

MOUNTAINS OF ETERNITY: RAIDHŪ AND THE COLOSSAL JINAS OF GWALIOR

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This paper explores the unique political and religious circumstances surrounding the carving of the colossal Jina images at Gwalior fort in the 15th century. It focuses on the works of the Apabhraṃśa poet Raidhū, who was a pivotal figure in the Gwalior court and the Digambara community. In his poems Raidhū speaks often of the end of times, the Kali yuga. This paper argues that the carving of the colossal Jinas was part of a strategy to turn Gopālagiri into a holy mountain destined to survive the coming cataclysm. Medieval Jain texts give ample evidence of a belief among both Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras that certain holy mountains covered with wonderful images of the Jinas would be left unscathed at the destruction of the world. The paper also explores the intimate networks of patronage in 15th century Gwalior.

INTRODUCTION

IN THE 15TH CENTURY numerous images of the Jinas were carved on the rock face of the Gwalior fort. There are over 1500 images on the cliff face. Most of them were carved during a remarkably short span of time, during the reign of two kings, Dūṅgarasimha and his successor and son Kirtisimha, from 1440-1473 AD.¹ At the center of the building project was a Jain layman and poet named Raidhū. His name figures in several of the inscriptions as the person who actually consecrated the images. We know from inscriptions that he per-

1. For an excellent description of the site see Balabhadra Jain, *Bhārata ke Digambara Jaina Tīrtha Samyojana evam Nirdeśana* (Bombay: Bhāratavarṣiya Digambara Jaina Tīrthakṣetra Kameṭī, 1974), 36-54. See also T.V.G. Sastri, *The Jain Sanctuaries of the Fortress of Gwalior* (Indore: Kunda Kunda Jñāna Pīṭha, 1997).

formed the consecration ceremony for two of the most imposing images, the 57 ft high image of the first Jain Tīrthaṅkara Ādinātha, and a large image of the Jina Candraprabha.² Raidhū was a poet of some note; he composed numerous poems in Apabhraṁśa, many of them while residing in Jain temples in Gopālagiri, as Gwalior fort was called.³ Most of his poems have survived; they provide us with considerable information about Raidhū and his contemporaries. Raidhū tells us something about himself at the beginning and conclusion of each of his works. He lived from 1393 to 1489 AD, and although we do not know where he was born, much of his adult life seems to have been spent in or around Gwalior.⁴ He was closely associated with many of the Digambara Jain ascetics who were influential in the court of the Gwalior kings.⁵

2. See Balabhadra Jain, *Bhārata ke Digambara Jaina Tīrtha*, 43 and Madhulikā Bājapeyī, *Madhya Pradeśa kī Jaina Kalā* (Dilli: Parimala Pablikaśan, 1993), 120. Raidhū's poetry has been edited and translated into Hindi by Raja Ram Jain, *Raidhū granthāvalī*, Jivarāja Jaina Granthamālā no. 25, vol. 1 and no. 45 vol. 2 (Sholapur: Jaina Saṁskṛti Saṁrakṣaka Saṁgha 1975, 1988); *Puṅṅāsawa-kahā-(kos) of Great Poet Raidhū*, ed. Raja Ram Jain, (Delhi: Śrī Digambara Jain Sāhitya Saṁskṛti Saṁrakṣaka Samiti, 2000). For information about the poet see Raja Ram Jain, *Raidhū Sāhitya kā Ālocanātmaka-pariśīlana* (Vaisali: Sikṣā vibhāga, Bihar Sarakāra, 1974). In both the introduction to Raidhū's poetry, vol. 1, and his study of the poet, Dr. Jain discusses the inscriptions that name Raidhū as the one who consecrated the large images. See *Raidhū Sāhitya kā Ālocanātmaka-pariśīlana*, 131. Very little has been written about Raidhū in any European language. Nalini Balbir edited a small poem by Raidhū and summarized some of Raja Ram Jain's findings about the poet's life. See "Souper de jour quatrains, Edition critique, traduction et commentaire de l'*Anatthamīpaddhati* de Raidhū, Poème Apabhramsha", *Indologica Taurinensia* 14 (1987-88): 47-77. Balbir also cited Jain's article, "Gvāliyar-durgake kucha Jainamūrti-nirmatā evaṁ mahākavi Raidhū", in *Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya Suvarṇamahotsava Grantha* (Bombay: Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, 1968), Hindi section, 43-48. On p. 47 Jain names Kamalasiṁha as the donor and Raidhū as the one who consecrated the image. He notes that this is corroborated by the inscription of the image, which, however reads Kālā and not Kamalasiṁha. Jain takes this to be either the result of an error in the carving or the product of weathering, since the genealogy of Kālā given in the inscription matches exactly Raidhū's genealogy for Kamalasiṁha in the *Sammattaguṇaṇihāṇakavva*. Unfortunately, this poem is not available to me.

3. In one of his longest works, the *Sammaiṇṇacariu*, a life of the Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra, 1.3.9, Raidhū tells us he was residing in Gopālagiri when he was requested to compose the work. See *Raidhū granthāvalī*, vol. 2.

4. The dates given for Raidhū are not always consistent; Jain, who has edited Raidhū's works and written extensively about him, places the period of his literary activity from 1400-1479 AD. See his introduction to *Raidhū Granthāvalī*, vol. 2, 16.

5. Gwalior was the center of the Bhaṭṭāarakas belonging to the Mathura gaccha of the Kāṣṭha samgha. See Balabhadra Jain, *Bhārata ke Digambara Jaina Tīrtha*, 50 and V.P.

