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Chapter 1

Questions and Conclusions: The Conundrum of the Rise and Decline of Jaina Influence in Medieval Karnataka

1 The Enigma

The main question which this book aims to tackle is how, after flourishing for several hundred years, from at least the eighth century CE, the Jaina religious community in Karnataka¹ lost most of its influence in a relatively short space of time. From the late eleventh or early to mid-twelfth century, depending on the area of the State concerned, the Jainas rapidly lost the upper hand and were relegated to a position of strong asymmetrical dependency on other newly dominant religious, economic and political groups. The five chapters that follow, from the fields of history, religion, art and architecture as well as anthropology, offer individual components of the solution to the riddle of why this happened. Taken together, these separate pieces of the jigsaw provide for the first time a fuller—and, as I hope, a more successful—picture of the political, economic, religious and artistic situation than a study coming from a single discipline. The various individual studies conjoined in this publication illustrate the factors which influenced this decline. It is noteworthy, that both mutations of their religion for which the Jainas themselves were responsible along with external elements in the form of other creeds which entered or sprang up in the region from the late eleventh and early twelfth century onwards contributed to this deterioration. These new faiths competed for hegemony in the region, took political and economic control and fought against the formerly predominant Jaina elite, contributing to the creation of acute dependencies.

In our study, we focus largely on the region of the modern-day State of Karnataka, although the area affected by these changes was, for much of the time under discussion in this chapter, much larger. This issue will be discussed at different points in this book. The period of concern corresponds largely to what in Europe is called the Middle Ages or the medieval period, which in an Indian context is also thought to last from about the fifth to the late fifteenth century CE.

It is surprising how little has so far been written about this transformation in the status of the Jainas in Karnataka. In general, hardly anything has been published on the question that concerns us. Moreover, many historical studies purposefully exclude

¹ Although the official transliteration of this modern Indian State is *Karṇāṭaka*, in this chapter and the book as a whole it has been treated as an English word and written without diacritical marks.

this period from their remit.² Some scholars have even claimed that no regression of Jaina influence in Karnataka ever took place—a claim which, as will be discussed in section 5.1 below, flies in the face of the physical evidence. The lack of interest in the waning of Jainism in Karnataka was already identified by Saletore in the 1930s.³ Fortunately, a few limited studies dealing at least with certain aspects of this complex subject have appeared since his time. On the one hand, this lack of enquiry appears to be linked to the fact that Śvetāmbara Jainism has by and large been studied for longer and more intensively than the culture of the Digambaras, who are more numerous in Karnataka and in the south more generally.⁴ On the other hand, even those studies focusing on Digambara Jainism in South India often write little about this period of weakening influence, or at least suggest no explicit reasons for it. One can say that, as a rule, scholars have been more interested in so-called classical or golden ages and high points of culture than in their periods of decline.⁵ In addition, Jainism has often been wrongly portrayed as a static, even monolithic, unchanging faith, and, as such, as less rewarding to examine than others. This is, of course, a view which is not applicable to any belief system. The discussions in this publication clearly show that in actual fact, Jainism adjusted a great deal and that the Jainas proactively tried to adapt to religious and political changes by emphasising existing features of their faith and absorbing and forming substantial new elements within it. As such, as will be argued here, Jainism—like any other faith—is a product of historical changes and religious developments.⁶

This chapter reviews the increasingly problematic situation the Jainas encountered from the late eleventh century onwards. It summarises the conclusions of the individ-

2 See, for instance, Ram Bhushan Prasad Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka (c. A. D. 500–1200)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975).

3 Refer, for example, to Bhasker Anand Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism: With Special Reference to the Vijayanagara Empire* (Bombay: Karnataka Publishing House, 1938): 1–2.

4 For the difference between these two Jaina sects, refer to the introductory paragraph of the section 2.1 “Arrival and Prospering of the Faith” in this chapter. Scholz in Chapter 3 in this publication has written on this topic as well. According to her, this neglect is due to the fact that the early Western Indologists of the nineteenth century concentrated primarily on philological studies of the Jainas, a tradition which continued to a certain extent at least into the later twentieth century. However, even modern Jaina studies have placed more of an emphasis on the Jaina community of north-western India and again more on the Śvetāmbara tradition. On further details on the lack of scholarly interest in Digambara Jainism in general and in the south of India in particular, see footnote 1 in Chapter 3 by Scholz in this publication.

5 I focused on this issue in much detail in a conference and edited volume, published as Julia A.B. Hegewald, ed., *In the Shadow of the Golden Age: Art and Identity in Asia from Gandhara to the Modern Age*, Studies in Asian Art and Culture (SAAC) 1 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2014). See also the brief discussion of this subject in this chapter under section 2.3.1 “High Points and Golden Ages Questioned.”

6 On this issue, refer also to Olle Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability: A Jain Strategy for Survival and Growth,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 41 (1998): 33.

ual specialists in their respective chapters in this volume, which shed light on this debate. It then digests and presents the results of a conference organised by the research team in Bangalore in 2007 and published by me in 2011 on the subject of our research project.⁷ The contributions of a large number of local experts from Karnataka and selected specialists from Europe and the USA at this conference yielded a substantial body of data, which has since been updated and further completed by additional readings on the various subject areas that have appeared in print since 2011. Furthermore, this chapter condenses the outcomes of two further subprojects. The first, examining re-use theory, widened the angle of the discussion from a regionally and (in terms of timeframe) highly focused enquiry to a more general deliberation about changes in dominance and dependency and the impact these have on artistic expression and religious practice more generally.⁸ The second subproject questioned whether it is helpful to classify certain periods as “golden” or ideal—in order to contrast them with phases of dependency and suppression—making the point that anything before such an idealised phase is necessarily seen as premature and anything after it as representative of decay.⁹

Chapter 1 has been structured in the following way: At the start (section 2), we shall examine the emergence, establishment and rise to dominance of Jainism and suggest reasons for its fast and successful path to power and supremacy in the region. This is followed by the first hints of decline. In section 3, we shall analyse organic changes in the Jainas’ own practices (that is, not made in response to aggression or persecution), such as their move from an itinerant life, without home or possessions, to a settled existence in monasteries, their transformation into wealthy landowners and their acceptance of Jaina castes and subgroups. The following section (4) is a discussion of the expansion of the Jaina pantheon, the introduction or increase in importance within Jaina ritual practice of other objects of adoration, *bhakti* (devotional) and Tantric elements, and the important aspect of lay participation, noting the marked effect which such developments had on Jaina sacred spaces, such as temple architecture. In section (5), we shall take a closer look at the other religions which increased in popularity at this time. Many of the changes described in this chapter—at least the encounters with other religious groups and the resulting persecution of

7 This has been published as Julia A.B. Hegewald, ed., *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, Heidelberg Series in South Asian and Comparative Studies (New Delhi: Samskriti Publishers, 2011).

8 For this refer to the joint publication by Julia A.B. Hegewald and Subrata K. Mitra, *Re-Use: The Art and Politics of Integration and Anxiety* (New Delhi: Sage Publishers, 2012) and especially the theory chapter by Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Towards a Theory of Re-Use: Ruin, Retro and Fake Versus Improvement, Innovation and Integration,” in *Re-Use: The Art and Politics of Integration and Anxiety*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald and Subrata K. Mitra (New Delhi: Sage Publishers, 2012): 30–54.

9 For the results of this study, consult Julia A.B. Hegewald, ed., *In the Shadow of the Golden Age: Art and Identity in Asia from Gandhara to the Modern Age*, Studies in Asian Art and Culture (SAAC) 1 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2014).

the Jainas—affected the Jainas in other south Indian States, such as Andhra Pradesh¹⁰ and Tamil Nadu, as well. For purposes of comparison, the situation of the Jainas in these adjacent areas will be briefly discussed at the start of section 6. However, we have made the State of Karnataka our primary focus as it is the south Indian State in which Jainism flourished most extensively and which still possesses the largest number of Jaina temples and the strongest continuing tradition of Jaina ritual activities.¹¹ A brief comparative examination will follow of the disappearance of Buddhism in India, which took place at the same time as the Jaina troubles. Whilst in the sections outlined so far, inscriptional and literary references constituted the main sources, the section that follows (7) focuses on artistic and architectural evidence for the persecution and decline of the Jainas in Karnataka. In section 8, I then examine the continuity of Jainism in Karnataka. The final section (9) summarises the results of this project. As such, Chapter 1 serves both as an introduction and as a conclusion to this edited volume.

2 Jaina Historical Developments in the Early Middle Ages

This large section with its various subdivisions outlines what we know about the legendary advent of Jainism in the region of Karnataka and summarises the historical development of the religion from its initial establishment, its expansion and upsurge to supremacy, followed by the first symptoms of its enigmatic decay at the high point of Jaina power in Karnataka. Particular attention will be paid to the reasons for the particular appeal which Jainism enjoyed at this time, which led to its rise in influence, as this will shed light on its later decline. At the end of this section, we shall examine the usefulness of applying value statements such as the term “golden age” to such periods of strong influence. The chapter closes with the proposition that many centuries of Jaina supremacy in the wider region might have led to a certain complacency on the part of the Jainas, rendering them slow to react decisively to shifts in the religious and political milieu in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

¹⁰ In 2014, the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh was divided into two sections, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Here, the entire area is referred to.

¹¹ This has also been stressed by M.S. Krishna Murthy, “The Development of Jaina Temple Architecture in Southern Karnataka,” in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald (New Delhi: Samskriti, 2011): 95.

2.1 Arrival and Prospering of the Faith

Jainism originated in the north-eastern State of Bihar, as did Buddhism, at around the same time. The doctrinal traditions of the religion, which is probably a reformed version of an earlier creed, were articulated by the teacher and ascetic Mahāvīra in the fifth or sixth century BCE.¹² In about the fourth century BCE, an acute drought struck the region, resulting in a severe famine. This led to massive migratory movements away from the east of India. In consequence, the Jainas shifted to the north-west, principally into the modern States of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and into the south. An additional reason for this move from the east of India might have been the upsurge of the *brāhmanical* Śuṅga dynasty (c. second to first centuries BCE), following the establishment of Mauryan rule in the area. This created an environment which was hostile to non-Vedic groups in the area of Magadha, which today largely represents the region of Bihar.¹³

This split of the religious community (*saṅgha*) into these two migratory groups resulted eventually in a schism. Broadly speaking, the group which had moved westwards formed the Śvetāmbara sect of the Jainas, whose male and female ascetics wear simple white cotton robes, while the faction which travelled south came to make up the Digambara subgroup, whose male mendicants reject all belongings, including clothing, and wander about naked. Digambara nuns wear simple white cotton robes, as do Śvetāmbara female ascetics.¹⁴ Desai, however, reminds us that there was never an absolutely strict division between north and south, Śvetāmbara and Digambara, and that from early on, the Śvetāmbara Jainas of North India moved into the south as well. Today, any migration is largely due to commercial reasons.¹⁵ In the following section, I shall look at how and when Jainism might have reached Karnataka.

¹² A similar situation almost certainly characterises the beginnings of Viraśaivism, which also represents a reformed version of a probably earlier cult. On this, refer to section 5.3.1 “Basava and His Teachings” in this chapter.

¹³ Jaini has written on this subject (Padmanabh S. Jaini, “The Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism: A Study in Contrast,” in *Studies in History of Buddhism: Papers Presented at the International Conference on the History of Buddhism at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, WIS, USA, August, 19–21, 1976*, ed. A.K. Narain [Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1980]: 82–83). For the dating of Śuṅga rule, refer to Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (New York: Weatherhill, 1993 [1985]): 56.

¹⁴ For further details on the migration and the split of the Jaina community into two major groups, see Julia A.B. Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India: The Development of a Distinct Language in Space and Ritual*, Monographien zur indischen Archäologie, Kunst und Philologie 19 (Berlin: G+H-Verlag, 2009): 17–19.

¹⁵ Desai suggests that in the past, this might have been ascribable to missionary activities of the Śvetāmbaras (P.B. Desai, *Jainism in South India and Some Jaina Epigraphs*, Jivarāja Jaina Granthamālā 6 [Sholapur: Jaina Saṁskṛti Saṁrakshaka Sangha, 1957]: 97–98). Chapter 5 by Hegewald in this volume also discusses Śvetāmbara temples in Karnataka.

2.1.1 Jaina Origins in Karnataka

According to Jaina tradition, the teacher (*ācārya*) Bhadrabāhu is said to have brought Jainism to Karnataka in the fourth or third century BCE.¹⁶ Bhadrabāhu is also known as Śrutakevali or Śrutakevalin. A Śrutakevali is an ascetic who knows all the Jaina scriptures and is consequently held to be omniscient. Myth recounts that he and Candragupta Maurya, grandfather of the famous emperor Aśoka, came to Shravanabelgola (Śravaṇabelgola) in Karnataka after fleeing the east Indian food crisis, which is said to have lasted twelve years (Plate 1.1).¹⁷ According to an inscription dated 600 CE, Candragupta, who in the inscriptions is referred to by his religious name, Prabhacandra, converted to Jainism before his death.¹⁸ The two eminent personalities are believed to have established Jainism at the sacred hill site in Karnataka and attained enlightenment on Candragiri,¹⁹ one of the two sacred hills at Shravanabelgola (alongside Viṇḍhyagiri), which is said to take its name from Candragupta Maurya.²⁰ The date of Bhadrabāhu's enlightenment (*nirvāṇa*) and death is usually given as 297 BCE (170 A.V.), while Candragupta is thought to have passed away twelve years later.²¹ Bhadrabāhu is believed to have died a religious death by self-starvation (*sallekhanā*).²² In Jainism, this is consid-

16 For information on this period of migration, refer also to Robert J. Zydenbos, "Jainism Endangered: The View of the Medieval Kannada (Kannaḍa) Poet Brahmasīva," in *"Minorities" on Themselves*, ed. Hugh van Skyhawk (Heidelberg: South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, 1986): 176. Alternatively, there is a legend according to which Mahāvira himself brought Jainism to Karnataka, long before Bhadrabāhu (Rajalakshmi Misra, "The Jains in an Urban Setting [The Ascetics and the Laity among the Jains of Mysore City]," *Bulletin of the Anthropological Survey of India* 21, no. 1–2 [1972]: 3). However, there is no evidence available to us today to prove the correctness or historicity of this story.

17 On this, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 3, and K.M. Suresh, "Jaina Monuments in and Around Hampi: An Art-Historical Appraisal," in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald (New Delhi: Saṃskṛiti, 2011): 179. There are different spellings for the name of this place. Whilst Śravaṇa Belgola (see, for instance, Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 3) and Śravaṇabelgola are also common, we shall use Shravanabelgola throughout this publication. In general, the first time a place name is given, it will be shown again in brackets with diacritical marks. Should there be an ancient or modern version of the same name, this will also be provided.

18 On this date, refer to Julia A.B. Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 476, fn 6, Julia A.B. Hegewald, "Jaina Temples in the Deccan: Characteristics, Chronology and Continuity," *Journal of Deccan Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007): 2. See also K.V. Subrahmanya Aiyar, "Origin and Decline of Buddhism and Jainism in Southern India," *The Indian Antiquary* 40 (1911): 214, and Misra, "The Jains in an Urban Setting": 4.

19 Refer to see R.V.S. Sundaram, "Elements of Jaina History in Kannada Literature," in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald (New Delhi: Saṃskṛiti, 2011): 30.

20 See Robert J. Del Bontà, "The Shantinatha Basadi at Jinanathapura," in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald (New Delhi: Saṃskṛiti, 2011): 117.

21 Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 3.

22 For more details on the ritual of *sallekhanā*, refer to section 4.1.3 "Lay Participation: Ablutions, the Cult of Bāhubali and *Sallekhanā*" in this chapter. See also Julia A.B. Hegewald, *Jaina Tradition of the Deccan: Shravanabelagola, Mudabidri, Karkala*, Jaico Guidebook Series (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2021): 121–22.

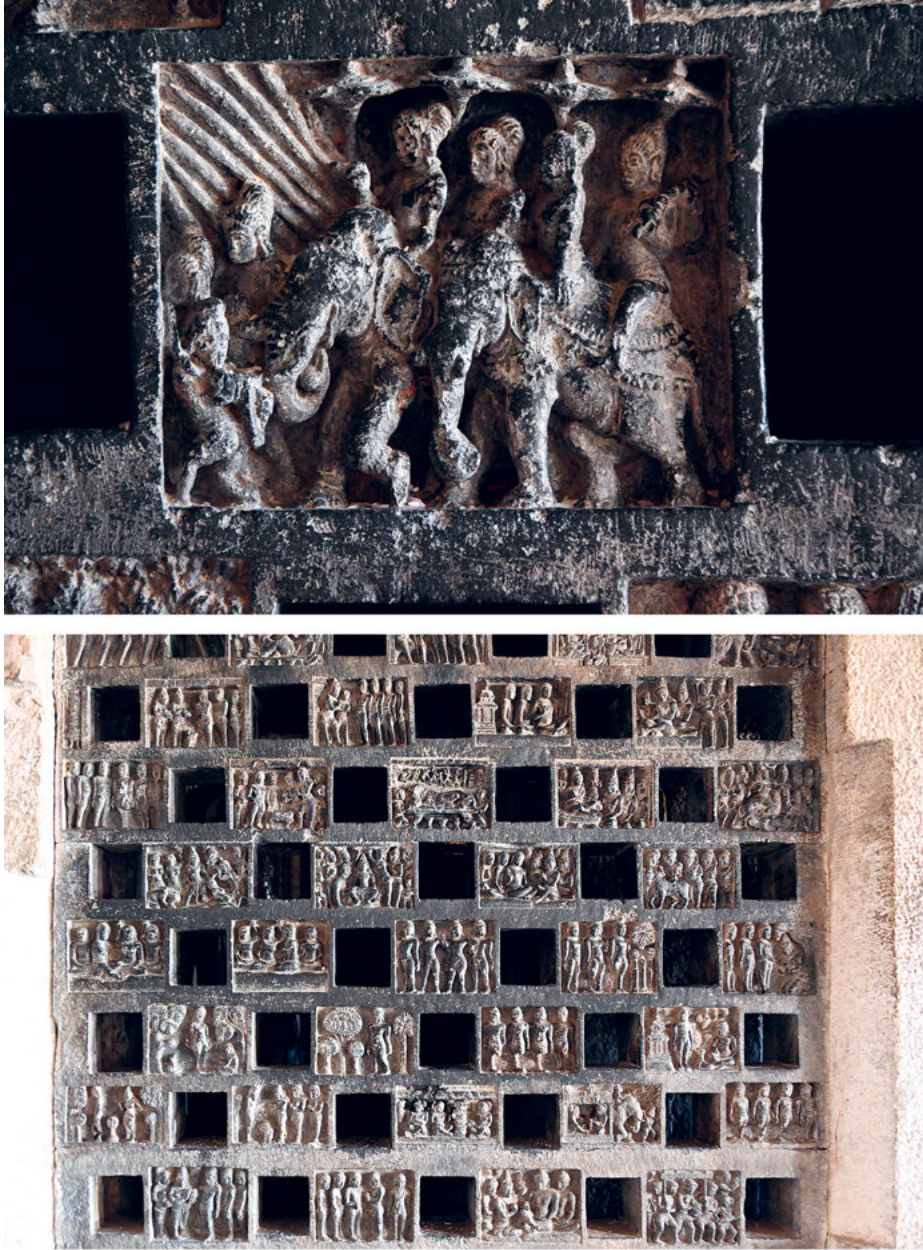


Plate 1.1: Two steatite screens inside the Candragupta Basadi at Shravanabelgola depict various scenes from the legendary southward migration of Candragupta and Bhadrabāhu.

ered an exemplary end, worthy of emulation.²³ The ritual of *sallekhanā* is still being practised today.²⁴ Bhadrabāhu's sacred death on this hill gave rise to a ritual tradition of following him in performing *sallekhanā* at the site.²⁵

According to this version of the story, reflected in various literary sources from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Jainism then spread into Tamil Nadu and Kerala from Karnataka.²⁶ The emergence of these accounts in Karnataka during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the period in which Jainism reached its pinnacle of influence in this area, might reflect the Jainas' sense of self-importance and feelings of superiority at this time. These will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

However, the dates of this migration, the introduction of Jainism to Karnataka, the identities of the main characters involved and the route via which Jainism is said to have reached the south have been much debated, as Pius F. Pinto shows in Chapter 2. Although the lithic and literary references to these events date from much later,²⁷ the presence of these two prominent historical personalities on the sacred hill is attested to in the names of a number of local edifices and the stories associated with them. These include Bhadrabāhu's meditation cave and the Candragupta Basadi, both on Candragiri at Shravanabelgola.²⁸ However, the conversion of Candragupta to Jainism and the introduction of the religion to Karnataka at this early age have been doubted by contemporary scholars.²⁹

Historically, it appears more likely that Jainism moved south from its place of origin in north-eastern Bihar through what is today the State of Jharkhand and into Odi-

23 Refer to Aloka Parasher-Sen, "Jaina Women, Ritual Death and the Deccan," in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald (New Delhi: Samskriti, 2011): 230.

24 Scholz has written on the contemporary continuity of *sallekhanā* (Sabine Scholz, "The Revival of the Digambara Muni Tradition in Karnataka During the Twentieth Century," in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald [New Delhi: Samskriti, 2011]: 272–74).

25 See del Bontà, "The Shantinatha Basadi": 117. On this issue, refer also to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 3, and Pinto in Chapter 2 in this publication.

26 For further details refer to R. Champakalakshmi, "Monuments & Sculptures 300 B.C. to A.D. 300: South India," in *Jaina Art and Architecture*, vol. 1, ed. A. Ghosh (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1974): 92.

27 On this issue, see Pinto in Chapter 2 and Suresh, "Jaina Monuments": 179. Much evidence on the situation of the Jainas in Karnataka has also been sourced from literary writings. Although this might surprise at first glance, R.V.S. Sundaram reiterates the importance of such texts also for historical research. See the discussion by Julia A.B. Hegewald, "Introduction: The Jaina Heritage of Southern India and Karnataka," in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald, Heidelberg Series in South Asian Studies (New Delhi: Samskriti Publishers, 2011): 3, and Sundaram, "Elements of Jaina History": 29.

28 Further details on both structures are provided in Chapter 5 by Hegewald. For additional information, see also Hegewald, *Jaina Tradition of the Deccan*: 54–55, 68–70. *Basadi* means "Jaina temple." See the discussion later in this chapter.

29 This has been discussed in more detailed by Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 476–77, 319. See also Asim Kumar Chatterjee, *A Comprehensive History of Jainism*, vol. 1, *From the Earliest Beginnings to AD 1000* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2000 [1978]): 105.

sha (until 2011 Orissa),³⁰ Andhra Pradesh, parts of modern Telangana, and into Tamil Nadu. From there, it is likely to have reached Karnataka during the early centuries of the common era, most probably in the second century CE.³¹ In addition, Jainism seems to have arrived not in one single migration, but more in the manner of a continuous process of waves.³² Even within our research group, debates about the date of arrival continued till the end. Sabine Scholz, in this publication, follows Dundas in dating the advent of Jainism in Karnataka to the second and first centuries BCE. Pius F. Pinto, following traditional Jaina accounts from the region, favours an even earlier date, in the third century BCE.³³ However, textual references from this early period are extremely rare and very difficult to date. The contemporary architectural remnants and inscriptions that survive provide no definitive evidence to help establish these early dates.

However, it is not the aim of this publication to tackle the problematic issue of precisely when Jainism reached Karnataka. We are primarily interested in reasons for the rise in popularity of this faith group in the region. In this context, the crucial fact, notwithstanding the exact date of their arrival, is that the Jainas were already receiving substantial patronage from royal dynasties in the early centuries of the common era. Their influence intensified during subsequent centuries, and from the fourth century CE, there is ample proof for the presence of Jainism throughout Karnataka.³⁴ The rise of this new faith in the south was not without its ups and downs, but we can see

30 Locally, the State names are spelled Jhārkhaṇḍ and Ōṛiṣā.

31 On this, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 6, and Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 4. For evidence of Jaina cave structures in Tamil Nadu dating from about the second to the first century BCE, refer to Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 475–78. These go back further in time than the earliest preserved Jaina cave remains in Karnataka, which date from only about 600 CE and as such make the eastern route a more plausible one.

32 On this, refer to S.B. Deo, “The Expansion of Jainism,” in *Jaina Art and Architecture*, vol. 1, ed. A. Ghosh (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1974): 34.

33 See Pius Fidelis Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire: The Survival of the Religion in the Capital and in the Coastal Region of Karnataka,” in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald (New Delhi: Samskriti, 2011): 77. Krishna Murthy argues for an introduction in the fourth century BCE (Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jaina Temple Architecture”: 95). It is not entirely clear how Krishna Murthy, in the work just quoted, comes to the conclusion that Jainism is therefore the “oldest existing religion of Karnataka,” as an early form of Brāhmaṇism must have predated it. V.S. Sundaram and Narasimha Murthy even argue that Jainism might have existed in Karnataka before the Mauryan period (c. 323 to 185 BCE) (Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 30; P.N. Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka: Developments from the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries CE,” in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald [New Delhi: Samskriti, 2011]: 40). On this, see also Pinto on the same page quoted above. However, to my knowledge, there is no firm basis for such very early dates for the arrival of Jainism in Karnataka. For the dating of the Mauryan period, refer to Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*: 41.

34 On this issue, refer, for instance, to Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 44, and Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 180.

that it became well established in Karnataka between the fifth and the seventh century, depending on the particular region of the State. From then on, Jainism appears to have risen steadily to a focal position of supremacy, dominating not just religious and political, but also philosophical, literary, artistic and architectural debates in Karnataka.³⁵ By the ninth or tenth century CE, the Jainas seem to have reached a very comfortable state of supremacy, which they kept until about the middle of the twelfth century.³⁶

2.1.2 Early Royal Patronage

How did the Jainas achieve this supremacy? One crucial factor appears to have been the support of ruling dynasties, which they gained quite early on. Here, we encounter what at first glance seems a contradiction. Did the Jainas, who preached and lived according to the precept of *ahimsā*, meaning non-violence or non-injury, really work so closely with and profit from the support of warrior kings, militant aristocrats and members of their combatant forces?³⁷ In fact, many Jainas were high-ranking members of the army themselves.³⁸ Saletore considers this a particularly important point, as it shows that the Jainas were not only theoreticians, concerned with religious issues, but also actively involved in politics and worldly matters, defending their region as members of the military.³⁹

Probably the best-known Jaina general is Cāvuṇḍarāya, also spelled Cāmuṇḍarāya, who commissioned the Bāhubali carved monolith (Plate 1.2) and the Brahmadeva pillar (Plate 5.14), both on Viṇḍhyagiri, and paid for the construction of the Cāvuṇḍarāya Basadi on Candragiri (Plates 2.3, 5.13), all at Shravanabelgola, as well as making other important donations.⁴⁰ *Basadi* (*basti*), derived from the Sanskrit *vasatī*, meaning

³⁵ Refer to Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 4, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 135. Lorenzetti in Chapter 4 outlines the same situation.

³⁶ Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 173, 216.

³⁷ This fact has also been emphasised by Scholz in Chapter 3. On this issue, refer to Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, Library of Religious Beliefs and Practices (London: Routledge, 1992): 102 as well. On the favours and support which the Jainas received from warriors, refer further to Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985): 79.

³⁸ Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 78–79 has written on this issue. There is a village in Karnataka named Adaguru, near Halebid. According to local information, the name derives from the term “*adoge*,” which means “to cook” and refers to Jaina soldiers who used to live and cook at this place. This is based on personal conversations with Jaina families on site in 2006.

³⁹ Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 101.

⁴⁰ These items have been discussed in Chapter 5. On this issue, see B. Sheik Ali, ed., *History of the Western Gangas*, Comprehensive History of Karnataka 1, Other Publications 61 (Mysore: Prasaraṅga, University of Mysore, 1976): 324–25. On the personality and deeds of the general, see Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 101–12.

temple, is the local term used in Karnataka for a Jaina temple.⁴¹ In this publication, we use temple, shrine, *basadi* and *jinālaya*, which is another alternative term, interchangeably. Cāvunḍarāya is seen as one of the main players during the peak phase of Jaina influence in the region. However, other notable Jaina generals also contributed to the expansion of the empire in the area of Karnataka, especially in the eleventh and twelfth



Plate 1.2: The colossal monolithic Bāhubali statue atop Viṇḍhyagiri at Shravanabelgola was commissioned by the famous Jaina general Cāvunḍarāya in about 981 or 983 CE.

⁴¹ See Saleatore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 367.

centuries. Saletore refers, for instance, to general Śāntinātha, who was active during the second half of the eleventh century and who, as he was also in charge of the treasury, was known as Daṇḍanātha Śāntinātha.⁴² It seems that in early Jainism, martial activities were accepted if they were conducted in a context of self-defence.⁴³ The slightly paradoxical but strong connection between Jainas following the tenet of *ahiṃsā* and military kings will be explored further later on in this chapter.⁴⁴ Although Jainas did not refrain from martial activities, their history is not one of combativeness and aggressive expansionism. This is probably one of the reasons why they eventually lost ground to other more radical and militant religious groups.⁴⁵

The religion could not have prospered as it did without royal recognition and support.⁴⁶ Indian kings traditionally extended a certain tolerance and generosity to all religions in their realm. However, it was especially important for the non-Vedic *śramaṇa* faith groups, such as the Jainas and Buddhists, to receive more active royal assistance and sponsorship during their formative periods. This raised their status and increased their wealth, enabling them to substantiate their position.⁴⁷ *Brāhmaṇical* sites, which had been on the scene for longer, had been backed by an extended line of rulers and could usually rely on ample financial resources.

The period from the fifth to the twelfth century was especially prosperous for the Jaina community, with a number of dynasties giving the religion important patronage. The Jainas received generous support under the rule of the Kadambas of Banavāsi (c. 350–550 CE),⁴⁸ the Gaṅgās of Talakāḍ, also known as the Western Gaṅgās (350–650 CE and 650–1004 CE),⁴⁹ and the Early or Western Cālukyas of Bādāmi (c. 540–753

⁴² On this issue, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 112–14). For prominent Jaina generals of the twelfth century, see the same publication on pp. 114–15.

⁴³ Compare Dundas, *The Jains*: 102.

⁴⁴ Refer in particular to section 2.2.1 entitled “Jainas as *Ahiṃsā* Warriors” in this chapter.

⁴⁵ On this issue, see Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 37.

⁴⁶ Scholz, in this volume (Chapter 3), reminds us that contrariwise, rulers also needed to be legitimised by association with influential religious figures and that they required the spiritual guidance of Jaina ascetics. Refer also to Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 44–45.

⁴⁷ Compare Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 83, and Qvarnström “Stability and Adaptability”: 43–44. All the non-*brāhmaṇical*, heterodox schools of Indian thought, which focus more on asceticism, are referred to as *śramaṇas* (Padmanabh S. Jaini, “Śramaṇas: Their Conflict with Brāhmaṇical Society,” in *Chapters in Indian Civilization: A Handbook for Readings to Accompany Lectures in Indian Civilization*, vol. 1, *Classical and Medieval India*, ed. Joseph W. Elder [Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1970]: 41).

⁴⁸ There are a lot of discrepancies in the dates provided for individual dynasties in different sources. Saletore explains this with regards to unreliable inscriptional records and similar names carried by different monarchs (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 7–8). On the subject of the period of prospering of Jainism, refer to Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 5, and Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 180.

⁴⁹ For the dates of the Gaṅgā dynasty, refer to I.K. Sarma, *Temples of the Gaṅgas of Karṇāṭaka*, Architectural Survey of Temples 6 (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1992): 6–25. Talakāḍ is also

CE).⁵⁰ While the Kadambas, a predominantly Hindu dynasty, practised a religious broadmindedness towards the Jainas,⁵¹ the Gaṅgā rulers seem actually to have owed their throne to Jaina support; it was the Jaina ascetic Simhanandi Ācārya who had brought Gaṅgā King Kogaṇivarmā to power, allegedly in 265 CE.⁵² As Parasher-Sen points out, this shows that Simhanandi cannot have been simply a world-rejecting ascetic, but must have yielded a considerable amount of political influence. Although traditionally, monks and nuns had been discouraged from getting actively involved in politics, it appears that Simhanandi's actions were not generally frowned on.⁵³ Jaini points out that this reflects "the moral ambivalence created by the need for royal support on the one hand and the demands of the spiritual life on the other."⁵⁴

Although not all Gaṅgā kings were Jainas, and some also followed Vaiṣṇavism, the large majority adhered to Jainism and those who did not were generally positively disposed towards the religion.⁵⁵ This resulted in a relatively peaceful coexistence and cooperation between Jainas and Vaiṣṇavas at this early stage. Once the Jaina faith had gained the favour of the royal family, however, substantial numbers of people converted. Even if some Gaṅgā monarchs were not Jaina themselves, they employed large numbers of Jaina ministers in their royal administration, and Jaina commanders, such as officers and generals, in their armed forces. This created an administration which actively promoted the welfare of the Jaina community.⁵⁶ In this context, Saletore also points out that by gaining the support of "feudal lords and the great commanders," the Jainas obtained influence in "various provincial seats over which these high officials were placed."⁵⁷

known locally as Talakāḍu. Saletore dates the start of the Gaṅgā dynasty to the second century CE (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 8). The rule of the Gaṅgās might have lasted until the tenth century CE (400–974 CE) (Misra, "The Jains in an Urban Setting": 5). This shows that the dates provided by various authors even for large and well-studied dynasties vary considerably.

50 On this issue, see *Epigraphia Carnatika*, vol. 2, *Shravanabelgola*, 2nd ed. (Mysore: Institute of Kannada Studies, University of Mysore, 1973): lxxix, Deo, "The Expansion of Jainism": 32, and Chapter 2 by Pinto.

51 Compare Misra, "The Jains in an Urban Setting": 5. According to Saletore, a number of the Kadamba kings were also Jaina (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 30).

52 On this issue, see Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 9–17, Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1990 [1979]): 279–80, Dundas, *The Jains*: 102, Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 40, 55, and Pinto, "Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire": 78. Gaṅgā King Kogaṇivarmā is also sometimes spelled Konguṇivarmā.

53 Refer to Parasher-Sen, "Jaina Women, Ritual Death": 225–26.

54 Compare Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*: 280. Singh is rare in questioning the position of Simhanandi in bringing the Gaṅgās to power (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 6).

55 For further information, see Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 30, Sheik Ali, *History of the Western Gangas*: 309, Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*: 280, and Chapter 2 by Pinto.

56 Parasher-Sen, "Jaina Women, Ritual Death": 226 has written on this issue.

57 Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 172.

The Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty, more specifically the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Maḷkhēḍ (735–973 CE), which succeeded the Gaṅgās, also supported Jainism.⁵⁸ Pius F. Pinto stresses, in Chapter 2, how much the Jainas flourished under their rule in particular. During this early propitious period, large numbers of Jaina temples were restored, extended and newly constructed. These activities and also the donation and veneration of statues became exceedingly popular as meritorious deeds.⁵⁹ Pius F. Pinto points out that the tradition of making grants to religious establishments appears to have been initiated by the Kadambas as early as the third century CE. Religious donations are generally referred to as “*dāna*” or “*mahādāna*,” the latter term signifies a particularly large donation (Plate 1.3).⁶⁰



Plate 1.3: It is common practice for Jaina visitors to sacred sites and temple edifices to make donations, *dāna*, for the preservation of *jinālayas* and the performance of rituals.

⁵⁸ On this, refer, for instance, to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 34–40.

⁵⁹ Singh has written on this issue (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 24).

⁶⁰ Refer to Pinto his chapter in this volume and to Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 178.

2.1.3 Support from Farmers, Merchants and Later Rulers

The public acceptance and support of royalty, outlined above, attracted members of other groups in society to Jainism.⁶¹ Pius F. Pinto notes in the next chapter that the Jaina tenet of *ahimsā* could be followed without problems by traders, which made the religion very appealing to this profession.⁶² For farmers, who represented a large section of society, the case was slightly different. Although many did become followers of Jainism, their professional practice of ploughing the ground and pulling root vegetables out of the earth was considered problematic from a Jaina religious standpoint, as such actions disturb the soil and might kill small living beings, such as insects. This helps to explain why in the mid-twelfth century, when the new Viraśaiva movement became popular, agriculturalists began to favour it over Jainism, even in villages where the local elite was Jaina, although it was traditional for villagers to adopt the creed of prominent local families. Sabine Scholz discusses this in more detail in Chapter 3. Notwithstanding the question of creed, the remarkable increase in agrarian produce from the eighth century CE onwards, which was achieved through artificial irrigation employing rain water tanks, and the founding of new agricultural settlements led to a substantial increase in trade and consequently in general prosperity in Karnataka by the twelfth century.⁶³

The teachings of Jainism appealed especially to the merchant classes; the Jainas had a history of attracting the sponsorship of influential trading groups for their religious establishments and charitable activities. From the tenth century CE onwards, moreover, the Jainas themselves became very active in trade.⁶⁴ Whilst the merchants of central Karnataka are generally referred to as Bāṇajigas and the entire merchant class as the Vira Bāṇajigas,⁶⁵ those in the coastal region are usually referred to as Seṭṭi or Seṭṭikārs.⁶⁶ With their enormous wealth, the commercial groups of society repre-

⁶¹ Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 180.

⁶² On the involvement of merchants in supporting Jainism, see also Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 113–16. This was also highlighted by Prof. Dr. Jim Menon in a personal communication in Heidelberg on 01.05.2008, when he argued that the Sadar Lingāyats, who live mainly in central Karnataka, were agriculturists and that this created tensions with the *brāhmaṇ* Hindus who were principally Bāṇajigas (traders).

⁶³ Compare Rajaram Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy, Mathas and Socio-Political Factors in Medieval India – A Regional Context in Karnataka,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 58 (1997): 233; Rajaram Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations: Saivism in Medieval Karnataka,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 60 (1999): 197. On page 239 he also stresses that traditionally, the Jainas had especially loyal followers in agricultural settlements.

⁶⁴ On this issue, see Dundas, *The Jains*: 102, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 114.

⁶⁵ There are multiple spellings for this term. Alternative spellings are Baṇajigas or Bāṇjigas. An alternative spelling for Vira Bāṇajigas is Vira Baṇajigas. See, for instance, Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 172. On the Bāṇajigas refer also to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 122.

⁶⁶ An alternative spelling is Śeṭṭis. For further details on the mercantile groups of Karnataka more generally, see Pinto in Chapter 2 in this volume and Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 80,

sented an important element of the middle classes.⁶⁷ As Pinto shows in Chapter 2, many embraced Jainism. The Jaina traders controlled enormous assets and in order to enhance the religious standing of their families, they invested large amounts of their capital in temple buildings, donations of sacred icons and the funding of ritual activities (Plate 1.4). A large number of the *basadis* in the coastal belt, for instance, were renovated, restored or newly donated by Setṭi families and many carry the names of these donor merchants.⁶⁸ In giving generously, Jainas partake in the ritual of *sāmāyika*, the temporary renunciation of their possessions.⁶⁹ Charitable acts of giving *dāna*, donations, not only to religious institutions but also to ascetics, the sick and the frail have been much emphasised in Jaina literature as virtuous, procuring religious merit and eradicating the bad effects of *karma*, thus easing the long road to final liberation.⁷⁰ The concept of *karma* basically refers to the totality of a person's actions and deeds in the present and his or her previous lives. This is believed to influence subsequent rebirths and one's status in future existences.

As a consequence of royal support, which also increased the popularity of Jainism amongst ordinary villagers, and their commercial activities, the Jainas became extremely prosperous under Kadamba and Gaṅgā rule. From the seventh century CE, large numbers of *basadis* were constructed throughout the area.⁷¹ This marks the start of what Saletore calls a “widespread diffusion” of the religion throughout the State.⁷² We can see it continuing during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries CE, when the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Maḷkhēḍ (735–973 CE), the Later Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa (973–1156 CE and 1183–1200 CE)⁷³ and the Hoysaḷas of Dvārasamudra (Dōrasamudram;

87, 89. On page 87, Pinto also discusses other trading groups in the coastal region. Whilst the Setṭis are best-known, other trade guilds were the Halas and the Yelames (Elames).

67 Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 173.

68 Examples are the Kōṭi Setṭi Basadi, the Dēramma Setṭi Basadi or the Mahādeva Setṭi Basadi, all in Mudabidri (Mūdabidri). On these and other temples built by the Setṭis, see Hegewald, *Jaina Tradition of the Deccan*: 93–101.

69 Parasher-Sen has written on this issue (Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 215–16).

70 On this subject, see, for instance, the discussion in Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 82 and John E. Cort, “Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition: Understanding Devotional Religion in South Asia,” *History of Religions* 42, no. 1 (2002): 76.

71 Zydenbos has highlighted this (Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 177). See also the discussion of many of these *basadis* in Chapter 5 by Hegewald.

72 Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 185, 216.

73 Alternatively, Malaked (Maḷakhēḍ), Mānyakheṭa (Deo, “The Expansion of Jainism”: 32) or Mānyakhēṭa (G. Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra: As Depicted in Inscriptions* [Hyderabad: Prakriti Bharati Academy, Jaipur and Akhil Bharatiya Sri Suvarna Jain Seva Fund, 1994]: 39) and the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa are also known as the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇī (Deo, “The Expansion of Jainism”: 32).



Plate 1.4: The Jaina merchants (*nagara*) of Shravanabelgola paid for the maintenance of the Nagara Jinālaya. It consists of a late-twelfth-century section (above) and a later extension at the front.

today, Halebid) (985–1346 CE) were also great patrons of Jainism (Plate 1.5).⁷⁴ The Jainas were influential in bringing the Hoysaḷas to power, as they had the Gaṅgās. In this case, it was the involvement of Sudatta Vardhāmana which gave the Hoysaḷas the advantage in the late tenth to early eleventh century.⁷⁵ Again, many of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Hoysaḷa sovereigns as well as their military commanders were Jainas themselves.⁷⁶ All these rulers made generous financial donations to temple establishments and to ascetics, as well as giving land grants or entire villages to existing shrines and having new *jinālayas* (Jaina temples) constructed.⁷⁷

This period represents the high point of Jaina political, religious and cultural influence in the region. The Jainas had prospered enormously through the support not only of merchants, landowners, farmers and ordinary men and women, but also of military commanders and generals, royal and aristocratic women and even kings.⁷⁸

However, the power and dominance of the Jainas did not last long. The enormous expansion of Jainism, especially over the eighth and ninth centuries CE, had brought the Jainas into conflict with other faith groups in the area (Plate 1.6).⁷⁹ Under the influence of the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa, royal and elite support for the Jainas had begun to weaken and isolated persecutions appear to have taken place,⁸⁰ although Jainism still continued to develop throughout the region, probably as a result of the relative religious tolerance of these rulers.⁸¹ However, inscriptional evidence reveals that from the eleventh century, Jainism started to come under severe attack in certain areas of the State. During this period, Vaiṣṇavism and a number of other religious groups grew in popularity, becoming serious rivals to the Jainas in the region.⁸² A notable

74 On these dynasties which supported Jaina activities, refer to *Epigraphia Carnatika*, vol. 2: lxxix and Deo, “The Expansion of Jainism”: 32. Refer also to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 209–13, 216, and to Pinto in Chapter 2.

75 See Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 67, Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 78, and Scholz “The Revival of the Digambara Muni”: 259–60. More generally, Saletore stresses with respect to the Jainas in Karnataka that by “playing the part of king-makers, they had secured for generations royal patronage” (Saletore: *Mediaeval Jainism*: 172).

76 On this, refer to Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 175.

77 This is attested to by a number of inscriptions, which are discussed in the chapter by Pinto in this volume.

78 On this, refer to Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 7, and Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 219–20. The issue of female donors is discussed in Chapter 5 by Hegewald in connection with a number of *jinālayas*.

79 Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 216.

80 On this issue, see Pinto in Chapter 2, when he refers to the activities of ruler Taila II and his direct successors. On this issue, see also S.R. Sharma, *Jainism and Karnataka Culture* (Dharwar: Karnataka Historical Research Society, 1940): 29.

81 *Epigraphia Carnatika*, vol. 2: lxxix–lxxx. Narasimha Murthy has also written on this period of continued flourishing and starting tensions (Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 41).

82 *Epigraphia Carnatika*, vol. 2: lxxix.



Plate 1.5: The Hoysalas of Dvārasamudra had the Pārśvanātha Basadi at Halebid raised. With its highly polished tall, lathe-turned pillars, it is typical of the Hoysala style.

apostate was the powerful Hoysaḷa ruler Viṣṇuvardhana, who converted from Jainism to Śrīvaiṣṇavism in the early twelfth century. For more on the role of Śrīvaiṣṇavism at this time, see section 5.4 on “Vaiṣṇavism and Śrīvaiṣṇavism.”



Plate 1.6: The massive success of Jainism in Karnataka during the eighth and ninth centuries CE provoked discord with other groups and led to the destruction of many Jaina sites as here at Aihole.

This was a time of great political volatility, in which many feudatories declared themselves independent from their rulers and set up their own small petty kingdoms, founding new royal lineages. Several of these regional rulers supported Jainism, notably the Seuṇas (Sevunas) or Yādavas of Devagiri (835–1336 CE), who started off as a Jaina dynasty, as did the short-lived dynasty of the Kaḷacuris of Kalyāṇa or Kalyāṇi

(1156–1183 CE),⁸³ who, however, soon became prominent supporters of the newly developed Viraśaivism.⁸⁴ This historical summary has already highlighted a number of potential explanations for the initial appeal of Jainism to the people of Karnataka. The following thematic section will focus in more detail on what attracted them to the faith.

2.2 What Attracted so Many People to Jainism?

The previous section has outlined the triumphal rise of Jainism from an unknown creed to one of the dominant religions in the area of Karnataka. The Jaina faith spread much faster and more widely than Buddhism, which probably had arrived in the region even earlier.⁸⁵ A number of features of early Jainism made it especially appealing to the people of Karnataka, leading to a rapid increase in followers in the early centuries of the common era.

2.2.1 Jainas as *Ahimsā* Warriors

It is fascinating to observe that the faith did not concentrate on religious issues alone, but that the Jainas were involved in politics as well. As has been briefly mentioned above, the Jainas attracted the interest of military kings and warring vassals who believed in the martial skills of bravery and heroism. Jainism has been characterised as a religion of non-violence, based on its central principle of *ahimsā*. In Jaina teaching, emphasis is laid on the cutting of all ties with the material world in order to attain liberation of one's soul. This is achieved through harsh austerities and a fight against the limitations of human aspirations. In this context, the image of the fearless warrior famous from the battlefield was translated into the religious ideal of the self-denying ascetic, combating all worldly desires and attachments by exercising heroic self-perfection. This is grounded in the belief that the eradication of *karma*, the effect of one's deeds in this and previous lives, can be realised only through severe austerity and penance, intensive studies of scripture, long meditations, extreme fasts, a total cessation of all desires and complete detachment from worldly life.⁸⁶

⁸³ For further details on these families, refer to Chapter 2 by Pinto, to Deo, "The Expansion of Jainism": 32–33, and Hegde, "Temple-Hierarchy": 237.

⁸⁴ See Karigoudar Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava: Lingayat Religion and Culture in South Asia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992): 3.

⁸⁵ According to Saletore, Buddhism reached Karnataka during the Mauryan period (Saletore, *Medieval Jainism*: 6), which spanned from about the fourth till the second century BCE.

⁸⁶ On this issue, see Parasher-Sen, "Jaina Women, Ritual Death": 215, and Padmanabh S. Jaini, "The Digambara Jain Warrior," in *The Assembly of Listeners: Jains in Society*, ed. Michael Carrithers and Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

The ritual of *sallekhanā* in particular—the process of slow self-starvation under strict religious guidance, already mentioned briefly in the context of Bhadrabāhu’s death at Shravanabelgola—was seen as waging “war against worldly desire through the weapon of self-mortification (while undertaking these death rituals)” (Plate 1.7).⁸⁷ In this sense, the ruling dynasties and their warrior classes considered Jainism a religion of “vigour and bravery” and as such as fitting in well with their own outlook on life.⁸⁸ Therefore, this element of the new religion played a crucial role. As a result of Jainism’s attractiveness to the military and kings, it quickly and easily became the faith of the ruling classes. At least at the start of the development of Jainism in the region, obtaining royal support was a crucial factor in its growth.



Plate 1.7: Foot images, *pādukās*, mark the locations where devout Jainas ended their lives under a highly controlled ritual of self-starvation, known as *sallekhanā*, as here at Shravanabelgola.

⁸⁷ This quote has been taken from Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 235. The ritual of *sallekhanā* will be discussed in more detail in section 4.1.3 “Lay Participation: Ablutions, the Cult of Bāhubali and *Sallekhanā*.”

⁸⁸ This short quote has been taken from Dundas, *The Jains*: 102.

2.2.2 Raising the Status of the *Drāviḍian* Elite

Another theory, supported by Sabine Scholz in this volume, posits that Jainism, as a religion coming from the northern, *aryan* regions and which moved into the south, bestowed a certain respectability on and raised the status of the southern, *drāviḍian* warrior classes.⁸⁹ To a large extent, these controlled the expanding south Indian population of farmers and farmworkers in the fifth and sixth centuries CE.⁹⁰ These martial classes had not wanted to align themselves with local agrarian Hindu groups.⁹¹

Furthermore, the support of ordinary people, who soon converted, following the ruling elite, was crucial for the firm establishment and the survival of Jainism in the region. Through close interaction also with the populace, the Jainas succeeded in controlling local politics, thus safeguarding long-term political and financial support for the faith.⁹² Here, the Jainas affiliated primarily with the leading warrior classes of society and only indirectly, through connection with them, established contact to the masses, as these followed the religion and practices of the ruling sectors of their society. Later on, it was the *bhakti* groups of the Hindu revivalism of the seventh and eighth centuries CE which contributed to the downfall of the Jainas in South India, consciously aligning themselves with the peasants to break the approach of the heretical faiths, such as Jainism and Buddhism.⁹³

2.2.3 Jaina Openness and *Anekāntavāda*

A further element that contributed to the rise in popularity of Jainism may have been what Qvarnström describes as the “tolerant,” “lenient,” “liberal” and “noncommittal” approach of the Jainas towards other religions and their practices, which attracted

89 On this, refer also to Burton Stein, “Brahman and Peasant in Early South Indian History,” *The Adayar Library Bulletin* 31–32 (1967–1968): 229–69, Stein, *Peasant State and Society*: 79, and Richard H. Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains: Retelling the Śaiva-Jain Encounter in Medieval South India,” in *Open Boundaries: Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History*, ed. John E. Cort (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, Indian Book Centre, 1998): 215. In this context it is interesting that Padoux suggests that Viraśaivism arose as a southern Indian reaction against *aryan brāhmaṇical* dominance (André Padoux, “Viraśaivas,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 13, ed. Mircea Eliade [New York: Macmillan, 1987]: 12). See also the discussion of these issues in Julia Leslie, “Understanding Basava: History, Hagiography and a Modern Kannada Drama,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 61, no. 2 (1998): 232.

