“TODAY I PLAY HOLĪ IN MY CITY”
DIGAMBAR JAIN HOLĪ SONGS FROM JAIPUR

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The springtime festival of Holi has long posed a problem for Jains. Jain ideologues have criticized the celebration of Holi as contravening several key Jain ethical virtues. In response, Digambar Jain poets developed a genre of Holī songs that transformed the elements of Holī into a complex spiritual allegory, and thereby “tamed” the transgressive festival. These songs were part of a culture of songs (pad, bhajan) and other vernacular compositions by Digambar laymen in the cosmopolitan centers of north India in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. I argue in this essay that an investigation into this Digambar genre of Holī songs encourages us to see that many of the “Hindu” Holī songs from this same time period were also engaged in a process of reframing and taming Holī. Both Hindu and Jain songs translated its antinomian and transgressive elements into softer, less threatening sets of metaphors specific to their spiritual traditions.

On the first night of the festival everyone gathers for the burning of a bonfire, in memory of the burning of an evil woman or demoness. In many interpretations this is the demoness Holikā. The bonfire clearly violates the central Jain ethical principle of ahimsā or

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1 Amrita Shodhan 2001: 123, 144 n.13 noted that nineteenth-century explanations of the stories behind the observance of Holī do not link it to the story of Viṣṇu, Prahlāda and Holikā, which is presented in most scholarship as the explanatory myth behind the events. She cited two Gujarati essays from 1859 printed in Bombay reformist periodicals.
non-harm. Igniting a fire at night, when inevitably many insects and other small living creatures will be incinerated, is seen as an act of fearsome violence. A well-known story of the twenty-third Jina, Pārśvanāth, for example, relates how he perceived that a Brāhmaṇ ascetic, performing a penance by sitting in the sun surrounded by fires, was unmindfully incinerating two snakes.

The next morning is Dhuleṇḍī; this is a riotous time, as neighbors throw colored liquids and dry colored powders on each other. Many people accentuate the festivities by consuming bhāṅg and becoming intoxicated. Holi is also a time when many people sing songs “publicly characterized as obscene”; they focus on “the joking [and potentially sexual] relationship between a woman and her younger brother-in-law” (Jassal 2012: 219). In many villages, women employ long phallic staffs and thick, wet-knotted ropes to beat the men (Miller 1973: 18f.). All of this clearly goes against the Jain emphasis on decorum, mindfulness and equanimity (samatā, samyam, sañjam). Scholarship has shown the many ways that the observance of Holi involves extensive sub-altern expressions of subjugated social and economic status, something in which many Jains from middle- and upper-class families, as paradigmatic “alterns,” might understandably be reluctant to participate.

For these reasons Holī was included on a list of "harmful customs" (hānikārik rivāz) that Śvetāmbar Mūrtipujak reformers in the early twentieth century urged their fellow Jains to avoid (Cort 2000: 175f.). In the middle of the twentieth century, the Śvetāmbar Mūrtipujak Tapā Gacch monk Ācārya Vijay Amṛtsūri (1953) contrasted the proper Jain spiritual (bhāv) observance of Holī, which was aimed to wear away accumulated karma, with the popular physical (dravya) observance of Holī, which had the opposite effect, and bound the soul to sinful karma. He concluded his short Holikā Vyākhyān (Sermon on Holikā) with a list of the great amount of karma one accumulated by the extensive karmic suffering brought about by observing the popular Holī customs, and contrasted this with a list of fasts one could undertake to remEDIATE the karmic affects of the popular Holi.

In a 1940 essay published in the Hindi-language journal Anekānt, of which he was the founder and editor, the Digambar intellectual and social reformer Jugalkīśor Mukhtār (1877-

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Marriott 1966 remains the most accessible introduction to the observance of Holī in a north Indian village, although Miller 1973 and Cohen 1994 are important extensions and corrections of his analysis. The older accounts of Bose 1967 and Crooke 1968 II: 313f. are still useful. The films by Beeche 1990 and Katz 1996 provide excellent presentations of the cultural significance of Holī in north Indian rural and urban culture, respectively.

I have coined this neologism as a back-formation from “subaltern.” Whereas the latter designates people and communities who are in subordinate social positions, the term “altern” indicates that most Jains have occupied a more powerful position in north Indian society.
1968) decried the way that Holī was commonly observed, and argued that its true essence was equanimity (samatā) and independence (svatantratā) (Mukhtar 1940b). He argued that it was of vital interest to the cause of the nation for the Congress to take the lead in restoring the observance of Holī to its original spirit. This would help instill a true spirit of independence (svarājya) in the people. If Congress was unwilling or unable to take the lead in this effort, he suggested that another national religious organization such as the Hindu Mahasabha should. He concluded his essay with a ten-point plan for the reform (sudhār) of Holī. This included using liquid ingredients in the play of colors that were not harmful, eliminating the consumption of alcohol and other intoxicating substances, not trading insults and not singing obscene songs. He accompanied his article by a poem he wrote in Hindi entitled “Holī Holī Hai,” in which he played upon the oral coincidence between the Hindi “Holī” and the English “holy” to ask in the refrain, “How is Holī holy?” (kaise “holī holī hai?”) (Mukhtar 1940a). The refrain was a rebuttal to the popular phrase “Holī hai!” This is the standard response to any criticism of the excesses of Holī, and implies, “it’s Holī, so anything goes!” He reprinted the poem in a 1948 issue of Anekānt, proudly noting that he had been told that the poem had been painted on the wall of the Bīspanth Koṭhī temple at the important pilgrimage shrine of Sammet Shikhar in eastern India.

This is not just a modernist response to Holī. The fifteenth-century Digambar poet Brahm Jindās criticized the popular performance of Holī in his Holī Rās. As summarized by Premcand Rānvka (1980: 70f.), Jindās described how Holī had been observed in the fourth spoke of time in Jain cosmology, a Jain version of the golden age of truth (satya yug):

“[Spring (basant) was played on the full moon of Phālgun. Rās, bhās, kavitt, phāg and gīt [all genres of songs] were sung. Virtuous people worshipped in the Jina temples. There were performances of religious stories. This was the correct Holī. The way Holī is observed nowadays is not correct.”

A century-and-one-half later, the Digambar poet Chītar Thōliyā in his Holī kī Kathā, which he composed in Mozamabad in 1603, said that the play with colors and the Holī bonfire are both examples of mīthāyāva or wrong faith. According to him, not only does participating in the play of Holī result in a person being reborn in an infernal existence (jo

3 Brahm Jindās was a renouncer in the saṅgh of Bhatṭārak Sakalakīrti, who established the Idar seat of the Bāḷāṭkār Gaṇ. He was also Sakalakīrti’s younger birth-brother. They were born in the Humbād caste in Patan, north Gujarāt. We do not have precise dates for Jindās, but know that he composed two of his many texts between VS 1508 and 1520 (1452 – 1464 CE), and presided over the consecration of Jina icons in VS 1510 and 1516 (1454 and 1460 CE) (Rānvkā 1980: 16).
śelai holī mithyāta / so pāvai narakā kau pāta), but just watching the bonfire will have the same result (holī jalatī deśai soya / narakā taṇauṁ jīva soya).⁴

On the other hand, Holi is a neighborhood event in which everyone in a community is expected to participate. Most Jains have done so willingly and even eagerly. It is a joyous springtime festival, the celebration of which traditionally has not been tied to any one religious community. An article in the March 15, 2008, edition of the Rājasthān Patrikā, a Hindi-language daily newspaper in Jaipur, listed several locations where there was public singing for the eight days leading up to Holi. These included the Lārlīji temple of Krishna in Rāmgaṇj Bazār, the Vaiśṇo Devī temple in Rājā Park, the Ānand Kṛṣṇa Bihārīji temple in Tripoliyā, and the Śyām Sevā Parivār organization of Krishna devotees in Jamnāpurī. Another article in the same issue described a poetry recital in celebration of the season; of the five poets mentioned in the article, three were Muslim. At the conclusion of Holi, there is a big annual kavi sammelan (“poet’s gathering”) in Vidyādharanagar, a suburb of Jaipur, which is attended by thousands of connoisseurs who come to hear seasonal poetry.

Much of what goes on during Holi, such as visiting with friends and neighbors to express loving comradeship, and eating sweets, dried fruits and other special seasonal foods, is not opposed to Jain ethics or etiquette. Not to participate in these activities can even be seen as rude and anti-social. Despite the ideological stance that a strictly orthodox Jain should not participate in various aspects of Holi (and some indeed do not), in actual fact the vast majority of Jains of all traditions living in north India do so. In Jaipur, for example, on the afternoon of the final day of Holī, many Digambar Jains used to go to the Phāgī temple in Ghīvāloṁ kā Rāstā, where there was a program of devotional singing of Holī and other songs (Anūpcand Nyāyātīrth 1990: 15).⁵

Singing Spring: Phaguā, Phāgu

Holī in north India is more than a two-day religious and social event. It is a high point of a larger set of cultural events that mark the season of spring. As we have seen, there are many musical and poetic performances. People gather in Hindu temples and other public places to sing Holī songs in a seasonal style known as phaguā, after the spring month of Phāgun. In

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⁴ Chitār Tholiyā, Holī ki Kathā. These passages are found in verses 95 and 96 in ms. 1356, and verses 94 and 95 in ms. 1357. See also Anūpcand Nyāyātīrth 2004.

⁵ While the similarity between the name of the temple and the name of the season may be behind the annual song performance, the name of the temple derives from the fact that the founders of the temple migrated to Jaipur from the village of Phāgī.
traditional north India, wintertime often saw the men of a family go elsewhere, to work, trade or soldier. In Phāgūn women expected their men to return. Many phaguā songs express viraha or love in absence, and are filled with emotional longing and sexual anticipation. Others express samyog, as the man has returned and the lovers are again united.

Phāg is also one of the names for the red powder that people throw on each other while playing Holī. While the various myths behind the festival indicate that most of the activities pre-date the Krishna-oriented Vaiṣṇavization of north India, in large parts of north India, Holī for several centuries has been inextricably linked with imitating the ways that Krishna and his companions played it. The play of colors in particular is closely associated with the spiritualized erotic play of Krishna and the gopīs in the countryside of Braj.

Modern phaguā songs derive from the older genre of phāg or phāgu. As described by Charlotte Vaudeville (1986: 21), “the main and almost sole theme of the phāgu is the erotic theme in its various aspects and phases: viyoga and samyoga, union and separation of lovers.” Kantilal B. Vyas (1942: xxxviii.) has summarized the features of a phāgu. It begins with a sensuous description of spring, as all of nature exhibits new life. The poem then turns to the heroine. The fertile exuberance of spring accentuates her longing for her absent lover. The detailed descriptions of the love-sick heroine are essential to the mood of the poem, creating a sympathetic sense of longing in the audience. At length, the hero returns, the lovers are reunited, and rather than being in conflict with the surrounding natural setting, their fertile erotic play is consonant with it. The poem ends with a sense of profound fulfillment.

