

# The Jaina Cult of Relic Stūpas

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## Abstract

This article gives an overview of recent findings on the thriving cult of bone relic *stūpas* in contemporary Jaina culture. Although Jaina doctrine rejects the worship of material objects, fieldwork in India on the hitherto unstudied current Jaina mortuary rituals furnished clear evidence for the ubiquity of bone relic *stūpas* and relic veneration across the Jaina sectarian spectrum. The article discusses a representative case and assesses the significance of the overall findings for the history of religions. It also offers a new theoretical explanation of the power of relics.

## Keywords

Jaina relic *stūpas*, mortuary rituals, Vallabha Samudāya, cultural unconscious, theory of generalized symbolic media, relics as social forms

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## Introduction

It is a common stereotype of textbooks on world religions that Jains never worshipped the remains of the Jinās, and consequently never developed a ritual culture parallel to the cult of relics in Buddhism. In his well-known study *The Jaina Path of Purification*, P. S. Jaini (1979:193) recalls that neither “the *Śrāvaka-cāras*,” the medieval texts outlining the rules of conduct for the Jaina laity, “nor the practices of Jainism give any indication that a cult of relic-worship once flourished within the tradition. No *stūpas* housing the remains of Jaina teachers have yet been discovered.” This verdict is echoed by K. Bruhn (1993:54): “There is also the issue of ‘actual evidence’. There were Jaina *stūpa.s* but they did not survive. As a consequence, the *stūpa* became a *Buddhist* monument.” Apart from isolated myths and legends in canonical and medieval Jaina (Jain) literature depicting the veneration of the relics of the Tīrthaṅkaras by the gods, there is no indication of bone relic worship in early and medieval Jainism to date.<sup>2</sup> Yet, although Jaina doctrine rejects the worship of lifeless, *acitta*, material objects, intermittent fieldwork in India between 1997 and 2009 on the hitherto unstudied contemporary Jaina mortuary rituals furnished clear evidence for the ubiquity of bone relic *stūpas* and relic veneration across the Jaina sectarian spectrum today.<sup>3</sup> This article offers an overview and interpretation of these recent, somewhat unexpected, findings on the thriving cult of bone relic *stūpas* and the ritual role of the materiality of the dead in contemporary Jaina culture, focusing on one

<sup>2</sup> See Bhagwānlāl 1885:143f.; Leumann 1885:500–4; Bühler 1890b:328f.; Smith 1901; Schubring 1935/2000 §25; Marshall 1951 II:463; Shah 1955/1998:54ff.; Choudhury 1956:47, 65, 93f.; Shāntā 1985:127ff.; Jain 1987:136; Settā 1989; Sastri et al. 1992; Kasturibai & Rao 1995; Dundas 2002:219, 291, n. 4; Laughlin 2003:200; Bronkhorst 2005:53; Dundas 2007:54; Quintanilla 2007:38; Hegewald 2009:135–7. See *infra* for a re-assessment of the evidence.

<sup>3</sup> British Academy funded research in 2000–2001 (Research Grant 2001 APN 3/522) produced the first documentation of two modern Jaina bone relic *stūpas*, a *samādhi* and a *smāraka*, constructed by the Śvetāmbara Terāpanth. Subsequent fieldwork, funded by the Central Research Fund of the University of London (Research Grant 2002/2003 AR/CRF/A), demonstrated that relic *stūpas* do not merely feature as functional equivalents of temples in some of the anti-iconic Jaina traditions but are also constructed by segments of the Mūrtipūjaka and Digambara traditions.

representative example,<sup>4</sup> that is, the *samādhi mandira*, or funeral monument,<sup>5</sup> of Sādhvī Mṛgāvātī of the Mūrtipūjaka Śvetāmbara tradition on the premises of the Vallabha Smāraka Km 20, J.T. Karnāl

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira, which represents the *Mūrtipūjaka* tradition, the names and dates of consecration of three further *stūpas*, confirmed by field-research, of segments of the three other principal Jaina denominations will suffice here: Pravartaka “Marudhar Kesarī” Miśrīmal (1891–1984), three relic shrines: (a) Marudhar Kesarī Pāvan Dhām Jetāraṇ 6.1.1985 (*samādhi sthala*), (b) Asthi Kakṣa, Sojat 5.5.1992, (c) Puṣkar (*Sthānakavāsī*: Śramaṇasaṅgha Raghunātha Dharmadāsa Gaṇa); Ācārya Tulsī (1914–1997), two relic shrines: (a) Ācārya Tulsī Śakti Pīṭha, Gaṅgāśahar 14.12.2000, (b) Ācārya Tulsī Smāraka Lāḍnūṃ 7.9.2000 (installation of the relic vessel) (*Terāpanth*); Bhaṭṭāraka Cārukīrti (died 1998) Mūḍabidarī Samādhi 22.12.2000 (*Digambara*). There are many *samādhis* of Digambara *munis* such as Ācārya Śāntisāgara “Dakṣiṇa” (1872–1955) in Kunthalgiri or Muni Sumatisāgara (1917–1994) in Sonagiri which, according to informants, contain relics. See Flügel 2001, 2004, 2008a, 2010b, forthcoming a for evidence on 122 triangulated Jaina cases, the majority (going back to 1804) listed independently for the present writer by Dineś Muni 2002, Gautama Muni 2009, Sādhvī Dr Ārcanā 2009 and Ācārya Dr Śivmuni 2009, four mendicants of two different *gaṇas* of the Sthānakavāsī Śramaṇasaṅgha. In addition to these cases, many of which were personally investigated, 10 of 28 other investigated memorials, the oldest being the Dādā Samādhi Mandira of Hira Vijaya Sūri (1526–1595) of the Tapā Gaccha near Unā, are suspected relic *stūpas*, 16 probably not, and 2 certainly not. Funerary monuments have been constructed even for religious leaders of the Jaina lay movement started by Śrīmad Rājacandra (1867–1901). According to local informants, the *samādhis* of Rājacandra in Rājkoṣ and of Parama Pūjya Śrī Bāpuji Śrī Lāṭakcand Māṇekcand Vorā (1905–1997) at the Rāj Sobhāg Āśram in Sāyalā/Gujarāt are both relic shrines. So is the “Satsthānak,” the *samādhi* for “Dādā Bhagavān” Ambalāl Mūljībhaī Paṭel (1908–1988) of the Akram Vijñān Mārg in Kelanpurī near Vaḍodarā.

<sup>5</sup> Anti-ionic Jaina traditions avoid the word *mandira* and simply speak of a *samādhi* (*nirmāna*). Generally, the term *samādhi* refers to a relic shrine and the term *smāraka* to a commemorative shrine. An interviewee stated that “a *samādhi* is constructed for *pūjā*, a *smāraka* only for *darśana* and meditation” (H. L. Jain, personal communication, Ludhiyānā 28.12.2009). Yet, frequently the words *stūpa* (P. *thūpa*), *samādhi* and *smāraka* are used as synonyms in Jaina scriptures and contemporary Jaina discourse to refer both to monuments containing mortal remains of the special dead as well as to mere commemorative shrines: these can be conceived following Fleming 1973:178 as “points on a continuum.” Morphology, on which Shah 1955/1998:57 rested his argument that in the Jaina tradition the symbolism of the *stūpa* was replaced by representations of the *samavasaraṇa*, is not decisive. Compare the debates on the passage in the ŚB 13.8.3 concerning the difference between square and round burial mounds;

Road, Alīpur, Dillī (Delhi).<sup>6</sup> The findings demonstrate that the Jaina cult of relics is not only a feature of lay religiosity, but is usually deliberately fostered by mendicants seeking to perpetuate the influence of their deceased teachers and thus strengthen their own position *vis à vis* competing sects through the construction of relic *stūpas* and the distribution of ashes from the funeral pyres and of memorabilia such as photographs and amulets.

### Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira

Sādhvī Mṛgāvātī Śrī (1926–1986) (Fig. 1) died of breast cancer on 18 July 1986 in the residential halls attached to the Vallabha Smāraka Jaina Mandira, twenty kilometers north of Delhi. She was born on 4 April 1926 into a Saṅghavī Dasa Śrīmālī Jaina family in Sardhār, a village near Rājkot in Gujarāt. In 1938, after the death of her father, two brothers and one sister, she took initiation together with her mother Sādhvī Śilavatī Śrī (1893–1967) from Ācārya Vijaya Vallabha Sūri (1870–1954) (*dīkṣā-dātā*) and Sādhvī Dāna Śrī (*dīkṣā-guruṇī*)<sup>7</sup> into the “progressive” Vallabha Samudāya,<sup>8</sup> a now independently organized

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between *stūpas* and tombs, for instance in Barua 1926:17 and Przlusky 1935:199f.; and between De Marco 1987:241 who argues that *stūpas* and Vedic *śmaśānas* “correspond to a single architectural type,” and Bakker 2007:40 who strictly distinguishes relic *stūpas* (“*eḍūka*”) and funerary monuments (“*aiḍūka*”).

<sup>6</sup> My first of five visits to the Vallabha Samāraka site goes back to 1988. On 26–28 October and 17–18 December 2003 formal interviews on the *samādhis* of the Vallabha Samudāya were conducted in Mumbaī and Delhi with monks and nuns and lay sponsors of the Vallabha Smāraka complex.

<sup>7</sup> Dāna Śrī succeeded the first nun of the *samudāya*, Sādhvī Deva Śrī (1878–1947).

<sup>8</sup> Vijaya Vallabha Sūri was born 26.10.1870 (1927 Kārtika Śukla 2) in Vaḍodarā in Gujarāt, initiated by Ācārya Vijaya Ānanda Sūri’s *pra-sīya* Muni Harṣavijaya on 5.5.1887 (1944 Vaiśākh Śukla 13) in Rādhanpur, became *ācārya* on the 1.12.1924 (1981 Mārgaśīrṣa Śukla 5) in Lahaur, and died in Bombay 22.9.1954 (2010 Bhādrapada Kṛṣṇa 10: Gujarātī calendar). He was one of the most influential *ācāryas* of the Tāpā Gaccha in the twentieth century and an advocate of modern education, social reform (in the Jain community the abolition of casteism), and of Gāndhī’s national freedom struggle. His order permits mendicants to use microphones, the use of “violent” flush toilets in big cities, nuns to give public lectures, and other modern practices that are rejected by orthodox Mūrtipūjaka mendicants. For a summary of his biography and the history of the Vallabha Samudāya, see Śāh 1956.



*Figure 1.* Sādhvī Mṛgāvati Śrī (1926–1986), official photograph.

monastic order of the Tapā Gaccha Vijaya Śākhā tradition.<sup>9</sup> It was due to her personal influence that the long-planned construction of the Vallabha Smāraka was started in 1979 and finally completed in 1989. The Vallabha Smāraka is a temple complex commemorating the achievements of Vijaya Vallabha Sūri, not least his *camatkāra* powers which at the time of partition in 1947 protected the lives of his monastic and lay disciples who were fleeing with him, under fire, from the Ātmānanda Gurukula in Gujrāṃvālā in Western Pañjāb to Amṛtsar in

<sup>9)</sup> On the early history of the Tapā Gaccha see Dundas 2007:17–52, on modern history and organization Cort 2001:40–8 and Flügel 2006:317–25. On the Vallabha Samudāya, see MJV 1956; Shimizu 2006. For Mṛgāvati's biography, based on a book of her disciple Sādhvī Suvratā, see *ibid.*:68, and N. N. 2003.

Eastern Pañjāb, and in some cases on to Ludhiyānā and Delhi.<sup>10</sup> The focus of attention (though not of ritual) at the site is his naturalistic portrait statue in the main hall, *mandapa*, in front of the smaller temple.<sup>11</sup> The construction of a national memorial, *smāraka*, in Delhi was planned already in 1954 during Vijaya Vallabha Sūri's funeral ceremonies in Mumbaī, where his *samādhi mandira* is located.<sup>12</sup> But for many years nothing happened. In 1973, Vijaya Vallabha Sūri's successor Ācārya Vijaya Samudra Sūri (1891–1977) therefore directed the charismatic and learned *sādhvī* Mṛgāvātī to spend *cāturmāsa* in Delhi to channel some of the enthusiasm for the preparations of the national celebrations of Mahāvīra's 2500th Nirvāṇa Mahotsava in 1974 into the half-forgotten construction project. Mṛgāvātī had gained a reputation for inspiring the construction of numerous temples, memorials, monastic residencies, schools and hospitals all over India.<sup>13</sup> In 1974, due to her personal influence, the Śrī Ātmā Vallabha Jaina Smāraka Śikṣaṇa Nidhi trust was created in the presence of Vijaya Samudra Sūri, who had come to Delhi to represent the Mūrtipūjaka tradition at

<sup>10</sup> Fascinating eye-witness accounts were documented by Shimizu 2006:63f., who also refers to Duggaṛ 1989:535. For other reported miracles, see *ibid.*:473f.; Jaya Ānanda Vijaya 1989:19f. and SAVJSSN p. 2: "At times he would even extend physical protection by using his super and divine powers." Despite the fact that Vijaya Vallabha Sūri in his youth was engaged in fierce polemical exchanges with Sthānakavāsī Jains and supporters of the Āryā Samāj in the Pañjāb, most internal sources, such as the contributors to MJV 1956, agree with SAVJSSN p. 2: "He always endeavoured for unity and solidarity amongst the Jain community. He had completely identified himself with the freedom struggle. He patronised the use of Khadi, Swadeshi and Hindi even though his mother tongue was Gujarati." For further biographical literature, see Shimizu 2006. For an overview of his polemical works, see Flügel 2008b:190–204.

<sup>11</sup> See Titze 1998:136, 235. Jina images are placed in a small shrine on the more elevated first floor right behind and above Vijaya Vallabha Sūri's statue. In the Śrīmad Rājacandra temple in Āgas, the Jina images are also placed above the statue of the relatively recently deceased religious leader. On memorials for Jaina ascetics see Laidlaw 1985; Babb 1996:102–36; Dundas 2007:54f. Unlike Granoff 1992:181; Babb 1996:103, 110f. and Bakker 2007:30, n. 67 who regard Jaina temples and images as elements of a mortuary cult, Hegewald 2009:87, argues that "spaces dedicated to the memory of Śrīmad Rājacandra should technically not be considered as temples, but as funerary or commemorative structures."

<sup>12</sup> Next to Seth Motiśāh Jaina Mandira, 137 Love Lane, Baikala, near Mumbaī Zoo.

<sup>13</sup> See the long list of her achievements in N. N. 2003:3–18.

the state celebrations of Mahāvīra's death anniversary, and suitable land located near the Great Trunk Road from Delhi to the Pañjāb was procured on 15 June 1974. Yet the project progressed faster only when Mṛgāvātī returned to Delhi again for two years. After prior competitive bidding for the privilege of performing the first ritual acts,<sup>14</sup> *bhūmi pūjā* or *bhūmi khaṇana*, the earth breaking ceremony, was performed by Mr. Lālā Ratancand Jain on 21 July 1979, and *śilānyāsa*, the foundation stone ceremony, by Ms. Lālā Kharatī Lāl Jain on 29 November 1979.<sup>15</sup> Finally, on 10 February 1989, the consecration, *pratiṣṭhā*, was celebrated in grand style in the presence of many monastic and social dignitaries.<sup>16</sup> The assembly was presided over by Ācārya Vijaya Indradinna Sūri (1923–2002), who had succeeded the deceased Vijaya Samudra Sūri. Mṛgāvātī's second most celebrated achievement was the solicitation of the release from the Archaeological Survey of India of a five hundred year old idol of Rṣabha, which tribals at Ranakpur used to venerate, which she made accessible for worship again in a newly constructed Jaina temple in Kāṅgaṛā (N. N. 2003:5).<sup>17</sup>

In recognition of her achievements, which favorably compare with the accomplishments of many Jaina *ācāryas*, and because of her devotees'

<sup>14</sup> Bidding for ritual privileges is common in Jaina culture, but not routinely performed in all Jain sects. Traditionally, women do not bid, but exert influence through their husbands. See Reynell 1987:327f.; Balbir 1994:121; Kelting 2009:288f.; Chhapiā & Choksi 2009.

<sup>15</sup> The ceremony was a key event of the 24th Convention of the All India Śvetāmbara Jaina Conference which was held on the premises, chaired by Dīpcand Gardī from Mumbaī (N. N. 2003:14).

<sup>16</sup> For further details on dates and actors, see Shimizu 2006:68–71, 170f. On 12–15 June 1974 land was bought by the trust; 21 July 1979 *bhūmi pūjā* by Ratancand Jain; 28 November 1979 bidding won by Kharatīlāl Jain; 29 November 1979 *śilānyāsa*; 27–28 September 1986 Haribhadra Sūri I Conference; 27–28 September 1987 Haribhadra Sūri II Conference; 10 February 1989 *pratiṣṭhā*, presided over by Ācārya Indradinna Sūri in the presence of the *ācāryas* Ratnākara Sūri, Nityānanda Sūri, Virendra Sūri and Janaka Sūri.

<sup>17</sup> “Thus, she was conferred the title of *Kāṅgaṛā Tīrthoddhārikā*” (Shimizu 2006:72). See Balbir 1994:125 on the significance of Mṛgāvātī's propagation of educating nuns. Yet, “[a]lthough Mṛgāvātī Śrī Jī is highly respected by the community members, her anniversary is not celebrated as with the four chief *ācāryas* of Vijaya Vallabha Samudāya (Vijaya Ānanda Sūri, Vallabha Sūri, Samudra Sūri and Indradinna Sūri) in the annual religious calendar” (Shimizu 2006:73f.n.).

desire to retain the spiritual link to her, that had proved to be beneficial in other respects as well,<sup>18</sup> from 1.1.1987 a *samādhi* was constructed for Mṛgāvātī at the site of her cremation, *agni saṃskāra sthala*, next to the Vallabha Smāraka (Fig. 2). It was consecrated on 1.11.1996.

To the visitor, the building is presented as an expression of the continuing devotion to Mṛgāvātī by Sādhvī Suvratā Śrī and her disciples Sādhvī Suyaśā Śrī and Sādhvī Suprajñā Śrī and dedicated devotees from Delhi and beyond, who desired “to do for her what she did for Vijaya Vallabha Sūri.”<sup>19</sup> According to Śāntilāl Jain, one of the main protagonists and patrons of the project, the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira was deliberately constructed as “the first *sādhvī samādhi* in the Vallabha community” (cited in Shimizu 2006:73).<sup>20</sup> More precisely, it was the first *samādhi mandira* for a Jaina woman in the Vallabha Samudāya, since at least one simple undated commemorative platform, *cabūtarā*, had earlier been erected at the place of cremation of Mṛgāvātī’s chief disciple Sādhvī Sujyeṣṭhā Śrī (1928–1985), who had died nine months before her, on 9 November 1985. This memorial is inscribed with the name Sujyeṣṭhā Samādhi (Fig. 3).

Amongst modern Jain *samādhis*, the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira stands out because of its peculiar circular dome-like shape which, at

<sup>18</sup> Devotees readily furnish evidence of the effects of her blessings for health, educational accomplishments or material wellbeing. “According to Śāntilāl Jain Jī... [t]he capacity of her spiritual power, knowledge and leadership attracted lay followers to her” (Shimizu 2006:73f.). A list of leading politicians who visited Mṛgāvātī is published in N. N. 2003:18.

<sup>19</sup> Mṛgāvātī died before the completion of the Vijaya Vallabha Smāraka, shortly after the death of her chief disciple Sādhvī Sujyeṣṭhā in 1985. Mṛgāvātī’s disciple Sādhvī Suvratā and lay supporters from Delhi were instrumental for the construction of the *samādhis* for both *sādhvīs* within the Vijaya Vallabha Smāraka complex (Vijaya Vallabha Smāraka, Brochure). The land was procured by Ms. Sudha Sheth. Major donors were reportedly Śāntilāl Jain, Ratancand Jain, Lālā Rāmlāl (deceased), and Rāj Kumār Jain. Inspiration was also received from Vijaya Indradinna Sūri’s disciple Ācārya Virendra Sūri (Interview, Vallabha Smāraka Annex 18.12.2003).

<sup>20</sup> Many ancient Jaina inscriptions referring to women as donors have been documented. But only a handful of older commemorative monuments for Jain women exist. In the Buddhist tradition “none of the inscribed... *stūpas* of the local monastic dead found at Indian monastic sites were erected for a nun” (Schopen 1992/1997:237, n. 74).





Figure 2. Sādhvī Suvratā Śrī and her disciples circumambulate the cremation platform of Mrgāvātī, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.

first sight, either resembles a burial mound, an overgrown ancient Buddhist *stūpa* or a stylized Jaina *samavasaraṇa*<sup>21</sup> (Fig. 4).

From the former it is distinguished by a publicly accessible hall in its interior, and from the latter by the absence of representations of a wish-fulfilling tree, *caitya-vṛkṣa*, and/or a *gandhakuṭī*, perfumed chamber, the legendary dwelling place of the Jina, on top.<sup>22</sup> The basic design

<sup>21</sup>) A dome shaped roof was also given to the relic *stūpa* of “Ācārya” Muni Suśil Kumār (1926–1994), the Ahimsā Paryāvaraṇa Sādhanā Mandira in New Delhi, designed by Sādhvī Dr Sādhanā, the leader of the Arhat Saṅgha I of the Nāthūrāma Jīvarāja Sthānakavāsī tradition, on which see Flügel (in press a).

<sup>22</sup>) On the *gandhakuṭī* of the Jina, see Shah 1955/1998:56. According to him, iconographic representations of the assembly of the four-fold community around a Jina, *samosaraṇa* (S. *samavasaraṇa*), are the Jaina equivalent of the Buddhist *stūpa*. Morphologically, “the *samavasaraṇa* has for its prototype the big *stūpa* (the *harmikā* of a *stūpa* may be compared with a *Gandhakuṭī* or *Devacchand-pīṭha* for the Jina)” (ibid.:93), though the functions of these structures are entirely different. For photos of modern architectural representations, which closely follow the mythological paradigms of the Āgamas, see Titze 1998:232, Hegewald 2009:388 cover, etc.



Figure 3. Commemorative platform for Sādhvī Sujeṣṭhā Śrī (1928–1985), photo by the author, Vallabha Smāraka 18.12.2003.

is a structure of seven or eight<sup>23</sup> superimposed round brick terraces covered with earth and grass. The upper terrace is rounded off like a mountain peak or a *harmikā*. As in canonical descriptions of Siddhāyatana, the paradigmatic heavenly Jaina temple, there are three large gates leading into the interior of the shrine from east, west and north.<sup>24</sup> The eastern and western gates are usually closed, at least in winter. Only the large portal facing north towards the Vallabha Smāraka always remains open (Fig. 5).

This is the main entrance to the spacious windowless room at the center of the *samādhi*. Looking from the outside into the shrine through the northern gate the visitor can already make out the head of the white marble statue of Mṛgāvātī, which is lit up with electric lamps,

<sup>23</sup>) Because of overgrowth, this is difficult to decide without recourse to the original drawings. See Shah 1955/1998:128 on the mythical eight terraces, *aṣṭa-pada*, created by Emperor Bharata on Mount Kailāśa, where his father Tīrthāṅkara Ṛṣabha died.

<sup>24</sup>) Cf. Shah 1955/1998:57.

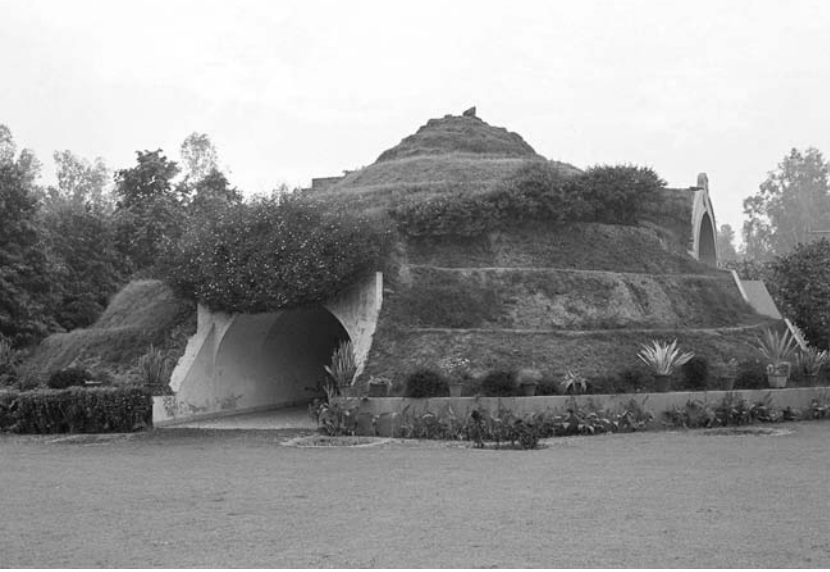


Figure 4. Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira, photo by the author, Vallabha Smāraka 18.12.2003.

creating the impression that, in the midst of darkness, Mṛgāvātī's head is the only source of illumination<sup>25</sup> (Fig. 6). On entering the dark interior the features of the entire statue become visible, placed on a base of black stone and covered with a wooden glass cabinet (Fig. 7).

Mṛgāvātī is represented in a naturalistic way, squatting in the *padmāsana* posture, hands on her lap and the brush, *ogḥā*, the symbol of monastic tradition, placed to her right. The statue faces the Vallabha Smāraka in the distance. Immediately in front of her is a small round pedestal made of white marble, with engraved *carāṇa pādūkās*, representing Mṛgāvātī's footprints. To prevent their worship, the *carāṇa pādūkās* are also under glass. An attached sign proclaims: “*carāṇom meṃ cāval va mīṭhā na caḍhāyem!* Do not offer sweets and rice to the feet!” Of course, rice and sweets are invariably found next to the sign.

Shimizu (2006:73f.) recalls a local quarrel over the Mṛgāvātī image and points to the fact that the worship of portrait statues of female

<sup>25</sup>) Cf. Kramrisch 1946:162 on the symbolism of womb and seed in Hindu temple architecture.



*Figure 5.* Main entrance of the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira, photo by the author, Vallabha Smāraka 18.12.2003.



*Figure 6.* Illuminated statue and footprint image of Sādhvī Mṛgāvātī inside the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira, photo by the author 18.12.2003.



Figure 7. Statue and footprint image of Sādhvī Mṛgāvātī inside the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira, photo by the author 18.12.2003.

ascetics, beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, is a new trend in the Jain tradition not accepted by everyone.<sup>26</sup> According to Laidlaw (1995:263), “the first female Jain renouncer to become a fully canonized saint”<sup>27</sup> was Pravartinī Vicakṣaṇa Śrī (1912–1980) of

<sup>26</sup>) Babb 1996:206, n. 19 found no evidence of great magical powers being attributed to nuns. However, *tapasvinīs* and renowned nuns such as Mṛgāvātī and Vicakṣaṇa (ibid.:55f.) provide good examples. The performance of *pūjā* to statues of deceased ascetics is controversial in the Mūrtipūjaka tradition, which reserved the full nine-limbed *candana pūjā* for Jina statues. See Cort 2001:114. On *pūjā* at *dādāguru* shrines, see Laidlaw 1985; Humphrey & Laidlaw 1994; Laidlaw 1995:270f.; Babb 1996:127; Laughlin 2003; Dundas 2007:54f. and Hegewald 2009:82–8.

