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WORLDLY AND OTHER-WORLDLY ETHICS: THE NONHUMAN AND ITS RELATIONSHIP  
TO THE MEANINGFUL WORLD OF JAINS

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*For my Parents*

*And for my Animal Companions*

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## Preface

It is during my tenure as an undergraduate student within the field of Religious Studies that I was provided with the opportunity to travel to India with a group of students from the University of Ottawa (May to June 2007). In the course of my travel in India, I attended lectures at the International Summer School for Jain Studies, which collaborated with the University of Ottawa, along with other Universities worldwide, to provide international students with the prospect of studying Jainism within the Indian context. After returning to Ottawa, I began my graduate work focusing specifically on Jainism – though not quite sure on which aspect of Jainism to focus on. My keen interest in animal ethics would lay down the path for my research. I began to investigate the questions “how do Jains view themselves in relation to non-human others” and “does this relationship resound with environmental and animal rights issues?” After my experience in India, which prompted my interest in what Jains were doing and saying online, I realized that animals and nature were central demarcating symbols of Jainness. In order to “do the Jain thing,” many Jains were promoting their tradition as a “green” tradition (e.g., as ecologically conscious). It became apparent that one of the most striking ways in which Jains redefined their traditional mores as contemporary and relevant was through their self-presentation as inherently “ecological.”

This thesis would not have been possible without the encouragement, guidance, and support from my very own formaker – namely, Anne Valley. I was definitely blessed with the most understanding and compassionate supervisor. Your inexhaustible patience and continued assistance were so important to me during my graduate work. For this, I am heartily thankful.

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## Introduction

What does it mean to be truly human? Does it entail a negative definition whereby “animality” defines the boundaries of “humanity”? Should the two concepts be considered separately? They are the focus of the work of such philosophers as Calarco, Agamben, and Midgley. They are also questions posed by anthropologists, such as Ingold and Vallely, and by religious authorities and their lay followers. Perhaps such questions are fundamental to being human. The “animal question” queries the complexity of the boundary drawn between human and non-human beings. It explores its powerful effects on human self-conception as well as on the ways in which non-human beings (e.g., plants, animals, environment, etc) are perceived, and therefore engaged with.

The human-animal divide is a boundary that is both constructed and perceived by human beings in many cultures and, some (Calarco 2008; Midgley 1983) would argue, by animals also. Unfortunately, says Midgley, the “animal” is an “outlaw by definition” (Midgley 1983: 61), meaning that the word “animal” differentiates non-human beings from the “human” being and, thus, often excludes non-human animals from ethical consideration. The “question of the animal,” to use Derrida’s phrase, is therefore the one that questions our existence in the face of the other “other” - the non-human being. In other words, the way non-human animals are perceived and treated by humans will necessarily say *something* about an individual or a group’s worldview and, thus, about his or her constructed identity.

In Indian and Indo-European cultures, among others, the demarcating between the human and the animal appears to be vital in the process of identity making. Individual and social identity (as well as the limits of moral obligation) is inescapably connected to where the line is drawn between humanity and animality. In Jainism (unlike what occurs in many other traditions) this process of demarcation is explicitly problematized. Its constant negotiation has long formed an integral - and very conscious – dimension of Jain identity. The contemporary environmental crisis has made the question “do animals [and nature] matter?” an urgent one for all traditions, and has changed the nature of this discussion as it plays out in Jainism. While the nonhuman has always been central to Jainism, it is central in *new ways* in

the contemporary period. The exploration of the nonhuman in Jainism constitutes the focus of my thesis.

In fact, many Jains define what it “means to be Jain” by asserting that their tradition perceives no difference in terms of essence, or soul, between humans and animals, which therefore defends them from committing any kind of violence towards any living being. The equality of all living beings, which is put forth in Jainism, is deemed by Jains (and others) to be in stark contrast to the ways in which the “West” traditionally relates to non-human animals, namely by “mastery” or “dominion” over them. Nevertheless, as will be apparent in the first chapter of this thesis, traditional Jain doctrine does assert that a difference exists between humans and animals in terms of physiological qualities and in terms of birth place (e.g., animals are born in the animal and plant realm of the Jain cosmos), but this difference does not constitute a difference in moral worth.

### **Definition of Terms and Summary of Chapters: Jain Identity and The Non-Human Lens**

Both lay and ascetic Jains are re-evaluating the traditional renunciatory ethic (e.g., the *mokṣa-marga* ideology), which traditionally entailed complete renunciation of the world of matter and, therefore, of nature, into an ecologically sound and relevant tradition. This paper seeks to explore the ways in which this is accomplished and how these new understandings are being established and understood by individual Jains in India and abroad. In doing this, it will be important to keep in mind Robert Orsi’s (2005: 156) manifesto against typologies and reifying boundaries since the lived tradition of Jains dictates that any separation between authentic or “ideal” and inauthentic or “real” Jainism is misleading. Certainly, those who describe themselves as “Jain,” engage in *their* ideal form of Jainism, and so the material must be approached with this standpoint in mind.

Nonetheless, the first two chapters of this thesis will be divided into discussions of Orthodox, Neo-Orthodox, and “Eco-Conscious” Jain understandings of themselves and of their relationship with the nonhuman (e.g., animals and the environment). These labels are used primarily for heuristic purposes and do not imply any such fixed categories. Real Jains are never found in one or the other category; for all

three certainly are simply orientations which inform each other and are informed by each other. Nevertheless, they are still useful working tools which will aid in differentiating the overlapping yet differing discourses about animals and the environment that do, in fact, exist between and amongst Jains today. Of course, Jains adhering to their own ideal are practicing their own form of “Orthodoxy,” which also greatly emphasizes practice and, thus, “Orthopraxy,” but, for the purposes of this thesis, “Orthodox Jainism” will mean that form of Jain religiosity that emphasizes renunciation and liberation as the ultimate goal. It will mean the form of Jainism whereby “devout believers... conform to the often intricate doctrines set forth in texts and formulated by scholars” (Esposito 2002: 8). In this sense, I align “Orthodoxy” with the *mokṣa-marga* ideal (described in detail in chapter one).

The first chapter will therefore discuss traditional Jain ideology by focusing on the Jain structure of the cosmos (*loka*), Jain karma theory, the realities of existence (*tattvas*), Jain taxonomy, the duties of ascetics and laypersons, which includes adherence to the paramount Jain vow of *ahimsa* or non-violence, as well as the conventional and stringent Jain vegetarian diet. Moreover, in order to demonstrate that Jainism was, and is, first and foremost a renouncer, or *śramanic*, tradition, the first chapter will also examine one of the major practices within the Jain tradition that emphasizes its soteriological aspect, namely Jain *gocarī/baharana* (e.g., almsgiving). In essence, this chapter will demonstrate that since the traditional ideal within Orthodox Jainism is to achieve *mokṣa*, or liberation, the concern for non-human animals is always in terms of this over-arching goal. Ideally, says Laidlaw (1995: 153), Jains emphasize an “ethic of quarantine,” an ethic of non-action, rather than involvement or action, which is clearly different from the sociologically involved ethics of many contemporary Jains.

A discussion of traditional Jain cosmology is necessary in order to understand the difference between what has traditionally been perceived as a “Jain” way of relating to the natural world in contrast to the modern ecological trend that is emerging amongst contemporary lay and ascetic Jains. While the soteriological path has always emphasized compassion towards living beings, it will become evident that animal rights and environmental concerns, and the ideology of “saving” the lives of others, as understood as basic to the Western environmental and animal rights movements, constitute a new emphasis within

Jainism. As Vallely writes: “Orthodox Jainism is intrinsically otherworldly. Although it espouses a powerful ethos of respect and compassion for all living beings, it is not an ethic of social activism. The Jain ethic of nonharm *is* a powerful ecology in itself, but its teachings are not designed to remedy social ills so much as to escape them” (Vallely in Chapple 2006: 212).

The second chapter will take up the task of examining the ways in which many Neo-Orthodox Jains in India and in the diaspora have reinterpreted their tradition with a “green” lens. I define them as Neo-Orthodox. For them, as will become apparent in chapter two, ecological and animal rights discourses are used to promote Jain identity through self-assertions that Jainism was the first tradition to have elaborated ecological discourse. As Cort reminds us, “an ideology is presented as timeless... it can never change or need to be changed” (2001: 10). Thus, “changes that do occur are interpreted as simply restatements of earlier formulations or clearer perceptions of the truth” (*ibid*, 10), and this is exactly what is being claimed in Neo-Orthodox Jains’ reinterpretations, or ‘restatements’ in their view, of Jain doctrine.

In essence, Neo-Orthodox Jainism holds onto the renunciatory ethic of Orthodox Jainism but redefines it in terms of contemporary social concerns. The language of renunciation is still used (e.g., *mokṣa*, *ahimsa*, meditation, fasting etc.). The idea that life must be “quarantined,” or “avoided” remains, but the emphasis on salvation of the soul through worldly withdrawal is minimized. In fact, many Neo-Orthodox Jains claim that Jainism has never “truly” been about escaping the natural world. Instead, they argue that the “avoidance of harm” as propounded in traditional Jain doctrine is really a secondary and subsidiary concern arising out of concern not to harm others. The focus, they argue, has always been on avoiding the natural world so that nonhuman others are spared pain, suffering, and death. It is through this ethos of avoidance, an ethos that propounds a philosophy of “live and let live,” that Neo-Orthodox Jains assert the inherent eco-friendliness of their tradition.

The second chapter also takes up an exploration of Eco-Conscious Jainism. It examines the ways in which Jainism is asserted to be an eco-friendly tradition among (mainly young) Eco-Conscious Diaspora Jains. Many Diaspora Jains, in the absence of ascetics, are redefining the Jain ethos as one of

social engagement rather than worldly renunciation, whereby, in order to be considered “Jain,” one must be actively involved in the social discourse on the environment and animal rights in addition to practicing a vegan, rather than a restrictive vegetarian, diet. The renunciatory discourse is absent here. The *Young Jains of America* is but one association promoting social involvement with issues such as the environmental crisis and animal rights. It will become apparent that these young Jains in the diaspora, unlike Neo-Orthodox Jains, put much more of an emphasis on social involvement and active ethical discourse - relating to animal rights and veganism. It is important to note that the *Young Jains of America* website is available across the globe, and so it should not come as a surprise that Jains in India are also being exposed to these ideas. The ethos of social engagement in non-human issues is, however, first and foremost, a diaspora phenomenon (Vallely in Chapple 2006: 213). Interestingly, many Westerners, as well as scholars of Jainism, have been very sympathetic to this socio-centric, ecological expression of Jainism. For instance, Michael Tobias, a noted Western environmental activist and filmmaker, argues that Jainism is the answer to our environmental problems. Tobias paints a Romantic portrait of Jainism as the pioneer of concepts such as compassion, care for non-human animals, and, thus, ecology. This assertion is certainly attractive to Jains trying to promote their tradition as timeless, yet still modern and relevant, and, in fact, Tobias is often quoted by Jains as further evidence that Jainism spearheaded the concept of ecology. In *Life Force: The World of Jainism*, Tobias (admittedly) writes from an insider’s perspective (he defines himself as Jain), and so his text has more of a rapprochement with the contemporary discourse of many environmentally conscious Jains.

Throughout this thesis, I examine how Jains mark the boundary between self and other, between “Jain” and “non-Jain,” through a use of the key symbols of animals and nature. The animal, vegetarianism, the environment and nonviolence are important symbols for Jains. In fact, as will become apparent in the first and second chapters of this thesis, animals, vegetarianism, nonviolence and, in the diaspora, veganism, are ideas that serve as symbols of Jain identity in India and abroad. However, Jains also have plenty of divergent discourses about the latter ideas, which will be the main focus throughout this thesis. In essence, I focus primarily on how Jains act out their relationship to the aforementioned

icons of ‘Jainness’ – namely, nonhuman beings.

Because my effort is to understand how these symbols are being used, and changed, meaningfully among the Jain community, I situate my work within a symbolic-interpretivist methodology, primarily derived from the work of the symbolic anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz’s emphasis on meaning and symbols has contributed to a study focusing on the ways in which the symbols of the environment and animals provide Jains with multivalent tools for the construction of a meaningful Jain world. Using Geertz’s symbolic-interpretivist approach, the third chapter will question the challenge posed by Callicott and Cort to the meaningful “green” world of Jains. Callicott and Cort assert that Jainism cannot be considered as eco-friendly since it is unequivocally a *śramanic*, or renouncer, tradition. A tradition that emphasizes detachment, they claim, cannot be *engaged* with environmental issues. From the perspective of symbolic anthropology, the “truth” of whether or not Jainism can be understood to be ecological must rest with the way the concept is used by Jains themselves. Chapter three will take up this issue in detail.

## **Methodology**

In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Geertz defines religion by placing “tremendous weight” (1973: 91) on symbol. He defines “religion” thusly: Religion, he says, is “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (*ibid*, 90). Essentially, Geertz asserts that “religion” provides human beings with direction and tools (which includes symbols) to cope with an otherwise formless and meaningless world by giving it form and direction. He argues that the symbols that are accorded importance by a particular group of individuals inform and are informed by the lived experiences of this same group.

Thus, in order to understand the meaningful worlds of various people, and in order to understand why certain people live and act in certain ways, we must focus our attention on the symbols that are

accorded utmost importance. Therefore what the symbolic-interpretivist approach emphasizes is the observation, recording, and interpretation of the interrelatedness between meaning, symbols, and a people's ethos or behavior. "As we are to deal with meaning," says Geertz, "let us begin with a paradigm: viz., that sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos - the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood - and their world view - the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order" (*ibid*, 89). Symbols, therefore, are an essential starting point in any attempt at understanding the "other." They are indispensable in summarizing representations of the way things "in sheer actuality are" and useful elaborating principles of how things could or should be. In essence, symbols represent a people's worldview along the world in which they live.

Essential to Geertz's definition of religion is the symbol, which he defines as a "vehicle for a conception" (*ibid*, 91). Symbols, he says, provide a "model of" and a "model for" reality. They shape and are shaped by lived experiences, and, therefore, are "extrinsic [e.g., public and shared] sources of information" (*ibid*, 92) that provide individuals and groups, or rather individuals *because they are in groups*, with affirmations and reaffirmations that life is in order and therefore meaningful. The study of the meaningfulness of symbols therefore tells us something about how and why members of a community may find and construct meaning in various ways. Indeed, for Geertz, religious symbols are of utmost importance in that they help human beings deal with existential angst or, as he termed it, with the problems of bafflement, suffering, and ethical paradox (*ibid*, 100). When things in life do not go according to plan, symbols are there to inform us as to the reason for this and in order to point the way to which ultimate course of action must be taken. They also provide us with a sense of belonging and identity – something that is so central to being human.

I have found the symbolic-interpretivist approach to be the most useful in my attempt at understanding how Jains make their worlds meaningful today because of its emphasis on meaning, and, thus, on anchoring truth in the meaningfulness of lived practice - not in theory or abstract principles

(though these are needed too). In approaching the various ways in which Jains use the natural world as a marker of Jain identity, I have considered that “nature,” or, more specifically, “the non-human,” has long been of central importance to the meaningful world of Jains. Indeed, ethical considerations of the non-human world have long served as defining symbols of “Who is a Jain” and “Who is not a Jain” *for* Jains. Since the symbolic-interpretivist approach essentially aims to understand, emphasize, and “find one’s feet” (as Geertz put it, borrowing from Wittgenstein 1973: 13 ), I have treaded the meaningful world of Jains by taking Jains seriously in their assertions that Jainism is ecological and animal friendly. Ultimately, if we are to heed the assertions of Jains, we must accept that environmental discourse has long been part of the Jain tradition - however this might be conceived. Thus, scholarly debates over whether Jainism is inherently ecological are at odds with this approach. However, I do not aim to discredit scholars who argue for or against the inherency of Western scientific ecology to Jainism, but rather focus my attention on Jain assertions that their tradition is scientific and ecological (a Jain discourse that is becoming ever more prevalent and meaningful to contemporary Jains).

As for the method used for this thesis, I have based much of my research on archival works. Thus, I take John Cort seriously when he writes, “To understand the Jains adequately, one must read what they read” (Cort 2001: 13). Indeed, it is possible for a scholar interested in the tradition to find value within these texts for they are of value to those who read them. In fact, most Jains are very much involved in what is written about Jainism and, in fact, often themselves write about what they perceive it means to be a Jain. I have therefore consulted the works of Jain scholars, ascetics, and laypersons from India and abroad (e.g., Canada, the UK, and the United States).

While I realize that the experiences of “Jains abroad” and “Jains in India” cannot be understood as two separate and complete wholes, differences do exist between these communities, reflecting their broader cultural contexts. In exploring what the different experience consisted of, I have found that they have much to do with the ways in which Jains relate to their natural environment. As Vallely (2004: 5) asserts, Jain ascetics cannot travel into the diasporic community since this would involve them in unnecessary violence, which therefore results in the “relationship with the ascetic ideal being

reconceived” in the Diaspora community. Jains outside of India do not have continuous access to the representatives of the Jain ideal - namely, the ascetics. In contrast, Jains in India, for the most part, do have the option of having continued contact with *sadhus* (monks) and *sadhvis* (nuns) and thus with the *mokṣa-marga* ideology. Exploring Indian and Diaspora Jainism as distinctive phenomena reveals coherent Jain voices concerning the environment and non-human animals on a global scale.

In addition to archival work, I draw upon the short-term fieldwork I conducted in India among the Jain community (summer 2007). Furthermore, I have consulted the *Young Minds* magazine, a quarterly publication of the *Young Jains of America* website, where Jains from all over the world engage in discussions about their tradition. Interestingly, many of the articles written by young Jains revolved around *ahimsa* and how this Jain concept is the answer to the contemporary environmental crisis and to animal rights issues. These written sources were useful in providing more individual Diaspora Jain understandings of their tradition in the contemporary world. In a sense, in order to have access to all these Jain voices, I have had to examine the various ways in which Jainism is statically represented on paper and the reaffirmations or reinterpretations of Jainism according to individual Jain voices online and in person. In doing this, I have had to look at groups (e.g., “Jains in India” and “Jains abroad”) and individuals and how each of these mutually reinforce each other in texts written by Jains and in more personal and engaged discussions between Jains online. The intention of this thesis is therefore certainly not to “prove” that Jainism is inherently ecological, or even to critique this assertion, but rather it aims to bring attention to the fact that a symbolic dialogue about the non-human environment and non-human animals is meaningful to Jains all over the world.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Ascetic Ideal: Renouncing a Violent World

*Praise to the Jinas*  
*Praise to the Siddhas*  
*Praise to the Acaryas*  
*Praise to the Upadhyayas*  
*Praise to all the Sadhus in the world.*  
*This fivefold praise*  
*destroys all bad karma*  
*and of all holies*  
*it is the foremost holy*  
 (Namokar mantra in Cort 2001: 5).

The above quote is the most popular mantra among Jains today. It is called the *Namokar*, or *Namaskara*, mantra. I refer to this ubiquitous Jain hymn at the beginning of this chapter because it is a repeated and formal statement which sums up the ideal Jain way of being in the world, or rather the ideal way of being *out of* the world by rendering ‘sacred’ those beings that were able to overcome the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth known as *samsara*. Certainly, the *Jinas*, which translates as ‘spiritual victors,’ are of utmost importance since they are the ones who are mentioned first in the mantra. “The *Jinas*,” says Jaini, “are human teachers said to have attained *kevalajñāna* (infinite knowledge) and to have preached the doctrine of *mokṣa* (salvation)” (1998: 2). These teachers, or *Tīrthāṅkaras* as they are also known, preach the doctrine of non-violence as the only way to free the soul (*jīva*) from endless bondage in a world full of pain and suffering. Yet, while these teachers may hold limitless knowledge of the world and its inner workings, it is important to note that they are not the founders of the Jain tradition nor do they intervene in the affairs of human beings. Though they have attained a superior state of knowledge, they cannot intervene in the affairs of those souls still remaining on earth, except to teach the principles that have freed them from *samsara*. Ideally, therefore, *the Jain path of purification*, to quote the title of Jaini’s text, is a path that must be walked alone - unaided by supernatural beings.

This chapter examines the ways in which Jains have traditionally dealt with the human issues of pain, suffering and death. It will examine the teachings as put forth by the above-mentioned teachers, or

*Jinas*, on the state of the world and the place of human beings within it and, thus, the perceived relationship of human beings with their natural environment. Throughout this discussion, it will become apparent that engagement with the world and with all living beings is to be minimized if not avoided, for engagement is the reason behind all the negative experiences we might encounter in a lifetime (e.g., sickness, death, loss). The remedy to this, according to traditional Jain ideology, is simply to “avoid the world” - to get out of it. Of course, it is only through the world and with a physical human incarnation that liberation can be achieved, and so the world is not completely odious. The world for Jains is both an ally and an enemy on the path to enlightenment; the source of bondage and freedom. The twenty-four *Jinas*, the most recent and most popular of whom is named *Mahāvīra*, have, out of compassion for bonded souls, provided those who would listen with beliefs and practices that would allow them to finally reach the ideal goal of liberation (*mokṣa*).

These beliefs and practices are systematically outlined in the fundamental Jain symbol of the universe called the *loka-ākāśa*, or *loka-puruṣa* (*ibid*, 128). A brief discussion of the structure of the Jain universe and the place of living beings within it, as well as the reason for its existence (e.g., karma) is necessary in order to demonstrate the logic of the Jain path. John Cort writes, “The *mokṣa-marga* [the path to liberation]... necessitates the increased isolation of the soul, and emphasizes separation of the individual from worldly ties and interactions” (Cort 2001: 7). As will become apparent in this chapter, the ideal of Jainism is to avoid nature and not engage with it. Thus, this chapter, which focuses solely on Orthodox Jainism, will provide a distinct idea of what it means to be Jain as traditionally defined.

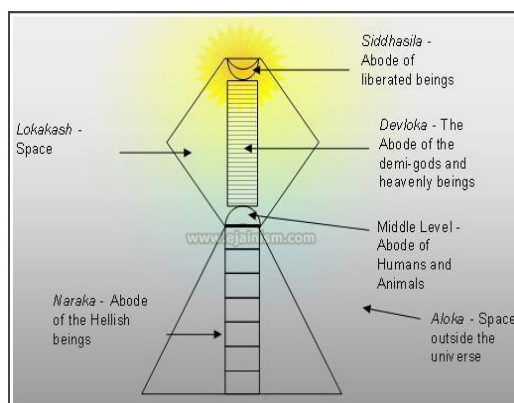
### ***Loka: A World Brimming with Life***

According to the ideals of Jainism, all beings possess eternal souls (*jīvas*), and this includes animals, insects, plants, water, fire, bacteria, and so on. All that is “alive” has a soul. Jain doctrine asserts that, though all living beings are individuals, all have the same kind of soul and so, in this sense, all souls are equal. However, some of these souls are more occluded by karma than others, which

necessarily means that different souls incarnate differently, and are therefore lower on the scale of living beings in terms of their bodies. Traditional Jain doctrine, therefore, sees a clear dividing line between pure soul and impure physical matter. As Valley asserts, “The most fundamental existential quandary shared by all beings of the cosmos is the entanglement of soul and matter (e.g., of *jīva* and *ajīva*). That soul (*jīva*) and matter (*ajīva*) are utterly enmeshed is what prevents the soul from achieving a state of bliss which can only be experienced in a state of purity and separation from all that is matter” (2011: 4). Indeed, the structure of the universe (*loka*) clearly demarcates those souls who have successfully evaded matter and achieved a state of omniscient bliss from those souls who are still very much burdened by the very physical substance of karma. The *loka* (image below), or world, is a symbol which depicts the universe as perceived by Jains and, thus, explains the ways in which one must act in this world in order to evade it. Padmanabh S. Jaini, a renowned Jain scholar, summarizes the Jain *loka* succinctly. He explains:

The lower world (*adho-loka*) is the home of infernal beings (*nāraki*), as well as of certain demi-gods (demons, titans, and so on). This region consists of seven tiers (*bhūmi*), each darker than the one above.... The middle world or terrestrial world (*madhya-loka*) consists of innumerable concentric island-continents (*dvīpa--samudra*), with Jambūdīvīpa in the center. This is the abode of humans (*manuṣya*) and animals (*tiryāṅca*).... In the higher or celestial world (*ūrdhva-loka*) are found the abodes of heavenly beings. *Siddha-loka* is the permanent abode of the liberated souls. This crescent-shaped region, lying beyond the celestial realms, constitutes the apex of world-space (Jaini 1998: 128-130).

