THE DAŚANĀMĪ-SAṂNYĀŚĪS
THE DAŚANĀMĪ-ṢAṀNYĀŚĪS

The Integration of Ascetic Lineages into an Order

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ................................................. ix
Preface .......................................................... xi
Abbreviations ...................................................... xiii
Transliteration ....................................................... xiv

Introduction .......................................................... 1
0.1 Introduction to the Daśanāmī-Śaṃnyāsīs ...................... 1
0.2 Locating ‘the śaṃnyāsī’ ........................................ 3
0.3 Sources for this book ........................................... 22

Chapter one. BRANCHES OF THE DAŚANĀMĪ ORDER
1.1 The Daśanāmī sect, as currently constituted, in relation to other renunciante sects ................ 28
1.2 Caste .......................................................... 38
1.3 Subdivisions within the Daśanāmī order: Daṇḍī ............. 40
1.4 Paramahamsa .................................................. 42
1.5 ‘Paramahamsa’ and ‘Daśanāmī’ as categories ............... 45
1.6 Nāgā ............................................................. 47

Chapter two. AKHĀRĀ-Ś AND DAŚANĀMĪ FUNCTIONARIES
2.1 The akhārā-ś ....................................................... 53
2.2 Maṭh-ś and dāvā-ś .............................................. 68
2.3 Functionaries within the Śrī Pāṇe Daśanāmī akhārā organisation ............................................ 72
2.4 Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras .......................................... 76
2.5 Śaṅkarācāryas ................................................... 79

Chapter three. RENUNCIATION, RULES FOR ASCETICS, AND INITIATION
3.1 Renunciation procedures ....................................... 81
3.2 Current initiation procedures: pāṇe-guru-samākār ............ 89
3.3 Current procedures: virajā-havan/-homa (vidyā-samākār) and nāgā initiations ..................... 93
3.4 Rules for renunciates ........................................... 100
Table of Contents

**Chapter four. THE INTEGRATION OF VARIOUS LINEAGES: THE MAHĀMĀYYA-S**

4.1 Śaṅkara’s authorship of texts, and his date. 104
4.2 Organisational structure of the Daśanāmīs, according to the *Mathāmnāyastotra*, Śrī *Mathāmnāyasetu* and other texts 114
4.3 Gotra, sampradāya, Brahmacārī name, Veda and *mahāvākya*. 119
4.4 The *piṭha*-s and *guru-parampara*-s 122
   4.4.1 Kāncipuram 128
   4.4.2 Śrīnerī and other southern *maṭha*-s 133
   4.4.3 Disputes concerning the western *piṭha* 139
   4.4.4 The eastern *piṭha* 140
   4.4.5 The northern *piṭha* 143
   4.4.6 The Sumeru *piṭha* 144

**Chapter five. ŚAṄKARA’S HAGIOGRAPHIES AND HIS RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION**

5.1 The hagiographies of Śaṅkara 148
5.2 Śaṅkara’s life in the hagiographies 151
5.3 Śaṅkara’s religious orientation 159
5.4 *Piṭha*-s, *maṭha*-s, and the installation of disciples in the hagiographies 170
5.5 The first references to the ‘ten names’ 173

**Chapter six. THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF ADVAĪTA MAṬHA-S**

6.1 The Pāṣupatas 177
6.2 *Maṭha*-s and competing religious traditions in south India, 600–1500 CE 179
6.3 Religious initiation and orientation of the Vijayanagara rulers 193
6.4 The Saṅgamas’ patronage of the Śrīnerī *maṭha* and its pontiffs 202
6.5 Śaṅkara and the founding of the Śrīnerī *maṭha* 214

**Chapter seven. NĀGĀ-S, SŪFĪS AND PARALLEL RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES**

7.1 The formation of militant ascetic orders 228
7.2 The development of Sūfī institutions in India 232
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

7.3 Religious identity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries .................................................. 235
7.4 Mercenary and military activities of nāgā-s and gosain-s .............................................................. 247
7.5 Saṅyāsī-s, fakār-s and rebellion in east India .......................................................... 251
7.6 Gosain traders and bankers ............................................................................................................. 256
7.7 Saṅyāsī-s and the modern political world ...................................................................................... 262
7.8 Concluding remarks ......................................................................................................................... 266

Appendix 1 ........................................................................................................................................... 271
   Numbers and percentages of orthodox, reformist and radical sādhu-s ................................................ 271
Appendix 2 ........................................................................................................................................... 274
   Śrī Maṭhāmāñāyasetu, Mahānuṣāsanam, Śeṣāmnāya ................................................................. 274
   Śrī Maṭhāmāñāyasetu ...................................................................................................................... 274
   Śāradā Maṭhāmāñāya .................................................................................................................... 274
   Govardhana Maṭhāmāñāya ............................................................................................................ 275
   Jyotir Maṭhāmāñāya ..................................................................................................................... 275
   Śrīnerī Maṭhāmāñāya ................................................................................................................... 276
   Mahānuṣāsanam ................................................................................................................................... 277
   Śeṣāmnāya ......................................................................................................................................... 279
   Translation ....................................................................................................................................... 281
   Śrī Maṭhāmāñāyasetu [The division of the revered traditions] ......................................................... 281
   Śāradā Maṭhāmāñāya .................................................................................................................... 281
   Govardhana Maṭhāmāñāya ............................................................................................................ 281
   Jyotir Maṭhāmāñāya ...................................................................................................................... 282
   Śrīnerī Maṭhāmāñāya .................................................................................................................... 283
   Mahānuṣāsanam [The great instruction] ......................................................................................... 284
   Śeṣāmnāya [The remaining doctrine] ............................................................................................. 286
Appendix 3 ........................................................................................................................................... 287
   The history and mythology of the Kumbh Melā .............................................................................. 287
Appendix 4 ........................................................................................................................................... 300
   Subdivisions within the Daśanāmī akhārā-s: maṭhā-s and dāvā-s ...................................................... 300

Bibliography ........................................................................................................................................ 303

Index .................................................................................................................................................... 339
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PREFACE

It concerns me that some of the results of this research may be objected to by traditionalists. However, my intention from the outset was simply to explore an institution that I believe is not only important within the religious environment of South Asia, but which has a great deal to teach anyone who engages with it on its own terms. No disrespect is intended either towards the Hindu tradition or \textit{saṁnyāśī}-s; but history sometimes reveals that which may be contrary to conventional understanding. It also needs to be stated that the general conclusions of the research presented in this book concerning the history of \textit{saṁnyāśī} institutions may turn out to be quite wrong in crucial respects. Should anyone find fault with any of the information provided or present data that undermine the historical arguments presented, reasoned criticism is invited. Despite considerable reluctance, it was finally decided to present this study to the general reader.

To this author, it is also undeniably evident that some \textit{sādhu}-s have acquired what may be described as ‘special powers’, however such complex phenomena may be characterised or explained. It is manifestly a consequence of the philosophy, discipline and religious perspective of the \textit{saṁnyāśī} that such powers may accrue. Although throughout this study attention has been devoted to the ‘wordly’ study of \textit{saṁnyāśī} institutions and history, I would urge the reader to bear in mind that there exists another and more subtle dimension of \textit{saṁnyāśī} life, a dimension that I believe is beyond the means of any kind of conventional understanding or academic explanation: \textit{Om Namo Nārāyaṇa}. 
## ABBREVIATIONS

(see the Bibliography for the editions of texts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADh</td>
<td>Āpastambha-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARE</td>
<td>Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARMAD</td>
<td>Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARSIE</td>
<td>Annual Report on South-Indian Epigraphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASI</td>
<td>Archaeological Survey of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV</td>
<td>Atharva Veda (see Griffith 1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>born</td>
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<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Bhagavadgītā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSB</td>
<td>Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya (of Śaṅkara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDh</td>
<td>Baudhāyana-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>circa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CŚV</td>
<td>Cūḍvilāsa-śaṅkaravilāsa-vijaya (see Antarkar 1973)</td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>died</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Epigraphia Carnatica</td>
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<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>Epigraphia Indica</td>
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<tr>
<td>fl.</td>
<td>floruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDh</td>
<td>Gautama-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDŚ</td>
<td>History of Dharmaśāstra (see Kane 1977–1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l.</td>
<td>line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBh</td>
<td>Mahābhārata</td>
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<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Manusmṛti</td>
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<tr>
<td>r.</td>
<td>reigned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rām</td>
<td>Rāmāyana</td>
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<tr>
<td>RV</td>
<td>Rg Veda (see Griffith 1973)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŚDV</td>
<td>Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya (see Mādhava-Vidyārānyā 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>Śāma Veda (see Griffith 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVAT</td>
<td>Uttankita Vidya Aranya Trust (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VDh</td>
<td>Vasiṣṭha-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YV</td>
<td>Yajur Veda (see Griffith 1927)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
TRANSLITERATION

Transliteration of Hindi terms generally follows Parikh (1996); for Sanskrit, Monier Williams (1994 [1899]), with the exceptions: ‘ṛ’ instead of ‘ṛi’; ‘ś’ instead of ‘sh’. Personal, place names and other terms that occur in both Hindi and Sanskrit registers are not always transliterated consistently. For example, places such as Allahabad occur in the Hindi register as ‘Prayāg’, and in Sanskrit as ‘Prayāga’; ‘renunciate’ is usually transliterated as sanīṣ, as accords with the Hindi register and the Sanskrit nominative singular, in distinction from the common rendering of the Sanskrit, as saṃnīsin. Names of Indian states (for example, Maharashtra) and well-known cities (for example, Delhi) have been transliterated according to modern English conventions, while smaller places have generally been transliterated according to Hindi conventions.

A slightly unusual convention has been utilised in the text of this book, of adding a hyphen before the ‘s’ of plural Hindi and Sankrit terms. Although this occasionally results in the ‘s’ becoming detached from the term, owing to automatic formatting by the computer, an advantage gained is the clearer legibility of diacritical marks.
INTRODUCTION

0.1 Introduction to the Daśanāmī-Saṃnyāsīs

This book presents an account of the history and practices of Daśanāmīs, or Daśanāmī-Saṃnyāsīs, one of the largest of the orthodox sects of South Asian sādhus. Sādhu4 refers to someone who has, at least formally if not in practice, renounced family life and conventional means for making a livelihood. Under a guru, assisted by several Brahman paṇḍit-s, the candidate passes through the saṃnyāsa ritual, the abandoning of ‘worldly’ life, an important constituent of which is the performance of the initiate’s own funeral rites. This relieves the renunciate’s family of any future responsibility in that regard. Saṃnyāsa entails not only the formal renunciation of worldly life, but simultaneously initiates the renunciate into the lineage of the sect to which the initiating guru belongs. During initiation into the Daśanāmīs (meaning ‘he who has [one of the] ten names’), a śaiva sect, the neophyte is given a new dikṣā (‘initiation’) name, the ‘surname’ being bestowed by an initiating guru with that particular Daśanāmī surname.6 The ten names are:

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1 The Daśanāmīs also refer to themselves as ‘Dasnāmī’, in conformity with the Hindi (as opposed to Sanskrit) rendering of the term.
2 In this context and throughout the book, the term ‘orthodox’ is used to refer to the principles, beliefs, doctrines, categories and behaviour which the Brahmanical tradition itself defines as orthodox, whether or not the objects of reference define themselves as orthodox or otherwise. This is simply to conform to a norm established by the continued textual and religious authority of the Brahmanical tradition within Hinduism.
3 The term ‘sect’ is commonly used to refer to various Indian orders. In the Indian context ‘sect’ does not necessarily have the late-mediaeval Christian connotation of heretical opposition to orthodoxy, but simply that of a group of people with common religious beliefs, rituals and practices, even though some Indian sects (such as Jaina, Buddhist and Cārvāka) did explicitly challenge Vedic authority.
4 Derived from the Sanskrit root sādh, meaning ‘accomplish’, sādhu also means ‘good’ or ‘virtuous’ in both Sanskrit and Hindi.
5 Most śaiva sects, including the Daśanāmīs, perform the saṃnyāsa rite for initiates, while in most vaiśnava renunciate sects, instead, a relationship is forged between the initiate and the redeeming deity.
6 The initiates of the Agni akhārā are an exception: they do not take one of the ten names, but one of the four brahmañcāri names (see Ch. 2.1).
Giri (‘hill’), Purī (‘town’), Bhāratī (‘learning’), Vana (or Ban) (‘forest’), Parvata (‘mountain’), Aranya (‘forest/wilderness’), Sāgara (‘ocean’), Tīrtha (‘pilgrimage-place’), Āśrama (‘hermitage’), and Sarasvatī (‘knowledge’).

The saṃnyāsī acquires a new religious identity and is initiated into a parallel social world, with its own hierarchies and implicit codes of behaviour. In the case of a large renunciate sect, such as the Daśanāmīs, the renunciate also has potential access to an extensive network of maṭha-s (‘monasteries’) and āśrama-s throughout India, which may provide food and shelter.

According to tradition, besides his literary activity and his tour of India—his digvijaya—when he defeated a variety of opponents with divergent religious and philosophical points of view, it was the great advaita philosopher Śaṅkarācārya\(^\text{8}\) who founded or organised the Daśanāmī-Saṃnyāsīs and established four maṭha-s (known as pītha-s) under the authority of his four main disciples, in the west, east, north and south of India at, respectively: Dvārakā, in Gujarat; Jagannāth Purī, in Orissa; Jyōśimaṭh, near Badarbān in Uttaranchal; and either Śrīnerī, in Karnataka, or Kāñcīpuram, in Tamil Nadu.\(^\text{9}\) The ‘thrones’ (gaddī-s) of these pītha-s (also known as vidyāpītha-s, ‘seats of learning’) are occupied by pontiffs known as Śaṅkarācāryas who all trace their lineage back to Ādi-Śaṅkara, via his disciples. If Śaṅkara did indeed organise the Daśanāmīs, it would have been the first Brahmanical order of ascetics. Although several scholars have commented that there is little evidence to support these claims of tradition,\(^\text{10}\) no one has yet proposed any alternative explanation for the origin of the order.

The aim of this book is, firstly, to provide the most comprehensive account of the current structure and organisation of the Daśanāmīs.

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\(^7\) The most common of the names are Giri, Purī, Bhāratī and Sarasvatī. The meaning of Bhāratī and Sarasvatī, given as ‘learning’ and ‘knowledge’ respectively, is but the symbolic meaning attributed to those names by Daśanāmīs.

\(^8\) Most scholars date Śaṅkara to between 788 and 820 CE, but there is still some controversy concerning his dates and what he may or may not have written (see Ch. 4.1). This Śaṅkara is also referred to as ‘Ādi’ (‘original’) Śaṅkara, to distinguish him from subsequent Śaṅkarācāryas.

\(^9\) The issue of the maṭha-s supposedly founded by Śaṅkara is considered in Ch. 4.4.

\(^10\) Potter (1981:14) comments that no other Indian philosopher has been celebrated in so many legends, and that it is difficult to differentiate traditional stories from fact.
order; this is undertaken in Chapters 1 to 3. Secondly, having presented an overview of the various branches of the sect, the origins of the Daśanāmīs are investigated in Chapters 4 to 7 from a variety of historical perspectives. It should not be expected that the results of the research undertaken enable the provision of a complete or exact solution to the question when the Daśanāmīs came into existence as a distinct, recognisable sect. However, the standard claims of tradition will be critically examined, and various religious and political developments will be explored, in order to indicate particular factors that may have led to the formation of the Daśanāmī order, most probably in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.\footnote{Unless otherwise stated, all dates in this book are CE.}

0.2 \textit{Locating ‘the saṃnyāsī’}

Before embarking on the presentation of the organisation and structure of the Daśanāmīs as a renunciate sect, a preliminary concern is to tackle the prevalent notion of a renunciate as a lone, wandering individual. It is apparent that the self-projection by the Brahmanical tradition of the image of the individualised, male saṃnyāsī has been remarkably influential on a general understanding of the dynamics of Hinduism. It will be suggested in this section that this projection has contributed to several popular misconceptions concerning the life of saṃnyāsīs.\footnote{Saṃnyāsī is often translated as ‘monk’, and matha as ‘monastery’. These terms derive from the Greek \textit{monos} (‘alone’) and \textit{monazein} (‘to live alone’), thus reinforcing a notion of ‘aloneness’ (see Meister 1990), which, it will be argued, is not entirely appropriate in a South Asian (or even Christian) context.} This image, while bearing a partial reflection of social reality, nevertheless detracts from the significance of samnyāsa being conferred on a candidate by a guru within a lineage that generally operates within the framework of a sect—however loosely knit—with its own identificatory markers.

A related issue, also considered in this section, is the lifestyle of the samnyāsī. According to the ideal, as presented in texts, renunciates maintain celibacy and undertake austerities of some kind or other to purify the mind and body, in order to ‘realise God’ or obtain liberation (\textit{mokṣa}), an objective considered to be difficult in worldly life. There is, however, a complex of sociological and economic factors...
implicit in reasons for initiation, and in the lifestyle of the *saṃnyāsī*,
who generally engages not only with members of his or her own
sect, but with the wider world. It is to a consideration of the ‘lone
ascetic’ and his or her lifestyle that we first turn. This discussion is
followed by a survey of Daśanāmī-Śaṃnyāsīs who are settled as a
caste in various regions of India.

From the early centuries BCE, the Brahmanical textual tradi-
tion provides us with an image of the Brahmanical ascetic. In
works on *Dharmaśāstra*, the *Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad*-s and mediaeval texts
on renunciation,13 we find a lone Brahmanical ascetic wandering
from one Brahman household to another, typically collecting food
from the womenfolk14 in his hands or other designated receptacles,
when the pestles are silent and the cooking fires are but embers.15
Open a tract or book on Vedānta recently published in India, and
there is considerable likelihood of seeing a picture of one of the
Śaṅkarācāryas, portrayed as a living representative of the ancient
Brahmanical practice of renunciation, *saṃnyāsa*.16 The Śaṅkarācāryas
consciously identify themselves with ancient Vedic tradition and the
four-fold *varṇa* and *āśrama*17 systems.18 As is well known, *saṃnyāsa*

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13 See Ch. 3 for further details.
14 See Findly (2002).
15 Probably the earliest available evidence to be found in the Brahmanical tradi-
tion for codes of conduct for ascetics is in the *Asfāḍhyāyi*, the grammatical treatise
of Pāṇini, usually assigned to the fourth century BCE. Pāṇini (IV.3.110–111) refers
to the *bhikṣusūtra*-s (codes of conduct for mendicants) proclaimed by Pārāśara
and Karmaṇḍa (see Pāṇini 1987). The earliest clear formulation of a Brahmanical
renunciate’s lifestyle is in the *Dharmasūtra*-s of Āpastamba (2.21.7–17), Gautama
(3.11–25), Baudhāyana (2.17–18), and Vasiṣṭha (10.1–29), texts dating from around
the third to the second centuries BCE (see Olivelle 1977:21; 1999:xxxvii–xxxiv).
For details of renunciation procedures in these texts, see Ch. 3.1. For a sum-
mmary of the lifestyle and rules for the ‘ideal’ Brahmanical renunciate, see Shiraishi
(1996:27–135), and Ch. 3.4.
16 The Sanskrit term *saṃnyāsa* originated as a specific reference to the ‘throwing
down’ or abandoning of the ritual implements used by Brahmans for their daily
Vedic ritual, the adoption of an ascetic way of life, and the renunciation of social
obligations or ritual duties in pursuit of ‘Knowledge’. The term *saṃnyāsa* (‘renun-
ciation’) occurs rarely in the *Veda*-s and *Brāhmaṇa*-s, and only appears once in the
classical *Upaniṣad*-s, in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.6: liberation through “*saṃnyāsa-
yoga*”), one of the later classical *Upaniṣad*-s, composed in the last few centuries BCE
17 The *āśrama* system became fully formulated within the Brahmanical tradi-
tion by around the beginning of the Common Era, only incorporating *saṃnyāsa* as
the ‘ideal’ fourth *āśrama* in the final phase of its development (Olivelle 1978:28;
1993:103). Both Manu (6.33–36) and earlier *dharmaśāstra* commentaries—for example,
is the fourth āśrama, ideally only suitable for ‘retired-from-Vedic-
ritual’ older men who have produced at least one son. The previous
Śaṅkarācārya of Kāṇḍīpuram, for example, commenting on saṃnyāśa
(Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī 1995:539), maintains that only a few
(including, by implication, himself) “have the wisdom...necessary
to skip two āśrama-s” (that of the householder, grhastha, and forest
recluse, vanaprastha). The Śaṅkarācāryas project themselves in the
image of fourth-āśrama saṃnyāśi-s—austere, detached and committed
to liberation—yet are the nominal heads of a large śaiva sect that
has had an intricate relationship with the economy and politics of
India for many centuries, instances of which are explored in the
latter part of this book.

The saṃnyāśi conceived in the stereotypical image of the lone
Brahmanical renouncer is often supposed, in various ways, to repre-
sent an ancient ‘individualistic’ ascetic tradition receding into India’s
remote past. References to what appear to be ascetics (though this is
disputed)19 with varied nomenclature in ancient Brahmanical texts,
if accepted uncritically, might also lend support to the notion of an individual ascetic. In the Veda-s, for example, there are references to muni-s\(^{20}\) and yati-s,\(^{21}\) who seem to exhibit classical features of asceticism and aspects of shamanism.\(^{22}\) The terms muni and yati are still used in the Brahmanical tradition to refer to ascetics.\(^{23}\) In the second century BCE, Patañjali (the grammarian) refers\(^{24}\) to the yati (3.1.97.82), munòdin (1.1.1.42, ‘shaven-headed’) and śramaṇa\(^{25}\) (2.4.12.2,

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\(^{20}\) The muni (‘silent one’) is mentioned twice in the earlier portion (Books II–VII) of the Rg Veda: VII.51.8 (muniriva); VIII.17.14 (mūninān sākha); and once in the Sāma Veda (I.3.2.4.3). In the well-known keśin (‘long-haired’) hymn of the Rg Veda (X.136), unmaditā (‘intoxicated/frenzied/ecstatic’) muni-s (v.3) are described (for references in the Veda-s, see Griffith 1927, 1973, 1985, 1986). Eliade (1972:407–411) believes this passage indicates affinities, but not a strict identity, with classical shamanism. Werner (1989:35–45) maintains that the keśin muni is “a spiritual personage of very high stature” who lives predominantly outside Brahmanical culture, practising meditation (man) and what came to be later known as the yogic life of the renouncer.

\(^{21}\) RV (VIII.3.9; VIII.6.18; X.57.7); SV (II.3.1.22.3); AV (I.2.5.3; II.20.9.3). Doniger (1981b:14) compares the yati with a shaman or magician. Mythologically, the yati-s are identified as an ancient race of ascetics who took part in the legendary creation of the world, and are connected with the Bhūgas, a group of ancient, mythical beings who are sacrificers, renowned for the bringing of fire to men, and also associated with funeral ceremonies, the underworld and eschatology. Bhūga became identified as one of the seven riś-s, who are the archetypal seers and sages who transmitted the Veda and revealed the Purāṇa-s, and who are perhaps closer to shamans than any other figures in Indian literature, including yogin-s. The riś-s are usually depicted similarly to the classical śāiva ascetic, dressed in deer-skin or bark-cloth, their bodies smeared with ashes, their hair uncut, matted and tied in a knot. See Griffith, AV (1985:270); Macdonell (1974:140); Bhattacharji (1970:1); Mani (1975:139–141); Goldman (1977:5); Mitchener (1982:187–188). For the inclusion of Bhūga within the tradition of the seven riś-s, in, essentially, two lists, see Mitchener (1982:4, 30, 126).

\(^{22}\) For attempted definitions of shamanism, see also Basilov (1999:25–30); Blacker (1999:24–26).

\(^{23}\) Another class of ascetics referred to in the Brāhmaṇa-s and Atharva Veda (XV) are the enigmatic vr̥tya-s, variously interpreted as a yogin-s, mystics, śāiva-s, nomads, cattle-raisers, non-ārya (see Eliade 1969:103), Vedic sacrificers (Heesterman 1963), or a semi-military sodality with similarities to European death-cults (Bollée 1981).


\(^{25}\) The term śramaṇa (‘ascetic striver’) has the same root as ‘shaman’ (Blacker
p. 476), without distinguishing them. Another term for an ascetic that occurs in the Brāhmaṇa-s and Āryavarta-s is vātaraśana (‘living on wind’ or ‘girdled with wind’),26 a person who is described as both ārdhvamanthin27 and śramaṇa. In the epics, residents of hermitages (āśrama-s) are also sometimes identified as śramaṇa-s.28 Manu, who wrote around the beginning of the Common Era, uses several terms for ascetics: yati,29 muni,30 bhikṣu (‘beggar’),31 tyāga (‘renunciate’) and parivrājaka (‘wanderer/circulator’), terms that had been used for ascetics in the older Brahmanical texts. Manu also refers to the state of renunciation as parivrājya/pravrajya, saṃnyāsa and tyāga, without distinguishing these as different kinds of asceticism or renunciation.32 It is somewhat difficult to determine the difference between these kinds of ascetics, but Manu’s concern is with saṃnyāsa and how that relates to other phases of a man’s life: he—as a Brahman—is not concerned with the aims and activities of non-Brahmanical ascetics, as any other ethnic group were considered to be śūdra-s,33 and hence ineligible to renounce.

Manu is the first Dharmaśāstra author to use the term saṃnyāsīn (Bronkhorst 1998:24),34 by which he refers to the fourth-āśrama renunciate, who is characterised in the image of the ‘ideal’, lone, begging
renouncer, as presented in the *Dharmasūtra*-s. It is this characterisation of what ‘the sannyāśī’\(^{35}\) represents that seems to have cast an interpretative shadow up to the present day.\(^{36}\) From the period preceding Manu until now, it seems that the status of many ascetics and ‘renouncers’ was and is far more phenomenologically and socially complex than the ideal conception might lead us to believe.\(^{37}\) For example, it is generally assumed that once someone has renounced, then the condition is permanent. However, in the *Yama-saṃhitā* (Dutta 1987,

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\(^{35}\) Similar conceptions of the ‘ideal’ Buddhist monk have also been challenged by Schopen (1997), who has published a series of influential articles on the differences between the textual representation of the activities of Buddhist monks, and their activities as revealed through inscriptions, the latter indicating the widespread involvement of monks in a variety of ‘worldly’ and ritual activities.

\(^{36}\) The theme of the ‘individual’ renouncer was famously articulated by Dumont (1960) in his seminal and influential article ‘World Renunciation in Indian Religions’. (See also Dumont 1998:184–187, 273–282). For useful critiques of Dumont, see Kolenda (1975) and Quigley (1999:21–53), who both suggest that Dumont never fully faced the relationship between social interaction and ideology. The ‘ideal’ lone renouncer is also a common motif in many recent works on Hinduism. Basham (1967:159, 175), Hopkins (1971:82–83), Fuller (1992:17), Lipner (1994:298), Klostermaier (1994:50), and Brockington (1996:198), for example, assume that the renunciate is ‘beyond’ caste and ritual (as that is the presentation of the *sannyāśī* supplied by Brahmanical texts). Although these scholars have a sophisticated understanding of the Hindu tradition, nevertheless ‘the renouncer’ is generally presented divorced from the sect within which his or her life is embedded, with the concomitant social hierarchies, caste-restrictions and social obligations. It is also apparent that the image of the *sannyāśī* in the western world was significantly influenced by Vivekānanda’s presentation within the general framework of what is generally known as ‘neo-Hinduism’. By the 1890s the notion of the *sannyāśī* had gained unprecedented significance, as a quintessential bearer of India’s spiritual culture (see Halbfass 1988:217–246; Chowdhury-Sengupta 1996; Radice 1998). However, ironically, Vivekānanda’s cabin-class journeys to Europe and the USA, and the establishing of foreign *advaita matha*-s, is almost the antithesis of the lifestyle of the traditional ancient Brahmanical ascetic. See Pagborn (1976:117) for the establishing of Advaita Ashrama *matha*-s.

\(^{37}\) A similar idealisation by Dumont of the role of the Brahman and the king (juxtaposed with the *sannyāśī* in terms of power, purity and caste) has also been criticised on several fronts. On kings and Brahmans, see Derrett (1976); on the ‘ideal Brahman’, see van der Veer (1997); Quigley (1999:54–86). Van der Veer (1998) observes that, far from aspiring to a ritually pure state as the ideal exemplar should, the Brahmans of Ayodhya maintain a complex set of relations, in terms of financial exchange, with the rest of the community and visiting pilgrims. He challenges (1998:xiv) a prevalent idea, articulated in various forms in Dumont (1960), Heesterman (1985), Parry (1985), and Fuller (1992), that “there is a contradiction in the Brahman’s priesthood, [that] the ‘ideal Brahman’ renounces the priesthood and the dependence on donations. I shall argue that instead of limiting our research to values we should look at behaviour”.

there is a penance prescribed for a Brahman mendicant who wishes to become a householder, indicating that, historically, sāṃnyāsa was not necessarily permanent. We will also see (in Chapter 1) that—in a modern context, at least—the caste background of the renunciate loses little of its significance after sāṃnyāsa, and that specific sectarian identification is a crucial component of the sāṃnyāsi’s identity.

From the Brahmanical perspective, sāṃnyāsa is, by definition, to enter a non-ritual state, and only possible for those twice-born (non-sūdra-s) with the ritual implements, fires and formulae to renounce. However, those Brahmans or other twice-born wishing to renounce had already been initiated into the Brahmanical world through the upanayana ritual when they earned the right to participate in orthodox ritual life and received their sacred thread. An important issue is whether the other kinds of ascetics mentioned in the ancient texts referred to were—as a general rule—initiated into some kind of ascetic tradition.

Many commentators on life in ancient India distinguish between, essentially, two classes of ascetics, brāhmaṇa-s and śramaṇa-s. They were clearly distinguished by early Jaina and Buddhist sources, and also by Megasthenēs (4th century BCE), who provides some of the earliest recorded visitors’ impressions of India. Megasthenēs made a distinction between two kinds of ‘philosophers’: the brāhmaṇa-s, following the brāhmaṇa ritual life, and the śramaṇa-s, the ‘strivers’ for liberation. Both kinds of ‘philosopher’ practised asceticism, the brāhmaṇa-s less extremely, but the śramaṇa-s intensely, “undergoing active toil, and by the endurance of pain being able to remain motion-

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38 He should perform three prājāpatya and three cāndrāyaṇa penances, becoming again purified with the jāta-saṃskāra and other saṃskāra-s, previously referred to in the text. See Ch. 3.1 for an explanation of the penances.
39 For details of upanayana, see Prasad (1997).
40 This is theoretically discarded during sāṃnyāsa, but see Ch.1.
42 See McCrindle (1877:97–103 [Fragment XLI; Strabo XV.1.58-60]).
43 Megasthenēs also distinguishes between two kinds of śramaṇa-s. The Hylobioi lived as celibates in the forests, subsisting on leaves and wild fruits; they were the most respected and “advised” kings. The other kind (next in honour) were the physicians who were “engaged in the study of man”. Besides these, there were the diviners and sorcerers who went around begging in towns and villages.
less the whole day”. Patañjali (the grammarian) noted the extreme and innate hostility between the brāhmaṇa-s and śramaṇa-s. The two kinds of ascetics were also distinguished in Aśoka’s inscriptions (mid-third century BCE); by Strabo (19 CE); by Bardesmanes of Babylon (second century CE); by the Chinese Buddhist scholar, Hūang Tsang (seventh century CE); and by Alberuni (eleventh century CE). According to Brahmanical norms women are not entitled to renounce—having not passed through the saṃskāra-s, they are

44 Zysk’s research (1998) reveals how Indian medical knowledge was also developed between 1,000 and 200 BCE by wandering śramaṇa-s uninhibited by Brahmanical restrictions on contact with such things as ‘impure’ dead bodies.

45 I.2.4.2 (Kielhorn edn., p. 476, line 9). Here, Patañjali, citing one of Pāṇini’s rules, provides the phrase śramaṇa-brāhmaṇa as an example of a compound in which the component words refer to objects that were opposed to each other.

46 Edicts of Aśoka, Rock Edicts 3, 4, 8, 9, 11; Pillar Edict 7. The Edicts indicate a double class of religious people worthy of honour and donations (see Mookerji 1928).

47 Section 70: “The Pramnai (śramaṇa) ridicule the Brachmanes who study physiology and astronomy as fools and imposters” (McCrindle 1979:76).

48 He divides Gymnosophists into two sects: Bragmanes and Samanaioi (Strabo XV.1.58–60 [McCrindle 1979:67–68 fn. 1; McCrindle 1877:97–103]).

49 See Beal (1884).

50 He refers to the antagonism between Brahmanas and Shamaniyya (Buddhists), even though they are akin (Sachav 1996, Vol. 1:21).

51 However, some Brahmanical commentary also provides evidence in support of the eligibility of women renouncers. In the Jīvanmuktiviveka (a fourteenth/fifteenth century text attributed to Vidyārāṇya, but see Ch. 6.4 of this book), it is stated that women, either before marriage or after the death of their husbands, have the right to renounce, subsist on alms, study the Upaniṣads, meditate on the Self, carry the tridenta (a form of the mendicant’s staff), and exhibit all the marks of saṃnyāsa. References from Veda-s, Upaniṣad-s and the Mahābhārata are cited in support of this position (see Vidyārāṇya 1996:6–8). In his Yatidharmapramakāśa (61.39–44) (see Olivelle 1976–1977), Vāsudevārāma (c.1625–1800) cites Vījñāneśvara (c.1100–1120), who cites Yājñavalkya Smṛti (which in turn cites a sūtra attributed to Baudhāyana, “strāṇām caite...”) to the effect that, in some circumstances, a woman may renounce. Vāsudevārāma states that the yati should not associate with women renouncers (saṃnyāsinī-s), even though some (such as Baudhāyana) declare renunciation also for women. The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya states that under some circumstances, such as in the case of a queen whose husband dies, women did in fact renounce. In the Bhadāranyaka Upaniṣad (IV.5.3) there is also the well known case of Maitreyī, the wife of Yājñavalkya, who announces her intention to renounce. Women renouncers were, however, generally regarded with disapproval by Kauṭilya, Manu, Vāsudevārāma and other orthodox commentators (see Kane HDŚ, Vol. 2:948; Olivelle 1977:24, 34, 175; 1984:115). Although these days women do not become saṃnyāsinī-s in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava order (see Ch. 2.1 fn. 7), there is evidence from the thirteenth century that they did so (Narayan 1993:282). For discussions of women and renunciation, see also Young (1987:68–70); Leslie (1989:318–321).
technically equivalent to śūdra-s—yet there is ample evidence of the existence of female ascetics,\textsuperscript{52} whether or not they had ‘renounced’.\textsuperscript{53} Pāṇini,\textsuperscript{54} Megasthenēs,\textsuperscript{55} and Strabo,\textsuperscript{56} who wrote in the period of the compilation of the Dharmasūtra-s, refer to both male and female śramaṇa-s (ascetic ‘strivers’).\textsuperscript{57} From references in the Mahābhārata and Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra (c. second century CE) it is also apparent that ascetics had a reputation for being useful to the state for a variety of nefarious activities, including spying and assassination.\textsuperscript{58}

Although there are abundant references to ascetics in South Asia—dating from the first millennium BCE until the present day—‘the
ascetic’ is generally presented in works on the Hindu tradition as someone divorced from any historical or social context, as an unchanging ‘ahistorical’ archetype. An aim of this book is to examine the roles that samnyāśīs have played in various contexts, and to illustrate some of the social, economic and political circumstances that have impelled their activities and organisation, a survey of which illustrates to some extent the historical development of samnyāśī institutions. A related point, which also needs stating, is that ascetics, as a general rule in South Asia, are initiates into a sect. The archetype of the typical ascetic usually presented within the Hindu religious tradition is a śāiva,59 usually covered with ashes, and renowned for the practice of austerities and the acquisition of extraordinary powers. Śāiva ascetics are attested in Brahmanical literature from the second century BCE,60 around the same time as the production of the first Brahmanical texts that deal with renunciation. It is apparent that ascetic ‘renunciates’ were not only ageing Brahman ex-ritualists. I would argue that although there are examples of individual lone renouncers, as a general rule, like initiated Jainas, Buddhists, Ājīvakas and Cārvakas, nearly all of the various kinds of non-Brahmanical ascetics mentioned in ancient Brahmanical texts would probably have been initiated in some fashion into an ascetic tradition by a preceptor within a lineage.61 This is true today and it seems improbable that it was otherwise in the ancient world, though this would be difficult to substantiate. The significance of initiation is the acquisition of a new religious identity (and usually sectarian markers), bestowed by the inititating guru. The social, political and economic significance of initiation into a sect is simply dependent on the socio-political status of the sect at the time of initiation. However, whether as an

59 The evolution of sectarian Śaivism is discussed in Ch. 6.
60 The first textual references to Śaivism are found in Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini’s grammar, probably written in the second century BCE (Dyczkowski 1989:4). Patañjali (5.2.76, Kielhorn edition, 1906, Vol. 2:387) refers to Śivabha-gats, whom he describes as itinerant ascetics wearing animal skins and carrying an iron lance.
61 Thapar (1996:56–93) has commented that there are essentially two types of renouncer: one is the relatively rare ‘ideal’ lone ascetic; the other is an initiated member of a group. She argues that organised groups of renouncers (of the post-Vedic period) were not seeking to negate or alter society, but rather to establish a parallel society, as members of an order constituting an alternative lifestyle; a kind of counter-culture, often using social heresy to organise a religious identity.
individual or as a member of a sect, the role of the *samnyāsī* within the religious and social history of India is far more complex than the image represented by the archetype.

Both within and between the various renunciate sects, a wide spectrum of behaviour, practice and lifestyle is apparent amongst renunciates. While most members of sects of sādhu-s are avowedly celibate, other sects, such as the Dādu, Gauḍīya, Rāmānandī and Vallabhacārī *panth*-s (‘paths/sects’) also have married initiates. Within the Daśanāmī order, lifestyles range from that of the poor sādhu undertaking austerities, to the privileges enjoyed by some of the Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras and Śāṅkarācāryas (*jagadguru*-s, ‘world-gurus’), who (on occasions) display royal insignia. A typical Daśanāmī mahānt, an owner or proprietor of an āśrama or *mātha*, frequently has a demanding and complex occupation, managing the income, taxes, finances, repairs, food supplies, pūjā, festivals and labour disputes of a large landed property. Successful *mātha*-s are run as businesses, which may expand to establish branch *mātha*-s; and wealthy establishments are sometimes the object of intense jealousy from other local landlords. In general, even poor sādhu-s have much closer ties with the world than might be supposed from the ideal.

Since the seventeenth century, another term that has been used

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62 Depending on predilection and social factors, *samnyāsī*-s may be more or less involved in the institutional life of *mātha*-s or āśrama-s. Some sādhu-s are referred to as *vīrakta* (meaning ‘detached’ or ‘indifferent’): they shun āśrama-s and other such institutions, believing them to be contrary to the aims of *samnyāsa* (*Virakta* is also a generic name in south India for renunciates who belong to the Vīraśaiva sect.)

63 For the role of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras within the Daśanāmī order, see Ch. 2.4.

64 Such as at the great festivals of Navarātri and Śrī Śāradāmābhī Mahārathotsava (but not at Śaṅkarajayantī): see Sawai (1992:170).

65 See Morinis (1984:89–96) for an account of the affairs of the *mahānt*-s of the Tarakeshvar temple in Bengal. He notes (p. 91) some cases of “extreme forms” of deviation from the ideal role of the *samnyāsī*, including a couple of murder cases connected with *mahānt*-s’ mistresses.

66 Formally, *samnyāsī*-s renounce their families and the rituals connected to family life, ‘home’ and conventional means of livelihood. However, Tripathi’s statistical surveys (1978:98–109) reveal that 76% of *sādhu*-s provide financial help of some kind to their families, and that only 20% earned their money mainly through begging, other sources of financial income being mainly from private offerings (26.6%), social services (19%), attention-catching devices (6.8%), landed property (4.8%), employment in an āśrama (1.6%), dubious devices (1.0%), and miscellaneous sources (26.2%).
to refer to Daśanāmī saṁnyāṣī-ś is gosain.67 Daśanāmī gosain-ś (non-monastic ascetics) are often but not always married, and many lead the lives of householders (gharbārī-ś), pursuing a variety of business, priestly and working activities. In the Daśanāmī context, the term gosain usually refers to saṁnyāṣī-ś who have become semi-secularised and who have married, but who have retained a nominal allegiance to their hereditary order. In the final sections of this book, the activities of saṁnyāṣī nāgā gosain-ś in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will be discussed. Many thousands of militant nāgā saṁnyāṣī-ś (also known as gosain-ś) were involved as mercenaries in numerous political conflicts in north India during this period, becoming wealthy as bankers and traders, and acquiring substantial property. The demise of their military activities around the end of the eighteenth century resulted in the settling of gosain-ś, mostly in the Gangetic delta and several places in the Himalayas. Some Daśanāmī gosain-ś migrated and settled in south India.

Ethnographic accounts dating from before Indian Independence typically treat Daśanāmī (or saṁnyāṣī) gosain-ś as a caste or an order engaged in a wide variety of activities, not only as mendicants (sādhu-ś), but also as priests, bankers, farmers, traders and mercenaries, thus illustrating the complex relationship that saṁnyāṣī-ś have had with their social environment. Historically, it seems more accurate to consider the Daśanāmīs as a caste or a sect with many facets, rather than as lone individuals.68 Writing on the castes of Mysore, Ananthakrishna

67 Gosain (or gōsain/gosāin/gōsāyi/gosaeen) is also the name for heads of monasteries of the vaisnavī Bairāgī/Vairāgī/Rāmānandī order, and of the followers of Vallabhācārya (1479–1531). One of the earliest recorded uses of the term is in the memoirs of Emperor Jahāngīr (r.1605–1628), where it is used to describe an ascetic with whom he had religious conversations (Clarke 1998:52). The term most probably derives from the Sanskrit gosvāmin, perhaps meaning ‘the master or possessor of a cow or cows’. Sadānanda Giri (1976:57–59) suggests that gosain may derive from go (‘sense-organ’) and svāmin (‘master’). The first six disciples of the vaisnavī Bengali mystic, Caitanya (1485–1534) are referred to as the six gosvāmin-ś—of Vṛndāvān—(see De 1986:111–165; Dimock 1963:110–113), later followers being referred to as gosāyi. (Followers of Caitanya constitute the Gauḍīya panth.) Certainly by the nineteenth century, the term gosain was used locally and by British commentators to refer to both sāiva and vaisnavā mendicants, fakīr-ś and yogīs (Pinch 1996:43–44). Gosain-ś are also referred to as atil (‘beyond’).

68 Partly in response to Dumont’s notion of the ‘lone-renunciate’, Burghart (1978; 1983a; 1983b; 1996) developed a thesis of two parallel hierarchies operating within India: one essentially religious and one essentially political. Some of his central observations are that renouncers of various sects may be married or
Iyer (1930:256–258) remarks that one of the chief peculiarities of the Gōsāyīs is that they constitute not only a religious order, but also a caste. Besides the caste’s natural increase from within, Brahmans, ksatriya-s and women are also recruited (via initiation) to the order, which then excludes them—via rules of commensality—from their previous caste.\footnote{Marriage between first cousins is prohibited, but widow marriage and divorce are possible. “Women are admitted into the order, when they have their heads shaved, assume the ochre coloured shirt and smear their bodies with ashes. These women are supposed to live in nunneries, leading a chaste and pious life. But many of them live with men of the order, and the sons born of such unions would be adopted as chelas or disciples of other Gōsāyīs, who make them their heirs by reciprocal arrangement... During their visits to villages, they engage in intrigues, and ribald Gond songs sung at the Holi festival describe the pleasures of the village women at the arrival of a Gōsāyī owing to the sexual gratification they derive from him. Nevertheless they have done much to maintain the Hindu religion, and are the gurus or the spiritual preceptors of the middle and lower castes” (Ananthakrishna Iyer 1930:256–258).}

Concerning the Śaṃnāyās of the Panjāb and North-West, Crooke (1896, Vol. 2:274) remarks that “the members of the sect are supposed to be strict celibates, but of late not a few of them have taken to marriage, and still continue to beg though married”.\footnote{They are, as a rule, of a higher class than the Jogīs, and their morality is of a higher order, but scandals about their enticing away the wives of rich Hindus are said to be not infrequent, though generally hushed up. The whole order is in theory devoted to contemplation and abstraction and abstracted from the cares of the world, and a large number of Sannyāsīs are actually religious mendicants without wives and without money, who wear ochre-coloured clothes and distribute quack medicines, who refuse to touch a coin or to take in alms more food than will suffice for the day; but there are also many who work in business and are men of great wealth” (Crooke 1896, Vol. 2:274).}

Initiation into the Daśanāmīs, whether the initiate subsequently becomes a gharbāṛī, a celibate living in a matha, or a wandering śādhu, requires the performance of the virāj-homa, the saṃnyāsa unmarried, of various and differing caste restrictions, and intrinsically involved ‘in the world’ in various types of power, ritual and material exchanges. Regarding the Daśanāmīs, the main thrust of Burghart’s thesis seems apt. However, we will see (in Ch. 7) that the mercenary, military, trading and banking activities of the Daśanāmīs in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries transgress practically all boundaries between religion and state, and between religious and political hierarchies. The activities of the Daśanāmīs—and indeed several other sects of renunciates in India—exhibit a complexity and diversity that seems to defy classification in any anthropological structural model. However, that said, the models of both Dumont and Burghart are particularly useful—and not invalid—as general frameworks within which the complex phenomena of renunciation may be initially apprehended.
rite (see Ch. 3.3), which is theoretically irrevocable, yet there are counter-examples.\textsuperscript{71}

Samanta (1997:115) lists the thirty major castes of Ujjain, which include Gosains. Maclagan (1911:304–305) provides an account of the Gosāṁs of the Punjab and North-West, who are divided into celibates\textsuperscript{72} and others who “form a separate caste, as well as an order, and are known as Sanniāsīs or Dasnāmīs, because they are divided into ten schools...and may be regarded as a semi-secularised offshoot of the Sanniāsī order”. Sherring (1879, Vol. 2:339) describes the Dowrī Gosāvīs, found in central India, who profess to be Hindu, dress in the ochre robe, have no permanent abode, bury their dead, and who are known to steal crops, thieve and commit highway robberies. They are non-vegetarian, with the exception of beef, and keep weapons ready for use at night. In the west Bengal area, the festival of Śivarātrī is known in many places as gājan or ghambūrā. Amongst the votaries of this cult of Śiva are bhakta-s known as saḿnyāśī-ś (Sarkar 1972:73–87; Morinis 1984:98–102). These are villagers who, for the week-long duration of the festival—and for up to a month—take temporary vows (vrata) and are initiated (dikṣā) into the lineage (gotra) of Siva as saḿnyāśī-ś. They follow preliminary dietary restrictions, are adorned with sectarian marks and shaved. A mūla-saḿnyāśī, who is the chief votary, is also required during celebrations. Those castes participating are often known in west Bengal as saḿnyāśī-ś, though there are no restrictions regarding caste or gender on those taking part, who may be householders with families, and even Muslims in recent times.

Maclagan (1911:304–305) describes the saḿnyāśī gosain-ś who settled at Kāṅgra and Shimla in Himachal Pradesh (in the foothills of the Himalayas). In some places they became cultivators,\textsuperscript{73} gradually

\textsuperscript{71} Reference was earlier made to the Yama-saḿhitā in this regard. I have also met a number of householders who had previously been saḿnyāśī-ś.

\textsuperscript{72} The celibates are described as being of one of three kinds: first, the maṭhdhārī (‘head of a monastery’), whose dwelling (maṭha) is in the village, and who may engage in all worldly pursuits but not marry; second, the āsandhārī (‘someone who has a place’), whose house is on the outskirts of the village; third, the avdhūt (‘someone who wanders about begging’), who does not beg for more than seven hours in one place. Maclagan also claims that the fraternities who live in the maṭha-s keep women.

\textsuperscript{73} Sadānanda Giri (1976:57–59) comments that, besides celibate gosain-ś, there are a large number of gharbārī (i.e. married) gosain-ś—who are also religious teachers—in the Gaṛhvāl and Kullū areas of the Himalayas where, generally, they either
accumulating much wealth from both trade and usury.\textsuperscript{74} Maclagan notes that, in theory, the Gosāṅs were celibate and recruited to the order by adopting celā-s from pure castes who may have been willing to dedicate their sons to them. However, in practice marriage was usual, married Gosāṅs being known as gharbārī, and sons succeeded to the order by becoming celā-s. At Sirsa, there is a separate caste of gosain-s, founded by Śimbu Ācārj, most of whom are either ‘Giri’s or ‘Puri’s.\textsuperscript{75} Marriage in these Himalayan sub-orders is still usually endogamous.\textsuperscript{76} Steele, whose information was obtained in Nāsik, Maharashtra, also maintains (1868:444) that a gharbārī gosain of the “ten sects” may only marry a female ‘Gosawnee’ if he wishes to remain a gosain.\textsuperscript{77} Exogamous marriage results in exclusion.\textsuperscript{78} While

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\textsuperscript{74} “The hill people, including their Rājās and Rānās, were in their debt and they controlled all the trade between the hills and the plains. In their practice of usury they were rapacious to an incredible degree...To the power of capital they added the influence of their own sanctity and though the Gurkha invasions broke up their dominion they continued to exhaust the resources of the people in the Outer Sarāj tract of Kullu till quite recently. On the other hand the Gosāṅs of Kāṅgra, who are principally found in Nādaun and Jvālamukhi, were an enterprising and sagacious community engaged in wholesale trade. They monopolised the trade in opium and speculated in charas, wool and cloth. Their transactions extended to the Deccan and indeed all over India...they are now impoverished” (Maclagan 1911:304–305).

\textsuperscript{75} The gurus of these lineages were, at that time (1904), presiding over matha-s in, respectively, Bālak and Kharak, both in Hissar district.

\textsuperscript{76} The ḍhastha gosain-s of Himachal Pradesh, who are believed to have migrated from Rajasthan, marry within the same order but outside their own gotra (‘lineage’) (for example, a Giri may not marry a Purī). Divorce is granted on grounds of adultery, chronic mental sickness, impotency and cruelty, and a male or female divorcee may remarry (Sarkar 1986:245).

\textsuperscript{77} If a woman born to a gosain fails to marry by the age of seventeen she is obliged to pass her life in celibacy and may not become a disciple. However, once past the age of discretion, she may choose—and is apparently not coerced—to become initiated, which prohibits her from marriage. The natural son of a gosain, born to a woman even of śūdra caste, has equal rights to those of an official celā, after he has been initiated in the usual way. The initiation cannot, however, be performed by the father; the uncle or next nearest relative should officiate.

\textsuperscript{78} Divorce is said to be permissible only as a consequence of impotency, for-
there are exceptions, most gosain communities enjoy a relatively high caste-status, and are frequently amongst the largest land owners wherever they live.⁷⁹

Daśanāmīs, some of whom are married, also serve as priests at many temples throughout India. Samanta (1997:30–31), for example, notes that the most venerated devī temple of Ujjain is that of Harsiddhi mātā, one of the fifty-two Śaktiśītha-s. The priests of the temple are gṛhaśtha Daśanāmīs who have served the temple for many generations. At Janakpur in Nepal, near the border of India, a succession of ‘Giri’ mahānt-s of the Daśanāmīs has long managed the Rāma temple, said to have been founded by Catūrībhūj Giri (Jha 1978:116–121). However, in general, gosain-s do not perform any priestly functions, most probably as many do not have a Brahman background. In gosain households, the functions of the purohit are generally performed by Brahmans who are not of their order. Also, in distinction from saṃnyāsī-s, many gṛhaśtha saṃnyāsī-s (gosain-s) wear the sacred thread.

In some areas of Nepal there are many householder saṃnyāsī-s, who are recognised in official surveys as being a caste. (In Nepal the term saṃnyāsi is usually understood to refer to a caste rather than a renunciate, the term yogi generally being used to refer to a sādhu.)⁸⁰

malised by a divorce document (chor citṭhī). Interestingly, a childless wife—who is not a widow—of an absent husband may enter into what is known as a ‘left-handed/perverse’ (vāṃ) relationship with another man. However, she is obliged to go back to her husband, should he so desire on return. If the returned husband decides to stay with his wife, he should reimburse the lover for expenses, though he is not obliged to support any illegitimate offspring. Otherwise, the husband may relinquish his wife to the lover, annul the marriage, and receive payment from him. Adultery committed with any woman outside the order results in expulsion. Warden (1847:75) maintains that (female) ‘Gosawunees’ must marry before the age of fifteen; otherwise, without a satisfactory explanation, they are obliged to pass their lives in celibacy. Only in the Deccan are married gosain-s accepted by other Daśanāmīs. Śūdra-s are also said to be recruited in the south.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Mayer (1960:80). In one (fictitiously identified) village in Madhya Pradesh, out of twenty-five castes, the gosain-s are second only to Rājpūts in terms of land ownership. Bhattacharya (1973:307) also comments on the gṛhaśtha gosain-s as a very respectable caste.

⁸⁰ Frank (1974:90) records that in the district of Nawakot, just north of Kathmandu, out of a population of 146,940, comprising twenty-two ethnic groups, the gosain-s are second only to Rājpūts in terms of land ownership. Bhattacharya (1973:307) also comments on the gṛhaśtha gosain-s as a very respectable caste.
A caste of Giris living in central Nepal around sixty miles east of Kathmandu are the subject of studies by Bouillier (1976; 1979). According to local tradition, the ancestor of the caste was Nārāyaṇa Giri, a saṃnyāsī with a kṣatriya background, who came from Banaras and arrived in the village of Kattike at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He married and had children, and up to the mid-1970s there had been seven generations of saṃnyāsīs. In lifestyle and general culture, the Giris, according to their caste, are typical for the area (Bouillier 1979:32–58). However, they follow two distinctive saṃnyāsī customs, concerning initiation and funeral rites.

Bouillier (1978) has also examined the Articles of the Nepalese penal codes (Muluki Ain) concerning ascetics, those of 1853, 1935 and 1963. The term jāt is used in two senses in the codes, one

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81 Kattike has a population of 2,895, of which there are 335 Giris in thirty-five houses. 90% of the Giris are descended from Nārāyaṇa Giri, and the saṃnyāsīs are a dominant caste in the village, in status slightly inferior to Upādhyā Bāhun (Brahmans) and Cetri (or Kṣatri). Over 90% of Giri marriages are within the caste. 17.85% of the Giris are polygamous, all are farmers, and they are non-vegetarian, but with some restrictions.

82 Formal initiation into the caste of Giris is in two stages (see Bouillier (1979:96–101). The first is the upanayana (bratabandha), which is performed by a Brahman purohit and follows the customary rites for twice-born boys. The second stage is the gurumukha, which is a rite distinctive to the Giris. The gurumukha rite may be before or after marriage, and is performed identically for both boys and girls, who become saṃnyāsīs. In Kattike three people are considered ‘guru’ for the men, while there is one woman guru in Kattike for the women. Initiates receive the “ivagya mantra, a trident (trīḍā), a staff (daṅḍa), fire-tongs (cimāṭā), a water-pot (kamaṇḍal), a small drum (damaru), a seed (rūḍraṅka) necklace, and Daśanāmī saṃnyāsī sectarian marks. Even though a ritual confirmation of the guru-disciple relationship is enacted, henceforth the guru plays no role in the life of the initiate. If a Giri has not received gurumukha before death, the mantra is whispered into the ear of deceased by the guru and a lock of hair is cut.

83 Technically, the renouncer is automatically liberated at death from the rounds of rebirth, and does not become a spirit or ghost (pūtācī), thus freeing his family from the need to feed it. However, the Giris of Kattike observe funeral rites which are similar to those of orthodox householders (Bouillier 1976); see also Parry (1982:84–85); Prasad (1995).

84 Although there were earlier legal codes—notably, those of Jayasthiti Malla (1350–1395) concerning laws applicable to sixty-four castes; and the edicts (incomplete) of Rām Sāh of Gorkha (1606–1633)—the Muluki Ain of Jaṅg Bahādur Rānā, promulgated in 1853, is the first code to legislate for the whole population of Nepal.

85 In the codes, ascetics are generally referred to either by the Persian term phakār, or as bhes dhārī (a wearer of ascetic’s clothes), and specifically as saṃnyāsī, bairāgī, udāsī, jaṅgam and sevaṅgā, terms which refer to, repectively, Daśanāmī, Rāmānandī, Udāsin (Sikh), Vīraśāiva and Jaina orders.
being ‘caste’ in general (including the particular caste a renunciate previously belonged to), and the other being the order (such as samnyāsī) that the renunciate belongs to. Three categories of ascetics are considered in the code of 1853: ramtā, those always on pilgrimage, who are assumed to be Indian; mathdhārīs, who own or reside in a monastery; and gharbārīs, married ascetics (for whom, in this code, there is less information). All three types of ascetic may initiate disciples, but only mathdhārīs and gharbārīs are subject to the punishments prescribed for transgressions under the code. Trangressing ramtās, for nearly all types of offences, are shaved and expelled from the country. The two chief concerns of the legal code are (improper) initiation into the ascetic life (phakirsita muḍīnā), and (improper) sexual relations. There is also a prohibition on renunciates performing the bratabandha for householders. Concerning sexual relations, the code makes no distinction between ascetic orders and other jāl-s in the general hierarchy of castes, no reference being made to the ascetic tradition or the ideology of renunciation which prohibits sexual relations. The code is not concerned with infraction of celibacy rules, but with infraction of caste rules of association. The revised penal code of 1935 contains many of the earlier provisions but also some changes. Only two categories of ascetic are mentioned, the

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86 To summarise some of the relevant proscriptions and penalties: initiation into renunciation is forbidden to impure castes; if a girl or boy who is under twelve years old should be initiated, then the initiator (gharbārī or mathdhārī) is subject to three years in prison and the confiscation of property (or losing all rights at a math); initiation of a girl under sixteen (whether married or a widow) results in a one year prison sentence; no one may be initiated against their will, and an initiator will be punished for doing so; under specified circumstances, one forcibly initiated may be readmitted to his or her caste, with appropriate rites.

87 In the hierarchy of castes, at the top are (‘pure’) Upādhyā Brahmins, under which, respectively, are Tākuri and Rājpūt, then Jaisi, Tāgadhārī (kṣatri), and Indian Brahmins. In sixth place, regardless of renunciate order, are the aforementioned renunciate jāl-s, ranking just under Jaisi. The bheṣ dhārī are considered as quite high caste and treated as such according to the law. The code specifies that if a Dasnām (or another order of ascetics) has sexual relations with a woman of a caste higher than him, then, as a member of any other caste of similar rank, he is subject to punishment, the severity of which depends on the number of women violated, and the age of the girl. The most severe punishment, of ten years in prison, is for sexual relations with a girl under eleven years old. There are also provisions for the punishment of an ascetic who seduces a woman whom he has initiated (Bouillier 1978:141).

88 In general, the code of 1935 is more restrictive, in terms of caste and age, than the previous code concerning eligibility for renunciation; no one under eighteen
ramtā and the maṭṭhānārī: the gharbārī is not mentioned. In the codes prior to 1963, renunciates were under the direct edicts of the king, who legislated against specific activities. However, that domain of influence only came to bear on the renunciate who had chosen to interfere in the ‘ways of the world’—such as the performance of bratabandha ceremonies for householders—a domain he is supposed to have renounced upon initiation. The enacting of legislation by the king nevertheless indicates the extent to which some practices of renunciates had become prevalent.

This brief review indicates that Daśanāmī maṭha-s are not only the seats of celibate saṃnyāsī-s, and that a distinction between the gosain-s as a ‘caste’ and as a religious sect is not clear. A distinctive characteristic of a religious sect is obviously, but in a sense quite trivially, that the sect members are particularly ‘religious’, of whatever persuasion that may be. But a general survey of various Indian castes would reveal that, like the Daśanāmīs, many castes trace
their ancestry to semi-divine beings, contain sub-castes who often have a relationship with other sub-castes in terms of caste hierarchy and commensality, and who exhibit some features of hierarchical ordering not dissimilar to those of the Daśanāmīs. While a general distinction may be made between married, semi-secularised gosain-s and celibate saṃnyāsī-s, who do not usually inhabit the same social milieux, it is apparent from current and historical evidence that distinctions between gharbārī gosain and celibate saṃnyāsī-s become tenuous when the various contexts of the Daśanāmīs are examined. Whether as a gharbārī gosain or a celibate saṃnyāsī, the initiate is a member of a community that has complex relations with the rest of society, which in many respects defy the archetype of the ‘lone’ saṃnyāsī that is presented in ancient Brahmanical texts.

0.3 Sources for this book

Of necessity, a wide range of textual (including hagiographic), ethnographic and epigraphic sources are drawn upon throughout this book. The work of many scholars and commentators is utilised in the fields of several of India’s religious traditions, and in particular periods of the history of South Asia. Many of the insights presented in this study are not novel; however, the drawing together of research from such a wide range of areas has enabled a tentative reconstruction of the historical formation of an identity for the Daśanāmīs. Nearly all the available ethnographic accounts of the Daśanāmīs have been consulted, including travel accounts from the Mughal period, British Government reports from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and contemporary sources. A number of Hindi publications are availed of, which provide details of the organisation, structure and mantras of the Daśanāmīs. Some of these publications usually only circulate amongst Daśanāmī initiates, and I am very grateful to the sādhu-s who made these available. Research was further informed by fieldwork conducted in 2001 and 2002.

91 Gnanambal (1973:199), for example, observes how some of the castes of south India have substituted Sanskritic names for low-caste names, tracing their mythological origin to ancestors like Sāgara, Vālmīki and Jambava.
92 Thanks to generous grants from research organisations, I was able to attend
An ethnographic overview of the Daśanāmīs is presented in Chapters 1 and 2, considering the subdivisions, hierarchies, caste and functionary positions within the order. The Daśanāmī order has two main wings, one being what might be called the monastic tradition, represented by the daṇḍī-ś, who are ‘staff-carrying’ samnyāśi-ś, the preeminent representatives of this tradition being the reigning Śaṅkarācāryas. The other main wing within the order is represented by paramahansa ascetics and (previously) militant nāgā-ś93 (‘fighting ascetics’), the latter being organised in quasi-military divisions known as akhārā-ś (‘wrestling ring’). While considerable use has been made of the work of other scholars in the ethnographic domain, fieldwork has yielded many details of the organisation of the Daśanāmīs, some of which were not previously apparent, particularly concerning the hierarchies and organisation of the akhārā-ś.

The rites of renunciation and initiation are analysed in Chapter 3. References are made to the Dharmasāstra-s, the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad-s and several mediaeval texts on renunciation. What is not apparent from a reading of dharmaśāstra texts—on which commentators on the Daśanāmī tradition generally rely for their understanding of saṃnyāsa—is that initiation into the Daśanāmīs via an akhārā transpires in two stages. The first is the pañc-guru-samskār, wherein the neophyte acquires five gurus. The second stage of initiation is the performance of the saṃnyāsa rite, usually performed at a Kumbh Melā, which brings together the two wings of the Daśanāmī order, with their own lineages, which generally have little contact with each other. Both the monastic and militant wings supply preceptors for the

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93 From the Hindi nāgā, meaning ‘naked’.
performance of the samnyāsa rite. A third initiation rite is performed for samnyāsīs who wish to become nāgās.

A series of short Sanskrit texts are the main source and focus of Chapter 4. Generally known as (Śrī) Mathāmnāya-s,94 these texts were supposedly, but improbably, written by Śaṅkarācāryya. In the Mathāmnāya-s, amongst other details, the ten Daśanāmī names are specified and attached to one of the four matha-s putatively put under the direct charge of Śaṅkara’s four main disciples. It is apparent that the information in the Mathāmnāya-s provides the primary framework within which Daśanāmī identity is constituted, as no other textual or epigraphic source supplies the crucial details pertinent to the constitution and emic history of the order. The information in the Mathāmnāya-s, representing the locus of popular understanding of Daśanāmī history, is consequently central to the transmission of Daśanāmī tradition, though it is argued that these texts are most probably not more than three or four hundred years old. The well-known claims of the tradition regarding the founding of four matha-s and the organisation of a sect of samnyāsī-s are contrasted with historical evidence and some legal judgements, revealing numerous matha-s all over India which have at times claimed to be founded by Śaṅkara, and casting some doubt on the notion that Śaṅkara founded any matha.

The main sources for Chapter 5 are the hagiographies of Śaṅkara. Use has been made of the work of Antarkar and Bader (see Bibliography), two scholars who have worked extensively on these texts. Śaṅkara’s own works are also examined, illustrating that Śaṅkara was almost certainly a vaisnava, and not a śaiva as projected in the hagiographic tradition. An examination of the twenty or so extant hagiographic works reveals that the first mention of four matha-s appears briefly in Cidvilāsa’s Śaṅkaravijaya-vilāsa, produced most probably in the late sixteenth or seventeenth century. However, no mention is made of the founding of any matha in the most popular of Śaṅkara’s hagiographies, the Śaṅkara-dig-vijaya attributed to Mādhava, written, at the earliest, in 1650. Further, no reference to Śaṅkara’s founding of the Daśanāmī order of ascetics is to be found in any of Śaṅkara’s genuine works, or hagiographic texts.

94 These texts, also variously known as Mathāmnāya-stotra, Mathāmnāya-setu, Mathetivṛtta, Mathāmnāyasāsanam and Mahānuśasanam are contained, together with translation, in Appendix 2.
References to the term \textit{daśanāmī} appear to occur first in a couple of late mediaeval texts on renunciation, also produced, at the earliest, in the late sixteenth century.

Within the Hindu religious tradition generally, and the Daśanāmī world specifically, Śaṅkara is intimately associated with the \textit{advaita matha} at Śrīṅgerī (in south Karnataka) which he supposedly founded. In Chapter 6, a detailed examination is undertaken of political and religious developments during the period of the Vijayanagara empire, which flourished in south India between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The work of eminent historians of the period is availed of, supplemented by epigraphic research. It is argued that in the mid-fourteenth century, the early Vijayanagara rulers patronised what was, essentially, a ‘new’ orthodox Śaiva \textit{advaita} tradition, though this had little to do with Śaṅkara, who appears to have been relatively unknown in this period. In the image of their Śaiva royal patrons, Śaṅkara’s hagiographers subsequently projected Śaṅkarācārya as an incarnation of Śiva who vanquished heresy and reinvigorated the orthodox Brahmanical tradition. This established Śaṅkara’s reputation as a great Śaiva, even though it is apparent he and his immediate disciples were \textit{vaishnava}-s.

As already mentioned, even the hagiographic tradition does not mention the founding of an order of Daśanāmī ascetics. If Śaṅkara did not found the Daśanāmīs, then an explanation is needed as to how the sect came into existence. The final layer of the argument presented in this study, in Chapter 7, explores the context in which a Daśanāmī identity may have formed. A variety of sources show that between around the mid-sixteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century a number of groups of radical militant ascetics from Nāth, Sikh-related and (nascent) ‘Hindu’ orders—including what was to become the militant division of the Daśanāmīs—became organised in military units (\textit{akhāryā}-s), largely as a consequence of state patronage. Relying on the work of specialists in Islam, the development of Sūfī sects and lineages in India are explored in respect of their influential relationship with the dominant Islamicate orders of north India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It will be seen how the organisation of Sūfī lineages mirrors, in several important aspects, parallel features of Daśanāmī organisation. This analysis tends towards the supposition that influential Sūfī institutions may possibly have provided both a contributory template and a political rationale for the organisation of the Daśanāmīs, and the formation
of a distinct identity for an order of *samnyāsī*-s; even though this cannot be conclusively demonstrated. In the formation of what is argued is a newly created identity, diverse lineages pertaining to both radical militant ascetics and *advaita* monastic traditions were merged into one order that gained its orthodox legitimacy from its putative inception by Śaṅkara.

The integration of the two wings of the Daśanāmīs—the *nāgā* and monastic traditions—is apparent in initiation procedures. The sharing of common religious practices and sectarian markers, the identification with a distinct (*advaita*) philosophy, and the adoption of a common mythology—as reflected in the most popular hagiographies of Śaṅkara and in the *mathāmnāya*-s—provide the substance for the identification of the Daśanāmīs as a distinct sect. Although some Daśanāmī lineages may stretch back indeterminately, it is argued that particular political processes most probably impelled the formation of an identity for the Daśanāmīs, resulting in the dissemination of the frame-structure of the *mathāmnāya*-s and the integration within one sect of disparate lineages of ascetics. It is possible that traditionalists might not only disagree with some of the findings of this research but also suspect that the author may have had something like Paraśurāma’s axe to grind in the deconstruction of oriental saints (such as Śaṅkara), Hindu tradition or Indian history. However, the author is aware of the extent to which not only religious but also social history has been ‘invented’ in practically all periods of human history in the service of various ideologies.\(^9\)

Even a cursory investigation into hagiography and constructions of various social and religious histories frequently illustrates broadly common processes in a variety of socio-political contexts.\(^9\,6\) If we consider Ireland in the seventh century CE (approximately the time of Śaṅkara), it has been remarked that, “By and large, each dynasty had its own saint, its own foundation, on a principle resembling the

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\(^9\) In this regard, the popular work of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) might be mentioned in connection with some British traditions. This collection of learned articles illustrates the ‘invention’ of several ancient traditions, including: the kilt-wearing Highland tradition of Scotland (Hugh Trevor-Roper); the rediscovery of some ‘ancient’ (but, in fact, non-authentic) Welsh traditions in the eighteenth century (Prys Morgan); and the involving of royalty in British parliamentary procedure (David Cannadine).

\(^9\,6\) For studies in Indian hagiography, see Snell (1994); Granoff (1984, 1988a, 1988b); Schober (1997).
Continental *eigenkloster*... Very clearly, the saints’ lives, as propaganda for the power and influence of their subjects, had a crucial role to play in aggrandizing specific monastic centres at (inevitably) the expense of others” (Stevenson 1995:25). Such remarks would be entirely appropriate to the discussion concerning the Indian monastic tradition, Śaṅkara and his Vijayanagara hagiographers (presented in Chapter 6).

A final but important rider to the discussion is the consideration that the Daśanāmīś and others who find their way into this book—whether as mendicants, *mahant*-s, mercenaries, scholars, philosophers, political envoys, traders, raiders, property-owners or bankers—are those who by their actions have found their way into history. Those who live more closely to the ideals of *saṁnyāsa*—as lone renunciates undergoing austerities, far removed from worldly, economic and political life—and who constitute a significant proportion of *saṁnyāśi*-s, leave little, if any, trace in history; perhaps just the proverbial and barely perceptible smoke of a fire on a hill. A kind of paradox is implicit in attempting to reconstruct the history of a renunciate movement from accounts of those who have left historical traces: perhaps the true history of *saṁnyāsa* would be simply an almost empty account.
CHAPTER ONE

BRANCHES OF THE DAŚANĀMĪ ORDER

In this chapter, the overall structure of the Daśanāmīs is introduced from a contemporary anthropological perspective, examining the branches and customs of the sect in its constitution as an order of nominally celibate sādhu-s. Although there are traditional Brahmanical restrictions that deny women the option of taking saṃnyāsa and renouncing, it is evident that amongst Daśanāmīs and some other renunciate sects there is a significant number of women renunciates. Also briefly considered in this chapter is the issue of sectarian identity within the South Asian context, and the ramifications within recent Daśanāmī history.

1.1 The Daśanāmī sect, as currently constituted, in relation to other renunciative sects

As noted in the Introduction, there are three subdivisions of the Daśanāmīs, namely: 1) the daṇḍī-ś, who carry a staff (daṇḍa); 2) the paramahaṃśa-s; and 3) the nāgā-ś (sometimes referred to as astradhārī-ś, ‘weapon-holders’), who belong to one of the seven Daśanāmī akhārā-s (‘wrestling rings’ or ‘military formations’). Daṇḍī-s may be recognised by the daṇḍa that they carry, a stick that may be plain or embellished and which usually has a piece of saffron cloth wrapped around it, under which is tied an axe-head and the sacred thread. Unlike daṇḍī-ś, paramahaṃśa-s and nāgā-s do not carry the mendicant’s staff. Although

1 See also Ghurye (1964); Tripathi (1978); Sinha and Saraswati (1978); Dazey (1990).
2 See Ch. 2.1
3 Many daṇḍī-s carry either a small līṅga or a sālagrama. Sālagrama-s are ammonites found in two or three places in the bed of the Kāli Gaṇḍaki river in eastern Nepal, which are one of the most important emblems of Viśṇu. They occur in as many as eighty-nine varieties, each type having a symbolic significance (see Ramachandra Rao 1997).
4 A staff is acquired by paramahaṃśa-s during the saṃnyāsa rite, but it is subsequently discarded (see Ch. 3.3).
the tripartite division of *danḍī*, *paramaḥamsa* and *nāgā* is recognised within the Daśanāmī order, the foremost means of self-classification is primarily in terms of the *paramparā* of the initiating guru, in one of the ten lineages\(^5\) supposedly deriving from Śaṅkarācārya. All the three branches of the Daśanāmīs have a large network of *matha*-s, spread throughout India, though most concentrated in north India, particularly in Banaras, Allahabad and Haridvār. Most of even the largest *āśrama*-s and *matha*-s began as a simple dwelling of a *śādhu* who had ceased travelling and settled, frequently after many years of pilgrimage to holy places\(^6\) throughout the Indian subcontinent.\(^7\)

Several scholars provide a general overview of around sixty sects of *śādhu*-s\(^9\) functioning in India in the last decades of the twentieth century.\(^9\) The greatest concentration of *śādhu*-s, both now and for the last three or four hundred years, is to be found in north India, particularly in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The three largest sects of *śādhu*-s are the *vaishnava* Rāmānandīs and the *śaiva* sects of Nāths and Daśanāmīs.\(^10\) There are currently, perhaps, around one hundred thou-

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\(^5\) Amongst the *danḍī*-s, the names used are Tīrtha, Āśrama and Sarasvati. Some few are called Bhāratī. Amongst the *nāgā*-s of today, the names attributed are Giri, Puri, Bhāratī and Sarasvati, though not all *saṃnyāsī*-s with that name are *nāgā*. Aranyas are rare, while Vanas, Sāgaras and Parvatas have practically disappeared.

\(^6\) Many *saṃnyāsī*-s (including the *akhārā*-s) begin the year at the *melā* (in January) at Gaṅgā Sāgar, east of Calcutta. Proceeding west, Paśupatināth and Banaras are popular for Śivarātri (in February/March), after which many follow the Gaṅgā to *tīrtha*-s in the Himalayas, for the summer. Autumn and winter are the seasons when *saṃnyāsī*-s may go south, occasionally visiting some of the twelve *jyotirlingams* en route, finally reaching Rāmeśvaram and Kanya Kumārī.

\(^7\) Before the introduction of passports in the early twentieth century, some *śādhu*-s also travelled widely in Central Asia and the Middle East. See Duncan (1799) for a *saṃnyāsī* who went to Russia and the Middle-East. See Bennett (1963) for an account of a *saṃnyāsī* who walked right round the world.

\(^8\) Some of these sects also have a substantial lay community.

\(^9\) Sinha and Saraswati’s (1978:51) study was based in Banaras; Tripathi’s (1978:156) study conducted in Uttar Pradesh. Tripathi was initiated into both Daśanāmī (*śaiva*) and Nimbārki (*vaishnava*) sects (*sampradāya*-s) and conducted sociological fieldwork over several years during the late 1960s and 1970s. Samanta’s (1997:49–52) study was conducted in Ujjain. See Appendix 1 for lists of sects.

\(^10\) According to Tripathi’s survey of a relatively small sample of 500 *śādhu*-s, the two largest sects are the Daśanāmī and Kānphaṭa (Nāth), each of which comprises around 12% of the *śādhu* population. According to Tripathi, the next largest sect is the Rāmānandī (6.6%). However, van der Veer (1998:xiii) believes that the Rāmānandī sect has become the largest monastic order of North India. Sinha and Saraswati’s research (1978:51) revealed that in Banaras—the main stronghold of Śaivism in India—the two largest ascetic sects are the Daśanāmī and the Rāmānandī.
sand Daśanāmī sādhu-s in South Asia.  Examples of female ascetics and renunciates in ancient India were referred to in the Introduction, and census reports from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveal that women samnyāsin-s then constituted up to forty percent

orders, the Daśanāmīs having 610 initiates and the Rāmānandīs 253. Statistics on sādhu-s are notoriously hard to obtain, because where records are kept in matha-s and akhārā-s, information is rarely divulged.

Hartsuiker (1993:122) gives a figure of five million for the number of sādhu-s, without, however, citing a source for that estimate. If that figure were approximately accurate it would indicate that sādhu-s, at the time of writing, would have constituted just under 0.5% of the population of India, which at the time was around 930 million. Crooke (1896, Vol. 2: 261) cites the Punjab report of 1891, which lists the number of Daśanāmī Gosains in forty-six places in north-west India, most of which are now in the state of Uttar Pradesh. 103,320 Daśanāmīs are recorded, of whom 55,347 are male, and 47,973 are female. The total population of the province in 1891 is recorded as 46,905,085 (1896, Vol. 1: clix) of whom 623,506 are ‘Fakir’. According to these figures, Daśanāmīs would have constituted approximately 16% of the renunciate population of north-west India and 0.23% of the general population. These figures are not so different from the estimates arrived at for the percentages of Daśanāmīs in relationship to other sects but would indicate a figure of approximately one half that of the figure estimated previously for the entire renunciate population.

Briggs (1982:4–6) made a useful, if somewhat disorganised, survey of Government Census statistics concerning ‘Jogīs’, ‘Faqīrs’ and ‘Mendicants’. The census returns for 1901 (Census of India, Vol. 1, part 2, Tables, pp. 283, 288, 301) enumerate 436,803 Hindu Faqīrs; 659,891 Hindu Jogīs; 43,139 Muhammadan Jogīs; 45,463 Hindu Näths (Kāmphaṭa). This makes a total of 1,185,296 ascetics. According to the census, the population of India was at that time around 200 million, so ascetics would have constituted around 0.5% of the Indian population, a similar figure reached above by rough calculation for today. If Tripathi’s (1978:156) figure of 12% is accurate for the percentage of sādhu-s who are Daśanāmīs, and if we assume that the relative percentages of members belonging to the different sects remains approximately the same (even if the total number of sādhu-s has declined since the time of Tripathi’s work in the early 1970s), then the total number of Daśanāmī sādhu-s would these days be around 600,000. However, this figure seems too high. An indicator of the possible size of the Daśanāmī population would be the fact that at the Ujjain Kumbh Melā in 1992, the Jūnā akhārā, one of the largest sub-branches of the sect, initiated around 3,000 new samnyāsī-s (Hartsuiker 1993:64). Bedi and Bedi (1991:85) comment that over 2,500 sādhu-s were initiated into the Jūnā akhārā at the 1989 Kumbh Melā at Allahabad. Nearly all initiations into all branches of the Daśanāmīs, through the samnyāsa rite, are performed at the Kumbh Melās at Haridvār, Prayāga (Allahabad) or Ujjain, over a periodic cycle of (almost) twelve years. If, at a rough guess, bearing in mind the relative sizes of the sub-branches of the Daśanāmīs, perhaps 7,000 or 8,000 men take samnyāsa in total on each occasion, then every twelve years there would be around 20,000 to 25,000 new Daśanāmī samnyāsī-s. Given an average lifespan of sixty or seventy years, a figure of around 100,000 would be reached.

Hindi: samnyāsin; the term is Sanskritised by some commentators as samnyāsini, though this term is rarely used in classical sources.
of both the general sādhu\textsuperscript{13} and Daśanāmī populations in certain regions of India. These days, however, women samnyāsin-s, who are usually referred to as mār or mātā-jī, may constitute perhaps between approximately two and ten percent of both the general sādhu and Daśanāmī populations.\textsuperscript{14} Although there are still a significant number of women ascetic renunciates in South Asia, there are very few orders where the guru-paramparā is handed down from woman to woman.\textsuperscript{15} Most of the orders and matha-s that comprise women are dependent on male preceptors, who in several instances are Daśanāmis.

There have been several studies of Hindu women saints, some of whom are ascetics,\textsuperscript{16} though relatively few devoted to female Hindu renunciates.\textsuperscript{17} Caplan (1973) describes a small group of Daśanāmī mā-r-s, all Giris, living in Duari in western Nepal. In this area most ascetics are unmarried women, samnyāsī-s usually being a settled caste, only distinguished from other castes of a similar rank by particular customs of initiation and funeral rites.\textsuperscript{18} In the village of Duari, besides the women ascetics, there were twenty-eight Giris (2.2\% of the village population) at the time of the study, in 1969. The mā-r-s of Duari live together in a monastery (kuṭī) which has a temple of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Female sādhu-s are also referred to as sādhvī.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Table XVII of the Imperial Census of India for 1931, cited by Briggs (1982:4–6), shows, under the heading of Aghorī, Faqīr, Sādhu and Sannyāśī, a total of more than one million persons. According to the Censuses of 1901 and 1931, women constituted approximately 40\% of the wandering ascetic population. Modern commentators, for example Denton (1981:212) and Hartsuiker (1993:62), give an estimated figure of 10\%, or just under, for female ascetics, many of whom are widowed. Denton’s estimate is derived from a sample of 1,300 ascetics in Banaras, of whom 130 are girls or women. Sinha and Saraswati’s (1978) general survey of 1284 sādhu-s in Banaras included 97 women (i.e. approximately one in twelve). However, it has been pointed out to me that estimates based on urban surveys may be significantly higher than surveys would reveal for India as a whole, which might indicate a much lower percentage of female renunciates than the 10\% derived for Banaras.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ramaswamy (1992:134) briefly mentions an example of a female preceptor: Venābāi, a disciple of Samarth Rāmadāsa (17th century), became head of a matha at Mirāj (in Karnatakā). Also, it seems that the followers of the saint Mirābāi (15th/16th century) once constituted a sect of ‘Mirābāis’. See Sethi (1979) and Alston (1980c) for brief resumés of Mirābāi’s life.
\item \textsuperscript{16} See Ramanujan (1973:111–142; 1982); Gupta (1991); Ramaswamy (1992; 1997). Very few women saints married, and almost all were initiated by males.
\item \textsuperscript{17} For the position of (women) sādhvī-s/ śrāvikā-s within Jainism, see Jaini (1991); Shāntā (1997); Balbir (2002); Vallely (2002).
\item \textsuperscript{18} One such caste of samnyāsī-s is discussed in the Introduction (see Bouillier 1976; 1979).
\end{itemize}
Bhairava. They survive by begging, donations, on the produce of the attached land, and sometimes by lending out money or grain. The head māni is usually the guru for the other ascetics, her status being determined not by age but by how long she had been resident in the kuṭi.19

[Clémentin-] Ojha has published several studies of women sādhuī-s in Banaras, the first (1981) being of forty-five individual women ascetics, another (1984)20 examining three communities of female samnyāsīn-s in Banaras, most of whom are Bengalis. Two are communities of Nimbārkīs21 (also known as the nīnāvat or Sanaka-sampradāya),22 the Śobhā Mā and Gaṅgā Mā.23 Around a dozen women ascetics live at an āśrama which Śobhā Mā founded in 1950. The third community is of followers of Ānanda Mayī Mā24 who live at the Kanyā Pīthha, founded in 1926. The women of the three communities live communally in matha-s, under the guide of female preceptors,25 and dedicate part of their time to teaching in various schools. Traditionally, the orthodox Nimbārkī order denies renunciation to women, so they undergo an initiation ceremony that contains fewer syllables of the sacred mantra than either householders (lay

19 Similar to the settled samnyāsī castes of Nepal, the women are not of Brahman caste, but the slightly inferior Jaisi caste. Despite being samnyāsin-s, caste still operates amongst the women, in terms of commensality, purity and pollution (p. 181). They were initiated between the ages of nine and thirty-five, two of them being daughters of ascetics. Some had become ascetics due to marriage problems, and one was widowed.

20 See also Clémentin-Ojha (1985; 1988).

21 Followers of Nimbārka, the twelfth/thirteenth century vaisnava bhakta, who was born in Bellary, Karnataka, but spent most of his life in the Vṛndāvana/Mathurā area; his philosophical system is dvaita-dvaita, ‘difference-in-non-difference’.

22 One of the four vaisnava sampradāya-s (see Ch. 2.1, fn. 7).

23 Both Śobha Mā and Gaṅgā Mā were initiated by a Bengali, Svāmī Santadās Kāthiyā Bābā (Clémentin-Ojha 1988:WS-34).


25 Clémentin-Ojha also presents (1985) four female ‘gurus’ (a term for which there is no exact equivalent in Sanskrit for females, owing to their traditional ineligibility to perform that role; though the term guru is used for a woman guru amongst Jinas, see Shāntā 1997:189). The female gurus (who are generally referred to as ‘Mātāji’) are from the Daśanāmī, Rāmānandī, Nimbārka and Vallabha sampradāya-s. All were initiated by male preceptors. After Ānanda Mayī Mā’s demise, Śobhā Mā became the most important female guru in Banaras, with around 1,000 disciples. The female guru from the Vallabha sampradāya, Śāradāvallabhā Beṭji, runs a temple and an educational institution, and can perform initiation (dikṣā) into the sect.
followers) or male renunciates (virakta). The order of Ánanda Mayī Mā is ‘heterodox’—having a woman as preceptor—yet the women are initiated by male Daśanāmī priests, under the name of Ánanda Mayī Mā (Ojha 1984:208). It is believed that, during the ceremony, the sākti of Ánanda Mayī Mā is transmitted to the initiate, who becomes a disciple of the guru. The women become brahmacārini but are not fully ‘saṃnyāsini’ as they do not perform the second stage of initiation, the viraṇa-home. Nevertheless, the saṃnyāsin-s have a higher status than lay followers. While generally dressed in the typical garb of a sādhu, women renouncers do not usually wear any jewelry, as one of the signs of their renunciation.

Sinclair-Brull (1997) and King (1984:75–79) provide accounts of the nuns of the Śrī Śaradā Maṭha, and those of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Śaradā Mission, organisations that run parallel to, but function independently, of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission. King (1984:79–81) also discusses several branch-orders of the relatively few women ascetics in other sects, those of the Svāmī Nārāyaṇ, Śārīrī Bhārati and Liṅgāyats.

26 See Ch. 3.
27 The Śrī Śaradā Maṭha, the largest of these female orders, was founded in 1954, and in 1981 had six centres, at Madras, Trichur, Pūne, Bangalore, Banaras and Haridvār. Women must be over thirty years old to be initiated into the order; novitiate (brahmacārini) vows may be taken after two years, and the full saṃnyāsa rite of renunciation after another five years. Then, (theoretically) irrespective of previous caste affiliations, the women initiates may perform Vedic rites. Founded in 1960, the Rāmakṛṣṇa Śaradā Mission (a sister institution) has eight more branches (five in Bengal, one each in Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala). In 1981 it had 170 monastic members (King 1984:78). See McDaniel (1995) for a profile of a Bengali saṃnyāsin, Arcanā Mā (b.1928) of the Rāmakṛṣṇa order, who has a large āśrama in Calcutta, inherited, unusually, from her male guru.

28 Rāmakṛṣṇa himself initiated a woman named Gaurī Mā (d.1938), who became a renunciate and founded an āśrama for women’s education in 1895 in Calcutta. It came to diverge in ethos from the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission, becoming orthodox in terms of caste and rites, and establishing a line of ascetic female initiates succeeding Gaurī Mā. Another āśrama (first called Māṭ Mandir and then Śaradā Mandir) was opened by Sudhira Basu (d.1920) in 1914 for women to practice renunciation. The āśrama was under the authority of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission until 1963. Vivekānanda also seems to have initiated several women, but only through mantra. Proper saṃnyāsa was not given to women until 1947, in the first western Vedānta convent, founded in Hollywood in 1940 (King 1984:77–78).

29 See Babb (1984) for comment on the role of women in the Brahmā Kumārīs.
30 The few female ascetics of the Svāmī Nārāyaṇ order are called Sāṃkhyā Yoginīs; they live in a separate temple and follow their own guru. Śrī Upāsanī
darśan (‘vision/spiritual presence’) and an interview with Her Holiness Sadguru Śrī Jīhānānandasarasvatī of Madras, a woman who was previously married, raising five children. She renounced the world, most unusually taking saṃnyāsa personally from the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcipuram, the first time he had performed the saṃnyāsa rite for a woman. More recently, Khandelwal (2004) recounts the life of several female renouncers, focussing mainly on two female Daśānāmī saṃnyāsinī-ś, Ānand Mātā and Bājī, both of whom run āśrama-ś in Haridvār.\textsuperscript{31}

While the Daśānāmī paramaḥamsa subdivision has some female ascetics, there are fewer amongst the dāndī-ś and very few who are nāgā.\textsuperscript{32} Amongst the akhārā-ś there is only one order of mārī-ś, who are affiliated to the Jūnā akhārā,\textsuperscript{33} the largest of the seven Daśānāmī akhārā-ś. While most of the women come from eastern Nepal or the adjacent Kumaun district of Uttaranchal, some few come from West Bengal. They have their own Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara (similar to an abbot),\textsuperscript{34} and the current mahant of the mārī-ś is Mīrām Purī. Around eight hundred mārī-ś attended the 2001 Allahabad Kumbh Melā,

\textsuperscript{31} Ānand Mātā is said to have been initiated by a “prominent swami” (p. 49), and Bājī by a Daśānāmī saṃnyāsī (p. 80).

\textsuperscript{32} See below for the dāndī, paramaḥamsa and nāgā branches of the Daśānāmīs.

\textsuperscript{33} Even though the other akhārā-ś do not generally admit women, Sinha and Saraswatī (1978:98) note that at one time the [Mahā]Nirvānī akhārā had a female ascetic raised to the position of Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara, causing a boycott by the other akhārā-ś. Sinha and Saraswatī (1978:68) report the presence in Banaras of two female ascetics who are members of the dāndī subdivision of the Daśānāmīs. One was residing with her male counterparts (gurubhārī-ś) in the Daksināmūrtī matha, and the other, Gaurī Mā, was a mahant who had succeeded the gaddī of the Pūranānanda Svāmī Āśrama matha. She was the only resident ascetic.

\textsuperscript{34} See Ch. 2.4 for an account of their role in the Daśānāmīs.
camping in an area adjacent to the camp of the Jûnâ akhârā. During the Mâgh Melâ, in January 2002, as per custom, many women camped alongside men in the daṇḍî camps. This is in sharp distinction to practices in the akhârā-š where there are usually no women, except in the case of the Jûnâ akhârā which has a separate camping area for the women samnyāsin-s.

Daśanâmîs usually refer to only themselves as samnyāśi-s, distinguishing themselves from other sects of sâdhу-s who generally refer to themselves by their sectarian names, as for example, Nâth (Kânphaṭa), Udâsin (Sikh-affiliated), Bairâgî/Vairâgî (Râmânandî), et cetera. Sâdhу-s are typically dressed so as to indicate, in some manner, their sectarian affiliation. Samnyâśi-s usually wear orange, ochre, saffron, or salmon-coloured cloth, the traditional colour of the samnyâśi. Sectarian affiliation is also shown by the kind of necklace (mâlâ) worn, and often more distinctively by sectarian marks that adorn the face and body. Hair may be shaven, short, long, or in dreadlocks (jâta) but, unlike the custom in some other sâdhu sects, the top-knot (cot) is not worn by the Daśanâmî-Samnyâśi-s. It is removed during initiation, as is the sacred thread (janeû) if it was previously worn, as a sign that the samnyâśi has renounced his right to perform sacrifices. While Daśanâmîs usually apply the tripûndra (or tripûnda) to the forehead, a sectarian mark of three parallel lines of holy ashes (vibhûttâ), it is usually only nâgâ-s who cover the body entirely with ashes. The equipment carried by itinerant Daśanâmî sâdhu-s usually consists of fire-tongs (ciṭṭa), blankets, sometimes a deer or tiger skin, a water-

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35 The author spent three weeks in October 1987 living with a female initiate of the Jûnâ akhârâ at her roadside shelter near Barkot, in Garhýal, Uttaranchal. Her husband had died some years previously in a road accident and she had taken samnyâśa. She was well respected locally and her brother helped her with many practical affairs. She died in 1995.

36 Vâïșnava-s wear tulûśi beads, which are beads carved from the wood of a basil plant (ocimum sanctum) which grows all over the subcontinent. Śaïva-s wear rudrâkṣa seeds, which come from a tree (elaegarâs ganitrus) that grows mostly in Nepal. Necklaces and bracelets usually comprise 108 seeds, but may also be worn singly or in other numbers. Accounts of the properties, associated mantras and significance of the number of segments vary considerably and may be found in several texts, including: Śiva Purâṇa (Vidyâvara Samhitâ); Padma Purâṇa (ch. 57); Śrîmaddevâbhagavat (11th Skandha, ch. 3–7); Rudrâksjâjâbala Upanîṣad. See Rai (1993a); Majupuria (1982:223).

37 Danḍi-samnyâśi-s keep the janeû concealed under a cloth that is attached to their daṇḍa.

38 This is in distinction from the practice of the vâïșnava Râmânandîs who maintain the top-knot after initiation, and may still perform sacrifices.
pot (kamāndal) made from coconut,\textsuperscript{39} wood or metal, sometimes a trident (trisūl), and a small bag (jholī) for a few belongings such as religious pamphlets, identity papers, money, holy ash, soap, and for members of some akhārās, smoking materials.

The ancient notion of tapas/tapasyā (Vtap, “heat”), to be found in the Rg Veda, is that austerities (tapas)—particularly celibacy—produce a kind of internal heat\textsuperscript{40} that is associated with spiritual and creative powers, and in the later context of the Purāṇa-s, liberation.\textsuperscript{41} While most Daśanāmīs periodically perform limited regimens of austerity (tapas/tapasyā), such as taking a vow (vrata) to fast on a particular day or during a certain period,\textsuperscript{42} or of limiting their diet,\textsuperscript{43} some few also perform haṭha-yoga postures. A few sādhu-s practise more radical forms of tapasyā, not infrequently for a period of twelve years.\textsuperscript{44} There is a

\textsuperscript{39} The most sought kind of coconut used is the extra large variety from the Seychelle Islands.

\textsuperscript{40} On tapas in a Vedic context, see Knipe (1975); Kaelber (1989).

\textsuperscript{41} The acquisition of power, through tapas, is also used for immoral purposes. Historically, tapas is not essentially related to ethics, and its association with ‘penance’ is misleading (see Rüping 1977). In the Veda-s and Brāhmaṇa-s, tapas is characterised—broadly—as heat, poetic inspiration, and the life-force born through the power of tapas, while in the Mahābhārata (MBh 1.25.10–18; 1.101.25; 1.166.9; 1.208.15–20; 1.36.8–19; 3.95.1–4) are to be found instances of powers accrued, and curses being exercised, through the tapas of a renouncer or ascetic (see Olson 1997:8–13). In the epics, tapas is seldom used for liberation, but for worldly gain (such as a son), revenge, status, honour, glory, and military success (see Holck 1969). For psychological interpretations of austerities, see Masson (1976); Cantlie (1977).

\textsuperscript{42} Vrata-s (‘vows’), particularly to fast on a particular day, are a general feature of traditional Hindu culture. See Kane (HDS, Vol. 5, part II:255–462) for an exhaustive list of around 1,500 different vrata-s. See also Dutt (2002). On women householders’ religious vows, see Babb (1975:110), who describes the solah somār vrat (the ‘sixteen Mondays vow’); McGee (1991); Iltis (1996); Pearson (1996).

\textsuperscript{43} The most common form of limiting diet is phalāhār, technically fruititarian, but usually also consisting of milk, fruits, nuts, and—if a grain is consumed—rāmdān, a kind of reddish millet. The important point about a phalāhār diet is that all foodstuff may ‘fall’ into the recipients hands.

\textsuperscript{44} Practices include those when the sādhu does not lie down or remains seated (when he is known as khaṛēśvāri), usually supported by suspended sling, or keeps one arm permanently in the air (ürdhvabāhu). Some permanently wear a metal chastity belt (a practice more common amongst Vairāgīs); while others lie on a bed of nails (a practice far less common today than even in the 1970s). Particularly at melā-s, sādhu-s may be seen supporting large weights (usually rocks) tied to the genitals; while some Daśānāmīs hang upside-down (ürdh-mukhi) for some time on a wooden contraption that supports the feet. Long periods of immersion in water (jal-sayyā), particularly the river Gaṅgā, are undertaken on a regular basis by some sādhu-s. Another, and it seems ancient, form of tapas is the pañcāgni tapasyā. For performing
general public perception that a sādhu-’s powers, accumulated from taṭāsvyā, are real—and they are feared—though attitudes to sādhu-s vary widely. While in north India sādhu-s are generally revered—particularly by villagers—sometimes almost as a form (mūrti) of deity, sādhu-s who have toured south India frequently complain of the difficulties they have experienced there.

In distinction from the usual Hindu practice of cremation, when a saṃnyāsī dies he is usually buried in a grave (known as a samādhi), facing east or north-east, supported on the wooden ‘T-shaped’ frame (baraṇgaṇ) that is used for meditation, which maintains the corpse in a seated posture. He is usually buried with some cannabis leaves (bhāṅg) and a water-pot gourd. Salt and spices are thrown in to assist the process of putrefaction. Some time after the burial the saṃnyāsī-’s disciples will organise a meal (bhandaṛā) for associated ascetics and Brahmans. Tombs and sometimes temples are erected over the graves of important heads of monasteries (mahant-s and mahāmaṇḍaḷesvara-s) and worship of the samādhi continues. Mahant-s are occasionally entombed in stone coffins (tanak) which are thrown into the Ganges, notably in holy places along the river, such as Haridvār, Banaras and Prayāg. Poorer ascetics are sometimes merely thrown into the river Gaṅgā with stones attached to their limbs.

this austerity, the ascetic sits in the noonday sun surrounded, in the first stage, by five heaps of smouldering cow-dung. He utters mantras of the Lord’s name, with the aid of a necklace (mala) hidden under a cloth. In the following stages the number of smouldering fires is then increased to seven, twelve, eighty-four, and ‘innumerable’ fires. In the final stage a fire is lit in a clay pot (known as kapār) and placed on the meditating ascetic’s head (kapār), leaving him surrounded by fire. This form of taṭāsvyā is typically performed for three consecutive summers, usually only by sādhu-s of the Rāmānandī order. For pictures of these activities, see Hartsuiker (1993).

46 A number of castes use a method for burials similar to that of saṃnyāsī-s; for example, the Pisharotis, a settled caste of Kerala (see Ananthakrishna Iyer 1912:143).
47 Thurston (1909, Vol. 2:299) reports that a dead saṃnyāsī-’s head is broken with a coconut, to facilitate mokṣa, and that his body is then wrapped with a reddish cloth and thrown into the Ganges. A south Indian Brahman saṃnyāsī-’s head is also said to be so broken, but his body is buried.
Regarding the Brahmanical textual tradition, according to the Byḍāḍarāṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.4.22; 3.5.1), the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.2.12), Manu (4.38; 6.97), and the Kūrma Purāṇa, (II.28.2), only Brahmans may renounce. Such is the opinion of the advaita commentators, Śaṅkara and Sureśvara, and most mediaeval authors. However, the Jābhāla Upaniṣad (4)\(^{48}\) and Yājñavalkya Smṛti (3.61)\(^{49}\) maintain that all twice-born (dvija: brāhmaṇa, ksatriya, vaisya) may renounce. In the mediaeval period, Brahmanical commentators were still undecided as to whether only Brahmans or all twice-born were eligible to renounce,\(^{50}\) an ambivalence also apparent amongst more recent commentators.\(^{51}\) The majority view is that the three higher varṇa-s are entitled to saṃnyāsa.\(^{52}\) However, in the Viṣṇu Smṛti (5.115)\(^{53}\) and Yājñavalkya Smṛti (2.241) a punishment is specified for those who entertain a śūdra parivṛjaka in rites for the gods or manes, indicating that, disregarding varṇa prescriptions, there were instances of śūdra renunciates, which seems to also pertain in more recent times.\(^{54}\) In a landmark ruling in 1980 by the Supreme Court, which is frequently reiterated, a śūdra has the right to become a saṃnyāśī.\(^{55}\) The judge-

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50 See Olivelle (1977:33–34). Vāsudevaśrama, for example, in his Yātīdharmaprajāśa (composed between 1675 and 1800), expressed both views.
52 See Killingley (1991) for a useful discussion of varṇa, jāti and caste, and how these categories have been interpreted by several influential commentators.
54 Sinha and Saraswati (1978:180) report that an Ācārya Maṇḍaleśvara, Nar-simh Giri, had a highly educated disciple from the Kunbi caste (a ‘clean’ śūdra caste). Steele (1868:440) remarks that if a person of too inferior a caste has through inadvertance been admitted to the order, should he be discovered he is branded with a hot coin and expelled. However, Thurston (1909, Vol. 2:299) notes that ‘Gōsāyis’ never marry, and that brāhmaṇa-s, ksatriya-s, vaisya-s and śūdra-s may all become Gōsāyī. Crooke (1896, Vol. 2:260, citing Maclagan, Panjāb Census Report 1891:112) states that some lineages of Daśanāmīs have lower-caste initiates. Rose (1914, Vol. 3:358) believes that originally only Brahmans were admitted, and that Rājpūts were subsequently admitted in the recruitment of nūgā-s. Vaiśya-s, who administered finance, were later admitted, and even men of impure ‘castes’. However, Rose maintains that the order is mostly made up of Brahmans and ksatriya-s, and that caste restrictions concerning commensality are maintained.
55 The case (Krishna Singh v. Mathura Ahir) ran from 1951 to 1980, and originated from a dispute over a śūdra saṃnyāśī’s right to inherit property (see Narayanan 1993:286–291).
ment on this case was reached primarily on the basis of custom within a community, which was interpreted as taking legal precedence over the proscriptions of dharma in this regard. After initiation by an acārya-guru, the initiate theoretically loses his previous caste identification. Nevertheless, caste remains an important background element in the life of the sāṃnyāsī, as his pre-sāṃnyāsa caste position is often known by other sāṃnyāsīs, higher caste initiates generally being accorded greater respect.

