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A SPACE FOR TOLERANCE: RESPONSES TO OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN MEDIEVAL INDIAN LITERATURE

PHYLLIS GRANOFF



22ND J. GONDA LECTURE 2014



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Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences
PO Box 19121, NL-1000 GC Amsterdam
T +31 (0)20 551 0700
F +31 (0)20 620 4941
knaw@knaw.nl
www.knaw.nl

pdf available on www.knaw.nl

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PHYLLIS GRANOFF

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE RHETORIC OF CONFLICT

I begin with a story of tolerance and intolerance from a medieval Jain text. In this story members of the two rival Jain sects, the Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras, are arrayed against each other in a violent struggle for control over a holy place, which the Jains had wrested from the control of the Buddhists, while a Jain king and his Hindu queen live together in harmony despite their different religious beliefs.¹

In the land of Surāṣṭra, in the city of Gomaṇḍala, a pious lay Jain named Dhārā organized a pilgrimage party. Surrounded by his seven sons and accompanied by seven hundred warriors and thirteen hundred bullock carts, this wealthy man, whose wealth numbered thirteen crores, set off to worship at the holy site of Mt Raivata. Having worshipped the first Jina Ādinātha at Śatruñjaya, he stopped at the bazaar at the foot of Mt Raivata. The holy site had been for some time under the control of the Digambaras; the Buddhists had held it for fifty years, but the Digambaras had defeated them in debate and taken over the holy mountain. The site had been in the hands of the Digambaras for twelve years by the time Dhārā set out on his pilgrimage. The Śvetāmbara Dhārā informed the Digambara ritual master, who was celebrated for his knowledge of Eighty-Four maṇḍala rituals, “I have come to worship the God here.” The Digambara replied, “Become a Digambara first.” Dhārā thought to himself, “Even if my life depended upon it I would never turn my back on my own spiritual preceptor. But I also will not return home until I have worshipped the God.” Dhārā became visibly upset. His sons asked him, “Why are you so upset?” “My sons! I cannot worship at the holy site.” “Why

1 This story of inter-religious conflict over a holy site is by no means unique in the corpus of medieval Jain literature. Another typical example can be found in the biography of the monk Vijayasīṃha in the *Prabhāvakacarita*, a collection of biographies of famous monks written by the Jain monk Prabhācandra in 1277-78 C.E. The account of Vijayasīṃha describes the vicissitudes of the holy place sacred to the Jina Suvrata at Bhṛgupura, the modern city of Baroach in Gujarat, and records how the Jains defended the site from Hindus and Buddhists and the demi-gods who aided them. Like Ujjayanta in the present story, the site even had to be reclaimed from the hands of the Buddhists, who are described as “excellent debaters.” *Prabhāvakacarita*, edited by Jina Vijaya Muni, Singhi Jain Series, vol.13 (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1940), 43. In another account of the same site, a Hindu goddess is said to have caused trouble at the site and had to be stopped by the Jain monk Hemacandra. *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, edited by Jina Vijaya, Singhi Jain Series, vol.10 (Śāntiniketan: Singhī Jaina Jñānapīṭham, 1934), chapter 10:20-22.

should you care about worshipping at a Digambara holy site?" Their father explained to them, "This place used to belong to us. It has only recently come under their control." "In that case, worry no more. If we have to, we will force our way in." His sons had him tell the Digambara master, "We will worship at the holy site, even if we have to use force." The Digambara told his devotee, who was named Khaṅgāra, what was happening. He sent some soldiers. The sons of Dhārā began to fight with those soldiers. All seven sons along with seven hundred warriors were killed. Dhārā, leader of the pilgrimage party, refused to eat. On the third day of his fast, the goddess Ambikā spoke to him, "My child! There is a king named Āma in the city of Gopālapura, in the land of Kanyākubja. Previously he was an ascetic and practiced austerities on Mt Bhūṅḍa; for this reason he has now been reborn as a king. The Jain monk Bappabhaṭṭisūri stays with King Āma. He is the only one who can defeat these Digambaras; no one else can do it. He knows powerful spells and controls powerful demi-gods. Now that you know this, you must go to him." Dhārāka left the pilgrimage party and with eight pious lay Jains headed for Gopālapura. When he arrived there, the Glorious Monk was entertaining the king in his court with a delightful discourse rich in poetic flavor. Dhārāka bowed to him and relayed to him that he had a message from a pilgrimage party. The king glared sullenly at Dhārāka, but the monk asked him for details. He told him everything, from start to finish. Hearing what had happened and learning of the great glory of the holy site Raivata, the king was flooded with joy, and he made this firm vow: "I will not eat until I have worshipped Śrī Nemi at Raivata." The king's wife Kamalādevī declared, "And I shall not eat until I have worshipped Someśvaradeva, Lord Śiva at Prabhāsa." And so they all set off together. There were a lakh of bullock carts, 20,000 camels, 700 elephants, a lakh of men mounted on horses, 3 lakhs of foot soldiers, and 20,000 lay Jains in the party. On the thirtieth day the king reached the holy site of Stambha. That night the goddess Ambikā spoke to him, "King! Because you have been so steadfast in your resolve, Śrī Nemi will come to you, right here. Tomorrow at dawn you must break your fast. You will see an auspicious diagram covered with flowers. Use your hand to dig there. Śrī Nemi will appear." The next morning everything happened as the goddess had predicted. The king worshipped Nemi. The queen said to him, "My lord! You must break your fast now." "How can I eat without you?", he replied. And at that very instant the liṅga of Someśvaradeva appeared. The king gave the local merchants money to build two temples, saying, "You must build two temples in this city so that we may see them on our return." And then they all set off again. They sent a messenger to the pilgrimage party. The Jain monk told the Digambara ritual

master, "If we fight many people will die. Let us determine who wins and who loses by means of a debate." They selected witnesses for the debate. When a month had passed and the debate was still going on, the king and Dhārāka complained to the Jain monk Bappabhāṭṭisūri, "This is taking forever!" The monk assured them, "I will bring about a resolution today." On the thirty-first day Bappabhāṭṭisūri told the Digambara ritual master, "Let us summon a young virgin into a magic circle. The holy site will belong to the one to whom she gives it." He replied, "So be it." First the Digambaras led a richly bejeweled virgin into the magic circle. They were unable to make a divine being descend into her; as a vessel she remained empty. Bappabhāṭṭisūri was meditating in his lodgings. He gave some consecrated powder to Dhārāka and sent him off. The powder was scattered over the head of the virgin. She, the vessel of the divine, then spoke these verses,

"Even one word of praise to Vardhamāna, best of the Jinas, causes a man or a woman to cross over the ocean of transmigratory existence."

"I worship that one who renounced the world, achieved Omniscience and gained Liberation on Mt Raivata, that Emperor of the Dharma, Ariṣṭanemi."

*Purātanaprabandhasamgraha.*²

This brief story seemed to me an excellent place to begin a discussion of attitudes towards other religious groups in medieval India. The text, in Jain Sanskrit with some Prakrit, is a collection of stories and its date is uncertain. The earliest manuscript bears a date of 1471 C.E., although some of the material may be earlier. The story about the pilgrimage site of Raivata or Ujjayanta, a mountain in Saurashtra that is sacred to the 22nd Jina Neminātha, tells us that the complex religious environment of medieval India could involve both tolerance and intolerance. An impressive pilgrimage party, like an early Christian public procession, was a powerful statement of a shared religious identity;³ it is not unexpected, then, that pilgrimage could also turn into an occasion for confrontation with those who did not share the religious convictions of the

2 *Purātanaprabandhasamgraha*, ed. Jinavijaya Muni, Singhi Jain Series, vol.2 (Calcutta: Adhiṣṭhātā-Singhī Jaina Jñānapīṭha, 1936), section 49:98-99.

