṇḍalu* and simple garments consisting of a loin cloth and another garment.

[138] While the place and year of Śāntisāgar's first initiation are undisputed, several theories regarding his *dīkṣā guru* exist. Since Devendrakīrti is the hereditary name of every *bhaṭṭāraka* of the Humcha *maṭha*, Karnataka, Paul Dundas (2002: 185) states that Śāntisāgar probably was initiated by a *bhaṭṭāraka*. Sumerucandra Divakar (2006: 46), on the other hand, describes Devendrakīrti as a former *bhaṭṭāraka* who had left this position after two years to become a fully initiated naked *muni*. The latter version was, according to Divakar, told to him by Śāntisāgar himself, when he had asked him for his *dīkṣā guru*.

[139] *Ailaka dīkṣā* is regarded as the last preparatory step before taking the initiation to become a naked *muni*. An *ailaka* only wears a loincloth. In case of Digambara female renouncers, after the *kṣullikā dīkṣā* there is only one more level of initiation, since female ascetics are not supposed to remove their clothes.

[140] *Pañcakalyaṇaka* is a ritual celebrated by Jainas at the consecrating ceremony of a Jina idol. In this ritual, the five auspicious moments in the life of a Tīrthaṅkara are re-enacted.

[141] Big religious ceremonies require the presence of at least one Jaina ascetic.

[142] Apart from the fact that travelling during the rainy season can be very troublesome, the rule is mainly meant to avoid the destruction of small living forms, which come into existence during that period.

to spend *cāturmāsa* there. This was the only way in which the *muni*'s presence could be assured for a longer period. Already before he had become a naked ascetic lay followers of the region had taken to accompanying him on his wanderings and spread the word that an ascetic was on his way from village to village. After his *muni dīkṣā,* his popularity seems to have grown. During *cāturmāsa* 1924 Śāntisāgar for the first time initiated a disciple into full monkhood, by giving *muni dīkṣā* to Kṣullaka Vīrsāgar.[143] A short time later a second *muni dīkṣā* took place, when Ailaka Nemaṇṇa was initiated as Muni Nemisāgar. These first initiations brought an important change. Up to then, Śāntisāgar had been the only travelling naked ascetic, temporarily accompanied by lay followers. Now, however, a *saṅgha* (group of ascetics) began to form, including other naked monks who accepted Śāntisāgar as their spiritual teacher and travelled permanently with him. In the course of time, this *saṅgha* kept growing, consisting of male and female renouncers of all levels of initiation. Shortly after the first initiations given by him, his followers bestowed the title *ācārya* on Śāntisāgar, which made him, in the imagination of most Digambaras, the first *ācārya* of the 20th century.[144] The title `*prathamācārya´* (`first *ācārya´*) is strongly connected with the figure of Śāntisāgar in the imagination and devotion of South Indian Digambaras. This becomes evident in book or booklet titles where the phrase is written in front of his ascetic name,[145] and during field

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[143] Though generally a Digambara ascetic is expected to pass through the levels of *kṣullaka* and *ailaka*, in cases where the spiritual teacher regards his disciple as well advanced on the ascetic way, *muni dīkṣā* may be given without a prior *ailaka dīkṣā*.

[144] In recent years there has been some kind of controversy, started by Ācārya Sanmatisāgar claiming superiority for his own *dīkṣā guru*, an ascetic called Ādisāgar Ankalīkar (`hailing from Ankali´), who had lived around the same time as Śāntisāgar. Since the time, place, and circumstances of the alleged first *ācārya* title being bestowed on Ādisāgar remain obscure, the claim seems to be quite unrealistic, or at least very difficult to verify.

Traditionally, the *ācārya* title is given by the present *ācārya* to a male ascetic of his *saṅgha*, who is considered most suitable as a successor. From Śāntisāgar's time onwards, this tradition was revived.

[145] See, for instance: Āryikā Jñānamatī (2004; 2006).

research was furthermore testified to by the answers Digambaras gave, when questioned about the special impact of Śāntisāgar.[146]

This title implies a very important contribution Śāntisāgar is credited with: he is seen as the `reviver´ of the tradition of an ascetic order. In this regard, his main achievement can be described as the willingness to lead others on the way to asceticism, and thereby to re-establish the ascetic tradition by initiating devout men and women into his *saṅgha,* who again contributed to the gradual numeral growth of Digambara ascetics, and the eventual establishment of their own groups of disciples. The importance of this `revival´ of the ascetic order was not restricted to the numerical increase of Digambara ascetics, but also contributed to making the Digambara ascetic a figure moving openly in public and interacting freely with lay followers. Regarding the Digambara ascetic as a public figure, however, the characteristic of the monk's complete nudity's leading to difficulties with the majority of (non-Jaina) Indians and the government, requires consideration. Against the earlier mentioned Victorian sentiments of some Western observers, in the Indian context an ascetic's nudity and moving openly in public did not necessarily exclude each other. Solitary naked ascetics or naked ascetics wandering in groups were, especially at times of the huge Hindu *mela* celebrations at pilgrimage centres like Benares or Allahabad, part of the Indian religious landscape. Under the British rule, the wandering of naked ascetics was mainly observed with disapproval. This attitude was not only caused by a Victorian dislike of any kind of public nudity, but also prompted by the fear of the disruption of public order, which could lead to violent confrontations and communal disturbances. In the case of wandering ascetics, however, they did not necessarily have to be naked to arouse the distrust of the local officials. In the year 1907, the inspector-general of police, C.R. Cleveland, wrote the following statement about `religious beggars´:

> I should like to establish that the system of Sadhus is bad for public morality: that it encourages crime and criminals; that it prejudices industry and agriculture by shortening the supply of labour; that it is a wasteful and unjustifiable diversion of charity and that with all these

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[146] Next to Śāntisāgar being stated as `the first naked ascetic of modern times´, the answer most frequently received to the question was that he had been `the first *ācārya* of the 20th century.´

defects it is unworthy of support by the Hindu community, by the religious leaders thereof and by native princes and landlords (1907: no page number).

Since, according to Cleveland, `criminal elements´ of the Indian society liked to "masquerade as Sadhus" (1907: no page number), religious mendicants were to be included in a series of lectures about `criminal Tribes´, which were meant for the education of British police officers in India.[147]

As William R. Pinch has shown in his *Peasants and Monks in British India* (1996), British officials knew about the authority religious mendicants held especially among the rural peasant population, and feared the revolutionary potential of this influence. Ascetics as "`political sadhus´" (Pinch 1996: 8) were distrusted for their alleged impact on the growth of Indian nationalism. Furthermore, some mendicant orders did not confine their activities to otherworldly pursuits, but became known as armed monks (Pinch 1996: 5). Here, it would lead too far to go into more details, which can be found in Pinch's pioneering work. It is clear, however, that wandering religious mendicants were mostly distrusted by the government. Regarding Jaina monks, the author of the above-mentioned lectures for the education of policemen, has the following to say: "The Jain sect is not one that is likely to trouble the police much for their tenets aim at securing a life of morality" (Gayer 1910: 136). Though this remark excluded Jaina ascetics from possessing criminal potential and therefore from being a risk to law and order, in reality it proved to be rather irrelevant, since British officials would find it hard to distinguish the ascetic of one tradition from that of any other.

Unfortunately, not much is known about the implications which the British officials' distrust towards ascetics had for the wandering of Śāntisāgar and his disciples. It can be assumed that as long as his wanderings were confined to rural areas with a relatively high population of Digambaras, there may have been no disturbances. With a growing *saṅgha*, however, the processions must have caught

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[147] The lectures were written by G.W. Gayer and published under the title *Lectures on Some Criminal Tribes of India and Religious Mendicants*. Central Provinces Police, Principal Police Training School, Saugor, 1910.

more public attention, which may have been problematic, especially where processions in urban areas were concerned. The biographies of Śāntisāgar touch the topic only very superficially, mainly stating in a hagiographic style that in cases where his *saṅgha* was banned from entering an area or region, its leader overcame the obstacle by severely fasting for what he regarded as his personal religious right. The only available more detailed account of an incident regarding the free travel of naked Digambara monks concerns the visit of Śāntisāgar and seven other naked monks to Delhi in 1931. According to personal communication with a local Digambara, whose grandfather had been involved in the event, and a Hindi newspaper article mentioning the incident,[148] the presence of naked ascetics in Delhi proved to be a difficult affair. On July 2, 1931, the Digambara *samāj* of Delhi sent an appeal to the government to allow Śāntisāgar and his *saṅgha* to follow their invitation and enter the city. When permission was officially given, after a week's time, the *saṅgha* came and stayed for about a month. The permission to stay, however, was initially only granted for one area of the city, Dariyaganj, where a wealthy local Digambara owned a big piece of land. Śāntisāgar's wish to proceed to the city centre to visit the Lal Mandir, a famous Digambara temple, was only granted after he had taken to fasting. The second appeal of the Delhi Digambaras, however, sent to the government in September of the same year, was not successful, since a number of people had issued complaints about the public movement of naked ascetics in the city centre. In the year 1932, the whole issue was eventually solved in favour of the Digambara Jainas.

This incident shows two noteworthy developments. First of all, it illustrates the strong involvement of lay Jainas and the interaction between lay men and ascetics: the lay followers invite, the ascetics follow their invitation. To overcome hurdles, lay followers file petitions and actively propagate for their ascetics' right to enter the city. Second, it testifies that the impact of Śāntisāgar - and other ascetics after

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[148] The events were explained during a talk with the grandson of Ulphat Ray Ji Jain on 28.05.2007 at Delhi, who had been one of the main activists on behalf of the Delhi Digambara *samāj*. The same account in more detail can also be found in an article of the Jaina newspaper *Sammedacal Rashmi*. See: Dipankar Jain (2001).

him - reached far beyond borders of region and caste. In this regard, the Digambara ascetic, as a public figure, was not restricted to a particular region, class and caste.

The appeal of the Digambara ascetic to a `Digambara community´ in a wider sense, irrespective of local origin and caste, became obvious even more, when in the year 1955 Śāntisāgar finally decided to perform the ritual of *sallekhanā*, the gradual fasting to death. No longer able to observe an ascetic's rules in all strictness due to failing eyesight, [149] he chose the Maharashtrian pilgrimage place Kunthalagiri, where he gradually reduced the food he took, until he only had water from August 14 onwards. On September 7 he also renounced water, and passed away on September 18, 1955. During his last weeks, thousands of Digambaras had come to Kunthalagiri. Śāntisāgar's *sallekhanā* became a `public event´ which brought together Digambara Jainas from different areas and backgrounds. In this regard, as his ascetic career had taken place in interaction with ascetic disciples and lay followers, his death in open public can be seen as a logical consequence. The practice of *sallekhanā* furthermore contributed to Śāntisāgar's reputation as the `ideal ascetic´ and set an example for later ascetics. [150] This uncompromising asceticism contributed largely to the rise of the Digambara monk as a new religious authority, while, at the same time, it elevated the naked *muni* to the position of a `living symbol of Digambara Jainism´ as will be further discussed in the following section.

The Naked Digambara Monk: A `Living Symbol of Digambara Jainism´

If, as the present chapter intends to indicate, the naked Digambara monk really has developed into a new religious authority, which during the 20th century became

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[149] Especially the vow of *ahiṃsā* became more and more difficult to observe, since, for instance, the proper examination of food for small insects was not possible any more.

[150] Death by *sallekhanā*, indeed, has become the ideal for modern day Digambara ascetics, and several ascetics after Śāntisāgar have ended their life in this way. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five of this thesis.

more influential than the authorative figure of the *bhaṭṭāraka*, it should be considered which elements established this authority and how this authority shows. The biographies of Śāntisāgar, although more religious hagiographies than historic accounts, nevertheless show one important characteristic of Śāntisāgar, namely his low level of formal and religious education, which, considering his rural agrarian background, is understandable. However, contrasted with the idealistic image of `a golden age of the Jaina tradition´, as described in chapter three, the figure of Śāntisāgar had nothing to do with the popular imagination of the ancient and medieval Digambara monk being "regarded as a symbol of learning" and "a scholar par excellence" (Sangave 2001: 201-202). In this regard, as will be further discussed in the next section, the modern Digambara ascetic's relatively low level of education was to be constantly criticised and sometimes ridiculed by educated lay followers. The 20th century revival of the Digambara ascetic tradition, therefore, did not produce a religious authority based on scholarship. When the recorded sermons of Śāntisāgar are considered, for example, extraordinary philosophical thoughts or profound religious discourses are not found. What made Śāntisāgar's immense popularity was not his religious scholarship, but his religious practice. It has already been mentioned how his biographers focus on Śāntisāgar's severe asceticism and his strict observance of the ascetics' rules. His biographies give detailed descriptions of the significance Śāntisāgar had put on the right performance of all of his actions, such as taking food.[151] His disciples had to follow the same strictness in their ascetic practice. The ascetic ideal, exemplified by him and carried on by his successors, consisted mainly of strict and uncompromising adherence to the ascetic rules, as laid down in the scriptures, and rigid asceticism, especially in the practice of fasting. His biographies stress his periods of long

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[151] Āryikā Viṣudvamatī, for instance, mentions an incident, when Śāntisāgar preferred to fast, instead of accepting some bread which had been made out of corn ground at night time (Āryikā Viṣudvamatī, n.d.). His refusal is based on a strict interpretation of the vow of *ahiṃsā*, for the grinding of corn after sunset could cause the destruction of tiny life forms which come out after sunset and cannot be seen properly.

fasting,[152] and indulge in descriptions of Śāntisāgar carrying on his meditation, though venomous snakes and red ants crawled over his body.[153] Especially in the Indian environment, where asceticism and fasting are important aspects of religious practice, and even more so among Jainas, stories like these are very likely to catch the popular imagination.

The Digambara ascetic as represented by Śāntisāgar follows the Jaina values of asceticism and *ahiṃsā* to the highest possible extent. His practice, renouncing even the loincloth, eating only once a day and being constantly alert not to cause any hurt even to the smallest living being,[154] earns the ascetic the respect and veneration of the laity, and substantially contributes to his religious authority. In this regard, Robert J. Zydenbos remarks:

> The Digambara monks are people who have drawn the most uncompromising consequences from their beliefs, and by living accordingly they are living representations of the Jaina faith. They represent the living essence of the faith much more vividly and concretely than any image can […]. The renunciant is worshippable, just as an image of a Tīrthaṅkara is worshippable […] (1999: 301).

Observances during field research for this thesis testify to the high level of reverence lay Digambaras generally hold for Digambara *munis*. What all lay Digambaras spoken to admired most about their monks and nuns was the high level of asceticism practised by them. Especially the naked *muni*, it was explained, deserved the highest veneration, for he had taken the last step of renunciation by abandoning even the last piece of clothing. Śvetāmbara ascetics, in comparison, were frequently described as being lax in their ascetic practice, for they did not practice the Digambara ascetic's rule of having food only once a day. Interestingly,

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[152] Āryikā Jñānamatī, for instance, includes a list of the fasts taken by Śāntisāgar (Āryikā Jñānamatī 2004: 28-29).

[153]See, for instance: Āryikā Jñānamatī 2004: 24; Divakar 2006: 60-61. Especially snakes feature in some popular stories about Śāntisāgar, exemplifying his strong willpower, fearlessness, and his ability to even attract wild animals by his ascetic power. The story of a snake appearing to take *darśana* of Śāntisāgar shortly before he passed away was also recounted by a lay Digambara met at Kunthalagiri during field research, who as a child, along with his family, was around when the ācārya performed *sallekhanā*.

[154] The ascetic's vow of *ahiṃsā*, observed to the most possible extent, for instance does not allow him to take a bath, since this could cause harm to tiny living beings.

when Śvetāmbara lay men where asked about their perception of Digambaras (in general), in several cases they began to speak in a very approving way about Digambara naked *munis* and their high level of asceticism.

In the imagination of Digambaras, the naked monk, in his imitation of the life of a Tīrthaṅkara, represents the `essence of Digambara Jainism´ at its fullest. This `essence´ is seen in the uncompromising practice of asceticism, and, through this, of *ahiṃsā*. In this respect, the naked Digambara monk becomes a symbol for Jainism as the Indian religion, which, according to the self-definition of its followers, practises the `Indian´ values of asceticsm and *ahiṃsā* more than any other religious tradition does.

The religious authority of the naked Digambara monk is based on his focus on asceticism. How, then, does this authority show? In the example of Śāntisāgar it can be seen how lay followers accompanied him on his wanderings and travelled a great distance to witness his *sallekhanā*. Michael Carrithers has described Śāntisāgar as a model of the Digambara ascetic "as a charismatic leader" (1989: 232). This leadership was not confined to Śāntisāgar's contribution of `reviving´ the ascetic tradition and guiding others on the ascetic way. His publicity contributed to leadership in a broader sense, and included lay Digambaras of different castes, regions and backgrounds. He did not become a spokesman of a specific caste, and did not limit his activities to a special region.[155] This leadership stood in strong contrast to the leadership of a *bhaṭṭāraka*, which was restricted to a special region and a special caste. The religious authority which Śāntisāgar held over lay Digambaras could be instrumentalised by mobilising his followers for special activities. In this regard, Śāntisāgar used his impact on wealthy lay followers, to ensure the preservation of ancient scriptures.[156] Furthermore, he was instrumental in the founding of schools, such as a still existing residential school at Shedbal,

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[155] The latter point becomes evident in the long journeys which led Śāntisāgar to places far from the area of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka.

[156] He was, for instance, instrumental in getting precious manuscripts, which had been collected at Mudbidri, South Karnataka, engraved on copperplates. For Śāntisāgar's engagement in the preservation of Jaina scriptures, see: Āryikā Jñānamatī (2004: 21-22).

North Karnataka, which was established in 1927 for the education of children from poor Digambara families, after Śāntisāgar had spent *cāturmāsa* at the village. [157]

Since Śāntisāgar several ascetics have made use of their religious authority to raise financial means for the founding of institutions, temples or for other activities. During field research in Karnataka, the degree of success some ascetics attained in raising huge sums of money for individual projects appeared remarkable. [158] According to my personal observations, their religious authority enables them to mobilise lay followers more easily than any appeal of lay followers or lay organisations can do.

This power to mobilise the laity is the fundamental feature of what Michael Carrithers (1989: 230-232) has described as `charismatic leadership´. During the 20[th] century Śāntisāgar was the first individual who could act as an undisputed representative of what can be called the `Jaina cause´ during the controversy about the Bombay Temple Entry Bill.[159] With his severe fasting against the application of the bill to Jaina temples, he became the leader of Jainas irrespective of caste or region, temporarily unified by their protest against a bill which included Jaina among Hindu temples.

Michael Carrither's analysis of Śāntisāgar as the role model for the ascetic as "charismatic leader" (1989: 232) also takes into account the historic circumstances of Śāntisāgar's activities, especially the emergence of new concepts of collective religious identity and religious communities. These new concepts, propagated by

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[157] Personal communication from local Digambara Jainas of Shedbal, whose family is in charge of the school and temple complex. The institution was, according to them, in a poor condition in the 1970s and its reviving was also strongly motivated by a Digambara *muni*. This ascetic, Ācārya Subalsāgar, was closely connected to the *āśrama* at Shedbal, and chose the place to end his life by *sallekhanā* in 2004. Subalsāgar's *sallekhanā* as a `public event´ will be described in chapter five.

[158] This becomes especially noteworthy, since the economic situation of Digambaras in the rural areas of Karnataka in general is much lower than that of Digambaras in the North and West of India.

[159] Shortly after Indian Independence in 1947, the so-called Bombay Temple Entry Bill was intended to put an end to any caste restrictions concerning the entry to Hindu temples. The bill originally included Jaina temples, which caused protests among Jainas, who insisted on the distinctiveness of their religion and community and refused to have their temples counted among Hindu temples. The protest, eventually, was successful and the bill was not applied to Jaina temples. For further details about the Jainas' protest and Śāntisāgar's role within the controversy, see: Divakar (2006: 283-303).

lay reformers and their organisations, corresponded more to the rising influence of Digambara *munis*, than to the authority of *bhaṭṭārakas* as caste *gurus* (Carrithers 1989: 232). Whereas until the beginning of the 20th century the religious authority had mainly been held by the *bhaṭṭārakas*, whose influence remained limited to a special region and a special caste, the naked Digambara *muni* was better fitted to represent modern ideas of supra-locally, supra-caste-based religious communities. Wandering around, accepting food from any devout Digambara family, the monk is not bound to any region, caste, or economic class.

Śāntisāgar's example of the *muni* as, using Michael Carrither's phrase, "charismatic leader" (1989: 232) also has its impact on the practice of contemporary Digambara ascetics. Since his death, several *munis* have acted as spokesmen for the Jaina, or more specifically Digambara cause during communal affairs,[160] or have tried to campaign for the general upkeeping of Jaina values. The latter point, for instance, is illustrated in Muni Tarunsāgar's *Ahiṃsā Mahākumbh*[161] movement against slaughter-houses and meat export. The Digambara ascetics' moving openly in public, revived by Śāntisāgar, seems to be carried to its highest possible level by Tarunsāgar, who frequently uses modern media, such as television and the internet, to spread his main message, the propagation of *ahiṃsā* and vegetarianism, also among non-Jainas. The naked monk as a public figure, acting in the public sphere, is represented here to the fullest extent. The naked Digambara ascetic as a public figure, who is able to mobilise lay followers, will be further discussed in chapter five. Here, however, it is important to stress that the figure of the Digambara mendicant as a religious authority, based on his severe asceticism and his `imitation´ of the life of a Tīrthaṅkara, had its origin during the first half of the 20[th] century. With what has been called the `revival´ of naked asceticism, Digambaras not only gained a new authoritative figure and "charismatic leader"

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[160] An example is Ācārya Vidyānanda's commitment during the so-called Bahubali Affair, which will be further discussed in chapter five.
[161] Can be translated as `great festival of non-violence´.

(Carrithers 1989: 232), but, on a more symbolic level, a `living representative´ of the Jaina values of asceticism and *ahiṃsā*.

The Digambara *muni* as a `symbol of Digambara Jainism´, however, also has a less imaginative but more pragmatic aspect. In his outward appearance, complete nudity plus his only possessions of *piñchī* and *kamaṇḍalu*, he remains a distinctive figure. In this regard, his outward appearance marks him much more concretely as `Digambara Jaina´ than the appearance of any lay Digambara or a *bhaṭṭāraka* does. The naked monk, therefore, can be seen as both a more metaphorical symbol for the values of Jainism, as well as a more concrete symbol for the Digambara Jainas as a `distinct community´.

The Naked Monk and the Intellectual Jaina Elite

The last part of this chapter will focus on the relationship between the naked Digambara ascetics as new religious authorities and the intellectual lay Jaina reformers who have been discussed in chapter three. How did these lay leaders react to the emergence of the naked ascetic as a leader figure? Have there been any connections and common goals, or did both groups, ascetics and intellectual lay Jainas, stay apart from each other in their interests and activities?

First of all, regarding their economic, social and especially educational background, there existed a huge gap between the typical lay reformer and the typical naked ascetic. While the former, furthermore, had a very rationalistic and universal approach to religion and was highly in favour of social reforms, the latter focused his life on the performance of ascetic practices and religious rituals, and was rather conservative in his outlook.

When the various volumes of the reformist intellectual Jainas' main organ, *The Jaina Gazette*, are searched, Jaina ascetics are hardly mentioned at all. Occasionally, the arrival of some ascetics at a special place, or the performance of a special ascetic ceremony, such as *dīkṣā* or *keśa loñca* (an ascetic's pulling out of head and facial hair by hand) find a short notice. *The Jaina Gazette* of May 1927 featured a comparatively longer report about four naked ascetics visiting a private

house in Lucknow (Shaw 1927: 138-140). The article, in which the monks' daily practices are described, was, however, not written by a Digambara, but a Western Christian. Interestingly, the reported visit took place at the private house of a leading Jaina reformer, the editor of *The Jaina Gazette*, Ajit Prasad, on whose invitation the meeting most probably had been arranged.

Other occasions, for which notes on Jaina mendicants gain entry into *The Jaina Gazette*, rare as these are, are less positive than the report of Ajit Prasad's Western visitor. The monks' low educational level and more conservative attitude unsurprisingly caused some critical remarks on the part of progressive Jainas. Though dealing with Śvetāmbara ascetics, the following statement about the Annual Śvetāmbara Conference's resolution for the need to educate their ascetics, gives an example of the intellectual Jainas' attitude towards uneducated mendicants:

> The ignorant Sadhu who can not even pronounce Sanskrit words correctly, and who has only committed to memory some wrong versions of sacred texts is certainly an object of ridicule in the eyes of the general Non-Jain public and the fewer their number the greater the dignity of the community.[162]

This remark was published in 1916, at a time when naked Digambara ascetics were still hard to find. However, it does not seem difficult to imagine that the emergence of the Digambara *muni*, in most cases not much better educated than his Śvetāmbara counterpart, would be received among the intellectual Jaina elite with a similar critical attitude.

An entry in *The Jaina Gazette* of October 1936 shows that not only the typical ascetic's lack of education was criticised, but also his alleged conservative outlook regarding all aspects of life. Remarking on the decision of two Jaina ascetics to learn Bengali in order to be able to speak to the Bengali population, the author, whose name is not mentioned, comments:

> These Munies are [the] first of their order who [have] taken the bold but right step of getting out of the rut of the beaten track - passing all their

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[162] "Notes and News." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol.XII, No.5, 6 and 7, May, June and July 1916: 110.

lives in Rajputana, and places near about, and speaking to familiar audiences on familiar subjects.

It will be to their edification to note that the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred at Cambridge on the venerable Vajirana Thera, who is thus the first Buddhist monk to study for and pass the Examination at an English University. Most of the Jain Sadhus have not even mastered the Elements of Jain Philosophy; and there is hardly one who can be called an All-round Doctor of Philosophy.[163]

Here, we find a comparison with other religious traditions, in which Jaina monks were ridiculed for their alleged conservatism and indolence. That this indolence, however, did not hold true for all ascetics, was testified by the lifestory of Śāntisāgar and his disciples, who went all the way from Karnataka to Delhi.