90 Compare Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215.

91 Dundas has written in more detail on this and related issues (Dundas, *The Jains*: 102).

92 See Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 224.

93 Compare Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215–16. For further details on the *bhakti* form of devotional veneration of a personal deity, refer to section 5.6 on “Rationales for the Popularity of Alternative Religions: *Bhakti* and Tantra?” in this chapter.

many converts especially during the tenth century CE in South India.⁹⁴ This is an aspect already highlighted in the 1930s by Saleatore, who identified the central Jaina tenet of *ahiṃsā* as a practice of tolerance: “[...] it cannot be denied that the Jainas fostered the principle of toleration more sincerely and at the same time more successfully than any other community in India.”⁹⁵ Going into more detail, Qvarnström argues that the Jainas showed significant flexibility towards converts, who did not entirely have to discard their own religious traditions. This applied in particular to the area of lay activities, including local customs and marriage practices. Sabine Scholz addresses this area in her chapter in this volume, emphasising that Jaina householders were free to adapt to local—also Hindu—customs and traditions, as long as the central elements of Jaina doctrine remained untouched.⁹⁶ According to Scholz, this attitude and approach applied by the Jainas helped Jainism to get established and to rapidly expand its following. The Jaina openness towards other faith groups also led to the absorption of Hindu gods, such as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, into the pantheon, and to the acceptance of texts such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, of which Jaina versions were produced.

This attitude of tolerance acted as a missionary strategy, which, at least initially, worked very well in Karnataka. In addition to being a demonstration of *ahiṃsā*, it could be said to express a practical application of the Jaina doctrine of *anekāntavāda*, the theory of the manifold nature of reality or non-one-sidedness.⁹⁷ According to Qvarnström, this approach made the Jainas “better equipped to cope with matters challenging their survival and growth.”⁹⁸ Subrahmanya Aiyar sees these developments more critically, writing with regard to conversions to Jainism: “Number, not faith, seems to have been their aim.”⁹⁹

Despite their openness and ability to adapt, expressed in the tenets of *ahiṃsā* and *anekāntavāda*, also the Jainas were at least from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries quite severely threatened. The rise of other religious faith groups presented both Jaina and Buddhist creeds with competition. In contrast to Buddhism, however, Jainism survived in India as a living and expanding faith.¹⁰⁰ The further development of a powerful cult of the female element in Jaina ritual practices—another expression of this characteristic Jaina approach of incorporation or assimilation—may well have

94 Refer to Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 34–35.

95 Compare Saleatore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 270.

96 The Jainas were unwilling to compromise on their hard-core religious dogma. On this, see also Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 35–36.

97 On this, refer, for instance, to Hampa Nagarajaiah, “Attacks on Important Buddhist and Jaina Centres in Karnataka,” in *Buddhist and Jaina Studies: Proceedings of the Conference in Lumbini, February 2013*, ed. J. Soni, M. Pahlke and C. Cüpper, LIRI Seminar Proceedings Series 6 (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2014): 51.

98 See Qvarnström “Stability and Adaptability”: 35.

99 Refer to Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline”: 216.

100 Compare Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 81–91.

been a tactical reaction to a threat posed by rival faiths. This will be discussed later in this chapter under section 4.1.1. “Female Divinities: Śāktism (*Yakṣīs*).”

Related to the previous point, but with a slightly different emphasis, is that the dissemination of Jainism appears also to have been further increased through its own capacity to adapt well to local circumstances. On this analysis, the Jainas showed an active ability to adapt themselves to other traditions, rather than just passively tolerating the absorption of new elements into their faith. As will be shown later in this chapter, Jainism survived especially well in the coastal region of western Karnataka, where it entered into an intensive dialogue with Hindu and in particular with more local sacred practices and cults.¹⁰¹

2.2.4 Engaging with Women and the Community

The period from the eighth to the twelfth century, in which Jainism flourished and gained an increasing number of followers, saw the faith diversify into a number of subgroups. According to Upadhye, divisions had already arisen in Jainism during the life-time of Mahāvīra, and the schism between Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras had been a major split.¹⁰² However, what paved the way for the fragmentation in this later period was the large number of members and teachers of the Jaina community and the comfortable position in which Jainism found itself. The Digambara group of the Yāpanīyas enjoyed particular popularity,¹⁰³ but there were many others, including the Japuli, Ājīvika and Daṇḍajīvika communities or *saṅghas*.¹⁰⁴

The Yāpanīyas, probably the most important of these subgroups, will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter (see section 3.2.2 “Divisions into Subgroups: The Yāpanīyas”). At this stage, it suffices to point out that, as an early reform movement, they aimed to adapt the Jaina tradition to the local setting in Karnataka and to be less dogmatic about rules than the Digambara Śrī Mūla Saṅgha, the main branch and oldest

¹⁰¹ For further details, see section 8.3 “Endurance in a Provincial Region: The West Coast of Karnataka” in this chapter and the discussion by Pinto in Chapter 2.

¹⁰² See the discussion by Upadhye of a number of Śvetāmbara factions (Adinath N. Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Saṅgha – A Jaina Sect,” *Journal of the University of Bombay* 1, no. 4 [1933]: 224–25).

¹⁰³ Saletore spells the name Yāpanīyas (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 34). Alternatively, but much more rarely, they are also known as Gōpya Saṅgha (Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Der Jainismus: Eine indische Erlösungsreligion* [Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1984 (1925)]: 356). “Gōpya” means “that which must be kept hidden.”

¹⁰⁴ On this issue, see Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 36, and Ashim Kumar Roy, *A History of Jainism* (New Delhi: Gitanjali Publishing House, 1984): 128.

monastic order of Digambara Jainism,¹⁰⁵ which had its seat at Shravanabelgola.¹⁰⁶ An important element of this more broadminded approach was the belief of the Yāpanīyas that not only ascetics, but also ordinary laypeople, and even the followers of other religions, could reach enlightenment.¹⁰⁷ Radically, they also taught that women were able to gain enlightenment from within a female body, a possibility denied by majority Digambara Jainism.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the Yāpanīyas accepted female teachers and gave them high-ranking positions in their monastic institutions.¹⁰⁹ This liberal attitude towards females significantly increased the popularity of Jainism amongst women in particular.¹¹⁰

In Chapter 3, Sabine Scholz argues, on the basis of inscriptional evidence, that the number of women lay followers and female ascetics also increased exponentially from the eighth to the tenth century CE.¹¹¹ The nuns were usually referred to as *ajjis*, *āryikās* or *kantis* (*gantis*) (Plate 1.8).¹¹² It is interesting to note that the veneration of female divinities also intensified at this point,¹¹³ a phenomenon which will be discussed later in this chapter (4.1.1. “Female Divinities: Śāktism (*Yakṣīs*)”). Following Desai, Suresh argues that equality of women favoured the increase in the influence of female goddesses, such as the *yakṣīs*.¹¹⁴ In this context, Desai also underlines how cru-

105 Desai characterises the Śrī Mūla Saṅgha as the “most predominant monastic order of the Jaina Church in South India” (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 221).

106 On this, refer to K.R. Srinivasan, “Monuments & Sculpture A.D. 600 To 1000: The Deccan,” in *Jaina Art and Architecture*, vol. 1, ed. A. Ghosh (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1974): 185, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 119–21.

107 Compare Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 167.

108 For the fact that mainstream Digambara religious thought does not believe that women can reach enlightenment, see Padmanabh S. Jaini, *Gender & Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1991), and Aloka Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 218, 227. On the Yāpanīya liberalist attitude towards women, see the latter source on pp. 221–24.

109 On this, refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 169–70.

110 For discussions of this issue, refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 168–70, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 126.

111 On this issue, see also Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 47.

112 Compare Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 168 and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 127–30.

113 See Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 170–73, Padmanabh S. Jaini, “Is there a Popular Jainism?” in *The Assembly of Listeners: Jains in Society*, ed. Michael Carrithers and Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Ramendra Nath Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan (c. A.D. 600–A.D. 1000)* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973): 59–60.

114 Refer to Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 183.

cial the role of women is in transmitting religious customs more generally,¹¹⁵ and Narasimha Murthy says, “More than men, women proved devout Jainas.”¹¹⁶



Plate 1.8: Jaina nuns wear simple white cotton *sāris* and carry the compulsory ascetic broom of peacock feathers (*piñchi*) to sweep the path so not to crush any living beings.

The many donations made by women to existing Jaina temples and for the construction of new temples adds weight to this contention. Jainism’s popularity amongst women, which of course added to the numbers of the faithful, reminds us that Jainism was not exclusively the chosen religion of royalty and the upper classes, such as warrior clans and influential traders. In no time, it had also become the preferred faith of large sections of the population in the region of Karnataka.¹¹⁷ This positive effect could be felt throughout society. A number of inscriptions which appear to show that local Hindus provided protection and monetary support for the construction and

¹¹⁵ Compare Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 168. On this issue, see also Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 229.

¹¹⁶ This quote has been taken from Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 44.

¹¹⁷ Pinto, too, has commented on this situation (Pinto: “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 78).

preservation of Jaina *basadis* suggest that the Yāpanīyas contributed to the integration of the Jaina faith among the general public and to a spread of collective societal harmony. Narasimha Murthy also mentions increased marital relations between Jainas and other religious groups at this time.¹¹⁸

Returning to the Yāpanīyas, we can deduce that the great popularity of this subgroup encouraged local lay Jainas to give them particular support, in return for religious guidance. Lay followers thus had more active interaction with ascetics and religious institutions (Plate 1.9). Furthermore, the Yāpanīyas appear to have founded a number of monastic orders and to have placed considerable emphasis on residing in monasteries close to towns,¹¹⁹ which allowed them more influence over local affairs, and provided them with a degree of constancy and permanency, which the Jainas—as a religion of migratory ascetics—had not known before.¹²⁰ We see them intensifying the ritual activities in shrines attached to their monasteries, commissioning temples, and establishing a strict routine of devotional practices. Of the Jaina *basadis* built before the mid-seventh century CE, roughly half were associated with the Yāpanīya *saṅgha*.¹²¹

The Yāpanīyas also built schools, rest houses (*choultries*) where travellers could stay, and hospitals to care for the community. In the seventh and eighth centuries CE, charity homes (*dānaśālās*) were often attached to Jaina *basadis*.¹²² In all these institutions, shelter or protection was provided, free food was distributed and medical facilities offered complimentary medicines as well as religious guidance. This reflects the so-called “four gifts” or the “four-fold gift of charity,” which Jainas are meant to offer to the public: food (*āhāra*), shelter or protection (*abhaya*), medicine (*bhaiṣajya*) and education or learning (*sāstra dāna*).¹²³ Through these welfare activities, the Yāpanīyas, and Jainas more generally, developed close ties with mainstream society.¹²⁴ Saletore identifies these gifts made to society by the Jainas as the most important factor underlying the successful spread of Jainism.¹²⁵

118 On this, refer to Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 43–44, 48–49.

119 Refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 164.

120 On this, refer also to Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*: 280. By “migratory” we mean that Jaina ascetics traditionally used to be homeless and constantly on the move.

121 Dibbad has written on this subject (Shantinath Dibbad, “The Construction, Destruction and Renovation of Jaina *Basadis*: A Historical Perspective,” in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald [New Delhi: Saṃskṛiti, 2011]: 66).

122 On this, see Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 83.

123 For further details, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 173, 269, Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 85, and Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 229.

124 Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 47–48 and Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 82.

125 Refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 269.



Plate 1.9: Lay followers belonging to the Yāpanīya and other Jaina sects interact with ascetics. They gain religious guidance in return for providing mendicants with food and lodging.

2.2.5 More Popular Forms of Worship, Guilds and Urbanisation

Thanks to the above increase in popularity and support, the number of donations to Jaina temples of icons and other venerated objects rose steadily, not only in shrines patronised by the Yāpanīyas, but also more generally in Digambara *basadis*.¹²⁶

The main focus of veneration in Jainism is the group of twenty-four human teachers who succeeded in reaching enlightenment and breaking out of the cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*). These are referred to as Jinas (spiritual victors) or Tirthaṅkaras (fordmakers). Both names will be used interchangeably throughout this book. Even in the early phases of Jainism, we hear that representations were made of the Jinas or Tirthaṅkaras during their lifetimes. Bharata, the son of the Jina Ṛṣabhanātha, for instance, is said to have set up a statue of his father right after his death, and there is mention of a sandalwood image of Mahāvīra being made during his lifetime.¹²⁷ In addition, there is ample evidence from the second century BCE to the early centuries CE for the veneration of statues of the Tirthaṅkaras. A reference to a statue is made, for

¹²⁶ The enormous range of icons and other sacred objects venerated in *jinālayas* has been discussed in Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 63–125.

¹²⁷ For further information, see Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 65.

instance, in the inscription by King Khāravela in the Hāthīgumphā, a cave on Udayagiri at Bhubaneswar (Bhubaneśvara) in Odisha, dated to the late first centuries BCE or the early first century CE; there exist several Jina statues from the early centuries CE from Lohanipur near Patna (Paṭnā, ancient Pāṭaliputra) in Bihar, dating from the early centuries CE, and a number of Tirthaṅkara bronzes dating from about the fourth century CE, from Chausa (Chausā) in Bihar.¹²⁸ From the tenth century CE onwards, however, the importance of image worship and temples appears to have strongly increased in Karnataka.

This new, more ritualistic and ceremonial form of Jainism, which was probably less abstract and austere than earlier forms (which appear to have used smaller numbers of icons and ritual objects) probably further increased the attractiveness of the religion to practicing Jinas and to new converts, especially from Hinduism, who were used to an evolved cult of image veneration, important female divinities and a more direct exchange with the gods.¹²⁹

The growth of Jainism in this period cannot, however, be attributed to the appeal of the religion alone. The political situation at the time favoured the Jinas. The expansion of royal power under the Cālukyas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas supported the liberal exchange and transfer of commodities and services throughout the region, and agriculture, manufacturing and commerce flourished.¹³⁰ This created a period of relative security and prosperity for the Jinas in Karnataka. Craftsmen and other entrepreneurs were organised in guilds, and until the end of the twelfth century, one of the most powerful of these, the merchant guilds, or *samājas*, were chiefly in Jaina hands.¹³¹ The guilds organised standards and work patterns but also performed charitable deeds.¹³²

The accompanying urbanisation process, which started around the tenth century CE,¹³³ benefited the Jinas, who had always been more closely associated with cities, trade centres and political headquarters.¹³⁴ On the one hand, this had to do with the professions preferred by Jinas, whose tenet of *ahimsā* led them in general

128 Hegewald and Cort have written on these and other early statues (Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 64–65; Cort, “Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition”: 67–68).

129 Authors who support this view are Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 182 and Vatsala Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses and their Worship in Karnataka,” in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald (New Delhi: Samskriti, 2011): 244. In contrast to divinities, the Jinas are entirely detached from worldly affairs and cannot communicate with or help devotees directly.

130 On this topic, refer to Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 40.

131 See Srinivasan, “Monuments & Sculpture”: 185.

132 Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 40–41.

133 On this issue, refer to Rajaram Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations: Saivism in Medieval Karnataka,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 60 (1999): 193.

134 McCormack, for instance, emphasised that Liṅgāyats (he prefers this term to Viraśaivas but uses them synonymously) are mainly farmers (William McCormack, “On Lingayat Culture,” in *Speaking of Śiva*, ed. A.K. Ramanujan [London: Penguin, 1973]: 177).

to avoid disturbing the ground. Although at its high point, as has been argued above, Jainism was accepted by all strata of society, including agriculturists, farmers in the villages tended to be drawn to Śaivism, and later also the independent form of Viraśaivism, which had developed from Hinduism. On the other hand, the Jainas were attracted to towns from a desire to be close to their patrons amongst the traders, the military, state functionaries and rulers.¹³⁵

Thanks to the various factors discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2, the Jaina community became in the space of a single century one of the prevalent religious and worldly powers of the day in Karnataka. In the ten centuries following its arrival in the region, probably in the second century CE, Jainism had risen starkly, swiftly penetrating all levels of society, from ordinary farmers and merchants to the administrative and defence bodies of the state and even its rulers. At the Jainas' high point of influence, they dominated and determinedly shaped all areas of concern: the religious, the economic, the martial and the royal and also all areas of the arts.

2.3 The Golden Age? Zenith and Causes of the First Shadows of Decay

The highpoint of Jaina influence in the region appears to have been the period between the tenth and the twelfth century.¹³⁶ Under the Gaṅgās, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Hoysaḷas, the Jainas came to hold a prominent role in society in the region, if not the dominant one. Large swathes of the population converted to the faith,¹³⁷ which ultimately represented the majority religious denomination, further enlarging the area of influence of the religion. Jaina thought governed political, economic, social, philosophical, cultural, artistic, literary, religious and ritual doctrine and activities throughout much of the region. Narasimha Murthy, emphasising the Jaina predominance with regards to literature, art and architecture, calls the period between the tenth and the thirteenth century the “Jaina Age.”¹³⁸ With the hundreds of *basadis* and monasteries that were es-

¹³⁵ Compare Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 194. Therefore, Jaina families have generally been very prominent in banking, money lending, trading and as jewellery merchants (*māṇikyā nagarangaḷa*) and precious stone cutters. On this, refer also to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 183. Interestingly, on pp. 269–70 of the latter source, Saletore stresses the important influence which Jaina *ahimsā* had on the Hindu communities of Karnataka.

¹³⁶ According to Pinto, our historian on the project, the climax of Jaina influence was reached in the twelfth century. See Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 78 and his Chapter in this volume. See also Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 6, Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jaina Temple Architecture”: 112, and Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 180.

¹³⁷ On conversions to Jainism, see Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 32, 33.

¹³⁸ For this expression, refer to Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 38–39. Further, he states in the same publication that “history of Kannada literature begins with the history of

tablished in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, we can see the arts—especially temple architecture and literature—as propagating the spread of Jainism.¹³⁹

It is difficult to fix the highpoint of Jaina power in Karnataka more precisely, as the northern regions of Karnataka were negatively affected by rivalling groups earlier than the south and south-west of the State. The twelfth century in particular represents a time of mixed fortunes for the Jainas, with further expansion and ambitious building campaigns, but also initial confrontations with other religious groups which led to a waning of Jainism in Karnataka. We are clearly dealing with very volatile times, in which the decline of Jainism was relatively spun-out, progressing more slowly in some areas of the State than others.

2.3.1 High Points and Golden Periods Questioned

Sundaram describes this phase of flourishing as an age of “valour and heroism” and stresses that it is referred to as a *kṣatra yuga*, a world age or period of the powerful rulers of the warrior caste. He sees this period as one in which many donors and authors of literary works who eulogised Jainism were also generals or officers, involved in martial activities, defending the faith,¹⁴⁰ so that the Jainas battled both with words and the sword. As Sundaram says, “In those days of glory, Jaina scholars felt pride in contesting and challenging others.”¹⁴¹ In a period of perceived superiority, therefore, the Jainas also challenged others, at least with words.

However, Jainism was not alone in flourishing during this period, which has generally been described as one of general religious and societal tolerance and harmony.¹⁴² This was a time of religious diversification and of the construction of temples on a large scale, described by Hegde as “the most active phase of the worshipping cults and sects.” Hegde backs this up with numbers of newly constructed *basadis* from the Shimoga and Haveri districts in northern Karnataka from the eleventh to

Jaina writing in Karnataka” (p. 42). This evaluation is shared by Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 396 and Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 5–6.

¹³⁹ On this, see Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 39, Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 32, 33, Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 53, and Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 64. This can be noted especially from about the tenth century CE onwards (Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 180).

¹⁴⁰ On this issue, see Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 32.

¹⁴¹ For this quote refer to Sundaram “Elements of Jaina History”: 32.

¹⁴² See, for instance, Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 217–18 and Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 214.

the thirteenth century.¹⁴³ Sundaram refers to the period from the ninth to about the eleventh century CE as the “glorious and commendable phase” of Jaina history in Karnataka,¹⁴⁴ and Krishna Murthy refers to the Hoysala period as a “golden age.”¹⁴⁵

My research on the concept of “glorious” or “golden ages,” however, suggests that such statements are of limited help,¹⁴⁶ based as they are on a strictly linear view of time, tracing cultural evolution from a simple archaic period via phases of transition to a classical peak of development classified as a golden age. What follows such a zenith, however, is by implication a degeneration. The inevitable consequence of categorising an art form or period of history as a golden apex is that everything preceding as well as following it is seen as less perfect and consequently devalued. Such value judgements, which represent only the very subjective view of one community, are usually applied retrospectively at an ample distance to the age in question and represent a view which would probably rarely have been shared by the people living at the time. In my opinion, such pronouncements do not help a serious attempt to understand the surviving traces of the past.

2.3.2 Supremacy to Dependency

As has already been pointed out above, high points and phases of decline naturally lie very close to one another. Let us return now from generalities to the specific situation of the Jains in Karnataka. In a way, it appears as if the increased influence and newly adopted cosmopolitanism of the Jaina community led them to neglect some of their main ascetic core tenets¹⁴⁷ or at least to forsake the more austere approach to practising their religion in favour of a more ritualistic path. Rituals had always played a part in their practice, but their importance was further emphasised from at least the tenth century CE onwards. Probably in order to accommodate converts, the Jains began to accept castes¹⁴⁸ and widened their angle of worship to give prominence to a large number of divine beings, besides the fully-enlightened but human Jinas. Initially, this may have attracted outsiders and made it easier for the Jains to blend into

¹⁴³ For this quote see Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 193–94.

¹⁴⁴ Refer to Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 31.

¹⁴⁵ Compare Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jaina Temple Architecture”: 108. On the idea of the “golden age” in Kannada literature from the tenth century CE onwards with authors, such as Pampa, Ponna and Ranna, refer to Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 175–76.

¹⁴⁶ See the book publication by Hegewald, *In the Shadow of the Golden Age*, and here especially Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Introduction: Out of the Shadow of the Golden Age,” in *In the Shadow of the Golden Age: Art and Identity in Asia from Gandhara to the Modern Age*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald, Studies in Asian Art and Culture (SAAC) 1 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2014): 31–76.

¹⁴⁷ Narasimha Murthy has written on these changes (Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 41).

¹⁴⁸ This issue will be discussed in more detail under point 3.2. “Castes and Fragmentation”.

society, which was structured by castes and focused on temple worship.¹⁴⁹ However, it appears that at the same time, this dilution of Jaina core practices may have weakened the faith by undermining its uniqueness. Furthermore, these changes aroused criticism and opposition from within Jainism's own lines, which led to divisions in the faith structure.

Another factor in this process of disintegration was the fragmentation of the Di-gambaras into various subgroups with individual religious headquarters. The lack of a central leadership authority left them vulnerable to challenge from rival religious groups, several of whom made their presence felt in the area around this time. Besides a general renaissance of *śaivism* and *bhakti* movements across South India, the *bhakti* *śaiva* *Nāyaṇārs* (*Nāyaṇmārs*) and *śrīvaiṣṇava* *Bhaktas* gained especially in importance and amongst the latter most prominently the *Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs* (*Ālvārs*, *Ālvārs*). In addition, Muslims moved down into Karnataka and *Vīraśaivas* gained in influence in the northern regions of the State.¹⁵⁰ The individual religious groups mentioned here will be discussed in more detail in section 5 of this chapter, "Struggle for Hegemony in the Region."

In consequence, from the late eleventh or early twelfth century onwards, the authority of the Jainas in the wider area of Karnataka steadily declined.¹⁵¹ Jaina poets and literary figures who had formerly supported the spread and rise of Jainism with their artistic activities from the twelfths and thirteenth centuries began to use their artistic works to defend the religion.¹⁵² Much Jaina literature refers to the religious conflicts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries,¹⁵³ retailing religious tales of survival and resistance and emphasising the tenet of *ahimsā*. After the death of the Hoysala ruler, *Vīra Ballāla* (r. 1173–1220),¹⁵⁴ Jainas no longer received sufficient royal support to continue their lavish building campaigns or, crucially, to maintain the vast number of *basadis* and monastic structures developed over the past two hundred years or so. Hegde explains in detail the importance of royal patronage and other influential donors for the establishment and maintenance of temple establishments, identifying the socio-political rationale behind the patronage of *basadis* as a new dynamic characteristic of the early medieval period in which religious shrines and the state closely inter-

149 Narasimha Murthy has written about the influence of the new Jaina converts in changing the faith (Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 44). In the same context, Suresh explains that popular stories and the eternal Hindu epics were also adapted by Jaina poets to provide continuity to converts from Hinduism (Suresh, "Jaina Monuments": 180–81).

150 On this, refer to Subrahmanya Aiyar, "Origin and Decline": 218, Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 397, Hegde, "Temple-Hierarchy": 238, and Hegde, "Dynamics of Sectarian Formations": 193.

151 Other authors have written on this regression of Jaina influence in the region as well. See, for instance, Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 401 and Pinto, "Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire": 78.

152 This has also been argued by Sundaram, "Elements of Jaina History": 34.

153 On this, refer to Zydenbos, "Jainism Endangered" and Sundaram, "Elements of Jaina History": 35.

154 Alternative spelling: *Vīra Ballāla* (Saletore, *Medieval Jainism*: 81).

acted.¹⁵⁵ *Jinālayas* continued to be built, but in complexity and sculptural detail they cannot rival the early achievements of the Gaṅgā and Hoysaḷa periods, and bear witness to a clear loss in influence and wealth of the Jaina community throughout the region. During the twelfth century, Jainas were even forbidden to raise new *basadis* in certain cities as it was considered inauspicious for the shadow of a Jaina temple to fall upon a non-Jaina house.¹⁵⁶ The tradition of the settled and wandering *munis* also started to decline at this time.¹⁵⁷

In short, after an enormous expansion of its religious influence and political authority from the tenth century CE onwards, with outstanding achievements in all areas of the arts, Jainism reached the pinnacle of its predominance in the twelfth century.¹⁵⁸ However, even in its heyday, Jainism also fell victim to internal disputes and began to need to actively defend itself against competing religions. During the centuries that followed, verbal threats, economic hazards and political neglect turned into open physical persecution of the Jainas in Karnataka.¹⁵⁹

3 Deliberate Religious Changes in Jainism

As indicated above, at the high point of their influence the Jainas appear to have made substantial changes in their own social organisation, religious practice and self-understanding. These appear to have resulted from their enormous popularity, which had led to the accumulation of riches, the establishment of temples and religious institutions and an increase in their following. There followed internal divisions, a need to adapt to the different inclinations of new adherents and the further development or adoption of new, more mundane, functions.

¹⁵⁵ On this issue, refer to Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 233.

¹⁵⁶ Consult Zydenbos on this (Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 184).

¹⁵⁷ Scholz has written in much detail on this issue (Sabine Scholz, “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” [PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2011]).

¹⁵⁸ On this, refer also to Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 53, Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 78, and Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 180.

¹⁵⁹ Saletore has written on this topic (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 287, 292). Refer also to Zydenbos on different levels of intimidation (Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 174). Qvarnström points out that the Jainas were also not able to missionize any longer from this time onwards (Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 44).

3.1 Monasteries and Land Ownership

Before we examine these changes in more detail, I shall briefly outline what is understood to be the earlier, traditional Jainism, which focused on the austere central tenets of the faith.

3.1.1 The Tradition of Homeless Wandering Ascetics

Although it is difficult, after many centuries, to characterise precisely what membership of a religion involved, early Jaina practice in Karnataka appears to have attached high importance to the central ideal of asceticism. Abstinence and renunciation were practised in their extreme forms by initiated monks and nuns, but as values they obviously played (as they still do) a prominent role for the Jaina laity.

As part of the initiation ceremony (*dīkṣā*) as a mendicant,¹⁶⁰ Jaina monks and nuns took the vow of non-possession (*aparigraha*) (which they still take today). The expectation of this fifth vow is that the mendicants renounce all attachments. This involves a rejection not only of all physical possessions but also of all attachments one might have to people, such as relations and friends, and of all of one's wishes and desires.¹⁶¹ In consequence, male Digambara ascetics can and are expected to reject all clothing and to go naked (Plate 1.10). Due to social conventions, however, Jaina nuns wear simple white cotton robes,¹⁶² which from a Digambara point of view prevents them from practising Jainism to the fullest extent and in consequence from attaining enlightenment. Furthermore, the ability of women to bear children, who are living beings, was (and still is) considered prejudicial to their reaching enlightenment. Orthodox Digambaras further insist that women do not have the necessary bodily constitution to attain liberation.¹⁶³ Before they can do so, they have to be born as a man first.¹⁶⁴ Members of both sexes own only a water pot (*kamaṇḍalu*), usually made out

¹⁶⁰ Singh has, for instance, written in detail on initiation rituals in Digambara Jainism in Karnataka (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 69–74).

¹⁶¹ On this, refer to N.N. Bhattacharyya, *Jainism: A Concise Encyclopedia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2009): 35 and Misra, "The Jains in an Urban Setting": 31, 47–56.

¹⁶² While it is a difficult issue in India for Jaina monks to wander naked, it is perceived as unacceptable for nuns or women more generally to do so.

¹⁶³ Tirthaṅkaras are described as having a special adamant body in order to endure the harsh ascetic practices necessary to reach enlightenment. It is said to resemble a diamond (*vajra*) (Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 68).

¹⁶⁴ On these issues, refer to Padmanabh S. Jaini, *Gender & Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1991), and Parasher-Sen, "Jaina Women, Ritual Death": 2018–220.

of a large gourd (Plate 1.11), and a brush of peacock feathers (*piñchī*) (Plates 1.8, 1.10),¹⁶⁵ used to clean the ground in front of them in order to avoid crushing any living beings, such as insects on their path.



Plate 1.10: As part of their initiation ceremony, *dikṣā*, male Digambara monks give up all clothing and wander naked to indicate detachment and control over all of their feelings, such as shame.

In the same spirit, Jaina ascetics have no home. Traditionally, they are wandering mendicants who walk from one Jaina centre to the next, usually in groups, and are not linked to a particular place. They are fed and provided with temporary shelter by rulers (or today, by local officials), and receive alms from them and from aristocrats, temple establishments, influential members of society, and ordinary lay members.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Zydenbos spells it “*picchi*” (Robert J. Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus,” in *Aspekte des Weiblichen in der indischen Kultur*, ed. Ulrike Roesler [Swisttal-Odendorf, Indica und Tibetica, 2000]: 166).

¹⁶⁶ This tradition has also been commented on by Scholz, “The Revival of the Digambara Muni”: 272.



Plate 1.11: Digambara Jain ascetics are allowed to own a water pot (*kamaṇḍalu*), which has usually been crafted out of a large gourd. These are left outside temples on visits to them, as here at Venur.

The emphasis on asceticism—and the visibility of Jain monks—make it easy to see Jainism as an entirely ascetic faith, but this does injustice to the actual situation, in which lay people also played and play an important role, as this tradition of alms-giving shows.

As firm models for proper behaviour, the Tirthaṅkaras, the twenty-four enlightened saintly teachers of the Jain religion, witnessed to the fact that a life-style of no attachments to possessions or place would lead to liberation. Consequently, monks and nuns traditionally follow this approach permanently from the date of their initiation, while laypeople—especially women—observe regular fasts and abstain from certain foods¹⁶⁷ for certain weekly or monthly periods or even for years, or when on pilgrim-

¹⁶⁷ On Jain penance and fasting, refer also to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 90–99.

age. Ascetics have always depended on lay followers for food and shelter, and the laity in turn on the ascetics for spiritual guidance and support.¹⁶⁸ Despite their periodic short stays with the lay community, such as the four-month rain retreat,¹⁶⁹ Jain mendicants focus quite strongly on the ascetic practices of having no belongings and no permanent residence.

3.1.2 Giving up Homelessness and Poverty

Both these important Jain religious tenets—of renouncing possessions and not staying in one place for long—started to lose their authority in the south of India during the early medieval period, more precisely between the eighth and the tenth century CE.

An increase in royal patronage meant that large numbers of new temples and religious establishments were built, for whose upkeep, and the regular execution of rituals necessary for consecrated *basadis*, donors bequeathed either monetary funds, land grants or entire villages.¹⁷⁰ This soon worked against the core idea of non-possession, as Jains who had followed a path of austerity now found themselves in possession of large amounts of wealth. Many became large-scale landowners (*gāvunḍas*); in some places, where they owned the majority of land in one location, they turned into village chiefs. Zydenbos outlines how the increase in wealth of Jain *basadis* and the creation of monastic institutions provided their heads with a lot of financial but also socio-political power. In consequence, the leaders of such religious establishments were viewed not only as religious but also as worldly rulers.¹⁷¹ In actual fact the Jain ascetics emerged as a new landowning class.¹⁷²

In order to look after their properties, groups of ascetics started to settle more permanently and to establish monastic institutions, known as *maṭhas*, close to Jain *basadis*.¹⁷³ There were separate monasteries for nuns and for monks. The practice of living

168 Refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 87, and Jaini, “Is there a Popular Jainism?”: 188. Scholz mentions also public discourses, lectures and special worship and offerings (*pūjā*) provided by ascetics for the lay community (Scholz, “The Revival of the Digambara Muni”: 272).

169 Traditionally, Jain ascetics only reside in one place for longer during the four months of the rainy season, known as *cāturmās* or *cāturmāsa*. On this issue, see Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 89–90, Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 21, and Scholz, “The Revival of the Digambara Muni”: 274.

170 Suresh refers to inscriptions, mainly donor records, which disclose land grants, donations of villages and other sources of revenue (Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 181).

171 Compare Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 149.

172 On this, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 119.

173 Singh emphasizes the close connection between Jain temples and monasteries as a single unit (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 101).

in monastic institutions, known as *maṭhvāsa*,¹⁷⁴ represented a drastic change in the Jainas' attitude and practice, as Singh points out, given their initial strict objections to the habit of belonging and settling more permanently in one place.¹⁷⁵ As Sabine Scholz has shown, in this publication, we have one piece of literary evidence for so-called "settled-down ascetics" (*maṭhavāsīs*) from as early as the second century CE, although this must have been quite unusual at this time.¹⁷⁶ Singh identifies further references dating from the fourth century CE and a larger number from the fifth century, which indicates that the building of monastic accommodation next to *basadis* had become a more regular custom.¹⁷⁷

Jaina householders were encouraged to support the establishment of *maṭhas*, and as such meritorious acts grew in popularity, the number of *maṭhas* increased even further in the period between the seventh and the twelfth century.¹⁷⁸ That not all ascetics settled down during the ninth and tenth centuries CE is shown by the clear linguistic distinction that was made between *maṭhavāsīs*, the settled, "monastery-dwelling" mendicants, and the wandering and homeless, "forest-dwelling" ascetics, the *vanavāsīs*.¹⁷⁹ However, in time, the monastic monks and nuns outnumbered those remaining true to their initial itinerant life-style.¹⁸⁰ Once benefactors had moved beyond donating to the *jinālayas*, and had begun to fund the establishment of monasteries, they began to gift additional land and villages whose yield would support the new institutions.¹⁸¹ This further increased the wealth of the Jaina community and the influence they wielded in society.

Singh describes the involvement of Jaina ascetics in the running of *basadis* and monasteries as a gradual process. He shows that from the fifth and sixth centuries CE, Jaina temples employed priests (*bhoja*, *bhojaka*), to take care of the increasing number of rituals conducted in the shrines.¹⁸² From the seventh or eighth century CE, the term *ācārya* (teacher) begins to take the place of *bhoja*, suggesting that more and more Jaina monks were taking over the running of *basadis* and monasteries.¹⁸³ Singh is one author who is very critical of these developments. He writes, for instance:

174 Compare Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 59.

175 See the discussion in Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 100.

176 This reference is to be found in the *Pravacanasāra*. On this issue, see Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 64 and the chapter by Scholz in this publication.

177 Refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 101.

178 This has been argued by Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 102, 104.

179 On this distinction, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 106.

180 Compare Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 106–7.

181 Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 104 has written on this subject.

182 *Bhojas* or *bhojakas* belong to the priest class in Karnataka.

183 Compare Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 47, 49. This is a situation which is not necessarily reflected in Digambara Jaina *basadis* in Karnataka today. Whilst priests who are employed by *jinālayas*—and which in Digambara Jainism can either be Hindu *brāhmaṇs*, Jaina *brāhmaṇs* (*brāhmaṇs* whose families converted to Jainism) or simply Jaina priests (*upadhye*), as well as the heads of

The reasons which impelled them [Jaina monks] to adopt the profession of priest are not difficult to find out. The rise of hedonistic tendencies and slack practices and the lust for material gains among the Jaina monks would have forced them to encroach upon the rights of [the] priest class which prevailed in Karnataka during the 5th–6th centuries. Thus, the distinction between Jaina monks and priests gradually disappeared from the 7th–8th centuries. The change in the usual practice of priesthood would have surely made them the sole master of enormous wealth, acquired from endowments made by the Jaina devotees.¹⁸⁴

The donations to the monasteries comprised not only movable goods, such as harvest produce, animals, gold, jewellery or money in cash, etc., but also immovable assets, such as temple structures, rest houses and hospitals, to mention only a few examples. The latter group included items which created further wealth, such as oil-mills, cultivable fields, entire villages, fruit gardens and land. All of these were affirmed to be tax-free and the entire revenue went to the religious institution.¹⁸⁵ These benefactions provided the monasteries and *basadis* with their primary source of income. Although the newly settled ascetics employed labourers to work on the donated land, they were required as landlords to take care of their property, a duty which as wanderers without possessions they had previously been free from. However, this also allowed them to establish religious libraries and to preserve, study and develop their scripture, philosophy and logic more intensively.¹⁸⁶ We have emphasised earlier in this chapter how important Jains were in the development of the sacred and worldly literature and poetic culture of Karnataka. To counterbalance the critical view of Singh, as expressed above, we need to remember that the Jaina rest houses, *basadis* and hospitals also distributed some of the wealth given to them in the form of donations back to the needy public.¹⁸⁷

monasteries (*bhaṭṭārakas*)—carry out rituals on images and more abstract symbols, fully-initiated monks do not normally touch or make offerings to statues nowadays. This is partly because Digambara ascetics have no belongings which they could offer in worship and also because, following the vow of *ahimsā*, they do not bathe regularly, which is demanded of worshippers before visiting a *basadi*. Ascetics perform mental or contemplative worship (*bhāvapūjā*). On this issue, refer to Dundas, *The Jains*: 176, and Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 31–32. Cort disagrees with this view. He argues that ascetics participate as much in worship as do the laity (Cort, “Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition”: 65–66). This is not corroborated by my research in South India. On Jaina *brāhmaṇas* refer also to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 82.

184 For this quote refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 51.

185 Singh has written on this (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 116).

186 On this, refer, for instance, to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 108–9.

187 This is a point which Singh makes himself (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 107).

3.1.3 *Bhaṭṭārakas* and Monasteries

The Jaina *maṭhas* contributed greatly to the spread of Jainism throughout the region. It seems that the Yāpanīyas were especially keen to establish and dwell in monasteries.¹⁸⁸ This might be due to their profound interest in regular temple worship.¹⁸⁹ The *maṭhas* developed into the ritual, religious, social and administrative headquarters and as such into important organising centres of the Jains in the area, as well as centres of education and partially of jurisdiction.¹⁹⁰ The monasteries were provided with administrator managers, known as *bhaṭṭārakas*,¹⁹¹ who were celibate but not fully-initiated Jaina monks, and wore orange robes (Plate 1.12). They are still to be found at the head of *maṭha* institutions in central and southern India today. An alternative term for *bhaṭṭāraka*, which, however, in my experience is not commonly used today, is *maṭhādhipati*.¹⁹² Jaini compares them to the *mahants* of Hindu monastic establishments.¹⁹³ They are the chiefs of monastic establishments, or *maṭhas*, representing the religious community and handling its financial affairs.¹⁹⁴

Sabine Scholz points out in Chapter 3 that the combination of religious, political and economic power gave the *bhaṭṭārakas* a position comparable to that of a worldly ruler. Furthermore, settled monks and nuns with established administrative headquarters and large numbers of *basadis* were able to influence local politics and economics more strongly and permanently than small groups of dispersed wandering ascetics.¹⁹⁵ On this level, Nandi argues that the Yāpanīyas, while diverging from tradition in their convictions and the reformed state of their practice, did not in the long run destabilise the authority of Digambara Jainism in Karnataka, but rather regenerated and boosted it.¹⁹⁶ The closer contact between ascetics, who were reliant on the support of the public, and the laity, dependent on their spiritual guidance, gradually attracted more lay people to a religious vocation. This resulted in an increase in the establishment of monasteries and their associated communities, who again could train more monks and nuns. In consequence, the number of new monastic foundations increased and Jainism became firmly established throughout the region of Karnataka.¹⁹⁷

188 See Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 99.

189 Scholz in her individual chapter in this volume has written on this issue.

190 Pinto has written on this. See Chapter 2 in this volume.

191 Further information on the *bhaṭṭāraka* tradition in India can be found in Chapter 3 by Scholz. See also Zydenbos for the decline of *maṭhas* and the *bhaṭṭāraka* tradition in North India (Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 159).

192 On this, refer to Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 149.

193 See Jaini, "Is there a Popular Jainism?": 196.

194 The *bhaṭṭārakas* are also involved in religious education, many manage schools and administer publication series. Restoration and maintenance of temples are also areas falling under their responsibility.

195 See, for instance, Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 110.

196 Refer to Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 61.

197 On this issue, see Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 46.

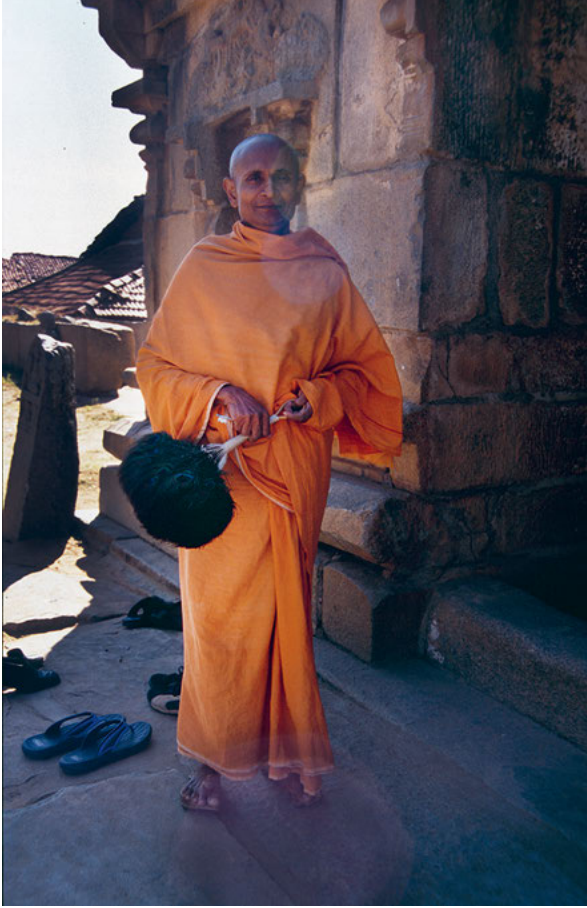


Plate 1.12: The manager, *bhaṭṭāraka*, of the small monastery, *maṭha*, at Kambadhalli, who is a celibate, not fully-initiated Jain monk, who wears orange robes and holds a brush of peacock feathers.

With the decrease of Jaina influence in Karnataka, the *maṭhas* sank into poverty and only six have survived in the wider area today. Of these, only three are still active as influential centres: Shravanabelgola (Plate 1.13),¹⁹⁸ Narasimharajapura (Narasimharajapura, Simhanagadde) and Humcha (Hombuja, Pombuccapura, Paṭṭi-Pombuccapura, Pombuccanagara).¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ The *maṭha* at Shravanabelgola was established in 982 CE by Cāvunḍarāya, the general of Gaṅgā King Mārasimha II, one year before he erected the tall Bāhubali monolith (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 105).

¹⁹⁹ For further information on these locations and their *maṭhas*, refer to Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 149–50. The *maṭha* at Humcha was founded between the eighth and the ninth century CE (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 105).



Plate 1.13: In its present form, the *matha* at Shravanabelgola and the mural paintings adorning the walls surrounding its central courtyard area date largely from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

To summarise, the establishment of *maṭhas* and of their leaders, the *bhaṭṭārakas*, represents an institutionalisation of Jainism on a large scale. The permanent integration of settled ascetics into lay society contributed to an interweaving of religious and ordinary life and strengthened ties and interdependencies between the two communities. Through this, the popularity of Jainism increased and the religion became firmly established in society.²⁰⁰

Initially, Jainas had not considered image veneration and donating to temples as essential for reaching liberation. Suresh suggests that these convictions probably arose as a result of the settlement of monks and nuns in monastic institutions.²⁰¹ Some Jainas at the time condemned these changes (as do some modern scholars of Jainism) denouncing them as indications of immorality, laxity and decadence.²⁰² Subrahmanya Aiyar goes so far as to call these internal changes “corruptions.”²⁰³ Singh, examining the criticism voiced in the *Ātmānuśāsana* of Guṇabhadra, refers to them as “lax conduct” of the Jaina monks.²⁰⁴ Sabine Scholz argues in Chapter 3 that these changes made Jainism more vulnerable in the face of more devotional Hindu movements which penetrated the region later. Nevertheless, this strongly noticeable tendency, which entirely changed the practice and outlook of Jainism in Karnataka, became the prevalent approach at this time.

Others consider these changes as necessary for the organisation, unification and strengthening of the Jaina community in the face of the challenges posed not least by the Viraśaivas in the northern parts of Karnataka and the Islamic invasions in Maharashtra and then in northern Karnataka.²⁰⁵ Sabine Scholz explains that Muslims, who opposed the Jaina monks’ habit of wandering naked, accepted the clothed *bhaṭṭārakas*, who were able to mediate and to defend the faith.²⁰⁶ We have also shown, in the discussion above, how monasteries and a settled life-style at least initially supported Jainism and led to its noticeable expansion in the area.

200 On this topic, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 107. It is fascinating that during the twentieth century, Digambara Jaina ascetics re-established the practice of wandering homelessly and many of the minor *maṭhas* have been closed. Scholz alludes to this fact in her conclusion to Chapter 3. See also her unpublished PhD dissertation on the subject (Scholz, “The Digambara Jainas”).

201 Refer to Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 182.

202 See Chapter 3 by Scholz for further information as well as Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline”: 216.

203 See Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline”: 216.

204 Compare Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 107.

205 Scholz has written on this issue in this publication (Chapter 3). The State of Maharashtra is locally spelled Mahārāṣṭra.

206 On this issue, see also Padmanabh S. Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism,” and Vilas Adinath Sangave, *Facets of Jainology: Selected Research Papers on Jain Society, Religion and Culture* (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 2001): 133.

3.2 Castes and Fragmentation

Between the eighth and the tenth century CE, the Jainas introduced further changes in their faith, beyond the alteration of temple worship and their relation to ownership and settled-ness. We can see that the social nature of their community also underwent substantial change, and it fragmented into a number of subgroups.

3.2.1 The Introduction of Jaina Castes

During the early Middle Ages, the Jainas officially introduced, or at least affirmed, a social system of four main castes, known as *varṇa* or *jāti*.²⁰⁷ Indian society has traditionally been structured by hierarchical layers. During the Kadamba and Gaṅgā periods, between the fourth and the sixth century CE, Hindu families who converted to Jainism had retained their caste affiliation on the basis of their professions, thus smuggling castes into Jaina society.²⁰⁸ In the course of the medieval period, probably from the seventh or eighth century CE onwards, the Jainas addressed the issue more directly and, by explaining caste hierarchies from a Jaina point of view, for the first time accepted and reinforced them as a new Jaina reality.²⁰⁹

Sabine Scholz argues in Chapter 3 that a positive outcome of this shift in attitude was that people could participate more widely in social traditions and that this supported the firm integration of Jainism in a society which was largely structured by castes.²¹⁰ Narasimha Murthy stresses the influence and passion of these early converts from Hindu groups to Jainism, arguing that they contributed much to the social and cultural activities associated with the Jainism of this time. On the other hand, however, the affirmation of Jaina *varṇas* also caused a certain fragmentation, which eventually risked endangering the unity of Jainism. Unfortunately, it seems that the problem of fragmentation was not perceived as a real danger until the nineteenth century, when early reform-orientated Digambara Jaina associations were created. They judged the disintegration of the Jaina community into large numbers of smaller fac-

²⁰⁷ *Varṇa* means colour and refers to an earlier system of social stratigraphy with four castes, already indicated in the earliest Vedic texts, which in later classical Hinduism are referred to as *jāti*. The latter term can also be used to describe a subcaste of a main *varṇa* (Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, 2nd ed. [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994]: 334–36; Karel Werner, *A Popular Dictionary of Hinduism* [Richmond: Curzon Press, 1994]: 82, 170; Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Hinduism* [Oxford: Oneworld, 1999 (1998)]: 198). The Vedic age lasted from about 1200 till 600 BCE.

²⁰⁸ Misra has undertaken a study of the different Jaina castes in Mysore city. She mentions Jaina *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and Gauḍas (Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 17–25).

²⁰⁹ Further details can be found in Chapter 2 by Pinto and in Chapter 3 by Scholz. See also Narasimha Murthy on this issue (Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 44).

²¹⁰ Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 44.

tions and castes to be a serious problem, which they aimed to eliminate. However, as Sabine Scholz shows in Chapter 3, these reformers were not very successful at simplifying and uniting the Digambara *saṅgha*.