This genre was adopted by more theologically oriented poets in the Vaiṣṇava and Jain traditions to express the separation of the person from his or her spiritual essence. In a Vaiṣṇava phāgu, the poet allegorized the separation of the lovers to the separation of the soul from God as Krishna. In a Jain phāgu, the poet allegorized the separation of the person as defined externally by the transitory and deluded body and senses from the person’s true being, the internal, eternal and wise soul.

The Jain genre of phāgu, and another genre that Vaudeville demonstrated had extensive overlap with it, the genre of bārahmāsā (a cycle of songs depicting the twelve months of the year), had a significant influence on the later Diāmbar genre of Holī songs. Vaudeville (1986: 22) wrote, “in the oldest phāgus . . . the ‘play-acting’ element is always noticeable,” so the genre lent itself to transformation from narrative poetry into drama. These two genres of phāgu and bārahmāsā appear to have been particularly popular in the language now characterized as Old Gujarati, and the examples Vaudeville discussed were all composed by Śvetāmbar authors. In relation to the bārahmāsā genre, she observed (p. 17), “the oldest known viraha-bārahmāsas [sic] are not krishnaite poems . . . but Jain works in Apabhramśa or old Mārvāri-Gujarati; the heroes are not Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, but one of the Jain saints,
usually the romantic Nemi (Neminātha) and his fiancée Rājimātī, cruelly abandoned by him on her wedding day.”6 Agar cand Nāḥā (1962b: 36f.), and following him Vaudeville (1986: 23), argued that the genre of phāgu also shows Jain, and particularly Śvetāmbar Jain, origins. The oldest known phāgu is the twenty-seven-verse Sīthalibhadra Phāgu by the Śvetāmbar author Jinapadmasūri. He was head of the Khatarc Gacch from VS 1390 to1400 (CE 1333-1343) (Vinayasaṅgar 2004: 202f.).7

A third genre that overlapped extensively with phāgu was dhamāl (also spelled dhamār; in older Digambar texts often spelled dhamaḷ). This was not as early a genre; the earliest Digambar examples from the sixteenth century VS, and the earliest Śvetāmbar examples from the seventeenth century VS. The overlap between phāgu and dhamāl was so great that Nāḥā (1962b: 39) said, “There must be differences between phāgu and dhamāl in terms of meter, rāginī and style, but in the seventeenth century, from when most of the compositions in the genre of dhamāl date, both names are applied to the same compositions.” We see this clearly in the seventeenth-century text I discuss below by the seventeenth-century Banārsidās, which was entitled both Adhyāyatam Phāg and Adhyāyatam Dhamār in the same manuscripts.

Among Jains phāgu and bārahmāsā appear to have begun in Śvetāmbar literary circles, but they did not remain exclusively Śvetāmbar genres. There was also a Digambar expression of this genre, as seen in the Ādiśvar Phāg by Jñānabhūṣan, composed sometime around 1500 CE. The author was a bhaṭṭārak who occupied the Sagwara seat (in what is now Dungarpur District in southern Rajasthan) of the Kāśṭhā Saṅgh, Nandītaṭ Gacch. He was active between VS 1531 and 1560 (CE 1475-1504). His Ādiśvar Phāg in two cantos, the first in Sanskrit and the second in what Kāśīlvāl (1967: 59) characterized as “Rajasthani influenced by Gujarati,”8 narrated the biography of the first Jina, Ādināth or Ādiśvar. After dwelling at great length on the hero’s childhood and accession to the throne as king, Jñānabhūṣan achieved a denouement

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6 Vaudeville’s use of the term “old Mārvārī-Gujarātī” indicates the extent to which “Old Gujarati” and “Old Rajasthani” extensively overlap, such that distinguishing between them obscures more than it clarifies. Recent papers by Inre Bangha 2012 and Phyllis Granoff 2012 have gone far toward reorienting the history of the vernacular languages of north India, and demonstrated clearly both the important role of the Jains in the development of all the vernaculars, and the extent to which modern labels such as “Hindi” and “Gujarati” are of dubious use in analyzing pre-modern vernaculars. See also the comments by two of the leading scholars of pre-modern languages and literatures of western India. Kastūrī Kant Kāśīlvāl 1981: 59 said, “In truth, in the seventeenth century Gujarati and Rajasthani could not have been different.” H. C. Bhāyānī 1965: 34 n.1 said, in a similar vein, that the same medieval language can be called Old Gujarati, Old Western Rajasthani, Maru-Gurjar and Old Gurjar.

7 Vaudeville dated Jinapadmasūri’s text to ca. 1330.

8 See note 6.
in which the divine dancer Nīlaṇjanā was sent by the gods to remind Ādiśvar of the need to renounce the world. She danced so energetically that she fell dead. This shocked Ādiśvar into realizing the fragility of life, and caused him to renounce his throne and become a homeless mendicant. We see here a skillful redeployment of the common phāgu emphasis on viraha or bereavement at separation from one’s beloved to underscore the Jain valorization of renunciation of the emotions.

Other Gujarat-based bhaṭṭaraks also composed phāgus. Bhaṭṭarak Sakalakīrti of the Idar branch of the Balātkār Gaṇ composed a Śāntināth Phāgu in the late fifteenth century (Kāśīvāl 1667: 1f). Bhaṭṭarak Vircond of the Surat branch of the Balātkār Gaṇ composed a Vīr Vilās Phāg, on the life of Nemināth, sometime shortly before 1600 (Kāśīvāl 1667: 106f). Bhaṭṭarak Ratnakīrti of the Surat branch of the Balātkār Gaṇ composed a Nemināth Phāg and Nemināth Bārahmāsā, also sometime shortly before 1600 (Kāśīvāl 1981: 51f). Finally, Brahm Rāymall, another renouncer in the Surat branch of the Balātkār Gaṇ, but who lived in the Dhūndhāhād region (the modern-day Jaipur area), composed a Nemīśvar Rāś or Nemīśvar Phāg in VS 1615 (CE 1558; Kāśīvāl 1978: 16f). These works are all found in Digambar libraries in north India, and so almost certainly influenced the later north Indian genre of Digambar Holī songs.

A Digambar Jain Counter-Tradition of Holī: Banārsīdās

Digambar Jain poets in north India developed a tradition of short Holī songs (pad) that was both in continuity with the older phāgu, dhamāl and bārahmāsā literature, and a response to the popular transgressive observances. We do not know when this counter-tradition of Holī

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9 The influence of Gujarati-writing Digambar renouncers in the development of this genre is an indication of the important role Digambar Jains in Gujarat have played in the broader north Indian Digambar tradition, and as a bridge between the north Indian and south Indian Digambar communities. Discussion of the Gujarati Digambar communities is almost totally lacking in most scholarship on the Jains.

10 Ramaṇāl C. Śāh 1999 published 140 Jain phāgus in Gujarati script, by both Śvetāmbar and Digambar authors.

11 Śvetāmbar authors, most of them mendicants, also developed a tradition of Holī songs. In 1886, the Śvetāmbar publisher Bhūmsīṃh Māṇek published a collection of 227 Holī songs (Jain Hort Sangrah Pustak). More recently, Kavin Śāh 2001 published an edition of 111 Holī (Holī) songs in Gujarati script, many of them the same as in the 1886 collection. This body of songs awaits analysis on another occasion. That the seventeenth-century Śvetāmbar poet Ānandghan composed at least one song that shares the Digambar allegory (Cort 2013b), and that songs by several Digambar authors are included in the two Śvetāmbar collections, indicate that there were avenues of influence and sharing among Śvetāmbar and Digambar authors. This subject also needs further investigation.
songs started, but it has been in existence since at least the time of Banārsīdās (1586-1643), who composed several Braj-bhāṣā poems on the subject. Included in his Banārsī Vilās, the collection of his poetic works compiled shortly after his death by his friend and fellow poet Jagīvanrām, is an eighteen-verse poem entitled Adhyātam Phāg or Adhyātam Dhamār. Banārsīdās engaged in an extensive allegorization of the observance of Holi, in which he stressed the need to turn away from externalities and focus on one’s inner spiritual essence. In the refrain of the poem, he asked,

Without spirituality
how will you realize
your divine form?12

This is the basic message of the style of Digambar spirituality known as Adhyātma; Banārsīdās was a leader in one of the most important Adhyātma circles, in Agra, in the mid-seventeenth century (Cort 2002). Adhyātma involved a radical form of soteriological dualism, and in the song Banārsīdās recommended that while deluded people play the external, physical Holi, the spiritual seeker should instead “play in the virtues of the power of the spontaneous soul”13 and thereby destroy delusion. Among the many virtues in which the seeker should revel is sumati, right or good thought or belief. Hiralal Jain (1962: 14) felicitously translated sumati as “good intention.” In this poem, Banārsīdās said that sumati is like a festive black cuckoo, whose singing aids the soul (ghat) that is wandering in a fog as thick as a cloud of cotton.14

Two other poems by Banārsīdās also described the Jain spiritual Holi. A short poem in the springtime rāg of Basant described the saints (sant) gathered in the Jina’s court (darbār).15 The other involved a more fully developed allegory, similar to what we find in the many Holi songs of subsequent centuries.16 Banārsīdās said that the heroine Sumati and her

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12 adhyātama bina kyōṃ pātṛye ho paramapuruṣako rāpa.

13 sahaja śakti guṇa kheliye ho.

14 bhrāma kuhara bādaraṇāṭe ho.

15 rāga macyau jina dvāra cālau kheliyai hori (Nāḥṭā 1978: 351).

16 rāga bhayo jina dvāra calo sakhī khelana hori (APP §517, p. 192); rāga bhayo jina dvāra calo sakhī khelana hori (JBhG, pp. 286f.); dhimāl: dhoma macī jina dvāra cālau kheliyai hori (Nāḥṭā 1978: 351). Even though the opening lines diverge between the versions published in APP and JBhG on the one hand, and by Nāḥṭā on the other, there is sufficient overlap between them that they can be considered as a single pad with significant manuscript variation. The variants would seem to indicate that the unknown editor(s) of JBhG did
friends expelled the evil woman Kumati (Bad or Wrong Thought, Belief or Intention) from their midst. In place of the passionate colors of Holī, they sprinkled the colors of equanimity (samatā). Instead of a physical fire to burn the wood of the bonfire (and the small living beings who make it their home), they developed the interior fire of meditation (dhyān) in which they burnt up the eight forms of karma. Banārsidās also allegorized the foods shared by people on Holī: the sweets became compassion (dayā), the expensive dried fruits became renunciatory asceticism (tap), and the betel leaf became truth (sat). Finally, the congregational musical performance of Holī was allegorized, as the drums and tambourines instead of music played the guru’s speech (vacan), as well as knowledge (jñān, gyān) and forgiveness (kṣamā, khīmā).