There is no indication that the sculptural project at Gwalior was a royal project. In one of his poems, Raidhū describes a Jain layman Saṅghavi Kamalasiṃha as the one responsible for the creation of Gopālagiri as a Jain holy place or *tīrtha*, although he does also tell us that the king Dūṅgarasiṃha offered Kamalasiṃha his full assistance in carrying out his pious deeds.⁶ The occasion for Raidhū's lavish praise of Kamalasiṃha is that Kamalasiṃha was the patron of the poem in which the praise figures. We shall see that lay patrons sponsored many different kinds of pious projects: they underwrote the composition of literary works, the copying of manuscripts, and the production of images and building of temples. Raidhū names other patrons, for example one Khelhā Brahmacāri, who along with the Digambara monk Yaśaḥkīrti encouraged him to write a biography of the Jina Mahāvīra, the *Sammaiṅṅacariu*. This same Khelhā was responsible for the colossal image of the Jina Candraprabha carved into the rock face.⁷ Yet another of Raidhū's patrons, Saṅghādhipati Nemaḍāsa, was, as the title Saṅghādhipati indicates, greatly honored as a sponsor of Jain pilgrimages. Nemaḍāsa seems to have met Raidhū through Kamalasiṃha when he came to Gwalior on business. He is named as the patron of one of Raidhū's longer poems, the *Puṅṅāsavakahākosa*. The *Puṅṅāsavakahākosa* tells us that at Raidhū's suggestion Nemaḍāsa had a Jain temple made.⁸ Another of Raidhū's lay patrons, Asapati, was the son of King Dūṅgarasiṃha's minister. The available evidence, much of which comes from Raidhū's own statements about these and other sponsors of his works, indicates that there clustered around Raidhū a group of wealthy Jain laymen, who supported Raidhū in his literary endeavors by sponsoring his poems, and at his suggestion funded the construction of Jain temples and the production of Jain images. Raidhū's connection with these pious activities of his wealthy patrons did

Johrapurkar, *Bhaṭṭāraka Sampradāya*, Jivaraja Jaina Granthamala no. 8 (Sholapur, 1958) on the institution of Bhaṭṭarakas.

6. This is in the *Sammattaguṇaṅṅahāṅakavva* 1.11.4, where he says of Kamalasiṃha, "You are the one who made Gopālagiri into a Tīrtha", *pai kiyau ticchu gopāyali* cited in Raja Ram Jain, *Raidhū-sāhitya kā ālocanātmaka pariśilana*, 91, note 1. For the assistance of the King Dūṅgarasiṃha Jain cites the *Sammattaguṇaṅṅahāṅakavva* 1.15.7-21, *Raidhū-sāhitya*, 102, note 1.

7. I return to this below. This information comes from the *Sammaiṅṅacariu* 1.4.

8. *Puṅṅāsawa-kahā-(kos) of Great Poet Raidhū*, ed. Raja Ram Jain, (Delhi: Śrī Digambara Jaina Sāhitya Saṁskṛti Saṁrakṣaka Samīti, 2000), 1/6, *Puṅṅu tua uvaesem jīṅa-vihāru kāravīu maham duriyāvahāru*, "At your suggestion I had a Jain temple built to destroy my sins".

not end with his serving as the initial stimulus for their donations. As just noted, he also functioned as the ritual specialist consecrating many of the images that his patrons had made. Raidhū appears to have sustained himself entirely through the generosity of this small group of wealthy Jains and by means of his religious role as image consecrator.

If Raidhū served as a kind of spiritual advisor to his wealthy sponsors, he in turn had his own spiritual advisors in the Digambara monks at Gwalior, who were themselves close to the kings. This same network of monks and laymen also cooperated in having religious literature copied and disseminated. There are numerous manuscripts from the period. Some, like Raidhū's *Jasodharacariu*, are lavishly illustrated.⁹ Their colophons provide us with a further source of information about Jain activities in Gwalior. They name many of the same people who appear in Raidhū's poems as his sponsors and the donors of images and temples.

From all of this information we can conclude that there existed in the Gwalior of Raidhū's time a closely linked network of centers of power: the center of temporal power in the court, a center of spiritual power in the Jain monks or Bhaṭṭāarakas, and a center of economic power in the wealthy Jain lay patrons. Raidhū emerges as the pivotal figure who linked these different groups together. He was close to the monks, and he wrote religious literature for the wealthy merchants and encouraged them in their pious donations. As we have seen above, some of these wealthy men, like Asapati, had their own connections to the court, but perhaps none so intimate as those of Raidhū himself. Raidhū stayed in Gwalior at the invitation of King Dūṅgarasimha.

The images at the Gwalior fort, then, belong to a period of intense productivity for the Digambara Jains at Gwalior. Further investigation could tell us if Gwalior was in fact unique for the period; even the most cursory survey of the archaeological remains of the period suggests that it was at least unusual in the extent of the literary and artistic activities that took place there in the mid 15th century. There is certainly nothing in the area to match the massive sculptural project of carving the many Jina images and caves on the sheer cliff that leads to the Gwalior fort. Despite the existence of Raidhū's praise-poems of his many patrons, from which we learn about their pious deeds and their ancestors, if we look for any specific information about what might have motivated this extraordinary project, we are disappointed. Most of the inscriptions of the images themselves are still unread

9. Balabhadra Jain, *Bhārata ke Digambara Jaina Tirtha*, 50.

and very few have been published.¹⁰ Even the few published inscriptions yield little more than names. They tell us nothing about the overarching religious or intellectual structure that might have inspired this massive sculptural project. Certainly medieval Jain piety celebrated the making of images, but why carve these huge images, why carve so many images in one place, and why carve them in so dramatic a place as the sheer cliff face of the Gwalior fort? Was there some overall meaning to the project? Did the cliff itself have some religious significance and was that significance somehow related to the scope of the project?

The question of what if any overall plan existed seems relevant on a number of accounts. There is, first, the extraordinary natural setting that would have made the carving of the images incredibly difficult. The images were also made in such a short time and one individual, the poet Raidhū, seems to have played such a seminal role in their production and consecration, leading to the suspicion that there may well have been some single guiding principle behind the project. What makes answering the question particularly challenging is that while Raidhū included in his poems information about his patrons and their pious deeds, he never tells us directly anything about any overall conception underlying the sculptural efforts at Gwalior fort.

