

Zeitschrift:	Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société Suisse-Asie
Herausgeber:	Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft
Band:	55 (2001)
Heft:	2
Artikel:	Jain monasticism in "An age without eminence" : religious gifting and the acquisition and transfer of merit
Autor:	Laughlin, Jack C.
DOI:	https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-147530

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 10.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

JAIN MONASTICISM IN “AN AGE WITHOUT EMINENCE”: RELIGIOUS GIFTING AND THE ACQUISITION AND TRANSFER OF MERIT¹

Jack C. Laughlin

I. Introduction

In the February 1999 issue of *History of Religions*, Jacob N. Kinnard begins his review of L. A. Babb’s *Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture* (1996) as follows:

Although the West has been aware of Jainism as a distinct religious tradition since the early sixteenth century, until quite recently Jains have in Western scholarship held a kind of second-class citizen status among the world’s religions. Typically viewed as Buddhism’s lesser cousin – or as Hinduism’s hostile nephew – Jainism and its radically world-rejecting religious ethos has frequently been portrayed as a colorless, grim, and spiritually impoverished system of extreme asceticism. After the publication of Padmanabh Jaini’s groundbreaking *The Jaina Path of Purification* in 1979, however, a steady stream of studies by Carrithers, Cort, Dundas, Granoff, Humphrey, Laidlaw, and others has gone a long way in correcting this negative portrayal of the Jain tradition. Lawrence Babb’s *Absent Lord* is central to this recent body of literature on the Jains, for he addresses what is perhaps the single most important question in the Western view of Jainism: What place can there be for ordinary Jains in such a radically world-rejecting vision?

1 This essay comes out of a presentation I made at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting held in Boston 11-14 March 1999. I thank Phyllis Granoff of McMaster University and Paul Dundas of the University of Edinburgh for their comments on earlier drafts.

It is true that recent studies by Babb, some of the other scholars mentioned by Kinnard, as well as several others not mentioned by Kinnard, have expressed the noble intention of rehabilitating the scholarly image of the Jains by earnest consideration of the religious life of the Jain laity. For these scholars, the Jain laity present certain “interpretive challenges to ethnography,”² given “the strictly renunciatory spirit of Jain doctrine … and the consequent devaluation of worldly existence,”³ given that Jainism is celebrated for its systematic practice of nonviolence (*ahimsā*) and for the rigor of the asceticism it promotes,⁴ and given that “the doctrine of the religion … is a soteriology—a project and set of prescriptions for how to bring one’s life to an end,”⁵ “a radically ascetic strategy for achieving liberation from the world’s bondage.”⁶ Hence, the laity appear to be at odds with the essence of Jainism by definition. For, they do not renounce the world, and so, they do not really practice asceticism, and so, they do not actively pursue liberation. Yet, scholars acknowledge that Jainism could not survive for more than two millennia if it did not have a lay community to support those who, ideally, pursued the religious vocation in poverty and celibacy; thus, Jainism has somehow had to accommodate the religious expectations of the laity, directed as they are to life very much in the world. As Babb says, “a Jain tradition in the fullest sense, as opposed to a mere soteriology, cannot be for mendicants alone; it must bring ascetics and their followers into a system of belief and practice that serves the religious interests of both.”⁷

- 2 As M.B. Carrithers says in his review of Babb’s *Absent Lord* from *American Anthropology*, volume 99 (1997), p. 443.
- 3 Reynell, Josephine, “Renunciation and Ostentation: A Jain Paradox,” *Cambridge Anthropology*, 9, 1985, p. 20.
- 4 Babb, L.A., *Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p. 2.
- 5 Laidlaw, James, *Riches and Renunciation Religion, Economy, and Society among the Jains*, New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1995, p. 3 or 4.
- 6 Babb, Lawrence A., “Monks and Miracles: Religious Symbols and Images of Origin among Oswāl Jains,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, volume 52, no. 1 (February 1993), p. 3.
- 7 Babb, 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Given this *Western view of Jainism*, I can appreciate the scholars' quandary which Babb aptly defines: "How can such a religious system 'work' when asceticism is so central a value?" or alternatively, "What place can there be for such a radically world-rejecting vision of the world in the lives of ordinary men and women?"⁸ However, one might well ask: if Jainism essentially consists of *such a radically world-rejecting vision of the world*, how might *anyone* live up to it? Certainly the difficulty, if not impossibility, of living up to the ascetic ideal has been acknowledged in the Jain tradition as is evidenced by revisions of and exceptions to the monastic rule.⁹ Furthermore, ancient Jain authorities rejected the extreme ascetic ideal asserting that the ascetic who leads flocks of monks and nuns should not be of the kind who is a "Follower of the Rule of the Jinas" (*Jinakappiya*), who goes about "alone, naked, carrying no belongings, enduring inconvenience and

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 9.

9 See Dundas, Paul, *The Jains*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 154; Williams, R., *Jaina Yoga*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., reprint 1983, p. xix. Most interesting though, are the exceptions to the Great Vows outlined by Caillat, especially the exceptions to the vow of chastity, for nothing is more definitive of asceticism than sexual abstinence. Breaches of this vow do not result in automatic defrocking, but are managed according to the status of the woman involved (*i.e.* sex with a nun results in more severe penance). A monk who has difficulty maintaining his celibacy, but who is otherwise very pious, must first live in the company of elders who have enjoyed the pleasures of the world in order to try to keep up his resolve. However, if this fails, then, with the help of those elders, the monk may escape from the community to pursue his carnal needs. Such a monk is counseled to go to places where he will not be recognized by anyone from his family or monastic life, and there find another's wife, a whore or a guileless woman (the monk is advised to watch his expenses carefully, so presumably he leaves the community with cash in hand). When the monk's desires are fulfilled, he can return to the company of his fellow monks where, with a nod and a wink, he receives a public rebuke from his teacher for absence without leave. The entire process is a carefully constructed ruse designed to prevent younger monks from being scandalized or demoralized (Caillat, C., *Atonements in the Ancient Ritual of the Jaina Monks*, Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology, pp. 81ff.).

discomfort," and who thus "imitates the conduct of Mahāvīra after his enlightenment,"¹⁰ presumably because his lifestyle is not conducive to the expansion of an organized monastic community.¹¹ Finally, as we shall see, some medieval literature declares that the asceticism practiced by Mahāvīra, the last Jina, is a lost skill and so no strategy even exists *for achieving liberation from the world's bondage*. On this basis, one might question the degree to which lay life or lay values constitute any sort of problem or do not easily fit with what Jainism *should* be. If Jain ascetics were rarely if ever expected to pursue their vocation in a manner like Mahāvīra and the other Jinas, then why should the failure of the laity to conform to such a model constitute any sort of contradiction or paradox in their Jain identity?

Now, this essay is not another consideration of the place of the laity in Jain tradition. Rather, it focuses upon the practices and beliefs of certain historical ascetics of the medieval period (with reference to some ascetics of the more recent past). What is apparent is that the Jainism of the laity and the Jainism of ascetics were not always, if ever, the mutually exclusive categories implied by much of the new Jain scholarship. It is not merely that such a rigid 'lay-monk distinction' defies common sense or that textual evidence, such as the modifications to the monastic rule cited above, precludes such a bifurcation of the historical Jain community. Additionally, there is compelling epigraphical evidence that many ascetics expressed their religiosity in ways very similar to their lay counterparts by making religious donations often for the sake of the merit (or good karma) that they were thought to produce. Some of these ascetic-donors even chose to transfer the merit of their gifts to other ascetics.