Three of the four dāṇḍī lineages, namely the Tṛtha, Āśrama and Sarasvatī, initiate only Brahmans and regard themselves as superior to the paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s. Bhāratis are to be found amongst both dāṇḍī-s, paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s, while the non-dāṇḍī lineages appear to also admit lower-caste initiates. It seems probable that when the akhārā-s first formed, most probably between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, lower-caste initiates were admitted as nāgā-s to some of the lineages. In accounts of events in northern India during this period it is apparent that it is the names ‘Giri’ (particularly), ‘Puri’ and ‘Bhārati’ which figure most prominently in nāgā armies. Many of these may have been recruited from lower castes (see Chapter 7).

Amongst the akhārā-s, my research has made clear that it is

56 Sadānanda Giri (1976:28) maintains that before acceptance for initiation the neophyte is questioned about his caste and religion. Brahmans and ksatriya-s from some parts of India are not accepted, for reasons he has not managed to determine, and ‘Untouchables’ are also excluded.
57 See Wilson (1861:197); Oman (1903:161); Anantakrishna Iyer (1930:255); Kane (HDŚ, Vol. 2:951); Tripathi (1978:64-67); Sinha and Saraswati (1978:69). Hartsuiker (1993:31) claims that Āśramas are of solely Brahman backgrounds, and that Brahmans predominate in the Tṛtha, Bhārati and Sarasvatī sub-sects. There are five main southern divisions (Pānc-Drāviḍa) of Brahmans, who reside south of the river Narmadā (with the exception of the Gujarati Brahmans who live to its north), and five northern divisions (Pānc-Gauḍa). There are numerous further sub-divisions, and yet further sub-divisions of those. In the south are: Mahārāṣṭra (12 sub-divisions), Tailanga (or Andhra) (8), Drāviḍa (6), Karnātak (7) and Gaurjara (84). The five northern divisions are the Sārasvat (4), Gauḍ (15), Kānkubja (or Kanaujia or Kānyakubja) (5), Maithila (4) and Uṛkāla (3). There have, of course, been extensive migrations of all castes of Brahmans over thousands of years; and caste is sometimes contrived. See Steele (1868:79); Sherring (1872:19–113).
58 See Ch. 7.
59 See Sarkar (1958). Many nāgā Giris figure in Sarkar’s account; also mentioned (p. 266) are three battalions of Purīs and one of Bhāratis, in the service of the Jodhpur state in the latter half of the eighteenth century.
extremely difficult to determine with any certainty the caste background of many initiates, for the obvious reason that some of them might wish to escape it. However there is a general tendency by informants to emphasise the Brahmanical nature of initiates, some akhārā-s, such as the Niraṅjanā, claiming that all initiates are Brahmans. The initiate should also be physically fit and without any disabilities, yet it is clear that there are exceptions. In general, it seems that apart from daṇḍī ṣaṃnyāsī-ś, many sādhu-ś, particularly those wandering, are from lower castes.

1.3 Subdivisions within the Daśanāmī order: Daṇḍī

Daṇḍī-ś are sometimes referred to as śāstradhārī-ś (‘scripture holders’), or as danḍadhārī-ś, and constitute the monastic wing of the Daśanāmīs. Many of them have some knowledge of Sanskrit, and their higher caste status is generally recognised (Tripathi 1978:64). They have a reputation for observing convention and conservatism (rūdhīvādi), usually keep their hair cut short, and often maintain deep caste prejudices. They generally disassociate themselves from the Daśanāmī-ś of the akhārā-ś, tending to regard only themselves

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60 Tripathi’s (1978:88) survey elicited a figure of 8.4% for sādhu-ś with disabilities.

61 The openness of renunciate orders to low-caste initiates varies from order to order. Rāmānmī sādhu-ś, for example, are almost exclusively low-caste, while one branch of the usually strictly Brahmanical Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas, the sāttā ekākī, were an order of celibate śūdra ascetics who performed important ritual service at the Tirupati temple complex in the fifteenth century (Stein 1968:89). Lamb (2002:18 fn. 15) comments that although (daṇḍī) saṃnyāsī-ś are high-caste, many nāgā-ś and other wandering sādhu-ś are low-caste.

62 During the Māgh Melā at Allahabad in 2002, I visited camps of daṇḍī-ś for around ten days, interviewing numerous sādhu-ś.

63 See Sinha and Saraswati (1978:70); daṇḍī-ś from one of the five main northern Brahmanical castes neither eat nor reside in the same matha-s with those from the five main southern Brahmanical castes. Tamils and Keralites do not associate with members of either group of Brahmans. Further, amongst the guḍā Brahmans of Uttar Pradesh there is a further sub-division, the Kānya-kubj—from Kanauj, one of the five main divisions of northern Brahmans, see Sherring (1872:23)—and Sāryūpāri, who do not dine together in the matha-s. Daṇḍī matha-s also maintain certain rules about the succession of the gaddī. At the Machīlī bandar matha, only a Sāryūpāri/Sarjuparia (one of the five main divisions of Kānya-kubj Brahmans) can accede, whereas the daṇḍī matha at Pushkar only appoints Kānya-kubj ascetics.
as the ‘true saṃnyāsīs’.  Daṇḍī-śs take initiation from a guru from a daṇḍī matha, while paramahamsa-śs usually take initiation from a Mahāmaṇḍalesvara of an akhārā. Common to both the monastic and nāga traditions are a shared understanding of the founding and organising of the sect. Further, at times of initiation the two traditions are united. The two traditions are not entirely distinct, though they are distinguished by their institutional independence and their different roles in India’s political and religious history.

Daṇḍī matha-śs are nominally affiliated to one of the four (or five) main matha-śs (known as pītha-śs) supposedly established by Śaṅkarācārya. Although daṇḍī-śs generally acknowledge the affiliation of their matha to a pītha with some pride, apart from branch-matha-śs of the main pītha-śs, daṇḍī matha-śs function independently, with no connection to the pītha to which they may be nominally affiliated. The greatest concentration of daṇḍī-śs is to be found in Banaras where they have many matha-śs, and where between approximately twenty-five and fifty percent of all daṇḍī-śs are to be found (Sawyer 1993:159), forming approximately one fifth of the ascetic population. At the Māgh

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64 I have even heard daṇḍī-śs remark that “we are not Daśanāmīśs”, emphasizing their non-identification with the akhārā-śs.

65 The daṇḍī-śs whom I have interviewed regard the southern pītha of Śrāgeri as genuine and do not recognise the Kāśicipuram pītha.

66 Sinha and Saraswati (1978:68–72) report 37 daṇḍī matha-śs in nine of the districts of Banaras, 23 affiliated to the Śrādā pītha, of Dvārakā, and 14 to the Śrāgeri pītha. Surprisingly, none of the Banaras daṇḍī matha-śs are associated with the Govardhan pītha of Puṣ or with the Jyotir pītha of Jyōśimath. According to the scheme presented in the normative texts of the Daśanāmīśs, the Mathāṃnāyā, Mahānuśasanam etc., the matha-śs of Banaras should be under the jurisdiction of the Jyotir pītha of Jyōśimath. Four of the matha-śs claim to have been established before the fifteenth century, whereas 27 were most probably built between 1800 and 1968. Only three daṇḍī matha-śs have been built since Independence, whereas the number of paramahamsa matha-śs has significantly increased. Sinha and Saraswati calculate a total resident ascetic population (in distinction from the numerous permanently wandering ascetics) for Banaras as 1,284 (providing a ratio of 1 ascetic for every 250 people in Banaras), of whom śaiva saṃnyāsīs constitute 48.8%. Daṇḍī-śs, numbering 239, form approximately one fifth of the ascetic population. According to Tripathi (1978:67), in Banaras there are twenty-eight matha-śs managed by daṇḍī-śs and fifteen managed by paramahamsa-śs. The two groups are said not to be on good terms and do not take meals together.

67 Sawyer (1993:163), notes that matha-śs continually change, sometimes expanding and becoming more prominent—with new branches being established—under a dynamic head; or alternatively, rapidly declining after the demise of an influential leader. Many of the matha-śs included in Appendix 2 of Sinha and Saraswati’s book
Melā in Allahabad in 2002, around seventy dandī matha-s were camped, the largest camp being that of the Machlibandar (‘fish-monkey’) Math which was represented by the six matha-s it owns in Banaras, where it has its headquarters.

Dandī-s have usually been householders before becoming sannyāsī-s, and on initiation to the order—but before the final rite of sannyāsa—they are given one of four brahmacārī names; either Śvarūp, Prakāśa, Ananda or Caitanya. The name given usually depends on which of the four main pīṭha-s the matha—via which the candidate was initiated—is nominally affiliated to. Dandī-s will have been initiated by a dandī guru, usually a Mahāmanḍalēśvara, but in rare cases directly by a Śaṅkarācārya at one of the four important pīṭha-s.

1.4 Paramahāṁsa

Like all Daśanāmīs, paramahāṁsa-s acknowledge that Śaṅkara founded four pīṭha-s, yet, similarly to the dandī-s, their affiliation to a pīṭha has virtually no practical relevance. However, their affiliation to an akhārā is significant, as it derives either from their own sannyāsa initiation—performed by a Mahāmanḍalēśvara of an akhārā—or from a historical connection, via the paramparā of their guru, whose own guru or guru’s guru may have been in an akhārā. Paramahāṁsa-s generally reside in matha-s that have little connection or no connection with the life of the akhārā, and apart from some

no longer exist, while new institutions have arisen since the time of their study. Sawyer (1993:171) maintains that the largest dandī matha in Banaras is the Mumukṣu Bhavan, established in 1929 by Śvāmī Ghanasyāmānanda. In response to various enquiries, I was informed, albeit unreliably, that there are perhaps 10,000 to 15,000 dandī-sannyāsī-s in India today.

68 For details of both the Māgh Melā and Kumbh Melā, see Appendix 3.

69 The name ‘Machlibandar’ derives from a story about the land which is the headquarters of the matha in Nagva, Banaras. (At one time it was a jungle, with monkeys and fish-ponds.) The matha has a total of fifteen properties, six in Banaras, and others at Haridvār, Sitāpur, Citrakūṭ, Dādī (Haryana), Karnāl (Haryana) Kurukṣetra and Kānpur. The current chief guru is Kailāśa Bhusār Āśrama.

70 In a number of classical texts, paramahāṁsa is a term also used, in an idealised sense, to refer to the highest category of renouncer (see Ch. 3.4).

71 Sinha and Saraswati found that the 296 paramahāṁsa-s of Banaras are affiliated to three akhārā-s, the Jūnā, Niraṇjanī and Nirvāṇī (or Mahānirvāṇī), over 50% belonging to the Nirvāṇī akhārā.
few paramahamsa-s who may participate in the life of an akhārā with a view to becoming nāgā—which requires a further initiatory rite—the inclusion of paramahamsa-s in the ‘military wing’ of the Daśanāmīs simply stems from their initiation from an akhārā. Although not usually involved, paramahamsa-s may actively participate in the life of the akhārā on certain occasions, such as during bhanḍārā-s (communal feasts with the distribution of alms), which may be for a single akhārā or for several together. They take place on particular holy days and when an ascetic succeeds to the gaddi of the maṭha, during which rite the successor is presented with a scarf (cādar) by the sādhu-s present.

The paramahamsa-s have the greatest number of ascetics and maṭha-s in Banaras, the maṭha-s comprising one fifth of all the maṭha-s there (Sinha and Saraswati 1978:72–81).72 Seven of the paramahamsa maṭha-s admit women sādhu-s (also known as avadhūtin),73 two of which are exclusively female, five being mixed male and female. All the mā-s are reported to come from Bengal and Nepal. The author’s field-work has established that some also come from the Kumaun area of Uttaranchal. In contrast to the dāṇḍī-s of Banaras, who run only one educational institution, the Dharma Saṅgha Śīkṣā Maṇḍala, which is in decline, the paramahamsa-s run five Sanskrit pāṭhasālā-s.74 The significance of the prestigious role, financial viability and expansive programme of paramahamsa educational institutions in the context of recent Daśanāmī history can be understood against the background of the militant history of the akhārā-s, and the curtailment of their activities. It seems that some individuals who had been actively involved in the mercenary activities of the akhārā-s had accumulated considerable

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72 There are fifty-seven paramahamsa maṭha-s, none of them established before the fifteenth century, over 82% appearing between 1800 and 1968, and thirty-nine instituted since independence. Of all the various ascetic institutions of Banaras (see Appendix 1), the paramahamsa is the fastest growing, a new maṭha being founded, on average, every two years.

73 This term is sometimes used derogatorily, as an avadhūtin is traditionally the female partner of a Tantric practitioner.

74 The oldest and most efficient is the Saṃnyāsī Saṃskṛta Mahāvidyālaya, run by the Aparnāth maṭha and established in 1906 by Svāmī Gobindāndajī Maṇḍalesvara. The students who have passed through this institution include not only saṃnyāsī-s but also students from the Sikh-derived Udāsin and Nirmala orders. Many of the saṃnyāsī-s have become eminent Maṇḍalesvaras. Sinha and Saraswati (1978:78) note that in 1957, when the institution celebrated its Golden Jubilee, it emerged that practically all the Maṇḍalesvaras of that time had been its students.
wealth, which was then channelled into land and property. Around the beginning of the twentieth century educational institutions were first established, as part of a process of reforming the general ethos of the paramahansa-s and the akhārā-s, particularly in the Gangetic heartland of their activities. At that time, some of the paramahansa-s were well-known as businessmen and landlords (see Ch. 7).

The inheritance of a matha, which is invariably attached to a temple, is usually decided by the reigning mahant, his decision committed in writing or announced in the witness of others. If the mahant dies suddenly, the issue may be settled by the mutual consent of the disciples. However, Sinha and Saraswati (1978:74ff.) comment that practically every matha in Banaras, of whatever denomination, has been involved in legal disputes at one time or another over property. They also note that mahant-s often have histories of affiliations and initiations into more than one akhārā, sometimes as a consequence of internal disagreements. Kane (HDS, Vol. 2:972–973) also records several of the numerous legal disputes that have engaged samnyāsī-s over the centuries. Regarding the trusteeship of matha-s and the required comportment of the mahant, there is now a code for religiously endowed properties, enshrined in the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Act of 1959.

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75 See Katju (1961:233–245) for a lively account of his professional involvement as a lawyer with several cases involving property disputes between matha-s and mahant-s.

76 Confirmed by the author.

77 Derrett (1974:67) also comments on the frequency with which disputes over the property of matha-s end up in court. Kane (HDS, Vol. 2:910–911) cites the remark of Sir T. Strange (Hindu Law, Vol. 1, 1839:32) that “Hindu law is meagre in its provisions relating to religious endowments”, observing that in modern times however, courts of India have laid down that an idol is a juridical person capable of holding property, and that an idol or a matha is in the trusteeship of the manager of the temple or of the mahant. Taylor (2001:50) remarks that legal cases, known as ‘debutter’ cases, concerning the devatā (the technical owner of the temple or property) and the Āebait (usually a priest, standing as the surrogate legal owner on the divinity’s behalf) were extremely frequent at the beginning of the twentieth century in the civil litigation before the Calcutta High Court.

78 Mahant-ship and the matha are not alienable or partible, but the mahant may be removed on the following grounds: 1. Being of unsound mind; 2. Suffering from a mental or physical defect that renders him unfit to be a trustee; 3. Having ceased to profess the Hindu religion; 4. Being convicted of an offence of moral turpitude; 5. Breaching the trust bestowed upon him in respect of any of the properties under that trust; 6. Misappropriating or wasting funds on purposes or properties unconnected with the institution; 7. Diverting funds intended for the benefit of the institution; 6.
A tripartite division amongst the Daśanāmīs has been discussed. However, it needs to be considered that in some instances there are branches of samnyāśī-śs and Daśanāmīs that are but tangentially connected with the core Daśanāmī tradition. By way of illustration, there are other maṭha-śs in Banaras founded in the name of well-known paramahāṃsa-śs, notably Tailāṅga Svāmī and Harihar Bābā, but disciples of those orders are not recognised as either Daśanāmīs or as paramahāṃsa-śs. Similarly, the final initiation—leading to his nirvikalpa-samādhi—of the famous Bengali Tantric, Gadādhara Caṭṭopādhyāya (1836–1886), who was given the name Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāṃsa, was performed by Toṭa Purī, who, it is believed, belonged to the Mahānirvāṇī akhārā. However, the order of samnyāśī-śs founded by Rāmakṛṣṇa’s chief disciple, Svāmī Vivekānanda, has no sectarian connection to the Daśanāmīs. On this point, there is some need to examine briefly the notion of ‘sectarian connection’ and by implication the categories of ‘Daśanāmī’ and ‘paramahāṃsa’.

In terms of self-identification, it is primarily the paramparā, the guru-śisya relationship—the ‘vertical’ order—that is paramount within the Indian tradition in general, and the renunciatory environment in particular. An initiate may be vague or unclear as to what the identificatory parameters of his or her sect, or branch of a sect, may be, while certain about their guru-paramparā. As an example, we might consider the Daśanāmī samnyāśī-śs of the Haṅdiyā Bābā Yogālaya. When asked about which kind of sādhu they are, they will usually say “Daśanāmī” or “samnyāśī”, invariably qualifying this statement with the remark that they are devotees of Haṅdiyā Bābā,

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79 Although Vivekānanda publicly identified himself as a monk of the “oldest order of samnyāśī-śs...founded by Śāṅkara”, there is no record of Vivekānanda ever formally taking samnyāśa. Further, he initiated all his gurubhāṣī-śs himself (in January 1887), with no links to religious structures or authorities of any sort, telling them that they were neither householders, nor exactly samnyāśī-śs, but “quite a new type” (Michelis 2004:79, 108, 112).

80 At Trivenī Bandh, Allahabad.

81 Haṅdiyā means ‘small clay pot’, which Haṅdiyā Bābā always carried and in which he collected alms. By all accounts he was a great yogī who lived simply for
who died in 1954. Further, some sādhu-s, but not all, informed me that they were “[a member of] the Jūna akhārā”. The current disciples of Haṇḍiyā Bābā took direct initiation into saṁnyāsa from their guru, Bīṣṇudevānand, who in turn was initiated by Haṇḍiyā Bābā. It seems most probable, though I was unable to establish this, that Yogānandsarasvatī (the guru of the Mahārāja of Darbhāṅga) was initiated into the Jūna akhārā, and hence the current identification with the Jūna akhārā, even though the current disciples of Haṇḍiyā Bābā have not been initiated by, nor do they have anything to do with, the Jūna akhārā. Thus, in terms of their own self-identification, the saṁnyāsi-s will say that they are Daśanāmī and, perhaps, Jūna akhārā, as their lineage traces back through the Jūna akhārā. However, the disciples of Haṇḍiyā Bābā were not initiated via an akhārā or a daṇḍī matha, nor are they Daśanāmī daṇḍi-s, paramahaṁsa-s or nāgā-s, criteria outsiders may use for identifying Daśanāmī saṁnyāsi-s. Yet the disciples’ claim to being Daśanāmī is, in their view, legitimised through lineage.

Another example, of which there are many, of a saṁnyāsi lineage which traces its ancestry to Śaṅkarācārya, and which might be similarly described as Daśanāmī, is the lineage of the Kailās Āśram, founded in 1880 at Muni-ki-Reti, Rṣikeś. The current lineage derives from Svāmī Dhanrāj Giri, who was born in 1871 (Tulī 2001:5). The resident Mahāmaṇḍalesvara performs traditional Brahmanical rites of initiation for the disciples, who are usually Sanskrit students. After the first initiation, as Brahmacārī, they keep the top-knot, wear the sacred thread and do japa. In the second initiation they perform the virajā-havan and have their top-knot removed; they are now unquestionably saṁnyāsi-s, and many have one of the ‘ten names’.

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82 His samādhī was erected in that year, around which an āśrama has been constructed. The resident saṁnyāsi-s of the āśrama perform daily observances and meditation at the samādhī. Haṇḍiyā Bābā learned yoga from Yogānandsarasvatī, who was guru to the Mahārāja of Darbhāṅga, Bihar, and had four disciples: Bīṣṇudevānandsarasvatī, Bhagvānandānandsarasvatī, Sahājānandsarasvatī and Punyānandsarasvatī. Bīṣṇudevānandsarasvatī is said to have initiated twenty-five men, five of whom were his main disciples. Two of those, Sādānand and Sāntānand, manage the property on the Trivenī Bandh, In Daraganj, Allahabad. (Two other properties, one nearby and one in the Banda District of Uttar Pradesh, are affiliated.)

83 For information on the traditions of the Kailās Āśram, see Vidyānand Giri (1993).
Sarkar (1958:94) mentions several Daśanāmī institutions, including the Gītā Mandir, established at Ahmadabad, Barauda and other cities by Śvāmī Vidyānanda, who was a nāgā of the Nirvāṇī akhārā;\(^{34}\) a maṭhā at Amṛtsār, founded by Śvāmī Kṛṣṇānanda, and a maṭhā founded at Kaṅkhal by Śvāmī Bhagavatānanda, who joins the nāgā-s of the Nirvāṇī akhārā at Kumbh Melās. The main connections that tie all these institutions together are linkages of guru-paramparā-s at times of initiation, initiates of one institution frequently being initiated by a guru from another institution.

1.6 Nāgā

During the first stage of initiation, Daśanāmīs are usually given one of the ‘ten names’.\(^{85}\) Paramahamsa-s may then take a further initiation to become a nāgā of an akhārā. Akhārā is a technical name for the institutions governing the nāgā-s, and also has the sense of ‘wrestling ring’ and ‘military formation’, where nāgā-s train for fighting. These arenas are separate from the large network of traditional wrestling akhārā-s which are training institutions with their own history, gurus and organisation.\(^{86}\) A distinguishing feature of life in several of the nāgā akhārā-s, notably the Jūnā akhārā, is the consumption of very large quantities of cannabis, either smoked with tobacco in a cilam (‘clay pipe’), or eaten or drunk in the form of bhāṅg, a preparation of the leaves of the plant.\(^{87}\)

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\(^{34}\) The organisation has a press, Gītā Dharma Press, at Banaras.

\(^{85}\) However, an exception are Daśanāmīs from the Agni akhārā, (one of the seven Daśanāmī akhārā-s), who do not ever take one of the ‘ten names’. Similarly to the daṇḍi-s, they are given one of the four brahmācārī names (Svarūp, Prakāśa, Ānanda or Caitanya), depending on nominal pāṭha affiliation.

\(^{86}\) See Alter (1992) for an account of Indian wrestling. There are around 150 akhārā-s in Banaras, and around 20 to 30 in surrounding areas. The larger akhārā-s have 50 to 60 members, most wrestlers being relatively low-caste. Akhārā-s specialise in different techniques, such as weights, clubs or maces. The wrestlers’ patron deity is Hanumān.

\(^{87}\) The cannabis is smoked either in the form of dried buds of the female plant (gāṅja), which is grown in many regions of the subcontinent, or in the form of a resin (caras), rubbed by hand from the buds of the female plant. Caras is made almost exclusively in the Indian and Nepalese Himalayas. The term hashish (for cannabis) is used, traditionally, only by Muslims, and refers to a different preparation of the resin of the plant, which is manufactured with the use of sieves. Nāgā-s typically
At Kumbh Melās, Mahāmanḍaleśvaras and usually one or more of the reigning Śankarācāryas preside over sāmnyāsa initiations at large formal ceremonies. However, many Mahāmanḍaleśvaras are not affiliated to the seven akhārā-ś of the Daśanāmī order. Most are the heads of āśrama-s located in north India. Around two hundred Mahāmanḍaleśvaras attended the 2001 Kumbh Melā but only four or five dozen are affiliated to the Daśanāmī akhārā-s. Several informants maintained that there were more than thirty Mahāmanḍaleśvaras affiliated to the Mahānirvāṇī akhārā, the largest number for any of the akhārā-s. Those Mahāmanḍaleśvaras who are affiliated to the akhārā-s, and those who specifically preside over initiations in the role of ācārya-guru, have very little to do with the activities or organisation of the akhārā-s, only being consulted in extreme or unusual circumstances. Many, however, will have spent time as a sādhu in an akhārā before becoming established as a Mahāmanḍaleśvara in charge of an institution.

Traditionally, nāgā initiation was three years (but sometimes between two and twelve years) after the sāmnyāsa initiation. After sāmnyāsa but before being nāgā, a sāmnyāsī within an akhārā is known as a vastradhārī (‘wearer of cloth’). This is in distinction from the nāgā-s who are traditionally naked, only covered with ash from the dhūnī. These days, however, most wear loin-cloths in public, and many wear cloth of the traditional sāmnyāsī orange, or sometimes black.

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88 A survey of most of the camps of the Mahāmanḍaleśvaras at the Allahabad Kumbh Melā in 2001 revealed that their main āśrama-s are most commonly situated in Delhi, Haridvār, Kaṅkhal, Rṣīkeś, Banaras, Allahabad, Ujjain and Cītrakūṭ.

89 In most Sanskrit colleges there are five grades: Entrance; First; Intermediate; Śāstrī; Ācārya. The title of the Ācārya Guru derives from his Sanskrit qualification.

90 The ‘holy ash’ worn by nāgā-s is known as vibhūti (also meaning ‘majesty’, ‘dignity’ or ‘superhuman power’), or bhabhūt, or bhasm(a). Besides its religious associations, ash protects against the cold and wards off insects. Although nāgā-s may use ash straight from a dhūnī in which no ‘unclean’ wood (such as bamboo, which causes itching) has been burnt, ‘pure’ bhasm is made from the faeces of cows grazing in the forest. The dried cow-pats are burned, and the ash is mixed with water and filtered through cloth. The water and fine-ash mixture is then left to stand for the night, after which the water is decanted. The remaining, soggy ash is shaped into balls or lumps, which are placed in a pit walled with other cow-pats, and burned again. The resultant ash is a fine, whitish powder.
The vibhūti from their dhūnī-s is one of the most common offerings to visiting devotees or pilgrims, who generally believe in its magical and restorative properties. These days, nāgā initiation usually occurs a day or two after the samnyāsa initiation. It is performed, usually at a Kumbh Melā, by a mahant belonging to the akhārā to which the nāgā will be affiliated. Nāgā-s train, to a limited extent, in weapons, fighting and wrestling91 in an akhārā. The occasion of the Kumbh Melā is the preeminent event in the calendar of the Daśanāmīs, particularly for the akhārā-s, when initiations and important meetings take place and decisions relating to the activities of the akhārā are made. During a crisis, such as when a mahant dies, the members of the akhārā will meet and attempt to settle any dispute, which is frequent, over succession or acquisition of the matha he previously occupied.

In Banaras, Sinha and Saraswati (1978:82) survey a total of twenty-four nāgā centres (akhārā-s),92 which are found to house ninety-one ascetics, who are members of one of the seven major akhārā-s. The akhārā-s with the largest membership are the Jūnā and Nirvāṇī with membership of thirty-three and nineteen respectively. These are followed by the Ānanda (fourteen), Agni (ten), Āvāhan (six), Nirañjanī (five), Ātal (two) and, curiously, Gūḍa(r)a (two).93 A total of six female nāgā-s are reported, three belonging to the Jūnā akhārā94 and three belonging to the Ānanda akhārā.95 Five of the female nāgā-s (or aavad-

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91 Martial training also has a long history in Kerala. The art of kalari-payattu was first systematised by Brahmins and kṣatriya-s around the eleventh century, during a period of wars between the Ceras, Cōlas and Pandyas. The kalari (practice arena) is presided over by between seven and twenty-seven deities, including one or more forms of the goddess (usually either Bhadrakāli or Bhagavati), Śiva-Śakti combined, Gaṅapati, past gurus who go back to Paraśurāma and Droṇa, Hanumān, Ayyappa, and local heroes or ancestors (Zarrilli 1998:67–78).

92 Fourteen were founded between 1800 and 1968, five trace their origin to the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Five claim to have been founded between the ninth and eleventh centuries, though these early dates seem highly improbable (see Ch. 7).

93 The Gūḍa(r)ā akhārā is recorded as having two male ascetics. The mention of this akhārā is anomalous as I have found no record of it either in other published sources or during interviews conducted in the field. It is not currently a recognised Daśanāmī akhārā. Its identity is analysed in the following chapter.

94 A woman nāgā (originally of French descent) of the Jūnā akhārā, named Santos Giri, has run an āśrama near Porbandar (Gujarat) for many years. She was initiated by a Śāṅkarācārya and is well known in the area. I have not visited her.

95 Female membership of the Ānanda akhārā is not in evidence currently. Contemporary female nāgā-s belong exclusively to the Jūnā akhārā.
hūtin-s) are reported to have come from Nepal and one from Bengal. All were aged over thirty-five, and in the akhārā-s of Banaras they were residing with the males.96

The akhārā-s are organised according to what is called the pañcāyati system, meaning that the organisation is run by elected representatives. One may see at the gateway of all akhārā-s throughout India the prefix ‘Śrī pañc ... akhārā’. Although Sinha and Saraswati (1978:196) acknowledge that succession to the leadership of the akhārā is through lineage—including in accordance with the mutual maṛhi (lineage)97 of the guru and successor—they also make a substantial claim about the democratic nature of the akhārā-s, stating that in this organisation no decision, great or small, may be taken by a single person of whatever rank, age or personal achievement. As an example, a letter addressed to the thanāpati98 is opened only in the presence of two other ascetics.

According to Sadānanda Giri (1976:27), in the akhārā-s the relationship between nāgā-s and their gurus is described as the relationship of siddha-sādhaka. He claims that it differs somewhat from the guru-celā relationship found in other sects, whereby the disciple is exclusively devoted to the guru, also claiming that in the Daśanāmī akhārā-s no one is formally a disciple of anyone else. Daṇḍā-s, who are outside the akhārā, and those of the Agni akhārā (one of the seven akhārā-s), specifically maintain the guru-celā relationship, and the usual hierarchy of guru and disciple. In the other akhārā-s, however, the initiating sannyāsī does not, in the technical terminology employed by the akhārā-s, become the guru of the initiate, the term ‘guru’ being reserved for the presiding deity of the akhārā. A nāgā is usually attached to a senior ascetic who becomes his sādhaka-guru. The siddha-sādhaka relationship means that the disciple serves a siddha-guru, supplying water, sweeping, offering pūjā and so on. In return, the siddha-guru looks after the well-being of the aspirant.

Notwithstanding the sometimes fierce independence of the nāgā-s, in practice, besides the unique arrangement amongst ascetic organisa-

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96 Sinha and Saraswati report, somewhat confusingly, that one akhārā is occupied exclusively by female nāgā-s, but supply no further information. It is most probable that females referred to are those in the female branch of the Jūnā akhārā.

97 Maṛhi is a technical term for a subdivision within the akhārā (see Ch. 2.2).

98 One of the more important officials within the akhārā with a responsibility, amongst others, for the welfare of the tutelary deity of the akhārā (see below).
tions for the democratic election of mahant-s and other officials—which takes place during Kumbh Melās, and which is a distinguishing feature of nāgā social life—the important social structures within the akhārā-s are hierarchical. While paramahamsa-s and junior nāgā-s may serve other nāgā samnyāsi-s or mahant-s, and this relationship may not be on a unique basis as in some renunciate sects, all paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s have their own gurus to whom they afford the highest respect. It is not the case that no one is the guru of anyone else, even though the arrangements and hierarchy of service within the Daśanāmī order may differ somewhat from other orders. In practice, the samnyāsī usually has five gurus, to whom he usually refers as ‘guru’, including a digambara-guru if he is a nāgā. (A nāgā is also referred to as digambara.) The highest respect to a human guru is accorded to someone who is sometimes known as the samnyāsī-’s siddha-guru, whom he may encounter at any point along the renunciative path. Although several commentators have been cited who claim that the akhārā-s function, essentially, in a non-hierarchical way, it is evident that clear hierarchies of both spiritual and practical authority operate between nāgā-s and within the akhārā-s.

In general, nāgā-s do not beg for alms. While some are actively engaged in various forms of minor business, such as selling herbal medicines or religious articles such as rudrākṣa seeds, some few others have semi-clandestine businesses. However, it should be emphasised that business is pursued by but a small percentage of nāgā-s and that stipends are paid to all nāgā-s, usually by the thānāpāli of the nāgā-s’ akhārā. As a consequence of a combination of mercenary, banking, smuggling and other mercantile activity—which is outlined in Chapter

99 Witnessed by the author at the 2001 Kumbh Melā.
100 Dazey (1987:557; 1990:309) also endorses Sinha and Saraswati’s suggestion that relationships within the akhārā-s are democratic and non-hierarchical, noting that the nāgā-s are guru-bhai-s (‘brothers’) under a guru, but the real guru of the akhārā is the presiding deity of the akhārā. However, Dazey (1987:542–544) also maintains that “the practice of maintaining a sacred dhūnī fire (for cooking and oblations) is unique to the nāgā-s among the Daśanāmī renouncers”: the ‘formless guru’ of the akhārā is said to be the dhūnī. While it is true that the dhūnī is generally regarded as holy, and prayers made to it, one only has to spend a short time in any akhārā to see both the clear hierarchical ordering amongst nāgā-s and mahant-s and also the enormous respect accorded to the human gurus within the akhārā.
101 Digambara (lit. ‘sky-clad’) meaning ‘naked’ (as does nāgā), is an epithet of Śiva and also the name of one of the two main branches of Jainism (see Dundas 2002).
7—the samnyāśī akhārās had, by the middle of the nineteenth century, accumulated extensive properties and large sums of money. Many princely states, such as Kacch, Jodhpur, Bāraudā, Indore and Gvalior used to pay money to the akhārā-s for services rendered in protecting local interests in conflict with external aggressors. Substantial income is still generated these days from the land held by the akhārā-s, the structures of which are the main focus of the following chapter.
CHAPTER TWO

AKHĀDĀ-S AND DAŚANĀMĪ FUNCTIONARIES

2.1 The akhārā-ś

While Daśanāmī daṇḍi-s are affiliated to their own monastic maṭha-s, the other wing of the Daśanāmīs (comprising paramahāṃsa-s and nāgā-s) are affiliated to one of the seven extant Daśanāmī akhārā-ś. In this chapter, the overall hierarchy of the Daśanāmī akhārā-ś will be considered, and some brief comparisons with akhārā-ś of other orders will also be noted. It is apparent that the Daśanāmī akhārā-ś have a radically different background to that of the monastic tradition, illustrated in their mercenary activities and inter-sectarian conflicts during the previous four centuries.1

Most akhārā members are nāgā, the formation and functioning of the akhārā-ś being fully evident at Kumbh Melāś.2 At the Allahabad Kumbh Melā, 2001, a total of thirteen akhārā-ś were represented. These are the extant akhārā-ś of the subcontinent.3 Seven of these are the śāiva Daśanāmī akhārā-ś, namely the Nirañjan, Jūnā, Mahānirvāṇī, Ānanda, Āvāhan, Ātal and Agnī.4 Besides these, there

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1 See Ch. 7.
2 The Kumbh Melā, the largest festival on earth, is attended by the majority of sādhu-s of all orders. While there is evidence—for the last 1500 years—of the periodic gathering of ascetics at what have become the four sites of the Kumbh Melā (Haridvār, Ujjain, Allahabad and Nāsik), it seems that the linking of the four sites (as sites of the Kumbh Melā), and the supporting mythology and astrology, is probably not more than around 130 years old. See Bonazzoli (1977); Bhattacharya (1977); Dubey (1988); and, particularly, Maclean (2001; 2003). Appendix 3 of this book reviews the work of these and other scholars.
3 Sarkar (1958:107) cites a report by Mr. T. Benson on the Kumbh Mela of 1882. He describes six “sects” of akhārā-ś that were present: 1. Nirvānī nāgā gosain-s; 2. Nirañjanī, associated with the Jūnā; 3. Three sects of Vairāgī; 4. Chota Udāsin; 5. Barā Udāsin, with the Bandhua (?) akhārā. 6. Nirmala, with the Vrindaṇā (?).
4 Members of some of the akhārā-ś may sometimes be identified by hairstyle, the Nirañjanī tying their jaṭā (dreadlocks) in the middle, the Jūnā on the left, and the Nirvānī on the right.
are three vāishāva anīśa:\footnote{5} the Digambara, Nirvāṇi\footnote{6} and Nirmohi, all of which are of the Rāmānandī order.\footnote{7} (Rāmānandī tyāgī-ś\footnote{8} are also referred to as anīśa, 'army corps'), and is now defunct before 1585. In the 1624; according to Varma (1977:5), 1585; according to Snell (1991:12), possibly the recent reclassification of the Rāmānandī sampradāya is constituted of both lay and sādhu communities, and is one of the four current vāishāva sampradāya-śa (catuh sampradāya-śa), a classification of four vāishāva orders that has changed twice during the last four centuries. Since 1938, when the Rāmānandīs split from the Rāmānuja, the four vāishāva sampradāya-śa have been constituted as follows (confirmed during fieldwork in 2001).

1) Śrī (or Rāmānuja or Nāthamuni) / Caudah [=14] Bhā Mahā-Tyāgī.  
2) Rāmānandī (or Dakor).  

The current formation of the catuh-sampradāya-śa does not correspond to the formation to be found in the important Rāmānandī hagiographical text, Bhaktāmulā, by Nābhādāsa (Nābhā-ji), written at the behest of Agra Dāsa (disciple of Payāhāri Krishnā Dāsa, who was a disciple of Rāmānanda) in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. According to Pollet (1963:11), this was between 1595 and 1624; according to Varma (1977:5), 1585; according to Snell (1991:12), possibly before 1585. In the Bhaktāmulā (v. 28, l.1–5), the four sampradāya-śa are attributed to Rāmānuja, Viṣṇuvāmī, Nimbāditya and Madhvācārya. Instead of the Rāmānandī sampradāya, the Viṣṇuvāmī is listed as one of the four sampradāya-śa (see Pollet 1963:74, 168); it is now defunct. The Viṣṇuvāmīś (Rudra sampradāya-śa) were almost entirely absorbed into the newer Vallabhaśa order (Gokulāsthā sampradāya). Van der Veer’s (1998:110) account of the current relationship between the ‘Tyāgīś’, ‘Mahātyāgīś’ and the Terah/Bārah Bhās is slightly inaccurate, as it is based on earlier accounts of the catuh sampradāya-śa as found in the Bhaktāmulā. A link between the Gaudīya lineage of Caitanya (1486–1533) and the Madhva sampradāya seems to have been established only in the eighteenth century, by Bāladeva Vidyabhūṣana (Dimock 1963:106). A total of eight sects (of followers Rāmānuja, Haridāsa, Madhva, Nimbārka, Viṣṇuvāmī, Rāmānanda, Vallabha and Caitanya) were absorbed into the scheme of the catuh-sampradāya-śa in different stages. For an overview of the catuh-sampradāya-śa see Clémentin-Ojha (1992). For an interpretation of the conflict between the Rāmānandīs and the Rāmānujās, which first began in 1918 and led to the most recent reclassification of the catuh sampradāya-śa, see Finch (1998).

The catuh sampradāya-śa were organised into systems of dvāra-śa, anīśa and akhārā-śa under the leadership of Bābā Abhay Rām Dās in 1720, according to Sharma (1998:128–135). However, Thiel-Horstmann (unpublished paper cited by van der Veer 1988:136) believes the organisation took place in two steps during four successive conferences, in Vṛndāvan (c.1713), Brahmāpurī (Jaipur) (c.1726), Jaipur (1734), and Galta (east of Jaipur) (1756). It was Bālānand who probably organised the army of nāgara-śa (rāmdāl) for service to Madho Singh, regent of Jaipur. The 52 dvāra-śa (‘door’/‘gate’) or gaddī-śa—which are essentially lineages—are assigned to places throughout India and mirror not only the 52 mahā-śa of the Daśānāmī akhārā-śa (see Ch. 2.2), but also the 52 phonemes of the Sanskrit alphabet, the 52 śākta-pītha-śa, and the legendary 52 clans of kṣatriya-śa of Maharashtra. “52 varṇa-śa and 18 jāti-śa”
referred to as Bairāgī or Vairāgī). The other three (of the thirteen) extant akhārā-ś are affiliated to the Sikh tradition. Two of these are Udāsin akhārā-ś, the Baṛā (large) Udāsin (or Baṛāpaṇcāyaṭī Udāsin) and the Choṭā (small) Udāsin (or Nayāpaṇcāyaṭī Udāsin). The other Sikh-affiliated akhārā is the Nirmala akhārā. Both the Udāsin akhārā-ś and the Nirmala akhārā are sects which have historical connections with the Sikh movement but which nowadays function as independent organisations.9 Besides the thirteen,10 previously militant, akhārā-ś so

was a standard expression for describing the entire class structure of Maharashtra in the late eighteenth century; see Wagle (1997:143).

The four sampradāya-ś each comprise several of the 52 dārā-ś: Rāmānandī (36); Nimbārki (10); Madhva (3); Viśuṣvāmī (3). This constitutes one of the three levels of organisation of the vaisṣuvaṇa orders. Another level of organisation is the system of anī-ś and akhārā-ś (which does not directly correspond to the akhārā-ś of the Daṇānamīś). The three anī-ś of the Rāmānandī sampradāya are subdivided into eight akhārā-ś: Nirmohi (3); Digambar (2); Nirvāṇī (3). The eight akhārā-ś are further subdivided into eighteen sections. The Dādū panth also has an akhārā (see Thiel-Horstmann 1991) which joins the Nirmohi anī for bathing at Kumbh Melā. The catuh-sampradāya-ś, which meet at the Kumbh Melā, have an administrative body, the Akhil Bhārati Khālsā, which oversees 412 sub-branches known as khālsā-ś, a system not more than 150 years old. This is a third level of organisation.

8 Rāmānandī tyāgī-ś have a lifestyle and appearance almost identical to that of Daṇānamīś nāḍī-ś; see van der Veer (1987:688). While the tyāgī-ś are Rāmānandī ascetics, the nāḍī-ś are soldiers who carry weapons and are given money by tyāgī mahānt-ś at melā-ś to protect the order. Technically, only the nāḍī-ś are said to be in the akhārā. Unlike the tyāgī-ś, Rāmānandī nāḍī-ś wear stitched cloth and do not wear jātā. A Rāmānandī disciple wishing to enter an akhārā has to pass through seven levels before he becomes a vaisṣuvaṇa nāḍī, who is known as nāḍī-āṭī: 1. yāṭrī, collects neem-sticks for his superiors, and wanders alone or with the Jamāt; 2. chorā, serves, draws water and makes leaf-plates; 3. bandāgar, looks after food stores, serves food and cleans nāḍī-āṭī-ś utensils; 4. hurdaṇg, cooks, offers food to the deity, calls “Harīhar” (hence hurdaṇg meaning ‘commotion’ or ‘uproar’), carries the insignia and flag of the akhārā, masters weapons; 5. mureṭhīya, worship deities, supervises sevak-ś, calls “jay” (a sequence of calls uttered before undertaking any work), and is experienced in the use of weapons; 6. nāḍī, administers the akhārā, worships the deity, protects the sampradāya’s property, leads the Jamāt, and prepares for the Kumbh Melā; 7. āṭī, decides important issues for the order and guides nāḍī-ś. It takes twelve years to become nāḍī, after which he may vote in the akhārā, as a member of the paṇc (see Sharma 1998:128–135). Nāḍī-ś are organised in four divisions (self), according to where they were initiated, the divisions being: Haridvārī (at Haridvār), Ujjayinīya (at Ujjain), Sāgariya (at Gaṅgā Sāgar, near Calcutta), and Basantīya (other places) (van der Veer 1998:139).

9 The Udāsin (Udāsin/Undāsi) and Nirmala akhārā-ś revere the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh text that occupies a central place in all gurdvāra-ś. The tutelary deity of both Udāsin akhārā-ś is Candrabhagvān (believed to be an incarnation of Śiva), who was Śrī Cand, the eldest of the two sons of Guru Nānak (1469–1539). Upon Nānak’s demise, the leadership of the Sikhs passed to Guru Aṅgad, and not
far mentioned, the Nāths are another sect which had political and military liaisons with various ākhārā-ṣ in different periods. The Nāths, however, camp at a distance from the other ākhārā-ṣ at Kumbh Mela, and bathe later than the other ‘orthodox’ ākhārā-ṣ.11 Despite the

to his son. According to Udāsin tradition (Singh 1951:59–64), Śrī Cand was initiated by Nānak and founded the Udāsins. Although Śrī Cand is not recognised as a guru within the Sikh guru-paramparā, neither is he rejected, and links remained strong between the communities. However, there is other historical evidence (Pinch 1996:36) that Śrī Cand and his followers were expelled from the Sikh community in the sixteenth century. Śrī Cand lived past the age of a hundred, up to the time of Guru Hargobind (1595–1644), the sixth guru of the Sikh tradition. This means that the Udāsin order was founded, according to the traditional account, between—at the limits—the early part of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth century. The gaddī passed from Śrī Cand to the son of Hargobind, Bābā Gurdita (a householder and soldier), who had four preaching disciples (masand) who founded four dhūnī-ṣ (dhūn) in 1636, which are the four divisions of the Barā (‘large’) Udāsin ākhārā. They are: 1. Balu Hasna; 2. Phul Sahib (or Mīn Sahib); 3. Almast; 4. Bhagat Bhagvān (or Gonda). According to one account (Singh 1951:64), Mīn Sahib and Bhagat Bhagvān (=Bhagat Gir, a saṃyāṣī) did not found dhūnī-ṣ, but missionary centres, known as bhākjī-ṣ.

The Choṭā (‘small’) Udāsin ākhārā was founded by Bhāṭī Pheru, supposedly with the permission of Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), who is also believed to have founded the Nirmala ākhārā (Ahuja 1994). However, Oberoi (1997:124–127) questions the antiquity of the Nirmanals, observing that references to them in Sikh literature are scarce in the early eighteenth century but abundant at the end of that century. Between the 1790s and 1840s, the Udāsin and Nirmala orders received extensive state patronage, and the number of their establishments increased five-fold.

10 An article appeared in an Allahabad newspaper (Dainik Jāgram, Ilāhābād, 12 January 2001, p. 3) announcing the coming into being of the Akhaṇḍ ākhārā, a new akhārā instituted by Svāmī Paramānand, who, along with ten others, was made ‘Mahāmāṇḍaleśvāra’ (Ācārya Mahāmāṇḍaleśvāra Yuvapurś Śrī Svāmī Paramānand Ji Mahārāj). The svāmī, who has published several books, has an ever expanding āśrama (Akhaṇḍ Param Dham) on the outskirts of Haridvār, and is quite well known internationally. He addressed the United Nations assembly in New York on 28th August 2000, a lecture published as Transformation of Religion Based Conflicts into World Peace: Identification of Dharma and its Utility. Whether the akhārā attracts many saṃyāṣī-ṣ remains to be seen.

11 The Nāths (or Nāth-Siddhas), also known as yogī-ṣ, were supposedly organised by Gorakhnāth, most probably in the thirteenth century (see White 1996:93–100). They are hatha-yogī-ṣ, renowned as wonder-workers. As power-brokers and mercenaries, they played a significant role in political and military intrigues during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in Rajasthan. For accounts of the Nāths, see Briggs (1982); Gold and Gold (1984); Gold (1996; 1999); White (1996; 2001). For resumés of the doctrine of the Nāṭh-Siddhas, see Ramana Sastri (1956:300–308); Bannerjea (1983; 1988); Vilāsnāth (1998). See also Chapter 7. For the marginal status of the Nāths in relationship to other more ‘orthodox’ orders of ascetics, see Gupta (2001); White (1996). See Vilāsnāth (1998) for Nāth paramparā-ṣ and mantras. See Kalvān (Tīrthāṅk) (1997:580–586) for Nāṭh holy places.
military background of all the akhārā-s, these days ‘dharmic’ activity is generally emphasised by their main spokesmen, which includes the founding of many educational institutions with traditional Sanskrit and Vedic studies.\(^\text{12}\)

The Daśanāmī akhārā-s are currently constituted as follows:

**AKHĀDĀ-S.**\(^\text{13}\) supposed founding dates \(^\text{14}\)(Vikram Saṃvat – V. S.)\(^\text{15}\) and *Tutelary Deities*

1. **Nirañjanī.** 960 V. S. [1904 CE]\(^\text{16}\) (Kārttikeya), founded in

\(^{12}\) See, for example, Purī (2001:198–210) on educational programmes fostered by the Mahānirvāṇī akhārā.

\(^{13}\) The author visited the headquarters of all the Daśanāmī akhārā-s in Allahabad and Banaras for inquiries (during January and February 2002), and other branches in Haridvār, Oṃkāreśvar, Jvālāmukhī and Jūnāgarh. The information concerning the regional branches of the akhārā-s is based partly on fieldwork, with some additional points on the supposed founding places and branches provided by Sinha and Saraswati (1978:85). The information on the regional branches of the akhārā-s relates to the most important branches. There are also many small matha-s or temples owned by the akhārā-s that may be administered by a single functionary of an akhārā, which are not mentioned. From a number of quite unsatisfactory enquiries, an approximate estimate of the number of initiates is also given. There are also a few Daśanāmī institutions in Kathmandu, the main one being the Śaṅkarācārya Maṭha in Deopatan, founded by Rāma Giri in 1877. See Michaels (1994:172–173) for further details.

\(^{14}\) Dates according to Sarkar (1958:82–90).

\(^{15}\) To convert traditional (Vikram Saṃvat) dates (as contained in manuscripts) to Roman dates: for the first nine and a half months of a Vikram year, subtract 57 years; for the remaining two and half months, subtract 58.

\(^{16}\) Sarkar’s scheme combines traditional dates, and in the case of some akhārā-s, the addition of 1,000 years, indicated in the square brackets. Sarkar believes that the Portuguese system of reckoning, which adds 1,000 years to traditional dates, had not been taken into account by the bards. However, the reckoning is inconsistent: adding 1,000 years to the supposed founding date of the Nirañjanī akhārā, given as 960 V. S., would, according to Sarkar’s calculation, be 1903 CE, yet the presence of the Nirañjanī akhārā was reported at the Kumbh Melā of 1840 by a Protestant missionary (Sinha and Saraswati 1978:86). For founding dates, see also Sadānanda Giri (1976:22); Tripathi (1978:70); Sinha and Saraswati (1978:85); Daze (1987): their repetitions are in several instances erroneous or different, adding unreliability to an account that was already declaredly unreliable. According to the Hindi newspaper, Āj (Mahākumbh Viśeṣāṅk, 14 January 2001), the founding dates (CE) of the akhārā-s are: Āvāhan, 547, by Miṣṭ Giri and Dīnānāth Giri; Ātal, 647, by Vankhāndbhārati, Sāgarbhārati and Śīvārāṇavaḥbhārati; Nīrvānī, 649; Ānand, 855, by Kēthā Giri and Rāmēśvar Giri; Nirañjanī, 904, by Maunī Simh and Sarajūnāth Puruṣottam Giri; Jūnā, 1060, by Mohkām Giri, Sundar Giri and Maunī Digambar; Agni, 1149 [no founder mentioned]. Keemattam (1997:83) cites
Mándavī (Kachh, Gujarat), Head Office in Prayāg (Dārāgañj), affiliated to Ānanda, contains perhaps 3,000 samnyāsīs and 500 nāgās. Branches in Nāsik, Oṃkāresvar (Madhya Pradesh), Haridvār, Ujjain, Udaipur, Jvālāmukhī (Himachal Pradesh), Kāśī.\textsuperscript{17}

2. \textbf{Jūnā}, 1202 V. S. (Datta\textsuperscript{ta}reya [previously Bhairava]), founded at Karn Prayāg (Uttaranchal), affiliated to Āvāhan, Head Office in Kāśī (Hanumān Ghat), containing perhaps 4,000 to 5,000 samnyāsīs, mostly nāgās. Branches in Nāsik, Ujjain, Oṃkāresvar, Jūnāgañj (Gujarat), Haridvār, Rāmeśvaram, Prayāg, Śrīnagar (Kashmir), Sri Lanka, 18 Kathmandu (Nepal).

3. \textbf{Mahānirvānī},\textsuperscript{19} 805 V. S. [1749 CE] (Kapil Muni), founded at Garhkuṭa (Palāmū District, Bihar),\textsuperscript{20} affiliated to Añāl, Head Office in Prayāg (Dārāgañj)

4. \textbf{Ānanda}, 912 V. S. (Śūrya), founded at Berār, Head Office in Kāśī (Maṇikarnika Ghat),\textsuperscript{21} contains several hundred samnyāsīs, with perhaps 500 to 600 nāgās. Branches in Tryambakesvar (near Nāsik, Maharashtra), Pūne, Sātārā (Maharashtra), Bareli (Uttar Pradesh), Rāmpur (Uttar Pradesh), Gvalior, Mirzapur (near Banaras), Betul (Madhya Pradesh), Barabaṅki (near Lucknow).

5. \textbf{Āvāhan}, 603 V. S. [1547 CE] (Siddh Gaṇeśa),\textsuperscript{22} Head Office in Kāśī (Daśāsvamedha Ghat), containing several thousand samnyāsīs, mostly nāgās. Branches in Bhuj (Kacch, Gujarat), Bodh Gayā (Bihar), Jvālāmukhī, Haridvār.\textsuperscript{23}

6. \textbf{Ātal}, 703 V. S. [1646 CE] (Ādi Gaṇeśa), founded at Gondvānā,

\textsuperscript{17} Kāśī designates the Old City, around which the larger town of Banaras (Varanasi) has developed.

\textsuperscript{18} No specific place is mentioned.

\textsuperscript{19} The \textit{akhārā} is usually referred to as the Mahānirvānī to distinguish it from the \textit{vaiṣṇava Nirvānī akhārā} which is one of the three \textit{nāgā akhārās} of the Rāmānandī order.

\textsuperscript{20} Other sources give the founding place of the \textit{akhārā} as Bajīnāth, Bihar.

\textsuperscript{21} While the Kāśī branch is officially the headquarters of the Ānanda \textit{akhārā}, the branch at Bereli [U.P.] is more frequented and active. At the time of the author’s visit to the Kāśī branch there was only one resident sādhu.

\textsuperscript{22} It is unclear where this \textit{akhārā} is supposed to have been founded.

\textsuperscript{23} Sinha and Saraswati add to this list, “sundry centres in South India”, without being specific.
7. **Agni.** 1426 V. S. (2001:137) provides mantras for the tradition. Purā (2001:137) provides mantras for the Kumbh Melās by the chief mahant or by nāgā-s. The bhālā is usually kept in the headquarters of the akhāṛā it represents, but during Melās it is planted in the ground near the temporary shrine for the tutelary deity, at the centre of the akhāṛā-s camping area. During processions, the current chief mahant of the akhāṛā is followed by other mahant-s, old nāgā-s and recent nāgā initiates (tāṅg tode), in that order.

The Daśāṃśmi akhāṛā-s have particular ties with each other, though they are not historically invariable. The leading akhāṛā-s, in terms of members and property, are the Niraṅjanī and Jūnā, the Jūnā being

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24 This date is supplied by Sadānanda Giri (1976:42) with no reference, and maintained by several saṃnyāsī-s in the akhāṛā.

25 Each Daśāṃśmi akhāṛā has traditionally made use of a ball of ash, known as a golā. This ball was formerly sent to sent kings or military chiefs as test of political allegiance. If the ashes were smeared on the forehead, in the way that sādhu-s do, then the recipient was regarded as friendly, but a refusal to do so was a sign of enmity. The shape of a golā is round for the Niraṅjanī, līṅga-shaped for the Jūnā, four-cornered for the Nirvāṇī, and octagonal for the Aṭāl. Many of the sources, previously referred to for information on the Daśāṃśmi, record this historical tradition. Purā (2001:137) provides mantras for the golā. However, from various inquiries made by this author, it seems that the custom is not current and but vaguely understood by contemporary Daśāṃśmi saṃnyāsī-s.

26 Nāgā-s initiated at Ujjain are known as khānī (‘killer’) nāgā-s, those initiated at Haridvār as barfānī (‘icy’) nāgā-s, and those initiated at Prayāga as rājārjēśvarī (‘lord of the king of kings’) nāgā-s.

27 See Ch. 3.3 for an explanation of this term.

28 Sinha and Saraswati (1978:84) note that after the 1954 Kumbh Melā the Jūnā and Niraṅjanī came closer together. Relations between the Nirvāṇī and Aṭāl are said to have become somewhat distant owing to a dispute concerning the selection of a female Maṇḍaleśvarā. The current ties between akhāṛā-s are: Āvāhan and Jūnā; Ānand and Niraṅjanī; Aṭāl and (Mahā) Nirvāṇī. The Agni akhāṛā always functions independently.
the oldest and having the largest number of nāga-s. The other two akhārā-s that have a high percentage of nāga-s are the Nirañjanī and the Mahānirvāṇī. The seventh akhārā, the Agni akhārā, is supposed to have been founded in 1368 CE and has fifteen branches. Like the other akhārā-s, it is nominally āśrama in orientation. All members are life-long celibates and refer to themselves as brahmacārī, distinguishing themselves, by that name, from the other akhārā-s. (Danḍi-s also refer to themselves as brahmacārī to distinguish themselves from other Daśanāmi saṃnyāsī-s.) Being known as brahmacārī-s means, also, that members of the Agni akhārā come, at least theoretically, from a Brahman caste. Unlike the other akhārā-s, which are comprised largely of nāga-s, none of the members of the Agni akhārā are nāga.

The Agni akhārā is not connected to the maṛhī network of the other akhārā-s and only attained equal status with the other saṃnyāsī akhārā-s in 1971 when, during the Ādhā Kumbh Melā at Prayāg, Brahmacārī Prakāśānanda was installed as the Mahāmanḍaleśvara of the akhārā. There are currently three Mahāmanḍaleśvaras affiliated to the Agni akhārā, the ācārya-guru residing in Amarkaṭā (Madhya Pradesh).30 As previously noted, unlike in the other akhārā-s, a guru will take only one celā, in the manner common to many other renunciate lineages. Saṃnyāsī-s of the Agni akhārā do not take one of the usual Daśanāmi ‘ten names’, instead taking one of the names of what they describe as brahmacāri gotra-s, namely Ānanda, Caitan, Svarāpa or Prakāśa.

According to Sarkar (1958:82), the earliest available information concerning the formation of the Daśanāmi akhārā-s comes from an oral tradition that can be dated to around 1750, and derives from Rajendra Giri who became famous in the affairs of the Delhi Sultanate (see Ch. 7.4). All the akhārā-s have a hereditary bard (bhāṭ) who can recite the oral history of the akhārā. Sarkar inspected a manuscript in the possession of the bhāṭ of the Nirvāṇī akhārā, detailing the foundation of the akhārā-s, the succession of pontiffs (mahant-s) and the battles that the akhārā-s fought. He estimated that the manuscript could not have been much more than fifty years old, and while admitting that

29 See following section.
30 The Agni akhārā is nominally under the jurisdiction of the Dvārakā pītha, and traces its origin to the four sons of Brahmā: Sanaka, Sanatkumāra, Sanandana and Sanātana, dividing its members (theoretically) between three areas: Narmadākhāṇḍa (Narmadā), Uttarākhāṇḍa (northern), and Naṃṣṭhika (‘faithful’). Some danḍi-saṃnyāsī-s reported to the author that the Agni akhārā functions as the akhārā for the danḍi-s. However, this is denied by the saṃnyāsī-s of the Agni akhārā.
the information is unreliable, gives the dates for the foundation of the akhārā-s as detailed above. Sarkar (1958:83) further cautions that the record (poth) is from but one akhārā and that other akhārā-s may possess quite different records.

Notwithstanding Sarkar’s caution, his publication (1958:82–85) of the putative dates of the founding of the akhārā-s (as above) has entered many accounts, albeit inaccurately. This is no doubt largely due to the fact that Sarkar’s account stands, still today, as virtually the only published account to be based on any kind of written record.31 While it is probable that ascetic lineages do indeed go back to the seventh century or beyond, firm evidence for the founding of akhārā-s, and their identity with lineages organised by Śaṅkara, cannot be found before the sixteenth century.32 Concerning the question of when orders of fighting saṁnyāsī-ś may have been organised, it seems most probable that between the late sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, a variety of political factors—that are explored in Chapter 7—led to the formation of various akhārā-s of fighting ascetics, including the Udāsin, Nirnāla, Dādū, Bairāgī (Rāmānandi) and Daśanāmī orders, notwithstanding the latter’s claims to greater antiquity. It is suggested that during this period when the akhārā-s formed, the Daśanāmīs also formed their own distinct (and orthodox) identity, comprising ten lineages from quite disparate backgrounds, one group comprising lineages from the monastic tradition, and the other group comprising lineages with a Nāth or ‘heterodox’ background. Beginning in the latter part of the sixteenth century, for the first time there are recorded conflicts between the akhārā-s, most frequently between

31 Purī (2001:83–90), a mahant of the Mahānirvānī akhārā, also gives the founding dates of the akhārā-s, citiing evidence from hand-written poth-s. He claims that the first akhārā to be founded was the Āvāhan, in 603 vikram (V. S.), the other akhārā-s subsequently. His information on the dating and some other details concerning places is almost identical to that provided by Sarkar. (Purī’s dating reflects his belief that Śaṅkara was born in 44 BCE.) However, having provided precise dates for the founding of the akhārā-s and a list of the founding saṁnyāsī-ś, he remarks (p. 89) that some people are doubtful about the founding dates. But, he maintains, it is certain that the Mahānirvānī akhārā was established by the sixteenth century, even though according to his earlier account it was founded in 805 V. S. by eight mahāpuruṣa-s connected with the Ātal akhārā. In evidence, he cites a battle in Bihar in 1664 CE between Aurangzeb and the Mahānirvānī akhārā, who had come from Banaras.

32 Intriguingly, all the akhārā-s possess voluminous written records, mostly concerning financial transactions recorded on parcā (birch-bark), which are not available for inspection even to relatively high-ranking officials within the akhārā.
Daśanāṃī-saṃnyāśī-śs and bairāgī-śs over bathing priorities at melā-śs and rights to collect taxes from pilgrims.

Perhaps the earliest record of a fight between identifiable akhārā-śs is that of Abu-l-Fazl, who records (1972:422–424) how, on one occasion, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, emperor Akbar was camped at Thānesar (Sthānviśvara), near Kurukṣetra, at the time of the melā there.34 A fight ensued between the Purī and Kur (or Gur, Giri?) saṃnyāśī-śs over occupation of an area by the lake, particularly suitable for the collection of alms from pilgrims. The Purīs, believing that they had been wrongfully usurped by the Kurs, approached Akbar for assistance. Akbar’s solicitations to the parties were to no effect. As the Purīs were few in number, Akbar enlisted the assistance of some other tribes35 on behalf of the Purīs who routed the Kurs, slaying their leader (pūr), Ānanda Kur. The combatants numbered around one thousand, and the dead around twenty (Smith 1966:57). Akbar was, apparently, delighted by the sport.

In the Dabistān (Dabistān 1843, Vol. 2:196–197), a battle that took place at Haridvār in 1640 between Bairāgīs (also referred to as ‘Mundīś’) and ‘Sanyāśīs’ is described. According to the account, the saṃnyāśī-śs were victorious and killed a great number of Mundīs. The Mundīs threw away the rosaries of tulsi beads and “hung on their perforated ears the rings of the Jogīs, in order to be taken for these sectaries”. The author of the Dabistān (Dabistān 1843, Vol. 2:231) also refers to a battle between ‘Sanyāśīs’ and ‘Sūfīśs’, the former being victorious.36

33 A conflict between saṃnyāśī-śs and Sūfīśs is also recorded (see Dabistān 1843, Vol. 2:231).

34 The same incident is referred to slightly differently by Al-Badāoni (1986, Vol. 2:94–95), who describes the two parties of combatants as “Jogīs” and “Sannyāśīs”, who are said to be “in the habit of fighting there in their bigotry”. At the emperor’s command, a number of soldiers smeared their bodies with ashes and fought on the side of the “Sannyāśīs” (numbering around 300), against the “Jogīs” (numbering more than 500). Many were slain on both sides, but the saṃnyāśī-śs were victorious. Akbar’s son Jahāngīr is also said to have witnessed a battle between Udāsīn and Vairāgī śādhuśs over bathing at the melā (Puri 2001:181).

35 These tribes are recorded as the Petamcahā (unknown to commentators) and the Gīrīś, a wild tribe from Mirzapur.

36 The saṃnyāśī-śs had assembled at a Hindu pilgrimage site (undisclosed), when an army of naked Jelālis and Madāris (sects of Sūfīśs) arrived, bringing a cow that they wished to slaughter. To avert the slaughter, the saṃnyāśī-śs bought the cow. However, the Sūfīśs brought a second cow, which was also purchased. A third cow was brought, and killed, engendering a battle in which 700 Sūfīśs died. The boys
In 1760 bairāgī-ś and samnyāśī-ś fought pitched battles in Haridvār over bathing precedence, with 1,800 dead, the samnyāśī-ś again being victorious (Russell 1916, Vol. 3:152; Nevill 1909a:254). In that year the British took control of the Haridvār area, and the Bairāgīs were then reportedly banned from the Haridvār melā for forty years (Lochtefeld 1994:597). The dominance of the śaiva gosain-ś in the area around Haridvār may have been partly due to the stationing in 1752 of the gosain Rajendra Giri, a powerful military commander, as commander of forces (faujdār) at Saharanpur, under the Mughal emperor Ahmad Shāh. The dominance of the śaiva gosain-ś at Haridvār, in trade, policing and taxation, appears to have continued largely unchallenged until the end of the eighteenth century.

In April 1796 an English officer, Captain Thomas Hardwicke, accompanied by Dr. Hunter, visited the Haridvār Melā on the way to Śrīnagar (Hardwicke 1801:309–347). They attended Makar Sāṅkrānti, which fell on April 8th that year. Pilgrims had come from as far as Kābul, Bhutān and Kashmir. The “Goosseyns” (also referred to as “Mehunts”, “Fakeers” and “Sannyasses”) had set themselves up as the police for the melā, meeting daily to hear grievances and adjudicate, and collecting levies on cattle, merchandise and pilgrims at the bathing places, taxes that would normally have gone to the Marāthas who were governing the region at that time. Wielding swords, they had effectively silenced all opposition to their regime, including that of the rival bairāgī-ś. On the last day of the melā, April 10th, between 12,000 and 14,000 Sikh horsemen arrived and planted their flag near the river. The gosain-ś took down the flag and plundered the Sikh party. The Sikhs sent a lawyer to the mahānt-ś, protesting their right to bathe and seeking the return of their looted property. The property was returned but the Sikhs attacked the ascetics at the bathing places, including the bairāgī-ś, samnyāśī-ś and nāgā-ś. Panic ensued, in which several drowned. The Sikhs lost twenty men but killed 500.

According to a copper-plate inscription in the possession of Mahant amongst the ‘fanatics’ were taken prisoner and educated “in their own religion” by the samnyāśī-ś.

37 See Chapter 7.4.
38 Pinch has commented that at this time the Sikhs were on the verge of statehood in nearby Punjab, under Ranjit Singh. They may well have been exercising territorial muscle at Haridvār on this occasion.
Radhamohanadasji of Nasik (Ghurye 1964:177), a great massacre of bairagi-s by saiva samnyasi-s took place at the Simhasta Melā at Nasik in 1690. Both sects were bathing at the same place, Cakratirtha, and subsequently an arrangement was made whereby at the melā of 1702, the two orders bathed at different places—the Šamnyāsīs at Tryambaka Kušavarta and the bairagi-s at Rāmakunda—an arrangement that still continues. This incident, if true, may have been an important impetus for the organisation of the bairagi-s’ akhārās.

At the Simhāsta Melā at Ujjain in 1789 a dispute between samnyasi-s and bairagi-s led to intense fighting. The Peśvā eventually ruled that the two orders should bathe at separate places (Burghart 1983:374). However, at the melā in 1826, another battle ensued between the two sects. The bairagi-s, assisted by the Marāthas, slaughtered many of the samnyasi-s and plundered their temples and monasteries in the vicinity of the city. Mindful of potentially bloody consequences, the British made elaborate arrangements for policing the Ujjain Melā of 1850, which included the positioning of heavy guns along the procession route, and the deployment of two companies of the Gwalior Infantry under Captain Macpherson. The more powerful bairagi-s were separated from the samnyasi-s, who were instructed to bathe earlier than the bairagi-s, and in a separate area. One hundred Brahmans were stationed (as ‘human shields’) between the two parties to assist with the bathing arrangements, which passed off without significant incident.

It appears that the order of bathing for the akhārā-s was fixed first in Haridvār, and then subsequently in Allahabad in 1870 (Maclean 2003:888). Eventually, an agreement was signed with the British in 1906 (Nandan 2002:58), which is still adhered to.39 While there are records—particularly in the eighteenth century—of conflicts at Haridvār, Ujjain and Nasik, there is no record in any account of any significant confrontation at Allahabad. Given the strategic importance of the Allahabad fort—adjacent to the saṅgam—which was first garrisoned by British troops in 1765,40 if there had been

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40 The fort was built by Akbar in 1584 CE. In 1765 CE, as part of the Treaty of Allahabad (between the East India Company, Shuja-ud-Daula and emperor Sāh Alām), the fort was occupied by British troops to protect the emperor. After its cession by Sādat Ali to the British in February 1798, the fort became, briefly, in 1832, the capital of the North-West Provinces (Maclean 2001:142–144).
any serious conflict there, it would no doubt have been recorded in a British report. Maclean (2003:895–896) suggests that the reason for the absence of conflict at Allahabad may have been that the Haridvār melā was a larger commercial market than Allahabad for trader-sādhu-s, and that dominance of trade and taxation by one sect or another led to bathing privileges. By contrast, Allahabad was a smaller commercial fair, and it was the navāb-s and then the British, and not sādhu-s, who taxed pilgrims. In 1938, the Uttar Pradesh State Legislature gave legal sanction for government participation in funding and overseeing the two Kumbh Melās in the state, at Prayāga and Haridvār. After Indian Independence, the U.P. government developed more permanent rules for the financial support and administration of both the Kumbh and Ādhā Kumbh Melās (Lamb 1999:196).

Despite control over bathing priorities, there are still occasions of disturbance. Low (1906:193–210), visiting the Kumbh Melā at Prayāga in 1906, records that the most turbulent of the attending sects and akhārā-s are the Bairāgīs, who on this occasion caused a riot, to quell which the police called out the army. More recently, at Haridvār, in 1998, rioting ensued amongst the Daśanāmīs over bathing priorities.

Besides the seven Daśanāmī akhārā-s mentioned above, some commentators discuss other akhārā-s, none of which are now recognised

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41 Lochtefeld (1994:596–597) suggests that changes in trading routes led to the growing importance of the major annual fair at Haridvār (which was also the largest horse market in India). The fair coincided with the bathing festival and it seems probable that control over trade and the market-place influenced status and bathing priority.

42 Mela Act 1938; Mela Rules 1940 (Nandan 2002:12). At Kumbh Melās, a total of six processions are allowed (two for Daśanāmīs), the akhārā-s to follow at a hundred yards distance. The order of bathing is currently as follows:

At Prayāga and Ujjain:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Processions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first</td>
<td>Mahānirvāṇī with Aṭal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second</td>
<td>Niraṇjanī with Āvahan, Jūnā with Ānanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third</td>
<td>Nirmohī, Digambara and Nirvāṇī (the three Rāmānandī/Bairāgī akhārā-s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fourth</td>
<td>Chotā Udāsin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fifth</td>
<td>Baṭā Udāsin</td>
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<tr>
<td>sixth</td>
<td>Nirmala</td>
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At Haridvār and Nāsik:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Processions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first</td>
<td>Jūnā, Niraṇjanī, Ānand and Āvahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second</td>
<td>Mahānirvāṇī and Aṭal</td>
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<td>third</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
amongst Daśanāṁśī. These akhārā-s have been either confused with another branch of the Daśanāṁśī, are now defunct, or are what seem to have been branches of Nāths. Ghurye (1964:106–108) states that besides the usual six akhārā-s, there are four other akhārā-s: the Agan, Alakhiya, Śūkha and Gūḍaṇa akhārā-s, all of which are said to be attached to the Jūnā akhārā. He also considers it is possible that these ‘akhārā-s’, the Śūkha, Īkhaṇa and another so-called akhārā-s, the Rūkhaṇa, mentioned by Wilson (1861:148–149)—who also mentions the Bhukaṇa and Kukaṇa akhārā-s but gives no details—are perhaps all to be considered as just one akhārā, the Śūkha, which seems to have been an order of Nāths.44 Sinha and Saraswati (1987:82–83) also include in the list of Daśanāṁśī akhārā-s the Gūḍaṇa akhārā, said to have been founded in Kāśī in 1617, on the evidence of an inscription. This brings Sinha and Saraswati’s total number of Daśanāṁśī akhārā-s to eight.45 However, the Gūḍaṇa akhārā also appears to have been a sect of Nāths.

43 The Agan akhārā (recognised by Ghurye as a cognate of the Sanskrit term agnī) is said not to be connected with “proper” Daśanāṁśī or nāgā-s. Even though the Agni akhārā did not gain full status as an akhārā until 1971, it seems highly unlikely that the Agni sub-branch did not consider themselves as Daśanāṁśī at the time Ghurye was writing, in the early nineteen-fifties. (Sinha and Saraswati (1978:86) note that the Agni akhārā was built in Banaras in 1957.) Ghurye admits puzzlement over the Alakhiya akhārā, noting that they beg for alms and carry long tongs. By way of clarification: the Alakhiyas may be seen at any large assembly of akhārā-s. They usually wear hats embellished with peacock feathers and have rope coiled around their waist over a tunic. They are often married and might be considered as a sub-sect of the Daśanāṁśī. A particular role they have is to sing and drum at melā-s, sometimes proceeding from one dhūmī to the next, collecting flour and money for the akhārā in skull-shaped coconuts (kapard), singing on such themes as saṃyāsī life, God, and the delights of cannabis intoxication.

44 Grierson (1916:866–867) also discusses the Rūkhaṇa, Śūkha and Īkhaṇa divisions, believing them to be branches of the Kāṇphaṭa order of yogī-s (Nāths or Nāṭh-Siddhas).

45 They add that the Gūḍaṇa and Agni akhārā-s are not considered as having the same status as the other six akhārā-s, and that they perform “certain functions” for the other akhārā-s. The Gūḍaṇa akhārā is stated to perform mortuary rites for the other akhārā-s. Enquiries at and near the address supplied by Sinha and Saraswati (1978:248), at Pitambarpura, Kāśī, failed to establish their previous existence there.

46 Wilson (1861:146–149) and Briggs (1938:10–11) state that the Gūḍaṇa wear the earrings or a piece of wood passed through the lobe of the ear, as worn by the Kāṇphaṭas. Briggs adds that in one ear they may also wear a flat copper plate with the imprint of Gorakhnāṭh. They carry a small metal pan in which they burn scented wood. This is carried when begging. They are said to belong to the
Several scholars have suggested that some of the nāgā lineages of the akhāra-s may have derived from Nāth, Siddha or similarly Tantric-influenced orders. Sinha and Saraswati (1978:92) discuss the possibility of Nāth antecedents, and note that at the samādhi of Bhartṛhari, in the fort at Chunar, Nāths and samnyāsī-s from the Jūnā akhāra take turns officiating as priests and mahant-s. They mention the common worship of both Bhairava and Dattātreya by the Nāths and the Jūnā akhāra (who previously worshipped Bhairava, but now Dattātreya), the use of and reverence for the dhūnī (sacred fire) by both nāgā-s and Nāths, the common but not universal use of earrings, and the fact that many names that occur in the list of marṭa-s contain the ending ‘nāth’ (see Appendix 4). While it seems probable that Nāths and the Daśanāmī lineages of the akhāra-s had some kind of common ancestry, it should, however, be cautioned that reverence for the dhūnī is not exclusive to the two orders. However, it will be argued that the structure of the Daśanāmīs, in the form into which it evolved in the last few hundred years, is partially a consequence of the integration of quite radical ascetic lineages within the order, many of which could have had common ancestry in Nāth or ‘Tantric’ lineages. It could be that the adoption of Dattātreya to supplant the previous tutelary deity, Bhairava, represented the integration of radical ascetic lineages within a newly constituted and orthodox Daśanāmī order.

47 Dazey (1990:303), for example, comments that the nāgā-s were most likely a separate sect of śaiva ascetics who were converted to advaita philosophy and incorporated into the Daśanāmī fold early in the medieeval period. However, he does not expand on this point.

48 See also Dazey (1990:305–306); Rigopoulos (1998:97). Visuvalingam (1989:159, 213 fn. 15) incorrectly attributes the view to Lorenzen (1972:46) that the Daśanāmīs may have been Kāpālikas converted by Śaṅkara. Lorenzen casts doubt on that claim, first made by Ghurye (1964:104), particularly on the issue of the putative transition from the Kāpālika faith (sic.) to Vedānta. There are also connections between the Daśanāmīs and the Udāsins, the latter also having historical associations with the Nāths. All three sects worship the dhūnī, and adhere to advaita philosophy. There is also a tradition that a Daśanāmī samnyāsī, Bhakta Giri, was the first to take initiation from Śrī Cand, the founder of the Udāsin panth (Sinha and Saraswati 1978:138).

49 Most commentators agree on the change of tutelary deity, but I have been unable to establish exactly when that took place.
2.2 Maḥī-s and dāvā-s

Six of the seven Daśanāmī *akhārā*-s (excluding the Agni *akhārā*) are essentially the main organisational bodies for the Daśanāmī *nāgā*-s, and comprise a network of a total of fifty-two maḥī-s (a ‘small hut’ or ‘temple’ in Hindi), which function as lineages within the Daśanāmī *akhārā*-s. There is some inconsistency in the available literature concerning the identity of individual maḥī-s and their significance.\(^{50}\) Daṇḍī-ś, being outside the *akhārā* system in terms of allegiance and organisation, do not recognise the maḥī classification. As mentioned previously, within the overall Daśanāmī structure there are essentially two main lineage traditions which, as we will see, come together during initiation procedures. One set of lineage traditions, comprising the nāgā-s, many of the *paramahāṃsa*-s and associated *saṃnyāśi*-s, is constituted within the maḥī-s of the *akhārā*. The other set of lineages is represented in the monastic traditions of the daṇḍī-s. The lineages of the *akhārā*-ś are also known as *nād vaṃś* (‘sound’ lineage), as it is the mantra-guru who initiates the *saṃnyāśi* into the *akhārā*.\(^{51}\) The other lineage is known as the *viraj vaṃś*. The *virajā-homa*—which is examined in Chapter 3.3—is an essential feature of Daśanāmī initiations, performed by an ācārya-guru who is a representative of the monastic tradition.

The term maḥī may have derived from the term *maṭha*,\(^{52}\) and it has been suggested by some commentators that there were fifty-two principal *maṭha*-ś before the six nāgā *akhārā*-ś were formed. Purī (2001:58) claims that the fifty-two (or fifty-one) maḥī-s are based on fifty-two centres (*kendra*) that were adjacent to the fifty-two *śākta-pīṭha*-ś,\(^{53}\) but that precise information connecting the pīṭha-s to the maḥī-s is not available. He also comments that in colloquial language, a *śākta-pīṭha* is referred to as *devī kī maḥī* (maḥī of the *devī*). While acknowledging the Vedānta philosophy of Śaṅkara, Purī also maintains that Śaṅkara worshipped Śrī-vidyā (Tantra), and wrote related works. These days also, particular *saṃnyāśi*-ś are said to “worship

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\(^{50}\) See Appendix 4 for lists of maḥī-s and dāvā-s.

\(^{51}\) See Ch. 3.2.

\(^{52}\) Ghurye (1964:106) maintains that maḥī is a vernacular diminutive of *maṭha*.

\(^{53}\) For overviews of *Śākti-pīṭha*-ś, see Sirkar (1973); *Tattvāloka* (1994); Kalyāṇ (Tirthānāk) (1997:515–527).
the *devi*", in other words, engage in some kind of Tantric practice.\(^{54}\)

The fifty-two *maṛhī*-s are further divided into either four or eight divisions (*davā*),\(^{55}\) each of which has several *mahant*-s. *Davā* means ‘claim’ and derives from voting procedures within the *akhārā* whereby *maṛhī*-s within a *davā* have equal voting rights during the process of electing officials and *mahant*-s within the *akhārā*. This takes place at Kumbh Melās, for all *akhārā*-s, every three or six years, when all official positions within the *akhārā* are subject to election. This is the only time when the *davā*-s have a practical significance.

*Nāgā*-s and the other *samnyāsi*-s of the *akhārā* trace their lineage through the *mahant*-s of the *davā*-s, each of whom belongs to a particular *maṛhī*. Unlike the complete account of fifty-two distinct *maṛhī*-s and eight *davā*-s presented by several commentators, not all *maṛhī*-s are currently represented at Kumbh Melās. Whereas the *maṛhī*-s represent ‘real’ lineages of gurus and disciples, the *davā*-s are units of administration that function at Kumbh Melās for voting purposes. The *maṛhī*-s are lineages of gurus, *mahant*-s and *sādhu*-s who, through association and initiation, transmit doctrines, practices and esoteric knowledge. Lineages of such a kind in the Indian tradition are generally notoriously complex given not only the problems inherent in hagiography but also the manifold tendencies of lineages both to subdivide and also, in some cases, to amalgamate. A guru might have several disciples, one or several of whom may form a sub-lineage, with perhaps the same name, say Giri or Purī, and to a greater or lesser extent be affiliated with other sub-branches within the family to which an initiating guru may have belonged. Every non-*daṇḍī* Daśanāmī *matha* is headed by a *mahant* whose lineage will be traced, at least theoretically, to a *maṛhī*.\(^{56}\) The *maṛhī*-s are usually referred

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\(^{54}\) In a recent personal communication, this was confirmed by a westerner who was initiated into the Jūnā *akhārā* in March 2001. His *nāgā* guru and associates perform Tantric rites at their Himalayan *āśrama*.

\(^{55}\) See Appendix 4.

\(^{56}\) However, Purī (who is affiliated with the Mahānirvāṇī *akhārā*) also accounts (2001:58–59) for all the ‘ten names’ within the *maṛhī* scheme, despite the fact that the specifically *daṇḍī* lineages, namely Tīrtha, Āśrama and Sarasvatī (and half of the Bhāratīs) are usually not classified within the *maṛhī* system, as the *daṇḍī* tradition is distinct. According to Purī:

1. Tīrthas merged with two *maṛhī*-s of the Giris.
2. Āśramas merged with two *maṛhī*-s of the Giris. Thus, the original twenty-three *maṛhī*-s of Giris were augmented by four *maṛhī*-s, comprising Tīrthas and Āśramas, giving rise to the twenty-seven *maṛhī*-s of Giris.
to by number, thus, for example, as the fourth or thirteenth maññhī. Initiates know from the number which maññhī and hence lineage is being referred to.\(^{57}\)

It can be seen at a Kumbh Melā how the arrangement of the maññhī-s and dāvā-s is represented spatially. (It has been described to the author as representing a yantra.) When camping at the Kumbh Melā, there are four ropes attached to the roof of the small, temporary temple housing the mūrti of the aṅkārā. The ropes lead in the four cardinal directions, each divided sector (dāvā) representing groupings of the various maññhī-s. Representatives of the maññhī-s are

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\(^{3}\) Aranyas merged with four maññhī-s of the Purīṣ. Thus, the original twelve maññhī-s of Purīṣ were augmented by four maññhī-s of Purīṣ.

\(^{4}\) Parvatas, Sāgaras and Sarasvatīs have no maññhī-s.

\(^{57}\) The fifty-one (or fifty-two) maññhī-s currently are constituted as follows:

\(\text{Twenty-seven of the maññhī-s are Giri; in one group are thirteen maññhī-s (Meghnāth-panth); and in another group, fourteen maññhī-s (Apārnāth-panth). One other maññhī attached to the Giris is known as the choṭā maññhī. The activities of the members of this maññhī are not regarded entirely favourably by other Daśanāmi-Samnyāsīs. Anecdotally described as the nāgā ‘mafia’, they often reside near railway stations, are said to be armed and to have an extensive information network.}

\(\text{Sixteen of the maññhī-s are Purīṣ.}
\)

\(\text{Four of the maññhī-s are Bhāratīs}
\)

\(\text{Four of the maññhī-s are Vanas.}
\)

\(\text{One maññhī is Lāmā.}
\)

The Lāmā maññhī mentioned in the lists does not figure in the contemporary constitution of active Daśanāmi lineages. However, one explanation (Lāl Purī 2001:58, 73) is that the Lāmā maññhī was instituted in Tibet by one Ved Giri, whose guru is believed by some samnyāsī-s to have been Padmasambhava (=Kamal Giri: as in Sanskrit, kamala and padma both mean ‘lotus’). According to tradition, Padmasambhava—the famous Tantric yogi and siddha—was initiated into Buddhist Cakra-Yoga by a dākini, came to Tibet in the eighth century at the invitation of King Khri-Strong-Ide-brtsan in order to assist the establishment of the first Buddhist monastery and to suppress local deities, and was the putative transmitter of the Bardo Thödol. During the twelfth century there appeared the first signs of an order identifying itself with the first diffusion of Buddhism, calling itself the rNying-ma Order, the ‘old order’, and retrospectively claiming the siddha Padmasambhava as its founder (see Govinda 1960:190; Skilton 1997:188). As a siddha—who have a collective religious heritage spanning Nāth, Mahānubhāva, Buddhist and Tantric traditions—it is not inconceivable that a lineage of ‘Nāths’ deriving from Padmasambhava became the Lāmā maññhī, though Padmasambhava is hagiographically ubiquitous.

The division of the maññhī-s (as above) is accepted, with minor differences, by most commentators. However, there is a minor disagreement between Purī (2001) and some informants, the latter maintaining that it is the Sarasvatīs who constitute one of the cār maññhī-s (the other being the Bhāratī), while according to Purī, the two cār maññhī-s constitute the Bhāratīs and Vanas.
put forward during election to offices within the akhārā. At Kumbh Melās, the dhūnī-s of the sādhu-s are arranged in lines, all dhūnī-s being positioned in one or another of the four (or sometimes eight) sections (dāvā) of camping area of an akhārā. (The dhūnī-s are also referred to as maṛhi-s,) Sādhu-s belonging to a particular maṛhi will be camped in an area alongside sādhu-s from that maṛhi or a related maṛhi. The related maṛhi-s constitute a particular dāvā or section of the akhārā.\(^{58}\)

Initiates in particular maṛhi-s may be grouped together as a pānthī (meaning: ‘follower or master of a particular sect’). Thus, for example, amongst the maṛhi-s of the Giris there are two subdivisions, known as the Meghnāth pānthī and the Āpārnāth pānthī. Initiates of maṛhi number four and maṛhi number ten belong to the Āpārnāth pānthī, whereas the maṛhi-s of the Giris, which are grouped under the Rāmdattī and Rdthināthī dāvā-s, are included within the Meghnāth pānthī. In essence, the pānthī-s are simply another indication of historical lineage.\(^{59}\)

Pūrī (2001:58–59) maintains that the maṛhi-s were instituted “some

\(^{58}\) At Kumbh Melās the camping arrangements for the Jūnā akhārā are as follows: members of the sixteen lineages (sl̄al maṛhi) of Pūrī’s camp to the right of the entrance to the camp, in the north-east quarter; members of fourteen of the lineages of Giris (caudāh maṛhi) camp in the north-western quarter; members of thirteen lineages (terah maṛhi) of the Giris camp in the south-west quarter; members of the four Bhārāṭi and Sarasvatī lineages (cār maṛhi) camp to the left of the camp entrance, in the south-east quarter. Camped separately are the cōṭā maṛhi.

The four mahant-s of the Jūnā akhārā camp at the four corners around the centrally located aśādāhātu-mūrtī (image made from eight metals) of Dattātreyā, the tutelary deity of the akhārā. In the central area around the shrine, the weapons and strong-box of the akhārā are kept. The four sacred javelins (bhālā) of the akhārā-s are planted here: the Dattaprakāśa Bhālā from Ujjain; Śūrayaprakāśa Bhālā from Prayāg; Candraprakāśa Bhālā from Nāsik; and the Bhairopprakāśa Bhālā from Haridvār. According to tradition, there are also four dhūnī-s: Dattamukhī, Ujjain; Śūrayamukhī, Prayāg; Gopāl, Nāsik; and Ājayane, Haridvār (see Daś Nām Vams Vīk).\(^{59}\)

\(^{59}\) 90\% of a settled caste of sāmavāsī-s (all Giris) living to the east of Kathmandu, in Kattike (see Bouillier 1976; 1979) belong to what they describe as the “Aparnāti thar” (Bouillier 1979:106), which is clearly a legacy of the Āpārnāth pānthī. In their community thar functions essentially as a marker of exogamous lineage, which is, naturally, particularly important for marriages. While 75\% of their marriages are with those from the other thar to be found in Kattike, the Ānikhārī, Bouillier (1979:179) remarks that, although her list was not complete, she was informed of five functioning thar-s, the Durgānāthī, Rdthināthī, Aparnāthī, Ānikhārī and Bodhla. With the exception of the Ānikhārī, the other four thar-s feature (see Appendix 4) in the conventional classification of the maṛhi-s of the Giris.
generations” after Śaṅkara, but observes that there is disagreement about when that was. He believes that maṛhi-s were organised by the disciples of the four main disciples of Śaṅkara, the earliest being the Giri maṛhi-s that were instituted in the tenth century CE, followed in the next couple of centuries by the other maṛhi-s. According to Purī, an important figure in the early organisation of the maṛhi-s is Vaikuṇṭha Purī, said to have been alive between 968 and 988 CE. Purī’s information derives from two written records, thought to be around four hundred years old. An extensive account is also provided (pp. 61–85) of the dozens of lineages deriving from the four main disciples, who are attached to one of the four āmnāya-s (connected to the four pīṭha-s). This information is said to be derived from a pothi that is 250 to 300 years old, in the possession of the bhāṭ of the akhārā.

However, despite Purī’s claims regarding the antiquity of the maṛhi-s and the akhārā-s, there is no real evidence that can be adduced that dates back more than three or four hundred years. The lineages (maṛhi-s) of the akhārā-s may in some instances have had a geographical connection—such as, for example Giris, Purīs, Bhāratīs and Bans60 (Vanas)—but these lineages appear to have been subsequently projected back through a paramparā originating with Śaṅkara and his four disciples.

2.3 Functionaries within the Śrī Pañc Daśanāmī akhārā organisation

Having examined the overall structure of the akhārā-s and their lineages, in this and the two following sections the general hierarchies and bodies of authority within the Daśanāmī order will be considered.

The most important body within the organisation of the Daśanāmī

60 Sadānanda Giri (1976:36) notes that the titles ‘Giri’, ‘Purī’, ‘Bhāratī’ and ‘Vana’ are found in the modern lists of both the ‘ten names’ and the maṛhi-s. From this he infers that these four ‘groups’ of saṃnyāsī-s helped to create the nāgā organisations, most probably in the Mughal period, as forces to counter Muslim aggression. Vanas, Aranyas, Parvatas and Sāgaras “roamed alone” and did not initiate disciples, and hence these names have become rare, while the Giris, Purīs and Bhāratīs increased their numbers through initiation.
akhārā-s is the Śrī Pañc, which consists of a group of nāgā-s and usually four or sometimes eight mahant-s (see below) from the akhārā. ‘Śrī Pañc’ is also a formal appellation preceding the name of the akhārā and may be seen on the proscenium-style arch at the entrance to an akhārā. Representatives to the Śrī Pañc are elected from all the groups of mahārā-s within either four or eight of the dāvā-s, depending on the constitution of the akhārā, and as we have seen, only theoretically represent all fifty-two mahārā-s. Some of the mahārā-s are these days effectively defunct and most akhārā-s are divided into four dāvā-s, the exception being the Mahānirvānī, which is divided into eight dāvā-s. The author’s inquiries during fieldwork indicated that despite the fact that the constitution and decision-making processes within the akhārā-s are somewhat more anarchic than some of the commentaries might indicate, a hierarchy of authority within the akhārā-s is universally recognised.

The Śrī Pañc has been compared to the parliament of the akhārā-s. It gives the orders for initiating nāgā-s at Kumbh Melās and settles disputes between matha-s and individual nāgā-s. During Kumbh Melās the assembly of nāgā-s is known as the Sambhu Pañc, which, ultimately, has the highest authority within the akhārā. However, it is only operational (as the Sambhu Pañc) for the duration of the Kumbh Melās. During the time between Kumbh Melās it is the Śrī Pañc that has the highest authority regarding administrative affairs, even though the members may be travelling. The Śrī Pañc has its own flag, deity and insignia but members do not usually own any significant personal property or have any permanent habitation. However, some members of the Śrī Pañc, particularly mahant-s, may own properties, such as matha-s or āśrama-s, which may be a part of an extensive landholding. In some akhārā-s the Śrī Pañc may itself, as a body, own land and properties.

All seven Daśanāmī akhārā-s have their own Śrī Pañc, to which officials are usually elected every six years, during either a half or a full Kumbh Melā. All akhārā-s follow this practice. The election is based on representatives selected from the dāvā-s. The number of posts within each akhārā varies according to the size of the akhārā, in terms of the number of properties it owns and the number of current initiates, but the positions are hierarchical. The highest position in

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61 The akhārā-s spell ‘pañc’ with a short ‘a’.
an *akhārā* is held by a single *sabhāpati* (the ‘president’ or ‘chairman’), who presides over all the activities of all regional branches of the *akhārā*. Under him, in order of hierarchical descent, are: *śri-mahant*-s and *mahant*-s; their assistants (*kārbār*-s or *adhikār*-s); *thānāpati*-s who manage the *akhārā*-s properties (the temples and *maṭha*-s); secretaries; *pūjārī*-s; *koṭvāl*-s who are armed guards who also circulate information about the election of *mahant*-s and *kārbār*-s at Kumbh Melās, and *koṭhārī*-s (or *bhaṇḍārī*-s), who manage the daily supplies, such as food items, needed by the *akhārā*. In the larger *akhārā*-s, notably the Jūnā and Mahānīvarṇī, two other officers, known as *dhūnīvālā*-s, may be elected to the Śrī Paṅc. The *dhūnīvālā* circulates decisions reached collectively by the Śrī Paṅc to the Jamāt, Jamāt being the name for a group of travelling Daśānāmīs who do not live in an *akhārā*.

In normal circumstances, any *maṭha* is presided over by a *mahant*, who is the spiritual head of the institution, succession typically passing to a disciple of that guru. While the *mahant* rules over the *maṭha* by legal right (*hāk*), the *śri-mahant* is elected, and rules by consensus. *Mahant*-s and *śri-mahant*-s may both sit side by side on the *gaddī*, but it is the *mahant* of the *maṭha* who usually has a more permanent position. The *kārbār* oversees daily practical affairs of an *akhārā* or *maṭha* for the *mahant*, and will be in charge should the *mahant* be away.

The Śrī Paṅc elects a number of *thānāpati*-s (‘landlords’) who man-

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62 All my informants used the English word ‘secretary’ to refer to this post, rather than the Hindi term, *sacī*, a term common in bureaucratic circles.

63 There are a number of direct parallels between the organisational structures of the Daśānāmī and *vaṁśavā* Rāmānandī (*Bairāgī*) orders, one being the 52 *madhī*-s of the Daśānāmīs and the 52 *dvāra*-s of the Rāmānandīs. Another is the *paṅc-samskār* initiation (see Ch. 3.2). There is also a very similar hierarchy of functionaries within both orders (see Burghart 1976:63–72; Sharma 1998:94–95). At the top of the hierarchy of a typical, large Rāmānandī *chāvāni* (‘temporary lodging’ or ‘troop cantonment’), equivalent to an *akhārā* is the *mahant*, followed by two *adhikār*-s (who administer the functioning of the organisation); one *koṭhārī* (storekeeper); five *pūjārī*-s; three *vyās*-s (specialists in three different *Rāmāyana*-s); one *koṭvāl*; two *prasāṭha*-s; three *jal-bhārī*-s (assistants); and twenty-five *bhaṇḍārī*-s (cooks). The officers of a *Bairāgī* *mandal* (a regionally organised unit) are: *śri-mahant*, *adhikārī*, *rasāyānī*, *jalbhārī* and *koṭvāl*. *Bairāgīs* are members of a *mandal* by virtue of their *kuṭi* (*aśrama*/*śilā*) being in that area.

The hierarchical order within the Nirmala *akhārā* is also similar (see Oberoi 1997:125, who cites Mahant Dial Singh, *Nirmala Panth Daśān*, Amritsar, 1952:323–337): ‘the akhara needs to maintain a touring unit and this shall be always made up of a maximum of 50 and a minimum of 20 Nirmalas. Such a unit will always have the following officiants: a head Mahant [a post below that of the Śrī Mahanṭ], a Granthi, a Pūjārī, a Paṇḍit or Gianī, a Koṭhārī, two Kārbārīs, and a Śrī Bhaṇḍārī’.
age the akhārā’s properties. They should be nāgā-s or retired mahant-s and are usually older ascetics. A thānāpati may be in a position inferior to one he previously occupied. The collective ownership and management of property by up to eight thānāpati-s, who also have a limited period in that role, is to prevent dissent over the management and ownership of property. The Śrī Pañc, being the highest collective body of authority within the akhārā, has, theoretically, the right to dismiss the thānāpati managing the affairs of the properties of the akhārā. Depending on the size and occupancy of any of the properties administered by an akhārā, there will be a corresponding number of thānāpati-s, secretaries and other officials. For example, in 1996 the Mahānirvāṇī akhārā was administering twenty-six properties (Pūrī 2001:151–153), the main maṭha at Allahabad having eight śrī-mahant-s, eight kārbārī-s, three secretaries and three thānāpati-s. At Kaṅkhāl, Haridvār, there are two secretaries and five thānāpati-s. A typical small maṭha, such as at Jvālāmukhī, has a single thānāpati.

The Jamāt, also referred to as the Jhuṇḍī (‘small flock or swarm’ in Hindi) or Jhuṇḍī Pañc, is elected by the Śrī Pañc and travels for most of the year, except for the four months of the rainy season, carrying its own flag, deity and insignia, which are borrowed from the Śrī Pañc. The Śrī Pañc also selects someone from the Jamāt to be a mahant within the Jamāt, the selected mahant being directly under the authority of a śrī-mahant of the akhārā. The travelling Jamāt may consist of ex-mahant-s, nāgā-s and vastradhārī-s (i.e. paramahāṃsa-s), all of whom may have joined willingly or been sent travelling by the akhārā. Members of the travelling Jamāt may stay somewhere and establish a new maṭha which will recruit new members to the order and send them to the akhārā for training. Within the akhārā,

64 However, according to Sadānanda Giri (1976:32) the thānāpati traditionally occupied his office for life, having received a letter with the seal of the akhārā.

65 At Dārágaṇj (Allahabad), Banaras (two properties), Kaṅkhāl (Haridvār), Oṃkāṛēśvar, Ujjain. In Maharashtra: at Nāgpur, Akolā, Lāregān (Vardhāh), Parbhānī (two properties), and Tryambakeśvar (Nāsik); and at Jvālāmukhī (H.P.), Nīlkanṭh, Rṣikēś, Karnāli (Baṛaudā), Kurukṣetra (five properties), Dehra Dūn (U.P.), Śrīnāthī (Baliyā, U.P.), and Udaypur (Rajasthan).

66 At the time of research (2001–2002), the Jūnā akhārā at Banaras had: 1 sabbāpati; 2 śrī-mahant-s; 2 kārbārī-s; 2 secretaries; 4 thānāpati-s; 4 kotvāl-s; 2 pūjārī-s; 1 kothārī. The Aṭal akhārā at Banaras: 1 sabbāpati, who is also śrī-mahant as well as secretary; 1 mahant; 1 kotvāl who is also thānāpati; 1 kothārī. The Āvāhan akhārā at Banaras: 1 sabbāpati; 1 secretary; 1 śrī-mahant. Āgni akhārā at Banaras: 1 sabbāpati; 1 secretary; 1 thānāpati, who is also kotvāl; 1 śrī-mahant; 1 pūjārī; 1 kothārī; 1 bhaṅḍārī.
the Jamāt is the second highest authority after the Śambhu Pañc.\textsuperscript{67} It is under the Śambhu Pañc during the Kumbh Melā, and under the Śrī Pañc at other times. Overseeing the activities of all thirteen akhārā-s (including the seven Daśanāmī akhārā-s) is a body known as the Akhil Bhāratīya Akhārā Pariṣad,\textsuperscript{68} based in Haridvār, which meets to decide various practical and policy issues.\textsuperscript{69}

2.4 Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras

Affiliated to the akhārā-s are one or several Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras (‘Lords of the area’).\textsuperscript{70} The author was informed by a variety of sādhu-s, officials and Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras, that presently the akhārā-s with the largest number of affiliated Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras are the Mahānirvāṇī and Niraṇjānī, with up to thirty affiliated Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras.\textsuperscript{71}

While many Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras are affiliated to the various akhārā-s, usually only one—or, occasionally, up to four—is directly involved with an akhārā in his role as ācārya-guru (or ācārya-mahāmaṇḍalesvāra) for the akhārā, presiding over a part of the saṁnyāsa rite. Only the ācārya-mahāmaṇḍalesvāra-s may give dikṣā, which is the only time when they usually come into contact with the akhārā. Even though Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras may indicate an affiliation with a particular

\textsuperscript{67} Sadānanda Giri (1976:27) remarks that: “When a disciple first comes into the Akhārā, he is sent out with the ‘Jamāt’ group, to roam about, see the country [and] to gain experience. In this way his good qualities are developed and he becomes fit to lead a life in the community. Eventually such people become the heads of the Akhārās. Sometimes after training they become head of the Āśrama of the Śiddhā-Guru. From many places the Akhārās recruit wayward boys. In this respect they have reshaped the life of many unruly boys, and saved them from becoming thieves and dacoits. When these boys come into the Akhārā they are made into good saṁnyāsins by rigorous training.”