The assumption behind this paper is that there was some governing religious ideology that underlay the sculptural program at the Gwalior fort and that it was intimately related to its spectacular natural setting. If Raidhū avoided telling us anything explicitly, I will argue, he nonetheless gave us many implicit clues in his poetry that can help us understand what that governing idea might have been. A careful reading of Raidhū's works can help us to go beyond the bare dates and names found in the inscriptions and in Raidhū's praises of his patrons. To anticipate the conclusions of what follows, we shall see that our clues come not from the few direct descriptions of Gopālagiri or its images that Raidhū provides, but from a consideration of a very different preoccupation of the poet. The Jains, like the Hindus with their Kali yuga, believed in a cyclic degeneration of Time and its gradual regeneration after a cosmic cataclysm. We live in a period of the cycle close to the moment when the universe will be destroyed, in the so-called "Fifth Period".

10. Hariharnivās Dvivedi, *Gvāliyar Rājya ke Abhilekha* (Gwalior: Purātattva Vibhāga, 1947), provides a list of inscriptions and some details, but not the inscriptions themselves. Some of the inscriptions can be found in *Jaina Lekha Samgraha: Jaina Inscriptions Collected and Compiled by Puran Chand Nahar* (Calcutta: Viswavinode Press, 1927). Nahar gives one inscription on an image pedestal that names Raidhū as the *pratiṣṭhācārya*. This is 1427.

Raidhū, we shall see, was very much cognizant of the fact that he was living in this “Fifth Period”. He tells us this in many ways, and also tells us in considerable detail about the chaos, anarchy, and ultimate destruction of the world that he was convinced would occur in the not too-distant future. I turn now to a consideration of Raidhū’s poetry and what we can learn from it about Gopālagiri and the Kali yuga or “Fifth Period” of Time.

RAIDHŪ AND THE KALI YUGA

Raidhū’s poems all take well-known stories or didactic verses as their themes. Although he composed his works in Apabhraṃśa, Raidhū adhered to the conventions of Sanskrit court poetry, particularly in his descriptions of settings and the heroes and heroines of his poems. Mountains often figure in Raidhū’s poetry, but we learn little about them as concrete and actual places. Raidhū’s descriptions of Gopālagiri and other mountains are largely conventional. Mountains are haunts of the semi-divine *vidyādharas*, whose erotic exploits are often celebrated in poetry; they are also the refuge of ascetics who practice austerities there in caves. Cities are all alike in their wealth, beauty of their women, and virtues of their citizens. Thus he tells us that Gopālagiri is a city wealthy enough to rival the city of Indra in heaven and populated by beautiful women; its bazaars are filled with all sorts of wares to sell, and its streets are thronged with crowds. The city houses lofty Jain temples, and the citizens are all pious and virtuous. Their homes are filled with riches, and they spend their time in study of the Jain sacred texts.¹¹ Such descriptions are not place-specific; the same things are said of other cities, other mountains. For example Raidhū describes Ujjayinī or Candravāḍa in much the same language as he describes Gopālagiri.¹² When he does mention one of the images carved into the cliff, it is in the context of praising his patron Khelhā and not in the description of Gopālagiri.¹³

11. On Raidhū’s descriptions of mountains see Raja Ram Jain, *Raidhū Sāhitya*, 495. On his description of Gwalior see also Jain’s introduction to the collected works, vol. 1, introduction, 20; the *Pāsaṅhacariu*, 1.3 and the *Sammaijiṇacariu*, 10.29.

12. For Ujjayinī see *Dhaṅṅakumāracariu* 1-7 in *Raidhū Granthāvalī*, vol. 1; Candravāḍa is described in the *Puṅṅāsavakahākosā*, *Puṅṅāsawa-kahā (-kos)* of *Great Poet Raidhū*, ed. Raja Ram Jain (Delhi: Śrī Digambara Jaina Sāhitya Saṃskṛti Samrakṣaka Samiti, 2000), 1/3, 3.

13. *Sammaijiṇacariu*, 1-4, where Khelhā tells the monk Yaśaḥkīrti that he has made an image of Candraprabha at Yaśaḥkīrti’s suggestion. This image is identified by inscription, *tumhaha pasāeṇa bhavaduḥa kayāmtassa sasipahajīnimdassa paḍimā visuddhassa | kārāviyā maim̐ ji govālaye tuṅga uḍuvāvi ṇāmeṇa titthammi suhasamga*.

We thus learn nothing unusual about Gopālagiri from Raidhū's writings, and I would argue that we should not expect to do so.

A contemporary of Raidhū, the Jain monk Nayacandrasūri in his *Hammīramahākāvya* tells us explicitly that poets do not take their descriptions from nature. They take them from other poets. Nayacandrasūri reminds us that Śrī Harṣa, the author of the *Naiṣadhīyacarita*, one of the greatest erotic poems in Sanskrit, was celibate. He describes Śrī Harṣa as one who “had conquered his sense organs” (*jīhendriya*). Those who know first-hand the pleasures of sex cannot write about them, while those who write about them are monks, he notes with a wry sense of irony. Here is how Nayacandrasūri put it:¹⁴

Those who speak eloquently of sexual passion, in phrases deeply moving, have never made love. And those who have made love, know not how to describe it. The elephant tusks that poets glorify, white as jasmine, are not what the elephant uses for chewing. No one can even see the teeth that the elephant uses to chew.

