

Jains and Muslims

Jains and Muslims have interacted with each other for well over one thousand years in a variety of economic, social, political, religious, intellectual, and personal encounters. Jains and Muslims have also engaged with each other's ideas, histories, and practices, often using cross-cultural connections as springboards for innovations in their respective traditions.

Several methodological challenges arise when trying to reconstruct Jain and Muslim relations. In terms of sources, textual and material evidence for early encounters is often thin on both sides. Additionally, both Jain and Muslim authors tend to omit certain types of interactions. Texts from both the Jain and Muslim sides present interpretive difficulties as well. Both sides lean toward obscuring the causality behind certain events, such as temple destructions, and the literary norms of a given tradition and genre sometimes include loose attention to the facts. The framing of "Jains and Muslims" also raises thorny questions about the importance of religious identity. When Jains and Muslims interacted, their regional, professional, or ethnic identities were sometimes more operative in a given situation, rather than their religious identities.

Jain associations with Islamic rulers, especially during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal periods, involved an uneven power relationship in political terms. Especially in political contexts, some contacts were destructive, such as Muslim-led assaults on Jain temples. However, not all interactions were exclusively delimited by political sovereignty, and Jains sometimes exercised other forms of authority, including spiritual and economic power, *vis-à-vis* their Muslim interlocutors. Moreover, Jain and Muslim interactions cannot be reduced to political dynamics; rather, members of these two communities have woven together a rich array of contacts over more than a millennium.

Early Contacts

Jains and Muslims likely first encountered each other on the subcontinent in the 8th century CE, shortly after Muslims first arrived in India. Arab Muslims initially entered the region during the 700s CE, traveling via sea to India's western coast and via land to Sindh, in the northwest of the subcontinent. Two types of activities brought Jain and Muslim communities into contact during the early decades in which Muslims came to India: trade and raiding.

Most Arab Muslims who journeyed to India in the 8th century CE sought to trade. Early Muslim visitors' focus on commercial activity is indicated by their travel routes and the areas within India of interest to them, including the Arab conquest of Sindh in 712 CE.¹ At a slightly later date, evidence emerges that Jain and Muslim communities coexisted in important commercial locations. For example, by the mid-10th century CE, Khambhat (Cambay) was a center of activity for a Śvetāmbara monastic order and was also home to one of the largest and most prosperous Muslim communities, with several mosques and people from Baghdad, Basra, Siraf, Oman, and elsewhere.²

We have little specific evidence of the Jain role in trade during the 1st millennium CE, but it is likely that Jain merchants entered business relationships with Arab Muslims during this time. Mercantile references appear even in ancient Jain texts such as the *Vīyāhapannatti* (also known as *Bhagavāi*), a Jain *aṅga* text (the earliest level of Śvetāmbara religious works) that dates to the 5th century CE and earlier. Writing in 778–779 CE, Uddyotanasūri features merchants in his Prakrit work titled *Kuvalayamālā*.³

More evidence survives concerning early Arab Muslim raids on areas with Jain communities and Jain cultural ties. Most famously, 8th-century CE

¹ Patel, 2008, 6; Thapar, 2002, 407.

² Patel, 2004, 64; Sheikh, 2010, 44.

³ Ray, 2004, 56.

Arab raiders likely hit Vallabhi, a wealthy city in Saurashtra that had long been a center of Buddhist and Jain learning. Śvetāmbara Jains held monastic councils in Vallabhi in the 4th and 5th centuries CE. From the late 5th century CE onward, Vallabhi flourished under the control of the Maitrakas, who ruled as an independent dynasty until the fall of Vallabhi in the late 8th century CE. Vallabhi also became a vibrant center of trade during Maitraka rule.

Perhaps owing to its reputation for wealth, Vallabhi may have been targeted by Arab raiders in the latter half of the 8th century CE. The details of the raid are murky. Some sources⁴ record a sack of Vallabhi around 750 CE by Junayd, a governor in Sindh, which left the city vulnerable to an epidemic.⁵ While Junayd conducted military operations in Gujarat,⁶ it is difficult to conclusively identify the specific places against which he led or sent expeditions.⁷ Moreover, the extant Islamic sources that record details of the raid date a century or more after the event. Accordingly, Junayd's raid on Vallabhi remains unconfirmed. Other modern sources report an Arab Muslim attack on Vallabhi in 782 CE⁸ or in 788 CE, following Jinaprabhasūri, a 14th-century Jain intellectual.⁹ Jain records of this event date from centuries later, and the time gap casts some doubt on their veracity. Sanskrit inscriptions from Gujarat dated to 736 CE and 738 CE mention military confrontation with Arab-led forces in Gujarat, but none concern Vallabhi specifically.¹⁰ In any case, around the same time as the sack of Vallabhi, Maitraka rule ended, and religious donations and trade in Vallabhi eroded.¹¹

Muslim-led raids intensified in Gujarat in the 11th and 12th centuries. The raiders were no longer Arabs but rather mainly Central Asian Turks, first associated with the Ghaznavid dynasty and later with the Ghurid dynasty. In addition to ethnic diversity, in some cases, the raiding parties employed non-Muslims, including Hindus. Turkic-led raids assailed various targets in Gujarat, including Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain temples that were often selected for their wealth and to make iconoclastic statements. Most famously, in 1026, Maḥmūd of Ghazni sacked Somnath in the southern Saurashtra region of

Gujarat.¹² While abundant textual evidence survives concerning many Turkic raids in Gujarat during this period, much uncertainty remains regarding which Jain temples were harmed or destroyed. R. Eaton¹³ has noted the difficulty of confirming alleged temple destructions – much less any details thereof – and the penchant for exaggeration on the subject in Indo-Persian sources.