Tiziana Lorenzetti, in Chapter 4 below, casts a critical eye over the fragmentation of Jaina society, demonstrating how discrimination on the basis of castes became ingrained in Jaina society. According to Singh, Jaina members of the lowest caste (*śūdra*) came to be debarred from initiation into the mendicant community, which formerly had been open to all Jains.²¹¹ This made Vīraśaivism with its initial absence of castes very attractive to members of these levels of society, as we shall see later in this chapter. From the eighth century CE onwards, we have reports of individuals making large land grants or donating *basadis* at the time of their initiation ceremony into the Jaina *saṅgha*. Whether such donations were seen as a compulsory fee or were entirely voluntary is not clear.²¹² It is possible that they helped open doors to someone who had been excluded from becoming a monk or a nun. Having an ascetic in one's family brought prestige and was very desirable, as it still is today.

3.2.2 Divisions into Subgroups: The Yāpanīyas

The Jaina community fragmented not only into a number of castes but also into religious subgroups, separate monastic orders (*guruvādis*) and lineages of individual teachers (*gaṇas*, *gacchas*, *anvayas*, *saṅghas*).²¹³ Most of the changes that fragmented the Jaina community took place between the eighth and the tenth century CE.²¹⁴ Upadhye sees such diversification into a number of different sects as already predestined through the multiplicity of leaders who founded Jainism and as being further supported by small groups of itinerant ascetics (*gaṇas*) moving separately through far-flung parts of the country. Groups might consist of as few as three people: according to Upadhye, a grouping of three monks was called a *gaṇa* and was headed by a *gaṇadhara*, and a larger assembly of seven ascetics was a *gaccha*.²¹⁵ At times, this term was

211 Refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 73.

212 Singh has written on this (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 74).

213 Scholz in Chapter 3 comments on this as do Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 221, Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 136, Adinath N. Upadhye, "More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha: A Jaina Sect," in *Upadhye: Papers*. Other Publications 77 (Mysore: Wesley Press, 1983): 192–93, 198, and Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 46. Scholz also reminds us of the popular saying, "while all the twenty-four Tirthankaras came from the northern part of India, the greatest *acharyas* lived in the south and many of them flourished in Karnataka" (Scholz, "The Revival of the Digambara Muni": 259).

214 See Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 41–46 and the chapter by Scholz in this publication.

215 Compare Upadhye, "Yāpanīya Saṅgha": 225.

also applied to a group of travelling ascetics more generally. Upadhye also states that a “regular community of monks” was called a *saṅgha*.²¹⁶ However, these terms appear to have had no clear omnivalent definitions. Upadhye refers here in particular to Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra as distinct leaders of ascetics with certain differences between their teachings.²¹⁷

The best-known and most influential new Digambara faction was that of the Yāpanīyas, whose contribution to the popularity and increase of Jainism in Karnataka during the early medieval period has already been touched on.²¹⁸ The community of the Yāpanīyas, the Yāpanīya Saṅgha, had already started to take shape during the first centuries CE, probably in the second century CE,²¹⁹ and became more firmly rooted in Karnataka over the fifth and sixth centuries CE. Yāpanīyas were most dominant in the northern areas of the modern State of Karnataka, in the districts of Dharwar, Belgaum and Gulbargah, and in the area of Kolhapur in modern-day Maharashtra.²²⁰ One of their early centres and possibly their main bastion was modern Halsi (ancient Palāśikā) in Belgaum District.²²¹ Other important Yāpanīya centres (which will be discussed in Chapter 5 below in the context of Jaina temple architecture), include Kagvad (Kāgavāḍ), Belgaum (Belgāum; ancient Vēṇugrāma), Aihole (Aihoḷe; ancient Ayyavoḷe) and Adargunchi (Adarguñchi).²²²

Surprisingly little is known about the origins and organisation of the Yāpanīyas, whose name appears to be a derivative from the root “yā” (“expelled”)²²³ and some accounts even identify them as a Śvetāmbara subgroup.²²⁴ This points towards their

216 Refer to Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 192–93.

217 Furthermore, Upadhye raises the issue of the wide dispersion of the groups of monks and provides information on a number of early splinter groups. He mentions the names of different Digambara subgroups and reminds us that the Śvetāmbara community also divides into a number of *gacchas* (Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 192; Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Saṅgha”: 225).

218 On this issue, see also Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 47.

219 Narasimha Murthy dates their origin to the second century CE (Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 47).

220 On the date and the regional focus of the Yāpanīyas, refer to Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Saṅgha”: 225, 229, 231 and Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 193, 198. Further information can be obtained from Chapter 3 by Scholz, from Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 164, and also from Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 224–27.

221 On this, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 122.

222 Compare also Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 164, 165.

223 On this, refer to Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Saṅgha”: 227, and Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 194. On the subject of heresy and an objection to the Yāpanīya’s liberal approach to Jainism, see also Scholz in this volume, Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Saṅgha”: 229, Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 169, Roy, *A History of Jainism*: 128 who calls them “false sects (Jainabhasa),” Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 48, and Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 227.

224 This subject has been discussed by Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 164, Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Saṅgha”: 227, Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 193, Kristi L. Wiley, *The A to Z of Jainism* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 2006 [2004]): 238, and Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 47.

position at the intersection between the two major Jaina sects, combining characteristic elements from both.²²⁵ In this context, Saletore wrote: “The Yāpanīyas [Yāpanīyas] were an unorthodox Jaina sect with the appearance of the Digambaras [that is, they wandered naked] but with the observances of the Śvetāmbaras.”²²⁶ Furthermore, we know that the Yāpanīyas settled close to Digambara establishments. We can see from the divergent viewpoints of Jaini and Singh that there is some doubt about Yāpanīya nakedness. According to Jaini, the Yāpanīyas wandered naked when they were outside of populated areas but wore “a single piece of clothing (eka-phālaka) when in inhabited areas,”²²⁷ while Singh argues that they always wore simple white garments.²²⁸ However, like the Śvetāmbaras, the Yāpanīyas believed that women were able to attain enlightenment (*strī mokṣa*) and that omniscient beings (*kevalins*) still ate and drank, which Digambaras strictly deny.²²⁹ Due to this ambiguity, the Yāpanīyas were considered “unorthodox,” “pseudo-Jaina” and as “heretics” by Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras alike.

Despite all these areas of contention, the Yāpanīya Saṅgha was highly influential throughout the region and appears to have been very effective in attracting donations and land grants from powerful rulers and wealthy sections of society.²³⁰ The period of Kadamba rule from the fourth to the sixth century CE appears to have seen a particular rise in their influence.²³¹ We know that merchants and other well-heeled members of the laity were Yāpanīyas. They bestowed a large number of *basadis* on the Saṅgha and granted them villages and land to look after these, particularly in the northern regions of Karnataka.²³² Especially popular were shrines dedicated to the Jinas Nemi-nātha and Pārśvanātha, who were represented nude, presumably like the ascetics.²³³

225 Desai has written on the connections and similarities the Yāpanīyas had with both sects of Jainism (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 98).

226 See Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 222. On page 223 of the same source, he mentions a number of Yāpanīya strongholds in Karnataka.

227 On this, refer to Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*: 15.

228 Compare Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 126.

229 On this, refer, for instance to von Glasenapp, *Der Jainismus*: 356, Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*: 15, and Wiley, *The A to Z of Jainism*: 239. On women and enlightenment refer also to the substantial study by Jaini, *Gender & Salvation*.

230 Compare Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 194–96, Wiley, *The A to Z of Jainism*: 239, and Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 47.

231 Desai has written on Halsi and the firm establishment of the Yāpanīyas in the region (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 98–99). For further subdivisions, see the same source on p. 166. Refer also to Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Sangha”: 231.

232 On these topics, see Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 199, and Parasher-Sen, who also states that in northern Karnataka, the strong Yāpanīya influence lasted for about one thousand years, until they were slowly absorbed by the mainstream form of Digambara Jainism (Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 227).

233 This has been stated by Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 198. Refer also to Roy, *A History of Jainism*: 127 and Wiley, *The A to Z of Jainism*: 239.

Upadhye suggests that in their professional management of the *jinālayas* through land grants, and the care they devoted to the community, the Yāpanīyas who were in charge of large temple establishments were forerunners of the later monastic heads, the *bhaṭṭārakas*.²³⁴ Zydenbos, too, believes that the *bhaṭṭāraka* role could be traced back to the Yāpanīya tradition.²³⁵ Furthermore, the Yāpanīyas appear to have been active in politics. Śimhanandi, the saint influential in bringing the Gaṅgā dynasty to power, is said to have belonged to the Yāpanīya sect. Parasher-Sen has mentioned both Śimhanandi and Kuṇḍakuṇḍa as being Yāpanīyas.²³⁶ According to Sabine Scholz, some highly respected Jaina teachers and writers also belonged to this subgroup, which again would have attracted others to join.

The Yāpanīyas were also active in the area of modern-day Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.²³⁷ However, Desai emphasises that, besides these few incursions into the modern area of Andhra Pradesh, the Yāpanīyas never ventured far beyond the region of Karnataka.²³⁸ In these early centuries CE, of course, there was no State border. The Yāpanīyas appear to have reached the southern regions of Karnataka, although only from about the seventh century CE onwards.²³⁹ However, they never became really rooted in southern Karnataka. It is worth pointing out here that in the numerous inscriptions preserved at Shravanabelgola, no records refer to the Yāpanīyas directly.²⁴⁰

More generally, the Yāpanīyas contributed strongly to the development of Jainism and its rise to popularity in Karnataka. This subgroup appears to have flourished between the fifth and the fourteenth century.²⁴¹ After this time, despite their popularity amongst ordinary citizens, the Yāpanīyas seem to have been absorbed by mainstream Digambara Jainism. Beyond the fourteenth century, they can no longer be identified

234 Compare Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 199.

235 See Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 149.

236 Refer to Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 226. In Karnataka, Kuṇḍakuṇḍa is also known as Kuṇḍakunda or Kuṇḍakundācārya (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 225, 270). On Kuṇḍakuṇḍa’s significance in the area, see also Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 156. The date of Kuṇḍakuṇḍa is heavily disputed but there is reasonable evidence to assume that he lived at the beginning of the Common Era, probably in the first century CE (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 226, 270; Renate Söhnen-Thieme, “Jaina History and the Universal History of the Jainas,” in *Pure Soul: The Jaina Spiritual Traditions*, ed. Peter Flügel, Heleen De Jonckheere and Renate Söhnen-Thieme [Surrey: Centre for Jaina Studies, Calderstone Printers, 2023]: 48). At this time, Kuṇḍakuṇḍa made Shravanabelgola the main centre of his religious practice (Srinivasan, “Monuments & Sculpture”: 185). Pinto in Chapter 2 in this publication places him in the first century BCE.

237 On this, refer to Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 227.

238 Refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 98, 164, 166–67 and 169.

239 On this, see Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses”: 247.

240 Upadhye has written on this (Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Sangha”: 198).

241 Compare Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Sangha”: 229, and Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 164.

as a separate faction.²⁴² Their *basadis* and icons were absorbed by the Digambara community, and are venerated by them today.²⁴³ This is a further argument in favour of associating the Yāpanīyas with Digambara rather than Śvetāmbara Jainism.

3.2.3 The Mūla Saṅgha, the Draviḍa Saṅgha and Other Subjects

The Yāpanīyas, however, were not the only subgroup that came to rival the Digambara Mūla Saṅgha in South India. On the basis of epigraphic records, for instance, we know that a number of new monastic orders were formed in the areas of modern day Bangalore and Hassan in the eighth and tenth century CE.²⁴⁴ This was the period of great flourishing in which the Jainas generally diversified. Inscriptional records from Shravanabelgola name four coexisting Digambara Jaina ascetic orders associated with different places in Karnataka during the eighth century CE.²⁴⁵

Another group which played an important role in Karnataka was the neighbouring Draviḍa Saṅgha, founded by Vajranandī in Madurai (Maturai) in Tamil Nadu, either in the fifth or between the ninth and tenth century CE,²⁴⁶ among whom we find evidence of female as well as male religious orders. Although initially, the nuns appear to have had only little influence, the position of female ascetics seems to have changed significantly from at least the eleventh century onwards.²⁴⁷

The creation of these diverse Digambara groups and organisations led to certain differences in doctrinal teachings, ascetic behaviour and ritual proceedings. In consequence, competition commenced amongst various orders about the highest-ranking monastic seat. All these distinctive orders and their monasteries, *basadis* and headquarters had to be administered, and complex hierarchical structures developed, with interdependent monasteries with lower-ranking preceptors and dominant chief pontiffs in particular regions. Singh argues that it was the “personal zeal” of individ-

²⁴² For their assimilation during the fifteenth century and for further details on the Yāpanīyas more generally, see the publications by Upadhye, “Yāpanīya Saṅgha,” Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Saṅgha,” and Chapter 3 in this publication by Scholz. Desai has written on the decline of the Yāpanīyas in particular (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 223). Additional information on the Yāpanīyas can also be found in Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 47–48, Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 66, Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 221–23, and Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses”: 247.

²⁴³ This has been suggested by Roy, *A History of Jainism*, Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*: 15 and Upadhye, “More Light on the Yāpanīya Saṅgha”: 201.

²⁴⁴ Compare Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 123.

²⁴⁵ These are the Navilūr, the Kittūr, the Kolaṭṭūr and the Malanur Saṅghas (Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 41–44; Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 123–24).

²⁴⁶ This illustrates the often unclear dates associated with named saints and rulers in the history of South India. For the reference, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 124–25.

²⁴⁷ On this, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 128–30.

ual monks that led to rivalry between their various orders.²⁴⁸ This diversification and fragmentation severely threatened the unity of the Digambara Jainas in Karnataka.²⁴⁹

As we have discussed, the donations of *basadis* and land for their upkeep put the Jainas in a position where they had to set up administrative headquarters and found monastic institutions. The creation of monasteries—in many ways contradictory to the initial vow of homelessness which the monks and nuns had made as part of their initiation ceremonies—led to an increased institutionalisation of the Jaina religion through a complex system of monasteries and associated temples and a more complex administrative organisation. In addition, we have seen a certain amount of Hindu influence on the Jaina religion, such as the introduction of the fourfold caste system. This appears to have taken place mainly during the seventh and eighth centuries CE, predominantly through conversions from Hindu groups to Jainism. The influence extended, for instance, to the wearing of the *brāhmaṇ* sacred thread by Jaina boys, probably from the early medieval period onwards.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, we have noticed an enormous diversification of the ascetic Jaina population. Especially prominent was the influence of the Yāpaniya Saṅgha, although there were also large numbers of other, often competing Jaina orders of monks and nuns. With all of them paying allegiance to different monastic headquarters and precepts, the unity of the community inevitably fragmented.

4 Transformation of the Jaina Pantheon, Temple Ceremonies and Architecture

We have seen that the rise in popularity of the Jaina community in Karnataka resulted in conversions, to a stark rise in numerical strength and an increase in financial support for this religious group. This led to an upsurge in patronage with regards to both the support of existing shrines and the donation and construction of new *basadis*. These new foundations were often supplied with generous land grants for the upkeep of the sacred centres. We shall now turn to the ways in which ritual and temple architecture responded to the growing importance of the *jinālayas*. Existing forms of worship were expanded and the iconography of divinities was further developed and gained in significance, while lay participation in religious activities also in-

²⁴⁸ Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 123.

²⁴⁹ On this, see Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 127. This has also been discussed by Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 58.

²⁵⁰ On this, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 77, 81. Only “artisans, dancers and probably śūdras” were not permitted to undergo this ceremony and to wear the sacred thread (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 82).

tensified. The new power and wealth of the Jaina *saṅgha* then also found expression in temple architecture with more complex constructions and sumptuous decorations. These areas of ritual and artistic activity will be discussed below.

4.1 Expansion of the Jaina Pantheon and of Ritual Activities

Inscriptional evidence points to an increase in ritual activities and an elaboration of image veneration in the newly raised *basadis* during the early Middle Ages. This is not to say that temple worship had not played an important role before:²⁵¹ indeed, the veneration of statues in Jainism appears to go back to the times of Ṛṣabhanātha's son and to Mahāvīra, as has been discussed earlier in this chapter.²⁵² Worship as a religious duty of the laity appears to have been codified for the first time by Samantabhadra in the first centuries CE.²⁵³ This was generally perceived as a positive development by most Jains.²⁵⁴ It appears that sumptuous rituals, including regular worship of a large number of statues, became accepted and widespread among the Jains in the period between the tenth and the thirteenth century (Plate 1.14).²⁵⁵

This emphasis on ritual also led to an elaboration and diversification of the Jaina pantheon.²⁵⁶ This has generally been interpreted as a means of making Jainism more appealing to its followers.²⁵⁷ As we have seen, in early Jainism as we understand it today, there appears to have been a stronger emphasis on asceticism and on the veneration of the twenty-four Jinas, or Tirthaṅkaras, who were thought to be the only ones who could show devotees the path to enlightenment.²⁵⁸ However, the complete detachment from our world of the fully-enlightened saintly teachers made them less well equipped to react to the needs and prayers of devotees. This could have made the religion appear somewhat abstract and remote.

251 Here, I disagree with Singh, who supports the view that “the early Jains did not practice image worship” (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 23).

252 Refer to section 2.2.5 “More Popular Forms of Worship, Guilds and Urbanisation.”

253 Samantabhadra has also been spelled Sāmantabhadra. On worship as a religious duty, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 23.

254 Refer to Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 182.

255 On this, see Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 237.

256 As will be argued below, this expansion of the group of Jaina gods and goddesses does not in my view represent a harmonisation with Hindu practices. It is really only in the area of coastal Karnataka that a particular closeness to and absorption of Hindu ritual practices can be noted.

257 On this issue, refer also to Pinto in Chapter 2 in this volume and to Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses”: 244.

258 Jainism describes the process towards spiritual perfection as a long and demanding journey, not attainable in this world age. The Jinas, as the few individuals who have reached this spiritual goal, are seen as models and ideals on this path. According to T.G. Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*, Jivarāja Jaina Granthamālā 20, Jaina Saṃskṛti Saṃrakṣaka Saṃgha (Sholapur: Lalchand Hirachand Dhoshi, 1969): 176, this justifies the need to worship them.



Plate 1.14: The large number of icons and sacred objects venerated inside the Baḍaga Basadi at Mudabidri are representative of the increase in ritual activities noticeable from the tenth century CE onwards.

While the group of twenty-four enlightened and detached Tirthaṅkaras remained the focus of Jaina veneration during the Middle Ages in South India, as models and,

indirectly at least, as providers of assistance,²⁵⁹ the gods and goddesses who had always existed alongside them gained strongly in importance. However, it cannot be emphasised enough, that this is not a new invention or borrowing from Hinduism, but that devotional (*bhakti*) cults and practices were present in Jainism right from the start and that this only represents and intensification of already prevailing traditions.²⁶⁰

4.1.1 Female Divinities: Śāktism (*Yakṣīs*)

During the Middle Ages in South India, Jaina divinities, being more approachable than the fully detached Jinās, gained an important position in rituals. The reason for this is that gods and goddesses can be asked directly for support and guidance in times of difficulty.²⁶¹ However, although they can assist and aid devotees in times of need and when in danger, the Jaina deities cannot help believers to reach enlightenment. Only the fully enlightened and detached Tīrthaṅkaras can act as models and indirectly at least, as assistance, in this area.²⁶² Nevertheless, gods and goddess have played an important role in Jainism right from its beginnings. Therefore, the idea that an original, purely ascetic form of the religion once existed, which exclusively focussed on the Jinās and that divinities were all taken later from Hinduism, has clearly been disproven.²⁶³ There is ample evidence that divinities, such as the *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs*, were already worshipped at the time of Mahāvīra. The Buddha and Mahāvīra are said to have worshiped *yakṣas* on a daily basis and to have stayed in *yakṣa* shrines.²⁶⁴ Another example for the long veneration of female divinities is that the earliest dated statue of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning is not a Hindu but a Jaina image from Kaṇkālī Tīlā at Mathura (Mathurā) (132 CE).²⁶⁵ Despite this, some authors, such as Kalghatgi, still argue for a Hindu influence in this area and claim that goddess veneration is alien to Jainism and was assimilated from Hinduism.²⁶⁶

259 On this, refer to John Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions,” *Numen* 34, no. 2 [1987]: 251. Gods are mortals and need to be reborn as humans first to be able to reach enlightenment and to leave the cycle of rebirths, *saṃsāra* (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 161, 166).

260 This has also been stressed by Cort, “Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition”: 59–86.

261 Compare Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177.

262 On this, refer to Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 251. Gods are mortals and need to be reborn as humans first to be able to reach enlightenment and to leave the cycle of rebirths, *saṃsāra* (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 161, 166).

263 On this, refer to Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 146–47, 153–55 and Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 249–50.

264 Compare Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 241.

265 The religious affiliation has been indicated in its inscription (Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 236; Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 107).

266 Refer to Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177–78.

Some divinities have a particular function in Jainism. The guardians of the temple compound, the *kṣetrapālas*, for instance, are there to protect the sacred compounds (*kṣetra*) of shrines (Plate 1.15). The *vidyādevīs*, as goddesses of knowledge and learning, also play an important role and are frequently depicted in the ceiling panels of Jain temples,²⁶⁷ as are the nine planetary deities (*navagrahas*) and their vehicles, and the eight directional divinities, the *aṣṭadikapālas* (Plate 1.16). This is especially typical of Jain temples in the area of Karnataka.²⁶⁸



Plate 1.15: Brahmadeva is both a *yakṣa* and a guardian of the temple compound, a *kṣetrapāla*. He is recognised by the club and noose he carries and by his association with a horse.

²⁶⁷ On this, see Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 108–9.

²⁶⁸ This will be discussed in more detail, and with reference to several examples, in Chapter 5 on Jain temple architecture in Karnataka in this volume.



Plate 1.16: The nine squares of the ceiling panel in the *navaraṅgamaṇḍapa* of the Pañcakūṭa Basadi at Kambadhalli depict the eight guardians of the directions, *aṣṭadikapālas*, surrounding Dhāraṇendra Yakṣa.

More generally, however, a male tutelary deity (*yakṣa*) and his female counterpart (*yakṣī*) acted as associates and protectors for all of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, from the early medieval period (Plate 1.17). Suresh reminds us that the origins of the *yakṣa* and *yakṣī* cult date from the centuries before the common era, where they were associated with fertility cults, mother goddesses and subterranean treasures.²⁶⁹ There are in actual fact references to *yakṣas* in the *Ṛg Veda*. Originally, *yakṣas* could be benevolent or harmful, in Jainism, however, they take on only a positive and protective function.²⁷⁰ In North India, *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* have been associated with the Jinas since about the sixth century CE.²⁷¹ Sundaram dates their close connection with particular named Tīrthaṅkaras in Karnataka to the tenth or early eleventh centuries,²⁷² when they were referred to as attendant or guardian deities *śāsanadevatās*, although without initially wielding any substantial individual influence.²⁷³ Their role was essen-

269 Compare Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 183. On this, refer also to Jaini, “Is there a Popular Jainism?": 192.

270 This has been underlined by Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 151.

271 On this, see Cort, who focusses in his research more on northern India (Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 241–42).

272 Compare Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 34.

273 Refer to Ram Bhusan Prasad Singh, “Jain Goddesses and Tantricism in Karnataka,” *Journal of Ancient Indian History* 6, no. 1–2 (1972–1973): 116 and Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 241.

tially to safeguard the enlightenment of their associated Tirthaṅkara and to flank him inside the teaching auditorium (*samavasaraṇa*) after his attainment of full enlightenment (*kevalajñāna*), thus further strengthening the mutual connection.²⁷⁴



Plate 1.17: In the Anantanātha Basadi at Lakshmeshvar, the associated *yakṣa* and *yakṣī* of the Jina have been set up inside the hall, flanking the entrance to the vestibule of the *basadi*.

However, as part of the development of Tantric Jainism in Karnataka, especially the female custodial divinities or *yakṣīs*, also referred to as *yakṣiṇīs*, *devīs* (goddesses) or *mātās* (mothers, mother goddesses), gained substantially in importance.²⁷⁵ Although Tantrism, involving the practice of ascetic exercises and magical techniques to obtain spiritual and physical powers, originated in India in the late fifth century CE, its influence was felt more strongly in Jaina practice from the seventh century CE. The increase in veneration of the female principle in particular appears to date from the eighth to tenth century CE. Although, for instance, Āmbikā Devī also plays an important role in north Indian Jainism, the number and significance of female *yakṣīs* in the south during this period is unparalleled. The only male *yakṣa* of significance in Karna-

²⁷⁴ For further details on these two points, refer to Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 148, 150, 165.

²⁷⁵ Parasher-Sen suggests that the Yāpanīyas were influential in introducing Tantrism and the cult of the *yakṣī* into Jainism (Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 227). On the connection between goddesses and Tantrism, see also Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177.

taka is Brahma *yakṣa*.²⁷⁶ Whereas in Hinduism, goddesses are considered to be the spouses of the deities, each *yakṣī* in Jainism is associated with a male *yakṣa* and both serve one named Tirthaṅkara.

The *yakṣīs* are regarded as mothers and act as representatives of the sacred feminine, as the primary position of veneration was already taken by the male Jinas.²⁷⁷ They were particularly beloved of normal householders who were not clerics and had not specifically been trained in philosophical and abstract religious thought. We can see that such people frequently entered into deep relations with these Tantric goddesses.²⁷⁸ As mothers, the *yakṣīs* were considered exceptionally powerful in helping at times of trouble, protecting, healing, and granting children and worldly boons. There are countless stories about the selfless aid of the goddesses in troublesome situations.²⁷⁹ However, the mother goddess is not only a maternal, caring figure. She is also a fierce warrior goddess, who carries arms. Jvālāmālīnī, the goddess of fire, for instance, is a terrifying divinity, often depicted with eight arms, holding destructive weapons.²⁸⁰ This concept appealed to the martial Jaina kings and the military classes associated with them, a feature which has been discussed earlier in this chapter in connection with the Tirthaṅkaras.²⁸¹

As we have noted, the *yakṣīs* were not created anew or adopted from Hinduism. Although we see them gaining in status substantially by the tenth century CE, they had existed in Jainism long before this. Inscriptions indicate that many were worshipped as slightly more independent divinities as early as the seventh or eighth century CE, albeit usually in the context of large temples dedicated primarily to one or

276 Zydenbos has commented on this (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 166). For examples of representations of Brahma *yakṣa* and his positioning especially on the tops of pillars in Karnataka, see section 2.3 “Additional Features of Jaina Temple Complexes” as well as the many examples discussed in Chapter 5 by Hegewald in this volume. See also Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Sacred Symbols, Enlightened Beings and Temple Guardians: The Display of Holy Elements on Pillars in Jaina Temple Complexes in Karnataka,” in *The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald, Heidelberg Series in South Asian Studies (New Delhi: Samskriti Publishers, 2011): 134–60.

277 Compare Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 184–88 and Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses”: 245.

278 On this, see Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses”: 246.

279 Refer to Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses”: 246, 248. This has also been depicted in paintings on temple walls. See, for instance, Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 98, Plate 214.

280 See Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 53. On depictions of the *yakṣīs* in Jainism, see also Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 94–100.

281 Iyengar has written on this subject as well (Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses”: 245). Iyengar on the same page also refers to the concepts of the seven mothers (*saptamātṛkās*), the sixty-four *yoginīs*, the sixteen *vidyādevīs* and Sarasvatī in Jainism. In addition to the latter goddess, Lakṣmī, alternatively known simply as Śrī, who has a particular significance for Jaina merchants, has also enjoyed active worship in Jainism. On Jaina worship of Lakṣmī, refer to Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 237.

several Jinas.²⁸² However, by the tenth century CE, their position or status was obviously changing. At this time, they no longer feature as only minor divinities in larger *basadis* dedicated to the Tīrthaṅkaras. We find *jinālayas* where the *yakṣīs* are named and worshipped almost on equal terms with the Jinas, such as in the Pārśvanātha and Padmāvati Temple on Kanakagiri or the Śāntiśvara Basadi at Nittur (Niṭṭūr), which is better known as the Jvālāmālīnī Devī Temple. In both places, the statues of the Jinas still reside in the main shrine rooms of the *basadis*. Moreover, from this time onwards, we also see large temple structures which house statues of female deities in their central sanctums, their *garbhagr̥has*, as powerful autonomous deities.²⁸³ An example is the Jvālāmālīnī Devī Basadi at Narasimharajapura in the coastal region of Karnataka. This provoked some internal criticism amongst the Jinas. However, Zydenbos, with reference to the writings of the Digambara monk Kunthusāgara, who defended the veneration of *yakṣīs* as a Jaina practice, stresses the point that despite their significance, the *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* never equalled the Jinas in religious standing.²⁸⁴ These *yakṣīs* were believed to have strongly delineated characters and distinct personalities. Whilst critics of the *yakṣī* cult referred to the fact of their distinct identities as a negative point, indicating strong *karma* attachment and distance from the almost completely identical Tīrthaṅkaras, the individual personalities of these goddesses played important roles in their cults of veneration.²⁸⁵

The most prominent of the *yakṣīs* who started to be venerated independently from the Jinas was Padmāvati, around whom a substantial religious cult evolved, as was the case (to a slightly lesser extent) with Jvālāmālīnī and Kuṣamāṇḍīnī (Kuṣmāṇḍī, Kūṣmāṇḍīnī).²⁸⁶ Alternatively, Kuṣamāṇḍīnī is also known as Āmbikā (meaning “mother”), a name more commonly used by Śvetāmbara Jinas in the north of India. The cult of Padmāvati goes back to the seventh, eighth or ninth century CE.²⁸⁷

282 Some scholars have suggested that the goddess cult was introduced to Karnataka from Tamil Nadu. Zydenbos, for instance, has written on this issue (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 162, 164). On the veneration of goddesses in the Tamil region, refer to K.V. Raman, “Śakti Worship in Tamil Nadu – A Historical Perspective,” in *Temple Art, Icons and Culture of India and South-East Asia* (Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 2006). However, to my mind, it seems that the cult of the Śakti developed independently and contemporaneously in Karnataka.

283 On this, refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 170.

284 See Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 165.

285 Zydenbos has written on this (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 166).

286 For further details on these individual *yakṣīs*, see the chapter by Scholz in this publication as well as the articles by Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus” and Iyengar, “Jaina Goddesses.” Especially useful on the various *yakṣīs* are pp. 248–53 in the latter publication. See also Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 171–73.

287 On this issue, see Scholz in Chapter 3, Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 150–51, Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 55, and Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 244. Without providing any particular reasons, Singh argues for a slightly later date in the tenth century CE (Singh, “Jain Goddesses”: 119).

In Karnataka, Padmāvatī is also known as Lokkiyabbe.²⁸⁸ She was probably the lineage goddess (*kuladevī*) associated with a number of influential local ruling Jaina families in Karnataka.²⁸⁹ Like Pārśvanātha, with whom she is connected as guardian deity, she is closely associated with snake (*nāga*) cults and *nāga* worship and is often represented with a snake hood behind her head (Plate 1.18).²⁹⁰ The veneration of serpents is prevalent throughout Karnataka but especially popular along its western coast, where we also find strong linkages with the *bhūta* (ancestral spirit) cult.²⁹¹ Padmāvatī is the principal focus of veneration at Humcha in Shimoga District.



Plate 1.18: Metal representation of Padmāvatī Yakṣī from the Pārśvanātha and Padmāvatī Basadi on Kanakagiri. Like her associated Tīrthaṅkara, Pārśvanātha, she is associated with serpents, *nāgas*.

²⁸⁸ Refer to Singh, “Jain Goddesses”: 119 and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 55.

²⁸⁹ This has been suggested by Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 243.

²⁹⁰ On her connection with snakes, refer also to Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 174–75.

²⁹¹ Compare Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 187. On *bhūtas*, refer also to the comprehensive study on Jainism in the region by Gururaja Bhatt, *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture: From the Pre-Historic Times up to the Modern* (Manipal: Manipal Power Press, 1975) and to Chapter 4 by Pinto.

The other two most active seats of *bhaṭṭārakas* in Karnataka today are associated with the remaining two prominent *yakṣīs*. Jvālāmālīnī has her own sacred area (*kṣetra*) over which she presides at Narasimharajapura in Chikmagalur District, although in the past she also ruled over Gerasoppe (Gērusoppe), also known as Gerasoppe (Gēr-asoppe) in the very northwest of Karnataka.²⁹² Jvālāmālīnī is paired as an attendant divinity with the male *yakṣa* Śyāma and associated with the eighth Tirthaṅkara, Candraprabhu.²⁹³ Traditionally, Jvālāmālīnī has been associated with fire and is often represented with eight arms, carrying destructive weapons, such as an arrow, a shield, a trident, a bow and a snake.²⁹⁴ Her cult appears to have gained particular momentum from the middle of the ninth century CE and flourished even more during the tenth and eleventh centuries.²⁹⁵

Finally, Kuṣamāṇḍīnī is the primary goddess worshipped at Shravanabelgola in Hassan District.²⁹⁶ She is also known as Jakkaḷamma, meaning Mother (*ḷamma*) Yakṣī (*jakka*).²⁹⁷ Kuṣamāṇḍīnī is associated as an attendant with the *yakṣa* Sarvāhana (Sarvāḥṇa) and with the twenty-second Jina Neminātha.²⁹⁸ She rides a lion and is associated with children, whom she can be shown carrying on her lap; sometimes she is accompanied by both children and lion, in a single statue, and sometimes they appear separately (Plates 1.19, 1.20). It seems that Kuṣamāṇḍīnī obtained the status of an independent goddess as early as the seventh century CE, but the tenth century was when her cult really flourished,²⁹⁹ as Singh has shown, on the basis of a solitary representation of Āmbikā/Kuṣamāṇḍīnī in the Meguḍi Temple at Aihole.³⁰⁰ Singh also deduces a certain increase in importance of the female element from the *yakṣī*'s position to the right of the Jina in cave temple number four at Badami.³⁰¹ Traditionally, the images of the *yakṣīs* would be found to the left of the Tirthaṅkara.

292 The reasons for this change and the story of the transfer have been narrated by Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 173.

293 Amongst the Śvetāmbaras, Jvālāmālīnī is known as Bhṛkuṭī and associated with the *yakṣa* Śyāma, known by them as Vijayā. On this, see Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 597.

294 See Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 53 and Singh, "Jain Goddesses": 117. On depictions of the *yakṣīs* in Jainism, see also Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 94–100.

295 On this, see Singh, "Jain Goddesses": 118.

296 Refer to Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 150.

297 In the north, amongst the Śvetāmbaras, Kuṣamāṇḍīnī is referred to as Āmbikā (Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 169).

298 In Śvetāmbara Jainism, Sarvāhana is known as Gomedha. Refer to Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 597.

299 For the early date of the seventh century CE, refer to Singh, "Jain Goddesses": 119.

300 This is unusual for a temple in the south, where normally her Digambara name would be used. Cousens and Singh refer to the Āmbikā statue from the Meguḍi Temple at Aihole whose children are held by two attendants at her side (Henry Cousens, *The Chālukyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts*, Archaeological Survey of India 42, New Imperial Series [New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1996 (1926)]: 31; Singh, "Jain Goddesses": 116; Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 52).

301 See Singh, "Jain Goddesses": 116–117, 119.



Plate 1.19: Statue of the *yakṣī* Kuṣamāṇḍinī from the Candranātha Basadi on Candragiri at Shravanabelgola. Here, she is shown with her lion vehicle, on which her associated children are sitting.

Whether venerated as individual divinities with their own temples, or flanking the doorway of the *garbhagṛhas* of the Tirthaṅkaras, *yakṣīs*, and sometimes also *yakṣas*, are beautifully wrapped in precious garments (Plates 1.21, 1.22). Most *yakṣīs* have a number of *sāṛīs* and their own opulent jewellery, which is kept in lockers next to or below the temples. By this means, they differentiate themselves clearly from the naked, plain statues of the Jinas, which have no belongings at all and which in Digambara Jainism are not even decorated with flowers or cooling colourful pastes, such as we know from Śvetāmbara worship.



Plate 1.20: This metal icon of Kuṣamāṇḍinī from Kanakagiri shows a Tantric form of the *yakṣī* with four arms. In this representation, she is seen carrying a child on her lap.

The significance of these divinities, especially of the female *yakṣīs*, has been much debated. Some scholars have argued that the cult of goddesses was “borrowed” from Hinduism as an “alien” or merely “popular” element.³⁰² Kalghatgi, for instance, says:

These forms of worship [the veneration of *yakṣīs*] must have arisen out of the contact with other competing faiths and with the purpose of popularising the Jaina faith in the context of the social and religious competition. [...] Yakṣī form of worship must have been introduced in order to attract the common men towards Jainism, by appealing to the popular form of worship.³⁰³

³⁰² For further details, see Chapter 3 in this book by Scholz. This has also been discussed by Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 153–54, with reference to Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177–78, and Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 233. See also Stein, *Peasant State and Society*: 79.

³⁰³ For this quote, refer to Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177–78. He continues by saying that goddess veneration is “foreign to the Jaina religion” but along the same lines also describes as “inconceivable,”



Plate 1.21: Stone statues of *yakṣas*, too, are wrapped in lavish vestments and decorated with flower garlands, as can be seen in this figure of Dhāraṇendra from the Akkaṇṇa Basadi at Shravanabelgola.

The discussion above, however, has shown that *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* had been venerated in Jainism since Mahāvīra's times, and had played important roles in Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism, being honoured with statues since at least the early centuries CE—a cult that still thrives today.³⁰⁴ What is fascinating and telling, however, is why during the Middle Ages, at least between the eighth and the tenth century CE.

the changes which Buddhism underwent “in the various countries of the world” (p. 178). Both statements would be seen very critically from our understanding of the two religious traditions today.

304 This is a cautious dating, as there is also clear evidence for the veneration of statues in Jainism in the earlier strata at Mathura and other sites. On this, refer also to Cort, “Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition”: 67–68. See Zydenbos for references to Jaina monks arguing for the veneration of *yakṣīs* in Jainism (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 164–65). On p. 182 he emphasises that there have always been advocates and adversaries for the *yakṣī* cult.

According to Sabine Scholz in Chapter 3, the goddesses cult helped to “safeguard the Jaina tradition against possible threats from the surrounding Hindu traditions, especially the *bhakti* movements.” She bases her argument on the work of Jaini, who maintains that the integration—or, as I would say, the increase in importance—of these divinities worked against the influence of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva *bhakti* movements.³⁰⁵ This implies that earlier forms of Jainism might have been perceived as too ascetic and abstract and that the new, more devotional, elements met the needs of people who might otherwise have converted to more popular forms of other religions.³⁰⁶ In this area, again, the Yāpanīyas appear to have been especially open to evolving and accommodating ordinary devotees in a practical way.³⁰⁷ However, it is worth reiterating that we should not assume there was a time when the Jaina tradition focused only on its ascetic community and on the fully-enlightened but detached Tīrthaṅkaras. The early traces of the *yakṣa* cult and the fact that Mahāvīra is also said to have venerated *yakṣas* make this conclusion inescapable.³⁰⁸ This shows that *bhakti*, in the sense of devotion to teachers and their statues, existed from the very beginning in Jainism and was simply reinforced and strengthened in later centuries.

The rise of the goddesses cult has often been explained as a reaction to the increased popularity of Tantrism—in Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Buddhism—and Hindu *bhakti* movements in the region and as a strategy for survival and expansion.³⁰⁹ In this context, Qvarnström says:

The adoption of goddessess into Jain doctrine and worship can be viewed as a conscious adoption in order to meet the challenges from the flourishing *bhakti* movements, thereby preventing Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva devotional movements from influencing the Jain laity.³¹⁰

Here, Qvarnström refers to ideas already expressed by Jaini with regards to developments in western India. In this context, Jaini wrote: “Such legitimisation of *yakṣa*-worship within the Jaina faith may have helped to prevent the influence of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva *bhakti* movements on the Jaina laity.”³¹¹

³⁰⁵ On this, see Jaini, “Is there a Popular Jainism?”: 196. The Hindu *bhakti* cults in Karnataka will be discussed in Section 5.1 on “Religious Rivalries: Contests, Conversions and Jaina Denial of a Decline” later in this chapter.

³⁰⁶ Amongst the scholars who argue along these lines are Desai, *Jainism in South India*, Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177–78, Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*, and Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 36–37.

³⁰⁷ See, for instance, Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 170–71 and Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 59–60.

³⁰⁸ Zydenbos, too, has questioned whether Jainism could have been a purely ascetic tradition only until the Middle Ages (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 146–47).

³⁰⁹ On the latter issue, see Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177–78, Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 233, and Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 183.

³¹⁰ Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 37.

³¹¹ For this quote, refer to Jaini, “Is there a Popular Jainism?”: 196.

In a way, the goddesses cult can be interpreted as the Jainas' expression of their own *bhakti* movement.³¹² At the same time, I think it helpful to see it as an expression of Śāktism, the veneration of the female principle, or Śākta Tantrism, the Tantra of the power of the goddess, which emphasises the female principle. This originated in the seventh century CE and by the eighth to tenth century CE wielded a strong influence on all religions in the region. In the context of Tantrism, Jaina goddesses were believed to have magic powers which enabled them not only to control people, eliminate evil and practise exorcism, but also to generate hostility, paralysis and even death.³¹³ As Tantric divinities, the *yakṣīs* are usually shown iconographically with at least four and often with large numbers of arms (Plate 1.22).

4.1.2 *Bhakti* and Tantrism in Jainism

As we have seen above, Tantric practices became very popular in Indian religions from about the late fifth century CE.³¹⁴ The ascetic exercises and magical techniques were widely applied by Jaina monks in Jaina temple settings from the eighth century CE onwards. At this time, Jaina monks were regarded as especially efficient in controlling evil spirits through occult practices. This gave them a certain superiority to other religions.³¹⁵ A number of inscriptions at Shravanabelgola, for instance, boast of the Tantric skills of certain named Jaina teachers.³¹⁶ However, Tantrism never became as important in Jainism as it was, for instance, in Buddhism at this time.³¹⁷ Such occult techniques could focus on positive outcomes such as healing or the attainment of religious ideals. On the other hand, they could also be used to cause harm, bringing one person under the control of another, causing hostility between two parties, gaining victory over somebody or destroying them.³¹⁸

312 Refer to Qvarnström, "Stability and Adaptability": 37 and Cort, "Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition": 59–86 on this topic.

313 On this, refer to Iyengar, "Jaina Goddesses": 246–47, Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 162–63, and Pinto, "Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire": 89. Zydenbos also describes the various cults of the *yakṣas* more generally as "occult practices" (Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 152, 173).

314 See David N. Lorenzen, "Śaivism: An Overview," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 13, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987): 10.

315 Compare Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 173.

316 Zydenbos has mentioned these (Zydenbos, "Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus": 163).

317 Cort has written on this subject (Cort, "Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions": 239).

318 For further details, refer to Singh, "Jain Goddesses": 120–221, and Cort, "Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions": 245–46.



Plate 1.22: Tantric images often have multiple arms, as can be seen in this bronze of the *yakṣī* Padmāvatī, sheltered by the typical snake hood, from the Pārśvanātha and Padmāvatī Basadi on Kanakagiri.

Tantric techniques involved incantations either in the form of mystic syllables and single-word spells (*mantras*) or magical multi-word utterances (*vidyās*).³¹⁹ Although a technical distinction is made between *mantras* and *vidyās* (Prakrit: *vijjā*), this is not observed in actual fact and both terms are usually treated as synonymous, meaning “spells.” Further, Tantric practices included the drawing of sacred diagrams (*yantras*) or circles (*maṇḍalas*) on paper or engraved onto metal discs or precious stones (Plate 1.23). In addition, the long list of Tantric customs adopted by the Jains included the use of amulets for protection, the powerful positioning and movement of the hands and fingers (*mudrās*) to influ-

³¹⁹ See Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 237–38. Kalghatgi stresses that the Jains were said to be master Mantravadins, with the greatest mastery over spells (*mantravidyā*) (Kalghatgi, *Jaina View of Life*: 177).



Plate 1.23: From the eighth century CE, Tantric diagrams incised in metal discs, *yantras*, became popular, as can be seen in the Pārśvanātha Basadi at Annigeri (above) and in this *bhaktāmara yantra* from Kanakagiri (below).

ence events and the placing of small icons of Jaina divinities on particular parts of the human body (*nyāsa*) for healing purposes. Lastly, they also encompassed powerful fire offerings (*homa*).³²⁰ Through these techniques, the practitioners would summon, identify with and embody a particular divinity, usually a *yakṣī*.³²¹

This shows a clear move away from earlier Jaina practices and doctrine. Until the fourth or fifth century CE, pronouncing and using magic spells (*vidyā*) was disparaged by the Jainas, as the practice was not of use in obtaining deliverance.³²² Over time, spells generally gained in importance and in Jainism were in effect converted into or equated with goddesses, who were then referred to as *vidyās* or *vidyādevīs*.³²³ Most texts name sixteen *vidyā* goddesses, the *vidyādevīs*, a number which first appears in the eighth century CE. Other texts refer to an even larger number and also to *mahā-vidyās* or *mātrkāś* (mothers). This points to a tradition of venerating groups of goddesses in the Tantric form of Digambara Jainism at this time.³²⁴ As personifications of magical spells, Jaina goddesses were invoked in Tantric rites and believed to confer superhuman abilities on the worshippers,³²⁵ who were believed to gain exceptional powers through their presence and participation. Here, again, the worship of the three main *yakṣīs*, Padmāvatī, Jvālāmālīnī and Kuṣamāṇḍīnī was especially popular in Jaina Tantra in Karnataka.³²⁶

One might argue that Śaktism, Jaina *bhakti*—in the form of *yakṣī* worship—and Jaina Tantrism contributed strongly to the rise in popularity and influence of Jainism between the eighth and the tenth century CE in particular. Opposed to this interpretation are voices which regard the increase in ritual practices, *bhakti*, Śaktism and Tantrism as a threat to Jainism and a loss of its core principles. In the context of the veneration of goddesses and the introduction of Tantric rites, Singh, for instance, says: “They [the Jainas] abandoned the original ethical principles, for the sake of mysterious yogic practices and magical spells.”³²⁷ Although some Jaina texts describe rites for Tantric worship as associated with mystical powers, others criticise and condemn

320 On various Tantric practices, refer to Singh, “Jain Goddesses”: 120–24, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 56–60, 80.

321 Compare Singh, “Jain Goddesses”: 122–24.

322 On this issue, see Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 37. On Jaina *vidyās*, refer also to Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 237–38.

323 On this, refer to Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 239.

324 On this, refer to Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 239–40. In Śvetāmbara Jainism, we frequently find the eight or twelve *vidyādevīs* adorning the domed ceilings of Jaina temples, especially in north-western India (Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 108–9).

325 Compare Singh, “Jain Goddesses”: 120.

326 Cort has written on this (Cort, “Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions”: 245–47).

327 For this quote, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 56.

them.³²⁸ Some of the twelfth-century writings of the Jaina author Brahmasīva, for instance, demonstrate that he viewed the veneration of divinities critically.³²⁹

This shows that some Jainas argued or feared at the time that through these new elements and ritual changes, the faith might drift away from its distinct and traditionally more ascetic focus. However, Jaina *bhakti*, involving the veneration of goddesses, could not justifiably be called a new element, as devotional worship of the Jinās and divinities had been part of Jaina practice from the very beginnings of the religion. Contemporary concerns with regards to Jaina Tantrism perhaps carry more weight. However, in all areas, it appears to be a question of degree and quantity of the changes, whether these should be seen critically.

Whether one agrees with these critics or not, what both interpretations clearly suggest is that, having lost their comfortable position of practising the dominant religion, the Jainas took on board more from new streams such as Tantrism, Śaktism and the *bhakti* cults than they might have done without any such external pressures. However, it is difficult to speak of a conscious “decision” being made here, as this was probably a gradual process of small, often quite unconscious steps, which did not affect all Jaina religious orders and their temples equally at the same time. Through the various modifications and developments, however, the faith evidently changed and to a certain extent adapted—if only by emphasising earlier existing aspects—in order to endure. Whether the means the Jainas adopted were really successful is open to question, as despite these adaptations, it is clear that Jaina influence in Karnataka declined significantly from the early twelfth century onwards. However, in contrast to Buddhism, Jainism survived in India as an active and still evolving religious force, which might well indicate that its reaction to changing religious circumstances and environments was a more propitious one.

4.1.3 Lay Participation: Ablutions, the Cult of Bāhubali and Sallekhanā

With the proliferation and intensification in ritual activities from the eighth century CE onwards, the role of laypeople (*śrāvakas*) in Jainism also increased.³³⁰ Jaina

³²⁸ On this, refer to Singh, “Jain Goddesses”: 120, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 56–57.

³²⁹ For the reference to Brahmasīva, see Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 182–83. On pp. 156–66 Zydenbos debates objections which the Jainas raised against the veneration of *yakṣīs* more widely. These were, for instance, regarded as superstitious practices, classified under the heading *mithyātva*, meaning “doctrinal aberrance” (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 157).

³³⁰ Scholz has argued this in Chapter 3 in this volume. Zydenbos has accentuated the importance of engaging lay members in religious life in order to guarantee the survival of a religion (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 146–47).

ascetics had always depended on food donations from the lay population. However, when Jaina monks and nuns settled more permanently in monastic institutions, the relationship between mendicants and the laity deepened. Interacting with ascetics was seen by lay people as a way of enhancing their own spiritual well-being. Not only did they offer them food and shelter, but they also endowed icons, *basadis* and land for their maintenance, and performed ritual activities, which were regarded as devout spiritual acts that conferred merit on the lay donors and practitioners. In fact, regular gifts and charitable acts were counted as fundamental obligations of a Jaina layperson.³³¹ We know that even simple but reasonably well-off peasants made substantial donations.³³² As such, while the destiny of *jinālayas* depended upon their benefactors, donors also tried to shape their fate by close personal association with religious establishments through generous gifts.³³³

Temple ritual, especially the complex worship known as the *pūjā* of eight substances (*aṣṭaparakārī pūjā*), and the ablution ritual (*abhiṣeka*) of statues (Plate 1.24) gained in importance during the medieval period. Whilst ablutions on a reduced scale, conducted on small ritual icons, were performed on a daily basis, the Digambaras developed large-scale ablution festivals during which colossal statues were anointed and reconsecrated at regular intervals. The major ablution ceremony performed in connection with monumental icons of Bāhubali, who is also known as Gommaṭa or Gommaṭeśvara, is referred to as the “great head anointing ceremony,” Mahāmastakābhiṣeka. Bāhubali statues are especially widespread and popular in Karnataka, and the performance of the Mahāmastakābhiṣeka in fact forms an important part of Digambara Jaina identity in this State to the present day. The Mahāmastakābhiṣeka of the tallest and oldest colossus at Shravanabelgola is conducted only once every twelve years (Plate 1.25).