Due to the short and vague character of the notes published about Jaina ascetics in *The Jaina Gazette*, it sometimes proves difficult to make out the ascetic tradition, the mendicants belonged to. Regarding critical remarks about idleness and indolence, however, it seems to be more likely that Śvetāmbara and not naked Digambara monks were the target of the reformers' verbal attacks. One of the reasons which make this assumption plausible is the much higher number of Śvetāmbara ascetics moving in public, while the naked Digambara monk, though increased in numbers since the first decades of the 20th century, up to the present day remains, in most regions, a rather rare sight. The extreme ascetic rules of a Digambara monk, especially the giving up of all kinds of clothing, and the limit on food and water to be consumed, makes it furthermore rather unlikely to expect anybody to become a naked monk for the main motivation of his own convenience.

The explicit mentioning of naked Digambara ascetics by authors publishing in *The Jaina Gazette* mainly concerned the defence of the ascetic's right to move around naked in public. The most ardent defender of what he regarded as a religious right was Champat Rai Jain. In a fierce article published in *The Jaina Gazette* in 1931, he argued: "The views of society may change from time to time, but religion is unchanging; it cannot change; if it did change it will cease to be correct and true" (1931a: 134). The Jainas were "exalted and sanctified with the

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[163] "Jain Sadhus." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol.XXXIII, No.10, October 1936: 328-329.

nudity of Saints, they worship it" (1931a: 134). If, as according to Champat Rai Jain, an independent India meant a ban on processions of naked ascetics, "no Swarajya is worth the having" (1931a: 136). In the same year, 1931, Champat Rai Jain published a tract, called *The Nudity of Jaina Saints*, in which he argued that the Digambara monk's nudity was "no innovation. There are old documents - books [sic] to show that the practice is at least thousands of years old (1931b: 16-17)." Therefore, he concluded:

> The function of the authorities is not to forbid such rights [of ascetics' nudity], but to enforce them. The Jaina Saints have been freely moving about all over India, including the Native States. There has [been] no obstruction, nor complaint. It is clearly the duty of the authorities to help them observe their religion, as they have been doing all along […] (1931b: 23).

Champat Rai Jain wrote this tract, which is obviously mainly addressed to the British authorities, in the same year when Śāntisāgar and his *saṅgha* approached Delhi for the first time. Considering the fact that Jain's pamphlet was published by The Jain Mittra Mandal, a Jaina organisation, at Delhi, it seems to be likely that the publishing of the tract was related to the controversy about the visit of naked monks in Delhi.

Naked Digambara monks may have been looked down upon by intellectual Jaina reformers for their lack of education and conservative attitudes. Their severe asceticism, however, seemed to have secured them respect. The defence of the Digambara ascetic's alleged right to complete nudity in public reflects not only the lay leaders' respect for the ascetic practice, but can also be interpreted as a way to state the distinctiveness of the (Digambara) Jaina tradition. In this regard, the Digambara monk could be seen as the representative of ancient Jaina values, which had to be protected.

Regarding reform, especially socio-religious reform as propagated by progressive lay Jainas, Digambara ascetics and lay leaders had very few common interests. Though, as Michael Carrithers (1989: 232) remarks, some of Śāntisāgar's activities, such as his support for the printing of religious manuscripts and the founding of

schools, were in accordance with the interests of the well-educated, reform-minded Jaina elite, Śāntisāgar remained conservative, particularly regarding more secular reform goals of some progressive lay leaders, such as widow remarriage or a ban on child marriage.[164] In this respect neither he nor his disciples shared any reformist goals with intellectual lay Jainas.

The revival of the naked Digambara tradition, on the other hand, has, perhaps unintentionally, contributed to the emergence of a rising awareness of the Digambaras as a supra-locally, supra-caste-based religious community. The naked ascetic's growing authority corresponded more with the modern idea of a universal collective Digambara Jaina identity and community, than with the authority of the *bhaṭṭārakas* as locally restricted caste gurus. In this regard, the emergence of the Digambara monk as a new religious authority and a `living symbol of Digambara Jainism´ has been a development, which, though rather unintendedly, contributed to the Jaina lay leaders' aims of establishing a sense of community which transcended regional and caste-based boundaries.

The image of the Digambara monk as the `ideal ascetic´ added the `core value´ of asceticism to the picture of Jainism painted by the first English apologetic writings as a rational, logical and scientific religion. This focus on asceticism, although not very much stressed in the apologetic writings of progressive Jaina reformers, was not in contradiction with the concept of Jainism as propagated by reformist lay Jainas, who acknowledged it, next to *ahiṃsā*, as the main principle preached by the Tīrthaṅkaras and practised for hundreds of years by Jaina ascetics and householders. It has to be noted that the stress on asceticism as a religious `core value´ is not a new development. Apologetic writings of medieval Jaina scholars stressed the alleged superiority of their religious path and its focus on asceticism. In this regard, the stress on asceticism, as well as *ahiṃsā*, is not a unique and novel feature of the modern intellectual Jaina discourse. However, the revival of the

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[164] In personal communication with several lay Digambaras in Maharashtra, who had taken a great interest in the local Jaina history, among them the scholar Vilas A. Sangave, it was stressed, that Śāntisāgar had no inclination towards any kind of social reform and took the conservative standpoint in controversies about reform aims such as widow remarriages.

naked ascetic tradition among Digambaras during the early 20th century substantially contributed to the integration of asceticism as a `core value´ into the modern 20[th] century intellectual Jaina discourse. This `integration´ of the concepts of asceticism and *ahiṃsā* into the modern identity discourse heavily relied on the `re-interpretation´ of these concepts, as will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The present chapter has shown how the re-establishment of a Digambara ascetic order during the first half of the 20th century has contributed to a broader concept of community among Digambara Jainas. At the same time, the picture of the naked monk has become a symbol for the Jaina values of asceticism and *ahiṃsā*.

Since the time of Śāntisāgar, the number of Digambara ascetics has been steadily increasing and most of the present day ascetics state that their ascetic lineage goes back to Śāntisāgar. According to the latest statistics available,[165] the number of Digambara ascetics - male and female, from *kṣhullaka* to *ācārya* - in the year 2006 was 1075. This number, according to the source, includes more than 50 *ācāryas* and more than 350 fully initiated naked monks. Compared to a previous estimation of Padmanabh S. Jaini (1979: 247), who stated the number of Digambara monks for the year 1977 as 65, and a Hindi newspaper clipping shown to Michael Carrithers (1989: 221) in 1984 estimating the number at 100, the statistics of 2006 present a significant growth rate. Regarding observations during field research for this thesis, however, this growth in numbers seems to be valid. While Michael Carrithers (1989: 221) in 1989 observed that *munis* were few and during two of the three years he spent on field research no monk stayed for *cāturmāsa* at Kolhapur and the surrounding area, which is rich in Digambara Jainas, the frequency with which solitarily travelling monks or groups of ascetics could be seen in the area of Karnataka and South Maharashtra in 2006 and 2007 was remarkable. The high

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[165] In the *Caturmas Patrika*, published every year, the ascetics of the different Jaina sects are counted while stating the place where they are going to spend the rainy season. Although the exactness of the count cannot be guaranteed, the publications present an interesting source. Unfortunately, a recent issue was not available. Nevertheless, the data of cāturmāsa 2006 was found cited in the Jaina magazine *Sanskar Sagar* from January 2007 (Malaya 2007).

number of ascetics travelling through the region at that time certainly must be explained in connection with two big *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* ceremonies[166] held at Shravana Belgola and Dharmasthala in the spring of 2006 and 2007, and another big religious festival at Varur, near Hubli (North Karnataka) which attracted groups of ascetics. This explanation, however, does not diminish the actual number of Digambara ascetics.

In the first part of the following chapter, the impact of contemporary Digambara ascetics on the concept of a collective Digambara identity, and the sense of community among Digambara Jainas will be discussed.

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[166] Literally `great head anointing´ ceremonies. The ritual will be further discussed in chapter five.

5. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY AND COLLECTIVE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AMONG DIGAMBARAS TODAY: THE ROLE OF ASCETICS, PUBLIC RITUALS AND LAY ORGANISATIONS

While the previous two chapters have focused on the period between the end of the 19th up to the first decades of the 20th century, the present chapter aims at analysing the concepts of collective religious identity and the establishment of community based on religion within the framework of the present day time period. Most of the source material for this analysis was collected during January 2006 and June 2007 in the Indian states of Karnataka and Maharashtra. The main focus will be laid on the impact of ascetics, public rituals and lay organisations.

The first part of this chapter will discuss Digambara ascetics, especially in their interaction with the laity. The argument raised in chapter four will be further developed. Digambara ascetics fulfil several roles in the establishment of community among Digambaras and the concept of a collective Digambara identity. As in chapter four, the greater focus on male ascetics is not meant to diminish the role of female ascetics. However, due to the lesser ascetic rank assigned to female renouncers in the Digambara tradition, the spiritual authority of male mendicants, generally speaking, is considered superior to that of nuns.[167] This ascetic hierarchy, to a certain extent combined with concepts of gender relations held among traditional patriarchic (lay) society, finds its further expression in the higher tendency of male ascetics to assume an active `leadership role´.

The role of distinct Digambara rituals and festivals will be analysed in the second section of this chapter. In this context, it will be argued that the performance of

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[167] In individual cases, however, special spiritual authority may be assigned by lay followers to some highly venerated nuns, such as the previously mentioned North Indian female ascetic Āryikā Jñānamatī who in the year 1987 was the first Digambara nun to initiate a male follower (Wiley 2006: 113).

particular Digambara rituals is instrumental in constructing a sense of community, as well as in defining the essential values of Digambara Jainism.

In the third part of this chapter, which focuses on lay organisations, the main aim is to present the modern (Digambara) Jaina discourse on collective identity and the concept of the (Digambara) Jainas as a distinct community. As will be argued, this concept of community reflects the discourse of the first Jaina reformers and stays on a rather abstract level. Furthermore, it will be shown that the present day Jaina discourse has to be seen in a transnational, global context.

The following sections will also illustrate that different `layers´ of identity among (Digambara) Jainas co-exist, and the `hierarchy´ of these identities depends on specific contexts.

<div align="center">

`Particular´ and `Routine´ Ascetic-Laity Interaction:
The Different Roles of Digambara Ascetics

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The previous chapter has provided an account of the so-called `revival´ of the naked Digambara *muni* tradition. It has also been stated that in 2006 the number of male and female Digambara ascetics of all grades of initiation was counted as 1075, including more than 50 *ācāryas* and 350 naked monks. Before discussing the various roles Digambara ascetics fulfil in interaction with Jaina and non-Jaina society, it is necessary to examine the developments which have taken place between the period of Śāntisāgar, who died in 1955, and today.

Śāntisāgar's direct lineage was passed on, shortly before his death, to his disciple Vīrsāgar, who was the first *muni* initiated by him. Today, the *saṅgha* is led by Ācārya Vardhamansāgar. John E. Cort, in his article "The Śvetāmbar Mūrtipūjak Jain Mendicant (1991)", has given a detailed comparison between the present day hierarchical structure of Śvetāmbara and Digambara ascetics, as it had been presented by Michael Carrithers (1989) two years earlier. Cort makes the following interesting observation:

The evidence presented by Carrithers and Bābūbāl Jain indicates that the Digambar mendicants do not have a detailed internal hierarchy. There are several Digambar *ācāryas* in addition to the many *munis*; but it is not clear whether the status of *ācārya* is a formal post into which one is initiated, or a non-initiatory mark of public respect. The principal hierarchical differentiation among Digambars occurs *before* full initiation as a *muni*, in the levels of advanced householdership of *brahmacārī*, *kṣullak*, and *ailak*, while the mendicants consist mainly of the single level of *munis*, with hierarchy determined by seniority of initiation. The Śvetāmbars, on the other hand, exhibit a uniformity among the laity […] but a graduated hierarchy of initiatory ranks among the mendicants (1991: 663).

Cort's statement is important, as it shows the relatively loose hierarchical system among Digambara ascetics. During my field research for this thesis, the somewhat weak hierarchical organisation became obvious, since various ascetics preferred to travel and spend their period of *cāturmāsa* differently. Some *munis* travelled alone, some in groups of two, while others stayed with their respective *ācārya* and his *saṅgha* of male and female ascetics.[168] Every contemporary initiated ascetic has a *dīkṣā guru*, but this does not necessarily imply a lasting teacher-disciple bond between them. Some ascetics choose to stay with their respective *ācārya* or his successor, and others do not. Each fully initiated Digambara monk's religious authority depends more on his status as *muni* (which he has in common with all other Digambara monks) and his individual characteristics (which appeal to lay followers), than on his lineage of succession. In this regard, Michael Carrithers speaks of a Digambara *muni*'s "personal charisma" (1989: 230), which, rather than his line of succession or his belonging to a special order, establishes his authority over the laity.

Though Digambara ascetics generally enjoy the respect and veneration of the laity, some have been more popular and, as "charismatic leaders" (Carrithers 1989: 232) more influential than others. Since a mendicant stays an individual - with individual characteristics and attributes - after his initiation into the ascetic order,

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[168] In the case of female ascetics, however, their freedom of choice is limited, since they always travel in company.

this is unsurprising. However, since the time of Śāntisāgar some changes have taken place, most importantly regarding the educational background and initiation age of Digambara ascetics. The majority of present day Digambara monks and nuns were born and raised in the rural surroundings of Maharashtra and Karnataka, and did not receive more than basic formal and religious education. In recent times, however, a growing number of highly educated professionals can be seen seeking initiation into the ascetic order. One of the most popular present day ascetics, Ācārya Vidyāsāgar (born in 1946), seems to be especially successful in attracting young people with high education to seek initiation into his *saṅgha*. Vidyāsāgar himself comes from a rural background and had only very little formal education. However, after he renounced the householder's life, he engaged himself in the study of Jaina literature and is now acknowledged for his learning.[169] During the field research, meetings with two younger ascetics took place, who had received higher education before they took initiation, and could converse fluently in English.[170]

Another noteworthy field research observation was the relatively high frequency of meeting Digambara ascetics who had taken initiation at a young age. In 1989 Michael Carrithers (1989: 224) had remarked that most Digambara monks had taken initiation at an advanced age, after having led a householder's life for the greatest part of their lives. The *ācārya* Vidyānanda, who took his *kṣullaka* initiation at the early age of 19 and became a fully initiated naked monk at 38, according to Carrithers in 1989, "is regarded as a prodigy" (1989: 224). Though any demographic data about the average initiation age of the present day Digambara ascetics is missing, the tendency to seek initiation in early life, instead of regarding it only as an option for one's later days, seems to be increasing since the time of Carrither's observations. Not only the large *saṅgha* of Ācārya Vidyāsāgar (who himself had taken *muni dīkṣā* at the age of 22) consists of a relatively high number of female and male ascetics, who opted for asceticism as their life purpose (instead

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[169] For an English biographical account of Ācārya Vidyāsāgar, see: Muni Kṣamāsāgar (2006).

[170] Kṣullaka Prayatnasāgar, met on 19.10.2006 at Bangalore; Upādhyāya Kāmakumār Nandī, met on 31.12.2006 near Shedbal (Belgaum District, Karnataka).

of getting married and raising children first);[171] among the Digambara ascetics interviewed during field research several had renounced the worldly life in their teens or early twenties.[172] It could be argued that these are exceptional cases and that, in general, the number of ascetics who have taken the ascetic vows at a later stage in life is much higher. Nevertheless, during field research, among the groups of male and female ascetics who were observed a substantial proportion of the ascetics appeared to be in their twenties and thirties.

The increasing number of young renouncers certainly has its impact on the fact that nowadays the former Jaina intellectuals` criticism against the "ignorant Sadhu" as "an object of ridicule in the eyes of the general Non-Jain public"[173] in various cases no longer holds true. Notwithstanding the fact that some of the younger ascetics hold university degrees, those with only little formal education also seem to be highly motivated to study Jaina scriptures and publish pamphlets and translations themselves.[174] This does not mean that the uneducated Digambara monk is a relic of the past which gradually died out after Śāntisāgar. The relatively low level of the average Digambara ascetic's formal and religious education is still criticised by some lay followers.[175] While, as argued in chapter four, Śāntisāgar was venerated among the laity for his strict ascetic practice, which reflected the Jaina ideals of asceticism and *ahiṃsā* in its ultimate form, present day ascetics also gain their religious authority mainly through their ascetic practice. However, unlike in the case of Śāntisāgar, some contemporary Digambara mendicants owe their

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[171]   For   pictures   of   the   *munis*   in   Vidyāsāgar's   *saṅgha*,   see,   for   instance:
http://www.digambarjainonline.com/dharma/greatja8.htm,   last   visited   on   01.06.2009:   2;
http://www.sarvodya.20m.com/munisangh.htm, last visited on 01.06.2009: 1-3.

[172] These are the already mentioned Kṣullaka Praytnasāgar (who became a spiritual renouncer at the age of 18) and Upādhyāya Kāmakumār Nandī (born 1967, renunciation year 1988); Muni Tarunsāgar (born in 1967, renounced at the age of 13 and took *muni dīkṣā* in 1988), as well as the Yuvācārya Guṇadharanandī (born in 1973, took *muni dīkṣā* in 1989).

[173] "Notes and News." In: *The Jaina Gazette*, Vol.XII, No.5, 6 and 7, May, June and July 1916: 110.

[174] As an example for the latter, Ācārya Vidyāsāgar must be mentioned who, after having left his parents' house, spent years on the study of ancient languages and Jaina scriptures. He has learned several classical and modern Indian languages and published several translations.

[175] In personal communication with an educated lay Digambara, himself active in publishing Jaina scriptures, it was explained that the lack of educated *munis*, according to his opinion, caused a regrettable shift of focus from philological studies to the performance of rituals (personal communication, 25.05.2007, Mumbai).

special popularity among lay followers also to their religious expertise. This holds true in the case of Ācārya Vidyāsāgar who especially attracts young professionals, and that of Ācārya Vidyānanda, founder of a well-renowned Prakrit research institute at Delhi, who enjoys special respect among intellectual lay Digambaras and lay scholars. Among female ascetics, the mainly self-taught Āryikā Jñānamatī is highly venerated for her scholarship in Jaina cosmography (Wiley 2006: 113).

Apart from religious expertise, another element of an ascetic's special characteristics has a strong impact on his/her authority over lay followers, and therefore contributes largely to his/her capacity as a leader who can mobilise the masses. This will be called `social commitment´. The phrase defined here describes a Digambara mendicant's willingness and motivation to engage with his/her environment in a broader sense than what will here be called the `routine form´ of ascetic-laity interaction in religious rituals and the taking of food. An example of this social commitment can already be seen in Śāntisāgar's involvement in the Jainas' protest against the application of the Bombay Temple Entry Bill to Jaina temples. This example, however, comes from a strictly religious Jaina context, and Śāntisāgar's commitment and leadership exclusively concerned Jainas. Other ascetics, however, have been practising social commitment in a wider sense concerning matters not purely religious and at times not restricted to Jainas. In this regard, it will be argued that since Śāntisāgar`s revival the role of the Digambara ascetic, in various cases, has also been enriched by a stronger element of social commitment - with individual monks as educationists, social reformers and political advocates. This development has to be seen in close connection with an increase of ascetics from a professional background and, in particular, an increase of young ascetics, who regard their ascetic `career´ as more than an option for retirement.

Regarding social commitment which did not exclusively aim at religious purposes, the figure of the Maharashtrian ascetic Samantabhadra can be taken as an important example. [176] Born as Devcand Kasturcand Shah to middle-class

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[176] The following short account of Samantabhadra is based on: Kakrambe (1991: 44-115), and meetings with former pupils of Samantabhadra at Bahubali, Maharashtra, on 04.12 and 05.12.2006.

Digambara Jaina parents in 1891, he attained higher Western education at Solapur, Bombay, Poona and Jaipur, passing his BA at Bombay in 1916. Afterwards, still as a lay man, he went to Karanja, a Digambara Jaina centre of Maharashtra, to study Jaina scriptures. In the following years, he engaged himself in the modern re-establishment of the ancient *gurukula* system of education.[177] This re-establishment aimed at the provision of religious education for young Digambara Jaina boys, combined with instruction in modern formal education, as Devcand had received himself. In 1933, when he approached Śāntisāgar asking for *kṣullaka dīkṣā*, a heated discussion among religious scholars broke out, about whether Devcand, after his initiation, would still be entitled to teach and look after the *gurukulas*. Eventually, Śāntisāgar initiated him as Samantabhadra. Up to his *muni dīkṣā*, taken in the year 1952, Samantabhadra was instrumental in the founding of several *gurukulas*.[178] As a fully initiated ascetic, he retired from his active work in the management of the *gurukulas*, but carried on giving advice to his helpers. In 1988 he took *sallekhanā* and died on August 18 at the Maharashtrian pilgrimage place of Bahubali, where he had spent most of his time after his *muni dīkṣā*.

The life and impact of Samantbhadra illustrates some noteworthy features. The reverence lay people showed towards him was not only due to his status as an ascetic, but also to his expertise in Jaina scriptures and his commitment to the establishment and management of Jaina *gurukulas*. As a "charismatic leader" (Carrithers 1989: 232) he made use of his religious authority to appeal to the laity for donations for his institutions. Furthermore, his permanent presence at Bahubali had a special impact on the local Digambaras of the Kolhapur and Sangli area, as Carrithers remarks:

> The presence of a Digambar *muni* at the site inspired Digambars not only to send their sons there, but also to spend on more quarried stone and concrete. Especially after Independence the newly burgeoning cooperative sugar mills around Kolhapur pumped money into the local

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[177] Ancient Indian system of education in which students stayed with their teacher for many years until they completed their education.

[178] The first of these was founded at Karanja in 1918. From 1934 onwards, 13 *gurukulas* were established in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. For a list of these institutions, see: Kakrambe (1991: 85).

economy and a good deal of it found its way to Bahubali. Yet more religious and educational buildings appeared in the Digambar school precinct (1988: 817).

In this regard, Samantabhadra's presence had a profound impact on the Kolhapur region. His own educational background, which was very different from that of Śāntisāgar, had made him believe in the utility of modern secular education, and a synthesis of religious instruction and formal education was what he believed to be best suited for the younger generation. To some extent, then, the example of Samantabhadra illustrates that the public role of a Digambara ascetic does not have to be restricted to purely religious matters.

  This social commitment, which makes some ascetics more widely known or influential than others, can also have a political dimension. When in the 1980s a communal dispute about the pilgrimage place of Bahubali broke out, it was not the already very aged Samantabhadra who became the religious leader for the Digambara cause.[179] As the conflict became more severe, the previously mentioned Ācārya Vidyānanda who himself had grown up at Shedbal (North Karnataka, not far from Bahubali) entered the scene. Unlike the elderly Samantabhadra, Vidyānanda had the power to become an energetic leader of the Digambara cause:

> Vidyanandaji identified strongly with the cause of the local Digambar leaders, but he brought with him a capacity they did not possess. Having traveled widely in the North, he could speak knowledgeably of other, similar conflicts. He was experienced in public religious affairs, and could take the local case to a wider constituency. He could be the focus of broad and specifically religious loyalty among the Digambar Jains of the region. […] Vidyanandaji's entry would make the local fracas a larger and more serious matter (Carrithers 1988: 820).

Apart from fasting, in which Samantabhadra joined, Vidyānanda's main `tool´ was his eloquence and experience in public speech. In his rhetoric he appealed to the personage of Bāhubali, a mythological figure highly venerated among Digambaras. The legendary account of Bāhubali can be summarised as follows. Bāhubali was

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[179] The communal dispute first broke out between Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras, while later also Marathas and untouchables got involved. For a detailed analysis of the conflict, which became known as the Bahubali Affair, see: Carrithers (1988).

the son of the first Tīrthaṅkara Ṛṣabha. When Ṛṣabha decided to renounce the world and become an ascetic, he divided his kingdom among his many sons. The eldest, Bharata, wanted to become a *cakravartin*, emperor of the whole world. Among his brothers it was only Bāhubali who rejected his claims. In a number of single combats between the two brothers, Bāhubali defeated and thereby humiliated his elder brother. His victory did not give any satisfaction to Bāhubali, but made him feel disgust towards all worldly aims. Therefore, he became a naked ascetic and meditated in the standing position, until he finally attained spiritual liberation.[180] Vidyānanda's rhetorical appeal to the figure of Bāhubali not only unified "all Digambars […] momentarily" into "a broader `imagined community´ […]" (Carrithers 1988: 829); the spiritual authority assigned to the figure of Bāhubali and, as his `successors´, to Digambara *munis*, could also be interpreted in a political way. According to the legend, Bharata, after Bāhubali's renunciation the universal emperor, bows to his brother, the ascetic, and acknowledges his moral superiority. This alleged moral superiority as the characteristic of a Digambara monk, accordingly, also provides the latter with the power to claim obeisance from worldly rulers, in the modern context politicians. In this regard, the gesture of Indira Gandhi begging Vidyānanda to end his fasting was highly symbolic for Digambaras (Carrithers 1988: 832). The rhetoric and symbolism used by Vidyānanda during the Bahubali Affair and at various other occasions is highly illustrative for the modern Digambara identity discourse, especially in the context of nationalism and communalism. Vidyānanda, taking the role of an exponent of a "Jain patriotism" (Carrithers 1988: 839), did not refrain from talking about political matters. The justification for this is not only derived from the alleged moral superiority of a Digambara ascetic, but also, in a nationalist context, from the alleged contribution the Jainas have made to India and, in particular, to Indian Independence. Carrithers summarises this argument as follows:

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[180] Accounts of this popular story can be found in: Dandavathi (2005: 18-23); Sangave (1981: 66-68); Settar (1981: 49).

Jainism contributed to the Indian nation through Gandhi, and through the nation, to the world, the principle of non-violence. Hence India has a special place in the world history, Jainism has a special place in India's history, and Jains owe a special allegiance to India. And to Jain audiences he [Vidyānanda] adds, that, since Jainism is morally and spiritually preeminent, Jains are preeminent in patriotism (1988: 840).