Jain temples were affected by Turkic raiding activity in several ways. In addition to being targets of violent, disruptive assaults, Jain icons were seized at times so that the raiders could make iconoclastic statements. For example, a Jain Tirthaṅkara statue has been found at the palace of Ghazni, where images of Hindu gods were also carried and likely displayed as war trophies. Some images were perhaps trampled underfoot in order to signal victory over certain parts of India.¹⁴

Jain authors wrote about Turkic-led raids on Jain temples and the breaking of Jain icons. Although the most verbose texts date from the 14th century and later, there are early mentions that presage some of the major lenses through which later Jain communities viewed Muslim-led raids and iconoclastic activities. For example, an early 12th-century work praises an image of Mahāvīra at Satyapura (present-day Sancho) by saying that it “obtained glory by breaking the pride of the power of the king of the *mlecchas* [“barbarians”]” since Maḥmūd of Ghazni failed to tear it down.¹⁵ Jain texts also relayed miraculous stories about broken images being made whole as a way to promote the strength of Jainism.¹⁶

The Delhi Sultanate Period

From the late 12th century to the early 16th century, Jain and Muslim contacts expanded and diversified. Especially notable are a wide range of religious and material interactions and patronage relationships. In terms of political power, the Delhi Sultanate, a series of five dynasties in North India, ruled for most of this period (1206–1526). However, contacts also took place outside of Delhi Sultanate domains, especially in Gujarat, and even beyond India in select

⁴ Richards, 1993, 95.

⁵ Jain, 1990, 72.

⁶ Asif, 2016, 42.

⁷ Elliot & Dowson, 1867, 441–442.

⁸ Dundas, 2002, 145.

⁹ Vose, 2013, 352.

¹⁰ Mirashi, 1955, 96–109, 137–145.

¹¹ Klimburg-Salter, 1999–2000.

¹² Thapar, 2004.

¹³ 2000; 2015.

¹⁴ Flood, 2009, 32.

¹⁵ Vose, 2013, 378–379.

¹⁶ Granoff, 1991.

cases. Moreover, certain types of Jain and Muslim associations began in the decades immediately prior to the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate.

Religious and Material Interactions

As early as the late 12th century, religious buildings were sponsored by political and merchant patrons that showcased different types of Jain and Muslim collaboration and influence. For example, masons who had worked on Jain temples in southern Rajasthan or northern Gujarat may have helped build mosques, such as the late 12th-century Masjid-i Sangī in the Larvand valley in southwestern Afghanistan.¹⁷ However, A. Patel¹⁸ has challenged this theory and called attention to the problematic identification of masons by religion. In Gujarat, Jain temples might have provided the inspiration for certain aspects of mosque construction, such as the layout of a courtyard surrounded by arcades.¹⁹ Ideas also flowed the other direction, and starting during the Delhi Sultanate period, Jain temples show architectural features and decoration styles that remind of Islamic tombs, shrines, and mosques.²⁰

Illuminated manuscripts, too, show signs of cross-cultural contacts and borrowing. É. Brac de la Perrière²¹ has argued that stylistic changes in mid-14th-century Jain manuscripts resulted from contact with Islamic art traditions. Even illustrated manuscripts of Jain religious texts reflect Islamic influences, such as a 15th-century copy of the *Kālakācāryakathā* (Story of Teacher Kālaka) that depicts a foreign hero as a Turk.²²

Some prominent Jains funded the construction and renovation of mosques for the use of their Muslim neighbors. For example, Jagaḍū, a 13th-century merchant, had a mosque built or repaired for use of Ismā'īlī Muslims in Gujarat. Ismā'īlīs were early travelers to Gujarat, having arrived by the 10th century CE seeking converts.²³ Jagaḍū's sponsorship of the mosque is mentioned by Sarvānanda in his laudatory Sanskrit biography of the trader, the *Jagaḍūcarita* (Acts of Jagaḍū), likely composed in the 14th century or early 15th century. Sarvānanda not only frames sponsoring a mosque (called a *masiti* in Sanskrit) as a meritorious act on Jagaḍū's part but also mentions it in a section devoted to Jagaḍū's patronage of Jain

religious buildings.²⁴ Jains and Muslims also shared holy places, such as Girnār, which hosts many Jain temples and a network of Sufi shrines associated with 14th- and 15th-century figures.²⁵

Some Jains and Muslims envisioned themselves as competing with each other and with Hindu groups in the religious marketplace. Both groups sometimes claimed the same prominent converts. For example, Jains and several Muslim communities allege to have converted Jayasiṃha Siddharāja, a ruler in the Chaulukya or Solanki dynasty between 1094 and 1143.²⁶

Violent Clashes

Some Jains and Muslims clashed violently from the 12th century to the 16th century, both within areas controlled by the Delhi Sultanate and elsewhere on the Indian subcontinent. For example, in Gujarat, the Ghurids briefly occupied Patan in 1197. The Vaghelas, under orders from state minister Vastupāla, harassed travelers from Delhi headed to Mecca in the early 13th century before putting an end to such hostility and thereby generating better relations with the Delhi Sultanate. Turkic troops destroyed temples at Śatruñjaya, a pilgrimage site, in 1313. In the case of Śatruñjaya, Samara Śāh, a lay Jain, approached Alp Hān, the governor of Gujarat, two years later and received a *farman* (royal order) from the governor permitting the temples to be restored. Samara Śāh subsequently worked for the Delhi Sultanate. Kakkasūri of the Upakeśa Gaccha described the 1315 rebuilding of the damaged Śatruñjaya temples in his *Nābhinandanajinoddhāraprabandha* (Narrative of Restoring the Temple of Jina Rṣabha), dated 1336. Kakkasūri cites the *kaliyuga*, the current degenerate age, to explain how such desecrations could happen, but he focuses on the temples' renovation as a way of lauding the robustness of the Jain community.²⁷

Other Jain works also report instances when Muslims broke Jain images during the Delhi Sultanate period. For example, in his *Vividhatīrthakalpa* (Descriptions of Various Holy Places; completed c. 1333), the Kharatara Gaccha monk Jinaprabhasūri discusses dozens of Jain pilgrimage sites. S. Vose²⁸ has pointed out that Jinaprabhasūri tells 11 stories

¹⁷ Flood, 2009; Scarcia & Taddei, 1973.