\textsuperscript{68} Each akhārā controls an average of a hundred religious bodies, such as matha-s, temples and āśrama-s (Jaffrelot 1996:471).

\textsuperscript{69} One decision taken quite recently was that the akhārā-s should not become involved in any overt or covert ‘religious’ activity (Dutt 2001). Whether this decision has any binding effect remains, however, to be seen.

\textsuperscript{70} Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras usually have lengthy titles, a typical example being, ‘Śrīmat paramahamsa parivrājakācārya brahmaniśta ananta śrī vibhūṣita śrī annapūrṇa pīthādhīśvara mahāmaṇḍalesvāra śrī svāmī visveśvarānanda giri ji mahārāja vedāntācārya’.

\textsuperscript{71} Sinha and Saraswati (1978:98) list eight Maṇḍalesvāras, including one Ācārya Maṇḍalesvāra, for the Mahānirvāṇī akhārā, whereas Purī (2001:136–137) lists twenty-nine Mahāmaṇḍalesvāras affiliated to that akhārā.
akhārā, sometimes indicated on the sign over the gateway to the camp or āśrama, in most instances the title is essentially honorary, as, at some time in the past, the Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara’s maṭha will have broken away from the akhārā. Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras often own large āśrama-s and deliver public lectures on Vedānta and related religious topics to large audiences, particularly in the rainy season. Many of them have the office bestowed upon them during a ceremony at a Kumbh Melā.72 The Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras are the heads of a hierarchy within the monastic tradition, which is essentially independent of the hierarchies that operate within the akhārā-s, except at times of initiation.73

Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras have essentially replaced the former pre-eminence of the ācārya-s. H. H. Wilson, writing in 1861, makes no mention of them in the Daśanāmi order, and Sadānanda Giri (1976:50–53) concludes that their office has only developed in the last sixty years or so. He remarks that there used to be only three ācārya-guru-s, of the Niraṇjana, Jūna and [Mahā-] Nirvānī akhārā-s, and that the ācārya-guru-s used to accompany the akhārā-s for the baths at the Kumbh Melās. (The Ānanda, Āvāhan and Aṭal akhārā-s, the three smaller akhārā-s, still accompany the three larger akhārā-s to the baths.) Although these days each akhārā has its own affiliated ācārya-guru, this has not always been so. Purī (2001:133) remarks that the Aṭal and Mahānirvānī akhārā used to share an ācārya-guru, but that since 1922 the Aṭal akhārā created an independent ācārya-guru. Purī provides a parampara for the Mahānirvānī akhārā of twelve Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras (as ācārya-guru-s), which, realistically, would perhaps go back around 150 years. Miśra (Āmit Kālrekha 2001:103) maintains that it was during the period when the Jyotir pīṭha was.

72 The ācārya-guru (who is a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara) of each akhārā is often a resident of a particular maṭha. Thus, for example, Sinha and Saraswati (1978:98), discussing the residences of the Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras of Banaras, note that the Ācārya-Maṇḍaleśvaras of the Mahānirvānī akhārā always reside in the Govinda maṭha, those of the Niraṇjana in the Durbeśvara maṭha, and those of the Jūna akhārā in the Mṛtyuṇjaya maṭha.

73 To give one example, the current Ācārya Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara of the Jūna akhārā is Svāmī Avadheśananda Giri, who was elected at the 1998 Haridvār Kumbh Melā. Svāmījī started and heads an organisation called Prabhu Premī Saṅgh, the headquarters being in Kanīkhal, Haridvār. It has twenty-eight āśrama-s throughout north India, and is dedicated not only to spiritual uplift but also to the education and feeding of the poor and destitute (see www.prabhuprem.org.in). Svāmījī has written around a dozen books and lectures frequently.
moved to Dholka in Gujarat that a decision was made by the Dholka ācārya that each akhārā should have its own ācārya mahāmandaleśvara. It is uncertain when the Dholka pitha was first established (certainly after 1776), but the Jyotir pitha was reestablished in 1941, which means—if Misra is correct—that the arrangement whereby each akhārā has its own ācārya-mahāmandaleśvara came into existence before 1941.74

The title of ‘Mahāmandaleśvara’ clearly derives from the feudal role performed by rulers in the process of state formation during the early mediaeval period.75 The institution of the Vijayanagara Mahāmandaleśvara is evident in the parallel role of the Mahāmandaleśvaras of the Daśanāmī order, whereby these heads of monastic matha-s are nominally under the instruction and command of the main matha-s controlled by the reigning Śankarācāryas. It seems that from hundreds of years before the time of Śaṅkara (eighth century CE), until the last century or so, it was pārisad-s of learned Brahmans who adjudicated on doubtful points of religious conduct, and prescribed appropriate penances (Kane HDS, Vol. 2:971–974). Only rarely were heads of matha-s asked to decide. During the time of Marāṭhā domination, the king or minister consulted the Brahmans in holy places such as Paithan, Nāsik and Karad on religious matters and only rarely consulted the heads of matha-s. This arrangement prevailed until the time of the British, and it was

74 Sinha and Saraswati’s account (1978:96) of an anecdote related to them by an informant from the Jīnā akhārā may throw some light on this issue. According to their informant, around a century ago nāgū-s used to give the highest honour to dāndī-s, whom they regarded as their gurus. At that time, the dāndī-s used to initiate the paramahamsa-s and nāgū-s into sannyāsa. The nāgū-s used to carry the palanquin of the Śankarācārya, who is considered to be the spiritual head of the Daśanāmī sannyāśīs. However, a dispute arose when the dāndī-s, who are Brahman brahmacārī-s, cast doubt on the purity of the paramahamsa-s and nāgū-s. Henceforth, the dāndī-s refused to initiate the paramahamsa-s and nāgū-s into sannyāsa. As a consequence, the institution of ācārya-guru arose, whereby a Mahāmandaleśvara from a monastic tradition, and who may also be a dāndī, will initiate paramahamsa-s and nāgū-s at a Kumbh Melā.

75 For example, from an inscription of 1356 (Epigraphia Carnatica, vol. X, Kolar, no. 222), we learn that Kumāra Kampana, one of the early rulers of the Vijayanagara empire, and the first son of Bukka I, was appointed by his father as the Mahāmandaleśvara of the Mulbāgal region, entrusted with the task of extending Vijayanagara rule in the Tamil country. Most of the Mahāmandaleśvaras were members of the royal family in the early period of Vijayanagara rule. By the time of Harīhara II, local tax collection systems of the village assemblies were bypassed and replaced by directly appointed Mahāmandaleśvaras and other such officials. See Krishnaswami (1964:7, 103ff.) for further details.
only at approximately the beginning of the nineteenth century that mahants and such authorities as the Śaṅkarācāryas—who occupied, for example, the gaddi-s of the Śaṅkeśvara matha at Karavīra in Maharashtra—76 have claimed almost exclusive jurisdiction in such matters. The adoption of the title of ‘Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara’ and an extended juridical role of the religious office would seem to indicate a kind of reformation or reorganisation of the order as it currently exists.

2.5 Śaṅkarācāryas

While authority is hierarchical within individual matha-s and akhārā-s, at the apex of the Daśanāmī structure are the Śaṅkarācāryas. Śaṅkarācāryas are also referred to as jagadguru (‘world guru’), a title reserved for someone with supreme spiritual authority. They reside at the matha-s supposedly founded by Śaṅkarācārya.77 The landholdings and estates of the larger matha-s, particularly those of Dvārakā, Kāṇḍīpuram and Śrīneri are extensive.78 The estates also include an increasing number of educational institutions and hospitals. Besides their religious and administrative duties—which include participating in initiation rituals at Kumbh Melās—the Śaṅkarācāryas also adjudicate on matters of Dharmaśāstra. Besides the government court system, parallel systems of social justice function in many regions of India.79 In south India, the local caste council (kattemane), usually with five members, decides many issues, while others are decided

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76 See Ch. 4.4, on Daśanāmī pītha-s and matha-s.

77 For a brief biography and an account of the the coronation/consecration (pattabhisēka) of Bhāratītīrtha, installed as Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīneri in 1989 (inherniting the gaddi from Vidyātīrtha, who had occupied it since 1954), see Yocum (1996).

78 See Venkataraman (1959:132–166) for details of the landholdings, shrines, temples and revenue of the Śrīneri Saṃsthānam (‘institution’). Revenue derives from around fifty villages in surrounding districts. Net revenue in 1959 was 33,000 Rs. The saṃsthānam also owns around fifty buildings, temples and shrines throughout India. The jāgra (land donated by a ruler) enjoyed by the pītha for 600 years was abolished in 1950 by the Inām Abolition Act and became a tālukā, with a tahsīldār as the civil administrator (Gnanambal 1973:8). The wealth of the Kāṇḍīpuram matha, which controls several schools, colleges, hospitals and other organisations, was estimated in 2004 at between Rs. 5,000 and 10,000 crore (1.1–2.2 billion U.S. dollars) (www.hinduismtoday.com/hpi/2004/11/17.shtml).

by Śaṅkarācāryas. Gnanambal (1973) provides extensive documentation of numerous cases decided by the pontiffs of seven south Indian matha-s, including the Kumbhakonam and Śrṅgerī matha-s (also known as pītha-s). For settling disputes or grievances the jagadguru is assisted by a number of teachers well-versed in the Dharmaśāstra-s. Cases typically involve marriage, adultery and sexual offences, religious rites and caste practice, anti-social acts, change of occupation, caste pollution, interpreting śāstra-s, caste, initiation and personal affairs. Complaints from individuals are usually first taken to the local pañcāyat, and a report elicited, before the case is presented to a matha. Branch matha-s of the Śaṅkara pītha-s have mudrādhikārī-s who refer cases to the dharmādhikārī (supervisor), someone who belongs to one of the Śaṅkarite pītha-s and decides on matters of caste, moral conduct and ritual obligation. Many of the cases are also considered by the Śaṅkarācārya. Although complaints are brought to the pītha and adjudicated, the pītha-s never actively pursue cases in the role of prosecutor. The punishment dispensed in cases which are adjudicated is seldom harsh, typically involving a small fine, forms of social exclusion or purification and expiation ceremonies. Only rarely, usually in cases of sexual misconduct, is someone excluded from the community. The pītha-s have considerable authority, particularly among some sections of Brahmans.

In this chapter, the structure, organisation and hierarchies within the akhārā-s have been examined. As noted in the previous chapter (1.6), several commentators claim that the akhārā-s are in some respects democratic and non-hierarchical. However, it is evident from our consideration of the organisation of the akhārā-s that the akhārā-s are essentially hierarchical in terms of authority and decision-making. Conflicts between the akhārā-s were referred to, illustrating the radically different character of the militant wing of the Daśanāmīs from that of the monastic tradition. Yet it remains to be explained how the Śaṅkarācāryas—the preeminent heads of the Daśanāmī monastic tradition—are integrated within a structure that incorporates the militant akhārā-s. This is illustrated in initiation procedures, the main topic of the next chapter.

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80 Some Daśanāmī matha-s are also known as pītha-s: see Ch. 4.4.
81 See, for example, Sadānanda Giri (1976:27); Sinha and Saraswati (1978:196); Dazey (1987:557; 1990:309).
CHAPTER THREE

RENUCIATION, RULES FOR ASCETICS, AND INITIATION

In this chapter, the procedures of renunciation are considered. A brief comparison between the earliest texts that provide details of renunciation procedures and a recent account of these rites illustrates the remarkable continuity in samnyāsa rites for around two millennia. However, several points that are not apparent in the ancient accounts are revealed in the details provided for contemporary procedures. Firstly, at least one officiating guru is required to perform the rite of renunciation for the candidate. In a modern anthropological context, such facilitation not only liberates the renunciate from a prior social identity, but, as indicated in the Introduction to this dissertation, the same samnyāsa rite also simultaneously initiates the renunciate into the renunciate lineage of the initiating guru: the samnyāsa rite has two aspects, constituting both a renunciation of one social order, and an initiation into another social order, that of a renunciate sect. Another key component of this chapter is the illustration of how the militant wing of the Daśanāmī order is ideologically linked to the monastic wing, via the auspices and participation of a high executive of the monastic wing (frequently a Śaṅkarācārya) in the initiation of paramahamsa-s and potential nāgā-s during the samnyāsa rite.

3.1. Renunciation procedures

The earliest extant account of Brahmanical injunctions for the renunciate and renunciation procedures is to be found in the Dharmasūtra of Baudhāyana (2.17–18),¹ the earliest portions of which may be dated from around the beginning of the third to the middle of the second century BCE. There seem, however, to have been a significant number of later interpolations in the text, most probably

¹ Kane (HDŚ, Vol. 2: 953).
including the section on renunciatory rites. It is in the Dharmasūtra of Baudhāyana that the term saṃnyāsa first appears in dharma literature. Other extant Dharmasūtra texts also deal at some length with the life of the renunciate; those of Gautama (3.11–25), Āpastamba (2.21.1–17) and Vasiṣṭha (10.1–31). These writers frequently quote from unnamed sources (Olivelle 1977:21 fn. 4).

According to Baudhāyana (2.17.1–7), renunciation may be performed by a widower or by someone who has settled his children in their respective duties. It is also prescribed for people over seventy years of age or for a forest hermit who has retired from ritual activities. During the procedure, the candidate internalises the sāvitrī mantra several times, in different ways. Before sunset he performs his daily fire sacrifice with offerings of ghee, and spends the night awake. In the last portion of the night he gets up and performs last daily fire sacrifice, making an offering to the Fire common to all men with an oblation prepared in twelve potsherds. He throws into the offertorial fire the vessels used in the daily sacrifice that are not made of clay or stone (i.e. wood), and into the household fire he throws the two fire-drills. He deposits the sacred fires in himself, breathing in the smell of each fire three times, saying: “With that body of yours worthy of sacrifice, O Fire...” Then, standing within the sacrificial area, he recites, three times softly and three times aloud, the praiṣa mantra (see below). Filling his cupped hands with water, he pours it out, saying: “I give safety to all creatures!” He takes the staff, sling, water-pot and bowl, reciting appropriate ritual formulae. Taking the aforementioned mendicant’s possessions, he goes to a water place, bathes and sips water, reciting mantras (the Surabhimat, Abliṅga, Vāruṇi, Hiranyavarṣa and Pāvamāṇi verses). Entering the water, he controls his breath sixteen times while reciting the Aghamāraṇa hymn; comes out of the water; squeezes the water from his clothes; wears another clean garment; and sips water. Then, taking the water strainer, he recites other mantras: to the elements, the sun, the ancestors and himself; he should then recite the sāvitrī mantra, up to an unlimited number of times.

3 For the translation of the Dharmasūtra-s, see Olivelle (1999).
4 Rules for ‘fourth-aśrama’ yāti-s (or paśivājaka-s or saṃnyāsi-s) also appear in various Purāṇa-s. See, for example, Kāṇa Purāṇa (II.28); Nārada Purāṇa (1.27.92–106; II.43.123–127).
5 Kane (HDŚ Vol.1:989-1158) lists over eighty works dealing exclusively with renunciation. Unfortunately, most still remain in manuscript form and little work has been done on editing the texts. Until Olivelle’s (1977–1978) editing of Vāsudevārama’s Tatidharmaṃprakāśa, a text dated to between, most probably, 1675 and 1800, the only other mediaeval treatises on renunciation to have been published were Viśveśvararasarṣaṇa’s Tatidharmasaṅgṛaha and Vidyāranya’s Jīvamuktiṣvēka.
6 The candidate first has his head, beard and body shaved and his nails clipped. Then, taking a triple-staff, sling, water-strainer, water-pot and bowl, he goes to the boundary of the village, eats a light meal of ghee, milk and curds, and then fasts. He then recites and internalises the sāvitrī mantra several times, in different ways. Before sunset he performs his daily fire sacrifice with offerings of ghee, and spends the night awake. In the last portion of the night he gets up and performs last daily fire sacrifice, making an offering to the Fire common to all men with an oblation prepared in twelve potsherds. He throws into the offertorial fire the vessels used in the daily sacrifice that are not made of clay or stone (i.e. wood), and into the household fire he throws the two fire-drills. He deposits the sacred fires in himself, breathing in the smell of each fire three times, saying: “With that body of yours worthy of sacrifice, O Fire...” Then, standing within the sacrificial area, he recites, three times softly and three times aloud, the praiṣa mantra (see below). Filling his cupped hands with water, he pours it out, saying: “I give safety to all creatures!” He takes the staff, sling, water-pot and bowl, reciting appropriate ritual formulae. Taking the aforementioned mendicant’s possessions, he goes to a water place, bathes and sips water, reciting mantras (the Surabhimat, Abliṅga, Vāruṇi, Hiranyavarṣa and Pāvamāṇi verses). Entering the water, he controls his breath sixteen times while reciting the Aghamāraṇa hymn; comes out of the water; squeezes the water from his clothes; wears another clean garment; and sips water. Then, taking the water strainer, he recites other mantras: to the elements, the sun, the ancestors and himself; he should then recite the sāvitrī mantra, up to an unlimited number of times.

7 Also, it is meant for Śālīnas and Yāyāyas who are childless. These are people
mantra,\(^9\) deposits the sacred fires in himself,\(^10\) and utters the \textit{praiśa mantra}.\(^{11}\) “I have renounced! I have renounced! I have renounced!”

A significant omission in Baudhāyana’s account is the absence of reference to anyone who assists, supervises or instigates the \textit{saṁnyāsa} rites: a guru is not mentioned. The candidate of Baudhāyana’s text would need to have knowledge of the procedures of renunciation for it to be performed. This aspect is crucial, as it is initiation by a guru (who has a lineage), through the performance of correct rites, that validates \textit{saṁnyāsa}.

The earliest known Brahmanical text devoted specifically to renunciation is the \textit{Yatidharmasamuccaya} of Yādava Prakāsa,\(^{12}\) written in

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\(^8\) A slightly different version of the initiatory rite is given in the \textit{Vaikhānasā Smṛtisūtra}, and reference is made to several of its elements in the \textit{Manu Smṛti} (6.38), \textit{Tātaprakāśya Smṛti} (3.56) and \textit{Viṣṇu Smṛti} (96.1) (see Olivelle 1977:37). It is also described in most \textit{Saṁnyāsa Upaniṣad-s} (see Olivelle 1992) and is substantially similar to accounts found in later, mediaeval texts on renunciation.

\(^9\) RV III.62.10, also known as ‘entry into śāvitr’ or the \textit{gāyatrī mantra}: “Oṁ Earth! I enter Śāvitr; that excellent [glory] of Śāvitr. Oṁ Atmosphere! I enter Śāvitr; the glory of god we meditate. Oṁ Sky! I enter Śāvitr; that he may stimulate our prayers” (tr. Olivelle 1999:204). This mantra is the most sacred mantra of the Brahmanical tradition. It is imparted at initiation (\textit{upanayana}) when the youth becomes a twice-born and a full participant in the religious life of the Brahmanical community. See Sharma (1988) for the religious use and symbolism of the \textit{gāyatrī mantra} in contemporary Hinduism.

\(^10\) One of the central motifs within the complex of ideas concerning renunciation in the Brahmanical world is that the external fires become internalised, as the renouncer’s breath. In most sources the internalised fires are identified with the breath or with the five breaths, but in the \textit{Ārṇi Upaniṣad} (2) the external fires are deposited in the stomach and the \textit{gāyatrī mantra} in the fire of speech. The internalisation of the fires is accompanied by the relinquishing of ritual paraphernalia into the fire or water.

\(^11\) The \textit{praiśa} is the technical term for the mantra, ‘I have renounced’ and constitutes an essential feature of the renunciatory rite. Olivelle translates it as ‘Call’. \textit{Praiśa} is a technical term in Vedic ritual vocabulary, and within that context it refers to the formulae used by Adhvaryu priests to perform specific procedures. It is unclear why this formula was given that technical appellation (Olivelle 1992:95; 1995:67 fn. 26).

\(^12\) According to tradition, Yādava Prakāsa was the \textit{advaita-Vedāntin} teacher of Rāmānuja, whom he had plotted to kill after Rāmānuja’s challenge to his own \textit{advaita} philosophical view. Yādava Prakāsa subsequently converted to Rāmānuja’s more devotional \textit{vīśiṣṭadvaita} (qualified non-dualism) philosophy and became his disciple. Rāmānuja was the founder of the first orthodox \textit{vaishnava} order of ascetics, known
the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{13} While it is evident that Brahmanical texts on renunciation are generally of \textit{vaishnava} persuasion, more than other mediaeval works on asceticism, the \textit{Yatidharmasamuccaya} integrates ascetic life into the ritual life of the Brahmanical \textit{vaishnava} tradition (Olivelle 1995:17).\textsuperscript{14} Yādava Prakāśa (4.1-49) details the rites of renunciation, primarily according to Śaunaka.\textsuperscript{15} As a preliminary practice before initiation, the so-called \textit{kṛcchra}\textsuperscript{16} (arduous) penances are to be performed (4.2), followed by \textit{śrāddha} oblations (4.2, 4, 26).\textsuperscript{17}

A crucial feature of \textit{sāmnyāsā} is that, unlike the ordinary people, the dead \textit{sāmnyāsī} does not become a ghost but is united immediately with the ancestral spirits. The \textit{śrāddha}-s usually performed for a dead person in a ghostly state (\textit{ekoddīṣṭaśrāddha}), and the customary rite of offering \textit{piṇḍa} a year after the death of a relative (to six generations

\textsuperscript{13} See Olivelle (1995). See Olivelle (1976–1977; 1986–1987) for other mediaeval texts on renunciation, several of which refer to a work called \textit{Brahma-nandī}—a lost work—which seems to have been a basic text (Olivelle 1976:25).

\textsuperscript{14} There are numerous references throughout the text to Viṣṇu, his emblem, offerings to him, and to the renouncer as Viṣṇu: 2.51, 65; 3.6, 10, 53; 4.28, 35; 5.23–24, 32–33, 76-81, 91–142, 260, 293; 6.64, 68, 81, 203–204, 223, 229–314; 7.65–66, 89, 100, 108; 9.25, 45–58; 10.11; 11.28.

\textsuperscript{15} He also cites eight other authorities: Baudhāyana, Vasiṣṭha, Kātyāyana, Jamadagni, Kapila, Jābāli, Āṅgiras and Likhita.

\textsuperscript{16} Four \textit{kṛcchra} penances constitute what is technically known as a \textit{prājāpatya} penance, which consists of taking one meal a day for six days—a morning meal for the first three days and an evening meal the second—eating what is received unasked during the next three days, and fasting during the last three. A single \textit{kṛcchra} penance—also called \textit{pādakṛcchra} (‘quarter penance’) at \textit{Tajñavalkya Dharmaśāstra} 3.3.18—is to perform the same four austerities for only one day each (Olivelle 1995:60). In \textit{Gautama Dharmaśūtra} (26) three kinds of \textit{kṛcchra} penances are described, involving progressive restrictions on eating over twelve days, finally only drinking water. The following chapter (27) describes the \textit{cāndrāyana} (‘lunar’) penance, whereby a lunar month of dietary control is observed, progressively decreasing and increasing food intake. The \textit{śrāddha} penance also apply to this penance.

\textsuperscript{17} First to the gods, second to the seers, third to the divine beings, fourth to male ancestors, fifth to female ancestors, sixth to human beings, seventh to the elements, and eighth to the self. Kane (HDS Vol. 2:932), commenting on the \textit{Narasimha Purāṇa}, remarks that the eight \textit{śrāddha}-s are: \textit{daiva} (to Vasus, Rudras, Ādiyās); \textit{ārya} (to the ten sages, including Marici and others); \textit{diyā} (to Hiranyakarīha and Vairāja); \textit{manuṣya} (to Sanaka, Sanandana and five others); \textit{bhauitika} (to five \textit{bhūta}-s, \textit{prthvī}, etc.); \textit{paitika} (to Kavyavādī fire [7], Soma, Aryaman, \textit{pitṛ-s} called \textit{Agnivātta} etc.); \textit{mātṛśrāddha} (to ten \textit{mātṛ-s}, such as Gaurī, Padmā); \textit{ātmaśrāddha} (to \textit{paramātmā}).
of ancestors), do not need to be performed for the samnyāsī who has performed his own śrāddha.\textsuperscript{18} The sāvitrī mantra is then internalised, followed by a night’s vigil. After bathing at first light, the candidate performs the morning fire sacrifice, reciting the Great Utterances\textsuperscript{19} and the hymn, “Swift runs the river of delight...” (RV IX.58). He should feed some Brahmans and make oblations to the fire, saying: “To the in-breath, svāhā! To the out-breath, svāhā! To the diffused breath, svāhā! To the top-breath, svāhā! To the middle-breath, svāhā!” After this he recites the Puruṣa-sūkta (RV X.90), offering a piece of firewood, ghee and porridge to the fire at each verse. He then makes further oblations to Agni Sviṣṭakṛt (the aspect of the fire-god that ‘makes a sacrifice properly offered’), makes presents to his teacher (of a cow, a bowl of ghee or anything else) and recites verses from the Taittirīya Āranyaka (II.18.1) and the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (II.5.8.8), depositing the fires in himself. He should then stand before the fire or in water and recite the praiṣa mantra three times softly, three times in a medium voice, and three times in a loud voice.\textsuperscript{20}

One of the most detailed accounts of initiatory procedures is contained in Vāsudevāśrama’s Yatidharmaprakāśa,\textsuperscript{21} a vaśīśvāra orientated advaita work of the late seventeenth or eighteenth century,\textsuperscript{22} which

\textsuperscript{18} Technically, the śrāddha rites, wherein gods and ancestors are invoked, are essentially a component of, or supplement to, what might be translated as full funeral rites, known as antyesti (see Parry 1982:84; Prasad 1995).

\textsuperscript{19} There are either three or seven Great Utterances (gāyatrī), denoting ‘worlds’: bhūḥ, bhuvah, svabh, with the addition of mahār, janas, tapas, satya (see Olivelle 1995:63 fn. 13).

\textsuperscript{20} Yādava Prakāśa also includes injunctions (4.40-48) for those who wish to renounce in the face of imminent death or mortal danger. If the man is able, he may perform the proper procedure, otherwise he may simply recite orally the praiṣa mantra. If he is unable to do that he should just mentally abandon attachments.

\textsuperscript{21} Vāsudevāśrama was acquainted with fifteen works dealing with dharma, four of them particularly with renunciation: Vidyāraṇya’s Jīvamuktiviveka, Yatidharmasamuccaya and Prāṇacarīmīnīṣā (c.1360), and Viśveśvarasarasvatī’s Yatidharmasangraha (early sixteenth century), also known as the Yatidharmasamuccaya. Besides the latter works and Viṣṇeśvara’s work on dharma, Mitākṣarā (1100–1120), Vāsudevāśrama was most influenced by the advatin philosopher Madhusūdanarasavatī, the pupil of Viśveśvarasarasvatī: he cites his Siddhāntabindu (46.12–14). Vāsudevāśrama also cites or refers to the works of Śāṅkara (8th cent.), Śureśvara (8th cent.), Prakāśatman (c. 975), Vācaspatimīśra (c.980), Sarvājātmān (c.1027), Vidyāraṇya (c.1340–1386), Madhusūdanarasavatī (1540–1647), Narasimhāśrama (mid-16th century), Rāmaṭūra (mid-16th century) and Raṅgoji Bhaṭṭa (c.1575) (Olivelle 1977:28).

\textsuperscript{22} In the final section (73) of his treatise, Vāsudevāśrama describes himself as a Paramāṇya renouncer, the pupil of Śrī Govindāśrama, who was the pupil of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇāśrama.
contains one of the first textual references to the ‘ten names’ (66.14–15) of the Daśanāmi. Following Baudhāyana (II.17.11), Vāsudevāśrama maintains that five items are obligatory for the renouncer (8.25): either a single or a triple-staff, a braided string to loop around the mouth of a water pot to carry it, a water strainer, a water-pot and a begging-bowl. The triple staff was usually the kind carried by vaiṣṇava renunciates, and the single kind by śaiva renunciates. During Daśanāmi renunciation procedures the saṁnyāśi is given a loincloth, and a single staff, which is abandoned shortly if the saṁnyāśi is affiliated to an akhārā but is maintained by dāndī-ś. In his commentary on the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (III.5.1), Śaṅkara maintains that a renouncer should give up all rites and ritual instruments, such as fire, top-knot and sacrificial cord, a position maintained by later advaitin-ś. One may easily distinguish Daśanāmi from other sādhu-ś (notably vaiṣṇava) by the absence of the top-knot, which is removed


during initiation. Vāsudevāstrama makes several references to shaving the head (5), some non-specific (8.3; 9.10), and another (21.39) clearly stating that the top-knot should be retained. However, during the subsequent procedures for renunciation, the renouncer discards one by one the symbols of his ritual life: the sāvitrī formula and the sacred fires (which are internalised), sacrificial utensils, sacred thread and top-knot.

The abandoning of all emblems and rites became one of the points of contention during the mediaeval period between adherents of the advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara, and those of the viṣistādvaita philosophy of Rāmānuja, who believed that, at least, the sacrificial cord should be maintained. One of the issues underpinning this debate is the viṣistādvaita contention that knowledge alone cannot cause liberation and that action, particularly religious ritual action, should accompany the quest for knowledge. This is in contrast to the advaita position that all action should be abandoned and that knowledge alone brings liberation. Unlike many other commentators on renunciation, the advaitin Vāsudevāstrama was not biased in a sectarian way. He does not adjudicate—as had become customary in advaita orders—over the relative superiority of either advaitin-s (as the carriers of the single staff), or members of one of the vaisnava ascetic orders (who traditionally carry the triple staff). The type of staff carried had become a self-conscious, emblematic, sectarian distinction.

The final sacrifice a renunciate will make is performed during the

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25 Vāsudevāstrama states that, according to one opinion (64.5-30), the renouncer worships Kṛṣṇa, Vyāsa, Śaṅkara, his gurus, Gaṇapatī, Kṣetrapāla, Durgā, Sarasvatī, the guardian deities of the quarters, Brahmā and Rudra. However, others maintain that only Viṣṇu in the form of the śaṅgam is worshipped (64.1-35).

26 Olivelle (1993:172; 1995:132) has remarked on the significance of the types of staffs carried by ascetics in relation to sectarian hierarchies. In a vaisnava text, the Sanatkumāra-smṛti (5.34–38), the advaita Haṁsa and Paramahaṁsa ascetics are described as carrying a single staff, whereas the ‘higher’ classes of vaisnava ascetics, the Bhagavān and the Prabhu, carry the triple staff. Vaisnava orientated texts make frequent derogatory remarks against the śaṅga advaita ascetics who carry the single staff, and not the triple staff (see, for example, Yatidharmasamuccaya 7.71). Śrī-Vaisnava ascetics, who carried triple staffs, often accused the advaitin-s of being Buddhists pretending to follow the Brahmanical law. However, most Śaṁvyāsya Upaniṣad-s and mediaeval legal texts consider the carrying of either the single or the triple staff as a feature of the four-fold classification of renouncers and not as sectarian badges (Olivelle 1986:43). There is an ‘ideal’ classification of four kinds of renouncer (kuṭicaka, bahunaka, hāṁsa, paramahamsa) to be found in many texts, which concerns their different emblems and lifestyles. For further details, see Ch. 3.4.
saṃnyāsa rite. Vāsudevāśrama states (12.6-7; 21.76) that the sacrifice may be to either Agni Vaiśvānara or Prajāpati, reflecting the divergent views on which deity should be the recipient of the offering.27 During Daśanāmī initiation rites, the final sacrifice is to Prajāpati.28 The renouncer should then perform the caru oblation to Puruṣa (15) and, optionally, a virajā oblation (16), and should declare the praiṣa (17). (All three rites are central to Daśanāmī procedures and the performance of the virajā-homa is crucial.) The renouncer may then commit ritual suicide (18) or exercise the option of not doing so. The renouncer should take a few steps towards the north until called back by his teacher. The journey to ‘the north’ is symbolic of the Great Journey to the Himalayas,29 undertaken without food or water, until the traveller died.30

27 Baudhāyana (II.17.23) states that the sacrifice should be to Agni, but the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad-s contain contrasting opinions. The Jābāla Upaniṣad (4) states that though some perform a sacrifice to Prajāpati, one should not do so, rather the sacrifice should be to Agni. However, the Nāradaparivājaka Upaniṣad (138) maintains that the sacrifice should be to Prajāpati, and the Kaṭhaśruti Upaniṣad (38) that there should be oblations to Agni Vaiśvānara, Prajāpati and to Viṣṇu (see Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad-s, trans. Olivelle 1992). Both Manu (6.38) and the Viṣṇu Smṛti (96.1) (sec Jolly 1991) state that the final sacrifice should be to Prajāpati. The Kūrma Purāṇa (II.28.4) states that it can be either to Agni or Prajāpati. Yādava Prakāśa (4.31) cites Jámadagnya, who states that the renouncer should perform a sacrifice to Prajāpati at which he gives all his possessions as a sacrificial gift to the priests and deposits the fires in himself. Apart from the inclusion of Prajāpati within a mantra stated by Saunaka, as a feature of the saṃnyāsa rite (4.12), Yādava Prakāśa only once mentions a sacrifice to Prajāpati.

28 Concerning the ambivalence of commentators regarding the deity to be the object of the final oblation, we might consider a feature of the Vedic agnicayana ceremony. Contrasting the generally iconic Hindu religious environment with the generally aniconic Vedic religious environment, Malamoud (1998:212) remarks that the aniconism of the Veda is not absolute. He discusses several instances, one of them during the agnicayana ceremony (the ‘piling of the fire-altar’), when a golden statuette is placed at the base of the brick structure. This statuette is an image of the sacrificer and also of the two divinities Agni and Prajāpati, with whom the sacrificer is secondarily identified. Agni and Prajāpati are furthermore identified with one another within the ceremony itself. The identity of the two deities is frequently alluded to in many Brahmanical texts. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the identity of the two is continually reaffirmed. The traditional, partial identity of the two deities might to some extent explain the ambivalence of commentators on renunciation in respect of the deity to whom the recipient makes the final oblation.

29 As in the final two books of the Mahābhārata.

30 On ritual suicide and the rite of renunciation, see Olivelle (1978).
3.2 Current initiation procedures: pañc-guru-saṃskār

Among the more comprehensive published accounts of formal Daśanāṁśī initiation procedures are those of Sarkar (1958:63–81), Sadānanda Giri (1976:26–31) and Tripathi (1978:7–11). However, their accounts do not illustrate the two-stage process of initiation. All candidates first approach a mahant of an āśrama or a maṭha, having demonstrated a sincere desire to renounce and honour a guru. The first stage of initiation for entrants into non-daṇḍī institutions is known as the pañc-guru-saṃskār (‘five guru ceremony’), while the first stage in daṇḍī initiations is to become a brahmacārī, acquiring one of the four daṇḍī surnames, Ananda, Caitanya, Prakāśa or Svarūpa, depending on the organisational affiliation of the maṭha from which the candidate is taking initiation. A brahmacārī generally serves fully initiated saṃnyāsī-śās, as, theoretically, a daṇḍī is not supposed to touch fire or metal. The second stage—for all—is the saṃnyāsa initiation, known as vidyā-saṃskār or virajā-havan (or homa).

During the pañc-guru-saṃskār the candidate acquires, besides his main guru, four other gurus, from either the daṇḍī maṭha or from

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31 See also Ghurye (1964:105); Sinha and Saraswati (1978:65); and earlier ethnographers, such as Rose (1914, Vol. 3:348–355) and Anantakrishna Iyer (1930–1931). Sarkar (1958:66) refers to two texts as sources for his information, the Sannyas-grahan-paddhāti of Paramahaṃsa Gopālānand (Banaras 1941)—which I have been unable to locate—and the Yatidharmasaṃgraha of Vīśeṣarasasvatī (Anand Ashram Press, 1909), who was the teacher of the advaitin Madhusudanasarasvatī (1540–1647). The text of the Yatidharmasaṃgraha (also known as the Yatidharmasaṃuccaya) is often in whole or in part contained in manuscripts entitled Vīśeṣvara Smṛti. A work entitled Pañcamāsrama-vidhiāna is a work based on or contained in the Vīśeṣvara Smṛti, a title of numerous similar but not identical texts (Olivelle 1986:21).

32 Sadānanda Giri and Tripathi were both initiated into the Daśanāṁśī, as a paramahaṃsa and daṇḍī respectively. Tripathi describes most of the procedures outlined in the following section. His top-knot and sacred thread were removed by his preceptor, the top-knot being thrown into the Ganges, and the sacred thread tied to the daṇḍī. The climax of his initiation ceremony was when the preceptor whispered the praiṣa (or Śiva) mantra into his ear.

33 Some daṇḍī institutions, such as the Machībandar Maṭha (one of the larger daṇḍī institutions, with headquarters in Banaras) also perform the preliminary pañc-guru-saṃskār initiation, some time before the virajā-homa.

34 Amongst the daṇḍī-śās, the guru’s name is referred to as prem-path, and the śiśya’s as yog-path.

35 The brahmacārī-śās I interviewed from the Machībandar Maṭha of Banaras all took the brahmacārī name Svarūpa, owing to the maṭha’s theoretical affiliation to the Śāradā pīṭha in Dvārakā.
the akhārā. The pañc-guru-saṃskār may take place at any time, the saṃnyāsa rite—freeing the candidate from all previous social ties—being usually performed at the following Kumbh Mela. Akhārā-ś recruit initiates from amongst those who have been accepted by a maṭha or recommended by an individual or by the Jamā. Akhārā-ś also admit those who are disciples of others outside their order, and individuals who are not saṃnyāsī-ś but who have served under a nāgā unconnected with the akhārā. The nāgā may then send a potential recruit directly to the akhārā. Initiation into the Daśanāmīs may also, in some rare instances, be directly at one of the main Śankarite maṭha-ś, for disciples directly under one of the four (or five) reigning Śankarācāryas. Some kind of initiation by a Mahāmaṇḍalesvara or Daśanāmī sādhu may also be given quite freely to aspirants such as roving and inquisitive foreigners. However, although a new name, mantra and meditation techniques may be given, Daśanāmīs emphasise the importance of the performance of the virajā-homa (see below), incumbent on all genuine daṇḍī-ś, paramahamsa-ś and nāgā-ś, before one is truly a saṃnyāsī.

The following details of current initiation procedures are as performed by candidates taking initiation into the Jūnā akhārā. First, the keeper of the akhārā records, the kārbāri, duly records the name of the candidate, whose guru is so and so, and that he has paid his dues (frequently fifty-one rupees) to a particular maṭdi of the Śrī Pañcnām Jūnā Akhārā for the maintenance of the charī (‘mobile shrine’) of Guru Dattātreya. The date is recorded according to the

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36 Sawai (1992:155) observes that at the time of his research at the Śrūgerī maṭha, in 1984: “There are in Śrūgerī currently only three saṃnyāsī-ś including the senior Jagadguru (mahāsaṃvidhānām in Sanskrit and Dodda Gurugala ‘old teacher’ in Kannada). This small number seems to imply that a life of saṃnyāsa is perceived by most smārta as too arduous to attempt...[At] Śrūgerī, the Jagadguru is very reticent in permitting aspirants to enter saṃnyāsa.” It should be noted that daṇḍī-ś initiated into saṃnyāsa directly by a Śankarācārya at the main Śaṅkara pīṭha-ś constitute a very small percentage of Daśanāmīs, and that there are many dozens of other daṇḍī maṭha-ś in north India. The vast majority of Daśanāmī saṃnyāsī-ś, comprising paramahamsa-ś, daṇḍī-ś and nāgā-ś, have been initiated at a Kumbh Melā via one of the hundreds of maṭha-ś and āśrama-ś scattered throughout north India.

37 My wife and I were ‘initiated’ into saṃnyāsa by a Mahāmaṇḍalesvara at the Kumbh Melā around fifteen minutes after meeting him.

38 Sadānanda Giri (1976:69) mentions a judgment of the Court of the District Judge at Hooghly in West Bengal, in 1937 (Order No. 147, 27: 8), that no person is a saṃnyāsī unless he has performed the virajā-homa.
Hindu calendar. Candidates, usually as a group, present themselves on the appointed day, already shaven, except for the top-knot. A pañcūṭī, the guru and the initiate will sit in a triangle in front of the dhūnī. Uttering “Svāhā”, oblations of water and flower petals are made, after which the candidate drinks paṅcgavāya, a mixture of cow’s milk, curd, ghee, urine and faeces. The candidate is then presented with a bundle, containing a coconut, loin-cloth (langoṭī), sacred thread (janeū) and rudrākṣa necklace, wrapped in an ochre cloth (bhagvā) which he places at the feet of the guru. Technically, the initiating guru is not considered to be the candidate’s ‘real’ guru, as the initiating guru is merely the witness guru, sākṣī-guru, to the event of the candidate becoming a disciple of Dattātreya, the Lord of Yogīs.

Besides the initiating guru (the mantra-guru), who is effectively the main guru, there are four other gurus from the same akhārā present, who, with appropriate mantras, will present the candidate with, respectively, holy ash (vibhūṭī), loin-cloth (langoṭī), a necklace of beads (rudrākṣa) and sacred thread (janeū). These five gurus constitute the so-called pañc-guru-s that the candidates acquire on their first initiation, known as the mantra-guru, rudrākṣa-guru etc. Under the bhagvā, held aloft by other sādhu-s, the candidate’s top-knot is cut and the guru-mantra is whispered three times into the candidate’s ear by the mantra-guru, ending: “Namaḥ parvatī pate, hara hara Mahādeva”. He is given a new name, ending in one of the ten Daśanāmī names.

The candidate then bathes, smears his body with holy ash, and is given a loin-cloth, rudrākṣa and sacred thread. He is finally wrapped in the bhagvā and places a monetary offering (dakṣīṇā) at the guru’s feet. He then performs what is known as onīkar-s to the five gurus,

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39 Purī (2001:160–167) provides the mantras used in the Mahānirvāṇī akhārā for the following: cutting the cofī (top-knot); mantra ‘blown’ into the ear; bhagvā; guru; ‘laying’ of the gerū (ochre colour) on cloth; vibhūṭī; Vedic mantra for wearing bhasm (‘ash’); applying candan (‘sandalwood’) paste; rudrākṣa; langoṭī; prthvī (‘earth’); jal (‘water’); Gāyatrī; going in the direction of ‘the field’; purification of the water vessel (kamandal); the tent; tooth-brushing; bringing the dhūnī to ‘consciousness’; digambar (nāgī) initiation; jatī; gola (‘ball of ash’); samādhi.

40 This ceremony is referred to in the Brahmanical texts on renunciation as the yogapāṭṭa, wherein the candidate receives a new name and recites the fifteenth to the thirty-third verses of the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. See Yatidharmaṭpadakāśa 66. 1–24, ‘The Procedure of (Conferring) the Meditation Shawl’, where one of the first textual references to the ‘Ten Names’ occurs.
a cycle of five rounds of a mantra,\textsuperscript{41} to each guru, presenting each with \textit{dakśinā} of one rupee. The \textit{omkār} is to be subsequently performed twice a day, morning and evening, the recitation accompanied by a rite involving the touching of thumbs and fingers. The coconut is then cracked open, the amount of water inside indicating the capacities of the novice \textit{sādhū}. The coconut water is mixed with raw sugar (\textit{gud}) and made into cakes. The guru feeds the \textit{sīya} and the \textit{sīya} feeds the guru, and the guru asks three times, “Which is sweeter, guru or \textit{gud}?” , to which the \textit{sīya} replies, “Guru”. A metal plate is then lifted over the \textit{sīya}’s head and the guru announces to the three worlds that the candidate has become a \textit{celā} (\textit{sīya}). Such kinds of announcement within the \textit{akhārā} are known as \textit{pukār} (‘call’), a public statement that carries far more weight within what is essentially an oral tradition than in religious culture that is more textually based.

Pieces of coconut and \textit{gud} are then distributed to all \textit{sādhū}-s present, the Brahmans performing the \textit{havan}, and the fire-places (\textit{dhūnī}) of the \textit{akhārā}. This concludes the first stage of \textit{saṁnyāsa}, during which the \textit{saṁnyāsa} acquires five gurus, including the \textit{mantra-guru}, and is nominally affiliated to the \textit{akhārā}. He is now called a \textit{mahāpurusha} or a \textit{vastradhārī}.\textsuperscript{42} The \textit{sādhū}’s full initiation into the \textit{akhārā} takes place in the third and final stage of initiation, when the \textit{saṁnyāsī} may become a \textit{nāgā}.

\textsuperscript{41} “\textit{Om Guru-jī, Om Dev-jī, Om Datt-jī, Om Svāmī-jī, Om Ālakh-jī, Om Namo Nārāyaṇ}”.

\textsuperscript{42} Initiation into the Rāmānandī order entails similar procedures (see Sharma 1998:62–68). The \textit{vaisṣṇava pātī-śaṁskār} consists of: 1. \textit{tap-śaṁskār}; being adorned by heated brands with the emblems of Nārāyaṇa, the \textit{cakra} (to the right arm) and \textit{śankha} (to the left arm); 2. \textit{puṇḍra-śaṁskār}; applying a \textit{tilak} of white clay to the forehead, arm, chest and stomach; 3. \textit{mālā} or \textit{kaṇṭha-śaṁskār}; receiving a necklace of \textit{tulsi} beads; 4. \textit{nām-śaṁskār}; receiving the name Dās, together with the name of Viṣṇu for the current month; 5. \textit{mantra-śaṁskār}, receiving the \textit{kharāśar mantra} from the guru, whispered thrice into his ear, while he is under a cloth. If, after a six-month trial, the disciple’s conduct has been satisfactory, then he is presented with: 1. a cloth to cover his head; 2. two loin-cloths; 3. a cloth (\textit{acal}) to cover the loin-cloth; 4. \textit{kamaṇḍal}. The Śrī-Vaisṣṇava \textit{saṁnyāsī}-s, founded by Rāmānuja, are invariably Brahmans and former householders. \textit{Saṁnyāsa} rites are almost the same as those performed by the Daśānāmīs (see below). Amongst scriptures recited is the \textit{Viṣṇu-saṁhasanāna} (see Lester 1992:78). Following the \textit{ātma-śrāddha}, \textit{āśrama-śvākāra} (the acceptance of the fourth \textit{āśrama}) begins with the \textit{praiṣa mantra}.
3.3 Current procedures: virajā-havan / -homa (vidyā-saṃskār) and nāgā initiations

The second initiation, the virajā-havan (the ‘rite of the hero’) or vidyā-saṃskār, is nearly always performed at Kumbh Mela. This is the main saṃnyāsa rite, which contains most of the features detailed in the texts that were examined in the first part of this chapter concerning ancient renunciation procedures. It is uniquely this rite that authenticates the saṃnyāsī’s condition of renunciation (as a ‘genuine’ sādhu), whether as a daṇḍī or a paramahansa.

While the major part of this rite is performed by a Brahman paṇḍit, some parts are performed by the ācārya-guru (a Mahānandaleśvara), who will represent either a daṇḍī lineage (initiating daṇḍī-ś)43 or an akhārā 44 (being elected by the nāgā-s of the akhārā). For daṇḍī-ś, the ācārya-guru may be the same person who performs both the preliminary brahmacārī rite and the final saṃnyāsa rite. The ācārya-guru is also a representative of a reigning Śaṅkarācārya, who also usually presides over major initiation ceremonies at the Kumbh Mela. For some days, many hundreds of sādhu-s will have had a restricted, phalāhār, diet, which is essentially a diet of milk with some fruit, and will have been repeating the gāyatṛi mantra. They line up near a river or saṅgam at dawn, bringing their parcā, a piece of dried silver-birch bark, on which is written their saṃnyāsī details and that their dues have been paid to the akhārā. Koṭvāl-s police the assembly. The candidates have their head (except for the top-knot), moustache, beard, armpits and pubic region shaved (pañca bhadra), and are given a sacred-thread, a kulha (a small clay pot representing a kamaṭal), and a daṇḍa,45 an

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43 Sadānanda Giri (1976:64–71) remarks that for daṇḍī initiations, the number of candidates should equal the number of words in the praśa-mantra, so that during initiation each candidate utters in turn one word of the mantra.

44 To give an example, paramahansa Svāmī Gopalānanda of the Dakṣiṇāmūrti Maṭh of Banaras was initiated by a Mahānandaleśvara from the Mahānirvāṇī akhārā. However, he explained (conversation, on 8 February 2002) that initiations in their order are usually performed by a Mahānandaleśvara from the Niraṅjana akhārā.

45 Daṇḍa-s may be given to the candidates. Otherwise, two days before the ceremony, they go as a group to the jungle, cut their own daṇḍa-s and collect the firewood (samidhī) that will be used in the virajā-homa. A Brahman should have a daṇḍa of palāśa wood (flame of the forest, butea frondosa), whereas ksatriya-s and vaiṣya-s should have bilva (Bengal quince, aegle marmelos) (Sadānanda Giri 1976:65).
ancient symbol of not only asceticism, but also royal power.\textsuperscript{46} Daṇḍa-s are only used by brahmačārin-s, so all candidates become nominal brahmačārin-s before initiation. The ācārya-guru informs the candidates that this is their last opportunity to return to their homes and families, should they wish to do so. Each candidate briefly discards his cloth and walks naked a few steps to the north before being called back by the ācārya-guru. (This symbolic walk was discussed previously in the context of the saṃnyāśi’s potential suicide.)

At sunset the candidates return to the akhāṭa, which has four funeral fires burning at each corner. Around the fires, the viraj-havan (or homa)\textsuperscript{47} will be conducted, for which the candidates are given some of the requisite materials (which include mustard and sesame seeds, the oblation of the viraj-havan). While a Brahman paṇḍit performs the havan, the ācārya-guru goes around whispering one of the four mahāvākyā-s (depending on lineage) into the candidates’ ears. Recitation of the Puruṣa-sūkta is also an important element of the ritual.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} Daṇḍa also means punishment. For an an analysis of the symbolic value of daṇḍa in both political and religious domains, see Glucklich (1988).

\textsuperscript{47} Sarkar (1958:67–73) and Kane (HDS Vol. 2:959-960) describe the lengthy viraj-homa ceremony, involving a total of forty oblations, of fuel-sticks (the samādhi collected by the candidate), boiled rice and ghee. There is a discussion of the viraj-homa in the Taittirīya-āraṇyaka (1.51-52; 2), wherein the best means to attain self-knowledge is saṃnyāsa. (Kane’s account appears to derive from a mediaeval work, Dharmasindhu.) First, the sixteen verses of the Puruṣa-sūkta (RV X.90) are chanted, oblations being performed at the end of each verse. As in many Brahmanical cosmogonic schemes, a classification of $3 + 1$ elements is apparent in the Puruṣa-sūkta, whereby three parts of the whole are ‘visible’ and one is ‘invisible’. The visible part of Puruṣa includes the four varṇa-s produced from the dismembered ‘cosmic man’ (see Malamoud 1998:111). The recitation of the Puruṣa-sūkta is followed by the reciting of the formulae, after oblations, of the viraj-homa, such as: “May my five prāṇa-s be purified, may I be light, free from rājas and from evil, svāhā. This is for prāṇa and the rest, it is not mine”. The formulae speak of the purification of all the parts of the body, the five elements and their corresponding guṇa-s, puruṣa, the five kośa-s (sheaths), the mind, speech and the ātman, and pay homage to the Veda-s. The sacrificer then bows to Agni, Prajāpati, Ātma, Paramātma and Jñānātma, after which the Puruṣa-sūkta is again recited. Recitations follow, of various verses and mantras from the Upaniṣad-s and the first sentences of the four Veda-s. Oblations to Agni Sviṣṭakṛt follow, and the candidate burns his wooden utensils in the household fire, donates his metal vessels to his guru, and deposits the fire in himself, reciting thrice “ayam te yoniḥ” and “ya te agne yajñiy”, taking in the warmth of the fire.

\textsuperscript{48} Besides its occurrence in the Atharva Veda (19.6), the Puruṣa-sūkta is also recited for obtaining a son, for purificatory baths, for the purification of sins, and during śāādhya rites for the deceased (Gonda 1970:27–32). According to some sources, after death the soul assumes what is known as an ātivāhika śarīra, which consists of
With the assistance of the *pañdit*, the candidates perform their own funeral rites (*śrāddha*), holding the stem of the sacred *dūrva* grass. While chanting the prescribed Vedic mantras the candidates perform the eight kinds of *śrāddha* (noted previously) and *tarpaṇa*, wherein water is released to the ground from cupped hands, as an offering to all the gods. They also offer *pinda* to the gods and ancestors, in the form of (usually) forty-eight balls of wheat flour. There is now no responsibility for anyone after the *sannyāsī* dies.

After a night of chanting and initiation, following the performance of the *viraj-havan*, the *sannyāsī* goes to the river with the *ācārya-guru*, where he bathes, breaks his *daṇḍa*, discards his sacred thread, which is thrown into the river, and calls on the Sun and Moon, Wind and Fire, Earth and Sky, Heart and Mind, the morning and evening Twilights, and all the gods to witness his resolution to become a *sannyāsī*. This is followed by the recitation, usually performed in waist-deep water, of the *gāyatrī mantra*, which is henceforth internalised. The *praiṣa mantra* is also recited—modulated in three different pitches—after which the initiate faces the east, performs an oblation to the water and asks that all creatures be free of fear of him. He gives blessings to his sons and relatives, telling them that he belongs to no one and no one belongs to him. He takes vows of *ahimsā*, truthfulness, not stealing, continence, liberality, non-anger, waiting upon the guru, avoidance of carelessness, cleanliness and purity in food habits.49 He then covers his body with ashes and returns to the *akhāryā*. He is instructed on doing good for society and receives a loin-cloth (*kaupinā*).

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49 See fn. 57 for summaries of rules for *sannyāsī*-s by Oman (1903:155); Rose (1914, Vol. 3:360); Sadānanda Giri (1976:25); Pūrī (2001).
and water pot (kamanḍal). The ācārya-guru then cuts the top-knot (śikhā) on behalf of candidate’s guru, and abhiṣeka is performed with a conch-shell over the initiate’s head. The candidate touches a daṇḍa, which is held by the ācārya-guru, who pronounces a mantra meaning that the daṇḍa is renounced. Henceforth, the samnyāsī accepts the daṇḍa of knowledge. After this ritual the candidate is instructed in the om, praṇaṣa and paramahamsa mantras and the significance of the mahāvākya-s by the ācārya-guru, to whom presents are given.

We have so far been detailing initiation rites of paramahamsa-s (and potential nāgā-s), who are initiated by an akhārā (in this case the Jūnā akhārā), and who only hold a daṇḍa for a portion of the renunciatory rite, after which it is renounced. However, daṇḍī-s, who are Brahmans initiated by a representative of a daṇḍī maṭha, keep the daṇḍa. It is referred to as Brahmsvarūp, and is made from bamboo and not the other kinds of wood, mentioned above, used in the samnyāsa rite.50 As previously mentioned, a sacred thread and an axe-head are attached to the daṇḍa, which is covered with a cloth. The sacred thread is carried, albeit concealed, as an indication of Brahman status. The receipt of the daṇḍa from the guru is one of the central features of the traditional Brahmanical rites of initiation into the renunciatory state, as described in many mediaeval texts on renunciation. The Brahmanical rite of renunciation consists of two major parts, the first being renunciation proper, in which the candidate abandons family, possessions, fire and other symbols of his former life. The second part is modelled after Vedic initiation (upanayana),51 with some

50 At no time should the daṇḍa come into contact with anything impure. Once initiated into samnyāsa the daṇḍa should never be further away from its holder than the distance a calf would wander from its mother, who will remain within hearing distance should the calf cry. A typical bamboo stick has knots at regular intervals and daṇḍī-s are given one of five sizes of daṇḍa, depending on their height. The tallest samnyāsī-ṣ are given daṇḍa-s with fourteen knots (known as Anant), and successively shorter samnyāsī-ṣ with, respectively, twelve knots (Gopāl), ten knots (Vasudeva), eight knots (Nārāyan), and six knots (Sudarṣan). (Interviews were conducted with numerous daṇḍi-s, mostly of the Machilbandar Maṭha, at the Māgh Melā, in January and February, 2002.)

51 Upanayana is the traditional rite of passage for a Brahman or other twice-born male, into the twice-born (dvija) society of those who are entitled to perform sacrifices. Before upanayana, the boy is, technically, a śūdra (Vasishṭha Dharmastra II.6), until he attains twice-born status. The Brahman householder in particular is required to perform sacrifices: nitya (‘permanent’ rites, such as the agnihotra and sandhyā worship), naimittika (‘occasional’ rites, performed at child-birth, jātakarma, and death, antyeṣṭi) and kāmya (‘supererogatory’ rites, such as to obtain a male child or at the time of a
significant differences (Olivelle 1986:37), and has the form of an initiatory rite (dikṣā) in which the guru plays a central role, ritually handing the new renouncer his staff: the candidate is initiated into a renunciatory tradition.

Current practice, which clearly reflects ancient tradition, is that during initiations at the Kumbh Melā all initiates are furnished with a staff (daṇḍa) and sacred thread, which confers temporary status on them as Brahmans, whether or not they actually were previously Brahmans by caste. The daṇḍa also confers the status of brahmacārīn upon the candidate, symbolising his nominal allegiance to the monastic institutions. Gurus from daṇḍī institutions present candidates with daṇḍa-s to keep permanently, in continuation of the Brahmanical advaita tradition whereby sannyaśins carry a daṇḍa to indicate both their sectarian affiliation and their renunciatory condition. However, at the completion of initiatory rites, non-daṇḍī sannyaśins (i.e. paramahaṃsa-s) discard the staff and sacred thread—the markers of Brahman status—which they have carried and worn for the period immediately prior to initiation, as a sign that they have entered pilgrimage to a holy place). Upanayana is traditionally performed in the eighth year for a Brahman, the eleventh year for a ksatriya, and the twelfth year for a vaiśya, though texts vary on the timing. See Prasad (1997) for further details.

There are distinct parallels and homologies between the life of the boy brahmacārīn, before upanayana, and the sannyaśin: the brahmacārīn studies away from the parental home, serving a guru. As a formal preparation for the life of a householder (ghaṭṣa), the brahmacārīn—like a sannyaśin—remains celibate, undergoes various austerities, begs for food and sleeps on the floor (Dharmasūtra-s of Āpastamba 1.2.18–41, 1.31–45; Baudhāyana 1.3.7–47; Vasiṣṭha 11.49–79). During the upanayana the brahmacārīn has his head shaved, leaving the topknot (a ceremony variously known as muṣṭana, cūkara or caula), and was traditionally presented with a girdle (mekhalā), sacred thread, deerskin and daṇḍa. The Brahman’s daṇḍa should be of bilva or palāśa wood, and should be as long as to reach the end of his hair, the ksatriya’s of vaṭa or khadira, to reach the forehead, and a vaiśya’s of pilū or udumbara, to reach the tip of his nose (Kaelber 1981; Prasad 1997:117).

“Whereas the Sannyāsa Upaniṣads often state that the sannyaśin gives up his sacrificial cord, girdle, antelope skin, and upper garment, the Viṣṇuṭānasūtrakārīṇī Sūtra makes it clear that the sannyaśin receives these things anew at his initiation in exactly the way prescribed at the Upanayana. The instructions given for the reception of the initiate by his new teacher (!), including the recitation of the Śāvitrī (Śāvitrīpraveśanī), are virtually identical in each case. As part of the initiation the sannyaśin has his hair, beard, and nails cut, receives a new name, swears obedience to his teacher, and takes a vow of truthfulness and ‘noninjury’ (ahimsā), just as the brahmacārīn had done before him, and like the brahmacārīn, the ascetic now begins a long period of training”.

See also Kaelber (1989:121): “Whereas the Sannyāsa Upaniṣads often state that the sannyaśin gives up his sacrificial cord, girdle, antelope skin, and upper garment, the Viṣṇuṭānasūtrakārīṇī Sūtra makes it clear that the sannyaśin receives these things anew at his initiation in exactly the way prescribed at the Upanayana. The instructions given for the reception of the initiate by his new teacher (!), including the recitation of the Śāvitrī (Śāvitrīpraveśanī), are virtually identical in each case. As part of the initiation the sannyaśin has his hair, beard, and nails cut, receives a new name, swears obedience to his teacher, and takes a vow of truthfulness and ‘noninjury’ (ahimsā), just as the brahmacārīn had done before him, and like the brahmacārīn, the ascetic now begins a long period of training”.

See also Crooke (1896, Vol. 2:471).
the *saṃnyāsī* life and permanently renounced caste. The mandatory carrying of a staff for initiation purposes may perhaps indicate that in order to obviate potential complaints from genuine Brahman-caste initiates about the admission of non-Brahmans, all candidates temporarily become Brahmans (holding a staff), but then renounce ‘Brahman’ status during initiation.

For those who wish, there is a third stage of initiation to become a *nāgā*, which may take place at any age. This initiation was traditionally performed several years after *saṃnyāsa*—younger aspirants usually waiting longer for initiation than older men—but these days *nāgā* initiation usually takes place a day or two after the *vidyā-saṃskār* initiation. According to my informants *nāgā* initiations may, in some rare instances, occur directly, without prior *saṃnyāsa* initiation. A *saṃnyāsī* wishing to take *nāgā* initiation first approaches a *śrī-mahant* (a leading mahant) who will question him as to whether he really wants to become a *nāgā*. Some days before the bathing procession (*syāhi/julās*) of the Kumbh Melā, the *koṭvāl* goes to the eight divisions of his *akhṣarā* and announces that each division may send those wishing to become *nāgā*-s. The names of candidates are then recorded by the *kārśṇi*. *Nāgā* initiations take place at night, at 3.00 a.m. or 4.00 a.m. at Kumbh Melās and Ādhā (half) Kumbh Melās. At the appointed time the *saṃnyāsī* stands next to the *kāršṭi-stambha*, a tall ‘triumphal’ column in the *āshrama*, accompanied by four *śrī-mahant*-s and one *ācārya-guru* who will give him a mantra. A *mahant* will then pull the penis thrice, breaking the membrane beneath the skin, an operation known as *ṭang tode* (literally, ‘broken leg’). The *saṃnyāsī* is hence fully initiated into the *akhārā* as a *nāgā*, and attached to a *nāgā* renunciate lineage.

Whether initiated as *daṇḍī*, *paramahamsa* or *nāgā*, the *saṃnyāsī* is

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55 From different interviews, Sadānanda Giri (1976:29–30) maintains that the method of initiating new *nāgā*-s is different in each *akhārā*. He also observes that formerly *ṭang tode* was performed but that nowadays there is “only a slight pull of the penis”. It seems that formerly some initiates had the penis broken (*ṭang tode*) before *saṃnyāsa*, but never performed the *virajā homa* to become *nāgā* *saṃnyāsī*-s, remaining ‘*ṭang tode*’ all their lives.

56 According to several *nāgā* informants I have interviewed, in the past the process may have involved the guru breaking the muscle of the erect penis with three sharp movements in different directions, rendering the initiate permanently impotent. However, these days the process involves the breaking of the membrane that attaches the foreskin to the penis.
henceforth a member of a distinct religious community, to a considerable extent bound by often unspoken but mutually recognised rules of behaviour appropriate to their status within their branch of the order,\textsuperscript{57} a position also often influenced by previous caste. However, in the classical textual tradition may be found injunctions for the ‘ideal’ kinds ascetic. Although the images of the kind of lifestyle presented in these texts have been very influential on general understanding of the renunciate, they seem to bear little correspondence to contemporary or historical reality.

\textsuperscript{57} Oman (1903:155) cites the ‘rules’, which he had gathered from a member of the order, as follows: (six prohibitions) 1. do not sleep on a couch, under any circumstances; 2. do not wear white clothes; 3. do not speak to or even think about women; 4. do not sleep during the daytime; 5. do not at any time ride on a horse or other animal, or in any vehicle whatsoever. 6. do not allow your mind to be agitated in any way; (six commandments) 1. leave your abode only for the sake of begging necessary food; 2. say your prayers every day; 3. bathe every day; 4. contemplate daily the likeness or image of Śiva; 5. practice purity and cleanliness; 6. perform the formal worship of the gods.

An account of the rules for samnyāsi-s to obey is cited by Rose (1914:360), from P. Hari Kaul’s Census Report, §148. He should: 1. wear one cloth around his waist and one over his shoulder (he should beg like this); 2. only eat one meal in twenty-four hours; 3. live outside; 4. beg from seven, and not more than seven, houses (except in the case of the kuṭīcaka); 5. not stay in one place more than a few days (except the kuṭīcaka); 6. sleep on the ground; 7. not salute, or speak well or ill of anyone; 8. bow only to samnyāsi-s of higher status or longer standing; 9. only wear the salmon-coloured cloth.

Sadānanda Giri (1976:25) gives ‘six commandments’ to be obeyed by nāgā-samnyāsi-s: 1. accept that all property belongs to the community; 2. abstain from all narcotics; 3. do not go to other akhārā-s; 4. do not quarrel with your comrades; 5. obey your superior officer; 6. use whatever belongs to the community, but do not steal or keep anything for yourself.

Purī (2001:149) provides rules and prohibitions (paraphrased below from the Hindi text) for mahānt-s and thānāpati-s of the Mahānirvāṅī akhāryā-s. They will lose their power and office should they: 1. misuse or destroy any of the moveable or unmoveable property of the akhāryā, or use such for the benefit of any other than the akhāryā; 2. incur debt for the akhāryā through overspending; 3. keep a wife or woman; 4. have any independent business or occupation; 5. make a disciple (i.e. independently), or introduce anyone as a member of this organisation; 6. become a follower of any other dharma or sampradāya; 7. bring harm or loss to any main office or branch (of this institution). In a following section, Purī states some miscellaneous rules concerning the recording of the names of mahānt-s and thānāpati-s at the headquarters at Allahabad, and their duties in the akhāryā.
3.4 Rules for renunciates

The earliest substantial Brahmanical accounts of rules for the renunciate to obey are found in the Dharmasūtra-s, rules that are repeated, often in modified form, in many of the Dharmasūtra-s, the Śaṅkyā Śaṅkhyā Upaniṣad-s and mediaeval texts on renunciation, which frequently cite the Śaṅkyā Śaṅkhyā Upaniṣad-s as authoritative. According to Baudhāyana (2.17.42—2.18.27), the renunciate should only drink water from a well that has been filtered through his water strainer. He should not wear white clothes and should carry the single or triple staff. He should maintain the vows of not injuring living beings, speaking the truth, not stealing, celibacy, and renunciation. The secondary vows are not giving way to anger, obedience to the teacher, not being careless, purification, and purity of food habits. He should beg from Śālinas and Yāyāvaras, and after returning and washing his hands and feet he should offer his food to the sun, reciting appropriate formulae. In the Śaṅkyā Śaṅkhyā Upaniṣad-s the way of life of the wandering ascetic is discussed in many passages. In general the renunciate lives far from his native home, outside the village and its associations with ritual life. Apart from the four months of the rainy season, he wanders without fire or home, living in the wilderness, accepting indiscriminately whatever food is given. The ideal method of begging is to imitate the bee (madhukara), begging

58 See Dutta (1987 [1906]): Yājñavalkya-saṅhitā (Vol. 1:56–66); Hārīta-saṅhitā (Vol. 1, ch. 6:1–23); Uśāna-saṅhitā (Vol. 1:1.29–36). The Śāṅkha-saṅhitā (Vol. 3:1–32) also mentions three of the limbs of classical yoga; dharma, pratyahāra and dhyāna. The overall cosmology centres on Viṣṇu (or Vāsudeva), the all pervading.

59 See Olivelle (1992). Most of the Śaṅkyā Śaṅkhyā Upaniṣad-s date from between the first few centuries CE and around the twelfth century, some from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries (Olivelle (1993:8–11).

60 Similar prescriptions are given by Āpastamba (2.21.7–2.23.2) and Gautama (3.11–3.35). Vasiṣṭha (9.1–10.29) adds that the ascetic should not display the emblems of the renouncer (staff, begging bowl, water strainer etc.). He should not beg through the means of astrology, interpreting omens or the signs of the body, or participate in debates. He may, however, live homeless and resolute in a village. He may also act as if mad. This is also recommended for the Pāśupatas (see Kaṇḍinya’s comm., tr. Haripada Chakraborty, on Pāśupata Sūtra 1.8, 2.3, 3.12–14). The renunciate may feign madness and attempt to attract censure, courting dishonour and insult, so that he may not be attached to the pride ensuing from praise (see also Ingalls 1962).

a little food from many houses. Another method is to undertake the ‘python vow’ (ajagaravāra
ta), waiting for food to come. The highest types of renouncers forego their begging bowls and eat directly
from their hands (pānipātrin), or the ground (udarapātrin) as would an animal.

Four kinds of ascetics (kuticaka/ku
ticara, bahūdaka, haṁsa, paramahaṁsa)
are explained in many texts, arranged—with minor modifications
and inconsistencies—in a hierarchy of ‘detachment’. They are
to be found in the Mahābhārata (XIII.129.29), Viś


Smṛti (4.11), Skanda Purāṇa, Saṁnyāsa Upani
dasad and many of the mediaeval texts on renunciation. This four-fold classification is also referred to by

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1. Kuticaka: lives in a hut (kūṭ), wears saffron-coloured clothes, has a triple staff (trīda
dā) and wears the sacred thread. He should stay with his son and depend
on him for his living.

2. Bahūdaka: should renounce his relatives, have a trīda
dā, wear the sacred thread, recite the
gīyatri mantra, wear saffron-coloured clothes, and beg for food at
seven houses of sage-like Brahmans (or other well conducted men), avoiding flesh,
salt and stale food.

3. Haṁsa: should be versed in Vedānta and have the pursuit of knowledge as his
aim. He should stay in one place and live on charity. He may carry a single staff
and a water-pot and wear the sacred thread. He should stay not more than one
night in a village and not more than five nights in a town when begging for alms,
otherwise he should subsist on cow-urine and cow-dung, or fast for a month.

4. Paramahaṁsa: has attained knowledge and regards all as the Self. He either
wears one piece of cloth or goes naked, and begs and eats with his hands only. He
lives in an uninhabited house, a burial ground or under a tree. He may carry a
single staff but abandons the top-knot, sacred thread and permanent rites.


63 See Aśrama Upani
dad (the earliest of the Saṁnyāsa Upani
dasad-s, dated to around
the third century CE) and Bhikṣuka Upani
dad. In the Nāradaparivṛ
daka Upani
dad (vv.
174–175) several classificatory schemes are provided, including a six-fold scheme
that includes the tuṣyāti and avadhū
ta, which, as Olivelle notes (1992:99), cannot
be easily distinguished from one another. Both these kinds of renouncers are
considered to be liberated beings and not subject to any kind of rule or prohibition.
The other four classes of ascetics are also distinguished by the goals to which
they aspire: kuticaka-s to the atmospheric world; bahū
daka-s to the heavenly world;
haṁsa-s to the Penance-world; and paramahaṁsa-s to the Truth-world. There is also
a discussion (vv. 204–205) of the relative frequency of shaving, eating and bath-
ing, and the application of renunciatory marks of ash and sandal paste, according
to the relative grade of the six kinds of renunciates. Lower kinds, the kuticaka and
bahū
daka, shave, bathe and eat more frequently than the higher kinds. The highest
kind, the avadhū
ta, obtains his food “like a python”, does not shave nor does he apply any sign or mark.

66 See the twelfth-century Yatidharmasamuccaya (5.7); the Pāśaradvamśa and
Jīvanmuktiviveka attributed to Vidyāranyya; and the seventeenth-century Yatidharma
prakāśa
modern commentators on the Daśānāmī tradition. The four kinds of renouncer are graded in respect of the degree of their renunciation, the Paramahamsa-s being the highest, a distinctive feature of many classifications of ascetics being the importance attached to eating habits. The paramahamsa stage is sometimes referred to as the fifth āśrama or as beyond the āśrama-s. As a classificatory term for renunciates, it was frequently used by Śaṅkara, who did not use the other terms for ascetics just referred to. In his commentary on the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (III.5.1.49) he distinguishes the renunciation associated with the classical fourth āśrama from the higher type of renunciation wherein all emblems of the renouncer are abandoned, a condition he associates with the paramahamsa (as explained, a term that has a specific sense in the Daśānāmī social context). Śaṅkara was also referred to as a paramahamsa by his hagiographers, as a sign of respect for the highest type of renouncer.

Within the four-fold classification given above, it may be seen that the two lower classes of ascetics carry the triple staff, whereas the higher classes carry either a single staff or none at all. (This is according to the advaita tradition, whereby the ‘lower’ viṣiṣṭādvaita adherents carry the triple staff.) The paramahamsa discards the top-knot and the sacrificial string, the preeminent marks or signs of Brahman status. Even though, theoretically, renunciation should be of the former life, including caste, in some passages in the advaita-orientated Śaṃnyāsa Upaniṣad-s it is explained that the top-knot and sacrificial thread were in fact retained despite renunciation, albeit symbolically.

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67 See, for example, Purī (2001:32–33).
68 The Paramahamsa Upaniṣad describes (vv. 1–4) the way of the paramahamsa yogins, the highest class of ascetics, as extremely rare. “If there is one such person, he alone abides in the eternally pure Being, and he alone is a man of the Veda-s”. He has renounced not only family, topknot and sacred string, but all rites and possessions: he goes entirely naked. “He is not attached anywhere either to the pleasant or the unpleasant”. The Yābula Upaniṣad (v. 6) adds that they “keep their conduct concealed, and... although they are sane, behave like madmen”.
69 Thus, for example, in the Nāradaparivrājaka Upaniṣad (vv. 152–153), in response to the question as to how a man can be a Brahman when he has no sacrificial
Commenting on the different and conflicting classifications of renouncers to be found in the *Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad*-s, Olivelle (1992:100) remarks that, “[they] point to the original variety of ascetic lifestyles that...were conflated into the single institution of *saṃnyāsa* by Brāhmaṇic theology”. However, the Brahmanical concept of *saṃnyāsa*—to enter a non-ritual state—is evidently but an ideal abstracted from a society with not only many kinds of ascetics, but also, as noted in the Introduction, many kinds of sects of ascetic renunciates that have existed at least since the time of the production of Brahmanical texts which detail the *saṃnyāsa* rite.

The rites of renunciation, detailed above, clearly indicate the process whereby the lineages of the *dāndī* matha-s and the *akhārā*-s are integrated. The *saṃnyāśī* has theoretically severed all ties to his previous social world, is nominally—but only nominally—beyond caste, and has become affiliated either to a *dāndī* lineage, or to a Daśanāmī *akhārā* (through his five gurus), in either case affiliated to the monastic tradition represented by the *ācārya*-s and the Śaṅkarācāryas. The substance of the *saṃnyāśī*’s new identity is embodied in both the legend of Śaṅkara and what he represents, and in the structure of the Daśanāmī order as presented in the *Mathāmnāya*-s, short texts that are analysed in the next chapter.

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string, it is explained that the sacrificial (or triple) string resides in the heart; that the renouncer’s string is worn as the supreme and imperishable Brahman; that knowledge is their top-knot; that the top-knot and sacrificial string consist of knowledge; and so forth.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE INTEGRATION OF VARIOUS LINEAGES:
THE MAṬHĀMNĀYA-s

In the previous chapters the structure of the Daśanāmī organisation was examined largely from an anthropological perspective, in terms of branches, divisions, initiations and hierarchies. It was also shown in the previous chapter how the two main wings of the order are integrated at times of the samnyāsa rite. In this chapter, we will be examining the Daśanāmīs from a different perspective of integration; from that of the normative account of the tradition, in terms of its own history, which is predominantly constituted in terms of lineages. The central focus will be on the Maṭhāmnāya-s, texts that contain the details of Daśanāmi lineages and of the pītha-s supposedly founded by Śaṅkara. The information in these texts provides an overview of the Daśanāmī order, integrating the diverse lineages and providing all Daśanāmīs with a commonly understood identity and a concise framework for their traditional religious history. The disparities between the sect’s own traditional history, particularly regarding the pītha-s, and historical evidence in the form of texts and inscriptions, will also be assessed. A brief, preliminary discussion of Śaṅkara’s authentic works and his probable date will be undertaken in the following section, as both issues bear directly on the history of the Daśanāmīs.

4.1 Śaṅkara’s authorship of texts, and his date

Śaṅkara is supposed to have organised the Daśanāmīs, and is sometimes attributed with the authorship of one or another of the Maṭhāmnāya-s, short Sanskrit texts that present an overview of the order, its ten lineages and its pītha-s. These texts will be analysed in the following section. The issue of the genuine works of Śaṅkara has attracted considerable scholarly inquiry. The longest list I have so far seen of works attributed to Śaṅkara is that contained in the Appendix of Piantelli (1974:i–xiii), which lists 433 works, 187 of which, it is indicated, are accepted as genuine by the tradition, including the
The sheer volume of texts produced in a short life (of thirty-two years, according to tradition), the poor or different style of writing in some texts, philosophical inconsistencies in others, references to doctrines or schools that may be dated post-Śaṅkara, and devotional hymns, are amongst the considerations leading most scholars who have looked into the issue to doubt Śaṅkara’s authorship of a large number of texts attributed to him.² There remains considerable doubt, however, about some of the criteria, however good,³ used to establish the validity of works, the genies of interpolation and alteration hovering ever close to many conclusions. Nevertheless, evidence derived from Śaṅkara’s hagiographies, examined in the following chapter, makes it highly improbable that Śaṅkara wrote the Maṭhāmnāya-s.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that numerous ācārya-s of both the official (four or five) and other advaita maṭha-s have been called Śaṅkara, as have other writers who have no connection to the advaita tradition at all. Rukmani (1998:264) points out that Śaṅkara is a very common name in Kerala, and that Śaṅkara (the author of the Brahmo-sūtra-bhāṣya) had contemporaries named Śaṅkara, one being the author of the play, Āścaryacūḍāmani, another being the Śaṅkara (or Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa) who wrote the Śaṅkaranārāyaṇam. Another Śaṅkarācārya was the author of the Tārāthasavirīttikā (Hacker 1995:43), and Rukmani notes yet another, Śaṅkarapūjyapādayati, who was the author of the Bhāṭṭikavyasyākhyā. However, terms such as pūjyapāda and bhagavatpāda are often used as terms of respect for a guru; they are not exclusively reserved for the author of the Brahmo-sūtra-bhāṣya. To Śaṅkarācārya is also attributed the Prapañcasāra, an early digest (10th–11th century?) of Tantric texts (Pal 1981:2).

What may indisputably count as Śaṅkara’s genuine works⁴ are those

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¹ I have not seen this text, or seen any other reference to it.
² See, for example, Potter (1981:14–15).
⁴ First published in 1947, Paul Hacker’s criteria (1995:41–56) towards establishing the genuine works of Śaṅkara have been influential on subsequent discussion. Mayeda (1992), who is influenced by Hacker in many respects, is another commentator frequently cited by others. Belvalkar (1929:209–240) also made a systematic
commented on by Śaṅkara’s direct disciples, namely the Brahma-
sūtra-bhāṣya (BSB)—universally recognised as Śaṅkara’s quintessential work—on which Padmapāda wrote the Pañcapādikā, and Śaṅkara’s bhāṣya-s on two Upaniṣad-s, the Bhādāranyaka and the Taittirīya, on both of which Sureśvara wrote vārttika-s. Sureśvara also quotes the Upadeśasāhasrī in his Nāiśkarmyasiddhi. Beyond these four works, many have given rise to discussions of authenticity.

Belvalkar (1929:215–231) comments on a total of fifty-seven texts, noting the existence of around 400 works attributed to Śaṅkara.6 Using several criteria, he concludes that eleven commentaries (including those on the Bhagavadgītā, Brahma-sūtra-s and nine Upaniṣad-s), eight stotra-s, and three prakaraṇagrantha-s can confidently be ascribed to Śaṅkara. A few other works may be those of Śaṅkara, while 358 other works must be considered as non-genuine.

One of Hacker’s criteria (1995:41–56) for attempting to establish authenticity is the name attributed to the author of the texts. Twenty-one texts examined are attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, Śaṅkara-Bhagavatpāda or Śaṅkara-Bhagavatpūjyapāda; fifteen are texts men-

and influential study of the issue. His conclusions, and those of Hacker, Mayeda and others, are further analysed by Pande (1994:100–130), who is more open to the inclusion of a greater number of works.

5 For the authentic works of the disciples, see Potter (1981, Vol. 3:18–19); Mayeda (1992:5; Hacker (1995:58). Padmapāda’s Pañcapādikā is probably his only genuine work, commented on by Prakāśātman (mid tenth century) in the Pañcapādikāvivara. Two works are attributed to Toṭaka, the Śrutiśārasamuddharaṇa and a short text, Toṭāṣṭaka (see S. Rajagopala Sastri 1968:63). Hirst (2005:11) mentions the striking similarities between the thought of Toṭaka and his teacher, Śaṅkara. To Hastāmalaka is attributed the short work Hastāmalakaślokaḥ (probably spurious). Also attributed to Sureśvara (besides Nāiśkarmyasiddhi) is the Mānasollāsa, a commentary on the Daksināmūrti-stotra attributed to Śaṅkara. The authenticity of both these works has been questioned (Potter 1981, Vol. 3:550–551). Alston (1980a, Vol. 1:13) notes that the Mānasollāsa contains no eulogy to Śaṅkara, which would render the work unique, should it be included alongside the genuine works of Sureśvara. While the influence of Toṭaka and Hastāmalaka on Advaita Vedānta has been negligible, Padmapāda founded one of the two main post-Śaṅkara schools of Advaita Vedānta, the Vīvarana (‘uncovering’) school. This was later overshadowed by the Bhāmati school. The main point of difference between the two schools is that according to the Vīvarana view, the jīva is a nescient reflection of Brahman, whereas according to the Bhāmati view the jīva is Brahman, as defined or limited by nescience (avidyā).

6 Included in Aufrecht’s Catalogus Catalogorum; the Triennial Reports and the Descriptive Catalogues of the Government Oriental Library, Madras, and the collected editions of the ācārya’s major, minor and miscellaneous works, published in Mysore, Śrīraṅgam, Pūne and elsewhere.
tioned more than once as the work of Śaṅkara; and eight are attributed to Śaṅkarācārya and Śaṅkarabhagavat. Of the texts examined, only the bhāṣya-s of three prasthāna-s (the early Upaniṣads, Bhagavadgītā and Brahmasūtra-s), as well as the Gaudapādiya-bhāṣya, are attributed to Śaṅkara-Bhagavat in the utilized material, as are the Upadeśasāhasrī and Vivekacūḍāmaṇī. The other texts have the other names in the colophon and make virtually no reference to Govinda (Śaṅkara’s teacher), who is always mentioned as a teacher in the texts attributed to the Bhagavat. Such was the extent of the identification of Śaṅkara with the name ‘Bhagavat’, that Appaya Diśītā, commenting on the commentaries of four prominent philosophers in the latter half of the sixteenth century in his Catur-mata-lesa-samgraha, refers to Ānandatūrtha (Madhva), Rāmānuja, Śrīkaṇṭha and Bhagavatpāda (Suryanarayana Sastri 1930:28), it being commonly understood that the last name refers to Śaṅkara. Hacker also considers the terminology used in the various texts. Having surveyed other scholarly arguments concerning authorship, he concludes that, while there may be other genuine works of Śaṅkara, those mentioned above are provisionally entitled to be called genuine, while, above all, the bhāṣya-s on the prasthānatrayī can claim to be Śaṅkara’s genuine productions. While this restricted list is accepted by most scholars, Ingalls (1952:7) and Comans (1996:xv–xvi) have argued against Śaṅkara’s authorship of the Vivekacūḍāmaṇī.7

Using the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya as a yardstick for genuine works, Mayeda (1992:6) believes Śaṅkara’s commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā and the Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Aitareya, Taittirīya, Īśā, Kaṭha, Muṇḍaka, Praśna and Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad-s are most probably genuine, as are the commentaries on the Gaudapāda-kārikā, and the Adhyātmapaṭala of the Āpastamba-dharmasūtra.8 While the Upadeśasāhasrī is certainly genu-

7 Alston (2000:108) also does not accept Śaṅkara’s authorship of either the Vivekacūḍāmaṇī or Ātmasaṅkhyā.

8 Śaṅkara is also attributed with the authorship of a number of independent texts (prakaraṇa-granthas); Sundaresan (2002) has argued that, besides the Upadeśasāhasrī, at least one of these texts, the Pañčikaraṇa, is most probably genuine, as is a commentary on it, the Praṇavārttika by Sureśvara. Belvarkar also believes the Pañčikaraṇa should also be attributed to Śaṅkara, although he acknowledges that there is nothing in the text to warrant its ascription to him. The vārttika on the text, supposedly by Sureśvara, is redolent of Tantra and, according to Potter (1981:318), is extremely suspect.
ine, the commentary on the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad may be spurious. Although Hacker, Nakamura and Mayeda believe the Yogasūtra-bhāṣya-vivaraṇa may be genuine, Rukmani’s (1998) examination of the work leads one to conclude that this is highly improbable.

Śaṅkāra’s date has been the subject of numerous discussions and monographs, and is significant in the context of the hagiographies and the history of the maṭha-s and their guru-paramparā-s, which will be examined in following sections. Currently, the most commonly accepted date for Śaṅkāra is 788 to 820 CE, first (?) proposed by C. P. Tiele in 1877. However, the date of the fifth century BCE proposed by Narayana Sastry in his Age of Śaṅkāra—first published in 1916—received widespread endorsement by the monastic tradition, represented by the pīṭha-s, most of which currently have guru-paramparā-s which go back to the earlier date. However, we will see that some guru-paramparā-s appear to have been altered in the twentieth century to accord with a later date.

Some of the more useful evidence concerning Śaṅkāra’s date may be summarised. Throughout the discussion it needs to be borne in mind that a disciple is not necessarily younger than a teacher, nor

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9 Mayeda’s detailed and subsequently influential analyses of texts, which owes much to Hacker’s previous work (see Hacker 1995), particularly concerning Śaṅkāra’s use of specific terms—such as avidyā, māyā, nāma-rūpa and īśvara—concluded that several of the important works attributed to Śaṅkāra are genuine: Bhagavadgītā-bhāṣya (1965a); Upadeśasāhasrī (1965b); Kena Upaniṣad-bhāṣya—there are two commentaries on the Kena Upaniṣad, the Padabhāṣya and Vākya-bhāṣya, both of which Mayeda believes to be genuine—(1967–1968a); and Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad and Gaudapādya-bhāṣya, which are related texts (1967–1968b). Hirst (2005:21) also maintains the authenticity of the Gaudapāda-kārikā and the Upadeśasāhasrī. Wilke (1995:328–330) provides an overview of the conclusions of Hacker, Mayeda and others on this topic.

10 On the basis of the signature ‘Bhagavadpāda’.

11 Leggett, who translates and comments on this work, also accepts it as genuine (1992:1–6). The text certainly existed in the fourteenth century. See also Halbfass (1983:Appendix), whose analysis renders Śaṅkāra’s authorship improbably though not impossible.

12 The position of the current Śaṅkarācāryas on Śaṅkāra’s genuine works is that a wider body of texts should be included, including the Tantric Saundaryalaharī (see Candrasēkarendra Sarasvati 2001).

13 Outlines of the History of Ancient Religions (see Kunjunni Raja 1960:129). This was on the basis of Yajñeśvara’s Āryavidyā-sudhākara and Bhaṭṭa Nilakanṭha’s Śaṅkāra-mandārāsaurabha, which refer to Śaṅkāra being born in the village of Kāḷaṭi in Kerala in the year 3889 of the Kāḷi period (=845 Vikram, =788 CE). However, these texts cannot be dated earlier than the sixteenth century (Pande 1994:45). Pathak (1882:174–175) also argues for this date, but also based on a dubious manuscript.
does a disciple necessarily write after the death of a teacher. Śaṅkara could have had disciples who were older than him, or disciples could have written works prior to further literary activity of their teacher. However, given the textual evidence for the provision of a rough chronology, we may be reasonably sure of Śaṅkara’s date within certain parameters.

According to tradition, Śaṅkara’s paramāguru (preceptor’s preceptor) was Gauḍapāda, who may be dated to not later than 500–570 CE. Śaṅkara quotes from the Gauḍapāda/Gauḍapādīya (Māṇḍūkya)-kārikā (III.2; III.38) in his Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya (2.15), but does not give a name here or in any other of his works (Lindtner 1985:275; Kunjunni Raja 1991:108). Śaṅkara’s bhāṣya on the Gauḍapāda-kārikā (GK) is accepted by most scholars as one of Śaṅkara’s genuine works, but Lindtner (1985) has argued that the author of this work fails to comprehend an important philosophical point made by Gauḍapāda. Śaṅkara’s understanding of Gauḍapāda is so widely off the mark in several places that Lindtner believes (p. 277) that “apart from other considerations, [it is] almost inconceivable that the author of the Bhāṣya, as tradition would have us believe, should have been a direct pupil of a direct pupil of the author of the GK.”

The evidence indicates that Śaṅkara post-dates Bhartṛhari (c.425–450), Dignāga (c.480–540) and Dharmakīrti (c.530–600 or 634–
673). In his *Upadeśasāhasrī* (18.141–142), Śaṅkara quotes two verses from Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika* (2.354). Suresvara, Śaṅkara’s main pupil, also cites one of these same verses from Dharmakīrti in his *magnum opus*, the *Byhadārayaka-bhāśya-vārttika* (4.3.476), and also names him (4.3.753). According to Śaṅkara’s hagiographical tradition, the philosophers Kumārila and Maṇḍanamiśra (Śaṅkara’s chief adversary) were Śaṅkara’s contemporaries. However, it seems probable that Śaṅkara slightly post-dates Kumārila, who may...
have written his *Bṛhaṭṭikā* between 630 and 640, in his old age,

but Śaṅkara may have been a contemporary of Maṇḍanamiśra,

whose literary activity was probably in the second half of the seventh century (Thrasher 1979:137–139). In conclusion, while Śaṅkara’s floruit may have been around 700 CE—a century before the widely accepted date of 788–820—he cannot have lived much later than the beginning of the ninth century.

losopher Akalanka, who most probably lived after the seventh century (Pathak 1892b, Art. XVI:221–223). According to one tradition, Akalanka was contemporary of the Rāṣṭrakūta emperor, Sāhasatūga Dantidurga, who is mentioned in a grant dated 753 CE (śaka 675) (Belvalkar 1929:210). If the tradition were true, then the date of Kumārila would have to be moved to the first half of the eighth century. However, Akalanka’s dates are controversial.

Concerning an upper limit for Kumārila: firstly, his *Śloka-vārttika* is quoted in the *Tattva-sangraha* of Śāntarakṣita (c.680–740) (Nakamura 1983:84–85). Secondly, Mahēśvara, in his commentary on the *Nirukta*, quotes from the *Śloka-vārttika*. Mahēśvara was a contemporary of Harisvāmin, who wrote a commentary on the *Ṣatapatha-brāhmaṇa* in 638 CE (Kunjunni Raja 1991:110). So Kumārila’s date cannot be much later than middle of the seventh century. (See also Halbfass 1988:183.) It also seems that Śaṅkara (in his *Tattiriya-bhāṣya*) was attacking the views of Kumārila (Pathak 1892b, Art. XVI:217).

In his *Sphota-siddhi*, Maṇḍanamiśra quotes from Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇa-vārttika*. He also quotes fifteen times from Kumārila’s *Śloka-vārttika*, and once from his *Tantra-vārttika*. However, neither Maṇḍanamiśra nor Śaṅkara refer to one another, even though both held remarkably similar philosophical positions (Thrasher 1979:118–120). Maṇḍanamiśra almost certainly makes references to Śaṅkara’s *BSB*, and appears to have had the text before him when he wrote the *Brahma-siddhi*, one of his later works (Kuppuswami Sastri 1937:xlv–xlvi, lviii; Kunjunni Raja 1960:143; Thrasher 1979:122–129). Sureśvara, Śaṅkara’s chief disciple, also knew Maṇḍanamiśra’s work, criticising him and reproducing his material with only slight rewording. Maṇḍanamiśra is not named by Sureśvara, but his opponent is almost certainly Maṇḍanamiśra, as Sureśvara in his *Naïskārmya-siddhi* paraphrases or quotes from Maṇḍanamiśra’s *Brahma-siddhi*. It is possible that Maṇḍanamiśra read Śaṅkara (who died aged 32 according to tradition), but that a response to their differences was made by Sureśvara (Thrasher 1979:131–137). It is suggested (see Ch. 5.3) that the extreme rivalry between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍanamiśra, as depicted in the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, may have been primarily due to their different religious persuasions rather than philosophical views.

Umbeke is not mentioned in the *Tattva-sangraha* of Śāntarakṣita (680–740 or 725–785), but is mentioned by his disciple Kamalaśīla (700–750 or 745–795) in his *Pañjikā*. Umbeka, whose literary activity may have been between 760 and 790, comments on the Maṇḍanamiśra’s *Bhāvacānā-viveka* (Thrasher 1979:138–139).

This date was argued for by Nakamura (1983:57–89).

Jinasena quotes Vidyānanda—another Jaina—in his *Ādiṣūrya*, his final work, which was written around 838. Vidyānanda, in his *Aṣṭaśatī*, quotes from Sureśvara’s *Bhyadārayyaka-bhāṣya-vārttika* (Pathak 1892b, Art. XVI:224–229; Belvalkar 1929:214). At the end of Vācaspatimīśra’s *Nyāya-sūcinibandha*, it is stated that it was written in
At first glance, there would seem to be some slight evidence for the currently accepted date for Śaṅkara (788–820 CE), in that when Śantarakṣīta and Kamalaśīla are discussing Upanisada-vāda, in the eighth century, they make no reference to Śaṅkara (Qvärnström 1999:176). Further, the great Śvetāmbara Jaina scholar and doxographer Haribhadrasūri (c.730–770 CE), although quoting Bhartṛhari, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, also makes no reference to Śaṅkara (Umesh 1981:ii). Nakamura (1962:187ff.) comments that although, beginning around 600, advaita/vedānta is recognised as a distinct doctrine by Jaina philosophers, who attacked particular advaita-related theories, Vedānta as a school of philosophy was not significant. He notes that Haribhadrasūri, in his Śaḍdarśanasamuccaya, refers to the teachings of the ‘six schools’ (Buddhism, Nyāya, Sāṃkhya, Jainism, Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā) and also Lokāyata in an appendix, but does not refer to Vedānta at all. Nakamura (1992:192) maintains that from the tenth century onwards, however, Vedānta began to become increasingly significant as a system, and that the philosophy recognised by Jaina philosophers was that of Śaṅkara. However, although Śaṅkara later came to be considered as not only the pre-eminent advaitin, but as perhaps the pre-eminent philosopher of India, it seems that for several centuries post-Śaṅkara, it was Maṇḍanamiśra—who knew the philosophy of Śaṅkara, and who was

841 CE (samvat 898), which is quite reliable (Nakamura 1983:65–66). Kunjunni Raja (1960:143–144) notes Hacker’s suggestion that the date should be taken as śaka 898 (equivalent to 976 CE), but disagrees with the later date. In the Bhāmatī (1.3.17), a commentary on the BSB, Vācaspatimīśra criticises the views of Padmapāda, referring several times to his Pañcapādikā (Belvalkar 1929:214; Kunjunni Raja 1960:145).  

32 See Chapple (1993:1–2) for Haribhadra’s date.  
33 Vetter (1979:11), following Kunjunni Raja (1960), also remarks that Śaṅkara was not referred to by Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla or Haribhadrasūri.  
34 By, for example, Samantabhadra (c.600) and his commentator Akalaṅka (c.700–770), Mallavādin (8th century), and Śīlāṅka (latter half of 9th century). See also Ghokale (1958; 1961–1962; 1972), who discusses and translates chapters III and VIII of Bhavya’s Madhyamakahṛdaya, which deal with Vedānta as known to Bhavya in the sixth century.  
35 Nakamura (1962:192) also notes that Siddharṣi, in a work composed in 906, refers to a total of twelve systems, but not Vedānta.  
36 Nakamura (1992:192–193) cites the Tāfastilaka of the Digambara scholar Somadeva, composed in 959, which refers to Vedānta and the doctrine of the Brahman-advaitin-s. Nakamura maintains that “This is conspicuously the Advaita theory of the Śaṅkara school”. However, Śaṅkara is not referred to explicitly. Unfortunately, I have not been able to see this text in order to ascertain what I suspect: that Śaṅkara may not have been known by Somadeva.
roughly his contemporary—who was considered the main exponent of \textit{advaita} by later \textit{advaitin}-s, and not Śaṅkara (Vetter 1979:11; Wilke 1995:336). Vācaspatimisra (9th century), author of the influential \textit{Bhāmatī}, a commentary on Śaṅkara’s \textit{Bhṛma-sūtra-bhāṣya}, relies for his interpretation of Śaṅkara on the doctrines in the \textit{Bṛhmaśiddhi} of Maṇḍanamisra (Subramanya Sastri 1937:vi). Maṇḍanamisra was also accepted as an authority by other important later \textit{advaitin}-s such as Prakāśātman (10th century), Ānandabodha (c.12th century), and Citsukha (c.13th century) (Isayeva 1993:66–67). Nor does any Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosopher of the ninth and tenth centuries refer to Śaṅkara, even though they make occasional references to Maṇḍanamisra.

Qvarnström (1999:176) also remarks that it was not until the tenth century that Vedānta gained general recognition in Jaina and Buddhist literature as a distinct philosophical system, and suggests that this is possibly on account of Śaṅkara being from the south and not the north where Jaina and Buddhist systems were flourishing. However, although Jainism and Buddhism were in decline in the south by the time of Śaṅkara, in some centres, particularly Kāṇḍīpuram—which had previously been a stronghold of both religions—Jainism and Buddhism were still influential for several hundred years after the time of Śaṅkara. Yet there seems to have been little contemporary

\begin{itemize}
  \item Subramahmanya Sastri (1935:vi) also asserts that Rāmānuja (1017–1137), in his quintessential work, \textit{Śrī Bhāṣya}, only quotes Maṇḍanamisra as the \textit{advaita} prototype. However, it is evident that Rāmānuja also refers to Śaṅkara and his arguments: as \textit{dravida bhāṣya/kāra} (p. 119); as \textit{bhāṣyakāra} (p. 120, p. 144); and as the incarnation, Śaṅkara (p. 111). (References are to the Karmarkar edition, 1959–1964.)
  \item See Potter (1981, Vol. 3:23 fn. 25; 1977, Vol. 1:15, 485, 604). For example, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Śrīdhara (fl. 991) and Aparākadeva (fl. 1125) notice Maṇḍana’s arguments but not Śaṅkara’s.
  \item Such as Koṅkanapura.
  \item According to one tradition, it was the famous Jaina, Akalaṅka—and not Śaṅkara—who defeated Buddhists in Kāṇḍīpuram. A village in the suburbs of Kāṇḍīpuram) is still known by the name ‘Jaina Koṅcī’. Many Jaina centres (that appear to have been weaving centres) were subsequently converted into Kālāmukha \textit{śāwa} centres. Jainism began to acquire more influence than Buddhism in Kāṇḍīpuram around the seventh century, and in other parts of Tamil Nadu during the latter part of the first millennium (Desai 1957:25–96; Champakalakshmi 1996:397–398).
  \item Buddhaghoṣa (fifth century) and other Buddhists propagated their doctrine from the \textit{vihāra}-s of Kāṇcī. Dignāga (c.480–540) was born in a suburb of Kāṇcī (later going north to study logic under Vasubandhu in Nalanda). Dharmapāla (530–561) was also a native of Kāṇcī. Bhavya (500–570) also lived in south India,
awareness of him by any philosophical tradition. If the earlier date proposed for Śaṅkara is accepted (flourishing around the beginning of the eighth century), then the only conclusion to be drawn is that Śaṅkara must have remained relatively unknown for several centuries after his demise, perhaps until his promotion by advaita maṭha-s, which were first founded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

4.2 Organisational structure of the Daśanāmīs, according to the Maṭhamānāyastotra, Śrī Maṭhamānāyasetu and other texts

The normative account of the Daśanāmīs is embedded in a few short Sanskrit texts, known variously as (Śrī) Maṭhamānāya, Maṭhamānāyastotra, Maṭhamānāyasetu and Maṭhetejīttā, which detail the four āmnāya-s, all supposedly but improbably written by Śaṅkarācārya. The Maṭhamānāya-śāsanam (or Mahānuśāsanam), frequently appended to the Maṭhamānāya-s, is a text primarily explaining the dharma and entitlement of the four designated ācārya-s to individual jurisdiction in their four respective regions: the gaddī is to be passed on only to the virtuous and learned samnyāśī. One aspect of this text is as a legitimation of the four pīṭha-s, to the exclusion of other claims.