The popularity of these statues is at first surprising, as they are not representations of enlightened Jinas. According to local legend, Bāhubali was the son of the first Tīrthaṅkara Ādinātha (Ṛṣabha, Ṛṣabhanātha). He managed to get the better of his brother in a fight over the kingdom which the other had instigated. However, in this moment of victory, Bāhubali recognised the futility of worldly battles and withdrew. Rather than fighting his own brother, he succeeded in subduing all his desires and was able to obtain omniscience. On the basis of his actions, he is seen as both a worldly military leader and a spiritual hero; as such, Bāhubali appealed especially to soldiers and the ruling martial classes at the time, but also to ordinary devotees who were trying to conquer their own desires. The most famous statue of him is the colossal monolith at Shravanabelgola, bequeathed by Cāvuṇḍarāya in 981 CE. At around

331 Compare Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 82–83.

332 On this, refer to Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 228.

333 Hegde has written on this subject (Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 240).



Plate 1.24: Lay participation in sacred rituals increased from the eighth century CE onwards, as can be seen here at Shravanabelgola, as such ritual activities were considered pious acts.

18.3 metres in height, the monumental image is the tallest of the Bāhubali statues in the south. The first ritual Mahāmastakābhiṣeka was probably conducted shortly after its completion as part of its initial installation and sanctification.³³⁴ Subsequently, other monoliths modelled on this earliest one were raised at sites such as Karkal (Kārkaḷa, Karkāla) in 1432 CE (about 13 metres tall) (Plate 2.8), at Venur (Vēṇur, Venupura, Varṇśapura) in 1604 CE (about 12 metres tall) (Plate 3.3) and at Dharmasthala in 1973 (about 12 metres tall).³³⁵

³³⁴ On this, refer to Sundaram, “Elements of Jain History”: 33–34.

³³⁵ For further details, refer to Chapter 5 in this publication, to Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 89–91, and Hegewald, *Jaina Tradition of the Deccan*: 38–40, 112–13.

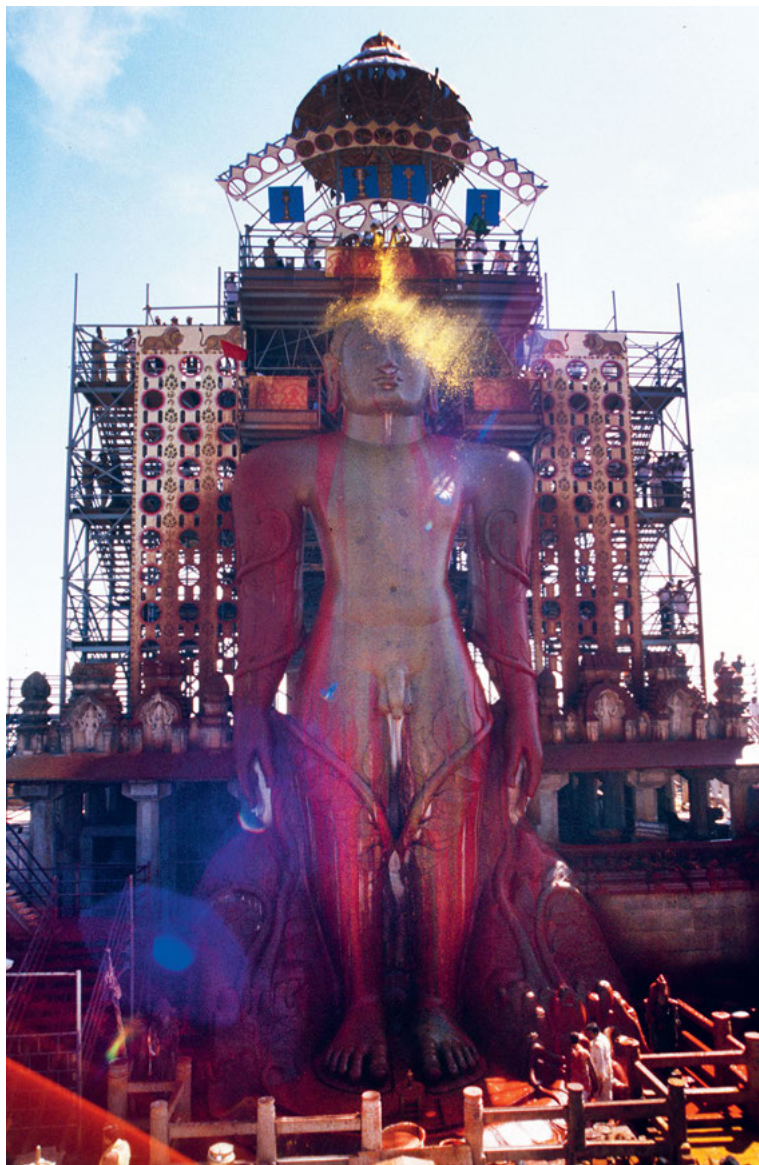


Plate 1.25: During the performance of the Mahāmastakābhiṣeka at the monumental statue of Bāhubali at Shravanabelgola, purifying colourful sacred substances are poured over the monolith for re-consecration.

The medieval period saw the introduction of other ritual practices, too, such as the observance of public celebrations in the form of chariot (*ratha*) processions and *jina-ratha* festivals. Other large-scale festivities became more frequent, as did private, individualised transformative rituals, such as the rite of *sallekhanā*, the practice of a

ritualised death by self-starvation.³³⁶ Parasher-Sen points out that the terms *saṁnyāsana*, *saṁādhi* or *saṁādhi maraṇa* were more popular than *sallekhanā* with Kannada writers and poets.³³⁷ Such renunciation of all food and water, leading to a religious self-sacrifice, has to be performed under the strict guidance of a religious teacher. There are firmly prescribed stages for this most extreme form of fasting to death. Books of Jaina holy law list only four situations in which the path was permissible: a situation of inescapable catastrophe (*upasarga*), such as submission by an enemy, extreme famine (*durbhikṣa*), old age (*jara*) and lastly, terminal illness (*mihpratikara ruḷā*).³³⁸

The performance of *sallekhanā* appears to have become especially popular from the eighth century CE onwards and to have continued on this level into the twelfth century.³³⁹ A remarkable number of inscriptions recording the act of *sallekhanā*, foot imprints (*pāḍukās*) marking the sanctified sites as well as memorials (*niṣidhis*)³⁴⁰ commemorating the sacred act, can be found on Candragiri at Shravanabelgola (Plate 1.26). Koppala also appears to have been a sacred centre where this ritual was carried out.³⁴¹ *Sallekhanā* seems to have been performed by both male and female ascetics and devout lay people, as well as by kings and queens. We know, for instance, that Indra IV died performing *sallekhanā* at Shravanabelgola, as did Gaṅgā King Mārasimha at Bankapur (Baṅkāpura), both in the tenth century CE.³⁴²

As early as the eighth century, sites which were sanctified by the act of *sallekhanā* became popular destinations for Jaina lay pilgrimages, and temples were also erected close to them. Whilst at first, the rite appears to have been performed at remote and

336 In contradiction to this, Scholz in this volume states that the rite of *sallekhanā* declined at this time. However, this cannot be corroborated, at least not from records obtained from the major pilgrimage centre of Shravanabelgola, renowned for its many *niṣidhi* memorials, commemorating religious deaths. On *sallekhanā* and alternative terms, refer to S. Settā, *Inviting Death: Historical Experiments on Sepulchral Hill* (Dharwad: Institute of Indian Art History, Karnatak University, 1986): 95–96, and Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 236. For more detailed information on the ritual of *sallekhanā*, see the same source on pp. 215–24, 228 and 230.

337 On this, refer also to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 196. In a Śvetāmbara context, this extreme ritual practice is less popular and widespread, and referred to as *santhārā* (Lawrence A. Babb, *Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture*, Lala S.L. Jain Research Series [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1998 (1996)]: 60). This indicates the close connection between meditation, general ascetic practices and ritualised death by self-starvation.

338 On this issue, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 61, and Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 216–17, 230.

339 See Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 65.

340 There are numerous divergent spellings for *niṣidhi*, for instance, *niṣidhi* (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 112).

341 For further details, see Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 230–34.

342 On this, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 65–67. See the same source for references to royal ladies performing this demanding ritual at the end of their lives.



Plate 1.26: Countless stone pavilions, containing memorial plaques, *śiṣṭhis*, mark the spots where an act of *sallekhanā* was committed by individuals on Candragiri at Shrivatse.

quiet places, it was later more commonly performed inside *basadis*.³⁴³ Pilgrims increasingly contributed to the development of such sites, by making donations to existing *jinālayas* as well as by bequeathing entire new *basadis*, especially during the tenth and eleventh centuries.³⁴⁴ Whilst *sallekhanā* is rarely committed nowadays, the practice has not died out in Karnataka, where such a death is regarded as a highly auspicious event, to be recorded on video, live-streamed and followed by large numbers of people at the site as well as digitally.³⁴⁵

Once again, these and other elaborations of ritual troubled some Jaina practitioners at the time, and have been singled out by some historians of Jainism as evidence of spiritual decadence and decay. Singh has argued, for instance, that the introduction of lavish ritual offerings violated the vow of *ahiṃsā*, non-injury:

³⁴³ Singh has written on this change (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 68).

³⁴⁴ On this issue, refer to Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 68, and Parasher-Sen, “Jaina Women, Ritual Death”: 237.

³⁴⁵ Sabine Scholz was able to witness such an auspicious event as part of her fieldwork in Karnataka in 2006.

In the course of performing worship and rituals, the Jaina devotees occasionally committed acts of injury to unseen germs in water, flowers, etc., which were used in the worship of the Jina. The offering of *homa* or fire oblation and *ārati* or waving the lamp round the Jina killed small insects.³⁴⁶

Again, it is questionable whether such an openness towards other faith groups and new trends, such as Śaktism, Tantrism and the *bhakti* movements—which may well in fact have attracted followers to Jainism and brought it closer to the needs of the laity—would rectify such severe internal criticism or even suffice to explain the decline of the faith.

Although Jainism obviously adapted and changed, it was surrounded by rival religious groups which offered alternatives to the so far dominant Jaina path. It is important to understand that the changes which Jainism underwent do not simply represent a “Hinduisation process” but that Jainism, like Hinduism and Buddhism, is a faith with a great internal diversity, ranging from severely ascetic and non-image-worshipping groups to highly devotional ones which venerate a number of abstract and figural sacred objects.³⁴⁷ Elements such as the goddesses cult and the veneration of images were around from the very beginning but increased in prominence in an environment in which *bhakti* and Tantric forms of religion flourished across religious divides.

4.2 Voluntary Changes in Jaina *Basadis*

As we have noted, the period of economic development and political stability which the Jainas enjoyed from the fifth to the seventh century CE, and their zenith of influence from the eighth to the twelfth century, led to a pronounced increase in their affluence. In this context, Narasimha Murthy writes: “There was a gradual transformation of life style from austerity to luxury and royal nobility.”³⁴⁸ We have seen already that this led to the founding of large numbers of new *basadis*, monasteries and entire pilgrimage centres. Soon, the changes in socio-religious values and the increased prosperity of the Jainas was visible not only in the private residences of Jaina traders and nobility, but also in the *jinālayas* they erected for the glorification of their own religion.

³⁴⁶ For this quote see Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 51. On the vow of *ahiṃsā*, the first vow taken during the *dīkṣā* ceremony, refer to Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 30.

³⁴⁷ Davis has also written on this issue (Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 217–18). Zydenbos, too, questions the idea of a corrupted and Hinduised Jainism (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 147).

³⁴⁸ Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 41.

The *basadis* of the Kadambas, the Gaṅgās and the Early Cālukyas had so far been reasonably plain, reflecting a relatively austere approach to life and their own religion (Plate 1.27). Krishna Murthy writes with regards to the earlier temple structures:



Plate 1.27: The Candragupta Basadi on Candragiri is typical of the plain Jain style prevalent during the rule of the Gaṅgās, mirroring a fairly ascetic outlook on life and architecture.

The *basadis* constructed in this way, normally presented an architectural look of restraint, austerity and simplicity. They were just utilitarian in character without any trace of luxury, because the Jain religion insisted that their followers should adopt such principles in their lifestyle too.³⁴⁹

However, from about the middle of the twelfth century, especially under Hoysaḷa rule, Jain shrines became more opulent and highly decorated.³⁵⁰ This change relates both to the interior as well as the exterior decoration of the *basadis*.

In early Gaṅgā constructions, the interior and the exterior walls and ceilings are reasonably plain. The first development we see is an increase in the ornamentation of the interior, with heavily decorated ceilings. These can be square flat panels, usually consisting of nine cassetted or coffered sections decorated with open lotus flowers or figural decorations (Plates 1.16, 1.28 above), or spacious domical arrangements with a

³⁴⁹ For this quote refer to Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jain Temple Architecture”: 98.

³⁵⁰ See the discussion by Krishna Murthy of the time of change to the more opulent style (Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jain Temple Architecture”: 106).



Plate 1.28: Under Hoysala rule, the interior of the *jinālayas* in particular increased in opulence, as can be seen in the ceiling panel from Halebid (above) and the lathe-turned pillars from Hangal (below).

central lotus pendant projecting from the centre. The ceilings are supported on highly-polished lathe-turned pillars, which were complex and costly to create (Plate 1.28 below). In addition, pierced stone screens (*jālīs*) are often included.³⁵¹ From the mid-twelfth or early thirteenth century—principally in the later Hoysāḷa structures—we see the facades of Jaina *basadis* being given more artistic attention and ornamentation. These were usually ornamented with abstract or architectural elements, or, more rarely, with figural depictions, too (Plate 1.29).

These developments appears to have been associated with changes in the life-style of many Jainas who had become wealthy through trade and close association with royal courts, and who found themselves in a position to put large amounts of money at the disposal of religious institutions. Another influence, however, will almost certainly have been the highly decorated contemporary Hoysāḷa Hindu temples.³⁵² In view of the clear differences in style, Krishna Murthy in fact divides the architecture of Jaina *basadis* into two main phases, with Phase I representative of the more ascetic and unembellished style and Phase II characterised by a much more lavish and highly decorated approach,³⁵³ which reached its apogee in the “luxurious” Jaina temples of the later Hoysāḷa age.³⁵⁴ This development will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this book.

5 Struggle for Hegemony in the Region

As we have noted, from the early twelfth century, royal patronage for the Jainas decreased and a number of contending religious groups either surfaced within the area of modern-day Karnataka itself or penetrated the State from surrounding regions. The Jainas’ fight for survival had started even earlier in the area today known as Tamil Nadu.³⁵⁵ As part of a strong Hindu revivalism, *bhakti* devotional Hindu sects were active in that area from about the sixth century CE onwards.³⁵⁶ Pius F. Pinto reminds us in Chapter 2 of this publication that the region ruled over by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire extended up to the east coast of India and included large portions of the modern States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu, down to Tanjor, also

351 These prove the presence of an indigenous tradition of latticed stone work before the entrance of Islam into India.

352 On these issues, see also Krishna Murthy “Development of Jaina Temple Architecture”: 98–99.

353 For further details on these two distinct phases, refer to Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jaina Temple Architecture”: 98.

354 Compare Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jaina Temple Architecture”: 96.

355 This will be discussed in more detail in section 6.1.1, “The Situation in Tamil Nadu,” later in this chapter.

356 See Jaini “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 85, Dundas, *The Jains*: 99, Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215, and Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 81.



Plate 1.29: In the later Jaina Hoysala structures, the facades of *basadis* were also provided with more elaborate decorative features, as here at Hangal (above) and Lakkundi (below).

known as Tanjavur (Tañcāvūr), in Tamil Nadu.³⁵⁷ We have pointed out that internal changes in Jainism may be said to have weakened the faith; however, many scholars insist that the real weakening of the religion in the region was initiated by Viraśaivas and to a lesser extent by Śrīvaiṣṇavas, both reform movements, which upset the equilibrium of influence in the area from the twelfth century onwards.³⁵⁸ In the following section I shall outline the religious atmosphere of competing faith groups in the State at this critical time.

5.1 Religious Rivalries: Contests, Conversions and Jaina Denial of a Decline

When considering competing religious groups, we have to be aware that all underwent continuous change and that none boasts a fixed and static tradition. Sabine Scholz reminds us that boundaries between religions were probably not understood in the same terms as they are today, being more fluid, and that this is especially true of the relationship between Hinduism and Jainism in medieval times.³⁵⁹

Even with regards to modern Jainism, it was only in 2014 that the Jainas were granted minority status at national level. In contrast, the Muslim community had already gained this status in 1993.³⁶⁰ In fact, many Jainas prefer to see themselves as belonging to the “majority,” arguing that whilst culturally they consider themselves as “Hindu”—probably meaning Indian rather than referring to a specific path of Hindu

³⁵⁷ On the vast extent of the Kannada region between the tenth and the thirteenth century, see also Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 38.

³⁵⁸ Sundaram has written on this subject (Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 35). See also Narasimha Murthy on the previous relative peace and amicable relations with the Hindus (Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 48–51) and on classifying the reasons for the downfall of the Jainas into two categories (p. 56).

³⁵⁹ On this, refer to her discussion in Chapter 3 in this publication.

³⁶⁰ The Jainas obtained minority status together with Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis). On this refer to Gopal Krishna “Islam, Minority Status and Citizenship: Muslim Experience in India,” *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie / Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie* 27, no. 2 (1986): 353–68, and the two webpages: Jain Heritage Centres, “Jains Minority Status,” <https://www.jainheritagecentres.com/category/jainism/jains-minority-status/> [accessed 08.05.2022], and Minority Status in India, <https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/minority-status-in-india#:~:text=In%201993%2C%20the%20first%20Statutory%20National%20Commission%20was,Jains%20were%20also%20notified%20as%20a%20minority%20community> [accessed 26.07.2023]. On the concept of minorities, refer also to Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 174–75. See also Sethi on the minority claim of the Jainas (Manisha Sethi, “Minority Claims and Majoritarian Anxieties: The Jain Question,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 51, no. 49, 03.12.2016: 55–63). Today, Jainas make up less than one percent of the entire Indian population (Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 145).

practice—they regard themselves religiously or spiritually as “Jaina.”³⁶¹ Although in medieval times there were many shared divinities,³⁶² aspects of ritual practice, and *brāhmaṇ* priests working for both communities³⁶³—as is still the case today—, there were still clear differences between Jainism and the other religions practised in Karnataka. These appear to have created rivalries and enmities during the religious-political regroupings and redeployments of the period.

Until the eleventh or even the early twelfth century, literary texts and inscriptions convey the impression of a relatively peaceful coexistence of Jainas, Buddhists, Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas in Karnataka.³⁶⁴ A Jaina inscription dated 1151 CE records the particular Jaina openness toward other faiths: “Victorious, though without words, are the sayings uttered by the Tirthankaras. Obeisance to the universal spirit of Jina, who is Śiva, Dhatri (Brahmā), Sugata (Buddha), and Viṣṇu.”³⁶⁵ However, a sudden rise in the number of individual faith groups in the area meant that claims for patronage multiplied. Whereas many royal and influential families had traditionally given strong support to Jaina religious endeavours, there were soon too many players all competing for the same limited group of believers for patrons to be able to offer financial support to all of them.³⁶⁶

Royal support was often decided on the basis of public debates in which high-ranking representatives of religious groups, such as monks, priests or teachers, engaged in in-

361 This is based on a personal conversation with Sushil Jain in Canada in 2006, but also reflects an idea that finds widespread acceptance in India. Lauer and Scholz point out that at State level, too, the Jainas have obtained minority status in Karnataka. This might have to do with the fact that it is one of the States with a particularly large percentage of Jainas amongst its population.

362 For instance, Gaṇeśa, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī are prominent deities both in Hinduism and in Jainism. In this context it is difficult, if not impossible, to verify which religion worshipped a divinity first. Whilst it has often been suggested that Jainism with its strictly ascetic beginnings borrowed from Hinduism, in fact—as has been noted earlier in this chapter—the earliest dated statue of Sarasvatī, bearing a dedicatory inscription with reference to its faith background, comes from a Jaina religious context.

363 For instance, especially Śvetāmbara religious establishments employ Hindu *brāhmaṇ* priests to take care of their temples. Whilst this can also be the case in Digambara *basadis*, this Jaina group also has its own class of temple priests (Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 31).

364 Sundaram provides inscriptional evidence on this serene cohabitation of different faiths (Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 35). Saletore and Hegde have written on the “peaceful co-existence of all cults” in the large urban centre of Balligave (Balligāme) (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 49, 202–4, 285; Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 194). The Buddhists were especially active in the region of north-eastern Kannada, which today is part of Andhra Pradesh.

365 For this quote, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 285–86.

366 While Indian society always consisted of an enormous plurality of faiths, smaller religious sub-factions, castes and language groups, the relative balance previously maintained—in which the Jainas had dominated—was disturbed and power-relations were renegotiated, allowing other players, especially various Śaiva groups as well as Vīraśaivas, to emerge as dominating forces.

tellectual contests.³⁶⁷ References to many of these open religious disputations have been recorded in inscriptions.³⁶⁸ We have, for instance, a record of a dispute in which the Jaina ascetic and logician Akalaṅka won over both Buddhists and Vaiṣṇavas, probably in the eighth century CE.³⁶⁹ Akalaṅka is said to have won against his Buddhist opponents with the help of the *yakṣī* Kuṣamāṇḍinī.³⁷⁰ This implies a Tantric practice and the involvement of magic.

The winners in such debates were decorated with a so-called “certificate of victory” (*jayapatra*).³⁷¹ Traditionally, Jaina monks were considered strong in wisdom and learning. This is reflected in a passage from an unknown context, which reads: “Who can withstand the Jaina Monk in a contest, when he lifts his pen? As when Arjuna, his Gāṇḍīva bow? Indra, his thunderbolt? Viṣṇu, his disc? Or Bhīma, his mace?”³⁷² The success of Jainas in such debates and their eagerness to engage in intellectual issues has also been highlighted by Granoff.³⁷³ From the twelfth century, however, more and more reports refer to the Jainas as losing against various Śaiva groups. This frequently resulted in the conversion of the defeated contestants and their communities—often entire villages—and the takeover and adaptation or even the destruction of the beaten religion’s local icons and sacred sites.³⁷⁴ Some Jainas are also said to have abandoned their faith out of fear, following the destruction of local Jaina *basadis*.³⁷⁵ Zydenbos refers to “mass conversions” “often under threats of violence.”³⁷⁶ He points out that there would have been various reasons for conversions, ranging from forceful persecution to

367 Further information on this subject can be found in Scholz in this publication and in David N. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas. Two Lost Śaivite Sects* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991 [1972]): 45–46. See also Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 82.

368 Subrahmanya Aiyar writes about disputes between Jainas and Buddhists in the Deccan region (Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline: 216).

369 On this, see the discussion in Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 231–233, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 105, who gives the precise date of 788 CE for this event.

370 On this, refer to Singh, “Jain Goddesses”: 119.

371 Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 371.

372 For this quote, refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 397.

373 Compare Phyllis Granoff, “Being in the Minority: Medieval Jain Reactions to other Religious Groups,” in *Jainism and Prakrit in Ancient and Medieval India: Essays for Prof. Jagdish Chandra Jain*, ed. N.N. Bhattacharyya (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994): 242.

374 Especially well known is the contest (referred to also as a “miracle contest”) at Abalur from 1160 CE or 1162 CE. Both Scholz in Chapter 3 and Lorenzetti in Chapter 4 have written on this contest, which will be discussed later in this chapter in Section 5.3.3 “Persecution of the Jainas and Economic Conflict with the Virāśaivas.” On this issue, see also Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 45–46, 169, Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 239, and Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 54.

375 Compare Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 73.

376 For these quotes, see Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 175.

the wish to obtain the favour of particular powerful people and gain access to attractive Hindu rituals.³⁷⁷

As mentioned at the outset, it is noteworthy how rare are inscriptions or textual references from a Jaina context which record such conversions, losses and defeats. To a certain extent, this reluctance to acknowledge setbacks continues today. The historian on our project, Pius F. Pinto, encountered enormous problems looking for Jaina evidence of the faith's marked decrease in influence from the twelfth century onwards. Jainas living in urban centres, in particular, concerned about the reputation of their own religion, frequently denied that the Jainas had ever suffered a gradual decline and eventual loss of real political and religious power.³⁷⁸ In archives, too, access to important sources was at times denied to our team members in order to keep the story of decline under wraps. Writing about a part of Jaina history which the Jainas themselves do not want to admit to or look at in any detail proved at times quite difficult.

Although there are no official census records from the twelfth century to verify this decrease in numbers, ample evidence is found in written sources from other religions, both inscriptional and literary, even if we allow for some denominational pride and exaggeration. There exist even some Jaina literary works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as from the twelfth, which narrate the discrimination and persecution suffered by the Jainas as well as the conversion of their sacred structures.³⁷⁹ Additionally, there are physical records in the shape of destroyed and converted statues and *basadis*, clearly indicating this decrease in Jaina influence.³⁸⁰ In rural areas in particular, members of our research team were often personally guided to damaged, destroyed and re-used former Jaina *basadis* by followers of the strongly decimated local Jaina community, who lamented what had happened to their ancient sites of Jaina culture and worship.

377 Refer to Zydenbos "Jainism Endangered": 184.

378 Even renowned local academics at first declined meetings with the members of my team in February 2006. Prof. Dr Hampa Nagarajaiah, for example, gave as his reason that a regression of Jaina influence in Karnataka had never occurred. This issue has also been discussed in Hegewald, "Introduction: The Jaina Heritage": 2. Many years later, Nagarajaiah published an article on this decline himself (Nagarajaiah, "Attacks on Important Buddhist and Jaina Centres"). In fact, the status of the Jainas, minority or not, and the issue of a decrease in the Jaina population and its influence in Karnataka and India as a whole are further debated today. See, for instance, Ezra D. Rashkow, "The Jain Endangerment Discourse," *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 49, 07.12.2013: 24–27.

379 On this refer to Zydenbos, "Jainism Endangered": 177–78, 182. One of the main authors on the subject is Brahmaśiva.

380 For actual examples, refer to Chapter 4 by Lorenzetti and even more so Chapter 5 by Hegewald in this volume.

The reluctance of some Jaina practitioners and historians to acknowledge the downfall of their own religion probably has several causes, but one important aspect might be linked to Jaina religious doctrine. Jainas believe in *karma* and, like devotees of other Indic religions, consider the situation into which an individual is born, or which a group experiences, as a reflection of deeds carried out in a previous life.³⁸¹ On the basis of a belief in *karma*, one could argue that anything experienced in one's life was due to one's own actions and therefore, as one might argue, one's own doing. To present one's own religion as good and superior, therefore, one must conceal and deny times of suffering and persecution. For this reason, historical accounts provided by the Jainas themselves often do not refer to this period of decline at all.³⁸² However, the dramatic changes documented by Tiziana Lorenzetti and myself in the field of art and architecture, summarised in this study in Chapters 4 and 5, and the many interviews we conducted with local Jaina families who still live in villages throughout Karnataka, prove beyond doubt that radical religious changes did take place throughout the wider region from the early twelfth century onwards. These led to a disempowerment and marginalisation of the Jainas on the Deccan plateau and in the south of India more generally.³⁸³

In the context of rival religious groups in the area of Karnataka in the Middle Ages, we focused in our group study primarily on the strongest and the least influential competing forces, namely, the Vīraśaivas (Chapter 4) and the Muslims (Chapter 6), to provide two extreme case studies in the form of entire chapters. The other groups are discussed in the following sections; we very much hope that the findings presented in this publication will soon be supplemented by additional studies examining in more detail Śrīvaiṣṇava and Śaiva interactions with the Jainas during this period. I shall start our examination of rival religious forces in the region with Śaivism, whose wider cults, from which also Vīraśaivism emerged, were to become by far the strongest opponents of the Jainas, constituting the most dominant cult in Karnataka from the early twelfth century onwards.³⁸⁴

5.2 The Śaiva Revivalism

As noted above, the impression given by the available evidence of the religious environment in early medieval Karnataka is of a highly competitive and at times out-

³⁸¹ On this issue, see Klostermaier, *A Concise Encyclopedia*: 95, Werner, *A Popular Dictionary*: 86, and Iyengar, "Jaina Goddesses": 244.

³⁸² This continues even today. The otherwise excellent study by Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*, for instance, does not deal with this period.

³⁸³ Regions of Karnataka which were less affected and where Jainism suffered less damage will be discussed later in this chapter in Section 8, "Continuity and Survival of Jainism in Karnataka."

³⁸⁴ Compare Hegde, "Temple-Hierarchy": 238.

rightly aggressive atmosphere, with a strongly enlarged number of religious players all vying for the same number of potential followers and financial supporters. Religions in effect fought to become established and for their long-term survival. We have many references to Jaina kings, such as Mahendravarma, who converted to Śaivism.³⁸⁵ In the context of Śaiva Siddhānta, the form of Śaivism prevalent in the south of India from about the fifth century CE onwards, we have some information on expiatory rituals which had to be performed after conversions from Jainism or Vedānta to Śaivism. Śaiva Siddhānta promotes an experience of union with Śiva and draws on the devotional hymns of the Tamil Śaiva saints of the period from the fifth to the ninth century CE, known as the Tirumurai, while Vedānta, also known as Uttara Mīmāṃsā, is one of the six orthodox (*āstika*) schools of Hindu philosophy, based on the *Vedas*. These particular conversion rituals were known as *vratoddhāra* or *līṅgoddhāra*.³⁸⁶ In the eleventh century, at least, South Indian Śaivism—in its Siddhānta form—appears to have been quite heterogeneous and open to new converts and ideas. In this context, Davis says:

It seems clear that, in historical practice, the division between religious schools that affiliated themselves with Brāhmaṇical [*brāhmaṇical*] textual traditions (usually labelled “orthodox”) and those not so affiliated (labelled “heterodox”) was never so sharp or deep as to preclude debate and strategic borrowing.³⁸⁷

In this struggle for survival, it appears that old enmities between Vedic and non-Vedic traditions surfaced anew with fresh power.³⁸⁸ Whilst early writings already reflect reservations Hindus had about Jainas, and vice versa, it was in the medieval period that these became a current and more consolidated problem. *Brāhmaṇical* authors invested a lot of time and energy in philosophical and more popular writings attacking the Jainas in the Indian Middle Ages.³⁸⁹ Zydenbos describes references to a permanent struggle between Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava Hindu groups and Jainism, as recorded in Tamil literature.³⁹⁰ The Hindus, as followers of the *Vedas*, the Vaidikas, objected to the Jainas (and Buddhists) who did not support the *Vedas*. For this reason, they were re-

385 On this, refer to Pranabananda Jash, “The Kapalikas – An Obscure Saiva Sub-Sect,” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 34, no. 1 (1973): 153. King Mahendravarma I will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.1.1 on “The Situation in Tamil Nadu.”

386 On these particular conversion rituals and further details of such conversions, refer to Davis “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 221.

387 For this quote, refer to Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 221–22.

388 Compare Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 202.

389 On this subject, see Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 146.

390 Refer to Zydenbos, “Göttinnenverehrung im Jainismus”: 162.

ferred to as *vedabāhya*,³⁹¹ people who are “external” to the *Vedas* and as heterodox or *nāstika*,³⁹² and treated as competitors and adversaries.³⁹³ Owing to the expansionism of Śaiva movements, especially during the twelfth century, about two thousand Jaina temples in the area of Karnataka alone are believed to have been destroyed.³⁹⁴

5.2.1 The Expansionism of Śaiva Groups

From the late eleventh century, a Śaiva renaissance in Karnataka posed a serious problem for the Jains.³⁹⁵ In the north of the State in particular, various forms of Śaivism rose swiftly in influence, a phenomenon strongly linked to the establishment of monastic institutions, the Śaiva *maṭhas*, headed by leaders (*heggaḍe*, *herggaḍe*, *maṭhādhipati*) whose chief aspiration was the procurement and administration of worldly power.³⁹⁶ The origins of this rise can be traced back to the eighth century CE. Nandi sees in this development a direct Jaina influence, as Jainism, too, had gained in strength by organising itself around monasteries.³⁹⁷ This is a point supported also by Davis, who shows that Jains had *maṭhas* in Tamil Nadu as early as the fifth century CE. He, too, argues for a Jaina influence on the Śaiva creation of monastic institutions.³⁹⁸ By living permanently in the ordinary community, providing education and performing charitable work, the religions strengthened their ties with local lay communities. Now, the Jains were no longer the only ones who provided medicines and education to the needy public. This created real competition for them.³⁹⁹ The Śaiva monastic tradition was at its high point in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

³⁹¹ As Truschke shows, the category of *vedabāhya* was applied to Jains and Buddhists, and also to Pāśupatas and other groups (Audrey Truschke, “Dangerous Debates: Jain Responses to Theological Challenges at the Mughal Court,” *Modern Asian Studies* 49, no. 5 [2015]: 1331).

³⁹² Compare Elaine M. Fisher, “Public Philology: Constructing Sectarian Identities in Early Modern South India,” in *Hindu Pluralism: Religion and the Public Sphere in Early Modern South India* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017): 32, 35.

³⁹³ On this issue, see Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 68, who on the same page also provides a number of sayings expressing the outright animosity, especially of Śaivas, towards the Jains.

³⁹⁴ For this reference, refer to Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 72.

³⁹⁵ Compare Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 397, Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 44, and Dibbad “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 73.

³⁹⁶ This is at least the view expressed by Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 234, 239, and Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 197. On this issue, refer also to Scholz in Chapter 3 in this volume.

³⁹⁷ See Nandi, *Religious Institutions and Cults*: 77.

³⁹⁸ Refer to Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 221.

³⁹⁹ In a Jaina context, similar activities have been discussed in Section 2.2. “Reasons for the Attractiveness and Growth of Jainism.” Hegde has written on the provision of food, education, medicines and remedies for “healing magic” by Śaiva *maṭhas* (Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 239). Salletore classifies these Hindu activities as a direct reaction to and imitation of the distribution of food, shelter, medical care and education by the Jains (Salletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 269, 273).

The Śaiva *maṭhas* controlled large numbers of temple establishments which were donated in increasing numbers after the middle of the twelfth century.⁴⁰⁰ Epigraphic records documenting such donations suggest that those who made such endowments were interested in pleasing higher religious authorities by naming the shrines for them, in obtaining religious merit, and in raising their own status.⁴⁰¹

A number of Śaiva inscriptions are indicative of tensions between Śaivas and Jainas. Many eulogise the victory of the Śaivas over the Jainas. Examples can, for instance, be found at Annigeri (Anṇigeri, Anṇigēri, Anṇigere) in Dharwad District, from 1184 CE, and at Talikota (Tālikōṭe, Tālikoṭi) in Bijapur District, from 1184 CE.⁴⁰² The epigraphic record from Annigeri has generally been associated with Viraśaivism. The engraving, dating from 1184 CE, mentions an Ugra Māheśvara, obviously a Viraśaiva, known as Goggidēva (Vira Goggidēva, Vira Goggidēvarasa), as presenting “death to the Jainas,” “an eagle to the snake (i.e. the Jainas),” “a hunter to the wild beasts (i.e. the Jainas),” “a fire to the Jaina scriptures” or “an axe to the followers of Jina.”⁴⁰³ See also the Muddebihal (Muddebihāl) inscription in Karnataka from 1184 CE,⁴⁰⁴ which shows that Śaivas attacked Jainas and Buddhists alike. However, as the Jainas were more influential in the region, they will have been more affected by these assaults. In his poetic works, Rāghavāṅka endorses and champions the destruction of Jaina sacred structures and mirrors the process of initial hatred turning into outright violence.⁴⁰⁵ A concrete example of a late twelfth-century former Jaina *basadi* which is now in use by Śaivas is the Siddheśvara Temple at Haveri. Most Jaina images adorning the outside of the structure have been removed. In some instances, however, the empty

400 On this, see Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 237. In his 1999 publication, Hegde argues that the period of the active construction of temples extended into the thirteenth century and provides actual numbers which indicate a Śaiva supremacy in the area, followed by Jainas and Vaiṣṇavas. He states, “Out of nearly 300 small and big shrines, 210 belonged to Saivite deities, 32 to Jainas and 14 to Vaishnavite deities.” He points out that this includes temples converted from Jaina to Śaiva usage (Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 194).

401 Compare Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 236, 237.

402 The text of these references has been provided and discussed in Scholz in Chapter 3. On this issue, see also Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 397–400, Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 71, and Nagarajaiah, “Attacks on Important Buddhist and Jaina Centres”: 55.

403 “Ugra” means terrifying (M.A. Dhaky, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture: South India – Upper Drāviḍadēśa (Later Phase, A.D. 973–1326)*, 2 vols. [New Delhi: American Institute of Indian Studies and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1996]: 587). For these quotes, refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 148, 398 and Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 71.

404 This has been reproduced in Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 398–99.

405 On this, refer to Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 36.

niches were filled with new Śaiva statues in a different stone which aim to imitate the original style but are clearly later and cruder.

Especially active amongst these competing Śaiva factions in the area of Karnataka during the early Middle Ages were the Tantric and ascetic groups of the Pāśupatas, the Lakulīśas,⁴⁰⁶ Kālāmukhas and Kāpālikas.⁴⁰⁷ All of these are early Śiva denominations, to a certain extent interrelated, which started to form from about the second century CE and are all extinct today.⁴⁰⁸ Their members, largely ascetics, were organised around monastic orders and their houses (*maṭhas*), but also had a certain supportive network of lay followers.⁴⁰⁹ An important element to note is that all these groups, and to a certain extent also the later cult of the Vīraśaivas, were monotheistic *bhakti* movements.⁴¹⁰ These split into two main paths, the so-called “Outer Path,” in Sanskrit Atimārga, and the “Path of *Mantras*,” the Mantramārga.⁴¹¹ All the early Śaiva orders rejected permanent caste association by birth alone and argued for the possibility of moving up in status during one’s lifetime. In actual fact, becoming a Śaiva ascetic (*yati*) brought equal status to that associated with a *brāhman*.⁴¹²

5.2.2 The Pāśupatas

The Pāśupatas form one important Atimārga subgroup, which was probably founded in the second century CE. They are well documented as a substantial faith group from the fourth century CE and flourished in the south of India in particular from the sev-

⁴⁰⁶ As the Lakulīśas are a school of the Pāśupatas, Lorenzetti in Chapter 4 in this volume refers to them with the joint name “Lakulīśa Pāśupatas.”

⁴⁰⁷ For the interconnectedness of these different schools or sects, refer to *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. 2: lxxx and to Jash, “The Kapalikas.” Interestingly, King Rāmānuja, who is contemporary with these Śaiva developments, stated that there are four groups which follow the doctrine of Pāśupati, meaning Śiva: “the kāpālas, the Kālamukhas, the Pāśupatas and Śaivas. The doctrines of all four groups are opposed to the Vedas” (David N. Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad,” *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 52, no. 1–4 [1971]: 97). It is interesting that he includes mainstream Śaivas in this list, possibly expressing a Vaiṣṇava view on the situation.

⁴⁰⁸ Compare Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 7 and Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: xi.

⁴⁰⁹ On this, refer also to the two publications by Lorenzen “Śaivism: An Overview”: 9, Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: xi.

⁴¹⁰ Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 10 has commented on this as well.

⁴¹¹ See Luke Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar,” in *Mountain, Water, Rock, God: Understanding Kedarnath in the Twenty-First Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018): 62. Törzsök does not count the Kālāmukhas among the group of Atimārga religions (Judith Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers [Kāpālikas] Called Soma?” in *Śaivism and the Tantric Traditions: Essays in Honour of Alexis G.J.S. Sanderson*, ed. Dominic Goodall, Shaman Hatley, Harunaga Isaacson and Srīlata Raman [Leiden: Brill, 2020]: 33).

⁴¹² Refer to Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 98–99.

enth to the fourteenth century.⁴¹³ They have generally been considered older than the Kālāmukhas and the Kāpālikas.⁴¹⁴ The name Pāśupatas derives from Śiva's epithet Pāśupati, meaning "lord of the animals," which in the context of the early religion, however, is usually one of the Vedic names of Rudra.⁴¹⁵ The minor Vedic deity Rudra operates as a prototype for the later main god Śiva, with whom he merged in later classical Hinduism to create a continuity.⁴¹⁶ Rudra-Śiva is believed to be depicted on the so-called "proto-Śiva" seals from the Indus Valley Civilization, showing the close connection between the terrible Vedic god Rudra, and Śiva, the more temperate god of later Classical Hinduism.⁴¹⁷ The Pāśupatas were a sect whose membership consisted only of *brāhmaṇ* men, who had renounced worldly life and become ascetics, and paid extreme devotion to the god Rudra or Śiva. They considered themselves the "cattle of Rudra-Śiva."⁴¹⁸

Like other Śaiva orders, they covered their bodies with sacred ash (*vibhūti*) as a sectarian marker.⁴¹⁹ However, the white ash was not only an outside mark for the benefit of others, signalling a religious association. In fact, as ash is connected with the polluting state of death, it was a tool for cutting social and worldly connections "by cultivating a particular state of being divorced from social reality, which, they believed, would lead directly to liberation."⁴²⁰ The Pāśupatas—and also the Kāpālikas, who will be discussed below—employed what has been described as "transgressive behaviour," such as handling impure substances, to show their power and "to move past the mundane distinctions of pure and impure."⁴²¹ In this, they imitated Rudra-Śiva, who paradoxically is said first to have violated social laws and rituals of society in order then to correct, restore and reaffirm them and to set up a world of order and purity.⁴²²

413 Compare Lorenzen, "Śaivism: An Overview": 9, and Whitmore, "Lord of Kedar": 62. Van Troy dates the Pāśupata tradition to roughly the years 200–1900 (J. Van Troy, "The Radical Social Protest of the Pashupata Ascetics," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 36 [1975]: LXX). This estimate is very unusual, as they appear to have ceased to exist much earlier.

414 This has been argued by Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 173.

415 On this, refer to Whitmore, "Lord of Kedar": 62.

416 See Lorenzen, "Śaivism: An Overview": 7.

417 Refer to Lorenzen, "Śaivism: An Overview": 7, and Whitmore, "Lord of Kedar": 62.

418 Whitmore has written on this subject (Whitmore, "Lord of Kedar": 62).

419 In outward appearance and behaviour, the Pāśupata saints—and the followers of the other early Śiva groups discussed below—in many respects closely resemble Śiva and his ascetic followers in mainstream Śaiva traditions. This can be seen in their general yogic behaviour, for instance, in smearing their bodies with ashes, in tying up their matted locks in a pile and wearing animal skins. See, for instance, the description of Śiva in Lorenzen, "Śaivism: An Overview": 7.

420 This quote has been taken from Fisher, "Public Philology": 133.

421 For this quote, refer to Whitmore, "Lord of Kedar": 63, 70.

422 See Hugh B. Urban, "The Remnants of Desire: Sacrificial Violence and Sexual Transgression in the Cult of the Kāpālikas and in the Writings of Georges Bataille," *Religion* 25 (1995): 70, 72–73.

Amongst the many Pāśupata schools were, for instance, the Lakuliśas or Lākulas, who believed that Lakuliśa (Lakuḷīśvara) had been the founder of the Pāśupata system, in the second century CE.⁴²³ In Sanskrit, Lakuliśa means “the lord with a club.”⁴²⁴ The Lakuliśa Pāśupatas were known alternatively as the Kālāmukhas (Kālāmukhas, Kālamukhas); sometimes, the latter were considered a branch or further development of the Lakuliśa Pāśupatas.⁴²⁵ These faith groups were closely related and followed similar ideals but still carried different names; as none of them survive today, some issues still remain unclear.

5.2.3 The Kālāmukhas

The Kālāmukhas were the predominant religious group in Karnataka from about the ninth to the thirteenth or fourteenth century.⁴²⁶ They are a heterodox Śaiva order, worshipping the male god Bhairava and the goddess Kālī. In translation, Kālāmukha means the “dark-” or “black-faced ones.”⁴²⁷ This appears to relate to their practice of marking their foreheads with a black line.⁴²⁸ Bhairava, who has been associated with Śiva since the period of the fifth to seventh century CE,⁴²⁹ is a guardian deity, a demon lord, in fact the commander of Śiva’s group of evil followers (*gaṇa*), who dwell in the cremation grounds.⁴³⁰ However, Bhairava is also considered to be Śiva himself, a wrathful form, a personification of Śiva’s anger.⁴³¹

⁴²³ On this, refer to Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 9–10, and Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 175.

⁴²⁴ Compare Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 177, and Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 62–63. On the Lakuliśas, refer also to Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”: 33.

⁴²⁵ In Karnataka, their name is usually spelled “Kālāmukha” (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 49) and for this reason, this is the spelling we are using throughout this book. Compare David N. Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background to Virāśaivism,” in *Studies in Orientalology: Essays in Memory of Prof. A.L. Basha*, ed. S.K. Maity, Upendra Thakur and A.K. Narain (Shahganj: Y.K. Publishers, 1988): 278, Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: xii, 173, Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 238, Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 195, and Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 63, 70. In the same publication on page 69, Whitmore points to a connection of the Pāśupatas and Kāpālikas, to the later yogic Śaiva group of the Nāths, Siddhas or Nāth-Siddhas, who emphasise an inner “serpent power,” known as *kuṇḍalinī*. On this, refer also to Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 10.

⁴²⁶ Lorenzen argues for a prevalence of the Kālāmukhas in the south of India until the thirteenth century (Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background”: 278) and Whitmore for their predominance till the fourteenth century (Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 63).

⁴²⁷ Refer to Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 63. The question of heterodoxy can also be questioned, as has been shown by Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background”: 278–79.

⁴²⁸ This has been discussed by Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 97.

⁴²⁹ Compare Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 64.

⁴³⁰ For further details, see Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 64.

⁴³¹ This has been discussed in Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 64.

By the ninth century CE, the Kālāmukhas had almost entirely replaced the Pāśupatas and become a very—if not the most—influential faith in Karnataka.⁴³² This appears to have been mainly thanks to their organisation around *maṭhas*.⁴³³ In the eleventh century, they vastly expanded their spread of religious centres, temples and monastic institutions throughout the State of Karnataka (but also in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh) by absorbing other local cults.⁴³⁴ This can be deduced from the large number of dedicatory inscriptions recording donations to Kālāmukha temples and their associated *maṭhas* dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries in particular.⁴³⁵ The cults absorbed included Vaiṣṇavas and followers of various goddess cults, Śāktas.⁴³⁶ Hegde explains that the absorption of Vaiṣṇava cults into Śaiva temples was a simple matter, involving the building of three shrines (*trikūṭācala*) with the main and central sanctum dedicated to Śiva and the other two to Viṣṇu and a third deity, such as Brahmā.⁴³⁷ Sacred structures enshrining the trinity of Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu are known as *tripuruṣaśālā* temples.⁴³⁸ At Naregal, in Gadag district, there is a fascinating eleventh-century temple, a former Jaina *basadi*, which is today known as the Narendra Gudi or Vir Nārāyaṇa Gudi. Although it does not have three separate shrines, it houses a *liṅga*, a statue of Viṣṇu as Nārāyaṇa and one of Brahmā, which are all venerated inside the same converted temple structure.⁴³⁹ Furthermore, from these dedicatory inscriptions, one can also deduce that the Kālāmukhas consisted of two main groups: the more influential Śaktipariṣad and the Siṃhapariṣad.⁴⁴⁰

There was a preponderance of Kālāmukha sites in the north of Karnataka, especially in the State of Dharwar.⁴⁴¹ Ishwaran describes the Kālāmukhas as a particular threat to Jainism, especially in the north of Karnataka, where many *basadis* were

432 See Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 236, 240. On page 238 he argues that this was mainly due to the organisation of the Kālāmukhas around *maṭhas*. Ishwaran stresses the fact that Kālāmukhas and Kāpālikas used supernatural techniques, such as sacred syllables (*mantra*) and magical Tantric practices as deceptions to convert the people (Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 47).

433 See Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 238.

434 On this refer to Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 47.

435 Compare Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 97 and Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: xii.

436 Refer to Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 198, 199.

437 For further details, see Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 200 and also Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background”: 281.

438 On this, refer to Dhaky, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*: 587.

439 On Naregal, refer to P.M. Joseph, *Jainism in South India* (Thiruvananthapuram: The International School of Dravidian Linguistics, 1997): 31–32. The former Jaina iconography was removed from the lintel leading to the sanctum in order to obscure the takeover of the former sacred Jain site.

440 *Pariṣad* means group, assembly or council in Sanskrit (Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 97, 100).

441 On this, refer to Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background”: 283.

taken over.⁴⁴² Kālāmukhas are known to have adopted a strictly sectarian policy in order to widen their power base over people of different faiths.⁴⁴³ Inscriptions show that some shrines were taken over by the Kālāmukhas and that others were lost to different faith groups later,⁴⁴⁴ showing how volatile the religious climate in Karnataka was between the start of the eleventh and the end of the fifteenth century.

The Kālāmukha priests were ascetics, known as *yogins* or *jaṅgamas*, “moving” itinerant monks.⁴⁴⁵ As a group, strongly influenced by Tantric thought and practices, they were seen and described as lacking self-discipline and accused of engaging in lax sexual practices.⁴⁴⁶ However, such portrayals often come from descriptions in Jaina literary works.⁴⁴⁷ Unfortunately, none of the Kālāmukhas’ (or the Kāpālikas’) own religious texts have survived, so our idea of them is largely based on descriptions provided by their rivals and, in many ways, adversaries.⁴⁴⁸ The Kālāmukhas’ influence further increased in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with a notable surge during the twelfth century,⁴⁴⁹ but declined sharply from the end of the thirteenth century, after losing much of the support of the royal dynasties of the Western Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa, the Kaḷacuris and the Seuṇas.⁴⁵⁰ It appears that the Kālāmukhas, their temples and their influential *maṭhas* were absorbed by the even more powerful and escalating cult of the Vīraśaivas in the fifteenth century.⁴⁵¹

442 See Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 46.

443 This has been discussed by Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 198.

444 Compare Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 99.

445 Refer to Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 98 and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 236. The term *jaṅgamana* for itinerant ascetics is also used in Vīraśaivism. On this, refer, for instance, to Chapter 4 by Lorenzetti in this publication.