¹⁸ 2015.

¹⁹ Patel, 2004.

²⁰ Hegewald, 2007.

²¹ 2014.

²² Asher & Talbot, 2006, 94–96.

²³ Sheikh, 2010, 53–54.

²⁴ Chattopadhyaya, 1998, 63.

²⁵ Sheikh, 2010.

²⁶ Sheikh, 2010, 163.

²⁷ Dundas, 2002; Granoff, 1991; Vose, 2013; Sandesara, 1953.

²⁸ 2013.

about how such sites were harmed or destroyed by individuals associated with Muslim rulers dating from the 8th to the 14th centuries. Jinaprabhasūri uses varied vocabulary for these Muslim rulers, including *mleccha* (“barbarian”) and *turukka* (Skt. *turuṣka*, “Turk”). He notes that such iconoclastic activity was not limited to Muslim kings and also records similar actions by Hindu rulers. Jinaprabhasūri, like other authors of roughly the same period, typically underscored the strength of the Jain tradition through rebuffing such attacks or subsequent restorations of damaged icons. For example, on one occasion he says that a *sultān* and his army were forced to retreat from iconoclastic activities due to a plague.²⁹

Some Jain authors wrote about Muslim-led military activities more generally. For example, between 1402 and 1423, Nayacandrasūri wrote the *Hammīramahākāvya* (Great Poem on Hammīra) at the Tomar court in Gwalior. Nayacandrasūri’s main topic was the last stand of the Chauhan king Hammīra at Ranthambhor, which he lost to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, a Delhi Sultanate king, in 1301.³⁰ Muslim-led military assaults also loomed large in the minds of other authors at the same court, such as Rāidhū, a multilingual Jain poet best known for his Apabhramsha works. P. Granoff³¹ has argued that Rāidhū understood the *kalyuga* as tied to Muslim military prowess; E. De Clercq³² contends that Rāidhū was responding more specifically to Timūr’s 1398 sack of Delhi. More generally, as early as the 13th century, Jain works record stories about Jain monks fearing violence from Muslims, especially in Muslim-controlled areas.³³

Temple Reuse

Muslims reused parts of Jain temples in the construction of mosques. Reuse more broadly, including the reuse of dilapidated mosques, was a striking feature of many Ghurid building projects.³⁴ Additionally, economic factors motivated stone reuse in some parts of India, such as the alluvial plain of Gujarat, which lacked locally available stones suitable for building.³⁵

A crucial and frequently misunderstood point is that recycling does not *de facto* indicate a prior destruction; buildings also simply fell into disuse.

Moreover, the evidence for reuse in specific buildings is often flimsier than current scholarship indicates. For example, F. Flood³⁶ has noted that the reuse of parts of Jain temples in Ghurid-era buildings in Ajmer is a widely accepted idea but rests on weak evidence. More sound is the argument that the Ghurids repurposed parts of ruined Jain temples in building projects near Delhi, such as the Qūṭb Mīnār and the nearby Qawwat al-Islām mosque. The extent and meaning of such reuse remain heavily debated today.³⁷

Patronage Ties and Intellectual Achievements

Jains and Muslims developed extensive patronage ties from the 13th through the 16th centuries. Members of the two communities shared patrons, such as the Chaulukyas of Gujarat in the early 13th century.³⁸ More indicative of direct contact are instances when Muslim kings sponsored or had dealings with lay Jains and monks. Sometimes Jains occupied formal positions in the administration of the Delhi Sultanate, and other times their presence at court was more informal and transient. Ties between Jains and Delhi Sultanate rulers created fertile conditions for Jain authors to produce texts that incorporated select Perso-Islamic practices and even the Persian language. Additionally, the breadth and depth of these cross-cultural links provide insights into negotiations between political and religious authorities in this period.

Both lay Jains and monks secured *farmans* (royal orders) from Delhi Sultanate rulers that advanced Jain interests. Royal orders pertaining to Jain religious practices were common. For example, Jains received *farmans* from Delhi to go on pilgrimage to Śatruñjaya in Gujarat starting around 1300, before the area was even under the formal control of the Delhi Sultanate.³⁹ As Delhi Sultanate governors solidified their grasp over Gujarat in the early 14th century, political contacts between Jains and Muslims expanded significantly.

Lay Jains and monks cultivated a variety of ties with Khaljis, the second of five Delhi Sultanate dynasties (1290–1320). Ṭhakkura Pherū was the most prominent lay Jain in Khalji employ; he occupied a

²⁹ Granoff, 1998.

³⁰ Hens, 2014; Bednar, 2007.

³¹ 2006.

³² 2017.

³³ Granoff, 1992.

³⁴ Patel, 2008.

³⁵ Lambourn, 2006.

³⁶ 2009.

³⁷ Kumar, 2001; Asher, 1992; Flood, 2009.

³⁸ Patel, 2004, 64.