Jagjivanrām

Banārsidās was not the only Jain poet of his time to allegorize Holī. His fellow member of the Agra Adhyātma seminar, Jagjivanrām (also Jagjjivandās), was an Agrāvāl Jain who was a dīvān for Jāfar Khan, a courtier of Shah Jahan (Premī 1957: 106f.). In VS 1701 (CE 1644) he collected Banārsidās’s smaller writings into the Banārsī Vilās. He was also a poet in his own right. He composed an Adhyātmik Phāg, which was built around the recitation of the Namaskāra Mantra.17 In the song he urged his listeners as faithful Jains to play Holī in the appropriate manner, so they would never again suffer the burning pain of life in this world of suffering.18 He concluded:

Your hair stands on end
and happiness arises
when you play Horī here

not simply copy their version from APP, but had access to another manuscript version of the pad, so we are dealing with a single pad for which there are multiple manuscript readings.

None of these variant Holī pads is found in Banārsī Vilās, nor discussed in scholarship on Banārsidās. The editor of APP, Kanchedi Lāl Jain, died before finishing the book, and so gave no indication of the sources for the poems in his collection. JbhG provides no information concerning how the book was compiled. Nāhitā simply said that the dhamāl, and an eight-line pad in rāg basant (rāṅga marayau jīna dvāra cālau khelīyai horī) that he published at the same time, were from a manuscript in his collection. The attribution of these poems to the well-known poet, therefore, is uncertain at best. I have translated the APP version in Cort 2013b.

17 namo ādi arahanta kaum ho sidha carana cita lāyā, in Jain Pad Saṅcayan, §156, p. 82. The editor, Gaṅgārām Garg, collected this poem from a Digambar library in the Bharatpur area.

18 horī khelīyai bhavijana bahauri naḥim iha dāva.
in the right way.\textsuperscript{19}

Jan Jagjivan sings:

remember the blessed Jina King.

The dried fruits are crown and crest-jewel
as you play Phagvā with your body.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{The Battle between Delusion and Discrimination}

Possibly because Banārsīdās is regarded as a foundational poet for the subsequent tradition of lay Digambar poets in north India, he was also credited with the composition of an allegorical drama, called \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh}, or \textit{The Battle between Delusion and Discrimination}. Most scholars, however, have rejected his authorship of this text. Nāthūrām Premī (1957: 83f.) rejected it on the grounds that the text does not match Banārsīdās’s known works either in use of Jain technical language or its skill in metrics. Saroj Agravāl (1962: 265f.) compared the text with two other known texts of the same name, by one Jan Gopāl (ca. VS 1650-1730) of the Dādūpanth,\textsuperscript{21} and the second by Lāldās (composed ca. CE 1675 or 1710?), who was a Vaiṣṇava. She concluded that the Banārsīdās text is an abridgement of the one by Jan Gopāl, and so must have been authored by another, later Banārsīdās. Ravindar Kumār Jain (1958; 1965; 1966: 207f.), who appears not to have known of Agravāl’s detailed analysis, nonetheless came to the same conclusion by a similar close comparison of the texts by Banārsīdās and Jan Gopāl. Agarcaṇḍ Nāḥṭā (1964) also concluded that the text attributed to Banārsīdās was authored by Jan Gopāl. In verses two and three, the author of \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh} explicitly said that he related in a more concise version what was found in three longer texts by the earlier poets Malh, Lāldās and [Jan] Gopāl. According to Premī (1957: 84f.), on the basis of information provided to him by Agarcaṇḍ Nāḥṭā concerning a manuscript in a Jaipur library, Malh (or Mall), also known as Mathurādās, was an Advaitin author who lived

\textsuperscript{19} Holī is spelled and pronounced Hori in Braj-bhāṣā. I use the former spelling in my own prose, but the latter in direct translation, in order to be faithful to the poets.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{roma roma sukha ūpajai tuma iha vidhi hori khelha} 
\textit{janajagajīvana gāyiye ho sumirau śrī jinarāya} 
\textit{mevā mukatī siromanī tuma phagavā dehu manāya.}

\textsuperscript{21} See Thiel-Horstmann 1983: 11f. on this Dādūpanthī poet, who was active in the late sixteenth century.
in Antarved.\textsuperscript{22} Malh’s \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh}, composed in VS 1603 (CE 1546), was a vernacular version of Kṛṣṇamiśra’s \textit{Prabodhacandrodaya}.

The presence in the Digambar libraries of Jaipur of five manuscripts of \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh} attributed to Banārsīdās indicates that it was copied and read by later Digambar authors, for whom the attribution to Banārsīdās would have given the text an authoritative status.\textsuperscript{23} Agarcand Nāhtā (1962a: 95f.) wrote that a manuscript in the \textit{bhanḍār} (library) of the Śvetāmbar Jain Barā Upāsara in Bikaner contained the \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh} along with four texts whose attribution to Banārsīdās is certain: the \textit{Mokṣamāl Pairī}, the \textit{Jīnī Paccīśī}, and his Braj-bhāṣā translations of the \textit{Sindūraprakara} and the \textit{Kalyāṇamandirī Stoṭra}. The manuscript was commissioned by a layman named Śāh Haṅsrāj, and copied in the town of Malkapur in 1703 by a Śvetāmbar mendicant named Raṅgśimalgāṇi. Haṅsrāj had the \textit{Sindūraprakara} copied for his own studies (\textit{pathanārth}), but had the other three copied so that he could use them in sermons (\textit{vācanārth}). He obviously was an important leader of a local intellectual circle, and he was described as a leader of the local congregation (\textit{sangh-mukhya}). While there is no colophon to the \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh}, it is possible that it was also copied for Haṅsrāj. Its presence in this manuscript shows that at least in the early eighteenth century in this one Śvetāmbar setting, Banārsīdās’s authorship of \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh} was accepted.

In 118 verses, the text describes a lengthy battle between two opposing armies. On the one side was the army of Vivek (Discrimination), who was assisted by such allies as Niśkām (Dispassion), Dayā (Compassion), Sarāltā (Straightforwardness) and Udārtā (Generosity). On the other was the army of Moh (Delusion), who was assisted by Kām (Passion), Krodh (Anger), Māyā (Illusion), Māmātā (Egotism), and others. In the end, Vivek was victorious.

\textbf{Kṛṣṇamiśra}

\textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh} indicates another line of historical influence upon the Holī songs of the later Digambar poets. This is the long tradition of allegory in South Asian religious writing. The Śvetāmbar scriptures, for example, contain many symbolic and metaphorical stories, as

\textsuperscript{22} It is not clear where this Antarved was. According to the Indian Place Finder maintained by the University of Tokyo (cia.csis.u-tokyo.ac.jp; accessed June 3, 2013), there are two towns with this name in Madhya Pradesh, in Katni and Satna Districts.

\textsuperscript{23} Kāśīvālī (1945-72: 2: 184, 330, 364f.; catalogue §§ 664, 665, 2322, 2424, 2507) listed five copies of \textit{Moh Vivek Yuddh} in the library of the Barā Terāpanth temple as of 1954. The first two were independent manuscripts, while the other three were in collections of multiple texts. As of 2011, only the two independent manuscripts I include in the bibliography could be located in the collection.
well as several instances of formal allegory. The classical example of the use of allegory in Jain literature is the Sanskrit Upamitibhavaprapaṇcakathā (Allegorical Story of the Diversity of Worldly Existence), composed by the Śvetāmbar monk Siddharṣi in CE 906. All the characters in this long novel had highly allegorical names such as Nispunyaka (Virtueless), Supuṇyaka (Good Virtue), Sadbuddhi (True Insight), Sadāgama (True Scripture) and Sumati (Good Intention). Several centuries later, during the short reign of the Caulukya emperor Ajayapāla (CE 1229-32), the lay Śvetāmbar poet Yaśahpāla composed his Sanskrit Moharājaparyāya (Defeat of King Delusion), an allegorical drama first performed in the Kumāravīhāra, a temple to Mahāvīrā built in Tharad by Ajayapāla’s predecessor Kumārapāla. This drama, about the “conversion” of Kumārapāla to Jainism, detailed a lengthy struggle between the armies of Vivekacandra (Moon of Discrimination) and Moha (Delusion). Their armies were populated by a large cast of virtues and vices. Allegory was also employed by Digambar authors, for example in the ca. fourteenth century VS Sanskrit Madanaparājaya (Defeat of Lust) by the south Indian layman Nāgadeva. This narrated a battle between the hero Jinendra and his foe Madana or Kāma (Passion), whose chief general was Moha (Delusion). Again, both sides were filled with allegorical characters from Jain soteriology. In the end, Madana and his army were defeated, Jinendra married Siddhi (Spiritual Perfection), and the two went to Mokṣa.

The most famous allegory in Indian literature, and one that had a significant influence on Jain literature, was the Prabodhacandrodaya (Moonrise of Spiritual Awakening) of Kṛṣṇamiśra. The author was an Advaitin ascetic who lived in the court of the Candella king Kṛṣṇinvarman, where the play was first performed sometime soon after 1060 CE (Kapstein 2009: xxviii). The play is said to have been written in order to teach philosophy to one of Kṛṣṇamiśra’s disciples (Nambiar 1971: 2), and it serves well as an introduction to the various schools of Indian philosophy. In the play, Kṛṣṇamiśra lampooned representatives of the various non-Advaita schools, such as Buddhism, Jainism and Cārvāka, and described (with adequate accuracy) and rejected their doctrines. The hero of the play was Puruṣa (Soul), who had forgotten his identity with Paramesvara, the Supreme Being. He had been led astray by his wife Māyā (Illusion). His son Manas (Mind), along with a companion named Ahaṁkāra (Egoism), contributed to his ignorance. Manas in turn had two wives, the bad wife Pravṛtti (Activity, i.e., active engagement with the external sensory world) and the good wife Nivṛtti (Quiescence, i.e., ceasing such active engagement). Pravṛtti’s son was the equally bad Moha (Delusion), while Nivṛtti’s son was the good Viveka (Discrimination). Moha and Viveka waged a war over their grandfather, each of them accompanied by an appropriately negative

24 The best introductions to this literature are H. Jain 1962 and R. Jain 1964.
and positive army of external and internal values and practices. Manas saw that Pravṛtti had been the source of much suffering, and he became attached to Nivṛtti. He was aided by his good sons and associates, and became quiet, i.e., he turned away from external stimuli and focused upon his interior spiritual essence. Viveka was then able to awaken Puruṣa to his true nature.

This play was widely read in the subsequent centuries by intellectuals and artists in all traditions. It was also the source of extensive imitation, adaptation and translation. It had a significant place in the vernacular literatures of north India (Agrawal 1962; McGregor 1971, 1986; Sharma 2011: 136f.). As we saw above, as Moh Vivek Yuddh it was adapted into Brajbhāṣā by poets of several different religious persuasions, including a Jain.