3 On Christian processions as statements of religious identity see Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual: The origins of Western Liberalism* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 125.

pilgrims. The story shows us that the reactions to those of a different religion were varied; it also lets us see how intolerance between groups of the same religion could be as strong as or even stronger than it was between groups of completely different faiths. We see in this story how one Jain group, the Śvetāmbaras, is pitted against another Jain group, the Digambaras. Their hostility to each other and the competition between them to control access to a sacred site leads to violence. A battle erupts in which thousands are killed. It is not entirely clear when Jainism split into these two mutually antagonistic groups. The process seems to have been a gradual one, but once the two groups were established, their antipathy to each other was unabated.⁴ Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras differ in practice and a few key points of doctrine. The Digambara monks go naked, regarding the wearing of clothing as a form of attachment to possessions, while Śvetāmbara monks wear white robes. Both admit nuns, who are always clothed, but Digambaras deny that women, even those who have renounced, can gain Liberation, since they have not given up their attachment to clothing. Śvetāmbaras, on the other hand, allow that women can achieve Liberation.⁵ This difference is in fact the crux of the verse that grants the holy site to the Śvetāmbaras in the story; the virgin, possessed probably by the goddess Ambikā, states unequivocally that women can gain liberation and in so doing makes the Śvetāmbaras the true guardians of the holy place.⁶

The threat of wholesale warfare is not the only threat of violence in Dhārā's encounter with the Digambaras; there is also the threat of forced conversion. When Dhārā seeks to worship on the mountain he is told that he must abandon being a Śvetāmbara and become a Digambara. His reply is that he would not do so even on pain of death. The Jains told many stories in which pious Jains are forced to worship Hindu deities, the goddess Cāmuṇḍā, or the gods Śiva and Viṣṇu; some must even worship the Buddha. In a notable spirit of generosity these stories agree that worshipping another's god under pressure is not an irredeemable sin, whether that pressure is in the form of fear of the king, fear of death, or even just family and peer pressure. The Jains, like the Buddhists, placed a great emphasis on intention as a determinant of karmic consequences;

4 On the split see Paul Dundas, *The Jains* (London: Routledge 2002), 46-49.

5 On this see P.S. Jaini, *Gender and Salvation: Jain Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

6 The Śvetāmbara monk Bappabhaṭṭisūri who engineers the Śvetāmbara victory by providing the consecrated powder is celebrated in Śvetāmbara literature as a great poet and a powerful tantric master. I have translated some of his biographies, "Ritual and Biography: The Case of Bappabhaṭṭisūri", in *Other Selves: Autobiography and Biography in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1994), 150-207.

without the intention to become a devotee of the Hindu deities or the Buddha, the mere formal act of worship does no harm and the Jain returns to being a pious Jain.⁷ Dhārā in our story is more steadfast in his commitment to his beliefs than are the protagonists of the stories about those who temporarily lapse. It is also worth noting that the conflict between the two Jain groups draws in local political figures. Dhārā, the Śvetāmbara Jain layman, had set out on his pilgrimage with a party that included armed warriors; the Digambara ritual master turns to a local ruler who supplies troops for the Digambara side.

In addition to this violent intra-religious conflict, the story tells us of an inter-religious rivalry, a heated contest between Buddhist and Jains. We learn that the Digambara Jains have taken the site away from the Buddhists, not by violence, this time, but by conquering them in a debate. Engaging opponents in a public debate, usually in the court of a king, is one important way to deal with religious rivals in medieval Indian literature. The debate is a non-violent battleground and debaters often treat their opponents with fierce contempt. The consequences of losing a debate could also be profound. The loser is often banished from the kingdom and must seek support elsewhere. Losers of debates may also convert to the winning position.⁸ There is no rapprochement between the two parties in these debates. The assumption behind stories of the debates is that there is a clear winner, whose religious doctrine and practices are true, and a clear loser, whose positions are absolutely false. In our little story about Mount Raivata, the Buddhists lose any right to worship at the holy site when they lose the debate and it becomes a Jain sacred site.

Buddhist/Jain relationships in Jain story literature are complex. A popular Jain story tells of two young monks who went in disguise to study with Buddhist philosophers. Their intention was to master the Buddhist doctrine so that they could refute it. Their subterfuge is discovered and they are murdered by the

7 See my article, "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*, edited by N.N. Bhattacharyya (Delhi: Manohar, 1994), 241-267. On intentionality and sin in Jainism see my article "The Violence of non-violence: Jain Responses to Buddhist vinaya rules on Murder", *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 15 (1992), 1-43.

8 See for example the debate between Siddhasena, a Brahmin, and Vṛddhavādin, an elderly Jain monk. The defeated Siddhasena converts to Jainism and goes on to become one of Jainism's most celebrated philosophers. I will refer to this debate below. For further details see my articles, "The Jain Biographies of Siddhasena: A Study of the Texture of Allusion and the Weaving of a Group Image", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 17 (1989), 329-384 and 18 (1990), 109-125.

Buddhists.⁹ From the traditional biography of the famous Śvetāmbara monk Siddhārṣi we see another imagined danger in Jain/Buddhist interactions. Buddhism could be extremely seductive. Siddhārṣi too went to study under the Buddhists. Captivated by their logical arguments he converted to Buddhism and was only later reconverted to Jainism.¹⁰ For their part the Buddhists told stories of Jains whom they converted to Buddhism; in a wide range of texts we even meet Jain nuns who become Buddhists.¹¹ In all of these stories relationships between Buddhists and Jains are hostile, as they are in the story with which I began; hostility also characterizes Śvetāmbara/Digambara interactions in the many stories told of their dealings with each other.

Agonistic relationships between religious groups well precede the stories I am quoting and even the appearance of the Buddhists and Jains. Indeed, hostility and aggression towards those who have different ways of worshipping can be said to be as old as the Ṛg Veda, where for example, Indra, the god of the Ṛg Vedic tribes, crushes those who do not perform the Vedic rituals.¹² Such stories persist in the literature, as we shall see.

There is a third religious encounter in this story that has a very different flavor, however. The king Āma is a Jain, but his wife is a Śaiva. He makes a vow that he must worship at the Jain holy place Mount Raivata and she makes a vow that she must worship at a nearby Śiva temple, the famous temple of Somanātha in Prabhāsa, not too far from Mount Raivata.¹³ Their devotion results in two similar miracles, confirming, as it were, the efficacy of worship to both the Jina and Śiva: an image of the Jina Neminātha is revealed and a Śiva liṅga appears. And as a result of their devotion two temples get built, side by side, one for the Śiva liṅga and one for the image of the Jina Neminātha.

9 I have translated this story. The two young monks are the nephews of the famous Haribhadra. "The Jain Biographies of Haribhadra: An Inquiry into the Origins of the Legends", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6 (1988), 1-24.

10 The story is told in the *Prabhāvaka-carita* 121-126.

11 See for example the stories of Nanduttarā and Bhadrā Kuṇḍalakesī, *The commentary on the Verses of the Therīs by Ācariya Dhammapāla*, translated by William Pruitt (Oxford: Pali Text Society 1999), p114, 132ff. Pali text of Nanduttarā <http://dhammadownload.com/forum/index.php?topic=19086.0> accessed May 25, 2014. Bhadrā Kuṇḍalakesī's story was also told in the *Apadāna, Dhammapada* commentary and the commentary to the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, the *Manorathapūrāṇī* (*Tipitika.org*, section 243 of the *pañcama varga* of the *Etadaggavagga*. Accessed May 26, 2014).