**Figure 1. The Jain Universe (Loka-ākāśa)<sup>1</sup>**



The position of each soul in this universe depends on the karmic substance that is attached to it. The ideal position for all souls is the *Siddha-loka*, but if one must be reborn because of past actions committed in previous or present lives, it is best to be reborn in the terrestrial realm as a human being (ideally, a healthy male). The male human body is the physical incarnation that is the best suited for *mokṣa*. It is least burdened by the very physical weight of karma. Furthermore, it is most advantageous to be reborn as a human male in “the lands where formakers [e.g., *Tīrthaṅkaras/Jinas*] appear to preach and where motivated religious action can come to fruition” (Dundas 1992: 91). These lands, known as *karmabhūmis*, are threefold - namely, *Bhārata* (e.g., India), *Airāvata* and *Mahāvideha* (*ibid*, 91). As Dundas asserts, “The massive dimensions of the *loka* and the insignificant space occupied by the *karmabhūmis* [demonstrated by the narrowness of the middle part of the symbol of the *loka*]... serve as a reminder of the rarity and value of human birth and the limited confines in which serious religious activity can be conducted” (*ibid*, 92). Indeed, it is only human beings that are considered capable of achieving the ideal in Jainism (e.g., *mokṣa*), since it is believed that only male human bodies are capable of undergoing the most rigorous forms of austerities (*tapas*) for taming the body and burning off karma.

Women, according to one of the two major sects<sup>2</sup> of Jainism, are believed to be capable of attaining *mokṣa*. But both sects assert that they are far more hampered in their quest for liberation. While the Śvetāmbara sect of Jainism recognizes that women are capable of achieving the ideal, it is still deemed more difficult for women to do this than men. During my own fieldwork in India, I was present at a meeting with Śvetāmbara Jain *sādhvīs* who acknowledged that it is more difficult for women to achieve liberation. Within the Digambara sect of Jainism, they are considered incapable of achieving liberation because they are more susceptible to passions (*kashayas*) than men. Digambara spiritual leaders (*acharyas*), such as Kundakunda, have argued that women are incapable of achieving liberation because of their close association with the world of matter due to their bodies. Interestingly, the same narrative of ‘potentiality’ rather than ‘capability’ holds true for non-human animals. Their bodies, as will be discussed later in this chapter, are held to be more violent in their very nature since their souls are ever more bound by karmic substance. “Karma is the “problem” according to the *mokṣa-marga* ideology.

Every unenlightened thought, deed, and word causes karma to stick to the soul like invisible glue. This karma both creates ignorance of the true nature of the universe and blocks the inherent perfection of the soul” (Cort 2001: 7).

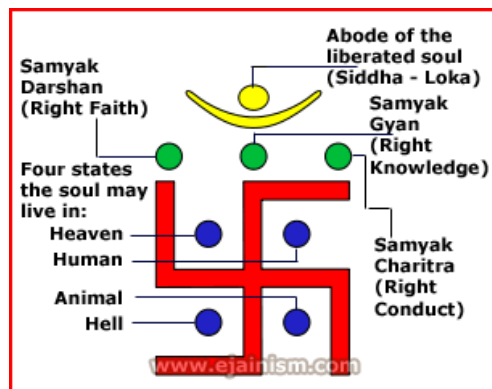
Thus, because of their bodies, non-human animals, unlike human beings, are unable to act out the teachings of the formakers, and are therefore unable to tread the *mokṣa-marga* in their current embodiment. While there are stories of animals acquiring “right knowledge” and, therefore, achieving god-like or human status in future births as a result of their encounters with a *Jina*, these narratives attest more to the supreme power of the formaker to awaken souls than to the accomplishment of the animal in traditional Jain doctrine. Dundas confirms my point when he says, “the moral [here is] that if animals can practice austerities, it is difficult for humans to justify laxity” (1992: 107). While traditional Jain doctrine does expand concern for living beings beyond the human border, animals and the natural world are still judged “in terms of the human values which are imposed upon them” (*ibid*, 107).

As previously stated, while the Jain ideal recognizes the fact that non-human beings have souls equal to those of human beings, their bodies inevitably render them as lower forms of life. As Jaini asserts, “the animal and plant (*tiryāṅca*) category constitutes a special case. It is the first of all the lowest of possible destinies, characterized by extremely gross sensory activity and pervasive ignorance” (1998: 108). Furthermore, within this animal and plant realm, Jain ideology recognizes enormous variations between and among non-human life. For example, earth, banyan trees, leeches, and elephants are all lumped into this realm, though they are all very much distinct in terms of the number of senses they possess and in terms of how self-conscious they may be. An elephant, in this instance, is said to possess more senses than a leech, and, more importantly, the fifth sense of hearing, and so is much more self-conscious and, therefore, capable of hearing the words of the *Jinas*. Yet, what does make these non-human life forms similar is their “non-humanness.”

The *svastika* (image below), which is the symbol that depicts the four destinies, or *gatis*, of souls, diagrammatically reveals animals as lower forms of life in comparison to human beings. The

placement of these destinies within the *svastika* reveals their lowly status in that they are placed next to the hell realm and below the human and celestial realms. Hence, though it has been argued that the body is “never seen as anything more than a tool” (Dundas 1992: 95), it is still very much apparent that non-human animals do not hold equal status to human beings in Orthodox Jain doctrine and understandings of Jain symbols. At this point, it is important to examine why traditional Jain doctrine understands animals as lower forms of life and, in order to do this, it is necessary to discuss Jain karma theory and, with this, the Jain idea of the realities of existence, or *tattvas*.

Figure 2. The *Svastika*<sup>3</sup>



### Karma, *Tattvas*, and Animal Bodies

#### *The Wet Soul: Non-Human Persons and Jain Karma Theory*

Since Jainism is a *sramanic* tradition, that is a tradition emphasizing renunciation, it is only logical that the initial code of conduct for lay and ascetic Jains would emphasize avoidance, or non-action, rather than affirmation, or worldly engagement. In a world that is abundant with life, the Jain aphorism “non-violence is the supreme religion/duty” (*ahimsa paramo dharma*), is more of a warning about the possibilities of further defilement of the soul through the intentional or unintentional harm to living beings, than it is a call to action. Of course, given the reality that only a timely minority ever

pursue the renouncer path, Orthodox Jainism had to work with the reality that those who live in the world must engage with the world, and so it was accepted that some forms of violence were necessary (Dundas 1992: 96-97). The ideal, however, is not represented in the layperson, but rather in the person of the ascetic who avoids, as much as possible, contact with all forms of life.

Indeed, “the emphasis throughout Jainism has consistently been upon the danger that nature causes man through his interaction with it and his careless propensity, ultimately dependent upon karma, to cause violence” (Dundas in Chapple 2006: 97). Thus, nature, or the world of matter/karma, is perceived as a threat to the soteriological goal. Certainly, the logic of a soteriological tradition, which has as its ultimate goal liberation from this world, would necessarily emphasize the need to avoid rather than engage with nature - a dangerous world that would surely implicate one in the violence it commits and into committing violence oneself. “Karmic matter,” says Jaini, “is said to be found “floating free” in every part of occupied space [e.g., in the world]” (1998: 112). It is this matter that is attracted to the passionate soul and, through the accretion of additional karmic matter caused by increased passion, that the soul is blinded by even more karmic “dirt.” The ignorance resulting from this “blindness” further fuels the passions, which, in turn, creates a vicious circle of ignorance, passion, and bondage in the world.

According to the Jain theory of karma, this physical substance that is karma would not be attracted to a soul (*jīva*) if it were free from the passions of desire (*rāga*) and attachment (*dveṣa*) (*ibid*, 119). Anger, greed, pride, and deceitful manipulation,<sup>4</sup> as well as other passions (*kashayas*) that may be demonstrated by a soul already “stained”<sup>5</sup> by karma, contributes to the endless reincarnation of that soul in a world that is “worth leaving.”<sup>6</sup> These passions are said to “moisten” the soul in order to allow karma to stick to it. Thus, a soul without passion (e.g., a dry soul or *vītarāga*) is, to use the analogy quoted in Jaini, like a dry wall upon which karmic “dust” has no hope to stick (1998: 112-113). An action performed as a result of these passions, or rather because every action is performed as a result of these passions, every act is deemed an ignorant act. In the Jain worldview, “action is viewed in physical terms and this [therefore explains why] the overall relationship between the *jīva* and action [is] a material one” (Dundas 1992: 97). It also explains why animal bodies are viewed more negatively than human

bodies. Basically, to continue with the above analogy, animals have very “wet” souls cluttered with karmic dust. They are lower life forms because they are weighed down in the chain of being by the heavy physical burden that is karma.

It may be argued, and, indeed has been argued, that a soul’s position in this chain of being, or its place in the hierarchy, is immaterial since, in our present time, *mokṣa* is an unattainable goal. Kristi Wiley writes, “Jains believe salvation is not possible at this time for anyone, human or animal” (2006: 253). What Wiley is referring to is the belief among Jains that we are currently living in the corrupt age of the *Kaliyuga* wherein liberation is impossible (Vallely 2002: 56). As Vallely asserts, “Time is understood cyclically, as a wheel with twelve spokes: six inclining and six declining, called the *utsarpini* and the *avasarpini* respectively. In the sixth spoke of the *avasarpini*, Jainism is unknown and it is a period of utter bleakness.... We are now in the fifth spoke of the *avasarpini* - called the *Kaliyuga* - a period of decline” (*ibid*, 269n20). It is in these last descending spokes of the wheel of time whereby “culture, religion and eventually even human stature” (Dundas in Vallely 2002: 269n20) are deprived. Essentially, the whole world is in a state of violence, dishonesty (lying and stealing), sexual wantonness, and possessiveness - acting out the exact opposite of the five major vows of Jainism which emphasize nonviolence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity, and non-possessiveness.

This leveling factor does not change the hierarchical ordering of beings since it is only a temporary state. A time will come again when liberation will be possible and so the life of restraint and nonviolence is still necessary - for this birth, future good births, and eventually for *mokṣa*. A human body is, therefore, always cherished. The fact that animals have bodies that cannot carry out austerities hinders them on the path to liberation. This becomes clear in an exploration of the Jain doctrine of the realities (variously seven, or nine). Indeed, this doctrine, in tandem with Jain karma theory, further explains the existence of all the various forms of bodies in the world.

### ***Soul and the Mechanisms of Illusion***

Whether “good” or “bad,” any action will affect the state and incarnation of the soul. As Dundas asserts, karma theory does not alone “explain why the soul becomes embodied and loses its pristine powers” (1992: 96). In order to understand the reasons why, for example, a soul might be reincarnated as a lion rather than a human being, it is important to understand the “realities” of existence that cause a soul to be continuously reborn, which are in addition to karmic factors. The realities of Jain existence are: “the sentient (*jīva*), the insentient (*ajīva*), karmic influx (*āsrava*), unwholesome karmas (*pāpa*), wholesome karmas (*puṇya*), bondage (*bandha*), stoppage of karmic influx (*saṃvara*), dissociation of bound karmas (*nirjarā*) and liberation (*mokṣa*)” (Jaini: 1998: 151). The first six “realities” point to the state of the soul in a world filled with souls (e.g., the sentient) and physical matter (e.g., the insentient), and the last three indicate what should be done about it (e.g., stoppage of karmic influx and shedding of karmic influx) in order to reach the ultimate goal of liberation. Padmanabh Jaini further explains that in order to be aware of these realities, one must first attain the fourth stage of the *guṇasthānas*,<sup>7</sup> namely, right faith or insight (*samyak-darśan*). “Accepting the existence of these nine [reals],” says Jaini, “is the final behavioral “mark” of having attained *samyak-darśana*” (*ibid*, 151). Indeed, those who do not recognize or accept the realities of existence listed above cannot undertake the appropriate actions to climb to the last stage of the *guṇasthānas*, namely *mokṣa* or liberation.

The fourteen stages on the path to liberation set the boundary between “who is a Jain” and “who is not a Jain.” In order to be considered part of the group, one must have first achieved the fourth stage of the layman, namely *samyak-darśan*, or right view, which allows for a correct understanding of the universe and proper behavior within it. As Jaini mentions above, it is only as a Jain layperson that one can undertake proper conduct, for it is only at this stage that the soul becomes aware of the realities of existence. Each individual *jīva* will only become aware of its bonded state and the necessity to escape it when it has shed the insight-deluding (*darśana-mohanīya*) karma (*ibid*, 272). Evidently, if the soul remains unaware of its bonded state, it will not understand that, through action, it accrues (*āsrava*) more

karmic matter, which buries the soul deeper under karmic dirt, and, thus, renders it *almost* impossible, or at least more difficult, for that soul to take the appropriate measures to stop the influx of new karma (*saṃvara*) and to burn away the existing karma (*nirjarā*) chaining the soul to the world. This certainly is the case for the non-human realm in traditional Jain ideology.

Animals are unable to follow the Jain code of conduct because their souls are so obscured by their bodies that they cannot, for the most part,<sup>8</sup> achieve the “right view” that would allow them to understand that their actions are causing further influx of karmic matter (*āsrava*). This leads to more ignorance, causing their bodies to become incapable of undertaking the “right actions” that would allow them to shed (*nirjarā*) existing karmic matter. Since non-human animals are incapable of taking up the austerities necessary to lead the soul towards liberation, they must wait until they are reborn as a higher form of life (e.g., human). Interestingly, animals are said to be able to burn off karma if their bodies are put under great distress, which is a topic that shall be discussed in tandem with animal suffering and euthanasia as it is perceived by Orthodox Jains. As will become apparent, animals in *pinjrapoles* (e.g., animal shelters) are never euthanized because of the logic of the *mokṣa-marga*. In fact, animal suffering in these cases is said to be effective along the *mokṣa-marga* - something which shall be expanded upon below.

### ***Jain Taxonomy: Animal Bodies and Violence***

The division between animality and humanity is certainly apparent in the Jain hierarchy of beings. Jains do not provide animals with an elevated status. Yet, they do see the potential within animals to eventually reach *mokṣa* since, though their bodies are different, their souls are equal to the ones that are trapped in human bodies. Nonetheless, animals are not representative of the ideal body within Orthodox Jainism since, as previously mentioned, they are so obstructed with karmic matter that their actions are never mediated by self-discipline and therefore they are necessarily violent. In fact, human beings who commit violent acts are said to be “like animals” and are believed to be reborn as lower forms of life having failed to take advantage of furthering themselves on the path of purification within their human

incarnation.

Living beings are classified according to the number of senses they possess, namely from one-sensed to five-sensed beings. Jain taxonomy classifies them, from lowest to highest forms, in the following way:

(1) one-sensed beings, such as earth, water, fire and air bodies possessing the sense of *touch*; (2) two-sensed beings, such as worms, leeches, oysters, and snails possessing both touch and *taste*; (3) three-sensed beings, which includes most insects and spiders that possess the sense of touch, taste, and *smell*; (4) four-sensed beings, like butterflies, flies, and bees having the sense of touch, taste, smell, and *sight*; (5) five sensed-beings, namely, humans and animals said to be endowed with the sense of touch, taste, smell, sight, and *hearing* (Chapple 2006: 241).

The lowest forms of life, called *nigodas*, are said to possess only the sense of touch, which is, asserts Chapple, “the foundational sense capacity that defines the presence of life” (*ibid*, 241). It becomes apparent upon examining this list that the more senses a being possesses, the more beneficial it is to that being’s capacity to reach the ideal goal of liberation.

The body, though viewed as impure matter, is still a necessary tool needed by every bonded soul in performing austerities in order to reach the ideal goal of liberation. The highest life-forms, namely self-conscious animals, and especially humans, possess all the senses of the lower life forms in addition to the sense of hearing. A soul can only be made aware of the wretchedness of existence in this world if it is able to hear the words of the *Tīrthāṅkaras*. In fact, Jains refer to themselves as “*shravaks*” or listeners (Dundas 1992: 188), clearly emphasizing the importance of hearing the true doctrine as preached by the *Jinas*, which will aid one on the path to liberation. One of the most important occurrences in Jain history attests to this. As Jaini asserts:

[*Mahāvīra*] sat in a lotus posture, maintaining constant omniscient trance, housed in an assembly hall which had been miraculously created by the gods. His body, free from all impurities, shone like a crystal on all sides. Above his head was hoisted the royal insignia of a white umbrella, signifying that nothing could be holier than he. A *divine sound* (*divyadhvani*) emanated from his person for the benefit of the audience. As this audience consisted of gods, demi-gods, human beings, and animals, the entire assembly was called the *samavasaraṇa*, a place of resort for all” (1998: 35 emphasis added).

Unlike many other religious traditions, Jainism emphasizes a “communion of subjects” in its conventional form, since animals are part of the “holy assembly” known as *samavasaraṇa* in Jainism. Thus, animals,

in this case, are deemed to be intelligent beings capable of listening to and understanding the words of the *Jina*.

Yet, even if animals are capable of hearing the words of the *Jina*, they cannot achieve liberation from their karmically-burdened bodies. This is made evident in the story of Yaśodhara, which, according to Chapple, appears first in Haribhadra's *Samaraiccakaha* in the eighth century and later in Harisena's *Brhatkathakosa* and Somadeva's *Yasatilaka* (2006: 242-43). The tale begins with the murder of King Yaśodhara and his mother, Candramatī, by his adulterous wife. Because the last activity that Yaśodhara and his mother were engaged in before their deaths was one of violence (the act of sacrificing a rooster made of flour) they were reborn as animals (in the care of Yaśomati, Yaśodhara's son, now king). Yaśodhara and his mother go through countless incarnations as animals because of their continued engagement in violence – spawned by jealousy, anger, and revenge. The story ends with Yaśodhara and Candramatī, now chickens, overhearing Jain doctrine from a yogi instructing the chickens' keeper on the precepts of Jainism. Realizing that their past actions have brought them much suffering through endless rebirths as animals, the chickens “crow” out of happiness of having finally been ‘awakened’ to the reality of existence.

“At that moment,” says Chapple, “Yaśodhara's son Yaśomati boasts to his wife that he could kill both chickens with a single arrow. Upon their death, Yaśodhara and his mother enter the womb of Yaśomati's wife and are eventually reborn as twins” (2006: 243). Yaśodhara and Candramatī's encounter with Jain doctrine allowed them to be reborn into a more positive incarnation – namely, a human one. Yaśomati's story, however, goes on. He continues to act in violent ways (e.g., hunting), until one day he encounters a Jain sage who recounts to him the past lives of his twins (formerly his father and his grandmother). The sage tells Yaśomati that the “misadventures [of his twin children] were prompted by the sacrifice of a rooster made of flour. The king [Yaśomati] embraces the Jaina faith. The twins grow up to be great renouncers, and convince an entire kingdom to give up animal sacrifice. Eventually, having taken their final monastic vows, they fast to death and attain a heavenly state” (*ibid*, 243) and are thus reborn into yet another positive embodiment.

This Jain narrative focuses on the interrelationship between the three characters of Yaśodhara, Yaśomati, and Candramatī, and demonstrates how ignorance born out of jealousy, revenge, and anger leads to endless rebirths – often in animal form. Indeed, this Jain tale of adultery and revenge indicates just how difficult it is for an individual soul to escape *samsara* once it has been reincarnated within an animal body. Surely, this is made evident in Yaśodhara’s incarnation as a peacock, a mongoose, a fish, a goat, and finally as a chicken. Nevertheless, Yaśodhara does eventually incarnate as a human being and becomes a great renouncer. The moral of the story, namely, “He who carelessly effects the killing of *one* living being will wander aimlessly on earth through many a rebirth,” (Granoff in Chapple 2006: 243) points to the difficulty in avoiding violent acts if one is careless in one’s actions. As previously mentioned, souls that become ever more burdened by karmic dust will become ever more ignorant of the fact that their actions are violent.

The tale therefore points to the difficulty of escaping animal life once a soul is born into the animal realm, since there is an extreme amount of violence present in the natural world. Yaśodhara and his mother endured six animal rebirths before becoming human again. “In none of these instances, except perhaps when they were chickens, did these animals rise above their basest instincts.... Their plight, while it reminds the hearer of the tale of the preciousness of human birth, in no way valorizes or sentimentalizes the animal realm. Instead it serves to underscore the inviolability of the law of *karma*” (Chapple 2006: 244). Though the Jain narrative of Yaśodhara points to an obvious feeling of empathy for souls trapped in animal bodies, which is apparent in the warning it makes against committing violent acts in order to avoid such misery in endless animal rebirths, it also points to the fact that animals are associated with the violent world of nature. Thus, it is not surprising that Jain vows traditionally emphasized avoidance of the natural world.

### **Quarantining<sup>9</sup> Life**

Jainism possesses a strict code of conduct for its renouncers and for its lay followers, each based

on five vows. The renouncers' vows are called the *Mahavratas* (Great Vows) and the vows of the laity, which are modeled after the Great Vows, are called *Anuvratas* (Lesser Vows). The central vow of *ahimsa* (non-violence) informs all the other vows: namely, *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-stealing), *aparigraha* (non-possession), and *brahmacarya* (celibacy). Its elaboration will provide the reader with an idea of the traditional Jain understanding of how human beings should be relating to animals, which includes the environment.

It is the violence associated with the natural world that has, according to Jain scholars, led Mahāvīra to link the five great vows with the description of life-forms (Dundas 2002: 158). “Irrespective of the history of their origin or development, the Great Vows are accepted by the *Śvetāmbaras* and *Digambaras* alike as lying at the heart of Mahāvīra’s ethical teachings and a discussion of them is necessary to understand the restrictions which bound the Jain ascetic’s life and fully bring about the state of homelessness for him or her” (*ibid*, 158). Related to Jain karma theory, the five great vows inform the ascetic’s relationship with lower and higher forms of life. Indeed, an ascetic must avoid all forms of life, which informs all aspects of his/her life. It is vital for an ascetic to avoid harm to higher forms of life (e.g., living beings with five-senses), but it is the attention to the simple sensed beings which defines the ascetic path. An ascetic must therefore never ingest root crops, such as onions and potatoes, because there is still a great amount of unnecessary violence in doing so. Root crops, which grow in the soil, are avoided because of harm implicated in uprooting these vegetables from the soil, which is filled with innumerable one-sensed living beings.

Ideally, a Jain ascetic should not eat if he or she is to avoid any and all kinds of karmic influxes caused by action. Non-violence (*ahimsa*) after all is not associated with actively promoting peace within the Jain tradition. Rather, it is a concept associated with non-action (Laidlaw 1995: 155). Certainly, if one does not move, one does not eat, if one does not eat, one does not perform excretory functions, and so on. Nevertheless, as human beings, ascetics must necessarily travel, though within a limited space, eat, though with stringent rules about diet, and perform excretory functions for which there are specific rules. In addition, the body is seen as a gift, or rather a tool, that can be used to aid the ascetic in getting out of

*samsara*, for it is only with a body that a soul with “right view” can undertake the necessary practices to achieve this. Thus, nourishing the body is important. Indeed, the longer the body of the ascetic lives, the longer the soul has to take advantage of its human incarnation in order to perform the necessary austere actions required to burn off karma.

Since every living being, including minute one-sensed beings (e.g., *nigodas*), must be avoided by ascetics in order to abstain from committing violence, it is not surprising that the Jain community has also emphasized an important role for its lay followers. Indeed, laypersons have allowed renunciants to avoid being implicated in the violence that is committed in killing even one-sensed beings through the practice of Jain almsgiving. In fact, traditional Jain doctrine, as we shall see shortly, has clearly been taken into consideration in this symbolic act of the renunciatory ideal, since the wandering ascetic is said to *never* encourage killing minute beings, such as vegetables, and even the minute beings living in water, for themselves. Rather, the ascetic appears uninvited on the doorstep of the layperson who thereby has the opportunity to demonstrate his or her adherence to the Jain ideal by renouncing food that would have been consumed by his or her family had the ascetic not visited them. Indeed, if the food is prepared for the ascetic, this would implicate him or her in the violent act and, therefore, result in the influx of karmic matter onto his or her soul.

Consequently, because of the ever-present potential for harming others and for being harmed oneself, worldly life, according to Jain scriptures, is ultimately unsatisfactory. It is tragic because it is full of pain and suffering. Thus, since no living being wishes to experience such suffering, “a uniquely forceful message [of avoiding doing harm] which shaped and defined a Jain ascetic culture... [was] regarded as bringing about quiescence of the senses and the workings of the body and eventual deliverance” for all (Dundas 1992: 161). Vowing to always tell the truth, to never steal, to renounce attachment, and to abstain from sexual intercourse were deemed to be the remedy to this forlorn existence because they ensured minimal engagement with the world. Since the goal behind these vows is to restrict action in order to avoid accruing karma, good (*punya*) and bad (*paap*), the actions that are

committed must be pure in thought and speech. Jaini states, “The purpose of assuming the mahāvratas is to reduce to a minimum the sphere and frequency of activities that would otherwise generate the influx of karmas and the rise of fresh passions” (1998: 247). Meaningless speech, such as telling a lie, must be avoided because, while any form of action is violence, actions that harm others will necessarily create greater harm for oneself.

Non-action in the world thus requires “extreme control of the senses” and “extreme mindfulness” (*ibid*, 247). The five great vows observed by the initiated ascetic, all of which are related to each other, are extended by the concepts of the three restraints (*guptis*) and the five rules of conduct (*samitis*). In accepting the realities of Jain existence (outlined at the start of the chapter) the Jain monk or nun must take the *appropriate* action in limiting action. He or she must gradually reduce the “activities of mind, body and speech” (*ibid*, 247). Just thinking about harming life, about lying, or stealing, or having sexual intercourse, results in the influx of karma for the ascetic. The renunciant must therefore approach the world in a state of equanimity (*sāmāyika*) - neither with of desire (*rāga*) nor attachment (*dveṣa*). Nothing must affect him or her negatively or positively, for this would result in the fermentation of passions. Indeed, the five *samitis*,<sup>10</sup> or careful actions, train the body to progress towards a state of composure and calmness and, therefore, of almost complete stasis whereby death is the ultimate form of non-action.

