



Invitation to the workshop

“THE JAINA AND THE BRITISH”

Collaboration and Conflict
Concealment and Contribution
during the 19th and early 20th century

19./20. FEBRUARY 2010

University of Tübingen: Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies (AOI)
Department of Indology and Comparative Religion



Some possible questions

- Which Jaina entrepreneurs were **among the most successful middlemen on behalf of the British East India Company**, and the Empire? How did these successful Jaina invest their profits for religious or for social purposes?
- Are the **life histories of influential Jaina merchants** exceptional or do they reflect the general history of their local communities?
- How do the Jaina perceive their own role in the 19th century? Do **oral and written family histories**, as produced during the last 150 years, provide answers and questions?
- What kind of references to the Jaina community can be traced in **journals of British travellers, missionaries, or British East India Company employees** during the 19th century? How are “the Jainas” characterized in these accounts?
- How do these findings correspond with those data of German sources from the late 19th and early 20th centuries? Why were **German indologists more successful in getting access to Jaina manuscripts** than the British researchers?
- Which – newly formed or existing – **Jaina institutions**, organisations or outstanding personalities **openly promoted the study of sacred texts in spite of the opposition among orthodox Jaina**?
- Did the “**discovery**” of “**Jainism**” as an independent religious tradition have an effect on the Jaina’s entrepreneurial position within the colonial economy?
- To what extent do **recent Jaina demands for the legal acknowledgement of their minority status** refer to findings of the late 19th century scholars?
- Which – newly formed or existing – Jaina institutions, organisations or outstanding personalities successfully promoted the **revival of the almost extinct mendicant orders during the 19th century**?

For further details on the content of the workshop please read the detailed position paper attached to this invitation.
(See also: www.uni-tuebingen.de/indologie/Jain19thc.workshop)

Prof. Dr. Klaus Butzenberger
Dr. des. Andrea Luithle-Hardenberg
Dr. Heike Moser

Deadline and Organisation

- We invite all interested scholars to propose a presentation of 30 minutes including time of discussion. Interested scholars without a presentation are also welcome. We kindly request you to notify us before 30/11/2009.
- Participant with a presentation are kindly requested to submit an abstract of 200-250 words until 30/10/2009 to Dr. des. Andrea Luithle-Hardenberg at a.luithle@gmx.de.
- The language of the workshop will be English.
- We are intending to publish all papers presented in the workshop in a joint volume.
- The final program will be circulated by 15/12/2009.
- The workshop will be held at the Castle Hohentübingen.
- For further questions regarding the organisation of the workshop please do not hesitate to contact Jain19thc.ws@uni-tuebingen.de.

THE JAINA AND THE BRITISH. Jaina Community in the 19th and the early 20th Century

Position Paper
for
the Workshop at the University of Tübingen
(February 19th/ 20th 2010)

Collaboration and Competition

From the very advent of the British in India onwards, Jaina merchants and bankers acted as their middlemen for commercial transactions. Being part of the heterogeneous category known as *banias*, the north Indian mercantile community, Jaina contributed to British colonial successes not just in matters of business, but also in the fields of military conquest and political dominance: They supplied financial resources, offered mercantile know-how, provided informational networks and launched their diplomatic and administrative skills as judges or revenue farmers and in similar positions.¹

At the same time Jaina merchants and entrepreneurs were among the chief beneficiaries of British rule in India. In almost all British strongholds, but especially in and around commercial centers such as Calcutta, Surat, Bharuch, Bombay, Cochin, Madras and Mysore, Jaina families amassed great fortunes by collaborating – and also competing – with British colonial projects. Even before the colonial period Jaina merchants and bankers had belonged to the local elites that controlled the indigenous networks of trade. However, with the advent of the British rule in the 17th century, they realized the opportunities of the growing colonial economy and ventured to migrate from native Rajasthan and Gujarat towards all directions of the subcontinent. By the 1860ies, these Jaina pioneers also participated in India's industrialization, in the process of which they further established their substantial communities in the emerging metropolitan locations, particularly in Calcutta, Kanpur, Bombay and Ahmedabad. After successfully demanding a greater autonomy for Indian entrepreneurs in the first decades of the 20th century, Jaina magnates were also among those who helped building the economic sector of an independent India.²