12 *Rg Veda* 8.14.15. "Die Gesellschaft, die keinen Soma preßt, jagtest du, Indra, auseinander; als Somatrinker hattest du die Oberhand". Karl Friedrich Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), vol. 2, 314. Also 2.12.

13 Much has been written about the contested history of this temple. See Romila Thapar, *Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History*, New York: Verso, 2005.



A pilgrimage map of Śatruñjaya, Rajasthan, ca 1740. Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum Collection, 31.746

Jain/Śaiva interactions were not always so peaceful; many are the Jain stories in which a Jain monk recites a hymn of praise to the Jina and causes a Śiva liṅga to split open, in effect smashing the liṅga. With only slightly less violence, the famous 11th century Śvetāmbara monk Hemacandra, preceptor to two kings in the northwestern state of Gujarat, was said to have caused Śiva to appear over the liṅga at Somanātha, the very object of our queen's devotion, to proclaim to king Kumārapāla (1143-1172 C.E.) the superiority of Jainism.¹⁴ A Digambara monk, Samantabhadra, occasions a similar miracle at a Śaiva shrine in South

¹⁴ I have discussed some of these stories in a paper "Telling Tales: Jains and Śaivaites and their Stories in Medieval South India", delivered at Harvard University, April 8, 2009, and University of Wisconsin, Madison, April 30, 2009. See also my paper on Siddhasena cited above.

India.¹⁵ In accounts such as these the miraculous power belongs exclusively to one side and the stories conclude with mass conversions to Jainism. The Śaivas told similar stories, but of course in their stories the damaged object is an image of the Jina and the conversions are to Śaivism. As an example of a Śaiva text I might cite the 13th century Telugu *Basava purāṇa*, which positively glories in accounts of the violence perpetrated by the Śaivas on the Jains. There is even a story of a Śaiva wife and a Jain husband, but their relationship is very different from that of King Āma and Queen Kamalādevī. When the wife worships Śiva the husband beats her unmercifully on her private parts and kicks her out of the house. In her misery and confusion she stumbles on a Jain temple and mistakes it for a temple to Śiva. She begs Śiva to protect her and at once the image of the Jina crumbles into dust.¹⁶

Stories of husbands and wives of different religious beliefs are not uncommon; Buddhists, Jains, and Hindus told them. In their tone they are similar to the stories of breaking images and shattering liṅgas; there is often an element of violence and the stories end up validating one faith, usually concluding with one spouse converting to the other's religion.¹⁷ The story of King Āma and Queen Kamalādevī is atypical in validating both of their beliefs, and it may be important that it is about royal donations of temples. Archaeological and epigraphical evidence suggests that the public display of piety through temple building may have been one important occasion for a show of magnanimity towards other religious groups. Hans Bakker has demonstrated that this began with the Gupta rulers in the 5th c. CE. It would continue throughout Indian history and can be documented in literature as well as in archaeological remains.¹⁸ In an early 14th century Jain collection of stories, the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅga, the Jain monk Hemacandra advises the king Kumārapāla to restore the temple of Śiva at Somanātha. This will give the king the lasting fame that he desires.¹⁹

15 I have translated the account of Samantabhadra's miracle from the *Kathākośa* of Prabhācandra in "The Biographies of Siddhasena: A Study in the Texture of Allusion and the Weaving of a Group Image", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 17(1989), 329-384.

16 Śiva's Warriors: The *Bāsava Purāṇa* of Pāṅkuriki Somanātha, translated by Velcheru Narayana Rao (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 214-218.

17 I have written on some of these stories in a paper, "Marrying outside the Faith: Buddhist and Jain Stories from Medieval India", delivered at a conference in Vancouver, March 21, 2011.

18 Hans Bakker, "Royal Patronage and Religious Tolerance: The Formative Period of Gupta-Vākāṭaka Culture", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, third series 20 (2010), 461-475.

19 *The Prabandhacintāmaṇi or Wishing-stone of Narratives*, translation C.H. Tawney, (Calcutta: Asiatic Society 1901), 126.

Hemacandra's encouragement of the king's donations to the Śaiva temple is particularly significant in light of the fact that Hemacandra is celebrated for having converted the king to Jainism. Nonetheless, he still encourages the king to rebuild a temple to Śiva. The political capital a ruler might gain by showing support for various groups must not have escaped the wise Jain monk. Other political factors could similarly motivate religious leaders to engage in a spirit of cooperation. A Jain monk Jayasinhaśūri wrote a play that was celebrated at a festival to the god Śiva, Bhīmeśvara, in the town of Cambay. If this seems surprising, the subject of the play helps to explain why a Jain-authored drama might be performed at a Śaiva temple. The play dramatizes the victory of the King Vīradhava over the Muslim conqueror, a victory that was celebrated by Jain and non-Jain alike.²⁰ But even this play, which I cite here as an example of Jain/Hindu cooperation, is a play about violence towards another outsider, the Muslim.

To return to the vignette with which I began, we might, I think conclude from this account of one Jain group pitted against another and the Jains as a whole pitted against the Buddhists that relationships between those of different religious views were generally antagonistic. There is much to support such a conclusion. Given the recent history of violence between Śrī Lāṅka Buddhists and the non-Buddhist Tamil population it is no surprise that one of the most often cited accounts of inter-religious violence in early South Asian literature is the one that appears in the *Mahāvamsa*, the Buddhist chronicle composed in Pali in Śrī Lāṅka in the late 5th c CE. In chapter 25, the Buddhist king Dutthagāmani, armed with a Buddhist relic in his sword, announces to a group of Buddhist monks that he will set out on a military conquest to bring glory to the Buddhist Faith. He goes into battle surrounded by a host of monks and defeats his Tamil enemies. Like another famous Buddhist king, the Emperor Aśoka, after his victory he is despondent as he reflects on the loss of life. His guilt is assuaged when monks assure him that he has not in fact killed millions of men; he has killed only one and half human beings, the one is someone who had taken the Three Refuges, in the Buddha, the Buddhist doctrine or Dharma and the community of monks or Sangha, while the other had gone part of the way to becoming a Buddhist in accepting the five precepts. The monks explain to the king that non-Buddhists are no better than beasts. They reassure him that he will go on to bring great honor to Buddhism, which he does through his many dedications of temples and his building of the Great Stūpa.²¹

²⁰ *Hammīramardana* of Jayasinha śūri, edited by Chimanlal D. Dalal (Baroda: Central Library, 1920).

²¹ *Mahāvamsa*, chapter 25, verses 1-4 and 109-111. Tipitika.org accessed June



View of the Neminatha Temple, Girnar. (Mt. Raivata) Photograph by Lynna Dhanani

The strikingly intolerant language of this passage cannot be denied, but by beginning with the Jain story I hoped to show that such intolerance and violence towards people of a different religious belief were not the only responses. The episode of the Jain king and his Śaiva wife in our story suggested at least that political considerations could override exclusivity of devotion. That such was the case not just in stories is corroborated by evidence on the ground, by the many temple donations made by a single ruler to multiple faiths or a Jain monk's writing a political play to be performed at a Śaiva temple. In what follows I should like to ask if there was any other space in which competition and hostility could give way to mutual respect and tolerance; were there philosophical arguments that transcended political expediency and provided an intellectual foundation for tolerance? To anticipate, I will try to show that there were several thinkers who developed compelling justifications for mutual respect and religious inclusiveness. They did so by focusing on ethics and distilling religious beliefs to a set of core principles that could be universally accepted. My sources are both Jain and Buddhist, but I envision what follows as a selection of examples that I will be able to expand as I continue to work on this topic.