Before the end of his/her embodied state (e.g., before dying), the ascetic aims to burn off the karma that is already forming his or her present body and stop any further karma from adhering itself to his or her soul. The ascetic must burn the residual karmic dirt with the fires of “tapas” (austerities) - thus reinforcing my earlier point that the body is, in fact, a useful tool on the ascetic’s path to liberation (Dundas 2002: 165). Monitoring every single action (*samitis*) one commits is certainly part of these austere practices, but the ascetic must, in addition to this, mortify the body and thin out the karmic matter to get to pure soul. Thus, “fasting, reduction of food intake,<sup>11</sup> deliberately making the process of seeking alms difficult for oneself, giving up... flavour to one’s food... solitude, and performing bodily mortification [such as pulling out one’s hair],” are six of the external obligatory actions of the ascetic (*ibid*, 166).

Furthermore, the renunciant must shed the more subtle forms of karmic matter, which are associated with mind. The internal austerities of diminution of egocentricity, atonement (*pratikramana*), showing respect for ascetic superiors, study and reflection, giving up personal attachments, and meditation are the six internal obligatory actions that are performed in order to do just this (*ibid*, 166). By quieting the mind and the body from karmic influences, the renunciant, in a state of equanimity, can follow the path to liberation. *Ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya*, and *aparigraha* are therefore vows of non-action. They are ascetic vows concerned with what “not to do”; they define a “via negativa” (Chapple 2006: 248). We will later see in the chapter on Neo-Orthodox and Diaspora Jains, that these vows are dramatically reinterpreted as committing the Jain to social engagement and wellbeing.<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, this reinterpretation of the five great vows of ascetics is not only a modern phenomena - it has occurred many times within traditional Jain ideology. As Dundas asserts, the increased interaction of ascetics and laity during the monsoon (*caturmas*) season in the medieval period led to a shift in the definition of vows (1992: 173). Ascetics could not engage in wandering and begging for alms during the rainy season because the life-imbued drops of rain falling on their bodies would cause them to accrue karma. Intention was not in the vocabulary of worldly renunciation - whether an ascetic intentionally or unintentionally harmed a living being, he or she would accrue the karma for the action. With increased laicization of the tradition, however, the emphasis shifted to intentionality. Dundas states: “If the general tenor of the most ancient portions of the *Śvetāmbara* scriptural canon was uncompromisingly to regard all acts of violence, whether performed, caused or approved, as the same, Umāsvati, reflecting a somewhat less intense atmosphere, provided what has become the standard definition of violence (*hiṃsā*) as the removal of life through a *careless* action of mind, body or speech” (*ibid*, 161-62). This was certainly an important shift within the Jain tradition, for it allowed for more freedom to engage with the world - especially amongst laypersons. It also emphasized “care” and “intent” of the action.

The shift that occurred in the definition of vows is a shift that was experienced by both sectarian groups (*Śvetāmbara*/*Digāmbara*) and their sub-sects. The vows for the layperson (e.g., those who do not

renounce) are the same as the ascetics, but with less emphasis on non-action and with more attention on *action with care*. Today, a Jain layperson can therefore cook, clean, garden, drive a car, as long as he or she avoids “unnecessary” violence, such as eating meat. An effective way to understand the Orthodox Jain ethos of avoidance in relation to the non-human environment is to examine the traditional Jain relationship with food as acted out in Jain almsgiving.

### **The Flesh of the Plant is Good to Eat: Pure Food for the Pure Soul**

In her essay “The Jain Plate: The Semiotics of the Diaspora Diet,” Valley discusses nonviolence (*ahimsa*) in terms of the Jain *mokṣa-marga* ideal. She asserts, “elaborate practices of non-violence are not so much about minimizing death or saving life as about keeping life “at bay” and essentially amount to an attempt at the avoidance of life” (2004: 12). Thus, in order to avoid life, all that is with soul (*jīva*) must be rendered without soul (*ajīva*) before consumption. In other words, all that is alive must be dead before ingestion, since consummation of a being that is with soul, or alive, would result in greater karmic burden. In traditional Jain doctrine, this rule of rendering a life-form “dead” by boiling or cooking it prior to ingestion is limited to one-sensed (e.g., water, vegetables, fruit) beings, since consuming living beings with more than one sense is prohibited in Jainism. Of course, since ascetics must never commit any violent act, this task of rendering living beings into “dead matter” (*ajīva*) is left to the householder. The layperson, after all, is permitted to commit some forms of “necessary” violence, though this must also be restrained because not all life-forms are permitted for consumption.

The ingestion of a living being that has not been boiled, cooked, or, in some cases (e.g., bananas), peeled, would be deemed a careless action according to traditional Jain doctrine and would therefore result in the influx of more karma than if the living being were boiled, cooked, or peeled before consumption. Moreover, as mentioned above, under no circumstances is it acceptable to intentionally take the life of a being possessing more than one sense. Jains are therefore unequivocally vegetarian. According to Dundas, “it is no exaggeration to say that food is a potentially dangerous substance for the

pious Jain. Strict and precisely defined vegetarianism, then, is the most tangible social expression of adherence to the doctrine of non-violence [as traditionally defined] and the most significant marker of Jain identity” (1992: 177). For all Jains, then, vegetarianism is the social expression of the renunciation of violence.

In a world (e.g., India) where vegetarianism is part and parcel of social identity, what makes the Jain diet unique is their additional restrictions that extend far beyond the abstention of meat. For instance, the relinquishment of root crops and fruits containing several seeds, as well as the avoidance of eating after dark when small beings might inadvertently be ingested, points to a uniquely *Jain* vegetarian diet.

As Jaini asserts,

To perceive the violence supposedly inherent in partaking of the other prohibited foods [e.g., vegetables, fruits, alcohol, honey], we must recall the Jain belief in *nigoda*, the myriad single-sensed creatures which inhabit almost every corner of the universe. Such creatures are said to be especially prevalent in substances where fermentation or sweetness is present.... The tissues of certain plants, especially those of a sweet, fleshy, or seed-filled nature, are also thought to serve as hosts for the *nigoda* (1979: 168).

Indeed, it is this belief in the *nigoda*, or single-sensed living being, which inhabits all the earth, that most defines the ways in which Orthodox Jain doctrine defines “who is a Jain” and how a Jain must relate to this world. In fact, not only is it forbidden to eat “fleshy” vegetables and fruits because of the presence of innumerable single-sensed beings in their fleshy bodies, but the uprooting of, say, potatoes and carrots, also causes unnecessary violence to single-sensed beings residing in the earth, which too must be avoided.

The reasoning behind avoiding these particular foods is, of course, related to the logic of a soteriological tradition which maintains that ingesting these fruits and vegetables would result in the killing of innumerable life-forms. As previously mentioned, such an act of violence would add a mass of karmic substance over the soul and, therefore, submerge it into ignorance. Root crops and seeded fruits, though they are one-sensed beings, are believed to contain more life (*jīvas*) than vegetables growing above the earth and seedless fruits. They are therefore prohibited (*abhakṣya*) to the pious Jain. Indeed, what one eats and does not eat reveals the social mores that are accorded most importance through this consumption and renunciation of food. “For Jains, diet *is* the locus for constructing and expressing an

ethical way-of-being in the world” (Vallely 2004: 7). Thus, the traditional Jain way-of-being in the world is described in the *mokṣa-marga*. This is particularly clear in the way in which Jain ideology describes how laypeople and ascetics must interact with each other through the giving and taking of food.

### **Jain Almsgiving: Gastro-Politics and the Non-Human Environment**

Jain doctrine permits those who live “in the world” to engage in some acts of necessary violence for their own survival and for the survival of the Jain tradition. Without the laity’s willingness to remain in the world, the ascetic order would surely come to an end, for the renunciants have taken the great vows (*mahavrata*s) which restrict them from engagement with the world and from committing any kind of violence. This therefore prevents ascetics from preparing food for themselves. The violence in food preparation exists for householders, but it is considered to be minimal. Interestingly, for this reason, the Jain woman’s kitchen is primarily a site of purity – of “humanity” rather than “nature” – a site that nourishes the family and the ascetic. It is also the site which permits both laypersons and ascetics to interact with each other and to act out the Jain ideal of renunciation. In effect, the moral purity of the lay donor is essential in Jain almsgiving (*baharana/gocarī*), since the ascetic will not take food from any householder that has not observed the essential doctrine of *ahiṃsa*, or “non-violence” towards all living beings (Jaini 1979: 9-10). Certainly, an ascetic would not take food from someone who was karmically impure.

Jain ideology still emphasizes the need for a pure donor since, if this were not the case, the “giver” would tarnish the purity of the gift and, therefore, the recipient’s purity (see Mauss 1967). Torkel Brekke writes, “In order not to accept there must be some fault in the giver or in the gift that makes the giving valueless or harmful” (1998: 298). Thus, if the renunciant accepts the gift, it provides the layperson with the “opportunity to give [which] is at the same time an opportunity to invest in the future for the donor” (*ibid*, 298). Basically, in order to avoid the accumulation of karma (whether “good” or “bad”), which would result in the bondage of the soul in *samsara*, the renouncer must be assured that

the food, the clothes, and the utensils, provided to them by the householders, have followed the norms of Jain nonviolence.

Householders gain honor and prestige, as well as other-worldly merit, from their charitable donations to wandering ascetics. A layperson, after all, is not focused on achieving the ideal of liberation since he or she “continually experiences to his [or her] detriment the pull of familial and social ties” (Dundas 1992: 151). Householders are, however, very important actors in the Jain *mokṣa-marga*. In fact, “the use of the term *saṅgha*, ‘assembly’ or ‘community’, to include both ascetics and laity points to an acceptance of their interdependent relationship and shared aspiration to an ideal goal, however distant it might be [especially for the layperson]” (*ibid*, 151). Though Jain almsgiving is an essential part of the householder’s daily routine, since it is included in the conventional layperson’s daily duties,<sup>13</sup> it is also, as previously mentioned, a practice which allows the Jain layperson to accumulate merit (good karma).

Even though Jain householders and Jain ascetics assert that there is no gift in Jain almsgiving (*baharana/gocarī*), since gift-giving to ascetics would necessarily imply that the renunciants were involved in the violence of killing one-sensed beings, this is merely a performance of the ascetic ideals of *aparigraha* (detachment) and *ahiṃsā* (non-violence). In effect, Orthodox Jain doctrine denies the existence of this-worldly interests on the part of both *characters* in Jain *baharana/gocarī*. Thus, this acted out symbol of *duty* and *restraint*, which promotes the ideal over the real, is demonstrative of the tensions that exist between the worldly and the other-worldly in a tradition that aims towards a “quarantine of life” (Laidlaw 1995: 153) in a world that is indubitably overpopulated with life.

This tension between worldly and other-worldly merit, in the Jain soteriological tradition, is brought to the foreground by the theatrical sacrifices through self-abnegation on the part of both donor and receiver through the medium of the gift of food. Indeed, as Valley asserts, householders and ascetics are physical manifestations of the difference between the worldly and the other-worldly (2002: 56). She asserts that, though ideally there should be no expectance of merit on the part of the donor, householders have informed her that the giving of alms to renunciants would “benefit them karmically” (Valley in Wiley 2006: 447). For the most part, householders justify their will to earn *punya* (good karma) by the

fact that human beings are currently living in a corrupt world age (e.g., the *kaliyuga*), whereby *mokṣa* or liberation is not possible (Vallely 2002: 56). Thus, the authority provided to the lay path (in the decades following Mahavira), has resulted in an emphasis among the laity on being reborn into a heavenly realm (and not on *mokṣa*) where souls can enjoy the blissful rewards of their selfless charity.

### ***Turning the Sacrifice Inwards: The Burning Flame of Tapas***

Natubhai Shah discusses the way in which sacrifice is conventionally understood in the Jain tradition. He states that the Jain understanding of sacrifice arose from a disdain towards the “priestly exploitation and ritualism” of Brahmanism, as well as from a condemning attitude towards the animal sacrifices of the Vedic era in the sixth century BCE (1998: 154). Thus, in similar fashion to Upanishadic Hinduism, and, more specifically, the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* (Brekke 1998: 304), Orthodox Jainism rejected the outward blood sacrifices of the Vedic tradition and sought to turn the sacrifice “inwards.” Practices such as meditation, fasting, and almsgiving replaced what was deemed to be excessive brutality towards living beings. According to Parry, “*dān* [e.g., almsgiving] was a substitute for [Vedic] sacrifice” (in Babb 1996: 187), and so, as is argued in several theories of sacrifice, a more symbolic form replaced the literal slaughter at the sacrificial altar.

The ritually prescribed enactment or performance of alms collection, whereby renunciation and, thus, self-abnegation, are demonstrated, is an example of the Jain value of interiorized sacrifice. Though he does not deal directly with Jainism in his work on Greek sacrifice, Jean-Pierre Vernant argues that “man is a “belly” or a “slave of the belly”.... Like animals, men must kill, eat, and procreate in order to survive” (2008: 59, 74). It is this animal nature of humanity (summed up in the Jain concept of desire or “*rāga*” – which includes the desire to eat) that ideological Jainism tries to suppress with its emphasis on non-action and renunciation. Furthermore, Vernant argues that the cooking of food is similar, if not exactly the same, as placing offerings in the sacrificial fire (*ibid*, 38-43). Hence, it is interesting to extrapolate from this argument and assert that lay Jains, mostly women, present their offerings in the

sacrificial oven or boiling pot, as well as in the burning bellies of ascetics during almsgiving, while Jain ascetics self-sacrifice by demonstrating restraint in response to lay charity and to their burning bellies. As Dundas states: “The heat (*tapas*) of the sacrificial fire is insignificant compared to the heat generated by the austerity (*tapas*) which remoulds life and destiny” (Dundas 2002: 15-16). Quoting the *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra*, Dundas makes it even clearer that the heat created through pangs of hunger through fasting and other austerities has replaced the heat of the sacrificial fire: “Austerity is my sacrificial fire, my life is the place where the fire is kindled. Mental and physical efforts are my ladle for the oblation and my body is the dung fuel for the fire, my actions my firewood. I offer up an oblation praised by the wise seers consisting of my restraint, effort and calm” (*ibid*, 15). Thus, the gift of food, which can in no way be prepared for the specific intent of giving to renunciants, is central to both the lay and the ascetic performance of self-sacrifice and, thus, to the very public assertion that *mokṣa* remains the ideal.

### ***Karma-Inducing Diet: Renouncing to Receive***

Though lay persons will often deny that they undertake the essential duty of almsgiving for any kind of personal gain, giving alms to a Jain renouncer is said to result in the accumulation of good karma (*puṇya*). Yet, salvation is still the ultimate goal. In fact, almsgiving is thought to “bring one closer to salvation” (Jaini 1979: 228) because it results in the influx of *good* karma, which guarantees rebirth in a body that is not weighed down by “heavy” karmic matter - a result of accruing *bad* karma. As Long asserts, “to give, for a layperson, is a kind of mental purification, a mini-renunciation in preparation for the ultimate renunciation for which the layperson hopes eventually to be ready - if not in this life, then in a future rebirth” (2005: 11). With the absence of negative karma, the individual soul is guaranteed to not be reborn into lower forms of life that are, as we have seen above, very much occluded by karmic dirt and passion and, therefore, ignorant of the realities of existence.

Nonetheless, a Jain householder would acknowledge the fact that they are still very much living

within the world, and that they cannot, and indeed should not, attempt to completely renounce their social life until they have reached a certain point in their spiritual progress. As previously asserted, “Jain tradition provides a set of five vows which a lay person may adopt. These are the five *anuvrats*, or ‘lesser restraints.’ They are homonymous with, but in application quite distinct from, the five *mahavrats*, or ‘great restraints,’ which all Jain renunciators take as the final and in theory irreversible stage of their initiation” (Laidlaw 1995: 173). The duty of householders, therefore, is to devote their lives, as much as possible, to the ascetic ideal. One of the ways in which they demonstrate their dedication to this ideal is through the renunciation of food during almsgiving, which they have, in theory, not prepared for the monks and nuns. In fact, “Jain renunciators are not collecting leftovers. This is why they must collect alms before lay families eat. The food they would take would have been eaten by the family, who are therefore renouncing (*tyag*) part of their meal” (Laidlaw 2000: 619). Of course, the food is often prepared for the ascetics, but what is important here is that a householder’s “Jainness” is accentuated by his or her relinquishment of part of their family dinner.

Nevertheless, householders are not “full-time ascetics” (Long 2005: 4). Ascetics need the worldly laypersons for physical sustenance, which certainly suggests that they are not completely otherworldly, and yet during the rite of almsgiving, Jains, both lay and ascetic, do engage in a kind of theatrical assertion depicting the ascetics as “out of this world.” Laypersons remain and engage in the world by choice, hoping that in their next bodily incarnation they will be able to take on the role of the ascetic, which is certainly beneficial for the community of monks and nuns who depend on the householders to commit necessary acts of violence over the sacrificial stove.

Householders take it upon themselves to transform the living souls (*jīvas*) of one-sensed beings into dead matter (*ajīva*), which leads to both the accumulation of good and bad karma. The killing of the lower life-forms draws *paap*, while the giving to the worthy recipient draws *punya*. The killing of a living being, in this case, is actually deemed to be beneficial for the householder because, as previously stated, he or she acts as if he or she were an ascetic by giving part of the dinner away as a charitable donation to renunciators. Their donation to a “worthy recipient,” to use Mauss’ (1967) terminology, whose

austerity (*tapas*) “burns” karma, further ascertains the ideal of world renunciation through the dramatic display of restraint on the part of both parties.

The householder’s “persistence enables the renouncer to exercise exemplary restraint, and yet still emerge with enough to eat” (Laidlaw 2000: 626). In effect, by *persisting*, the householder is acting out the ethos of renunciation and encouraging the ascetic to do the same. The householder and the renunciant physically manifest the complementary tension that exists between the worldly and the other-worldly – with the emphasis being ascribed to reaching the other-worldly goal of liberation. As Valley asserts, “Through the ritual of alms-giving and alms-taking, renunciation is performed daily, and the roles of the ascetic and householder are reinforced, and in fact, created through it” (2002: 48). Essentially, the layperson depends on the austerity of the renouncer, since the severity of the austerity and restraint demonstrated in the alms-round will dictate the efficacy of the sacrificial flame within his or her belly. The greater the restraint displayed by the ascetic, the greater the merit afforded to the layperson in his or her insistence on his or her own renunciation of food.

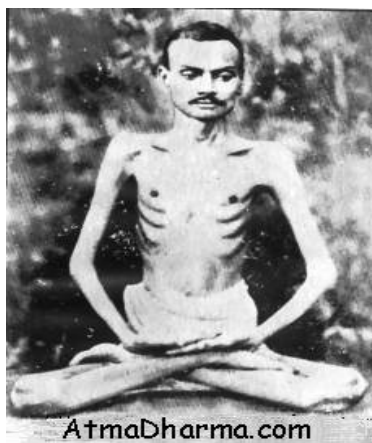
### ***Karma-Reducing Diet: Receiving to Renounce***

Unlike Jain householders, renunciants do not wish to accrue good karma in order to be reborn in heaven or in any other meritorious form. Rather, ascetics seek to liberate themselves from the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. This necessarily obliges them to follow the ascetic ideal to its fullest extent. Long asserts that, “the function of Jain asceticism is to create an environment that is inhospitable to karmic fruition, but that can lead, rather, to the destruction of karma” (2005: 9). The ascetic must make sure that his or her soul is a dry wall without passions, therefore discouraging the adherence of karma to it. Consequently, the ascetic receives to renounce, rather than renouncing to receive, during Jain almsgiving. “The metaphor [that] is often used... [is that] of “cooking” the seeds of karma in the fires of asceticism (*tapas*) so that they cannot grow or bear fruit” (*ibid*, 9). Thus, while the householder cooks to gain merit from the thing given, he or she, in turn, kindles the fire within the belly of the ascetic in his or

her demonstration of restraint in the face of charity.<sup>14</sup>

Jain almsgiving is a powerful enactment of the ideal of world (and nature) renunciation. Indeed, the *sādhus* and *sādhvīs* enter into character during the Jain alms-round, which is facilitated by the householder's excessive giving. Laypersons and renunciants enter into their opposite, yet complementary, roles during *baharana/gocarī*. Of course, this kind of "acting" is not limited to the alms-round, for monks and nuns often engage in additional rigorous ascetic practices aimed at increasing the intensity of the very literal and physical sensation of hunger, as well as the figurative flame within their bellies, which burns away karma. "The aspirant may fast (*anaśana*) for extended periods.... He [or she] may limit to four or five the number of houses to be visited on begging rounds... thereby making it unlikely that he [or she] will receive his [or her] daily ration" (Jaini 1979: 251). What is interesting about the Jain alms-round and the aforementioned list of austerities - a list which is more extensive than the list provided here - is that they revolve around food and, thus, the non-human environment. The "burning belly" of the ascetic, which is demonstrative of his or her restraint from engaging with the natural world through food, reduces his or her karmic and physical body (image below). Certainly, "sacrifice" or self-abnegation is written on the body of the renunciant.

**Figure 3. Writing the *Mokṣa-Marga* on the Body - Rajchandra<sup>15</sup>**



It is interesting to add to this discussion by focusing on the question of the animal in this context. In Jainism, an animal is one who is dominated by appetites, who shows no restraint. A lion who stalks his prey, or, to put it otherwise, who lives a life “red in tooth and claw,” is certainly far from representative of the Jain ideal of non-violence. When I was in India, I had the opportunity to discuss this issue of animal “appetites” and violence with Manish Modi, a Mumbai-based Jain publisher, scholar, and activist. In particular, I was curious about a Jain depiction of a lion and a cow drinking from the same urn of water (image below). The image naturally recalled for me the Biblical image of the lion and the lamb, which is so commonly used as a visual symbol of peace in the Western tradition. I wondered if the Jain image was communicating a similar aspiration for future wellbeing. I queried Manish Modi who explained it this way:

**Figure 4. Non-Violent Animals<sup>16</sup>**



We Jains believe in the supremacy and the efficacy of non-violence. We worship the Jinas, who were the personification of non-violence and supreme detachment. It is believed that because the Jinas were so completely free of all forms of violence, persons who came in contact with them also imbibed their qualities. Hence, when the lion and the cow, lying on different levels of the food chain, came under the influence of the Jina’s teachings, they felt completely non-violent and therefore could drink water from one urn, without hurting or harming each other (Manish Modi, personal communication).

Interestingly, the lion is of a golden hue, which often suggests specialness and, in South Asian traditions, often suggests enlightened knowledge, but he is only “special” because, as Manish Modi asserts in the quote above, he has imbibed the qualities of the *Jina*, and thus overcome his animal nature. Restraint, in other words, is almost always alien to an animal’s nature. It is the strength of the human incarnation that,

according to Jainism, should never be squandered.

Returning to our discussion of restraint and sacrifice in the Jain case, the denial of worldly hunger is done through the ritualized give and take of alms. Ideally, “renouncers should not eat,” but, in reality, they must eat. Thus, their humanity becomes a burden in their pursuance of asceticism to its fullest extent, which explains the emphasis within Jain doctrine on the avoidance of the gift of food. Certainly, this demonstration of restraint in the face of lay charity relieves the omnipresent tension between the worldliness of their bellies and their other-worldly goals. The tension between living in the world and other-worldly goals is therefore apparent in the act of Jain almsgiving. This daily routine of ascetics and householders in India foregrounds all the central cornerstones of the “organic whole” that is Jainism (Long 2005: 4). The cooking fire of the householder and the burning belly of the renouncer, which occur through the medium of food, encapsulates the most basic soteriological principles of the Jain tradition.

The *mokṣa-marga* ideology, however, does not lack compassion for non-human persons and the non-human environment. Though Jain principles, practices, and diet may emphasize an avoidance or a “quarantine” of life, rather than engagement with it, these ideals of doctrine and practice are also joined by the obligatory practice of atonement (*pratikramana*), and a more positive definition of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence). While the emphasis in Orthodox Jainism is not on the suffering caused to the animal, but rather on the soul that has been tainted by such violence, the by-product of this kind of thinking necessarily results in better treatment of sentient non-human others. As hitherto indicated, the considerable power accorded to laypersons, due to increased contact between lay and ascetic groups during the monsoon season, has led to a vigorous and legitimate adaptation of the *mokṣa-marga* ideology for the layperson. Rather than having as a goal the attainment of *kevalajñāna*, the layperson is required to *act* morally in the world in keeping with Jain precepts. As demonstrated with the example of the Jain alms-round, lay people prioritize the accruing, and therefore influx (*āsrava*) of *good* karma in order to guarantee a positive rebirth in either the human or celestial realms. As Cort asserts, “The goal of this realm, to the extent that it is at all goal-oriented, is a state of harmony with and satisfaction in the world, a

state in which one's social, moral, and spiritual interactions and responsibilities are properly balanced" (2001: 7). Essentially, the focus of the laity, to use Cort's rather useful distinction, is on "wellbeing" rather than "liberation."