One might suspect that a Jain monk would be reluctant to admit to first-hand knowledge of the delights of love making, but even when it comes to describing the natural world, Nayacandrasūri tells us,

Experience is not the source for poets in their poetry. If this were not so why would we see them reply to their critics, saying, “This is the way of poets, and not of the ordinary world”. Who in this world has ever seen “Glory, fragrant like the moon, white as the jasmine, cool like moonlight?” Or for that matter, who has ever beheld its opposite, Infamy, with the opposite characteristics?¹⁵

That Nayacandrasūri was accurate in asserting that poets do not write about the actual experience of nature but about some fantasized world

14. *Hammīramahākāvya of Nayacandrasūri*, ed. Muni Jinavijaya, Rājasthāna purātattva granthamālā 65 (Jodhpur: Rājasthāna Purātana Granthamālā, 1968), verse 33, p. 119: *ye śṅgārakathām prathām vidadhate vācām vilāsai rasaprollāsān na samasti teṣv anubhavo yeṣvasti te 'nye punaḥ | varnyā ye vadaneṣu kundaviśadā stamberamāṇām radā | naite carvaṇasādhanam tadiha ye durlakṣyarūpās tu te.*

15. Verse 30: *kāvye kāvyakṛtām na cāsty anubhavaḥ prāyah pramāṇam na cet | prāhus te kavidharma eṣa iti kiṃ pratyāhatās tārkikaih | ko nāmānubabhūva candrasurabhiṃ kundojjalām kaumudisitām kīrtim ato 'nyathoditagūṇasphītām akīrtim ca kah.*

created by other poets is clear when we read their works or what they say about them. One of the most revealing sources about the nature of the craft of the medieval Jain poet is the *Hīrasaubhāgyam*, a poem on the life of the famous 16th century Tapāgaccha monk Hīravijaya by his disciple Devavimalagaṇi.¹⁶ Chapter 15 describes another famous Jain holy mountain, Śatruñjaya, which was revered by the Śvetāmbaras, rivals to the Digambaras at Gopālagiri and elsewhere. As the poet begins to describe Śatruñjaya, poetic conventions take over; it becomes impossible to see the actual mountain, so dazzled do we become by blinding rays of the jewels that make up its peaks. For Śatruñjaya in Devavimalagaṇi's description has peaks of jewels and gold and silver and palaces of the gods; its trees are magic wishing trees (verse 5). The light coming from the gem peaks sparkles in the dark sky, and the poet imagines that the lightning, always fickle and feminine in Sanskrit poetry, has decided to stay forever nestled in the arms of her lover, the clouds (verse 6). The mountain is imagined to stride the universe as did the Hindu god Viṣṇu with his three steps (verse 11). The imagery is lush and erotic; clumps of jasmine look pale like the cheeks of women pining for their absent husbands. (20). The commentary, said to be by the poet himself, explains the source of these images: it is always other poetry.¹⁷ In verse 6 it is Kalidāsa's cloud messenger, the *Meghadūta*, but in verse 20 it is Śrī Harṣa's *Naiṣadhīyacarita*. Even the image taken from Hindu mythology is seen not as a religious image but as one more fragment from a vast repository of poetic conventions. The commentary again refers to the *Naiṣadhīyacarita* as its source. What lies behind the complex texture of these verses, then, is the experience of literature and not reality. The poet responds not to nature but to the descriptions of nature provided by his predecessors.

Given the fact that Raidhū is writing poetry, and that Jain poets belong to the mainstream of the Sanskrit poetic tradition, we should not be surprised, then, that we cannot learn the answer to our question, what was the religious significance of the sculptural project at Gopālagiri, from reading Raidhū's descriptions of the Gopālagiri. Raidhū tells us nothing concrete or distinctive about Gopālagiri and we are left to our own devices to discern

16. *Hīrasaubhāgyakāvyaṃ*, ed. Kāśīnāth Pāṇdurang Parab, Kāvyaṃālā 67 (Bombay: Nirnaya Sagara Press, 1900).

17. The commentary occasionally mentions variant readings, which seems odd for an auto-commentary. The commentary nonetheless identifies itself as an auto-commentary, a *svopajñāvṛtti*.

behind his words something that might help us to understand what lay behind the carving of the colossal Jinas there.

Raidhū's poems would seem to have little in common in their subject matter beyond the fact that they all deal with stories that were well known in the Digambara tradition. But as I read them I did notice that one thing they shared was their frequent mention of the degenerate age, the Kali yuga or in Jain terms, the Duḥṣamā kāla. I focus the following exploration of Raidhū's poetry on the Kali yuga because my argument will be that Raidhū was intensely conscious of the fact that he lived in unusual times and that the carving of the Jinas in the cliff face at Gwalior was a response to his deep fear about the end of time. I will propose that we see in it an effort to turn the mountain into a sacred site that would be capable of surviving the inevitable destruction of all creation that was, in the cosmic scheme of time, coming soon.

Jain cosmology had a theory of declining world ages and the destruction of the world at the end of a cycle, much like the Hindu puranic notion of the four world ages with the Kali yuga as the dreaded last age.¹⁸ Raidhū in his poetry speaks both of the Kali yuga in language borrowed from the Hindu *purāṇas*, and of the more technical Jain term, the Duḥṣamā kāla. The complicated descriptions of time in Jain texts may well have been more than an abstract discussion to Raidhū and his contemporaries, for this was a period of repeated upheavals in North India. The kings under whom Raidhū wrote were something of an exception to the rule, a relatively stable though short-lived Hindu kingdom that came after a succession of sometimes violent periods of Muslim domination. Dūṅgarasīmha, one of the kings who patronized Raidhū, is called the Emperor of the Kali Age, "Kalikālacakravartin" in the colophon to one of the manuscripts of a poem of Raidhū's written in 1431. This was just before most of the sculptural activity at the Gwalior fort, and it is not inconceivable that the epithet was more than just a conventional title.¹⁹

The Kali yuga figures prominently in Raidhū's poetry. He often responds to a request by a patron that he write something with a lament about the vagaries of the Kali yuga, a time when it is so difficult to find anyone who can appreciate good poetry. Thus he tells his patron in the *Pāsanāhacariu*, his biography of the Jina Pārśvanātha, that it is only his devotion to the Jina

18. See Paul Dundas, *The Jains* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 14.

19. This is in the colophon to the Delhi manuscript of the *Puṇṇāsavakahāḥosa*, cited p. 158 in the published text.

that prompts him to write his poem in the terrible times in which they live.²⁰ The same text closes with a benediction that his patron escape the suffering caused by the wicked Kali Age.²¹ Similarly, in the story of Dhannakumāra, Raidhū responds to a request by the monk Guṇakīrti that he write the poem by saying that it is difficult in these degenerate times to find anyone to appreciate his efforts. Guṇakīrti in turn responds by telling Raidhū about the pious layman Puṇṇapāla in Gopagiri, Gwalior.²² The same conversation with different names appears as well in the introductory verse to the *Puṇṇāsavakahākosa*. When Nemaḍāsa asks Raidhū to write the *Puṇṇāsava*, Raidhū tells him that this is the Duḥṣamā kāla and people are cruel and too quick to find fault.²³