³⁹ Vose, 2013, 374.

high position in the Delhi Sultanate mint in the early 14th century.⁴⁰ Jains had largely controlled minting in and around Delhi for a few centuries before the advent of Khalji rule, and Ṭhakkura Pherū's family had a history of working in the finance industry. Ṭhakkura Pherū entered the service of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī (r. 1296–1316) before 1315, the year in which he completed the *Ratnaparīkṣā* (also known as *Rayanaparīkṣā*),⁴¹ an Apabhramsha work on gemology in which he mentions that he had seen 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's vast treasury with his own eyes. Under 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's successor, Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Ṣāh (r. 1316–1320), Ṭhakkura Pherū wrote a treatise on comparative Indian coinage, the *Dravyaparīkṣā*, based on his experience with coins in the Delhi mint. Ṭhakkura Pherū also received a royal order from Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Ṣāh to travel to Jain pilgrimage places.

Jain monks forged relations with at least two rulers of the Tughluq dynasty (1320–1414): Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq (r. 1324–1351) and his successor Fīrūz Ṣāh (r. 1351–1388). As early as the first year of his reign, Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq may have granted *farmans* to a Śvetāmbara Jain, although the veracity of the extant document and details thereof remain murky.⁴² By far the most famous liaison between Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq and the Jain community revolved around Jinaprabhasūri, a member of the Kharatara Gaccha.⁴³ Jinaprabhasūri's time at Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq's court is recorded in numerous Sanskrit texts, the best known and most reliable of which is the 14th-century *Vividhatīrthakalpa*. Delhi Sultanate histories, mainly in Persian, are silent on Jinaprabhasūri's presence at court.

Jinaprabhasūri spent time at the court of Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq between 1328 and 1334, and Jain narratives about interactions between the two blend historical details with conventions. Jain accounts of the initial meeting between Jinaprabhasūri and Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq also provided a template of narrative elements – including the refusal of gifts, display of intellectual prowess, and adoption of markers of political power – that reappeared in narratives of later meetings between Jain monks and Muslim rulers, such as in 15th-century Gujarat and at the 16th-century Mughal court. For example, according to the *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq

offered Jinaprabhasūri many gifts, including a thousand cows, money, and hundreds of textiles. Jinaprabhasūri refused the lavish favors, conceding only to accept some blankets, and also impressed the king by debating with other visitors at court. After vanquishing all others in debates, Jinaprabhasūri and Jinadeva, Jinaprabhasūri's student, were paraded in glory on elephants, a marker of prestige and sovereignty provided by the Tughluqs.

After their initial meeting, Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq sent Jinaprabhasūri to Devagiri, also known as Daulatabad, in the Deccan. Jinaprabhasūri spent the better part of three years, from 1329 until 1331, discoursing on Jain doctrine in Devagiri. In 1331, the king recalled Jinaprabhasūri to Delhi, and, according to Vidyātilaka's addition to the *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, he was received with fanfare, including adoring crowds of both Jains and Brahmins.

The *Vividhatīrthakalpa* emphasizes that in the subsequent few years the affinity between Jinaprabhasūri and Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq grew deeper in terms of personal affection and political gain for the Jain community. The two traveled together, including on Tughluq conquests to the east and once to meet Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq's mother, who was returning to Delhi after a trip. Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq built a residence for Jinaprabhasūri next to the royal palace. Over the course of his relationship with the Tughluq ruler, Jinaprabhasūri obtained half a dozen *farmans* that ensured the safety of Jain pilgrimage destinations and released prisoners. During the early 1330s, Jinaprabhasūri became a leading teacher of Jains in Delhi.

Additional Sanskrit works add details and variants to the outline of events involving Jinaprabhasūri and Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq as found in the *Vividhatīrthakalpa*.⁴⁴ For example, the *Vṛddhācāryaprabandhāvali* (Garland of Narratives about the Great Teachers), which is undated but likely written within a few decades of Jinaprabhasūri's death circa 1333, mentions that Jinaprabhasūri performed many miracles at court, including casting a demon out of Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq's wife. Later works alter the story further. For example, a later narrative published in the *Purāṇanaprabandhasamgraha* changed the king with whom Jinaprabhasūri enjoyed relations to Fīrūz Ṣāh, Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq's successor.

⁴⁰ Sarma *et al.*, 2009; Sarma, 2012.

⁴¹ see Sarma, 1984.

⁴² Vose, 2013, 129–130.

⁴³ Granoff, 1992; Vose, 2013.

⁴⁴ Granoff, 1992; Vose, 2013.

Śubhaśīlaganī's *Pañcaśatīprabodhasaṃbandha* (Collection of 500 Enlightening Narratives), dated 1464, also named Fīrūz Šāh as the relevant ruler and portrayed Jinaprabhasūri as part of the Tapā Gaccha, a separate Śvetāmbara mendicant lineage.

Jinaprabhasūri's links with the Tughluq court provided creative fodder for some of his more unusual writings. Three Persian-language texts are attributed to Jinaprabhasūri: a single-verse poem (*Vītarāganamaskāra*; Praise to the Passionless), an 11-verse hymn (*Rṣabhadevastavana*; Hymn to Lord Rṣabha), and a 25-verse poem (*Śāntināthāṣṭaka*; Eight Verses to Śāntinātha). S. Vose⁴⁵ has analyzed Jinaprabhasūri's Persian works and noted that some use basic Persian grammar, whereas others rely on Apabhramsha case endings coupled with Persian vocabulary.⁴⁶ All three works praise one of the Jinas, and the poems have some unusual features beyond being written in Persian. For example, the 11-verse poem to Rṣabha compares Rṣabha to Allāh. The *Śāntināthāṣṭaka*, the longest of Jinaprabhasūri's Persian works, has been printed but is the least well-studied.