This adaptation and lay application of Jain ideals certainly moves away from the very rigid boundary set between the purer body of the human being and the impure bodies of non-human animals and the environment. Though the concern still remains one of karmic influx and the shedding of karmic particles, the shift from traditional Jain ideology of the Jain ascetic to the ethical ideal of lay Jains paved the way for the eventual emergence among Diaspora Jains to further emphasize the need to engage with social issues. "*Ahiṃsā*, if negative in form," says Dundas, "is also interpreted within Jain tradition in strongly positive terms as involving such qualities as friendship, goodwill and peace which manifest themselves through gentleness and lack of passion" (2002: 161). A discussion of how *ahiṃsa* (nonviolence) as a positive principle manifests itself among lay Jains in Indian animal shelters is therefore in order.

### **Spiritual Compassion and Jain Animal Sanctuaries**

While compassion (*anukampā*) is not lacking in the traditional soteriological ideal of Jainism, the soteriological ideal is also never completely remote from Orthodox Jain understandings of compassion. "This awareness," says Jaini, "of the basic worth of all beings [in terms of their souls], and of one's kinship with them, generates a feeling of great compassion... for others. Whereas the compassion felt by an ordinary man is tinged with pity or with attachment to its object, *anukampā* is free of such negative aspects; it develops purely from wisdom, from seeing the substance (*dravya*) that underlies visible modes, and it fills the individual with an unselfish desire to help other souls towards *mokṣa*" (1979: 150). Hence, as is evident in Jaini's words, though the animal body is perceived in a negative light, other souls in human form must aid and encourage animals on the path to liberation. However, human beings must never interfere in the karmically informed path of the animal.

As previously mentioned, the *mokṣa-marga* is a path that must be walked alone. The burning flame of tapas of the ascetic, which burns away karma, must also be allowed to follow its course in the suffering animal. In other words, from a standpoint of deep empathy for souls trapped in the karmically imbued bodies of animals, letting an animal suffer is, in effect, deemed to be beneficial for the animal (Chapple 2006: 247) since it allows the living being to perform austere bodily practices that it could not otherwise perform. Thus, by letting the animal undergo physical pain, the Orthodox Jain is actually reducing the amount of times that the soul within the animal will be reborn into the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. *Parasparopagraho jīvānām*, which translates as “all beings support each other,” essentially points to the fact that “we are all in this mess together because we create this mess together through violent actions” (my translation). Thus, the soteriological ideal within Jainism focuses more so on the spiritual perfectibility of the soul of other life-forms rather than on alleviating the bodily suffering of the non-human - an issue which receives much criticism by “Eco-Conscious” and mainly young Diaspora Jains.

Nonetheless, the practice of demonstrating compassion towards animals, in the Jain sense of “spiritual” compassion for the soul or the essence of the animal, is, indeed, very old. Basing his research on the work of Deryck Lodrick, Chapple (2006: 246) examines the history of animal shelters in India and asserts that one English merchant by the name of Ralph Fitch described the existence of a *pinjrapole* in 1583 CE. It is unclear whether it was indeed members of the Jain community that erected and controlled this animal shelter, but it is most likely the case since they are and were the wealthiest minority group in India who also propounded sympathy and compassion for all living beings. To this day, *pinjrapoles* (animal sanctuaries) and *goshalas* (cow shelters) are a fundamental feature of the Jain landscape. Vilas Sangave, an eminent Jain scholar, describes how *pinjrapoles* are an essential aspect in the lay Jain adherence to the vow of charity and nonviolence: “Along with the dispensaries for men [medicine, rest-houses, etc], the Jainas conducted special institutions known as *Pinjarāpolas* for the protection and care of helpless and decrepit animals and birds. In unusual times of flood and famine these *pinjarāpolas* carry out various activities for animal protection. There is hardly any town or village of Gujarat or Rajasthan,

where a *pinjarāpola* is not present in some form or other” (1999: 158).

Animals in these shelters are provided with care, which is said to offer *punya*, or good karma, to the lay Jains who care for them. As Dundas asserts, “it was consistently accepted that a particularly efficacious way of gaining honour and reputation, and thus greater prosperity, was to direct one’s wealth outwards as religious giving (*dāna*) in the form of expenditure upon the construction and upkeep of temples... [and] the financing of communal festivals and the endowment of animal hospitals, the latter being a tangible sign of commitment to non-violence” (1992: 197). Nonetheless, though Jains may provide funding and care for animals in order to gain merit and, thus, a positive rebirth, the by-product in regards to the treatment of animals at these shelters is, for the most part, a positive one. Indeed, animals in *pinjrapoles* benefit from the Orthodox Jain requirement of compassion and charity. Animals are given food, water, and shelter. They are protected from famine and from the unforgiving elements of the Indian landscape. However, in keeping with the soteriological ideal, predatory animals are not admitted into shelters (Chapple 2006: 248) because they are so far removed from representing the ideal of non-violence in Jainism. They are also never admitted into shelters since, if they were to commit any act of violence by harming any other animal at the *pinjrapole*, the individual or group of Jains who permitted this animal’s entry into the shelter would share the karmic burden of the animal’s violent action. As previously stated, Jains must not intentionally harm, encourage others to harm, or have others harm for oneself any living being.

Consequently, no matter what their condition may be, animals in *pinjrapoles* are never euthanized due to this ever-present belief that, first of all, killing will lead to the influx of karmic matter for the individual who commits the act and, secondly, that the animal, though in pain, still desires to live. Depriving the animal of life would be unethical from the Jain point of view, and furthermore it is believed that animals can burn off their karma through physical suffering. A suffering animal is said to be performing *tapas* in a similar fashion to the ascetic who mortifies his or her own body through fasting, rigorous pilgrimage, and pulling out his or her hair. “Practices at *pinjrapoles*, where a being is allowed to

live out the life span with which it was born and to die a natural death, are in accordance with a definition of *ahimsā* that includes non-interference [or avoidance] with a being's life force" (Wiley in Chapple 2006: 45). To interfere with the animal's suffering would, in actual fact, be *himsic* (violent) because it would delay the suffering animal's progress on the path to liberation.

The soteriological goal of laying stress on non-interference, or "quarantining life," is certainly apparent in this refusal to euthanize animals who are suffering. Yet, this does not mean that the traditional soteriological goal also propounds apathy towards animals. In effect, there is a feeling of deep empathy for all living beings trapped in *samsara* and, thus, a feeling of "care." Nonetheless, this chapter has demonstrated that Jainism traditionally propounds an ethos of "avoidance" rather than an ethos of "social activism" (Vallely in Chapple 2006: 212). Today, however, many Jains in India and in the diaspora are reinterpreting their tradition in dramatically new ways. They are interpreting their tradition using the socio-centric ideals of environmental and animal rights discourses. In the following chapter, it will be important to keep in mind that though Neo-Orthodox Jains in India and abroad, as well as Eco-Conscious Diaspora Jains, are promulgating an ethic much closer to that of Western animal rights and environmental discourse, it does not mean that traditional Jain ideals are, or should be, excluded from such discourses. Thus, in the second chapter, I demonstrate that the soteriological Jain tradition interweaves itself into contemporary Jain discussions on the environment, animals, and in what it means to be Jain today.

## CHAPTER 2

### Jainism and Ecology: Taking Jainism into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The mutual respect for all living beings in Jainism, which necessarily acknowledges the inherent worth of all forms of life, is, according to *sadhvi* Shilapi - a contemporary Śvetāmbara Jain nun - a concept first developed by Mahāvira. This twenty-fourth teacher of Jain doctrine, says Shilapi, “made a fundamental contribution to our understanding of ecology” (2006: 160). The latter quote by Shilapi demonstrates that Jains are constantly negotiating the boundaries between the “old” and the “new.” The melding of one of Jainism’s most recent and great cultural heroes, namely Mahāvira, with contemporary discourses on the environment is certainly indicative of this fact. Evidently, recent experiences with globalization, industrialization, urbanization and their effects on the environment have generated the need for new symbols and discourses amongst several religious and secular communities in order to provide a meaningful interpretation of the perceived suffering caused by these new developments.

Of course, not all developments, such as multimedia that allow for the expansion of communication worldwide, have been detrimental to the “green” cause. In fact, as it shall become apparent throughout the following discussion, Jains, both in the diaspora and in India, have made great use of the internet in order to encourage the education of Jain youth into the “true” ecological Jain tradition. For Jains, the ecological crisis has given rise to a re-evaluation of its traditional *mokṣa-marga* ideology, which, as we saw in the preceding chapter, entails complete renunciation of the world of matter and, therefore, of nature. This chapter seeks to explore the ways in which this re-evaluation is accomplished, and how these new understandings are being established and understood by Jains in India and abroad. Because distinct patterns within Jainism are evident, and overlap to a large degree with their geographical context, I explore what I have above referred to as Neo-Orthodox Jainism (as it is expressed in both the Indian and North American contexts) and Eco-Conscious Jainism, which mainly finds expression in the diaspora.

While the main aim of this chapter is to explore Neo-Orthodox and Eco-Conscious expressions of Jainism, I also seek to deconstruct preconceived and reified notions of “ecology,” and to explore the ways in which Jains understand this concept. Questions, such as ‘Who is an Ecologist? What does an ecologist look like? What are the ideals of ecology, and are these ideals purely Western,’ which are reminiscent of questions posed by postmodernist feminists in relation to “feminism,” are, indeed, relevant to this discussion. In fact, as Feminism is now understood in the plural as ‘feminisms,’ environmentalism is yet another “-ism” that too might best be understood as multifarious in nature, otherwise scholars are in danger of setting up, *apriori*, barriers to understanding culturally-specific uses of the concept. Jainism represents an important case in point, given that the tradition views itself as inherently and powerfully ecological, yet is typically regarded by Western scholars as not being so. Symbolic Anthropology, with its prioritizing of meaningfulness, would insist on the need to be open to the fact that a uniquely Jain notion of ecology does exist *for Jains* and learning to understand how Jains understand themselves this way is imperatively needed in order to allow for a constructive global dialogue on the various ways in which humans relate to the non-human world.

### **Neo-Orthodox and Eco-Conscious Jains: Redefining Jainism and Ecology**

According to Clifford Geertz, one of the most influential cultural anthropologists of the twentieth century, religious symbols and principles are those symbols and principles that take human beings out of the ordinary and mundane world and into an alternate, though not necessarily transcendental, plane of existence. They form part of “cultural patterns” that both shape and are shaped by reality (Geertz 1973: 93). In essence, religious symbols color the perspectives of individuals in terms of their everyday experiences. In addition, everyday experiences affect which religious symbols become personally meaningful and which principles inform one’s views. It is this fluid connection between reality as it is perceived and as it is lived that provides human beings with forms to a formless world and with meaning in an otherwise meaningless world. The interrelatedness of experienced reality and perceived reality is

explained by Geertz as “models of” and “models for” reality, respectively. Geertz states: “Unlike genes, and other nonsymbolic information sources, which are only models *for*, not models *of*, culture patterns have an intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning, that is, objective conceptual form, to social and psychological reality both by shaping themselves to it and by shaping it to themselves” (*ibid*, 93). The unavoidable dialogical nature of being in the world supports the reasoning behind Geertz’s emphasis on context and particularity, since context will affect both the perceived and lived reality of individuals and groups. Thus, religious symbols, according to Geertz, are the “cultural patterns,” or the “webs of significance,” that unite the ideal and the real world and therefore provide human beings with the impression that the world is in order and that life has meaning.

In fact, Geertz asserts that “man depends upon symbols and symbol systems with a dependence so great as to be decisive for his creatural viability and, as a result, his sensitivity to even the remotest indication that they may prove unable to cope with one or another aspect of experience raises within him the gravest sort of anxiety” (*ibid*, 99). The notions of “animal” and of “nature” are central to Jainism. Animal rights and environmental discourses resonate with Jains who proudly assert that not only is their tradition inherently eco-friendly and animal-friendly, but that it is, in fact, the pioneer of these discourses. Hence, one of the principles that unites contemporary experience and tradition for Jains, and thus provides them with a “framework of meaning” asserting that life is in fact in order, is the discourse surrounding the environmental crisis and animal rights.

The difference between Neo-Orthodox Jains and “Eco-Conscious” Diaspora Jains is apparent in the way in which each group approaches these issues. Briefly, if we imagine a fence separating Jainism into two groups, the one on the right, which follows the ideals as prescribed in the first chapter of this thesis and the other on the left, which is completely integrated into Western animal rights and environmental discourse, the Neo-Orthodox Jains would be situated on the fence leaning to the right and the Diaspora Jains would also be on the fence but leaning to the left - with both, of course, wavering to and from tradition and the newly emerging socio-centric “green” Jainism. The focus of Neo-Orthodox Jains is on preserving tradition, and so they may not ‘waver’ as far to the left as North American

Jains. Although this is a very simplistic generalization of the messiness of the lived experiences of Jains, it is, nevertheless, a practical analogy in an attempt at clarifying the nuances that do in fact exist between both groups. Both groups use the non-human animal and the environment as symbols in promoting Jain identity and, therefore, in adding meaning to their lives, but the way in which each group does so differs.

### **The Ascetic Imperative in a “Green” World**

There seems to be a widely held notion among scholars that ascetic traditions can never be ecologically minded, since the ideal of these traditions is to renounce a corrupt world. Certainly, the first chapter of this thesis has alluded to the fact that the Jain tradition perceives the environment and non-human animals as dangerous to human beings wishing to achieve the ultimate goal of liberation. Indeed, Jain ideology describes the cosmos as “brimming with life,” which must be avoided lest violence will be caused. In this living world of matter, animal bodies are depicted as polluted since their souls are ever more occluded by the karmic particles than the souls that are trapped in human bodies. Traditional Jainism, therefore, does not sentimentalize animals (Chapple 2006: 248), but rather commiserates with them (Vallely 2011: 12). In other words, there is a feeling of deep empathy for animals because they are, like human beings and the rest of the living cosmos, trapped in the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. However, unlike human beings, animals have less of a chance of becoming aware of the nature of their true selves, namely as souls or *jīvas*, and are therefore more likely to remain entrapped in this world for a long period of time.

Nonetheless, animals are still said to possess souls, which therefore affords them the possibility of achieving the ideal even though they may be far from representing it in their current state. Hence, though Orthodox Jainism may not be practical or even possible in correlation with applied environmentalism and animal rights activism, it can be said to be part of the spectrum.<sup>17</sup> Nina Mehta affirms my point:

“Consciousness of karmic accumulation affects the life choices and actions of many Jains. It's easy to see how alliances with transnational environmental, animal rights and vegan or vegetarian forums are forged.

Especially in diasporic Jain communities, and especially among youth, Jains are *increasingly* finding relevance and broader application for practices of non-violence and compassion” (Mehta, Reality Sandwich, emphasis added). Moreover, the activist ethic of environmental and animal rights, though more characteristic of young Diaspora Jains, as evidenced by this quote, is not absent among Neo-Orthodox Jains. However, among the latter, the discourse on ecology is modified to fit a “reverence for life” ethic, whereby “avoidance” remains the emphasis.

What differentiates Neo-Orthodox Jains from Orthodox Jains are the motivations underlying their beliefs and practices: namely, social well-being over *mokṣa*. The newly emerging Neo-Orthodoxy wishes to lay claim to the relevance of a very ancient tradition in the contemporary world. Neo-Orthodox Jains can be said to adhere to an “ecology of avoidance,” which emphasizes a feeling of empathy and, thus, of respect for life in its “live and let live” ethos. Certainly, this is a traditional way for Jains to come to terms with the contemporary issues surrounding the global environmental crisis and animal rights. In essence, the “moods and motivations” of Neo-Orthodox Jains allow for the perceived straightforward correlation between traditional mores and contemporary experiences concerning the non-human environment. Non-human animals and the environment, which are key symbols used in the Jain cosmic framework and in their lived reality, provide Neo-Orthodox Jains with a sense of identity and belonging in the world.

To represent the Neo-Orthodox view, I examine the writing and works of four representative Jains: *Sadhvi* Shilapi, Surendra Bothara, Gurudev Chitrabhanuji, and Pramoda Chitrabhanu. *Sadhvi* Shilapi is a Jain nun who contributed an article to Christopher Chapple’s volume on Jainism and ecology. What is interesting about Shilapi’s contribution is that, as an ascetic, she represents the *mokṣa-marga* ideal of Jainism, and yet, she is also very much engaged in the world - something which becomes even more apparent in her interpretation of Jain principles as remedies for the environmental crisis.

***Sadhvi Shilapi: Treading the Mokṣa-Marga in an Environmentally Conscious World***

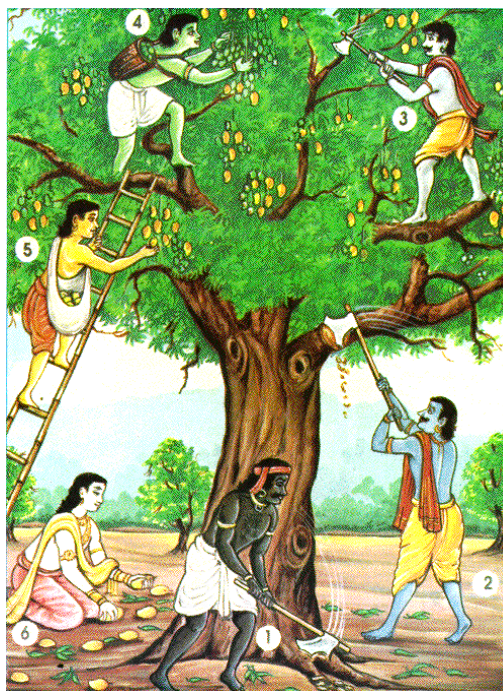
From 1996 through 1998, conferences on the subject of religion and ecology were held at the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions. These conferences led to the publication of massive volumes on the subject, such as *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, and *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*. These volumes, which were edited by Christopher Key Chapple, Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology at Loyola Marymount University, endeavored to resolve the tensions between scholars arguing against the inherent eco-friendliness of South Asian religious traditions and scholars arguing for the possibility of an ecological hermeneutic within Hindu, Buddhist and Jain doctrines. Interestingly, one of the articles within the volume on Jainism and ecology was written by a Jain *sadhvi*.

As a Jain nun, Shilapi represents the liberation-centric ideal of Jainism, which fervently argues against any kind of interaction or interference with or in the natural world. Yet, she also represents a compassionate way of connecting with the world. In her discussion of the narrative of the six *leshyas* (image below), Shilapi demonstrates a concern for the environment rather than for personal salvation. Traditionally, the narrative of the six *leshyas* is meant to demonstrate that “through passion, desire, and hatred, the *jīva* attracts karma” (Chapple 1993: 14) and, thus, prevents the impassioned individual from achieving the ultimate goal of liberation from *samsara*. The individuals in the narrative who decide to cut down the tree or branches from the tree are said to be more violent in their actions than the individual who decides to pick up the fruit, which has already fallen to the ground. This individual (#6 in Figure 5) is more enlightened than the other individuals because he interacts the least with the fruit tree. As previously discussed, any kind of *involvement* with the world will necessarily have deleterious effects on the soul and, therefore, on the hopes of achieving ultimate bliss.

However, in her version of the narrative (see n. 18), *sadhvi* Shilapi reveals a concern for the depletion of natural resources and the potential of traditional Jain principles, such as *ahimsa* (non-

violence) and especially *aparigraha* (non-possession), to remedy this situation. In essence, this narrative, which promotes non-interference in nature, has been redefined in a way that appears for several members of the Jain community, and is most certainly for *sadhvi* Shilapi, timeless, contemporary, and relevant. By syncretizing “old” world values with contemporary issues, such as the environmental crisis, Shilapi finds meaning in asserting the *inherent* ecological value of her tradition.

**Figure 5. The Six *Leshyas*<sup>18</sup>**



The way in which Shilapi renegotiates a traditional narrative in response to her awareness and therefore experience of the environmental crisis, is representative of the orientation I am defining as Neo-Orthodox. In addition to the fruit tree narrative of the six *leshyas* mentioned above, Shilapi refers to the doctrine of *ahimsa*, or non-violence, and its symbolic apex, namely Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvira, as evidence of the fact that Jainism is inherently ecological and concerned for the welfare of all living beings. Moreover, in her discussion of the five *samitis*<sup>19</sup> and their applicability to ecology, she asserts the relevance of traditional Jain doctrine to contemporary debates on environmental issues. Evidently, *sadhvi* Shilapi’s ‘Jainism’

differs from the ‘Jainism’ examined in the first chapter. This does not, however, mean that her interpretation is any less authentic than the ideal soteriological path as lived by Orthodox Jains in the past and in the present.

For Shilapi, Lord Mahāvira was an environmentalist because “he actively propagated these ideas [of non-violence, non-possession, and so on] and went on to make the protection and care of life in all its manifestations an obligatory duty for all Jains. For example, the daily prayer of the Jains contains a word of forgiveness for any harm or pain caused not only to fellow human beings but to all forms of life” (Shilapi in Chapple 2006: 160). The term for this prayer, an acted out symbol of Jainness, which Shilapi refers to here is *pratikramana*. Recalling the soteriological form of Jainism as described in the first chapter, *pratikramana* must be practiced by laypersons and especially renunciants with the intended goal of shedding the more subtle forms of karmic matter, which are associated with mind. This daily prayer is one of the six internal obligatory actions of ascetics which must be performed daily (Dundas 2002: 166). It is intended to quiet the mind and the body from karmic influences and deluding passions in order to allow the renunciant to enter into a state of equanimity, which is essential in attaining ultimate self-knowledge and, in the end, *mokṣa*. The prayer goes as follows:

I confess to any injury caused by the path of my movement, in all my comings and goings, in treading on living things, in treading on seeds, in treading on green plants, in treading on dew, on beetles, on mould, on moist earth, and on cobwebs; whatever living organisms with one or two or three or four or five senses have been injured by me or knocked over or crushed or squashed or touched or mangled or hurt or frightened or removed from one place to another or deprived of life, I confess to that (Shilapi in Chapple 2006: 160).<sup>20</sup>

The understanding of *pratikramana* as a prayer intended to quiet the mind and the body from all karmic influences is not, however, the main concern of Shilapi in her article. As mentioned in the previous chapter, only enlightened souls can achieve total non-violence, since participating in the world necessarily presumes some form of violence on the part of those of us who are still bound by karma.

Vallely (2011: 6) writes:

[T]he rest of us - that is, all embodied life forms - are essentially sensorial beings. Our senses produce our way of being in the world, allowing us to engage with others in purposeful ways. The passions that course through our human [and animal] bodies - sadness, joy, trust, fear...

which cause us to be transported to great heights and plunged to great depths, belong to the world. It is through such moods, informed by senses, that all beings participate in the world with each other.

Indeed, we can try to renounce the world, but the world often does not renounce us. Hence, *pratikramana* is a prayer of compassion and commiseration - of realizing, by *being with*, or living with, others (Vallely 2011) that we are all in *samsara* together. It is not surprising, therefore, that Shilapi perceives this daily prayer as a call to an awareness of the existence of life in various forms and, thus, that “care for life” is the message behind this practice.

Nonetheless, the emphasis here is not on actively ‘saving’ animals from their suffering, but on avoiding doing any harm to any living being. This respect for life, in terms of not interfering with the lives of innumerable beings as much as is possible, is, for Shilapi, ecological. She states:

People often think that religions which endorse forms of world renunciation hold the position that personal salvation supersedes all other concerns and that the search for otherworldly rewards overrides a commitment to this world. Some may think that divine-human relations are more important than the relationship between humans and the natural world. This may be true for those who have not experienced a “oneness” with all other souls, a connection of totality. However, *sarvajñyata*, the perfect knowledge of Mahāvīra or of any Tīrthaṅkara, is not only defined as the knowledge of past, present, and future, but also as an extraordinary capacity for experiencing the pain and pleasure of all beings (2006: 163).

In essence, Shilapi is asserting the unavoidable fact that ascetics are involved in the world. In fact, she argues that those ascetics who have achieved perfect knowledge are aware of every soul’s connectedness in this world, including their own. Thus, out of empathy for souls still trapped in a world full of pain and suffering, these perfected souls taught the doctrine of compassion and non-violence towards all living beings. It is therefore up to those of us who are not perfected beings, which includes the ascetics, to care for the environment and for non-human life.

Since we are all in this “mess” of *samsara* together, and since each action will affect an equal reaction from every living being, it is important that we all protect each other from harm through non-interference. Thus, even though the ultimate goal may still be to reach liberation, the means of getting there do largely overlap with an ecological ethic - though not an active one.<sup>21</sup> What I mean by this is that, while Shilapi’s article points to the fact that Jainism holds the “conceptual resources” for an

environmental ethic, it engages the “via negativa” (Chapple 2006: 248) in pursuing it; rather than planting trees to make up for deforestation, Jains will minimize the consumption of tree products. In other words, they seek to not harm anything in the first place. Whether this can be considered, from a Western perspective, as ecological or not is debatable. But from the Jain perspective it unquestionably is.