These facts are 'striking' or 'surprising', if not downright embarrassing, if we accept the way that Jainism has been largely defined to date. The accumulation of good karma by ascetics through

10 Caillat, *op. cit.*, p. 41. Presumably, Digambara ("Sky-Clad") Jains—or at least their ascetics—would argue that Śvetāmbara ("White-Clad") Jain ascetics represent, by definition, an unacceptable compromise in Jain values, since they don monastic robes.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 59f.

donation or merit transfer represents the complete antithesis of the Jain ascetic ideal:

The accumulations of *karma* on the soul are responsible for the soul's bondage. This is because they cover the soul and occlude its true nature, which is omniscient bliss. The keys to liberation, therefore, are two. First, one must avoid the accumulation of further *karma*. Second, one must eliminate the *karma* already adhering to the soul. The fact that *karma* is viewed as an actual physical substance means that the most radical measure will be required for its removal. This radical measure is ascetic practice of great severity. The tradition's recurrent image is that of asceticism as a kind of fire that burns away the soul's karmic imprisonments; hence ascetic values are central to the tradition's highest aspirations.¹²

Lay practice is clearly at odds with this Jain ascetic ideal, since it consists almost entirely of practices intended to produce good karma: from the soteriological perspective good karma is as problematic as bad, for any accumulation of karma propagates the cycle of rebirth, the very antithesis of liberation.

However, it is apparent that many ascetics' behaviour was equally problematic and at odds with the ascetic ideal, since it consisted of exactly those actions which preoccupied the laity. Knowledge of this demands that we seriously reconsider the very nature of Jain asceticism: as we do so, we shall see the imagined polarization of lay and ascetic values begin to evaporate. I am not about to claim that the ideal of the 'Jain path of purification' is entirely without prescriptive force. However, if we find that some if not a lot of actual monastic practice and belief was not exclusively derived from it, then we must be careful how we interpret any Jain phenomenon through its lens. Otherwise, we will continue to predetermine the nature of lay Jain practice and miss many fruitful avenues of research.¹³ But more importantly for my

12 Babb, 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

13 Given my disagreement with Babb about the centrality of the ascetic ideal in Jainism, it should be no surprise that I also differ with him concerning the nature of his main topic of interest in *Absent Lord*, the so-called Dādāguru cult dedicated to certain deceased monks who are worshiped by Jains as gods. I

present purposes, we will simply be unprepared to see various hitherto unknown features of Jain asceticism, as long as we define asceticism firstly in soteriological terms. There is much in the lives of historical Jain ascetics that is bright, baroque and religiously rich; but, far from showing us otherwise, a lot of recent Jain scholarship leaves us with the impression that Jain monasticism is precisely *colorless, grim, and spiritually impoverished*. I intend here to make a step towards creating an image of Jainism as a much more nuanced and complete religion than scholarly accounts have presented to date.

II. Jain Ascetics' Gifts: The Epigraphical Evidence

The evidence I have found concerning religious donations by Jain ascetics consists of about 80 inscriptions dating from 1092 to 1921 C.E. from Gujarat and Rajasthan.¹⁴ Eighty monastic gifts, out of the thousands of records of Jain donations, from a period close to a millennium, is nowhere near as startling as, for example, the rate of 40% that Schopen notes for the Buddhist site of Bhārhut over the period of 120-80 B.C.E.¹⁵ But to be sure, evidence of this kind has the advantage, following what Schopen says of Buddhist epigraphy, of reflecting in part what (some) Jain monks actually practiced and believed.¹⁶ These gifts represent a range of expenditures. A record of 1174 C.E. from a well near Jalor describes the gift only as “a donation

consider the Dādāgurus to be just another group of the ‘very special dead’, like many others in Indian popular practice, although the historical circumstances of their development are quite interesting, while Babb sees them as a bridge between the worldly values of the laity and the Jain ascetic ideal (1996, *op. cit.*, chapter three). However, I must leave this topic for a paper to follow this one.

- 14 Also, all the records in question are Śvetāmbara; none are Digambara.
- 15 Schopen, Gregory, “Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit,” *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*, volume 10 (1985), p. 24.
- 16 Schopen, Gregory, “Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism,” *History of Religions*, volume 31 (1991), pp. 1-2.

(*pradatta*) by Nemicandra, disciple of Bha[ttāraka] Śānti.”¹⁷ A very interesting record from 1194 reports that the monk Sumatisūri made a donation (*pradatta*) of cocoanuts, banners and a sum of cash (?) “for the purpose of the worship of the image of Śālibhadrasūri, his own preceptor.”¹⁸

I must point out that this inscription further shows that the medieval monk was often very different from the monk imagined by some scholars. For here we find a monk sponsoring what amounts to *dravya pūjā*, worship with material things. According to Babb, “those who take ascetic vows ... cannot ... worship with material things; being possessionless, they have nothing to offer,” and in a note he adds, “ascetics, however, do engage in worship in a more general sense. They can perform *bhāv pūjā* [mental worship] and can also participate in congregational worship as observers and singers. But *dravya pūjā* is barred” (1996, *op. cit.*, p. 83).

Images were the most common donations. Ascetics donated seven images of Jinas,¹⁹ two images of goddesses,²⁰ (one plaque of) 52 Jinas with the goddess Saccikā and the god Gaṇapati,²¹ and one image of a *samavasarāṇa*;²² also, between 1092 and 1398 C.E. monks donated 16

17 *JI* 912. I do not know if the gift was the well itself or a gift of something like the requisites of worship that Sumatisūri donated for the worship of his Guru’s portrait as described next.

18 om // sam° 1251 kārtikasudi 1 ravau atrayādhivāsinā nālikera dhvajā khāsaṭīmūlyam nijaguru śrī Śālibhadrasūrimūrtipūjāhetoh śrīsumatisūribhiḥ pradattam / tatra balā° 5 māsapāṭake necake vyayanīyāḥ // cha // *PJLS* II 327 (*JI* 879 records a slightly different transcription).

19 Abu V 319 (1158 C.E.); *PJLS* II 469 (1246); *SSG* 405 (1258); *PLS* 160; *JI* 1966 (1446 recording the donation of a pair of Jina images by a single monk), 501 (1533).

20 Agrawala, R.C., “A Unique Sculpture of the Jaina Goddess Saccikā,” *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (n.s.) 29 (1954), pp. 63-66; *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 17 (1954), pp. 232-34 (1181 C.E.); *PJLS* II 522 (1315 C.E.).

21 *JI* 2565 (1281).