<sup>27</sup>) Much depends on the word “fully” here. The Shānakavāsī *mahāsati* Pārvatī Devī (1854–1939) may be referred to as an earlier example of a “canonized” highly respected nun. See Flügel 2008b:201–3. The Tīrthaṅkara Mallinātha, who for

the Kharatara Gaccha, the chief rival of the Tapā Gaccha within the Mūrtipūjaka traditions. She also died of cancer. Her painted marble statue, one of the first realistic portraits of a Jaina nun,<sup>28</sup> was consecrated in 1986, the year of Mṛgāvātī's death, on the premises of the popular Dādā Bāṛī temple on Motī Dūṅgarī Road in Jaipur where it became an object of worship.<sup>29</sup> A *samādhi mandira* with another portrait statue was constructed for her at the Mohan Bāṛī shrine on Galta Road outside Jaipur, the place of her demise and cremation, where two further *samādhi mandiras* for Muni Śānti Vijaya (died 1943) and Sādhvī Sajjana (died 1989) were constructed (Babb 1996:55, 102f.). However, extant commemorative shrines for Jaina nuns seem to be almost as old as the earliest extant *samādhis* for prominent monks, if less frequent.<sup>30</sup> M. U. K. Jain (1975:96) mentions three “tombs,” that

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Śvetāmbaras was a female, must be regarded as a mythological figure. See Roth 1983.

<sup>28</sup> Vicakṣaṇa Śrī's statue holds a mouth shield, *muhapattī*, in her left hand and a rosary, *mālā*, in her right. Like Mṛgāvātī, she is juxtaposed to a male ascetic, in this case the statue of Jinakuśala Sūri, who is the main focus of veneration at the Dādā Bāṛī, although his *samādhi mandira* is located in Mālpurā (Babb 1996:111). See Shāntā 1985/1997:270, Plate 10 for a photo of another portrait statue of Vicakṣaṇa Śrī in Delhi (Meharaulī). See the photographs of modern naturalistic statues of Jaina monks in Hegewald 2009:82–7, and Laidlaw's 1995:258–67 and Babb's 1996:111ff. analyses of the iconography.

<sup>29</sup> Like Mṛgāvātī's statue, Vicakṣaṇa Śrī's images are nowadays covered by a locked glass cabinet to prevent *dravya pūjā*. See Babb 1996:102. In support of his theory of alternative Jaina “embodied ontologies,” Laidlaw 1995:262–7 argues that the illness of Vicakṣaṇa Śrī is iconographically highlighted in the facial expression to stress “suffering as a religious virtue” (ibid.:266). This is questionable, since suffering is not visibly depicted. The famous photos of the emaciated Śrīmad Rājacandra shortly before his death from chronic diarrhea are similarly interpreted as depictions of the “body of a dualist” who departed from “normal Jain practice” and turned the cultural practice of fasting “into a concerted attack on the body.”

<sup>30</sup> According to Shah 1987:17, the first commemorative *pādukās* and *niśidhis* were constructed in the medieval period. Yet, the Hāthigumphā inscription of the second or first century BCE already mentions a Jaina *niśidhi*. The earliest *nicitikaīs* (P. *niśidhiyā*, etc.), or funerary monuments for Jaina monks who starved themselves death, in this case mere “epigraphs engraved on the bare summit of boulders” in Tamil Nadu, were dated in the sixth century CE by Mahadevan 2003:135f., who notes the influence of earlier practices in Karnāṭaka. Settar 1989:215 stressed that the *niśidhis* in Karnāṭaka, at least the later pavilions, “were apparently not erected at the place where the commemorated breathed their last. In other words, they were not

is, *samādhis*, for the Digambara nuns, *āryikā*, Āgama Śrī (1426), Pratāp Śrī (1631), and of Pāsamatī Mātājī (died 12.2.1767), whose *samādhi sthalī* at the Pārśvanātha Janma Sthala in Bhelūpur/Vārāṇasī features a commemorative plaque placed under a newly built *chatrī*. Next to it is a similar *chatrī* covering *pādukās* which mark the *samādhi sthal* of Ācārya Vidyāsāgara's disciple Muni Saṃyam Sāgara (died 14 June 1984). Laughlin (2003:140, n. 339) found two *pādukās* dated 1675 and 1684 presumably located at Ābū for Mūrtipūjaka nuns donated by other nuns (one from a branch of the Kharatara Gaccha) but no *samādhi mandiras*. Shāntā (1985/1997:254–6) describes three twentieth-century *samādhi mandiras*, for the Kharatara Gaccha nuns Pravartinī Puṇya Śrī (1858–1916) in Jaypur and Pravartinī Suvarṇa Śrī (died 1932) in Bikāner, and for the Tapā Gaccha nun Sādhvī Sunandā Śrī (died 1968) at the foot of Mount Ābū. She notes that the invitation card for the *pratiṣṭhā* of the *guru mandira* and of the *cāraṇa pādukās* of Sunandā Śrī in 1976 details a long series of *pūjās*, which demonstrates that the *samādhi* is a place of worship.<sup>31</sup> Though Shāntā (ibid.:256, n. 348) believed that “reformed communities, the Sthānakavāsīs and the Terāpanthīs, who perform no temple worship, do not erect *samādhi-mandiras*,” two *samādhis* for the Terāpanth *sādhvīs* Mālūjī (died 1996) and “Tapasvini” Pannājī (1907–2000) in Lāḍnūṃ, which are simple commemorative platforms, *cabūtarās*, presently without *pādukās* and *chatrīs*, and many *samādhis* for Sthānakavāsī nuns in places such as Ambālā and Āgrā can be added to this list.<sup>32</sup> None of these *samādhis* for Jaina nuns features a portrait statue like the Mṛgāvati Samādhi, though the production of naturalistic statues of deceased *sādhvīs* and *āryikās* became increasingly popular from the

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necessarily built on the mortal remains of the dead.” Hindu and Buddhist *pādukās* are evident from first centuries CE.

<sup>31</sup> See Shāntā 1985/1997:270, Plate 9 for a photo of the *pādukās* inside the shrine.

<sup>32</sup> Flügel 2010b:24–6. In the Terāpanth today, only memorials for *ācāryas* are officially ornamented with “royal” *chatrīs*, never *pādukās*. However, in the 1970s a tall *chatrī* (“Smṛti”) was erected by family members of Sādhvī Dhyānavatī (1901–1970) at the place of her cremation at the cemetery, *śmaśāna*, of the Osvāl caste in Lāḍnūṃ. Like several other *chatrīs* for Terāpanth monks and nuns in caste cemeteries, this memorial was unsanctioned, and is not publicized because, generally, places of cremation of common mendicants remain unmarked and are not remembered as places of significance.

twentieth century onwards, also amongst Digambaras (Hegewald 2009: 85). However, most display a photograph.

The creation of Mṛgāvati's *samādhi mandira* and statue was motivated in part by the competitive sectarian dynamic within the Jaina tradition, whose popular appeal relies to a large extent on the belief in the miraculous powers, transmittable through touch, of Jaina ascetics and some of their material representations. Through the construction of commemorative shrines, often in the vicinity of temples or *upāśrayas*, sectarian history is inscribed into the topography of India in the hope that this will help perpetuate the influence not only of the teachings of the Jinas but specifically of the respective monastic traditions.<sup>33</sup> The competitive construction of *samādhis* in the medieval and modern period is intrinsically linked with intra-denominational Jaina sectarianism, beginning in the eleventh century in the Śvetāmbara tradition. The history of the doctrinal acceptance of the religious role of miracles and so-called magical power, *iddhi* (S. *ṛddhi*) in the Jaina tradition is yet to be written.<sup>34</sup> Though canonical texts, such as *Uvavāya* (Uv) 24–27, *Viy*<sub>1</sub> 8.2 (340a ff.), are full of references to supernatural powers of Jaina ascetics, Bruhn (1954:118) pointed out that, in contrast to the biographies of the Buddha, early Jaina texts tend to limit and rationalize the role of miracles and the power of gods and ascetics in terms of the Jaina *karman* theory. According to Granoff (1994: 150f.), even after Hemacandra's standardization of the imaginative post-canonical Śvetāmbara narratives of Mahāvīra's funeral and the veneration of his relics by the gods in his twelfth-century *Triṣaṣṭi-śālākāpuruṣacaritra* (TŚPC XIII), medieval Jaina biographies rarely narrate post-cremation miracles of local monks and are generally “not interested in depicting the monks as continuing objects of lay worship.” Reports of post-mortem appearances and miracles in the seventeenth-century biographies of the Tapā Gaccha *ācārya* Hira Vijaya Sūri<sup>35</sup> and of prominent *ācāryas* in the *paṭṭāvalis* of the Kharatara Gac-

<sup>33</sup> On layered identities in Jaina patterns of worship, see particularly Babb 1996:135.

<sup>34</sup> See Flügel forthcoming b.

<sup>35</sup> On Hira Vijaya Sūri's funeral rites, his *samādhi* and post mortem miracles, see the original sources compiled by Mahābodhi Vijaya 1997–8; also Commissariat 1957 II:248.



cha are described by Laughlin (2003:178) as “exceptions,” though further examples, more frequently of later dates, such as the miracle shrine of Sādhvī Vicakṣaṇa Śrī in Jaipur, can be added. Textual and epigraphic history thus seem to point to a progressive development, from the Kuṣāṇa period onwards, of schematic accounts first of the death, funeral and post-funeral rites and miracles of selected Jinas and later of exceptional monks (rarely nuns) who, in the milieux of individual sects (*gaccha*, *gaṇa*, *sampradāya*, etc.), became objects of veneration in their own right.

Laidlaw (1985, 1995:69–80), Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994:21ff.) and Babb (1996:111) showed that the worship of deceased but non-liberated male ascetics, believed to be reborn as gods, is now a “central feature of the religious life of Śvetāmbar Jains associated with the Khartar Gacch.” The followers of the Kharatara Gaccha worship four of their prominent ascetic reformers and miracle workers, called Dādāgurus,<sup>36</sup> for whom they erect special shrines, *dādā-bāṛīs*, all over India.<sup>37</sup> These shrines feature alternatively iconic or aniconic representations of these saints, *guru mūrtis* or *carāṇa pādūkās*, housed in structures which are generally “modeled on the funerary cenotaphs [*chatrī*] that are so common a feature of Rajasthan” (ibid.:112). In the *dādā-bāṛīs* constructed at their places of cremation footprints rather than portraits are the central focus of worship. In 1962, three hundred and forty-four independent shrines and two hundred and ten temples already existed in which *dādā* representations were worshipped (ibid.). In the meantime, the number has considerably increased. Following the example of the Kharatara Gaccha, several Tāpā Gaccha traditions, such as the Vallabha Samudāya, began to develop *dādāguru* cults as well.<sup>38</sup> But the *dādāguru* cult is still given more importance by the

<sup>36</sup> See also Cort 2001:221, n. 27. The veneration of statues and *carāṇa pādūkās* of the Kharatara Gaccha Dādāgurus at places in Rājasthān, such as Delavāḍā, Mālpurā, Dhuleva or Ābū, has been mentioned already by K. C. Jain 1963:135.

<sup>37</sup> Jinadatta Sūri (1075–1154), Jinacandra Sūri (1140–1166), Jinakuśala Sūri (1280–1332), and Jinacandra Sūri II (1541–1613). The Kharatara Gaccha *paṭṭāvalī* mentions the erection of a *stūpa* in Delhi to the memory of Jincandra Sūri, who reportedly had “a jewel in his head,” as became evident at his cremation (Klatt 1882:248).

<sup>38</sup> For instance, the seventeenth-century Hīra Vijaya Sūri Dādā Samādhi Mandira (current name). See Laughlin 2003:16; Dundas 2007:54f. and Phyllis Granoff,

Kharatara Gaccha, most likely because it is not, like the Tapā Gaccha, split in many collateral branches, but maintains a single centrally organized monastic tradition. The recent development of a cult of miracle-working *dādāguru* shrines<sup>39</sup> in the Vallabha Samudāya similarly demonstrates its ambition to establish itself as an independently organized order within the Tapā Gaccha tradition.<sup>40</sup>

Local respondents give a clear explanation for the peculiar shape of the Mṛgāvātī shrine. Engineer Vinod N. Dalal,<sup>41</sup> a devotee of Mṛgāvātī who was personally involved in the construction of the *samādhi*, recalled Mṛgāvātī's own wishes. Before she died, intentionally at the Vallabha Smāraka,<sup>42</sup> she said: "I want to remain in a cave, *guphā*, where I can continue to worship god without being disturbed."<sup>43</sup> The design of the *samādhi mandira* thus represents a meditational cave inside a mountain.<sup>44</sup> Its outer form is echoed by a "stupa-like" shrine at Hastinapura, called Dhyāna Mandira, which Hegewald (2009:391) describes as "a Jaina temple structure dedicated to meditation."<sup>45</sup> Mṛgāvātī's characterization of her "cave" tallies well with this description, although the shrine is nowhere designated as a cave, nor as a place for

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E-mail 5.1.2009: "The Vijayamāhātmya has a section, clearly added on, about Vijayadevasūri's post-mortem appearances and miracles. The Hīravijaya has a similar section and the miracles occur at the *stūpa*."

<sup>39</sup> See Samudra Sūri's 1956 article on "Dādā Gurudev" Vijaya Ānanda Sūri.

<sup>40</sup> For definitions of Jaina "school," "order," and "sect," see Flügel 2006:366, n. 8. On organizational segmentation within the Tapā Gaccha, see *ibid.*:319–24.

<sup>41</sup> Interviewed in the administrative office of the Vallabha Smāraka, 17.12.2003.

<sup>42</sup> On the phenomenon of death and burial *ad sanctos* in the Jaina tradition, see Flügel 2010b:24–26.

<sup>43</sup> The word "god" is deliberately ambiguous. It can refer to the soul, the Jinas, as well as to Vijaya Vallabha Sūri towards whom the statue of Mṛgāvātī is oriented. "God" as the source of Mṛgāvātī's supernatural powers is described in one of her biographies: "H. H. never sought to approach political leaders. On the other hand they came to H. H. with head bowed. . . . [list of politicians follows] . . . Unparalleled reverence and devotion to God were the source of her spiritual power" (N. N. 2003:19).

<sup>44</sup> Confirmed by M. P. Sheth, interviewed 17.12.2003 at the Vallabha Smāraka.

<sup>45</sup> "It is a stupa-like building, consisting of an earthen mound overgrown with grass (Plate 691). The structure contains a cave-like windowless circular chamber, housing a large sculptural representation of the sacred syllable "*hṛm*," placed on a lotus platform" (Hegewald 2009:390).

meditation. The motif of mountain caves frequented by meditating Jain ascetics acquiring wish-fulfilling powers is attested already in the Āgamas. In the Śvetāmbara context, the most popular source is the Saṅgha-stuti, an allegorical hymn at the beginning of the canonical Naṃdī (NS<sub>1-2</sub> I.12–17/18). Its final section, the so-called Mahāmandaragiri-stuti, eulogizes the mythical Sumeru, a mountain filled with gold, silver and gem-stones and overgrown with magical herbs and forests.<sup>46</sup> This text is the most likely source of inspiration for the design of the building.<sup>47</sup> The magic mountain is a metaphor of the ideal *saṅgha*, the Jaina community. The herbs that grow on its slopes stand for the *labdhis*, attainments or powers,<sup>48</sup> including the healing touch, *āmarśa-auṣadhi*, of the Jaina ascetics in their beautiful “caves of compassion for life,” *jīva-dayā kandarā*. The ascetics themselves are symbolized by “wishing-trees,” *kalpa-vṛkṣas*, which cover the mountain and offer shelter to the visiting Jaina laity.<sup>49</sup> The cave/mountain distinction could also be read as an analogy of the Jaina soul/body distinction. But this is not explicated in the text.<sup>50</sup>

The outer form of the shrine thus represents the magical Mt. Sumeru, which itself is a metaphor of the ideal religious community, with the virtuous “wish-fulfilling” ascetics at its center.<sup>51</sup> Yet, there is an

<sup>46</sup> The oldest Jaina depiction of Mt. Sumeru, echoed by Saṅgha-stuti vv. 12–18, is in JDP<sub>1-2</sub>. For Jain cosmography, see Kirfel 1920/1990.

<sup>47</sup> This is yet to be confirmed through interviews, but seems obvious.

<sup>48</sup> For classical lists of *labdhis* (P. *laddhi*), see Uvavāiḃa (Uv<sub>1-2</sub>) 24–27, Tiloyapaṅṅati (TP) II.4.1078–1087.

<sup>49</sup> “As the Meru mountain remains unmoved and stable even in the midst of terrible hellish storms and deluge, so remains this religious organization of the *Jina* amidst the verbal tirade of the antagonists” (Amar Muni, commentary to NS<sub>2</sub> 18, p. 13).

<sup>50</sup> See Kramrisch 1946:161–76 on the image of mountain and cave, *garbha-grha*, in Hindu architecture, and on the symbolism of darkness and light, seed and sprouts. On Buddhist mountain caves in Thailand, and the symbolism of stages of knowledge, see Tambiah 1984:280ff. Similar meditational caves are still used by Jains on Mt. Ābū. On the analogy of mountain cave and the *samādhi* in Hindu tantrism, see White 1996: 333.

<sup>51</sup> The analogy of great Jaina ascetics with heavenly wishing trees is a common motif in Jaina (and Buddhist) literature. See for instance the Śālibhadracarita I.83 ff., in Bloomfield 1923:265, and the summary version of the same story and motif in TŚPC<sub>2</sub> Ch. 10, p. 255. For an analysis of the social implications of its plot, see Flügel

invisible dimension of this building, unknown to most visitors and never publicized. Located some fifteen to twenty feet underneath Mṛgāvātī's statue is a small relic chamber with a tiny vessel filled with charred bones and ashes from her cremation pyre. On the surface, there is no indication whatsoever that the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi is, in effect, a relic *stūpa*, that is, pragmatically defined, a building of any shape constructed for the purpose of housing bone relics,<sup>52</sup> amongst other functions.<sup>53</sup> On the contrary, attempts to physically worship the *mūrti* and the *pādūkās* are systematically obstructed, albeit not entirely prevented.<sup>54</sup> Since relic worship blatantly contradicts Jaina doctrine, in truth, none of the local patrons and trustees will easily admit the fact that bone relics of Mṛgāvātī are enshrined under the artificial mountain and, if questioned, generally respond in an evasive manner. Apparently, Mṛgāvātī herself never explicitly talked about the preservation of her body relics or the construction of a *stūpa*, although she personally

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2010a:380–402. The Kharatara Gaccha Dādāgurus are also conceived as “wish-fulfilling trees,” *kalpataru*. See Babb 1996:126.

<sup>52</sup> Acharya 1927/1978:574 defines *stūpa* as a “Name of edifices, which serve as receptacle for a relic or as monument.” Though the *samādhi* at the site of cremation is always given primacy, a *smāraka* or memorial at a different place may also contain bone relics. It is therefore impossible to rely on the common *samādhi-smāraka* distinction or on the word *stūpa* to discriminate relic *stūpas* from commemorative monuments. Some modern *smāarakas* built at sites away from the place of cremation, such as the Asthi Kakṣa of Muni Miśrīmal and the Ācārya Tulsī Smāraka mentioned in footnote 4, display the relic vessels openly, which *samādhis* at sites of cremation never do. Compare Viy 10.5.a ff. (502b ff.) and Rāy<sub>2</sub> 240, 276, 351 on the worship of the bones of the Jinās, *jīṇa-sakahā*, kept in reliquaries hanging on hooks from commemorative pillars. See also Toussaint 2006:60 on the Catholic practice of open display starting in the thirteenth century; Strong's 2004a:143f. interpretation of the practice of hiding relics; and the volume edited by Kippenberg and Stroumsa 1995 on concealment.

<sup>53</sup> Hegewald 2009:136, on morphological grounds, identifies a hitherto unstudied and apparently unlabeled structure at Gajapantha as a Jaina “*stūpa*,” remarking: “An essential feature of this structure, and of most stupas in general, whether they have been built for a Jaina or a Buddhist audience, is that they usually are solid constructions, which have no accessible internal space, and cannot usually be entered.”

<sup>54</sup> Located next to the *samādhi* is a very popular Padmāvātī shrine where rites aiming at wish fulfillment are openly performed without any specifically Jaina content (though Padmāvātī is a Jaina goddess).

inspired the erection of four *samādhi mandiras* for Vijaya Vallabha Sūri and one for Vijaya Samudra Sūri.<sup>55</sup> Given the reticence of the minority of Jains who know of the presence of relics in a particular shrine and the denial of the majority who do not know, considerable detective work is required to amass sufficient evidence of bone relic preservation and oblique worship through touch in each suspected case.

After several visits and some negotiation, the leading trustee of the Vallabha Smāraka, who refused to be implicated, arranged a private meeting on site with V. N. Dalal on 17 December 2003, whose description of the architectural design of the shrine confirmed the initial intuition of the present writer, based on previous investigation of relic shrines amongst the Terāpanth and Sthānakavāsī Jaina traditions (Flügel 2001, 2004, 2008a), that the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira is a genuine relic *stūpa*. A meeting on 18 December 2003 with the resident Ācārya Virendra Sūri and Muni Rajendra Vijaya, who both openly advocated the construction of relic shrines and proudly presented bone relics and ashes from the cremation pyre of the late Ācārya Vijaya Indradinna Sūri, forced the leading trustee to an indirect admission of officially unspeakable practices, clandestine yet public, in which the monastic and local leadership of the fourfold community of the Vallabha Samudāya collude. Suddenly, photo albums emerged from a cupboard by Sudarśanā, a female devotee who had just requested and received from Ācārya Virendra Sūri some of the ashes from the pyre of his guru Ācārya Vijaya Indradinna Sūri that he had shown the present writer. The albums on display did not include pictures of the relics themselves nor of the relic vessel, but the excavated relic chamber is clearly visible in the photos of the rites of *śilānyāsa*, the consecration of the brick foundations of the shrine, which involved ritual blessings by

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<sup>55</sup> Since Vijaya Vallabha Sūri was cremated in Mumbaī, technically, none of the “*samādhis*” and “*smārakas*” that were constructed in the Pañjāb and in Delhi can be called “*samādhi mandira*.” There is anecdotal evidence, however, that charred bones and ashes were transported from Mumbaī to North India and preserved to be entombed under one or other of these commemorative shrines. According to the architect J. C. C. Sompura, the Vallabh Smārak is not a relic shrine but the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi is (personal communication, Kuppakalāṃ 28.12.2009). See p. 418.



Figure 8. A photo of Mṛgāvātī is held up to the cameras during the foundation stone ceremony 1 January 1987, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.

Mṛgāvātī's successor Sādhvī Suvratā Śrī in the presence of her two disciples (Figs. 8 and 9).

Similar “hide and seek” games are faced by anyone who wishes to research Jaina relic shrines. Publicly, the members of the Jaina community are in collective “denial” about the widespread practice of relic veneration,<sup>56</sup> and it is only due to favorable circumstances if this dimension of the Jaina “cultural unconscious” can occasionally be unveiled.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Laidlaw 1995:76, 80 reported similar “resistance and reluctance” and “uncensorious censure” of his respondents when faced with questions on miracles and magical powers associated with *dādāguru* shrines.

<sup>57</sup> On the usefulness of Assmann's 2000/2006 notion of the “cultural unconscious” for Jaina Studies, see Flügel 2008b:183.



Figure 9. Sādhvī Suvratā Śrī blesses the ground during the *śilānyāsa* ceremony 1 January 1987, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.

What is the evidence? In confidence, but not without pride, interviewees at the Vallabha Smāraka, and similar sites, generally admit after probing that some of the charred bones and ashes of great saints are usually preserved underneath *samādhis* constructed over their sites of cremation;<sup>58</sup> though common monks and generally no nuns are graced with this honor. Their *puṣpas* or flowers, that is, the small pieces of charred bone that remain after a cremation, are simply discarded. There is no conventional architectural style for these sites, apart from the traditional *cabūtarās* and *chatrīs*, and a wide variety of forms and shapes are evident today.

<sup>58</sup>) Many recent *samādhis* for Tapā Gaccha mendicants such as Prem Sūri (Khambhāt), Nemi Sūri (Mahwa/Bhāvnagar), Rāmacandra Sūri, Bhuvanabhanu Sūri, Meruprabha Sūri (Ahmedabad), Devacandra, Siddhi Sūri, Magha Vijaya, Udayavallabha, etc. are unexceptional in this respect as well, as the present writer learned from interviews with eyewitnesses.



Figure 10. Mortal remains of Mṛgāvātī are being immersed into the river Ganges in Haridvār in 1986, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.

After her death, Mṛgāvātī's corpse was displayed for two days to allow for *darśana*, one day longer than usual at these occasions. Representatives of the president of India came and garlanded her. One day after the cremation, most of the charred bones were collected and transported to Haridvār to be immersed into the river Gaṅgā (Fig. 10). A “handful” of bones and ashes were preserved by leading members<sup>59</sup> of the Vallabha Smāraka trust from Delhi.<sup>60</sup> After the brick platform,

<sup>59</sup> Reportedly by Rāj Kumār Jain, Lālā Rāmlāl (deceased), Śāntilāl Jain, Ratancand Jain, and others. Usually, many bystanders take samples of ashes and bones from the funeral pyres of famous monks and nuns for private use. The ashes are believed to be increasers of finance, health, etc. They are kept in purses and dissolved in water and consumed as medicine for instance.

<sup>60</sup> This is not unusual. Matsuoka 2009:3 reports the following events on the day after the cremation on 14 November at Śaṅkeśvara Pārśvanātha of Muni Jambū Vijaya (1922–2009) and Muni Namaskāra Vijaya, who tragically died in an accident near Balotara on 9 November 2009: “Their bones were collected in small cans. Jambuvijayaji’s ashes were divided into hundreds of packages as gifts for the condolers.” The Times of India reported on 13 November 2009 that “An anonymous donor has offered Rs 1.11 crore for construction of a temple in the memory of the two monks.”



*maṃca*, for the cremation was taken down, the site grew over with grass until the beginning of the *samādhi* construction. The three remaining *sādhvīs* of Mṛgāvati's group were all present at the ceremonies connected with the construction of the foundations and the relic chamber. Some kind of pathway was laid out with bricks and wooden boards to enable the nuns to directly witness the earth breaking ceremony, the *bhūmi pūja* or *khanana pūjā*, while avoiding walking over grass, which involves the killing of living beings. At the beginning, a square was marked on the grass with short wooden pegs and white chalk. Then Sādhvī Suvratā Śrī stepped onto a plank that was placed in the middle of the square and blessed the earth with *vāsakṣepa* powder. Afterwards, the *pūjā* was performed by leading committee members with fire, *dīpaka pūjā*, etc., before the ceremonial breaking of the earth with a spade commenced. Later the *śilānyāsa* ceremony was performed at the bottom of the pit by *śrāvakas* and *śrāvikās* who sprinkled milky water on the ground and performed *pūjā* with flowers, coconuts, and fire, etc. Every brick was individually blessed through touch by the hand of Sādhvī Suvratā Śrī who stepped down into the pit herself. After the foundation stones were placed, one by one, a small relic chamber, *asthi kaṣa*, was constructed where the vessel with charred bones and ashes would be entombed. The ritual acts of breaking the earth and placing the first bricks were previously auctioned to raise money for the building work.