The Neo-Orthodox Jain ethic of protection through non-interference is taken even further in Shilapi’s association of ecology with Jainism through her interpretation of the five *samitis* as environmentally beneficial. As discussed in the previous chapter, the five *samitis*, or “careful actions,” are extensions of the five great vows of the initiated ascetic. Initially meant as tools to keep actions “in check,” and, therefore, to avoid karmic accumulation, the *samitis* are said to train the body to progress towards a state of composure and calmness and, therefore, of almost complete stasis whereby no karma is accrued. Yet, Shilapi asserts that these “precautions” are meant “for the protection of life” (2006: 161). Essentially, she argues that taking care in, for instance, “picking up and putting down things” in order to avoid harming any living being, is ecological. The concern here is not the avoidance of karmic influx but rather the avoidance of harm. The protection of non-human life is emphasized rather than protection of the self from karmic fruition, though harm to the self is certainly part of the equation.

In sum, Shilapi’s assertion is that Jainism is an inherently ecological tradition. Such a view provides Shilapi, along with her Jain readers, with a strong sense of the validity and relevance of Jainism in a global and environmentally threatened world. The following discussion on the work of Surendra Bothara will further demonstrate how Neo-Orthodox Jains are finding meaning through the assertion that Jainism and ecology are symbiotic. In fact, Bothara argues that there is nothing new about the concept of ecology since it was pioneered by Jains 2500 years ago.

***Surendra Bothara: Returning to True Form: A Jain Scholar’s Perspective on the Inherent Ecological Framework of Jainism***

Surendra Bothara, “an independent Jain scholar and managing editor at the Prakrit Bharti Academy in Jaipur” (Ahimsa Center, California Polytechnic University), has authored a very influential

(among Jains) book entitled *Ahimsā: The Science of Peace*. This text aims at deconstructing what he claims to be false reinterpretations of the original ecological message of Jain *Agamas* (e.g., scriptures). He argues that Jain principles such as *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *aparigraha* (non-possession) indicate that Jainism was the first tradition to approach the environment with all its macro- and micro-organisms from a scientific and ecological perspective (2004: 5-6). However, over time and place, these concepts, especially the notion of *ahimsā*, have lost their original meaning to ritualism, which has, laments Bothara, become the institutionalized form of Jainism (*ibid*, 7). Hence, the *mokṣa-marga* or renunciant ideal of Jainism, which has been propounded as the “original” or “Orthodox” form of the Jain faith by Jain renouncers, philosophers, and ideologues and, more recently, Western scholars, is, according to Bothara, the result of centuries of false interpretations.

It is important to note that there is no “canon” (Dundas 2002: 62) in Jainism, which therefore makes Bothara’s assertion plausible. While certain texts are deemed “orthodox” by both sects within the Jain community, there are important variations as to the meaning of the messages in these texts - a case in point is the argument over whether clothing is an obstruction to the ultimate goal of liberation. Bothara’s view, which is shared by many other Neo-Orthodox Jains in India and abroad, denounces the inclination to associate Jainism solely with renunciation, which they see as a misrepresentation of the tradition. In fact, Bothara asserts that these “hard core traditionalists,” as he calls them, are not just erroneous because of their negative definition of Jainism, they are also misguided in terms of their calcification of a dynamic tradition. Bothara states: “There comes a typical argument from the hard core traditionalists [asserting that].... [t]he applied form of philosophy is not religion but social rule. It [e.g., social action] cannot be justified on the grounds of philosophical principles. As such, one should always follow the rules laid down in the scriptures and accepted in tradition” (2004: 31).

These “traditional rules,” however, are not the original intent of Mahāvira’s teachings, according to Bothara. He writes: “Mahavir observed that if the conduct is based on Ahimsa, it becomes all-enveloping. If one becomes conscious to the harm of others and takes precautions against it, he

automatically covers other factors like hygiene, social conduct, ecological balance and almost every facet of behaviour and short term and long term consequences” (*ibid*, 41). In other words, the teachings of the *Jinas* are ecologically valid because their by-products necessarily have positive results for the environment and non-human animals. Thus, the ecological ethic is a religious duty as well as a social duty for Jains - it is part and parcel of Jain religious ideology.

What Bothara is in fact arguing here is what I have briefly touched upon, namely that to reject the claims of Jains that their tradition is inherently ecological is to not only discredit a powerful source of meaning for contemporary Jains, but it is also a relegation of Jains and their tradition to the domain of global irrelevancy (at least as far as ecological concerns go). As Bothara states: “It would appear that religion has hardly anything to do with such physical and technical things as the environment and ecology. This is because the artificial dividing lines originally drawn between different disciplines for convenience of management have now become *barriers*” (*ibid*, 1). Bothara’s critique is launched at Jain scholars for setting the boundary between religious and social duty. Through their insistence that involvement in the environmental movement is a social and not a religious duty, these Jain scholars, like Western scholars who delimit the notion of ecology as a “Western” concept, place a boundary between what counts as authentic Jain religious practice.

Bothara asserts that *ahimsā* (non-violence) is a “potent symbol for universal peace” (*ibid*, xi), and the remedy to terrorism as well as environmental degradation. As a Jain scholar, and as a lay Jain, Bothara’s vast knowledge of the Jain tradition stems both from his intellectual endeavors in translating Jain texts and from his everyday experiences as a Jain. His critique of the tendency among Jain scholars to set up barriers between Jainism and Ecology is therefore a double-edged sword. Not only does his assertion that Jainism is inherently ecological make the Jain tradition modern and relevant to him and many other Jains, it also challenges preconceived notions of Orthodox Jainism as being “originally” a soteriological path. For most contemporary Jains, their traditional ecological innateness is a taken-for-granted fact, and is the ground upon which their critiques of the contemporary crises are made. This is certainly evident in the case of Chitrabhanu, a former Jain monk who decided to bring the message of the

*Jinas* to New York in 1974.

***“Partly Deracinated” Jainism: A Jain Monk in New York***

Though Chitrabhanu’s brand of Jainism certainly resonates with ecologically conscious Diaspora Jain understandings of their tradition, he still maintains a strong renunciatory ethos: He argues that animals must be protected by minimizing harm or, rather, by avoiding harm to all living beings in the first place. He is interesting for the purposes of this thesis because he spent twenty eight years of his life as a monk in the Terapanthi Śvetāmbara order, in Rajasthan, India before abandoning the monastic path. He lived the life of an ascetic for his entire youth and much of his adulthood, reading Jain scriptures, subsisting on a restrictive vegetarian diet, begging for food, and cultivating an awareness of every single action performed by his body. Thus, he fully “inhabited” the Jain ideal, which not only was imprinted in memory, it was also very much impressed upon his body. Mehta asserts: “Chitrabhanu spent the first five years of his monastic life walking through woods, mountains and villages in silence, fasting and meditating under the guidance of a Jain Acharya, or monk instructor” (Mehta, *Reality Sandwich*). He was, therefore, very much a symbol of the *mokṣa-marga*. Yet, by 1974, this would all change. He would renounce his vows, marry Pramoda, a “long-time student,” leave India, and open the *Jain Meditation International Center* where he would spread the message of peace (*ibid*). In a global world, where problems are global problems, Chitrabhanu saw it as fitting to make the remedy of non-violence universally accessible.

The solution to the world ecological crisis that Chitrabhanu proposes is a combination of “old” and “new” world Jainism, since he stresses the need to reconnect to our true selves before any action can be ethical action. The reconnection to true self is reminiscent of the traditional soteriological path, whereby the ideal is to shed all karmic particles in order to achieve knowledge of the self and ultimate bliss, whereas the emphasis on action is part of the new Jain idiom of social engagement. On the virtual rendition of the *Jain Meditation International Center*, Chitrabhanu asserts, “It is not so much what

happens to us but how we CHOOSE to respond that creates our future reality. With meditation as a daily practice we NATURALLY begin to respect all life, wanting to harm no being anywhere [*sic*] through our thoughts, words or actions, and thus we begin to have a life filled with happiness and bliss” (Chitrabhanu, Jain Meditation International Center). In a similar manner to Shilapi, though with greater emphasis on action, Chitrabhanu asserts that an awareness of the ‘pure’ self through meditation will necessarily result in non-violent action. Mehta confirms my point: “He [Chitrabhanu] emphasizes the disconnection between one's name and one's being, and the importance of reconnecting to one's self, through breath, meditation, reprogramming oneself as an individual, in relation to others. *This Jain ethic* is tied very closely to *action*” (Mehta, emphasis added). This ethical action, however, must remain non-violent, which is the reason behind the focus on meditation and, as we shall see below, on the renunciation of certain foods deemed to be harmful to living beings.

Indeed, both Chitrabhanu and his wife Pramoda Chitrabhanu are very much involved in encouraging “global animal and environmental rights” (Mehta, *Reality Sandwich*) with Pramoda being at the forefront of most of the active engagement in these issues through her involvement with *PETA*, *Beauty Without Cruelty*, and through her advocacy of a vegan diet. Yet, the ethical action of Guruji and his wife are not quite the same as the activism of Western animal rights and environmental groups, nor is it quite the same as the activism of Eco-Conscious Diaspora Jains. As Mehta explains: “This Jain ethic of non-harm, however, does not fit traditionally with ethics of activism. As an ideal, Orthodox Jain ethics seeks to transcend this world, not work within it. However, the ideal does manifest itself in actions and practices of activism, advocacy and transnational alliances” (*ibid*). This “partly deracinated” (Dundas 2002: 185) Jainism, which seeks to assert the relevance of Orthodox Jain doctrine in Neo-Orthodox applications of contemporary discourses on the environment to more traditional forms, is what makes this particular type of engagement with animal and environmental ethics “Jain” and, therefore, meaningful for Jains.

In addition, Pramoda Chitrabhanu has been involved in many projects for the championing of

animal rights and environmental issues. In addition to the ventures mentioned above, she has collaborated with Pravin K. Shah on a volume entitled *The Book of Compassion: Reverence for All Life*. Shah is a well-renown Jain scholar, an animal rights proponent, and an advisor to the *YJA (Young Jains of America)*. The webs of Jain alliances on the internet and through collaborations such as these certainly explains the reason behind the hybridization between Jain old world values and animal and environmental discourse on a large scale. Of course, the old symbols available to Jains, some of which I have already discussed (e.g., non-violence to all living beings, care in action, and so on), facilitated Jainism's turn toward environmental issues and animal issues. Nonetheless, there is something quite new in the articles written by Pramoda Chitrabhanu in the aforementioned text. As Vallely asserts, "the table of contents reads like an animal rights primer. Indeed, the preamble is titled "Universal Declaration of the Rights of Animals," and is followed by chapters such as: "Dairy Cows - Life, Usage and Suffering"; "Recycling Slaughterhouse Waste"; [and] "Milk - its impact on health, cruelty and pollution" (2004: 17-18). In fact, when comparing this volume with Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*, the language is resoundingly similar. Yet, what is different is the obvious Jain undertones. Indeed, the Jainness of this volume becomes apparent with subheadings like "Ethics of Ahimsa (Non-Violence)" in an article entitled "Alternatives to Animal Abuse," an article which was written by Pramoda Chitrabhanu.

The very descriptive language and the reliance on statistics used by authors in this text is reminiscent of Peter Singer's (the father of the animal rights movement) landmark volume on animal rights. Actually, one of the articles written by Chitrabhanu, namely "Facts about Eggs," reads very much like the chapter on poultry farming by Singer, entitled "Down on the Factory Farm." The passages quoted below will testify to this fact. I will first provide a passage from Singer's *Animal Liberation* in order to demonstrate the nuances that do exist in the passage from Chitrabhanu's article.

Singer writes:

Fred C. Haley, president of a Georgia poultry firm that controls the lives of 225,000 laying hens, describes the hen as "an egg producing machine"... Like broilers, layers have to be debeaked, to prevent the cannibalism that would otherwise occur in their crowded conditions.... [T]he typical hen at rest physically occupies an area of 637 square centimeters, but if a bird is to be able to

turn around at ease, she would need a space of 1,681 square centimeters if kept in a single cage (2002: 107-112).

Chitrabhanu writes:

The egg is totally forbidden for those who believe in non-violence. Right from the rearing of hens to the hatching of their eggs, there is violence all over. A visit to any poultry farm will support this fact. In poultry farms, hens are considered no better than egg-producing machines. They are confined to a narrow space of 15ö x 19ö.... Due to a shortage of space, they naturally become violent, offensive, obsessed and quarrelsome. They attack one another in a barbarous manner. So they are de-beaked (2000: 47-48).

Both passages show a definite concern for the treatment of chickens as machines rather than living beings and for the lack of space provided for hens in poultry farms, which therefore results in cannibalism and in debeaking. What differs in these passages is Chitrabhanu's assertion that eating eggs is "*forbidden* for those who *believe* in non-violence." Actually, eating eggs is a forbidden (*abhakshya*) food in Jainism because it is, for Jains, 'non-veg' (Vallely 2002: 11) due to the potential of the being within the shell to be born as a five-sensed animal. As demonstrated in the first chapter, the killing of a five-sensed being would attract an innumerable amount of karmic particles to the soul because of the violence attached to it. Thus, traditionally, eggs are forbidden because of the violence it brings to the self. However, in Chitrabhanu's passage, wherein the employed language is strikingly comparable to the language used by Singer, the focus is moreover on the harm that comes to the hen.

However, for Chitrabhanu, relations with animals and the environment remain "betwixt and between" full engagement and renunciation. According to Chitrabhanu, "actively practicing ahinsa and helping the animals is what Mahavir taught and here our true compassion is manifested. Non-interference is applied for those who have renounced the world. So according to me it is better to connect with the animals. *But being aware that in doing so we do not use any means that involves violence.* Like food" (Mehta, emphasis added). She does assert that only ascetics can be completely uninvolved in the world, and even this is a near impossibility, as demonstrated in my discussion on Jain almsgiving. Thus, interaction with animals is acceptable for those who are not ascetics - the vast majority of the Jain population. Nonetheless, this involvement in animal ethics must be a non-violent involvement, and the best way to do this, says Chitrabhanu, is through the renunciation of foods procured violently, such as

eggs and milk. Interestingly, the non-consumption of milk is something that is quite new to the Jain diet – a development that shall be further discussed in tandem with the emphasis on veganism among many Diaspora Jains. What is important to mention, here, is that the generally agreed upon “traditional” forms of Jainism hold the fabric of contemporary interpretations of “Who is a Jain” together and create an ethos of renunciatory activism. Through the renunciation of dairy, Jains promoting a vegan diet are, in their view, reducing the harm done to non-human animals in dairy farms.

Up to this point, this chapter has discussed various ways of being Jain in the modern world – especially in relation to contemporary environmental discourses. Indeed, Neo-Orthodox Jain ascetics, Jain scholars, and lay Jains are putting forth a uniquely Jain ecological ethic, though retaining a commitment to renunciation (to varying degrees). Jainism is traditionally an ecology of avoidance rather than interference, and this is evident in Neo-Orthodox expressions. The multifarious nature of being Jain is overwhelmingly demonstrated by how a Jain acts in relation to his or her natural world. Hence, the way of being Jain as an ascetic in India will necessarily differ from the way of being Jain in the North American context, and this difference, once again, is observable through the ways in which Jains relate to the non-human environment. Nevertheless, with the advent of technological tools such as the internet, the world has become much smaller and has therefore blurred the boundaries between “Jains in India” and “Jains in the diaspora.” Indeed, social networking sites, such as *Facebook*, and websites such as the *Young Jains of America*, have allowed Jains from all over the world to engage in discussions about their tradition, which has resulted in a cross-pollination of ideas about what it means to be Jain today. Nevertheless, striking distinctions can be observed and it will become apparent that young Diaspora Jains, unlike Orthodox and Neo-Orthodox Jains, put a greater emphasis on social involvement in their understanding of ethical discourse, especially relating to animals and diet. The well-being of animals and the environment, rather than the purity of one’s soul, have become the focus of young Jain discourses. In the absence of ascetics, and thus the ascetic ideal, food, non-human animals and the environment have become central symbols around which Jains construct their identity.

## Eco-Conscious Jainism

### *“Do the Jain Thing”: Ecology and Animal Rights in the Jain Diaspora*

Upon visiting the Shri Digambar Jain Mandir in Delhi, accompanied by members of the local Jain community and from abroad, I paused to examine the idol of Neminatha; the twenty-second *Tīrthaṅkara*. As I gazed upon the marble statuette, Tansukh Jain, an elderly Jain man from Ohio, began to tell me the story about Neminatha’s liberation from the world of matter, and in so doing he strongly emphasized the “animal rights” interpretation that is popular in the Diaspora. The story has been modified by Jains, and especially young Jains born in the diaspora, to reflect a sociological rather than a soteriological ethos. The nuance between the traditional story and the new interpretation of it is something that has been discussed by Valley (2002: 209-11). During her field research among young Diaspora Jains in Toronto, she observed the variation in the very popular Jain narrative of Nemi Kumar’s wedding feast.

Neminatha, named Nemi Kumar prior to taking the vow of asceticism, was a prince destined to be married to princess Rajimati. During his wedding procession, he noticed animals in crates and therefore asked his elephant driver why these animals were being held in cages. The driver informed Nemi Kumar that the animals were bound to be slaughtered for his very own wedding feast. It is Nemi Kumar’s response to the elephant driver that is altered by Jains in the diaspora. Traditionally, as Valley (*ibid*, 209) asserts, his response indicates a soteriological concern for the self. In this version, Nemi Kumar says, “If I agree to be the cause of the butchering of so many living beings, *my life and the one to come* will be filled with pain and misery” (*ibid*, 209-11, emphasis added). He then renounces the world and takes up the vows of the ascetic as propounded by Orthodox Jain doctrine - meaning, he follows the ethic of avoidance of life rather than of engagement with life. The concern of Nemi Kumar, here, is obviously directed towards the possibility of accruing karma for having participated in the slaughter of five-sensed beings for his wedding feast. As discussed in the first chapter, Jain karma theory asserts that one accrues karma whether one commits an act of violence oneself, encourages another to do it for oneself, or knowingly allows another to commit a violent act. This therefore explains Nemi Kumar’s concern for his

participation, even though it is indirect, in the eventual slaughter of these caged animals.

But for most Diaspora Jains, such as Tansukh, Neminatha's primary motive for not wanting the animals to be slaughtered is that he did not wish to cause undue pain and suffering to them; concern with the soul is not mentioned. The animals, in this story, have value in themselves because, like human beings, they feel pain. In fact, Valley asserts that in the diaspora version the animals cry out to Nemi Kumar pleading to not be killed. He hears the cries of the animals and "his heart was crying at the pain and fear the poor animals were suffering" (*ibid*, 210). According to this version, Neminatha interfered by refusing to proceed with his wedding and by actively opening the cage doors in order to free the animals (*ibid*, 210). This active engagement on the part of Nemi Kumar, who has now become the ideal symbol of animal activism rather than asceticism among Diaspora Jains, is demonstrative of the increasing association of Jain values with Western animal rights and environmental discourse.

### **"For the Love of Animals": The Socio-Centric Ethos of Young Diaspora Jains**

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (*PETA*) is a hyper-vocal, "in your face" animal rights activist group based in the United States that seems far removed from the world of Jain renunciation. And yet, a link to the *PETA* website is prominently displayed on the *Young Jains of America* homepage, which, on December 15, 2008 redirected me to a page with the title "Khloe Kardashian's Sexy New Naked Anti-Fur Ad and Giveaway!" The socio-centric ideals of *PETA*, which put forth an ethos of engagement with, rather than withdrawal from, the world, coincides with the socio-centric ethics of young Diaspora Jains. As Valley asserts, "Rather than through the idiom of self-realization or the purification of the soul, ethics are being expressed through a discourse of environmentalism and animal rights" (in Chapple 2006:193). She also argues that this socio-centric attitude towards nature is a recent diaspora development, which moves away from the traditional mores of Jainism as it has developed in India (*ibid*, 193). Of course, it is not unprecedented that a community espousing certain ideals prior to establishing themselves in new surroundings will modify them in order to

“fit in,” and so one of the ways in which Jains modify their tradition is through the reinterpretation of Jain principles such as *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *aparigraha* (non-possession) with an ecological and animal rights lens.

This reinterpretation of Jainism as an “ethic of engagement,” while valid for young ecologically concerned Diaspora Jains, is often labeled as “inauthentic” by first generation Jains who tend to espouse more “Orthodox” versions of Jain beliefs and practices. Valley affirms my point: “A number of [Toronto’s] first-generation immigrant [Jains] believe that Jainism as practiced in Canada is less “authentic” than that practised in India, and readily attribute the perceived “degeneration” of Jainism outside of India to the absence of ascetics” (*ibid*, 195). Jain ascetics are restricted from committing any act of violence, even to the minutest life-forms called *nigodas*, which therefore prohibits them from any unnecessary travel that would implicate these renunciants in voluntary or involuntary forms of violence. The absence of fully initiated Jain monks and nuns, who are symbolic of the ideal of renunciation, in the diaspora, has, according to Valley, been a major factor in the development of a socio-centric ethos through the reinterpretation of Jain principles. Of course, it can be argued that ascetics in India are also demonstrating a concern for the environment and animals. However, as I have demonstrated during my discussion of *sadhvi* Shilapi’s understanding of the Jain tradition, the concern, among ascetics, still remains largely focused on the *mokṣa-marga*. The form of Jainism found amongst young Diaspora Jains, therefore, is not the same as that propounded by Shilapi and many other Orthodox and Neo-Orthodox Jains.

Though the work of Bramadat and Seljak refers to experiences of young Hindus in North America, their analysis is relevant to the experiences of young Jains in the diaspora: “In response to their experience of the Canadian culture of individualism, self-expression, self-determination, and egalitarianism, many choose to redefine their beliefs, values, and practices. However, very often individuals and groups do not choose one set of values over another, but negotiate a unique model of forms that includes new and traditional elements” (2005: 226). Indeed, these young South Asian men and

women in the diaspora, who are “caught between cultures” (Hinnells 2000: 6), have become “skilled cultural navigators” (Ballard in Hinnells 2000: 6).

Thus, in a cultural context without ascetics and where traditional asceticism is impossible many young Jains view the Jainism of their parents as “old-fashioned” (Vallely 2002: 203) and “irrelevant in the modern world” (*ibid*, 203). Therefore, young Jains have hybridized their identity in a way that correlates old and new forms, thus making their everyday lives and experiences meaningful. Young Jains, therefore, work with newly interpreted principles of Jainism as promoting environmentalism and animal rights in order to cope with new situations and experiences they may undergo in the contemporary world.

Although Jainism has traditionally been concerned with harm done to the self as a consequence of violence done to others, “for most Jain youths [in North America], violence refers principally to harm done to *others*, and *ahimsā* is primarily about *alleviating the suffering* of *other* living beings. Self-realization is subordinate to this overarching goal” (Vallely in Chapple 2006: 205, emphasis added). In essence, the socio-centric Jainism of young Jains in North America concerns itself with the well-being of *others*, and especially non-human others. The anxiety regarding the possible accruing of karma by intentionally or unintentionally harming or killing non-human life-forms is sidelined, if at all a concern. In fact, young Diaspora Jains are highly critical of the ‘no kill’ philosophy of *pinjrapoles* in the Indian context (*ibid*, 207-202), because, as proponents of a more socially engaged compassion for animals, the refusal to euthanize animals that are in extreme and obvious pain is unacceptable. These young Jains, like Western animal rights activists, want to avoid inflicting or prolonging any kind of suffering in non-human animals. There is no concern here for karmic influx in killing a suffering animal since eliminating suffering is perceived as the ethically just course of action.

Philosopher Peter Singer, author of *Animal Liberation*, asserts, quoting Bentham, that in considering the interests of non-human animals one must not ask whether animals can talk or reason, but rather whether animals are capable of suffering (Singer 2002: 7). The issue of animal suffering, in Singer’s view, provides the Animal Liberation Movement with substantive reasons to argue against practices such as experimentation and factory farming. He asserts that combating animal suffering should

be the first step towards ending “speciesism,” a term which he coined meaning a prejudice or bias in favor of the interests of one’s own species (*ibid*, 9). Evidently, the issue of animal suffering in Western animal rights discourse is, generally, an issue of *physical* suffering. On the other hand, it is primarily suffering of a “spiritual” nature that is cause for concern in the traditional Jain ethos. The difference in the understanding of suffering, here, is related to the fact that, in the West, physical suffering is said to be “so wretched because it is so meaningless,” (Vallely in Chapple 2002: 211), while, in traditional Jainism, suffering is considered meaningful because bodily pain purifies the soul and so furthers one on the path to liberation. For many young Diaspora Jains, however, the arguments of Singer and Bentham are of central importance. The physical suffering of the animal body is focused on, and so they are critical of the refusal to euthanize sick animals *pinjrapoles*. Hence, since *suffering is meaningful* in traditional Jain ideology, compassionate action is demonstrated through the “no kill” policy in animal shelters, whereas, for many young Diaspora Jains, compassion stems from alleviating suffering here and now because *suffering is so meaningless*.

One of the main ways in which young Jains become connected and involved in animal rights and environmental issues is through electronic correspondences with each other and through writing articles for the *Young Minds* magazine, a quarterly publication of the *Young Jains of America* website. I will here discuss the ways in which electronic social networking has contributed to this ever increasing emphasis on social activism amongst young Diaspora Jains, and, in addition to this, it will be important to discuss how food, which has become such a central aspect of Jain identity in the diaspora, is renegotiated with the socio-centric Jain lens.