¹ Marshall 1979, Timberg 1979, Bayly 1983, 1988, 1993 and 1996, Tripathi (ed.) 1984, Subramanian 1987 and 1996, Chaudhury 1988, Chatterjee 1993, Cadene/ Vidal (eds.) (1997), Wagoner 2003, Subrahmanyam 2004

² Timberg 1979, Tripathi 1981, Tripathi/ Mehta 1990, Taknet 1986, Herdeck/ Piramal 1986, Piramal 1996

Concealment and Contribution

Although the British saw Jaina merchants as either competent allies or dignified combatants in business, they hesitated to recognise the Jaina as a religious community with traditions different from those of the Hindu majority. Brigadier Alexander Walker of Bowland (1764-1831), who, in 1803, started his service as the British resident at the Geakwad's Court in Baroda, was one of the first colonial officers to classify the Jaina as a discrete religious community. In his largely unpublished "*Account of the Jeyn, or Shrivaca Religion*"³ he depicts the Jaina community as "*a great body of People who have been little known until lately, and who in the indiscriminating researches of our Countrymen were considered to be Hindoos but who belong to a faith which is in opposition to that of Brama*"⁴.

In contrast to his better known contemporary Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1809) who characterizes the Jaina community as "*a Hindu tribe*", Walker more carefully distinguishes the Jaina from the Hindu majority: "[...] *The Jeyns or Shrivucks may easily be mistaken for Hindoos, as they resemble them in their persons, dress, language and manners. Their religious tenets are however very different. They reject the Vedes, Mahadave, Vishnoo and Brama.*"⁵ On almost 300 pages Walker elaborates and exemplifies his insights into several aspects of Jaina doctrine and community with topics such as the 24 "*Aryahuntas*"; the rules of conduct and the orders of the Jaina ascetics (including interviews with a leading Acarya), the 84 castes or sects; a complete catalogue of the sacred "*Books*" (the "*agams*"); cosmology, astronomy and ethics according to a translation of a "*Jeyn Manuscript containing an account of the Sect*"; translations of several inscriptions; immunities granted by Akbar and the representation of the Jaina within the Hindu Puranas.

By taking this study and a few less detailed early colonial accounts into consideration, one can assume that at least some British researchers have had direct information on the religious and ritual life of the Jaina community. However, the British did not continue with this kind of investigation until the second part of 19th century.⁶ Two major reasons may have caused this deficiency: First, the Jaina and Hindu (Vaishnava) Banias are in fact closely related in terms of marriage, caste affiliation and many other aspects. Secondly, Jaina generally preferred to remain inconspicuous as already stated by Walker: "[...] *[T]hey are dispersed throughout the*

³ below AJSR

⁴ India Office Library & Records IOL MSS Eur D 582: 293; for the first chapter, see Bender 1976

⁵ AJSR: 294

⁶ Stevenson 1848, Burgess [1869] 1976, 1873 and 1884

*Country and are often desirous of concealing themselves. They never obtrude themselves into a notice, and this is the reason that the researches have only lately been directed towards their institutions.*⁷

While, in the early times of colonization, Walker had obviously established a certain degree of mutual respect and trust when contacting his Jain informants who were mostly ascetics, the later colonial officers after 1820 adopted a more aggressive information policy. The Jaina had never been very responsive to British inquiries into their religious affairs, but now their lack of enthusiasm turned into open refusal. In public, orthodox Jaina agitated against any study, translation and publication of their sacred texts, being afraid that these inquiries might pollute their holy scriptures.⁸