On request, V. N. Dalal produced a drawing of the relic chamber (Fig. 11). It was constructed at the bottom of the trench which was later filled up to ground level with stone slabs set on a three-foot-deep foundation of three layers of reinforced concrete divided by two layers of sand, each six inches deep. The relic vessel, *asthi kalāśa*, was enshrined in the relic chamber, which is six feet deep, layered with bricks, and later covered with concrete on top of the foundation stone. The *kalāśa* itself is made of copper and apparently only one finger high. It is said to contain a very small amount of bones and ashes, since most of the remains had been taken away by individual devotees after the cremation or immersed in rivers in Northern India and Gujarāt. One interviewee, R. K. Jain laconically remarked: "My wife had a little — she is no more," "Sudarśanā has some." After the *kalāśa* was ceremonially entombed, the chamber was covered with a stone slab and cement. According to informants, there is no physical link

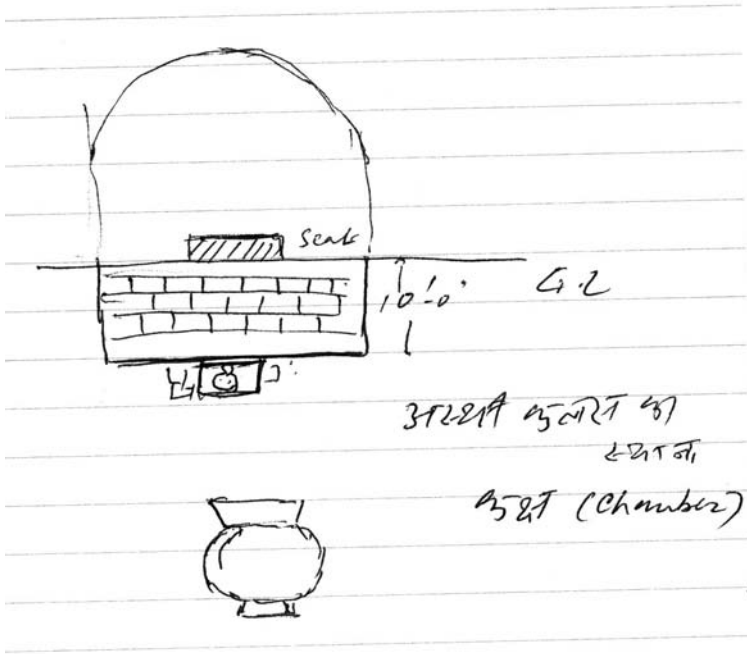


Figure 11. Drawing of the relic chamber of the Mrgāvati Samādhi by V. N. Dalal, Vallabha Smāraka 17.12.2003.

between the *kalaśa* and the statue of Mrgāvati, except for a two-inch-wide and fifteen- to twenty-foot-long copper pipe, *nāla*, which is implanted in all Jaina and Hindu temples, connecting the foundation stone or navel, *nābhi*, with the seat on which the main statue is placed. The tube does not reach the surface, but extends only to the marble plate, *siddha śilā*, covering the foundations, on which the statue is placed (Fig. 12). The pipe was filled with precious stones, gold and silver coins, donated by eager devotees who queued up for this privilege, in the belief that this offering would produce ample returns.<sup>61, 62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> In December 2009, the author had the opportunity to insert a few coins into a similar tube in a Sthānakavāsī *smāraka* for Ācārya Ātmārāma (1882–1962) which is under construction outside Ludhiyānā.

<sup>62</sup> See Kramrisch 1946:110–12 on textual blueprints for the construction of the foundations of a Hindu temple, *śilā-nyāsa* and *iṣṭakā-nyāsa*, which are only slightly modified in Jaina building projects. On the foundation stone, *ādhāra-śilā*, or brick,

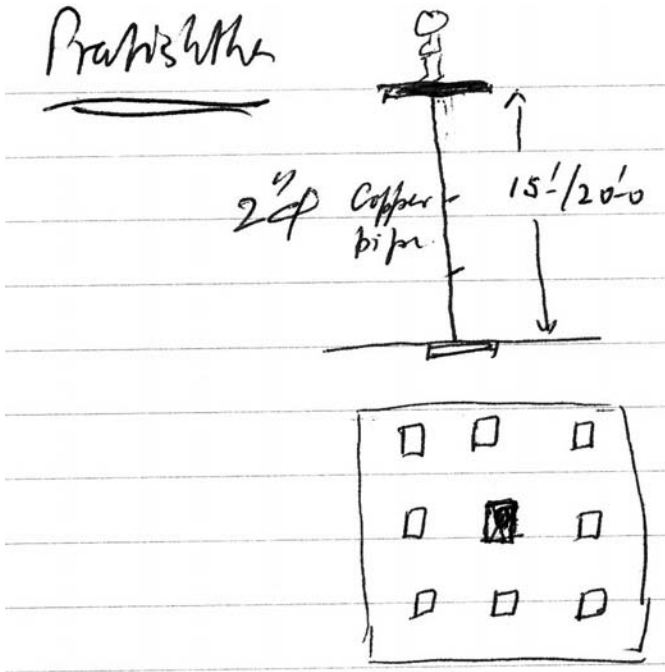


Figure 12. Drawing of the copper tube connecting the relic chamber with the statue of Sādhvī Mrgāvati by V. N. Dalal, Vallabha Smāraka 17.12.2003.

The *samādhi mandira* itself was designed and constructed by the firm C. P. Trivedi & Sons in Ahmedabad, which specializes in (Jaina) temple architecture. It was built without using any steel. Two reasons are cited for this: (a) Iron and steel should not be used in Jaina buildings, because metals are considered to be living matter and using them causes “*pāpa*,” according to the monks who were consulted. (b) Steel lasts only two to three hundred years. A temple should last a minimum

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*-iṣṭakā*, a treasure jar, *nidhi-kalaśa*, full of power, *śakti*, is placed in a small chamber, *garbha* or *kaṅṣa* in current Jaina idiom, which is covered with a stone slab and connected with a tube, *yoga-nāla*, to the plinth supporting the central altar. In addition to the *nidhi-kalaśa*, a *garbha-kalaśa*, containing the “seeds” of the temple (earth, jewels and grains), is placed on a representation of the serpent Ananta. Kramrisch sees a continuity between the Vedic sacrificial altar, *citi*, the (Buddhist) *stūpa*, and the Hindu temple “which is a monument more than a building” (ibid.:147f.). Jaina relic vessels apparently substitute for the *nidhi*- and/or *garbha-kalaśa*.

of one thousand years. If metal needs to be used at all, then only copper should be used, because it does not rust. A second “*samādhi*” for Mṛgāvātī is reportedly under construction at Ambālā.<sup>63</sup>

### Further Samādhis of the Vallabha Samudāya

Though the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi is one of the first if not *the* first grand scale funerary monument for a Jaina nun, it is not the first *samādhi* of the Vallabha Samudāya. It is one in a long line of commemorative shrines bearing witness to the perpetual glory of the religious reform movement of Ācārya Vijaya Ānanda Sūri (1836–1896), the teacher of Vijaya Vallabha Sūri and other influential monks, known as Muni Ātmārāma before his acrimonious conversion from the Sthānakavāsī Nāthūrām Jīvaj Sampradāya to the Mūrtipūjaka Tapā Gaccha Vijaya Śākhā tradition. Vijaya Ānanda Sūri was born in the Pañjāb. After his re-initiation in the Tapā Gaccha he almost singlehandedly revitalized the image-worshipping Śvetāmbara tradition in Gujarāt and in his native Pañjāb where in the nineteenth century anti-iconic Jaina traditions and neo-Hindu movements such as the Āryā Samāj dominated. After his death, an opulent funerary monument, the Vijayānandasūri Samādhi Mandira, was consecrated on 6 May 1908 (1965 Vaiśākha Śukla 6) at the site of his cremation in Gujarāmvalā, near Lahore. In some publications, this shrine is designated as a “*stūpa*.” Subsequently, at least four further commemorative monuments, *samādhis*, *smārakas*, or *guru mandiras*, were erected in the Pañjāb alone: in Hoṣiyārpur (*pratiṣṭhā*: 6.5.1943), Jirā (24.6.1943), Jaṃḍiyālā Guru (29.4.1955), and Amṛtsar, not to mention numerous portrait statues all over India. Many of these were inaugurated at the suggestion of his most illustrious *pra-śiṣya*, Vijaya Vallabha Sūri, who became the founding father of one of several now independent lineages descending from Vijaya Ānanda Sūri.<sup>64</sup> In this way, his followers sought to permanently

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Ācārya Virendra Sūri and Muni Rajendra Vijaya, Vallabha Smāraka, 17.12.2003.

<sup>64</sup> Mendicants of the Vallabha Samudāya share food only with mendicants of the Keśarasūri and Dharmasūri Samudāyas. See Flügel 2006:372, n. 57.

inscribe the traces of Vijaya Ānanda Sūri's life and legacy into the landscape of India.<sup>65</sup>

After the death of Ācārya Vijaya Vallabha Sūri in Mumbaī, his followers sought to preserve the memory of his exemplary life and the channels to his “miraculous powers”<sup>66</sup> in similar ways.<sup>67</sup> The construction of his *samādhi* in Mumbaī, which was consecrated in 1955 (2011 Jyeṣṭha Śukla 12),<sup>68</sup> was reportedly inspired by Sādhvī Mṛgāvātī, with the blessings of Ācārya Samudra Sūri (N. N. 2003:7). According to anecdotal reports, some of his mortal remains were buried underneath this shrine, while the rest were carried away by devotees from all over India, amongst them trustees of his future memorial shrines in North India. In Mumbaī, his *mūrti* and *pādukās* are worshipped almost like a Jina statue, not with a formal *aṣṭaparakāri pūjā*, but with incense, *dhūpa*, fire, *dīpaka*, rice, *cāvala*, sandalwood, *kesara*, and with water, *jala*, which is placed with one finger of the right hand on the front, eyes and navel of his statue, as well as with song (even “Om Rām,” etc.).<sup>69</sup> Local gatekeepers prevent the taking of photographs and the writing of notes, which indicates a sense of unease about the unorthodox practices that are performed at this site, usually for ulterior instrumental purposes. Three memorials for Vijaya Vallabha Sūri in North India were apparently inspired by Mṛgāvātī: the Vallabha Vihāra Samādhi Mandira in Ambālā, the Vallabha Smāraka near Delhi, and the Guru Vallabha Samādhi Mandira in Māler Kotlā (N. N. 2003:7f.). Numerous portrait statues of him have been consecrated and are worshipped, for instance in the Jālandhar Jaina Mandira and in Kāngarā. Whether

<sup>65</sup> See the list of four *samādhis* of Vijaya Ānanda Sūri in Samudra Sūri 1956:432 and the photo of his oldest “*stūpa*” at the place of his cremation in the unpaginated opening pages of Vijaya Vallabha Sūri 1956. A description of the construction of the *samādhi* and instructions for proper silent veneration are given by Vijaya Vallabha Sūri (ibid.:414f.) Statues and *caraṇa pādukās* of Vijaya Ānanda Sūri were consecrated at numerous places, for instance in Paṭṭī in the year 1898 and in Hoṣiyārpur in 1899.

<sup>66</sup> The funeral procession attracted more than 200,000 participants and onlookers, and at the time was one of the greatest religious assemblies Bombay had ever seen.

<sup>67</sup> On his miracles, see Duggar 1989:473f.; Jaya Ānanda Vijaya 1989:19f.; Shimizu 2006:63. For further biographical literature on Vijaya Vallabha Sūri, see Shimizu 2006.

<sup>68</sup> Next to Seth Motiśāh Jaina Mandira, 137 Love Lane, Baikala, near Mumbaī Zoo.

<sup>69</sup> Visit 26.10.2003.

or not bone relics and ashes of Vijaya Vallabha Sūri are actually entombed in any of the sites (as the use of the term *samādhi* would suggest), the ongoing sectarian discourse on his miraculous powers invariably involves references to his ashes being moved around to be deposited in one or other new memorial. An informant from Delhi, for instance, suggested that a person who now lives in Ludhiyānā took some of Vijaya Vallabha Sūri's ashes and placed it into a temple there. The same happened in Delhi.

If the evidence on Vijaya Vallabha Sūri's relics is merely anecdotal and based on second hand reports, there is unequivocal first hand information on the fate of the relics of Ācārya Vijaya Indradinna Sūri (1923–2002),<sup>70</sup> the successor of Ācārya Vijaya Samudra Sūri (1891–1977),<sup>71</sup> whose own Samādhi Mandira was constructed at Mṛgāvati's suggestion and consecrated on 1 November 1996 in Murādābād (N. N. 2003:8). Vijaya Indradinna Sūri's *samādhi* is located in Ambālā,<sup>72</sup> where he was cremated in a euphoric frenzy, as indicated by photographs (Fig. 13) and eyewitness reports by Ācārya Virendra Sūri and Muni Rajendra Vijaya.

The belief in his miraculous powers is still widespread. Evidently, the leaders of the Vallabha Samudāya put a premium on the existence of this particular quality in all of their *ācāryas* in order to maintain popular appeal. Official publications, on the other hand, emphasize universally acceptable qualities, such as support for public education, health and nation building.<sup>73</sup> After Indradinna Sūri's death, as usual, many miraculous events were reported. Due to their belief in his extraordinary powers, his devotees placed *vāsakṣepa*, gold, silver and precious stones on his dress and on the funeral palanquin before he was cremated, for purification and strength (Fig. 14).

<sup>70</sup> Born 1980 Kārtika Kṛṣṇa 9 (2.12.1923) Sālpurā (Vadoḍārā), *dikṣā* 1998 Phālguna Śukla 5 (20.2.1942), *ācārya* 2027 Māgha Śukla 5 (31.1.1971) Varlī, death 16.1.2002, Ambālā (after a bypass operation in 2001).

<sup>71</sup> Born 1948 Mārgaśīrṣa Śukla 11 (12.12.1891) Pālī, *dikṣā* 1967 Phālguna Kṛṣṇa 6 Sūrat, *ācārya* 2009 Māgha Śukla 5 (20.1.1953) Thānā (Bombay), death 2034 Jyeṣṭha Kṛṣṇa 8 (9.6.1977) Murādābād.

<sup>72</sup> Vijaya Indra Samādhi, Caḍigaṛḥ Highway, Motor Market, Ambālā City.

<sup>73</sup> With regard to Vijaya Vallabha Sūri, see for instance MJV 1956.



Figure 13. Ācārya Vijaya Indradinna Sūri's funeral procession in Ambālā January 2002, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.

The winner of the bidding competition spent RS 63 Lakhs for the privilege of performing the kindling of the fire, *agni saṃskāra*, which for Jaina mendicants is not, as in secular funerals, routinely conducted by the oldest son. “While the flames were in progress,” Muni Rajendra Vijaya reported, “Mahārāj jī appeared as the image of Pārśvanāth Bhagavān in sitting posture. Thereafter he appeared in the form of Māñibhadrajī — the deity *guruji* had pleased by his *sādhanā*.” Because of this apparition, fire sacrifices were performed in the presence of a monk in a *havana-kunḍa* to Māñibhadra, the protector of the Tapā Gaccha and wish-fulfilling *kula-devatā* of the Vallabha Samudāya<sup>74</sup> (Fig. 15).

<sup>74</sup> According to Cort 1997:115, Māñibhadra, the protector, *adhiṣṭhāyaka*, of the Tapā Gaccha, is regarded as “the reincarnation of a sixteenth-century Jain layman named Māñakandra who had defended image-worship against the iconoclastic followers of Loñkā Śāh.” The famed “defeat” of the enemies of image-worship in the Pañjāb by Vijaya Ānanda Sūri resonates well with this story and may explain the



*Figure 14.* Ācārya Vijaya Indradinna Sūri before his cremation in Ambālā January 2002, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.



*Figure 15.* Fire sacrifice to Māṇibhadra, the protective and wish-fulfilling lineage deity of the Vallabha Samudāya in Ambālā January 2002, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.



Indradinna Sūri's successor, Gacchādhipati Ācārya Ratnakāra Sūri (born 1945), continues his predecessor's support for *samādhi* construction. In the Pañjāb, he faces strong local competition by the *gaṇas* of the anti-iconic Sthānakavāsī Śramaṇasaṅgha, which nowadays also engage in *stūpa* construction in the competitive sectarian quest for popular support (Flügel 2008a, 2010b). On his command, the charred bones and ashes of Vijaya Indradinna Sūri were collected and divided into several portions. One part was preserved locally to be entombed under a newly constructed *samādhi mandira*,<sup>75</sup> while most of the remainder was shared between different parties to be dispersed in thirty-six rivers all over India. The decision to discard, *visarjana*, the mortal remains not only in one but in many rivers must be read as a hegemonic attempt by Ācārya Ratnakāra Sūri to encompass as many of his predecessors' regional support networks as possible (cf. Geary 1986:181f.). The practice to divide relics in order to create more than one relic shrine is not uncommon, nor is the transportation of corpses to preferred cremation sites.<sup>76</sup> Two of the main sites were the river Narmada and the river Bodeli near Vaḍodarā in Gujarāt, where many followers and disciples of the deceased live (Fig. 16).

Indradinna Sūri was born into a family of Parnārs in Gujarāt, a Dalit caste whose members categorize themselves as *ksatriyas* and traditionally eat meat. His father Muni Gautama Vijaya was also a Jain monk. He worked in the cotton business and became a Jain and later a monk after being converted by the *śrāvaka* Somcandbhāi Śāh. At the time of his own initiation, Indradinna Sūri took a vow to convert as many Parnārs as possible, and because of his example many Parnārs

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popularity of Māñibhadra amongst the followers of Vallabha Samudāya. Maybe sub-sectarian rivalry informs the recent rise of the protector gods Ghaṇṭākarṇa Mahāvīra and Nākoṛā Bhairava amongst the followers of other Tapā Gacch orders in Gujarāt and Rājasthān. Cf. Cort 2001:222, n. 40.

<sup>75</sup>) P. Bhogilal, interviewed Mumbaī 26.10.2003, pointed out that a *samādhi* for Indradinna Sūri will be constructed in the Pañjāb with his bones and ashes buried inside. He suspected that a leading trustee from Delhi even took some of the "dust" from Vijaya Vallabha Sūri's pyre to Delhi. At the same time, he was convinced that Mṛgāvati's *samādhi* at the Vallabha Smāraka, which he co-sponsored, does not contain any of her remains.

<sup>76</sup>) See footnote 4 for two examples of the former and footnote 59 for an example of the latter.



Figure 16. Mortal remains of Ācārya Vijaya Indradinna Sūri before their immersion into the river Bodeli in Gujarat in January 2002, Vallabha Smāraka Photo Album.

became Jainas. Today about 50% of all mendicants of the Vallabha Samudāya and 25% of the monks (about 50 of altogether 200 in all Mūrtipūjaka *gacchas*) are Parnārs.<sup>77</sup> “We are egalitarian, we accept anyone,” Ācārya Virendra Sūri stressed, during an interview with the present author, before proudly presenting a piece of bone and a metal box filled with ashes from Indradinna Sūri’s funeral pyre<sup>78</sup> (Fig. 17) (at this very moment a delegation of fellow Parnārs from Gujarāt arrived, all of whom had fasted without water for the whole day).

The strong presence of members of a previously meat-eating “untouchable” caste creates considerable problems for the social integration of the mendicants and laity of the sub-sect: the majority of the lay followers in Gujarāt and in the Pañjāb are from the Osvāl and

<sup>77</sup> In 2002, when he was inaugurated, this group had 295 mendicants, 60 *sādhus* and 235 *sādhvīs* (B. U. Jain 2002:232). In 2008, the Vallabha Samudāya split into two groups led by Ācārya Vijaya Ratnakāra Sūri (Bhāg I) and Ācārya Vijaya Nityānanda (Bhāg II) respectively (B.U. Jain 2009: 225–7, 235–7).

<sup>78</sup> Many Jaina mendicants carry small bone relics and ashes of other mendicants with them.



*Figure 17.* Ācārya Virendra Sūri shows a bone relic of Vijaya Indradinna Sūri, photo by the author, Vallabha Smāraka Annexe 18.12.2003.

Śrīmālī merchant castes from which most followers of the Śvetāmbara tradition are traditionally recruited.<sup>79</sup> Many members of the traditionally vegetarian middle caste and middle class laity still do not engage in social intercourse with the relatively recently recruited low caste and tribal converts, even if they bow to monks and nuns from Parnār families, in the absence of renouncers from their own castes. Similar

<sup>79)</sup> “The majority of Pañjābī members of the Vallabha Samudāya are from the Osvāla caste, however, some are from the Khaṇḍelavāla caste (ex. Panyās Jaya Vijaya Ji), and Brahmin caste (ex. Ācārya Vijaya Kamala Sūri). Vijaya Vallabha Sūri’s female disciple Sādhvī Mṛgāvātī Jī was from Dasa Śrīmālī caste, in Gujarātz, while on the other hand, her disciples are from the (Viśa) Osvālas, while the origin of many *sādhvis* is Pañjābī” (Shimizu 2006:66).

complications are faced by the Jain mendicants in the Pañjāb from Brahmin families. Even Gujarāti and Punjābī Osvāls generally do not socialize because of linguistic and cultural differences such as the onion and garlic eating habits of the North Indian Osvāls, which to some degree explains why the *khādī*-wearing Vijaya Vallabha Sūri supported national integration and Hindī as the lingua franca of India.<sup>80</sup> Unsurprisingly, a dispute, whose causes are not entirely clear, emerged soon after the cremation of Indradinna Sūri amongst his followers. The presence of some of his bones and ashes that were kept in the small town of Bodeli provoked local clashes in the year 2001 “as long as they were there,” according to Muni Virendra Vijaya. In January 2003, the relics were therefore transported to the town of Vāghā near Amṛtsar in the Pañjāb, the main border crossing to Pakistan, where at eight p.m. in the night yet another miracle occurred. Light flashed from the vehicles and illuminated three roads before dispersing in the sky. Ācārya Virendra Sūri explained that Mahāvīra’s ashes were taken by the gods to the heavens both for his remembrance and for their miraculous effects. Similarly, ashes of renowned saints such as Indradinna Sūri are used by monks both as souvenirs and for the purification of water that is sprayed over crowds as a blessing and for protection. They are also used as medicine and in attempts to revive the dead.

### Objections to Relic Worship

Despite the fact that there is no explicit condemnation of either relic worship or image worship in the canonical scriptures of the Jainas (cf. Shah 1987:7), there is unequivocal rejection of the worship of mere physical entities, whether for material or spiritual benefits. Except for body secretions and mortal remains of ascetics, this aversion, *viigīnchā* / *vitigicchā* (S. *vicikitsā*),<sup>81</sup> is extended to all physical remains of living beings, such as excrement, hair, bones, nails or teeth, which have to be removed, for instance, when the site for a temple construc-

<sup>80</sup> See Cort 2001:51 on protests in Pāṭaṇ against his involvement in Gāndhī’s independence movement and propagation of social reform, i.e., his direct involvement in politics.

<sup>81</sup> On this term, see Dundas 1985:190, n. 63.

tion or image installation is cleared (Glasenapp 1925:430f./1999:473). Texts such as TŚPC 1.843–855 emphasize that the bodies and body parts of living Jaina ascetics are a special class of objects, endowed with healing properties and other miraculous powers. But the preservation of bone relics and the construction of relic shrines are generally dismissed. The tenth-century Digambara *ācārya* Somadeva, for instance, in his Yaśastilaka Ch. VIII, explicitly rejects *stūpa* worship as “stupid,” *mūḍha* (Handiqui 1949/1968:253), though Chapter VI.17–18 of the same book reiterates the conventional portrayal of the Jaina *stūpa* of Mathurā as “built by the gods” (ibid.:416, 432–34), a phrase that seems to convey significance to the famous building while at the same time diverting responsibility for its construction away from human beings to the (relic-worshipping) gods.<sup>82</sup>

While the preservation of relics underneath funeral cenotaphs remains a clandestine if widespread practice in contemporary Mūrtipūjaka and Digambara traditions, in certain branches of the Sthānakavāsī tradition several recently constructed memorials openly advertise the presence of bone relics and display relic vessels publicly above ground. This provoked a lively debate within the tradition. Despite their original ideological “reservations about the worship of Stūpas and Caityas” (Roth 1989:148), the construction of *samādhīs* or *pāvāna-dhāmas*, purifying holy abodes, that is, pilgrimage places, has become popular amongst unorthodox Sthānakavāsī traditions, most prominently among the sub-groups, or *gaṇas*, of the Śramaṇasaṅgha, which strive to retain or strengthen their identity in the face of the long expected collapse of the fragile administrative structure of the Śramaṇasaṅgha, an umbrella organization founded in 1952 by thirty-two originally independent monastic traditions, *sampradāyas*, now led by one single *ācārya* (Flügel 2003:196).<sup>83</sup> The majority of the relic

<sup>82</sup> This interpretation is, at least, a possibility. Bühler 1891:61f. took the expression as a token of ancientness: “*devanirmīta*, ‘built by the gods,’ i.e., so ancient that at the time, when the inscription was incised, its origin had been forgotten.” Lüders later changed Bühler’s reading of the inscription *pratimā vodve thupe devanirmite* into *pratimāvo dve thupa devanirmite*. See Shah 1987:15f.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Geary 1986:179 on the ability of relics to “substitute for public authority” during periods of “relatively weak central government.” See also Tambiah 1984:344–6.

*stūpas* for prominent monks of the Śramaṇasaṅgha are associated with the *gaṇas* of the North Indian Pañjāb Lavajīrṣi, Amarasiṅha Jīvarāja, Nāthūrāma Jīvarāja and Raghunātha Dharmadāsa traditions which face intense competition from the monastic orders of the Mūrtipūjaka tradition such as the Vallabha Samudāya which are active in the Hindī speaking areas of Northern India. Since the time of Vijaya Ānanda Sūri's secession from the Sthānakavāsī tradition, the focus of this sectarian competition is the Pañjāb.

Objections to relic worship are occasionally raised internally, but rarely published. In an interview with the present writer in Ratlām 28 December 2002, the orthodox Pravartaka Umeśmuni (born 1932) of the Mālvā Dharmadāsa Gaṇa within the Śramaṇasaṅgha summarized the arguments of orthodox Sthānakavāsīs against the construction of (relic) *stūpas*.<sup>84</sup> When asked if the construction of *samādhis* or *pāvana-dhāmas* is a new development in the Sthānakavāsī (Jaina) tradition, he answered that those who think that erecting such buildings is a work of religion, *dharma-kārya*, and a form of *guru-bhakti* are mistaken. They are ignorant, *ajñāna*, and deluded, *moha*, since the Sthānakavāsīs follow the Āgamas, where nothing is written about Jaina pilgrimage places, *tīrtha*,<sup>85</sup> or erecting *stūpas* (except those made by the gods). Memorials are the root cause of image worship, and hence damaging. One cannot stop it, because no one is listening in this age. The majority are materialistic and not concerned with the fruits of religion. These places increase in great numbers to satisfy worldly desires without consideration of religious merit, *puṇya*.<sup>86</sup> It is true that the Namaskāra Mantra, the paradigmatic Jaina prayer, can also be recited for the mere fulfillment of worldly desires, *laukika kāmanā*, and for

<sup>84</sup> After an internal dispute within the Śramaṇasaṅgha, Umeśmuni was pronounced *ācārya* by his supporters in protest against the "lax" Ācārya Dr Śivmuni, who is still the official head of the Śramaṇasaṅgha. Although he is not using the title himself, Umeśmuni does not object to this designation either. See Flügel 2003:215–8.

<sup>85</sup> *Sthānakavāsī paramparāeṃ āgam ke pramāṇ se aise tīrtha-sthāpanā ko na to tīrtha mānatī haiṃ aur na aise tīrtha-sthāpanā ko mahatva detī haiṃ* (Umeśmuni 2007:11).