Āmnāya means: a sacred tradition; that which is to be remembered or studied or learnt by heart; a Veda (or Veda-s in the aggregate); or received doctrine. The term also has a particular significance in the context of the dissemination of Tantric texts during the early mediæval period. Similar to the Tantric tradition, which has western, eastern, northern and southern āmnāya-s, pertaining to the four Daśanāmī pīṭha-s—supposedly founded by Śaṅkarācārya—are four āmnāya-s, at the western, eastern, northern, and southern borders of India. The four āmnāya-s of the maṭha-s are said to be “revealed” (in all texts) such that the first is the western āmnāya,

as did Dharmakīrti who lived in the kingdom of Cūḍāmaṇi. Around 640, Hüang Tsang reports more than a hundred Buddhist monasteries in Kāñci, with more than 10,000 Sthavīra monks (Watters, 1905, Vol. 2: 226). Buddhism was still a living religion in Kāñcipuram in the twelfth century, surviving there into the sixteenth century (Mahalingam 1969:125; Chaudhury 1969:234–235; Subramanyam 1975:23–24).

the Śāradā matha (at Dvārakā); the second is the eastern āmnāya, the Govardhan matha (at Purī); the third is the northern āmnāya, the Jyotir matha (at Jyōśimāth); and the fourth is the southern āmnāya, the Śrīgerī matha.43 It can be seen from the scheme below that each of the ‘ten names’ of the Daśanāmīs are nominally affiliated to one or another of the four main matha-s, also known as pītha-s. There is, however, an ongoing dispute concerning the location of the ‘genuine’ southern pītha: whether it should be located at Śrīgerī or at Kāñcīpuram.

The information in the Mathāmnāya-s, presented below, is known quite well by most initiates, and is repeated, with some minor differences, in virtually every commentary on the Daśanāmīs that has been published in the previous 150 years.44 I will be suggesting that this account is probably fictitious in several respects. However, regardless of the authenticity of the Mathāmnāya-s, the importance of these texts may be gauged not only from the intrinsic value of constituting a formal identity for various lineages of ascetics as an organised sect with a founder, but also from the fact that they have on several occasions been used as formal evidence in Court cases concerning property, trusteeship and succession.45

43 There has been some discussion in orthodox Hindu circles concerning why the southern pītha is located inland, and not at a coastal extremity, such as Rāmeśvaram. See, for example, Ramesan (1968).

44 There are differences to be found in some of the earlier ethnographies. Crooke’s account (1896 Vol. 4:273) relies on the Panjāb Census Report (3) of Maclagan, who remarked (1891:112) that he had before him eight lists of the “ten names”, from different parts of the Province (Punjab). Only Giri, Purī, Aranya and Bhāratī were common to all lists. The names are associated with one or another of Śaṅkara’s four disciples, namely Tarnaka, Prithodar (or Prithivi), Sarūpa and Padman. (These names of ācārya-s are not exactly those of the disciples of Śaṅkara in the standard hagiographies.) Maclagan reports that according to some accounts the distribution of saṃnyāsī-s per matha is as follows: Jyotir (Giri, Purī, Bhāratī); Śrīgeri (Vana, Aranya, Tirtha); Nararāginī (Parvata, Áśrama); Brahmacāri (Sarasvatī, Daṇḍī). Rose’s account (1914:353) presents four different lists, one of which (‘List A’) distributes the names as below, with the exception of the absence of the Sarasvatī pāda. Rose’s ‘List B’ distributes the pāda-s quite differently. Rose’s two other lists of ‘ten names’ both list eleven names. Included in those lists are the Jattī, Sukar, Rukar, Daṇḍī and Surasti, names which do not appear in ‘modern standard lists’. It is just possible that Maclagan and Rose’s ethnographies reveal that the standard account of the ten names as found in the Mathāmnāya-s (see below) had not yet become universally standard; or they could have been badly informed.

45 See Mishra (2001:vii–xiv) for some of the legal judgments that have derived from the Mathāmnāya-s.
During the first initiation into the Daśanāmīs, the paṅc-guru-saṁskār, the initiate is instructed on his lineage, lifestyle, gotra, pītha and so on, according to which of the ten names he receives. This information—in particular, the initiate’s own maṭhāmnāya—is to be remembered as a form of formal identification, and is circulated among Daśanāmī initiates in the form of Hindi texts, including the Daś nām vamśa vrks and Stotra-puṣpaṇjali (see Haridvār Giri, n.d.). In contrast, the contemporary structure of the Daśanāmīs, in terms of its various branches and sub-branches, is ill understood by most initiated saṁnyāsī-ś, who rarely have any knowledge of any branch of the order other than their own. The understanding of what Daśanāmī means lies, for all practical purposes, in a body of texts that has become a vital means for presenting an overview of the order, both from emic and etic perspectives.

The Daś nām vamśa vrks describes the cosmic evolution from “the void”, through various gods and ṛṣi-ś, to Śaṅkara and his four disciples, who head the four Mathāmnāya-ś. Additional information in this text includes the constitution of the maṛṭi-ś, the four ācāra-ś of the four yuga-ś, the four cermonial javelins (bhālā-ś), and the four dhān-ś. The ten names are assigned to one of four strings (tanī-ś): Uttar (north), of the Giris; Purv (east), of the Vanas and Arānyas; Dakṣin (south), of the Puris; Paścim (west), of the Tīrthas and Āśramas.

The texts of the various Mathāmnāya-ś are available in Sanskrit catalogues, in several Hindi publications, and in three English publications. Apart from minor differences, the only essential dis-
parity between the different versions of the texts concerns a few of the deities, and the appointment of Śaṅkara’s disciples to the respective gaddi-s: It will be suggested that it is most probable that normative texts, in the form of Mathāmnāya-s (or something with a similar name) which continue to be disseminated by the main Śaṅkara pīṭha-s, are most probably not more than about four or five hundred years old.

The scheme below is based on the Mathāmnāya-satu, published by Parameshwar Nath Mishra (2001:1–57), and some details that conflict with this text are indicated.

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This text, together with the Mahānusāsanam and Śeṣāmnāya (and translations) are contained in Appendix 2. Mishra’s text is almost identical to that published by Kāmeśvar Nāth Miśra (1996), and very similar to other versions of this text, including the Mathāmnāya-setu published by Sarma (1963:642–652), but for a different verse order in some passages. Sarma’s text of the Mathāmnāya-stotra (another text containing virtually the same information) is from the Śrṅgeri pīṭha, obtained in the form of a very old handwritten copy from the Śrī Kāmarūpā matha of Banaras. Sarma (1963:647) states that the Mathāmnāya-stotra-s he had collected from other matha-s, at Navadvīpa, Kāśi, Kāmarūpa, Lahore, Pune and Mirzapur, are similar. The texts of the Mathāmnāya-setu and the Mahānusāsanam are differently ordered in some passages in some versions of the texts, different versions also omitting or adding the occasional verse.

Entries with a single asterisk (*) indicate differences contained in the versions of the (Śrī) Mathāmnāya-setu and Mathāmnāya-stotra published by Sarma (1963:642–652), Brahmācari (2001:22–24) provides the Śrādā pīṭha ṣṭotra, which is identical to Miśra (1996). At variance with Mishra (2001): Vidyānand Giri **(1993:63–66); Upādhyāy ***[1967:601–617]; Purī ****[2001:44–48]; Kunhan Raja *****[1933:48–49]. The information in the Daśnām vānśvyūṣ is almost identical to the Mathāmnāya-setu of Miśra, with the exception that the deities of the Jyotir matha are called Śūrya-Nārāyana and Punyagiri; and both Hastāmalaka and Prthvīdhārācārya are assigned to Śrṅgeri. The śīṅkha of Jyotir is called Rddhīnāth, and the ʾṣṭdev of Jyotir is Dattātreya (no other ṣṭotra in this text has an ʾṣṭdev). The Śrṅgeri matha has (inexplicably) the gaddī of Anusūyiā (sic.).
## Matha

**Śāradā-pītha** (also named Kālikā)

**Jurisdiction (maṇḍala)**
- Dhāraka (Arabian Coast, Gujarat)
- Sindhu, Sauvīra, Saurāstra, Mahārāstra

**Orders (padāni)**
- Tirtha, Āśrama

**Deities**
- (m) Siddeśvara  (f) Bhadrakāli

**Tirtha / Kṣetra**
- (r) Gomati, Dvāraka (Gaṅgā-Gomati)

**Veda**
- Sāma

**Mahāvākyā**
- tat tvam asi (you are that)

**Gotra**
- Avigata

**Brahmacāri name**
- Svarūpa

**Sampradāya**
- Kiṭavāra

**Appointed pontiff**
- Visvarūpa (Padmapāda)

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**Matha**

**Govardhan-pītha**

**Jurisdiction (maṇḍala)**
- Jagannāth (Puri, East Coast, Orissa)
- Anāgā, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Magadha, Utkala, Barbarā (?)

**Orders (padāni)**
- Aranyā, Vana

**Deities**
- (m) Jagannāth  (f) Vimalā (Vṛṣalā)

**Tirtha / Kṣetra**
- Mahodadhi (sea)/Puruṣottama

**Veda**
- Rg

**Mahāvākha**
- prajñānaṁ brahma (knowledge is brahma)

**Gotra**
- Kaśyapa

**Brahmacāri name**
- Prakāsa

**Sampradāya**
- Bhogavāra

**Appointed pontiff**
- Padmapāda (Hastāmalaka)

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**Matha**

**Jyotir-pītha** (also named Badarikā, or Śrī)

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54 The area adjacent to the Indus river.
55 The area around Surāt.
56 (r) = river.
57 An aphorism (great saying) from the Upaniṣads.
58 Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6.8.7); attached to Śāma Veda.
59 The country around Bhagalpur, in Bihar.
60 West Bengal.
61 Orissa.
62 West-central Bihar
63 Orissa.
64 The barbarian region (?).
65 Aitareya Upaniṣad (3.5.3); attached to Rg Veda.
In the  Maṭhāmāṇya-s we find an assignment of the four disciples of Śaṅkara to the four pītha-s, each with its own Vedic school; and the ten names distributed in four groups, each with its own Brahmani-

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60 Western Gangetic plain.
61 Eastern Afghanistan.
62 Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad (4.2); attached to Atharva Veda.
63 Tamil Nadu.
64 Karnataka.
65 Byadāranyaka Upaniṣad (1.4.10); attached to Śaṅkha (white) Yajur Veda.
66 Prthvīdhara is identified with Surenśvara by Purī (and some other commentators), while Śarma identifies Prthvīdhara with Hastāmalaka.
cal gotra, sampradāya and Brahmacārī name. As can be seen, the two points of disagreement between the Mathānmāya-s concern the deities (at three of the pitha-s) and the appointment of Śaṅkara’s disciples. The Mathānmāya-s only agree on the appointment of Toṭaka to the Jyotir pitha.

Gotra denotes an ancient Vedic clan or lineage, the gotra-s supposedly originating with the seven mythological rṣi-s. The gotra-s were most probably distinguished originally on the basis of different Vedic rites performed. There are scores of Brahmanical gotra-s, pertaining to the ten major divisions (and their sub-divisions) of Brahmans. There are also twenty-five other Brahmanical clans, including the Kashmiri, Nepali and Mālā Brahmans, and other groups, all with various gotra-s. Four groups of gotra-s are traditionally assigned to one or another of the four Veda-s, this arrangement also being reflected in the correspondence (albeit inaccurate) in the Mathānmāya-s of four gotra-s to four Veda-s. Mediaeval āgama texts of Śaiva-Siddhānta reveal that traditional initiation into Śaivism also entails the acquisition of the gotra/gocara of the initiating guru (Brunner 1964:458).

As can be seen from the table giving the structure of the Daśanāmīs, the four pitha-s are represented by four Brahmanical gotra-s (lineages); Avigata, Kaśyapa, Bhṛgu and Bhūrbhava. Kaśyapa appears in the first fully formulated lists of the seven rṣi-s, in the Dharmasūtra-s (Mitchener 1982:30), while the Kaśyapa gotra is traditionally in the group of

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73 In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the term gotra—as with so many other terms originally employed in a Vedic context—has, besides its sense as a spiritual lineage, a technical philosophical meaning, designating both a soteriological principle and an aspect of awakening. For further details, see Ruegg (1969).

74 One of the original senses of gotra, as used in the Rg Veda, was of a ‘cowstall’ (Kane 1935:10). For Jainas, gotra had the sense of ‘family’, while in some Mahāyāna texts gotra meant ‘spiritual class’. By the early centuries BCE, gotra had come to designate not only descendants of a common ancestor, but sometimes a family, an exogamous unit or social status generally. The so-called pravaśa recitation by Brahmans, which accompanies daily sandhyā worship, is a recitation of a list of usually three ancestors, who were among the seven primordial rṣi-s, and whose names constitute gotra-s. A gotra is the lineage of the family, thus confirming from which families a potential wife would be acceptable, as marriage cannot be made with a partner from within the same gotra. A man is in one of eighteen gotra-s, and must marry into one of the other seventeen, a system which has survived to the present day (Brough 1953:2–10; Kane HDS Vol. 2:479–497).

75 See Sherring (Vol.1, 1872:6–113) for a detailed account of the gotra-s, and (p. 8) their affiliation to the Veda. See also Kamath (1986:83) on particular gotra-s.

76 Agastya is to be found occasionally in the Dharmasūtra-s as an eighth rṣi.
gotra-s that follow the Sāma Veda (Sherring 1872:8). This is inconsistent with the scheme of the Mathāṁnāya-s, whereby the Kaśyapa gotra is assigned to the Govardhan pīṭha, which follows the Rg Veda. Bhṛgu appears as an eighth tīṣī in a second list of tīṣī-ś, which came to take textual preference over the first list, notably in most of the lists to be found in the Purāṇa-s (Mitchener 1982:30). In the Brahmanical tradition the Bhṛgu gotra is amongst the gotra-s that follow the Rg Veda. Again, this is inconsistent with the Mathāṁnāya-s, wherein the Bhṛgu gotra is affiliated to the Jyotir pīṭha, which follows the Atharva Veda. The other two gotra-s, Bhūrbhava and Avigata, do not appear in known list of gotra-s, but no one has so far been able to provide a satisfactory explanation for them. Gotra and the other elements of the Mathāṁnāya-s, which initiates are supposed to learn, are essentially esoteric verbal markers of the initiate’s identity and lineage within the Daśanāṁśis, used for mutual identity and detecting imposters: a kind of samnyāśi pravara.

The origin of the four sampradāya names, Ānandavara, Bhūrivāra, Bhogavara and Kīṭavara, that are given in the texts cited, similarly defies adequate explanation. Most commentators follow Ghurye (1964:86) in explaining, somewhat vaguely, the sampradāya in terms of life-style. However, in Daśanāṁśi practice, the sampradāya names, as with the gotra-s, simply confirm to which of the four groups of lineages the initiate belongs, and do not signify a different life-style. The sampradāya names are used by Daśanāṁśis as an identificatory title, such as, for example, Mahant Lāl Purī, Bhūrivāra. (It can be seen, according to the Mathāṁnāya-s, that Bhūrivāra indicates

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77 See Ghurye (1964:85–87); Dazey (1990:288). This author has also failed to find any references to these gotra-s in published works.

78 Thus, according to Ghurye, the Ānandavāra is happy (ānanda) with whatever food he gets without begging, or because his happiness is not derived from worldly pleasures. The Bhūrivāra (bhūṛi meaning ‘very much’) is explained as renouncing wealth and living on vegetation in the jungles. The Bhogavāra (bhoga meaning ‘enjoyment’ or ‘pleasure’) are supposedly indifferent to worldly pleasures. Lastly, the Kīṭavāra (kīta meaning ‘insect’ or ‘worm’) is supposed either to eat as little as an insect, or to have developed a high level of compassion, not even troubling insects. See also Rose (1914:357): 1. Bhog-bār, who are indifferent to all earthly things, save those necessary to sustain life; 2. Khet-bār, who attempt to eat only a small quantity of food; 3. Anand-bār, who are averse to begging and live on spontaneous alms; 4. Bhūr-bār, who live on forest products and pounded grasses and ashes. 5. Kansā-bār, who have no desire and live on air and water, in continual beatitude.

79 Of the Mahānirvāṇī abhāṣā at Kaṅkhal (see Bibliography).
a Purī, Bhāratī or Sarasvatī; Ånandavār indicates a Girī, Parvata or Sāgara; etc.) When a candidate is initiated into samnyāsa by the ācārya-guru, a mahāvāhya from one of four Upaniṣad-s—attached to its respective Veda—is given, the mahāvāhya being the liberating mantra of the lineage. However, the distribution in the Mathāmāya-s of the four Veda-s to the four cardinal directions is not corroborated in other Brahmanical sources.80

The four Brahmacārī names given, Ānanda, Caitanya, Prakāśa and Svarūpa, are the names given to brahmačārī-s who have passed their first stage of initiation to become dandī-s. They will subsequently undergo the virajā-homa to become dandī-samnyāsī-s. The four Brahmacārī names theoretically correspond to their affiliation to a particular pīṭha. As previously noted, this is determined by the affiliation of the particular matha via which the candidate is initiated, to either the western, eastern northern or southern pīṭha.

4.4 The pīṭha-s and guru-paramparā-s

In this and the following sections, the claims by various matha-s to have been founded by Śaṅkara will be surveyed, and it will become apparent that there is no substantive evidence to connect Śaṅkara with the early history of any of the matha-s supposedly founded by him. Even in the nineteenth century the claims of the ‘official’ four matha-s to be the only legitimate ones were far from universally established. Over the previous few hundred years, several other advaita matha-s have also claimed legitimacy, many of the disputes being settled by royal decree or by a court case. The ‘legitimacy’ issue stems primarily from the claims of various Śaṅkarācāryas to be the sole representative in their area for the title of jagadguru, entitled to travel in palanquin (aḍḍā-pālakī)81 and be accorded due

80 However, Mishra (2001:2) cites the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (3.12.37), stating that the Rg, Śāma, Atharva and Yajur Veda-s are “expressed” from, respectively, the eastern, western, northern and southern mouths of Brahmā. However, this verse from the text of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa states that: “Beginning from the front face of Brahmā, gradually the four Vedas—Rg, Yajur, Śāma and Atharva—became manifest” (trans. Prabhupada): rg-yajuh-sāmātharvākhyān vedān pūrvādhir mukhāḥ (sāstram ijyām stutistomaṁ prāyaścittam) vyadhāt kramāt. There is no mention of directions.

81 This mode of transport, usually reserved for kings, may involve the palanquin being carried ‘sideways’ to hold up (aḍḍā) other traffic.
honours, and to have the ‘foremost’ right to collect tithes or donations (agrasambhāvanā) from adherents or disciples in the kṣetra supposedly under their jurisdiction. Evidence from the Maṭhāmnāya-s have been central to several court cases, as have passages in the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, particularly those referring to his last days and final samādhi. Claims and counter-claims by rival maṭha-s also frequently involve the assertion by one of the parties that parts of a particular text not agreeing with their claim have been tampered with.

It can be seen from the variant schemes of the Maṭhāmnāya-s (as shown above) that there is inconsistency concerning the appointments to the four pīṭha-s, depending on which text is referred to. The identity of Sureśvara, who is claimed by the Śrīnerī, Dvārakā and Kāñcī maṭha-s (see below), is also disputed. Most of the maṭha-s that will be

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82 Amongst the hagiographies, the Kāñcī maṭha relies most on the evidence of the ASV (see Ch. 5.1), where Śaṅkara is said to have passed away at Kāñcī. (This text is rejected as inauthentic by Śrīnerī.) In their support, the Kāñcī maṭha also cite evidence for this from the Śivarāhasya and the Mārkaṇḍeya-śaṁhitā, the authority of which is disputed by Śrīnerī.

83 Rose (1914:353) records two (variant) versions of the appointments to the maṭha-s. Chakrabortī (1973:181) also remarks on the disagreement amongst scholars over the appointments to the maṭha-s, one issue being whether it was Hastāmalaka or Padmapāda who was the first appointed pontiff of the Purī maṭha. The Šrīnerī tradition, according with the Maṭhāmnāya-stotra, maintains that the first pontiff of Dvārakā was Padmapāda.

84 Sureśvara is identified by the monastic tradition as Maṭḍanamiśra (see Pande 1994:281–283). Relativley large parts of all the hagiographies of Śaṅkara are dedicated to the debate between Śaṅkara and either Maṭḍanamiśra—the famous Mīmāṁsaka and author of the Brahmasiddhi, who is portrayed as a disciple of another great Mīmāṁsaka, Kumārila—or Viśvarūpa. In the Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya (10.103–107) (see Ch. 5.1), after his conversion by Śaṅkara, Maṭḍanamiśra (a ghaṣṭha) acquired the name Sureśvara (as a sāmyyāśīn). The SDV also refers to Maṭḍanamiśra as Viśvarūpa. The identification of Maṭḍanamiśra and Sureśvara is also made by Anantānandagiri, in the Śaṅkaravijaya (sec. 55), and by Cidvilāsa in the Śaṅkaravijaya (18.44–45). However, in other hagiographies of Śaṅkara (Vyāsa-cāla’s Śaṅkaravijaya (6.5.36); Govindanātha’s Śaṅkara-cartri (6.1); Lākṣmaṇa Śastrī’s Guruvaṁśa-kāvyā (2.143), Śaṅkara’s opponent is identified as a disciple of Kumārila called Viśvarūpa; and Maṭḍanamiśra is a different person. Many scholars have argued, on philosophical grounds, against the possibility of Maṭḍanamiśra being Sureśvara: see Dasgupta (Vol. 2, 1975:82–87); Hiriyanna (1923; 1924); Bhattacharyya (1931:301–308); Kuppuswami Sastrī (1981:27–50); Alston (1980a, Vol.1:50–51). Sastrī (1961:281–291) believes that the two could be the same: Maṭḍana could have changed his views. However, in perhaps the most extensive and detailed treatment of the topic, Kuppuswami Sastrī (1937: xxiv–lvii) not only illustrates the philosophical differences between the two authors, but points to a long line of Vedāntins—including Vācaspatimā, Viṁuktātman, Prakāśatman, Ānandabodha, Prakaṭārthakāra, Ĉitsukha, Āmalānanda, Ānandagiri,
referred to in this section claim to have been founded by Śaṅkara, and have parampara-s of ācārya-s going back to between the eight century CE and the sixth century BCE. However, 44 BCE is taken as the date of the birth of Śaṅkara by several authorities, including, until recently, the Śrīgeri matha. The later date of Śaṅkara (788 to 720 CE) accepted by many contemporary scholars was challenged by Narayana Sastry (1971 [1916]), who proposed an earlier date of 509 BCE for the birth of Śaṅkara. This proposal for an earlier date was accepted by many Indian scholars, some of whom still maintain it, despite many objections raised by various scholars.

I suspect that the views of Narayana Sastry (and hence later scholars) may have been substantially impelled by the considerable space devoted to the date of Śaṅkara in The Theosophist during the 1890s. Articles on the date of Śaṅkarācārya appeared in Volumes I, IV, XI, XIV and XVI of The Theosophist, volumes XIV and XVI containing the guru-parampara-s of the Śrīgeri and Dvārakā matha-s respectively, the Śrīgeri list recording the birth of Śaṅkara in 43 BCE, the Dvārakā list giving the birth-date of Śaṅkara in 2631 yudhisṭhira śaka (509 BCE). Scholarly opinions on the date of Śaṅkara seem to have influenced the construction of guru-parampara-s, and some of them, such as that of Śrīgeri, appear to have been altered during the previous century to accord with the later date (788–820 CE) for Śaṅkara (Antarkar 2001:45), as previously the Śrīgeri matha had had a guru-parampara that accorded 800 years for the life of Sureśvara.

Vidyārānya, Madhusūdanasarasvatī, and Brahmānandasarasvatī—and philosophers of other schools, whose works illustrate their understanding that Maṇḍanāmīśra and Sureśvara were different people, with different views on particular philosophical points. Indeed, Sureśvara, in his Vārttika and Naiṣkāmyasiddhi, sneers at some of the views of Maṇḍana (p. xxx). The main division in advaita, between the Bhāmāti and Viśaraṇa schools (concerning whether the locus of nescience resides in jīva or brahman) goes back to Maṇḍanāmīśra and Sureśvara. However, in some works (see p. xxv), for example Vidyāraṇya’s Viśaraṇa-prameya-samgraha (p. 92), a passage from Sureśvara’s Vārttika (4.8) is attributed to Viśvarūpācārya (Dasgupta, p. 83), lending some credence to their identification in the Maṭhāṃnāya-s. Also, in none of Maṇḍanāmīśra’s works, or in the philosophical works of other authors, is Maṇḍanāmīśra mentioned as a disciple of either Kumārila or Śaṅkara.

85 See, for example, Aiyer and Sastri (1962) and Kuppuswami (2001), who argue for a birth-date of 509 BCE.

Perhaps the earliest list of ācārya-s for the Śrṅgerī pītha is that contained in the Śrī-puruṣottama-bhārati-carita, composed by Viṣṇu in the late fifteenth century (Shastry 1982:7). It provides a brief account of the ācārya-s from Vidyāśākara (on the gaddī from 1228–1333) to Candrasekharabhaṛatī II (1454–1464). In one of the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, Lakṣmaṇa-Śāstri’s Guruvaṁśa-kāvyā, written in 1740, is also to be found a list of ācārya-s for the Śrṅgerī maṭha. Antarkar (2001:40) believes that this is possibly the earliest full list of ācārya-s of the Śrṅgerī maṭha. This work was instigated by the then reigning ācārya, Saccidānandabhaṛatī II (1705–1741). Probably the earliest widely disseminated list of the Śrṅgerī ācārya-s was that published by Gopalacharlu in The Theosophist in 1893, which was based on a text published twenty years previously by Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar of Mysore. This guru-paramparā gives the date of Śaṅkara’s birth as 43 BCE, his accession to the Śrṅgerī gaddī as 34 BCE, and his death as 11 BCE. He is followed by Viṣvarūpācārya and thirty-one other gurus, up to Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Narasimhabhaṛatī, who acceded in 1817. A similar but not identical list was subsequently published as an appendix to the Tamil translation of the ŚDV, under the order of Narasimhabhaṛatī VIII, after his demise in 1879. Up to 1898 there were 34 or 35 ācārya-s in the six lists that Antarkar (2001) inspected. However, it seems that Śaṅkara could not have lived earlier than the seventh century CE, rendering spurious all of the guru-paramparā-s that go back to BCE.

87 I am doubtful about this early date, as it is based on the report of Venkatarāman (1959:ix), some of whose proposed dates for the ācārya-s of Śrṅgerī lack sufficient historical support.

88 It was also published in Telugu by Vavilla Rāmasvāmi in 1885 CE.

89 Many of the pontiffs of the Śrṅgerī maṭha have been from the Mūlakaṇḍadu branch of Telugu-speaking Brahmans of Tamil Nadu (Gnanambal 1973:5).

90 As discussed in Section 1 of this chapter.

91 Sastry and Kumaraswami (1971:201–206), supporters of the Kāṇeś maṭha, comment that lists of Śrṅgerī ācārya-s are not consistent. A list of thirty ācārya-s was published in 1854 by His Highness Śrī Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar, in which Pṛthvīdhāra is Śaṅkara’s immediate successor at Śrṅgerī. In some later manuscripts Viṣvarūpa is introduced in place of Pṛthvīdhāra, but none of them mention the name of Sureśvara, as found in the list prepared by Narasimhabhaṛatī VIII. In the list of Śrṅgerī ācārya-s published by Aiyer and Sastry (1962:164), Śaṅkara is recorded as ascending the gaddī in 18 BCE, and passing away in 12 BCE. Sureśvara follows him, ascending the gaddī in 12 BCE, and passing away in 773 CE; a ‘miraculous’ reign of 785 years. Sastry and Kumaraswamy maintain that Sureśvara was not introduced to the Śrṅgerī guru-paramparā until after 1856. They believe (1971:194–201) that
The other three *matha*-s (of the ‘official’ four) have a list of between 60 to 144 *ācārya*-s in their *guru-parampara*-s, widely disparate numbers of *ācārya*-s for institutions that were supposed to have been founded within a few years of each other. To date, the Dvārakā *matha* has a list of 77 names, going back to Śaṅkara, born in 491 BCE, the seventy-seventh *ācārya* being Abhinava Saccīdānanda, installed in 1960 (Miśra, *Mathānmāya Setu* 2001:26). This *guru-parampara*, minus the *ācārya*-s of the twentieth century, is given in the *Vimarśa* (pp. 25–28) said to have been written by the *ācārya* Śrī Rājarājēśvara Śaṅkarāśrama Svāmī, the seventy-third pontiff of Dvārakā, in 1896 (Miśra, *Mathānmāya Setu* 2001:35; Umesh 1981:169), and published in 1955 (Antarkar 2001:40).

In several sources, the so-called copper-plate of King Sudhanvā is mentioned. The inscription (last line) is dated *asvin sukla 15, yudhisṭhira śaka* 2663—corresponding to 476 BCE—and has been cited

Śaṅkara was born in 509 BCE, and was the first Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī, passing away in 477 BCE. The second *ācārya* to occupy the *gaddhi* was Sureśvara (477–407 BCE), followed by sixty-five other *ācārya*-s (eight of whom were called Śaṅkara), up to Candraśekharāndrasarasvatī, who ascended the *gaddhi* in 1907 CE. The thirty-seven was Abhinava Śaṅkara, born in Cidambaram, who was on the Kāñcī *gaddhi* from 801 to 839 CE. The proponents of the earlier date for Śaṅkara maintain that it is this Abhinava Śaṅkara who is being confused with Śādi Śaṅkara, the *bhāṣyakāra*.

92 See Aiyer and Sastri (1962:167–181) for the *ācārya*-s in the *guru-parampara*-s of four *matha*-s: 35 for (Tunga) Śrāgeri; 68 for Kuḍalī; 79 for Dvārakā; 144 for Jagannāth. These lists seem to be based on a Marāṭhī work by Mahadev Rajaram Bodas, *Śaṅkarācārya va tīyācā sampradāya*, Piṇḍe, 1923 (Lütt 1978:412 fn. 2). See also Shastry (1982: Appendix III) for the (36) *pīthādhīpati*-s of Śrāgeri *jagadguru*-s who go back to Śādi Śaṅkara (788–820 CE), who is followed by Sureśvara. Dates only start with Vidyāśaṅkaratīrtha (on the *gaddhi* from 1228–1333 CE); see Sadvānand Bhavmacārī (2000:29–34) for the (78) *jagadguru*-s of Dvārakā, also going back to Sureśvara, who supposedly occupied the *gaddhi* from 447 BCE. According to this *guru-parampara*, Sureśvara is followed by Citsukhācārya (from 423 BCE). However, Citsukha may be dated to the latter half of the twelfth century, as he comments on the *Nyāya-makaranda* of Ānandabodha Bhaṭṭārakācārya, who appears to have lived in the latter half of the eleventh and first half of the twelfth century (see Dasgupta 1975, Vol. 2:49; Satchidanandendra Sarasvati 1989:908–943). However, it was long ago suggested (Govinda-Dāsa 1894:166) that the Citsukhācārya of the Dvārakā *guru-parampara* is different from the more recent Citsuka.

93 I have not seen this work.

94 The Dvārakā *guru-parampara* is also published in Govinda-Dāsa (*Theosophist*, Vol. XVI, 1894:164–168); Bāldev Upādhyāy (1967); *Yatisandhyāsamuccaya* (pub. by Dvārakā-āśrama, 1967).

95 For the Sanskrit text and translation, see Mishra (*Mathānmāya Setu* 2001:62–65).
on several occasions\textsuperscript{96} in support of the claims to antiquity of both the Dvārakā pitha and Śaṅkara (who is supposed to have been a contemporary of Sudhanvā), and to authenticate the claim that Śaṅkara founded four maṭha-s in the four quarters of India.\textsuperscript{97} Sudhanvā (as a king of Kerala) also appears (four times) in the Śaṅkara-dig-vijaya (ŚDV)\textsuperscript{98} and the Mathāmnāya-s.\textsuperscript{99} Umesh (1981:176–177) is, in my view, rightly suspicious of the authenticity of this inscription: the copper-plate was not available from the Dvārakā pitha for his inspection, despite his numerous requests; the Sanskrit is not ancient, as would have been used in the fifth century BCE; and the signature of Sudhanvā as sarvabhauma (‘Lord of the entire earth’)\textsuperscript{100} is odd,

\textsuperscript{96} Vīmāra p. 2 (see Umesh 1981:169); Mishra (Mathāmnāya Setu 2001:xvii).

\textsuperscript{97} Installing: (l.1) Padmapāda (alias Sanandana) at Bhogvardhana (Jagannah); (l.17) Toṭaka (alias Pratardana) at Jyotir (Badar); (l.23–27) Viśvarūpa (alias Sureśvara) at Śāradā (Dvārakā); and (l.18–19) Prthvīdhāra (alias Hastāmalaka) at Śrī-ṛṣi (Śrīgeri). Sureśvara is deputed by Śaṅkara to be the arbiter of important decisions (l.32–33). Śaṅkara is also said to have installed Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the renovated temple of Trailokya Sundar in Dvārakā, which is particularly renowned for heresies (l.23–26).

\textsuperscript{98} See Māhava-Vidyāraṇya (1986). The first appearance (l.60–98) is when Sudhanvā (an incarnation of Indra) is saved from the perils of Buddhism by the miracles of Kumārila-Bhaṭṭa (an incarnation of Skanda): he accepts the Veda and expels the Sugata Buddhists. This incident seems to be partly based on an account found in the Keralopathi (the earliest traditional account of Kerala), according to which two of the twenty-five Perumals who administered Kerala (Palli Bana Perumal and Cheraman Perumal) embraced Buddhism, Palli Bana Perumal (c.305–317 CE) ordering the Brahmans throughout Malanādu to also embrace Buddhism. The Brahmans, with the help of a saint named Jāgaman and six sāstrī-s defeated the Buddhists in debate, resulting in their expulsion by the king, who then abdicated in great remorse. Cheraman may have been born, and died, a śaiva, though supporting Palli Bana Perumal’s conversion to Buddhism (Chaudhury 1964:233). In the second incident (l.10–30), Sudhanvā’s attempts to entice Śaṅkara to his palace are rebuffed. He is finally granted the boon of a son after reciting three self-penned dramas. Sudhanvā appears (l.166–175) when Śaṅkara visits Kerala; and when Śaṅkara commences his digvijaya, he is accompanied by many disciples and Sudhanvā, who here makes his fourth appearance (l.1–29). During his encounter with Krakaca and his ferocious Kāpālika entourage, the king fought with bow and arrow on behalf of Śaṅkara, who reduced them to ashes with a mystic syllable.

\textsuperscript{99} Discussing the various characteristics (lakṣaṇa) needed by a wandering mendicant (parivrājaka) to assume authority at either of the four separate pitha-s (Dvārakā, Jyotira, Śrīgeri and Govardhana), the Mahānūsāsanam, v. 53 (Mishra, vv. 53 and 55 [=Sarve 1963:649, Mathāmnāyaseta, vv. 32 and 33; see Appendix 2]) states that he should have the capacity for exertion of Sudhanvā for dharma, serving gods and kings. The tradition of dharma (v. 55) should be protected eternally by Sudhanvā and other rulers.

\textsuperscript{100} See also Miśra (Āmit Kālekhā 2001:21–23) for a discussion of the term sarvabhauma.
as it is to Śaṅkara that the plate is addressed as a eulogy. Sanskrit first came to be used in inscriptions only in the first century BCE (Salomon 1998:86), the earliest extant examples of copper plate inscriptions—used primarily to record land grants—dating to around the middle of the fourth century CE (the earliest examples being in Prakrit, issued by the Pallava and Śālaṅkāyana dynasties in south India), though they appear to have been manufactured from the first or second century CE (Salomon 1998:114). Further, the form of copper plate inscriptions is fairly standardised, and in no respect similar to the copper plate inscription of Sudhanvā. The historical existence of Sudhanvā as a king of Kerala seems doubtful as I have been unable to find any reference to him in other sources, and the copper-plate inscription seems to be entirely spurious, manufactured to add credence to the legitimacy of Dvārakā and the other three pīṭha-s.

4.4.1 Kāṇḍīpuram

There is an ongoing dispute concerning whether Śaṅkara founded either four matha-s, as per the Maṭhāmnāya-s, or five matha-s, including Kāṇḍīpuram (known as the Kāmakoṭi pīṭha). This matha is nevertheless fully recognised in most orthodox circles. Both Śrīnerī and

101 Intriguingly, Rāja Sudhanvā also features in the semi-mythological history of Nepal (see Wright 1877:83, who edited a translation of the Buddhist recension of the Vamsāvalī, “The Genealogical History of Nepal”): the Tretā Yuga is said to have ended in Sudhanvā’s reign; he built a new palace in a town called Sāṅkāya-nagarī that he founded; and was put to death, for reasons unknown, at Janakpur by Rāja Janaka, the father of Siṭā.

102 Sureśvara’s reputation amongst Śaṅkara’s hagiographers is such that his appropriation to a particular place seems to be a probable (though admittedly unreliable) indicator of the source of a hagiographic or eulogistic text. The Dvārakā guru-paramparā begins in 509 BCE, and the copper-plate also records dates in the fifth century BCE. I would even hazard a guess that the inscription may have been fabricated around the time of the previously mentioned disputes over the legitimacy of pīṭha-s in Gujarat during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Curiously, the inscription does not mention Kerala, where, according to the ŚDV, Sudhanvā was a king.

103 Published in Kalyāṇ (Tirthāṇk) (1997:547–548), a conservative publication, is a list of twenty jagadguru śaṅkarācārya pīṭha-s and upapīṭha-s, which states that the five main pīṭha-s “established by Śaṅkara” are: Jyotir pīṭha, Govardhan pīṭha, Saradā pīṭha, Śrīnerī pīṭha, Kāmakoṭi pīṭha. There are seven “branches or upamathā of the Śrīnerī pīṭha”: Kunḍi (=Kuḍali), Śivagaṇḍā, Āvana, Virūpāka, Puspagiri, Saṅkeśa/Karavīr, Rāmcandrapur (Hosangar talukā, Mysore District); and eight matha-s in
Kāñcīpūram claim legitimacy as the authentic southern pīṭha, and a substantial volume of polemical publications from both sides have issued in the last century, the foremost contributors being, on the Śrūgerī side, Śarma (1963); and on the Kāñcī side, Kuppuswami (1972; 2001) and Narayana Sastry (1971 [1916]), who published the first work in English in support of the Kāñcī claim. Recently, Antarkar (2001) has responded to numerous points raised by Śarma, Aiyer and Sastry, and Venkataraman, objecting to the legitimacy of the Kāñcī maṭha. Śarma claims, contrary to significant epigraphic evidence, that the Kāñcī maṭha only came into existence in the early nineteenth century. The Punyaślokamaṉijārī (PŚM), one of the three hagiographies of Śaṅkara accepted as genuine by the Kāñcī maṭha, contains a guru-paramparā for the Kāñcī pīṭha, going back to Śaṅkara’s founding of the maṭha and ascension of the gaddī in 480 BCE; he is followed by Sureśvara who was on the gaddī from

the Karnataka area: Harīharpur (near Śrūgerī), Bhandigeḍī (Uḍupi tāḷukā), Yaḍnīrū (Kāsargodū tāḷukā), Kodaṇḍāsram (Tumkur tāḷukā, Mysore District), Svaruvalli (Śirsī tāḷukā), Nelamāvu (Uttar Kanārā tāḷukā), Yoganarsīṁha Śvāmi (Holenarasāpur, Mysore District), Bālakudurū (Uḍupi tāḷukā).

Another list of twenty maṭha-s is cited by Anantanandendra Sarasvati (1968:388) from a work that I have not seen, by Mahāvidvāṅ Venkaṭācāla Śarma. These maṭha-s are described as Śaṅkarācāryādīvidyā-dharma-pīṭhādhipa-paramparāgata-maṭhā: Śumeru, Paramāṭma, Sumur (at Kāśī), Hayvaka, Koppala, Śrī-Sailam, Rāmeśvaram, Ghanagiri, Honmahalli, Kaivalyapura, Mūlabagalu, Sirali, Grḍṛhapura, Narasīṃhapādi, Molavana, Paṭana, Kāśī, Tīrthārājapura, Gaṅgōtrī, Tīrthahalli.

There is also a reference to a Śaṅkara maṭha at Gaṅgōtrī in The Light of Asia (1894:331). My suspicion is that this may be to a now practically derelict maṭha at Ukhimāṭha (near Gaṅgōtrī), which I visited in 1985. This appears also to be the maṭha referred to by Ghosh (1930:12)—who cites Sister Nivedita’s Northern Tīrthas—which was originally granted to the “Kedarnāth order of Śaṅkaraśāṅkara” for (presumably) military gosain-s in the service of the kings of Gaṅḍivaḷ. The mahānt was said to be the 125th in succession.

Kuppuswami responds, in large measure, to the arguments presented by R. Krishnaswamy Aiyer and K. R. Venkataraman in The Truth about the Kumbhakonam mutt, [Publisher and place not identified]:1965. (I have not been able to see this work.) Bader (2000:291) lists thirteen polemical works arising from disputes between the maṭha-s, including those by Śarma (1963), and Aiyar and Venkataraman (1965).

The others are Anantanandagiri’s Śaṅkaravijaya (see following section) and the Guru-ratna-mālā.

Antarkar (2001:38) and Veezhinathan (see Sarvajñātman 1972:1) also refer to the Jāgadbūrṇa-ratnā-mālāstava (Guru-ratna-mālā/mālākā [GRM]), which contains a list of 57 ācārya-s for the Kāmakoṭi pīṭha. The work is attributed by the Kāñcī maṭha to Sadāśivabrahmendra, who was co-student with Ātmbodhendra (1586–1638), both being disciples of Paramahāṃsa Śivendra (1539–1586), ācārya no. 57. It appears that
477 to 407 BCE. The guru-paramparā is said by the Kāñcī to have been prepared by Sarvājñasadābodha, the fifty-sixth ācārya, on the gaddī from 1512 to 1539. Later additions to the paramparā were added by several subsequent ācārya-s, the current reigning ācārya being Jayendrasarasvatī, the sixty-ninth. However, the credibility of the guru-paramparā pertaining to the period prior to the sixteenth century is doubtful.

The earliest record of an advaita maṭha at Kāñcī is a copper-plate epigraph, dated to 1291/2 CE, that records the grant of a village called Ambikāpuram (near Kāñcī) to Śrī ŚankarārYA (also referred to as Śankara-yogin), by Vijayaganḍagopāla, a Telugu Colā ruler. The inscription mentions pūja to Candramauliśvara and advaita upadeśa. It has been claimed, by some Kāñcī supporters, that the inscription is referring to a Śankarācārya, and provides evidence of a maṭha founded by him. However, firstly, it is clear that the reference cannot be to Ādi Śankara, as no one suggests that Śankara lived at such a late date. Secondly, the name in the inscription is Śankarāya and not Śankarācārya.

A Tamil inscription in the Śiva temple at Ambikāpuram, dated 1516 CE (śaka 1436), is signed by Candrasekhararasasvatī of the Kāñcī maṭha, and refers to a village granted to the maṭha, confirming the aforementioned grant of 1291/2 CE by Vijayaganḍagopāla (Mahalingam 1940:324; Antarkar 2001:112-115). The next record providing information about the pontiffs of Kāñcī is a grant of a village named Kṛṣṇarāyapuram, made in 1521 CE (śaka 1444) by Kṛṣṇadevarāya of Vijayanagara, to Candracūḍarasasvatī, disciple of Mahādevasarasvatī. In 1527 CE (śaka 1450) Kṛṣṇadevarāya made a further grant, of the village named Udayambākam, to Sadāśi-

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109 See, for example, Kuppuswami (1991:xxix–xxxii), who assigns this inscription, contra EI, to 1111 CE.
110 In another grant, of 1506 CE (śaka 1429), Mahādevasarasvatī is mentioned as a disciple of Sadāśīvasarasvatī (EI XIII, p. 122), while Sadāśīvasarasvatī is a disciple of Candrasekhararasasvatī, ‘Candraśekhara’ and ‘Candracūḍa’ being homonyms (EI XIV, p. 169).
vasarasvatī, disciple of Candraśekharasarvasvatī, wherein Sadāśiva is described as Śiva incarnate, besmeared with holy ash, and wearing rudrākṣa mālā (EI XIV:168–175). ¹¹¹ While there are several consistent records concerning the names of the early pontiffs of the Kāṇcī maṭha, the name Śaṅkarācārya first appears in epigraphs at Kāṇcī in 1686 CE. The four other maṭha-s consistently deny the authenticity of the Kāṇcī maṭha, yet the maṭha currently enjoys equal status with the maṭha-s at Dwārakā and Śrīgerī, the three maṭha-s being singled out by the Hindu Religious Endowments Commission in 1960–1962 as being among the few Hindu institutions which have remained true to the aims with which they were established (Bader 2000:304). Several of the Śaṅkarācāryas of those institutions have been, and continue to be, held in very high regard.

Regarding the polemical arguments against Kāṇcī, one strand of Śarma’s multi-faceted argument is the absence of any reference to Kāṇcī in the Maṭhāmnāya-s. However, the Kāṇcī maṭha currently denies the authenticity of the Maṭhāmnāya-s, believing that they post-date Vidyāraṇya and were not written by Śaṅkara. ¹¹² This is the view of most scholars who have examined the Maṭhāmnāya-s. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, ¹¹³ in response to objections by critics that Kāṇcī was not mentioned in the Maṭhāmnāya-s, some supporters of Kāṇcī either found or produced a Maṭhāmnāya-setu that included Kāṇcī, as the madhyāmnāya or mālmānna, and constituting the fifth āmnāya. ¹¹⁴ However, the production of this āmnāya appears to have detracted from the Kāṇcī claim, rather than substantiating it as intended. Critics of the Kāṇcī claim, notably Śarma (1963:312 ff.),

¹¹¹ See also EI XIII, p. 122.
¹¹² The official position of the Kāṇcīpuram pitha is that the Maṭhāmnāyas are historically unreliable, were not written by Śaṅkara, and came into existence after the time of Vidyāraṇya. However a Maṭhāmnāya-setu that records five maṭha-s exists (see below), Kāṇcī being the mālmānna, presided over by Śaṅkara himself, the others by his disciples. (I have not been able to see this text.)
¹¹³ Śarma (1963:316–336) refers to a maṭhāmnāya published by the Kumbhakoṇam maṭha in 1894.
¹¹⁴ Details from this āmnāya are to be found in Śarma (1963:'kha'), who refers to this āmnāya also as the mālmānna, ūrdvāmnāya and mukhyāmnāya: Maṭha, Sāradā; Āśrama, Indrasarasvatī; Pitha, Kāmakoti; Brhadmacārya, Satyabrahmacāri; Veda, Rg; Mahāvēkya, Aum Tatsat; Sampradāya, Mithyāvāra; Ācārya, Śri Śaṅkarācārya. Details provided by Aiyer and Sastri (1962:98) are as per Śarma, but also included are: Kṣetra, Satyavrata Kāṇcī; Devalā, Ekmānātha/Kāmakoti or Kāmākṣi; Tirtha, Kampa Saras.
have devoted a substantial effort to pointing out the inconsistencies contained in the Kāñcī Maṭhāmāyā. For around 120 years, since the controversy first began to generate considerable heat, the claim of the Kāñcī maṭha is that Śaṅkara founded five maṭha-s, with himself as the first ācārya at Kāñcī, and his four disciples at the other places recorded in the Maṭhāmāyā-s. The main substance of the Śrṅgerī claim is that the Kāñcī maṭha is a branch maṭha—of which there are several—of the Śrṅgerī maṭha.

One of the issues that has complicated the argument is the shifting of the Kāñcī maṭha to Kumbhakonam, which took place certainly prior to 1763 (Antarkar 2001:139), most probably in 1743 (Sriniwasan 1979:246). From epigraphic evidence, it appears that the Kāñcī maṭha was located in the Viṣṇukāñcī part of Kāñcīpuram at least until 1686. Owing to Muslim raids, the maṭha was then temporarily shifted to Tanjore, at the invitation of the rāja, Pratapa Sinḥa, who built a new maṭha and had a golden image of Kāmākṣī devī installed. The maṭha was then shifted to Kumbhakonam (Gnanambal 1973:10), which may have been the site of a Śaṅkara maṭha since the thirteenth century (Champalalakshmi 1996:344). Endowments

In 1886, a forum of scholars and pandits met at a vyavasthā (‘organisation/ruling’) held at Banaras and decided that only four maṭha-s were legitimate. Their decision was based primarily on the ŚDV and Maṭhāmāyā-s (Antarkar 2001:135–137). Ironically, it coincided with a tour of the north by Mahādevasarasvatī, the 63rd ācārya Kumbhakonam maṭha. However, the purpose of the vyavasthā was to discredit the claim of one Sadānandatārtha Svāmī that Śaṅkara founded a fifth maṭha at Mālāgala in Dvārakā (see below).

The Vaiṣṇava Śārṅgapāṇi temple of Kumbhakonam was renovated in the early Vijayanagara period, beginning in 1385, when the name Kumbhakonam was first used. A Vaiṣṇava maṭha was first attached to the temple in the period of Raghunātha Nāyaka, in the seventeenth century, since when it has served as an important pontifical seat of south Indian Vaiṣṇavism (Champakalakshmi 1996:344).


A Telugu Cōda Copper plate grant of the period of Viṣṇuvaṃśa (thirteenth century) records provisions made for its maintenance (Epigraphia Indica, XIII, A-62:194ff).
were made to the Kumbhakonam *matha* by the provision of the late Vijayanagara ruler Veṅkaṭa V in *śaka* 1632 (1710 CE). The main *matha* returned to the Śivakāṃci part of Kāṇcīpuram in the early nineteenth century, the Kumbhakonam *matha* now being a branch *matha* of Kāṇcīpuram.\(^{120}\)

### 4.4.2 Śṛṇgerī and other southern *matha*-s

While there is an on-going dispute between the Śṛṇgerī and Kāṇcīpuram *piṭha*-s as to which *piṭha* was founded by Śaṅkara as the southern *piṭha*,\(^ {121}\) at least six other *matha*-s have claimed legitimacy in the south (see Antarkar 2001:51–69): the *matha*-s at Āvaṇi, Puṣpagiri, Virūpākṣa, Śaṅkesvara, Tuṅga Śṛṇgerī and Kuḍalī (or

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\(^{120}\) Both the Kumbhakonam (‘junior’) and Kāṇcī (‘senior’) *matha*-s have a traditional entitlement (known as *merai*) to 1/96th part of the land-tax payable to Government, a tradition ratified in the High Court of Madras in 1917 by Sir John Wallis and Justice Mr. Ayling (Antarkar 2001:121). In 1894 the Collector of Tanjore recommended that 6743 Rs. be paid as *merai* to the Kāṇcī *matha* (Anantanandendra Sarasvati 1968:379).

\(^{121}\) A dispute between the Kāṇcī Kāmakoṭi and Śṛṇgerī *matha*-s led to two court cases, in 1844 and 1848. This concerned the authority to carry out the repair of the ear-ornaments (*taṭaṇka-pratīṣṭhā*) of the Goddess Akhilaṅḍeśvarī in the Tiruvanaikōil temple at Jambukeśvaram, and the entitlement to exclusive jurisdiction over certain spiritual affairs of the area, in this case in district of Tirichinopoly. (Incidentally, the *matha* attached to this temple also claims to be the first and foremost of the *matha*-s established by Śaṅkara; see Antarkar 2001:95). The cases were decided in favour of the Kāṇcī *matha*, and the Śṛṇgerī *matha* failed to prove its case for its jurisdiction over religious matters in the south. A similar dispute over the consecration of the earrings again took place in 1908, with the same outcome, the Kāṇcī *matha* finally performing the consecration. There were several other disputes between the two *matha*-s (Bader 2000:290–291 fn 138; Antarkar 2001:94–101). More recently, in 1984, one K. Rajendran brought a case at the High Court of Madras (Bader 2000:303), claiming that the incumbents of the Kāṇcīpuram *matha* are not Jagad-guru-Śaṅkarācāryas. Rajendran cited the *Mathāmānīya*-s, and called attention to the three branches of the Śṛṇgerī *matha* in Tamil Nadu. He objected to the control of the Kāṇcī *matha* over the Kāmākṣi-amman temple, and to the participation of the Chief Minister and the Minister for Religious and Charitable Endowments in a conference partly organised by the Kāṇcī *matha*. The court rejected the suit, and, similar to the ruling in the case brought before the Bombay High Court in 1908, maintained that it was not the duty of the government to declare who is or who is not a Śaṅkarācārya.

\(^{122}\) Both the Puṣpagiri *matha* (Cuddapah *tāluṅkā*, Cuddapah District, Karnataka) and Virūpākṣa *matha* (Hospet *tāluṅkā*, Bellary District, Karnataka) have their own *Mathāmānīya*-s (Antarkar 2001:80). For the *Mathāmānīya-stotra* of the Puṣpagiri *matha*, see Anantanandendra Sarasvati (1968:386–387). It seems possible that the Puṣpagiri *matha* was originally one of four Śaiva-Siddhānta *matha*-s known to have been very
Kuḍalī. While the Kuḍalī matha (at the confluence of the Tuṅga and Bhadrā rivers in Shimoga District, Karnataka) may date from the twelfth century, and Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī (in Chikkamagalur District, Karnataka) from the fourteenth century, the others date from a later period.

The Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī matha and Kuḍalī matha (whose current jurisdiction is in north-west Karnataka and southern Maharashtra; see Anantanandendra Sarasvati 1968:363 fn. 11) have both made competing claims for legitimacy, arguing that the other matha is a subsidiary. Of the two, the currently recognised Śaṅkarācārya occupies the gaddī of Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī. However, it seems that previously the Kuḍalī matha enjoyed supremacy. In 1580, during the reign of Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka of Keladi (1520–1609), an order was passed prohibiting the ācārya of the Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī matha from going out on digvijaya. During the reign of the 52nd ācārya of Kuḍalī, around 1723, the ācārya-s of Kuḍalī, Śaṅkeśvara and Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī matha-s met at Sātārā (Maharashtra) during the reign of Sahu—the successor of Śivāji—to decide which of the ācārya-s should be entitled to agra-pūjā (‘first/foremost’ pūjā). It was decided in favour of the ācārya of the Kuḍalī matha. Under the order of Basavappa Nāyaka II—during the reign Narasimḥabhāratī, the 53rd ācārya of Kuḍalī (1727–1751)—the ācārya of Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī was restrained from going on digvijaya; and again in 1806, this time under the order of Purṇayya, the famous minister of Hyder Ālī and Tippu Sultan. Another restraining order was was also issued in 1820. In 1811, Kṛṣṇarājendra III of Mysore permit-

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123 From inscriptive evidence, it appears that the Kuḍalī matha received grants from 1155, while the Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī matha received grants only after 1345 or 1350 (Antarkar 2001:55–67).

124 There is a story to be found in several sources that while the ācārya of the Kuḍalī matha, Narasimḥabhāratī, was away on an extended tour, around 1570, the gaddī was usurped by the Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī matha. This, however, contradicts the account (and the guru-parampārā of Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī), that Narasimḥabhāratī was initially the incumbent of Tuṅga Śṛṅgerī (see Antarkar 2001:57–59).

125 The founding of the Śṛṅgerī matha, and its association with Śaṅkara, are discussed in the following chapter.

ted Narasiṃhabhāratī\(^{127}\) (1820–1856) of Kuḍāḷī to go on digvijaya in palanquin and with full honours, having recognised him as jagadguru. When, in 1836, the incumbent of Kuḍāḷī, the 59th ācārya, also wanted to go on digvijaya, the Tuṅga Śrīnerī ācārya objected and took the Kuḍāḷī ācārya to court in Mysore to prevent it; the resultant ruling was in favour of Tuṅga Śrīnerī, but on Appeal (no. 22 of 1847) the ruling was overturned, in favour of the Kuḍāḷī ācārya, ratified by Sir Mark Cubbon in 1849. Up until the middle the nineteenth century, all of the several court rulings in disputes between the Kuḍāḷī and Śrīnerī matha-s issued in favour of the Kuḍāḷī matha.

Although currently the Śaṅkarācārya of the Tuṅga Śrīnerī matha is recognised as the ‘legitimate’ Śaṅkarācārya, and not that of Kuḍāḷī, it seems that it was only in the middle of the twentieth century that the Tuṅga Śrīnerī matha started pushing the claim that theirs was the Dakṣināmnāya matha, or one founded by Śaṅkara for the southern region. Records appear to have been altered to this effect (Antarkar 2001:81).

It is not only the Kāṇcī, Kuḍāḷī and Śrīnerī matha-s that have enjoyed dominance as the southern matha. The Śivagaṇgā matha was established at the request of Rāja Wodeyar, the then ruler of Mysore, in 1615 at Śivagaṇgā\(^{128}\) by an ascetic, Śaṅkarabhāratī,\(^{129}\) who was ordained by Abhinava Narasiṃhabhāratī V of the Śrīnerī matha (Row 1914:57ff.). The spiritual jurisdiction of the matha has periodically extended over most of the territory of modern Karnataka. Between 1727 and 1846 the matha rose to prominence, so much so that the Śrīnerī matha was overshadowed by the influence of the Śivagaṇgā matha. During this period, rāḥdarī-ś (‘passports’) were issued by several local rulers and officials, permitting the jagadgurū-s of Śivagaṇgā to travel in the region and collect religious donations, and a number of villages were granted to the matha. However, Narasiṃhabhāratī VIII, who was on the gaddī as the pīṭhādhipati of (Tuṅga) Śrīnerī

\(^{127}\) Another ācārya of the same name.

\(^{128}\) According to Row (1914:24) the two main temples at the site (Svarṇadevī and Gaṅgādharavāmī) were first established in the reign of Viṣṇuvardhana (1104–1141). The site, which is thirty-four miles north-west of Bangalore, features a prominent hill where pilgrims assemble at Makarasaṅkṛānti to witness several pot-loads of ‘Gaṅgā-water’ issuing from the earth.

\(^{129}\) For a list of the Śaṅkarācāryas on the gaddī at Śivagaṇgā from 1615 to 1914, see Row (1914:Appendix 1).
from 1817 to 1879, revived the fortunes of Śrīnerī (Venkataraman 1959:84–95; Antarkar 2001:85–92), ‘rediscovering’ Kālī (Śaṅkara’s birthplace), instituting Śaṅkara jayantī celebrations all over India, and arranging for the publication of a comprehensive collection of Śaṅkara’s works. He also instituted meetings of various ‘legitimate’ Śaṅkarācāryas and objected to travel on pālānkuṇ (addā-pālakī) and the receiving of presents by the ‘illegitimate’ ācārya-s of the Śivagaṅgā maṭha. To settle the dispute, the Mahārāja of Mysore passed an order (10 th June 1831) that both maṭha-s should enjoy equal privileges (Row 1914:69). However, the aim of the Śrīnerī maṭha—which was ultimately successful—was to absorb the Śivagaṅgā maṭha’s jurisdiction into its own and to treat the Śivagaṅgā svāmī as a ‘disciple’, giving him a small allowance (Row 1914:75). At times, the Śivagaṅgā, Āvaṇi and (Tuṅga) Śrīnerī maṭha-s have sent payments to the Kuḍāḷi maṭha, which is evidence of their status as subsidiary maṭha-s in previous centuries. However, as observed previously, it was the (Tuṅga) Śrīnerī maṭha that subsequently gained preeminence, gaining control of the Śivagaṅgā maṭha, and persuading the government to deny it certain privileges, such as the suspension of rāhḍarī-ś.130

The Āvaṇi maṭha was founded by Abhinava Narasiṃhabhāratī V, of the Śrīnerī maṭha, who, according to the Śrīnerī guru-paramparā, ascended the Śrīnerī gaddī in 1576, his demise being in 1599 (Aiyer and Sastri 1962:165). The earliest record for the Āvaṇi maṭha is a grant by Śrī Raṅga III, dated 1645 (Venkataraman 1959:60),131 subsequent grants being made by the Mughal administrators of Bijapur (Karnataka). According to the occupants of the Āvaṇi maṭha (Anantanandendra Sarasvati 1968:384–385), the maṭha was established

130 The vigorous assertion of power and privileges for the Śrīnerī maṭha by Narasiṃhabhāratī VIII also led to several court cases against the Kumbhakonam maṭha, where the Kāṇḍī maṭha was stationed during most of the nineteenth century (see Antarkarv 2001:88ff.). In 1829, two hundred residents of Madurai had an order (nibandhanapatrika) issued, stating their allegiance to the Kumbhakonam maṭha. The Śrīnerī ācārya got a similar order issued in his favour. However, in 1837, when Narasiṃhabhāratī wished to attend the Mahāmāgham festival in Kumbhakonam, he was prevented by a government order from going by pālānkuṇ through the street of Kumbhakonam housing the Kumbhakonam and other maṭha-s; he was obliged to pass via another route. The ācārya went to Trichiripalli in 1838 and attempted to get donations (agrasambhānacanā) from the residents of some villages in the district. Upset, the villagers approached the District Collector, who passed an order preventing the Śrīnerī ācārya from doing so.

131 Epigraphia Carnatica, X, Mulbagal, 60.
after Narasimhabhāratī returned to Śrīnerī from a long tour in the north, to find that someone else had been installed on the Śrīnerī gaddī. Rather than dispute, he set up at the Kuḍalī maṭha. When Narasimhabhāratī went on tour again, he left a disciple on the Kuḍalī gaddī, to avoid being usurped again. On this tour he established a maṭha in Kolar district that was subsequently moved to Avanti (also in the Kolar district), and which became known as the Āvaṇī maṭha. Although the Āvaṇī maṭha is currently recognised as a branch of the Tunga Śrīnerī maṭha,132 in the eighteenth century the agrasamabhāvanā collected by the ācārya, who was on tour in the Kāverī area, went to the Kāṇcī maṭha, as the Kāverī area lay within the Kāṇcī jurisdiction. However, correspondence from the early eighteenth century133 reveals that at that time both the Āvaṇī and Śivagaṅgā (see below) maṭha-s were paying tribute annually to the Kuḍalī maṭha (Anantanandendra Sarasvati 1968:384–385), indicating that it was either Kuḍalī or Kāṇcī that was then considered the preeminent maṭha.

The Virūpākṣa maṭha is another advaita maṭha that has been involved in legal disputes concerning its right to exert spiritual sovereignty over the area under its jurisdiction, and to collect donations. According to local tradition it was founded by the legendary Vidyāranya,134 its first ācārya being appointed in 1382. However, the earliest available inscription is of Kṛṣṇadevaraya, of 1515 (Verghese 1995:116).135 In 1863, the Śrīnerī maṭha filed a suit in the Nizam’s High Court, attempting to prevent the Virūpākṣa maṭha—which had representatives stationed in Hyderabad and other places—from touring and collecting yearly payments. The court decided against the plaintiff, noting that people were familiar with the Virūpākṣa maṭha, and that the Śrīnerī samsthāna (‘institution’) had not toured for many years. The court ruled that the Śrīnerī maṭha should give up its claim to regular payments for spiritual authority; and that the Virūpākṣa maṭha should continue to impart religious instruction to its disciples and tour the country, and that no one should interfere with that organisation.136

132 The ācārya-s of the Āvaṇī maṭha call themselves Āvaṇī Śrīnerī svāmī-s (Venkataraman 1959:60).
133 Letters written in 1711, 1713, 1714 and 1715.
134 See the following chapter.
135 Another smārta advaita maṭha is located nearby, the Cintāmaṇī maṭha at Ānegundi. It is believed that this maṭha was founded in the early fourteenth century, and continued to function in post-Vijayanagara times.
136 The Kāṇcī maṭha, and the Virūpākṣa, Āvaṇī, Śivagaṅgā, Hampe and Karavīra
In Maharashtra, in the village of Karavīra, is the Karavīra *matha*, also known as the Śaṅkėśvara *pītha*. The *matha* appears first to have been affiliated to Śṛṛgerī, and then to have seceded in the sixteenth century (Lütt 1978:416). It has four branches, at Śaṅkėśvara/Karavīra, Pūṇe, Kolhapur and Sātārā (Anantanandendra Sarasvatī 1968:367). In 1925/26 both the Śaṅkarācārya of Purī (Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha) and the Śaṅkarācārya of Śaṅkėśvara (Dr. Kurkoti) were actively engaged in the politics of the recently reformed Hindu Mahāsabhā, and both were vigorously defending their claim to be Śaṅkarācāryas, through public exposure and political activity. Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha was attempting to become pontiff of Dvārakā, but did not succeed, instead becoming Śaṅkarācārya of Purī in 1925, at the request of the dying Śaṅkarācārya of Purī, Madhusūdanatīrtha (Lütt 1978:415).137

According to tradition, Śaṅkara was of the Nambūdiri (Nambūthiri) caste of Kerala. Their manners and customs are recorded in the Śaṅkara-smyti and the Śaṅkarācaryar, works reputedly but almost certainly not written by Śaṅkara. According with some of the hagiographic accounts of Śaṅkara’s travels (see below), the Nambūdiris claim that Śaṅkara left Kedārnāth, where he had set up a śiva-liṅgam, and returned to Śrīśailam via Ayodhyā, Gayā and Purī. When Śaṅkara reached the south he is said to have established four *matha*-s in Trichur (Kerala). Two of these, the Thekkē *matham* (Tirukkekkat) and the Natuvil *matham* (Nāḍuvile) were functioning at the beginning of the twentieth century, presided over by Nambūdiri *saṃnyāsi*-s, who have, according to them, descended in a regular line of succession from the original heads of the *matha*-s (Ananthakrishna Iyer 1912:259).138

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*matha*-s—the latter now all being branches of the Śṛṛgerī *matha*—are all known as Śāradā *matha*-s. While there is a reference in some of the vijeya-s of Śaṅkara (see below) to Śaṅkara’s inauguration of the worship of Śāradā devī at Śṛṛgerī, according to the *Mathāṃnāya*-s it is Dvārakā that is the Śāradā *pītha*.

137 The Śaṅkarācārya of Śaṅkėśvara/Karavīra, together with the Śaṅkarācāryas of Purī and Dvārakā, attended the Allahabad Kumbh Melā of 1918 to preside over sessions of the All-India Hindu Sabhā (later to become the Hindu Mahāsabhā) and the All-India Sanātana Dharma Mahāsambhālan. The Śaṅkarācārya of Karavīra was subsequently enrolled into the Hindu Mahāsabhā (Jaffrelot 1996:198).

138 These *matha*-s are said to have been originally situated at Trichur, but subsequently relocated outside town. One of the four *matha*-s (I have not been able to determine which) was transformed into a Vedic college for Nambūdiri Brahmans (Anantanandendra Sarasvatī 1968:378).
4.4.3 Disputes concerning the western pitha

The Mūlabāgala matha (in Karnataka) and the Durvāspur matha (in the vicinity of Dvārakā) have both claimed legitimacy, in opposition to the Dvārakā matha. The claim of the former led to a convocation of pandits at the aforementioned vyavastha in Banaras in 1886, which decided against the Mūlabāgala matha, in favour of Dvārakā. In 1945 Svāmī Śrī Abhinava Saccidānandatīrtha was consecrated as head of the Dvārakā matha. Prior to this he had been head of the Mūlabāgala matha, but upon his appointment to Dvārakā the lineage of the Mūlabāgala matha was merged with that of Dvārakā (Daśanāmī Sampradāya—The Monastic Tradition 1999:4).

Bader (2000:299) discusses what he describes as undoubtedly the most significant legal case involving the jurisdiction of the Śaṅkara matha-s, which came before the High Court of Bombay in 1908. The Śaṅkarācārya of Dvārakā succeeded, under a first court ruling, in preventing his rival at Dholka in Gujarat from calling himself Śaṅkarācārya, and from soliciting money under that name. In defence, the Dholka ācārya had claimed that the Śaṅkarācārya at Badarānāth had long ago set up matha-s in Gujarat and elsewhere, having been obliged to quit Badarānāth owing to disputes there; and that the Dholka matha is a branch of the Jyotir matha. An appeal was brought by the Śaṅkarācārya of Dholka, who denied the authenticity of Śaṅkara’s authorship of Mathāmnāya-s, which the Dvārakā matha had cited in evidence, reiterating that Dholka was a branch of the Jyotir matha. The British Judge, Chief Justice Scott, accepted the claim that Śaṅkara established four matha-s, but observed that matha-s may decline in prestige, and that new matha-s are established. He noted that the jurisdiction of the Śrīgeri matha was reported to have been divided into five or six branches in 1835. Justice Scott accepted the defendant’s evidence that the Śaṅkarācāryas of Śrīgeri, Dvārakā and Purī had received offerings when they were on tour in districts outside their alleged jurisdiction, but allowed the appeal, setting aside the ruling of the lower court. The Dvārakā pitha was again involved


140 This was on the basis of Śrī Sunkur Swami v. Sidha Lingayath Charanti; see Bader (2000:301 fn. 159).
in a dispute in 1982, after the demise of the then pontiff Abhinava Saccidānanda-tīrtha, who had appointed Svarūpānanda-sarasvatī as his successor. However, at that time Svarūpānanda was Śaṅkarācārya of the Jyotir maṭha, where he had been installed since 1973 (Jaffrelot 1996:356). This resulted in Svarūpānanda becoming the Śaṅkarācārya of two maṭha-s, which was challenged by Mādhavārāma who wished to occupy the Jyotir maṭha gaddī (Sundareshan 2000:4).

4.4.4 The eastern pīṭha

Regarding the history of the eastern pīṭha in Orissa, little if anything is known of the historical origins. It seems that the oldest maṭha-s in the area were Kāpālīka and Pāṣupata. The Govardhana maṭha at Purī has a list of 144 (or 142) ācārya-s contained in its Mathāmnāya, published in Purī as the Śaṅkarācārya-jagadguru-mathāmnāya by Yogeendra Asthavādana Śarma in 1930 (Pande 1994:29). The Govardhan maṭha has four other branches in Purī: the Śaṅkarānanda, Śivatīrtha, Gopālatīrtha and Mahiprakāśa maṭha-s. The first three maṭha-s are presided over by samnyāsī-s, while the last is a brahmacārī maṭha. The only dates known for the pontiffs of the Govardhan maṭha are for the last five pontiffs, the first of whom became Head in 1849. In the bald list many names are repeated. One significant difference between appointments at Purī and other pīṭha-s is that at Purī the Śaṅkarācāryas are traditionally first householders before assuming office. At the other pīṭha-s the Śaṅkarācāryas are generally appointed much younger, from brahmacārya. As a consequence, pontiffs at Purī tend to reign for shorter periods, which could account for its longer list of pontiffs (Lütt 1978:412). However, there seems to have been some kind of lapse of authority at Purī, as suggested by a letter from the Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīgerī to his colleague at Purī, dated

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141 In Bhubanesvara, the oldest maṭha is the Sadavrata maṭha, dating from (tentatively) the seventh century. It was originally in the hands of the Pāṣupata order, but in 1964 it was administered by Bhāratī of the Daśanāṁī order (Miller and Wertz 1976:13). The second oldest monastery is the Kāpālī maṭha, dating (tentatively) from the eighth to sixteenth centuries. This maṭha is associated with the Kāpālikas, a sect closely associated with the Pāṣupatas.

142 The Śaṅkarānanda maṭha is the more important of the affiliated maṭha-s, supplying the vice-president to an organisation of Brahmans (the Mukti-Maṇḍapa) which oversees sixteen inām villages in the Purī pargana. The Govardhan maṭha supplies the president to this organisation (Anantanandendra Sarasvatī 1968:399).
1862. The Śaṅkarācārya states that “the Acharyas of the Govardhana and Jyotir Maths degraded themselves to the position of Gosains [presumably married śaṃnyāsīs] and thus these two Maths remained without any Acharya although the Govardhana Math was subsequently revived by a Sanyasi from Gougak Nakhal.” Beyond this not much is known, but it appears from East India Company documents that the Puri matha was (still or again?) in the hands of śaṃnyāsīs around 1800 (Lütt 1978:413 fn. 6).

At one time there seems to have been a close association between the Govardhana matha and the Jagannātha temple, in that the priests of the Jagannātha temple used to receive training in ceremonies and rituals in the Govardhana matha. A certificate was then issued, which, following the confirmation of the king, permitted the priests to carry out their services. Owing to a dispute arising from the removal and destruction of the idols of Ādi-Śaṅkara and Śiva (or Padmapāda?) from Jagannātha, around 1800, the relationship between the two institutions ended. Prior to 1900 the Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīnerī was regarded as the preeminent authority regarding the running of the other matha-s, and the Śaṅkarācārya of Puri did not play an important role in the religious life of India. This changed in the twentieth century, since when the Śaṅkarācāryas of Puri have played a more prominent role in Hindu religious affairs, notably under Bhāratkṛṣṇatīrtha, who was very active during his period on the gaddī, from 1925 to 1960 (Lütt 1978:414–415).

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144 During his reign, Gajpati Dibyasisma Deva II (1793–1798) renovated the Jagannātha temple, temporarily removing the mūrtis of Padmapāda and Śaṅkarācārya. They were returned but subsequently destroyed by vaishnava-s (Das 1997:109).
145 Purī has witnessed periodic contests between vaishnava and śaiva religious and political authorities since the twelfth century, until which time Orissa was śaiva, with few vaishnava temples. Śakti images appear from the eighth century onwards. The rise of vaishnava influence began around the time of the construction of the Jagannātha temple, begun in 1136, attributed to the Gaṅga king Anantavarman Coṇḍagaṇa, who was most probably śaiva. The cult of Puruṣottama (later known as Jagannātha) was raised to the status of an imperial cult. Jagannātha at Puri is mentioned by Śyāna (c.1370), indicating its importance. See Dimock (1963:107); Dash (1978); Panigraha (1981:335–352); Upinder Singh (1993:249–259).
146 In January 1906, at the Allahabad Kumbh Melā, the Śaṅkarācārya of Puri presided over the orthodox organisation, Sanātana Dharma Mahāsabhā; at the inauguration of the All-India Hindu Sabhā at Haridvār, in 1915, the Śaṅkarācārya of Puri acted as one of the three Śaṅkarācārya vice-presidents; three Śaṅkarācāryas—of
Śaṅkarācārya, he was involved in the Hindu Mahāsabhā, after 1923, and ran for presidency in 1925/26. At the invitation of the Self Realisation Fellowship of Los Angeles, he toured the USA in 1958, becoming the first Śaṅkarācārya to tour outside India.

Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha died in 1960, having not appointed a successor. The gaddī was vacant for four years, eventually being occupied by Niraṅjanadevatīrtha, who became infamous as one of the instigators of the agitation against the government’s failure to implement a pan-Indian ban on cow-slaughter. Since the early twentieth century, the Śaṅkarācāryas of Purī, Dvārakā and Jyōṣimath have been mutually supportive during various religious and political protests, their orthodox stance being supported by Hindu organisations such as the Hindu Mahāsabhā and the Jan Saṅgh (Lütt 1978:416–417).

Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha was involved in the nationalist movement, having contacts with Aurobindo and Gokhale. He was arrested but acquitted in 1921 after involvement in the famous ‘Karachi case’, a consequence of the All-India Khilafat Conference held in Karachi in July 1921, when Maulana Muhammed Ali declared it unlawful for any faithful Muslim to serve in, or conscript for, the British army. As Śaṅkarācārya, he was extensively involved, between 1931 and 1933, in opposition to the Untouchability Abolition and Temple Entry Bills. After 1952, Bhāratīkṛṣṇa spent more time in Nāgpur, founding the Vīśva Panamāṁāna Saṅgha (World Reconstruction Association) there in 1953, and eventually settling there.

On November 6th, 1966, 200,000 people tried to storm parliament, resulting in eight deaths and many injuries. 750 people (including 500 sannyāsīs) were arrested. Niraṅjanadevatīrtha undertook a 73-day fast in an unsuccessful attempt to change the decision of the government. In 1972, he formed an organisation against family planning, concerned that the proportion of Hindus in the population was decreasing.

In July 2000 a dispute erupted over the gaddī of Purī (Banerjee 2000:34). Svāmī Adhokṣajānanda, from Banaras, arrived in Purī, claiming that he was the real Śaṅkarācārya, having been ordained by the previous ācārya of Purī, Svāmī Niraṅjanadevatīrtha. However, he was arrested and expelled from the town, with widespread support from local dignitaries for the incumbent, Svāmī Niścalānadārasasvatī. The case is not straightforward, as the incumbent’s appointment—finally in 1995—had been surrounded by controversy and had taken several years, an appointment to the gaddī needing the recognition of the state’s endowment commissioner. One of the objections raised against Niścalānadārasasvatī’s appointment was that a Śaṅkarācārya of Purī should be a Tīrtha, and not a Sarasvatī. In the context of this particular dispute, it is perhaps interesting to note that according to the Mathāmnāya-s—used many times in court in legal and jurisdiction disputes by Śaṅkarācāryas of the four main matha-s—Tīrthas should belong to the Dvārakā pīṭha, and Sarasvatīs to the Śrīnerī pīṭha.
4.4.5 The northern pītha

Little information is available about the Jyotir matṭha in the north, for which Antarkar was supplied with a list of 82 ācārya-s in 1987 by the then ācārya.149 Miśra (Amit Kālekhā, 2001:102–106), an affiliate of the Dvārakā pītha, maintains that the Jyotir pītha was vacant from 1776 to 1941 (165 years),150 during which time the gaddī was removed to Dholka, where it was occupied by a continuous line of Śaṅkarācāryas during the interval. (It will be recalled that the Dholka gaddī was the object of a considerable legal dispute.) Pande (1994:29) observes that the tradition of the Jyotir matṭha is incomplete and shows interruption in the succession. Of the earliest period, twenty-one names are recounted in verses contained in an Appendix to a manuscript of the Mantra-rahasya.151 There is also a list of twenty-one names for the period between 1479 and 1776,152 then there is a gap until the twentieth century. In 1851/2 there was an earthquake in the area which destroyed the matṭha (Mason 1994:17).

During the early part of the twentieth century there were several court cases when various people laid claim to be the Śaṅkarācārya of the Jyotir matṭha (Sundaresan 2000:1). However, on May 11th 1941, Brahmānanda Sarasvatī was installed as pontiff, with the approval of the Śaṅkarācāryas of Śrīnerī and Purī, and support from Karpatri of Banaras and the Mahārāja of Darbhāṅga.153 His appointment was, however, surrounded by controversy, as was the appointment—after his demise in 1953—of his successor, Śaṅkānanda Sarasvatī, who had a rival, Krṣṇabodhāśrama. Both were appointed Śaṅkarācārya by the rival factions, resulting in court proceedings, decided in favour of Śaṅkānanda, who was subsequently succeeded by Viṣṇudevānanda Sarasvatī in 1981. However, the contro-

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149 The current ācārya frequently resides in Allahabad, where the Jyotir matṭha has a pāṭhyaśālā.

150 According to some records, the Jyotir matṭha ceased to function for nearly three centuries, but the current authorities of that institution admit a break of only 165 years (Cenkner 1983:111).

151 Māyādattā Śāstri, Jyotisīṭha-paricaya, p. 16 (cited by Pande).

152 Harī Krṣṇa Ratūri, Gaṅgādāra ka Itihās, p. 55 (cited by Pande).

153 Brahmānanda Sarasvatī’s reputation was enhanced through the influence of his former secretary and disciple, Mahārāṣṭri Maheś Yogi, who, famously, became a guru to the Beatles, Marianne Faithful, Donovan, and other pop-stars from the nineteen-sixties. (For further details of the relationship between the Maharishi—as he became known—and Brahmānanda, see Mason 1994:12–23.)
versely lingered on concerning the rightful successor to the Jyotir pītha. In 1979 a meeting of the Śaṅkarācāryas of the four āmnāya matha-s took place at Śrīneri, the first ever such meeting. It was convened by the then Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīneri, Śrī Abhinava Vidyātirtha, but neither Śaṅtānanda nor Viṣṇudevānanda were invited. Another court case which began in 1999, at Allahabad, concerning the succession to the Jyotir matha, was still running in 2000. 154

4.4.6 The Sumeru pītha

The Sumeru pītha of Banaras also has a claim to have been founded by Śaṅkara, as the northern pītha. Several of the publications of the Maṁśaś and the Mahānūśăsanam that presents—with some minor differences—three more matha-s and āmnāya-s (see Appendix 2), the Sumeru being the fifth. 157 The Sumeru āmnāya is as follows (Mishra 2001:48–52, vv. 66–68): 158

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maṁha</th>
<th>Sumeru-pītha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Kaiласa kṣetra)</td>
<td>Kaiласа</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orders (padāni)</td>
<td>Satya (Truth), Jñāna (Knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deities</td>
<td>(m) Nirañjana   (f) Māyā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

154 For further details of the dispute concerning the gaddī, the claim exerted by svāṁś-s of three separate lineages, political influence, and the subsequent succession, see Daśanōmi Sampradāya (1999); Sundaresan (2000); P. N. Miśra [Amit Kālekha] (2001).

155 Kunhan Raja (1933:49); Šarma (1963:650–651); Upādhyāy (1967:610–612); Miśra (1996:48–49; 2001:16–52). (Miśra’s text is currently being disseminated by the Dvārakā pīḷha.)

156 The Śesāmnāya-s; called the “Residuary-Shruti Receptacles” (Miśra), and part of the Maṁśaśvetu (Śarma).

157 The sixth āmnāya (Mishra vv. 69–72) is said to be the Self (ātmāmnāya), and paramātmā is the ‘great’ matha. The sampradāya is sattvaśāsta (‘goodness-pleasure’), and the pada (‘title’, ‘office’) is yoga. The kṣetra is the ocean; the deities are (m) Paramaṁapa and (f) Mānasī Māyā; the tīṭha is Tripūti (?); the sentences of Vedānta are the instruction; and the ācārya is Cetanājñatīya (‘consciousness-heart’). The seventh āmnāya is Niśkāla. The maṁha is Sahasrārkadyuti (‘brilliance of a thousand suns’). The sampradāya is sacchiśya (‘the good student’) and the pada-s are Śrī-guru and pādukā-s (a mendicant’s ‘holy’ sandals). The kṣetra is anubhūti (‘realisation’), the deities are (m) Viṣṇu (‘multiform/universal/Viṣṇu’) and (f) Citsakti, and the ācārya is Sadguru. The tīṭha is hearing the true scriptures.

158 Further details are included in the text provided by Kunhan Raja (1933:49).
**Tīrtha**
Mānasā (rovaraṁ)

**Sampradāya**
Kāśi

**Ācārya**
Īśvara

In a previous publication Miśra (1996:12) claims that, although it is said that there are seven *matuha*-s, in fact Śaṅkara founded four of them. The existence of the Sumeru *matuha* is explained as being an allegorical ‘heavenly’ *matuha*.\(^\text{159}\) Upādhyāy (1967:610) similarly explains the fifth āmnāya, Sumeru *matuha*, as an ūrdhvāmnāya, stating that the last three āmnāya-s have a corporeal form only as knowledge.\(^\text{160}\) However, the Sumeru *matuha* of Banaras still functions—claiming to have been founded by Śaṅkara in 827 CE—and maintains a list (up to 1958) of sixty mahant-s who have occupied the gaddi, the first being Mahādevānandatīrthā.\(^\text{161}\) (Curiously, all the mahant-s but the last, from 1958, are named ‘Tīrtha’.) The *matuha* is in a district of Banaras named ‘Sumeru’, possibly indicating the antiquity of the *matuha*, and preserves a pair of wooden sandals (*pādukā*), believed to have been used by Śaṅkara, hence its other name, the ‘Pādukā Maṭha’. It admits only dāṇḍī-s of the Sarasvatī order, and used to be patronised by the Mahārāja of Banaras.\(^\text{162}\) In the *Guruvanśa-kāvyā*,
written in 1740 (see below), it is stated (3.25) that Śaṅkara established five maṭha-s, including one for himself at Banaras. At the Brahmen-
dra maṭha, at the Śivālaya ghāṭ in Banaras, there is an inscription
dated 1884 CE (V. S. 1941) revealing a guru-paramparā of Śaṅkara
(Anantanandendra Sarasvati 1968:379–380). This would seem to
indicate that the Banaras maṭha was of some considerable importance
in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sinha and Saraswati
(1978:60) relate that “some years ago”, Svāmī Mahesvarānanda
was designated Śaṅkarācārya of Kāśi by the then Śaṅkarācārya of
Jyośimāṭh at a ceremony at the Ādhā-Kumbh at Prayāg. However,
Śvāmī Ānandabodhāśrama, the mahant of the Sumeru maṭha at the
time of Sinha and Saraswati’s study (1967), did not recognise Svāmī
Mahesvarānanda as the Śaṅkarācārya, nor did Mahesvarānanda live
at the Sumeru maṭha. One of the most important recent pontiffs of
the Sumeru maṭha was Svāmī Hariharānandasarasvati (commonly
known as ‘Karpatri’), who died in 1982. He has been described as
the most influential daṇḍi not only of Banaras but of all India (Sawyer
1993:170), directing the affairs of the Jyotir pīṭha even though he
was not a Śaṅkarācārya.

Our relatively brief excursion into the histories of various advaita
maṭha-s has shown that very little reliance, if any, can be placed on the
paramparā-s of the maṭha-s,163 or the information in the Mathāmnāya-s
that Śaṅkara founded four maṭha-s in four specific places, each pīṭha
being associated with either two or three of the ten lineages: the status
of various pīṭha-s was still being contested in the nineteenth century.

and concluded that the language and characters used in the inscription
would most probably indicate a date of around the seventeenth century at the earliest for the
composition of the text, which appears to have been falsely dated.

163 According to the guru-paramparā of (Tunga) Śrṅgerī (see Aiyer and Sastri
1962:164–181), none of the first four ācārya-s of the Śrṅgerī after Śaṅkara are
named Sarasvatī, Bhāratī or Purī, as they should be according to the Mathāmnāya;
ācārya-s nos. 8 to 11, and nos. 35 and 36 are named Tīrtha (located at Dvārakā in
the Mathāmnāya); and ācārya-s nos. 5, 6 and 7 are Girīs (located at Jyotir maṭha in
the Mathāmnāya). There are no Purīs or Sarasvatīs in the list at all. In the Kuḍali
list all the ācārya-s are Bhāratīs. Of the seventy-nine ācārya-s of Dvārakā (Tīrtha and
Āśrama according to the Mathāmnāya), only six are Tīrtha, one is a Sarasvatī (acc.
Śrṅgerī), thirty-six are Āśrama, while the rest have other names. The 144 ācārya-s
of the Jagannātha maṭha should be called either Vana or Arāṇya, according to the
Mathāmnāya, yet none of them have that name. After the eighteenth, all but two are
Tīrtha (located at Dvārakā in the Mathāmnāya) and the first seventeen have other
names. (No guru-paramparā is provided by Aiyer and Sastri for the Jyotir maṭha.)
The epigraphic evidence that has been examined indicates there that were *advaita matha*-s in south India dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, notably Tuṅga-Śrīnerī, Kuḍalī-Śrīnerī and Kāñcīpuram. While the specific sectarian identity of the Kāñcī *matha* referred to in early inscriptions is hard to determine, we will see in Chapter 6.5 that a Śrīnerī *matha* was not associated with the name of Śaṅkara at the time of its founding in the fourteenth century. Regarding the current main *matha*-s in the north, at Dvārakā, Purī and Jyōśimaṭh, there appears to be no reliable epigraphic or other evidence that is much more than than a couple of hundred years old referring to these institutions.
CHAPTER FIVE

ŚAṆKARA’S HAGIOGRAPHIES AND HIS RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

It was suggested in the previous chapter that the popular notion that Śaṅkara founded four maṭha-s is highly improbable. In this chapter, the hagiographies of Śaṅkara will be surveyed for what they reveal concerning the founding of maṭha-s and other legends central to the traditional life of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara’s religious orientation will also be analysed, and it will be seen that Śaṅkara, despite being projected as an incarnation of Śiva in the hagiographies, was almost certainly a vaishnava, as were his immediate disciples. In the final section, the hagiographies of Śaṅkara will be returned to again. They provide further evidence of the improbability that Śaṅkara founded either maṭha-s or an order of ascetics.

5.1 The hagiographies of Śaṅkara

Two scholars in particular have made detailed studies of the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, namely Antarkar¹ and Bader (2000).² Around twenty Sanskrit hagiographies of Śaṅkara have so far been uncovered.³ Several hagiographical works have been composed since the late eighteenth century, on the basis of earlier works or tradition,⁴ but vernacular texts do not start appearing until the end

² See also Kuppuswami (1972:7–20); Pande (1994:1–39).
³ A few brief references and details of Śaṅkara’s life may also be found in the Śiva-rahasya (9.16); Patañjali-carita (8), composed by Rāmabhadra-Dikṣita, c.1700; Mārkaṇḍeya Saṁhitā (72.7.10,11–18; 73.7.1–2); Liṅga Purāṇa (1.40.20–22); Kūma Purāṇa (28.32.35); Saura Purāṇa; and Padma Purāṇa. Texts of these passages (the last two without references) are included in Pande (1994:36–38). Details of Śaṅkara’s life may be found in several other Purāṇa-s (see Sankaranarayanan 1995a:5–14, who lists a total of 33 sources, including the hagiographies).
⁴ One of the better known of these is the Śaṅkara-dīgeśaya-śāra of Sadānanda, composed in the late eighteenth century. His son-in-law Dhanapatiśūri composed the Dīgīḍina, dated to 1824, a well-known commentary on the ŚDV. Another such work is the nineteenth-century Śaṅkara-mandāra-saurabhā, written by Nilakaṇṭha, for
of the nineteenth century. Bader examines eight of the hagiographies (some other texts, not examined, being largely derivative of one of the eight works considered): 5 Mādhava’s Śaṅkara-dīg-viśva
yā (ŚDV), Anantānanda-giri’s Śaṅkara-viśva (AŚV), 6 Cidvilāsa’s Śaṅkara-viśva-
vilāsa (GŚV), Vyāsācalā’s Śaṅkara-viśva (VŚV), Rājācūḍāmani-Dīkṣita’s Śaṅkarābhvyudyā (RŚA), Govindānātha’s Śaṅkara-cāryacarita (GŚC), Tirumala-Dīkṣita’s Śaṅkarābhvyudyā (TŚA), and Lākṣmaṇa-Sāstrī’s Gurvaṁśa-kāvya (GVK). 7 All texts are tentatively dated post-fourteenth century, the earliest being the AŚV and the VŚV, 8 most probably followed by the GŚV and TŚA. 9 Antarkar (1973:2) places the GŚV

which Ungemach (1992) provides the text and (German) translation.

  5 Bader (2000:342–350) also discusses two so-called ‘lost’ hagiographies of Śaṅkara, the Prācīna-Śaṅkara-viśva (PrŚV)—attributed by some (see Pande 1994:7) to Anantāgiri (or Anandajñānam)—and the Brhat-Śaṅkara-viśva (BrŚV) attributed to Citsukha. (According to one tradition, Citsukha—also called Viśuṣarman—was a direct disciple of Śaṅkara.) T. S. Narayana Sastry (1971 [1916]) was one of the first scholars to call attention to the ‘lost’ texts. Antarkar (1960; 2001:26) believes in the existence of the BrŚV, yet has not succeeded in seeing it, despite efforts over the last 35 years; nor has Pande (1994:9). According to two commentaries on the ŚDV—Ācyūta’s Advaitārāja-Lakṣmī (17.16.103), dated to 1798, and the Dīnākṣma—the PrŚV was a source for the ŚDV. However, Bader (2000:342–350) believes the PrŚV to be a summary of the contents of AŚV. Ātmabodha (Ātmabodhendra’s Siṣyamā [a commentary to the Guru-ratna-mālākā attributed to Sādāśīvabrahmendra] also cites the PrŚV and the BrŚV. According to the concluding stanzas, it was written in 1720 (Pande 1994:7; Antarkar 2001:38). However, it may be older still, as Ātmabodha is dated from 1586 to 1638. No text of the BrŚV is available, but for a single chapter published by Sastry and Kumařaswamy (1971:272–281). It contains astrological information and faulty Sanskrit that lead both Bader (2000:347 ff.) and Umesh (1981:179–182) to doubt its authenticity. Ungemach (1992:4) notes that material from the PrŚV and BrŚV is cited in later texts, but also doubts that these two texts existed.

  6 Antarkar (1961) demonstrates that this Anantānanda-giri cannot be identified as Anantāgiri, the Vedāntin, with whom he is sometimes identified.

  7 There is a complex relationship between the texts: see the table comparing contents (Bader 2000:74–76). The texts fall essentially into two groups, comprising slightly different traditions (Bader 2000:242), Group A comprising the AŚV, GŚV and the GVK, and the other, Group B, comprising the VŚV, RŚA, GŚC and ŚDV. The TŚA stands somewhat alone.

  8 Some believe the VŚV to have been written by Mahādeva IV (Mahādevendra-rasarasvatī, also known as Vyāsācāla), the 52nd ācārya of Kāṇṭi, from 1498–1507 (Ungemach 1992:4; Pande 1994:20).

  9 In the colophons of the TŚA, Tirumala-Dīkṣita says that he is devoted to Paramaśivendra. According to the guru-paramparā of the Kāṇṭi mārtha, the fifty-seventh ācārya was Paramaśiva II (Paramaśivendra-rasarasvatī), who reigned from 1539 to 1586, and who was the guru of Sādāśīvabrahmendra (Aiyer and Sāstrī 1962:131). If we accept the admittedly unreliable chronology of the guru-paramparā-s, and if
perhaps before the RŚA (c.1630), and possibly before the TŚA (16th cent.). Bader (2000:24) believes the RŚA and GŚC to have been written around 1650, while the GVK may be dated to 1740, and the ŚDV to between 1650 and 1798 (Sawai 1985; Bader 2000:53–62).

The Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya (ŚDV/Madhāvīya) of Mādhava is by far the most widely distributed of the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, the incumbent Śaṅkarācāryas of the Śrṅgerī and Dvārakā/Jyotir matha-s maintaining that this text is the most authoritative account of the ācārya-’s life. Since the establishment of its widespread reputation, towards the end of the eighteenth century, subsequent writers largely restate its contents. According to the ŚDV, Śaṅkara had four direct disciples, whom he converted to his philosophy. There is a reference (10.71) to Śaṅkara’s setting up a temple at Śrṅgerī and initiating the worship of the devī Śāradā, and to his installing certain of his disciples in āśrama-s, such as the one at Rṣyāśṛṅga (Śrṅgerī) for ensuring the greatness of his creed (16.93). He also built a temple to devī at Kāṅcipuram, inaugurating worship according to Vedic tradition (15.1–20). However, no mention is made anywhere in the text of their appointments to head the four matha-s, nor is there

the Paramaśivendras are identical, then the TŚA may be placed in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

10 For references in this section, see Vidyāranya (1915) for the Sanskrit text, and Mādhava-Vidyāranya (1986) for the English translation.

11 Even though the colophons at the conclusion of each of the sixteen chapters state that the text was written by Mādhava, the editor of the widely circulated Anandāśrama edition of the ŚDV has changed not only the title of the work (to Saṅkṣepa-Śaṅkara-jaya) but also the author’s name, to Mādhava-Vidyāranya. Besides Bader, several other scholars have presented evidence against the possibility of Vidyāranya’s authorship: see Sastry and Kumaraswamy (1971:229); Antarkar (1972:1–23); Sawai (1983:454–459).

12 There are two exceptions (Bader 2000:23): the Ācārya-dīgviṣaya-campu, by Vallisahāya, and the Bṛhat-Śaṅkaravijaya by Bhṛmhānandasarasvatī. The former text may be dated to the end of the nineteenth century, while the latter idiosyncratically diverges significantly from the other hagiographic works.

13 Śaṅkara’s first disciple was Padmapāda (Sanandana), whom he met in Banaras; followed by Hastāmalaka, who became his disciple in Mūkambikā (Kollur, Karnataka); Toṭaka (Giri) became his next disciple, in Śrṅgerī; lastly, Sureśvara, who became his main disciple.

14 In Hindu mythology, Rṣyaśṛṅga is (in most texts) a single-horned ascetic who is seduced by an enchantress on behalf of Indra, who fears the ascetic’s tapas (see Doniger O’Flaherty 1981a:42–54).

15 This was towards the beginning of his dīgviṣaya according to the ŚDV, and at the end of the dīgviṣaya according to the ASV (see below).
any mention of the founding of an order of ascetics, nor the term ‘Daśānāmi’. Given the relative lateness of this text, the absence of any reference to the founding of an order of ascetics or four matha-s is indeed intriguing.

5.2 Śaṅkara’s life in the hagiographies

Śaṅkara’s own works, previously discussed, provide very little information on the life of the ācārya. We know from these that Śaṅkara became a saṃnyāsī and that his guru was Govinda, but not much more. According to tradition, Śaṅkara was of the Nambūdiri caste, an orthodox Brahman caste who are the only original Brahmans of Kerala, renowned for their maintenance of Vedic rites which are extinct elsewhere.16 Sureśvara, in his Vārttika (6.22–23) on Śaṅkara’s Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya, tells us that his teacher was a “lordly ascetic who walked with a bamboo staff” and that he was descended from the rṣi Atri, indicating that Śaṅkara was a Brahman (Alston 1980a, Vol. 1:44). In the Naiškārmyasiddhi (4.44)17 Sureśvara refers to Śaṅkara as a dravida, indicating Śaṅkara’s southern origins.18 However, it is interesting to note that in the works considered genuine, all Śaṅkara’s references to places are to those in the north, in the Ganges delta (Alston 1980a, Vol. 1:44). Śaṅkara also refers to the Himalayas,19 lending some support to the supposition that Śaṅkara wrote and taught in north India. Our only other source of information for the life of Śaṅkara is the hagiographies, which Bader (2000:72) considers it more appropriate to take as the creation of hagiographers rather than as any kind of historical record.

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16 Mayeda (1992:7 fn. 7) notes that insofar as the Nambūdiris adhered to any philosophical system at all, it was to the (Kumārila) Bhāṭṭa school of Pūrva Mīmiṃśā, which Śaṅkara attacked in his works (see below). It is suggested that advaita philosophy was adopted by the Nambūdiris only after it had become popular in other parts of India.


18 This is also indicated by Śaṅkara’s practice of writing as performed through incisions into palm-leaf that were later filled with ink. This is the method utilised in south India, whereas in north India, ink was applied at the time of writing, often on birch-bark.

19 In the BSB (II.3.14; III.1.8. See Śaṅkarācārya 1993:468, 567) Śaṅkara refers to the melting of snow and hail. He refers to a blind man dreaming he has seen a Himalayan peak (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad-bhāṣya IV.3.6. See Śaṅkarācārya 1965:605).
Amongst the numerous incidents recorded in the various hagiographies, particular stories are common to all.\textsuperscript{20} However, since the ŚDV has become the most well-known of the hagiographies, particular incidents contained therein have become standard to the contemporary understanding of Śaṅkara’s life, even though they do not occur in the other hagiographies.\textsuperscript{21} All of Śaṅkara’s hagiographies agree in describing the tapas undertaken in order to have a child by a pious but childless Brahman couple, Śivaguru and his wife, usually referred to by the respectful epithet Ārya or Āryāṃbā. In all texts but one, Śaṅkara is born in Kālāti,\textsuperscript{22} a village in the Ernakulam district of Kerala.\textsuperscript{23} Śaṅkara is initiated into an advaita lineage by his guru, Govinda, that goes back, ultimately, to Vyāsa and Śiva.\textsuperscript{24} His mission is to restore the true teachings of Vedānta, to

\textsuperscript{20} See Bader (2000:77–99). Ungemach (1992:11–24) also discusses several of the motifs, similarities, and parallels between events in hagiographies of Śaṅkara and events in: the Rāmāyaṇa; legends of the Buddha (in the Buddhacarita, Jātaka tales, and other sources); the Basava Purāṇa (containing stories of Basava, the twelfth-century founder of the Līṅgayat/Vēraśāiva sect); the Kalpaśūtra (containing stories of Mahāvīra); the Līlāvīra (an anecdotal biography of Cakradhara, founder of the Maharashtran Mahānubhāva sect, written between 1272 and 1278); and stories—particularly relating to Śaṅkara’s entry into the body of king Amaruka—pertaining to the semi-legendary founders of the Nāth order, Matsyendranātha and Gorakhnātha (c.12th/13th century), found in, for example, the Gorakṣa-siddhānta-samgraha. One of the hagiographies of Madhva (see below), the 13th century Maniśāñjunī, describes several specific events found in the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, such as Śaṅkara’s meeting with Maṇḍanamiśra, and Śaṅkara’s burning of his mother’s body after her death.

\textsuperscript{21} One prominent example is when Śaṅkara avoids an outcaste in Banaras who is Śiva in disguise, an incident which only occurs in the ŚDV and the TŚA.

\textsuperscript{22} In the Calcutta edition of the ASV Śaṅkara is born in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, a place more commonly associated with the birth of Patañjali, the author of the Jñāna śīla, who is an embodiment of the primal serpent, Adiśeṣa (see Dīkṣitār 1965:5.2–5.8).