### ***Young Jains of America: Writing for a Better Tomorrow***

The *Young Jains of America* website, which is a kind of “one stop shop” on “all things Jain” for Jain youth in the contemporary world, has as its goal to be recognized as an “international Jain youth organization” which aims at “establishing a network to share Jain heritage and religion through young

people” (Young Jains of America, yja.org).<sup>22</sup> The accessibility of this site, and the involvement of Jain youth in this endeavor, has provided a place for young Jains to vent, to ask questions about every day experiences relating to their life and to their Jainness, and to educate young Jains on Jain doctrine and practice. Interestingly, in every single issue of the *Young Minds* magazine spanning from the Fall 2008 issue up till the Winter 2010 issue, there is great emphasis placed on being “green” and avoiding committing any harm to human and non-human beings. The magazine also publishes information regarding past and future meetings of Jains, and one of these advertises a past meeting where young Jains were able to rate their “Greenness” according to how they “follow the Jain way of life... by helping the environment daily and [by doing] meditation/yoga” (First Annual Midwest Retreat, Young Minds, Winter 2010). Indeed, the challenges of environmental and animal rights issues provide young Jains with the opportunity to assert their Jainness to their peers online, to their non-Jain surroundings, and to themselves, all the while using the environment and non-human animals for the basis of this Jain identity.

In each issue, Jains have the opportunity to write about their own view of what it means to be Jain in the modern world. In the Fall 2008 issue, which has as its main topic “*Ahimsā*,” or non-violence, one of these “skilled cultural navigators” writes:

To be “green” as an individual means to live your life in a way that reduces the pollution we cause to our planet. We cause destruction to our Planet earth in several ways, but the most common one is due to excess of Carbon Dioxide.... Individuals are a major contributor to CO2 emissions. Using electricity, driving, hot water, A/C, and the heater all contribute.... One way to reduce the consumption of electricity and save money is by using CFL (Compact Fluorescent Light) bulbs.... These simple changes can significantly save you money and also conserve energy to reduce the CO2 emissions. It is important to know how the things you consume and use affect the world around you. *We sometimes do not realize how our actions affect the earth physically. At the same time, if we treat the earth consciously and observe our actions, the earth’s environment will get better, not worse*” (Young Minds, Young Jains of America, Fall 2008, 5, emphasis added).

Naman Jain, the author of this article and part of the 2008-2009 executive board as director of events for the *YJA*, grew up in Boston and has a B.S. in Computer Engineering. Though his writing is largely scientific, there is nevertheless an element that is uniquely Jain. In fact, it is not only because he is Jain, nor is it because his article was written for the Fall 2008 issue of *Young Minds*, which focused solely on

*ahimsā*, that his article indicates his ‘Jainness,’ but it is the last two sentences, which allude to a need for an awareness of our actions which is reminiscent of the three restraints (*guptis*) and the five rules of conduct (*samitis*) of the ascetic Jain. And yet, awareness of our actions and their effects on the earth is also very much a part of the ecological endeavor, since ecology “basically deals with the relations between organisms and their environments” (Bannerjee in Chapple 2006: ix). It is therefore not surprising that Jains, especially young Diaspora Jains who are ever more removed from the ascetic ideal by time and space, would find meaning in the correlation between what their parents taught them about Jainism and what they learned about environmentalism and animal rights in the West.

Other topics covered by the *Young Minds* magazine include the modern relevance of *aparigraha* (non-possession), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacarya* (celibacy), and *anekantavada* (the doctrine of many-pointedness).<sup>23</sup> Each reveals a telling story about the hybridized identity of young Jains abroad. In fact, not only are Jains tied to the context into which they were born, they are also very much tied to the Indian continent. As Tsuda affirms, “migration is not merely a unipolar one-way process of immigration, settlement, and assimilation confined to the receiving nation-state.... Instead of simply assimilating and being absorbed into singular national communities, migrants (and their descendants) retain economic, social, and political ties to their homelands, live in transnational communities... and develop multiple and diffuse transnational identifications” (Tsuda 2009: 8). This negotiation of multiple identities is certainly evidenced by young Jains in their assertion, through writing and action, that ‘Jainness’ is synonymous with being engaged and compassionate towards the non-human world.

In addition to writing for the *Young Minds* magazine, young Jains are also consciously involved “as Jains” in what they eat and do not eat. Indeed, diet has become the primary enacted symbol of Diaspora Jainism.

***Consuming Jain Identity: Eating for a Better Tomorrow***

While it is obvious that food nourishes and sustains our physical bodies, it also satisfies our need to belong. Food is a powerful indication of individual and group identity. As Kittler and Sucher assert, “most animals feed, they repeatedly consume those foods necessary for their well-being, and they do so in a similar manner at each feeding. Humans, however, do not feed. They eat.... The correlation between what people eat, how others perceive them, and how they characterize themselves is striking” (2008: 1-3). Certainly, the new emphasis on veganism in the Diaspora is symbolic of a distinctive expression of Jainism. Many young Jains in the diaspora are clearly and consciously asserting their Jainness through what they eat and do not eat - they are consuming and producing their Jain identity through veganism - a movement which emphasizes the need to renounce the consummation of eggs and dairy products in order to avoid the harm caused to animals in factory farms and to the human body. This new relation to food is symptomatic of a new relation to the natural environment as one of engagement rather than avoidance. As Kittler and Sucher (2004: 4) assert, “eating [or not eating] is a daily reaffirmation of cultural identity,” and this is certainly the case for young Diaspora Jains advocating a vegan diet. Food is an acted out symbol of who we are - a symbol that provides hints to an individual or a group’s worldview. Though food is a biological human need, it is also a social one because it necessarily provides individuals and groups with a sense of belonging and, thus, creates a world that is both orderly and meaningful.

Indeed, there is a moving away from traditional symbolic forms in the diaspora because adherence to the ascetic ideal in the North American context is just not plausible. Many young Jains are reevaluating the Jainism of their parents, perceiving it to be ‘old fashioned’ and no longer applicable to the modern world. One of the ways in which they are doing this is by renegotiating what counts as “Jain” diet. In fact, in the February 2009 issue of *Young Minds*, a list entitled “10 Ways to be Jain in the New Year”<sup>24</sup> has as its first point the practice of a vegan lifestyle. The author encourages young Jains to “practice healthy living. Avoid junk food and eat healthier such as organic, vegan, or raw food” (Young Jains of America, *Young Minds Magazine*, February 2009, 3). This full list, which is presented as “undeniably Jain,” is evidently representative of a socio-centric rather than a liberation-centric ethos.

Moreover, though young Jains are aware of the theory of karma in its more simplistic form of “as you sew, so you reap,” their diet reflects a concern for the animal other rather than for the preservation of the purity of their own souls. Nonetheless, as Vallely argues (2004: 9), the so-called ancient Jain soteriological mores are not altogether lacking from the discourse of these young Jains.

Vallely’s (2004) field research among young Jains in Toronto, along with the articles written by young Jains in the *Young Minds* magazine, point to this hybridizing of two seemingly opposing discourses. In Vallely’s article, she describes sitting at the table inside a Burger King with young Jains for a meatless whopper. At first, she asserts, there “seemed to be no difference” between the five young Jains who she was accompanying and the rest of the populace. “Eating at an icon of American popular culture was reassuring: vegetarianism need not banish one to the periphery of mainstream society. And yet, in spite of this apparent oneness, what was *not* consumed was of pre-eminent significance to the group: through absence, Jain identity was affirmed” (*ibid*, 4). By eating at Burger King, these Jains were, according to Vallely, “still eating a hamburger” - a symbol of American and North American culture and, of course, part of these five young Jains’ identities (*ibid*, 20). Yet, they were also renouncing American and North American consumer culture in both the act of renunciation, a characteristic of Jainness, and in the substance of what they were renouncing - namely, meat.

### ***“Carrot Juice is [Not] Murder”***

Vallely asserts that “food is a symbol of consumption and renunciation” (*ibid*, 4). Indeed, what one eats and does not eat not only creates group boundaries between “in group” and “out group,” but it also reveals the social mores that are accorded utmost importance. “For Jains,” says Vallely, “diet *is* the locus for constructing and expressing an ethical way-of-being in the world” (*ibid*, 7). As already mentioned above, the Jain ‘way-of-being’ in India has, traditionally, emphasized the avoidance of the natural world, while Jains in the diaspora follow an ethic of engagement, of ‘saving’ the world. The concern for the killing of one-sensed minute beings, called *nigodas*, for fear of hindering one’s growth on

the path to liberation, largely disappears in the diaspora. Instead, contemporary experiences with regards to factory farming, animal abuse, vivisection, and so on, has, especially in the North American and American contexts, led Jains to interpret the Jain principle of non-violence as promoting engagement and involvement with the non-human world in order to rectify these very important issues. Valley argues that the principal Jain ethic of *ahimsa* has been appropriated and interpreted by Jains in the diaspora as being part and parcel of Western animal discourse (*ibid*, 20). Certainly, by renouncing meat in consuming the meatless whopper, the Jains at the Burger King were renouncing a speciesist institution for the sake of the animal other and not for their personal salvation.

This new ‘diaspora’ interpretation of Jain diet greatly differs from Orthodox Jain foodstuffs. The repudiation of traditional aversions to eating root crops in favor of a vegan diet (*ibid*, 17) bespeaks of the transformation of Orthodox ascetic values into world-affirming North American Jain values. The emphasis on engagement rather than avoidance, as we see here, is reflected on the young North American Jain’s plate. “Food [for young Jains in America and North America] is a moral material product that speaks the values of compassion and animal welfare” (*ibid*, 17). Of course, this newly emerging discourse is not absent in the Indian context, as demonstrated in the discussion on Bothara and *sadhvi* Shilapi. However, there is certainly greater correlation between the discourse of young Jains and Western animal rights discourse than between a discourse that is still very much near the Orthodox form of Jainism - both geographically and physically to ascetics.

There is, however, a growing awareness of animal rights and environmental discourse, as it is defined in the West, on the Indian continent. Previous discussions on the assertion of the inherent eco-friendliness of Jainism attest to this. Moreover, the Mumbai-based Jain publisher-scholar Manish Modi, frequently sends out electronic mail to members of his online “Jain class.” In one e-mail (Modi, Jain Class, May 4, 2011), he informs his readers of a vegan camp in Karnataka India. The link to the website provides the interested party with the following information:

Sthitaprajna is a vegan community located close to the Western Coast of South India in the state of Karnataka, on the footsteps of Western Ghats - a world hot spot of bio-diversity. Sthitaprajna

is spread over about 3 acres of vibrant nature in sylvan surroundings along a seasonal natural stream. At Sthitaprajna, we have places for the practice of yoga, pranayama and meditation. It is an eco-friendly centre for relaxation and rejuvenation having very basic amenities with places for reading and listening to soulful music, playing indoor and outdoor games, cooking and eating, etc (Indian Vegan Society, Sthitaprajna - Vegan Retreat, June 19, 2011).

It would, therefore, not be accurate to assert that there is an absolute boundary between socio-centric Jains in the diaspora and liberation-centric Jains in India. Pravin Shah, an erudite American Jain scholar, who is also an important link between Diaspora Jains and Jains in India, writes:

In ancient time the root cause of the existence of all animal slaughter houses was the consumption of meat by human beings. Milk producing cows were raised by individual families and were treated part of the family. Also agricultural farming was not developed to support the food requirements of human population and hence milk and its products were essential for our survival. In modern time, the root causes of the existence of all animal slaughter houses are the consumption of meat and dairy products by human beings. Since Jains are vegetarians but most of them consume dairy products. Hence we are also the part of the problems in the creation and expansion of modern slaughterhouses (Shah, Jain Sadharmik, May 7, 2011).

Shah wrote this in response and in protest to the opening of eight new slaughterhouses in Uttar Pradesh.

This passage is evidence of the need to correlate traditional forms with actual experience, and, in a global world, experiences tend to be similar. Thus, the promotion of veganism is an ever-growing concern among Jains in India, as evidenced by the link provided by Manish Modi, because of the increase in practices deemed to be harmful to animals and, therefore, “non-Jain.”

Nonetheless, as has hopefully been evident in the discussion above, this socio-centric lens, which champions a concern for the animal other rather than for one’s own self is largely a diaspora phenomenon. “The compatibility between Jainism and environmentalism,” says Valley, “is largely a new, diaspora development, and actually reflects a shift in ethical orientation away from a traditional orthodox liberation-centric ethos to a sociocentric or “ecological” one” (Valley in Chapple 2006: 193). In effect, members of the *Young Jains of America* have applied traditional Jain soteriology as taught to them by their parents, to animal rights discourse and their diet by renouncing food that is considered harmful to animals. The concern, here, is harm to the animal for the animal’s sake - though Jains often present the health benefits of being vegan as an additional bonus to this kind of diet. In essence, through diet, vegan Jains put forth a uniquely *Jain* ethic of engagement with the non-human world. Indeed, through what they eat (e.g., root crops) and do not eat (e.g., dairy), Jains use animal bodies, or lack

thereof, to communicate their dual identity with the social mores of animal rights and environmental discourse and with the soteriological mores of Orthodox Jainism.

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate that, for Jains, their tradition is inherently ecological. For the Orthodox and Neo-Orthodox, it is ecological by a *via negativa* (e.g., in its compassionate but radical detachment from nature and the world). For Eco-Conscious Jains, it is through active engagement in environmental and animal rights issues.

## CHAPTER 3

### Jainism and Ecology: The Debate

Though the field of Symbolic Anthropology is certainly a vast and complex field stemming from before the 1960s, like Ortner, I focus my attention on one particular time period. Beginning in the 1960s, the field of cultural anthropology (and mirrored within the subdiscipline of the anthropology of religion) came under the sway of the new approach to the study of culture, namely symbolic study. Sherry Ortner (1984: 130), in her review of the trends in the field of anthropology since the 1960s, divides the discipline into two major subfields, namely, the American school of symbolic anthropology and the British school of social anthropology. Both schools of thought dealt with symbols, though in a radically different way. Two major representatives of these schools are Clifford Geertz, whose focus was on symbols, ethos, worldview, and cultural meaning, and Victor Turner, who focused primarily on the social function of symbols. The most fundamental differences between these two scholars relate to the fact that Geertz fixed his attention on the meaning of symbols and their centrality for the actor in order to explain the world and his or her place within it, which therefore provides the individual actor with a sense of ultimate meaning and the necessary tools to make life more livable. Turner, on the other hand, examined the social function of symbols and placed emphasis on the role of symbols in group cohesion rather than on the individual meaning. This thesis, which has been discussing the symbolic meaning of environmental and animal rights discourse for Jains in India and abroad, is indebted to both approaches. The notion of the non-human has always played an important role in Jain group identity, around which to determine who belongs and who is outside of the group. Nevertheless, my focus is primarily on meaningfulness, and therefore I situate my work within the symbolic orientation of Geertz. His theory has been most useful in understanding the ways in which Jains experience and live meaningfully in the world.

Geertz explores symbols as “vehicles of culture” (*ibid*, 131) and of meaningfulness to individuals within a group - something that is not highlighted by scholars such as Callicott and Cort in their assertion that ascetic traditions are non-ecological. To argue that ecology (whether “scientific” or otherwise) is a

Western movement and not inherent to South Asian ascetic traditions (as Cort and Callicott argue) is to shift the discussion to a level that is largely meaningless to Jains themselves. One could easily counter the “origins argument” by pointing out that Eastern traditions influenced the concept of ‘ecology’ amongst Westerners during the 1960s counter-culture, when India was the Romanticized other full of philosophical wisdom about the workings of the world and how to act within it. Actually, one could go back to the nineteenth century, when “there was a perceived need for renewal [out of rationalist Europe], which in the case of the Romantics took the form of a search for childlike innocence, a vision of wholeness, a yearning for the recovery of what the poets and philosophers of the period felt the age had lost, namely a oneness with humankind and a oneness with nature” (Clarke 1997: 59). The point here is that it is difficult to discern exactly from where and from when the concept of ecology has emerged, and for that reason, perhaps the question of origins should be put aside.

More important, from the perspective of Symbolic Anthropology, is that the idea of being ecological is now vitally meaningful to Jains themselves. It provides Jains with a way-of-being in the world today. Discovering how, why, and by whom it was created recalls the search for origins of ‘religion,’ and is meaningless for the community at hand. The symbolic interpretivist’s approach is not to question the ‘honesty’ of other cultures, but to explain what happens and “what people *intend* by what happens” (Geertz 1973: 267). The debate over the ecological nature of Jainism is therefore largely a debate among scholars themselves. Nevertheless, it is interesting, and important, because it affects the way in which Jainism is presented as a “world religion” and that is why we explore it here.

### **Ascetic Traditions as Non-Ethical and Non-Ecological: The Perspectives of Callicott and Cort**

In the first chapter, I discussed the representatives of the Jain ideal, namely the *Jinas* or *Tīrthankaras*. These teachers are said to have preached the doctrine of non-violence as the only way to free the soul (*jīva*) from karma and, thus, from endless bondage in a world full of pain and suffering. Indeed, the ultimate goal, according to Orthodox Jain ideology, is to leave this world - it is “a life worth

leaving.”<sup>25</sup> In view of Jain karma theory, which informs and is informed by Orthodox Jain cosmology, the perception of nature is a negative one. As previously stated, the ideal is to keep life ‘at bay’ and to not engage with nature (or with life in general) for fear of accruing karma through, either intentionally or unintentionally, harming a living being in a world deemed to be brimming with life. The Jain motto “non-violence is the supreme religion/duty” (*ahimsa paramo dharma*), in this context, is more of a warning about the possibilities of further defilement of the soul than a call to action. But it is, of course, more than this. Indeed, it is the ethical ground upon which all engagements - between humans, and between humans and animals - take place.

In the first and second chapters of this thesis, I demonstrated that compassion, though understood differently by Orthodox, Neo-Orthodox, and Eco-Conscious Jains, is part and parcel of the Jain way of perceiving and being in the world. Through the ethos of avoidance of harm to living beings, or through the ethos of engagement to “save” the non-human from harm, Jains have always demonstrated a concern for non-human life - though in varying ways. Indeed, I have demonstrated how the multiple Jain voices concerning the applicability of the ultimate Jain doctrine of non-violence, along with various other Jain principles and practices, are presented in different yet overlapping ways. Eco-Conscious Jainism is simply a new way of being Jain in the modern world.

Moreover, as discussed, a laicization of Orthodox Jainism, which began in the decades following the death of Mahavira, was necessarily the result of a growing householder tradition. Consideration that those who live in the world must engage with the world was accepted and incorporated into Jain teachings, as was that some forms of violence were necessary (Dundas 1992: 96-97). Yet, the ascetic ideal, though not represented in the layperson, has certainly influenced the contemporary Jain idiom of engagement with the environment and non-human animals. How are we to understand this shift in context? Are we to accept the Jain view of things and treat Jainism as inherently ecological? Or do we insist on a more limited understanding of “ecology” to the extent that Jainism (among other traditions) remains outside of it? This is the argument by many, including Callicott and Cort, and I present it here as faithfully as I can:

Callicott argues that ascetic traditions, such as those found on the Indian continent, cannot possibly be deemed ecological in the scientific sense of the term (e.g., biology). Now teaching at the University of North Texas, Callicott works in Western environmental science and ethics. He has presided over the International Society for Environmental Ethics at Yale University, and has chaired the UNT Department of Philosophy and “Religion Studies.” He is, therefore, evidently an authority on the subject of environmental ethics and on the applicability of ecological discourse to the beliefs and practices of various religious traditions.

In his articles, “Conceptual Resources for Environmental Ethics in Asian Traditions of Thought: A Propaedeutic” (1987) and “Toward a Global Environmental Ethic,” (1994) Callicott introduces his reader to the history of the environmental movement in the West. He asserts that environmentalism began in the middle of the 1970s as a “subdiscipline of philosophy” (Callicott 1987: 115). He writes that a growing number of dissatisfied groups, angry over the disasters of the Second World War, perceived indifference to nature within the Judeo-Christian tradition, industrialization, urbanization, along with Romantic ideas of the East, resulted in a “disaffected, alienated American subculture called the Beat Generation” looking to the East for philosophical remedies to the destructive and “conquest” mentality of the West (*ibid*, 119). In fact, Zen Buddhism and Taoism are, he claims, the main influences on the environmental ethics of the West because of “concept[s] of living in accordance with the *tao* of nature” (1994: 36). Nonetheless, and importantly, he unequivocally argues that environmental ethics, to be considered “environmental,” must be “world-affirming.” This therefore argues that renouncer traditions, such as Jainism, cannot provide the remedies needed to solve the environmental crisis (1987: 125). He states:

Hindu and Jain thought provides *at first glance*, at least, an attractive and useful axiology for environmental ethics in the concept of a single inner substance, be it *ātman* or *Brahman*, residing in all living things, indeed, in all phenomenal things without exception. If all things are one in essence, then native self-love, egoism, upon realization of this fact, is transformed into a general love of all other beings - that is, phenomenally “other” beings, since they are not really other than oneself... Environmental ethics, however, requires an ethical attitude toward nature which is *world-affirming*, since its practical program is to integrate and harmonize with nature, not to become detached, or to deny or ignore it. Indeed, despite their metaphysical differences,

the philosophies of the Indian subcontinent seem to share a pragmatic emphasis on either personal transcendence of or detachment from nature - at least as phenomenally manifested. That autistic indifference to natural phenomena does not provide, to my mind, the sort of affirmative, actively engaged moral attitude toward nature required for a *proper* environmental ethic (*ibid*, 123-25).

Callicott argues that ascetic Hindu and Jain traditions cannot contribute anything to environmental discourse because of their “indifference” to nature, revealed in their renunciation of it. In order to develop a *proper* environmental ethic, he asserts that “metaphysical foundations must be brought into alignment with ecology” and not the other way around (*ibid*, 117).

The renunciatory ethic of the philosophies of the Indian continent is, for Callicott, inhospitable to the growth of an “applied” environmental ethic. He argues that we have, for too long, been in the stage of critiquing the metaphysical ideas that have led us to the point of environmental crisis (e.g., Lynn White’s critique of the ideology of Christianity as the cause of the environmental crisis) (*ibid*, 117), and that now that this “criticism” stage is over, we should be actively searching for ethics that do work for the valuation and regeneration of the environment (*ibid*, 127). This ethic, as he states in the quote above, must be “world-affirming.” Thus, a “world-denying” ideology, as “pronounced in classical Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism” (*ibid*, 124) is inadequate for a refined environmental ethic. Rather, he challenges students of far Eastern thought (e.g., Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism) to contribute a to the literature of environmental ethics by stating, “Environmental ethics may provide a new forum for the introduction, exercise, and application of Oriental thought in a heretofore largely Occidental field” (*ibid*, 128). Thus, Callicott is open to the idea of melding Western environmentalism with varying religious discourses, as is evident in his assertion that Zen Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism might work in tandem with the applied ethics of ecology. However, he excludes the renunciatory traditions of “classical Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism” from this equation. For Callicott, these traditions are on the outskirts of environmental reform.

Cort, on the other hand, does acknowledge that Jainism is fluid, dynamic, complex, and “messy.” He is very much aware that there are and always have been multiple Jainisms in the past and in the present. He does not, however, do the same with regards to the concept of ecology. He asserts that it is

possible to *develop* a Jain environmental ethic, but that it would be “mistaken” (Cort in Chapple 2006: 68-69) to assert that Jainism is inherently ecological. Like Callicott, Cort argues that environmental discourse is a “relatively new episteme” (*ibid*, 66), which does not, he asserts, mean that Jains never thought about the environment or how to act towards it, but the “concept of environment/ecology/nature is a new episteme... raising questions and issues that Jains have not addressed in this particular way.... [Thus,] to speak of a “Jain environmental ethic” before the recent past is meaningless” (*ibid*, 66).

He continues his discussion by agreeing with the fact that Jainism has the potential to be an eco-friendly tradition, since Jainism is a tradition, like any other, that changes over time and place, but, he asserts, the traditional *mokṣa-marga* ideology is “not conducive to an environmental ethic” (*ibid*, 70). Rather, what is conducive to an environmental ethic is the layperson’s way-of-being in the world – namely, the realm of “wellbeing.” In essence, since laypersons do not renounce the world because they have not yet achieved this stage in their spiritual progress, they must seek harmony with the world. This realm of Jainism – e.g., “the realm of wellbeing”<sup>26</sup> – can be, according to Cort, conducive to an environmental ethic. On this basis, he provides Jains with steps to developing an environmental ethic that would be globally recognized as such.

The first task, he asserts, is historical. According to Cort, Jains must “speak honestly about the blemishes in their own history” regarding their contribution to the degradation of the environment (Cort in Chapple 2006: 68). He doubts whether any religious tradition has held, always and completely, favorable principles and practices for the well-being of the environment. Nevertheless, Jains, he says, must look at how they have understood and related to nature in the past, which, as I have presented in the first chapter, has primarily been one of “via negativa” - of keeping life “at bay” – rather than of engagement. Furthermore, Cort argues that Jains should investigate Jain narratives, myths, and histories, in order to get a clearer glimpse of how nature was understood throughout the history of the Jain tradition (*ibid*, 67-68). After having been completely “honest” about possible “blemishes” regarding Jain views of the natural world in the past, Cort asserts that Jains should “recover” narratives that can be used for an

environmental ethic. This is the second task. Thus, he does concede to the fact that some of the Jain tradition can *become* environmentally-minded, but he does not agree with the idea that it is and always has been ecological. Cort states: “[This search into the past] needs to remain intellectually honest. It must always remember what Jains *can do, might do, or should do* in the future... this is quite different from the language of many contemporary Jain enthusiasts who *mistakenly* convert these models into assertions that they represent what Jains *have done*” (*ibid*, 68-69, emphasis added).