<sup>86</sup> Umeśmuni 2007:11f. On 22 February 1998 in Ratlām, a vast *samādhi* was inaugurated for one of Umeśmuni's teachers, "Mālav Kesari" Saubhāgyamal (1897–1984). Near the *samādhi* his *baikuṅṭhi* is exhibited, which was apparently not burnt on the pyre, including one half-burnt piece of cloth. On Saubhāgyamal, see Flügel 2007:129.

the acquisition of powers, *siddhi*. But, for instance, the consecration and veneration of so-called *navakāra*- or *tīrtha kalāśas*, that is, coconut shaped metal vessels venerated for wellbeing by some Sthānakavāsīs at home or collectively under the direction of mendicants with recitations of the Namaskāra Mantra, is a dangerous form of venerating lifeless objects, *jaṛ pūjā*,<sup>87</sup> which does not belong to the *mokṣa mārga* but to the *saṃsāra mārga*.<sup>88</sup> It is important to avoid a mixture of the two which only leads to *oja* (S. *ojas*), splendor, and *teja* (S. *tejas*), fiery energy, but not to liberation. Hence, the true Sthānakavāsī is not concerned with tradition, *paramparā*, but pursues only the path of the purification of the soul in agreement with the scriptures, *āgamānumodit ātma-viśuddhi kā mārga* (Umeśmuni 2007:13).

The customary rules, *maryādās*, of many orthodox independent Sthānakavāsī traditions explicitly reject the construction and veneration of *samādhis*, together with the worship of lifeless objects, such as material images in general. An example is Resolution No. 32 ratified by six still independent Gujarātī Sthānakavāsī-traditions (Ajṛāmar, Gopāl, Goṇḍal, Boṭād, Sāyalā, Dariyāpurī) at a *sammelan* in Rājkoṭ 1–7 March 1932 (1988 Māgha Kṛṣṇa 9–15).<sup>89</sup> A yet unattributable Sthānakavāsī *sāmācārī*, or list of sectarian customary monastic rules, published in Mālvā under the name Jaina Bhikṣu Gabbūlāl (1949:13) explicitly prohibits the erection of death memorials.<sup>90</sup> Similar rules were laid down by Ācārya Gaṇeśīlāl (1890–1963) of the Sādhumārgī tradition in Rājasthān, who left the Śramaṇasaṅgha in 1962 to re-establish the Sādhumārgīs as an independent orthodox order.<sup>91</sup> So do the

<sup>87</sup> Umeśmuni 2007:13.

<sup>88</sup> For a general rejection of such arguments from a Digambara perspective, see CB 202, in Jaini 2008:124.

<sup>89</sup> Resolution No. 32: *sādhū-sādhvī ke photo khiñcvānā, unahem pustakoṃ mem cahpānā yā grhastha ke ghar par darśan pūjan ke lie rakhanā, samādhi-sthān banānā, pāt par rupae rakhanā, pāt ko praṇām karānā ādi jaṛ-pūjā, ham logon ke paramparā ke viruddha hai* (AISJC 1956:150).

<sup>90</sup> Rule 19j: *sādhū sādhvī ke mṛtyu bād unkā koī jaṛ-smānak nahim karānā aur upadesādik abhiprāy batākar karvānā nahim, bane vahā tak bajandār śiṣṭa bhāṣā mem niṣedh karnā...* (Gabbūlāl 1949:13).

<sup>91</sup> *Guru ādi kī samādhi pagaliye va inake citroṃ ko dbūp dip va namaskār svayam na karem dusarem sem na karāvem* (Gaṇeśmāl n.d.). *Vidyālay, skūl, gurukūl, pustakālay, maṇḍal sthānak ādi ke lie makān banāne kā upades nahī denā* (ibid.).

rules and regulations of a lay organization associated with the orthodox Sthānakavāsī Jñānagaccha, the Akhila Bhāratīya Śrī Sādhumārgī Jaina Saṃskṛti Rakṣaka Saṅgha, which was formed in 1957 in protest against a range of practices within the Sthānakavāsī Śramaṇasaṅgha such as *stūpa* construction that were “opposed to the scriptures.”<sup>92</sup> The contemporary Sthānakavāsī writer S. L. Sañcetī (1999:40f.), and others, protest not only against the construction of *stūpas*, but also object to the practice of setting up photographs at the cremation sites of well known monks, inviting devotees to bow to the photos and to place incense sticks in front of them. His grievance echoes a complaint of Ācārya Hīrācandra (born 1938), the successor of Ācārya Hastīmal (1911–1991) as leader of the orthodox Sthānakavāsī Ratnavamśa, who highlighted the paradoxical fact that a funeral memorial was erected for the second leader of the Śramaṇasaṅgha, Ācārya Ānanda Rṣi (1900–1992), although Ānanda Rṣi himself objected to the widespread practice of erecting funeral memorials for prominent monks of the Śramaṇasaṅgha.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Section “k” entitled *śraddhā viṣayak* states clearly that “pilgrimages to rivers, mountains and *stūpas* or fixed sacred sites” are not in accordance with (Sthānakavāsī Jaina) religious belief: *vah vyakti vitarāg sarvajña, sarvadarśi arihant siddha bhagavān ko hī devādhidev mānane vālā ho | rāgī, dveṣī, asarvajña athavā jaṛ-mūrti va citra ko dharma dev nahim mānane vālā ho, tathā nadi pahār athavā stūp yā sthāvar tīrthom kī yātrā meṃ dharma śraddha ne vālā na ho |* (ABSJSRS 1957:32f.).

<sup>93</sup> Hīrācandra 2003:20f. refers to the report of Ānanda Rṣi 1972/1999:49. When Ānanda Rṣi’s was twenty-seven years old his guru Ratana Rṣi died near Alipur and the question arose how to commemorate him. A local illiterate, *an-parh*, landlord, *māl-guzār*, proposed and finally built a *samādhi* at the cremation site opposite the Viṭṭhala Mandira, despite the fact that Ānanda Rṣi did not want a memorial to be constructed. During his Kuśālapurā *cāturmāsa*, Ānanda Rṣi described the incident in one of his sermons and recalled his much cited response to the landlord: *hamāre yahām [sthānakavāsī samāj meṃ] samādhi nahim mānate* — here amongst us [in our Sthānakavāsī society] a funeral memorial is not accepted (ibid.). He thus officially rejected the worship of images and lifeless objects, *jaṛ pūjā*. Hīrācand 2003:21 stresses that he himself is not saying everyone should give up *mūrtipūja* and *jaṛ pūjā*, since memorials are obviously attractive for devotees, as long as internal worship, *bhāva pūjā*, oriented towards the qualities, *guṇa*, represented by the object is practiced rather than worship of the material object itself: *samādhi jaṛpūjā kī or ākarṣit kartī hai aur ham guṇom ke pujaṛi haiṃ. jaṛ pūjā hogī vahām bhāv pūjā aur bhāv-bhakti guṇ ho jāyegī* (ibid.).



S. Sañcetī (1999:40f.), whose voice represents a strong current of opinion in the anti-iconic Jaina traditions, also objects to the customary Jaina spectacle of displaying on ice and venerating the corpses of prominent religious leaders before the cremation, also a common Buddhist practice (DN ii.16.6.13, cf. Bareau 1971:178). In his view, this is practiced mainly to assemble large numbers of devotees in order to raise money for the construction of memorials which later will become the headquarters of the mendicants of the respective order with all amenities, such as canteens, *bhojana-sālā*, lavatories, etc. Ultimately, picnics and marriages are held there and the places are misused for a variety of worldly purposes. The money is raised by auctioning the paraphernalia, *upakaraṇa*, of the deceased, “*muhapattī, oghā, puñjaṇī*,”<sup>94</sup> the privilege to shoulder the funeral palanquin, “*beṅkuṭī*” (*baikuṇṭhī*), to keep parts of its decoration, or the privilege of kindling the fire. Reminding everyone that living, *sacitta*, water (ice) and fire should not be used by devout Jains, he also protests against the practice of cremation itself, which inevitably destroys innumerable organisms inhabiting the corpse. This issue was already discussed in antiquity, since the use of the living element of fire is, in principle, off limits for fully committed Jains.<sup>95</sup> In practice, the violence against one-sensed living beings such as the elements earth, fire, water and air can only be systematically curtailed by Jaina mendicants, whose survival is indirectly reliant on acts of violence committed by others.

### Relic Worship and the Jaina Cultural Unconscious

Are contemporary Jaina practices of relic worship a new development or is there evidence for historical antecedents beyond the early nineteenth century?<sup>96</sup> The significance of the chance “discovery” of the contemporary Jaina cult of relic *stūpas* for the history of religions can only be properly assessed by comparing observed custom with textual

<sup>94</sup> Letter of the author 25.6. 2003.

<sup>95</sup> See Bollée 2002:54. Schopen 1992/1997:217 mentioned a debate in the Tibetan Buddhist Vinayaksudrakavastu relating the “Buddha’s view” that the “worms” inside the living body die with him; corpses, however, should be opened up and examined before cremation to make sure no living creature will be injured by the fire.

<sup>96</sup> See footnote 2 for earlier studies.

paradigms and with the archaeological and epigraphic evidence. Because the veneration of relics is not standard Jaina doctrinal practice, comprehensive textual models are not readily at hand. In the absence of archaeological evidence, it thus remains a matter of conjecture and logical-historical reconstruction to determine when and how currently observable monastic funerary customs emerged.

The widespread belief in the protective powers of relics and *stūpas* in ancient India is not only documented in Buddhist but also in Jaina scriptures. The fifth-century Naṃdī (NS<sub>1</sub>) 38 (= NS<sub>2</sub> 53f.),<sup>97</sup> a late-canonical text, highlights the protective power of relics in the story of the conquest of the town of Khaggi (“sword”) in Videha by king Kūṇiya (Kūṇika) through the cunning reasoning of the evil Muni Kulabālaya (Kulabālaka). The main purpose of the story is to illustrate the misuse of deductive reasoning, *pariṇāmiyā buddhi*. Realizing that the protective powers of the unnamed *stūpa* at its center makes the town invulnerable, the ascetic entered the city in disguise to spread the idea that the aim of the king in attacking the city was only to destroy the *stūpa* and that he would leave as soon as this task was accomplished. Convinced of the ascetic’s arguments, the citizens demolished the protective *stūpa* themselves, and the city was subsequently conquered.

In a remarkably similar Buddhist tale, the motif of the cunning but evil ascetic is turned against the Jains. But the main purpose of the Buddhist story is not the exemplification of the abuse of deductive reasoning or the critique of the Jains or Nigaṇthas but the demonstration of the power of the Buddha’s relics.<sup>98</sup> The thirteenth-century Pāli version of the Dāṭhāvaṃsa (DV) II–III composed by Dhammakitti describes the rivalry between followers of the Buddha and of the Nigaṇthas or “heretics,” *titthiyā*, over the patronage of King Guhasīva of Kālīṅga in terms of their contrasting attitudes toward the worship of the tooth relics (of the Buddha). It relates how both Guhasīva and his overlord King Paṇḍu of Pāṭaliputta were, one after the other, converted from Jainism to Buddhism through a series of unprecedented miracles, *acchariyas*, caused by the Buddha’s tooth-relic, though only

<sup>97</sup> The key word is *khaggi-thūbhimde* (S. *khadgī-stūpa-bhedah*).

<sup>98</sup> On the relics of the Buddha in the Buddhist chronicles, see Trainor 1997:117ff., 164ff.

indirectly. In reality, it was the devotion of true believers, the majority of the common citizens “recollecting the qualities such as Dasabalas etc. of the excellent Buddha” (DV<sub>2</sub> II.114f.) that prompted the miracles. The remembrance of the Buddha’s qualities revealed to them the miraculous power, *mahi-iddhi*, magical power, *vijjā-bala*, and influence, *pabbhāva*, of the Buddha relic. Originally, Guhasīva was a follower of the Jains, *nigaṇṭhas*, who are described as “cunning, enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, hankering after gain and fame and ignorant of the welfare of their own and of others.”<sup>99</sup> The description of the *nigaṇṭhas*’ appeal to Paṇḍu to punish the convert Guhasīva for his heresy presents them as being both so clever and yet ignorant that they defend not their own belief in the Jinās but belief in the Hindu gods:<sup>100</sup>

You always salute gods, Śiva, Brahmā, etc., who are endowed with miraculous powers and who should be worshipped by all gods and men.<sup>101</sup>

Now, your subordinate king, Guhasīva, blaming such gods, worships the bone of the dead. (DV<sub>2</sub> II.93f.)<sup>102</sup>

When the Jains, acting on order of Paṇḍu, subsequently failed to burn the bone relic and to destroy it by any other means (DV III.10–18), they wondered how to explain the inexplicable power of the relic. Finally they invoked the Hindu *avatara* concept, arguing that the only explanation could be that the bone was part of the body of Janaddana (Viṣṇu), for how else could such miraculous material influence be possible (since Jinās and other liberated souls cannot interfere into this world) (DV<sub>2</sub> III.19).<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup>) *Saparattḥānabhiññeso lābhāsakkāralohuḥ | māyāvino abijjandhe nigaṇthe samu-  
paṭṭhabhi ||73||* (p. 13).

<sup>100</sup>) On strategic jainizing reinterpretations of Hindu religious terms, such as *śiva* (*mokṣa*), *mahādeva* (*jina*), in medieval Jaina texts, see Williams 1963/1983:xix.

<sup>101</sup>) *Sabbadevamanussehi vandanīye mahiddhike | sivabrahmādayo deve niccaṃ tumhe  
namassatha ||93||*.

<sup>102</sup>) *Tuyhaṃ sāmāntabhūpālo guhasīvo paṇādhunā | nindanto tādisse deve chavaṭimṭha  
vandate iti ||94||* (p. 14).

<sup>103</sup>) See Jaini 1993:244f. on the general Jaina rejection of the *avatara* concept and on the motif in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa “that Viṣṇu became incarnate as the Buddha through the power of his Yogamāyā in order to delude the demons,” which is similarly applied to the Jina Rṣabha in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. See also the story of Aśoka’s conversion

Buddhist literature abounds in attempts at warding off standard Jaina criticism of Buddhist relic worship. All the more astonishing is the occasional acknowledgment of the power of *stūpas* and miracles in Jaina canonical literature. The best examples are the legendary tales of the removal of the relics of the Jinas by gods and demigods for exclusive private worship in their own palaces in the first heaven and in the rather pleasant uppermost level of hell. Early Jaina Vinaya texts are unconcerned with the fate of the corpse of a (common) Jaina mendicant after its ceremonial disposal in the forest or elsewhere outside the abode.<sup>104</sup> The earliest textual paradigms that closely resemble currently observable practices of cremation and disposal of the remains are the mythical accounts of the funerals of selected Jinas in the proto-Purāṇas of the middle- and late-canonical period (ca. first century BCE to fifth century CE). The heavenly scenarios depicted in these texts probably reflected common practice, rather than the other way round, thus pointing to the historical continuity of Indian funeral practices, including *stūpa* construction, which in contemporary India is presently almost only practiced by Jainas and has thus become a typically Jaina custom. Having considered the passages in Rāyapaseṇaijja (Rāy<sub>1</sub>) 200g (= Rāy<sub>2</sub> 351) on the post-funerary veneration by the gods of the bone

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to Buddhism, after testing the virtues of members of various religious groups including *nigāṇṭhas*, and the erection of *stūpas* on behalf of the Buddha in Thūp<sub>1</sub>, pp. 185–190 (tr. pp. 49–55).

<sup>104</sup> Rudimentary rules for the disposal, *ujjhāṇa* (S. *ujjhana*), of the bodies of deceased ascetics can be found in the ancient Kappa (BKS) 4.24 and Vavahāra (VS<sub>1</sub>) 7.17 and in the commentaries on these almost identical passages: the sixth-century Bṛhat Kalpa Bhāṣya (BKB) 5.5497–5565 incorporating the ca. first-century CE Bṛhat Kalpa Niryukti (BKN), and the Vyavahāra Bhāṣya (VB) 3254–3308 (=7.424 ff.). Further details are given in Malayagiri's twelfth-century Vyavahāra Ṭikā (VṬ) and the Bṛhat Kalpa Sūtra Ṭikā (BKṬ) which was completed by Kṣemakīrti in 1276. For *niharāṇa* (S. *nirharāṇa*), removal of the corpse, see Niśītha Cūrṇi 11; for *pariṭṭhāvaṇīya* (S. *pariṭṭhāpanika*), abandonment of the dead, ĀvN 2.94–130 (pp. 71a–76) and ĀvC II (pp. 102–109). See J. C. Jain 1947:241f., 1988/1992:97–104; Deo 1956:428–32; Bollée 1998 II:xxiii–iv. The issue is also treated in the Bhagavatī Ārādhanā (BhĀ) 1960 ff. of the c. first-century CE Digambara *ācārya* Śivārya or Śivakoṭi, starting with the Vijahaṇā (Vihāna) section, whose contents overlap with the BKB. See Upadhye 1974/1983:41ff.; Varnī 1944/1998 IV:393f.; J. C. Jain 2004:114f.; Oerjens 1976. See Schopen 1992/1997:210 on almost identical “minimal” *nirharāṇa* procedures in early Buddhism. See also footnote 176.

relics of the Jinas, *jiṇa-sakahā*, placed in round jewelry-studded boxes hanging from memorial pillars, *ceiya-khaṃbha*,<sup>105</sup> and on the cremation of the first Jina Usabha (Rṣabha) and the removal and veneration of his remains in heaven by the gods in Jambuddivapannatti (JDP<sub>1</sub>) 2.43 (= JDP<sub>2</sub> 2.109–120), Jivājivābhigama (JĀĀ) 138 and Bhadrabāhu's Āvassaya Nijjutti (ĀvN<sub>1</sub>) 435,<sup>106</sup> all of which have been placed in the middle or late canonical period, Schubring (1935/2000 § 25: 49f.) concluded that they “most certainly followed earthly examples” and that “cremation... was the rule,” which is equally said “of the Tīrthaṅkaras” (ibid.:§ 165:290).<sup>107</sup> Given that Indras and Indrāṇīs, the model rulers whose roles are still enacted in Jain temple rituals today, are “Jainism’s model worshipers” (Babb 1996:77), if not “the exact counterparts of terrestrial prototypes” (Alsdorf 1966:19), the cliché of the removal of the bone relics by the gods could be interpreted as a metaphor for the exclusive access of Jaina laity to the relics, as opposed to other members of Indian society, such as Brahmins etc., who do not know how to venerate the relics properly, which would tally with current practice and with similar Buddhist accounts.<sup>108</sup> If Schubring is right, and the stories are not “pure mythology,” then the practice of cremating the discarded bodies of ascetics, and preserving relics, performed by householders (Jaina laity or the general public), was either introduced in the middle- or late-canonical period, or always existed side-by-side with the monastic custom of simply abandoning the corpse.

<sup>105</sup> Leumann 1885:500–4 highlighted that the description of the rite of worship indicates the precedence of *mūrtipūjā*, image-worship, over *ceiya thūbha* worship.

<sup>106</sup> Balbir 1993:133 designates the heavenly *stūpas* depicted in the JDP as “monuments commémoratifs.”

<sup>107</sup> This view was echoed by Shah 1955/1998:59, n. 4, 1987:15 and Deo 1956:322, etc., *pace* Shah 1955/1998:53, who remarked on depictions of the worship of Jaina relics by the gods: “we must remember that this is a description of a shrine whose counterpart on earth is nowhere referred to in the Jaina canons.” According to Bruhn 1954:116, the description of relic worship in Jambuddivapannatti is “*reine Mythologie*” (pure mythology). The same assessment was given by Ācārya Mahāprajña, interviewed in Sujāgarḥ 21.12.2008. According to Bruhn 1985:164 the “*de facto* situation will... always deviate to a greater or lesser extent from the literary canon.”

<sup>108</sup> For Aśoka and Sakka as “exemplars of the lay Buddhist ideal,” see Trainor 1997:122, n. 91.

With the increased integration of householders in the monastic practices of disposal, as reflected in the Śvetāmbara Ācārya Malayagiri's twelfth-century Br̥hat Kalpa Sūtra Ṭikā on BKB 5500–5565 (Schubring 1966:79f.), monastic procedures of discarding began to be officially supplemented by rites of cremation and procedures for disposing of relics that are exclusively performed by householders. There are only minor ritual differences between the cremation rituals for Jaina mendicants and laity. As a rule, funerals of mendicants are celebrated in a joyful rather than mournful manner, because mendicants are either reborn as gods in heaven or liberated from this world of suffering. Specific Jaina lay funerals, modeled on the Hindu *samskāras*, were not delineated in Jaina literature “before the fifteenth century” (Williams 1963/1983:xxiv). Even today, Jaina lay funerals tend to reflect local “Hindu” practices in a jainized way, without ever involving Brahmins and performing *śrāddha*, except for the funerals for those who performed the ritual fast to death, *saṃlekhanā*, which mimic the opulent and joyful ceremonies performed for mendicants,<sup>109</sup> in conscious reversal of common custom.<sup>110</sup> For centuries, householders who supported the *niganthas* must have either disposed of their dead in the same manner as the mendicants or performed funeral rites, like other life-cycle rituals today, according to common (Vedic or Purāṇic) custom which was jainized to different degrees, and with permission of the *ācāryas* may have simply extended their own (high class) funeral practices to the discarded corpses of the mendicants.

One reason why rites of cremation for Jaina mendicants, i.e., the jainized Vedic practices observable today, became customary at some stage (presumably only after the formal creation of the category of the supporters of the monks, *śramaṇopāsaka*, and of the concept of the fourfold community, *caturvidha-tīrtha*) may be inferred from an epi-

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Hillebrandt 1897:91, 1929:371, who stressed that the re-burial of the relics in the context of a Vedic *pitṛmedha* was a joyful occasion and celebrated with music.

<sup>110</sup> See Parry 1994:184f. for “Hindu” parallels. For details of modern Jaina lay funerals see *infra*. Ethnographies and modern funeral guidelines for expatriate Jains in the UK and North America reveal many “Hindu” elements. See Oshwal Association of the U.K. 2002:11–21, Salgia 2004. The flexibility of lay practices is exemplified by Salgia's 2004:16 recommendation: “Generally, Jains do not collect ashes, but if this is specifically desired, then that is to be arranged.”

sode in *Viy*<sub>1</sub> 3.1.2a (160b–166a). This passage narrates the punishment of the Asuras by the Devas led by Īsāṇa (Īśāna), the ruler of the northern half of the lowest celestial sphere, after their maltreatment of the corpse of the non-Jaina ascetic Tāmila, although he is portrayed as “unwise” because of his instrumental rather than salvifically oriented practice of asceticism.<sup>111</sup> Since there are no doctrinal reasons for protecting the integrity of the dead body for its ritual re-creation in heaven by way of cremation, one of the main concerns of the followers of Jainism must have been the public image of their tradition in the eyes of their opponents. If so, then it may have been an important motive for the creation of funerary rituals and monuments as well.<sup>112</sup>

It should be noted that in current practice mythical narratives of the funerals of the Jinas (paradigmatically the description of Ṛṣabha’s *parinirvāṇa* in the first book of Ācārya Hemacandra’s TŚPC 6.459–643, which focuses on the powerful miraculous qualities of the relics, a theme applied in the last book to Mahāvīra as well)<sup>113</sup> are never explicitly invoked as ritual blueprints for monastic funerals today,<sup>114</sup> nor are the few known Sanskrit manuals for Jaina lay funerals. Jaina practices of cremation and constructing memorials for the special dead are based

<sup>111</sup> Similar reasons are given by Baudhāyana *Gṛhyasūtra* 3.11f. for the burial of Brāhmaṇical renouncers, or *parivrājakas*. See Pandey 1969/1993:271.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Schopen 1992/1997 on the role of “social censure” in early Buddhism. Another concern must have been the prevention of sorcery with the help of body relics.

<sup>113</sup> The text is largely based on JDP, JĀĀ, ĀvN and their commentaries, especially the ĀvC, and Haribhadra’s eighth-century Āvaśyaka *Vṛtti* (ĀvV), and earlier universal histories of Śīlaṅka and the Digambara *ācārya* Jinasena. See Alsdorf 1936:117; Bruhn 1954:9, 56, 113; and Balbir 1993:83–5, 133. Most Digambara accounts of Ṛṣabha’s funeral differ from the Śvetāmbara versions by not mentioning bone relics, though sometimes ashes are referred to, and generally omitting the episode of the removal of the relics by the gods. However, according to the Digambara *ācārya* Jinasena’s influential ninth-century Ādi Purāṇa (ĀP) 47.343–354 Ṛṣabha’s cremation was performed by the gods who, having collected the ashes, *bhasma*, were asked by humans for a share (resembling the request to the Brahmin Droṇa to share the relics of the Buddha), who then smeared them on their limbs, in an attempt to fully absorb his purity, *pavitra*, in the manner of Hindu *bhakti* devotionalism.

<sup>114</sup> I use the term “monastic funeral” both in a general and in a specific sense: designating funeral rites performed for a mendicant, and funeral rites performed by mendicants for a mendicant. In context, the intended meaning is unambiguous.

on custom, not on textual prescription, for which there is scant and rather late evidence (Sangave 1980:251).<sup>115</sup> This does not rule out the possibility that the extant funeral customs for mendicants were once consciously informed by the procedures that were described by Jaina monks in the Jaina proto-Purāṇas and universal histories (or the other way round),<sup>116</sup> in the same way as Hindu funeral practices today are influenced by Purāṇic models (cf. Bayly 1981:184f.). They are certainly reflected in texts such as Vardhamāna Sūri's fifteenth-century Ācāradinakara (ĀD<sub>2</sub>), which contains the first known depiction of Jaina lay funerals, which for lay followers of the Kharatara Gaccha pre-

<sup>115</sup> The earliest known Śvetāmbara text that prescribes funerals or last rites, *antya-saṃskāra*, not for mendicants but for Jaina laity, seems to be the Kharatara Gaccha *ācārya* Vardhamāna Sūri's Ācāradinakara (ĀD<sub>2</sub>, pp. 68–72), which, according to Williams 1963/1983:xxiv, was composed as late as 1411, and contains many “accretions from Hinduism,” but not *śrāddha*, which is also not mentioned in the ĀṬ, the first text to delimit Jaina life-cycle rituals, as Jaini 1979:302f. pointed out. Glasenapp summarized the mortuary rites depicted in the ĀD, including the construction of relic shrines (the English rendition of S. B. Shrotri has been amended), while adding personal observations:

The dead body is put down on the ground, washed, anointed with perfumes and newly dressed. Then it is put on a bier and carried by four near relatives on the shoulders to the place of cremation, where a pyre is kept ready, which is placed on a stone, to prevent the destruction of other living beings. The wooden pile is kindled with the fire that is brought from the house of the deceased. Once the corpse is reduced to ash, the mourners return home. On the third day the ash is then thrown into a river by a near relative, while the bones are put down at a consecrated place. (Pyramid-shaped funerary monuments are later often erected over the latter, topped by a water pot [Kalaśa] made of stone.) Then the survivors go to the temple and venerate the Jina-images, and to an Upāśraya, where a monk gives preaches to them on the ephemerality of all that is worldly. — On account of the death the relatives are impure for up to ten days. Death rituals (Śrāddha), as practised by the Hindus, do not take place among right-believing Jainas. (Glasenapp 1925:417/1999:460f.)

Paul Dundas pointed to the Digambara Bhaṭṭāraka Somasena's 1610 Traivarnikācāra (T) for an early set of rules for Digambara lay funerals (Paper for Panel A9–229: Jain Studies Consultation, AAR Conference, Montreal 9.11.2009).