446 On the sexual practices of the Kāpālikas refer to Hudson (D. Dennis Hudson, “Violent and Fanatic Devotion among the Nāyanārs: A Study in the *Periya Purāṇam* of Cēkkilār,” in *Criminal Gods and Demon Devotees: Essays on the Guardians of Popular Hinduism*, ed. Alf Hiltebeitel [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989]: 391) and, on the Tantric influence, to Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background”: 278.

447 Zydenbos, for instance, refers to such a Jaina literary work dating from the twelfth century (Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 179).

448 Lorenzen has written on this issue (Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: xi–xii).

449 On this issue, see Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 97, Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 97, and Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 70.

450 Refer to Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background”: 278.

451 Compare Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 99, 167–72, Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background,” Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Introduction: The Jaina Heritage”: 23, Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 51, and Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 70. The most detailed discussion of this issue can be found in Lorenzen, “The Kālāmukha Background.” See also Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 235–36, 238 for arguments for and against this continuity. Fisher also refers to Vīraśaivas absorbing the Pāśupatas and to their being themselves absorbed by the Vīraśaivas (Elaine M. Fisher, “Hindu Sectarianism: Difference in Unity,” in *Hindu Pluralism: Religion and the Public Sphere in Early Modern South India* [Oakland: University of California Press, 2017]: 43).

5.2.4 The Kāpālikas

Bhairava, the wrathful incarnation of Śiva, is likewise the central deity of the heterodox south Indian Kāpālikas, also known as the Kāpāla or Mahāvratin sect. *Kapāla* means “skull” in Sanskrit and the name Kāpālika means “skull-bearers.” This refers to the story of Śiva or Bhairava cutting off one of the five heads of the god Brahmā and finding that the skull stuck to his hand, which made him “someone who carries a skull,” a Kāpālika.⁴⁵² Also related to this legend is the lesser-known name of the sect, “Mahāvratin,” which derives from *mahāvratā*, the great vow, referring to the pledge Śiva had to make after cutting off the head.⁴⁵³ His sin could be erased only after twelve years at Varanasi, which in consequence turned into a prominent centre of Śaiva devotion.⁴⁵⁴ Followers belonging to this group were also known as *kapālinas*.⁴⁵⁵ The earliest attested use of the word *kapālin*, a “skull bearer,” dates from sometime between the second and fourth century CE.⁴⁵⁶

The Kāpālikas, who focused on Bhairava as a personal god, were a *bhakti* cult, who aimed at achieving a spiritual union with Śiva.⁴⁵⁷ The order was probably founded during the early centuries of the common era and we find references to them in various *Purāṇas* and other texts from the sixth century CE onwards.⁴⁵⁸ The cult flourished especially in Karnataka and there from the seventh to the fifteenth century.⁴⁵⁹

We can see from the associations outlined in connection with the terrible Bhairava in the section on the Kālāmukhas above (section 5.2.3) that violent transgression of mainstream rules about religious behaviour and the contravention of the concepts of purity and pollution as “a tool for religious progress” was a prime concern for the highly ascetic cults of the Kālāmukhas and the Kāpālikas.⁴⁶⁰ The Kāpālikas, however,

452 The deed of killing Brahmā was considered equal to killing a *brāhmaṇ* priest.

453 Lorenzen has written on this (Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 9, and Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 73–82).

454 Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 64–65, has written on this. See also Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 9, Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 69–70, and Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”: 33, 35–36.

455 On this, see Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 153, Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 9, and Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, “Interrogating ‘Unity in Diversity’: Voices from India’s Ancient Texts,” *Social Scientist* 43, no. 9–10 (2015): 15.

456 Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 13, has written on this.

457 Compare Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 83–95.

458 On the origin of the cult and textual reference from the first centuries CE, refer to Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 69, and on the later textual sources, mentioned here, to Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 152, 154.

459 Compare Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 69.

460 Refer to Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 67, and Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 64, 70.

have generally been identified as the most disreputable of the Śaiva sects.⁴⁶¹ Kāpālika ascetics, are believed, for example, to have resided in cremation grounds, where they performed rituals which involved handling polluting substances linked to faeces, sex, death and alcohol.⁴⁶² This is said to have included freely associating and performing rituals with female Kāpālika practitioners as Tantric consorts, as well as having sex with outcasts.⁴⁶³ According to Törzsök, it was not typical in the other Atimārga religions for male and female initiates to perform rituals together, as their members were expected to remain celibate.⁴⁶⁴

The ascetics are said to have worn their matted hair in an ascetic knot, with a garland of skulls and human bones around their neck (*kaṇṭhikā*) and to have smeared their body with ashes. All of these items, being related to death, cadavers and cremation, are considered highly polluting. Associated with the name of their order, Kāpālins, as “skull-bearers” are said to have carried a human skull (*kapāla*) as their alms bowl, from which they ate their food.⁴⁶⁵ For a *kapālin*, the skull was as essential as the sacred thread to a *brāhmaṇ*.⁴⁶⁶ Kāpālins are thought to have drunk wine, menstrual blood and sperm from the skull of a *brāhmaṇ*, identifying them clearly as a heterodox and Tantric sect.⁴⁶⁷ They are also believed to have carried out castrations and beheadings,⁴⁶⁸ and participated in fire oblations involving the offering of severed human flesh and even in full human sacrifices, symbolising extreme violence.⁴⁶⁹

All these violent and orgiastic practices, of highly Tantric character, represent strongly transgressive activities. By ignoring the concepts of purity and pollution, a duality which is so central to mainstream Hindu practices, the practitioners aimed to achieve a condition of unworldly, ethereal spiritual distance or detachment from this world. However, they were also intentionally abusing and capitalising on the transgressive force found at the boundary between social order and its transgression, as a source of mundane and non-spiritual power which might lead to liberation.⁴⁷⁰ Like

461 Jash, “The Kapalikas,” and Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”: 33 have commented on this.

462 For further details, refer to Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 98, Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 153, Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 67, Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 67, and Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”: 33, 42.

463 On this, see Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 67.

464 See Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”: 34.

465 On this, refer to Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”: 33.

466 Jash has commented on this (Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 152, 153).

467 On this, refer to Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 89, Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 74, and Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 152, 153.

468 Compare Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 69–78.

469 Compare Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 152, Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 85–88, and Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 74.

470 Urban has written on these two interpretations of Kāpālika behaviour (Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 67).

the Pāśupatas, the Kāpālikas also imitated the initially transgressive and ultimately corrective behaviour of the god (Rudra-)Śiva.⁴⁷¹

In considering descriptions of the behaviour of the Kāpālikas we have to bear in mind—as has already been pointed out in the context of the Kālāmukhas—that none of their own texts have been preserved. In consequence, our view has been determined by the descriptions left by competing and often antagonistic faith groups.⁴⁷² As well as acts which went against the codes of conduct of mainstream Hindus, the Kāpālikas are also believed to have performed highly ascetic acts of renunciation and penance. They appear to have venerated not only Śiva—mainly in his symbolic form as the abstract *liṅga*—and Rudra, but also the fierce goddess Cāmuṇḍā, a Tantric *yoginī* or mother goddess, who lives in cremation grounds and is closely associated with the often violent goddesses Kālī and Durgā.⁴⁷³ Cāmuṇḍā, too, is draped with a garland of skulls, seated on a corpse and accompanied by jackals, perceived as negative forces.⁴⁷⁴ All these aspects give strong expression to the Tantric nature of this cult.⁴⁷⁵

Kāpālika temples were found mainly in the State of Mysore.⁴⁷⁶ While during the sixth and seventh centuries CE the cult of the Kāpālikas can be found throughout India right up to the Punjab in the north, the south Indian *kapālin* ascetics appear to have been especially heterodox, rejecting all *brāhmaṇical* practices.⁴⁷⁷ They are known to have applied trickery and delusion to convert new followers,⁴⁷⁸ in order to expand their influence. In the fifteenth century, the cult was absorbed by other Śaiva groups, such as the Kānpaṭās, the Goraknāths and the Aghoris, whose behaviour was also highly transgressive.⁴⁷⁹

All these early Śaiva groups are at heart non-*śāstric*, rejecting the *Vedas*. As non-Vedic (or even anti-Vedic) religions employing impure practices, they were rebuked by mainstream, *Purāṇic* Śaivism. However, all of them, and perhaps most prominently the Kālāmukhas, absorbed local belief systems and as such contributed to the

471 This has been discussed by Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 73.

472 Only a small number of Kāpālika inscriptions have been preserved (Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: xi–xii). These have been discussed in detail in the aforementioned publication by Lorenzen.

473 On the associated violence and unrestrained sexual energy connected with these goddesses, refer to Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 70.

474 On her iconography, refer to Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 153, and Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”: 38.

475 The Tantric nature of goddesses in Jainism was discussed earlier in this chapter (4.1.1 “Female Divinities: Śāktism (*Yakṣīs*)”). Urban has commented on this association in the context of the Kāpālikas (Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 69).

476 Compare Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: xii.

477 According to Jash, there are two main groups of Kāpālikas in India, the *brāhmaṇical* and the non-*brāhmaṇical* (Jash, “The Kapalikas”: 154). See his publication for further details.

478 Lorenzen and Ishwaran have written on this (Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 93; Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 47).

479 On this, refer to Urban, “The Remnants of Desire”: 69.

spread of Śaiva groups in the region. Eventually, these non-conformist groups, too, were assimilated, Sanskritised, *brāhmaṇised* and integrated into the mainstream religious thought of pan-Indian religions.⁴⁸⁰ This illustrates the complex inner structure of Śaivism in South India⁴⁸¹ and explains why it is so difficult at times to determine the precise sect governing a temple. Not only might the group in charge have changed repeatedly, but the believers frequenting a site might hold quite divergent views as to which precise sect they follow.⁴⁸²

Whitmore points out the importance of pilgrimage centres, such as Kedarnath (Kedārñāth) in the Garhwal Himalaya and Srisaïlam (Śrīsaïla) in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh, another of the *jyotirlinga* sites, as meeting points for these various Śaiva sects, most notably Pāśupata, Lākula, Kālāmukha, Kāpālīka and at times even Vīraśaiva followers.⁴⁸³ All these Śaiva orders competed for material power throughout the region, establishing temples and organising *maṭhas* in order to increase their influence. The Śaiva derivative of the Vīraśaivas, which gained particular importance in Karnataka from the early twelfth century onwards, will be discussed in the following section.

5.3 Vīraśaivism and Discrimination of the Jains

Many of the aforementioned Śaiva sects were soon to be marginalised and absorbed by the new and all-powerful Vīraśaivas,⁴⁸⁴ who posed the strongest opposition and the greatest threat to the Jains in Karnataka during the medieval period. Just like the

⁴⁸⁰ Refer to Hegde, “Temple-Hierarchy”: 238 and Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 193.

⁴⁸¹ Hegde has written on this topic (Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 199).

⁴⁸² This is an issue raised in Chapter 5, where we shall see that the present denomination of converted Jaina temples is not always entirely clear.

⁴⁸³ In addition, they included also Śaiva Siddhānta groups, discussed briefly in the context of Tamil Nadu, and those which followed Vedic ritual patterns, known as Vaidikas or Smārtas, non-sectarian, orthodox traditions, which have not been discussed here. For further details, refer to Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 10, Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 219, Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 71, and Jash, “The Kapalīkas”: 154. Jash also comments on the connections between Kāpālīkas and Somasiddhāntins or Śivaśāsanas (Jash, “The Kapalīkas”: 152), which have also been discussed by Lorenzen, *The Kāpālīkas and Kālāmukhas*: 82–83. According to Törzsök, Kāpālīkas and Somasiddhāntins are the same (Törzsök, “Why are the Skull-Bearers”).

⁴⁸⁴ In addition to Kālāmukhas, Kāpālīkas and Pāśupatas, Zydenbos also mentions the Śrōtriya tradition as a precursor of Vīraśaivism, which also merged with the new Vīraśaivism (Robert J. Zydenbos, “Līngāyata,” in *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions*, ed. Jeffery D. Long, Rita D. Sherma, Pankaj Jain and Madhu Khanna [Dordrecht: Springer, 2022]: 846 [section entitled: Hinduism and Tribal Religions]). For a discussion of the application of the term “sect” with regards to the Vīraśaivas, see William McCormack, “Lingayats as a Sect,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 93, no. 1 (1963): 59–71.

faith groups discussed above, Viraśaivism originates in the region of Karnataka itself and is a local force which gained power in the mid-twelfth century.

5.3.1 Basava and His Teachings

Viraśaivism has at times been described as a form of “neo-Śaivism” although practitioners and most academics consider it to be a distinct religion.⁴⁸⁵ Ishwaran, for instance, is absolutely clear about the fact that Hinduism and Viraśaivism are two separate faiths and emphasises that Viraśaivism is one of the youngest Indian religions, which celebrated its eight-hundredth anniversary in 1968 with the official participation of the Vice President of India.⁴⁸⁶ This provides an official date of 1168 CE for the origins of Viraśaivism, which as we will see below, is difficult to fix. Ishwaran, who uses the terms Liṅgāyat/Liṅgāyatism as alternatives for Viraśaiva/Viraśaivism, writes: “In what follows, it will be shown that the Liṅgāyat religion [...] is not only opposed to the Brahman religion, but that it rests on doctrines which are mutually exclusive.”⁴⁸⁷ The authors in this volume, too, treat Viraśaivism as a distinct faith for reasons which will be explained in more detail below.

The founding of Viraśaivism is credited to the Śaiva *brāhmaṇ* Basava, also known as Basavaṇṇa or Basavēśvara (Basaveśvara) (Plate 1.30). “Basava” is the Kannada term for “bull,” equivalent of the Sanskrit “*vṛṣabha*.” Both are epithets for Nandī (Nandin), the carrier animal and itself a manifestation of Śiva.⁴⁸⁸ The *Basava Purāṇa* states that Nandī is as an incarnation of Śiva, sent by the god to earth to care for humanity.⁴⁸⁹ Due to the importance which Nandī has for Viraśaivas, most of their temples throughout Karnataka contain a *liṅga* and a small stone statue of the bull, Nandī (Plate 1.31, 4.18). The ending “-aṇṇa” in Basavaṇṇa means older brother and is used as a term of respect,⁴⁹⁰ whilst Kannada “-ēśvara” (in Sanskrit: “-īśvara”) in the form Basavēśvara signifies “lord” or “god” with a number of related meanings. Basava was born into a prominent Śaiva *brāhmaṇ* family in Bagevadi (Bāḡēvāḍi) in Karnataka, at a time when Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇ*s had a higher standing in society than Śaivas.⁴⁹¹

485 On this issue, refer to *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. 2: lxxx, to McCormack who considers Liṅgāyats to be Hindus (McCormack, “On Lingayat Culture”: 175), and to Leslie, who, although she does not share this view, describes this phenomenon (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 229).

486 Refer to Ishwaran (Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 1) and also his entire Chapter 5, entitled “Not an Off-Shoot of Hinduism, but a New Religion” (Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 87–110).

487 For this quote, see Ishwaran (Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 87).

488 Compare Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 239–40.

489 Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 240, has written on this.

490 On this, refer to Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 228.

491 On this, see Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 239.



Plate 1.30: This incomplete mural from the Basavēśvara Temple at Shedbal, which is a converted Jaina *basadi*, depicts Basava, the founder or reformer of an earlier form of Viraśaivism.

It is not entirely clear whether Basava created Viraśaivism from scratch or whether he merely reformed an earlier faith, probably known as Liṅgāyatism.⁴⁹² Because of this, the authors in this publication favour the name Liṅgāyats and Liṅgāyatism when we make specific reference to the period or the form of the religion before the reform activities or the time of Basava. We use the term Viraśaivas or Viraśaivism to refer to

⁴⁹² Leslie, for instance, has written on this unclear situation with regards to the origin of Viraśaivism in much detail (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 235–37). In this section, she points out that the first written references to Basava and Viraśaivism date from 1162 CE only. Refer also to McCormack, “Liṅgāyats as a Sect”: 59. It is interesting that with regards to Jainism, we have a similar situation. Mahāvira is believed to have renewed and reformulated an earlier path directed already by Pārśvanātha (Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 8).



Plate 1.31: In converted *jinālayas*, as here at Hangal, the shrines were cleared and a *linga*, faced by a statue of Nandī, set up. The Jaina icons, formerly adorning the lintel to the sanctum, were erased.

the religion in its modernised or new form under the saint Basava, and afterwards, from the twelfth century onwards.⁴⁹³

This differentiation is helpful, as the faith developed into a very powerful, in many ways military organisation only under Basava's influence, when the tag "*vīra*" (hero) was adopted.⁴⁹⁴ In translation, the Viraśaivas are the "heroic" or "militant Śaivas," which refers—at least during their early reformed days in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—to their somewhat martial mindset and pugnacious approach to the spread of their expanding faith. Tiziana Lorenzetti in this publication points out that the term "heroic" may also relate to the "strength of their devotional experience" (see Chapter 4). Yet in the same chapter, she also highlights the fact that the fifth of the five regulating principles of conduct (*pañcācāra*), on which Viraśaiva ethics are founded, comprises working, serving and fighting to defend the community (*gaṇācāra*).⁴⁹⁵ The name Liṅgāyat can be translated as "worshipper," "wearer" or "bearer of the *liṅga*," indicating the central importance of this sacred symbol for believers.⁴⁹⁶ The founding or reform of the religion of the Viraśaivas seems to have been provoked by the long domination of the Jainas in the region and the strong Vaiṣṇava activities in the area under Rāmānujācārya in the eleventh century.⁴⁹⁷

Basava was born and raised at the start of the twelfth century in the north of Karnataka, where he first practised the new creed. His dates are disputed, but he was

493 There is, however, no uniformity in approach by scholars working on this subject. The authors McCormack, "Lingayats as a Sect": 59, Kurt Friedrichs, "Liṅgāyat," in *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion: Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Zen*, ed. Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber, Franz-Karl Erhard, Kurt Friedrichs and Michael S. Diener (Boston: Shambhala, 1994): 202, Leslie "Understanding Basava": 229, and Zydenbos, "Liṅgāyata": 846, either use the terms synonymously or underline the fact that Liṅgāyats and Viraśaiva are frequently used synonymously by others. However, Zydenbos, on the same page, outlines that some practitioners apply the term Liṅgāyatism or Basavaism to a stricter and less Hinduised form of the religion. On page 847, Zydenbos states that the term Viraśaivism actually only originates in the fourteenth century. Leslie describes the tendency to apply the term Viraśaiva more to outline the "philosophical or historical context" and Liṅgāyat to denote the modern social group (Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 229), which is the opposite of our approach in this study. Whitmore argues that the two were separate faiths to start with and that Viraśaivas and Liṅgāyats merged only in the fifteenth or sixteenth century (Whitmore, "Lord of Kedar": 71). This shows the many incongruities with regards to the two terms, which this study does not aim to resolve. It is only important to understand how we use these terms in this publication, as outlined in the text above.

494 As in the name of the twenty-fourth Jina, Mahāvīra, meaning "the great hero."

495 Compare S.C. Nandimath, *A Handbook of Viraśaivism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979): 48.

496 On this, refer to Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 2, and Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 229. Zydenbos translates Liṅgāyat as "one who has accepted the *liṅga*" (Zydenbos, "Liṅgāyata": 846).

497 Leslie has written on this. According to her, the Jainas had been the dominant political power from the second century BCE, which I would consider too early (Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 232). The evidence seems to me to show that it was not until the eighth or ninth century CE that the Jainas came to control much of religious and political life in Karnataka.

probably born in 1105 or 1106 and must have died in around 1167 or 1168.⁴⁹⁸ It was Basava's aim to generate a powerful socio-religious reform movement.⁴⁹⁹ He combined devotional *bhakti* and Tantric thought to outline his religious and social reformist ideas in his *Vacanas* (free-verse “sayings”),⁵⁰⁰ written largely in the local vernacular Kannada language.⁵⁰¹

Vīraśaivism clearly has its roots in the many diverse belief systems which one might refer to collectively as “mainstream” Śaivism. Despite this, in its modernised form, restructured by Basava, it is considered by most scholars and practitioners a separate religion, independent from Hinduism. The Indian Constitution of 1950, too, lists Liṅgāyats as having a separate faith from Hindus.⁵⁰² Zydenbos writes, “Some Liṅgāyats have advocated that the religion should be considered a fully independent one, and not a variety of Hinduism.”⁵⁰³ This issue is highlighted in Chapter 4 in this volume by Tiziana Lorenzetti, who also cites contemporary newspaper articles reporting on the contemporary struggle of the Vīraśaivas/Liṅgāyats in Karnataka to be recognised as a distinct religion.

Vīraśaivas have sometimes been considered “unorthodox Hindus,” but this is unconvincing, given their refusal to accept core dogmas of *brāhmaṇical* Hinduism; Vīraśaivas not only reject the veneration of multiple gods, the concept of *karma* and the authority of the *Vedas*—the central body of religious texts in Hinduism⁵⁰⁴—but they also oppose social inequalities, the caste system, which dominates Hindu social structures and religious life, and child marriage. They allow widows to marry again and,

498 For different combinations of these dates, refer to A.K. Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva* (London: Penguin, 1973): 61, Padoux, “Vīraśaivas”: 12, Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: frontispiece, and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 228. There are a number of authors who place Basava much later than this. Zydenbos gives 1134 CE to 1196 CE as the dates of his life (Robert J. Zydenbos, “Vīraśaivism,” in *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions*, ed. Jeffery D. Long, Rita D. Sherma, Pankaj Jain and Madhu Khanna [Dordrecht: Springer, 2022]: 1748 [section entitled: Hinduism and Tribal Religions]). Lorenzen places Basava even later and suggests a date of birth around 1150 CE (Lorenzen, “Śaivism: An Overview”: 10), whilst Nandimath even argues for 1160 CE (Nandimath, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*: 17). In this context, Ramanujan underlines how unclear and vague the dates and events in Basava's life actually are (Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 61).

499 On this issue, see *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. 2: lxxx. This is also how Scholz describes the faith group in her Chapter 3.

500 The *Vacanas* represent a literary genre, combining prose and verse, referred to as “prose lyrics” (Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 19) or “prose-poems” (Chapter 4 by Lorenzetti).

501 Compare McCormack, “Lingayats as a Sect”: 59, and Padoux, “Vīraśaivas”: 12. The *Vacanas* are Basava's most important writings. Ishwaran is unusual in denying that Vīraśaivism is a *bhakti* religion (Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 111–41).

502 Refer to McCormack, “On Lingayat Culture”: 175, Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 229, and Zydenbos, “Liṅgāyata”: 846.

503 For the quote, refer to Zydenbos, “Liṅgāyata”: 846.

504 On the issue of unorthodox Hindus, refer to Friedrichs, “Liṅgāyat”: 202, and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 229.

crucially, bury their dead rather than burning them (Plate 1.32 above).⁵⁰⁵ The burial sites of their *gurus*, in front of which their ascetic wooden sandals are usually kept on display, are especially venerated (Plate 1.32 below).

On the basis of these substantial differences, Davis describes the period of Basava as one of “dramatic social change and intellectual ferment.”⁵⁰⁶ Saletore identifies the rejection of the caste system by Basava as a direct imitation of Jaina behaviour, through which, he argues, the *Vīraśaivas*—as also some Hindus, Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas—aimed to counteract the strong influence of Jainism in the region of South India.⁵⁰⁷ Again, contrasting with mainstream Digambara Jainism, *Vīraśaivas* thought that women could attain enlightenment just as men could.⁵⁰⁸ Through many of these social and societal reforms, the new faith became especially appealing to lower-caste members of Kannada society in the twelfth and following centuries.

Another difference between *Vīraśaivism* and Hinduism is that orthodox *Vīraśaiva* followers are not supposed to use temples or worship images other than the *līṅga*. However, it is fascinating that the *līṅga* has often been provided with a face and can also be sheltered by a snake. Thus, some *Vīraśaiva līṅgas*, which should be abstract symbolic elements, take on almost personal and figural features (Plate 1.33). Temples are not forbidden to *Vīraśaivas*—who do maintain shrines—but they are not of central importance for attaining *nirvāṇa*.⁵⁰⁹ Furthermore, *Vīraśaivas* reject sacrifices and the concepts of purity and pollution, all central to conventional Hinduism. Temple cults involving veneration and the making of offerings are considered of no use, as is pilgrimage, and all rituals are denounced.⁵¹⁰ On the topic of temple veneration, Basava says:

Gods, gods, there are so many
there's no place left
for a foot.

There is only
one god. He is our Lord
of the Meeting Rivers.
(*Vacana* 563)⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁵ Compare Padoux, “*Vīraśaivas*”: 12.

⁵⁰⁶ For the quote, refer to Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 222. On these ideas refer also to Padoux, “*Vīraśaivas*”: 12 and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 230.

⁵⁰⁷ Refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 273.

⁵⁰⁸ On this, see, for instance, Lorenzetti in Chapter 4 in this publication. This expresses the idea of equality of all *Vīraśaiva* believers.

⁵⁰⁹ See Zydenbos, “*Liṅgāyata*”: 847.

⁵¹⁰ Padoux has written on this (Padoux, “*Vīraśaivas*”: 12). See also the section entitled “The Rejection of the Temple System” in Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 74–75.

⁵¹¹ Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 84.



Plate 1.32: Viraśaiva burial site (above) and the wooden sandals of a *guru* placed in front of his cenotaph (below) at the Gavisiddheśvara Maṭha in the former Jaina centre of Koppala.



Plate 1.33: Viraśaiva *linga* supplied with a face, a protective snake hood and a dress of flowers and garlands, venerated in the main shrine of the Gavisiddheśvara Maṭha at Koppala.

The “Lord of the Meeting Rivers,” in Kannada *kūḍalasaṅgamadēva*, named here, refers to a Śaiva pilgrimage site, called Sangama (Saṅgama) or Kudalasangama (Kūḍalasaṅgama), the confluence (meeting) of the rivers Krishna (Kṛṣṇā) and Malaprabha (Malaprabhā).⁵¹²

Despite these many differences, Viraśaivas have preserved strong links with Śaiva traditions and Zydenbos emphasises that “a radical break with *brāhmaṇical* Śaiva Hinduism never took place.”⁵¹³ In my research in Karnataka I found that people very clearly identified themselves as Viraśaivas or as Śaivas, without any ambiguity

⁵¹² Refer to Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 62 and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 239, 240.

⁵¹³ This quote come from Zydenbos, “Liṅgāyata”: 847. Ramanujan expresses a similar idea when he stresses that Viraśaivism was a rejection of contemporary Hindu practice only and should be considered as a return to its true core values, similar to the sixteenth-century German Protestant movement (Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 33). Michael also draws a parallel to Protestantism (R. Blake Michael,

in their own religious affiliation.⁵¹⁴ However, when it comes to religious sites, whose religious association might have changed many times between Śaivism and Vīraśaivism and sometimes back to Śaivism—and where the focus of veneration is only a *liṅga* and not a figural Śaiva image—there is more ambiguity. A similar opacity can be found in literary texts as well as in inscriptions, which, in spite of the many differences outlined above, sometimes refer generally to Śaivas and sometimes more specifically to Vīraśaivas, with no clear-cut differentiation between the two.

All Vīraśaivas must undertake formal initiation (*dikṣā*) and have a spiritual teacher (*guru*).⁵¹⁵ worship the aniconic symbol of the *liṅga* at least twice a day.⁵¹⁶ As has been pointed out, orthodox Vīraśaivas do not support temples with static (*sthāvara*) *liṅgas* but favour moving (*jaṅgama*) *liṅgas*.⁵¹⁷ Followers carry a small, private, portable *liṅga* in a container fastened to a thread around their neck, arm or chest. Ordinary worshippers carry a small black stone or raisin *liṅga*, usually only a centimetre or two large, in a small cloth sachet or silver container, worn on a thread (Plate 1.34). However, there are also more elaborate necklaces involving *rudrākṣa* berries or beads, with a heavily ornamented box for the most sacred item. *Rudrākṣa* seed beads are sacred to Vīraśaivas and Śaivas and are regarded as the eyes of Śiva.⁵¹⁸ In the practice which gave the Liṅgāyats their name, a small personal *liṅga* is given to each Vīraśaiva follower, male or female, during their initiation ceremony.⁵¹⁹ Vīraśaivas are identified by the *liṅga* they carry and by a white dot of ash—with or without the white horizontal Śaiva lines—on their foreheads (Plate 1.35).⁵²⁰ They refer to the *liṅga* as “divine principle” or *iṣṭaliṅga*. Carrying it makes the body of the devotee a temple.⁵²¹ This is graphically expressed in one of Basava’s *Vacanas*:

“Work as Worship in Vīraśaiva Tradition,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 50, no. 4 [1982]: 605, 607–8). Leslie has written on these issues as well (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 232, 258).

514 This has also been reaffirmed by Ishwaran. See, for instance, the whole chapter entitled “Not an Off-shoot of Hinduism, but a New Religion” in Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 87–110. Leslie has also written on this fact (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 229).

515 For further details on this, refer to Padoux, “Vīraśaivas”: 12.

516 Compare Padoux, “Vīraśaivas”: 12, and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 229.

517 On this, see, for instance, Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 20, Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 232, and Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 71. The concept of moving objects or teachers is also known in Jainism, where a Jaina teacher from Chikka Hanasoge (Chikka Haṇasoge), called Eḷācārya, was known as a ‘moving *tīrtha*’ which designated him as a person of extraordinary devoutness and religiosity (Sale-tore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 173–74).

518 On this, refer to McCormack, “On Lingayat Culture”: 184.

519 This ritual is performed by the family priest (*guru*) usually on the day of birth of a child (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 229, 230).

520 On this, refer to Padoux, “Vīraśaivas”: 12 and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 229.

521 This is underlined in detail by Ramanujan in the section entitled “The Temple and the Body,” in which the author outlines that all Indian temples are “traditionally built in the image of the human body” (Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 19–22). This is also true of Hindu temples.



Plate 1.34: Young male Viraśaiva follower from Koppala, carrying his small personal portable *līṅga* in a simple silver container, adorned with *rudrākṣa* beads, around his neck.

My legs are pillars,
the body the shrine,
the head a cupola
of gold
(*Vacana* 820)⁵²²

The related term *jaṅgamana*, as we saw earlier, in the context of the moving or *jaṅgama līṅgas*, is used to describe the itinerant Viraśaiva teachers, who carry the *līṅga* on their bodies.⁵²³ The hereditary priests of the Viraśaivas, who are wandering medicants without possessions, are also referred to as *jaṅgamas*.⁵²⁴ Viraśaivas are strict vegetarians.⁵²⁵ They consider work (*kāyaka*) as sacred, a kind of veneration or offering made to god.⁵²⁶

Whilst Jains support *anekāntavāda*, the philosophy of many principles or multiple viewpoints, the body and the *līṅga* in Viraśaiva practice are meant to merge in a

⁵²² Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 19.

⁵²³ See the section on *jaṅgamana* (2.2.2) in Chapter 4 in this publication by Lorenzetti.

⁵²⁴ Refer to Ramanujan, *Speaking of Śiva*: 20–21, Padoux, “Viraśaivas”: 12, Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 171, and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 230.

⁵²⁵ McCormack has written on this (McCormack, “Lingayats as a Sect”: 59).

⁵²⁶ Compare Michael, “Work as Worship”: 608–9, and Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 243.

nondual reality, transcending the binary opposites of devotee and deity to become one.⁵²⁷ As such, the Vīraśaivas propagate *ekāntavāda*, one principle, with regards to divine provenance and existence as a whole.⁵²⁸ Whitmore points out that finding the liberating power in oneself is a Tantric technique. Later on in this chapter, I shall outline Tantric practices and the embodiment of the divine.⁵²⁹

Through their quite simple and direct form of religiosity, welcoming converts from all levels of society, giving a relatively equal position to women, allowing widows to remarry and proposing independence from priests and expensive rituals, the Vīraśaivas managed to popularise their tradition both in the upper levels of society and amongst the ordinary population.⁵³⁰

5.3.2 Monasteries, Trade and Conversions: Increasing the Influence of Vīraśaivism

Like the Jainas, the Vīraśaivas established monastery-like establishments, *maṭhas*, to propagate their faith.⁵³¹ Each *maṭha* was and is today still led by a head, a *maṭhādhipati* (lord of the *maṭha*), *maṭhapati* or a *jagadguru* (Plate 1.35).⁵³² Traditionally, there are five main Vīraśaiva *maṭhas*, the *pañcapīṭhas* (literally, the “five seats”).⁵³³

However, the prominence of Vīraśaivas in trade and commerce in particular seems to have accelerated the rapid conversion of the dominant Jaina families, landowners and heads of trade guilds to this new creed.⁵³⁴ The strong involvement of Vīraśaivas in trade seems to be due to their religious view of work and trade as a religious and social service (*kāyaka*), where part of a person’s earnings is dedicated to supporting the community, especially those members who are less well off. This is known as *the*

527 Compare Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 71, 82. Van Troy describes a similar concept in the context of the Pāśupatas (Van Troy, “The Radical Social Protest”: LXX).

528 On this issue, see Pinto in this volume as well as Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 54.

529 This is discussed in section 5.6 “Rationales for the Popularity of Alternative Religions: *Bhakti* and *Tantra*?”.

530 Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 53.

531 Pinto in this book writes about this in relation to the west coast of Karnataka.

532 Zydenbos uses the term *maṭhādhipati* (Zydenbos, “Liṅgāyata”: 848; Zydenbos, “Vīraśaivism”: 1752) and Whitmore the term *jagadguru* or *jagatguru* (Whitmore, “Lord of Kedar”: 70).

533 For further information on the *maṭha* tradition in Vīraśaivism, refer to Padoux “Vīraśaivas”: 12, Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 230, and Zydenbos, “Liṅgāyata”: 848.

534 In fact, Pinto in this volume goes so far as to state that Vīraśaivism “percolated into the region only through trade.” Refer also to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 281–82, Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 58, and Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 82. On conversions from Jainism to Vīraśaivism, see also Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 35–36.



Plate 1.35: The *jagadguru*, the head of the Viraśaiva Maṭha at Koppala, wearing the distinct parallel white lines and the white dot of ash on his forehead in association with orange robes and a turban.

vīra bāṇajiga dharma (*vīra bāṇjiga dharma*), the “law of the noble merchants.” Due to the prominence of the Viraśaiva traders in commerce, Indian tradesmen are often referred to as a whole as Bāṇajiga (Bāṇjiga, Baṇajiga, Bāṇia, Bāṇiya or Bāṇija) merchants.⁵³⁵ Previously, the Jainas had been the prominent actors in trade, a profession which offered them the opportunity to live by the ideal of non-violence (*ahimsā*). During the twelfth century, however, the Viraśaivas took the upper hand in an aggressive struggle for control over the trade in the region. Wealthy landlords, whether Jaina by belief or not, had grown accustomed to their riches and wished to continue accumulating wealth and preserve their position in society. As such, those

⁵³⁵ Compare McCormack, “Lingayats as a Sect”: 59. On this, refer also to Chapter 4 by Lorenzetti in this publication. Tiziana Lorenzetti has also spoken in detail on the involvement of Viraśaivas in trade (Tiziana Lorenzetti, “The Viraśaivas / Liṅgāyats of 12th Century Karnataka,” talk by Tiziana Lorenzetti, organized by the Deccan Heritage Foundation, 24.05.2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsBqa756fR4&t=19s> [accessed 09.06.2022]). On this subject, see also Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 73.

at the high and influential levels of merchant society appear to have converted and followed Viraśaivism.⁵³⁶

The effect on Jainism was disastrous. These high-profile conversions led to a shift of finances towards Viraśaiva establishments, and the resulting loss of financial support had catastrophic effects on the maintenance of Jaina temples and the funding of costly ceremonies.⁵³⁷ Religious antagonism and commercial rivalry were linked, as various sacred centres of opposing faith groups struggled for the backing of the richest and most influential trading communities.⁵³⁸ With the conversion of dominant players, such as wealthy landowners, to Viraśaivism and other faiths, the common people inevitably followed suit.

In the records from the Middle Ages in Karnataka, we hear of occasional mass conversions, even under threat of violence.⁵³⁹ According to Zydenbos, initially there were mainly individual conversions. Later on in the establishment, as Viraśaivism gained ground, there were more group conversions of entire castes.⁵⁴⁰ This had the probably unintended effect of reintroducing the element of caste and *brāhmaṇising* certain parts of the Viraśaiva community.⁵⁴¹ Sabine Scholz, in this volume, is sceptical about enforced conversions, pointing out that in the past a strict affiliation with only one closely defined religious group was not as common as it is today. Religious association had more to do with allegiance to a social group than with an individual's personal religious faith. If the ruling classes converted, then the populace followed, often in mass conversions.⁵⁴² In this context, entire villages often changed their faith.⁵⁴³ It is debatable whether this should be considered as enforced or not. On the basis of a survey of Kannada literature, however, Sundaram refers to forceful conversions from Jainism to Viraśaivism.⁵⁴⁴

536 Pinto has written on this issue in Chapter 2 in this volume, where he also stresses that it was the merchant clans, who had brought the Jaina community economic success, who now offered support to the Viraśaivas.

537 On this issue, see the chapter by Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka."

538 This is based on the oral presentation by Tiziana Lorenzetti at the Deccan Heritage Foundation on 24 May 2022 (Tiziana Lorenzetti, "The Viraśaivas / Liṅgāyats of 12th Century Karnataka," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsBqa756fR4> [accessed 09.06.2022]).

539 Compare Zydenbos, "Jainism Endangered": 175.

540 On this subject, refer to the writings of Zydenbos, "Jainism Endangered": 175.

541 See Padoux "Viraśaivas": 12, Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 230, and Zydenbos, "Liṅgāyata": 847. This is a phenomenon we have also described as taking place in a Jaina context with many converts in the period between the fourth and the sixth century CE and with a certain caste acceptance by the Jainas from the eighth century CE onwards.

542 See Pinto, "Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire": 82. This fact has also been highlighted by Lorenzetti in this publication. Sundaram narrates the example of the poet Brahmaśiva, who was a Jaina, converted to Śaivism and then back to Jainism (Sundaram, "Elements of Jaina History": 35).

543 Sundaram refers to group conversions from Jainism to Viraśaivism (Sundaram, "Elements of Jaina History": 36).

544 On this issue, see Sundaram, "Elements of Jaina History": 36.

As has been pointed out before, conversions appear often to have followed religious debating competitions, with people converting as part of the contract or agreement they had struck. There are literary references to the conversion of ordinary *śrāvaka*s and high-ranking Jaina *ācārya*s to other creeds. Dibbad explains this as a consequence of the permanent and pronounced pressure placed on the Jainas at this time of rivalry, opposition and outright contest.⁵⁴⁵ In this context, even leading religious figures, such as Jaina monks, who by that time regularly managed large properties, seem at times to have been more anxious about preserving their newly acquired worldly powers and riches than with upholding their religious convictions.⁵⁴⁶ Tiziana Lorenzetti in Chapter 4 in this publication highlights the various economic and social factors which made Viraśaivism so attractive for the people in Karnataka at this time and which often led to conversions, especially during the fifteenth century. As a result, the Jainas finally lost large numbers of followers and were plunged into a situation of suppression and severe asymmetrical dependency in a State they had formerly controlled for centuries.

5.3.3 Persecution of the Jainas and Economic Conflict with the Viraśaivas

There appears to have been reciprocal opposition between Viraśaivas and Jainas at this volatile time in south Indian history, although other religious groups were involved in this struggle, too.⁵⁴⁷ Many of the verses of the Viraśaiva *Basava Purāṇa*, for instance, refer to strong anti-Vaiṣṇava sentiments.⁵⁴⁸ In these campaigns, *brāhmaṇical* shrines were also destroyed.⁵⁴⁹ However, according to Desai and Zydenbos, in Karnataka at this time, the Viraśaivas committed acts of outright violence against the Jainas in particular.⁵⁵⁰ The Jainas, as the most powerful in recent history, experienced the worst of their rivals' aggression.

As we have noted, the name Viraśaivas means the "heroic Śaivas," linked on the one hand with religious heroism but also with martial behaviour. In this context, Pius

545 See Dibbad, "Construction, Destruction and Renovation": 69. According to Pinto, in this volume, the Jainas had got used to a luxurious life-style, which they wanted to maintain by converting.

546 On this refer to Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 58.

547 Leslie has written on this subject (Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 232). Saletore compares the influence of the Viraśaiva revival with the influence the Nāyaṇārs had on the Jainas in Tamil Nadu (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 280).

548 See Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 257.

549 On this, see Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 54.

550 See Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 401–2 and Zydenbos, "Jainism Endangered": 175. To a lesser extent, see also Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 54.

F. Pinto refers to the Viraśaivas as aggressive and militant. Viraśaiva rulers and saints turned combative for the promulgation of their faith and religious ideals. Among the most influential leaders who aimed to raise Viraśaivism above Jainism were Ekāntada Rāmayya,⁵⁵¹ Viruparasa,⁵⁵² Goggidēva⁵⁵³ and Ekāntada Basavēśvara.⁵⁵⁴ The aggression of Viraśaiva combatants was directed at not only the Jainas but also their sacred places of worship. Raman, who has written in much detail on the religious, economic, social, cultural and educational significance of temples more generally,⁵⁵⁵ shows that by this time, sacred establishments operated as landowners, money lenders, consumers of goods and services, employers, patrons of the arts, and centres of learning. Owing to the enormous multifaceted significance which the *basadis* had for the Jaina community,⁵⁵⁶ they were usually the first to be attacked in the fight for hegemony.⁵⁵⁷

Adherents of the religions expanding most rapidly at this time—Śaivas, Viraśaivas, Kāḷāmukhas, Śrīvaiṣṇavas and Muslims—all took part in the desecration and demolition of earlier Jaina icons and shrines, and also in their conversion. The fact that the precise religious affiliation of people involved in this fight against the Jainas is not always completely clear becomes visible in references to Ekāntada Rāmayya, who is described as a Viraśaiva and as a Kāḷāmukha.⁵⁵⁸ This is not too surprising, as the Kāḷāmukhas were later absorbed by the Viraśaivas. Large numbers of Jaina *basadis* were targeted in religiously motivated attacks. There are many records which eulogise the conversions of Jainas and their temples to other creeds.⁵⁵⁹ As will be outlined in Chapter 5 of this publication, a remarkable number of icons and *jinalayas* were destroyed or annexed and re-used by the Viraśaivas. Given their highly reduced ritual, which has no need of icons, temples, or priests, the Viraśaivas were particularly uncomfortable with

551 Alternatively, his name has also been spelled: Śaiva Ekāntada Rāmayya. He is also simply known as Ekāntada, Ekānta or only as Rāmayya. See, for instance, Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 237.

552 His name, too, is known in a number of other combinations, such as Tribhuvanamalla Vira or Vira Someśvara Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Viruparasa.

553 Alternatives for his name are: Vira Goggidēva or Vira Goggidēvarasa.

554 For this information, see *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. 2: lxxx, Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 46, Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 54–55, Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 397, and Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 69–72.

555 See K.V. Raman, “The Role of Temple in the Socio-Economic Life of the People,” in *Temple Art, Icons and Culture of India and South-East Asia* (Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 2006): 11–18.

556 The multi-layered use of Jaina temples and religious centres in particular has also been emphasised by Suresh, “Jaina Monuments”: 178.

557 Dibbad has written about shrines being primary targets during conflicts in South Asia (Dibbad, “The Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 73).

558 See Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 70.

559 Two examples of Viraśaiva conversions of former *jinalayas* in Karnataka have been examined by Julia A.B. Hegewald in a joint publication with Subrata K. Mitra, “Jagannatha Compared: The Politics of Appropriation, Re-Use and Regional State Traditions in India,” *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics (HPSACP)* 36 (2008). See pp. 22 to 29 in particular.

large landowning Jaina monasteries and wealthy *basadis*.⁵⁶⁰ A good example of a Jaina shrine converted by the Viraśaivas is the former Digambara Jaina Mallinātha Temple, now the Vīrabhadreśvara Temple (Iranna Deva Gudi) at Haveri (Plate 1.36).



Plate 1.36: The former Digambara Jaina Mallinātha Temple at Haveri was converted by Viraśaivas, who named it the Vīrabhadreśvara Temple and removed most Jaina statuary from its roof.

⁵⁶⁰ Leslie has written on this topic as well (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 232).

There is substantial inscriptional evidence for such religiously motivated attacks on Jaina *basadis* by Viraśaiva practitioners. Hagiographical accounts of the lives of Viraśaiva saints, frequently strongly idealised, constitute a further source for direct references to Viraśaiva deeds from this time.⁵⁶¹ Plenty of inscriptions from the twelfth century record Viraśaiva attacks on the Jainas. Many refer to quite heated verbal debates or public contests between the two communities, in which one group always ended up subdued. Increasingly, it was the Jainas who gave way, in the face of the expansive Viraśaiva following and their persuasive strength.⁵⁶²

One particularly famous inscription in this context is a late twelfth-century one in Kannada, dating from about 1162 CE, during the reign of Bijjala (1162–1167 CE).⁵⁶³ It is found on the outer walls of the Somanātha Temple at Abalur (Ablūr), also spelled Abbalur (Abbalūr, Abbalūru) in the Haveri District. The Śaivas involved in this contest are referred to as Māheśvaras or Vira Māheśvaras, meaning Viraśaivas, and as the destroyers of Jainism in this part of Karnataka.⁵⁶⁴ Their representative is a Viraśaiva priest, the aforementioned Ekānta or Ekāntada Rāmayya, who in this inscription is called an Ugra Māheśvara, or “fear-evoking Śaiva.”⁵⁶⁵ He is said to have faced a group of Jainas in an argument. When Rāmayya asked the Jainas to worship Śiva, they challenged him to prove his own devotion to the god and the deity’s power, asking him to cut off his own head and—if Śiva were really so great—to ask him to reinstate it again after one week. If this could be done, they said, they would convert to Viraśaivism.⁵⁶⁶ According to the story, Rāmayya did as they asked and miraculously succeeded in reinstating his own severed head and coming back to life. However, the Jainas nevertheless refused to replace their Tirthaṅkara statue with that of a *liṅga*. In rage, according to the story, Rāmayya shattered the image himself. When the distressed Jainas turned to King Bijjala for support, he suggested they might start an even tougher contest in which the Jainas should offer the destruction of all of their *basadis*, should they succumb once again. The Jainas did not dare bid any further and the king awarded a

561 On the topic in general, see Dundas, *The Jains*: 110. On inscriptions, refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 398–402, and on hagiographical accounts to Velcheru Narayana Rao, *Śiva’s Warriors: The Basava Purāṇa of Pāṅkuriki Somanātha*, translated from the Telugu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). See also the Chapter by Scholz in this book.

562 Refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 311–13, and Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 81, 86.

563 Lorenzen dates the inscription to 1200 CE (Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 169).

564 See Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 69.

565 Compare Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline”: 218, Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 148, and Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 69.

566 This illustrates an interesting change from purely philosophical intellectual contest to one at the corporeal level, such as the mutilation of one’s own body. Nagarajaiah has also commented on this change (Nagarajaiah, “Attacks on Important Buddhist and Jaina Centres”: 58).

so-called “certificate of victory,” *jayapatra*, to the Viraśaivas.⁵⁶⁷ In an alternative version of the story, narrated in the *Basava Purāṇa*, Basava himself was present at the contest; although the defeated Jainas bowed to the *liṅga* and accepted the Viraśaiva marking on their foreheads, the triumphant Viraśaivas destroyed all the Jaina temples, “broke the heads of the Jina idols [...] and harassed and killed every known Jain and smashed them all into the ground.”⁵⁶⁸

Further inscriptional evidence testifies to the enforced conversion of Jainas to Śaivism, killings of Jainas, attacks on Jaina sites and the destruction of their temples. Despite the fact that the Jainas did not enter into a second contest, Ekāntada Rāmayya allegedly smashed around eight hundred Jaina *basadis* throughout Karnataka.⁵⁶⁹ His deeds and those of his followers were regarded as “purifications” (*pavāḍas*).⁵⁷⁰ Ekānta or Ekāntada Rāmayya’s name signals hostility towards the multi-perspectivism of the Jainas, referred to above, with “Ekānta” identifying him as a follower of the doctrine propagating only one reality.⁵⁷¹ A fervent defender of Viraśaivism, the mid-eleventh-century poet-saint Devara Dāsimayya, is also credited with defeating the Jainas and helping the Viraśaivas to establish supremacy in the area.⁵⁷² Anti-Jaina sentiments are expressed in many verses of the *Basava Purāṇa*, too, where we find reference to the beating to death of Jainas and their blinding, beheading and impaling on hot iron spears or staves: acts of violence which—even if the stories are only half-true—reflect appalling eruptions of cruelty.⁵⁷³

We hear also of the Vira Māheśvaras, also referred to as Vira Māheśvara Niṣṭha or simply as Niṣṭhā. These were Viraśaiva military subdivisions, also called *gaṇa*, who were willing to kill for their faith and to sacrifice their own lives.⁵⁷⁴ This is evidenced, for instance, by the inscription from the historic Jaina centre of Kalya (Kalya or Kalyāna

⁵⁶⁷ On this, see Nandimath, *A Handbook of Viraśaivism*: 14, and Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 45–46, 169. Leslie has written about this inscription in detail (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 237–38). See also Lorenzetti on this story and related caved panels, in Chapter 4 in this book.

⁵⁶⁸ For this version of the story and the quote, refer to Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 238. There is another version of the story in the *Cannabasava* or *Cennabasava Purāṇa* (Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*: 169).

⁵⁶⁹ On this issue, see Nandimath, *A Handbook of Viraśaivism*: 14 and Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 69–70.

⁵⁷⁰ See Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 70. *Pavāḍa* in Kannada means “a miracle.”

⁵⁷¹ Compare Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 70.

⁵⁷² For details on texts referring to his deeds, see Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 70–71. Nagarajaiah mentions a number of other Viraśaivas who carried out attacks on the Jainas and their sacred places of worship. These include Ādayya of Puligere (modern Lakṣmeśvara), Bommayya of Kovūru, Devara Dāsimayya, Candrabhuṣaṇa Paṇḍita of Jājuru, and Viruparasa of Hagarāṭa-geṇādu (Nagarajaiah, “Attacks on Important Buddhist and Jaina Centres”: 57). On Ādayya, refer also to the chapter by Lorenzetti.

⁵⁷³ Leslie quotes many such sections from the *Basava Purāṇa* (Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 238–39).

⁵⁷⁴ Refer to Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 72, and Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 108.