22 *SSG* 82 (c. 1322). This image represents a pavilion which the gods construct for the Jina’s first sermon upon his attainment of omniscience. For its iconography

stone portraits of other monks,²³ while the monk Ratnasūri donated a portrait of himself in c. 1364.²⁴ A late donation is unique among images donated by ascetics: its inscription indicates that in 1839 the monk-donor, Pandita Īśvarasimha of the Kharatara lineage, gave something called an *aṣṭadalakamala* ("eight-petalled lotus").²⁵ Also, between c. 1670 and 1887 Jain ascetics in the Bikaner area donated approximately 30 plaques of the footprints of other ascetics, called *pādukās* or *caraṇanyāsas* in the inscriptions.²⁶ Finally, a couple of monks also donated commemorative pillars.²⁷

see Bhandarkar, D.R., "Jaina Iconography," *Indian Antiquary* (May-June 1911), pp. 125-130; 153-161.

- 23 *PLS* 63; *JI* 881; *PJLS* II 508, 509, 523, 530, 531; *SSG* 54, 101, 144, 152, 533; *Nākodā* 8; Jośī, Madanlāl, *Dādābārī-Digdarśana*, Bombay: Śrī Jinadattasūri Sevāsamgha, 1962-63, p. 60; Shah, Ambalal Premchand, "Some Inscriptions and Images on Mount Śatruñjaya," in Upadhye, A.N., *et al.*, eds., *Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya Golden Jubilee Volume*, Bombay: Shri Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1968, p. 168.

It has long been known that many Jain temples in Gujarat and Rajasthan contain or contained portraits of historical ascetics and lay people. However, my Ph.D. dissertation ("Ārādhakamūrti/Adiṣṭhāyakamūrti: Popular Piety, Politics and the Medieval Jain Temple Portrait," McMaster University, 1999) is the first comprehensive study of these images.

- 24 *SSG* 77. The 17 portraits donated by Jain monks are very significant if for no other reason than the fact that they represent about 1/3 of all the monks' portraits known to me. Below, I will briefly remark on the further significance of these images.
- 25 *BJLS* 2541. I have no other information on this object, but I must presume that it is the same as the lotus-shaped *navadevatā*, an eight-petalled plaque illustrating four of the five worthies of the *namaskāramantra* and four auspicious symbols with a Jina in the middle (see Shah, U.P., *Jaina-Rūpa-Maṇḍana*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1987, pp. 44f., figs. 36 and 37).
- 26 *BJLS* 51, 52, 1806, 1986, 1989, 2002, 2013, 2044, 2050, 2055, 2057, 2061, 2065, 2113, 2115, 2300, 2307, 2310, 2311, 2505, 2312, 2313, 2315, 2831, 2846, 2847, 2854, 2858, 2862, 2873. It is a curious fact, for which I have no certain explanation, that although footprints of the Jinas as well as historical

In addition to making such gifts, monks also sponsored more grand architectural projects. Seven inscriptions (representing only three different donors) record monks' sponsorship of *devakulikās*, small ancillary shrines that often surround a primary Jain temple.²⁸ Another inscription relates that a monk donated a pair of *ālakas* (a type of shrine) with spires for them or their temple.²⁹ Some monks made donations even greater than these: two monks undertook temple renovations;³⁰ one had a *rāngamāṇḍapa* added to a temple;³¹ and yet another added a portico to a temple that he had earlier consecrated on behalf of its lay donors.³² Monks of the more recent past also made similarly large donations: in 1739 the monks Kalyāṇasundara and Labdhisundara of the Upakeśa lineage donated a *pauṣadhaśālā* (alms-house);³³ in 1801, 1830 and 1838 the monks Vācaka Vidyāhema, Paṇḍita Sukhasāgara, and Paṇḍitas Vinaicanda and Manasukha respectively donated similar structures (described only as *śālās*);³⁴ also, Upādhyāya Rāmalālaganī of the Kṣemakīrtti branch of the Kharatara

Jain monks were made from an early period (see Shah, U.P., 1987, *op. cit.*, p. 17), the ascetic donations of them did not occur until quite late.

27 *PJLS* II 373-74. These two records are undated and I have not seen the objects in question; however, the fact that they are published along with other records from the town of Nāḍol dating from 1087-1630 C.E. leads me to believe that they are no later than that time frame. In any event, I will use them freely to advance some of my arguments, for I cannot ignore the fact that their monk-donors made them for the merit of their mothers, and hence, they represent true filial piety among Jain ascetics.

28 Abu V 119 (1355), 120 (1356), 246 (1465), 247-48 (1470), 249 (c. 1470). One inscription for a *devakulikā* donated by the monk Bhadreśvarasūri at a temple in Jīrāvalā is undated (Abu V 116). However, all the dated *devakulikās* from this temple (Abu V) were made between 1298 and 1430; hence, the monk's shrine probably comes from this period.

29 *JI* 893; *PJLS* II 321 (1243).

30 *PLS* 87 (1386); Abu V 268 (1429).

31 Abu V 113 (1390).

32 Abu V 278 (c. 1418).

33 *BJLS* 2554.

34 *BJLS* 2104, 2202, 2252.

lineage had a hall renovated in 1921 which apparently belonged to him (*svaśālāyā jīrṇoddhāra kārāpitā*);³⁵ and finally in 1868 Pāṇḍita Samudrasaumya of the Kīrttiratna branch of the Kharatara lineage donated a Pārśvanātha temple.³⁶ Each of these donations was made in Bikaner or the surrounding area.³⁷ I must point out that there is something unusual in the distribution of certain types of gifts over time. All of the portraits donated by monks date to before c. 1400 and all of the Jina images before c. 1533; the *śālās* were all donated after c. 1739, and all of the *pādukās* after c. 1670. This distribution is very suggestive of a real change in the nature of monastic gifting, but at present I am unable to explain such a change. But, I mention all of this because I am going to focus upon the earlier gifts for statistical purposes, although in what follows I shall not hesitate to mention facts from the later evidence where they are important.

Before proceeding any further, we must decide, as best we can, if these examples of monastic gifting are mere anomalies from the margins of the Jain monastic community or if they represent more prevalent attitudes with the sanction of the community. That the evidence consists only of some 80 inscriptions from a period of more than 800 years might suggest that giving by Jain ascetics was nothing more than an occasional exception to orthodox rule. Furthermore, the monastic lineages (*gacchas*) of the ascetics who made gifts are, apparently, not very representative of the historical community, especially where the earlier gifts are concerned: only 15 out of the approximately 150 attested lineages occur in the inscriptions (and more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the records contain no reference to a *gaccha* at all). Perhaps more importantly, several important *gacchas* are poorly represented or do not occur at all. The Upakēśagaccha, an important lineage in the pre-Mughal period, is represented only by the nun's gift of an image of the goddess Saccikā, and the *pausadhaśālā* of 1739. Ascetics of the

35 *BJLS* 2306.

36 *BJLS* 1975.

37 I do not know the extent of any of these structures. However, since they were built in the 18th and 19th centuries I suspect that they are relatively modest buildings made brick and concrete (rather than stone) like other North Indian architecture of the time.

Tapāgaccha made no gifts.³⁸ By contrast, ascetics of the Kharataragaccha made a number of gifts. Early Kharatara gifts are few, but this is not wholly surprising since the lineage did not become particularly influential until somewhat later in time. About two thirds of the footprint plaques were Kharatara donations, as were 3 out of 5 of the greater gifts of the later period.