In addition to these brief references to the Kali yuga, Raidhū included in some of his works an extended description of the declining cycles of time, based on earlier Jain sources. Thus his *Sukosalacariu*, a retelling of the well-known story of the Jain monk Sukosala, includes a description of the different time cycles. The same poem also concludes with a statement that the poem was composed in the declining part of the declining cycle of time.²⁴ Another reference in the *Sukosalacariu* suggests that the Kali yuga may well have been connected in Raidhū's mind with contemporary political realities, namely the frequent Muslim invasions. In the story, the queen, deserted by her husband who has become a monk, forbids all the Digambara monks entrance into her city. Without the monks there, Raidhū tells us that the city is like the city of the foreigners or Muslims, the *mlecchas*.²⁵ Moreover, when her son learns what she has done, he is furious and describes her act as filled with the wickedness of the Kali age.²⁶ While Raidhū must have known many earlier versions of his popular story, it is

20. *Pāsanāhacariu*, 1-7, in *Raidhū Granthāvalī*, vol. 1, 8: *bho ayaravāla-kula-kamalasūra paṇḍiyajānāna maṇaāsapūra | jīṇadhammadhuramdhara guṇaṇikeya jaspasara-disamtara-kiya-suseya | siripajunṇasāhuṇamdaṇa suṇehi kalikālu payaḍu ṇiyamaṇi muṇehi | dujjaṇa aviyaḍḍha vi dosagāhi vaṭṭanti paura puṇu puhaimāhi | maim sukaittaṇi puṇu baddhu gāhu paṇavivi aṇurāem pāsaṇāhu | tuhu satthakusaku lelehi bhāru siripāsacarittahu jaṇamatāru.*

21. Verse 7-10: *kalimaladuha khijjahu mangala gijjahu pāsapasāem ghari ji dharā.*

22. *Dhannakumārācariu* 1-2, in *Raidhū Granthāvalī*, vol. 1, *parakāraṇi vaṭṭai citti pavaṭṭai soyāru ṇa kuvi ṇiyami jaṇi.*

23. *Puṇṇāsavakahākosa* 1-6, *pakkhāvaraṇu vaṭṭai dusamakālu paradosa gāhi khalayaṇu karālu.*

24. *Sukosalacariu*, in *Raidhū Granthāvalī*, 1-11 and 4-23.

25. *mecchāvāsahaṃ samāṇu* 4.1.

26. *kalimalabhariyau.*

worth noting that the celebrated Sanskrit version lacks these references to either the *mlecchas* or the Kali age.²⁷

Raidhū also describes the cycles of time in his biography of Mahāvīra, the *Sammaiṇacariu* and the *Bhadrabāhucariu*. The *Bhadrabāhucariu* is an account of the monk Bhadrabāhu, the deprivations of the Kali yuga and the resulting decline of the teachings, which culminated in the split between the Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras. It is interesting to note that Raidhū incorporates the same material in his biography of Mahāvīra. He does not stop at the death of Mahāvīra and the formation of the immediate community of ascetics. Instead, he stresses that Mahāvīra's death was soon followed by the beginning of the Fifth Time, when the teachings would greatly decline and men would be of little intelligence. He continues with an account of the terrible deprivations that followed Mahāvīra's death and concludes his biography of Mahāvīra with an account of Bhadrabāhu and the schism.²⁸ I return to the significance of Raidhū's interest in Bhadrabāhu below.

In addition, Raidhū seems to connect the very composition of the *Sammaiṇacariu* directly with the Kali yuga. Immediately after his account of the cycle of time, he tells us that those who are aware of the nature of Time and its cycles should be steadfast in their efforts to overcome the faults of the sense pleasures and pursue what is of spiritual benefit to themselves. Thus, he says, he came to write his poem, despite his ignorance of the technicalities of the poetic art.²⁹

A work of a Jain monk not far from Raidhū in time suggests that Raidhū's preoccupation with the Kali yuga was shared by other Jains and was directly related to concrete historical circumstances. Extant literature of the period indicates that the Jains regarded the Muslim victories as a tragic moment in history. Nayacandrasūri's *Hammīramahākāvya*, mentioned above, tells of the death of the king Hammīra of Ranthambhor at the

27. This is the *Padmapurāṇa* of Ravisena. I have translated this version in *The Forest of Thieves* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1998).

28. *Sammaiṇacariu*, sections 9-20 and 9-21 and chapter 10. In fact, except for their closing verses, the text of the *Bhadrabāhucariu* and the corresponding section in the *Sammaiṇacariu* are identical, although the editor of the texts prefers to consider them two distinct texts. Raidhū was not alone in following the account of Mahāvīra's life with a description of the cycles of time and the destruction of the universe. Guṇabhadra had done the same in his *Uttarapurāṇa*, chapter 56, ed. Pannalāl Jain (Kāśī: Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha Prakāśan, Mūrti Devī Saṃskṛta Granthāṅka, 14, 1944). What is unusual is his inclusion of the account of Bhadrabāhu.