Fīrūz Šāh is commonly depicted as having reversed Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq's more liberal policies toward non-Muslims. However, Jain sources remember Fīrūz Šāh even more positively than Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq. For example, Fīrūz Šāh is said to have honored several Jain monks for writing Sanskrit and Prakrit works.⁴⁷ Such a claim finds some backing in Fīrūz Šāh's broader interest in Sanskrit literature. For instance, he sponsored translations of Sanskrit texts into Persian, including the *Brhatsaṃhitā* (Great Compendium). Šams-i Sirāj 'Afīf's *Tārīkh-i Fīrūz-Šāhī* states that Fīrūz Šāh once asked Brahmins and Jains to decipher the writings on a Mauryan pillar, which both groups failed to do.⁴⁸ Rāīdhū depicts Fīrūz Šāh as a benefactor of Jains, permitting the building of Jain temples and facilitating Jain pilgrimages.⁴⁹

Mahendrasūri, a Jain monk, was a notable presence at Fīrūz Šāh's court known for his contributions to astronomy, long a fertile area of cross-cultural engagement for Sanskrit intellectuals. Under Fīrūz Šāh's patronage, in 1370, Mahendrasūri composed the *Yantrarāja* (King of Instruments), a Sanskrit treatise

on how to make and use astrolabes.⁵⁰ Mahendrasūri's lineage is unclear, but he was probably not part of the Kharatara Gaccha,⁵¹ which had benefited from links with Muḥammad bin Tuḡluq. This suggests that Jain connections with the Tughluqs expanded beyond a single lineage. In the opening of the *Yantrarāja*, Mahendrasūri mentions that Muslims have written numerous works on the astrolabe (presumably in Arabic and Persian) and that he is presenting their essence in Sanskrit. Malayendusūri, Mahendrasūri's student who likely accompanied his teacher to Delhi, penned a commentary on the work. In a colophon that repeats at the end of each of the five chapters, Malayendusūri proclaims that his teacher was the premier (*praṣṭha*) astronomer at Fīrūz Šāh's court. Malayendusūri also provides dates in both the Hijrī and the Vikrama calendars.

In the 15th century, Jains developed ties with other Indo-Muslim dynasties and continued to enjoy friendly relations with Delhi Sultanate rulers.⁵² For example, Jain merchants received support from the rulers of Malwa, such as Maḥmūd Khaljī I (r. 1436–1469). Jain communities were reportedly on good terms with the Sayyids (1414–1451), the penultimate Delhi Sultanate dynasty, and even served as ministers for the Sayyids.⁵³

The Mughal Period

Jain relations with Indo-Muslim ruling elites intensified during the Mughal period (1526–1739). Monks and lay Jains from a variety of lineages fashioned extensive connections with the Mughal kings and other imperial officials.⁵⁴ The Kharatara and Tapā Gacchas often competed with each other through their Mughal ties. Members of both groups wrote about their relations with the Mughals in Sanskrit and vernacular texts. A group of six Sanskrit biographies forms a core collection of detailed records of Mughal links with Jains, especially Jain monks.⁵⁵ These texts are supplemented by additional Jain-authored materials, in both Sanskrit and vernacular languages, as well as European sources and Persian-language texts, both from and about the Mughal courts, which contain briefer mentions of Mughal

⁴⁵ 2013.

⁴⁶ see also Balbir, 2007; Jain, 1950.

⁴⁷ Vose, 2013, 138–139.

⁴⁸ Sarma, 2000.

⁴⁹ De Clercq, 2010.

⁵⁰ Sarma, 2000.

⁵¹ Vose, 2013, 138–139.

⁵² Malik, 2008, 122.

⁵³ De Clercq, 2014.

⁵⁴ Andhare, 2004; Gopal, 1999; Jain, 2012a; Prasad, 1997; Vidyavijayji, 1944.

⁵⁵ Truschke, 2016.

and Jain connections. When taken as a whole, extensive documentation in multiple traditions provides a rich account of the range of Mughal links with Jain lay and ascetic leaders.

Jain Monks at the Mughal Court

Padmasundara, who entered the court of Akbar (r. 1556–1605) in the 1560s, was the first Jain monk known to have received Mughal patronage. Some Jain sources assert that earlier monks had formed ties with Bābur (r. 1526–1530) and Humāyūn (r. 1530–1540 and 1555–1556), but these claims remain unverified. While at court, Padmasundara wrote a Sanskrit text for Akbar titled *Akbarasāhīśṛṅgāradarpaṇa* (Mirror of Erotic Passion for Shah Akbar), which exemplifies the nine standard *rasas* (aesthetic moods), both using Akbar as an example and casting the emperor as the ultimate *rasika* (aesthete). Padmasundara was a member of the Nāgapuriya Tapā Gaccha, a mendicant lineage that does not seem to have cultivated links with the Mughal court going forward. However, the Tapā and Kharatara Gacchas pursued relations with the Mughals.

After Padmasundara, Hīravijaya, leader of the Tapā Gaccha, was the next Jain ascetic known to enter Akbar's court. Hīravijaya visited Fatehpur Sikri in 1583 at Akbar's invitation and remained in residence until 1585. Tapā Gaccha sources do not usually posit a strong link between Padmasundara and Hīravijaya, but a story concerning Padmasundara's library told in the *Hīrasaubhāgya* attests that the Mughals viewed these monks as part of the same tradition. The tale also indicates some of the power dynamics between Akbar and Hīravijaya. After Padmasundara died in 1569, Akbar deemed the monk's followers unworthy and so held onto his manuscript collection. When Akbar met Hīravijaya in 1583, he gave Padmasundara's library to the Tapā Gaccha leader. At first, Hīravijaya refused the gift since, as one of his Sanskrit biographers explained, he was an ascetic with no earthly desires. After further imperial pressure, Hīravijaya was cajoled into accepting Padmasundara's books but only under conditions set by the Tapā Gaccha leader. Hīravijaya refused to touch the manuscripts but rather left them in Agra under the care of Thānasīṃha, a lay Jain leader, for the use of the local Jain community.