The reference to the Jaina influence on Mohandas Gandhi is not a new topic within the Jaina discourse. Already before Independence it had been stressed by Jaina intellectuals.[181] New, indeed, was its explicit usage by a Digambara monk within a political and nationalist context. On a more symbolical level, a *muni*'s announcement to fast to death in order to get a resolution moved shows a striking reference to Gandhi's fastings. This element of passive resistance, demonstrating the suggested moral and spiritual superiority of the ascetic over worldly (that is mainly political) powers - among modern Digambara ascetics first used by Śāntisāgar - was also adopted by Vidyānanda and other *munis* after him. Similarly, Vidyānanda's involvement in politics has also been followed by other Digambara ascetics, who do not see a conflict between their ascetic status and their commitment to social and political reforms.

One of the most prominent of these ascetics is the already mentioned Muni Tarunsāgar.[182] Born in Madhya Pradesh in 1967, he left his family at the very young age of 13 and took *muni dīkṣā* in 1988. As a skilled orator, his public speeches, delivered in Hindi, cover a variety of social and political topics, such as meat export, alcohol abuse, female infanticide, corruption and communal violence. During his *cāturmāsa* stay at Bangalore in 2006, I attended several of his lectures. His style is very lively, sometimes aggressive, sometimes amusing, but always seems to capture his audience. A number of his speeches have been published in book form, some of them translated into English and several Indian languages. These books, along with audio and video CDs, posters, pictures, and all kinds of

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[181] See, for instance: Mehta (1929: 200).

[182] The following information about Tarunsāgar is mainly based on an interview with the *muni*, conducted on 18.10.2006 during his *cāturmāsa* stay at Bangalore, and the following publications: Mishra (2003); Muni Tarunsāgar (2003); Tarun Kranti Manch Trust (2006).

souvenirs are sold from the several vans of his main organisation, the Tarun Krānti Mañch,[183] which accompany him on his travels. Among the several honorific titles which he received is the title of *Rāṣṭra Sant,* `National Saint´, awarded to him in 2003 by the government of Madhya Pradesh. On January 1, 2000 he delivered a speech from the Red Fort, Delhi, starting his movement against slaughter-houses and meat export. The location of this public speech, the Red Fort at Delhi, as well as the many photographs included in his publications, showing prominent political figures being blessed by him, are of a highly symbolic significance. Similar to Vidyānanda and other ascetics before him, his spiritual authority gives him the right to get involved in political matters and to claim obeisance from worldly rulers. The presentation of rich picture material published by his organisation also seems to imply that Tarunsāgar's spiritual authority is not restricted to Digambaras. Several pictures depict him giving speeches in front of members of the Indian army, blessing a group of Śvetāmbara nuns, and conversing with prominent Hindu *gurus*.[184] Tarunsāgar's message, and the way he propagates it, strongly reflects a universalistic approach to religion and spirituality. According to his own description, his main aim is to spread the Jaina message among everybody, regardless of caste and religion:

> Jains have a very good commodity called Mahavir, but its packing is of low quality; while today it is the packing which matters the most.
> Jain society has either to open up [the] doors of its temples to each and every person or otherwise take out Mahavir from its confinement to the common man, they have to take Him to the cross-roads. By taking Him to the crossroads, I do not mean that I am tampering with his respect. My intention is to take Lord Mahavir and his message to each and every person (2003: 16).

`Mahavir's message´, according to Tarunsāgar, mainly consists in the principle of *ahiṃsā*, most prominently expressed in the movement for world wide peace and vegetarianism. Another of Tarunsāgar's aim is the cooperation among different

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[183] Literally `Tarun Revolution Forum´, named after Tarunsāgar who is called `Revolutionary Jaina Saint´.
[184] For these pictures, see: Tarun Kranti Manch (2006: 13; 28; 50-51).

Jaina sects. When his *cāturmāsa* camp was held in Bangalore, it was surprising to see that among his followers were all sects of Jainas and also non-Jainas in big numbers. The committee organising his *cāturmāsa* stay consisted not only of Digambaras but also different groups of Śvetāmbaras. *Paryuṣaṇa*[185] in his camp was celebrated for 18 days, instead of eight and ten days according to the different traditions among the Jaina groups. This cooperation certainly owed a substantial part of its success to the fact that Tarunsāgar delivers his speeches in Hindi, and most Śvetāmbaras residing at Bangalore have their origin in North India and practice Hindi as their native tongue. Nevertheless, cooperation of this kind is generally rare, and a Sthānakvāsī lay woman and voluntary helper at Tarunsāgar's camp frankly explained that she has never before visited a Digambara monk. Tarunsāgar's aims, spreading the message of *ahiṃsā*, propagating social reform and uniting different Jaina sects, reflect the approach taken by reformist intellectual Jainas earlier in the twentieth century. In this regard, continuity is found in the modern Jaina discourse.

As Tarunsāgar's message presents him as the prototype of a `modern *muni*´, so does his extensive usage of modern media in order to spread his message. This liberal approach towards the use of modern media and technology is shared by other Digambara ascetics who, like Tarunsāgar, have taken the ascetic vows at a rather young age. While the speeches of various *munis* are published in books or recorded on tapes and CDs, some ascetics can even be contacted by mobile phone or use computers.[186] (For pictures of Muni Tarunsāgar see Appendix 1)

As can be expected, the opinion of the laity varies.[187] Some dislike the use of modern media by ascetics or their involvement in collecting donations for the establishment of religious, social or educational institutions. According to their opinion, a Digambara ascetic should avoid any danger of worldly attachment by

[185] *Paryuṣaṇa* is a very important Jaina festival of austerities celebrated during *cāturmāsa*. The Śvetāmbaras celebrate for eight days while the Digambaras celebrate for ten days.

[186] The technical equipment, strictly speaking, is not owned but nevertheless used by them.

[187] During field research various conversations with lay Digambaras from different social and educational backgrounds took place, in which they offered their opinions about their like or dislike of some ascetics' practices.

staying aloof from society as far as possible. Others see Digambara monks and nuns as the real messengers of (Digambara) Jainism and therefore accept everything that they regard as helpful for spreading the `Jaina message´.

The examples of Samantabhadra, Vidyānanda and Tarunsāgar do not suggest that all present day Digambara monks have been actively engaged in education, politics and social reform. The majority, certainly, has not, and the usage of the internet and mobile phones is also restricted to a minority. Furthermore, the reformist approach and social commitment of Tarunsāgar is an exception, and does not suggest that all present day mendicants welcome social change or religious and inter-sectarian dialogue. Nevertheless, the above mentioned examples show that a Digambara ascetic can fulfil several roles within the Digambara and non-Digambara society, and his/her public appeal sometimes transcends the purely religious sphere and the boundaries of sect and religion. The examples of Vidyānanda and Tarunsāgar also show that active participation in the Jaina identity discourse and the presentation of `Jainism´ to non-Jainas is not restricted to lay followers.

On the other hand, it is important to stress that Digambara ascetics are not a homogenous group of world renouncers, but individuals with individual concepts of the `ideal role´ of a Digambara ascetic. In this regard, both lay followers and ascetics have their individual approach to the Jaina tradition, and lay men and women generally will be more attracted to individual ascetics whose practice and speech is more in line with their own concepts of Jaina practice and belief. For instance, a lay follower who strongly dislikes the worship of *yakṣīs*, female protecting deities of the Tīrthaṅkaras, will naturally not be too attracted by monks and nuns engaged in *yakṣī*-worship, but favour ascetics who also do not preach and practice any worship except of the Jinas'. Those who do not accept ascetics using modern media most likely will not become a follower of Tarunsāgar, but there are other *munis*, living in the more traditional way, who can be venerated instead.

It has to be noted that although Samantabhadra, Vidyānanda and Tarunsāgar represent the Digambara ascetic tradition, their impact on the construction of community among Digambara Jainas differs. Samantabhadra's role as authorative

religious figure was mainly restricted to local Digambaras of the South Maharashtrian area; furthermore, his religious expertise represented the ancient scriptural Digambara tradition. In his appeal to Digambaras, Vidyānanda was much less locally confined. This is amply illustrated in his nationwide travels and speeches, the latter not only directed at Digambaras, but also non-Digambara Jainas and non-Jainas. However, while his rhetorical appeal aimed at a broader construction of the Jainas as representatives of the highest moral values and ardent nationalists, in more concrete terms he became the leader of the Digambaras in sectarian disputes between Digambaras on one side, and Marathas and Śvetāmbaras on the other. These different `roles´ taken by Vidyānanda do not necessarily contradict each other. While propagating the broader concept of the Jainas as a community preeminent in patriotism and the practice of moral values, at the same time Vidyānanda represented local Digambaras and their practical interests in a regionally confined communal dispute, which he managed to turn into a national affair.

The last example for a *muni*'s `social commitment´, Tarunsāgar, demonstrates that a Digambara ascetic's sphere of influence can transcend the `boundaries´ of sectarian and religious affiliations. While Tarunsagar attracts also non-Digambara and non-Jaina lay followers, in his religious practice and outward appearance he represents Digambara Jainism. In his rhetorical approach he aims at the construction of Jainism as a universal tradition, whose values can be practised by anybody irrespective of sectarian or religious background. It has to be noted that Tarunsāgar's appeal to non-Digambaras and non-Jainas, which could be witnessed during his *cāturmāsa* stay in Bangalore, is extraordinary, because – as was stated in interviews with lay Jainas of different sectarian backgrounds and was confirmed by personal observations during field research - lay Jainas usually do not venerate ascetics of other sectarian divisions. In this respect, the example of Tarunsāgar and his extraordinary appeal to non-Digambaras illustrates how special circumstances and occasions can `broaden´ or transcend otherwise more narrowly defined forms of collective identities. For instance, while in their daily religious routine and socio-

religious practices, such as the arrangement of marriages, Śvetāmbaras residing in Bangalore will hardly have any intercourse with local Digambaras, an extraordinary event such as Tarunsāgar's *cāturmāsa* stay in Bangalore can create a broader `temporary community´ of Jainas (and also non-Jainas) with different sectarian and caste backgrounds.

Apart from the individual characteristics and activities of Digambara ascetics - illustrated in the examples of Samantabhadra, Vidyānanda and Tarunsāgar - which make some more popular or controversial among the laity than others, the everyday `routine interaction´ between a Digambara ascetic and the laity also has an important impact on lay Digambara social and religious life. In chapter four it was described how, with Śāntisāgar, the Digambara monk became a `public figure´, with nearly all of his actions being watched by the laity. A *muni* or nun is rarely on his/her own. During their wanderings, they are accompanied by lay followers. When they leave one place, an escort of lay Digambaras will go with them. In the case of more popular *munis*, often travelling with their *saṅgha*, special arrangements for accommodation will be made, for instance in public buildings such as schools, and sometimes a number of vehicles will accompany the group, transporting the luggage of escorting lay followers and food to be prepared for them.[188]

The most important daily ritual in which an ascetic interacts with the laity is the highly ritualised begging for food. The giving of food, *āhāra dāna*, complies with strict rules regarding the purity of the food, the religious conduct followed by the lay followers preparing and giving the food, and the way in which the food is to be taken by the ascetic.[189] On the part of the laity, it involves great effort, for all preparations, from personal cleanliness to the cooking itself, will take several

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[188] For instance, these arrangements were made when the popular Ācārya Devanandi travelled with his *saṅgha* near Humcha (Shimoga District), Karnataka, in February 2007. When Devanandi was briefly interviewed he explained that there are four vehicles to carry the luggage of lay followers, and I was offered the opportunity to join them.

[189] For a description of the ritual of *āhāra dāna*, see: Carrithers (1989: 227-228); Cort (1999: 96-98); Wiley (2006: 27-28); Zydenbos (1999).

hours. However, since it completely depends on the ascetic, if he or she chooses food from one person or another, the careful preparation does not necessarily imply that the food will be accepted by an ascetic. Bearing these aspects in mind, the efforts taken by lay followers, mainly women, illustrate the high symbolical value attached to the ritual of feeding an ascetic. According to observations during field research, the women felt more than happy to get the chance of feeding an ascetic, which is considered both an honour and a way to gain religious merit. Strictly speaking, the sustaining of the body through food and water is the only aspect in which an ascetic depends on the laity. However, John E. Cort (1999) regards the renunciation of Jaina ascetics not as anti-social, but as a social institution in itself. In this regard, he rightly remarks:

> With the exception of their dependence upon the laity for food, water, and shelter, the mendicants' daily routine […] is largely independent of the laity. But in actual practice, there is frequent interaction between the mendicants and the laity in both the private and the public spheres (1999: 93).

These interactions have a profound impact on the establishment of community among Digambaras and the concept of a collective religious identity. In chapter four some important aspects of an ascetic's impact were discussed. The completely naked *muni*, having no possessions and eating only once a day, symbolises the Jaina values of asceticism and *ahiṃsā* to the highest possible extent. In this regard, for Digambaras, he becomes the `living symbol of Digambara Jainism´ and deserves just the same veneration as a Tīrthaṅkara does. In actual practice, this veneration shows in the way a *muni* is treated by lay followers, who bow in front of him, massage and wash his feet and perform the ritual of *āratī* to him, worship with lamps, also offered to the image of Tīrthaṅkaras. In his outward appearance the Digambara *muni*, as a distinctive figure, is more concretely recognisable as a Digambara Jaina than any other Digambara.

For Digambaras, his example of practised asceticsm and *ahiṃsā* is not only worthy of worship, but can also be inspiring. Furthermore, since ascetics are expected to deliver spiritual discourses, they also act as teachers of the Jaina

tradition. Although many monks and nuns may not be very well educated, most of them will have undertaken some religious studies after their renunciation and will at least have read some Jaina scriptures in vernacular translations, which makes them, on the whole, not as ignorant as the harsh criticism on the part of early lay Jaina reformers claimed them to be.

Regarding the conceptualisation of the Digambaras as a community, the impact of Digambara ascetics is found not only in a symbolical aspect, but also in a very pragmatic issue. The visit of an ascetic to a special location always acts as an impulse for the social and religious life of a group of local Digambaras. An ascetic or, even more, a group of ascetics usually brings a festive and devotional atmosphere to the places visited. Special *pūjās*[190] and functions will be organised and held. In this regard, the social intercourse between local Digambaras, in their specific role as members of one religious community, will normally be higher during the special occasion of an ascetic's visit. The *cāturmāsa* time especially, when the ascetics stay at one place for several months, gives vital impulses for the social and religious life of local Digambaras as a community. In practice, the stay of a group of ascetics at one place for four months depends on a high level of preparations, which again require the involvement of as many voluntary helpers as possible. During the *cāturmāsa* stay of Tarunsāgar and his *kṣullaka* Prayatnasāgar at Bangalore in 2006, not only a high degree of voluntary help, but also of financial aid was required. In this specific example, donations from all Jaina sects were needed to refund the costs.[191] On a concrete, practical level, the service of lay followers towards ascetics mainly contributes to the establishment of community among local groups of Digambaras. However, interaction between lay followers and ascetics is also conducive to conceptualising the notion of Digambaras as a community in a wider sense. On the more pragmatic level, this can be seen in the interaction between Digambaras from various local backgrounds while escorting groups of ascetics or organising their further travels. On a more symbolic level, a

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[190]*Pūjā* means a formal, ritualised adoration.
[191] Personal communication with a local Digambara whose family had been involved in organising Tarunsāgar's stay.

Digambara ascetic's impact on the notion of a distinct Digambara identity, achieved through his outward appearance, his practices and teachings, also contributes to the notion of a distinct religious community of all those who identify themselves as Digambaras.

In the next section, another important constituent in the formation of collective religious identity will be discussed, in which all sectors of Digambaras participate - religious rituals and festivals. In this regard, the Jaina value of asceticism also holds a preeminent position, as will be shown in the following section.

`Fasting and Feasting´:
The Role of Rituals and Festivals

The present section will focus on two Digambara Jaina rituals which, it will be argued, are important for the establishment of the concept of Digambaras as a supra-caste, supra-locally-based religious community. As the headline suggests, the first is deeply connected with `fasting´ and, as such, with the utmost practice of asceticism. Among Digambaras usually known as *sallekhanā*, the voluntary gradual reduction of food up to the point where all kind of food and even water is renounced, follows strict rules. Inscriptions and memorials found at the South Indian Digambara pilgrimage centre Shravana Belgola testify that the ritual had mainly been performed by ascetics between the 7th and 10th century. From the 10th to the 15th century, *sallekhanā* taken by lay persons is also recorded, while after the 12th century the performance seems to have become less (Settar 1986: 3-124; Wiley 2006: 181-182). In the present day context, the vow of *sallekhanā* may be taken by lay men and women during a terminal disease. Among ascetics, however, there may be different reasons for taking the vow. Most importantly, *sallekhanā* may be practised when a particular physical condition, related to disease or old age, makes the proper observance of the ascetic rules impossible. Generally, the ritual is more common among Digambara than Śvetāmbara ascetics. This interesting point, which is mentioned by Kristi L. Wiley (2006: 182) and John E. Cort (1991: 654-655) also

conforms to field research observations, although the exact reasons for this phenomenon need to be the topic of further research. While the ritual, known among Śvetāmbaras by the name of *santhārā*, during the 20th century has only very rarely been practised by a few Terāpanthī and Sthānakvāsī ascetics (Cort 1991: 654-655; Wiley 2006: 182), among Digambaras the formal vow of *sallekhanā* has not only been taken by some lay followers,[192] but - after the example of Śāntisāgar - seems to have become the ideal ascetics try to follow. Although any empirical data is missing, personal observations during field research suggest that the vow is taken more often than might be expected. In the year 1999, Ācārya Vidyānanda, now permanently residing at Delhi, took the special vow of *niyam sallekhanā*, which means a gradual reduction of food and liquids over the period of twelve years. At some places in North Karnataka and Southern Maharashtra local Digambaras explained about the *sallekhanā* recently performed there by an ascetic, while at Kunthalagiri, where Śāntisāgar ended his life, several *munis* and two nuns had taken *sallekhanā*. Furthermore, in his biography of Ācārya Vidyāsāgar, his disciple Muni Kṣamāsāgar mentions several ascetics of the *saṅgha* having performed the ritual (2006: 118-127).

The practice of the ritual is noteworthy for several reasons. One is the extreme physical hardship involved in it. Seen from this viewpoint, the complete renouncing of any kind of food and liquid seems to be a logical climax to a *muni*'s or nun's ascetic life. Therefore, *sallekhanā* can be regarded as the ultimate symbol of asceticism, which, again, is a core value of Jainism. However, since the vow is mainly taken by lay followers and ascetics belonging to the Digambara fold, *sallekhanā* is more a distinct feature representing the Digambara tradition.

On a deeper level, the ritual not only symbolises utmost asceticism and self-control, but also absolute individualism and independence. During his life as a

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[192] Regarding *sallekhanā* practiced by old and/or terminally ill lay followers, several lay Digambaras interviewed during field research mentioned cases from their own family. At one family's home at the village of Ugar Bundruk, near Shedbal, pictures were shown of the recent *sallekhanā* of an elderly, seriously ill female family member (15.01.2006).

mendicant, a Digambara *muni* is free from any human bonds and has to submit to nobody. Even his dependence on the laity for food can be regarded as relative, since he has mastered bodily desires and, if no food is available, will practise fasting. Independence and individualism have been stressed by Carrithers (1989: 225-230) as main characteristics of a Digambara *muni*. Seen in an Indian context, these elements gain special importance, since "a person's independence and autonomy is by implication also an assertion of superiority" (Carrithers 1989: 226). In deciding when and in which way to die, an ascetic's autonomy is taken to the highest possible degree. In this regard, the ritual of *sallekhanā* can be considered an expression of a Digambara ascetic's suggested moral and spiritual superiority and, in a wider sense, of the Digambara tradition as such.

While the performance of *sallekhanā* among Jainas and non-Jainas is regarded as an especially extraordinary event, what makes it even more special is the fact that some ascetics perform it openly in public. A person's fasting to death as a `public event´ certainly seems to be rather unusual for a Western spectator. During a field research visit to Shedbal (North Karnataka) in January 2006, local Digambaras invited me to watch a set of video CDs with the recordings of the *sallekhanā* of Ācārya Subalsāgar who, after having taken the vow of *niyam sallekhanā* in 1992, spent his last months at Shedbal, before he passed away on March 17, 2004. On altogether 10 CDs the most important functions and rituals, performed during the *ācārya*'s last months and weeks, were recorded. Surrounded by his *saṅgha* of male and female ascetics, as well as other ascetics and several *bhaṭṭārakas*, watched by a number of lay followers, the ascetic's death was a public event. So were the following procedures and rituals, from the positioning of the dead *ācārya*'s body in a sitting position, immediately after his death in the night, to the last *pañcāmṛta abhiṣeka*[193] to the dead body of the *ācārya* and his cremation on the following day. As could be seen from the recordings and as was testified to in personal communication with local Digambaras, the last weeks in the life of Subalsāgar

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[193] *Pañcāmṛta abhiṣeka* is the ablution with five precious substances.

attracted thousands of devotees and spectators to Shedbal, from far beyond the regional borders. However, the events at Shedbal were no exceptional case regarding the performance of an ascetic's *sallekhanā* taking the form of a public devotional festival. An ascetic's announcement of the intention to take *sallekhanā* is received by the laity as an exceptional devotional and spiritual event. When visiting Shedbal for a second time in December 2006, local Digambaras explained that a *muni* belonging to the late Subalsāgar's *saṅgha* had announced his own *sallekhanā*, and I was invited to come back in a few weeks time to witness the passing away of the ascetic. As this incident shows, the performance of *sallekhanā* is not only highly venerated by lay Digambaras, but also a practice Digambaras take substantial pride in. Regarding the establishment of a sense of community among Digambaras, the ritual can be considered an extraordinary event which not only brings together a local group of Digambaras, but also draws Digambaras from other regions. In the case of prominent *ācāryas* or *munis* fasting to death, also many non-Jainas and even politicians pay their respect to the ascetic. Since it also attracts non-Jainas, who are free to partake as spectators, the performance of *sallekhanā* - even if rather unintendedly - contributes to the presentation of the Digambara tradition and its alleged moral superiority to non-Jainas. In this regard, *sallekhanā* as a `public event´ demonstrates Digambara values to the non-Jaina society while, at the same time, it acts as a special occasion, at which Digambaras of different localities and economic backgrounds come together to join into a distinctive Digambara Jaina ritual.

While the ritual of *sallekhanā*, more than anything else, symbolises the Jaina value of asceticism, the Digambara festival of *mahāmastakābhiṣeka*, discussed in the following subsection, combines the aspects of `feasting and fasting´ in a distinct and, for the spectator, spectacular way. According to Indian tradition, the ritual of anointing or ablution, *abhiṣeka*, forms an important element in the worship of sacred statues. The ritual, performed by Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas, is an integral part of the first installation of an image, but is also frequently performed during

regular worship. What makes the *abhiṣeka* ceremony performed in the form of *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* (`great head anointing ceremony´) mainly at Digambara pilgrimage places of Karnataka special, is the immense height and size of the images adored. In this regard, the ablution of the image's head requires special arrangements and therefore will be performed only around every twelve years. A further noteworthy feature is the figure worshipped in the festivals. Unlike in most Digambara temples, where the images of Tīrthaṅkaras and their female guardian goddesses, the *yakṣīs* or *yakṣiṇīs*, are worshipped, the colossal statues adored by *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* are the images of the previously mentioned mythical figure Bāhubali. The story of Bāhubali had found its expression in several literary works, the first among them written during the 9th century CE in Sanskrit, and was taken up by several influential Kannada poets.[194] As in literature, the figure of Bāhubali in Karnataka also developed into an important subject in the field of arts. The most famous and oldest colossal image of Bāhubali, also known as Gommaṭa or Gommaṭeśvara, is situated at Shravana Belgola, where it was erected around 981 CE. It measures more than 58 feet.[195] In the coastal region of Karnataka, at Karkal and Venur, two smaller statues of Bāhubali were erected in the years 1432 and 1604. A much smaller and not very well-known Gommaṭa statue is located near Mysore at a place called Gommatagiri (Dandavathi 2005: 46-50). Finally, in 1975 a huge statue of Bāhubali was erected at Dharmasthala, South Karnataka. These are the most prominent colossal Bāhubali images, which testify to the prominence of the Bāhubali cult among the Digambaras of Karnataka. In this regard, the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* of Gommaṭa is a distinct Digambara ritual, most prominent in the South. In the following, I will mainly focus on the grandest of these ceremonies, the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* at Shravana Belgola.

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[194] These poets include Pampa and Cavundaraya (both 10th century). For more details, see: Settar (1981: 47).
[195] The measurements of the Karnataka University's Indian Art History Institute, taken in 1980, give the total height as 58.8 feet (Dandavathi 2005: 28-29).

The first *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* at Shravana Belgola most probably took place shortly after the completion of the statue. Some epigraphic evidence mentions the performance of the ritual during the following centuries. During the 20th century it was performed eight times (Dandavathi 2005: 34-35), and the last *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* took place in February 2006. During a period of around ten days the huge statue was anointed daily with thousands of litres of water, milk, sugarcane juice, diluted turmeric, sandalwood, and other precious substances. Tens of thousands of Digambaras from all parts of India, a big congregation of ascetics, and also many non-Jainas came to witness the event. In the weeks and even months preceding and following the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka*, the number of Digambara pilgrims visiting Karnataka was much higher than usual, as many Digambaras from North and West India used the opportunity to visit other Digambara centres of Karnataka. The *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* at Shravana Belgola is the most splendid and most well-known ritual performed by Digambara Jainas in South India. However, the funding[196] and organisation of the ritual is managed by Digambaras from all over India, and many wealthy Digambaras from North and West India spend large sums bidding for the right to perform parts of the ablutions. The cooperation between Digambaras from different parts of India in the organisation of the festival does not necessarily imply that everything will be decided and all necessary work will be distributed in a harmonious way. In personal communication, some voluntary helpers in the arrangements complained about unfair distribution of work load and high politics behind the scenes. This does not come as a surprise, since the event involved the activities and, at times, different interests of various individuals. However, individual personal rivalries do not diminish the fact that thousands of volunteers had temporarily been working for the same, distinct Digambara, cause. Regarding the devotees visiting Shravana Belgola during the time of the ceremony, a `temporary community´ of worshippers, joining a specific Digambara festival, was established. Although originally a festival of South Indian Digambaras, by attracting Digambaras from all parts of India, disregarding their local or caste

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[196] The immense costs of the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* are also, to an extent, covered by the national and state governments.

background, the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* at Shravana Belgola acts as a public platform to represent Digambara Jainism on a supra-local level. This especially holds true for the ceremonies held during the 20th century, when the notion of a universal religious community of Digambara Jainas first had taken its form. This last point, the nationwide representation of Digambara Jainism, has an important impact on the concept of Digambaras as a religious community as held among non-Digambaras. In other words, it contributes to the establishment of an image of Digambara Jainism and the Digambaras from the `outside´ perspective.