29. *Sammaiṇacariu*, 10.28.

hands of the Muslims. The poem was probably composed in 1420, almost a hundred years after the death of Hammīra, but very close in time to Raidhū and the images in the Gwalior fort. The poet tells us that he was inspired to write the poem by a challenge that was delivered at the court of the Tomara King Virama in Gwalior. The courtiers all insisted that no one could write a poem like the poets of old. And so Nayacandrasūri composed his poem on Hammīra.³⁰ This is a poem, then, that describes in poignant terms the death of a Hindu king at the hands of invading Muslims and was written by a Jain monk who was present in the Gwalior court close to the time of the large sculptural project there. Nayacandrasūri also tells us that hearing about the death of the heroic Hammīra, there were many poets who composed poems to sing his glory (14.1). It seems reasonable to conclude that such poems about the invasions of the Muslims and the death of Hammīra formed a part of the literary and probably political culture of Gwalior at the time we are investigating. In addition, Nayacandrasūri makes frequent reference to the Kali yuga in his poem. His saga of the death of Hammīra seems inseparable from his firm conviction that both poet and king lived in a terrible time. Thus we hear that Hammīra was the sole king in the Kali yuga capable of defeating the Muslims (14.9). In this Kali yuga, no one could emulate the deeds of Hammīra (14.11). With the death of Hammīra, the saying that there are no wishing trees and wishing cows on earth in the Kali yuga has become true (14.4).

This is not the only poem that laments the defeat of the Hindus at the hands of the Muslims, and in writing his *Hammīramahākāvya* our Jain poet was very much within the mainstream of contemporary literature. The poet Gaṅgādhara wrote his *Gaṅgadāsapratāpavilāsanāṭaka* around 1449 AD, a drama describing the defeat of the king Gaṅgadāsa.³¹ At the end of act 4 in the one manuscript of this poem that we have, we are told, “This is an age not fit for warriors. This Kali yuga belongs to the Muslims alone.”³² Later a king proclaims, “The Yavanas (Muslims) rule through the power of the Kali age and not by the might of their own arms.”³³ Gaṅgādhara also wrote about the defeat of a king Maṅḍalika, the last of the Yādava kings. He is

30. *Hammīramahākāvya*, 14.43.

31. *Gaṅgadāsapratāpavilāsanāṭakam gaṅgādharaṣṭīyam*, ed. Bhogilal Jayachandbhai Sandesara and Pandit Amrtlal Mohanlal Bhojak (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1973).

32. *ayaṁ samayaḥ kṣatriyāṇāṁ na bhavati, ayaṁ kalikālo yavanānām eva.*

33. Act VI, *yavanāḥ kalibalenaiva rājyaṁ kurvanti na tu bhujabaleṇa.*

described as an incarnation of Kalki, come to destroy the Muslims. The same themes recur: the Muslims have become strong because it is the Kali age (2.32).³⁴ The subject of the conquest of India by the Muslims was clearly a popular one in the mid-15th century and the texts make the explicit connection between the Muslim onslaught and the Kali age.

Beyond its connection with contemporary political events, the Kali yuga was also fundamental to Digambara religious self-identity. The account of the great schism between the Śvetāmbara and Digambaras centers around the Kali yuga and the decline in religious practice that was occasioned by the suffering produced during the Kali yuga. We have seen above that Raidhū wrote a poem in Apabhraṃśa that describes that schism. This is his story of Bhadrabāhu. He wrote about Bhadrabāhu in his biography of Mahāvīra, the *Sammaijñacariu*, mentioned above and there is evidence that the section on Bhadrabāhu may have circulated as an independent text.³⁵ The story of Bhadrabāhu was well known; in a terrible famine some evil monks take to wearing clothes and to relaxing the monastic rules. They become the Śvetāmbaras, while the true Jain monks remain naked, faithful to the original practices. They are the Digambaras.³⁶ Raidhū particularly recommends his account of Bhadrabāhu as appropriate for this Kali yuga. He warns his audience that they are not far from the time when the world will come to an end.³⁷

As I have noted, Raidhū seems to have been particularly interested in the stories about Bhadrabāhu and the declining cycle of time. Raidhū took the unusual step of extending the story of Mahāvīra beyond his death to include an account of Bhadrabāhu and the famine and a description of the cycles of time which end inevitably in a cosmic cataclysm. In Raidhū's interest in the Kali yuga we no doubt see both political and religious realities reflected. The immediate political reality, the constant attacks by Muslim forces, seemed to provide proof of the descriptions of the coming cosmic crisis inherent in the Jain understandings of the cycle of time that were part of their religious teachings and so important an aspect of Digambara religious identity.

34. H.D. Velankar, "Maṇḍalika. The Last Great king of Independent Saurāṣṭra", *Bharatiya Vidya* 14-15 (1953): no. 1, 36-61 and no. 2, 13-40.

35. *Bhadrabāhu caṇakya candragupta kathānaka evaṃ rāja kalkivarṇana*, Raja Ram Jain (Vārāṇasi: Śrī Gaṇeśaprasāda Varṇī Jaina Granthamālā Prakāśana, 1982).

36. See Paul Dundas, *The Jains*, 46-47.

37. *Bhadrabāhucariu, cariu ehu ṇamdau ciru bhūyali pāḍhijjamtu pavaṭṭai iha kali*. Also p. 24 on the fifth stage of time.

To review this material, we now have the following clues to help us understand the motivation behind the unusual sculptural project at Gwalior. We see a contemporary historical reality marked by constant attacks by Muslims. Raidhū himself seems to connect the Kali yuga with the *mlecchas* or Muslims, and other Jain poets openly lamented that the strength of the Muslims lay in the vagaries of time. Raidhū provides us with ample evidence from his work that the Kali yuga was often on his mind. He also alerts us to the deep connection of the Kali yuga with Digambara self-identity. And now we come to the central question: what could all of this concern with the Kali yuga, religious and political, have to do with covering a mountain with Jain images and temples?