Hīravijaya brought several other Jain ascetics with him to Akbar's court and also created the conditions that allowed Kharatara Gaccha monks to fashion ties

with Mughal elites. Among the Tapā Gaccha, three successive leaders of the lineage visited the courts of Akbar or Jahāngīr: Hīravijaya, Vijayasena, and Vijayadeva. In addition, Bhānucandra and his pupil Siddhicandra spent extensive time at the Mughal court and even accompanied Akbar on trips to Kashmir and the Deccan. Siddhicandra passed most of his youth at the Mughal court and, according to his own works (e.g. *Bhānucandraganīcarita*), was one of the few Sanskrit intellectuals to learn Persian. The Kharatara Gaccha leader Jinacandra and another monk, Mānasīṃha, both visited Akbar as well.

In addition to encountering the Mughal kings, Jain monks also developed relationships with other imperial elites. For example, Jain monks interacted with the brothers Abū al-Faẓl and Fayẓī, Akbar's chief vizier and poet laureate, respectively. Fayẓī was particularly impressed by Jain memorization feats (*avadhāna*). Jain monks were employed to educate the Mughal princes, including Prince Salīm (who later became Emperor Jahāngīr).

Jain-authored reports of meetings between Jain monks and Mughal figures often underscore Jain ascetic virtues and political clout, and many such stories follow conventions that had been established during Kharatara relations with Delhi Sultanate rulers. For example, during Hīravijaya's initial meeting with Akbar in 1583, the monk allegedly refused money offered by the king, thus proving his aversion to wealth. He also declined to sit on luxurious Mughal carpets in order to avoid harming the small bugs that he knew, through clairvoyance, were underneath, thus proving his commitment to *ahimsā* and his special perceptive abilities.⁵⁶

At some points, Jain authors offer more specific and likely historically reliable information about what passed between Jain monks and Mughal elites. For example, during Akbar's reign, the Tapā Gaccha monk Siddhicandra reported that Bhānucandra taught Akbar to recite the Sanskrit *Sūryasahasranāma* (Thousand Names of the Sun), which the king had obtained from Brahmans who were then unable to explain its proper meaning and use. Akbar's sun veneration is confirmed in the *Muntaḥab al-Tawārīḥ* by 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī, an unofficial and highly critical Persian-language historian of Akbar's reign, and by Antonio Monserrate,⁵⁷ a Jesuit visitor to Akbar's court.

Many Jain monks solicited the Mughals for imperial orders (*farmans*) beneficial to their religious

⁵⁶ Granoff, 1990.

⁵⁷ trans. Hoyland & Banerjee, 1922.

and regional interests. For example, Hīravijaya and Vijayasena, successive leaders of the Tapā Gaccha, procured orders from Akbar and Jahāngīr, respectively, banning animal slaughter during the Jain festival of *pariyuṣaṇa*. Repeat *farmans*, such as the *pariyuṣaṇa* orders, were not uncommon and suggest that Mughal commands had a limited impact or lifespan at times. Hīravijaya also lobbied for other restrictions on violence against animals, such as prohibiting fishing in a pond near Fatehpur Sikri. Several Mughal *farmans* survive that guarantee Jains the right to worship and travel freely. The Tapā and Kharatara Gacchas competed to obtain Mughal orders securing possession of Śatruñjaya. Members of both groups carved inscriptions at Śatruñjaya that proclaim their ties with the Mughals.⁵⁸

Jain monks participated in religious debates at the Mughal court. Sometimes Jains were included in discussions that also involved other religious groups – including Muslims, Hindus, and Christians – in the *‘ibādathāna*, Akbar’s house of religious debate, and in other courtly venues. At other times, Jain monks were challenged regarding specific Jain theological precepts, usually by rival Hindu groups, who sought to raise Mughal ire by suggesting that Jains were atheists. Sanskrit texts record that Jains defended themselves as monotheists using a variety of arguments regarding who constituted god in Jain thought.⁵⁹ Jains also report having discussed Islam at the Mughal court. While some Jain works, such as the *Hīrasaubhāgya*, show familiarity with the basics of Islam,⁶⁰ the veracity of alleged conversations between Jain monks and Mughal kings regarding Islam is often suspect.

Select Mughal texts reflect connections between the imperial court and Jain monks. For example, Emperor Akbar ordered a translation of the *Pañcākhyāna*, a Jain recension of the *Pañcatantra*. Hīravijaya, Vijayasena, and Bhānucandra are listed in Abū al-Faẓl’s *Ā’in-i Akbarī*, a major court-sponsored history of Akbar’s reign, among the learned men of the age, which indicates the high esteem of these visitors in the eyes of Akbar’s court. The *Ā’in-i Akbarī* also includes a substantial section on Jain beliefs and practices. Abū al-Faẓl confesses therein that he was unfamiliar with Digambara Jains, and there are no known direct connections between Digambara monks and the Mughals, despite a robust

Digambara presence in Agra during the 16th and 17th centuries.⁶¹

Jain monks produced Sanskrit texts for Mughal consumption, which was part of a broader set of Mughal engagements with Sanskrit literary culture that also drew in Brahmins. Around 1590, for instance, the Jain monk Śānticandra penned the *Kṛpārasakośa* (Treasury of Compassion) for Emperor Akbar, a work of 128 verses that praises the king’s family and his life. In the work, Śānticandra draws on Jain tropes and ideas at times, such as extolling Akbar’s penchant for nonviolence. Samayasundara, a Kharatara monk,⁶² presented a text to Akbar in 1592 titled *Artharatnāvalī* (The String of Jewels of Meaning). The work explains how, by the employment of unusual grammatical explanations and variations in word breaks that allowed for disparate sentence structures and semantic interpretations, a simple eight-syllable Sanskrit phrase (*rājāno dadate saukhyam*, “kings bestow happiness”) can be interpreted in 800,000 separate ways. The goal was to demonstrate to Akbar how Jain religious texts could be understood in multiple ways, including as supporting monotheistic ideas.