\textsuperscript{23} The description of Śaṅkara’s birth uses stock images of kāyya literature, as found in Āśvaghoṣa’s Buddhacarita and Kālidāsa’s Raghuvamśa (Bader 2000:80). When Śaṅkara was five, Śivaguru was about to perform Śaṅkara’s upanayana, but died; his mother performed the rite. Against the wishes of his mother, Śaṅkara wanted to leave home and renounce. While bathing in the river, Śaṅkara is seized by a crocodile. Brahmanical tradition permits renunciation in the event of a life-threatening calamity (āpat-sannyāsa), and Śaṅkara, in the jaws of death, asks his mother permission to renounce, which she, of course, grants, miraculously saving him.

\textsuperscript{24} Govinda’s teacher is Gauḍapāda, the author of the earliest specifically advaita commentary available, the Gauḍapāda-sūtra-kārikā (King 1995:15). In the hagiographies, Gauḍapāda is also linked with another lineage, descending from Patañjali. Although current tradition, taken from the ŚDV, locates Govinda by the Narmadā river, only three texts agree on this, and do not specify the place.
which end he is to write his commentary on the Brahmasūtra, which is approved by Vyāsa, who grants him an extension of sixteen years on his life, which was originally destined to finish when he was but sixteen years old.  

Perhaps the most fundamental theme of Śaṅkara’s life story is that he is an avatāra of Śiva, the concept of avatāra being common in the traditional biographies of both kings and saints in India. The avatāra, Buddha or Tīrthaṅkara is the divine descendant, sent to earth to rescue people from heresy, encroaching decadence and chaos, and to reestablish cosmic order. Śaṅkara moves freely from the human to the divine plane, experiencing human suffering—notably as a child—and is involved in numerous rational debates, yet he is divinely incarnated and can perform miracles in time and space. The incarnations of Śiva generally reflect the ambivalent and often frightening qualities of Śiva, in contrast to some of the more benign incarnations of Viṣṇu. One important exception is the incarnation of Śiva as Lākuliśa, the preceptor of the Pāśupata order who probably lived in the second century (Chakraborty 1970:8–12), and who may possibly have partially inspired Śaṅkara’s hagiographers: like Śaṅkara, Lākuliśa also had four pupils, named Kuśika, Garga, Mitra and Kauruṣya. The concept of divine presence—and also, by

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25 Śaṅkara’s life-span is omitted in the CŚV (Bader 2000:85 fn. 25).

26 Sawai (1987) also summarises Śaṅkara’s purpose of incarnation, as told in the ŚDV: to halt the conduct of “evil” people, establish Vedic dharma, and to guide people to salvation. The śāiva mythological frame of the hagiographies of Śaṅkara draws on themes found in the Purāṇa-s. In the ASV, CŚV and GVK, it is Nārada who is alarmed by the Brahmans’ neglect of their duties, their rampant heresies, and the decline of Vedic sects. To save the world from chaos, Śiva agrees to incarnate as Śaṅkara, the son of a pious Brahman woman. In the TŚA, ŚDV and GVK, the story begins with Śiva himself, who is approached for help by the deva-s. In the TŚA and ŚDV, not only Śiva incarnates (as Śaṅkara), but Brahmā becomes Maṇḍanamiśra, Sarasvatī his wife, Kumāra is born as Kumārīla-Bhaṭṭa (ācārya), Nārāyaṇa as Padmapāda, and Vāyu as both Hastaṃalaka and Toṭaka.

27 See Granoff (1984; 1988a; 1988b) and Snell (1994) for excellent studies of the transmission and common motifs in Indian hagiographies. See Schober (1997) for articles on the importance of the hagiography of Buddha for the Buddhist tradition. Even in the earliest stratum of Buddhist texts, the biography of the Buddha is inherent in the teachings transmitted (Reynolds 1997:19–39).

28 The Mathurā pillar inscription of Candragupta II (of Gupta year 61, regnal year 5, =380 CE) mentions a śāiva guru who was tenth in succession from Kuśika. This provides an approximate date for Lākuliśa, who is identified with Śiva in the inscription, an identification probably made not much earlier (Stietencron 2001:34 fn. 21).
implication, divine grace—being inherent in outstanding religious leaders was first articulated in the Gupta period. The first historical evidence for an identification of a historical person with a deity—even though such an identification may have been made previously—was that made (posthumously) between Lākuliśa and Śiva\(^{29}\) (Stietencron 2001:22).

It is evident that many of the motifs central to Indian hagiography may also be found in other religious contexts. Heffernan’s remarks concerning Christian saints and their biographies in the Middle Ages are appropriate—in a parallel way—to saintly samnyāsī-śs: that paradigmatic action dominates narrative structure; and that for actions narrated in the lives of the saints to be binding for the community, they had to be imitatio Christi. Gregory of Tours (538/9–593/4), one of the most influential early mediaeval sacred hagiographers, believed that the saint, unlike the rest of mankind, lived simultaneously in two worlds, the heavenly and the earthly (Heffernan 1988:6–10). “Sacred biography, although it exalts the individual, does so only having made perfectly clear that the exaltation is the result of Providence. There are no genuinely autonomous acts of heroism in this genre; all actions, whether good or evil, are contingent acts” (Heffernan 1988:64). Such remarks are quite apposite to the samnyāsī-śs being discussed.

A central motif of the hagiographies is Śaṅkara’s all-India tour of victory, his digvijaya establishing his supremacy over all rival views.\(^{30}\) Throughout his journey he is victorious over all rival sects

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29 Lorenzen (1983), focusing primarily on the ŚDV, has indicated several parallels between the lives of Śaṅkara and Kṛṣṇa, the earliest Indian god to be given a real hagiology. Details of Kṛṣṇa’s life, particularly the birth and infancy, amply fit the ‘standard saga’ of the hero as elaborated by the psychoanalyst Otto Rank in 1914. Two significant differences between the life-story of Śaṅkara and Kṛṣṇa are the lack of conflict with a father figure, such as Kaṁsa, and the absence of abandonment and adoption by other, more humble parents, such as Nanda and Yaśodā. Lorenzen has pointed to the tension in the hagiographies between Śaṅkara, the lone śāiva samnyāsī renunciate, and the householder vaisnava tradition represented by his mother, a staunch vaisnava, a tension most famously explored in Dumont’s (1960) structural analysis of Indian society, referred to in the Introduction. Bader (2000:128) acknowledges the tension in the hagiographies between householder and samnyāsī but disagrees with Lorenzen’s (1983:164) supposition of a vaisnava component in the narrative, implied in a comparison of the childhoods of Śaṅkara and Kṛṣṇa; the hagiographies of Śaṅkara are distinctly śāiva in orientation.

30 This features in five of the hagiographies (Bader 2000:141–182), the most
and views—the very existence of which indicates the decline of the Vedic tradition—and reestablishes the correct understanding of the sacred texts. Although the hagiographies differ considerably over the places visited, the end of the debates, and the final event of significance before he dies, signals Śaṅkara’s ascension to the Throne of Omniscience.33

Śaṅkarācārya also features in the partly mythological—and not

extensive account being contained in the AŚV, which is associated with the Kāṇṭci maṭha, and is particularly śātra in orientation. The AŚV provides the largest number of identifiable places that Śaṅkara visited, including many pilgrimage places, thirteen places being identified as venues for debates with sectarian foes. However, the ŚDV provides the largest number of places visited, being compiled from several sources. Śaṅkara visits a total of twenty-eight places, scattered throughout India.31 In all seven sources: Badarī, Prayāga, Kāṇḍi, Rāmeśvaram. In six: Maghada, Gokarna, Kālāti. In five: Kāśmīra, Kāši, Cidambara, Śrīvali/Sivāvihāra. In four: Śrīśaila, Śṛṅgerī, Tirupati, Anantaśāyana (Bader 2000:143).

32 The place of Śaṅkara’s final disappearance, as recorded in the vijaya-s, has been examined by Antarkar (1997), who inspected seventeen works. Amongst the hagiographies that state the place of Śaṅkara’s demise (not all do so), the locations are: 1) Vṛṣṇiṣhala (Trichūr) in Kerala (two works, GŚC, and Kūṇmāṇda Śaṅkara-vijaya of Puruṣottamabhārata); 2) Kāṇḍi (four works: AŚV, BrŚV, RŚA, (and presumably) Ācārya-dīgviṣaya-campū of Valli-Sahāya; and also in the Suśamā); 3) Himalayas, in either Kedārānātha or Kailāsa—and in two accounts via a cave/hermitage of Dattātreya, which could be at Māhūrī in Maharashtra (see Bader 2000:158)—(seven works: ŚDV, CŚV, GVK, Śaṅkara-dīgviṣaya-sara of Sadānanda, Bhagavat-pādābhuyadaya of Kavi Lākṣmaṇa Sūri, and Śaṅkara-mandara-saurabha and Śaṅkara-daya, both by Nilakaṇṭha). Kedarnāth has become the most widely accepted of the places mentioned, owing to the popularity of the ŚDV. However, Antarkar favours Kāṇḍi, though this is rejected by those who deny the authenticity of the Kāṇḍi pītha. The iconographic evidence from Kāṇḍi (statues of śaṁnyāsī-s) is relatively modern, and really provides no substantive evidence at all on this issue. Local traditions locate the place of Śaṅkara’s death at Kāṇḍi, Kedārnāth, Śṛṅagar (Kashmir), Vṛṣṇiṣhala and Nirmālā (near Bassein, close to Bombay), all of which contain either shrines or samādhi-s for Ādi-Śaṅkara. Gadgil (1895:295) visited the samādhi of Śaṅkara at Nirmālā but concludes that the festival there, celebrated around the 13th of the bright half of Kārtika, is for a ‘second’ Śaṅkara. In our current state of knowledge, the question of where Śaṅkara may have died is still open.

33 Six of the hagiographies describe Śaṅkara’s final ascension to the seat of omniscience (sarajñī-pītha), while in four of the hagiographies his enthronement is the climax of the narrative: see Bader (2000:96, 177–179). There are various challenges before he ascends, the final one being from Sarasvatī (Māṇḍanāmīśra’s wife), who (in some versions) questions him as to whether he can be pure, having enjoyed women. In all the hagiographies Śaṅkara takes the body of king Amaruka to make love, to gain knowledge of all sāstra-s, including kāma-sāstra: see Bader (2000:169–182). Śaṅkara passes the test, and disappears to his abode on mount Kailāsa. This episode may be modelled on a similar story pertaining to Gorakhnāth and Matsyendranāth (see Ungemach 1992:22).
always entirely consistent—*Chronicles* (*Vaṃśāvatī*) of Nepal, according to which he was born to an immaculate Brahman woman in the Deccan during the time of the Nepalese Sūryabhaṃśī dynasty. Having been defeated by Bhaudhamārgīśī in religious debate in six former incarnations, Śaṅkara went to Nepal to pursue the sixteen remaining learned Bodhisattvas who had fled there in fear of him. In Nepal, Śaṅkarācārya found that the four Hindu castes were all Buddhists of one kind or another. The only clever Buddhists he could find invoked Sarasvatī to help them in debate, but Śaṅkara dismissed the goddess and defeated them. Śaṅkara forced some bhikṣu-s to marry, prohibited many Buddhist ceremonies, cut the Buddhists' Brahmanical thread, made them shave their top-knots and perform animal sacrifices—contrary to their religion—in order to drive them out of the region. Some Buddhists who refused to accept defeat were put to death, all 84,000 of the extant Buddhist religious texts in Nepal were destroyed, and śāiva religion was introduced. Although Śaṅkara had vanquished the Buddhist religion in Nepal, but for a few remaining Bhaudhamārgīśī he was obliged to leave some Buddhist priests in temples, as no one else was competent to propitiate the gods. Śaṅkara then returned to the seaside in the south.

In the hagiographies, the *dīgavijaya*-s depict Śaṅkara as a universal conquerer, frequently referring to him as “the king of ascetics”. His quasi-military conquest of the four quarters, and subsequent ascent to the Throne of Omniscience, are evidently modelled on the royal *dīgavijaya* (“conquest of the quarters”) undertaken by kings of the early mediaeval period, the philosophical and sometimes dangerous battles with sectarian opponents mirroring the earlier royal submission of feudatory regents. This is a theme also to be found in epic/historic

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34 See Wright (1877:118–123); Hasrat (1970:38–40).

35 In these accounts, Śaṅkara is also said to have brought the Paṇca-Gauḍa and Paṇca-Dravīḍa Brahmans to Nepal and to have divided the Nepalese people into sixty-four castes (Wright 1877:185–186; Petech 1958:181–183).

36 The role of the ‘big-man’ (*periyar, periyavātara*) in south Indian culture has been examined by Mines and Gourishankar (1990), who illustrate the several parallels between kings, sect-leading renunciates (notably the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāḷīcī), and other community leaders who act as sponsors for worship (as *yajamanā-s*) and exhibit altruistic behaviour in the giving of charity.

(itiḥāsapurāṇa), literature. It has been suggested (Sax 2000) that the demise of the royal digvijaya—due in large part to the dominance of northern Islamic regimes—led to the production of religious digvijaya-s, modelled on the royal performance. It is also possible that the early digvijaya-s of Śaṅkara were modelled on the already extant digvijaya-s of the vaisnava dualist, Madhva (1238–1317) from Uḍupi, as it is probable that one of the earliest hagiographies of Śaṅkara, Ānanta-giri’s Śaṅkaravijaya, post-dates Madhva. In Madhva’s hagiographies, during his digvijaya (similarly to Śaṅkara), Madhva goes first to Śrīnīvarī, and also goes to Badarikāraśrama, establishing holy places and fending off threats from Muslims (Sax 2000:48).

Śaṅkara’s final ascent of the Throne of Omniscience has a direct parallel in the ancient rājasūya rite, the royal consecration cere-

38 In this category of literature, Bader (2000:170) notes Raṭnākara’s (9th cent.) Haravijaya, the story of Śiva’s defeat of the demon Andhaka; Vāsudeva’s (9th cent.) Yudhishṭhiravijaya, a retelling of the main events of the Mahābhārata; and the (12th. cent.) Prthvīrāvijaya, dealing with the war and triumph of Prthvīrāja III (which may have directly influenced the VŚ, GŚC, GVK and ŚDV). A digvijaya also features prominently in Kālidāsa’s Raghuvaṃśa.

39 Manmaita’s and Sumadhvavijaya, both by Nārāyaṇananda, the son of Trivikrama-panḍita, who was a direct disciple of Madhva.

40 Besides the hagiographies of Śaṅkara and Madhva, Sax (2000) also discusses the digvijaya-s of Vallabha (1479–1531) and Caitanya (1486–1533). Madhva took samyās from Acyutapreka, either at the age of nine or eleven/twelve (see Glase-napp 1992:4), and wrote a treatise on renunciation (see Olivelle 1982). Śrī Caitanya Kuṭṣa was given his name by Keśva Bhārati, a Daśanāmi, from whom he took samyās in 1510. The initiation seems to have been largely a formality (he did not add Bhārati to his name); Caitanya was far more influenced byĪsvara Purī of the Madhva sect, whom he had met previously in Gayā in 1508, and who initiated him into the Daśākara Kṣna mānta, after which he became an ecstatic devotee of Kuṭṣa (Kapoor 1994:20–25). Vallabha, besides his other works, wrote a treatise on renunciation, the Samyāsāmanīraga, which, according to tradition, was written in Badarīnāth. He took samyāsa one month before his death, aged fifty-one. However, his doctrine of renunciation “is tinged by a palpable disinclination for the subject” (Smith 1993:136–137), his view being that the lilā-s of the world can be known without it; bhakti is contrasted with samyāsa (see Horstmann 1997:229–231; Bhatt 1980). Sax states that “It is possible—perhaps even likely—that Śaṅkara’s hagiographers, all of whom wrote after the time of Madhva, were in fact emulating historical accounts of actual journeys by the [other] Vaiṣṇavas”. Madhva attacks Śaṅkara’s reputation, portraying him as an incarnation of the demon Maṇimāt, born to a widow (Bader 2000:37), and the digvijaya-s of Śaṅkara may, in part, have been responding to those accounts. However, Vallabha and Caitanya both lived after the time the time of the production of the earlier hagiographies of Śaṅkara. Rather, it seems more probable that later vaisnava hagiographies were based on the earlier hagiographies of Śaṅkara and Madhva.
mony for a kṣatriya king, which is one of the three large-scale śrauta rites, the others being the aśvamedha and the vājapeya. Heesterman’s (1957:222–224) study of the rājasūya illustrated that it was not a ceremony performed once and for all, but is of the character of a yearly festival (utsava), whereby the powers active in the universe are regenerated. The king’s unction is preceded by a year long dīkṣā, and dīkṣā-like observances. Technically, the consecration rite is reserved for kṣatriya-s; and Śaṅkara is a Brahman, who, having renounced, is beyond ritual action. Yet four specific elements of the rājasūya are reflected in the narrative: the preparatory initiation (dīkṣā, received from Govinda); the establishment/conquest of the four quarters (digvyāsthāpana); the chariot drive42 (also performed by the Śaṅkarācāryas); and the enthronement.43

In the rājasūya the king has a particular association with the tiger, upon whose skin he receives the unction,44 prior to the dīkṣā. Similarly, the gaddi-s of the Śaṅkarācārya-s are covered with a tiger skin. It is during the chariot drive that the king engages in a ritual battle with another kṣatriya, at whom he shoots his arrows, declaring, “the purpose has been fulfilled”.45 The parallel in the hagiographies is the verbal battle with the wealthy ritualist Māṇānami ṛṣi (the foremost authority of his time—seventh century—in the Vedic Māṇāṃśā tradition), who self-immolated after meeting Śaṅkara.47

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41 See Heesterman (1957:103–105) for how the royal sacrificer mounts the “quarters of space”, taking one step in each of the four directions, and a fifth towards the centre, which is above.
42 Ibid. (pp. 127–139).
43 Ibid. (pp. 140–142).
44 Ibid. (p. 106).
46 Identified in four of the hagiographies as Viśvarūpa. See Ch. 4.4, fn. 84 of this book for the identity of Viśvarūpa/Sureśvara/Maṇḍanamiśra.
47 Kumārila, the ritualist, is portrayed as the man responsible for the defeat of Buddhism and the restablishment of the Vedic path. To gain inside knowledge of Buddhism, and to defeat them in subsequent debate, he disguised himself as a Buddhist. Realising that he has committed a sin, Kumārila immolates himself on a fire; when Śaṅkara arrives, the fire is already alight. (This incident is depicted on a plaque near the saṅgam at Prayāg.) Śaṅkara does not debate with Kumārila, who expresses admiration for Śaṅkara’s commentary on the Brahmaśūtra but declines to write a sub-commentary on it, assigning the task to a disciple. Both Śaṅkara and Kumārila are projected as saviours of orthodoxy in popular tradition; to wit the customary definition of smārta: vyavahāre bhāṭṭaḥ paramārthe śāṅkaraḥ (Halbfass 1983:101 fn. 21).
The fulfilment of the rājasūya is the enthronement of the king, which is accompanied by a game of dice. The king ascends the throne, which is considered to be his birthplace, and is proclaimed brahman by each of the four priests who sit around him at the four quarters. In the ŚDV, the most widely known hagiography, those defeated in debates during the digvijaya are described in the fifteenth chapter. A substantial part of the digvijaya is devoted to the conquest of saiva-s of various types, the Kāpālikas being the most horrendous, while the only vaiṣṇava opponents are described as wearing the emblems of Viṣṇu, and as recognising five differences. The philosophical doctrine (pāñc-bheda) appears to be that of Madhva. The vaiṣṇava-s are dealt with in but three verses, which is significant. Śaṅkara’s lack of engagement with any vaiṣṇava opponents, of which there were many in Śaṅkara’s time, and throughout the period of the composition of the hagiographies, is curious indeed. A possible explanation is that Śaṅkara’s hagiographers wished to project him as a śaiva (for reasons that will become apparent in the following chapter) who defeated only radical śaiva-s and tantrika-s, yet did not want to offend vaiṣṇava-s, who underpinned the early Vedānta tradition.

5.3 Śaṅkara’s religious orientation

Having considered Śaṅkara’s life in the hagiographies as an incarnation of Śiva, in this section Śaṅkara’s religious orientation will

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48 Heesterman (1957:140–160).
49 First, the liquor drinking Śāktas, in Rāmeśvaram (vv. 1–3). He then worships Lord Rāma (Rāmanātha) and proceeds to Kāñcī where he builds a temple to Devī, inaugurating Vedic worship and eradicating every trace of Tantric worship (vv. 4–5). He continues to Andhra, where he worships Veṅkaṭanātha (Viṣṇu), followed by a battle with the śaiva Kāpālika, Krakaca, and his followers in Karnāta (vv. 8–12). He then defeats the śaiva dualist, Nilakaṇṭha, and his disciple, Haradatta, in Gokarna (vv. 29–72); vaiṣṇava-s in Dwārakā (vv. 73–75); the bhedabheda vedāntin, Bhāṭṭa Bhāskara, in Ujjain (vv. 76–140); some Jainas among the Bahlīkas or Bāctrians (vv. 141–155); a Śākta named Abhinavagupta, in Kāmarūpa (most probably confused with the famous Kashmiri Tantric); and finally some unidentifiable philosophers in Bengal (vv. 161–162).
50 Between God and jīva, between ātman and jīva, between ātman and insentient objects, between God and sentient objects, and between sentient objects themselves
51 Lorenzen (1983:163) identifies these opponents as Pāñcarātrins. However, this is not stated in the ŚDV. Moreover, while the Pāñcarātrins maintain a five-fold manifestation of Nārāyaṇa—in his para, vyūha, vibhava, antaryamin and arca forms—(see Bhatt 1968:3), they do not adhere to the doctrine described in the ŚDV.
be analysed, particularly considering the evidence from Śaṅkara’s own works. The indications are that he was a Vaiṣṇava with a religious background that was most probably Pāñcarātra, a ritual and philosophical system that also significantly informed the religious background of both Rāmānuja and Madhva, two other important early Vedāntins.

It is known that the Pāñcarātrins produced a vast number of texts, their Tantra-s (or Agama-s) dating from the fifth century. Their influence on some aspects of the Brahmanical tradition has perhaps been heretofore somewhat underestimated. The attitude of both Śaṅkara and the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas to the Pāñcarātrins is ambivalent. On the one hand, a long array of Śrīvaiṣṇavas and later Pāñcarātrins have attempted to disprove the charge of heterodoxy made against the Pāñcarātrins. On the other hand, while most of the Pāncarātrin authors regard Pāñcarātra as being in conformity with the Veda, they also regard the Veda as either the shoots or the roots of Pāñcarātra (Bhatt 1968:12).

Śaṅkara’s opposition to the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavatas (Pāñcarātrins) is known from his remarks in the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya (2.2.42). As Pāñcarātra claims to be based on an independent, extra-Vedic revelation, it would have been illegitimate and unacceptable from Śaṅkara’s perspective. However, Pāñcarātra gets off lightly. His principal objection to Pāñcarātra does not concern their shared common Ultimate, Nārāyaṇa, but concerns an aspect of Pāñcarātra metaphysical doctrine; the contention being that an individual soul (called Saṃkarśana) said to be created from the supreme Self (called Vāsudeva) will be impermanent, as it is created. Śaṅkara does not accept this, a component of the Pāñcarātra doctrine of Vyūha-s (emanations). However, he agrees with the Pāñcarātrins that Nārāyaṇa

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52 While several scholars have concluded that the origin of the term pāñcarātra (lit. ‘night of the five’) is obscure, Neveil (1977:10) believes that the term probably refers to the dissolution of the five elements in mokṣa. For Pāñcarātra doctrine, see Schrader (1916).

53 Schrader (1916:14) estimates that the samhitā literature of the Pāñcarātras amounted to at least 1.5 million sloka-s.

54 See Inden (2000:29–98) for a penetrating analysis of the influence of Pāñcarātra on ritual and royal polity in Kashmir in the 7th and 8th centuries.

55 Śaṅkara appears to have lived between the times of the composition of the earlier northern Pāñcarātra samhitā-s and the later southern samhitā-s: see Schrader (1916:16–17).
is superior to Nature, and is well known to be the supreme Self and the Self of all, dividing Himself into many forms. Śaṅkara also endorses the Bhāgavatas’ ‘single-pointed’ (ekāntin) devotion and temple visiting. Śaṅkara (BSB 2.2.42) gives five methods of worshipping the supreme lord, Bhagavat Vāsudeva: (i) abhīgamana, ritually going to the temple of the deity, with speech, body and mind centred on him; (ii) upādāna, collecting materials needed for worship; (iii) īyā, worship; (iv) svādhyāya, the muttering of mantra; (v) yoga, meaning meditation. By worshipping the lord in these ways for a hundred years, the devotee reaches Bhagavat.

Alston (1980a, Vol. 1:10–14) comments on Śaṅkara’s connection to the early Pāñcarātrins, pointing out Śaṅkara’s reference in the introduction to his Gītā commentary to two separate groups of mind-born “sons of Brahmā”, who were projected at the beginning of the world-period (kalpa). To them, the Lord, called Nārāyaṇa, communicated a practical knowledge of the two-fold Vedic wisdom. Śaṅkara also quotes frequently from the Nārāyaṇiya section of the Śānti parvan of the Mahābhārata, which contains (XII.321.27–326.97) the earliest known account of the doctrines of the Pāñcarātrins (Neveel 1977:10); it is of a secret dialogue between Nārāyaṇa and Nārada. In the next section (XII.327ff.), Dvaipāyana praises Pāñcarātra as the greatest Upaniṣad.

Śaṅkara could have objected to the Pāñcarātrins on several grounds: the secondary status of the Veda in respect of their own texts; the predominance of Tantric elements and associated anti-Brahmanical rites and practices; image worship and the paramouncy of bhakti over mokṣa; and the admission of women, śūdra-s and foreigners within the Bhāgavata fold (see Batt 1963). However, Śaṅkara equates the Supreme of the Upaniṣad-s with Nārāyaṇa (BSB 2.2.42), which is the Supreme for the Pāñcarātras. Śaṅkara only rejects one aspect of the vyūha doctrine of the Pāñcarātras, and expressly approves a considerable part of their system, which is said to agree with his Vedānta. According to Neveel’s analysis (1977:20), Śaṅkara’s rejection of Pāñcarātra doctrine is only partial. Śaṅkara admits, in a general sense, that paramātma exists in a manifold way as vyūha-s (‘extensions’ of Himself), and that this concept has a Vedic basis (quoting Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.26.2). Śaṅkara also says (BSB 2.2.42–44) that the entire

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56 Also described in the Nārāyaṇiya section of the MBh (XII.327).
universe is a vyūha of the Lord, twice referring to a specific aspect of the Pāṇcarātra vyūha theory, the sad-guṇa-s.\(^{57}\) In his introduction to the Bhagavadgītā, Śaṅkara refers to the sad-guṇa-s—in the same sequence used by Pāṇcarātra—in explaining how Nārāyaṇa has become the avatāra Kṛṣṇa (Neevel 1977:20–23). These qualities are said to co-exist in equal fullness in Vāsudeva (or Nārāyaṇa), the highest Godhead and vyūha (paravyūha). Śaṅkara does not object to the vyūha theory as such, but only the way that the theory is developed by the Pāṇcarātrins.

Śaṅkara is far more critical of the Śaiva Mahेशvaras, Kāpālikas and Pāṣupatas—and also of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Śaṅkhya, Yoga, Jainism and Buddhism,\(^{58}\) all of which he explicitly describes as heretical (veda-bāhyā). Neevel argues that Śaṅkara placed Pāṇcarātra on a higher level than other systems, closest to Vedānta. Objections to Pāṇcarātra did come from Pārva-Mīmāṁsākās, who maintained that Pāṇcarātra was in conflict with the Veda-s, but not from the commentatorial tradition of Vedānta, of which all known sources reveal a more or less positive attitude to Pāṇcarātra. An important exception is Bādarāyaṇa, who, in the Vedāntasūtras-s (2.2.42–45, the so-called pāṇcarātra section of the tarka-pada), raises objections to what the commentatorial tradition assumes to be Pāṇcarātra doctrines, even though Pāṇcarātra is not named. However, Neevel (1977:18–22) notes that Śaṅkara and Bhāskara (the earliest two commentators on the Vedāntasūtra/Brahmasūtra) treat this sūtra in only a cursory way; they could have levelled many objections to Pāṇcarātra, but refrain. Both Vedānta and Pāṇcarātra emphasised knowledge over action, and laid stress on a continuity with the Upaniṣad-s, but Pāṇcarātra had developed an alternative and increasingly popular ritual tradition, which Neevel suggests may have threatened the livelihood and authority of smṛta Brahmans, hence their opposition.

If Śaṅkara really was a śaiva, as depicted in the hagiographies, then his attitude towards the vaiṣṇava Bhāgavatas and his recognition

\(^{57}\) The ‘six-qualities’ of Pāṇcarātra are: jñāna, aśīvārya, śakti, bala, vīrya and tejas.

\(^{58}\) (BSB 2.1.1–3; 2.2.4–6.) “Smṛtis are the scriptural texts called Tantra, written by the great seer (Kapila)”. It is not possible for Kapila and others to have attained perfection in their practice: “It is a false claim that liberation can be obtained through Śaṅkhya knowledge or the path of Yoga independently of the Vedas”...Yoga “leads to the acquisition of extraordinary powers”, but not liberation (BSB 2.1.1).
of Nārāyaṇa as the highest Self in his main work, the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, is indeed remarkable. Alston (1980a, Vol.1:10–14) observes that there is very little in Śaṅkara’s commentaries to connect him with Śiva worship. He invokes Nārāyaṇa at the beginning of his *Gītā* commentary, who is said by Ānanda-giri—his sub-commentator—to be his chosen deity (*iṣṭa-devatā*), and in the commentary he refers several times to Kṛṣṇa as Nārāyaṇa, even though the name Nārāyaṇa does not appear in the text of the *Gītā*.

Hacker (1995:33–39) has also considered the issue of Śaṅkara’s religious orientation. Lorenzen (1983:160) believes Hacker’s arguments that Śaṅkara was most probably a vaisṇava to be not altogether convincing, but Hacker’s conclusions have yet to be refuted. Hacker observes that in the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* (BSB), Śaṅkara’s definitive work, Śiva is not mentioned. There is one passing mention (3.3.32), in a mythological reference, to Rudra, who generated Skanda. But this is no evidence for śaiva predilection; on the contrary, as śaiva-s prefer to refer to their *iṣṭa-devatā* as Śiva, and not Rudra, a name usually used by opponents. Earlier in the BSB (2.2.36–41), Śaṅkara refutes the doctrines of the śaiva-s (Maheśvara-s), whose God is Paśupati.

‘Śaṅkara’ is a well-known name of Śiva since ancient times, but concerning the notion that Śaṅkarācārya was a śaiva, or indeed an incarnation of Śiva as projected in the hagiographies, in the *Pañca-pādikā* (v. 3) Padmapāda bows to his teacher who had merely the name of Śaṅkara, whom he contrasts with the real Śiva (whom he does not bow to). He states that Śaṅkara (his teacher) did not wear ashes smeared over his body like Śiva and his ascetic devotees, nor does the “new Śaṅkara” have any of the marks or emblems of Śiva. Śaṅkara’s use of imagery is also vaisṇava in style, and not śaiva. Three times in the BSB (1.2.7; 1.2.14; 1.3.14) the *śālagrāma* is referred to in the context of a metaphysical analogy. Four times (3.3.9; 4.1.3 twice; 4.1.5) an image is used of the superimposition of the spiritual vision

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59 See also Hirst (1993:131–139), who presents a broad clutch of references from Śaṅkara’s own works, indicating both his vaisṇava orientation and his conception of the Lord and ‘Inner Controller’ as Nārāyaṇa. In the *Gaudapādikā-bhāṣya* (1.6–7), Śaṅkara seems to imply that that the founder of the advaita tradition is Nārāyaṇa, who is his non-dual self (see Hirst 1993:138).

60 The *Dakṣināṁśrī-stotra* (attributed to Śaṅkara), on which Sureśvara wrote a *Vīrttika*, the *Mānasollāsa*, is śaiva in orientation, but both are of doubtful authenticity (see Potter 1981, Vol. 3:550–551).

of Viṣṇu on idols (pratimā), as an instance of the superimposition of religious ideas on things. Hacker maintains that if Śaṅkara really was a śāiva, then the imagery would have more naturally employed the linga instead. Similar vaisnava imagery occurs throughout the commentaries on the Upaniṣad-s.62 Imaginary persons used by Śaṅkara in explanations are also frequently vaisnava characters, with names such as Devadatta, Yajñadatta, Viṣṇumitra and Kṛṣṇagupta. In his commentary on Gaṇḍapāda’s Māndūkya-kārikā (4.1), Śaṅkara equates Gaṇḍapāda’s Sambuddha (Śākyamuni, the Buddha) with Nārāyaṇa (the Puruṣottama), once again indicating Śaṅkara’s vaisnava orientation. Also, In the BSB (3.4.20) Śaṅkara equates (third āśrama) vanaprastha-s with vaikhāṇasa-s, the latter being orthodox vaisnava-s who have practically no associations with renunciation (see Colas 1992).

Hacker (1995:36) observes that Śaṅkara deviates from custom, in that he does not—with the exception of the Gītā commentary—include the invocation to a deity (maṇgalācarana or namaskāra) at the beginning and/or end of his works. Where he does include a maṅgala, as for the Māṇḍūkya-bhāṣya and Taittirīya Upaniṣad-bhāṣya, he invokes the neutral Brahman or Ātman. This Śaṅkara explains in his commentary on the Kena Upaniṣad, where he says that “he who, having been led to Brahman, is consecrated to sovereignty, does not wish to bow to anyone”. The evidence discussed does not necessarily indicate that Śaṅkara was specifically vaisnava, as his realisation took him beyond religious identification. It merely points to Śaṅkara’s probable religious background, which was evidently not śāiva.

A further clue as to Śaṅkara’s religious orientation is provided by his attitude to Viṇāyaka (Gaṇapati/Gaṇeśa). Commenting on a passage in the Gītā (9.25), Śaṅkara remarks there are four kinds of worshippers (each attaining their own respective goal): Devavrata-s (who attain the deva-s), Pitravrata-s (who reach the realm of ancestors), Bhūtavrata-s (who attain the bhūta-s, ‘malevolent spirits’), and Viṣṇuavrata-s (the vaisnava-s who worship ‘Me’, and reach ‘Me’).63 Śaṅkara mentions three sects of Bhūtavrata-s by name: the Viṇāyaka, the Mātrgaṇa and the Caturbhaginīs (Nagawaray 1996:237–238).

Gaṇeśa makes his first appearance in the Hindu pantheon around

62 Taittirīya (1.6.1; 1.8.1); Muṇḍaka (2.1.4); Praśna (5.2); Brhadāraṇyaka (1.1.1; 5.1.1); Chāndogya (6.16.3; 7.1.4; 8.1.1).
63 See Bhagavadgītā (tr. van Buitenen 1981:107).
the fifth century (Courtright 2001:7), and by the sixth century Vināyaka is well established as a classical deity within the Hindu pantheon in both north and south Indian temple worship (Nagaswamy 1996:239). He is also established mythologically, certainly by the seventh century, as the Tēvāram hymns of Appar and Campanṭar refer to Gaṇapati as the son of the God Śiva (Peterson 1991:101), and a number of hymns were composed to him. Yet it is apparent that Śaṅkara regarded the worship of Gaṇeṣa as the lowest form of worship, that of malevolent spirits (bhūta). The horrifying nature of Gaṇeṣa, leader of the attendants (bhūta-s) of Śiva, is described in a chapter of the Tājñavalkya Smṛti entitled Mahāgaṇapatikalpa. Śiva is said to have created him for the specific purpose of impeding those performing ritual sacrifices (Nagaswamy 1996:239). Within the development of śaiva worship, Gaṇeṣa had become integrated within the orthodox śaiva tradition by the time of Śaṅkara, so his attitude to those who worship Ganeṣa as bhūtavrata-s seems to be yet another clear indication of his non-śaiva religious inheritance.

The second group of bhūta worshippers that Śaṅkara mentions are those who worship the Mārgaṇa (which represents the Saptamātrṣ), while the third group of bhūta worshippers mentioned by Śaṅkara are those who worship the ‘four sisters’ (caturbhaginī-s). It is evident from Śaṅkara’s commentaries that the worship of Durgā, Bhadrakāli, Vināyaka, the Saptamātrṣ, rākṣasa-s, piśāca-s and the sixty-four yoginī-s is considered the lowest grade of worship. Śaṅkara’s classification of the catuṣṭṣṭiyogīnī worship with the lowest form of worship of bhūta-s, preta-s and piśāca-s, would provide further evidence against Śaṅkara’s authorship of the Tantric stotra-s and commentaries attributed to him.

64 These are usually Brāhmī, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Cāmunḍa. This gaṇa also includes Gaṇeṣa at the beginning and Vīrabhadra (or Vināḍhara Śiva) at the end. The worship of the seven women is ancient, possibly being represented on Mohenjo-daro seals (Ramachandra Rao 1992, Pratima-Kosha, Vol. 6:246), and certainly found from the first century CE onwards. It is known that from the seventh century their worship in Tamil Nadu involved the sacrifice of goats or fowl, and was performed by non-Brahman priests.

65 In an intriguing analysis of the term caturbhaginī used in the Gītā-bhāya, Nagaswami (1996:242–244) argues, from the evidence of commentators on the passage containing the term, that the original term used was catuṣṭṣṭiyogīnī, referring to sixty-four yoginī-s (associated primarily with Tantric worship), and not caturbhaginī. There was a close relationship between the sixty-four yoginī-s, Tantric Kaulas, and the Pāṣupatas.
Śaṅkara’s two most important meetings, in the context of the hagiographies, are with Maṇḍanamiśra and Kumārila, the great debate (lasting between six and a hundred days) being between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍanamiśra.66 The winner must convert to the lifestyle of the other. The arbiter is Maṇḍanamiśra’s wife (Sarasavāñi/Bhāratī/Ubhaya-Bhāratī/Sarasvati), who decides that Śaṅkara has won. Maṇḍanamiśra is then initiated as a saṇhya and becomes a disciple of Śaṅkara. Hacker (1995:38–39) suggests that the reason behind the traditional emphasis on the rivalry between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍanamiśra—two great orthodox Brahman monists, between whom there were only minor philosophical differences—was that Śaṅkara was most probably a vaiśśava, while Maṇḍanamiśra seems to have been a śaiva, as at the end of his Brahmasiddhi he calls the state of liberation paramaśivabhāva.67 Hacker surmises that a few centuries later, when concrete differences between the two schools had been forgotten, Vācaspatimiśra successfully meged the two systems into one. From then on, Maṇḍana’s doctrines survived as the so-called Vācaspati (bhāmatī) sub-school of advaita-Vedānta. However, it is apparent that Kumārila was also a śaiva, as the maṅgalacaraṇa at the beginning of his Ślokavārttika is an explicit eulogy to Śiva.68 The evidence fits a hypothesis being presented that the hagiographers could not have successfully presented Śaṅkara as an orthodox Brahman śaiva monist, engaged in an intense rivalry with other orthodox Brahman śaiva-s. Maṇḍanamiśra’s and Kumārila’s śaiva orientation had to be omitted, as in the hagiographies Śaṅkara is also a śaiva.

Although Śaṅkara’s religious background is not entirely certain, his advaita philosophical position, entailing a doctrine of māyā, would not be inconsistent with a vaiśśava heritage. The Paramārtha-sāra (ascribed to Ādiśeṣa) and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa are vaiśśava devotional works that espouse both a form of advaita and a doctrine of illusion, māyā (Alston 1980a, Vol. 1:36–37). Both texts slightly predate69 Śaṅkara, and

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66 Portrayed as cordial and respectful in one set of texts, while in the other set there is an antagonism with the shaven-headed saṇhya (Bader 2000:88–89, 185).
67 See Kuppuswami Sastri (1937:300, section P.159.9).
68 See Kumārila (1993:3, l. 1), who bows to “he whose body is pure consciousness, whose divine eyes are the three Vedas, who causes attainment of the highest, and who wears the cresent moon”; viśuddhajñānadehāya trivedidīnyacakṣuse śreyahprāptinimittāya nāmaḥ somārdhadhāriye.
69 Hacker (1995:39) dates the Paramārtha-sāra to before the sixth century, while Hazra (1940:22) dates the Viṣṇu Purāṇa to not later than the seventh century.
although he does not comment on these texts directly, there is no reason to suppose, as some of his critics have, that because Śaṅkara on occasion employed Buddhist concepts, his philosophical doctrines were necessarily or substantially inherited from a Buddhist milieu, \(^70\) such as that of Gauḍapāda. If there is any conclusion to be drawn concerning Śaṅkara’s religious background, it may be that he is best described as a refomed Pāñcarātra or Bhāgavata, Śaṅkara-Bhagavat or Śaṅkara-Bhagavatpāda indeed being one of the names he uses to describe himself. This is but a surmise. However, a Pāñcarātra (and orthodox Vedic) background is also evident in the two other important Brahmanical renunciate orders that developed in south India around the beginning of the second millennium: the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava order of Rāmānuja, and the order of Madhva. Nevertheless, these Vedāntins’ specific relationship to Pāñcarātra remains uncertain, as a fundamental principle of Pāñcarātra is that, for participation in the cult, an initiation ceremony is required, to be performed by an ācārya, a maṭhādhīpati or a guru (Gnanambal 1977:108).\(^71\)

We will first address Rāmānuja’s connection to Pāñcarātra. According to the Koḻ Olụgu (the somewhat historically unreliable Śrīraṅgam temple chronicle), it is said that Nāthamuni, Yāmunamuni and Rāmānuja (the three most important ācārya-s in the early development of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism)\(^72\) took saṁnyāsa from the householder state, but by the consent of Lord Varadarāja of Kāṇṭipuram, rather than at the feet of another saṁnyāsī, as was traditional (Lester 1992:91–92). Neevel (1977:37) believes that Yāmuna’s family, and that of his grandfather Nāthamuni, were of a class of Bhāgavatas, known as śīṣṭa Bhāgavatas, who performed both Vedic and Pāñcarātra prac-

\(^70\) For a useful summary of Śaṅkara’s relationship to Buddhist philosophy, see Mayeda (2000).

\(^71\) This initiation is based on five sacraments, known as paṅc-saṁskār (or cakraśāntana), the paṅc-saṁskār initiation also being fundamental to the first stage of initiation into the Daśanāmis. For details of the paṅc-saṁskār initiation into Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism, see Gnanambal (1977:183–186). A yellow string is tied around the wrist, the body is branded with symbols, and the candidate receives a new name and mantra.

\(^72\) Nāthamuni was born shortly after 907; Yāmuna (his grandson, the fourth ācārya) most probably flourished between 1022–1038; Rāmānuja’s dates were probably moved back by several decades, to 1017–1137, to enable Rāmānuja (the sixth ācārya) to receive Yāmuna’s blessings (see Neevel 1977:14–16). According to tradition, Yāmuna is Rāmānuja’s teacher’s teacher (paramācārya).
tices, installing images, prostrating and circumambulating temples.\textsuperscript{73} Yāmuna makes every effort to distinguish Pāṇcarātra from other non-Vedic traditions, defending it from attacks from the two major schools of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā, the Bhaṭṭa (Kumārila), and Prabhākara. Halbfass (1983:92) comments that Yāmuna’s Āgama-prāmāṇya (c.1000) is an exemplary statement concerning the authority of the so-called Pāṇcarātra. Yāmuna also presents a long and elaborate refutation of the charge that Bādarāyaṇa rejected Pāṇcarātra. (It was previously mentioned that Śaṅkara was also uncomfortable with Bādarāyaṇa’s apparent rejection of Pāṇcarātra.) One of Yāmuna’s distinctive contributions was to deny that there were any general conflicts between Veda (or śrutī) and Pāṇcarātra (Neevel 1977:24). Yāmuna’s works reveal many influences, including, directly, the bhakti of the Āḻvārs, tangentially Islam, but more importantly, Pāṇcarātra. Neevel (1977:193) contends that by the time of Rāmānuja, a division of labour had taken place, in which Śrī-Vaiṣṇava viṣistādāvaita philosophy had hived off the philosophical activity of the Pāṇcarātras, leaving their ritual activity to take a separate course.\textsuperscript{74} However, according to tradition (the Koil Oļugu) Rāmānuja was also a Pāṇcarātrin ritually, opening the temple to full participation by śūdra-s, called sāttada Vaiṣṇavas (‘those with no thread’) (Stein 1999:233; Hopkins 2002:34).\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{73} For details of Pāṇcarātra eight-fold daily observances, see Czerniak-Drozdowicz (2002); for the worshipper’s visualisation and installation of the deity, see Rastelli (2002).

\textsuperscript{74} Lipner (1986:5) refers to Neevel’s study, but contends that Rāmānuja, while recognising the authority of Pāṇcarātra, does not explicitly identify his position with their views. However, according to tradition, after fleeing from Śrīrangam to avoid persecution, Rāmānuja settled at Melkote, directed the restoration of the Tirunārāyaṇa-svāmī temple, and renewed his saṃnyāsa on the stone marking the renunciation of the great sage Dattātreya (also the tutelary deity of the Jūnā akhāvā) who is listed as the twenty-fifth prādūrabhava (or vibhava) within a list of thirty-eight descents contained in the Sāttvata Saṃhitā (9.77–84)—copied almost verbatim in the Ahirbudhyāna Saṃhitā (5.50ff.), an important Pāṇcarātra text—one of the earliest sources within the Pāṇcarātra tradition (Rigopoulos 1998:43). A continuity within the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition with respect to Dattātreya is still evident. On January 31st 1971, the dying pontiff of the Yadugiri Yatrīrāja Maṭha at Melkote officially bestowed the title to the gaddi of the maṭha to a successor, in a ceremony performed at the Dattātreya temple. On the initiation day for the successor, the tridāna was handed over, and the kaiśāya (ochre-coloured) robe was placed at the feet of Dattātreya (Gnanambal 1977:140).

\textsuperscript{75} In two of his hagiographies, the Rāmānuja-divya-caritā and the Prapannāmya of Anantācārya, it is said that Rāmānuja visited Jagannātha at Purī and attempted, with the support of the king, to reform the worship in the temple and the lives of the priests, by introducing Pāṇcarātra rites. The incumbent (‘degraded’) priests resisted,
Lester (1992:95) maintains that although guru-paramparā texts and temple chronicles place the Śrī-vaishnava practice of renunciation on a Vedic foundation, inscriptions and other evidence suggest otherwise, that samnyāsi-s and jīyar matha-s, at least to begin with, were mostly inspired by non-Vedic traditions of renunciation, those of the Sātttada/Sāttvata ekāṅgin/ekāntin Bhagavatas, in other words, Pāñcarātra. Madhva (1238–1317), a smārta vaishnava, was another important figure in the early development of Vedānta. He also fully accepted the Pāñcarātra (Zydenbos 2001:113, 116), and wrote a short text, Samnyāsa-paddhati, on rules for renunciates.

It is apparent that Śaṅkara was a vaishnava who seems to have been significantly informed by Pāñcarātra—as were Rāmānuja and Madhva—yet Śaṅkara’s hagiographers project him as an ‘orthodox’ (Vedic) śaiva. In the following chapter, it is proposed that Śaṅkara’s early hagiographies projected him as a śaiva in the image of their Vijayanagara patrons who, beginning in the mid-fourteenth century, patronised what was essentially a ‘reformed’, ‘orthodox’ śaiva tradition that included advaita śaiva matha-s and Vedic scholarship. In the following section we will see that the writers of the earlier hagiographies do not clearly mention either Śaṅkara’s founding of a renunciate order and Rāmānuja was magically removed by Lord Jagannātha to Śrī Kūrmam, a śaiva temple in Andhra Pradesh. The incident is also briefly mentioned in the temple chronicle, Mādala Pañjī (Dash 1978:159–160). Lord Jagannātha and Balabhadra wear the Śrī-vaishnava tilak on their foreheads.

76 By title, there are three types of renunciates in contemporary Śrī-vaishnavism: jīyar, āṇḍavān and ekāṅgin. The jīyar-s and āṇḍavān-s are former Brahman householders who have become samnyāsi-s; ekāṅgin-s are important in the historical development of Śrī-vaishnavism, but are unrecognised these days in works on or of Śrī-vaishnava-s. With the exception of the ekāṅgin Brahmanas at Tirupati, āṇḍavān-s came to be regarded generally as low-caste, even though they at one time enjoyed great power and prestige in vaishnava temples. Ekāṅgin may be equated with the ekāntin Bhagavatas, and while Śrīraṅgam Brahman authorities state that ekāṅgin designates a non-twice-born renunciate, it is unclear from the Śrīraṅgam chronicles whether the ekāṅgin is Brahman or non-Brahman. However, a mid-fifteenth century inscription in the Tirumalai-Tirupati temple contains the earliest reference to Satttada Śrī-vaishnava-s, who are identified as persons living a life of renunciation (either as ekāṅgin or ekāṅgin), and as disciples of Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangar, who refers to himself as paraṁ ekāṅgin, a title suspiciously close to that used by the Pāñcarātra Vaishnavas. Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangar’s teacher was Kandādai Anṇan of Śrīraṅgam, who was known as satttada paraṁ ekāṅgin, satttada most probably being a corruption of satttada, designating the Bhagavata/Pāñcarātra vaishnava tradition, reflected in the title of its earliest text (Lester 1992:85–86).

77 See Olivelle (1982) for a translation and commentary.
or the institution of maṭha-s, traditions which seem to have arisen well after the founding of the first advaita maṭha-s. Most of Śaṅkara’s hagiographies include the inauguration of a devī shrine at Śṛṅgerī, and non-Tantric devī worship at Kāṇcī. Devī worship is apparent in the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, but in a non-Tantric, Vedic (śmārtta) form: radical śaiva opponents are defeated. The hagiographical tradition of devī worship is embodied in the Maṭhāmnāya-s, but we also find there deities such as Bhadrakālī (=Durgā), the tutelary deity of the Śāradā pītha. However, we have seen that worship of deities such as Bhadrakālī seems to have been considered by Śaṅkara as of the lowest order of worship. It is proposed that the Maṭhāmnāya-s represent the final stage of a process whereby radical ‘Tantric’ nāga śaiva ascetics were integrated with a monastic order of ‘reformed’ śaiva-s, into the Daśanāmīs.

5.4 Pīṭha-s, maṭha-s, and the installation of disciples in the hagiographies

The paucity of references in the hagiographies to the founding of maṭha-s and the establishing of an ascetic order is striking, the most obvious explanation being that, during the period that they were composed, the Śaṅkara maṭha-s did not have the prominence they now enjoy. There also appears to be no inscriptional evidence connecting Śaṅkara with any maṭha-s prior to 1652, indicating that the idea of his founding monastic centres was not widespread before that time. The hagiographies indicate that the notion that Śaṅkara founded a sect may not have been prevalent for another century.

The earliest hagiography to mention the founding of a maṭha is

78 Sarasvatī is installed at Śṛṅgerī in five of the hagiographies: AŚV, CŚV, TŚA, ŚDV, GVK (Bader 2000:75).
79 The ŚDV has already been discussed, while the VŚV, GŚC, RŚA (Group B) and TŚA make no mention of succession, nor of the founding of monastic centres. Ungemach (1992:27) also remarks that the legend of Śaṅkara founding four maṭha-s under four disciples is not stated in any hagiography.
80 The first inscription that specifically identifies Śaṅkara as the founder of a maṭha appears to be one dated 1652. It records a grant to the Śṛṅgerī “dharma-pīṭha” established by Śaṅkara-cārya, for the worship of the gods Mallikārjuna, Vidyāśaṅkarasvāmī and Śārada-amma; Epigraphia Carnatica, Vol. VI, Śṛṅgerī Jāgīr, no. 11 (see Kane HDS, Vol. 2, part 2:907; Bader 2000:241 fn. 28).
the Śaṅkaravijaya of Anantānanda Giri (sec. 61–62). After installing the devī Sarasvatī in Śrīgerē, Śaṅkara is said to have founded a matha there and established the Bhāratī sampradāya. He placed Padmapāda in charge. Śaṅkara then proceeds to Kāṅcipuram (sec. 63), instigates the construction of two towns in the vicinity, consecrates a temple to the devī Kāmākṣī, and installs a śrī-cakra. He establishes a lineage of disciples, which would last until the end of the eon, in various cities, the first of which was the seat of learning (vidyāpīṭha) at Kāṅcī (sec. 67). No other matha is specifically mentioned in this text, which is the one recognised by the proponents of the Kāṅcī matha as the most authoritative biography of Śaṅkara.

Besides the AŚV, which only mentions matha-s and worship at Kāṅcī and Śrīgerē, only two hagiographers, Cidvilāsa (CŚV) and Lakṣmaṇa-Śāstrī (GVK), mention the founding of four matha-s.83

81 References are to the Madras edition of the AŚV, edited by Veezhinathan (see Anantānanda Giri 1971).
82 Suresvara, according to the Calcutta edition of this text, which also only mentions the establishing of a lineage of disciples in Śrīgerē, and does not mention any matha founded at any other place (Bader 2000:235). This discrepancy between the two editions of the AŚV has been one of the contentious points fuelling the ongoing controversy concerning the legitimacy of the Kāṅcī pīṭha, discussed previously. Another point of contention is that the Madras—but not the Calcutta—edition of the AŚV also mentions Śaṅkara’s receipt from Śiva of five crystal linga-s (AŚV sec. 55, 66, 74), three of which were established by himself at Kedāra (mukti-linga), Nilakanṭha (near Kathmandu) (vara-linga), and Śrīgerē (bhoga-linga). The fourth (yoga-linga) and fifth (moksa-linga) were given to Suresvara, the former to be worshipped by him, and the latter to be sent to Cidambaram.
83 See also Ungemach (1992:27). However, despite the fact that there is no mention in all the SDV of the founding of four matha-s, the tradition of Śaṅkara founding four matha-s (in the four quarters of India) is so prevalent that one may even find this myth perpetuated in recent scholarship. Malinar (2001:93) states that “The philosopher Śaṅkara is claimed as the founder of the monastic institutions (matha) of the Daśanāmī orders and of the Advaita sampradāya. This position is elaborated and continuously re-created in numerous hagiographies.” This assertion is apparently incorrect. Further, Malinar focuses almost solely on the SDV, which contains no mention of the founding of either Daśanāmī orders or four (or any) matha-s. Similarly, Isayeva (1993:81) maintains, incorrectly, that “Most of the biographers are of the opinion that the main monasteries, which were founded by Śaṅkara...were established in the following order: Đvārakā, Badarānātha, Purī, Śrīgerē and Kāṅcī”, and that (p. 88) “The hagiographies enumerate ten Hindu monasteries founded by Śaṅkara, as well as ten monastic orders of sannyāsins”. Isayeva (1993:82, fn.10) also maintains, but with no supporting evidence, that each of the ‘ten names’ corresponds to one particular monastery, and that “to five other monasteries were assigned the monastic orders of Tīrtha, Purī, Vaṣa, Parvata and Sāgara”.

...
Jagannāth and Dvārakā figure in the *digvijaya* of Śaṅkara in only three hagiographies, and the popular tradition of dispatching disciples to the four quarters appears also in only the ČŚV and GVK (Bader 2000:160–161). We have noted that Antarkar tentatively fixes the date of the ČŚV around the sixteenth century, though acknowledging that fixing a date for this text is difficult.\(^8^4\) The GVK is known to have been composed at the behest of an incumbent of the Śaṅkara *maṭha* at Śrīgerī, Svāmī Saccidānandābhāratī (on the *gaddī* from 1705–1741),\(^8^5\) and records the traditions of the time (*c.*1735–1740).\(^8^6\) The founding of the monastic centres follows the account of Cidvīlāsa (ČŚV), who appears to have been the first hagiographer to mention four *maṭha*-s.

Cidvīlāsa extols Śrīgerī (ČŚV 24.31–33a),\(^8^7\) where the first *maṭha* (called Śrī *maṭha*) is established by Śaṅkara, who installs Sureśvara in that seat of learning. Śaṅkara is then said to establish other *maṭha*-s: near the Jagannātha temple in the east (presided over by Padmapāda); in the “western quarter” (where he installed Hastāmālaka); and “in the northern quarter he had a heavenly *maṭha* built” (where he installed Toṭaka) (ČŚV 30.10–31.29). While there are specific references in the text to Śrīgerī and Jagannāth, and though the Gomatī (river) is mentioned by name as a *tīrtha* (ČŚV 30.4) in connection with the western quarter, there is no mention in the text of either Dvārakā or Badarī(*nātha*) as the place of the founding of a *maṭha*. In the GVK, besides the specific references to the Śrīgerī and Jagannātha *maṭha*-s—also found in ČŚV—there are specific references (3.59–62) to the *maṭha*-s at Dvārakā and Badarī.\(^8^8\) The appointment of dis-

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\(^{8^4}\) Antarkar (1973:2) supplies several references—five to kings—from the ČŚV that may at some time help to establish more precisely its date. Antarkar has not been able to deduce any dates from these references: 1. Bhadrasena of Rudrākhyanagar, near Prayāg (ch. 16); 2. Vīrasena, near the bank of the Tuṅgabhadrā river, Śrīgerī *maṭha* (ch. 24); 3. Rājasena, king of of Kānci (ch. 25); 4. Bhojasingh, king of Cidambar (chs. 26 and 27); 5. Ratnasingh, king of Badarī (ch. 31); 6. Rāmarāja of Anantaśayana (ch. 28). Bader (2000:38–40) largely corroborates Antarkar’s findings, but concerning an earliest date for the ČŚV, he notes (p. 197) that some sections of the ČŚV featuring debates between Mañḍanamiśra and Śaṅkara appear to have been lifted from the *Pārśara-mādhava-yāya* (1340–1360).

\(^{8^5}\) Miśra (*Amīt Kārekā* 2001:25).

\(^{8^6}\) This is the first text giving a *guru-parampara* for the Śrīgerī *maṭha*.

\(^{8^7}\) All references to the ČŚV are to the text edited by Antarkar (1973). See also Bader (2000:237–238).

\(^{8^8}\) Antarkar (2001:22) observes that another *vijaya* of Śaṅkara, the *Bhagavat-
pādābhuyadaya, mentions, besides the four places in connection with the founding of matha-s, also Kāncī, but that this text post-dates the GVK.

Regarding our previous discussion of the Sumeru matha at Banaras: the GVK (3.23) also refers to Śaṅkara contemplating five matha-s when he was in Banaras, four for his disciples and one for himself. However, after this fleeting reference, no more is said of the fifth matha (Antarkar 2001:23).

5.5 The first references to the ‘ten names’

Amongst the eight hagiographies of Śaṅkara scrutinised by Bader, the only one to mention the establishing of ten lineages is the CŚV (24.36–37a). This is said to occur while Śaṅkara is residing at Śrīnerī, but no more information is supplied. The only other hagi-
ography to refer to a lineage is the AŚV, which (we have already noted) refers to the establishing of but one sampradāya, the Bhāratī (AŚV sec. 62). Curiously, the GVK, which follows the CŚV on the establishing of matha-s, like all the other hagiographies makes no mention of the ten names.  

There is nothing in any of the hagiographies to connect matha-s with the Daśanāmī lineages, such as we find in the Mathāmnāya-s, nor do the published guru-paramparā-s accord with what little information is supplied by the hagiographies. It is apparent that the traditions of the guru-paramparā-s for the matha-s were independent from the sources for the traditions that are constituted in the Mathāmnāya-s, and from the sources that led to the hagiographies of Śaṅkara.

I have so far found no reference in any text to the ten names before the sixteenth century, excluding the possibility that the CŚV may possibly be earlier than that. The only early texts that I have been able to discover that refer to the ten names both utilise the same phrase utilised by Cidvilāsa, and were written between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. A reference to the ten names may be found in the Yatidharmaprakāśa of Vāsudevārāma (66.14–15), dated to between 1675 and 1800 (Olivelle 1976:18). In this passage Vāsudevārāma is citing an earlier work, the Yatidharmasamgraha of Viśveśvarasarasvatī (pp. 102–103). Viśveśvarasarasvatī was the teacher of the illustrious advaita philosopher, Madhusūdanaarasvatī (1540–1647), who is the person believed by some to have authorised the acceptance of nāgā lineages within the Daśanāmī order.  

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93 Michaels (2004:126) also notes that a connection between Śaṅkara and the Daśanāmīs appears to have been made after the 15th/16th centuries, as there is no mention of this in the earlier hagiographies.

94 Discussing the procedure of conferring the meditation shawl (yogapaṭṭa)—which means initiation into samnyāsa—Vāsudevārāma explains (66.3–4) that the the cloth is held over the pupil, who, with the guru, other pupils and relatives, recites the chapter of the Bhagavadgītā called Viśvarūpa, up to the words “...enjoy a prosperous kingdom”. (Note that here also a vaisnava text is recited.) “Then the guru should give him a name that is approved by all. Tīrtha, Aśrama, Vana, Aranya, Giri, Parvata, Sāgara, Sarasvatī and Purī are the ten names (given to) renouncers. His name should be uttered appropriately with the titles ār and pāda. From today onward you should always perform the initiation, the explanation (of texts) and the like, and also confer the meditation shawl on one who has been examined well” (66.13–18); ed. and trans. by Olivelle [1976, Part 1:99; 1977, Part 2:187]).

95 = Viśveśvarapaddhati, published by the Ānandārāma of Pūṇe in 1909; see Olivelle (1977, Part 2:25).

96 See Chapter 7.1.
to Madhusūdana, we may assign the *Yatidharmasamgraha* of Viśveśvara to around the end of the sixteenth century.

Another early reference to the ten names occurs in the *Vārāṇ* of Bhāū Gurdās (1551–1637), a disciple of the fourth Sikh guru, Guru Rām Dās, and scribe of the *Guru Granth Sahib* in the period of the fifth guru, Guru Arjuna Dev. The *Vārāṇ* may be dated to the first quarter of the seventeenth century (Jodh Singh 1998, Vol.1:1–5). It states (*Vār 8, pauḍī 13 [varṇa]): “Many are yogēśvarīs (great yogis) and many are sannyāsis. Sannyāsis are of ten names* and yogis have been divided into twelve sects*.

It seems that Daśānāmī-Samnyāsīs were also established in Nepal by the middle of the seventeenth century. A copper-plate inscription of 1635/6 from the Jagannāth temple in Hanumāṇ Ďhoka palace square in Kathmandu employs the phrase *daśānāma samnyāśī* referring to several individuals with the surnames ‘Giri’, ‘Puri’ and ‘Bhārati’.

That the notion of *samnyāśī*-s with ten names was established by the seventeenth century may be gleaned from a report in the *Dabistān*, composed in 1645, where it is reported (*Dabistān*, 1843, Vol. 2:139) that the *samnyāśī*-s are of ten names. Our chronicler accurately describes, perhaps for the first time, the division of the *samnyāśī*-s into the two main branches of the Daśānāmī-Samnyāsīs, the monastic and *nāgā*. It is suggested that perhaps a century or so before this report, the ten names—comprising two branches—became established: to my knowledge, there is no earlier reference.

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97 *Saṃnāśī das nām dhari.*
100 Dayāla Bhārati, Renukā Bhārati, Rāma Giri, Niraṇjana Puri, Bāla Giri, Śaṅkaranāth Gadādhara Giri, Bhagavān Bhārati, Purna Giri, Ayodhyā Giri, Kula Giri, Puruṣottama Giri.
101 Kane (HDŚ, Vol. 1, part 2:815) notes a reference to the ten names in the *Smṛṭīmuktāṇḍhala of Vaidyānātha-Dikṣita*, a text he dates to c.1700.
102 “...Ban, A’ran, Tirthah, A’shram, Kar (Giri?), Parbatah, Sākar, Bhārthy, Perī and Sarsātī. They are said to follow the dictates of Datātēri [Dattātreya], and to be of two classes: ‘Dandaheri’, who do not have long hair and are attached to the precepts and regulations of the smrīti; and the ‘Avadhātas’ who drink ashes, wear the ‘zunar’ and ‘juta’ [jata,’dreadlocks’]. Other sanyāśīs rubbing bhabūt [vibhātu] into the body remain twelve years standing up on one leg... Some of this class of men (are) of consideration and opulence and are escorted by files of elephants; they have carriages, fine apparel, courtiers, servants on foot and horseback.”
103 It is claimed (see Michaels 1994:117ff.) that an (unnamed) *samnyāśī* follower of a Śaṅkarācārya came from the Āmaradaka Agnimaṭha at Kāśi and Prayāga to
next chapter the establishing of orthodox śaiva advaita maṭha-s will be discussed, and how Śaṅkara may have been projected onto the monastic tradition.

Nepal twice in the twelfth century, taught yoga and tantra vidyā there, founded two temples, initiatedĀnandaDeva (son of king Śivadevamalla) and others, and had the Paśupatināth temple renovated. This claim is based primarily on a Sanskrit inscription, said to be dated to 1142 (V.S. 1199, Nevrā Śaṃvat 262), which is on a slab of stone now lying in the grounds of the Government Museum in Kathmandu. The text of the inscription is reprinted by both Regmi (1966:13–16) and Taṇḍan (1986:27–29), though the renderings of many of the lines and phrases of the inscription are substantially different in the two versions.

I have some doubts about both the dating of the inscription and its supposed provenance. Firstly, although Regmi (1966:13) states that the date figures of the inscription are lost, Taṇḍan (1986:27), in his preamble to the inscription, states that the date of the inscription is N.S. 262. I have been unable to ascertain how this was established, given that the date of the inscription is apparently unreadable. Secondly, given the discussion earlier in this chapter of Śaṅkara's religious orientation, it would seem improbable that one of his followers would be teaching yoga and Tantra, rather than advaita-Vedānta.

However, the Amaradaki [Āmarapāda] maṭha, a Śaiva-Siddhāntin institution that was particularly influential in south India during the twelfth century (see Ch. 6, fn. 39, 40) contributed to the development of the temple movement, was associated with Tantra, and supplied śaiva-ācārya-s who initiated many regents from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. It seems possible that if the inscription does indeed date from the twelfth century, as maintained by Taṇḍan (1986:27) and Vajrācārya (1980:209ff.), then it may perhaps relate to a Śaiva-Siddhāntin rather than a samnyāsī. In support of this suggestion, firstly, it may be noted that in an incomplete sentence in v. 6 of the inscription Durvāsa is mentioned (though in which capacity it is difficult to discern accurately from the fragment). According to several Taṇtra-s, Durvāsa is the preceptor of the Amaradaki maṭha (ARE 1917, part II, para. 37 [1986:124]). Secondly, although Taṇḍan (1986) and Michaels (1994:117ff.) believe that this inscription signals the arrival of samnyāsī-s in the Kathmandu valley, I have been unable to see how such a conclusion could be derived from it. Although (possibly) a teacher named Śaṅkara—approached by pupils—is referred to in v. 9, no reference is made to either a samnyāsī, a daśanāmī or a Śaṅkarācārya. Also, in Ch. 4.1 it was pointed out that Śaṅkara was a relatively common name in the mediaeval period, and that the mention of someone named Śaṅkara does not necessarily refer to the author of the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya or a Śaṅkarācārya.

That the Amaradaki maṭha was in south India, yet supplied a preceptor to a Nepalese king would not be improbable: there was considerable religious and cultural contact between the two regions from the twelfth century onwards, and since either the twelfth or the fifteenth century the priests (and their assistants) of the Paśupatināth temple at Kathmandu have come from south India (Michaels 1994:116–132). Also, the Amaradaki maṭha was connected to the Gōlakī maṭha, which had a significant institutional presence in Kāśi. Notwithstanding a tradition amongst the so-called Bhaṭṭa-priests of Kathmandu that the worship of Paśupati and their priesthood were instigated by Śaṅkarācārya, it has been suggested that if there were śaiva ascetics in the Kathmandu valley during the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, then they were most probably Śaiva-Siddhāntins rather than samnyāsī-s (i.e. followers of Śaṅkarācārya).
CHAPTER SIX

THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF *ADVAITA MATHA*-S

In order to consider the relative importance and influence of *advaita matha*-s within the context of religious developments in India from the early to the late mediaeval period, a brief survey of the development of early Śaivism will first be presented. The processes will then be considered whereby several forms of Śaivism gradually came to replace Buddhism and Jainism as the dominant forms of religion in the south. This was primarily due to state patronage. The religious orientation of various rulers and prominent Vedāntins is discussed, and the initiation of kings by rāja-guru-s. A more detailed analysis of the institution and funding of *śaiva matha*-s up to the Vijayanagara period follows. The central thrust of this chapter is to illustrate how a new monastic tradition was founded by the early founders of the Vijayanagara empire, a tradition which also represented a ‘new’ orthodox smārta form of *advaita* Śaivism, primarily represented in Vedānta tradition and philosophy. It was only much later that Śaṅkara—ideally situated as an orthodox *advaita-vedāntin*—was projected onto that new monastic project, which originally seems to have had nothing to do with the ācārya. Although the work of many scholars of the period has been utilised in this chapter, the argument that a ‘new’ orthodox *śaiva* tradition was established is essentially novel.

6.1 The Pāśupatas

We will first consider the earliest known sect of *śaiva*-s in India, the Pāśupatas. In what many scholars believe to be one of the later additions to the *Mahābhārata* (XII, 349.64), there are references to different doctrines (*jñāna*) and sects (*mata*) prevalent at the time (c.300–500): the Pāśupata-s, Śaṅkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra and Vaidika. In the *Purāṇa*-s, the *vaishnava* Pāñcarātras are sometimes condemned, but it is the Pāśupatas who are considered to be the most subversive. The Pāśupatas can be regarded as the prototypes of Śaivite ascetics, covering their body with ashes and sectarian markings, emphasising
yoga, and often criticised for anti-social behaviour. Śaivite sects, which seem to have developed in the early centuries BCE, all attribute their origin to the Pāṇḍavas—the oldest recognisable Śaivite sect—who worshipped Bhairava, the fierce form of Śiva (Maheśvara). The first textual references to Śaivism are found in Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini’s grammar, probably written in the second century BCE (Dyczkowski 1989:4). Patañjali (5.2.76)\(^1\) refers to Śivabhagat-s, whom he describes as itinerant ascetics wearing animal skins and carrying an iron lance.

The Pāṇḍava doctrine\(^2\) is attributed to Lākulīśa (or Nākulīśa), ‘The Lord of the Staff’, who was considered to be an incarnation of Śiva. His teachings, according to tradition, had been revealed by Śrīkaṇṭha, the consort of Umā (Chakraborti 1970:8; Pathak 1960:4–8). He is believed to have come from Baroda (Gujarat) and to have lived in the early centuries. However, it is far from certain that Pāṇḍava Śaivism began with him, as there is a tradition which admits the existence of Pāṇḍava teachers prior to Lākulīśa (Dyczkowski 1989:20). There were other groups of ascetics also known as Pāṇḍavas, and it is probable that Pāṇḍava became a general name for a number of sects. The earliest surviving texts of the sect are the Pāṇḍavasūtra, with the Pañcartha-bhāṣya of Kauṇḍinya, which may be dated to around the fourth to the sixth centuries (Dyczkowski 1989:21).\(^3\) Pāṇḍava texts inform us that the Pāṇḍava ascetic should be a Brahman, and it was prohibited for him to address women or śūdra-s except under special circumstances.\(^4\) However, no Brahmanical rite is recommended, and many of its rituals seem to have been entirely non-Vedic (Dasgupta 1975, Vol. 5:142).\(^5\) Pāṇḍava philosophy appears to have been a


\(^2\) Pāṇḍava doctrine and the yoga doctrine of Patañjali bear distinct affinities (see Hara 1999).

\(^3\) For the chronology of the Pāṇḍavasūtra and its commentaries, see Hara (1994).

\(^4\) Ingalls (1962:291–297) believes that Pāṇḍava actions were far more lecherous than Kauṇḍinya’s gloss suggests.

\(^5\) Dasgupta (1975, Vol. 5:130) remarks that the texts do not give us any philosophy of Śaivism but rather deal almost wholly with rituals, or rather modes of life. It is quite possible that śāiva philosophy was added to extant ascetic practices, as in the Saiva-darsīna-samgraha of Madhava the Pāṇḍava system is not identified with any form of philosophy, but with different kinds of ascetic practices.
relatively late accretion to a radically antinomian lifestyle, which included: wearing filthy garments; use of violent and indecent language; feigning madness; spitting; defecation; and public sex acts. The Pāṣupatas specified five levels of attainment, the second level being distinctively Pāṣupata, whereby the initiate behaves in a manner (such as being mad, or like a dog) likely to cause censure and reprimand, courting disfavour, thereby relieving the initiate’s previously accumulated bad karma. The Pāṣupata goal was mokṣa, but also to be free to act at will.

The Pāṣupatas are thought to have survived in two major factions, the Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas. The Kāpālikas were a radical and itinerant Śaivite sect famed for their carrying of a human skull, their immoral behaviour and their reputation for practising human sacrifice. They are believed to have been the instigators of Tantric ritual (White 1998), and are referred to in early (fifth or sixth cent.) Tantric literature (Lorenzen 1972:52). While the Kāpālikas represented the most heterodox aspects of Śaivism, the Kālāmukhas represented the more orthodox aspects, inaugurating temples and colleges in south India. Despite differences in practice, the Kālāmukhas maintained a doctrine very similar to that of the Pāṣupatas. We will be returning to these Śaiva sects, after first examining the causes of the rise of various forms of Śaivism in the south.

6.2 Maṭha-s and competing religious traditions in south India, 600–1500 CE

After the seventh century, there was a general decline in the influence of both Jainism and Buddhism in south India, with relatively few references to Buddhism in literature and inscriptions, although, as previously noted, Buddhism survived in some centres up until the thirteenth century. Jainism nevertheless still maintained some influ-

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6 See Ingalls (1962); Davidson (2002:183–184). There are distinct parallels between the Pāṣupatas and the Greek Cynics, both of which Ingalls believes had shamanic roots. The Cynics first appeared in the fourth century BCE and exerted considerable influence until the fifth century.

7 In Hala’s Prakrit poem, the Gāthāsaptāṣati (third to fifth century) there is one of the earliest references to the Kāpālikas (Dyczkowski 1989:26).
ence in the south for several centuries, and between the eighth and tenth centuries several new monastic orders were established in the Bangalore and Mysore districts. Royal and private charters registering land grants, and control over local tolls, raised the position of the Jaina pontiff almost to the position of a landlord, giving the maṭha considerable status in the local area. The adoration of the preceptor of Jaina maṭha-s developed into a cult during this period, numerous burial stones being erected by lay and monastic disciples, to which ritual worship was offered (Nandi 1973:108–113, 170; Champakalakshmi 1996:345; Davidson 2002:90).

Buddhism and Jainism were being challenged by the growing popularity of vaisāyuva bhakti (centred on the Ḍvārā) and, more importantly, śāiva bhakti (centred on the Nāyaṇārs). Both Jainism and Buddhism had previously been patronised by the non-Tamil Cāḷukyas, but the adoption of Śaivism by the succeeding Tamil Pāṇḍya and Pallava dynasties entailed a loss of patronage for those religions, and the active promotion of Śaivism by the ruling elites of the Deccan and south India. The expansion of the powerful Tamil kingdom of the Pallavas under Mahendravarman I (580–630) and his son Narasimhavarman I (630–668) coincided with the anti-Buddhist and anti-Jaina bhakti movement and the rise of a strong sense of Tamil

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8 One of the most important centres of the early south Indian bhakta saints was Kāṇṭīpuram, a place also associated with the early career of Rāmānuja (13th century).
9 In the Tamil region, three śāiva poet-saints, Tirunāṇacampantar, Tirunāvukkaracar and Cuntaramūrti, popularly known as Campantar (or Nāṇacampantar), Appar and Cuntarar (sixth to eighth centuries), are recognised as the principal ‘leaders’ (nāyāgar), or the ‘First Three Saints’, of the sixty-three Nāyaṇārs. In a later classification, Māṉikkavaṉcar (ninth century?), the author of the Tiruvācakam (‘Sacred Utterances’) is included with the other three poets, as ‘Preceptors of the Faith’ (camayakuravar) or ‘The Four’ (nālvar). Their vernacular poems were incorporated into the Tēvāram, also known as ‘The Complete Canon’ (aṭṭaṅkaṉmuṟṟai) which comprises seven books and forms the bulk of the primary sacred texts of Tamil Śaivism. In the eleventh century the works of the ‘First Three Saints’ were compiled into the seven-volume Tirumurai (‘Sacred Utterances’), which served as primary scripture for this branch of Śaivism. It seems that the entire canon (which, amongst other works, also includes the Tirumantiram as Book X; see below) was not completed until the thirteenth century (Peterson 1991:12–15).
10 Buddhism survived for longer in the outlying regions of the east and north (Davidson 2002:90).
11 According to tradition, Mahendravarman was converted from Jainism to Śaivism by the poet-saint Appar (Peterson 1991:9). For a brief resumé of the king’s literary activity, see Unni (1998:1–7).
identity. The rise and influence of Advaita Maṭha-s was marked by the worship of Śiva, and while the Pallavas worshipped the Trimūrti (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva), it was Śaivism that witnessed a remarkable growth, particularly during the reign of Narasimhavarman II (or Rājasimha, c.690/91–c.728/29) (Mahalingam 1969:123–124).

The anti-social practices integral to both Jaina and Buddhist ideologies (such as their prohibitions on contact with women, and their generally negative attitude to art, literature and music), and the alien and artificial literary style of Jaina Tamil may also have been significant contributory factors in the decline of Jainism and Buddhism after the seventh century (Zvelebil 1973:192–197). In the early bhakti hymns of the Tēvāram (the collective title for the Nāyaṉārs’ hymns) particular emphasis is given to the temple and ritual worship. However, it is apparent that the so-called bhakti movement of south India was mainly represented by Brahman and kṣatriya poets, and was not in any way a low-caste phenomenon articulating class-struggle or social protest, even though the ethos of the bhakta-s could be described as social negativism (Zvelebil 1973:192–197).

12 It may also be noted that the bhakti movements contributed significantly to the cult of the book—notably Purāṇa-s—in distinction to earlier oral traditions: texts came to be considered as protecting forces for domiciles, and particular merit could be accrued from copying a text (Brown 1986:76–78).

13 Rājasimha also seems to have continued supporting some Buddhist institutions. He is credited with the construction of a Buddhist vihāra at Nagapattinam.

14 The collective title Tēvāram (‘a text related to ritual worship’) was only given to the Nāyaṉārs’ hymns in, perhaps, the sixteenth century.

15 The three poets sang hymns to Śiva as the god of shrines situated in 274 sacred places (five belonging to the Himalayas, the abode of Śiva), the Tamil places creating a Śaivite sacred geography (see Spencer 1970).

16 Besides the bhakti movement, more radical forms of Śaivism were also prevalent in the south. In the Tirumantiram, Tirumīḷar (eighth/ninth century), the great Tamil siddha and Tantric, describes four paths of Śaivism, also called śuddha-siddhānta and vedānta (Thirumular 1999:vv. 1419–1501). In desending order of accomplishment, from jhāna to bhakti, are: jhāni-s, merging the “I in the you”; yogi-s, raising kuṇḍalinī through the six centres, attaining siddhi and samādhi; those in kriyā, not missing daily worship; those in caryā (performance of rites and ceremonies), who perform many pilgrimages. Those on the paths of kriyā and caryā wear earrings, rudraśka around the neck, and (presumably) the vṛsabha (bull) and trident mūdra-s (seals). There is also a reference (v. 1449) to six schools of vedānta-siddhānta. This four-fold hierarchical scheme is the same as the four-fold division into ‘quarters’ (pādā) of both the Śaiva Āgama and the Pāṇcarātra Samhitā, and probably does not accurately reflect real socio-religious divisions.

17 An examination of the caste-origin of the bhakti poets reveals that around 75% of the poet-saints were either of Brahman or kṣatriya origin. A further 20% (including Appar and Nammāḷvār) are vellāḷa-s, technically a śūdra caste, but in...
In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Cōlas actively promoted the devotional Śaivism of the Nāyaṇārs, enlarging and rebuilding extant Śiva shrines visited by the Nāyaṇārs, who were installed as a feature of the iconography and ritual complex of the temple. They also perpetuated the institution, begun by the Pallava kings before them, of employing singers of the hymns of the Nāyaṇārs in ritual worship in the temples (Peterson 1991:14). 18

Although developments in the dominance and decline of various religious movements are being discussed, particularly concerning the rise of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, it is important to consider the frequently syncretic nature of religion at a popular level. To give but one example for the period under discussion: in Bengal in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it is apparent that, in the eyes of the laity, there was practically no distinction between ‘Purāṇic’ Hinduism and Buddhism; people may have had ten Brahmanical sanskāra-s performed by Brahmans, yet paid homage to the Buddha (Chakrabarty 2001:145). 19 However, notwithstanding religious syncretism, sectarian conflicts nevertheless took place. The twelfth-century work of Cēkkilār, the Periya Purāṇam (a hagiography of the sixty-three Nāyaṇārs), contains a description of a major conflict between Jainas and Śaivas, which occurred at Vaḍatāli, near Kumbhakonam, wherein the Jainas are accused of hiding a linga and are forced to leave by the local Cōla ruler. The Jainas appear to have suffered considerably at the hands of zealous śaiva-s. 20

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18 Although they promoted Śaivism, the Cōlas, and the Pallavas before them, were also supporters of Jainism. An inscription dated to 945, in the reign of the Cōla king Madiraikoneḍa Parakesarivarman, records a gift of gold to a devotee at a (most probably) Jaina monastery, Jinagiripallī. Other inscriptions during the reigns of the Cōlas record various grants and land gifts. These include an inscription of c.1116 (from the reign of Kulūttuṅga Cōla I), another, a few years later, from the reign of Vikrama Cōla, and an inscription dated 1199 records a gift of land to a Jaina temple (Desai 1957:34–35).

19 It is apparent that in mediaeval contexts, while texts may have been sectarian, ritual was frequently fluid, crossing Jaina, Buddhist, Muslim, Tantric, and sectarian ‘Hindu’ boundaries, creating shared patterns of worship. For evidence from the ninth to fourteenth centuries; see Granoff (2000:418–420); Orr (2000:24–25; 204, fn. 45).

20 One indication of this is an epigraph at Śrīsālām, Andhra Pradesh, dated to 1512, recounting the pious achievements of a Viraśaiva chief, named Liṅga, who took pride in cutting off the heads of Śvetāmbara Jainas (Desai 1957:23).
the *Periya Purāṇam* witnessed a significant growth of maṭam-s (maṭha/guḥai/āṭīṇam), which functioned not only as centres of sectarian learning but also of administration.

Inscriptional evidence for the Deccan and south India between 600 and 1000 reveals that the overwhelming majority of maṭha-s were in the central/western part of what is now Karnataka State (see Nandi 1973:205). This area, to the east of Goa, is known to have been home to around fifty Jaina, śaiva and Buddhist monasteries during that period. Although, as explained, śaiva-orientated sects are known to have existed since at least the early centuries BCE, śaiva monasteries were unknown before the eighth century (Nandi 1973:70–90; Swaminathan 1990:117). Between the eighth and tenth centuries, there are around thirty-five inscriptions for śaiva maṭha-s, the earliest being for the Śaiva-Siddhāntins (see below), Pāṣupatas, Kapālikas, and the Kālāmukhas of Mysore, all of

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is also a persistent tradition that Cuntarar was responsible for the annihilation of 8,000 Jaines in Madurai (Nampi Anṭār Nampi, Āluṭaiya Pīḷaiyār Tiruvulāmālai, 59 and 74; see Zvelebil 1973:106). During the reign of the Kaḷacūrya king Bijjala (12th century), the Kālāmukha Ekānata Rāmayya exterminated many Jaines at Ablūr. Kālāmukhas desecrated dozens of Jaina basadi-s during that period, many of which can be identified, after defeating the Jaines ‘in debate’ (Settar 1999:77–79).

21 In Karnataka, nine other maṭha-s were situated in the Bangalore area, while two Jaina maṭha-s were in south Karnataka, the other from the tenth century. Four maṭha-s (two śaiva and two Jaina) were situated in Tamil Nadu, and seven in Andhra Pradesh. Four maṭha-s (Buddhist, śaiva and Jaina) were functioning in Orissa, around Bhubanesvara, while two śaiva maṭha-s were situated on the coast of Maharashtra, south of Mumbai. Four śaiva maṭha-s are recorded in Madhya Pradesh.

22 There appear to have been few vaiṣṇava maṭha-s before the rise of the Śri-Vaiṣṇava movement under Rāmānuja in twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See Gurumurthy (1979:17, 73), who lists four, the earliest being the Govindapadi maṭha founded in North Arcot in 969.

23 One of the earliest references to a maṭha in inscriptions is in the Tirumēṟṟai inscription (of uncertain date) of Dantivarman Pallava (r.796–847) (Swaminathan 1990:117).

24 The earliest inscription referring to Pāṣupatas is dated 943, found at Hemāvati, Sira Tālukā, Mysore. Another important inscription, referring to Śīva becoming incarnate as Lākulīṣa, is found at Eklīṣī, near Udaipur, Rajasthan, dated 1028 (Bhandarkar 1995:166). There was also an important Pāṣupata centre in Udupi, on the Kanataka coast in South Kanara district, supported by the Ālupa chiefs. The Pāṣupatas were also influential in the area around Palāyāraī (south Tamil Nadu) during the Gōla period. Rājendra I built a temple there for one of his queens that was used by Pāṣupatas. The Dārāsuram temple in the same town contains 108 sculptured figures of Pāṣupata śaivādīrya-s (Champakalakshmi 1996:346).

25 The earliest occurrence of the word kapālin (one who bears a skull) is probably
whom had established *matha*-s in the south by around the middle of the tenth century.

The influence of the Pāṣūpata sect appears to have been extensive. Davidson (2002:184–186, 341–343) has identified over one hundred Pāṣūpata sites, all over India, dating from the fifth to the twelfth century, and remarks that no comprehensive study has yet been undertaken, which would doubtless reveal more sites.²⁸ It appears (Davidson 2002:85) that Buddhist missionary activity was effectively supplanted by the Pāṣūpata sect.²⁹ The Pāṣūpata and Kālāmukha sects, besides promoting their āgama-s, were both associated with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy.³⁰

By the tenth century there were *śaiva matha*-s all over the Deccan,
the greatest concentration being around Dharvar (central Karnataka). By the end of the Cōla period (early thirteenth century), nearly every temple in south India in the region governed by them had one or more maṭha-s functioning in close proximity to it (Nilakanta Sastri 1955:650; Suthanthiran 1986:192). From the early thirteenth century, numerous Śaiva maṭha-s were established by devotees of what had become a canon of Śaiva saints. 31 Besides being educational institutions which were frequently in receipt of grants and donations (vīḍyādāna) to further educational activities, 32 the maṭha-s were also often involved in charitable activities, including feeding arrangements for pilgrims and the poor, and in some cases setting up hospitals and maternity centres. 33 The early maṭha-s were but a few rooms attached to temples, but by the tenth century there were separate buildings for the residents.

During the latter half of the first millennium, it became common practice for regents to take initiation (dikṣā) from Śaiva gurus, whose general influence was simultaneously enhanced by the growing popularity of devotional Śaivism amongst the population in some parts of India. In the south many kings, from the Cāluṅka, Hoysala, Cōla, Gaṅga, Cedi, Yādava, and subsequently the Vijayanagara dynasties, were initiated by Śaiva preceptors—effectively undergoing a spiritual rebirth—usually in return for which substantial properties were donated, with revenue to be derived from the holdings. 34 Kings

31 See Rajamanickam (1964:231–250).
32 Amongst subjects studied were Veda, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, the eighteen Purāṇa-s, yogaśāstra, systems of philosophy, logic (tarka), grammar (vyākaraṇa), poetry (kāvyā), dramaturgy (nāṭaka), and sciences connected with literature (śāhitya) (Gurusūrthī 1979:14; Swaminathan 1990:118). For educational subjects and salaries in maṭha-s during the Cōla period, see Nilakanta Sastri (1955:628–634).
34 Vikramādiyā I of the Cāluṅka dynasty of Bādāmī had as many as three Śaiva preceptors, the first, Śrī Sudarśanācārya, performing the śiva maṇḍala dikṣā, for which he was granted a village in 660. Another of his gurus, Śrī Meghācārya, also received a village in the same year. An inscription of 1039 reveals that the Kālāmukha, Kriyāśakti Paṇḍita Deva, was rāja-guru of the Western Cāluṅka, (Jaya) Śinṣa Deva. Sarveśvaraśakti Deva—an acārya of seventy-seven temples—was rāja-guru of another Cāluṅkya monarch, Someśvara Deva, in 1070. In 1129 Someśvara Deva Bhūlakamalla made a grant to the rāja-guru, Vamaśakti Paṇḍita, the greatest of the Kālāmukha gurus, who also received a grant, in 1156, from Bijjaṇa Devarasa of the Kalacuriyas, over whom the guru had considerable influence. Vamaśakti was also most probably the rāja-guru of the Hoysala king, Vira, receiving a village from a grant made in 1193. It appears from another inscription, in
were consecrated and installed as royal protectors of the realm at the centre of a śāiva maṇḍala. Davidson comments (2002:89) that “śāiva royal inscriptions are collectively the most extraordinary documents for the combination of religious fervour, erotic sentiment and graphically violent images”. Records indicate that the śāiva preceptors, known as rāja-guru-s, were almost exclusively from the Śāiva-Siddhānta, Kālāmukha, and Mattamayūra orders (the latter also being a Śāiva-Siddhānta sect), though the lineage in a few inscriptions is hard to determine. We will now consider the available evidence on this influential role of the Śāiva-Siddhānta and Kālāmukha sects.

It is apparent that the Cōḷa rāja-guru-s (ācārya) were held in enormous

1191, that Kriyaśakti Deva was also the rāja-guru of the Hoysala ruler Narasimha Deva. The rāja-guru-s of the Hoysalas seem to have come from Āsandī-nāḍ, where there were five maṭha-s, the priests from there being known as Kampanācāryas. As recorded in 1245, the Yādava (or Seuṇa) rulers had Rudraśakti Deva, from the Koteśvara (or Koṭināṭha) temple of Kuppatūr, as their Kālāmukha rāja-guru (Saletore 1935; Nandi 1973:101–102; Settar 1999).

Cōḷa regents, from Rājarāja to Kulottuṅga (c.1000–1200), were initiated by a long line of Śāiva-Siddhāntin ācārya-s, many of whom came from north or central India (Laṭa, Gauḍa and Madhya regions). Their ‘surnames’ were all ‘śiva’ and often ‘śiva-paṇḍita’ and they were authors of a number of texts (Rajamanickam 1964:228–231; Nagaswamy 1998).

King Devendravarman of the eastern Gaṅga dynasty was initiated into Śaivism by Paṭaṅgaśvēcārya, who received a village as daksinā. The Kālāmukha, Vidyēsvāra, was acknowledged as the preceptor of the eastern Čālukya, Amma II (Vijayāditya VI), who donated four villages to his sect. Kumāra Śvāmī was the preceptor of another regent of the eastern Čālukyas, Yuddhamalla II, who built a monastery for the exclusive use of śāiva monks and preceptors.

The preceptor of the Cedi king, Yuvarājadeva, was Saṭdēhāva Śāmbhu, who received a large province as bhūkṣā (‘charitable donation’). King Gaṇapatiḍēva of the Kākatya dynasty was ordained by his preceptor, Viśēśvāra Śāmbhi (Saletore 1935; Nandi 1973:101–102; Settar 1999). The eastern Čālukyas were also, from the beginning and throughout their rule, active patrons of Jainism. The early Kākatya-s, based in Warangal, supported Jainism at the beginning of their reign (Desai 1957:19–22).

35 The rāja-guru should perform a special abhiṣeka ritual, marking the king’s spiritual enthronement (see Nagaswamy 1998:26).

36 Davidson (2002:129–130) believes that the term devarāja, which appears in many inscriptions, refers to the king identified with Śiva. This seems incorrect (see Kulke 1978b; Chandra 1992). Devarāja refers to the icon of power (a pandillum, typically a lingā) that is at the centre of a royal consecration ritual based on the āindrā abhiṣeka, whereby the king is consecrated with the power of either Indra or Śiva. The ancient Vedic rite was augmented by Āgamic rites, and by the ninth century it had become established as the preeminent rite of royal consecration in many parts of Asia.
respect, and considered as the spiritual guardians of the country.37 They came from Śaiva-Siddhānta lineages (santāna), and their functions included the supervision of the construction of temples,38 and the keeping of documents and records of temple endowments. Rāja-guru-s could be householders or bachelors (most were householders) but not saṃnyāsin-s. They were sometimes hailed as siddha-s who could cure disease, and were meant to be able to predict impending disasters. They also used to perform various rituals to protect the king, including the annual rāja-rakṣā, during which the king was anointed with sacred ashes mixed with saffron powder (Nagaswamy 1998:24–26).

By the thirteenth century, numerous Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s had been established, which exerted a considerable influence in most parts of the Tamil region.39 One of the matha-s most influential in supplying rāja-guru-s was the Gōlakī matha.40

37 Rājarāja refers to his guru as “my Lord” (svāmi/udaiyār), whom he adores as Śiva himself. According to the Kānikāgama (one of the principal texts in mediaeval Śaiva-Siddhānta), in temples the foremost place is offered to the rāja-guru, followed by the king and then the queen. It seems that the Rājendra Gōla brought śaiva-ācārya-s south, from Banaras and the Gōdāvari region (Nagaswamy 1998:20–28).

38 Three people were responsible for temple construction: the yajamāna (patron-builder); the architect-sculptor; and the ācārya, who was the most important. He should know vāstu-sāstra, and supervise all procedures (Nagaswamy 1998:24–26).

39 According to the tradition pertaining to the Gōla rāja-guru-s, five tīrtha-s (Kauśika, Kaśyapa, Bharadvāja, Gautama and Agastya [or Ātreyā]) were initiated by Śiva. (This group of tīrtha-s is often to be found in Śaiva-Siddhānta Āgama texts; see Brunner 1964:457.) The tīrtha-s produced five lineages (pāṇca-santāna-s: Durvāsa, Dāḍīci, Ruru, Sveta, and Upamanyu), which resulted in the establishing of five māthra-s in the south: Mantāṇa-Kāľiṣvaram (at the centre), surrounded by Amardaki, Gōlakī, Puṣpagaṇi, and Raṇabhadra. Mantāṇa-Kāliṣvaram was most probably in the Gōdāvari region, while the latter four māṭha-s (particularly Amardaki) played a central role in the development of the temple movement in south India. According to several Tantra-s, Durvāsa is the preceptor of the Amardaki māṭha (ARE 1917, part II, para. 37 [1986:124]). Aghora Śīva came from the Amardaki māṭha and was a resident of Kāṇci. Though not a rāja-guru (Nagaswamy 1998:28ff.), he was an influential and prolific systematiser of a dualist form of Śaiva Siddhānta. His Kriyā-krama-dyotika (Aghora-śivācārya-paddhati), written in 1158, is still one of the most important texts in the south (Davis 1991:17).

40 The Gōlakī māṭha also traces its lineage to Durvāsa, and was probably established in south India by Yuvārāja-deva I (r.915–945?), a king of the Kālacuri dynasty. The māṭha had several lineages (santāna), and by the fourteenth century had numerous branches all over the south (Mahalingam 1962; Rajamanickam 1964:225; Dehejia 1986:89), employing many musicians and craftsmen. The pontiffs (who all have the surnames ‘Śiva’ or ‘Śambhu’) came from the same lineage (i.e. Śaiva-Siddhāntin) as those of the Mattamayūra sect, though there is also evidence that the māṭha may have had Pāṣupata adherents and related Tantric associations at the time of
A considerable number of the Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s were named after either the famous Brahman śaiva saint, Tirujñānaśambandar, or the non-Brahman śaiva saint, Tirunāvukkaraśar. With regard to Vaiṣṇavism, non-Brahman participation became significant only after the time of Rāmānuja, in the thirteenth century. In the case of Śaivism, it is apparent that beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries many new matha-s were established that were headed by lineages (santāna) of non-Brahman teachers, called mudaliyār. It seems its founding. The name ‘Gōlākī’ may indeed derive from ‘Gola-giri’, indicating a circular Tantric yogini temple, such as that at Bheḍagāth, near Jabalpur (Mahalingam 1962:447; Swaminathan 1990:119–121; Nilakanta Sastri 1992:118; Misra 1997:78). The Gollā/Gōlākī or Laksādāhāyi lineages (of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries) trace themselves from the Gollā matha of Banaras (which may be connected to the Bhikṣā matha of Banaras; see Rajaminnickam 1964:227). The Gōlākī matha supplied rāja-guru-s to the Kalacuri, Kākatiya, Mālva, and Telugu Cōla dynasties. One of the matha-s most influential preceptors, who founded several branch matha-s, was Viśveśvara Śiva (fl. mid-thirteenth century). While it is possible that the Gōlākī matha-s also supplied the rāja-guru-s for the Tamil Gōlas (Rajamanickam 1964:229), evidence indicates that it was the Amardakī matha which supplied most of their śaiva-ācārya-s (Nagaswamy 1998:30–33). Nothing is heard of the Gōlākī matha after the sixteenth century, most probably because the matha was overshadowed by the growing influence of the smārta matha-s following the tradition of Śaṅkara (Mahalingam 1962:450). (For details of the matha-s’ activities, acquisitions, branches, lineages, and preceptors, see ARE 1917, part II, para. 33–38 [1986:121–125]; ARE 1936–7, para. 19 [1986:67].)


42 See Gurumurthy (1979:70–73) for a list of sixty matha-s established between the tenth and fourteenth centuries.

43 Rajamanickam (1962; 1964:214–250); Champakalakshmi (1981:421). There are some indications that the flourishing non-Brahman matha-s were opposed by Brahman, though attempts to take them over were generally unsuccessful (Stein 1999:236–237). Agama texts, in general, permit the initiation up to the second level (of three levels of initiation: samayadikṣā, viśeṣadikṣā, nirvāṇadikṣā) of both śūdra-s and women, though some texts dispute śūdra-s’ rights to be initiated to the third (‘highest’) level (nirvāṇadikṣā), and become ācārya-s. In some instances, to obviate restrictions, ‘sat’ (‘pure’) śūdra-s are created. Considerations of caste seem to be behind the scheme of four kinds of śaiva-s (variously named and categorised) to be found in many texts (Brunner-Lachaux 1963, Vol. 1:xxiii–xxiv; Brunner 1964:460ff.). According to the Varnāmacandrika, a seventeenth century text produced by the (Śaiva-Siddhānta) Dharmapuram matha (long after the matha had been founded) to legitimise non-smārta worship, śūdra-s have the right to take all levels of śaiva initiation, and to become preceptors (Koppedrayer 1991:201). It is evident that many śaiva matha-s were significantly supported by members of the vēḷāḷa caste (originally low-caste, but subsequently comprising many middle-class landlords). For studies of other non-Brahman Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s, see: Oddie (1984) for an account...
probable that from the middle of the thirteenth century, many of the maṭha-s were founded by disciples of Meykaṇṭār\textsuperscript{44} (Rajamanikkam 1962:222–223). The ascetic frequenters of Śaiva-Siddhānta maṭha-s were generally known as śivayogin-s or mahēśvara-s, who are recorded in a large number of epigraphs.\textsuperscript{45} According to the Āgama-s counted as authoritative for the southern Śaiva-Siddhāntins of the period under consideration (c.1000–1300), although authority lay ultimately in a mastery of the rites and texts of the Āgama, adherents also had the right to study the four Veda-s (Nagaswamy 1998:27). Śaiva-Siddhānta, in general, accepts the authority of the Veda, but considers the Āgama also to be both Veda and śruti (‘revelation’), the Āgama in effect being a ‘higher’, more subtle revelation than the traditional Veda, which is regarded as a secondary revelation. A crucial distinction between the Vedic and Āgamic traditions is that whereas the Veda is only open to the ‘twice-born’, the Āgamic revelation is for all four varṇa-s, including śūdra-s, who seem to have been quite powerful within the general expansion of Śaiva-Siddhānta (Brunner 1964:451ff.).

The Kālāmukhas were divided into at least two major orders, the Śakti-pariṣad, which had four separate subdivisions, and the Śimha-pariṣad. The Śimha-pariṣad seems to have been distributed over a large area, including parts of Andhra Pradesh and Mysore, though the Śakti-pariṣad was probably the more important order. The main centres of activity of the Śakti-pariṣad were the Dharvar and Shimoga districts of Karnataka (Lorenzen 1991:97). Between the middle of the eleventh and the end of the thirteenth century, the Kālāmukha rāja-guru-s of south India came from either Balligāve (Balligāve/Belagāve),\textsuperscript{46} Kuppaṭūr, Āsandi-nāḍ or Śrīparvata (Śrisailam), the first two places being most important, particularly Balligāve (in the Śikāripura tālkūṁ of Shimoga district, in Karnataka), which from

\textsuperscript{44} Meykaṇṭār is one of the most important figures in the development of Śaiva-Siddhānta in the south. His Čivaṇānapōṭam, written around 1221, was a Tamil text that laid the basis for a shift in Śaiva-Siddhānta theology from Sanskrit to Tamil (see Davis 1991:17–18).


\textsuperscript{46} Before approximately 1100, the place was called Valligāve, and then Balligāve (Settar 1999:56).
the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries was hardly matched by any mediaeval Deccan city: with over fifty temples, it was famous for its splendours and seats of learning.