As a consequence, the British had only a limited access to Jaina scriptures. Accordingly, 'Jainism/Jinism' could not be recognised as an independent 'religion' until 1879, since earlier any textual evidence had been lacking. In this year the German Indologist Hermann Jacobi published his edition of the *Kalpasutra*, of which the introduction provides the first textual evidence that 'Jainism/Jinism' was older than Buddhism. By clearly separating Jainism from Buddhism as well as from Hinduism, Jacobi established Jaina Studies as an integral part of Indology.⁹ Along with some other German and European scholars such as Albert Weber, Helmuth von Glasenapp und Walther Schubring, Jacobi helped to advance Jaina Studies during the last decade of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th centuries. While earlier textual studies had been opposed by orthodox Jaina, the educated Jaina elite now cardinally approved of this new academic tradition of Jaina studies and even referred to it when claiming public recognition of the Jaina community at the end of the 19th century.¹⁰

This German tradition, based on scriptural studies with the focus on religious topics such as doctrine, cosmology and ascetic restrictions, remained quite apart from social and historical researches on Jaina prominence within India's economic development after 1800. The fertile role of Jaina bankers, merchants and middle men, or later industrialists, are studied by historians and economists, who pay less attention to the religious identity of the Gujarati

⁷ AJSR: 295

⁸ Flügel 2005 - For the discourses on colonial knowledge see e.g. Said 1978, Rocher 1993, Metcalf 1994, Cohn 1996, Dirks 2001, Wagoner 2003, Alamgir 2006

⁹ Butzenberger 2003, Flügel 2005

¹⁰ Flügel 2005

Mahajan und Marvari Sheths.¹¹ Some of these scholars would even consider religion only of secondary importance with regard to the Jaina's remarkable commercial achievements (see, for example Timberg 1979). Others who, in the tradition of Max Weber, pay attention to the mutual influences of religious beliefs and economic performance would not normally examine the whole range of religious phenomena. Nevaskar (1971), for example, only considers religious rules and prohibitions and their effects on the economic ventures of Jaina entrepreneurs.

Some detailed ethnographic studies, however, do illustrate the social impact of the gift giving practices within the Jaina community, while also addressing the apparent paradox of Jaina doctrine and practice, the co-existence of a severe asceticism and an open approval of amassing wealth.¹² At the same time, such ethnographic works have not yet been used to draw up a detailed picture of the economic and social development of the 19th century which may be due to a lack of general case studies.

As a consequence, the given disjunction between the religious and economic domains within Jaina studies has been an impediment to further insights into the social history of the community since long. Regardless of the subject we look at: Studies on the Jaina community either focus on their religion or on their economic achievements but rarely fuse the two in search of a complete socio-historical portrayal. Moreover, most historical accounts based on textual studies only focus on pre-colonial periods, i.e. ancient and medieval times.¹³ A comprehensive account on the Jaina's history of the 19th century is still lacking, even if a variety of contributions do discuss this period in general or from a specific perspective. Thus the following may be listed:

1. locally focused contributions of contemporary authors,¹⁴
2. accounts of historians and anthropologists adopting a more general approach to the colonial period and the society of Western India,¹⁵
3. references to the 19th century by Jaina scholars which are included into their more general contributions on the Jaina community,¹⁶

¹¹ Marshall 1979, Timberg 1979, Bayly 1983, 1988, 1993 and 1996, Subramanian 1987 und 1996, Tripathi 1981, Chaudhury 1988, Tripathi/ Mehta 1990, Bayly 1992, 1993 und 1996, Chatterjee 1993, Subrahmanyam 2004, Cadene/ Vidal (eds.) (1997), Wagoner 2003, Subrahmanyam 2004

¹² Cort 1991 and 2001, Laidlaw 1995

¹³ Glasenapp [1925] 1984, Schubring 1927, Williams [19863] 1991 Dundas 1992 and 2006

¹⁴ Tod 1939 on Rajputana, Burgess [1869] 1976, 1873 and 1884 on Shatrunjaya

¹⁵ Babb 2004 on merchant castes in Rajasthan, Bayly 1988 and 1996 on merchants in colonial society, Catanach 1970 and Hardiman 1992 on moneylenders in Western India, Tams-Lyche 1997 on Gujarat, Timberg 1979 and Hardgrove 2004 on Marvari migration during the 19th century