<sup>116</sup> Since the cremation of mendicants involves the use of fire and other violent practices, the early Jaina authors must have shied away from prescribing funeral rituals, though they may have communicated the same in a mythological guise.



scribes jainized Vedic style cremation, disposal of bone relics and periods of impurity, combined with Jaina style image veneration and instruction by monks.<sup>117</sup> In fact, I would argue that Jaina funeral practices, especially the preservation and worship of relics, are part of what Assmann (2000:34) calls the “cultural unconscious,” that is, the forgotten, ignored, obsolete, hidden, excluded, suppressed or disrespected elements of a living tradition that are still accessible but that lie outside the official tradition and are therefore “freely at one’s disposal.”

### Prehistory of the Jaina *samādhi*

The historical existence of funerary monuments for prominent Jaina mendicants is well known. Clear textual, epigraphical and archaeological evidence for Jaina *samādhis* is available from medieval times, if not unequivocally for earlier periods.<sup>118</sup> Yet, surprisingly, it has rarely been conjectured that many, if not most, of these *samādhis* are veritable relic *stūpas*, despite the accumulation of much indirect evidence of varying quality. The Śvetāmbara author Haribhadra (II), placed by Williams (1965:106) into the twelfth to thirteenth centuries,<sup>119</sup> in a famous

<sup>117</sup> See also the section on *guru-stūpa-pratiṣṭhā-vidhir-adhikārah* including *stūpa-pūjā* given in the Kharataragaccha *muni* Samayasundara’s 1616 *Sāmācārīśatakam* (SS) 81 (pp. 252f.).

<sup>118</sup> See Bühler 1890b:328f.; Commissariat 1935, 1938, 1940–1957; Granoff 1992, 1994:151; Laughlin 2003:200; Dundas 2007:54f. and Bakker 2007:39, 30, n. 67 who argues that *samādhis* and *chatris* emerged in North-India only after 1200 CE, “possibly under Islamic influence” (ibid.:1, 35, n. 79), with the exception of one “true *eḍūka*” at site T at Vākāṭaka in Mansar dated c. 500 CE (ibid.:41) that is considered to be Buddhist or Jaina (ibid.:39, 30, n. 67). The oldest reference to a Jaina commemorative funeral monument or a relic *stūpa* is the Hāthigumphā inscription of circa second or first century BCE which mentions a *niśidhi*. Settar 1990:75, Fig. 16 reproduces a relief at Śravaṇabelāgoḷa which shows monks paying respect to a *śilākuṭā*. He also points to EC II, SB.532, as the sole epigraphic reference to the practice of cremation in the historical record of Digambaras in South India: the incineration of the layman Ecirāja who in the c. twelfth century died a *sanyasana* death in Jinanāthapura, a death initiated by a vow of renunciation of bondage, which was commemorated with a *śilākuṭā*, a memorial of stone, created at the place of his cremation by his mother (ibid.:273, 74). See also footnote 121.

<sup>119</sup> With good reasons, Williams attributes the Saṃbodha Prakaraṇa not (like the Kharatara Gaccha commentators) to the eighth-century Haribhadra Sūri “Yākinī-

attack on the *caityavāsins*, or temple-dwelling pseudo-monks, complains in his *Sam̐bodha Prakaraṇa* (SP) about their unorthodox custom of building funerary monuments or *stūpas*.<sup>120</sup> The Śvetāmbara canon already contains several references to *thūbhas* and *ceiyas*, the majority collected by Pischel (1900/1981/1999:§§ 208, 134). It is not clear, however, whether the *stūpas* mentioned in the Āyāranga II,<sup>121</sup> one of the oldest canonical texts, are Jaina or, more likely, non-Jaina sacred sites. Though Schubring (1935/2000:§ 25:49f.), echoing Bhagwānlāl (1885:144),<sup>122</sup> suspected that the description of the heavenly worship

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putra,” who is explicitly mentioned in the printed edition, SP 59a, but to another Haribhadra of the 12th or later centuries: “There is special interest in stressing that the *Sam̐bodha-prakaraṇa* is not his work because it has all too often been quoted as evidence that he was an opponent of *caitya-vāsa*. That he was in fact its supporter is indicated, explicitly in the *Ṣoḍaśaka* and implicitly in the *Aṣṭaka*, despite his commentator’s efforts to prove the contrary” (Williams 1965:106). For further references, see Balbir 1993:83, n. 142.

<sup>120</sup> SP II (Chapter: Atha Gurvadhikārah) v. 71, p. 14a: *naṃdi-bali-piḍha-karaṇam hīṇāyārāṇa mayāṇiya-gurūṇam*. They get “topes constructed where their lascivious preceptors [whose conduct is bad] were cremated” (N. Sahal’s translation of Nathmal’s 1968/2000:3 Hindi translation). It is not clear, however, what kind of shrine is referred to by *naṃdi-bali-piḍha*. See also Flügel 2008b:240.

<sup>121</sup> ĀS<sub>1</sub> 2.1.2.3 & ĀS<sub>2</sub>: *thūbha-mabesu* (S. *stūpa-mahotsava*), ĀS<sub>1</sub> 2.3.3.1 & ĀS<sub>2</sub>: *caiyakanda thūbha* (S. *caityakṛta stūpa*). ĀS<sub>1</sub> 2.10.17: *maḍaya-thūbhiyā* (S. *mṛtaka-stūpikā*). In his translation of the passage, Jacobi rendered *maḍaya-thūbhiyā*, which the text contrasts with *mṛtaka-caitya*, ambiguously as “sarcophagous”: “A monk or a nun should not ease nature where charcoal or potash is produced, or the dead are burnt, or on the sarcophaguses or shrines of the dead.” For the original text, see ĀS<sub>2</sub> 2.10.23.

<sup>122</sup> Bhagwānlāl’s 1885:143 drawing of an inscribed sculpture found by himself in Mathurā (together with Leumann’s 1885a summary of the description of relic worship in the Rāyapaseṇaijja) was regarded by Bühler 1890b:328 as the first proof “that the Jainas formerly worshiped Stūpas.” Interestingly enough, “Premachandraji, a learned yati of the *Kharatara Gachcha*”, that is, a monastic order that is renowned for its funerary monuments, gave Bhagwānlāl 1885:138 the false impression that the items inside the *sthāpanācāryas* (on which see Shah 1987:19f.) used in the rituals of Mūrtipūjaka monks, represent relics of the Tīrthaṅkaras:

Like the Buddhists the early Jainas also worshipped the bone-relics of Tīrthaṅkaras. Their books generally mention that after death Tīrthaṅkaras are burnt by the gods who take away their bones to svarga for worship. The Jaina

of the relics of the Jinas, *jiṇa-sakahā* (S. *sakthin* = *asthi*), “most certainly follows earthly examples” and that the Jains must have “erected stūpas since long,” he remained skeptical about the either “untenable” or “inexplicable” interpretations of Jayaswal (1918) of the famous Hāthīgumphā inscription of king Khāravela of Kaliṅga at Udayagiri (Orissa) from the second to first century BCE (Sircar 1965:213–21) which offers what seems to be the first epigraphic evidence of bone relic *stūpa* worship amongst the Jains, though no relic chamber was found at the site of the “*stūpa*” which was excavated nearby.<sup>123</sup> In line 14 of the inscription, the words *kāyya-nisīdiya* or *kāya-nisīdiyā* appear, which Jayaswal and Banerji (1933:89) translated as “relic memorial,” though the word *kāya*, corporeal, could also refer to the body of a living monk and *kāya-nisīdiyā* to the caves at Udayagiri themselves, offered as a resting place for monks during their rain retreat, as critics such as Barua (1929:46, 301; 1938:468, 480–82)<sup>124</sup> pointed out.<sup>125</sup>

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temples of the present do not show any *stūpas* or worship of the bones of Tīrthaṃkaras, but there can be little doubt that the practice once existed, as so late as the thirteenth century the Jainas were worshipping at Mathurā a large stūpa taking it to be the stūpa of the Tīrthaṃkara Supārśva [note 1 refers to Jinaprabhasūri’s Tīrthakalpa, P. F.]. At the present day Jaina *sādhus* of the Kharatara *gachcha* use for worship a five-toothed sandal goblet called *thāpanā* and this is a copy of the jaws of the Tīrthaṃkaras. So the Jaina nuns or *sādhvīs* use for worship as *thāpanā* a kind of shell, *śankha*, which they take to be the knee bones of Mahāvīrasvāmī. These facts prove that *stūpas* and tree worship were common among early Jainas. (p. 144)

<sup>123</sup> “The Nishīdī at the Kumārī Hill (the Hill where the inscription is engraved) was not an ornamental tomb but a real stūpa, for it is qualified *kāyya*, corporeal (i.e. ‘having remains of the body’). Thus it seems that the Jains called their stūpas or chaityas *Nishīdīs*. The Jaina stūpa discovered at Mathurā and the datum of the *Bhadra-bāhu-charita* saying that the disciples of Bhadrabāhu worshipped the bones of their Master, establish the fact that the Jainas (at any rate the Digambaras) observed the practice of erecting monuments on the remains of their teachers . . .” (Jayaswal 1918:338f.).

<sup>124</sup> He offered an alternative, equally imaginative, reading. The view of “Jina Vijaya Sūri” reported in a footnote (p. 481, n. 203) that “the Jaina recluses referred to in the inscription belonged, in all likelihood, to the Yāpana-saṃgha,” (i.e., to a “heterodox” Jaina sect from the Śvetāmbara point of view), is being recycled in the literature (see also the attribution of the Mathurā finds to the “heterodox” Ardhamālakas by U. P. Shah and others, discussed by Jaini 1995:479ff.).

<sup>125</sup> Sircar 1942/1965:217 & 220, accordingly, explained *kāyanisīdiyā*, S. *kāya-nisīdiyā*,

According to Upadhye (1982:46), the word *nisīhiyā* (S. *nisidhi*, etc.), seat or resting place especially of a Digambara ascetic who performs the death-fast, refers to a memorial erected either at the spot of the religious death, *saṃlekhanā*, or of the cremation of a Jaina ascetic, or “where his bone relics etc., were buried.”<sup>126</sup> On the evidence of Digambara *nisidhis* in southern India, Settar (1989:215, 268) and Dundas (2006:400, n. 37) assume that the word *nisidhi* referred exclusively to commemorative monuments “rather than a physical relic.”

The reluctance of archaeologists to consider the early historical existence of Jaina relic *stūpas* is unsurprising, since no Jaina (but also no Vedic) bone relics have ever been found, not even at the *stūpa* excavated at the site known as Kaṅkāli Ṭīlā,<sup>127</sup> in Mathurā,<sup>128</sup> where many

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with “*varṣāsu viśrāma-lābhāya*.” Jayaswal’s and Banerjee’s reading of this passage was restated by Kant 1971/2000:30; Kant was criticized by Norman 1973; Schwarzschild 1975 and von Hinüber 1975 who all, like Schubring, refrained from commenting on *kāya-nisīdiya*.

<sup>126</sup> “[I]t must be seen whether it is correct to render *nisīdiyā* as *stūpa* in the Khāvela inscription” (Upadhye 1933:264–6).

<sup>127</sup> Literally, “hill of skeletons.” Kaṅkāli is also the name of a Hindu goddess (Durga) which is still venerated at the site, next to a cremation ground.

<sup>128</sup> Further suggested sites of “Jaina *stūpas*,” in Udayagiri/Orissa (Bhagwānlāl 1885:143f., Jayaswal 1918), Rāmnagar (A.A. Führer’s Progress Report of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for 1891–2, Epigraphical Section, cited by Lüders 1912:161, Glasenapp 1925:398 / 1999:440f.), Taxila (Marshall 1951 II:463–66), Pakbira, Benusagar, Kesnagarh (Choudhury 1956:47, 65), Maniyar Maṭh, Rājagr̥ha, (District Gazetteer of Patna, in Choudhury 1956:93), Vaḍḍamāṇu (Sastri et al. 1992; Kasturibai & Rao 1995), and Gajapantha near Maṅgī Tuṅgī (Hegewald 2009:135f.) revealed no evidence of relic worship. The evidence for a Jaina *stūpa* in Rāmnagar has been conclusively deconstructed by Lüders 1912:161–7. See also Huxley forthcoming, pp. 8f. The credentials of the *stūpas* in Taxila and Vaḍḍamāṇu to be Jaina rather than Buddhist monuments have been questioned with good arguments. Shah 1955/1998:10 insisted that “the total absence of any other Jaina relic in the whole site [of Taxila] excavated hitherto cannot be disregarded.” The evidence at Vaḍḍamāṇu is also slight and, despite the name of the site, cannot establish beyond reasonable doubt the existence of a Jaina *stūpa* “in the midst of a grand Buddhist desert” (Shastri 2000:165). Whether the unnamed structure at Gajapantha photographed by Hegewald 2009:135, though “closely resembling the shape of a *stūpa*” (ibid.:136), represents a memorial is unclear. Claims for *stūpa* structures in Rājagr̥ha cited by Choudhury 1956:92 and in Patna by Hegewald 2009:17 are equally speculative.

Jaina votive tablets, *āyāgapata*, depicting *stūpa* worship with flowers, etc., and inscriptions pointing to their Jaina origin<sup>129</sup> were discovered;<sup>130</sup> these led Bühler (1891:61f.) to the conclusion that the *stūpa* was constructed by Jains “several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.”<sup>131</sup> However, “no record of all these operations has ever been published, so there is almost no proof as to the exact finding places of the objects of the Kaṅkāli Ṭilā,” as Lüders (1961:41) later remarked.<sup>132</sup> The entry by Alois Anton Führer (1892:141) in his list of *Accessions to the Lucknow Museum During the Month of March 1890* stating that “10 pieces of old pottery filled with the ashes of some Jaina monks” were “excavated from the Kaṅkāli Ṭilā, Mathurā” and donated by the unnamed “Assistant Archaeological Surveyor, North-Western Provinces

<sup>129</sup> Shah 1987:28, n. 45 and Jaini 1995/2000:311 associate the inscriptions and reliefs, identified as Digambara by Führer (Bühler 1890a:169), with the Jaina Arddhaphālaka (S. Ardhaphālaka) sect which, they argue, was identical with the now extinct Yāpaniya tradition.

<sup>130</sup> The excavations at Kaṅkāli Ṭilā were begun in 1888 by Burgess and continued by Führer in 1889–1891 and 1896 on request of Bühler (Lüders 1961:40). Based on a letter from Führer dated 11.3.1890, Bühler 1890a:169, 1890b:313f., reported the finds and speculated: “I see also a trace of the worship of Stūpas in the Chaityavandana, the worship of Chaityas, incumbent on all Śrāvakas, and I believe that the term *chaitya* or *cheia* originally meant ‘a funerary monument in honour of a teacher or prophet,’ not a temple as it is now interpreted” (ibid.:328f.).

<sup>131</sup> See Bühler’s 1891:61f. initial comments on a rubbing of the inscription describing a “Voḍḍha (?) Stūpa,” received from Führer 27.12.1890. Bühler 1892a, 1892b, 1894a, 1894b, 1896, 1898 published, translated and analyzed most of the inscriptions. See also the work of Lüders 1961, Shah 1987:15f. and Quintanilla 2000, 2007. The *stūpa* in Mathurā is frequently referred to in Śvetāmbara and Digambara Jaina literature, which strengthened Bühler’s argument. For instance in BKB 5824, Hariṣeṇa’s Bṛhatkathakośa (BKK) pp. 22–27, composed 932 CE, Somadeva’s tenth-century Yaśastilakacampū (YC) VI.17–18, Jinaprabha Sūri’s fourteenth-century VTK pp. 17f. and MSS, and Rājamallā’s sixteenth-century Jambūsvāmicaritra, cited by A. N. Upadhye in BKK, p. 379. These sources, and the evidence in ĀvC p. 567 pointing to a *stūpa* of Munisuvrata in Vesālā (Vaiśālī), and a copper of Pāhārpur in Bengal dated 479 CE, unearthed by Dikshīt 1933:62 (EI 20), referring to a “Nirgranthanātha *āchārya* Guhanandin belonging to the Pañcha-stūpa section of Benares” (Majumdar 1943 I:410), are reviewed by Shah 1955/1998:62–4.

<sup>132</sup> See also Lüders 1912; Lüders 1961:43, n. 2 and the work of Falk 1991; Phelps 2007 and Huxley 2006.

and Oudh Circle,” that is himself,<sup>133</sup> was never commented upon. If the ashes came indeed from the location of the *stūpa* at Kaṅkāli Ṭīlā, which according to Jinaprabha Sūri’s unlikely account was repaired in the eighth century on the instructions of Bappabhaṭṭi Sūri,<sup>134</sup> rather than from the two Jaina temples, apparently destroyed in the twelfth century,<sup>135</sup> or from other locations nearby, then this would be the oldest archaeological evidence for Jaina bone relic worship. Unfortunately, no further details are given, and it remains uncertain whether the relic vessels are still in existence, if they ever were<sup>136</sup> (Fig. 18).

For an archaeologist, the only way to conclusively prove the proposed hypothesis that many if not most surviving historical Jaina funerary monuments are in fact relic *stūpas* would be to conduct excavations at the sites of existing *samādhis*, an activity understandably prevented by Jaina communities, or to undertake expensive ground-penetrating radar scans.<sup>137</sup> Alternatively, one must wait for one or other find that emerges during the frequent renovations or relocations of *samādhis* to be reported.

<sup>133</sup> I am grateful to my colleague Andrew Huxley for pointing me to the *Accessions to the Lucknow Museum* and sharing his yet unpublished findings on the life and work of Führer with me.

<sup>134</sup> VTK, cited rather doubtfully by Shah 1955/1998:64: “it is not likely that even a few sculptures of Bhappabhaṭṭi’s age could not survive at the site.” Handiqui 1949/1968:433 infers that the *stūpa* still existed at the time of the tenth-century Digambara author Somadeva, who in his *Yaśastilaka* of 959 CE mentions that the *stūpa* in Mathurā “is still known by the name of Devanirmita.” According to the introduction to the VMP by Agaracanda and Bhaṃṣvaralāla Nāhaṭā, p. 11, Jinaprabha himself caused the “Mathurā Tīrtha” to be renovated.

<sup>135</sup> Smith 1901:48 commented on inscription Fig. 3 in his book on Führer’s Mathurā findings: “The inscription was recorded within about five years of the sack of Mathurā by Mahmūd of Ghaznī in A.D. 1018, when the temples are said to have been burnt. It would seem that the Jain temples of the Kankālī mound must have escaped destruction.”

<sup>136</sup> Thus far, the present writer’s efforts to trace these reliquaries which usually contain bone relics have been without success. It is unclear why Führer refers to “Jaina monks.”

<sup>137</sup> See also Bakker 2007:25 on the lack of archaeological investigation of Hindu memorials.



Figure 18. Hindu women venerate an ancient fragment of the Jaina Stūpa or temples at Kañkālī Ṭilā depicting Kubera while pieces of broken Jina statues receive less attention, photo by the author 6.1.2010.

### Jaina Monastic Funerals and the Theory of Secondary Burial

The Indian pre-history of the practices of collecting (*asthi-saṃcayana*) and burying charred bones and ashes after cremation and erecting sepulchral monuments, *śmaśāna*, is uncertain.<sup>138</sup> As a general practice,

<sup>138)</sup> Falk 2000:78 stressed that early Vedic literature, especially the late Ṛg Veda (RV) 10.15.14, does not contain a single unequivocal passage on the abandonment or burial of cremated remains nor on inhumation. By contrast, the late Vedic Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra (ĀGS) 4.5 (c. 500 BCE) prescribes the ceremonial collection in an urn and burial of the remaining charred bones after a cremation while reciting the verses of RV 10.18.11–13 which themselves ambiguously refer to burial mounds: *sādāna* = “*citi* oder *çmaçāna*” (Hillebrandt 1929:371; Geldner 1923/2003:260, n. 1 interprets RV 7.89.1 as referring to an urn). Secondary burials of charred bones and ashes are also described in the Pitṛmedha Sūtras, in particular the Bhāradvājapitṛmedha Sūtra and the earlier Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa (JB) 1.46–49, both summarized by Falk 2000:75–7. See Caland’s 1896:§ 53–60:99–112 classical textual study of the rituals

secondary burial pre-dates the Vedic period.<sup>139</sup> For Vedic and post-Vedic developments, three principal developmental stages are posited by most Vedic scholars today: (a) inhumation, (b) cremation and subsequent burial of the remains, with or without a funerary monument, (c) cremation and subsequent immersion of the remains. The continuing presence of all these practices in contemporary India shows that, generally, later developments did not replace earlier ones but were added on.<sup>140</sup>

In summary fashion, Oldenberg (1894/1917:556f.) noted that the widespread distinction between “preliminary” and “final” burial (the latter facilitating after a transitional period the final integration of the deceased into a yonder world which is celebrated with a collective feast), was also prominent in classical Vedic ritual, where the charred bones remaining after cremation are collected into a jar which is buried under a tree (or hung onto a tree) until it is removed again and either re-buried under a funeral memorial or discarded into the floods of the river Ganges (metaphorically, any river), which is now standard practice. Maybe in order to safeguard the model of double burial, which was later canonized by Hertz (1907/1960)<sup>141</sup> according to whom the separation of flesh and bone by means of cremation is the first significant step of the transformational ritual sequence and the burial of the remains the second,<sup>142</sup> Caland (1896:§ 72:129) suggested

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surrounding the erection of a funerary tumulus (*citi*) containing a bone relic over the cremation ground, *śmaśāna*.

<sup>139</sup> For archaeological evidence see Das 1969–70, Singh 1970, Gupta 1972, also Ghosh 1989. According to Falk 2000:73, the oldest, isolated, find of several urns filled with charred bones in Cemetery H in Harrappa is dated c. 2000 BCE. See Caland 1896:166f. who found descriptions of the rites for the erection of funeral monuments, *śmaśāna*, only in three Vedic texts: Taittirīya-, Kauśika- and Kātyāyana Sūtras (ibid.:xiii). The *locus classicus* of the inhumation of partially cremated bones is Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra 4.5, citing RV 10.16.14, 10.18.10, 10.18.13. This passage is referred to by Eggeling in footnote three on ŚB 11.6.3.11, containing the curse “not even thy bones shall reach thy home!” On this custom, see in particular ŚB 13.8.3 on the post-cremation burial and the erection of round sepulchral mounds in eastern India. The passage has been widely commented upon, for instance by Caland 1888:24, Das 1969–70:62, Knipe 1977:122, n. 6. and Patil 1982:49f., 57.

<sup>140</sup> See Butzenberger 1998:3, n. 5.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Parkin 1996:195, n. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Mitra 1870:254f. found already a “double ceremonial of first incineration and



that the second burial of the charred bones and erection of a funeral monument, *śmaśāna*, after cremation and first burial under a tree, was not common but “*facultativ*,” a voluntary practice performed in special cases only, which would also explain why in the texts of the younger Taittirīya schools this ritual is described after the expiation rituals. Hillebrandt (1911:475f.) speculated that “the non-obligatory *śmaśānachiti* may have been originally an independent custom,” since in this case “the urn is not interred, but cast away.”

Alongside immersion, the practice of collecting and re-burying the charred bones at the place of cremation is still mentioned in later ritual manuals that are currently used, such as the *Garuḍa Purāṇa Sāroddhāra* (GPS) 10.75 of Naunidhirāma and the *Antyeṣṭipaddhati* (AP) 4.22 of the sixteenth-century Śivaite author Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa. It was also documented in early “ethnographies” such as Abbé Dubois’s (1817/1943:400, 490) depiction of Brāhmaṇical funeral rites in South India, based on a report of the Jesuit Coeurdoux of 1777 (Bronkhorst 2009:11).<sup>143</sup>

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subsequent burial” depicted in the *Āraṇyaka* of the Black Yajurveda rather than a double burial, but noted that perhaps instead of a first burial the text recommends hanging the urn with the remains from a tree before final burial. See footnote 159.

<sup>143</sup> Because the practice of double burial is not universally evident in the Vedic and post-Vedic sources, Hertz 1907/1960:43 argued that in India “the cremation, and the burial of the burned bones correspond respectively to the first and the second burial.” In a letter to Pierre Roussel of 9 December 1907, he conceded, however, that cremation is a problem for the theory, because of the swift transition from state A to B, and suggests three possible solutions with a preference for the last: “a) the temporary sojourn of the soul on earth and the period of mourning have nothing to do with the state of the body; b) there is still a double rite, but the second takes place as if the first had not mattered; c) the second rite is reduced to a ‘simple appendix to the cremation,’ as in the Hindu rite — i.e. there is a very short but still perceptible interval” (Parkin 1996:195, n. 1).

Hertz and subsequently Parry 1982:101f., 1994:184–8 focused exclusively on the rebirth symbolism associated with Indic practices of cremation, interpreted as a technique for accelerating the separation of flesh and bone. But the emergence of the custom of disposal of the bone relics through immersion rather than burial or entombment, and the literary motifs of secondary cremation and of the final disappearance of relics, have drawn little attention in the literature, apart from stray remarks.

Jaina cremation rituals and the custom of preserving the relics of renowned ascetics are from a doctrinal point of view purely conventional affairs. Evidently, they merely play on the Vedic symbolism of a ritually solicited ascent of the deceased to heaven, rather than “rendering the deceased person immortal” (Sharf 1992:5) in the manner of a Vedic *antyeṣṭi* or funeral sacrifice, and do not intentionally produce relics, two of the presumed aims of the cremation of Buddhist monks (Strong 2004a:115). In contrast to the official or unofficial practice of preserving relics, which in one way or another presumes a continuing material link between the deceased and the living,<sup>144</sup> Jaina mythology posits the final disappearance of all mortal remains of the Jinas which were taken away by the gods from the middle world.<sup>145</sup> The metaphor of disappearance, I would argue, symbolizes salvation rather than rebirth. Mortuary rituals symbolically associated with salvation, such as the immersion of funerary relics into a river without leaving a trace in the Hindu traditions, or the simple disposal of corpses and their subsequent dismemberment by vultures or other animals in early Jainism, may thus be interpreted as a “tertiary” form of disposal additional to the two older forms discussed by Oldenberg (1894/1917:556f.). In my view, the theoretical distinction between three rather than two forms of disposal (“burial”) may resolve the difficulty, raised by Faure (1991:134f.) and Strong (2004a:116, 235), in applying Hertz’ (1907/1960) general theory of secondary burial to “the funeral of someone who has put an end to passage.” The problem results from

<sup>144</sup> However: “The very existence of a reliquary cult presupposes the notion that there is no possibility of absolute continuity between the community of the living and that of the dead” (Hertz 1907/1960:57).

<sup>145</sup> On Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance, see Bhāgavata Purāṇa (BP) 11.30–31. See Trainor 1997:197 and Strong 2004a:221–28, 230 on Buddhaghosa’s fifth-century account of the reassemblance and final disappearance without a trace of the Buddha’s relics in a self-kindling fire, which can be contrasted with the depiction of Mahāvīra’s death without a written trace on his remains in Jinacariya 128. In the same way, in the late Vedic tradition, which is echoed by this Buddhist motif, the continuing existence of relics represents the continuing life of the ancestors in heaven. See Caland’s 1896:§ 60:110–12 characterization of the “facultative” rite of *punardāha* or re-burning after which no bones are left, which is mentioned only in the Taittirīyakaḥ: “Nach dieser Wiederverbrennung kann natürlich das Grabdenkmal (śmaśāna) nicht errichtet werden, weil die Knochen fehlen” (ibid.:111).

the non-differentiation of funerals for a mendicant who is reborn as a god in heaven from funerals for a being that has died its final death, because only the first type of funeral can be interpreted as a rite of social regeneration in Hertz' sense.<sup>146</sup> In the case of the destruction or removal of all relics without a trace, symbolic representations of the deceased and his teaching remain the only points of reference for social reproduction, though in practice such conceptual distinctions are easily confounded.