Although the inscriptions do not permit us to say with confidence that giving by ascetics was mainstream practice, the fact that *any* Kharatara ascetics made gifts is significant, for perhaps no other lineage has been more closely associated with the reformation of ‘lax behavior’ in the Jain monastic community than the Kharataragaccha. Kharatara identity has always been intimately tied to criticism of other lineages and their rituals which Kharatara authors deem to be heretical.³⁹ Furthermore, since the 11th century, according to lineage sources, the Kharatara has defined itself by opposition to the so-called *caityavāsins*, “temple-dwelling monks” who allegedly lived in residences especially prepared for them and used temple funds for their own personal use.⁴⁰ It has been said that some of the very gifts by

38 This is perhaps not that surprising because this lineage did not become renowned until the Mughal period under its charismatic leader Hīravijayasūri, in the period between the earlier monastic gifts, notably the portraits, and the later ones consisting of the *śālās* and the footprints. It was from this time that many lineages began to die out, so that only the Tapāgaccha has any real presence in Jain monastic life today.

39 See Granoff, P. and Koichi Shinohara, *Speaking of Monks: Religious Biography in India and China*, Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1992, pp. 48ff.

40 See Dundas, Paul, “The Tenth Wonder: Domestication and Reform in Medieval Śvētāmbara Jainism,” *Indologica Taurinensia*, volume XIV (1987-1988), pp. 182f. Such behavior is contrary to the prescriptions of texts like the *Dasaveyāliyasutta*, which Kharatara authors invoke as the measure of orthopraxis for Jain ascetics (see Babb, 1996, *op. cit.*, p. 115). Now, we must presume that all of the ascetics who made gifts personally possessed the means to pay for those gifts. However, according to the *Dasaveyāliyasutta* a monk must not possess “a stock of things,” and he should be “without property” and “without possessions” (*Dasaveyāliya Sutta*, Leumann, Ernst, ed., Schubring, Walter, trans., Ahmedabad: The Managers of Sheth Anandji Kalianji, 1932,

ascetics that I have described were *caityavāsins*' gifts.⁴¹ However, there is no evidence whatsoever that this was the case.⁴² But if this were the case, we might expect the Kharataragaccha to proscribe giving on the part of ascetics, but they do not; on the contrary, Kharatara ascetics were responsible for numerous gifts, even up to a recent period. On this basis, we might presume that monastic gifting was a widespread and acceptable practice, since even ascetics of the somewhat 'protestant' Kharataragaccha made gifts, despite the paucity of lineages represented in the inscriptions.

That making religious gifts was acceptable practice in the monastic communities to which the donors belonged is also implied by the fact that, in most cases, the Jain monk-donor was not, just as Schopen's Buddhist monk-donor was not, "a simple 'uneducated' village monk,"⁴³ but a religious specialist, holding a historically attested office in the monastic hierarchy.⁴⁴ Many donors bore the designation *-sūri* indicating that they held the leadership of all or part of a lineage. Some of those also bore the title *Bhaṭṭāraka*, an officer whose exact place in the Śvetāmbara monastic hierarchy I cannot ascertain, but who must have been more authoritative than the mere *sūri*.⁴⁵ Other offices mentioned in

reprinted in *W. Schubring Kleine Schriften*, Heransgegeben von Klaus Bruhn, Wiesbaden: Frans Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1977, 3.3, 6.21, 12.5).

- 41 Jain, K.C., *Jainism in Rajasthan*, Sholapur: Gulabchand Hirachand Doshi, 1963, pp. 89f.
- 42 In fact, there is very little historical evidence for the *caityavāsins* at all. For a discussion of what we do know about these ascetics see Dundas, Paul, "The Marginal Monk and the True *Tīrtha*," in Smet, Rudy and Kenji Watanabe, eds., *Jain Studies in Honour of Jozef Deleu*, Tokyo: Hinno-Tomosha, 1993, p. 243.
- 43 Schopen, Gregory, "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of 'Sinicization' Viewed from the Other Side," *T'oung Pao* Vol. LXX, Livr., (1984), p. 120.
- 44 As for Jain nun-donors, only 1 out of the 6 is identified by monastic office.
- 45 The title *Bhaṭṭāraka* was more current among the Digambaras. According to Jaini, Digambara *Bhaṭṭārakas* were a "special group of 'administrator-clerics', who not only managed the temple and its associated holdings (schools, libraries, extensive areas of land) but also assumed control of the temple rituals" (Jaini, Padmanabh S., *The Jaina Path of Purification*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass,

a handful of records each are Upādhyāya, Vācaka or Vācana, Paṇḍita, and Gaṇi.⁴⁶ In another handful of records, the donor is not identified by office. At any rate, like Schopen's Buddhist monk-donors, most of the Jain monk-donors were "teachers and transmitters of 'official' ... literature,"⁴⁷ arbiters of proper monastic behavior with authority over some if not all of the monks and nuns in their respective lineages. If the highest doctrinal authorities could make their own donations, then monastic gifts had the highest and most visible sanction, and thus religious gifting on the part of ascetics must have had broad acceptance

1979, p. 307). The use of this term by Śvetāmbara monks of the Tapā and Kharataragacchas occurs in records from the Mughal period and it also occurs in the 15th century records of the Kaccholiyagaccha, such as the gifts by Bhaṭṭāraka Vijayaprabhasūri (Abu V 246-48, *PJLS* II 374).

- 46 All of these offices have long histories in Jain monasticism and appear in canonical or early post-canonical literature and old inscriptions from Mathurā for example (see Deo, S.B., *History of Jaina Monasticism, Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute* Vol. XVI, June 1954-March 1955). In post-canonical literature the Upādhyāya was the chief instructor of a group of monks, and he appears to have had no additional administrative duties. The minimum qualification for an Upādhyāya was three years' standing as a monk. As a monastic instructor, the Upādhyāya had to be "an expert in the sacred lore and its exposition" (*ibid.*, pp. 144, 218). The Jain inscriptions from Mathurā refer to Vācakas. Deo describes them as "teachers of sacred lore" (*ibid.*, p. 22). One of the monk-donors is described as a Vācanācārya. This is a title that is known to Jain literature as old as the *Bṛhatkalpa*, though Deo is unsure of his place in the monastic hierarchy (*ibid.*, p. 224). Another donor is called a Vācaka Paṇḍita. A Paṇḍita in the monastic hierarchy is obviously superior to the simple monk but subordinate to the other officers described above. There is no textual evidence that the Paṇḍita was a recognized monastic office; thus, Deo thinks it might have been merely an honorific, or designated a well-read disciple (*ibid.*, p. 515). In texts the role of the Gaṇi is unclear and he is often indistinguishable from the Ācārya (*ibid.*, p. 146); however, it is certain that he was superior to some (small) body of monks. A Gaṇinī, a nun presumably in charge of a group of other nuns, was the donor of the image of the goddess Saccikā to which I have already referred (Agrawala, *op. cit.*).

47 1984, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

in the community.⁴⁸ This allows us, I think, to generalize from our small sample that the religious beliefs the donors were expressing through their donations were common among the donors' contemporaries even though they have not left us any tangible evidence of those same beliefs.