AT THE END OF THE DELUGE

The first clue I had to a possible answer to this question comes not from a Digambara source, but from a Śvetāmbara source, and one that is somewhat later than our period. It comes from a mid 17th century Śvetāmbara monk-commentator, Śānticaṇḍra. It is worth noting that this was an intense period of building at another Jain mountain, the Śvetāmbara pilgrimage site of Śatruṅjaya. The text he is commenting on, the *Jambudvīpaprajñapti*, had already become somewhat neglected and its meaning obscured. Śānticaṇḍra assures us that he is not making up the explanations he is giving, but has culled them carefully from other texts and their commentaries.³⁸ The passage that is the key to our puzzle describes the end of time and the destruction of the world that will ensue. The text itself says that one place will be spared in the cosmic destruction. This is the mythical mountain Vaitāḍhya or Veāḍḍha.³⁹ Veāḍḍha is in fact described in some detail in the

38. In the edition of Diptaratnasāgara the relevant section is on p. 163. Paul Dundas (personal communication) tells me that serious Jain scholarly interest in the *Jambudvīpaprajñapti* seems to have begun in the late 16th century with a commentary by the famous Tapāgaccha monks Hīravijaya and Dharmasāgara. He also mentioned a monumental work by Vinayavijaya on Jain cosmology and Universal History and suggested that at least for these Tapāgaccha monks, who seem not to have been particularly interested in the Kali yuga, this new interest in cosmology may have been a response to their encounters with new knowledge systems in the Moghul court. Dundas discusses this material in some detail in his forthcoming book on the Tapāgaccha.

39. The belief that some places would survive the world destruction is reflected in the description of Hindu *tīrthas* as eternal; it also figures in Buddhist depictions of holy sites, particularly mountains. See Timothy Brook's article *Institutions*, in Donald Lopez, ed., *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005),

Jambudvīpaprajñapti. For us its most relevant features are that it is eternal, that is, it survives the destruction at the end of the Kali yuga or Duṣṣamā kāla, and that it is covered with eternal shrines and Jina images. The commentary of Śānticaṇḍra suggests that medieval Jains believed that it was not only this eternal mountain with its eternal temples that would survive the Kali yuga; they also believed that other mountains with man-made temples could do the same. Thus Śānticaṇḍra tells us that Veaḍḍha is meant as an *upalakṣaṇa*, an indicator of other mountains as well. These other mountains are mountains like Śatruṅjaya, which are virtually the same as the eternal mountain Veaḍḍha.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the Śvetāmbara monk Śānticaṇḍra explicitly lists mountains that will be destroyed. His list, not surprisingly, given what we know about Śvetāmbara-Digambara rivalry, names Gwalior, Gopālagiri, and Chittor, Citraūta, two Digambara mountains, as mountains that are destined to be destroyed.⁴¹ The evidence from Śatruṅjaya, in which there clearly was a period of heightened temple building around the very time when Śānticaṇḍra was commenting on the *Jambudvīpaprajñapti*, a text he acknowledges he is reviving, suggests that the two phenomena, the heightened building activity and the interest in this text, may not have been unrelated. Keen interest in this text may well be connected with the belief that Śānticaṇḍra finds supported in it, namely that the Śvetāmbara holy site Śatruṅjaya is destined to survive the deluge and is equivalent to the eternal mountain Veaḍḍha. Perhaps the frenzy of temple building was meant to insure and to document the equation. Like the eternal mountain Veaḍḍha, Śatruṅjaya, too, is covered with extraordinary temples and wonder-working images of the Jinas.⁴²

I would like to propose that Śānticaṇḍra's comments suggest to us a rationale for the earlier sculptural activity at Gopālagiri. We have seen that Raidhū and his contemporaries at Gopālagiri were keenly aware that it was the Kali yuga and the end of Time was drawing near. The world would be destroyed. Only the eternal mountain(s) would remain. What better way to protect yourself from the impending doom, than by turning your environment into (the) an eternal mountain? And how else to do it but by covering

158-159. I thank Marko Geslani for this reference.

40. *upalakṣaṇatvād ṛṣabhakūṭam śāsvataprāyaśatruṅjayagiriprabhṛtiṃś ca varjayitvā, Jambudvīpaprajñapti*, 166.

41. *gopālagiricitrakūṭaprabhṛtayah, Jambudvīpaprajñapti*, 166.

42. On the building activities at Śatruṅjaya see James Burgess, *The Temples of Satrunjaya Palitana in Kathiawad* (New Delhi: Shri Jainendra Press, 1976, reprint).

the mountain with temples, as was done by the Śvetāmbaras at Śatruñjaya and the Digambaras at Gwalior? I would add that Digambara texts offer ample evidence that the Digambaras believed that the cosmic mountain would offer a place of refuge when the deluge came. Thus the *Uttarapurāṇa* of Guṇabhadra (9th ca. AD) tells us that when the world is destroyed a few people will take refuge on the cosmic mountain or in the heavenly Ganges (56.449). The 10th century *Trilokasāra* attests to the same belief.⁴³

While Raidhū never explicitly says that Gopālagiri has become one of the eternal mountains, we have seen that he is deeply concerned with the fact that it is the Kali yuga; he also mentions explicitly that there is an eternal mountain that will survive the deluge. In his biography of Mahāvīra, Raidhū tells us that Sumeru is eternal. It is also covered with jeweled temples.⁴⁴ Raidhū in fact makes a direct comparison between Gopālagiri and Sumeru or Kailāsa, and between Kamalasiṃha, the donor of the largest image at Gopālagiri, and Bharata, the son of the first Tirthāṅkara who was responsible for making the first images of the Jinas on Sumeru.⁴⁵ Under Raidhū's watchful eye, Gopālagiri, like Sumeru, then, is transformed into an eternal mountain, covered with images of the Jina, destined to survive the coming cataclysm.

We have in these references to Kali yuga and eternal mountains, I would argue, a means to understand what lay behind the overall enterprise of carving out this gigantic cliff. It was the ultimate defense against the inevitable course of Time and the vicissitudes of history, the repeated incursions of the Muslims. Contemporary Digambara Jain interest in the kind of subject matter covered by the *Jambudvīpaprajñapti*, including discussions of the cycles of time, is clearly attested by the existence of a related text, the *Jambudvīpaprajñaptisaṃgraha*, the oldest manuscript of which is dated 1461 AD, precisely the period when the images of the Gwalior fort were being made. In addition, it has been suggested that a Digambara Sanskrit text on cosmography, the *Samskṛta Lokavibhāga*, may well have been written by a monk named Siṃhakīrti. A Siṃhakīrti was responsible for having one of the Pārśvanātha images in the Gwalior fort consecrated, although we cannot know if they are the same individual. We do know, however, that a manuscript of the text was copied by a Jñānabhūṣaṅakīrti in 1477 AD, again squarely within the

43. Verse 865, cited in the notes of the *Uttarapurāṇa*, 556.

44. *Sammaijñacariu*, 5-5.