9, 2014. One might be reminded of Charlemagne's treatment of his Saxon enemy; non-Christians were simply not considered human. See Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, 155.

II. MAKING SPACE FOR TOLERANCE

I begin here with another story, this one from the *Yogabindu* of the Jain philosopher and master storyteller Haribhadra.²² The story is told in the commentary to verse 119, which Haribhadra wrote himself. The preceding verse recommends the worship of all the gods, not only the gods of one's own Faith. An objection is raised in the commentary that not all the gods are equally worthy of worship. The story meets that objection. Here are the verses and the prose commentary.

Those who worship all the gods, showing no partiality to any particular god, and who have subdued their sense organs and put an end to their anger, conquer every adversity. 118

Now an objector interjects: not all the gods who are popularly worshipped behave in such a way that is beneficial for those who have set out on the path to release. Why do you say that they should all be worshipped equally?

The wise agree that one should follow the example given in the story of the restorative herb and the grazing bull. There is no other way for the goal to be accomplished, especially for people who are just embarking on their religious quest. 119

There was a city named Svaticatī, filled with urbane young men. And in that city lived a certain Brahmin girl and her friend. The two were deeply devoted to each other. When they married, they moved away from each other. One day the Brahmin girl began to wonder how her friend was doing and she decided to go visit her. She saw that her friend was drowning in an ocean of sorrow. She asked her, "My friend, why are you looking so downcast?" The friend replied, "I must have done something very wicked in the past, for my husband does not want me." The Brahmin girl told her friend, "Do not despair. Despair is like a poison. I will turn your husband into a bull with a special root that I have." She gave her friend the root and then went back to her own home. Angry at the husband who had rejected her, the friend at once fed the root to her husband. In an instant he turned into a bull with broad shoulders. The wife now worried that he would be incapable of doing anything at all. She began to take the bull out to graze with the other cattle every day. Now one day it

²² Haribhadra, *Yogabindu with auto-commentary* (Ahmedabad: Śrī Jainagranthaprakāśasabhā granthamālā, 1940) 24-25, verse 119.

stopped to rest under a banyan tree. A semi-divine couple flying through the sky also stopped to rest under the shade of that tree. The man told his wife, "This creature was not born a bull, but was turned into a bull because of the effect of a root." The wife piped up, "How will it stop being a bull?" "By eating another kind of root." "Where is that root?" "It's here under this very tree." When she heard that, the wife of the bull, stricken by remorse, not knowing one root from another, had the bull eat everything that was under the tree. As soon as he ate the right root, the bull turned back into a man. Just as the wife made the stupid bull, that did not know one root from another, eat absolutely everything in an effort to turn him back into a man, so the teacher, knowing that he is faced with a dumb student, who is no smarter than that bull when it comes to worshipping the gods, makes the student worship all the gods to achieve the desired goal. Such a teacher does not err; he does the right thing.

When the student is able to realize that one god in fact has greater virtue than all the others, then he is to worship that one god with special attention, but without harboring any animosity towards the other gods. 120

The moral of the story is clear: a person who is incapable of knowing which is the true god is to worship all the gods. Once the worshipper comes to know the true god, he should worship the true god alone, but he should nonetheless not be hostile towards other gods and one assumes, towards their worshippers. This is not a statement that all religions equally preach the truth or the same truth; here Haribhadra seems to say there is one true religion, but until you know what it is then at least practicing some religion is better than none. And by practicing all religions willy-nilly you do also worship the one true god.²³

This story exists in many different versions. In a variant in the 14th century *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* the Jain monk Hemacandra tells the story to convince Siddharāja, the king who preceded Kumārapāla as ruler of Gujarat, to respect equally all the different religious systems. In this version the story concludes, "And here is the point: Just as that medicinal herb worked its magic even though no one knew precisely which blade of grass it was, so in this degenerate age one should practice all religions with a heart filled with faith; the true god, though

23 This seems to me to be different from pagan arguments for religious tolerance in which it is stipulated that there are many ways to find the one true God. In the Jain stories these other grasses do not lead to the true grass; the bull needs to eat them all in order to be sure that in the process he eats the right one. For a summary of pagan arguments see Richard Sorabji, *Moral Conscience Through the Ages: Fifth Century CBE to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 47-58.

his identity may remain unknown to those who are deluded, will still grant final release.”²⁴

Here the fault belongs not so much to the student as to the times in which we live. The Jains shared the pan-Indian notion of cycles of time, which grow progressively worse. We are in the down cycle and in these terrible times it is hard to know the truth. The answer is not to despair, but to leave no blade of grass unplucked. Again, the implication is that there is in fact one true religion, but the story is nonetheless a plea for avoiding religious conflict and cultivating respect for those of different beliefs.²⁵

The Buddhists also told a similar story but in a very different context. The Buddha had a physician named Jīvaka, who went to Taxila in the Northwest of the sub-continent to study medicine. The life story of Jīvaka was told in the various collections of monastic rules. Here is one version from the Pali *Mahāvagga*, 1.6-8.

Jīvaka Komārabhaca approached his teacher and addressed him, “Master, I have learned much and I have learned quickly. I remember what I have been taught and I have not forgotten a thing. I have been studying the art of medicine for seven years now, but there seems to be no end in sight. When will I truly know all there is to know?” The teacher replied, “Jīvaka! Take this spade and survey the area that extends for a mile beyond the borders of this

24 This is my translation from the text, edited by Jinavijaya Muni, Singhi Jain Series, volume 1 (Śāntiniketan: Singhi Jaina Jñānapīṭha, 1930), 70. The story is translated in Tawney, *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, 106.

25 Anxiety over the uncertainty of knowing what is the true doctrine was not confined to the problem of multiple religious contentions. Such anxiety no doubt reflects the intensely sectarian and agonistic climate of medieval Jainism. There were many factors that led even the most learned monks to fear that they might not have gotten their own doctrine quite right. The celebrated 11th century commentator on the Śvetāmbara canon, Abhayadeva, concluded one of his commentaries with these words, “I might have made some mistakes, for the traditional transmission has been interrupted and I have often been alone in my endeavors; I have not read everything there is to read in my own and in every other tradition, nor do I always remember the little I have read; there have been various ways in which the texts have been expounded and the manuscripts are sometimes faulty; the texts themselves are deep and there are even differences of opinion now and then. Those learned ones who can clearly tell what is correct and what is not correct should take from what I have written only that which is in conformity with the true Jain doctrine and nothing else. In their great devotion to the Jina and their compassion, they should correct what is incorrect here, protecting me from sin.” *Sthānāṅgasūtra*, edited by Muni Dīparatnasāgara, volume 3 (Ahmedabad: Āgama Śruta Prakāśan, 2000), 576.

city of Takṣaśīla. Bring me every plant that you can find that has no medicinal value." "I will, master", promised Jīvaka, and he took the spade and set out. He walked for one mile beyond the boundaries of the city, but could find no plant that was without medicinal use. And so Jīvaka returned to his teacher and said, "I walked all over, master, but I did not find any plant that was without medicinal value." "Jīvaka, you have learned well. You have mastered the art of medicine. You do not need to study any longer. Here is something to get you started." And with these words, his teacher gave him something for his journey and sent him out into the world.