Regarding the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* at Shravana Belgola as a distinct Digambara ritual it has to be noted that also a number of non-Digambara Jainas and non-Jainas witnessed the ceremony in 2006. The performance of the rituals, however, was restricted to Digambaras. Considering the fact that the festival is a large-scale and extraordinary event, its appeal to the wider public is not surprising. Therefore, it would be misleading to suggest that Digambaras and non-Digambaras join the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* with the same motives or become a unified `temporary community´ of worshippers. While for Digambaras the event combines worship with partaking in an extraordinary event, for non-Digambaras, especially non-Jainas, the latter aspect will be the main motivation. In this respect, this section does not argue that the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* as such transcends sectarian or religious differences. Rather, its contribution to the establishment of a broader concept of collective religious identity remains confined to Digambaras; however, by presenting a distinct Digambara Jaina ritual to non-Digambaras and non-Jainas, the concept of a supra-locally and supra-caste-based Digambara community is demonstrated to the non-Digambara public.

Regarding the representation of Digambara Jainism to non-Jainas, another important aspect has to be mentioned. Judging from the personal impressions gained during the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* performed in 2006, the festival was anything else than dry, "most colorless, […] most insipid", to use the previously cited phrase with which the Sanskrit scholar Hopkins (1902: 296-297) had characterised the Jaina tradition in general. Although Hopkins wrote this statement

in 1902 the `orientalist legacy´, described in chapter two, still lingers on. Jainism, accordingly, in the popular (non-Jaina) imagination is restricted to the focus on strict ascetic practices, such as meditation and fasting. But whoever imagines the Jaina tradition as a colourless, rigid ascetic system, will have to reconsider this approach after having witnessed festivals such as the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* at Shravana Belgola. Colours, scents, music and dancing, all these elements combine in the veneration of Bāhubali, the ideal ascetic, thereby combining the two elements of `feasting and fasting´ into a distinct festival. The *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* at Shravana Belgola is not the only festival which combines `feasting and fasting´; however, for non-Jainas it is the most visible and most prominent one. (For pictures of the ceremony see Appendix 2)

At first glance, both of the discussed rituals, *sallekhanā* and *mahāmastakābhiṣeka*, do not seem to have much in common, apart from both being distinctively Digambara and acting as an important religious occasion, when Digambaras from different localities and social backgrounds come together. However, on a symbolic level, both rituals can be regarded as the illustration of asceticism as a core value of Jainism. Earlier in this chapter, Ācārya Vidyānanda's rhetorical appeal to the figure of Bāhubali was discussed. In this interpretation, the Digambara *muni* acts as the `successor´ to Bāhubali's spiritual and moral authority. While the image of Bāhubali gets anointed with precious substances during the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka*, so too was the dead body of Ācārya Subalsāgar (after his *sallekhanā*) in the performance of *pañcāmṛta abhiṣeka*. In both cases, the focus is laid on the veneration of asceticism and the moral superiority attained by its practice which, according to the Digambaras' self-definition, is to its highest degree found among Digambara Jainas.

Rhetoric and a `Re-imported´ Universal Approach:
The Role of Lay Organisations

Most of the present chapter has dealt with Digambara ascetics and asceticism as a Jaina `core value´. This last section will be less focused on the aspect of asceticism. Nevertheless, though discussing other suggested `core values´ of Jainism, the various parts of this chapter are connected by the same inherent theme: the suggested moral superiority of Jainism. In the case of the Digambara ascetic this `moral superiority´ has been used to justify an ascetic's involvement in political and social issues and define the Jainas' alleged contribution to the Indian nation as profound. The following paragraphs will illustrate, in what ways the suggested `moral superiority´ of Jaina values is used in the discourse of contemporary lay organisations.

Regarding the first reformist Jaina organisations founded at the beginning of the 20th century, the DBJS has carried on as an organ of the educated middle or higher middle-class. However, at present a substantial number of its members consist of middle-aged and retired elderly men. Its various branches are mainly active in running educational institutions, most prominently student boardings, and managing temples and pilgrimage places. The following short account of the present state of the DBJS mainly focuses on its impact on the concepts of a collective Digambara identity and the Digambaras as a distinct community. Apart from my own observations made during visits of DBJS institutions and interviews with members,[197] much is owed to the work of Michael Carrithers (1991).

As Carrithers (1991) remarks, the influence of the DBJS during the 20th century has been noteworthy for two related aspects. The first (concrete and visible) one has been the establishment of educational institutions aiming at the educational (and also economic and social) progress of the local Digambaras. The second (less tangible) one is its continuous discourse on the Digambaras as a community. This `community´ acquires its practical and visible form through the educational efforts

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[197] During field research, several weeks were spent at DBJS run student boardings at Hubli, Belgaum, Kolhapur and Sangli, where members of the DBJS were interviewed.

of the DBJS whose institutions are open to every Digambara, in other words to every member of the `Digambara community´. This `community´, then, can be said to consist of all those born into a family which belongs to one of the Digambara castes. In this respect, the rural Digambaras of North Karnataka and Southern Maharashtra are united in as far as they belong to an "improving community" (Carrithers 1991: 265) regarding their educational and economic progress since the founding of the DBJS in 1899. Besides this very basic definition, the DBJS`s public discourse on the Digambaras as a community stays on a mainly secular and rather abstract level. In its public discourse mainly addressed to local Digambaras, this secular and abstract level does not come as a surprise when the organisation's traditional `protestant´ approach to Jainism is considered. Similar to what can be called `protestant movements´ among Hindus, such as the Ārya Samāj, or `protestant Buddhism´ in Sri Lanka, this "Jain Protestantism" (Carrithers 1991: 274) lays its main focus on reform and a critical approach to traditional institutions and authorities (such as temple priests and *bhaṭṭārakas*). Furthermore, its preference is for the publication and study of religious scriptures rather than for the performance of rituals and building of temples (Carrithers 1991: 273). It seems to be evident that the DBJS's discourse on the Digambara Jainas as a community rather focuses on the Jainas as ardent proponents of special universally valid values, than on a community connected by the partaking in the same rituals and festivals. This approach is illustrated in a speech delivered at the organisation's yearly meeting of 1985. Commenting on the `moral decline´ of Indian society, the DBJS's new president declared:

> In these circumstances a new problem has been placed before the followers of Jainism […] who cherish […] the eternal values such as truth, *ahiṃsā*, and non-possession […]. For the past thousands of years the founders and teachers of Jaina *dharma* have set their moral stamp on those of other faiths. Today as well by the example of (good) conduct this stamp must be set on other communities. This responsibility falls on followers of Jainism. In the future this responsibility will fall on the shoulders of Jain youth (S.T.Patne, cited in: Carrithers 1991: 271-272).

This open declaration of the Jainas' suggested moral superiority resembles the rhetoric of the ascetic Vidyānanda, earlier discussed in this chapter. In both cases, the Jainas' alleged impact on Indian history is regarded as profound. However, as the DBJS is a lay organisation, the moral superiority claimed in the above cited speech is not based on Digambara ascetics and the element of asceticism. Here, Jainas are seen as those who follow "the eternal values such as truth, *ahiṃsā*, and non-possession" (S.T.Patne, cited in: Carrithers 1991: 271). It does not become clear if these values, according to the speaker, are considered the sole `patent´ of the Jainas and have only been `adapted´ by other religious traditions after the Jainas' example. In any case, since the Jainas are seen as `responsible´ for the `moral progress of Indian society´, they are regarded as allegedly practising the "eternal values" (S.T. Patne, cited in: Carrithers 1991: 271) in the most ardent way.

The above mentioned statement seems to be a rather extreme example of the feeling of moral superiority expressed in Jaina rhetoric. However, the idea that the Jainas as followers of a special timeless and universally valid set of concepts are in the position to contribute largely to the moral progress of society in general, has not only survived since the first apologetic writings of an educated Jaina elite, but also still seems to be in full blossom. Before a further elaboration of this argumentation will be developed, it has to be noted that the discourse on the moral superiority of Jainism is not a `product´ of the late 19th and 20th century. The Jaina tradition has a long history of apologetic writings in which the Jaina philosophy was presented as the ultimate path to spiritual liberation. These writings were mainly produced by Jaina scholars during the medieval period and reflect intellectual disputes with proponents of other philosophical and religious systems. This discourse had its focus on intellectual discussion between individuals who were well-learned in religious and philosophical aspects of their traditions. Neither did these writings address a larger non-highly educated audience, nor did they illustrate particular interest in presenting the Jaina tradition as a means to provide solutions for worldly matters. Regarding the latter point especially we find a novel development within the modern Jaina discourse which presents an interesting `re-interpretation´ of ancient Jaina concepts. This `re-interpretation´ and its focus on the construction of

Jainism as a universally valid, supra-sectarian and supra-caste-based `way of life´ will be illustrated in the following discussion of a recently established Jaina organisation, The Young Jains of India.[198] The analysis is based on the program booklet from their first convention, held at Indore in December 2005; field research observations; personal communication with some members, conducted in 2006 and 2007 at Dharwad, Hubli and Varur (Karnataka); and on written communication with leading members via the internet. Established in the year 2005, the organisation especially targets young and professional Jainas, regardless of caste or sect. According to their self-description, the YJI are "[a]n organization dedicated to promote Jainism as a way of life, a practice, and an observance" (YJI Program Booklet 2005: 1). This concept is further illustrated in the words of a leading member:

> Our aim is to simplify Jainism without compromising on the basic principles and fundamentals so that the youngsters do not perceive religion as a complicated set of Do's and don't [sic] to follow, rather they get guided towards self-realization with deeper understanding of Mind, body & Soul [sic] .
> We do not preach Jainism as a religion but as a way of life that can be adopted/followed by any individual regardless of caste/creed/religion.
> We believe that Jain Way of Life is based on very scientific and logical principles which help in improving the quality of one's life. So not only Jains but anyone can and should learn to understand and practice it (personal written communication from a leading member of the YJI, June 2008).

Regarding the rhetoric used by the YJI, the phrase `Jain Way of Life´ is particularly noteworthy. According to the YJI program booklet from 2005, the Jain Way of Life consists of three concepts, which form "core Jain principles" (YJI Program Booklet 2005: 13). These principles are: *Ahiṃsā* (non-violence), *aparigraha* (non-possession or non-possessiveness) and *anekāntavāda* (can roughly be translated as `non-onesidedness´). The choice of these concepts as `core values´ requires some further remarks. The first two, *ahiṃsā* and *aparigraha*, both form parts of the five-fold vow Jaina ascetics take and also householders may adopt to a lesser degree.

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[198] In the following the short form YJI will be used.

Regarding the emphasis which Jainas place on the principle of *ahiṃsā*, its inclusion as a `core value´ is logical. The choice of *aparigraha*, however, is less easily explained. For instance, it may be asked why (apart from *ahiṃsā*) among the concepts included in the ascetic's and householder's vows *aparigraha* and no other was chosen. The third concept propagated as part of the Jain Way of Life, finally, is not part of the vows, but a metaphysical concept and philosophical method. The term *anekāntavāda* can be translated as "the theory of non-onesidedness" or "the theory of the many-sided nature of reality" (Matilal 1981: 1). Reality, accordingly, is manifold and should not be described in an unconditional statement. For instance, the self (*jīva*) can be said to be both permanent and impermanent, depending on the viewpoint. In this regard, the Jaina tradition grants partial truth to other religious systems which are either based on the theory of permanence or impermanence (Wiley 2006: 36). However, Jaina philosophy rejects any philosophical system which claims to contain the absolute truth as *ekānta*, `onesided´. As a philosophical method, also known as *syādvāda*, which can be translated as `the doctrine of may be´, *anekāntavāda* was used by medieval Jaina monks as a polemical weapon in religious disputes, by making it possible to defend their own doctrine, while pointing out that rival systems only contained the partial truth.[199]

A look at the `modern interpretation´ of the three concepts, as provided by the YJI, makes it clearer why these principles were chosen. The YJI program booklet from 2005 provides the following explanation:

> The world today is in a dire need of the Jain principles of Non-Violence (Ahimsa), Non-Possessiveness (Aparigraha) and Non-Onesidedness (Anekantvaad). When we read the newspaper or turn on the television, we hear of hatred and anger along with on-going wars and acts of terrorism. The spirit of ahimsa is urgently needed. Today, there is ever-increasing greed for money, power, fame and other materialistic objects. The principle of aparigraha offers a solution to overcome the greed and live a life of contentment. Fundamentalism and differing views divide us to the point of violence. The principle of anekantvaad

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[199] For the Jaina doctrine of *anekāntavāda*, see: Cort (2000: 325-327); Dundas (2002: 229-233); Jaini (1979: 89-97); Matilal (1981); Wiley (2006: 36).

also referred as multiplicity of views, makes us realize that the reality may be perceived differently from different points of views (YJI Program Booklet 2005: 2).

Within this modern interpretation of Jainism and the concept of a Jain Way of Life, the focus on *ahiṃsā* is not really new, but reflects the stress on *ahiṃsā* as the `sole remedy´ for the modern world's problems, as propagated from the beginning of the 20[th] century onwards in the first English apologetic writings. Regarding the interpretation of *aparigraha*, its usage as one of the `core values´ becomes more evident. In the modern context, *aparigraha*, similar to *ahiṃsā*, loses its original focus on individual spiritual progress, and becomes an important tool for the progress of the whole world. In this regard, the Jaina tradition is re-interpreted as a tradition of ecological awareness, with *aparigraha* as a responsible approach to the environment, the saving of natural resources, and a substantial means to create a fairer world.

However, seen in the modern context the most revealing re-interpretation concerns the concept of *anekāntavāda*. This modern interpretation has already been promulgated in academic and popular accounts of Jainism from the beginning of the 20th century onwards. Here, *anekāntavāda* is interpreted as `intellectual *ahiṃsā*´. The term `intellectual *ahiṃsā* ´ was coined by the Indian scholar A.B. Dhruva, who first used it in 1933 (Cort 2000: 327).[200] In this context, *anekāntavāda* is regarded as tolerance towards other opinions. In his article "`Intellectual Ahiṃsā´ Revisited: Jain Tolerance and Intolerance of Others" (2000), John E. Cort has shown how the interpretation of *anekāntavāda* as `intellectual *ahiṃsā* ´ was adopted by other scholars and "has had a powerful afterlife" (2000: 328). However, as Cort (2000) and other Western scholars (Dundas 2002: 229-233; Wiley 2006: 36) have demonstrated, the interpretation of *anekāntavāda* as `intellectual *ahiṃsā* ´ in the form of tolerance towards the (religious) views of

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[200] A.B. Dhruva first used it in his *Introduction* to *Syadvadamanjari of Mallisena with the Anyayoga-Vyavaccheda of Hemacandra*. Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series 83, The Department of Public Instruction, pp.xiii-cxxv, here: p.lxxiv. As this publication has not been available to me, I rely on: Cort (2000: 327; 344-345).

others, must be regarded as a "misreading" (Dundas 2002: 232) of the original doctrine. Most Jaina teachers, who made use of *anekāntavāda* in its dual aspects as a metaphysical concept and philosophical method, still considered the Jaina doctrine and practice the only one which could lead to salvation. Furthermore, a history of Jaina literature shows instances of religious intolerance and sometimes rather harsh critical remarks against non-Jaina texts and beliefs (Cort 2000: 331-336; Dundas 2002: 232-233; Wiley 2006: 36). Finally, the re-interpretation of an ancient complex doctrine as `religious tolerance´ proves to be problematic, as Paul Dundas rightly states:

> Religious tolerance, effectively a political concept born in the European Enlightenment, does not transpose itself particularly comfortably into the traditional Indian context in which Jain philosophy was located. Although there can be no doubt about the general persistence of flexible attitudes towards objects of worship in South Asia, Indian religions and philosophical movements were highly critical of the knowledge systems and ideologies of their rivals (2002: 232-233).

However, *anekāntavāda*, according to its modern interpretation as used by the YJI, has not stayed confined to respect for other opinions in the intellectual field. In a broader context, it has become an expression of religious tolerance and harmony in a globalised world. Furthermore, it takes the role of an intellectual weapon against any kind of intolerance, fundamentalism and terrorism.

The interpretation of *anekāntavāda* as `intellectual *ahiṃsā*´ has been widespread especially among Jainas of the British and North American diaspora,[201] who attempt "to situate themselves within the new global and pluralistic context of religious expression" (Cort 2000: 330). In various ways, the interpretation is used "with the corollary implication that the Jains thereby occupy a moral and intellectual high ground in the arena of religious pluralism" (Cort 2000: 330). Cort's remark is important regarding two aspects. First, it demonstrates the Jainas' claim of `moral superiority´. Second, Cort's reference to the Jaina diaspora leads exactly to the place, to which the YJI and the Jain Way of Life owe their

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[201] In this thesis the term `diaspora´ is used in its broadest sense of being dispersed from the original homeland for a variety of reasons, including work opportunities. For a discussion of different usages of the term, see: Cohen (1997).

`existence´: the establishment of the YJI was highly influenced by a diaspora Jaina organisation, the Young Jains of America. Two active members of the latter organisation were instrumental in the founding of the YJI. Furthermore, the Jain Way of Life evolved in the US as part of a Jain Vision 2020, developed by a group of Jaina professionals. The Jain Vision 2020 is introduced as follows on the internet:

> We Jains have been on a path of Non-Violence, Non-Absolutism (Anekantvad), and Non-Possessiveness (Aparigrah) for 1000's of years. And recently Science is walking with us- hand in hand on this path. For 1000's of years Jains have believed in […] animal compassion, vegetarianism, environmentalism, equal rights for women, respect for other culture, religion, and traditions, forgiveness, and more. […] Jains are sitting on a treasure and have so much to offer. Imagine if we had shared this treasure with the world 1000's of years ago, this world would have been a very different place. But it is not too late (http://www.jainlink.org?page=vision, last visited on 30.06.2008:1-2).

Other maxims included in the Jain Vision 2020, which are worth mentioning here, are the `branding´ and `positioning´ of Jainism, in order to make it easy to be understood and be compared with other religious traditions: "[W]hen someone asks what is Jainism - we give a short crisp response" (http://www.jainlink.org?page=vision, last visited on 30.06.2008: 3). The creation of the Jain Way of Life evidently reflects some kind of `branding´. Three Jaina principles have been taken out of their traditional context and been given a new interpretation, which represents Jainism as a universal `way of life´, which can be practised by anybody without the need for formal conversion.

  This `vision´ is interesting, for it not only reflects a universalistic approach to religion, but furthermore illustrates the context of religious diaspora. Immigrant Jainas share important similarities with other immigrant religious groups in North America. As other South Asian immigrants, Jainas feel the necessity to adapt their tradition to the new surroundings. This becomes especially important regarding the second and third generations, for whose members traditional languages, rituals and symbols often have lost their meaning. Parents mostly seek the assistance of

organisations at the crucial point, when their children begin to socialise outside of the home (Williams 1998: 189).

Furthermore, in the diaspora context the question of individual and group identity is more pronounced. This process of identity formation in the diaspora is closely linked to religion, as South Asian immigrants to the US, according to their own statements, "are more religiously active than they were in India or Pakistan" which "[…] reflects the power inherent in religion to provide a transcendent foundation for personal and group identity in the midst of the enormous transitions that migration entails" (Williams 1998: 188). Apart from the search for their own identity, the defining of their own religious tradition for its presentation to outsiders is considered crucial. Therefore, `branding´ and `positioning´ of their own religious tradition become maxims for activists of immigrant religious groups.[202] In this respect, a missing focus on internal divisions within the newly `branded´ religious traditions is not surprising, for it would diminish a clear presentation to outsiders. Regarding the propagation of a Jain Way of Life, we do not find any references to - in practical life existing - further divisions and more narrowly defined forms of collective identities along caste and sectarian lines. The YJI's discourse uses the conceptualisation of community among Jainas in the widest possible sense, not only including Jainas of all regional, caste and sectarian backgrounds, but, more than that, propagating Jainism as a practical way to live one's life, open to anybody without the need for formal conversion.

Regarding the background of the North American Jaina diaspora, the YJI are certainly a special example for a modern Jaina lay organisation. However, the example is chosen for an important reason. In the modern globalised world with transnational networks - especially electronic media such as the internet - religious ideas, concepts and organisations spread, and developments among religious groups in the diaspora have their influence directed back to the Indian `homeland´ (Williams 1998: 193-194). This process, however, also works vice versa. In this

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[202] For a study of Hindu immigrants to the USA and their organisations' aims at the `codification´ of an `American Hinduism´, see: Kurien 2004. The felt necessity to `define´ the own religious tradition in the context of the North American Hindu diaspora is also discussed in: Eck 2000: 233-235.

regard, the modern interpretations of the three principles of *ahiṃsā*, *aparigraha* and *anekāntvāda*, for instance, could already be found in India decades before the YJI adopted the Jain Way of Life from North American Jaina immigrants. A `branding´ of Jainism, however, seems to be an issue more important in the context of the religious diaspora.

   Contemporary religious developments among South Asian immigrants to North America and Europe will not be further discussed here.[203] Suffice to say that the organisation of Jainism in the diaspora in many ways has been similar to developments among other South Asian religious communities in North America and Europe. The discourse on the Jaina Way of Life, developed among Jaina immigrants and `re-imported´ to India by the YJI, shares a similar argumentation to the modern representation of other Indian religious traditions, mainly Hinduism, in its emphasis on `timeless ethical values´ such as non-violence and (religious) tolerance. While the YJI's propagation of these values greatly resembles the universalistic approach of the first English apologetic Jaina writings and speeches, its stress on Jainism "as a way of life that can be […] followed by any individual regardless of caste/creed/religion" (personal written communication from a leading member of the YJI, June 2008) further contributes to a rather abstract and secular concept of the Jainas as a universal community.

   The present chapter has aimed at illustrating in what ways the concepts of collective religious identity and supra-caste, supra-locally-based religious community have been established among Digambara Jainas in modern times. One common theme connecting the impact of ascetics, distinct rituals and lay organisations is the interpretation and presentation of Jaina values as `morally superior´ and best suited for universal progress. In this regard, the Jaina discourse, as started by early Jaina reformers from the end of the 19th century onwards, has proved to be persistent. Although the `moral superiority´ of the `Jaina values´ of asceticism and *ahiṃsā* seems to be widely accepted among different sectors of

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[203] Among academic publications discussing the South Asian religious diaspora in North America and Britain, see: Coward et al. (2000); Kurien 2004; Williams 1998.

Digambaras, the concept of the Digambara Jainas as a distinct, concretely defined religious community remains blurred and abstract; in this respect, the most visible and `concrete´ form of a Digambara Jaina community finds its expression in lay-ascetic interaction and the performance of distinct Digambara rituals.

The previous sections have illustrated various forms of collective identities among Digambara Jainas; these `multiple identities´ and concepts of community formation co-exist with shifting `hierarchies´ - depending on individual motivations and external circumstances. While, for instance, in his speeches the Digambara ascetic Vidyānanda makes use of a broader concept of a `Jaina community´ with specific `Jaina values´, in the context of a communal dispute he became the leader and proponent of the Digambara interests. That the establishment of community can have a temporary nature and substantially depends on individual circumstances was illustrated in the discussion of Tarunsāgar's *cāturmāsa* stay in Bangalore in 2006 which attracted a substantial number of Śvetāmbara Jainas who temporarily joined local Digambaras in rituals and devotional activities. Regarding the establishment of a supra-locally, supra-caste-based concept of community among Digambaras, the large-scale festival of the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* provides a special occasion for the establishment of a `temporary community of worshippers´ consisting of Digambaras of different regional, caste and social backgrounds.

The broadest conceptualisation of community and collective identity among Jainas is propagated by the contemporary lay movement of the YJI. While the YJI's discourse shares the DBJS's stress on the alleged moral superiority of the Jaina tradition and defines `Jainism´ in a rather abstract and secular sense, both organisations appeal to different Jaina groups. Originated as an organisation of regional Digambara castes of the South Maharashtrian and North Karnataka area, the DBJS still represents Digambaras of the area. The YJI aim to represent all Jainas regardless of regional, caste or sectarian background. Their main message, therefore, does not consist in the propagation of a `Digambara´ or `Śvetāmbara´, but a `Jain Way of Life´. The universal message of this Jain Way of Life is furthermore stressed by the claim that anybody - irrespective of his or her religious

background - can practise it. During a public meeting of a local section of the YJI near Hubli, North Karnataka, in 2007 several members invited me, a non-Jaina, to join the organisation. It may be argued that the YJI's broad and universal conceptualisation of Jainism as a practice open to everyone is no more than a theoretical construct with no practical value. However, the fact that regarding socio-religious practices caste, and especially sectarian divisions among Jainas play an important role, does not necessarily diminish the possibility of other, broader forms of collective identities among Jainas. These identities may be heavily relying on discourse and may be more `imagined´ than more narrowly defined sectarian and caste-based forms of identity; nevertheless, these broader concepts of community and collective identity among Jainas have developed into an influential intellectual force. This development finds a practical expression in campaigns for nationwide minority status which are substantially based on the notion of a unified, broader Jaina community. These campaigns will be discussed in the following chapter. The discussion will focus on the question to what extent the modern Jaina discourse of intellectual lay leaders and reform movements such as the YJI - with rather abstract and `blurred´ definitions of the Jainas as a separate, non-Hindu community - have an impact on the legal status of the Jainas as a community. Furthermore, the chapter aims to show in what ways the `Jaina case´ differs from developments among other Indian religious groups - Sikhs and Buddhists in particular.