III. Merit and the Monastic Gift

If the simple fact of gifting by Jain ascetics is not enough to indicate that medieval Jain asceticism in practice was not what many scholars presume it was, then the expressed intentions for several of those gifts certainly is. Of the records for the approximately twenty early gifts made by ascetics (before c. 1533 C.E. and excluding the portraits for the time being), fourteen carry expressions of merit: in four cases the donors kept the merit for themselves; thus, in ten cases the donors transferred the merit. The unspecified gift of 1174 was made by Nemicandra for his own merit (*ātmaśreyase*); Pañdita Laśamanasīha donated a pair of Jina images for his own merit (reported twice in the record, once as *svaśreyortham* and once as *ātmaśreyortham*).⁴⁹ It is also notable that the image of the Jain goddess Ambikā donated in 1315 by the nun Suhaba of the Candrakula was for the donor's own merit (*ātmaśreyase*).⁵⁰

Very little is known about the lives of medieval Jain nuns. I would like to know if goddess worship was a central feature of nuns' religiosity. At any rate, these two donations, but especially Suhaba's made for her own merit, show that the deities of the Jain pantheon, and

48 The stamp of official approval is also found especially on the images donated by ascetics (Jinas, deities and even the portraits) by virtue of the fact that most of them were consecrated by *sūris* other than the donor (although several *sūri*-donors consecrated their own gifts).

49 *PLS* 160; *JJ* 1966.

50 *PJLS* II 522. I draw attention to the fact that the only two independent images of Jains deities donated by ascetics are images of goddesses and they were both donated by nuns. The other is an image of the goddess Saccikā donated by a nun of the Upakeśagaccha in 1181 (Agrawala, *op. cit.*).

the worship of them, were important to some ascetics. This is also demonstrated by the fact that the inscription for the *pauṣadhaśālā* donated by the Upakeśa monks Kalyāṇasundara and Labdhisundara in 1739 begins with *śrī gaṇādhipate namah*, “obeisance to Blessed Ganeśa” (BLJS 2554). All of this is very problematic for L.A. Babb’s description of the gods and their place in the Jain world: “the deities are not, in the strict sense, objects of worship they exist for the sole purpose of enjoyment, the very enjoyment the ascetic rejects their worship is seen as a kind of postscript to the worship of the Tīrthankars” (Babb, L.A., “The Great Choice: Worldly Values in a Jain Ritual Culture,” *History of Religions* Vol. 34 no. 1, 1994, pp. 21ff.).

Only one major gift was made for the donor’s own merit: one Rāmacandrasūri donated a *devakulikā* in 1356 for his own merit (*ātmaśreyase*).⁵¹ Among the later gifts, only two were made for the donors’ own merit: the *aṣṭadalakamala* donated by Paṇḍita Īśvarasimha (*ātmapuṇyārtha*), and the *śālā* donated by Vācaka Vidyāhema in 1801 (*puṇyārtha*). Monks transferred the merit of their gifts to fellow monks as follows.⁵² Bhaṭṭāraka Vijayaprabhasūri’s donations of *devakulikās* in 1465 and 1470 were for the merit of Bhaṭṭāraka Guṇasāgarasūri, his predecessor in the Pūrṇimāpaka branch of the Kacchulavālagaccha (a.k.a. Kacholiyavāla and the like).⁵³ In 1390 Hematilakasūri of the

51 Abu V 120.

52 That some Jain monks transferred the merit of their gifts should be doubly surprising, for not only should monks not make gifts—and thus generate (good) karma—but they should not believe that karma is transferrable, if we believe, as some scholars do, that Jainism’s thorough-going understanding of karma entails the notion that “except for karma earned for oneself by oneself, no one gives anything to anyone” (See Jaini, Padmanabh S. “Karma and the Problem of Rebirth in Jainism,” in O’Flaherty, Wendy Doniger, ed., *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, Delhi: Motilal BanarsiDass, 1980, p. 235). Yet, if Jain ascetics made gifts, we should not really be surprised that some of them transferred the merit from those gifts, for merit transfer has always been a significant aspect of lay giving: I have determined that almost half of the medieval gifts by lay people were made for the benefit of parties other than the donors (*super*, p. 341).

53 Abu V 246-48.

Brahmāṇīyagaccha donated the *raṅgamāndapa* of the Varamana Jain temple for the merit of his previous teachers in the lineage (*pūrvaguruśreyortham*).⁵⁴ Muni Udayavarddhana donated a *devakulikā* for the merit of a Vācana (Reciter of Scripture) whose proper name is missing from the inscription.⁵⁵ Paṇḍita Pāsacandra donated an image of Pārśvanātha for the merit of Paṇḍita Rāyakīrti in 1246.⁵⁶ And finally, Bhadreśvarasūri donated a *devakulikā* for a temple in Jīrāvalā for the merit of Tilakasūri (n.d.).⁵⁷

Here I must note that the inscription for the portrait of the Jain monk Guṇasenaśūri of the Nāgendra lineage (1286 C.E.) from the famous Jain pilgrimage place of Śatruñjaya states that the image was donated by the monk Paṇḍita Rāmacandra “for the merit of his Guru” (*svaguruśreyase*) who was presumably Guṇasena, in the absence of any other named monk in the inscription.⁵⁸ Thus, in effect, the portrait of Guṇasena served as a medium of merit transfer for its subject. Now, none of the inscriptions for the other portraits donated by monks indicates that the images were meant to profit their subjects;⁵⁹ yet, I believe that this was, in fact, the case for most of the images in question. Certainly we cannot doubt this on the grounds that Jain monks would not have an interest in merit or its transfer.

There is also important Hindu evidence that portraits or effigies were thought to be meritorious for their subjects. A memorial stele of 1183 C.E. from Candrāvatī in Rajasthan, showing a female figure flanked by two goddesses respectively mounted upon an elephant and camel, is notable here. Its inscription says that it was set up by its husband and wife donors “for the increase of the fame (as long as) the sun and the moon shine (on earth) and for the merit (*śreyase*) of their

54 Abu V 113.

55 Abu V 249. The inscription is undated. But, Udayavarddhana was prompted to make the gift at the instruction of Vijayaprabha, who made the gifts of 1465 and 1470 cited above, and hence we can date this gift to c. 1470.

56 *PJLS* II 469.

57 Abu V 116.

58 *SSG* 152.

59 As a matter of fact, no other Jain portrait inscriptions clearly indicate that the images (lay or monastic) were intended for the benefit of their subjects.

daughter, the virgin Sītukā by name, who had gone to heaven, and for the reward of the next world.”⁶⁰ The female figure is, no doubt, the deceased; the stele with her portrait was made by her parents for her benefit. But, the most important Hindu evidence comes from the inscription for the portrait of the Cāhamāna prince Meghanāda (1255 C.E.), for it explains exactly how a portrait was thought to produce merit for its subject. The record states that “Megha Cāhamāna, the virtuous warrior, perpetually worships Blessed Śiva Mahānāla, by means of his own portrait, for the increase of his own life span, progeny, fortune, happiness and fame.”⁶¹ The inscription implies that the portrait standing as a permanent worshiper in the temple or at least perpetually residing in the holy precinct (can we say, ‘on perpetual pilgrimage’?) collects merit on behalf of the portrait subject as if the actual subject were performing the worship (or undertaking a pilgrimage). This must have been Rāmacandra’s purpose for the portrait of Guṇasena. I believe that this also explains why Ratnasūri set up his own portrait of c. 1364, also at Śatruñjaya, and this must have also been the purpose for many of the other 15 portraits donated by monks, even though their inscriptions are not as explicit about it as that for Guṇasena’s portrait. The donors provided the portrait subjects with the means to earn almost limitless amounts of merit by the setting up of the portraits in temples, in effect transferring merit to the portrait subjects. Thus, to the cases where monks transferred the merit of their gifts to their fellow monks described above, we may add a number of the portraits donated by monks as instances of merit transfer.