In the Jain stories of the husband who has turned into a bull, the plants that the desperate wife fed to the bull were a motley assortment and only one of them was efficacious. The wife had to give the bull them all simply because she did not know which one was the right one. In the Buddhist story of Jīvaka and his teacher all the plants have medicinal powers; there is no right one and no wrong one. A comparison of the stories is instructive; tolerance and respect for others need not imply agreement with their views.

The two Jain stories and the Buddhist story share a similar problem, however, and that is when there are so many possibilities how can one recognize the true religion, what works and what does not work, what has value and what has no value. This question was asked often and in different guises in India, where there had always existed different religions. A relatively early attempt at answering it is to be found in a Buddhist Pali sutta, the *Kesamuttisutta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*.²⁶ As the text opens, the Buddha, along with many of his monks, has come to the town of Kesamutta. A group of townspeople come out to see him to ask him to solve their dilemma. There are so many different ascetics, they say, each one with his own doctrine and method of practice. How on earth are they to know which is the right one? This is the grass problem that we have already encountered. The answer, however, is not the same. The Buddha tells them that there are indeed many methods that are employed to decide what is right when there are differing points of view; one can rely on scripture, on logic, on tradition, on the reputation of the speaker, to name just some of the ones that the Buddha lists. He rejects each one of these. Instead, he asks the people to rely on their innate recognition of what is good and what is bad. He tells them that they all know without being told what is virtue and what is vice; they all know without being told what kinds of behavior or character traits are praised by the wise and what are criticized. They all know full well what acts

26 On-line *Tipitika*, *Kesamuttisutta*, *Tikanipāta*, *Mahāvagga*. Accessed May 21, 2014.

are conducive to their own well-being and what kinds of deeds will ultimately lead to misery. The Buddha proves this to them by asking them what they think of certain mental states and the acts to which they lead. He begins with greed. A greedy person, he tells his audience kills, steals, lies, and sets his eyes on another man's wife. Is this, he asks, behavior that will lead to a good end, or is it behavior that leads to a bad end? They have no difficulty in replying in unison that such behavior is definitely not good and leads to a bad end. The Buddha repeats the question, substituting a sinful person and a deluded person for a greedy person. The answer is always prompt and unanimous: these are bad acts that are rejected by the wise and they lead to terrible consequences. The Buddha then asks them about the opposite of these things. The man without greed, he explains, does not kill, does not steal, does not lie and does not go after another person's wife. Is this behavior that should be praised? Does this lead to a good end? Again, the answer is unanimous. It is good and leads to a good end. The Buddha reassures the group that they do not need anyone to tell them what is right and what is wrong; they know this intuitively. The text has a somewhat surprising conclusion. The Buddha tells his audience that they do not need to believe in rebirth, they do not need to believe in karma. They just need to lead moral lives. Every vestige of a distinctive doctrine is removed from consideration.²⁷

Another Pali *Sutta*, the famous Lion-Roar *Sutta* in the *Dīghanikāya*, follows a similar strategy of reducing the debate between people of different beliefs to a discussion that centers around a core of shared ethical concepts. With this as a focal point, the *sutta* argues that common sense as well as the guidance of the wise is sufficient to show that it is the teaching and behavior of the Buddha that are superior.²⁸

²⁷ It was just such a reduction of doctrine to simple ethical truths that Kumārila inveighed against in his writings. On this see Vincent Eltschinger, "Apocalypticism, Heresy and Philosophy", in *World View and Theory in Indian Philosophy*, edited by Piotr Balcerowicz (Delhi: Manohar, 2012), 9-87, in particular 57.

²⁸ *Dīghanikāya, Silakkhandavagga, Mahāsīhanādasutta*. Pali Tipitika on line www.tipitka.org accessed July 19, 2014. I disagree here with Eltschinger, "Debate, Salvation and Apologetics: On the Institutionalization of Dialectics in the Buddhist Monastic Environment", in *Devadattiyam: Johannes Bronkhorst Felicitation Volume*, edited by Francois Voegeli, et. al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012) 429-491, specifically 437, that this should necessarily be taken as evidence that the early Buddhist texts regard debate as undesirable. Rather, I argue here, the Buddha has a way of neutralizing debate by focusing on a shared belief or a group of shared beliefs and reducing his own doctrine to that shared core.



Indra praising Mahavira, Indian, Jain, About 1475. Object Place: Gujarat, Western India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of John Goelet, 66.152.

This question of how to know which teacher to follow was clearly of central importance to the Buddhists. The *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* that describes the death of the Buddha reserves for its last dramatic episode the conversion of a non-Buddhist ascetic Subhadda. Subhadda comes to the Buddha with a familiar question: there are so many teachers. In their wisdom did they all gain insight into the Truth? Did none of them realize the Truth? Did some realize the Truth while others among them did not? The Buddha's reply should now also be familiar. He tells Subhadda that the true monks exist only in the teaching that has the eight-fold path, in other words, only in the teaching that has a strong and clear ethical focus, namely the Buddha's teaching. Subhadda realizes immediately that this must be the case and asks to be ordained as a Buddhist monk. There is here no need to debate arcane points of doctrine; what is ethically sound behaviour is known intuitively.²⁹ It does not seem to me to be a coincidence

29 *Mahāparinibbāna sutta, Dīghanikāya, mahāvagga*. Tipitika online, <http://www.tipitaka.org/romn/>, accessed July 26, 2014. The eight-fold path does of course have a commitment to correct knowledge of the four noble truths, that there is suffering and a way out of suffering, for example. Again, it is stated in a sufficiently simple form that it would have been universally accepted by those like Subhadda who were already seeking the religious goal. Subhadda and this episode are the focus of a dilemma in the *Milindapañha*. There the Buddha declares that the essence of his doctrine is practice, *paṭipatti*, glossed further as the *sikkhāpada*, which are for laymen the five abstentions from killing, stealing, unacceptable sex, lying and drinking. For monks and nuns there are five additional rules that have to do with abstaining from luxurious living. *Milindapañha*, edited by V. Trenckner, (London: Williams and Norgate, Pali Text

that this teaching is among the Buddha's final words. The degree of anxiety that the Buddhist community had about other teachers and other teachings may have been given concrete form in some relief scenes of his death in which the dying Buddha is flanked on the one side by a figure identified as the demon Māra, who had always been trying to prevent the Buddha from discovering and propagating the true doctrine and who had even begged the Buddha to enter nirvāṇa, and on the other by a heretical ascetic, sometimes said to be a Jain, in other texts an Ājīvika, who informs the Buddha's disciple Mahākāśyapa that the Buddha has died.³⁰

There are many stories, Buddhist and Jain, that similarly reduce the teachings to simple statements of the necessity of ethical conduct. Thus a Jain debate between an elderly monk and a young Brahmin pits the erudite language of doctrine and philosophy against this simple verse that the old Jain recites in the language of the peasants who are witnessing their argument:³¹

Good deeds and righteous living according to the true faith together are the lord of all creatures.

Through the power of such good deeds and righteousness men become blessed with fortune. What good is life if one is born in a land that the true doctrine has not reached?

What use is a man who is but a burden to his mother the earth, a man who does nothing but eat and drink, who wanders again and again in this cycle of rebirths and who has not made the true doctrine his devoted friend?

The Brahmin converts, and in an ironic twist, becomes one of Jainism's most erudite philosophers, leaving behind the simple language of the peasants.