6. ARE JAINAS HINDUS?
POLITICS AND THE QUESTION OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

The previous chapters have described and tried to analyse the processes of community building among a regional sub-group of the Jainas. It was shown in chapter two, in what ways `Jainism´ as a distinct religious system was `defined´ by orientalist scholars like Hermann Jacobi from the last decades of the 19th century onwards. Around the same period, the term `Jain´ as a separate category also found its entry into the Indian census. Among Jainas, as among other Indian traditions, the discourse on a communal religious identity and special `values´ was led by a small educated elite. The construction and propagation of a distinct, separate Digambara Jaina community whose members adhered to `universal Jaina values´ such as *ahiṃsā*, asceticism and tolerance has been strengthened by lay-ascetic interaction and the performance of distinct rituals.

Nevertheless, one important aspect within the Jaina identity discourse has remained blurred. If, as stressed by apologetic writers, the Jainas had preserved the most `original Indian values´ such as *ahiṃsā* in their `purest form´, how has the relationship between Hindus and Jainas to be defined? As we have seen in chapter three, for men such as Virchand Gandhi or Lala Benarsi Dass, a clear distinction between `Hindu´ and `Jaina´ had never been a pressing concern. Neither was the establishment of exclusive communal boundaries between Jainas and other Indian religious traditions part of other Jaina reformers' rhetoric agenda. What, according to the reformers' discourse, made Jainism special was its alleged timeless and universal approach, while being firmly rooted within ancient Indian tradition. In this regard, Jainism and Hinduism (as well as Buddhism) were held to share the same cultural heritage. The main distinction between Jainas and Hindus (and Buddhists), then, was rather found in the grade, in which special `original Indian values´, such as vegetarianism, were practised. Although this stream of argumentation, which constructed the Jainas as `torch bearers´ of ancient Indian

civilisation, stressed the Jainas' `Indianness´ and `patriotism´, it proved to be less than helpful when issues of communal political representation or legal procedures about religious rights of communities were concerned.

The present chapter will take up the issue of the intermingling of politics and communal identity, in the case of the Jainas mainly represented in their campaigns for the official legal recognition as a nationwide religious minority community. The aim will be to discuss the Jainas' position within the modern Indian nation state's framework of a Hindu majority and several officially recognised religious minority communities. Within the context of the modern Indian nation state, the position of the Jainas will be compared to that of the officially recognised religious minorities,[204] the Buddhists and Sikhs in particular. Like Jainas, Buddhists and Sikhs follow a religious tradition which originated on the Indian subcontinent. Unlike in the case of the Jainas, however, both Buddhists and Sikhs have been included as national religious minorities and are therefore legally regarded as separate, non-Hindu religious communities. The reasons for these different developments, as will be argued here, are mainly due to two interrelated factors in which the Jaina `case´ differentiates from that of Buddhists and Sikhs (as well as the other officially acknowledged religious minorities): first, historical and socio-political factors, such as the small number and wide distribution of Jainas, which have made an efficient political organisation among Jainas difficult to achieve; second, closely interrelated, the dominant identity discourse among the lay leaders of the respective communities, which has used the rhetoric `tool´ of the "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) to various degrees. Before I discuss the Jainas' position within India's religious pluralist and communal landscape, a general outlook on the issue of minorities in Indian legislation will be provided.

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[204] On 23.10.1993 the Indian Central Government issued a notification, declaring the following religious groups as religious minority communities: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Government of India, Ministry of Welfare: 23 October 1993, Notification 8.0.No.810. F. No.1/11/93/MC [D]).

Minorities and the Indian Legal System

When after Independence the Constitution of India was officially adopted on January 26, 1950, its framing body, the Constituent Assembly, had gone through months of lively discussions about the question of minorities in Indian society. Apart from ethnic and linguistic diversity, the legal system had to deal with the issue of religious minorities. The traumatic experience of Partition and the founding of Pakistan, accompanied by violent expulsions, communal riots, and the killing of hundreds of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, had made relations between the Hindu majority and India's other religious communities, especially the Muslims, a crucial and very sensitive topic. Unlike in the case of Pakistan, the Constitution of India defines India as a democratic, liberal and secular state (Mahajan 1999: 31). The principle of secularism did not imply any hostility or discrimination against religion and religious practice as such, but was meant to ensure that all religious traditions would be treated as equal by the state (Bhasin-Malik and Aiyar 2007: 103). Article 25 of the Constitution of India accordingly guarantees each citizen "freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion" (Article 5 [1], Constitution of India).[205] Regarding minorities, Article 29 declares the protection of their interests: "Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same" (Article 29 [1], Constitution of India). The definition of minorities stated here includes ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. However, during the framing of the Constitution, the especially established Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights of Citizens and Minorities only included representatives of religious minorities (Mahajan 1999: 61). The criteria for the representation of a respective religious group were seen in its cultural distinctiveness and smaller numerical strength, compared to the Hindus as India's religious majority. In this regard, the framers of the Constitution regarded Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Indian Christians as religious minorities. This classification,

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[205] This information, as well as other parts of the Constitution of India cited in this chapter, are downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department), Government of India (http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/welcome.html).

already controversial at the time of the Constituent Assembly, allowed representatives of the named communities to officially take part in the debates about minority rights (Mahajan 1999: 61).

Provisions for special rights of respective communities had already been made by the British colonial power and the rulers of some princely states.[206] Regarding the religious communities which later on, during the Constituent Assembly debates, were to be regarded as religious minorities, it was the Muslims who had been the first in British India to be granted separate electorates, after the constitutional reforms of 1909. In 1919 and 1935 provisions for special representation in the legislature were also granted to Sikhs and Indian Christians. Apart from provisions for special representations in the political field, the colonial state furthermore granted reservations in government employment (Bajpai 2000: 1837; 1843 fn.1). As Rochana Bajpai points out:

> Ever since the introduction of the constitutional reforms of 1909 […] religious minorities had been the prime beneficiaries of the colonial state's policies of group preference. In constitutional drafts and deliberations, political safeguards encompassed provisions for reserved seats in legislatures, quotas in government employment, reserved posts in the cabinet and the creation of administrative machinery to ensure supervision and protection of minority rights (2000: 1837).

The above mentioned special political safeguards enjoyed in British India, however, did not find their introduction in the final draft of the Indian Constitution. Though representatives of religious minorities, who had benefited under the British, aimed at securing reserved seats in political bodies and reservations in government employment, these special benefits eventually were only granted to the so-called 'scheduled castes´ and `scheduled tribes´, whose members were not only economically and educationally backward, but were also regarded as having had a long history of exploitation and unequal treatment inflicted by the higher Hindu castes. The final decision to exclude religious minorities from any constitutional political safeguards was only reached after extensive debates within the Constituent

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[206] See: Bajpai (2000: 1837). For special reservations and provisions for scheduled castes and tribes, as well as the so-called `other backward castes´, see: Galanter (1984: 18-40; 154-159). For a special focus on the princely state of Kolhapur, see: Latthe (1924); Salunkhe (1994).

Assembly, which will not be repeated here.[207] Suffice to say that the dominant nationalist opinion regarded special political rights of religious communities as undesirable and dangerous within a democratic, secular nation state (Jha 2003: 1581).

While special rights for political representation of religious minorities were largely regarded as against the democratic and secular character of the Constitution, the right to practise and preserve their respective religion and culture was not. Although initially the right to establish educational institutions and receive governmental aid for these was to be limited to linguistic minorities, the final draft of the Constitution, as Article 29 testifies, included religious minorities (Jha 2003: 1582). Therefore, religious minorities had been granted the right to establish and manage their own institutions and provide religious education in these. Ideally, Article 29 aims at protecting a minority's cultural distinctiveness against the threat of assimilation by the majority community. As Gurpreet Mahajan puts it: "Collectively, these rights sought to protect the independence and autonomy of the religious minorities while simultaneously providing an assurance that their cultural identity would not be tampered with by the state" (1999: 62). Seen in the context of the recent history of Partition, the Constituent Assembly's focus on a minority's right to keep its own cultural and religious identity was mainly targeted at Muslims, who remained the largest religious minority in independent India. In practice, the Constitution granted religious minorities non-interference by the state in their religious affairs, while, at the same time, educational institutions founded and run by religious minorities were eligible for governmental aid.

With the framing of the Constitution, however, controversies about the rights of religious minorities continued. Here, one main point of debate concerns the fact that freedom of religious practice, as guaranteed in Article 25, led to the official acceptance of different personal laws. In this regard, the Muslims' practice of their own personal law in dominant discourse has been seen as an obstacle to the creation of a uniform civil code and as a violation of the principle of gender

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[207] For these debates and the different opinions held by members of the Constituent Assembly, see: Bajpai (2000); Gupta (1999); Jha (2003); Mahajan (1999).

equality (Engineer 2006: 34-35; Mahajan 1999: 63). The 'special treatment' of religious minorities in general, expressed in state aid for their educational institutions, and of Muslims in particular, as reflected in their right to practise their own personal law, also has led to a popular discourse arguing that the Hindu majority is disadvantaged and unfairly treated.[208]

These discourses will not be further discussed here, since they do not hold a prominent position within the framework of this thesis. Other controversies about the legal status of religious minorities, however, do, and these are mainly concerned with blurred, if not completely missing definitions. First of all, one has to ask: which groups are India's religious minorities? We have already seen earlier in this chapter, that those communities which had already benefited under the colonial rule were invited to send representatives for the Constituent Assembly's debates about minority rights. Among them, Muslims and Sikhs had been the most audible ones, whose claims for special representation had first been acknowledged by the British. On the dual basis of being smaller in number than the Hindu majority and possessing a distinctive culture, Parsis and Indian Christians were also included in the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights of Citizens and Minorities. However, nowhere in the Indian Constitution, nor in any other official legal document, is a comprehensive definition of `minority´ given. The present listing of the officially recognised nationwide religious minorities, also including Buddhists, is found in a Ministry of Welfare Notification from October 23, 1993. But even here, a definition of the specific character of a 'minority community' is missing.

Though, as Dipankar Gupta stresses, minorities tend to be defined by secularists as static, unchanging entities, they are dynamic (1999: 47). These dynamics do not only find their expression in the various opinions voiced in official debates about minority rights.[209] Geographically speaking, on the basis of numerical strength a nationwide minority can be a majority in specific areas, in the Indian context the

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[208] This popular discourse is mentioned in: Mahajan (1999: 63). During field research in Karnataka and Maharashtra several lay Jainas interviewed stated that they regard a separate personal law for Muslims as an unfair treatment of all other religious communities.
[209] For a short overview about changing attitudes towards which groups should be legally included among the minorities, see: Mahajan (1999: 47-48). Regarding the question, which groups should be included among `scheduled castes´ and `other backward castes´ the legal discourse has proven to be even more profound. For a historical account, see: Galanter (1984: 119-147; 154-281).

respective states. This holds true for Muslims, who are the majority in Jammu and Kashmir, as well as Sikhs in Punjab and Christians in the North-Eastern states of Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya.

In the following section, a historical account of the Jainas' campaigns for recognition as a distinctive Indian religious minority will be given.

The Jainas' Campaigns for Nationwide Minority Status:
Phase One: Under British Rule

One of the main contemporary Digambara Jaina activists for the recognition of the Jainas as a nationwide religious minority, the DBJS member Bal Patil, in 2009 considered the "Jain demand for minority status […] a century old" (2009: 1). Strictly speaking, back in 1909, the issue at stake was not the minority status as such, but political reservations for Jainas. When, accompanying the so-called Morley-Minto Reforms, the British considered reserving seats in the Legislative Council for "important minorities" (Patil 2009: 1), the Bombay-based Digambara merchant and reformer Seth Manekchand Hirachand, at that time acting President of the Bhāratavarṣīya Digambara Jain Mahāsabhā, appealed for the inclusion of the Jainas as an important minority. Since any explanation of what exactly made a minority `important´ is missing, we can only speculate about the nature of an `important´ minority. Regarding the historical and social circumstances, the felt need of the British to stabilise their rule after the partition of Bengal, it does not take much imagination to regard `loyalty´ as a major criterion for a minority's importance. Furthermore, the reservations were only meant for a tiny section of the minority, namely the upper class Western-educated elite. Regarding the most likely criteria for a community's `importance´ during the British rule, loyalty, cooperation, economic power and educational standard became important characteristics, stressed in petitions for the granting of special reservations to respective communities. Accordingly, in his "Memorandum of Evidence", submitted on October 13, 1924, to the Reforms Enquiry Committee at Simla, Nanoo Mal, Honorary Secretary of the Jain Mitra Mandal at Delhi, listed the

following reasons as justification for the Jainas' claim for separate representation. First of all, the Jainas were among the richest communities of India and regarding literacy held the highest rank after the Parsis. Apart from being an ancient community with a glorious past, the Jainas had strenuously cooperated with the East India Company and had rendered profound service to it (1924: 274-275). During World War I the Jainas had shown their loyalty by supplying the British with money as well as men: "As such their welfare is the welfare of the Empire" (1924: 275).

Sources like the above mentioned, about the political engagement of Jainas to secure special reservations for the Jainas as a community from the time before Independence, are rare. However, the few available articles from *The Jaina Gazette* support the following reconstruction of Jaina activities during the first half of the twentieth century. As the year 1909 with the passing of the Morley-Minto Reforms had stimulated campaigns from the leaders of several communities, among them the Jainas, the Government of India Act of 1919 also had its impact on the political activity of minority groups. In this regard, several notes in *The Jaina Gazette* are devoted to the political representation of the Jainas. In an article entitled "The Jains and the Reconstruction of India", published in 1919, the anonymous author starts with praise of the alleged ancient glory, power and influence of the Jainas, before he mentions the current political situation. Unlike the other (not specified) communities, the Jainas, according to the author, missed their chance by their inactivity.[210] After this criticism, he goes on to explain his concept of the role of the Jainas for India as a nation:

> When we preach the preservation of Jaina integrity and the principle of self-determination we ought not be misunderstood. We don't ask to forget the higher call of the nation but this much we emphasise that the future Indian Nation will be richer for maintaining the integrity of the minor religious communities. Hence it is not inconsistent with our national policy to insist on the special rights and privileges for the Jains ("The Jains and the Reconstruction….": 88).

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[210] "The Jains and the Reconstruction of India." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol.XV, No.3, September 1919: 86-89.

The article is interesting for several reasons. First of all, the above cited statement highlights the aspect of `patriotism´ within the discourse on minority rights. Apart from the focus on the Jainas as `most loyal citizens´, as expressed in Nanoo Lal`s previously cited article, here we additionally find the issue of patriotism and nationalism. This latter aspect is a very modern one in debates about special privileges for religious minorities: though, according to the argument, a minority is given special rights and privileges, its members' main loyalty will still lie with the nation. This argument seeks to counteract the majority's fear of communal tensions. In this regard, the above cited author implies that the Jainas have strong patriotic and nationalistic feelings. By highlighting the alleged former glory of the Jainas, their positive impact on India is stressed.

Apart from this apologetic statement, which sheds light on the dominant presentation of the Jainas as patriots and loyal citizens, another important aspect of the Jainas' involvement in politics also finds its expression in the article. While other communities take the chance of the Government Act to secure political representation, the Jainas are described as rather indifferent. Critical remarks about the alleged political disinterest of the Jainas as a community can be found in various articles published in *The Jaina Gazette*. Though an anonymous article from February 1920 states that individual members of the Jaina elite, such as Ajit Prasad and Manak Chand Jaini (both Western-educated lay Jaina leaders) were active members of the Congress, as a community "Jainas have never dabbled in politics."[211] In 1917, Ajit Prasad had established the so-called Jaina Political Conference ("The Reforms Act 1919….": 44-45). Due to deficient participation, however, its existence proved to be shortlived."[212]

As was shown in chapter three, Jaina reformers during the first decades of the 20th century criticised not only the conservative Jainas' lack of interest in social and educational reforms, but also their indifference regarding political representation of the Jainas as a minority community. For reformist Jainas, such as the editors of *The*

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[211]"The Reforms Act 1919, and the Jainas." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol.XVI, No.2, February 1920: 44.

[212] "Notes and News." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol.XXV, No.7, 8 and 9, July, August and September 1929: 208-209.

Jaina Gazette, the damage done by this indifference and passivity was even worse, when considering the alleged glorious history and present economic condition of the Jainas, which, in the eyes of lay Jaina leaders, made them worthy of being counted among the "important minorities" (Patil 2009: 1). An article from 1926, entitled "The Political Rights of the Jainas", aimed at contrasting the Jainas' `national importance´ with their actual lack of political representation:

> It is a well known fact that the Jains form a very wealthy community in India. Their contribution to the growth of Indian Industries and the development of Indian Commerce is in no way an insignificant one. Their religion and culture date from a period buried in the dim pre-historic past. From the beginning of the historic age till even a century after the advent of the British into our country the Jains have played very influential parts in various capacities. There have been Jaina Emperors, Kings, Ministers, Commanders-in-Chief, Legislators, Judges and others […].
> But what is our political status to-day? Owing to our own indifference we are left unnoticed. Though we are the followers of a very ancient, independent and separate Religion, we are wrongly considered as a class of Hindus. Though we follow several customs and manners peculiar to ourselves and occupy a prominent position in the Indian Nation we are not recognised as an important minority community. We are not given the privilege of sending our own representative to any of the Legislative Bodies.[213]

The same article also sought to demonstrate the main reason for the Jainas' political neglect, namely their own indifference. As a very small minority distributed over the whole of India, the Jainas had to work hard to make themselves heard. Therefore, the unnamed author insists: "The teaching is `Ask and it shall be given.´ If we don't ask, nobody will know our needs. However important we may be, we will be left unnoticed if we sit idle ("The Political Rights…": 285-286). This statement reveals an important aspect of the debate about minorities and their rights: a community's claims have to be audible. Though lay Jaina leaders, as the above cited examples illustrate, regularly blamed the Jainas' indifference and passivity for their lack of audibility, it would be misleading to imagine the Jainas as a group particularly indifferent to politics. Besides the failed attempt to secure

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[213] "The Political Rights of the Jainas." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol.XXII, No.9 and 10, September and October 1926: 285.

reservations in 1909, the fact that in 1923 the Jainas of the Madras Presidency were granted one seat in the Legislative Council demonstrates some Jainas' engagement in claiming special rights for the Jainas as a community.[214] Their lack of audibility, then, was not merely due to missing initiative, but naturally also to the Jainas' low numerical strength. Their widespread distribution, furthermore, made it impossible to build a numerically influential minority in any of the provinces. Their weakness in numbers, combined with the lack of any geographical `centre´ - by contrast with the case of the Sikhs - has certainly, up to the present day, been a substantial obstacle to the Jainas becoming a very audible community.

Though, due to their economic influence, they may have been considered `important´ by the British rulers, their lack of numbers made them a less influential minority. In this regard, it has to be noted that within minority rights discourse the numerical weakness of one respective community does not necessarily imply the group's preferential treatment compared with other minority communities, but rather the opposite. Among various minority groups, that with the greatest numerical strength will usually be the most audible and most dominant one. Reflecting on the Constituent Assembly debates about minority rights, Rochana Bajpai thus rightly remarks: "In minority claims, a given group's numerical status was invoked most frequently to denote numerical strength (rather than numerical disadvantage) which made the group a force to reckon with and gave it better title to safeguards than smaller groups" (2000: 1838). In this regard, *The Jaina Gazette* of June 1922 in a short note remarks that the petition of Jainas in the Punjab for legislative representation had been rejected due to their lack in numbers.[215] Another source from 1927 reflects the importance numbers have been given in claims for minority rights. After having listed the Jainas' "loyalty to the British Empire", their economic importance and wealth, as well as their "hoary antiquity in religion and philosophy", as factors for their `important position´ among India's communities, representatives of the Jainas of the Delhi Province state the following in their petition for the granting of public holidays on Jaina festival days:

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[214] "Notes and News." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol XIX, No.11, November 1923: 271.
[215] "Notes and News." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol.XVIII, No.6, June 1922: 173.

But in spite of their being most ancient, important, wealthy and law-abiding people in India, we regret to state that the Jains being in a minority, though an important minority, no Jain festival is declared by the Government as a public holiday […]. Comparisons are not as a rule desirable but the fact cannot be denied that as compared with the Sikhs, the proportion of the Jains in the Delhi Province is about double (i.e. 2764 Sikhs and 4698 Jains). While in the Bank Establishments, according to the latest Census figures, out of the total employees 5474, the number of Jains is 377 (i.e. 7 per cent or 49 in 700), while the number of the Sikhs is only 8 (i.e. roughly 1 in 700) […].

We do not intend in the least to minimize the importance of the Sikhs, but we do wish to assert that the Jains are quite as important a minority and greater in population in this province and so in the name of justice and fair-play they can claim from the Government that they should be granted at least as many public holidays as are now enjoyed by their sister community, the Sikhs, whose numbers as shown above are less in every respect.[216]

Though the Jainas in the Delhi Province may have been larger in number and held more positions in government employment than the Sikhs, in general the Sikhs remained a more audible and influential minority than the Jainas. Unlike the Jainas, who, in most cases without success, in various districts and Native States filed petitions for their inclusion within political reservations and, as in the example cited above, for the official recognition of Jaina festivals as public holidays, Sikh political involvement and organisation within the state of Punjab had, since the time of World War I, been closely linked with determined communal competition and the entanglement of politics with Sikh identity.[217] Concentrated in the Indian state of Punjab, before Independence and the Partition of India the Sikhs represented the third largest community in the region, after Hindus and Muslims. From the 19th century onwards, the Punjab had not only been an area of determined religious competition and growing communal tensions, but with the outbreak of World War I the area furthermore gained importance for its contributions in the form of war loans, food provisions and men power (Kapur 1989: 62). Among the Punjabis

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[216] "Public Holidays for Jains." In: *The Jaina Gazette*. Vol.XXIII, No.1, January 1927: 29-30.
[217] For the growing connection between the establishment of collective religious identity and politics among the Sikhs during the first half of the twentieth century, see: Barrier 1988: 174-190; Kapur 1989: 36-207; McLeod 1989: 82-98; Attar Singh 1988: 226-232; Mohinder Singh 1988: 192-202.

recruited for the British army, the Sikhs represented the highest proportion. In this regard, World War I for the Sikhs was an opportunity to show their loyalty to the British. In 1916 the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League drafted a scheme, according to which provisions for the representation of minority communities in the provincial legislative councils should safeguard minority interests. These minority interests, however, were only meant for the Muslims as the largest and most influential minority. Accordingly, in the Punjab, fifty per cent of the seats were granted to Muslims, while no reservations were given to the Sikhs. This scheme, naturally, enraged Sikh leaders and intellectuals and had a great impact on the further political activities of the Sikhs (Kapur 1989: 70-71). For radical Sikh reformers, the expression of a distinctive Sikh identity and the "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) between Hindus and Sikhs became inseparable from the safeguarding of political power. In this regard, boundaries also had to be erected along political lines. Making extensive use of the printing media, Sikhs were vocal in demanding political representation for their community, whose members, it was argued, had profoundly contributed and shown their loyalty during the war:

> The memorandum demanded that the Sikh community be granted separate electorates in any future scheme of constitutional reform and that Sikh representation in the council be based not on their strength in numbers but `proportionate to the importance, position and services of the community, with due regard to their status before the annexation of the Punjab, their present stake in the country and their past and present services for the Empire´ (Kapur 1989: 72-73).

With the constitutional reforms of 1919, the Sikhs were eventually granted separate electorates. However, their demands regarding the percentage of representation had not been fulfilled. Since "[f]or educated Sikhs there was a direct link between the Indian war effort and future constitutional reforms" (Kapur 1989: 80), Sikh intellectuals demanded a much bigger share in political representation than corresponded with their actual numbers. Besides their disappointment, the alleged unwillingness of the Hindus to accept the Sikhs' claims for separate political presentation added fuel to the communal tensions between Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab (Kapur 1989: 74-75). The growing establishment of

boundaries between both communities in the political field also found its expression in the controversy over the management of Sikh Gurdwaras. It would lead too far here, to go into more details about Sikh politics during the first half of the 20th century. This short account of the growing entanglement of politics and Sikh identity, however, indicates important differences between Jaina and Sikh political involvement and organisation. Though members of both groups stressed their community's loyalty and contributions to the British rulers, the Sikh claims expressed a heated atmosphere of communal tensions, in which Sikh intellectuals regarded substantial political reservations for their community as essential for their `survival´ within an allegedly hostile political environment, dominated by Hindus and Muslims. While for Jaina reformers such as Ajit Prasad, the founder of the shortlived Jaina Political Conference, the political involvement of Jainas had been desirable along with social and educational reforms, for Sikh intellectuals of the Punjab Sikh identity became inseparable from political representation. Regarding the political situation in the Punjab, radical Sikh leaders did not merely demand separate electorates corresponding to their community's numerical strength, but aimed at substantial political influence to safeguard the interests of their community within an allegedly political hostile and highly communal atmosphere.

Therefore, the main difference between Jainas and Sikhs in their political approach lay in different conceptions of `community´. Within dominant Sikh discourse, Sikhs not only constituted a distinct and independent religious tradition, but also an independent political entity. Both aspects of identity, religious and political, had become more and more entwined. This development was supported by the regional concentration of Sikhs and their sacred places, which led to the concept of a `Sikh homeland´, the Punjab, expressed in a kind of religious nationalism, which during the 20[th] century found its more radical form in the quest for an independent Sikh state, `Khalistan´.

Though Jaina reformers had also aimed at unification and the establishment of political organisations, the question of politics and religious identity had not been an issue, neither was the concept of a `Jaina nationalism´. When some individuals, such as Ajit Prasad, propagated the Jainas' involvement in politics, they tended to

stress the `benefit of the whole nation´, rather than communal interests. This argumentation, for instance, is reflected in Jagmander Lal Jaini's article "Jainas and Politics" from 1920. Stating that all religions should tolerate each other, Jaini stresses national unity as the highest goal for Indian citizens, including Jainas:

> The duty of Jainas […] is to discard all their caste and sub-caste distinctions and fuse themselves into one Jaina Community, bound by a common creed, and into one national People bound by the interests of a common country and pride in one pure and high national character (1920: 71).