Pura), which explicitly states that Viraśaivas killed Jainas.⁵⁷⁵ Viraśaiva literature is replete with accounts of the smashing of Jaina temples and the crushing of their images.⁵⁷⁶ The events around Basava and the persecution of the Jainas provided the historical plot for a well-known play in Kannada by playwright Girish Karnad, entitled *Taledaṇḍa* (Death by beheading), dating from 1990. In 1993, an English version appeared under the title *Talé-Daṇḍa: A Play*.⁵⁷⁷

Their deep involvement in commerce, conversions and persecutions enabled the Viraśaivas to gain rapidly in influence. Jaina landlords, whether householders or monastic leaders, had grown used to a luxurious life-style—or at least generous funding for their establishments—and wanted to maintain their status in society and their wealth. As such, the upper levels of society and landowners frequently converted and followed Viraśaivism. The faith flourished in the north of Karnataka in particular, in the States of Dharwar, Bijapur and Belgaum. Viraśaivas still comprise the religious majority in Karnataka today.⁵⁷⁸ There are about six million followers of Viraśaivism in India, of whom most are settled in Karnataka.⁵⁷⁹ According to Tiziana Lorenzetti, the heyday of the faith was the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when it spread to the south of Karnataka and, in the north, to the neighbouring region of Andhra Pradesh as well. During these periods, however, the followers of Viraśaivism moved further and further away from Basava's original doctrine of simplicity and homelessness. As Tiziana Lorenzetti shows in her chapter—and as has also been mentioned above—the Viraśaivas established *maṭhas*, settled down and expanded the ritual which initially had involved only the small portable *liṅga* that every Viraśaiva carries on their body. Over the centuries, abandoned shrines were annexed, *basadis* which were still in use taken over from the Jainas and even new Viraśaiva temple structures built. In this respect, we witness a development away from plainness and unpretentiousness to a more highly ritualistic and institutionalised religion, very similar to the trajectory of Jainism as outlined above.

To summarise the religious conflict in the region so far, we have seen how various Śaiva orders, in particular, established their dominance over the other religious cults

575 On this issue, see Pinto, "Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire": 84.

576 Nagarajaiah, "Attacks on Important Buddhist and Jaina Centres": 59–61, has given many such examples.

577 Leslie has written in detail on this play (Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 244–58). She is particularly interested in parallels which Karnad establishes between the socio-political situation in the twelfth century in Karnataka and the twentieth century in India as a whole (see especially pp. 228, 252–53) and the tolerance supposed to be paid by Hindus to other religions, which Karnad questions in his play (pp. 257–58).

578 On this issue, see Zydenbos, "Jainism Endangered": 177, Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 229, and Scholz in Chapter 3.

579 Refer to Padoux "Viraśaivas": 12.

of the region, through institutionalisation—establishing monasteries and temples—and *brāhmaṇisation*—absorbing smaller, even anti-*brāhmaṇical* cults.⁵⁸⁰ Jainism, as a non-Vedic, *śramaṇa* tradition aiming to keep its distinct identity and denying the superiority of the Śaivas, could not be absorbed by Śaivism as easily as other cults.⁵⁸¹ For this reason, the Jainas were first demonised as the main target of enmity and then relegated to minority status in Karnataka from the twelfth century onwards, while various Śaiva denominations, in particular the often militant Vīraśaivas, increased in influence and numbers of followers.⁵⁸² This led to a remarkable Śaivite revival in the south of India during the twelfth century, as well as to the development or further evolution of Vīraśaivism. In addition to this largely local and regional rivalry, worshippers of devotional Vaiṣṇavism also penetrated into the region from the mid-twelfth century onwards. This was part of a more general renewal of *brāhmaṇical* faiths in the region.

5.4 Vaiṣṇavism and Śrīvaiṣṇavism

I shall now turn from the Śaiva and Śaiva-derived heterodox denominations, including Vīraśaivism, to the second major religious group of classical modern Hinduism, Vaiṣṇavism. Although Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism are both Hindu currents, with some links and common elements (for instance, in the statues of Harihara that consist of Hari, Viṣṇu, and Hara, Śiva) they are both distinct faith groups. Śaivism focuses on the veneration of Śiva as supreme godhead, and Vaiṣṇavism on the worship of Viṣṇu.⁵⁸³ In our area of discussion, the south of India, the Vaiṣṇavas also worshipped the early Vaiṣṇava saints, the sixth-century CE Āḷvārs.⁵⁸⁴ In the eighth and ninth centuries CE, the arrival of Śaṅkarācārya in Karantaka reinvigorated Vaiṣṇavism, which came to present a strong competing—and at times outrightly aggressive—force in opposition to the Jainas.⁵⁸⁵ This was followed by Rāmānuja's Śrīvaiṣṇavism in the eleventh century.⁵⁸⁶

580 Hegde has also written on this subject (Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 201).

581 Refer to Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 202.

582 Zydenbos and Dibbad have written on this subject (Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 175; Dibbad “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 73).

583 Vaiṣṇavas worship Viṣṇu and his consort Lakṣmī (Ranjeeta Dutta, “Texts, Tradition and Community Identity: The Srivaisnavas of South India,” *Social Scientist* 35, no. 9–10 [2007]: 23).

584 On this, refer to Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 117, and Dutta, “Texts, Tradition and Community Identity”: 23. In Karnataka, Āḷvār temples can, for instance, be seen at Vijayanagara. See the discussion by Valerie Stoker, “Allies or Rivals? Vyāsātīrtha's Material, Social and Ritual Interactions with the Śrīvaiṣṇavas,” in *Polemics and Patronage in the City of Victory: Vyāsātīrtha, Hindu Sectarianism, and the Sixteenth-Century Vijayanagara Court* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016): 76 and map 5.

585 Singh has commented on this (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 81).

586 For further details refer to Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 7.

Fisher prompts us to remember that Hinduism is characterised by an enormous internal diversity of sectarian pluralism and that we are not dealing with an original unity, called “Hinduism,” which was later fragmented. Instead, we are confronted with a complex structure of religions which were formerly distinct, and which over time merged to a certain extent to create something that we now call Hinduism, which is still very varied, and which today divides mainly into Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava groups.⁵⁸⁷ In Karnataka, during this time of conflict and challenge, in the twelfth century in particular, both these sects were competing as to who could exercise the greatest influence.⁵⁸⁸ Statistics on temples established in northern Karnataka during the active building period of the tenth to the thirteenth century indicate that Śaiva shrines were predominant, followed by those of Jains and only then of Vaiṣṇavas.⁵⁸⁹ This suggests that, although they were present at this stage, the Vaiṣṇavas represented the smallest faction in this struggle between religious groups for supremacy.

In the south of the State during the later medieval period, the Vaiṣṇavas who became dominant tended to be followers of the *bhakti* form of Vaiṣṇavism, which had entered Karnataka from Tamil Nadu. This *bhakti* form of the religion is commonly known as Śrīvaiṣṇavism, or alternatively as the Viśiṣṭādvaita School of Rāmānuja.⁵⁹⁰ The latter name refers to the eleventh-century saint Rāmānuja or Rāmānujācārya (c. 1017–1137 CE),⁵⁹¹ who, fleeing the persecution of Kulōttuṅga Coḷa, took up refuge in Karnataka and received royal patronage from the mainly Jaina Hoysaḷa rulers.⁵⁹² His teachings were very influential and large parts of the population converted, at least in the Hoysaḷa domain.⁵⁹³ However, it has been pointed out that due to his origin in Tamil Nadu, Rāmānuja would have taught in Tamil (Tamiḷ), which represented a certain language impediment.⁵⁹⁴ Despite this, the influential Hoysaḷa King Viṣṇuvardhana (c. 1104–1141 CE),

587 See Fisher, “Hindu Sectarism”: 31.

588 Singh characterises both Viraśaivas and Vaiṣṇava reform movements as real threats to Jainism in Karnataka at this time (Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 6).

589 Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarism Formations”: 194 has written on this.

590 Refer to *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. 2: lxxx.

591 See Saletore, *Medieval Jainism*: 114, Lorenzen, “The Kālamukhas of the Śakti-Pariṣad”: 97, and Singh, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*: 6. Although a lifespan of 120 years is probably unlikely, these are the dates usually cited for Rāmānuja.

592 On this refer to *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. 2: lxxx, and Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 55. This appears to be a reference to Kulōttuṅga I (1070–1122 CE) (Hudson “Violent and Fanatic Devotion”: 374).

593 Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 55, 57.

594 Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 55, and Pinto in this volume have written on this issue of language. With its origins in Tamil Nadu, Śrīvaiṣṇavism has largely remained confined to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (Dutta, “Texts, Tradition and Community Identity”: 23).

initially a Jaina, was amongst these early converts. After adopting Śrīvaiṣṇavism, in about 1116 CE, under the influence of Rāmānuja, the king called himself Bīṭṭideva, Bīṭṭiga Deva or Bīṭṭi of Dvārasamudra.⁵⁹⁵ Pius F. Pinto in Chapter 2 explains that “*bīṭṭi*” is a variant of Viṭṭhala, one of the names of Viṣṇu.⁵⁹⁶ The strong anti-Jaina attitudes dominating during this period are reflected in a number of sayings compiled in literary texts.⁵⁹⁷ Despite his own conversion, Viṣṇuvardhana’s principal wife, Śāntalā Devī,⁵⁹⁸ and many of his highest officials of state and military employees remained Jainas,⁵⁹⁹ reflecting his tolerance towards other religions. It appears that Jainas who owned land and were active in agricultural activities were the most likely to convert to Śrīvaiṣṇavism.⁶⁰⁰ The rate of conversions seems to have increased particularly after the twelfth century,⁶⁰¹ with mass conversions of Jainas to Śrīvaiṣṇavism, often also under intimidation.

Like the various Śaiva groups discussed above, Śrīvaiṣṇavism is also a sect with a certain duality in its tradition. It has likewise seen a constant dialogue between two strands of the religion: in this case, a majority Sanskritik and a more regional or local—in this case, at least initially, Tamil—form. Dutta describes a schism of Śrīvaiṣṇavism into the northern and more Sanskritik Vaṭakalai group, with its seat in Kanchipuram (Kāñci, Kāñcīpuram), Tamil Nadu, and the southern and more regional Tamil Teṅkalai group, with Srirangam (Śrīraṅgam, Śrīraṅkam), also in Tamil Nadu, as its headquarters. The latter group is less *brāhmaṇised* and has some non-*brāhmaṇical* followers.⁶⁰²

595 On this, refer to Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline”: 218. According to Saletore, eight highly gifted Jaina generals served under King Viṣṇuvardhana (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 114).

596 In Karnataka and Maharashtra, Viṭṭhala is also known as Viṭṭhōbā. On this, see also Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 8.

597 For examples, see Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 68.

598 Queen Śāntalā Devī is known as a great benefactor, making grants and supporting the construction of *basadis*, for instance, at Shravanabelgola. For examples, see Chapter 5 on Jaina temple architecture.

599 Probably best known is his general Gaṅgarāya, a generous patron of Jaina religious sites. See Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 43. On the Jaina support of Bīṭṭideva’s associates, see William Coelho, *The Hoysala Vamsa* (Bombay: Indian Historical Research Institute, 1950): 109.

600 On this, see Zydenbos (Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 175, 177), who on the latter page also states that these agrarian converts today largely belong to the group of the Gauḍas. This will, for instance, be discussed in Chapter 5 with regards to the village of Markuli (ancient Manikala) in Karnataka. According to Misra, the Jaina converts to Vaiṣṇavism of the Wynad or Wayanad (Vayanāt) area of Kerala are today referred to as “Namadhari Gowdas” (Gauḍas). Allegedly, many re-converted to Jainism in recent times (Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 8). The State of Kerala is locally spelled Kēraḷam.

601 Compare Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 195.

602 Refer to Dutta, “Texts, Tradition and Community Identity”: 22–23. According to Lester, these groups are further fragmented into smaller subgroups, such as the Sāttāda Śrīvaiṣṇavas which also exist in Karnataka. Lester argued that this group held authority and control in many temples between the eleventh and the sixteenth century (C. Robert Lester, “The Sāttāda Śrīvaiṣṇavas,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114, no. 1 [1994]: 39).

Narasimha Murthy is unusual in doubting that Śrīvaiṣṇavas would have harmed the Jainas. However, he admits that they would have wanted to subjugate Jainism as a rival creed.⁶⁰³ However, there are references from the fourteenth century to the persecution of Jainas at the hand of Vaiṣṇavas from the Jaina centre of Kalya in the area of Bangalore.⁶⁰⁴ Although less easy to prove today, it seems that many former Jaina temples were converted to Vaiṣṇavism. Two examples for which we have evidence are the former Jaina *basadis* at Naregal in Gadag district, and Guttal in Haveri district, which were converted under Bīṭṭideva.⁶⁰⁵ Today, both are Śaiva temples, with *liṅgas* in their main sanctums, indicating another conversion. It is interesting that in the shrine at Naregal, images of Viṣṇu and Brahmā, the two other main male Hindu gods, are also venerated in the same structure.⁶⁰⁶ Hegde shows that this was a common occurrence when Vaiṣṇava cults were absorbed by Śaivas.⁶⁰⁷

Whilst Rāmānuja had established his first religious headquarters and *maṭhas* at Melkote (Mēlkōṭe) in Hassan District, Śrīvaiṣṇavism enjoyed particular influence at the Hindu court of Vijayanagara during the sixteenth century (Plate 1.37).⁶⁰⁸ Although Śrīvaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and Viraśaivas fought for superiority in the region, especially against the Jainas, we also find references to mediation between the religions. Fascinating in this context is the inscription recording the reconciliation which Bukka Rāya I achieved in 1398 CE between the Jainas and the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, after the latter had maltreated the Jainas.⁶⁰⁹ Pius F. Pinto reminds us that Jaina temples and sacred icons were destroyed and converted by Śrīvaiṣṇavas as well,⁶¹⁰ despite the mediation

⁶⁰³ See Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 55–57.

⁶⁰⁴ Compare Nagarajaiah, “Attacks on Important Buddhist and Jaina Centres”: 55.

⁶⁰⁵ Slightly problematic is the dating provided on a board at the temple at Guttal, as this provides a date of 1207 CE for the temple, which would actually be after Bīṭṭideva.

⁶⁰⁶ The temple has an underground passage about half a kilometre long, leading to Vireshvara Tirtha (Vireśvara Tirtha), today a small Śiva temple. Such underground passages are also known from other Jaina *basadis*, especially in Rajasthan. See Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 44. These underground passages served as escape routes during times of siege to bring treasured icons to safe locations. Both temples in Karnataka were allegedly converted to Vaiṣṇavism by the architect Jaganāth Chāri.

⁶⁰⁷ Refer to Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 200, and the discussion earlier in this chapter in the section discussing the Kāḷāmukhas.

⁶⁰⁸ On Melkote refer to Misra, “The Jains in an Urban Setting”: 7 and for further information on the faiths at Vijayanagara, see Stoker, “Allies or Rivals?”: 73, 74.

⁶⁰⁹ See Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 288–89, *Epigraphia Carnatica*, vol. 2: lxxx, 285–86, inscription No. 475, and Jagadeesh Kivudanavar, “Jaina Generals in Vijayanagara Court,” *Jain Journal* 35, no. 1 (2000): 23. Pinto also discusses this in more detail in his chapter. See also Stoker, “Allies or Rivals?”: 75.

⁶¹⁰ See Chapter 2 by Pinto in which he bases his argument on a publication in Kannada language by M. Chidananda Murthy, *Kannada Sasanagala Samskr̥tika Adhyayana 450 A.D.–1150 A.D.* (Bangalore: Sapna Book House, 2002): 235–37. On this issue, see also Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 289, 292.



Plate 1.37: After Rāmānuja's early headquarters at Melkote (above), Śrīvaiṣṇavism prospered particularly well at the Hindu court of Vijayanagara during the sixteenth century (below).

and reconciliation that took place in this instance, and the fact that Viraśaiva assaults appear to have been more prominent.⁶¹¹

Vaiṣṇavism and its special south Indian *bhakti* form of Śrīvaiṣṇavism threatened the position of the Jainas in Karnataka to a certain extent. Just like the various Śaiva sects and Jaina groups, however, they fragmented into a number of schools,⁶¹² which partially weakened their position. Although we have clear evidence of Vaiṣṇava conversions of Jaina sacred places, these do not seem to amount to a massive number. We can say, then, that the Jainas were under threat from both Vaiṣṇavas and Viraśaivas at this time, with the Viraśaivas posing the greatest risk.

5.5 Islam

So far, we have focused on *brāhmaṇical* religions—or those such as the Viraśaivas and certain heterodox Śaiva groups which find at least their origins in Hindu practices—as competition for the Jainas. However, to a lesser extent, Muslim groups from the north also infiltrated Karnataka from the late thirteenth century onwards. Islamic culture in the Deccan region has often wrongly been regarded as lying somewhat on the periphery of the Islamic world.⁶¹³ Especially in the northern districts of Bidar and Gulbarga, but also in those of Bijapur, Raichur, Bellary and Dharwad, Islamic traditions became more firmly established as Islam spread and took root in the south of India.⁶¹⁴ This southwards expansion of Islam contributed also to a decrease in influence of Jainism in the region. The once thriving Jaina communities of northern Karnataka, in particular, were forced to retreat to the coastal region and the southern parts of the State.⁶¹⁵

However, we always have to remember, as is emphasised by Julia Lauer and Sabine Scholz in Chapter 6 in this publication, that Muslims were present in Karnataka from a much earlier date, at least from the eighth century CE onwards, and that the

611 Dibbad actually treats them as equally detrimental to the Jainas (Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 69), which, however, does not reflect our understanding in the research group.

612 Compare Dutta, “Texts, Tradition and Community Identity”: 22–23.

613 Assayag has commented on this (Jackie Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers: Muslims and Hindus in South India* [New Delhi: Manohar, 2004]: 35).

614 Deo, “The Expansion of Jainism”: 33, Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 69, and Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*: 30–34, have, for instance, written on this subject. At least today, Muslims are also attracted to larger cities and urban centres, such as Bangalore (Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*: 34).

615 Compare Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability”: 44.

reasons for their original link to India were primarily commercial.⁶¹⁶ Initially, these were largely Arab or Persian merchants, referred to either by the general name “*ma-raikkayar*” (*marakkar* or *marrikars*, meaning “boatsmen”) or in Karnataka more specifically as the Navayat community, who were involved in maritime trade.⁶¹⁷ These two groups of Muslims can be identified with the two strains of Islam which are primarily found in South Asia, the mercantile Sunnī, who were stronger in the south, and the more military Shī’a, who had more of a presence in the north.⁶¹⁸ Whatever their reasons for venturing into Indian territory and finally settling there, the two groups eventually mingled on the Deccan plateau in Karnataka.

When we examine the territory of the State of Karnataka today, we have to bear in mind that, while some sections formerly belonged—at least for a time—to other political entities, certain surrounding regions were earlier part of this area. Pius F. Pinto in his chapter reminds us that the precise limitations of the region which in ancient times was occupied by the Kannada-speaking people are not entirely clear. As he shows, however, there are signs that it extended in the north from Aurangabad (Aurangābād) to the Nilgiri hills in the south and in the east from Anantapur (Anantapuram) and Kurnool (Karnūlu) to the west coast of India.⁶¹⁹ At the time of independence in 1947, substantial areas of the Kannada region belonged to the Madras and Bombay Presidencies and the princely State of Hyderabad (Haidarābād). The modern Karnataka State was created as part of the linguistic reorganisation of Indian States in October 1956. In addition to the original princely State of Mysore (Maisūru), it included the districts of Bellary, South Kanara and sections of the State of Madras. Furthermore, it contained parts of the States of Bombay, Dharwar, North Kanara, Belgaum and Bijapur, and from the States of Hyderabad, Gulbarga, Raichur and Bidar, as well as Coorg.⁶²⁰ Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed “Karnataka” in 1973. Many of these northern sections which today form part of Karnataka had come under Muslim control in the sixteenth century.⁶²¹

616 On this dating, refer also to Kamta Prasad Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule,” *New Indian Antiquary* 1 (1938–1939): 516.

617 See Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*: 36–37.

618 This has been suggested by Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*: 36, 38.

619 Pinto, in this volume, grounds his information on Aravind Malagatti, ed., *Kannada Vishaya Vishwakosha – Karnataka*, vol. 1 (Mysore: University of Mysore Kuvempu Institute of Kannada Studies, 2005): 455. Desai has also written on the problem of delineating the area of influence of Jainism in Karnataka (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 96).

620 North Kanara is also known as Uttara Kannaḍa.

621 On the issue of changing State boundaries, see also Hegewald, “Introduction: The Jaina Heritage”: 1. Pinto states that after 1565, Muslims and Portuguese occupied areas which had formerly been part of Jaina kingdoms.

Muslim invasions in the modern-day area of Karnataka adversely affected Hindu groups as well as the Jains.⁶²² From the last quarter of the thirteenth century onwards, we find both inscriptions and local traditions referring to the desecration of Jaina icons and the destruction of *basadis* by Muslims.⁶²³ In 1311, for instance, Sultān ‘Alau’d-Dīn Khiljī of Delhi (r. 1296–1316 CE) and his general Malik Kafur⁶²⁴ invaded the Hoysaḷa kingdom and took over their capital city at Dvarasamudra (Dvārasamudra), today’s Halebid (Halebid, Haḷēbiḍ, Haḷēbiḍu, Haḷeyabiḍu).⁶²⁵ Other sites in Karnataka, too, record attacks by Malik Kafur.⁶²⁶ Nonetheless, this does not appear to have been a period of widespread destruction. By this time, as we have seen, Jainism and its temples had already suffered severe damage at the hands of other indigenous faith groups. This interpretation is challenged by Narasimha Murthy, whose approach is in line with that currently propagated by a certain strand in Indian national politics.⁶²⁷ In his opinion, the Muslims aimed to enslave the people of the region, overwhelming the originally indigenous religions; they “broke the back of Jainism.”⁶²⁸ At this distance, it is of course difficult to establish the facts with absolute certainty. As Laidlaw, however, emphasises with regards to confrontations between Jains and Muslims in North India, “Long and often bitter episodes of hostility between Jains and especially Śaiva Hindus, although recorded in medieval Jain literature, are largely ignored today.”⁶²⁹ Nowadays in India, when there is no clarity about who ransacked a site, it is often the Muslims who are blamed. In some instances, however, we have inscriptions, testifying to such deeds, as at Muḷgund (Muḷgund), where a sixteenth-century inscription narrates the destruction of the Pārśvanātha Temple by Muslims and the

622 Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 55.

623 On this, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 287. See also Desai on two seventeenth-century records from Abalur, recording Muslim assaults on Jaina temples (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 148). On this issue, refer also to Chapter 6 by Lauer and Scholz in this volume. It appears that when statues were targeted, it was primarily the faces and heads which were removed. For further details and examples, refer to section 5.1.1 “The Removal, Desecration and Disfigurement of Jaina Statues” in Chapter 5 in this volume.

624 Malik Kafur, who died in 1316 CE, is alternatively known as Raj al-Din Izz al-Dawla. He was an important general during the Slave Dynasty of the Delhi sultanate.

625 Krishna Murthy has written on this subject (Krishna Murthy, “Development of Jaina Temple Architecture”: 114).

626 See, for instance, section 5.1.2 “Destruction, Demolition and Reconstruction of Temple Edifices” in Chapter 5 in this volume.

627 This approach has been criticised as a misrepresentation of Muslim actions by Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule”: 518 and Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*.

628 Refer to Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 57.

629 This quote comes from James Laidlaw, *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy, and Society among the Jains*, Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995): 105.

killing of a local *ācārya*.⁶³⁰ For this and other case studies, refer to Chapter 5 on the material record in Karnataka.

It is noteworthy that besides outright destructions, there were other forms of affecting Jaina art. The largely iconoclastic approach of Muslims to Jaina figural icons seems to have influenced them to further develop aniconic ways of representing their saintly teachers, such as in the form of *pādukās*.⁶³¹ Eaton, on the other hand, questions whether Muslims applied iconoclasm in their campaigns in India at all.⁶³² However, the visual record does not tell this story either. In Karnataka it is often difficult to identify precisely who damaged or destroyed statues or *basadis*, but we need to use the available evidence to build up a nuanced picture. Some Muslim invaders clearly had iconoclastic tendencies. For instance, the material taken from Jaina temples and religious colleges, and re-used to build early mosques in Delhi and Ajmer, in the north of India, shows clear evidence of defaced icons and the removal of figural statues.⁶³³ The Jaina temples on Mount Śatruñjaya, too, were evidently severely damaged and many were wholly destroyed by Turkish or Turko-Persian Islamic Ghurī (Ghorid) invaders.⁶³⁴ Dundas makes an interesting point about how the Jainas related to this obliteration, quoting a Jain observation that “such occurrences are to be expected in the irreligious Kali Yuga,” a reference to the present age of the world cycle of *yugas*, or “ages.”⁶³⁵ This again shows the typical tendency of Jainas to downplay negative events in the past and to understand

⁶³⁰ For the inscription refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 148, P.B. Desai, ed., *South-Indian Inscriptions*, vol. 15, *Bombay-Karnataka Inscriptions vol. II* (Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1964): 433, inscription no. 695, and K.R. Srinivasan, “Monuments & Sculpture A.D. 1300 To 1800: The Deccan,” in *Jaina Art and Architecture*, vol. 2, ed. A. Ghosh (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1975): 365.

⁶³¹ On this, refer to Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Domes, Tombs and Minarets: Islamic Influences on Jaina Architecture,” in *The Temple in South Asia*, ed. Adam Hardy (London: British Association for South Asian Studies and the British Academy, 2007): 183, 188, Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Foot Stones and Footprints (*Pādukās*): Multivariate Symbols in Jaina Religious Practice in India,” in *In the Footsteps of the Masters: Footprints, Feet and Shoes as Objects of Veneration in Asian, Islamic and Mediterranean Art*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald, *Studies in Asian Art and Culture* (SAAC) 7 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2020): 411–13. Deo mentions also that Muslims led were indirectly responsible for the emergence of non-image-worshipping Jaina groups, such as the Sthānakvāsīs (Deo, “The Expansion of Jainism: 34).

⁶³² Compare Richard M. Eaton, “Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States,” in *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, ed. David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000): 255, 270.

⁶³³ On this, refer to Robert Hillenbrand, “Political Symbolism in Early Indo-Islamic Mosque Architecture: The Case of Ajmīr,” *Iran* 26 (1988): 105–17, and Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Extreme Dependency as a Creative Catalyst in Early Indo-Islamic Architecture of the Slave Dynasty,” in *‘Das alles hier’ Festschrift für Konrad Klaus zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ulrike Niklas, Heinz Werner Wessler, Peter Wyzlic und Stefan Zimmer (Heidelberg: Xasia eBooks, 2021): 151–74.

⁶³⁴ Dundas, for instance, has written on this (Dundas, *The Jains*: 125). On this branch of Islam, refer also to Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*: 36.

⁶³⁵ For this quote, refer to Dundas, *The Jains*: 125. In the Kali Yuga, enlightenment cannot be attained by mankind. On the concept of the Kali Yuga, refer to Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Golden Age or Kali-Yuga?: The Changing Fortunes of Jaina Art and Identity in Karnataka,” in *In the Shadow of the Golden Age*:

them from within their religious world view. Instead of lamenting, the medieval Jains got on with reconstructing their shrines. The legend of Nākoḍā Bhairava in Rajasthan, for instance, tells of the saving of an image from the destruction of a temple in Gujarat.⁶³⁶

Let us briefly examine the development of an Islamic presence in southern India. The first independent Muslim kingdom in the south was the Bahmanid Sultanate (1347–1527 CE), established by the Turkish governor ‘Alau’-d-Dīn Bahman Shāh in 1347 CE.⁶³⁷ Its earlier capital at Gulbarga was for tactical reasons shifted to Bidar (Bīdar) in 1425 CE. As a result of rivalry within Muslim society and aristocracy at the time, the Bahmanid Sultanate broke up quite quickly.⁶³⁸ After its collapse, five independent kingdoms arose as the Deccan Sultanates.⁶³⁹ Of particular significance for the region of Karnataka were, in particular, the Adil Shāhis of Bijapur and the Barid Shāhis of Bidar. The small Bīdar Sultanate was absorbed by the Bijāpur Sultanate in 1619 CE. Under the Adil Shāhi dynasty, the capital of Bijapur developed into a substantial and cosmopolitan city, which attracted scholars and Sufis from the north of India and from as far afield as Iran, Iraq and Turkey. The Adil Shāhis, however, also mounted invasions and are believed to have destroyed large numbers of temples throughout Karnataka.

From the fourteenth until the end of the seventeenth century, various Sufi orders thrived in Bijapur and throughout the sultanate. Julia Lauer and Sabine Scholz in this publication stress the importance of the Sufi saints in establishing and legitimising Muslim rule in the Deccan. Many Sufi sites and *dargahs* are also visited by non-Sufis.⁶⁴⁰ The relatively long and stable rule of the sultanate came to an end in 1686 CE, when the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (Ālamgīr) took over Bijapur. The south of Karnataka was less affected by Islamic rule, although the region around Mysore was controlled in the eighteenth century by first Haider Alī and then his son Tipu Sultān. In 1799, the British overpowered Tipu in the battle of Shrīrangapatna (Śrīraṅgapaṭṭaṇa). This ended Islamic rule in Karnataka.

Although Muslims evidently did attack Hindu and Jaina temples and destroy sacred sites, the attacks on the Jains appear not to have been as severe as modern-day his-

Art and Identity in Asia from Gandhara to the Modern Age, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald, Studies in Asian Art and Culture (SAAC) 1 (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2014): 322, 338–42.

636 Laidlaw has written on this (Laidlaw, *Riches and Renunciation*: 72).

637 According to Assayag, the Dynasty of the Bahmanis were established by Muḥammad bin Ṭughlāq (Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*: 38).

638 Lauer and Scholz have written on this in Chapter 6 in this volume.

639 These were the kingdoms of Bidar, Golkonda, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Khandesh (Assayag, *At the Confluence of Two Rivers*: 39).

640 Sara Mondini has spoken on joint pilgrimages carried out by Muslims and Vīraśaivas to Islamic *dargahs* on 17 November 2021 as part of a digital lecture series entitled “Religious Traditions of India,” organised by the University of Ghent, Belgium. Unfortunately, the lecture was not recorded.

torians would often have us believe. Leslie, under the subsection “The fabled tolerance of the Hindus,”⁶⁴¹ has discussed this issue also with reference to the works of Girish Karnad and Romila Thapar, who both rebut the nowadays

surprisingly popular notion that Hindus are inherently tolerant of other faiths. Despite recent events at Ayodhya, this image of the ‘tolerant Hindu’ is still widely entertained, often in opposition to that of the ‘intolerant Muslim.’ In the contemporary context of communal violence, it is particularly important that this idea of the beleaguered Hindu defending himself against Muslim aggression is recognized for what it is: self-serving propaganda. This is Karnad’s point.⁶⁴²

Two oft-cited encounters from this time suggest that amicable relations existed between southern Digambara Jainas and at least Muslims from the north. We hear of the northern Digambara Jainas calling the saint Ācārya Mahāsenā from the south to Delhi, to represent the Jaina faith in discussions about religion with the emperor ‘Alau’d-Dīn Khiljī (ruled 1296–1316 CE).⁶⁴³ Likewise, the south Indian Jaina teacher Simhakīrti is reported as being present at the court of *sultāns* in Delhi, where he appears to have impressed Sultān Muḥammad bin Ṭughlāq (c. 1300–1351 CE) with his debating skills. Although no precise date is available, Saletoore places this event between 1326 and 1337 CE.⁶⁴⁴ During the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, Jaina ascetics were also regularly invited by Akbar for religious exchanges and cross-cultural debates.⁶⁴⁵ In addition, there are a number of accounts, again, predominantly from the north of the country, of Mughal rulers supporting Jaina monks, prohibiting animal slaughter close to sacred Jaina sites as a sign of respect for the strictly vegetarian Jainas and exempting pilgrimage centres from taxes.⁶⁴⁶

Sabine Scholz in her individual chapter discusses forced conversions of Jainas to Islam. Some conversions, however, appear to have been voluntary, especially on the part of those considered lower caste individuals and communities. In this context, Julia Lauer und Sabine Scholz argue in their joint chapter in this publication that Jai-

641 This can be found in Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 257.

642 This quote has been taken from Leslie, “Understanding Basava”: 257. Refer also to Romila Thapar, *Cultural Transactions in Early India: Tradition and Patronage* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987): 15, and Paul Dundas, “Jain Perceptions of Islam in the Early Modern Period,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 42 (1999): 35–46. The play, *Taledaṇḍa* by Girish Karnad from 1990 and its English version from 1993, entitled *Talē-Daṇḍa: A Play*, have been briefly discussed in section 5.3.3, “Persecution of the Jainas and Economic Conflict with the Viraśaivas.”

643 Jain has written on this encounter (Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule”: 517).

644 Compare Saletoore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 370–71 and Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule”: 518.

645 On this subject, refer, for instance, to Dundas, *The Jains*: 125, and Truschke, “Dangerous Debates.” For further information on positive relations between Muslims and Jainas, refer to Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule.”

646 Deo and Granoff have written on these subjects (Deo, “The Expansion of Jainism”: 34; Granoff, “Being in the Minority”: 241).

nas were drawn predominantly to the Sufi form of Islam, which was prominent in northern Karnataka by the start of the fourteenth century the latest.⁶⁴⁷ Concrete evidence for later conversions from Jainism to Islam can be found in colonial publications, which list the original faith of Muslim communities in Karnataka.⁶⁴⁸

By the fifteenth century, Islamic sultanates, such as those of Bijapur and Bidar, had established themselves in the Deccan region, in the northern areas of Karnataka. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that, at the time when Muslims gained control over the northern parts of Karnataka, the Jainas had already lost most of their authority and influence in the region. As such, Muslim control appears not to have been highly influential in the deterioration of Jainism in Karnataka. However, one aspect of Jaina custom on which Muslim rule had an adverse impact, as explored by Sabine Scholz, was the practice of the south Indian Digambara Jainas ascetics walking naked. In areas of Muslim domination in the south, the tradition of the nude wandering teachers, the *munis*, steeply declined.⁶⁴⁹ As Muslims objected so strongly to the nakedness of Jaina monks, one allegedly used a piece of cloth to cover his nudity when visiting the wife of Fīrūz Śāha Ṭughlāq. According to Jain, this might have become popular with others, thus initiating the practice at least of *bhaṭṭārakas* wearing clothes.⁶⁵⁰ Allegedly, the Mughal emperor Bābur was so appalled even by the nakedness of the tall standing stone statues, carved out of the rock below the fort at Gwalior (Gvāliyar) in Madhya Pradesh, that he ordered to have their genitals be removed.⁶⁵¹ Jaina icons of standing saints in Karnataka have frequently suffered this mutilation too.

By itself, the impact of Muslim destruction might not have been so lethal. However, there had also been the effect of the powerful Viraśaiva movement, which like the Muslims, was also dominant in northern Karnataka. There is no doubt that the two groups jointly had a devastating impact on the Jainas, especially in the north of the State. For this reason, Jainism still remains more prevalent and vibrant in the south and west of the area of Karnataka. For contemporary relations between Jainas and Muslims—now both minority religions in a Hindu-dominated India—refer to Chapter 6 by Julia Lauer and Sabine Scholz.

⁶⁴⁷ Although Sufism might have come to Karnataka as early as the seventh century CE through Arab traders reaching the west coast, the earliest mention of a Sufi saint in Karnataka dates from 1301 CE and makes reference to Gulbargah (Sufism in Karnataka, <https://aalequtub.com/2018/11/28/sufisim-in-karnataka/> [accessed 25.07.2023]).

⁶⁴⁸ Lauer und Scholz in this publication refer to the *Bijapur Gazetteer*, first published in 1884 (James M. Campbell, *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, vol. 23, *Bijapur* [Bangalore: Government of Karnataka, 2001 (1884)]: 282, 289).

⁶⁴⁹ In particular, refer to the chapter by Scholz “The Digambara Jainas,” special attention should be paid to pp. 60–261. Refer also to Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule”: 517.

⁶⁵⁰ Compare Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule”: 518–19.

⁶⁵¹ On this, refer to Laidlaw, *Riches and Renunciation*: 104. However, according to Jain, Bābur also had conciliatory feelings towards other religions (Jain, “Jainism under the Muslim Rule”: 516).

5.6 Rationales for the Popularity of Alternative Religions: *Bhakti* and Tantra?

As there were so many very different religions all competing for influence and adherents in the region of Karnataka at the same time, it is difficult to pinpoint the factors which would have led Jains to convert to other faiths. What is noticeable, however, is that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when Jainism was on the decline, many of the faith groups which were expanding vigorously featured the *bhakti* movement and Tantrism.

The wide appeal of the *bhakti* movement, whether in the form of Viraśaivism or Śrīvaiṣṇavism, towards the latter part of the Middle Ages, is very striking. Originating in Tamil Nadu, in the very south of the country, in about the sixth or seventh century CE, the *bhakti* movement swept over Karnataka during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶⁵² From there, it spread to northern India, where it flourished mainly from the fifteenth century onwards. An important aspect of the *bhakti* path was no doubt its openness to all, regardless of birth or gender, with its advocacy for social change. Initially, of course, Jainism had offered a similar path to its followers. However, with large numbers of converts from Hinduism during the fourth and fifth centuries CE, castes were firmly accepted into Jaina practice from about the eighth century CE, and this and other changes fundamentally altered the structure of Jainism at this time in Karnataka.

It is typical for *bhakti* movements to preach against the discriminatory caste system and employ the local vernacular to reach ordinary people in particular. Perhaps in reaction against the enlarged ritual practices of many Hindu groups and also of the Jains from about the tenth century CE onwards, the *bhakti* path expressed a person's personal devotion and love for one or more divine principles or deities, often in the form of a personal god (*iṣṭadevatā*). As such, it offered a simpler option, which appears to have appealed to many at this time. In addition, the emancipation of followers from large temple establishments and expensive rituals conducted on their behalf by priests was a significant element of *bhakti* movements, creating a tradition of wandering devotees and mendicants (*jaṅgamas*), who had become one with the divinity, so that their bodies in effect became temples, making expensive religious buildings superfluous.⁶⁵³ In focusing on *bhakti*, we should also remember that Sufism is a *bhakti* form of Islam and that it was this form in particular which allowed the faith to

⁶⁵² Suresh mentions *bhakti* activities in Karnataka as early as the seventh or eighth century CE (Suresh, "Jaina Monuments": 183). However, they appear to have become instrumental only from the tenth to the twelfth century onwards.

⁶⁵³ On this, refer to Hegde, "Dynamics of Sectarian Formations": 197.

spread throughout the region at this time, further increasing the importance of *bhakti* and its practitioners, the Bhaktas.

It is striking how many of the elements noted above as presenting positive reasons to convert away from Jainism were originally at the very core of the teachings of the Jinās. Intriguingly, the changes to Jainism which we have traced above seem to have been intended to attract and retain new converts; during the early centuries CE they were by and large successful. As we have seen, however, there were some who found these changes alienating. It should also be pointed out that the veneration of living and deceased teachers has always formed part of Jaina ritual practice, so that Jainism offers its own devotional, *bhakti* path. As such, *bhakti* alone cannot have been the sole incentive for conversions.

Tantric traditions also flourished extensively throughout the region of Karnataka at this time, influencing and being taken up by various Hindu and Buddhist groups, as well as by Jainas, as has been outlined above. From the seventh century CE we find obvious Tantric elements in the Jaina religion; by the eighth to tenth century CE, these had really changed Jaina practices in a more substantial way, especially in terms of the veneration of goddesses. Admittedly, the Tantric fascination with spells, magical diagrams and other ritual means, which were believed to shorten the long and hard path to salvation, made fewer demands on the believer than the ascetic practices propagated by Jainism. By the tenth century, however, as we have seen, the Jainas themselves had integrated or accentuated so many Tantric elements into mainstream rituality that there would seem to have been small incentive for Jainas to convert to another Tantric religion on ritualistic grounds.

This seems to indicate that we are not dealing predominantly with religious issues here, or at least not exclusively. The influence of any of the Indian religions under discussion here, seems to have been intimately linked with the financial donations made to its representatives and institutions, in particular by traders, merchants,⁶⁵⁴ and officials based in cities. At first, it was the Jainas who benefited from this support. Over the centuries, however, the Viraśaivas supplanted them. Many people seem to have turned to Viraśaivism in reaction against the enormous accumulation of wealth by Jaina *basadis* and *maṭhas* and the increase in ritual activities, perceived even by many Jainas as disproportionate.⁶⁵⁵ Śaivism in particular, which appears to have adapted more flexibly to contemporary changes in social stratigraphy, managed to ap-

⁶⁵⁴ Especially influential and successful were the oil millers, who were one of the most prominent groups in these large urban centres. Oil was the standard article of donation to temples in the region (Hegde, "Dynamics of Sectarian Formations": 196).

⁶⁵⁵ Particularly striking or important amongst the reasons for conversion were the role of commerce, which was first dominated by the Jainas and subsequently by the Viraśaivas, and the fact that the followers of Basava rejected the caste system and offered a free choice of profession to all.

peal to the expanding rural groups of society, while at the same time developing urban ones.⁶⁵⁶ In contrast to the Jaina developments starting in about the tenth century CE, the Vīraśaivas, for instance, at least initially rejected religious establishments, temples and elaborate rituals.

During the early centuries of the common era, then, converts to Jainism contributed to changes in its social structure, and Jainism adapted to devotional *bhakti* cults and Tantric influences. However, from the eleventh and twelfth century onwards, Jainas themselves converted increasingly often to other faiths with which they came into contact. It is possible that these appeared more devotional or offered a simpler path to salvation. The emergence at this period of non-image-worshipping groups, such as the Jaina Sthānakvāsī, which offered a more reduced ritual in a Jaina context, could be understood in this sense.⁶⁵⁷ However, as we have noted, religious affiliations were not such a personal matter as they are today. Several different questions seem to have influenced a change of religious allegiance: did a religion discriminate on the basis of caste? Which religion was favoured by the local landowner? Would conversion bring an increase in trading profit? The evidence suggests that such societal, socio-political and economic factors played an important part in people's decisions to convert away from Jainism.

6 Similar Situations in Bordering Regions and for Other Non-Vedic Cults

This study focuses on the area more or less coterminous with the modern State of Karnataka. However, as has been pointed out before, State boundaries changed repeatedly in the past; additionally, some areas no longer within the limits of Karnataka today were formerly part of the Kannada *deśa*, the land of Karnataka. Furthermore, the complex situation of intense religious and political rivalry outlined in this publication had an adverse effect upon more groups than the Jainas in this region of South India, impacting bordering lands and other religious cults as well. We have focused on Jainism here because of the extreme changes in its fortunes: after its exceptional flourishing in the area of modern-day Karnataka, its sharp decline in influence was felt most harshly. For comparison, however, we shall now look briefly at circumstances in the neighbouring regions of Tamil Nadu and the modern States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, which were formerly combined in one, and at the situation with regards to Buddhism, the other major non-Vedic, *śramaṇa* religious cult in the region.

⁶⁵⁶ On this, refer to Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 195.

⁶⁵⁷ According to Jainī, the development of Jaina non-image-worshipping groups, such as the Sthānakvāsī, represents an “anti-temple” reaction (Jainī, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 84).

6.1 The Rise and Fall of Jainism in South India

While Jaina scholars in Karnataka frequently argue for an initial dispersion of Jainism throughout South India from centres in Karnataka, such as Shravanabelgola, it appears more likely that the faith was transmitted along the east coast of India, through Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, from where it spread to Tamil Nadu. On this basis, Jainism would have reached Karnataka from Tamil Nadu,⁶⁵⁸ the State which is home to the earliest surviving Jaina sites in south India.⁶⁵⁹

6.1.1 The Situation in Tamil Nadu

Jainism probably reached Tamil Nadu⁶⁶⁰ during the fourth century BCE or even earlier.⁶⁶¹ Buddhism appears to have arrived slightly later, in about the third century BCE.⁶⁶² The Digambara Jaina *ācāryas* Samantabhadra (Sāmantabhadra), Akalaṅka, Kanakasēna and Guṇanandī are thought to have been especially influential in the dissemination of Jainism throughout Tamil Nadu.⁶⁶³ Samantabhadra is believed to have lived during the early second century CE and his disciple Guṇanandī in the latter part of the century.⁶⁶⁴ Samantabhadra is said to have brought Jainism to Karnataka from Kanchipuram, also known as Jina Kāñcī, in Tamil Nadu.⁶⁶⁵ In another account, Jainism was brought to Karnataka by the Jaina saint Vajranandī from Madurai, which definitely developed later into a major centre of Jainism, whatever the status of the Vajranandī story.⁶⁶⁶ Inscriptions and literary works indicate that many Pallava and Pāṇḍya kings converted to Jainism and that the faith was popular during the fifth and

658 This has been discussed already in section 2.1 in this chapter. On the difference in view, refer, for instance, to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 217, who argues for an arrival of Jainism in Karnataka and a transmission from there. In contrast, Desai is more inclined to follow the theory describing a migratory route of Jainism through Andhra Pradesh into Tamil Nadu (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 25) and a dispersal from there into Karnataka, which I find more convincing.

659 Refer, for instance, to Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 475–78.

660 This State is locally spelled Tamiḷ Nāṭu.

661 See Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 26, and Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 476.

662 On this, see Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 30. Other authors refer to the presence of Jainism and Buddhism in Tamil Nadu from at least the second century BCE (Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 214).

663 For further information on these teachers, compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 224.

664 Refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 224–26.

665 On this, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 229.

666 For additional information, see, for instance, Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 234–35, and Alvappillai Veluppillai, “The Hindu Confrontation with the Jaina and the Buddhist: Saint Tiruñānacampantar’s Polemical Writing,” in *The Problem of Ritual*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 1993): 335. According to Cort, Jainism bloomed in the area of Madurai between the second century BCE and the early centuries CE (Cort, “Bhakti in the Early Jain Tradition”: 83).

sixth centuries CE.⁶⁶⁷ We even have contemporary references to the persecution of Śaivas by Jaina kings.⁶⁶⁸ This point is important as it shows that religious violence has been committed by all faith groups in history. No single group is either the perpetual victim nor the sole perpetrator. At this time, many monarchs, although Hindus themselves, gave grants to Jaina establishments.⁶⁶⁹

There appears to have been close relations between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.⁶⁷⁰ Despite this, we also have records of Coḷa (Cōḷa) incursions into the region of modern-day Karnataka in the early eleventh century. The Coḷa King Rājādhira Deva, who was apparently a fervent enemy of the Jainas, is recorded to have attacked King Someśvara Āhavamalla of the Western Cāḷukya Dynasty at Koppala (Koppala; ancient Kopaṇa) and the Jaina temples there in about 1052 CE. This is recorded in the Annigeri stone inscription. Although the Coḷa king was killed in the battle, his brother, Rājendra Deva, managed to defeat the Cāḷukyas and force them to retreat.⁶⁷¹ Nevertheless, a small number of records still indicate reasonably positive relations between the Jainas and Hindus in Tamil Nadu in the thirteenth century.⁶⁷² This indicates that, as in Karnataka, the decline of Jainism in Tamil Nadu was a gradual and spun-out process which did not happen suddenly in the seventh and eighth centuries CE, but dragged on until the twelfth or thirteenth century.⁶⁷³ As we shall see, however, the Hindu revival and the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* movements, which affected Tamil Nadu during the seventh century CE, took their toll on the local Jainas.

In the Tamil region, the days of the flourishing and spread of the Jainas were also numbered.⁶⁷⁴ Their most serious rivals were the sixty-three Tamil Śaiva saints, the Nāyaṇārs, who followed the doctrine of Śaiva Siddhānta, a Śaiva devotional *bhakti* movement which arose in the sixth century CE and flourished between the seventh

667 Compare Salletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 243, 246, 248, and Veluppillai, “The Hindu Confrontation”: 336.

668 Stein writes about the Pallava King Mahendravarman I (late sixth century CE), who, when still a Jaina, is said to have maltreated Śaiva followers until he himself converted to this faith (Stein, *Peasant State and Society*: 78).

669 For further information, see Salletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 284.

670 Salletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 224, has written on this.

671 On this issue, refer to Salletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 194–95. As Salletore shows on page 196 of the same publication, despite this, Koppala remained a Jaina sacred place during the twelfth century and even into the fifteenth (p. 198) and sixteenth (p. 356) centuries.

672 On this, refer to Salletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 243, 246, 248.

673 Davis shows that Jainism still played a relatively significant role in Tamil Nadu until the thirteenth century (Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 217).

674 The situation of the Jainas in Kerala and the whole of South India was also affected at this time. On this, see also Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 72, and Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 81.

and the tenth century CE.⁶⁷⁵ They represented a severe and threatening competition to the Jains especially during the seventh century CE. This is the period just after the enormous increase in popularity of the Jaina doctrine in Tamil Nadu, during the fifth and sixth centuries CE.⁶⁷⁶ Despite some parallels in Śaiva Siddhānta and Jaina thought,⁶⁷⁷ the Jainas posed a risk to the growing significance of the Śaiva Siddhāntins. This was a fight for power, social standing and patronage.⁶⁷⁸ Amongst the Śaiva poet saints of the Nāyanārs who posed the greatest threat to the Jainas at this time was Tirujñāna Sambandhar, also known as Piḷḷe Nāyanār, Tirujñāna Sambandhar Mūrti Nāyanār or simply as Sambandhar, who successfully eradicated the Jainas from the region of Madurai in the seventh century CE.⁶⁷⁹ Of similar ferocity was his contemporary Tirunāvukkarasar, alternatively also known as Vāgīśa or Dharmasena, who annihilated the Jainas in the area of the Pallava kingdom.⁶⁸⁰ Desai also characterises the period of the seventh and eighth centuries CE as one of strong opposition against the Jainas in the Tamil Nadu.⁶⁸¹ This form of Śaiva Siddhānta was particularly active in the region until the tenth century CE but still survives today.