- 60 ācamdrākkayaśo vṛddhaye divaṅgatāyāḥ svīyasutāyā śreyase kanyākumari
sītukānamnī pāralaukikaphalāya. Srivastava, V.S., “A Unique Inscribed
Memorial Stele Dated V.S. 1240 from Candrāvatī (Abu),” *Journal of the
Oriental Institute, Baroda*, volume 32, parts 1-2 (September-December 1982),
p. 78.
- 61 Śrīman mahānāla Śivāya tadguṇāḥ sacchāhumānāḥ subhaṭaśca meghāḥ /
āyuḥsutaśrīsukhakīrtivṛddhyai nityam svamūrtyā sa namaskaroti //
Sharma, Ram, “No. 27–Menal Inscription of the Chahamana Prince
Meghanada, Vikrama 1312,” *Epigraphia Indica*, volume XXXVII, part iv
(October 1967), v. 3.

IV. Monastic Donors and Beneficiaries: 'Kinship' Parallels with Lay Jain Giving

To begin to explain the unexpected interest in merit on the part of Jain ascetics (for the sake of themselves, but especially for the sake of the ascetics to whom they transferred the merit) I wish to look more closely at the relationships between the donors and the beneficiaries of the merit. Although, those relationships are not always clear, there are sufficient instances in which we can discern patterns of relationships. We may recall that Vijayaprabhasūri donated *devakulikās* for the merit of Guṇasāgarasūri, his predecessor as head of their lineage; similarly, Hematilakasūri's *raṅgamāṇḍapa* was made for the merit of the previous teachers in the lineage. Furthermore, at least a half dozen of the approximately 28 *pādukās* donated by ascetics represent the footprints of the Gurus or Gurvīs of the donors. To this I add that, in addition to the portrait of Guṇasena, at least five of the other portraits donated by monks (out of 15) were donated by the direct disciples of the subjects.⁶² Finally, the Kharatara monk Paṇḍita Naracandragaṇī donated a plaque representing several former monks in the lineage in 1276.⁶³ It is not surprising that devotion to the Guru was an important

62 These are as follows:

Date	Subject	Donor	Source
1092 C.E.	Devanāga	Paṇḍita Jinacandra	<i>JI</i> 881
1293	proper name missing	Jajjagasūri	<i>PJLS</i> II 509
1293	Ratnaprabhasūri	Guṇasamudrasūri	<i>SSG</i> 54
1377	Siddhasūri	Dharmeśvarasūri	<i>PJLS</i> II 531
n.d.	Jinaratnasūri	proper name missing	<i>JI</i> 1963

Additionally, Jinakuśalasūri of the Kharataragaccha donated two monks' portraits including one of Jinacandrasūri, his Guru and predecessor as head of the lineage, in 1322 after Jinacandra had died (*Nākodā* 8). However, as I intend to explain in a separate article, this is a very special case: evidence indicates that Jinakuśalasūri's donation was part of a Kharatara claim that Jinacandra had become a god with supernatural powers.

63 Jośī, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

motivation for the monastic donors of portraits and other gifts, since veneration of the teachers (*vandana*) is one of the six obligatory actions (*āvāsyaka*) of Jain ascetics.⁶⁴ However, I imagine that it was not only vocational obligation that motivated these donors, but something more personal. A Jain ascetic's teacher is undoubtedly in many ways (social and personal) a substitute for a parent; for that matter, the monastic community is a fictive kinship group. Now, there are three other cases where monastic donors transferred the merit of their gifts. I have not yet mentioned these particular gifts because the beneficiaries of the merit were not other monks, but blood relatives of the donors. Two undated pillars from Nadol, as I have remarked, were donated for the merit of the mothers of the donors, Upādhyāya Padmacandra and Bhaṭṭāraka Thūlabhadra;⁶⁵ also, the two monks Dhaṇadeva and Bahudeva, who were brothers, donated a Jina image for the merit of their father.⁶⁶ Two other portraits donated by monks are interesting in this regard: in 1216 C.E. at Śatruñjaya, the monk Paṇḍita Padmacandra donated a portrait of Paṇḍita Yaśovarddhana who was his uncle;⁶⁷ and in 1293 C.E. at Radhanpur, Jajjagasūri, then head of the Brahmāṇagaccha, donated an image of his Guru, who also happened to be his brother.⁶⁸ This coincidence of biological and monastic fraternity makes it improbable that these gifts were made without any sense of the ties involved.⁶⁹

64 See Jaini, *op. cit.*, pp. 189f.

65 *nijajananīśurīśreyo 'rtham* and *nijajananīcehanīśreyortham*. *PJLS* II 373-374.

66 *pituusabhaśreyortham*. Abu V 319.

67 Shah, A.P., *op. cit.*, p. 168.

68 *PJLS* II 509. I also note that Jinacandra, the subject of the portrait donated by Jinakuśala in 1322, was also Jinakuśala's uncle. But as I have indicated, I believe that this is a special case, one in which I do not believe personal sentiment played much of a part.

69 The 'spirit' of Jain monasticism demands that the initiated monk sever his ties with all his former worldly associates especially family, for all such relationships are transitory across rebirths and hence any attachment to them is gratuitous. All these gifts though, indicate that the total social renunciation of the Jain ascetic has no more than theoretical significance, and that some ties between ascetics and the social world of their birth are never broken.

The case of the 15th century monk Kīrtiratnācārya of the Kharataragaccha certainly shows that strong ties could persist between a monk and his family over the course of his entire career. This monk's activities centered around Nākodā and Vīramampura in central Rajasthan. The monk died in 1469 C.E. at which time a *stūpa* was erected for him. The *stūpapraśasti* includes a short biographical sketch of the monk, recording his pedigree and the significant events in his monastic career (*Nākodā* 49). We are told that the monk was born as the youngest son of a wealthy family in the Śaṅkhavāla branch of the Upakeśa caste of Jains. In 1380 C.E. he took initiation from Jinavardddhanasūri, then head of the Kharataragaccha, and in about 1423 Jinavarddhana promoted him to the office of Vācanācārya. Within about a year of that, Jinabhadrasūri, the new head of the Kharataragaccha, promoted him to the office of Upādhyāya. Then in 1431, he became Kīrtiratnācārya in the line of Bhāvaprabhasūri; at Jaisalmer a large festival of investiture was held under the sponsorship of his brothers Lakkhā and Kelhā. The record also tells of a pilgrimage to Śatruñjaya, Girnar, *etc.* undertaken by a party consisting of Kīrtiratna, Kīrtiratna's brothers, nephews and others, and the laymen in this party were the sponsors of Kīrtiratna's *stūpa*. Additionally, there is a portrait of Kīrtiratna at Nākodā which was donated by one Rohinī, daughter of Jeṭhā, in 1480 C.E. (*Nākodā* 55). From the *stūpa* inscription we know that Jeṭhā was Kīrtiratna's cousin.