45. *Sammattaguṇaṇihāṅakavva*, 1.15.5, cited in Raja Ram Jain, *Raidhū-sāhitya*, 91, note 1.

time period of the sculptural activity at Gwalior.⁴⁶ In addition, Digambara texts on Jain doctrine often included a section on cosmography in which a number of different mountains on different continents are described as the abode of marvelous and eternal Jain images and temples.⁴⁷

In summary, I would like to suggest that an intense conviction that the Kali yuga or the last cycle of decline was imminent led to the covering of the mountain with Jina images and temples, transforming it from ordinary space into sacred space. In this case, the mountain was transmuted into a particular kind of sacred space: an eternal mountain, the sole bulwark against the coming cataclysm. Even the colossal size of the images may be a reflection not only of the size of the Jinas themselves in those bygone periods of time, but also of the size of the images on the eternal Mt. Sumeru.

But if this was Raidhū's overall plan, its individual elements may have had less grandiose designs. Religious donations operate on many levels. We have seen so far the convergence of political and religious beliefs. I conclude with some comments on the personal, for the individual donors seem to have had more intimate and immediate reasons for their pious deeds.

FROM PUBLIC TO PERSONAL: THE IMAGE
OF CANDRAPRABHA IN THE GWALIOR FORT

It has been argued that textual sources are inadequate to serve as repositories of a multivalenced medieval religious geography.⁴⁸ The Jain images at Gwalior and the poetry of Raidhū may just provide us with an exception to this assertion. Of the many images in the Gwalior fort we know most about the large image of Candraprabha. Identified by inscription as the donation of Khelhā, it is mentioned in Raidhū's *Sammajijñacariu*. As the poem opens, Raidhū has had a dream in which the Goddess or Speech has

46. On the Digambara cosmology texts see Kailāśacandra Śāstrī, *Jainasāhitya kā Itihāsa* (Vārāṇasī: Śrī Gaṇeśaprasāda Varṇī Jaina Granthamālā Prakāśāna, Vira Nirvāṇa 2502), vol. 2, 75-93. The debate over the identity of Simha, the author of the text is on pp. 91-92. For the role of Simhakīrti and some of the other Bhaṭṭārakas at Gwalior see Balabhadra Jain, *Bhārata ke Digambara Jaina Tirtha*, 41ff.

47. See for example the 12th century *Siddhāntasārasaṅgraha* of Narendrasena, 7.46; 80-82.1, ed. Jindas Parshwanath Phadkule, Jīvarāja Jaina Granthamālā no. 5 (Sholapur: Jaina Samskriti Samrakshaka Sangha, 1972).

48. Nayanjot Lahiri, "Archaeological Landscapes and Textual Images: A Study of the Sacred Geography of Late Medieval Ballabgarh", *World Archaeology* 28/2, *Sacred Geography* (Oct 1996): 244-264, particularly 263.

appeared to him. She has told him that he must compose a poem; he is not to fear the sharp tongues of fools. Raidhū awakens and goes to a Jain temple, where he sees a man named Khelhā paying respects to the Jain sage Yaśaḥkīrti (Jasakitti). As I noted above, Khelhā reminds the sage that it was at his suggestion that he had commissioned an image of the Jina Candraprabha. He goes on to explain what lay behind this pious act. His reasons for having the image made are in fact intensely personal:

My mother, whose name is Ājāhi, is a pious and pure lady; her hair is always damp with the scented water that was used to wash the feet of the Jain images and the Jain monks. It is difficult in this world to obtain a human birth, but that is what she gave me. I have taken initiation into the Jain path of asceticism, which leads to the conquest of the enemy, sensuality. And to repay her I have had an image of the Jina made, bright as the moon, with all auspicious marks.⁴⁹

Khelhā continues by telling Yaśaḥkīrti how he had gone to his mother and told her that there was one thing that still troubled him. He wanted to have an account of the life of the last Tīrthaṅkara, Mahāvīra, composed, in order to bring about the destruction of the karma that was preventing him from gaining perfect knowledge. Such an act would also remove the stains of the Kali age. He pledges that he will give his mother the merit he gains by doing so. Khelhā then comes to his point. He wants Raidhū to compose the poem, but is afraid to ask him himself. He asks Yaśaḥkīrti to pass this request on to Raidhū; Raidhū, he says, would never turn Yaśaḥkīrti down.

Through these brief verses we gain a rare glimpse into what led one individual donor to commission one of the images in the Gwalior fort, a son's desire to express his gratitude, and we might add, love, for his mother. There are countless images from early and medieval India with inscriptions that tell us that certain images were made for the welfare of a parent. As extraordinary as the image of Candraprabha is, in size and in location, it is no exception to this general rule. The images in the fort at Gwalior thus

49. *ājāhiyāhāṇa mahu jaṇaṇi supavitta jīṇadeva-muṇi-pāya-gandova-sirasitta | dullambhu ṇara-jammu mahu jāi ihu diṇṇu saṅgahivi jīṇa-dikkha mayaṇāri jīm chiṇṇu | tahiṃ paḍi-uvayārakāraṇeṇa jīṇamuti kārāviyā tāhi suṇimitta sasi-ditta.* I differ here from the Hindi translator, who says that it is the mother who has taken Jina *dīkṣā*. The text uses the masculine pronoun and Khelhā was a *brahmacārin*. I have therefore preferred to take Khelhā as the one who undertook the Jain initiation. This is sections 1.4 and 1.5 in the *Sammajīṇacariu*.

belong to a poignant moment in history, or perhaps we should say histories: the personal history of the donors, the larger political history of North India, and the religious history of Jainism, with its cycles of time, its Kali yuga and its promise of eternal mountains of hope and salvation.

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