The earliest record of the presence of Kālāmukha at Balligāve is from 1019 (Settar 1999:70), while it is recorded in 1036 that Balligāve had five Kālāmukha matha-s (Saletore 1935:34–38; Settar 1999:68). From 1036 to 1139 Balligāve was home to at least thirteen monastic orders, including one Buddhist, two Vaiṣṇava, three Jaina, one Advaita, one Śrutiya and six Kālāmukha, the Kālāmukha being the most important and influential of the orders (Settar 1999:65–66). 47

The Kālāmukha influence spread all over Karnataka under Hoysala and Cakkaya patronage (Venkatarman 1950:74), the most prominent division of the Kālāmukhas being centred in the Koḍiya matha, at the Kedāreśvara temple48 in Balligāve, from where many of the Kālāmukha rāja-guru-s came. The Koḍiya matha first appears in records in 1139, from when it appears in records alongside the original five matha-s.49 It received substantial patronage from the Kalacūrya king, Bijjala, who was closely involved with Basava, the key figure in the development of the Vīraśaiva order.50 The short-lived prominence of the Koḍiya matha was overshadowed by another Śakti-pariṣad branch, the Mūvarukoṇeyasantani of Parvatāvali (Settar 1999:69, 77). By the end of the twelfth century the Kālāmukha order had begun to decline in power and influence.

Besides providing preceptors to kings, the Kālāmukha pañcamaṭha-s, as an institution, patronised vaiṣṇava-s51 and supervised the transac-

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47 Although Lākuliśa is hagiographically connected to the founding of the Paśupata order, the Balligāve records frequently refer to Lākuliśa-Kālāmukha in the same phrase, but no reference ever occurs in records to either Paśupatas or Kāpālikas (Settar 1999:69).

48 The full name of Śiva who presided over this temple was Dakṣiṇa-Kedāreśvara (‘Lord of the Southern Kedāra’).

49 Interestingly, the oldest of the original five Kālāmukha matha-s that can be dated is the Paṇcalīṅga matha (Settar 1999:67). It will be recalled that in Śaṅkara’s hagiographies the Kāṭcī stream of texts (the ASV and its derivatives) devote considerable emphasis to Śaṅkara’s establishing five linga-s. Could this story perhaps be an echo of the importance given to the establishing of a five-linga matha within the Kālāmukha tradition?

50 The Vīraśaivas Prabhudeva and Akkamahādevi were also connected with Balligāve. Vīraśaivas took over matha-s of the Kālāmukhas after the latter declined (Settar 1999:78).

51 Epigraphia Carnatica VII (Shikapura), 131, 132.
tions of other śaiva institutions in 1104 and 1113. However, as noted above, Kālāmukhas appear to have had serious conflicts with Jainas. The Kālāmukhas worshipped not only Śiva, but also Viṣṇu and Brahmā, and accepted not only the Āgama-s, but also the Veda-s, varṇa-s and āśrama-s. Nevertheless, vaishnava critics such as Rāmānuja and Yāmunācārya represented the Kālāmukhas as anti-Vedic (Settar 1999:68–69). As revealed in inscriptions, not only were kings being initiated and making substantial donations to Kālāmukha gurus, but so were their viceroy and provincial officials, who were often entitled Mahāmāndaleśvara (Narasimham 1929:116).

Prior to the ninth century, inscriptions hardly mention any lineage of teachers, but from the ninth century onwards a preceptor is rarely mentioned without his lineage. The role of the royal preceptor was clearly becoming institutionalised, resulting in the enhanced role and influence of the institution to which a line of preceptors was attached. The śaiva gurus were, like their Jaina counterparts, becoming deified as cult objects. Archeological evidence indicates that already by the seventh century (and perhaps earlier) Pāṣupata teachers were thought to become identical with Śiva at the moment of death, and temples were erected with a linga installed bearing their name (Stietencron 2001:24). The enhanced status of many pontiffs of śaiva maṭha-s was partly in view of the irrevocable nature of royal grants (śāsana-s) and partly owing to the absolute rights of the pontiff over the temple or monastery. In a record of around 900 is to be found one of the first references to a mahānt, whose rights in this instance are absolute. However, in many instances local bodies or assemblies had the right to remove the pontiff, should he have committed moral offences or be deemed to have brought the maṭha into disrepute. Nandi (1973:99–101) comments that absolute control over the properties of the temple or monastery led to a kind of feudal organisation in important monasteries, some of which organised mass śaiva initiation (dīkṣā) rituals, thus furthering their sphere of influence. The maṭha-s

52 EC VII (Shikapura), 131, 99.
53 The Mahāmāndaleśvara, Kundamarasa, made grants in 1019 after washing the feet of his guru, Mālīga Śivasākta Paṇḍita of Balligāma. Govinda Rāja, the younger brother of Kṛṣṇa Rāja, made endowments to Someśvara Paṇḍita Deva. See Saletore (1935:38) for other instances.
54 EC X, Srinivaspur tālukā, 29. The grant, by Kunnayya, was also made to the servants of five (presumably resident) mahānt-s.
also attracted itinerant trade on account of their organisational net-
work, contributing significantly to urban growth (Champakalakshmi
1996:210).\(^{55}\) Itinerant traders were also significant donors to \textit{matha}-s, some of which were named after them.

Misra (1997) discusses the power of \textit{matha}-s and their pontiffs in
central India in the ninth and tenth centuries, based on records of
nine \Śaiva-Siddhānta \textit{matha}-s. The initiates promoted \textit{vaiśeṣika}
philosophy and Āgamic Śaivism, from “fortress-like structures”. The
movement was rooted in the Guṇa-Śivpuri region, but spread over
central India, and on to Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra, Karnataka
and Tamil Nadu. The network of \Śaiva-Siddhānta \textit{matha}-s traced
their lineages back to the Mattamayūra (‘drunken peacock’) sect at
Kadvaha.\(^{56}\) From the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, these mon-
asteries supplied many of the \textit{rāja-guru}-s to regents of several of the
dynasties previously referred to. Some of the pontiffs were low-caste,
but regardless of caste—which had theoretically been eliminated after
initiation—received land-grants from the state. Nominally celibate,\(^{57}\)
several of the pontiffs wrote religio-philosophical texts that became
relatively widely known.\(^{58}\) It has been estimated (Misra 1997:74;
Dehejia 1986:89) that the dispensation in grants and land to the
pontiffs of these \Śaiva \textit{matha}-s amounted to one third of the reve-
nue of the entire Kalacuri state, indicating the importance of \Śaiva
\textit{matha}-s to Kalacuri polity.

The \textit{matha}-s employed not only artisans and tenant farmers, but also
a contingent of law-enforcement officers (\textit{vīrabhadra}-s and \textit{vajramuṣṭi}-s)

\(^{55}\) Champakalakshmi (1996:385) draws attention to the close relationship indi-
cated between the increase in trade activities, craft production—especially oil and
textiles—and the institution of \Śaiva \textit{matha}-s. The \Kālmukha (Pāṣupata) \textit{matha}-s of
the ninth and tenth centuries (in centres such as Mayiläppūr and Tiruvorğiyūr),
the \textit{bhakti} \textit{matha}-s named after \Śaiva saints (of the eleventh and twelfth centuries),
and the well organised \textit{matha}-s of the Gollā/Gōḷāki or Lakṣādhāyi lineages (of the
twelfth to fourteenth centuries, which trace their lineage from the Gollā \textit{matha} of
Banaras), were all invariably located in trade and craft centres.

\(^{56}\) See Davis (2000) for further details of the Mattamayūra sect.

\(^{57}\) It is apparent from records of various kinds that celibate orders were not
always so. Derrett (1974) analyses a legal ruling from the sixteenth century—during
the reign of Venkata I—at Jambukeśvara, whereby it is ordered that the pontiff of a
Pāṣupata \textit{matha} should be a \textit{gṛhaṭha}. It is apparent that the \textit{matha} had been occupied
by various non-celibate Pāṣupatas, nominally a strictly celibate order.

\(^{58}\) These include the \textit{Vyomati-ṭikā} of Vyomaśiva, the \textit{Prāyascitta-samuccaya}, \textit{Naimit-
whose powers of enforcement included mutilation and castration. In terms of the powers and privileges enjoyed within the hierarchy of the state, the pontiffs of the maṭha-s appear to have been ranked higher than Brahmans and the chief priest, in other words, second only to the regent himself.\(^{59}\) The pontiffs also held more land than the kṣatriya-s, who were subservient to them. The maṭha-s rendered services to the state in various ways, including the garrisoning of war-forces, the provision of elephants, horses and perhaps wealth, the manufacture of armaments for battle, the maintainance of arsenals, training in warfare, and even participation in battle. Several pontiffs are praised in inscriptions not only for their knowledge of religious texts, but also for their political wisdom, their power against enemies, and their knowledge of weaponry. They also participated in civil administration, one pontiff (Vimalaśiva) being praised for his ability to make even distant people pay taxes.\(^ {60}\) Taxes were also levied by the maṭha-s themselves on many items, including a wide range of animals and farm produce, taxes being another source of the maṭha-s’ considerable wealth. The titles of the pontiffs, such as nātha, adhipati and pāla were those usually reserved for royalty, and such was the importance of the pontiffs to the state that, time and again, their “venerable feet were revered by the lustre of the crest jewels of the princes” (Misra 1997:77).

The relationship of maṭha-s to the empires of south India in the first centuries of the second millennium is particularly relevant in the context of understanding the traditions associated with development of advaita maṭha-s, particularly those of Śrīṅgerī and Kāṇḍīpuram, which are connected by hagiographers with the activities of Śaṅkarācārya. In this regard we now turn to the founding of the Vijayanagara empire, considering the religious orientation and initiation of its regents, and their patronage of various religious institutions.

6.3 Religious initiation and orientation of the Vijayanagara rulers

After the collapse of the Cōla and later Cāḷukya empires, four dynasties arose in south India; the Yādavas of Devagiri, the Kākaṭīyas

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\(^{59}\) See *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. 4, part 1, nos. 63, 64, 70; Misra (1997:75).

\(^{60}\) *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. 4, part 1, no. 64, v. 44.
of Warangal, the Hoysalas of Dvārasamudra and the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai, who dominated the south in the thirteenth century. By 1328 these kingdoms had come under the control of the Delhi sultanate, but subsequent revolts against Delhi resulted in the establishing of the independent sultanate of Ma’bar at Madurai (which lasted from 1335 to 1378), the Bahmani sultanate (in 1347 at Bijapur, Karnataka), and the kingdom of Vijayanagara, whose capital was modern-day Hampi (Hampi), Karnataka.61

Up to 1565, three dynasties ruled Vijayanagara; the Saṅgama (1336–1485), Sāluva (1485–1505), and the Tuluva (1505–1570). Harihara (Rāya)62 I, the eldest of the five sons63 of the chieftain Saṅgama, was the first king of Vijayanagara (1336–1356). Within a few years, with the assistance of his brothers—primarily Bukka but also Mārappa—Harihara built up an extensive empire stretching from coast to coast, an empire that was constantly at war with the Bahmani sultanate. Bukka I (1356–1377) succeeded his brother Harihara I, Bukka’s son, Kumāra Kampana, being famed for the conquest of Toṇḍaimanḍalam, defeating the Muslim governor of Kanṭanūr (six miles north of Śrīraṅgam), and the destruction of the Ma’bar sultanate (1334–1371).64

The traditional date of the founding of Vijayanagara is 1336. 1346 has also been suggested, the date of the famous ‘festival of victory’ at Śrīṇgerī, to which we shall return. These dates have been questioned by Kulke (1985:126), who maintains that Vijayanagara probably only emerged under Bukka I as a capital, in the area of the old Hoysala capital, previously called Virūpākṣapaṭṭana, Hosapaṭṭana

61 For the history of this period, see Saletore (1934); Mahalingam (1940); Venkataraman (1950); Majumdar (1960, Vol. 6); Krishnaswami (1964); Dallapiccola (1985); Verghese (1995); Aiyangar (2000).

62 The Saṅgamas are frequently referred to in inscriptions as rāya (‘king’).

63 The other four brothers were Kampa, Bukka, Mārappa and Muddappa. Curiously, the name Muddappa does not appear in some inscriptions as one of the brothers, another brother being named as either Saṅgama or Saṅkara (Filliozat 1973:135).

64 The event is celebrated by Kampana’s wife, Gaṅgā Devī, in her epic, Madhurāvijayam. After the victories, Kampana’s commandant, Goppana, brought back and facilitated the reinstalled of the two main idols of Śrīraṅgam that had been secreted at Śīngavaram (Gingee) and the foot of the Tirupati hill. Śrīraṅgam had twice been sacked, once by Malik Kufur in 1310–1311, and during the Tughluq incursions in 1327–1328 (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:126).
or Vijayavirūpākṣapura. The first inscription mentioning the name Vijayanagara is from 1357, the year after Harihara I died and Bukka I took the throne. Bukka gave himself the regal title *Mahārājādhirāja paramēśvara*, but only in 1368, shortly before his death. Initially, all brothers had the title *Mahāmāndalesvara*.

Bukka I was followed by Harihara II (1377–1404), under whom the Vijayanagara empire expanded all over south India up to the Kṛṣṇa river. Harihara II’s three sons, Virūpākṣa I, Bukka II and Devarāya I, all vied for the throne after Harihara’s death, Devarāya succeeding and ruling from 1406 to 1422. Devarāya’s two sons, Rāmacandra and Vīra Vijaya, both ruled for brief periods, followed by Vīra Vijaya’s son, Devarāya II (1424–1446), the greatest of the Saṅgama rulers. After Devarāya II, the reigns of Mallikārjuna (1446–1465) and Virūpākṣa II (1466–1485) were weak, resulting in Sāluva Narasimha (1485–1491), governor of Candragiri, usurping the throne in 1485.

Sāluva Narasimha was succeeded by his minor sons, Timma (1491) and Immaḍi Narasimha (1491–1505), the latter being assassinated by his Tuluva minister, Vīra Narasimha, whose reign (1505–1509) was followed by that of his half-brother, Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1509–1529), the greatest king of Vijayanagara. Acyutarāya, a half-brother of Kṛṣṇadevarāya, then ruled from 1529–1542. Following his death, a faction led by Rāmarāya, Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s son-in-law, installed Sadāśiva (the nephew of Acyutarāya) on the throne, though Rāmarāya remained the *de facto* ruler. Under Rāmarāya, the Vijayanagara empire regained some territory lost under Kṛṣṇadevarāya but the combined forces of the Delhi sultanate finally defeated Rāmarāya, who died in January 1565 at the decisive battle of Rakkasa-Taṅgaḍi, also known as the battle of Tālikōṭa. The Vijayanagara capital was sacked and temporarily occupied by the Muslim armies, thenceforth ceasing to be an imperial capital. Northern Karnataka came under

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65 Venkataranayya (1974:34) maintains that there is inscriptional evidence (of 1323) that Harihara I was first a king in Gutti (Jaggatāpi-Gutti), in the present Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. However, an inscription from 1347 states that Harihara was reigning in the ‘Gutti-rājya’, and governing from Vijayanagara (Sewell and Aiyangar 1932:191 [Epigraphical Annual Reports made to the Archaeological Survey of Madras, 1921, App. A, C-P. 9]). Filliozat (1973:xvii) suggests that there may have been two Hariharas, as a solution to this and other conflicting inscriptive evidence.
Muslim control, and as the empire disintegrated, independent feudatories arose. Tirumula, Rāmarāya’s brother, moved to Penugoṇḍa in the Anantapur district, founding the Āraviḍu dynasty (1570–1646) there with the puppet ruler, Sadāśiva. The capital of the vestiges of the empire subsequently moved twice, to Candragiri in North Arcot district, in 1592, and then to Vellore in 1606 (Verghese 1995:2).

Many historians have presented the glorious history of the Vijayānagara empire in terms of a Hindu empire established in the face of Muslim aggression and persecution.67 The Vijayānagara rulers have been presented as Hindus whose patronage of and association with Hindu institutions, particularly the advaita maṭha at Śrīnerī, and whose defeat of the Muslims, notably at Madurai, saved and revived Hindu dharma from impending destruction. However, although wars with the Bahmanī sultans were frequent, their cause was more political and economic than religious. There were also numerous military expeditions against less powerful Hindu rulers, such as the Śambuvaṟāyas, the Reḍḍis of Koṇḍavīḍu, the Velamas and the Gajapatis (Verghese 1995:3). Muslim soldiers also fought in the armies of the Vijayānagara regents, undermining the notion that the protagonists were fighting essentially religious wars.

Kulke (1985:120–125) also questions the traditional account, presented by several prominent historians,68 of the origins of the Saṅgama brothers. According to this account, the brothers were serving in Warangal in the Eastern Deccan, which was overrun by Sultan Muhammad Tughluq in 1323. They fled to Kampili, which was also subsequently captured in 1327 by the Muslims, who had them taken to Delhi as prisoners and converted to Islam. The Sultan of Delhi then sent Harihara I and Bukka to take over the administration of Malik Muhammad in Kampili, and put down a revolt by Hindu subjects. They are then said to have been converted back to Hinduism by the sage, Vidyāraṇya, and to have built a Hindu

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66 Penugoṇḍa, Delhi, Kolhapur and Jina Kānci are counted as the four Vidyāsthānas of the Jainas (Desai 1957:161).
67 See, for example Saletore (1934, Vol. 1:1): “south of the Vindhyas...after eight and sixty years of humiliation...the smouldering forces of Hinduism suddenly swept away the growing menace...The terror which shook the country to its foundation was entirely foreign; the measures adopted to meet and rout it were purely indigenous”.
68 Sewell (1900); Nilakanta Sastri (1958); Venkataramanayya (ed. Majumdar) (1960, Vol. 6:271–325).
empire. However, the evidence indicates that the Saṅgamas began their career under the Hoysala king, Ballala III, and were never converted to Islam. We shall also see that the Vijayanagara rulers were indeed initiated into Śaivism, but not by Vidyāranya.

The religious culture of the Vijayanagaras and previous kingdoms was generally cosmopolitan. Inscriptions of the later Cālukyas and Hoysalas exhibit an almost uniform pattern, beginning with an invocatory verse in praise of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Jīna or Śakti. However, this is not a characteristic of Vijayanagara inscriptions, most of which begin with a short obeisance. “Salutation to Virūpākṣa”, “Salutation to Gaṇapati”, or “Salutation to Viñabhadra”, all of which are Śaiva deities. In general, the inscriptions mention a variety of both Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva deities, goddesses such as Sarasvatī, and also refer to various characters from the Mahābhārata. The Vijayanagara rulers extensively promoted important Hindu institutions, in endowments to Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples and advaita matha-s, and in the patronage of commentary on the Veda. But the earlier Vijayanagara rulers were essentially Śaiva, and like many of the other kings and regents of previous times, were initiated by Śaiva gurus.

Kāśīvilāsa Kriyāśakti Ācārya, almost certainly a Kālāmukha, is known from several inscriptions to have been the rāja-guru of the first two Saṅgama rulers, Harihara I and Bukka I, the founders of the Vijayanagara empire, and perhaps also of Harihara II and Devarāya I. The precise lineage of this particular Kriyāśakti is difficult to

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69 Wagoner (2000) has shown how the account of the founding of Vijayanagara and the ‘conversion’ and ‘apostasy’ of the brothers was derived from a melding together—first by N. Venkataramanayya in 1929, then elaborated by Nilakanta Sastri in 1946, and then repeated by subsequent historians—of ‘histories’ contained in two sets of texts: (i) ‘Īṣāmī’s Futūh al-Salāṭīn, written in Gulbarga between 1347 and 1350; Baramī’s Ta’rikh-i Firūz-Šāhī, written at the Sultanate court of Delhi; Rikhlah or The Travels of Ibn-Baṭṭūta, written in 1354; (ii) Rājakula-nirṇaya, Vidyāranya-kālajñāna, Vidyāranya-vṛtiṇṭa, and Vidyāranya-śaka, written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The latter set of texts is particularly unreliable historically. The Vidyāranya-kālajñāna contains distinct motifs in common with other texts, notably the Pratāparudra Caritramu and Kōṭil Oṭugu, indicating a common source for the accounts.

70 See UVAT 1985.

71 In two records, obeisance to Śrī Rāmānuja is found, and in some other records only the name of the deity is mentioned, such as Śrī Viṣṭhala and Śrī Tiruveṅgalanāṭha. Only thirteen inscriptions contain an invocatory verse, two invoking Jīna, nine invoking Śiva, one praising Viṣṇu, and one invoking both Śiva and Mādhava (Rajasekhara 1985:104).

72 Only one inscription contradicts this: in 1396 Khaṇḍeya Rāya Khaleśvara Devayya is called rāja-guru (Saletore 1935:39 fn. 29).
determine. He is also referred to as Rāyārajaguru-mandalaścārya (Rama Rao 2000:44). There were two other Kālāmukha gurus, Kriyāśaktī Deva and Kriyāśaktī Paṇḍita, who headed two of the five Kālāmukha matha-s in Balligāme in 1113 (Saletore 1935:39). Although Kriyāśaktī is also a common name for Pāṇḍapatas (Lorenzen 1991:161–164), it seems that this Kriyāśaktī (Kāśivilāśa) was a Kālāmukha of the Śakti-parisad branch of that order, kriyāśakti referring to an office rather than a personal name. As revealed in a stone inscription to Bukka, dated 1368, and two other inscriptions of 1347 (Verghese 1995:8), Kāśivilāśa Kriyāśaktī was also the guru of one Mādhavamāntin, 74 who was the great minister of Mārappa, one of the five Śaṅgama brothers (Saletore 1935:33 fn. 2). Between 1347 and 1442 at least three different Kālāmukha Kriyāśaktī gurus are mentioned in Vijayanagara literary and epigraphic sources, namely Kāśivilāśa, Vāṇivilāśa and Candrabhumīṣṭa. 75 After the reign of Devarāya II (1424–1446) there are no further references to Kālāmukha gurus.

The tutelary deity of both the Kālāmukhas and the earlier Vijayanagara rulers was Virūpākṣa, who was housed in the Kālāmukha Koḍiya (or Koṭi) matha at Balligāve, and not in the royal temple of Vijayanagara at Pampā-ḵṣetra (Saletore 1935:38–39), which housed Pampādevi, originally a local goddess, who had become the consort of Virūpākṣa. The Prakāśikā of Cannibhaṭṭa, 76 who was at the Vijayanagara court, refers to Vijayanagarī and Virūpākṣa as different places, Virūpākṣa having probably been derived from the name of the deity (Thakur 1961:527). All the copper-plate records from

73 See Epigraphia Carnatica VII (Shikapura), 99, p. 67.
74 There are several Mādhavas (who are not to be confused with the vāṣṭava dualist Madhva), whose identities are examined below
75 Kriyāśaktī is mentioned as the kula-guru of Harihara II in a copper-plate grant of 1378. Rāja-guru Vāṇivilāśa Kriyāśaktī is referred to in a record of 1379. In two copper-plate grants (of 1398 and 1399) Harihara II is praised as the worshipper of the feet of rāja-rāja-guru-pitāmaha Kriyāśaktīdeva. Devarāya I is referred to in an inscription of 1410 as having received supreme knowledge by the favour of rāja-guru Kriyāśaktī, who is also mentioned in a grant made in the same year by Vijaya Bhūpati, Devarāya’s son. In 1429, Harihara II made a grant to Brahmans, with Kriyāśaktī at their head. Kriyāśaktīdeva is referred to in a record of 1431, the last inscription referring to a ‘Kriyāśaktī’ being in 1442, when rāja-guru Kriyāśaktī Odeya is referred to. Candrabhumīṣṭa Kriyāśaktī appears in the court of Devarāya II, in a work of Śrīnātha, a Telugu poet (Verghese 1995:8, 112).
76 Most probably the author of the Sava-darsana-sangraha (see below).
Vijayanagara end with the honorific ‘signature’ ‘Śrī Virūpākṣa’,\textsuperscript{77} at least until 1570 (Rajasekhara 1985:103). However, after the decisive defeat of the Vijayanagaras at the battle of Tālikōta in 1565, the Āravīḍu king, Venkaṭa II, who was established in Penugonḍa, replaced ‘Śrī Virūpākṣa’ with ‘Śrī Venkatesa’ (the vaiṣṇava deity of Tirupati) as the official signature. The later Vijayanagara regents were primarily vaiṣṇava.\textsuperscript{78}

Whatever their personal initiation or religious inclination, like many successful politicians the Vijayanagara rulers patronised a variety of religious institutions, including Vīraśaivas,\textsuperscript{79} followers of Madhva,\textsuperscript{80}

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{77} In one example the honorific signature names both Virūpākṣa and Śrīkaṇṭhanātha (Śiva) (UVAT 1985:83).

\textsuperscript{78} The Vijayanagara rulers remained sāiva up until Virūpākṣa II (1466–1485), the first Vijayanagara ruler to convert to Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism being Śāluva Narasiṃha, who usurped the throne in 1485. He was a devotee of Venkateśvara of Tirupati (Tirumalai) and Narasiṃha of Ahobalam. Under the later Tuluvas the Venkateśvara temple was built up to become the most splendid temple of the realm (Michell 1995:276). Kṛṣṇadevarāya (1509–1529) is known to have venerated Śrī-Vaiṣṇava ascetics such as Govindarāja—who is called his guru—and Venkaṭa Tātācārya. The Telugu vaiṣṇava tradition maintains that Tātācārya was the guru of Kṛṣṇadevarāya. There is also a story that Vyāsārāya temporarily occupied Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s throne during an inauspicious conjunction of planets (Nīlakanṭa Sastri 1992:128). Kṛṣṇadevarāya’s favourite deity was Venkateśvara of Tirupati, one of the main centres of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism. The last Tuluva emperor, Sādāśiva, and his regent, Rāmarāya—whose guru was Pañcamatābañjanam Tātācārya—also owed their primary allegiance to Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism. Patronage for sāiva institutions seems to have more or less ceased under Sādāśiva and Rāmarāya, the last of the Vijayanagara rulers (Verghe 1995:9; Champakalakshmi 1996:343).

\textsuperscript{79} The Vīraśaivas, also called Līṅgāyats, were widely active in the Vijayanagara period, particularly in Karnatak and Andhra Pradesha. The most important figure in the development of Vīraśaivism was Basava, who was minister to the Kalačūrī king Bijjala from 1162–1167. The most important Vīraśaiva mahā-s were at Śrīśailam, Saṅgameśvaram and Ummattūr (Nīlakanṭa Sastri 1992:129). It is known that Devarāya II patronised Līṅgāyat gurus, and some Līṅgāyats, such as the Generals Lakkāṁa and Camarasa, rose high in state service. Grants were made to various jaṅgama-s (wandering Vīraśaiva priests), and it is assumed that there were many Vīraśaiva mahā-s, though there are but a few records. There is no evidence, however, to support the claim that Devarāya and his immediate successors were Vīraśaivas (Verghe 1995:8, 112, 117). For an account of contemporary Vīraśaiva renouncers (vīrakta), see Bradford (1985).

\textsuperscript{80} Little is known about the presence of Vaiṣṇavism in Karnatak before the time of the dualist Madhva (1237–1317). (For Madhva’s dates, see Glasenapp 1992:9–11.) Madhva (Ānandatīrtha) was born in a vaiṣṇava Smārta family, and besides accepting the Vedāsminhitā-s as authoritative, also accepted Mahābhārata, Vālmiki’s Rāmāyana, Purāṇa-s agreeing with these, and the entire Pāṭhārita (Zydenbos 2001:113, 116). The temple of Kṛṣṇa at Uḍupi, which is the centre of the Madhva school, is first
and Jainas. Devarāya II, although initiated into Śaivism, endowed the Śrī-VAiśṇava temples at Śrīraṅgam and Tirumalai, and also sponsored Jaina institutions in the imperial capital and elsewhere (Verghese 1995:9). Besides the sects previously mentioned, there was also a significant presence of Nāths in south India during this period. Some records also seem to mention a Christian dīwān (chief minister) to Devarāya II in 1445 (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:127). Up to 10,000 Muslim horsemen were employed in Devarāya’s army, and Harihara II had a mosque built in 1439 in the Muslim quarter of Vijayanagara at the behest of a Muslim patron, the warrior Ahmad Khān mentioned in an epigraph of 1366–1367 (Ramesh 1970:300). According to tradition, Madhva appointed eight disciples to conduct worship of Kṛṣṇa at the matha founded by him at Uḍupi. This led to the founding of eight matha-s in Uḍupi, which currently function as branch matha-s of the main matha, known as the Kṛṣṇa matha (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:121–122). However, the tradition was primarily established by another group of four of his disciples: Padmanābha, Narahari, Mādava and Aksobhya-tārtha. These disciples were succeeded by Jayatīrtha and his successors, who were the most influential group of Madhva’s adherents. This lineage bifurcated around 1412, the younger division further bifurcating around 1435, resulting in three branches, known as the Vyāsārāya, Rāghavendra-svāmī and Uttarādi matha-s (Verghese 1995:113). The Madhva sect is currently the largest vaisṇava sect in Karnataka State (Siauve 1957:iv).

81 Bukka I was behind the Jaina-Vaiṣṇava accord of 1368, which specifically mentions, along with others, the Jainas of the Penungoṇḍa Nādu. It seems that this charter was necessary as the Jainas appear to have been subject to considerable harassment in the latter half of the fourteenth century (Desai 1957:161, 402). There are very few records of the Saṅgamas that mention new constructions, the earliest of them dating to 1385 and recording the construction of a caityālaya for the Jina, Kuntu Nāṭha, the seventeenth Tīrthaṅkara (Archaeological Survey of India: South Indian Inscriptions [ASI], Vol. 1, no. 152, pp. 153–160). This was on behalf of a general of Harihara II, Irugappa Daṇḍanāyaka—perhaps the greatest patron of the Jainas amongst Vijayanagara officials—who was a pupil of Puṣpasena, and is also associated with other Jaina centres, such as Śrāvaṇa Belgoḷa (‘white tank of the Jainas’) and Tiruparuttikunṟu (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:129).

82 A record of 1426, issued on the order of Devarāya II for the erection of a caityālaya to Pārśvanātha (ASI, Vol. 1, No. 153), reveals that state aid was being given to Jainas, who nevertheless were on the decline both politically and numerically (Rajasekhar 1985:106). Nevertheless, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Jainism was adhered to by large sections of the population, and all over the south Karnataka region many Jain bastis were restored (Ramesh 1970:300). During this period the main Jaina strongholds were Kāṇči, Śrāvaṇa Belgoḷa and the Tuluva area (south-west Karnataka) (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:129).

83 During this period, although little is heard of Buddhism, there is a reference by a Javanese poet in 1362 to Buddhist monks “living at six monasteries in Kāṇčipuram”, indicating that Buddhism continued to be practised (Sewell and Aiyangar 1932:195 [Memoirs of the Batavian Society of Arts LIV, 1902]).
(Rajasekhara 1985:107; Wagoner 1999:250). Kṛṣṇadevarāya and his successor, Acyutarāya, although converted to Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism, gave significant gifts and endowments to both vaishnava and Śaiva temples, including some in Kumbhakonam, notably the vaishnava Śāraṅgapāṇi, Rāmasvāmī and Cakrapāṇi temples, and the Śaiva Ādi Kumbheśvara temple. The political adaptation of Vijayanagara rulers to religious situations is well illustrated by the policy of Rāmarāya, the last of the Vijayanagaras, who allowed mosques to be built, and refused to heed the advice of his brother, Tirumala Rāmarāya, and other Hindu subjects, who wished to prevent cow-slaughter in the Muslim quarter (Turukavāḍa). Further, he had the Koran placed before himself in the Audience Hall, so that Muslim soldiers would feel more comfortable making obeisance before him. The Vijayanagaras and the Nāyakas also made substantial endowments to the darga-s (tombs) of Muslim saints, where miracles were believed to be performed (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:127).

Having considered the Vijayanagaras’ general religious orientation, the Śaiva initiation of the early rulers by Kālāmukha rāja-guru-s, and the patronage they extended to various traditions, we now turn

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84 There is a claim that a sage of the Madhva sect, Vyāsatīrtha, was the rāja-guru of Śaiva Narasiṁha and of the Tuḷuvas, Vīra Narasiṁha, Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutarāya. Eleven smādhi-s (known as brndāvana-s) of Madhva saints are to be found at Vijayanagara, indicating their influence there between around 1324 to 1623. Vyāsārāya was a significant presence in the courts of Śaiva Narasiṁha and the Tuḷuva rulers—down to Acyutarāya—from around 1499 until his death in 1539. Although Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutarāya are known to have venerated Vyāsārāya, there is little supporting evidence for the claim that Vyāsārāya was a rāja-guru. There is another claim that Virūpākṣa II was a Śrī-Vaiṣṇava. However, both of these suppositions are principally based on accounts to be found in sectarian hagiographic works (Verghese 1995:8–9, 113–114).

85 Kṛṣṇadevarāya repaired the Virūpākṣa temple at Hampe soon after his succession, and made gifts to the Śaiva temples at Tiruvaṁāmalai, Cidambaram, Kālahasti, Śrīsailam and Amaraṅavatī. Gifts were also given to the vaishnava temples at Kāṇchi, Tirupati, Śiṅhācālam and Ahōbalam. Amongst those in his service were smārta-s, Jainas and vaishnava-s (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:126). Acyutarāya, on the occasion of his coronation, gave an equal number of villages to the temples of Ėkāmbarānātha and Varadarāja at Kāṇchi.

86 This temple was built during the Vijayanagara period and hosts a twelve-yearly Mahāmāgham festival, when bathing in the temple tank during the month of Māgha is equivalent to a bath in all the holy rivers of India, mirroring the annual bath at the Māgh Melā at Prayāga. A vaishnava matha, first attached to the Śāraṅgapāṇi temple in the seventeenth century, has become an important vaishnava pontifical seat in south India.
specifically to their founding and patronage of a new orthodox śaiva institution at Śrṅgerī.

6.4 The Saṅgamas’ patronage of the Śrṅgerī maṭha and its pontiffs

Crucial to our inquiry into the history of the Daśanāmī order is the origin of the monastic tradition at Śrṅgerī. In this section, an attempt will be made to disentangle epigraphic evidence from tradition, in order to establish the identity of the most important figures in the earliest decades of the maṭha, namely its first three pontiffs (Vidyāṭīrtha, Bhārattīrtha and Vidyāraṇya), Śāyaṇa (the commentator on the Veda-s), and at least two individuals named Mādhava (one of whom is often mistakenly identified with Vidyāraṇya). We have surveyed the importance and influence of various Śaiva-Siddhāntin maṭha-s and lineages, and how the Veda was studied, but with foremost authority bestowed upon the Āgama-s. In this and the following section, it will be seen how the the pontiffs patronised by the early Vijayanagaras at Śrṅgerī were essentially representatives of a new, orthodox, śaiva, Brahmanical, advaita-Vedānta monastic tradition, ‘orthodox’ in respect of primarily representing Vedānta, and constituting a tradition that acknowledged its ultimate authority as deriving from the Veda.

We will first consider the founding of the Śrṅgerī maṭha and its first pontiffs. It is well known that the Saṅgamas extended significant patronage to the maṭha at Śrṅgerī. In 1346 Harihara I led his four brothers on a pilgrimage there, where they celebrated the ‘festival of victory’ (vijayotsava), the conquest of the earth from the eastern to the western shore. The inscription records grants to forty Brahmans “well-versed in the Veda”,87 and praise is bestowed on Vidyāṭīrtha guru, “whose friendship gained is never lost” (UVAT88 1985:71–73).89 Saletore believes (1935:39–40) that Vidyāṭīrtha was the pontiff of

87 The wife of the late Hoysala king Ballala III, Kikkāyitai, also participated in this ceremony and donated land. This and other evidence undermines the contention made by several historians that the Vijayanagaras conquered the Hoysalas (Kulke 1985:122).
88 This work, on Vijayanagara inscriptions, hence referred to as UVAT, contains the text and translation of many of the inscriptions referred to in this section.
89 See also EC VI (Sn 1), p. 92.
Śrīnerī at the time, and together with the famous Vidyārānya, to whom we shall return, was responsible for considerable financial aid to the rulers in their military campaign, which brought on them the envy of their contemporaries, and which caused a pledge of eternal friendship to be made to the head of the Śrīnerī matha. Although the traditional guru-paramparā of the Śrīnerī matha records the death of Vidyātīrtha in 1333, several epigraphic records, from Śrīnerī and other places, clearly indicate that Vidyātīrtha continued to be alive at least until June 14th 1375. Saletore (1935:40) believes that Vidyātīrtha remained guru of the Śrīnerī matha until this date. However, in 1356 Bukkā paid homage to Vidyātīrtha, and also made land grants to Bhāratīrtha and his disciples “to live and carry on their religious observances in sacred Śrīnerī” (UVAT 1985:70, v. 1; 72, v. 3). According to tradition, Bhāratīrtha (=Bhāratīkṛṣṇātīrtha) followed Vidyātīrtha (=Vidyāśāṅkara) as pontiff of Śrīnerī, and it seems probable that Bhāratītīrtha was, for some time, head of Śrīnerī, but perhaps under Vidyātīrtha (Rama Rao 2000:42). Bhāratītīrtha is indeed described in one inscription, in so many words (UVAT 1985:116, v. 10), as the disciple of Vidyātīrtha. While Vidyātīrtha appears not have left any written works, both Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyārānya wrote several advaita-Vedānta texts which are considered to be important works within the Vedānta tradition.

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90 There is a legend (Saletore 1934, Vol. 1:142) of Vidyārānya bringing down a shower of gold for three and three-quarter hours.
92 On this date (saka 1298, ráksasa, aśādha, śukla, 15) a gift of land was made by Paṇḍarīdeva Oḍeya (viceroy over the Maṅgalārū-raīya) to Vidyātīrtha for conducting worship in the Śiva temple at Ulayībeṭṭu in the Mangalore talukā. In an inscription dated 1377, Vira Bukkā Oḍeya (Bukka I) is spoken of as having become “very great” with the assistance of Vidyātīrtha. A stone record at Śrīnerī of 1365 restates the founders’ friendship with Vidyātīrtha. See Saletore (1935:40) for further details of the relevant inscriptions. The evidence does not seem to exclude the possibility that Bhāratītīrtha took over the gaddī at Śrīnerī after 1356, yet Vidyātīrtha continued to perform functions and receive grants.
93 See Venkataraman (1959) for the details of the lives of all the pontiffs of Śrīnerī.
94 According to tradition, Vidyātīrtha founded eight matha-s and installed therein eight of his disciples: Saṅkarāṇanda, Saccidāṇanda, Sāndranda, Advaitāṇanda Sevadhi, Mahādeva Śiva, Advaīta Sukhāṇanda, Śivayogi and Pratīyogīyotī. Vidyārānya and Bhāratītīrtha (Advaīta Brahmāṇanda) remained at Śrīnerī (Shastry 1982:18).
95 Bhāratītīrtha wrote a commentary on the Brahmāṣṭuta-s, the Adhikaraṇamāla (or
At Śrīnerī there is the splendid temple of Vidyāśāṅkara. It is the main temple of the śīrtha, and tradition associates it with the founding of a matha in Śrīnerī by Śaṅkara. Although this temple may have been erected in memory of Vidyātīrtha, the notion that the temple was either consecrated in 1356, under the supervision of Bhāratiśrīrtha—who granted 120 vṛtti-s (stipends) to various Brahmans on the occasion (ARMAD\textsuperscript{96} [Śrīnerī] 1916:15)—or constructed as late as 1380 (ARMAD [Śrīnerī] 1933:226), has been challenged by Michell (1995). A careful consideration of both epigraphic evidence and architectural style leads Michell to the conclusion that the Vidyāśāṅkara temple, which has a liṅga representing Śaṅkara, was constructed in the mid-sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{97} Inscriptions of 1390, 1430 and of the Tuḷuva period (1515–1545) refer to the deity Vidyāśāṅkara, but not to any temple. Given the abundance of inscriptions in Vijayanagara, Michell comments (1995:276) that it is indeed strange that the largest and most finely appointed temple of the area is utterly devoid of any foundational inscription. He believes that the probable reason is that the temple was sponsored and built by the pontiffs of the Śrīnerī advaita matha itself, in an attempt to gain prestige for their śaiva institution. As we have seen, from the late fifteenth century onwards the Vijayanagara regents switched their primary religious allegiance from Śaivism to Vaiṣṇavism, an allegiance also followed by family members, ministers and military commanders. This is reflected in the changed honorific signature and the erection of important new vaiṣṇava temple complexes in the sixteenth century (Michell 1995:276). It is suggested that, in this context, the Vidyāśāṅkara temple was built to enhance the prestige of the site. It also seems probable, given the other evidence presented so far in this book, that around the time of the construction of the temple in the mid-sixteenth century, the legend of Śaṅkara founding pīṭha-s may first have been disseminated.

\textsuperscript{96} Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department.

\textsuperscript{97} Epigraphs of 1346 and 1356 make no reference to any temple, and Michell doubts that a record of 1375 (ARSIE 1929, no. 460) from Kuḍupu (near Mangalore), which refers to offerings to be made to the Śaṅkaradeva temple at Śrīnerī, refers to the Vidyāśāṅkara temple.
According to tradition, Vidyāraṇya is connected with both the founding and the success of the Vijayanagara project (UVAT 1985:25). There are four early inscriptional references to Vidyāraṇya: in a copper-plate grant of 18th April 1336, the village of Yāraguḍi is renamed Vidyāraṇyapura (UVAT 1985:46, vv. 1–38),98 while in a grant made shortly afterwards,99 Harihara I is described (UVAT 1985:57, vv. 22–25)100 prostrating himself at the feet of the holy ascetic Vidyāraṇya, “comparable to Lord Śiva Himself, the one of supreme austerity and devotion...”. In these inscriptions Vidyāraṇya is credited with assisting the Saṅgamas in founding Vijayanagara in 1336. However, it is almost certain that these two copper-plate grants are spurious, being backdated (ARMAD 1934:139–142; Filliozat 1973:xiv–xv; Kulke 1985:123), as are two others, one dated 1370 (?), and another dated March 23rd 1344—twelve years before Bukka became king—in which king Bukka is exalted: seated on a bejewelled throne, he shines “in Vidyā, the city established by [the sage] Vidyāraṇya” (UVAT 1985:66, vv. 14–16).

The first genuine epigraphic mention of Vidyāraṇya is dated October 25th 1375 (ARMAD Śg. 1933:226; Filliozat 1973:xxx, fn. 1). On this date a grant was made by Bukka—during the incumbency of the governance of Mangalore by Panḍarideva—[to] “the holy feet of Vidyāraṇya of Śrīgeri” (UVAT 1985:60, v. 1), who had by now, it is assumed, become pontiff of the maṭha.101 This would agree with a kadita102 of the Śrīgeri maṭha that states that Bhāratūrtha died in 1374 (ARMAD Śg. 1933:226–227). The land-grant was for the feeding of Brahmans and daily offerings to Lord Vidyāśaṅkara, the deity later housed in the temple built in honour of Vidyāūrtha. Saletore (1935:41) believes inscriptions indicate that it was to Vidyāūrtha, and not to Vidyāraṇya, that the Saṅgamas credited their success,103 even though

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98 According to this copper-plate inscription (vv. 27–28)—the ‘Bestarahalli’ grant—this was the date of Harihara’s coronation, in the presence of the god Virūpākṣa and his consort Pampā.
99 The ‘Kāpaluru’ grant.
100 See also EC (X, no. 70:241).
101 Other grants were made: in 1377, in the presence of Vidyāraṇya of Śrīgeri; in 1378, under the orders of Vidyāraṇya (UVAT 1985:89, 93).
102 A kadita is a long piece of cloth covered with paste, and used for records (see Shastry 1982:9–12).
103 A copper-plate grant dated 1377 states that Bukka Oḍeya was born to free the land of mleccha-s, and became the sole lord of the earth by the grace of Vidyāūrthas-
in later tradition the honour goes to Paramahamsa Parivrājakācārya Vidyārāṇya Śṝpāḍa. Vidyārāṇya is also credited with the authorship of numerous works, but we shall see that, besides his genuine works, others are not of his authorship, but credited to him in the mistaken belief that he was named Mādhava before he took samnyāsa.

The evidence indicates that it was the triumvirate of Vidyātīrtha (Vidyāśāṅkara), Bhāratītīrtha (Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha) and Vidyārāṇya who are intimately connected with the politics of the early Vijayanagaras, Vidyārāṇya perhaps awarded the gaddī of ŚrīnGERī as a reward for his manifestation of showers of gold, if the legend has some historical basis. This seems not improbable, given the evidence, previously reviewed, of the considerable wealth of the Śaiva matha-s in previous centuries. In the aforementioned inscription of May 26th 1386 (UVAT 1985:116, vv. 10–11) the three sages are mentioned together, Bhāratītīrtha, as the disciple of Vidyātīrtha, “coming to full bloom in the rays of the sun that is sage Vidyārāṇya”.

While there is inscriptive evidence for the association of the triumvirate with the (Tuṅga) ŚrīnGERī matha, they are also all claimed by the Kudali matha at ŚrīnGERī (Antarkar 2001:61–62). Vidyātīrtha is also claimed by the tradition of the Kāṇcī matha. The guru-paramparā of the PUNyāślokamaṇjarī, by Sarvajñasadāśivabodha (56th pontiff from 1524 to 1539), the earliest account of the pontiffs of the matha, states that Vidyātīrtha, a disciple of Candracūḍa,104 ruled there for seventy-three years (from 1297 to 1370) as the fifty-first preceptor, retiring with his disciple, Śaṅkaraṇanda, to the Himalayas, where he died (Rama Rao 1931:83).105 The fifty-second pontiff, according to the traditional account, was Vyāsācala Mahādevendrasarasvatī, who may have been the author of one of the early hagiographies of Śaṅkara, the Vyāsācala-Śaṅkaravijaya (see Ch. 5.1 fn. 8).

As previously noted, the first mention of Vidyārāṇya in connection with ŚrīnGERī is in an inscription of 1375; no earlier inscriptions at

vāmī. Another grant of 1380—which gives details of previous grants—relates that, in 1346 the five brothers (and Bukka Oḍeṭya in 1356) had gone to the senior Śṝpāḍa (Vidyātīrtha). Saletore (1935:41) believes this inscription and the other evidence referred to “demolishes the contention of all those who have erroneously maintained that Vidyārāṇya Śṝpāḍa was instrumental in the founding of the Empire of Vijayanagara”.

104 Vidyātīrtha was called Sarvajña viśnu, son of Sarangapāṇi of Bivāranya, before samnyāsa. Also, Candracūḍa was previously Gaṅgeśa according to this account.
105 See also Mallappa (1974:20); Kuppuswami and Seshadri (2001b:6).
Śrīnerī mention Vidyāraṇya, but only Bhāratīrtha and Vidyātīrtha, who are mentioned in inscriptions, respectively, nearly thirty and nearly twenty years previously (Kulke 1985:130). In a copper-plate grant of 1380 (ARMAD 1916:57) it is recorded that Bukka had written a letter to Vidyāraṇya Śrīpāda, who was then in Banaras, requesting him to return to Virūpākṣa (Hampe). Vidyāraṇya returned to Hampe, from where he was taken to Śrīnerī and granted land for his maintenance, in Kikunda-nāḍu. Cikka, the son of Harihara (Harihara II), also granted land to Vidyāraṇya, as did Harihara II, who, in 1380, confirmed all previous grants that had been made (Saletore 1935:41; Kulke 1985:133). In an inscription dated November 25th 1384, Harihara II is described as having “acquired the empire of knowledge unattained by other kings ... by the grace of Vidyāraṇya muni” (UVAT 1985:108). Harihara II is also recorded in this inscription as having made a donation to two disciples of Vidyāraṇya: Sūrappa and Kṛṣṇadeva. It was during the last two years of the reign of Bukka I, and then in the reign of Harihara II that Vidyāraṇya, most probably, was pontiff of the Śrīnerī matha, from October 1375 to his death on May 26th 1386.

In 1386, before he died, Vidyāraṇya was present when Harihara II made a grant, recorded on copper-plate, to Nārāyaṇa Vājapeya-yati, Narahari Somayāji and Paṇḍari Dīkṣita, who are acknowledged as “Promoters of the Commentary on the Four Vedas”. On January 29th 1386, Vidyāraṇya made a land-grant to a lay attendant for the purposes of food offerings at the temple of Gopīnātha (ARMAD 1934:139–141; UVAT 1985:111). Shortly after Vidyāraṇya’s death,

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106 This particular account of Vidyāraṇya’s return from Banaras is repeated in the Guru-vanśa-kāvyā and in a kādita at Śrīnerī (ARMAD 1933:226–227).

107 The putative date of Vidyāraṇya’s succession is supported by a kādita at the Śrīnerī matha, which states that Bhāratīrtha died in 1374 (ARMAD 1933:266ff.). However, the kādita records are not entirely reliable. The situation is further complicated by the existence of several other Vidyāraṇyas. One of them is mentioned at Śrīnerī in 1515 (ARMAD 1916:18); another is the guru of a svāmī at the Kuḍāli matha in 1591; Vidyāraṇya is claimed by some as the founder of the Kuḍāli matha; another Vidyāraṇya may have been a pontiff of the Śrīnerī matha at the time of Kṛṣṇadevarāya (ARMAD 1933:146). Vidyāraṇya is also claimed as the founder of the Virūpākṣa matha, as described in the Puṣpagiri Mathāṁnaṁya (see Anantendra Sarasvati 1968:386–387); also, several gurus of the Āvāni matha are called Vidyāraṇya (Rama Rao 1931:91).

108 A disciple of Vidyāraṇya named Saṅkararāṇya-Śrīpāda made an endowment to a temple at Chantāru in the Uḍupi tālūkā in 1402 (Annual Report on South-Indian Epigraphy 1928:81).
Harihara II made further grants, in 1386, of land in Kiku-O̍a-n'u, which was named Vidyāraṇyapura in his honour (ARMAD 1933:134–146). Significantly, in an inscription dated May 3rd 1384 (UVAT 1985:102) Vidyāraṇya is referred to as Kṛiśākti-Vidyāraṇya,\(^{109}\) indicating the probability that Vidyāraṇya was a Kālāmukha before his accession to the Śṛṅgerī gaddī, a gaddī that had already been occupied by Bhāratīṭhṛtha and Vidyāṭhṛtha, Vedāntins who represented a new orthodox tradition. While Bhāratīṭhṛtha’s religious background is uncertain, Vidyāṭhṛtha was almost certainly a maheśvara (see below).

We have seen that Vidyāṭhṛtha and Bhāratīṭhṛtha are mentioned in a number of inscriptions dating from 1346. However, as Vidyāraṇya is first mentioned in 1375, it seems highly improbable that he was associated with the founding of Vijayanagara or a maṭha. It seems that his active role in the 1330s and 1340s was projected back from a later age (Kulke 1985:128).

Also central to this period of early Vijayanagara religious history are Sāyaṇa and Mādhava, the latter often being identified erroneously with Vidyāraṇya. Mādhava’s identity is further complicated by the existence of at least one other contemporary with the same name. Concerning the identities of Mādhava and Sāyaṇa, there is an inscription (UVAT 1985:34), unfortunately undated, at the Aruḷaḷa-Perumāl temple at Kāñciipuram. This record is dedicated to Sāyaṇa, of the Bhāradvāja gotra, Sāyaṇa being the famous commentator on the Vedas. His mother Śrīmāya is named; as are his father, Mayāṇa; his younger brother, Bhoganātha; and his elder brother, Mādhava. This Mādhava, of the Bhāradvāja gotra, and the brother of Sāyaṇa, is one of the great mediaeval commentators on dharmasāstra, whose fame in the south stands second only to Śaṅkarācārya (Kane HDŚ, Vol.1, part 2:779). For the purposes of explication, this Mādhava will be henceforth referred to as Mādhava [B]. (Further on in this section we will consider the identity of another Mādhava, who will be referred to as Mādhava [A].)\(^{110}\)

\(^{109}\) This has been interpreted by some as referring to two individuals, but the text (UVAT 1985:98, l.1–7) seems to indicate one person, as the relevant case endings are in the singular.

\(^{110}\) The distinction between Mādhava [A] and Mādhava [B] was first clearly analysed and demonstrated by Narasimhachar (1916a; 1916b; 1917). It was further commented on by Rama Rao (1930; 1931; 1934), and subsequently endorsed by Kulke (1985).
During the middle of the fourteenth century, Mādhava [B]—sometimes referred to as Mādhava-ācārya—served as a minister and advisor to Bukka I.\textsuperscript{111} According to Rama Rao (1930:703), there are five works that may be attributed with some certainty to this Mādhava, who was philosophically orientated to advaita.\textsuperscript{112} This Mādhava [B] has also been identified with the author of the Śāṅkara-dig-vijaya, the most well-known of the hagiographies of Śāṅkara. In the opening verse of the ŚDV, the author pays obeisance to his guru, Vidyātīrtha. This work was originally entitled Saṁkṣepa-Śāṅkara-jaya, and in some current printed editions,\textsuperscript{113} is attributed to Mādhava-Vidyārāṇya. The colophons at the conclusion of each of the sixteen chapters of the ŚDV state that the work was written by Mādhava (not Mādhava-Vidyārāṇya). But this author could not have written the text before 1650 (Sawai 1985; Bader 2000:54–55), several centuries after the time of both Mādhava [B] and Vidyārāṇya. The identification of Mādhava [B] with Vidyārāṇya has led to numerous works being wrongly attributed to Mādhava [B] (Rama Rao 1930:705–706).\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{111} Due to the erroneous identification of Mādhava with Vidyārāṇya (see below), it has sometimes been assumed that Mādhava/Vidyārāṇya was also a minister to Harihara I, Bukka I and Harihara II (see, for example, Venkataramanaïya [Majumdar] 1990, 4th edn., Vol. 6:323).

\textsuperscript{112} Pārvāsaramīty-vyākhya (Pārvāsamādhaviya), Vyavahāra-mādhava, Kālamādhaviya (Kālānīraya), Jīvanmuktiyikā, and Jaiminiyāyamālāvistara (which examines the sūtras of Jaimini). The Pārvāsamādhaviya and Vyavahāra-mādhava provide rules on dharma, while the Kālamādhaviya is concerned with the requisite timing for dharmic acts. The Pārvāsamādhaviya considers renunciate life, but primarily for the three lower classes of renouncers. The Jīvanmuktiyikā focusses on the life of the paramahansa, the highest type of renouncer, and is also attributed to Vidyārāṇya (see Olivelle 1977, part II:25; Vidyārāṇya 1996: Translator’s Preface), owing to the frequent but problematic identification of Mādhava with Vidyārāṇya (see below). Vidyārāṇya salutes Vidyātīrtha, one of the first pontiffs of the Śrīgeri maṭha, in the opening stanza of this work.

\textsuperscript{113} The Ānandārāma edition.

\textsuperscript{114} Such as Vidyāmādhaviya, Mādhavanidāna and Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha. Some scholars, such as Lorenzen (1983), have revised their former opinion (also held by Hacker 1993:ch. 1) that the author of the Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha and the Śāṅkara-dig-vijaya were one and the same person, namely Mādhava-Vidyārāṇya. The evidence indicates that Mādhava [B] was certainly not the author of the ŚDV, and probably not the author of the Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha, an account of the sixteen systems of philosophy that espouses advaita as the ‘highest’ philosophy. In this work it is stated both that the author is Sāyaṇa-Mādhava, and also Mādhava, “the Kaustubha-jewel of the milk-ocean of the fortunate Sāyaṇa” (Mādhava-Āchārya 1882:1:3–4). It has been suggested that this work may have been by Mādhava [C], also known as Māyaṇa, one of the two sons of Sāyaṇa, who was neither Mādhava [A] (see...
In his seven known works, Sāyāna also provides corroborating information concerning his family, mentioning his parents, his younger brother Bhoganātha, and his elder brother, Mādhava [B]. Sāyāna first lived at the court of Prince Kampa (a younger brother of Harihara I), in the east of Vijayanagara, and then, following Kampa’s death, served as advisor and minister to his young son, Saṅgama II, who became ruler of the eastern province. Mādhava [B] became the mahā-manaṁ (Kane Vol.1, pt.2:789), and Bhoganātha a minister-chamberlain for Saṅgama II (UVAT 1985:80–83). This latter inscription, of 1356, was composed by Bhoganātha, who states his veneration for the preceptor "rākṣa, a āiva advaitin who lived in the early twelfth century (Suryanarayana Sastri 1930:1–35; Nagaswamy 1982:97). This "rākṣa, who is also referred to in an inscription as a Kālāmukha, was most probably the rāja-guru of Vikrama Cōla (c.1121) (Rajamanickam 1964:229; Nagaswamy 1998:35). Below), governor of Banavase (and minister to Harihara I, Bukka I and Harihara II), nor Mādhava [B], minister to Bukka I (Rama Rao 1930:714; Venkataraman 1959:34). The author of the SDS (1.2) states that he daily follows his guru Sarvajña-Viṣṇu, son of Sāranigapāṇi, who knows all the Agama-s, thus ruling out Mādhavas [A] and [B]. However, a most insightful analysis by Thakur (1961) indicates that the author of the SDS was Cannibhaṭṭa (Cinna or Cennu), son of Sahajasarvajña Viṣṇu Bhaṭṭopādhyaya, who was also a preceptor to Sāyāna and Mādhava [B]. Cannibhaṭṭa was a younger contemporary of Sāyāna and Mādhava, author of a sub-commentary on the Pañcapādikāvivekaṇa, and worked in the Vijayanagara court under the patronage of Harihara Mahārāja The SDS shares many passages and quotations from Cannibhaṭṭa’s other works. Thakur suggests that the plan of the work may have originated with Mādhava, and been written by Cannibhaṭṭa, with the help of Sāyāna and Mādhava.

115 Subhāṣita-sudhānīdhi, Prāyaścitā-sudhānīdhi (Karmaviṇīka), Alankara-sudhānīdhi, Dhiśturitti, Puruṣārtha-sudhānīdhi, Yajñatantra-sudhānīdhi.

116 ‘Sāyāna’ also was not an uncommon name during the period under consideration. Filliozat (1973:xxxi) records six different Sāyānas from inscriptions, son of Harihara I, son of Kampa I, son of Bukka I, son of Mārappa, son of Kampa II, and minister of Kampana I.

117 Rama Rao (1930:711), however, doubts that Mādhava served Saṅgama II, believing that, at Vijayanagara, Mādhava was only ever a minister of Bukka I.

118 This Śrīkaṭṭha (nātha) is not to be confused with the Śrīkaṭṭha who was the preceptor of the Pāṣupatīs.

119 Epigraphia Carnatica VII (Shikapur), 99 (1113 CE).

120 Śrīkaṭṭha, like Saṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva (Ānandaṭīrtha), commented on the Brahmaśūtra of Bādarāyaṇa, and spearheaded the non-dualist Śīvāvaiṭa school, which is particularly important in the south, and is based on his commentary, the Śrīkaṭṭha-bhāṣya. These four philosophers could be considered as the most influential
Having served mahāmandaleśvara-s in the eastern provinces, Śaṅkara and Mādhava then appear to have moved to Vijayanagara and both became ministers to Bukka I, but in different capacities.

Śaṅkara lived to see Bukka II’s son, Harīhara II, enthroned as king of Vijayanagara, in 1377, and died during the latter’s reign. Śaṅkara’s guru was Viḍyāratha. In Śaṅkara’s Vedic commentaries and some other later works, the term “Mādhavīya” occurs in the colophon. However, it is clear from the introductory verses of the Puruṣārtha-sudhānidhi and the Yajurveda-bhāṣya that Mādhava was approached by Bukka I to write the texts, but Mādhava entrusted their composition to his younger brother, Śaṅkara (Rama Rao 1930:709). There is also no evidence, apart from a copper-plate inām of dubious authenticity,¹²¹ that different sections of the Veda-bhāṣya were written by a team of Brahmins under the guidance of Śaṅkara. A reference was made previously to three Brahmins who received grants at Śrīneri in 1386 for their commentaries on the four Vedas. However, Śaṅkara does not acknowledge anyone’s assistance in his works (Kulke 1985:131), and this gift to Brahmins does not necessarily indicate that Śaṅkara was assisted in his commentaries. The works of Śaṅkara and Mādhava [B] also indicate that Mādhava [B] was also a minister to Bukka II (one of the three sons of Harīhara II), who asked both Śaṅkara and Mādhava to compose treatises on the Vedas, Purāṇa-s and Smrīti-s.

Besides Mādhava [B], it is also apparent that there was another Mādhava, [A], who was governor of Banavasi (Goa), and the author of Tātiparyādīpikā, a commentary on the Sūtasamhitā. On his instruction, Brahmins were brought from Andhra Pradesh and Kashmir, and settled with land in Karnataka (Rama Rao 1930:709 fn. 1). From several inscriptions, including one from Goa, dated 1391, it

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¹²¹ The authenticity of this copper-plate, of 1386, is doubted as it refers to Viḍyāranya as living some months after his death (Rama Rao 1930:711).
is known that his parents were Mācāmbikā and Cauḍabhaṭṭa; that he served as minister to Harihara I, Bukka I and Harihara II, from 1347 to 1391; and that his guru was Kāśīvilāsa Kriyāśakti (Filliozat 1973:136).\textsuperscript{122} Mādhava [A] was also minister to prince Mārappa, the younger brother of Harihara I. In 1368, this Mādhava mantrin is twice described in inscriptions as “depending on king Bukka’s lotus feet”, something that a śaṁnyāśī would never state. This Mādhava [A] also clearly never became Vidyāraṇya (Kulke 1985:128).

According to tradition at Śrīnāgarī (Venkataraman 1959:28–39; Sawai 1985), Śāyana is the elder brother of Vidyāraṇya, and this and other references are explained by claiming that Vidyāraṇya was called Mādhava before his taking śaṁnyāsa from Vidyāśāṅkaratīrtha (=Vidyātīrtha), the tenth jagadguru of Śrīnāgarī, Vidyāraṇya becoming the twelfth jagadguru, after Bhāratītīrtha. The editors of UVAT (1985:33), in accord with the Śrīnāgarī tradition,\textsuperscript{123} also maintain that Śāyana was named Bhāratītīrtha after śaṁnyāsa and that the Mādhava ācārya [B] who became Vidyāraṇya was different from the Mādhava mantrin [A] of the Āṅgirasa gotra who was Provincial Governor of the area that is now Goa. However, the claim of tradition that Mādhava [B] became Vidyāraṇya is impossible, not least because Mādhava [B] praises, as his guru, Bhāratītīrtha, who, according to tradition, would have been his brother with a new name.

While there seems to be no doubt that there were at least two Mādhavas (one of the Āṅgirasa gotra [Mādhava A], and the other of the Bhāradvāja gotra [Mādhava B]), both of whom were closely involved with the Vijayanagara rulers, it is apparent from a careful consideration of both the literary and the epigraphic evidence that neither of the Mādhavas changed their name to become Vidyāraṇya, the śaṁnyāśī (Rama Rao 1930:712–717; Filliozat 1973:135; Kulke 1985:129–132).\textsuperscript{124} In the five authentic works of Mādhava [B], partic-

\textsuperscript{122} Inscription no.146.
\textsuperscript{123} See Venkataraman (1959:29).
\textsuperscript{124} One of the most useful studies of the Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya identity issue is presented by Rama Rao (1930; 1931; 1934; 2000). See also Raghavan (1976). Besides Mādhava [A] and [B], Vidyāraṇya has also been identified with Vidyāmādhava—son of Nārāyaṇapūjyāpāda of the Vasiṣṭha gotra, author of Vidyāmādhaviya, an astronomical work—and with Mādhava, son of Indukara, author of the medical work of the sixteenth century, Mādhava-siddhā (Rama Rao 1931:82). Another Mādhava, Veṅkaṭa Mādhava, wrote a commentary on the Rg Veda, the Rgartha-dīpikā, a work composed on the banks of the Kāverī river at the time of the inauguration of the
ular features are common: invocatory verses addressed to Bhāratīrtha and Vidyārīthra, and references to his first work, Pārśārasṛṣṭiṁyākhyā, in which full details of his parentage are given. He also calls himself a minister (āmṛtya), and the bearer of the burden of sovereignty of Bukka (Kulke 1985:128). It is also apparent that Mādhava [B] was a married householder and a performer of Vedic sacrifices. In one inscription of 1377 (Mysore Archaeological Report 1915:42), Māyāṇa the son of Mādhava is mentioned, while the Śivatattva-ratnakara (dated to 1709) describes Mādhava as having sons and grandsons (Rama Rao 1931:82).

Throughout the works of Mādhava [B], it is Bukka I who is mentioned as his patron; no mention is made of either Harihara I or Harihara II. The inscriptions mentioning Vidyārīnya, however, are all of the reign of Harihara II. Moreover, the tradition relating to Vidyārīnya, including the narratives of Nuniz and Ferishta, depicts Vidyārīnya as having taken samnyāsa before Bukka I came to the throne, and as having gained the throne for Harihara I by dint of his spiritual power. Also, according to the literary tradition of the māṭha-s, Vidyārīnya was a poor Brahman, unable to marry.125 The Vidyārīnya-kāḷajñā, Śivatattva-ratnakara and Guru-vamŚa-kāvyā also speak of Vidyārīnya setting Harihara on the throne, yet Mādhava makes no mention of either Harihara I or Harihara II. The married Mādhava (who performs Vedic sacrifice, necessarily with his wife) and the samnyāsī Vidyārīnya cannot be the same person in the same period of time, in the reign of Bukka I, or later.

Further, Mādhava [B] refers to himself as Mādhava in all his works. If he had become Vidyārīnya at any time, he would have been prohibited, according to the rules of samnyāsa, from referring to himself by his pre-samnyāsa name. Yet Mādhava never refers to himself anywhere, even by allusion, as Vidyārīnya. Nor is an identity made between Mādhava and Vidyārīnya in the works by the other Mādhavas previously referred to, nor in several other works from the next couple of centuries that refer to either Mādhava or Vidyārīnya. As already observed, Sāyaṇa lived into the reign of Harihara II, yet

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125 According to the Maṇimāṇjarībhedinī and Guru-vamŚa-kāvyā (Rama Rao 1934:804).
Sāyaṇa refers to his brother as a performer of Vedic sacrifices, and not as a sannyāśī, nor as Vidyāraṇya. Also, as previously observed, Mādhava invokes Bhāratītīrtha as his guru, yet Vidyāraṇya does not once refer to Bhāratītīrtha. Vidyāraṇya, in his works,126 instead acknowledges Vidyātīrtha and his guru Śaṅkarānanda.127 Despite the fact that Vidyāraṇya’s importance and role in the affairs of Vijayanagara was most probably projected back from a later time, it is clear from inscriptional and other evidence that Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha, Vidyāraṇya, Sāyaṇa and Mādhava [B] played a highly significant role in the Hindu religious revival under the Vijayanagaras, primarily represented in the advaita-Vedānta tradition established at Śrīgerī. We now turn to the issue of Śaṅkara’s putative involvement with that tradition.

6.5 Śaṅkara and the founding of the Śrīgerī maṭha

Tradition associates the founding of Śrīgerī and the other main maṭha-s with Śaṅkara. However, an examination of Śaṅkara’s hagiographies, undertaken in the previous chapter, revealed that there is no evidence for this in the earlier hagiographies. We will see that inscriptional evidence also reveals no connection between Śaṅkara

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126 Anubhūti-prakāśa, Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha and Pañcadaśī. The authorship of the Pañcadaśī is slightly problematic, as the author first pays salutations to the lotus feet of his guru, Śrī Śaṅkarānanda (Vidyāraṇya 1975:1.1). According to tradition (Venkatraman 1959:52), Śaṅkarānandabhāratī was the sixteenth pontiff of Śrīgerī, taking sannyāsa in 1428, and occupying the godī from 1448 to 1454. We have seen that Vidyāraṇya died in 1386, so for his guru to have been Śaṅkarānanda would have been impossible. Numerous other works are attributed to Vidyāraṇya (see UVAT 1985:23–24). Vidyāraṇya’s literary activity was exaggerated in later times, first occurring in the Vidyāraṇya-kālajñāna, a work of semi-prophesy, composed between around 1664—after the collapse of the Vijayanagara empire—and 1709. In this work Vidyāraṇya is credited with initially composing numerous works that were then written by Sāyaṇa and Mādhava, including the Veda-bhāṣya. This attribution to Vidyāraṇya is repeated in the eighteenth century Guru-vanśa-kāya. Vidyāraṇya’s hagiography is contained in the Mani-mahājān-bhedini, where he is identified with Mādhava and credited with the authorship of many works. Mādhava’s identity with Vidyāraṇya is propounded in several other works emanating from the Śrīgerī and Kāṇṭī maṭha-s (Rāma Rao 1931:80).

127 There is one tradition that links Vidyāraṇya with Tantra, indicated in a list of the heads of the Śrīgerī maṭha, in the Gadyāvalī, a work on Tantric ritual by Nījātmaprakāśayogīndra (Antarkar 2001:48).
and either the founding or early history of any maṭha. We have seen that the early pontiffs of Śṛṅgerī were śaiva, and we will also see that the Kāṇcipuram maṭha appears to have been consistently śaiva. Śrīkaṇṭha(nāṭha), a rāja-guru and an important advaita Śaiva-Siddhānta philosopher in the twelfth century, will be again mentioned in this section. It will be suggested that he can be seen as a transitional figure in the shift from Āgamic Śaivism—represented by the previously powerful Kālāmukhas, Mattamayūras and Śaiva-Siddhāntins—to a new Brahmanical advaita institution that was established at Śṛṅgerī. Śaṅkara has been shown to be vaishnava, and it will become evident that his immediate disciples were also vaishnava. It will also be argued that it is improbable that Śaṅkara inaugurated either devī worship or the śmārta tradition at Śṛṅgerī, with which tradition credits him. Finally, it will be suggested that Śaṅkara’s projection onto the Śṛṅgerī project, and the attachment of specific legends to his name concerning the founding of maṭha-s and the instigation of an order of ascetics, developed in a three-stage process.

We will first consider the earliest evidence of any maṭha at Śṛṅgerī. The two oldest inscriptions at Śṛṅgerī, found in the Pārśvanātha basti, date from 1150 and 1160. The first praises the Jīna-sāsana, and the second contains information about a donation from Jaina merchants, indicating that Jainism was established in Śṛṅgerī in the twelfth century (Kulke 1985:132). It is known that the South Kanara district of Karnataka was long a stronghold of Jainism, which received considerable patronage after the advent of Hoysala power (Ramesh 1970:298). A Hoysala feudatory, Lokanāthadevarasa, was a Jaina, and an inscription from 1334 records land-grants to the basti of Sāntinātha, built at Kārakaṇḍa by the disciples of the Jaina preceptor Kumudacandra-bhaṭṭārakadeva. The Āḷupā ruler, Kulaśekhara III, was also an active supporter of Jainism, as shown by inscriptions dated 1384 at Mūḍabidure, when he made grants to the Jaina tīrthāṅkara Pārśvanātha, and worshipped at the feet of the Jaina preceptor Cāruktīra. However, the Āḷupas were predominantly śaiva, as were the early Vijayanagara rulers.

The first record of any kind concerning an advaita presence at Śṛṅgerī dates to 1346 (UVAT 1985:71–73), an inscription in which obeisance to Śambhu (Śiva) and Vidyāṭīrtha is stated. It records the visit of the five brothers—on the occasion of the vijayotsava—and the donation of land for the maintenance of Bhāratīrtha (who, as we have seen, is an advaita-vedāntin), his disciples and forty Brahmans.
But this inscription only refers to Śrīnerī as a tīrtha, and not as a having a matha. The first mention of a matha at Śrīnerī is in 1356, when Bukka I donated villages for the maintenance of those at the Śrīnerī matha (Kulke 1985:132). While we cannot be certain that there was no advaita matha at Śrīnerī much before 1356, some circumstantial evidence may indicate the former presence of Jainas, as Bhāraṭārtha is praised as having demolished the teachings of the Jainas and Buddhists.

An outstanding puzzle is the precise sectarian situation at Śrīnerī just before the founding of a matha. As mentioned previously, Vidyārtha left no written works. But in both texts and inscriptions, Vidyārtha is referred to as a Maheśvara, which may possibly indicate a Śaiva-Siddhāntin. However, as noted at the beginning of this section, Bhāraṭārtha did leave a text, which is advaita-vedāntin in perspective. The exact processes which led to the establishing of an advaita-vedānta monastic tradition are hard to determine.

From the time of the first recorded Vijayanagara grant to Śrīnerī, in 1346, until Vidyāranya’s death in 1386, donations to the advaita matha increased enormously, multiplying approximately five-fold in that period, indicating the importance of Śrīnerī to the Vijayanagara rulers. However, neither the grant of 1380, previously referred to, confirming all previous grants, nor any other inscription, give any indication that there was any kind of institution at the site receiving any kind of income prior to the first grants in 1346. The Śrīnerī

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128 Tradition credits Vidyāranya with establishing eight advaita matha-s, but this remains uncorroborated. Besides Śrīnerī two other advaita matha-s are known from records, one being the Vidyāranya-svāmī matha, centred on a well, and located to the west of the Virūpākṣa temple at Vijayanagara. This matha was associated with the Śrīnerī matha and is referred to in an inscription of Kṛṣṇadevarāya from 1515, but the date of the foundation of the matha is uncertain and disputed. The head of the matha in the 1990s, Narasiṅhabhāratī, traces his lineage from Vidyāranya. The other advaita matha is the Cintāmani matha in Ānegondi, believed to have been established in the early fourteenth century (Verghese 1995:116).

129 Kulke (1985:133); ARMAD (1933:211–218, l.66ff.).

130 See Mallappa (1974:28): Vidyārtha is referred to as a Maheśvara in EC VI, Śg 2, 5, 12, 14, 24, 28; in the works of Sāyaṇa; at the end of every chapter of Anubhuti Prakāśa; the beginning and end of every part of the Veda-bhāṣya; at the beginning and end of Ṣivānmuktiveka; and in Śaṅkarāṇanda’s Bhadāranya-dīpikā.

131 In the first ten years, from 1346 to 1356, the income from the villages at Śrīnerī amounted to between 250 and 360 gadyāṇa-s (=610 g.). During Vidyāranya’s stay at Śrīnerī, income was between 1419 and 1871 gadyāṇa-s (Kulke 1985:133).
matha continued to be endowed with grants by the later Saṅgamas, Bukka II giving an endowment for the maintenance of the library there in 1406. More land was given by Devarāya II in 1431, and by Mallikārjuna in 1451. The Nāyakas of Keladi (Shimoga district) established an independent state from 1499 to 1763, and continued the support of the Śrṅgeri matha originally instituted by the Vijayanagāras (Shastry 1987).

As we have seen, the Vijayanagara inscriptions bestow praise on various deities, including Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Virūpākṣa and Rāmacandra; and the ācārya-s Śrīkaṭhanātha, Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyāranya. Given that the eulogies in many of the inscriptions are quite lengthy, and considering that Śaṅkara is so intimately connected to Śrṅgeri in later tradition, it is remarkable that Śaṅkarācārya is not mentioned in any inscription. In an inscription of 1346 praise is bestowed on Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha, and on Vidyāranya’s knowledge of advaya (advaita) (UVAT 1985:116, v. 10), yet Śaṅkara, later so particularly associated with advaita, is not mentioned. In a kādiṭa copy of Harihara’s inscription of 1380, Bhāratītīrtha is praised for defeating Bhāta (Kumārila), but here also no mention is made of Śaṅkara (Kulke 1985:134), who, as recalled, defeated Kumārila in debate in the hagiographies. Shastry (1982:7) also comments on the Śrī-puruṣottama-bhāratī-carita, the manuscript of which is to be found in the archives of Śrṅgeri. Composed by “Viṣṇu”, and belonging to the fifteenth century, the first three chapters give an account of the ācārya-s of Śrṅgeri, from Vidyāśaṅkara to Candrasekharabhāratī II, and the other nine chapters deal with Puruṣottamabhāratī, until his assumption of the pontificate at Hampe, and his taking over the administration of the Śrṅgeri matha. Here also, remarkably, no mention is made of Śaṅkara.

It was suggested in Chapter 5 that Śaṅkara was relatively unknown during his life-time, and probably for several centuries after, as there is no mention of him in Buddhist or Jaina sources for some centuries; nor is he mentioned by other important philosophers of the ninth and tenth centuries, notably the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, saiva adherents of a philosophy favoured, as we have seen, by the Kālāmukha rāja-guru-s. Potter (1977, Vol. 1:15) remarks that even the advaita system scarcely receives any mention by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas until the time of Śriharṣa (c.1075–1125), who critiques Nyāya and espouses Vedānta.

Our brief survey of the inscriptional evidence from Śrṅgeri and Kaṇḍī also reveals no trace of the name of Śaṅkara, even in the four-
teenth century, after the founding of the Śrīgerī matha. It has been argued that Śaṅkara’s religious orientation was distinctly vaiṣṇava. However, the prime religious orientation of the early Śaṅgamas, their rāja-guru-s, and the early advaita pontiffs, was distinctly śaiva. We have seen that Vidyātirtha, the first pontiff claimed by Śrīgerī to have any genuine inscriptive reference, is also referred to as a Maheśvara, a sect which, as we have seen, was commented on by Śaṅkara with particular condemnation.

If we examine the works of Śaṅkara’s immediate disciples it is also apparent, as first observed by Hacker (1995:38), that they and nearly all the early advaita philosophers up to the tenth century were vaiṣṇava, “in a restricted sense of the word”. This is apparent from the introductory invocations (maṅgalācaraṇa) to the available works of Śaṅkara’s disciples.

Toṭaka begins his Śrūtisāra-samuddhāranam with an invocation to Hari; Vyāsa is also mentioned. The other references in the text that might provide a specific clue to Toṭaka’s religious orientation are in verse 85, where he refers to Śrī Rāma; verse 148, where he refers to Hari (of the Bhagavadgītā) as the teacher of all teachers; and the final verse, v. 179, where he bows down to Lord Viṣṇu. Toṭaka makes no reference anywhere to Śiva, and is particularly critical of the Śaṅkhya, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems.

Sureśvara also offers obeisance to Viṣṇu in the first verse of his Naiśkarmyasiddhi, and refers to omniscient Hari at IV.64; at IV.76 he states that “Śaṅkara obtained through the power of his yoga the knowledge which reveals the abode of Viṣṇu and which destroys the entire world of bondage”.

The Pañcapādikā, the work of Padmapāda—another of Śaṅkara’s disciples—begins with three invocations. The first is to the eternal brahma; the second is to Bādarāyaṇa (author of the Vedāntasūtra/Brahmasūtra); the third is to his teacher Śaṅkara, who is described as being without the “enjoyment” of a family, or Umā, without vibhūti

\[\text{\textsuperscript{132}}\text{ See Comans (trans., 1996). The only other work attributed to Toṭaka is the Toṭakājītaka (Rajagopala Sastri 1968:63).}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{133}}\text{ See, for example, vv. 140–141.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{134}}\text{ See Balasubramanian (trans., 1988).}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{135}}\text{ This is his only known authentic work (Potter 1981, Vol. 3:563).}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{136}}\text{ See Padmapāda (1948; 1989), Pañcapādikā (text in edition of Vedakavivamsam T. R. Srinivasan; trans. in edition by Venkataramiah).}\]
(the sacred ashes worn by śaiva-s), of mild nature (unlike the ugra, ‘fierce’ form of Śiva), and without Vināyaka (i.e. Gaṇapati). This description of Śaṅkara by one of his chief disciples seems to be overtly distinguishing the venerable teacher from any explicit connection with Śiva or śaiva-s. This might be contrasted with a description of, for example, Sadāśivasarasvatī, pontiff of the Kāṇcī maṭha, who was referred to in an inscription of 1527 as an incarnation of Śiva, wearing holy ash and rudrāka-mālā. There is little in the Pañcapādikā to indicate Padmapāda’s religious orientation. However, at one point, when discussing Brahman (I.3.49)137 Padmapāda refers to the (transient) bliss of Hiranyagarbhaloka (the abode of Kṛśṇa), and then quotes from the Bhagavadgītā. At Pañcapādikā II.5.12, Padmapāda refers to the sentient Hiranyagarbha (the ‘Lord’ who is also subject to transmigration), beyond whom lies Brahman. No genuine works are available for Hastāmalaka, Śaṅkara’s fourth disciple.138

Śarvajñātman, author of the Saṅkṣepaśārīraka, was a pupil of Suresvara. In the introductory invocation he invokes Viṣṇu,139 and then, having saluted Vyāsa, Śrī Śaṅkara and Śrī Suresvara (vv. 6–8), states that the obstacles [to writing the treatise] have been removed by “my preceptor’s contemplation on Lord Nārāyaṇa” (v. 10). Interestingly, as noted by Veezhinathan in his introduction to the text, Śarvajñātman140 is associated with the Kāmakoṭī pīthā at Kāṇcī. According to tradition he took sannyāsa directly from Śaṅkara, and was nominated successor to the maṭha, with Suresvara, his preceptor, as his protector.

However, is apparent that there is something odd about aspects of the traditional account here. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the Śaṅkarite tradition the Kāmakoṭī pīthā at Kāṇcī is particularly associated with Śaivism. This is substantiated in other sources also. Appar (seventh century), one of the sixty-three Nāyaṇārs, refers to śaiva maṭha-s at Kāṇcī (Balambal 1999:32), and makes one of the earli-

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138 To Hastāmalaka is attributed the Hastāmalakaślokāḥ, but this is probably spurious (Potter 1981, Vol. 3:19). Amongst other important Vedāntins, Ānandabodha invokes Viṣṇu, while Vimukṭātman bows to his own self (Hacker 1995:38).
139 See Śarvajñātman (Veezhinathan trans., 1972).
140 Traditional dates for Śarvajñātman place him in the fourth century BCE, but if he was a disciple of Suresvara, he must be placed around the eighth or ninth century.
 CHAPTER SIX

The earliest known references to Kāmākṣī, the presiding deity of the Kāmakoṭī pīṭha. Campantar, Appar’s contemporary, refers to Śiva in union with Kāmakoṭī of “Kaccī”, which refers to Kāmākṣī of Kānci. The śaiva bhakta Cuntarar, who lived in the eighth century, also refers to the kāmakottam of Kānci (Nagaswamy 1982:204–207). The term kāmakoṭī was used, from the eleventh century onwards, to refer to amman shrines,141 but crucially, from the time of Appar, kāmakōṭī referred to the consort of Śiva. The Kāmakōṭī pīṭha, as currently constituted, was built during the reign of Śrīraṅgarāya in the late sixteenth century (Balambal 1999:39),142 though the present Kāmākṣī temple may well be at the same site visited by Cuntarar (Nagaswamy 1982:207). As observed in the previous chapter, it was only in 1686 that the name Śaṅkarācārya first appears in inscriptions of the maṭha.

The earliest inscriptive records of the pontiffs of the Kānci maṭha, dating from 1290, also clearly show that the pontiffs of the maṭha were śaiva. Yet the first three advaita sāṁnyāsī-s claimed by the Kānci tradition, namely Śaṅkara, Sureśvara and Sarvajñātman, are evidently vaiṣṇava. In the previous chapter, Hacker’s (1995:38–39) suggestion was considered, that the reason behind the rivalry between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍanamiśra, as portrayed in the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, was most probably that Maṇḍanamiśra was a śaiva, which would have been in distinction from almost all other advaita vedāntin-s of the time (when, it should be added, religious affiliation was not a trivial affair). This is not to say that political or hagiographical expedience may not transcend religious sensibilities.

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141 From the thirteenth century onwards, deivi shrines, known as amman shrines, became a prominent feature of temple worship in Tamil Nadu. Although from at least the eighth century deivi images in the temple were common, separate shrines for the deivi as part of the temple complex were rare until the thirteenth century. Among the most important deivi-s were Durgā, Jyeṣṭhā (the fearsome sister of Lakṣmī), and the Sapta-Māṭkās. From the eleventh century onwards, the amman shrines were invariably called kāmakottam or tirukāmakottam in all temples, whence the name of the Kāmakōṭī pīṭha at Kānci. Folk goddesses, worshipped most probably since very ancient times at the village level, first started gaining prestige in south India in the Cōla period (985–1050). Absorbed into the religious practice of temple culture, deivi-s were associated with both Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. After the eleventh century, amman shrines, those devoted to Pārvatī or Umā, gradually replaced other, older deivi shrines. By the fourteenth century, most Śiva temples had such a shrine, known as a kāmakottam. Deivi, with many names, also appeared as the consort of Viṣṇu in the main vaiṣṇava centres of south India, enjoying a universalisation in the company of Purānic deities (Stein 1973:77–80; Nagaswamy 1982:204–206; Stein 1999:238).

Regarding the various traditions that were to become subsumed under the umbrella of ‘Hindu’—a process that properly began in the early sixteenth century—pre-Muslim religious orientation in India was distinctly sectarian and non-universalist. The significance of this, in the context of religious identity, will be explored in the following chapter. An analysis of a manual on pūjā for priests (Pūjā-pada-paddhati), the eleventh-century Somaśambhu-paddhati of Somaśambhu (probably south Indian), is pertinent in this respect. The removal of līṅga (internal ‘marks’ of a previous religion) was a fundamental process in initiation into Śaivism; there was no question of ‘equality of faiths’, as the removal of the līṅga removed all the merit that may have been acquired while following the previous creed (Stietencron 1995:56–63). As there is considerable evidence that Śaṅkara and his immediate disciples were vaisnava, there is all the more reason to doubt their connection with the early monastic tradition of either Śrṅgerī or Kāṅcipuram.

The monastic traditions that developed at Śrṅgerī and Kāṅcipuram, as represented in the works that we have at our disposal from the hand of the early known (as opposed to hagiographically presented) pontiffs, were essentially and distinctly orthodox. As has been indicated, they were essentially śāiva, yet, in accord with Brahmanical tradition, śmārta orthodoxy was demonstrated by their acknowledgement of the Veda as the ultimate source of knowledge. In this, the advaita pontiffs and their strictly Brahmanical cohorts were somewhat distinct from the Kālāmukhas, Mattamayūras and Śaiva-Siddhāntins who had been so influential and powerful in previous centuries. These sects, while accepting the Veda, as we have seen, laid prime emphasis on the Āgama. They did not deny the authority of other texts to other traditions: simply, religious traditions were hierarchised, and within their own orders, Āgamic Śaivism was at the apex. After the fourteenth century the influence and estates of the Kālāmukha and Mattamayūra orders significantly declined, their role to a significant extent being eclipsed by the new and heavily patronised śmārta advaita maṭha-s.

The śmārta tradition, centred on Śrṅgerī, may have also been competing with Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism. Suryanaran Sastri (1930:42, 74) remarks

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143 It may be noted that the śāiva sects under discussion were also significantly influenced by Tantra (see Lorenzen 1991:3–7).
that under the Cōḷaś Vaiṣṇavism had found little favour, but that there is evidence that the influence of Rāmānuja’s movement, open to all castes,\textsuperscript{144} engendered a new aggression by vaiṣṇava-s against śaiva-s.\textsuperscript{145} Haradatta (d.1119), for example, was forced to defend his śaiva teachings in public, seated on a red-hot tripod, and wrote the Hari-hara-tārataṃya, which Sastri (1930:74) describes as “a monument of sectarianism, such as could have been called forth only by the intolerant spirit of a religion on the upward and onward march”.

It was previously noted that one of the most important philosophers of the early mediaeval period was the śaiva advaitin Śrīkanṭha, a Kālāmukha (also referred to as a Śaiva-Siddhāntin) who most probably lived in the early twelfth century. He is mentioned in a Vijayanagara inscription (UVAT 1985:80–83) as a teacher of Bhoganātha (minister to Saṅgama II), and as a form of Paśupati who expounds a new Maheśvara doctrine (vv. 12–13). Śrīkanṭha argued for the authority both of the Veda (including the Upaniṣad-s) and the śaiva Āgama-s, and his role in attempting to harmonise the two traditions has been compared with a parallel task undertaken by Rāmānuja—around the same time as Śrīkanṭha—to harmonise Pāṇcarātra Āgama with the Veda (Suryanarayana Sastri 1930:11). A crucial difference, of course, is that while the six-fold path of the śaiva Āgama-s is open to all varṇa-s, the Veda is only for the ears of the twice-born. The śaiva-orientated advaita of Śrīkanṭha may be understood as the bridge between the more Tantric Kālāmukhas and the orthodox smārta śaiva tradition that developed at the advaita matha-s sponsored by the Vijayanagaras. It is perhaps partly in response to the situation outlined above that the early hagiographers found Śaṅkara’s orthodox Vedic position\textsuperscript{146} and philosophical erudition so suitable for elaboration into a digvijāya. Śaṅkara’s orthodox position would, of course, have been fully acceptable to Brahmans.

We now turn, finally, to the tradition that Śaṅkara inaugurated both smārta and devī worship at Śrīgeri. The predominant practice

\textsuperscript{144} For the role, status and social mobility of śūdra-s in the early Śrī-Vaiṣṇava movement, see Stein (1968).
\textsuperscript{145} The reformist zeal of Rāmānuja may have contributed to the rivalry there between śaiva-s and vaiṣṇava-s for royal patronage (Champakalakshmi 1996:397–398).
\textsuperscript{146} For Śaṅkara’s relationship to Vedic orthodoxy, see Rambachan (1991).
of the Śrīnerī maṭha is smārtta,\textsuperscript{147} being the Brahman tradition of the worship of five deities, pāncayatana-pūjā, namely Āditya (Sūrya), Ambikā (Devī), Viṣṇu, Gāṇeṣa and Śiva. At Śrīnerī a sixth deity, Kumāra (Skanda, Subrahmaṇya, Murugan), is also worshipped. Smārtta adherents have as īṣṭa-devatā either Śiva or Viṣṇu.\textsuperscript{148} Śaṅkara is credited by tradition with the initiation of smārtta worship\textsuperscript{149} at Śrīnerī (Sawai 1992:23), yet our previous analysis of his religious orientation revealed his ranking of deva and Gaṅapatī worship as of the lowest order (alongside bhūta-s), and his distaste for Śiva, making it highly improbable that he initiated this form of sakti worship at Śrīnerī—as projected by his hagiographers—or instituted smārtta worship. It seems that his association with deva worship was a result of his projection by his hagiographers as a śaiva, with the complementary sakti worship inherent to śaiva traditions, particular in such sects as the Kālāmukhas.

The advaita maṭha-s of Śrīnerī and Kāṇcī have presiding deva-s: Śāradā and Kāmākṣī, respectively. Deva worship has been, and continues to be, an integral feature of the worship of the maṭha-s since the latter part of the fourteenth century, when the maṭha began to receive Vijayanagara patronage. According to tradition, Śaṅkara installed Śrī Śāradā deva at Śrīnerī, and a great festival in her name is performed in January to celebrate the anniversary of Śaṅkara’s inauguration of her worship at the Śrīnerī maṭha (also known as Śrī Śāradā pītha). Śāradā is worshipped daily and also during the festival of Navarātri (Sawai 1992:73). However, although Śāradā is associated with both Dvārakā and Śrīnerī, and while there is evidence of the

\textsuperscript{147} See Venkataraman (1959:136–165) for details of temples, shrines and worship at Śrīnerī. See Daze (1993:158–160) for the daily routine of the Śaṅkarācārya, and the festivals celebrated.

\textsuperscript{148} The two sectarian traditions are outwardly distinguished by, usually, either three horizontal lines of vibhūti on the forehead (tripundra), for śaiva-s; or by three vertical marks (ūrdhva-puṇḍra), usually of sandal-paste (candam), for vaiṣṇava-s. In south India, smārtta-s generally follow the advaita tradition represented at Śrīnerī, or the dvaita tradition represented by Madhva. There are at least twelve divisions amongst smārtta-s, four of them being Vaiḍagalaī, and six of them being Teṅgalai, the two main divisions of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:113). Smārtta practice in Karnataka, in general, has long been to apply the tripundra, but the followers of Madhva apply a distinguishing single vertical line (Zydenbos 2001:120). Most varieties of sectarian marking usually also include a red round dot (aṃśata) between the eyebrows, which represents sakti.

\textsuperscript{149} For details of smārtta worship, see Bühnemann (1988).
worship of Durgā and Lakṣmī in Vijayanagara (Filliozat 1985:313), there is no mention of Śāradā devī in any Vijayanagara inscription, the main devī found in records being Pampā (consort of Virūpākṣa). The most important festival for the Vijayanagara rulers was mahānавами, celebrated in honour of Durgā, and also Lakṣmī and Sarasvati; on the ninth and final day, several thousands of buffaloes, sheep and goats were sacrificed before the rāya-s and nobles (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:131). Considering the evidence presented above, it seems that the devī-s became incorporated into the temple rites of the matha-s during the early period of Vijayanagara involvement with the advaita matha-s—several centuries after the time of Śaṅkara—but that the devī at Śrīgerī was not Śāradā at that time.

As we have seen, the earliest of Śaṅkara’s hagiographies was most probably written during the Vijayanagara period. The connection of Śaṅkara to either Kāṇči or Śrīgerī in the earlier of the hagiographies precisely fits the region where the Vijayanagaras were operating, endowments being made to both matha-s, particularly Śrīgerī. Vijayanagara being the centre of what might be called ‘Hindu India’ at the time, the earlier hagiographers would have had no reason to write of advaita matha-s in places still occupied by Muslim regimes to the north. It was previously explained that the legend of the four matha-s was a feature only of the later hagiographies. The Cidvitāsa-Śaṅkaravijaya-vilāsa was probably written in the sixteenth century, and here for the first time are disciples dispatched to the four quarters of India. The names of all four matha-s do not appear until later still (perhaps around 1650), after the fall of the Vijayanagara empire and the conversion of the later rulers to Vaśīvānavism.

It appears that hagiographers in the service of the Vijayanagara rulers wrote the earliest hagiographies of Śaṅkara, projecting him in the image of their sponsors as an incarnation of Śiva\(^{150}\) (who also performs devī worship). The two southern matha-s were written into the hagiographies to enhance their status as resorts of Śaṅkara, the saviour of the Vedic tradition. This has created the legacy of a continuing dispute, resting on the irony that Śaṅkara probably founded neither matha.

\(^{150}\) Hacker (1995:29) also believes that Śaṅkara was transformed into a śaiva folk-hero in a reconstruction of Hinduism—in the face of Muslim aggression—by his hagiographers, but wrongly attributes the project to Vidyāraṇyā (assisted by Śāyana).
Several conclusions may be drawn concerning the development of the hagiography of Śaṅkara, and the final attribution to him of the founding of an order of renunciates and four maṭha-s.

1) Śaṅkara’s connection with Śrīnerī and Kānci was established some time after the founding of any advaita maṭha in either of those places; this connection was perhaps first made in the fourteenth or fifteenth century in the earlier hagiographies which, as we have seen, contain no reference to his establishing any maṭha. The Śaṅkaravijaya of Anantānandagiri, perhaps the earliest of the hagiographies, dated perhaps to post-fourteenth century (Bader 2000:24), and associated with Kānci, is unique amongst the hagiographies in that it contains no reference to the four disciples of Śaṅkara, instead providing an account of twelve disciples who accompanied Śaṅkara when he went to see his guru (Bader 2000:258–259).

2) The next stage in the elaboration of Śaṅkara’s hagiography was to attribute to him four main disciples and the founding of a maṭha in either Kānci or Śrīnerī (depending which stream of hagiography is referred to).

3) The third stage of hagiographic projection is to attribute to Śaṅkara the founding of four maṭha-s in the four quarters of India under four disciples. This stage, I believe, most probably coincides with the production of the Mathāmnāya-s, which both affirmed Śaṅkara’s conquest of the four quarters, and also integrated into that picture Śaṅkara’s founding of an order of ascetics, many lineages of which, up until the time of the dissemination of the integrated picture, had no connection to the orthodox traditions represented by the advaita maṭha-s. Many prominent Vedāntins bear one or another of the ten names of the Daśanāmī family. There are the first preceptors of Śrīnerī: Bhāratīrtha, Vidyātīrtha, and Vidyāraṇya.151 Madhva (the dualist) was initiated under the name Pūnanaprajña, was named Anandatīrtha when he was an ācārya, and was only later called Madhva. The three important scholars (munitrayam) within the early

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151 The name Aranya is currently an unusual Daśanāmī name. As has been observed by Gerald Larson, although Śāmkhya doctrine permeates Indian philosophy generally, followers of Śāmkhya are practically non-existent. Larson found but one Śāmkhya maṭha, near Banaras. However, there is a lineage of Śāmkhyans—named Aranya—at the Kapil maṭha at Madhupur in Bihar, which was founded in 1938 by Svāmī Harīharānandārāṇya, who is said to have revived Śāmkhya (see Dharma-megha Aranya 1989).
Madhva Vedānta tradition were Madhva, Jayatirtha (1365–1388) (who codified Madhva’s doctrines), and Vyāsatirtha (1460–1539) (Sarma 2003:17).

Several of the prominent Vedāntins of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries bore the name Sarasvatī, including Sadānanda Yogendraśarasvatī (Sadānanda), who wrote the Vedāntasāra, on which a commentary, the Subodhini, was written by his grand-disciple, Nārasimhasarasvatī of Banaras, in 1588 (Nikhilananda 1978:xii). Other important Vedāntins of this period were Brahmānandasarasvatī, author of the Brahmānandāyam, and Madhusūdanasarasvatī—the author of the Advaitasiddhi—an advaitin but also a devotee of Kṛṣṇa (see Nelson 1998). Jagannāthāśrama was a great teacher of south India, living in the latter half of the fifteenth century. His pupil, Narasimhāśrama, became one of the most reputed teachers of Vedānta in the early half of the sixteenth century (Dasgupta 1975, Vol. II:53–55).

Unravelling lineages in terms of orders is inherently complex, given that orders may flourish or decline, that many people of historical importance bear the same name, and that lineages may bifurcate into orders with different religious or philosophical positions. While these advaita Vedāntin-s are unquestionably in what might be called the philosophical paramparā of Śaṅkara, citing his arguments and works, this, I would suggest, is quite different from maintaining that these authors believed—whether they did or not—that they were of a saṁnyāsī order begun by Śaṅkara, moreover a family also comprising militant Giris, Purūs and Bhāratīs.

The social, religious and political processes that may have been behind the integration of diverse lineages into an orthodox order is the central issue addressed in the following chapter.

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132 His guru was Advayānandasarasvatī. There appear to have been two individuals named Sadānanda who are occasionally confused (Ramachandran 1968:206), one being the author of the Vedāntasāra, the other being the author of the Advaita-brahmasiddhi.

133 See also Hiriyanna (1929:17); Haramohan Mishra (1983:v).


135 Some of the foremost Vedānta writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries flourished in a Vedāntic circle, directly or indirectly under the influence of Narasimhāśrama and Appaya Dīkṣita.
CHAPTER SEVEN

NĪGĀ-S, SŪFĪS AND PARALLEL RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

Examined in the previous chapter was the claim that Śaṅkara founded maṭha-s, in particular the Kāṅcipuram and Śrīnerī maṭha-s. There appears to be no evidence to substantiate this claim, or the tradition that he founded an order of ascetics. It was also shown that the guru-paramparā-s of the maṭha-s are quite unreliable, and that the earliest an advaita tradition can be discerned at the maṭha-s is 1155 at Kūḍali, 1290 at Kāṅcipuram, and 1346 at (Tuṅga) Śrīnerī. Evidence for the foundation of the other maṭha-s, namely at Dvārakā, Purī, and Jyośimaṭh, is even more elusive, and firm records do not go back more than a few hundred years. If Śaṅkara did not found the Daśanāmīs, then what is needed is some kind of explanation of when and why the order might have come into existence as a recognisable entity.

In this chapter, the context for the formation of the Daśanāmīs as a distinct order will be explored, the central hypothesis being that the Daśanāmīs order formed in response to religious and political developments, some time in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The formation of an order essentially integrated two sets of disparate and previously unconnected lineages pertaining to the nīgā and monastic traditions. It is suggested that around the time of the formation of the aṅkā-s of the Daśanāmīs, a Daśanāmī identity was created—encapsulated in the all-India purview of the Mathāmnāya-s—integrating monastic and military saṃnyāsī-s, and enhancing the legitimacy of both sets of lineages, the instigation of which was attributed to Śaṅkara. As indicated in Chapter 2, of the thirteen militant aṅkā-s currently functioning in India, the six non-Daśanāmī aṅkā-s¹ are believed to have formed in this period, and it seems most probable that the Daśanāmī aṅkā-s also formed around the same time, notwithstanding claims to greater antiquity.

¹ The three Bairāgī (Rāmānandī) aṅkā-s, and the three Sikh-affiliated aṅkā-s (the Nirmala and the two Udāsīn aṅkā-s).
7.1 The formation of militant ascetic orders

As early as the eighth century, Pāṣupata ascetics were armed by guilds to protect trade (Davidson 2002:80).² Lorenzen (1978) provides other examples of Indian fighting ascetics in the early mediaeval period. In a frequently cited reference to fighting ascetics in the *Kabīra Bijaka* (Abhilash Das 1997:56–57 [Ramainī 69]), most probably written in the mid-sixteenth century, scorn is poured on yogī-s, siddha-s, mahant-s and ascetics who resort to arms, keep women and collect property and ‘taxes’.³ Besides the Madārī fakīr-s (see below), the first groups of mercenary ascetics to be in any way organised appear to have been the Nāth-s⁴ (Orr 1940:6) and the Saṃnyāsīs. Perhaps the earliest recorded confrontation between ascetic fighters is that recorded in Abu-l-Fazl’s *Akbar-nāma* (1972:422–424)⁵ when rival groups of Saṃnyāsīs and ‘Jogīs’ (Nāth-s) clashed, watched by Akbar, in the late sixteenth century.⁶ Other organised militant orders, such as the early Sikh *khālsā*,⁷ the Udāsin and Nirmala orders,⁸ Dādūpanthi,⁹

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² In the eleventh century, King Harṣa (Harṣadeva) (r.1089–1101), short of funds, raided temples for icons he could melt down. He employed groups of naked ascetics, who defiled the temples with spittle and excrement. Basham (1951:206) believes they may have been Ājīvikas.