Jain writers also authored Sanskrit texts for Jain readers that adapted ideas from Mughal contexts. For example, one biography of Hīravijaya (*Jagadgurukāvyā*, Poem on the Teacher of the World) narrates how Hīravijaya processed from Akbar’s court adorned with splendid markers of Mughal royalty, including musicians, elephants, and horses. P. Dundas⁶³ has noted texts that discuss Hīravijaya’s kingdom (*sāmṛājya*), describe Hīravijaya as a crown prince (*yuvarāja*), and so forth. Some of these works (e.g. the *Vijayadevamāhātmya*) postdate the end of direct contact between the Mughal court and Jain monks by a few decades, which indicates that relations with Mughal figures shaped the identity of some Jain groups even after those cross-cultural links had ceased.

The Mughal kings Akbar and Jahāngīr involved themselves in Jain religious affairs, especially by bestowing titles and ranks on certain individuals. The two rulers endowed successive leaders of the Kharatara Gaccha with the title *yugapradhāna* (primary man of the age). Akbar, largely via his vizier Abū al-Faẓl, raised the rank of Bhānucandra and then invited Hīravijaya to perform the formal

⁵⁸ Commissariat, 1940; Findly, 1987.

⁵⁹ Truschke, 2015.

⁶⁰ Dundas, 1999.

⁶¹ Cort, 2002; 2015a.

⁶² Balbir, 2002.

⁶³ 2007, 188–189n29.

ceremony recognizing the higher status. Mughal kings also gave Jain monks honorary titles in both Sanskrit and Persian, such as fashioning Hīravijaya as *jagadguru* (Skt. teacher of the world) and naming Siddhicandra and Nandivijaya *hūṣfahm* (Pers. wise man).

Jains' connections with the Mughals came to a close in the late 1610s under Jahāngīr. The concluding sequence of events is dramatic, and its narration in Jain texts (e.g. the *Bhānucandraṅcarita*) indicates some of the tensions that arose when ascetic monks lived at lavish courts. One day Jahāngīr noticed the beauty of Siddhicandra, a young Tapā Gaccha monk, and ordered him to take a wife. Siddhicandra refused, risking the wrath of Jahāngīr and his queen, Nūr Jahān, who participated in the ensuing debate. Unable to convince the monk to renounce his vow of chastity, Jahāngīr ordered him trampled to death by an elephant. When Siddhicandra stood firm before the mad elephant, Jahāngīr was impressed and settled on exiling Jain monks from cities across the Mughal Empire in lieu of an execution. After a short period of time, Jahāngīr rescinded the banishment order and again resumed what were, by then, normal Jain and Mughal relations. Between 1616 and 1618, Jains populated the Mughal court and received *farmans* ensuring them the freedom to worship and banning animal slaughter.

Jahāngīr again bristled at Jains, however, when he suddenly remembered that Jinasiṃha (also known as Mānasiṃha), a member of the Kharatara Gaccha, had predicted on the emperor's ascension that his rule would be short-lived. Jahāngīr summoned Jinasiṃha to court, and the monk died en route. In his memoirs, *Jahāngīrnāma*,⁶⁴ Jahāngīr maligned Jinasiṃha as a "black-tongued beggar" and proclaimed his demise to be divine justice. In 1618, Jahāngīr again exiled all Jain monks from court and Mughal cities, accusing them of "perversities and lewdness" in his memoirs. Jahāngīr soon rescinded the 1618 banishment order, but Jain monks never resumed regular relations with the Mughals. Nonetheless, there are sporadic reports of contact between Jain monks and Awrangzēb (r. 1658–1707) in the late 17th century and even the early 18th century.⁶⁵

The climactic end of connections between Mughal elites and Jain monks during Jahāngīr's rule indicates some of the dangers that Jain ascetics

faced in entering Indo-Muslim courts. Jain communities had long struggled with how to balance the benefits of royal patronage with the idea that monks belong in the forest rather than at opulent courts, and this tension arose in the Mughal context. The *Bhānucandraṅcarita*, for example, narrates Siddhicandra's refusal of Jahāngīr's order to marry as a virtuous example of upholding Jain asceticism even in the face of dire circumstances. More specific to the Mughal milieu, Mughal norms and the king's authority reigned supreme at the courts of Akbar and Jahāngīr. In this regard, Jain monks sometimes faced challenges that they could overcome, such as the need to identify a single supreme god in Jain thought. But in the two banishment orders of Jain monks, the potency of Mughal imperial authority was on full display.

Lay Jains and the Mughals

Lay Jains forged ties with the Mughals, both during the period of intense connections between Jain monks and the Mughal court and subsequently. Many populated centers of Mughal India housed robust Jain populations, such as Agra and Delhi. Even Jains without formal ties to the Mughals wrote about major events, such as Banārsīdās's narration of Akbar's death in his autobiographical *Ardhakathānak* (Half a Life).

The Agra-based Śvetāmbara community was notably affluent, and 88 prominent Jains were mentioned in a 1610 invitation letter to Vijayasena, who embraced relations with Akbar and Jahāngīr. The Agra community commissioned Śalivāhana, a Mughal court artist, to illustrate the invitation letter. The 1610 letter survives today and contains depictions of several Mughal figures and Jain monks who visited Jahāngīr's court.⁶⁶

Some lay Jains were employed by the Mughal state, such as the Digambara Nānū Godhā, who served under Mān Singh, a Mughal state official, in Bengal. The father of Jagjīvanrām, who compiled Banārsīdās's shorter works after the latter's death, worked under the Mughal courtier Jafar Ḥān. Other Jains worked for regional rulers and thereby interacted with the Mughals. For example, Karmacandra was a lay Kharatara and a government official in Bikaner, who had cross-cultural interactions with Mughal figures. Karmacandra negotiated Jain-friendly concessions from the Mughals, such as

⁶⁴ trans. Thackston, 1999, 249–250.