Vādicandra

Arguably the most important Digambar Jain response to the Prabodhacandrododaya was the Sanskrit Jñānasūryodaya Nāṭaka (Drama of the Sunrise of Knowledge), written in VS 1649 (CE 1593) by the domesticated monk Vādicandra. The title was a direct nod to Kṣiṇamiśra’s earlier allegorical drama, for whereas the earlier play detailed the Moonrise of [Salvific] Awakening, Vādicandra’s concerned the Sunrise of [Salvific] Knowledge.25

Vādicandra was a bhaṭṭārak of the seat of the Sūrat Branch of the Balāṭkār Gaṇ of the Mūl Saṅgh in southern Gujarat (Premī 1956).26 He composed the Jñānasūryodaya Nāṭaka in Mahuva, in present-day Surat district in southern Gujarat. He wrote a number of texts, mostly in Sanskrit, but also in the vernacular, between VS 1640 (CE 1584) and VS 1657 (CE 1601), including a Pārśva Purāṇa and a Pavanadītā. The latter was an imitation of Kālidāsa’s Meghadūta, so Vādicandra had an obvious propensity for imitations of classical Sanskrit literature.

The Jñānasūryodaya Nāṭaka was the story of the hero Ātman (Soul). He had a number of children by his two wives Sumati (Good Intention) and Kumati (Bad Intention). Sumati’s four sons were all virtues: Prabodha (Awakening), Viveka (Discrimination), Santoṣa (Contentment) and Śīla (Virtue). Kumati’s five sons were all vices: Moha (Delusion), Kāma (Passion), Krodha (Enmity), Māna (Pride) and Lobha (Greed). Several of these characters reappeared in the works attributed to Banārśidās a generation later, and still others were included in the subsequent genre of Digambar Holī poems.

25 This highly popular Digambar text has never, to the best of my knowledge, been published in its Sanskrit original.

26 See also Johrāpurkar 1958: 186f.
Sumati and Kumati are good and bad variants of one of the five forms of knowledge (jñāna) according to Jain epistemology. In brief, mati-jñāna consists of knowledge that is mediated by the senses (which, in Jainism, includes the mind). In the Holi poems, mati simply refers to all the ways that the person interacts with external stimuli, and allows those stimuli to shape his or her understanding of and reaction to the world. Because it is sensory, mati-jñāna is inherently different from the immaterial soul. The soul (jīva, ātman), on the other hand, is marked by consciousness (cetanā). Pure consciousness, however, is obscured in the unliberated soul by karma. Of particular importance here is the form of knowledge-obscuring (jñānāvaraṇīya) karma that blocks knowledge; one of the five sub-forms of this karma blocks mati-jñāna.

While the Digambar allegories of Sumati, Kumati and Cetan are based on the basic elements of Jain epistemology and karma theory, they do not relay the technical details. Rather, the allegories work on a simpler and more straightforward understanding that Cetan is the pure, eternal soul within the person, characterized in particular as being Consciousness. In Sanskrit the feminine noun cetanā was the preferred form, but in the vernacular literature the masculine noun cetan was used. This allowed the poets to allegorize Cetan as a male hero. Sumati and Kumati are the positive and negative mentalities - mind is considered one of the senses in Jain ontology - by means of which a person, as a transitory embodied being, interacts with the world. These two aid or hinder the person in realizing his or her pure, eternal essence. Sumati and Kumati comprise all of the thoughts, beliefs and intentions through which one interacts with the external world. Since mati is a feminine noun, the poets then allegorized Sumati and Kumati as feminine characters.

We do not have any definitive proof that Banārsīdās himself read or otherwise knew of Vādicandra’s drama, composed a generation earlier in a different province of the Mughal Empire. It is clear that subsequent poets did read it, and it had a significant influence on later vernacular Digambar literature. There are at least eight manuscripts of the drama in the Digambar temple libraries in Jaipur, and at least another half-dozen manuscripts in other Digambar temple libraries elsewhere in Rajasthan (Kāśīvāl 1945-72). More important as evidence of its influence is that it was translated at least five times into the vernacular, making it among the most frequently translated of all Digambar Sanskrit texts. Just a single manuscript copy exists of some of these translations, indicating that they might be

27 See Jinendra Varnī 1993-95 III: 249f. for an extensive presentation of mati-jñāna from the Digambar perspective.

28 On cetanā see Jinendra Varnī 1993-95 II: 296f.
translations done privately for a person’s own edification. An otherwise unknown author named Jinvārdās (who, from his name, might have been a renouncer disciple of a bhaṭṭārak), composed his version in VS 1585 (CE 1797): the single extant copy was made by one Dayācand Candvār and deposited in the Bārā Terāpanth temple library in Jaipur in VS 1892 (CE 1835). The unknown Bakhāvarlāl composed his version, of which just a single copy was extant as of 1954, in VS 1854 (CE 1797). The one copy of a version by the unknown Bhagavatīdās was copied in VS 1877 (CE 1820). The well-known vernacular hymnist and author Bhāgicand composed his version in VS 1907 (CE 1850). There are at least twelve manuscripts of his version in Rajasthani libraries. The last version was by Pārasdās (also Pārśvadās) Nigotyā (d. VS 1936 = CE 1879), an important Digambar paṇḍit of Jaipur who was a voluminous author. In VS 1883 (CE 1826), his father Rṣabhādās Nigotyā (who was also an active writer) built the Digambar Temple Nigotiyān, a Terāpanth temple in Jaipur, which is still managed today by his descendents (Anūpand Nyāyārth 1990: 14f.). There are at least eight manuscripts of Pārasdās’s version in Jaipur temple libraries.

Būcrāj

Another precursor to the later Digambar Holī tradition, who also pre-dates Banārsīdās, is the poet Būcrāj. Little is known of this poet. His only two dated texts are from 1532 and 1534. In total he composed eight longer texts and eleven short gīts and pads. He was a renouncer in the bhaṭṭārak tradition who lived in the area of what is now Rajasthan and Haryana. In his undated Bhuvanakīrti Gīt, Būcrāj expressed his devotion to Bhaṭṭārak Bhuvanakīrī as his guru, and also indicated that he had spent some time in the group of renouncers led by Bhuvanakīrti’s predecessor Bhaṭṭārak Ratnakīrī. Bhūvanakīrti and Ratnakīrti occupied the

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29 I have used the manuscripts (listed in the bibliography) of all these translations, except for the one by Bakhtāvarlāl. Kaslivāl 1945-72 IV: 317 listed one manuscript of Bakhtāvarlāl’s Jñānasūryodaya Nātaka Bhāṣā (catalogue §3335; Chote Dīvān veṣṭan 564), which was missing as of 2011.

30 See the introduction by Gaṅgārāma Garg to his edition of Pārśvadās Padāvali, as well as K. Rānvkā 1966.

31 Just three decades after Pārasdās Nigotyā composed his vernacular version in a form of Dvūḍhārī that was strongly inflected by Brajbhāṣā, the modern scholar Nādhūrām Premī, one of the most important of all traditional Digambar scholars, translated the play into Modern Standard Hindi in 1909. Whereas the earlier versions were all entitled Jñānasūryodaya Nātaka Bhāṣā, or sometimes labeled as a vacanikā (“vernacular prose gloss”), Premī’s work was consciously in the new, modern genre of anuvād (“translation”). In his introduction (p. 4), Premī wrote, “The vacanikās do not fulfill what people nowadays like in a translation.”

32 Information on Būcrāj comes from Kaslivāl 1979: 10f.; see also P. Jain 1964: 97f. and Kaslivāl 1967: 70f.
seat of the Nagaur branch of the Balātkār Gaṇ. The branch was started by Ratnakīrti in 1515; he was later consecrated as bhaṭṭārak in Delhi in 1524.33 He was succeeded by Bhuvanakīrti in 1529, who occupied the seat until 1533.34 The colophon of a manuscript of the Samyaktva Kaumudī that was copied in 1525 indicates that it was donated to a Brahm (celibate renouncer) Būc in Champavatī (also known as Chaksu and Chatsu), a town with an important Digambar presence that is located about twenty-five miles south of present-day Jaipur.35 Kāśīvāl (1979: 11f.) has written that Champavatī between 1518 and 1528 was a center of Bhaṭṭārak Prabhācandra and his group of celibate disciples, and they produced a number of manuscripts, so Būcraj may have been one of the celibate renouncers in Prabhācandra’s following. Prabhācandra was head of the Delhi branch of the Balātkār Gaṇ from which Ratnakīrti had earlier broken off. Prabhācandra and Ratnakīrti were both disciples of Bhaṭṭārak Jinacandra, and Joharpurkar (1958: 110) indicates that the separation was simply one of geography, not ideology, so Būcraj and other renouncers may have moved between the two groups. According to Kāśīvāl (1979: 12), Prabhācandra’s group was one in which there was extensive study of Sanskrit and Prakrit texts, and so being in this group may have been attractive to a renouncer like Būcraj with strong literary interests. Būcraj completed his Mayan Jujh in Champavatī in 1532. His only other dated text is the Santos Jayatīlaku, which he completed in Hisar in 1534. In a gīt (song) he venerated the icon of the Jina Śāntināth in Hastinapur, a Jain pilgrimage shrine about fifty-five miles northeast of Delhi.36 Manuscipds of Būcraj’s texts have been found mostly in Rajasthan, confirming that while he spent time in other regions of northern India, this was probably his principle area of residence.37

Būcraj is best known as a poet of allegories (rūpak), composed in a form of vernacular language that showed strong influences of Apabhramsa, but also the rising influence of Hindī. In the 159 verses of his Mayan Jujh (The Battle against Lust) he narrated a struggle between the first Jina, Ṭṣābha, and Kām (also known as Madan), the god of erotic love or lust. The battle was carried out between the same pair that we see in the Moh Vivek Yuddh

33 Information on Ratnakīrti comes from Joharpurkar 1958: 104, 110, 114, 121.

34 Information on Bhuvanakīrti comes from Joharpurkar 1958: 114, 121.

35 The full text of this colophon is given by Kāśīvāl 1950: 63.

36 Būcraj, Gīt in Rāg Dhanākṣari (in Kāśīvāl 1979: 111). This same temple was visited by Banārsīdās a century later, in 1619; he also composed a very short hymn to Śāntināth, along with Kunthinātha and Aranātha, two other Jinas who are important at Hastinapur (Ardhakathānak 583). See Balbir 1990 for a study of Hastinapur.

37 Nāḥṭa 1963:361 reported that his manuscripts are found in both Digambar and Śvetāṃbar libraries, indicating that his narratives were popular in the region across sectarian lines.
attributed to Banārsīdās, and who also played major parts in Kṛṣṇamīśra’s Prabodhacandrodaya: the hero was Vivek (Discrimination), while his opponent was Moh (Delusion). Vivek was the son of Cetan (Consciousness) by his good wife Nivrīṭti (Quiescence), while Moh was Cetan’s son by his bad wife. Moh in turn married Māyā (Illusion), and their son was Kām. Among Moh’s female companions was Kumati, along with Kusīkh (Bad Learning) and Kubuddhi (Bad Insight). Vivek married Sumati. Vivek was assisted by a retinue of virtues, while Moh was assisted by a large number of vices. In the end, Vivek defeated Moh, and so the renouncer Rṣabha overcame Kām.

Several of Būcraj’s other narrative texts also involved allegories that fit within the larger Digambar literary tradition that includes the later Holī songs. His 113-verse Santos Jay Tilaku told the story of a contest between Santos (Satisfaction) and Lobh (Greed). The Cetan Pudgal Dhamāl was a springtime narrative of 138 verses in which he told of the conflict between Cetan and Pudgal. This is the fundamental Jain ontological duality of conscious soul and unconscious matter: recognizing the profound difference between the two, and so orienting oneself toward the former while rejecting the latter, is at the heart of the spirituality emphasized by the later Jain vernacular poets.