³ This particular section of the *Bijaka* appears to have been written not only after the time of Kabīr, but also some time after the battle of Panipat in 1526, as firearms are referred to; firearms were used for the first time on a large scale on Indian soil during this battle (Lorenzen 1978:61). Lorenzen (1992:9–12) dates Kabīr to between the mid-fifteenth century and c.1525.

⁴ Nāth-Yogīs maintained a stronghold at the gorge at Galtā (near Jaipur) until usurped by militant vaisnavas-s in the sixteenth century (Orr 1940:8). The state of Jodhpur (and the wider area of Marwār) was heavily influenced by the Nāths in the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly in relation to the rise to power of Mān Singh, whose guru was Ayas Dev Nāth (assassinated in 1815). Nāths were also an element in the Jodhpur army (see Gold 1996; White 2001:9–19). In royal chronicles of Rajasthan, Kumaun and Nepal may be found accounts of how particular Nāth-Siddhas use yogic powers and intrigue to install patrons favourable to them on the throne (White 2001:5–6). ‘Siddhas’ were not only heterodox power brokers: the famous eleventh-century writer and Tantric, Abhinavagupta, was also a siddha (see Muller-Ortega 1989:60–61).

⁵ Referred to in Ch. 2.1.

⁶ In his *Memoirs*, Jahāngir (r.1605–1628) reports not less than two or three thousand people attending contests at arenas for athletes or pugilists, at places such as Agra and Lahore. However, it is not known what proportion of them were in the hands of sects like the Dādūpanthīs or Gosains (Kolff 1990:28).

⁷ According to the Sikh tradition, the *khālsā* (‘brotherhood’) was founded in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru in descent from Nānak, the founder of the
Rāmānandī (Bairāgī), 10 Nimarkī and Rādhāvallabhī nāgī-s, 11 all formed between the time of Akbar and the eighteenth century, with a substantial recruitment of low-caste sūdra-s into Sikh, Rāmānandī and Daśnāmī akhārā-s (Pinch 1996:26–27).

Even though there had been sporadic attacks on samnyāsī-s by

order. However, it appears that the khālsā formed gradually from bands of roaming warriors, during most of the eighteenth century, as an element in the expansion of Punjabi Jāts, and the consequent reaction of the Mughals (McLeod 1976:1–19, 51). The Nihangs, soldier ascetics (also referred to as Akālīs), a subdivision within the khālsā-s, were formed, according to tradition, in 1690, by Mān Singh (see Farquhar 1925a:340).

8 The Udāsīn order was founded, according to tradition, by Śrī Cand, during the seventeenth century, as was the other Sikh-related akhārā, the Nirmala (see Singh 1951:64; Ahuja 1994; Oberoi 1997:124–127). However, the Sikh orders are more accurately understood as a continuation, within a new community, of an already extant ascetic tradition with significant correspondences with the Nāths, including particular respect for hatha-yoga practices, and a reverence for the dhūān (=dhūnī) (McLeod 1980:35 fn. 2, 103, 203). The three militant, ascetic, Sikh-related orders are the Nihṅg, Udāsīn and Nirmala.

9 Towards the end of Akbar’s reign, Dādū (d.1604), a cotton-cleaner from Ahmadābād, organised a new sect of Rāma devotees, the Dādū panth, which comprises virakta-s (ascetics), vastradhārīn-s (householders), and nāgā-s (khālī [ash-clad]virakta-s). The Dādū panth nāgā-s had a prominent role in the armies of some princes, notably in Jodhpur, and still retain a small akhārā that bathes with the Nirmohī anī at Kumbh Melās. The Dādūpanthīs claim that their nāgā-s are descended from Sundardās, a disciple of Dādū, and thus from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Although the genealogy of the Dādūpanthī nāgā-s may possibly have begun around the mid-seventeenth century at the earliest, firm records are only available from the second half of the eighteenth century; they were officially constituted in 1756 (Thiel-Horstmann 1991:257, 268–269). According to Orr (1940:15) the Dādūpanthīs first fought alongside the Rāmānandīs, and then set up their own akhārā.

10 The vaṣānvā Rāmānandīs appear to have constituted their military branches between approximately 1650 and 1720 (Ghurye 1964:177; [Thiel-] Horstmann 2001). According to Rāmānandī tradition, the decision to arm vaṣānvā ascetics was taken at the meeting of the catuḥ sampradāya at Gaḷṭa (near Jaipur), in 1713 (Burghart 1978b). However, Rāmānandīs were already armed and organised by 1693 (see below).

11 According to Orr (1940:10–17), the Rādhāvallabhīs joined ranks with the Nimarkīs, while armed Viṣṇuśvāmī militants entered the service of Rājā Bijay Singh of Jodhpur as mercenaries in 1779, as one of sixteen fighting akhārā-s (seven akhārā-s were Rāmānandī; seven Nimarkī; one Madhva; one Viṣṇuśvāmī). Samnyāsīs and Viṣṇuśvāmīs continued to serve the Jodhpur state for nearly a century, until they were finally disbanded by Mahārājā Jasvant Singh in 1875. Up to the early twentieth century, the Jaipur state maintained a force of 5,500 nāgā-s, comprising mostly Dādūpanthīs, but also Nimbāvats (Nimbarkīs) and Rādhāvallabhīs. Samnyāsīs, Dādūpanthīs and Viṣṇuśvāmīs were still employed in the Bundī and Koṭa states until 1915.
Muslims—such as the massacre of a large number of devotees at Haridvār by Timur in 1398 (Nevill 1909a:254)—it seems that the formation of the *samnyāsī akhārā*-s was not primarily in response to Muslim harassment. Many follow Farquhar (1925b:483), who believes that Madhusūdanasarasvatī (1540–1647), the well-known Vedāntin philosopher, approached Emperor Akbar (1542–1605) to seek advice on the protection of the order to which he belonged from harassment by armed Muslim *fakīr*-s. He was advised by his trusted Rāja Birbal, who was present, to initiate a large number of non-Brahmans. Thus were many *ksatriya*-s and *vaisya*-s—and, says Farquhar, “multitudes of *sūdra*-s at a later date”—admitted into the order. It is said that half the Bhāratiṣ refused to accept this and went to Śrīnerī to remain ‘pure’, thus making three-and-one-half lineages ‘pure’. The recruitment of *nāga*-s into fighting units appears to have taken place around the time of Akbar’s reign, although it is unlikely to have been a specific response to harassment by militant Sufis.  

Farquhar’s conclusion was based on anecdotal evidence, and the historical evidence (see Ch. 2.1) indicates that the main conflicts of the period were between sects of Hindu renunciates—more specifically between *vaisnava* Bhairāgīs and *śaiva* Saṃnyāśīs (also known as *gosain*-s)—rather than between *samnyāsī*-s and militant Sufi orders (Sikand 1998). A further problem with Farquhar’s thesis is that Akbar is recorded witnessing a fight between *samnyāsī*-s and *yogī*-s (see Al-Badāoni 1986 Vol. 2:94–95; Abu-l-Faḍl 1972:422–424), illustrating that militant Hindu orders were already in existence in some form during his reign, but perhaps organised only within the previous few decades.  

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12 Although the story of the founding of the *akhārā*-s cannot be confirmed, it seems that Madhusūdanasarasvatī may have had a connection with Akbar’s court (Halbfass 1983:88).

13 Although a distinct ‘Hindu’ identity seems to have formed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see below), significant disputes concerning sectarian Hindu identity persisted well into the nineteenth century. In the Kachava kingdom of Amber-Jaipur a major dispute finally erupted in 1864 concerning *vaisnava* and *śaiva* affiliation. Under Mahārāja Rāmsingh II, zealous *śaiva*-s had chased *vaisnava*-s from the capital of the kingdom, Jaipur. For many months the wearing of the vertical *vaisnava tilak* had been effectively banned, and only those wearing the horizontal three-line *tilak* were to be seen in the streets (Clémentin-Ojha 1999:349).

14 Lorenzen (1978:62–64) believes that the various fighting orders that emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—in response to social, economic and political change—may be divided into two broad groups: those movements concerned with the protection of specific, local, economic and social interests; and
Dādūpanthī traditions maintain that their military organisation was in response to the aggressive activities of the saṃnyāsī-ś. However, the evidence indicates that nāgā military activity flourished under direct state patronage, and was not primarily religiously sectarian, even though inter-sectarian battles did take place at Hindu melā-ś.

The organisation of saṃnyāsī-ś and other ascetics into military akhāryā-ś can be understood as a relatively seamless transition between the two lifestyles of nāgā and soldier: both require rigorous self-discipline, and an adaptability to harsh conditions. The travelling jamāt is perfectly adaptable to a military unit, with its command structure, information network, and proficiency in practical camping and cooking arrangements over wide areas of India. Soldiers, naked and theoretically beyond identifiable caste, are celā-ś of a commander, who performs the religious rituals of his sect, thus increasing the bond of the unit. In mediaeval India, asceticism, trade and war were by no means incompatible (see Kolff 1990:77). Some western commentators have been challenged to reconcile the idealised ascetic striving for mokṣa—referred to in the Introduction—with militant saṃnyāsī-ś (see Lochtefeld 1994). However, if the practice of tapas (‘asceticism’) is considered in its Indian context, epic and Purānic material illustrates how tapas almost invariably leads to boons and the acquisition of material powers, and also frequently of magical weaponry with which to overcome and kill adversaries. The powers of militant, ash-covered gosain-ś are quite reconcilable with their

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Those involved in popular, sometimes regional, rebellion against central authority. However, the categories are not entirely distinct, as different groups operate in both domains. Lorenzen categorises the Sikhs, broadly, in the second group, while the Daśānāmī nāgā-ś, he maintains, formed for the protection of non-nāgā land and monastic property. Though the Daśānāmī nāgā-ś may have protected monastic property, there are no available historical records of this.

15 For example, in the reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707), under an imperial decree of 1692–1693, five Rāmānandī commanders were authorised to move freely about the whole empire, with standards and kettledrums, and without hindrance, in charge of foot and horse-mounted soldiers (Orr 1940:9).

16 Pinch (1997:12–15) comments on the historical change in attitude towards tapas, comparing Vālmiki’s Rāmāyana (usually dated to around the first century) with the Rāmacaritānavas of Tulsiḍās (c.1543–1623), particularly in the Bālakāṇḍa. In short: Vālmiki elevates it, in the traditional way, as leading to power; but Tulsiḍās pours scorn on tapas, preferring bhakti. Pinch suggests that this shift in attitude is a reflection of the change in the social attitude of the times towards religious ascetics, evinced by the activities at the time of armed, marauding gosain-ś and fakīr-ś. Disdain for this kind of lifestyle was also shared by the nirguṇī bhakta Kabīr.
mythological counterparts. In the construction of an identity for the Dašanāmīs, the lifestyles and activities of both monastic monks and armed, ash-covered gosain-s are equally valid within the framework of traditional Hinduism.

7.2 The development of Sufi institutions in India

If we consider Sufi institutions in India, many aspects of their development seem to provide a plausible rationale for a parallel institutionalisation of the Dašanāmī order. The first Sufi settlements in India date from the eighth century (Siddiqi 1989:14). Another wave of Sufi Shaikhs, who migrated from Khurasan (western Afghanistan/Iran) to Delhi during the time of the Delhi sultanate, were distinctly militant, and did not always exhibit the pietistic attitude that some writers have extolled, their wrath leading to “the discomfiture, misery and often death of those who presumed to oppose [them]” (Digby 1986:60). Between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries, Bijapur (also known as the Bahmanī state) was a Sufi stronghold in India. The Bahmanī state was a region contiguous and frequently at war with Vijayanagara, with which it had considerable structural similarities (Eaton 2002:160–166). At its height in the mid-seventeenth century, the Bijapur sultanate was one of the largest and most powerful states in the subcontinent, second only to the Mughal empire. The first Sufis to enter the Bijapur plateau arrived in the late thirteenth century (Eaton 1997:36–48), and were what might be called ‘warrior Sufis’, who are virtually indistinguishable in many respects from Dašanāmī nāgā-s. The first of these warrior Sufis to gain renown was Shaikh Sufi Sarmast (d.1281), who, with his army of seven hundred ghāzi-s (‘religious soldiers’)—according to his hagiography—killed...
many Hindus and engaged in battle with a Hindu king. During a crucial fifty-year period, from 1296 to 1347, militant Sūfīs seem to have been extensively involved with Muslim military expansionism in the Deccan. In this period, the Sūfīs, besides providing the Muslim armies with an element of religious legitimacy, may have represented the only element of Islamic organisation at the frontiers of expansion, most probably centred on khāṅqāḥ-s (simple monastic dwellings) (Eaton 1997:46).

Sūfī Sarmast belonged to no institutional order as such, as he predated any such organisation in south Asia, yet, as a Sūfī, he had been initiated by a pīr (a Muslim religious preceptor), enabling him to initiate others. Within the Sūfī world this system of initiation (ba’i’y’a) and authoritative transmission is known as khilāfāt, and is a direct parallel with the guru-paramparā arrangement that operates within the Hindu domain. Integration through the khilāfāt system is the single most important criterion for being a Sūfī. From the fourteenth century onwards, an institutional network of khāṅqāḥ-s became established, based on a silsilā (‘chain’) from a founding pīr (or shaikh). By the mid-fourteenth century, warrior Sūfīs—who had not been affiliated to any order—had more or less disappeared from the Bijapur area. They were replaced by Sūfīs who were affiliated to

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20 Another warrior Sūfī, Pīr Ma’bari Khandyat, who died in the early fourteenth century, accompanied one of the sultan of Delhi’s campaigns in the struggle to gain control of Bijapur. According to Ma’bari’s hagiography, he slaughtered many idolatrous local rāja-s. He appears also to have accompanied Malik Kufār—who we encountered in the previous chapter (fn. 64)—in 1311, during his military campaigns in the south. While Sarmast and Ma’bari are known to have been involved with armies, other Sūfīs appear in Bijapur in the late thirteenth century who are remembered for their military prowess, martyrdom, and attacks on Hindus and idolatry. Amongst them are Āli Pahlavan (a companion of Sūfī Sarmast), Shaikh Shahid, Pīr Jumna, and Tīgh Brahna.

21 In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, khāṅqāḥ-s also functioned as travellers’ rest houses (sarai), thus facilitating the spread of the fame of saints. There were up to 120 khāṅqāḥ-s in Delhi, where three nights’ stay was possible (Digby 1976).

22 The initiation ritual involves the teacher grasping the pupil’s hand (or touching his head), and investing the best disciples with a khīrqa (a garment of, usually, patched wool). Some were also given a licence or diploma (called ājāza or khilāfāt-nāma), authorising them to act as deputies (khalīfa), and disseminate the principles and practices of their respective orders (see Rizvi 1978:102).

23 For an analysis of the pīr-murīd (teacher-disciple) relationship, one of the basic pillars of Sūfī organisation, see Islam (2002:385–396).
one or another of the Sufi orders that had developed in the Middle-East, notably the Chishti, Qadiri and Shattari orders.\(^{24}\)

One of the first Sufis to become closely associated with the Bahmanî court at Bijapur was Shaikh Siraj-uddîn Junaidi (d.1380), who assisted with the coronation of the new king, Ala-uddîn Hasan, in 1347, and received what was perhaps the first land-grant to a Deccani Sufi, the village of Korchi, which has since remained in the hands of his descendants. Shortly after his coronation the new sultan distributed four hundred pounds of gold and a thousand pounds of silver in the name of Nizâm ud-Dîn (al Dîn) Aulia, the great Chishti of Delhi. As a consequence, his successor Muhammad Şâh Bahmanî, was able to obtain a declaration of allegiance from virtually all the Sufis of his kingdom (Eaton 1997:60–61).

It will be recalled that the first land-grants to Şringerî were just a year earlier, in 1346, in somewhat parallel circumstances; namely, patronage of a samnyâsi institution in return for favours presumably rendered. In another parallel with Dašânâm institutions, the Indian Sufi Shaikhs of the fourteenth century and later—following a tradition of some of their predecessors in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Khurasan—were considered to have a divinely sanctioned jurisdiction over a specific territory (wilâyat).\(^{25}\) There were frequent challenges to various claims of jurisdiction and ‘protection’, both from within the

\(^{24}\) Their occupation of the Deccan was in part as a consequence of Muhammad bin Tughluq’s order of 1327 that the khângâh-s of Delhi be vacated. Resident Sufî-s were ordered to migrate to the Deccan to inhabit the new capital at Daulatabad, as part of a general policy of resettlement. In 1347 many Deccanis revolted against the rule of Delhi, and the Bahmani kingdom was established at Gulbarga.

\(^{25}\) Heads of sisilâ-s dispatched their khalîfa-s to various provinces, called wilâyat. Khalîfas, in their turn, appointed subordinate khalîfa-s for various cities and settlements. Thus a hierarchy of saints came to be established in northern India, with the chief saint established at the centre, controlling a network of khângâh-s spread over the country. Mediaeval records show numerous instances of such territorial distribution (Nizami 1961:175–177). At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Šaiikh Nizâm al-Dîn of the Chishti sisilâ was identified with the well-being and fortune of the city of Delhi, over which the Šaiikh exercised his ‘governance’. In an account of the late fourteenth century, Amir Khwurd describes how Mu’în al-Dîn’s wilâyat extended all over India (Digby 1986:72). The notion of ‘divine jurisdiction’ is perhaps most amply exemplified in the person of Mu’în al-Dîn Chishti (d.1236), who founded the Chishti lineage in India. His tomb in Ajmer became a major centre of pilgrimage, notably after Akbar’s pilgrimages on foot there between 1562 and 1575. Today, the festival for the anniversary of the saint is the greatest pilgrimage festival of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent.
order and from rival orders (Digby 1986:63–72), one example being the cult of Dattätreya, one of several Hindu devotional cults that arose in Maharashatra in this period. Tulpule believes (1979:352) that the Dattätreya cult probably arose as a reaction against the activity of Süfs, who were exerting a significant influence on the traditional religion of Maharashtra.

7.3 Religious identity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

In this section, we turn to the issue of religious identity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and how there was an ample context in this period for the development of a distinct Hindu sectarian identity for the Daśanāmīs. It was observed in Chapter 5.6 that the first references to Daśanāmī appear around the middle of the sixteenth century. Around the same time, we find the first references to the term ‘Hindu’, as used self-reflexively to distinguish ‘Hindu’ from other religious traditions, specifically Islam. As noted in the previous chapter, in the earlier part of the first millennium, śāiva and vaishnava were considered as distinct religious traditions, and the term ‘Hindu’ was not used by the traditions themselves.

The first use of the term ‘Hindu’ by Hindus was by Vijayanagara regents in 1352. This appears to be the first use of the term term ‘Hindu’ in any Indian language source (Talbot 2003:90). Devarāya II is described as “the sultan among Hindu kings (hindurāya-suratrāṇa)” in inscriptions of 1424 and 1428. The term was previously only used by Muslims, and it was not until the late thirteenth century that Persian literature written in India uses the term ‘Hindu’ as a religious designation. The Vijayanagara use of the term appears to have been an appropriation in order to distinguish Indic from Turkish polities, and, according to Talbot (2003:90–91), was not used to

26 Narasiṃhasarasvatī (1378–1458) is regarded as the second avatāra of Dattätreya (a deity comprising the trimūrti Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva). He is the central figure in the history of the cult, and most probably its founder (Rigopoulos 1998:111–112).
27 Another example is the Mahānubhava sect, founded by Cakradhār (d.1273), who was the last of a series of five human incarnations, called the ‘Five Kṛṣṇas’ (see Feldhaus and Tulpule 1992).
represent a distinction between those of the ‘Hindu religion’ from those of the ‘Islamic religion’.  

The term ‘Hindu’ was first used self-reflexively in a religious sense in Bengal during the early part of the sixteenth century by Vallabhiya and Gaudiya vaishnava-s, who actively proselytized, converting not only among Hindu groups, but also occasionally Muslims. “The Hindus now start using this foreign term as a device of asserting and defining their identity against the foreigners; the fact that they are named, excluded and defined as “others” by these foreigners provides them with a new sense of their own identity, as well as a new perspective on the otherness of others” (Halbfass 1988:192). In the seventeenth century the term ‘Hindu’ is also used in Maharashtra where Śivājī (1627–1680) led successful campaigns against the Mughal rulers. However, the projection in hagiography31 of Śivājī as an entirely ‘Hindu’ ruler, a protector of gods, Brahmans and cows, fighting demonic ‘Muslim’ adversaries—such as the Mughal captain Udebhān, who sacrificed a pregnant cow before battle and killed his eighteen mistresses—is misleading. Indeed, in the army of Afzal Khān (Śivājī’s chief adversary) there were many Hindus; and in Śivājī’s own army there were many Muslims (Laine 1999:307). Nevertheless, it is during this period that ‘new’ and distinct religious identities emerge. Discussing this issue in the age of Śivājī, Laine (1999:315) concludes: “In short, the complex diversity of religious belief and practice, which early Muslim arrivals to India saw as a multitude of sects and communities, was now a unity, a religion, a din.”

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, on the one hand there appears to have been a tendency towards the establishing of a distinct ‘Hindu’ identity, while on the other there was also an apparent tendency—in the consciousness of difference—towards religious universalisation, a process that came to successful fruition during the following two centuries. The tendency towards religious universalisation is readily apparent in the Pranāmi sect, which was founded in the same period in the Jamnagar district of Gujarat. Its

30 However, in the latter inscription (vv. 10–13) Devarāya is compared in numerous virtues with Rāma, son of Daśaratha.

31 Notably, the Śivabhārata, commissioned at the time of Śivājī’s coronation in 1647. The writing of historical biographies (carita-bakhar) began in Maharashtra with the advent of Marāṭha rule under Śivājī (see Wagle 1997:135).
first preceptors were Devcand (b.1581) and Prānnāth (1618–1694). Prānnāth believed in the unity of religions, reflected in the teachings of the Bible, Veda, Koran, Jaina scriptures and other holy works, and spent sixteen months in Delhi unsuccessfully attempting to dissuade Aurangzeb from what is generally perceived as his anti-Hindu policy (Mukharya 1989:113; 1999:122).

During the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries religious identity became a significant political issue with new dimensions in many parts of India. Although there had been earlier attacks on Hindu temples by Islamic regimes—primarily as demonstrations of power at the frontiers of campaigns, rather than being specifically anti-religious (Eaton 2000)—there was a period of cessation of hostilities from around 1420 onwards. However, in the late sixteenth century attacks on Hindu temples recommenced (Talbot 2003:104–107). By the middle of the seventeenth century, communal relationships between landed Sūfīs and Hindus became increasingly violent in the Deccan, with many Sūfīs participating in various conflicts in the region. Under a farmān (‘royal decree’) of 1679, Hindu temples were destroyed, and a tax (jazīyā) on Hindus, that had been rescinded by Akbar (r.1556–1605) in 1564/5, was reinstated in 1679 by Aurangzeb (r.1658–1707), who at first desisted from imposing it, partly owing to his allegiance to the Rājpūts. His reimposition of the tax appears not to have been specifically anti-Hindu, but was part of an attempt to rally support from an increasingly orthodox clergy (ulamā) (Chandra 2003:141–142). Nevertheless, there is

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32 Prānnāth’s mother tongue was Gujarati, but he was well acquainted with Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Rajasthani and Hindi. He twice made tours of Muslim Arabia, and had an extensive knowledge of Islam. All Pranami literature is in Hindi, written in the devanāgārī script, and Prānnāth was the first Hindi poet to use the word hindavi (Hindustani), considering it as the ‘national’ as well as a link language.

33 The tax has been calculated as amounting to a month’s wages from a tradesman’s income for a year (Chandra 2003:142). It was in force until 1713; it was again imposed between 1717 and 1720 (Thiel-Horstmann 1991:268).

34 Akbar’s son and successor, Jahāngīr (r.1605–1628), generally continued—but with important exceptions—the liberal policy of his father, permitting Hindu pilgrimage to such places as Haridvār, preventing forcible conversion to Islam, and even paying daily allowances to extra-faith converts. Many Hindus also held high public office (Sharma 1937–1938:307–315).

35 Bayly (1983:191) believes Aurangzeb’s ‘tilt’ towards Islam may have been to build up local support against the power of Hindu zamīndārs.

36 During periods of conflict between Mughal and Hindu rulers, up until the
also some evidence that Aurangzeb, after his conquest of Bijapur in 1686, contributed to the widening divisions between the Muslim and Hindu communities, purging non-orthodox and ‘eclectic’ Sūfis (Eaton 1997:244–246).

Regarding Hindu/Muslim relations, changes in government perceptions and policy can be seen in developments within the sultanate of Bijapur. Eaton (1997:99–114) discusses the cultural syncretism of the sultanate under Sultan Ibrahim II (1580–1627). The Sultan, a Sunni Muslim and a Deccani, was a noted scholar, with a considerable knowledge of Sanskrit.37 He is hailed as one of the great poets of the age, and actively supported various Hindu religious and cultural institutions,38 one of his popular epithets being jagadguru.39

The religious eclecticism of Ibrahim II was not shared by his successor, Sultan Muhammad Ādil Šāh (1627–1656), under whom an orthodox Muslim religious establishment came to play a heightened religio-political role in Bijapur. Up to a fifth of the wealth derived from military conquests went to support Muslim organs of state (Eaton 1997:115). Muhammad styled himself a mujahid (‘wager of

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37 His dominance in the region can be traced from 1583, when the Shi’a khutba (the Friday sermon, in which the secular ruler’s name was revered and prayed for) was replaced by that of orthodox Sunnism (Eaton 1997:100).

38 He composed one of the landmarks of Dakani literature, the Kitab-i Nauras, a treatise on the nine sentiments (rasā) of Sanskrit literature, which also discusses the subject of Indian musical rāga-s. Instead of the usual Muslim invocation, bism-ullah, the book opens with a prayer to Gaṇapati. Śiva, Parvati and Bhairava also feature prominently in the work. It is reported that Ibrahim even had an image of Sarasvatī brought into the palace for his personal worship. Being infatuated with music, Ibrahim also instituted a national music-holiday, Id-i Nauras, in which thousands of Hindu musicians participated. He issued orders ensuring the rights of pilgrims to perform rituals to the Hindu deity Khanderao (Mallari), and supported the upkeep of a Hindu temple at Chinchvad, near Pune (Eaton 1997:111).

39 Besides support for Hindu institutions, Ibrahim tolerated Shi’a Muslims—though not in his employment—and was the first sovereign to allow Jesuits to establish mission churches in the kingdom. He nevertheless wished to be remembered above all as a good Muslim; on his tomb are Arabic couplets from the Koran, extolling the piety of Abraham (father of Isaac), who is described as not a Jew, nor a Christian, but a Muslim.
jihād’ and ghāzī (‘religious fighter’) in his campaigns, from 1638 to 1649. Government regulations (Dastur al-Āmal) issued under Muhammad specifically separated the Hindus and Muslims as distinct and unequal communities for the first time in the history of Bijapur.\(^{40}\) Reaction to the religious eclecticism came not only from government but also from the Sūfī orders of Bijapur, primarily from the newly-arrived Qādiri and Shattārī orders. The reformist Sūfīs of Bijapur were often hostile to Brahmins, Hindu ascetics and yogī-s. There are several semi-hagiographic accounts of the time that describe various spiritual battles between Sūfīs and Hindu yogī-s and gosain-s; the Sūfīs, of course, emerging victorious. Even though warrior Sūfīs had been active in India since the thirteenth century, it was only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the image of the Islamic holy warrior (ghāzī) appears in Indo-Muslim writing, an image that was then retroactively attributed to numerous individuals of previous centuries (Talbot 2003:107).

During the period under consideration Sūfīs began to exert considerable influence on the administration in Delhi, some gaining very prominent status. Amongst Chishtīs, Khwāja Muinud Chishti and Shaikh Salim Chishti were virtually made patron saints of the Mughals (Chandra 1996:145). The status of Shaikhs was such that they were considered to be above some aspects of law (Shackle 1976:162). Already by the sixteenth century the Mughal emperors had established extensive bureaucratic hierarchies that dispensed royal funds and land to Sūfī shrines, frequently regulated by appointed trustees (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:21). Also, contrary to certain preconceptions concerning the nature of Islam, some Sūfīs of the mediaeval period in the subcontinent enjoyed a particular kind of prestige, as they acted as priests at dargāh-s (‘tombs of departed pīr-s’), and also performed rituals as intermediaries between God and supernatural forces (Gaborieau 1989).\(^{41}\)

Besides the more orthodox Sūfīs of the dargāh-s there were also

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\(^{40}\) The Muslim population were obliged to attend the Friday prayers, and preachers were instructed not to allow any Hindu influences on Islam. Muslims were instructed not to attend festivals such as Holi, Divālī and Dassera, when taxes on sheep, ghī, and rice were imposed for those attending (Eaton 1997:117–118).

\(^{41}\) Gaborieau’s study is limited to Nepal, but it seems probable that the situation was similar in north India.
many majzūb (‘dervish’/Madārī)⁴² Sūfīs wandering around. In the Dabistān (p. 223)—written in the mid-seventeenth century—they are compared with Saṃvyāsī-Avadhūts, rubbing themselves with ashes, the most “perfect” of them going naked—even in the severe cold of Kashmir and Kabul—with black turbans and tangled hair, sometimes clad with iron chains, and drinking large quantities of bhāṅg. In terms of life-style and appearance there is little to distinguish them from Nāths and Daśanāmī nāgā-s.⁴³

During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries arose what has been called the ‘the Nakshbandi reaction’, an orthodox Sūfī movement against religious eclecticism in Mughal India, represented by Akbar, and against ‘unorthodox’ Sūfī orders and practices. This movement roughly parallels events during this phase of Bijapur’s history (Eaton 1997:124). The reformist Nakshbandis had spread widely throughout Muslim-dominated north India, many obtaining high posts in the civil and military administration.⁴⁴ Many men, not only those with a high degree of traditional Islamic learning, but also military adventurers and soldiers, abandoned their previous occupations and joined the Nakshbandis during the time of Aurangzeb’s rule. Some recent immigrants from Central Asia who were military commanders holding high office in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries became clients of Nakshbandi bābā-s, though there seems to be no evidence of proselytizing or conversion of non-Muslims (Digby 2001:7–8). The influence of the Nakshbandis may

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⁴² An order founded by Šāh Madar (=Shaikh Badi’u’d-Dīn, b.1315) (Rizvi 1993:318).
⁴³ These kinds of Sūfīs were known by various names in different regions of India, including: Madāris, Haydaris, Malamātis, Torlaks, Babls, Abdals, Jamīs, Malangs, Jalālis, and Qalandars. This radical form of Sūfism is also known as qalandar. The early Qalandari branches were founded in the Middle-East, Turkey, Egypt and Sindh in the thirteenth century (Schimmel 1983:335; Rizvi 1993:301–321; Ernst and Lawrence 2002:21–22). Radical Sūfīs were noted for being quarrelsome and sometimes violent, giving rise to anxiety when they stayed in khāngāh-s in India. Yet their spiritual powers were feared and respected (Digby 1976:172). For a graphic account of some of the radical practices of a sect of fakīrs in Hyderabad, the Rufayīs, descended from Sayed Ahmad Kabīr Rafaī (d.1160), see Hunt (1934).
⁴⁴ The Nakshbandi order derives its name from Bahā’uddīn Naqṣbāndī (d.1390), who came from central Asia. His most successful successor was ‘Abdu’l-Khāliq Ghijduwānī, who taught ‘the way of the Khojas (teachers)’, tariqa-yi Khwājagān, and established connections with trade guilds and merchants. Under Khwājā Ahrār, Nakshbandis came to dominate central Asia, establishing a firm footing in India at the end of Akbar’s reign, shortly before 1600 (Schimmel 1983:364–367).
also be seen in the pattern of marriages between Nakshbandis and the royal house (Damrel 2000:180–187).

One of the most famous of the orthodox reformers was a Sunni Muslim, Shaikh Ahmad Faruki of Sirhindī (1563–1624), who was a Nakshbandi. He disliked Shi’a Islam, and attempted to reform all orders. Sirhindī rose to become governor of the province of Bihar, and oversaw a network of up to 1,600 khulafa/khalīfa-s (Rizvi 1993:226, 293) that, according to Jahāngir, was active in every town of the empire. Both the more conservative Sirhindī, a Nakshbandi, and his more eclectic and ‘Nāth yogic’ Chishti predecessor, Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī (d.1537), agreed on the principle of prohibiting kafīr-s from government service, except in minor posts. Sirhindī went further, however, wishing to reimpose a tax on non-Muslims, and attempting to prohibit Muslim dress for non-Muslims. The assertion of a distinct Muslim identity on the part of the political elite also roughly coincided with the heightened importance of the institutions of Sūfī pūr-s. From around the mid-seventeenth century, the khānqāh-s of the Bijapur region, which were previously occupied by the early migrant pūr-s, were replaced by dargāh-s, which sometimes included a courtyard, a small mosque and the graveyard of the pūr-s descendants. Spiritual power ceased being transmitted from one pūr to another, and began to be transmitted from the pūr to the dargāh where he was buried (Eaton 1997:210–213; Lapidus 1988:460). Also, whereas previously the pūr holding the office of kalīfā (or sajjāda-nisīn ‘one who sits on the prayer carpet’) had been

45 Sirhindī—also known as ‘Mujaddid’ (‘saviour’) Alī i-Sani—traced his descent from Caliph ‘Umar, and believed that he and three of his successors (beginning with his son, Muhammad Ma’ṣūm) were the highest representatives of God (qayyūm), directly elected to reform Islam (Schimmel 1983:369; Rizvi 1993:202ff.).

46 The nature of the ‘Nakshbandi reaction’ has been questioned by Damrel (2000), who argues that Sirhindī’s reform programme was essentially his own personal agenda, rather than being rooted, as many scholars have maintained, in Nakshbandi tradition. Sirhindī was imprisoned but was eventually released, after which he initiated Šāh Jahān (Haq 1935:17ff.). Although primarily a Chishti, Sirhindī was also initiated into the Qādiri (and maybe also the Suhrawardī) order, and then, finally, into the Nakshbandī order. Sirhindī traced his line of allegiance to the Prophet through twenty-one Nakshbandis, twenty-five Qādiris and twenty-seven Chishtis. He maintained Chishti ties even after he became a Nakshbandī (Damrel 2000:182).

47 On the relationship between Sirhindī and Jahāngir, see also Sharma (1937–1938:312–313).

succeeded by initiated disciples (*murād*-s), the criterion for succession changed, and it passed to a hereditary heir and his family, *pārzada*-s (‘sons of the pūr’), who enjoyed—and still enjoy—the social prestige inherent in being descendants of an illustrious predecessor. The *dargāh*-s became dynamic social institutions centred on the personality cult of the departed pūr and his descendants.

Although for many centuries the devotion of a pūr to his deceased teacher (Shaikh) had been frequently expressed by pilgrimage to his tomb—a local pilgrimage that in some instances was considered a Great *hajj* (Shackle 1976:162–163)—Sūfism changed from being a discipline for a small elite, to becoming a movement of popular devotionalism, many *dargāh*-s becoming general places of pilgrimage. Although the *pūr*-s of some *khāngāh*-s had acted as spiritual preceptors to Sultans, ties between *pūr*-s and Sultans remained largely informal. However, a significant development in the late seventeenth century was that many *pārzada*-s entered into formal association with the state, and permanent land-grants (*inām*) were issued, which were substantially augmented up to the beginning of the eighteenth century by subsequent Sultans, including Aurangzeb. The land-grants, enshrined within the *Dastur-al-Āmal*, established a new relationship between the state and Sūfī institutions, which began enjoying power and prestige within the state in a new and significant way, as the “Brahmans of Islam” (Eaton 1997:212–221, 247). The influence of Sūfīs may be gauged from the fact that there was more Persian Sūfī hagiographical literature produced in India than in all of Persia and Central Asia combined (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:48).49

Sūfī institutions were clearly very influential on the Muslim state during the period under consideration, and it is interesting to consider a parallel in the structures of the Sūfī and Dašanāmī schemes of their respective orders. During the middle ages it was very common for Sūfīs to trace their lineage to the four Caliphs, and thence to the Prophet Muhammad. Hagiographers also retrospectively assigned such lineages to famous Sūfīs, such as Jālāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207–1273), author of the *Mathnawī*. In the *Al-Jawahir-ul Mudiyya* of Shaikh Muhyi-iddin Abdul Kadir (d.1373), and other works, Rūmī was attached to

49 One of the earliest works of Sūfī hagiography was Muhammad Ja’far al-Khuldi’s *Hikayāt al-Auliyyā* (late ninth or early tenth century), a work no longer extant (Islam 2002:3).
the lineage from Abu Bakr’s family. However, this is contradicted by epigraphic and other evidence (Güven 1991:24–27). The Maulawi sect of Sūfis, who descend from Rūmī, thus trace the lineage of their sect back through Rūmī to Abu Bakr, the first Caliph.50 It was during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the organisation of Sūf orders as teaching lineages first crystalised (Rizvi 1978:83),51 a link to the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad being crucial.52 During initiation the lineage of the chain of masters is recited, a practice subsequently supplemented by the writing out of the names of the masters of the order, resulting in a filial tree (shajara). Knowing the names of previous masters conferred special religious merit (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:19–23). In this context it is interesting to note the observations of the author of the Dabistān, written in 1645, comparing the Hindus and the (celibate) Muslim Sūfis:

[The Sūfis], as they have heard that there ten classes of sanyāsīs, and twelve of yogīs,53 they also pretend to be divided into fourteen classes; when they meet together, the questions which they ask are: who are the four sages, and which are the fourteen noble families? And they impose upon their disciples many years of service, before they reveal to them the four sages and fourteen families; they say: the sage of sages is the [1] illustrious Muhammed (may the peace of God be upon him!), and after him, devoted to godliness, [2] Ali (may the blessings of God be upon him!); from him the Khalifat devolved upon [3] Imam

50 The four Caliphs reigned as follows: Abu Bakr (632–634); ‘Umar (634–644); ‘Uthmān/’Usman (644–656); ‘Ali [bin Abī Talib] (656–661).

51 An example is the Indian Chishti order, which has a tradition of twenty-two masters. Many Chishtis trace their lineage to the archangel Gabriel, and reckon the 21st successor as Shaikh Nizām ud-Dīn Aulia (d.1325), and the 22nd as Shaikh Nasir ud-Dīn Mahmud Chiragh-i Dīhli (d.1356). However, the branch of the Chishti order that predominates in the Deccan starts with the Prophet Muhammad, and counts Shaikh Nizām ud-Dīn’s successor, Burhan ud-Dīn Gharib (d.1337) as the 21st successor, and Zayn ud-Dīn Shirazi (d.1369), as the 22nd (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:23).

52 Most Sūfī orders regard ‘Ali as their Shaikh, and trace their descent from either ‘Ali, or from Hassan al-Basri (656–661), who was born in Medina and settled in Basra. According to Sūfī tradition, Hasan became ‘Ali’s disciple, though this is doubted by mediaeval and modern scholars (Rizvi 1978:27, 83).

53 This is a reference to the twelve panth-s (baropanthi) of Nāth-yogīs/siddha-s, which are: Satyanāth, Dharma, Rām, Nātēśvar, Kanthar, Kapil, Vairāgya (Bhartṛhari), Mannāth (Gopicand), Ayae, Pagal (associated with Caurāṛgināth or Puran Bhagat), Dhavja (associated with Hanumān or Mahāvīr), Gaṅgānāth (associated with Bhīṣma, son of Gaṅgā) (see Banerjea 1988:13–14). For the complete guru-paramparā of the Nāths, descending from the ‘nine Nāths’, see Vilāsnāth (1998:61–81).
Hossain,\textsuperscript{54} then [4] Khaja Hossen of Basora,\textsuperscript{55} also was his disciple and a khalif; these four personages are the four sages (\textit{Dabištān} pp. 220–221).

The text continues with a list of fourteen families,\textsuperscript{56} which are said to descend from two Caliphs.\textsuperscript{57} Similarities between the Sūfī and Samnīyāsī overviews of their respective orders is evident.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{54} Husain (624/5–669/70) was the son of ‘Ali. His assassination—while opposing the Umayyads—was a decisive moment in the separation of the supporters of ‘Ali (Shi’a) from the Sunni community.

\textsuperscript{55} Hasan al-Basri (642–728); most Sūfī lineages claim to pass through him.

\textsuperscript{56} In the eleventh century, the Persian Sūfī, Shaikh al-Hujwīrī classified twelve Sūfī orders, linking each to a famous Sūfī master, despite the fact that there was seldom a correspondence between these early ascetics and the well-known Sūfī orders of later times. Sultanate and Mughal \textit{tazkira} (‘hagiographical family-tree’) writers added two more Sūfī orders—to make fourteen—but the lists are not consistent (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:24).

\textsuperscript{57} The text continues: “They say besides, from Khaja Hossen, of Basora, sprang two branches: the first was that of the Khalif Hossen Basorī Habīb Ajemī, from whom nine families proceeded, named as follows: Jibān, Tākerīn, Kherktīn, Sīkatīn, Jenīdīn, Gazarīnīn, Tūsīn, Ferdūsīn, and Soherwardīn. From the second Khalīfat of Hossen Basori, which was that of Shaikh Abdul Wahid Zaid, came forth five families with the following titles: the Zebīrīn, Aiāsīn, Adhamīn, Habīrīn and Chesh’hūn, and these are the fourteen noble families.”

The \textit{A-in-i Akbarī} of Abu-l-Falī (1972, Vol. 2:393–420) provides a somewhat different list of the fourteen Sūfī orders that existed in India at the time of Akbar (r.1556–1605): Habibi, Tayfuri, Karkhi, Saqati, Junaydi, Kāzruni, Tusi, Firdaus, Suhrawardī, Zaydi, Ṭyāzī, Adhamī, Hubayrī, and Chishti. The lives of the fourteen founding saints are also sketched. “It is said Ali, the Prince of the Faithful, had four viceregents, viz., Hasan, Husayn, Kamil, and Hasan Basri. The source of these orders they believe to be Hasan Basri who had two representatives, Habbib-i-Ajami, from whom the first nine obtain their spiritual fervour, and the other Abdu’l Wāḥad-b-Zayd, from whom the last five are filled with consolation” (p. 394). Five Sūfī sects played an important role in India from the fourteenth century onwards: Shattārī, Qādirī, Qalandarī, Nakshbandī, and Uwaysī (Siddiqi 1989:35).

The earliest \textit{silsilā} was the Qādirī, founded by Shaikh Abdul Qādir Jalānī (d.1166) (Rizvi 1993:6 fn. 1). From the beginning of the thirteenth century, the most important of the organised Sūfī orders in India were the Chishti and Suhrawardī, the former order being more ascetic, independent from state patronage, and also open to outsiders. Suhrwardīs were more closed to outsiders, accepted government service, and became wealthy. From the fourteenth century, Sūfīs were often initiated into both orders (Rizvi 1993:13, 217, 272). The Qādirī and Shattārī orders became influential in India in the fifteenth century. The Shattārī order became closely identified with the state elite (dressing like kings, with followers in military uniform), but lost favour with Akbar, and declined in influence (Lapidus 1988:448). For the founding and resumé of the history of the Qādirī, Suhrwardī, Kubrāwī (which has two Indian branches, the Firdawsi and Hamadani), Nakshbandī (Khwājah), and Chishti orders, see Rizvi (1978:84–120). For the Shattārī order, see Rizvi (1993:62–64).

\textsuperscript{58} Sūfī and Dašānāmī traditions have parallels even today. During initiation,
It is not only Sufi orders that trace their descent from four preceptors. Also, as previously noted, the śaiva Pāṣupata order traces its origin to the four disciples of Lākuliśa. The vaiṣṇava Vaikhānasa tradition also traces its origins to four Vedic schools, represented, according to the Ānanda-saṃhitā (XVII. 38–39), by four Vedic ṛṣi-s who were disciples of Vikhānasa: Marīci, Atri, Kaśyapa and Bhṛgu (Colas 1996:14, 20). Within the Indian epic tradition, Vyāsa, the reputed author of the Mahābhārata, is said to have had four disciples: Sumanta, Jaimini, Paila, and Vaiśampāyana (see Kramisch 1924:2). According to the Jaina Śvetāmbara tradition, four pupils of Vajrāvāmin (fifth–sixth cent.? ) founded four kula-s (‘clans’) for the mendicant community: the Candra (sometimes -kula), the Nirvṛtti (sometimes -kula), the Vidyādhara gaccha (‘those who travel together’) and the Nāgendra gaccha. In the mid-thirteenth century, referring to “the four kula-s” was a way of referring to the totality of the Śvetāmbara mendicant community (Dundas 1993:251–252; Cort 2001:42). The Sikh-related Baḷā (‘large’) Udāsin akhārā was founded, according to tradition, by Śri Cand, the eldest of the two sons of Guru Nānak (1469–1539). The akhārā is divided into four divisions, namely: Balu Hasna; Phul Sahib (or Mān Sahib); Almast; and Bhagat Bhagvān (or Gonda). These four dhūnī-s (dhūn) are said to have been instituted in 1636 by the four disciples of Bābā Gurdita, who followed Śri Cand on the gaddi. According to the Bhaktamāla (v. 32) of Nābhadāsa.
(c.1600), Rāmānuja had four disciples, and it seems the organisation of the four vaiṣṇava sampradāya-s may have first formally arisen in the sixteenth century.

This is not to suggest that the Saṃnyāsīs necessarily borrowed the idea of four ‘disciples’ from the Sūfī or any other tradition, as Śaṅkara may possibly have had four disciples, though it is perhaps significant that the chief mahant-s of the akhārā-s are sometimes called pīr, a Muslim honorific term. However, some evidence has been presented to show that there was a very fertile context for the development of an identity for an orthodox Hindu order. By the middle of the seventeenth century in north and south-central India, there was harassment of Hindu saṃnyāsī-s and yogī-s; the heightened power and prestige of pīr-s and dargāh-s with their proud and remunerative lineages; a more orthodox regime at Delhi perceived by many as essentially hostile towards Hindus; and, importantly, large roving bands of militant nāgā-saṃnyāsī-s with what seems to have been a non-orthodox Tantric background. The notion of ten names seems first to be attested around the end of the sixteenth century, around the time of the formation of the first militant akhārā-s. It is suggested that it was in this context that the Mathāmmāya-s emerged as an ideological response to the saṃnyāsī-s’ social and political situation. The Mathāmmāya-s built on to the notion of Śaṅkara as a śaiva who conquered the four corners of India with Vedānta, with the claim that Śaṅkara also founded of an order of ascetics, who consequently became united under an orthodox Hindu umbrella. The Daśanāmī order amalgamated lineages of militant Giris, Purīs and Bhāratīs, with other monastic lineages, producing the compound order of ‘Tīrtha, Āśrama, Vana, Arānya, Giri, Parvata, Sāgara, Sarasvatī, Bhāratī and Purī’.

Some of the activities of the nāgā-s and akhārā-s will now be discussed to illustrate the diversity of Daśanāmī activities, by this time with some kind of orthodox identity.

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65 Śrutiprajña, Śrutideva, Śrutidhāmā, and Śrutidadhi.
66 See Ch. 2.1, fn. 7.
7.4 Mercenary and military activities of nāgā-s and gosain-s

Sarkar (1958:262–286) records the service to various regents in north India by nāgā armies of up to many thousands of Daśanāmī-Saṃnyāsī gosain-s, Bairāgī and other fighting orders, who fought in numerous battles, both defensive and aggressive. During the early eighteenth century the city of Jhansi was the capital of a small state ruled over by Daśanāmī gosain-s (see below). During the latter half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries they were employed, in many instances as a regularly paid standing army, in service to Mahārājas of Jodhpur, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Udaipur, Baṛaudā, Marvār (western Madhya Pradesh), and Bhuj (capital town of Kacch).

In an official bond-letter dating from the 1730s, addressed to the Mahārāja Jaisingh II (r.1700–1743),67 the Rāmānandī, Vrijānand, abjures the carrying of arms and allowing armed monks to attend Rāmānandī communal feasts. This indicates their conspicuous presence.68 It is further stated that those Rāmānandīs who do so will be expelled from the seven-branched Śrī Rāmānandī sampradāya (the seven-branched sampradāya being perhaps modelled on the seven akhārā-s of the Daśanāmīs). The Daśanāmīs, along with Sant and other vaiṣṇava orders, were similarly requested to sign such bonds ([Thiel]-Horstman 2001:3–4). However, this did not prevent their extensive military campaigns.69

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67 Jaisingh II was a king of the Kachavāhā dynasty of eastern Rajasthan. The kings of this dynasty operated as semi-autonomous regents under the Mughals. Their capital moved from Ajmer to Jaipur in 1739.

68 They were permanently established at a small fort at the base of Nahargarh hill (Orr 1940:11).

69 Rāmānandī warriors under Vrijānand subsequently engaged in battle in 1744 in the neighbouring states of Koṭā and Bündi with forces that were threatening Īśvarsingh, Jaisingh II’s successor. Although the Rāmānandīs fought on behalf of the Mahārāja of Jaipur, they were not on his regular payroll. Vrijānand died in 1752, and was succeeded by Bālānand, whom Rāmānandī tradition credits with giving definitive shape to the military organisation of the Rāmānandīs, in 1734. Although Bālānand is cast as a Rāmānandī, Rāmānanda is nowhere mentioned in the relevant documents of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, it is Rāmānuja who figures as the spiritual fountainhead of the order ([Thiel-] Horstmann 2001:8). Bālānand’s forces fought against the Jāts who were seeking to expand. Outside Rajasthan, Bālānand had strongholds in the entire Braj-Bhāratpur region, and as far away as Jagannāth Purī. Bālānand died in 1795, his funeral being attended by numerous dignitaries, testifying to his power and influence. He had
The militant Dādūpanthīs were supported by the Mahārāja of Jaipur, Mādhav Singh, who reigned from 1750 to 1767. Court records reveal that, beginning in 1768, the nāgā-s began to receive ever more lucrative land-grants and payments. By 1803, eight years after they had officially joined state forces, 4,000 nāgā-s were a part of the 13,000-strong state army of Jaipur.\(^{70}\)

There are other documented instances of large bands of gosain nāgā-s being hired for specific military offensives. In 1763, Prthvī Nārāyaṇ Śāh, king of Gorkha, and the founder of modern Nepal,\(^ {71}\) was engaged in a campaign to extend his empire into the Kathmandu valley (Baral 1964:231–234). His chief adviser and strategist was the ascetic Nāth-sīḍḍhā, Bhagavantnāth, who used his influence to negotiate various matrimonial and military alliances between Gorkha and some of the other forty-five kingdoms of western Nepal. During Prthvī Nārāyaṇ’s attack on the village of Sāgā, his Ghorkalese troops were confronted by five hundred nāgā-s who were fighting on behalf of one of his opponents, Jayaprakāś Malla, king of Kathmandu. The leader of the nāgā-s, Gulābram, had given a sword to Prthvī Nārāyaṇ Śāh when the latter visited him in Banaras twenty years previously. Gulābram, believing the sword to be responsible for the king’s success in battle, had returned for recompense, which was denied. Gulābram and his forces then took up arms with Jayaprakāś, but with disastrous consequences; all the nāgā-s were slaughtered by the Ghorkalese army. Gulābram, however, escaped. During the 1780s, some seven hundred nāgā-s died in battle in another Himalayan province, Kumaon. 1,400 nāgā-s had been enlisted, with the promise of substantial financial rewards, by king Mohan Cand in his unsuccessful attempt to recapture his seat at Almora, from which he had been deposed by his rival, Harṣdeo Jośi, king of the neighbouring province, Gaṁhvāl (Agrawal 1993:325).

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\(^{70}\) Crooke (1896, Vol. 4:238) reports that the Dādūpanthī nāgā-s live in seven camps or villages in the neighbourhood of Jaipur. They are occasionally sent out to coerce revenue defaulters. Their pay is one anna per day in peacetime, and two per day during active service. All are never on duty at the same time; those left at home cultivate land, breed camels or lend money. As late as 1914, a group of Dādūpanthīs offered military service to the Government of India for the First World War. However, they refused to enlist in the regular army, and their offer was not accepted (Orr 1940:12 fn. 4).

\(^{71}\) See Burghart (1995) for the king’s attempt to found a “Hindu” kingdom.
The careers of three prominent Daśanāmī gosain nāgā-s, namely Rajendra Giri Gosain (d.1753), and his celā-s, the brothers Anūp Giri Gosain (Himmat Bahādūr) (1730–1804) and Umrao Giri Gosain (b.1734), have been documented by Sarkar (1958:123–261) and Bhalla (1944).72 Their studies reveal the extent of some gosain-s’ power, wealth, influence and duplicity. At the height of their careers the gosain-s commanded a force of up to forty thousand horse and foot soldiers. The movement and recruitment of troops was greatly facilitated by a network of weapon-stocks and grain-stores in the countryside. Gosain-s also looked after food-producing small holdings at different times of the year. When on campaigns, most of which were executed in the Gangetic region, they carried equipment—including materials for mounting fortified locations—on elephants and other pack animals, and had camel-mounted guns. The army was equipped with excellent horses and state-of-the-art weapons, including musketry and artillery.73 They were highly regarded by the British as a fighting force, ranked alongside the Afghans, Jāts and Sikhs, and particularly renowned for their night-time guerilla operations: naked, slippery with oil, and deadly with the dagger.

The gosain-s Rajendra Giri, Anūp Giri, Umrao Giri, and their nāgā saṃnyāsī armies, fought on behalf of several rulers and regents, their mercenary approach to war resulting on some occasions in their changing sides to fight on behalf of former adversaries. Their patrons in the mid-eighteenth century included the Safdar Jang,74 vazīr

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72 See also Kolff (1971) and Barnett (1987) for further details of their activities and political developments.

73 Military equipment also included bows and arrows, shields, spears, discuses (worn around the neck), the ‘rocket’ (a metal cylinder with knives), and the ‘umbrella’ (a mechanism of revolving iron balls) (Orr 1940:16).

74 The Mughals also supported Rāmānandī nāgā-s at Ayodhya. Safdar Jang granted seven bighā-s of land at Hanumān hill to Abhay Rām Dās, the abbot of the Nirvāṇī akhārā. During the reign of Shuja’s successor, Asaf ud-Daulah (r.1775–1793), funds were raised to construct part of the fortress-like building to be found at this site. It seems that originally the Nāths and then the Daśanāmīs were the former occupants of the hill. The Daśanāmīs also used to dominate Ayodhya, but were evicted from Ayodhya (except for the Siddhigiri mattha) and the hill then occupied by the Jūnā akhārā. Rāmānandī forces were led by Abhay Rām Dās (van der Veer 1988:143–147). All Mughal emperors, from Akbar to Sāh Ālam II (the last Mughal emperor, r.1759–1806) also supported Nāth institutions and individuals, as has the royal house of Nepal since the mid-eighteenth century. Sāh Ālam II was highly influenced by the charisma and yogic powers of Mastnāth (White 2001:8, 15).
(‘chancellor’) to the Mughal Emperor (Ahmad Šāh) and ruler of the province of Avadh, and his successor Shuja-ud-Daulah. Campaigns were launched against the encroaching Afghans, and an unsuccessful attempt to capture Delhi was also pursued in 1753, resulting in the death of Rajendra Giri. In league with the Afghans, the nāgās also fought the Marāṭhās. Before the battle of Panipat in 1761, an assembly of the Afghans were most upset at the sight the naked army of Shuja, “with their things and buttocks exposed” (Sarkar 1958:158).

A combined army of Mughals, Pathāns, Ruhelās, Rājpūts, nāgās and others fought the British in battles at Patna and Buxar in 1764. However, the British repelled the attackers with superior fire-power (Sarkar 1958:163–166). Anūp Giri and Umrao Giri continued their mercenary activities under other patrons, including the Jāts under Javahir Singh, in their unsuccessful campaign to capture Delhi from the Ruhelās in 1764 and 1765 (Sarkar 1958:170–172). However, in 1767 the two gosain-s again changed sides, serving under the Marāṭha, Raganāth Rao (Sarkar 1958:178). During Rao’s absence in the Deccan, the gosain-s lived by plundering Bundelkhand, to be subsequently re-employed by the navāb of Avadh, Shuja-ud-Daulah, between 1767 and 1775. They were paid the colossal sum of 48,000 rupees per year (Bhalla 1944:129). Together with the Marāṭha, Gopāl Rao, the two gosain-s were employed as high commanders who held the power of dastkhat (‘signature’), entitling them enlist troops without reference to Shuja (Barnett 1987:79). For the next fifteen years the gosain-s served a series of regimes in Delhi, interspersed with periods of sanctioned plunder. Anūp Giri’s last patron, from 1789 and 1802, was the Marāṭha, Ali Bahādur, who eventually conquered

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75 Politically expedient ‘religious syncretism’ on the part of regents and power-brokers during this period was not uncommon (see Bayly 1985:177–191).
76 In one campaign the Afghans, under Ahmad Šāh Abdali, attacked the holy shrine of Gokul, near Mathurā. Four thousand nāgā samnyāsīs and bairagīs defended the shrine, but two thousand of them were slain (Sarkar 1958:154).
77 In battle against the Marāṭhās in 1787, saiva nāgā gosain-s under Anūp Giri fought alongside another army of nāgā-s, including five thousand musketeers, under the vaisnava bairagī commander, Bālanānda, who was in service to the Mahārājā of Jaipur, who had up to 10,000 nāgā-s in his army (Bhalla 1944:130–134; Sarkar 1958:226–252; Chandra 1977:21).
78 These were Mirza Najaf Khān (who seized Delhi in 1773); the Marāṭha, Mādhav Rao Scindia (from 1784); and Šāh Ālam II. Anūp was in charge of the defence of the city during the two latter regimes.
Bundelkhand with the assistance of Anūp Giri’s forces, for which he was rewarded with 1,300,000 rupees (Bhalla 1944:133).79

The Treaty of Bassein, signed in 1802, ceded large parts of Bundelkhand from the Marāthas to the British. In 1803 Anūp Giri and his forces at first united with the Marāthas to repel the British, who were threatening Anūp’s territory. However, through the British Collector, Mr. Mercer, and Colonel Mieselbach, Anūp sold himself and his 4,000 cavalry and 8,000 foot-soldiers to the British. When his forces arrived they received a thirteen-gun-salute (Bhalla 1944:134). Alongside the British under Colonel Powell, they conquered Bundelkhand, defeating the Marātha chief, Śamser Bahādur (son and successor of Ali Bahādur), other warlords and Bundela chieftains (Pinch 1997:10). Anūp concluded a treaty with the British on September 4th, yielding a jāgīr of 2,200,000 rupees, the right to maintain a force of 10,000 cavalry, and a swathe of land between Kalpi (near Mathurā) and Allahabad. Anūp’s brother Umrao Giri had been imprisoned on account of a conspiracy, but his release and a pension were negotiated. Anūp Giri died in 1804 at the age of seventy, shortly after the conclusion of the war.80 Anūp Giri had a son, Narender Giri, but he did not inherit his father’s estate (Bhalla 1944:135).81

7.5 Saṃnyāsī-ś, fakīr-ś and rebellion in east India

After the defeat of the navāb Siraj-ud-Daulah at the battle of Plassey in 1757, the British had gained control of revenue collection in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by 1767. In the general breakdown of law and order during the disintegration of Mughal authority—after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707—many saṃnyāsī-ś and fakīr-ś had become organised in roving bandit/dacoit groups, sometimes known

79 In 1791 Anūp Giri placed local Rājpūts and others under the command of a Dutch colonel, John Mieselbach (Sarkar 1958:256).
80 Anūp established a small town in Bundelkhand, named Gosainpur (Hunter 1885, Vol. 5:173). His earthly remains were deposited in a tomb two miles north of Banda.
81 According to Sarkar (1958:205), Anūp Giri’s son was Kumār Gaṅgā Giri, and another adopted son was Kumār Kaṅcangir. Umrao Giri had two sons, namely Kumār Jagat Giri and Uttam Giri, who were also involved in courtly life and mercenary activity (Sarkar 1958:245).
as Piṇḍarīs. As Company records contain numerous reports of incursions by these ‘marauding’ and frequently armed groups, the first of which took place in 1743 (Ghosh 1930:36). Although often naked, leading gosain-s frequently wore gold and silver bangles and necklaces, sometimes studded with pearls and diamonds (Ghosh 1930:19).

British forces were subsequently engaged in numerous skirmishes and battles with bands of samnyāsīs and fakīr-s in Bihar and Bengal (Ghosh 1930; Chandra 1977). The British version of events is, by and large, endorsed by Ghosh, whereby the ash-clad, bhāng-drinking samnyāsī-s and fakīr-s are presented as marauder-bandits, masquerading as pilgrims, but extracting money and goods from local landlords and peasants on false pretences. However, this view has been challenged (Chandra 1977; Chatterjee 1984): if the socio-economic situation of the region at the time is considered, then the disturbances can be seen as part of a larger movement of peasant unrest and rebellion against colonial repression and excessive taxation, sometimes leading to starvation; samnyāsī and fakīr nāgā-s were frequently at the spearhead of the movement.

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82 After the battle of Panipat in 1761, the Marāṭhas were forced to rely on mercenaries, some of whom received the name ‘Piṇḍari’ (Gordon 1969:426).
83 From 1757 there are reports of battles between up to 5,000 samnyāsī-s and British sepoys, forced seizure of money from zamīndār-s’ kacahār-s (‘revenue offices’) and Collectors, and raids on villages and factories at Dacca and other places by groups of armed samnyāsī-s and fakīr-s. The first raid on a British factory was at Rampur Boalia, in Dacca, in 1763, by samnyāsī-s assisted by unemployed cotton workers. In some raids British agents were killed, and army captains were regularly dispatched to disperse the raiders, not always successfully; both sides frequently suffered extensive casualties. The raids were frequently successful as the robbers could flee from the British-held territories of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In a series of successful raids on zamīndār-s in 1773, the samnyāsī-s were led by Motī Giri and Dharma Giri (Chatterjee 1984:8). In the latter decades of the eighteenth century the fakīr-s were under the leadership of the Madāri Sūfī, Maṇju Śāh (d.1787), whose first raid in Bengal was conducted in 1771 (Chandra 1977:49–68). By 1774 he had established a cantonment in Dinajpur district of well-armed Rājpūts, with whom he had formed an alliance. A series of raids were conducted in 1786 by Musa Śāh (d.1792), a relative of Manju, who retreated to a headquarters he had established in Gorkha, Nepal. Various groups of samnyāsī-s and fakīr-s operated out of Myemsingh (in what is now northern Bangladesh), an area over which ruling authorities, including Garos, Koches, Afghans, north-Indian Brahmins and breakaway Mughals, had only ever been able to exert minimal control (van Schendel 1985:140–144).
84 The situation was significantly exacerbated by the great famine of 1770/1771, when around one third of the population of Bengal, some fifteen million people, died. However, Warren Hastings was able to write to the Board of Directors that, despite the decrease in population, revenue had increased in 1771, in comparison
Groups of saṃnyāśī-ś and fakīr-ś—who occasionally fought each other (Chandra 1977:29)—together with other pilgrims had for many centuries enjoyed annual pilgrimages to holy places in Bihar, Bengal and Assam. Some fakīr-ś had enjoyed extraordinary privileges under various patrons in the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century. Prior to full British control over revenue, Muslim authorities occasionally issued sanad-s (‘deeds/grants’) to ensure the rights of the fakīr-ś to collect alms and acquire property, a demand on meagre peasant resources also regarded as legitimately collectable by the British in the form of tax. Some groups of saṃnyāśī-ś were also employed simply as mercenaries in the service of political rivals to the British.

British forces, under orders from Warren Hastings, made strenuous
efforts to prohibit, rout and dispel the raiders entering Bengal. No less than four battalions of the army were actively engaged against the samnyāsī-ś and fakīr-ś (Chandra 1977:84, 101–114), and attempts were also made to remove settled samnyāsī-ś—many of them being landless peasants—of which there were several thousand in some districts. The British negotiated with the Nepalese, and signed a treaty with the Tashu Lāmā of Bhutan, to prevent samnyāsī-ś from being resident in their territory, and by 1800 the rebellion that had continued for thirty-five years was finally suppressed. Raids on Company-owned finance and property in east India ceased (Chandra 1977:131–137), and the few military nāgā-ś who remained in south Bihar in 1809/1810 were reported to have abandoned arms (Pinch 1996:31). Nevertheless, it seems that some samnyāsī-ś (or those pretending to be samnyāsī-ś) were still involved in criminal activities in the nineteenth century. Their activities were were virtually indistinguishable from, and carried out in broadly the same region (central India) as those of marauding bands of Piṇḍarī highway robbers (van Woerkens 2002:26ff.). These bandits were also called Thag (Thug/Thugi/Thagi) by the British, a term that had already been used in South Asia to refer to criminal assassins for about a thousand years. In 1830, a government ‘Department of Thagis and Dacoits’ was set up by the

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88 A law was passed in 1773 to prohibit the carrying of arms by samnyāsī-ś and fakīr-ś, and certain sects of samnyāsī-ś, baivāgī-ś and fakīr-ś were expelled from Bengal and Bihar, becoming ‘prohibited sects’. Farmers found to be harbouring members of prohibited sects were to be severely punished (Chandra 1977:60).  
89 After a series of land-reforms had been implemented by Warren Hastings, by 1790 revenue collection for the British was undertaken by a new class of landlords, who frequently employed samnyāsī-ś and fakīr-ś for that purpose. Under the Permanent Settlement of Bengal Act of 1793, responsibility for law and order then passed from the zamīndār-ś to a newly created police force (Chandra 1977:165). Some zamīndār-ś granted land, in a religious donation (śibbotār), rent-free, to ascetics. Landlords thereby enhanced their own status in the area, and gained a protection force of armed samnyāsī-ś to guard their estates. Samnyāsī-ś were also given land after they had assisted landlords’ own forces in repelling aggressors (Chatterjee 1984:3). In north and east Bengal, some samnyāsī-ś still live on the produce of endowed lands (Ghosh 1930:160).  
90 Bhāsaarvajña (ninth century) makes perhaps the first known reference: he refers to the thakaśāstra in connection with the killing of Brahmans. Several writers use the term in the following centuries; and a fourteenth century Muslim report mentions thag-ś. The term thaka/thaga may be derived from the Sanskrit root śthag (‘cover/conceal’). See Halbfass (1983:13, 24 fn. 61) for further details and references.
Governor General, Lord William Bentick. It was to oversee the activities of Thugs, and was run by William Sleeman, a British official who is responsible for the stereotyping of the term ‘Thug’. Sleeman had read an article by Dr. Sherwood (a surgeon in Madras), published in 1816, entitled ‘Of The Murderers Called Phansigars [‘stranglers’]’, which so concerned him that he transferred to the Civil Service in 1918 (Annan 1967:64ff.).\(^9\) Sleeman, the initiator and architect of the anti-Thug campaign, came to believe that three-quarters of Hindu and Muslim mendicants were criminals (van Woerkens 2002:10ff.), and that the Thugs—who worshipped Kalī, and either strangled or poisoned their victims—constituted an organised criminal sect.\(^9\) Such was the British suspicion of ascetics that a police handbook (\(sādhu-i-kitab\), written in Urdu) was issued in 1913 to enable officers to identify \(sādhu\)-s by their appearance and sectarian markings (Pinch 1996:8). However, within the socio-political context of the time, it is apparent that the Thugs were not an organised religious sect or a caste; that their activities were entirely mercenary; and that the notion of a Thug ‘conspiracy’ was unfounded, but nevertheless helped to finance Sleeman’s department,\(^9\) which was quite successful in catching and punishing several thousand criminals. Marauding Pindārī groups that had previously been employed, on an occasional basis, as mercenaries by various powers such as the Marāṭhas, in many instances simply continued their ‘criminal’ marauding activities when states had insufficient funds to pay them (see Gordon 1969).

There is also a widely-held nationalist notion, still prevalent, of a specifically Hindu militant \(samnyāsī\) rebellion against British rule in the eighteenth century, famously taken up as the main theme of a novel by Bankim Chandra Chatterji\(^9\) (1838–1894), \(Ānandamāth\). The influence of this image is apparent in that \(Bande Mataram\), the \(samnyāsī\) song from the novel—which was set to music by Rabindranath Tagore—became the unofficial anthem of the Independence

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\(^9\) According to van Woerkens (2002:44ff.), who provides a comprehensive account of the Thugs, Sleeman first heard of specific crimes of the Thugs sometime between 1822 and 1824; an anti-Thug law was passed in 1836 (p.100).

\(^9\) See Sleeman (1903, Vol. 1:96–111) for his account of the iniquity of the Thugs.

\(^9\) The idea of a criminal religious cult also proved popular with the Victorian press and as a theme for novelists (see Rushby 2002:8–15).

movement. However, we have seen that the situation regarding sādhu-s in the eighteenth century cannot simply be characterised as a Hindu samnyāsi uprising against British rule: Sufi fakir-s were involved with samnyāsi-s in the Bengal rebellion, and the gosain fighters formed substantial alliances with not only the Mughals but also the British. Saṃnyāsi-s performed various roles in the period under discussion, both in support and against the rule of various powers. Nor can samnyāsi-s and fakir-s be characterised, as they were by the British, as simply ‘Thugs’. This is to ignore the complex, various and shifting roles of many samnyāsi-s in this period: as ascetics (some of whom would not so much as touch a coin), and as pilgrims, traders, money-lenders, mercenaries, protection guards, bandits, and on occasion even diplomats.

7.6 Gosain traders and bankers

Many of the political conflicts previously discussed had ceased by the beginning of the nineteenth century, by which time many thousands of gosain-s had settled in Bengal and other parts of India, many of them being ex-soldiers from disbanded armies of various regents. These settled gosain-s, some of them rich from war, engaged

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95 M. K. Gandhi also took up the song as a constituent of his nationalist ideology. When V. D. Savarkar, the famous Indian freedom-fighter, was at high school in Nāsik, he belonged to and recruited members to a secret society of revolutionaries, aiming to liberate their motherland from British rule. Members greeted each other with Bande Mataram, and in a pamphlet with that name Savarkar asserted that the assassination of British officials is the first stage of the revolution. In his monumental work, Indian War of Independence, 1857, Savarkar refutes British accounts of the Mutiny of 1857 as failed. The work, which describes how sādhu-s, samnyāsi-s and fakir-s can become revolutionaries, was banned but achieved wide circulation, becoming, for half a century, the Indian revolutionaries’ gospel and handbook. Savarkar was imprisoned for terrorist activities from 1910 to 1937. He then became president of the Hindu Mahāsabhā from 1937 to 1944 (McKean 1996:73–77). See Savarkar (1989) for his conception of Hindutva.

96 In the 1770s, Puran Gir mediated between the Panchen Lāmā and the British, serving both sides in their negotiation of a trade treaty between Bengal and Tibet. After the death of the Lāmā, Puran Gir (and his successor, Daljit Gir) continued his negotiating role with the Lāmā’s successor. In 1779 Puran Gir travelled with the Panchen Lāmā to Peking to visit the Chinese emperor (Clarke 1998:66).

97 The number of śāiva and vaishnava ascetics in north India in the last decades of the eighteenth century was considerable, around 500,000, comprising around five percent of the population (Bayly 1992:126, 183).
in money-lending, banking and trading, involving significant amounts of money overall. Evidence of saṁnyāsīs’ involvement in trade may be seen in Banaras, where in 1787 they were the dominant merchant class, having a substantial trade in cloth, raw silk, gold and silver, in a network extending to the Deccan, Bengal and Nepal. In Banaras alone they owned forty of the leading business houses, representing a significant sector of the economy.98 Established also in Mirzapur, the gosain-s, who were mostly Giris, were described by G. H. Barlow, sub-secretary to the Bengal government, as being “a religious sect remarkable for their wealth, and for their integrity in all commercial transactions” (K. P. Mishra 1975:95–96). In Mirzapur, the gosain-s were the accepted leaders of the merchant community (Bayly 1992:143), one Giri mahant being notorious amongst merchants (Crooke 1896, Vol. 2:471). In 1911, the Giris of the Mirzapur area were reported to have land-holdings amounting to 44,784 acres, income deriving also from rent and money-lending (Chatterjee 1984:3–4).

By the 1780s gosain-s had become the dominant money-lending—frequently at exorbitant rates of interest99—and property-owning group in Allahabad, Banaras, Mirzapur, Ujjain and Nāgpur (Bayly 1992:126, 143; Kolff 1971), and were major brokers in Rajasthan and the Deccan, at places such as Hyderabad and Pūne (Clarke 1998:58).100 There was, however, often a very thin line indeed between tax-collection, dacoity and money-lending.101

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98 In 1786/1787 the total value of the saṁnyāsīs’ imports and exports which passed through the customs houses of Banaras and Mirzapur was 1,614,759 Rs.. Around 40% of the trade was in raw silk, most of which was brought from Bengal and traded in Mirzapur and Banaras for bullion or other commodities (K. P. Mishra 1975:96). The figure given above only records the declared goods, and does not account for what appears to have been a substantial non-declared trade. In 1809/1810, one gosain merchant alone sent silk worth 650,000 Rs. to the United Provinces (Cohn 1964:177).

99 Aware of the saṁnyāsīs’ profitable money-lending business, the British government enacted various measures in 1772 to cap loan rates (at 2%) and restrict the saṁnyāsīs’ business.

100 Chatterjee suggests that the increase in money-lending activities of the saṁnyāsīs was partly a consequence of a decline in their previously profitable silk-smuggling business. This decline was an effect of superior British production techniques, extra levies and custom posts. The saṁnyāsīs complained to the British administration of being taxed in both Banaras and Mirzapur, and for a while tried to smuggle goods through Bihar. The British nevertheless recognised the value of the saṁnyāsīs’ trade (Cohn 1964:177).

101 Marāṭha tax records of the mid-eighteenth century illustrate the nexus between
In the 1780s, European banking houses were also established to finance trade, with the resultant consequence that samnyāsīs’ profitable loan businesses were effectively squeezed (Chatterjee 1984:7). The extent of the samnyāsīs’ money-lending business may be gauged from their involvement in the financing of the war between Prthvī Nārāyaṇ Śāh, Jayaprakāś Malla and others, in their struggle for control of the Kathmandu valley in the mid-eighteenth century, referred to in the previous section. It is evident that Prthvī Nārāyaṇ Śāh helped finance his campaign with cash loans from samnyāsī traders, who had trade agencies in several cities in the valley. The gosain-s were repaid, and as a reward they were awarded charters to trade freely in his domain. The gosain-s profited handsomely from both sides throughout the duration of the conflict, in terms of both financial interest earned and trading rights. However, it appears that some gosain-s and Kashmiris were expelled from Nepal by Prthvī Nārāyaṇ Śāh owing to their allegiance to the Malla dynasty (Regmi 1975, Vol. 1:117–121, 201).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it is apparent that some samnyāsī matha-s—which were occasionally fortified (Ghosh money-lending, dacoity and mercenary activity. The gosain (or any) money-lender would typically loan money against the purchase of goods, and also arrange transport and guards. Default on repayment could result in land and its derivative revenue being acquired by the lender, an arrangement that was legally binding. Transfer of ownership of land and its revenue meant that the new ‘owner’ could demand money from tenants. Rulers also used their military forces to collect taxes, and the military were often gosain-s (Gordon 1971).

102 The first request for a loan was made in 1745, addressed to Mahant Kamala Bana, Mahant Lakṣman Purī, and Dāyāl Purī. This was in a period when Jayaprakāś Malla was in exile—but not abdication—from his throne in Kathmandu. In 1748, Jayaprakāś Malla, alarmed at the threat to his realm, then borrowed 20,000 Rs., after extensive bargaining, from Kamala Bana Gosain and Rakham Purī Gosain to help finance his bid to reclaim the throne, which was successful.

103 In 1764 Jayaprakāś issued a charter requesting that the gosain-s—Durbasa Bana, Lakṣman Bana, Jagāvārā Bana, Bhagavatī Bana (disciple of Kamala Bana), Bhor Bana, Naval Bana and Catūr Bana—reside in Kathmandu with him, enjoying royal favour. After the eventual fall of Kathmandu, the new ruler Prthvī Nārāyaṇ Śāh continued to support gosain-s. In 1786 he issued another charter, addressed to the first four of the above-named gosain-s, permitting them to conduct trade to Tibet, subject to statutory checking and taxes. It is curious that this lineage of Daśānāmśis, the Bana (Van), although so prominent in Nepal in the eighteenth century, is very meagrely represented these days.

104 Sometime after 1792 the gosain-s were also expelled from Tashilumpo in Tibet, owing to the suspicion by the Chinese authorities that they were acting as spies for their enemies (Clarke 1998:56, 67).
—became, effectively, storehouses for the trade in goods (including raw silk, shawls, opium, gold, silver, copper and spices) which were carried out by *celā*-s of various *mahānt*-s over wide areas of north India. *Saṃnyāsī* traders who profited were able to buy land, sometimes acquired from both peasants and landlords suffering insuperable debt. Individuals and groups of pilgrims traded in precious and semi-precious gems, notably coral and pearl from the Coromandel coast and Sri Lanka. They also traded in diamonds, brocade, broadcloth, tobacco, indigo and conch shells. Coral and pearl were two of the principal exports from Bengal to Tibet, while musk, gold-dust and yak tails were brought from there (Clarke 1998). A network of *matṛha*-s and pilgrimage routes throughout India greatly facilitated contacts, trade, resting places and loan facilities. Armed nāgā-s were available to protect the transportation of goods and bullion traded from as far afield as Ahmadabad, Baraudā, Pūne, Nāgpur, Bengal, Kashmir, Nepal and Tibet. The nāgā-s’ religious status and their fearsome reputation also made them virtually immune from prosecution or police harrassment (Bayly 1992:184). In 1792, the rāja of Nepal complained that “although the *fakīr* is full of faults and deserving death”, he could only expell them from his territory and could not confine or kill them, as that would be contrary to religious law (Ghosh 1930:9).

The *gosain*-s were all members of a religious fraternity whose

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105 In Nepalese records of this period, the term *fakīr* is used also for *saṃnyāsī*.

106 The different status of ascetics regarding the law may be seen also in ancient India, in *Dharmaśāstra*. Olivelle (1987:48), reviewing injunctions found in several works, notes that ascetics, when found guilty of a crime, were not subject to the corresponding punishment (instead they were required to perform religious works for the king); they were not to be tortured during interrogations; judges were expected to show leniency towards them; and wandering ascetics could obtain a pass from the Controller of Shipping that allowed them to cross rivers without paying the usual fee. Amongst the privileges for Brahmānical ascetics were land-grants that were made to them in newly-settled countryside; they were exempted from the salt tax; and the property of an ascetic could not be taken as booty when an enemy’s land was conquered.

107 Clarke (1998:53) suggests that the *gosain*-s may have been either *vaishnava* or *śaiva*. However, *gosāmin* (*gosain*) followers of Gaṅgāpatī and Vaibhavacārya are not, to my knowledge, ever mentioned in ethnographic reports of the period. The information supplied concerning *gosain*-s indicates that they were followers of Śaṅkara (i.e. Daśanāmīs), most of them having one of the ‘ten names’. However, *vaishnava* Bairāgīs are mentioned as traders at Chhartarpur, in Madhya Pradesh (Kolff 1971:215). Pinch (1996:43) remarks that the term *gosain* began to lose its specific *śaiva* and
rules and codes of practice were recognised by initiates, further facilitating trading arrangements. They were also favoured as religious mendicants who, in some kingdoms, were exempt from full taxation on their goods. In Banaras, for example, gosain-s paid special rates on their transit goods (Bayly 1992:143, 165). Maṭha-s also received religious donations, particularly at melā-s when pilgrims frequently donated handsomely to a mahant, and generally used rent-free land. The passing of wealth from a desceased mahant to, frequently, a sole celā or a closed group of celā-s, ensured that institutional wealth, which was sometimes considerable, remained ‘in house’.108 This arrangement had distinct financial advantages over the traditional family arrangement, whereby a father’s wealth and property was often dispersed to many relatives, sometimes geographically distant, upon his death.

Even in the mid-nineteenth century the gosain-s were still an important element in north Indian trade and commerce.109 They owned fleets of boats and controlled a major share of the trade along the Ganges, transporting goods from the United Provinces to Bengal—some of which went on to Europe—and brought Bengali and British goods to Mirzapur and Banares for trade (Cohn 1964:180). Until the 1840s gosain-s remained the key inland merchants in the growing colonial trade in cotton. The British were significantly irritated by the success, authority and general popularity of the gosain-s—a popularity the colonial masters did not enjoy—and attempted to blacken their name. The gosain-s, however, were no economic partisans: in 1857 the gosain maṭha-s of the United Provinces had at least 200,000 Rs. invested in government paper currency (Bayly 1992:241–242).

In north India, there was a decline of the trading activities of the

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108 In a case that reached court in Calcutta, the disputed wealth of one maṭha—not considering immovable property—amounted to 242,000 Rs. (A. K. Mishra 1975:99).

109 During the late eighteenth century, corporate religious institutions had invested in a substantial building programme. In Banaras, by 1816, there was said to be one pilgrim rest house for every ten houses. The use of dressed stone in the construction of religious buildings was a major influence on the stone-cutting business, which was controlled by the ascetic orders (Bayly 1992:127).
gosain-s in the nineteenth century, which may have been a consequence of agricultural development in the Punjab and the change from river to railway transport (Cohn 1964:181). The increase in British hold over trade and exports is also evident, in that between 1814 and 1854 British exports in commodities tripled (Rothermund 1993:23). However, the gosain akhār-s adapted astutely to changing economic patterns, diversifying rapidly into urban property ownership after 1802.110 Following the construction of the railways, the gosain-s also capitalised on the rapidly rising value of urban properties. Although the gosain-s’ involvement in trade and banking declined in the nineteenth century, they still enjoyed considerable income from rent,111 and maintained their position as a major money-lending

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110 It has been estimated that around 250,000 acres of land are still owned by the Daśanāmī akhār-s, about half being the property of the Jūnā akhār. Until recently, the entire Girnar hills area in Gujarat was under the control of a nāgā from the Jūnā akhār (Gross 1992:163).

111 In Banaras district in 1909, the gosain-s owned 10,304 acres of land (Nevill 1909b:114). Sinha and Saraswati (1978:262) provide a list of nine paramahaṁsa-s of Banaras who, between 1926 and 1931, had substantial bank deposits at the kothī (‘banking house’) of the Jaṅgambarī matha before the kothī went into legal liquidation. Their deposits were mostly of around 2,000 Rs. to 3,000 Rs., but one, that of Svāmī Svarūpa Svarṇananda Maḥārāja, was of over 20,000 Rs. Joint families of ‘respectable’ city bankers could earn around 20,000 to 80,000 Rs. per annum towards the end of the nineteenth century (Bayly 1973:41). It seems that up until around 1925 there were a few wealthy matha-s in Banaras that were also known as kothī-s. The kothī-s used to feed the general public and ascetics on certain occasions but were guarded and only inhabited by the mahānt and his servants who entertained wealthy people and high officials. It seems that some of the paramahansa matha-s of Banaras were once affluent, namely the Bihārī Purī, Bodh Gayā, Paramārtha Giri, Dakṣināmūrti, Dhurbeśvara, Haṭhiyā Rāma, Narsiṁh Cauk, Annapūrna, Hari Gūrā, and Prakāśānanda matha-s.

Samnyāsī estates also occasionally have an ambiguous position in regards to religious status and the law. Sinha and Saraswati (1978:80) cite a legal case [Judgement of the High Court of Allahabad, Case No. 21 [1928], Appeal No. 584 [1934]] involving one Svāmī Rāmcaran Purī, who describes himself as a landlord (gāmīndār) and a banker, and not a paramahansa. He states that he is the Municipal Commissioner of Banaras, paying a substantial amount of money in taxes and rent money to the government and the Mahārāja of Banaras. (Per year, he paid 2,000 Rs. to the government, 35,000 Rs. to the Mahārāja, 200 Rs. in municipal taxes, 208 Rs. in income tax and “some annas-s” on banking business.) He had inherited the property, the matha, from his ancestors and also purchased further property himself. There were three temples on his property, of Lakṣmī, Mahādeva and Bhāgavatī, and he would feed and distribute alms to visiting Brahmans, ṣādha-s and fakīrs. He argued that his property was not an endowment, that he was the sole owner, and that he had the right to sell or mortgage it should he so choose. He claimed to have been given the property without any conditions attached, and to be performing
group, not only in the cities, but also in the small towns and villages along pilgrimage routes (Bayly 1992:452). Even in the early twentieth century the Mahārāja of Jaipur employed a group of nāgā-s as tax collectors (Farquhar 1925c:452). The influence of the gosain-s on the economy of north India had been such that Bayly (1992:242) comments: “As some of the largest urban property owners in the Gangetic and central Indian towns, and as important lower-level money-lenders, ironically it was [gosain-s] who became the nearest of any Indian business community to the emerging bourgeoisie that European theorists, from Sleeman to Marx, wished to see”.

7.7 Saṃnyāśi-s and the modern political world

The wealth of merchants and bankers appears to have played a significant role in the establishment of the nascent Congress Party. Although some members of the Viceroy’s executive council assumed that the Congress was supported by journalists, lawyers and other professionals, it is apparent that between 1885 and 1901, very many of the elected members were from the trading and banking classes, such as the Naupati bankers, the commercial aristocracy of Banaras. These bankers (mahājan) financed pilgrim centres and trade in sugar, indigo, opium, gāṅjā and bhāṅg. A high percentage of the assets of the major bankers, who had a close connection with the functions of local government, was also absorbed in the foundation of temples, bathing ghāt-s, community shrines and religious trusts (Bayly 1973:29–43). In terms of life-style, there was little difference between bankers and saṃnyāśi-s.113

On another front, in Calcutta, it was believed in 1912 that an akhārā was being used as a cover for the Midnapore revolutionary charitable activities only, without the constraints that would be incumbent upon an endowed property.

112 Nevill (1909a:256) remarks that the Udasīs [of Uttar Pradesh]: “Besides their religious duties carry on a considerable trade in money-lending”. The Daśanāṁi śaiva akhārā-ś of the nāgā gosain-s (the [Mahā]-Nirvānī, Niraṅjana and Jūnā) are said by Nevill (1911:71) to be “equally wealthy and carry on extensive banking business”.

113 Until the 1880s, the major bankers of Allahabad lived as joint families in several small mud houses in the central market area. In a typical mahājanī family, food remained strictly vegetarian and servants were few (Bayly 1973:41–42).
society, plotting against British rule (Taylor 2001:52). At the meeting of the National Congress in Nāgpur in 1920, over a hundred nāgā-s attended. It was decided that they could carry the message of Independence and non-cooperation around India, as the masses of the towns and villages had high regard for them. Gandhi urged the nāgā-s to visit military camps and advise the soldiers to give up their employment (Pinch 1996:5). Sadhu-s were regarded by the British authorities as a serious threat in their involvement with the non-cooperation movement, as already in the mutiny/rebellion of 1857 nāgā sādhu-s had been involved, even though not militarily to any large extent.

It is apparent that during the twentieth century, and particularly since Independence, the Daśanāmā-s have turned towards other activities, establishing colleges and āśrama-s, many paramahansa-s preaching as a means of livelihood in big cities such as Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, their chief patrons being big businessmen and important officials in the government. However, as has been explored by McKean (1996), there is a considerable connection between several important saṁnyāśī institutions and right-wing organisations such as the RSS, BJP, VHS and VHP. The VHP—which has recruited many sādhu-s to its ranks (Jaffrelot 1996:355)—supported the claim of

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114 By 1991, the BJP had six saffron-clad MPs (Jaffrelot 1996:479).
115 The closing ceremony of a meeting of the Viśā Hindu Sammelan, held in Kerala in April 1982, was presided over by the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcipuram (Chiriyankandath 1998:212).
116 One prominent example is the relationship between the VHP (Viśva Hindu Parishad) and the Divine Life Society (DLS). The DLS was founded in 1936 by Śvāmī Śivānanda, its headquarters being in Haridvār. Śivānanda (Sarasvatī) took saṁnyāsa in 1924 from the Daśanāmā, Śvāmī Viśvānandasarasvatī, though he subsequently makes virtually no reference to his guru. One of Śivānanda’s early disciples was Śvāmī Cimāyānanda (d.1993), who founded the VHP in 1964, which the DLS carefully avoid mentioning. Śivānanda’s successor, Śvāmī Cidānanda, maintains ties with the VHP. Significant events in the expansion of the DLS were Śivānanda’s founding of the All World Religions’ Federation in 1945, and the All World Sadhus’ Federation in 1947 (McKean 1996:164–179). At the inaugural meeting of the VHP in August 1964, it was decided to organise a world Hindu sammelan during the Allahabad Kumbh Melā, on 22–24 January 1966. Among the 25,000 attending delegates were two Śaṅkarācāryas, from Dvārakā and Purī (Jaffrelot 1996:198; Bhatt 2001:180–185). For the involvement of Jagendrasarasvatī (Śaṅkarācārya of the Kāñcī pīṭha) with the VHP in the 1980s, see Jaffrelot (1996:357).
117 Jaffrelot (1996:357) maintains that the Hindu nationalist movement made major advances in the early 1980s by mobilising Hindu leaders who could be seen as ‘ecclesiastical’ authorities.
Svāmī Vāsudevānanda to the succession to the Jyotir pītha in 1998, his rival being beaten up at the Kumbh Melā (Krishnan 2002:28). While attempting, to some extent, to remain outside political involvement, the Daśanāmī Śaṅkarācāryas have inevitably been drawn into the Rām Jann Bhūmī dispute at Ayodhya, given their status as religious authorities.\footnote{For further details of the Śaṅkarācāryas’ involvement with ‘Ayodhya’, see Jaffrelot (1996:413 fn. 3, 470–471)} As of 2002, four of the Śaṅkarācāryas (of the four āmnāya matha-s) were opposed to the VHP’s temple construction plan, while Jayendrasarasvatī (of the Kāṇcī pītha) has been asked by the government to help negotiate the issue. The VHP are very keen for the other Śaṅkarācāryas to throw their weight behind temple construction, even though they are reluctant to do so (Krishnan 2002). The proximity of Jayendrasarasvatī\footnote{For brief biographies of Candraśekharendrasarasvatī and his disciple Jayendrasarasvatī, see Cenkner (1996:55–57).} to the government was evident when he sent Brahman representatives to Delhi to perform rituals on the morning of R. Venkataraman’s inauguration, on the 25th July 1987, as the eighth President of India. Adding to the long list of the President’s degrees and awards, the Śaṅkarācārya bestowed on Venkataraman the title ‘Sat seva ratna’.\footnote{‘The Jewel of True Service’. See www.parliamentofindia.nic.in/rs/whoswho/vp/rvenkatraman.htm; www.indiademocracy.com/resources/presidents/rvenkatraman.jsp} Perhaps one of the most illustrative links between the Daśanāmī-Saṁnyāsīs and the modern political world is the case of Umā Bhāratī, a saṁnyāsin who became a politician, and who was subsequently sworn in, on 8th December 2003, as the first woman chief minister of the state of Madhya Pradesh.

Although the Śaṅkarācārya of the Kāṇcī matha, Jayendrasarasvatī, has been involved in political life at the highest levels, that did not prevent his arrest at Mehboobnagar in Andhra Pradesh on 11th November 2004 for conspiracy to murder A. Śaṅkararāman, a manager of the Varādaperumal temple at Kāṇcipuram, who died in the temple office on 3rd September 2004.\footnote{For further details of the case, see (for all bibliographical entries, see under www.): www.industelegraph.com/story/2004/11/12/01357/717; www.outlookindia.com/ptinews.asp?id=318369; www.hinduismtoday.com/hpi/2004/11/17.shtml; http://in.rediff.com/news/2004/nov/17agnl.htm; www.mytamil.com/n/a/arc0-} The murder was committed
by a gang of five, including Kadiravan and Rajini, who were allegedly hired by Appu and Ravi Subramanian (a building contractor) at the behest of the Śaṅkarācārya. The Śaṅkarācārya’s arrest was authorised by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalalithā. The seventy-year-old Śaṅkarācārya was also accused of involvement in an assault on Rādhākṛṣṇan (an auditor and associate of the māṭha), his wife and an associate that took place on 20th September 2002. Jayendrasarasvati’s appointed successor, the ‘junior’ ācārya Vijayendrasarasvati, was also arrested for conspiracy to murder, together with twenty-two others, including the Kāṇṭī māṭha manager, Sundaresa Iyer, and Vijayendrasarasvati’s younger brother Raghu in connection with the two cases. It has been alleged that between May and July 2004 Śaṅkararāman wrote a number of letters complaining of the misappropriation of temple-related funds by the two Śaṅkarācāryas, his final letter of 30th August containing a threat to take the māṭha to court. Perhaps in a moment of weakness, Jayendrasarasvatī authorised the silencing of his critic. Jayendrasarasvati and Vijayendrasarasvati were originally remanded in custody until 26th November 2004, a stay which was extended until 10th December. (It should be emphasised that at the time of going to press none of the allegations against any of the parties have so far been proven.)

Within a week of the arrest of the Śaṅkarācārya, there were protests, hunger strikes and the closure of temples in cities such as Lucknow, Banaras Sātārā and Haridvār. Even Muslim leaders in Ayodhyā and Sātārā came out in his support. There has been some comment in the press that the Śaṅkarācārya’s influence in the AIDMK (All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) party, and the considerable wealth of the Kāṇṭī māṭha, a privately run body that—as noted in Chapter 2—has assets estimated at between 1.1 and 2.2 billion U.S. dollars, over which the Tamil Nadu Endowments Department has no control, may be behind the charges.

122 Vijayendrasarasvati was officially appointed as successor to the gaddī of the Kāṇṭī māṭha in 1987.
123 http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-anand231104.htm, p. 2
However, many prominent people, including Jayalalitā, have denied these allegations.

Jayendrasarasvatī and Vijayendrasarasvatī were granted bail on 10th December, when they returned to a significant welcome in Kāncīpuram. A court hearing is scheduled in the Chengalpatta Sessions Court for January 2006 for the charges of murder and those related to the assault on Rādhākrṣṇan.

7.8 Concluding remarks

In the Introduction to this book, one of the hypotheses proposed was that the projection by the Brahmanical tradition of the image of the ‘lone male samnyāsī’ (beyond caste, ritual and social engagement), though influential even today, is misleading. Firstly, although the samnyāsī is projected as being ‘beyond caste’ both in Brahmanical texts and in many contemporary anthropological and Hindu studies reviews, it is evident from our survey of Daśanāmī institutions in the first three chapters of this book that caste has an important influence on the life of the samnyāsī. Secondly, even though most Brahmanical texts proscribe samnyāsa for women, references in the Introduction and Chapter 1 illustrate both the historical and the current existence of numerous women samnyāsin-s.

Noted in the Introduction were the studies of Dumont (1960; 1998) and Burghart (1978; 1983a; 1983b; 1996). It was observed that Dumont’s seminal article of 1960, which apprehended the image presented in Brahmanical texts of the ‘lone’ samnyāsī who lives independently of the conventional social world, ignored the renunciate’s necessary initiation into a new social order, namely a renunciate institution. Burghart’s more sophisticated model, which was refined in his later publications, of parallel social orders whereby the political realm and renunciate institutions are juxtaposed, while improving on Dumont’s analysis, was also found to be inadequate—even if initially useful for understanding a complex range of phenomena—for encapsulating the complex roles that renunciates have played and

1990s under the stewardship of Jayendrasarasvatī, the Kāncī matha significantly expanded its investments in hospitals, schools and colleges (http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-anand231104.htm, p. 3).
continue to play. In the previous section, the influences of some samnyāsī-ś on the political world at the highest level were presented. Such involvement undermines the neat distinctions between social worlds that Burghart articulated. I would contend that the roles of samnyāsī-ś and other renunciates are historically too complex to be captured in any kind of binary model, even though such models may serve as useful navigatory schemes.

Several ethnographies were cited in the Introduction to illustrate how samnyāsī-ś are not only lone mendicants, but are settled as castes in various regions of India, performing a variety of roles, as priests, farmers and traders. Many of these settlements seem to have been established by ex-mercenaries after the demise of the samnyāsī nāgā armies during the nineteenth century, whose activities have been reviewed in this chapter. Amassed wealth was most probably, in some instances, also channelled into land and property now at the disposal of the akhāyā-ś and paramahamsa matha-ś. The role of samnyāsī-ś in the history of India since the sixteenth century is evidently complex, whether viewed from religious, economic or political perspectives; and the material presented in this book illustrates this.

Historically, there may well have been some old, male, Brahman ritualists who renounced ritual life and wandered alone. However, these Brahman samnyāsī-ś would have been already initiated into the Brahmanical world through upanayana. An important consideration is whether the many kinds of ascetics—who were not old Brahmins—mentioned by commentators during the first millennium could have adopted that way of life without being formally initiated by a guru. In the modern context, the samnyāsa rite, which has remained substantially stable in form since the earliest textual records (from around the third century BCE), simultaneously constitutes both a renunciation of a former social life, and an initiation into a spiritual lineage via a guru. The samnyāsī is not a ‘real’ and recognised samnyāsī unless he or she has passed through the virajā-homa under a guru. This is true today, and I have argued that it is highly improbable—but for some exceptions—that it was otherwise in the past, though this is difficult to substantiate. In general, lineages—inherit in guru-paramparā-ś—transmit religious teachings, a sectarian mythology and a sectarian identity, and engender institutions over time. It is this package that essentially constitutes a sect, whether in the context of settled samnyāsī communities, or amongst wandering sādhu-ś.

The analysis of the samnyāsa rite in a modern context (presented
in Chapter 3) illustrates how the two main wings of the Daśanāmīs come together on the occasions of its performance, when representatives from the monastic tradition also provide preceptors for the militant wing of the akhārā-s. The ten lineages of the Daśanāmīs, spread between the dandī-s, paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s, are brought together not only through initiation rites, but through the adoption of an identificatory structure, encapsulated in the information contained in the Mathāmnāya-s, texts which were analysed in Chapter 4. When the sannyāsī is initiated, the guru imparts to the candidate the relevant details regarding how his or her new name fits into the scheme of the Mathāmnāya-s, with its associated identificatory markers (brahmacārī name, gotra name, and sampradāya name) and association of the name with one of the four pīṭha-s, which has its jurisdiction and founding ācārya. Śaṅkara’s fame as an advaita philosopher, and his well-established reputation for performing a digvijaya and founding four maṭha-s and an order of Brahmanical ascetics, provide the specific substance that bonds the identity of the Daśanāmīs as a sect of sannyāsī-s. One of the central issues of this study was to investigate how this identity came to be forged, in the light of historical information which undermines the veracity of the Mathāmnāya-s’ presentation of the founding of the sect.

In the latter part of Chapter 4, it was shown how numerous maṭha-s have claimed to be founded by Śaṅkara, and that claims were being contested by several of them in the nineteenth century. Still today, the Kāṅcīpuram and the Śrīgerī maṭha are in dispute as to which one is the genuine southern pīṭha. Guru-paramparā-s were shown to be unreliable, and with the exception of the southern pīṭha-s, some of which appear to date from the thirteenth century, records of the other maṭha-s cannot be traced back further than about 250 years. In attempting to understand how the name of Śaṅkara came to be associated with the founding of a monastic tradition, the contents of his hagiographies were examined in Chapter 5. It was shown how the early hagiographies make no mention of the founding of maṭha-s, and that the four maṭha-s first appear in hagiographic work in an ‘incomplete’ form in the late sixteenth century at the earliest. Regarding the founding of a renunciatory order, amongst the twenty extant hagiographies, only in one of the later texts (Cidvilāsa’s Śaṅkara-vijaya-vilāsa) are the ‘ten names’ briefly enumerated. This text may be dated to the late sixteenth century (or slightly later), a period when, for the first time, the ‘ten names’ phrase also appears in other texts.
It is apparent from Śaṅkara’s own works (which were examined in Chapter 5) and the works of his immediate disciples (analysed in Chapter 6) that Śaṅkara and most of his disciples (Toṣaka, Sureśvara and Padmapāda) were not śaiva, yet Śaṅkara is projected as a śaiva in hagiographic works, which began to be produced around the fourteenth century. In Chapter 6 it was proposed that Śaṅkara, who was relatively unknown during his lifetime and for several centuries thereafter, was projected as an incarnation of Śiva by hagiographers in the image of their Vijayanagara patrons, who—in common with many other regents of the Deccan between the eighth and fifteenth centuries—were initiated into Śaivism by śaiva rāja-guru-s. This established Śaṅkara’s reputation as a śaiva, yet, as mentioned, the hagiographies generally fail to provide the key features central to Daśanāmī identity, namely that Śaṅkara founded four matha-s and an order of ascetics.

In Chapter 6 it was also shown how the early Vijayanagara regents patronised Śrīgerī from the mid-fourteenth century, effectively establishing a lineage and a matha that represented a ‘new’, orthodox form of advaita Śaivism. However, it was evinced that there is no historical evidence to associate Śaṅkara with the founding of a matha at any of the places now recognised as Śaṅkarite pīṭha-s, including Śrīgerī. In this chapter (Chapter 7) political developments during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been analysed, and it has been proposed that these developments provide an entirely adequate context for understanding the formation of an identity for a Hindu sect such as the Daśanāmīs. It was during this period that militant akhārā-s of all the sects appear to have formed, and it was proposed that the structure of Daśanāmī identity may have been influenced by the model of sectarian identity that had been developed by Sūfī orders, who during this period exercised significant influence within the dominant Islamicate polities of north India. Through the creation of an orthodox Daśanāmī identity, with paramparā-s receding to Śaṅkara, lineages of both militant nāgā samnyāsī-s and those pertaining to the monastic tradition were forged into a sect with an identity, gaining added prestige from being founded by someone who was, by then, a famous Brahman samnyāsī. It has been proposed that the tradition embodied in the Mathāmnāya-s is possibly of much more recent origin than is generally believed.