In the case of the Jainas, a tiny minority wherever they had settled within British India and the Native states, a strong political organisation seemed to be impossible. The construction of a separate religious identity and the notion of a distinct Jaina community did not include the stress on a separate political identity; neither did it strongly rely on the establishment of visible external boundaries between Jainas and others, mainly Hindus. Though their intellectual lay reformers stressed their distinctiveness and regarded the Jainas as an important minority community, the Jainas did not become a political force, such as the dominant Muslim minority community or the regionally concentrated Sikhs. The position of the Jainas within the landscape of India's religious communities under the British rule was rather difficult to locate, and has remained blurred up to the present day. The undeniably original Indian roots of the Jaina tradition, the location of their sacred places within the Indian subcontinent, and their centuries long close cultural interaction with and co-existence next to Hindus has made the religious and especially cultural boundaries between Jainas and Hindus blurred. The same can be said for other Indian religious traditions, which originated and developed on the Indian subcontinent, namely Buddhism and Sikhism. In this regard, both Buddhists and Sikhs have also repeatedly been claimed as part of the Hindu fold. While the case of the Indian Buddhists and their official recognition as a minority community will be discussed and compared to the `Jaina case´ later in this chapter, regarding the Sikhs, their profound level of political organisation, it will be argued, has largely contributed to the official recognition of the Sikhs as a distinct minority community. This strong politicisation, combined with a focus on the establishment

of religious boundaries through the extensive usage of external symbols, certainly makes the Sikhs stand out among the Indian religious minority communities. However, these special features have been substantial in translating their own dominant identity discourse to the outside, in a visible and audible form. Though their religious tradition originated in India, Sikhs, according to the message, are different and distinct from Hindus. This distinctiveness not only expresses itself in different external symbols, sacred places and a `Sikh homeland´, but furthermore, on a political level, in the call for separate political representation to safeguard Sikh interests in a hostile communal atmosphere.

It has to be stressed that the concept of the Sikhs as a unified, universal community may no less be called an `intellectual imagination´ or theoretical construct than that of the Jainas. Neither have caste, regional differences and sectarian divisions lost their importance in the sphere of socio-religious practices and the formation of collective identities; nor has the ideal of the bearded, turban-wearing Sikh replaced all other forms of Sikh identities. In this respect, we find multiple identities among Sikhs, as among members of other religious groups. However, what differentiates the case of the Sikhs from that of the Jainas is the extent to which the radical Sikh reformers' `imagination´ of a `collective Sikh identity´ has not only been influential among Sikhs themselves, but has also been successfully presented outside of their own community. Among the external factors which have contributed to this development, the political situation in Punjab must be regarded as an important factor. In this respect, it may be argued that the strong politicisation and the radical Sikh leaders' efforts at political organisation not only required campaigns for internal unification, but also largely depended on external differentiation.

Considering the different developments between Sikhs on the one hand and Jainas on the other, it becomes clear that Jainas could not easily act as a `political pressure group´. In a few individual instances, Jainas of a respective region succeeded in securing reservations in regional legislative bodies or the official acknowledgement of Jaina festivals as public holidays. However, generally and seen on a nationwide

scale, the Jainas do not appear as a strong communal force during British rule and at the time of the framing of the Constitution.

In the following section the Jainas' campaigns for the recognition as a religious minority community in independent India will be discussed.

Phase Two: After Indian Independence

As shown earlier in this chapter, with the adoption of the Constitution of India religious minorities lost their rights for reservations in political bodies and government employment. The benefits enjoyed under the British, however, lingered on in the form that those communities recognised as `important minority communities´ by the colonial power were also regarded as religious minorities during the framing of the Indian Constitution. In independent India, a religious minority was constituted through numerical disadvantage, plus cultural and religious distinctiveness from what was regarded the Hindu majority. The latter criterion certainly proved to be problematic, since exclusive definitions of `Hindu´ culture and religion did not exist. In this regard, popular discourse tended to club the religious communities residing in India into two groups: those whose religious tradition had originated on the Indian subcontinent, namely Hindus, Buddhists, Jainas and Sikhs; and those with a non-Indian origin, including Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews. The latter group, again according to popular discourse, naturally qualified for `religious and cultural distinctiveness´, even if its members' practices, beliefs and customs had been thoroughly `Indianised´ and showed considerable differences from the practices and beliefs found outside India. This simplistic model of differentiation between Indian and non-Indian religions heavily relies on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's nationalistic definition of the term `Hindu´. Though often cited, Savarkar's highly influential definition shall be repeated here:

> […] we Hindus are bound together not only by the tie of love we bear to a common fatherland and by the common blood that courses through our veins and keeps our hearts throbbing and our affections warm, but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization-our Hindu culture, which could not be better rendered than by the word Sanskriti suggestive as it is of that language, Sanskrit, which has been

the chosen means of expression and preservation of that culture, of all
that was best and worth-preserving in the history of our race. We are
one because we are a nation a race and own a common Sanskriti […]
(2003: 91-92).

Savarkar's definition of a `Hindu´, then, regarded all those individuals as Hindus,
who claimed India not only as their `fatherland´, but also as their `holy land´ (2003:
116). In this regard, Savarkar regarded Hindus, Buddhists, Jainas and Sikhs as
Hindus, while Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews could not possibly be included
among Hindus, for their `holy land´ lay outside India, and they adhered to customs,
beliefs, practices, festivals and religious laws `foreign´ to the Hindus. It is
important to note that for Savarkar, who first composed his tract *Hindutva*: *Who is
a Hindu?* while being imprisoned by the British for his involvement in the
nationalistic movement, the term `Hindu´ as such is not exclusively meant for the
follower of a specific religion. According to Savarkar, `Hinduism´ as "the system
of religious beliefs found common amongst the Hindu people" (2003: 103) can
only be defined after an answer to the question `who is a Hindu?´ has been
established. Western Orientalist scholarship had made the mistake of first trying to
define `Hinduism´, and then to declare, who could be regarded as a Hindu
according to this, in Savarkar's opinion, faulty definition. This Western tendency
had caused a lot of avoidable controversies and "[…] so much of bitterness
amongst some of our brethren of Avaidik school of thought, the Sikh, the Jain, the
Devsamaji and even our patriotic and progressive Aryasamajis" (Savarkar 2003:
103). What then, in Savarkar's theoretical framework, is the religion of a `Hindu´?:

> All […] bitterness is mostly due to the wrong use of the word,
> Hinduism, to denote the religion of the majority only. […] The religion
> of the majority of the Hindus could be best denoted by the ancient
> accepted appellation, the Sanatan dharma or the Shruti-smriti-puranokta
> Dharma or the Vaidik Dharma; while the religion of the remaining
> Hindus would continue to be denoted by their respective and accepted
> names Sikha Dharma or Arya Dharma or Jain Dharma or Buddha
> Dharma (2003: 107).

Savarkar's work, first published in 1923, has been immensely influential, especially
among Hindu nationalistic movements. `All-embracing´ definitions of the term

`Hindu´, also propagated in the universalistic approach of so-called Neo-Hinduism, as made popular by Vivekananda and organisations such as the Ramakrishna movement, also had their impact outside the so-called Hindutva movement. While Savarkar's usage of the term `Hindu´ as all-inclusive regarding traditions which had originated on Indian soil aimed at the raising of a national spirit and the foundation of a national identity, adherents of those religious traditions clubbed among the umbrella term `Hinduism´ have been concerned about what they regarded as their own religious and cultural tradition - be it Buddhist, Jaina, or Sikh - being absorbed by the Hindu majority.

   This concern found its expression shortly after the adoption of the Constitution of India, when Sikh and Jaina leaders protested against Explanation II of Article 25 of the Constitution, which states the following:

> In sub-clause (b) of clause (2) [regarding reform or the opening up of Hindu public religious institutions to all classes of Hindus] the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly (Article 25, Explanation II, Constitution of India).

In January 1950, a Jaina delegation submitted a petition to Jawaharlal Nehru and other politicians, "to draw their attention to the anomalous position of the Jains."[218] In a letter dated January 31, 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru's principal private secretary replied:

> With reference to the deputation of certain representatives of the Jains, who met the Prime Minister on the 25th January, I am desired to say that there is no cause whatever for the Jains to have any apprehensions regarding the future of their religion and community. Your deputation drew attention to Article 25, Explanation II, of the Constitution. This Explanation only lays down a rule of construction for the limited purposes of one provision in the Article, and, as you will notice, it mentions not only Jains, but also the Buddhists and the Sikhs. It is clear that Buddhists are not Hindus. Therefore there is no reason for thinking that Jains are considered as Hindus. It is true that Jains are in some

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[218] Writ Petition in the High Court of Judicature at Bombay Civil Appelate Jurisdiction, 1997, Shri Bal Patil and Another versus The Union of India and Others: 22. A copy of this document, as well as copies of other petitions and submitted by Bal Patil on behalf of the DBJS, has been made available for this thesis by B.B. Patil, a life member of the DBJS. In the following, this petition will be cited as *Writ Petition 1997*.

ways closely allied to Hindus and have many customs in common; but there can be no doubt that they are a distinct religious community and the Constitution does not in any way affect this well-recognised position.[219]

Though this statement does not contain any further explanation why, out of the three included religious communities, it should be especially "[…]clear that Buddhists are not Hindus […]" ("Unpublished Letter dated 31.01.1950…"), it was clearly meant to reassure Jainas, as well as Buddhists and Sikhs, that their religious distinctiveness had not been tampered with by the Constitution. Explanation II of Article 25, however, has repeatedly given rise to controversies. Though officially already acknowledged as a nationwide minority in 1993, in 2002 Sikh leaders still felt irritated by the wording and appealed to the so-called Constitution Review Commission claiming that Explanation II "affected their independent status and hence should be amended."[220] The somewhat confusing character of Explanation II regarding the status of Buddhists, Sikhs and Jainas is also reflected in Western academic writing. In his *Orientalism and Religion* (1999) Richard King, for instance, interprets Article 25 as an inclusive definition of the term `Hindu', when he states the following:

> Although the modern Indian Constitution (article 25 (2)) classifies all Buddhist, Jains and Sikhs as `Hindu´, this is unacceptable for a number of reasons. First, it rides roughshod over religious diversity and established group-affiliations. Second, such an approach ignores the non-brahmanical and non-Vedic elements of these traditions. Fundamentally, such assimilation effectively subverts the authority of members of these traditions to speak for themselves. In the last analysis, neo-Vedāntic inclusivism remains inappropriate for the simple reason that Buddhists and Jains do not generally see themselves as followers of sectarian denominations of `Hinduism´ (1999: 108-109).

Though King's reading of Explanation II as an open inclusion of Buddhists, Jainas and Sikhs among `Hindus´ seems somewhat too extreme, his statement reflects the

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[219]"Unpublished Letter dated 31.01.1950 from A.V. Pai, Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Secretariat New Delhi, to S.G. Patil, Representative of Jains Deputation, New Delhi, No. 33/94/50-PMS." A copy of this document was provided by B.B.Patil, DBJS.

[220] Patil, Bal: **"A Note on the Constitutional Position of the Jain Religious Community according to various Supreme Court and High Court Judgments."** Unpublished article, provided by Bal Patil. The short article also provides a discussion about Explanation II of Article 25.

discourse about Indian religious minority communities' potential threat of being absorbed by an all-inclusive Hindu ideology.

For Jaina activists, however, the definition of Explanation II became crucial in their campaigns for the official inclusion of the Jainas among the nationwide minority communities. In a court case from 1976, cited in the *Writ Petition 1997*, the following conclusion from Explanation II was drawn: since Explanation II explicitly mentions the Sikh, Jaina and Buddhist `religion´, it supports the distinctive character of these traditions as independent from Hinduism. [221] Accordingly, as minorities, Sikhs, Jainas and Buddhists cannot possibly be regarded as `Hindu sects´ but as independent religions. Had they been part of the Hindu fold, sections of the Hindus themselves would be declared minorities, which would make the Hindus cease being the majority (*Writ Petition 1997*: 28). For Jainas claiming the minority status, this statement had two important implications. First, Explanation II established Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism as independent religions. Second, the recognition of a religious minority status acted as a further proof of a minority community's distinctiveness as not being part of the Hindus. When in 1993, however, the government notification issued did not include Jainas among the officially declared minority communities, Jaina activists regarded this decision not only as an unwillingness to acknowledge the independent status of Jainism, but furthermore as against the Constitution itself. In this regard, Bal Patil and the DBJS argued:

> […] if the Buddhists and Sikhs included in the definition of Hindus (for the purposes of sub-clause (b) of clause 2 of Article 25) have been declared as Minorities under the above Notification, there is no reason why the Jain community should have been excluded. This is clear discrimination not permissible under the Constitution. This non-inclusion of Jains by the Government of India in the listing of Minority Commission for the National Commission of Minorities Act, 1992 is an unconstitutional denial of equal treatment and the equality before the law protected by Article 14 of the Constitution (*Writ Petition 1997*: 23).

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[221] ASE Trusts Vs. Director of Education Delhi Admn. AIR 1976, Del. 207. Cited in: *Writ Petition 1997*: 28-29.

Up to the present day, the official status of the Jainas regarding their inclusion among the nationwide religious minorities has been undecided. According to the rather vague and minimalistic definition found in the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, a minority means "a community notified as such by the Central Government."[222] In 2005, however, the Supreme Court of India declined an appeal made by Bal Patil concerning the recognition of the Jainas as a religious minority throughout India, referring to a court case of 2002,[223] in which the court had decided that minorities should be considered state-wise, not nation-wise ("Jain Minority Proposed Amendment": 5). State-wise, Jainas have been granted religious minority status in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkand, West Bengal and Delhi. While this was made possible by the campaigns of regional Jaina organisations, and grants the Jainas in the respective states the right of foundation and management of their own educational institutions, the exclusion of the Jainas from the nationwide minority communities still causes severe dissatisfaction among Jainas engaged in campaigns for minority status.

Though mainly based in Maharashtra and Karnataka, where Jainas enjoy the legal status of religious minority, the DBJS has been among the most active campaigners for the nationwide minority status, since they - in 1995 and 1996 - "took up the issue in a Constitutional and legal context" (personal communication with Bal Patil in an e-mail, received on 03.10.2009). Apart from the DBJS, other individuals and organisations have been participating in the campaigns for nationwide minority status, among them Rameshchandra Jain, president of the All-India Digambar Jain Parishad. One reason for the ongoing campaigns concerns educational and financial benefits. For instance, some scholarships granted by the Central Government are only available for members of nationwide minorities ("Jain Minority Proposed Amendment": 3). A more subtle reason, however, is the suspicion that the denial of the nationwide minority status symbolises the denial of the recognition of the

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[222] Patil, Bal: "Jain Minority Proposed Amendment." Unpublished document: 1. A copy was provided by Bal Patil.
[223] The courtcase T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State Govt. of Karnataka (2002) 8 SCC 481 concerned educational rights of minority communities.

Jainas' status as an independent and distinctive Indian religious tradition. The main issue at stake, then, is not the eligibility of some educational rights and state benefits, but the distinctiveness of the Jainas as a separate, independent community.

Petitions for the granting of minority status, which have been submitted repeatedly since the official notification about religious minorities of 1993, stress the independent and distinctive character of Jainism and the Jainas. In this regard, Western orientalists such as Jacobi, as well as influential Indian politicians (like Jawahrlal Nehru), academics, and the verdicts of court cases held since the early decades of the 20th century are cited at length. An example for the argumentation mainly used as proof for the distinctiveness of the Jaina tradition is found in the already cited *Writ Petition 1997*. Under the heading "Legal and Judicial view on Jain Minority Status" several court cases are cited, in which the court declared Jainas as distinct from Hindus (*Writ Petition 1997*: 24-32). The works of Western and Indian scholars find mention under the headline "Opinions on Jainism by Scholars: Indian and Foreign" (*Writ Petition 1997*: 32-38). Within both sections, special focus is laid on three aspects: first, the existence of a separate Jaina law; second, the age of the Jaina tradition; and, third, distinctive beliefs and practices. Regarding the first aspect, the question of a separate Jaina law, a strong link is found between the early Jaina reformers and contemporary Jaina minority status activists. Just as intellectual Jaina reformers had aimed at establishing the existence of a separate Jaina law, contemporary petitions argue in a similar fashion. Citing a treatise entitled *Hindu Law Principles and Precedents*, the *Writ Petition 1997* states the following:

> So far as Jain law is concerned, it has its own law books of which
> Bhadrabahu Samhita is an important one. Vardhamana Niti by the great
> Jain teacher Hemachandra deals also with Jain law. No doubt by long
> association with the Hindus who form the bulk of the population,
> Jainism has assimilated several of the customs and ceremonial practices
> of the Hindus, but this is no ground for applying the Hindu law as
> developed by Vignaneswara and other commentators several centuries
> after Jainism was a distinct and separate religion with its own religious,
> ceremonial and legal system, en bloc to Jains […].[224]

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[224] Raghavachariar, N.R., 1970, *Hindu Law Principles and Precedents*. Published by the Madras Law Journal Office. Cited in: *Writ Petition 1979*: 25

Compared with the issue of an independent Jaina law, the *Writ Petition 1997* gives more importance (and room) to stressing the antiquity of the Jaina tradition. As already noted in chapters two and three, the academic foundation of Jainism as distinct from both Hinduism and Buddhism had, to a significant degree, relied on the establishment of the antiquity of Jainism. Early Jaina reformers enthusiastically anticipated the writings of scholars like Hermann Jacobi, who declared Mahāvīra and Parśvanāth historical figures, and dated the origin of the Jaina tradition back to ancient times. The issue of a religious tradition's antiquity, which played an influential role in the emergence of communal awareness at the beginning of the 20th century, still holds a dominant position within the discourse on the distinctiveness of Indian religious traditions. In this regard, the *Writ Petition 1997* states a court case from 1939, arguing that "it is true, as later historical researches have shown that Jainism prevailed in this country long before Brahmanism came into existence or converted into Hinduism."[225]

Among arguments for the distinctiveness of the Jainas regarding their beliefs and practices, the Jainas' rejection of the spiritual authority of the Vedas is given the highest prominence within the *Writ Petition 1997*, which cites several court cases and academic works stressing "the Vedas […] [as] the bedrock of Hinduism."[226] Other differences from Hindu beliefs mentioned in the *Writ Petition 1997* include the uncompromised focus on *ahiṃsā*, the denial of a creator god, and differences in the karma theory. Regarding ritual practices, the focus is mainly laid on the Jainas' abstaining from the practice of *śrāddha* for a deceased person.[227]

An important point to make here is the continuity of arguments used for the establishment of the Jainas as a separate community from the end of the 19th century until the present day. By citing either Western orientalists like Hermann Jacobi and Heinrich Zimmer, later academic works which are based on the theories of scholars like Jacobi, or court cases, in which, again, orientalist writings had been

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[225] Hirachand Gangji Vs. Rowji Sejpal [AIR 1939, Bombay, 377]. Cited in: *Writ Petition 1997*: 32.

[226] Raghavachariar: *Hindu Law Principles and Precedents*. Cited in: *Writ Petition 1997*: 24.

[227] For the cited differences, see: *Writ Petition 1997*: 24-38.

used as proof, the *Writ Petition 1997* in its argumentation strongly reflects the arguments used by the first Jaina reformers and intellectuals. Interestingly, the underlying concept of the `Hindu tradition´, used in the contemporary petition, also reflects the image of `Hinduism´ as it was constructed by 19th century orientalist scholarship. Accordingly, the belief in the sacred authority of the Vedas denotes a main characteristic of `Hindu belief´, as the performance of the *śrāddha* ceremony is regarded as a main component of `Hindu practice´. The definition of `Hindu´, reflected here, corresponds strongly to what has been called `orthodox Hinduism´.

However, if we consider Savarkar's all-inclusive definition of the term `Hindu´, the above described argumentation for the Jainas' independent status would not contradict the Jaina tradition as being labelled `Hindu´. Savarkar argues for his all-inclusive concept embracing Vedic and non-Vedic traditions alike under the umbrella term `Hinduism´ in the following way:

> The Vedas do not constitute an authority for all Jains. But the Vedas are the most ancient work and the history of their race belongs to Jains as much as to any of us. Adipuran was not written by a Sanatani, yet the Adipuran is the common inheritance of the Sanatanis and the Jains (2003: 96).

According to this model of Hindutva or `Hinduness´, Jainas, Buddhists and Sikhs are all integral parts of the Hindus as a `nation´, `race´ and `culture´. This `Hindu unity´, however, has been threatened by the communal tendencies already manifesting themselves at the time of Savarkar's writing. It has already been discussed how among what Savarkar called "our brethren of Avaidik school of thought" (2003: 103), the Sikhs had aimed for separate communal representation. Concerning their campaigns, Savarkar remarks:

> […] we feel that, that claim should not have been backed up by our Sikh brothers by an untenable and suicidal plea of being non-Hindus. […] The harm that a special and communal representation does is never so great as the harm done by the attitude of racial aloofness. Let the Sikhs, the Jains, the Lingayats, the non-Brahmins and even, for the matter of that, Brahmins press and fight for the right of special and communal representation, if they honestly look upon it as indispensable for their communal growth. For their growth is the growth of the whole Hindu-society. […] Let the Sikhs be classed as Sikhs religiously, but as Hindus racially and culturally (2003: 126).

Though after Independence the question of communal political representation has no longer been an issue, the controversy about a Hindu cultural nationalism, as reflected in the Hindutva ideology supported by several political organisations, is still an important theme within the discourse about minority rights. In this regard, it is not completely unexpected that the main activists for the Jaina minority status blame the Hindutva influence on contemporary politics for the exclusion of the Jainas from the officially recognised nationwide minorities.[228] By denying the Jainas the status of nationwide religious minority, it is argued,

> [t]he very identity of the Jain community as a distinct religious minority is imperiled by the Hindutva onslaught. It is imperative for the Jains to stand up and fight for their survival. The recognition of the Jains as a minority will be a crucial test of the secular, democratic character of the nation as conceived in our Constitution [...] ("Memorandum for Declaration...": 22).

It would lead too far to discuss the question of the contemporary Hindutva movement's impact on the discourse about religious minorities and their rights. For the extent to which this thesis reaches, another question has to be regarded as more important: if the Hindutva concept of a `Hindu´, as formulated by Savarkar, includes Jainas, Buddhists and Sikhs, how can it be explained that Buddhists and Sikhs are included among the nationwide minorities, while the Jainas are not?
In the concluding part of this chapter, this question will be discussed.

The Sikhs, Buddhists and the `Jaina Case´

As already expressed in the previous parts of this chapter, a rather troublesome aspect of the minority debate is the question: in what ways does a community possess a "distinct culture" (Article 29 [1], Constitution of India) and thereby qualifies to be counted as a minority community? With regard to religious minorities, it should be asked: what elements establish their cultural and religious

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[228] See, for instance: Bal Patil: "Letter dated 20.06.1997 to the Prime Minister."; "Memorandum for Declaration of Jain Community as a Minority." Dated 11.05.1995, addressed to the Home Minister, Govt. of India: 4-22. Copies of these documents were provided by B.B.Patil (Kolhapur) and Bal Patil (Bombay).

distinctiveness? Since the Constitution does not give any legally valid definition of `Hindu´ culture and religion, it remains an impossibility to objectively decide who is a `Hindu´ and who is not. Considering the problem of missing definitions, it becomes clear that a religious minority is not only a question of numerical strength. Equally, if not even more important, is the aspect of identity. Does a group of individuals regard themselves as members of the same religious community, and, if so, do they regard their community as distinct from others, especially the majority group categorised as Hindus? Seen from the outside: is the community recognised as such by those not belonging to it?

The case of the Sikhs demonstrates that the dominant identity discourse within a group, when strongly reflected in the relations to outsiders, can change the way the group is regarded by non-members. The radical Sikh leaders' campaigns for a distinct Sikh identity, combined with a focus on political organisation, has not only proved dominant among Sikhs, but also largely contributed to their official legal recognition as a distinct religious community. The important point here is to note that a religious community's "distinct culture" (Article 29 [1], Constitution of India) very much depends on the dominant identity discourse within the group and the community leaders' success in propagating it outside the group. As shown by Oberoi (1994), the rather exclusive *khālsā* Sikh ideal propagated by radical Sikh leaders is not the only concept of their tradition and identity held among Sikhs, and a substantial number of Sikhs most likely do not care too much about the "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) between Sikhs and Hindus. Nevertheless, the radical Sikh leaders' concept of a distinct Sikh identity has been established as the dominant one.

The important role of a community leader's will and effort to both establish `religious boundaries´ to the Hindu majority, and make himself audible, is also reflected in Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar's Buddhist movement, which during the 1950s led to the conversion of several hundred thousands of his low caste followers to Buddhism. In Ambedkar's distinctive interpretation of Buddhism, also known as the `neo-Buddhist movement´, social equality and the abolishing of any caste distinctions hold the most prominent position. Since caste, according to Ambedkar,

was a fundamental aspect of Hindu religion, he felt it necessary to officially break with Hinduism altogether. In this regard, he evolved several vows to be taken by converts, thereby openly declaring a break with the worship of gods and the practice of rituals which he considered part of the Hindu religion. One of the vows taken by Ambedkar and his followers openly renounces Hinduism: "I embrace today the *Bauddha Dhamma*, discarding the Hindu religion which is detrimental to the emancipation of human beings and which believes in inequality and regards human beings other than Brahmins as low-born" (cited in: Elst, Koenraad: *Are neo-Buddhists Hindus?* Available from: http:// koenraadelst.voiceofdharma.com /books/wiah/ch11.htm, last accessed on 23.10.2009: 2-3). Ambedkar's leadership and resolute attitude regarding himself and his followers being outside of the Hindu fold made the Indian Buddhists an audible religious minority. With his open renunciation of the Hindu religion Ambedkar publicly constructed `religious boundaries´ between his interpretation of Buddhism and Hinduism. In this regard, Koenraad Elst states:

> […] neo-Buddhists are not Hindus, because they say so. Indeed, whereas […] other groups […] developed their identities naturally, in a pursuit of Liberation or simply in response to natural and cultural circumstances, only to discover later that this identity might be described as non-Hindu, the neo-Buddhists were first of all motivated by the desire to break with Hinduism (Elst, Koenraad: *Are neo-Buddhists Hindus?* Available from: http://koenraadelst. voiceofdharma.com/books/wiah/ch11.htm, last accessed on 23.10.2009: 31)

Here, we find a powerful `intellectual contruct´ or `imagination´ of collective identity. Ambedkar's resolute break with Hindu customs, such as the worship of Hindu gods, may have had little impact on the actual socio-religious practices of his followers; however, Ambedkar's theoretical construction of a collective religious (non-Hindu) identity of the `neo-Buddhists´ had a substantial practical impact in form of its contribution to the inclusion of the Buddhists among the nationwide religious minorities. It is important to stress that - as in the case of other religious groups - there is no unified `Buddhist community´ or `collective Buddhist identity´, and multiple identities also exist among Indian Buddhists. Furthermore, although

constituting the majority of Buddhists in India, the so-called `neo-Buddhists´ do not represent Buddhism in India as a whole. Other forms of more `traditional´ Buddhism also prevail, which makes the Indian Buddhists, similarly to other religious groups, a heterogeneous community. Though Ambedkar's followers - whose deliberate conversions to Buddhism were strongly motivated by the socio-political Dalit movement - regarding their religious practice and geographical, economic and social background do not have much in common with `traditional´ Buddhists in the Himalaya region or Tibetan Buddhists in Indian exile, the unique character of the neo-Buddhist movement substantially contributed to the recognition of Indian Buddhists as a religious minority.