A Buddhist parallel can be found in the *Avadānakalpalatā* of Kṣemendra, story 53. The Buddha in a past birth was a king, who was in search of a

Society, 1880),130-133, *paṭipattimūlakam mahārāja Satthusāsanaṃ paṭipattisāraṇam*, p. 133. The text is online <https://www.shemtaia.com/BU/DL/milindapanha.shtml>, accessed November 4, 2014.

30 For example the well-known nirvāṇa scene from Loriyan Tangai in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, Huntington Archive 0004891, accessed July 25, 2014.

31 This is the debate referred to above. The story is found in the *Ākhyānikamaṇikośa*, edited by Muni Puṇyavijayaji (Ahmedabad: Prakrit Text Society, 1962), 171-172, and the translation, slightly revised, is taken from my article "The Jain Biographies of Siddhasena".

subhāṣita, a charming, pithy verse that encapsulates the truth.³² He learns from his minister that the special verse is not to be found among the learned, but is carefully guarded by a hunter, the ultimate outcaste in the Indian system. The king agrees to pay for the verse with his life. Here is what he gets:

Evil deeds are a curse; taking refuge in the true happiness, one avoids remorse. One should practice good deeds, which are pure like a lotus, its lofty stem, virtuous conduct; as the lotus is the abode of the Goddess of Fortune, meritorious deeds are the abode of all good fortune. The mind is fickle, lusting and jumping from one object of desire to another. It must be brought under control, made satisfied with the enjoyment of the one true object. This is the teaching of the Buddha, the lion throne of the kingdom of tranquility; it protects men from misfortune and is for everyone the abode of good fortune. It defeats desire and puts an end to the vicissitudes of transmigratory existence; it polishes the mirror of the mind and leads to the amassing of meritorious deeds. Verses 49-50, p 330.³³

This story, odd as it may seem, is important. By reducing the truth of Buddhism to simple moral truths, the religion is made universally accessible; here it is a hunter, someone without access to the learning that would make doctrine comprehensible to him, who knows the essence of the Buddha's teaching.

Placing the emphasis on ethical action removes the necessity of fighting to prove the correctness of one's own religious beliefs. This is, I think, the import of the following verse from another Jain text, the *Kumārapālaprabodhaprabandha*, about the life of the King Kumārapāla. The earliest manuscript of the text is 1407 CE, which may be close to the date of its composition.³⁴

Our bodies are weak and austerities are hard to perform; we live in a time when evil prevails and truth is obscured by the arguments of fools. There are so many different religions now—no telling what will appeal to the foolish masses. The doctrine of the Jains has always been appreciated only by the few who can discern the truth. Aware of all this, those who know right from

32 I have discussed this story in "Seeking the Perfect Words: Teachers and Transmission in Buddhist Story Literature", *Indologica Taurinensia* XVII (1991-1992), 145-183.

33 Kṣemendra, *Avadānakalpalatā*, ed. P.L. Vaidya, vol.2, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1959.

34 The text is included in the collection *Kumārapālacaritraṣaṅgraha*, edited by Jina Vijaya Muni, Singhi Jain Series, 41 (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1956), 70.

wrong and are eager to lead decent lives must stop themselves from committing acts of barbarism.

This verse shares with the story of the bull and the grasses from the *Prabandha-cintāmaṇi* an awareness that we live in the declining cycle of time. It is difficult for people to know the truth, and for the most part people go their own ways and believe all kinds of things. Here the verse frankly acknowledges that it is impossible to convert everyone to Jainism in the way that the stories about debates between Jains and Buddhists or about miraculous shattering of Śaiva liṅgas promised. People are simply too foolish and Jainism is too difficult for most. What remains is a commitment to avoid violence and conflict, to avoid those acts that are *anārya*, a word I have translated as “barbarous”. It is here, I think, in the commitment to avoid all forms of violence, including inter-religious conflict, that these texts carve out a space at least for coexistence if not for more.

That the emphasis on virtue could, at least in theory, do more than just counteract a tendency towards inter-religious violence is clear from other verses written by the Jain monk Haribhadra. In the *Yogabindu*, a text in which we have seen Haribhadra advocated worship of all the gods, at least until one realizes who is the true god, we also meet with verses that tell us that all virtuous people should be honored. Thus in verse 122 he says that it behooves us to give charity to all religious people, no matter what group they belong to, as long as they are faithful to their respective traditions. He repeatedly stresses that it is not what one calls someone, a Bodhisattva or a Jain, that should determine our respect for them. It is their compassion for others, their ethical virtues, that command our respect (verses 271-272; 288). Haribhadra embraces the arch-opponent, the Buddhist, by recognizing a shared commitment to the principled religious life. Indeed, in another text, the *Upadeśapada*, in speaking of the importance of abstaining from sin, Haribhadra notes that other religious groups also teach their followers to desist from sinful acts. He insists that this shared principle is to be respected wherever it is found; to reject what is right simply because it occurs in the texts of a group not one’s own is a dangerous form of delusion. The 12th century commentary of Muncandrasūri adds that close-mindedness is particularly unsuited for Jains, whose training in examining everything from multiple points of view should condition them to adopt a stance of fairness with respect to other religious groups. Muncandrasūri concludes his remarks with a quote from another great Jain philosopher, Siddhasenadivākara, saying that all true religious doctrines, like so many rivers, meet in the great ocean of

the Jain teachings.³⁵

Religious teachings could be distilled in other ways to allow for shared space. Haribhadra in his *Yogadr̥ṣṭisamuccaya*, verses 103-109, extends his hand to all those who believe in an Omniscient Being.³⁶ This includes the Buddhists, who like the Jains believe that the founder of their Faith was All-Knowing. It embraces as well theistic Hindus who believe in an Omniscient God. In the *Yogadr̥ṣṭisamuccaya* this becomes a defining attribute of the true Faith. The difference in name, Buddha or Jina, Śiva or Viṣṇu, and the slight differences in religious practices are immaterial. It is important to remember, however, that were he to use a story here, Haribhadra would not have used the story of the physician Jīvaka, for whom all herbs equally have medicinal properties. He remains closer to the story of the bull and the grass, for he continues to say that there is only one true Omniscient Being, by which he means the Jina; in worshipping another god as the Omniscient One, the worshipper is mistaken in assuming that the one he worships as all-knowing, all powerful, can be anyone other than the Jina.³⁷ Nonetheless, Haribhadra makes space for worshippers of those mistakenly “Other” Omniscient Beings. It is worth noting that the differences between the Jain Omniscient Being and for example the Omniscient Hindu God Śiva or Viṣṇu, Creator of the Universe, are not trivial. Jains, including Haribhadra, spent considerable time and effort in refuting the notion that God creates the world. The shared religious space can only be constructed on a foundation of some common principle or principles that leave such issues for later debate, a debate in which the Jain position will prevail.

Haribhadra’s understanding of inclusiveness as something that implies at the same time an acceptance of the Truth as it is described in the Jain texts became the normative Jain position. Another monk, who was close in time to Haribhadra and who paid him great respect as the one who taught him to understand the unique truths of Jainism, vividly expressed the same position. This is Siddharṣi, the Jain seduced by the Buddhists, whom we have already met. Siddharṣi concludes his long allegory about the soul’s search for the truth, the *Upamitibhavaprapañcakathā* (finished in 906 C.E.), with a mini-allegory about a skilled doctor, who can cure the sick, and false doctors, who mostly can’t do anything for their patients. Both good and bad doctors write medical

35 *Upadeśapada with commentary of Municandrasūri*, edited by Śrīpratāpavijayagaṇi (Baroda:Lalchand Nandlal, 1925), vol.2, verses 692-694; pages 317-318.