It should be emphasised that the conclusions derived from this study of religious developments in South Asia from the early to late mediaeval period are but a ‘thesis in process’: further information
may come to light that could undermine any aspect of this study; and 
constructive criticism is invited. From the outset, no disrespect was 
intended to any individual or organisation, and it should be cautioned 
that this is a study of religious institutions that may have little to do 
with anyone’s spiritual experience. As noted in the Introduction, 
those *saṃnyāsī*-s who find their way into history and books such as 
this do so because their engagement with ‘the world’ has in some 
capacity rendered them historically visible. Those *saṃnyāsī*-s who live 
according to the ideals of *saṃnyāsa*, engaged in quiet contemplation 
of the divinity, detached from the world, and shunning the glare of 
any kind of publicity, will remain forever unnoticed, yet vital to the 
spiritual inheritance of South Asia.
APPENDIX 1

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF ORTHODOX, REFORMIST AND RADICAL SĀDHU-S

1.1 The chart below constitutes an overview of Tripathi’s (1978:156, 242–249) research regarding sādhu sects active in the state of Uttar Pradesh during the time of his sociological investigation. The survey covers a total of 500 sādhu-s in various sects.

\[(V): vaiṣṇava. (S): śāiva. (N): nṛguṇī\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orthodox sects</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Orthodox sects</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Śrī Sampradāya (V)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>27. Kāpālika (S)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nimbārkī (V)</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>28. Śākta (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Brahma Sampradāya (V)</td>
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<td>Total:</td>
<td>354</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Madhva Gauḍīya (V)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Rāmānandī (V)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Vāllabhaacārī (V)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sakhī (V)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Udāsin (V)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Svāmī Nārāyaṇ (V)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Dhāmī (V)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Dharmīśvarī (V)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Mahānuḥbhāva (V)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Hariścāndi (V)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Malākdāśī (V)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Parināmī (V)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Rāśik (V)</td>
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<td>18. Rādhā Vallabhī (V)</td>
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<td>19. Rādhā Rāmnī (V)</td>
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<td>22. Aghorī (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Liṅgāyat (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Kīnārāmī (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Karaliṅgī (S)</td>
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<td>26. Gaṅpatya (S)</td>
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### Reformist Sects

<table>
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<th>%</th>
<th>Sect</th>
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<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Brähma Kumārī (N)</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>33. Bavāri (N)</td>
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<td>2. Kabīr (N)</td>
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<td>3. Dādū (N)</td>
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<td>35. Sat Sain (S)</td>
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<td>4. Nirmala (N)</td>
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<td>5. Bhagat (N)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Bābā Lālī (N/V)</td>
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<td>7. Caran Dāśī (V)</td>
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<td>8. Dariyadāśī (N)</td>
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<td>12. Dariya (N)</td>
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<td>14. Garībdāśī (N)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Gulabdāśī (N)</td>
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<td>16. Lāl (N/V)</td>
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<td>20. Niraṅkārī (N)</td>
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<td>21. Paltu Sahabī (N)</td>
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<td>22. Prem Prakāśī (N)</td>
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<td>23. Panap (N/V)</td>
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<td>24. Raidāśī (V)</td>
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<td>25. Rām Sanehī (N/V)</td>
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<td>26. Śīva Nārāyanī (N/S)</td>
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<td>27. Satta Nāmī (N)</td>
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<td>28. Śītā Rāmī (N/V)</td>
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<td>29. Sādh (N)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Saheb (N)</td>
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<td>31. Sutharā (N)</td>
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<td>32. Seva (N)</td>
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</table>

### Radical Sects

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sect</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ānanda Margī (N)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Muni Samājī (N)</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kumbhī Patia (S)</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand total: 500 100
1.2 The chart below comprises the various sects who were resident in the ascetic maṭha-s of Benares in 1968, as published by Sinha and Saraswati (1978:51).

\[[S] = \text{śaiva. } (V) = \text{vaiṣṇava. } (SK) = \text{sikh}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Daṇḍī (S) (Daśanāmī)</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Nāgā (S) (Daśanāmī)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Paramahamsa (S)(Daśanāmī)</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Rāmānandī (V)</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  Rāmānuji (V)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  Nimbarka (V)</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.  Madhva (V)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.  Gauḍīya (V)</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.  Viṣṇusvāmī (V)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.  Kabirpanthī (V)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.  Garībdāsī (V)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.  Dādūpanthī (V)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.  Ghūṣa (V)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.  Svāmīnārāyaṇ (V)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.  Gorakhpanthī (S)</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.  Nirmala (SK)</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.  Udāsin (SK)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.  Nihaṅg Sikh (SK)</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.  Bauddha</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.  (Others)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

ŚRĪ MAṬHĀMNĀYASETU, MAHĀNUŚĀSANAM, ŚEṢĀMNĀYA

Śrī Maṭhāmnāyasetu

Śāradā Maṭhāmnāyah

1. prathamaḥ paścimāmnāyaḥ śāradāmaṭha ucyate /
kītavāraḥ sampradāyas tasya tīrthāsramau pade //
2. dvārakākhyāṁ hi kṣetram syād devaḥ siddhesvaraḥ /
bhadraṅgī tu devī syād ācāryo viśvarūpakaḥ //
3. gomātīrtham amalām brahmacārī svarūpakāḥ /
sāmadevaśa vaktā ca tatra dharmaṁ samācaret //
4. jīvātmaparamātmaikya bodho yatra bhaviṣyatī /
tattvam asi mahāvaṅkaṁ gotro ’vigata ucyate //
5. sindhusauvārasaurāstraḥmahārāṣṭras tathāntaraḥ /
deśaḥ paścimadikṣṭāṁ ye śāradāmaṭhabhāgaṁaṁ //

1 The Sanskrit texts (including verse numbers) presented below are as contained in Mishra (2001:1–52). Several typographical errors have been corrected, and variant readings of words and phrases are occasionally substituted from other versions of Maṭhāmnāya-s, notably Sarma’s (1963:642–652), where Mishra’s text is unclear. For the translation, Mishra’s (2001:1–52) English translation was consulted, as was that of Dazey (1987:577–602), and the Hindi translations of Upādhyāya (1967:601–617) and Miṣra (1996:33–57). In the various published versions of the Maṭhāmnāya-s the order of some of the verses is different, even though the content is substantially similar; this has been indicated in the footnotes. The published versions of the Maṭhāmnāya-s (given below) generally follow the verse order of either Sarma (1963) or Mishra (2001). [1’ =line; ‘v’ =verse.]


2 Hastāmalaka (Upādhyāya, v. 2)
6. trivenīsaṅgame tīrthe tattvamasyādi lakaṅke /3
snāyāttattvārtha bhāvena tūrthānāmā sa ucyate //
7. āśrama-grahaṅca prauḍha āśāpāśa vīvarjitaḥ /
yātāyāta vinir Mukta evāśrama ucyate4 //
8. kītādayo viśeṣeṇa vāryante yatra janta vah /
bhūtānukampaya nityaṃ kītavāraḥ sa ucyate //
9. sva svarūpaṃ vijānāti svadharme purāṇalakaḥ /
svānande kṛiḍate nityaṃ svarūpo bāṭuṛ ucyate //

Govardhana Maṭhānāyāḥ

10. pūrvānāyōo dviṭiyāḥ syād govardhanamaṭhaḥ saṃṛtaḥ /5
bhogavāraḥ sampradāyo vanāranye pade smṛte //
11. puruṣottamaṃ tu kṣetraṃ syā jagnānātho 'syā devatā /
vimalākhyā hi devi syād ācāryaḥ padmapādakaḥ //
12. tūrthā mahodadhiḥ praktaṃ brahmaṃ cā na prakāśakaḥ /
mahāvākyaṃ ca tatra syāt prājñānam brahma cocya //
13. ṣrgvedaṇaḥanam caiva kāśyapo gotraṃ ucyate /
āigaṇaṅkalingaṃ ca magadhotkalabbarbaraḥ /
govardhanamaṭhaḥdhīnā deśāḥ prācī vyavasthitāḥ //
14. suramye nirjane sthāne vane vāṣaṃ karoti yaḥ /6
āśāṇḍhāvinirrmukto vanaṇmā sa ucyate //
15. araṇye samṛṣṭhito nityam ānande nandane vane /
tyaktāv sarvam idaṃ viśvam āraṇyaṃ parikāryat //
16. bhogo viṣaya ityukto vāryate yena jīvinām /
sampradāya yatānāṇ ca bhogavāraḥ sa ucyate //
17. svayam jyotīr vijāṇāti yogayuktiṣāradaḥ /
tattvajñānapraκkāśena tena prktaḥ prakāśakaḥ //

Jyotīr Maṭhānāyāḥ

18. tṛtiyaṃ tūttarāmāṇyo jyotīr nāma mathi bhavet /
śrīmaṭhaḥ ceti vā tasya nāmāntaraṃ udīritam //8

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3 vv. 6–8 = l. 1–4 in Chakraborty (1973:180).
4 “eṣa” (UŚādhyāy, v. 7); “etad āśrama lakaṅgaṃ” (Chakraborty, l. 4).
5 A few lines of a Maṭhānāyā pertaining to the Govardhan maṭha that are not to be found in other texts, even though the information contained therein is substantially similar, are included by Chakraborty (1973:181):

“govardhana maṭhe ramye vimalāpiṭha saṅgake /
pūrvānāye bhogavāre śrīmat kāṣyapa gotrajaḥ //
māḍhyavasya sutaḥ śrīmān sanandana iti śrutaḥ /
prakāśa brahmaṃ cā ṣrgvedi sarvaśāstra viṣ /
śrīpamādaḥ prathamācāryaṃvēryavanābhyaṣicacya” //”

6 “suramya nirjane deśe vāṣaṃ nityaṃ karoti yaḥ” (Chakraborty, l. 5).
7 “āśāpāśvinirrmukto vanaṇmā sa ucyate” (Chakraborty, l. 6).
8 “ānandavāro viṇyeyāḥ sampradādyo 'syā siddhitṛ” (Śarma, p. 649, v. 7).

APPENDIX 2 275
19. ānandavāro viṁśeyāh saṁpradāya 'syā siddhidāḥ /
padāṁi tasya khyātāni giriparvataśāgarāḥ //
20. badarīkāśrāmalah kṣetraṁ devo nārāyaṇaṁ ānātāḥ /
pūrṇāgiriś ca devī syād ācāryas toṭakaṁ ānātāḥ //
21. tūrthām ca ālakanaṁākhyāṁ 9 ānando brahmacāry abhūt /
 22. ayam ātma brahma ceti mahāvākyam udāhṛtam //
23. atharvavedavaktā ca bhṛgvākyāṁ gotram ucyate /
 24. karuṅaśmirakāṃbojapāṇālādīvibhaṅgatā /
25. jyotirmāthavaśā desā udiṣṭidgavasthitāḥ //
26. vāso girivane niyam gītādhyaṇanātatapanaḥ /10
 27. gambhīrācalabuddhiṣ ca11 girīnāmā sa ucyate //
28. vasan parvatamūleṣu prauḍhaṁ jñānaṁ vibharte yaḥ /12
 29. sārasāraṁ vijānāti parvataḥ parīkṛtyate //
30. tattvasāgara gambhīra jñānataṁparapraṣaṁ /13
 31. maryādāṁ vai na laṅghyeta sāgarah parīkṛtyate /14
32. ānando hi vilāsāśa ca vāryate yena jīvinām /
 33. saṁpradāya yatīnām ca ānandavāraṁ sa ucyate //
34. satyaṁ jñānamanantaṁ yo niyamām dhyāyet tattvavit /
   svānande ramate caiva ānandāḥ parīkṛtyate //

Śrīgeri Mathānmāyaḥ

28. cathurtho daksināṁnāyaḥ śrīgeri tu maṁtho bhavet /
 29. saṁpradāyo bhūrivāro bhūrbhuvo gotramucyate //
30. padāṁi trīṇaṁ khyātāṁ sārasvataṁ bhāratati purī /
 31. rāme śvarāhavayaṁ kṣetraṁ ādīvārāhadevatā //
32. kāmākṣi tasya devī syāt sarvākāmamphala pradaṁ /
 33. hastāmalaka15 ācāryas tuṅgabhārdeti tūrthakam //
34. caitanyākhyo brahmacārī yajurvedasya pāthakaḥ /
 35. āhaṁ brahmāni tatraśa mahāvākyam samīritam //
36. ānāndradrāvīḍakāṛṇāṁtakerālādīpāhradevataḥ /
 37. śṛṅgeriyadhīnā desās te hy avācīdīgavasthitāḥ //
38. svarajñānarato16 niyamāṁ svaravādī kavīśvaraḥ /
 39. saṁsārasāgarāsārā hantā 'syā sa sarasvati //17

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9 “tūrthamtvālakanaṇḍakhyam nandākhyo...” (Śrīma, p. 649, v. 9).
10 “vāso girivare(?) niyamāṁ gītādhyaṇe hi tatparaḥ” (Chakraborty, l. 9).
11 “... vuddhiṣca ...” (Chakraborty, l. 10).
12 “vasset parvatamūleṣu prauḍha yo dhyāna tatparaḥ” (Chakraborty, l. 11).
13 “vasset sāgaragambhīre dhanarataṁ paripraghaḥ” (Chakraborty, l. 13).
14 “maryādaśchāhālanghyenā sāgarah parīkṛtitaḥ” (Chakraborty, l. 14).
15 Suresvara (Upādhyāya, p. 608, v. 3); Prthvīdhara (Śrīma, p. 649, v. 13). Śrīma identifies Prthvīdhara as Āstāmalaka.
16 “svarajñānavavo ...” (Chakraborty, l. 15).
17 “saṁsāra-sāgare śārābhūjū ya sa sarasvatī” (Chakraborty, l. 16).
34. vidyabhāreṇa samŚuptaṇāḥ sarvabhāram pariṣṭvajan
duśkhabhāram na jaṇāti bhāratī pariṣṭvātyate

35. jñānatattvena samŚuptaṇāḥ pūrṇaṭattvavapade
parabrahmarato niyaṃ puṛṇāmā sa ucyate

36. bhūriśabdena sauvarṇyaṃ vāryate yena jīvinām
sampradāyo yatīnām ca bhūriśvāraḥ sa ucyate

37. cinnatram caityarāhitaṃ anantam ajaran śivam
yo jaṇāti sa vai vidvān caitanyam tad vidhiyate

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Mahānūśaśanam

38. maryādaiśa suvijñeyā caturmāṭhavิดhiyinī
tām etām samuपāsṛitya acārāḥ sthāpitaḥ kramāt

39. āmnāyāḥ kathitāḥ hy ete yatīnām ca pūthak pūthak
taiḥ sarvaśi caturacārāyārniyogena yathākramam

40. prayoktavyāḥ svadharmesu śāsanīyās tato 'nyathā
kurvanu eva satatam ajanāṃ dharaṇītale

41. viruddhācataraṇa-prāptāv acārānām samājnāyā
lokān saṃśilayanty eva svadharmāpratirodhataḥ

42. sva-svarāṣṭrapratīṣṭhitaiśa saucārāḥ svudhiyātām
maṭhe tu nīyato vāsā acārayasya na uyuṣate

43. varṇāśrama sādacārā asmābhir ye prasādhitaḥ
rakṣanīyāḥ sadaivaite sva sva bhāge yathāvidhi

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18 Mishra’s alternative rendering of terms are utilised in this line, which corresponds to Chakraborty, l. 17.
19 “pariṣṭvātyate” (Chakraborty, l. 18).
20 “tattve” (Chakraborty, l. 19).
21 =Chakraborty, l. 20.
22 Śarma’s version of the Mahānūśaśanam omissions vv. 38 and 56. Most of the verses of this text also appear in Śarma’s Mathānāyasya (pp. 649–650, vv. 21–48), which has several verses (14, 15, 16, 44) not contained in Mishra’s version of that text. Upādhyāy (pp. 609–612) includes v. 38 (of the text above) as the last verse of the Śrūgērī Mathānāyā, and begins the Mahānūśaśanam at v. 39. Misra (1996:49–57) includes most of the verses of the Mahānūśaśanam in the latter part of the Śeṣāṁnāya (subsequent to v. 10).
25 “sarve” (Śharma).
27 vv. 40–41 =Śarma, vv. 15–16.
28 “niyam” (Śarma, v. 22).
30 “rakṣanīyāstā evaite sva sve...” (Śarma, v. 23; Upādhyāy, p. 613, Mahānūśaśanam, v. 5).
44. yato vināṣṭir mahatū dharmasyāsya31 praṇayate / māṇḍyaṁ santyāyam evātra dāksyaṁ eva samāsrayet //
45. parasparavibhāge tu na praveṣaḥ kadācana / parasprena kartavyaḥ hy ācāreṇya vyavasthitih //
46. māryādāyā vināśena lupyeraḥ niyamāḥ śubhāḥ / kalahāṅgārasampattir atastāṁ32 parivarrjayet //
47. parivrāḍ āryamaryādō māmakināṁ yathāvīḍhi / catuṣpithāḥgīm sattāṁ praṇuṣṭyāc ca pūthak pūthak //
48. śucir jītendriyo veda vedāṅgādi vīśāraḍah v / yogajñāḥ sarvasastraṅāṁ sa madāsthānam āpnyāt //33
49. uktalakaṇa sampannaḥ syāc cen maṭpīthabhāg bhavet / anyathārūḍhaḥpītho 'pi nigrāhārḥo maṇiṣināṁ //
50. na jātu maṭhām ucchindayād adhiékāriny upasthite / vighnānāṁ api bāhulyād eṣa dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ //
51. asmātpāṭhe34 samārūḍhaḥ parivṛāḍ uktaḷakaṇaḥ / aham eveti viṣṇeṣyo yasya deva iti śruteḥ //35
52. eka evābhiseccyaḥ36 syād ante laṃḍa-sammataḥ / tattatāpīṭhe kramenāiva na bahu yuṣyate vakṣit //37
53. sudhaṃyaṁ saṃautsukyaṇivūttyai dharmahetave / deva-rājopacaṛāṃś ca yathāvad anupālayet //38
54. kevalaṁ dharmam uddīṣya vibhavo brāhmaṇecasām / vihiṣṭaḥ copaṅkāraḥ padmapatranaṁ vrajey //
55. sudhaṃyaḥ hi mahārājas tathāyey ca nareśvarāḥ / dharmapāramparirmetāṁ pālayantu nirantarām //
56. cāturvarṇyaṁ yathāyogyaṁ vāṃmanaḥ kāya-karmabhiḥ / gurōḥ pūtham samarceta vibhāgaṇukraṁena vai //
57. dhārāṁ ālabhya rājanaḥ praṇāḥyāḥ karabhāgināḥ / kūtādhiṅkārā cācāryā dharmatas tadvad eva hi //
58. dharmo mūlaṁ manuṣyaṁ sa ca cācārya-vālambanaḥ / tasmād cācārya-samuccaṁś śāsanaṁ sarvato (a)dhikam //
59. tasmāt sarva-prayatnena śāsanaṁ sarva-sammatam //39 cācāryasya viśeṣena hy audāryabharaḥbhāginaḥ //

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31 “...dharmasyatra...” (Śarma, v. 24).
33 “...tantrāṇāṁ” (Śarma, Mathāṃmāyaśeṣu, v. 28); “...śāstraṅāṁ sa madāsthānam āpnyāt” (?) (Mishra).
34 “...piṭhe...” (Śarma, v. 31).
36 “...evāviseccyaḥ” (?) (Mishra).
37 v. 52 =Śarma, Mathāṃmāyaśeṣu, v. 52; Upāḍhyāy, v. 14.
39 vv. 56–58 =Śarma, Mathāṃmāyaśeṣu, vv. 40–42; Upāḍhyāy, vv. 18–20. (References to Śarma below are to the Mathāṃmāyaśeṣu.)
40 v. 59 =Śarma, v. 46; Upāḍhyāy, v. 21.
60. अचार्याक्षीपा दान्दास् तु कुत्वा पपानि मनवाह् / 
nirmanalāḥ svargamāyaṁti saṁtaḥ suktūṁ yathā ///
113
61. ity evaṁ manur apy āha gautamo 'pi viśeṣatāḥ / 
viśīṣṭa sīṣṭacāro 'pi mūlād eva prasiddhyati //
62. tān ācāropadesās ca rājadandaś ca pālayet / 
tasmād ācārya rājānāvanavyadyau na nindayet ///
63. dharmasya"44 paddhatūr īry eṣa jagataḥ sthiīhetave / 
sarvavarṣāraṇaṁ hi yathāśāstraṁ vidhiyate ///
64. kūte viśvāgurur brahmā tretāyāṁ uṣisattamah / 
dvāpere vyāsa eva syāt kalāv atra bhavāmy aham //
65. maṭhāśi catvāra ācārāya catvāraś ca dhurandharāḥ / 
sampradāyaś ca catvāra eṣā dharmavyavasthitī //

Śeṣāmnāya47

66. athordhvāṁ śeṣā āmnāyās te viṣiṣṭanaukā vigrāhāḥ / 
pañcamas tūrdhva āmnāyaḥ suñerumāṭha ucitate / 
sampradāya 'syā kāṣi syāt satyajñānābhīde pade //
67. kailasāḥ kṣetramity utktaṁ devata 'syā niraṁjanaḥ / 
devī māyā tathācārya īśvaro 'syā prakāṛitaḥ //
68. tūrthāṁ tu mānasāṁ proktam brahmataṭṭavāvagāḥi tat / 
tatra saṁyogamātreṇa saṁnyāsaṁ samupāśrayet //
69. suṣmavedasya vaktvā ca tatra dharme samācāret / 
ṣaṭṭhaḥ svātmākhyā āmnāyaḥ paramātmā maṭho mahāṁ //
70. sattvatoṣah sampradāyaḥ padam yogam anusmaret / 
nabhāḥ sarovaran kṣetram48 parahāṁsa 'syā devata //
71. devī syān mānasī māyā ācārāya cetanābhayaḥ / 
tripuṭṭūrtham utkūṣtam49 sarvapunyapradāyakam //
72. bhava pāśavināśaya saṁnyāsaṁ tatra ca āśrayet / 
vedāntavākyaवाक्यं ca tatra samācāret //

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41 v. 60 =Śarma, v. 43; Upādhyāy, v. 22.
42 v. 61 =Śarma, v. 45; Upādhyāy, v. 23.
44 “dharmapaddhatiresa...” (Śarma, v. 47).
45 v. 63 =Śarma, v. 47; Upādhyāy, v. 25.
46 v. 65 =Śarma, v. 39. Śarma’s text concludes: “iti śrīmatparamahāṁsaparivrā- 
jakācārya śrīmacchaṇkara bhagavatktṛa maṭhāmnāyaścatavaraḥ maṇḍāpptāḥ”. [Thus 
are the four-fold maṭhāmnāya-s, written by the honourable paramahāṁsa ascetic, 
Śrī Saṅkara Bagavat, completed.]
47 This section of text is referred to as ‘Maṭhāmnāyasetu’ by Śarma; as ‘Śeṣāmnāya’ 
by Upādhyāy (pp. 310–311). Miśra appends this text to the previous section.
48 “nabhikundalī” (the centre of the coil) is given as the kṣetra by Kunhan Raja 
(1933:49).
49 The ṛṣṭha is given as Trikuṭi by Kunhan Raja.
73. saptamo niśkalāṃnyāyaḥ sahasrārkadyutir maṭhaḥ / 
sampradayo (a)sya sacchisyaḥ śṛiguroḥ pāduke pade //
74. tatrānubhūtiḥ kṣetraṃ syād viśvarūpo (a)sya devatā / 
devi cicchaktināṃti hi ācāryaḥ sadguruḥ smūtaḥ //
75. sacchāstraśravaṇaṃ tirthaṃ jārāmūtyuvināśakam / 
puruṇānandaprasādāna saṃnyāsaṃ tatra cāśrayet //50

50 Kunhan Raja’s text (Mathāmnāyopaniṣat) also details seven āmnāya-s (the four standard āmnāya-s, and three other śēṣāmnāya-s). The main details of all seven āmnāya-s are similar to those presented above.
TRANSLATION

Śrī Maṭhāmnāyasetu [The division of the revered traditions]

Śāradā Maṭhāmnāya

1. The first is the western tradition (āmnāya). The monastery (maṭha) is called Śāradā. Its sampradāya is kīṭavāra. The [saṃnyāsin] names ['titles', pada] are Tīrtha [holy ford] and Āśrama [hermitage].

2. The kṣetra is Dvārakā. The male deity is prescribed as Siddheśvara. The female deity is Bhadrakāli. The [first] ācārya is Viṣvarūpaka.52

3. The tīrtha is the pure Gomati [river], the brahmaċāri [name] is Svarūpaka; and he is a reciter of the Śāmaveda; he should observe the dharma therein.

4. There will be known the unity of jīvātman and paramātman.

5. "Tattvamasi" 53 is the mahāvākyya. The gotra is called Avigat.

6. Sindhu, Sauvāra, Saurāṣṭra, Mahārāṣṭra and other places also are the territories in the western direction apportioned to the Śāradā maṭha.

7. "Tattvamasi" is the figurative meaning of the tīrtha at the confluence of the three rivers. He who bathes there, in the essence of that saying, is called Tīrtha.

8. He who is mature, who has shunned the noose of desire, is seized of [the condition of] Āśrama. Free from coming and going, only he is called 'Āśrama'.


10. He who knows himself is surrounded and protected by his own dharma. He always amuses himself in his own bliss. A young lad [a Brahman brahmaċāri ] is called Svarūpa.

Govardhana Maṭhāmnāya

10. The second tradition is the eastern, prescribed as the Govardhana maṭha.

The sampradāya is Bhogavāra. The [saṃnyāsin] titles prescribed are Vana [forest] and Arāṇya [jungle].

51 For the sense of specific terms used in the Maṭhāmnāya-s, see ch. 4.2–4.3.
52 Hastāmalaka (Upādhyāy, v. 2).
53 "You are that".
11. The kṣetra is Puruṣottama [and] its male deity is Jagannāth. The female deity is Vimalā. The [first] ācārya is Padmapādaka.
12. The ārtha is proclaimed as the ocean. The brahma [name] is Prakāśaka.

And the mahāvākyā there is “prajñānaṃ brahma”.54
13. The Rgveda is studied, [and] the gotra is that of Kāśyapa. Āṅga, Vāṅga, Kālīṅga, Magadha, Uṭkala and Barbarā are the territories situated in the east, presided over by the Govardhan matha.
14. He who makes [his] dwelling a place in a uninhabited forest is free from the ties of hope, [and] is called Vana.
15. Situated in the jungle, he dwells in eternal bliss in a sylvan paradise.
Having renounced this whole world, he is called Aranya [jungle].55
16. He keeps a distance from peoples’ so-called pleasures and sensual enjoyments.
And the sampradāya of the ascetics (yatī-s) is called Bhogavara.
17. He who is proficient in the practice of yoga, producing light within himself, in the manifestation of knowledge of reality, is called Prakāśa.

Jyotir Mathāmnāya
18. The third tradition is the northern tradition of the matha called Jyotir.
It is also [called] Śrī-Maṭha, which is its other name.
19. The sampradāya is known as Ānandavara, which confers perfection. Its titles (pada-s) are called Giri, Parvata and Sāgara.
20. The kṣetra is Badrīkāśrama; the male deity is [to be remembered as] Nārāyaṇa, and the female deity is Pūrṇāgiri. Its [first] ācārya is [to be remembered as] Toṭaka.56
21. The ārtha is the Alaknanda [river]. Ānanda is the brahma [name].
“Ayamātmā brahma”57 is the mahāvākyā.
22. The Atharvaveda is spoken, [and] the gotra is said to be Bhṛgu.
The [territory] apportioned is Kuru, Kāśmīr, Kāmboja, Pāñcāla, et cetera.
Other territories situated in the north are also included under the authority of the Jyotir matha.
23. Living in the forests and hills, he is eternally engaged in the study of the Gītā.

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54 “Knowledge is Brahman”.
55 “lakṣaṇaṃ kīla” (Chakraborty, l. 8, instead of “parikāryate”).
56 “Troṭaka” (Śarma, p. 649, v. 9).
57 “The self is Brahman”. 
[He is] thoughtful, steadfast, wise, and is called Giri.

24. He who lives in the mountain valley, his knowledge is mature. He knows the quintessence of everything [and] is called Parvata [mountain].

25. He grasps the gem of knowledge [in] the deep ocean [sāgara]. He who verily never exceeds his [moral or juridical] limits is called Sāgara.

26. He distances himself from the pleasures and enjoyments of the world [living beings]. The sampradāya of the ascetics [here] is called Anandavara.

27. [The ascetic] knows the truth [which is] the culmination of knowledge [and] always thinks about truth. He enjoys the delight in himself and is called Ānanda.

Śrīnerī Maṇḍāmnāya

28. The fourth tradition, then, is [that of] the Śrīnerī matha. The sampradāya is Bhurivāra [and] the gotra is Bhūrībhva.

29. The three titles [pada] are named Sarasvatī, Bhāratī and Purī. The kṣetra is called Rāmeśvara [and] the male deity is Ādi Vārāha.

30. Its female deity is Kāmākṣī, who bestows the fruits of all desire. Hastāmalaka58 is the [first] ācārya [and] the Tuṅgabhadra [river] is the tīrtha.

31. The brahmacārī name is Caitanya; he recites the Yajurveda. The mahāvāky to be uttered there is “Ahaṁ Brahmaṁ”.59

32. Āndhra, Dravida, Kārṇātaka, Kerala, et cetera, are the apportioned territories which are included as being subject to [the authority] of Śrīnerī.

33. Always intent upon self-control, uttering [the mantra] svar, a lord amongst poets, the defeater of the entire ocean of worldly existence, he is called Sarasvatī.

34. He who is full of the weight of knowledge, he relinquishes the burden of everything. He does not know the burden of suffering, and is called Bhāratī.

35. [He] filled with true knowledge, established in a condition filled with truth, [and] always gratified in the highest Brahman, is called Purī [town].

36. He who utters correct sounds [speaks truly], through many words, keeps a distance from the [beings of] the world. The sampradāya of the ascetics [here] is called Būrīvāra.

37. Consciousness, freed from mental fluctuations, is infinite, undecaying, [and] auspicious. He who knows this is verily wise, [and] he is called Caitanya.

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58 See fn.15.

59 “I am Brahman”.
Mahānuśāsanam [The great instruction]

38. This rule giving the instruction for the four matha-s is to be well discerned. The ācārya-s [who are] established in succession, are to be supported by this rule.

39. The traditions (āmnāya) of the ascetics, which are declared, are [to be] separately distinguished. All of these four ācārya-s, through [this] injunction, [are to be appointed] in succession.

40. [People], engaged otherwise, should be made to perform their own dharma-s, under this order. They [the ācārya-s] should constantly wander on the surface of the earth.

41. If people engage in forbidden conduct, they should be guided in [the non-obstruction of] good conduct of their own dharma, by the the ācārya-s.

42. Each one properly abiding in his own territory, wandering around is to be practised. The ācārya should not make a permanent residence in a matha.

43. We have clearly presented the [rules for] the virtuous conduct of varna and āśrama. According to [this] injunction, the rules should be preserved by each [ācārya] in his own area.

44. Since the great destruction of dharma is produced by this [failure to uphold dharma], indolence should be renounced, [and] one should just rely on skill [and ability].

45. There should be no intrusion into one another’s territory at any time. [This] should be mutually observed, arranged by [each] ācārya.

46. If, through the destruction of the boundaries, these auspicious injunctions are violated, [then] then the embers of strife [will] be fanned [aggravated], [which] should be avoided.

47. The wandering ascetic, according to [this] injunction, [should observe] the boundary [established by me], [and] the separate existence [i.e. non-interference] enjoined upon the four pītha-s.

48. He who is pure, a master of his senses, [and] proficient in the Veda and Vedāṅga, et cetera, [and] is a knower of yoga [and] all śāstra-s, he should obtain our rank and position.

49. A perfected person, who has the aforementioned qualities, should be entitled to my pītha. Otherwise, even one who has ascended the pītha [who does not have the requisite qualities] may be restrained by the wise.

50. A qualified person who is installed at the matha should never be uprooted [from there], even should many difficulties arise. This is the eternal dharma.

51. The wandering ascetic, who has the aforementioned qualities, [and] who ascends our pītha, he should be known by [his saying] “It is I”, as one hears it said “yasya deva” (lord of whom).60

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60 A famous scriptural saying from Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad 6.23: yasya deva parābhaktiryanāthāde me tathā guru...
52. In the end, only one [ācārya] who has the [agreed upon] characteristic is [to be] anointed [as ācārya]. [This is to be done] at each pītha, [and] only in succession; [and] there should not be more [than one ācārya] anywhere.

53. [Like] [king] Sudhanvā, possessed of the enthusiasm for the cause of dharma in creation, so he should protect the reverence to gods and kings.

54. Having explained the dharma of isolation, he is [shown to be] powerful among those whose minds are directed to Brahman. Let him wander; and help [will be] bestowed [on him] [through his] acting like a lotus petal.

55. The great king Sudhanvā and other rulers of men should continuously protect the dharma that is traditionally handed down.

56. The pītha of the guru should be honoured with speech, mind, body and actions, according with the propriety of the four varṇa-s, [and] verily, [it should be occupied] in due succession, [and] according to the [established territorial] divisions.

57. Kings, depending on support, are entitled to taxes from their subjects. Ācārya-s, [on whom] power is conferred, are [similarly] entitled to authority with respect to dharma.

58. Dharma is the root of humanity, and an ācārya is its support. Therefore, the instruction of a well-adorned ācārya is greater than everything.

59. Therefore, the instruction [of the ācārya], through all [his] continuous endeavour, is assented to by all people; the ācārya’s discrimination is [held] as a responsibility in his heart.

60. Men who have committed sins, but who are struck by the ācārya’s stick [i.e. punished], will enter heaven pure, like people who do good.

61. Thus, in this way, also Manu and also Gautama particularly declared. Even the conduct of the most learned of the learned ācārya-s becomes [is made] well known, from the root [as it were].

62. The instruction of the ācārya and the punishment of the king are for the welfare of the people. Therefore, the ācārya and the king should not be criticised, and should be properly respected.

63. This manual on dharma is for the maintenance of the world; it is indeed enjoined as a śāstra [scripture] upon people of all castes and stages of life.

64. In the Kṛta age Brahmadeva is the world-guru; in the Tretā age it is the most virtuous wise seers; in the Dvāpara age it is indeed Vyāsa; now, in the Kālī age, it is “I [am]”.

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61 A king from Kerala whom Śāṅkara meets in the Śāṅkara-dīg-vijaya.
62 Kevalam, pertaining to a meditative ascetic, kevalin.
63 Undisturbed by the muddy waters beneath.
65. *Dharma* is maintained by these [things]: the four *maṭha*-s, the four *ācārya*-s (who bear the burden [of responsibility]), and the four *sampradāya*-s.

**Śeṣāmnāya [The remaining doctrine]**

66. Next, there are the [other] remaining ‘heavenly’ [*ārdha*] āmnāya-s, [which are] distributed in the form of knowledge. The fifth āmnāya is the ‘heavenly’ *maṭha*, called the Sumeru *maṭha*. Its *sampradāya* is Kāśi [Banaras]; its titles [*pada*] are distinguished as truth and knowledge. The *kṣetra* is said to be [mount] Kailās. Its male deity is Nirañjana, [and] its female deity is Māyā. And its *ācārya* is worshipped as the Lord [*īśvara*].

67. The *tīrtha* is proclaimed as the mental one,[64] [*māṇasa*], which is absorbed in the essence of Brahman. There, through union [with Brahman], refuge should be taken in renunciation[*samnyāsa*].

68. The *tīrtha* is the joy of reality; the title [*pada*] is to be remembered as *yoga*. The ocean of the sky is the *kṣetra*, [and] the male deity is *parahāṃsa* [the highest kind of ascetic].

69. The sixth āmnāya is one’s own self. The ‘subtle’ *Veda* is spoken, and there dharmā should be observed. The great *maṭha* is the the great Self [*paramātman*].

70. The *sampradāya* is the joy of reality; the title [*pada*] is to be remembered as *yoga*. The ocean of the sky is the *kṣetra*, [and] the male deity is *parahāṃsa* [the highest kind of ascetic].

71. The female deity is Mānasī Māyā, and the *ācārya* is said to be Cetan [self/intelligence]. The *tīrtha* is Triputī which brings forth the bestowal of all merit.

72. There, one should resort to *samnyāsa* for the destruction of worldly bonds, and the sentences of Vedānta are uttered. There, *dharma* is to be practised.

73. The seventh āmnāya is the Niśkala [stainless?];66 the *maṭha* is Sahasrār-kadhuti [the splendid of a thousand suns]. Its *sampradāya* is Sacchiṣya [the good student]; the holy footprints [or wooden sandals, *pādukā*] of the guru are the title [*pada*].

74. The *kṣetra* there is realisation [*anubhūti*]; the male deity is Viśvarūpa [the form of the universe]; the female deity is verily named Cit-śakti; the *ācārya* is declared as Sadguru.

75. The *tīrtha* is the hearing of sacred scripture, which is the destroyer of old-age and death. Through the grace of total bliss, there *samnyāsa* is resorted to.

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[64] The notion of mental *tīrtha*-s is also recognised in classical sources. For example, Bhīṣma extols their virtues to Yudhiṣṭhīra (MBh XIII.111).

[65] = *paramahāṃsa*

[66] Perhaps from *niśkalanika*, or from *niśkala* (to drive away).
Whether Daśanāmīs reside almost permanently in a matha or āśrama, or travel, the vast majority will attend the Kumbh Melā (or Kumbh Parv), particularly a Mahā (‘great’) Kumbh Melā at Prayāg. It is the largest festival on earth, when, in recent years, up to an estimated fifteen million people will pass through or reside permanently during the six weeks of the festival. The main purpose is to bathe at particularly auspicious times, of which there are usually five during each Melā. Bathing at auspicious times is believed to eradicate accumulated sin and, for the more mythologically minded, to confer

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1 The terms melā and parv both mean ‘festival’ or ‘occasion for religious observance’, parv being the term generally preferred by samnyāsī-ś. The term kumbha means ‘pot’, and also indicates the astrological sign of Aquarius.
2 Bedi and Bedi (1991:114) provide the following statistics for the attendance (in millions) at the Prayāga Kumbh for Maun Amāvasyā: 1906, (2.5); 1918, (3); 1930, (4); 1942, (1.2); 1954, (6); 1966, (7); 1977, (10); 1989, (15). Maun Amāvasyā is the most important bath of the Melā, and also a time most auspicious in the Hindu calendar for offering pīṇḍā for ancestor (pitr) worship.
3 The main baths for the Kumbh Melā are as follows (the dates are for the 2001 Prayāg Kumbh; sankrānti is the term used for when the sun or a planet enters a new astrological sign; * indicates the most important baths for samnyāsī-ś). At Prayāg: Pauṣa Pūrṇimā (full-moon, plus eclipse, 9th Jan.); Makar Sankrānti* (14th Jan.); Maun Amāvasyā* (24th Jan.); Basant Pañcami* (29th Jan.); Māghe Pūrṇimā (8th Feb.); Mahā-Śivarātri (12th Feb.). The akhāra-ś perform the ‘royal procession’ (jāhī julūs) three times: Makar Sankrānti, Maunī Amāvasyā, and Basant Pañcami. At Haridvār, the three most important baths are on: Mahā-Śivarātri*; the new moon day (kṛṣṇa-amāvasyā) of Aries* (Caitra); the first day (sankrānti) of Taurus* (Vaiśākhā). At Nāsik when Jupiter, Sun and Mars enter Leo (Śrāvaṇa/Siṁha sankrānti*); Leo (Śrāvaṇa) kṛṣṇa-amāvasyā*; Śrāvaṇa full-moon*; amāvasyā of Virgo* (Bhādrapada); Ekādaśi (the eleventh day of either fortnight of the lunar month) of Scorpio (Kārtika). At Ujjain the most important baths are on; Meṣa (Aries) sankrānti*; Vaiśākhā (Taurus) kṛṣṇa amāvasyā; the full-moon of Vaiśākhā. In 1921 plague broke out when there has only been one ‘royal bath’ (Pūr 2001:173). The baths for the 1980 Ujjain Melā were: 31st March (Caitra Pūrṇimā); 14th April (Meṣa sankrānti); 15th April (Vaiśākhā amāvasyā); 17th April (Aṣṭāra Tṛṭīyā); 19th April (Śaṅkarācārya Jayantī); 30th April (Vaiśākhā Pūrṇimā) (Sarma 1980:11).

4 See Stanley (1977:27–31) for an explanation of the significance of particular astronomical events, such as amāvasyā.
some drops of the Nectar of Immortality (āmyta) on the bather. The Kumbh Melā not only attracts pilgrims from throughout India and Nepal but is also a gathering of all major Hindu religious and ascetic organisations.\(^5\) For sects such as the Daśanāmīs, it is a unique occasion for a gathering of their order from far and wide, when important issues are discussed and decided. Śaṅkarācāryas and all branches of the order attend, elections within the nāgā akhārās take place, and saṃnyāsa and nāgā initiations are performed.\(^6\) The pageants of the akhārās arrive at the site, making their ‘entry procession’ (peśvāj julūs), with mahant-s and svāmī-s on decorated daises atop elephants (these days mostly on tractor trailers), who are garlanded by officials. They are accompanied by naked, sword-yielding, ash-covered nāg-s blowing nāgphāni (a serpent-shaped horn), some on horseback. At the camps of the akhārās, bhūmī-पūjā will be performed, and the akhārā flag (dhvaj) will be raised fifty feet high. On the occasions of the main baths, the akhārā will make a ‘royal procession’ (sāhi julūs) to the saṅgam. The Melā, crowded with multitudes of men and women such as you may not meet twice in a lifetime, has made an impression on all who have ever visited. Two of the sites, Haridvār and Prāyāg, are the location of the headquarters of six of the seven Daśanāmī akhārā-s (see Ch. 2.1), the military wing of the Daśanāmīs.

The Kumbh Melā usually takes place every three years, rotating around four sites: at Prayāg (the ‘tirțh-rāj’), at the saṅgam of the

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\(^5\) There is scant evidence in the Veda for institutionalised pilgrimage (yātrā); Yāska’s Nirukta does not list pilgrimage among the meanings of yātrā (Sanskrit for ‘travel’); although this term became the most common one for pilgrimage in the Purānic period (c.200–1000), Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdharā’s Kīṭyakalpataru (‘the wish-fulfilling tree of general duties’; c. late 11th–early 12th cent.) was a work that exercised a great influence in Mithilā, Bengal, and northern and western India. Discussed in the text is how to properly discharge the traditional triple-debt (ṛapatra) to the seers, ancestors and gods: pilgrimage is stated to be one of the incumbent duties (Bharati 1963:147). On the significance of tirțha (‘ford’)-yātrā, Salomon (1979) translates and discusses a medieaval text, Tirțha-pratyaṁnāyāḥ, the earliest extant version of which appears in the Smṛtyarthasāra of Śrīdhara, dating to c.1150–1200. In this text, around one hundred pilgrimage sites throughout India are ranked according to the amount of merit obtained by visiting them, the merit being evaluated in terms of both the distance to be travelled, and a correspondence with regimes of purification penances (kṛchcha or prājapātya-kṛchcha) (see Ch. 3.1). The fundamental feature of the system of the Tirțha-pratyaṁnāyāḥ is its emphasis on rivers, the text being organised around the main rivers of India.

\(^6\) The second most important melā for the akhārā-s is that at Gaṅgā Sāgār, near Calcutta, held every year during Makar Saṅkrānti.
Gaṅgā and Yamunā rivers; Haridvār, on the banks of the Gaṅgā; Ujjain, on the banks of the Śiśrā; and Tryambakeśwar (near Nāsīk), on the banks of the Godāvarī. Śaiva nāgā initiations take place in Prayāg, Haridvār and Ujjain, whereas vaishnava nāgā initiations take place at Nāsīk. There is a tradition that Śaṅkaracārya organised the Kumbh Melā, or that he organised attending groups of ascetics (Krāsa 1965:181). However, there appears to be no evidence to support this belief. We will see that both the astrological determinants of the festival and also the notion that the Kumbh Melā occurs at one of four sites—which has an explanatory myth—were most probably invented in the mid-nineteenth century.

One of the widely known mythological stories in the Hindu tradition is that of the ‘Churning of the Ocean of Milk’ (kūrābhdi-manthana) and the production of the Nectar of Immortality (āmyta). The story appears in both the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, and later in more or less embellished variants in the Agni, Viṣṇu, Brahmāṇda, Vāyu, Kārma, Padma, Skanda, Matsya and Bhāgavata Purāṇa-s. It is famously represented in architecture—dating from the twelfth century—at Ankor Wat in Cambodia.

The deva-s (gods), defeated by asura-s (demons) and ashamed of their weakness, approached Viṣṇu, seeking rejuvenation and immortality. Viṣṇu directed them to the primeval ocean that contained the secrets of life and death. The gods enlisted the help of the demons to churn the cosmic milk-ocean, so as to extract various boons, especially the amṛta, contained in its depths. Mount Mandara—said in some accounts to be near Mount Kailāsa—was used as the churning stick. This ‘stick’ was supported on the back of the Tortoise King

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7 The extinct Sarasvatī river is also said to emerge from underground at the saṅgam of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā rivers.
8 The three vaishnava nāgā akhārā-s belong to the Rāmānandī order (see Ch. 2.1).
9 The popular legend appears in numerous Hindi publications; see, for example, Upādhyāy (n.d.). See Long (1976) for a discussion of the various versions of the myth and references.
(kārmaraṇa), and around it was curled Vāsuki (the king of snakes) as a rope, whose head and tail was pulled by, respectively, the asura-s and deva-s, to churn the ocean. After many years of churning, fumes, gases and, finally, deadly poison was produced. To save the situation, Śiva drank the poison. Parvatī (or Viṣṇu) prevented him from swallowing it, and his throat turned blue, hence one of his epithets, Nīlakaṇṭha (blue-throat). Thereafter, fourteen extraordinary treasures were produced, including an aerial car (vimāna puṣpaka), Airāvata (the elephant), the Pārijāta tree (erythrina indica), a flying horse, a priceless jewel (kaustubha), the waxing Moon, Rambhā (one of the celestial dancers at Indra’s court), five auspicious cows (Lakṣmī, Surūpa, Yamunā, Suśilā and Saurabhi), Viśvakarma (the cosmic architect), and, lastly, Dhanvantari (the divine healer), holding a pot (kumbha) of amṛta, which was handed to Indra.

The deva-s and asura-s had previously agreed to share the amṛta, but the deva-s reneged at this point and kept the whole pot for themselves, fearing the invincibility of the asura-s should they drink the amṛta. The asura-s then snatched away the kumbha of amṛta from the deva-s. Nārāyaṇa, concerned about the consequences of this, assumed the form of an enchanting female, Mohini, whose charms caused the asura-s to loosen their grip on the pot. The deva-s snatched back the pot and started drinking the amṛta. Rāhu (the ascending node of the moon), one of the asura-s, disguised himself as a deva in order to get a drink of the nectar. However, just as he began to sip the nectar, he was noticed by the Sun and the Moon who warned Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa cut Rāhu’s throat with his discus, but Rāhu’s head and throat became immortal and ascended to heaven, remaining the eternal enemy of the Sun and Moon. Meanwhile, Śukrācārya (Venus), the preceptor of the asura-s, alerted the asura-s to Mohini’s enchantment. The asura-s attacked the deva-s and a battle ensued. There are several different accounts of what followed.

Pertinent to the mythology of the Kumbh Mela is the story whereby Bṛhaspati (Jupiter), the preceptor of the deva-s, assisted. This particular version of the conclusion of the fight between the deva-s and asura-s

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13 This part of the account, wherein gases and poison were produced, and Śiva drank the poison, is not in the Mahābhārata. (Simon Brodbeck kindly pointed this out.)
14 Accounts vary slightly on what was produced.
15 The ‘patron saint’ of the Indian medical profession.
underpins the mythology of the sacredness and linkage between the four sites. In this story, Bṛhaspati told Jayanta, the son of Indra, to flee with the amṛta and hide it from the asura-s. Jayanta took the form of a rook and, assisted by the Sun and the Moon, fled with the kumbha, pursued by the asura-s. A fight between the deva-s and asura-s took place for twelve days, and depending on the account: either the kumbha fell to earth at the four sites, Prayāg, Haridvār, Ujjain and Nāsik; or the sites were where Jayanta rested; or the kumbha was hidden at the four earthly sites and eight heavenly sites for twelve divine days (equalling twelve human years), when a few drops spilled en route, sanctifying the places. During the battle, the gods sent the Moon to prevent the pot from overflowing; the Sun to protect it from bursting; Saturn to prevent the contents being devoured by Jayanta; and Bṛhaspati to protect Jayanta from the demons, during which twelve-year period he was staying in the signs (rāśi) of Aquarius (Kumbha), Taurus (Vṛṣa), Leo (Śimha) and Scorpio (Vṛścika), hence the origin of the twelve-year cycle of the Kumbh Melā and the determination of the timing of the Melā according to the position of Jupiter. 16

Whereas the story of the ‘Churning of the Ocean’ and the fight between the deva-s and asura-s is told in a number of texts, including the epics and Purāṇa-s, the story of Jayanta and the spilling of the nectar at four places does not appear therein, notwithstanding current claims for the antiquity of the melā. 17 The myth of the spilling of the

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16 There are also other legends of the spilling of the nectar (Dubey 1987:121; Rai 1993b:43–44; Nandan 2002:3–4). In one, it is Garuḍa who, winning the pot after a battle with the demons, is carrying it to devaloka when the nectar drops at the sites. In another, Garuḍa brought the nectar from devaloka to release his mother, Vinatā, from Kadrā, the mother of the serpents (nāga-s). Vinatā was released but Indra stole the pot, and when fleeing the pursuing serpents spilt drops at the four sites. While the dropping of nectar is not found in the epic-Purānic tradition, Garuḍa’s bringing nectar to free his mother from the snakes is well known (MBh I.25ff.; Rām III.35.27; Garuḍa Purāṇa 1.240.26–28; Skanda Purāṇa 4.1.55–125).

17 Evidence occasionally cited in support of an ancient Kumbh Melā includes a reference in the Vāyu Purāṇa (2.15.47) to “kumbha” as a holy place suitable for performing śrāddha rites. Dubey (1987:120) believes that this reference does not refer to a Kumbh Melā but to a āśrama named Śri Kumbha on the Sarasvatī river. Bonazzoli (1977:107) observes that a verse from the Atharva Veda (4.34.7) that states, “I give four pitchers (kumbha), in four (several) places” (catura kumbhāṃśacatutrāḥ dadāmi) has been taken out of context by some commentators who believe this verse indicates the antiquity of the Kumbh Melā. Sāyana (fourteenth century) commented on this verse, but made no connection with either Prayāg or the Kumbha as a Melā, even though in his time āśrama-yātrā-s were common. It seems that the
four drops of nectar, and astrological prerequisites,\textsuperscript{18} appear in two short texts—one referring to Haridvār and the other to Prayāg—both of which are attributed to the \textit{Skanda Purāṇa}.\textsuperscript{19} The earliest publications of these ‘Purāṇic’ texts are by Giri (1909) and Gauḍa (1947).\textsuperscript{20} However, they are not traceable in any other printed editions of the \textit{Skanda Purāṇa} (Bonazzoli 1977:115), and appear almost certainly to have been interpolated, most probably around 1860, if Maclean is correct about the origins of the Kumbh Mela (see below).

According to these texts the location for the occurrence of the Kumbh Mela is determined primarily according to the position of Jupiter (\textit{Bṛhaspati}), in its (almost) twelve-year cycle. Every twelve years the Mahā (‘great’) Kumbh Mela takes place at Prayāg. This is when Jupiter is in Aquarius (\textit{Kumbha}) on both the Maṅg (Capricorn)\textsuperscript{21} and Meṣa (Aries) \textit{sanKR̥anti}-s. Some Mahā Kumbh Melas are hailed as particularly auspicious, such as the 2001 Prayāg Kumbh, during which was an astrological alignment that had not occurred for 144 years. Periodically, the Ādhā/Ardh (half) Kumbh Mela occurs at either Haridvār or Prayāg, in six-yearly cycles, while every year the Maṅg Mela is held at Prayāg. The Maṅg Mela begins at \textit{Makar ŚanKR̥anti} (on January 16th) and finishes on Śivarātri, ‘Śiva’s night’, the main festival for Śiva, held on the 14th day of the dark half of the month of Phālgun (Pisces). The full Prayāg Kumbh Mela takes place when Jupiter (\textit{Bṛhaspati}) enters Aries (Meṣa; Hindi \textit{Cait}) and both the Sun and the Moon are in Capricorn (Maṅg).\textsuperscript{22}
According to current mythology, the Melās are held when Jupiter is in one of four astrological houses: Aquarius, Taurus, Leo or Scorpio. However, as may be seen from the scheme below, this does not exactly correspond to practice (one of the melās at Prāyag takes place when Jupiter is in Aries). The timing of the baths is also determined by how long Jupiter remains in each sign. The Melā at Prāyag is known as the Kumbh Melā, at Haridvār as the Meṣ Kumbh (as the festival coincides with the large bath for the sankrānti of Meṣa), and at Ujjain and Nāsik as the Sīmhāṣṭa (‘eight lion’) Melā.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Astrology</th>
<th>Mela</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Haridvār</td>
<td>Ādi (Aries)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Aquarius (Kumbha), Sun and Moon in Aries.</td>
<td>Kumbh</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Prāyag</td>
<td>Māgha (Capricorn)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Aries (Meṣa) [or Taurus (Vyṣā)] Sun and Moon in Capricorn on the new moon day in Capricorn.</td>
<td>Kumbh</td>
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<tr>
<td>6(a)</td>
<td>Nāsik</td>
<td>Śravana (Leo)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Leo, Sun and Moon in Leo (Sīṁha).</td>
<td>Kumbh</td>
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<tr>
<td>6(b)</td>
<td>Haridvār</td>
<td>Caiṭra (Aries)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Leo, Sun in Aries.</td>
<td>1/2 Kumbh</td>
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<td>6(c)</td>
<td>Ujjain</td>
<td>Vaiśākha (Taurus)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Leo, Sun in Aries [or Taurus], Moon in Virgo (Tulā).</td>
<td>Kumbh</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Prāyag</td>
<td>Māgha</td>
<td>Jupiter in Scorpio (Vyṣāka), Sun in Capricorn.</td>
<td>1/2 Kumbh</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Haridvār</td>
<td>Caiṭra</td>
<td>Jupiter in Aquarius, Sun and Moon in Aries.</td>
<td>Kumbh24</td>
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Sinha and Saraswati (1978:149–151) and Rai (1993b:47–57) note that, historically, the Kumbh Melā fell strictly according to the cycle of Jupiter, which is 11.86 years, the retrograde movement taking

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23 The scheme for the timing of the melās is primarily based on the astrological configurations found in the dubious text of the Skanda Purāṇa, cited by Gauḍa (op. cit., KM 8–21) and Giri (op. cit., KN 7–9). Interpretations are not entirely consistent. See Bonazzoli (1977); Bhattacharya (1977:2); Sinha and Saraswati (1978:149).

24 According to Gauḍa (op. cit.) there are alternative astrological determinants:

- Prāyaga Māgha (Capricorn) Jupiter enters Taurus on the new moon day in the month of Māgha, Sun in Capricorn;
- Nāsik Āṣāḍha (Cancer) Jupiter, Sun and Moon in Cancer (Kārka), on the new moon day (amāvasyā);?
- Ujjain Vaiśākha (Taurus) Saturn in Libra (Tulā), Sun and Moon in Taurus on the new moon day.
it one house further every eighty-four years. Thus, the Haridvār, Prayāg, Ujjain and Nāsik Kumbh Melās take place sometimes eleven, twelve or thirteen years after a previous melā at one or another of the sites. The pattern of the dates (CE) of the melā-ś during the twentieth century is irregular (Dubey 1987:127), usually following a twelve year cycle, but with eleven and thirteen year intervals, in consort with the cycle of Jupiter. However, the Nāsik and Ujjain melā-s are either in the same year or a year apart.

Although it has been suggested that the mythology and astrology linking the four sites of the Kumbh Melā seems to be of relatively recent origin, there are a number of references to each site in the Purāṇa-s. The Nārada Purāṇa ([Part 5] Uttarabhāga 66.44) states that it is auspicious to bathe [every twelve years] in the Gaṅgā at Haridvār when Jupiter is in Aquarius (Kumbha) and the Sun is in Aries. Hazra

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25 There was a dispute over this in 1956/7 and again in 1968/9 at the Simhāsta Melā at Ujjain (Sarma 1980:10). On both occasions, the ārya-s, Saṅkaracāryas and others attended, but the melā was boycotted by the nāga akhārya-s, who attended a melā held a year later, claiming that the melā should be held strictly every twelve years. There was also a dispute over when one of the Prayāg Kumbh Melās should be held, the Saṃnyāsi astrologers believing it should be in 1965, while the Vairāgīs (Rāmānandīs) believed it should be in 1966 (Lamb 1999:198). The solution and consequence was the enhanced funding by the government of the annual, month-long Māgh Melā, held at the same site, the two sects of sādhu-s attending in different years. On both occasions many millions of pilgrims attended. In order to show their gratitude to the government for funding both melā-ś, the Rāmānandīs attended the following year, in 1967, a festival attended by over two million people. The Māgh Melā continues to be attended by the Rāmānandīs and their akhārya-s, but is not attended by the Daśanāmi-SAṃnyāsi akhārya-s.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Haridvār</th>
<th>Prayāg</th>
<th>Ujjain</th>
<th>Nāsik</th>
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27 It may be noted that the twelve-year cycle of Jupiter also determines the date of several other religious baths in India, the largest besides the four northern melā-ś being the twelve-yearly Mahāmaham Melā at Kumbhakonam, by the Kāverī river. This single-day festival is referred to as the Mahā Melā of the south, the last having been held on the full-moon of March 1st 1980 when around two million people attended. It is celebrated when Jupiter is in transit across Leo, and the moon is conjunct with the constellation Maham, when the sun is in Aquarius (Kumbhā).
(1940:132) believes that this section of the Purāṇa is “comparatively late” (post-1000). The Khulāšt-ut-Tawārikh (34b), a description of India under Aurangzeb, written between 1693 and 1695, informs us that every twelfth year, when Jupiter enters the sign of Aquarius and the Sun is in Aries, a large number of people come from far and wide to bathe at Haridvār (Rai 1993b:64). The text also mentions a yearly melā at Allahabad (Prayāg). Although a yearly festival at Haridvār, which draws exceptional crowds every twelve years, is historically quite well attested, its origins are obscure.

Several of the Purāṇa-s recommend bathing at the saṅgam of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā in the month of Māgha, particularly on anāvāsyā,29 the fifteenth day of the dark half of the month. The Anuśāsanaparvan of the Mahābhārata30 states that whoever bathes with a restrained mind, observing strict vows, at Prayāg in the month Māgha is cleansed of all sins and attains heaven. Perhaps the earliest unequivocable reference to a congregation of people at Prayāga during Māgha occurs in the Narasiṃha Purāṇa (1.1.24), a text dated by Hazra (1958:242) between 400 and 500. Another early historical record of a large gathering of ascetics at any of the sites may be found in the account by Hüang Tsang31 of his travels in India, between 629 and 645. From his account32 and from epigraphic evidence (Devahuti 1983:60, 176–181, 250), we have information of the presence of half a million people, from court officials to beggars, many thousands of śramaṇa-s, and a whole township of temporary structures at the saṅgam near Prayāga in 644, a gathering that lasted a month, which Hüang Tsang says is “age-old”. Bathing in the river washes away

The mythology surrounding the festival involves nectar oozing from a pot into a līṅga of sand made by Śiva (see Subramanyan, 1980).

28 According to the ʿA-ln-i-Akbarī (3.9), at Haridvār (Māyā) large numbers of pilgrims assemble on the 10th of the month of Cāitra (March/April). (See Abu-l-Fazl 1972.)

29 The Prayāga-mahātmya-śatādhvāyi recommends bathing there, and describes the benefits thereof. The Matsya Purāṇa is the earliest Purāṇa containing this Māhātmya, which appears subsequently in the Padma and other Purāṇa-s. Besides the Matsya (106.8; 107.7) and Padma (3.44.1), other Purāṇa-s also recommend thrice-daily bathing during Māgha at Prayāga: Nārada (2.63), Kūrma (1.36.2; 1.38.2), Agni (3.10b–11a), and Skanda (4.1.7.62). See Bonazzoli (1977:84–101); Bhattacharya (1977:6); Dubey (1988:63).

30 MBh XIII:26.36.

31 Or Hiuen Tsiang/Hwen-Thsang/Yuan Chwang.

sins, and many visitors fast. Some ascetics are said to try to attain liberation by climbing a pole erected in the middle of the river, and staring at the sun. There also used to be a tradition of ritual suicide at Prayaga.\textsuperscript{33} Since olden times, kings and noble families had come to the place to distribute gifts and goods in charity, hence the name of the area to the east of the river, \textit{dān kṣetra}.\textsuperscript{34} Hūang Tsang was in the company of King Harṣa Vardhana, the ruler of Kanauj, who was attending the sixth five-yearly assembly of the Buddhist \textit{saṅgha}. Harṣa attended every five years, holding council, adorning a statue of the Buddha in a sumptuous way, performing religious rites and distributing alms to priests, men of standing, heretics, widows, orphans, the poor and mendicants. In one day, he is said to have distributed wealth accumulated over five years, much of it replenished subsequently by gifts from visiting nobles. Niccolau Manucci, who was in India from 1656 to 1717, also mentions (1990, Vol. II:76) a quinquennial festival at Allahabad. He observes that those who die from stifling by the crowd are not afforded the usual lamentations, as they die in a condition of grace and holiness, effected by the \textit{tīrtha}. Manucci also mentions that those who bathe must each pay six and a quarter rupees\textsuperscript{35} to the Mughal king, who derives a handsome income.

It is also reported (De 1986:99) that Caitanya (1485–1533) visited the Prayāga Melā around 1515. Prayāga (Illahābās) is also referred to by Abu-l-Fażl in his \textit{Ā-in-l-Akbarī} (3.9)\textsuperscript{36} (16th cent.); he observes that suicide is respected here—but regarded as a sin elsewhere—and that although holy throughout the year, Prayāga is especially so during the month of Māgha. Thevenot, a European traveller, described the congregation at Prayāg in 1666–1667 of “troops” of \textit{fakōrs}—some good men, and some rogues—performing ablutions and various penances, including fasting, continuously standing, holding their arms above their heads and being buried alive (Dubey 1988:67).

\textsuperscript{33} See Kane (HDŚ, Vol. 2:925; Vol. 3:939; Vol. 4:603–614). Before it was ordered to be cut down by Akbar, around 1584, jumping from a banyan tree near the \textit{sāṅgam} was a popular means of suicide (Bonazzoli 1977:144).

\textsuperscript{34} The area is still so called, and pilgrims still receive alms there during \textit{melās}.

\textsuperscript{35} A small fortune at the time.

\textsuperscript{36} Reference to the Blochmann (1997) translation.
and Vācaspatimiśra (c. 9th–10th cent.), refer to the efficacy of māgha-
snāna at Prayāga, as does Tulsīdās (1532–1623) in the Rāmcaritmānas
(Dey 1998:66).

Regarding Ujjain,\(^{37}\) the Skanda Purāṇa (5.1.1.48.51, 5.1.2.61.39,
5.1.2.82.15–17) recommends bathing there, in the Śiprā, on the full-
moon day of Taurus (Vaiśākha). The Śiva Purāṇa (1.12.22–23) and
Vārāha Purāṇa (1.71.47–48) extoll the virtues of bathing at Nāsik, in
the Godāvarī—also referred to as Gomatārtha—when the Sun and
Jupiter are in Leo (Simha). The Brahmadeva Purāṇa (152.38–39; 175.83–84)
refers to this event as the Simhāṣṭa Melā. There is a temple at
Rāmghāt, on the Godāvarī at Nāsik, that is opened every twelfth
year, when Jupiter is in Leo. According to Ghurye (1964:178), the
earliest mention of the Nāsik melā occurs in the Guru-carita, a text
from the end of the fifteenth century.

Although it can also be seen that these Purānic injunctions coincide
with the timings of the melā-s at the respective sites, as previously
noted, the linkage between the sites is not evident in the epics or
Purāṇa-s.\(^{38}\) Bonazzoli (1997:117)\(^{39}\) believes that the Kumbh Melā (or
Kumbh Parv) gets its name from a large gathering that used to take
place at Haridvār every twelve years on the occasion of a particular
conjunction of planets, one of which was Kumbha rāśi, and that the
traditional bath at Prayāga for Makar sankrānti may have developed
into the ‘Prayāga Kumbha Parva’. The name was applied to the other
large festivals, even though no celestial body was in the Kumbha rāśi
(‘sign of the zodiac’) at the time of their occurrence.

It is apparent that the current Kumbh Melā at Prayāga and the
other three sites is a continuation of an ancient gathering of ascetics
in those places,\(^{40}\) but Maclean’s (2001; 2003) studies of the origins
of the Kumbh Melā provide substantive evidence that the legend of

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\(^{37}\) Samanta (1997:17) states that there were three-yearly gatherings of Buddhists
at Ujjain during the reign of Aśoka in the third century BCE, but gives no refer-
ence for the information.

\(^{38}\) See also Ali (1983).

\(^{39}\) See also Bhattacharya (1977:7); Rai (1993b:53–56).

\(^{40}\) The festival of Śivarātri, celebrated all over India and Hindu Nepal, is another
festival attended by many śāiva sādhus at śāiva holy places, such as Pāśpatināth in
Kathmandu. Although there are references to the mythology of the ‘Night of Siva’
in several Purāṇa-s (dating from the eighth to twelfth century), the origins of the
festival are obscure (Long 1982:192). One of the earliest references to the festival
in India is from 1141. However, one of the first references to Śivarātri in Nepal
dates to 1773 (Michaels 1996:326).
the four sites and the astrological determinants may have been instituted around the middle of the nineteenth century. From Maclean’s (2003:884–888) inspection of numerous historical documents, including government archives, tax legislation, Indian and British travel accounts, and newspaper reports, it is evident that before 1868 there is no mention of the word ‘Kumbha’, in any of its variant spellings, in connection with the annual melā at Prayāg, nor is there any indication that every six or twelve years the melā had a particular significance, either as an ardh or ‘full’ Kumbh Melā.41

The main agents behind the transformation of the site of the Māgh Melā into a site for one of the Kumbh Melās seem to have been the pandā-s42 of Prayāg, the Pragvāls (prayāg-vāl-s) (Maclean 2003:879–884), who claim that their exclusive right to serve pilgrims at the saṅgam was established by Akbar, in a farmān (‘charter’) dated 1593. Their service to pilgrims for many generations had built up a network of contacts all over India, particular villages being the domain of particular Pragvāls. They had enjoyed some freedom from intrusion during Navābī rule, prior to the secession of Allahabad to the British in 1801. The British inherited the right to collect tax from visiting pilgrims—and their vehicles—which was implemented in 1806. The exhorbitant tax (one rupee per pilgrim) levied by the British antagonised the Pragvāls, as impoverished pilgrims would have less money to give to them (Maclean 2003:881). By 1815 the Pragvāls threatened to cease officiating, causing concern amongst the British, who recognised the Pragvāls’ substantial influence over the arrangements for the melā and their role in attracting taxable pilgrims. Although the Pilgrim Tax was abolished by 1840 (Maclean 2001:147), leading to increasing attendance, the British continued

41 During the early part of the nineteenth century there are references by British observers to the Kumbha Melā (with variant spellings) at Haridvār, which drew exceptional crowds every twelve years, but the Māgh Melā at Prayāg is referred to as a yearly event. The first mention that Maclean (2003:884–888) has been able to find in any document of a Kumbh Melā at Allahabad is in 1868, by the Magistrate of Allahabad, who reports that a “Coomb fair” will be held in January 1870, and that four years previously (in 1866) there had been an “Ad Coomb when the concourse was immense”. Maclean believes that 1870 was the first time the melā at Allahabad was referred to as the Kumbh Melā.

42 Pandā-s are Brahman priests who may be found in all major Hindu pilgrimage centres. They keep family records and, for a fee, guide pilgrims through religious rituals, including the ministering of rites for the dead. They are generally regarded as low-caste Brahmans.
to profit from the *melā*, taxing traders, barbers and others providing services. This was a source of increasing tension between the British and the Pragvāls. In June 1857, after the mutiny of the 6th Native Infantry, the Pragvāls joined the rebellion against the British, which was crushed. After their failed attempt at insurrection, the Pragvāls exerted every effort to rebuild their business. Due to the general turmoil in India, there was no *melā* in 1858, but in 1859 there was a small Māgh Melā (Maclean 2001:153). The Māgh Melā of 1860 was exceptionally well attended, the flags of the Pragvāls (used for the purposes of identification by their clients) bearing anti-British symbols. That same year the Pragvāl Sabhā was formed and registered with the government. Its aims were to protect and preserve the rights of its members to conduct rituals and accept donations at the *saṅgam*.

Although the origins of the legend of the four sites, the twelve-year cycle and the related astrology are obscure, Maclean’s analysis tends to the conclusion that the package of ideas was at the least actively disseminated, or most probably fabricated, around the middle of the nineteenth century, in an environment inhabited by several important groups of actors: anti-British Pragvāls, with an economic agenda to expand the fame of their *tīrtha*; and various mahant-s, *saṃnyāsī*-s and pilgrims, some of whom, in the context of the general uprising against the British and general issues of geographical and religious identity, may have been active disseminators of some of the legend currently pertaining to the Kumbh Melā. The *melā* became a symbol of religious identity, and the legacy of a decision by the British not to interfere with religious affairs. The institution of British rule in India at the end of the eighteenth century had effectively eroded the power and economic activities of the *akhārā*-s. The only great arenas remaining for displays of the power and religious prestige of *saṃnyāsī*-s and *akhārā*-s, and for the collection of alms and donations, were the Kumbh Melās, which remained relatively free from government interference; *sādhu*-s were allowed to go naked and display arms. The dissemination of legends highlighting both the antiquity and auspiciousness of the *melā*-s could not have but furthered *saṃnyāsī*-s’ economic and religious agendas.
APPENDIX 4

SUBDIVISIONS WITHIN THE DAŚANĀMĪ AKHĀDĀ-S: MARHĪ-S AND DĀVĀ-S

1. In the Matheśvar Dharma Paddhati, an oral tradition has been recorded (Sadānanda Giri, 1976:19), in which there is a list of 53 maṭha-s, which are as follows:


2. Sadānanda Giri (1976:21), Sinha and Saraswati (1978:263), and Purī (2001:53–76) present somewhat inconsistent accounts of the formation of the eight dāvā-s, comprising the maṭhi-s. According to Sadānanda Giri, they are:


1 This name inexplicably appears twice, also occurring as entry no. 16.
3. According to the *Daś nām vanā śṛṅka*, a short back text Hindi circulated amongst Daśanāṁś initiates, the *maṛti*-s are constituted as follows (see also Purī 2001:57–85):

4 *maṛti*-s of Bhāratīś: Viśva Bhāratī, Narsimha Bhāratī, Bāl Viśvanātha Man Mahēsa Bhāratī, Manuskunda Bhāratī.

4 *maṛti*-s of Van(a)s: Siṁhasan Van, Bhaṇḍārī Van, Sāropārā Van, Totārā Van.

16 *maṛti*-s of Purīś: Baikuṇṭhapurī, Kevalpurī, Keśavpurī, Multiṇī, Manpurī, Rāmcandrapurī, Rādhāpurī, Guruḍevpurī, Punampurī, Gaṅgādariyāpūrī, Durgāpurī, Kāṃṭhapurī, Dasaṇām Tilakpurī, Sahajpurī, Bhagavānpurī, Rāmpurī, Prayāgpurī (?).

13 *maṛti*-s of Giris: Meghnāṭhī, Baikuṇṭhnāṭhī, Bāvānāṭhī, Jāgnāṭhī, Śitalānāṭhī, Viśvanāṭhī, Rājānāṭhī, Harivānāṭhī, Durgānāṭhī, Pramathnāṭhī, Bholānāṭhī, Sahesvarnāṭhī, Rddhnāṭhī.

14 *maṛti*-s of Giris: Āpārānāṭhī, Prabhānāṭhī, Bādalānāṭhī, Aumkāṛīnāṭhī, Rudranāṭhī, Sāgarānāṭhī, Nāmendranāṭhī, Bodhnāṭhī, Kumustnāṭhī, Ratannāṭhī, Molānāṭhī, Mahēśvanāṭhī, Modūnāṭhī, Rāmanāṭhī.

4. In the sources of the Mahānirvāṇī *akhārā*, used by Sarkar (1958:58–59), 52 *maṛti*-s are listed in the six groups, with the following divisions:


F. Lāmā. The Lāmā mahī/akhārā has an uncertain status. According to Sadānanda Giri (1976:19), nāgā-s believe that the Lāmā mahī, which in some lists is the fifty-third mahī, is included in the Giri dāvā.
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INDEX

Abhay Rām Dās, Bābā, 54n.7, 249n.74
Abhinava Narasiṃhabhārati V (17th cent.), 135, 136, 137
Abhinava Saccīdānanda, 126
Abhinava Saccīdānandatīrtha, 139, 140
Abhinava Śāṅkara, 126n.91
Abhinavagupta, 159n.49, 228n.4
Abu Bakr, 243
Abu-l-Falāh, 62, 228
Ācārya-guru(s) (Daśanāmī): arising of institution of, 78n.74; as Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, 76–78; initiation by, 39, 48, 68, 93–96, 98, 122; of Agni akhāryā, 60
Acyutarāya, 195, 201
Adhokṣajanā, 142n.148
Ādi Kumbhelvara (temple), 201
Advaitarāja-Lakṣmī (of Acyūta), 149n.5
Advayānandaṣarasvatī, 226n.152
Afīl al Khān, 236
akh(s), 17n.73, 23, 25, 30n.11, 34, 48n.88, 53, 60, 168n.74
Ahmed Sāh, 63, 250
Āśīvika(s), 11n.57, 12, 228n.2
Aklanīka, 11n.26, 112n.34, 113n.40
Akbar, 62, 64n.40, 228, 229, 230, 234
Akṣara, 17n.73, 23, 25, 28, 29n.6, 30n.10, 36, 39–44, 47, 48, 52, 86, 90, 227, 229, 230, 231, 245n.62, 246, 247, 261, 262, 267, 269, 287n.3, 288, 294n.25, 299; ācārya-gurus in, 77, 78; affiliation to, 43, 44, 45; caste in, 39–40; definition of, 47; equipment of sādha-s in, 36; fights between, 61–65; for wrestling, 47n.86; founding of, 57–59; initiation by, 93–98; location of/scheme of, 57–59; mār-s in, 49–50; membership of, 49–51; order of bathing for, 64–65n.52; relationships in, 50–51; voting procedures in, 69
Agni, 1n.6, 47n.85, 49, 50, 60, 66n.43, n.45; functionaries in, 75n.66
Aḥma, 47, 77
Atal, 49, 77; functionaries in, 75n.66
Āvāhan, 49, 77; functionaries in, 75n.66 (Gūḍaḥa), 49, 66
Jūnā, 42n.71, 46, 47, 49, 66, 67, 74, 78n.74, 168n.74, 249n.74; ācārya-gurus of, 77; camps at Kumbh Melā, 71n.58; functionaries, 75n.66; initiation into, 90–98; mār-s in, 34–35, 49, 50n.96; number of initiates, 30n.11; paramahamsa-s affiliated to, 42n.71; property of, 261n.110
Mahānirvāṇī, 45, 47, 48, 69n.56, 73, 74, 91n.39, 93n.44, 99n.57, 121n.79; female Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara in, 34n.33; Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras of, 48, 76; ācārya-gurus of, 77; paramahamsa-s affiliated to, 42n.71; property of, 75
Nirajānā, 40, 42n.71, 49, 93n.44; ācārya-guru-s of, 77; Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras of, 76; paramahamsa-s affiliated to, 42n.71
(Rūkha) (Śūkha)(/Ukha), 66
Akhil Bhāratī Khālsā, 55n.7
Akhil Bhāratīya Akhārā Parisad, 76
Alakhiya(s), 66
All World Religions’ Federation, 263n.116
Al World Sadhus’ Federation, 263n.116
Alahabad, 37, 42, 65, 144, 251, 257, 262n.115, n.116, 158n.47, 175n.103, 295, 298n.41; akhāryā-s at, 57–59, 75; branch of Jyotir matha at, 143n.149; Daśanāmī at, 29; fixing of order of bathing at, 64; Kumbh Melā at, 23n.92, 30n.11, 34, 48n.88, 53, 60,
Dattātreya, 58, 67, 71n.58, 90, 91, 117
n.53, 155n.32, 168n.74, 175n.102, 235
devarājā, 186n.36
Devarāyā I, 195, 197, 198n.75
Devarāyā II, 195, 198, 199n.79, 200, 217, 235, 236n.30; patronage of reli-
gions by, 200
Dev cand, 237
Devendravarman (king), 186n.34
Dharma Giri, 252n.83
Dharma Saṅgha Śiksā Maṇḍala, 43
Dharmakūrī, 109, 110, 111n.28, 112, 114n.41
Dharmapāla, 110n.20, 112n.41
Dharmapuram mattha, 188n.43
dharmāśāstra, 4, 79, 80; āśrama system in, 4–5n.17; penances in, 84n.16;
renunciation procedures in, 82; re-
nunciation and caste in, 38–39; rules for renunciates in, 100; samyāsī in, 7–8, 23
dharmāśāstra(s), 23; penances in, 84n.16;
renunciation procedures in, 81–83;
ṛṣī-s in, 120; rules for brahmacārīn in, 97n.52; rules for renunciates in, 4n.15, 100; samyāsī in, 8;
Dholka mattha, 78, 139, 143
dhūni(s), 48, 51n.100, 66n.43, 67, 67n.48,
71, 91, 92, 229n.8; four, 116
dhūni-vādā(s), 74
digambara(s), 51
Digambara auñī, 54, 65n.42
Dignāga, 109, 110n.18–19, n.22, n.26,
112, 113n.41
dīgījāya: of Saṅkarācāryas, 134–36
dīkṣā, 1, 16, 76, 97, 158; from saiva guru-s, 185–86
Dīṇḍina (of Dhanapatisūri), 148–49n.n.4–5
Divine Life Society, 263n.116
Dumont, Louis, 8nn.36–37, 14–15n.68, 154n.29, 266
Durbēsvara mattha, 77n.72
Durgā, 87n.25, 165, 170, 220n.141, 224
Durvāśa, 176n.103, 187nn.39–40
Durvāśpur mattha, 139
Dvārakā (mattha/pitha), 2, 41n.66, 60n.30,
79, 89n.55, 115, 118, 123, 124, 126,
127, 128, 131, 132n.115, 138, 139–
40, 146n.163, 147, 150, 171n.83, 223,
227; in hagiographies, 159n.49, 172,
173; māthānāya of, 118
fakār(s)/phakār(s), 14n.67, 19n.85, 30n.11,
63, 228, 230, 240n.43, 259, 261n.111,
296, 338
Gaṅapatideva (king), 186n.34
Gandhi, M. K., 256n.95, 263
Gaṅesa (Gaṅapati), 49n.91, 58, 86n.23,
87n.25, 164–165, 197, 217, 219, 223,
238n.38
Gaṅgā Devī, 194n.64
Gaṅgā Mā, 32
Gaṅgā Sāgar, 29n.6, 55n.8, 253n.85,
288n.6
Gangohi, Abd al-Quddūs, 241
Garuda, 291n.16
Gaudapāda, 109, 152n.24, 164, 167,
Gaudapādīya-kārikā, 107, 108n.9, 109,
152n.24
Gauḍīya (sect), 13, 14n.67, 54n.7, 162,
236
Gaurī Mā, 33n.28
Gāyatrī, 59
gāyatrī mantra, 83nn.9–10, 91n.39, 93,
95, 101n.62
gharbārī(ṣ)s, 14, 15, 16n.73, 17, 20, 21,
22
ghažī(ṣ)s, 232, 239
Gītā Mandir, 47
Gobind Singh, Guru, 56n.9, 228n.7
Gokhale, Viṣṇubāvā Brahmacārī, 142n.
146
golā, 59n.25, 91n.39
Gōlakī/Gollā mattha(ṣ)s, 176n.103, 187–
88n.39–40, 192n.55, 211n.120
Gopāl Rao, 250
Gopīnātha (temple), 207
Gorakhmāṭh, 56n.11, 66–67n.46, 152n.
20, 155n.33
gosain(ṣ)s, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 53n.3,
63, 129n.103, 141, 228n.6, 230, 232,
239, 252; definition of, 14, 177n.107;
divorce by, 17–18n.78; numbers of,
30n.11; property of, 261n.111
gotra, 16, 17n.76, 60, 116, 118, 119, 268;
in Buddhism and Jainism, 120nn.
73–74
Govardhan (mattha/pitha at Purī), 2, 41n.
66, 113, 121, 126n.92, 127n.99, 128n.
103, 140–42, 147, 227; māthānāya
of, 118
Govinda(ācārya), 107, 116n.46, 151, 152, 158
Govinda maṭha, 77n.72
Govindānand, 248n.69
Govindapādi maṭha, 183n.22
Govindasarasvatī, 226n.154
Gregory (of Tours), 154
gṛhaṇī(ā)s, 5, 17n.76, 18, 97n.52, 192n.57
Gurdās, Bhāī, 175
Gurdītā, Bābā, 56n.9, 245
gurumukha rite, 19n.82
Haradattā, 159n.49, 222
Harāyāsī, 54n.7
Hardwicke, Captain Thomas, 63
Hastā, 57
Hasan, Ala-uddīn, 234
Hasan al-Basri, 243n.53, 244n.57
Hasan al-Basri, 243n.52, 244n.55, n.57
Hastings, Warren, 252n.84, 253
Hatū, 159, 220n.141
Hēvī, Shaik al-, 248n.57
Hīkū, Shaik al-, 248n.57
Hīuān Tsang, 10, 114n.41, 295, 296
Hujwīrī, Shaik al-, 212n.18, 244n.56
Huang Tsang, 10, 114n.41, 295, 296
Ibrahīm II, Sultan, 238
Imāmī Naṣrānīma, 195
Irugappa Daṇḍanāyaka, 200n.81
Jagadguru(s), 13, 79, 80, 122, 238; female, 34n.30
Jagadguru-ratna-mālāstava (of Sadāśivabrahmendra), 129n.106, 149n.5
Jagannātha (temple), 141, 172; visit of Rāmānuja to, 168–69n.75
Jagannāthāśrama, 226
Jahāngīr, 14n.67, 62n.34, 228n.6, 237n.34, 241
Jain(a)(s)/Jainism, 1n.3, 101, 112, 113, 159n.49, 162, 162, 217, 237, 184n.25, 186n.34, 191, 200, 201n.85; ascetics, 7n.25, 9, 12, 19n.85; in south India, 113, 177, 179–81, 215–16; maṭha-s, 183, 190; Svētāmbara gaccho-s/kala-s, 245; women, 31n.17, 32n.25
Jaisingh II, 247
Jāmāt, 55n.8, 74, 75, 76, 90, 231
Jan Saṅgh, 142
Janakpur, 18, 128n.101, 238n.39
Jayendrasarasvatī, 130, 263n.116, 264
Jayatīrtha, 200n.80, 226
Jayendrasarasvatī, 130, 263n.116, 264;
arrest of, 264–66
Jelālī(ī) (Sūfīs), 62n.36
Jesuit(s), 238n.39
Jīvanmuktiviveka (of Vidyārāṇya), 10n.51, 82n.5, 85n.21, 101–2n.66, 204n.95, 209n.112
Jānāndasarasvatī, 34
Junaidi, Shaikh Siraj-uddīn, 234
Jyeṣṭhā, 220n.141
Jyōsimath/Jyōtor (maṭha/pīṭha), 2, 41n.66, 77–78, 115, 117n.53, 120, 121, 127n.97, n.99, 139, 140, 141, 143–44, 146, 150, 264; in hagiographies, 172; maṭhamāṇya of, 118–19
Kabīr, 231n.16; Bījaka of, 228n.3
Kalari-payattu, 49n.91
Kailās Ātram, 46
Kailāsa (mountain), 155nn.32–33, 289
Kālāmukha(s), 179, 183, 184, 190, 191, 192n.53, 201, 208, 215, 221, 222, 223; branches of, 189; matha-s, 184n.27, 190; rāja-guru-s, 185n.34, 186, 197, 198, 210, 221
Kālaṇṭi, 108n.13, 136, 152
Kāmakōṭi pīṭha. See Kāṇḍapuram pīṭha
Kāmākṣī, 119, 220, 223
Kamalāśīla, 109n.14, 110n.19, 111n.29, 112
Kampa I & II, 194n.63, 210
Kāṇḍapuram, 113nn.40–41; bhākta saints in, 180n.8; Śaṅkaračārya’s disappearance at, 155n.32
Kāṇḍapuram (matha/pīṭha), 2, 41n.65, 115, 128–33, 137, 147, 167, 193, 200n.83, 206, 208, 215, 219, 220, 221, 225, 227, 264, 266, 268; landholdings of, 79n.78, 133n.120, 265; in hagiographies of Śaṅkaračārya, 150, 171
Kāṇṭha. See Nāth
Kanyā Kumārī Sthān, 34n.30
Kāpālika(s), 67n.48, 162, 179, 183; in Śaṅkara-dig-vijaya, 127n.98, 159; matha-s, 140n.141
Karavīra matha. See Śaṅkeśvara matha/pīṭha
kārbāṇ(s), 74, 75, 90, 98
Karmaṇḍa, 4n.15
Karpatī (Śvāmi Hariharanandasarasvatī), 143, 146
Kāśi. See Banaras
Kāśivilāsa (Kriyāśakti Ācārya), 197, 198, 212
Kāsīyapa, 118, 120, 121, 187n.39, 245
Kathmandu: Daśānāmīs at, 57n.13, 58, 175, 176n.103, 248, 258, 297n.40
Kedāreśvara (temple), 190
Kedārnāth: Śaṅkaṭācārya’s disappearance at, 155n.32
kēśīn, 6n.20
khāṅgālar(s), 233, 234n.24–25, 240n.43, 241–42
khilāfhat system, 233
Khwāja Ahrār, 240n.44
Khwāja Muinud Chishti, 239
Kītāb-i Nauroz, 238n.38
Koṭiya matha, 190, 198
Köl Oļugu, 167, 168, 197n.69
Koteśvara (temple), 186n.34
kōṭyālar(s), 74, 75n.66, 93, 98
Kriyāśakti Deva, 186n.34, 198
Kriyāśakti Oḍeṣa, 198n.75
Kriyāśakti Paṇḍita, 185n.34, 198
Krṣṇa, 162; life of, 154n.29
Krṣṇabodhāśrama, 143
Krṣṇadevarāya, 130, 137, 195, 199n.78, 201, 207n.107, 216n.128
Krṣṇananda, 47
Krṣṇappa Nāyaka, 134
Krṣṇarāja Wodeyar, 125
Kṛṣṇaśālāpatara (of Bhāṭṭa Laksīmīdhara), 288n.5
ksatriya(s), 15, 19, 49n.91, 54n.7, 93n.45, 97n.51–52, 181, 193, 230; and renunciation, 38, 39n.56; and royal consecration, 158
Kubrawi(s) (Sūfīs), 244n.57
Kulasēkhara III, 215
Kullū: samnyāsīs at, 16–17nn.73–74
Kūlottuttunga (king), 186n.34
Kūmrā, 153n.26, 223
Kūmrā Kāmpana, 78n.75, 194
Kūmrālīla (Bhāṭṭa), 110, 111n.26–28, 123–24n.84, 127n.98, 151n.16, 153n.26, 158, 217; Śaṅkaračārya’s meeting with, 158n.47, 166; school of, 168
Kumbh Melā(s), 23n.92, 76, 77, 264; akhārā-s at, 47, 53, 55n.8, 56, 57n.16, 59, 60, 65, 73, 74, 229n.9; camping of Daśānāmīs at, 70–71; initiation at, 23, 30n.11, 48, 49, 51, 70n.74, 79, 90, 93, 97, 98; mathī-s at, 69, 70n.57; mār-s at, 34; meetings of organisations at, 138n.137, 141–42n.146, 263n.116; order of bathing at, 55n.7, 65n.42
Kumbhakonam matha, 80, 131n.113, 132–33, 136n.130
Kumudacandra-bhāṭṭārakadeva, 215
Kuntu Nātha, 200n.81
Kuppuswami, A. 129
Kurkotī, Dr., 138
kufīkālar(s), 87n.26, 99n.57, 101–2
Kvāṭhāndo matha, 21n.90
Lakṣmī, 220n.141, 224
Lākulīṣa, 153, 154, 178, 183n.24, 184n.29, 190n.47, 245
Līṅgāya(s). See Vīraśaiva(s)
Lorenzen, David N., 67n.48, 209n.114
Paramaśivendrasarasvatī, 149n.9
Parāśara, 4n.15
parivājaka/parivāya, 7
Pārvatī, 220n.141
Pārvanātha, 200n.82, 215
Pāśupata(s), 100n.60, 153, 162, 165n.65, 183, 184, 187n.40, 190n.47, 191, 198, 210n.118, 228, 245; in Cambodia, 184n.28; matha-s, 140, 192n.55, n.57
Pāśupataśūtra, 178
Pāśupatīnāth (temple), 29n.6, 176n.103
Patarigaśivācārya, 186n.34
Patañjali (the grammarian), 6, 10, 12n.60, 178
Patañjali (the yogi), 152n.22, n.24, 178n.2
Patañjali-caritra (of Rāmabhadra-Dīkṣitā), 148n.3
pauṇcī(s): cāndrāyana/kṣecra/prājāpatya, 9n.38, 84n.16, 288n.5
Peyrī Parānām (of Cēkkīlār), 182, 183
phalāhār, 25n.43
pilgrimage, 288n.5
Piṇḍaṭi, 252, 254, 255
pūrṇa, 241; initiation by, 233
pūṭha(s), 2, 41, 68, 72, 104, 108, 114–15, 116; and gotra-s, 120; lists of, 128–29n.103
Prabhākara, 168
Prabhu Premī Saṅgh, 77n.73
Prācīna-Śaṅkaracārya (of Ānanda-gīra), 130
n.106, 149n.5
Pragnāvālī, 298–99
praiṣa mantra, 82n.6, 83, 85, 86n.23, 88, 89n.32, 92n.42, 95n.43, 95, 96
Prājāpati: sacrifice to, 88, 94n.47
Prakāśanānda, Brahmacārī, 60
Prakāśātman, 106n.5, 113, 123n.84
Prakāśārthakāra, 123n.84
Prāṇāmī (sect)/Prāṇānātha, 237
Prāṣastapādā, 18n.30
Pratapa Śimha, 132
Pratardana, 127n.97
Pravāg(a). See Allahabad
Prthvīrānāya Sāh, 248, 258
Prthvīdharā, 117n.83, 119, 125n.91, 127n.97
prūjīrś(a) (Daśānāmī), 74
Prayaśokamāṇjava (of Sarvaṅgaśadāśiva-bodha), 129, 206
Puraṇ Gīr, 256n.96
Pūraṇa(s): renunciation procedures in, 82n.4; Śaṅkarācārya’s life in, 148n.3
Pūrī (matha/pūṭha), See Govardhan
Puruṣāukta, 85, 94–95n.47–48
Puruṣottama (cult of), 141n.144
Puruṣottamabhairatī, 217
Puṣpadūri matha, 129n.103, 133, 187n.39, 207n.107
Qādīrī (Sūfīs), 234, 239, 241n.46, 244n.57
Qalandāri (Sūfīs), 240n.43, 244n.57
Rādhāvallabhī, 229
Rafī, Ahmad Kabīr, 240n.43
Ragunāth Rao, 250
Rāja-guru(s), 177, 185–90, 192, 197, 198n.75, 201n.84, 210, 217, 215, 218, 269
Rājarāja (king), 186n.34, 187n.37
Rājarēṣvarā Sāṅkarāśrama, Śvāmi, 126
rājasūya, 157–59
Rajendra Giri, 60, 63, 249–50
Rājput(s), 18n.79, 20n.87, 38n.54, 237, 250, 251n.79, 252n.83
Rām Dās, Guru, 175
Rām Jaun Bhāmī (dispute), 264
Rāmakṛṣṇa (Paramahamsa), 23n.28, 31
Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission/Rāmakṛṣṇa Śāradā Mission, 33
Rāmānanda/Rāmānandī(s), 13, 19n.85, 32n.25, 35, 61, 247n.60, 254n.88, 259n.107, 294n.25; conflicts with other sects, 62–65, 230 functionaries among, 55n.8, 74n.63; in catuḥ sam-pradāya, 54n.7; initiation into, 35n.38, 92n.42; militant organisation, 226n.1, 229n.10–11, 247, 249n.74, 250n.76, numbers of, 21n.10, 256n.97
Rāmānuja, 54n.7, 83–84n.12, 87, 92n.42, 107, 113n.37, 160, 167–69, 180 n.8, 183n.22, 188, 191, 197n.71, 210 n.120, 211n.120, 222; disciples of, 246
Rāmarāya (king), 195, 199n.78, 201
Rāmasvāmī (temple), 201
Rāmānīda(s), 28n.61
Rām Sāh (of Gorkha), 19n.84
Rāmāsingh II, 230n.13
ramatī(s), 20, 21
Rānā(s): Jaṅg Bahādūr, 19n.84
Rānaprabhadra matha, 187n.39
ṛṣi(s), 6n.21, 116, 120, 121, 187n.39, 205; Śaṅkarācārya’s descent from, 151
RSS (Rāṣṭrīya Svayamsevak Śaṅgh), 263
Rṣyaśṛṅga, 150
rudākṣ(a), 19n.82, 35n.36, 51, 91, 131, 181n.16
Rudraśakti Deva, 186n.34
Rufayīs (Sūfīs), 240n.43
Rūmī, Jālāl al-Dīn, 242
sabhāpatīs, 74, 75n.66
Saddānānda Śivabhinava Narasimha-bhāratī, 125
Saddānāndabhāratī II, 125, 172
Sadānanda Girī, 89n.32
Sadānanda Yogendraśarasvatī, 226; identity of, 226n.152
Sadāśīva (king), 195, 199n.78
Sadāśivabrahmendra, 129n.106, 149n.5, n.9
Sadāśivarasvatī, 130n.110, 219
Sadbhāva Śambhu, 186n.34
Saddarāsanaśamuccaya (of Haribhadra), 112, 184n.30
sādhūs, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23n.92, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 37, 40, 43, 45, 46, 48, 53n.2, 54n.7, 58n.21, 59n.25, 62n.34, 65, 69, 76, 86, 145n.161, 255, 256, 260n.107, 263, 267, 294n.25, 297n.40, 299; definition of, 1n.4; equipment of, 35–36; finances of, 13n.66; in marga-s, 71; in Nepal, 18; numbers of, 29–30m.10–11; penances of, 36–37n.44; travels of, 29n.7
sādhinīs. See women renouncers
Ṣatdar Jang, 249
Ṣah Ālam II, 249n.74, 250n.78
Ṣah Jāhan, 241n.46
Ṣah Sultan, Pir, 253n.85
Ṣaibābā of Sirdi, 33
Saiva-Siddhānta, 183, 186, 187, 189, 202, 216, 221, 222, initiation into, 120; matha-s, 133–34n.122, 176n.103, 188–89, 192–93; rāja-guru-s, 186–87, 192, 215
sākta-pātha-s/saktipātha-s, 18, 54n.7, 68
sālavāma, 28n.3
Salīm Chishti, Shaikh, 239
Sāluva Narasimha, 195, 201n.84; conversion to Śrī-Vaishnavism, 199n.78
Śambhu Pañc, 73, 76
Śāmkhya, 112, 162, 177, 218
Śāmkhya matha, 225n.151
Śāmkhya Yoginī, 33n.30
saṃnyāsa, 3; definition of, 4n.16; meaning of, 1, 4; rite of, 81–88, 93–98
Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣad-s, 4, 23, 83n.8, 89 n.26; final sacrifice in, 88n.27; renunciation procedures in, 58n.8; rules for renunciates in, 101–3
saṃnyāśīs, 14, 240, 243; divorce by, 17–18n.78; first use of term, 7; funeral rites of, 19n.83, 37; in Nepal, 19–21; initiation ofhouseholder saṃnyāśīs, 19n.82; lifestyle of, 3–4; rules for, 99n.57; militant organisation, 228–31; numbers of, 30n.11, 256n.97; significance of, 3–13, temporary, 16
Saṃnyāśī Saṃskṛta Mahāvidyālaya, 43 n.74
saṃnyāsinīs. See women renouncers
Śamiṣer Bahādur, 251
Śanandana (the ascetic), 127n.97, 150n.13
Śanagama II, 210, 222
Śanagama dynasty, 194–97; patronage of religions by, 199–201
Śāṅkarabhāratī, 35
Śāṅkarābhuyadayā (of Rājaçūḍāmani-Dikṣāta), 149
Śāṅkarābhuyadayā (of Tirumala-Dikṣāta), 149
Śāṅkarācārya (Ādi), 2n.8, 24, 26, 29, 61n.31, 67n.48, 68, 72, 78, 85n.21, 103, 141, 206, 210n.120, 220, 222, 224, 226, 266–69; as avatāra of Śiva, 152–54, 163–64, 223, 224; as paramahamsa, 102; ascent of Throne of Omniscience, 155–58; date of, 108–14, 122–26; digvijaya of, 2, 138, 154–57, 159; final samādhi of, 123, 155n.32; founding of matha-s by, 122–47; in Nepalese history, 155–56, 175–76n.103; opinion on renunciation, 38, 86
Śāṅkarācārya-s, 13, 48, 78n.74, 103, 108 n.12, 264, 288, 294n.25; initiation by, 90n.36; of Banaras, 145–46; of Dvārakā, 139–40; of Jyōśimath, 143–44; of Kāncipuram, 5, 34, 130–32, 156n.36; of Purī, 140–42; of Śaṅkēśvarā, 79, 138; of Śrīgērī, 79n.77, 134–37, 139
Śāṅkarācāryacarita (of Govindanētha), 123 n.84, 149
Virūpākṣa (temple), 201n.85, 216n.128
Virūpākṣa I, 195
Virūpākṣa II, 195, 199n.78, 201n.84
Viṣeṣvarānandaūrtha, 145n.161
Vishva Kalyan Mission, 34n.30
Viṣṇu Purāṇa, 166
Viṣṇudevānandasarasvatī, 143
Viṣṇusvāmī(s), 54n.7, 229n.11
Viśvānandasarasvatī, 263n.116
Viśvarūpa, 82, 86n.84, 88n.91, 88n.97, 110n.46
Viśveśvarānandasarasvatī, 263n.116
Viśveśvara Śambhu, 186n.34
Viśveśvara Śiva, 188n.40
Viśekacūḍāmani (of Śaṅkarācārya), 107
Vivekānanda, 8n.36, 33n.28, 45
vrata, 16, 36, 101,
vrātya(s), 6n.23
Vṛjānand, 247
Vyāsa: disciples of, 245
Vyāsaratyā, 199n.78, 201n.84
(Vyāsācala) Mahādevendrasarasvatī, 149
n.8, 206
Vyāsatūrtha, 226
vīśayat, 234
women ascetics/renouncers, 10–11, 15, 30–35, 43; Ājīvika and Buddhist; 11 n.57; in Banaras, 32; Jaina, 31n.17; numbers of, 31n.14; terms for, 30nn. 12–13, 31
Yādava Prakāśa, 83n.12
Yadugiri Yatirāja Matha, 168n.74
yajamāna, 5n.19, 156n.36, 187n.38
Yāmunamuni/Yāmunācārya, 167, 191
yatī, 6, 7
Tatidharmaprabhāsa (of Vāsudevāśrama), 10n.51, 38n.50, 82n.5, 101n.66, 174; renunciation procedures in, 83–86, 91n.40
Tatidharmasamgraha (of Viśveśvarasarasvatī), 82n.5, 85n.21, 89n.31, 174
Tatidharmasamuccaya (of Yādava Prakāśa), 83, 84–85, 101n.66; final sacrifice in, 88n.27
Yoga (doctrine), 100n.58, 162, 176n.103, 177, 178, 178n.2, 185n.32
Yogasūtra-bhāṣya-sivaraṇa (of Śaṅkarācārya), 108
yogi(s)/yogin(s)/Jogi(s), 6n.21, n.23, 14 n.67, 15n.70, 18, 30n.11, 45n.81, 56n. 11, 62, 62n.34, 66n.44, 70n.57, 91, 102n.68, 175, 189, 228, 228n.4, 230, 239, 243, 246; in Tirumantiram, 181n.16
yoginī(s), 165, 165n.65, 188n.40
Yuddhamalla II, 186n.34
yuga(s), 116, 128n.101
Yuvarājadeva, 186n.34, 187n.40

Yudhamalla II, 186n.34