Schopen (1994b/2005:361) revived the argument that “the Hindu deposition of mortuary remains at a *tīrtha* and the Buddhist deposition at a *stūpa* are functional — in part, even formal — equivalents,” aimed at securing the attainment of heaven (ibid.:363). Strong (2004a: 174) added: “or, alternatively, liberation (*mokṣa*).” He argues that in the case of the Buddha “the new steady state that is passed into is that of the relics,” rather than *nibbāna* (ibid.:235). His evidence is the peculiar and almost unique method of the Buddha's cremation which produced not charred bones, as usual, but “gem-like relic-grains” untainted by any ashes (Strong 2007b:44f.). The assumption here is that the two practices of burning a corpse on a pyre and dissolving it in an iron casket of boiling oil produce relics of different quality and value. Hence, these represent two different types of funerals.<sup>147</sup>

One of the problems with this argument derives from the Buddhist rejection of the animistic doctrine of spiritual substances on which Hertz' version of the theory of psycho-physical parallelism is predicated. In the Jain case, and in Hindu soteriologies,<sup>148</sup> there is no

<sup>146</sup> Rozenberg 2007:114 also focuses on the contradiction between rebirth and the accomplishment of *nirvāṇa*. But his argument that the preservation of the relics of an extraordinary saint, *arabant*, who is cremated in the same manner as common monks in Burma indicates the monk's accomplishment of liberation echoes Levin's 1930, Sharf's 1992:5 and Strong's 2004a:235 “somewhat artificial” conclusion that, in the absence of the notion of a liberated soul, the relics of a cremated Buddhist saint that are preserved are “the new steady state that is passed into.”

<sup>147</sup> A US American undertaker, interviewed by Strong 2004a:106, n. 21, confirmed that “frying” a corpse in oil would indeed liquefy the flesh and leave the uncharred bones floating in a greasy “mess.”

<sup>148</sup> See Davis 1988:41, 46, 49 analysis of the revisionist Śaiva Siddhānta cremation ritual which is not only defined as a sacrificial act but also as an expiation, *prāyaścitta*, as a “door to final *mokṣa*” for the soul, *ātman*, of the initiated *mumuṣu*: “For his soul,

doctrinal problem in defining “what” is passing “where” after final salvation, as in the case of the Buddha’s *parinibbāna*. An immortal spiritual entity, both life-force and omniscient essence, we are told, is migrating to a realm of the liberated souls, *jīva* or *ātman*, located not beyond but within the physical confines of the world. The imagery is one of immanent transcendence. In the case of liberation, however, no physical remnant is left that is of intrinsic religious value. Only the *dharma* and the *saṅgha* remain and symbolic representations of the deceased.

### Contemporary Jaina Funerals

Jaina laity today practice a wide variety of funeral ceremonies that represent variations of Brāhmaṇical custom. Particularly interesting is the fate of the remains, *avasesa* (S. *avaśeṣa*), of well known Jaina ascetics, usually *ācāryas*, in particular of the charred pieces of bones, *haddī*, and nails, *nack*, which do not burn away completely.<sup>149</sup> Because of their shape, they are colloquially called “flowers,” *puṣpa*, in Rājasthān.<sup>150</sup> Generally, as in the Vedic tradition, the terms *asthi* (P. *aṭṭhi*), bone, and *bhasma*, ash, are used to refer to funerary relics. The Buddhist preference for the terms *dhātu* (P. *dhāu*), essence, and *śarīrāni* (P. *śarīrāni*), body relics, is not replicated in the Jaina tradition.<sup>151</sup> Relics are usually not, as in Buddhism, under the tight control of clerics and “confined within the ritually defined boundaries of monastic complexes” (Trainor

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death is no passage to a realm of ancestor spirits or to another human rebirth, but to the altogether different ontological state of liberation, in which it becomes completely similar to Śiva” (ibid.:44).

<sup>149</sup>) Occasionally, the robe of an ascetic does not burn and thus acquires the aura of “immortality.” The clothing and *muhapattī* of Jinadatta Sūri of the Kharatara Gaccha, for instance, are displayed in the famous Jaina *bhaṇḍāra* in Jaisalmer. In Jaina narrative literature similar practices are described.

<sup>150</sup>) Cf. Grodzins Gold 1990:79, 124; Parry 1994:188. For similar analogies between bodily relics and flowers in Europe see Goody and Poppi 1994:160, n. 39 cited by Dundas 1997:140.

<sup>151</sup>) Taylor 1993:176 observed that in Buddhist northern Thailand uncrystallized bone fragments of monks are called *atthi* but are not considered relics worthy of worship which are designated *phrathaat = śarīrika-dhātu*. Strong 2004a: 12 notes that the Sanskrit version of the MPNS “refers to the Buddha’s remains as *asthi*.”

1997:31). On the contrary, most of the desirable bone relics and ashes find their way into the households of common Jain laity, and some are kept by individual Jaina mendicants.

Many Jains collect the ashes and charred bones after a common lay cremation and bury them either at the site of cremation or at an unmarked spot outside the village or town.<sup>152</sup> Amongst the Osvāls in North India today, usually the eldest son of a deceased person carefully scrutinizes the ash for *puṣpas* on the day after the cremation.<sup>153</sup> They are put into an earthen jug, *kulhaṛa* or *kulhaṛī*, and are then taken either by a family member or by a Brahmin family priest, *purohita*, to a sacred spot along the Ganges or another river, to be cast into its floods, *phūla bolāṇo*.<sup>154</sup> Sometimes, the bones of family ancestors, *pitara*, which Hindus usually store in a jar in order to submerge them later into a river or into the sea,<sup>155</sup> are now collected by Rājasthānī Osvāls and placed under memorial stones at the place of cremation, as was done in the Vedic period and by the Rājputs in the not too distant past.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>) Documentations of variant Jaina funeral customs in the colonial Gazetteers reveal many parallels to Brāhmaṇical customs prescribed in ritual texts such as the AP and the Jaina ĀD, but also deliberate omissions and changes, especially in the cremation rituals for ascetics. See Campbell 1886:144–46; Stevenson 1918:494; Sangave 1980:345f., 250, 252.

<sup>153</sup>) Strong 2004a:11, referring to R. Buswell's personal communication, Ruppert 2000:291 and Taylor 1993:175–7, notes that in Korea, Japan and Thailand "unburnt bone fragments are . . . not considered to be relics," only crystallized gem-like relics.

<sup>154</sup>) The origins of this "Hindu" custom are obscure and are discussed by Mishra 1991:50. Stevenson 1910:48 observed interesting variations between Hindu and Jaina customs of cremation and the river disposal of the remains in Gujarat. In rare cases the ashes of Jaina laity are buried at the site of cremation and covered with a platform, *caukī*, to become a place of commemoration. See Glasenapp 1925: 417/1999:460 on relevant textual prescriptions in the ĀD.

<sup>155</sup>) Reportedly, Hindus assume that the spirits of those that have died are embodied in the flowers. See Grodzins Gold 1990:61, 63, 85–89, ch. 4 and Kane 1941/1953:242 for textual sources of such modern practices. Strong 2004a:11, 14–16 cites the key evidence in ĀGS 4.5 and Goswamy 1980:6 for Hindu practices of searching for bone fragments after the cremation and for the burial of the uncremated bodies of Hindu *sannyāsins* (who died their first death during initiation).

<sup>156</sup>) A great number of cenotaphs for the leaders and ordinary members of the Hindu Dadu Panthī sect in Naryana near Jaipur are mentioned by Mishra 1991:106. For

Similar procedures of cremation are observed in monastic funerals. There is only legendary evidence for Shah's (1955/1998:60) suggestion that in Jaina monastic funerals, as in the case of the Buddha, "the cremation is done in such a way as to save the various bones."<sup>157</sup> Cremation fires in modern India do not differ much from those described in the texts. They do not produce pristine relics, but leave a messy jumble of ashes and pieces of charred bone. The *puṣpas* of common Jaina monks and nuns are usually discarded in the desert or submerged into a river, without ever involving Brahmins. Only the *puṣpas* of exceptional monks (rarely, if ever, nuns) are treated differently.<sup>158</sup> They are not all cast away, but at least some are preserved in one or another building until they are buried underneath either simple cremation platforms, *cabūtarās*, or elaborate funeral monuments, constructed in a variety of shapes over or near the sites of cremation. Similar to Vedic<sup>159</sup> and Buddhist customs,<sup>160</sup> the collection of relics is not a public event.<sup>161</sup> Pieces of bone, *asthi*, and ashes, *bhasma*, are usually snuck away in the

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late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Hindu *śmaśāna* temples or *samādhi-mandiras* of the Bhawal Rājas in Joydevpur Bengal, see Choudhury 2007:63. For evidence from post-canonical Jaina texts, see Granoff 2003:202f.

<sup>157</sup> The quasi Vedic method described by Hemacandra differs from the one depicted in the Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta according to which the corpse of the Buddha was cooked in oil until all flesh was dissolved to generate pristine relics: "When the flesh, et cetera had been consumed, the Stanita-gods at once extinguished the pyre with water from the Ocean of Milk" (TŚPC 13.245–272, translated by Johnson 1962 VI:351, cf. TŚPC 6.522–565, translated by Johnson 1931 I:364).

<sup>158</sup> In contemporary Thailand also, two types of Buddhist monks are distinguished: saints, *arahān* (S. *arhanta*) and common monks. Only the "wish-fulfilling" relics, *asthi*, of the former are keenly collected. See Tambiah 1984:20ff.; Taylor 1993:175–7. See also Rozenberg 2007:128 for the preservation of relics exclusively of the Buddhist saints, *yahanda*, of Burma.

<sup>159</sup> RV 10.18.10–13 recited in the ĀGS 4.5 pp. 85f. Compare Heesterman 1993:175 and Malamoud 1999:137f. on the *asthi-yajña*, sacrifice of bones, in Vedic *sattra* ritual.

<sup>160</sup> See for instance Keyes 1975:54, n. 21, pp. 58f., Tambiah 1984:108–10, Brac de la Perrière 2001:252 on the direct involvement of Buddhist monks in the collection and distribution of bones and ashes.

<sup>161</sup> Since the present author was given funerary remains (ashes) both from a Sthānakavāsī (Śramaṇasaṅgha) and Mūrtipūjaka (Tapā Gaccha) monk, it is clear that, at least in some cases, Jaina monks are informally also involved in the collection and distribution of funerary relics.

early hours of the morning after the cremation by eager devotees. The rest are collected in an unceremonious manner by officials, without the ritual precautions of brāhmaṇical *asthi-saṃcayana* procedures.<sup>162</sup> Only for Jaina lay funerals several reports of the customary performance of quasi Brāhmaṇical rituals exist<sup>163</sup> such as circumambulating the pyre anti-clockwise, pouring water mixed with milk on the ashes,<sup>164</sup> collecting the remaining charred bones systematically,<sup>165</sup> beginning with

<sup>162</sup> For late Vedic rules for the collection of the bones after the cremation, see Mitra 1870:253–5 (Āraṇyaka VI of the Black Yajurveda), Caland 1896:§ 53ff.:99f., and Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa's sixteenth-century Antyeṣṭipaddhati (AP) 4.22–26 which still prescribes Vedic practices of secondary burial of relics: first under a tree and then their excavation and final immersion in a river, rather than re-burial (Müller 1992:23, 139–46). For contemporary variations of the basic rite, see Monier-Williams 1891:284f., 302; Oldenberg 1894/1917:581, n. 2; Hillebrandt 1911:476; Knipe 1977:115f. and Crooke 1899:286 on the “survival” of this rite of bone collection in modern Hinduism, “when a day or two after cremation, the bones and ashes are swept up and buried there and then, or reserved for consignment to some holy river.” See Crooke (ibid.:288) and Mitra 1870:254 (Āraṇyaka VI of the Black Yajurveda) for the custom to hang the “urn or bundle... from the branch of a sami or palāsa tree” before final burial, which may be reflected in the Jaina depictions of the veneration of the relics of the Jinās by the gods. Hillebrandt 1911:478 (citing the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* 3, 8, p. 489, and Caland 1896:105, n. 884) states that accounts of how remains are put in a new barrel and thrown into the water or desert or other lonely place exist only “from the latest period”: “The Kapola Banias tie up bones in a piece of ‘silken cloth, and the bundle so made is suspended to the bough of a tree in the burning-ground’.”

<sup>163</sup> Campbell's 1886:144f. evidence on transportation of sacrificial fire from the home to the cremation ground, ritual bathing of the chief mourner during the cremation, the ritual role of a life stone, the extinction of the fire “with offerings of milk, sugar and water,” subsequent periods of impurity, and the performance of the “*shrāddh* or mind-rite,” suggests that the funeral rites of the Digambaras in nineteenth-century southern India were less jainized than lay funerals of the Jaina castes in northern India. See Sangave 1980:252; also Singh 1894:130.

<sup>164</sup> One amongst numerous reasons given in Vedic and post-Vedic texts is to ease the pain of the deceased, *preta*, and to feed it. See UK 24.12 summarized by Abegg 1921:22, GPS<sub>1-2</sub> 10.65–66.

<sup>165</sup> According to Brahma Purāṇa 221.151, referred to by Dange IV 1989:553, “[a]ll normal activities should be performed only after the collection of the bones.” On the numerous ritual variants mentioned in the Vedic texts, see Donner 1870:11; Caland 1888, 1896; Kane 1941/1953. See also GPS<sub>1-2</sub> 10 and UK 24.15 summarized by Abegg 1921:22.

the bones of the feet, and placing them into a jar, *asthi-kumbha*, representing the new body to be recreated in heaven<sup>166</sup> in order to ritually “liberate the deceased from the state of death,”<sup>167</sup> and keeping or burying the jar at a suitable place nearby, to be unearthed and re-buried in close proximity or thrown into a river a few days later (according to AP 4.26 to make sure that the deceased will remain in *brahma-loka* forever).<sup>168</sup> Before the cremation, as described in classical Vedic literature, invariably precious stones, gold or silver are put into the orifices of deceased mendicants, both to prevent evil spirits from entering the corpse and as an expression of personal admiration. The desire to find those “*cintāmanis*” amongst the mortal remains valorizes the relics and gives an additional impetus to the great rush after the cremation of famous mendicants to secure some relics for private use.<sup>169</sup>

### Structure of Mortuary Rituals for Mendicants

Apart from the non-involvement of Brahmins, common Jaina lay funerals outwardly differ only in details from common “Hindu” practices. Funerals for mendicants, however, are somewhat more elaborate and visibly different from common lay funerals, reflecting the elevated religious status of the deceased. The standard mortuary rites for a Jaina ascetic today comprise two distinct types of rituals that are performed only once before and after death:<sup>170</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Müller 1992:27 on AP 4.22; Monier-Williams 1891:300. Waldschmidt 1948:345 n. 157a explains descriptions of similar practices at the time of the cremation of the Buddha with reference to late Vedic precedents.

<sup>167</sup> “Ich werde das Sammeln der Knochen vollziehen, um den Toten N. N. aus dem *gotra* N. N. vom Totendasein zu erlösen” (AP 4.22, translated by Müller 1992:139).

<sup>168</sup> “Der, dessen Knochen, richtig ausgeführt, in das Wasser der Gaṅga geworfen werden, wird nie mehr aus dem *brahma-loka* wiedergeboren werden” (AP 4.26, translated by Müller 1992:143, cf. 145). Similarly GPS 10.84, also cited by Monier-Williams 1891:300f.

<sup>169</sup> See Babb 1996:120–22 and Dundas 2000:237f. on the “wish-fulfilling jewel” in the ashes of Jinacandra Sūri “Maṇḍhārī” (1140–1166). On the association of bone relics with treasures in Buddhism, see Tambiah 1984:109; Martin 1994:281ff.; Trainor 1997:119f.; Strong 2004a:117; Ruppert 2000:91 ff.; Faure 2004:95ff.

<sup>170</sup> The distinction between *Todten-* and *Bestattungsriten* is Caland’s (1896). But in the present article “death rituals” are differently defined as pre-mortem rites, and



- (I) Death rituals
- (II) Funeral rituals

In the case of famous *ācāryas* or ascetics, one or two additional types of ritual are observed periodically, preferably, but not necessarily, at the site of cremation:

- (III) Commemorative rituals
- (IV) Rites of worship<sup>171</sup>

This analytical structure of broadly four types of rituals connected with the death of a prominent Jaina monk or nun is characterized by decreasing scriptural regulation and involvement of mendicants: Death rituals for mendicants, *saṃlekhanā*, for which no Vedic or Buddhist parallels exist, are described in detail in the Āgamas and their commentaries.<sup>172</sup> But only selected aspects of funeral rituals, cremation and post-funerary rites are depicted in mythological form.<sup>173</sup> Rites of commemoration and worship are unscripted and generally performed individually without mendicant participation.<sup>174</sup> In contrast to the death and funeral rituals of a particular saint, commemoration can be

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“funeral rituals” as post-mortem rituals dealing in particular with the mortal remains. See also footnote 113.

<sup>171</sup>) Only this type is particularly related with *samādhis*. Schopen’s 1992/1997:234, n. 63 suggestion that in Buddhism funeral ceremonies and relic cults are conceived as “fundamentally different forms of religious behaviour” seems to hold for the Jaina case as well, but neglects the Vedic heritage still informing the integral sequence of these rites.

<sup>172</sup>) For Jaina death rituals, see von Kamptz 1929 and Settar 1989, 1990.

<sup>173</sup>) See Schopen 1989/1997:91 on the conundrum of “the complete absence of rules specifically concerned with *stūpas* or *cetiya*s” in the Pāli Vinaya texts, which he suspects to have been “intentionally written out.” Langer 2007:89 also notes “the total lack of prescriptive, ritual literature in Theravāda Buddhism” except for scarce information “scattered in a variety of texts, hidden in stories and commentaries.” She suggests — inspired by an observation by Gombrich that *stūpa* construction became popular in North India only after the texts had been written down — that, at least in Śrī Laṅkā, the bodies of ordinary monks might have been simply discarded, rather than cremated (ibid.:113–5).

<sup>174</sup>) On historical changes from ritual *śrāddha* to “mere commemoration” in nineteenth-century Hindu reform movements, under the impact of colonialism, see Bayly 1981:179–85.

performed indefinitely and is therefore not part of the funeral rituals as such. Acts of worship in the widest sense are also performed during the pre-mortem existence of the deceased in a variety of forms, and are therefore to be distinguished from rites of commemoration.

In the English language the word “commemoration” includes a number of different religious practices that, while clearly distinguished in Jaina texts, are to some extent indistinguishable in practice: commemoration, *smṛtijñāna*, homage, *śraddhāñjali*, and worship, *pūjā*. *Smṛtijñāna* in the narrow sense can refer to the act of remembering a person recently deceased, as in the context of a commemorative meeting, *smaraṇotsava*, or homage. Accordingly, the annually commemorated days of death of the founders of specific sectarian traditions serve as reference points for sectarian calendars, following the example of the denominational Jaina calendars based on the conventional death days of Mahāvira in the Digambara and Śvetāmbara traditions. The English word commemoration can also refer, in a more abstract sense, to the recollection of the qualities or sayings of a long deceased person for the purpose of imitation. Only in this latter sense can the worship of a Jaina saint be described as an act of commemoration. Though within the Jaina tradition, rites of commemoration of doctrinally valued qualities of an exemplary saint are explicitly distinguished from rites of material empowerment through the difference of intentional orientation,<sup>175</sup> the rites of worship of famous saints inevitably combine both. Both commemoration and empowerment are oriented towards wish-fulfillment, though they differ in the specific nature of the wish and the either internal or external source of power that is addressed. Jaina rites of worship of deceased saints are not, strictly speaking, mortuary rites, nor of course are they ancestor rituals or purely symbolical rites of worship such as those directed to the Jinas. However, they are specifically connected with sites of cremation marked by funeral shrines that are believed to be visited on the death anniversaries by the deceased mendicant, now reborn as a god, along with attendant deities. The currently popular construction of funeral monuments at places such as the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira attracts attention, promotes cultic activity and thus enhances the public appeal of a sectarian

<sup>175</sup> See Tambiah 1984:203, 335 for this distinction.

tradition. The intention to encourage rites of commemoration at *samādhis* through *stotras* and *japa* meditation is evident in the brief outlines of recommended forms of homage in the form of leaflets and signposts *in situ* that rarely find their way into the official sectarian ritual manuals. Rites of empowerment, whether through the essential transfer of energy through touch (in addition to the mere presence at a *samādhi*) or through rites of worship, *pūjā*, are, however, officially discouraged for different reasons in the iconic and anti-iconic traditions.

### Contemporary Funeral Rituals for Mendicants

From an analytical point of view, contemporary funeral rituals for Jaina ascetics can be divided in three parts.<sup>176</sup> The first part, the

<sup>176</sup> In his discussion of the link between the funeral rites and the distribution of a deceased monk's property "in harmony with, classical Hindu laws or Dharmasāstric conventions governing inheritance," Schopen 1992/1997:214 discussed five principal ritual elements of the monastic funerals depicted in the Cīvara-vastu and the Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu of the Buddhist Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya (amongst others, such as monks taking a post-funeral bath). Number five relates to post-funeral rites if indeed a *stūpa* for the deceased itself is referred to, which is unlikely (ibid.:234, n. 63). All of these practices have Jaina equivalents, which points to an ancient common monastic funerary culture (pp. 210f., 218), despite variations (points four and five are not scripted in the Āgamas but observable in contemporary practice even amongst Jaina mendicants: *antya darśana* and visit of a temple rather than a *stūpa*):

- Sounding of the gong (*gaṇḍī*) for the dead (announcing the death)
- Recitation of *dharmā* (*tridaṇḍaka*)
- Removal of the body (*abhi-nirhāra*) and transportation to the funeral ground
- Worshipping the body (*śarīra-pūjā*)
- Worshipping the *stūpa* or *caitya* (of the Buddha). (ibid.:208ff.)

According to Schopen 1994a/2004:290–4, the somewhat ambiguous term *śarīra-pūjā*, which earlier writers understood as referring to relic worship, signifies "the ritual handling or preparation of the body prior to cremation, though sometimes it seems to include the latter" (ibid.:290). If this is so, then from a pragmatic point of view the sequence poses a problem, since cleansing of the body and other basic preparations invariably precede its removal, whatever else is done to the body afterwards. A *śarīra-abhiṣeka*, on the other hand, can be performed at the cremation ground, as it is today at funerals of Digambara mendicants. On the basis of his sources, Schopen 1992/1997:221 concludes that "the funeral of a local monk was an exclusively monastic affair where participation was limited to monks and monks alone." However, the

“monastic funeral” strictly speaking, is performed exclusively by ascetics according to canonical paradigms, and parts two and three, the cremation and the disposal of the remains, exclusively by householders according to custom.

- (A) Disposal of the corpse
  - (a) Fasting, non-study, meditation
  - (b) Changing the clothes of the deceased
  - (c) Abandoning the corpse
  - (d) Meditation
- (B) Cremation
  - (a) Veneration of the corpse
  - (b) Funeral procession
  - (b) Cremation
- (C) Disposal of the bone relics<sup>177</sup>
  - (a) Collection of the bone relics
  - (b) Discarding of the bone relics
  - (c) Stūpa construction (post-funeral)

The principal ritual acts under the three main headings, whether scripted or unscripted, are nowadays shared by all Jaina traditions, with some exceptions. Most of them are, in one way or another, traceable to canonical sources.<sup>178</sup> Yet, an outline of the tripartite structure as a whole cannot be found in any single text. This should not be seen

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cremation itself is not mentioned at all in the texts. This part of the procedures, one must assume, was performed by householders as in the Jaina case, if it was performed at all. The erection of relic *stūpas* is also seen in the Jaina ĀvN1 206 as a practice that is separate from the funeral itself.

<sup>177</sup> Nowadays, Sanskrit terms are used to designate these ritual types. Discarding the corpse is usually called *visarjana* rather than *niharana* (S. *nirharana*), the technical term in the scriptures. Brāhmaṇical terms such as *dāha saṃskāra* are used to designate the cremation, as well as the collection of the charred bones or *asthi-saṃcayana*. The charred bones or *aṭṭhi-jhāma* (S. *asthi-dhyāma*) remaining after cremation are simply described as bones or *aṭṭhis* (S. *asthi* or *haḍḍī*).

<sup>178</sup> The principal ritual acts performed today by mendicants in connection with the disposal of the corpse are all mentioned in the Prakrit scriptures: (1) Fasting, *cauttha-bhatta*, non-study, *asajjhāya*, and meditation, *jhāna*, (2) changing the clothes of the deceased, *vatttha pariyaṭṭha*, (3) abandoning the corpse, *niharana*, the key ritual, and (4) meditation, *cauvisatthava kāussaga*. For details, see Flügel in press a.

as a flaw: rather, it reflects an important quality of social and ritual rules in general, one that gives them flexibility and secures their ability to function as relatively stable social forms. Ritual texts usually can and do not exhaustively prescribe concrete rituals for all contexts. These can only be constructed by ritualists on the basis of practical knowledge, often by combining paradigms from diverse texts or customs, as shown for Brāhmaṇical and Jaina contexts by Müller (1992:8f., 19) and Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994:31–6). The composite structure of contemporary Jaina monastic funerals reflects both the strict separation between mendicants and laity and the historical development of Jaina funerary rites.<sup>179</sup> Yet, if necessary, Jaina mendicants can still proceed according to ancient custom by simply discarding the corpse on suitable ground without relying on householders performing cremations or other further rites.

### History of Jaina Funeral Rituals

How did this structure emerge? According to Āvaśyaka Niryuḱti (ĀvN<sub>1</sub>) 206, a middle- or late-canonical text,<sup>180</sup> Rṣabha, the mythical first king and first *tirthaṅkara* of Jaina universal history who created culture, crafts and social forms, also invented the first rites of cremation and post-cremation rites for his mother Marudevī.<sup>181</sup> According to Śvetāmbara mythology, she was the first person to attain liberation in the present regressive time-cycle.<sup>182</sup> Listed among the forty cultural elements that Rṣabha is said to have introduced are: 35. veneration of the corpse, *mṛtaka-pūjā*; 36. cremation, *dhyāpanā*; 37. *stūpa* construction; 38. utterances for mourning and commemorating the dead, *śabda*.<sup>183</sup> Relics are not mentioned. Subsequent mythological texts of

<sup>179</sup>) On Buddhist parallels, i.e., the segmentation and development of early Buddhist mortuary rites for monks, see Schopen 1992/1997:210f., 234, n. 63.

<sup>180</sup>) Only the Mūrtipūjaka tradition grants the ĀvN canonical status.

<sup>181</sup>) As stated by Mūlabhāṣya Gāthās No. 26–27, ĀvN<sub>1</sub> p. 133.

<sup>182</sup>) See the passages with commentaries and parallels discussed by Balbir 1993:132, 170, 187; ĀvN 344, 1023, 1320cd; and Jaini's 2003:6f. extensive discussion of ĀvN 1023 and 1320.