36 *Yogadr̥ṣṭisamuccaya with auto-commentary*, edited by Professor L. Sueli (Mumbai: Devacandra Lālabhāi, 1912). The text is also online at Jainelibrary.

37 *sarvajño nāma yaḥ kaścīc pāramāṛthika eva hi sa eka eva sarvatra vyaktibhede 'pi tattvataḥ* 103

texts and have followers and patients; indeed the good doctor often has fewer who appreciate his skills than the mountebanks. But sometimes the medicines that the bad doctors give actually work. This, Siddharṣi says, is because the bad doctors are also plagiarists, and they steal remedies and treatments from the good doctor's texts. The good doctor is the Jina, the only real healer who can cure people of the disease that is transmigratory existence. The false doctors are all the other religious teachers. Whatever they say that is right comes from what they have taken from the Jain texts. Siddharṣi goes on to use inclusive language. It does not matter if you worship Śiva or Viṣṇu or Buddha; names do not matter. But you do have to have the right understanding of God, and that is the Jain understanding. Siddharṣi has no patience with the atheist; such people, who do not believe in god at all and therefore have nothing in common with the Jains, are simply wicked.³⁸ But everyone else has some access to the truth. For Siddharṣi this is because the truth in other religious texts came originally from the Jain texts, which are at the origin of all religious writing. The challenge is for others to relinquish their adherence to whatever is in conflict with Jainism, and here he names specifically rituals that involve taking life, sacrifice, and oblations into the fire. But once that is done, Siddharṣi tells us, everyone can arrive at the shared religious truths.

This is, of course, not always so simple in practice, and Siddharṣi is aware of the problems. A disciple asks his teacher, "Master! Just as we say that the Jain teachings underlie all religious truths, so other people might well make the same claim for their beliefs. How would you respond to them? The followers of other religions all think themselves to be Omniscient and are sure that the ideas they have must be right; they are puffed up with pride in their own teachings and disparage the beliefs of others. Firmly committed to the way they conceive god, religious practice, doctrine and liberation, they can't even dream that there might be another way of seeing things. And we are not really so different from them, are we? We too are puffed up with pride in our own teachings, just as they are in theirs. Master, teach me how to tell the difference between them and us, so that my mind can become as firm in the true doctrine as Mount Meru is firm

38 Siddharṣi was not alone in having no respect for those who are without religious belief. In the story of the holy site at Bhṛgupura cited above from the *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, a worshipper of Śiva comes to respect the Jain way of non-violence but is then castigated by the Śaiva priests at the temple he has built. Disgusted, he turns away from all religions. He makes fun of religious people and is deceitful in his conduct and for all that he is reborn in an animal realm. The story makes a strong connection between morality and a belief in some religion. *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, 20, *paramakiviṇo dhammarasiyaṃ loaṃ hasanto māyāraṃbhehiṃ tiriāuaṃ baṃdhittā*

and unshakeable.” The Master’s answer might seem to us to be more hopeful than practicable; he replies very simply that once people hear the true doctrine they realize that they have believed in it all along; differences are differences in name only.³⁹ Whether one calls the Supreme Being Viṣṇu, Śiva, the Buddha or the Jina, the only true Supreme Being is omniscient, devoid of passion, free from enmity, the destroyer of delusion; in other words, the Supreme Being as the Jains conceive him.⁴⁰ We have met this strategy before; the Jain monk reduces the correct belief to the bare essentials that he assumes must be commonly shared.

Other Jain monks could be less sanguine about the prospect that non-believers will instantly recognize the truth when they hear it; Hemacandra in his *Yogaśāstra* seemed resigned to the fact that just as a sick person might reject the very medicine that would cure him, so false believers will reject the Jain doctrine; what is really the drink of immortality appears to them as vile poison.⁴¹

In all these examples that allow for the possibility of a shared religious space the key to creating that space is the distillation of a complex system of religious beliefs and practices into something simple and easily agreed upon by otherwise contending parties. That fundamental essence can be defined

39 A colophon to a manuscript of the Śvetāmbara Jain canonical text, *Bhagavatī sūtra*, with the commentary by Abhayadeva describes something like this. A family group, hearing the discourse of a Jain monk, “realized the insubstantiality of transmigratory existence, and convinced in their hearts that the doctrine taught by the Omniscient Jina was the true doctrine, had this manuscript made for the four-fold community of monks, nuns, laymen and women for private study and public preaching.” *samsārāsāratam vicintya sarvajñoktam śāstram pramāṇam iti manasi jñātvā caturvidhasamghasya paṭhañārtham vācanārtham ca likhāpitam*

We can assume that the monks read and preached from the text, while the laymen and women listened. Muni Puṇyavijayajī, *Catalogue of the Palm-Leaf Manuscripts in the Śāntinātha Jain Bhaṇḍāra, Cambay* (Baroda: Gaekwad’s Oriental Series, no. 135, 1961), 20. This is manuscript number 10.

40 *Upamitibhavaprapaṅcakathā*, Śreṣṭhi Devacandra Lālabhāi Jainapustakoddhāre Granthāṅka 49 (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagara Press, 1920), 760-761; 753- 754. Online Jainelibrary, accessed June 16, 2014.

41 *Yogaśāstra*, commentary on 3.119, edited by Muni Jambūvijaya (Mumbai: Jaina Sāhitya Vikāsa Maṇḍala, 1981), 570-571. Why some people do not accept the obvious truth, namely that the speaker’s religion is the only right one, was a question that also arose for Christians. In general the response was like Hemacandra’s response: It is hard to understand why this is so, but it just is. On the Christian response to Jewish failure to accept Christianity see Stephen J. Shoemaker, “‘Let us Go and Burn her Body’: The Image of the Jews in the Early Dormition Traditions,” *Church History* 68 (1999) 775-823, specifically, 781.

as basic human decency, an unwavering commitment to a group of universal moral principles, or it can be a basic belief in God, an Omniscient, All-Powerful Being. It is impossible to judge whether the efforts that we see in these texts had any effect on actual inter-religious relationships. It is one of the ironies of medieval Jain biography literature that Haribhadra, who speaks a language of inclusivity, is described in his biographies as a murderer of Buddhists.⁴² At least in the literary imagination his own words seem to have had little effect on the relationship between the Jains and the Buddhists! On the other hand, a 13th century biography of a monk notes that the Jain monastic community stopped a goddess who was protecting their holy site from hindering people of other faiths in their worship.⁴³ But the picture is complicated. In a colophon to a manuscript of the same date, the wife of the donor is praised because she “took no delight whatsoever in the words of other religions.”⁴⁴ Clearly, a meeting of minds was not so simple to achieve. There were other ways of creating shared religious space than the strategies examined here and I suspect that these other ways were far more visible on the ground. I turn to this question in my brief conclusions.

42 “The Jain Biographies of Haribhadra.”

43 This is the story of Vijayasimha in the *Prabhāvakacarita*, cited earlier, verse 74.

44 *reme yadiyamanasā manāg api na tīrthikavacassu*, verse 11 to the colophon of manuscript no.11, page 16 in *Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts*, cited above.