In addition to these Śaiva saints and their royal followers, we can track the influence of another *bhakti* movement, almost as destructive, the Vaiṣṇava Āḷvārs, whose roots go back as early as the fifth century CE.⁶⁸² Their impact was strongest during the seventh and eighth centuries CE, when Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas fought against the non-Vedic Jainas and Buddhists.⁶⁸³ Here, Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas were temporarily connected in their opposition to the two main heterodox faith groups, but when the non-Vedic enemies were eradicated, or at least severely decimated, the two Hindu groups turned on each other, fighting for survival.⁶⁸⁴ According to Veluppillai, the Hindu groups were harsher on the Jainas than on the Buddhists, as the nudity of the Jaina monks was an aspect which they considered particularly objectionable.⁶⁸⁵ The reli-

675 On these, refer to Lorenzen “Śaivism: An Overview”: 10, Hudson, “Violent and Fanatic Devotion”: 373, and Ishwaran, *Speaking of Basava*: 117.

676 See Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 214.

677 These have been discussed by Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 220–21.

678 On this, consult Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 213–14.

679 See Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 273, 274, 278.

680 Refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 278.

681 Compare Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 81.

682 On the influence of the Śaiva Nāyanārs and the Vaiṣṇava Āḷvārs, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 272. On page 278, Saletore names the Vaiṣṇava saint Tirumangai Āḷvār as particularly violent. On the persecution of the Jainas at the hands of Hindu groups in Tamil Nadu more generally, refer also to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 81–83, and to Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215.

683 Refer to Stein, *Peasant State and Society*: 80, and A. Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts and Conversion of Jaina Temples in Tamil Nadu,” in *Rishabh Saurabh*, ed. Satya Dev Showdhari (Delhi: Rishabhdev Foundation, 1997): 136.

684 Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215, has written on this.

685 Compare Verluppillai, “The Hindu Confrontation”: 345–47, 348–50. The problem of nudity has already been discussed in the context of Muslim Jaina relations in section 5.5 “Islam.”

gious texts, hagiographical compositions and devotional songs of these two prominent Hindu *bhakti* groups express their unreserved disrespect, if not hatred, for Jainism.⁶⁸⁶ Davis shows that this construction of “the other” (the Jainas), even if a misrepresentation, was an important way for these early *bhakti* cults to define themselves.⁶⁸⁷

There is evidence that these encounters with opposing Hindu groups in Tamil Nadu led to conversions of Jainas and of their *basadis*, largely to Śaiva faiths.⁶⁸⁸ We can trace the conversion of Jaina temples at Malayadikkuruchchi, Chitral (Tiruccāraṇattumalai), Nartamalai, Kalugumalai (Kaḷukumalai) and Nagercoil (Nākarkōvil) (Plate 138).⁶⁸⁹

Some Jaina sacred structures, however, were not converted but completely destroyed. The debris of some dismantled Jaina shrines was re-used for Hindu constructions, as can be seen in the material remains, and as is recorded in the twelfth-century *Periya Purāṇam* of Cēkīlār.⁶⁹⁰ The *Periya Purāṇam* or “Great *Purāṇa(m)*” is the hagiographic epic narrating the life stories of the sixty-four Śaiva Nāyaṇārs.⁶⁹¹ It also recounts the story King Mahendravarma I, a seventh-century CE Pallava king from Kanchipuram and initially a follower of Jainism, who was converted to Śaivism by the poet-saint Appar (“father”) or Tirunāvukkarasar (“king of the tongue” or “lord of language”). After his conversion, the monarch is said to have had the monastery of Tiruppatiripuliyur (Pātaliputra) close to Cuddalore (Kadalar, Kaṭālūr) destroyed and the building material used for a Śaiva temple at Tiruvatigai.⁶⁹² There are also ample inscriptional and literary references to the killing of Jaina believers and monks in Tamil Nadu at this time.⁶⁹³

Legend records that in the seventh century CE, after the Śaiva saint and composer of many devotional hymns, Tirujñāna Sambandhar (mentioned above) cured the Jaina King Kuṇḍpāṇḍya at Madurai of a severe disease, the monarch converted to Śaivism and allegedly killed about eight thousand Jainas who had been unable to restore him to health. Sambandhar himself, however, who was also accused of persecuting Jainas

686 On this, refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 279, Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 136–37, and Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 213.

687 Compare Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 220.

688 See Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 137, 143.

689 On these, refer to Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 140–43, Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 213, and Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 195, 520. For instance, the temple at Tiruppugalur or Thirupugalur, originally dedicated to Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, was called Vardhamāneśvara Śiva Temple after his conversion (Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 138).

690 Compare Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215.

691 Refer to Hudson, “Violent and Fanatic Devotion”: 373.

692 See Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 138. On page 139 the author gives further examples of the destruction of Jaina *basadis* without their debris being re-used. Refer also to Stein, *Peasant State and Society*: 80, and Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215.

693 Refer to Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 216.

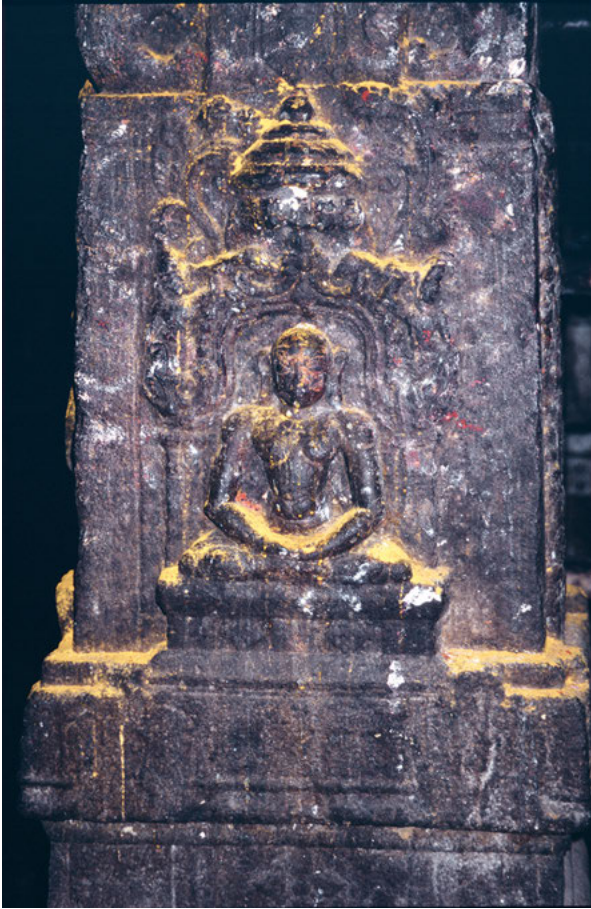


Plate 1.38: Surviving Jina statues carved onto the pillars of the Nāganātha Temple, an originally ninth to twelfth-century CE *basadi* at Nagercoil, indicate that it was converted from Jaina to Hindu usage.

at Punatagai near Tiruvottur (Thiruvottiyur),⁶⁹⁴ was celebrated in an annual festival, staged at the Mīnākṣī Sundareśvara Temple in Madurai, commemorating his order to impale 8,000 Jaina heads.⁶⁹⁵ There are also mural paintings depicting the persecution and impaling of Jainas at the hands of followers of Hindu reform movements under Tirujñāna Sambandhar in the Mīnākṣī Sundareśvara Temple at Madurai.⁶⁹⁶ This all re-

⁶⁹⁴ On the stories relating to Sambandhar, refer to Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 137.

⁶⁹⁵ Compare Stein, *Peasant State and Society*: 80. Hudson includes a representation of the impaled Jainas (in this case their entire bodies) in his study (Hudson, “Violent and Fanatic Devotion”: 392, plate 43).

⁶⁹⁶ In the 1930s, these paintings, probably painted in the tenth or eleventh century, were still visible on the walls of the Golden Lily Tank and inside the temple (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 279). On the

flects a relative collapse of Jainism in Tamil Nadu and the wider area of South India, at least at the start of the Coḷa period.⁶⁹⁷ Ekambaranathan refers to continued persecution of the Jains in Tamil Nadu up to the fifteenth century.⁶⁹⁸ However, we have to remember that although severely reduced in numbers, the Jains did not die out in Tamil Nadu or the wider area of South India.

Ekambaranathan points out that—outside their literary writings—the Jains took no revenge on Hindus or their temples at this time.⁶⁹⁹ According to him, this shows the Jains following the practice of *ahimsā*, not harming others. As we have seen, Jains were certainly prepared to destroy temples and serve as high-ranking officers in various royal armies. However, they do not seem—as a religious group—to have fought back against the persecution of their members and the destruction of their sacred sites. This might have to do with their belief in *ahimsā* but is probably also linked to the fact that at this time, they were numerically too marginal a group to have the power to strike back.⁷⁰⁰

6.1.2 Jains in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

We have records indicating the presence of Jainism in the former Andhra Pradesh (Āndhra Deśa, Āndhra Dēśa), which since 2014 consists of a State with this name and of one referred to as Telangana (Telaṅgāṇa),⁷⁰¹ during pre-Mauryan or at least Mauryan times.⁷⁰² Whilst Desai and Jawaharlal argue that Jainism was introduced to

persecution of the Jains at the hands of Śaiva Bhaktas at Katalur and Madurai, refer also to Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 213.

697 See Davis, “The Story of the Disappearing Jains”: 215–16.

698 Compare Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 139.

699 On this, refer to Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 137, 143.

700 In this context, Ekambaranathan also wrote: “The Jains resorting to conversions of Hindu temples is unheard in their religious history.” (Ekambaranathan, “Religious Conflicts”: 143). Actually, he gives examples for this himself on the next page of his publication and an example of such an instance has also been published by Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Architectural, Sculptural and Religious Change: A New Interpretation of the Jaina Temples at Khajuraho,” in *Studies in Jaina History and Culture: Disputes and Dialogues*, ed. P. Flügel, Routledge Advances in Jaina Studies 1 (London: Routledge, 2006): 401–18. It seems to be important to Ekambaranathan, however, that no Hindu temple in use was forcibly removed by the Jains and converted, with which I would probably agree.

701 Locally, these would be spelled Āndhra Deśa (Āndhra Dēśa) and Telaṅgāṇa. Here, we use the names as English words.

702 This is, for instance, attested to by a Jaina cave with an associated rock-inscription, dating from the third century BCE (Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 83).

the area as early as the sixth century BCE, in Mahāvīra's lifetime, Saletore dates the arrival of the faith in the region to the second century BCE.⁷⁰³ Andhra directly borders Orissa, where we have a lithic record in the form of Jaina King Khāravela's Hāthīgum-phā inscription, dating to the early second century BCE.⁷⁰⁴

However early Jainism reached Andhra Pradesh, we have no evidence for the pervasive and widespread existence of the faith in the region until the seventh century CE.⁷⁰⁵ The Jainas appear to have fared especially well under the rule of the Eastern Cāḷukyas of Vēṅgī, a branch of the Cāḷukyas of Bādāmi. Although these were largely Hindu, some were Jainas and others were positively disposed to the faith.⁷⁰⁶ From the following centuries too, regular epigraphic records record the spread of the religion, the donation of *basadis* and the granting of villages for the upkeep of Jaina temples, especially from Anantapur district—in particular the Rayadurg (Rāyadurg) (Plate 1.39) area and the city of Penukonda (Penugonḍa, Penukoṇḍa)—right up to the eleventh or in some places the thirteenth century.⁷⁰⁷

During the medieval period, Jainism flourished extensively in the wider area of Andhra and most villages had *jinālayas* and reasonably large communities caring for their upkeep.⁷⁰⁸ The period from about 624 till 1000 CE represents a particularly active phase of Jaina temple building.⁷⁰⁹

However, in this region, too, Jainism became threatened over time. There were early encounters and struggles with the Buddhist community which had established itself very quickly throughout the region.⁷¹⁰ Especially well-known, also for its famous artistic style, is the Buddhist centre of Amaravati, which evolved around a large *stūpa* monument, which survives only as an archaeological site.

More detrimental for the Jainas, however, was the influence of a growing Hinduisation and later Muslim encounters in the region. With the weakening and loss of power of the Eastern Cāḷukyas, from the eleventh to the very end of the twelfth century, the Jainas lost their main royal support, particularly along the east coast of Andhra.⁷¹¹ *Brāhmaṇical* faiths were on the upsurge. Although Jainism still expanded in certain areas of the region under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Jainas started to leave the west coast in 1022 CE when King Rājārājanarēndra commenced a movement against

703 See Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 3, Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 31, and Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 250, 251.

704 Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 250, and Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 32.

705 Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 251.

706 See Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 39.

707 Refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 252–54, and Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 43.

708 On this, see Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 83.

709 For further details on this issue, compare Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 84.

710 Refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 3–9, and Pinto, "Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire": 81.

711 Jawaharlal has written on this in much detail (Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 43).



Plate 1.39: The early Jaina cave site of Rayadurg in Andhra Pradesh was taken over by Hindus, who appropriated the former rock-cut statues of the Tirthaṅkaras.

them.⁷¹² The Jainas probably fared worst under the rule of King Gaṇapatideva, the Kākatiya ruler of Warangal (Varangal) (1199–1260 CE). At this time, the Jainas lost in a public disputation against Tikkana Somayya, a thirteenth-century Telugu poet, and were deprived of all their influence and status.⁷¹³ In the fort of Warrangal, remnants of a beheaded Tirthaṅkara or Bāhubali icon, as well as other misplaced Jain statues, which probably go back to this time, are still on display today (Plate 1.40).⁷¹⁴ From the twelfth century, the Jainas also suffered under the expansion of the Viraśaivas.⁷¹⁵ As late as the sixteenth century, as Tiziana Lorenzetti shows in Chapter 4 in this publication, Viraśaivas were still exercising violence against Jainas in Andhra Pradesh. This is testified to by an inscription recording the decapitation of Śvetāmbara Jainas by a local Viraśaiva leader.⁷¹⁶

As in Karnataka, Jain statues were mutilated and Jain temples converted to Śaiva and Viraśaiva usage at this time.⁷¹⁷ In this context, Jawaharlal also refers to a large number of originally Jain icons which were converted to represent Śaiva deities. As a mark of their conversion, they were painted and ornamented with Śaiva marks and draped with flower garlands.⁷¹⁸ The campaigns which Rājendra Coḷa and Rājadhirāja waged against the Jain centre of Kulpak (Kollipaka, Kolanupaka) in and after 1007 CE appear to have been especially vigorous.⁷¹⁹

Being settled further north in the Deccan region, the Jainas of Andhra suffered more heavily under Muslim domination. Invasions by the Khiljīs and Tughlāqs led to the establishment of Islamic rule in the Deccan at least from the early fourteenth century. A number of Jain *basadis* were converted into use as mosques. Especially noteworthy is here the Deval or Pattar Masjid in the fort of Bodhan (Bōdhan),⁷²⁰ where the large open pillared hall of the temple became the prayer hall with worshippers turning west to face Mecca. The *garbhagrha* section, formerly the most sacred part of

⁷¹² Refer to Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 43–44.

⁷¹³ Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 272 has written on this. On public disputations and miracle contests between Jainas and Śaivas in Andhra, refer also to Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 85.

⁷¹⁴ These statues have also been discussed in Hegewald, “Jaina Temples in the Deccan”: 9.

⁷¹⁵ On this topic, see Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 84, and also Hegewald, “Jaina Temples in the Deccan”: 9.

⁷¹⁶ Refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 402.

⁷¹⁷ Jawaharlal has written on this (Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 67). See also his entire chapter entitled “Conversions of Jain Monuments” (pp. 83–88).

⁷¹⁸ On this, refer to Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 87. He includes images of such transformed images from Konakondla near Guntakal (Guntakallu), Rayadurg (Rāyadurg) and Saidapur (Section on Conversions of Jain Monuments, Figs. 17–19). For further information on the converted cave site of Rayadurg, refer also to Hegewald, “Jaina Temples in the Deccan”: 3–4.

⁷¹⁹ Jawaharlal has written on this (Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra*: 67, 86–87).

⁷²⁰ For further illustrations, refer to Jawaharlal, *Jainism in Andhra* and in his photo section on Jain Temples Figs. 33–35 and the photo section on Conversions of Jain Monuments Figs. 12–13. An example of a converted *jinālaya* for use as a mosque in Karnataka will be discussed later in this chapter. See, for instance, Plate 1.48.



Plate 1.40: On display in the Kuśmahal palace in the fort of Warangal, Andhra Pradesh, are a number of violated Jain sculptures, amongst them a beheaded statue of a Tirthaṅkara or Bāhubali icon.

the Jaina temple, has been sealed off.⁷²¹ Persecutions in the Andhra area continued into the nineteenth century.⁷²² Many originally Jaina sites were taken over and converted, although they still show clear signs of their original dedication.

Jainism probably reached the wider Tamil and Andhra areas earlier than Karnataka. In these regions, too, Jainism spread and flourished. Despite this pronounced presence of Jainism throughout the area, however, its influence on the art, culture, religion and politics of the region was less marked and the number of eminent Jaina centres smaller than in the area of Karnataka to the west,⁷²³ so that its rise and eventual decline were altogether of smaller proportions.

6.2 The Disappearance of Buddhism

Posing a similar question to ours, Jaini has described the weakening and almost complete extinction of Buddhism from the subcontinent, between the seventh and the thirteenth century CE, as one of the most puzzling questions of Indian history.⁷²⁴ However, the questions surrounding this decline have so far been studied in more detail and given more attention by scholars than the Jaina situation.⁷²⁵ This might have to do with the fact that Buddhism has generally been better researched and for a longer time, and that Buddhism has spread more widely from India to other regions and also to the West.⁷²⁶ According to a recent study examining the Buddhist regression in India, by Giovanni Verardi,⁷²⁷ what appears to have caused this decline is a combina-

721 For a discussion of the converted temple, refer to Hegewald, "Jaina Temples in the Deccan": 9.

722 Compare Ekambaranathan, "Religious Conflicts": 139.

723 See Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 254, 272. On page 264 of the same publication, Saletore also stresses that, for example, the effect the Jainas had on the literature of Karnataka was much stronger than in the other regions, although their influence made a definite impact there, too.

724 Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 81. See also the detailed study by Mitra on this topic (R.C. Mitra, *The Decline of Buddhism in India*, Visva-Bharati Studies 20 [Calcutta: Visva-Bharati, 1954]). Subrahmanya Aiyar identifies the period after the seventh and eighth centuries CE as the main phase of regression (Subrahmanya Aiyar, "Origin and Decline": 216). Pratt raises many questions with regards to the death of religions, but supplies few useful suggestions and no definite answers with regards to particular religions which have vanished (James Bissett Pratt, "Why Do Religions Die?" *Journal of Religion* 1, no. 1 [1921]: 76–78).

725 Saletore has also commented on the acute lack of studies and publications on the decline of Jainism in Karnataka (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 1–2).

726 As high-ranking Jaina teachers are not permitted to travel by any means of any transport, such as cars, buses, trains or airplanes, and are only allowed to walk, Jainism has not spread as widely from India as has Buddhism. While Jaina businessmen and their families are found all around the globe, it is difficult for them to build up Jaina religious centres abroad as at least high-ranking Jaina ascetics will not use any means of transport.

727 Giovanni Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2011).

tion of external pressures from other faith groups and inherent structural limitations in Buddhism itself. Some of these issues are similar to those which caused the waning of Jainism, while others are peculiar to the unique structure of Buddhism.

The Buddhists, like the Jainas, found themselves in a more or less hostile majority *brāhmaṇical* environment in India, to which, as heterodox reform movements, both were to a certain extent opposed. From about the ninth century CE, the Buddhists suffered, as the Jainas did, under a Hindu resurgence and domination. This situation worsened under various Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava reform movements and with the formation of entirely new cults. In this context, the Śrīvaiṣṇavas and the Viraśaivas had the most disruptive impact. From the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this Hindu revival resulted in an outright *brāhmaṇical* persecution of the Buddhists.⁷²⁸ Śaivas in particular appear to have been hostile to the followers of the Buddha's teachings.⁷²⁹ There is ample evidence of persecutions and killings of Buddhists. Pallavamalla Nandivarman II, for instance, is shown in a frieze in the Vaikuṇṭhaperumaḷ Temple at Kanchipuram impaling Buddhists.⁷³⁰ However, it is not clear whether this persecution was detrimental enough to really threaten the survival of the creed as a whole.⁷³¹

Muslim invasions and settled rule had a similar impact on the Buddhists as on the Jainas. As the Muslim armies subjugated first North-West India and then large parts of the rest of the subcontinent, including the south, the Buddhist area of influence was reduced, and many Buddhist sites of worship and learning were destroyed. Here, particular mention should be made of the sacred sites and Buddhist universities in eastern India, such as Nalanda (Nālandā) and Vikramshila (Vikramśilā), both in Bihar. These invasions were especially aggressive in the north and east of India during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and as such hit the Buddhists very acutely. When Islam reached the south, the Buddhists were less well placed than the Jainas to adapt to life under invasion. Jainism had already lost its zenith of power in the region, and whilst the Jainas were also severely hurt in the north and the south, as traders and money lenders, they somehow managed to stabilise their situation with the newly dominating power, and to survive. As Jaini has shown, the Buddhists failed to find a way to do this and considers the Muslim invasions as one of the decisive factors for the extinction of Buddhism in India.⁷³²

⁷²⁸ On this, see Subrahmanya Aiyar, "Origin and Decline": 216, 218, and Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 81, 83.

⁷²⁹ Leslie has written on this (Leslie, "Understanding Basava": 257). See also Stein, who also refers to Vaiṣṇava persecution of the Buddhists (Stein, *Peasant State and Society*: 80–81).

⁷³⁰ See Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism*: 224–26. See his publication also for further examples of persecutions.

⁷³¹ Jaini has also commented on this (Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 83).

⁷³² On this issue, refer to Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 83.

The loss of royal patronage, too, played an important role for southern Buddhism. As we have seen, this was one of the main reasons for the downfall of the Jainas in Karnataka.⁷³³ Whilst royal rulers usually supported all religions in their domain, their chosen personal faith group naturally obtained the largest share of prestige, financial donations and access to the dealings of the court.⁷³⁴ During the Hindu resurgence from the eleventh century onwards, this important royal backing was practically entirely withdrawn from the Buddhist faith group.

However, we can also identify elements within Buddhism itself which help to explain its decline. Buddhist texts hint at a certain movement away from the faith's core values, and an internal change which has been described as a decay, degeneration or corruption within the Buddhist *saṅgha*.⁷³⁵ Buddhists, like the Jainas, seem to have been amassing problematically large amounts of personal or communal wealth and to have focused increasingly on magical practices as part of the performance of Tantric forms of the religion.⁷³⁶ Tantric tendencies were even stronger in Buddhism than amongst the Jainas at this time. Jaini emphasises that such phases, which he classifies as times of internal deterioration and doctrinal laxity, are common in all religious groups worldwide, and are often followed by periods of strengthening reforms and reorientation.⁷³⁷

Furthermore, in the religious field, there was no official or pronounced reaction from the Buddhists when the Vaiṣṇavas assimilated Buddha as one of the ten manifestations (*avatāras*) of Viṣṇu.⁷³⁸ One might have expected them to object to the absorption of their main enlightened being into a different faith system, but it appears that the Buddhists allowed Hindus to meddle directly in their ritual affairs. The consequence was that Hindu *brāhmaṇ* priests could as it seems, claim the right to perform official duties in temples dedicated to the Buddha,⁷³⁹ representing an enormous encroachment on and interference in Buddhist ritual life. By contrast, the Jainas rebuffed quite starkly the suggestion that Ṛṣabha (Ṛṣabhanātha) should be an incarnation of Viṣṇu. On the other hand, however, the Jainas allowed for a connection between Śiva and Pārśvanātha, and they wrote their own Jaina versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the

733 Subrahmanya Aiyar, "Origin and Decline": 216, has written on this subject.

734 See Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 82.

735 Compare Subrahmanya Aiyar, "Origin and Decline": 216, and Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 81, 83.

736 Jaini has written on some of these issues and refers to other misdemeanours (Jaini, "Śramaṇas": 79; Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 83). Cort has written on the topic of discouraging magical spells (Cort, "Medieval Jaina Goddess Traditions": 238).

737 On this, see Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 83.

738 Jaini has written on this (Jaini, "Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism": 85).

739 On this issue, refer to Jaini, "Śramaṇas": 78.

Mahābhārata Epics.⁷⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Jainas of Karnataka accommodated Hindu features in other areas of their practice, developing worldly rituals, known as *saṃskāras*, relating to birth, marriage or death, which were extremely closely related to the Hindu ceremonies,⁷⁴¹ thus establishing further links with the majority religion, despite the threats it often posed to Jainism. This epitomises what Qvarnström has termed the “tolerant” or “lenient” approach of the Jainas.⁷⁴²

In addition, other doctrinal factors have been identified, which might have weakened Buddhism. Amongst these are the Bodhisattva ideal of Mahāyāna Buddhism. As an almost divine figure, the Bodhisattva might have been perceived as too removed from ordinary life for lay worshippers to relate to. By contrast, the Tīrthaṅkaras of Jainism are seen as struggling to reach enlightenment and are, as such, closer to the ordinary life of practitioners, for whom they act as models. One might, of course, also argue that the fully detached nature of the Jinas provides distance, but this would be the same with a statue of Buddha. The Bodhisattvas, like the *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs*, offer more proximity, although perhaps not as much as the Jaina divinities. The Bodhisattvas also appear to have superseded the Buddha in importance at certain times and in certain contexts,⁷⁴³ whereas in later southern Jainism, although a small number of temples were exclusively dedicated to a *yakṣī*, these deities were never really serious rivals to the Jinas.⁷⁴⁴ Jaini sees in the divine nature of the Bodhisattvas a dangerous closeness to Hinduism, which allowed Hindus to subvert the Buddhist faith and, in consequence, to absorb their sanctuaries. This happened, for example, at the main temples at Bodhgaya (Bodhgayā) and Sarnath (Sārṇāth), which were of highest significance for the Buddhists. These became Buddhist again only recently.⁷⁴⁵

According to Jaini, the Buddhists also failed to react adequately to the *bhakti* movement which swept across the south and then the rest of the country, costing them many converts to Hindu *bhakti* faiths.⁷⁴⁶ Countering this position, one could argue that the development of the Bodhisattva ideal represented a Buddhist reaction

740 Allegedly, Pārśvanātha was a devotee of the Hindu god. On this issue, refer, for instance, to Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 202. A connection with *liṅgas* can be seen in some Jaina shrines, especially in temples in Rajasthan.

741 See Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 85.

742 Qvarnström, “Stability and Adaptability” and the discussion in section 2.2.3 on “Jaina Openness and *Anekāntavāda*.”

743 Jaini has written on these issues (Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 86–88).

744 As has been pointed out before, in Jainism, only the Tīrthaṅkaras have reached enlightenment, while the gods and goddesses are mortal and need to be reborn as humans first in order to reach liberation through a long path of intense suffering.

745 On these sites refer to Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 86. Sarnath is the site of the historical Buddha’s first sermon and Bodhgaya the place of his enlightenment, *nirvāṇa*.

746 Compare Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 85.

and integration of a more devotional form of worship into the faith. The Jainas, however, may have reacted even more proactively in strengthening the veneration of the female element in Jainism. In actual fact, in the period between the seventh and ninth century CE, the Jainas flourished so much that they appear to have overshadowed the Buddhists in the south of India.⁷⁴⁷

Another internal factor that has been cited, again with a parallel in the Jaina situation, was the excessive fragmentation of the Buddhist *saṅgha* into subgroups. Upadhye calls this “the schismatic vivisection” of Buddhism and identifies it as one of the many reasons for its loss in strength, leading to its waning in India.⁷⁴⁸ Although the differences between the various sects were often marginal, this form of Buddhist sectarianism led to internal disputes and resulted in an internal destabilisation of the faith.⁷⁴⁹ Furthermore, according to Subrahmanya Aiyar, the Buddhists lacked strong leaders.⁷⁵⁰ This is a point which can also be made about Jainism during its later phases.

It has also been claimed that the Buddhists gave too little consideration to the status and life of their lay followers.⁷⁵¹ The term “Buddhist” officially applied only to fully initiated monks and nuns and while the laity supported them, they had no formal position as members of a religious group.⁷⁵² This is a genuine area of difference, as the Jainas paid particular attention to their laity in the period between the eighth and the tenth century CE, providing ordinary male and female householders with more direct occasions to participate in temple rituals and with the chance to live temporarily as ascetics by taking part in pilgrimages. Jainas even enabled the laity to die a religious death (*sallekhanā*).⁷⁵³

This short summary has recapitulated in brief some communalities and differences in the situation of Jainas and Buddhists vis à vis their decline. The question remains as to why the adverse circumstances which both groups encountered appear to have

747 Although he writes more with regards to Tamil Nadu than to Karnataka, the assessment of Subrahmanya Aiyar with regards to “the triumph of the Jains over the Bauddhas” can to a certain extent be related to this region, too (Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline”: 215). Saletore mentions Buddhist sites, for instance, Koppala, which were annexed by Jainas—and subsequently by Hindu groups (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 187–91).

748 For this quote, refer to Upadhye, “Yāpaniya Saṅgha”: 224.

749 Refer to Jaini, “Śramaṇas”: 78; Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 81, 84. On p. 84 Jaini points out that differences between Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras, for instance, were much more far-reaching.

750 See Subrahmanya Aiyar, “Origin and Decline”: 216.

751 On this issue, refer to Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 81, 84.

752 Compare Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 84.

753 A final reason for the disappearance of Buddhism from India which has been mentioned in the literature is some kind of “exhaustion” of the members of this faith group. This should be excluded as it is a non-objective statement, which cannot be verified. On this, see also (Jaini, “Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism”: 81).

created so many more difficulties for Buddhists. The Jainas survived in the south of India—even if their community was decimated—and they were never really threatened as an entire faith group in the whole of the Subcontinent. Buddhism, on the other hand, became practically extinct in India during the twelfth century. The main reasons why the Buddhists suffered so much more than the Jainas in Karnataka, and lost so much influence, appear to have been their neglect of the lay community, their failure to react decisively enough to the *bhakti* movement and their closeness to Hindu practices, which allowed Hindus to interfere directly in Buddhist shrines and to take over their most sacred sites.

Buddhism remained practically extinct in the subcontinent until the Tibetan exiles established settlements surrounding the Dalai Lama in the twentieth century, with only a very few small traditional communities surviving in eastern India. Jainism, on the contrary, interacted much more closely with the laity, and intensified this exchange in Karnataka from the eighth century CE onwards. Furthermore, there appears to have been much less direct Hindu interference in a Jaina context. The Jains reacted to Hindu elements but formulated their own versions of the eternal epics, which reflected distinct Jaina ethics and world views; they remained firm regarding the position of their Tirthaṅkaras and stuck more closely to their core doctrinal structure than did the Buddhists.⁷⁵⁴

Despite these developments in India, one has to stress that Buddhism did much better than Jainism when it came to spreading throughout the world. While declining in its homeland, it spread north and east and during the modern age also to the West. Due to the stringent restrictions with regards to travel that apply to its mendicant community, Jainism has been slower and less powerful in its worldwide dispersal.

7 Damage, Destruction and Re-Use of Icons and *Basadis* by Other Groups

The foregoing sections have outlined the rise and initial deterioration of Jainism in Karnataka. From a position of superiority, the Jainas lost status to the point where they were a strongly dependent section of society, deprived of most of their political and economic clout. According to Narasimha Murthy, at the start of the fourteenth century, “Jainism presents a picture of a war-torn land in Karnataka.”⁷⁵⁵ The religious and political picture which we have portrayed on the basis of inscriptional and literary evidence is also reflected in the material record, in the condition of icons and temple build-

754 For a brief summary, refer also to Marcus Banks, “The Body in Jain Art,” in *Approaches to Jaina Studies: Philosophy, Logic, Rituals and Symbols*, ed. N.K. Wagle and Olle Qvarnström, South Asian Studies Papers 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 1999): 311.

755 For this quote, see Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 39.

ings. While some sacred centres were completely taken over by contesting religious groups, a few were returned either immediately or after some delay to the Jaina community after they had been ransacked. Saletore writes: “In the centres which fell into the hands of the non-Jainas, only mutilated Jaina images and broken slabs bear silent testimony of the once prosperous condition of Jainism in the country.”⁷⁵⁶ In the course of these sectarian rivalries, as we have seen, Śaivas and in particular the militant Viraśaivas targeted Jaina religious institutions, such as *maṭhas* and *basadis*, as these were close to their own religious power bases and the Śaivas saw a threat in them.⁷⁵⁷ As has been pointed out before, the new religious groups were vying for the support of the same financial backers as the Jainas. They went about desecrating the Jaina sacred sites—which as we have seen were also important political and economic centres—in a variety of ways, none of which was peculiar to one faith group. We shall look at these briefly below,⁷⁵⁸ exploring also the particular role played by re-used Jaina sacred objects and spaces.

7.1 The Targeting of Jaina Icons and Temples

Temple icons (*mūrtis*) form the focus of devotion inside Jaina *basadis*, giving sanctity to the sites and legitimising the community and its rulers.⁷⁵⁹ When rival religious groups wished to undermine the Jainas, Jaina statues, being invested with not only religious but also political significance, presented an obvious target. They were frequently entirely removed from their temple settings and even destroyed. Large numbers of written accounts from Viraśaiva and Jaina contexts, many of which have been referred to in this chapter already, tell of the outright destruction of *basadis* and Jaina icons. In addition, there is ample visual evidence, in the shape of *jinālayas* which have lost all their sacred statues, or which have piles of sculptural debris, consisting of fragments of Jaina *mūrtis* and other imagery.

⁷⁵⁶ Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 184.

⁷⁵⁷ On this refer to Hegde, “Dynamics of Sectarian Formations”: 202. On the same page, Hegde also writes about the occasion on which a Kāṣmukha Śaiva donated a Jaina temple in 1182 CE at the height of communal and religious tensions. This episode, however, seems to represent an extremely rare incident.

⁷⁵⁸ For a more detailed examination of these issues, refer to Chapter 5 by Hegewald, especially section 5, “Jaina Temples under Threat.”

⁷⁵⁹ Davis has shown how religious icons confer power and legitimacy on rulers (Richard H. Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 52, no. 1 [1993]: 23). Refer also to Eaton, who underlines the close connection between king, god, temple and sacred site in India (Eaton, “Temple Desecration”: 254, 256).

Once images had been completely obliterated, any return to a site or reconciliation between local groups became impossible. This annihilation of the sanctified and revered icons deprived the religious communities of their legitimisation, focus and power. Without their consecrated statues, Jains not only lacked actual objects to venerate but also lost their theoretical and religious-philosophical focus. In order to prevent such theft or obliteration, many Jaina figural representations and sacred objects were buried in the ground or removed to underground sections of *basadis* for safekeeping.⁷⁶⁰

Although Davis describes numerous acts of destruction of statues by Hindu rulers, he implies that this was not part of ordinary Hindu religious or political behaviour. According to him, it was Muslims who introduced this practice into the subcontinent.⁷⁶¹ Eaton strongly disagrees with this and on the contrary portrays the looting and destruction carried out by Muslims as simply an imitation of a long-established indigenous Indian approach to sacred statues:

[...] it is clear that temples had been the natural sites for the contestation of kingly authority well before the coming of Muslim Turks to India. Not surprisingly, Turkish invaders, when attempting to plant their own rule in early medieval India, followed and continued established patterns.⁷⁶²

While a tradition of destruction and religious looting existed before the influx of Islam into India, Islamic forces looted and destroyed sites sacred to different religions—and even to other Islamic groups (Sunnī or Shī'a) in other regions of the world as well.⁷⁶³ Furthermore, Eaton considers accounts of image and temple destruction written by Muslim chroniclers as exaggerated glorifications only.⁷⁶⁴ With today's generally negative view of the destruction of religious and artistic objects, nobody wants to take the blame for such deeds any longer. This reluctance is further boosted by a rhetoric of Indian national identity which argues that all indigenous Indian religious groups together constitute a unity, often constructed in opposition to Christianity and Islam.⁷⁶⁵

There is, however, clear evidence that Hindu groups, Viraśaivas and Muslims alike carried out such campaigns of destruction. There are ample examples of Jaina temples throughout Karnataka today which have empty pedestals and have been completely deprived of all their sacred icons (Plate 1.41). Whilst the destruction of

⁷⁶⁰ Davis describes the burying of a Hindu statue under a sacred tree in the fourteenth century to prevent iconoclastically minded Islamic armies moving through the Kaveri (Kāverī) delta destroying it (Davis, "Indian Art Objects as Loot": 22). For specific Jaina examples of such burying of icons, refer to Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 42, 43, 338, 348, 412, 553, 579.

⁷⁶¹ On this, refer to Davis, "Indian Art Objects as Loot": 42.

⁷⁶² See Eaton, "Temple Desecration": 256.

⁷⁶³ Leisten has written in detail on this situation (Thomas Leisten, "Mashhad Al-Nasr: Monuments of War and Victory in Medieval Islamic Art," *Muqarnas* 13 [1996]: 7–26).

⁷⁶⁴ Refer to Eaton "Temple Desecration": 257.

⁷⁶⁵ On this issue, refer to Davis, "Indian Art Objects as Loot": 45, and Eaton, "Temple Desecration": 246, 247, 250.

stone statues and the eradication of formerly influential faith groups constituted a means to assert dominance, the melting down of metal images made available a valued base material, with which new statues or non-religious objects such as jewellery or armoury could be cast, or the roofs of mosques gilded.⁷⁶⁶ As mentioned above, in addition to the physical evidence, we have plentiful written records associating Hindus, Viraśaivas and Muslims with such acts of annihilation.⁷⁶⁷ Fortunately, however, the complete destruction of sacred icons was not a universal practice.

In other cases, figural depictions of Jinas, other saints and divinities were mutilated. Sometimes, only an arm or other limb was chopped off the statues (Plate 1.42).⁷⁶⁸ Digambara Jaina icons are nudes, reflecting the practice of Digambara monks of wandering naked. With sitting representations this is not as obvious, but icons depicted standing reveal their full nakedness. We have seen how Hindus and in particular Muslims disapproved of this practice. However, Viraśaivas also objected to a public state of undress. The figural representations of standing naked Tirthankaras therefore often had their genitals sliced off (Plate 5.44).⁷⁶⁹ Davis argues that in India, the statues of opponents were traditionally always treated well.⁷⁷⁰ However, this is not reflected in the record of preserved but mutilated icons from the Middle Ages in Karnataka.

Even more frequently than the genitals, it was the faces or heads of statues which were disfigured. Often, the face was targeted (Plate 1.43). Especially haunting, however, is the full decapitation of an icon, usually of one of the most eminent fully-enlightened Tirthankaras. This act bears strong connotations. We have heard about miracle contests in which the Viraśaivas allegedly cut off their own heads and had them miraculously reinstated by Śiva. The large number of beheaded Jaina sculptures indicates that this was obviously a practice which the Jainas could not replicate, not even with regards to their figural representations (Plate 1.44). I would argue that the emphasis on self-decapitation in the dialogue with the Viraśaivas might have led to a particular large number of truncated Jina icons as reminders of the defeat suffered by the Jainas in these contests. The amputation of the head probably signals most

⁷⁶⁶ Davis and Hegewald have written on this (Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 45; Julia A.B. Hegewald, “Viraśaiva and Jaina Rivalries in Medieval South India: Creating and Overcoming Structures of Dependency,” in *Control, Coercion, and Constraint: The Role of Religion in Overcoming and Creating Structures of Dependency*, eds. Wolfram Kinzig and Barbara Loose, Dependency and Slavery Studies Vol. 14 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024]: 155–77).

⁷⁶⁷ For Muslim accounts, refer to the article by Eaton, “Temple Desecration”: 250–51.

⁷⁶⁸ Refer, for instance, to the discussion of the former Jaina temple at Hallur in Chapter 5 in this volume. See especially sections 3.2.1, “The Meguḍi and Other Jaina Temples at Aihole” and 5.1.1 “The Removal, Desecration and Disfigurement of Jaina Statues.”

⁷⁶⁹ This will be examined in Chapter 5 of this book in connection with the Jaina temple at Kambadhalli.

⁷⁷⁰ Compare Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 29.



Plate 1.41: Most former *basadis* at Aihole have had their main icons removed and only preserve empty pedestals, even though the *lalāṭabimbas* often still display Jaina imagery, indicating a conversion of the space.

strongly the idea of killing and death.⁷⁷¹ In addition, the removal of the face or the entire head also prevented Jaina devotees from looking at the eyes of the image. Although in Digambara ritual practice this is less important than amongst Śvetāmbaras,

⁷⁷¹ In Chapter 5, I argue that this might not only represent the figurative “killing” of a particular Jina or statue but of the entire faith of Jainism and its eradication from Karnataka.

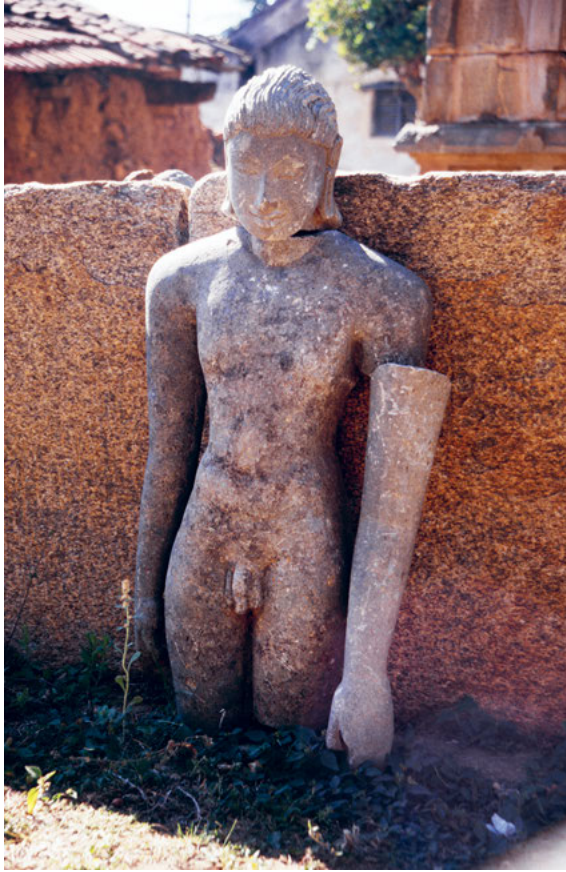


Plate 1.42: A statue of a nude standing Jina from Kambadhalli has had its head and one arm struck off in religiously motivated attacks on the site.

who often mark the eyes of their statues with inlaid sparkling precious stones, icon eyes are nevertheless of high significance in Digambara temple worship.⁷⁷²

As such, icons were usually the first items to be targeted by attackers. Figures were stolen, destroyed or disfigured; only rarely were they later returned or repaired. According to Davis, accepting back a statue which had been taken by opponents could be perceived as a sign of humiliation and degradation or as a public acceptance of one's own defeat.⁷⁷³ The Jaina view is also that such icons have been vandalised and polluted not only physically but also religiously. Eaton describes icons which were forcibly removed

⁷⁷² On this issue, refer also to Hegewald, "Viraśaiva and Jaina Rivalries": p. 165).

⁷⁷³ Compare Davis, "Indian Art Objects as Loot": 34–35.



Plate 1.43: The figure of a standing Tirthaṅkara inside a niche on the outside of the Pañcakūṭa Basadi at Kambadhalli has had its face sliced off in an act of vandalism.

from their former religious contexts as “dead.”⁷⁷⁴ Although what he chiefly has in mind is probably that after their seizure, they could not empower a ruler and its community any longer, it is true that the Jainas treat such returned statues almost as if they had died. Returned, marred and sometimes even buried images have thus been kept outside recaptured or returned Jaina temple establishments and not usually accorded primary importance again in ritual activities (Plate 1.45). On the one hand, this might indicate that the statues are regarded as debased and that they have not really been accepted back. On the other, these often blemished returned images are almost publicly

⁷⁷⁴ Refer to Eaton, “Temple Desecration”: 260.



Plate 1.44: A number of beheaded seated Jina statues and some dislocated heads of venerated Jaina images are on display at the front of the Anantanātha Basadi at Lakshmeshvar.

displayed by the Jainas and act as reminders of the harsh and difficult times their community has endured.⁷⁷⁵ As this practice is perceived as so symptomatic of the entire story of the persecution of the Jainas in Karnataka, a reproduction of such an openly displayed mutilated icon, set up in front of the *basadis* at Lakkundi, has been chosen as the cover image for this publication. It is noteworthy that, instead of dwelling on the hurt and loss in connection with such exhibited Tirthāṅkara torsos, the Jainas tend to emphasise the fact of their survival. In their eyes, these violated statues exemplify the strength of their own faith, not to say the longer-term superiority of Jainism in relation to other religious groups who had tried to eradicate them during the Middle Ages.

Although statues represented—and still represent—the most important part of a temple, and their removal or destruction sufficed to deprive a religious community of their religious focus, architectural structures were also regularly targeted in aggressive campaigns. In some instances, only parts of the *basadis* were destroyed, usually the most sacred shrine sections, the *garbhagrha* (Plates 5.4, 5.45). In other instances,

⁷⁷⁵ Davis in his article describes the official re-establishment of seized statues (Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 25–26). This appears not to be common in a Jaina context. On the fact that such images were not really integrated again in Jaina ritual activities, refer to Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 42–45.



Plate 1.45: As at the Pārśvanātha Basadi at Tadakoda, sacred icons involved in assaults on Jain sites are often considered tainted and no longer given a central position in ritual proceedings.

the roofs were torn off, which led to a gradual but definite obliteration of the *jinālayas* through the effects of the weather. In other instances, Jain *basadis* were completely demolished. This was, for instance, the case with the Śaṅkha Basadi at Lakshmeshvar (Lakṣmeśvara; ancient Puligere), of which only the lowest *adhiṣṭhāna* mouldings have survived. These still indicate the outline of the former Jain temple, but everything above them was lost and what is visible today is a later reconstruction consisting of pieces of rubble only (Plates 1.46, 5.18).

Eaton describes temple destructions as part of the “sweeping away of all prior political authority in newly conquered and annexed territories,” which was under-



Plate 1.46: The eleventh-century Śaṅkha Basadi at Lakshmeshvar was completely broken down into such small pieces that a faithful reconstruction of the *jinālaya* was not possible.

taken, for instance, by Muslims.⁷⁷⁶ This illustrates once again the close connection between rulers and their shrines, which is a pervasive phenomenon in India. According to Eaton, only state temples were normally targeted.⁷⁷⁷ As he relates this Muslim practice of temple destructions to a previously existing indigenous tradition, he implies that Hindus and Vīraśaivas would also have confined themselves to desecrating state temples. This, however, cannot be corroborated by the data from South India, where the large majority of existing Jaina temples were harmed. In Karnataka, the attempt to efface and entirely obliterate Jaina power and religious centres appears to have been so intense, and carried out by so many different religious groups, all competing for hegemony in the region, that hardly any temple remained unharmed. What is difficult to establish today is how many shrines might have decayed simply through abandonment after conversions away from Jainism.

Essential building parts of such entirely annihilated temples were at times reinserted in later, largely modern temple edifices. This can, for instance, be seen in the Mysore City Basadi, which despite its modern date, incorporates a Hoysaḷa lintel and door frames with flanking door guardians (*dvārapālas*) (Plate 5.48). Altar platforms, too, were regularly re-used.

In this section, I have focused on the complete or substantial destruction of Jaina icons and temple structures to indicate the power of a new faith group in the region. We shall see, however, that this was not always the method applied.

7.2 Re-Use as a Concept of Cultural Appropriation and Continuity

In addition to disfigured, destroyed and stolen icons and damaged or demolished Jaina temples, we find many instances where statues and sacred spaces were preserved largely intact and simply taken over, appropriated and given new meanings by the representatives of other faith groups. Many Jaina *basadis* were converted to Hindu worship,⁷⁷⁸ and a remarkable number of them were transformed to correspond to the concepts of Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Vīraśaiva ritual usage.⁷⁷⁹ As Narasimha Murthy says, “[...] most of the *basadis* and monasteries in northern Karnataka are now to be seen in the form of Śiva temples, or as materials used in the construction of mosques and forts.”⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁶ For this quote and further information on this issue, refer to Eaton, “Temple Desecration”: 254.

⁷⁷⁷ See Eaton, “Temple Desecration”: 255.

⁷⁷⁸ Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 177 has written on this.

⁷⁷⁹ Dibbad has also commented on this issue (Dibbad, “Construction, Destruction and Renovation”: 69).

⁷⁸⁰ For this quote, refer to Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 42–43.

The re-employment of spolia will be discussed in much detail in Chapter 5.⁷⁸¹ However, entire statues and *jinālayas* were also re-used. In this study, we have opted for the term “re-use,” in preference to the alternatives “rededicate” or “repurpose.”⁷⁸²

“Re-use” essentially refers to the employment of something more than once. In conventional re-use, an item such as an icon or a temple is used again—after a certain period of disruption—for the same purpose for which it was initially created.⁷⁸³ In the context of Jainism in Karnataka, this could be a deserted *basadi* whose architectural space and images are reconsecrated for Jaina worship after a period of desertion, a statue stolen and returned, or a *jinālaya* which is either handed back to Jaina ownership or claimed or retaken by the Jainas. Identifying an act of conventional re-use is not easy. Beyond the fact that Jaina icons are often not reinstated to their former position of importance, as has been discussed above, and that mutilated images are not usually restored, there is little to indicate that sacred objects and sites have undergone such a temporary interruption and takeover. We have to rely largely on written sources and some residual evidence of damage or scarring to establish what has happened.

What is much easier to distinguish is “new-life re-use,” a term I have coined to describe the situation where a clear change in use has taken place. In the context of our subject under examination, this could be a Jaina icon or *basadi* which is perhaps still used for religious purposes, but no longer by the Jainas.⁷⁸⁴ Select examples will be discussed below and, in more detail, in Chapter 5 in this volume.

The last major form of re-use is best described as “recycling,” where an item such as a religious sculpture or a building is broken down to its material properties.⁷⁸⁵ This is, for instance, the case when a Jaina metal statue has been melted down and the bronze, silver or gold cast into a new shape. However, stone debris from Jaina temples was also employed in new constructions, such as fortification walls or sacred edifices. In instances where Jaina *basadis* were completely destroyed but the fragments were left on site, the Jainas themselves sometimes used the structural remains of their own vandalised *jinālayas* to reconstruct them, as the above-mentioned Śaṅkha Basadi at Lakshmeshvar illustrates.