The Ongoing Tradition of Cetan, Sumati and Kumati

The allegory of King Consciousness and his two wives, Good Intention and Bad Intention, continued to be popular in Digambar vernacular literature outside of its use in the Holī songs I discuss below. The poet Bhaiyā Bhagavatīdās (also spelled Bhagotīdās), whose pads continue to be sung today, composed his Cetan Caritra (Epic of Consciousness), also known as Cetan Karm Caritra (Epic of Consciousness and Karma), in 1679.38 Bhaiyā Bhagavatīdās was a Digambar Osvāl who lived in Agra, where his father Daśrath Sāhu had been a well-known merchant.39 His dated compositions are from a period between 1674 and 1698. In part

38 The colophon of the incomplete manuscript (even though the library card prepared by Anūpcand Nyāyūrī in 1953 lists the manuscript as complete, as do both Kāśīvālī 1945-72 II: 17 in his published catalogue of the library and the recent library card prepared as part of the reorganization of the Digambar libraries in Jaipur under the auspices of the National Mission for Manuscripts, it is clear that the manuscript is complete only through verse 95 on page 24, and all subsequent pages are missing except for the unnumbered colophon page) I consulted in the library of the Baṛā Terāpanth temple in Jaipur gives the date of composition as 1695: all other sources give the date as 1699, including the version given in the printed edition of his Brahm Vilās. Śītikanth Miśra 1989-99 III: 32 has also noted the two different dates given for this text. On Cetan Caritra, see also Paramānand Śāstrī 1957 and U. Jain 2006: 39f.

39 The Bhaiyā Bhagavatīdās who composed Cetan Caritra was different from the earlier Bhagavatīdās who also lived in Agra and was a companion of Banārsīdās in the Adhyātma seminar in that city. The earlier Bhagavatīdās was an Agravāl Digambar who was born in Ambala, and first moved to Delhi before coming to...
because of his residence in the Mughal capital, his texts contain much Urdu and Persian vocabulary (Miśra 1989-99: 3: 316). He composed more than sixty texts, ten of which were to varying extents in the genre of allegory. In the 290 verses of the Cetan Caritra, he narrated the story of King Cetan and his two wives, Sumati and Kumati. Sumati sees that Cetan is entangled in Karma, and tells him that he must fight illusion (moh) with the weapons of discrimination (vivek), and the distinctly Digambar spiritual emphasis on knowing the difference (bhed-vijñān) between the sentient soul and the insentient material body. In response to this positive influence of Sumati, Cetan’s other wife, Kumati, leaves him and returns to the home of her father, King Illusion (Mohrāj). He sends a messenger named Lust (Kām) to demand that Cetan accept back Kumati, or else prepare for battle. When Cetan refuses to take back Kumati, King Illusion advances with his army led by the generals Passion (Rāg) and Aversion (Dveś). They are assisted by warriors with the names of the various kinds of karma. Cetan in turn is assisted by his minister Knowledge (Jñān), and a number of warriors whose names indicate positive spiritual perceptions and practices. In the end, Cetan is victorious.

Another text that relays the conflict between Sumati and Kumati is the Sumati Kumati kī Jakhādī (The Binding of Kumati) by Vinodilāl.40 He was a resident of Sahijapur, a town on the Ganga, but also spent time in Delhi during the reign of Aurangzeb, where he composed a vernacular prose rendition of the Bhaktāmara Stotra and its related stories in 1690.41 Other texts by him date from between 1685 (or 1687) and 1693.42 He was a follower of Bhaṭṭārak Kumārṣen, who occupied a seat of the Kāsthā Sangh, Māthur Gacch, Puṣkara Gaṇ.43


40 I have not been able to see this text. The catalogue of the Bara Terapanth Mandir library in Jaipur lists a single three-folio copy of it. It was copied in 1732 (Kāśīvāl 1945-72 II: 327). This manuscript, however, was missing from the library collection when I inquired about it in 2011. Neither Nāhṭā 1948 nor Miśra 1989-99 III: 311f. mentioned this text in their discussions of Vinodilāl. P. Jain 1964: 322, however, did mention it, but referred only to the same now missing Jaipur manuscript. Kāśīvāl 1945-72 II: 340 listed an anonymous Sumati Kumati kā Jaghrā (The Quarrel between Sumati and Kumati); this manuscript was also missing in 2011.


42 Nāhṭā 1948: 64 and P. Jain 1964: 319 gave the date of his earliest dated composition, the 42-verse Nemināth Mangal, as 1687, whereas Miśra 1989-99 III: 477 dated it to 1685.

43 Johrāpurkar 1958: 223f. gave three references to a Bhaṭṭārak Kumārṣen in this lineage, but the available dates are 1558 and 1575. Clearly there was another, later bhaṭṭārak by the same name, of whom we know nothing other than the references to him by Vinodilāl.
The later poets who composed Holi songs that employed the allegory of Cetan, Sumati and Kumati, also composed songs outside the Holi setting that described either all three of them, or just the struggle between Sumati and Kumati (and, accordingly, the need for a good Jain also to struggle between them). Budhjan, whose Holi songs I analyze below, for example, composed the following pad in the Rāg Kaliṅgarā:

The work of Kumāti
is worthless,
sir. (refrain)

The woman Sumāti
is smart—
the doctrine tells you, sir,
she is excellent.

She is born of endless bondage.
Her brothers are anger,
greed & intoxication.
Illusion is her sister,
wrong faith her father—
this is the lineage
of Kumāti. (1)

She loots your house
of knowledge, wealth
& wisdom.
She gives birth
to passion & aversion.
Then you become weak
& karma foes
grab hold of you.
You dance the dance
in life after life. (2)

Get rid of your affection
for her family—
this is Budhjan’s advice.

Color your love with Sumati
the daughter of Dharma,
live in the palace
of liberation. (3)⁴⁴

The Story of the Holī Festival

In tracing the various literary streams that inform the later vernacular Holī songs of King Consciousness, Good Intention and Bad Intention, we should be aware of an earlier genre of Holī literature that appears not to have influenced the later Holī allegory. This is the genre of narratives, found in both Sanskrit and vernacular, and in both prose and verse, that relate the story behind a specifically Jain way of observing Holī in a nonviolent manner. Above I mentioned the Holī ki Kathā of Chītar Ṭholiyā, which he composed in Mojamabad in 1603.

Almost nothing is known about Chītar Ṭholiyā. The Holī ki Kathā is his only extant composition. We do know, however, that Mojamabad in the early seventeenth century was an important center of Digambar Jainism within the Kacchvāhā state.⁴⁵ In the 101 or 102 verses of his poem,⁴⁶ Chītar Ṭholiyā told the story of a rich merchant named Manorath and his wife

⁴⁴ APP §285, pp. 85f.; BBhS §126, p. 141; JPS §112, p. 45.

kumati ko kāraja kārau ho ji
thāṅki nāri sayāṁi sumatī mato kahai chai rārau jī (tek)
anantānubandhitā jāi krodha lobha mada bhāi
māyā bahīna pītā mithyāmata yā kula kumati pāi (1)
ghara kau jīnāna dhana vādi latāvai rāga doṣa upajāvai
thāb nirbala lakhi pakarī karama ripu gati gati nāca nacāvai (2)
yā parikarasauṣaun mamata nivārāu budhajana sikha samhārau
dharamasutā sumati sanga rācau muktī mahalamaim padhārau (3)

⁴⁵ This was in large part because of Nānū Godhā (Kāśīvāl 1989: 196f.). He was a mahāmātya - minister and general - in the court of Māṃśimh, king of Amer. Māṃśimh in turn was an important courtier and general of the Mughal emperor Akbar; he was general of the Mughal army in Akbar’s invasion of Afghanistan, and later served as Mughal governor of Bengal. Nānū accompanied Māṃśimh to Bengal. Upon his return to Rajasthan, Nānū constructed a large Digambar temple in Mojamabad, for which there was a large consecration ceremony in 1607, just four years after Chītar Tholiyā composed his Holī ki Kathā in that city. The consecration festival was presided over by Bhaṭṭārak Devendrakīrtī, who occupied the Amer seat from 1605 to 1633 (Kāśīvāl 1989: 150f.). The bhaṭṭāraks of this seat to a significant extent also served as the caste gurus for the Khandelvāls of the region. While Chītar Tholiyā made no mention of Nānū Godhā, Devendrakīrtī or the latter’s predecessor Bhaṭṭārak Candrakīrtī, it is quite possible that he had connections with both Nānū and the Amer bhaṭṭārak seat.

⁴⁶ Ms. 1356 has 102 verses, while ms. 1357 has only 101. Anūpcand Nyāyūrthī 2004 wrote his article on the basis of a third manuscript, in the library of the Digambar Jain Mandir Caudhrī in Jaipur. This manuscript also

20
Lakṣmī. Their youngest daughter was named Holikā. She was widowed just a few days after her marriage, and returned to her natal home. There she fell in love with a young man named Kāmpāl (Lord Lust). She employed a go-between to arrange for a meeting with him. Holikā killed the go-between so that she could not tell of Holikā’s inappropriate behavior. She then burnt the corpse, so people would think that it was Holikā who had died. Holikā and Kāmpāl ran off, and became absorbed in their passion for each other. The go-between was reborn as a fierce goddess (vyantarī) who began to oppress the people of the city with an illness. She appeared to someone in a dream, and explained what to do to pacify her. She instructed the people to burn a log on the full-moon night of Phāguna, and then rub the ashes from the fire on the foreheads of anyone who was ill. If this was done in the spirit of correct Jain faith (samyaktva), the goddess would be pacified and the person cured. People came to call this fire “Holī.” Holikā and Kāmpāl, meanwhile, became impoverished due to their single-minded focus on their erotic affair. Holikā returned to her natal city, and came to the shop of Manorath. He saw her eyeing a saree, and remembered that Holikā had been fond of it. He realized she was his daughter, and took her back into her home. Chītār Ṭholiyā concluded, as we saw above, with the exhortation that people should perform Holī in a state of equanimity and peace, whereas the popular, more riotous performances were a sign of wrong faith (mithyātva).

Other texts also told this tale. An anonymous Sanskrit prose text entitled Holī Raṇja Parva Kathānaka (The Story of the Festival of Holī Color) found in a manuscript in the Digambar library formerly in the old capital of Amer, and now at the Jain Vidyā Sansthān in Jaipur, tells the same story. This manuscript was copied in 1820. As with many Jain narratives, this explanation for the observance of Holī is not restricted to the Digambars. The Holī Raṇja Parva Kathānaka by a Śvetāmbar monk named Jinasundarasūri, in fifty-one Sanskrit verses tells essentially the same story as does Chītār Ṭholiyā and the anonymous Holī Raṇja Parva Kathānaka.\(^{47}\) None of the characters of this narrative, however, appear in the vernacular Digambar Holī songs.