<sup>183</sup>) The last six of the forty cultural elements listed in form of keywords in the old

the Śvetāmbara tradition present the first funeral rituals as creations intended only for monks and householders who experienced salvation (Marudevī was not a nun), rather than as variants of royal funerals as in the Buddhist Mahāparinibbāna Sutta. *Stūpa* construction and relic veneration are only ever mentioned in connection with the Jinās. The classical Śvetāmbara form of the myth of Marudevī in Hemacandra's TŚPC tells us that the first funeral rites were performed for Marudevī after her simultaneous accomplishment of omniscience and liberation caused by the first sight of her son Rṣabha in his splendor as a Tīrthānkara:

She was the first person to attain mokṣa in this avasarpinī. The gods deposited her body in the ocean of milk after performing rites. From that time funeral rites existed among the people. Whatever the great do, that becomes a custom. (TŚPC 3.448–534, translated by Johnson 1931 I:197)

According to ĀvN<sub>1</sub> 366 and 435, echoed in TŚPC 6.459–643 with added descriptions of *stūpa* construction and relic worship, Rṣabha himself was also cremated. Deo (1956:322) thus speculated that “this might have been the general practice followed in the case of other monks also.” Neither early nor modern Jaina literature, however, contains prescriptions for the presently observable combined practices of cremation, collecting bone relics, and erecting relic *stūpas* for famous ascetics, except in this coded, mythological form. Nor is there unambiguous early epigraphical or archaeological evidence of Jaina funerary practices. According to current knowledge, limited prescriptions appear only in two rather exceptional Sanskrit texts of the Kharatara Gaccha (ĀD and SŚ) and one Digambara text (T) from the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, which are not referred to in ritual practice.

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*śloka* metre: *maḍaya-pūaṇā*<sup>35</sup> *jhāvaṇā*<sup>36</sup> *thūbha*<sup>37</sup> *sadde*<sup>38</sup> *a*, *chelāvaṇaya*<sup>39</sup> *pucchaṇā*<sup>40</sup> || ĀvN<sub>1</sub> 206 ||. In her analysis of this list of forty items and the related verses of the ĀvC and of Saṅghadāsas Vasudevahiṇḍi, Mette 1973:8f. considers only the first three, while mentioning the relevant commentaries. The funeral rites are further explained in the Mūlabhāṣya Gāthās No. 26–27 (ĀvN<sub>1</sub> p. 133). I am indebted to Professor Bansidhar Bhatt (Letter 9.4.2009) for pointing me to these passages, which he regards as late canonical interpolations. For further references, see Balbir 1993:131.

Remarkably, the common structure of the cremation and post-funeral rites for the Jinās enacted by the gods in Jaina mythology and by Jaina laity for their special dead today, broadly corresponds to the structure of the Brāhmaṇical funeral rituals outlined in late Vedic texts, especially the Taittirīya Sūtras, which Caland (1896:xii–xiii) analyzed under four main headings:

- (1) Cremation (*upoṣaṇam*)
- (2) Collection of the charred bones (*asthi-saṃcayana*)
- (3) Erection of a monument (*śmaśāna-citi, loṣṭa-citi*)
- (4) Expiation (*śāntikarman*)<sup>184</sup>

Neither Jaina texts nor ritualists explicitly refer to any of the four stages outlined in the Brāhmaṇical texts. Only death rituals and ritual procedures preceding the disposal of the dead by the mendicants, which are of course missing in the Brāhmaṇical literature, are described in detail in the scriptures. However, in ritual practice Vedic terms such as *dāha saṃskāra* and *asthi-saṃcayana* are invariably used to designate the main stages of the funeral rituals.

Because of their outward similarity to Vedic practices, the second and third parts of the tripartite funeral for a Jaina ascetic are often regarded as “Hindu” customs, incorporated into Jaina culture through processes of “pseudo-hinduisation” or “jinisation” / “jainisation.”<sup>185</sup> Yet, few parallels with the current mortuary rites of Jaina ascetics, as a whole, can be found in contemporary Hinduism. For Jaina ascetics, as for Buddhist monks and Hindu laity, cremation is now customary. Hindu *yogīs*<sup>186</sup> and *saṃnyāsins*, by contrast, are generally not cremated,

<sup>184</sup> In Vedic texts, the cremation is called *upoṣaṇam* or *daha* (Caland 1896: § 53:99). Although sometimes listed before the burial of the relics, the expiation usually takes place at the end of the funeral, i.e., after the voluntary (“facultative”) burial of the remains under a funeral monument (ibid.:xiii, § 61:113) which is called either *śmaśāna-citi, loṣṭa-citi, nidhānam*, depositing, or *pitṛmedha*, sacrifice for the fathers: “die Schichtung der Leichenstätte’, ‘die Lehmklumpenschichtung’, ‘das Niederlegen’ oder auch ‘das Väteropfer’” (ibid.:§ 72:130f.). Manu<sub>1</sub> 4.46 also mentions “a mound piled up for the dead.”

<sup>185</sup> Glasenapp 1926:340, 345, Alsdorf 1936:120; and Jaini 1979:297f., 304. See also Williams 1963:xx, xxiii on “hinduisation.”

<sup>186</sup> De Marco 1987:224, and others.

but are buried or immersed, because ritually they already swallowed their own ashes during their initiation,<sup>187</sup> and no post-funerary rituals are performed.<sup>188</sup> Though the collection of mortal remains is still generally performed after the cremation of common Hindus (and Jains), as in Vedic times, nowadays they are rarely (re-)buried.<sup>189</sup> Instead, they are discarded in large rivers such as the Ganges. Both in Vedic and post- / non-Vedic contexts, mortuary shrines are only erected for extraordinary (male) individuals, such as royalty or religious or political leaders of influence as, for instance, for Mahātmā Gāndhī in modern times.<sup>190</sup>

Kane (1941/1953:255, 182ff.) stressed that this late Vedic pattern as a whole, if ever practiced widely, is not reflected in current “Hindu” custom anymore; and Müller (1992:10f.) pointed to many changes in the history of Brāhmaṇical funeral rituals, in particular the late Vedic addition of the *śrāddha* and *sapindīkaraṇa* rituals,<sup>191</sup> separately described by Caland (1888:22–32) under the label “ancestor ritual” following the division of the Vedic scriptures, and the omission, rearrangement and condensation of rites. For unknown reasons, the construction of

<sup>187</sup> Caland 1896:§ 50:93–5; Pandey 1969/1993:271f.; Carstairs 1983:233; Parry 1994:184, and others. Although Kane 1941/1953:229, as well, found that in accordance with the ancient Brāhmaṇical scriptures “[a] yati (sannyāsin) was and is even now buried,” the evidence on Hindu ascetic orders collected by Singh 1894:90–7 indicates that, in the nineteenth century, the vegetarian Vaiṣṇava ascetics tended to be cremated while the meat-eating Śivaite ascetics tended to be buried. The practice of erecting *samādhi* “tombs” was only recorded for the Jogīs (ibid.:92). See also Bayly 1981:168, who also reports that Kabīr-panthīs preferred burial.

<sup>188</sup> Pandey 1969/1993:271.

<sup>189</sup> Müller 1992:23 noted the absence of contemporary evidence of the practice of unearthing buried relics for either reburial or immersion, described in AP 4.26 with reference to RV 10.18, despite the fact that the custom of burying relics apparently continues in contemporary Hinduism, according to his informant. Monier-Williams 1891:284f., 302 witnessed a ceremonial gathering and burial of the bones of a low caste woman “which had many features in common with the ancient rite.”

<sup>190</sup> See <http://www.euronews.net/2010/01/30/gandhi-s-ashes-poured-into-indian-ocean/>.

<sup>191</sup> The reasons are unknown. For informed speculations, see Oldenberg 1894/1917:555–63; Butzenberger 1996:57, n. 44, pp. 72, 77, 1998:3, n. 6; Oberlies 1998:300, 465, n. 57 with reference to Caland 1893:176–81. For recent changes in the practices informed by the purāṇic model, see also the study of Bayly 1981.



bone relic shrines, *stūpas*, is generally not performed anymore amongst contemporary “Hindus,” though tombs are sometimes erected over the burial sites of ascetics by certain sectarian traditions and for kings or politicians.<sup>192</sup> Today, cremation and post-cremation practices that are comparable to the structure identified by Caland are predominately manifest in the Jaina context and in Buddhist traditions outside India,<sup>193</sup> which evidently had no impact on Jaina practices. In contrast to contemporary Buddhist customs,<sup>194</sup> there is usually no direct involvement of Jaina mendicants in monastic or lay cremations or post-cremation rituals, though cremations of mendicants are performed by laity according to the instructions by leading monks.

The conclusion seems inevitable that the composite tripartite structure of the Jaina monastic funeral emerged by combining exclusively Jaina monastic funerary practices, that is, the rituals associated with the disposal of the corpse, *nīharaṇa* (S. *nirharāṇa*), with the established structural form of classical Vedic funerary practices, emptied of all doctrinal content and ceremonial detail, including the facultative erection of relic monuments for the special dead,<sup>195</sup> while introducing

<sup>192</sup> See Briggs 1938/2001:39–43 on *samādhis* of Kānphaṭa Yogīs; and Parry 1982:96f. on *samādhis* of Kina Rām Aghorīs. On the difference between tomb and *stūpa*, see Barua 1926.

<sup>193</sup> See in particular the work of Keyes 1975, 1980, 1982; and Langer 2007.

<sup>194</sup> On contemporary monastic funerals in Buddhist Śrī Laṅkā, for instance, see Gombrich 1971/1991:320; and Langer 2007:66–9.

<sup>195</sup> Hillebrandt’s 1897:§ 55–57:90–2, 1911:479 summary of Vedic (“Hindu”) practices is worth recalling:

Over the remains is erected the monument, which conforms to a definitely prescribed plan, and in which the present writer sees the precursor of the *stūpa* of later days. When the structure has reached a certain height, food for the dead is walled in. After its completion, the *śmaśāna* is covered with earth, and water is poured over it from pitchers which it is the custom to destroy, or it is bestrewn with *avakā*-plants and *kuśa*-grass.

Information on the ritual function of funerary monuments in the Vedic period is extremely rare and sketchy. Hillebrandt 1897:§ 55–57:86f. points to the “extraordinary” description in ĀGS 1.12 of a *caitya-vandana*, veneration of the funeral shrine, erected in honor of teachers or prophets, either with a personal offering or *bali* in front of the sacrificial fire, or by sending a *piṇḍa* to be offered with a messenger, who

more and more changes and reinterpretations that led to a progressive jainisation and eventual codification, for Jaina laity only, of those originally Vedic practices, which themselves were further elaborated and transformed as evident in the Hindu Epics and Purāṇas.

The continuing influence of this ancient Brāhmaṇical ritual paradigm, even after the emergence of the current “Hindu” custom of immersing the charred bone relics after cremation, has, it seems, not been sufficiently appreciated in the academic literature to date. Two of the exceptions are Caland’s (1896) and Waldschmidt’s (1944–48) occasional comparisons of late Vedic prescriptions with the accounts of the funeral of the Buddha. The latter’s approach was elaborated by Bareau (1971, 1975), whose view that the Buddha’s funeral was performed according prevailing Brāhmaṇical custom has been challenged by Bronkhorst (2009:17) who inferred on the basis of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta the existence of pre-brāhmaṇic customs in “Greater Magadha” of preserving “non cremated, entombed human corpse[s]” in *stūpas*, which in his view were initially continued in early Buddhism, Jainism and Ājīvikism (ibid.:13), but later replaced by Brāhmaṇised cremation rites.<sup>196</sup> The question why “Magadhan religions” should have been interested in preserving the corpse as long as possible if indeed “karmic retribution” (Bronkhorst 2007:71) was the cornerstone of their beliefs is not addressed. There is presently no evidence for practices of this kind or for the existence of early Jaina or Ājīvika

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receives another *pinda* himself. The commentator Narāyaṇa interprets this as a wish-fulfilling sacrifice. In a footnote to his translation of ĀGS, Oldenberg 1886:178, n. 1 comments: “I do not know anything that supports this statement as to the meaning of *kaitya*.”

<sup>196</sup> Brāhmaṇical elements in the surviving depictions of the Buddha’s funeral are uncontroversial, but the reasons for wrapping the corpse of the Buddha and putting it into a tub filled with oil are unclear. While Waldschmidt 1948:264 argues that it was done for preservation until cremation, Bareau 1971:43 and Strong 2004a:104, cf. 106, n. 21 point out that it played a role in procuring good relics. Bronkhorst 2009:17 suspects that the body was preserved in oil “to provide enough time to build the *stūpa*,” and that the episode of the cremation was later interpolated under Brāhmaṇical cultural influence. Yet, even in this scenario it remains unclear why the body was not preserved in oil immediately, and why no description of the “initial account of the entombment” survived. On the widespread practice of mummification preceding cremation across cultures, for different reasons, see Levin 1930:30; Pandey 1969/1993:24; Sharf 1992:4f., and others.

practices of inhumation.<sup>197</sup> But there is some evidence in the R̥gveda and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, etc., collected by Caland (1896:§ 42, pp. 69f., 87, n. 327), Levin (1930 I:31, III:65f.), Kane (1941/1953:233f.), and others, for the complementarity of the practices of preservation and cremation of the corpses of kings or other special dead, and the theoretical discussion by Hertz (1907/1960:41–3, 125, n. 96).<sup>198</sup>

<sup>197</sup> Building on Waldschmidt's 1944–48:263f. and Bareau's 1971:314–20 ideas on the problem of understanding the use of an oil-filled tub, *tela-donī*, to preserve the Buddha's body before his cremation to prevent decomposition, Bronkhorst 2009:15ff. offered a new, speculative, interpretation of the "original" custom of inhumation of the body of the deceased in the pre-brāhmaṇicized regions of eastern India. He argued that the continuing practice of burial of Hindu ascetics derives from this tradition, as well as the "original" Buddhist, Jaina and Ājīvika practices of preservation of the body, which were later transformed under the influence of the Brāhmaṇical practice of cremation (ibid.:13). Five reasons, at least, speak against this hypothesis: (1) There is no evidence for Jaina and Ājīvika burial practices in early India. (2) Possible reasons for the preservation and inhumation of the body are not explored. (3) No explanation is offered for the putative transformation of the "original" practice of inhumation into the practice of post-funerary preservation of relics in the Buddhist tradition, and for the discontinuation of the same practice in the Brāhmaṇical tradition. (4) Alternative explanations, based on the work of Caland 1896, by Waldschmidt 1948:264 and Bareau 1971:314ff. are rejected because they would disagree with the Greater Magadha hypothesis (Bronkhorst 2009:17). (5) The fact that preservation of the entire body before and during the cremation is a requirement of the classical Vedic funeral, as is the collection and burial of the relics after cremation, is not considered. See also footnote 165 in the present text. However, for the appellation "O *Māgadhbā!*" in Bhagavatī (Viṃ) II.1.23.fol.34 (his ms.) see A. Weber 1867:250.

<sup>198</sup> Tiwari 1979:23f., and Patil 1982:56 point to the exceptional and short-lived character of the practices described in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Yet, like Das 1969–70:61–7 and others before him, Patil 1982:58 found evidence both in the late Vedic and Buddhist texts and at Buddhist sites in northern India from the first century BCE for the custom of erecting memorial pillars or hero-stones over the charred bones and ashes which were "collected and then deposited or buried in more or less the same manner as in a burial," which he argued, "had its origins in the Buddhist practice of relic worship, which, in its turn, was derived from the funeral practices of the easterners or the Asuras of the Vedic texts" (p. 58). In his view, "Modern practices of the disposal and care of the dead retain evident traces of the primitive beliefs and practices so that memorials in honour of the dead such as tombs, grave-stones or tablets, cenotaphs, *samādhis* or *vṛndāvans* are being raised over the dead bodies, their relics or ashes" (p. 47). At the same time, Patil 1982:58, and Tambiah 1984:127, stress the difference between relics of Buddhist ascetics (or commoners) and of martial heroes who died a "bloody death."

The most likely sources of the structure of the funerary practices depicted in ancient Jaina narrative literature and of contemporary Jaina practices of cremation, collecting relics and constructing relic *stūpas*, are thus the late Vedic funeral rites outlined in Dharma- and Gṛhyasūtra texts such as the Taittirīya Sūtras, analyzed by Caland (1896), which are preserved even today in a jainized form.<sup>199</sup> The prevalent view, echoed by Bronkhorst (2007:273f.), that an increasing concern with ritual purity prevented the development of a relic cult in the Brāhmaṇical tradition diverts attention from the principal reason for the continuing practice of collecting and ritually discarding bone relics post cremation, i.e., the outward perpetuation of the Vedic belief in the ritual reconstitution of the body of the deceased in an ancestral world.<sup>200</sup> This popular view, which is incompatible with karman theory, continues to inform funerary practices throughout the Subcontinent (Knipe 1977:112), including the ritual logic and symbolism of Jaina monastic funerals, which simulate or re-enact the journey of the soul to heaven, a journey that, according to Jaina doctrine and monastic ritual, happened already at the point of death. Long before colonialism (cf. Bayly 1981:156), jainization transformed the Vedic cremation from a “ritual” into a “ceremony.”<sup>201</sup>

In sum, despite its outward similarity with structures and elements of Brāhmaṇical (and brāhmaṇicized<sup>202</sup> Buddhist) funeral rites, the tripar-

<sup>199</sup> Caland 1896:IV–VII, XIII focused mainly on the *pitṛmedhasūtra*’s of the “younger schools” of the Taittirīya tradition: Bhāradvāja, Āpastambha, Hiranyakeśin, rather than of the older Baudhāyana (which is not included in Bühler’s “rohe Inhaltsangabe” in the Sacred Books of the East). The *pratīkas* of the sayings cited at the funerals of the tradition refer all to the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka. An overview of the Vedic mortuary rites is offered in Hillebrandt 1897:§§ 55–57:86–97. See footnote 193.

<sup>200</sup> A. Weber 1855:238/1868:21f., 25f. in his comments on the mortuary rites depicted in ŚB 4.6.1.1, 11.1.8.6, 12.8.3.31 and 11.6.3.11 = 14.6.9.28 concluded that the prescribed collection of the relics after cremation is intrinsically connected with the intention to recreate the body of the deceased in its entirety in heaven as a form of personal immortality, a practice which is only “inconsequentially” continued in Buddhist relic worship.

<sup>201</sup> For the argument that “the main social function of the dualist Jain doctrine was to contribute to a relative de-substantialisation of popular preconceptions” see Flügel 1995–6:163.

<sup>202</sup> Or rather: “buddhicized” Brāhmaṇical rites. See Waldschmidt 1948:263f.; Schopen 1992/1997:214, 219.

tite monastic funeral as an ensemble is unique to Jaina culture. Despite some overlap, the form and meaning of specific rituals such as changing the clothes and symbolically bathing the corpse before the cremation tend to be entirely different. Monastic death and funeral rituals and rites of disposal including rites of last sight, *antya darśana*, as well as in image-worshipping traditions, *guru pūjā*, are specifically Jaina (and Buddhist),<sup>203</sup> while post-funerary rites are less elaborated if not entirely missing: rites of expiation, for instance, or ancestor rituals, which are neither prescribed nor usually practiced by Jains after the cremation of an ascetic, though sometimes after the death of a lay person. Until recently, there was no evidence of bone relic preservation amongst Jains, which is still the exception rather than the rule. Even the mythical paradigms of the Śvetāmbara canon only refer to the relics of the Jinās, not to those of common mendicants. Nor are there any Jaina texts detailing rules for *stūpa* construction, which leaves ample space for creativity. On the contrary, Jaina karman theory discourages attachment to all material objects including mortal remains. Specifically Brāhmaṇic rituals are not practiced at all during Jaina mortuary rites, especially not acts of sacrificial violence, nor are Brahmins involved.

In view of the manifestly different rituals that are associated with the Jaina variants of the Vedic sequence of funeral rites, it may seem rash to assume that current Jain practices of cremation and disposal of the remains under funerary monuments of variable shape were originally Brāhmaṇic rituals that were at some stage reinterpreted and incorporated by the Jaina tradition, as in the case of Buddhist relic *stūpas* whose round shape is still widely accepted as evidence for their derivation from the round burial mounds, *śmaśāna*, mentioned in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (ŚB) 13.8.1–2.<sup>204</sup> There is as yet, however, no better explanation.

<sup>203</sup> See footnote 174 on the Buddhist *śarīra-pūjā* which is also performed by monks.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Parpola 2002:310–12, 2004–5:53–5. See Schopen 1992/1997 for textual evidence of Buddhist monastic funerals that closely resemble Jaina monastic funerals. See footnotes 113 and 174.

## The Power of Relics

What conclusions can be drawn from these new findings on the contemporary Jaina cult of relic *stūpas*? Clearly, belief in the miraculous power of the bone relics of the special dead plays an important role in Jaina culture, albeit a subordinate one. After cremation, the relics of prominent mendicants are collected, distributed and sometimes enshrined in opulent funerary monuments. At the same time, the practice of relic worship is denounced and its efficacy denied or rationalized. *Viy*<sub>1</sub> 10.5.a ff. (502b ff.) has the story of the demigod Camara, dwelling in the uppermost region of the underworld, who in his palace worships the relics of the Jinās in a deluded search for power, *iddhi*, which after all prevents him from enjoying sexual pleasures with his forty thousand Asurakumārī wives who worship the relics as well. *JĀĀ* 442, 516 and *Rāy*<sub>1</sub> 200g (*Rāy*<sub>2</sub> 351) describe, in almost identical words, the worship, *accāṇa*, of bone relics of the Jinās with scented water, incense and flower garlands by the god *Sūriyābha*, the reincarnated king *Paesi*, in his palace in the first heaven. Remarkably, *Rāy*<sub>1</sub> 186f. (*Rāy*<sub>2</sub> 275f.) does not merely promise worldly benefits, such as welfare, happiness and forgiveness, to the one who worships the relics of *Tīrthaṅkaras*, but also release from the cycle of rebirth — a fact that is downplayed by the modern Hindī translator and commentator of the text, the *Sthānakavāsī* monk *Pravartaka Amar Muni* (2002:184), who rendered the Prakrit word *nisseyasa*, salvation, as *kalyāṇa*, good fortune. Occasionally, the body secretions of Jaina ascetics are described as physical sources of power. But generally, *iddhis* and other special powers and qualities associated with relic worship are interpreted as the karmic fruits of good deeds in a former existence (*Viy*<sub>1</sub> 3.1.2a [169b]). The only source of personal power is good karman, resulting from the enactment and veneration of Jaina values, symbolized by images or relics of noble beings, as much as from charity, asceticism, religious work, good conduct or scriptural study, all mentioned in *Rāy*<sub>1</sub> 206 (*Rāy*<sub>2</sub> 665–7). According to the scriptures, the value of relics and body secretions of Jaina mendicants can be conceived in multiple ways: as crystallized forms of ascetic energy; as indexical symbols of the living presence of ascetics who are reborn in heaven; or as conventional symbols of Jaina ideals, the doctrinally favored variant. Whichever interpretation is preferred, because the bone relics of the

Jinas are considered worthy of worship by all gods (Rāy<sub>1</sub> 174 = Rāy<sub>2</sub> 240), they are perceived as objects of mimetic desire and can serve as a vehicles of legitimate authority and power. By implication, the same applies to exemplary Jaina monks and nuns. However, the worshipper could only expect to have it “both ways” (Cort 2001:200), that is, to accrue good karman and therefore material and soteriological gain at the same time, when relics are venerated as symbols rather than as powerful material objects. This subtle doctrinal point is not always appreciated in practice. Probably in order to discourage personalized cults of the dead,<sup>205</sup> the Jaina scriptures invite us to imagine the veneration of relics by the gods in heaven, but not here on earth. Yet, today the living bodies and bodily remains of unliberated mendicants are venerated in almost the same way as the relics of the Jinas in canonical mythology. Nevertheless, at most Jaina funerary monuments, such as the Mṛgāvātī Samādhi Mandira, worship by means of *pūjā* and *pradakṣiṇā*, which comes naturally in India, is actively discouraged. The presumed material power of relics can therefore only be transmitted through the devotee’s physical presence at the shrine and through touch of the *cabūtarā* or the *caraṇa pādukās*, etc.<sup>206</sup> No theology of merit making is associated with these practices, nor is there a notable official discourse about the pros and cons of the veneration of relic shrines, comparable to the vast literature on the equally controversial practice of image worship. Yet, in apocryphal writings and malicious gossip Sthānakavāsīs blame Mūrtipūjakas and Digambaras for the worship of lifeless objects, while often constructing and worshipping relic *stūpas*. Digambaras blame Śvetāmbaras for erecting *stūpas* and for spreading the myth of the veneration of the relics of the Jinas by the gods. But, a key text of the tradition, Jinasena’s Ādi Purāṇa, depicts the cremation of Tīrthaṅkara Rṣabha by the gods who share the ashes, *bhasma*, with humans. Other texts confirm that the (Digambara or) Yāpanīya Jaina *stūpa* in Mathurā was built by the gods. Early evidence also points to the possibility of some Digambara *nisidhis* doubling as relic shrines, while contemporary Digambaras construct relic shrines as well.

<sup>205</sup> See also Tambiah’s 1984:329 remarks on what Max Weber would have called Buddhist *Amtscharisma* (charisma of office)

<sup>206</sup> It is emphasized by the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthīs that a deceased *ācārya* should not be venerated as a god but instead be commemorated as a human being.

In the Jaina traditions, the preservation of relics, as sources of empowerment, under highly visible funerary cenotaphs is never done without the consent of the monastic authorities and usually at their request. Ceremonies of entombment, *asthi kalaśa kī sthāpanā*, however, are not widely announced and somewhat clandestinely performed early in the morning by small groups of officials (not least because precious stones are buried together with relics). There is no culture of trade or theft of relics. Following J. Assmann's (2000) terminology, the Jaina cult of relic *stūpas* can be said to belong to the domain of the Jaina "cultural unconscious." It is a disrespected and hidden practice at the periphery of the official tradition, which for doctrinal reasons cannot be instrumentalized for purposes of public religious display and therefore remains unregulated and freely at everyone's disposal.<sup>207</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

Is it possible to find general explanations for the widespread human belief in the miraculous power of relics and the socio-psychological efficacy of relic worship? Broadly speaking, three theoretical approaches have been proposed in academic discourses: (1) psychological theories, informed by causal theories of power, (2) sociological theories, informed by relational theories of power, and (3) fetish theories, combining causal and relational theories of power.

Among psychological approaches, there are three principal causal explanations for the power of relics: (a) those that connect them with magical, mythical or mystical thinking, associated with popular religion; (b) those that interpret them as the objectification of charisma; (c) and those that highlight the aesthetic effect of performative objects. A brief review of recent scholarship must suffice here.

The most popular explanation of relic worship linking it with a "primitive mentality" (Lévy-Bruhl 1922/1923) argues that it is predicated on "bad science." For Cassirer (1923–29 Vol. II:83f.), relic worship

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<sup>207</sup> The "cultural unconscious" in this sense must be distinguished both from inferred processes of "unconscious thought" and "deep motivations" (Goonasekere 1986:7), and from spheres of value within the realm of ideology which are not systematically or only indirectly expressed (Laidlaw 1985:51f.) and in this sense "unconscious" (Cort 1990:60).



is a manifestation of *mythical thinking* predicated on a conception of causality which posits that each part literally embodies the indestructible whole to which it belongs. Hence, all phenomena are always and essentially incarnation.<sup>208</sup> As an example one may refer to theological views frequently reported from Catholic and Buddhist cultural contexts that relics of saints *are* the saints “continuing to live among men” (Geary 1986:176) and should thus be treated in the same ways as the living saints (Schopen 1987/1997:134). Since the denunciation of relic worship by Christian Protestant reformers, and due to the influential writings of M. Weber (1922/1972), such practices are still generally associated with popular “emotive” forms of religion rather than with “rational” soteriological doctrine, both by scholastics and theorists. This “two-tier model” was challenged, but not replaced, by P. Brown (1981) and subsequent scholarship.<sup>209</sup>

Mauss (1902–3/1972:63, 22) interprets *magical thought*, oriented towards wish-fulfillment, also as a pre-scientific conception of causality: a conventionally accepted synthetic judgment *a priori* related to the idea of an impersonal force whose effect is *sui generis* that can be invoked through ritual actions and objects. He argues that the “false images” of causal effects produced by magical judgments are found “only in public opinion... under the pressure of the needs of groups and individuals” (ibid.:155). Sociologically, Mauss concludes, “the magical value of persons or things results from the relative position they occupy within society or in relation to society” (ibid.:120f.).