4. studies on spiritually motivated Jaina reform movements at the end of the 19th century and during the first decades of the 20th century as initiated by charismatic personalities such as Shrimad Rajchandra and Kanji Svami,¹⁷
5. accounts of the foundation of local Jaina organisations such as the Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi in 1821 which include statements on religious property,¹⁸
6. references to Jaina supra-regional initiatives that include socio-political concerns such as the foundation of the All India Jain Association in 1926,¹⁹
7. two prominent family histories.²⁰

All these contributions provide us with ample evidence that crucial developments within the Jaina community were triggered by and involved in the rapidly changing social environment of colonial India in the 19th century. In the course of these developments the British and the Jaina became allies as well as adversaries when negotiating central issues such as religious property, traditional authority, or access to institutions of higher education and to the civil service. Nevertheless the Jaina's vital role within the colonial economy may have helped them to implement their religious and social concerns. For instance large projects of temple construction, such as the donations of Jagath Sheth's on Sammet Shikar and of *inter alia* Moti Shah's on Shatrunjaya, were financed by extensive earnings of Jaina magnates business transactions with the British and other overseas clients.²¹

More of these historical correlations should be discovered for a more detailed picture of the inseparable connection between the economic and religious domains in the 19th century development of the Jaina community. Such a picture should also include public issues such as the temple economy as related to the traditional authority of the ascetics. The inner-Jaina disputes, arising from this issue, are yet to be examined adequately. The above mentioned literature on the Jaina reform movements and the formation of supra-regional Jaina organisations already points to important debates taken up within the community. However, the question is left open how the traditional ascetic orders – Shvetambar as well as Digambar – responded to the cataclysm of the colonial period, i.e. how they dealt with disputes on the value and mode of image-worship, the challenges to the ultimate formal authority of the

¹⁶ Dundas 1992: *passim*, Cort 2001: *passim* (mainly on the Jaina community in Patan), Flügel 2005

¹⁷ Dundas 1992: 227-234

¹⁸ Banks 1992, Kim 2007, Luithle-Hardenberg 2006/ forthcoming, Cort 2000

¹⁹ Sangave 1991, Flügel 2005

²⁰ Little 1920 and Taknet 1986 *passim* on the Jagath Sheth and Tripathi 1981 on Lalbhai Dalpatbhai

²¹ Taknet 1986, Kim 2007

traditional ascetic orders, the separation of the Shvetambar and the Digambar tradition, the – questionable – merit of Western education and the more general political issues such as the independence movement.

To sum up: We do not have a comprehensive account on the Jain community that provides us with detailed analytical descriptions of the social, religious and economic processes shaping the Jaina community and identity – including local and sectarian variations – during the peak phase of the colonial epoch.

The workshop should bring together scholars of different disciplines that include indology, economics, socio-cultural anthropology, history and comparative religion as far as they unite in the study of the Jaina community. Furthermore, the workshop should discuss the extent to which such historical developments are reflected in the present within the Jaina community.

Accordingly, the following questions may be raised:

- ❖ What additional sources may provide us with further information on the Jaina community during the colonial period? What kind of literature circulated within the Jaina community in English and vernacular languages during the 19th and early 20th centuries? Which sources are still available to allow a study of the changing ideas on religious topics, the vindication of traditional values and/or the affirmation of new/traditional forms of social organisation? Can we perceive different attitudes in earlier sources as compared to later ones?
- ❖ What kind of – published and unpublished – references to the British can we identify in letters, journals, newspapers, diaries and the like? How are the British characterized when compared to other foreigners in past and present times? How do the Jaina perceive their own role in the 19th century? Do oral and written family histories, as produced during the last 150 years, provide answers to these questions? Do these accounts indicate any impact of the central religious vow of non-violence (*ahimsa*) on the professional behaviour of the Jaina entrepreneurs?
- ❖ Which of the newly formed or existing Jaina institutions/organisations or who among the outstanding personalities should be included in a history of the Jaina community during the 19th and early 20th centuries? What do we know about their emergence or their life histories? Who were the local communities or wealthy and influential Jaina families to sponsor institutions and organisations?