The examples of Sikhism and Indian (neo)-Buddhism - although both are unique on their own account - show some similarities, which, it is argued here, differ substantially from the case of the Jainas. One is the already discussed "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) between their own group and outsiders, mainly the Hindu majority, and open declaration: `We are not Hindus.´ Although the dominant Jaina identity discourse discussed in chapter three and five of this thesis also stated the Jainas' distinctiveness, the Jaina discourse has not been focused on the establishment of strict boundaries between Hindus and Jainas. Furthermore, due to their lack of organisation, especially in the political field, their missing geographical centre, and numerical weakness, Jainas have not succeeded in being a particularly `audible´ community.

Another important aspect of the discourse on minorities, which also connects the case of the Sikhs with that of the (neo)-Buddhists, has to be mentioned here: a religious minority is not only established because the members of a religious community regard and declare themselves as not belonging to the majority. Minority identity can also be strengthened by the process of "minoritization" (Gupta 1999: 38), which Dipankar Gupta defines in the following:

> This process, by which minorities are created, unbeknownst to them, is what has been termed here as *minoritization*. When minoritization takes place the communities that are picked on for persecution are decided upon by the majority, or those `others´ who are on the outside. The constitution of minority identity in these cases takes place from the outside rather than the inside […] (1999: 52-53).

The case of the Sikhs, with the anti-Sikh riots and killings following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, constitutes a drastic recent example for the process described by Gupta (1999: 50-54). Regarding the neo-Buddhists, the last decades have also shown several instances of persecution inflicted on them by caste Hindus. Though these assaults were targeted at neo-Buddhists not because of their Buddhist religion, but rather because of their Dalit background, the strengthening impact on the minority consciousness of the victims is similar to the case of the Sikhs. The process of minoritization, in the context of the modern Indian nation state, has resulted in communal disturbances between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and, in some cases, Buddhists. Jainas, however, in recent history have neither been the victims of minoritization, nor have they been designated as the `others´, nor been accused of being disloyal to the Indian state. In this regard, the case of the Jainas differs substantially from the situation of other Indian religious communities.

Concluding this section, another important factor for the `Jaina case´ must be mentioned. Detrimental to the campaigns for nationwide minority status are the differing opinions among Jainas themselves. While Digambaras, especially those of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, generally seem to be more supportive of the inclusion of Jainas among the religious minorities,[229] a substantial degree of opposition is prevalent among a section of Jainas, mainly belonging to the Śvetāmbara tradition of Gujarat. The argumentation used by prominent opponents of the minority status for Jainas strongly resembles the rhetoric used within the Hindutva movement. Accordingly,

> [a]ny move to extend minority status to any section of the society today is equal to attacking the integrity of the country. It should be seen as an attempt to destabilise the harmony between various sections of the Hindu society.[230]

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[229]This assumption is supported by the fact that campaigns for the granting of the minority status to Jainas are mainly led by Digambara organisations, most prominently the DBJS. In interviews with lay Digambaras during field research in Karnataka, South Maharashtra, Mumbai and Delhi, campaigns for the minority status were generally described as important for the establishment of the Jainas as a distinctive community.

[230] Ācārya Vijay Ratnasunder Sūrīśvarjī, cited in: "Jains are Part of Hindu Society- Jain Acharya Vijay Ratnasunder Surishwarji." In: *Ahimsa Times*. March 2009 Issue. Available from:

This public statement of a Śvetāmbara *mūrtipūjaka ācārya* was made during a meeting organised by the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad at Delhi in 2009. Already in 1997, an article posted on the internet had declared:

> The Jain Samaj has made it clear to all concerned including the government that Jains are not a minority and that those who are trying to seek that status - or grant that status - should desist from such attempts.
> The Jain Samaj has further reiterated their stand that they are Hindus.
> Ever since the attempt of some people to get the Jains declared as a minority, various Jain Acharyas, including late Acharya Tulsi, have publicly stated that the Jains are Hindus and that they have no intention of seeking the status of a minority (Udavant 1997: 1).

Who exactly constitutes the "Jain Samaj" (Udavant 1997: 1) mentioned here remains unclear. Both above cited statements reflect the ideology of Savarkar and the Hindutva movement and have to be seen in the context of Hindu nationalism, as expressed by organisations such as the Viśva Hindu Pariṣad. This stream of argumentation, based on an `all-inclusive´ definition of the term `Hindu´ and the internal unity of all Hindus as the highest priority, is also illustrated in Sandhya Jain's article "Jainas: Cream of Hindus" (2006):

> Hindu and Jaina traditions are like the weft and woof of the unstitched garment favoured by our saints; they cannot be separated without severe haemorrhage to both. The shared spirituality of the Indic tradition is like an unstitched garment - whole, inclusive, interlinked, and unthreatened by the inevitable loss of culture, tradition and diversity that accompanies monotheistic traditions (Sandhya Jain 2006: 2).

The controversy among Jainas about minority status is motivated by various factors, and is not confined to different interpretations and definitions of the term `Hindu´. Since in popular opinion the phrase `minority status´ often carries the negative connotation of having to rely on financial benefits, especially members of the wealthier section of Jaina merchant classes regard the inclusion of Jainas among minority communities as a humiliation. This popular assumption, however, is based

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http://www.jainlibrary.org/elib_master/magazine/ahimsa_times/Ahimsa_Times_2009_03_SrNo_1 05_023605.pdf, p.3, last accessed on 24.05.2010.

on a misunderstanding of the legal concept of religious minorities in India. This misconception is illustrated in heated discussions about the granting of the statewide minority status to the Jainas in Delhi. For instance, on an internet discussion forum a message was posted arguing that the wealth of the Jainas residing at Delhi and their inclusion among the religious minorities were an open contradiction (http://mboard.rediff.com/newboard/board.php?service_name=& boardid=new, last accessed on 06.04.2010: 1).

As this short discussion illustrates, the issue of the minority status is controversial and complex. The important point to stress here is that internal controversies among different sections of Jainas further contribute to the discussed historical and political factors which have led to what has been called the `Jaina case´ regarding the Jainas' position among India's religious communities. This is not to say that among other groups, for instance the Sikhs, there is absolute uniformity of opinions regarding the distinctiveness of their own group as a separate, non-Hindu community. Here again we have to differentiate between actual practice and intellectual discourse or `imagination´. While regarding socio-religious practices `boundaries´ between Hindus and Sikhs often `blur´ in the performance of local festivals or the arrangement of marriages, and regional and caste-based forms of collective identities hold an important position, strict boundaries between Sikhs and Hindus have been constructed mainly in the field of intellectual discourse and the way in which community is `imagined´ in the dominant discourse of radical Sikh leaders. It is the impact of this discourse, as argued within this thesis, which contributes to the popular image of the Sikhs as non-Hindus. The same holds true in the case of Ambedkar's Buddhist movement and the official classification of the neo-Buddhists as members of a non-Hindu minority community. Considering these points, it has to be stressed that regarding socio-religious practices and the prevalence of multiple forms of collective identities the `Jaina case´ does not particularly differ from the case of the Sikhs and Buddhists. It is in the field of intellectual discourse, and here mainly in the extent, to which this discourse has been successfully voiced and made audible also among outsiders, where we find the difference. Though - similar to the discourse of the leaders of other newly defined

religious communities - reformist Jaina leaders have tried to propagate the Jainas as a uniform and distinct community, their discourse did not focus on a clear definition of `boundaries´ between Jainas and Hindus.

In the present chapter it has been argued that `blurred boundaries´ between Jainas and Hindus have impacted on the undecided legal status of the Jainas regarding their inclusion among the nationwide religious minority communities. Regarding socio-religious practices, for instance the partaking in religious festivals or the arrangement of marriages, `blurred boundaries´ between different religious communities in India are not confined to Hindus and Jainas. However, in the field of intellectual discourse and the way in which broader collective identities have been `imagined´, the powerful rhetoric tool of "the construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) between their own group and outsiders, mainly the Hindu majority, has hardly been used by Jaina intellectuals.

Although since the first constitutional reforms of 1909 Jaina leaders have repeatedly filed petitions for the granting of reservations in political bodies for the Jainas as an `important´ minority, and after Independence the Jainas have been granted the minority status in ten Indian states, on a nationwide scale they are not included among the officially recognised religious minorities. While Digambara Jaina activists hold a Hindutva influence on contemporary Indian politics responsible, a comparison between the Jainas and Indian religious communities which have been granted the status suggests some more complex reasons. In this regard, the missing of any influential political organisation among Jainas, mainly caused by their small number and wide distribution over the whole of India, has to be taken into account. Unlike the Sikhs who, for different historical reasons, have been able to act as a `political pressure group´ and make themselves audible, the Jainas have remained a less audible group. This also holds true when compared to the Indian neo-Buddhists, who, with Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, had a prominent leader and, as part of the Dalit movement, have been more politically involved. Regarding both aspects, a community's audibility and its leaders' efforts at creating distinct lines between the group and others, again the examples of Sikhs and neo-

Buddhists stand out. While the dominant Sikh identity discourse has heavily relied on "the construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) and a focus on politicisation, Ambedkar's conversion ceremony openly denounces a convert's affiliation with the Hindu tradition. In both cases, the message of the dominant discourse is clear in stating: `We are not Hindus.´

The tendency to regard their own group as different from the majority can be further strengthened by the process of `minoritization´. This process has been painfully witnessed by Sikhs during the anti-Sikh riots following Indira Gandhi's assassination. In the case of the (Dalit) neo-Buddhists, repeated attacks by caste Hindus may have caused a further alienation from the Hindus. On the other hand, in recent times Jainas have not been the target of the Hindu majority's aggression.

Finally, ongoing controversies among different sections of Jainas themselves suggest that, unlike among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, among other local and sectarian groups of Jainas the concept of the Jainas as a separate, distinctive, non-Hindu tradition, and its official recognition in the granting of the nationwide minority status is less prevalent. Different opinions regarding the question of religious and cultural distinctiveness are not `unique´ to the Jainas. However, as the comparison with the case of the Sikhs suggests, the extent to which a particular discourse is presented as the dominant one has substantial impact not only inside the community, but especially on the view outsiders will hold.

The following chapter will provide a short summary of this thesis' previous chapters and some concluding remarks regarding the Jaina community's undefined position within India's religious landscape.

7. CONCLUSION

This thesis has aimed at analysing in which way and to what extent from the late 19th / early 20th century onwards novel formulations of collective religious identity and supra-caste, supra-locally-based concepts of community have been established among the Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, a regional sub-group of the Indian religious tradition of the Jainas. In this respect, the present research has argued that the wider `shift´ from locally restricted, caste-based concepts of community to broader conceptualisations of pan-Indian or `universal´ religious communities - as witnessed among other Indian religious groups, most prominently Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs - has found parallel developments among Jainas. While more narrowly defined forms of collective identities along regional, sectarian and caste-based lines still exist among Jainas, as among members of other Indian religious communities, intellectual discourse and `imagination´ has developed broader concepts of collective religious identifications. These universal religious identities and constructions of community may be more `imagined´ than more narrowly defined forms of collective identities which find their expression in socio-religious practices and traditions. Nevertheless, the intellectual reformers' concepts of supra-locally, supra-caste-based religious communities have not only developed into alternative possible forms of identifications; more than that, these novel forms of identity and community formation also had substantial impact outside the field of intellectual discourse. In this respect, the concepts of supra-locally, supra-caste-based religious communities and collective identities have found a practical expression in campaigns for the official declaration of the distinctiveness of the Jaina tradition and the Jainas' inclusion among the nationwide religious minority communities.

At the same time, the analysis provided in this thesis indicates important differences between the dominant Jaina discourse discussed here, and developments which have taken place within movements among members of other numerically small religious groups whose traditions originated on the Indian sub-continent, namely Sikhs and neo-Buddhists. As this research has aimed to

demonstrate, most prominent among these differences is the extent to which, in Harjot Oberoi's (1994) term, the "construction of religious boundaries" between their own group and outsiders has been used by lay leaders in order to define their own religious tradition. The main argument presented here is that - unlike in the case of radical Hindu and Sikh leaders, as well as Dalit neo-Buddhists - Jaina reformers have not focused their Jaina identity discourse on the establishment of boundaries to other religions. In this respect, in the field of intellectual discourse boundaries between `Hindus´ and `Jainas´ have remained blurred up to the present day, which finds its most tangible expression in the undecided legal status of the Jainas regarding their inclusion among the nationwide minorities. It has to be stressed that regarding socio-religious practices `blurred boundaries´ do not only exist between Jainas and Hindus, but also between Hindus and other religious groups in India. However, what differentiates the `Jaina case´ from that of other numerically small Indian religious communities, mainly Sikhs and neo-Buddhists, is the extent to which their lay leaders' dominant discourse has aimed at `transforming´ these `blurred boundaries´ regarding socio-religious practices and traditions into the powerful intellectual concept of clear-cut boundaries between their own religious tradition and outsiders, especially the Hindu majority.

  The discussion provided in this thesis has taken the last decades of the 19th century as the historical starting point, when the Jaina tradition became the academic focus of some Western orientalists. As has been indicated in chapter two, the Western orientalists' `discovery´ and `definition´ of a religious tradition called `Jainism´ or `Jinism´ reflects substantial similarities with the orientalists' preceding `framing´ of `Hinduism´ and `Buddhism´. This is not to argue that `Jainism´ (or, similarly, `Hinduism´ and `Buddhism´) was `invented´ by Western orientalists. Regarding the Jaina textual tradition, medieval scholars stressed their tradition's distinctiveness in their apologetic writings. What has been called the Western orientalists' `discovery´ and `definition´ of Jainism is meant to describe the process in which `Jainism´ was defined as a religious system in accordance with the European concept of `a religion´ as a universal, unchanging entity, which had been developed during the period of the Enlightenment. Orientalist writings on Jainism

were exclusively based on translations of ancient Jaina texts. Jainism, then, as defined by Western scholars, was a textual tradition, with a main focus on asceticism and renunciation. From the 1880s onwards, especially through the academic writings of the German scholar Hermann Jacobi, orientalist research proposed the independent origin of Jainism from Buddhism, thereby `establishing´ Jainism as one of the oldest independent and separate religious traditions with Indian origin.

Similar to the case of Hindu and Sikh intellectuals in India, orientalist writings had a profound impact on a small Western-educated intellectual Jaina elite, whose members tried to accommodate themselves within the colonial intellectual and political atmosphere. In this regard, Western orientalist concepts of distinct, exclusive Indian religious systems substantially contributed to the emergence of new concepts of an exclusive `religious identity´ shared by all those who constituted the same equally exclusive `religious community´.

Chapter two has furthermore illustrated that the emergence of communal awareness among Indian intellectuals was strongly supported by the introduction of the census in British India during the last decades of the 19th century. The census-takers' focus on the caste and religion of each citizen strengthened the concept of communities established along religious lines. Reflecting the changing attitude in orientalist writings regarding the independent origin of the Jaina tradition, from 1882 onwards the Jainas appeared as a separate category within the census takings. This category, however, was to remain blurred and fluent, for during the following census operations a substantial number of Jainas were counted among, and regarded themselves, as Hindus. The blurred lines between Jainas and Hindus in the census takings indicate the abstract and highly theoretical level on which Jainism, as a separate religious tradition, had been defined. Here, we find the contrast between `imagined´ or `constructed´ supra-locally, supra-caste-based religious communities and collective identity on one side, and in actual practice existing more narrowly defined forms of community and collective identities along regional, sectarian and caste-based lines on the other. While, according to the Western orientalists' scholarly definitions, the Jainas were neither Hindus, nor Buddhists,

but followed their own independent tradition, in socio-religious practices lines between Hindus and Jainas remained vague and fluid.

It has to be stressed that among other religious groups, like Hindus and Sikhs, academic exclusive definitions also did not necessarily express the practical experiences of the common, non-intellectual masses. A large amount of confusion in entries during the census takings eventually created the myth of declining, or, more dramatically, `dying´ communities among Hindus, Sikhs and Jainas. This alleged development alarmed intellectuals. Reformist organisations founded among Hindus and Sikhs, such as the Ārya Samāj and the Singh Sabhā - established within an atmosphere of growing communal tensions between Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and a determined Christian mission - aimed at `re-conversion´ of former converts to Islam or Christianity. More importantly, radical Hindu and Sikh leaders regarded the stress on religious boundaries as significant means to `save´ their own religious tradition and safeguard its members' share in political power. Especially among the Sikhs, the intellectual leaders' dominant discourse focused on the "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994) between Sikhs and Hindus. This point is especially important, since the element of establishing outward boundaries between one's own group and outsiders, as has been argued within this thesis, largely contributed to different developments among Jainas and other religious minority groups in India. While, as demonstrated in chapter two and three of this thesis, allegedly dwindling numbers also caused concern, unlike in the case of radical Hindu or Sikh leaders, Jaina intellectuals did not focus on the creation and propagation of boundaries with other groups as a means to define their own tradition.

Chapter three has illustrated in what ways Jaina intellectuals have tried to `protect´ and `propagate´ the Jaina tradition by means of internal organisation, unification and a definition of Jainism. Regarding the first `self-definitions´ by Jaina intellectuals, the work of Western orientalists was used in order to prove the independent origin and character of the Jaina tradition, as well as its antiquity. Negative statements about Jainism, on the other hand, prompted the composition of English apologetic writings, in which Jainas defended their tradition. Though Jainas

may have been less confronted with an aggressive Christian mission than Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab, Western writings on the Jaina tradition were also frequently motivated by the idea of Western cultural and religious superiority. Therefore, these writings prompted similar reactions among reformist Jaina intellectuals to those they had caused among other religious groups, most prominently Hindus. Among the first apologetic writers were lawyers who had spent some time in Europe themselves. The World's Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893 delivered the first big scale opportunity for Jainas to present their tradition to Westerners. The Gujarati Śvetāmbara Virchand R. Gandhi (1864-1901) as Jaina representative presented Jainism as an ancient tradition, rational, logical, scientific and with a universal approach. This definition, which very well reflected the Universalist and Theosophic intellectual atmosphere of the Parliament, was further developed by the writings of the Digambara lawyers and progressive reformers Jagmander Lal Jaini (1881-1927) and Champat Rai Jain (1867-1942). According to their interpretation, Jainism was a fully logical, scientific religion, and its eternal values such as *ahiṃsā* made it the most suitable, timeless and universal religion. While this definition highlighted the importance the Jainas, although very small in numbers, allegedly held within Indian civilisation as the `torch bearers´ of ancient Indian values and spirituality, it did not focus on the establishment of religious boundaries with other communities. In the discourse of these early reformers, the relationship between `Hindus´ and `Jainas´ remained vague. Although the first apologetic writings produced by Jaina reformers contributed to the framing of `Jaina core values´ such as *ahiṃsā*, tolerance and compatibility with science, the boundaries between Jainas and Hindus remained largely undefined and unclear. In this respect, the dominant identity discourse of the early 20th century Jaina lay leaders did not contribute to a clear positioning of the Jainas as a religious community within the framework of Indian religious pluralism.

Chapter three has furthermore aimed at suggesting an answer to the question, in what ways religious organisations based on modern Western models have contributed to broader concepts of community and collective religious identity among Jainas. The chosen example of the DBJS, a reformist organisation of the

Digambaras in the regional Digambara centre of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, has illustrated that the organisation's main activities in the field of social and educational reform were in line with the reform goals of progressive lay organisations and individual reformers of other regional and religious backgrounds. In the social field, campaigns against child marriage and for widow remarriage took the most prominent position, but only met with very limited success. Reacting to the general intellectual atmosphere of their times, the leaders of the DBJS furthermore stressed education, in the form of higher Western education, female education and basic education for the masses. Especially when seen within the context of the regional Digambaras' agricultural, low economic and educational background, the DBJS's focus on education and the establishment of educational institutions and student hostels became more pressing. The development of hostels for Jaina students, which started from the native state of Kolhapur, was furthermore in close connection with the Maharashtrian Anti-Brahmin movement and its ardent advocate Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur (1874-1922). Annasaheb Latthe (1878-1950), lawyer, politician and leading member of the DBJS, closely worked with Kolhapur's ruler and was personally involved in the Anti-Brahmin-Movement. As a pragmatic leader, Latthe had a profound influence on the DBJS. The progress of the local Digambaras, according to Latthe, largely depended on their educational improvement, as well as their inner unification. To achieve more unity among Digambaras, progressive members of the DBJS, led by Latthe, campaigned for the practice of inter-caste marriages and inter-caste dining. Although in their student hostels inter-caste dining was practised and some members of the DBJS arranged marriages of their family members with spouses from different castes, both practices again only met with limited success. However, what the DBJS did succeed in was the gradual shifting of a popular focus from a locally and caste-based sense of community to the concept of a more universal supra-locally, supra-caste-based Digambara community. Here, it has to be stressed that this wider `shift´ did not consist in a complete `replacement´ of regional, caste-based forms of collective identity. Rather, the concept of a more universal Digambara identity developed into an important additional form of collective identities held by

Digambara Jainas. Although in actual practice castes remained and inter-caste marriages only very gradually became more common, the DBJS - through its public functions, its community newspapers and its collaboration with Jaina leaders and associations from different regional and social backgrounds - propagated the concept of a more universal Digambara Jaina community, consisting of Digambaras from different regional, social and caste backgrounds. In this respect, as a modern reform movement the DBJS not only propagated Western-influenced concepts of social and educational reform, but furthermore adopted modern Western forms of organisation. As the analysis presented in chapter three has shown, it was especially the latter aspect - namely its organisational structure and activities, making extensive use of the public sphere - which contributed to the establishment of a broader concept of community among Digambaras.

This broader concept of the Digambara Jainas as a supra-locally, supra-caste-based religious community, however, was not based on a conscious establishment of religious boundaries with other groups, mainly Hindus. When Annasaheb Latthe propagated the founding of student hostels in the Kolhapur area, he regarded the Digambaras as one group among many other non-Brahmin castes. The Digambaras' economic, social and educational progress was the main reform goal of the DBJS. Here, we find an important difference from reform movements among Hindus and Sikhs, whose leaders focused more on religious reform. Although religious reform was also part of the progressive Jaina leaders' reformist agenda, it remained far less pronounced than calls for social and educational reform. In this respect, what can be called the `purification´ of Jainism from alleged `Hindu´ influences did not hold a very prominent position. Borrowing Harjot Oberoi's phrase of "Sikhizing the Sikhs" (1994: 306), we do not find a very strong tendency of `Jainising the Jainas´. This aspect is important, as it suggests that intellectual Jaina reformers, such as Latthe, did not consider the stress on a Jaina-Hindu dichotomy necessary for the economic, social and educational progress of the Digambaras as a community.

The main aim of chapter four has been an analysis of developments among non-middle-class protagonists. In this respect it has been argued that what was called the `revival´ of the tradition of naked Digambara monks and the re-establishment of

an ascetic order during the first half of the 20th century also had a great impact on novel concepts of collective religious identity and community among Digambaras. By discussing the ascetic career of the South Maharashtrian Ācārya Śāntisāgar (1872-1955), it has been demonstrated that Śāntisāgar's `revival´ established the fully naked Digambara monk as a public figure and, more importantly, a religious authority. As "charismatic leader" (Carrithers 1989: 232) the naked monk replaced the *bhaṭṭāraka*, who was linked to a respective locality and caste, as a more universal Digambara religious authority. With his religious authority mainly based on his severe ascetic practices, the Digambara ascetic developed into a `living representation´ of a Tīrthaṅkara and into a `living symbol´ of the Jaina values of asceticism and *ahiṃsā*. Besides the symbolic level, the distinct outward appearance of the male Digambara renunciant, especially his complete nudity, makes him stand out among Digambara Jainas. In this regard, he also acts as a very concrete symbol for Digambara Jainism. While the stress on asceticsm and *ahiṃsā* can already be found in apologetic writings of medieval Jaina scholars, the `integration´ of these `core values´ into the modern 20th century Jaina discourse is strongly connected with the `revival´ of the Digambara ascetic tradition since the early 20th century.

In chapter four it has also been demonstrated that not only the Western-educated intellectual elite, but also non-educated members of the Jaina masses made use of the colonial public sphere and reacted to the growing public awareness of religion as an important identity marker. In this respect, the public re-emergence of the naked monk substantially contributed to the establishment of a broader supra-locally and supra-caste-based notion of collective religious identity among Digambara Jainas.