With reference to the work of Mauss (1902–3, 1925) and M. Weber (1922/1972), Tambiah (1984:203, 336, 342) interprets relics as objectifications of the ritually transferred *mystical power* of charismatic individuals.<sup>210</sup> The quality and quantity of the objectified power, i.e., the

<sup>208</sup>) “In the hairs of a human being, in its nail cuttings, its clothes, in its footprints, the entire human being is still contained. Each trace which a human being leaves behind is taken as a real part of it, which can effect back on it as a totality” (Cassirer 1923–29 Vol. II:83f./1955:83).

<sup>209</sup>) For instance M. Weber 1922/1972; Obeyesekere 1966, 1985; Gombrich 1971/1991; Spiro 1970/1982 and, on the other hand, P. Brown 1981; Tambiah 1984; Schopen 1997.

<sup>210</sup>) On rites of transfer through metaphorical association (equation) of attributes, see Tambiah 1968:194: “The rite of transfer portrays a metaphorical use of language (verbal substitution) whereby an attribute is transferred to the recipient by means of a

relic's potential for "instrumental action" (ibid.:45), is determined by "a society's classified positions" (ibid.:339) in line with the culturally dominant hierarchy of values.<sup>211</sup> A variant of the theme of routinization of charisma is offered by Babb (1996:110), who argues that the *magical power* of a renowned Jaina ascetic "crystallizes into a *ritual effect*" by means of hagiography that serves as "a charter for a mortuary cult" which preserves the relationship between a specific saint and his/her followers "in the form of a pair of permanently available ritual roles: powerful monk and lay follower in need of assistance."

A third set of causal theories focuses on the *aesthetic effects* of socially recognized relics as "performative objects,"<sup>212</sup> that is, on processes of subjectification or consumption,<sup>213</sup> rather than on the processes of production of relics through ritual processes of objectification or through the metaphysical gaze projecting the presence of the deceased into the remains. Freedberg (1989:97) argues that the perceived power of relics and images does not derive from psychology, social structure or ritual but from their materiality and aesthetic form: "Effectiveness of function proceeds directly from effectiveness of form" (ibid.:439).<sup>214</sup> In response to Davis' (1998:17) question how "images are able to act as they do," R. L. Brown (1998a: 33) asks whether images or other representations of the Buddha derive their power from the worshippers or are intrinsically powerful.<sup>215</sup> His conclusion is twofold. Firstly,

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material symbol which is used metonymically as a transformer. Frazer would simply have described the procedure as a case of contagious magic. The technique gains its realism by clothing a metaphorical procedure in the operational or manipulative mode of practical action; it unites both concept and action, word and deed." See also Tambiah 1973/1985.

<sup>211</sup> Tambiah 1984:330, 204 acknowledges similarities between this analysis of *iddhi* and the Buddhist cosmological "doctrine of presence."

<sup>212</sup> For a glimpse of analogous Christian theological debates on sacramental causality, see Blankenhorn 2006.

<sup>213</sup> On objectification and subjectification in the theory of consumption, see Miller 1987.

<sup>214</sup> Following Freedberg, despite minor criticism, Faure 1998:781, 805 and Sharf 1999:85 argue that icons such as Buddhist *stūpas*, which are distinguished from other images through their constitutive physicality, become animated objects through subjective acts of projection, which leads them back, in one way or another, to the notion of *primitive mentality* (ibid.:89).

<sup>215</sup> Contrast this question with the older one: "whether it is the objects themselves

in Buddhist countries miracles are expected both of images and of the relics of the Buddha. Secondly, the source of the power of Buddha images is not derived from the Buddha's presence in his symbols, nor is it that crafty politicians or monks merely use them for instrumental ends. Rather, "their power to influence the people and the state stems most fundamentally from their ability to function as *objects* of power, rather than as portraits or symbols" (Brown 1998b:45).<sup>216</sup> Granoff (1998:89f.), by contrast, suggests a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic factors: "Any successful art object has some latent powers as its subject and can in some contexts function exactly like the real thing." She proposes that both rituals of consecration and the aesthetic quality of objects are significant.

The possible objection that relics are not objects of art in the same way as images can be met by referring to cremation or secondary burial as skillful methods for manufacturing relics. In his study of the relics of the Buddha, from "a Buddhist view of the nature of reality," Strong (2004a:115) makes precisely this point. He also argues against the prevalent view that relics are incarnations (ibid.:229): "Relics of the Buddha... are more spreaders and continuators of the Buddha's presence than incarnations of him... the Buddha's life story does not stop with his death, just as it does not begin with his birth." For him (ibid.:238), too, relics are performative objects which, like performative utterances, "do' things by virtue of their very nature, in the right ritual / cultural / emotional / religious environment." He stresses that Buddhist relics are "treated as a monk, but also could be identified with kingship and divinity." Like R. L. Brown, he talks about "actions" of relics and "things done." Yet, these are metaphorical expressions, reproduced from the emic repertoire.<sup>217</sup> Relics do not act: they only function. The now widely used term "performative object" mimics

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which effect material changes in some mysterious way, or whether it is some spiritual force which is either represented by or located in (but separate from) these objects" (Ellen 1988:215).

<sup>216</sup> Similarly Gimello 2004: 245 on Buddhist relics: "What about their power to generate rather than only to receive meaning?... I do not believe... that a sacred image or relic is simply a simulacrum, or merely the sum of its extrinsic socio-political implications."

<sup>217</sup> See Ellen 1988:223–6 for an analysis of further examples.

Austin's (1962/1975:6ff.) concept of the "performative utterance" while concealing the fundamental difference between action and function. However, the emphasis on the relic itself and its function as an object independent from the presumed continuing presence of its deceased creator are crucial observations which prepare the ground for a theoretical shift from causal to relational explanations of the power of relics and images of the dead.

Evidently, most causal explanations of the power of relics are tied to a metaphysics of presence, whether couched in religious or non-religious terms, and posit the formative influence of cultural categories created by a set of distinct cognitive processes.<sup>218</sup> Yet, I would argue, the cross-cultural recognition of the power of valued relics can only be comprehensively understood in terms of their function as media of communication and interaction within social systems. This has been sensed by scholars such as Geary (1978/1990, 1986), Tambiah (1984), Trainor (1997), Faure (1998, 2004) and Strong (2004a) whose pioneering investigations of relic cults in Christian and Buddhist contexts moved away from the earlier psychological theories towards an analysis of the specific social and cultural procedures for establishing the value of relics. Such approaches highlight the importance of narratives and the role of experts in political "tournaments" that endow relics with socio-cultural value and work against their commodification. Though their focus tends to be on politics, trade and theft of relics most modern analysts explain the resistance of relics towards commodification with reference to the social dominance of cultural templates and status hierarchies informing practices of validation (e.g. Taussig 1980/1986; Appadurai 1986; Bloch 1990). We are back to the study of mentalities. Sharf (1999:78) drew attention to the problem that such cultural functionalist approaches tend to presuppose rather than explain the power of relics within given social systems.<sup>219</sup> A general theory of the function of relics as symbolically generalized media of social interaction and communication, drawing on ideas of Marx (1867), Simmel

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<sup>218</sup>) See *ibid.*:219 on "fetishization."

<sup>219</sup>) This is a general problem of Talcott Parsons' influential variant of structural functionalism which still informs this line of investigation. For a brief overview of post-Parsonian developments on generalized media, such as money, power, influence, value-commitment, truth or love, see Chernilo 2002.

(1900), Parsons (1963), Luhmann (1976) and Habermas (1980–1), who have altogether ignored the role of relics as social media, still remains a desideratum.

Relics do not have the capacity to act and to exercise power over others in the same way as living saints or political rulers. They function as repositories and transmitters of power in other ways. Like money, circulating as a symbol of value without having value itself, I would argue, relics condense energy in a passive way, but are perceived to be the source of the power, essentially social relationships, that they mobilize and represent.<sup>220</sup> Relics of renowned ascetics have the power to attract rather than to command. Though relics are usually hidden away and do not physically circulate much, their invisibility and relative immobility does not affect their efficacy as symbolic media of social communication and interaction. Historically, this power is derived from the perceived material continuity with a revered personality that is extended to the funeral monuments where relics are enshrined. The fact that valued *bona fide* relics can be divided and individually appropriated does not impact on their potential for social mobilization, which undesirable relics do not possess. As objects of mimetic desire,<sup>221</sup> they act as social catalysts, conditioning, focusing, and energizing collective energies and actions of individual human beings.<sup>222</sup> Their power does not merely derive from their position in the dominant cultural hierarchy of values which they represent. In my view, the power of desirable relics can, to a large extent, be

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<sup>220</sup> On the analogy of power and money, and the link between the cultural, social, political, and economic systems in modern societies see Parsons 1963, and for a revised version of his theory of generalized media of communication: Luhmann 1976. For Luhmann 1975/1988:22 // 1979:121f., whose criticism of causal theories of power has informed the present literature review, the term power refers only to political power, and can be applied to relics only by analogy.

<sup>221</sup> See already Mauss 1902–3/1972:235: “It is because the result desired by everyone is expressed by everyone, that the means are considered apt to produce the effect.”

<sup>222</sup> For a definition and functional analysis of social catalysts, see Luhmann 1975/1979:11/114: “[T]he power of the power-possessor is not satisfactorily described as a cause. It can be compared rather with the complex function of a catalyst. Catalysts accelerate (or decelerate) the triggering-off of events; without themselves changing in the process, they cause changes in the ratio of effective connections (or probability) expected from chance connections between system and environment.”

understood as a variant of the general human tendency towards the anthropomorphization or fetishization of established media of social communication, which is a necessary correlate of their function, a phenomenon well documented in the sociological and anthropological literature.<sup>223</sup> Faure (1998:794) observed that a *stūpa* is “in more than one sense, an animated monument”: not only “because of the presence of relics that give it life” (in a metaphorical sense) but also “because of the procession of pilgrims that turns it into what Mus called a ‘cinetic’ monument.” From the second, functionalist rather than metaphysical, point of view, unexplored by Faure’s own “self-centred perspective” (ibid.:811), the power of relics is a consequence of the objectification not of subjective charisma but of a web of social relations whose energy is causally attributed to the relic as a placeholder for the role of the deceased. The relationship between subjects, that is, in the present case, mendicant and devotee, is turned into a relationship between subject and object, that is, devotee and relic. From a functional point of view, collective attributions of special powers to particular individuals or to their relics represent variant forms of fetishization of social media. Effectively, collective attributions themselves produce the perceived intrinsic power of recognized media that function as social catalysts.<sup>224</sup> However, while both ascetics and relics, in their roles as media of social interaction, can serve as means or ends of social power, relics can never generate or exercise instrumental power. Their power is predicated on the relational power of individuals that are endowed

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<sup>223</sup>) For fetish theories and analyses of the relationship between power, death and money, inspired by Marx’ 1867/1890 analysis of the value-form, see Taussig 1980/1986; Tambiah 1984:340; and Bloch 1990:177, who in his work on the Merina in Madagascar states “[t]he parallel to capital and money as understood in the work of Marx is... the tomb and the bodies of the dead for the Merina.” See also *infra* on the somewhat different but kindred approaches of Simmel 1900/1989; Parsons 1963; Luhmann 1975/1988 and Habermas 1980–1 on symbolically generalized media of communication.

<sup>224</sup>) Hobbes 1651/1985:150 already noted (though not with regard to relics) that “Reputation of power, is Power; because it draweth with it the adherence of those that need protection,” and that “The manifestation of the Value we set on one another, is that which is commonly called Honouring, and Dishonouring” (ibid.:152).

with extraordinary capabilities<sup>225</sup> demonstrated through exemplary acts that are socially recognized.<sup>226</sup>

Relic veneration appears to be a conundrum only if the power of relics is conceptualized in terms of a causal theory of power, i.e., in terms of the notion of a generalized individual capacity to act conceived as a personal possession. From this perspective, one must conclude that if the agent is dead, the capacity to act dies with him or her, unless the role has been filled by a place holder. Instrumental theories of power, often projected into insufficiently analyzed phenomena such as “magic,” have therefore been supplemented by theories of institutional power or cosmologically generalized conceptions of ultimate instrumental power (Tambiah 1984:330). Yet, relics are not venerated by decree or cultural norm, but because of personal attachment. The problem, how pieces of dead matter, a relic or an emblem, can exert influence and power, in an admittedly less specific way than the deceased individual, cannot be answered by institutional or culturalist theories of power either. A relic has no will. It can at best function as a catalyst and repository of power, in a manner akin to money. It can become powerful itself only if it is recognized as a tangible means of communication, and hence endowed with the ability of constituting emergent or auto-poetic social systems if and when it is brought into circulation as a symbolically generalized medium of communication.

The aspect of the power of relics that derives from their role as social catalysts can be easily understood and modeled with the help of J. L. Moreno’s (1934:266) elegant theory of the social unconscious which is predicated on the view of society as a spontaneous self-regulative network that is based on an emotional economy of contacts and processes of social gravitation and sociostasis. A network approach is useful for the analysis of relic worship because it focuses not on the realm of formal institutions, social positions and official procedures of authorization, but on the bedrock of social life, the undercurrent of

<sup>225</sup> “Ascetics have power, relics don’t” (H. L. Jain, personal communication, Ludhiyānā 26.12.2009).

<sup>226</sup> “The generalized symbols of the code, the duties and insignia of office, ideologies and conditions of legitimation serve to help the process of articulation, but the communication process itself only crystallizes motives when power is being exercised” (Luhmann 1975/1979:21/120).

interpersonal psychogeographical links that runs through and cuts across formal structures. For Moreno (1947:80) the smallest social unit, the “social atom,” is not the individual but “the individual *and* the people (near or distant) to whom he is emotionally related at the time.”<sup>227</sup> Social life is to a large extent constituted by fluctuating configurations of personal relationships, of which ego-centered networks are but one variant. The most significant quality of social networks for understanding the attribution of “miraculous” power to the relics of renowned saints is that social networks have a life of their own.<sup>228</sup> If an individual dies, its contact network does not die as well, but lives on, albeit in a somewhat adjusted form:

The life of men extends beyond their physical death through their psychosocial networks. A man dies when his social atom dies. Physical and individual death are not the end of life, they can be viewed as functions of an older unit, of the socio-atomic processes in which they are both embedded. (ibid.:84)

In the same way, the network of qualitative relationships created or inherited by a mendicant continues to exist after his/her death in the form of the enduring feeling of relatedness and continuing interaction of the survivors. The extraction of one individual from a web of relationships will not necessarily lead to the dissolution of the entire network or to fundamental changes of its structure.<sup>229</sup> The network will persist, at least for some time, even without formalization and

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<sup>227</sup> Mauss 1902–3/1972:117 argued that the perceived power of “magical acts” is predicated on public opinion and on the emotive force of the social bonds within the social totality within which they are operating; and that the determination of relative value or potential (the terms are used synonymously) “is a game, involving ‘value judgments,’ expressive aphorisms which attribute different qualities to different objects” in which the social sentiments of the “collective thinking” express themselves (ibid.:120f.).

<sup>228</sup> “We have shown that these configurations function as if they were a unit. They may not be the same people with whom the individual is officially related, and who are in turn officially related to him, but they are always people to whom he has a feeling relationship. It is like an *aura* of attractions and rejections, radiating from him and towards him” (Moreno 1947:80).

<sup>229</sup> The imagery of networks and fields of gravity is not unfamiliar to Jaina philosophy, as indicated by *Viy*<sub>1</sub> 5.3.1 (214a), translated by Schubring 1935/2000: § 92:188f., with a focus on vertical rather than horizontal relationships:



supporting narratives. A similar perspective, but couched in Buddhological terms, informs Strong's (2004a:229) observation that the "Buddha's life story does not stop with his death, just as it does not begin with his birth." Generally, for the survivors the deceased, as opposed to the dead person, lives on (Heidegger 1927:§47).

Most networks are multiplex, without a specific focus. Special cases are networks centered on one individual, a saint for instance, who acts as a common reference point, and hence medium of communication.<sup>230</sup> After the death of the individual, the network will automatically gravitate towards tangible tokens of the lost center as enduring points of reference that allow the web of emotive links and interactions to continue.<sup>231</sup> This tendency towards sociostasis is inevitable, because

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Just as the meshes of a net [*jāla-gaṇṭhiya*] closely following each other by consequently forming in a row without any interval will act upon the next mesh by their gravity, their load, their full weight and their density, thus in every soul in many thousands of reincarnations many thousands of lives by their gravity, their load, their full weight and their density act on their subsequent lives.

A similar vision can be found in RV<sub>1</sub> 10.130.1–2 where the sacrificial connection between ancestors and the living is compared with the weaving of a net, which arguably illustrates how Jaina texts transformed Brāhmanical imagery through the metaphorical internalization of sacrifice under Jain doctrinal premises:

1. The sacrifice drawn out with threads on every side . . .  
This do these Fathers weave who hitherward are come:  
they sit beside the warp and cry, 'Weave forth, weave back'.
2. The Man extends it and the Man unbinds it:  
even to this vault of heaven hath he outspun it.  
These pegs are fastened to the seat of worship:  
they made the Sāma-hymns their weaving shuttles.  
(Translation: Griffith 1899; see also Ehni 1896: 147)

For further evidence of "string-theories" in the RV, *ātata-tantu*, see Oberlies 1998:480.

<sup>230</sup> Cf. Kopytoff's 1986:83 alternative or supplementary analysis which highlights the importance of instrumental political "cognitive and cultural" processes of "singularization" as sources of the power of objects (one may add: and persons): "Power often asserts itself symbolically by insisting on its right to singularize an object, or a set or class of objects" (ibid.:73).

<sup>231</sup> Cf. Mauss 1925/1988: 41–ff. and Ellen 1988:222 on the objectification of social relationships: "Those items which we subject to any kind of exchange, either concrete items (such as food), notional ones (such as credit transfer), or — as in most cases — a mixture of the two, almost always serve to 'thingify' a relationship."

relationships with significant others form a constitutive part of the individual personality which cannot be instantly changed or reset.<sup>232</sup> Relics, images and nowadays photographs are amongst the set of immediately acceptable material substitutes for a deceased saint that are not reliant on ritual consecration or official authentication to function effectively as media of social interaction.<sup>233</sup> The power that is attributed to them is derived from the continuing emotive energy that informs the relationships that were once centered on the living saint, who him/herself could only function as an attractive medium of social interaction to the extent of his/her ascetic power of detachment and depersonalization. The concept of the saint is itself a relational category.

Power structures based on emotively charged contact networks can also be perpetuated or constructed deliberately by introducing conventional symbols or signs such as funerary cenotaphs, amulets and of course relics, as place holders for a deceased saint.<sup>234</sup> In an interview conducted in Sujāngarḥ on 21 December 2008, Ācārya Mahāprajāna, the contemporary leader of the Terāpanth monastic order, which rejects image worship as a matter of principle but now engages in the construction of relic *stūpas* as well, asserts that Jaina relic shrines, whether in heaven or on earth, have nothing to do with religion or spirituality, but much with faith and with institutional conquest, *saṁsthān-vijaya*, and with the consolidation of gains by imprinting the memory of sectarian history onto the social landscape via a network of sacred sites.<sup>235</sup>

Of the two classical sociological theories of the objectification of social relationships by Marx and Mauss, only Marx' theory offers a non-normative approach suitable to explaining the potential social

<sup>232</sup> “[W]hat happens within one actor is by nature not much different from what happens between actors” (Dumont 1966/1980:xxxvi).

<sup>233</sup> “Few if any relics need to be consecrated in order to make them effective; very many images do” (Freedberg 1989:97). A different question is the authentication of relics, especially those which travelled, on which see for instance Geary 1978 and Trainor 1997.

<sup>234</sup> Laum 1924:158–61 argued that the historical origins of money (in Europe) derive from contexts of state-controlled transactions surrounding collective sacrifice.

<sup>235</sup> The veneration of Terāpanth saints by chanting their names, Ācārya Jayācārya 1981:114 wrote, “is effective because it bears the stamp of authority” (v. 956).

function of relics in general.<sup>236</sup> In many ways, the task of modeling the transition from a network structure oriented towards a focal individual to a structure centered on material placeholders is formally similar to the task undertaken by Marx (1867/1890/1962:62–92) to model the theoretical transition from the elementary or accidental form of value to the general form of value and to the money form in order to logically reconstruct the evolution of “commodity fetishism,” i.e., “a definite social relation between human beings” which necessarily assumes in the eyes of the participants “the fantastic form of a relation between things” (ibid.:86).<sup>237</sup> Simmel (1900/1989:254–91) showed how Marx’ analysis of the process of the objectification of social relationships can be transposed to other social contexts; for instance, how an exemplary individual (“the stranger”) by virtue of his/her detachment from common social intercourse can, like money, function as a universally acceptable telos beyond all particular interests and hence as a medium for the integration of diverse social relationships.<sup>238</sup> For Simmel, the cryptic units of the “personality” and of the “soul” (the money of the mind) are also social forms constituted through the objectification of relationships. Like money, the soul is an abstract reference point for diverse relationships and qualities, which in turn are the only means by which the qualities of the abstract reference point itself can be inferred (ibid.:393).

I would argue that a general theory of objectification of social relationships in the media of social interaction also holds true for the case of the relics of influential religious figures. There is not only a fetishism of commodities, a fetishism of the gift, a fetishism of words, and a

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<sup>236</sup> Mauss 1925/1988:37 recurs to a normative framework of three obligations: to give, receive and repay, to explain the obligatory force of the bond established by the gift. Parsons 1963 posits the dominance of the cultural system. Luhmann’s 1976 non-normative theory is extremely abstract, entirely formal, and does not address the question of fetishism.

<sup>237</sup> Compare the research strategies of Bloch 1990:176 and of Moreno 1945:24 who states: “The statistical distribution of attractions and repulsions is affected by some esoteric factor. . . . It is dependent upon both, or all, the individuals and is not the subjective, independent product of each person. Out of these operations of the tele factor a product results which has the character of an objective, a supra-individual system” (ibid.).

<sup>238</sup> See the example in Tambiah 1984:390, n. 64.

fetishism of the soul, but also a fetishism of relics.<sup>239</sup> Like money, *bona fide* relics are not merely physical objects; they are also social forms. Their “miraculous” metaphysical qualities derive, like those of money, in part from their function as media of social interaction. As a focus of emotive energy within a social configuration, relics, like living saints, can appear to be the source rather than the recipient of the energy that pervades the social configuration. The participant’s perspective is not entirely wrong. It is in fact constitutive for the system, because without a common point of reference a network of relationships would not necessarily add up to more than the sum of its parts. But in reality, the power of relics to act as catalysts derives from the individuals who are oriented towards them and from the emotive energy with which relics are invested, not from their intrinsic qualities.

The advantage of a network analytical theory of the *objectification of social relationships*, compared to the model of the *objectification of charisma*, is that it is a non-subjectivist model. It does not need to make *a priori* assumptions about the presumed analytical significance of metaphysical entities, cultural values, aesthetic forms or political strategies, nor about the status system of a particular society, in contrast to the majority of theories concerned with the problem of explaining the metaphysical presence of deceased saints in their relics. Such a theory effectively explains how at base the miraculous role of relics as social catalysts can emerge spontaneously through self-regulative mechanisms.

A culturalist interpretation could point to the fact that in Jaina literature and religious practice relics of exemplary ascetics are clearly described as having “power”<sup>240</sup> and conveying “good fortune.”<sup>241</sup> It could also refer to the somewhat ambiguous distinction between pure

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<sup>239)</sup> The same point has been made by Ellen 1988:222f. However, like the contributors to the volume edited by Appadurai 1986, Ellen tends to interpret all forms of objectification as analogues of commodification without consideration of the specific qualities of the social relationships concerned. He also does not consider the role of living personalities such as mendicants as mediums of social interaction and as symbolically generalized means of communication. The focus of Ellen’s article, whose conventional descriptions of attributions of causative powers to objects are unconnected with the model of objectification, are cognitive processes not social systems.

<sup>240)</sup> TŚPC 6.522–565, translated by Johnson 1931 I: 364f.

<sup>241)</sup> TŚPC 13.245–272, translated by Johnson 1962 VI: 351f.

and impure matter, *subha-* and *asubha poggala*, in *Viy*<sub>1</sub> 5.9.2 (246b), 14.8, etc., and to the Jaina category of special matter formed quasi-alchemically by mixed karmic and natural causes, *mīsa-parinaya poggala* (*Viy*<sub>1</sub> 8.1.2 [328a–332b]). These emic categories point to the possibility of analyzing the process of the symbolic transformation of ascetic labor, *śrama*, into objectified power circulating in form of the *persona* of socially recognized ascetics or their relics, which can be logically reconstructed in analogy to the analysis of the genesis and “fetishism” of money by Marx (1867/1890/1977:49–98) and the fetishism of the gift by Mauss (1925/1988); as Taussig (1980:37f.), Tambiah (1984: 340f.), Ellen (1988:222f.), Bloch (1990:176) and others have pointed out for other contexts.<sup>242</sup> However, in contrast to money, relics do not represent universal exchange value, but remain intrinsically connected with the personality of the deceased and their associated particular psycho-geographical networks.<sup>243</sup> In contrast to ideas on the transferability of karman prevalent in Buddhism, according to Jaina doctrine and dominant religious practice, neither karmic particles nor the relics produced by karman can circulate like modern money in an entirely depersonalized form. Relics have no exchange value or purchasing power, though theoretically they can function as measures of value (of the deceased) and stores of (karmically encoded) merit. Sociologically, they are “inalienable possessions” which function as stable reference points beyond the sphere of social exchange, like the Jaina concept of the soul functions as a transcendent reference point for the control of the influx and outflux of karmic matter. The psychological correlates of the problem of contingency and the orientation towards relics of venerable saints as stable points of reference were aptly explained to the present writer by a Sthānakavāsī Jain who is not strictly opposed to relic veneration as such because “people want it” and “many ways lead

<sup>242)</sup> “We have learned two lessons since the days of *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft*: Firstly, probably all societies have their versions of ‘fetishism’ of objects. Secondly, the manner in which objects and persons are intertwined and evaluated differs according to each society’s cosmological design and cultural grid, in which social, divine, animal, and object hierarchies are mutually implicated” (Tambiah 1984: 340).

<sup>243)</sup> Following Fichtenau 1952, Geary 1978/1990:31 points to the continuing identification of relics with the deceased saint, and suggests that behind the cult of relics is “a natural inclination to think of power and influence in personal terms.”

to god.” He described relic veneration, in game-theoretical terms, as a win-win strategy for everyone involved.<sup>244</sup>

Venerating *samādhis* offers a 50/50 or 60/40 chance of success. Whenever you go there and pray for something, then either you will win, that is, your wish will come true, and then you will become a devotee, or you loose, that is, your wish will not come true, and there is no loss because you were no devotee in the first place.

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<sup>244</sup> S. Jain, personal communication, Ludhiyānā 27.12.2009. From a materialistic point of view, he emphasized, “shrines are means for the acquisition of social status and for the collection of charitable funds.”

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