An environmental ethic, for Cort, must necessarily be one of active engagement. Thus, the third task for Jains, he claims, is to engage in a reciprocal “interchange with the principles, practices, and worldview assumptions of environmentalists... [which should be] a cross-fertilizing process” (*ibid*, 69). He asserts that there should be no “mapping” of Jain principles onto environmental discourse and vice versa. However, for Cort, “the *mokṣa-marga* ideology is not very conducive to the development of an environmental ethic. At its heart is the goal of permanent separation of the soul from all matter. In such a dualist ideology positive environmental results are largely incidental” (*ibid*, 70). Therefore, the Orthodox and Neo-Orthodox Jain assertion that “quarantining life” necessarily has a positive end result, whereby harm is avoided, is not conducive to an environmental ethic because the positive effects for the environment are not intentional, or, rather, are “largely incidental.” Nevertheless, Cort does not exclude all Jain beliefs and practices from the increasingly and globally important environmental discourses.

For Cort, some principles and practices can be easily *reinterpreted* to fit a global environmental ethic. He asserts that *sāmāyika* (mindfulness), *aparigraha* (non-possession), the five *samitis* (rules of conduct), and the Jain ritual prayer of *pratikramana* (confession), and, most importantly, *ahimsa*, can be used as positive tools in remedying the contemporary environmental crisis. Traditional Jain understandings of these concepts, however, are not inherently ecological - they must be reinterpreted to “fit” the ecological episteme, which, he claims, arose “out of a set of physical [e.g., biology], technological, and increasingly moral and intellectual challenges of the past several centuries, but has attained its position as a distinct field of inquiry – an episteme – only within the past several decades” (*ibid*, 66). Hence, like Callicott, Cort asserts that an ascetic tradition can never be environmentally

friendly, since, for Cort, “ecology” is a new concept. “It is only recently that the various religions have had to question their sources with regard to the explosion in numbers of people and their consumption of the earth’s resources at a rate that threatens to exhaust its life sustaining capacity” (Coward in Cort 2006: 66). And yet, as we have seen, Jains themselves contend that there is nothing fundamentally “new” about ecology in Jainism. To the contrary, environmental discourse in terms of “protection through non-interference” has always been part and parcel of the Jain way of being in the world.

***Analysis: The Symbolic-Interpretivist Approach to the Meaningful “Green” World of Jains***

The very title of Cort’s article, namely “Green Jainism?” is incompatible with the world of contemporary Jains. Yet, Cort does acknowledge the dynamic nature of religious traditions. He states: “[I]deology is presented as a timeless, universal truth, and so its proponents resist the notion that it can ever change or need to be changed. Changes that do occur,” he argues, “are interpreted as simply restatements of earlier formulations or clearer perceptions of the truth” (2001:10). When Cort argues against the eco-friendliness of Jainism, he sets a boundary between Jainism and ecology. But, for Jains themselves, an ecological and animal rights ethic in the Jain tradition is very much a reality.

Traditional Jain ideology is certainly world-negating rather than world-affirming. In this, Callicott and Cort are accurate in their description of Orthodox Jainism. They are not, however, accurate in asserting that Jain doctrine somehow advocates apathy toward the living world. On the contrary, traditional Jain ideology describes a world full of suffering and pain in which all beings must live out their karmic past, present, and future in the hopes of someday achieving *mokṣa*. Realizing that “we are all in this mess together,” traditional Jain doctrine asks its followers to exercise empathy and not apathy with other living beings. Mehta, referencing Derrida’s work on the dialogical nature of living with the non-human other, confirms my point:

In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Jacques Derrida discusses being in the world, together *with* living beings.[3] He criticizes the simplification of animal life that takes place as a result of the distinction between man as a thinking animal and every other living species. "The animal is

there before me, there next to me, there in front of me -- I who am (following) after it. And also, therefore, since it is before me, it is behind me. It surrounds me" (Derrida, 11). Derrida addresses the complicated interconnection, pluralism, difference and multiplicity of beings, offering a term "animot," as a pseudo-remedy to the violence that labeling living beings as "animal" commits.... In Jain philosophy, we are *being with* and in relation to different life forms, in many different ways, through and within specific life cycles. Ian Hacking talks about having sympathy *with*, rather than *for* animals in "On Sympathy: With Other Creatures," insisting that we look at the animal with "a whole gamut of emotions," as a whole (Mehta, Reality Sandwich).

It is this relatedness with other living beings, both human and non-human, which includes earth, air, fire, and water bodies, that, out sympathy for souls still trapped in a world full of pain and suffering, Jain Orthodoxy propounds avoidance. Jain ideology not only advocates "avoidance" plain and simple, but avoidance of *harm* - an important emphasis which Callicott and Cort do not adequately address. As mentioned above, Cort considers it incidental (Cort in Chapple 2006: 70). This emphasis on avoidance of harm is observable in Jain practices such as *gocarī* and through the use of objects such as the *muhpatti*.<sup>27</sup> As previously mentioned, since all living beings suffer and feel pain, and since each action will affect every action of every living being, it is important, according to traditional Jain doctrine, that we all protect each other from harm by not interfering on each other's paths. Thus, even though the ultimate goal may be to reach liberation, the means of getting there can be said to be compatible with an environmental ethic – though not in the traditional Western sense of active engagement.

In fact, as demonstrated in the second chapter, though the word "ecology" is certainly context-sensitive, the presence of this concept in Jain doctrine is, to many Jains, obvious. Ecology is typically defined in secular terms as a branch of biology "that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and their physical surroundings" (Apple Dictionary entry). Jain ethics are profoundly attuned to such interrelationships, and their central motto "*parasparopagraho jīvānām*" (all beings support each other) is testimony to this. Indeed, as I have argued throughout this thesis, the blending of animal rights and environmental discourse with Jain ideology, is just one of many ways in which Jains make their lives relevant and meaningful in the modern context. Even Cort (in Chapple 2006: 91n28) acknowledges the fact that ecologists can barely agree on a concrete definition of ecology, nor can they agree on what can

be considered beneficial practices for the environment.

Yet, he still asserts that if Jains wish to be environmentally engaged, they must research the “sub-epistememes of environmental thought” (*ibid*, 72). Implied here is that if Jains truly want to *develop* a *proper* and *scientific* environmental ethic, they must be made aware of the multifarious nature of debates about the environment, which include various sub-epistememes. One of these sub-epistememes is “deep ecology.” Briefly, Deep Ecology, a term coined by Arne Naess in 1973, refers to the idea that all life has worth in its own right (Devall and Sessions 2010: 454). “So-called simple, lower, or primitive species of plants and animals contribute essentially to the richness and diversity of life. They have value in themselves and are not merely steps toward the so-called higher or rational life forms” (*ibid*, 457). In addition to associating value to nature in and of itself, Deep Ecology stresses the interconnection of all life. “The foundations of deep ecology are the basic intuitions and experiencing of ourselves and Nature which comprise ecological consciousness” (*ibid*, 454). It questions what it means to be human in relation to the natural world, while perceiving no “sharp breaks” between the human self and the non-human other (*ibid*, 454). As discussed in the first chapter, while Jain doctrine does perceive a difference between humans and non-humans in terms of their bodies, it does not in terms of their essence or soul, and emphasizes, similar to Deep Ecology, the interconnections between all life. This notion is expressed in the central Jain aphorism, “*parasparopagraho jīvānām*” (*Tattvārtha Sūtra* 1994:131), which translates as “All life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence.”

In fact, though souls in non-human bodies are said to be more occluded by karma than souls in human bodies, Jain doctrine still asserts that all living beings possess a soul *equal* to all other souls – each carrying within them the potential to reach the ultimate goal of liberation. All beings, therefore, necessarily have non-instrumental value in themselves – an attitude towards the natural world that is central to Deep Ecology. The differences between Deep Ecology and Jainism are, however, significant: For Jainism, all life has intrinsic individual value that should not be violated. Each being is an individual with an eternal soul. Deep Ecology, by contrast, argues that individualism is a false metaphysic, and

there is no such thing as individuals - only living systems. Value resides within the whole, and each part plays a role in enriching the ecosystem. Nonetheless, despite this important difference, the similarities between the two discourses in terms of the non-instrumental value of all life, is apparent.

Cort's statement regarding the meaninglessness of speaking of a Jain environmental ethic before the recent past (e.g., before it developed in the West), is problematic from a Jain perspective. If, as he has asserted in a separate article (2001: 10), ideology is perceived as being timeless and always relevant from an insider's perspective, then the assertion that Jainism is inherently ecological is not at all meaningless - at least, not for Jains who are promulgating this idea. It is not meaningless because the discourse itself has provided Jains, in India and abroad, with a meaningful place for them and their tradition in the world today. They are living their lives *as Jains*, meaningfully and with integrity, making meaning in the world as it presents itself to them.

Scholars, such as Michael Tobias, who depict Jainism as a panacea for the world's ills, while rather romantic and uncritical, are accorded authority by members of the Jain community - which further demonstrates the meaningfulness of the hybridizing of two seemingly opposing discourses for many Jains. Valley confirms my point:

Jainism and environmentalism do share much in common.... Indeed, Jain ethics (both in the diaspora and traditionally) are deeply concerned about relationships with the nonhuman environment, reflecting an ontology whereby moral value is constituted, above all else, through interactions [either avoidance or engagement] with "nature." Its ethical commitment to the avoidance of harm to all life-forms, however this is reasoned, offers an important restorative to views which treat nature as a mere backdrop for human activity, as are common within the Judaeo-Christian tradition" (Valley in Chapple 2006: 194).

Hence, while scholars such as Callicott and Cort negate the possibility of an inherent ecological ethic in Jainism, Valley supports my argument that these scholars approach the subject of a "Jain environmental ethic" with specific ideas of "Jainism" and "Ecology" in mind.

The ecological discourse we know today stems from previous ideas and notions about the environment which philosophers, physical scientists, and social scientists in the West deemed to be

beneficial to the environment - it is not altogether “new.” As previously discussed, Callicott affirms that the environmental ethics of the 1970s stemmed from Romantic ideas of the “East” amongst the Beatnik generation, and yet these ideas from the “East” were modified to fit the context of the West. It is therefore futile to try to assert the origins of the concept of ecology, just as it is misleading to exclude Orthodox Jain doctrine from the equation.

Contemporary religious traditions are redefining and reinterpreting old texts as “really more environmentally minded than they seemed at first glance,” all the while perceiving this reinterpretation to be part of their timeless tradition - to be “clearer perceptions of the truth” (Cort 2001: 10). Indeed, it is almost impossible in a global world to discover the origin of ideas in a particular place and time. What is important to understand is how these concepts change over time and place, and how they provide meaning to those who use them. The parallels with Feminism, which I discussed earlier, are again relevant here.

Although the term “feminism” originated in the “West” and “specifically [in] France” (Badran, Al-Ahram Weekly Online, 2008), it is not a purely Western concept. “Feminisms,” says Badran, “are produced in particular places and are articulated in local terms.... Yet despite a large literature in many languages documenting these globally scattered feminisms... some still speak of a “Western feminism” in essentialist, monolithic, and static terms” (*ibid*). Of course, one could argue that these “Western” concepts were imposed onto “other” cultures by scholars who, unavoidably, interpreted the “other” from a Western feminist’s lens, and yet one could also argue that the English term “feminism” was used to describe actual observed practices (see Howell 2005)<sup>28</sup> – an argument I have been making throughout this chapter regarding the concept of a “Jain ecology.” Most fundamentally, from the perspective of symbolic-anthropology, we must recognize that the Jain notions of the non-human animal and the environment are important principles providing Jains with a unique way of being and acting in and

towards the contemporary world.

After all, Jains who are actively melding environmentalism and animal rights discourse with traditional Jain doctrine are not passive victims of Western imposition. As demonstrated in the second chapter, they are forthrightly asserting the inherent eco-friendliness of their tradition with their own unique “Jain” interpretation of ecology, which is, in any case, not foreign to its Western interpretation - an indication of the dialogical nature of ideas in a world that has moreover become “one place and one time” (Robertson in Thomas 2007: 36). Of course, the “live and let live” ethos of world-renouncing Jains is not without its problems for the community itself, as seen in my discussion of the controversy within the Jain world over the prohibition against euthanizing sick animals in *pinjrapoles*. What is important is that we take Jains seriously in their presentation of Jainism as ecological and, therefore, relevant in the modern world.

### **“The Western World, It is Exploding” – Romantic Portrayals of the East**

*This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, which is a compendium of articles written by environmentalists, theologians, and faith groups on the ecology of various religions, from, for example, Judaism, to Islam, to Hinduism, in addition to selections from religious texts, such as the *Qur'an* and the *Tao Te Ching*, demonstrates the global and inter-cultural/inter-religious nature of hybridizing religions with environmental and animal rights discourses. However, for the most part, this text provides the reader with a Western Romantic vision of these traditions and of nature. In effect, the works of highly influential nature poets of the nineteenth century, such as Wordsworth, Thoreau, and Emerson, are positioned at the outset of this text. Certainly, these aforementioned authors, among others, have informed Western Romantic visions of human oneness with nature - especially during the 1960s counterculture. Many of the authors in this text argue that “Eastern” religious traditions are useful resources in remedying the environmental crisis, whereas the “dominion” or “conquest” disposition of the Abrahamic faiths, especially Christianity, has been and is detrimental to the environment - an argument

Tobias makes throughout his book *Life Force: The World of Jainism*.

Certainly, the assertion of the equality of all living beings is in stark contrast to the ways in which the “West” traditionally relates to non-human animals, namely by “mastery” or “dominion” over objects, or “unconscious automata,” as Descartes described them, without souls. It is therefore not surprising, as Callicott affirms, that early environmentalists in the 1970s focused their attention on criticizing “the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition” (Callicott 1987: 117). “The great Western religions born of monotheism,” says Callicott, “have been the major source of our moral attitudes. It is from them that we have developed the preoccupation with the uniqueness of man, with justice and compassion” (*ibid*, 117). Nevertheless, Callicott asserts that this focus on Western religious traditions as the sole contributors to environmental degradation is simplistic (*ibid*, 117), and, with this, I strongly agree. Authors such as Lynn White, Giorgio Agamben, and, as we shall see below, Michael Tobias, while not mistaken in their assertions that the Western ethos of dominion has contributed to the abuse of the non-human world, are mistaken in pinpointing the West as the sole author of these problems. In the modern and inescapably global world, industrialization, urbanization, and thus denigration of the environment is unavoidably a global problem.

In essence, both “East” and “West” have been engaging in activities that are detrimental and beneficial for the environment. “During the twentieth century,” says Cort, “most Jains have wholeheartedly embraced the values of global industrial and postindustrial capitalism, and have thereby contributed significantly to environmental and social degradation” (Cort in Chapple 2006: 79). He further asserts that there existed and still exist Jain voices, both in India and in the diaspora, who are calling for social, economic, and environmental justice. These various voices in various Jain contexts are demonstrative of the messiness of culture, revealing the impossibility of homogenizing a tradition: one cannot assert that all Jains are concerned for the environment any more than claiming they are apathetic to the environmental cause.

Yet, new experiences contribute to new interpretations, which is certainly the case for Jains in both India and in the diaspora. The Embassy of India’s website asserts that India “has achieved all-round

socio-economic progress during the last 62 years of its Independence. India has become self-sufficient in agricultural production and is now one of the top industrialized countries in the world and one of the few nations to have gone into outer space to conquer nature for the benefit of the people” (National Portal of India: Government of India, India at a Glance). These new developments, along with the building of eight new slaughterhouses in Uttar Pradesh at the behest of the Indian government, have certainly contributed to the growing stress on environmentalism and animal rights by many Jains in both India and abroad. This emphasis on an activist stance towards ecological issues and animal rights, for Michael Tobias, however, is part and parcel of Orthodox Jain doctrine.

### ***Jainism, A Pioneer of Ecology - Tobias' Perspective***

At the outset of his work, Tobias asserts that Jains grew up with ecological concepts “which I, a Westerner,” says Tobias, “have only more recently struggled to understand” (1991: 3). In this, he implicitly argues that Jains, and not the West, are the pioneers of ecology. The “reverence for life” ethic, which is *unique to Jainism*, he says, is something that is possible for all human beings to experience, since we all have “an innate desire to nurture and cherish that which is all around us” (*ibid*, 2). Unfortunately, we [e.g., the Western world] seem to have forgotten this fact in our destruction of the earth. “Jainism,” therefore, “is a momentous example to all of us that there can, and does exist a successful, ecologically responsible way of life which is abundantly non-violent in thought, action and deed” (*ibid*, 6).

According to Tobias, the “ethos of horror” of the West is in sharp contrast to the ethos of “peace and love” of the Jains (*ibid*, 11). The promulgation of war, animal abuse and murder, and the killing of animals in factory farms is solely a product of the West (*ibid*, 9). “The Jains,” on the other hand, “have modelled themselves after a vision of nature that favors peace and love over war and hatred, and they have envisioned - indeed, realized - a major world religion whose guiding tenet is the heartfelt aspiration” (*ibid*, 11). Indeed, the common practice of building animal shelters for sick and injured animals is an

ancient practice that is demonstrative of Jain compassion for non-human animals. “Jainism’s accessible genius is this total embrace of the earth - so ancient, so contemporary” (*ibid*, 15). The very ancientness of the Jain tradition and its ultimate doctrine of non-violence is, for Tobias, proof that this tradition established the concept of ecology.

He asserts that *ahimsa* (non-violence) which is the foundational concept for respecting the environment and animals, is about minimizing pain to non-human others (*ibid*, 31). Tobias claims that traditional Jain doctrine propounds non-interference *for the sake of the animal other*. He claims:

The Jains say that no individual should interfere in another’s life; that absolute non-interference is the beginning of compassion. This sequence of events may seem cockeyed. We [e.g., Westerners] are so conditioned to thinking in terms of Peace Corps analogies; peace-keeping forces; the Red Cross; Amnesty International; Greenpeace; People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals; Earth First!; Green parties; the World Wildlife Fund; the Nature Conservancy of organizations, political movements and individuals who stick their necks out in order to save an animal, preserve a community, or spare an entire ecosystem (*ibid*, 36).

Hence, Tobias questions whether the ‘ethos of engagement’ of contemporary Western environmentalism is necessarily the only, or even beneficial, way in which we can remedy the environmental crisis. In Jainism, which, Tobias argues, is the pioneer of the concept of ecology, protection through non-interference is more advantageous to the preservation of natural world than actively engaging in it.

This protection through non-interference, Tobias claims, is evident in the occupational restrictions imposed upon lay Jains. He states: “There are actually fifteen occupations which are considered “cruel,” and are absolutely forbidden. They are a livelihood involving charcoal, wood, carts, transport fees, hewing, animal by-products, insect secretions (shellac), alcohol, trade in human beings or animals, poisonous articles... activities that involve milling, mutilation, fire, the draining of swamps or lakes or the diverting of rivers, and a livelihood deriving from the propagation of anti-social behavior” (*ibid*, 58). Thus, by not harming anything in the first place, we can, asserts Tobias, save the environment from harm. “Jain civilization,” he argues, “has achieved what is normally called progress without making a mess of its environment or particularly harming other beings” (*ibid*, 59).

Indeed, the ideal of Jainism, which propounds non-action in the world, requires “extreme control

of the senses” and “extreme mindfulness” (Jaini 1998: 247). The Jain monk or nun must take the *appropriate* action in limiting action. He or she must gradually reduce the “activities of mind, body and speech” (*ibid*, 247). Just thinking about harming life, about lying, or stealing, or having sexual intercourse, results in karma for the ascetic. Thus, “there are 28 *Mula-gunas*, or ascetical vows, that must be continually embraced, and all of them encompassed within the broadest definition of ahimsa. The vows stipulate care - care in everything one does (*samitis*), from begging, to walking, even care in the observance of the call of nature” (Tobias 1991: 93). “The approach to liberation [in Jainism] is,” claims Tobias, “a humane one, ever mindful of its reason for being: the protection of other life forms” (*ibid*, 93). Therefore, Tobias asserts that Jains have long thought about and enacted the environmental ethic debated and practiced by Western environmentalists today. He states: “[The] green party environmentalism [of the] late twentieth century, was prescribed three thousand years ago by the followers of the Jinas” (*ibid*, 69).

***Analysis: Tobias - The Western Voice of Neo-Orthodox and Eco-Conscious Jains***

In contradistinction to Callicott and Cort, who argue that a soteriological tradition cannot be inherently ecological, Tobias asserts that Jainism is eco-friendly and, in fact, that it was the first tradition to devise this concept. Tobias is, therefore, on the other end of the spectrum of Romantic portrayal of Jains and the Jain tradition. In essence, Tobias asserts that the ecology of the Western world is a kind of adulteration of the three thousand year old ecological principles of Jainism. Thus, he too, like Callicott and Cort, essentializes the concept of ecology. While Orthodox Jain doctrine can be interpreted as ecological in terms of its ‘live and let live’ ethos, an argument I have made in the second chapter, it is important not to conflate this with the Western activist form prevalent among contemporary Western environmentalists and, to a certain extent, young Diaspora Jains. Dundas confirms my point: “While it might well be the case that Jainism has throughout its history developed certain insights that could be profitably deployed within the environmentalist debate, I am, broadly speaking, unhappy with the

attempt... to compel a traditional soteriological path originally mapped out for world-renouncing ascetics to fit the requirements of modern, ultimately secular, Western-derived agenda” (Dundas in Chapple 2006: 111).

Interestingly, Tobias does not discuss the reasoning behind the Orthodox Jain doctrine of non-interference or, more importantly, its relation to Jain taxonomy and the theory of karma. The division between animality and humanity is certainly apparent in the Jain hierarchy of beings. Orthodox Jain doctrine does not provide non-human animals with an elevated status. Yet, animals are deemed to have the potential to eventually reach *mokṣa* because their souls are equal to the ones that are trapped in human bodies. Nonetheless, non-human animals are not representative of the ideal body within Orthodox Jainism since they are so obstructed with karmic matter that their actions are never mediated by self-discipline and therefore necessarily violent. Valley confirms my point: “[A]nimals... are quintessentially “eaters”. Significantly, *mokṣa* is described as a state of “not consuming” (*anāhārī pad*); a state of bliss attainable only when one is outside the violent and meaningless cycle of eating and being eaten.... [E]ffectively, they [e.g., animals] are their bodies. As such, they serve as a type of negative witnesses to the truth of Jainism, which insists upon the experience of body and world estrangement as the first step to liberation” (2011: 20). Thus, “*Ahimsā Paramo Dharma* (‘nonviolence is the supreme religion’) is [not only] a commitment to nonharm that extends well beyond one’s own kin to include all sensory beings.... but also [an]...apprehension [of the natural world]” (*ibid*, 9).

To conflate the form of “ecology” of the soteriological path of Jainism with Western environmental discourse, or to assert that Jains were the first to develop this ethic - something which Tobias affirms in his text – is inaccurate. Though it is theoretically possible, the search for the origins of “ecology,” whether from the critical perspective of Cort and Callicott or from the Romantic perspective of Tobias, is futile. Nonetheless, what is important to acknowledge is that Jains often quote Tobias to support their arguments that Jainism is, first and foremost, a tradition with great concerns for the environment. In fact, in a packet provided to students at the *International Summer School for Jain Studies*, an article written by N.P. Jain quotes the following passage from Tobias (1991: 5): “Jainism is a

momentous example to all of us that there can, and does exist a successful, ecologically responsible way of life which is abundantly non-violent in thought, action and deed” (2007: 5). One of the main assertions made by Tobias in his book is that Jainism is the pioneer of environmental ethics, an assertion further emphasized by Mehta (2007: 1).

As Chapter 2 has demonstrated, the composite of Jainism-ecology is a very important identity marker for many Jains across the globe, which therefore explains the popularity of Tobias’ writings among these members of the Jain community. In effect, Tobias, reinforces the demarcating symbol of the moral treatment of non-human animals and the environment as being the defining marker of what it means to be “Jain.” For many Jains, this identity exists in contradistinction to “Western animal-abusing other.” Indeed, as Valley asserts, there is an understanding of the Western world as being rampant with “voracious meat-eaters” (Valley 2002: 11). While most of the Western world consists of meat-eating cultures, this depiction of the West also suffers from reification and inaccuracy because Tobias, like many Jains, is too quick to judge the capacity, or rather the incapacity, of Western thought to suggest remedies to these unfortunate issues. *PETA, Help In Suffering, the Society for the Protection of Cruelty against Animals, Green Peace*, and various *Humane Societies*, were, after all, founded by so-called Westerners.