⁶⁵ Chandra, 1958.

⁶⁶ Sastri, 1942; Jain, 2012b.

control over Mount Ābū, a pilgrimage site, and the return of Jain icons seized during imperial campaigns in Rajasthan. Karmacandra also led a Jain ceremony at the Mughal court that was performed, on Akbar's request, in order to remove a curse on the king's infant granddaughter, Jahāngīr's daughter; the ceremony was recorded in the *Mantrikarmacandrav aṃśāvalīprabandha*.

Merchants and Trade Relations

Many Jains were prosperous merchants in Mughal India, and some had direct dealings with the Mughal state. Among those less commonly discussed are Seṭh Hīrānand Śāh, a member of the Osvāl community, who provided jewels to Jahāngīr. Some Jain merchants brought their Mughal connections into the religious realm, such as Son Pal and Kunvar Pal, who installed Jain icons inscribed on their foreheads with the name of the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr.⁶⁷

Śāntidās Jhaverī was the most famous Jain merchant associated with the Mughals. Śāntidās was a wealthy Gujarati businessman, especially known for his trade in jewels, and a lay Jain. He is mentioned in contemporary English sources as "very powerful" at the Mughal court⁶⁸ and is known to have had business ties with Āṣaf Hān, a Mughal noble, and with Prince Dārā Śikōh, in addition to Mughal kings. S. Jain⁶⁹ has traced numerous imperial orders issued by Śāh Jahān (r. 1628–1658) and other Mughal figures that benefited Śāntidās's business and community interests. The Mughal prince Awrangzēb clashed with Śāntidās in 1645 and, in a violent display of Mughal power, ordered the desecration of a temple in Ahmedabad that had been financed by Śāntidās. Emperor Śāh Jahān ordered Śāntidās's temple repaired. During the war of succession (1657–1659) among Śāh Jahān's four sons, Śāntidās bankrolled Murād, the youngest son. After Awrangzēb ascended the throne and imprisoned Murād, Awrangzēb repaid Murād's loans to Śāntidās.

Virjī Vorā was another leading Jain merchant who had Mughal connections. Less information survives concerning Virjī Vorā's imperial ties, but in the 1630s, Śāh Jahān intervened to prevent the governor of Surat from harassing Virjī Vorā. Like Śāntidās, Virjī Vorā funded Murād's bid for the Mughal throne in the late 1650s. Both Virjī Vorā and Śāntidās also had business dealings with European traders and so were part of emerging global networks of trade.⁷⁰

The Colonial and Modern Periods

During the British colonial and modern periods, Jains and Muslims continued to engage with each other and each other's traditions, especially in intellectual, architectural, and economic arenas.

In the 18th century, a lay Digambara, Ṭoḍarmal (1719–1766), espoused a harsh view of Islam in his *Mokṣamārgaparakāśaka* (Light of the Path to Liberation). This text, written in Rajasthani, is still considered authoritative by many today. Ṭoḍarmal devotes only a few pages to Islam, in the context of discussing false approaches to liberation. He says that Muslims (*musalmāna*) espouse a sham religion that is similar to Hinduism in both practices and beliefs. For example, he argues that both Muslims and Hindus believe in a creator-god and posit the existence of incarnations (*avatāra*) or prophets (*payjambar*). Similarly, according to Ṭoḍarmal, both Hindus and Muslims walk an uneven line when it comes to ethics, at times acting peacefully and other times lashing out violently. Ṭoḍarmal ends this section by observing that while Hindus have declined relative to Muslims in the present age, Jains have suffered worst of all.

In the 20th century, Jain thinkers began to invoke Islam and Islamic practices in the context of thinking about the use of icons. Questions about the status of icons had cropped up for centuries in Jain thought. At earlier points in history, the question of whether Jains ought to revere or shun icons had been largely internal to the Jain tradition. But in the 1900s, the subject resurfaced in debates between the icon-revering Śvetāmbara Mūrtipūjakas and the iconoclastic Sthānakavāsīs, who both brought Islam to bear on this issue.⁷¹

Some modern Jain thinkers used Islam as an example of the normalcy of religious icons. For example, writing in the mid-20th century, Kalyanvijay proposed that icon worship was justified, in part, because it is a universal practice found even in religious traditions that claim to condemn it, such as Islam. Contemporary thinkers, such as Buddhīsāgara, echoed Kalyanvijay's arguments. Other modern Jains linked iconoclasm with Islam as a way of maligning the idea. For example, Bhadrakarvijay (c. 1941) said that everyone worshipped icons until the 7th century CE, when Muḥammad had irrationally condemned the practice. Such arguments

⁶⁷ Jain, 2009, 294.

⁶⁸ Jain, 2013, 78.

⁶⁹ 2013; 2015.

⁷⁰ Mehta, 1991.

⁷¹ Cort, 2010.

played on anti-Muslim sentiments that see Islam as violent and unnatural.⁷²

Jains and Muslims have continued to influence each other architecturally. For example, some Jain temples in Jaipur and Delhi place icons on an elevated platform that invokes the imagery of Mughal-era thrones. C.B. Asher⁷³ suggests that these innovations may date to the 18th and 19th centuries. Some modern Digambara home shrines in Jaipur have Mughal-style roofs.⁷⁴

Commercial ties, especially in the gem industry, also link members of the two religious groups. For example, both Muslims and Jains work as gemstone cutters and brokers in modern Jaipur.⁷⁵

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⁷² Cort, 2010.

⁷³ 2003.

⁷⁴ Cort, 2015b.

⁷⁵ Babb, 2013.

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