III. CONCLUSIONS

From the earliest record we have of Indian religions, the *Rg Veda*, we are made aware of the sub-continent as a place of different religions. They dealt with each other in many different ways. They argued, they fought, but sometimes they created what I have called shared religious spaces that were both physical spaces and ideas. I began this paper with a story that highlighted religious conflict; Jains fought a battle and killed other Jains; Jains argued with Buddhists and expelled them from a holy site; Jains used a ritual of possession to do the same to other Jains. Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras in this story never make peace with each other. In fact the one peaceable moment in the story happens with a Jain king and his Śaiva wife. Together they undertake vows to fast; together they break their fasts when the objects of their yearning appear to them. The result of their devotion is concretized in the building of two temples, one to the Jina Neminātha and the other to Śiva. The sacred sites in India in which Buddhist, Jain and Hindu temples coexist are too numerous and too well known to enumerate here; I mention only the caves at Ellora or the temples at Khajuraho, two of the most famous examples. But there are many more. Some rulers like the Paramāra kings of the 11th and 12th centuries in North India seem to have pursued a deliberate policy of building Jain and Śaiva temples together at their sacred sites, as is evidenced by the extant archaeological remains at a site like Un in Madhya Pradesh. These are such visible shared spaces; even if the primary reason for their creation was in part political, the worshippers who visited them can hardly have failed to notice that they were part of a larger group of devotees, some of whom worshipped in different ways to different gods. What we know of medieval ritual suggests that they may even have worshipped together, or at least shared prayers and ritual technologies.⁴⁵

Much more could be said about the mental shared spaces that Indian thinkers created. I have focused in this paper on the Jains and to a lesser extent the Buddhists and largely on their story literature, but these were by no means the only religious groups that endeavored to deal with the religious pluralism of early and medieval India, nor were stories their only medium for conveying their views on other religions. The distillation of religious truth, its reduction to universal principles that we see in the texts I have chosen, was also not their only strategy for dealing with the religious “other”.⁴⁶ Some Jain texts paid close

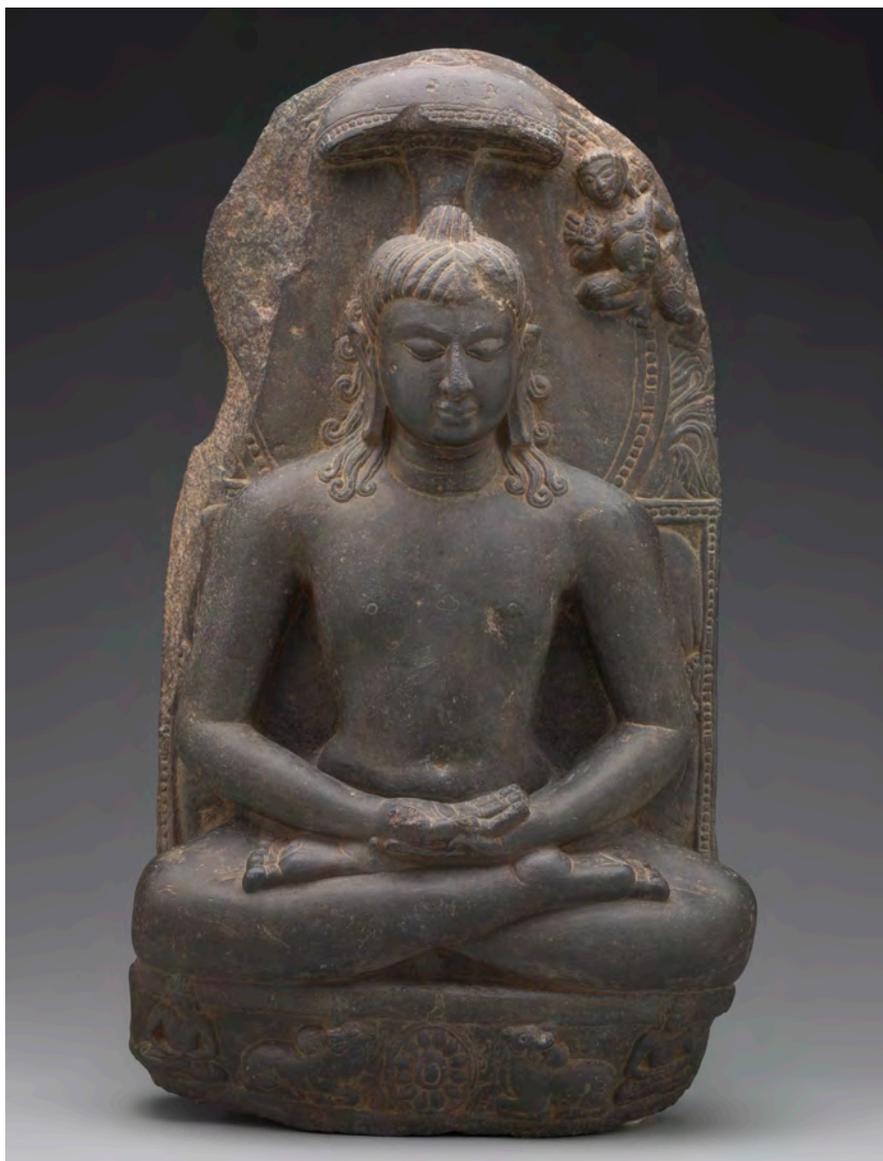
45 See my article, “Other People’s Rituals: Ritual Eclecticism in Early Medieval Indian religions”, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28 (2000), 399-424.

46 Paul Hacker singled out as uniquely characteristic of Indian religious thought something that he called “Inklusivismus”. To Hacker this practice of seeing in other

attention to matters of doctrine and regarded other religions in their doctrinal pronouncements as partially true; what they said was not wrong, they argued, only incomplete and therefore inadequate as a description of reality. Perhaps taking a cue from the Jains, Tantric Śaivas propounded definitions of scripture that were exceedingly generous and potentially created space for every believer and every belief, though they also could temper these definitions in such a way as to allow for a hierarchy of beliefs with themselves at the top.⁴⁷ It has not been possible to do justice in this paper to the rich variety of views on other religions or their complex history, but I would close with a return to the Jain stories that formed the core of this paper. What is distinctive about them in the larger context of Indian attitudes towards other religions is their focus on the ethical side of religion to the almost complete exclusion of doctrine and their clear statement that respect for others does not require that we agree with them. Others may fail to see the truth, but that does not make them less honorable or less worthy of our esteem.

religious groups central principles that were common to one's own at the same time implied the inferiority of the other groups. Hacker distinguished "Inklusivismus" from tolerance. His article with discussions by A. Wezler, W. Halbfass, and G. Oberhammer can be found in Gerhard Oberhammer, *Inklusivismus: eine indische Denkform* (Wien: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, 1983). The article by Halbfass also appears as chapter 22 in his *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988). Halbfass emphasizes that Hacker's inclusivism is "an instrument of the critique of Indian, specifically Neo-Hindu thought, and an implicit defense of the Christian-European tradition against certain claims and temptations posed by the Indian tradition." (p. 406). A scathing critique of Hacker's notion of Inklusivismus may be found in Joydeep Bagchee and Vishwa P. Adluri, "The Passion of Paul Hacker: Indology, Orientalism, and Evangelism", chapter 15, in *Transcultural Encounters Between Germany and India*, edited by Joanne Miyang Cho, Eric Kurlander, Douglas T. McGetchin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014). Although I have frequently used the term "inclusive" in this paper, I intend it in its normal English meaning, without the implications of Hacker's term.

⁴⁷ I have discussed some of the Śaiva strategies in "Tolerance in the Tantras: Its Form and Function", *Journal of Oriental Research Madras* LVI-LVII (1986-92), 283-302.



Ādinātha, late 7th century, Bihar, Yale University Gallery of Art

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