Tobias does, of course, mention that Westerners have thought about environmental degradation and animal abuse. In his critique of the exclusion of Orthodox Jain thought from environmental discourse, he lists various institutions in the West dedicated to these causes. When Tobias argues that protection through non-interference seems “cockeyed” to Westerners because we are so used to thinking in terms of terms of “Peace Corps analogies,” or of “stick[ing] [our] necks out in order to save an animal, preserve a community, or spare an entire ecosystem,” he reiterates what I have been arguing contra Cort and Callicott – namely, that we cannot map Western environmental ethics onto Jainism by critiquing Jain assertions that their tradition is ecological. However, Tobias’ claim that Jains grow up with ecological concepts while Westerners, usually, do not, is also problematic. In essence, he too reifies Jainism and

ecology by asserting that Orthodox Jain principles have always led to a favorable relationship between Jains and their environment.

The danger of this reification of “Eastern” and “Western” practices in regards to the environment is further demonstrated in Tobias’ film *Ahimsa - Non-violence* (1987). Much like his text, which is, in fact, an extension of the film, there is a denunciation of Western practices as detrimental to the environment and a Romantic portrayal of Jain belief and practice in its “love” of nature. In one scene, men are shown roughly throwing sheep, ready for slaughter, onto the back of a truck. In the tradition of Western animal rights groups, such as *PETA*, Tobias uses very evocative language in order to further demonize the practices: The sheep are said to have no water and, in effect, will never drink again. They are packed “like sardines” into the back of a truck to be driven “500 miles to be slaughtered” (Tobias 1987). Jains, according to Tobias, frequent these markets in order to save these animals from inevitable slaughter - paying any price necessary to achieve this.

Tobias’ essentializing of the West as an “ethos of horror,” whereby war, animal abuse, and animal consumption are prevalent, versus the Jain “ethos of peace and love” is reminiscent of nineteenth century Europeans’ disaffection with their own context in favor of the idealized “Orient.” Writing on the nineteenth century phenomena of Indophilia, J.J. Clarke mentions that the reifying of the Eastern “other” stemmed “not primarily in a spirit of objective scholarship, even less through a desire to understand contemporary India, but rather as an instrument for the subversion and reconstruction of European civilisation... it was deployed primarily as a means of treating what were seen as deep-seated ills at the heart of contemporary European culture” (Clarke 1997: 60). This “idealisation and distortion” (*ibid*, 60) of the East is exactly the problematic issue of the perceived “idyllic paradise” (*ibid*, 60) that Tobias has of Jainism. Jainism, like all traditions, is a far more complex phenomenon.

Although many Jains, especially young Diaspora Jains, are very much involved in an ethic of activism in the plight for environmental renewal and for animal rights, it does not mean that all young Diaspora Jains are interested in these issues. Moreover, Orthodox and Neo-Orthodox Jains in India, who are promoting a Jain environmental ethic and compassion towards animals, are not using the exact same

discourse of Western animal and environmental activists - this is much nearer the discourse of Diaspora Jains. Instead, the ethos of “live and let live,” which is, in effect, an ethos of avoidance rather than engagement, is disseminated as “Jain ecology.”

Neither Tobias’ assertion that Jains pioneered ecology, a statement which stems from a Western and idealized portrait of the Jain principle of non-violence, nor Cort’s assertion that traditional Jain doctrine can never be interpreted as inherently ecological are both misrepresentations of the multifarious realities of *Jainisms* and *ecologies*. In essence, both authors argue at two opposing sides of the “ecology” spectrum, though Tobias’ Romantic portrayal of Jainism as inherently ecological certainly resonates more with members of the Jain community worldwide than does Cort’s critique. After all, Jaini says Jaini, “appear to have outlined a path of nonviolence that would allow a lay adherent to conduct his daily life with human dignity while permitting him to cope with the unavoidable reality of the world in which violence is all-pervasive” (Jaini in Sethia 2004: 59-60). The acted out principles of the compassionate treatment of non-human animals and the environment, which provides a meaningful worldview for several Jains in a world that is becoming ever more aware of both animal rights and environmental discourses, has, in the debate discussed in this chapter, become the battlefield upon which preconceived notions of ecology are contended. For Jains, however, this is a non issue - Jainism *is* ecological.

## Conclusion

### The Anthropology of Meaningfulness

The anthropology of religion, an important subfield within cultural anthropology, focuses on ‘religious’ dimensions of human life in order to better understand the human project. It is a field that incorporates multiple disciplines in order to explain that which is most complex and ambiguous, namely ‘humanity,’ and it has itself undergone several marked transformations since its appearance as a field of study in the late nineteenth century. Today, it contains both nomothetic and idiographic streams: those that aim at establishing scientific laws, and those that seek after meaningfulness. Scholars like Roy D’Andrade and Melford E. Spiro argue for the need of general scientific theories in the field of anthropology. Clifford Geertz argues that anthropology is not “an experimental science in search of a law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (1973: 5). This thesis is firmly rooted in an interpretivist approach. It has endeavored to explore the different, yet overlapping, meaningful world constructions of Orthodox, Neo-Orthodox, and Eco-Conscious Jains through their understanding of “nature.” Hence, from a symbolic anthropological perspective, it has been argued that it is important to be open to the fact that Jains are not attempting the impossible in their association of two seemingly opposing discourses, but are in fact making their tradition modern, relevant, and meaningful.

Scholarly debates about the inherency of ecology to the Jain tradition are, after all, ultimately just that – scholarly debates. They have little relevancy for those engaged in their tradition. The interpretivist approach of Geertz forces us to take seriously Jain ideas of ecology and to accept that ecology can be thought of in a variety of ways. According to Geertz, “thick description” allows the anthropologist to look at the “interconnected pattern of ideas, motives, and activities that we call a culture” and explain them within their own context (*ibid*, 265). Geertz argues that in describing not only what happens, but also “what people *intend* by what happens” (*ibid*, 267), scholars will discover *something* worth writing about (*ibid*, 20). Indeed, this thesis has endeavored to demonstrate how the natural world has provided symbolic substance for the representation of what it means to be Jain, both in the past and in the

present.

As discussed in Chapter 3, in their exclusion of Orthodox Jain doctrine from the ecological equation, Cort and Callicott have, in effect, imposed a narrow definition on what is a fluid concept of ecology by emphasizing active social engagement in the world as its defining trait. Nonetheless, though the *word* ‘ecology’ is certainly context-sensitive, the presence of the *concept* of ecology in Jain doctrine is fundamental and obvious to most Jains. Indeed, many Jains today are answering the question “Who is a Jain?” by stating that a Jain is someone who cares deeply for the environment and cares for animals – whether through active engagement or avoidance of harm. The difference depends greatly on the closeness to traditional Jain ideology and to Jain representations of this ideology - namely, the ascetics.

In sum, this thesis began with the exploration of the Orthodox renunciatory ethic of Jainism. I discussed how Jains traditionally understood the very real experiences of pain, suffering, and death common to both the human and the non-human world, whereby the ultimate goal was to escape the endless and meaningless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. This approach to the world, which is further explained in Jain karma theory, necessarily entails complete renunciation of the natural world and, more importantly, of action in the natural world. Harm to living beings, whether done intentionally or unintentionally, would guarantee one unfortunate rebirth into *samsara*. Thus, the conventional relationship of Jains to the natural world is one of ‘via negativa,’ of ‘keeping life at bay’ or, even, of ‘quarantining life.’

However, compassion for animals and the natural world is present in Orthodox Jainism. The prominence of animal shelters as part and parcel of the Jain landscape attests to this. Moreover, avoidance of nature can actually be beneficial for the natural world. The ‘reverence for life’ ethic of Jain soteriology necessarily results in the *avoidance of harm*. Reverence, or rather, great respect for life, in this case, does not entail actively engaging in saving the non-human from harm, but in sympathizing at a distance. As Valley asserts, “This Jain ‘way of being’ might be fruitfully characterized as one of sympathy - not in the sense of being tenderhearted - but in the sense of the word that accentuates its receptive and responsive connotations: being Jain means being receptive or alert, to

the omnipresence of the activities of life, in order to be effectively responsive to the universal requirements of all beings” (*ibid*, 3). In other words, the “shared condition of *jīvas*,” trapped in this world, leads Jains to engage in commiseration with the rest of the natural world because, like humans, all living beings suffer, experience pain, and die and will continue to do so until they have ‘awakened’ to their miserable state.

The thesis, in Chapters 2 and 3, elaborated upon the modern expressions of Jainism (Neo-Orthodox and Eco-Consciousness) and their understanding of nature. It is through the Jain ethos of protection through avoidance that Neo-Orthodox Jains affirm Jainism as inherently ecological. In keeping with tradition, many contemporary Jains holding to the renunciatory ethic are also cross-pollinating their tradition with ideas about the depletion of natural resources, animal rights, and global warming. However, they are not actively engaging in the same sense as a Western activist or an Eco-Conscious Diaspora Jain might be. Rather, they are reinterpreting ‘old’ world values as “really more environmentally minded than they seemed at first glance,” all the while perceiving this reinterpretation to be part of their timeless tradition - to be “clearer perceptions of the truth” (Cort 2001: 10). As Dundas asserts, “Neo-Orthodoxy... presents itself as modern and progressive, with an emphasis on those aspects of Jainism which can be interpreted as scientific and rational and can therefore be accommodated to and encompass Western modes of thought” (2002: 273). Certainly, asserting the relevance of ancient Jain principles in the modern world provides Neo-Orthodox Jains with the sense that Jainism is and always will be a meaningful religious tradition.

For many “Eco-Conscious” or “green” Jains in the diaspora, however, the emphasis on renunciation is no longer plausible or compelling. Indeed, the re-negotiation of the “Jain diet” in the diaspora is demonstrative of the socio-centric values indicating a concern for non-human animals, which is vastly different from the soteriological values acted out in the symbol of *gocarī*, or Jain almsgiving. Both are meaningful ways of relating to the natural world and of being Jain. Indeed, they are both modern and relevant in their respective contexts and for whichever self-asserted Jains deem them relevant

for themselves and for the environment.

Eco-Conscious Diaspora Jains as skilled cultural navigators, have effectively melded the renunciatory ethic of traditional Jainism with the activism of Western animal rights and environmentalism. Their emphasis is not on world renunciation but on the renunciation of modern exploitative practices. And they actively promote animal rights and environmental regeneration. Born into a context that promotes social engagement, these young Jains are constructing their identities through the renunciation of harmful foods - such as dairy - for the sake of the animal other. Indeed, food is *the* medium through which they are communicating this active political stance against institutions like factory farms. The emphasis on being “green” is a new way of affirming Jain identity in the modern world.

These multifarious, yet overlapping, Jain discourses demonstrate the ways in which Jains in varying contexts are asserting their identity using the treatment of the non-human as a demarcating notion of what it means to be Jain. Indeed, the various ways in which Jains are doing this provides an example of the messiness of all traditions. Therefore, any attempt at questioning the validity of any of these particular Jain understandings of themselves and the world would be, from the symbolic-interpretivist approach, to focus on the wrong issue. The symbolic-interpretivist approach treats the “insider” or “emic” perspective as the most valid one to explore when one does not seek to explain a phenomenon according to a particular theory or concept; but instead seeks after meaningfulness, which can only be derived from within the tradition itself. Geertz writes: “[U]nderstanding a people’s culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity” (1973: 14). Indeed, the key principles of animals and nature have long allowed Jains to assert the relevancy of their tradition. The “ecology of avoidance” is a new and valid way for Neo-Orthodox Jains to both perceive the environment and reaffirm their Jainness, just as the “ecology of engagement” is a new and valid way for Eco-Conscious Jains to do the same. The relevancy of these discourses today, and, more importantly, their astoundingly similarity to Orthodox Jain doctrine, has allowed Jains to live their tradition in a meaningful way.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Image source: eJainism, <http://www.ejainism.com/jainsymbols.html> [accessed August 3, 2011] (see also Jaini 1998: 128 for a similar rendition of the Jain cosmos).

<sup>2</sup> Two major sects exist in Jainism. They are the Digambara ('sky-clad') and Śvetambara (white-clad) Jains. Several other sub-sects exist within these two overarching groups. As their name would suggest, one of the main dividing factors relates to whether the wearing of clothes is an obstruction to liberation. The Digambaras, perceiving violence in the making of clothing, as well as shame and, therefore, attachment to the body in wearing clothes, believe that clothing will lead one off the path to *mokṣa*. The Śvetambaras, however, do not see a problem in wearing clothing. Other separating factors include debates over the potential for women to reach spiritual perfection, and over whether the *kevalin*, "the fully omniscient being, experiences hunger and needs to take physical nourishment" (Dundas 2002: 45; see also Jaini 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Image source: eJainism, <http://www.ejainism.com/jainsymbols.html> [accessed August 3, 2011]

<sup>4</sup> Jaini (1998: 119) explains that anger (*krodha*) and pride (*māna*) are subdivisions of the passion of attachment, while deceitful manipulation (*māyā*) and greed (*lobha*) are products of desire.

<sup>5</sup> "Tying, "smearing," and "staining" are some of the adjectives that are used to "convey the negative role karma plays in Jain ontology." See Dundas, Paul. 1992. *The Jains*. Routledge, New York, 97.

<sup>6</sup> This turn of phrase is taken from Laidlaw's (2005) article "A life worth leaving: fasting to death as telos of a Jain religious life."

<sup>7</sup> The fourteen *guṇasthānas*, or stages to purification, are: "(1) *Mithyādrṣṭi*: wrong views; (2) *Sāsvādāna*: mixed taste; (3) *Samyak-mithyātva*: state of transition from the first to the fourth *guṇasthāna* and vice versa; (4) *Samyak-drṣṭi*: right view (5) *Deśa-virata*: stage of the Jain layperson after receiving the minor vows; (6) *Sarva-virata*: stage of the mendicant after receiving the great vows or *mahāvratas*; (7) *Apramatta-virata*: state in which carelessness, the third cause of bondage, is overcome; (8) *Apūrva-karaṇa*, (9) *Anivṛtti-karaṇa*, and (10) *Sūkṣma-sāmparāya*: three stages where secondary passions, such as laughter, pleasure or displeasure in sense activities (e.g., eating), fear, disgust, and sexual cravings can be eliminated; (11) *Upasānta-moha*: suppression, and not elimination of the *saṃjvalana* passions (e.g., apathy in meditation and causing subtle attachment to life; (12) *Kṣīṇa-moha*: state in which *saṃjvalana* passions are eliminated and, thus, all deluding (*mohanīya*) karma. Thus, *kaṣāya*, or passion, which is the fourth cause of bondage, is overcome; (13) *Sayoga-kevalin*: state of omniscience, wherein the remaining three *ghāṭiyā* (knowledge-obscuring, perception-obscuring, and energy restricting) karmas are eliminated. This is the state of an *arhat*, *kevalin*, *Jina*, or *Tīrthāṅkara*; (14) *Ayoga-kevalin*: The state attained by an *arhat* in the instant prior to his death [my emphasis]. Here yoga (activity), the last cause of bondage, comes to an end. Death itself is accompanied by elimination of the four *aghāṭiyā* [non-harming] (feeling-producing, body-producing, longevity-determining, and environment-determining) karmas" (Jaini 1998: 131, 273).

<sup>8</sup> For stories about animals who achieve right view by listening to Jain monks and *Jinas* see Wiley (2006) and Chapple (2006) in *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science & Ethics*.

<sup>9</sup> Laidlaw (1995: 163) refers to the ideal Jain interaction with the non-human environment as one of "quarantining life," of keeping away from it as much as possible.

<sup>10</sup> "The *samitis* include: (1) care in walking (*īryā-samiti*) - a mendicant must neither run nor jump, but should move ahead slowly, gaze turned downwards, so that he will avoid stepping on any creature no matter how small; (2) care in speaking (*bhāṣā-samiti*) - in addition to observing the vow of truthfulness, he should speak only when absolutely necessary and then in as few words as possible; (3) care in accepting alms (*eṣaṇā-samiti*) - only appropriate food may be taken, and it should be consumed as if it were unpleasant medicine, that is, with no sense of gratification involved; (4) care in picking up things and putting them down (*ādāna-nikṣepaṇa-samiti*) - whether moving a whisk broom, bowl, book, or any other object, the utmost caution must be observed lest some form of life be disturbed or crushed; (5) care in performing the excretory functions (*utsarga-samiti*) - the place chosen must be entirely free of living things (Jaini 1979: 247-48).

<sup>11</sup> Though they may seem to say the same thing, fasting and reduction of food are, in fact, quite different. Indeed, one can decide to either renounce food completely or simply to limit the consumption of certain types of food.

<sup>12</sup> Cort (in Chapple 2006: 90) divides the world of Jainism into two realms, namely the realm of "ideology" or of the *mokṣa-marga* and the realm of "wellbeing." He defines the two realms as follows: "The *mokṣa-marga*... necessitates the increased isolation of the soul, and emphasizes separation of the individual from worldly ties and interactions," whereas the "realm of wellbeing is very much a matter of one's material embodiment.... [H]ealth, wealth, mental peace, emotional contentment, and satisfaction in one's worldly endeavors.... [It is] a state in which one's social, moral, and spiritual interactions and responsibilities are properly balanced.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the lesser vows (*anuvratas*), which are, essentially, the same as the great vows (*mahavratas*) of the ascetic, though less stringent, laypersons must also observe three ‘Subsidiary Vows’ and four ‘Vows of Instruction.’ “The three ‘Subsidiary Vows’ (*gunavratas*), which supplement the Lesser Vows, involve the restriction of excessive travel and random and untrammelled movement in order to minimise the destruction of life-forms, the avoidance of excessive enjoyment of, for example, food or clothes, and the general abandonment of deleterious forms of activity such as futile speculation, moping or idle and self-indulgent practices. The four ‘Vows of Instruction’ (*śikṣāvratas*) relate to positive and obligatory religious practices: the restriction of one’s activities to a certain area for a certain period of time (essentially a variation of the first Subsidiary Vow), the regular performance of the *sāmāyika* ritual, the undertaking of fasts on fixed days of the lunar calendar, and the performance of all sorts of religious and charitable giving” (Dundas 1992: 190). These additional seven vows, in addition and as extensions of the five Lesser Vows of nonviolence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*), and chastity (*brahmacharya*), make up the twelve obligatory actions of the Jain householder.

<sup>14</sup> Lay Jains gain merit (*punya*) through their act of charity, while renouncers are said to gain nothing since any kind of karma, even good karma, would result in his or her further bondage in *samsāra* (Long 2005: 11).

<sup>15</sup> Image Source: AtmaDharma.com,

[http://www.google.ca/imgres?q=Rajchandra+in+Jainism&um=1&hl=en&rlz=1R2ADFA\\_enCA337&tbm=isch&tbnid=RmofMmDcisqyTM:&imgrefurl=http://www.atmadharma.com/siteinfo.html&docid=kcpsEExY4OBQYM&w=230&h=310&ei=qFdATrivCe6ssAKlt6G7Bw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=327&vpy=14&dur=3182&hovh=248&hovw=184&tx=89&ty=146&page=4&tbnh=116&tbnw=83&start=24&ndsp=9&ved=1t:429,r:6,s:24&biw=784&bih=406](http://www.google.ca/imgres?q=Rajchandra+in+Jainism&um=1&hl=en&rlz=1R2ADFA_enCA337&tbm=isch&tbnid=RmofMmDcisqyTM:&imgrefurl=http://www.atmadharma.com/siteinfo.html&docid=kcpsEExY4OBQYM&w=230&h=310&ei=qFdATrivCe6ssAKlt6G7Bw&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=327&vpy=14&dur=3182&hovh=248&hovw=184&tx=89&ty=146&page=4&tbnh=116&tbnw=83&start=24&ndsp=9&ved=1t:429,r:6,s:24&biw=784&bih=406) [accessed August 5, 2011].

<sup>16</sup> Image Source: Facebook, Issjs Isjs, International Summer School for Jain Studies, New Delhi, India

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=154645857922079&set=a.154645391255459.43629.100001299981973&type=1&theater> [accessed August 26, 2010].

<sup>17</sup> In using the word “spectrum” here, I do not intend to assert that any end of the spectrum is the “beginning” or the “end,” or that one is better than the other, but just that one is different from, though somewhat similar to, the other.

<sup>18</sup> Shilapi (in Chapple 2006: 164) narrates the story of the *six leshyas* thusly:

Once upon a time, six friends went out together. After a while they were hungry and thirsty. They searched for food for some time and finally found a fruit tree. As they ran to the tree, the first man said, “Let’s cut the tree down and get the fruit.” The second one said, “Don’t cut the whole tree down, cut off a whole branch instead.” The third friend said, “Why do we need a big branch?” The fourth friend said, “We do not need to cut the branches, let us just climb up and get the bunches of fruit.” The fifth friend said, “Why pick that much fruit and waste it? Just pick the fruit that we need to eat.” The sixth friend, quietly, “There is plenty of good fruit on the ground, so let’s just eat that first”.... In sum, the way Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra lived his own life provides one of the most profound examples one can follow in restoring the ecological balance.

Image source: Source: Jainworld.com, <http://www.jainworld.com/education/juniors/junles16.htm> [accessed August 3, 2011].

<sup>19</sup> Refer to note 10.

<sup>20</sup> Another version of the prayer is quoted in Jaini (1998: 216): “I ask pardon of all living creatures; may all of them pardon me. May I have a friendly relationship with all beings and unfriendly with none.”

<sup>21</sup> See Wiley’s (in Sethia 2004: 20) discussion of “active” versus “passive” compassion. In her discussion, Wiley asserts that Jains following the ideal soteriological path demonstrate a “passive” compassion to living beings, which means that, through avoidance of harm, they protect non-human life.

<sup>22</sup> The objectives of the *YJA*, which are listed on the website, are: “To raise awareness about Jain ideals and principles in North America and the world; To create a forum for sharing Jain religion; To instill a sense of pride among Jain youth about their heritage; To address the problems, difficulties, and concerns facing Jain youth; To assist and to promote charitable community activities; To prepare Jain youth to become successful Jain leaders of tomorrow; To develop friendships among young Jains; To foster and strengthen local Jain youth groups” (Young Jains of America, [yja.org](http://yja.org))

<sup>23</sup> *Anekantavada*, or the doctrine of many-pointedness, is often interpreted by contemporary Jains as being synonymous to pluralism. Like Jainism and “ecology,” the correlation between Jainism and pluralism provides Jains with a meaningful world order in a context where pluralism is a concept and experience that is encountered every day. Some scholars have denounced this definition of *anekantavada* as pluralism (Dundas in Sethia 2004; Cort 2000), saying, instead, that it was a method used by Jain

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*acaryas* (e.g., teachers) to hear all the points of view of their opponents before presenting the argument that the Truth lay in Jain beliefs and practices. Other scholars (Vallely in Sethia 2004) have argued that the doctrine of many-pointedness could be interpreted as advocating pluralism because of the emphasis on the existence of multiple realities and, therefore, on multiple truths rather than Truth.

<sup>24</sup> The “Ten Ways of Being Jain in the New Year,” according to an article published in the February 2009 *Young Minds* issue are as follows:

1. Practice healthy living. Avoid junk food and eat healthier such as organic, vegan, or raw food.
2. When buying food for a group, purchase only all-vegetarian food.
3. When taking a friend/client/boss out to a restaurant (or even suggesting a place for a group to go), find a nice all-vegetarian restaurant in the area and go there. It's undeniably Jain to support all-vegetarian establishments.
4. Donate to your favorite charity.
5. Clean out your closet. Give your lightly used items to the needy, and reduce unnecessary possessions. This also forces you to reduce attachment.
6. Practice mindfulness. Be present and active when you are completing tasks.
7. Use compact florescent light (CFL) bulbs. CFL bulbs use less energy compared to incandescent bulbs and significantly reduce carbon emissions.
8. Practice Anekantavad: When making a group decision give every viewpoint equal weight.
9. Eliminate anger, ego, deceit and greed from our day-to-day lives.
10. Stop and think before you act, thus observing the principles of Ahimsa better.

<sup>25</sup> This turn of phrase is taken from the title of an article written by James Laidlaw on the subject of *sallekhana*, or the Jain ritual fasting unto death - which is yet another example demonstrating the ideal negative relation with the world of matter in Orthodox Jainism. See Laidlaw (2005).

<sup>26</sup> Refer to note 12.

<sup>27</sup> The *muhpatti* is a mouth-shield used by “*Sthānakvāsī* and *Terapānthī* ascetics... [It is] a strip of cloth [worn] across the mouth, tied behind the ears... which by minimising the destruction of air-bodies and tiny insects through the outflow or inflow of breath is an outward sign of the ascetic’s commitment to non-violence” (Dundas, 1992, 2002: 252).

<sup>28</sup> Hanegraaff (2001) argues that Western New Agers practice a kind of “crypto-ethnocentrism,” and that such views encourage “spiritual imperialism.” Howell (2005) observes similar practices of “New Age” religious groups in the Indonesian context, and argues that New Age can emerge in different times and places independently from Western influence. Thus, while Hanegraaff and Howell do not discuss “feminism,” per se, in their articles, their arguments for or against the imperialist agenda of “New Age” are applicable to other concepts, such as feminism and ecology, for instance, that struggle with ideas of universalism/imperialism and relativism.

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