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47 At least three manuscripts of Jinasundarasūri’s text are found in Digambar libraries in Jaipur, although most manuscripts are found in Śvetāmbar libraries. I have no further identification of this author. Śīkkanth Miśra mentioned two vernacular authors by this name. The first was a monk in the Bṛhatapā Gaccha, who lived sometime in the late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century, but it is not known if he wrote any texts (Miśra 1989-99 I: 510). The second was a Kharatara Gaccha monk whom Miśra simply listed as a disciple of Punyasagara and guru of Paramānanda. The latter composed a text in 1618 (Miśra 1989-99 II: 284). Mahopādhyāya Vinayasagār 2006: 337 listed one author by this name, who composed four vernacular songs (git stavan). He lived from 1645 to 1715, and was active in southern Gujarat and Saurashtra (Vinayasagār 2004: 278). The
Budhjan

In the two centuries following Banārsidās, seemingly every one of the dozens of prolific poets who made up the thriving lay Digambar vernacular literary scene in north India included several Holī songs in his repertoire. For example, we find two Holī songs among Bhāgcand’s eighty-seven songs, and there are seven Holī songs among the more than 700 we have from Pārasdās Nigotyā. On the occasion of this celebration of the scholarship of Alan Babb, and in honor of his close study of the city of Jaipur over the past two-and-a-half decades, I have chosen to present and analyze the six Holī songs (pad, bhajan) by the Jaipur Digambar Jain poet Birdhīcand (also Badhīcand, Bhadīcand and Budhcand), better known by his nom de plume Budhjan. He was active between VS 1835 (CE 1778) and VS 1895 (CE 1838), and so lived a generation before Pārasdās Nigotyā. He may well have known Pārasdās’s father Rṣabhdās, since they were contemporaries, although we have no evidence that they met. Budhjan was a prolific author of more than two dozen independent texts, and more than 250 short pads. He also built a temple, in VS 1864 (CE 1807), the Budhcanḍ Baj temple on Tīkkivālom kā Rāstā in Kiṣānpol Bazaar (Anūpcand Nyāytirh 1990: 60f.). This temple is in the Gumān Panth.

Budhjan’s poems do not show a single, simple allegorization of Holī. Rather, in each composition the poet gave different symbolic interpretations of various elements in the observance of Holī. Presumably part of the enjoyment of hearing the songs sung in performance would be the pleasure of seeing how the poet had structured equivalences in any one particular song, and then comparing them to the next song that followed in the series. To give some sense of how they might have been received in performance, I will first present and discuss the poems individually, before returning to an overview analysis of them.

oldest manuscripts of the text found in the Śvetāmbar library in Patan were copied in the seventeenth century VS (Punyavijay 1971, §11467; and Jambūvijay 1991, §15256).

As with many Jain narratives, the story of Holikā is found in both Digambar and Śvetāmbar literature. Amrtṣūrī 1953 presented a modern retelling of the Śvetāmbar version, which is largely similar to the Digambar one, but did not specify his source(s). Other versions of the story found in the Patan library include the 34-verse Sanskrit Holikārajahparva Kathā by Punyārājagani, composed in CE 1429; the Sanskrit prose Holikā Kathā by Bhāvaprabhasūri, composed in CE 1726; the 139-verse Sanskrit Holikārajahparva Kathā by Phatendrasāgara, composed in CE 1766; the Sanskrit prose Holikāparva Vyākhyāna by Kṣamākalyāṇa Pāthaka, composed in CE 1779; and an anonymous 65-verse Sanskrit Holikā Kathā.

48 I intentionally use the male pronoun here, as this tradition appears to have been an almost exclusively male one, at least in terms of what made it into manuscript form and has therefore been preserved for us today.

49 On Budhjan, see Mūlcand Jain Šāstri 1986 and Cort 2009.

50 I discuss the performative context for Digambar hymns in Cort 2013c.
order here is the same as that in the recent edition of Budhjan’s collected independent songs by Tārācand Jain.

_Now he’s come home, my King Consciousness_51

In the first poem, Sumati—who is never directly named in the poem, but is understood to be the person singing it—celebrates that her lord and master Consciousness has returned home from unspecified travels in time to play Holī. As contemporary scholarship has shown, Holī is a time of social anti-structure, when the hierarchical concerns of society are temporarily set aside. Sumati does this as well, in addition to setting aside worldly concerns that distract one from the spiritual pursuit. The poet indicates one ritual way to overcome Kumati: donation (bali) to the gurus. Since at the time of Budhjan there were no full-fledged naked Digambar munis in north India, but only landed and clothed bhattāraks, whose authority and therefore suitability for donation the Gumān Panth rejected, Budhjan either speaks idealistically of giving to a true renouncer, or else by “gurus” (gurujan) refers to the Jinas, the ultimate teachers for the Jains. Budhjan then turns to his allegorization of Holī. The reservoir that holds the water to be used in the water-fights equals experience of the self (nij subhāv). The red dye, the squirt-gun, and the act of sprinkling the dyed water are all referred back to this experience of the self. Through this experience, Sumati sings that she will be able to keep Cetan “at home,” and he will not wander again.

Now he’s come home,
my King Consciousness.
Friend,
now I can play Horī. (refrain)

I’ve put aside laziness
I’ve put aside worries
I’ve put aside family

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51 These songs use extensive technical and semi-technical language, which causes problems in translation. The three key characters - Cetan, Sumati and Kumati - are all short words of two or three syllables. Short words fit well with the aesthetic of both Braj-bhāṣā and contemporary American English verse, as both tend eschew the use of long, multi-syllabic words. Technical philosophical terms in English tend to be longer words, however, which can quickly deaden a verse translation. For the most part, therefore, I have chosen to retain Cetan, Sumati and Kumati in the original Braj-bhāṣā. At times, however, the longer translated terms fit the verse as well if not better, and so I have chosen to use them, as in this case.
I am firm
    I am steadfast
    I am strong.

Don’t think about Kumati—
    she’s a bad one.
She keeps looking at me.
I give & give
    to the gurus
to drive away
    my silly ideas. (1)

I fill the reservoir
    with the water of experience
    of my self.
I stir in
    the red dye
    of my self.
I pick up the pure *pickāri*[^52]
    my self
I sprinkle
    my mind itself. (2)

I have sung
    I have rejoiced
    he’s now under my sway
never again
    will he go away.
Budhjan says,
    I am dyed [with the self]
    & will remain inside
[I have found]
    my timeless strength. (3)^[^53]

[^52]: The *pickāri* (also *picukē*) is a syringe for squirting colored water at a distance, much like a modern-day squirt-gun. Both “syringe” and “squirt-gun” entail misleading associations in English, so I have chosen to retain the original in my translation.

[^53]:
Everyone has gathered to play Horī

In this poem, Cetan is missing when everyone else gathers to play Holī, as Kumati has stolen him through greed (lobh) and delusion (moh). These two vices are common to all Indic religions, but in Jainism are both forms of karma (Jaini 1979: 131). The sweets that people give each other at Holī are given a negative gloss, as lies (jûtha) that have allowed Kumati to lead Cetan into unvirtuous actions. Sumati reflects one of the foundations of Jain ontology: every individual soul in its pure state is indistinguishable from every other soul in its perfections, and the perfected soul is God, the Lord of the three worlds (tīn lok sāhib). But we forget this due to the karmic vices, and so are condemned to become slaves (dās) of our wrong perceptions and intentions, and to wander through the city of rebirth. In her bereavement at losing Cetan, Sumati turns to the gurus - here clearly the Jinas - and weeps her petition (araj) that they show mercy (dayāl) on her, and return Cetan to Sumati - in other words, that they return Consciousness to the influence of Good Intentions.

Everyone has gathered
to play Horī.
Whom will I meet
to play Horī? (refrain)

Kumati is an evil one.
She has charmed my wise one.
She’s sown greed & delusion
& robbed him.
He is naïve
so she fed him sweets of lies.
She forced him
away from his virtues. (1)

aha ghara aye cetanarāya sajanī khelaingī maim horī
ārasa soca kāi kula harikai dhari dhīraja barajorī (tek)
buri kumati ki bāta na bhāi citavata hai mo orī
va gurujana ki bali bali jāum dūri kari mati bhorī (1)
nījā subhāva jala havoc bharāum ghorūm nijarūmā rorī
nījā lyuam lyāya śuddha picakāri chirakana nījā mati dori (2)
gāya rīhāya āpa vaśa karikai jāvana dyuam nahi porī
budhjana raci maci rāhum nirantara śakti apūraba morī (3)
He is the Lord
of the three worlds.
Who is equal
to his strength?
He doesn’t remember
his self.
He’s become a slave
& wanders about her city. (2)

Budhjan says,
Sumati says to the gurus,
Hear my plea
& show mercy on me.
I weep & moan
I grasp your feet.
Give me back
my dear Cetan. (3)\textsuperscript{54}

\textit{Cetan, play Horī with Sumati}

In this third song, the speaker is Budhjan, who directly addresses Cetan, in other words, his own Consciousness. He urges his Consciousness to break with all that is “other” (ān, i.e., \textit{anya}), the term commonly used in Jainism to indicate karma, the material bondage that is “other” than the pure immaterial soul. As in this poem, the karmic “other” (\textit{anya, par}) is contrasted with what is one’s “own” (\textit{nīj}), the soul. Budhjan again uses an urban metaphor, one that would speak to the lived experience of his urban (and urbane) listeners in a Jaipur temple, when he urges Consciousness to return home to his own city. In this poem Budhjan engages in a fuller allegorization of Holī than the first two poems. The ashes (\textit{chār}) from the Holikā fire are the passions; Budhjan here uses a technical term, \textit{kaśāy}, that is specific to Jain

\textsuperscript{54}APP §508, p. 188; BBhŚ §188, p. 221.
\textit{aura sabai mili hori racāvaim hūm kāke sānga khelaunghī horī (tek)}
kumati harāmini jānī piyāpāi lōbha mohā ki dāri ṭhagaurī
dhorai ḍhūṭha mithāī khavāī khomsī laye guna kari barajorī (1)
āpa hi tīnā lokake sāhiba kauna karai inakai sama jorī
apani sudhi kabahām nāhīn lete dāsa bhaye ḍolaim para pauřī (2)
guru budhajana taim sumati kahata haim suniye aroja dayāla su morī
hā hā karata hūm pāṁya parata hūm cetana piya kījē mo orī (3)
philosophy. The saffron (keśar) that is mixed into the water to sprinkle on other people is samakit (right faith), while deluded people fill the shoulder-bags they carry during Holī with stones that are mithyā (wrong faith). This is another fundamental Jain dualism, as rejecting the wrong way of understanding the world (mithyā, mithyātva, mithya-darśana), and coming to right faith (samakit, samyaktva, samyak-darśana), or the correct way of seeing the world as has been shown by the Jinas, is the key moment in one’s becoming a true Jain. Instead of carrying around the heavy stones of wrong faith in one’s shoulder-bag, one should carry around the light red powder (gulāl) of the self. This is what leads to enlightenment, and allows one to forego the external play of the senses and karma in favor of the inner spiritual play (vilas) with the beautiful bride of liberation (śīv-gori). There is a gentle eroticism in this image of play, as vilas (more often vilās) refers to sensuous engagement with the world. R. S. McGregor (1997: 928) defines vilās as “sensuous pleasure; luxurious life . . . pleasure with the opposite sex, flirting.” The spiritual union of one’s liberated self is compared and contrasted with the worldly union with a beautiful woman (gorī, gaurī).