In these donations by Jain ascetics, which were made for the sake of the merit of the fictive kinsmen of the donor, or a blood relative, we appear to have a close parallel to the pattern of lay giving. Among the medieval Śvetāmbara Jain laity, we find that more than 70% of inscriptions mention merit. Over half of those indicate that the merit was meant for one or both parents; the rest benefitted spouses, brothers, and uncles, ancestors or 'family' in about equal proportions.⁷⁰ Similarly, about 35% of lay Jain portraits represent one or both parents of the donors or some ancestor.⁷¹ Thus, I would argue, certain monks honored their Gurus in exactly the same way as they might otherwise

70 This is based upon *PLS*, a collection of 500 inscriptions from all over Gujarat and Rajasthan dating from 1067-1491 C.E.

71 See Laughlin, *op. cit.*, Table B.

honor their biological fathers (and/or mothers, or grandparents): as lay people donated images, *etc.* for the sake of their parents, so monks donated the same for the sake of their monastic superiors. As lay people donated portraits of their parents, so also monks donated portraits of their Gurus or other superior monks; occasionally monks even made donations for the sake of their actual kin. The gap between the religious practices of monks and the religious practices of the laity seems to narrow greatly, if not to disappear altogether.

V. Conclusion

Clearly gifting, and more significantly the resulting acquisition of merit on account of it, was important to a number of Jain ascetics. Yet, according to the normative vision of Jain monasticism, the Jain renouncer should not be interested in merit (for himself or others); the goal of monasticism is supposed to be the eradication of karma (good or bad) in order to attain liberation from rebirth. But should we expect the religiosity of historical monks or nuns to be the consummate reflection of Jainism's normative soteriology? After all, monks and nuns, like lay Jains, came from a rich network of kinship and family ties. Our evidence suggests that the degree to which ordination removed them from the religious and social world of the laity was relative. As we have seen, several medieval ascetics continued to be concerned about their blood relatives, since they made gifts for the merit of such relatives; for other ascetics, the distinction between monastic and familial relationships was further blurred, since their brethren were sometimes related to them by blood. Whatever the fruits of merit might be, it is clear that the ascetic donors did not think that their ascetic practices alone could secure them, since they felt compelled to make these donations for the merit that they were thought to generate. This was no false modesty, for other monastic donors did not think that their fellow monks were above needing merit either, since they made donations for the sake of the spiritual welfare of those fellow monks as well as for themselves.

We must ask why Jain ascetics should seek to secure merit for themselves and for other ascetics when ordination seemingly entails the

complete rejection of such practice. It appears that by the medieval period, if not before, it was commonly believed that asceticism, even spotlessly performed, could not lead to the salvation of the Jinas. Certainly some believed this by the time of Rājaśekhara's *Prabandhakośa* (1349 C.E.), for in it the famous 12th century Jain polymath Hemacandra is made to tell King Kumārapāla:⁷²

This is an age without eminence. Sixty-four years after the final liberation of Mahāvīra, Jambūsvāmi, the last Omniscient One attained perfection (*siddham gataḥ*). With him, all at once, these twelve features (of an *arhat*) vanished from Bharatakṣetra: the power to read the thought-forms of other beings,⁷³ clairvoyance,⁷⁴ the *pulāka* magical power, the power to become small in order to consult a *kevalin*, the powers to suppress and then eliminate the subtle passions,⁷⁵ adherence to the code of discipline followed by the Jinas,⁷⁶ the three states

72 *Prabandhakośa* of Rājaśekhara, Jina Vijaya, ed. Singhī Jain Series no. 6, Śāntiniketan: The Adhiṣṭhātā-Siṅghī Jaina Jñānapīṭha, 1935, p. 53.

73 *manahparyavajñāna*. This is the second highest of five types of consciousness that a living being may possess. *Paramāvadhi*, *manahparyavajñāna*, and *kevalajñāna* are, in order, the highest types and are the three types of supramundane consciousness (Jainī, *op. cit.*, 1979, pp. 121-122).

74 *paramāvadhi*.

75 *upaśamaśrenīḥ* and *kṣapakaśrenīḥ*. These are the names of the skills that make it possible to pass through the 8th to 10th *gunasthānas* (stages of quality). But, they are also the names of the accomplishments which place the *arhat*-to-be into 11th or the 12th *gunasthānas*: if the subtle passions are merely suppressed (*upaśama*) some back-sliding will occur when these passions resurface; but if they are eliminated (*kṣapaka*) the 12th *gunasthāna* is attained from which there is no back-sliding and omniscience is inevitable (Jainī, 1979, *op. cit.*, pp. 257, 272-3).

76 *jinakalpa*. Hence, the actual monastic conduct of the Jinas is unknown! The monasticism practiced by historical Jain ascetics is but a pale reflection of the monasticism practiced by Mahāvīra, *contra* the assertions of scholars like Josephine Reynell, who say that Jain ascetics "follow the supreme model of non-attachment and *aparigraha*, namely that of the Tirthankaras beings who attained enlightenment but remained on this earth to show people the way to

culminating in perfect purity which assures omniscience,⁷⁷ (and so also) *kevalajñāna*, (and so also) Siddhahood. Seven years later when Sthūlabhadra⁷⁸ went to heaven, the last four Pūrva texts, two bodily perfections⁷⁹ and the highest meditational skill were lost Over time, all the rest of Pūrvas were eventually lost.⁸⁰

Hence, salvation in the manner of the Jinas is not an ideal popularly ignored; it is an ideal impossible to attain according to old

salvation,” in the attempt to demonstrate that lay Jain religiosity is somehow at odds with what Jainism really is (see Reynell, *op. cit.*, p. 22).

77 *parihāraviśuddhi-sūkṣmasamparāya-yathākhyātāni caritrāni*

78 Sthūlabhadra was one of six “Śrutakevalins,” oral preservers of the oldest Jain teachings (the Pūrvas) which legend says went back to the time of Pārśvanātha, the Jina prior to Mahāvīra.

79 *samacaturasrasamsthāna* and *vajrasabhanārācasamhanana*.

80 I must note that this statement appears in the context of a story wherein the famous king Kumārapāla asks Hemacandra, his Jain preceptor, to tell him about his previous existence and how it was responsible for his present life as a great king. Hemacandra explains that as a result of the loss of the original accomplishments of the Jina and his disciples (which I presented above), the only way he might learn the answer to the king’s query is to evoke the Goddess of Learning, by means of the (lesser) attainments he developed through his austerities (*āptatapodhana*). After three days of meditation, Hemacandra causes the Vidyādevīs to appear before him and, pleased by his “purity” (*sattva*), they provide the answer to the king’s question.