An analysis into the developments among the Digambara ascetic tradition after Śāntisāgar, as provided in chapter five, has shown that Digambara monks fulfil different roles in their interaction with the laity. Although the majority of contemporary Digambara ascetics consist of men and women from a rural and low educational background, developments during the last decades indicate that an ascetic's religious authority does not have to stay confined to the ascetic ideal

practised by him or her. A growing number of younger men and women with a professional background have been initiated into the Digambara ascetic order. In this respect, several contemporary ascetics owe their popularity among the laity not only to their ascetic practice, but also to their religious learning. The increasing number of ascetics, who have taken initiation at an early stage in life, furthermore suggests that an ascetic's career, when considered as more than a spiritual option for retirement, can include what within this thesis has been called `social commitment´. In this respect, a Digambara ascetic can act as a leader figure in communal affairs, for the protection of `Jaina values´ such as vegetarianism, or use his religious authority to appeal to the laity to donate for social, religious or educational purposes. The popular Ācārya Vidyānanda is not only highly respected as a Jaina scholar, but also acted as a leader of the Digambara cause during the communal Bahubali Affair in Maharashtra during the 1980s. Surpassing the boundaries of Digambara Jainas, Muni Tarunsāgar leads a nationwide campaign against slaughter-houses and meat export, and his public speeches also attract non-Jainas in great numbers. While, as among members of other religious communities, also among Jainas multiple identities exist, and the `hierarchy´ between these identities varies depending on individual circumstances, the impact of the discussed Digambara ascetics on the formation of community among Digambaras also takes different forms. This, for instance, is illustrated in the case of Ācārya Vidyānanda who in his nationwide travels and popular speeches propagated a broader notion of the Jainas as a nationwide community; at the same time, he acted as the religious leader of local Digambaras in a regional communal conflict. By combining both `roles´, Vidyānanda transformed a regional affair into a nationwide event.

Notwithstanding especially popular individual ascetics the daily `routine´ interaction between ascetics and laity also largely contributes to the establishment of broader forms of community among Digambara Jainas. The visit of an ascetic at a special locality, especially during the three months of *cāturmāsa*, has a very concrete impact on the strengthening of group affiliations among local Digambaras who will work together to organise the feeding and sheltering of the ascetic, as well

as special functions. To a lesser extent, the constant travels of ascetics also contribute to the strengthening of the concept of a supra-locally, supra-caste-based Digambara community, with lay followers from different locations coming together while travelling with special monks and their disciples, inviting ascetics to their places and joining functions.

One of these occasions, as discussed in chapter five, is the extraordinary event of an ascetic's public performance of *sallekhanā*, the ritual of fasting to death. As a distinct Jaina - and even more so Digambara - ritual, *sallekhanā* not only symbolises the Jaina value of asceticism at its highest possible extent, but also expresses the performing ascetic's absolute independence and individuality, thereby establishing the Jaina ascetic's suggested spiritual and moral superiority. Another extraordinary event among Digambaras, the spectacular *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* ceremony performed to the colossal statue of the mythic ascetic Bāhubali, also provides a forum for Digambaras from different regional, economic and caste backgrounds to interact in preparing, running and celebrating the event. Additionally, the grand ceremony also catches the attention of non-Jainas and, in its colourful aspects, counteracts the popular stereotype of Jainism as a dry and colourless religion. Although in practice the supra-locally, supra-caste-based `community of worshippers´ established at the extraordinary event of the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* is of a temporary nature, its `image´ substantially contributes to the presentation of the concept of a universal Digambara community to non-Digambara and non-Jaina outsiders.

As the discussion of the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* has furthermore shown, the ascetic element is a fundamental part of the ceremony, which is held in veneration of the ascetic figure of Bāhubali, whose asceticism, according to the Digambara legend, made the ruler of the whole world bow to him. As an ascetic's *sallekhanā* followed by the *abhiṣeka* of the ascetic's corpse with precious substances testifies to the alleged moral superiority of a Digambara ascetic and, in a broader sense, of the (Digambara) Jaina tradition as such, the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* similarily symbolises the Digambara Jainas' utmost stress on asceticism, which, according to popular

Digambara identity discourse, makes Jainism stand out among other religious traditions.

As discussed in chapter five, the issue of Jainism's alleged moral superiority is also found in the discourse among contemporary Jaina lay organisations. A discussion of the rhetoric used by (contemporary) leading members of the DBJS illustrates that the concept of the Digambaras as a community is mainly used in a rather secular sense. Digambaras, accordingly, are all those who have been born into a Digambara caste and are therefore eligible to attend one of the educational institutions run by the DBJS. `Community´, according to the DBJS's rhetorical approach, is not established through partaking in the same rituals and festivals, but rather through the adherence to the `universal´ Jaina values of *ahiṃsā*, tolerance and truthfulness. According to this discourse, the Jainas' uncompromising practice of these `universal values´ establishes the Jaina tradition's suggested moral superiority.

In a global context, a similar argumentation is brought forth by the contemporary Jaina organisation Young Jains of India, founded in 2005. While the DBJS represents members of the regional Digambara castes of the South Maharashtrian and North Karnataka area, the YJI target Jainas irrespective of caste, regional or sectarian background. In their establishment deeply influenced by diaspora Jaina organisations, the YJI reflect young professional Jainas' efforts to locate their tradition in a world of religious pluralism and globalisation. By re-interpreting the ancient Jaina concepts of *ahiṃsā*, *aparigraha* and *anekāntavāda*, Jainism is defined as the most suitable religion for the modern world, securing peace, tolerance, and a responsible approach to environmental issues. In their discourse, the YJI take up the argumentation already used by the first Jaina apologetic writers, and develop it further by taking in the contemporary context of religious diaspora and transnational networks between India and the West.

It has to be stressed that the discourse on the Jaina tradition as morally superior to other traditions did not have its origin in the modern Jaina discourse of the 20th century, but has a very long history. Jaina scholars during the medieval period produced apologetic writings arguing for the moral and spiritual superiority of their

tradition. These writings targeted highly-educated religious scholars of rival religious traditions. However, neither were these writings addressed to a larger, non-highly educated audience, nor were they focusing on the presentation of the Jaina tradition as a means to provide solutions for non-religious matters.

In their discourse, the YJI's rhetorical usage of a `Jain way of life´, first proposed by Jaina professionals in the United States, shows important similarities to the modern presentation of other (Indian) religious traditions, focusing on allegedly timeless moral values such as non-violence and tolerance. Internal divisions, mainly in form of castes and sectarian sub-groups, do not feature in the YJI's universalistic conceptualisation of Jainism and the Jainas. Considering actual socio-religious practices, in which sectarian differences and caste divisions exist, broader concepts of a supra-caste, supra-sectarian and supra-locally-based universal Jaina community - such as that developed by the YJI - may appear to be not much more than an `imagination´ or theoretical construct. This `imagination´, however, has developed into an important intellectual force. This development finds a practical expression in campaigns for the official recognition of the distinctiveness of the Jaina tradition and the inclusion of the Jainas among the nationwide (non-Hindu) religious communities. These campaigns are based on the notion of a supra-locally, supra-caste-based universal Jaina community propagated by individual reformers and lay organisations from the end of the 19th century onwards. However, as expressed in the universalistic conceptualisation of the YJI's Jain Way of Life or the `protestant approach´ of the DBJS leaders' rhetoric, this modern discourse remains on an abstract level regarding the notion of the Jainas as a distinct community. The vagueness of this discourse, as has been argued within this thesis, finds its expression in undefined, unclear boundaries between Jainas and Hindus.

These blurred boundaries in the sphere of intellectual discourse, as finally argued in chapter six, have had a substantial impact on the undecided legal status of the Jainas regarding their inclusion among the nationwide religious minority communities. While under British rule petitions for political representation of the Jainas as an `important minority´ were mainly unsuccessful, after Independence the Jainas have not been included among the nationwide religious minorities. Among

Jaina organisations, the DBJS especially has been an ardent proponent for the inclusion of the Jainas, and since the 1990s several petitions have been filed. The argumentation used in these petitions reflects the late 19th century orientalist discourse on Jainism as an ancient, independent religious system, and considers the non-granting of the minority status to the Jainas a violation of the Indian Constitution. According to the DBJS's main petitioner Bal Patil, the exclusion of the Jainas from the nationwide minority communities is directly motivated by a Hindutva influence on Indian politics.

   Without further discussing Bal Patil's argumentation, the concept of Hindutva, as first formulated by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, includes Sikhs, Buddhists and Jainas among the umbrella term `Hindu´. In this regard, the last section of chapter six has aimed at suggesting possible explanations for the different legal status of Sikhs, Buddhists and Jainas regarding their community's inclusion among the nationwide Indian religious minorities. A comparison of the dominant identity discourse among Sikhs and Buddhists with that of the Jainas illustrates various factors responsible for different developments. It has been argued that the Jainas as a numerically very small religious group with a wide distribution across the whole of India did not establish any influential political organisation. Unlike in the case of the Sikhs and, to a certain degree, the Dalit neo-Buddhists, the conceptualisation of the Jainas as a community has not been connected to what has been called the `politicisation´ of a collective religious identity. While the element of politicisation is especially pronounced within the dominant Sikh identity discourse, in contrast to the Jainas both radical Sikhs and neo-Buddhists have been a far more audible community regarding their leaders' public claims stating: `We are not Hindus.´ This open "construction of religious boundaries" (Oberoi 1994), as argued within this thesis, has not been an element of the dominant Jaina identity discourse. It has to be stressed that in the field of socio-religious practice and tradition, boundaries between religious communities in India are much more fluid and `blurred´ than radical reformers would like them to be. In this respect, this thesis does not suggest that in practice boundaries between Hindus and Sikhs, or Hindus and neo-Buddhists are fixed and clearly defined. Regarding the `Jaina case´ discussed

within this research, it is not in the area of popular religious and cultural practices, where we find developments which are substantially different from the case of other religious groups, mainly the Sikhs and neo-Buddhists. While in actual practice `blurred boundaries´ between their own community and the Hindu majority can be found among Jainas, Sikhs and neo-Buddhists alike (and, to a certain extent, also among Muslims, Christians and others), it is in the field of the modern identity discourse where the missing rhetorical usage of "the construction of religious boundaries" differentiates the `Jaina case´ from that of Sikhs and neo-Buddhists.

Regarding differences between the `Jaina case´ and that of Sikhs and neo-Buddhists, the discussion of developments among Sikhs and neo-Buddhists has also shown that in both cases the process of "minoritization" (Gupta 1999: 38), in which a respective minority group becomes the focus of persecution by members of the majority community, most likely has had an impact on the strengthening of the Sikhs' and neo-Buddhists' own minority consciousness. The Jainas, on the other hand, have not been the victims of "minoritization" (Gupta 1999: 38) in recent times.

While these factors have had a substantial impact on the `Jaina case´, the opinions of Jainas concerning their inclusion among the nationwide minority communities also differ. While, as the present research indicates, Digambaras of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka are more likely to regard the Jainas' inclusion as a desirable official recognition of the Jaina tradition's distinctiveness, Śvetāmbaras, especially in Gujarat, tend to oppose the granting of the minority status to Jainas. In this respect, internal differences further contribute to the `Jaina case´ and the Jaina community's legally unclear position within India's religious landscape, commonly regarded as consisting of a Hindu majority and several religious minority communities. This is not to argue that in the case of other communities internal differences do not exist. However, especially in the case of the Sikhs their radical intellectual leaders' construct of a unified and distinct Sikh community has successfully been presented as the dominant one - in particular to non-Sikhs.

The case of the Jainas and their legally unclear position regarding their inclusion among the nationwide religious minorities discussed in this thesis gives some

important indications that the popular model of the Indian religious landscape, in which all religious groups are given their fixed position, does not hold true in all cases. Therefore, this thesis' focus on the `Jaina case´ contributes to the discourse on the formation of communal identities in India by including a hitherto neglected religious minority group, whose position within the broader framework of the Indian religious landscape defies any clear definition.

  The developments among Jainas, discussed within this thesis, illustrate the substantial impact of intellectual discourse and `imagination´ on popular concepts of collective identity formation and the establishment of universal religious communities. In this respect, we have to differentiate between two `aspects´ of identity formation and the establishment of community. One is what within this thesis has been called `actual practice´ or the field of socio-religious practices and traditions; the other consists of the more abstract sphere of intellectual discourse or `imagination´. While, as has been argued in this thesis, in actual practice more narrowly defined forms of community building and collective identities along regional, sectarian and caste-based lines exist, it is the latter aspect of intellectual discourse which has contributed to the establishment of broader concepts of universal religious collective identities. In this respect, the notion of `blurred boundaries´ is significant. While in socio-religious practices `blurred´ or fluid boundaries are not only found between Jainas and Hindus, but also between Hindus and members of other religious communities, it is the `fluidity´ of boundaries in the intellectual Jaina leaders' discourse, which differentiates the `Jaina case´ from developments among Sikhs and neo-Buddhists. These different developments, as has been argued in this thesis, were mainly caused by distinctive geographical, social and political circumstances. These respective contexts, then, had substantial impact on the identity discourse of the intellectual elite. In this respect, the present thesis does not suggest that the `Jaina case´ is an `extraordinary´ or `unique case´ per se; rather, the aim is to demonstrate, in what way specific circumstances have an impact on the `imagination´ or `construction´ of collective religious identity and the formation of community. In the context of the formation of community along religious lines in India, the discussion of the `Jaina case´ presented in this thesis

suggests a revision of popular models of the Indian modern religious landscape in which each religious community has a fixed and defined position.

During the research for this thesis, several interesting points, mainly regarding the complex issue of religious minority status, have occurred, which I regard as important for further research. One of these points concerns the comparison of the dominant modern Jaina identity discourse along geographical and sectarian lines. Although the written source material used for this thesis about early Jaina reformers and apologetic writers included Digambara and Śvetāmbara, South, North and West Indian Jainas, most of the anthropological material collected during field research mainly focused on Digambaras of South Maharashtra and Karnataka. However, as indicated above, regarding the contemporary legal status of Jainas as a religious minority community, the official acknowledgement of the Jainas as being not part of the Hindu community seems to be less important for Śvetāmbaras. Among Śvetāmbaras of Gujarat, there seems to be the tendency to resist the official recognition of the Jainas as being not part of the Hindu community. This tendency, though beyond the scale of this thesis, gives rise to several interesting questions: if the concept of a distinct Jaina identity is less developed among Jainas in North and Western India, especially of the Śvetāmbara sect, what are likely reasons for this? Does the popularity of Hindu nationalism in Gujarat contribute to this tendency? Is, as could be argued, the inclusion of Jainas and Hindus among some trading castes, and the practice of intermarriage between the two groups a substantial factor? Recent studies on diaspora Jainas in Africa and Britain, for instance, have shown that in many cases caste affiliations prove to be stronger than the lines between Jainas and Hindus (Dundas 1992: 332-334). Regarding the issue of a lesser degree of a distinct Jaina identity among Śvetāmbaras in North and West India, an interesting remark was made during field research by a young Sthānakvāsī woman, who had migrated with her family from Rajasthan to Bangalore, Karnataka. In Rajasthan, according to her, she had never been aware of her `Jaina identity´. Only after she had come to Bangalore, she was told that she was not Hindu, but Jaina.

Another interesting aspect noticed during field research were the sometimes aggressive efforts, with which some especially younger Jainas, mainly through the medium of the internet, aim at publicising acts of the alleged taking over of Jaina monuments by Hindus, thereby `claiming back´ converted former Jaina sites to protect the Jaina tradition against an alleged hostile Hindu nationalism. Is this rather aggressive communal awareness a reaction to growing Hindu nationalist tendencies? In a broader sense: does an increase in communal tensions through radical Hindu nationalism provoke a greater communal awareness among Jainas? Among recent developments, the strong protests against the amended Gujarat Freedom of Religion Bill of 2006, which included Jainas among Hindus, seems to indicate a trend like this, as Gujarati Śvetāmbaras, usually not prominent Jaina activists, also filed petitions against the bill.

These questions, raised during field research and the writing of this thesis, could be the topic of further research, contributing to the important study of religious pluralism and collective religious identities in the modern Indian nation state.

While these issues have to remain open for further research, the present thesis has, for the first time, included developments among the Jainas into the discourse on the dynamics of religious community formation in late colonial and post-Independence India. Additionally, the discussion provided in this thesis has demonstrated the complexity of collective religious identifications and the Indian religious landscape, which, as the `Jaina case´ suggests, defies any fixed model.

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS

abhiṣeka	ritual of ablution/anointment with purified water and other substances
ācārya	male leader of a group of ascetics
āhāra dāna	the ritual of giving food to a Digambara ascetic
ahiṃsā	non-violence; non-hurting
ailaka	a grade of initiation within the Digambara ascetic tradition
anekāntavāda	philosophical doctrine of non-onesidedness
aparigraha	non-possession; non-possessiveness
āratī	rite of worship by offering lamps to an image
āryikā	designation for a Digambara nun
bhaṭṭāraka	literally `learned one´; title for the head of a Digambara monastery
brahmacārī/ brahmacāriṇī	a person practicing celibacy
cāturmāsa	four-month period of the rainy season, during which mendicants stay at one place and do not travel
dīkṣā	initiation into the ascetic order
jina	literally `victor´; a human being who has attained omniscience and preaches the way to spiritual liberation to others
jīva	the self
kamaṇḍalu	a pot carried by Digambara ascetics containing boiled water for the purpose of washing hands and feet and cleaning oneself after excretion

khālsā	Sikh order established by Guru Gobind Singh
keśa loñca	ascetic practice of pulling out the own head and facial hair by hand
kṣatriya	member of a Hindu caste with the traditional occupations of rulers and warriors
kṣullaka/kṣullīkā	first level of initiation into the Digambara ascetic order
mahāmastakābhiṣeka	literally `great head anointing ceremony´; Digambara ceremony of ablutions performed to the colossal statues of the mythical figure Bāhubali, usually held around every twelve years
maṭha	monastery; seat of a *bhaṭṭāraka*
muhpattī	piece of cloth covering the mouth in order to avoid any kind of harm to small living beings; worn by ascetics of the Śvetāmbara sectarian traditions
muni	fully initiated Jaina male ascetic; within the Digambara tradition designation for a naked monk
mūrtipūjaka	sectarian branch among Śvetāmbaras which worships sacred images
pañcakalyānaka	Jaina festival in which the five auspicious moments in the life of a *tīrthaṅkara* are ritually re-enacted
paryuṣaṇa	Jaina festival of austerities performed during the rainy season
piñchī	a broom made out of peacock feathers used by Digambara ascetics to wipe the floor before sitting or lying down in order to prevent causing harm to small living beings
pūjā	ritualised act of worship
sallekhanā	Jaina ritual of fasting to death
saṅgha	general term for the (whole) religious community of Jainas; within this thesis it refers to a group of Digambara ascetics

śrāddha	Hindu ceremony honouring deceased family members
śrāvaka/śrāvikā	literally `listener´; a Jaina lay-follower
sthānak(a)vāsī	non-image worshipping sectarian branch of the Śvetāmbaras
śūdra	member of the lowest Hindu caste
terāpanthī	sectarian division within the Digambara tradition; a non-image worshipping sectarian branch of the Śvetāmbaras (within this thesis the term used refers to the latter)
tīrthaṅkara	literally `ford maker´; a human being who has attained omniscience and preaches the way to spiritual liberation to others
yakṣī	female deity, traditionally attributed to a *tīrthaṅkara* as a guardian deity

Note on Spelling

Within this thesis, diacritics are used in the spelling of the above listed Indian terms, as well as in the names and ascetic titles of Jaina monks and nuns. In the bibliography, diacritics are only used in titles where the author uses diacritics.

Appendix One

(Photo: Scholz)

Lay followers offering food to Muni Tarunsāgar during his *cāturmāsa* stay at Bangalore in 2006.
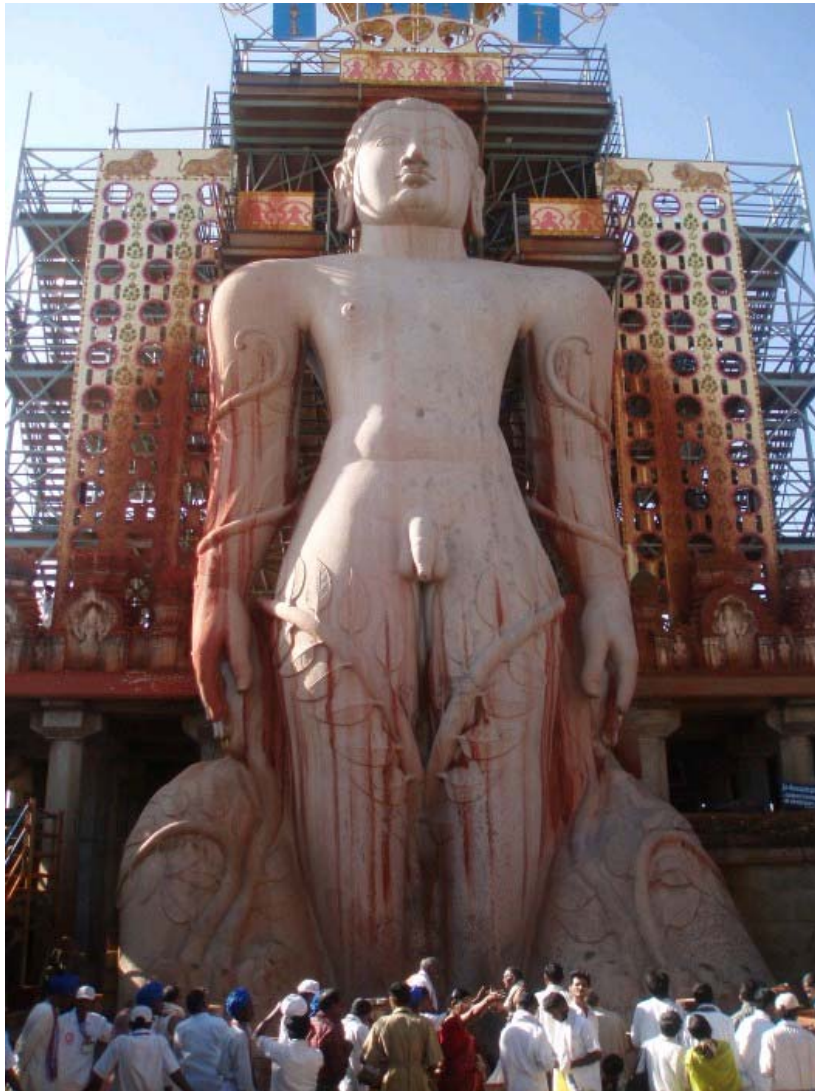
(Photo: Scholz)
Lay followers surrounding Muni Tarunsāgar after a religious function at Bangalore.

(Photo: Scholz)
Lay followers performing the ritual of *āratī* to Muni Tarunsāgar during his *cāturmāsa*
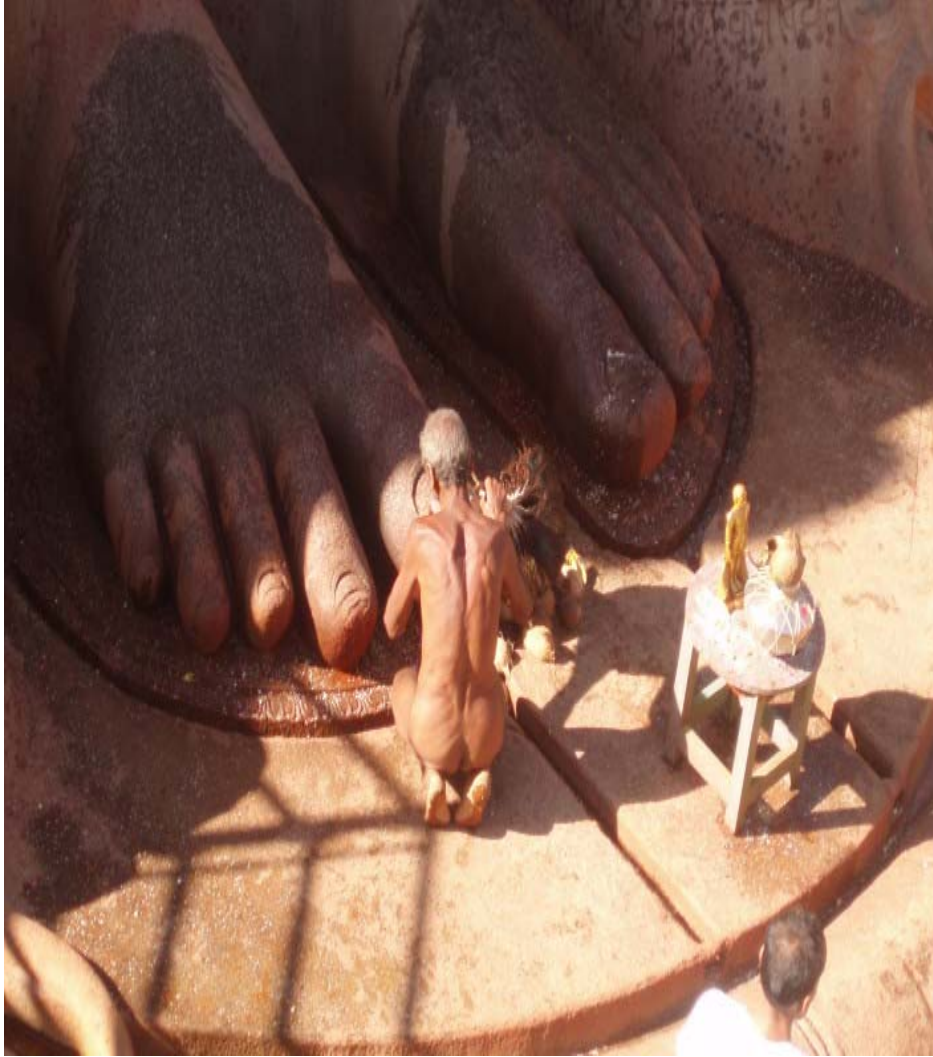stay at Bangalore in 2006.

Appendix Two

(Photo: Scholz)
The Bāhubali statue at Shravana Belgola is prepared for the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* ceremony during February 2006.

(Photo: Scholz)
Last ablution with water during the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* ceremony at Shravana Belgola in February 2006.

(Photo: Scholz)
Digambara monk worshipping the feet of the giant Bāhubali statue at Shravana Belgola.

(Photo: Scholz)
Jainas at Shravana Belgola during the *mahāmastakābhiṣeka* ceremony in February 2006.

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