Cetan,
play Horī
with Sumati. (refrain)
Break with your love
for that other one,
that shrewd one.
Join with the good one.

You wander
from path to path.
Come to your own city.
Why not share
the juice of Phaguvā
with your own?
If not
you’ll be wretched. (1)

Give up the passions—
they’re ashes—
grab hold of her.
Mix the saffron
of right faith.
You carry around
stones of wrong faith—
throw them away.
Fill your shoulder-bag
with the red powder
of the self. (2)

You’ve fallen
under the spell
of frauds.
All you’ve gained
is sorrow,
you’ve lost your senses.

Budhjan says,
restore your own appearance
& play with the bride of liberation. (3)\textsuperscript{55}

\textit{Cetan, today I’ll play Horī with you}

This fourth song is the most sensual of Budhjan’s Holī songs. In it he explicitly refers to the erotic nature of Holī and transforms it into an allegory of the spiritual path. This song also starts with the image of Cetan returning home after wandering elsewhere for many days. Sumati is piqued, and vows to get back her own. In a sort of violent love-play, she binds him, but with equanimity (\textit{sañjam-mat}), and visits upon him afflictions (\textit{parīśah}), which, she assures him, will be good for him. This again involves technical Jain doctrine. The stories of

\textsuperscript{55} In \textit{rāg Āśāvarī Jogiya}, in a fast \textit{tetālā}. \textit{APP} §508, p. 188; \textit{BBhS} §189, p. 222; \textit{HPS} §238, pp. 198f.; \textit{JPS}, Vol. 5, §23, pp. 10f.

\begin{align*}
cetana khela sumati sañga horī \\
tori ḍañdī pritī sayāne bhali banī yā jaurī (tek) \\
ḍagara ḍagara dole hai yauṃ hi āva āpanī pauringa \\
nīja rasa phaguvā kyaum nahiṃ baño nātara khvāri torī (1) \\
chāra kaśīya tyāgī yā gahi lai samakita keśara ghorī \\
mithäyā paṭhara ārī dhāri lai nīja guḷāla kī jhorī (2) \\
khote bheṣa dharaim dolata hai dukha pāvai budhi bhorī \\
budhajana apanā bheṣa sudhāro jyaum vilaso śivagorī (3)
\end{align*}
the Jinas and subsequent ascetic monks are filled with the stories of the afflictions (*parīśah*) they endured with equanimity (*samyam, sañjam*). In this song, enduring afflictions is equated with the games of lovers. Earlier Cetan had been bound by Kumati (here called Durmati); but Sumati binds him for his own good. She lovingly bathes him to make him pure, and then rubs his body with the red powder (*gulāl*) of right faith (*samakīt daras*). She gently sprinkles the juice or nectar (*sudhāras*) of right knowledge (*jñān*) on him, and rubs the paste (*cobā*) of right conduct (*cārit*) all over his body.\(^{56}\) These three are the three jewels of right faith, knowledge and conduct that together make up the Jain path to liberation, here allegorized as unguents with which Sumati covers his body. Finally, just as lovers feed sweets to each other with their own hands, she feeds Cetan the sweets of compassion (*dayā*). Through all these intimate acts, Sumati makes Cetan’s body fruitful (*saphal*), and says that the two lovers, formerly separated but now joined, will remain together forever. By this Sumati is able to fulfill her mind’s desires (*man kī āśā*); whereas the desires of a worldly lover would be love-play with her man, in the spiritual allegory Mind desires immersion in the pure soul.

Cetan

    today I’ll play Horī with you. (refrain)

Why have you wandered elsewhere
    for so many days?

Now I’ll take my revenge.

I count as wrong
    everything you’ve done.

Now I will bind you
    with equanimity.

You will endure
    many afflictions

but they’ll be good for you. (1)

She made you suffer
    & made you wander—

I’ll drive away Durmati.

\(^{56}\) The film by Katz 1996 included a scene in which a couple lovingly rubs oil over the body of their young son in order to gather up all the sinful dirt on his body that has accumulated in the past year. They then rub cleansing oil on his body, and throw the old, polluted paste into the Holikā fire.
You’ve been fettered
by the spells of frauds.
Now I’ll bathe you
& make your appearance pure. (2)

I’ll rub you
with the red powder of right faith.
I’ll sprinkle you
with the nectar of knowledge.
I’ll rub the paste
of right conduct
all over your body.
I’ll feed you
the sweets of compassion. (3)

Budhjan says,
I’ll make your body fruitful.
I’ll grind up
all your misfortunes.
I’ll remain with you.
never again
will we be apart.
I’ll fulfill
my mind’s desires. (4)³⁷

³⁷ In rāg Kāfi, and tāl Dipacandi. BBhŚ §190, p. 223.
Many of the scholarly accounts of Holī focus on it as a rural festival, celebrated in villages, especially the villages of the cowherds of Braj. It has long been an urban festival as well, and Budhjan as a lifelong city dweller focuses on its urban aspects. This allows him to employ a widespread spiritual metaphor of the body as a city (oftentimes described as a city of nine gates), and traveling and celebrating within the city as a metaphor for the inward spiritual path. Budhjan says he will celebrate Holī in “my own city” (nij-pur); this could equally be translated “the city of my self,” and the double entendre is intentional. The subject of this song is Budhjan, who says how elated (umagi) he is that both Cetan - in this case called Cidānand (Bliss of Consciousness), a widespread Indic term for the spiritual self - and Sumati have come to his town to play Holī with him, in his very body. He again allegorizes elements of Holī to the three jewels: the red powder (gulāl) is right knowledge, the saffron (kesar) is right faith, and the water thrown from the squirt-gun (picuki) is right conduct. In the fourth verse Budhjan creates an allegory using elements of hatha yoga; these are stock in trade for nirgun songs across the religious traditions of north India, and found in many other Jain songs. Whereas the external Holī is known for its distinctive seasonal songs, Budhjan silently sings his soul with every yogic breath.\(^58\) Whereas in the external Holī people douse each other with a cascade of colored water, Budhjan in his yogic Holī spreads the “unstruck sound” (anahad).

\begin{center}
\textit{Today I play Horī}  \\
in my own city. (refrain)
\end{center}

\begin{center}
I am elated  \\
Cidānand-ji has come  \\
& beautiful Sumati has come as well. (1)
\end{center}

\begin{center}
All worldly shame  \\
& worries of family  \\
have gone.
\end{center}

\begin{center}
I fill my bag  \\
with the red powder of knowledge. (2)
\end{center}

\(^{58}\) Tārācand Jain (p. 226) in a footnote explained that ajapā gāna refers to repeating (jap) a verse or mantra, doing one recitation with every thought or every breath, while moving one’s lips but making no sound.
I mix the color
of the saffron of right faith.
I squirt right conduct
from the picukī. (3)

With every breath
I silently sing the beautiful songs.
I spread a cascade
of the unstruck sound. (4)

Budhjan says,
when they see this
& are soaked
they’ll observe
an amazing story. (5)59

I will play Horī in the court of the blessed excellent Jina

We saw above that many Jain songs in the bārahmāśā and phāgu genres involve the twenty-second Jina, Nemināth. It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of Holī songs also describe the play of Holī in Nemināth’s court (darbār). This is part of a much older use of the life of Nemi to contrast the Jain path of world-renunciation, equanimity and non-harm to the world-affirming, sensuous and therefore potentially harmful sports of his cousin Krishna. While Budhjan does not explicitly mention Nemi in this final song, most Jain listeners would assume that in this song Budhjan is describing himself playing Holī in Nemi’s court. He again contrasts the interior spiritual Holī of the self (sarūp) with the exterior material Holī of the other (par), karma. He contrasts Kumati as a demoness (nārikā) with Sumati as a similar sounding but ethically opposite good woman (nāri). He allegorizes the ashes (bhasmī) of the Holikā fire and the colors (raṅg) of the Holī play with the dualistic pair of wrong faith (mithyā) and right faith (samakīt). Whereas people in the material Holī drink bhāṅg and

59 In rāg Sāraṅg. APP §509, pp. 188ff.; BBhŚ §191, p. 225; HPS §237, p. 198.

nįjapura mem āja macī horī (tek)
umāgi cidāṇandajī īta āye īta āi sumatīgorī (1)
lokālāja kulakāmī gamāi jīnāa guḷāla bhāri jhori (2)
samakīta kesarā rāṇa bāṇāyo cārītra kī picukī chorī (3)
gāvata ajapā gāṇa manohara anahada jharasauṁ varasyo rī (4)
dekhā āye budhajana bhīge nirakhyaau khyāla anokhi rī (5)
become intoxicated, Budhjan drinks the juice of the self (nīj ras), and thereby attains a spiritual intoxication that fills him with bliss (ānand) and joy (haras).

I will play Hori
    in the court
    of the blessed excellent Jina. (refrain)

I will remove the spell
    of the power
    of the other.
I will purify
    my innate self.
    I will play Hori. (1)

I will no longer keep company
    with Kumati
    that demoness.
I will summon
    the good woman Sumati.
    I will play Hori. (2)

I will sweep away
    the ashes
    of wrong faith.
I will filter the color
    of right faith.
    I will play Hori. (3)

Budhjan says,
    I drink the juice of the self
    & now I’m drunk.
    I’m filled with joy
    & bliss.
    I will play Hori. (4)\(^6\)

\(^6\) In rāg Kanaṇī. BBhŚ § 192. p. 227.
*sinānāvara darabāra khelūṅī hori (tek)*
The Allegorical Songs of Holī and Jain Spirituality

We do not see in these songs a single, rigidly imposed allegorization. There are a few elements that are common: the male hero is Cetan (in one place Cidānand), Consciousness; the female heroine is Sumati, Good Intention; and the wicked anti-heroine is Kumati (in one place Durmati), Bad Intention. The basic allegorical message is that of Digambar spirituality: the need to turn away from the external world of sensory influx and karmic bondage, and focus instead on the inner spiritual path to the purity of the soul. The many ways that a person can be distracted by external sensory experience are symbolized by aspects of Holī, as are the religious virtues and practices that allow one to turn away from the externals and return to one’s self, one’s soul.

The ashes (chār, bhasmī) of the Holikā fire in one case are the passions (kaśāya), and in another are wrong faith (mithyā). In another song, wrong faith is symbolized by stones (pāthar) that a person carries around in a shoulder-bag. Wrong faith, what we can also translate as incorrect worldview, the wrong way of seeing things, in other words, is the very essence of the personality of Kumati.