It cannot be imagined that there is something intrinsic to Hemacandra’s Jain asceticism that gives him the power to evoke deities. There is a universal Indian assumption that self-denial, regardless of its sectarian orientation, produces such abilities. Jain stories never suggest that the monk’s powers are different from those of magicians like the Hindu *yogīs* or Muslim *pīrs*, only that they are greater. Endless examples could be cited, but here I provide just one: according to the story of “The Glorious Jīvadeva” (translated by Granoff, P. in Granoff, P., ed., *The Clever Adulteress and Other Stories: A Treasury of Jain Literature*, Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1990, pp. 149ff.), a Hindu ascetic tried to work black magic on Jīvadeva in order to kill him, but the Jain monk bested the Hindu, “because the monk had an even more powerful spell.”

scholastic notions about the world and the capacities of living beings. This surely goes a long way to explaining Jain ascetics' unabashed interest in merit. As I argued, Rāmacandra expected his portrait of Guṇasena at Śatruñjaya to collect merit as a surrogate worshiper or pilgrim on behalf of its subject. But I do not believe that Rāmacandra erected the portrait for the reasons that Meghanāda Cāhamāna erected his own portrait before Śiva Mahānāla, long life, progeny, fortune and the like. Rather, I believe that Rāmacandra sought increased merit for Guṇasena for the reason that Situkā's parents sought increased merit for her via her memorial stone; to secure rewards in the next world. In the absence of the possibility of enlightenment, the highest religious expectation for many a Jain monk (and layman alike) was rebirth in heaven. This appears to be confirmed by the fact that the monks of medieval Jain biographical literature are invariably said to have 'gone to heaven' upon death.⁸¹ Jain ascetics, by sponsoring images or temple constructions, in addition to donating portraits, must have been seeking enough merit for themselves or others to secure the coveted rebirth in heaven.

The *Prabandhakośa* passage effectively corrects any misconception of Jainism as a set of ascetic practices designed to lead the practitioner to enlightenment. This 'normative' reason to be of monastic ordination had simply ceased to exist by medieval times, if we judge from the stories of monks and their religious lives.⁸² The loss of the original attainments of the Jinas and Siddhas implies that no one may pass beyond the sixth stage of quality (*guṇasthāna*), which one

81 See Granoff and Shinohara, 1992, *op. cit.*, p. 3n. See also *Kharataragacchapaṭṭāvalīsamgraha* 1 (Jina Vijaya Muni, ed., Calcutta: Vishva Vinode Press, 1932) in which every head of the Kharataragaccha is said to have 'gone to heaven' (*svargagāmī, divaṁ jagāma, svaryayau* and the like).

82 This, perhaps, begs the question of why anyone would become an ascetic. I cannot claim to know the hearts of any Jain ascetics, living or dead, but only reply, following Collins, that "there are as many motivations as there are ascetics ... there is, simply, a taste for the perceived virtues of purity, simplicity, and celibacy which certain human beings have" (Collins, Steven, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 32).

attains by taking ordination as a monk, out of the fourteen needed to attain omniscience;⁸³ the lay person, hence, cannot surpass the fifth *guṇasthāna*. Paul Dundas asserts that this is commonly understood today and comments on its implications:

Some Jain writers today invoke the stages of quality as if they threw some genuine sociological light on the way Jains envision their position in the world. However, the fact that it is generally accepted that lay people and ascetics in this age cannot progress beyond the fifth and sixth stages respectively shows that this model of development of spirituality has only theoretical value. Nonetheless, it demonstrates general approval of the validity of the householder's role and its linkage to that of the ascetic.⁸⁴

Thus, by Dundas's reckoning, the relationship between Jain ascetics and the laity has grown closer over time, although ascetics maintain a degree of superiority. The relationship between monks and lay followers, thus, is not an uneasy alliance between those earnestly striving on the orthodox path and *ordinary Jains* whose worldly values make much of their religiosity antithetical to higher or proper Jainism.

Altogether, the evidence I have presented shows that 'true Jain practice', as conceived by many contemporary scholars, is not in fact the sole prerogative of Jain ascetics. In fact, we must wonder to what extent lay practices and beliefs can be viewed as a paradox, since many ascetics shared these practices and beliefs. If Jainism's *radically world-*

83 The passage seems to imply this by the statement that *Mahāprāṇadhyāna* was lost with the death of Sthūlabhadra. I can find no technical explanation for this term though it obviously denotes some form of meditation. I presume that it is the same as what Jaini calls *dharmadhyāna*, the meditation which removes the obstruction that prevents the adept from passing from the 6th to the 7th *guṇasthāna* (Jaini, 1979, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253, 272). There is a higher meditative state, called *Śukladhyāna*, which must be attained to pass from the 7th to the 8th *guṇasthāna*, however, the *PK* passage seems to indicate that progress past the 7th stage was cut off by the loss of *kṣapakaśrenīḥ*, which, along with *upāśamaśrenīḥ*, makes it possible to pass through the 8th to 10th *guṇasthānas* (*ibid.*, pp. 257, 272-3).

84 Dundas, 1992, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

rejecting vision did not govern the entire demeanor of historical ascetics, then to what extent can it really be said to be definitive of Jainism? If Jain ascetics were not really expected to pursue their vocation according to the normative model, then how can we imagine that the Jain laity suffered any extraordinary pressure to conform to that model? Those very values which allegedly put the Jain laity at odds with real Jain values have defined the religious lives of many ascetics as well. Thus, lay identity is not exclusively a function of lay life-in-the-world, but also reflects belief and practice permeating segments of the entire fourfold Jain community of lay men and women, monks and nuns. To hold lay religiosity up to a 'normative' ideal, which is the ascetic ideal, creates a false dichotomy which limits not only our ability to comprehend the depth of lay life but also ascetic life, for it reifies the ascetic ideal. This, in fact, creates a Jainism in essence which is precisely a *colorless, grim, and spiritually impoverished system of extreme asceticism*. This, in turn, blinds many modern scholars to the possibility that historical monks and nuns had very human religious hopes and beliefs just like their lay counterparts, and that they expressed them in ways, like the laity, that reflected little of the purely ascetic ideals of Jainism.

Abbreviations

- Abu V *Arbudaprācīna Jaina Lekha Saṃgraha.*
Muni Jayantavijayajī, ed. Ujjain. V.S. 1994.
- JI *Jaina Inscriptions.*
3 Volumes. Nahar, P.C., ed. 1918-1929.
- Nākoḍā *Mahopādhyāy Vinaysāgar. Nākoḍā Pārśvanātha Tīrtha.*
Jaipur: Kushal Samsthan. 1988.
- PJLS II *Prācīnajainalekhasaṃgraha.*
Volume II. Jinavijayajī, ed. Bhavnagar. 1921.
- PJS *Prācīnalekhasaṃgraha.* Munirāja Vidyavijayajī, ed.
Bhavnagar: Śrī Yaśovijaya Granthamālā. 1929.
- SSG Acharya Kanchansagarsuri. *Shri Shatrunjay Giriraj Darshan in Sculpture and Architecture.* Aagamoddharak Granthamala Book no. 59. Kapadwanj: Aagamoddharak Granthamala. 1982.