The examples of re-use discussed in this volume largely take place in the wake of acts of hostility, violence and takeover. However, this is not necessarily always the case. Re-use is generally typical of situations where cultures come into contact with other peoples, religions, traditions and ideas, for instance, at times of political and religious change and invasion, but also along pilgrimage and trade routes. Further interesting

⁷⁸¹ Consult especially section 5.1.2, “Destruction, Demolition and Reconstruction of Temple Edifices.”

⁷⁸² See the joint publication by Hegewald and Mitra on the issue of re-use in the arts and social sciences (Hegewald and Mitra, *Re-Use: The Art and Politics of Integration and Anxiety*).

⁷⁸³ On this issue, refer to Hegewald, “Towards a Theory of Re-Use”: 31, 33.

⁷⁸⁴ Compare Hegewald, “Towards a Theory of Re-Use”: 31.

⁷⁸⁵ See Hegewald, “Towards a Theory of Re-Use”: 32.

cases of re-use can be found when new media are introduced, and an old shape has to be translated into a new material.⁷⁸⁶ Usually, only one aspect of an item changes, either the material, the shape or the meaning. If too many characteristics of an object are modified at the same time, people cannot relate to or understand the item any longer and will probably reject it. This shows that re-use is a selective process. It does not represent a simple copying but the careful selective adoption of something new, such as a shape, a material or a meaning, and its application to a traditional context. It is important to remember in this context that cultures also constantly make reference to and re-use aspects of their own past to shape the present and the future. This creates cultural cohesion and works towards the creation of a distinct tradition, albeit one which is refreshed by the regular absorption of some new aspects. However, in the context of Jainism in Karnataka during the medieval period, the forceful appropriation of *basadis* and images is the most prominent instance of re-use.

Let us look first at the re-use of temple spaces. Although Viraśaivas had a very reduced ritual, originally confined to the veneration of the personal *linga* worn on their own body, its followers did annex *basadis* and in the process of the development of their faith also constructed temples themselves.⁷⁸⁷ After taking over a multi-shrined structure, the Viraśaivas usually used only one *garbhagrha*. The multiple cellas, often found on super-positioned levels, which are so typical of Jaina temple building,⁷⁸⁸ were usually kept but ignored and not furnished with additional images, reflecting the reduced ritual practice common in a Viraśaiva context (Plate 1.47).⁷⁸⁹ As Viraśaivism in its reformed mode has existed since the twelfth century only, the new Viraśaiva owners of former Jaina establishments, older than the twelfth century, usually did not cover up their capture of Jaina sacred buildings. However, statues that were felt to distract or were thought not fitting, such as those on the lintels of shrines, were often crudely chiselled away. As

⁷⁸⁶ Ideas, styles and building types can travel along such routes, as can be seen, for instance, along the Silk Routes and their western and eastern extensions. For such examples and also those illustrating changes in material, for instance, from constructions out of bamboo via later rock excavations to structural building out of blocks of stone, palm leaf to paper or oral to written traditions, refer to Hegewald, "Towards a Theory of Re-Use": 34–36.

⁷⁸⁷ This has been examined and portrayed by Lorenzetti in Chapter 4 in this volume.

⁷⁸⁸ On the planning and spatial rationale behind Jaina temple architecture, see, for instance, Julia A.B. Hegewald, "Multi-shrined Complexes: The Ordering of Space in Jaina Temple Architecture in North-Western India," *South Asian Studies* 17 (2001): 77–96, Julia A.B. Hegewald, "Jaina Temple Architecture: A Progression from Images to Shrines and Temple Cities," in *South Asian Archaeology 1999. Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists*, ed. Ellen M. Raven (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2008): 427–37, and Hegewald, *Jaina Temple Architecture in India*: 561–85.

⁷⁸⁹ For a converted Jaina temple illustrating this approach, refer to the section by Hegewald in Julia A.B. Hegewald and Subrata K. Mitra, "The Past in the Present: Temple Conversions in Karnataka and Appropriation and Re-Use in Orissa," in *Re-Use: The Art and Politics of Integration and Anxiety*, ed. Julia A.B. Hegewald and Subrata K. Mitra (New Delhi: Sage Publishers, 2012): 57–61.

Vīraśaivas felt that no other icons besides the symbol of the *līṅga* should be venerated, the Jaina icons or ornamentations were not replaced with alternative representations and their obvious removal was in most cases not obscured. This suggests that another aim of these temple transformations was also to signal the power of the victorious Vīraśaivas.



Plate 1.47: Due to the diminished ritual activities in a Vīraśaiva context, typical raised Jaina sanctums were simply cleared and left empty after the conversion, as can be seen at Hallur.

As has been mentioned before, most buildings were converted from Jaina to Śaiva or Vīraśaiva usage. However, we also find examples of Jaina sacred spaces being re-used by Muslims. The former Jaina *basadi* Aratranbat Gudi, for example, at Bankapur in Karnataka, was converted into a mosque in the ninth or tenth century CE. Aratranbat Gudi means “sixty-nine temple” or temple with sixty-nine columns (*kambad, kambada*).⁷⁹⁰ The large hall or *mahāmaṇḍapa* of the former *jinālaya* has been used as an Islamic prayer hall whilst the small hall, the vestibule (*antarāla*) and the shrine section of the structure have been closed off by a locked door (Plates 1.48, 5.49). Mosques follow a very different planning logic from Hindu and Jaina temples, and such re-used *basadis* are rare, although they are also mentioned by Eaton in his study.⁷⁹¹ I discussed

⁷⁹⁰ On this converted *jinālaya*, refer to Joseph, *Jainism in South India*: 29.

⁷⁹¹ Compare Eaton, “Temple Desecration”: 259.

a similar example, in Andhra Pradesh, in section 6.1.2. I shall provide a comprehensive examination of converted *jinālayas* in Chapter 5.



Plate 1.48: The ninth to tenth-century CE Jaina Aratranbat Gudi at Bankapur was converted into a mosque, and its large front hall is used as the prayer hall. Notice also the Muslim graves on its side.

Takeovers of Jaina icons are rarer than seizures of *basadis*. This makes sense, as the iconographical elaboration of a figural statue indicates clearly which Jina or divinity is depicted. Icons are more specific to a particular faith and, as such, harder to adapt. Some characters were more easily appropriated than others. For instance, representations of Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara, or Supārśvanātha, the seventh Jina, who both are depicted with a sheltering snake hood behind their heads, lend themselves especially well to conversions to Vaiṣṇava usage, since the god Viṣṇu, especially in his form of Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa or Śeṣaśāyīn (Śeṣaśāyī), is also typically protected by a hooded snake.⁷⁹² The serpent component of images of Pārśvanātha or Supārśvanātha can either be part of the Tīrthaṅkara statue itself or form an element of the back plate, extending upwards behind the statue, as part of the altar. As the god Śiva is likewise closely associated with serpents, the pedestals and backrests formerly associated with Pārśvanātha and Supārśvanātha icons could also be re-used easily by

⁷⁹² For an illustration of a Jaina image converted to Vaiṣṇava use, refer to Plate 2.3 in the photo section and the text reference in Hegewald, “Towards a Theory of Re-Use”: 33.

Śaivas. This will be discussed with regards to the Nāganātha Temple at Lakkundi in Chapter 5 of this volume (Plate 5.54).⁷⁹³

In other instances, however, iconographic features appear not to have mattered much; what are obviously statues of Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras or guardians of the sacred temple complexes (*kṣetrapālas*), *yakṣas* or *yakṣīs*, were at times annexed and re-sanctified in a Śaiva or Vīraśaiva context.⁷⁹⁴ For Vīraśaivas, who should worship only the *liṅga*, figural statues make no real sense at all. As such, the re-used Jina statue at Adargunchi and the converted *kṣetrapālas* from Kagvad, which are all still venerated today in temples converted by the Vīraśaivas, are startling examples (Plates 1.49, 5.56)

In this context, it is useful to remember the argument of Richard H. Davis that images have histories, and that through acts of appropriation, the meaning of an image changes over time.⁷⁹⁵ He applied this, for instance, to the context of Islamic iconoclasm or the removal of statues from their sacred contexts by European colonials, to adorn collections or museums. Davis showed that this practice in actual fact had a much longer indigenous tradition amongst Indic religious groups, Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu.⁷⁹⁶ During the struggle for hegemony in a region, statues chosen for their religious or political value were publicly removed—as Davis argues—without being physically mutilated or religiously dishonoured.⁷⁹⁷ We have seen, of course, that such respectful treatment was not necessarily always given to Jaina sacred objects in Karnataka. Be that as it may, Davis characterises such deeds of appropriation as political acts which have more to do with an expression of victory, subjugation and defeat than with religious sentiments.⁷⁹⁸ He goes so far as to describe the act of looting in the context of indigenous groups in medieval South Asia as “an important element in the rhetoric of kingship.”⁷⁹⁹ Davis also points out that looting is not about economic gain but that the stolen images were seen as “symbolic objects” and that this “is a matter of ‘victory’ not of theft.”⁸⁰⁰ Likewise, if a looted statue were later recaptured by its original owner, this would mark another change of direction in political power. In the

793 See, in particular, section 5.2.2 “Re-using Jaina Icons in Hindu and Vīraśaiva Contexts.”

794 Re-used *kṣetrapālas* can be seen in Plate 3.9 in the photo section with a text reference to it in Hegewald and Mitra, “The Past in the Present”: 66.

795 Refer to Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 22–48, especially p. 22 and p. 23.

796 Davis describes such an expropriation of a Sri Lankan Buddhist icon being carried out by Hindus from South India (Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 24–26) and a Hindu expropriation of a statue belonging to another Hindu power (see, pp. 26–27, 28, 30). According to Davis “In their inscriptions, medieval Indian rulers proudly and repeatedly proclaim their expropriation of objects from other kings.” (p. 26).

797 See Davis “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 23, 29, 32.

798 On this, refer to Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 22–24.

799 This quote has been taken from Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 26.

800 For these quotes, refer to Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 27. On the issue of looting being a kind of indigenous pattern of behaviour, refer also to Eaton, “Temple Desecration”: 256, 259.



Plate 1.49: Examples of a converted Jina with white *tripuṇḍra* lines and of re-used Jaina statues can be seen in what are now the Viraśaiva temples at Adargunchi (above) and at Kagvad (below).

sense of Roland Barthes, the meaning of the stolen statue shifts. It loses its former significance and acquires a new meaning in its changed context.⁸⁰¹ Much of this appears to be reflected in the Vīraśaiva re-use and appropriation of Jaina sacred images and temple settings.

I have focused here mainly on the annihilation, destruction and re-use of Jaina cultural artefacts, in connection with the loss in influence suffered by the Jaina community from about the late eleventh or early to mid-twelfth century onwards. Despite the obvious threat and devastation caused by a number of competing faith groups across the region, Jainism survived and even continued to thrive in a number of places throughout these troublesome times.

8 Continuity and Survival of Jainism in Karnataka

In this study, we are focusing on the rise and decline of Jainism in Karnataka. The fact that these trajectories are complex and that the two cannot always be neatly separated is illustrated by the fact that even during the Hoysāḷa age, when Jainas flourished, there are ample descriptions of persecutions of Jainas. Sundaram, for instance, writes with regards to the Hoysāḷas: “Once, when going on an expedition, Chikka Deva Raya of Mysore handed over power to Dodda Devayya and within three days he destroyed one thousand seven hundred Jaina temples and idols.”⁸⁰²

We have evidence that the persecution of the Jainas continued at least up to the sixteenth, if not even into the nineteenth century.⁸⁰³ Despite the emphasis in this study on the weakening of Jainism in Karnataka during medieval times, all the chapters in this volume also refer to, analyse and emphasise continuities, many lasting to the present day.⁸⁰⁴ On the basis of the evidence in Karnataka, I do not agree with the view of Bissett Pratt, who classifies Jainism as a precarious religion which is further declining and just surviving.⁸⁰⁵ Even under intense persecution, Jainism was not en-

801 See Davis, “Indian Art Objects as Loot”: 28.

802 For this quote, see Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 35. Dibbad also writes about the strength of Vaiṣṇavism under Chikka Deva Rāya or Rāja (Dibbad, *Construction, Destruction and Renovation*: 68). Dodḍa Devayya is also known as Dodḍayya. On this, see p. 72 of the last quoted source.

803 For discrimination and harassment until the sixteenth century, see Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 402. For persecution into the nineteenth century, refer to Sundaram, “Elements of Jaina History”: 35. See also Scholz on the weakening of the Digambara ascetic tradition in Karnataka up to the nineteenth century (Scholz, “The Revival of the Digambara *Muni*”: 260).

804 This is particularly the case with the joint chapter by Lauer and Scholz which takes an anthropological approach to the material and also asks what influence Muslim-Jaina struggles in the past had on contemporary feelings and interactions between these two distinct communities.

805 On this issue, refer to Pratt, “Why Do Religions Die?”: 76.

tirely eradicated as a faith in Karnataka in the Middle Ages and did not completely cease to exist and develop in this region. In actual fact, there was a certain revival of Jainism in Karnataka in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries CE.⁸⁰⁶ The discussion by Pius Fidelis Pinto in Chapter 2 and the examination of continuities in the architecture of the *basadis* of the region in Chapter 5 show that selected royal, religious and provincial centres provided a certain security and support for the Jainas, even after the uncertainties of the twelfth century.

8.1 Protection by a Royal Centre: Vijayanagara

One royal urban centre which favoured the further existence of the Jaina faith was the capital city of Vijayanagara, the City of Victory, also known as Hampi (Hampi).⁸⁰⁷ Pius F. Pinto in his contribution reminds us that the Vijayanagara empire as a whole covered practically the entire south Indian peninsula, including the modern States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Although the empire was large, Jaina temples continued to be raised in its capital city, Vijayanagara, and the surrounding area. Many of these splendid structures will be discussed in Chapter 5.⁸⁰⁸

The Vijayanagara rulers were Hindus, predominantly Vaiṣṇavas, but they were tolerant towards the Jainas,⁸⁰⁹ even defending them against the Śrīvaiṣṇavas when they were threatened, as discussed in section 5.4 on “Vaiṣṇavism and Śrīvaiṣṇavism.” As we have seen, benefactors were not always followers of a creed to which they made donations.⁸¹⁰

However, even in the major centre of Vijayanagara, the Jainas were not entirely safe from Viraśaiva attacks. In Hampi, too, they were a “disadvantaged minority,” as Pius F. Pinto puts it, and were persecuted and killed.⁸¹¹ For further information on continuities at Hampi, refer to Chapters 2 and 5 in particular.

806 Compare Zydenbos, “Jainism Endangered”: 177. Saletore refers to a revival of Jainism as early as the sixteenth century under Vādi Vidyānanda (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 255–356).

807 For more detailed information on the historical background, see Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 284, 313, and the section on the Vijayanagara empire in the chapter by Pinto.

808 Refer in particular to section 6.1, “Fourteenth and Fifteenth-Century *Jinālayas* at Vijayanagara.”

809 On this issue, see Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 283–97, 298, and Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 77.

810 This has also been argued by Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 219.

811 For the quote, see Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 84, who bases his argumentation on a publication in Kannada by Chidananda Murthy, *Kannada Sasanagala*: 235–37.

8.2 Continuity in a Religious Centre: Shravanabelgola

Since its beginnings in Karnataka, from at least the fifth century CE onwards, the site of Shravanabelgola has been the most prominent Digambara Jain religious centre in the region. The surrounding area of Gaṅgāsvāḍi, which also includes the sites of Jinanāthapura (Jinanāthapura) and Kambadhalli (Kambadhalli), just to mention two, became an active centre of Jain activity from the ninth or tenth century onwards.⁸¹²

Shravanabelgola bloomed under the Western Gaṅgās and the Hoysaḷas in particular. The site was so significant for the local Jainas that even during times of trouble, the central pilgrimage centre at least continued to expand. It carried on developing in later centuries, during the Vijayanagara and Wadiyar periods. In actual fact, the year 1400 CE is one during which a record number of visitors came to this celebrated pilgrimage site, as recorded in local inscriptions.⁸¹³ Even nowadays, Shravanabelgola is still the most significant pilgrimage site in the south of India and the main centre of Digambara Jainism in the State of Karnataka today. For further details on the endurance of Jain culture at Shravanabelgola, refer to Chapter 5 later in this book.

8.3 Endurance in a Provincial Region: The West Coast of Karnataka

Probably the largest provincial area in which Jainism was able to continue its growth and development, even during difficult times, is the coastal belt of western Karnataka. I shall focus here on the later history of this region, as this has been more neglected in the available literature. As the Jainas gradually lost their influence in the capital of Vijayanagara, and without influential leaders who could support their faith against competitors in the capital city, they turned to the provinces to survive.⁸¹⁴ Although the region along the west coast of Karnataka formed part of the extensive Vijayanagara empire, this peripheral area was governed by local feudatory families, who ruled relatively independently of the centre.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹² Gaṅgāsvāḍi was the headquarters of the Gaṅgā Dynasty (Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*: 280). For further information, refer to Narasimha Murtha, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 40.

⁸¹³ Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 324. As the discussion on the next page in Saletore shows, the interest in the site continued during the following years.

⁸¹⁴ On this, see Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 312. On page 323 of the same publication, he categorises the Vijayanagara empire as maturing during the fifteenth, reaching its zenith in the sixteenth and slowly losing power in the seventeenth century. This loss of power resulted in a movement of the Jainas to religious centres such as Shravanabelgola, and provincial regions such as coastal Karnataka.

⁸¹⁵ Compare Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 312–13.

The earliest local rulers amongst these were the Āḷupas who had been dependents, connected in intermarriage with the Kadambas of Banavāsi and the Čāḷukyas of Bādāmi. Like these two major imperial dynasties, the Āḷupas also practised religious tolerance in their area and actively supported Jainism.⁸¹⁶ Many of the Āḷupa officers, commanders and ministers came from leading local Jaina families. In addition to the Āḷupa chiefs, their often Jaina military and administrative staff, also influential local Jaina merchant families supported the building of *basadis*. The Āḷupas were followed by the Sāḷuvas of Gērusoppe and Hāḍuvallī, the Kellas, the Nagire Rājyas, the Bhairavas (Bhairava or Bhairasa Oḍeyars of Kārkaḷa), the Chauṭas of Mūdabidri, the Baṅgas of Bangavadi and other local rulers, who at times overlapped and coexisted, ruling over what were often quite small areas.⁸¹⁷ All of them, however, appear to have been in favour of supporting Jaina activities.⁸¹⁸

According to Pius F. Pinto, although these coastal chieftains were economically quite weak, they had considerable political autonomy and were able to make independent decisions favourable to the Jaina community, allowing it to live in relative communal harmony at a time when the plight of the Jainas had severely deteriorated in other regions of Karnataka. The coastal rulers supported the building of Jaina *basadis* and the funding of rituals. A number of monastic headquarters were also established, with the largest at Mudabidri, Karkal, Varanga (Varāṅga, Varāṅganā) (Plate 1.50) and Haduvalli (Hāḍuhallī) near Gērusoppe.⁸¹⁹ Mudabidri was the headquarters of the Candrakīrti Bhaṭṭārakas, Karkal was the *maṭha* of the Lalitakīrti Bhaṭṭārakas and Varanga of the Devendrakīrti Bhaṭṭārakas. Other smaller monastic seats developed as subsidiaries of these central monastic centres.⁸²⁰ Today, only Karkal, Mudabidri, Humcha and Narasimharajapura, have active *maṭhas*.⁸²¹ These places, but also Venur, Varanga, Barkur (Bār-kūr) and others, continued as centres of Jaina pilgrimage and ritual, art production, temple building and the composition of Jaina literature.

⁸¹⁶ On this issue, see Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 86. In addition to general tolerance and support for Jainism, it has to be pointed out that connections between the different groups and sects of various religions were very close in this area anyway. One can notice a lot of sharing of rituals, such as *bhūta* worship. On strong interactions with local practices, see Bhatt, *Studies in Tuluva History*, Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 87–90, and Pinto in this volume.

⁸¹⁷ Further prominent ruling families were the Kongāḷvas, the Cangāḷvas, the Sāḷuvas of Sangitapura, the Samantas of Mulki, the Tolahas of Sural, Ajilas of Vēnur and the Mulas of Bailangadi, amongst others. On this, see Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 86, and Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 87–100, 313.

⁸¹⁸ For further information, see Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 87, and Pinto in this book.

⁸¹⁹ On this issue, see Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 87, and Chapter 2 by Pinto in this volume.

⁸²⁰ Refer to Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 87.

⁸²¹ Compare Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 53. A small monastic institution survives in Kambadhalli but its significance seems to be very limited.



Plate 1.50: Entrance to the ancient Jaina *matha* at Varanga, displaying the typical sloping red tiled roofs, characteristic of the architecture along the coastal line of Karnataka, which has adapted to strong rains.

Pius F. Pinto argues in Chapter 2 that the reason Jainism survived and flourished to such an extent in coastal Karnataka was that it adapted more effectively there than elsewhere to the regional forms of Hinduism and folk practices, thus becoming an integral part of local society. He also reminds us that the situation was not the same everywhere. The neighbouring region of Keḷadi, just north of the Kanara Region of coastal Karnataka,⁸²² was dominated by Vīraśaivas and did not welcome Jains. The Keḷadi Nāyakas allegedly coerced the Jaina chiefs of Sōde or Sōndā and Bilagi or Bīligi to convert to Vīraśaivism, which also led to the conversion of their subjects. As a result, the Jaina centres of Gerusoppe, Bhatkal (Bhaṭkaḷ, Bhaṭakaḷa) and Haduvalli in North Kanara District also deteriorated. The situation in regions such as these contributed to a general decline of the Jaina faith throughout the State.⁸²³ Desai ascribes the decline in Jainism from the seventeenth century onwards to the actions of the Vīraśaivas and to the aggressive Muslim incursions and attacks in the area.⁸²⁴ Nevertheless, Jainism flourished along the west coast of Karnataka at a time when it was severely

⁸²² The coastal region of Kannara is also known as South Kanara or Dakṣiṇa Kannaḍa.

⁸²³ Pinto has written on this topic in this volume. See also Narasimha Murthy, who outlines how the Rāṣṭrakūṭas yielded power to the Cāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa and the Gaṅgās of Talakāḍ to the Coḷas, who moved into the area from the south (Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 39).

⁸²⁴ On this issue, refer to Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 132–33.

in decline elsewhere in the region. The coastal belt still represents one of the major centres of Jaina culture in India today.

Inscriptional records from the mid-fourteenth to the early seventeenth century testify to the strong support which Jaina activities received from aristocrats as well as ordinary people, amongst them many women, in the coastal belt.⁸²⁵ It is important to understand, however, that it was now the backing of the common people that ensured Jainism's survival, rather than royal support, as in earlier centuries.⁸²⁶ Even today, the coexistence of different creeds and even their active interaction throughout this region is surprisingly peaceful. Besides sharing religious practices, as mentioned above, they also actively interact at certain sacred sites. For instance, the manager (*moktēsara*) of the Mañjunātha Svāmi, a Śiva temple at Dharmasthala, always comes from a Jaina family, whilst its priests are Vaiṣṇavas, illustrating an admirable coexistence and interaction of different faith groups around a single temple.⁸²⁷

We can see, then, that although the Jainas lost much of their property and influence as Śaivism, Śrīvaiṣṇavism, and Vīraśaivism grew in popularity, and with the arrival of Islam in the wider area, their faith did not die out. At the royal centre of Vijayanagara, the religious centre of Shravanabelgola and in the coastal region, in particular, Jaina ritual practice, art and architecture continued to develop and evolve in Karnataka, even if on a much smaller scale than before.

9 Conclusion: Reasons for the Weakening of Jaina Influence in Karnataka

At the end of this large and comprehensive research project, I will attempt to summarise the results from all the involved research areas once again in brief for a better understanding of the measured but marked decline of the formerly dominant Jaina community in the area of the modern-day State of Karnataka during Medieval times. This decrease in influence forces itself on our notice in the late eleventh and early twelfth century and was particularly pronounced from the late twelfth century onwards. It can be ascribed not to a single major cause but to a variety of interrelated reasons. Chains of events that affected one another and influenced interconnected areas led to the dwindling of Jaina religious and political impact in the region. The waning of Jaina influence was a gradual process, spanning several centuries, and not affecting all areas of Karnataka equally at the same time.

⁸²⁵ Saletore has written on this subject (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 319).

⁸²⁶ This has been stressed by Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 322.

⁸²⁷ Pinto has written on this issue (Pinto, "Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire": 91). There is also a Jaina temple and a statue of Bāhubali at the site of Dharmasthala.

Due to the large number of players involved in these historic, political, economic, social and religious upheavals, our team has uncovered diverse and even conflicting narratives and interpretations. What is especially striking is the way in which a single factor, while not in itself negative, might in the end have been the element that caused the fortunes of the Jainas to tip. Often such elements had initially even helped to establish and widen Jaina authority in the State, only to be given too much importance, gain excessively in influence and become integrated so tightly into Jaina practice as to alienate at least orthodox Jainas. This led to a fragmentation and a decimation of the Jaina *saṅgha*. Additionally, the Jainas were at times perhaps too slow to react and adapt. Possibly, they had become too used to a comfortable position of power. At this volatile time of change, whilst the clergy appear now and then to have been somewhat inflexible in the face of attempts to liberate the faith, some ordinary devotees, by contrast, decided to find salvation by following other religions who were vying for new supporters.

9.1 The Particular Situation of Jainism in Karnataka

Jainism wielded considerable influence over the religious, political and cultural life of the people of Karnataka for several centuries, from its establishment in about the fifth century CE and its development into an influential power in the seventh century CE, until the eleventh, if not the early to mid-twelfth century. The Jainas' success seems at least partially to have been due to their relatively open, inclusive approach to other religions and their traditions. By incorporating into Jainism Tantric and *bhakti* elements, which were very popular at the time, whilst holding on more or less to their own tenets, the Jainas managed to substantially expand their following, especially in the period from the eighth to the tenth century CE. At this time, non-Vedic religions such as Jainism (and Buddhism), posed real challenges to Hindu orthodoxy. However, from the late eleventh century, the power base of these heterodox religions severely declined and from the thirteenth to fourteenth century onwards, the Jainas almost completely lost their influence in central and northern Karnataka and became a disempowered minority. Hindus had reacted to this non-Vedic threat by developing new, often more devotional forms of their faith, which successfully attracted followers as well as the support of influential rulers.

The individual projects within this large research venture have come up with a range of conclusions, enabling us to identify a number of causes of the waning of Jainism in Karnataka during the medieval period. The explanatory factors involved are of two basic types: voluntary and internal on the one hand and external or imposed on

the other.⁸²⁸ However, as the reasons for the collapse of Jaina hegemony in the State of Karnataka are very diverse and intertwined in a highly complex fashion, it is difficult to separate them neatly from one another. Any one factor had a marked effect on other areas, and many are tightly interconnected.⁸²⁹

9.1.1 Loss of Political and Financial Support

There is overwhelming evidence for the conclusion that the breakdown of royal support was the primary cause of the sudden decline of Jainism in Karnataka. The substantial backing the faith group received after the initial conversion of kings was crucial for its early establishment, development and expansion, allowing it to become influential in the region during the medieval period. At this time, the wider area was divided into a number of regional kingdoms. With the rise of Kadamba and Gaṅgā power in Karnataka, Jainism flourished and gained further support, especially from the Cālukyas, the Rāṣtrakūṭas and the Hoysaḷas. However, towards the end of the tenth century CE, both the Rāṣtrakūṭa and the Gaṅgā dynasties suffered a substantial loss in power at pretty much the same time.⁸³⁰ All the authors in this publication underscore this as a significant factor in the demise of the Jainas. Once the religion had been firmly established and had substantially expanded its number of properties and clergy, whose maintenance and survival had to be guaranteed, the network of religious centres could not subsist without funding and donations on a large scale.

Connected to this shortfall in royal support was a loss of patronage from other political and financial benefactors, such as secular and more localised rulers. These included more regional feudatories and members of the aristocratic and upper levels of society, such as ministers and high-ranking military figures, as well as of the influential trading classes and corporate bodies. However, also ordinary people had supported the rise of Jainism. Although the support for Jainism (and Buddhism) was generally stronger in urban centres, during its peak of success, even farmers championed

⁸²⁸ In the nineteen-thirties, Saletore suggested four main reasons for the decline of Jainism in Karnataka. According to him, all the factors he deduced are specific to the particular geographical region and time frame (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 279). Our study has built on earlier findings and taken the research further. Pratt suggested that when religions die, a combination of different causes are always at work. He proposed that we are dealing with a mixture of, on the one hand, violent and hostile attacks, military rivals, propaganda, conversion and missionary activities, which can be peaceful or violent, and on the other, internal, more subtle factors (Pratt, “Why Do Religions Die?”). Although Jainism clearly did not die, these different levels of threat can also be seen in our data from Karnataka.

⁸²⁹ Rice has written on this in more detail (B. Lewis Rice, *Mysore and Coorg: From the Inscriptions* [New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1986 (1909)]: 72).

⁸³⁰ Refer to Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 280, and Pinto, who emphasise the importance of the downfall of the Rāṣtrakūṭa and the Hoysaḷa dynasties for the position of the Jainas (Pinto, “Jainism in the Vijayanagara Empire”: 82).

Jainism and participated in ritual proceedings. This shows, that during its heyday, between the eighth or tenth and the twelfth centuries, Jainism obtained support from all groups of society. In return, the Jainas provided spiritual and religious guidance to the people and contributed to the further development of all the diverse strands of the arts in Karnataka. However, when the upper strata of society turned away from Jainism, also the masses converted and the Jainas lost financial support from all levels of society.

From the tenth century CE onwards, the monarchs, their ministers, feudatories and commercial tycoons changed very frequently. As one group gained in power, another surrendered, leading to a highly unstable political situation.⁸³¹ Influential leaders had often offered not only economic support to the Jainas but also physical protection. With the conversion of rulers to Virāśaivism in particular, the Jainas suffered serious losses of patronage, protection and even control over trade. This latter harmed them severely; the salvaging of at least their commercial connections could have provided them with a certain financial independence.

The withdrawal of political and financial backing thus caused a particular practical problem. It became impossible for the remaining Jainas in Karnataka to maintain their numerous *basadis*, monasteries, medical centres and charity houses, as well as the religious and administrative staff looking after their land, properties and religious communities.

9.1.2 Contesting Faiths, Complacency and Conversion

In addition to the withdrawal of patronage from the Jainas, the sequence of religious trials, new movements and entirely new faith groups which entered the area was probably the second most decisive factor in the destabilisation of Jainism in Karnataka. New religions emerged at very short intervals over these years. The Tantric movement, from about the eighth century CE, the Hindu resurgence in the south of India from the ninth century CE, the powerful *bhakti* path in Karnataka from about the tenth century CE, and the Śaiva revival from the late eleventh or early to mid-twelfth century, all affected the religious and social environment in Karnataka.

It is clear that in the period from the eighth to the tenth century CE, Jainas opened up in a pronounced way to other faiths and allowed substantial changes to be made to the structure and administration of their own religion. Initially, these transformations—such as a liberal attitude towards women, in the context of the Yāpanīyas, the acceptance of large numbers of converts from other faith groups, the consolidation of the position of female divinities such as the *yakṣīs*, and the acceptance of large donations for building more *basadis* and *maṭhas*—helped them to grow in popularity. In

⁸³¹ Narasimha Murthy has described this situation (Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 39–40).

the long run, however, at least some of these elements probably contributed to their gradual decline.

It is surprising how little the seemingly all-powerful Jainas appear to have been aware of how much the upsurge of new religious groups in the wider area might threaten them. This openness is one of several elements which might seem initially to be positive, but of which we can say, with hindsight, that they ended up endangering the faith. We have outlined the tolerant and liberal approach of the Jainas to other religions as something which at first allowed them to make large numbers of converts quickly. Once they had reached a position of comfortable superiority, however, this tolerance turned into what one might describe as a noncommittal ignoring of religious developments around them: an attitude that soon endangered the religion. We might describe the approach of the Jainas from about the eleventh century onwards as complacent or indifferent. Jaina leaders were obviously unprepared for a situation of fierce religious competition, which ultimately contributed to their displacement from power.⁸³²

Especially detrimental in this context was the new—or at least strongly reformed—movement of the Viraśaivas from the middle of the twelfth century, which as it appears was long disregarded and severely underestimated by the formerly dominant Jaina religious leaders. Early Viraśaivism in particular was aggressive and militant. This shows that from an initially political and financial threat, described in the previous paragraph, followed by religious competition, the situation turned into an outright struggle for survival against Viraśaivism. With its egalitarian and classless outlook, this new or strongly reformed faith appealed especially to those levels of society which, according to the local caste system, were described as of lower ranking status. In the past, the Jainas had appealed to these groups, but through the adoption of castes, had lost this advantage. Again, the acceptance of castes, which initially helped their rise of the Jainas, later endangered their position, making them unattractive to groups of lower caste status. The Jainas did not manage to counteract the strength of the powerful Viraśaiva religious movement. The conversion of important families of vassals to Viraśaivism caused them particular problems; through the conversion of high levels of society and of the ruling classes, the Viraśaivas absorbed all financial patronage.

However, even worse news for the Jainas was the conversion to Viraśaivism of the influential merchant classes of the Vira Bāṇajigas, who represented the wealthy middle classes at this time. The middle and upper layers of society had long been dominated by the Jainas, but once the Viraśaivas became active in trade, they appear to have gained influence rapidly. This had a detrimental effect on the position of the Jainas. Today, the sub-caste of traders or Bāṇajigas in Karnataka are still mainly Viraśaivas.⁸³³

⁸³² Saletore and Narasimha Murthy have also commented on this issue (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 271, 280; Narasimha Murthy, “History of Jainism in Karnataka”: 53). Saletore bemoans in particular the lack of a competent mentor, such as Śiṃhanandi (Saletore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 283), who could have proven to be a strong religious leader as well as a well-versed politician at this time.

⁸³³ Refer to McCormack, “On Lingayat Culture”: 177–78.

We have heard about the conversion of feudatory and royal families as well as of the merchant classes to Viraśaivism. Our research has shown that such conversions played a powerful role. Whilst during the early period of the Viraśaiva upsurge in Karnataka, some conversions appear to have been enforced, influential Viraśaiva teachers later approached the matter in a more subtle and charismatic manner and managed to convert influential rulers as well as the common people more easily.

Although their influence was less pronounced than that of the powerful Viraśaivas, Śaivas, Śrīvaiṣṇavas and other Hindu sects also threatened the existence of the Jainas. This was a time of Hindu revivalism, in which the *bhakti* movements played an important role and created enormous rivalry for the faith groups already in the area. In contrast to Śrīvaiṣṇavism, whose early saints came from the modern region of Tamil Nadu and conversed and preached in Tamil language, Jainism, with its strong ancient roots in Karnataka and no language barrier to hinder its missionary activities, should have been in an advantageous situation. But despite this, the Jainas also lost members to this new Hindu creed from Tamil Nadu.

Once Islam also appeared on the scene at the northern edge of Karnataka, the position of the Jainas was further weakened. Although much damage had already been done to the influence of Jaina rulers, their *basadis* and monasteries, Islam constituted another significant religious group competing for recognition and power in the region. This further undermined the already strongly shaken position of the Jainas, who by this time were already in a minority in the northern regions of the State.

9.1.3 Fragmentation and Internal Competition

The failure of the Jainas to form a united front against other religions and the challenges of the times also weakened the faith. The fragmentation of Jaina religious society into large numbers of different subgroups, such as Śvetāmbaras, Digambaras, Yāpanīyas, diverse *gaṇas*, *gacchas*, *anvayas* and various other *saṅghas*, all with their distinct *maṭhas* and local leaders, meant that despite their shared religious origin, these groups often fought against one another. Even within individual subgroups, damaging struggles for leading positions in monasteries and temples often took place.

The strength of the Yāpanīyas, in particular, in the period from the eighth to the tenth century CE, and their success in accruing followers, was not strategically employed by the Jainas to consolidate the entire faith. On the contrary, the Digambara Mūla Saṅgha tried to isolate the Yāpanīyas and brand them as heretics. Instead of building on the success of the Yāpanīyas in attracting converts, especially women, to Jainism, leaders engaged in internal competition over how to run Jaina organisations.

The problem of disintegration was made worse by the fact that the Jainas do not appear to have recognised the fragmentation and dissolution of their own religion. Nor

did they realise that the reorganisation of their social structure in the form of castes would have positive but also negative consequences for their standing.

Castes had initially become a feature of Jainism more or less by accident, and at first perhaps even unnoticed, after large numbers who converted from Hindu faiths in the period from the fourth to the sixth century CE had held on to their caste status. However, the situation changed when castes were officially accepted and affirmed by the Jainas in the eighth century CE. From this time onwards, the mendicant path was no longer open to the lowest levels of society, although this had previously been an important way for them to gain recognition and social standing. The initially strongly egalitarian nature of Jainism was thus somewhat constrained if not entirely lost. In this context, it is ironic that from the twelfth century onwards, and particularly during the fifteenth century, one reason for the stark increase in conversions to Viraśaivism appears to have been their rejection of the Hindu caste system. The Jainas had, of course, initially also gained support by rejecting castes when they put down roots in Karnataka.

Had the Jainas taken these problems seriously and tried to remedy them at once, the situation could perhaps have been saved. However, as Saletpore has argued, at this time of crisis in Karnataka, there were too few individual Jaina reformers who could have corrected such unintended developments and reinvigorated the faith again.⁸³⁴ Of course, with hindsight, it is easy to see this. Reading about the history and developments of this time, one gets the feeling of an unrelenting barrage of events and a breath-taking surge to Jaina supremacy within just a couple of centuries, which would have made it difficult to notice the sweet spot at which a formerly attractive feature turned into a problem.

9.1.4 Jaina Ascetics as Settled Landowners

Furthermore, we have shown that the deterioration of Jaina pre-eminence in the region was due to a disregard for religious duties such as the renunciation of home and possessions. The introduction of amenities and wealth, which allowed ascetics to leave their path of purely selfless service and severe poverty, certainly set the stage for a distinctive process of change which appears to have contributed to a certain disintegration and exposed the ascetics to criticism from their own ranks, as well as blurring clear distinctions between different religious groups.⁸³⁵

⁸³⁴ On this, see Saletpore, *Mediaeval Jainism*: 270–71.

⁸³⁵ Desai has written on this subject (Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 170).

The problem was perhaps not so much the benefactions, as such, as the fact that donated properties required larger and larger funds to look after them. Once donated and officially sanctified, a *basadi* needed continuous “core” contributions, not only to maintain the ritual activities but also to pay for the repair and upkeep of the structures and statues and the priests tending to them. As such, every benefaction demanded further endowments, creating a vicious circle of dependency on money of which the monks had initially been absolutely independent.

An associated issue was the tendency of some Jaina ascetics to abandon their homeless life-style and settle down more permanently in monastic establishments. On the one hand, this helped them by allowing them to forge closer links with lay people, and intensify their mutual interdependence. On the other hand, however, it added to the accumulation of wealth and land, which went against the core ideals which the ascetics had pledged to abide by, of giving up all their belongings and cutting ties with the material world. This is why the institution of the dressed, not fully-initiated *bhaṭṭārakas* was introduced, but also these had to be assisted by monks and nuns in their work.

The points outlined in this section perhaps illustrate particularly well the conundrum faced by the Jainas as their faith developed. Many modifications initially led to a rise in popularity of their faith in Karnataka. However, beyond a certain level, these initially helpful aspects were to become liabilities, which severely changed the outlook of the religion, made it open to criticism and in the long run endangered its survival.

9.1.5 Close Connections with Other Religious Practices

As we have seen, there is no sound basis for labelling the development observable in Jainism of focusing increasingly on divinities a violation of their central religious tenets. We have no evidence that a pure and reduced form of Jainism, focusing only on ascetics and the twenty-four Tirthaṅkaras, ever existed. Divinities appear to have been part of the ritual from the very beginning. The situation did of course change markedly between the eighth and the tenth century CE. At least at certain sites, the absolute focus on the Tirthaṅkaras, who are the only beings who have reached enlightenment and who can guide the worshippers on their path to liberation, as understood by Jainism, was slightly marginalised from the tenth century CE onwards. The Jaina pantheon of gods and goddesses became so enlarged and their status so increased that a select number of *basadis* even have no statues of the Jinas, but only goddesses in the form of powerful *yakṣīs* at the centre of their cult. This suggests that the Tirthaṅkaras alone provided too little direct support for the lay community, and shows the goddesses’ rise in influence. However, in terms of religious hierarchy, the Tirthaṅkaras are far above the *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs*. In fact, as we have seen, gods and goddesses have first to be reborn as humans to start the long and arduous path towards salvation on earth.

While it is true that, with this focus on divinities, the Jainas moved in their development and practice somewhat closer to Hindu and Buddhist ritual practices, and became somewhat less distinct in their approach to the sacred, it is difficult to argue that this was a corruption of the faith, as *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* had been worshipped from the very beginnings of Jainism. It may, however, be true that, once the popularity of the *yakṣīs* had started—at least at certain individual sites—to almost overpower the importance of the Tirthaṅkaras, the cohesion and clarity of the Jaina path to salvation might have suffered. This could have worked against the stabilisation of the religion.

The suggestion that the Jainas' adherence to the principle of *ahiṃsā*—non-injury—made them too unworldly is likewise unconvincing.⁸³⁶ Jainism, with its heroic approach to conquering one's own desires, appealed especially to martial groups and many generals and army chiefs were in fact Jainas, as the right to defend oneself and one's kingdom did not fall under the category of violence or harming others. I therefore conclude that the tenet of *ahiṃsā* alone would not have been enough to bring Jainism down.

9.1.6 Lack of Leadership in Jainism

It does seem to be true that, at least from the twelfth century, the Jainas lacked strong enough leadership. For whatever reason, they were no longer successful in attracting ascetics and teachers who could effectively support and propagate their beliefs at least in the open philosophical and theological contests where religious leaders commonly defended their own faith. By contrast, the followers of the new—or at least radically reformed—Vīraśaiva creed appear to have been extremely active and ambitious, with strong and charismatic leaders bent on enlarging their religious community. They often managed to defeat the Jainas in debate, swaying the masses in their favour. Such contests often resulted in large-scale conversions away from Jainism. Why this was the case is difficult to ascertain. Possibly, after centuries of domination, the Jainas were so sure of their own position of supremacy, and so occupied with looking after their wealth and properties, that they thought they had enough political influence not to be affected by such challenges. Unfortunately, however, history proved them wrong. Most of the ruling classes were converted from Jainism to Vīraśaivism, very much due to the influence of the above-mentioned Vīraśaiva saints.

As we have shown, through such conversions, the Jainas lost not only in following, but also in financial support and protection. The loss of protection was especially detrimental, as Vīraśaivas were not only quick in debates and charismatic as leaders, but also militarily inclined. After defeat in debates, the *ahiṃsā*-loving Jainas were often physically persecuted, and their places of worship were destroyed.

⁸³⁶ See the discussion in Narasimha Murthy, "History of Jainism in Karnataka": 57.

9.2 Concluding Thoughts

The discussion in this chapter and the volume as a whole has shown that there are a number of internal factors within Jainism itself which appear to have led to a weakening of the faith over several centuries, as becomes especially apparent from the eleventh century onwards. In addition, however, external factors such as the rise in influence of Viraśaivism and other faith groups have to be taken into account. Initially, the rise of Jainism in Karnataka in the early centuries of the common era appears to have owed a lot to the fact that the majority of the ruling classes and the better-off trading communities supported it. Jainism became especially popular amongst the upper sections of society. This initial gain and upsurge in influence created dependencies which in the long run resulted in an enormous fall from grace. The expansion of *basadis* and icons meant that enormous sums were required for the simple maintenance of shrines and monasteries, which had developed into complex institutions.

In addition to these largely political and economic factors, we should not forget the social elements of the equation, such as the attraction to Jainas of the strongly propagated egalitarianism of Viraśaivism.⁸³⁷ The Jainas, abandoning their earlier commitment to opportunity of equality, had come to accept the caste system after accommodating Hindu converts, and had also failed to capitalise on the practices of their own Yāpanīyas, who offered even more equal opportunities than mainstream Digambara Jainism, enticing women in particular to convert. The Digambara main *saṅgha*, instead of strengthening the community as a whole, had absorbed the subgroup of the Yāpanīyas and standardised and adjusted their approach.

We must also assume that religious, dogmatic and ritualistic factors will have played a role. It is easy to imagine the attraction of the single divine principle and strongly reduced ritual of Viraśaivism, in view of the increase in pompous Jaina ceremonies, the bloated religious administration, and the enormous enlargement of the Jaina pantheon, whose myriads of divine and enlightened figures all required allegiance and a certain financial support from devotees. We should, however, remember that the opposite case could also be made: earlier forms of Jainism might have been too strict and lifeless to attract many followers, but a certain number of approachable divine beings would have made the religion more appealing.

Perhaps Viraśaivism offered a comfortable and appealing middle way between earlier forms of Jainism which offered too little and its later settled, landowning guise, characterised by too much of everything. Furthermore, Viraśaivism is a *bhakti* religion, requiring strong personal and emotional involvement, which at this time apparently appealed to many, as we see from the enormous success of not only Śaiva but also

⁸³⁷ However, Scholz reminds us in Chapter 3 that, just like the initially caste-less Jainas, also the Viraśaivas eventually developed a caste system.

Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* sects. Sabine Scholz, in Chapter 3, stresses that the followers of monotheistic religions have generally been characterised as executing a stronger and more rigorous “missionary zeal,” as she calls it. Somehow, the absolute focus on a single divine entity considered superior to all other powers can lead to a lack of tolerance towards other religious groups, which can easily lead to violence. At least during the early phase of Viraśaivism in Karnataka, this seems to have been the case.

It appears that the Jainas, who had been in the ascendant for centuries, had grown used to a position of strength and had lost the verve of a new emerging creed, with the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and fight on every level for their survival. The Jainas had become accustomed to administering their own wealth, landed properties and power and were preoccupied more with organising rituals and festivities, and perhaps celebrating their own importance, than linking up directly with their human followers, who after all provided their legitimisation and economic basis. Against this, however, we have to balance the fact that in the period from the eighth to the tenth century CE, Jaina ascetics engaged more intensely with the laity and offered them more opportunities to engage in ritual activities. As such, householders were directly involved in ceremonies and religious festivals. This illustrates again the complex nature of the manifold developments in Jainism in the early and later Middle Ages.

Within only two to four hundred years, Jainism went from being one of the foremost religions of Karnataka to one of the least influential faith groups in the area. The discussion in this volume shows that there is no single, simple explanation for either the rise or the decline of Jainism. In both cases, we are dealing with multifarious causes, whether religious, political, economic or social. Whilst during earlier periods of Indian history, organised, methodical and widespread discrimination against the adherents of contending religious groups, and their active maltreatment with weapons, were very rare, the persecution of the Jainas in the period from the twelfth to the fourteenth century represented a real change.⁸³⁸ Harmony and tolerance gave way to harsh harassment and outright persecutions.

The situation which presented itself to the Jainas from the late eleventh century onwards, characterised by political impediments, military defeats, failure of economic control and a general catastrophic loss in power, represented a condition of unavoidable calamity (*upasarga*). This explicitly allowed for the application of the religious ritual of death by self-starvation to be carried out. In this desperate situation, many Jainas abandoned worldly realities to search for shelter in religious pursuits and even in the execution of *sallekhanā*. This became a regular practice, carried out by royalty, ascetics and common people, including a large number of women. Evidence of this can be found at the main sacred centres of Koppala and Shravanabelgola, where nu-

⁸³⁸ On this issue, see also Desai, *Jainism in South India*: 401.

merous *niṣidhi* memorials commemorate these acts of deep religious devotion and ultimate asceticism. Others escaped this fate by converting to up-and-coming faith groups.

The history of Karnataka is closely linked to the spread, development and flourishing of Jainism. It appears to have reached the area in the second century CE, to have risen to significance between the fifth and the seventh century CE and to have enjoyed a heyday from the eighth century CE onwards. Its period of flourishing lasted at least until the eleventh and in many areas of the State far into the twelfth century, during which it had permeated all layers of civilian society and won the allegiance of royalty. The Jainas supported the creation of two major royal dynasties, the Gaṅgās and the Hoysaḷas, who both ruled over extensive kingdoms. Furthermore, they influenced the course of a wide-reaching literary, artistic, architectural, religious, social and political transformation and renewal in the region for about a thousand years, from the second to the twelfth century and in certain areas of Karnataka for even longer. At the royal centre of Vijayanagara, for instance, Jainism flourished until the fourteenth century, while the sacred pilgrimage site of Shravanabelgola continues to evolve, and there are many places along the west coast of India where Jainism prospered beyond the sixteenth century and still exhibits a strong religious presence today.

The success of the Jainas was in many respects due to the flexibility, innovation and internal diversity of their own faith as well as its ability to further develop their own and absorb other religious elements and concepts and to adapt to quickly changing circumstances. The Jainas opened up to aspects of Hinduism without becoming Hinduised or losing their own inner core values. All religious groups need to adapt to changes in their surroundings in order to survive. Otherwise, they are in danger of declining, entirely dissolving or being absorbed by other bigger players in the field, as has been the case with so many of the smaller religious groups mentioned in this chapter.

Readers will, of course, decide for themselves whether the Jainas absorbed too many changes too quickly, moving too far away from their core tenets of asceticism and homelessness. However, this is not a view which I share. To my mind, the Jainas displayed an impressive power to adapt and to survive. The broadminded approach of the Yāpanīya group, the veneration of *Yakṣīs*, and the establishment of monasteries initially all contributed to the growth of Jainism in the region of Karnataka. Only once fragmentation, the importance of goddesses and landownership had developed beyond a certain workable limit did these elements become potentially problematic. Strictly speaking, it is not the changes themselves which caused the downfall of Jainism, but their further development in certain places at particular times. This added to a gradual decrease in influence that resulted from a withdrawal of patronage and financial support more generally and the arrival in the region within a very short time of a large number of religious groups, all competing for supremacy. The important point, however, is that despite this evident decline in influence, Jainism survived the

struggles of the later medieval period in Karnataka to present a thriving and still developing religious tradition in South India and the whole subcontinent today.

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