Right faith (samakīti), on the other hand, is the very essence of Sumati. It shows up in four of the six songs, symbolized in two cases by the saffron (keśar, kesar) mixed into the water that is squirted in the Holī play, and in the other two by the dry red powder (gulāl, raṅg) that is thrown in the Holī play. The red powder also symbolizes the self (nij) in two songs, and knowledge (jñān) in another song. The water into which the saffron or other coloring agents is mixed symbolizes experience of the self (nij subhāv) and right conduct (cāritra). Knowledge and right conduct also appear in different guises in Budhjan’s more erotic song, “Cetan, today I’ll play Horī with you,” the former as nectar or juice (sudhāras) shared by the lovers, and the latter as cooling paste (cobā) that Sumati rubs all over Cetan’s body.

Finally, one element of Holī appears as both a virtue and a vice. Celebrants share sweets (miṭhāī) with each other on the afternoon after playing with color, a sign of the loving communion with family, neighbors, and even strangers that is at the heart of one social message of Holī. In one song the sweets symbolize the lies (jūṭhī) with which Kumati has
entranced Cetan and led him away from his virtues (gun), and in another they symbolize compassion (dayā) that Sumati feeds to Cetan to keep him united with her.

In the hands of an unskilled poet or a pedantic moralist, allegory can be a deadening genre, which can quickly fail to hold the reader’s (or listener’s) attention. The analogies between the external, physical surface of the drama, and the interior, spiritual and conceptual message, can become mechanical, predictable and therefore boring. This is not the case, I argue, in Budhjan’s songs. He employs his skills to provide a different “take” on the underlying allegory in each song. I intentionally import this term from western music to indicate the way that allegory functions in these Holī songs. Any take of a song, whether in live performance or in the recording studio, will differ from all others, perhaps in slight and subtle ways, perhaps in significant and even drastic ways. The music aficionado knows the “original” of a song, and can appreciate the ways that the performance of any particular take plays with it and creates something new (or, of course, the opposite—not all takes work for all listeners). In a similar manner, the knowledgeable members of an audience gathered in a Digambar temple in Jaipur during the season of Phaguā to hear a performance of Budhjan’s songs, would know the many cultural elements in the observance and play of Holī, and would also know the basics of Digambar Jain spirituality and the path to the perfection of the soul. To the extent that each song successfully presented a new way of allegorizing that spiritual path through the elements of Holī - a new take on the inner spiritual Holī - members of the audience would experience musical joy. They would also experience a heightened understanding of the spiritual truths of Digambar spirituality, and perhaps some of them thereby advance along that spiritual path themselves (or, “them-selves”).

Taming Holī

The Digambar Jains have not been the only ones in north India to compose and sing allegorical Holī songs. Many “Hindu” poets have also composed such songs, in both the nirguna and saguna styles, although it does not appear to have been as extensive a genre as among Digambar poets. In an article on the Holī songs in north Indian religious literature, Bhaṅvarlāl Polyākā wrote that religious poets, “have seen Holī in a different way, and experienced it in a transcendent [alaukik] form. They hear the message of Holī in a different

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61 The nirguna-saguna distinction has been thoroughly historicized and problematized in recent years (Hawley 2005). I use it here as a simple shorthand to distinguish between two broad and overlapping styles of religiosity in north India, on the one hand with an emphasis on turning inward to discover one’s spiritual essence, and on the other with an emphasis on the need to establish a firm relationship with God (in various forms) as one’s refuge and savior.
way, and their play of colors with the pickârî and other toys is different” (Polyêkâ 1957: 141). He discussed Holî pads by eleven authors. Three of these were Jain - Budhjan, Daulatrâm and Dyânatray. Of the other eight, six were “Hindu”: Mirâbâi, Sahajobâî, Caradâs, Cunnîlîl, Sahabram and Nârâyân. Two were Muslim: Yârî Sahab and Afsos Sahab. He concluded, “Sant and bhakti poets of every tradition have composed spiritual (âdhyâtmit) pads in connection with Holî, and have described the Holî play of their chosen deity (îst)” (Polyêkâ 1957: 151).

Paying attention to the Jain allegorization of Holî allows us to see how non-Jain authors also strove to recast Holî as a spiritually transformative occasion rather than a socially transgressive one. Let me give a few examples.

The large anthologies of songs in the Dadv Panth known as Paîc Vâñî, include a single Holî song each by three of the five poets. These are Kabîr, Nâmdev and Hardâs. Dadu and Raidâs do not appear to have composed such songs, at least not among those in the anthologies. In their critical edition of the Paîc Vâñî, Callewaert and de Beeck included songs by Gorakhnâth and Sundardâs; the latter’s songs also include one Holî song. These four nirguṇ songs show an allegorization of Holî, although not the same as the Jain allegory with Cetan, Sumati and Kumati. Kabîr sings:

Play Horî with the true teacher.

Drive away disease & death,

bring wandering to an end."

He continues, to sing of spraying forgiveness (simâ, kšamâ) with the pickârî, of playing Horî in the alley of meditation (gyâîîn galî), and of the dramatic display of the true teacher playing Phâg (tamâsâ satagura selai phâga).

Nâmdev’s song begins in a manner similar to several of those by Budhjan:

My beloved has wandered

to a foreign land,

how can I play Horî?"

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62 Nor are there any Holî songs in the collection of Raidâs’s works by Callewaert and Friedlander 1992.

63 sataguru saîga horî selie jâta n jarâ marana bhrama jâî. Nirguṇ Bhakti Sâgar §144, p. 327.

64 mora piyâ bilamyo paradesa horî maiî kâ sauî khelaûn. Nirguṇ Bhakti Sâgar §229, p. 419.
He does not, however, engage in an extensive allegorization of the elements of Holi. Both Hardās and Sundardās refer to the “red powder of knowledge” (gyān gulāl), and in their songs they play on the image of the inner self being soaked in the color of true spiritual experience.⁶⁵

Sagun poets have produced Holi songs that are in many ways quite similar to those of the nirgun poets, reminding us that the sagun-nirgun distinction, while heuristically useful at times, can also obscure as much as it reveals. The sagun Holi songs focus on the loving play with colors and liquids, in which the participants dye each other and erase visual social differences, and simultaneously dye their souls and erase the ignorant perceptions of difference between God and soul. The sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava poet Paramāṇand sings (Sanford 2008: 170f.):

Listen, darling beloved reveler, let’s go play
some games.
Sandalwood and vermillion, perfumed yellow die and red powder,
everyone throws rasa.
And they take red powder and yellow color, their play resplendent
in every bower.
You throw on us, we throw on you: we’ll wear
each other’s color.
The heart of hearts knows this inner joy; he smiles,
darling and handsome.
Paramāṇand knows the connoisseur of rasa; he divides and
throws the rasa.

Here the play of colors in Holi symbolizes the Vaiṣṇava emphasis on communion: of congregants with each other, and of congregants with God, the “darling and handsome” one, who is, of course, Krishna. Further, the poet emphasizes that the seeming separation of one from another, of soul from God, is in fact all part of God’s creative play, his līlā. God experiences life as a unity, but also creates our human experience of difference. In that experience of difference, the soul feels the absence of God, and so many Holi songs begin with a lamentation at separation, as we see in the beginning of the song by Nāmdev. Many centuries later, at the tail end of the Braj-bhāṣā poetic tradition, the Banarsi Vaiṣṇava poet

⁶⁵ Nirguṇ Bhakti Sāgar §70, p. 465 (Hardās); and §200, p. 582 (Sundardās).
Bhāratendu Hariścandra wrote a Holī song remarkably similar to that of Nāmdev, in which the female soul mourns the absence of her lover at the beginning of the Holī season:

Friend, my beloved
is in a foreign land—
how will I play Hori?  

For a Vaiṣṇava, the absence of the beloved revealer at Holī symbolizes the separation of the feminized Soul from the masculine Krishna; for a Jain, it symbolizes the separation of Good Intention (feminine) from the Conscious Soul (masculine).

It is striking that all of these poets - Jain, nirgun, sagun - present a softened, cleaned up version of Holī. It is a celebration of loving companionship, in which people gently throw colored powder and sprinkle colored liquid over each other, and share with each other sweets and drinks. These depictions of Holī in the songs of all traditions, to symbolize the theological positions on suffering and liberation, are quite different from the descriptions we get from other sources.

In the songs, the revelers gently throw powder and colored water on each other. They do not douse each other with buffalo urine (Marriott 1966: 203). They might gently hit each other in the songs; we do not find people with lacerated scalps from being struck with hurled water pots (Marriott 1966: 203), or with bruised shins from being fiercely beaten with sticks by village women (Crooke 1968 II: 316, Marriott 1966: 203, Miller 1973: 19). In the songs, the poets drink the juice of religious essence, and become intoxicated in the love of Krishna or the experience of the self. They are not intoxicated on bhāng or country liquor (Marriott 1966: 203f., Miller 1973: 18, Jassal 2012: 227). While many of the songs involve a symbolized eroticism, this is always within the bounds of poetic propriety. The poets sing devotional bhajans and pads, not sexually explicit and insulting gālīs (Crooke 1968 II: 316, 320f., Cohen 2007, Jassal 2012). Their songs are never obscene (aślist). There are no references to Mahālaṇḍ or Superdick raping the mothers and sisters of the listeners (Cohen 2007). We do not hear of young men and old men dressed as bridegrooms, riding backwards on donkeys, waving gigantic penises made of rags and paper (Marriott 1966: 202, Cohen 2007: 206; cf. Bose 1967: 37f., 53f.). The veiled eroticism of the Holī songs of the Jain, Vaiṣṇava and nirgun poets is always heterosexual; the male homoeroticism of Holī in Banaras is missing (Cohen 2007). Equally missing is the violence in reaction to caste, class and gender hierarchies that lies clearly visible just beneath the surface of much Holī activity.

*sakhī hamare piyā paradeśā hori maiṁ kāsoṁ khelaun. Bhāratendu Samagra, p. 111.*
Holī in the songs is fun and playful; Holī today, at least in many cities, is a potentially dangerous time when many people wisely stay off the streets.

In other words, Holī as performed today in Braj and Banaras, and from the historical evidence as it has been performed for at least several centuries, is a deeply transgressive affair. Seemingly every hierarchy - of caste, class, religion, gender, age, sexuality - is turned upside down. It is a time of freedom. But this freedom is not the calm, controlled freedom of orthodox religious ideology; rather, it is an antinomian social freedom from forms of oppressive domination.

Some religious reformers may decry the excesses and subversions of Holī, and urge their co-religionists to avoid it as a “harmful custom” that runs counter to religious orthodoxy. But Holī is unavoidable in north Indian life, and has been for centuries. We see, then, how religious poets from many traditions have tried to soften the subversions of Holī. Budhjan and the other Jain poets employed their educated literary tools of metaphor, symbolism and allegory to transform Holī’s social transgressiveness. Instead of critiquing and reversing the hierarchies of society, we find in Budhjan’s poems a gentler, more irenic religious transgressiveness, in which the listener is urged to put aside all the external constraints and ignorance of worldly existence and turn instead to an inner spiritual pursuit of that which is ultimately real.
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