- ❖ Which Jaina entrepreneurs were among the most successful middlemen on behalf of the British East India Company, and the Empire? How did these successful Jaina invest their profits for religious or for social purposes? Are the life histories of these influential people exceptional or do they reflect the general history of their local communities? What evidence is reflecting open confrontations – and their solutions – in the religious or the economic domain?
- ❖ What kind of published and unpublished references to the Jaina community can be traced in journals of British travellers, missionaries, or British East India Company employees and their families during the 19th century? Which journals may be found in British and Indian archives? How are “the” Jainas characterized in these accounts? Are they distinguished from other Indian elites cooperating with the British? Do these sources mention personal relationships between outstanding historical figures on either side?
- ❖ How do these findings correspond with those data of German sources from the late 19th and early 20th centuries? What kind of relationship existed between German indologists and individual Jaina such as Acaryas or influential laymen? Why were German indologists more successful in getting access to Jaina manuscripts than the British researchers?
- ❖ Which – newly formed or existing – Jaina institutions, organisations or outstanding personalities openly promoted the study of sacred texts in spite of the opposition among orthodox Jaina? What attitudes regarding textual studies can be found within the Jaina community today? Who has access to sacred manuscripts and who is excluded? Did the “discovery” of Jainism as an independent religious tradition have an effect on the Jaina’s entrepreneurial position within the colonial economy?
- ❖ Which – newly formed or existing – Jaina institutions, organisations or outstanding personalities successfully promoted the revival of the almost extinct mendicant orders during the 19th century? What kind of arguments fuelled their campaigns? What do we know about the sedentary *yati*-tradition which formed the majority of ascetics during the early and mid 19th century? How is the conflict between sedentary and vagrant ascetics reflected in the Jaina’s own current collective memory of the 19th century?
- ❖ Which kind of social issues of a more general concern were taken up by – newly formed or existing – Jaina institutions, organisations or outstanding personalities in

colonial India? Examples may be the access to higher education, child marriage, sati, female infanticide, access to the civil service, dowry payments, animal sacrifice, untouchability and temple entry bill. To what extent are these issues reflected in current social movements promoted by Jaina activists?

- ❖ Which role did Jaina institutions, organisations or outstanding personalities play within Gandhi’s *swaraj* movement or other political movements for India’s independence of British rule? How did Jaina organisations generally conceive the Indian independence movement?
- ❖ Did the general attitude of individual Jaina magnates or institutions towards politics change significantly after independence, or can it be asserted that the Jaina’s political involvements were linked to more or less consistent attitudes and strategies?
- ❖ Why were All-Jaina-institutions not very successful, when trying to overcome the separation between Digambara and Shvetambara?
- ❖ To what extent do recent Jaina demands for the legal acknowledgement of their minority status refer to findings of the late 19th century scholars? To what extent do British legal decisions of early 20th century play a part in this debate?
- ❖ (...)

Andrea Luithle-Hardenberg

Deadline and Organisation:

We invite all interested scholars to propose a **presentation of 30 minutes** including time of discussion. We are also looking forward to receiving **further suggestions** regarding the content of the workshop. An **abstract of 200-250** words should be submitted until **30/10/2009** to Andrea Luithle-Hardenberg at a.luithle@gmx.de. The language of the workshop will be **English**. We are intending to publish all papers presented in the workshop in a joint volume. Interested scholars without a presentation are also welcome. We kindly request you to notify us before 30/11/2009. The **final program** will be circulated by **15/12/2009**. The workshop will be held at the Castle Hohentübingen. We are also inviting all participants to a cultural program in the old university town Tübingen and its vicinity. For further questions please do not hesitate to contact Jain19thc.ws@uni-tuebingen.de.

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